

DART+ Depot Project Report

Appendix B – DART+ West: Planning Context

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DART+ Depot

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1. Policy Context

1.1 DART+ Programme

The 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 50 km in length to over 150 km. The DART+ Programme's will 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.

The principal programme components are as follows:

Electrification and re-signalling of the Maynooth line from Maynooth Train Station east, the M3 Parkway line, the Belfast Line between Dublin and Drogheda, the Wexford Line between Dublin and Greystones, the Cork Line between the Dublin Docklands and Hazelhatch (approximately 150km in length);

Capacity enhancements at Connolly Station (to include modifications to junctions and the station) to facilitate increased train and passenger numbers;

Provision of a new Spencer Dock Station, which will better serve the north Docklands area and improve interchange with the Luas;

Closure of level crossings and provision of replacement bridges where required;

Interventions at existing bridges over the rail line where there are insufficient clearances for the overhead electrification equipment.

Substations, electrical buildings and all other civil and ancillary works as necessary to accommodate the programme;

Construction of new Centre of Excellence DART Depot facilities to accommodate the maintenance and parking (stabling) of trains;

At the time of preparation of this study the DART+ Programme was extended to include extension of the DART+ service to Kilcock.

DART+ Programme Objectives

The updated 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, Kilcock, 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:

Catering 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.

Improvement of 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.

Enabling further urban compact growth along existing rail corridors, unlocking 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.

Delivering 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.

Providing a higher standard of customer experience including provision of clean, safe, modern vehicles and a reliable and punctual service with regulated and integrated fares.

DART+ Programme Need and Strategic Fit

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.

Project Ireland 2040 comprising the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) and the supporting investment package contained in the National Development Plan. 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 the DART+ Programme is now approved in principle under the National Development Plan 2021-2030 and both DART+ West and DART+ Southwest have been approved by An Coimisiún Pleanála while DART+ Coastal North has been lodged with An Coimisiún for approval of a Railway Order application.

The requirement for increased capacity through the implementation of the DART+ Programme is multifaceted and will be transformative for the GDA transport landscape. The delivery of the proposed DART Programme will enhance heavy rail infrastructure and will similarly contribute to the incremental transformation of the national heavy rail network. At an international level, the DART+ Programme supports Ireland's commitment to fulfilment of its obligation as an EU member state regarding both greenhouse gas emissions and the improved functionality of heavy rail services and integrated land use planning with sustainable mobility. The DART+ Programme is a cornerstone transport project and will assist with supporting both the European Green Deal, and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy as well as and climate action commitments.

Notwithstanding the benefits of improving sustainable transport options, the programme is fundamental to supporting the economic and social growth that has been highlighted by the National Planning Framework and county development plans. The DART + Programme will facilitate multi-modal journeys through the improved integration with other modes including LUAS, the proposed Metrolink, proposed BusConnects, proposed LUAS Finglas, the Royal Canal Greenway and other sustainable mobility infrastructure. The DART+ Programme is aligned with the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the National Planning Framework.

All existing stations on the railway corridor between Connolly Station and Spencer Dock Station to Kilcock Station and M3 Parkway Station will be catered for by more sustainable electrical rail network allowing a shift towards low emission passenger and modernised electrified fleet. The frequency and quality of service that will be provided will secure a viable transport alternative to existing and future communities along the route and support a modal shift to help support a climate resilient low carbon economy.

The Programme within National Policy

The DART+ Programme is central to the delivery of planning and transportation policy objectives at EU, national, regional and local level. The policy hierarchy and some of the relevant policy documents are listed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Planning and Policy Documents

European Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU White Paper on Transport: Roadmap to a single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system • EU Green Deal
National Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework First Revision and the National Development Plan 2021-2030 • 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 2025 • The White Paper: Ireland’s Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030
Regional Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 • Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042 • Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan 2022 • Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024
Rail Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2030 Rail Network Strategy Review • Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027 • All-Island Strategic Rail Review • IÉ Rail Freight 2040 Strategy
Local Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, as varied • Fingal Development Plan 2023 - 2029 • Barnhill Local Area Plan 2019-2025 • Kellystown Local Area Plan 2021

- **Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029**
- Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2023, as amended (extended to 2026)
- Maynooth and Environs Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031
- Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021 (expired)
- **Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied**
- **South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2022-2028**
- Clonburris Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme (2019)
- Adamstown Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme (2014, as amended in 2017, 2020 and 2023)
- **Dun-Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028**
- Woodbrook – Shanganagh Local Area Plan 2017-2023 (as extended to 2027)
- **Wicklow County Council Development Plan 2022-2028**
- Bray Municipal District LAP 2018-2024 (expired)
- Greystones – Delgany & Kilcoole LAP 2013-2019 (expired)
- **Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027**

1.2 DART+ Programme in Policy

Table 1-1 of Section 1.2 of this report provides a list of the principal policy documentation examined in confirming the status of the DART+ Programme in current policy. Consideration of the DART+ Programme for alignment with the policy documentation is set out below.

1.2.1 European policy

The EU is striving to achieve a climate neutral European continent by the year 2050. This commitment is evidenced in the Paris Agreement, an international legally binding agreement to address climate change and subsequently tackle carbon emissions. To achieve climate neutrality, policies such as the European Green Deal and The 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.

1.2.1.1 **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 strategy 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.*

1.2.1.2 European Green Deal

The European Green deal addresses the task of transforming the European economy from a holistic perspective whereby essential facets of modern life such as reliable and efficient infrastructure must be made more climate friendly. Transport in the EU contributes roughly 5% to the EU GDP and currently, transport emissions represent around 25% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions. While being critical, transport must adapt to become far more efficient in its resource use as per the 2030 climate & energy framework. The EU aims to reduce the transport related emissions by 90% from 1990 levels by the year 2050. The intermediary target of a 55% reduction by the year 2030 was also set. Such vast targets require strategic choices when it comes to transport.

High speed rail is one of the most environmentally positive choices with regards to public transport. This is true particularly, considering the EU's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy which targets transport and mobility under three 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, three 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 the policy will be enacted so that the pricing of transport will reflect the environmental impact associated with the respective mode chosen.

1.2.2 National policy

1.2.2.1 Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 was launched in February 2018 and comprises the National Planning Framework, Our Plan 2040, the National Development Plan 2021 – 2030. Project 2040 is a long-term overarching strategy which aligns investment decisions with a clearly defined development strategy and ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSO), as shown in the section below.

The NPF together with the NDP sets the context for each of the three regional assemblies to develop their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) 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.

1.2.2.2 National Planning Framework First Revision

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. On 8th April 2025, the Government approved the National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision which signals the conclusion of the NPF revision process which has been underway since June 2023.

The NPF succeeded the previous National Spatial Strategy and has a statutory basis. It is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland out to the year 2040. The Framework is revised and updated to take into account changes that have occurred since it was published in 2018 and to build on the framework that is in place. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for our people, and to protect and enhance our environment - from our villages to our cities, and everything around and in between.

The overarching ambition of the NPF is to *"to create a single vision, a shared set of goals for every community across the country"*. This will be achieved with the following vision by:

- developing a region-focused strategy for managing growth; linking this to the Project Ireland 2040 National Development Plan;
- using public and private lands for certain strategic purposes with a more active approach to the management of land;
- supporting this with strengthened, more environmentally focused planning at local level; and backing the framework up in law, with oversight by the Office of the Planning Regulator in the overall context of Ireland's existing international and EU obligations and commitments.

The NPF predicts and plans for a population increase 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.

The NPF recognises that more balanced growth between the regions is necessary because Dublin and to a lesser extent, the Eastern and Midland area has witnessed the biggest concentration of population, homes and jobs growth. The plan seeks to allow Dublin to grow at a sustainable rate, targeting a roughly 50:50 distribution between Dublin and the Eastern & Midland Regions and the Southern and Northern and Western Regions combined. Growth is also targeted at the five cities (Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford), however the NPF recognises that the cities are not evenly distributed across the three regions, with Sligo and Athlone expected to fulfil regional roles to a greater extent than elsewhere.

There are ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) identified within the framework. **NSO 5: Sustainable Mobility** is identified as being central to enhancing competitiveness, sustaining economic progress and enabling mobility choices for citizens. NSO 5 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 5 also commits to invest in key transport projects such as the DART+ Programme, Luas, 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 Carbon Neutral 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 1-1 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) and Strategic Investment Priorities of the NPF (Source: Updated Draft Revised National Planning Framework 2024)

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 link to Metro Link. Delivery of the metropolitan cycle network and BusConnects project are also identified as enablers and will interact positively with DART+ West project.

1.2.2.3 National Development Plan 2021 – 2030

The updated National Development Plan 2021–2030 (NDP) 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.

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 in 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 5, 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.

In July 2025, the Programme for Government set out a review of the National Development Plan (NDP). The review identified that €102.4 Billion has been allocated to Departments for the 2026-2030 period. The list of projects has not been published at the time of writing.

1.2.2.4 National Sustainable Mobility Policy 2022

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 1-2 below.

Table 1-2 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
Better Integrated Mobility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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+ Depot will facilitate the completion of the DART+ Programme project which 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+ Depot project.

1.2.2.5 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.



Figure 1-2 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 1-3 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 1-3 NIFTI modal hierarchy

1.2.2.6 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. This Act provides 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 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 improvements 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.

1.2.2.7 The Climate Action Plan 2025

The Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP25) was approved by Government in April 2025, subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. CAP25 sets out a roadmap of specific actions in various sectors including road transport. The Climate Action Plan 2025 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. CAP25 builds upon CAP24 by “refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and it should be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024”.

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.

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.

Avoid-Shift-Improve framework for transport sustainability was introduced in CAP23 (see Figure below) and this approach has been applied again in CAP25 to categorise all actions.

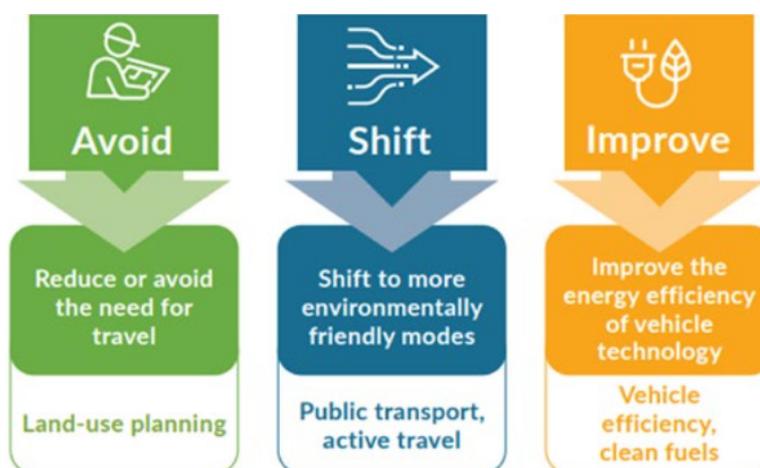


Figure 1-4 ‘Avoid - Shift -Improve’ framework (Source: Climate Action Plan 2023)

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+ Depot project which directly supports the implementation of the DART+ Programme, are actions across transport targets, decarbonisation, land use integration and citizen engagement and participation. No change has been made to the key performance indicators which were provided in CAP23 to set out the level of change required to meet a 50% compliant pathway. Key **Transport targets** include:

- 20% reduction in total vehicle kilometres travelled relative to business-as-usual.
- 50% reduction in fuel usage.
- significant increases to sustainable transport trips and modal share.
- Fleet electrification and biofuels will continue to provide the greatest share of emissions abatement in the medium term.

As set out in CAP24, measures to deliver targets include “*significant investment in new public transport infrastructure is required to deliver on our carbon emissions reduction targets, and to provide people with the sustainable alternatives to private car usage*”. 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 public transport projects and programmes such as Metrolink, DART+ and BusConnects programmes.

Actions for 2025 “*reflect continuation of, and are in line with, agreed policies set out in CAP23 and CAP24*”. **Action No. TR/24/12(TF)**: “*Progressing appraisal and planning for DART+ Programme, including lodgement of railway order for DART+ Coastal North*” is of relevance to the proposed DART+ Depot Project and was included in CAP24.

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 at least 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+.

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+ Programme 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.

1.2.2.8 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).

1.2.3 Regional policy

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

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (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+ in 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.

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.

1.2.3.2 Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042

The *Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042* has been prepared and published by the National Transport Authority (NTA). The Strategy provides a framework for further investment in services and infrastructure across the region, covering Dublin, Meath, Wicklow and Kildare over its period. The Transport Strategy aligns with the national policies on sustainability, including climate action and low carbon legislation. The Transport Strategy has been developed to be consistent with the spatial planning policies and objectives set out in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) as adopted by the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly in June 2019.

The overall aim of the Strategy is “to provide a sustainable, accessible and effective transport system for the Greater Dublin Area which meets the region’s climate change requirements, serves the needs of urban and rural communities, and supports the regional economy”.

Four objectives have been developed to support the delivery of the overall aim:

- **An Enhanced Natural and Built Environment:** To create a better environment and meet our environmental obligations by transitioning to a clean, low emission transport system, increasing walking, cycling and public transport use, and reducing car dependency.
- **Connected Communities and Better Quality of Life:** To enhance the health and quality of life of our society by improving connectivity between people and places, delivering safe and integrated transport options, and increasing opportunities for walking and cycling.
- **A Strong Sustainable Economy:** To support sustainable economic activity and growth by improving the opportunity for people to travel for work or business where and when they need to, and facilitating the efficient movement of goods.
- **An Inclusive Transport System:** To deliver a high quality, equitable and accessible transport system, which caters for the needs of all members of society.

The Strategy emphasises the importance of the enhancing the environment with a low-emission sustainable transportation system through an increase in walking, cycling and use of public transport. As such, the Strategy commits to increase the existing active travel and public transport journeys by

500,000 by 2035. In relation to rail, the Strategy contains a number of aims, some of which are of relevance to the proposed development:

- DART Services on all lines into Dublin.
- Over 100km of new electrified rail lines.
- 65,000 additional daily passengers.
- Delivering high quality rail to serve major housing development areas.



Figure 1-5 Proposed 2042 DART & Commuter Rail Network

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 RAIL3 – DART Extension: The NTA and Irish Rail will, over the lifetime of the Strategy, extend the DART to deliver electrified rail services to the following towns: Sallins / Naas; Kilcock; and Wicklow.

Measure RAIL 5 – Regional and Intercity Services: The NTA will continue to work with Irish Rail to improve regional and intercity services which will benefit connectivity within and to the GDA.

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 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 PT1 – Steady-State Maintenance of Public Transport: The NTA and transport operators will ensure that existing public transport infrastructure, including roads, road markings and signage, and fleet will be maintained at a high standard and renewed at the appropriate time.

Measure PT2 – Climate Proofing New Public Transport Infrastructure: The NTA will ensure that all new public transport infrastructure is proofed for resilience against the potential impacts arising from climate change.

The proposed Dart+ Depot Project will facilitate the implementation of the DART+ Programme which is supported by the GDA Strategy.

1.2.3.3 Greater Dublin Cycle Network Plan 2022

The National Transport Authority (NTA) prepared the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Cycle Network Plan 2022 as part of the GDA Transport Strategy 2022- 2042. The GDA Cycle Network represents a progressive and forward-looking approach, enabling cycling across a broader geographic area to accommodate the region's growing population. The cycle network expands to encompass various areas of the GDA, including district centres, towns, urban fringe areas, and Strategic Development Zones (SDZs).

The primary objective of the GDA Cycle Network is to create an inclusive cycling environment that promotes safety and accessibility for individuals of all ages and cycling abilities, while establishing strong connections between residential areas and key destinations.

The proposed network of primary, secondary and greenway routes that will help support cycling in the vicinity of the study area is shown in the Figure 1-6, and will be taking into consideration as part of the DART+ Depot Project.

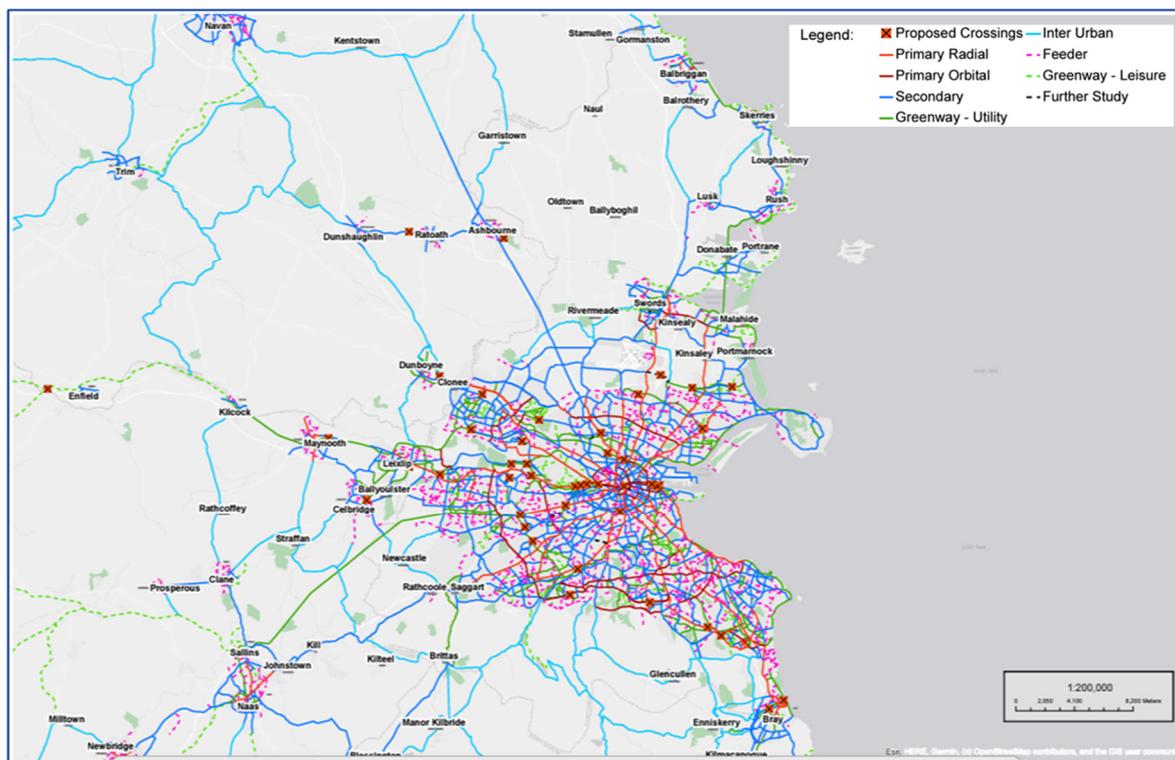


Figure 1-6 Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan 2022 (part of)

1.2.3.4 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 2016-2035 and 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+ Programme.

1.2.4 Rail Policy

1.2.4.1 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 in the greater Dublin area emphasises the need to increase the capacity and the frequency of rail services which will be facilitated by the proposed DART+ Programme.

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.

1.2.4.2 *Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027*

ÍÉ prepared the 2017 Strategy for its national railway network. The Strategy will aid ÍÉ 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. 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.

1.2.4.3 *All-Island Strategic Rail Review*

The All-Island Strategic Rail Review was published in July 2024 after an extensive Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Public Consultation in July 2023. This Strategy was joint commissioned by the Department of Transport in Ireland and the Department of Infrastructure in Northern Ireland and sets out 32 strategic recommendations in order to enhance the rail system across the island of Ireland up to 2050, aligning with net zero carbon emission commitments within both jurisdictions. The strategic vision of this Rail Review is “to deliver an accessible, efficient, safe and sustainable transport system that supports communities, households and businesses”. In order to pursue this vision, the recommendations “seek to transform the quality of the rail system to the benefit of passengers and wider society on the island, involving additional track capacity, electrification, increased speeds, higher service frequencies and new routes”. The recommendations in this Rail Review have been developed through an evidence-based review taking into account goals such as connectivity, sustainability, and economic feasibility.

