



## **Record of 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting ABP-315939-23**

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	Luas Finglas – the extension of the Luas Green Line at Charlestown, Finglas Village, Finglas West, and Tolka Valley, County Dublin.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> etc. Meeting</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	15/03/24	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	Virtually	<b>End Time</b>	12:25 a.m.

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>		
Paul Caprani, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Kevin Moore, Senior Planning Inspector		
Eimear Reilly, Executive Officer	e.reilly@pleanala.ie	01-8737184
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>		
Hamid Foroughi, Head of Public Transport New Scheme Planning, TII		
David Weldon, Luas Finglas Project Manager, TII		
Maurice Stanley, Quantity Surveyor / Project Services, TII		
Bronagh Lennon, Railway Order Coordinator, TII		
Stephen Byrne, Senior Environmental Scientist, TII		
Joseph Martin, Environmental Coordinator, TII		
Jim Quinlan, Project Director, Barry Transportation Egis Group		
Eamon Daly, Project Manager, Barry Transportation Egis Group		
Martin Hogan, Environmental Coordinator, Barry Transportation Egis Group		
Antía Prados Castro, Assistant Environmental Coordinator, Barry Transportation Egis Group		

## **Introduction**

The Board's representatives referred to its previous meeting with the applicant, which was held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and to the record of this meeting. The Board's representatives outlined the following general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- 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 in any legal proceedings.

### **Presentation made by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), gave a recap of the proposed development, along with a presentation on progress to date. It gave an overview of the timeline of the overall project, noting the two non-statutory public consultations held to date: one in 2020 where the emerging preferred route was announced, and one in 2022 where the preferred route was announced. It stated its intention to lodge the Railway Order application in Q2 of 2024, with a target date at the end of June. Construction is intended to commence in 2031 under the National Development Plan, however, it noted the potential to bring this date forward, subject to funding. It noted that the preliminary business case is currently under review by

the Department of Transport, and that, once brought to cabinet, a recommendation will allow it to proceed in submitting the application to the Board.

The prospective applicant provided an overview of the preferred route, highlighting that there would be four new stops along the extended Luas line. It noted the proposed park and ride at the terminus of the line and highlighted the intention for this to encourage a transport modal shift to public transport at the M50. The proposed route is mostly off-road with journey times of 13 minutes from Charlestown to Broombridge, and 30 minutes from Charlestown to College Green. Approximately 70% of the proposed alignment is intended to be grass track, and additional off-road cycle provisions are intended to be developed in line with the National Transport Authority and the Greater Dublin Area cycling strategy.

The prospective applicant outlined the objectives of the proposed development, noting the intention to serve the existing and future transport demand, to provide safe, frequent, reliable, efficient, and sustainable transport connection, to reduce public transport journey times compared to journeys by car, to contribute to the Climate Action Plan targets, and to promote economic growth. Emphasis was placed on the sustainability aspect of the proposed development, and it was noted that consultations regarding this have been held with all key stakeholders.

The environmental benefits were outlined as follows:

- 1.3 million low-carbon trips in the opening year,
- An annual reduction of 440,000 vehicle trips,
- An annual reduction of approximately 300 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>,
- A huge emphasis on sustainability in design.

In relation to the safety and physical activity benefits, the prospective applicant noted the school catchment of approximately 4,500 pupils.

Regarding accessibility and social inclusion, it noted the intention for the proposed development to provide new access to education and employment along the alignment.

It noted that it has worked closely with NTA and Irish rail in relation to integration for the proposed development and for other transport schemes such as BusConnects and Dart+, and highlighted its work with Dublin City Council in relation to transport orientated developments.

It noted development potential, regeneration, and enhanced mobility within the catchment as being the economic benefits of the proposed development.

In relation to measuring the sustainability of the proposed development, the prospective applicant highlighted the introduction of the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) and proceeded to outline the methods development goals as they relate to the proposed development.

It also highlighted the Building Information Modelling (BIM) and noted that this process highlighted potential issues and elicited discussions with key stakeholders at the beginning of the process, as well as facilitating better design coordination.

It noted that the issue of cycling, which was addressed during the most recent non-statutory consultations, has since been resolved.

With regard to design disciplines, the prospective applicant provided examples of previously developed tracks and explained the changes and improvements that it has included in the proposed design of the track for the proposed development. The design to be implemented was said to account for 40% reduction in CO2 emissions and this was used as an example to highlight the effort made by the prospective applicant to improve upon designs used in the past.

