



**Submission to Minister for Transport
With respect to the public inquiry concerning the Kildare Route
Project**

Platform 11 Dublin Rail Projects Committee¹

November 25, 2005

The chair of the committee may be contacted at mark.gleeson@platform11.org

We wish that the following submission be considered at the public inquiry.

Summary

We wish to make it known that we support the project as presented by the applicant. We acknowledge and congratulate the applicant for several innovative ideas and in particular the placing of the slow lines between the fast lines thus fully isolating slow trains from intercity trains a technique not commonly used eliminating conflicting movements at turnbacks. We have no objection to the proposal as it stands, however we feel that several issues need to be addressed which in doing so would in our opinion lead to a better end result for the passenger and indeed the applicant.

We note the key to maximise the benefits of the Kildare Route Project (KRP) is the interconnector tunnel and only with this in place will the maximum benefits of the Kildare Route Project be felt. All effort should be made in the provision of the KRP to facilitate its construction both with minimal disruption and also to facilitate its construction in parallel to the KRP. These projects form the core of the rail element of the Transport 21 plan and as such should be given utmost priority.

These issues, which we wish to highlight, are mainly in specification and design of the railway in terms of making provision for higher train speeds, allowing for operational flexibility and future upgradeability. While outwardly technical these issues have a direct effect on the quality of the passenger experience, journey times, flexibility and the ability of the line to cope under degraded operating conditions e.g. train failures and routine maintenance. Our focus is on the provision of a railway to meet the needs of the passenger and also to minimise disruption when things go wrong and during engineering works in the future e.g. interconnector tunnel.

We wish to raise the following 6 issues.

1. Access to the works order, plans and EIS
2. Specification of the railway
3. Hazelhatch Straffan Sallins Newbridge Kildare
4. Crossovers
5. Proposed Service Levels
6. Future Proofing

1 Access to the works order, plans and EIS

While not related to the works, this is related to the execution of the public inquiry procedure. Quoting section 40 (2) of the Act of 2001²

Members of the public may inspect a copy of a draft railway order and accompanying documents deposited under this section free of charge at the times and during the period specified in the notice referred to in subsection (1)(b) and may purchase copies of or extracts from any of the documents aforesaid on payment of a fee to the applicant not exceeding the reasonable cost of making such copies or extracts as may be fixed by the applicant.

We wish that the record show our objection to the unreasonable costs levied by the applicant with respect to copies of the full works order. We consider €222 excessive. We note a cost of €15 levied for a copy of the documents in electronic format, given that blank CD's are available in bulk for 30¢ and are regularly given as a free item in newspapers, magazines etc this charge is undeniably excessive. Despite some sections of the EIS appearing on Iarnród Éireann's website the full proposed works order was not available online. We note the Rail Procurement Agency quote a substantially lower and quite acceptable fee for all elements in their recent works order applications performed under the Act of 2001. A charge of €5 for an electronic copy for instance.

2 Specification of the Railway

2.1 Line Speeds

We are extremely disappointed to learn that the applicant has no intention to increase the line speed from the current 145kph (90mph) for intercity trains. 165kph operation on the Dublin Cork main line is a stated goal of the applicant.

We seek clarification with respect to the provision of an increase in line speed from current 145kph to 165kph and later to 200kph. Do the passing clearances, signal sighting and spacing distances (allowing for existing, modified, new and proposed structures) accommodate such an upgrade. This is in the interest of the passenger to reduce journey times on intercity services.

2.2 Lateral Clearances

2.2.1 Spacing Between Lines

Structure plan L001 indicates a distance of 2000mm between the outer rails of adjacent tracks. However allowing for the standard Irish gauge of 1602mm and allowing for the swept envelope of the train, the Interim Rail Safety Commission state where it (the swept envelope) is not more than 3420mm there guidelines indicate that new lines should achieve 380mm (or 450mm for

² The Act of 2001 shall refer to Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act, 2001

200kph). For a 3420mm swept envelope clearance is only 182mm. The use of 3420mm as an upper limit would reasonably suggest the presence of rolling stock with such a swept envelope.

Applicant to indicate that no currently certified rolling stock exceeds a 3238mm swept envelope and thus the presented dimensions are within guidelines³. While tighter clearances as low as 100mm are allowed where 380mm is not practical we can see no reason why it is not possible to achieve the full clearance. The minimum required for 200kph is 380mm.

