
**Appendix A3.2
Public Consultation No.2
Consultation Findings
Report**



DART+ PROGRAMME

DART+ West

Iarnród Éireann

Public Consultation No.2 Consultation Findings Report

MAY-MDC-GEN-ROUT-RP-Y-0007

May 2022



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1. Introduction

1.1. DART+ Programme

The current DART network is 50 km long, extending from Malahide/ Howth to Greystones. The DART+ Programme will increase the length of the DART network to 150 km of railway corridor through the electrification and upgrade of existing lines transforming commuter rail travel in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

The DART+ Programme also includes the purchase of new train fleet. The DART+ Programme will deliver frequent, modern, electrified services from Dublin City Centre (Connolly & Spencer Dock) to:

- Maynooth, M3 Parkway
- Hazelhatch & Celbridge
- Drogheda
- Greystones.

The DART+ Programme is a key transportation improvement to form a high quality and integrated public transport system. It will have benefits for the residents of the Greater Dublin Area and also those living in the other regions. It will assist in providing a sustainable transport system and a societal benefit for current and future generations.

The DART+ Programme will seek to maximise use of the existing railway corridors and implement a modernisation programme to achieve the capacity increase necessary to meet current and future demands.

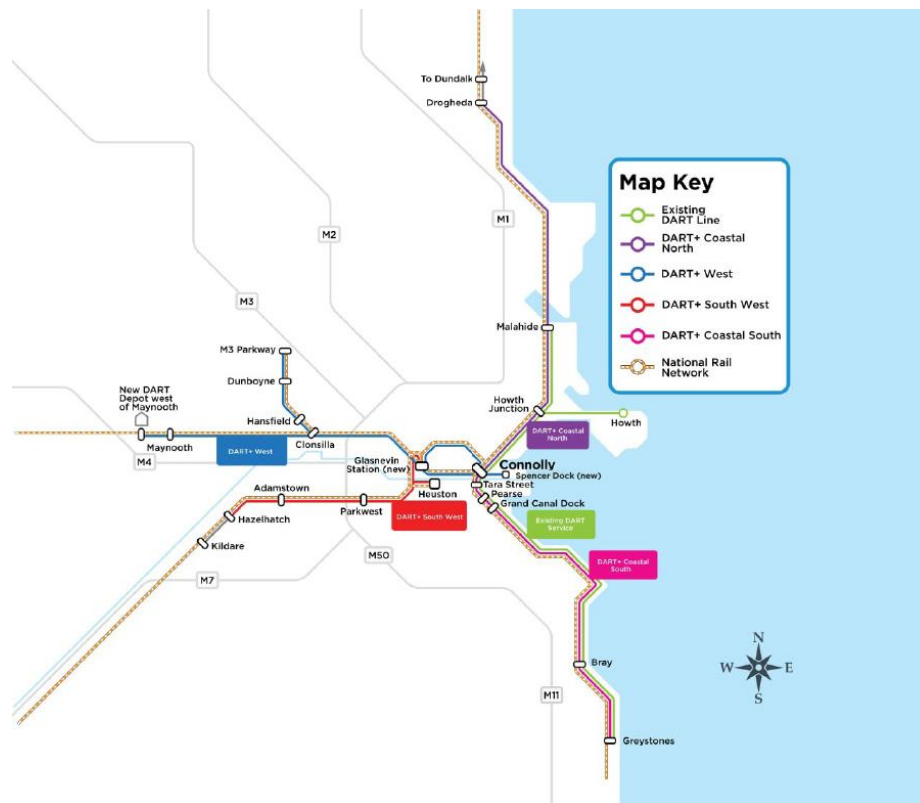


Figure 1-1 Schematic diagram of DART+ Programme extent

1.2. DART+ West

The first project of the DART+ Programme to be delivered will be DART+ West.

The DART+ West project is seeking to significantly increase rail capacity on the Maynooth & M3 Parkway lines. This can be achieved by changing to electrified, high-capacity DART trains and increasing the frequency of trains. The DART+ West project will increase passenger capacity from approximately 5,000 to 13,200 passenger per hour, by utilising new DART trains and lengthening existing diesel trains, operating at increased service frequency (i.e. 6 existing to 12 proposed trains per hour). The capacity projections have been amended since public consultation no.1, based on more detailed railway operating modelling.

Delivery of this project will support existing communities along the railway and support future sustainable development. It will serve all existing stations along the railway corridor between Maynooth Station and M3 Parkway Station to Connolly Station and a proposed Spencer Dock Station using electrical power with lower carbon footprint than associated with the existing diesel trains. The frequency and quality of service will provide a viable transport alternative to communities along the route and help encourage people to migrate from private car use. This will assist Ireland in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport and help combat climate change.

The electrification of the rail line will predominantly follow the existing railway corridor. Interventions outside of Iarnród Éireann lands will be required at a number of locations for some of the scheme elements such as:

- Level crossing replacements
- Proposed depot, including rail and road realignment
- Proposed new Spencer Dock Station
- Construction of substations (to facilitate the provision of power to the line)
- Use of land for temporary construction/storage compounds and all ancillary works required for the project.

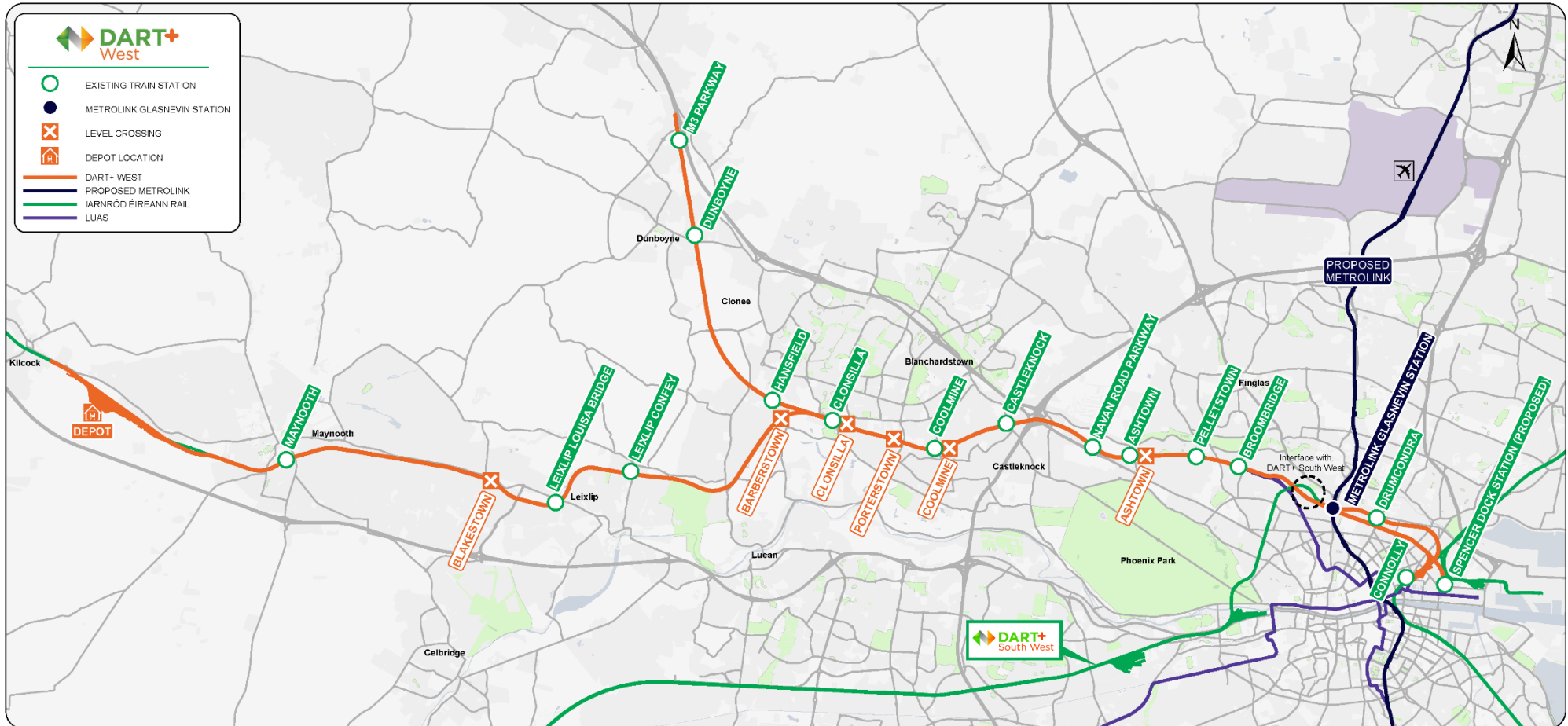


Figure 1-2 Map of proposed DART+ West project extents

1.3. Public Consultation

Public participation during the design process is a key element to the delivery of major infrastructure projects such as DART+ West. The purpose of these consultations is to engage the public in the scheme delivery process, inform the public of the statutory process and the likely timescales, seek the public's cooperation and understanding of the project and to capture local knowledge to inform the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and railway order (RO) process.

Public participation is welcomed and encouraged throughout the design development process, however, there will be three main project consultation stages which will provide the opportunity to learn about the design development and provide feedback which will inform the next stage as appropriate. The main public participation stages as part of the project development are illustrated below:

- Non-statutory public consultation no.1 emerging preferred option (Autumn 2020)
- Non-statutory public consultation no.2 preferred option (Summer 2021)
 - Local Ashtown public consultation on the revised preferred option (Spring 2022)
- Statutory consultation period as part of the railway order application process (planned for Summer 2022)

This report details the process and records and analyses the feedback from public consultation no.2 on the preferred option (including the local Ashtown public consultation on the revised preferred option- refer to Section 6 of this report).

