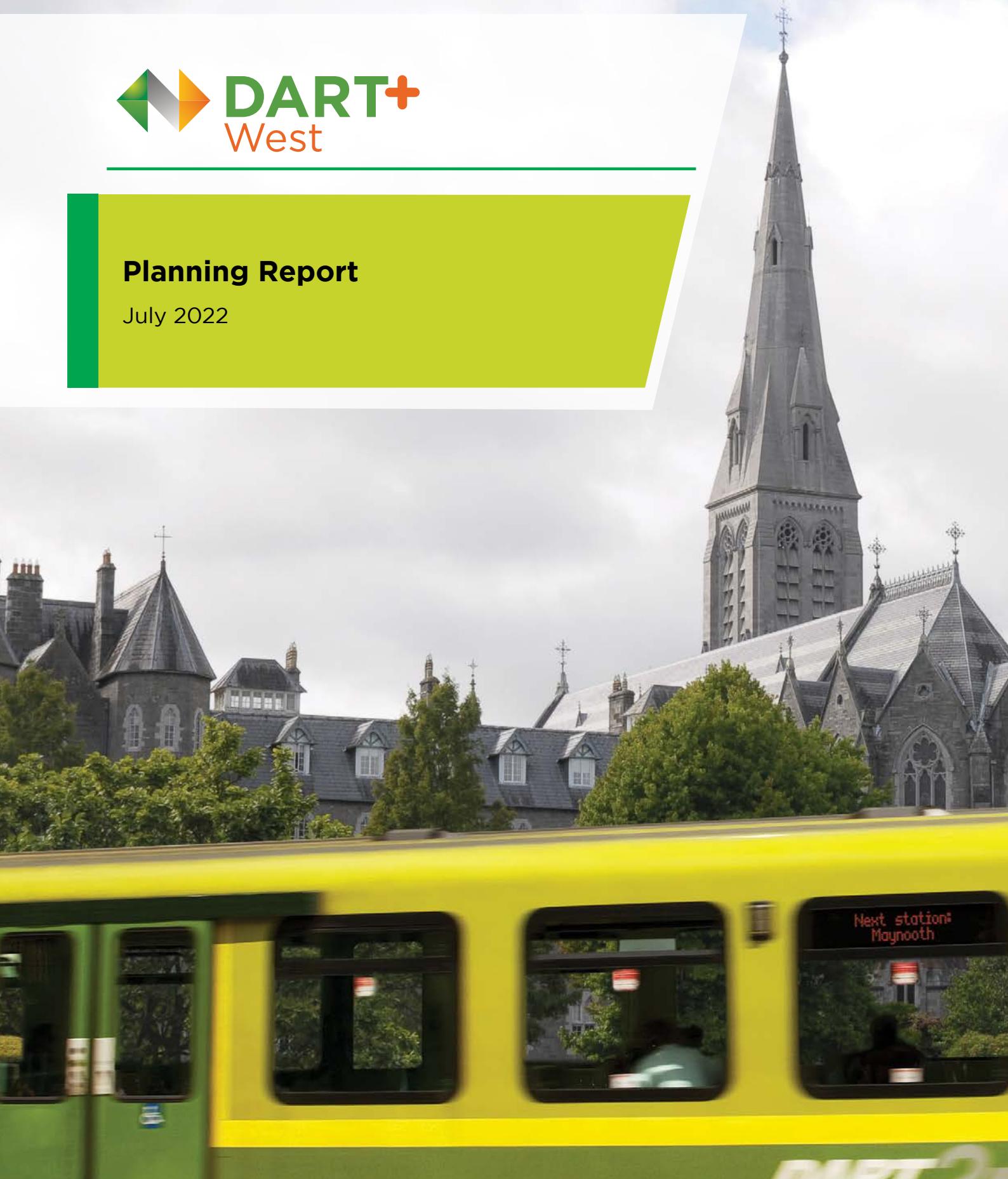




Planning Report

July 2022



Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

NTA
Údarás Náisiúnta Iompair
National Transport Authority



Iarnród Éireann
Irish Rail

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1. PLANNING REPORT

1.1 Introduction

Córas Iompair Éireann, hereafter referred to as CIÉ or ‘the Applicant’, is applying to An Bord Pleanála (“the Board”) for a Railway Order (“RO”) for the DART+ West project (“the proposed project” or “proposed development”) under the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001 (as amended and substituted) (‘the 2001 Act’) and as recently further amended by the European Union (Railway Orders) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 in Statutory Instrument No. 743/2021 (the 2021 Regulations).

The purpose of this Planning Report is to assist An Bord Pleanála in its assessment of the Railway Order Application relating to planning policy.

As provided for by section 37(3)(a) of the 2001 Act, the application for the RO includes a draft of the proposed railway order.

Section 43 of the 2001 Act sets out the matters to be considered before deciding whether to grant the order to which the application relates, including *inter alia*:

- *The application.*
- *The draft order and documents that accompanied the application.*
- *The report of any oral hearing held and the recommendations contained therein.*
- *The EIAR submitted as part of the application for the order.*
- *Submissions made by any person arising from the publication of the notice in relation to the application for a railway order and/or any further information requested and received in relation to the application.*
- *Submissions made by any planning authorities (or other authority if the railway works are likely to have significant effects on the environment arising from the publication of the notice in relation to the application for a railway order.*
- *Any additional information requested and furnished under section 41 of the 2001 Act [i.e. Further information requested]. Further amendments to this process have been made by the 2021 Regulations.*

Among the matters which An Bord Pleanála (‘the Board’) is required consider when an application is made for a Railway Order, in this case for DART+ West, are the matters referred to in section 143 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) by virtue of section 43(1)(h) of the 2001 Act. Accordingly, the Board, in the performance of its functions is required to have regard to (a) the policies and objectives for the time being of the Government, a State authority, the Minister, planning authorities and any other body which is a public authority whose functions have, or may have, a bearing on the proper planning and sustainable development of cities, towns or other areas, whether urban or rural; (b) the national interest and any effect the performance of the Board’s functions may have on issues of strategic economic or social importance to the State, and (c) the National Planning Framework and any regional spatial and economic strategy for the time being in force.

This Planning Report seeks to address these matters.

While this is addressed in more detail later in this report, in summary, Project Ireland 2040 (Building Ireland’s Future) presents the overarching policy initiative to make Ireland a better country for all. Project Ireland 2040 is made up of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan.

By 2040 it is expected that an additional 1 million people will live in Ireland, with an additional 667,000 people working. This will place a huge increase in demand for travelling to work, education and services. Whilst the National Planning Framework sets out the sustainable spatial development strategy for Ireland, it is the National Development Plan sets out the infrastructural investment programme to support implementation of this spatial strategy.

The National Development Plan involves investment of approximately €116 billion in infrastructure to support the ten strategic outcomes of Project Ireland 2040. The DART+ Programme is a cornerstone infrastructural investment that enables a number of the Strategic Outcomes, namely:

- *Enabling compact growth along public transport corridors (NSO1);*
- *Proving sustainable mobility (NSO4); and*
- *Facilitating a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (NSO8).*

The National Development Plan commits Exchequer funding to public investment projects that have sufficiently matured through the planning and technical evaluation process.

The National Development Plan states that the DART+ Programme is the cornerstone of rail investment with the lifetime of Project Ireland 2040 and represents the single biggest investment in the Iarnród Éireann network.

The National Development Plan describes the DART+ Programme based on a number of discrete infrastructure delivery projects. These discrete projects are:

- *DART+ BEMU Charging Infrastructure.*
- *DART+ West.*
- *DART+ South West.*
- *DART+ Coastal North.*
- *DART+ Coastal South.*

The Government, in December 2021, approved the Preliminary Business Case (PBC) for the DART+ Programme. The PBC was constructed on the principle of the discreet individual project descriptions. The PBC approval authorised the award a fleet procurement contract for new electric and battery/electric trains.

The National Development Plan acknowledges the long term planning necessary to give effect to Project Ireland objectives. Long term funding is allocated to deliver on these requirements and a disaggregated capital profile is determined in accordance with the Department of Transport requirements.

The Transport Strategy and the National Development Plan are fully aligned. The National Transport Authority has prepared the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 (adopted as policy by Government) and a new draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042.

These strategy documents also describe the DART+ Programme based on discrete infrastructural delivery projects, which can be delivered sequentially to deliver incremental capacity improvements and ultimately delivering the necessary longer-term capacity necessary across the network. The Strategy also acknowledges that the current DART+ Programme may be further expanded to meet further growth requirements.

This Planning Report is informed and should be read in conjunction with the RO application including RO Schedules and the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and supporting documents that is prepared as part of the RO application. The EIAR has been compiled in accordance with the 2001 Act (as amended) and EIA Directive 2014/52/EU. Further details in regard to the statutory requirements of the EIAR are set out in the EIAR Volume 2, Chapter 1: Introduction and are not repeated here.

The EIAR includes, at Volume 2, Chapter 2: Policy Context and Need for the Project, which presents an overview of the policy context and planning policy, it also set out the need for the Project. This Planning Report provides more detail relating to local/county planning policy considerations and the projects compliance with same.

Volume 3A of the EIAR, presents the figures of the proposed development including the site location, project plans, sections and elevations for the proposed development.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared for the project in accordance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and a Flood Risk Assessment have been prepared and accompany the application as separate documents.

The Planning Report is structured as follows:

- Project overview.
- Legislative requirements.
- Consultation.
- Planning Policy context.
- Conclusion.

It provides a reference to where further detail on planning policy matters and a reference to where additional information may be found within the RO package.

The content of this report is derived from the RO documents including the EIAR, plans, sections and elevations prepared in accordance with the Statutory Regulations and relevant planning policy documents. A Railway Order when granted confers powers on CIÉ to allow for the acquisition of land and other rights in relation to land to facilitate the construction, maintenance, improvement and operation of the railway. These matters are addressed during the design and environmental assessment process. The lands are identified in the Railway Order Schedules and are assessed in the EIAR that accompanies the RO application and are not duplicated in this Planning Report.

1.2 Project Location

The proposed DART+ West project is located in Dublin City and extends westwards towards Kildare and Meath in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The project will electrify a combined total of approximately 40 kilometres of the Great Southern & Western Railway (GSWR) and the Midland Great Western Railway (MGWR) rail lines from the Dublin City centre extending west of Maynooth as far as the proposed depot, and separately to the M3 Parkway Station in County Meath. The works extend across four administrative areas/namely: Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Kildare County Council and Meath County Council.

The project is described and assessed in the EIAR from east to west from Dublin City centre (Connolly Station and the proposed Spencer Dock Station) to the M3 Parkway Station and then to the proposed depot located west of Maynooth. For the purposes of describing the project in the EIAR the project description is divided into six zones, namely, Zone A to Zone F.

The main infrastructural elements associated with the proposed development include the electrification of the existing railway corridor. It will also include constructing a new station at Spencer Dock in Dublin City centre and passenger capacity enhancements at existing train stations as required. It will require the closure of the six existing level crossings along the railway line. From east to west, these level crossing closures are at Ashtown, Coolmine, Porterstown, Clonsilla, Barberstown and Blakestown. To maintain connectivity at the level crossing, replacement bridge structures will be provided as necessary. These will include road bridges and / or pedestrian and cycle bridges, as required.

The Zones and locations along the line are described in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1 EIA geographical zones of the project

Name	Section	Description
Zone A	Loop Line Bridge to Phibsborough/Glasnevin (on GSWR line) and East Wall Junction (on Northern line)	Loop Line Bridge (northern side) to Glasnevin (Glasnevin Jct) on GSWR line (largely on viaduct) (including Cabra compound). Connolly Station to East Wall Junction (Tolka river Bridge) on the Northern Line.

Name	Section	Description
Zone B	Spencer Dock Station to Glasnevin Junction	Spencer Dock Station to Phibsborough/Glasnevin (Glasnevin Jct) on MGWR line (largely in cutting)
Zone C	Glasnevin junction/ Phibsborough to Clonsilla Station/Junction	Phibsborough/Glasnevin (Glasnevin Jct) to Clonsilla Station (Clonsilla Jct)
Zone D	Clonsilla Station/Junction to M3 Parkway Station	Clonsilla Station (Clonsilla Jct) to M3 Parkway Station (M3 Parkway terminus)
Zone E	Clonsilla Station/Junction to Maynooth Station	Clonsilla Station (Clonsilla Jct) to Maynooth Station
Zone F	Maynooth Station to Depot	Maynooth Station to Maynooth Depot doubling the track

Chapter 4 Description of the Proposed Development in Volume 2 of the EIAR identifies the main elements of the proposed development and also identifies the EIAR Zones A-F.

1.3 Project History

The rail network in Ireland and more particularly in the Dublin Metropolitan area is a 19th century legacy, which represent a significant national asset in that it provides high-capacity public transport corridors into and through the city centre. The expansion of the heavy rail network has been a key long-term objective of CIÉ, Iarnród Éireann and statutory transport plans for a significant period.

The expansion of the heavy rail network has been stop-start in nature and influenced by available Exchequer funding. The commissioning of the DART in the 1980's is a huge public transport success. Subsequent funding has been provided in the 1990's and early 2000's to improve the rail network and increase capacity.

However, due to the national economic downturn in 2008, capital investment was significantly constrained.

In 2011, CIÉ prepared and had finalised an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to support a Railway Order Application for the Maynooth Line which involved the closure of the same six level crossings. The project progressed however due to funding constraints it was not submitted for planning.

Available capital investment is now targeted at prioritised projects including DART+ West and committed as part of the National Development Plan 2021-2030.

1.3.1 DART Expansion Origins

The origins of the DART+ programme including the rail modernisation and expansion date back to the early 1970's, parallel with Dublin Corporations early Development Plans. The 1971 Dublin Transport Study and the 1975 Dublin Rapid Rail Transit Study (DRRTS) recommended progressive expansion and electrification of the radial rail lines into Dublin City Centre and an underground city centre rail interconnector, to accommodate demand from the greenfield site development proposals in Dublin's hinterland (including Tallaght, Clondalkin, Blanchardstown). Phase 1 of the DRRTS was delivered with DART services being introduced from Howth to Bray in 1984. However, subsequent rail expansion phases were halted in the 1980's due to economic recession. In the 1990s, the focus of national investment was for the expansion of Ireland's motorway network.

The publication of 'A Platform for Change' (Dublin Transportation Office, 2001) set out a vision of an integrated multi-modal transportation strategy for the GDA to be delivered over the subsequent 15 years. This strategy formalised the benefit of using heavy rail as the spine of an integrated public transport network. Since 2001, Iarnród Éireann has progressed railway improvement projects in accordance with the objectives of DART Expansion as funding permitted.

Iarnród Éireann's previous priority was to deliver, as early as possible, the DART Underground tunnel link beneath the city centre. This was seen as being fundamental to increasing capacity on the radial routes. Design and planning for DART Underground was progressed and a Railway Order was made by An Bord Pleanála in December 2011 and perfected by the High Court in March 2014.

However, in September 2015 the Government deferred authorisation for the construction of DART Underground and instructed Iarnród Éireann to examine the current design with an objective of delivering a lower cost technical solution, whilst retaining the required rail connectivity for the DART Expansion Programme.

Between September 2015 and the publication of the National Development Plan 2018-2027 (NDP) in February 2018, IÉ and the NTA worked collaboratively in the assessment of lower cost technical solutions. A number of studies were undertaken and transport assessments including the Maynooth Line Transport Study (2019), the DART Expansion Rail Electrification Assessment (2019), the DART Underground Western Tie-In Study (2017) and Tunnel Configuration Study for new Metro North and DART Underground (NTA/IE/TII 2017).

The outcome of these studies influenced the formulation of the Project Ireland 2040 comprising the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) and the supporting investment package contained in the National Development Plan 2018-2027 which was published in February 2018. The National Development Plan recommended that the DART+ Programme (previously termed DART Expansion) should proceed to deliver priority elements including investment in new train fleet, provision of new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines.

The NPF and NDP state that the focus should be on non-underground tunnel elements of the programme using existing tracks (i.e., using the Phoenix Park Tunnel branch line). On the 4 October 2021, the National Development Plan 2021-2030 was published in which the DART+ Programme is considered as the "cornerstone of rail investment" within the lifetime of Project Ireland 2040.

Advancement of priority elements of DART+ Programme is now approved in principle under the National Development Plan 2021-2030 and DART+ West will be the first of the DART+ Programme packages that will be lodged with An Bord Pleanála for the approval of a Railway Order application.

1.3.2 DART+ Programme

The DART+ Programme involves development of and enhancements to the existing rail network that radiates from Dublin City Centre. This will include interventions, electrification and re-signalling across the four main routes primarily over existing alignments to extend the DART system.

The individual projects within the overall DART+ programme include:

- DART+ West - c.40 km electrification from Connolly Station/Spencer Dock Station in the city centre westwards to a new maintenance depot facility located west of Maynooth. The project will also electrify the Dunboyne Line from Clonsilla Station to M3 Parkway Station. DART+ West will interface with DART+ South West along the Phoenix Park Tunnel line. It also includes upgrade and reconfiguration of existing railway infrastructure in the city centre and a new station in the Docklands area named Spencer Dock Station, and all ancillary works.
- DART+ South West - c.20 km electrification of Kildare Line from Dublin Heuston to Hazelhatch-Celbridge; electrification of the Phoenix Park Tunnel branch line to link to DART+West and all ancillary works.
- DART+ Coastal North - c.38 km with electrification and related works from Malahide to Drogheda, also includes works from Connolly to Malahide & on the Howth Branch and all ancillary works.
- DART+ Coastal South - removal of level crossings and related works, upgrades to Tara Street Station and works to facilitate increased services between Bray and Greystones section and all ancillary works.

DART+ West will be the first project of the DART+ Programme to be delivered by CIÉ. DART+ Programme is a transformative programme of projects that aims to modernise and improve existing rail services in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). It will provide a sustainable, electrified, reliable and more frequent rail service, improving capacity on rail corridors serving Dublin. Figure 1-1 provides a schematic layout of the proposed DART+ West and its interactions with the proposed MetroLink project at Glasnevin and the proposed DART+ South West project.

Customer capacity and train service frequency on these lines will be significantly increased as a result of the DART+ Programme. This will help to deliver a more efficient transport system, allowing more people to make sustainable travel choices that reduce their carbon footprint, improve quality of life factors and reduce road congestion, thereby helping to meet the goals set out in the Government's Climate Action Plan.

Iarnród Éireann's (IÉ) ambition is to increase train frequency from the current ten-minute frequency to a five-minute all-day frequency and to lengthen all trains to eight carriages. To achieve this ambition, it is imperative that constraints along the track are rectified, and level crossings are removed.

The cumulative network effect of DART+ Programme, subject to Government authorisation and funding, will increase customer capacity from circa 26,000 customers per hour per direction (2019) to circa 50,000-60,000 (peak) passengers per hour per direction under the National Development Plan investment and future growth capacity potential to 70,000-80,000 (peak) passengers per hour per direction thereafter, subject to further fleet procurement.

1.3.3 DART+ Programme objectives

DART+ Programme is a transformative programme of projects that aims to modernise and improve existing rail services in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). It will see the DART network grow from its current 50km in length to over 150km.

The DART+ Programme's primary objective is to support urban compact growth and contribute to reducing transport congestion and emissions in the Dublin region by enhancing the heavy rail network between Dublin City Centre and the areas of Drogheda, Maynooth, Dunboyne, Celbridge and Greystones. It will provide a sustainable, electrified, reliable and more frequent rail service, improving capacity along these corridors.

Sub-objectives of the DART+ Programme include:

- Cater for existing heavy rail travel demand and support long-term patronage growth along established rail corridors in the Greater Dublin Area through the provision of a higher frequency, higher capacity, electrified heavy rail service which supports sustainable economic development and population growth.
- Improve accessibility to jobs, education, and other social and economic opportunities through the provision of improved inter-rail and inter-modal connectivity and integration with other public transport services.
- Enable further urban compact growth along existing rail corridors, unlock regeneration opportunities and more effective use of land in the Greater Dublin Area, for present and future generations, through the provision of a higher capacity heavy rail network.
- Deliver an efficient, sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient heavy rail network, which contributes to a reduction in congestion on the road network in the Greater Dublin Area and which supports the advancement of Ireland's transition to a low emissions transport system and delivery of Ireland's emission reduction targets.
- Provide a higher standard of customer experience including provision of clean, safe, modern vehicles and a reliable and punctual service with regulated and integrated fares.

1.4 Project Overview

The DART+ West project is seeking to significantly increase rail capacity on the Maynooth & M3 Parkway lines. This will be achieved by changing from diesel powered trains to electrified, high-capacity DART trains and increasing the frequency of trains from 6 to 12 trains per hour per direction. Passenger capacity will increase from 5,000 in 2019 to 13,200 in 2025 passengers per hour per direction. The project will involve the electrification of approximately 40km of permanent way (railway line) from the Dublin City centre to west of Maynooth and to M3 Parkway Station and development of all associated supporting infrastructure.

The electrification of the rail line is located predominantly within the existing railway corridor within Irish Rail/ CIÉ owned lands however some works will involve works outside the CIÉ boundary and require the acquisition of private lands to facilitate the project.

The principal project components can be summarised to include:

- Signalling, Electrification and Telecommunication (SET) works.
- Construction of overhead line equipment (OHLE) along the railway.
- Structural alterations to existing rail overbridge structures.
- Modification works to existing bridge structures.
- Linear railway permanent way works.
- Closure of six existing level crossings and construction of replacement access infrastructure at Ashtown, Coolmine, Porterstown, Clonsilla and Barberstown.
- Station alterations at Connolly Station (RPS) including the provision of a new entrance at Preston Street via Connolly Station vaults (connecting to platforms 6 and 7) and associated public realm works on Preston Street.
- Construction of a new station at Spencer Dock.
- Construction of 12 substations, supporting technical buildings and electricity connections along the line.
- Construction of temporary construction compounds.
- Construction of permanent maintenance compounds.
- Off-line track realignment in the vicinity of Rail overbridge 23 (OBG23/Jackson's Bridge) and associated roadworks.
- Construction of a depot (west of Maynooth), access infrastructure including a new overbridge, roadworks and flood compensation storages areas and all drainage and ancillary works.
- Drainage works and all ancillary works.

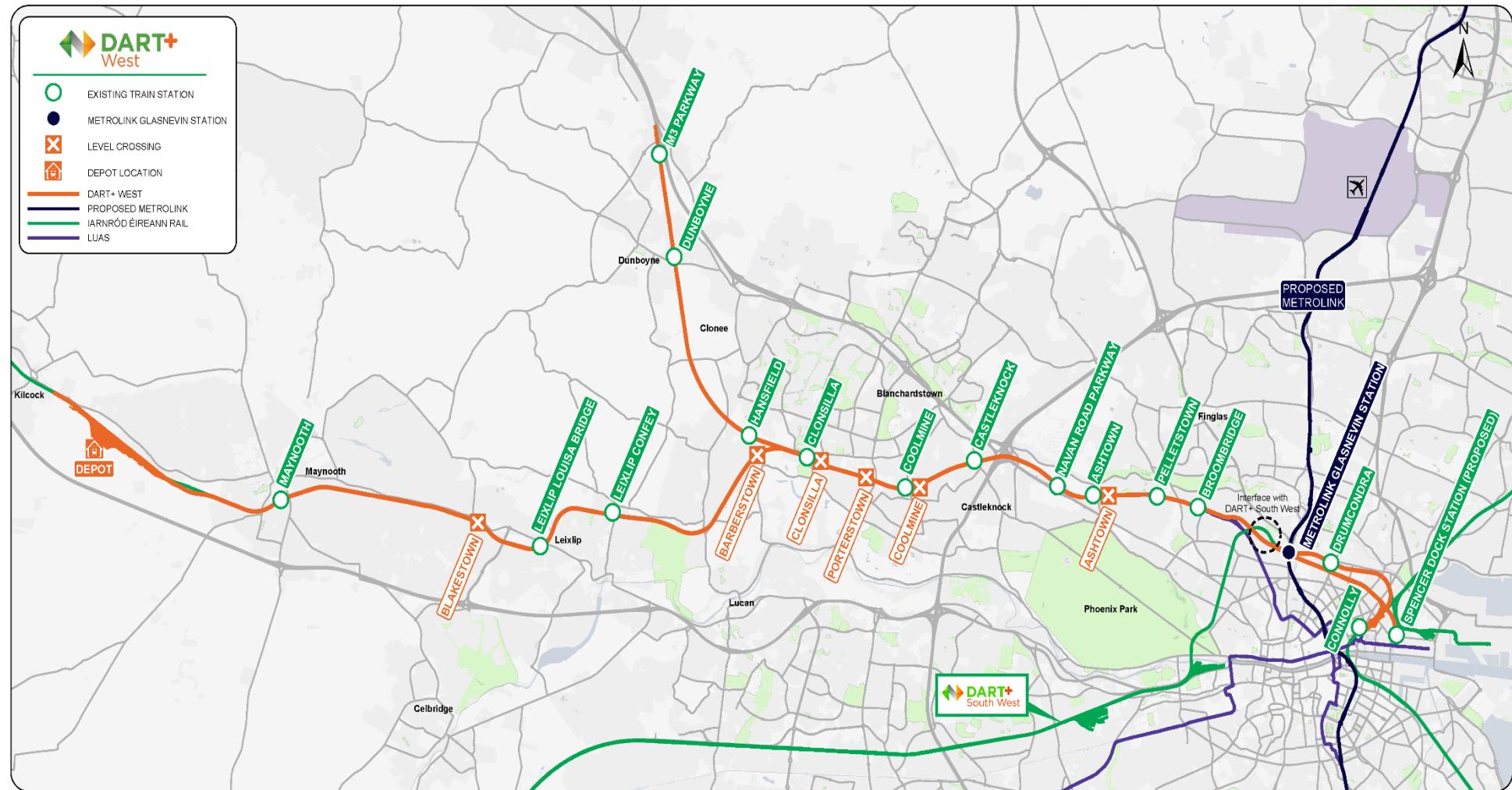


Figure 1-1 Schematic of DART+ West project

1.5 Project objectives

The primary objective of the DART+ West project is to increase the carrying capacity on the project route corridor between City Centre and Maynooth/M3 Parkway and support the rapid transition required to deliver on a low carbon climate resilient transport system.

Sub-objective include:

- To deliver higher frequency, higher capacity, reliable, electrified rail service along the project route corridor to enable the provision of DART services between City Centre and Maynooth Station / M3 Parkway Station.
- To deliver solutions to meet the Train Service Specification.
- To deliver a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient design solution including making the maximum use of existing railway infrastructure together with targeted interventions to remove capacity constraints.
- To identify cost effective solutions from a capital, operations and maintenance perspective.
- To minimise adverse impacts on existing rail services, road users and landowners associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the project.
- To minimise adverse impacts on the natural and built environment associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the project.
- To deliver a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient design solution including making use of existing infrastructure where possible with targeted improvement works.
- To deliver an improved customer experience and service for customers along the project corridors.

The requirements for the DART+ West project comprise technical and functional attributes associated with DART+ programme requirements and the unique characteristics associated with the location and characteristics of the project. These requirements include:

- To design in accordance with IÉ Standards and relevant national and EU standards and guidelines.
- Designs shall comply with the Minimum Employer's Functional Requirements and meet the Train Service Specification.
- Electrification of the line with overhead apparatus.
- Provision of an appropriate number of substations to support the electrification.
- Closure of existing level crossings and provision of appropriate alternative access.
- Improve safety for all users by separating the road and rail interface.
- Implement the necessary infrastructure changes to achieve the clearances required for electrification at bridges and structures.
- Implement the safety improvements consequent on the introduction of electrification.
- Provision of new fleet maintenance depot for DART vehicles.
- Provide enhanced passenger interchange with existing public transport at Connolly and in the north Docklands area.
- Take cognisance of the planned sustainable transport programmes and projects.
- Allow for continued movements of freight traffic.
- Provide signalling and telecoms systems to support the project.

2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This Planning Report supports the Railway Order (RO) application that is submitted by CIÉ to the An Bord Pleanála “the Board” for its approval of DART+ West project. The Planning Report is not a legislative requirement but is a supporting document of the RO application. The Planning Report should be read in conjunction with the EIAR and technical appendices and figures.

The EIAR is a legislative requirement and has been prepared to facilitate the Board’s undertaking of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development to facilitate the competent authority, in this case the Board, to carry out an EIA and determine by way of a reasoned conclusion the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment. EIA is the process by which the likely significant effects on the environment (positive and negative) of a proposed development or project are assessed; where effects are significant, relevant design changes and / or other mitigation measures can be taken to avoid, reduce or mitigate those effects. The application for an RO is made to the Board, and among the documents which must accompany the application, as per section 37(3)(e) of the 2001 Act, is an EIAR, which is prepared in accordance with Directive 2014/52/EU and inter alia contains the information referred to in section 39 of the 2001 Act, having regard to relevant guidance documents and guidelines.

Accordingly, CIÉ, as the applicant for this Railway Order, has ensured that the EIAR is prepared by competent experts; contains a description of the proposed railway works comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the proposed works; contains a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed railway works on the environment; contains the data required to identify and assess the main effects which the proposed railway works are likely to have on the environment; contains a description of any features of the proposed railway works, and of any measures envisaged, to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment; contains a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the applicant – here CIÉ – which are relevant to the proposed railway works and their specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the railway works on the environment; contains a summary in non-technical language of the above information; takes into account the available results of other relevant assessments under European Union or national legislation with a view to avoiding duplication of assessments; in addition to and by way of explanation or amplification of the specified information referred above, the EIAR contains such additional information specified in Annex IV to the EIA Directive relevant to the specific characteristics of the particular railway works, or type of railway works, proposed and to the environmental features likely to be affected and in this regard Annex IV sets out the information which is referred to in Article 5(1) of the EIA Directive. Further the EIAR includes the information that may reasonably be required for reaching a reasoned conclusion in accordance with section 42B of the 2001 Act on the significant effects of the proposed railway works on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment.

