

2.0 PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide some relevant background information in relation to planning and transport policy under the following headings:

- Background to Luas in the Dublin Area;
- Roads Proposals in the West Tallaght Area;
- Land Use Planning Policy Context;

and also to consider how Luas Line A1 will contribute to good planning and sustainable development in the area it serves.

2.2 BACKGROUND TO LUAS IN DUBLIN

2.2.1 Dublin Transportation Initiative

The Dublin Transportation Initiative (DTI), published by the Department of Transport in 1994, presented an integrated transport strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). Among other measures, it recommended the construction of a three line Light Rail Transit system, linking Tallaght, Ballymun and Cabinteely to the City Centre.

2.2.2 Luas Red and Green Lines

In 1996 the Transport (Dublin Light Rail) Act, 1996 was enacted to provide a legal framework for CIÉ to apply to the Minister for Public Enterprise for light railway orders granting CIÉ powers to construct, operate and maintain light railways.

Light rail orders for the present Luas Red and Green Lines were made in 1999 and 2000. The Green Line that runs between St. Stephen's Green and Sandyford opened to passengers on 30 June 2004. The Red Line from Tallaght to Connolly began carrying passengers in September 2004.

The 1996 Act was repealed by the 2001 Act but the provisions relating to railway orders in the new Act were substantially the same as in the previous one.

2.2.3 DTO Strategy –“A Platform for Change”

In October 2000 the Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) published 'A Platform for Change - Outline of an integrated transportation strategy for the Greater Dublin Area - 2000 to 2016.' The Strategy set out a vision of an integrated multi-modal transportation strategy for the Dublin area, to be delivered over the subsequent 15 years.

Figure 2.1 is an extract from 'A Platform for Change' and illustrates proposals for public transport and roads in the Dublin Area.

In addition to Luas, the Strategy identifies a metro system as a key element of the transport network. The western orbital route, as envisaged in the DTO's plan, is to serve Tallaght, Clondalkin, Blanchardstown and linking with the Swords route in the vicinity of the N2-M50 Interchange. Of relevance to Luas Line A1, the Strategy identified a proposal for a spur from the Orbital Metro line from Cookstown to Tallaght West.

Figure 2.1: Extract From DTO Strategy – “A Platform for Change’ – Outline of an integrated transportation strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2000-2016”



2.2.4 Early Route Identification Studies

During 2001, in response to the publication of A Platform for Change, the CIÉ Light Rail Project Office (whose functions were transferred to RPA in December 2001 on the formation of RPA under the 2001 Act) commissioned consultants WS Atkins to carry out the Dublin Orbital Metro Study. The study was completed in 2002. The study was undertaken in consultation with relevant stakeholders including DTO. The purpose of the study was to identify potential alignments for a western orbital metro route between N2/M50 and Tallaght via Blanchardstown and Clondalkin. One of the aims of the study was to identify and preserve one or more alignments along this corridor for metro. The Study took place in an environment of rapid commercial development where good surface alignments would be lost unless satisfactory safeguarding arrangements were made. Two feasible alternative alignments linking Citywest to the main orbital metro route in the vicinity of Tallaght Hospital were identified. This study also concluded that there were no insurmountable constraints, environmental or otherwise, to the route options considered.

2.2.5 “Transport 21”

The Government’s capital investment framework for rail infrastructure in the Greater Dublin Area is contained in Transport 21 which was announced in November 2005. This plan contains many of the infrastructure projects described in A Platform for Change.

Figure 2.2: Extract from “Transport 21” – Greater Dublin Area Rail Network.

