

Senior Executive Officer,

Planning Department,

Áras Chill Dara,

Devoy Park,

Naas,

Co. Kildare,

W91X77F.

24th May 2022

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 Draft Public Consultation

Iarnród Éireann welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Kildare County Council (KCC) Development Plan 2023-2029 Draft Public Consultation [hereafter “the Development Plan”]. The new Development Plan comes at a critical juncture for the County in its adaptation to the challenges and opportunities of the ‘new-normal’ that emerges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I particularly welcome the strong support in the Development Plan for the railway and the key role it has at the heart of a sustainable and integrated transport network. I also welcome the ambition of Kildare County Council to at a minimum raise the modal share of rail from 5% currently to 14% over the lifetime of the Development Plan. This aligns with our plans to significantly enhance rail service capacity and frequency over the lifetime of the Development Plan, particularly with the implementation of the transformative DART+ Programme.

It is important to recognise at the outset of this submission, that interventions in the transport sector should be based on a long-term strategic vision for the sustainable mobility of people and goods. This is driven by the principle that structural reform of policies takes a considerable time to implement and must be the subject of detailed advanced planning. The Development Plan enables this capability of advanced long-term vision and planning by providing foundations to 2029 and beyond, therefore making it an important document for the desired growth of sustainable mobility in Kildare. The review of the Development Plan allows it to be reassessed in the current context as we move towards a more sustainable integrated transport system, advanced local mobility hubs, and maximisation of the dynamic impact between housing and transport, all of which can greatly contribute to the economic, environmental, social and cultural progress of Kildare County.

Iarnród Éireann welcome the aligning of the Development Plan's growth strategy with that of National and Regional policy, concentrating on facilitating compact growth and the alignment of future development with public transport infrastructure. As the Council is aware, Kildare's transport policy at Tier 2 level planning is driven by the National Transport Authority's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2016-2035), which is currently undergoing statutory review. Iarnród Éireann believe it is imperative that the Development Plan ties in with the resultant revised Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, which will provide a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in Kildare County which are captured in the wider Greater Dublin Area (GDA) over the period to 2022-2042. Iarnród Éireann continues to support local transport plans in Kildare County, such as the Kildare and Maynooth Town Transport Strategies, to which Iarnród Éireann provided submissions to the Council's public consultation process.

The remaining parts of this submission will take the shape of Iarnród Éireann's core objective, progress we have made, and our priorities for the future.

Iarnród Éireann - Core Objective and Benefits of Rail

It is Iarnród Éireann's core objective to provide safe, accessible and integrated rail services for Ireland, that contribute to sustainable environmental, economic and social development in an efficient manner. It is this key objective that informs our views regarding the future expansion of the commuter and suburban rail network for Kildare County, the GDA, and the wider Eastern Region¹. By its nature and interrelationship with the wider Intercity rail network, many of the measures proposed for the GDA rail network will have significant spin-off mutual benefits for regional / Intercity rail services and the wider national economy.

Iarnród Éireann believe that heavy rail can play an essential role in supporting the sustainable growth and prosperity of Kildare County and the Greater Dublin Area, and by extension the growth of the wider regions and national connectivity, providing numerous benefits notably;

- It is a key enabler of local sustainable transport in Kildare with two of the four existing rail corridors penetrating Dublin City Centre coming from/through Kildare County; providing commuter services to the areas of Celbridge and Maynooth, along with the other areas of the GDA in Drogheda, Greystones, and Dunboyne. These corridors also enable significant inter-regional and Intercity services for Kildare County, which are important for connectivity and accessibility on a national level from the County.
- The current rail network in Kildare is an underutilised asset that can be developed with little impact on the road network, providing a step change in mobility with limited disruption to traffic flows.
- Heavy rail can operate comfortably within a mass transit system, transporting large volumes of passengers, more than any other mode, enabling potential compact dense development growth to be catered for by reliable frequent services.

¹ The Eastern Region refers to the area encompassed by Dublin, Louth, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow.

- Heavy rail is largely segregated from other transport modes in the national transport network, avoiding congestion and conflicts associated with road traffic, providing greater punctuality and reliability for citizens of Kildare County.
- Rail can provide a step change in improving air quality levels in Kildare as the County aims to address climate change and emissions - the average rail passenger km creates approximately 28g of greenhouse gases (GHGs) vs. 102g for road vehicle.

Current Rail Development in Kildare County

The existing Iarnród Éireann rail network plays an important role in the public transport provision in Kildare County as the Kildare and Maynooth/M3 lines pass through it, providing DART and commuter rail services which connect into our Intercity rail services. Iarnród Éireann is committed, subject to funding, to further expand and integrate the railway network, in accordance with national, regional, and local policy, in collaboration with KCC, the Department of Transport, and the National Transport Authority (NTA). Iarnród Éireann's development of the network in Kildare is driven by the objectives of NTA's 'Transport Strategy for Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035' and the NTAs 'Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024'.

