



ANNEX 2.1

Policy Context

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1 Policy Context

The following sections of this report provide an overview of the strategic fit of the DART+ Programme and DART+ Coastal North project in relation to European, national, regional, and local policy. Reference should also be made to Annex 2.2: Useful Links which contains links to relevant supporting policies and documents.

It should be noted that some of the documents referenced below are currently under review. The analysis of each document will be updated if revisions or adoption occurs during the Railway Order Process.

1.1 European Policy

Trans-European Network for Transport

The Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) is a European Union policy directed towards the implementation and development of a Europe-wide network of roads, railway lines, inland waterways, maritime shipping routes, ports, airports and rail-road terminals. The network consists of two layers:

The Comprehensive Network: Covering all EU regions.

The Core Network: A subset of the Comprehensive Network. This consists of the strategically most important connections, linking the most important nodes.

The objective of TEN-T is to close gaps, remove bottlenecks and eliminate technical barriers that exist between transport networks of EU Member States, strengthening the social, economic and territorial cohesion of the Union and contributing to the creation of a single European transport area. Under the TEN-T Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, the Core Network is due to be completed by 31 December 2030, while the Comprehensive Network is due to be completed by 31 December 2050.

The aim of the EU's Transport Policy is to promote a mobility that is efficient, safe, secure and environmentally friendly. Congestion is not just a nuisance for road users, it also results in an enormous waste of fuel and reduces productivity. Many manufacturing processes depend on just-in-time deliveries and free flow transport for efficient production. Congestion costs the EU economy more than 1% of GDP – in other words, more than the EU budget. To reduce this, the EU needs more efficient transport and logistics, better infrastructure and the ability to optimise capacity use. The EU Commission also recognises that Europe needs transport which is cleaner and less dependent on oil. Moving towards low-carbon and more energy efficient transport, as well as developing more efficient urban and intermodal transport solutions are essential alternatives to developing a more environmentally friendly transport policy.

Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 sets out the requirements for rail infrastructure that form part of the TEN-T infrastructure network, both Core (2030) and Comprehensive (2050), and states under Article 12(2)(d), the following:

“Member States shall ensure that the railway infrastructure:

(d) save in the case of isolated networks, is fully electrified as regards line tracks and, to the extent necessary for electric train operations, as regards sidings;”

The DART+ Programme including the DART+ Coastal North project is consistent with the objectives of the Trans-European Network for Transport. It will involve the creation of a rail mode transport which is cleaner and less dependent on oil, and more energy efficient. It will allow for more efficient transportation along the east coast of Ireland, and encourage greater use of public transportation, reducing the dependency on car-based commuting.

1.2 National Policy

Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government’s high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country by 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities to protect and enhance the environment.



Figure 1-1: National Strategic Outcomes Source: Project Ireland 2040

There are 10 “National Strategic Outcomes” a number of which are relevant to the proposed development:

“Compact Growth

Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority.”

The DART+ Coastal North project will, by providing a more efficient public transport infrastructure, make urban areas and zoned lands along the route, more attractive areas in which to live and work in.

“Sustainable Mobility

In line with Ireland’s Climate Change mitigation plan, we need to progressively electrify our mobility systems moving away from polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles and the introduction of electric and hybrid traction systems for public transport fleets, such that by 2040 our cities and towns will enjoy a cleaner, quieter environment free of combustion engine driven transport systems.”

The DART+ Coastal North project is entirely consistent with this Strategic Outcome in terms of the provision of the electrification of part of a busy public transportation route along the east coast of Ireland.

“Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society:

The National Climate Policy Position establishes the national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. This objective will shape investment choices over the coming decades in line with the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework. New energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy to the major sources of demand.”

The DART+ Coastal North project will encourage less car-based travel and will comply with the objective to reduce carbon emissions in the country.

One of the key growth enablers for the Dublin Region is identified as:

“Delivering the key rail projects set out in the Transport Strategy for the GDA including Metro Link, DART expansion and the Luas green line link to Metro Link.”

The DART+ Coastal project will contribute to the achievements of these outcomes and objectives. As outlined above, it will lead to more compact, railway-based growth along the railway line. It will encourage more sustainable commuting and contribute to a lower carbon environment. It will enhance the growth of the GDA in a more sustainable approach than one based on car transport. It is likely to alleviate pressure on Dublin City and create additional areas in the GDA along the route in which people can live and work.

National Development Plan 2021-2030

The current NDP sets out the ten-year capital ceilings which will support economic, social, environmental and cultural development across Ireland, incorporating a total public investment of €165 billion from 2021-2030. It takes account of the current Covid-19 crisis and related recovery plans, to ensure alignment with the new programme for Government, to strengthen the alignment with the NPF and to enhance the link with the new Climate Action Plan and other sectoral policies.

To deliver the National Strategic Outcomes set out in the NPF, the NDP identifies the following relevant Strategic Investment Priorities and actions. Note that ‘DART+ Expansion Programme’ refers to the DART+ Programme.

Table 1-1: NDP Strategic Investment Priorities and actions

National Planning Framework NSO	NDP Strategic Investment Priority	NDP reference to DART+ Programme
NSO 2: Enhanced Regional Accessibility	Public Transport	<i>“Investment in the DART+ programme will address some of the constraints on the Dublin City Centre rail network and provide for additional services for intercity rail services.”</i>
NSO 4: Sustainable Mobility	DART+ Programme	<i>“The DART+ programme will be a cornerstone of rail investment within the lifetime of Project Ireland 2040 and represents the single biggest investment in the Irish rail network.”</i>
NSO 8: Transition to a Climate-Neutral and Climate Resilient Society	An additional 500,000 sustainable mobility journeys per day by 2030. Comprehensive integrated public transport network for Ireland’s cities connecting more people to more places.	<i>“Delivering priority public transport programmes including BusConnects, DART+ Expansion Programme and MetroLink so that increased transport demand is met by greener public transport.”</i>

Strategic Investment Priorities have been influenced by the national objective of transitioning by 2050 to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy and society. As identified above, the DART+ Coastal North project will contribute to achieving these objectives.

