



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting

**ABP-306587-20**

<b>Development</b>	Railway Improvement Works on the Maynooth Line and City Centre enhancements as part of the DART Expansion Programme		
<b>Location</b>	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	02/07/20	<b>Time</b>	14:30p.m. – 16:00p.m.

<b>Attendees</b>		
<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>		
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Una Crosse, Senior Planning Inspector		
Jennifer Sherry, Executive Officer	j.sherry@pleanala.ie	01-8737266
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>		
Barry Corrigan, Consultant, ROD		
Mark Conroy, Irish Rail		

Colm Reynolds, Irish Rail
Tom McKay, Project Manager, IDOM Consulting Engineering
Rita Monaghan, Irish Rail
Michael Finan, Irish Rail

## Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant requesting pre-application consultations and advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted an information-gathering exercise for the Board; it also invited the prospective applicant to outline the nature of the proposed development and to highlight any matters that it wished to receive advice on from the Board.

The Board mentioned the following general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- The Board will keep a record of this meeting and any other meetings, if held. Such records will form part of the file which will be made available publicly at the conclusion of the process. The record of the meeting will not be amended by the Board once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.
- A further meeting or meetings may be held in respect of the proposed development.
- Further information may be requested by the Board and public consultations may also be directed by the Board.
- The Board may hold consultations in respect of the proposed development with other bodies.
- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Board in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or any legal proceedings.

## **Presentation by the prospective applicant**

The prospective applicant set out the background of the project under which DART+ Programme is a key deliverable under the National Planning Framework, National Development Plan 2018-2027, Climate Act Plan 2019, Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 to enable compact growth for Dublin, sustainable mobility and assist in the transition to a low carbon society.

With regard to the existing Dublin 19<sup>th</sup> Century railway infrastructure, the prospective applicant said the greater Dublin area transport network is at capacity with no additional fleet available to meet the increasing passenger demand. The DART+ Programme project objective is to be delivered under four infrastructural projects which will individually comprise Railway Order Applications to An Bord Pleanála. Each project will deliver infrastructural and capacity improvements in their own right, but will tie-in to the existing railway network and can be commenced individually.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the proposed development the subject of this pre-application consultation which comprises the provision of railway improvement works on the Maynooth Line with enhancements at Connolly Station and Docklands Station to provide a higher frequency service with increased capacity by re-signaling and electrification of existing lines along the approximately 40-kilometre route.

The proposed development was further elaborated upon with regard to different elements of the project:

- Connolly Station – currently consists of four terminal platforms (numbered 1-4) and three through running platforms (numbered 5-7), capacity is constrained by railway traffic with a bottleneck at the northern throat of the station. The proposed development is seeking to modify the northern throat with additional crossovers and (track modifications to facilitate increased operational flexibility.
- Docklands Station – currently operates as an overflow terminus station however, under the proposed development, modifications of this station are necessary to provide additional terminus capacity and integrate with the existing Luas line. The

prospective applicant is considering Option A, the expansion of the Docklands Station at the current location or Option B, to relocate the station to a more central North Lotts location.

- Interchange with MetroLink – is proposed to be a fully integrated public transport station to facilitate DART+ and MetroLink in Glasnevin. The station will comprise of a surface station for DART+ and an underground station for MetroLink with shared concourse for full passenger integration.
- Level Crossings – currently there are six level crossing (Ashtown, Coolmine, Porterstown, Clonsilla, Barberstown, and Blakestown) on the Maynooth line. Under the proposed development all these level crossings will have to be modified as there will be insufficient crossing time due to increased train capacity, from 7 trains per hour per direction, to 15 trains per hour per direction (in peak hours). The prospective applicant discussed the emerging preferred option for each level crossing:
  - i. Ashtown – replace current level crossing with full vehicular road bridge, pedestrian, and cyclist facilities.
  - ii. Coolmine – replace current level crossing with full vehicular road bridge, pedestrian, and cyclist facilities.
  - iii. Porterstown – replace current level crossing with pedestrian and cyclist bridge.
  - iv. Clonsilla – replace current level crossing with pedestrian and cyclist bridge.
  - v. Barberstown – replace current level crossing with full vehicular road bridge, pedestrian, and cyclist facilities.
  - vi. Blakestown – close current level crossing with no replacement option.
- Electrification of the Line – the proposed development requires overhead line infrastructure along the established Maynooth corridor to enable electrification of the line. There will be some visual impacts on properties in areas of the embankment, public safety (potential to touch) concerns in areas of cutting and

bridge modifications due to low electrical clearance. The prospective applicant indicated a number of alternative options are being explored for bridge modifications at a number of locations as some are protected structures.