The application for a Railway Order is made pursuant to the provisions of the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001, as amended and substituted (“the 2001 Act”). As mentioned, the 2001 Act has been amended on a number of occasions since it was first enacted. Most recently, for example, the European Union (Railway Orders) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 in Statutory Instrument No. 743/2021 gave further effect to the transposition of the EIA Directive (EU Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU) on the assessment of the effects of certain public private projects on the environment by amending the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001 ('the 2001 Act'). The initial Directive of 1985 (Council Directive 85/337/EEC) and its three amendments were codified by Directive 2011/92/EU of 13 December 2011. Directive 2011/92/EU was amended in 2014 by Directive 2014/52/EU (which came into force in May 2014) and together all of these Directives are referred to as “the EIA Directive”.

Other key environmental assessments that are required for this project, and that have informed the EIAR include:

- CIÉ has adopted a coordinated assessment in its approach to the preparation of the EIAR together with the preparation of the Natura Impact Assessment under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992) and the Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009).
- Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment.
- Site-specific flood risk assessment.

2.1.1 Legislation and guidance

The EIAR has been undertaken in accordance with, but not limited to, the following legislation:

- Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001 (as amended).
- European Union (Railway Orders) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (Statutory Instrument No. 743/2021).
- Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006.
- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- The initial Directive of 1985 (Council Directive 85/337/EEC) and its three amendments were codified by Directive 2011/92/EU of 13 December 2011. Directive 2011/92/EU was amended in 2014 by Directive 2014/52/EU (which came into force in May 2014) and together all of these Directives are referred to as “the EIA Directive”.
- The Habitats and Birds Directives and national regulations implementing same.
- Water Framework Directive (WFD) and national regulations implementing same.
- Where appropriate, regard has been had to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2021.

The preparation of the EIAR has been informed by relevant international and national EIA guidelines including the following:

- *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements* (Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 2002).
- *Advice notes on current practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements* (EPA, 2003).
- *Draft Guidelines on information to be contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report* (EPA, 2017).
- *Draft Advice Notes for preparing Environmental Impact Statements* (EPA, 2015).
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, (DHPLG, August 2018).
- Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes - A Practical Guide, Revision 1 (NRA/TII, 20 November 2008).
- *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report* - European Commission, 2017.
- *Advice Note seventeen: Cumulative effects assessment relevant to nationally significant infrastructure projects, 2019 published by the Planning Inspectorate, an executive agency of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of the United Kingdom.*

Other legislation, guidelines from TII and other bodies have been considered and are detailed in the relevant technical assessment chapters of the EIAR. Each environmental factor assessed in the EIAR sets out the legislative context, policy context and guidance relevant to that environmental factor. The required methods of assessments are provided within each chapter contained in the EIAR, in accordance with published professional guidelines.

2.1.2 Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001

A Railway Order is the statutory consent to an applicant providing authorisation to construct, maintain, improve and operate the railway or railway works. Railway works and the procedure for obtaining a Railway Order is governed by the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001 as further recently amended by the S.I. 743 of

2021 ("the 2021 Regulations"). The regulatory framework for Railway Orders is set out in Part 3 (Railway Orders) of the 2001 Act. The 2001 Act as amended combines a number of statutory and regulatory processes including *inter alia* public consultation, environmental impact assessment, appropriate assessment, planning assessment and compulsory purchase powers for railway infrastructure.

Section 37 of the 2001 Act requires, *inter alia*, that the application be made in writing and be accompanied by:

- a) a draft of the proposed Railway Order.
- b) a plan of the proposed railway works.
- c) a book of reference to a plan describing the works which indicates the identity of the owners and of the occupiers of the lands described in the Plan.
- d) a statement of the likely effects on the environment of the proposed railway works (the EIAR).

In 2006 the Board assumed the role of the Minister for Transport where the granting of Railway Orders is concerned. Subsequently, section 49 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006 amended the 2001 Act *inter alia* by substituting new sections 37 to 47A for sections 37 to 47. These new sections were primarily intended to transfer responsibility for the approval of a Railway Order from the Minister for Transport to the Board and to make certain related amendments. Accordingly, pursuant to the 2001 Act, the Board has the powers to *inter alia*:

- Receive an application for a Railway Order.
- Assess the application.
- Hold an oral hearing.
- Consider a range of matters before deciding whether to grant the order to which the application relates (section 43 of the 2001 Act).
- After considering these matters, if the Board is of opinion that the application should be granted, it shall make an order authorising the construction of the works applied for, including improvement and the operation of the railway subject to such conditions, modifications, restrictions and requirements (and on such other terms) as the Board thinks proper and specifies in the order.

In summary, the amendments made to the 2001 Act by the 2021 Regulations in Statutory Instrument No. 743/2021 in the transposition of the EIA Directive include *inter alia* the following:

- It sets out the type of information which is to be included in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report ('the EIAR') and replaces EIS with EIAR.
- It provides for the dissemination of the EIAR both to the public and to the authorities which are designated by the Minister for Transport for consultation.
- It sets out the statutory functions of An Bord Pleanála and its powers for consideration and decision-making.
- It makes provision for the Minister for Transport to designate, by Notice, the authorities likely to be concerned by proposed railway works and for the publication of the Notice on the website of the Department of Transport.
- It provides powers to monitor and assess whether 'environmental conditions' are being complied with and to enforce compliance if this is not the case.
- The 2001 Act now provides for what is known as a coordinated assessment in section 42A of the 2001 Act. Therefore, in carrying out an environmental impact assessment (EIA) in respect of an application made under section 37 of the 2001 Act An Bord Pleanála shall, where appropriate, co-ordinate the assessment with any assessment under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992) or the Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009).

A Railway Order is therefore the statutory consent to an applicant providing authorisation to construct, maintain, improve and operate the railway or railway works. Railway works and the procedure for obtaining a Railway Order is governed by the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001, as amended and substituted.

The 2001 Act sets out a bespoke process covering all aspects of consultation and notification requirements in relation to the application, consideration, assessment and decision-making for a proposed Railway Order and if granted, for the construction, maintenance, improvement and operation of a railway and railway works, including powers of compulsory acquisition.

2.1.2.1 *Compulsory acquisition of land*

A Railway Order when granted confers powers on CIÉ to allow for the acquisition of land and other rights in relation to land to facilitate the construction, maintenance, improvement and operation of the railway. For example, section 45(1) of the 2001 Act inter alia states:

"Upon the commencement of a railway order, the Agency or CIÉ shall thereupon be authorised to acquire compulsorily any land or rights in, under or over land or any substratum of land specified in the order and, for that purpose, the railway order shall have effect as if it were a compulsory purchase order..."

In accordance with 37 (2)(d) of the 2001 Act a book of reference has been prepared (*indicating the identity of the owners and of the occupiers of the lands described in the plan*). The EIAR has also assessed the proposed railway works set out in the book of reference. The Planning Report does not duplicate these assessments. All reasonable efforts have been made to engage with all affected property owners throughout the design and EIA process. Where engagement has been forthcoming this has informed the design and EIA process and is documented as appropriate in the EIAR.

2.1.2.2 *Railway Order*

As provided for by section 37(3)(a) of the 2001 Act, the application for the RO includes a detailed draft of the proposed order. Section 43 of the 2001 Act sets out the matters to be considered before deciding whether to grant the order to which the application relates, including inter alia:

- The application.
- The draft order and documents that accompanied the application.
- The report of any oral hearing held and the recommendations contained therein.
- The EIAR submitted as part of the application for the order.
- Submissions made by any person arising from the publication of the notice in relation to the application for a railway order and/or any further information requested and received in relation to the application.
- Submissions made by any planning authorities (or other authority if the railway works are likely to have significant effects on the environment arising from the publication of the notice in relation to the application for a railway order).
- Any additional information requested and furnished under section 41 of the 2001 Act.

Section 43 has also been amended by the 2021 Regulations.

The Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') is carried out by the Competent Authority and in the case of a Railway Order application the Competent Authority is An Bord Pleanála (the 'Board'). Arising from the 2001 Act as amended by the 2021 Regulations, the carrying out of an EIA in relation to proposed railway works in a draft Railway Order by the Board means a process consisting of inter alia:

- the preparation of an EIAR by the applicant – in this case CIÉ – in accordance with section 39 of the 2001 Act.
- the carrying out of consultation.
- the examination by the Board of:
 - the information presented in the EIAR.
 - any further information provided by the applicant under section 41 and, where applicable, section 47D.

- any relevant information received through consultation under section 40, section 41 and, where applicable, section 47D.
- the reaching of a reasoned conclusion by the Board in accordance with section 42B of the 2001 Act on the significant effects of the proposed railway works on the environment, taking into account the results of the examination referred to in (c) and, where appropriate, its own supplementary examination.
- the integration by the Board of its reasoned conclusion into its decision under section 43 of the 2001 Act.
- an examination, analysis and evaluation by the Board under sections 42B and 43 of the 2001 Act in order to identify, describe and assess, in the light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed railway works, including significant effects derived from the vulnerability of the activity to risks of major accidents and disasters relevant to it, on:
 - population and human health.
 - biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under the Habitats and Birds Directives.
 - land, soil, water, air and climate.
 - material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape.
 - the interaction between the above factors.

2.1.3 EIA Directive

As referred to earlier, the 2001 Act has been amended on a number of occasions since it was first enacted. Most recently, the 2021 Regulations gave further effect to the transposition of the EIA Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public private projects on the environment by amending the 2001 Act. The EIAR has been prepared in accordance with requirements of the 2001 Act as amended by the 2021 Regulations and the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU *Assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment* as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU¹ and includes the information set out in section 39 of the 2001 Act as amended by the 2021 Regulations and has had regard to relevant guidelines and guidance documents as set out in paragraph 1.5.1. Article 5 and Annex IV to the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU (referred to in the 2001 Act as amended by the 2021 Regulations) sets out the information to be contained in an EIAR and is reproduced in the Table 2-1 below. The information provided in the EIAR meets these requirements. The table below includes the chapter reference where each of the information requirements is addressed in the EIAR.

Table 2-1 Information for the EIAR - Annex IV of EIA Directive as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU

Information for the EIAR as per Article 5(1)	Chapter in the EIAR:
1. Description of the project, including in particular: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a description of the location of the project; (b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole project, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases; (c) a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the project (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used; (d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation) and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases. 	Chapter 4 and Chapter 5
2. A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.	Chapter 3
	Chapters 6-23
	Chapters 6-23

¹ The European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018) inter alia transposed the Directive.

Information for the EIAR as per Article 5(1)	Chapter in the EIAR:
3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the project as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.	
4. A description of the factors specified in Article 3(1) likely to be significantly affected by the project: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.	Chapters 6-23
5. A description of the likely significant effects of the project on the environment resulting from, inter alia:	
(a) the construction and existence of the project, including, where relevant, demolition works;	
(b) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources;	Chapters 1,2 and 6-23
(c) the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste;	
(d) the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters);	Chapters 6-23
(e) the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources;	
(f) the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change;	Chapters 6-23, 24 and 27
(g) the technologies and the substances used.	
The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in Article 3(1) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the project. This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to the project.	Chapters 6-23, 24 and 27
6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	
7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	Volume 1 All Chapters
8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the project on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the project to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to Union legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom or relevant assessments carried out pursuant to national legislation may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.	
9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under points 1 to 8.	
A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the report.	

2.1.3.1 EIA process

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process under the terms of European Directives² for the assessment of the effects of development projects on the environment. An Environmental Impact Assessment

² EU Directive 85/337EEC as amended by Directive 2011/92/EU and Directive 2014/52/EU

Report (EIAR) is a statement prepared by the developer, providing information on the significant effects on the environment based on current knowledge and methods of assessment. It is carried out by competent experts, with appropriate expertise to provide informed assessment on the environmental factors as required under the EIA Directive. The EIAR consists of a systematic analysis and assessment of the potential effects of a proposed development on the receiving environment.

Environmental impact assessment is defined in Article 1 of the EIA Directive to mean a process consisting of:

- I. the preparation of an EIAR by the developer, as referred to in Article 5(1) and (2).
- II. the carrying out of consultations as referred to in Article 6 and, where relevant, Article 7.
- III. the examination by the competent authority of the information presented in the EIAR and any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the developer in accordance with Article 5(3), and any relevant information received through the consultations under Articles 6 and 7.
- IV. the reasoned conclusion by the competent authority on the significant effects of the project on the environment, taking into account the results of the examination referred to in point (iii) and, where appropriate, its own supplementary examination.
- V. the integration of the competent authority's reasoned conclusion into any of the decisions referred to in Article 8a.

An Bord Pleanála is the competent authority for the purpose of carrying out an environmental impact assessment of the proposed development.

2.1.4 Habitats Directive

CIÉ has adopted a coordinated assessment in its approach to the preparation of the EIAR together with the preparation of the Natura Impact Assessment under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992) and the Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009). Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds ("the Birds Directive") list habitats and species which are, in a European context, important for conservation and in need of protection. This protection is afforded in part through the designation of sites which support significant examples of habitats or populations of species ("European sites"). Sites designated for birds are termed "Special Protection Areas" (SPAs) and sites designated for natural habitat types or other species are termed "Special Areas of Conservation" (SACs). The complete network of European sites is referred to as "Natura 2000".

In order to ensure the protection of European sites in the context of land use planning and development, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive provides for the assessment of the implications of plans and projects for European sites, as follows:

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site³ but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Article 7 of the Habitats Directive provides that the provisions of, *inter alia*, Article 6(3) are to apply to SPAs under Directive 2009/147/EC (the "Birds Directive").

The requirements arising out of Article 6(3) are transposed into Irish law by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended and substituted) and by the European Communities (Birds and Natural

³ Including, where applicable, 'sites'.

Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended⁴ (S.I. No.477 of 2011) (the Habitats Regulations), including Part 5 thereof. The assessment is referred to as an “Appropriate Assessment” (AA).

The determination of whether or not a plan or project requires AA is referred to as “Stage 1” or “AA Screening”. A Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment (AA) “Stage 1” Screening was completed to determine whether or not the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on areas designated as being of European importance for nature conservation (“European sites”), thereby enabling Iarnród Éireann, to fulfil its obligations under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The AA Screening completed for the project could not rule out likely significant effects on European Sites and therefore the project must proceed to Stage 2”. A Stage 2 AA ‘Natura Impact Statement’ (NIS) is included as a separate document to the EIAR.

Prior to approval of a plan or project which is the subject of Appropriate Assessment or “Stage 2 AA” it is necessary to “ascertain” that the plan or project will not “adversely affect the integrity of the site.”

The NIS contains an examination of the implications of the proposed development, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, for Natura 2000 sites. It has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), including inter alia sections 177U,177V, 177S thereof, to facilitate the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment by An Bord Pleanála.

A Stage 2 AA ‘Natura Impact Statement’ (NIS) is included as a separate supporting report to the RO application.

2.1.5 Water Framework Directive Assessment

Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (“the Water Framework Directive” or “WFD”) requires all Member States to protect and improve water quality in all waterbodies so that they achieve good ecological status by 2015 or, at the latest, by 2027. It was given legal effect in Ireland by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003). It applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, transitional and coastal waters. The Directive requires that management plans be prepared on a river basin basis and specifies a structured method for developing these plans.

Any works which could affect the biological, physiochemical or hydromorphological quality of a waterbody requires an assessment in line with the WFD to demonstrate how the proposed works will not lead to a degradation in status and where possible, enhance waterbody status in order to achieve the required Good status target as set out in the directive. The likely impacts to various hydrological and hydrogeological parameters and how these affect WFD status are assessed in the EIAR, in Chapters 10 Hydrology and Chapter 11 Hydrogeology of the EIAR.

2.1.6 Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment

A separate Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) has been undertaken and has informed the design stage and the environmental assessment contained in the EIAR. All potential sources of flooding have been considered, including fluvial, coastal, pluvial, groundwater and surface water drainage derived flooding.

The SSFRA has been prepared in accordance with ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ published by the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) in 2009. The Guidelines set out a staged approach to the assessment of flood risk with each stage carried out only as needed. The stages are listed below:

- **Stage I Flood Risk Identification** – to identify whether there may be any flooding or surface water management issues.

⁴ Including inter alia S.I. 290 of 2013; SI 499 of 2013; SI 355 of 2015; the Planning, Heritage and Broadcasting (Amendment) Act 2021, SI 293 of 2021.

- **Stage II Initial Flood Risk Assessment** – to confirm sources of flooding that may affect an area or proposed development, to appraise the adequacy of existing information and to scope the extent of the risk of flooding which may involve preparing indicative flood zone maps.
- **Stage III Detailed Flood Risk Assessment** – to assess flood risk issues in sufficient detail and to provide a quantitative appraisal of potential flood risk to a proposed or existing development or land to be zoned, of its potential impact on flood risk elsewhere and of the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation measures.

The SSFRA is a separate supporting report to the RO application.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 Introduction

Consultation and stakeholder engagement during the design and planning process is a key element to the delivery of major infrastructure projects such as DART+ West. Stakeholder consultation with statutory and non-statutory including the four local authorities planning departments has been key part of the consultation throughout the process. Public consultation and participation have also been welcomed and encouraged throughout the design development and has helped inform the design, EIA and RO process.

The main consultation stages in the project development are listed below and discussed between statutory and non-statutory consultation as follows:

Statutory consultation:

- Informal EIA Scoping.
- Pre-application Consultation meetings with An Bord Pleanála.
- Statutory Consultation period as part of the Railway Order application process.

Non-statutory consultation:

- Non-statutory public consultation no.1 emerging preferred option (August 2020).

Non-statutory public consultation no. 2 preferred option (July 2021) and local Ashtown public consultation on the revised preferred option (March 2022). As well as these consultations above there has a number of meetings with local authorities, National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service, Waterways Ireland, Office of Public Works, National Transport Authority, etc, landowners, private individuals, residents' association, etc. which has informed the project. The main stages and bodies consulted are discussed in the sections below.

3.2 Statutory Consultation

3.2.1 Informal EIA Scoping

'Scoping' is a process of deciding what information should be contained in an EIAR and what methods should be used to gather and assess that information. The Scoping Report describes the nature, extent and location of the proposed project. The Scoping stage provides an opportunity to consult with statutory consultees and stakeholders about the extent of the information required to be contained within the EIAR.

All prescribed bodies were written to on 29th May 2020. This was an introductory letter advising all Consultees that the DART+ West project had commenced and provided some background information on the DART+ Programme.

On the 12 March 2021, prescribed bodies and key stakeholders were provided with the DART+ West Informal EIA Scoping Report as part of the Scoping process consultees were asked to respond within 6 weeks to make a submission or observation. The list of all the prescribed bodies and the key stakeholders contacted is provided in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 List of prescribed and unprescribed bodies consulted

Prescribed bodies under Article 211 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Regulations	
Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government	Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media c/o Development Applications Unit National Parks Wildlife Service National Monument Service Architectural Heritage Advisory Unit
Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications	Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport
Other prescribed bodies under Article 213 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Regulations	
Dublin City Council	Fingal County Council
Kildare County Council	Meath County Council
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
An Chomhairle Ealaíon (The Arts Council)	An Taisce
Fáilte Ireland	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
The Heritage Council	Inland Fisheries Ireland
Waterways Ireland	Irish Aviation Authority
Córas Iompair Éireann	National Transport Authority
Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform	Health Service Executive
Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)	Commission for Railway Regulation (Railway Safety Commission)
Irish Water	
Other key stakeholders	
Bat Conservation Ireland	Birdwatch Ireland
Minister Public Expenditure and Reform	Dublin Fire Brigade
Dublin Port	Geological Survey of Ireland
Health & Safety Authority	Irish Farmers Association
Irish Landscape Institute	Marine Institute
The Office of Public Works	Dublin Chamber of Commerce
Fingal Dublin Chamber	County Meath Chamber
County Kildare Chamber	IBEC
Construction Industry Federation	EirGrid
ESB Networks	Bord Gáis
Gas Networks Ireland	Irish Wildlife Trust
Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland	Eir Group
Local Government Management Agency	Met Eireann
Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation	Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Bord Iascaigh Mhara	

A total of 7 responses were received from the prescribed bodies and key stakeholders these include:

Prescribed bodies:

- Fingal County Council.
- Meath County Council.
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).
- Inland Fisheries Ireland.

- Failte Ireland.

Stakeholders

- Office of Public Works.
- Gas Networks Ireland.

A summary of the Scoping responses and action undertaken is provided in the EIA Scoping response (document no. MAY-MDC-ENV-ROUT-RP-Y-0003).

3.2.2 Pre-application consultation

Pre-application consultation (PAC) must be requested before an application for permission or approval is made for a Railway Order to An Bord Pleanála (ABP). A number of pre-application consultation meetings have been held with ABP in advance of the railway order application being lodged with An Bord Pleanála.

The dates of the meetings and topics discussed are outlined below.

Table 3-2 Pre-Application Consultation Meetings

PAC Meeting	Topics addressed
PAC No.1 2nd July 2020	Introduction to the project
PAC No.2 16th September 2020	Stakeholder Engagement including Public Consultation EIA Scoping Electrification of the line and bridge clearance issues Cumulative Effects
PAC No.3 8th October 2020	Level Crossing closures Railway Order – Approach CPO/Book of Reference
PAC No.4 10th November 2020	Consultations Update Transport modelling approach Construction methodology & strategy Connolly & Docklands/Spencer Dock Station
PAC No.5 17th December 2020	Bridges adjacent to Protected Structures Glasnevin Interchange interface Maintenance & Stabling Depot
PAC No.6 21st January 2021	Planning context Impact on residential amenity Photomontages Format of the EIAR
PAC No.7 24th February 2020	Feedback on planning context from PAC Meeting No.6 Public Consultation No.2 update Appropriate Assessment Electromagnetic compatibility Coolmine junction improvements Dockland's station

3.2.3 Statutory Consultation on Railway Order application

The design development and all public consultation feedback has informed the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and an Appropriate Assessment (AA) which culminated with the publication of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and the Natura Impact Statement (NIS)

and supporting documents which are submitted as part of documentation required for the railway order approvals process.

At the time of the submission of the railway order application and supporting documents (including this Planning Report) to An Bord Pleanála, an advertisement will be placed in at least one national newspaper to notify the public of the railway order application.

There will be a period of 6 weeks for submissions to be made to An Bord Pleanála whereby the public, stakeholders or any other body can make a submission to the Bord for their consideration. The Board may decide to hold an Oral Hearing.

Section 40 of the Railway Infrastructure Act 2001, as amended by the SID Act 2006, details the procedures required when an application for a Railway Order is made. At the time of the submission of the Railway Order application to An Bord Pleanála the applicant shall:

- Depositing – and keeping deposited – at places which are accessible to the public as directed by the Board, a copy of the draft order RO and all documents accompanying the application, for not less than 6 weeks following the publication of the notice referred to in section 40(1)(b) of the 2001 Act.
- Publishing a notice in one or more newspapers circulating in the area to which the RO relates:
 - a. indicating that an application will be made for an order.
 - b. indicating the time and the place or places at which, and the period (which shall be 6 weeks) during which, a copy of the draft order and accompanying documents deposited under section 40 may be inspected.
 - c. stating that the Board will consider any submissions in relation to the proposed order or in relation to the likely effects on the environment of the proposed railway works which are submitted in writing to it by any person within the 6 week consultation period.
 - d. stating that a copy of or extract from the draft order and accompanying documents may be purchased on payment of a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making such copy or extract.
 - e. stating, if it be the case, that the proposed railway works are likely to have significant effects on the environment in Northern Ireland.
 - f. stating that a person may question the validity of a decision of the Board by way of an application for judicial review, under Order 84 of the Rules of the Superior Courts (S.I. No. 15 of 1986).
 - g. identifying where practical information on the review mechanism can be found.
- Serve on the planning authority/planning authorities in whose functional area(s) (or any part thereof) the proposed railway works are proposed to be carried out, on the Minister for Transport and on such other persons (if any) as the Board may direct a copy of the draft order and accompanying documents and the notice referred to in section 40(1)(b) of the 2001 Act.
- Serve a copy of the newspaper notice together with relevant extracts from the documents referred to in section 40(1)(a) of the 2001 Act on every occupier and every owner of a land referred to in the draft order.
- Members of the public and any other body can make a submission or observation in writing in relation to the RO application, including the EIAR and the compulsory purchase order and supporting documents.
- The Board may request further information. If the response to the further information contains significant data in relation to the likely effects on the environment of the proposed Project, the Board must direct CIÉ that the information is put on a further public consultation for at least three weeks.
- Valid submissions received will be considered by the Board as part of the decision-making process.
- It is at the discretion of the Board whether or not an oral hearing will be held.
- After the Oral Hearing the Board will prepare an assessment of the proposed Project and will decide whether to grant, grant in part or refuse the RO.

An approved RO is required to construct and operate the proposed development and for the necessary compulsory purchase order arrangements.

3.3 Non-Statutory Consultation

There has been a number of non-statutory including public consultation campaigns which have provided the opportunity for the public and statutory bodies to engage and provide feedback that informed the design development and ultimately the final project currently being considered. The key stages are summarised below with more detail provided in subsequent sections.

- A Preliminary Option Selection Report was published in July 2021 setting out a variety of options and concluding with the identification of an Emerging Preferred Option.
- A non-statutory public consultation (PC1) was undertaken on the ‘Emerging Preferred Option’ from the 26th of August 2020 to the 21st of October 2020.
- Development of the Preferred Option (October 2020- July 2021). This was informed by the feedback from the first round of public consultation, stakeholder and community engagement and the availability of additional design information with the design of the Emerging Preferred Option evolving with further alternatives considered.
- A second round of non-statutory public consultation (PC2) was undertaken on the Preferred Option (July 2021- October 2021).
- All feedback received from the second round of public consultation was fed into the final design of the preferred option. Due to the significant amount of feedback received in relation to the preferred option at Ashtown, a revised preferred option specific to Ashtown was established.
- A local ‘Ashtown’ public consultation was undertaken on the modified preferred option specific to Ashtown (March 2022-April 2022).
- Finalisation of the Preferred Option- informed by feedback from the overall public consultation process, continuing stakeholder engagement and the availability of additional design information, the Preferred Option was finalised and the EIAR was completed based on this design detail.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

The policy hierarchy and some of the key relevant policy documents to the DART+ West project are listed in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 Planning and Policy documents

EU Level
EU White Paper on Transport: Roadmap to a single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system
European Green Deal
National Level
Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework – Ireland, Our Plan 2040, and; National Development Plan 2021-2030-2027
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)
National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (2021)
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021
Climate Action Plan 2021
The White Paper: Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030
Regional Level
Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031
Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 & draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042
Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024
Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan
Rail Policy
2030 Rail Network Strategy Review
Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027
Local Level
Dublin City Development Plan 2016–2022; and Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028
North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ Planning Scheme 2014
Ashtown-Pelletstown Local Area Plan 2014
Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023; and Draft Fingal Development Plan 2023 - 2029
Hansfield Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme 2006
Barnhill Local Area Plan 2018
Kellystown Local Area Plan 2021
Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023; and Draft County Development Plan 2023-2029
Maynooth Local Area Plan 2013-2019
Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021
Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2023
Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027
Dunboyne, Clonee & Pace Local Area Plan 2009 - 2015

4.1 International and European policy

Ireland is party to both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (UNFCCC 1992) and the Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC 1997). The Paris Agreement (UNFCCC 2015), which entered into force in 2016, is an important milestone in terms of international climate change agreements and includes an aim of limiting global temperature increases to no more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels with efforts to limit this rise to 1.5°C. The aim is to limit global GHG emissions to 40 gigatonnes per year as soon as possible whilst acknowledging that peaking of GHG emissions will take longer for developing countries. Contributions to GHG emissions will be based on Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) which will form the foundation for climate action post 2020. Significant progress was also made in the Paris Agreement on elevating adaption onto the same level as action to cut and curb emissions.

The European Union (EU) is striving to achieve a climate neutral European continent by the year 2050. In order to meet the commitments under the Paris Agreement, the European Union (EU) enacted 'Regulation (EU) 2018/842 on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 contributing to climate action and amending Regulation (EU) No. 525/2013' (hereafter referred to as the Regulation) (European Parliament and Council of Europe 2018). The Regulation aims to deliver, collectively by the EU in the most cost-effective manner possible, reductions in GHG emissions from the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) and non-ETS sectors of 43% and 30%, respectively, by 2030 compared to 2005. The ETS is an EU-wide scheme which regulates the GHG emissions of larger industrial emitters including electricity generation, cement manufacturing and heavy industry. The non-ETS sector includes all domestic GHG emitters which do not fall under the ETS scheme and thus includes GHG emissions from transport, residential and commercial buildings and agriculture. Ireland's obligation under the Regulation is a 30% reduction in non-ETS GHG emissions by 2030 relative to its 2005 levels.

To achieve climate neutrality, policies such as the European Green Deal and the EU White Paper were enacted to hasten the transition to a low carbon economy. The decoupling of economic progression and heavy resource use is crucial to this green transition.

