



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP-306587-20

---

<b>Development</b>	Railway Improvement Works on the Maynooth Line and City Centre enhancements as part of the DART Expansion Programme (Dart + West).
<b>Location</b>	Maynooth Rail Line and Dublin City Centre.
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Kildare County Council & Meath County Council
<b>Prospective Applicant</b>	Iarnrod Eireann
<b>Type of Application</b>	Proposed Railway Order Application
<b>Dates of Pre-Application Meetings</b>	2 July 2020, 16 September 2020, 8 October 2020, 10 November 2020, 17 December 2020, 21 January 2021, 24 February 2021, 31 March 2021, 8 March 2022.
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	6 October 2020, 14 May 2021 & 23 May 2022
<b>Inspector</b>	Una Crosse

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1. This report relates to pre-application discussions held with Corás Iompair Eireann (CIE)/Iarnrod Eireann in respect of Railway Improvement Works on the Maynooth Line and City Centre enhancements as part of the DART Expansion Programme known as the Dart + West Project – Railway Works. The pre-consultation request was received by the Board on 6 February 2020.
- 1.2. This report describes the location and nature of the proposed development, the applicant's submission, the consultations held and the legal provisions which are relevant to the proposed development.
- 1.3. The Board's representatives met with the prospective applicant on nine occasions. The presentations provided by the prospective applicant and written records of those meetings are on file. This report should be read in conjunction with the written records on file of the pre-application consultation meetings held with the prospective applicant. It is not proposed to repeat the contents of those records in detail here.

## **2.0 Site Location and Description**

- 2.1. The site of this large linear proposed development extends from Spencer Dock in Dublin City to a location west of Maynooth in County Kildare. Commencing at Spencer Dock, the subject site comprises a new station. At Connolly Station the subject proposal relates to platforms 5, 6 and 7 and the creation of a new station access from Preston Street. From both the Spencer Dock area and from Connolly Station the two lines (GSWR and MGSR) continue until they converge in Glasnevin with the existing rail line continuing past Broombridge where it interfaces with the Luas. West of Clonsilla Station the line splits with the Pace line heading northwards through Hansfield and Dunboyne stations before terminating at the M3 parkway. The other line continues west to a location west of Maynooth. There are six level crossings along the line at the following locations: Ashtown, Coolmine, Porterstown, Clonsilla, Barberstown and Blakestown which are subject of this proposal. There are a significant number of bridges along the route which traverse the rail line and in some instances are double arched to bridge the canal. The rail line runs parallel to the Royal Canal from Glasnevin up to and past the sites location west of Maynooth

rail station, where it is proposed to divert from the existing line and create a new rail line to access the site of the proposed depot.

### **3.0 The Proposed Development**

#### **3.1. Context**

- 3.1.1. As outlined in the presentations to the Board the proposed development is one of four infrastructural projects proposed to be delivered under the Dart + programme which seeks to electrify parts of the existing rail network to facilitate an expansion of the Dart service. The subject proposal seeks to increase the carrying capacity on this line from 4,500 to 13,750 passengers per hour per direction comprising an increase from 7 trains per hour/per direction to 15 trains at peak times.

#### **3.2. The Proposed Development**

##### **3.2.1. Overview**

The development comprises a number of elements which I will outline in turn. I would refer the Board to a detailed document entitled 'Preferred Option Description' dated 3 March 2022 which was received by the Board in advance of the ninth and final meeting which provides a very detailed description of the proposed development. The description subdivides the route into 6 zones describing what works are proposed within each zone. It also outlines the general linear works proposed which are common to all sections of the route which I will outline first. For the Boards ease of reference, I will use the references to zones proposed by the prospective applicant. I will set out a broad outline of the proposal in the following sections.

#### **Description of the Works**

##### **3.2.2. Re-signally, Electrical and Telecommunications works**

- Overhead Electrification Equipment to provide power to the networks new electrified fleet which is similar to that currently used on the DART network.