1.3.1 Principal Changes to Preferred Option Following Public Consultation No.1

Having completed public consultation no.1, contributions from the public led to a number of design changes which are evident in the preferred option that was presented at public consultation no.2. The principal changes included the following:

- At Ashtown, in addition to the proposed road bridge, a pedestrian bridge with lifts was proposed to be constructed at the station in order to provide universal access. The bridge and lifts will be accessible to the public, not just to station passengers.
- At Ashtown, the existing Ashtown Road south of the railway is to be reconfigured as a high amenity urban space.
- At Coolmine, the proposed road bridge at St Mochta's Green and Riverwood Court is no longer the preferred option. Instead, a pedestrian / cycle bridge is proposed at the location of the Coolmine level crossing suitable for all non-motorised users and the local road network will be upgraded to accommodate the additional road traffic diverted away from the level crossing.
- At Coolmine, it is proposed to construct a pedestrian bridge with lifts in the station to accommodate mobility impaired users.
- To the west of Maynooth, in the environs of Jackson's Bridge, it is proposed to construct a new section of railway parallel to and south of the existing railway at Jackson's Bridge, protecting the heritage bridge. The proposal will sever vehicular access over Jackson's Bridge and it is proposed to divert motorised vehicles west to a proposed new bridge crossing of the railway and the canal at the location of the depot. It is proposed that pedestrians and cyclists will continue to use Jackson's Bridge and access for them will be facilitated under the railway along the approximate alignment of the existing local road.

1.3.2 Covid-19

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time of public consultation no.2 and in line with government guidelines, the consultation strategy for public consultation no.2, focused predominantly on digital / online

consultations. In order to comply with the public health restrictions, no physical roadshow / public hall events could take place. Instead, all consultation with the exception of a very limited number of on-site meetings with affected landowners/residents were conducted online (website/email/Skype/MS Teams/telephone). At the time of the localised Ashtown public consultation, the COVID restrictions had been lifted therefore allowing for a physical in person event, which took place on the 31st March 2022 (Refer to Section 6).

2. Public consultation no.2 – The Preferred Option

2.1. Overview of Public Consultation Process

This public consultation findings report has been prepared to summarise and assess the feedback received from public consultation no.2, on the preferred option. The consultation period commenced on 28th July 2021 and was initially planned to run for a period of 6 weeks. However, it was extended by a further 4 weeks to the 6th October 2021 in response to representations from and on behalf of the public.

As described in the public consultation brochure, the consultation was an opportunity for potential users of the improved services, those likely to be affected by its development and all members of the general public, to express their views on the preferred option which is being put forward. On projects such as DART+ West local knowledge communicated through submissions of all types, positive or negative informs the preferred option identification and the design development. This feedback and engagement will ultimately assist Iarnród Éireann in improving the project and ensuring the successful delivery of a project that best meets the needs of its users and the local communities. The development of the preferred option will inform the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA). Throughout public consultation no.2, the project team attempted to respond to all queries raised, in a timely manner. The objective was to assist the public in gaining a better understanding of the project and to encourage engagement in the consultation process. The following sections describe the various channels of communication used to notify and inform the public of the public consultation no.2.

2.1.1 Media Coverage

Public consultation no.2 was launched on the 28th July 2021. Iarnród Éireann Corporate Communications and Media team provided a press release to all major media outlets and the launch was covered widely on the day by national media including:

- Irish Times
- Dublin Gazette
- Kfmradio.com
- Independent.ie
- Oiereachtas.ie
- Thejournal.ie

A selection of press clippings in relation to the launch are provided in **Appendix A**.

2.1.2 Display Boards at Stations

In order to inform rail users and local communities in vicinity to the stations, posters were put up at display boards at a number of stations to announce the preferred option consultation. In total, 31 posters were erected at 5 stations: Connolly, Ashtown, Castleknock, Coolmine and Clonsilla.



Figure 2-1 Public consultation no. 2 display board at Ashtown Station

2.1.3 Elected Member Briefings

On the afternoon of 27th July 2021, a series of online briefing sessions were held with elected representatives from Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Kildare County Council and Meath County Council. A total of 77 elected representatives were invited and three separate presentations provided.

2.1.4 Website

A project webpage (www.irishrail.ie/DARTWest) presented all of the project information published as part of PC2 including the project brochure, the flyer the feedback form, the Options Selection Report and associated annexes and drawings. The website also contained a virtual room, allowing the user to have an interactive experience simulating a real-world public hall event. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet was also developed following the initial submissions received and provided on the project website. This was regularly updated throughout the consultation period to reflect additional issues that were raised during the process. The final FAQ sheet can be found in **Appendix B**.



Figure 2-2 DART+ West virtual room

2.1.3.1 Project Webpage Analytics

The webpage analytics measure the hit rate on the public consultation webpage as well as the areas of the webpage where the most traffic was received. The determination of these analytics is GDPR compliant.

The analytics demonstrate that the project webpage had a total of 53,137 separate page views with the largest audience viewing and downloads on the launch day 28th July 2021.

Table 2.1 The number of public consultation webpage views – top 10

Webpage Name	No. of views
Home	9,566
DART+ West	9,206
DART+ West PC2 – Route Map	3,652
DART+ West PC2 – Preferred Option	3,072
DART+ West PC2 – How to Engage	3,015
About DART	2,984
DART+ West PC2 – Useful Materials and Downloads	2,038
DART+ West PC2 – Public Consultation Process	1,921
DART+ West PC2 – Key Infrastructural Elements	1,479

The project brochure had 344 downloads and the Option Selection Report had between 54 and 249 downloads, depending on the section of the report. Option Selection Report: Volume 2 – Technical Report had the highest number of downloads out of all sections, and Preliminary Option Selection Report had the least, at 54 downloads. The total number of public consultation material downloads from the project webpage is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.2 The number of public consultation material downloads from the project website

Material	No. of downloads
DART+ West PC2 Brochure	344
Option Selection Report: Volume 2 - Technical Report	249
DART+ West PC2 Information Leaflet	209
DART+ West Option Selection Report: Volume 1 - Preferred Option Report	208
Option Selection Report: Annex 1 Schematic Layouts Combined Set	87
Volume 3L: Stations – Spencer Dock Station. General Layout – Site Plan and Floor Plans	83
Volume 3L: Stations – Connolly Station. General Layout – Site Plan, Floor Plans and Sections	68
Schematic layout Sheet 1 of 39 – Docklands to Connolly	67
Volume 3L: Stations – Spencer Dock Station. 3D View	63
Preliminary Option Selection Report: Main Report	54

Based on the data, there were 13,887 users that visited the DART+ Website and the average session duration was 03:41 minutes. Out of the 13,887 users who visited the site, the top three demographics were Ireland (12,143), United Kingdom (595) and Brazil (379).

The results from the webpage analytics ensured that the webpage was continually improved throughout the consultation period.

2.1.5 Brochures and Leaflets

A non-technical public consultation brochure, presenting the key details of the DART+ West project, the benefits, the option selection process and the preferred option was developed and published. The brochure was made available on the dedicated project webpage and hard copies were issued to the elected representatives and to members of the public that requested a hard copy. Although produced bilingually, the English version of the brochure can be found in Appendix C.

A mail drop to c. 19,225 properties consisting of an information leaflet provided in both English and Irish highlighting the key elements of the project and notifying the local community of the commencement of the consultation was circulated in the project areas during the opening week of the consultation.

2.1.6 Letters to Landowners

Letters to all registered landowners (168 in total) identified as likely to be affected by the preferred option were sent via registered post notifying them in advance of the commencement of the public consultation no.2 and inviting them to provide feedback on the preferred option. Details of the communication channels to do so were provided..

2.1.7 Direct Correspondence via Emails, Online Forms, Project Helpline

A project email address (Dartwest@irishrail.ie) and a project postal address was provided on all project material. An online feedback form was provided on the project webpage to allow the public make submissions on the project. The online feedback form asked the respondents specific questions relating to the project, to provide comments, suggestions, ideas and to detail what aspects of the project are of interest to the respondents.

A helpline was established to ensure that all calls received during the consultation period were answered, documented, passed to the dedicated Community Liaison Representative (CLO) and responded to timeously.

All of the above measures were promoted to ensure adherence with the public health advice in relation to Covid-19.

2.1.8 Meetings

Meetings were arranged with affected landowners and attended by the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and CIÉ Group Property Representatives. Over and above the phone calls made to the affected landowners, a total of 14 landowner meetings took place. Meetings were held virtually or in a limited number of cases face-to-face whilst adhering to social distancing guidance and government restrictions at that time.

2.1.1.1 Public Information Webinars

Multiple webinar meetings were held between IÉ and potentially affected residents, community groups and elected representatives. This was as part of the efforts to inform the public as widely as possible whilst ensuring compliance with the government restrictions at that time. Skype was typically used as it was considered the most easily accessible platform for the public.

Prior to the meetings, participants were requested to provide questions which were addressed following a bespoke presentation focusing on the relevant affected area. Questions raised during the webinars were also addressed and participants were encouraged to make a formal submission as part of the consultation process. Table 2.2 provides a list of webinars and presentations held:

Table 2.2. Public consultation no.2 webinar meetings

Date	Resident Group	Attendees *
3 August 2021	Spencer Dock – Connolly area	< 10
4 August 2021	Coolmine Clonsilla area residents	36
5 August 2021	Croke Park – Ashtown area	90
10 August 2021	Clonsilla to Maynooth/M3Parkway area	23
12 August 2021	Coolmine to Clonsilla area	33
13 September 2021	Residents from the Spencer Dock – Connolly area	5
14 September 2021	Residents from the Croke Park – Ashtown area	79
15 September 2021	Residents from Coolmine – Castleknock area	47
16 September 2021	Residents from Clonsilla – Maynooth/M3 Parkway area	60
27 September 2021	Residents Connolly/Spencer Dock – Ashtown Q&A	66
28 September 2021	Residents Coolmine – Castleknock Q&A	36
30 September 2021	Residents Clonsilla – Maynooth M3 Parkway Q&A	45

* Numbers are approximate due to individuals dropping off, re-joining, joining late, etc.

