

An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-311802-21 1st meeting

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| Case Reference / Description | ABP-311802-21 DART+ Coastal North (Northern Line) involving railway improvement works from Connolly Station to Drogheda Station, inclusive of the Howth branch line from Howth Junction Station to Howth Station. From East Wall Junction (to the north of Connolly Station) through to Drogheda. | | |
| Case Type | Pre-application consultation | | |
| 1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting | 1 st | | |
| Date | 20/01/22 | Start Time | 11.00 a.m. |
| Location | MS Teams | End Time | 12.15 p.m. |

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| Representing An Bord Pleanála |
| Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair) |
| Conor McGrath, Senior Planning Inspector |
| Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer |
| Representing the Prospective Applicant |
| Colm Reynolds, DART+ Programme Director |
| Paul Wilcock, Programme Manager DART+ Coastal North |
| Kevin Brennan, Project Manager |
| Rita Monaghan, CIE Solicitor |

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| Laura Carolan, EIA Project Manager |
| Mark Conroy, EIA and RO Manager |
| Gillian Sisk, Arup, Project Manager |
| Clodagh O'Donovan, Arup, RO Lead |

The meeting commenced at 11.00 a.m.

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 it wished to receive advice on from the Board. The Board mentioned general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process as follows:

- 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 opened its presentation with a brief overview of the current Iarnród Éireann network and the DART+ programme. The current network comprises of four principal lines. The Northern Line is the focus of this pre-application consultation as it includes the proposed DART+ Coastal North line.

The current DART network extends from Malahide/Howth to Greystones to along 50km of railway corridor. The DART+ Programme aims to increase the extent of electrification to 150km. The DART+ Programme comprises the following projects:

- Maynooth/M3 Parkway on the Sligo Line (DART+ West)
- Hazelhatch (Celbridge) on the Kildare Line (DART+ South West)
- Battery Electric Multiple Units (BEMU) charging infrastructure at Drogheda
- **Drogheda on Northern Line (DART+ Coastal North)**
- Greystones on the Southeast Line (DART+ Coastal South)

The projects are standalone and can be commenced individually but will tie into a fully integrated system.

The prospective applicant mentioned the Battery Electric Multiple Units briefly, clarifying that this is a standalone project which would allow enhanced service on the Northern line prior to electrification. A battery charging station is proposed at Drogheda and planning permission for this would be sought from the local planning authority.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the proposed development comprising:

- The extension of existing 1500V DC electrification, from Dublin City Centre which currently terminates at Malahide, as far as Drogheda MacBride Station;
- Reconfiguration of the existing track layout and associated infrastructure in the vicinity of Drogheda MacBride Station, Malahide Station, Clongriffin Station and Howth Junction & Donaghmede Station, as well as the provision of sections of additional track and station turnback facilities to allow for improved operational flexibility on the Northern Line;
- Construction of a new platform at Drogheda MacBride Station;

- Upgrades to existing signalling, telecoms and power supplies to support the planned increase in train services, including the introduction of new electrical substations at key locations alongside the railway line;
- Undertaking bridge improvements/modifications, track reconfigurations and/or electrical clearances to achieve necessary clearances;
- Modifications to existing depots at Drogheda and Fairview to support the new train fleet, including the provision of additional train stabling at Drogheda; and
- Ancillary civils, drainage and power work to cater for the changes.

The proposed project aims to improve performance and increase train frequencies and reliability throughout the day and especially during the AM and PM peaks, alleviate road congestion and encourage sustainable transport choices.

The prospective applicant stated that the proposed project is supported by National and Regional Policy, and by the relevant County Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

The prospective applicant used a 2-stage assessment methodology for option selection. Stage 1 assessed a long list of options against engineering, economic and environmental criteria and produced a shorter list based on feasibility to meet project objectives. Stage 2 was a detailed, multi-disciplinary, comparative analysis of the feasible options assessed against six appraisal criteria – economy, safety, environment, accessibility, social inclusion, integration and physical activity.

This assessment has led to the determination of a 'Emerging Preferred Option' as described above.