Since its adoption in February 2016, Iarnród Éireann has made significant progress on the rail objectives contained in the NTAs Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area [hereafter "the Strategy"]. In terms of the Strategy's rail specific objectives, the majority are included in the NTA's Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024. The Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024 supports the delivery of the wider Strategy. It sets out the central infrastructure investment programme and overall funding provision over the six years. The priorities in the Integrated Implementation Plan align with the objectives and priorities set out in the Strategy, focused on improving public and sustainable transport across the region.

These current developments, along with our priorities for the future, outlined later, will greatly assist in the enablement of the Council's objective TM T4, which aims to as a minimum, increase the current modal shares of work trips by train to 14% from a base of 5% during the lifetime of this Plan.

1. DART+ Programme

Iarnród Éireann welcomes the support of KCC for the delivery of the DART+ Programme. The DART+ Programme represents the largest heavy rail investment scheme in the history of the State, providing a transformational increase in capacity and frequency of the existing system between Dublin City Centre and the areas of Maynooth, Celbridge, Dunboyne, Drogheda, and Greystones. The DART+ Programme, or simply DART+, is a cornerstone project of the Strategy and the Government's Project Ireland 2040 vision. DART+ is a central pillar in a future integrated sustainable transport system serving Kildare, the GDA, and the wider Eastern Region.

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cornerstone project of the Strategy and the Government's Project Ireland 2040 vision. DART+ is a central pillar in a future integrated sustainable transport system in Dublin City Centre and across the GDA and wider Eastern Region.

DART+ provides a transformational upgrade change to the future public transport network in two ways; firstly, through infrastructure improvements, including electrification, removal of level crossings, a new depot, and other works, and secondly; through additional rolling stock, combining to double the peak passenger capacity of the rail system into Dublin City Centre from approximately 25,000 passengers per hour in 2019 to over 50,000 by 2028.

In terms of progress, the DART+ Programme received approval for its Preliminary Business Case (PBC) in December 2021, a major milestone, with approval obtained:

- for the DART+ Fleet Project, which allowed the contract award and the first fleet order to be placed for brand new DART Electric and Battery Electric Multiple Units.
- Approval for DART+ West Project to progress towards submission of its Railway Order application, which will be made in 2022.

The approval of the DART+ Fleet Project allows for the largest and most sustainable ever order of fleet for Ireland's public transport network. Alstom were awarded a contract by Iarnród Éireann for up to 750 new rail carriages over the coming decade, of which 325 will be delivered under the DART+ Programme itself. An initial order of 95 carriages, comprising six sets of five-carriage conventional electric trains and thirteen sets of five-carriage battery-electric trains has been placed, which includes substantial design costs for the full framework agreement.

Figure 1: New DART+ Multiple Units by Alstom



The battery powered carriages will quickly provide more capacity for commuters in advance of electrification of the lines upon which they will operate. The initial 95-carriage order will benefit a number of routes, including:

- New battery-electric carriages will be deployed on the Drogheda to Dublin Northern Commuter services
- New electric carriages will be deployed on the existing DART route to maximise capacity

- The introduction of the new fleet will also free up existing carriages to increase capacity on other Commuter and Intercity services.

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Figure 2: New DART+ Multiple Units Proposed Interior



DART+ West

DART+ West will provide a sustainable, electrified, reliable and more frequent rail service to our customers, improving capacity on Maynooth and M3 Parkway to city centre rail corridors. The project will deliver a very significant increase in service frequency and capacity along the Dublin-Maynooth corridor, whilst also increasing capacity and reducing journey times for non-electrified InterCity and Commuter services.

Figure 3: Before and After Impacts of DART+ West on Services and Capacity

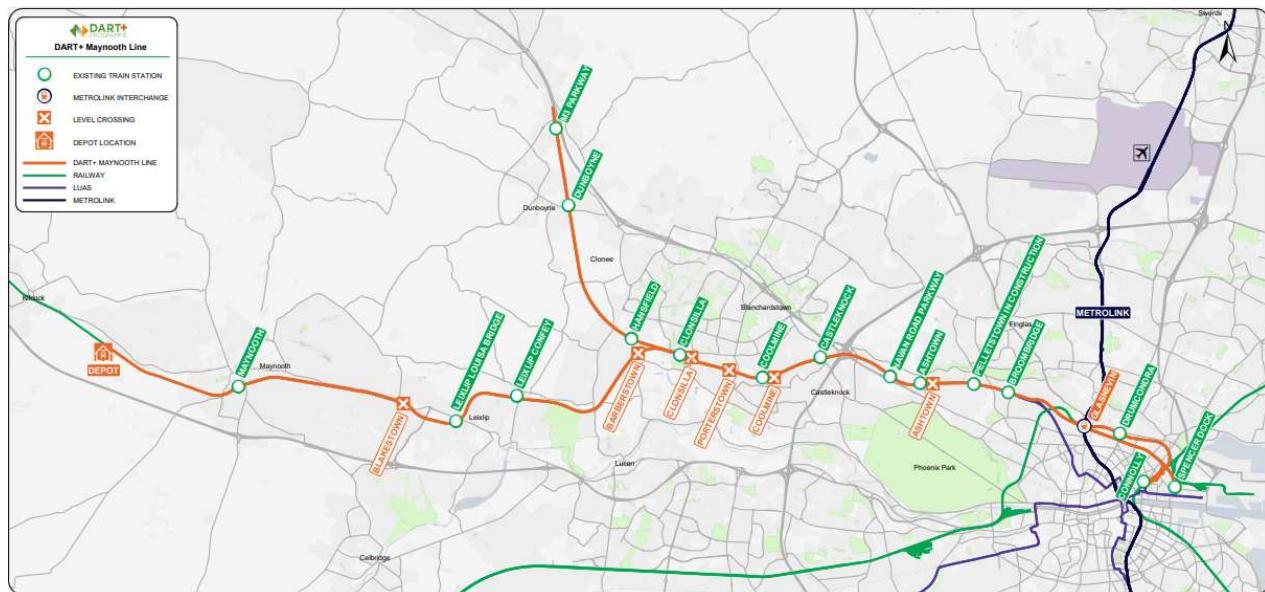


Key benefits of DART+ West include:

- Increased passenger capacity from 5,000 to 13,200 passengers per hour per direction and increased train frequency between Maynooth and M3 Parkway and Dublin City – facilitating fast, frequent, green, and reliable public transport to surrounding communities.
- Enhanced public transport opportunities for work, education, or leisure purposes.
- Supports future population growth of existing and new communities along the corridors served
- Alleviates road congestion, particularly at the existing level crossings

- Improves multimodal transport connectivity through the new Spencer Dock station and with MetroLink at Glasnevin², complimenting the existing high-quality interchange with the LUAS at Broombridge
- Build a sustainable and connected city region, supporting the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.
- Facilitate people to make sustainable travel choices by encouraging a move away from private cars to a reliable, efficient, and safe public transport network.
- Additional new fleet for improved customer experience with a new depot built to the west of Maynooth
- Improved multimodal transport connectivity.
- Improved journey time reliability
- Improvements in inter-regional accessibility through enhanced capacity created

Figure 4: DART+ West Route Map



Iarnród Éireann note that, in the context of Protected Structures, that the Council propose under PPS 20 to add Cope Bridge located at Captain's Hill Leixlip Co. Kildare to the list of Proposed Protected Structures. While Iarnród Éireann recognise and appreciate the heritage significance of this arched bridge over the canal, Iarnród Éireann request that the bridge is not added to the Protected Structures list on the grounds of safety, maintenance and the future electrification of the Dublin-Maynooth railway line as proposed under the DART+ West Project which is imminent, and for which a design is currently being progressed in consultation with Kildare County Council.

² Glasnevin station to be delivered as part of the MetroLink Railway Order

DART+ South-West

The [DART+ South West Project](#) will see an increase in train capacity along the line traversing part of Kildare County. The current 12 trains per hour per direction will increase to 23 trains per hour per direction (i.e. maintain the existing 12 services, with an additional 11 train services provided by DART+ South West). This will increase passenger capacity from the current peak capacity of approximately 5,000 passengers per hour per direction to approximately 20,000 passengers per hour per direction, providing a transformational change in capacity and services serving the citizens of Kildare County. Delivery of DART+ South West will support existing communities and support future sustainable development. It will serve all existing stations along the railway corridor between Hazelhatch & Celbridge Station and Dublin City Centre using electrical power, which has a lower carbon footprint than the current diesel fleet of trains on the corridor. The DART+ South West route map can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: DART+ South West Route Map



The key infrastructural elements of the DART+ South West Project includes;

- Completion of four tracking from Park West & Cherry Orchard Station to Heuston Station
- Electrification and resignalling of the line from Hazelhatch & Celbridge Station to Heuston Station and also from Heuston Station to Glasnevin Junction, via the Phoenix Park Tunnel Branch line, where it will link with DART+ West
- Undertaking improvements/reconstruction of bridges to facilitate movement of electrified train services
- Remove rail constraints along the Phoenix Park Tunnel Branch line
- Delivery of a new station at Heuston West

Figure 6: Planned Capacity/Frequency uplift from DART+ South-West project



Iarnród Éireann believe that these DART network expansions and enhancements facilitates sustainable higher-frequency transport links to Dublin City Centre from Kildare County and throughout the Eastern Region. It facilitates further modal shift to sustainable public transport by providing an alternative to the car to more citizens. It will increase the length of electrified lines on the rail network further, so that a consistent, higher-frequency timetable can be operated across more of the network to the benefit of the GDA and Kildare County through the additional accessibility and mobility provided.

