



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-311802-21 5th meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	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.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting</b>	5th		
<b>Date</b>	16/10/23	<b>Start Time</b>	11.00 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	MS Teams	<b>End Time</b>	12.20 p.m.

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Paul Caprani, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Conor McGrath, Assistant Director of Planning
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
Lauren Griffin, Executive Officer
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Colm Reynolds, Iarnród Éireann
Paul Wilcock, Iarnród Éireann
Patrick Conway, Iarnród Éireann

Rita Monaghan, Iarnród Éireann
Christopher Bradish, Arup
Darragh Beirne, Arup
Clodagh O'Donovan, Arup
Stephen Hyland, Arup

The meeting commenced at 11.00 a.m.

The Board welcomed the prospective applicant to the meeting and introduced those attending 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 project update since the last pre-application meeting. The preliminary design and reference design is complete. Public consultation 2 is complete and feedback has informed the final design. Work on the railway order documentation is nearing completion and it is envisaged that an application will be lodged in Q1 of 2024.

The prospective applicant presented a number of design updates since the last meeting. The Clongriffin passing loop has been extended, resulting in an increase in land-take required, a proposed widening of the River Mayne Bridge and inclusion of a retaining wall. This extension of the passing loop is required to achieve the required speed of 85km/hr. It was advised that consultation with landowners is still ongoing. The applicant stated that it has been in consultation with Fingal County Council heritage team about the required widening of the Mayne Bridge, which is a protected structure and which is also intended to be included in the design of a future greenway. The prospective applicant presented a draft design of the widened bridge, which allows the two historical arches to remain visible.

8 no. substations will be required to provide for electrification of the line. Feedback from consultations has resulted in some design changes to 5 of the substations. The change to the design of Donabate substation was presented as an example of the type of changes being made. This includes a repositioning of the substation and access road within the site. Locations of substations have not been changed.

Significant stakeholder consultations have been undertaken regarding the level crossings on the Howth Branch Line, including public consultations and post 'Public Consultation 2' meetings with Fingal County Council, elected members and community groups. A comparative assessment was also undertaken with level crossings on other lines on the DART network which concluded that the proposed design will not exceed current levels on other lines.

It was stated that stakeholder consultation is ongoing in relation to the Malahide Turnback and associated construction works which has been an area of concern for local residents. Whilst there is no change to the design, consideration is still being given to details of the finishes on the retaining wall and appropriate mitigation measures and construction methodologies to minimise noise and general disruption.

Construction compound locations, which were presented on a map, have remained generally the same as presented at public consultation 2 except for the removal of a proposed compound at Ballealy Landfill. Utility diversions have been identified. Temporary land-take to facilitate these diversions will be included in the Railway Order.

The prospective applicant gave an update on the EIAR and AA documentation. Draft EIAR documentation is being finalised following reviews and incorporating lessons learned from other DART projects. Cumulative impact assessment is ongoing.

AA screening has concluded that a NIS is required. The proposed development overlaps with five European Sites. The NIS is being finalised and key considerations / mitigations relate to the protection of surface water, invasive species, habitat degradation as a result of air quality impacts, and protection of SCI species.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the impacts on property and residential amenity. It was stated that the majority of works will be within the existing railway boundary. 616 no. third party plots have been identified which will be impacted. It was stated that the majority of land-take will be temporary. The prospective applicant presented a draft layout of the Schedules to be included in the Railway Order.

It was stated that stakeholder consultation is ongoing, and that the prospective applicant will seek further close-out meetings with the local authorities.

It was noted that the prospective applicant is focusing on ease of reference for third party landowners and stakeholders in its presentation of the final Railway Order package.

The intention is to lodge the Rail Order application in Spring 2024.

## **Discussion:**

The prospective applicant could not confirm the number of landowners to be affected by the Railway Order but stated that whilst there is some permanent acquisition, the majority of acquisition will be temporary.

When asked about the change to the Clongriffin loop the prospective applicant clarified that the change in design was driven by the speed requirement and that there would be no change at the station itself but rather at the extremities, where the line rejoins the main line.

Discussion was had about the widening of the bridge over the Mayne River. It was noted that this is c. 500m upstream of a European Site and this change in design should be taken into account in the NIS. The prospective applicant stated that documents have been updated and it is satisfied that this change has been appropriately addressed. The prospective applicant stated that it has been in consultation with Fingal County Council Heritage team about the design change for the bridge and that flood risk assessments have been undertaken. The new bridge design will facilitate proposed FCC greenway proposals. It was stated that Fingal County Council is satisfied with the design.

The prospective applicant stated that the DAU has responded to the scoping report issued to it but that a meeting has not been held.

It was clarified that the area of land-take identified in the presentation, at the Clongriffin loop, is required for a construction compound. The prospective applicant stated that development of the surrounding lands would not be impacted by the proposed project and that clear boundary lines have been agreed with the developers. Lands temporarily affected are zoned as open space. The only programme issue which could arise is the development of Fingal County Council parkland.

Regarding land-take around substations, it was stated that agreement in principle has been achieved with landowners at the majority of locations. The Board representatives advised that the application should demonstrate that these are the optimum locations for the substations, that all alternatives have been taken into consideration and that the land-take is proportionate..

The Board representatives noted the comparison studies undertaken with level crossings on the network. It was stated that the expected traffic will be less than that experienced at points on other lines. It was noted that the prospective applicant could not commit to timetabling as part of the application. The busiest survey day will be assessed against peak capacity.. It was advised that the applicant be clear in its documentation what frequency of services it is assessing against.

It was clarified that the design at Malahide has not changed but that engagement is ongoing around best mitigation measures and the final design of the retaining wall. It was clarified that the duration of works here will be between 18 months to 2 years. Some nighttime working will be included, depending on the activity. It was advised that the more specific the prospective applicant can be around mitigation measures the better.

Regarding operational noise on the turnback, it was clarified that the line closest to residents would be used for through-trains only. There will be some change to operational practise and that trains using the turn-back will be electric trains. There will be no idling of diesel trains.

The Board noted that the prospective applicant is shortlisting plans and projects for cumulative impacts. It was advised that the prospective applicant should be clear in its criteria for shortlisting and use the shortlisting process to identify those key projects which may cause cumulative impacts.

The Board advised that the documentation, schedules etc. be as complete as possible when submitting the application as to avoid amendments in so far as possible during the course of the application process. The Board asked that any agreements to be included in the schedule of agreements be clearly identified within the application documentation.

### **Conclusion:**

The onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process. 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 meeting concluded at 12.20 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Caprani', is written over a horizontal line.

**Paul Caprani**

**Assistant Director of Planning**