- To carry the wires, structural steel supports are proposed with a typical steel mast support rising to between 6.0m and 8.5m above rail level located at spacings of between 40m and 50m along the railway.
- Replace the existing signalling system with modern technology which will serve the more frequent train service with the proposed signalling system incorporating similar components to those already in use i.e. posts, gantries, signal boxes.
- Electrical power supply to the network is proposed via 12 electrical substation buildings proposed at intervals along the route within secure compounds.
- Equipment cabinets located within stations.
- Clearance at bridges required and where insufficient clearance available, alternative design solutions such as:
  - Provision of specialist electrical solutions;
  - Lowering of the rail track with measures to protect against flooding and ensure rail stability;
  - Modification of an existing bridge (Raising existing bridge deck - Old Navan Road Bridge (OBG9); Louisa Bridge (OBG16), and modification of existing arch bridge with replacement pre-case arch to a higher profile at Broombridge (OBG5), Castleknock Bridge (OBG11) and Cope Bridge (OBG9))
  - Replacement of access over an existing bridge with equivalent access over a new bridge.
  - Realignment of rail corridor to avoid a bridge.
- Ancillary works along the line including boundary walls, parapet walls, noise barriers, landscaping.
- Temporary and permanent diversion of watermains, electricity cables, telecommunications cables and gas main – below and above ground.

### **Level Crossing Removals**

- Removal of 6 level crossings to improve train efficiencies, enhance safety, and remove the delays caused by the road / rail interface.
- Where existing usage patterns of the level crossings exhibit significant activity, alternative equivalent access is proposed in the form of bridges and roadworks.

### **Compounds**

- Temporary compounds adjacent to site of works during construction works such as at stations, bridges, level crossings and substations.
- Three permanent operational phase maintenance facilities proposed.
- Main storage and distribution centre to provide materials to the construction compounds located on an existing storage and distribution facility to the north-west of Dublin Airport on a site of up to 10 acres.

### 3.2.3. **Zones A & B – Connolly Station/Spencer Dock Station to Glasnevin Junction**

- Electrification of both lines;
- Installation of supporting structures for electrical wires;
- Track lowering at number of railway overbridges
- New rail station at Spencer Dock providing an interchange with the Luas and local bus services creating a new transport interchange. It is proposed to lower the railway tracks by approximately 7.0m to pass under the Spencer Dock Plaza providing an underground terminal station with four tracks that will have four platforms with lifts, stairs and escalators linking passengers to the surface streetscape.
- Demolition and rebuilding of part of the Sherrif Street Bridge.
- New entrance to Connolly Station at Preston Street and emergency exits.
- Works to facilitate additional capacity on and to and from Platforms 5, 6 & 7.
- Modification of the trackwork on the northern approach to the Station with additional crossovers and adjustments to track alignment.
- Substations at Spencer Dock and Glasnevin (land to be acquired).

### 3.2.4. **Zone C – Glasnevin to Clonsilla Junction (approximately 10.10km)**

- Closure and removal of Ashtown level crossing.
- Rerouting of Ashtown Road to the west passing under the railway and Canal (c.490m) new access arrangements to adjoining properties and works to public road.
- Universal access bridge at Ashtown station.
- Track lowering/reduced height OHLE solution required at M50 roundabout/Navan Road Bridge and M50 roundabout bridge.

- Reconstruction of Broombridge Railway bridge to provide required clearance.
- Substation at Ashtown.
- Operational Phase Maintenance Facility at Navan Road Parkway.
- Deck lift on Old Navan Road Bridge to provide sufficient clearance.
- Granard Bridge deck reconstruction (Castleknock Road).
- Substation at Castleknock.
- Closure and removal of Coolmine level crossing.
- Universal access bridge over the railway and canal at the station on Coolmine Road and diversion of traffic with road/junction improvements.
- Substation at Coolmine.
- closure of the level crossing at Porterstown and the construction of a new 5m wide cycle/pedestrian bridge over the railway and canal.
- closure of the level crossing at Clonsilla and the construction of a new 5m wide cycle/pedestrian bridge over the railway and canal.
- New roadbridge to west at the Barberstown level crossing replacement to the west.

#### 3.2.5. **Zone D – Clonsilla Junction to M3 Parkway (7.5km)**

- Clearance required to Barnhill Bridge, Stirling Road Bridge and Dunboyne Bridge by way of track lowering or a reduced height OHLE.
- Substations at Hansfield, Dunboyne and M3 Parkway.