In terms of progress, Iarnród Éireann has concluded its second round of non-statutory public consultation on the preferred option for DART+ South West project. All submissions and feedback will be reviewed and assessed as part of design development.

Iarnród Éireann welcome the support of Kildare County Council in TM 09 for the delivery and implementation of the DART+ Programme, including DART+ West and DART+ South West. DART+ will be critical to achieving the Councils aim under target TM T1 which is to, as a minimum, reduce the current car-based trips to work from 74% to 50% and the car-based trips to education from 50% to 40% by the end of this Plan period.

The extent of the DART+ Programme and the various elements are summarised in Appendix A.

2. Station Improvement/Other Enhancement Programmes including Accessibility

The objective of the current Accessibility Programme is to prepare preliminary designs and progress planning and statutory processes for significant accessibility upgrades across 15 stations on the Iarnród Éireann network, 7 of which are within the GDA. The scope will include full compliance with accessibility standards, notably the Technical Specification for Interoperability (TSI) for Persons with Reduced Mobility. These improvements are essential for the inclusivity and mobility of Persons with Reduced Mobility within the transport network, while recognising that the recommended enhancements would improve access for all users, to some degree.

3. Non-DART Fleet Enhancement

In terms of addressing the short term demands on heavy rail services, approval of the business case for 41 intermediate intercity railcars (ICRs) was obtained in 2019. When delivered, the additional fleet will allow for improvements in capacity and frequency on commuter services in Kildare County and the GDA as well as on Intercity services which serve Kildare, enhancing local and regional connectivity.

4. Network Development

The Strategy anticipated that a number of additional stations will be opened or added to the network in developing areas which have a sufficient level of demand to support the provision of a train station. Iarnród Éireann have progressed the planning and development of a number of new stations to add access to the network, these are;

- Pelletstown station on the Maynooth Line, which opened on 26th September 2021
- Kishogue station on the Kildare Line
- Woodbrook station on the South-Eastern Line

Iarnród Éireann Priorities for the future

Iarnród Éireann will now outline its priorities for key expansion projects and enhancements to the rail network to 2027. Further detail on these plans and our wider company strategy can be found in our recently published [Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027](#) document. Also in the context of wider national rail policy and development, it is worth the Council noting that the Department of Transport (DoT) and the Department of Infrastructure (Northern Ireland) (DfI(NI)) have engaged a consultant to prepare an all-island strategic rail review on faster intercity connectivity, improved regional connectivity and freight. Iarnród Éireann will prioritise the outcomes of this study as part of its future plans upon completion of the study. The Development Plan should consider and support the outcomes of that study.

Iarnród Éireann as part of its submission will now outline its priorities for key expansion projects and enhancements to the rail network of Kildare and the GDA.

Despite the impact the public transport sector and the wider economy and society is experiencing with COVID-19, it is imperative that the momentum shift towards sustainable public transport is not lost and that the important development of our public transport network and expansion of rail services continues. Iarnród Éireann believe that these proposals provide the opportunity to strengthen the Development Plan so that it will be fit for purpose well into the future.

1. Further DART Network Extensions and Enhancements

The DART+ Programme will transform the capacity of the existing lines in Kildare and the GDA. Iarnród Éireann believe that the final revised NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area to 2042 should include provision for a further expansion and enhancement of the DART network in the GDA and wider Eastern Region. The next development for the DART is the expansion of the network boundary itself. Iarnród Éireann want to build on the DART+ Programme by extending the DART network further to all areas North, South, East, and West of the GDA incrementally to continue to support compact growth along established rail corridors and promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the Eastern Region. This will facilitate a greater catchment for Kildare County bringing agglomeration benefits to employees and employers along the existing DART and new DART+ West routes which pass through Kildare.

These extensions are also proposed in the context of the environmental consequences of the unsustainable quantum of private cars on Ireland's road network requires action, in particular the air pollutant emissions and greenhouse gas

emissions produced. Ireland has set a target to develop a low/near zero carbon emission transport network by 2050. Heavy rail has a pivotal role to play based on the unique ability of electrified rail services to move large numbers of people quickly and safely. Heavy rail has reduced its overall emissions by 48% since 2006, significantly ahead of the EU 2020 target of 20%. There is an opportunity to continue this trajectory.