National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (December 2021)

The Department of Transport has prepared and finalised the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI). NIFTI is the Department of Transport’s high-level strategic framework to support the consideration and prioritisation of future investment in land transport. It represents the Department’s contribution to Project Ireland 2040, Government’s long-term, overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all and to build a more sustainable future. NIFTI has been developed to ensure sectoral investment is aligned with the National Planning Framework (NPF) and supports the delivery of the ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs).

As part of NIFTI, a wide range of supporting analysis has been conducted to identify key transport challenges, needs and constraints, both today and in the future. This analysis can be divided into three broad categories: context and background, the existing land transport network, and the future land transport network.

The NIFTI states:

“The right transport investment helps to deliver high-quality travel and supports positive outcomes for society, the environment and the economy. However, these outcomes do not happen by chance. It is important to have in place a framework to guide transport investment and deliver the infrastructure and services we need. That is the purpose of NIFTI.

New transport investments will have to demonstrate their alignment with NIFTI. By extension, this will ensure that investment is aligned with the NPF and its National Strategic Outcomes, resulting in a consistent approach to investment across Government, with transport supporting our growth and development goals. In this way, NIFTI will ensure that transport enables the NPF.”

The NIFTI notes that the National Development Plan identifies DART+ as one of the infrastructure projects required in the next decade.

The NIFTI states that in order to address the challenges identified in the supporting analysis, NIFTI establishes four Investment Priorities: Decarbonisation, Protection and Renewal, Mobility of People and Goods in Urban Areas, and Enhanced Regional and Rural Connectivity. Future transport projects must align with these priorities to be considered for funding. Moreover, as the National Strategic Outcomes are embedded in NIFTI, future investment made in accordance with the priorities will support the delivery of the National Planning Framework over the coming decades.

The DART + Coastal North project will comply with the Investment Priorities. It will assist in the decarbonisation of the transport system. It will help in the protection of the environment. It will improve the mobility of people in a sustainable manner. Finally, it will improve regional connectivity between Dublin, Meath and Louth.

Department of Transport: Statement of Strategy 2021-2023

The Statement of Strategy does not refer to specific projects. However, there are a number of objectives outlined in the Strategic Approach that are relevant to the DART + Coastal North project development:

“Aligned with the National Planning Framework and the National Economic Plan we will maintain and develop high quality sustainable road, public transport and active travel networks to enable economic activity, essential services and social connections between and within our cities, regions and communities.

We will encourage and support transport networks and services that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We will prioritise the decarbonisation of transport and low carbon technology in line with the EU Green Deal and ambitious government policies.

We will continue to invest in active travel and in our public transport networks, greenways and alternative technologies.”

Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021

This Capital Plan published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform presents the Government’s €42 billion framework for infrastructure investment in Ireland over the period 2016 to 2021, including a €27 billion multi-annual Exchequer Capital Investment Plan.

The €27 billion Exchequer component of the Capital Plan, supplemented by a new €500 million phase of the PPP programme, is primarily targeted at addressing priority needs in transport, education, housing and health care. The sectoral share on transport is 29%.

The Plan states:

“High-quality infrastructure is an important element of a modern society and economy. It strengthens economic growth through enhancing efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. Investment in infrastructure also underpins social cohesion through providing the facilities for vital services to people in the form of schools, public transport, healthcare and housing. This Capital Plan reflects the Government’s commitment to supporting strong and sustainable economic growth and raising welfare and living standards for all.”

With regard to transport, the plan states:

“As well as population growth, rising economic activity is the main driver of demand for transport. Total road kilometres travelled and annual bus journeys have shown recent increases as the economy improves but remain below pre-crisis peaks; the challenge here is to maintain and safeguard investments and look at measures to address congestion in urban areas as growth places demands on transport infrastructure.”

The plan recognises that it is essential for road, rail and public transport networks to be developed and maintained to the standard required to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and freight. A €9.6 billion capital investment for transport will be provided over seven years, including €3.618 billion in Public Transport.

The plan states:

“The first phase of a multi-phase DART expansion programme will also begin, with the extension of the DART line to Balbriggan....”

The DART+ Coastal North project is part of the overall strategy of improved public transport in Ireland, along the east coast in particular.

Climate Action Plan 2021

This plan sets a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve the country's emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government.

The Climate Action Plan 2021 sets out a detailed sectoral roadmap designed to deliver a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030. This doubles the ambition of the 2019 Climate Action Plan and will require significant reductions from all sectors.

An action identified to reduce emission in the transport sector is:

“The proposed pathway in transport is focused on accelerating the electrification of road transport, the use of biofuels, and a modal shift to transport modes with lower energy consumption (e.g. public and active transport).”

The plan states that transport accounts for approximately 20% of Ireland's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Road transport is responsible for 96% of those GHG emissions. Promoting cleaner, safer and more sustainable mobility is critical for climate policy.

To meet the required level of emissions reduction, by 2030 the Plan sets out a number of targets, the following of which are relevant:

“Provide for an additional 500,000 daily public transport and active travel journeys

“Increase the fleet of EVs and low emitting vehicles (LEVs) on the road to 945,000, comprising of: [inter alia]

- *an expanded electrified rail network.”*

Action 240 is directly relevant:

“Commence delivery of DART+ Programme and continue heavy rail fleet investment.”

