



Case Reference / Description	Railway Improvement Works on the Maynooth Line and City Centre enhancements as part of the DART Expansion Programme		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	7 th		
Date	24/02/21	Start Time	11:00 a.m.
Location	Virtually	End Time	12.45 p.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Una Crosse, Senior Planning Inspector
Jennifer Sherry, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Colm Reynolds, Assistant Director DART+, Iarnród Éireann
Michael Finan, Programme Manager DART+ West, Iarnród Éireann
Mark Conroy, Environmental Manager DART+, Iarnród Éireann
Rita Monaghan, CIE Solicitor

Mark Kilcullen, Deputy Project Director, IDOM-ROD
Barry Corrigan, Railway Order Manager, IDOM-ROD
Patrick O'Shea, Project Ecologist, IDOM-ROD
Nigel Duignan, Compliance Engineering Ireland, IDOM-ROD

Introduction

The Board referred to the 6th meeting held with the prospective applicant on the 21st January, 2021 and the record of this meeting. The prospective applicant confirmed that it had no comments or corrections to make to the record and enquired if the Board had any feedback on the planning context included in the presentation provided at the last meeting. In response the Board advised it was satisfied with the comprehensive presentation given and would welcome the involvement of the project planner at future meetings to facilitate the pre-planning process.

Presentation

The prospective applicant gave a presentation under the following topics:

- **Appropriate Assessment Screening** – the rationale for the proposed likely zone of impact for the proposed development was outlined.

It was stated that there are four Natura 2000 Sites identified as within the likely zone of impact. The railway line for DART+West crosses over the Rye Water Valley / Carton SAC in Leixlip and the proposed development is adjacent to the designated site between Leixlip and Maynooth. The proposed development is also hydrologically connected to South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, North Bull Island SPA and North Bull Island SAC through the Royal Canal, the River Liffey and the River Tolka.

A number of potential construction phase impacts and operational phase impacts on biodiversity were listed in the presentation provided by the prospective applicant.

Potential likely significant effects are identified as surface-water pollution, ground-

water pollution, alterations in ground-water flows and habitat loss / disturbance. The prospective applicant has identified St. Vincent's Primary School (Glasnevin), Ashington Park, Tolka Valley Park and Ashtown Playing Pitches as requiring survey work in respect of birds.

The prospective applicant discussed relevant caselaw in relation to the requirement for SUDs (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) to be considered as a mitigation measure for the purposes of screening or not. The prospective applicant advised that it was awaiting confirmation of the preferred design route option before coming to a decision in respect of the significance of potential effects and the requirement to prepare an NIS.

- **Electromagnetic assessment** – the project consultant for electromagnetic assessment is CEI Ltd (Compliance Engineering International). A comprehensive presentation was given on sources of EMR and the EIAR process for electromagnetic assessment which includes baseline definition, baseline surveys, sensitive equipment, magnetic field modelling, standard mitigation and advanced mitigation. The prospective applicant advised that consultation has been carried out with a number of stakeholders in the vicinity of the proposed development. As a result Intel in Leixlip, Co. Kildare has been identified as needing further investigation with modeling and surveys of sensitive equipment being carried out.
- **Human Health** – the prospective applicant referred to the requirement to assess human health as a factor in the EIAR as per the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU. The methodology for the undertaking of the study of this factor in the EIAR was discussed in the presentation provided by the prospective applicant.
- **Design updates** – the prospective applicant provided an update on the Coolmine Level Crossing replacement and Spencer Dock Station as follows:
 1. **Coolmine Level Crossing** – following a review of the option selection process after the first round of public consultation, an additional two options were included at MCA Stage 1. These were for Option 9 - a pedestrian/cycle bridge and road upgrades within the area, and option 10 - an online droplock. At MCA Stage 2, 4 options were considered with the emerging preferred

option being option 9. A selection of drawings highlighting option 9 were included in the presentation.