The DART+ Programme and any subsequent network extensions when implemented will also facilitate improved access to/from Kildare and the Regions. Iarnród Éireann will look at further extending the electrified area across each of the lines and providing enhancements as below:

a) Maynooth/M3 Line

- Providing double-tracking and electrification between Maynooth station and Kilcock station to the west³. This provides the dual benefit of boosting the reach of higher frequency DART services while also facilitating more Intercity and outer commuter services through double-tracking.
- Extension of the line from M3 Parkway to the large town of Navan.

b) Kildare Line

- Providing four-tracking south of Hazelhatch & Celbridge station (the current outer limit of four-tracking and the DART+ Programme) to Newbridge and/or Kildare Station. This provides the dual benefit of boosting commuter capacity by implementing higher frequency DART services and providing further segregation between fast Intercity services and slower stopping commuter services.
- Providing a new station at Cabra to utilise increased services from the DART+ Programme.

c) Northern Line

- Providing four-tracking from Connolly northbound to Clongriffin/Malahide and/or possibly additional tracks further north of Malahide to boost capacity for DART services and Intercity/Enterprise services between Dublin and Belfast.
- Extending electrification or battery electric services to Dundalk to expand the catchment of lower emission services.

d) South Eastern Line

- Extending electrification between Greystones station and Wicklow station to the south, providing relief to the congested N/M11.
- To facilitate the above, further infrastructure upgrades to facilitate the expansion of services between Bray-Greystones could be included.

Iarnród Éireann believe that these DART network expansion and enhancements facilitates sustainable higher-frequency transport links to Dublin City Centre to/from Kildare, internally within Kildare, and throughout the Eastern Region. It facilitates further modal shift to sustainable public transport by providing an alternative to the car to more

³ Note: The DART+ Programme will see double-track and electrification between Maynooth Station and a new Maynooth Depot to the west.

citizens. It will increase the length of electrified lines on the rail network further, so that a consistent, higher-frequency timetable can be operated across more of the network to the benefit of the Eastern Region and Kildare through the additional accessibility and mobility provided. In this regard, Iarnród Éireann welcomes Objective TM O43 of the Draft Development Plan which aims to “Facilitate and support the extension of the DART+ line to Kilcock, the extension of the DART+ Southwest line to Naas/Sallins [...], in co-operation with Irish Rail, the Department of Transport and the National Transport Authority”.

2. Intercity and Outer Suburban Service Development

Intercity

The Intercity rail network is a key component of the national mobility network. Iarnród Éireann is planning to improve Intercity service frequencies and journey times for customers travelling between the major cities/urban centres and the Capital. Intercity improvements include additional services across all routes to increase capacity and offer an enhanced service frequency to passengers. This will be complemented by a clock-face timetable for Intercity routes to deliver a service pattern where services depart at regular intervals. Iarnród Éireann’s future plans for the Intercity services which traverse Kildare County are outlined below in Table 1.

Table 1: Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027 - Service enhancements for Intercity services include

Route	Enhancement
Dublin – Cork	Additional services to achieve 30-minute intervals at peak times. Renewal of all track on the Dublin/Cork line and removal of level crossings towards improving journey times.
Dublin – Limerick	Addition of 30-minute intervals at peak times, with an increase in the number of direct services. Improved journey times resulting from renewed track on Cork mainline.
Dublin – Galway	60% increase in services to hourly all-day with some improvement in journey times.
Dublin – Waterford	100% increase in services to hourly all-day with some improvement in journey times
Dublin – Westport	60% increase in services to two-hourly all-day with some improvement in journey times.
Dublin – Sligo	Increase in services to two-hourly all-day with hourly peak services along part of the line.
Dublin - Tralee	Increase in services to two-hourly all-day with hourly peak services. Improved journey times resulting from renewed track on Cork mainline.

Iarnród Éireann welcome the support of the Council in Objective TM O52 to support and liaise with Iarnród Éireann with respect to the planned upgrade of the Intercity services which traverse and serve the county.

Outer Suburban Services

It is Iarnród Éireann's long-term ambition under our [Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027](#) to increase outer suburban services from Dublin to Portlaoise and from Dublin to Carlow to every 20 minutes in peak periods and half hourly off-peak subject to funding and demand levels.

Our ambitions for both Intercity and outer suburban services assist in achieving the Councils objective, TM O52, which aims to "support and liaise with Irish Rail with respect to the upgrade of the Athy/Waterford rail link".