These works were further elaborated upon as follows:

- General linear works to facilitate electrification – This will include signalling, telecommunications and electrification. Upgrades to the telecommunications systems will be required route wide with signalling upgrades and additional signalling required between Malahide and Drogheda and minor changes to signalling between East Wall Junction (Tolka River) and Malahide. Extension of electrification from Malahide to Drogheda will be provided. Similar overhead

lines to those currently used on the DART lines will be used. Eight new electrical substations will be required along the railway line. An existing level crossing (XB001) will be closed. Options are being considered where necessary electrical height clearances are not available at overbridges including electrical solutions with reduced clearance, lowering the rail track under the bridge, modification of the existing structure; removal of the existing structure or a combination of these. OHLE to be fixed and require localised modifications to underbridges/viaducts at Malahide Viaduct, Rogerstown Viaduct, Balbriggan Viaduct and Laytown Viaduct. Modifications to existing overbridge parapets. Interfaces with utilities, boundaries, drainage works and ancillary works along the line.

- Works around Drogheda MacBride Station, which includes protected structures – Construction of a new platform on the Drogheda Freight Siding. This platform will extend over the R132 Dublin Road Underbridge (UBK1) necessitating widening of the bridge. At-grade access will be provided between the two platforms and direct access to the new platform will be provided from the car park. The existing Drogheda freight siding and a new stabling track located adjacent the depot will be utilised to provide additional train stabling at Drogheda MacBride Station.
- Works around Malahide Station – Introduction of a new turn back facility immediately north of the station. This will require widening of the railway corridor and embankment on its eastern side, including new retaining wall, and new OHLE and signalling installations, as well as modifications to the existing systems.
- Works around Clongriffin Station – Introduction of a new loop to serve a platform to the east of the station. The original station design anticipated this construction requirement and as such, it will have minimal impact on the station building/existing infrastructure. Modifications to track alignment to the south of the station, new OHLE and signalling installations and modification to existing systems.

- Works around Howth Junction & Donaghmede Station and the Howth Branch- Construction of an extension to Platform 2 to allow the platform to be used by services from Howth without impacting on services running along the Northern Line. Track modifications, to include a new crossover to the east of the existing station platforms. Alterations and modifications to existing OHLE, signalling and telecoms systems. Station facility improvements. These proposed changes will facilitate the introduction of a shuttle service between Howth and Howth Junction & Donaghmede.

Further assessment will be carried out of the level crossings along the Howth branch line to establish feasibility of keeping the crossings

- Regarding depot works, some localised works will be required at Drogheda, Fairview and Connolly Depots to facilitate the change in rolling stock and the depot at Drogheda MacBride Station will be electrified with OHLE.

Other project requirements which have yet to be assessed fully will include substation locations, temporary utility diversions, construction compound locations and land acquisitions.

The prospective applicant noted a number of construction principles of the project. The objective is to maintain passenger services during the day, meaning that night-time works will be required during construction. Construction compounds, site access and material storage will be incorporated into the design.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the technical engagement to date. Briefings were held with the relevant local authorities between October and December, 2021 and further meetings are scheduled. Prescribed and other bodies were written to in September 2021 and stakeholder meetings have been held with the NTA, ESB, Irish Water and others. Public consultation No. 1 is due to commence in February, 2022 with a further public consultation scheduled for August, 2022.

The prospective applicant intends to submit the application to An Bord Pleanála in Spring, 2023. A possible schedule of pre-application consultations with the Board has been prepared.

Discussion:

Regarding the Howth to Howth Junction & Donaghmede line, the Board's representatives queried whether this would be exclusively a shuttle service or whether it would also allow for through trains. The prospective applicant clarified that the infrastructure is being designed to enable both. The intention is to focus on a shuttle service during peak hours, but this will be a final operational decision.

The prospective applicant clarified that engagement is ongoing with the local authority regarding traffic issues in relation to the level crossings along the Howth branch line and revised barrier opening times.

The Board's representatives raised issues regarding the signalling system in the city centre with the prospective applicant stating that the signalling system will be designed to support the increase in capacity.

The prospective applicant clarified that the city centre capacity was being delivered by the DART+ West project and works at Connolly station.

The Board's representatives advised that the prospective applicant be clear in their application as to any cumulative and in-combination affects from the other DART+ proposed developments and any dependencies between these projects.


Based on the proposed timeline for application the Board's representatives queried the status of ecological surveys, including wintering bird surveys. It was confirmed that survey work has already commenced and is on going.

Conclusion:

The Board advised the prospective applicant that any requests for further meetings would be facilitated.

The record of the instant meeting will issue in the meantime and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing or alternatively bring any comments for discussion at the time of any further meeting. The onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 p.m.

 25/1/22

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning