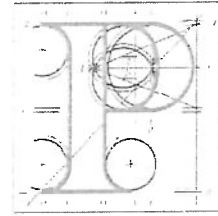


Our Case Number: ABP-320164-24



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

The Resident of Dargan's Way
c/o Michelle O Connor and Mark Carey
Railway Avenue
Sutton
Dublin 13
D13 EE05

Date: 31 October 2024

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

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent letter in relation to the above mentioned case. The contents of your letter have been noted.

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

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

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

Yours faithfully,



Aisling Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737131

RA03

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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
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D01 V902	D01 V902

The Residents of Dargan's Way, Railway Avenue, Sutton, Dublin 13 object to the proposed changes to DART and Costal North and the introduction of a shuttle from Howth station to Howth Junction station.

The current DART system, which includes a direct route from Howth to the city centre, adequately meets the needs of the residents between Howth and Howth Junction. The proposed introduction of a shuttle service between Howth and Howth Junction is not fit for purpose and includes a number of negative impacts for users and residents alike.

Frequency of level crossing gates being down

The proposed shuttle service will adversely impact traffic around the level crossings which is already congested.

The current proposal for 6 trains in each direction per hour, running every 10 minutes, will have an extremely adverse effect on traffic in the area, both for local residents and those passing through the affected area.

Queues will stretch beyond Sutton Cross and the Baldoyle Road leading to gridlock in the whole area as a result of these additional shuttles, a point that has been noted and acknowledged by Irish Rail.

If the number of shuttle trains are reduced, it will reduce level crossing closure times but will increase the waiting time for passengers alighting at Howth Junction, which is not acceptable.

Anti-social aspect of Howth Junction

There is also, unfortunately, an issue around security at Howth Junction station historically. Measures discussed by Irish Rail do not fully address the issues that passengers could face when forced to alight and wait for their DART at Howth Junction. Cameras and lights have not proven to be a sufficient deterrent and this leaves many vulnerable DART users a target for such behaviour. A large increase in passengers waiting on DART at the station may well increase the anti-social behaviour that has been experienced in the past.

Accessibility of Howth Junction

The station at Howth Junction is not fit for purpose. The proposed changes are not with passengers from the Howth line in mind. The changes cannot ensure the safety of the large numbers of passengers all disembarking at the same time. There are huge risks under the proposed system particularly in terms of passenger safety. Passengers with physical disabilities or mobility issues will not be serviced adequately with this new system. Those with physical disabilities who require assistance both boarding and alighting DART trains will have additional difficulties with the proposed shuttle service as they will be forced to change trains and cross tracks when travelling either direction. The Irish Rail plan for new lifts in Howth Junction, while a welcome addition, will not satisfy the requirements of such passengers. Unfortunately, lifts at Irish Rail stations are unreliable and very often dirty, despite the many cameras in operation at existing stations. Multiple passengers cannot use lifts at once, which with the increased number of passengers alighting at Howth Junction, will lead to missed DARTs and longer waiting times for those who may be considered more vulnerable.

Available seating

There has been a large increase in the population within Howth and surrounding areas, example being the large apartment complex on the Howth Road along with multiple smaller developments between Howth and Howth Junction.

This increase in population coincides with the reduction in the service afforded to those in Howth and surrounding areas. The shuttle will result in vast numbers of passengers alighting at Howth Junction to join DART services with little to no available seating. DART services are already difficult to manage for those considered elderly, less mobile or passengers with children given the current level of crowded trains and this will only add to the problem.

Longer commuting times

Travel times will increase significantly between Howth and the city centre for all passengers on the line. The service is currently used by workers, students and tourists alike and the additional transfer will have an impact on the lives of all users going about their daily business.

Tourism

Tourism is booming in Howth and the ease of access plays a big part in this. A direct line from the city centre makes the visit effortless and enjoyable. A changeover at Howth Junction would lead to unnecessary difficulties and is likely to deter many visitors to the area.

Noise pollution and ground tremors

As the development runs parallel to the train line, the introduction of a shuttle service will increase the noise and ground tremors generated by trains passing. Dargan's Way already experiences significant noise and vibrations from the current DART service and an increase in traffic will add to this.

We strongly object to the loss of the direct Howth to Connolly Station service and its replacement with a service, which will not and cannot be reliable.

Yours sincerely

The Residents of Dargan's Way, Railway Avenue, Sutton, Dublin 13

Submitted by:

Michelle O Connor & Mark Carey

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