To summarize, the Rail Review’s recommendations are as follows:

- **Additional capacity:** upgrading much of the single-track rail network to double-track, with four-track in some areas.
- **Faster services:** new 200kmh (125mph) intercity trains, with rail journey times between cities significantly reduced – in some cases, halved.
- **Higher frequency:** train services at least hourly between cities and at least every two hours on regional/rural routes.
- **Decarbonisation:** a net carbon zero rail system, primarily through the overhead electrification of intercity routes and new electric trains.
- **Greater reach:** the rail network route length would increase from circa 2,300km to almost 3,000km with the reopening of former and new rail lines.
- **Wider access:** facilitated by new routes in the North Midlands and Northwest, 700,000 more people would live within 5km of a railway station.

- **More passengers:** almost tripling the number of people using the rail system annually from circa 65 million to over 180 million by 2050.



Figure 1-7 Heavy Rail Network with the All-Island Strategic Rail Review Recommendations, Extracted from the All-Island Strategic Rail Review

The Review's recommendations are divided into three indicative time horizons: short-term to 2030, medium-term between 2030 and 2040, and long-term between 2040 and 2050. The Review has prioritised the following considerations which also align with the proposed development's project programme, these are as follows:

- **Electrification** and **decarbonisation** interventions are likely to be seen as a priority. This will enable rail to make a greater contribution to the decarbonisation of the wider transport system as soon as possible, while also delivering material improvements in journey times on existing railways.
- Many electrification interventions could be delivered alongside online **speed** and **capacity enhancements**, and so these are also prioritised in the early part of the programme.
- Iarnród Éireann's plans to expand rolling stock fleets should enable **regional frequency enhancements** and **direct regional services** to be introduced in the relatively near future.

The All-Island Strategic Rail Review is fully aligned with the objectives of the DART+ Programme as it seeks to contribute to decarbonisation, improve intercity connectivity, enhance rural and regional accessibility, encourage sustainable mobility, and fostering economic activity.

1.2.4.4 IÉ Rail Freight 2040 Strategy

The IÉ Rail Freight 2040 Strategy was developed to address one of Ireland's most underutilised assets, the rail freight network. From the European to the National level, strategies such as the EU Green Deal, Project Ireland 2040, and the RSES all reflect on the need for sustainable development, a regional balance, and the priority to decarbonising transport systems. This strategy states the importance of revitalising the rail network because "rail is inherently more energy efficient than road transport and the development of an expanded rail freight sector represents a real opportunity to reduce carbon emissions from transport while enabling sustainable growth." After extensive stakeholder engagement and the analysis of potential demand, this strategy was developed in order to achieve a sustainable rail freight system for Ireland which will aid in achieving national environmental policy targets and population projection targets, compact growth, enhanced regional connectivity, and sustainable mobility while also bringing about wider societal and economic benefits.

The IÉ Rail Freight 2040 Strategy includes associated service developments, outlines the need for organisational change, and 25 strategic initiatives with an estimated investment of €500 million up until 2040 which aims to transform the rail freight infrastructure and enable IÉ to better support businesses and modernise supply chains with the goal of making rail an integral part of Ireland's freight transport. This strategy outlines a plan to develop a network of intermodal freight facilities starting with Dublin and Limerick which will extend over time to include small tactical terminals in Cork, Galway, and Sligo. Tactical Rail Freight Terminals (TRFTs) "will be developed in Cork, Galway and Sligo to establish a cross-county network of rail freight facilities. In collaboration with road operators these terminals will expand the reach of rail freight and provide sustainable intermodal freight options to businesses across the regions." Moreover, the re-establishment of Marino Point to the rail network was highlighted under the Strategy's 2040 Investments in order to connect Marino Point to the Port of Cork which will allow for the movement of bulk commodities by rail, to and from the Port of Cork.

The implementation of this Strategy is phased in order to take account of certain project priorities, market conditions, realistic project implementation schedules, and technical considerations. The core areas of investment are as follows:

- 1) Enhancement of infrastructure at sea ports;
- 2) Development of a network of inland intermodal terminals, and;
- 3) Purchase of required rolling stock.

An outline of the phased implementation of this strategy is shown below in Figure 1-8.

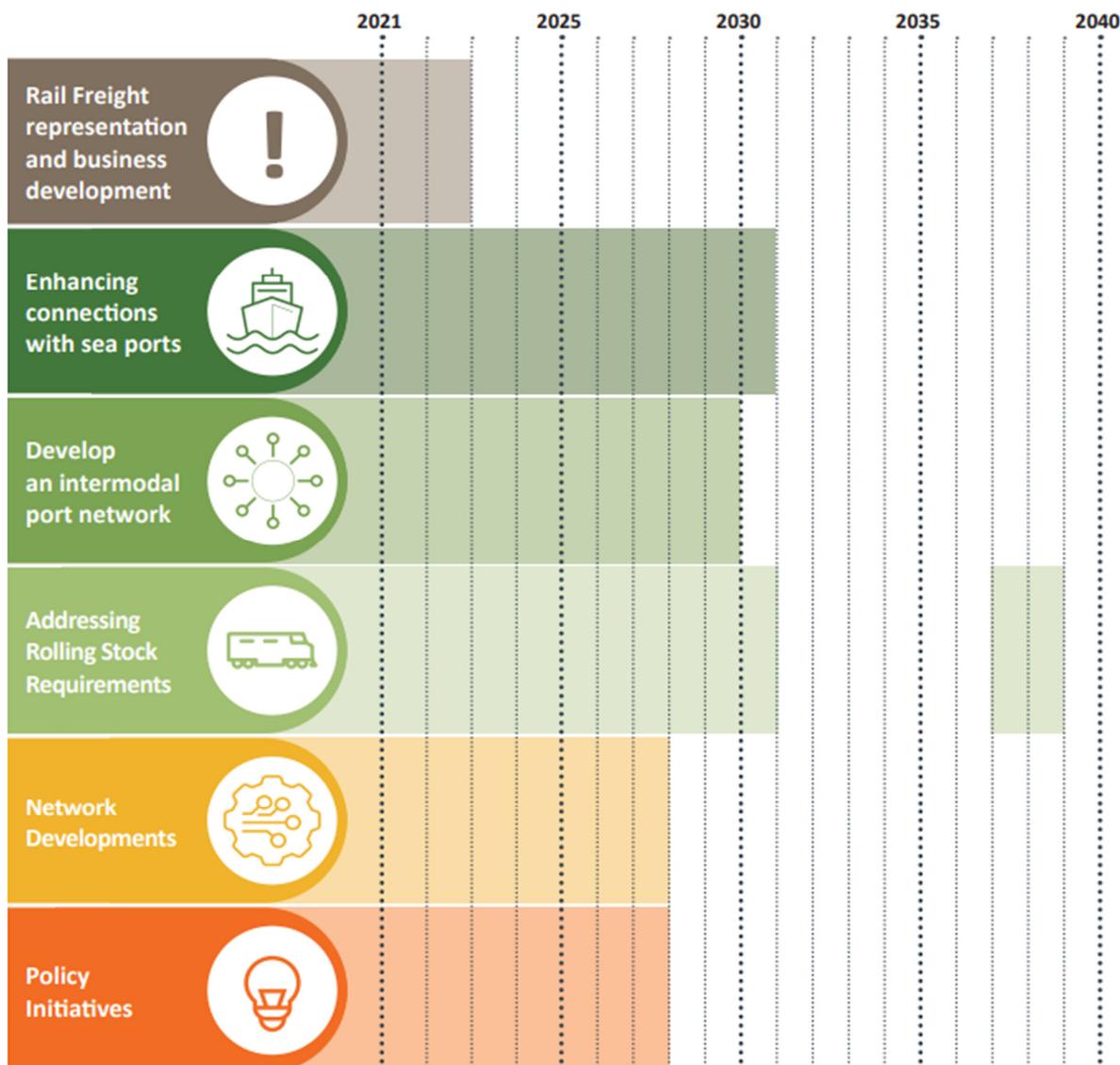


Figure 1-8 Phased Implementation of Rail Freight 2040, Extracted from the IÉ Rail Freight 2040 Strategy

The IÉ Rail Freight 2040 Strategy will transform the provision of rail freight services in Ireland and result in various beneficial outcomes for Ireland. Moreover, this Strategy is directly in line with five NSOs from the NPF and NDP, which will directly contribute to Ireland meeting its set environmental and sustainability goals. These NSOs include enhances regional accessibility, strengthened rural economies and communities, sustainable mobility, high-quality international connectivity, and transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient society. The Strategy fully supports the objectives of the EU Green Deal, the NSOs of the NPF and NDP, the Climate Action Bill, and the RSES as it seeks to provide additional rail connectivity across Ireland, support regional balance and provide freight options, provides a robust and resilient network of services to support business and economic growth, and reduce the impact of congestion in towns and cities across Ireland, all of which are consistent with the DART+ Programme.

1.2.5 Local Policy

County Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Masterplans for Strategic Development Zones have been examined in considering the alignment of the DART+ Programme with local policy. The detail of the examination is set out in the following paragraphs.

1.2.5.1 Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, as varied

The relevant planning policy and objectives of Dublin City Council are presented and discussed in the section below. The Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) 2022-2028 policy remit relevant to this project extends from the city centre west to Ashtown level crossing, southwest to Park West and Cherry Orchard, north to Clongriffin and south to Booterstown.

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

Policy SMT22 – Key Sustainable Transport Projects: *“To support the expeditious delivery of key sustainable transport projects 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 and to support the integration of existing public transport infrastructure with other transport modes. In particular the following projects subject to environmental requirements and appropriate planning consents being obtained:*

DART +

- *Metrolink from Charlemount to Swords*
- *BusConnects Core Bus Corridor projects*
- *Delivery of Luas to Finglas*
- *Progress and delivery of Luas to Poolbeg and Lucan.”*

Policy SMT14 – City Centre Road Space: *“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.”*

Objective SMT017 – Additional Interchanges and Rail Stations: *“(i) To promote and seek the development of a new interchange station at Cross Guns Glasnevin, subject to environmental requirements being satisfied and appropriate planning consents being obtained, as part of the DART+ and Metro link projects. (ii) To promote the provision of a station at Croke Park Stadium. (iii) To promote and seek provision of additional stations as part of the DART+ projects in consultation with Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail.”*

Objective SMT01 – Transition to More Sustainable Travel Modes: *“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).”*

Policy SMT23 – The Rail Network and Freight Transport: *“(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 and support the needs of freight transport in accordance with the NTA’s Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 – 2042 and enhance the capacity on existing rail lines and services to provide improved facilities promoting the principles of sustainable transport to cater for the movement of freight by rail. (iii) To support the outcomes of the Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail Rail Freight 2040 Strategy.”*

Strategic Development Regeneration Areas (SDRA) 1 – Clongriffin/Belmayne and Environs

The Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out overarching frameworks and guiding principles for a set of 17 Strategic Development Regeneration Areas (SDRAs), which are identified as being capable of delivering significant quantities of homes and employment for the city.

SDRA 1 (Clongriffin/Belmayne and Environs) is roughly bounded to the east by the Dublin-Belfast railway line, to the south by the R809 and R139 regional roads, and to the north and west by the

administrative boundary with Fingal County Council. Clongriffin DART station is located at the easternmost extent of SDRA 1.

The overall vision of the lands is to facilitate a highly sustainable, mixed use neighbourhood, centred on key public transport interchanges, with a distinct identity and sense of place.

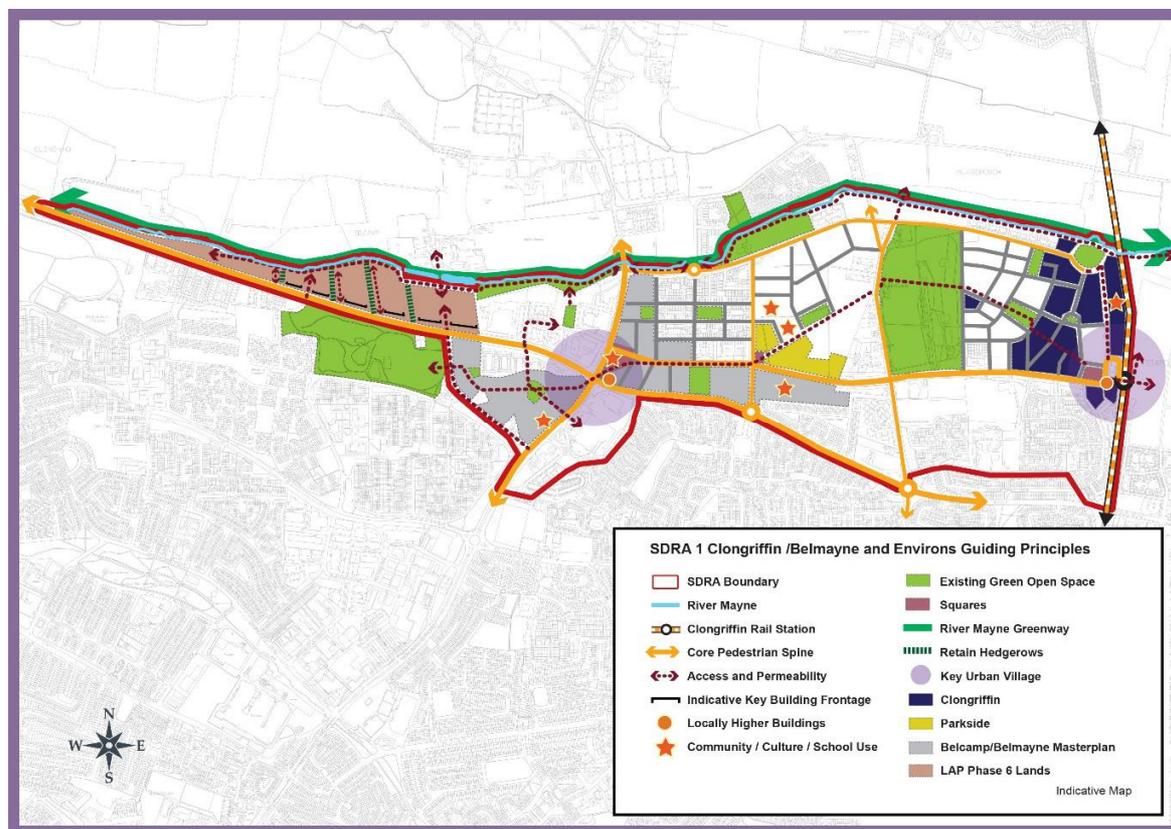


Figure 1-9 SDRA 1 – Clongriffin/Belmayne and Environs Area

Strategic Development Regeneration Areas (SDRA) 6 – Docklands

SDRA 6 Docklands is a large area corresponding to the Dublin Docklands area as defined by the Dublin Docklands Development Authority Act, 1997. SDRA 6 incorporates both the Poolbeg West Special Development Zone and the North Lotts and Grand Canal Special Development Zone, in addition to the surrounding areas of Dublin such as North Wall, East Wall, the International Financial Services Centre, and Amiens Street.

Land uses for lands within SDRA 6 but outside of an SDZ Planning Scheme are required to comply with the relevant development plan zonings. The overall approach aims to encourage mixed use development in order to achieve a balance between residential and commercial uses, with other community and cultural uses encouraged throughout.

It is a guiding principle of SDRA 6 to “To support the extension of LUAS light rail, a DART Interconnector and improvements to Irish Rail’s network including Dart+ projects” (Dublin City Development Plan, p.449).

SDRA 6 identifies a number of Key Opportunity Sites. Site 1, Connolly Station, is located to the east of Connolly Station, and incorporates a portion of existing Irish Rail infrastructure. It is proposed to develop a masterplan for the regeneration and redevelopment of these lands.

SDRA also proposes the provision of new public open space on that the lands which are currently occupied by the Docklands Railway station.

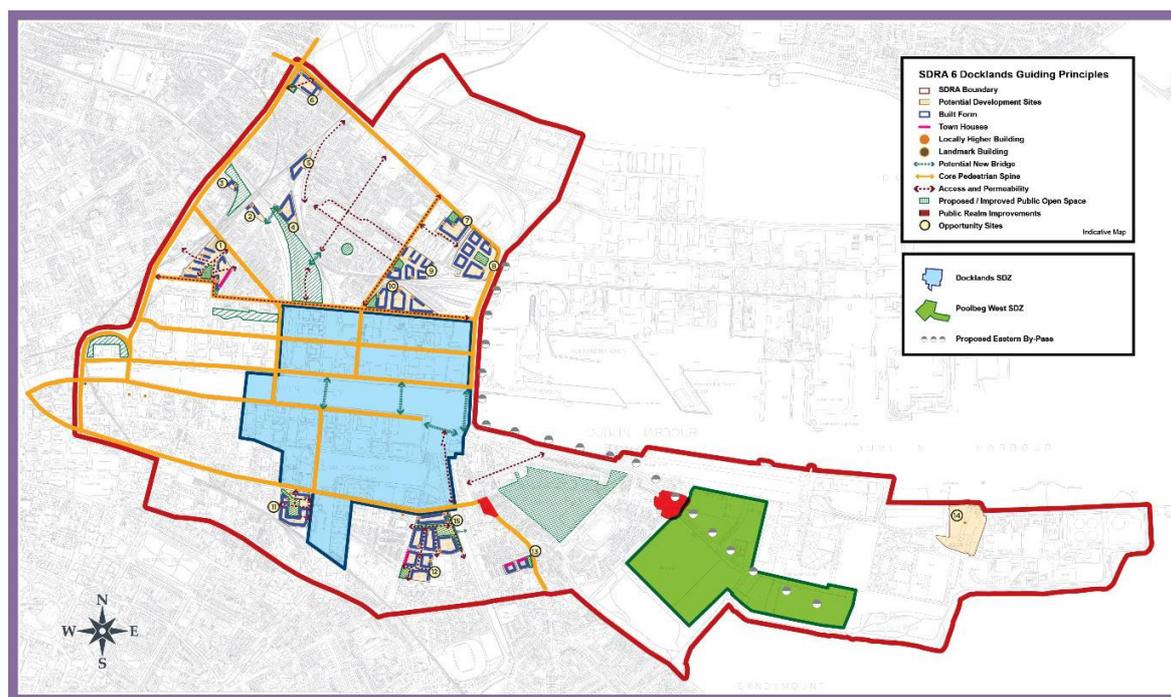


Figure 1-10 SDRA 6 – Docklands Area

1.2.5.2 Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029

The relevant planning policy and objectives of Fingal County Council are presented and discussed in the section below. The Fingal Development Plan (FDP) 2023-2029 policy remit relevant to this project extends from the Ashtown level crossing west to Leixlip, and from Clongriffin north to Balbriggan.

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

Objective CMO1 – Transition to Sustainable Modes: *“Work with the NTA, TII and other transport agencies in facilitating the integrated set of transport objectives for the County as set out in this Plan, in line with National and Regional policy including the NTA’s GDA Transport Strategy and any subsequent plan to encourage modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport and patterns of commuting to reduce reliance on the private car.”*

Policy CMP6 – Integrated Transport Network: *“Support and facilitate sustainable mobility objectives set out in the NPF, RSES, Smarter Travel and the NTA’s GDA Transport Strategy and any subsequent plan to ensure the creation of a high-quality and integrated transport network to serves the needs of the County and the wider region.”*

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.”*

Objective CMO23 – 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 CMO24 – NTA Strategy: *“Support NTA and other stakeholders in implementing the NTA Strategy including MetroLink, BusConnects, DART +, LUAS and the GDA Cycle Network.”*

Objective CMO25 – Level Crossings and Public Transport Schemes: “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.”

1.2.5.3 Barnhill Local Area Plan 2019-2025

The Barnhill LAP comprises 45.64 hectares of greenfield lands, illustrated in the Figure 1-11 below. The zoned lands are located approximately 3 km southwest (as the crow flies) from Blanchardstown Town Centre. The lands are bound by the Dunboynne 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 1-11 Physical Map of the lands subject to Barnhill LAP. Source: Barnhill Local Area Plan, 2019

Fingal County Council published the Barnhill LAP in February 2019. The following key objectives of the LAP were first identified within the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 (superseded by the FDP 2023-2029):

Objective SI1 - Social Inclusion: “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 1-12 below) 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.