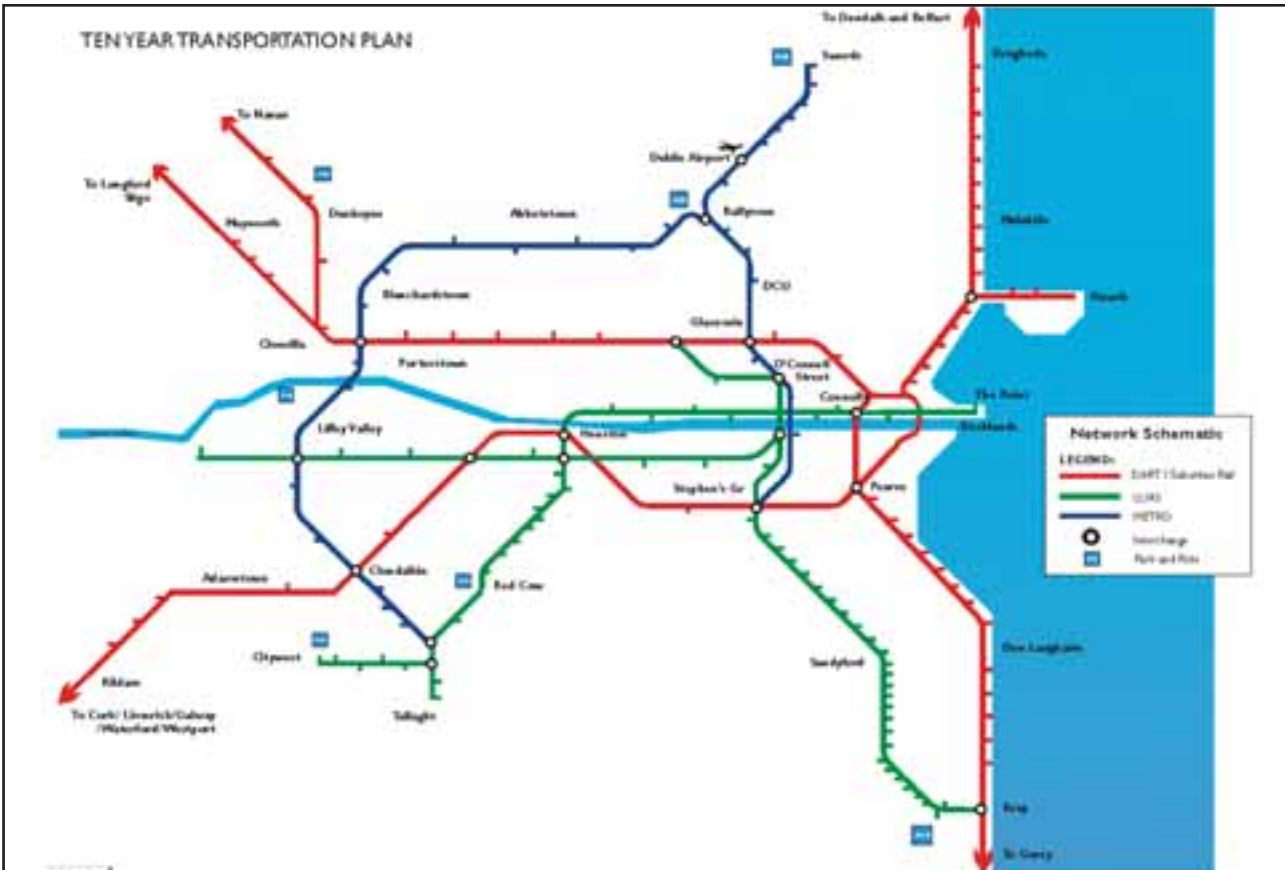


Figure 2.2 is an extract from Transport 21 and shows the proposed Greater Dublin Area rail network.

The projects and programmes that make up Transport 21 are set out in the Department of Transport’s website for Transport 21. As set out within, these projects and programmes

“aim to

- increase accessibility;
- ensure sustainability;
- expand capacity;
- increase use; and
- enhance quality.

Increasing accessibility is about making it easier for everybody to get to and from work, school, college, shopping, business and social activities. It is also about making it easier for industry and business to access raw materials, workers, and above all markets

Ensuring sustainability recognises that a modern transport system must be sustainable from an economic, social and environmental perspective. The transport sector is the fastest growing

contributor to our national greenhouse gas emissions. The Department of Transport, as outlined in its Statement of Strategy, is committed to tackling the adverse environmental impacts of the transport sector while maximising the efficiency and increasing the mobility of goods and people on the transport network.

Expanding capacity has two important dimensions:

- Existing capacity deficiencies which arise from past underinvestment and from the sheer pace of economic growth over the past decade must be addressed;
- Appropriate provision for future growth must be made.

Expanding capacity can no longer be based on just a “predict and provide” strategy of predicting traffic growth and providing the infrastructure to meet it.

Use of our transport network needs to be improved by managing the network itself, making the best possible use of existing infrastructure before new infrastructure is built.

