An Bord Pleanála

Record of 8th Meeting

ABP-306587-20

Development	Railway Improvement Works on the Maynooth Line and City Centre enhancements as part of the DART Expansion Programme		
Location	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	8th		
Date	31/03/21	**Time**	11:00 a.m. – 13:00p.m.

Attendees		
Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Una Crosse, Senior Planning Inspector		
Jennifer Sherry, Executive Officer	j.sherry@pleanala.ie	01-8737266
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
Barry Corrigan, Railway Order Manager, IDOM-ROD
Patrick O'Shea, Project Ecologist, IDOM-ROD
Cristina Chale, Design Manager, IDOM-ROD
Borja Aróstegui Chapa, Project Architect, IDOM-ROD
Stephen Smyth, AWN Consulting on behalf of IDOM-ROD
Avril Challoner, AWN Consulting on behalf of IDOM-ROD
Frances O'Kelly, Spatial Planner, IDOM-ROD
Gessica Silva, IDOM-ROD

Introduction

The Board referred to the 7th meeting held with the prospective applicant on the 24th February, 2021 and the record of this meeting. The prospective applicant confirmed that it had no comments or corrections to make to the record.

Presentation

The prospective applicant gave an update on the project under the following headings:

- **Design Updates**
  - i. **Connolly Station** – the prospective applicant briefly discussed the existing facilities in Connolly Station highlighting that a new pedestrian access needs to be created to facilitate the increased passenger numbers associated with the proposed development. Three locations have been considered for the new proposed entrance are as follows:
    1. access through the Rotunda building at Sheriff Street Lower,
    2. access through Preston Street, and

3. access through the Fáilte Ireland car park.

The emerging preferred option is access through Preston Street. The prospective applicant referred to a number of slides in the presentation illustrating visually the new access and arrangements including a concourse, entrance vault, central corridor and vertical connection facilities.

ii. **Bridge clearances** – the prospective applicant provided a hierarchy of alternative solutions to achieve minimum vertical clearance, as follows:

1. Reduce clearance OHLE
2. Vertical Lowering (track lowering)
3. Bridge Modification
4. New Alignment (off-line solution)

The prospective applicant further set out which solution was suitable for each of the bridges along the railway line for the proposed development and detailed drawings / maps can be referenced in the presentation provided. A synopsis of the emerging preferred solution for each bridge is as follows:

1. OBG23 Jackson's Bridge (protected structure) – new alignment of a double offline track emerged following studies on flood levels.
2. OBG18 Pike Bridge (protected structure) – track lowering (+340mm).
3. OBG16 Louisa Bridge – deck bridge modification.
4. OBG14 Cope Bridge – bridge deck reconstruction (+350mm).
5. OBG13 Collins Bridge – track lowering 250mm at the OB (4400mm cwh).
6. OBG11 Granard Bridge – bridge reconstruction.
7. OBG9 Old Navan Road Bridge – flat deck lifting.
8. OBG7C M50 Autoroute Roundabout - compromise solution no intervention.
9. OBG7A M50 Roundabout – OHLE solution.
10. OBG5 Broombridge – bridge deck reconstruction, precast arch deck.
11. OBO11 Cross Guns (on Prospect Road) – track lowering.
12. OBD222 Cross Guns (Westmorland) – track lowering to allow a 4250 – 4300 mm contact wire system.

13. OBD221 Cross Guns (Westmorland) – minimum track lowering because of OBD222 solution.
14. OBD223-224-225-226-227 – general track lowering.
15. OBO35 and OBO36 Spencer Dock Station – slab track solution (Spencer Dock Station is below water level). Slab track is steel embedded on concrete slabs.
16. OBCN286 – Barnhill Bridge – track lowering.
17. OBCN290 Dunboyne Bridge – minimum track lowering without impact on Station platforms.

- **EIA Factors**

i. **Noise & Vibration**

The prospective applicant advised that the EIAR assessment methodology being used, is to determine baseline conditions through survey work, identify key noise sources and carry out an impact assessment at construction phase and operational phase. More detail can be seen in the presentation provided by the prospective applicant, including likely issues to occur. The following is an outline of the information provided in the presentation.

Baseline studies - Survey work is ongoing, with locations previously used in the 2010 Maynooth Line project reused to allow a comparison of how baseline conditions have changed.

Construction phase – criteria to be adopted is the British Standard BS 5228 which is a well-established document used on numerous projects, including the approach to be taken for the MetroLink project.

Operational phase – the prospective applicant in assessing the noise impacts will base the significance criteria on a peer review of best practice including LUAS, MetroLink and other large urban rail projects. There are no guidance documents for assessing the significance of vibration impacts, and as above, a peer review of best practice on Luas, MetroLink and other large urban rail projects is being used.

ii. **Climate**

The prospective applicant stated the climate impact assessment will refer to national guidelines, where available, in addition to international standards and guidelines relating to the assessment of GHG emissions and associated climatic impact. The DART+ Programme is specifically mentioned in the Climate Action Plan 2019 under section 10.3 Measures to Deliver Targets. The prospective applicant further outlined there is a greater focus on the impacts of climate using quantitative assessment and referred the Board to a table in the presentation which contains quantitative data for the proposed development.