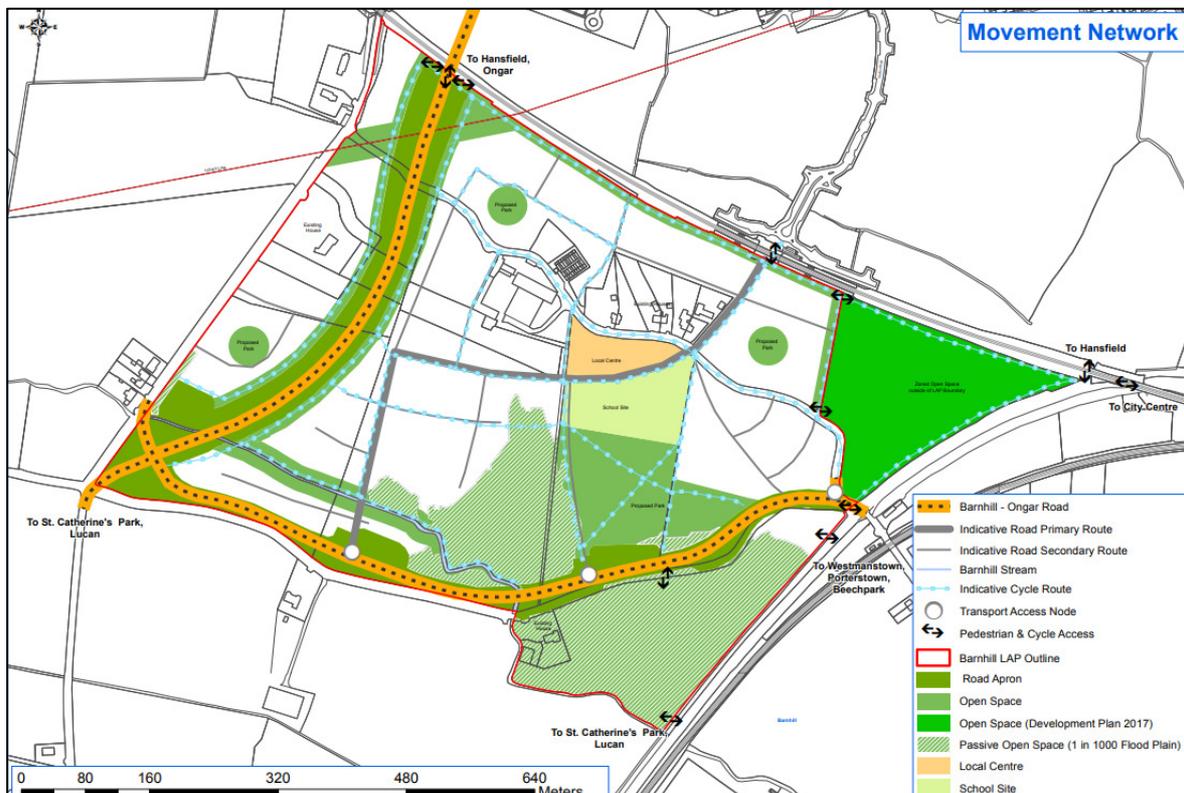


Figure 1-12 Barnhill LAP Movement Network. Source: Barnhill Local Area Plan, 2019

1.2.5.4 Kellystown Local Area Plan 2021-2026

The Kellystown LAP was approved by Fingal County Council in January 2021. The Kellystown lands, outlined in the Figure 1-13, 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 LAP lands comprise approximately 56.4 ha (0.4 ha occupied by roads) and will provide a statutory framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



Figure 1-13 Kellystown LAP Indicative Layout Plan (Source: Kellystown LAP 2021)

The LAP makes reference 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.

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*”

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

Objective 7.6: *“Provide appropriate pedestrian/cyclist facilities at the Porterstown level crossing.”*

Objective 7.7: *“Reserve an area within the LAP for potential development of a new railway station at Porterstown.”*

1.2.5.5 Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029

Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 was adopted by the elected Members on 09th December 2022.

Chapter 5 of the Development Plan identifies the aim “to promote and facilitate ease of movement within and through County Kildare, by integrating sustainable land use planning and a high-quality integrated transport system; and to support and prioritise investment in more sustainable modes of travel, the transition to a lower carbon transport system, and the development of a safer, efficient, inclusive, and connected transport system.” It notes that *“the recent (7 December 2021) Government approval of the DART+ West project to enter the planning system is a crucial milestone in transforming the rail network that will provide a reliable alternative to the private car. The project will see the construction of a new depot near Maynooth as well as the electrification of the current Maynooth Line and the upgrading of infrastructure at both Connolly and Docklands stations in the city centre.”*

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

Objective TM O1: *“Support the NTA Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2022-2042) and facilitate and secure the implementation of projects identified within the Strategy.”*

Objective TM O10: *“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. The DART+ projects present an opportunity to improve journey time, reliability, and train frequency.”*

Objective TM O13: *“Promote and facilitate the implementation of public transport projects (bus and rail) and encourage transport providers and other agencies (e.g. NTA, developers etc.) to improve public transport (bus and rail) and to have regard to and support recently implemented and/or planned routes under NTA’s Bus Connects and proposed / planned routes under NTA’s Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan; Including: 1. Kilcock, Maynooth and Leixlip into Dublin; 2. Celbridge into Dublin; 3. Maynooth to Naas; 4. Leixlip to Naas; 5. Celbridge to Naas; 6. Naas to Caragh. in addition to a range of rural transport routes. Such developments shall be subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.”*

Policy 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.”*

Objective TM O50 Facilitate and support the extension of the DART+ line to Kilcock, the extension of the DART+ Southwest line to Naas/Sallins (and promote a future extension to Newbridge and Kildare Town in the next DART + programme / GDA Transport Strategy Review) and the extension of the LUAS network, in co-operation with Irish Rail, the Department of Transport and the National Transport Authority.

Objective TM O54: Support and facilitate, in co-operation with Irish Rail and the National Transport Authority the delivery of the following proposed new facilities to connect to the existing and proposed rail network;

- A second railway station, sited to the west of the existing station in Sallins, including a park and ride facility (1, 000 spaces);
- A second Maynooth railway station/depot sited to the west of Maynooth;

- A railway station at Collinstown including a Park and Ride facility (c. 1,000 spaces – 500 initially); and
- A Kill park and ride facility - bus based (500 spaces).

1.2.5.6 Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2023, as amended (Extended to 2026)

Leixlip Local Area Plan (LAP) 2020-2023 sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Leixlip. The Vision of the LAP is to “develop Leixlip as a dynamic town in which to live, work and carry out business, supporting a living and working population in a sustainable and compact manner and to protect and maximise opportunities presented by the unique natural and built environment of the town”.

Section 8.2 ‘Public Transport’ of the LAP 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.

The LAP supports the DART+ Programme through the following policy and objective:

Policy MT2 – Public Transport: “It is the policy of the Council to promote the sustainable development of Leixlip by supporting and guiding the relevant national agencies in delivering improvements to the public transport network and to public transport services”.

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.”

Objective MT2.4: “To engage with the National Transport Authority (NTA), Dublin Bus, Irish Rail, Local Link and other stakeholders to improve the provision of public transport in Leixlip including the provision of bus priority measures to ensure the free running of bus services through the town centre and the provision of bus turn around facilities proximate to Confey Station.”

1.2.5.7 Maynooth and Environs Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Kildare County Council and Meath County Council have prepared a Joint Local Area Plan (LAP) for the Maynooth and Environs area which was adopted on February 19th 2025. The Joint LAP incorporates a framework for guiding the future development of transportation, housing, retail, heritage, employment, and social and community infrastructure in Maynooth. The following objectives included in the draft LAP are of relevance to the DART+ Programme:

Objective MATO 3.2: Actively engage and co-operate with the Department of Transport, National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), Irish Rail, Local Link and other stakeholders to improve the provision of public transport in Maynooth, including the implementation of the measures outlined in Table 7.5 and illustrated on Map 7.3 of this Joint Plan.

Objective MATO 3.5: Support the delivery of the DART+ West services in Maynooth, including the development of ancillary supporting infrastructure, subject to planning and environmental considerations.

Objective MATO 3.6: Support and facilitate the National Transport Authority and Irish Rail in delivering a second train station to the west of Maynooth, including the development of ancillary supporting infrastructure, subject to planning and environmental considerations.

Objective MWO 1.3: Support and co-operate with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), National Transport Authority (NTA), Córas Iompair Éireann (CIÉ), relevant landowners and other stakeholders to facilitate the co-ordinated delivery of critical transportation infrastructure including the Maynooth Outer Orbital Route (MOOR), DART+ West, the second train station, a park and ride facility and any potential upgrade to the M4 Motorway on lands zoned as SR(2) Strategic Reserve.

The proposed DART+ Depot project facilitates the delivery of the DART+ Programme which is supported by the draft LAP.

1.2.5.8 Kilcock Local Area Plan 2015-2021 (expired)

This LAP has expired; however, Kildare County Council have noted on their website that they will have regard to adopted Local Area Plans, including the Kilcock LAP, until such time as it is reviewed or another plan made.

The Kilcock Local Area Plan development boundary is located out of the current DART+ Programme extent. The main policy and objectives stated in the LAP which would be applicable to the DART+ Programme include:

Policy MT1: To support the sustainability principles set out in the National Spatial Strategy, The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, Government's 'Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020' and the National Transport Authority's 'A Platform for Change', the Integrated Implementation Plan for Transport in the GDA and the Authorities Draft Transportation Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2011-2030) and to ensure that land use and zoning are fully integrated with the provision and development of a comprehensive, sustainable and efficient transportation network that accommodates the movement needs of Kilcock and the region.

Objective MTO2: To maximise the use of public transport infrastructure, walking and cycling and minimise car dependence.

1.2.5.9 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as varied

The Meath County Development Plan (MCDP) 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.