All trips made have an impact on other transport users, particularly when there is congestion on the transport network. With this in mind, Transport 21 will seek to increase the use of public transport, particularly in urban areas and facilitate the better management of the use of the transport network so as to maximise its capacity to move people and goods, as distinct from just vehicles.

Enhancing the quality of the transport system has a number of dimensions:

- It is about the physical quality of the network, ensuring that it is well constructed, maintained and operated.
- It concerns the speed, reliability and comfort of a journey.
- It relates to integration and ensuring that the journey is as seamless as possible.
- It concerns making sure that the transport network is safe to use.
- It is about the physical accessibility of our transport network for people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments.”

Transport 21 makes the introduction of Luas to Citywest subject to half of the capital cost of the Project being funded by the private sector. RPA has put agreements in place which will meet this requirement; more information on this is contained in section 3.8.

2.2.6 Metro West

The orbital metro, described in A Platform for Change and examined in the Study carried out by WS Atkins referred to above, is included in substance in Transport 21 as Metro West. The selection of a route and the development of the design for Luas Line A1 have taken account of Metro West. An emerging preferred route corridor for Metro West was selected by RPA in June 2007 and is currently the subject of public and stakeholder consultation and further design work with a view to making a railway order application for the line in due course. As the emerging route for Metro West does not include any part of Luas Line A1, there are no plans at present for the Project to be upgraded to metro standard (this would principally involve the use of longer rail vehicles and greater separation from other road traffic). However, in order to allow such an upgrade to take place in the future, the design of Luas Line A1 contains no features which would prevent an upgrade taking place, if necessary.

2.3 ROAD PROPOSALS IN THE WEST TALLAGHT AREA

The design of Luas Line A1 has also taken into account of a number of significant road infrastructure developments in the West Tallaght area which will improve the accessibility of the area and facilitate its development in accordance with South Dublin County Council's land use strategy for the area as set out in the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010. The following road projects are relevant in the context of the proposed Luas Line A1 (see Figure 2.3).

2.3.1 N7 Naas Road Improvement Scheme

The N7 Naas Road Improvement Scheme, which comprised the construction of a third lane in both directions for a distance of 14km, was completed in summer 2006.

2.3.2 Embankment Road

It is an objective of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010 to develop the road, known as Embankment Road, from Citywest to Belgard Road. This road will run along the reservation to the north of the residential areas of Fettercairn, Cairnwood and Kilmartin. A Part 8 application for the proposed scheme was presented to South Dublin County Council and a decision to proceed with the proposed scheme was made by the Council in May 2006. Detailed design is currently being prepared for the scheme and accommodates Luas Line A1, while land acquisition and site investigation works are progressing (at the time of writing).

The proposed works include the following:

- Construction of c.2.6km carriageway between Citywest and Belgard Road.
- Provision of additional carriageway lanes between the Old Belgard Road and Belgard Road.
- Reconfiguration of road layout in the vicinity of Belgard Road, Old Belgard Road and Cookstown Estate Road.
- Construction of approximately 100 metres of carriageway linking Fettercairn Road to the proposed Embankment Road Extension.
- Local realignment of Cookstown Road in the vicinity of its junction with the proposed Embankment Road Extension.
- Realignment of junction of Cookstown Road and Fettercairn Road at St. Marks S.C. and forming of cul-de-sac on Cookstown Road north of junction.
- Construction of cycletracks and footpaths.
- Installation of signal control at the junctions of Belgard Road / Cookstown Estate Road and Cookstown Road / proposed Embankment Road Extension.
- Installation of new (replacement) signal control at the junction of Embankment Road with both Belgard Road and Old Belgard Road.
- Acoustic walls will be located between Belgard and the eastern end of Alpine Rise. A 2.5m high acoustic wall will be located adjacent to Alpine Rise.

2.3.3 Outer Ring Road Phase 3

Phase 3 of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) will connect the N7 to the N81. This road has recently been approved by An Bord Pleanála (Ref 06S.ER.2047).

The project comprises the following:

- Construction of a new single carriageway link road plus bus and cycle lanes between the Outer Ring Road N7 Kingswood Interchange and the Cheeverstown Road.
- Upgrading of the existing single carriageway link road plus bus and cycle lanes along the Cheeverstown Road and Cookstown Road to the N81.
- Existing priority junctions at Brookfield Road, Fettercairn Road, Cookstown Road and Fortunestown Way to be changed to Traffic Signal Controlled Junctions.
- Construction of a new roundabout south of the Kingswood Interchange to facilitate access to the Roadstone Quarry.

