



27 Pelletstown Avenue  
D15KPN5

An Bord Pleanála  
64 Marlborough St  
Dublin 1  
D01V902

28<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: DART+ West Electrified Railway Order 2022**

Rathborne Community Association (RCA) wish to express our general support for the latest plans for Ashtown Rail Station as detailed in the DART+ West Railway Order Application (July 2022), with some observations for minor changes and/or additional detail.

As per our submission in April 2022 (see Appendix), two key areas of concern have been addressed in the revised preferred option with further detail provided in the Railway Order Application:

1. North-south road links are maintained in the area
2. The pedestrian cycle bridge ensures that pedestrians and cyclists benefit from passive surveillance

**Pedestrian Cycle Bridge**

As noted in our April 2022 submission regarding the pedestrian cycle bridge, *"it is imperative that the aesthetic design of the bridge is sympathetic to the heritage nature of the surrounding location."*

The Railway Order Application provides three *photomontage* images of the proposed solution at Ashtown Station. Only one of these images (Image 1 below) is from a ground-level perspective. While we recognise that any structure which must traverse the railway will necessarily be of significant scale, the proposed bridge appears imposing in the single ground-level image provided. We would welcome the publication of additional images that would assist in understanding the aesthetic impact on the area.

We would welcome further engagement with the local community and additional detail on

1. the specific material to be used in the bridge,
2. how the steel is to be maintained and corrosion managed,
3. how resistant to graffiti
4. examples of bridges with similar material already in existence in Ireland/UK where climate conditions are similar

**Image 1**



**Image 2**



**Figure 4-15     Photomontage of the proposed Ashtown underpass and footbridge**



### **Image 3**



**Figure 4-16     Photomontage of Ashtown Station after removal of level crossing**

### **Passenger Lifts**

The latest proposal does not include passenger lifts. This may impede the capacity for passengers and local residents with mobility issues to cross the railway. However, the addition of passenger lifts would likely increase the height of the bridge by an additional 2 metres.

We would welcome further community consultation on the matter to understand the considerations regarding the omission of passenger lifts.

### **Martin Savage Park Residents Association (MSPRA) Proposals**

We have engaged with our neighbours in Martin Savage Park in recent months regarding the revised proposals for Ashtown Station. We are greatly encouraged that both RCA and MSPRA are broadly aligned in our support for the latest Irish Rail proposal (July 2022) for Ashtown Station.

We recognise that there are a variety of public realm changes on the south side of the railway line which will have a direct impact on the residents of Martin Savage Park.

We have received a copy of the MSPRA submission to Irish Rail in relation to the latest proposals for Ashtown Station and we wish to express RCA's support for the constructive suggestions made under the following headings:

- **Construction Compound**
  - An alternative location west of Ashtown Station is proposed
- **Setdown Area on Ashtown Road**
  - It is requested to retain as much of the existing tree cover as possible
- **Location of Substation**
  - Alternative locations further east or to the west of Ashtown Station are proposed
- **Flooding Risk**
  - Flooding that occurred in MSP in 2020 was not referred to in the Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment, July 2022

## **Conclusion**

Rathborne Community Association is supportive of the DART+ West project and the general solution proposed to replace the Ashtown level crossing.

The pedestrian cycle bridge will have a significant visual impact on the area. It is imperative that full consideration is given to the suitability of materials for future maintenance so that it does not detract from the aesthetic of the area.

Considerations regarding the omission of a passenger lift needs to be understood by the community.

Genuine concerns raised by Martin Savage Park Residents Association should be addressed and where possible, proposed changes should be adopted.

Rathborne Community Association have engaged constructively on all proposals to date and urge Irish Rail to continue to engage with the local community to achieve the best outcome for all parties.

Yours faithfully

Rathborne Community Association

[Rathborne.Community@gmail.com](mailto:Rathborne.Community@gmail.com)

## **Appendix – April 2022 Submission to Irish Rail re Revised Ashtown Preferred Option**

**By Email: DARTWest@irishrail.ie**

DART+ West  
Iarnród Éireann  
Inchicore Works  
Inchicore Parade  
Dublin 8  
D08K6Y3

6th April 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: DART+ West  
Public Consultation  
Revised Ashtown Preferred Option**

Rathborne Community Association (RCA) wish to express our support for Option 10 as detailed in the Revised Ashtown Preferred Option – Option Selection Report.

As detailed in our October 2021 submission (see Appendix 1 attached), it is critical that local north-south vehicular access be retained in the vicinity and that pedestrian and cyclist access be facilitated in a manner that does not present a risk to public safety. Option 10 achieves both objectives.

We welcome the inclusion of the Pedestrian Cycle Bridge as detailed in Figures 4-2 and 4-3 of the report. The inclusion of the bridge addresses a significant concern raised in our October submission with regard to pedestrian and cyclist access being incorporated within the proposed underpass: *“the walkways would be out of sight of any nearby residences, isolated upon approach from Rathborne village and along the Mill Lane, greatly reducing the passive oversight that our community currently benefits from. The underpass would introduce a secluded and distant passageway with no visibility from residential areas.”*

The revised proposal ensures that pedestrians and cyclists benefit from passive surveillance.

We note *“The bridge design is proposed to incorporate structural steel to give it a light appearance and to keep the walking surfaces as low as is practicable. The use of steel also provides for enhanced architectural treatment for the proposed station.”*

It is imperative that the aesthetic design of the bridge is sympathetic to the heritage nature of the surrounding location. We welcome the proposed use of steel rather than the Brutalist concrete structure used at the neighbouring Pelletstown station. We would welcome further consultation with the local community on the detail of any final design.

Option 10 ensures that vehicular access to/from the Navan Road via the Ashtown Roundabout is maintained. Options 4, 11 & 12 shortlisted in Stage 2 MCA necessitate traffic travels west to access the Navan Road. These options are impractical as city-bound traffic must travel away from the city before joining what is a heavily-congested route approaching Ashtown Roundabout at peak times. These options would likely have a severe impact on the neighbouring Royal Canal Park development as traffic would be routed through residential areas to access the bridge on Ratoath Road (R805). Access to Ratoath Road from River Road already suffers from severe tailbacks at peak times.

Option 13 maintains north-south vehicular access via a proposed overbridge, but is an inferior solution to Option 10 as, per the report, it “*severs the high amenity zoned lands in two rather than skirting the curtilage of them*”.

While not short-listed, we would like to voice our concerns re Option 9. The option will impact directly on protected structures including the Royal Canal, canal locks and Longford Bridge. The three-year disruption to rail services envisaged would have a severe impact on the high-density population of Rathborne who rely heavily on the commuter rail facility, in addition to all communities along the Maynooth/Sligo line.

## **Conclusion**

There is no prefect solution for the complex issues faced at Ashtown Level Crossing. There are compromises required, regardless of the option presented. Rathborne Community Association agree that the level crossing must be closed to facilitate the necessary delivery of Dart+ West.

We are satisfied that the revised preferred option 10 delivers safety for pedestrians & cyclists, while preserving the necessary north-south vehicle access for our community. We advocate further community engagement regarding the final designs for the Pedestrian Cycle Bridge to ensure that the visual impact is appropriate for the area.

Yours faithfully

Rathborne Community Association

[Rathborne.Community@gmail.com](mailto:Rathborne.Community@gmail.com)