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**Appendix A3.1  
Public Consultation No.1  
Consultation Findings  
Report**

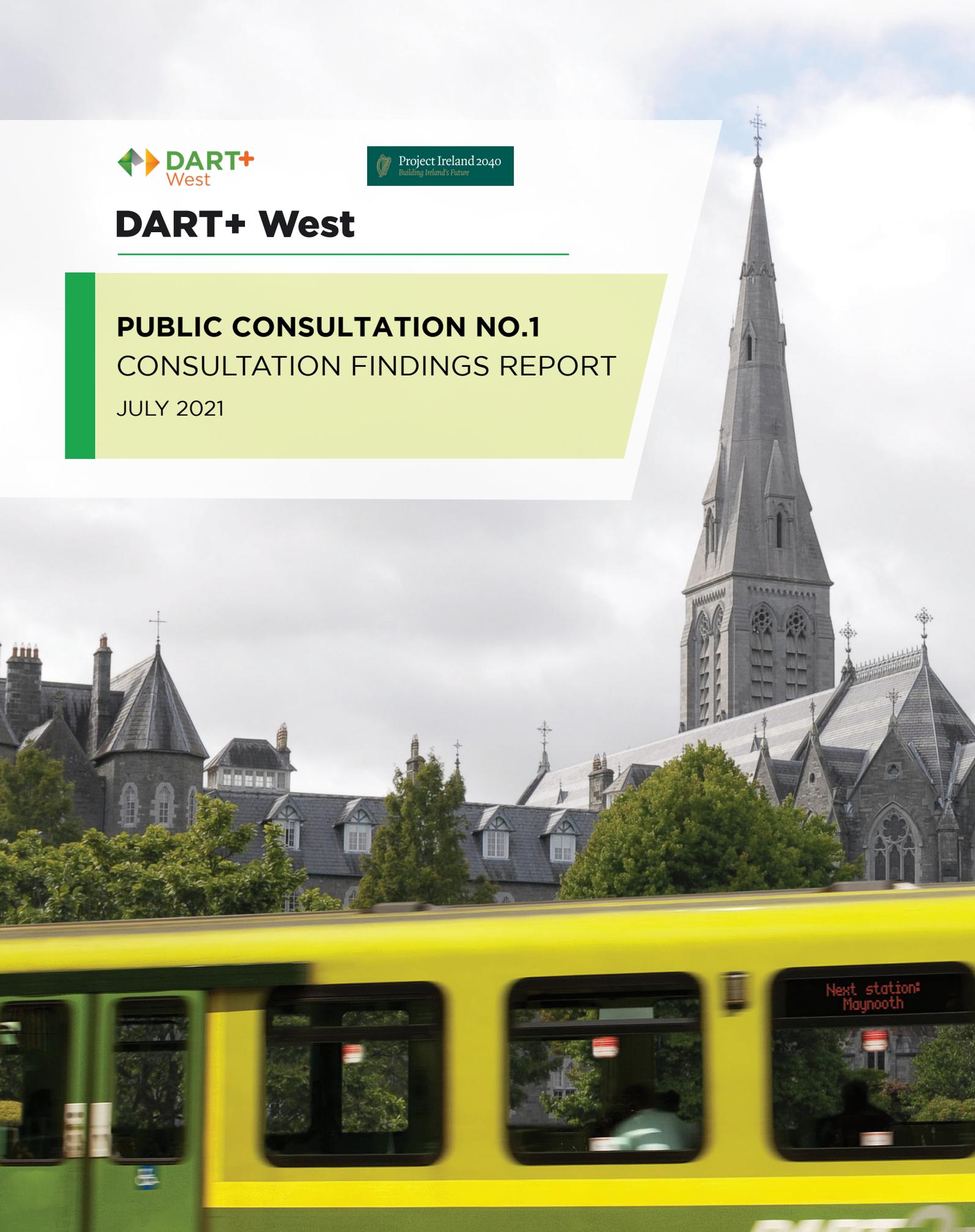
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# DART+ West

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION NO.1 CONSULTATION FINDINGS REPORT

JULY 2021



## Table of contents

|           |  |           |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Introduction.....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| 1.1.      | DART+ Programme .....  | 4         |
| 1.2.      | DART+ West .....   | 5         |
| 1.3.      | Public Consultation .....  | 7         |
| 1.3.1     | Covid-19 .....   | 7         |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Public consultation no.1 – The Emerging Preferred Option .....</b>                                  | <b>8</b>  |
| 2.1.      | Overview of Public Consultation Process .....  | 8         |
| 2.1.1     | Ministerial Launch & Media Coverage .....  | 8         |
| 2.1.2     | Elected Member Briefings .....   | 9         |
| 2.1.3     | Website .....  | 9         |
| 2.1.4     | Brochures and Leaflets .....   | 10        |
| 2.1.5     | Letters to Landowners.....   | 10        |
| 2.1.6     | Direct Correspondence via Emails, Online Forms, Project Helpline .....                                 | 11        |
| 2.1.7     | Meetings.....  | 11        |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Consultation Feedback.....</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| 3.1.      | Assessment Methodology .....   | 13        |
| 3.2.      | Overview of Submissions Received .....   | 13        |
| 3.3.      | General Themes Raised During Consultation Process .....  | 14        |
| 3.4.      | Issues Raised Outside Project Scope .....  | 14        |
| 3.4.1     | Effects of Covid-19 on Ability for Public Engagement .....   | 14        |
| 3.4.2     | Extending the Project to Kilcock .....   | 15        |
| 3.4.3     | Inclusion of a DART Station at Croke Park .....  | 15        |
| 3.5.      | Specific Feedback from the Online Forms .....  | 16        |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Summary of Key Issues or Concerns .....</b>   | <b>18</b> |
| 4.1.      | Key Issues or Concerns by Location .....   | 18        |
| 4.1.1     | Coolmine Level Crossing .....  | 18        |
| 4.1.2     | Ashtown Level Crossing.....  | 22        |
| 4.1.3     | Clonsilla Level Crossing.....  | 24        |
| 4.1.4     | Blakestown Level Crossing .....  | 24        |
| 4.1.5     | Proposed Depot.....  | 26        |
| 4.2.      | Scheme Wide Issues .....   | 28        |
| 4.2.1     | The Issues Raised Related to the Public Consultation Process and Quality of Consultation Material..... | 28        |
| 4.2.2     | Concerns Regarding Adherence to Universal Design Principles to Ensure Equal Access for All .....       | 29        |
| 4.2.3     | Noise Impacts.....   | 29        |
| 4.2.4     | Parking .....  | 29        |
| 4.2.5     | Impact on Heritage Structures – Old Schoolhouse at Porterstown Level Crossing .....                    | 29        |
| 4.2.6     | Impact on Heritage Structures – Bridge Modifications.....  | 30        |

|           |                                     |           |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 4.2.7     | Impact on Residents .....           | 30        |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Summary and Next Steps .....</b> | <b>32</b> |
| 5.1.      | Summary .....                       | 32        |
| 5.2.      | Next Steps.....                     | 32        |

**List of Appendices**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Appendix A</b> | Press Clippings from public consultation no.1 launch              |
| <b>Appendix B</b> | Presentation provided to Elected Representatives on day of launch |
| <b>Appendix C</b> | Frequently Asked Questions sheet from PC1                         |
| <b>Appendix D</b> | PC1 brochure (English version)                                    |

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. DART+ Programme

DART+ 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. The current DART network is 50km long, extending from Malahide / Howth to Greystones. The DART+ programme will increase the length of the DART network to 150km of railway corridor through the electrification and upgrade of existing lines transforming commuter train travel in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The DART+ Programme also includes the purchase of new train fleet. The DART+ Programme will deliver frequent, modern, electrified services from Dublin City Centre (Connolly & Spencer Dock) to:

