



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

**Record of Meeting
ABP-318886-24 1st meeting**

Description	ABP-318886-24 – Proposed development of the BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road Scheme		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Venue	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Date	26/02/24	Time	11:00am – 11:50am

Representing An Bord Pleanála

Paul Caprani, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)

Philip Davis, Senior Planning Inspector

Lauren Griffin, Executive Officer

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Representing the Prospective Applicant

Director of Service - Uinsinn Finn

Senior Engineer - Colm O'Riordan

Executive Engineer - Jonathan Whelan

Executive Planner - John O'Donnell

Senior Planner - James Russell

Design Consultant - John Nolan - JB Barry

Env. Consultant - Mary Jo Costello - JB Barry

Introduction:

The Board welcomed the prospective applicant to the meeting and introduced those attending from the Board. The Board stated that the proposed development will come in under Section 51a of the Roads Act 1993, as amended. The Board advised the prospective applicant that the initial meeting 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 that it wished to receive advice on from the Board.

The Board outlined the following general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- The Board will keep a record of this meeting and any further 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.
- The Board stated that there will be no decision made on the SID status of the proposed development.
- 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 by the Applicant

The prospective applicant introduced those attending the meeting and began the presentation. The following matters were discussed:

The prospective applicant provided a brief overview of the existing projects being developed as part of the Galway Transport Strategy including the Galway BusConnects: Cross City Link Scheme. The Dublin Road Scheme is a 3.9km multi-

modal corridor situated between east of the Moneenageisha Junction to the Martin Junction in the east of the city.

The prospective applicant continued with a further description of the scheme, including a 'fly through' video detailing the entire length of the scheme. The scheme will begin with a tie-in at the eastern end, close to the G Hotel and will link with the Cross City link scheme and continue to the west at the Martin Junction, past the Doughiska Junction. The prospective applicant explained the western area runs through a less built-up area including Merlin Park, while the eastern part of the project is more a more urbanised environment.

The proposed development will consist of two bus lanes and parallel cycle lanes, the latter of which will be situated behind the tree line along one section of the route. A two-metre wide footpath on both sides of the road is proposed.

The prospective applicant stated that public consultation took place in October 2020 for 12 weeks and a second public consultation took place in January 2023 which included a showing of the 'fly through' video and information brochure. The prospective applicant explained the public consultation included an in-person day and an online arrangement where members of the public could submit their observations. The prospective applicant had consultations with the NTA, ATU and Woodhaven Estates.

The prospective applicant indicated that there are 31 effected landowners, both permanent acquisition and temporary acquisition. Consultation is on-going with the 31 landowners.

The prospective applicant set out the context and need for the scheme. The prospective applicant explained that Galway BusConnects is an integral part of Government policy to improve public transport and address climate change.

The prospective applicant mentioned that the scheme aligns with the 7 principles set out in the Galway Transport Strategy. The prospective applicant mentioned how the scheme will promote public transport usage, walking and cycling, it will complement the proposed Inner-City Access Route at Moneenageisha Junction and it will provide reliable journey times. The prospective applicant explained the scheme is needed to make improve accessibility in Galway City and to reduce traffic congestion.

The prospective applicant stated that a draft EIA Screening report was prepared in April 2023 and concluded that an EIAR is required. The proposed scheme exceeds the mandatory threshold detailed in Section 50(1)(a)(iv) of the Roads Act (1993) (as amended), and the Roads Regulations Part V (Article 8) – realignment or widening of an existing road to provide 4 or more lanes for 500m or more in length in an urban area. An informal Scoping Report was prepared and circulated on the 4th May 2023. The prospective applicant stated that an Appropriate Assessment Screening concluded that there could be significant effects on the Galway Bay Complex Special Area of Conservation and inner Galway Bay Special Protection Area and that a

stage 2 Natura Impact Statement is being prepared. The prospective applicant concluded that an EIAR is currently being prepared in accordance with relevant guidance and legislation.

Discussion:

The Board's representatives asked for an indication of all projects the prospective applicant is planning to develop in terms of Galway BusConnects routes. In response to this, the prospective applicant explained that the Galway BusConnects Cross City Link scheme and this proposed development are the only projects that will be submitted to the Board regarding the BusConnects.

The prospective applicant agreed to submit an overview of all projects relating to the Galway Transport Strategy.

The Board's representatives queried if any buildings would be acquired as part of the compulsory purchase order. The prospective applicant confirmed that there are two structures at the Brothers of Charity Services to be acquired. The prospective applicant stated that Galway City Council were in consultation with the Brothers of Charity and that they were receptive to the acquisition. The Board's representatives queried the function of the two buildings, the prospective applicant confirmed one building is used for bin storage and they will inquire about the function of the second building.

The Board's representatives asked if there were lands to be acquired at Merlin Park Woods, the prospective applicant confirmed there were lands to be acquired. The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant that any interference with a national monument or protected structure would require detailed consideration.

The Board's representatives mentioned that the proximity of Lough Atalia will require information on drainage and discharges to be part of the design submitted in order to complete a full Appropriate Assessment

The Board's representatives mentioned the Cycle Manual was released last year. Cycle design consideration should be based on the most up to date manual and the Board's representatives queried if all the prospective applicant's junctions will be updated to be in accordance with the manual. The prospective applicant explained when the manual was released, it conducted an exercise in assessing its arrangements against the manual and were satisfied in its findings.

The Board's representatives asked the prospective applicant to be judicious in what European Sites they screen in and screen out regarding the Natura Impact Statement.

The prospective applicant indicated that the compulsory purchase order schedule will be completed by June 2024.

The prospective applicant has indicated its desire to hold another pre-application meeting before submitting its planning application in September 2024.

Conclusion:

The record of the meeting will issue to the prospective applicant, and it will then be a matter for the prospective applicant to submit any comments on this if it wishes to do so. It will be a matter for the prospective applicant to revert to the Board if it requires a further meeting or if it wishes to close the pre-application consultation process.



Paul Caprani

Assistant Director of Planning