



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-309584-21

Developments

12 Core Bus Corridor Schemes

Locations

Dublin City and County, and North
County Wicklow

Prospective Applicant

National Transport Authority

Planning Authorities

Dublin City Council
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County
Council
South Dublin County Council
Wicklow County Council

Inspector

Kevin Moore

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. The National Transport Authority (NTA) requested Pre-Application Consultations under section 51A of the Roads Act 1993, for the development of BusConnects – Core Bus Corridor Infrastructure Works comprising 12 stand-alone Core Bus Corridor schemes in Dublin. The NTA intends to submit applications for approval to the Board, pursuant to section 51 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) in relation to projects that fall under section 50(1)(a)(iv) of the Roads Act. Environmental Impact Assessment Reports are intended to be submitted in accordance with section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act. Related Compulsory Purchase Orders, pursuant to section 213 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Housing Act 1966 (as amended), will also be submitted to the Board.
- 1.2. Four Pre-Application Consultation meetings took place between An Bord Pleanála (the Board) and the prospective applicant on the following dates:

21st April, 2021

20th May, 2021

10th June, 2021

29th June, 2021

- 1.3. This Report is prepared following the request by the prospective applicant to close the Pre-Application Consultations between the applicant and the Board. This Report provides details of the legislative provisions, an overview of the proposed projects, a summary of the meetings and the advice provided by the Board, and recommends a list of Prescribed Bodies who should be forwarded copies of the applications.

2.0 Roads Act – Legislative Provisions

- 2.1. The Roads Act of 2015 inserted Section 51A into the Roads Act of 1993. Section 51A provides for consultations with An Bord Pleanála before making an application under Section 51.

- 2.2. The Act provides that the Board may give advice in relation to the procedures involved in making the application, and what may have a bearing on its decision in relation to the application in respect of the effects of a proposed road development on the environment, or an area, site or land, and proper planning and sustainable development.
- 2.3. Section 51A of the Roads Act consultations differ from other strategic infrastructure legislation. The Act does not require the Board to provide an opinion on whether the project is strategic infrastructure or not. Following the completion of any consultations between the Board and the applicant, the Roads Act states that the applicant may apply to the Board for the approval in relation to a proposed road development.

3.0 Background to the Schemes

- 3.1. The NTA has submitted that BusConnects is intended to transform the bus system in Dublin. It would include the 12 stand-alone road development corridor schemes. The overall centreline length of the 12 schemes would be 120km.
- 3.2. The 12 Core Bus Corridor Schemes are as follows:
 1. Clongriffin to City Centre
 2. Swords to City Centre
 3. Ballymun/Finglas to City Centre
 4. Blanchardstown to City Centre
 5. Lucan to City Centre
 6. Liffey Valley to City Centre
 7. Tallaght/Clondalkin to City Centre
 8. Kimmage to City Centre
 9. Templeogue/Rathfarnham to City Centre
 10. Bray to City Centre
 11. Belfield/Blackrock to City Centre
 12. Ringsend to City Centre

3.3. The objectives of the schemes are to:

- Enhance the capacity and potential of the public transport system by improving bus speeds, reliability and punctuality;
- Enhance the potential for cycling by providing safe infrastructure, segregated from general traffic wherever practicable;
- Support the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service, supporting the achievement of Ireland's emission reduction targets;
- Enable compact growth, regeneration opportunities and more effective use of land in Dublin;
- Improve accessibility to jobs, education and other social and economic opportunities; and
- Ensure that the public realm is carefully considered in the design and development of the transport infrastructure and seek to enhance key urban focal points where appropriate and feasible.

4.0 Proposed Developments

4.1. Clongriffin to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route commences in Balgriffin, running south-west along Malahide Road, through Coolock and Artane to Donnycarney and on to Fairview in the City Centre. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 5.7km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 11.4km (both directions), constituting a 36% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 11.9km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 47% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 97 properties. Two existing roundabouts will also be replaced by signal-controlled junctions.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for dual carriageway and single carriageway parts of the route and has detailed pinch points and an example of urban realm improvements at Donnycarney Church.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 24% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 93% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City Council and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.2. Swords to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route commences at Pinnock Hill Roundabout in Swords and runs southwards along Dublin Road, Swords Road, through Drumcondra to Parnell Street in the City Centre. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 12km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 24km (both directions), constituting an 39% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 21.4km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 53% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 106 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for dual carriageway and single carriageway parts of the route and has detailed pinch points and an example of urban realm improvements at Drumcondra.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 71% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 39% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City and Fingal County Councils and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.3. Ballymun/Finglas to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route provides for two corridors, from Ballymun Road and from Finglas Road linking at Botanic Road and running through Phibsborough to the City Centre. The route crosses the River Liffey on the Finglas Road and St. Mobhi Road and there is a crossing of the Royal Canal at Prospect Road. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 11km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 22km (both directions), constituting an 85% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 22km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 60% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 10 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for the route and has provided examples of urban realm improvements at Ballymun Main Street, St. Mobhi Glasnevin Village, Phibsborough Village, and the Royal Bank at North Circular Road.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 20% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 29% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City and Fingal County Councils and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects. The scheme would interact with five proposed MetroLink stations and DART+ West at Glasnevin/Phibsborough.

