

Submission No.			95	
Organisation Name or Name of Submitter			Fingallians GAA Club	
Item No.	Section Ref.	Page No.	Observation Statement	TII Response
Re: TII Submission for the Railway (Metrolink-Estuary to Charlemont via Dublin Airport) Order 2022				
1	Executive Summary	4	Fingallian's GAA Club fully supports in principle, the project to deliver a metro railway service to Swords. However, we are submitting an observation to An Bord Pleanála as we believe that the Club, its membership and the wider community will suffer adversely as a consequence of construction works and the plans being proposed for the Balheary green space when works are completed. Under the current plan, Fingallians will be significantly worse off in terms of available playing facilities. At a minimum the club would expect no impact to existing facilities as a result of the development of MetroLink. The current plan results in Fingallians losing a full-size pitch.	TII wish to thank you for taking the time to make this submission and are appreciative of your positive support for the Project. The proposed pitch layout tries to minimise the impact on the southernmost pitch (pitch #1, full size GAA pitch), hence the proposed intervention into that pitch is minimal. Through the consultations with Fingallians and Fingal County Council TII established that this pitch is the only full size pitch at this location and it is vital for the clubs operation. It is envisaged that the work will primarily involve relining, goalpost and ball net installation, which could be done in between the games or in off-season period. The phasing of the utilities works on both sides of the pitch will also be adjusted to suit the pitch shifting slightly in its position. The pitch will be at all times complying with minimum dimensions for a full size GAA pitch (130x80m). TII will work closely with Fingallians to ensure that there will be no impact to availability of the pitch during the construction works and the terms of the contract between the TII and its Contractor will reflect this requirement. The pitch #2, which is currently marked slightly below the full size (144x75m), is proposed to be converted to an artificial all weather surface pitch. Through the consultations with the club we established that this pitch is being used mainly for training of juvenile groups. It has been agreed at the request of the Fingal County Council and the Fingallians GAA, during the consultation process, that this pitch will be converted to an artificial pitch with flood lighting. The artificial surface and the lighting would compensate for the change in size of this pitch. The width of the pitch #2 is reduced to 50m initially, however it is proposed to extend its width to 60m after the MetroLink works along its eastern edge are completed. Further extension of the width is impossible as this would impact a tree buffer along the Ward River, which was left untouched at the request of the Fingal County Council. To maximise usefulness of the new pitch, it has been proposed to have the pitch fully lit, so it can benefit from much heavier usage - also outside of the daytime hours - than a natural pitch could withstand. It is anticipated works to pitch 2 will take a maximum of 1 year to complete. TII in collaboration with Fingal Co Council and Fingalians, will identify suitable alternative training facilities which will be in place in advance of the commencement of works to Pitch 2. As a result of MetroLink works, TII anticipate that works to Pitch 1 will improve the overall appearance and condition of Pitch 1. The provision of a All Weather-Flood Lit training Pitch 2 represents a significant upgrade to currently training pitch in use by Fingallians. TII therefore do not accept that the Club will be significantly worse off in terms of available playing facilities post MetroLink completion.
2	Executive Summary	4	We also believe the proposed works will cause a significant risk to the health and safety of club members and the wider community as adequate provision is not being made to enable safe access to Balheary or Fingallian's GAA Club.	As presented in EIAR Chapter 11, Population and Land Use, pitches will need to be repositioned and reduced in size, with potential severance impacts due to construction activity along the R132 leading to temporary road closures and diversions. However, mitigation measures including temporary adjustments and advance notices will be in place reducing the significance of the impacts. During the construction work, the quality of pedestrian access will also be maintained, with additional crossing points added along the route to facilitate safe access. Please also refer to response (5) below.
3	Fingallian's C.L.G. - Current Activity	5	Any reduction or restriction in access to the Balheary facilities in the short and medium terms will have a detrimental impact on Fingallian's ability to manage the demand for playing time. It is imperative that An Bord Pleanála considers as part of the planning application that suitable alternative facilities are provided for the duration of the project and when construction is finally completed.	Please refer to response (1) above. TII will work closely with Fingallians to ensure that there will be no impact to availability of Pitch 1 during the construction works and the terms of the contract between TII and its Contractor will reflect this requirement. It is anticipated that works to pitch 2 will take a maximum of 1 year to complete. TII in collaboration with Fingal Co Council and Fingalians, will identify suitable alternative training facilities which will be in place in advance of the commencement of works to Pitch 2.

