

**IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION TO
AN BORD PLEANALA**

**For Approval of the Railway (Metrolink – Estuary to Charlemont via
Dublin Airport) Order [2022]**

ABP-314724-22

ORAL HEARING

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE

on

Opening Statement

By

Aidan Foley

19 February 2024

**MetroLink Oral Hearing
Brief of Evidence of Aidan Foley
Opening Statement**

1 Qualifications and Role on the MetroLink Project

1.1 My name is Aidan Foley. I am employed as Transport Infrastructure Irelands (TII) Project Director for MetroLink. I am a Chartered Engineer with Engineers Ireland and hold a MSc in Railway Engineers and Systems Integration from Birmingham City University and an MBA from University College Dublin. Since joining TII in 2009, I have worked on the original Metro North Project, Luas Cross City Project. I have been responsible for the delivery of the MetroLink project since 2015.

1.2 My evidence is concerned with:

1.2.1 The Opening Day introduction to the MetroLink Project, it will cover the following areas; Scheme Overview, the need for public transport, Public consultation, Design and Construction, access to information, the Property Owners Protection Scheme, the Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan, the Preferred Route Design Development Report and the approach to TII's proposed Asset Protection Policy.

2 Introduction to MetroLink.

2.1 I am very pleased to be here today with my colleagues to participate on the oral hearing for Metrolink scheme. MetroLink is a transformative project for Dublin and a critical component of the NTAs integrated public transport plan for the city. MetroLink will bring enormous benefits to residents and visitors and will help provide the city with a modern transport system befitting a European Capital City.

2.2 MetroLink is a key scheme in an overarching strategy to make Dublin a liveable city. Its need has been established in every relevant transport study and policy document including the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 and 2022-2024, the Fingal/North Dublin Transport Study 2014-2015 and the National Development Plan 2018-2027 and 2021-2030

2.3 It aligns strongly with several of the National Strategic Outcomes of Project Ireland 2040, by enabling compact growth, enhancing regional accessibility, delivering sustainable mobility, contributing to our transition to a low carbon and climate resilient economy and being a significant element of high-quality international connectivity.

2.4 I and my colleagues are here to assist the Inspector in your understanding of the scheme and to address the concerns that stakeholder's line-wide have raised during the non-statutory and statutory consultation process.

2.5 If I could take a few minutes to remind everyone of the problem that MetroLink is attempting to address. I would like to provide a brief overview of the scheme and its objectives.

3 MetroLink Scheme Description/Objectives

3.1 MetroLink is a transformative piece of new public transport infrastructure, the first of its kind in Ireland. It will comprise a high-capacity, high-frequency, modern and efficient metro railway, with 16 new stations running from Swords to Charlemont. The alignment will link Dublin Airport, Irish Rail, DART, Dublin Bus and Luas services and create a fully integrated public transport network for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The MetroLink alignment is shown in adjacent map.

3.2 It is fully aligned with the Government's National Planning Framework (including strong alignment to the national strategic outcomes), the Programme for Government, Regional and Local Development Plans, Area Transport Strategies, the Climate Action Plan 2023/2024, Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill

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2020, and TII's Environmental Strategy. It is also fully aligned with the European Green Deal and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- 3.3 As well as linking major transport hubs, MetroLink will connect key destinations including Ballymun, the Mater Hospital, the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin City University (DCU) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD). Much of the 18.8km route will run underground, an exciting innovation for Irish public transport.
- 3.4 When operations commence there will be trains every three minutes during peak periods. This can rise to a service every 90/100 seconds by 2060 if required. The system will be capable of carrying up to 20,000 passengers per hour in each direction. For comparison, current Luas Green Line services can carry circa 9,000 passengers per direction per hour.
- 3.5 When completed passengers will be able travel from Swords to Dublin city centre in approximately 25 minutes and it is estimated that MetroLink will carry up to 53 million passengers annually.
- 3.6 Metrolink's primary objective is to provide a sustainable, safe, efficient, integrated and accessible public transport service between Swords, Dublin Airport and Dublin City Centre forming a key spine of the proposed integrated public transport system for Dublin which includes DART+ and BusConnects projects.

