

METROLINK ORAL HEARING - 13 MARCH 2024

I would like to thank An Bord Pleanála for this opportunity.

I am an owner occupier of an apartment at The Court, Dalcaasian Downs, Glasnevin.

I have a number of questions to raise on matters that have not in my view been thus far sufficiently answered.

Before I ask these questions, I am taking this opportunity to state that the impact of the metrolink proposal on my life has been enormous. It is a threat to my peaceful enjoyment of my home and the secure future that I built for myself when I bought my apartment in 2013. I see the metrolink proposal as a grey cloud that has followed me around since the plans were announced by TII in March 2018.

Initially, the proposal by TII was the compulsory purchase and demolition of my apartment block to make way for the Glasnevin Station. Back then I was blissfully unaware of what a CPO was and although demolition and CPO are no longer on the table the new plan to build the metrolink under my apartment block creates its own set of worries. This is because regardless of what mitigations TII say they are putting in place I have a frightening vision of myself being trapped living on a construction site where noise, dust, debris, loss of light and loss of quality of life will replace the safe and peaceful environment, surrounds and locality that exists there now.

To outline a little of my own background, as mentioned I bought my apartment in 2013. To find my perfect home, I house hunted for four years, I worked and saved hard, I went through the mortgage process, and I finally succeeded in buying my home and I would like to point out that I did this on my own. I am 11 years older now and dread the thought of having to house hunt again. I do not know how I would save a deposit again and I do not know if I would get a mortgage again. Furthermore, my apartment has some very specific factors that I searched for, i.e., it was not built during the boom years, its above ground level, the management fee, and management company are very satisfactory, it is peaceful and safe and close to town, shops, work, and other amenities. In addition, I was very confident when I bought it that it would retain and even increase in value, and I know it has done so. This is something

that is very important to me because not only is it my home but it represents a strong investment in my future.

Unlike other issues that have been raised over the course of this hearing my questions aren't about traffic or the design of the station or the effect on the surrounding locality or tunnelling noise or the property owner's protection scheme.

My questions centre around the idea of my not remaining as an owner /occupier in my apartment and the difficulties I would face if I were to make the extremely difficult decision to sell up. The prospect of selling up and moving out is devastating. However, I want to be able to plan ahead and try to prepare myself mentally and physically for what will happen if metrolink receives planning permission.

To this end I see a number of scenarios that may happen if planning permission is granted which may cause me to feel compelled to sell up. I will now outline these scenarios now and the related questions that arise.

Scenario 1.

I sell up now. The problem with this is that it is devastating. I honestly do not know if I can walk away from my apartment because it is my happy, safe place and it is so much more to me than just bricks and mortar. By selling up I would get away from the metrolink monster, but on the flipside a decision to sell will trigger many worries about the logistics, the need to pay professionals, the house hunting, and the financial element. I don't believe I should have to carry any of these burdens and as such my question to TII is will you commit to a full professional services and financial assistance package to lift these burdens? Why should I have to undertake any of this burden when I have done it all before.

Scenario 2.

I do not sell now. I stay in my apartment and wait until construction begins. I dread the thought of being there during construction, but I also worry deeply about getting trapped there. Yet if I decided to sell at the eleventh hour, I worry that potential buyers would be fewer during the construction phase, and I have a very real concern that I would not get the true value of my property. This is one of my biggest fears and in turn begs the question; how on earth

would I acquire another property with all those unique features that I described already if I do not have the finances for it?

My question to TII in this scenario is the same as before; will you commit today to a full professional services and financial assistance package to lift these burdens? If the answer to this is no, then I argue that this can be turned into a yes. I argue that a way can be found. Whether or not this is covered in the Irish Constitution or in legislation or in precedent I am of the view that a way can be found to give me the affirmative answer that I need. An affirmative answer would allow me to walk out of here in a much better situation today than when I walked in.

A number of pieces of legislation that I have reviewed indicate that someone who loses their property to a CPO should not be left worse off financially. I am not losing my property to a CPO, however in my opinion I am entitled to the same remedy and furthermore I am absolutely adamant that I should not lose out in any shape or form, not just financially and that I should be afforded every recourse so that I can come away from this beast with the same financial, residential and secure lifestyle that I have now. I note that in the event of a CPO the compensation value is equal to market value at the time of notice to treat so even if I were in that situation I argue that market value would be nowhere near enough to allow me or others like me to acquire another property of the same value.

Basically, I am fighting for a 'like for like' outcome which I think is absolutely fair and reasonable. I don't see why I should be put in a situation where I appear to have less than the normal rights and protections that every other property owner is entitled to.

There are schemes to assist first time buyers and protections to assist people in difficulty with paying mortgages so again I argue my case that there should be protection for people in a situation like mine. If there was a fund to CPO everyone at my apartment block there should be a fund to assist with all of the issues I've outlined.

There is one more scenario I want to describe which would not be one of my choosing. This relates to temporary relocation. Temporary relocation by the occupants of my apartment block numbers 19-36 has been proposed by TII to take place during some of the construction phase. This proposal has been mentioned several times however absolutely nothing has been clarified. I

dread the thought of being relocated temporarily because I have no faith in TII's management of a relocation plan, I have no clue as to where I would relocate to or how long it would be on for. I feel I would be at the mercy of TII and even if relocation were for a short period only, I absolutely do not want to return to the apartment block at any stage of construction.

My question here is has this been thought through properly by TII and how would they propose to find this supposed temporary accommodation given the current housing crisis in this country with refugees desperate for a place to live and thousands of people fighting to get on the property ladder.

Before I finish there is one final item that I have a question about. This relates to the physical elements of what will happen if planning permission is given for metrolink. What I mean by this and frightening as it is for me, is that I am asking is there a step by step of what will physically happen to me and my apartment if the point comes that TII and their staff arrive at Dalcassian Downs with their machinery and equipment. I do not want to know right now of what those steps are. However, it is something that I do not think has been mentioned and is worth putting out there as something that most affected owners will probably want to know at some stage. I'll finish now by asking everyone here to imagine what it would be like to wake up one day to bulldozers and tunnel borers and an army of people arriving on their doorstep to dig up the life you have known and feeling that you never had any say in it but what a difference it would make be treated fairly and have options and a safe future to look forward to if justice could be delivered to individuals like me who will be so acutely affected by metrolink if it goes ahead.

Thank you.

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