The DART+ Coastal North project will be in compliance and will contribute towards the targets identified in the Climate Action Plan. It will help reduce GHG emissions by:

- The provision of a more efficient public transport route, thereby encouraging a modal shift towards public transportation;
- It will become part of the electrified rail network in Ireland.

The DART+ Coastal North project is part of the DART+ Programme which is identified as a specific action in the plan.

1.3 Regional Policy

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031

A RSES is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. At this strategic level it provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development throughout the Region.

The principal statutory purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Region. The RSES is required under the Planning and Development Act 2000 to address employment, retail, housing, transport, water services, energy and communications, waste management, education, health, sports and community facilities, environment and heritage, landscape, sustainable development and climate change.

The RSES sets out sixteen Regional Strategic Outcomes, three of which are relevant to the DART + Coastal North project:

“Sustainable Settlement Patterns

Better manage the sustainable and compact growth of Dublin as a city of international scale and develop Athlone, Dundalk, Drogheda and a number of key complementary growth settlements of sufficient scale to be drivers of regional growth. (NSO 1, 7, 10)

The DART+ Coastal North project will assist in the development of urban settlements along the route, and also Drogheda as a destination in which to live and work in.

“Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration

Promote the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built-up urban footprint and to drive the delivery of quality housing and employment choice for the Region’s citizens. (NSO 1)”

The DART+ Coastal North project will encourage the development of underutilised zoned lands along the route via provision of a more efficient public transport route.

“Integrated Transport and Land Use

Promote best use of Transport Infrastructure, existing and planned, and promote sustainable and active modes of travel to ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning. (NSO 2, 6, 8,9)”

The DART+ Coastal North project will assist in achieving a more balanced approach to the integration of transportation and development, both in terms of employment and residential locations. It will make locations along the route more favourable for both employers and residents.

The ‘DART Expansion’ – the previous name for the DART+ Programme - is heavily referenced and supported in the document, including in relation to the development of the Dublin Metropolitan Area, and Drogheda.

Regional Policy Objective 5.2 states:

“Support the delivery of key sustainable transport projects including Metrolink, DART and LUAS expansion programmes, BusConnects and the Greater Dublin Metropolitan Cycle Network and ensure that future development maximises the efficiency and protects the strategic capacity of the metropolitan area transport network, existing and planned.”

Regional Policy Objective 8.8: supports delivery of the rail projects set out in Table 8.2, subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.

One of the projects set out in Table 8.2 is:

“DART Expansion Programme – new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines, including provision of electrified services to Drogheda or further north on the Northern Line, Celbridge – Hazelhatch or further south on the Kildare Line, Maynooth and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line, while continuing to provide DART services on the South-Eastern Line as far south as Greystones.”

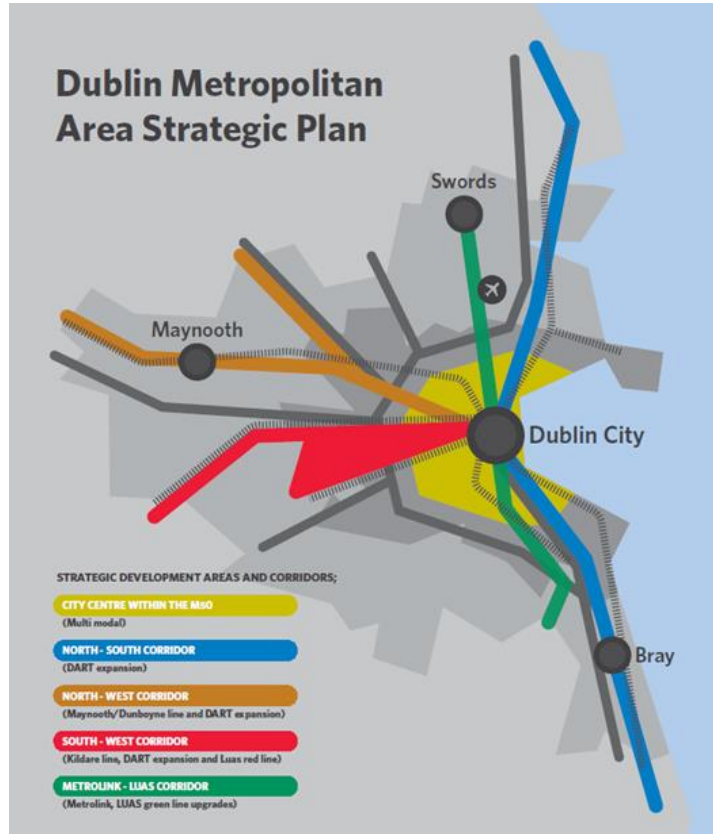


Figure 1-2: Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan Source: Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2031¹

Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035

The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 was published by the National Transport Authority. It provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the GDA.

It states that heavy rail (DART and Commuter Rail) provides the core high-capacity infrastructure and services that are central to the GDA’s public transport system. It further states that whilst the rail network has continued to be developed over recent decades, significant work still remains to be done to create a fully integrated rail network.

The strategy assesses a number of options with regard to various transport corridors in the GDA including the Dublin to Belfast Corridor. With regard to the DART+ Programme, it states that it is the intention of the Strategy to:

“Implement the DART Expansion Programme, which will provide DART services as far north as Drogheda; to Hazelhatch on the Kildare Line (including a tunnel connection from the Kildare Line to link with the Northern / South-Eastern Line); to Maynooth in the west and to the M3 Parkway;”

¹ Note that the of DART+ Coastal North project is part of the north-south corridor indicated in blue on this graphic



Figure 1-3: 2035 Greater Dublin Area Heavy Rail Network Source: Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035

The Strategy further states:

“The DART Expansion Programme which is a cornerstone project of the strategy, will see the DART system expanded, providing fast, high-frequency electrified services to Drogheda on the Northern Line, Hazelhatch on the Kildare Line, Maynooth and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line, while continuing to provide DART services on the South-Eastern Line as far south as Greystones.”

The Transport Strategy also outlines objectives for Transport Services and Integration noting that:

“The DART services will operate to a high frequency with adequate capacity to cater for the passenger demand. It is anticipated that DART services in the city centre section of the network will operate to a regular ten minute service frequency in the peak hours from 2016 and will transition to a five minute service frequency following the completion of the DART Expansion Programme.”

The DART+ Coastal North project is in accordance with these regional policies. The draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 – 2042 has also recently been published and is currently out for public consultation.

1.4 Local Policy

Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022

The Dublin City Development Plan (2016-2022) sets out policies and objectives to guide how and where development will take place in the city over the lifetime of the plan.

The Development Plan contains a number of principles to guide the future development of the city, including “Movement”:

“Helping to build an integrated transport network and encouraging the provision of greater choice of public transport active travel.”

The following policies and objectives are relevant:

“MTO1: To encourage intensification and mixed-use development along existing and planned public transport corridors and at transport nodes where sufficient public transport capacity and accessibility exists to meet the sustainable transport requirements of the development, having regard to conservation policies set out elsewhere in this plan and the need to make best use of urban land. Dublin City Council will seek to prepare SDZs, LAPs or other plans for areas surrounding key transport nodes, where appropriate, in order to guide future sustainable development.”

MT3: To support and facilitate the development of an integrated public transport network with efficient interchange between transport modes, serving the existing and future needs of the city in association with relevant transport providers, agencies and stakeholders.

MT4: To promote and facilitate the provision of Metro, all heavy elements of the DART Expansion Programme including DART Underground (rail interconnector), the electrification of existing lines, the expansion of Luas, and improvements to the bus network in order to achieve strategic transport objectives.

MT6: (i) To work with Iarnród Eireann, the NTA, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and other operators to progress a coordinated approach to improving the rail network, integrated with other public transport modes to ensure maximum public benefit and promoting sustainable transport and improved connectivity.

MTO5: (i) To facilitate and support measures proposed by transport agencies to enhance capacity on existing public transport lines and services, to provide/ improve interchange facilities and provide new infrastructure.”

The DART+ Coastal North project aligns with these policies and objectives and the overall vision of enabling the growth of a more sustainable city with enhanced access to public transport facilities.

Zoning Objectives

The railway and stations are unzoned lands (technically known as “white land”).

The railway line goes through or is adjacent to the following zoning objectives:

- Z1 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods
- Z2 Residential Neighbourhoods (Conservation Areas)
- Z3 Neighbourhood Centres
- Z4 District Centres (incorporating Key District Centres)
- Z6 Employment/Enterprise
- Z9 Amenity/Open Space Lands/Green Network
- Z14 Strategic Development and Regeneration Areas (SDRAs)

The DART+ Coastal North project will not contravene any of these zoning objectives.

Protected Structures

There is only one protected structure identified in Dublin County Council jurisdiction along the DART+ Coastal North route:

Ref: 880; Railway Bridge, Clontarf Road, Dublin 3: “twin-arch cutstone railway bridge inclusive of stone embankment walls”.

Any works associated with the DART + North Coastal project that may affect this bridge will have to be carefully assessed.

Amenity Designations

There are designated conservation areas associated with the Tolka River, Santry River and a parkland area north of the St Donagh Road in Kilbarrack. The DART+ Coastal North project either adjoins or oversails these conservation areas, however works associated with the project are unlikely to affect these designations.

Clongriffin-Belmayne Local Area Plan (LAP)

Clongriffin-Belmayne Local Area Plan was published in 2012 and extended until December 2022. The vision of the plan is to facilitate the development of a highly sustainable, mixed use urban neighbourhood with a distinct identity based around high quality public transport nodes.

The LAP areas are located on the northern border of Dublin City Council and are primarily zoned Z14, the objective of which is “to seek the social, economic and physical development and/or rejuvenation of an area with mixed use of which residential and “Z6” (enterprise and employment) would be the predominant uses”.

The main goal of the plan in relation to movement and transport is:

“To promote ease of movement within and access to the area by incorporating a high quality, integrated transport network through improvements to the existing road, rail and public transport network, together with improved cycling and pedestrian facilities within the local area.”

The key aims of the Movement and Transport Section of relevance are:

“To improve accessibility and maximise the use of public transport.

Cater not only for travel demand but also for reductions in congestion and pollution.

Place a stronger emphasis on sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport, particularly for short trips.”

Objective MT05 is also relevant:

“To liaise with Irish Rail and promote greater frequency and enhanced services at Clongriffin Rail Station for commuters as the area continues to grow.”

Clongriffin railway station is recognised as a key development node with additional height and densities permitted in proximity to the station.

The DART+ Coastal North project, including the rail enhancements at Clongriffin railway station, complements the aims and objectives of the LAP enabling the development of a sustainable, mixed use urban quarter adjoining a high-quality public transport node.

There are no policies, objectives or designated areas related to the natural or built environment that would be impacted by the DART+ Coastal North project.

Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

The Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 sets out the Council’s proposed policies and objectives for the development of the County over the period of the plan. The Development Plan seeks to develop and improve, in a sustainable manner, the social, economic, environmental and cultural assets of the County.

The Strategic Vision for the plan contains a number of sectoral policies, the following of which are relevant:

“Consolidate urban areas to provide a vibrant, attractive environment for living and working, facilitating efficient movement by sustainable modes of transport throughout the County.”

Make better use of key resources such as land, water, energy, waste and transportation infrastructure.

Reduce climate change through settlement and travel patterns and reduced use of non-renewable resources.”

The Strategic Vision intends to deliver on the Main Aims of the Plan by, inter alia:

“Seek the development of a high quality public transport system throughout the County and linking to adjoining counties, including the development of the indicative route for New Metro North and Light Rail Corridor, improvements to railway infrastructure including the DART Expansion Programme, Quality Bus Corridors (QBCs) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, together with enhanced facilities for walking and cycling.”

With regard to the development strategy for Balbriggan, Objective 12 states:

“Promote and facilitate an enhanced railway station (a Protected Structure) and rail service, including the extension of the DART rail service to Balbriggan.”

The following objectives in relation to transportation are also relevant:

“Objective MT01: Support National and Regional transport policies as they apply to Fingal. In particular, the Council supports the Government’s commitment to the proposed new Metro North and DART expansion included in Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021. The Council also supports the implementation of sustainable transport solutions.

Objective MT02: Support the recommendations of the National Transport Authority’s Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 to facilitate the future sustainable growth of Fingal.

Objective MT05: Integrate land use with transportation by allowing higher density development along higher capacity public transport corridors.

Objective MT30: Support Iarnród Éireann and the NTA in implementing the DART Expansion Programme, including the extension of the DART line to Balbriggan, the design and planning for the expansion of DART services to Maynooth, and the redesign of the DART Underground.”

Zoning Objectives

The railway and stations are unzoned (technically known as “white land”). The rail line goes through or is adjacent to the following zoning objectives:

- “GB” Greenbelt
- “GE” General Employment
- “HA” High Amenity
- “MC” Major Town Centre

- “OS” Open Space
- “RA” Residential Area
- “RS” Residential
- “RU” Rural
- “TC” Town And District Centre

The DART+ Coastal North project will not contravene any of these zoning objectives. However, careful design will have to be considered in relation to the more sensitive zoning objectives such as High Amenity lands.

Protected Structures

There are a significant number of protected structures on or adjoining the railway and stations. These are detailed in the Constraints Report (Annex 3.1 of the Preliminary Options Selection Report). Any works associated with the DART+ Coastal North project that may affect protected structures will have to be carefully assessed.

Site Specific Objectives

There are a number of Indicative Cycle/Pedestrian Routes adjoining the existing railway line including:

- Howth Junction north to Grange Road.
- Sutton Station east to Howth Station.
- Malahide Estuary north across Malahide Railway Viaduct.
- From Donabate north across the Rogerstown Viaduct.
- Baldoyle to Portmarnock Greenway.

Local Objectives

2: *Promote and facilitate a pedestrian over-bridge as part of an attractive walkway along Tanner’s Water Lane to the proposed coastal path linking to the town centre [south of Balbriggan].*

13: *Facilitate, in consultation with Iarnród Éireann, the provision of a railway station at Ballykea [south of Skerries].*

The design of the DART+ Coastal North project will have to take these objectives into account; however, it must be acknowledged that the provision of new railway stations is outside of the scope of the current project.

Baldoyle-Stapolin LAP

Baldoyle-Stapolin LAP was adopted in 2013 and extended to May 2023. The LAP lands are located on the southern boundary of Fingal County Council where they meet the administrative area of Dublin City Council along the Dublin – Belfast railway. To the west of the railway lies the developing mixed-use area of Clongriffin within Dublin City Council’s wider North Fringe Area encompassing Northern Cross / Clare Hall / Belmayne to Clongriffin. This, along with Baldoyle Stapolin, is one of Dublin’s larger new development areas and, when completed, is envisaged to have up to 10,000 new homes as well as new retail and commercial areas. The Plan lands comprise the site of the former Baldoyle Racecourse and Stapolin House.

The vision for Baldoyle-Stapolin is to create a place to live that is appealing, distinctive and sustainable, with minimal impact on the surrounding environment and the coast. It is envisaged that Baldoyle-Stapolin will develop as a sustainable community comprised of new homes, community, leisure and educational facilities based around an identifiable and accessible new village centre which will form the heart of the area. With a range of different sizes and types of homes, as well as integrated amenities and excellent public transport, this will be a fledgling neighbourhood with a varied social mix and will embody the principles of sustainability, sustainable communities and inclusiveness.