3. Electrification

With Ireland targeting the development of a low/near zero carbon emissions transport network by 2050, rail has an ever increasing a critical role to play. This is based on the unique ability of electrified rail services to move large numbers of people quickly and safely. Ireland has the lowest level of electrification across the EU27, meaning it is an area with significant expansion opportunities across the network and key tool to combat increasing transport emissions.

Intercity electrification also forms part of Iarnród Éireann's long-term strategy to de-carbonise the rail network and provide the benefits of significant journey time savings, improved reliability, enhanced passenger quality and lower operating costs. The Dublin to Cork line, as a main rail artery on the rail network, has potential for this investment. There are major sustainability benefits to be gained by electrification of rail services on existing lines, and this will only be further enhanced with the shift long-term towards renewable energy sources. If electrified, this will further enhance the green credentials of Kildare County with all rail services traversing the County operating with zero emissions⁴. Iarnród Éireann will include the outcomes on Intercity and inter-regional connectivity from the all-island Strategic Rail Review by DoT/DfI(NI) as part of this electrification priority once they are known. Iarnród Éireann welcomes the support of the Council in the Draft Development Plan for the electrification of Intercity services through objective TM O44.

4. Accessibility Programme

As noted earlier in this submission, Iarnród Éireann is progressing with its Accessibility Programme. Iarnród Éireann welcome the support of the Council in Objective TM O40 to support and facilitate the implementation of the Iarnród Éireann Accessibility Programme. By providing more accessible stations on the rail network, it enables and encourages journeys that would otherwise have to be taken by road-based transport, or perhaps even no journey, onto the rail network. This has sustainability benefits in terms of the reduction of emissions that result from it, while also ensuring that all who wish to use the railway can avail of its benefits in terms of frequency, reliability, and journey time.

⁴ At the point of use

5. Customer Information Services

Iarnród Éireann is developing a Customer Information Services (CIS) Strategy Report to create a strategic implementation framework for the development of enhanced information systems and information flow to our customers, staff, and third parties. Key amongst these requirements is the ability to provide reliable real time passenger information that is accessible to all, co-ordinated across the network in stations and on trains, and that is consistent across all media.

Iarnród Éireann welcome the support of the Council for the development of the Iarnród Éireann Customer Information Services (CIS) Strategy Report in Objective TM O41. It is a vital customer experience capability required to both attract and retain customers using sustainable rail services and a wider integrated sustainable public transport network.

6. Development of Multi-Modal Interchange Strategy

Iarnród Éireann aims to develop a Multi-Modal Interchange Strategy [previously referred to as the '*Sustainable Interchange Programme*'] which will enable more sustainable end-to-end journeys to be made by rail. The multi-modal interchange strategy will include the provision of facilities within Iarnród Éireann's stations and local environs to provide for ease of interchange between rail and all other modes, prioritising those that are sustainable – cycling, electric charging, wayfinding, and shared mobility. Iarnród Éireann's Multi-Modal Interchange Strategy, when implemented, facilitates compact growth along railway corridors due to the improved sustainable mobility offering at each station. Commercial and residential developments can be supported through improved interchange with active mode parking infrastructure, and car park spaces (including electric vehicles), increasing the attractiveness of rail and increasing the rationale for the location of compact developments.

By providing more sustainable interchange and electric charging, along with bicycle and vehicle parking facilities at stations, it enables and encourages journeys that would otherwise have to be taken by road-based transport onto the rail network. It enhances the appeal of zero emissions active modes onto low emissions rail services.

The Multi-Modal Interchange Strategy has the potential to promote the concept of Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) in the longer-term as digital platforms could be linked to sustainable mobility providers at either end of rail journeys as the interchange capability improves. If the railway does not enable better integration with other modes, passengers may lose out on benefits, and rail may lose prominence in the wider transport system as a result.

Iarnród Éireann welcome the support of the Council in the Development Plan for the Iarnród Éireann Multi-Modal Interchange Strategy in Objective TM O42. Iarnród Éireann also welcome Objectives TM O24/25/26 to improve walking and cycling integration with the railway and Iarnród Éireann will work closely with the Council to achieve the targeted improvements. With respect to TM O26 the Council should note that the DART+ West project is seeking to permanently close Blakeshaw level crossing and is not proposing any replacement bridge, given the current low use of this level crossing and the proximity of the R449 link road. The existing infrastructure is considered adequate for the current level of development in Kilmacredock/Collinstown area. However, Iarnród Éireann is aware of Kildare County Council's objective to develop strategic employment lands at Collinstown. Iarnród Éireann has previously indicated to Kildare County Council and the National Transport Authority our co-operation to facilitate the provision

of a new access over the railway, separate to the DART+ West Railway Order application, when a masterplan for the Collinstown strategic development lands has been developed. These discussions may also include the inclusion in the Masterplan for a potential new station and a Park & Ride facility to serve Collinstown.