#### 3.2.6. **Zone E – Clonsilla Junction to Maynooth Station (15.6km)**

- Closure of Barberstown level crossing and construction of a new bridge above the railway and canal c.250m west of the existing crossing.
- Track lowering/installation of reduced height OHLE solution at Collins Bridge and Pike Bridge.
- Reconstruction of Cope Bridge facilitating adequate clearance and widening of the structure.
- Substation at Leixlip Confey station.
- Deck lift at Louisa Bridge
- Closure of Blakestown level crossing.

- Substation at Blakestown (land to be acquired).

### 3.2.7. Zone F – Maynooth Station to Maynooth Depot

- Track modifications in Maynooth station
- Substation at Maynooth station.
- Upgrading of existing single track west of Maynooth to a twin-track to the site of the proposed depot with the new track parallel to and south of the existing track diverting south parallel to the existing line avoiding Jackson's Bridge with works to mitigate flood risk proposed.
- divert the existing L5041 local road west to a proposed bridge crossing the depot, the existing railway and the canal and linking into the R148 approximately 700m west of the existing L5041 connection to the same road.
- Provision of a depot with stabling and a main building to accommodate administration and operational in addition to the Depot Control Centre, a shunting track for the connection between all the tracks of the stabling and of the workshop.
- Operational Phase Maintenance Facility and substation.

## 4.0 Policy Context

The following policy documents are of relevance but, it should be noted, do not comprise an exhaustive list:

- Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework 2040 and National Development Plan 2018-2027
- Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport (SIFLT)
- Climate Action Plan 2021
- Transport Strategy for Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 (under review)
- Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031
- Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (being updated)
- Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024
- Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 (currently under review)

- Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023 (currently under review)
- Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (currently under review)
- Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027
- North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ Planning Scheme 2014
- Ashtown- Pelletstown LAP 2014
- Hansfield SDZ Planning Scheme 2006
- Barnhill LAP 2019
- Kellystown LAP 2021
- Maynooth LAP 2013-2019
- Kilcock LAP 2015-2021
- Leixlip LAP 2020-2023
- Collinstown LAP 2020
- Dunboyne, Clonee & Pace LAP 2009-2015

## 5.0 Meetings Held

5.1. Nine meetings were held with the prospective applicant's representatives on the following dates:

- 2 July 2020,
- 16 September 2020,
- 8 October 2020,
- 10 November 2020,
- 17 December 2020,
- 21 January 2021,
- 24 February 2021,
- 31 March 2021 and
- 8 March 2022.

5.2. Presentations were provided at each meeting which are included in the file together with other information provided to the Board in respect of same. The record of each meeting is also contained in the file.



## 6.0 Legislative Context

### 6.1. Draft Railway Order/Strategic Infrastructure Development

The application for a Draft Railway Order will be lodged under the provisions of Section 37(3) of the Transport Infrastructure Act 2001 as amended by Section 49 of Planning and Development Act (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006.

The Draft Railway Transport Order is designated as Strategic Infrastructure by virtue of the provision of Section Part 3 Section 6(c)(g) of the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006 which designates as 'Strategic Infrastructure Development'

*'Any proposed railway works referred to in section 37(3) of the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001 (as amended by the Planning and Development Act (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006).'*

## 7.0 Relevant Cases

The following comprise recent transport related pre-application consultations or applications which are considered of note.

### 7.1. Pre-Application Requests – Current or Concluded

**Ref. ABP-308826-20** - DART+ South West, involving railway improvement works from the environs of Hazelhatch Station to the environs of Heuston Station; and the environs of Heuston Station to the environs of Glasnevin/Phibsborough

**Ref. 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

**Ref. ABP-309584-21** - BusConnects Dublin Core Bus Corridor Projects

**Ref. ABP-302010-18** – Proposed Metro Link for Swords-Airport-City Centre corridor which includes connection to the existing Luas Green Line.