4 The Problem/Need for Public Transport

- 4.1 Ireland is outgrowing its current transportation infrastructure. In 2021, Dublin ranked as the 35th most congested city in the world. A single Dublin commuter will, on average, spend over 213 hours a year stuck in traffic (28 extra minutes each rush hour). Economists estimate that, without intervention, congestion and lost time will cost the Irish economy over €2 billion per annum in 2033 (EFEU, 2017).
- 4.2 This problem is forecast to worsen as Ireland's population continues to grow. At the last census in 2016, Ireland's population stood at just under 4.8 million, having grown by 3.8% since 2011. Dublin City's population grew 5.1% in the same period, while the Fingal County Council (FCC) area experienced a population growth of 8.0%, twice the national rate of growth.
- 4.3 Project Ireland 2040: NPF forecasts a 25% increase in the population in the Dublin area by 2040. The Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan envisages a population of 1.65 million in the metropolitan area by 2031, an increase of 250,000 (18%) from 2016.
- 4.4 The GDA transportation network is not ready to accommodate these levels of growth and needs significant investment in new infrastructure projects such as Metrolink, Dart, BusConnects to enable sustainable growth, prosperity and improved living standards for our citizens.

5 The Swords / City Centre Corridor

- 5.1 The Swords, Dublin Airport, Dublin City Centre corridor is a major artery for the Irish economy and is becoming increasingly impacted by the trends identified above. Almost 8,000 workers currently commute from Swords to Dublin City Centre, but only 12% of those commuters use public transport (CSO, 2016).
- 5.2 Congestion is reaching critical levels along the Swords, Dublin Airport, Dublin City Centre corridor – a major artery for our economy (growth in traffic of between 30% and 35% was recorded between 2013 and 2019 on the national roads within the area of Influence of MetroLink such as the M1 and M50). The morning peak journey times for private vehicles from Swords Pavilion to St. Stephen's Green, approximately 19 kilometres, can be as much as 55 minutes or longer. This compares to off-peak times of between 25 and 35 minutes.

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- 5.3 An intervention on this corridor is necessary in order to achieve a change in transport patterns that reduces the reliance on private cars and increases significantly the modal shift to public transport. This would allow the opportunity for the transport network to be optimised by freeing up capacity for more efficient goods and service transport. The intervention must not only address the identified challenges that are experienced today and address potential future congestion and sustainable development challenges
- 5.4 Public transport capacity along the corridor is constrained also. At present there are limited express bus services serving the Swords area with many of them covering long and circuitous routes around the Swords area before accessing the motorway network / areas of bus priority. The express services that do exist do not have any stops along the Swords, Dublin Airport, Dublin City Centre corridor and therefore only serve demand for travel between the city centre and Swords and do not offer any connectivity to other destinations along the corridor.
- 5.5 It is the combination of need to address housing and land-use patterns as our population continues to increase, coupled with maintaining and protecting the economic efficiency of this corridor, that elevates the requirement for an intervention in this area. The intervention is required and should allow the opportunity for the network to be optimised by freeing up capacity on the existing road network for more efficient goods and service transport and make the transportation network more sustainable and to create a more sustainable and liveable environment. The intervention must not only address the challenges of today but the potential challenges of the future.

6 Socioeconomic Costs

- 6.1 While the impact of congestion and the lost hours for commuters are significant, the inefficiency of the transportation system hides a lot of additional socioeconomic costs. The statistics quoted above only reference those willing to endure the peak traffic delays. However, the lack of reliable journey time has other more difficult to measure impacts.
- 6.2 People leave earlier/later in the mornings to avoid the peak hour rush making the transportation system look like it is more efficient than it is and hides other costs. It puts pressure on families, with one or more parent being absent from the home for longer periods. Which leads to increased childcare demands and increased pressure on parents in the household, which can create a cycle of increased stress, reduced disposable income and reduced quality of life.
- 6.3 On the other side, for those that can afford it, it also can generate the desire for multiple vehicles at home (with associated negative environmental and sustainability impacts). It follows that, an inefficient transportation system will generate other societal and economic inefficiencies, making an efficient, reliable and demand responsive transportation system crucial to a sustainable and resilient economy and society.

7 Public Consultation

In preparing an application for a Railway Order ABP for the proposed Project, the Project Team has consulted with the public and stakeholders in accordance with the following legislative, best practice and planning practice requirements:

- Aarhus Convention;
- Consolidated EIA Directive requirements; and
- Requirements of National Law.

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- 7.1 At the outset the project team developed a project roadmap to help guide the consultation and engagement process and to show how consultation feeds into the technical development of the project. The project roadmap or timeline acted as a visual aid and set out the stages of project development and the associated stages of public consultation.