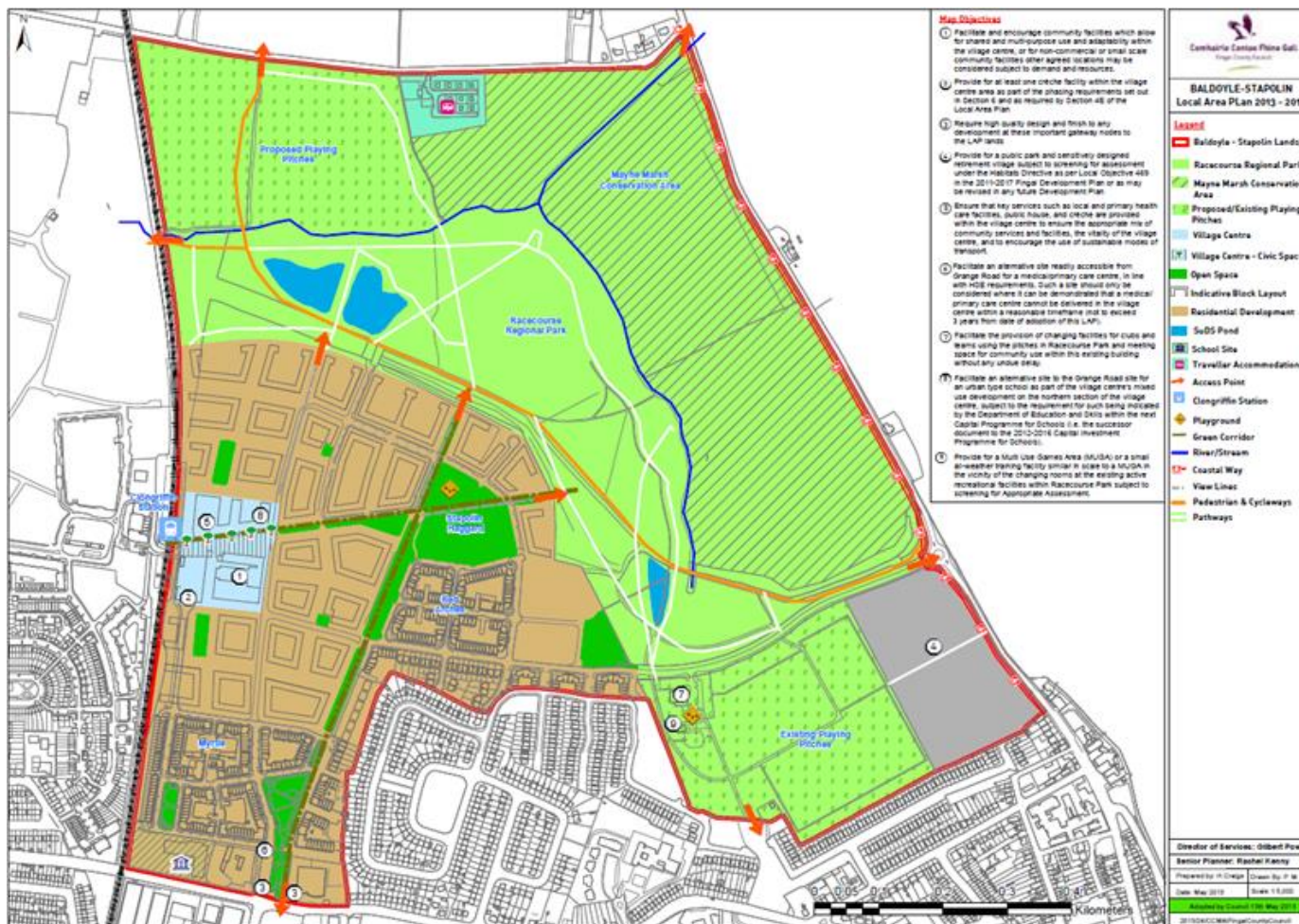


Figure 1-4: Baldoyle-Strapolin LAP Map 2013-2019 Source: Baldoyle-Strapolin Local Area Plan

Zoning is provided for between 800-1100 new dwellings and a new village centre. The latter is defined as a sustainable mixed-use centre for Baldoyle-Stapolin which meets local needs by providing a range of retail, commercial, leisure and residential uses and establishes a distinctive sense of place and heart for the community.

The village centre is located directly adjacent to Clongriffin Station.

Objective GI 16 states:

“Create new green links to connect publicly accessible open spaces to main destination points, such as the DART station, bus stops, village centre, proposed school, health facilities and other publicly accessible open spaces including Racecourse Park.”

The DART+ Coastal North project will help realise that the vision and objectives of the Plan. It will provide a better service to the area, thereby encouraging the full development of the village and greater usage of the DART, leading to a more sustainable community.

There are no policies, objectives or designated areas related to the natural or built environment that would be impacted by the DART+ Coastal North project. However, one recommended road improvement may be relevant to the design of the project:

“Baldoyle Public Transport Bridge: An extension of Red Arches Road and bridge over the rail line at Clongriffin DART station and connection with the east-west link of Clongriffin Main Street to accommodate buses, pedestrians and cyclists.”

Portmarnock South Local Area Plan 2013

The Portmarnock South Local Area Plan 2013 was adopted by the Council in July 2013 and was extended up to July 2023. The Portmarnock South LAP comprises a land area of circa 86 hectares of which 40.36 hectares are zoned as residential. The majority of the remainder of the lands are zoned off for open space and amenities. The lands are directly to the south-east of Portmarnock DART station.

The main purpose of the Portmarnock South LAP 2013 is to set out a framework for the development of the lands to provide for a sustainable residential community within close proximity to a high quality public transport corridor while recognising the environmental sensitivities of the site.

The vision for Portmarnock South is to develop a high-quality urban environment with a unique sense of place, maximising and respecting the opportunities presented by the area’s natural assets and coastal location adjoining Baldoyle Bay and recognising its high level of accessibility to Portmarnock DART station.

Objective TM 1 is relevant:

“Ensure that future planning applications and development of the plan lands are designed to have regard to Iarnród Éireann future rail improvement proposals.”

Portmarnock train station is a crucial element in contributing to sustainable development. The entire residential plan lands are within walking distance of the train station. The plan lands could not be developed without the proximity to the DART station.

The DART+ Coastal North project will contribute to the sustainable development of these lands.

There are no policies, objectives or designated areas related to the natural or built environment that would be impacted by the DART+ Coastal North project.

