



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-306587-20 meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-306587-20 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	9 th		
Date	08/03/22	Start Time	11 a.m.
Location	N/A	End Time	12.25 p.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Una Crosse, Senior Planning Inspector
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Colm Reynolds, Iarnrod Eireann
Michael Finan, Iarnrod Eireann
Mark Conroy, Iarnrod Eireann
Rita Monaghan, CIE
Gessica Silva, Iarnrod Eireann
Barry Corrigan, Roughan & O'Donovan

Cristina Chale, Roughan & O'Donovan
Morgan Hart, Roughan & O'Donovan
Frances O'Kelly, Roughan & O'Donovan
Patrick O'Shea, Senior Ecologist

The meeting commenced at 11 a.m.

The Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant (31st March 2021) and the record of this meeting. The Board enquired if the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to submit on the record of this meeting; the prospective applicant replied that it had no comments to make.

Prospective applicant's presentation:

The prospective applicant provided an update on the preferred option consultations and advised that these consultations took place between the 28th July and 6th October 2021. Consultations were conducted online due to the pandemic. A total of 8,284 submissions were received. 12 public webinars were held as part of these consultations. With regard to Ashtown, the key issues raised in submissions included the impact on Ashtown Stables, safety concerns, impacts on cultural heritage and impacts on biodiversity. Several petitions were received with respect to potential impacts on the Ashtown area.

Details regarding the revised option (Ashtown Option 10) at this particular location were outlined. The revised option provides for a reconfigured station with a separate pedestrian-cycle bridge added and a cycleway provided on the roadway. This revised option is cognisant of pedestrian concerns in the underpass and it has concluded that this revised option will primarily remove impacts on Ashtown Stables. An existing commercial enterprise to the west of Ashtown Stables will be impacted due to the revised proposal. In response to the Board's query on the matter, it was stated that consultations have commenced with this landowner. It also advised that localised consultations on this revised option are due to commence on the 9th March 2022 (four-week consultation period). With regard to the Board's observation on the substantial amount of infrastructure being provided at this particular location, it was stated that these changes had prompted its decision to initiate this further round of

localised consultations. The Board noted this and outlined the need to provide the rationale for these changes in the context of public concerns and submissions received.

With respect to Cope Bridge (Leixlip Confey Station), Kildare County Council's requirements to increase the width of this bridge for road users have been incorporated, with extensive consultations taking place with the local authority and the NTA in the development of an integrated road/rail solution at this particular location. The prospective applicant noted that the bridge in question is not a protected structure but has a heritage value.

The prospective applicant referred to the following:

- Coolmine level crossing closure – key issues which have been raised as part of consultations outlined; noting that the level crossing needs to be closed to allow for capacity enhancements on the line. Traffic Impact Assessment is assessing all localised traffic impacts and that junction improvements are provided and the footbridge proposed at Coolmine is being replaced by a universal access steel footbridge.
- Blakestown level crossing closure – the prospective applicant advised that there is no change to the preferred option at this location and noted that there is alternative infrastructure in the form of the R449 link road in close proximity to the level crossing for diverted traffic.

With respect to the matter of Appropriate Assessment, the prospective applicant provided updates to the likely zone of impact since the time of the previous consultation meeting with the Board. The prospective applicant said that the likely zone of impact is now taking account of the proposed Main Storage and Distribution Centre located three kilometres north-west of Dublin Airport; which it was noted by the Board's representatives is a new element of the proposal.

In relation to the assessment of adverse effects on groundwater dependent species and habitats, these have been informed by the Hydrogeological Impact Assessment. The conclusions of the hydrogeological assessment are that the effects on groundwater will be localised; it was added that the proposed buffer of 550 metres will exceed the limit for effects on groundwater bodies. All assessments are

approaching a conclusion and it was confirmed that an NIS will accompany the railway order application.

With regard to topics to be covered as part of the EIAR, the prospective applicant reported on the following:

- Hydrology – Water quality monitoring has been undertaken and a site-specific flood risk assessment has been prepared for the scheme in line with OPW guidelines. With respect to the Water Framework Directive, the assessment of likely impacts has been undertaken and all water bodies within the study area have been assigned a formal status.
- Land and Soils – the main challenge apropos land and soils is to move soils to and from and across the subject site. With regard to this, a large excavation is required at Spencer Dock and significant earthworks would also take place at the proposed depot location but only minimal earthworks will be required along the main track alignment due to the established rail corridor.
- Cumulative assessment of effects – the prospective applicant said that the assessment of cumulative effects for the purposes of a railway order application has been undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation including the EIA Directive and the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001, as amended. The pertinent requirements of the EIA Directive were identified and referred to the tiered approach to the identification and assessment of potential cumulative impacts that pertains to the project. The identification of relevant national, regional and local plans and the assessment of positive or negative direct, indirect and secondary and cumulative impacts as a result of the proposed development is considered as part of its assessment; it also identified key plans in this regard including the National Planning Framework and the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. With regard to Tier 3 Projects (existing or approved plans and projects), regard has been had of planning applications approved and which have not yet been completed within 550 metres of the red line boundary granted over the past 10 years. With regard to Tier 4 Projects (Other Projects), regard has been had to other NTA projects, plans and programmes that are at a preliminary design stage or are in the public domain; these included projects

such as BusConnects and the proposed MetroLink scheme. With respect to the study areas, as provided, the Board's representatives noted these and suggested that a rationale for the extent of the study areas in question be provided in each case.

With regard to the storage and distribution centre located close to Dublin Airport, the prospective applicant said that an options selection process was undertaken in relation to this. In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant confirmed that this element would be part of the railway order application.

With regard to the matter of electricity supply to facilitate the proposed development, the prospective applicant said that the general approach was that such supply will be brought to a substation and transformed to 1,500 V DC nominal voltage for the proposed railway; overhead line equipment will be utilised for distribution. It was advised that there will be 12 substations along the proposed route at approximately four-kilometre spacings. It was confirmed that it is the intention to include the substations as part of the railway order. Power supply will be provided by ESB and will be taken through planning by same who have been consulted with on this element of the proposed development; it was added that cumulative impacts and in-combination effects of this element will be assessed as part of the overall project. Any ESB diversions (including overhead lines) occurring within the red line boundary will be included and assessed as part of the proposed development. The Board's representatives noted this and advised that plans and particulars accompanying the application should be very clear as to which elements are included as part of the railway order and those that are not.

With respect to the draft railway order documentation, the prospective applicant said that draft copies of the relevant documents will be issued to the Board and the relevant local authorities. The intended approach was summarised apropos the format of documents and the requirements for public notice and a project-specific/stand-alone website were noted. With regard to Schedules for the Draft Book of Reference, it was noted that work is progressing on these. With regard to the draft land plan, data from relevant sources is being used to determine the existing boundaries of third-party properties. The draft alignment plan will indicate the proposed rail works, compounds, substations, stations and other works required.

The intended approach to the making of the application to the Board includes all pertinent plans and particulars, including the EIAR, NIS, Book of Reference and the copies of notices to relevant prescribed bodies. The Board's representatives recommended that all electronic documents, including plans and drawings, in relation to a linear project such as this should be readily and easily accessible for members of the public.

The prospective applicant noted its imminent localised consultations with regard to Ashtown and indicated its intention to request formal closure of the pre-application consultation process within a number of weeks of the instant meeting. In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant said that its current intention is to lodge the railway order application circa Summer 2022.

Conclusion:

The record of the instant meeting will issue in the meantime and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have on this in writing. It is up to the prospective applicant to seek formal closure in writing.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 p.m.

Ciara Kellett
Assistant Director of Planning