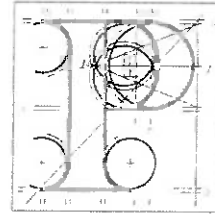


Our Case Number: ABP-316272-23



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Involve Autism D6/D6W and Surrounds
c/o 1 Wainsfort Manor Crescent
Terenure
Dublin 6W

Date: 24 April 2024

Re: Bus Connects Templeogue/Rathfarnham to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme
Templeogue/Rathfarnham to City Centre

Dear Sir / Madam,

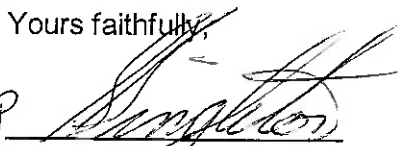
An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above-mentioned proposed road development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

Please note that the proposed road development shall not be carried out unless the Board has approved it or approved it with modifications.

If you have any queries in relation to this matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Board at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above-mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,


Eimear Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737184

HA02A

Teil (01) 858 8100
Glaó Áitiúil 1800 275 175
Facs (01) 872 2684
Láithreán Gréasáin www.pleanala.ie
Ríomhphost bord@pleanala.ie

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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

AN BORD PLEANÁLA
LDG- _____
ABP- _____
26 MAR 2024
Fee: € _____ Type: _____
Time: 12:35 By: Hand



Involve Autism D6/D6W & Surrounds
c/o 1 Wainsfort Manor Crescent
Terenure
Dublin 6W

316272/316377

An Bord Pleanála (Strategic Infrastructure Division)
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

21st March 2024

**BusConnects Templeogue / Rathfarnham to City Centre CBC
Rathfarnham Castle Park Woodland Playground
Importance to the Autistic Community**

Dear Sirs,

We wish to make a further submission regarding the NTA response to our concerns regarding the likely impact of BusConnects on Rathfarnham Castle Park and the consequences for local autistic children.

Involve Autism was set up in 2018 and has worked tirelessly since then, primarily in the area of advocating for appropriate educational placements for autistic children in their local communities, but also in supporting parents and encouraging inclusion of our families in their local communities. It is extremely important to us that our public amenities should be as inclusive as possible for autistic children and those with sensory needs. This is even more significant with the recent announcement by the Lord Mayor of Dublin of a new initiative which will see Dublin become the world's first autism friendly capital city. In practical terms, this approach also ties in with the EU Restore Nature concept.

A large number of local autistic children particularly love the peace and natural environment of the Woodland Playground in Rathfarnham Castle Park. It was recently substantially renovated by SDCC and is a serene, calm environment. Surrounded by mature trees, bushes and undergrowth, it has a real air of being out in the country, rather than right beside Rathfarnham Village. It offers a sensory experience which is entirely different to that in more traditional playgrounds, such as the other playground in the Park. It helps children to calm and enjoy the peace of nature, watching the

squirrels and wildlife while playing among the trees and on the play equipment. It is a vital resource for local autistic families and must be protected.

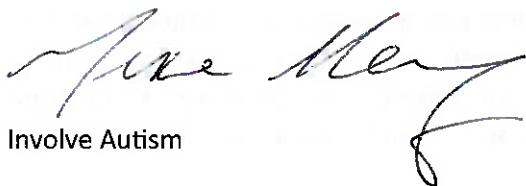
In our submission, we raised the point that, in the event that the proposed road widening works go ahead, not only will the Woodland Playground be lost to our autistic children for the substantial period (e.g. 2 years) during which construction takes place, but it will be in real terms lost forever. The new road, with its noise, smells and pollution, will be so much closer to the play area and the encircling trees, bushes and undergrowth will have been lost. It will no longer meet the sensory needs of our children who love its peace, tranquility and sense of being out in an untouched natural environment. There is another traditional playground in the Park but it is an entirely different proposition and does not meet the same needs at all. The current Woodland Playground and Natural Play Space is unique in the area, so convenient to autistic children all around Rathfarnham Village. It is perfect as it is and should not be interfered with. It is also a wonderful wildlife habitat.

However the NTA has clearly not understood these points at all. They have stated that they have dealt with the issue of the impact on the autistic community in the responses, however the only relevant point which we can see is solely in relation to noise. The Planning Response [pg 99] simply refers to there being "no change in the effective of noise screening from the boundary wall.... Whilst there will be a portion of trees removed from the park boundary, these do not provide any notable noise screening..."

Contrary to the NTA's view, this is not simply a case of ultimately replacing one c.3m high wall with another c. 3m high wall and disregarding the fundamental changes which will have been wrought to the area. The fact that the play space is currently fully encircled by mature trees and vegetation gives it a calming atmosphere which will be entirely lost after 2 years of extensive construction works and the removal of most of the trees on the side near the road, leaving a blank wall. The vibrant wildlife will be lost due to the noise, vibrations and upheaval of piling, rock-breaking work etc. There is simply no understanding by the NTA of the sensory needs which are met by this particular play space. It is vital to the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of local autistic children.

We also wish to support the Rathfarnham Wood Residents' Association proposed solution that the bus corridor should instead terminate at the end of the Rathfarnham Village bypass (by the Butterfield Avenue junction). A signal controlled priority light would provide sufficient priority for the limited number of outbound buses which pass Rathfarnham Castle Park. It would keep the lovely Woodland play area as it is, a highly valued, vitally important and unique amenity for local autistic children.

Yours faithfully,



Aine Mery

Involve Autism