4.1.1 EU White Paper on Transport: Roadmap to a single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system

In 2011, the European Commission adopted the White Paper Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system in the context of the Union's 2020 growth strategy. The vision of the White Paper spans four decades, up to 2050, but also sets earlier goals for 2020 and 2030. The Commission's vision for a competitive and sustainable transport system involves transport that uses cleaner energy, better exploitation of modern infrastructure and a reduction in its negative impact on the environment.

The White Paper defines ten goals designed to guide actions and measure progress to achieve a 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions and comparable reduction in oil dependency. Goals to which the DART+ Programme is aligned:

- 1. *Halve the use of 'conventionally fuelled' cars in urban transport by 2030; phase them out in cities by 2050; achieve essentially CO₂ free city logistics in major urban centres by 2030.*
- 4. *By 2050, complete a European high-speed rail network. Triple the length of the existing high-speed rail network by 2030 and maintain a dense railway network in all Member States. By 2050 the majority of medium-distance passenger transport should go by rail.*

4.1.2 European Green Deal

Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and the world. To overcome these challenges, the European Green Deal will transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, ensuring:

- no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050.

- economic growth decoupled from resource use.
- no person and no place left behind.

The European Green Deal is also the EU's lifeline out of the COVID-19 pandemic. One third of the 1.8 trillion euro investments from the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan, and the EU's seven-year budget will finance the European Green Deal.

With transport contributing around 5% to EU GDP and employing more than 10 million people in Europe, the transport system is critical to European businesses and global supply chains. At the same time, transport is not without costs to our society: greenhouse gas and pollutant emissions, noise, road crashes and congestion.

Today, transport emissions represent around 25% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions, and these emissions have increased over recent years. The EU has a goal of being the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, this goal requires ambitious changes in transport. A clear path is needed to achieve a 90% reduction in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The European Commission adopted a set of proposals to make the EU's climate, energy, transport and taxation policies fit for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

Rail is one of the most environmentally positive choices with regards to public transport. The EU's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy targets transport and mobility under 3 key objectives.

- Sustainable mobility.
- Smart mobility.
- Resilient mobility.

The mobility strategy will, while designing policies, consider the environmental impact of development. To achieve sustainable mobility, 3 key perspectives will be evident in EU policies enacted to achieve sustainable mobility. The first is the reduction of fossil fuel dependence, the second is making alternative choices available such as high-speed rail in this instance. The EU aims to double the traffic on high-speed rail by 2030 and to double the freight traffic on rail by 2050. The final consideration is that policy will be enacted so that the pricing of transport will reflect the environmental impact associated with the respective mode chosen.

4.2 National Policy

4.2.1 Project Ireland 2040

"Project Ireland 2040" was launched by the Government of Ireland in February 2018 and comprises the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP). Project Ireland 2040 is a long-term overarching strategy which for the first time aligns investment decisions with a clearly defined development strategy.

The NPF together with the NDP sets the context for each of the three regional assemblies to develop their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) taking account of and co-ordinating local authority Development Plans in a consistent manner to ensure national regional and local plans align with each other.

4.2.1.1 National Planning Framework 2040

The NPF guides development and the exchequer investment up to 2040. It is a blueprint to guide public and private investments to promote and enhance opportunities and infrastructure for an increasing population and sets out the development principles that subsequent plans must follow.

The NPF predicts and plans for an increase in population of one million people from 2016 figures, bringing the total population to 5.7 million by 2040. It is estimated that 2.85 million people will be located within the Eastern and Midlands region. Planning for and delivering sustainable mobility projects is a key objective of the NPF and will help create a more integrated public transport system, enhance competitiveness, sustain economic progress and enable sustainable mobility choices for citizens.

There are ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) identified within the framework, See Figure 4-1. **NSO 4:Sustainable Mobility** is identified as being central to enhancing competitiveness, sustaining economic progress and enabling mobility choices for citizens. NSO4 is supported by the delivery of the DART+ Programme whereby, the Framework aims to expand the range of public transport services available and to reduce congestion and emissions. NSO 4 also commits to invest in key transport projects such as the DART+ Programme, BusConnects and MetroLink.

The DART+ Programme will also support other NSOs identified within the Framework such as **NSO 1: Compact Growth** and **NSO 8: Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society**. NSO 1 identifies the need to deliver a greater proportion of residential development within existing built-up areas and the role that an integrated transport network will play in the regeneration and revitalization of urban areas while NSO 8 includes the electrification of transport fleets as a requirement to support a move away from polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems.



Figure 4-1 National Strategic Outcomes

The delivery of the DART+ programme is identified as a 'key future growth enabler of Dublin' along with the other rail projects set out in the Transport Strategy for the GDA including MetroLink, and Luas green line link to MetroLink. Delivery of the metropolitan cycle network and BusConnects project are also identified as enablers and will interact positively with DART+ West project.

4.2.1.2 National Development Plan 2021 – 2030

National Development Plan 2021–2030 (NDP) published in 2021 sets out the Government's over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030. It is an ambitious plan that balances the significant demand for public investment across all sectors and regions of Ireland with a major focus on improving the delivery of infrastructure projects to ensure speed of delivery and value for money.

Public investment plays a significant role in addressing the opportunities and challenges faced by Ireland over the coming years such as Covid 19, Brexit, housing, health, climate action and population growth.

The NDP supports the delivery of Project Ireland 2040 through public capital investment over the next ten years and guides national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland. The NDP provides government departments with greater visibility of their investment capacity over the term. The NDP caters for an increase in population of over 1 million people by 2040 and identifies €165 billion for investment in capital projects targeted at enhancing regional development and driving economic growth. For the first time in Ireland, climate and environmental assessment of the NDP measures have been undertaken

The NDP identifies the DART+ Programme as the cornerstone of rail investment within the lifetime of Project Ireland 2040 and represents the single biggest investment in the Irish rail network. The programme comprising a number of infrastructural projects, namely: DART+ West, DART+ South West, DART+ Coastal North to Drogheda via Balbriggan, and DART+ Coastal South. It also includes the expansion and modernisation of the rail fleet, including both battery-electric multiple units (BEMUs) and electric multiple units (EMUs). At the time of the NDP publication, a Preliminary Business Case had been submitted for analysis and approved by the Government as required under the *Public Spending Code* allowing the proposed project to move into the Railway Order application process.

DART+ programme will alleviate some of the constraints on the Dublin City Centre rail network and provide for additional intercity rail services. The NDP supports NSO 4, Sustainable Mobility and outlines the importance of investing in high quality sustainable mobility (active travel and public transport) networks if the NPF population growth targets are to be supported sustainably. It is recognised that the investment in high-quality sustainable mobility will improve citizens' quality of life, support Ireland's transition to a low carbon society and enhance the country's economic competitiveness. The NDP also highlights that the improved and expanded sustainable mobility services and infrastructure can also act as an enabler of the NPF's commitment toward compact growth of the cities, towns and villages within their existing urban footprint.

4.2.2 National Sustainable Mobility Policy

The Department of Transport's National Sustainable Mobility Policy (NSMP) sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Irelands overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade, targeting at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys by 2030.

The NSMP has been developed to align with and complement other international, European and national policies and frameworks, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement, European Green Deal, EU Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and National Planning Framework.

The policy is guided by three key principles, which are underpinned by 10 high level goals as detailed in Table 4-2 below.

Table 4-2 Principles and Goals

Principles	Goals
Safe and Green Mobility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve mobility safety 2. Decarbonise public transport 3. Expand availability of sustainable mobility in metropolitan areas. 4. Expand availability of sustainable mobility in regional and rural areas. 5. Encourage people to choose sustainable mobility over the private car
People Focused Mobility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Take a whole of journey approach to mobility, promoting inclusive access for all. 7. Design infrastructure according to Universal Design Principles and the Hierarchy of Road Users model. 8. Promote sustainable mobility through research and citizen engagement

Principles	Goals
Better Integrated Mobility	9. Better integrate land use and transport planning at all levels. 10. Promote smart and integrated mobility through innovative technologies and development of appropriate regulation.

The DART+ West project supports the principles and goals outlined in the NSMP, removing at-grade level crossings from the rail and road network, whilst increasing the service capacity of the commuter rail services improving the safety of all mobility options and supporting the Safe Routes to School Programme.

The DART+ programme is identified as a key focus for the Greater Dublin Area, by expanding the electric and battery electric fleet and rail network, with electrified services from 50 km to 150 km by 2030. The DART+ programme also expands and improves public transport services through improved railway infrastructure which is fundamental to achieving the target of an additional 500,000 daily active travel and public transport journeys by 2030.

The principles and goals of the National Sustainable Mobility Policy align with and support the DART+ West project.

4.2.3 National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (2021)

In December 2021, the Department of Transport published the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) which replaces the Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport (SFILT) following the launch of Project Ireland 2040 in February 2018. NIFTI provides a framework to guide transport investment and deliver the infrastructure and services, aligning with the NPF and its National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) to provide a consistent approach to investment across Government. Through the transport investment priorities identified it will contribute to Ireland's decarbonisation efforts, support vibrant and successful communities, deliver high performing transport systems, and promote a strong and balanced economy.

As part of the future network analysis completed to support investment priorities, NIFTI identifies consistent congestion as an issue in the five major cities in the country: Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, and Waterford. It supports the development of new urban infrastructure supply across the five cities including the development of BusConnects and comprehensive cycle networks, while Dublin will also see heavy rail improvements in the form of DART+ and MetroLink among other things. The continued support of the DART+ Programme demonstrates the substantial investment in sustainable mobility being delivered under the National Development Plan 2021-2030.

The future network analysis undertaken to inform NIFTI has reiterated the importance of the DART+ Programme for the GDA as it will address existing congestion issues, cater for rising travel demand, and support sustainable public transport options across the GDA. The DART+ Programme will also encourage compact growth, transport-orientated development (TOD) and the decarbonisation of the sector to include the purchasing of electric powered trains. The proposed project also supports improvements and maximisation of existing transport infrastructure assets.

To address the transport challenges, NIFTI establishes four investment priorities namely:

1. Decarbonisation.
2. Protection and Renewal.
3. Mobility of People and Goods in Urban Areas.
4. Enhanced Regional and Rural Connectivity.

Projects must align with these priorities to be considered for funding. Moreover, as the NSOs 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+ Programme is fully aligned with these priorities and is supported under NIFTI. NIFTI investment priorities are outlined in Figure 4-2.



Figure 4-2 National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland – Investment Priorities

NIFTI identifies a modal hierarchy or hierarchy of travel modes that will be encouraged when investments or other interventions are being considered. The modal hierarchy is illustrated in Figure 4-3 below, it clearly identifies the dominance of first supporting active travel, then sustainable travel modes and the last option being private vehicles. This hierarchy of investments will enable and support multiple NSOs contained in the NPF and will also support decarbonising the transport sector and delivering on the principles of compact growth. It is well documented that a significant shift is need in Ireland from low-occupancy private vehicles to active and more sustainable travel modes particularly to support our cities, towns and urban centres. NIFTI acknowledges that the private car will remain, but investment and integrated planning must support this hierarchy. The DART+ Programme is fully supported by NIFTI.

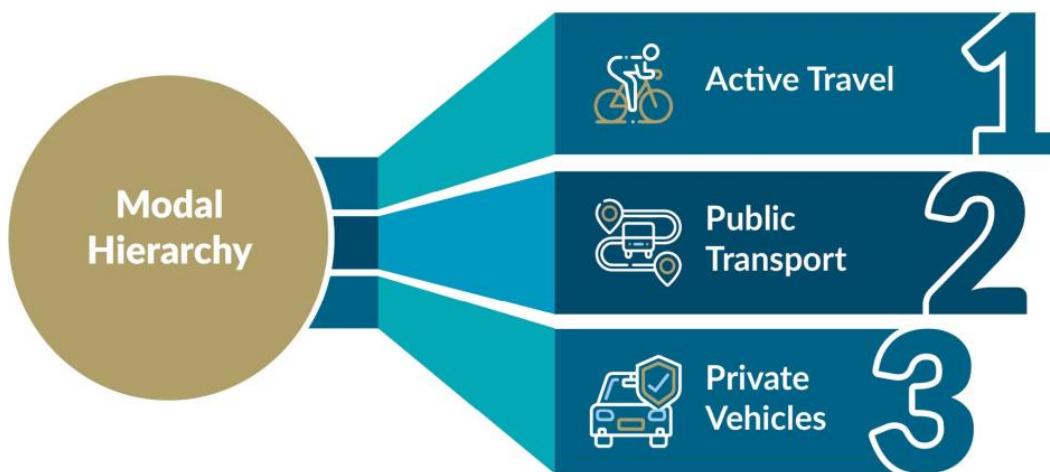


Figure 4-3 NIFTI modal hierarchy

4.2.4 Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

In July 2021, the Government signed the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 into law amending the 2015 Act. The 'Climate Act' provides for the first time, a governance framework setting out how Ireland will transition to 'Net Zero' and achieve a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050.

The key features of the Amended Act are:

- Placing on a statutory basis a 'national climate objective', which commits to pursue **and achieve**, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate- neutral economy, by no later than 2050.

- Carbon budgets including a provision for setting sectoral targets.
- Actions for each sector to be included in an annually revised Climate Action Plan.
- Strengthened role for the Climate Change Advisory Council.
- New oversight and accountability by the Oireachtas.
- Public bodies will be obliged to perform their functions in a manner consistent with national climate plans and strategies and furthering the achievement of the national climate objective.

Transport is one of the key sectors in which substantial emissions reductions are required in order for Ireland to achieve a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050. The DART+ Programme will contribute to achieving this objective.

4.2.5 The Climate Action Plan 2021

The Climate Action Plan 2021 provides a detailed plan for taking action to achieve the Government commitment to reduce the overall greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and includes the detailed actions to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, (committed to in the Programme for Government and the 'Climate Act 2021'). The commitments make Ireland one of the most ambitious countries in the world on climate action and emissions reduction and the scale of the challenge will require effort across all sectors of government and the public in order to deliver on these commitments.

The Action plan will work towards providing a cleaner, greener economy and society; and works towards resilience and adaptation from the devastating consequences of climate change. It also represents significant opportunity to create new jobs and grow businesses in areas like offshore wind; cutting-edge agriculture; and retrofitting, making our homes warmer and safer.

The Plan lists the actions needed to deliver on our climate targets and sets indicative ranges of emissions reductions for each sector of the economy. It will be updated annually, to ensure alignment with the legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings.

Of most relevance to the DART+ West project actions across transport targets, decarbonisation, land use integration and citizen engagement and participation. **Transport targets:**

To meet the required level of emissions reduction, by 2030 we will:

- Provide for an additional 500,000 daily public transport and active travel journeys
- Develop the required infrastructural, regulatory, engagement, planning, innovation and financial supports for improved system, travel, vehicle and demand efficiencies
- Increase the fleet of EVs and low emitting vehicles (LEVs) on the road to 945,000, comprising of:
 - 845,000 electric passenger cars
 - 95,000 electric vans
 - 3,500 low emitting trucks
 - 1,500 electric buses
 - an expanded electrified rail network
- Raise the blend proportion of biofuels to B20 in diesel and E10 in petrol
- Reduce ICE kilometres by c. 10% compared to present day levels
- Undertake a programme of work which will review progress and further refine measures that will seek to deliver the additional c. 0.9 MtCO₂ reduction by 2030 in a fair and equitable manner

Measures to deliver targets include: Expanding sustainable mobility options to provide meaningful alternatives to everyday private car journeys is necessary to reduce transport emissions. Continued and enhanced investment in our walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure and services across the country

is required on a scale not previously seen. The plan commits to delivering an additional 500,000 daily sustainable journeys by 2030 (c. 14% increase on current levels) through the implementation of major transport projects such as:

- Expanding rail services and infrastructure in, and around, major urban centres i.e. DART+ Programme.
- BusConnects.
- Connecting Ireland.
- A significant increase in walking and cycling investments.

Specifically, **Action 240:** Commence delivery of DART+ Programme and continue heavy rail fleet investment.

Decarbonisation of the transport sector: Decarbonisation of public sector transport emissions from transport account for about 30% of the public sector's overall GHG emissions, the second largest portion after buildings. Increased use of electric vehicles (EVs) by the public sector will help to demonstrate their value to wider society, improve urban air quality, and reduce noise pollution, supporting sustainable urban communities in line with the National Planning Framework. As part of the actions the plans states will

- Transition the rail fleet towards an electric model, increasing the length of electrified rail network from 50 kilometres to 150 kilometres by 2030, including the DART+ project which will extend DART services to Drogheda in the north; Maynooth in the west; Hazelhatch in the southwest; and Greystones in the southeast.
- We will accelerate the removal of obstacles to decarbonisation of our transport fleet, proactively addressing technical and regulatory barriers.

Energy transition: Among the most important measures of the Action Plan is to dramatically increase the proportion of renewable electricity to up to 80% by 2030. This includes an increased target of up to 5 Gigawatts of offshore wind energy. This target is needed not only to reduce fossil fuel reliance and reduce associated emissions but is also necessary to support the electrification of our transport sector including the electrification of the DART+ West

Citizen engagement and behaviour change: The Climate Action Plan will result in reducing our dependence on imported fossil fuels, and power comes from our own indigenous renewable resources including wind and solar providing not only a cleaner environment but also economic development. It will be important that society adapts and makes the necessary changes in lifestyle and consumption patterns and are supported by the Government through education, financial incentives and physical infrastructure design that supports easy, low carbon, healthier options such as active travel. Walking and cycling will see significant investment in the coming years making it safer and more attractive to the public. Public transport integration with active modes as well as electrification will bring many benefits to communities and tackling transport emissions. Public transport improvements such as DART+ project will result in a more efficient, cleaner, more frequent and reliable service with reduced noise, air and greenhouse gas emissions. The improvements in public transport and active modes will also support a just transition and provide benefits to all the economy, society and the environment.

4.2.6 The White Paper: Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030

The White Paper 'Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030' provides a framework to guide policy and the actions that Government intends to take in the energy sector from now up to 2030 transforming Ireland's fossil fuel-based energy sector into a clean, low carbon system. The White Paper comprises of an energy policy update and provides the framework to guide the national policy. The Paper considers European and International climate change objectives and agreements. The actions that support the proposed project are: "*Support initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of the rail network*" (pg. 66) and "*Support further rail electrification*" (pg.67).

4.3 Regional policy

4.3.1 Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly's (EMRA) produced the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 (EM RSES), a strategic plan and investment framework and provides regional policy objectives for the Midlands, Eastern and Dublin region. The RSES addresses the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 at the regional level. It considers spatial and economic factors which relate to the future of the region and ensures that employment opportunities, services, ease of travel and the overall wellbeing of citizens is being addressed.

Throughout the strategy there are 3 cross cutting key principles; Healthy Placemaking, Climate Action and Economic Opportunity all of which are supported by the DART+ West project. The Strategy highlights the DART+ and its role in the consolidation of Dublin City and the regeneration of locations such as Dublin Docklands and Poolbeg. Along the North-West corridor, the DART+ West to Maynooth will enhance rail services along the Dublin – Sligo line. The RSES also emphasizes the role of DART+ to increasing capacity to support the ongoing development of lands adjacent to the line at Leixlip and Maynooth and support the further development of compact sustainable development in existing urban centres.

Maynooth is a key town in the GDA and an economic driver for North Kildare. The delivery of the DART+ West project is identified as a 'enabling infrastructure' for the future sustainable development of Maynooth which is also included in the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP).

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

The DART+ Programme is listed as one of the rail projects in Table 8.2: *"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".*

The Strategy highlights the importance of provision of enabling infrastructure for growth in Maynooth, identifying that the *"DART+ project and proposed electrification of the rail line to Maynooth represents a significant opportunity for sequential growth in Maynooth"*. The DART+ West project also supports climate action and economic development across the region.

4.3.1.1 Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)

Chapter 5 of the EM RSES details the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for Dublin. The MASP is an integrated land use and transportation strategy for the Dublin Metropolitan Area that sets out;

- **A Vision for the future growth** of the metropolitan area and key growth enablers, identifying strategic corridors based on their capacity to achieve compact sustainable and sequential growth along key public transport corridors, existing and planned.
- **Large scale strategic residential, employment and regeneration development opportunities** and any infrastructure deficits or constraints that need to be addressed.
- **A sequence of infrastructure priorities** to promote greater co-ordination between local authorities, public transport and infrastructure.

The plan requires the development of the Dublin MASP and include the management of sustainable and compact growth of Dublin metropolitan areas and better use of underutilised lands.

The Vision for MASP is to *"build on our strengths to become a smart, climate resilient and global city region, expanding access to social and economic opportunities and improved housing choice, travel options and quality of life for people who live, work, study in or visit the metropolitan area."* This vision is underpinned by

a spatial framework which supports the overall settlement strategy of the EMRA and sequential development of the metropolitan area which include focusing on the consolidation of Dublin City and suburbs and key towns including Maynooth and the planned development of Dunboyne and Leixlip which will be served by the DART+ West project.

One of the **Guiding Principles** to achieve this vision is;

'Integrated Transport and Land use: To focus growth along existing and proposed high quality public transport corridors and nodes on the expanding public transport network and to support the delivery and integration of 'BusConnects', DART expansion and LUAS extension programmes, and Metro Link, while maintaining the capacity and safety of strategic transport networks.'

Regional Policy objective for Sustainable Transport includes:

RPO 5.2 *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.*

RPO 5.3: *Future development in the Dublin Metropolitan Area shall be planned and designed in a manner that facilitates sustainable travel patterns, with a particular focus on increasing the share of active modes (walking and cycling) and public transport use and creating a safe attractive street environment for pedestrians and cyclists.*

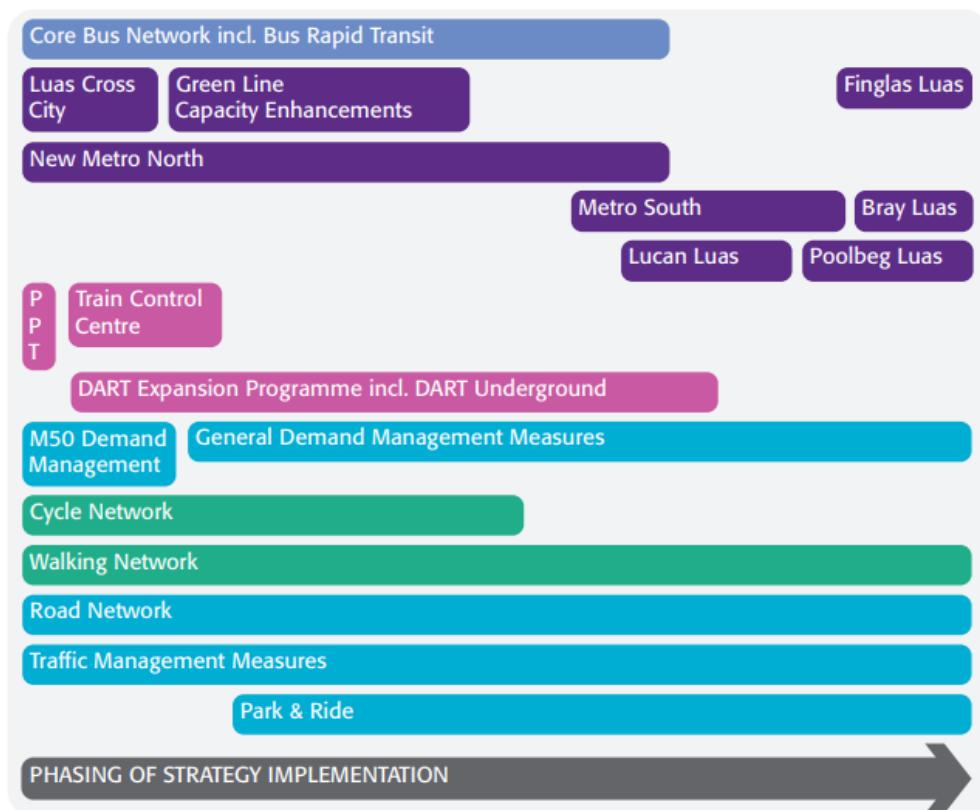
The DART+ West project aligns with the Vision and regional policy objectives for MASP. It will support sustainable transport objectives and enabling infrastructure for key locations prioritised for future population and economic development including Dublin City centre and suburbs, Maynooth, Leixlip and Dunboyne.

4.3.2 Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035

The National Transport Authority (NTA) developed the Transport Strategy for the GDA with the purpose of contributing *"to the economic, social and cultural progress of the GDA by providing for the efficient, effective and sustainable movement of people and goods."*

The Strategy provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) over the next two decades up to 2035. It also sets out the transport planning policy around which other agencies involved in land use planning, environmental protection, and delivery of other infrastructure such as housing, water and power, can align their investment priorities. It is, therefore, an essential component, along with investment programmes in other sectors, for the orderly development of the Greater Dublin Area over the next 20 years. It builds on previous strategies and is required to be reviewed every 6 years which is currently underway (see section below). The Strategy identifies current trends and challenges including addressing the continued dominance of the private car in the GDA which is contrast to the situation pertaining to the city centre where less than 1 in 4 people drive to work. It also highlights that public transport numbers are increasing including those on DART and will continue as population growth is expected to increase.

The Strategy sets out infrastructure proposals by mode share as follows: Heavy rail, light rail, bus, cycling, walking and road infrastructure. The Strategy also addresses the issues of freight movement, parking provision, the provision of park & ride sites and transport demand management and addresses the importance of integrated transport and land use planning as well as behaviour change.



*PPT – Phoenix Park Tunnel

Figure 4-4 Phasing of the Strategy Implementation

It includes infrastructure proposals for heavy rail (DART and Commuter), light rail, bus, cycling, walking and roads as shown below. Some of the heavy rail proposals are identified in the figure below.



Figure 4-5 Multi modal Transport Strategy for Greater Dublin Area and heavy rail

In developing the Strategy, the NTA have considered alternative options for the provision of transport services along the six radial corridors into Dublin City and found heavy rail to be the most appropriate solution to meet the transport needs of the high-density population centres across several of the corridors identified.

The Strategy recognises the many benefits metropolitan rail services would bring to areas due to increased use of the existing asset of the Maynooth Line stating it “*would have many advantages, particularly in the context of development at locations such as Hansfield and Pelletstown. As such, it is proposed to extend DART to Maynooth by electrifying this line and by removing the level crossings.*”

Some of the Heavy Rail Infrastructure provision identified in the Strategy includes the following:

- “*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.*”
- *Develop a new train control centre to manage the operation of the rail network.*
- *Construct additional train stations in developing areas with sufficient demand.*
- *Implement a programme of station upgrades and enhancement.*
- *Ensure an appropriate level of train fleet, of an appropriate standard, to operate on the rail network.*

The Strategy also outlines its objectives for Transport Services and Integration, including bus and rail services, in relation to the rail service, the Strategy proposes the following:

- *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+ West project supports the delivery of the Transport Strategy for the GDA.

The GDA Transport strategy includes many provisions/intentions to address transportation issues identified across all modes some of these are provisions are described below.

Walking

Section 5.7 of the Strategy sets out provisions for walking, some of the most relevant provisions for the DART+ West project include the following:

- *Provide a safer, more comfortable and more convenient walking environment for those with mobility, visual and hearing impairments, and for those using buggies and prams.*
- *Revise road junction layouts, where appropriate, to provide dedicated pedestrian crossings, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, provide more direct pedestrian routes, and reduce the speed of turning traffic.*
- *Ensure that permeability and accessibility of public transport stops and stations for local communities is maintained and enhanced.*

Regional and Local Roads

Section 5.8.2 of the Strategy sets out provisions for Regional and Local Roads, some of the most relevant provisions for the DART+ West project include the following:

- *Regional and Local Roads: Enhance orbital movement, outside of the M50 C-Ring, between the N3, the N4 and N7 national roads, by the widening of existing roads and the development of new road links.*
- *Regional and Local Roads: Develop appropriate road links to service development areas.*
- *Regional and Local Roads: Enhance pedestrian and cycle safety through the provision of safer road junctions, improved pedestrian crossing facilities and the incorporation of appropriate cycle measures including signalised crossings where necessary.*

Principles of Road Development

Section 5.8.2 of the Strategy sets out provisions for Principles of Road Development some of the most relevant provisions for the DART+ West project include the following:

- *There will be no significant increase in road capacity for private vehicles on radial roads inside the M50 motorway.*
- *That the road scheme, other than a motorway or an express road proposal, will be designed to provide safe and appropriate arrangements to facilitate walking, cycling and public transport provision.*

The DART+ West project is included as a key heavy rail project in the Transport Strategy for the GDA that will support climate resilient, compact sustainable development of the GDA. It supports the delivery of frequent and reliable services to the Maynooth, M3 Parkway and city centre lines as well as supporting active transport modes (walking and cycling). It will also support integrated transport and land use planning, and with the planned improvement in the fleet and increase in services it will support behaviour changes due to the provision of viable over the private car.

4.3.3 Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042

The draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042, developed by the National Transport Authority (NTA) in 2021 is currently at public consultation stage. The Strategy reviews and builds on the previous Strategy and once finalised will replace 2016- 2035 Strategy (discussed in the previous section). The Strategy addresses the transportation requirements to support the continued co-ordinated development within the counties of Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow. Major projects provided for in the Strategy include:

- *Luas Cross City.*
- *The reopening of the Phoenix Park Tunnel Rail Line.*
- *The on-going roll out of cycle tracks and greenways.*
- *Metrolink; DART+ Programme.*
- *Investment in bus priority and bus service improvements – BusConnects Dublin.*
- *M7 Naas to Newbridge widening, Osberstown Interchange and Sallins Bypass.*

With regards to the DART+ Programme, the Strategy includes the following measures:

Measure RAIL1 – DART+ “*The DART+ Programme will be implemented, providing electrified services to Drogheda in the north and Maynooth plus Celbridge in the west, in addition to an enhanced level of service to Greystones. The programme will include additional fleet, aligned with higher passenger demand, and a higher frequency of service on all lines*”.