- 7.2 MetroLink has been committed to public and landowner engagement as an integral part of its project development process. This approach is informed by national and European requirements and enhanced by TII's organisational commitment to best practice in this area. Public involvement is a fundamental principle of EIA. The inclusion of the views of the affected and interested public helped the Project Team to ensure the decision-making process is equitable and fair and would lead to more informed choice and better environmental outcomes. To that end, it was decided at the outset of the MetroLink project to hold a number of non-statutory consultations to facilitate greater public participation.
- 7.3 Public consultations were conducted in line with the project roadmap to ensure the most meaningful contribution to design phases. These non-statutory consultation periods invited stakeholders to provide feedback in the form of a submission. Stakeholders made submissions primarily through email and post.
- 7.4 In the three-year period, and in line with the project roadmap, a number of public consultation periods were carried out. These submissions were an effective way of understanding the concerns and feedback of interested individuals and impacted stakeholders. Further details of the consultation periods are outlined later in this chapter.
- 7.5 Emerging Preferred Route - Non Statutory Consultation : The announcement of the Emerging Preferred Route (EPR) was made on 22 March 2018 with the inclusion of the first non-statutory consultation on the development of the EPR over a period of seven weeks, from 22 March 2018 to 11 May. The purpose of this first non-statutory consultation was to present the EPR and the concept design scheme for the proposed MetroLink Project and to elicit views of the public and stakeholders. To ensure maximum visibility and an opportunity for the public to meet the Project Team, venues at key locations were chosen to facilitate access to all members of the public. Staff were available at these venues to address any queries in relation to the proposed Project.
- 7.6 Following the seven public consultation events, a total of 7,591 submissions were received via phone, email, letter and from feedback forms provided at the events. These submissions covered a wide range of topics including general interest in the proposed Project.
- 7.7 Preferred Route Non-Statutory Consultation - Following a review of the EPR and the issues raised during the EPR Consultation, the Preferred Route was determined. As outlined in the preceding section, the positive changes made to the EPR for the Preferred Route, addressed the majority of stakeholder concerns giving way to a very positive second period of non-statutory consultation. The Preferred Route consultation took place over an eight-week period from 26 March 2019 to 21 May 2019.

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- 7.8 The purpose of this consultation period was to present the Preferred Route and the key changes that were implemented following the consideration of feedback received during the consultation for the EPR, and to receive further feedback from the public on the design development. Consultation events took place at five venues across Dublin City and county. Venues were selected at key points along the route to ensure communities impacted by the proposed Project had at least one accessible venue.
- 7.9 Following the close of the Preferred Route consultation, a total of 2,132 submissions were received by email, post and at consultation events. These submissions were reviewed, analysed, and all consultation feedback was then provided to the Project Design and Environment teams for consideration.
- 8 Albert Collage Non-Statutory Consultation – During the public consultation, local residents requested that more information be provided about the shaft, so they could properly consider its impact on the surrounding area. In response to this request, MetroLink initiated a local area consultation to explain in more detail the function and need for the intervention shaft at Albert College Park. The Albert College Park Tunnel Intervention Shaft Local Area Consultation was launched on Wednesday 12 February 2020 and ran for four weeks until 11 March 2020.
- 9 Wider consultation - TII have consulted extensively with local residents groups, statutory bodies local businesses and other interested parties along the route during the projects development. Full details of the consultations are provided in Volume 2 chapter 8 of the EIAR.

Access to Project Information,

- 10 Aside from the comprehensive documentation forming part of the Railway order Application, the following document are available on the Metrolink.ie website:
- Land Acquisition Strategy
 - All documents relevant to the EPR/PR studies
 - Preliminary Design Review Report
 - POPS Scheme
 - Airborne and Ground Borne Noise Policy
 - Albert College Park Intervention shaft consultation document
 - All of the documents requested by the Inspector are also available on the Project Website MetroLinkro.ie
- 11 **Property Owners Protection Scheme**
- 11.1 TII is satisfied that the tunnel and the stations comprising the MetroLink Project will be constructed at an appropriate depth and using appropriate methodologies as per international best practice to ensure that the buildings above it will not suffer significant adverse effects. TII is also satisfied that it will have appropriate measures in place to monitor adverse changes including vibration and settlement devices. The MetroLink construction project will have extensive public liability insurance cover for damage to third party properties as is normal for any similar large construction project.
- 11.2 Notwithstanding this, in the course of the Emerging and Preferred Route Non-Statutory Consultation for the TII noted that a number of residents expressed concerns in relation to possible damage that might be caused

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to their properties during the construction of MetroLink. In response to this feedback, and in order to alleviate any concerns that private residential property owners may have regarding possible damage to their property, a Property Owners Protection Scheme (POPS) has been established.