Further to this, it noted the example of the junction re-design at Charlestown to consider more sustainable practices by considering and re-prioritising for pedestrians, active travel, and public transport, and by reassigning space and introducing as much landscaping as possible. The prospective applicant maintained that it has considered an improved cycling provision to maximise cycling opportunities along the proposed route, and stated that this has been well received by both Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council. It also provided a map of the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Strategy, highlighting its communication with NTA in

relation to this and showing the areas in which its proposed cycle routes would join with NTA cycle routes.

The prospective applicant provided photos of the proposed new bridge structure over Broombridge Road and noted its extensive engagement in relation to this with Irish Rail, Waterways Ireland, and Dublin City Council. It also showed images of the proposed route over Tolka Vally. An animated video was presented which highlighted the alignment of the proposed route.

The prospective applicant provided an overview of the progress of its' Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). It states that it is following the Environmental Protection Agency's 2022 guidelines. It also provided a list of statutory and non-statutory consultees which have been consulted in 2022 in relation to scoping and stated that the process is progressing well, noting that climate is at the forefront of the EIAR.

In relation to biodiversity, it noted its delivered focus on protected species within the EIAR and NIS process, with a focus on Wintering Birds such as brent geese. It stated that regular surveys have been taken and that mitigation and management plans have been considered. It also noted the protected species of Clustered Stonewort along the proposed route, as well as acknowledging that a known Otter holt which has been monitored, is not regularly used, and it is unlikely to become a breeding/natal holt.

In relation to population, the prospective applicant provided statistics outlining the inactivity of women and children along the route regarding walking and cycling. It noted its intention for the proposed development to improve these statistics. It noted the importance of the Gender Lens Study/Survey carried out and which has identified points of improvement for women as regards protection and comfort. It stated that it moved a proposed station location along the proposed route based on findings of these surveys.

Having regard to cultural heritage, the prospective applicant mentioned its significant engagement with Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council in relation to archaeology and cultural and built heritage, and it identified key features to be

included in the assessment along the proposed development. It also noted its intention to undertake a diver survey of the canal.

With regard to land and soil along the proposed route, it stated that it has completed significant investigations and assessments. While it noted the geology and topography to be good, it also stated that it had discovered an historic landfill within Tolka Park, however, it also stated that this landfill did not present any major concern. It stated that some material may need to be recovered and sent to landfill and noted the significant opportunity for reuse and recovery of material within the proposed scheme.

In relation to risks, it acknowledged the objections that it had received from local objectors and highlighted its efforts to address concerns through consultations and through mitigation in the EIAR. It acknowledged that the historic landfill presents some unknowns but maintained that it is not expected to cause any major concern and that it is confident that all associated risks can be managed and mitigated. It stated that biodiversity has been significantly addressed within the EIAR and that it has proposed improvement measures for the existing integrated constructed wetland. It noted the concerns regarding EMI/Noise and Vibration and maintained that it will ensure that assessments make full use of the existing Luas network to address concerns/objections that may be raised.

In relation to innovation for sustainability, the prospective applicant noted its intent to provide lower carbon infrastructure and maintained that the trackform choice will help to deliver this. It reiterated that the proposed track is 70% grass track and stated that the proposed multi-story car park will have blue/green roof. It also mentioned that Dublin City Council's request to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) where possible has been considered. It also stated that the biodiversity net gain will be measurable by ecologists.

Finally, the prospective applicant outlined its use of BREEAM and noted its intention to promote the positive findings it used in relation to the proposed development. It also went through the 17 BREEAM sustainable development goals and outlined the goals which it focused on for the proposed development.

## **Discussion:**

The following matters were discussed:

- The prospective applicant indicated that the instant meeting would be the final meeting in relation to the proposed development and sought clarity on several procedural matters. In response to these procedural questions, the Board's representatives advised the following:
  - In order to close the pre-application process, the prospective applicant must submit a formal closure request to the Board in writing by letter or by email. The Board's representatives clarified that no additional documents are required to be enclosed with the closure request. The Board's representatives also advised that the Board would then inform the prospective applicant by letter when the Board has formally closed the pre-application consultation process.
  - A list of the prescribed bodies that the prospective applicant is to notify of any subsequent Railway Order application will be included in the Inspector's report and will be included in the Board's letter to the prospective applicant once the pre-application consultation process has been formally closed by the Board.
  - One copy of any subsequent Railway Order application must be available for public viewing in the Board's office as well as in another location chosen by the applicant. These copies must be available to the public for no less than 6 weeks during the public consultation period.
  - The Board's representatives advised that the prospective applicant does not commence the public consultation period until 5 days after the application has been submitted to the Board (i.e. a grace period to allow for the application to be validated and prepared for public viewing).

