

**Railway Order Dart +West Oral Hearing  
Fingal County Council's Concluding Remarks**

Fingal County Council is committed to supporting and facilitating the delivery of Dart+ West as it is fully consistent with our strategic objectives.

In response to matters raised in Landowner and Observer Submissions and by the Inspector during the Oral Hearing relating to the Fingal area, Fingal County Council would ask for the following to be taken into consideration by An Bord Pleanála in its determination on the Railway Order.

**Response to query raised by Inspector on proposed cycle network in respect of proposed bridges or underpass.**

The Inspector raised this item during the Oral hearing. In general, all the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridges planned as part of Dart + West tie in to either planned cycleways or into desire lines for pedestrian and cycle linkage (Dublin cycle network plan 2022 and Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029).

While Porterstown Road does not have a cycle route planned it links a large school at the North end, St. Mochtas NS with a school campus at the southern end, Scoil Choilm Community NS and Luttrellstown College. All the proposed bridges would link with the proposed Royal Canal Greenway.

There is a proposed cycle scheme between Blanchardstown and Phoenix Park cycleway which would need an additional structure at Granard bridge. A consultant is being procured currently by Fingal CC for the design of that scheme.

**Response to query raised by Inspector in respect of the Ongar Barnhill Road**

The Ongar Barnhill Road and the upgrade of Barberstown Lane South is under construction since mid-September this year with an expected completion of Q2 2025.

**Response to matters raised on impacts to Architectural Heritage**

It is essential that conservation and good-quality architectural solutions direct and develop the design of the interventions to the architectural heritage impacted by the Dart + West including the historic masonry bridges of the rail-line and the Royal Canal, and the other sites that need careful consideration and sympathetic handling are the settings of the protected structures of Ashton House, Ashtown Mill, Former Clonsilla Schoolhouse, Clonsilla Train Station. Any revised proposals should be agreed with Fingal County Council, prior to any works commencing.

### **Response to discussion on Ashton House**

Fingal County Council would request that further consideration is given to the potential architectural heritage and ecological impacts at this location, in particular with regard to the entrance and boundary wall proposal for Ashton House, along with the on-site mitigation measures to protect the ecological corridor of the southern and eastern side of the historic designed landscape.

With regard to general ecological considerations, it is acknowledged that while the loss of trees cannot be avoided for Health and Safety reasons, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment that clearly quantifies both the loss of trees and the proposed tree gain through any mitigation would prove useful in demonstrating that the proposed works at Ashtown would not have an unacceptable impact on the ecology of the area.

In this regard it should be noted that the treeline within the east and south of the Ashton House lands is extensive and is linked with the Riparian Corridor of the Royal Canal which makes it an important ecological corridor in the area. High value ecological corridors such as this have become rare and fragmented in the wider landscape and need to be protected and retained or where it has to be compromised the compensatory/mitigation tree planting is installed and well-established before any tree removal commences. It is considered that the loss of trees along the newly proposed road layout could potentially be overcome through planting of additional trees, extending the boundary of the wooded area to the west, beyond the extent of the newly constructed retaining walls to where the ramp levels out within the grounds of Ashton House. It is requested that prior to the commencement of any works in the Ashtown area that the engagement takes place with Fingal County Council in relation the removal and replacement of trees which form the ecological corridor.

### **Architectural Heritage Considerations**

It is considered that the design as proposed by Irish Rail for Ashton House gates, entrance avenue and boundary to Ashtown Road would benefit from further consideration in order to ensure a more considered and sympathetic handling of the existing built fabric of the area. In this regard, it is requested that the applicant engages with Fingal County Council prior to the carrying out of any works in this area.

With regard to the consideration of the alternative option for works at Ashton Gate proposed by Castlethorn, Fingal County Council is of the opinion that the original option proposed by Irish Rail represents a more appropriate response having regard to the potential impact of the alternative option on the existing ecological corridor in the area.

Finally, Fingal County Council has significant concerns in relation to the placement of a construction compound within the protected and highly sensitive lands of Ashtown House.

It is requested that the applicant considers an alternative location for the compound, that includes the consideration of lands in the vicinity indicated for permanent acquisition for the project.

**Response to comments on Overbridge Designs**

Fingal County Council welcomes the opening statement by Irish Rail that included reference to revisions/development of the design of the four pedestrian and cycle overbridges within the Fingal area and that there will be more consistency in the design approach to all four bridges. Fingal County Council has repeatedly raised the need for these structures to be high-quality architectural designs that are as lightweight and as visually permeable as possible as they directly impact on the setting of the protected structure of the Royal Canal and its historic masonry bridges, and on the other protected structures of the Former Clonsilla Schoolhouse at Porterstown and Clonsilla Signal Box & Overbridge. These will be visually dominant new insertions into the existing environment so the material/finish chosen needs to be carefully considered as to whether it emphasises or minimises the linear extent of the access ramps.

In conclusion, Fingal County Council is committed to supporting and facilitating the delivery of Dart+ West. We will continue to engage with Irish Rail following the outcome of this process.