

Suggestion that: The Depot Location Interferes with the Greenway and the character of the Depot at this location is a significant amendment to the Greenway. The observation questioned the suitability of the site in principal and the ability of the receiving environment to absorb the facility.

The proposed depot is part of the railway which has been present on the lands West of Maynooth for approximately 150 years. The railway and canal at this location have exerted significant influence on the character of the lands between the R148 and the M4. The greenway is located on the north bank of the canal, remote from the lands of the proposed depot, and shielded from it by the railway and the associated hedgelines which are to be preserved where practicable as part of the project.

The DART+ West depot is an element of the development that connects with and is necessary for the safe and effective operation of the railway network and is sited on agricultural land adjacent to the existing rail network. The depot will provide the necessary support to ensure the continued operation of the railway for future generations and support the decarbonisation of the transport network. In the EIAR and Planning Report submitted with the draft Railway Order it is established that the project, including the Depot is consistent with the existing and emerging land use and transportation planning policy.

It is noted that the alignment of the existing L5041 over Jacksons bridge is to be retained as part of proposed DART+ West project to accommodate a future cycle route to be developed by Kildare County Council with connection to the existing greenway.

The decision to locate the proposed depot in the floodplain of the Lyreen River and associated tributaries is considered to meet the requirements of the OPW: Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, dated November 2009 (OPW GPA).

The OPW GPA, requires the planning system at national, regional and local levels to:

- Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding, particularly floodplains, unless there are proven wider sustainability grounds that justify appropriate development and where the flood risk can be reduced or managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere;
- Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management when assessing the location for new development based on avoidance, reduction and mitigation of flood risk; and
- Incorporate flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.

The location of the proposed depot is in the floodplain of the Lyreen River and associated tributaries. Chapter 3 of the OPW GPA notes that “only when both avoidance and substitution cannot take place should consideration be given to mitigation and management of risks.” The DART+ team has assessed 13 possible locations and 8 nodal sites for a proposed depot and determined that avoidance and substitution cannot take place and that the site west of Maynooth is the appropriate site for location of the proposed Depot.

The OPW GPA also notes that exceptions to the restriction of development due to potential flood risk are provided for through the use of a Justification Test, where the planning need and the sustainable management of flood risk to an acceptable level must be demonstrated. The justification test is broken into two parts.

The first part, set out in Box 4.1 of the OPW GPA requires the production of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in support of a development plan and zoning or designation of the lands concerned. A SFRA was carried out by Kildare County Council and published in support of the Kildare County Development Plan 2022-2029. The assessment report states that “the SFRA informs policy regarding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and identifies areas where Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments (SSFRAs) should be undertaken for development”. It used published OPW flood extent mapping to define the flood zones for the SFRA and states that “All areas where a flood risk has been identified using this flood mapping analysis shall be subject a to site specific flood risk assessment to confirm the extent of flooding on the site”. As identified in Objective TM O54 above the Kildare Development plan identifies the lands west of Maynooth for railway station and depot development.

The second part of the test, set out in Box 5.1 of the OPW GPA relates to the development concerned. In addition to zoning or other designation, it requires the production of an appropriate flood risk assessment that demonstrates the following:

- i. The development proposed will not increase flood risk elsewhere and, if practicable, will reduce overall flood risk;
- ii. The development proposal includes measures to minimise flood risk to people, property, the economy and the environment as far as reasonably possible;
- iii. The development proposed includes measures to ensure that residual risks to the area and/or development can be managed to an acceptable level as regards the adequacy of existing flood protection measures or the design, implementation and funding of any future flood risk management measures and provisions for emergency services access; and
- iv. The development proposed addresses the above in a manner that is also compatible with the achievement of wider planning objectives in relation to development of good urban design and vibrant and active streetscapes.

A detailed flood risk assessment of the project has been carried out. It demonstrates that the proposed development will not increase flood risk elsewhere. It includes measures to minimise flood risk to people, property, and economy through the implementation of Sustainable drainage Systems and compensatory storage. The design provides for climate change to facilitate management of residual risk to the development and the proposals are compatible with the achievement of wider planning objectives.

The location of the proposed Depot is considered to meet the Justification Test set out in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities for a development in a flood plain. The suitability of the site in principal is confirmed as is the ability of the receiving environment to absorb the facility.

Suggestion that: The MCA should be weighted, should be subject to update, that the outcome was predestined 15 years ago and that the cost of land should feature more prominently in the options selection process.

The multi criteria analysis methodology adopted for DART+ West was informed by the Common Appraisal Framework (CAF). It provides for analyses with or without numerical weightings. DART+ West has adopted a mechanism without numerical weightings as the allocation of such weightings can be subjective and unclear. Rather the options are compared with a view to identifying clear advantage, disadvantage or equivalence using a colour coding to provide clarity across the spectrum of parameters assessed.