3. Consultation Feedback

3.1. Assessment Methodology

All submissions received either via post, telephone communication, online feedback form or email were analysed. The issues, comments and suggestions were then logged in a searchable database after being tagged in relation to the key items noted in the submission. All letters received were scanned and treated as email submissions. It should also be noted that issues raised during the webinars were also taken into consideration and the participants were encouraged to submit formal submission through the communication channels provided.

The online feedback forms posed specific questions in relation to the proposed project namely, question 2 and 6. The responses to these questions are assessed in Section 3.5.

3.2. Overview of Submissions Received

The total number of submissions received for public consultation no.2 was 8,284.

A total of 4,175 submissions were received by Iarnród Éireann via the communication channels provided (email, online feedback form and/or helpline calls). In addition, a total of 4,046 handwritten petitions were received in relation to the Ashtown stables. A further c. 63 hard copy petition signatures from Martin Savage Park residents were also received. Submissions received after the close of the public consultation period (6 October 2021) were still accepted and taken into consideration. The feedback received ranges from personal submissions from affected residents and commuters to detailed proposals from public bodies and various associations. A breakdown of the feedback received is indicated in Figure 3-1 below.

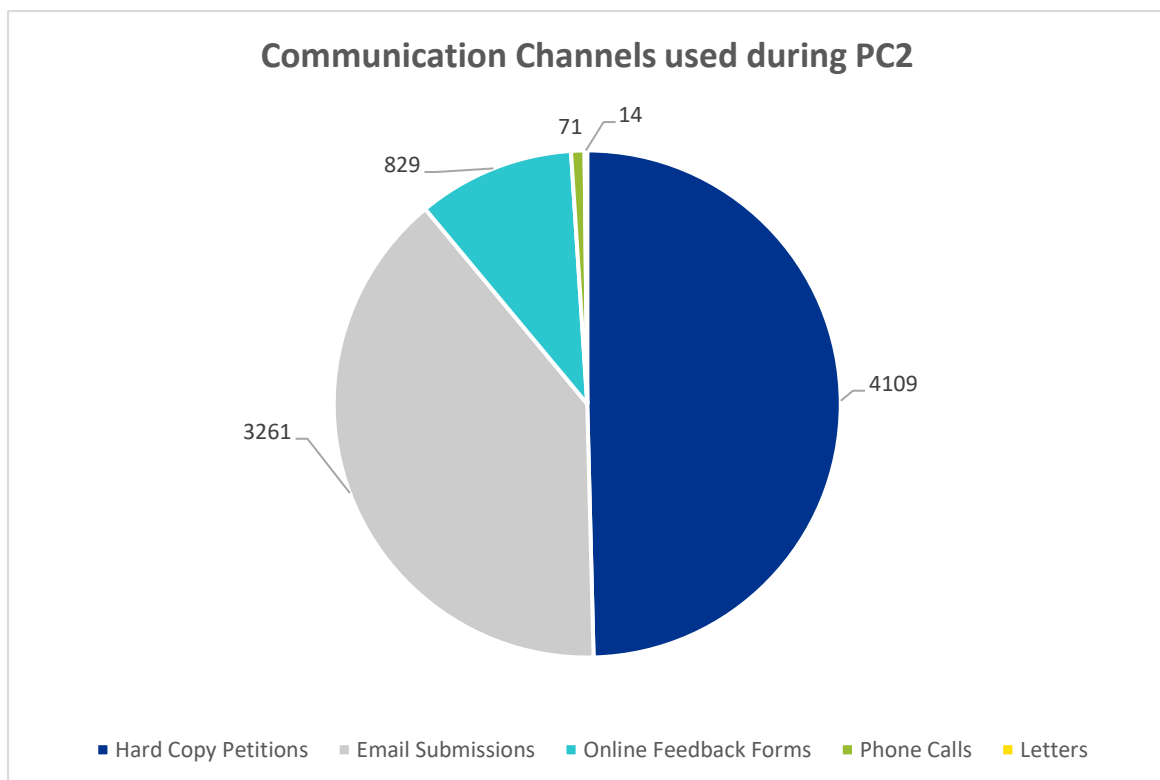


Figure 3-1 Submissions and queries communication channels

Due to the digital nature of the public consultation, it was common for the respondents to submit queries seeking further information or clarity regarding the emerging preferred options. Of the 3,261 email submissions, 2,475 consisted of comments only and 260 solely contained queries. A number of email submissions included webinar invitations and requests. It is noted that some feedback forms were submitted within emails and therefore are included as both 'Email' and 'Online Feedback Forms' submissions.

3.3. General Themes Raised During Consultation Process

All of the 4,175 submissions (email, online feedback form and/or helpline calls) received by Iarnród Éireann were reviewed and the issues raised were categorised, summarised and analysed. During the review process a total of 26 themes were identified and are indicated in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1. Main themes identified during review process (queries & submissions)

Theme	Frequency
Population	670 comments
Traffic	440 comments
Human Health	419 comments
Accessibility	360 comments
Disruption	232 comments
Integration	187 comments
Socio-economic	171 comments
Design	164 comments
Consultation Process	127 comments
Biodiversity	112 comments
Social Inclusion	88 comments
Archaeology/Cultural Heritage	75 comments
Tourism	61 comments
Environmental (General)	58 comments
Physical Activity	58 comments
Planning/CPO	54 comments
Climate Change	52 comments
Noise	46 comments
Air Quality	38 comments
Construction	29 comments
Landscape (Visual impact)	28 comments
Architecture	15 comments
Hydrology	14 comments
Safety	12 comments
Economy	7 comments
Land & Soils	5 comments

3.4. Issues Raised Outside Project Scope

While reviewing the feedback received it was clear that there were several issues raised in the submissions that are outside of the scope of this project or which were not directly related to the proposals. These are detailed below.

3.4.1 Effects of Covid-19 on Ability for Public Engagement

During the run of public consultation no.2, there were several submissions received that requested the consultation period be extended or delayed due to the Covid-19 public health restrictions. Respondents were concerned that the initial time frame for the public consultation was too short, particularly during the Covid-19 restrictions where it was difficult for residents to meet and discuss the project.

In response to the requests made by the public, the consultation period was extended twice, from 6 weeks to 10 weeks in total. Iarnród Éireann also accepted submissions received after the consultation period had closed. The public were also advised that there will be a statutory consultation at the time of the railway order application.

3.4.2 Extending the Project to Kilcock

A total of 230 submissions were received requesting that consideration should be given to extending the electrification west to Kilcock or even further to Enfield. Respondents highlighted the growing population of Kilcock and expressed dissatisfaction that the electrification was not being extended to and/or beyond Kilcock.

Response

The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2016-2035) has concluded that the DART+ will extend to Maynooth / M3 Parkway. The outer areas of the Greater Dublin Area and the outer Regions will continue to be served by numbers of diesel train services, albeit at increased frequency. These train services will be augmented by the M4 / N4 regional bus network.

At present, Kilcock Station is a single platform station. Continuation of the DART+ West to Kilcock would require construction of double track along a very narrow railway corridor, necessary overbridge modifications and the reconstruction of Kilcock Station to provide the necessary train infrastructure.

The NTA have commenced a review of the Transport Strategy, which will consider the existing and future demand and changes in demand since the last strategy. It will consider all options for servicing demand along the corridor including rail-based options. Electrification of the Sligo line beyond Maynooth remains an objective of Iarnród Éireann. It has been agreed that the NTA will consider the next phase of electrification on the Sligo Line and the required service levels to meet passenger demand in a review of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. It is important to note that the works now proposed along the Maynooth Line will not preclude future electrification of the line to Kilcock and further west.

3.4.3 Cycle Parking

A number of submissions requested further consideration and clarity regarding the levels of cycle parking to be provided as part of the proposed works, including a submission from Dublin City Council. Respondents raised concerns regarding inadequate existing cycle parking at some stations and requests were submitted to include more cycle parking facilities with the proposed scheme.

Response

A survey of cycle demand has been undertaken at a number of stations along the DART+ West Project. The survey has been assessed to determine the demand and cycle parking provided where possible at stations where there are works proposed to the station.

3.5. Specific Feedback from the Online Forms

An online feedback form was provided which requested the public's contact details, their relationship to the project (Owner/occupier/other), whether they support the principle of the project, aspects of interest, comments on the Preferred Option and the project in general, whether the improved services will encourage a modal shift and whether they want to be added to a mailing list. 829 submissions were received by means of the provided online form on the DART+ West webpage and further 16 email submissions were received in which the online form questions were answered and have therefore been taken into account.

In terms of the two specific questions asked the analysis of the responses is positive.

Question 2: Do you support the principle of the DART+ West project? (electrification of the existing rail line and increasing train capacity)

Figure 3-2 below shows the percentage of responses expressing their support or not for the principle of the DART+ West project. As shown 73% of the 845 feedback forms submitted expressed support for the principle of the electrification of the rail line and increasing train capacity, while 27% indicated that they do not support the principle of DART+ West project.