- 11.3 It is important to emphasise at the outset that POPS is not a substitute or replacement for any legal remedies otherwise available to any property owners, and no person who signs up to it will be worse off for having done so. In fact, those who sign up will avail of significant benefits not available as legal rights. Any person who signs up to POPS and is unhappy with the solutions offered by POPS will be free to pursue such other legal remedies they wish.
- 11.4 POPS is:
- Free of charge
 - Fast-track
 - Voluntary
 - Non-binding
 - In addition to all other legal rights and remedies of property owners
 - In addition to the community liaison arrangements and the measures taken to enhance residential amenities and to monitor and mitigate adverse impacts of the MetroLink works

Entitlement to sign up to POPS

- 11.5 POPS is a voluntary Scheme that allows homeowners (i.e. owners of residential property) and owner management companies (in relation to residential common areas) to sign their property up to the scheme if their property (or part of it) lies within thirty (30) metres of the MetroLink Route Alignment or fifty (50) metres of station structures. The immediately adjoining property to a POPS property will also be included in the scheme. These zones of potential influence were selected by TII's engineers on foot of empirical evidence relating to ground movement as outlined in the EIAR Volume 5 Appendices A5.17 ("Building Damage Report").
- 11.6 POPS is also available to landlords of residential properties. POPS is not open to non-residential property owners.
- 11.7 Although it is open to those who sign up to POPS to withdraw from it, it will not be possible for those who do not sign up to it to join the scheme once construction begins as a pre-condition survey is required.

Components of POPS

- 11.8 POPS comprises two aspects:
- 11.8.1 Condition surveys of residential properties along the route of the proposed Project, for the purpose of (a) recording their condition before, during and/or after the MetroLink construction works; and
- 11.8.2 Repair or remediation of damage caused as a result of the MetroLink construction works where the estimated cost of repair does not exceed €45,000.00

How does the POPS scheme work?

- 11.9 TII has established a panel of three independent firms of building surveyors. When a homeowner signs up to the POPS, they will be invited to select a firm from this panel. This surveyor's firm will carry out an initial condition survey of the residential property before any construction begins. If a qualifying property is on the Record of Protected Structures, this survey will be carried out by a Conservation Specialist. After the

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surveyor's firm completes the initial condition survey, they will issue an initial condition survey report to the homeowner and to TII.

- 11.10 If, in the course of the MetroLink works, it becomes necessary or appropriate to carry out interim condition surveys, these will be carried out by the surveyor's firm and issued to the homeowner and TII.
- 11.11 After construction, a final condition survey will be carried out of the property by the surveyor's firm (ideally within the first six months after the completion of works) and they will issue the final survey report the homeowner and TII.
- 11.12 If a homeowner notices any change to their property during construction, they should notify TII without delay. In that event, following an interim condition survey and such other investigations as are necessary, the surveyor's firm will assess whether any damage has occurred, whether it was caused by the MetroLink works, and what steps are necessary to remedy any such damage. The surveyor will, if appropriate, recommend repairs to an owner's property to rectify damage caused by MetroLink works, and provided those repairs cost no more than €45,000, TII will implement that recommendation promptly with the homeowner's agreement.
- 11.13 If the homeowner disagrees with any recommendation of the surveyor or the decision of TII in relation to that recommendation, they will have a number of options:
- 11.13.1 They may bring the matter to the Dispute Resolution Process, which will be in place, and which will enable an independent expert appointed by Engineers Ireland to adjudicate on the homeowner's entitlements under POPS (this ruling will be binding on TII but not one the homeowner, who may pursue all legal remedies available to them outside POPS);
- 11.13.2 They may pursue such other legal processes as would be available to them as if they had never signed up to POPS.
- 11.14 The POPS Scheme will remain in place for twelve months after the opening of the MetroLink line to passengers. This means that any homeowner who believes that changes or damage may have been caused to their property must notify TII of that change or damage within 12 months of completion of the entire project and its commencement in operation (this could be a number of years after completion of MetroLink construction works in any given homeowner's area).
- 11.15 Following the 12-month period after the opening of the line to passengers, the POPS will no longer be available and any property owners who believe changes or damages have occurred to their property may only seek redress through standard legal means.