## 7.2. Applications Received - Bus Connects

**Ref. ABP-313182-22** - BusConnects Clongriffin to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme

**Ref. ABP-313509-22** - BusConnects Belfield/Blackrock to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme

## 8.0 Matters Arising

### 8.1. Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

The matters arising include inter alia:

- Policy context surrounding the proposal ranging from strategic to local.
- Public consultation process and stakeholder engagement undertaken.
- Development within an SDZ.
- Potential demolition/CPO/other impacts on residential properties
- Potential impact on residential amenity from construction/operational impacts
- Potential impact on communities resulting from closure of level crossings/roads and alternatives proposed for vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist traffic.
- Preferred options for level crossing closures and works to bridges.
- Potential impact on the Royal Canal given proximity and other physical constraints
- Type of overhead line being considered/clearance required.
- Works required to bridges along the route to facilitate required clearance with potential impact on protected structures.
- Protection against direct contact with wires/parapet heightening
- Glasnevin Interchange Interface
- The potential interdependency on other Dart+ schemes
- Proposed additional access to Connolly Station
- Options for Docklands/Spencer Dock Station
- Visual Amenity of infrastructural elements

- Potential impact on cultural heritage.
- Impact on business/commercial operations in the vicinity of the route.
- Construction compounds – requirements and locations
- Land acquisition/CPO requirements.

## 8.2. Environmental Impact Assessment

It is proposed to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment Report with the proposed Draft Railway Order. The following include matters which were outlined during the course of the consultation meetings.

- EIA Scoping was undertaken by the prospective applicant with c.48 consultees.
- Transport modelling methodology
- Consideration of Alternatives
- Major Accidents & Disasters
- Environmental factors including but not limited to: Climate, Hydrology, Land & Soils, Noise & Vibration, Visual and Landscape, Biodiversity, Cultural Heritage, Population and Human Health, Range of Material Assets, Traffic & Transportation.
- Water Framework Directive
- Electromagnetic Assessment
- Approach to Electricity Supply
- Construction Impacts
- Format of the EIAR
- Consideration of cumulative impacts.
- Draft Railway Order documentation

### 8.3. **Appropriate Assessment**

It is proposed to submit a Natura Impact Assessment Report with the proposed Draft Railway Order. The following include matters which were discussed during the course of the consultation meetings.

- Likely Zone of Impact of all elements of the proposal
- Natura 2000 sites within likely zone of impact and proximity to QI's/SCI's.
- Pathways for likely significant effects
- Screening conclusion
- Consideration of potential adverse affects in NIS
- Potential Mitigation Measures to be considered
- In-combination Effects

### 8.4. **Serving of a Copy of the Draft Railway Order**

- 8.4.1. At the final pre-application consultation, the prospective applicant requested that the Board indicate in writing, what persons be served with a copy of the draft order and accompanying documents prior to the making of the application.
- 8.4.2. The provisions of s.40(1)(c) of the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act, 2001, as amended under s.49 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006, indicate that the Board may direct the prospective applicant as to what persons (in addition to the planning authorities and the Minister) should be so served (i.e. there does not appear to be 'prescribed' bodies for the type of development proposed).
- 8.4.3. In that regard I recommend that the Board consider that the persons listed hereunder be served with the draft order and accompanying documents. In forming the list hereunder, regard was had to, *inter alia*, the requirement under s.40(1)(b) of the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act, 2001 as amended under s.49 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act, 2006, to give the public notification of the proposed application. Regard was also had, in drawing up the list below, to the provisions of s.213 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2006.
- 8.4.4. The prospective applicant should serve the following persons with a copy of the draft order, accompanying documents and a copy of the public notice:

- Dublin City Council
- Fingal County Council
- Kildare County Council
- Meath County Council
- Minister for Transport
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage – Development Applications Unit (all three sections to be notified: NPWS, Architectural Heritage Protection Unit and Archaeological – National Monuments Service)
- Department of Communications, Climate and Environment,
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Irish Water
- An Chomhairle Ealíon
- Fáilte Ireland
- An Taisce – the National Trust for Ireland
- The Heritage Council
- Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Waterways Ireland
- CIE (all bodies within the group to be served i.e. Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann)
- National Transport Authority
- Health Service Executive
- Health and Safety Authority
- Commission for Railway Regulation
- Office of Public Works
- ESB

The Board may wish to review that list and satisfy itself that it is sufficient and the applicant may wish to consider other bodies they consider relevant.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

By letter dated 29 April 2022 the prospective applicant wrote to the Board requesting that the pre-application process be formally concluded. I am of the opinion that the process should be concluded as requested and would recommend accordingly.



Una Crosse

Senior Planning Inspector

25 May 2022