I refer to proposed Council Action TM A8. While Iarnród Éireann recognises the ambition to provide a segregated walking and cycle corridor parallel to the railway lines, in practice this will be difficult to realise. Iarnród Éireann does not own sufficient excess lands that would deliver the objective, without impacting on the safe operation of the railway. This matter would require the input of the National Transport Authority in the first instance to ensure the corridor accords with the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. Thereafter, responsibility for the statutory application for approval and delivery of the walking/cycling routes would likely fall to the National Transport Authority and/or the relevant Local Authority.

Iarnród Éireann will work closely with the Council and all stakeholder and service providers to facilitate the development of a public transport hub in Sallins & Naas as set out in Council Objective TM O38.

7. Park and Ride Strategy

Linked to the above priority, Iarnród Éireann also wishes to grow the number of strategic Park and Ride sites at stations in Kildare County. Iarnród Éireann has seen success of Park and Ride's at sites such as M3 Parkway and believe it is a model than can attract car users, but the benefits of it are contingent on the level of demand. Iarnród Éireann is currently engaging with Kildare County Council and the National Transport Authority to develop a Park and Ride Strategy, which will be implemented in line with growing demand.

Iarnród Éireann welcome Objectives TM O46/O47 expressing the support of the Council to facilitate, in co-operation with Iarnród Éireann and the NTA, the delivery of proposed new park and ride facilities at Sallins & Naas, Collinstown or Maynooth Station/Depot and Kill as well as the investigation of a P&R facility at Newbridge train station.

8. Rail Freight

Iarnród Éireann believe the case for rail freight is increasing, given the context of climate change and environmental targets Ireland must achieve, both nationally and internationally. This is also set against a context of increasing road congestion, alterations to the pattern of freight movements brought about by Brexit and uncertainties created by Covid. While the absolute future travel patterns are unknown, there will be an increasing necessity to transition to use of sustainable freight transport solutions across Ireland with stakeholders recognising that rail has a more significant role to play. Iarnród Éireann have developed a [Rail Freight 2040 Strategy](#) in the context of;

- The Government's Project Ireland 2040, National Development Plan, National Mitigation Plan, Climate Change Action Plan, Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021
- The Strategic Masterplans of Ireland's Port Authorities
- Anticipated demand growth over the medium to long term, leading to increasing Road Congestion especially on core city corridors
- Pressure on road freight markets e.g. driver shortages, Brexit, fuel costs
- Policy, demand, and sectoral analysis being undertaken to establish demand and opportunities for rail freight

- A growing demand amongst international distributors and other stakeholders that rail be an integral part of a sustainable freight transport system

The Strategy launched in December 2021 and Iarnród Éireann welcome the NTAs commitment to support the implementation of the outcomes of the Rail Freight 2040 Strategy. To realise the objectives of the strategy and fulfil on the ambitious vision for rail freight nationally, Rail Freight 2040 has been developed around five key pillars which can be found in Table 2. These pillars focus on internal and external aspects of the rail freight business and when pursued as part of a cohesive strategy will result in wide ranging transformation of rail freight in Ireland.

Table 2: Iarnród Éireann Rail Freight 2040 Strategy – Five Key Pillars

Five Key Pillars of Rail Freight 2040 Strategy	High-level description
Enhancing connections with seaports	 <p>Irish port traffic accounts for over 90% of annual imports and exports. The importance of port freight traffic underlines the need for modern and effective freight infrastructure to facilitate the movement of goods and materials in and out of the island of Ireland. Central to Rail Freight 2040 are initiatives to have all Tier 1 Ports connected to the rail network. This degree of connectivity will establish an expansive freight network which provides the options and resilience required by modern supply chains and potential customers.</p>
Addressing Rolling Stock Requirements	 <p>The expansion of rail freight services will be facilitated by the identification of new markets and customers as well as improvements in operational efficiencies. Servicing this will require new fleet with a large proportion of the existing stock near life expired, necessitating high levels of maintenance and limiting the ability to serve new customers.</p> <p>Investment in new rolling stock would be sequenced to take place on agreement for new traffic flows thus linking cashflow requirements to committed business contracts. The core requirements consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in the intermodal wagon fleet • Investing in new bulk wagons • Investing in bi-mode locomotives