Measure RAIL7 – Station Upgrades “*The NTA, in conjunction with Irish Rail, will upgrade, refurbish and maintain train stations across the GDA to ensure that they are of an appropriate standard and provide a good quality experience for passengers*”.

Measure RAIL6 – New Rail Stations “*The NTA, in conjunction with Irish Rail, will develop new rail stations at Cabra, Glasnevin, Heuston West, Kylemore, Woodbrook, west of Sallins, west of Louisa Bridge and west of Maynooth. Kishoge station will also open in the short term as development of the Clonburris SDZ is realised. Other stations will be considered where development patterns support such provision*”.

Measure CYC8 – Bikes on Public Transport “*The NTA will facilitate the carriage of standard bicycles on all newly acquired (during this strategy period) DART, Commuter and Intercity rail carriages operating in the Greater Dublin Area at all times*”.

In relation to the road network, the proposed DART+ West Project will also facilitate the implementation of the following measures:

Measure ROAD1 – Principles of Road Development

“1. That there will be no significant increase in capacity for private car trips on radial roads within the Metropolitan Area, except where re-alignments or junction changes are necessary for safety reasons.

4. That road schemes, other than a motorway or protected road, will be designed to provide safe and appropriate arrangements to facilitate walking, cycling and public transport provision, including as applicable, the delivery of walking and cycling facilities off line where this is considered to be a more attractive solution for these modes”.

Measure ROAD9 – Regional and Local Roads Policy

“5. Enhance pedestrian and cycle safety through the provision of safer road junctions, improved pedestrian crossing facilities and the incorporation of appropriate cycle measures including signalised crossings where necessary.

“6. Implement various junction improvements, realignments and local reconfigurations on the regional and local road network to address safety deficiencies and/or support integrated transport proposals catering for all road users”.

The DART+ West project is still a cornerstone of the GDA transport Strategy and will supports the achievement of various measures including those identified above.

4.3.4 Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024

Following the approval of a transport strategy for the region by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, is required to prepare an integrated implementation plan covering a six-year period. The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 was approved in February 2016. The preparation of the Integrated Implementation Plan was aligned with the Government's review of capital spending which commenced in 2016 and culminated with the publication of the National Development Plan 2018-2027 in February 2018.

The NTA's Integrated Implementation Plan (IIP) 2019-2024 supports the delivery of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035and is aligned with the objectives of the NDP (both now updated). It sets out the central infrastructure investment programme and overall funding provision over the six-year period. It identifies the key investment areas with respect to bus, light rail, heavy rail and integration and sustainable transport investment.

The IIP provides further detail on the sequencing and allocation of the €4.6bn available to the NTA across Bus, Light Rail, Metro and Heavy Rail projects up to 2024. It also notes that the “integrated rail network will provide a core, high-capacity transit system for the region and will deliver a very substantial increase in peak-hour capacity on all lines from Drogheda, Maynooth, Celbridge/Hazelhatch and Greystones”.

The objectives of rail investment in the IIP are to:

- Implement key elements of the DART + programme.
- Eliminate the current signalling restrictions in the city centre through the completion of the City Centre Re-signalling project.
- Protect the safety and reliability of the GDA railway system through investment in upgrading of train control and monitoring systems.
- Continue investment in a level crossing closure programme.
- Enhance customer information systems and ticketing systems.
- Continue the upgrading and enhancement, including accessibility, of train stations in the GDA.

The investment programme and overall funding provision of the Implementation Plan align with and support the DART+ West project.

4.3.5 Greater Dublin Cycle Network Plan

The NTA published the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan in 2013. The Plan consists of the Urban Network, Inter-Urban Network and Green Route Network for each of the seven Local Authority areas comprising the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The Plan sets out a 10-year strategy to expand the urban cycle network from 500 km to 2,480 km. The overarching objective of the NCPF is that 10% of all trips in Ireland will be made by bike by 2020.

The network will consist of a series of primary, secondary and feeder routes as well as greenways routes. These routes will comprise of a mix of cycle tracks and lanes, cycleways and infrastructure-free cycle routes in low traffic environments. To compliment the investment in the cycle network, the cycle network plans also provide for:

- *The expansion of the bike share scheme in Dublin City and the introduction of similar schemes across the Greater Dublin Area.*
- *The implementation of a comprehensive cycle route signage programme in conjunction with the development of the cycle network.*

The proposed network of primary, secondary and greenway routes that will help support cycling in the vicinity of the project is shown in Figure 4-6.

It includes the development of the Royal Canal Greenway route. The Maynooth/Sligo rail line is immediately parallel to the Royal Canal extending from Dublin city centre to Maynooth. The canal towpath is paved from North Strand Road as far as Ashtown, with good quality gravel surface from there to Blanchardstown. This path is in use by cyclists as a de facto cycleway at present. A number of design studies are underway to develop a high-quality cycle track along the canal westward to Maynooth, as the Royal Canal Urban Greenway (RCUG) preferred route was presented at the Non-Statutory Public Consultation held in July 2021. The DART+ West project and the proposed greenway will complement each other in terms of connectivity and transport integration. Ongoing liaison between Fingal County Council and the RCUG design team and Iarnród Éireann has taken place in relation to the interfaces between the proposed projects.

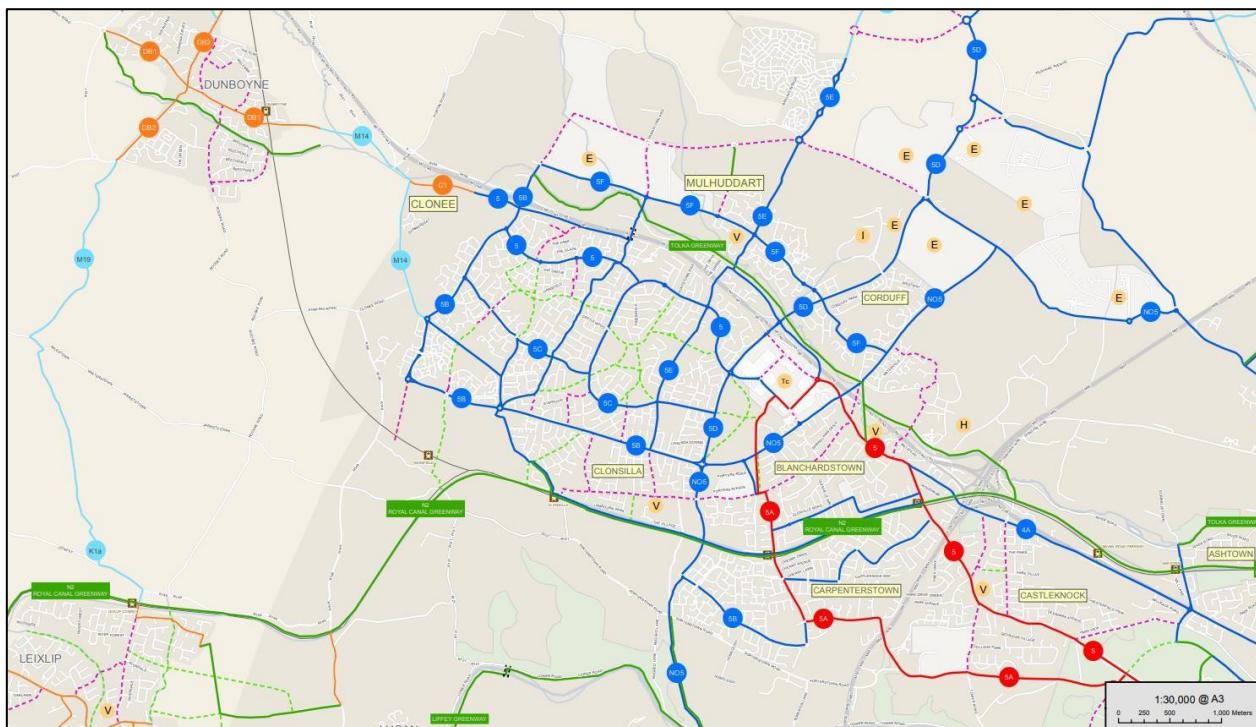


Figure 4-6 Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (part of)

4.4 Rail Policy

4.4.1 2030 Rail Network Strategy Review

In 2011, Iarnród Éireann carried out a review of future development requirements of the Iarnród Éireann InterCity Network (ICN) and regional services. It sets out a broad strategic goal for the rail network to “provide safe, accessible and integrated rail services that contribute to sustainable economic and regional development in an efficient manner.”

The review states that the Dublin – Sligo corridor “carries significant traffic from the commuter areas within the Greater Dublin Area”. The proposed development aims to electrify a portion of this corridor from Dublin to Maynooth.

In terms of the distribution of passenger demand across the various routes, the Strategy review indicates that in 2011 the number and distribution of passengers using intercity and outer-suburban rail services on the Dublin to Maynooth line were the second highest after the Dublin to Drogheda route at 4,147,000 (19.3%) and 5,768,000 accounting for 26.9% of the overall passenger demand respectively. This passenger demand on the Dublin to Maynooth line emphasise the need to increase the capacity and the frequency of rail services to Maynooth which will be facilitated by the proposed DART+ West project.

All-Island Strategic Rail Review – Public Consultation

In November 2021 an All-Island Strategic Rail Review consultation paper was launched and will focus on delivering 6 goals namely:

- Contribute to decarbonisation.
- Improve all island connectivity between major cities.
- Enhance regional and rural accessibility.
- Encourage sustainable mobility.
- Foster economic activity.
- Achieve economic and financial feasibility.

The Review expands on the commitment under the New Decade, New Approach agreement to examine the feasibility of a high/higher speed rail link between Belfast, Dublin and Cork and will look at ways to improve our current rail infrastructure, including the feasibility of high/higher speeds and electrification, better connections to the North-West, and role of rail in the efficient movement of goods.

4.4.2 Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027

IÉ prepared the 2017 Strategy for its national railway network. The Strategy will aid IÉ to deliver high-capacity sustainable public transport solutions to cater for the increase in travel resulting from the anticipated population and employment growth, and to facilitate Ireland in improving sustainable mobility options and reduce carbon emissions from the transport sector.

The Strategy identifies the DART+ Programme as a priority investment project and highlights that the services along the DART line “have all experienced significant passenger growth over recent years with overcrowding increasingly experienced by customers on some peak services, especially on the Maynooth Line”. The Strategy notes that the DART+ programme will benefit the Intercity outer GDA services by increasing the capacity along the core rail corridors in the GDA. In the case of the DART+ West Project, the Strategy states that the Dublin-Sligo Intercity service will benefit from increase in reliability and journey times for rail users and increase in services “to two-hourly all day with hourly peak services” for the Dublin to Maynooth section of the rail corridor.

4.5 Local Planning Policy

This section of the Planning Report reviews the local planning policy context and significant land use change. Most of the proposed development is located within the existing CIÉ railway corridor as such, this Planning Report identifies where its elements are located outside of the railway corridor. Changes to the rail over/under bridge structures are not included as part of this report as these are detailed and assessed as part of the EIAR and the separate Heritage Impact Assessment Reports. This section presents the planning policy context from east to west by local authority administrative area i.e. Dublin City, Fingal, Meath, Kildare. The Development Plans for each county is presented first (as the overarching strategic planning framework). Any relevant Local Area Plans (LAPs) or Masterplans are then discussed relevant to the administrative area. Compliance with the planning policies of these plans is discussed based on the infrastructural works proposed as part of the DART+ West Project.

4.6 Dublin City

4.6.1 Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022

This section presents the relevant planning policy within the administrative area of Dublin City Council relevant to the project. Dublin City Development Plan's core strategy has been developed in line with the national and regional policy objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (RPGs) and the government's Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009–2020.

The RPGs have incorporated the national and regional population targets set out in the NSS to county level. There is a requirement of the County Development to be consistent with these population targets, however it is acknowledged that they may not be met within the indicated timeframe.

The RPGs targets a population growth of approx. 60,000 persons from 2016 to 2022 to occur in Dublin City. In relation to housing, the RPGs target an increase in Dublin City's housing stock by approx. 29,500 residential units for the 2016 – 2022 period in order to accommodate long-term sustainable growth. To address the RPGs housing target, the Dublin City DP aims to encourage "*infill and brownfield development; regeneration and renewal of the inner city; redevelopment of strategic regeneration areas; and the encouragement of development at higher densities, especially in public transport catchments*". The plan aims to achieve this development through zoning land under 'Z1- Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods' and 'Z2- Residential Neighbourhoods (Conservation Areas)' which will be subject to local area plans and masterplans.

A number of local area plans and masterplans are relevant to the proposed development and include:

- North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) Planning Scheme 2014.
- The Ashtown – Pelletstown Local Area Plan (LAP) 2014.

Planning policy and objectives relevant to the proposed development within these plans are presented in this Planning Report.

The Dublin CDP provides an integrated, coherent spatial framework to ensure Dublin City is developed in an inclusive way which improves the quality of life for its citizens, while also being a more attractive place to visit and work. The areas relevant to the DART+ West project includes the areas between the Docklands extending east towards the Ashtown level crossing.

The key policies which are of specific relevance to the DART+ Programme include the follow:

Policy MT1: *To support the sustainability principles set out in The National Transport Authority's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area.*

Policy 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.

Policy 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.

Policy 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.

Policy 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.

Policy MT6: (ii) Subject to a station layout assessment, to promote the re-instatement of station entrance at Amiens Street/Buckingham Street Junction.

The current Dublin City Development Plan is currently under review. A central policy tenant in the forthcoming plan will be Transit Oriented Development (TOD) which DART+ West supports.

4.6.1.1 North Lotts and Grand Canal SDZ Planning Scheme 2014

Dublin City Council prepared and adopted a SDZ Planning Scheme (PS) for the Docklands area of North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock in 2014. The existing Docklands Station is located with this zone. The area is in transition and under existing regeneration. The predominant land uses in the area comprise mixed use, industrial, port related uses with primarily commercial related office buildings and interspersed with long established residential neighbourhoods and new residential. The area is identified as a Strategic Development & Regeneration Area (S.D.R.A.) in the Dublin City DP 2016 – 2022. These areas have substantial development capacity and the potential to deliver the residential, employment and recreational needs.

The Dublin Docklands S.D.R.A. is approximately 520 hectares (ha) in size and aims to continue the physical and social regeneration of the Docklands and Poolbeg West areas to establish it as a “vibrant economic, cultural and amenity quarter of the city, whilst also nurturing sustainable neighbourhoods and communities”.

66 ha of the Docklands S.D.R.A. lands are designated under the North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock Strategic Development Zone (SDZ). The vision for the North Lotts and Grand Canal SDZ is to: “become a world-class maritime quarter with a distinctive Dublin character. It will be a model of sustainable inner-city regeneration incorporating socially inclusive urban neighbourhoods, a diverse, green innovation-based economy contributing to the prosperity of the locality, the city and the country, all supported by exemplary social and physical infrastructure and a quality public realm integrated with the wider city.” (p. 26)

Social sustainability is also key and the SDZ aims to facilitate integration between the existing and emerging communities within the Docklands by promoting community, cultural and recreational development. The Docklands S.D.R.A. has the capacity to provide 4,600 new residential units in Docklands all of whom will require high quality active and sustainable transport infrastructure.



Figure 4-7 Dublin Docklands and the North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ 2014 Development Boundaries.

The SDZ lands are strategically located north and south of the River Liffey and are in proximity to the City's central business district on the Grand Canal Dock and to the south city core retail area. The SDZ area is currently serviced by Luas, DART and mainline rail commuter services, "the more long-term proposals for a DART Underground Station at Spencer Dock will potentially result in the lands becoming the most accessible and connected part of the city and State" (p.5).

The relevant objectives within the North Lotts and Grand Dock SDZ PS include:

MV1: To continue to promote the modal shift from private car use towards increased use of more sustainable forms of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport and to implement the initiatives contained in the Government's 'Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020'.

MV2: To support and facilitate the development of an integrated public transport network with efficient interchange between transport nodes, to serve the existing and future needs of all ages in association with relevant transport providers, agencies and stakeholders and to facilitate the integration of walking and cycling with public transport.

MV10: To promote best practice mobility management and travel planning to balance car use to capacity and provide for necessary mobility via sustainable transport nodes.

MV16: To support and facilitate the reservation strip as shown in City Blocks 2 & 7 for the provision of the DART Underground Station. All proposals within the zone of influences will demonstrate to IE how the proposal relates to the DART Underground design. In the interim period until DART underground is in place, temporary uses and/or pavilion structures will be considered on a short term basis, subject with the DART Underground Office.

CD14: To promote the development of street infrastructure, walking and cycling routes and public transport routes to enhance connections between residential areas and the community facilities that exist in the wider neighbourhood.

Section 4.4.4.1 of the North Lotts and Grand Dock SDZ states ‘works for the provision of new public transport, or in the furtherance of existing or permitted public transport, shall be considered on their merits, in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Dublin City Development Plan’.

The above objectives are supported by the proposed DART+ West project.

4.6.1.1.1 Proposed Spencer Dock Station

A new Spencer Dock Station is proposed within the North Lotts area on a vacant lot adjacent to the Spencer Dock Luas stop. The proposed station is within an area identified as ‘SDRA6’ in the Dublin CDP, approved by ABP to facilitate fast tracked planning and regeneration of the North Lotts area. In the Dublin City DP, the area is zoned for ‘Z14: to seek the social, economic and physical development and/or rejuvenation of an area with mixed use of which residential and “Z6” would be the predominant uses’. Z6 land use zoning objective is to “provide for the protection and creation of industrial uses and facilitate opportunities for employment”. The signalling track upgrades follow the existing IÉ tracks that are in operation and located in an area zoned ‘Z1: To protect improve and provide for residential amenity’ indicated by light yellow in the Figure 4-8 below.

Key specific considerations for DART+ West contained in the North Lotts and Grand Canal SDZ Planning Scheme 2014 that have influenced the design of the proposed Spencer Dock Station include the following:

- “The hatched line as indicated in City Block 2A & 2C shall be retained as a reservation strip for the future provision of the DART Underground Station. No permanent structures shall be built over this until the position of the DART Underground Station has been confirmed. In the interim period temporary uses and/or pavilion structures will be considered.”
- All planning applications within the Zone of Influence of the proposed DART Underground, as identified in Appendix 7 shall demonstrate to Iarnród Éireann how the proposal relates to the DART Underground Project. No development shall compromise the integrity of, or adversely impact on the DART Underground Line. (Refer to Appendix 7 for Reservation Strip and Zone of Influence).”
- The DART Underground postponement presents challenges for the rollout of the implementation, in relation to the line reservation under the Spencer Dock Economic Hub and the transport management measures which must be brought into play until such time as the DART Underground can be provided. The land reservation will be used for a variety of temporary buildings/activities, while the existing transport assets must be sweated until the DART is provided, by measures such as expedited Mobility Management Plans and more frequent trams.

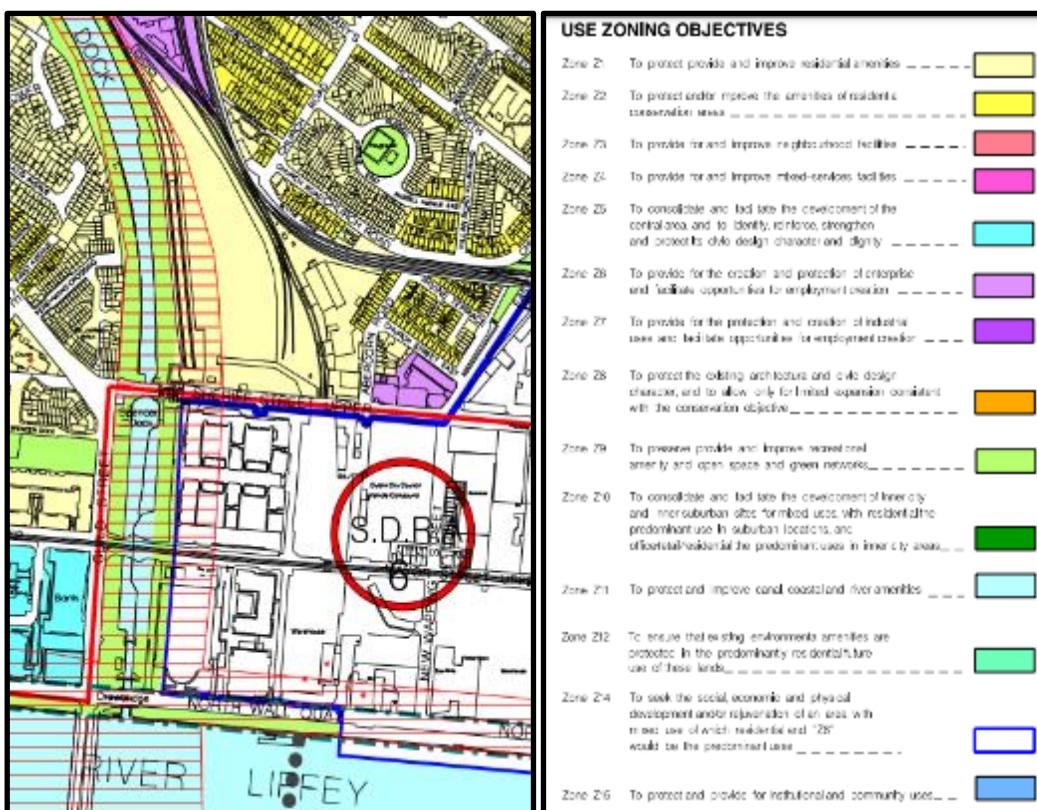


Figure 4-8 Dublin City Development Plan Zoning (extract)



Figure 4-9 North Lotts & Grand Canal Dock SDZ Planning Scheme 2014

Station Design and integration with North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ Planning Scheme

There is a strong policy impetus in Dublin City for optimising the potential for the land use and transport integration at the proposed station site and to bring about 'Transit Oriented development' (TOD). It is important to note that this application does not and cannot legally apply for the over site development (OSD) as part of a Railway Order application. However, as part of the design and preparation of this RO, CIÉ have worked closely with DCC, TII, NTA to ensure that the design of station and provisions for public realm is consistent with the SDZ Planning Scheme and facilitates potential future development above the site. The Design Report (contained as an Appendix to Chapter 4 of the EIAR contains more detailed information regarding the architectural response at this location and integration with the North Lotts and Grand Canal SDZ Planning Scheme). The sections below present an overview of the analysis undertaken as part of the design process demonstrating that the design has been future proofed structurally and is capable of supporting a range of future layouts which will be determined at a later stage.

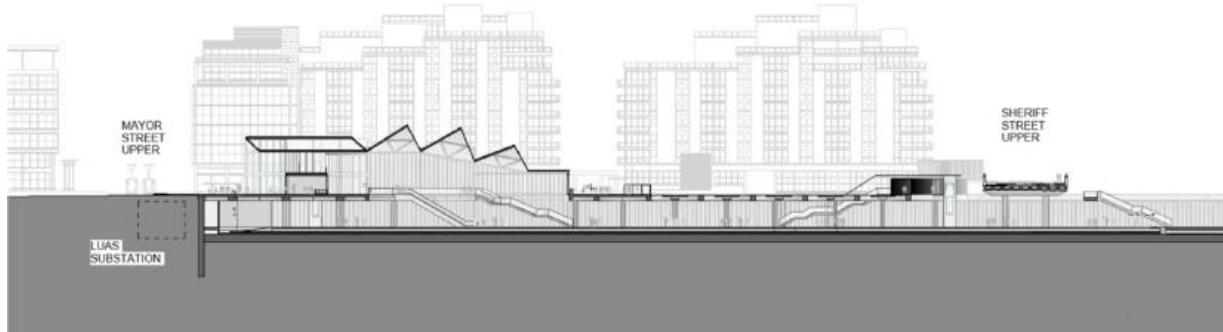


Figure 4-10 Schematic cross section of proposed Spencer Dock Station

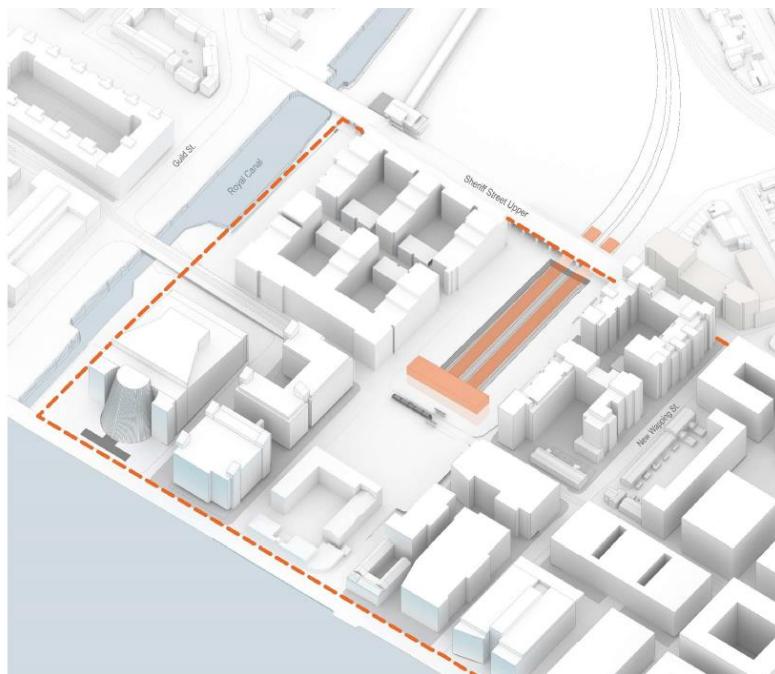


Figure 4-11 Schematic of the proposed location of Spencer Dock Station

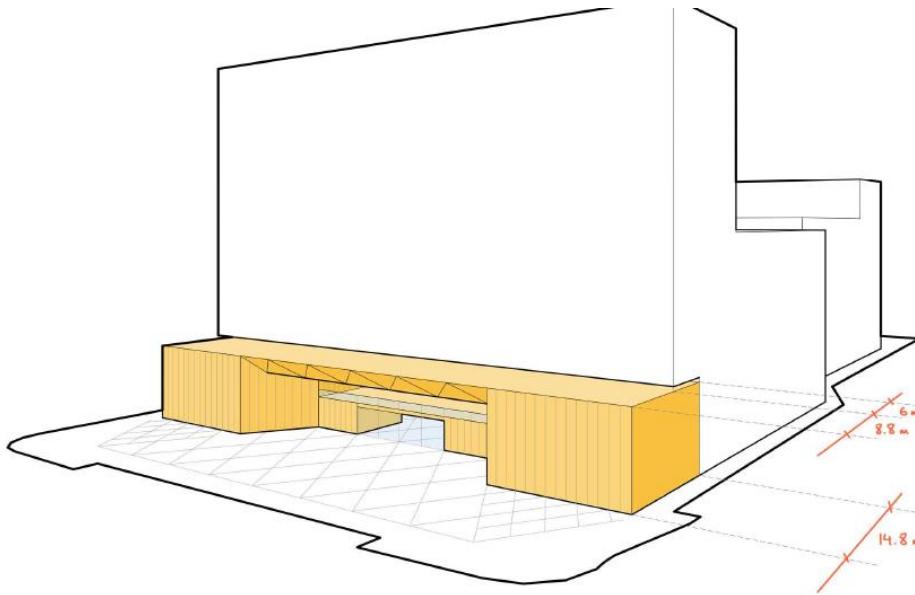


Figure 4-12 Potential alignment of the station with a future (OSD) landmark building

An intermediate pedestrian laneway will be constructed between blocks 2A and 2C of the planning scheme to give continuity to the pedestrian laneways existing in the surrounding blocks and satisfies requirements of the SDZ Planning Scheme.

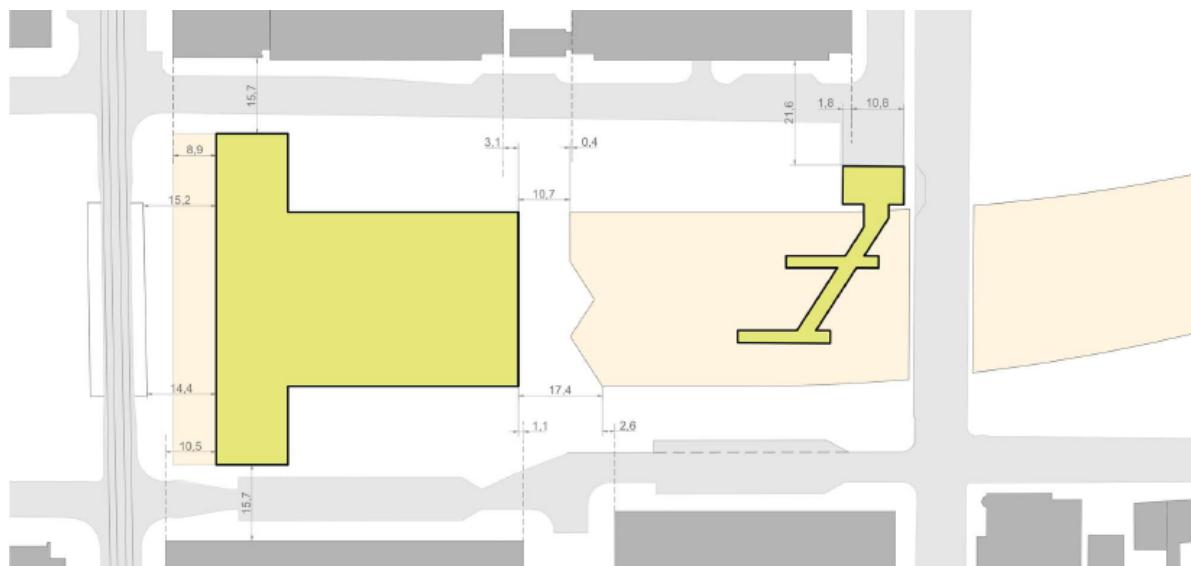


Figure 4-13 Spencer Dock Station alignment - above ground footprint

The access to the proposed station is located fronting the existing Spencer Dock Luas stop which will ensure ease of interchange between the DART and Luas. It will also front onto the adjacent existing 'Central Square' public park with the proposed Spencer Dock plaza acting as a meeting point and/or 'urban hall' for the station and multi-modal interchange.

