

An Bord Pleanála,  
Marlboro Street,  
Dublin 1  
26<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**Dart+ West Railway Order  
Ref NC29N.306587 Maynooth – Dublin City**

Observation on the Rail Order sent in by

Cllr Nuala Killeen, 21 Abbey Lane, Celbridge, Co. Kildare

And to include the observations of the Kildare Cllrs including Cllr Aidan Farrelly and Cllr Bill Clear

Support

We are supportive of the Dart+ West Project and as a community, we are looking forward to the extension of Dart services to Maynooth, when they come on stream.

The commuter towns of Kilcock, Maynooth and Leixlip that move passengers into Dublin and return by rail require this level of investment in public transport infrastructure.

Our aim is to encourage more widespread use of public transport overall and to advocate for quality public transport services.

The population numbers expected to live in the Greater Dublin Area commuter belt are rising each year. There are 10% population growth targets for Kildare for each town Leixlip, Celbridge & Maynooth and 5% for Kilcock. Alongside already planned and permitted strategic housing developments set to commence, there is an expected Urban Development Zone to accommodate 3,500 in Confey and more development of land is expected in the near term.

This level of population growth requires accessible, efficient and robust public transport to facilitate the efficient movement of people to support the towns and our climate targets.

**There are issues within the Rail Order for the Dart+ West project that have a direct impact on certain Kildare areas.**

### **Confey Train Station at Cope Bridge, Leixlip at**

#### **Access to Dart+West stations:**

There is a deficiency of capacity for car parking at Confey Train station. Development of capacity needs to be considered. Originally, in the concept phases of the Bus Connects C-Spine, the bus terminus was due to be sited at the train station.

Having a bus terminus and turning circle at Confey station would relieve current bus congestion on the local L routes significantly impacting Leixlip residents. Where a terminus is sited within Confey station and bus services aligned to incoming trains, an efficient joined up transport system would then be in place. It would also be of direct benefit to the commuters and residents in the area.

At the moment there is significant rail user use of neighbouring housing estates to avail of car parking whilst accessing the current train service. This has led to constraint in the busy area and conflict with the needs of the current residents. An improvement to this current situation needs to be considered as part of the rail order.

#### **Access to housing estate**

Consideration needs to be given for access to utility vehicles, emergency vehicles and for the residents to have peaceful enjoyment of their estate.

Noise levels of plant machinery, cranes, night work, vibrations from works and illuminations from light work will impact on the quality of life for residents in the estate where the green space adjacent to the homes is being used as a construction compound.

### **Glendale Estate – Cope Bridge**

Glendale housing estate is adjacent to Cope Bridge and has been occupied for decades.

The main concern of residents is in relation to the taking over of their open green space area to accommodate a substation and signal building.

Additionally, it is proposed to locate an access road to the substation on the open green space.

The below figure represents three construction compound areas to be sited adjacent to the houses on the open green space. The first is to facilitate the construction of the bridge. One is due to house a construction compound and the third to facilitate the building of the substation and signal housing itself.

The green space in question is part of the original amenity space associated with the planning permission for Glendale. The estate has been formally taken into the charge of Kildare County Council. In the past, it was usual practice for the Council not to take the green spaces in charge, these remained in the technical ownership of the original developer who is

listed on land registry today. The development plan does however restrict the use to those lands for amenity purposes.

Glendale Residents Association have collected fees and maintained this space for decades, it is used daily mainly by children. It is understandable therefore that while there is a lot of support for the Dart + upgrade there is a lot of upset about the impact this aspect of the proposal will have. There was never any expectation that open green space would be utilised to facilitate a large industrial building and a construction compound with a large permanent building left behind.

The figure below highlights the amount of open undeveloped space that surrounds the open green space that could instead be utilised to accommodate the signal substation and construction compound. This needs to be seriously considered.