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

Objective 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 Orbital Route in a manner which supports future development and population growth and builds on synergies with Maynooth University promoting a knowledge-based economy.”*

Policy MOV POL 5: *“To support the extension of the rail network in the County and to actively and strongly pursue a rail line from Dunboyne/M3 Parkway to Navan subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.”*

Policy MOV POL 6: *“To actively pursue, in conjunction with Irish Rail and the NTA, the re-appraisal of the extension of the Dunboyne/M3 Parkway line to Navan during the Mid-Term review of the GDA Transport Strategy in accordance with the precepts of the RSES.”*

Policy MOV POL 7: *“To support the reappraisal and thereafter, promote, facilitate and advance the Dunboyne /M3 Parkway line to Navan railway line project and associated rail services in cooperation with other relevant agencies.”*

Objective MOV OBJ 5: *“(a) To protect and safeguard the detailed designed alignment of Phase II of the Navan rail route and surrounding lands (including identified station locations), as illustrated on Map Series No. 5.1 in Volume 3, free from development and any encroachment by inappropriate uses which could compromise its future development as a rail facility, prior to the reappraisal of the project as part of Mid Term Review of the GDA Transport Strategy in accordance with the precepts of the RSES. (b) As part of the future planning of the Dunboyne/ M3 Parkway line to Navan, the possibility of a spur serving Ashbourne and Ratoath should be explored subject to compliance with national policy and the Railway Order.”*

Objective MOV OBJ 6 *“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”.*

Objective MOV OBJ 7: *“To facilitate the provision of a train station at Bettystown (in addition to the existing station at Laytown) as part of the DART expansion works to Drogheda through the planned electrification of the Northern rail line by Irish Rail.”*

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.

Dunboyne North Masterplan (MP22)

As required under the Meath County Development Plan, a masterplan was prepared for a site to the north of Dunbooyne in October 2022. MP22 provides a strategy for the delivery of a mixed-use development in accordance with MCDP objectives. Any Planning Application for the development of the Dunbooyne North lands should be aligned and consistent with this Masterplan.

The masterplan aims to deliver a balanced mix of complimentary land uses, including science park/high technology, logistics, warehousing, neighbourhood retail centre, education (including third level) and residential, based on an integrated sustainable “live work” community.

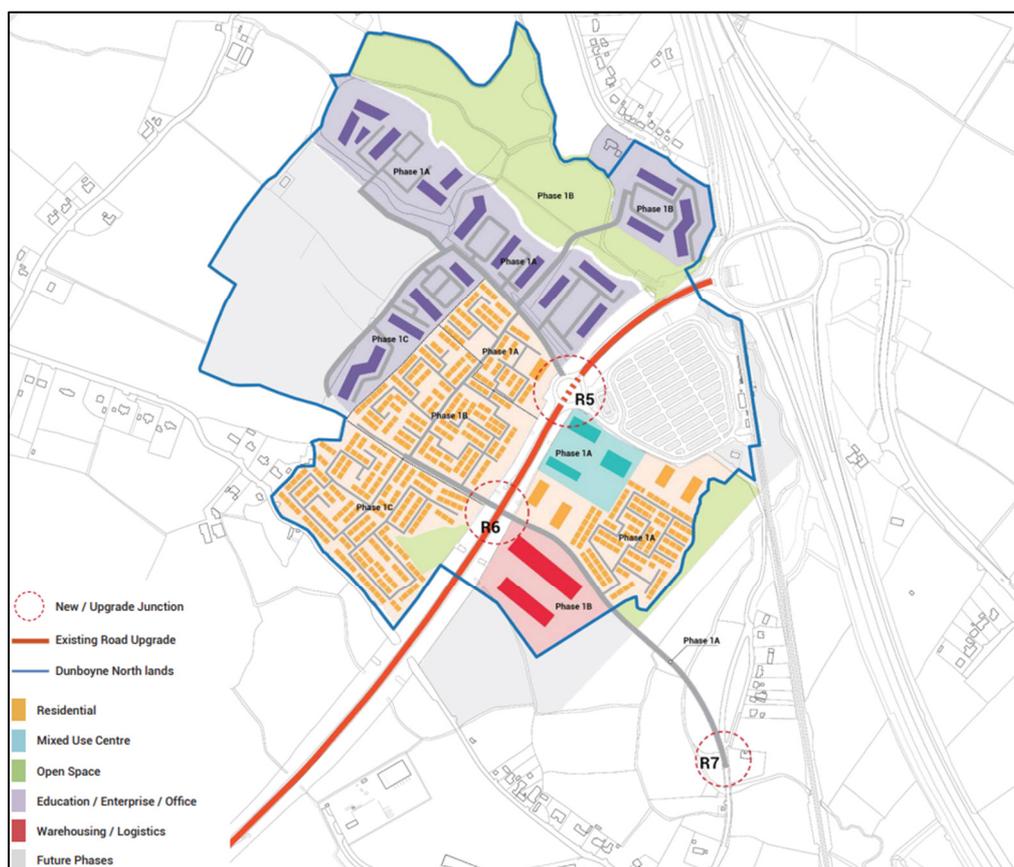


Figure 1-14 Dunbooyne North Masterplan (MP22)

1.2.5.10 South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028

The South Dublin County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028 came into effect on 22nd June 2022. The South Dublin CDP 2022-2028 sets out a vision to “increase the number of people walking, cycling and using public transport and reduce the need for car journeys, resulting in a more active and healthy community, a more attractive public realm, safer streets, less congestion, reduced carbon emissions, better air quality, and a positive climate impact.”

The Development Plan contains policies and objectives which promote measures that have the potential to reduce the climate impact of transport by encouraging a shift from private motorised transport to walking, cycling and public transport. Chapter 7 ‘Sustainable Movement’ of the South Dublin CDP 2022-2028 contains a number of objectives which are supportive of the DART+ Programme:

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

Policy SM1 – Overarching – Transport and Movement: “Promote ease of movement within, and access to South Dublin County, by integrating sustainable land-use planning with a high-quality sustainable transport and movement network for people and goods”

SM1 Objective 2: “To ensure consistency with the NTA’s Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2016-2035) as updated to 2042, as required by RPO 8.4 of the RSES.”

SM1 Objective 3: “To support the delivery of key sustainable transport projects including DART and Luas expansion programmes, BusConnects and the Greater Dublin Metropolitan Cycle Network in accordance with RPO 5.2 of the RSES / MASP.”

SM1 Objective 7: “To engage with relevant agencies including the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in relation to strategic and local transportation issues including delivery of transport projects and to encourage consultation with local communities.”

Policy SM3 – Public Transport – General: “Promote a significant shift from car-based travel to public transport in line with County targets and facilitate the sustainable development of the County by supporting and guiding national agencies in delivering major improvements to the public transport network.”

SM3 Objective 1: “To achieve and monitor a transition to the County mode share targets of 20% Bus and 5% Rail.”

Section 7.6.2 of the South Dublin CDP 2022-2028 notes the following in relation to DART Expansion Programme:- “The implementation of the DART expansion programme will provide DART+ services as far as Hazelhatch on the Kildare Line, serving the developing Adamstown SDZ lands, the Grange Castle Business Park, the established areas of Clondalkin and the Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) lands at Clonburris where a community of 23,000 population is planned. The newly built station at Kishogue will open during Phase 1B of the Clonburris SDZ Planning Scheme (1,001-2,000 residential units). The expansion programme will also provide an increased train frequency at Park West in the City Edge area.”

The proposed DART+ Depot Project will directly facilitate the implementation of the DART+ Programme which is supported by this Development Plan.

1.2.5.11 Clonburris Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme (2019)

The current Clonburris Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme (the Planning Scheme) was approved by An Bord Pleanála in 2019, replacing the existing 2008 Planning Scheme. When complete, the approximately 280 ha area will provide approximately 9,500 no. residential units on greenfield lands along the Kildare Railway Line and Grand Canal, focused on Kishoge and Clondalkin Fonthill Railway Stations. The SDZ scheme is illustrated in Figure 1-15 below.

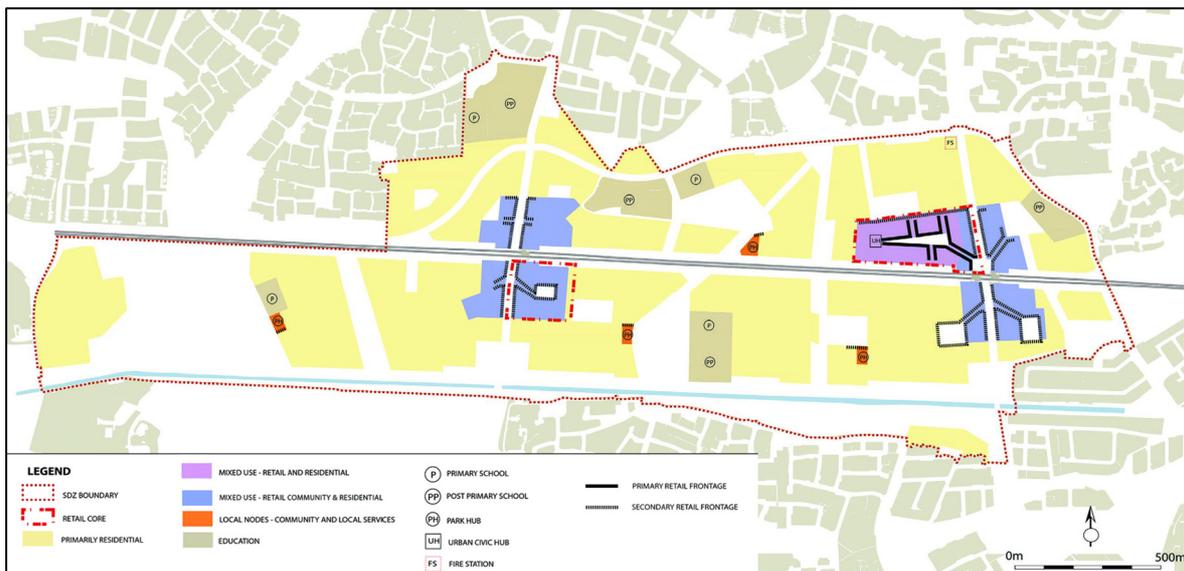


Figure 1-15 Clonburris SDZ. (Source Clonburris SDZ Planning Scheme, 2019)