2.2.2 Lineside Walkway

It is clear from the EIS that the proposed lineside walkway is too close to the railway to allow for operation above 165kph. The quoted figure is 1340mm from the nearest rail, which is equivalent to 431mm from the swept envelope of the widest train. For operation above 165kph and below 200kph additional clearance of 850mm is needed according to the guidance of the interim rail safety commission.

For the record the applicant will by end 2006 have in service 200 coaches designed to operate at 200kph and a test train reached 200kph in 1984. So it is not unreasonable to assume operation at 200kph in the medium to long term and passive provision should be made now again in the interests of reduced intercity journey times.

3 Hazelhatch Straffan Sallins Newbridge Kildare

3.1 Hazelhatch Straffan Sallins

The original proposals for the Kildare Route project saw 4 tracks extend to Straffan. The applicant has pulled back from this but has indicated the intention to proceed with this work at a later date.

The work to provide 4 tracks Hazelhatch Straffan could be done within this phase of works and could in our opinion be possible within reason to complete the 4 track section to Straffan without any additional disruption over what would be required to complete the rest of the project. Minimisation of overall disruption the travelling public is a key issue

If this is not done trackwork and signaling would need to be removed at Hazelhatch and replaced leading to significant expense and disruption, which is avoidable if the work was done now.

3.2 Sallins Newbridge Kildare

Despite the significant increase in services no upgrade is proposed for these stations. Under the original Kildare Route Project an upgrade was proposed. While these stations do not fall under the works order they do fall within the area defined as the Kildare Route Project. Applicant

³ The current widest vehicles on the network are former CIE Park Royal and Laminate type owned by the RPSI with a static envelope of 3.1-3.2m the swept envelope being greater.

should indicate how these stations will cope with extra demand and train frequency brought by the KRP and in particular how the extra passenger demand will be accommodated e.g. parking facilities, which are currently insufficient.

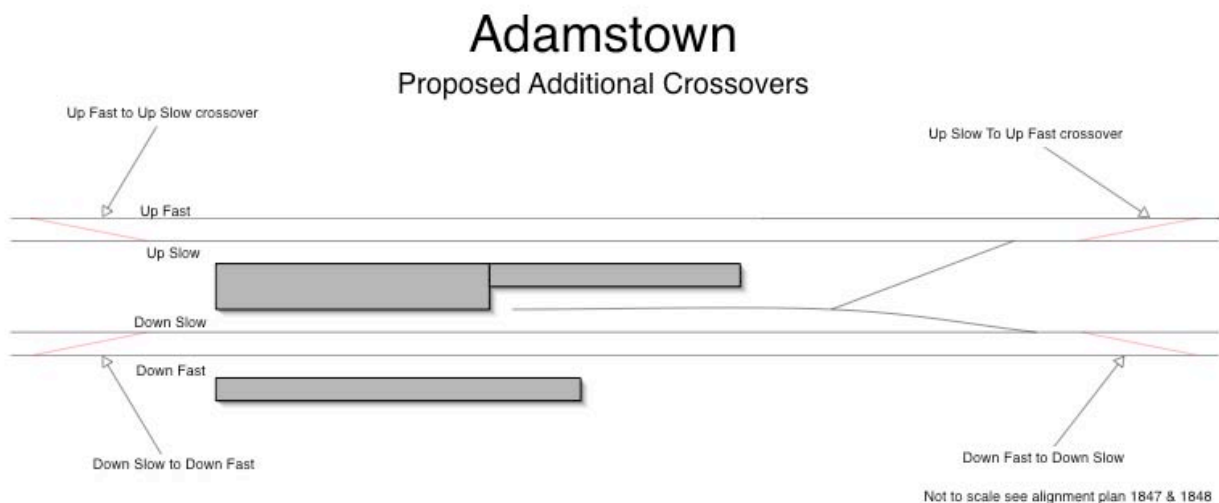
4 Crossovers

To provide operational flexibility and to maximise capacity the provision of crossovers at line speed between slow and fast should be provided. None exist in the plans and later addition of crossovers we understand may require ministerial approval and would require extensive signaling modifications again leading to disruption. The true benefit and flexibility of 4 tracking can only be reached if it is possible for trains to swap from the fast to slow and slow to fast, particularly during times of degraded operation due to maintenance or train failure.