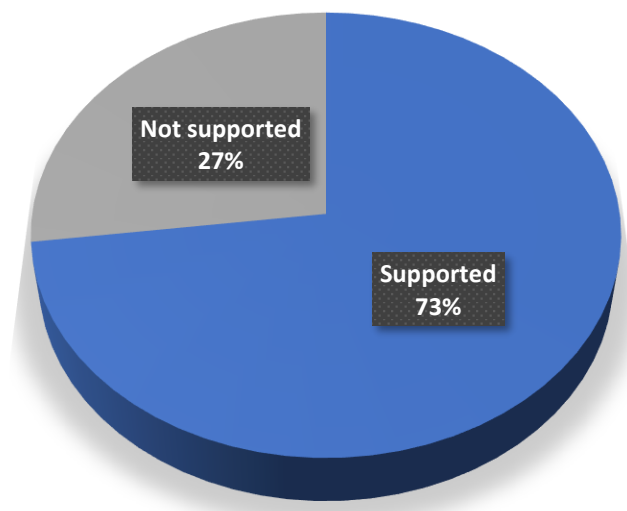


Figure 3-2 Percentage of public submissions in response to Question 2 of the online feedback form

Question 6: Will the improved services encourage you to change from travelling by private car to public transport?

The feedback indicates that with improved services, 54% of the respondents will be encouraged to change from travelling by private car to public transport, while 39% indicated 'No' and 7% did not provide a response (Figure 3-3).

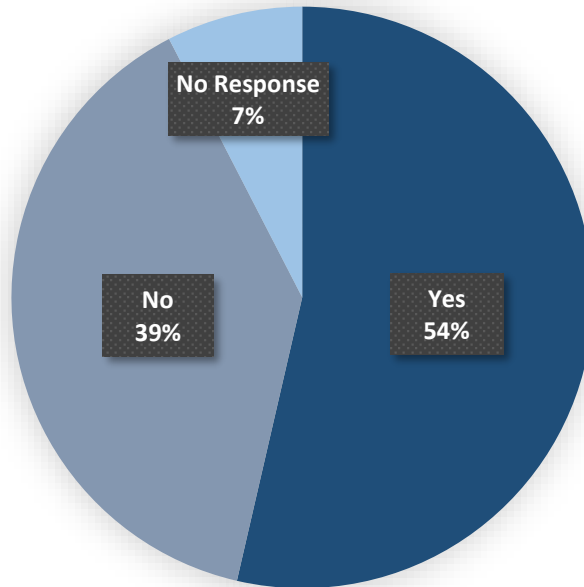


Figure 3-3 Percentage of public submissions in response to Question 6 of the online feedback form

4. Summary of Key Issues or Concerns

4.1. Key Issues or Concerns by Location

While a wide variety of issues were raised in the submissions this section provides a summary of the principal issues or concerns related to the specific locations of the project. The chart below shows the locations/project elements most referenced within the submissions (and hard copy petitions received). Issues outside of the scope such as extending to Kilcock, cycle parking, and comments relating to the public consultation process are not included.

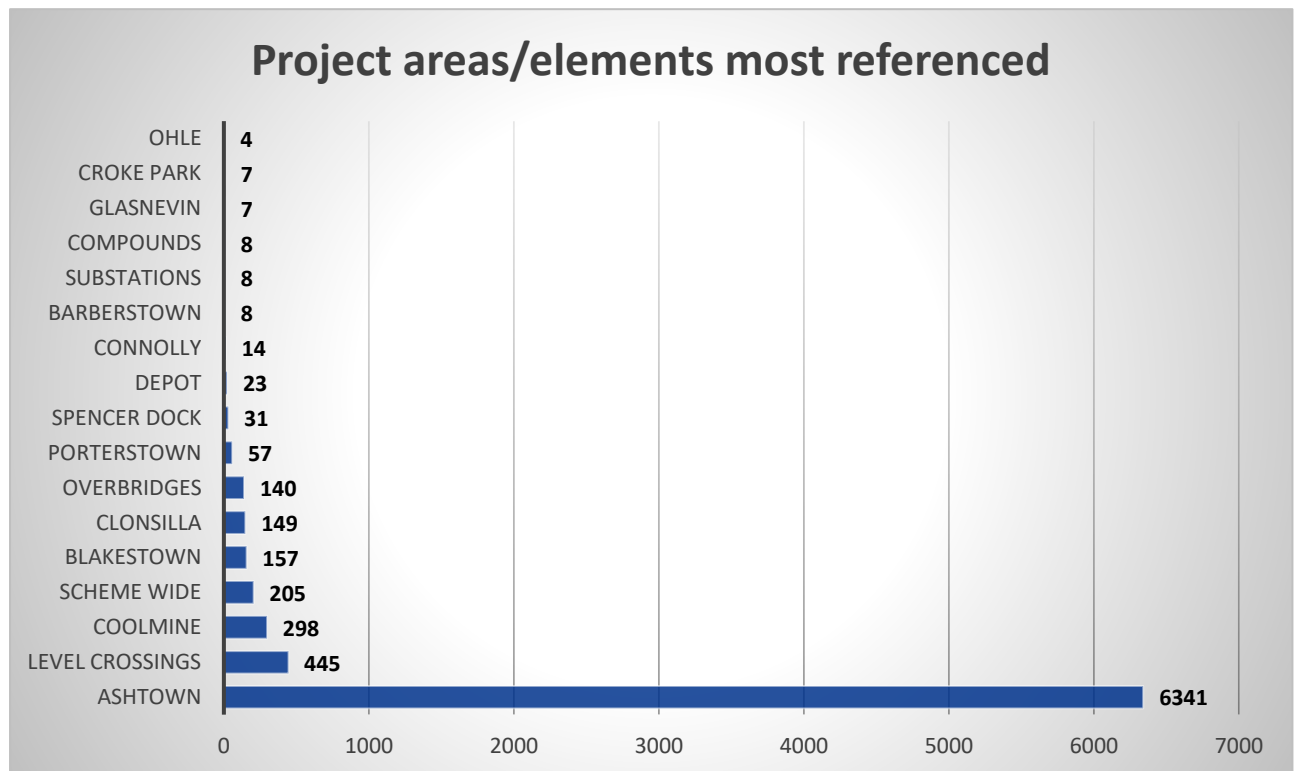


Figure 4-1 Project areas/elements most referenced

4.1.1 Ashtown Level Crossing Replacement

The preferred option for Ashtown received the largest number of submissions, a total of 6,341. This includes queries, submissions and petitions. The following are the main issues or concerns raised and the typical responses provided by Iarnród Éireann during the consultation period:



Figure 4-2 Ashtown level crossing preferred option

4.1.1.1 Request for Avoidance of Relocation / Destruction of Ashtown Stables

Respondents expressed strong concerns over the demolition of Ashtown Stables. A significant number of comments highlighted that the Ashtown Stables have been a vital amenity to the community of Ashtown as well as tourists and have objected to the demolition of the stables.

Response

A full re-analysis of the Ashtown level crossing replacement option selection process will be undertaken to take account of the submissions from the public and the potential impact of the loss of this community facility.

4.1.1.2 Concerns About Safety of Underpass and Anti-social Behaviour

Respondents have stated concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and the safety of the pedestrian underpass. Particular concern was related to safety of vulnerable users and women that would be unlikely to use the proposed underpass.

Response

A full re-analysis of the Ashtown level crossing replacement option selection process will be undertaken to take account of the submissions from the public.

4.1.1.3 Concern Relating to Cultural Heritage Impacts

Concerns were raised relating to the archaeological and architectural heritage impacts on the stables. Respondents raised concerns that the archaeological potential of the stables site has not been tested and there is a potential for prehistoric and early medieval and archaeology remains. Concerns were particularly raised regarding the impact on cultural heritage structures, such as loss of stone wall of Ashton House.

Response

A detailed archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage assessment is being undertaken at Ashtown and along the full project. The potential impacts of the options on cultural heritage will be reviewed as part of the reanalysis of the Ashtown level crossing replacement option selection process.

4.1.1.4 Human Health and Wellbeing, and Impacts on Women

Respondents expressed concerns in relation to the safety of the tunnel for women in particular. Requests were also included for open public areas and safe access for vulnerable women, children and elderly. The concerns particularly relate to the difficulties that the local vulnerable users will face due to the potential unsafe environment of the underpass.

Response

A full re-analysis of the Ashtown level crossing replacement option selection process will be undertaken to take account of the submissions from the public.

4.1.1.5 Impacts on Rathbourne

Respondents expressed concern regarding impacts on the access to the shops and facilities in Rathbourne. Concerns were raised regarding the tunnel and pedestrian access to and from Rathbourne, specifying the need for well-lit and preserved pedestrian ways to ensure that residents feel safe.

Response

A full re-analysis of the Ashtown level crossing replacement option selection process will be undertaken to take account of the submissions from the public.

4.1.1.6 Request Review of MCA process and Further Consideration of Option 9 for Track Lowering at Ashtown

Respondents requested reconsideration of option 9 as the “preferred” option to the Ashtown community. Option 9 is commented as being the most favourable to the local and wider community as it would avoid demolition of the Ashtown Stables and would comprise lowering of the track.

Response

A full re-analysis of the Ashtown level crossing replacement option selection process will be undertaken to take account of the submissions from the public.

4.1.1.7 Mobility and accessibility- the gradient of the tunnel and having to use lifts

Concern was raised regarding the provision of lifts at Ashtown Station. Respondents expressed concern over the potential attraction of anti-social behaviour in the lifts, as well as community severance. Concerns were also raised regarding the accessibility for vulnerable and disabled users, as well as overcrowding of lifts and potential lift breakdown.

Response

A comprehensive Multi Criteria Assessment (MCA) has been undertaken by a team of competent experts to determine the preferred option. Accessibility and Social Inclusion is one of six Common Appraisal Framework (CAF) parameters used in this assessment and the preferred option identified has been developed in

accordance with design standards. This will be reviewed as part of the re-analysis of the Ashtown level crossing replacement option selection process to take account of the submissions from the public.

4.1.1.8 Concerns about impact on biodiversity

Concern was also raised over the demolition of the Ashtown Stables and the biodiversity of the land, underlining that the stables are home to a wide range of wildlife including bats, owls, birds and other species.

Response

A detailed baseline survey of the project extents and the zone of impact has been undertaken on lands where access has been permitted. Biodiversity has been considered in the MCA process however, this will be reviewed as part of the re-analysis of the Ashtown level crossing replacement option selection process to take account of the submissions from the public.

4.1.2 Coolmine level crossing

The preferred option for Coolmine area received the second largest number of submissions by area, a total number of 298. The following are the main issues or concerns raised and the typical responses provided by IÉ during the consultation period:



Figure 4-3 Coolmine level crossing replacement preferred option



Figure 4-4 Proposed Footbridge at Coolmine

4.1.3.1 Request for Consideration of Signalling Upgrade and a Trial Period Thereof

Respondents submitted requests that Iarnród Éireann consider that a signalling upgrade get top priority and that a trial period start immediately.

Response

The DART+ West project will be taken forward to Railway Order Application as a fully considered and holistic design. Subject to approval by An Bord Pleanála, the construction will commence when Government authority and funding has been provided. Therefore, no works can start immediately for trials.

The signalling upgrade will be implemented in a coherent manner to best suit the project objectives. It is not possible to prioritise the signalling upgrade without considering the safety and operational requirements of the railway.

4.1.3.2 Traffic Impacts on Delwood and Roselawn Road

Respondents were concerned that the preferred option identified will lead to increased traffic congestion following the closure of the Coolmine Crossing around the areas such as Coolmine, Carpenterstown, Riverwood, Delwood and Roselawn. Residents from Delwood and Roselawn were also particularly concerned about the traffic impacts within their estate, as well as traffic diversion onto the Diswellstown Bridge.

Response

There are a number of existing level crossings along the route where rail traffic and road traffic (cars, pedestrians and cyclists) interface. These are located at (east to west) Ashtown, Coolmine, Porterstown, Clonsilla, Barberstown and Blakestown. The level crossings constrain train frequency. For example, Coolmine level crossing is closed for approximately 40 minutes between 08.00-09.00 each weekday for 6 trains per hour per direction. In order to achieve the project objectives of significantly higher train frequencies it is not viable

to retain the level crossings. (i.e. increasing from 6 trains per hour per direction to 12 trains per hour per direction)

The removal of the level crossings will improve train efficiencies, will enhance safety, and will remove the delays caused by the road / rail interface. Their closure will also remove the periodic blockages on the road system, which are currently very pronounced, especially in the morning and evening peak commuter periods

Where existing usage patterns of the level crossings exhibit significant activity, alternative equivalent access is proposed in the form of bridges and roadworks. We are proposing the following interventions at each of the existing level crossings:

- Coolmine level crossing – Permanent closure with diversion of vehicular traffic to existing crossing points at Castleknock and Diswellstown Road with associated road junction improvements. A new pedestrian and cyclist footbridge will be provided at the existing level crossing and a new station accessibility bridge and lift will be provided within the station.
- Porterstown level crossing - Permanent closure with diversion of vehicular traffic to existing crossing points at Diswellstown Road and the new road bridge at Barberstown with associated road junction improvements. A new pedestrian and cyclist footbridge will also be provided at the existing level crossing.
- Clonsilla level crossing - Permanent closure with diversion of vehicular traffic to existing crossing points at Diswellstown Road and the new road bridge at Barberstown with associated road junction improvements. A new pedestrian and cyclist footbridge will also be provided at the existing level crossing.

In relation to the upgrade of junctions in the Coolmine area required to facilitate the closure of the level crossings.

- At the Diswellstown Junction, Castleknock Junction and Porterstown Road Junction additional traffic lanes are being proposed so that the junction can operate efficiently with the additional traffic flows projected following the closure of the level crossing.
- At the Clonsilla Road roundabout, the roundabout will be changed to a signalised junction to allow better management of the additional traffic flows projected following the closure of the level crossing.

The EIAR will contain a detailed traffic impact assessment which will present the traffic modelling analysis which shows how the junctions and road links in the area will operate.

4.1.3.3 Concern Raised over Impacts on School and Safety of Children

A number of concerns were raised regarding the safety and fencing near the train lines. Concerns were also raised about the Coolmine level crossing and its frequent use by children attending Scoil Choilm. Requests were made for temporary pedestrian crossings to allow safe crossing of children going to school. Respondents also raised concerns over increased traffic in the vicinity of schools in the area due to the proposed closure of Porterstown and Clonsilla level crossings.

Response

A pedestrian and cycle bridge will be provided at Coolmine level crossing to ensure that movement of students will be unimpeded.

In relation to increased traffic and potential safety concerns there are a number of existing level crossings along the route where rail traffic and road traffic (cars, pedestrians and cyclists) interface. These are located at (east to west) Ashtown, Coolmine, Porterstown, Clonsilla, Barberstown and Blakestown. The level crossings constrain train frequency. For example, Coolmine level crossing is closed for approximately 40 minutes between 08.00-09.00 each weekday for 6 trains per hour per direction. In order to achieve the project

objectives of significantly higher train frequencies it is not viable to retain the level crossings. (i.e. increasing from 6 trains per hour per direction to 12 trains per hour per direction)

The removal of the level crossings will improve train efficiencies, will enhance safety, and will remove the delays caused by the road / rail interface. Their closure will also remove the periodic blockages on the road system, which are currently very pronounced, especially in the morning and evening peak commuter periods

Where existing usage patterns of the level crossings exhibit significant activity, alternative equivalent access is proposed in the form of bridges and roadworks. We are proposing the following interventions at each of the existing level crossings:

- Coolmine level crossing – Permanent closure with diversion of vehicular traffic to existing crossing points at Castleknock and Diswellstown Road with associated road junction improvements. A new pedestrian and cyclist footbridge will be provided at the existing level crossing and a new station accessibility bridge and lift will be provided within the station.
- Porterstown level crossing - Permanent closure with diversion of vehicular traffic to existing crossing points at Diswellstown Road and the new road bridge at Barberstown with associated road junction improvements. A new pedestrian and cyclist footbridge will also be provided at the existing level crossing.
- Clonsilla level crossing - Permanent closure with diversion of vehicular traffic to existing crossing points at Diswellstown Road and the new road bridge at Barberstown with associated road junction improvements. A new pedestrian and cyclist footbridge will also be provided at the existing level crossing.

In relation to the upgrade of junctions in the Coolmine area required to facilitate the closure of the level crossings.

- At the Diswellstown Junction, Castleknock Junction and Porterstown Road Junction additional traffic lanes are being proposed so that the junction can operate efficiently with the additional traffic flows projected following the closure of the level crossing.
- At the Clonsilla Road roundabout, the roundabout will be changed to a signalised junction to allow better management of the additional traffic flows projected following the closure of the level crossing.

The EIAR will contain a detailed traffic impact assessment which will present the traffic modelling analysis which shows how the junctions and road links in the area will operate.

4.1.3.4 Request for a Higher Architectural Design of Footbridge

Respondents submitted requests to consider more elegant designs for pedestrian bridges. Particular point highlighted was the failure of the proposed designs to blend into the surrounding environment. A number of concerns were raised regarding the impacts on the appearance of existing bridges in the vicinity, some of which are considered to be of National importance by the NIAH.

Response

The DART+ West project is seeking to modernise the existing railway whilst protecting where possible the existing heritage of the railway. In order to construct the electrification system, certain interventions are required that will impact on specific bridges.

The project team have considered the architectural heritage of all bridge structures in the options assessments and physical interventions to these heritage structures will only be undertaken where absolutely necessary. In most cases works are confined to the railway bridges in proximity to the canal bridges and works will be restricted as much as possible to avoid any potential impact on these structures. An architectural heritage

assessment of the proposed development and all protected structures impacted by the proposed works will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

Where opportunities allow for optimisation of the bridge designs to provide more architectural bridge designs these will be considered.

4.1.3.5 Concerns Relating to Haphazard Parking on the Northern Side of the Railway due to Severance from Car Park

Respondents raised concerns regarding increased demand for parking due to the severance from the car park and more commuters using the estates in the vicinity to park their cars for free. A number of submissions highlighted that the car park for the Coolmine station is on the South side of the tracks and therefore, following the proposed closure of the level crossing, the roads on the northern side of the tracks will be utilised for on street parking by commuters.

Response

A passenger drop-off area and a provision for safe vehicle turn around will be provided on the north side of the Coolmine Level crossing.

4.1.3.6 Request to Include Widening of Castleknock Bridge

Respondents raised concerns regarding the Castleknock bridge, in particular the narrow footpaths and the issue of safety when passing oncoming pedestrian traffic. A number of respondents requested that an upgrade of the bridge would be considered in line with the proposed scheme.

Response

The DART+ West project is capacity enhancement project. The DART+ West project does not require the widening of the Castleknock rail bridge or the adjacent canal bridge as part of the project. Iarnród Eireann have liaised with Fingal County Council throughout the design development process and will continue to do so to ensure that any future cycleway/greenway project to be provided at the Castleknock Bridge location is not adversely affected by the proposed DART+ Wet proposals. Iarnród Eireann will continue to liaise with Fingal County Council on this issue.

4.1.3 Clonsilla Level Crossing

The preferred option for Clonsilla level crossing received a total number of 149 submissions. The following are the main issues or concerns raised and the typical responses provided by IÉ during the consultation period:



Figure 4-5 Proposed Footbridge at Clonsilla

4.1.3.1 Congestion at the Diswellstown Viaduct

Concerns were raised regarding the increased pressure on the Diswellstown viaduct following the proposed closure of the level crossing. The concerns particularly relate to the existing traffic pressures that the viaduct is under and the inability to cope with any future rerouting of traffic onto it.

Response

At the Diswellstown Junction, Castleknock Junction and Porterstown Road Junction additional traffic lanes are being proposed so that the junction can operate efficiently with the additional traffic flows projected following the closure of the level crossing. The EIAR will contain a detailed traffic impact assessment which will present the traffic modelling analysis which shows how the junctions and road links in the area will operate.

4.1.4 Blakestown Level Crossing



Figure 4-6 Blakestown level crossing preferred option (Do-Minimum)

Respondents raised concerns over the closure of the Blakestown level crossing, including a submission from Kildare County Council, in which it was stated that KCC is 'not in favour of the permanent closure in the absence of alternative vehicular access provisions'. 907 online petition signatures in relation to the closure of Blakestown level crossing were obtained via an online petition platform (Change.org). Specific concerns from respondents included reduced access to the canal for residents, as well as longer travelling time due to rerouting traffic. Concerns were raised over access to public transport, in particular the bus stop, following the closure of the crossing. A number of respondents raised concerns over additional time for emergency services to reach the residents that would be affected due to the crossing closure.

Response

There are a number of existing level crossings along the route where rail traffic and road traffic (cars, pedestrians and cyclists) interface. These are located at (east to west) Ashtown, Coolmine, Porterstown, Clonsilla, Barberstown and Blakestown. The level crossings constrain train frequency. For example, Coolmine level crossing is closed for approximately 40 minutes between 08.00-09.00 each weekday for 6 trains per hour per direction. In order to achieve the project objectives of significantly higher train frequencies it is not viable to retain the level crossings. (i.e. increasing from 6 trains per hour per direction to 12 trains per hour per direction)

The removal of the level crossings will improve train efficiencies, will enhance safety, and will remove the delays caused by the road / rail interface. Their closure will also remove the periodic blockages on the road system, which are currently very pronounced, especially in the morning and evening peak commuter periods

Where existing usage patterns of the level crossings exhibit significant activity, alternative equivalent access is proposed in the form of bridges and roadworks. At Blakestown level crossing the levels of pedestrian and vehicular traffic do not justify provision of replacement infrastructure. A comprehensive multi criteria

assessment was undertaken to determine the preferred option at the Blakestown level crossing. Details of the assessment can be found at the below web link. Please refer to Volume 2: Options Selection – Technical Report, Section 8, sub section 8.7 page 212.

4.2. Scheme Wide Issues

Some of the issues raised were not location specific and relate to multiple locations along the route or issues that related to the project as a whole.

4.2.1 Park & Ride

Respondents raised concerns regarding the insufficient Park and Ride facilities along the scheme. A number of respondents commented on the increased need for those facilities as the number of commuters will rise.

Response

The objectives of the DART+ West project is to increase capacity and electrify the line. Additional car parking facilities are not within the scope of the DART+ West project. However, Iarnród Éireann's Network Enhancement Division and the National Transport Authority's Park & Ride Development Office are working on other projects to deliver enhanced parking at stations, for cars and bicycles in parallel to DART+ West.

4.2.2 Footbridge Design and Visual Impact on the Royal Canal

A number of respondents raised concerns over the proposed footbridge designs and their aesthetics. Particular concerns were raised in relation to the visual impact of the proposed bridge designs on the landscape of the Royal Canal and other heritage structures in the areas. Concerns were raised by the general public as well as DCC and FCC regarding the further consideration of the architectural design of footbridges.

Response

The DART+ West project is seeking to modernise the existing railway whilst protecting where possible the existing heritage of the railway. In order to construct the electrification system, certain interventions are required that will impact on specific bridges.

The project team have considered the architectural heritage of all bridge structures in the options assessments and physical interventions to these heritage structures will only be undertaken where absolutely necessary. In most cases works are confined to the railway bridges in proximity to the canal bridges and works will be restricted as much as possible to avoid any potential impact on these structures. An architectural heritage assessment of the proposed development and all protected structures impacted by the proposed works will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The EIAR will also contain a landscape and visual impact assessment and will include photomontages to help the public understand how the proposed development will sit into the receiving environment.

4.2.3 The issues relating to the public consultation process and quality of consultation material

Respondents raised concerns regarding the accessibility of the online public consultation material for those less comfortable with technology. Respondents commented on the material being too long and the difficulty of reading such lengthy material in the short time between public consultation no.1 and no.2 and in an online format. Comments were raised about access to hard copies of the material. A number of respondents also stated that the public consultation was not adequately advertised, such as at the train stations on the DART+ West line.

Response

Due to the government restrictions in relation to public gatherings during the covid pandemic, the project team have been restricted from holding public gatherings.

All project information and updates are available on www.dartplus.ie, a dedicated website for this programme. A virtual room has been created on the project website to make the experience as real as possible for the public. All public consultation launches are highlighted through in-station posters and a leaflet drop along the project route, briefing of elected representatives, email notification to the project database, targeted digital advertising and advertising in print media and on radio where appropriate.

A number of webinars were also arranged to assist the public in clarifying any queries they may have. It is the purpose of the webinars to outline the preferred option, detail the current project status and to address questions which arise. This is to assist interested parties in preparing their submissions on the project. The submissions being the formal public consultation.

The duration of the public consultation was extended significantly to allow the public sufficient time to consider the material provided and submit a response.

4.2.4 Noise Impacts

Respondents highlighted concerns about the noise impacts as a result of the increase in rail works along the railway line.

Response

During the operational phase, as electric trains are quieter than diesel trains, it is not expected that noise levels will increase significantly. Should noise levels increase significantly at any location and exceed the permitted guideline levels, mitigation measures will be employed. All likely significant effects during both the construction and operational phases will be identified and detailed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report with a detailed schedule of mitigation measures identified to reduce those potential effects.

4.2.5 Parking

Issue

Respondents expressed concern relating to the provision of adequate parking facilities at the stations due to the proposed increase of rail users.

Response

The objectives of the DART+ West project is to increase capacity and electrify the line. Additional car parking facilities are not within the scope of the DART+ West project. However, Iarnród Éireann's Network Enhancement Division and the National Transport Authority's Park & Ride Development Office are working on other projects to deliver enhanced parking at stations, for cars and bicycles in parallel to DART+ West.

4.2.6 Impact on Heritage Structures – Old Schoolhouse at Porterstown Level Crossing

Issue

Concerns were expressed regarding to the impact on the protected Old Schoolhouse as a result of the proposed bridge crossing at Porterstown.

Response

Architectural heritage and landscape impact are two of the parameters assessed as part of the Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) for the level crossing replacement options at Porterstown. The relative impact of each option on these parameters was identified in the Preliminary Option Selection Report and this will be further updated in the Option Selection Report to reflect feedback, consultations and further surveys. The project team has briefed Fingal County Council on the proposed replacement options at Porterstown, and the associated constraints with each option. A detailed Architectural heritage Impact Assessment will be provided in the EIAR to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála as part of the Railway Order application.

4.2.7 Impact on Heritage Structures – Bridge Modifications

Issue

Respondents expressed concern over the need to modify heritage structures, particularly the bridges along the length of the Royal Canal. Concerns were raised regarding some bridges being identified as recorded structures, such as the bridge on Sherriff Street recorded on the DCIHR, and the demolition of Bailey Bridge that is listed as a national listed structure.

Concerns were expressed and a submission was received from the Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland (IHAI) relating to the proposal to dismantle and rebuild Broombridge railway bridge to lift the bridge deck. Particular concerns were highlighted in relation to the alteration of the appearance of the bridge and impact on the adjoining canal bridge, which is considered to be of National importance by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). The IHAI then recommended that the Dublin City Industrial Heritage Record (DCIHR) and Fingal Industrial Heritage Survey (FIHS) be consulted.

Response

The DART+ West project is seeking to modernise the existing railway whilst protecting where possible the existing heritage of the railway. In order to construct the electrification system, certain interventions are required that will impact on specific bridges.

The project team have considered the architectural heritage of all bridge structures in the options assessments and physical interventions to these heritage structures will only be undertaken where absolutely necessary. In most cases works are confined to the railway bridges in proximity to the canal bridges and works will be restricted as much as possible to avoid any potential impact on these structures. An architectural heritage assessment of the proposed development and all protected structures impacted by the proposed works will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

4.2.8 Traffic

Issue

A number of respondents expressed concern over resulting traffic and increased road use following the closure of level crossings and rerouting onto existing bridges that are already struggling with congestion at peak hours.

Response

See response to 4.1.3.2 above

4.2.9 Impact on Residents

Issue

Residents in proximity to the rail line have raised concerns relating to the construction and operational impacts that the project will have on them. A number of respondents raised concerns regarding potential disruption during the construction works as well as queries on any increase in noise following the increased number of trains.

Response

Construction Phase

In order to maintain services during the day, the majority of the construction works along the railway line itself will take place at night. Works outside of the live railway corridor can progress during the day (i.e., construction of bridges associated with level crossing replacements, the construction of the depot, substations, construction compounds). Every effort will be made to avoid, reduce, and/or mitigate negative impacts, however, there is likely to be some disturbance experienced for those in close proximity to the railway line caused by noise, lighting or fencing/hoarding erected associated with the construction activities. The types of construction work required at each specific location will determine the type of impact that may affect the area/your property. However, there will be general linear works required along the full length, such as:

- Overhead electrification equipment along the full extent of the railway line. This will be similar in style to that currently used on the existing DART network.
- Modifications to the existing rail bridges such as modifications to the structure, track lowering or a combination of both.
- Substations will be required at intervals along the rail line to provide power to the network.
- Signalling upgrades and additional signalling will be required to the upgraded infrastructure.