Some of the key overarching principles of the SDZ (as set out on page 4 of the Planning Scheme) are:

- *“To develop vibrant mixed use centres around Clonburris and Kishoge railway stations as part of a hierarchy of urban centres to serve Clonburris”,*
- *“To develop the SDZ in a manner that maximises existing and proposed public transport opportunities, including high quality rail and bus services, and supports these opportunities with an integrated network of streets and routes with a clear hierarchy that promote walking and cycling”,*
- *“To realise the optimum development of the SDZ area with a target of 9,416 (up to 11,098) new homes offering a choice of dwelling types, sizes and tenure options”, and*
- *“To realise the optimum development of the SDZ area with a target of 9,416 (up to 11,098) new homes offering a choice of dwelling types, sizes and tenure options”.*

Key principles of the SDZ in relation to Movement and Transport (as set out on page 23 of the Planning Scheme) include:

- *“To develop a transport framework that maximises route choice and access to residential, education, retail, service, community and leisure uses by means of walking, cycling and public transport while balancing the needs of the car”, and*
- *“To seek the delivery of public transport infrastructure and services that will serve the trips demands of the SDZ Planning Scheme”.*

1.2.5.12 Adamstown Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme (2014, as amended in 2017, 2020 and 2023)

The Adamstown Strategic Development Zone Planning Scheme (the Planning Scheme) was originally approved by An Bord Pleanála in 2003, and further amended in 2014 with the current planning scheme document being published in 2014. This 2014 scheme has subsequently been amended three times, in 2017, 2020 and 2023. The SDCC website states that a new planning scheme document is currently being prepared which will incorporate all amendments. When complete, the 223.5 ha area will provide approximately 7,000 no. residential units focused around Adamstown Railway Station. The SDZ scheme is illustrated in the Figure below.



Figure 1-16 Adamstown SDZ. (Source Adamstown SDZ Planning Scheme, 2003)

The Planning Scheme was prepared regarding best practice in the planning and design of new urban communities. Its holistic design approach seeks to “create urban place with a strong sense of identity that is attractive and desirable as well as safe and secure, in a traditional town and village format”. The Planning Scheme was conceived to: “Provide alternatives to the private car in the form of a new railway station and transport interchange, additional rail capacity, dedicated bus routes and a continuous network of walking and cycling links”. The delivery of DART+ Programme, facilitated by the DART+ Depot will significantly improve the frequency and reliability of commuter services at Adamstown Station which will bring social and economic benefits to this growing community.

1.2.5.13 Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017-2023

The Celbridge Local Area Plan (LAP) 2017-2023 sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Celbridge. One of the aims of the LAP is to set out a framework for enhancement of the town’s existing transport network by increasing permeability, particularly for sustainable modes of transport and improving access to public transport.

The LAP identifies several Key Development Areas (KDAs) including KDA 2 Ballyoulster and KDA 5 Simmonstown located to the south of the River Liffey between Celbridge town centre and Hazelhatch Train Station. LAP Objectives of relevance to DART+ Programme include:

MTO 1.2: “To facilitate and encourage cycle as a more convenient and safe method of transport through the development of new or improved cycle facilities in Celbridge with a particular focus on the routes identified in the National Transport Authority (NTA) Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan to link population, commercial, community facilities, schools and transport nodes.”

MTO 2.1: “To create an interlinked public transport network that maximises the efficiency of existing services, reduces overall journey times and facilitates easy exchanges between modes and/or routes.”

MTO 2.4: “To provide greater opportunities for modal shift to public transport through the appropriate management of development particularly in lands to the south of Celbridge Town Centre.”

MTO 2.5: “To work with all agencies to improve and develop public transport facilities in the area and to link such facilities with Celbridge Town Centre and other nearby towns and to ensure that developments are carried out in accordance with the requirements of this plan and relevant legislation.”

MTO 2.6: “To promote alternative routes of the bus service to Hazelhatch Train Station so that it serves Main Street, Maynooth Road, Shackleton Road and Clane Road.”

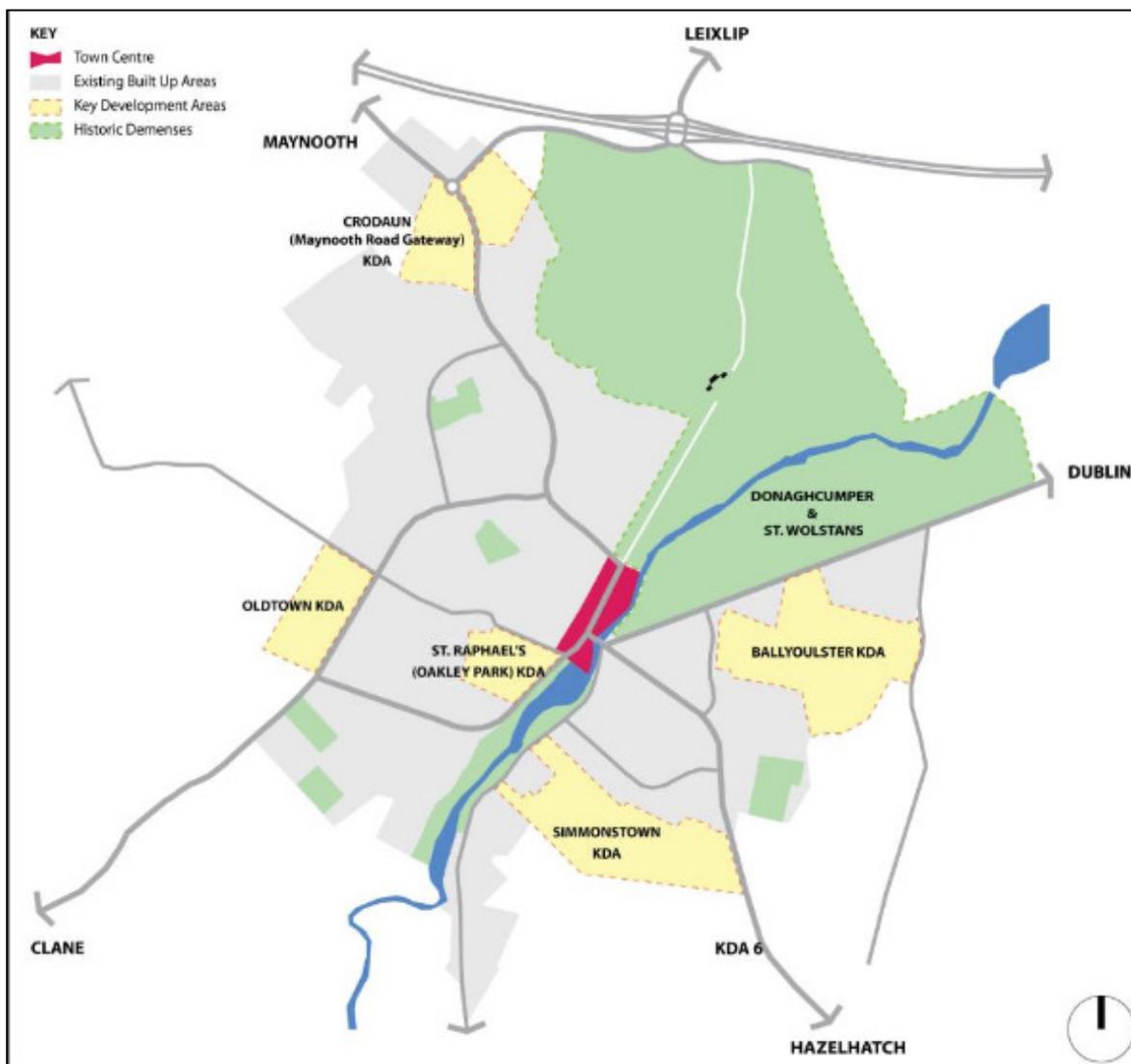


Figure 1-17 Core Strategy Map for Celbridge (Source: Celbridge LAP 2017-2023)

1.2.5.14 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan (DLRCDP) 2022-2028 came into effect on the 21st of April 2022. The Introduction to Chapter 5, Transport and Mobility, states that the overall policy approach of the Council is (inter alia):-

- “To adopt the ‘Avoid-Shift-Improve Approach’ to transport”,
- “To integrate land use and transport policies”, and
- “To support the demand management approach which focuses on moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes.”

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

Policy Objective T1: Integration of Land Use and Transport Policies *“It is a Policy Objective to actively support sustainable modes of transport and ensure that land use and zoning are aligned with the provision and development of high quality public transport systems. (Consistent with NSO 1, NPO 26 of the NPF, 64, RPO 4.40, 5.3, 8.1 and Guiding Principles on Integration of Land Use and Transport of the RSES).”*

Policy Objective T3: Delivery of Enabling Transport Infrastructure *“It is a Policy Objective to support the delivery of enabling transport infrastructure so as to allow development take place in accordance with the Core Strategy of this Plan and the settlement strategy of the RSES. (Consistent with RPO 4.40, 10.2, 10.3, 10.11, 10.16 of the RSES).”*

Policy Objective T4: Development of Sustainable Travel and Transport *“It is a Policy Objective to promote, facilitate and cooperate with other transport agencies in securing the implementation of the transport strategy for the County and the wider Metropolitan Area as set out in Department of Transport’s ‘Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 –2020’, and subsequent updates and the NTA’s ‘Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035’ and subsequent updates, the RSES and the MASP. (Consistent with NPOs 26, 64 of the NPF and RPOs 5.2, 5.3, 8.4, 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9 of the RSES).”*

Policy Objective T5: Public Transport Improvements *“It is a Policy Objective to expand attractive public transport alternatives to car transport as set out in ‘Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future’ and subsequent updates; the NTA’s ‘Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035’ and the NTAs ‘Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024’ and subsequent updates by optimising existing or proposed transport corridors, interchanges, developing new park and rides, taxi ranks and cycling network facilities at appropriate locations. (Consistent with NPO64 of the NPF, RPO 4.40, 5.2, 8.3 and 8.8 of the RSES).”*

The DLRCDP also states (on p.105) that:-

- *“It is a Policy Objective to support the DART+ Programme which will provide a higher frequency, integrated rail connection into the city with enhanced interchange with other modes”, and*
- *“It is a policy objective to ensure that such lands as are required for the development of planned public transport facilities (transport corridors) and interchanges are kept free from development.”*

1.2.5.15 Woodbrook-Shanganagh LAP 2017-2023 (as extended to 2027)

The Woodbrook-Shanganagh Local Area Plan 2017-2023 was adopted by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council at the July 2017 Council meeting and came into effect on the 1st of August 2017. On the 12th of September 2022 it was extended in accordance with the legislation for a further period of 5 years from the 11th of October 2022.