Current status of the POPS scheme

- 11.16 In 2023 TII wrote to homeowners in relation to joining the Scheme. Closer to the start of MetroLink construction, the homeowners will be contacted again with the details of the panel and invited to select their preferred firm of surveyors. The surveyors will then contact the owner to arrange the initial condition survey to be carried out before construction begins.
- 11.17 Circa 500 number or 17% of properties identified by TII as being within the parameters of the POPS are currently signed up by their owners.
- 11.18 In order to provide additional reassurance to homeowners close to the MetroLink project, it has been decided to extend the POPS to include properties that immediately adjoin a property that is already included in POPS. This means that if one semi-detached house is in POPS, then the immediately adjoining semi-detached

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house is also now eligible for POPS. In addition, if one or more properties in a terrace is already included in POPS, the immediately adjacent house in that terrace is also now eligible for POPS.

Further Information

Further information on POPS is available in EIAR Chapter 8 (Consultation) and Chapter 11 (Population & Land Use). Useful information can also be found in the MetroLink Frequently Asked Questions document which can be found online at this [link](#) and this is where useful updates will be made available as the proposed MetroLink Project progresses.

12 Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan

- 12.1 An undertaking as complex as the construction of MetroLink will pose a huge challenge to all involved in delivery. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) will take responsibility for ensuring that the Contractor puts a Stakeholder Communication Plan in place well in advance of the commencement of any MetroLink construction. This commitment is included in the EIAR, Chapter 5.
- 12.2 The purpose of this note is to give a high-level indication of the desired approach to communications during construction which will be pivotal in the successful delivery of the biggest infrastructural project in the history of the State.
- 12.3 A fundamental objective of the MetroLink Team is to create a sense of “buy in” or ownership amongst all those who are involved in the delivery of the project, whether directly involved in the team or indirectly involved from outside the team. In addition to TII, NTA and Government and the various Contractors, there are a range of other professionals in Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, ESB, OPW, etc who will be deeply involved in the project. It is essential that effective channels are created and maintained to optimise the engagement of all these agencies and to ensure, as much as possible, that they regard themselves as part of the MetroLink delivery team.
- 12.4 A regular forum, primarily directed towards traffic issues will be set up and this will follow the model of the highly effective Luas Cross City Traffic Forum. This group will meet on a weekly basis and will include, in addition to the local authority traffic specialists and NTA, transport operators and other service providers as appropriate. The primary objective here is to ensure that as far as possible the city is kept open to traffic movements.
- 12.5 A strong relationship with the local public representatives has already been established and this will be continued with regular briefings and a collaborative approach to dealing with issues as they arise. Members of the team will make themselves available to the local area committees of Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council.
- 12.6 Many valuable lessons in relation to effective collaboration have been learnt in the delivery of projects like Luas Cross City (LCC) and these lessons will be implemented. For example, a Communications Forum was established and chaired by the then Minister for Transport, Leo Varadkar T.D. at the start of the construction phase of Luas Cross City. This Forum brought together the agencies, together with business, transport, and other key stakeholders on a regular basis, and met on a scheduled basis under the leadership of successive Transport Ministers until LCC went into operation. This Forum was highly effective in solving problems, providing impetus, and underlining the key strategic importance of the project to the city. Ideally, a similar forum will be established for MetroLink.
- 12.7 The list of stakeholders and affected parties is considerable, and this list has been captured by TII. The list is constantly being updated and this will continue and evolve over time. A Stakeholders Matrix will be part of the Stakeholders Communications Plan.