- Royal Canal – the DART+ will run on the established track route and within existing railway corridor adjacent to the Royal Canal. The prospective applicant said some modifications will be necessary surrounding the Royal Canal with the removal of vegetation to ensure safe operation of electrified trains, features of architectural heritage and biodiversity, and the interface between level crossings and the Royal Canal will be addressed.
- Depot Location – a new depot is proposed west of Maynooth Station with twin tracking from Maynooth to be constructed on existing agricultural landholdings. The prospective applicant stated consultation commenced with landowners in 2018 and 2019. The length of track required is approximately 2.5 kilometers from Maynooth Station to the new depot location.
- Construction Strategy – the prospective applicant said considerable night time works will be required in the construction phase as the objective is to maintain passenger services during the day throughout the proposed development. It is proposed that mitigation measures will be implemented in built up areas for night time works.
- Consultation with Prescribed Bodies – the prospective applicant indicated that prescribed bodies were consulted in May 2020. It is also intended to undertake informal EIA Scoping with prescribed bodies in July 2020. Furthermore, the prospective applicant is carrying out ongoing meetings with Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council, Meath County Council, Kildare County Council, Waterways Ireland, ESB and other utility providers.
- Public Consultation – is commencing on 21st July 2020 with another round of public consultation proposed for October 2020. The prospective applicant is also engaging with potentially affected landowners.

The prospective applicant set out an indicative schedule for the proposed development and a possible time line for future meetings with An Bord Pleanála.

## Discussion

- The Board's representatives stressed the importance of considering the cumulative effects of the project not only in terms of the Transport Strategies but with regard to Local Area Plans (LAP) and Strategic Development Zones (SDZ). Consideration of those cumulative effects should be addressed in the EIAR.
- The Board commented the proposed development is a high-level plan to support transport infrastructure and it is in the interest of the prospective applicant to highlight how the current project is captured and supported within the NDP, CDP and LAP's.
- The Board enquired as to what stage Appropriate Assessment considerations are at and if the proposed development is adjacent to any Natura Sites. The prospective applicant advised they are currently in the process of making a declaration and there are no Natura 2000 Sites within the vicinity of the proposed development.
- The Board noted the proposed development is a large-scale project with a number of significant elements within the overall development, such as the removal of six level crossings, bridge modifications and alterations to existing railway stations. The Board's representatives considered that it may be appropriate to undertake the consultation process by considering a number of the constituent elements in more detail at future meetings rather than seek to discuss the whole project in its entirety at each stage of discussion.
- The prospective applicant said it is open to changing the order of the topics suggested in their presentation for discussion in future meetings with An Bord Pleanála and would welcome feedback from the Board on the different elements for the proposed meeting schedule.

## Conclusion:

The record of the meeting will issue to the prospective applicant and it will then be a matter for the prospective applicant to submit any comments on this if it wishes to do so or at the time of a further meeting. It will be a matter for the prospective applicant to

revert to the Board when it requires a further meeting. The prospective applicant indicated it would be likely to request such a further meeting in August 2020.

It is proposed that the consultation process should address the following connected project elements under these headings but not necessarily in the order set out:

1. Connolly Station
2. Docklands Station
3. Metro Link Interchange
4. Closure of Level Crossings – Ashtown, Coolmine, Porterstown, Clonsilla, Barberstown, Blakestown
5. New Electrification and OH line infrastructure including potential bridge modifications.
6. New Depot west of Maynooth and associated infrastructure

The Board following consideration of the proposed development considers it would be pertinent to focus on two of the above at a further meeting with the prospective applicant in addition to providing an overview on the other elements and updates on the consultation being undertaken.

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Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning