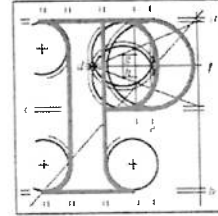


Our Case Number: ABP-320164-24



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Eileen O'Connor & Others
11 Bayside Walk
Sutton

Date: 11 September 2024

Re: DART + Coastal North Railway Order 2024 - Northern Line between Dublin City Centre and Drogheda including the Howth Branch
Dublin City Centre and Drogheda, located in counties Dublin, Meath and Louth

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent letter in relation to the above mentioned case. The contents of your letter have been noted. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: www.pleanala.ie.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Board at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Aisling Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737131

RA03

Teil	Tel	(01) 858 8100
Glaao Áitiúil	LoCall	1890 275 175
Facs	Fax	(01) 872 2684
Láithreán Gréasáin	Website	www.pleanala.ie
Ríomhphost	Email	bord@pleanala.ie

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
Baile Átha Cliath 1	Dublin 1
D01 V902	D01 V902

10th September, 2024

**An Bord Pleanála – Observation on a Strategic Infrastructure Development Application
for the DART + Coastal North planning application**

Applicants:

Eileen & Willie O'Connor, 11 Bayside Walk, Sutton, Dublin 13,

Al Duff and Janet McQuillan, 69 Bayside Boulevard North, Sutton, Dublin 13

Denis Casey and Noeleen McAdden, 27 Sutton Grove, Sutton, Dublin 13

A chara,

We wish to make the following observations about the plan to change the current direct Dart services from Howth to Connolly, and substituting a shuttle service between Howth and Howth Junction.

We object to the proposed plan for the following reasons:

1. Loss of direct DART services

The direct DART services from Howth, Sutton and Bayside to the city centre and beyond are vital to keep our communities connected.

DART services have been running to Bayside, Baldoyle, Sutton and Howth for 40 years, and a direct train service has been running to Howth Station since 1847.

This will affect our communities from youngest going to school, crèche, sports activities, right through the school/college goers, the working population who mainly commute to work by DART through to our older residents who value our connectivity with the city centre and beyond.

2. Level crossings

A shuttle DART service operating every 10 minutes in each direction would cause the level crossings to be closed for up to 30 minutes of every hour.

For example, the crossing at Sutton Station could be closed for more than 32 minutes of every hour, and the Baldoyle Road crossing could be closed for more than 30 minutes of every hour in a worst case scenario. (Appendix A6.1 Dart+ Coastal North Level Crossing Assessment page 11).

This will cause unacceptable levels of traffic disruption (pedestrian, bus, bike, van deliveries and car) to our community.

3. Increased traffic

The traffic assessment submitted by Irish Rail as part of their application shows that longer closures of the level crossings will result in more traffic congestion.

The traffic study states that traffic queues on Baldoyle Road could be up to 59% longer than they currently are. (Appendix A6.1 Dart+ Coastal North Level Crossing Assessment page 29)

This has the potential to impact traffic on the wider road network including buses and cars that aren't passing through the level crossings.

4. Sustainable travel

It is National Policy to encourage people to use sustainable transport instead of their cars.

77% of people who took part in the 2nd public consultation said they would not be encouraged to use the DART over their cars. (Appendix A3.2 PC2 Findings Report page 21)

Furthermore, Irish Rail's 2nd public consultation report found that:

"The loss of direct services to Dublin City Centre was regularly cited in submissions as grounds for existing DART users from the Howth Peninsula to revert from DART usage to private car usage."

- Appendix A3.2 PC2 Findings Report page 33

Removing direct DART services does not align with our national transport and climate policy.

5. Accessibility

A shuttle DART service will require people to transfer DARTs at Howth Junction Station if they want to continue into the City Centre.

This will cause difficulties for people with disabilities, limited mobility, and wheelchair users where they need to use the lifts in the station.

In 2023 the Irish Independent reported that lifts at Irish Rail stations were marked out of service over 800 times in just 18 months. It can take days, and even weeks for lifts to be repaired.

In order to change from the Howth shuttle service to join the mainline platform, there are 80 steps (ascending and descending) to negotiate. There is one lift which is on a call button, and accommodates either one person with a buggy or wheelchair, or up to 4 people). When a large group of dart users at rush hour are changing from the shuttle to the mainline train together, this will not be an adequate option. It would be impossible to negotiate the stairs with a buggy, a wheelchair or with limited mobility.

From personal experience travelling to work between 7.30 and 9 am, there is no chance of getting a seat on the mainline train when getting on at Howth Junction, so all those moving from the shuttle to the mainline train will be giving up a seat on the shuttle to stand on the mainline train between Howth Junction and Connolly.

This will mean a major downgrade of service to the Dart users from Howth, Sutton, Bayside and Baldoyle.

6. Local businesses

The loss of direct DART services will have significant negative impacts on local business in Bayside, Baldoyle, Sutton and Howth.

Businesses will have to grapple with delays to their deliveries and longer journey times for staff and customers.

7. Schools

There are 10 schools all served by the DART in our area. These schools are big employers of teachers, admin staff and special needs assistants. The second-level school pupils are big DART users, Saint Fintans, Sutton Park, St Mary's Baldoyle, Pobalscoil Neasain, and then many residents of our areas travel to schools outside the area, e.g. Manor House, Mount Temple and many schools further afield.

Most students attending Third level education are travelling by DART.

- 8. Workers** – I (Eileen O'Connor) travel by DART and Luas to work daily. Having to change from the shuttle at Howth Junction would add a third leg to my journey, both travelling into work and back home. Not a good option for me, or anyone else.

9. Oral Hearing

We request that An Bord Pleanála call an oral hearing for the DART + planning application in order to allow further discussion about the project and the negative impacts these changes will have.