On the road facing Glendale Estate there are schools and a nearby secondary school. Traffic is currently constrained from Cope Bridge to the Main Street. Adding a construction compound on this side of the bridge is not the most efficient way to deal with traffic / plant machinery. The other side of the bridge was used to facilitate construction of other ESB / Irish Water projects in recent years.

The rail order would not have to be much amended, it could be requested to resite the compound and the substation as an amendment or condition of the order.

There are open fields on the far side of the bridge opposite the station that could easily accommodate a compound. There is also sufficient space to locate the sub-station directly opposite the station which is separated by the Royal canal.

## **Cope Bridge**

It is proposed to install two pre constructed bridges to facilitate foot passengers and cycle lanes on both bridges.

It would be essential to consider installing one bridge, having this operational for cyclists and pedestrians at an early stage of the proposed bridge construction where feasible.

There is a large population in Confey with much access requirement to Maynooth, Blanchardstown and Lucan via Cope Bridge. Due to the issues with the bus service, most of the traffic congestion goes through Cope Bridge on the way to Lucan, Intel and the other side of Leixlip – also to access the N4 from Dublin and Meath commuters.

There are also about 2000 homes in the Confey area all of which access Captains Hill, a primary school, large secondary and library, youth centre and graveyard (on the other side of Cope bridge).

I had called for a safety audit of Captains Hill from Riverforest to the Main street as the issues are so apparent and complex, a traffic consultant is currently employed to undertake this safety assessment.

Bus Routes need to be considered that go through Confey e.g. the 139 bus service from Naas to Blanchardstown via Confey.

Earlier installation of the pedestrian bridge would benefit the Confey GAA club which is a vibrant social and sports complex. Access to the graveyard for funerals needs to be sensitively considered. If the proposal to completely close all access for several months is realised, it will create huge traffic issues in Lucan and on the Maynooth side of Kellystown Lane where thousands of cars daily will be rerouted. This will impact workers at Intel, the school communities and workers trying to travel through and from Leixlip. An interim solution must be considered at this stage for the least amount of closure.

### **Construction Phase**

The phase of utilising three separate construction compounds on the open space of a mature housing estate needs very detailed consideration. Perhaps, a complete resiting of these compounds ought to be considered. The residents of Glendale and Glendale Meadows have enjoyed peaceful occupation of their housing estate since the 80s and would never have expected their open space to be a construction site once the estate was taken in charge by Kildare County Council. This usually protects the open space in the housing estate for the residents.

The constructed pedestrian bridge will be brought into one of the compounds. Considering the road and the scale of the plant machinery and constructed bridge elements, the angles of the turn on the residential roads within the estate and disturbance to residents and other road users must be considered.

During the construction phase a detailed traffic management plan needs to be put in place. In addition managing a compound especially if it is ultimately located in a housing estate requires detailed consideration.

Light pollution and noise are of great concern as the construction compounds are within a quiet mature housing estate utilising their green space.

Construction vehicles and the noise and vibration they will bring will be a disturbance so when adding to the light noise and dust from a construction site, much disturbance will occur.

It is anticipated much of the work will be done at night when activity around the compound might generate both a lot of noise and light pollution, this is a real concern. Safety is also an issue of concern given the type of vehicles that will be in use.

The existing entrance to Glendale is often congested. Glendale and Glendale Meadows are two separate housing estates that were built at different times. Non-resident parking, some of which originates from Glendale Meadows has been a feature particularly since the train station opened, it should be noted that there is very limited car parking spaces at the station. The compound only adds to the daily challenge for residents accessing their homes.

Should the compound be constructed in Glendale it is essential that following the completion of the works the area is restored to a high standard and to the satisfaction of the residents.

## **Pedestrian Safety**

At rail order stage, it has not been defined which pedestrian access routes have been considered. There is the pedestrian footbridge to allow crossing over Cope Bridge. However, there is a requirement at the Confey area to ensure provision of planned, laid out pedestrian access to housing estates, bus stops, the library and youth centre and also safe access towards the Confey GAA site and graveyard. They are all very busy areas. A traffic management plan should be developed that considers the planned Urban Development Zone in the Confey area. The team should consider making submissions to the Master Plan when the time arrives.