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- 12.8 The list of those charged with delivering the project is also quite considerable and it is essential that a collaborative approach- particularly between TII / NTA/Government and reaching out to include key stakeholders such as public bodies, representative groups, business, community groups etc -is fostered from the outset.
- 12.9 Construction is intrusive and can be disruptive, particularly for those who find themselves near the works. It is important to highlight at every opportunity the long-term gains of a project such as MetroLink and the approach to selling the benefits through all the various channels, web, and social media management etc will be set out in detail in the Plan.
- 12.10 However, those stakeholders who do find themselves near construction must be given a particular priority. These stakeholders (residents, businesses, community groups, sports clubs, schools etc) will all be included in the Matrix and will require continuous, reliable, and personal management throughout the entire period of construction. For example, measures to limit noise and vibration effects including the use of noise blankets, scheduling construction work to appropriate times of the day and the use of machinery that would limit noise and vibration outputs (eg electric generators) are all measures that could have an enormous direct impact on the quality of life of these stakeholders during construction.
- 12.11 It is intended to hold a monthly meeting with local business interests along the route. These meetings provide an opportunity for local business interests to have a direct opportunity to raise issues and get updates on upcoming activities. These regular meetings have proved valuable in allowing local businesses and the business representative groups such as Fingal Chamber of Commerce, Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Retail Excellence Ireland, and Dublin Town to meet on a regular basis with TII and contract staff members.
- 12.12 In relation to these issues and to ensure coordination between the project team and Dublin City Council's and Fingal County Council's Environmental Health Units (EHU) a notification system will be established to keep them informed of all potentially noisy and out-of-hours working. This process proved to be successful during works on Luas Cross City in managing noise and vibration issues. This is an example of effectively building on lessons learnt. And it is just one example of how effective communications can make or break a project!

Communication Team

- 12.13 The project will have a well-resourced communications team led by a Director of Communications who will be a key member of the project's senior executive team. A significant part of this team's remit is to act as a two-way conduit, listening and responding to stakeholder concerns. In addition to managing media relations and social media etc the team will include several Local Liaison Officers (LLO). These TII staff members will each have a specific geographical area of responsibility. The LLO will be the "go to" person locally for all local interests in an area. This person will share his/her contact details (including mobile phone) with all local stakeholders and will be the local interface between MetroLink and the local host community. A Local Liaison Officer will be attached to each of the Visitor Information Centres listed below and will take primary responsibility for "hands-on" stakeholder relations in that area, for the duration of construction.
- 12.14 Construction impacts from MetroLink will vary from location to location and from phase to phase of construction. Detailed localised construction plans-including when the tunnel boring machine will be under a particular area -will be shared with the stakeholders when the contractors programme becomes available. Each local area will have a location-specific engagement plan and this plan will be implemented by the LLO and shared with the local community using all the communications channels, including local community forums, audio visual tools, TBM videos from other locations etc. It is important to all the communities and stakeholders along the entire route that they are made aware of how construction will impact specifically on their local area. Each of these localised specific community engagement plans will be implemented from the

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Local Visitor Information Centre and updated systematically as the works move through the phases. In this way stakeholders will be given real time and location specific information in a structured and meaningful way at the appropriate time for them.

Visitor Information Centres

12.15 The main aim in relation to Visitor Information Centres is to ensure that anyone who needs information regarding the scheme can easily access it, with public information offices established in Swords, Glasnevin/Ballymun, O'Connell Street and Charlemont. There will be a dedicated LLO attached to each Centre in a 'boots on the ground' capacity, to engage with residents, businesses, and the public on a daily basis. The LLO will build and maintain effective relationships at a local level. Local stakeholders need to feel that they have a person that they can contact at any time and that the project will engage directly with them. This arrangement proved highly effective in previous schemes.

12.16 (List of stations by Visitor Information Centre.)

- Swords: Estuary; Seatown, Swords Central and Fosterstown, Dublin Airport
- Glasnevin/ Ballymun: Dardistown, Northwood, Ballymun, Collins Avenue, Griffith Park, Glasnevin
 - O'Connell Street: Mater, O'Connell, Tara Street
- Charlemont: Saint Stephen's Green and Charlemont.

12.17 The following local services will be organised through the local Visitor Information Centre:

12.17.1 Monthly business and local traders' "drop-in" meetings.

12.17.2 Regular Community Forums, held on a quarterly basis.

12.17.3 Meetings with local groups such as residents' associations, schools, community groups, disability groups, sports groups, cycling groups etc.

12.18 Projects worldwide of this nature have established visitor centres such as those at Crossrail and HS2 and this concept worked well on the Luas Cross city project. These centres will enable local businesses, residents and anyone who is interested in the project to find further information, have their queries answered and will help to ensure the public are kept informed and advised of upcoming works so they can plan more effectively.