Donabate LAP 2016

The Donabate LAP 2013 was adopted by the Council in March 2016 and was extended up to July 2026. The LAP comprises approx. 138 hectares (340 acres) of land in four separate parcels. The LAP seeks to establish a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of these lands supported by an overriding Vision Statement and supported by four Strategic Aims. The adopted Vision Statement seeks, inter alia, to:

“Provide for the structured development of the identified new residential areas of Donabate such that they integrate into the established village and support the continued growth of a vibrant and attractive town for existing and future residents. New development will be accompanied by the required community, educational, transport, drainage and recreational infrastructure to ensure the protection and enhancement of local amenities and the continued growth of local services in Donabate”.

The LAP notes that the NTA has requested that Irish Rail progress the planning for the extension of the DART rail service along the northern rail line, to include Donabate.

Objective 3.2 is relevant in this regard.

“Support the NTA’s proposed electrification of the Northern Line from Malahide to Balbriggan to allow an extension of DART services to Balbriggan.”

The majority of the lands zoned in the LAP are within 1000m of Donabate railway station. The DART+ Coastal North project will help to facilitate the development of these lands in a sustainable manner.

There are no policies, objectives or designated areas related to the natural or built environment that would be impacted by the DART+ Coastal North project.

Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted on 22nd September 2021 and came into effect on 3rd November 2021.

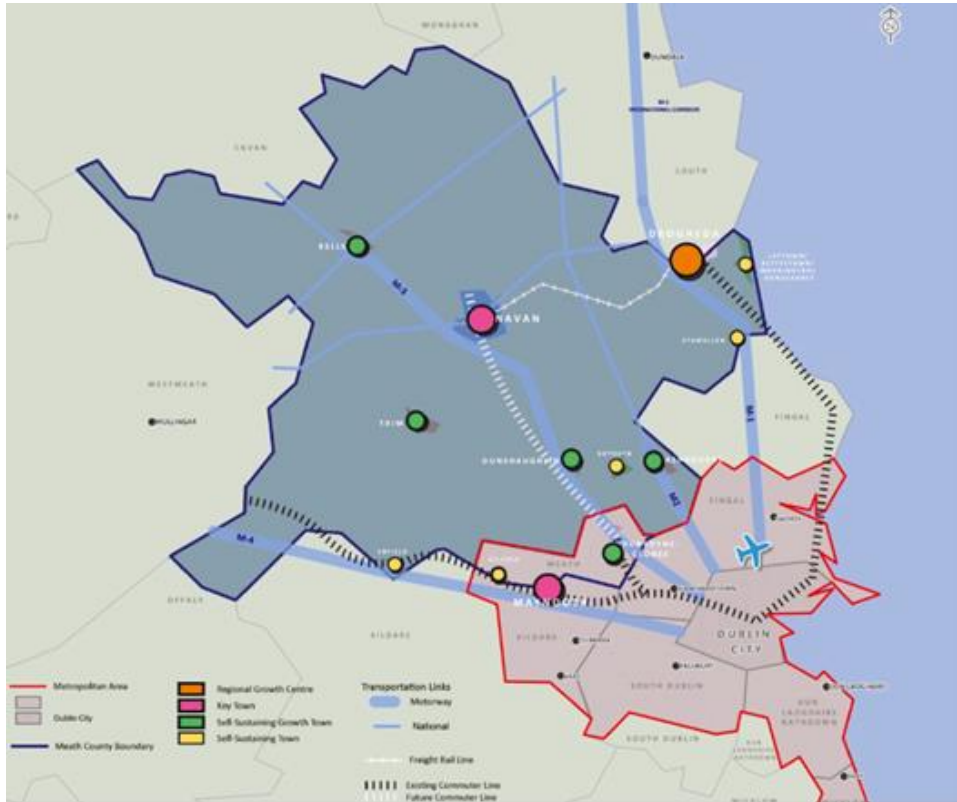


Figure 1-5: Core Strategy Map Source Meath Development Plan 2021-2027

It is a strategic aim of the Development Plan to create attractive efficient compact settlements which reduce the need to travel and improve the quality of life for inhabitants.

The following policies and objectives in the Draft Development Plan of specific relevance to the DART+ Coastal North project include:

“MOV POL 1: To support and facilitate the integration of land use with transportation infrastructure, through the development of sustainable compact settlements which are well served by public transport, in line with the guiding principles outlined in RPO 8.1 of the EMRA RSES 2019-2031

MOV POL 3: To promote sustainable land use planning measures which facilitate transportation efficiency, economic returns on transport investment, minimisation of environmental impacts and a general shift towards the greater use of public transportation throughout the County.

The DART+ Coastal North project complies with the strategic vision and the specific policies of the Development Plan.

Zoning Objectives

The railway line goes though or is adjacent to the following zoning objectives:

- A1 – Existing Residential
- A2 – New Residential

B1 – Commercial Town or Village Centre
E1/E2 – Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses) / General Enterprise & Employment
F1 – Open Space
G1 – Community Infrastructure
RA – Rural Area
TU – Transport and Utilities
WL – White Lands (To protect strategic lands from inappropriate forms of development which would impede the orderly expansion of a strategic urban centre.)

Protected Structures

There are a number of protected structures on or adjoining the railway and stations as detailed in the Constraints Report (Annex 3.1 of the Preliminary Options Selection Report). Any works associated with the DART+ Coastal North project that may affect protected structures will have to be carefully assessed.

East Meath LAP 2014-2020

This LAP has been prepared to provide a statutory framework for the future growth and development of Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East-Donacarney-Mornington. The purpose of the LAP is to guide future development within these towns and villages in a sustainable and equitable manner and to inform members of the public, the local community, stakeholders and developers of the policies and objectives that will shape development within the plan area.

The Plan identifies lands adjacent to Laytown Railway station as being suitable for employment uses together with park and ride facilities.