The Woodbrook-Shanganagh LAP 2017-2023 covers two discrete development parcels, at Shanganagh Castle and Woodbrook. The latter parcel is centred around a new station on the DART+ Coastal South line, which is currently under construction.

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

Policy WS4: *“To promote sustainable transport forms such as walking, cycling and public transport as set out in the Government’s ‘Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020’ and to support planned infrastructure that prioritises public transport, as well as new cycling and pedestrian interconnections to key public transport nodes, school and amenity destinations in the Woodbrook-Shanganagh LAP Area and wider environs.”*

Objective T1: *“To promote sustainable transport forms such as walking, cycling and public transport as set out in the Government’s ‘Smarter Travel, A Sustainable transport Future 2009- 2020’.”*

Objective T2: *“To promote the provision of a DART Station at Woodbrook as set out in the National Transport Authority’s (NTA) ‘Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035’ and the County*

Development Plan 2016-2022 Objective (SLO 127) and to ensure that the DART Station is designed in a manner to accommodate a pedestrian over-bridge in the interest of permeability and enhancing access to the lands to the east.”

Objective T3: *“To seek early delivery of the planned DART Station in order to establish sustainable commuting and travel patterns at the outset as an integral element of a newly emerging sustainable community.”*

Objective T14: *“To adopt a proactive mobility management approach and to encourage a culture of sustainable travel in the new residential neighbourhoods at Woodbrook-Shanganagh. Travel Plans will be required for large scale residential proposals and / or each of the key sites at Master Plan Level.”*

1.2.5.16 Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, as varied

The Wicklow County Development Plan (WCDP) 2022- 2028 was adopted on the 12th of September 2022. The Introduction to Chapter 12, Sustainable Transport states “The Council will continue to provide for all components of the transportation system which are within its own remit and will support and facilitate the development of those other elements provided by external agencies, such as the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). In addition, the strategy and objectives of this plan are required to be consistent with the transport strategy of the NTA1, as well as the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).”

The Introduction notes the following:

“In particular, the achievement of the following goals shall be at the core of all aspects of the transportation objectives of this plan:

Facilitating modal shift² to more sustainable transport options by:

- Support of investment programmes and any associated infrastructure development that deliver improvements to public transport infrastructure and services, in particular the upgrading of the Dublin – Rosslare train line, improved DART Services, bringing the Luas or other mass transit to Bray and Fassaroe and the development of improved bus services in all parts of the County; ...”

The relevant policies for the DART+ Programme contained in the Plan include the following:

Objective CPO 12.20: *“To cooperate with NTA and other relevant transport planning bodies in the delivery of a high quality, integrated and accessible transport system in County Wicklow.”*

Objective CPO 12.22: *“To continue to work with Iarnrod Eireann and the NTA on the improvement of mainline train and DART services into Wicklow and in particular:*

- *To facilitate all options available to increase capacity through Bray Head;*
- *To support the delivery of the DART+ programme; and*
- *To support electrification of the rail line south of Greystones and the provision of high speed and high frequency services on the existing underutilised south east rail line to south Wicklow.”*

Objective CPO 12.23: *“To ensure the continued and long term operation of and improvement of the Dublin – Rosslare line, including the re-opening of closed stations, are maintained and to ensure that land uses adjacent to former stations are appropriate and can facilitate future improvements. In particular:*

- *to ensure coastal protection measures are put in place to protect the railway line from coastal erosion and to consider identifying corridor options for route continuity in the event of coastal land loss;*
- *to resist any development within 20m of the railway line;*

- *to resist demolition or removal of any former train station structures or apparatus, other than for safety reasons; and*
- *to require any development proposals in the vicinity of former train stations to be so designed to facilitate future access to the station and to reserve adequate space for future car parking.”*

1.2.5.17 Bray Municipal District LAP 2018-2024 (Expired)

The Wicklow County Development Plan provides population and housing targets for all 21 settlements in the County; however, local policy (including land use zoning policy) is provided for the 13 settlements on Tiers 4, 5 and 6 of the Settlement hierarchy. Local policy for the remaining settlements (including Bray) is instead set out in stand-alone Local Area Plans.

The Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2018-2024 includes the settlements of Bray, Enniskerry and Kilmacanogue. The LAP was adopted by Wicklow County Council on the 14th of May 2018 and came into effect on the 10th of June 2018. While this plan has now expired, the replacement Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2025 remains at pre-draft stage at time of writing; as such, the policies of the expired LAP are included below for reference purposes.

The relevant policies for the DART+ Programme contained in the Plan include the following:

Objective PT1: *“To cooperate with NTA and other relevant transport planning bodies in the delivery of a high quality, integrated transport system in the Bray MD area.”*

Objective PT4: *“To continue to work with Iarnród Éireann and the NTA on the improvement of mainline train and DART services into Bray station.”*

1.2.5.18 Greystones-Delgany & Kilcoole LAP 2013-2019 (Expired)

The Greystones-Delgany & Kilcoole LAP 2013-2019 includes the settlements of Greystones-Delgany and Kilcoole. The LAP was adopted by Wicklow County Council on the 2nd of September 2013 and came into effect on the 29th of September 2013. While this plan has now expired, the replacement LAP remains at pre-draft stage at time of writing; as such, the policies of the expired LAP are included below for reference purposes.

The relevant policies for the DART+ Programme contained in the Plan include the following:

Objective TS11: *“To provide for the development of sustainable modes of transportation within the plan area including public transport, walking and cycling, in particular to provide high quality pedestrian and bicycle links between residential areas and retail, recreation and education facilities. The Council will facilitate the following:*

- *Any works required to upgrade the frequency and capacity of existing DART services.*
- *Any works required to upgrade Kilcoole Train Station.*
- *The continued operation of Greystones park and ride.”*

Greystones Harbour and North Beach Action Plan (AP3)

The Greystones-Delgany & Kilcoole LAP 2013-2019 contains a number of Action Plan areas, which provide more detailed planning policy for specific sites.

The Greystones Harbour and North Beach Action Plan (Action Plan 3) provides a planning framework in which the development of the Greystones Harbour and North Beach Area may be facilitated, and appropriate proposals developed.

1.2.5.19 Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted on 30th September 2021. The Plan came into effect on 11th November 2021. The Strategic Vision of the Plan is as follows:

“Promote County Louth, in particular the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk, as uniquely attractive places in which to live, work, visit and do business and where the quality of employment and educational opportunities, natural and built environment, cultural experiences and provision of inclusive communities are all to the highest standards, while transitioning to a low carbon and climate resilient society.”

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

In relation to transport, the CDP aims to *“To facilitate investment and improvement in transport infrastructure in the County that will support economic growth and investment and the creation of healthy, sustainable communities; by improving connectivity and journey times within and between settlements, promoting and investing in more sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport, creating a more attractive public realm, and reducing carbon emissions”*.

Note also that a Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan is currently at pre-draft stage.

The following policies and objectives in the CDP are of relevance to the DART+ Programme:

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

Policy Objective MOV 1: *“To work with national transport agencies in supporting the delivery of a high quality, climate resilient and sustainable transport network in the County.”*

Policy Objective MOV 3: *“To facilitate the integration of land use with sustainable transportation infrastructure in accordance with the requirements of RPO 8.1 in the RSES by supporting the creation of a critical mass of population and employment related development that would maximise investment in public transport infrastructure and create compact, sustainable settlements”*.

Policy Objective MOV 7: *“To support a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking and the attainment of any national targets relating to modal change published during the life of this Plan.”*

Policy Objective MOV 9: *“To support investment in sustainable transport infrastructure that will make walking, cycling or public transport more attractive and appealing, and facilitates accessibility for all, regardless of age, physical mobility, or social disadvantage.”*

Policy Objective MOV 13: *“To engage and work closely with the relevant transport authorities and operators, both public and private in facilitating and securing improvements to and the expansion of public transport infrastructure and services in the County.”*

Policy Objective MOV 14: *“To encourage a modal shift from use of the private car towards more sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling, and public transport.”*

Policy Objective MOV 16: *“To support the DART Expansion Programme including new infrastructure and the electrification of existing lines along the northern rail line to Drogheda.”*

Policy Objective MOV 17: *“To support the provision of a higher speed rail service between Dublin and Belfast and any associated infrastructure investment and works required.”*

Policy Objective MOV 18: *“To secure, in co-operation with Iarnród Éireann and the National Transport Authority, improved rail services for the mid and south Louth areas and in particular to seek to examine the feasibility of re-opening the rail station in Dunleer and providing additional new rail stations for north Drogheda, south Dundalk and the mid-Louth area.”*

The DART+ Depot project supports the delivery of the DART+ Programme and the overall vision in the Plan, particularly in relation to the development of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre.

1.3 DART+ Depot in Policy

DART+ Depot is a core element of the DART+ Programme and policy support for the programme is equally valid for the depot. The depot is, however, specifically called out in selected policy documents. The details are summarised below.

1.3.1 Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029

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

TM O54: Support and facilitate, in co-operation with Irish Rail and the National Transport Authority the delivery of the following proposed new facilities to connect to the existing and proposed rail network;

- A second railway station, sited to the west of the existing station in Sallins, including a park and ride facility (1, 000 spaces);
- A second Maynooth railway station/depot sited to the west of Maynooth;
- A railway station at Collinstown including a Park and Ride facility (c. 1,000 spaces – 500 initially); and
- A Kill park and ride facility - bus based (500 spaces).

Although the proposed Depot is an integral element of the DART+ Programme for which commitment is evident across the spectrum of national, regional and local policy, specific reference to the location of a depot is only evident in the policy documentation of Kildare County Council.