



Dart + submission

Paul Donnelly TD

A chairde,

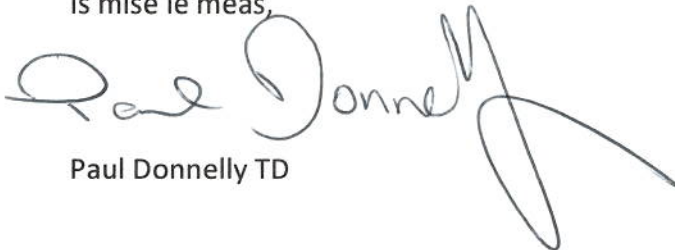
I would firstly like to welcome the Dart + project and the benefits that it will bring to the entire Dublin West community. There is no doubt that we face significant challenges in Dublin West in terms of our public transport infrastructure, road infrastructure and the challenge of climate change and global warming.

In Dublin West we have significant housing developments underway along the rail line, areas such as Hansfield, Ongar, Windmill in Clonsilla and significant developments in Pelletstown. There are also significant housing developments planned for Clonsilla village, Kellystown LAP.

If we are to deal with all those challenges and developments, then we must move forward to deliver projects, such as Dart +.

The process of retrofitting such massive infrastructural projects is no doubt problematic and causes huge fears and concerns for those who will be directly affected. I will focus on those issues that have been brought forward to me as a member of the Oireachtas, representing the community in Dublin West.

Is mise le meas,



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Public Consultation;

The pandemic presented the team and the community with significant challenges in terms of how a project of this importance, complexity and size could be managed in terms of ensuring that the community and those who will be affected by the future works on the Dart plus line.

However, I would also contend that there is a significant section of our community who have very little or maybe even no knowledge of the project, despite the plethora of meetings that have taken place because many people are not online. I welcomed the opportunity of the community in Ashtown to have a public consultation evening in St Plunkett's/ER GAA club.

I do believe that with the extended period of the Railway order notice that at least one open public meeting could and should have been facilitated.

I will now present feedback from the community following the hundreds of emails and from my public meeting with residents in relation to each area affected

Closure of the level crossings;

I would like to address the issue of the closure of the level crossings from Ashtown to Barberstown. This is very significant move and will have a massive impact on traffic flows not just along the line but on the surrounding communities at every intersection.

The movement of people from Castleknock, Diswellstown and Carpenterstown to Coolmine, Clonsilla and Blanchardstown and vice versa will be severely impacted on. This is a very serious matter and there is concern that the road infrastructure will not be able to cope with the current levels of traffic, let alone the future traffic levels from developments in Clonsilla, Kellystown and Castleknock.

It would make no sense whatsoever to close the level crossings when there would a very limited off-peak train service with no service throughout the night. As we know, it will take a long time for the train service to reach a level that would necessitate the closure of the level crossings full time. It may also be possible that there will be advances in technology that would enable some of the more critically important level crossings to remain in situ into the future.



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I note that one of the reasons that was given was that people would be confused if they were closed in the morning and evening and that people would continue to travel down that road and it would cause disruption and possible even be dangerous.

This just does not stand up to close scrutiny, I would like to point out two examples of how the explanation does not stand up to scrutiny.

If one travels down the N3 to the Ashtown roundabout, in the morning, it is well known that you cannot turn right and down Blackhorse avenue from 7am to 10am. There are no barriers or poles, just a simple sign that states what you can and cannot do.

The second example would be the North Strand, again, simple signage indicates that you cannot turn left or right down certain roads and certain busy times.

I point these two out but there are hundreds of examples where traffic is diverted from certain roads during busy times to prevent rat running.

There is no reason whatsoever why this could not be done in the short/medium term to allow for the changes from cars to public transport to take place with the increase in Dart+ services and the implementation of Bus connects and to allow for the continued connection between communities.

There are concerns in relation to the pedestrian and cycle bridges that have been proposed across all the level crossings. It is vitally important that these are sympathetic to the environment and the protected status of the Royal Canal and in particular the protected structure at Porterstown.



1. ASHTOWN;

Martin Savage Park (MSP) is a small, tight knit community that is a very settled. There are concerns about the impact of the closure of their current road and how that will impact on their green space. It would be very important that as much of this green space is protected as possible.