## **Cycling Infrastructure.**

It is really important that at each station there needs to be infrastructure for cyclists. To encourage more people to use active travel methods to travel to the stations. Proper facilities must be in place. These include but not exclusively,

1. Segregated cycle track from the main road as close as possible to the train platforms.
2. Sufficient and secure covered bike parking in an area that has both passive and CCTV security.
3. Availability of bike lockers in the same vicinity.
4. Good lighting for all users of the bike racks.
5. Where possible cycling/bicycle routes should be utilised along existing desire lines. It will be obvious where these are, broken fences, hedge openings small gates.

## **Leixlip Louisa Station**

Access to bus services that align with train departures and arrivals is crucial to promote extended use of the train station. Accessible options and lift access must also be offered.

## **Blakestown Level Crossing**

In the project phases that sought community observations in respect of the Dart+ plan, the community and representatives were very vocal in opposing the closure of Blakestown Level Crossing. The crossing offers a direct link to Intel which is a huge site of employment and construction. The community are based at Kilmacraedock which has links to the M4 and also a large strategic housing development called Leixlip Gate is scheduled to be sited nearby.

The Royal Canal Greenway upgrade project is just about to commence where a valuable community asset will be in place. Where Blakestown is due to close, the access to this will no longer be available for many residents in that part of Leixlip (Beech Park, Westfield etc). People wishing to access the Royal Greenway will have to travel by car to the Greenway and it does not align with current Kildare county Council's sustainable travel permeability goals.

Where it is planned to site a substation at this site, a pedestrian and cycleway link could easily be added to the order to maintain this permeability. It is also the area where the historical access to the Celbridge Connolly estate was – hence the title Leixlip Gate.

## **Kilcock Services;**

The Railway Order proposes to cease the line 450m from Kilcock's current train station.

It is not envisaged that passengers will be able to access the Dart at Kilcock. The towns Leixlip, Maynooth and Kilcock contain a large number of commuting passengers and there has been a number of SHDs in Kilcock the population is still expanding.

Traffic comes from Kilcock to Leixlip and Maynooth to join the rail service. Extending the line to Kilcock will alleviate some of that pressure on the M4 and would also align with sustainable travel goals.

At the time of the Docklands Light railway project in the UK, to align that service with other underground and overground services the DLR rail line was extended far more than 500 creating a further platform for the passengers to access. This has been done in other international areas and would be less costly as an interim measure.

It is understood that a separate rail order will consider Kilcock but if that is years away, it will not alleviate the growing pressure on transport infrastructure. An interim solution of extension of the current line could be considered.

The residential and business communities in Kilcock have been very active in advocating for a better rail link and ought to have been considered in provision of the Dart+ West project.

## **Water Issues**

The Rail line in Leixlip runs adjacent to an aqueduct, care should be taken to preserve and protect this.

The confey area has the Royal Canal which is undergoing significant investment to improve, the construction plans should ensure that no deterioration to the works undertaken as part of the greenway upgrade occur.

The railway order should ensure that no damage is done to the canal during the works and seek to leave the area better than when started.

There is an area of significant beauty and areas of special conservation beyond the canal, natural springs should be retained and care taken to avoid any pollution events.

Assessment of areas prone to flooding should be carefully considered as some historical incidences are recorded, specially at Jacksons Bridge and the wider area there in Kilcock.

In all areas where the Dart+ West project is to be installed, consideration to noise pollution, air pollution, disruption to residents and light pollution if works are conducted at night should be the utmost consideration.

Cllr Nuala Killeen,

Cllr Aidan Farrelly,

Cllr Bill Clear

Social Democrats Clls in the Kildare North Area



Pics to highlight the alternative open space options available onsite.