The following policies in the LAP of specific relevance to the DART+ Coastal North project include:

TD POL 12: To develop the east coast rail line as a valuable tourist resource creating ease of access from North and South to a variety of attractions and recreational activities associated with the coastline.

TM POL 13: To support the improvement of existing rail transport infrastructure including the existing Dublin – Drogheda rail service which serves the urban settlement of Laytown and Gormanstown and to seek to have the proposed electrification of this rail line extended to Drogheda.”

The DART+ Coastal North project is consistent with the policies of the LAP, in particular with regard to the development of lands adjacent to Laytown railway station. The proposed development will specifically comply with the two policies outlined above in terms of developing the “east coast rail line” and the electrification of this rail line extended to Drogheda.

There are no policies, objectives or designated areas related to the natural or built environment that would be impacted by the DART+ Coastal North project.

Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted on 30th September 2021. The Plan came into effect on 11th November 2021.

The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 has superseded the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2011-2017 and the North Drogheda and Environs Local Area Plan.

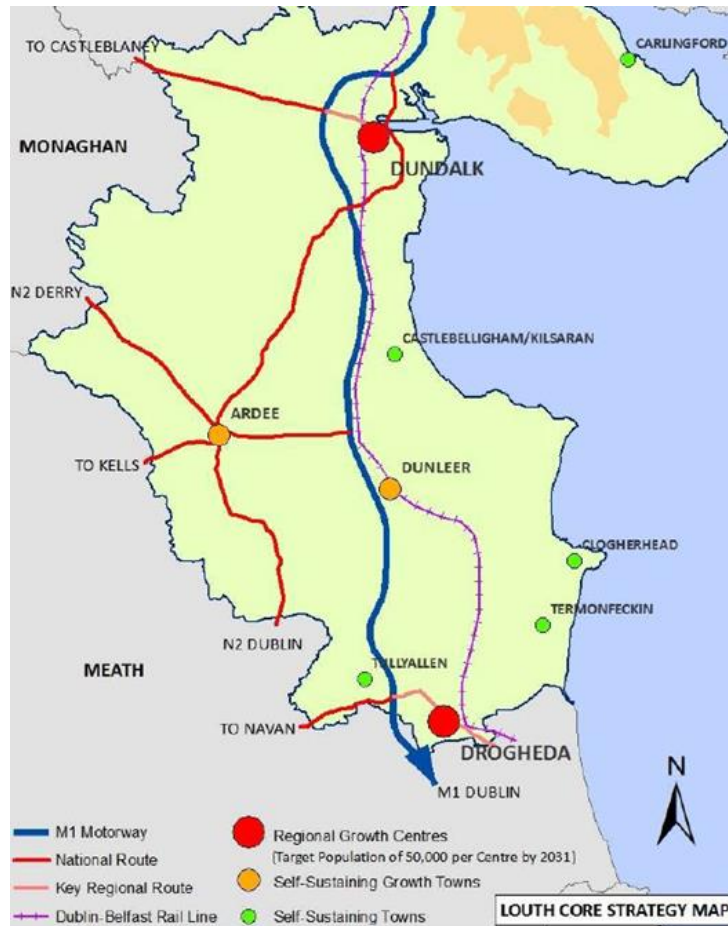


Figure 1-6: Louth Core Strategy Map Source: Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

A key priority of the plan is to promote the continued sustainable and compact growth of the town as a regional driver of city scale with a target population of 50,000 by 2031. This will be supported by objectives to regenerate the town centre, promote compact growth in the town’s hinterlands and enhance the role of Drogheda as a self-sustaining strategic employment centre on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

The Plan states the following in relation to Drogheda:

“The goal of achieving compact growth will require improved accessibility, sustainable mobility and the requisite infrastructure to enable Drogheda to grow as a Regional Growth Centre (RGC). The town will benefit from the extension of the DART service and improvements will be required to MacBride station relating to accessibility.”

The plan recognises that the “DART Expansion Programme” is an important growth enabler for Drogheda as it would improve the connectivity to Dublin due to the increased frequency of services, making the town more accessible and attractive for economic investment and employment generating development.

The following policies and objectives in the plan are relevant:

“SS13: To support investment in public and sustainable transport infrastructure and services in Drogheda including the progression of the DART Expansion Programme which includes the electrification of the rail line and the extension of DART services to Drogheda

MOV 2: To facilitate the integration of land use with sustainable transportation infrastructure in accordance with the requirements of RPO 8.1 in the RSES by supporting the creation of a critical mass of population and employment related development that would maximise investment in public transport infrastructure and create compact, sustainable settlements.

MOV 12: To support the DART Expansion Programme including new infrastructure and the electrification of existing lines along the northern rail line to Drogheda.”

The DART+ Coastal North project supports the overall vision in the Plan, particularly in relation to the development of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre.

Zoning Objectives

The rail line goes through or is adjacent to the following zoning objectives:

A1 – Existing Residential

A2 – New Residential

J1 – Transportation Development Hub

The DART+ Coastal North project will not contravene any of these zoning objectives.

Protected Structures

There are a number of protected structures in or adjoining the Drogheda railway station as detailed in the Constraints Report (Annex 3.1 of the Preliminary Options Selection Report). Any works associated with the DART+ Coastal North project that may affect protected structures will have to be carefully assessed.

1.5 Conclusion

This document sets out the policy context for the proposed DART+ Coastal North project, which forms part of the DART+ Programme. It sets out the policy framework, from a European, national, regional and local perspective and how the proposed project aligns with this policy framework. It is evident from the relevant policies included herein, that the DART+ Coastal North project aligns with, and is in accordance with, such policy.