

Recorders MetroLink Oral Hearing Mon 25th Mar 2024. 9.30 am

Good Morning all. Good morning Inspector.

My name is Pauline Foster and this is Yvonne Traynor. We are both members of the committee of the Recorders Residents Association which covers the Whitehall Road Area in South Dublin.

Why are people from the western flank of Terenure at an Oral Hearing for MetroLink from Swords? The answer is simple. In addressing the Swords and north Dublin issues, which is welcomed, the decisions taken at the southern end of this rail-line have the potential to leave us in a quagmire of traffic for the foreseeable future. I will refer to this later.

When Metro North was first mooted, south-siders were baffled, that the southern side of this metro was going to replace the existing Green Line. Why not a new line into the mid area where no rail existed?

In 2018/19 hopes rose when the discovery of the difficulties presented by the Greater Dublin Sewer Tunnel alongside the canal, resulted in the abandonment of linking with the Green Luas Line. Up to this point in time, the long-standing recognition that metro was/is required in SW Dublin, was being ignored by NTA and TII. However, the 2019 decision re the green line gave rise to an opportunity - that this long-recognised deficiency in SW Dublin could finally be addressed.

Here also was the opportunity to resurrect the much published 2006 Metro plan, from Stephen's Green via Kimmage to Tallaght, notably, commencing at Swords. The metro shown on the Atkins map in 1998, which I had carefully preserved, would have would been even better - as it was - to have come through Rathmines.

The Metrolink Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) stated, re the Swords corridor, - *"An intervention on this corridor is necessary in order to achieve a change in transport patterns"*

It continued : *"Significant intervention is required to make the future transport network more sustainable and to create a more sustainable and liveable environment."*

The Recorders Residents Association contend, re the Templeogue/Rathfarnham and Kimmage corridors, that the same, if not greater needs, exist in the S.W. Sector of the city.

We are envious that Swords etc are about to see these benefits delivered. As things stand, we are doomed to the status quo until c2050 - nigh on 50 years since Platform for Change stated that this rail was necessary.

We know metro underground is the ultimate answer. It is now vital that NTA and TII were made aware how important it is to maintain the Stephens Green Gateway to South West Dublin in order for this to be possible.

In tandem with the 'new' decision re MetroLink, in 2018, BusConnects came onto the scene. An in-depth study of BusConnects and its '*obvious to those who live here*', inability to resolve our major traffic issues, led to the formation of the Metro South West Group. The Charlemont section of MetroLink became a paramount issue and still remains so.

TII have not given any meaningful response to our submission's stated concerns. It appears to us that they are simply focusing on the immediate line and, are not seeing the bigger picture.

Is seeing the bigger picture not part of the planning process? Is the line itself the only concern?

In the TII response to our submission it also appears to us, that they do not see this matter in the same light as we do, when they state that, it is possible to go to SW Dublin from Manders Terrace.

Jaspers concurred with us:

Jaspers: *"The connection to Ranelagh could feasibly be deferred until there is clarity on the future of the Green Line (subject to an improved understanding of how this could physically be delivered in a scenario with Metro operational)"*

We know the long term plan for the Green Line, is to come back to it in 20/30 years

Right Now there is the opportunity to re-consider the completion of the original Government plan, ie, for a North-South Metro. Some radical thinking must be done and, a Re-evaluation of the map that we have shown.

An Option: Preserve the Green Line option in readiness for 20 years' time (as per the current plan as far as Stephens Green) and take the Metro onward from St. Stephens Green, via Cathal Brugha, catering for the Kimmage and lower Rathmines areas and onward via a 'park & Ride' station at Spawell to Tallaght asap.

Valuable action on Climate change can be activated immediately for the SW Sector.

A compelling case for this is shown in some of the research I undertook with MSWG:

Comparison of seats on Public Transport in SE and SW Dublin are stark:

**Table 2.3.1 Public Transport Capacity Peak Hour (7-8am) In-bound
Dublin South East vs Dublin South West**

Mode	Dublin South East Capacity	Dublin South West Capacity
DART: feasible capacity	15,000	0
Luas Green Line: feasible capacity	6,000	0
Buses: actual provision	3,600 ^a	5,680 ^b
Total	24,600	5,680

Another compelling factor is the proximity of Spawell to both the M50 and the N81 which leads to Blessington, the gateway to West Wicklow. A recent conversation with the mayor of Baltinglass concurred with our thinking re a metro station at Spawell with park and ride facilities, which could address their car reliance issues.

I will talk very briefly about BusConnects but only in the context of how it contributes to our need for an underground rail line and the implications of Charlemont on this.

The quagmire:

The quagmire of traffic, which I referred to earlier, would be effectively *caused by* BusConnects.

In order to facilitate the corridors, road closures – Templeogue, Lr. Kimmage and Rathmines will have the effect of pushing all traffic towards the west onto less suitable roads. Gridlock is highly likely as has happened in Streatham in London.

The wider picture which I referred to earlier is only seen by studying our three corridors collectively.

Metro, to do the 'heavy lifting' is vital for our area. Buses could be freed-up to circulate in the suburbs in a much more beneficial manner.

Public Transport Congestion could be greatly alleviated, particularly in the knowledge of further planned street closures in the city centre.

Proposal to use Charlemont Station as a terminus for MetroLink and a hub to serve the south-side of Dublin.

TII response to our submission is to tell us everything they have done is best design, best route, there will be no traffic congestion around the station, everyone will walk there, to the point of almost saying the neighbours won't even know it's there. Quote – "It will be a city centre location... It will serve south west Dublin... Future south-side Luas services will terminate there as their city centre termini."

It is our contention that Charlemont fulfils none of the above.

- Lower Ranelagh is perhaps one of the most in-accessible districts by public transport on the south-side of Dublin other than by Luas, which of course is inaccessible to us.
- By car the approach road along the canal is one of the most congested in the city.
- Proposed road closures to facilitate BusConnects will rule out many existing road options.
- Walking from Rathmines with luggage is simply not viable.

Therefore, in the best interest of the city as a whole, pause the Northern section at St. Stephens Green and be sure the next steps are the right ones, with all options being evaluated.

The truth gleaned from the recent referendum "they are not listening" was already abundantly clear to us as we doggedly pursued our mission over these past years. Interaction between NTA/TII and dedicated members of the public is needed.

We are very willing to answer any questions you may have for us.

Pauline Foster – Chairman Recorders Residents Association.

Yvonne Traynor – Treasurer Recorders Residents Association.

25th March 2024.