Developing intermodal port network		<p>To realise the potential demand for rail freight services additional infrastructure is required to provide an attractive network of facilities and a freight service offering which is a viable alternative to road, for existing and potential new customers. In time, this investment will provide an expansive network of inland rail freight terminals establishing rail freight in each of the regions and providing strong national coverage.</p>
Network developments		<p>The connection of industrial sites directly to the rail network has the potential to realise large volumes of repeat business and establish long standing relationships with large organisations. This offers greater resilience within the network which increases the attractiveness of rail freight to customers. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting to industrial sites • Development of passing loops • Dedicated freight paths
Policy initiatives		<p>The utilisation of rail freight in Ireland lags significantly behind that of other European countries. A lack of supporting policies has hindered the growth of the sector and led to a drastic decline in the volume of goods and materials transported by rail over the last two decades. While investment in new infrastructure and rolling stock is needed to increase rail freight services in line with European norms, there are also a number of policy initiatives required to establish a more favourable environment for rail freight and put in place the supports necessary to realise the potential for the sector in Ireland, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for environmental benefits • EU funding • Track access charges (TAC's) • Incentive programmes • Alternative sources of funding (e.g., private finance) • Policy input • Re-establishing cross border services

A key element of the approach is enhanced connectivity with Tier 1 ports with Dublin Port being central to this given the proportion of Ireland's imports and exports served by it. A significantly higher proportion of movements through Dublin Port will need to be made by rail as contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions and avoidance of increased congestion on all motorway corridors into Dublin and accessing the port. Further integration of rail infrastructure and services will be required to achieve the desired outcomes with this being discussed between relevant stakeholders. This includes a need to separate road and rail movements at the crossing of East Wall Road and how rail may contribute to movements to/from the planned new 3FM Port at Poolbeg on the south side of the city.

Infrastructure investment is a series of intermodal rail freight terminals across the country to improve access to the rail network for goods which can be seen Figure 7. We are investigating the possibility of a strategic rail freight terminal to the West of Dublin to serve distributors, retail and residential areas located along the western side of the city, for proximity to the motorway network, act as a key interchange between Dublin Port and the movement of goods to regional destinations across the island of Ireland. This terminal could assist with overflow for Dublin Port by providing shuttle services to/from the port, as well as a marshalling yard for preparation of trains for onward movements.

This rail freight 'Dublin Eastern Gateway' will be expected to facilitate intermodal traffic to and from the South West. As well as being a potential key interchange between Dublin Port, this facility would be located close to the M50 (with ease of access to the motorway network), the numerous industrial estates, major retail sites, and potential customers along the route.

We are at a critical point in terms of the state's position and commitment to addressing climate change, and the implementation of a sustainable rail freight system has a key role to play in achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Iarnród Éireann welcome the support of the Council in Objective TM O50 supporting the Iarnród Éireann Rail Freight 2040 Strategy.

Figure 7: Rail Freight 2040 Freight terminal network



All Island Rail Review

In the context of wider national rail policy and development, it is worth the Council noting that the Department of Transport (DoT) and the Department of Infrastructure (Northern Ireland) (DfI(NI)) have commenced an [All-Island Strategic Rail Review](#) with faster Intercity connectivity, improved regional connectivity, and rail freight forming key elements. Iarnród Éireann will prioritise the outcomes of this Review as part of its future plans upon completion of the study.

Property Issues

In line with normal planning procedure any future measure or proposal by the Council which may impact on the property of the CIÉ Group must be fully discussed and agreed with the CIÉ Group Property Division in advance.

Track and Structures

Any proposals to add railway structures, including but not limited to bridges, to the Register of Protected Structures should be notified to the Senior Track and Structures Engineer, Iarnród Éireann, Pearse Station, Westland Row, Dublin 2 D02 RV00.

Concluding Remarks

To conclude this submission, it is important to acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused wide-ranging challenges and uncertainty throughout society on a global, European, and national level. It continues to alter some aspects of the way we live our lives and move about. It is likely to have an impact on the population and economic targets projected as part of the Project Ireland 2040 initiative, the levels of which, as of yet, are unclear.

From the perspective of developing a sustainable integrated transport system, COVID-19 does present an opportunity to change habits, and the promotion and priority of sustainable transport can be a key driver for the recovery of growth, thus making the Kildare County Development Plan a key strategic document for the GDA. The development of a sustainable integrated transport network for Kildare can be a springboard to economic recovery through the jobs it creates during its implementation, and it sustains post-completion. This is crucial for the GDA to maintain competitiveness internationally and promote regional balance in the national recovery.

Notwithstanding the tremendous challenges ahead due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I hope that this gives you a good indication of the potential rail developments that could be delivered by Iarnród Éireann over the next County Development Plan period and beyond. This can significantly enhance rail access within Kildare and adjoining Regions in the future.

Iarnród Éireann looks forward to working with you to achieve the positive outcomes the final Development Plan will bring for Kildare.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Meade".

Jim Meade

Chief Executive

Appendix A

Extent of DART+

