



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-315939-23 1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	Luas Finglas - extension of the Luas Green Line. Charlestown, Finglas Village, Finglas West and Tolka Valley, County Dublin.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	26/05/23	Start Time	11.00 a.m.
Location	N/A	End Time	11.35 a.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Paul Caprani, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Kevin Moore, Senior Planning Inspector
Susan Clarke, Senior Planning Inspector
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Marcello Corsi – TII Project Manager for Luas Finglas
Dave Weldon – TII Design Manager for Luas Finglas
Joseph Martin – TII Environmentalist
Stephen Byrne – TII Senior Environmental Scientist
Hamid Foroughi – TII Head of Public Transport New Scheme Planning
Paolo Carbone – TII Head of Public Transport Capital Projects

Jim Quinlan – Barry Egis Project Director
Eamon Daly – Barry Egis Project Manager
John Fallon – Barry Egis Environmentalist

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 by stating that the proposed development consists of an extension northward of the Luas Green Line. It was stated that the project will include a new park and ride facility and that it had always been the intention to extend the Luas line north and Broombridge station had been designed to facilitate this extension.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the key features of the proposed development which will consist of a 4km extension from Broombridge to the M50 incorporating 4 new stops. 1 park and ride facility with 350 spaces will be included. It was stated that the line will mostly be off road with few road junctions and as such will be highly reliable. Travel time from the M50 to College Green will be 30 minutes. Sustainable grass-track will be used through green areas and provision for off-road cycle lanes will be included. Key benefits of the proposed development were presented including an increase in sustainable travel, improved transport interchange between light and heavy rail and busses, and maximising use of existing infrastructure.

The project has five overarching objectives as follows:

1. Serve existing and future transport demand,
2. Provide a safe, frequent, reliable, efficient and sustainable public transport connection from Charlestown,
3. Reduce public transport journey times between Charlestown, Finglas and the city centre compared to private car trips,
4. Contribute to the Climate Action Plan targets for the decarbonisation of transport,
5. Promote economic growth for the residents and businesses of Charlestown, Finglas and the surrounding areas.

The prospective applicant presented a map depicting the interchange between the proposed line and all other rail lines in Dublin.

Other benefits of the proposed development will include environmental benefits, with one tram carrying the same number of passengers as 300 cars, safety and physical benefits, incorporating active travel routes, and accessibility and social inclusion benefits, increasing access to education and employment.

The prospective applicant stated that it anticipates lodging a planning application at the end of 2023, or January 2024 at the latest.

The options selection stage took place between 2018 and 2020. Initial route options were informed by land uses and constraints and taking existing and future public transport routes into consideration. Regarding crossover with the Metro line, it was clarified that there is a distance of between 2-3kms between the lines. Options selection also included options of a start point other than from Broombridge station and various options to facilitate a tie-in at Broombridge station taking account of the canal crossing. The preferred option here is to pass over the canal.

Initially, 29 end to end route options were identified, which was narrowed down to an emerging preferred route after various screening stages and multi-criteria assessment.

Non statutory public consultation was held on the emerging preferred route (EPR) in 2020 which included a website, brochures and a virtual consultation room. Feedback from this consultation informed the design of the Preferred Route (PR), which went for public consultation in December 2021. The prospective applicant detailed the main changes from the EPR to the PR, including the repositioning of St. Helena's stop, repositioning of the line around Farnham Pitches, a change to the route through Mellowes and Finglas Village and a reposition of St. Margaret's Road stop. The advantages of these changes were discussed, including improved safety and connectivity, and a lesser impact on residential areas.

The prospective applicant presented drawings of indicative bridge designs. The proposed project will include construction of two new bridges, over Royal Canal and Tolka River.

The park and ride facility will be located behind the Lidl on St. Margaret's Road. Regarding stakeholder engagement, it was stated that feedback was halved between consultation on the EPR and consultation on the PR.

The prospective applicant stated that Luas Finglas is taking an innovative approach to design and project management, with close collaboration between key stakeholders. It was stated that 3D led multi-disciplinary design development offers a number of benefits including improved visualisation for stakeholders and improved construction planning, providing a tested and verified design. It was stated that this project is a circular economy pilot for the TII and that the multidisciplinary approach means that it is not just being viewed as a transport project, but also as a water

management, biodiversity and human activity project. The prospective applicant is using the BREEAM Infrastructure approach to the project, which aims to drive and verify sustainability performance standards. It was stated that the sustainability design approach being used should result in 40% less in carbon emissions compared to the construction of existing Luas tracks, with Luas Finglas using less concrete, facilitating rail removal and replacement and being less engineered. Regarding the Railway Order drawings, it was stated that these are being generated directly from the reference design models and there will be circa. 108 in total. A number of sample drawings were presented.