These works will remove the current up main to down main facing and trailing crossovers that exist at Hazelhatch currently leaving Sallins as the first point a train could change tracks beyond Inchicore. This is roughly 7 miles further than current arrangements and we feel this is unacceptable.

4.1 Adamstown

It would appear logical to place such crossovers at Adamstown. We propose 4 crossovers, (please see below sketch) these will allow the flexibility to allow trains to cross from the fast to slow lines, allow trains on the fast lines to access the turn back siding at Adamstown thus maximising the flexibility of the 4 track section.



If the proposed change from fast slow slow fast to slow slow fast fast occurs these crossovers are still extremely useful.

4.2 Hazelhatch

A facing and trailing crossover should be placed to the west of Hazelhatch at chainage 20km if the 4 track section terminates at Hazelhatch as proposed. This maintains the status quo.

5 Proposed Service Levels

While timetabling is generally a matter for Iarnród Éireann the stated service level in the EIS impacts heavily on the viability of the project and must be considered.

5.1 Hazelhatch Newbridge Kildare

The proposed outer suburban service (or regional as it is now known) serving Hazelhatch is only 1 train an hour serving Sallins Newbridge and Kildare. This actually represents a reduction in service frequency, Sallins Newbridge and Kildare see 4 services. Two regional services an hour should stop at Hazelhatch and these should be timed approximately 30 minutes apart.

5.2 Phoenix Park Tunnel

Despite the applicant indicating in recent years that some Kildare line services would be routed via the Phoenix Park Tunnel to Drumcondra and Spencer Dock station (or Connolly) no reference is made in the EIS to this.

This has long been a matter of contention. Applicant should indicate how the proposal to use the Phoenix Park Tunnel integrates with the proposed service levels. Provision of these services would in our opinion be of great benefit to commuters and have a positive effect on the viability of the Kildare Route Project.

6 Future Proofing

6.1 Interconnector Tunnel

EIS does not indicate the location of the start of the much-heralded interconnector tunnel. Frequent reference is made to this tunnel but little reference is made to its impact on the Kildare route project given that both projects could be ongoing in parallel.

In light of the fact the interconnector is an approved and seemingly financed project, carrying out where practical all piling work, retaining walls etc. as part of this application would be in the interests of reduced overall disruption and project delivery.

Platform 11 believes the proposed fast slow slow fast arrangement to be the optimal both now and post interconnector offering maximum flexibility, zero conflict operation, ease of provision of turnbacks and the non requirement of flyovers/unders for grade separation. This track

arrangement also leads to safety benefits as no passenger standing on a platform on a slow line would be exposed to passing high speed intercity traffic. The fast slow slow fast arrangement allows slow trains to transition from 4 to 2 (and 2 to 4) tracks without any conflicts which would be present in a slow slow fast fast arrangement as is proposed post interconnector.

6.2 Electrification

Throughout the EIS reference is made to later electrification, in light of recent government commitment to electrify the Hazelhatch Dublin section we query could electrification be carried out during this set of works.

To put in place electrification equipment as part of the project would save time and money and in doing so satisfy the need to deliver projects quickly with minimum disruption and at least cost. At the very least the foundations (which are the most time consuming element) of the overhead masts should be put in place as part of this application.

6.3 Platforms

6.3.1 Length

Provision must be made in the design of all platforms to allow for extensions, the applicant has indicated elsewhere the potential for 12 coach trains (250m platform)

Applicant should indicate the manner in which each platform would be extended and show that no equipment cases, signals, track circuit joints etc would require relocation at a future date. Platform extensions are straightforward, relocation of infrastructure to allow extensions is where the real delays lie. This is a zero cost item simple planning now, avoids disruption and cost later. In light of the DART upgrade experience such forward planning is prudent.

6.3.2 Temporary Platforms

It is indicated that temporary platforms may be required at several stations during the construction phase. Such platforms would be required to match basic standards and as such would not be strictly temporary. Platform 10 in Heuston was supposedly temporary but is built to a higher standard than many deemed permanent. It is clear retention of these platforms in a usable condition would be extremely beneficial in times of disruption and maintenance.