Figure 4-13 represents a schematic of the proposed Spencer Dock Station footprint. The construction of the two future building blocks (2A & 2C) described in the North Lotts SDZ Planning Scheme is compatible with the stations' layout. The future landmark building and the building fronting Sheriff Street Upper would need to avoid locating structural supports in the footprint of the station.

While the design and construction of the Over Station Development (OSD) is out of the DART+ West scope, the proposals illustrated below demonstrate potential solutions to respond to the OSD that could be developed at a later stage and ensures the site can be developed to its full potential.

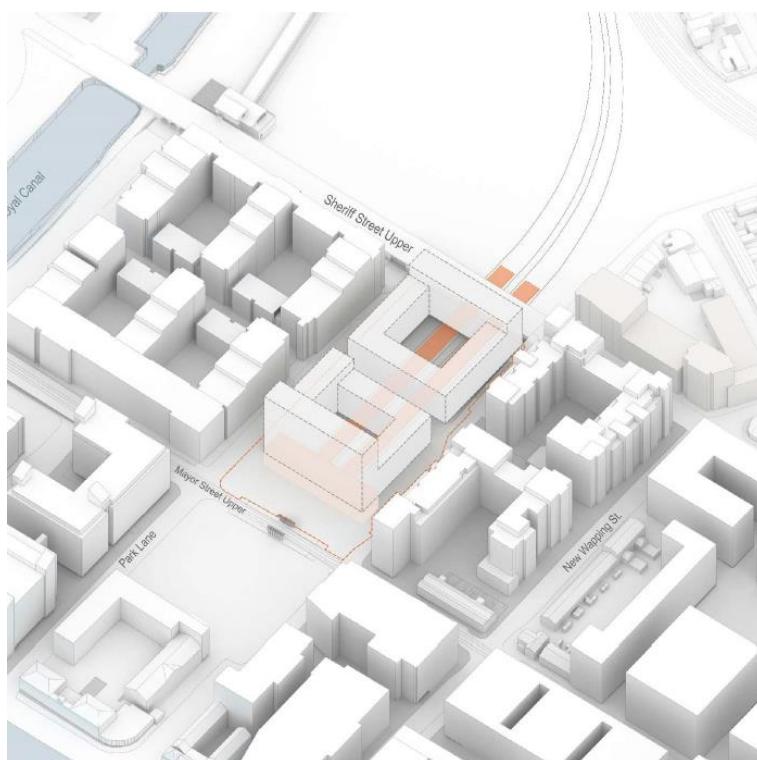


Figure 4-14 Schematic of potential over station development (OSD) at Spencer Dock Station - to be developed by others

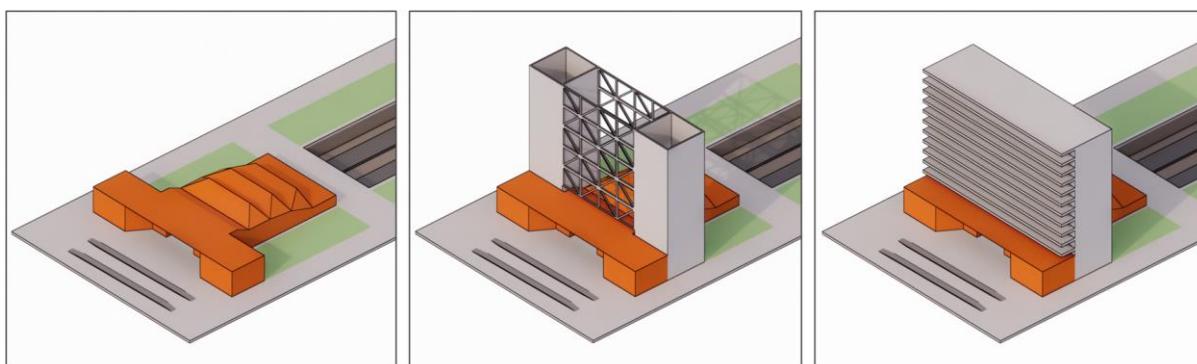


Figure 4-15 Three schematic representations of a potential OSD to bridge the Station entrance - to be developed by others

The alignment of the station complies with the North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ Planning Scheme taking cognisance of the potential future landmark building/ OSD. The proposed development has been future proofed structurally and does not preclude the realisation of future layouts of the OSD at this site and the overall intensification of development proposed in the Docklands area.

The proposed Spencer Dock Station supports sustainable mobility and compact TOD. It will provide for a modern and integrated rail station and a positive passenger experience interfacing with existing sustainable transportation, high quality public realm and future development at Spencer Dock. The station location facilitates multimodal interchange namely with the Luas, bus services and active travel modes which is also an objective of the North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock (SDZ) Planning Scheme.

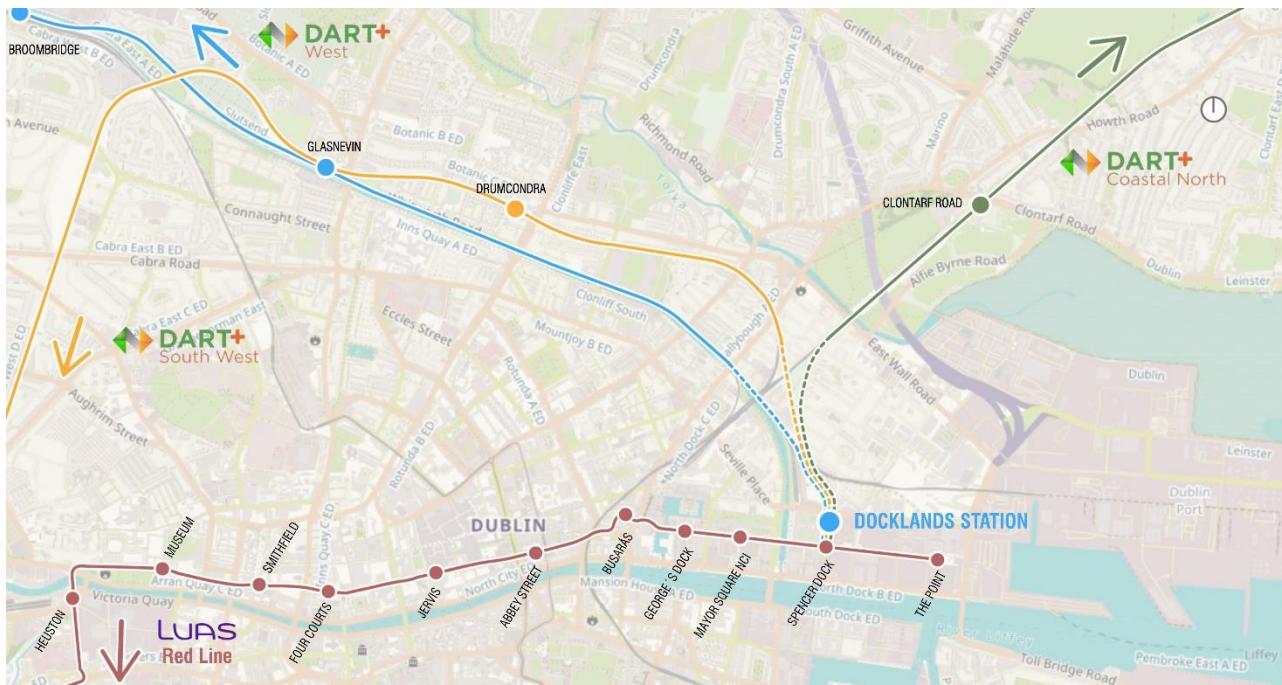


Figure 4-16 DART+ and Luas Integration in Docklands

In summary, the proposed design of the Spencer Dock Station provides integration with the surrounding buildings by aligning the platform of the station to the North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ Planning Scheme gridlines. This alignment makes the layout more compatible with the structure of the existing and future buildings. Access to the proposed station is adjacent to the Spencer Dock Luas Stop thus fostering ease of interchange between the DART and the Luas and supporting sustainable mobility. The location and access to the proposed station will allow for a high quality arrival experience and public realm space fronting the existing Central Square park which will be complemented by the proposed Spencer Dock Plaza.

4.6.1.2 Ashtown level crossing (XG004)

Ashtown level crossing is located on Ashtown Road on the Dublin – Maynooth rail line and forms the boundary between the administrative areas of Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council (refer to section 3.5.2 below for relevant FCC policies). The Royal Canal runs parallel to the rail line to the north. To the south of the level crossing, the existing land use is predominantly residential, with Phoenix Industrial Estate located west of Ashtown Road. The area to the north of the level crossing consists of a mix of residential and commercial land use and undeveloped land. The Ashtown train station is located to the east of the level crossing.

The lands to the east of the Ashtown level crossing are subject to the planning policies of the Dublin CDP 2016 – 2022 (under review). The lands to the west of Ashtown level crossing are subject to the land use designation under the Fingal County DP 2017-2023.

The Ashtown / Pelletstown S.D.R.A. is located to the north east of the existing Ashtown level crossing. It has the capacity to provide 1,000 new residential units in Ashtown / Pelletstown all of whom will require high quality active and sustainable transport infrastructure.

Dublin City Council prepared the Ashtown / Pelletstown Local Area Plan (LAP) 2014 to develop lands within the Ashtown / Pelletstown S.D.R.A. for which active planning applications exist. The LAP supports the proposed development through Objective MAO7:

"To encourage and facilitate, in cooperation with Fingal County Council and Iarnrod Eireann, the replacement of the existing manually operated rail level crossing at Ashtown Road, with a suitably designed alternative. The eventual design shall have regard to both existing and proposed developments in the immediate vicinity of the plan area and provide for high quality pedestrian and cycle

facilities linking with existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle networks both within and surrounding the LAP area”.

The vision of the LAP is the “*creation of a sustainable living and working environment with a strong urban identity, anchored by mixed-use supporting hubs and benefitting from both good permeability and quality public transport options. The area shall be characterised by a vibrant social mix, reflected in a variety of housing options and community facilities/ amenities, well integrated with the wider city via improved infrastructure and green infrastructure*”.

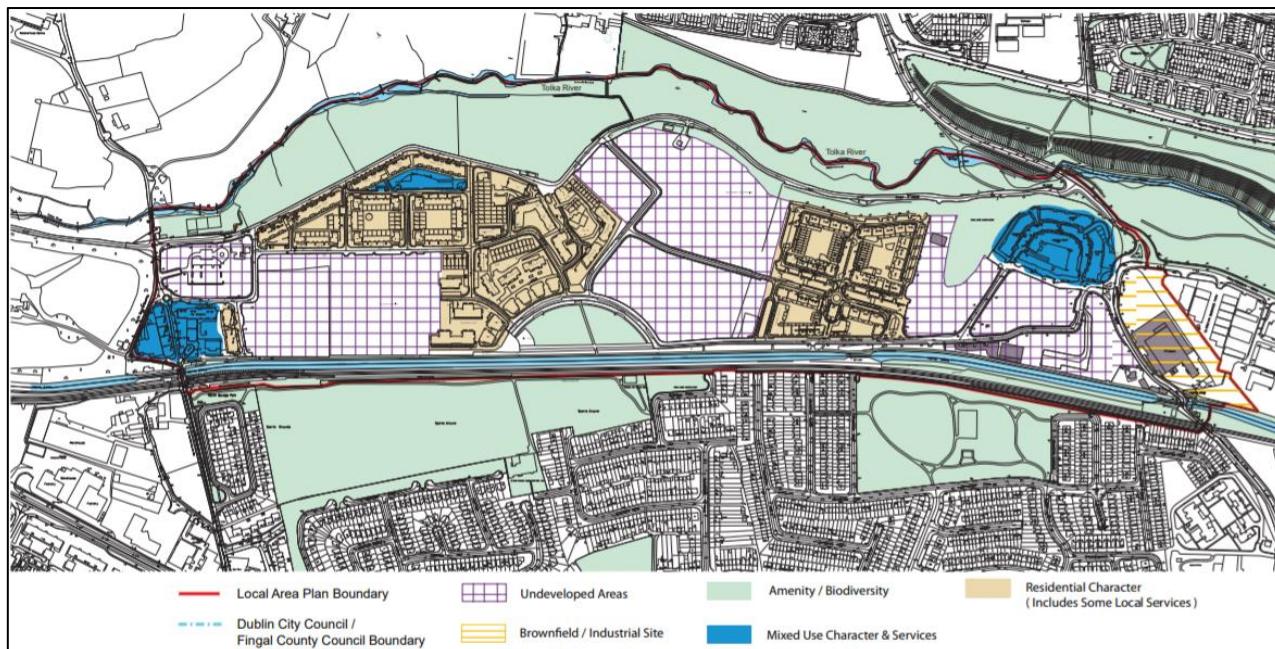


Figure 4-17 Character Areas within the Ashtown Pelletstown Local Area Plan 2014

To achieve this vision, the LAP was developed in accordance with guiding principles which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Support the development of a coherent spatial structure, characterised by two mixed use hubs (east and west) and predominantly residential areas in between. The Tolka Valley and Grand Canal amenities framing the northern and southern boundaries shall be interconnected via links through key open spaces, contributing to an attractive public realm.
- To encourage employment-generating uses in vacant commercial buildings, on brownfield sites, and in identified mixed-use areas.
- To improve connectivity throughout the area, removing existing barriers to movement and facilitating completion of a main east/ west thoroughfare with associated public squares at each end and secondary north/south routes. Pedestrian and cycle routes are given specific consideration.
- To ensure a mix of residential typologies and designs at densities appropriate to ensure the viability of public transport and other supporting community facilities within a high quality living environment.

The LAP aims to provide over 3,500 new homes to accommodate between 6,300 to 7,200 new residents with the capacity for the development of recreational areas and community facilities also.

The proposed development will support existing and future populations and support high density sustainable transit orientated developments in existing settlements. The development will improve the rail-road interface and congestion associated with the existing level crossing closures. The proposed footbridge at Ashtown station will maintain pedestrian and cyclist connectivity at the level crossing for all road and rail users. The proposed footbridge at Ashtown station will maintain pedestrian and cyclist connectivity at the level crossing for all road and rail users.

4.6.1.3 Substations

High Voltage (HV) substations will be constructed at several locations along the extents of the Maynooth and M3 rail lines to provide electrical power to the network's new electrified line. Electrical substation buildings are approximately 6.0m high x 35m long x 10m wide. The substations will be located within a secure compound, behind palisade fencing for security purposes. Where practicable, the project has sought to locate the substations within CIÉ owned lands.

Glasnevin substation

The Glasnevin substation proposed as part of the development will be located within the sports grounds of St Vincent's School in Glasnevin zoned as Zone Z15 Institutional and Community. Due to the relatively small size of the substation and location in the corner of the site it will not impact on the functionality of the sports field or residential amenity of the surrounding land uses.

Ashtown substation

The proposed Ashtown substation will be located next to Ashtown Station within CIÉ owned lands. The development of the substation will result in loss of scrub/ vegetation and will support the development of the project.

4.6.2 Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028

At the time of writing, the draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 is under preparation and published for public consultation on 25th November 2021 until the 14th of February 2022. The main policies and objectives relevant to the DART+ Programme are as follows:

Policy SMT20: *To support the expeditious delivery of key sustainable transport projects including Metrolink, Bus Connects, DART+ and LUAS expansion programme so as to provide an integrated public transport network with efficient interchange between transport modes, serving the existing and future needs of the city and region.*

Policy SMT13: *To manage city centre road-space to best address the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, public transport, shared modes and the private car, in particular, where there are intersections between DART, LUAS and Metrolink and with the existing and proposed bus network.*

SMT015: *(ii) To promote and seek provision of additional stations as part of the DART+ projects in consultation with Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail.*

SMT01: *To achieve and monitor a transition to more sustainable travel modes including walking, cycling and public transport over the lifetime of the development plan, in line with the city mode share targets of 26% walking / cycling / micro mobility; 57% public transport (bus/rail/LUAS); and 17% private (car / van / HGV / motorcycle).*

SMT21: *(i) To work with Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail, the NTA, 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. (ii) To facilitate the needs of freight transport in accordance with the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035 and forthcoming review.*

4.6.3 Summary

The policy review confirms that the DART+ West project is consistent with the policy provisions of Dublin City DP core strategy and will support existing and projected population and economic growth. It will also deliver improved sustainable mobility and support reductions in emissions from the transport sector. The project facilitates the integration and interchange with existing and planned transportation projects such as the new

Spencer Dock Station integration with Luas, bus services and active travel modes. The project also supports the opportunity for more high-density TOD and will support the continued sustainable development and regeneration of a number of areas along its extents, specifically the development at North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock, Glasnevin/Phibsborough areas (interconnecting with the proposed MetroLink) and the Ashtown/Pelletstown areas.

The project will deliver a modernised electrified low carbon fleet, more frequent, reliable and comfortable rail service, improving capacity on the Maynooth, M3 Parkway rail lines and the city centre. It will make sustainable mobility options more attractive and viable for more of the population which will also contribute to improving quality of life factors for populations in the GDA region.

4.7 Fingal

4.7.1 Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

The relevant planning policy and objectives of Fingal County Council are presented and discussed in the sections below under each of the respective policy documents. The Fingal Development Plan (FDP) 2017-2023 policy remit relevant to this project extends from the Ashtown level crossing west to Leixlip. Fingal Development Plan's core strategy has been developed in line with the national and regional policy objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the Greater Dublin Area. There is a requirement of the County Development Plan to be consistent with these population targets, however it is acknowledged that they may not be met within the indicated timeframe.

The RPGs population targets for Fingal projects a population growth of 35,293 persons from 2016 to 2022. A share of 19.8% of Dublin's housing is targeted to be provided in Fingal between the 2016 to 2022 period. This target means an increase in Fingal's housing stock from 105,392 units in 2015 to 145,340 units (estimated) in 2023, this would require the construction of 39,948 new housing units in Fingal between 2016 and 2023. To address the RPGs housing target, Fingal DP has zoned lands for residential / mixed-use development, some of which are subject to more detailed local area plans (LAPs) and masterplans. Much of this housing stock will be provided in proximity to the proposed development as provided for through the DP and the various LAPs and masterplans to include:

- Navan Road Parkway LAP, in preparation.
- Kellystown Local Area Plan LAP, 2021.
- Old School House Masterplan, in preparation.
- Hansfield SDZ Planning Scheme, 2006.
- Barnhill LAP 2018.

Throughout the design development these plans have been reviewed to ensure consistency.

Fingal DP recognises that a “*safe, efficient, effective and sustainable transportation system*” is key to the future economic, social and physical development of Fingal.

Relevant aims of the FDP relating to transport are as follows:

- *Incorporating sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation, social inclusion, high quality design and resilience are fundamental principles that underpin the Development Plan.*
- *To promote an appropriate balance of development across the County, by developing a hierarchy of high quality, vibrant urban centres and clearly delineated areas of growth, and favouring expansion in areas nearest to existing or planned public transport nodes.*
- *To promote and facilitate movement to, from, and within the County of Fingal, by integrating land use with a high quality, sustainable transport system that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport.*
- *To provide an appropriate level of safe road infrastructure and traffic management, in particular to support commercial and industrial activity and new development.*

- To work with all relevant stakeholders to seek a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport.

The integration of land use with public transport, specifically near high capacity public transport such as DART, offers and promotes a sustainable mode of commuting by ensuring that areas where people live are either close to, or are connected by public transport to their places of work or education. This strategy allows for the construction of high-density developments which will be appealing to the public as places to live in due to their proximity to transport corridors. This in turn has a financially beneficial effect on the service by increasing its patronage.

The delivery of the **DART+ Programme** is recognised as a strategic aim of the FDP, key policies include:

MT30: Support Iarnród Éireann and the NTA in implementing the DART+ 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.

MT31: Design and implement measures, having regard to potential environmental impacts, to mitigate the increased congestion on the local road network caused by more frequent closures of the existing level crossings on the Maynooth Line. Ensure that well in advance of any such measures being taken, extensive direct consultation is undertaken with local communities and residents who would be directly impacted by any such measures.

MT28: Facilitate, encourage and promote high quality interchange facilities at public transport nodes throughout the County.

Strategic Aim 15: 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.

The main land use zoning objectives specific to the Fingal area that are relevant to the project are relevant to the railway corridor (mainly protected overbridges which are discussed in the Architectural Heritage Chapter of the EIAR and are not repeated here. The proposed level crossing closures of: Ashtown, Coolmine, Porterstown, Clonsilla and Barberstown level crossings are discussed in the sections below.

4.7.1.1 Ashtown Level Crossing Closure (XG004)

This section presents information pertaining to the Ashtown level crossing, it presents some of the key constraints and considerations that were considered when developing the design. Ashtown level crossing (XG004) is manually operated level crossing located on Ashtown Road approximately 300 m north of the Navan Road approximately 1 km east (inside) the M50 C-Ring motorway. The Tolka River runs west-east parallel to the railway line approximately 300 m to the north of the level crossing. Ashtown Road crosses the railway and then crosses the Royal Canal via Longford Bridge which is a protected structure (RPS 907 DCC, RPS 693 FCC). The Royal Canal 10th lock which is a protected structure (RPS No. 944a FCC) is located immediately west of Longford Bridge. The 10th lock is a double lock that drops approximately 4.5 m through the double system.



Figure 4-18 Ashtown level crossing

The Royal Canal, a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) runs parallel and to the north of the railway line. The area to the immediate north of the level crossing is developed and includes residential and retail land uses with further development proposed on the lands to the northeast of the level crossing (DCC Ref. 3666/15, ABP ref. PL29N.246373 - Active planning application 2596/20).



Figure 4-19 View eastwards of Royal Canal and development in Pelletstown

Ashtown Railway Station is located immediately east of the crossing and there is an established residential estate further south (Martin Savage Park, Ashbrook and Kempton). There is a horse-riding school to the west of Ashtown Road and light industrial development further west on the opposite side of Mill Lane. Mill Lane follows the old line of Ashtown Road, which was severed when the Royal Canal was constructed. Martin Savage Park training fields is located to the east, home to St Oliver Plunket's GAA club. These playing pitches are also used in significant numbers for foraging by Light bellied Brent Geese which are a Qualifying Interest of the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Dublin Bay. There are several protected structures including Ashtown House and gate lodge, old Mill building, the 10th Lock and the Royal Canal itself.



Figure 4-20 View of Old Mill to the south west of the existing level crossing

Ashtown level crossing lies on the boundary between two administrative areas namely, Dublin City Council (east) and Fingal County Council (west). Consequently, the Dublin City Development Plan 2016 – 2022 and the Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023 are both relevant.

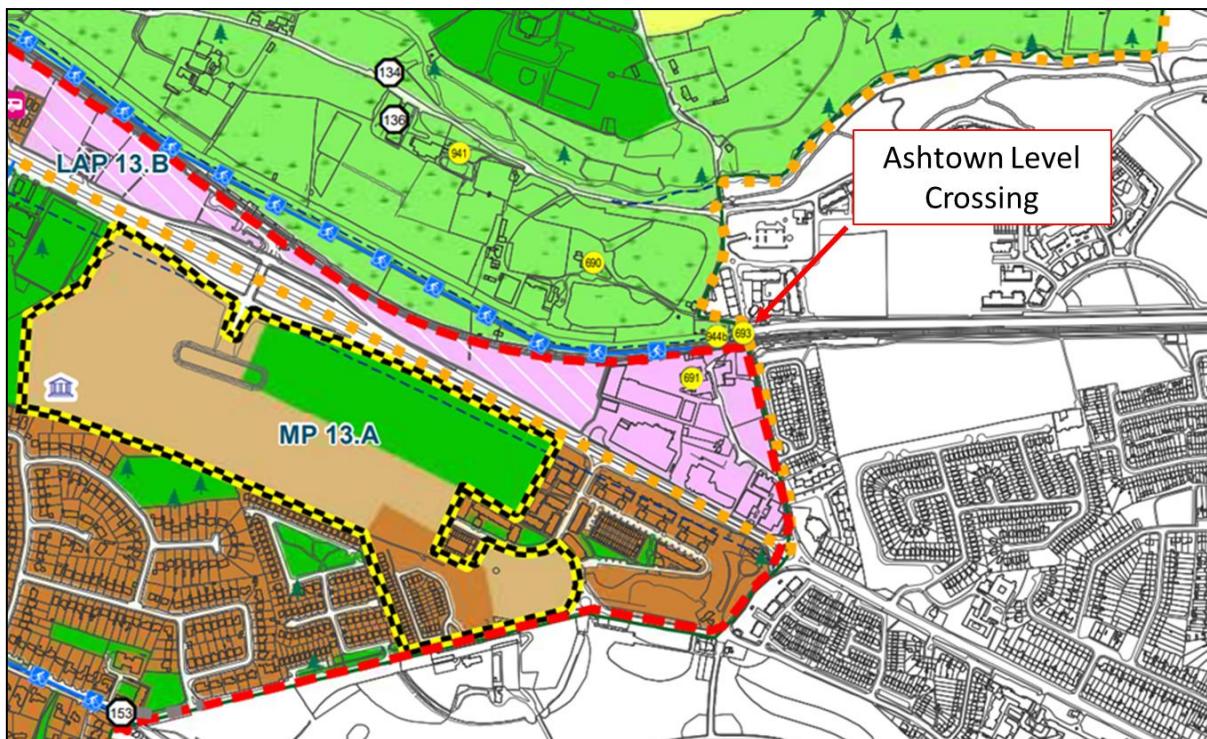


Figure 4-21 Blanchardstown South - Land use zoning objectives (Source: Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023, Extracted from Sheet No. 13)

Objective MAO7 of the Ashtown/Pelletstown LAP addresses the issue of the replacement of the level crossing and seeks: "To encourage and facilitate, in cooperation with Fingal County Council and Iarnród Eireann, the replacement of the existing manually operated rail level crossing at Ashtown Road, with a suitably designed alternative. The eventual design shall have regard to both existing and proposed developments near the plan area and provide for high-quality pedestrian and cycle facilities linking with existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle networks both within and surrounding the LAP area."

Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023 supports DART Expansion through 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.*”

As discussed, Ashtown level crossing is located on the boundary between the administrative areas of Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council. An area to the south west of the level crossing is designated for development under the Navan Road Parkway LAP as part of the Fingal County DP. At the time of writing the Navan Road Parkway LAP has not been developed. The LAP encompasses primarily undeveloped land bound to the north by the Royal Canal and south by Navan Road. The area stretches west of Ashtown Road and encompasses the existing Phoenix Industrial Estate, Navan Road Parkway train station, before terminating east of Ashburn Avenue. The land use designation under the Fingal County DP 2017 - 2023 is HT - High Technology to “*Provide for office, research and development and high technology/high technology manufacturing type employment in a high quality built and landscaped environment*”. The proposed Ashtown level crossing replacement works are located within the Navan Road Parkway LAP.

The proposed development is consistent with and supports the policies and objectives within the Fingal County DP 2017-2023.

4.7.1.2 Navan Road Parkway - Permanent Maintenance Compound

Continuing westwards along the railway line the next main infrastructure works associated with the project comprises the development of a permanent compound immediately west of the Navan Road Parkway Station car parking area. The temporary construction compound bounds Navan Road from the north and is located within undeveloped lands zoned for development under the Navan Road Parkway LAP. The adjacent land uses are primarily greenfield and undeveloped.

The land is zoned by the Fingal County DP 2017 - 2023 for HT - High Technology to “*Provide for office, research and development and high technology/high technology manufacturing type employment in a high quality built and landscaped environment*”.

The LAP for Navan Road Parkway has not been developed at the time of writing. The proposed development will support the development within the Navan Road Parkway LAP by enhancing the existing road and rail infrastructure and will not preclude the long-term realisation of the HT-High Technology zoning objectives.

4.7.1.3 Coolmine level Crossing

Coolmine level crossing is located west of the M50 and approximately 2 km west of Ashtown level crossing. It is located within Fingal County Council's administrative area. Coolmine Railway Station is located to the east of Coolmine Road with the main station facilities and car park located to the south of the railway tracks. The level crossing is currently CCTV controlled. The crossing itself is located on Coolmine Road (L3060) that connects Carpenterstown Road (south) and to Clonsilla Road approximately 600 m to the north. The Royal Canal is a pNHA and RPS (No. 994a), located north of the railway tracks running in west-east direction. The Royal Canal is spanned by Kirkpatrick Bridge, this is a protected structure within the Fingal Development Plan (RPS 697), at this location. The level of the Royal Canal is approximately 9 metres below the railway level at the level crossing.