12.19 Visitor Information Centre Services

- Audio visual meeting room for meetings, presentations
- Interactive screens
- Meet or speak with the team
- Host webinars with the experts
- Project information and updates
- Traffic diversion information leaflet and maps



Figure above: Crossrail visitor's centre

Public Events and Community Gain

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- 12.20 These are a vital part of community engagement and encompass a wide range of activities. Events will range from one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders, to group meetings with residents' associations etc and to public drop-in events. These will be organised through each of the LLO's in his/her area.
- 12.20.1 Community Clinics - Drop-in clinics along the route for members of the public to speak with the team and find out more about the project.
- 12.20.2 Briefing Sessions - Briefing members of stakeholder groups, including local councillors, TD's, and Senators. A good, honest, and open working relationship with local representatives is an important objective for the team.
- 12.20.3 Community Gain - Under the various construction contracts, TII will make provision to ensure that the appointed contractors work with Local Communities and the Local Authorities to participate and support local community initiatives.
- 12.20.4 Community Forums - As mentioned earlier, Forums will be established in publicly accessible locations along the route to give affected residents and businesses the opportunity to raise concerns, discuss their queries, and get more information about upcoming works in their areas.
- 12.20.5 Schools - All schools along the alignment will be offered visits, talks and general positive engagement across a range of activities from sponsorship to supervised site visits. Students of both genders will be encouraged to develop an interest in science, engineering, construction, and sustainable development through a connection with MetroLink staff who will be presented as role models for the girls and boys.
- 12.20.6 Universities and Colleges - There will be meaningful engagement with all the 3rd Level institutions on the route. Lecturers and course leaders will be invited to include projects relating to MetroLink on their courses and academic prizes can be sponsored particularly for work that relates to sustainable transportation. Close collaboration should also be developed with the various student groups who are key influencers in many ways.
- 12.20.7 Independent Expert - There is provision for the services of the Independent Expert (IE) to be continued through construction and this will be taken forward by the team and the LLO will be the first point of contact for issues raised through the IE.
- 12.20.8 The communications team will also be a pivotal point of contact for all queries in relation to the Property Owners Protection Scheme.
- 12.20.9 Whilst the primary point of contact for local communities will be the Local Liaison Officer, other tools and channels will include the MetroLink Website: www.MetroLink.ie; Freephone 24-hour number; email info@metrolink.ie and Post.
- 12.20.10 All complaints will be logged by TII, captured on the database, responded to promptly and subject to audit control. TII will ensure that protocols are in place for all contractors, sub-contractors, and agents. All issues will be brought to the attention of the appropriate team members for speedy resolution and rapid response.
- 12.20.11 The Stakeholder Communication Plan which is referenced in Chapter 5 of EIAR will be developed by the Contractor under the control of TII's Director of Communications and TII commits to ensuring that all stakeholders will continue to have access to TII /MetroLink staff throughout the various stages of the project's delivery.

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13 Preferred Route Design Development Report

13.1.1 This report was prepared and was published as part of the 2019 Preferred Route Public Consultation.

13.1.2 It is accessible on the TII web site;
https://www.metrolink.ie/media/vlip2lpw/metrolink_pr_design_development.pdf

13.1.3 The report provided an update on the Preferred Route design development that had commenced following the Emerging Preferred Route (EPR) publication and earlier consultation, highlighting several changes being made to the EPR and providing explanation of the changes proposed. It provided a summary of the earlier EPR route and consultation before describing the proposed changes and further development of the route.

13.1.4 It should be noted that the Preferred Route as developed and presented in the report retained the earlier EPR route corridor. The changes were presented as part of the Preferred Route Public Consultation in 2019 in order to elicit comment on the revised proposals.

13.1.5 The design developments incorporated and described in this document included:

- The proposed single-bore tunnel configuration;
- A different tunnel construction proposal, with two separate tunnels proposed, one under the airport and one driven southward from Northwood into the city;
- Relocation of the Depot from Estuary to Dardistown;
- Introduction of a viaduct crossing over the M50 and associated track realignment;
- Automatic Train Operation (ATO) – making it possible to run a high frequency train service using shorter trains and platforms while still delivering the required passenger capacity;
- A revised alignment alongside the R132 in cutting, rather than on elevated structures with some associated changes to station locations;
- Amendment to the Estuary Station and Park & Ride location and changes to the track alignment in the Estuary to Lissenhall area to minimise impacts on the proposed Swords Western Distributor Road and to avoid potential impacts on the Lissenhall Bridge;
- Removal of the proposed upgrade of the LUAS Green Line to metro standard from the present scheme, with Charlemont Station proposed as the present Metro terminus in the city;
- The relocation of O'Connell Street Station (off O'Connell Street) with an associated short alignment change; and
- Changes to other station layouts (Northwood, Ballymun, Griffith Park, Glasnevin, Tara, St. Stephen's Green and Charlemont).