A common approach was adopted to the cost of land acquisition on the basis that depot configurations on individual sites were likely to have equivalent footprint size and that it would be inappropriate to make specific allowance for compensation over and above a base rate for land value.

Several studies were carried out between 2003 and 2022 which examined the potential location for a depot associated with the expanded DART network. The studies were carried out on differing comparative bases depending on the timing of the production of the study reports. An complete review of earlier options selection was carried out as part of DART+ West to align the methodology with DART+ West MCA practice, to take account of new information which was being acquired by the project team and to consider the implications of the outcome of the Stage 3 assessment of the emerging preferred site. The review was across the full spectrum of parameters, was even handed and is characterised as part of the EIAR and supporting documentation.

The multi criteria analysis of 13 locations, pruned to 8 sites, showed that avoidance and substitution cannot take place in respect of the site and that the site west of Maynooth was the most appropriate site for location of the proposed depot.

The analysis was carried out across six principal criteria. They are Economy, Integration, Environment, Accessibility and Social Inclusion, Safety and Physical Activity. Each criterion is subdivided into sub-criteria to allow comparative evaluation of the options.

The following locations were examined on the basis of 5no principal criteria used to prune sites which are clearly unsuitable for the proposed depot. The criteria were as follows:

- A. Is the site equal to or greater than 20 hectares;
- B. Is there 1,800m linear length directly adjacent to the operational railway;
- C. Is it practical to develop a Maintenance Depot at the exact strategic node?
- D. Is it practical to develop a Maintenance Depot lineside in the wider environs of the strategic node?
- E. Are there fundamental issues with the specific strategic node that deem it unfeasible to continue in the assessment?

The locations were as follows:

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| • Fairview depot | • East Wall Railway Yard | • M3 Parkway Station; |
| • Connolly Station; | • Inchicore Railway Works; | • Hazelhatch Station; |
| • Heuston Station; | • Drogheda Station / depot; | • Greystones Station; |
| • Pearse Station; | • Maynooth Station | • Bray Station. |
| • North Wall Railway Yard | | |

Four locations were taken forward with two sites identified at each for further appraisal. They were Drogheda Environs, Maynooth Environs, M3 Parkway Environs, and Hazelhatch Environs.

EIAR Table 4.1 presents the comparative assessment of the eight options subjected to details multicriteria analysis.

From the table it is clear that six of the eight sites examined exhibit flood risk. Drogheda South performs very poorly in respect of economy and landuse integration due to the positioning of the site at the northern extremity of the proposed DART+ Programme, due to access issues to the site associated with the alignment and the adjacent road network, due to existing heritage structures present on and adjacent to the site and due to land use zoning associated with the site.

The Maynooth East site is too small to accommodate the depot with linear trackside interface only 1.5km and area of approximately 20 hectares. The site is restricted by the presence of several historic monuments and structures including Pike Bridge, Deey bridge and lock, Grangewilliam Cemetry and Monastery (ecclesiastical remains), rectangular enclosure, and a ringfort and Grangewilliam House.

Access to the site from the R148 is constrained and the scope for construction a bridge crossing of the canal and railway is curtailed by the proximity of the R148 to the canal and the presence of the Carton Demsense immeditaely North of the R148. Access to the site would likely require enhancement of the local road network which is subject to ribbon development.

In respect of the OPW GPA, it is clear that substitution cannot take place in respect of the site as all sites considered are either too constrained to house the depot or are subject to the same flood risk challenges evident on the designated site.

The lands west of Maynooth are appropriate for the location of the proposed depot for the following principal reasons:

- The site at the western extremity of the proposed DART+ Programme, a location well positioned to serve the whole of the proposed DART+ network;
- The site is located west of the proposed terminal station on the Maynooth Line. Train movements between the depot and proposed railway network are best facilitated by a terminal configuration. A depot west of Maynooth is at the end of line and will only interface with one train/hour passenger

service. The access/egress from the operational line to the depot is not considered complex. This will result in significant advantages in comparison to other prospective sites;

- The railway alignment is straight on plan for a length of 2.5 km adjacent to the site. The site is large enough to accommodate all the requirements of the depot. The layout of the site has significant advantages over other prospective sites;
- The land is generally flat over the extent of the site;
- There is no residential development on the site. Other prospective sites have houses on them;
- The R148 runs parallel to the railway, north of the proposed site and the M4 is located to the south of the site. The site is well located for staff access from Maynooth or Kilcock;
- With a single centre of excellence maintenance depot, a number of trains at commencement and termination of daily passenger timetable will run empty between city centre and depot. By virtue of the distance, a depot in the Maynooth environs has some advantages over other prospective sites;
- A site in the vicinity of Maynooth offers advantages over other prospective sites in regard to access for maintenance;
- The delivery of DART+ West exhibits the strongest passenger growth characteristics of projects on the DART+ Programme and consequently the best return for investment. There is advantage to delivery of the DART+ West project first. To provide the train services to DART+ West it is necessary to construct a depot. A depot on the Maynooth line, consequently, best suits the effective delivery of the proposed train service specification.