The main planning policy provisions, zoning objectives and specific objectives relevant to the area are contained in Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 specifically in the **Blanchardstown south Sheet No. 13**. The lands in the vicinity of the level crossing are zoned RS (residential) and OS (open space and recreational amenities).

Relevant map-based planning policy objectives in this area are illustrated Figure 4-22 and include:

- **Objective 141:** Prohibit any road bridge at this location.

- **Objective 142:** Preserve the existing pedestrian and vehicular right of way at the Coolmine Level Crossing.
- **Objective 143:** Car parking provision associated with the train station shall be two storeys or less.
- RPS No.697 - Kirkpatrick Bridge.

An “Indicative Cycle/Pedestrian Route” is routed north south through the level crossing. The dashed blue lines indicate the Greater Dublin Area Cycle route proposed through the area.



Figure 4-22 Blanchardstown South - Land use zoning objectives (Source: Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023, Extracted from Sheet No. 13)



Figure 4-23 Coolmine level crossing

The area surrounding the level crossing is predominantly residential in nature. There are mature housing estates to both the north and south of the railway / canal corridor. The Coolmine Station facilities are located to the immediate southeast of the level crossing, these include the main station building and associated car parking. Carpenterstown Road is an important access route to the lands south of the railway and carries approximately 8,000 vehicles a day.

Fingal County DP 2017 – 2023 was reviewed to establish the land use policies and objectives at, and in vicinity of the existing Coolmine level crossing.

Emerging Land Use

The Coolmine level crossing is located on Coolmine Road on the Dublin – Maynooth rail line within the administrative area of Fingal County Council. The level crossing is located in a well-established suburban residential area with the predominant Fingal County DP 2017 -2023 land use zoning of RS- Residential to “*Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity*”. The proposed development supports the emerging population trends, existing and future land use in Coolmine area.

4.7.1.3.1 Closure of Coolmine Level Crossing

The relevant planning policy map-based objectives of FCP which require specific consideration in the Coolmine include the following:

- *Objective 141: Prohibit any road bridge at this location (Riverwood Court – Stationcourt Way).*
- *Objective 142: Preserve the existing pedestrian and vehicular right of way at the Coolmine Level Crossing.*

The Options Assessment process carried out for the project reviewed several alternatives to building a bridge at the Rivercourt and Stationcourt Way location (location of Objective 141) which was deemed to be the emerging preferred at Public Consultation no. 1. After significant public feedback further analysis and assessments the design resulted in changing from constructing a bridge to multiple upgrades to the existing

road network to cater for the increased volumes of traffic. As part of the preferred option vehicular traffic will be redirected to the existing road network which will be upgraded as part of the proposed development at Diswellstown Road Junction, Porterstown Road Junction, Clonsilla Road Junction and Castleknock Road Junction. Therefore, there is no impact on Objective 141.

Based on the capacity enhancements and increased frequency of service required to deliver the DART+ Programme it is not possible to maintain the level crossing or the right of way. This affects local **Objective 142** '*Preserve the existing pedestrian and vehicular right of way*'. Whilst the proposed development will permanently close the existing Coolmine level crossing, an alternative segregated and safer pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure will be provided at this location therefore maintain a right of way at the level crossing.

The proposed development will enhance cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure at the location of the existing Coolmine level crossing whilst the junction upgrade works will cater for the redirected traffic flows in the wider area.

4.7.1.3.2 *Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge*

The Coolmine Road via the Coolmine level crossing is identified as an 'Indicative Cycle / Pedestrian Route' in the Fingal DP. The proposed development will maintain pedestrian and cyclist access at this location through the provision of a dedicated pedestrian and cyclist bridge at Coolmine station for rail users and the general public. The proposed development will facilitate the development of a cycle / pedestrian route at this location.

The southern extents of the proposed pedestrian and cyclist bridge are located within the car parking area of Coolmine station which is zoned Residential "*Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity*".

Objective 143 of the Fingal County DP 2017-2023 for the car parking area states that "*Car parking provision associated with the train station shall be two storeys or less*". The proposed pedestrian and cyclist bridge does not preclude the realisation of this objective.

The northern extents of the proposed bridge structure will be located on the edge of land zoned as OS-Open Space "*Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities*". The bridge structure will reduce the amount of land available however it is currently mainly low quality scrub and will not preclude the long-term realisation of objectives under the OS-Open Space land use zoning.

4.7.1.3.3 *Junction Upgrade Works*

Fingal County DP 2017 – 2023 was reviewed to establish the land use policies and objectives at, and in vicinity of the junction upgrade works. The proposed development will involve upgrade works to the following junctions to support the existing and future road traffic demand:

- Diswellstown Road Junction.
- Porterstown Road Junction.
- Clonsilla Road Junction.
- Castleknock Road Junction.

The majority of the upgrade works for the aforementioned junctions will be confined to the existing roadbed however, minor road widening will be required on lands zoned as OS – Open Space which aim to "*Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities*". The works will interfere with this zoning objective however due to the location (on road verges) it will not have a significant impact on open space and recreational amenities, footpaths and cycle paths will be maintained/ facilitated however reduce area for landscaping will be available. The proposed change will improve the overall active and vehicular travel in the area.

It is the objective of the Development Plan to develop an 'Indicative Cycle / Pedestrian Route' along the existing road network where junction upgrade works are proposed (see Figure 4-24 below). An indicative light rail corridor is also identified. The proposed development will upgrade the existing cycling and pedestrian facilities

at, and on approach the junctions supporting the cycle / pedestrian route objectives contained in the Development Plan in conjunction with the local authority.

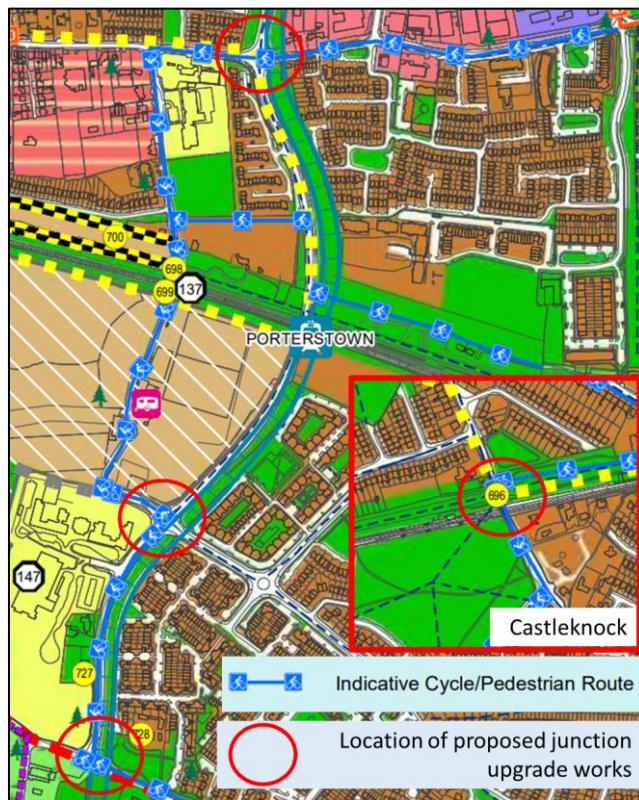


Figure 4-24 Location of proposed junction upgrades (adapted from Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023)

4.7.1.4 Coolmine substation

The proposed Coolmine substation is located to the south of the existing railway line with Sycamore Green, an open space amenity area within a residential estate. The lands are zoned as OS – Open Space to “*Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities*”. There will be an impact to a corner of this open space area as a result of this supporting infrastructure. The substation is located in a discrete location and will not significantly affect the zoning designations of the area.

4.7.1.5 Castleknock substation

The proposed Castleknock substation and associated access road is located within Laurel Lodge Green, an open space amenity area within a residential area. The site is zoned OS-Open Space to “*Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities*”. The substation is located in a discrete location of the park and will not significantly affect the functionality or the overall zoning designations of the area.

4.7.1.6 Porterstown Level Crossing (XG008)

This section characterises Porterstown level crossing (XG008), it presents some of the key constraints and considerations in the design development. Porterstown level crossing is located on the Old Porterstown Road. The level crossing is currently CCTV controlled. Porterstown Road connects Clonsilla Road to the north to Diswellstown Road to the south. The crossing is located immediately adjacent to the Royal Canal, which is spanned by Keenan Bridge a masonry arch protected bridge (RPS) structure. The Dublin to Sligo railway line runs east west at this location, and the level crossing is located on a straight section of railway. The main planning policy provisions, zoning objectives and specific objectives relevant to the area are contained in Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 specifically in the Blanchardstown south Sheet No. 13. The lands in the vicinity of the level crossing are zoned RS (residential) and OS (open space and recreational amenities).



Figure 4-25 Porterstown level crossing

The existing road over Keenan Bridge (RPS no. 698) is only wide enough for a single lane of traffic meaning one vehicle must give way to an opposing vehicle on the approach to the bridge. The need for a full road traffic connection on Porterstown Road has been largely replaced by the recent construction of the Porterstown Viaduct located 200 metres to the east. Developments in recent years have provided connection being secured to the Porterstown Distributor Road running east west along the northern boundary of Luttrellstown Castle Estate.

Fingal County Council has recently identified a preferred route with the proposed Kellystown Road Improvement scheme which proposes to construct a new link running east west and tying into the Diswellstown Road as part of the Kellystown Local Area Plan. This link will bypass the Old Porterstown Road and any residual use of the road will be for local traffic only.

**Figure 4-26 Porterstown Level Crossing**

The existing level crossing is accessed via the narrow Kennan Bridge (RPS no. 698), a canal bridge that allows only one direction of travel at a time. Keeper's Cottage is also located on the Porterstown Road (RPS No. 699) and is a mid-19th century Rail Keeper's Cottage located on the southern side of the level crossing. The canal is in a relatively deep cutting at this point. A ringfort (RMP DU017-005) is situated in Porterstown townland 600 m to the south of the level crossing.

**Figure 4-27 Kennan Bridge (RPS No. 698) A Late 18th Century Single-Arched Stone Road Bridge Over the Royal Canal**

The area surrounding the level crossing is predominantly green field sites, with some low-density residential development to the north of the crossing. There are two sports facilities on the eastern side of Porterstown Road – one on either side of the canal / railway corridor and there are also two schools along the road.

Open space, recreational and amenity land uses are present and include the Royal Canal Way. Extensive tracts of existing agricultural land is earmarked for future development associated with the Kellystown LAP area – refer to Figure 4-28 below identified as map based objective ‘LAP 13.C’. This figure also identifies the current land use zoning in the vicinity of the level crossing.

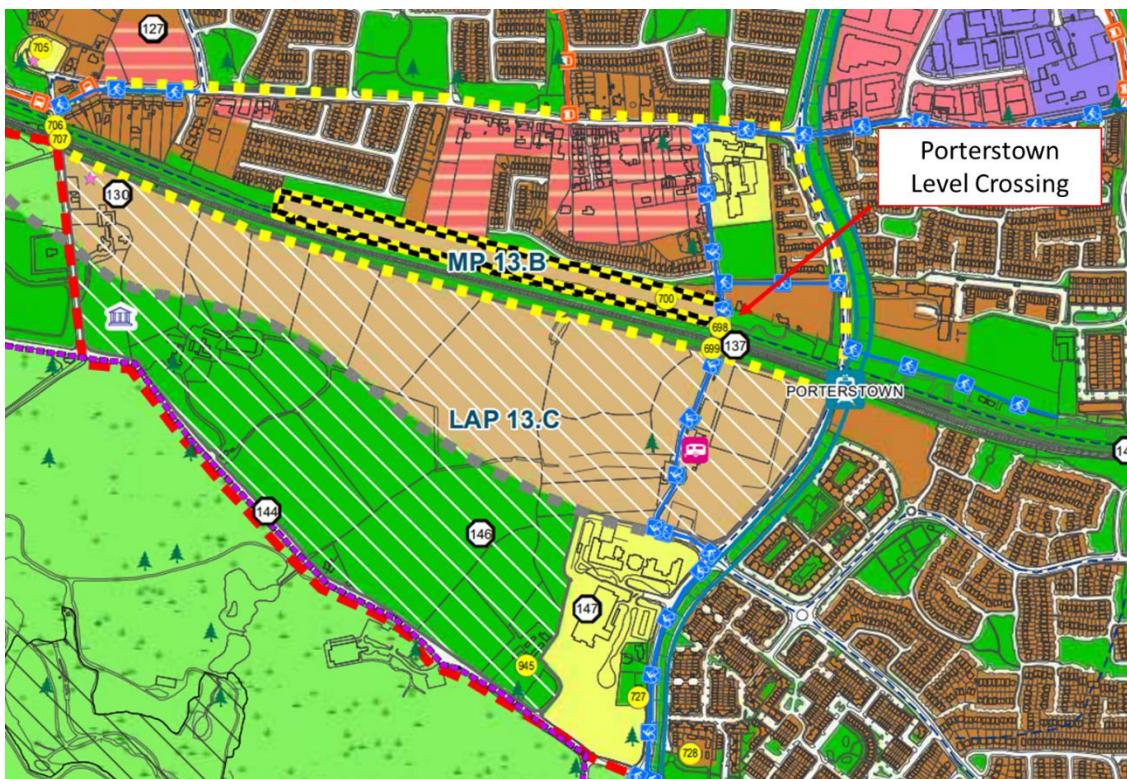


Figure 4-28 Blanchardstown South - Land use zoning objectives (Source: Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023, Extracted from Sheet No. 13)

- Specific Objective 137: “Preserve the existing pedestrian and vehicular right of way at the level crossing at Porterstown”.
- RPS No. 698: Kennan Bridge: A late 18th century single-arched stone road bridge over the Royal Canal.
- RPS No. 699: Rail Keeper’s Cottage (mid-19th century).
- Royal Canal (RPS No. 944a) & pNHA.
- MP 13.B Old School House Masterplan (Porterstown).

The proposed development is broadly consistent with the policies and objectives of FCDP and support existing and future growth and sustainable mobility and transport trends.

4.7.1.6.1 *Kellystown Local Area Plan 2021*

The Kellystown LAP was approved by Fingal County Council in January 2021 and is relevant to the Clonsilla and Porterstown level crossings. The LAP lands are bound by the Royal Canal to the north and the Dublin-Maynooth Railway Line to the south, Diswellstown Road to the east and Clonsilla Road (R121) to the west. The lands comprise approximately 56.4 ha. The LAP will provide a statutory framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

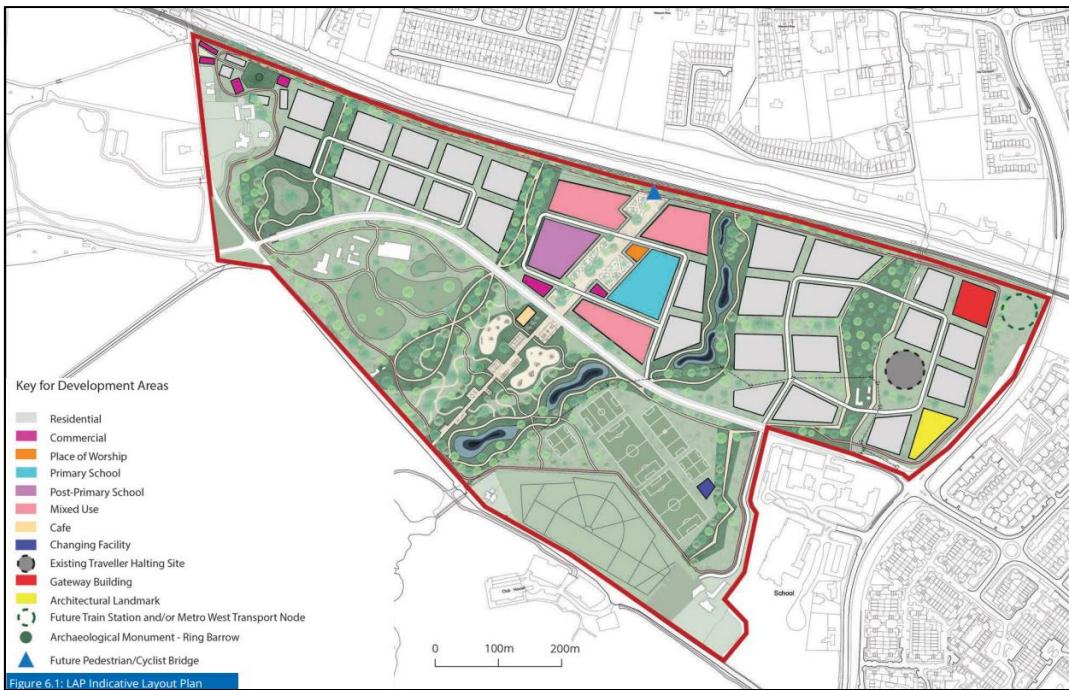


Figure 4-29 Kellystown LAP Indicative Layout Plan (Source: Kellystown LAP 2021)

The LAP refers to the DART+ West proposals and recognises the intention to close Clonsilla and Porterstown level crossings.

The LAP states “*With respect to Development Plan Objective 137 (To preserve the existing vehicular right of way at Old Porterstown Road level crossing), the findings of the Maynooth Line Transport Study report have concluded that there is no need to retain a vehicular right of way at this location. The Kellystown Draft LAP continues to support Objective 137 of the Fingal Development Plan.*”

The LAP supports the DART+ West project and investment in sustainable public transport, active travel, high quality sustainable urban developments and increased levels of pedestrian and cyclist movement within and around the area that will be supported by the project. Figure 4-30 below indicates the internal and external links which the project supports.

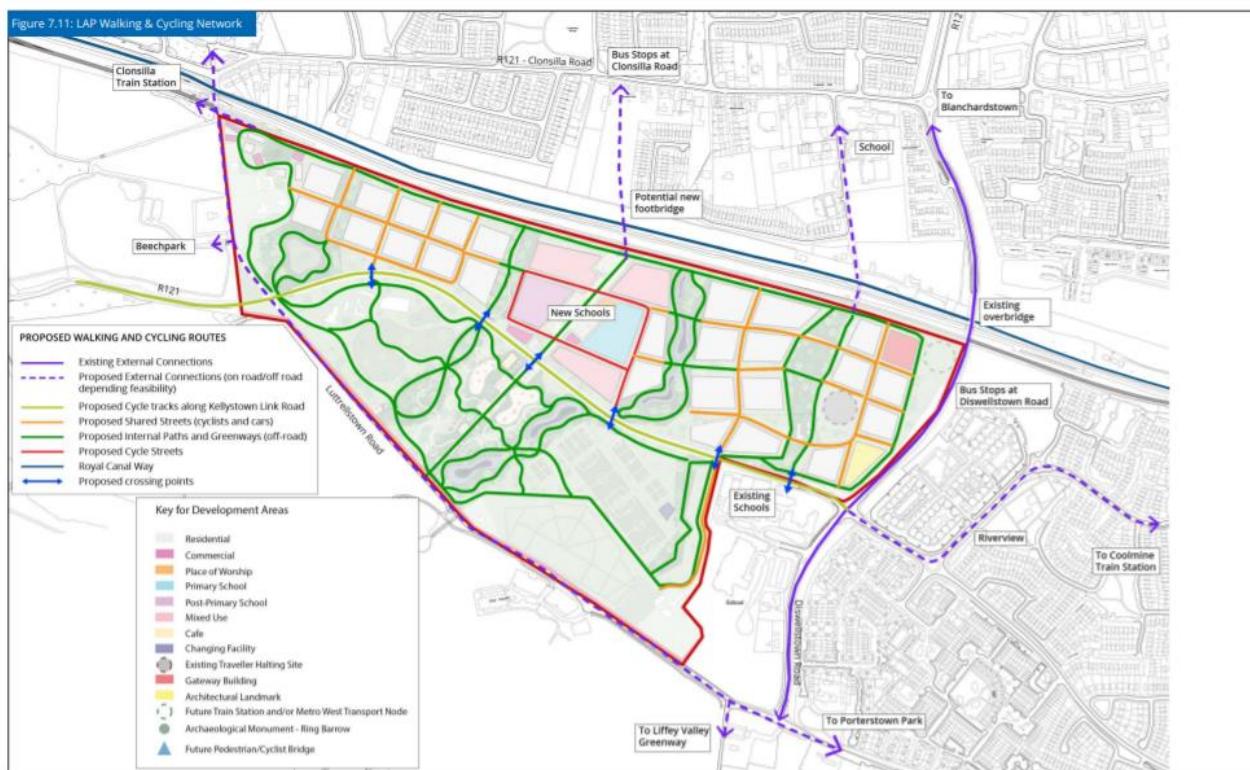


Figure 4-30 Walking and Cycling Network (Source: Kellystown LAP 2021, FCC)

The general guiding principles for the development of lands within the Kellystown LAP include, but are not limited to the following:

Objective 6.2 “Provide high quality housing having regard to the Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, the Fingal Development Plan development standards and the design principles as set out in this LAP”.

Objective 6.4 “Provide high quality development at appropriate densities in close proximity to Clonsilla Rail Station in order to maximise the benefits of investment in rail infrastructure”.

Objective 6.12 “Align pedestrian and cycle links to capture views to local features (natural and built) and incorporate opportunities for overlooking and passive surveillance insofar as possible”.

Objective 6.13 “Create safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes with high levels of legibility and permeability connecting the lands to local amenities and the adjoining areas of Clonsilla and Carpenterstown”.

Kellystown LAP has the capacity to accommodate for approx. 1,055 – 1,583 additional residential units within three ‘Development Areas’ as shown in Figure 4-31 with the phasing of development to progress generally in an east-to-west manner from Porterstown Road in the east of the LAP towards the R121 in the west.

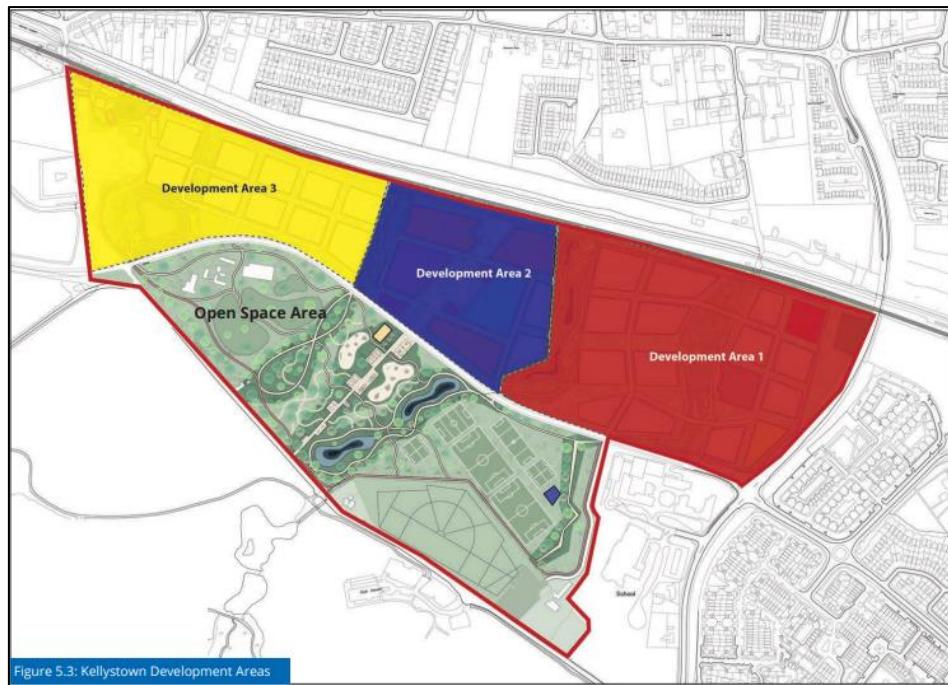


Figure 4-31 Development Areas within Kellystown LAP, 2021

The Eastern Development Area (Development Area 1) is subject to **Key Objective DA 1.9** “*The Eastern Development Area should incorporate all new railway infrastructure resulting from amendments to the level crossing*”. The Western Development Area (Development Area 3, see Figure 4-31) of the LAP is required under **Key Objective DA 3.2** to “*Ensure a high level of pedestrian and cyclist connectivity through the lands to connect Clonsilla Railway station to the surrounding area*”. The Kellystown LAP supports the rail and road infrastructure improvements proposed at Porterstown level crossing as part of the DART+ West project through the implementation of these objectives.

The Kellystown LAP also aims to develop a new primary and secondary school. The LAP will relocate St. Mochta’s Football Club to a new location. The new site will accommodate a full-sized soccer pitch along with new sports facilities in the form of multi-use games areas (MUGAs) which will be accessible by the new schools. The relocation of St. Mochta’s Football Club will facilitate the development of residential units within Development Area 1.

Old School House Masterplan

Fingal County DP 2017-2023 has zoned lands to the north of the Royal Canal to be developed as part of the future Old School House Masterplan (Figure 4-32). At the time of writing Fingal County Council are in the process of preparing a Masterplan for Old School House, a protected structure

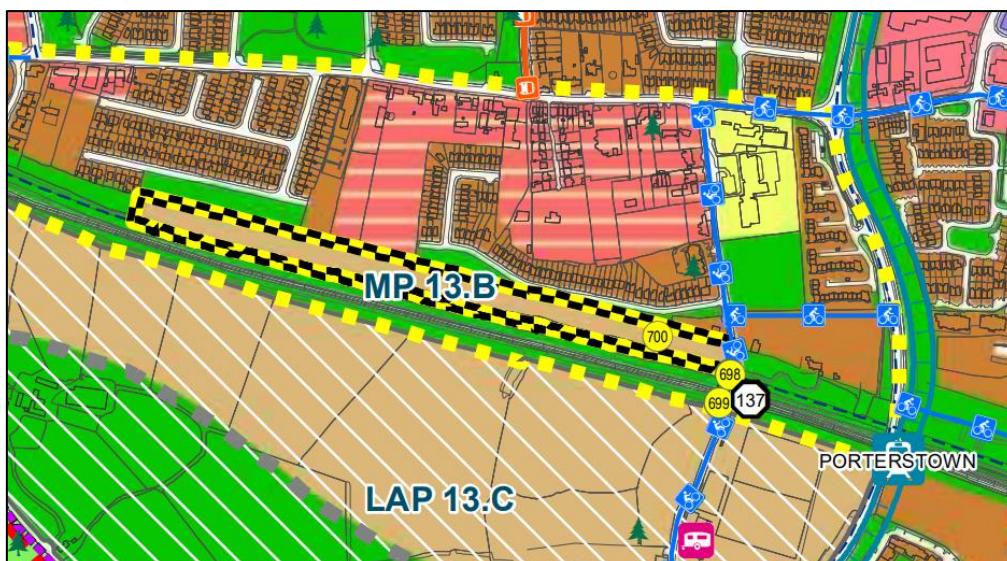


Figure 4-32 Lands designated to be development under the Old School House Masterplan (MP13.B). Source: Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

The lands within the Masterplan are designed as 'RA – Residential Area' to "Provide for new residential communities subject to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure". The following key objectives have been identified within the Development Plan for the Masterplan:

- *Development provided for within the Masterplan lands shall be to secure the preservation, conservation and redevelopment of the Old School House, a Protected Structure. Any new development will respect the integrity of the Protected Structure to be retained.*
- *No residential or commercial unit shall be sold or occupied pending the full reinstatement of the Protected Structure to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.*
- *Preserve the Old School House, a Protected Structure, and facilitate its rehabilitation into a suitable long-term use that is integrated with the back lands adjacent to the Royal Canal and which provides public access, and links to the Royal Canal as a central design feature.*
- *Facilitate a comprehensive re-development of this backland area which provides new pedestrian and cycle route connections to adjoining sites.*
- *Provide for integration with the Royal Canal and with adjoining Open Space lands.*
- *Provide for a recreational/tourism hub at this location facilitating a linear public park in addition to tourism related uses, restaurants and craft shops to be scaled and designed in a sensitive manner to reflect the sensitive environment.*
- *A key priority of the Masterplan shall be safeguarding the viability of the schoolhouse restoration (financially and otherwise).*

The proposed development will support the land use objectives of the Old School House Masterplan by maintaining pedestrian and cyclist access at the existing Porterstown level crossing via the proposed cyclist and pedestrian bridge. Vehicular traffic will be redirected to Porterstown Viaduct which will provide direct access into the lands to be developed as part of the Masterplan.

4.7.1.6.2 Closure of Porterstown Level Crossing

Objective 137 of Fingal County DP 2017-2023 aims to "Preserve the existing pedestrian and vehicular right of way at the level crossing at Porterstown". While the proposed development will permanently close the 'existing' level crossing, alternative pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure will be provided at this location enhancing the pedestrian and cyclist facilities in the area. The delivery of the DART+ Programme capacity enhancement cannot be achieved if the level crossing remains open. F CC through the Kellystown LAP recognise the plans for the close the level crossings by IÉ to facilitate the roll out of the DART+ Programme. The project supports the LAP by providing safer and improved walking and cycling infrastructure at the level crossing.

Vehicular traffic will be redirected to the existing road network, including the Porterstown Viaduct which will also facilitate direct access to lands to be developed as part of Kellystown LAP (via future Kellystown Road) and the Old School House Masterplan.

The proposed development supports active modes of travel and sustainable transport by prioritising and maintaining the pedestrian and cyclist access at the existing Porterstown level crossing and improving rail services and capacity which will also work support climate change targets by supporting active modes of travel. The proposed development facilitates the realisation of **Objective 6.13** of the LAP “*Create safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes with high levels of legibility and permeability connecting the lands to local amenities and the adjoining areas of Clonsilla and Carpenterstown*”.

