



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-302010-18

Case Reference / Description	ABP-302010-18 Proposed MetroLink for Swords-Airport-City Centre Corridor.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
Meeting	Meeting with the Office of Public Works and The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht		
Date	18/09/19	Start Time	10:05 a.m.
Location	Offices of the Office of Public Works	End Time	12.18 p.m.
Chairperson	Brendan Wyse	Executive Officer	Maeve Williams

Attendees		
Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Staff Member	Email Address	Phone
Brendan Wyse, Assistant Director of Planning		
Kevin Moore, Senior Planning Inspector		
Maeve Williams, Executive Officer	m.williams@pleanala.ie	01-8737287

Representing the Office of Public Works		
Martin Bourke (Assistant Secretary General)		
Catherine Eddery (PO)		
Alan Dalton (APO)		
John Cahill (Assistant Principal Architect, Conservation & Project Management / Capital Projects)		
Ger Harvey (Assistant Principal Architect)		
Rosemary Collier (PO) Margaret Gormley (Chief Park Superintendent)		

Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht		
Nessa Foley (APO)		
Sean Kirwan (Senior Archaeologist Grade 1)		
Mark Keegan (Archaeologist)		
Nicola Matthews (Senior Architect)		

Introduction

An Bord Pleanála (The Board) outlined the scope and purpose of the meeting.

It indicated that the meeting was essentially an information gathering exercise. A record of the meeting would be made and a copy forwarded to the Office of Public Works (OPW) and The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) for comments in due course. The record, together with any comments received, would be placed on the public file at the closure of the pre-application consultation process.

The Board noted the function of pre-application consultations with respect to railway order applications which is to advise the prospective applicants [Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)] on procedural matters and on considerations related to proper planning and sustainable development and the environment which, in the opinion of the Board, might have a bearing on the decision on any subsequent application.

The Board outlined details of the pre-application consultations held to date. It advised that two meetings have been held with TII. The Board has also met with representatives of Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council.

With regard to the project generally, the Board said its' current understanding is that TII intends to lodge an application some time in 2020. It noted that the development as originally proposed involved the metro extending from Estuary (Swords) to Sandyford (along the Luas Green Line). More recently, the project has been amended to omit the Luas Green Line. The preferred route document was published in March 2019. The Board said that it expects to have a third meeting with TII around the end of October.

Operational and Construction Phases – Key Issues

DCHG referred to the legal status of St. Stephens Green, from the St. Stephens Green Dublin Act 1877 to the present day, including its' status as a national monument, and to the applicable consent regime.

OPW indicated its' general support for the metro project and that it has had extensive engagement with TII. More detail is still required in relation to design, construction methodologies, building surveys etc. It was also noted that significant elements of the project are still subject to change, including the specific design of the St. Stephens Green station.

OPW noted that, in addition to St. Stephens Green, the tunnel alignment, as currently proposed, also runs under a number of other sensitive state buildings and properties (eg. Government Buildings and Botanic Gardens).

DCHG considered that the impact of the proposed station at St. Stephens Green would be profound and negative. Concerns raised included ; impacts on heritage value; impacts on trees; impacts from the light well structures over the station; and impacts arising from the station access being located within the Green. The Department is open to discuss options in relation to these matters. It also referred to the current lack of clarity in relation to the full extent of the proposed construction envelope at the Green.

OPW generally concurred with the view of DCHG. It referred to the importance of the Green as Dublins' oldest city park, its' heritage value and its' current significance in terms of visitors/users. It queried how these values (somewhat intangible) were weighed against considerations applied to the decision not to place the station structure in the roadway (St. Stephens Green East) so as to avoid disrupting traffic or relocating other infrastructure (eg. mains sewer). Earlsfort Terrace was suggested as a possible alternative location for the station.

OPW queried the use of a standardised station design at all stop locations and suggested that a more bespoke approach should be adopted, particularly at sensitive locations such as St. Stephens Green. It also questioned if cut/cover was the only option considered for the station construction.

OPW referred to; the wildlife/habitats value of the Green; wildlife linkages to other squares (eg. Merrion Square); pedestrian circulation patterns; and to the opening hours of the Green – it closes at 4.00pm in winter and 9.00pm in summer.

OPW referred to other potential construction impacts, including; dust (including impacts on trees generally in the Green); noise; and consequential impacts on visitors/tourists in their use of the Green.

The Board indicated that the application documentation would be required to be comprehensive and to convey a complete understanding of the entire project, including construction methodologies.

The Board queried if discussions held to date with TII had included consideration of any possible tie-in with DART Underground at St. Stephens Green. OPW/DCHG indicated that this matter had not arisen. They also indicated that the matter of deviation limits had not been discussed.

OPW referred to the other significant state buildings, beyond St. Stephens Green, that would be potentially affected by the proposed development. These included Government Buildings and the associated museums and galleries. Concerns included; possible impacts relating to electromagnetic radiation; and structural issues and impacts on Dail committee rooms and recording facilities in the basement areas of Leinster House. There was also the question of possible impacts on the future development potential of these sites. Proposed mitigation measures would be very important.

The Board referred to the likelihood of the application including a Property Owners Protection Scheme and detailed agreements with individual property owners similar to the approach employed in the previous Metro North project. Any approval granted would reference these and also include requirements, by condition, for specific additional mitigation measures for specific locations where warranted.

Conclusion:

OPW indicated that, in due course, it would submit a written summary of the issues it raised at the meeting.

The board advised that a copy of the record of the meeting would be forwarded to the OPW/DCHG. The record, as well as any submission received, would be made available to the prospective applicant and would be placed on the public file when the pre-application consultation phase is formally concluded.

Brendan Wyse

Assistant Director of Planning