Interfaces with existing utilities, boundary treatments, drainage works, vegetation management and other ancillary works will be required along the length of the project.

Upon appointment of a construction contractor a dedicated Community Liaison Officer will be put in place to communicate details of upcoming works and every potential mitigation will be put in place to minimise the disruption that may occur.

Operational Phase

During the operational phase greenhouse gas emissions will reduce significantly whilst noise levels are not expected to increase significantly due to the switch to electric trains from the current diesel fleet at certain locations, some parapet heightening, or protection of the electricity wires will be required.

All likely significant effects during both the construction and operational phases will be identified and detailed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report with a detailed schedule of mitigation measures identified to reduce those potential effects.

5. Summary and Next Steps

5.1. Summary

The purpose of this public consultation process was to present the preferred option for the proposed DART+ West project and to request the views of the public. A total of 8,284 submissions were received during the consultation period covering a broad range of concerns from the public.

As part of this analysis the following items or options have been identified as requiring further assessment:

1. Consider the additional information received in relation to Ashtown Stables and the Ashtown community in undertaking a review of the option selection process for the Ashtown level crossing.
2. Consider changes to proposed architectural design of footbridges.
3. Further investigate the possibility of avoiding the requirement for the closure of the Blakestown level crossing.
4. Consider gradual closing and a trial period for the closure of Coolmine level crossing.
5. Consider widening of the Castleknock bridge to provide enhanced pedestrian and cyclist facilities.
6. Consider the widening of Cope Bridge to remove shuttle system.

6. Local Ashtown Public Consultation

6.1. Revised Preferred Option for Ashtown Level Crossing

During public consultation no.2 significant public feedback was received in relation to the preferred option being presented for Ashtown Level Crossing. As committed to by the project team, all feedback was analysed, and a re-assessment of the option selection process was undertaken. This re-assessment exercise introduced additional and modified options for Ashtown and has identified a revised preferred option for Ashtown.

6.1.1 How the Revised Option Addressed Principal Issues raised during PC2

In respect of the principal concerns raised during the public consultation process, the revised preferred option at Ashtown addressed the following:

- Community severance; The preferred option secures access for all in close proximity to the level crossing and the village.
- Loss of green space in Martin Savage Park; The proposed option curtails the loss of greenspace at the train station. The proposal to reconstruct the train station incorporating the bridge within its footprint mitigates any impact on the adjacent green space.
- Concerns about flooding in Martin Savage Park; The proposed option will be designed to ensure flooding does not occur at Martin Savage Park.
- Impact on Ashtown Stables; The revised preferred option facilitates Ashtown Stables remaining in Ashtown to support the local community. By relocating the roadway to the west of the mill much of the impact on the stables is removed. There will be some impact at the southern extremity of the site at Mill Lane to accommodate road widening and there are likely to be some impacts due to construction activity.
- Safety of underpass and anti-social behaviour; the preferred option provides for the primary social activity to be located above ground at Longford Bridge rather than along Mill Lane. A high amenity design is provided for, and the location is not isolated. The proposed underbridge is intended for vehicle and through cyclist use, and will be open, 5.3m high, and well lit. It is also proposed that, CCTV supervision will be provided for in the design in support of public safety.
- Human health and wellbeing, and impacts on women; The preferred option seeks to maintain the integrity of the Ashtown and Rathborne communities with the provision of safe, direct access for all while maintaining facilities and the links to them. The proposal to include a new train station incorporating integral high amenity access at street level and above means the users have the security of accessing local facilities in a supervised, well-lit urban landscape.
- Impacts on Rathborne: access to the shops and facilities; As set out above access to shops and facilities will remain available to all on implementation of the proposed scheme.
- Need to feel safe; Public safety has been an essential component of the review. The proposed option is considered to best meet the need through the provision of supervised, well lit, high amenity, direct access at the railway;
- Further Consideration of Option 9 for Track Lowering at Ashtown; This option was further examined as part of the review but was set aside at MCA1 stage due primarily to the environmental and construction stage impacts associated with this option;
- Concerns regarding adherence to universal design principles to ensure equal access for all; the universal design principals in respect of access will be aggressively pursued in the design development of the scheme. This will be further pursued during design development with disability user groups, the planning authorities and the gardai;
- Need for well-lit and preserved pedestrian ways to ensure that residents feel safe; This has been provided for in the options selection process and will be an important part of design development of the scheme;

- Concerns the impact on residents in proximity to the rail line; Noise impacts and the like have been considered in the option selection process and the preferred option will be subject to design development and environmental assessment which will any characterise such impacts in accordance with accepted standards and, where significant, will propose measures to mitigate those effects;
- Concerns regarding the provision of adequate parking facilities at the stations; Parking at the station in Ashtown will be discouraged. Provision will be made for set down and disabled only. The adjacent Navan Parkway station provides parking facilities and, one can presume, those needing to park up are likely to use that station, rather than risk not being able to park in Ashtown.
- Impact on the Royal Canal navigation for boating activities along the canal; Once construction is complete, there will be no impact on Royal Canal navigation.



Figure 6-1 Revised Preferred Option at Ashtown

6.2. Overview of Local Ashtown Public Consultation Process

The local Ashtown Public Consultation was launched on the 9 March 2022 and ran for a total of 4 weeks. The following sections describe the various channels of communication used to notify the public of the local Ashtown public consultation.

6.2.1 Media Coverage

Iarnród Éireann Corporate Communications and Media team provided a press release to all major media outlets and the launch was covered widely on the day by national media including:

- The Herald
- Independent.ie
- Dublinlive.ie

A selection of press clippings in relation to the launch are provided in **Appendix D**. Additionally, to drive awareness throughout the localised Revised Ashtown Preferred Option public consultation process, a social

media campaign was launched whereby Facebook and Instagram activity targeted all adults and commuters in areas around Ashtown and Castleknock within a 3km radius.

6.2.2 Elected Member Briefings

On the 9th March 2022, an online briefing session was held with elected representatives from Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council.

6.2.3 Website

The project webpage (www.irishrail.ie/DARTWest) presented all of the project information published as part of revised Ashtown Preferred Option consultation. Information published included a Revised Ashtown Preferred Option - Option Selection Report and associated annexures and drawings, and an information leaflet.

An updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) was also developed following the initial submissions received and provided on the project website. This was updated throughout the consultation period to reflect additional issues that were raised during the process. The final FAQ sheet can be found in **Appendix B**.

6.2.4 Leaflet

A mail-drop to c. 8,000 properties consisting of an information leaflet provided in both English and Irish notifying the local community of the revised preferred option and the launch of the localised public consultation. Details were also provided on how to register for the public webinar event and where one can find information on the revised preferred option and how to make a submission. The English Leaflet can be found in **Appendix E**.

6.2.5 Letters to Landowners

Letters to all registered landowners (24 in total) identified as likely to be affected by the revised preferred option at Ashtown were sent via registered post notifying them in advance of the commencement of the public consultation and inviting them to provide feedback. Details of the communication channels to do so were also provided.

6.2.6 Direct Correspondence via Emails, Online Forms, Project helpline

As with the previous public consultations, a project email address (DARTWest@irishrail.ie) and a project postal address was provided on all project material. An online feedback form asked the respondents specific questions relation to the project, to provide comments and suggestions. The helpline was established to ensure that all calls received during the consultation period were answered, documented and passed on to the Community Liaison Representative (CLO).

6.2.7 Meetings

Meetings were arranged with affected landowners and residents as requested and attended by the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and CIÉ Group Property Representatives.

6.2.7.1 Public Information Webinars

A public webinar meeting was held between IÉ and potentially affected residents, community groups and elected representatives. This was part of the efforts to inform the public as widely as possible whilst ensuring social distancing for those who are not yet comfortable to attend an in-person event. Skype was typically used as it was considered the most easily accessible platform for the public. The webinar took place on the 22nd March at 19:00hrs. Approximately, 64 members of the public attended with the number of attendees varying throughout.

6.2.7.2 In-person Public Consultation Event

At the time of the local Ashtown Public Consultation, the government restrictions pertaining to Covid-19 had been lifted therefore allowing for a physical in person event to take place. The event was held on the 31st March 2022 from 18:00pm until 21:00pm at the St Oliver Plunkett Eoghan Ruadh GAA Clubhouse. Here members of the community had the opportunity to view display boards detailing the revised preferred option as well to ask questions and engage with the project team. A total of approximately 38 persons (those who signed in) attended the event.

6.3. Consultation Feedback

6.3.1 Assessment Methodology

The same process was applied as with the main public consultation No.2 submissions whereby all submissions received either via post, telephonic communication, online form feedback or email were analysed. The issues, comments and suggestions were then logged in a searchable database after being tagged in relation to the key items noted in the submissions. All letters received were scanned and treated as email submissions.

6.3.2 Overview of Submissions Received

A total of 1,461 submissions were received by IE via the communication channels provided (email, online feedback for and/or helpline calls, hard copy objection letters). This includes 83 objection letters that were received after the consultation period had closed. This figure also includes the hard copy objections that were received by Iarnród Éireann.