The option selection process associated with the proposed depot west of Maynooth is considered to have identified the most appropriate location for the depot; during design development the site selection was revisited to take account of additional information acquired with advancement of project activity.

Suggestion that: The facilities proposed to be housed at the depot site could be split across several sites and the area used at site selection did not reflect the demands of the depot.

At site selection stage, a 19Ha area was used to prune out sites which were clearly too small to house the proposed depot facility. It was never identified as the anticipated size of the depot. The actual depot area was identified as part of the options selection process and subsequent design development.

The depot lands comprise the following component areas:

- Core Depot (within the depot layout/fencing limits): 28 Ha
- Roads diversion (L5041 + R148) and new bridge: 6.8 Ha
- Compensatory storage areas: 15.4 Ha
- CCE compound: 3.3 Ha
- Rail realignment: 2.8 Ha

With the implementation of DART+ West an expanded fleet of modern trains will be procured. This will be the third fleet of passenger trains in operation on the network, each of which has bespoke demands in respect of parts and maintenance. It is not appropriate to split the maintenance of a given fleet across a number of locations. It is intended that a Centre of Excellence will be established at the proposed Depot to facilitate the maintenance and stabling of the train units.

As part of design development a Stabling Study was carried out. This examined the operation of the network and how trains would be stored overnight. On implementation of the train service specification, half of the trains operating on the network are planned to be stabled at remote locations, at stations and at many of the prospective sites in the ownership of CIÉ which were identified as being too small to accommodate the proposed depot.

The works to realign the railway east of the proposed depot and to realign the existing L5041 are necessary to mitigate the impact of the project on Jacksons Bridge and to address the pre-existing flooding issues associated with the Lyreen River. Regional policy identifies the objective to extend the DART to Kilcock. The works associated with the diversions are necessary to facilitate this extension.

The CCE compound area is needed to accommodate the relocation of an existing compound, currently located in the Docklands and which is affected by the Works. The relocated compound will also accommodate the increased scale of the electrified network. The enhanced access and location of the depot relative to the railway network warranted relocation to the depot site.

All lands identified to be acquired at the depot site are necessary for the successful implementation of DART+ West Project.

Suggestion that: No consideration was given to the potential construction access off the M4, HGV bans on the local network prohibit construction access.

Access to establish the site to construct the southern leg of the proposed L5041 realignment with associated compensatory storage and to construct proposed bridge over the railway is planned along the local road network south of the proposed depot. It is not necessary to construct a direct access off the M4 motorway. Kildare County Council has confirmed again that there are no HGV restrictions in place which would prohibit access and they have raised no issues in regard to the suitability of the existing road network. The construction of the proposed bridge over the canal and railway will take approximately 1 year. Thereafter all access will be off the R148.

Suggestion that: There has been no provision for parking at existing congested stations such as Kilcock and Maynooth. No Park and Ride facilities are proposed.

The coordinated delivery of park and ride facilities across the Greater Dublin Area is being advanced by the NTA on a multi modal basis. The process requires consideration of the delivery of heavy and light railway plans, planned station locations, local and regional bus services, planned urban development and access to the national road network. The NTA plans to facilitate active travel connection to urban centres from the proposed sites. The delivery of such multimodal facilities has been identified as a priority by the NTA and a strategy is in place for delivery of them separate from DART+ West and other proposed transport projects. It is appropriate that the P&R facilities be secured separate from DART+ West so they can be procured in an appropriate timeline and in a coordinated way to meet the multimodal ambitions of the NTA.

The NTA Park and Ride Strategy 2021 Vision aspires to “support sustainable growth in the regions, urban areas, and rural settlements through enhancing connectivity to high quality, accessible, low emission, and sustainable transport; empowering modal shift and increasing the catchment areas of existing and future public transport by delivering a network of appropriate Park and Ride facilities.”

The strategy Objectives for Park & Ride are:

To maximise the opportunities provided by on-going investment in public transport infrastructure and services, particularly in relation to the commencement of service of new public transport projects.

1. To provide the appropriate type and scale of Park and Ride at the right locations, with connectivity to the road and public transport networks and design that supports integration with the surrounding walking and cycling network.
2. Reduce reliance on the private car, reduce distances travelled by car and ensure Park and Ride facilitates greater use of sustainable modes.

3. Deliver an enhanced customer experience through safe, secure, and user-friendly facilities that considers opportunities for interchange and to address barriers to public transport use.
4. To set the standard for the design and layout of P&R sites.