The detailed design for the scheme accommodates Luas Line A1. The construction of the junction of Outer Ring Road Phase 3 with the Embankment Road extension is currently underway (at the time of writing). Provision for Luas infrastructure is being made by the local authority in the construction of this key road crossing to mitigate construction disruption once this road becomes live to road traffic.

2.4 LAND USE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Land use planning is governed by a hierarchy of policy documents ranging from national to local levels. An outline of some of the main provisions of these sources which are relevant to the Luas Line A1 project is provided below.

2.4.1 National Objectives

Transport policy at a national level is captured in the Department of Transport's Statement of Strategy 2005 – 2007; the National Spatial Strategy, 2002; and the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013.

Department of Transport Statement of Strategy 2005 – 2007 (DoT)

The overriding objective of the Department's strategy as embraced in the Mission Statement is

“...to underpin Ireland's economic growth and competitiveness and contribute to social development through the efficient and effective delivery of an appropriately regulated sustainable, safe and integrated transport system”.

The means by which this objective is to be attained is set out in what the strategy describes as its five 'high level goals' – integration; investment; safety; competition; regulation and reform; and delivery.

The strategic objectives of the Department set out how these high level goals are to be achieved and for public transport these are defined as:

- the provision of a well functioning, integrated public transport system which enhances competitiveness, sustains economic progress and contributes to social cohesion;
- the provision of a defined standard of public transport, at reasonable cost to the customer and taxpayer;
- the timely and cost effective delivery of the accelerated investment in infrastructure and facilities necessary to ensure improved public transport provision.

Specifically, the Department seeks to realise an increase in the number of people using public transport; an increase in the modal share of public transport; and an integrated approach to public transport provision.

The Luas Line A1 conforms to the above objectives and provides for an appropriately regulated sustainable, safe and integrated transport system.

National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS) was issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in 2002. The Strategy is a strategic planning framework, which provides guidance for future development throughout the country by identifying a hierarchy of settlements to accommodate future growth, with the driving objective of achieving balanced regional development. With regard to public transportation in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), the NSS states as follows:

“The physical consolidation of Dublin, supported by effective land use policies for the urban area itself, is an essential requirement for a competitive Dublin. Consolidation is also required for the public transport to function effectively. In turn, investment in public transport will assist in promoting a more efficient and competitive Greater Dublin Area”.

National Development Plan 2000 – 2013

The National Development Plan 2007 – 2013 builds on the significant social and economic achievements of the 2000 – 2006 Plan. A key element of the overall strategy is the continuation of sustainable economic growth, greater social inclusion and balanced regional development.

The public transport elements of the Plan for the Greater Dublin Area include the implementation of the Luas light rail network.

Luas Line A1 meets the above objectives providing an increased Luas light rail network allowing for greater sustainable development.

2.4.2 Regional Planning Guidelines for The Greater Dublin Area, 2004-2016

The Dublin Regional Authority and Mid-East Regional Authority published the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016 (RPGs) in July 2004. The strategy distinguishes between the Metropolitan Area and the Hinterland Area and proposes policy directions for both.

The key objectives of the RPGs relate to consolidation of the urban centres located within the Metropolitan Area based on provision and facilitation of an integrated public transport system and the achievement of a greater use of sustainable transport modes through the integration of land use and transport planning.

The RPGs support the projects proposed under the Infrastructure and Services Improvements element of the DTO Strategy 'A Platform for Change'.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016 contains a number of recommendations which are of relevance to the proposed development.

Recommendation 7.1 states that:

"In the Metropolitan Area, public transportation and other sustainable modes should be given precedence over the requirements of the private car in all relevant policy and decision making..."

...In the Metropolitan Area, the intention is to create and sustain conditions suitable for major enhancement of the existing public transport system."

Recommendation 8.2 states as follows:

"The priority to be accorded to the measures and projects included in the Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) Platform for Change and its review in 2004 should be confirmed by the relevant authorities and the resources necessary to give effect to the proposals, without any delay and should be secured and allocated, where this has not already been done.