- Maynooth, M3 Parkway
- Hazelhatch & Celbridge
- Drogheda; and
- Greystones

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

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

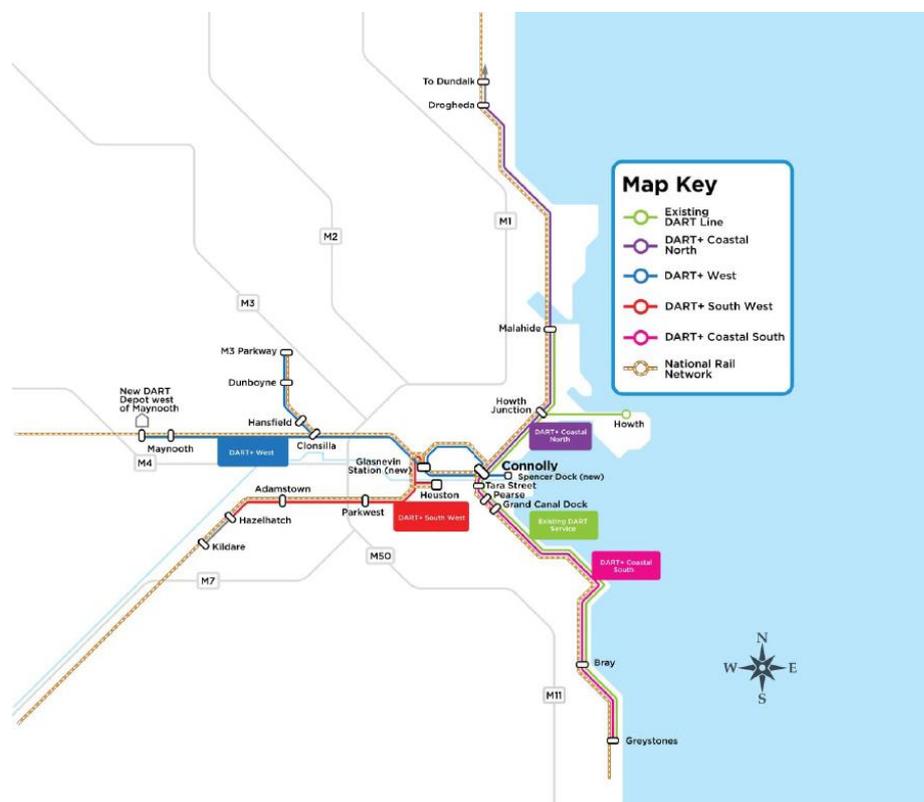


Figure 1.1 Schematic diagram of DART+ Programme extent

## 1.2. DART+ West

The first of the infrastructural projects of the DART+ programme to be delivered will be DART+ West. The DART+ West project is seeking to significantly increase rail capacity on the Maynooth and M3 parkway lines. This can be achieved by changing to electrified, high-capacity DART trains and increasing the frequency of trains.

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

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

- Level crossing replacements;
- Proposed depot;
- Construction of substations (to facilitate the provision of power to the line); and
- Use of land for temporary construction/storage compounds and all ancillary works required for the project.

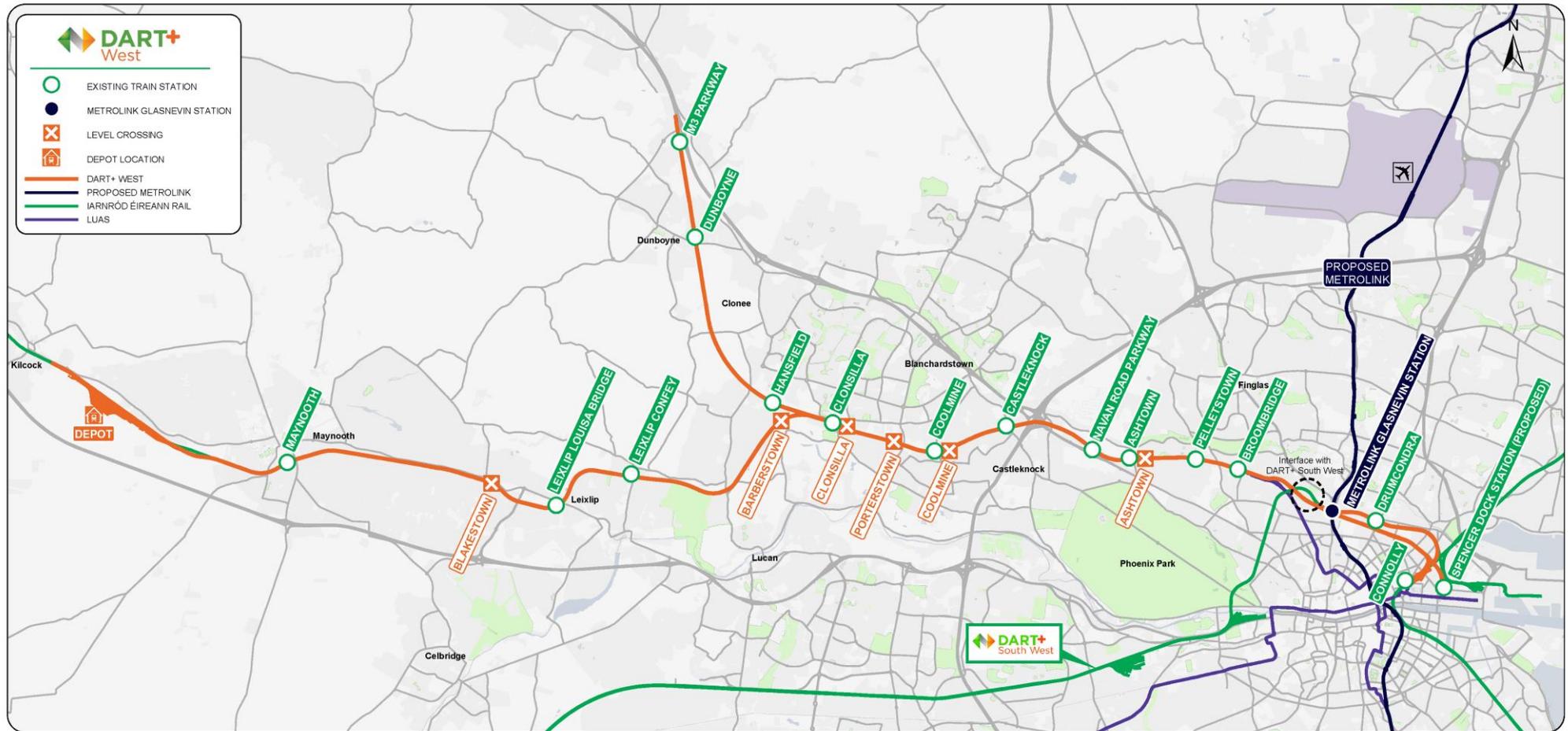


Figure 1.2 Map of proposed DART+ West project extents

### 1.3. Public Consultation

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

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

- Non-statutory public consultation no.1 emerging preferred option (Autumn 2020)
- Non-statutory public consultation no.2 preferred option (Summer 2021)
- Statutory consultation period as part of the railway order application process (Late 2021 / Early 2022)

This report details the process and records and analyses the feedback from the first of the public consultation events, public consultation no.1 the emerging preferred option.

#### 1.3.1 Covid-19

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time of public consultation no.1, which included all indoor events and gatherings being limited to six people and a localised lockdown in Kildare, the consultation strategy for public consultation no.1, focused predominantly on digital / online consultations. In order to comply with the public health restrictions, no physical roadshow / public hall events could take place. Instead, all consultation with the exception of a very limited number of on-site meetings with affected landowners/residents were conducted online (website/email/Skype/MS Teams/telephone).

## 2. Public consultation no.1 – The Emerging Preferred Option

### 2.1. Overview of Public Consultation Process

This public consultation findings report has been prepared to summarise and assess the feedback received from public consultation no.1, on the emerging preferred option. The consultation period commenced on 26th August 2020 and was initially planned to run for a period of 4 weeks. However, it was extended by a further 4 weeks, to the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 in response to representations from and on behalf of the public due to the impacts of the Covid-19 restrictions.

As described in the public consultation brochure, the consultation was an opportunity for potential users of the improved services, those likely to be affected by its development and all members of the general public, to express their views on the project plans at an early stage in the design process. On projects such as DART+ West local knowledge communicated through submissions of all types, positive or negative informs the option selection process and the design development. This feedback and engagement will ultimately assist Iarnród Éireann in improving the project and ensuring the successful delivery of a project that best meets the needs of its users and the local communities. Throughout public consultation no.1, the project team attempted to respond to all queries raised, in a timely manner. The objective was to assist the public in gaining a better understanding of the project and to encourage engagement in the consultation process. The following sections describe the various channels of communication used to notify and inform the public of the public consultation no.1.

#### 2.1.1 Ministerial Launch & Media Coverage

Public consultation no.1 was launched by the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan TD on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 (See Figure 2.1). Iarnród Éireann Corporate Communications and Media team provided a press release to all major media outlets and the launch was covered widely on the day by national media including:

- RTE News (lunchtime, Six One and 9 o'clock news programmes)
- TV3 News
- Irish Independent
- Irish Times
- Irish Daily Mail
- Irish Sun
- RTE Radio 1
- Newstalk
- Breakingnews.ie

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



Figure 2.1 Photograph from Ministerial Launch

## 2.1.2 Elected Member Briefings

On the afternoon of 26th August 2020, immediately following the ministerial launch event, a series of online briefing sessions were held with elected representatives from Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Kildare County Council and Meath County Council. A total of 66 elected representatives were invited and the presentation provided during the online briefing sessions can be found in Appendix B.