Construction phase – the quantification of the impact due to embodied carbon within construction materials will be calculated using the TII Carbon Assessment Tool and emissions from the constructions vehicles / road traffic redistribution will be calculated using the NTA Environmental Appraisal Module, ENEVAL software.

Operational phase – the quantification of the impact due to the change of frequency of rail services; emissions from the road traffic redistribution will be calculated using the NTA Environment Appraisal Module; and change of rail fuel type from diesel to electric will be assessed.

- **Appropriate Assessment**

The prospective applicant presented the likely zone of impact as the entire area within 550m of the proposed development and all watercourses within 550m of the proposed development boundary downstream as far as and including the Liffey Estuary Lower Transitional Waterbody and the Tolka Estuary Transitional Waterbody. The rationale used for the 550m likely zone of influence relates to the potential disturbance on waterbirds (previous meeting presentation refers).

Pathways for likely significant effects to European Sites' have been identified on the following: Rye Water / Carton SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, North Bull Island SPA and North Dublin Bay SAC. The screening conclusion for the four European Sites identified that likely significant effects could not be excluded on

these sites in view of the Conservation Objectives for the following specific qualifying interests/special conservation interests: Desmoulin's Whorl Snail, Narrow-mouth Whorl Snail, Petrifying Springs with tufa formation and Light-bellied Brent Goose.

Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- The Board's representatives referred to the proposed changes at Connolly Station and noted specific objectives in Dublin City Development Plan to open the previous access on Amiens Street. The Board highlighted the need to address why an alternative to this objective is being proposed in the EIAR. The Board advised the prospective applicant to be mindful of the public amenity on Preston Street including surveillance and public realm and to consider how the ancillary elements for the proposed new entrance, for example bike stands may be incorporated.
- The Board further enquired if the vaults beneath Connolly Station are protected structures and given their age, enquired as to their historical significance. The prospective applicant advised the vaults are not protected but their historical significance will be addressed in the EIAR. The Board's representatives commented on the unique features of the vaults and stated their regeneration and the public access to same would likely be a positive impact of the proposed development.
- The Board referred to pre-application consultation meeting no.5 under which OBG23 Jackson's Bridge was discussed with the emerging preferred option at that time, bridge deck reconstruction. The Board's representatives enquired what the main reasons for the current emerging preferred proposal for an offline option were. The prospective applicant advised following flood risk analysis protection of the track from the risk of flooding and the offline option is being considered to address this concern. The prospective applicant in response to the Board's enquiry confirmed that land will need to be compulsorily acquired at lands adjacent to OBG23 Jackson's Bridge for this option.
- The Board's representatives referred to the emerging preferred option at the M50 to lower the tracks and enquired if the prospective applicant had consulted with TII.

The prospective applicant clarified that the proposed works to be undertaken would be in the rail corridor in the ownership of Iarnród Eireann. The Board's representatives suggested a meeting with the TII may be beneficial given the strategic importance of the M50 and the fact they most likely will be identified as a prescribed body for the proposed development application.

- The prospective applicant in response to the Board's enquiry on the visual impact to OBG14 Cope Bridge (protected structure) stated it is proposed to change the level of the arch way by raising the soffit of the bridge.
- The Board's representatives noted the discussion in relation to noise and vibration in the EIAR and enquired if it was proposed to address biodiversity impacts in relation to this factor. The Board's representatives referred to the positive impacts outlined in relation to climate with the table provided on quantitative impacts outlined in the presentation considered particularly useful.
- The Board's representatives queried if there is any scientific basis for presenting the zone of influence of 550m for habitats as opposed to the previously provided justification for this distance in relation to waterbirds. The matter is to be addressed in the NIS. The prospective applicant said mitigation measures have been agreed in consultation with Birdwatch Ireland along with data gathered from other projects. The Board's representatives iterated the more evidence-based mitigation measures the prospective applicant can provide the better.
- The Board's representatives clarified that if a site is being progressed from screening to appropriate assessment that all qualifying interests/species of conservation interest for those sites are to be assessed.

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 a time of a further meeting.

The Board's representatives requested in advance of the next meeting that a clear and detailed description of the entire proposed development end to end be provided. Furthermore, the Board's representatives said it would be useful to receive in tabular

format an inventory of all the bridges with the name, location and an outline with the exact works proposed.

The Board's representatives also advised the prospective applicant to be mindful to only close the pre-application consultation process when they are ready to do so.

Ciara Kellett 9/4/2021

Ciara Kellett
Assistant Director of Planning