- The prospective applicant's standalone website for the Railway Order application must be updated regularly to include application documents and any further information that may be requested by the Board.
  - The Board require two hard copies of the application along with one soft copy of the application.
  - The fee for the application is €100,000.
  - Proof of notices served in relation to acquisition of land must be submitted as part of the application documentation.
- In relation to the submitting of the Railway Order application, the Board's representatives advised that the prospective may send a draft copy of the notice to the Board's SIDs/LAPs section via email so that the notice can be reviewed before publishing.
  - When asked, the Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to email any further procedural queries to the Board's SIDs/LAPs section.
  - The Board's representatives sought clarity in relation to the adoption of Climate Action Plan 2024. The prospective applicant clarified that the Plan has not yet been adopted and that it may be formally adopted in May 2024. In response to this, the Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to reference the correct plan when lodging the subsequent Railway Order application.
  - The Board requested that the prospective applicant submit a route alignment drawing package prior to or with its closure request. The prospective applicant stated its agreement to do so. It also asked if a copy of the animated video that was presented during the instant meeting would be useful to the Board and stated that commentary could be added if necessary. The Board's representatives confirmed that this would be useful.
  - When asked by the Board's representatives, the prospective applicant confirmed that the route alignment for the proposed development hasn't changed since previous meeting.



- The Board's representatives asked if any issues had arisen from public consultation regarding loss of public open spaces. The prospective applicant replied that issues had arisen regarding the playing pitches and public parks/use of those parks at Farnham and confirmed that it updated the alignment in response to this. It also reiterated that its efforts to ensure that the proposal will have minimal impact on the environment.
- The Board's representatives sought clarify regarding locations at which the proposed development would integrate with the NTA's Dublin City BusConnects schemes. The prospective applicant confirmed that there is a proposed transport interchange at Broombridge, and that the other main locations are Mellows, Finglas village, and the N2 at St. Margarets Road. It also stated that it has worked closely with the NTA in relation to future plans.
- The Board's representatives asked if any flood plains were being crossed along the proposed route and if any issues had arisen as a result of this. The prospective applicant confirmed that the proposed development would cross the Tolka River and that it has completed a flood risk assessment of that river and has had consultation with OPW in relation to this. It stated that it submitted a section 50 application to OPW which has been approved via email and noted that it is awaiting official confirmation of this. This approval will be obtained prior to lodgement of the Railway Order application.
- The Board's representatives asked if any issues had arisen from local resident's groups regarding access to residential properties. The prospective applicant responded that the proposed development would affect Mellows Court by opening the cul-de-sac and that it has received a lot of public opposition in relation to this. As a result of the opposition, the prospective applicant completed a review of the proposed alignment and engaged with An Garda Síochána and OPW and have since created an alignment option with less of an impact at Mellows Court.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to liaise with NPWS and emphasised the importance of this. The prospective applicant confirmed that it met with NPWS to go through all surveys completed and

stated that it has carried out more surveys that were suggested at this meeting.

- The Board's representatives noted the importance of the prospective applicant liaising with DAU.
- The Board's representatives asked if any concerns have arisen regarding the proposed new bridges and noted, in particular, the proximity of Broombridge, a protected structure, to the proposed new bridge. The prospective applicant replied it has monitored this closely and had initial meetings with Dublin City Council to ensure that the local authority was satisfied. It also stated its intention to hold a meeting with Department of Heritage and another with Dublin City Council in the coming weeks.
- In relation to the proposed Charlestown terminus, the proposed applicant, when asked, clarified that a turnback facility, crossover from inbound to outbound lines and vice versa, would be used. Similar to that arrangement at the LUAS terminus at Connolly Station.

### **Conclusion:**

The Board's representatives advised that the onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process. The Board's representatives advised that 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.

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**Paul Caprani**

**Assistant Director of Planning**