## 2.1.3 Website

A project webpage ([www.irishrail.ie/DARTMaynooth](http://www.irishrail.ie/DARTMaynooth)) was established which presented all of the project information published as part of PC1 including the project brochures (English and Irish), the flyer (English and Irish), the feedback form, the Preliminary Options Selection Report and associated annexes and drawings. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet was also developed following the initial submissions received and provided on the project website. This was regularly updated throughout the consultation period to reflect additional issues that were raised during the process. The final FAQ sheet can be found in **Appendix C**.

### 2.1.3.1 Project Webpage Analytics

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

The analytics demonstrate that the project webpage had a total of 53,116 separate page views with the largest audience viewing on the launch day 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

The project brochure had 478 downloads and the Preliminary Option Selection Report had between 370 and 1029 downloads, depending on the document. The total number of public consultation material downloads from the project webpage is shown in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 The number of public consultation material downloads from the project website**

| Material   | No. of downloads |
|--|------------------|
| DART+ Programme brochure                                 | 1407             |
| DART+ West brochure                                      | 478              |
| DART+ Public consultation leaflet                        | 298              |
| DART+ West Preliminary Options Selection Report: Annexes | 1029             |
| Preliminary Options Selection Report: Drawings           | 994              |
| Preliminary Options Selection Report: Main Report        | 636              |
| Preliminary Options Selection Report: Executive Summary  | 370              |

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 a survey was conducted on the webpage to gauge the content relevancy for stakeholders where the survey asked, ‘*Did you find the information you were looking for in relation to the DART+ project*’. The results indicated that 81.6% of the responses indicated ‘Yes’ and 18.4% indicated ‘No’. Respondents that answered ‘No’ were asked to provide some information on what they were searching for. It was found that those who could not find the information were not critical of the webpage and pages presented but had other queries relating to the project.

The results from the webpage analytics ensured that the webpage was continually improved throughout the consultation period. The improvements implemented during the course of the consultation period include:

- FAQ’s added to a dedicated page
- A quick link was added to DART+ West landing page
- Reinstate anchors at the top of the DART+ West landing page
- User experience improvements
- Navigation improvements were placed at the end of each page
- A countdown timer to indicate the closing of submissions was added to the Feedback Pages

#### 2.1.4 Brochures and Leaflets

A 72-page non-technical public consultation brochure, presenting the key details of the DART+ West project, the benefits, the option selection process and the emerging preferred option was developed and published in both the Irish and English languages. The brochure was made available on the dedicated project webpage and hard copies were issued to the elected representatives following the ministerial launch. The English brochure can be found in Appendix D.

A mail drop to c. 13,000 properties consisting of an information leaflet provided in both English and Irish highlighting the key elements of the project and notifying the local community of the commencement of the consultation was circulated in the project areas during the opening week of the consultation.

#### 2.1.5 Letters to Landowners

Letters to all registered landowners (49 in total) identified as likely to be affected by the emerging preferred option were sent via registered post notifying them in advance of the commencement of the public consultation no.1 and inviting them to provide feedback on the emerging preferred option. Details of the communication

channels to do so were provided. 9 of the letters were returned to sender and an additional follow up was made with these registered landowners to ensure awareness of the public consultation no.1. commencement and to encourage their submissions.

### 2.1.6 Direct Correspondence via Emails, Online Forms, Project Helpline

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

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

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

### 2.1.7 Meetings

Meetings were arranged with affected landowners and attended by the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and CIÉ Group Property Representatives. Over and above the phone calls made to the affected landowners, a total of 22 landowner meetings took place. Meetings were held virtually or in a limited number of cases face-to-face whilst adhering to social distancing guidance and government restrictions at that time.

#### 2.1.7.1 Public Information Webinars

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

Prior to the meetings, participants were requested to provide questions which were addressed following a bespoke presentation focusing on the relevant affected area. Each of the presentations was generally based on the main presentation as included in Appendix B but tailored to specific locations where necessary. Questions raised during the webinars were also addressed and participants were encouraged to make a formal submission as part of the consultation process. Table 2.2 provides a list of webinars and presentations held:

**Table 2.2. Public consultation no.1 webinar meetings**

| Date              | Resident Group   |
|-------------------|--|
| 27 August 2020    | Coolmine residents   |
| 3 September 2020  | Ashtown residents  |
| 7 September 2020  | Coolmine residents   |
| 17 September 2020 | Clonsilla residents  |
| 22 September 2020 | Rathbourne Residents Association   |
| 22 September 2020 | Kilcock Business Association   |
| 23 September 2020 | Kirkpatrick, Delwood, Stations Court, Sheepmoor Lane, St. Motchta's Grove residents (Coolmine) |
| 24 September 2020 | Riverwood and Luttrell Park residents (Coolmine)   |

| Date              | Resident Group                 |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 25 September 2020 | Disability Users Group         |
| 1 October 2020    | Blanchardstown Area Committee  |
| 14 October 2020   | Navan Road / Ashtown residents |

### 3. Consultation Feedback

#### 3.1. Assessment Methodology

All submissions received either via post, telephonic communication, online form feedback or email were analysed. The issues, comments and suggestions were then logged in a searchable database after being tagged in relation to the key items noted in the submission. All letters received were scanned and treated as email submissions.

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

#### 3.2. Overview of Submissions Received

The submissions received and the meetings with registered landowners, make a total of 1785 engagements for public consultation no.1.

A total of 1,763 submissions were received by Iarnród Éireann via the communication channels provided (email, online feedback form and/or helpline calls). Submissions received after the close of the public consultation period (21 October 2020) were still accepted and taken into consideration. This figure includes submissions that were received up until the 9 November 2020. The feedback received ranges from personal submissions from affected residents and commuters to detailed proposals from public bodies and various associations. A breakdown of the feedback received is indicated in Figure 3.1 below.