4.4. Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route commences at Blanchardstown Shopping Centre and runs south-eastwards along Blanchardstown Bypass, the Navan Road, onto Prussia Street and into Stoneybatter to Arran Quay in the City Centre. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 10.9km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 21.21km (both directions), constituting a 289% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 17.07km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting an 82% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 89 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for dual carriageway and single carriageway parts of the route and a pinch point and has detailed an examples of urban realm improvements at Stoneybatter Village and Blanchardstown Bus Interchange.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 75% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 43% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City and Fingal County Councils and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.5. Lucan to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route commences at Lucan and runs westwards along the Lucan Road through Palmerstown, along the Chapelizod Bypass as far as St. John's Road and Heuston Station in the City Centre. It is predominantly a dual carriageway route. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 9.6km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 18.5km (both directions), constituting a 36% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 15.1km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 208% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 9 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for dual carriageway and single carriageway parts of the route and has detailed an example of urban realm improvements at South Circular Road Junction.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 24% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 50% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City and South Dublin County Councils and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.6. Liffey Valley to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route commences at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, running through Ballyfermot, on to Emmet Road, Old Kilmainham Road and James's Street as far as Christchurch in the City Centre. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 9.1km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 18.2km (both directions), constituting a 340% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 12.9km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 69% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 31 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for dual carriageway and single carriageway parts of the route and has detailed pinch points and an example of urban realm improvements at Cornmarket.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 58% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 45% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City and South Dublin County Councils and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.7. Tallaght/Clondalkin to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route provides for two corridors, from Belgard Square in Tallaght and from Nangor Road in Clondalkin linking at Drimnagh Road and running north-east via Crumlin Road, Dolphins Barn and Cork Street to Christchurch in the City Centre. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 15.5km and the scheme would include an additional 3.8km alternative cycle route from Walkinstown to Harold's Cross. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 28.5km (both directions), constituting an 85% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 39.8km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 241% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 143 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for the route, including the alternative cycle route and has detailed examples of urban realm improvements at the Tallaght Interchange and Drimnagh Road/Walkinstown Road Junction.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 172% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 61% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City and South Dublin County Councils and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and

assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.8. Kimimage to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route commences in Kimmage, running north-east along Kimmage Road Lower to Harold's Cross, along Clanbrassil Street, and on to Christchurch in the City Centre. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 3.5km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 7km (both directions), constituting a 440% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 7km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 17% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 23 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for the route and has detailed examples of urban realm improvements at Kimmage Road Lower, Sundrive Cross, Stoneboat Boardwalk, at Robert Emmett Bridge over the Grand Canal, and at Clanbrassil Street Lower/New Street South.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 80% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 8% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City Council and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that the scheme does not automatically trigger the requirement for EIA and it is in the process of completing its deliberations on whether the scheme would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. It notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the

other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.9. Templeogue/Rathfarnham to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route provides for two corridors, from Templeogue Road and from Grange Road linking at the junction with Terenure Road and running north-east and north through Rathgar, Rathmines and Camden Street as far as Dame Street in the City Centre. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 9.9km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 17.4km (both directions), constituting an 175% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 23.3km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting an 112% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 80 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for the route and has detailed an example of urban realm improvements at Rathmines Village.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 123% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 79% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City and South Dublin County Councils and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.10. Bray to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route commences in Bray and runs north-west along Dublin Road, through Shankill, along the Bray Road to Stillorgan and on to Donnybrook, Morehampton Road, and Leeson Street as far as St. Stephen's Green in the City Centre. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 18.5km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 37km (both directions), constituting a 46% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 32.9km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 1% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 72 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for dual carriageway and single carriageway parts of the route and for pinch points and has detailed examples of urban realm improvements at Leeson Street/Sussex Road, Wellington Place/Leeson Street, UCD Bus Interchange, Shankill Village, and Castle Street in Bray.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 40% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 108% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City, South Dublin and Wicklow County Councils and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.11. Belfield/Blackrock to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route commences at Monkstown Road in Blackrock, running along Rock Road and Merrion Road, to Pembroke Road and Baggot Street and on to Merrion Square in the City Centre. The proposal would include a two-way cycle track coastal section and a two-way cycle track section for Nutley Lane. The scheme would include a crossing of the Grand Canal and it would run alongside Booterstown Marsh. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 8.31km. The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 16.62km (both directions), constituting a 172% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 16.62km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 112% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 30 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided typical cross sections for dual carriageway and single carriageway parts of the route and has detailed pinch points and an example of urban realm improvements at Baggot Street Upper.