I welcome the changes that have been made and believe that they will make a significant difference for the community.

There is general concern from residents on both sides of the level crossing with the proposed closure of the crossing. The main concern is the lack of access to either side of the

crossing but especially from the Navan rd./MSP side. There is a significant senior citizen population and they believe they are about to be cut off from Rathborne/Pelletstown and the shops, cafes and other facilities.

I note that the latest plan from Irish rail has excluded a lift at the existing level crossing, this is hopefully just an error. Many of those on the Navan roadside and in particular Martin Savage Park would be long time residents and would find it difficult to access their new village in Rathborne. They would feel they are cut off from their services.

I would like to support the Martin Savage Park residents and the comments and recommendations made in their submission, especially in relation to the green space at the adjacent the estate in relation to the potential flooding issues and access of services vehicles.

I would like to welcome the significant changes to Ashtown Riding centre and stables and that most of the lands have been omitted from the plans. I would urge that during the construction phase that any lands that are to be used are returned to the owners as quickly as possible and that a timeline is agreed for the return of any lands to the Ashtown stables and Riding school.

On the issue of the tunnel/underpass, I have a concern that this will have a serious impact on local community. It has been stated that this will be unusable and indeed dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists and will be too far away from local houses to enable people to feel safe using it. I think this could be resolved with the installation of CCTV on the under pass.



2. COOLMINE;

I have raised the issue and concerns from residents in relation to the former “preferred option” at Riverwood/St Mochtas. I am happy that this has been removed as an option. However, this remains as the most contentious section of the entire project.

I believe that the best option is a “drop lock” system. Rather puzzlingly, this was not put forward as a preferred option until I raised it at the first consultation meeting. This would enable the project to build a tunnel (same as Ashtown) under the rail line and over the canal. This system is used in many canals across Britain and other European countries.

It seems the only reason that this was rejected was ongoing costs. I believe that this would be a small price to pay.

There are concerns around the new preferred option to upgrade the existing road network. This also needs much more clarification as the rationale that there will be less cars on the road therefore less cars will be traversing the from east/ west and vice versa if the level crossings are closed.

I have concerns around the Granard bridge section of the proposal. I cannot see how the upgrading of this will in anyway help the progression of traffic back and forward across the bridge. It must be noted that there will be no crossings whatsoever from Clonsilla village along the Clonsilla road down towards Roselawn and indeed this has the potential to effectively cut the community on the Castleknock side away from the western side.

There are four junctions are to be upgraded, yet the junctions and road systems feeding these four intersections that they feed into will remain untouched. This it would seem just push traffic further back into surrounding communities.

I am also puzzled that there are no proposals whatsoever to jointly work with Fingal CC to install a new pedestrian or cycle way across the Granard bridge. This would be a serious mistake and it would be bizarre that the opportunity would not be taken to install such facilities thereby making cycling and walking safer and possibly reducing the need for cars, which is the very reason why the Dart + project is taking place.

Finally, Residents have expressed concerns around the potential for anti social behaviour if the area on the Coolmine side of the crossing is turned in to a de facto “cul de dac”.



Porterstown;

There are concerns that the closure of the level crossings will have the effect of cutting of St Mochtas FC and St Brigid's lawn, along with several houses. It is therefore essential that this level crossing is not closed or removed until the Kellystown road and Barnwell bridge are built, that a period has elapsed to prove the community will not be adversely affected by the closure of this gate.

Clonsilla;

Again, there are concerns that residents who live on the Beechpark side of the tracks will be cut off from Clonsilla without adequate provision. The nearest crossing for these residents would be Barnhill/Barnwell or Dr Troy bridge several kilometres away.

Again, there must be a condition that this level crossing is not removed or closed until it is proven that the proposed roads and bridges are in place and that the upgrades of the junctions have been working for a period.

Barberstown;

The closure of this level crossing does not seem to have any impact on significant impact on the local community.

As I have stated, the vast majority, if not all the submissions are strongly in favour of the upgrading of the railway and the electrification of the network to deliver the Dart + project.

Royal Canal.

There were concerns expressed into the potential effects of the construction works along the Royal Canal where the railway and the Canal come within metres of each other. This is a protected structure and the utmost care must be taken to ensure that there is no impact on the environment adjacent the Rail line.