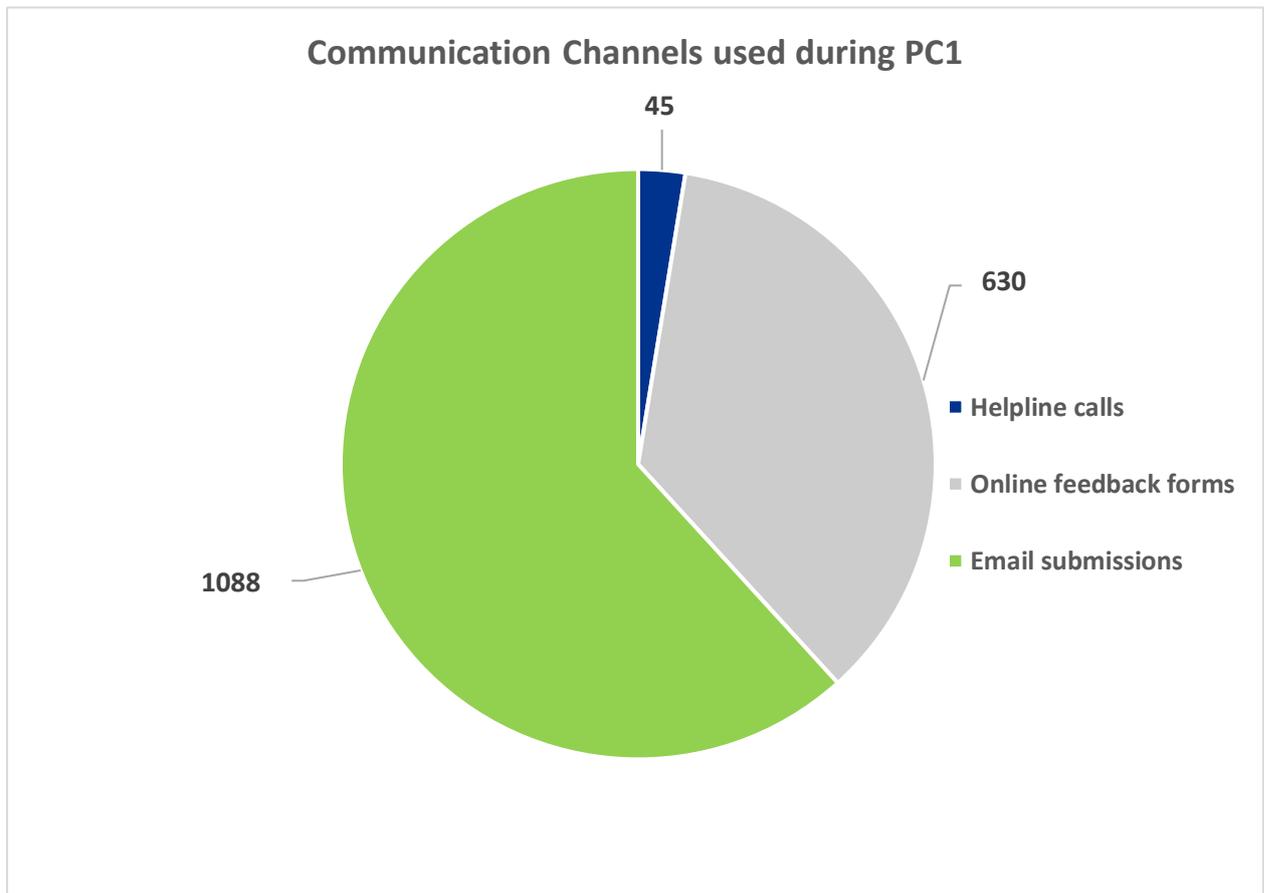


Figure 3.1. Submissions and queries communication channels

Due to the digital nature of the public consultation, it was common for the respondents to submit queries seeking further information or clarity regarding the emerging preferred options. Of the 1088 email submissions, 25 contained both comments and queries, 999 consisted of comments only and 64 solely contained queries.

Of the 1088 email submissions, 133 were identified as being automated submissions generated via the Uplift campaign website relating to the emerging preferred option for Coolmine level crossing. These submissions were treated in exactly the same manner as all other email submission.

### 3.3. General Themes Raised During Consultation Process

All of the 1,763 submissions received by Iarnród Éireann were reviewed and the issues raised were categorised, summarised and analysed. During the review process a total of 18 themes were identified and are indicated in Table 3.1 below.

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

| Theme                          | Frequency    |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Traffic / Accessibility        | 675 comments |
| Environmental (General)        | 607 comments |
| Noise                          | 414 comments |
| Communication/Public relations | 403 comments |
| Air Quality                    | 345 comments |
| Landscape (Visual impact)      | 329 comments |
| Health                         | 305 comments |
| Anti-social behaviour          | 288 comments |
| Suggestions/ideas              | 243 comments |
| Safety                         | 224 comments |
| Land use planning              | 213 comments |
| Option Selection Process/MCA   | 196 comments |
| Property value loss            | 188 comments |
| Biodiversity                   | 131 comments |
| Parking                        | 92 comments  |
| Water                          | 25 comments  |
| Mobility                       | 18 comments  |
| Heritage                       | 16 comments  |

### 3.4. Issues Raised Outside Project Scope

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

#### 3.4.1 Effects of Covid-19 on Ability for Public Engagement

As noted above there were several submissions received that requested the consultation period be extended or delayed due to the Covid-19 public health restrictions. Respondents were concerned that the initial time

frame for the public consultation was too short, particularly during the Covid-19 restrictions where it was difficult for residents to meet and discuss the project.

In response to the requests made by the public, the consultation period was extended by 4 weeks. Iarnród Éireann also accepted submissions received after the consultation period had closed. The public were also advised that there will be a second round of public consultation on the preferred option and statutory consultation at the time of the railway order application.

### 3.4.2 Extending the Project to Kilcock

A total of 219 submissions were received requesting that consideration should be given to extending the electrification west to Kilcock or even further to Enfield. Respondents highlighted the growing population of Kilcock and expressed dissatisfaction that the electrification was not being extended to and/or beyond Kilcock.

#### Response

At present, Kilcock Station is a single platform station. Continuation of DART+ to Kilcock would require construction of double track into along a very narrow railway corridor, necessary overbridge modifications and the reconstruction of Kilcock Station to provide the necessary train infrastructure. This would present significant difficulties at the station and be disruptive to Kilcock town centre. The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2016-2035) has concluded that the DART+ will extend to Maynooth / M3 Parkway. The outer areas of the Greater Dublin Area and the outer Regions will continue to be served by numbers of diesel train services, albeit at increased frequency. These train services will be augmented by the M4 / N4 regional bus network.

The NTA have commenced a review of the Transport Strategy, which will consider the existing and future demand and changes in demand since the last strategy. It will consider all options for servicing demand along the corridor including rail-based options. Electrification of the Sligo line beyond Maynooth remains an objective of Iarnród Éireann. It has been agreed that the NTA will consider the next phase of electrification on the Sligo Line and the required service levels to meet passenger demand in a review of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. This review is scheduled for the end 2021. It is important to note that the works now proposed along the Maynooth Line will not preclude future electrification of the line to Kilcock and further west.

### 3.4.3 Inclusion of a DART Station at Croke Park

51 submissions requested that the DART+ West project should include a station at Croke Park to serve the stadia and local community. This included a motion adopted by the Dublin City Council Central Area Committee.

#### Response

A number of physical and operational constraints exist on the existing railway lines in the Ballybough area that would reduce the potential for an additional station, and these are presented below:

##### Physical Constraints

On the GSWR line (more northern line crossing the Ballybough Road) the railway is in a restricted area heading east of Ballybough Road towards Connolly and is elevated on a series of bridges and arches and not suited for location of a station. West of Ballybough Road the current gradient and tight curvature of the existing track geometry is not in accordance with standards for the provision of a station. Siting stations and platforms on tight curves introduces large stepping gaps and creates accessibility issues.

Furthermore, the elevated nature of the existing railway, which is on a 4-metre high embankment in this area, would raise issues regarding overlooking and visual impact on adjacent residential properties.

On the MGWR line (line closer to the city and adjacent to the Royal Canal) the railway east of Ballybough Road is in a tight cutting parallel to the Royal Canal alongside Clonmore Terrace where there is limited space to the railway boundary and is not a suitable place to locate a station. West of Ballybough Road and towards Coke Park there is again a steep gradient issue identified. Impact on surrounding properties would also be an issue with limited space available.

### Operational Constraints

This section of the railway is a highly congested area with services from the Sligo line, Maynooth line, M3 Parkway line and Phoenix Park tunnel lines all converging on the city centre and it would be particularly disruptive to place a suburban stop in this area on the approach to the city. While some trains currently get held here on approach to the station to stop all suburban services so close to Connolly, an area where we have capacity issues would cause operational disruption impacting on other movements around the Connolly area for example on the northern line.

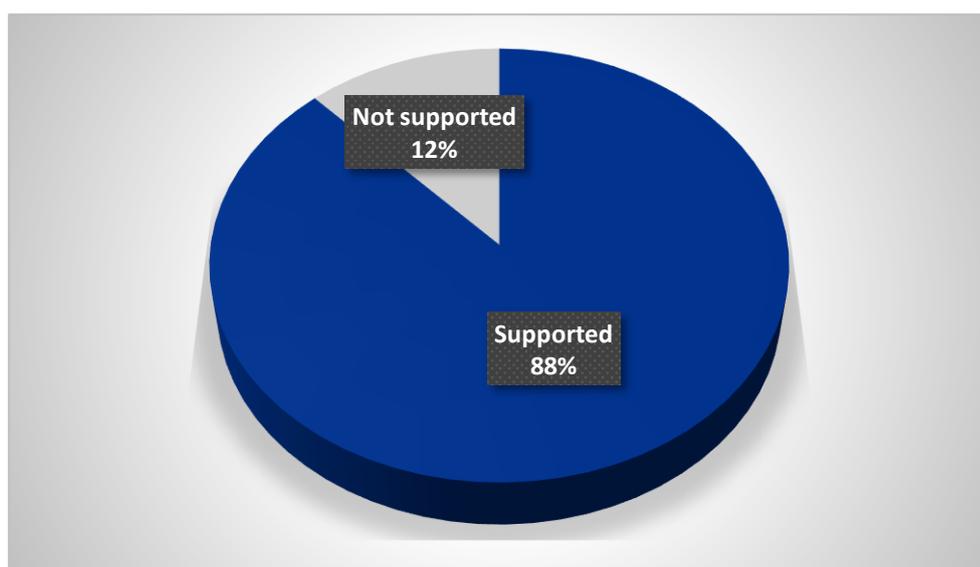
### 3.5. Specific Feedback from the Online Forms