4.7.1.6.3 Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge

Porterstown Road via the Porterstown level crossing has been identified as an ‘Indicative Cycle / Pedestrian Route’ in the Fingal County DP 2017-2023. The proposed development will maintain pedestrian and cyclist access at this location through the provision of a dedicated pedestrian and cyclist bridge over the Royal Canal and will support the development of a pedestrian / cycle route at this location.

The footprint of the proposed cyclist and pedestrian bridge infrastructure is located within lands zoned for ‘OS – Open Space’ to “*Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities*” and ‘RA- Residential Area’ which are designated to be developed as part of Kellystown LAP and the future Old Schoolhouse Masterplan.

FCC are currently in the process of developing a design for the Royal Canal Greenway which will travel under the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge at this location. Close collaboration with the design teams has been undertaken throughout to ensure integration and consistency between both projects.

4.7.1.7 Clonsilla (XG010)

Clonsilla level crossing (XG010) is adjacent to Clonsilla Railway Station. It is currently a manually operated level crossing. The crossing is located on Clonsilla Road adjacent to the Canal where Clonsilla Road veers south towards Luttrellstown Road and Clonsilla Station. The crossing is located immediately adjacent to the Royal Canal. The Royal Canal is a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) and Protected Structure (RPS No. 944a) and runs parallel and to the north of the railway line which is spanned by Callaghan Bridge (RPS No. 706).

A steel pedestrian bridge was constructed by Iarnród Éireann to span the Canal immediately west of Callaghan Bridge. The existing level crossing at Clonsilla is adjacent to the canal bridge and to the Clonsilla railway station. Clonsilla Overbridge and Signal Box are RPS No. 707 and are located on the opposite side of the road from the railway station.

Figure 4-33 shows the existing level crossing and station at Clonsilla.



Figure 4-33 Clonsilla level crossing

Clonsilla is currently a local centre with a limited number of retail and other commercial activities. Fingal County Council has designated it as a Town or District Centre in the settlement hierarchy. Consolidation of the existing settlement is sought and to realise the potential of the Royal Canal as a valuable amenity. The lands in the vicinity of the level crossing are zoned for residential use and/or for open space and recreational amenities (land use zoning map extract below).

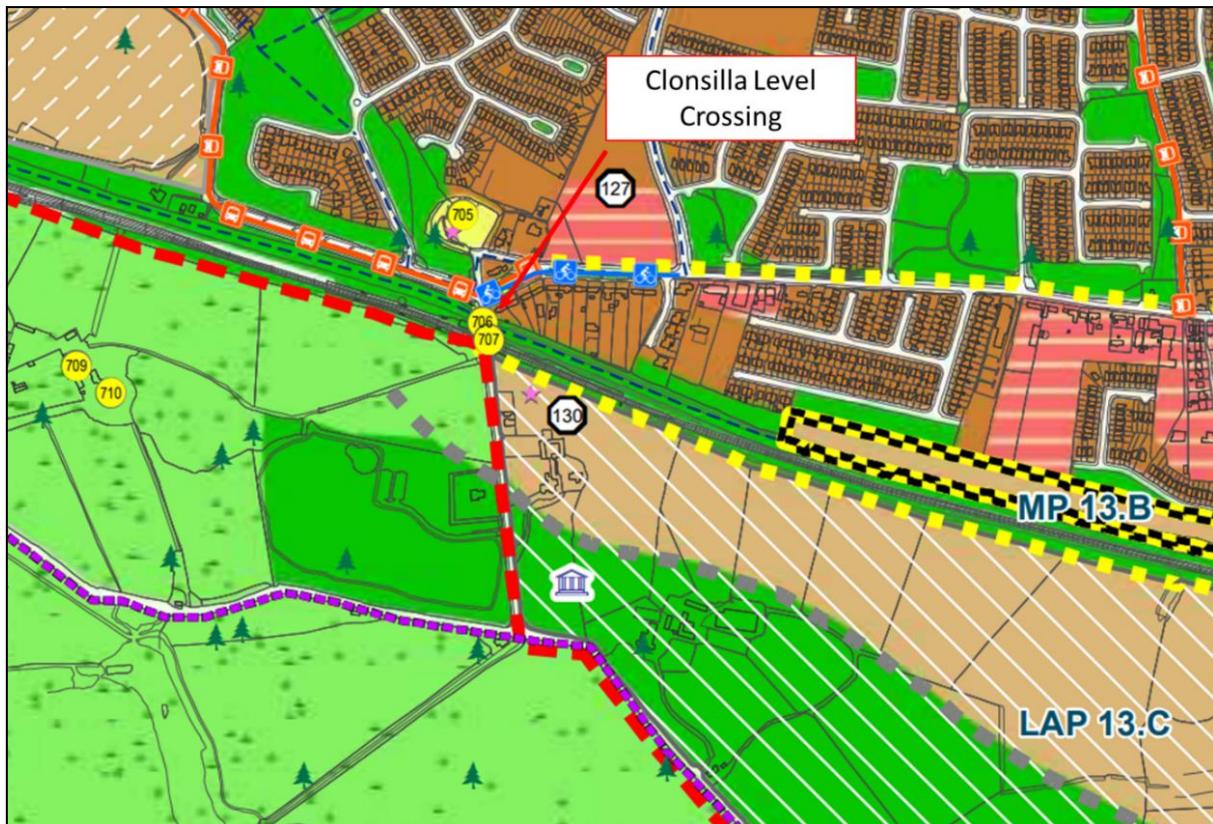


Figure 4-34 Blanchardstown South - Land use zoning objectives (Source: Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023, Extracted from Sheet No. 13)

Lands south-east of the level crossing are zoned as Residential Area (RA): “Provide for new residential communities subject to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure.” Lands north of the level crossing are zoned as Residential (RS): Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity. There are several existing planning permissions for residential developments in this area. Lands south-west of the level crossing are zoned as High Amenity (HA): “Protect and enhance high amenity areas”. These lands include the lands associated with Beechpark Allotments and Beechpark local parkland area. The Kellystown Local Area Plan 2020 is relevant to this area (refer to separate section below).



Figure 4-35 View of northern approach to the existing level crossing

4.7.1.7.1 Closure of the Clonsilla level crossing

The proposed development will permanently close the Clonsilla level crossing but will maintain pedestrian and cyclist access at this location. Vehicular traffic will be redirected to Porterstown Viaduct which will serve as a direct access point to lands to be developed as part of the Kellystown LAP. The traffic will also be redirected to the proposed Barberstown level crossing road replacement infrastructure.

The proposed development will facilitate the realisation of *Key Objective 3.2* “to *Ensure a high level of pedestrian and cyclist connectivity through the lands to connect Clonsilla Railway station to the surrounding area*”, and *Objective 6.13* of the Kellystown LAP by providing enhanced pedestrian and cyclist facilities over the Royal Canal to Clonsilla Station and into the development lands.

4.7.1.7.2 Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge

The southern extents of the proposed pedestrian and cyclist bridge are located within undeveloped lands used adjoining the Beechpark allotments which are zoned as ‘HA – High Amenity’ to “*Protect and enhance high amenity areas*”. The northern extents of the proposed bridge are located within greenfield lands zoned OS-Open Space to “*Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities*”. The footprint of the development is very minor in this area and will not impact the overall realisation of these objectives. The proposed development supports the overall development and enjoyment of these areas through active travel modes and supporting sustainable mobility for existing and future communities.

4.7.1.8 Barberstown (XG012)

Barberstown level crossing is within the administrative area of Fingal County Council. Fingal County DP 2017-2023 is reviewed to establish the local planning policies and objectives in the area. Lands to the north of the Barberstown level crossing are zoned for extensive future development as part of the Hansfield Strategic

Development Zone (SDZ) and the Barnhill Local Area Plan (LAP), objectives of which are discussed in the subsequent sections.

The XG012 Barberstown level crossing is located to the approximately 1.2 km west of Clonsilla Train station on the Dublin Sligo Railway Line. The railway at this location is twin track. There is no train station at this location. The Dublin to Maynooth railway line crosses Milestown Road, which is a local road linking the R121 Kellystown Road and R149 Barnhill Road. The crossing is located adjacent to the Royal Canal, which is spanned by Pakenham Bridge – a protected structure (RPS no.711). The area is rural in character with the surrounding lands predominantly used for agricultural purposes.



Figure 4-36 Barberstown Level Crossing

The level crossing is currently operated under CCTV control and is lightly trafficked. The area is zoned for residential development within the Fingal Development Plan. Although lightly trafficked, closure of the crossing to vehicular traffic would result in a detour of approximately 8 km.



Figure 4-37 Western Approach to Barberstown Level Crossing

Lands immediately south of the level crossing comprise large tract of lands zoned High Amenity (HA). These HA lands are associated with Luttrellstown Castle Estate and demesne. The Estate is an architectural conservation area, and a protected structure. There are also a number of Tree Preservation Objectives for lands north of Luttrellstown Estate.

The lands immediately north of the level crossing are zoned open space associated with the Royal Canal and Royal Canal way amenity route. Further north, a large tract of land is zoned for substantial development, which is detailed in the Barnhill Local Area Plan, February 2019 which are in close proximity to the Hansfield SDZ located further north and currently under construction.

Lands to the east (containing Clonsilla and Porterstown level crossings) will also be an area of future development currently being considered as part of the preparation of the Draft Kellystown Local Area Plan 2020. The Barberstown level crossing is expected to come under increased pressure due to the additional traffic movements that will be created as result of future development.

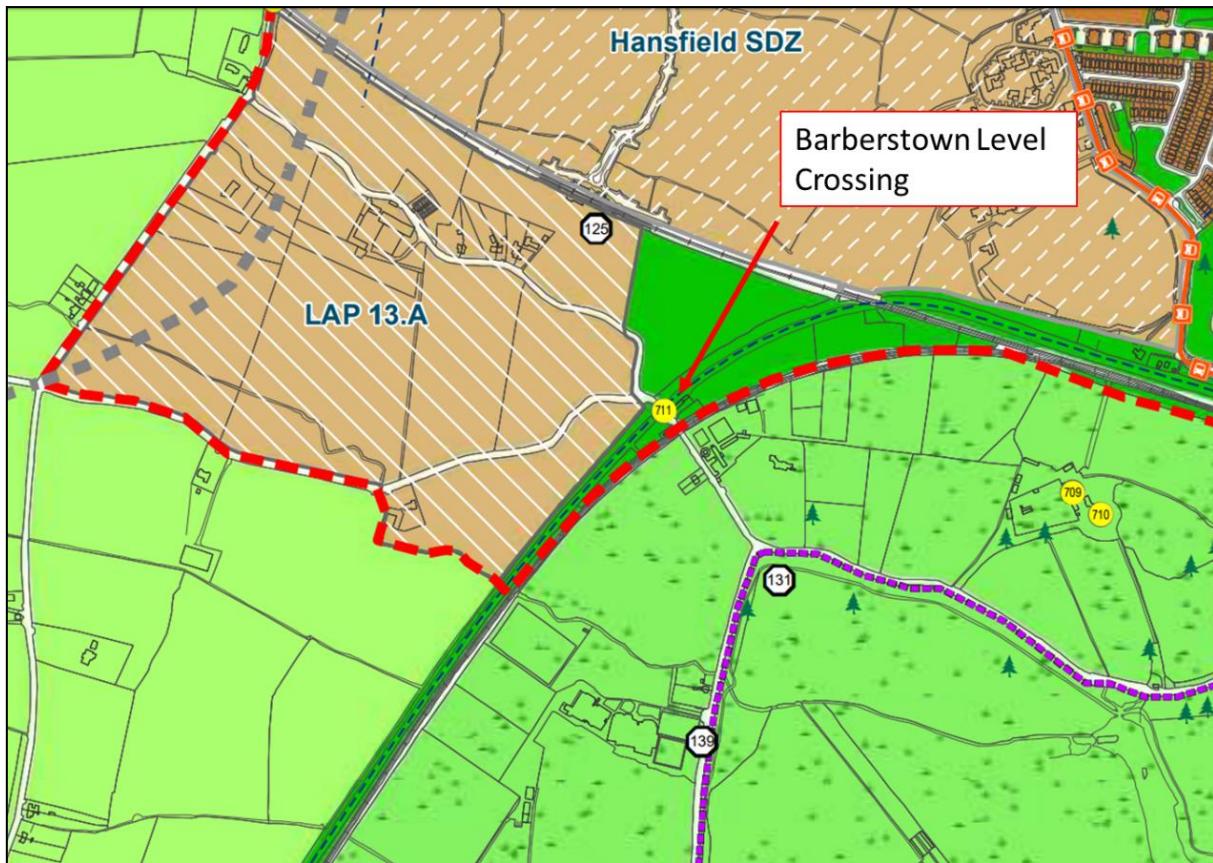


Figure 4-38 Blanchardstown South - Land Use Zoning Objectives (Source: Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023, Extracted from Sheet No. 13)

Fingal County Council have planning permission to construct the Ongar to Barnhill Distributor Road. Close consultation with FCC has been undertaken throughout the project and design stage to facilitate tie-in with this approved project.

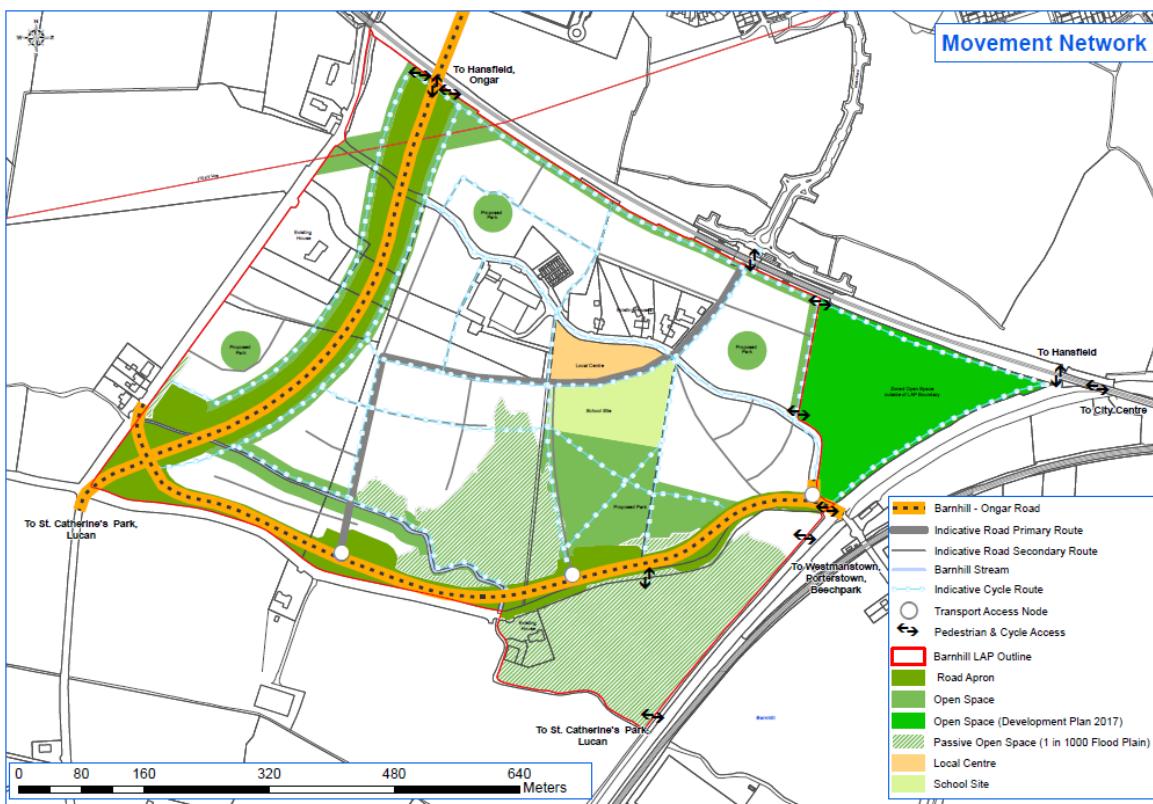


Figure 4-39 Movement Network, Barnhill - Ongar Road Connection (Source: Barnhill LAP 2019)

4.7.1.9 Hansfield Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme 2006

The Hansfield Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) Planning Scheme comprises approximately 80.74 hectares of land in southwest Blanchardstown close to the county boundary with County Meath. The SDZ Planning Scheme was approved by An Bord Pleanála in April 2006 and a number of residential units are occupied. The site is currently active site with residential units under construction namely in Zones 1, 2, 4 & 6.

The Transport Strategy for the SDZ includes the opening of the Old Navan Line. The first phase of the proposed railway linking Navan to Dublin opened in September 2010. Over 25 trains each way per day now run between the new M3 Parkway Station, Dunboyne and Dublin City Centre. Part of the strategic infrastructure within the SDZ was to provide a new train station within the SDZ lands, and Hansfield train station was opened in 2013.

In addition, pedestrian/cyclist connection to Clonsilla Train Station will be provided as part of the SDZ strategy. Figure 4-40 illustrates the extent of the SDZ lands. The Hansfield SDZ lands are adjacent to the Barnhill LAP area (discussed in the next section).

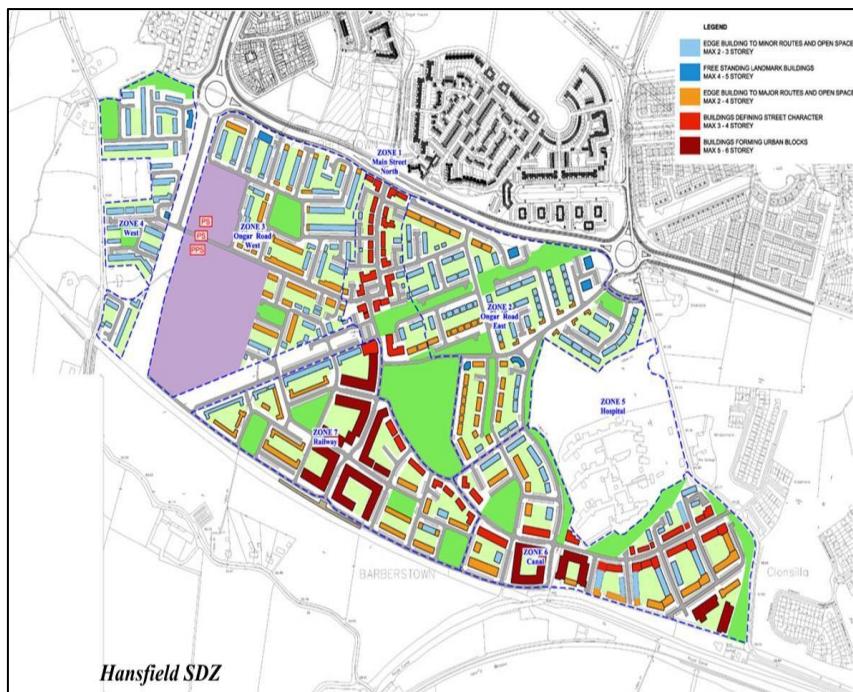


Figure 4-40 Hansfield Strategic Development Zone Boundary Area

As already stated, the SDZ is under development. Taking into account the developed lands there is approximately 54.25 ha of the SDZ lands available for new residential development with the capacity for approximately 3,000 dwelling units.

Land Budget	Hectares
Total lands within SDZ	80.74
Existing established uses including hospital lands, private residences and existing rail and road	12.23
Remaining lands for Development	68.51
Including:	
Schools	6*
Community Facility and Place of Worship Reserved Sites	0.30
On-site Class 1 Public Open Space	2.02
Rail Station Reservation	0.21
N3 - N4 Link Road Reservation	2.23
110 KV Reservation	3.50
Net potential land available for residential use	54.25

Figure 4-41 Land Budget for Hansfield SDZ. Source: Hansfield SDZ Planning Scheme, 2006

The proposed development will support the existing vehicular demands in this area and support sustainable mobility through safe, segregated active travel modes for the existing and future populations in and around the area.

4.7.1.10 Barnhill Local Area Plan 2018

The Barnhill LAP comprises 45.64 hectares of greenfield lands, illustrated in Figure 4-42. The zoned lands are located approximately 3 km southwest (as the crow flies) from Blanchardstown Town Centre. The lands are bound by the Dunboyne to Clonsilla rail Line to the south, the Royal Canal and the Dublin - Maynooth Railway Line to the west and the R149 (Clonee to Leixlip) to the east.

The LAP Vision for Barnhill is to create a place to live that is *appealing, distinctive and sustainable, maximising the opportunities provided by the surrounding natural environment for biodiversity and improved amenities*. It is envisaged that Barnhill will develop as a sustainable community comprised of new homes, community, leisure and educational facilities based around an identifiable and accessible new local centre which will form the heart of the area.



Figure 4-42 Physical Map of the lands subject to Barnhill LAP. Source: Barnhill Local Area Plan, 2018

Fingal County Council published the Barnhill LAP in October 2018. The following key objectives have been identified within the Fingal County DP 2017-2023 for the LAP:

Social Inclusion Objective SI1 “Deliver between circa 950-1150 new dwellings and associated amenity and educational facilities on the LAP lands, to help meet existing and future housing needs and to create a sustainable and socially inclusive mixed-use community”.

High Quality Design Objective HQD3 “Create a sustainable mixed-use centre for Barnhill which meets local needs by providing an appropriate range of retail, commercial, leisure and residential uses and establishes a distinctive sense of place and heart for the community”.

The key Movement and Transport Strategy objectives are listed below:

Objective MT1 “Improve accessibility throughout the plan area, through the completion of a hierarchical road infrastructure network to serve the development, and encourage links to existing and proposed public transport nodes both within and beyond the LAP boundary”.

Objective MT3 “Promote increased cycling and pedestrian activity within the development through a network of routes that connect to public transport routes, centres of employment, amenities, and community and retail destinations.”

Objective MT4 “Implement an integrated and sustainable movement and transport strategy for Barnhill which supports the effective management of sustainable travel patterns across the site with good connections to the greater Blanchardstown network.”

Objective MT6 “Prioritise sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport and reduce the reliance on the use of private cars within Barnhill.”

In order to provide for a coherent sustainable movement and transport strategy and to maximise development capacity within the Barnhill LAP lands, it is required to deliver the necessary extension of the Ongar-Barnhill Road (see Figure 4-43) with provision of a new bridge over the Dunboyne (Pace) – Clonsilla rail line and provision of a new junction with the existing road network. This will connect the Ongar Road to the existing R149.



Figure 4-43 Barnhill LAP Movement Network. Source: Barnhill Local Area Plan, 2018

4.7.1.10.1 Closure of level crossing/Road replacement infrastructure

The proposed development will permanently close the existing Barberstown level crossing and provide the necessary road replacement infrastructure to maintain existing vehicular and non-vehicular access at this location over the Royal Canal and railway. The proposed construction of a new bridge above the railway and canal located approximately 250 m to the west of the existing crossing. The proposed replacement vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure will take the form of a bridge spanning over the railway and the canal along with a roundabout at the northern end of the proposed route and a junction with the Kellystown Road at the southern end, facilitating a tie-in with the existing road network. The tie-in supports existing and future populations access to the Barnhill LAP. The proposed bridge accommodates a cross section of a 7 m wide carriageway with 1.7 m raised verge on either side with a 3.8 m wide pedestrian cycleway on both sides. The proposed overbridge structure will rise to 9.3 m above the railway to provide the minimum clearance required for the electrification of the rail line resulting in a significant structure in the landscape.

The extents of the proposed Barberstown level crossing road replacement infrastructure to the south of the Royal Canal is largely located within existing agricultural lands zoned under the Fingal County DP 2017-2023 for HA- High Amenity to “protect and enhance high amenity areas”. Lands either side of the Royal Canal are zoned for OS- Open Space to “Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities”. [Castleknock substation].

The proposed Castleknock substation and associated access road is located within Laurel Lodge Green, a green amenity area within a residential estate. The lands are zoned as OS-Open Space to “Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities”. According to the Development Plan, road and rail infrastructure improvements are neither ‘Permitted in Principle’ nor ‘Not Permitted’ under OS-Open Space land use zoning.

4.7.1.11 Hansfield substation

The proposed Hansfield substation is located on zoned residential lands currently used for agricultural purposes adjacent to the railway line. Relevant planning policies are contained with draft Fingal CDP 2023-2029 and the Barnhill Local Area Plan (LAP) 2019 identify that this area of land is part of a large tract of residentially zoned land, ‘RA – Residential Area’ to “Provide for new residential communities subject to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure”. The Barnhill LAP aims to deliver between 950 to 1150 residential units and associated amenity and educational facilities. The LAP includes a policy “PU2 Facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of electricity and gas to developments in the plan area, to the

requirements of the relevant service provider and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.” The proposed development conforms to this policy development. The location of the substation, close to existing rail services and the relatively small size of the substation development will not impact significantly this land use zoning particularly considering the positive effect improved services will have on the area and the zoned lands available for residential purposes, the impact on the land use is *negative, slight and permanent*.

4.7.2 Draft Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029

At the time of writing, the Draft Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 was prepared and published for public consultation on 24th of February 2022.

The main policies and objectives relevant to the DART+ Programme are as follows:

- **Policy CMP18 – Public Transport:** Support the provision of a high-quality public transportation system that is accessible to all to serve the needs of the County and to enable a significant shift from car-based travel to public transport.
- **Policy CMP20 – Public Transport Interchange:** Support and facilitate the provision of high-quality transport interchanges within the transport network in order to facilitate seamless transition between different transport modes and to maximise the movement of people by sustainable modes.
- **Objective CMO22 – Enabling Public Transport Projects:** Support the delivery of key sustainable transport projects including MetroLink, BusConnects, DART+ and LUAS expansion programme so as to provide an integrated public transport network with efficient interchange between transport modes to serve needs of the County and the mid-east region in collaboration with the NTA, TII and Irish Rail and other relevant stakeholders.
- **Objective CMO23:** Support NTA and other stakeholders in implementing the NTA Strategy including MetroLink, BusConnects, DART +, LUAS and the GDA Cycle Network.
- **Objective CMO24:** Ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate the impacts of level crossing closures on the Maynooth rail line including protection measures for public transport and increased priority for cycling and walking.

Local Objectives

The draft Plan contains several deletions and changes to the existing DP local map-based objectives which are of relevance to the proposed DART+ West to include the following:

These local map-based planning policy objectives are listed below (illustrated in the figure below) and would replace the existing DP local based objectives should the current draft be adopted

Coolmine level crossing:

- **Objective 91** Ensure pedestrian and cyclist connectivity is provided across the canal and rail line at this location.

Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Cycle Network 2013. Porterstown level crossing:

- **Objective 88** Ensure pedestrian and cyclist connectivity is provided across the canal and rail line at this location.

These policy changes would be consistent with the proposed DART+ West project and would further recognise the importance of the DART+ Programme and associated benefits that this transformative public transport project will bring to both local and wider communities while also delivering on cross-sectoral national policies including supporting sustainable mobility and climate resilience.

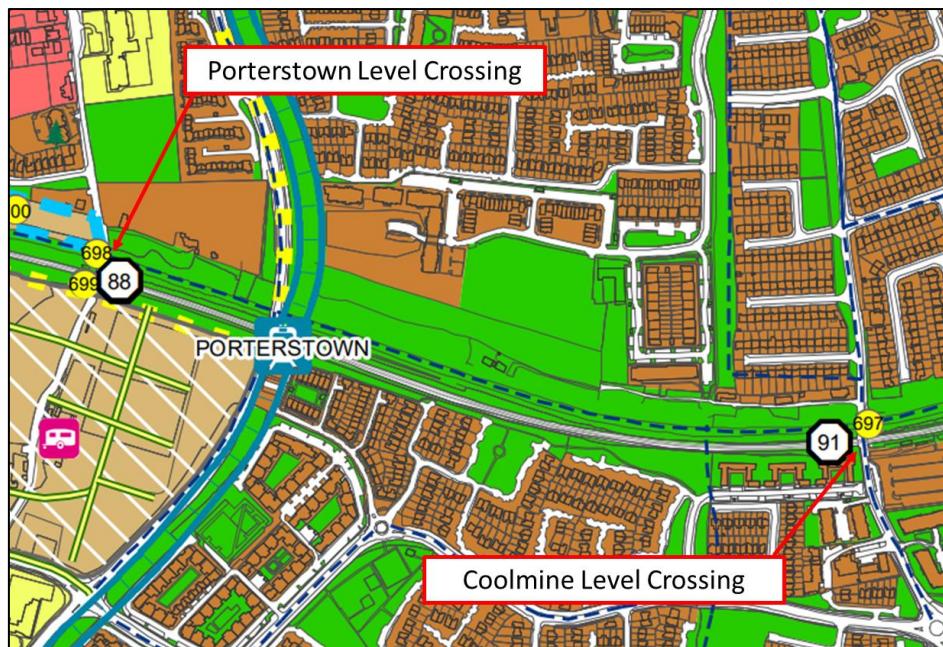


Figure 4-44 Blanchardstown South - Land Use Zoning Objectives (Source: Draft Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029, Extracted from Sheet No. 13)

4.7.3 Summary

The DART+ programme is supported by the Fingal County Council's policies and objectives. The project will support existing and future communities through improved transportation services. The project will provide modern, reliable frequent rail service, improving capacity on the Maynooth and M3 Parkway rail lines across positively influencing all stations located in the Fingal area. The Project will also improve the road rail interface at the existing level crossings and through the provision of replacement vehicular infrastructure (where deemed to be required), will reduce congestion at the level crossings by providing suitable replacement transport infrastructure. The project provides for safer, segregated and supports active travel infrastructure for existing and future communities supporting the Governments transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

The proposed development also supports the principles of transport-oriented development in Fingal particularly for areas that are not yet developed. The project supports compact, connected, sustainable, low carbon and integrated developments in the GDA particularly in the lands associated with Kellystown LAP, Barnhill LAP, Navan Road Parkway LAP and Hansfield SDZ which will facilitate significant residential and economic development.