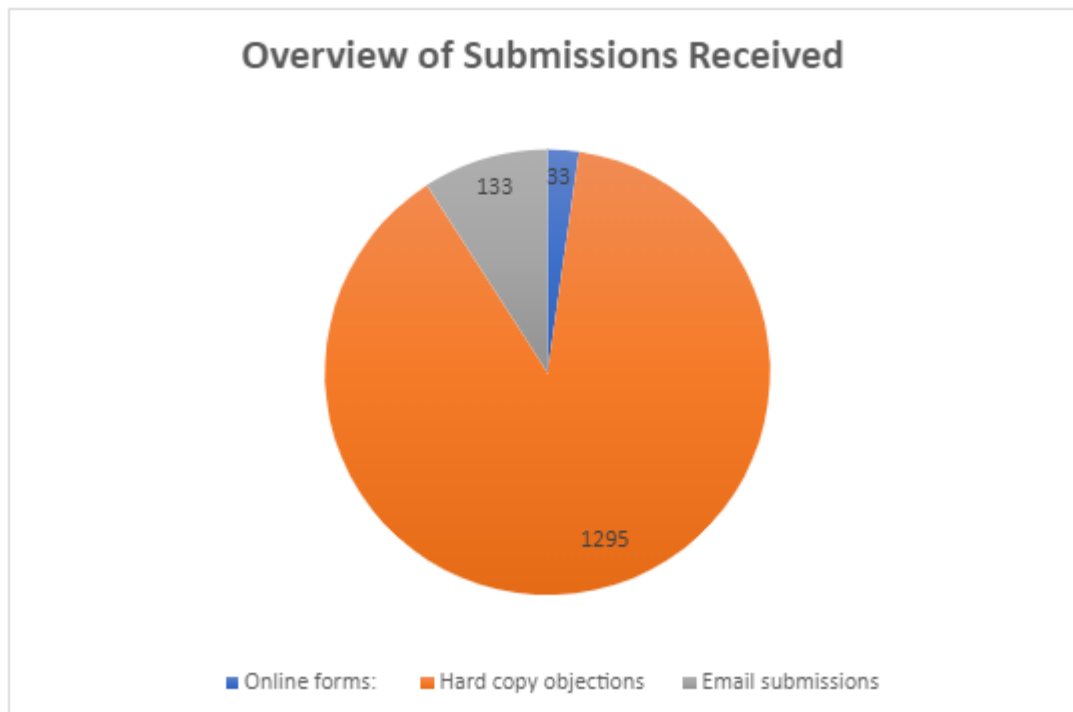


Figure 6-2 Overview of Submissions Received

6.3.3 General Themes Raised During Consultation Process

All the email submissions and online forms received by Iarnród Éireann were reviewed and the issues raised were categorised, summarised and analysed. Table 6.1 below indicates the principal themes identified

Table 6.1.1. Principle themes identified during review process (email submissions and online forms)

Theme	Frequency
Disruption	132
Socio-economic	123
Design	19
Biodiversity	14
Population	10
Landscape & Visual	10
Traffic	9
Accessibility	7
Access	7
Noise	6
Archaeology / Cultural Heritage	5
Environmental	5
Air Quality	3
Construction	3
Safety	3

6.3.4 Specific Feedback from the Online Forms

An online feedback form was provided which requested the public contact details, their relationship to the project (Owner/occupier/other), whether they support the principle of the project, aspects of interest, comments on the revised Ashtown preferred option and whether improved services will encourage a modal shift and whether they want to be added to a mailing list.

In terms of the two specific questions asked the analysis of the responses is positive.

Question 2: Do you support the principle of the DART+ Maynooth Line project? (electrification of the existing rail line and increasing train capacity)

All 33 of the online feedback form respondents expressed support for the principle of the electrification of the rail line and increasing train capacity.

Question 6: Will the improved services encourage you to change from travelling by private car to public transport?

The feedback indicates that with improved services, 55% of the respondents will be encouraged to change from travelling by private car to public transport, while 36% indicated 'No' and 9% did not provide a response (Figure 6-3).

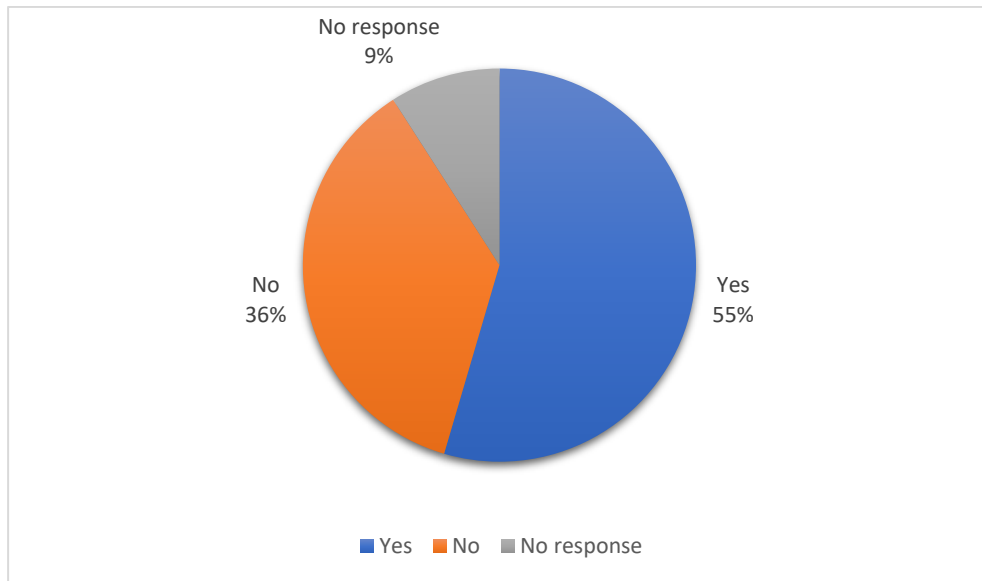


Figure 6-3 Percentage of public submissions in response to Question 6 of the online feedback form

6.3.5 Summary of Key Issues or Concerns

Following the review and analysis of all submissions received (email, online feedback forms, hard copy objection letters, feedback from the webinar and in person event) this section provides a summary of the principal issues or concerns and the IE response to each issue.

6.3.5.1 Objection to the impact on caused on Burke Brothers Son & Company Ltd.

A significant amount of the submissions received included c.1,080 objections in relation to the impact on Burke Brothers, Son & Company. Respondents object to the loss of premises at the expense of enterprise, warehouse bays and associated work yard space thus resulting in a disruption of day-to-day operations. Further consideration of Options 4a/b and Option 9 was also requested.

Response

DART+ West has reassessed all options in the preparation of, and as presented in, the Revised Ashtown Preferred Option – Option Selection Report. All options, including the Preferred Option (Option 10), Option 4 and Option 9 have been subject to a thorough multi criteria analysis. This analysis has assessed the impact on the commercial activities within Burk Brothers enterprise. There was no new significant information brought forward on Option 4 or Option 9 during the consultation process to warrant a reassessment of the multi criteria analysis. The IE project team will continue to engage with the owners of Burke Brothers in order to explore options for the commercial enterprise to continue its operations.

6.3.5.2 Objection to the impact caused on Gowan Motors

Submissions received in relation to Gowan Motors indicated concerns over the proposed new roadway located along Mill Lane and the impact on the current operation of Gowan Motor's premises, necessitating the loss of a proportion of existing car parking spaces required for operation of the facility.

Response

The revised Ashtown Preferred Option will involve some impact on existing car parking spaces associated with Gowan Motors, principally two rented plots where cars are parked outside the main Gowan Motors plot.

DART+ West will continue to engage with Gowan Motors with a view to minimising the loss of car parking and any disruption during the construction programme.

6.3.5.3 Request for the inclusion of lifts

Respondents requested that lift access be provided for those people that have mobility issues.

Response

At the previous round of public consultations there was significant negative feedback from the Ashtown community in relation to the reliability and availability of lifts for a public thoroughfare. In the redesign of the overbridge at Ashtown it has been possible to incorporate a bridge with stairs and ramps, to ensure full accessibility for pedestrians, vulnerable users and cyclists. Where ramps are technically feasible it is the preference of Iarnród Éireann to provide those over provision of lifts. This ensures that the crossing remains open at all times (24/7) and is not subject to interference by mechanical faults (i.e. lift faults). Therefore, it is not proposed to incorporate lifts into the footbridge.

6.3.5.4 Concerns over the impact on local flora and fauna in the area

Respondents have stated concern over the impact to the rich biodiversity and ecological landscape of the area. This includes the loss of trees and hedgerows to facilitate car users on Ashtown Road

Response

The level of impact on the flora and fauna of the area has been assessed and considered under the biodiversity heading in the MCA. This was informed by detailed ecological surveys of the study area where access was permitted. The potential impacts of the proposed development on biodiversity and the proposals for replacement planting will be presented in the EIAR to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála as part of the Railway Order.

6.3.5.5 Concerns over the visual impact of the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge

Respondents expressed concern over the visual impact of the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge for those living on the northern bank of the Royal Canal.

Response

The new pedestrian and cycle bridge proposed at the station has been an architectural led design which has avoided spanning across the canal to minimise visual impacts on the canal and properties in Rathbourne. Further design improvements to finishes can be investigated at detailed design stage.

6.3.5.6 Concerns over antisocial behaviour and objection to the under pass with or without CCTV

Respondents have indicated their concerns that the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge will attract antisocial behaviour and that the underpass will be long and isolated and unsafe for users.

Response

The underpass is proposed for cyclists and road traffic with pedestrians and mobility impaired users accommodated via the new pedestrian and cyclist bridge at the station. The underpass will be well lit, heavily used and relatively short.

6.3.5.7 Impact on Heritage Structures

Concerns over the impact to the Mill Complex and Mill Pond at Ashtown Mill were expressed by the respondents.

Response

The potential impacts of the revised preferred option on archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage have been assessed and considered in the MCA and a more detailed impact assessment will be presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála as part of the Railway Order application.

7. Conclusion

All feedback received on the preferred option and revised preferred option at public consultation no.2 and the localised Ashtown public consultation has been considered as part of the option selection process. Following the conclusion of the localised Ashtown consultation all of the above issues in section 6.3.5 were considered by the project team, however it is considered that there is nothing contained in the submissions that further changes to the preferred option and the preferred Option as presented will progress to Railway Order stage.