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

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

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

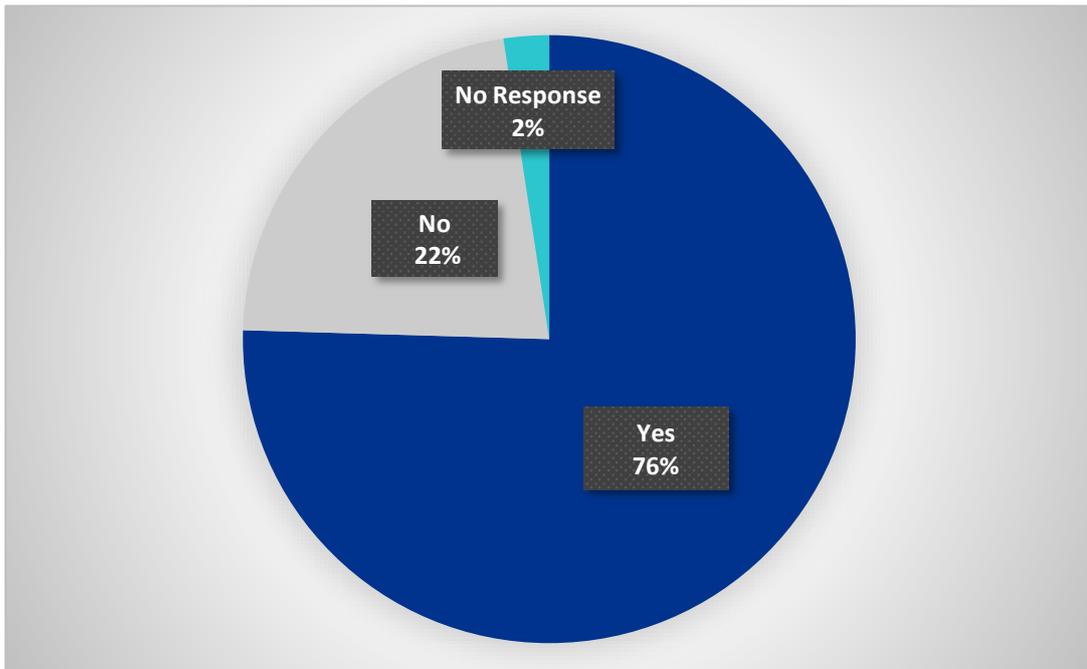
Figure 4 below shows the percentage of responses expressing their support or not for the principle of the DART+ Maynooth Line (West) project. As shown 88% of the 630 feedback forms submitted expressed support for the principle of the electrification of the rail line and increasing train capacity, while 12% indicated that they do not support the principle of DART+ Maynooth Line project.



**Figure 3.2** Percentage of public submissions in response to Question 2 of the online feedback form

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

The feedback indicates that with improved services, 76% of the respondents will be encouraged to change from travelling by private car to public transport, while 22% indicated 'No' and 2% did not provide a response (Figure 5).



**Figure 3.3** Percentage of public submissions in response to Question 6 of the online feedback form

## 4. Summary of Key Issues or Concerns

### 4.1. Key Issues or Concerns by Location

While a wide variety of issues were raised in the submissions this section provides a summary of the principal issues or concerns related to the specific locations of the project. The chart below shows the locations/project elements most referenced within the submissions. Note that many of the references to Clonsilla were as part of Coolmine based submissions. Issues outside of the scope such as extending to Kilcock and Enfield and the inclusion of a station at Croke Park are not included.

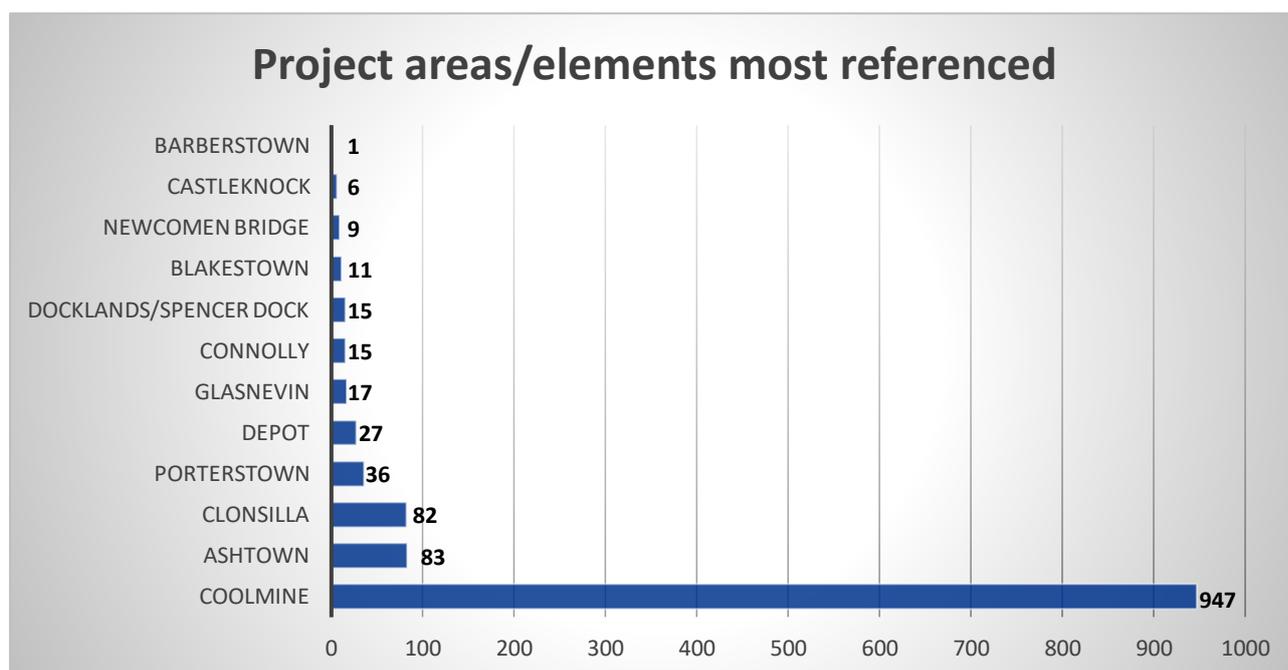


Figure 4.1 Project areas/elements most referenced

#### 4.1.1 Coolmine Level Crossing

The emerging preferred option for the Coolmine level crossing replacement received the largest number of submissions, a total of 947. This includes both queries and submissions. The following are the main issues or concerns raised and the typical responses provided by Iarnród Éireann during the consultation period:



**Figure 4.2 Coolmine level crossing replacement options**

#### **4.1.1.1 Request for Further Consideration of Signalling Upgrade at Coolmine Level Crossing**

Respondents requested that Iarnród Éireann keep the Coolmine level crossing open and upgrade the signalling in lieu of the construction of a new road bridge crossing. It was also queried whether keeping one level crossing open would prevent the electrification of the Maynooth line. Comparisons were also made to level crossings between Lansdowne and Merrion Gates where the DART is in operation with level crossings in place.

#### **Response**

At present at the Coolmine level crossing, for the current 6 trains per hour per direction (tphpd), the level crossing gates are closed for 41.5 minutes out of 60 minutes between 08:00-09:00. The DART+ West involves re-signalling along the Maynooth Line to reduce block sections between signals to specifically increase train capacity and decrease train headways. However, the re-signalling will not remove the rail/road conflicts at the level crossing. The projected increase in capacity from 6 tphpd to 12 tphpd will result in closure of the level crossing. Without mitigation this will have a significant negative impact on connectivity (for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles) across the railway corridor. It is to mitigate the effects of this severance that Iarnród Éireann are proposing new bridges across the railway. DART+ West is seeking to close the level crossings on the Maynooth Line however DART+ Coastal South will progress designs for the removal of level crossings between Lansdowne and Merrion Gates. Level crossing by virtue of the road environment and the rail environment being that the same grade and having to share the space places capacity constraints. As Iarnród Éireann seeks to increase train numbers there will be a longer period of level crossing gate closures and less time for traffic queues to clear the gates before they are closed again.

#### **4.1.1.2 Traffic Impacts Created by a New Bridge at Coolmine**

Respondents were concerned that the emerging preferred option will lead to increased traffic congestion around the Blanchardstown Town Centre and areas such as Coolmine, Carpenterstown, Clonsilla and as far away as Chapelizod village. Residents from Riverwood Estate were also particularly concerned about the traffic impacts within their estate.