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 103% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 64% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Councils and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

4.12. Ringsend to City Centre Core Bus Corridor

This route commences at the junction of Bath Avenue and Beach Road in Ringsend, running through Irishtown and along both sides of the Quays from Sir John Rogerson's Quay to George's Quay and from Custom House Quay North Wall Quay. It would include a new bridge structure, Dodder Public Transport Bridge from York Road to Sir John Rogerson's Quay. The length of the Core Bus Corridor is 5.7km (3.2km for the North Quays and 2.5km for the South Quays). The proposed total bus priority for the scheme is 5.7km (both directions), constituting a 437% increase over the existing bus priority. A total of 8.4km (both directions) of segregated and non-segregated cycle facilities are proposed, constituting a 56% increase over existing cycle facilities. Other features of the scheme include introduction of a number of traffic signal-controlled junctions, a number of signalised crossings and land take involving 4 properties.

The prospective applicant has provided two typical cross sections for North Wall Quay and Sir John Rogerson's Quay and examples of urban realm improvements at Custom House Quay, George's Dock and Royal Canal (Spencer Dock).

The NTA's traffic impact assessment estimates there would be an approximate 12% increase in public transport usage arising from the scheme, with an approximate 17% increase in cycle and pedestrian usage.

Ongoing public consultation and stakeholder engagement has been taking place, including liaison with Dublin City Council and consultation with property owners and the public.

The NTA has submitted that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be mandatory and notes that cumulative effects will be required to be addressed and assessed, to include the other Core Bus Corridors, MetroLink, DART+ projects, and any other projects with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

5.0 Pre-Application Consultation

5.1. Four Consultation Meetings were held on 21st April, 2021, 20th May, 2021, 10th June, 2021, and 29th June, 2021. The following was presented by the Prospective Applicant:

21st April, 2021

- An overview of the role of NTA
- The legislative requirements for the applications to the Board
- The schemes' aims
- An outline of potential environmental impacts
- Consultations to date

The Board advised that presentations on each of the schemes were required. The nature and extent of the information required in such presentations, inclusive of drawings, were outlined. Clarity on the need for Appropriate Assessment, timelines for public submissions in the application process, and the timing of the making of the applications were discussed.

20th May, 2021

- Transport Impact Assessment and Modelling Overview
- An outline of each of the following proposed Core Bus Corridor Schemes:
 - * Clongriffin to City Centre
 - * Liffey Valley to City Centre
 - * Belfield/Blackrock to City Centre
 - * Ringsend to City Centre
 - * Ballymun/Finglas to City Centre
 - * Swords to City Centre

Clarification was provided on the need to address traffic redistribution (notably for the city centre), the extent of the remit of each project, the need for consistency in the development approach for each project, the users of proposed 'bus gates', and association of schemes with other proposed road schemes by local authorities. Land acquisition and the facilitation of residential and business parking affected by the schemes were identified as likely significant matters of public concern. The need for conservation advisors for particular elements of some schemes was acknowledged.

10th June, 2021

- An outline of each of the following proposed Core Bus Corridor Schemes:
 - * Lucan to City Centre
 - * Blanchardstown to City Centre
 - * Tallaght/Clondalkin to City Centre
 - * Kimmage to City Centre
 - * Bray to City Centre
 - * Templeogue/Rathfarnham to City Centre

Clarification on the extent of some land takes, public consultation, and consistency of approach with other proposed road schemes was provided. The need for conservation advice on some components of the schemes was again identified and the need to have regard to construction activity in the vicinity of some other development schemes was noted.

29th June, 2021

This meeting clarified procedural matters in relation to the making of the applications to the Board. The extent of preliminary design documentation to be provided was discussed and clarity was provided on requirements relating to the Irish language. The prospective applicant was informed that the holding of oral hearings was entirely at the discretion of the Board.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 Following the insertion of Section 51A into the Roads Act, a Road Authority or Authority as the case may be, can enter into consultations with the Board prior to submitting an application under Section 51(2) in relation to a proposed road development. The Board may give advice to the Authority regarding the procedures involved and what considerations relating to the effects of the proposed development on the environment or the proper planning and sustainable development may have on its decision in relation to the application. During the meetings held, advice was provided as noted on the file attached.
- 6.2 The applicant now wishes to close the consultation stage and, following this stage, the applicant may apply to the Board for the approval of the Core Bus Corridor projects.
- 6.3 A recommended list of Prescribed Bodies, who should be forwarded copies of the application documentation, is as follows:

Section 51(3)(b) lists the following bodies:

- (i) The Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland,
- (ii) Bord Fáilte Éireann,
- (iii) An Taisce – the National Trust for Ireland,
- (iv) Any other prescribed body or person.

It is considered that the following prescribed bodies should also be notified:

- (i) Dublin City Council
- (ii) South Dublin County Council
- (iii) Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
- (iv) Wicklow County Council
- (v) Eastern and Midland Regional Authority
- (vi) Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
- (vii) Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications and Transport

(viii) An Chomhairle Ealaíon

Kevin Moore
Senior Planning Inspector

3rd August, 2021