The project supports the delivery of a sustainable mobility and movement network across the GDA and local areas by facilitating seamless integration and interchange with existing and planned transport projects within the Fingal County to include the Royal Canal Greenway, BusConnects, Luas and Metrolink, Dublin Bus, Mainline Rail, and other cycling and walking infrastructure proposed in the GDA Transport Strategy.

4.8 Meath

4.8.1 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted on the 3rd of November 2021. Meath County Development Plan's core strategy has been developed in line with the national and regional policy objectives set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region.

The Core Strategy Vision of the Meath CDP is:

"To continue to support the creation of socio-economically progressive vibrant, dynamic, and healthy communities throughout the County and ensure that future growth is based on the principles of sustainable development that delivers a high-quality living and working environment that meets the needs of all residents, in accordance with National and Regional Guidance."

The objectives of the Meath Core Strategy are as follows:

- *"To demonstrate how the Meath County Development Plan is consistent with national and regional planning strategies, guidelines and policies including national and regional population projections.*
- *To provide the policy framework for the settlement strategy and Local Area Plans, particularly in relation to land use zoning and population distribution. Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Chapter 2.*
- *To ensure the co-ordination of infrastructural investment with settlements identified for future growth.*
- *To facilitate the population growth of Meath up to a projected population of 228,300 in the plan period and ensure the distribution of this population is targeted towards the growth centres identified in the RSES".*

To meet the population targets in County Meath, it is projected that approx. 91,320 residential units will need to be provided over an 11-year period, between 2016 and 2027. The Plan recognises that the County's future population should be managed in a way as to achieve compact growth. Analysis of land use was carried out as part of the Plan which showed that 31% of the total household allocation can be delivered on infill and brownfield lands, with the remaining percentage being delivered on greenfield land.

To achieve the RSES's population growth for the Metropolitan area of County Meath, this Plan will target future growth within the settlements of Maynooth and Dunboyne area subject to the following local area plans:

- Dunboyne Clone Pace LAP 2009-2015.
- Maynooth Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013 – 2019 (amendment No. 1), see section 4.9 for further details.

The relevant objectives contained in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 include the following:

ED OBJ 10 *"In accordance with RPO 4.33 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, to support the continued development of Maynooth, co-ordinated with the delivery of strategic infrastructure including pedestrian and cycle linkages within the town and to the Royal Canal Greenway, DART expansion and road linkages forming part of the Maynooth Outer Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Chapter 4 Orbital Route in a manner which supports future development and population growth and builds on synergies with Maynooth University promoting a knowledge-based economy".*

MOV OBJ 4 *"To improve, in conjunction with the NTA and Irish Rail, facilities at existing stations".*

MOV OBG6 *"To facilitate and encourage the upgrading of existing railway stations, and protect, as required, lands necessary for the upgrading of existing railway lines or stations or the provision of new railway stations throughout the County".*

The Plan also recognises the higher-level planning and transportation policy remit (e.g., Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031), and references support for these policies (RPO 8.8) that relate to the delivery of this project which states: *"The RSES supports delivery of the rail projects set out in Table 8.2, subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process."*

These projects include:

- Re-appraisal of the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan during the Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy.

- Dart expansion Programme - new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines, including provision of electrified services to Drogheda, Maynooth and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line.

It goes on to state that the “*Plan supports the prioritisation of these projects and will continue to support TII in the roll out of rail improvements and upgrades throughout the County.*”

MCDP recognises that the NTA’s Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services over the period 2016 - 2035.

The proposed development is consistent with and supports the Meath County DP 2021-2027.

4.8.1.1 Dunboyne Clonee Pace LAP 2009-2015

The existing PACE M3 Parkway Train station is located within the development boundary of the Dunboyne Clonee Pace LAP. Relevant policies include:

MOV POL 4 *To facilitate and protect the operation of the railway in conjunction with Iarnród Éireann/CIE. To protect the Pace–Navan extension of the railway corridor from inappropriate development where all planning applications lodged within the route reservation corridor or which may impact on the future railway will be referred to Iarnród Éireann/CIE for comment.*

MOV POL 6 *To facilitate the development of Park & Rides as set out in the Railway Order NA0001 at Dunboyne Station & Pace Interchange*

The project is consistent with and supports the long-term realisation of objectives contained in the LAP.

Land use zoning for Dunboyne and Clonee are included in the adopted Meath County DP 2021-2027. A new local area plan will be developed for both settlements in accordance with the Development Plan which will supersede the Dunboyne Clonee Pace LAP 2009-2015. A new local area plan will be developed for both settlements in accordance with the Development Plan which will supersede the Dunboyne Clonee Pace LAP 2009-2015.

4.8.1.2 Dunboyne and M3 Parkway substations

The proposed Dunboyne and M3 Parkway substations are both located within the train station carparks adjacent to the train line. The lands are zoned TU – Transport and Utilities to “*provide for essential transport and public utilities and infrastructure including rail stations, park and ride facilities, water and wastewater infrastructure, electricity, gas, and telecommunications infrastructure*” under the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. The proposed substations support the development of transport services and are therefore consistent with this zoning objective.

4.8.1.3 Summary

The proposed development will provide for sustainable growth and travel options within County Meath, specifically for the population of Dunboyne and the commuters who utilise the M3 Parkway train station and connections further along the network. The DART+ West Project will provide an electrified, more frequent rail service, improving capacity on the M3 Parkway rail line. The Project will reduce congestion and make journeys more comfortable for passengers, and support climate action targets as well as supporting business and communities living in County Meath.

The project supports improved access to and from the Dublin City and M3 Pace area. The DART+ West Project objectives also support the delivery of a sustainable movement network for County Meath by facilitating seamless integration and interchange with existing and planned transport modes such as Dublin Bus, Mainline Rail, cycling and walking infrastructure across the GDA.

4.9 Kildare

4.9.1 Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023

This section will review the relevant local planning policy to the proposed development within the administrative area of Kildare County Council as set out in the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (Kildare County DP 2017 – 2023). A number of local area plans, and masterplans have also been identified in the Kildare County DP 2017 – 2023. The plans of relevance to the proposed development are as follows:

- Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2023
- Maynooth Local Area Plan 2013-2019 (incorporating amendment no.1)

Relevant planning policy and objectives to the proposed development within these plans have been considered in this Planning Report.

The Kildare County Development Plan (KCDP) sets out an overarching strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the functional area of County Kildare, over the period 2017-2023 and beyond. In the context of the DART+ Programme the KCDP pertains to the areas from Leixlip extending west to the proposed depot located west of Maynooth. The key policies of the plan of relevance to the DART+ Programme are as follows:

MT 1: *Promote the sustainable development of the county through the creation of an appropriately phased integrated transport network that services the needs of communities and businesses.*

PTO 7: *Promote and support the upgrading of the Maynooth rail line and the Kildare rail line, in accordance with the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 and in co-operation with the NTA.*

The Leixlip LAP 2020-2023 supports the proposed DART+ Programme through Objective **MT2.2** “*To support and facilitate the delivery of electrification and upgrading of the Dublin – Sligo rail line from Connolly Station to Maynooth, including improvements to Cope Bridge.*” and recognises the requirement for the removal of level crossings and re-signalling works”.

Other policies and objectives which are of specific relevance to the DART+ Programme include:

- **MT 2:** *Support sustainable modes of transport by spatially arranging activities around existing and planned high quality public transport systems*
- **MT3:** *Influence people’s travel behaviour and choices towards more sustainable options by working closely with relevant organisations in improving and accessing public transport facilities*
- **PT 1:** *Promote the sustainable development of the county by supporting and guiding national agencies including the National Transport Authority in delivering major improvements to the public transport network and to encourage public transport providers to provide an attractive and convenient alternative to the car.*
- **PT 2:** *Generate additional demand for public transport services by strengthening development around existing and planned high capacity transport routes and interchanges throughout the county.*
- **PTO 3:** *Support the delivery of the NTA’s Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy (2016-2035) in Kildare.*
- **PTO 5:** *Investigate, in co-operation with Irish Rail and the National Transport Authority, the provision of new railway stations in the county and the upgrading/relocation of existing stations, to rectify existing constraints in the network.*

The proposed development is consistent with and supports the land use policies and objectives within the Kildare County DP 2017-2023.

4.9.1.1 Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2023

The existing Blakestown level crossing is located within the boundary of the Leixlip Local Area Plan. The LAP supports the proposed DART+ Programme through objective **MT2.2** “*To support and facilitate the delivery of electrification and upgrading of the Dublin – Sligo rail line from Connolly Station to Maynooth, including improvements to Cope Bridge.*” and recognises the requirement for the removal of level crossings and re-signalling works.

Section 8.2 of the LAP (Public Transport) states “*The DART Expansion Programme is a key project in the delivery of an integrated rail transport network for the Dublin region and includes the electrification of the Dublin-Sligo rail line from Connolly Station to Maynooth, together with the removal of level crossings and re-signalling*”. It recognises that the realisation of this project will improve the number and frequency of train services in addition to improving journey times.

Lands to the north of existing Blakestown level crossings are zoned as ‘H: Industrial and Warehousing’ to “*provide for industry, manufacturing, distribution and warehousing*”. The majority of these lands are already developed and are occupied by Intel Ireland’s Leixlip Campus, with extension of the campus currently under construction. Lands to the south of the level crossing which are currently agricultural, are zoned for ‘Q: Enterprise and Employment’ to “*provide for and facilitate the provision of high job-generating uses*”.

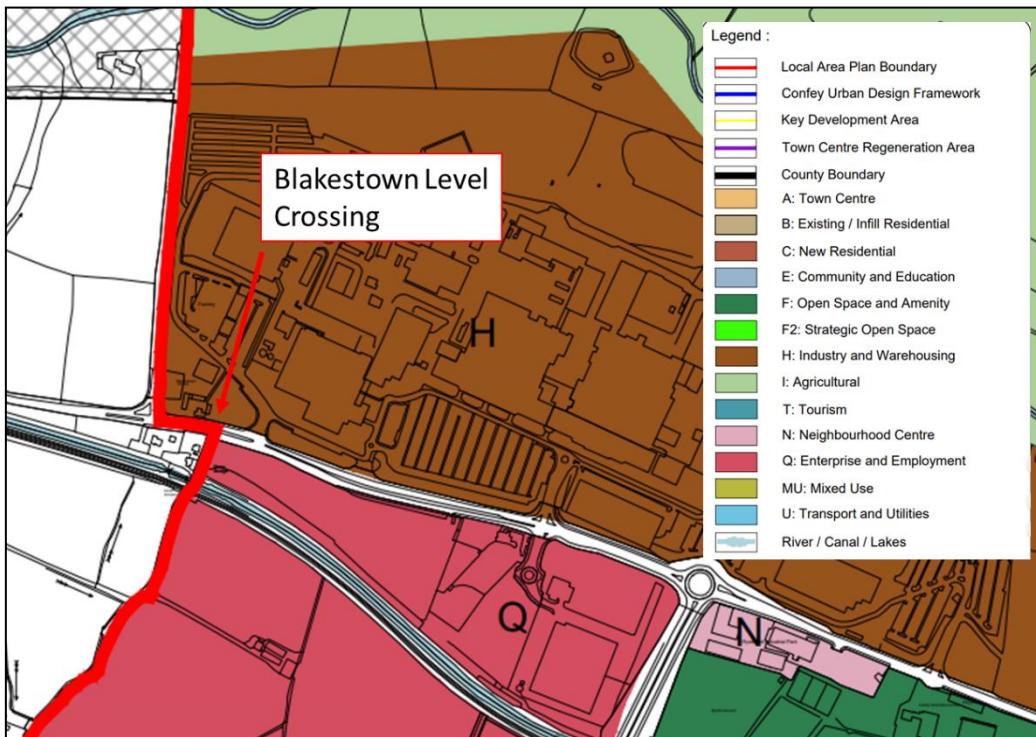


Figure 4-45 Land use zoning in vicinity of Blakestown level crossing. Source Leixlip Local Area Plan, 2020 – 2023

The Blakestown level crossing lies within the functional area of Kildare County Council. The Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 and Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020 – 2023 are relevant to these lands.

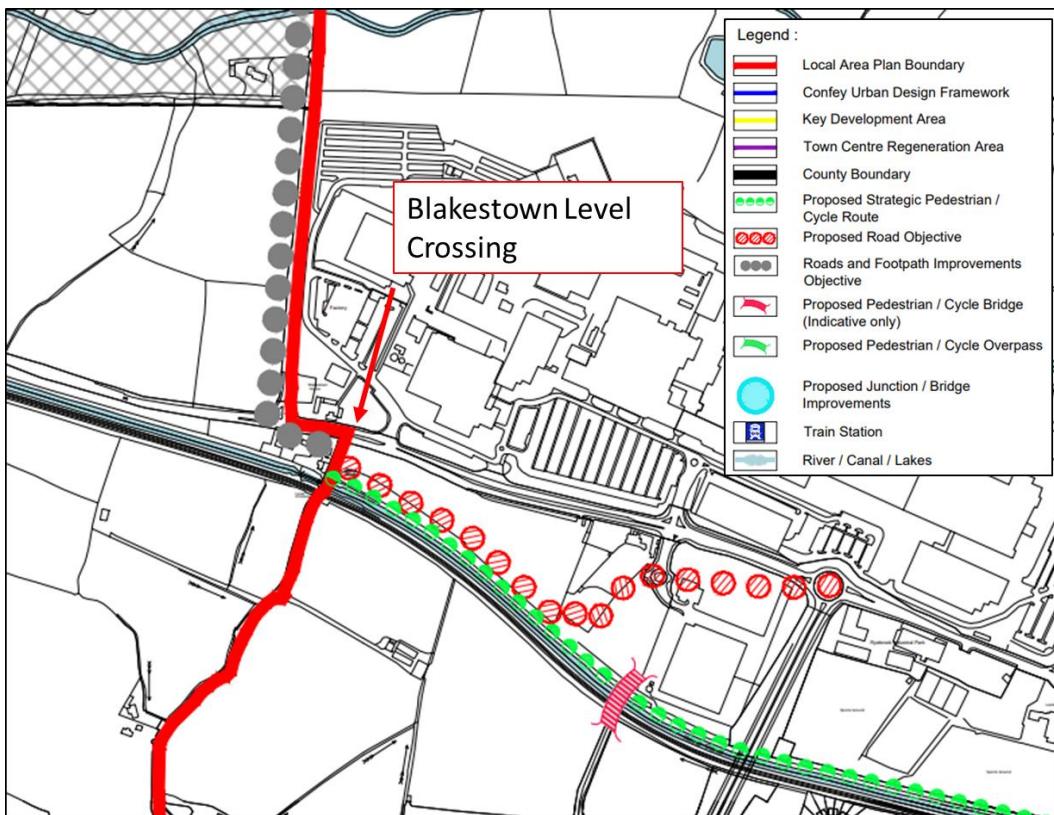


Figure 4-46 Proposed Road Network in Vicinity of Blakestown Level Crossing. Source Leixlip Local Area Plan, 2020 – 2023

As can be seen from land use zoning map, the lands to the north of the level crossing are zoned as H: Industrial and Warehousing. Lands to the south of the railway are zoned as Q: “Business and Technology”. These lands will be subject to the future Collinstown Masterplan which will aim to “promote a high environmental quality enterprise/employment zone at this strategic location in the context of North Kildare”.

The level crossing and the road network in vicinity, including the L1014 Local Road and the R148 Regional Road have a number of road improvements objectives namely Objectives MTO3.3 and MTO3.4 which relate to proposed road infrastructure at the Blakestown level crossing.

Objective MTO3.3 “To investigate the improvement of access to the masterplan lands at Collinstown (as set out in Section 12.2.1) including improved accessibility over the canal and railway line to facilitate permeability and connectivity.”

Objective MTO3.4 “To investigate the feasibility of the following road improvement schemes, to include an investigation of alternatives:

- (i) The realignment and improvement of the R149 (Confey Road) between the L1014 Leixlip Local Area Plan 2017 - 2023 46 (Kellystown Lane) and the county border with Fingal.
- (ii) The upgrading of the L1014 (Kellystown Lane) or an alternative north-south connection west of the R149”.

It is clear from the land use zoning objectives that this area will continue to grow and develop, and the development of the Collinstown Masterplan will be a key aspect in terms of defining and guiding this future development.

Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands

Lands zoned as the ‘Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands’ are located immediately to the southeast of the Blakestown level crossing. The Collinstown lands are approx. 59.6 hectares in size and are located directly

south of the railway and Intel Ireland's Leixlip Campus. The northern boundary is bound by the R148 Regional Road. The site includes portions of the Royal Canal and the Dublin – Maynooth railway line as shown in Figure 4-47 below. The Vision for the development of the Collinstown lands is “*To guide the development of a high-quality, attractive and sustainable business campus environment that is characterised by comprehensive pedestrian/cycle friendly infrastructure, which also facilitates the efficient functioning of business and enterprise activities within this zone. The implementation of best practice urban design principles within the Campus will assist in the long-term economic viability and vibrancy of the area*”.



Figure 4-47 Boundary of ‘Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands’ (adapted from Leixlip LAP 2020-2023)

In relation to movement and transport, the following design consideration for Collinstown lands have been developed:

- Main movement spine connecting all areas through the Campus development.
- Accessible streets with a focus on the free movement of pedestrians and cyclists, including those with limited mobility.
- A legible and connected street environment that is easy to navigate, assisting the most casual of users in finding their way around.

- Safe and inclusive streets that passively manage vehicular behaviour and the needs of all users; Use of cost effective materials and street furniture that are easy to maintain and are distributed in a rational manner.

The Collinstown lands will be developed under a Masterplan required by Objective COL 1.1 of Leixlip LAP 2020-2023: “*To require the preparation of a masterplan (to be developed in conjunction with relevant traffic/transport assessments) for Collinstown giving full consideration to the type and intensity of development relative to future transport options and in particular public transport provision (the potential for a rail station at Collinstown, park and ride facilities, bus network revisions and the principles and priorities set out in Section 12.6.3) and to work with the NTA in this regard. Individual applications for smaller sections of these lands will not be considered until such time as a single masterplan has been prepared and agreed in writing with the Planning Department of Kildare County Council*”.

4.9.1.1.1 Blakestown level crossing XG014

Blakestown level crossing (XG014) is located in Co. Kildare. Local Road (L81206) crosses the railway and adjacent Deey Bridge over the Royal Canal. Deey Bridge (and 13th Lock), is a Protected Structure (RPS No. B06-14) in the Kildare County Development Plan and spans the Royal Canal located north of the level crossing.

The L81206 is narrow local road of approximately 3 m in width. It has no hard shoulders and has limited verges. To the south of the level crossing the L81206 connects to the local road network and R449 while 90 m north of the level crossing the road ties into the R148 Regional Road connecting Leixlip to Maynooth. The R148 was recently realigned southwards near this junction to accommodate the expansion of the Intel Ireland campus. The R449 Regional Road which connects the R148 to the M4 Motorway lies approximately 700 m east of the level crossing and provides an alternative route for local traffic accessing the R148.



Figure 4-48 Blakestown Level Crossing

South of the existing level crossing the land both east and west of the L81206 is in agricultural use. To the northeast of the level crossing the land is occupied by the Intel Ireland Leixlip Campus. Directly northwest of the crossing there are number of houses and a bed and breakfast, north of here and the R148 there are farmlands and to the west of this lies Carton Demesne.



Figure 4-49 Deey Bridge (RPS No. B06-14)

Closure of Blakestown Level Crossing

Due to the existing low levels of use by both vehicles and active modes the proposed development will permanently close the existing Blakestown level crossing. The project has determined that it does not require the investment of alternative infrastructure at this location. There is existing vehicular access available to properties that will be severed via the R449 and R418. Access will be maintained to the future Collinstown employment lands via the R449 Regional Road which will provide direct access further access improvements are likely to be proposed as part of the Masterplan (once it is prepared).

4.9.1.1.2 Cope Bridge

At present Cope Bridge has inadequate road for its capacity, and this is currently managed through signal-controlled access for vehicles (shuttle system). The proposed development includes the resolution of this issue by separating pedestrian and cycle traffic from motorised traffic by means of two new pedestrian/cycle bridges on either side of the existing bridge which will be utilised by public and passengers travelling from Leixlip Confey Station.

Two footbridges are proposed to be constructed either side of the existing Cope Bridge in Leixlip. The lands are zoned under Leixlip Local Area Plan (LAP) 2020 – 2023 for; ‘B: Existing /infill Residential’ and ‘U: Transport and Utilities’. The proposed footbridges travel over lands zoned for F2 Strategic Open Space either side of the Royal Canal.

4.9.1.1.3 Leixlip Confey substation

A new substation is proposed to be located on a green amenity area within a residential estate zoned for B: Existing /infill Residential. The substation and the associated access road is located in a discrete location of the green space area and will not significantly affect the functionality or the overall zoning designations of the area.

4.9.1.1.4 Blakestown substation

A new substation is proposed immediately south of the Blakestown level crossing on undesignated agricultural lands within the administrative area of Kildare County Council. The lands are outside of the Leixlip and Maynooth development boundaries. There are no land use zoning objectives at this location.

4.9.1.2 Maynooth Local Area Plan 2020-2023

The existing Maynooth train station is located within the development boundary of Meath LAP 2020-2023. Relevant policies include:

PT 1 *To ensure where possible, that all public transport is accessible to the disabled.*

PT 4 *To provide greater opportunities for modal shift to public transport through the appropriate management of development particularly in the Canal Harbour area and pertaining to bus and train station facilities.*

The project is consistent with and supports the long-term realisation of objectives contained in the LAP.

4.9.1.2.1 Maynooth substation

A new substation is proposed to be located within the confines of the existing car parking area of Maynooth station. The lands are zoned under Maynooth Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013 – 2019 (amendment No. 1) for J: Transport and Utilities to “provide for and protect transportation infrastructure and public utilities”. The proposed substation supports the long-term realisation of objectives under the TU – Transport and Utilities land use zoning.

4.9.2 Depot

The proposed depot is located on agricultural lands outside the development boundary of Kilcock Local Area Plan and the Maynooth Local Area Plan. The Kildare County Development Plan (CDP) 2017 – 2023 was consulted and these lands are unzoned. There are no land use zoning objectives identified for this area or unzoned agricultural lands.

The proposed depot will cater for the maintenance and track parking (stabling) associated with the new and existing fleet of trains. The proposed depot will comprise a depot building, maintenance shed, offices and administrative building, train washing and cleaning facilities as well as other maintenance facilities. It will include a test track, stabling for trains, storage, an electrical substation, staff parking and welfare facilities for staff. Between Maynooth and the proposed Depot the current single line track will be upgraded to a double-track section. This new track will be located parallel to, and to the north of the existing single line track. The depot will be accessed from the existing road network but will require the reconfiguration of a local road and the demolition of an existing rail over bridge and the construction of a new, wider bridge connecting the R148 Regional Road to the depot.

4.9.3 Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

At the time of writing, the draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 was prepared and published for public display on 14th of March 2022. The main policies and objectives relevant to the DART+ Programme are as follows:

TM P1: Promote sustainable development through facilitating movement to, from, and within the County that is accessible to all and prioritises walking, cycling and public transport.

TM P3: Promote the sustainable development of the county by supporting and guiding national agencies in delivering major improvements to the public transport network and to encourage a shift from car-based travel to public transport that is accessible for all, regardless of age, physical mobility, or social disadvantage.

TM O9: Facilitate and secure the delivery/implementation of the public transport projects that relate to County Kildare as identified within the Integrated Implementation Plan (2019-2024), (or any superseding document), including the DART+ programme (Including DART+ West and DART+ South West), BusConnects and the light rail investments.

TM O44: support the electrification of intercity routes.

4.9.4 Summary

The proposed development will support existing and future communities in County Kildare, specifically for the population of Leixlip (Confey and Louisa Station) and Maynooth train station and their hinterlands by providing a more frequent, reliable and modern rail service increasing passenger capacity on rail line. The project will also improve pedestrian and cyclist access at Cope Bridge facilitating safe, seamless connectivity between active travel modes to public transport infrastructure.

5. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the requirements of the '2001 Act' this Report has set out the relevant legislation, policies and objectives in place at the time of lodging the Railway Order including those of the four planning authorities whose functions have, or may have, a bearing on the proper planning and sustainable development of cities, towns or other areas.

This Planning Report has demonstrated that the DART+ West project is supported by, and is consistent with National and regional policies and objectives. The National Planning Framework identifies DART+ Programme as a cornerstone of rail investment within the lifetime of Project Ireland. It identifies the need for the development of reliable, sustainable, and integrated public transport network at national level and particularly in the GDA where population and public transport demand is set to continue to increase. The proposed development will facilitate the realisation of several of the National Planning Framework national strategic objectives including: NSO 4: Sustainable Mobility, NSO 1 Compact Growth and NSO 8 Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society which is required to be achieved by 2050.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region promotes the sustainable growth of Dublin and regional centres, aligning services with population and economic growth, compact growth in urban settlements and optimising the use of infrastructure including public transport. The RSES supports the DART+ programme and the DART+ West project (Objective RPO 8.8).

The DART+ programme is supported by all local authorities in their development plans through the following policies:

- Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022: *Policy 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.*
- Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023: *MT30: Support Iarnród Éireann and the NTA in implementing the DART+ 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.*
- Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027: *ED OBJ 10 “In accordance with RPO 4.33 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, to support the continued development of Maynooth, co-ordinated with the delivery of strategic infrastructure including pedestrian and cycle linkages within the town and to the Royal Canal Greenway, DART expansion and road linkages forming part of the Maynooth Outer Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Chapter 4 Orbital Route in a manner which supports future development and population growth and builds on synergies with Maynooth University promoting a knowledge-based economy”*
- Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023: *PTO 7: Promote and support the upgrading of the Maynooth rail line and the Kildare rail line, in accordance with the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 and in co-operation with the NTA.*

Fingal Development Plan - Map based objectives

This planning policy review has found that there are a number of map-based objectives within the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 that wish to preserve the existing pedestrian and vehicular right of ways at the level crossings, namely at: Coolmine: Specific Objective 142; and Porterstown Specific Objective 137. These are currently being proposed to be amended in the Draft Fingal Development Plan 2022 - currently at public display. The traffic assessment to support the project has determined that the delivery of the DART+ Programme capacity enhancement cannot be achieved if the level crossings remain open and no infrastructure intervention is without causing significant congestion for all modes of transport on the network. Due to the increased frequency of services proposed as part of the project the level crossing would effectively be closed for a significant portion of the day with pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular traffic continuing to experience significant congestion and delays. The proposed replacement pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure supports

preserving the right of way for pedestrians and cyclists at these locations, albeit altering it. The Porterstown intervention does not propose a replacement vehicular access due to low vehicular usage and sufficient capacity within the existing road network. The proposed projects interventions supports higher level climate and transport policy, promotes active modes of travel and integration with sustainable transport by prioritising and maintaining the pedestrian and cyclist access at these level crossings. The improvements in rail services and additional capacity through the electrified fleet will support population growth and delivering on the States legally binding reductions in emissions targets required to be achieved under the 'Climate Act 2021'. The replacement pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure will provide safer, segregated, and unrestricted access/public right of way at these locations which will become a valuable asset to the community, improve residential amenity, support economic growth and public realm improvements as well as encouraging low carbon solutions and healthier/more active modes of travel in the area.

Consultation with the public, local authorities and statutory bodies has been a valuable component of the project undertaken throughout the design and environmental assessment process and has contributed to significant and positive design changes. The design has been assessed in the EIAR and NIS of the project and is the optimal design to deliver on the project objectives.

The above review demonstrates that the DART+ West Project delivers on its objectives to include:

- Cater for existing heavy rail travel demand and support long-term patronage growth along established rail corridors in the Greater Dublin Area through the provision of a higher frequency, higher capacity, electrified heavy rail service which supports sustainable economic development and population growth.
- Improve accessibility to jobs, education and other social and economic opportunities through the provision of improved inter-rail and inter-modal connectivity and integration with other public transport services.
- Enable further urban compact growth along existing rail corridors, unlock regeneration opportunities and more effective use of land in the Greater Dublin Area, for present and future generations, through the provision of a higher capacity heavy rail network.
- Deliver an efficient, sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient heavy rail network, which contributes to a reduction in congestion on the road network in the Greater Dublin Area and which supports the advancement of Ireland's transition to a low emissions transport system and delivery of Ireland's emission reduction targets.
- Provide a higher standard of customer experience including provision of clean, safe, modern vehicles and a reliable and punctual service with regulated and integrated fares.

The DART+ West project will make a significant positive contribution to the achieving multiple cross-cutting planning policy objectives across EU, national and at local planning level. The project supports the sustainable development of the GDA specifically relating to integrated planning and transportation solutions, sustainable mobility, enabling citizen participation to address climate action and will deliver a safer more efficient, low carbon, reliable and resilient rail network for communities today and into the future.

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