#### **Response**

The Maynooth Line Transport Study (CSEA/Systra, July 2019) is the reference document in relation to the traffic impact appraisal of level crossing closures and the traffic mitigation provided by the construction of replacement bridges across the rail/canal corridor. This is provided in Annex 3.1 of the Preliminary Option Selection Report provided on the public consultation website ([www.irishrail.ie/DARTMaynooth](http://www.irishrail.ie/DARTMaynooth)). Section 3 of this report (Page 32) provides information on all automatic traffic counts (35 No.) and junction turning counts (48 No.) undertaken. Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.11 shows the locations of each automatic traffic count and junction turning count. This information was used to calibrate and validate the local area model, to provide an accurate representation of traffic movements within the study area. Section 4.2 of this report (Page 56) details the overall methodology followed in the road-based assessment.

The transport assessment undertaken for the Maynooth Line level crossing closures concluded that a vehicular/cyclist/pedestrian bridge to serve Coolmine communities and the wider area (north and south of the railway/canal corridor) is very important to existing and future traffic management, however further traffic analysis will be undertaken prior to the selection of the preferred option. If the level crossing is closed without the provision of a new relief bridge, then the capacity of Diswellstown Road/Dr Troy Bridge as currently configured would be adversely impacted. Journey times for road users would be increased and future land use development potential would be impacted.

Please refer to Section 5.1 of this report for details on the further consideration of this issue.

#### **4.1.1.3 Environmental, Health and Safety Concerns in Relation to the New Bridge at Coolmine**

Concerns were raised that the diversion of traffic from its existing route and through a currently quiet residential area will have an impact on the living conditions for residents because of increases in noise and air pollution. Respondents have expressed concerns relating to the impacts on the environment, health and well-being and the safety of residents.

#### **Response**

Environmental impacts are a key consideration to the option selection process and all likely significant environmental effects will be assessed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report which will be lodged as part of the Railway Order process and available as part of a statutory consultation at that time.

#### **4.1.1.4 Concerns Relating to the Overly Technical Nature of the Material and Issues with the MCA**

Respondents found that the Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) process of selecting an emerging preferred option was confusing and that there were colour coding discrepancies in the comparative analysis of the options.

#### **Response**

Iarnród Éireann acknowledge that there have been some errors in the application of the ranking process but are satisfied that the process is robust and that the errors do not materially change the emerging preferred option published during PC1 at the Coolmine level crossing.

Additional information gathered during and following public consultation no.1, including ongoing surveys and public submissions will further inform the options assessment process and design development. The MCA matrices will be reassessed and recalibrated to determine the preferred options for DART+ West, which will be published at the next round of public consultation and presented in the Option Selection Report.

As stated in the Preliminary Options Selection Report (POSR), the Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) matrices and process for the project has followed the “*Department of Transport Tourism and Sport (DTTAS), Common Appraisal Framework (CAF) for Transport Project and Programmes March 2016*”. Adherence to this process is a requirement for this optioneering phase of the project. The documents published as part of public consultation no.1 (PC1) including the Preliminary Option Selection Report (POSR) are working documents and have been published as working documents. We take on board the observations from this submission and other submissions and as part of the next stage in the process we will include more information and technical analysis so that the decision-making process is more transparent to the public.

#### **4.1.1.5 Concerns About Noncompliance of the EPR at Coolmine with the Local Objectives of the Fingal County Development Plan (Objectives 141 and 142)**

Respondents expressed concern regarding the non-compliance of the Coolmine emerging preferred option with the following local objectives of the Fingal County Development Plan:

- Objective 141 Prohibit any road bridge at this location (across the train line and canal at Riverwood/ Station Court - Blanchardstown South Sheet No. 13)
- Objective 142 Preserve the existing pedestrian and vehicular right of way at the Coolmine Level Crossing

#### **Response**

At PC1 the project team presented a number of options developed to alleviate the traffic impacts and severance caused by the closure of the level crossing. The team are aware of these local objectives and have been in consultation with Fingal County Council on this and all project issues. The project team is also aware of the higher-level objectives in the Fingal County Development Plan supporting the implementation of DART Expansion (now DART+).

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

*‘Objective 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.’*

*‘Objective 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.’*

All planning policy will be considered during the review and update of the MCA of the level crossings in advance of the identification of the preferred option.

### 4.1.2 Ashtown Level Crossing

The emerging preferred option for the Ashtown level crossing received the second highest number of queries and submissions, a total of 83. The following are the main issues or concerns raised and the typical responses provided by IE during the consultation period.

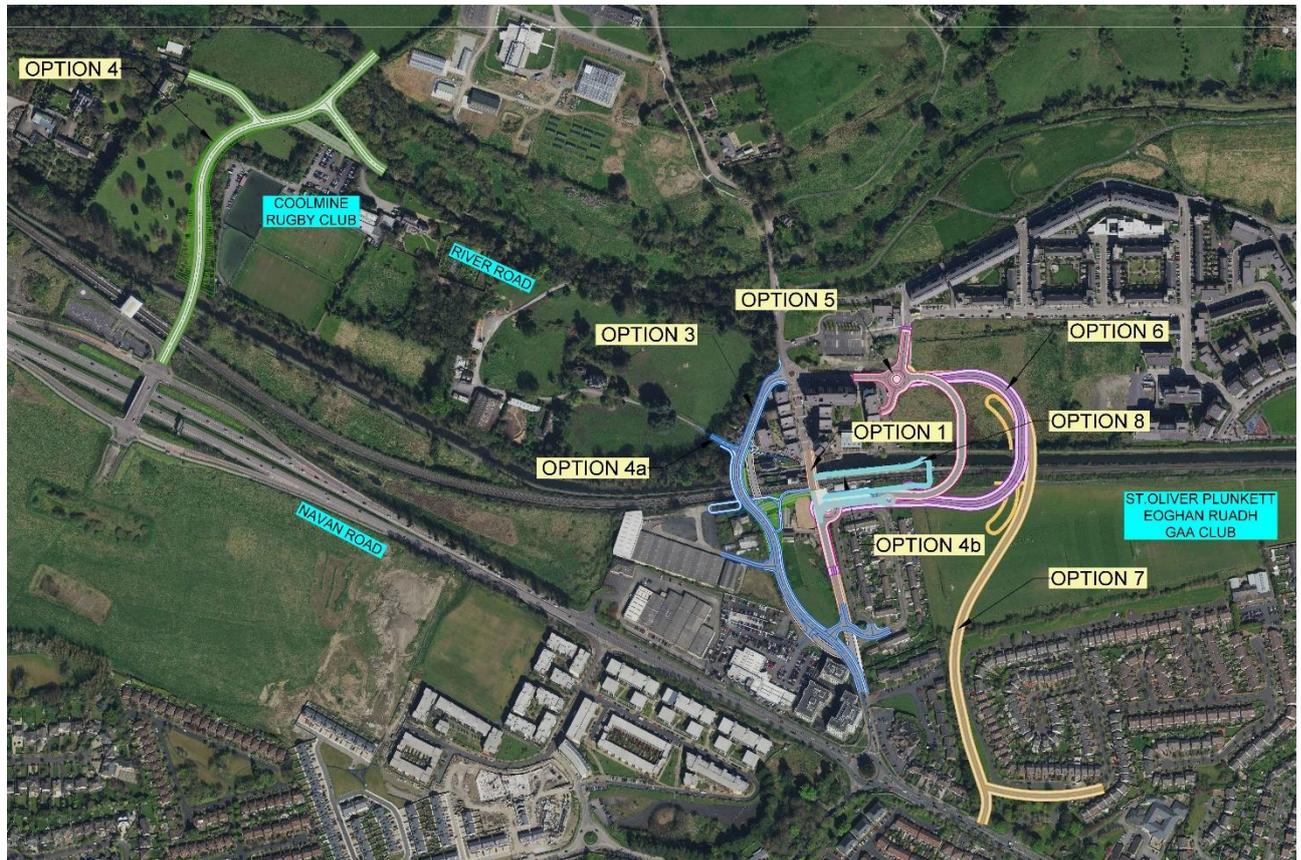


Figure 4.3 Ashtown level crossing replacement options

#### 4.1.2.1 Community Severance Concerns Due to the Closure of the Level Crossing and the Circuitous Diversion Route for Elderly Residents Accessing Shops or the Opposite Platform

Respondents expressed community severance concerns due to the proposed circuitous diversion route for elderly residents accessing shops or the opposite platform at Ashtown Station. The concerns particularly relate to the difficulties that the local elderly and mobility impaired residents will face due to the gradient and length of the underpass.