2. **Spencer Dock Station** –capacity enhancements are required in the Docklands area, options A1 and B2 were considered at MCA Stages. Following consultation with the NTA a preference was expressed for option B2 as the NTA have plans for transport integration in this area. Option B2 is for a new fully embedded station and partially embedded approach track work with 4 new platforms. The prospective applicant advised option B2 is the preferred option and a number of 3D drawings were included in the presentation to show the characterization of the development.
- **Public Consultation No. 2 Update** – it is proposed by the prospective applicant to present to the public at PC no.2 the preferred option with clarity on issues raised at PC no. 1. An online virtual consultation platform will be used to engage with the public and request feedback to optimize the design of the preferred option for the railway order. A new project website will be launched for PC no. 2 www.Dartplus.ie which will allow for enhanced consultation throughout the full duration of the consultation period. The launch date for PC no.2 is to be agreed and will run for a 6-week consultation period.

Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- The Board's representatives referred to the two legal cases included in the presentation and advised the matter of AA is very live in the courts and is an area which is constantly evolving through legal judgements. The Board further advised the prospective applicant to give careful consideration to the language used in the EIAR and AA SR/NIS with the EIA Directive referencing matters such as biodiversity and cumulative impacts and the Habitats Directive referencing matters such as in-combination effects.
- The Board's representatives noted the railway line crosses the Rye Water Valley / Carton SAC and enquired if any survey work has been carried out to see what, if

any, qualifying interests are located in the vicinity of the site and what are the conservation objectives of the SAC. Reference was made by the prospective applicant to surveys undertaken of the railway site itself and to the most likely potential effect resulting from surface water. The Board also enquired as to the location of the qualifying interest - petrifying springs with tufa formation – in relation to the proposed development. The Board's representatives also questioned the rationale for the zone of influence chosen, which relates to waterbirds, particularly in the context of habitats which are qualifying interests within the SAC.

- The prospective applicant in response to the Board's representative's enquiry in relation to the preparation of an NIS said it could be prudent to include an NIS due to the size, scale and importance of the proposed development. Based on the information presented the Board's representatives were of the opinion that an NIS will likely be required for the proposed development and the information within same should be as robust as is possible. The Board's representatives further elaborated that it is not considered appropriate to limit surveys to the lands within the railway line and station and that it would be necessary to understand the appropriate zone of influence.
- The Board's representatives stated that all potential pathways/connections to European sites should be considered. The prospective applicant enquired how might the other qualifying interests of Rye Water Valley / Carton SAC be addressed. The Board's representatives advised scientific evidence should be produced and that a tailored rationale relevant to each Site should be used.
- The Board's representatives noted that in terms of the electromagnetic receptors a number of stakeholders had been consulted by the prospective applicant. The Board's representatives enquired if there is any basis for ecological receptors to be considered in the EIAR. The prospective applicant advised this is not something they have done in the past but if necessary is something they could look into. The Board's representatives commented when looking at receptors in the EIAR it could be useful to use evidence from previous studies to close it out as a potential for significant effect.

- In response to the Board's representatives query the prospective applicant said the existing station at the Docklands was originally a temporary station and a decision has not been made as yet in relation to its future. The Board's representatives commented this is something that needs to be set out in the application documentations as it is a material asset. The prospective applicant stated it is seeking a meeting with Dublin City Council in relation to development within the SDZ.
- The prospective applicant sought the Board's representative's opinion on using the web address www.Dartplus.ie as the standalone website for the purpose of uploading all the documentation for the Railway Order for public viewing. The Board's representatives said their initial thoughts were that it may not be sufficient having regard to the number of projects at various stages of development relating to the Dart expansion programme but would provide clarification on this at the next meeting.

The prospective applicant stated there is a potential for two further meeting as part of the pre-application consultation process. The Board's representatives requested that a final project outline be provided with the various elements set out clearly. The prospective applicant also said that an update on its position in relation to AA will be presented at the next meeting.

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 was agreed that a further meeting would take place in late March, 2021.

Ciara Kellett
Assistant Director of Planning