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4	Connectivity and Movement	5	The Club fully supports in principle, the development of MetroLink as it will be a key enabler for the commuter residents in the town bringing them to and from their homes and to Fingallians in the most efficient ways possible with reduced carbon footprint aligned with the council improvements for cyclists. However, the project cannot be delivered at the expense of the already limited recreational and green spaces in the locality. Fingallians is particularly concerned about the short-term impact of the MetroLink works in the Lissenhall area. Based on our understanding of the planned works: * Both full-size playing pitches will be unavailable for up to 12 months (estimate) as the southern-most pitch (pitch #1 below) has to be re-aligned. Pitch #2 will be developed as an all-weather but reduced in size when compared to the existing pitch. As a result, this pitch will not be suitable to host matches. While we welcome the intended provision of an all-weather pitch it is essential that the design is reconsidered and increased to a full-size all-weather flood-lit pitch. - At present we have two full size pitches which are used year round - Providing a full size all-weather pitch will ensure a maximum utilisation (# of games and teams) of the pitch throughout the entire year particularly during adverse weather conditions - Ensure less travel - this will have a positive impact on reducing car journeys and hence a reduction on our carbon footprint by reducing the need for renting indoor facilities throughout north county over the winter months - There is sufficient space to enable the increase in size.	As per our repsonse to (1) above, we confirm that only Pitch 1 is a "Full Size" GAA pitch. Pitch 2 is a training pitch whose dimensions currently are smaller than the minimum regulation GAA pitch (130 x 80m). Our proposals in repect of pitch 1 and 2 are outlined in response (1). It is antipated works to pitch 2 will take a maximum of 1 year to complete. TII in collaboration with Fingal Co Council and Fingalians, will identify suitable alternative training facilities which will be in place in advance of the commencement of works to Pitch 2. As as result of MetroLink works, TII anticipate that works to Pitch 1 will improve the overall appearance and condition of Pitch 1. The provision of a All Weather-Flood Lit training Pitch 2 represents a signiifcant upgrade to the current training pitch in use by Fingallians.	
5	Connectivity and Movement	6	The revised plan for the footbridge crossing the R132 suggests it will be permanently removed which is contrary to the original plan (see photo below). This will bring an increased risk to the large numbers of club members, particularly the exceptionally large numbers of juveniles, travelling teams, parents/supporters and the general public who access Balheary and LMP on a daily basis.	As detailed EIAR Chapter 5, MetroLink Construction Phase, Fingallian's Footbridge Satellite Compound, the footbridge provides general access across the R132 Swords Bypass. It also functions to link the Balheary Park playing pitches to the Fingallian's GAA Club. However, its use becomes redundant by the proposed upgrade of the R132 Swords Bypass through this area, with signalised crossings replacing the current footbrodge. The planned upgrade of the R132, and placement of signalised pedestrian crossings will be completed and operational in advance of the MetroLink works. As part of the Metrolink project the removal of the bridge is to be sequenced in such a way that an alternative safe pedestrian crossing is provided prior to demolition to ensure that access and connectivity is safely maintained between Balheary and Fingallians GAA Club.	
6	Connectivity and Movement	6	Provision must be given to Fingal maintenance vehicles (grass cutting) and emergency access for an ambulance.	As outlined in EIAR Appendix A9.5, traffic movements will be restricted to and from the R125 arm of Estuary Junction, resulting in an approximate 1km diversion for southbound movements and 2km diversion for westbound movements so that access can still be maintained. Two U-turn facilities will allow traffic impacted by the Estuary Junction closures to stay on the R132 for the entirety of the diversion. These diversions will therefore maintain traffic access for both maintenance and emergency access.	
7	Conclusion	7	Proceeding with the development without providing alternative local arrangements will impact * the nurturing and development of our young members in all aspects of GAA games, health and wellbeing * the facilitation of ladies' sport where we have the largest participation rate across Fingal * the promotion of all aspects of Irish cultural activities the use of the club facilities to provide an outlet and opportunities for our local special needs community * The ability to provide sufficient sports infrastructure to meet the needs of a rapidly growing town.	As identified in EIAR Chapter 11 Population and Land Use, Fingallians GAA facilities in Balheary Park will need to be repositioned and reduced in size, and there will be severance and environmental impacts on Fingallians GAA pitches due to the construction activity if not mitigated. However, mitigation measures include providing alternative access arrangements and diversions to maintain access to facilities, temporary layout adjustments, and advance notice of works being undertaken, to reduce the significance of the impact. Alternative playing facilities required during works to the pitches will be provided by TII in collaboration with Fingallians and Fingal Co Council. Post construction, Fingallians will benefit from improved facilities.	