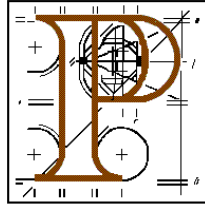


An Bord Pleanála



Inspector's Report

Proposed Development

Luas Finglas – Extension of the Luas Green Line to Charlestown, Finglas Village, Finglas West, and Tolka Valley, County Dublin

Prospective Applicant: Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)

Planning Authorities: Dublin City Council

Nature of Development: Railway Infrastructure

Inspector: Kevin Moore

1.0 LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

I note the definition of ‘strategic infrastructure development’ as set out in section 3 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). This includes the following:

‘ strategic infrastructure development ’ means — ...

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

Regarding pre-application consultation, the following are the relevant provisions of section 50 of the *Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006* as they relate to pre-application consultation for railway infrastructure:

50.— The Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001 is further amended by inserting the following sections after section 47A (inserted by section 49):

“Discussions with Board before making an application.

47B.— (1) The Agency, CIÉ or any other person who proposes to apply for a railway order in accordance with section 37(1) shall, before making the application, enter into consultations with the Board in relation to the proposed railway works.

(2) Such a person is referred to subsequently in

this section and in section 47C as a ‘prospective applicant’.

(3) In any consultations under subsection (1), the Board may give advice to the prospective applicant regarding the proposed application and, in particular, regarding—

(a) the procedures involved in making an application under this Part and in considering such an application, and

(b) what considerations, related to proper planning and sustainable development or the environment, may, in the opinion of the Board, have a bearing on its decision in relation to the application.

Section 47B: supplemental provisions.

47C.— (1) A prospective applicant shall, for the purposes of consultations under section 47B, supply to the Board sufficient information in relation to the proposed railway works so as to enable the Board to assess those works.

(2) The Board may, at its absolute discretion, consult with any other person who may, in the opinion of the Board, have information which is relevant for the purposes of consultations under

section 47B in relation to the proposed railway works.

(3) The holding of consultations under section 47B shall not prejudice the performance by the Board of any other of its functions under this Act or the Planning and Development Act 2000 or regulations under either of those Acts and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

(4) The Board shall keep a record in writing of any consultations under section 47B in relation to proposed railway works, including the names of those who participated in the consultations, and a copy of such record shall be placed and kept with the documents to which any application in respect of the proposed railway works relates.

2.0 **THE PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS**

- 2.1. A request by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to enter into pre-application consultations in relation to the proposed Luas Finglas development was received by the Board on 1st March, 2023 in accordance with section 47B of the *Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001*, as inserted by section 50 of the *Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006*.
- 2.2. Pre-Application Consultation meetings took place between An Bord Pleanála (the Board) and the prospective applicant on the 26th May, 2023 and 15th March, 2024.

- 2.3. This Report is prepared following the request by the prospective applicant to close the Pre-Application Consultations between the prospective applicant and the Board. This Report provides an overview of the proposed project and gives a summary of the meetings between the prospective applicant and the Board. I attach a list of Prescribed Bodies who it is considered should be forwarded copies of the application.

3.0 **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

3.1. Overview

Luas Finglas is a proposed extension to the Luas Green Line. The proposed route is 4km long and it would provide four stops: St.Helena's, Finglas Village, St. Margaret's, and Charlestown. It would link with the established Green Line at Broombridge. The scheme would be mostly off-street and 70% would be built using grass track. It would be comparable with the higher speed sections of the Luas network. The proposed development would also include the provision of a park and ride facility for 350 cars close to the St. Margaret's stop and near the M50 motorway. The project would allow for interchange with bus networks along the route and with mainline rail services and future DART services at Broombridge. The proposal would include an extension to Broombridge depot for tram storage. The development would further include two new bridges, one over the Tolka River and one at Broombridge over the Maynooth line and the Royal Canal. Segregated pedestrian paths and cycling infrastructure would be developed along much of the route.

It is intended to have a service provision of eight trams per hours (one every seven and a half minutes), with an approximate journey time of 13 minutes from Charlestown to Broombridge. By 2035, the scheme is projected to result in a daily increase of up to 5,500 more people taking public transport and 4,600 more people walking or cycling.

4.0 **POLICY CONTEXT**

- 4.1. The further extension of the Luas network is consistent with national, regional and local policy, which includes the following:

National

Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040 – National Development Plan

Regional

Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region

Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy

Local

Dublin City Development Plan

Fingal County Development Plan

5.0 **PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION**

- 5.1. Two pre-application consultation meetings were held with the prospective applicant. The following is a summary of these meetings:

26th May, 2023

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the proposed routing and key features of the project and set out its principal objectives. Reference was made to its option selection process and non-statutory public consultation. A 3D animation route walkthrough was presented. An overview of the EIAR structure was presented. Discussions with the Board's representatives included matters relating to construction works at a former landfill at Tolka Valley Park, overhead

line provision through built-up areas, and security concerns and connectivity with residential areas at St. Helena's. Consultation with NPWS on biodiversity impacts and with DAU and CIÉ on bridge design and architectural heritage impacts was emphasized. The nature and extent of proposed compulsory purchase of properties were also discussed. Connectivity with cycling infrastructure was clarified.

15th March, 2024

At the second meeting, the prospective applicant gave a recap of the nature and extent of the proposed development, a timeline for the project, and anticipated environmental benefits. A 3D animation route walkthrough was presented. Track form and design were alluded to and reference was made to junction redesign at Charlestown. An overview of the progress on the EIAR was provided. Discussions with the Board's representatives included clarity on procedural matters, on the Climate Action Plan status, and on connectivity with BusConnects. Matters relating to concerns about loss of public open spaces arising from the scheme, impact on flood plains, and access to residential estates were discussed. Reference to bridge design and consultation with Dublin City Council and the Department of Heritage and to ongoing consultation with NPWS was made again. The prospective applicant also clarified the turnback arrangements at Charlestown.

At the second meeting, the prospective applicant committed to forwarding a copy of the 3D animation with a voiceover and reference design drawings. The Board will note that these were forwarded recently as a Share File under the following link: <https://tii.sharefile.eu/d-s06ea8e52c37e4240bd373d6845ab7c7e>.

6.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1. Further to section 47B of the *Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001*, as inserted by section 50 of the *Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006*, Transport Infrastructure Ireland entered into consultations with the Board prior to submitting an application for Luas Finglas. The Board has given advice to TII regarding the procedures involved and what considerations relating to the effects of the proposed development on the environment and 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 a railway order for the proposed development.
- 6.3. A recommended list of Prescribed Bodies, who should be forwarded copies of the application documentation, is as follows:
- (a) Department of Transport
 - (b) Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
 - (c) Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media
 - (d) Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
 - (e) Dublin City Council
 - (f) Fingal County Council
 - (g) Uisce Éireann
 - (h) An Chomhairle Ealaíon
 - (i) Fáilte Ireland
 - (j) An Taisce
 - (j) Heritage Council
 - (k) The Commissioners of Public Works
 - (l) EirGrid

- (m) ESB
- (n) Health Service Executive
- (o) Inland Fisheries Ireland
- (p) Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
- (q) National Transport Authority
- (r) Waterways Ireland
- (s) Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- (t) Commission for Railway Regulation
- (u) Córas Iompair Éireann

Kevin Moore

Senior Planning Inspector

4th April, 2021