#### Response

As the level crossing is required to be closed, Iarnród Éireann are providing an alternative route for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular traffic as close to the existing level crossing location as feasible. The site of the existing level crossing is very constrained with commercial properties to the north, the protected structure to the north west and the station and residential properties to the southeast of the level crossing. The presence of the existing canal bridge and the footbridge along with the locks and the significant level differences between the canal and the rail significantly restrict the options available. The alternative pedestrian route will be designed for universal access.

IE have noted the concerns raised by the public at public consultation no.1 and the preferred option now includes a bridge with a lift and stairs will be provided immediately adjacent to the existing level crossing within Ashtown station. This accessibility bridge will be accessible to the general public as well as passengers during station hours. Further detail on this bridge is provided within the Option Selection Report and other material published as part of public consultation no. 2.

Please refer to Section 5.1 of this report for details on the further consideration of this issue.

#### **4.1.2.2 Loss of Green Space in Martin Savage Park**

Respondents expressed discontent at the removal of the amenity area and mature trees in Martin Savage Park for the proposed set down area at Ashtown.

#### **Response**

DART+ West is seeking to provide additional passenger capacity along the entire route and for all stations. Pick up and drop off and turning facilities are proposed at Ashtown because DART+ West is creating a cul-de-sac due to the level crossing closure. The proposals for efficient and effective turn back of vehicles is consistent with road design guidelines and standards. DART+ West must provide sufficient improvements for all users, be they vehicle users, cyclists and pedestrians including mobility impaired users at Ashtown to ensure proper design and sustainable development for the project.

The comments have been noted regarding the loss of green space and Iarnród Éireann have committed to undertaking further design development of the emerging preferred option.

Please refer to Section 5.1 of this report for details on the further consideration of this issue.

#### **4.1.2.3 Concerns About Safety of Underpass and Anti-social Behaviour**

Respondents have stated concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and the safety of the pedestrian under pass

#### **Response**

The underpass will be designed in order to maximize the openness of the structure and to enhance the feeling of safety. The structure will only be 30 metres in length and will be approximately 5 metres high. There will also be public lighting provided through the underpass. As this will be the main public road there will be a high level of usage thereby reducing the likelihood of antisocial behaviour. Iarnród Éireann have committed to reviewing the integration of CCTV usage at the underpass.

#### **4.1.2.4 Concerns About Flooding in Martin Savage Park**

Respondents have expressed concerns over the impact that further developments will have on the flooding in the Martin Savage Park area.

#### **Response**

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is currently being prepared for the DART+ West Project. The FRA will analyse areas identified as liable to flood and advise on appropriate flood risk management measures as per "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (OPW 2009). Initial findings from the FRA will be included in material published as part of public consultation no.2.

### 4.1.3 Clonsilla Level Crossing

Concerns were expressed about the traffic impacts of the closure of the Clonsilla level crossing and whether there would be any impact on the Clonsilla Urban Strategy.

#### Response

Iarnród Éireann has conducted a transport study to assess the level of necessary infrastructure in lieu of closing the level crossings. This traffic study has taken account of existing traffic and future projected traffic demands. This future projected demand has factored in the development of the Kellystown lands to the south of Clonsilla and the Barnhill lands to the west of Clonsilla.

The Clonsilla Urban Strategy recommends that Clonsilla should maximise residential densities to take advantage of its proximity to the railway corridor and availability of high-quality public transport. The Strategy also highlights the high green amenity lands bound between the R121 and the railway corridor.

Further, DART+ West is compliant with later national transport and land use Policy, including Project Ireland 2040 and the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area.

### 4.1.4 Blakestown Level Crossing

Concerns were expressed and a submission was received by the Elected Members of the Celbridge-Leixlip Municipal District Member in which a Motion was received to call for a bridge for cyclists and pedestrians that can allow access to the Royal Canal Greenway.

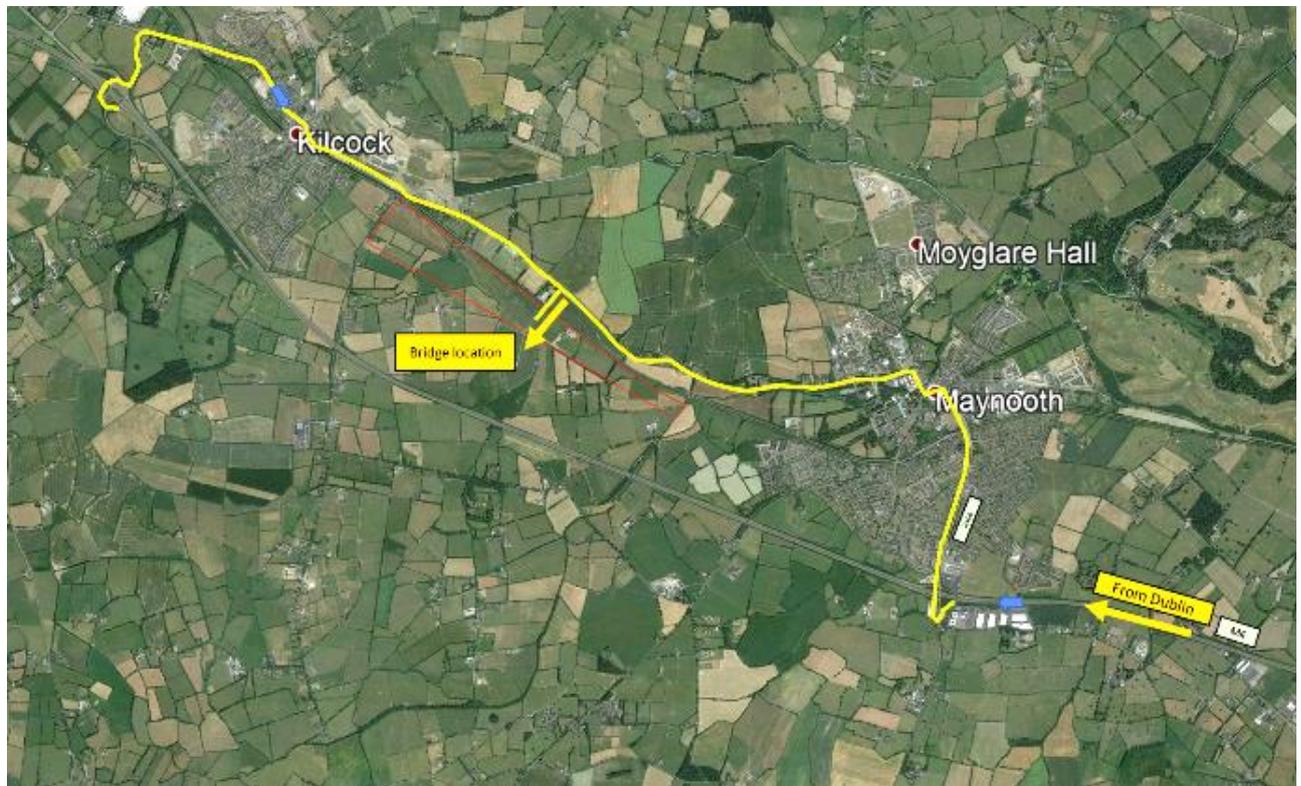
#### Response

An option for a pedestrian and cyclist bridge has been considered as part of the options assessment as presented in the Preliminary Options Selection Report and in the Option Selection Report published as part of this public consultation no.2. . The Do-Minimum option has been selected as the preferred option. This will result in the closure of the level crossing with no new bridge provided due to the low-level usage of the level crossing and the proximity of alternative access.



**Figure 4.4 Blakestown level crossing emerging preferred option (Do-Minimum)**

#### 4.1.5 Proposed Depot



**Figure 4.4 Proposed depot location west of Maynooth**

The principal concerns expressed in relation to the location of the proposed depot were:

##### 4.1.5.1 Impact in Terms of Traffic, Road Safety and Access to the Town

Respondents highlighted concerns about road safety and the adverse impacts that heavy goods vehicles will have on traffic and access to the towns of Maynooth and Kilcock.

##### Response

As part of the options development for the depot area four possible access routes were assessed under the Multi Criteria Assessment (MCA) process to determine the optimal option. Option 1 discussed the possibility of changing the road in question (Connaught Street) to a one-way traffic flow. Following completion of the MCA it was determined that option 4 which involves an access route off the R148 was determined to be the emerging preferred option. The emerging preferred option for the depot layout includes for an emergency access point located south east of the bend in Connaught Street as it turns south. Slight road widening works may be required to the bend to improve road safety. It is not envisaged that Connaught Street will need to be one-way traffic to facilitate the emergency access point.