The prospective applicant presented a 3D animation, route walkthrough, based on the BIM drawings.

Regarding EIA, a Scoping Report was published in April 2022 and in February 2023 a Report was published including the summary of submissions received and responses to same.

The prospective applicant presented an overview of the EIAR structure, which will include 5 volumes and presented a list of surveys and their progression from 2021-2023. It is anticipated that a NIS will be required, due to the crossing of the Tolka River and pathways to the Dublin Bay SACs and SPAs. Some key EIA topics will include Biodiversity (wintering birds, Brent Geese, bats and otters), Water (Integrated Constructed Wetland at Tolka Valley Park), Land and Soil (historic landfill at Tolka Valley Park), and Climate.

The prospective applicant noted recent EIA trends and caselaw, stating that it will robustly address cumulative impacts, alternatives, climate and mitigation in the EIAR. An overview of the EIAR timescales was presented.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of BREEAM Infrastructure which is being used in the design of project. Luas Finglas is aiming to achieve the Client and Design Award. It was stated that BREEAM Infrastructure is cost efficient, acts as an independent assurance proving commitment to and achievement of sustainability goals, drives standards and promotes better project performance, and promotes cohesive, positive teamwork and systemic, sustainability driven project management. Use of BREEAM Infrastructure is new in Ireland and Luas Finglas hopes to become a leader in it's use in the country.

Discussion:

The Board's representatives advised, when asked, that a chapter on planning and policy context be included in the EIAR, as opposed to being submitted as a separate appendix.

The Board asked that a copy of the video animation be provided to the Board.

The prospective applicant confirmed that TII is committed to using renewable energy during the operational phase of the development.

Regarding the former landfill at Tolka Valley Park, it was clarified that excavation depth and amount is being limited here. There will be minimal cut and fill and the prospective applicant is very confident that it can avoid disturbance of contaminated soil. It was stated that extensive ground investigations, ground and water monitoring had been carried out here. It was also stated that a drainage system would be used to avoid contamination.

The Board's representatives asked if there were any envisaged difficulties with providing overhead line equipment through more built-up areas. The prospective applicant clarified that this equipment, poles and boxes, will be designed and located as discretely and unobtrusively as possible.

Regarding the stop at St. Helena's, the Board's representatives asked if there were any security/connectivity concerns at this area. It was clarified that the stop was moved to provide better connectivity and that it is more centrally located within the residential catchment area at the new proposed location. The prospective applicant is looking at the context around stops, from a social viewpoint as a means of ensuring security. It was stated that activity and the presence of people is the best source of security. At St. Helena's, a food truck area and seating areas have been provided along with the construction of parallel footpaths and cycle paths to encourage activity in the area. CCTV will also be provided.

It was clarified that the St. Helena's stop will serve a large residential catchment, national schools and sports facilities and will provide connection to BusConnects.

Regarding consultation, the prospective applicant clarified that it is in ongoing consultation with private stakeholders, landowners, residents' associations etc.

It was advised that the prospective applicant consult as constructively as possible with the NPWS on the project and with DAU on architectural heritage in relation to the two new bridges and their proximity to two protected bridges. It was confirmed that there is no consistency of Luas bridge design across the Luas network. A conservation architect will be engaged to look specifically at the bridges.

Consultation with the DAU was also encouraged in relation to Broombridge, where there are also changes proposed due to the DART+ West project. The prospective applicant stated that it has had extensive discussions with Irish Rail and DCC architectural heritage staff about the works at this location.

Regarding the proposed additional stabling area at Broombridge, it was stated that this land is owned by DCC and was earmarked for social housing. The applicant is still in negotiations with DCC about this and is aiming to demonstrate that a high density of housing can be provided on the remaining lands.

It was clarified that circa 130 private properties will be included in the CPO with circa 20 land acquisitions impacting on dwelling homes. This will be a mix of permanent and temporary acquisitions and only gardens of dwelling homes will be affected. It is proposed to demolish three industrial sheds, two of which are not in use.

The prospective applicant is in negotiations with Lidl about land to facilitate the park and ride. It is likely that this land will form part of the CPO. Clarity was provided on connectivity to the M50 and St. Margaret's Road stop from the park and ride facility.

Regarding cycling infrastructure, it was clarified that the proposed routes will tie into existing infrastructure, Royal Canal Greenway and Tolka Valley Greenway for example, and tie-in with future routes will be facilitated.

It was confirmed that the proposed substations will form part of the railway order application.

The Board advised the prospective applicant to focus on reasonable alternatives in the EIAR, with focus on the alignment taken.

The Board's representatives asked that the prospective applicant provide feedback from engagement at the next meeting.

Conclusion:

The record of the instant meeting will issue in due course 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 13.10 p.m.

Paul Caprani**Assistant Director of Planning**