14 Approach to proposed Asset Protection Policy

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- 14.1 The MetroLink scheme will involve the construction of a significant number of structures, most of which will be subsurface, and as such there is a requirement to develop policies and processes to determine the potential influence of the construction by third parties of buildings and infrastructure above, and in the vicinity of, these underground railway structures.
- 14.2 In 2023, TII produced an early draft Guidance Note for Developers ("Guidance Note" - see Appendix 1) to assist developers in understanding TII's early requirements for the protection of MetroLink assets and provide guidance on future land use development in proximity to the MetroLink route which may be undertaken without affecting the railway structures and associated infrastructure.
- 14.3 This Guidance Note remains in draft format, and will be finalised following the completion of the project and expanded to encompass other MetroLink asset types (such as stations, surface buildings, intervention shafts etc.) to ensure that for any proposals for the construction of buildings or infrastructure in proximity to the operating railway:
- The MetroLink structures and associated infrastructure retain structural integrity,
 - Emergency management capabilities are not compromised,
 - Safety and free flow of users of the facility is maintained,
 - The infrastructure can be safely and adequately maintained at all times, and not put at risk by adjacent developer activities.
- 14.4 The finalised Guidance Note will be sufficiently detailed to allow developers to fully assess the interfaces and potential interactions during construction and post construction stages between any proposed development and the MetroLink infrastructure, and engage with TII as early as possible prior to any significant design development pre-planning to ensure the proposed development imports no risk of impact to the infrastructure or the operating railway and incorporates safeguarding requirements as agreed with TII through this consultation process.
- 14.5 Once an agreed position has been reached, TII expect to enter into formal agreement with any developers proposing to undertake construction over or adjacent to MetroLink incorporating the particular requirements of TII in response to the nature of the development proposed.

Safeguarding Measures

- 14.6 Depending on the specifics of the proposed development, TII may require confirmation by way of detailed assessment of the effect(s) of construction of the developments against the following topics.
- Structural protection,
 - Groundborne noise and vibration limits,
 - Electromagnetic compatibility and stray current limits,
 - Ventilation and emergency management capability,
 - Other as may be identified on a case by case basis.
- 14.7 For structural protection, defined exclusion and protection zones based on the final built infrastructure will be provided along the route, clearly setting out limitations on adjacent developments.

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- 14.8 The exclusion zone is an area in close proximity to the tunnel (or other MetroLink subsurface structure such as a cut & cover tunnel) where any intrusion by third party developments (e.g. piled foundations) would represent a significant risk to the structural integrity of that subsurface structure.
- 14.9 The protection zone is a buffer zone outside the exclusion zone where any developers proposing developments within this area should consult with TII as soon as possible to understand what constraints may apply to the design and construction methodology proposed for the building to ensure safeguarding of MetroLink assets.
- 14.10 The actual extent of the exclusion and protection zones around the various types of structures in the ground is wholly dependent on the specifics of the proposed development such as:
- the type of foundation (including depth of piles if that is what is selected),
 - distribution and magnitude of building loads,
 - proximity to the MetroLink subsurface structure in question,
 - geological and groundwater conditions in the area of the proposed development,
 - construction methodologies, including extent and sequencing of excavations.
- 14.11 TII will need to be consulted as early as possible in the development of the Developer's design to ensure developments can proceed without impact on MetroLink infrastructure (and provide confidence to developers that TII as a statutory consultee will not object at planning stage). In executing any assessment TII requires that the MetroLink geology model be augmented by site investigation data gathered by the Developer where applicable.

MetroLink Pre-Construction Asset Protection

- 14.12 Before the finalisation and publication of the Guidance Note post construction of the project, TII will continue to engage with those developers intending to build within the proposed MetroLink corridor in a collaborative manner to both ensure the safeguarding of this corridor and to ensure that developments are not stymied.

TII has a proven track record in engaging in such consultations with developers from the earliest stages of the project at numerous sites along the route. Through this engagement, proposed designs that would have otherwise impacted on the ability of TII to deliver the proposed project have been adjusted to allow planning permissions to be submitted and the works to proceed.

[END]