

National Transport Authority

Lucan to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme

EIA Screening Determination

The National Transport Authority (the “NTA”) is proposing to carry out the Lucan to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme (the “**Proposed Scheme**”).

The Proposed Scheme involves the provision of continuous bus priority consisting primarily of dedicated bus lanes in both directions along the existing road from where the Proposed Scheme commences at Junction 3 on the N4, via the N4 as far as Junction 7 (M50) and via the R148 along Chapelizod bypass, Con Colbert Road and St John’s Road West, where it will join the prevailing traffic management regime at Frank Sherwin Bridge.

Cycle facilities are provided along the Proposed Scheme commencing at Junction 3 on the N4 and continuing to Junction 2 where it starts to follow the Old Lucan Road. The cycle facilities continue over the M50 and through Palmerstown on the Old Lucan Road, connecting to existing cycle facilities adjacent to the R148, immediately east of Palmerstown village. These will connect to future facilities through Chapelizod village. Cycle facilities are also provided between Con Colbert Road and the end of the corridor at Heuston Station.

Legislative Context

Projects listed in Annex I of Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014) (the “**EIA Directive**”), automatically require an environmental impact assessment (“**EIA**”). The Proposed Scheme does not fall under the list of projects identified in Annex I of the EIA Directive.

Further, section 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) (the “**Roads Act**”) and Article 8 of the Roads Regulations 1994 (S.I. No. 119 of 1994) (as amended) (the “**Roads Regulations**”) sets out certain “road development”, which automatically requires an EIA. The Proposed Scheme does not fall within any of the categories of “road development” set out in section 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act or Article 8 of the Roads Regulations.

Section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act provides:-

“Where a road authority or, as the case may be, the Authority considers that a road development that it proposes (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, it shall inform An Bord Pleanála in writing prior to making any application to the Bord for an approval referred to in section 51(1) in respect of the development”

In accordance with section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act, the BusConnects Programme Board of the NTA, for and on behalf of the NTA, has considered whether the Proposed Scheme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. Arup were instructed to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for the Proposed Scheme to assist the NTA in its consideration as to whether the Proposed Scheme

is likely to have significant effects on the environment. This report concluded that the Proposed Scheme is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

EIA Screening Determination

In accordance with section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act, the EIA Directive, and applicable guidance and on the basis of the information provided in the Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for the Proposed Scheme (which has taken into account the provisions of the EIA Directive including Annex IIA and III to that Directive), and has taken into account, where relevant the available results of other assessments of the effects on the environment, the BusConnects Programme Board of the NTA, for and on behalf of the NTA, has determined that the Proposed Scheme is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and therefore that an EIA is required and that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report must be prepared.

Main Reasons for the Determination

The above determination has been arrived at for the following main reasons with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III of the EIA Directive:-

1. The Proposed Scheme is likely to have significant cumulative effects on the environment as a result of the overlap of the Proposed Scheme and other development projects as detailed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report such as for example:
 - (a) Increased severance and driver/pedestrian/cyclist delay as a result of congestion caused by construction vehicles and temporary diversions/closures of footpaths and roads arising from the cumulative effect of the Proposed Scheme in combination with the GDA Cycle Network Route 06 (during construction).
 - (b) Increased dust emissions and noise and vibration effects associated with construction activities, such as excavation, demolition and road re-surfacing arising from the cumulative effect of the Proposed Scheme in combination with the Strategic Housing Development at Palmerstown (during construction).
 - (c) Pollution and contamination caused by construction activities, which cumulatively effect soils, waterways and groundwater arising from the cumulative effect of the Proposed Scheme in combination with GDA Cycle Network Route 06 (during construction).
 - (d) Cumulative effects on materials and waste resource due to demolition, excavation and transportation (removal and delivery) of materials arising from the cumulative effect of the Proposed Scheme in combination with a new Lucan West Park and Ride Facility (during construction).
 - (e) Cumulative effects on air quality and noise as a result of changes to junctions, traffic levels and traffic patterns arising from the cumulative effect of the Proposed Scheme in combination with the reconfiguration of the M50 Junction 7 and the Liffey Valley Shopping Centre expansion (during operation).

2. The Proposed Scheme is likely to have significant effects on the environment during Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme, including the following:
 - (a) Increased congestion as a result of traffic diversions and movement of construction related traffic;
 - (b) Air quality effects as a result of dust emissions from construction activities, emissions from construction vehicles and diverted traffic adjacent to construction works;
 - (c) Noise and vibration effects arising from construction activities, particularly during intense periods of construction;
 - (d) Increased levels of stress and disruption, particularly on vulnerable road users and members of the public living, working, or commuting through the area;
 - (e) Biodiversity effects due to the loss of habitats including trees/other vegetation, spread of non-native invasive species;
 - (f) Water quality effects should a pollution event occur adjacent to a watercourse during construction;
 - (g) Soils and geology and contamination effects on groundwater resources as a result of excavating made ground and the existing roadbed;
 - (h) Archaeological and cultural heritage effects and disturbance of below ground archaeological remains arising from excavation activities;
 - (i) Townscape and visual effects due to general construction activity from removal of trees, impacts on property boundaries and streetscape disturbance;
 - (j) Impacts as a result of material arising from the excavation of the roadbed; and
 - (k) Effects on utilities due to diversions and modifications of utility infrastructure.

3. The Proposed Scheme is likely to have significant effects on the environment as a result of the Operation Phase of the Proposed Scheme, including the following:
 - (a) Reallocation of the road space leading to changes in parking and loading provision;
 - (b) Air quality and noise impacts due to changes in traffic patterns along the Proposed Scheme and adjacent road links;
 - (c) The potential to introduce or spread non-native invasive species during maintenance activities;
 - (d) Water quality and flooding impacts due to increases in area of hardstanding which may increase the rate of runoff;
 - (e) Soils and geology and potential contamination impacts as a result of accidental spillages;
 - (f) Impacts on the setting of cultural heritage assets due to changes within the road boundary; and

- (g) Changes to the transport corridor effecting the sense of place, townscape and visual amenity due to the new features within the streetscape, changes in traffic flows, lighting, signage, new boundaries and landscape planting treatments.

Signed: 

Anne Graham

For and on behalf of the BusConnects Programme Board of the NTA

Dated: 9th August 2021