##### 4.1.5.2 Environmental, Tourism, Health and Safety Issues Relating to the Depot

Respondents expressed concerns relating to the impact of the depot on topics such as the environment, local tourism, human health and safety. The main environmental issues raised include the impact on biodiversity, light and noise pollution and the impact on the visual landscape of the area.

## Response

Options studies were undertaken which identified this as the optimum location for a depot on the network. The environmental impacts of the depot at this location will be addressed and included in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report which will be lodged as part of the railway order process and available as part of a statutory consultation at that time. These studies include all of the environmental issues raised above.

### **4.1.5.3 Concerns in relation to the Site Selection Process of the Emerging Preferred Option location at Maynooth**

Concerns were raised regarding the selection process of the Emerging Preferred Option location at Maynooth compared to an alternative location at Hazelhatch West. Specific issues were raised regarding the criteria and appraisal outputs of the Formal Appraisal stage, this includes: Economy where capital and operating cost have not been explicitly considered in monetary terms, Integration where the integration of the depot with sustainable transport modes has not been considered and Accessibility and Social Inclusion where the accessibility of the depot itself as a workplace from deprived geographic areas or those without access to cars was not considered. Respondents also expressed that the process lacked the required transparency and required level of robustness.

## Response

It is considered that the level of detail provided in the report was sufficient for the purposes of a high-level site selection process. Site specific surveys and assessments on the proposed depot site have been underway since 2020 to inform the Environmental Impact Assessment process. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report which will be provided as part of the railway order application will provide all of the detailed information.

### **4.1.5.4 Concerns about non-compliance of the EPR with land use**

Respondents highlighted that the lands between the Local Area Plan boundaries of Kilcock and Maynooth are zoned for agricultural uses and not for future development purposes.

## Response

Irish Rail has selected the depot location based on a site selection and assessment process which included an assessment of sites across the GDA. It is recognised that the proposed depot impacts on agricultural land uses however the options assessment process determined that when compared with all of the sites on a range of criteria to include: Integration, Economy (costs), Accessibility and Social inclusion, Physical Activity and Environmental considerations, that this site was the preferred.

### **4.1.5.5 Severance impacts on agricultural operations due to the removal of overbridge**

Concern was raised that the construction of the depot would give rise to a significant severance impact with the existing private overbridge forming the only access to the southern part of the landholding being removed with no provision being made to include an alternative agricultural access. Alternative access via a new public road would impact on farming operations.

## Response

As a requirement of the Railway Order and land acquisition process, all private lands will be provided with access where any existing access is severed. A public road access will be required for access to the depot from the R148 and this will facilitate access high quality access to private lands on both sides of the railway line at this location.

#### **4.1.5.6 Inadequacy of the road network**

Concern was expressed that it is unclear why the Maynooth West location scored positively under the 'road vehicle access criterion' due to the characteristics of the R148 (meandering horizontal alignment with limited visibility) and that the proposed development is deemed premature pending the completion of the R148 upgrade by Kildare County Council. Respondents highlighted that the additional development related traffic and high volume of HGV will have a significant impact on traffic.

#### **Response**

It is not considered that the depot will generate significant volumes of road traffic during the operational phase and that regional road access would be considered adequate for the quantity and type of vehicles accessing the depot site. Any junction proposals for connecting to the R149 would be designed to current standards and likely result in improvements to the R148 horizontal alignment at this location.

#### **4.1.5.7 Increased Flooding Risk**

It was raised that the proposed depot construction could impact the current drainage arrangements on the land holding at the depot site and that the increased flood risk would have a significant further adverse impact on the viability of the farm.

#### **Response**

Flooding issues will be addressed by appropriate design measures, in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment report which will be prepared and submitted as part of the Railway Order application for the project.

#### **4.1.5.8 Impact on Newcomen Bridge and Royal Canal Navigation for Boaters**

Some respondents highlighted a concern about the impact that the project will have on the use of the Royal Canal as a viable waterway. Specifically, the concerns relate to the impact on Newcomen Bridge and Royal Canal navigation.

#### **Response**

The DART+ West will not cause any change to the Newcomen lifting bridge and the current Iarnród Éireann/Waterways Ireland procedure will continue to facilitate boat movements.

## **4.2. Scheme Wide Issues**

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

### **4.2.1 The Issues Raised Related to the Public Consultation Process and Quality of Consultation Material**

Respondents raised concerns regarding the accessibility of the online public consultation material for those less comfortable with technology. A number of respondents also stated that the public consultation was not adequately advertised, such as at the train stations on the DART+ West line.

#### **Response**

As presented in Section 2 of this report, an extensive consultation process was undertaken at multiple levels to ensure that as many people as possible could access the information. All comments received will be taken

on board in the planning for public consultation no.2 with the aim of ensuring all relevant members of the public are informed about the consultation process.

#### **4.2.2 Concerns Regarding Adherence to Universal Design Principles to Ensure Equal Access for All**

Respondents stated that accessible service regardless of age, size, ability or disability should be provided for in the proposed DART+ West project.

##### **Response**

Accessibility is an important aspect of the design of the DART+ Programme. Where new interventions are made as part of the DART+ Programme, Iarnród Éireann will ensure that this is step free access. Furthermore, Iarnród Éireann will continue its rollout of the accessibility programme under funded projects. Together, DART+ and the Accessibility Programme will improve access to person's with reduced & impaired mobility and passengers with sensory impairments.

#### **4.2.3 Noise Impacts**

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

##### **Response**

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

#### **4.2.4 Parking**

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

##### **Response**

Under DART+ it is not proposed to provide any additional parking facilities at stations. However, Iarnród Éireann's Network Enhancement Division and the National Transport Authority's Park & Ride Development Office are working on another project to deliver enhanced parking at stations, for cars and bicycles in parallel to DART+ West.

#### **4.2.5 Impact on Heritage Structures – Old Schoolhouse at Porterstown Level Crossing**

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

##### **Response**

Architectural heritage and landscape impact are two of the parameters assessed as part of the Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) for the level crossing replacement options at Porterstown. The relative impact of each option on these parameters was identified in the Preliminary Option Selection Report and this will be further updated in the Option Selection Report to reflect feedback, consultations and further surveys. The project team has

briefed Fingal County Council on the proposed replacement options at Porterstown, and the associated constraints with each option.

#### **4.2.6 Impact on Heritage Structures – Bridge Modifications**

##### **Issue**

Respondents expressed concern over the need to modify heritage structures, particularly the bridges along the length of the Royal Canal.

##### **Response**

The project team have considered the architectural heritage of these structures in the options assessments and physical interventions to these heritage structures will only be undertaken where absolutely necessary. In most cases works are confined to the railway bridges in proximity to the canal bridges and works will be restricted as much as possible to avoid any potential impact on these structures. A conservation architect has contributed to the options assessment process and will play a key role in the selection of the preferred option at each of these heritage structures. A full architectural heritage assessment of the proposed development and all protected structures impacted by the proposed works will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

#### **4.2.7 Impact on Residents**

Residents in proximity to the rail line have raised concerns relating to the construction and operational impacts that the project will have on them.

##### **Response**

###### Construction Phase

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

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

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

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

### Operational Phase

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

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

## 5. Summary and Next Steps

### 5.1. Summary

The purpose of this public consultation process was to present the emerging preferred option for the proposed DART+ West project and to request the views of the public. A total of c. 1,700 submissions were received during the consultation period covering a broad range of concerns from the public. All submissions received as part of the first round of public consultations will feed into the option selection process and the selection of the preferred option. The project team will analyse the submissions and consider all relevant information in the re-evaluation of the Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA). This re-evaluation will also include the further refinement of the options design and additional elements which will be brought forward in the selection of the preferred option

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

1. Consider the methods of advertisement of the consultation event to the public to maximise the reach of the notification.
2. Consider CCTV provision to address the security and safety concerns at the Ashtown underpass.
3. Consider an alternative solution for the set down area at Martin Savage Park.
4. Consider universal access options at Coolmine and Ashtown stations as part of the DART+ West project.
5. Further investigate the possibility of improving the signalling at Coolmine to avoid the requirement for the closure of the level crossing.
6. Consider an option that does not provide any new road traffic bridge at Coolmine but does provide a pedestrian and cyclist bridge.
7. Consider an option along the alignment of the existing Coolmine Road that incorporates a drop lock and the removal and reconstruction of the protected canal bridge.

### 5.2. Next Steps

Following the update of the options assessments the preferred option will be presented at public consultation No.2 which is planned for Summer 2021.

All feedback received on the preferred option at public consultation no.2 will feed into the development of the preliminary design, railway order and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