The strategy assumes that all of the transportation measures and projects, as amended / updated by Platform for Change, are implemented. Some of these projects have been subject to considerable delay and it is critical that no further delays are encountered in the realisation of these and other proposals."

Recommendation 8.4 states as follows:

"The review of the DTO Platform for Change should consider, inter alia, the projects for both the Metropolitan and Hinterland Areas outlined below, with a further review or reviews as the strategy is implemented. Appropriate priority and resources should be allocated to avoid unnecessary delays.

The future population and household growth can only be accommodated if the provision of transport infrastructure, particularly in respect of public transport facilities, is maintained beyond the implementation of the DTO Platform for Change measures. In addition to the measures listed in relation to Recommendation 5, other measures and actions required include:

4. Investigate possible extension to Luas and Metro systems within and beyond proposals of Platform for Change."

The proposed development which involves an extension of the existing Luas system as recommended in the DTO Platform for Change and includes a Park and Ride scheme at Cheeverstown, is in accordance with these recommendations.

2.4.3 Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation in the Tallaght Area

The Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation for the Tallaght Area, which was prepared by WS Atkins, was published in November 2003. The study, which was commissioned by South Dublin County Council and the Transportation Office (DTO), aimed to:

"...establish a strategy to maximise the potential benefit of sustainable development of the area and to fully utilise proposals for improving the public transport and highway systems, together with cycling and walking facilities" (p. vi).

The Report recommended a number of proposals for the area which included a metro line from Finglas to Tallaght via Blanchardstown and Clondalkin with a spur to Tallaght west and a Park and Ride site located in Tallaght Town Centre or Citywest to be developed in the medium term (2008 – 2012).

Luas Line A1 benefits the sustainable development of the area and surrounding areas by improving accessibility to an integrated public transport system.

2.4.4 South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010

South Dublin County Council is the planning authority for the West Tallaght area and the statutory Development Plan for the area is the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010. Figure 2.3 is an extract from Maps 3 & 4 of the Development Plan and shows the land use zoning objectives and other infrastructural and environmental objectives for the West Tallaght / Citywest area.

While no specific route is detailed, the Development Plan Policies and Objectives contain a number of policies and objectives which support the Luas Line A1 project.

Section 7.6.2.iii (c) requires:

“...the protection, free from development, of such lands as are required for the development of public transport facilities. This will include the protection of lands to facilitate the extension of the proposed Light Rail Transit System (LRT) to Clondalkin, Oldbawn and City West.”

Policy T6 of the Development Plan also supports the extension of Luas and states as follows:

“It is the policy of the Council to extend the LRT system to serve the Lucan area as proposed in the DTO Strategy ‘A Platform for Change’. It is also the policy of this Council to facilitate the extension of the LRT system to the Oldbawn area, to Clondalkin and to Citywest, and to promote the extension of LUAS to the Rathfarnham, Terenure, Knocklyon, Ballycullen and Oldcourt areas and to reserve final lines for LUAS-LRT when they have been agreed. The Council will continue to pursue this policy at every available opportunity.”

Specific Local Objective No. 40 of the Development Plan states as follows:

“40.Promote the extension of the proposed Light Rail Transit System (LRT) from:

- a) the Naas Road (N7) to Clondalkin*
- b) Tallaght Town Centre to Citywest and Oldbawn”*

Since the adoption of the Development Plan in 2004, South Dublin County Council have issued a number of initiatives which are relevant to the planning context for the proposed Luas Line A1. These areas are identified on Figure 2.3, numbered 1, 2 and 3 as follows:

1. Tallaght Town Centre Local Area Plan, 2005

The Tallaght Town Centre Local Area Plan, prepared by South Dublin County Council in 2005 was adopted by the Elected Representatives on the 10th of October 2006. This includes framework plans for 15 precincts within and around Tallaght Town Centre. The north westernmost precinct is referred to as Cookstown Station and outlines proposals which address the land use/ urban design opportunities presented by the existing Luas Red Line and station at Cookstown. Similarly the northmost precinct is referred to as Belgard Station and outlines proposals which address the land use/ urban design opportunities presented by the existing Luas Red Line and station at Belgard. The Local Area Plan also makes provisions in the framework plan in anticipation of the Luas Line Spur to Citywest and recognises the significance of this area as a future transportation interchange.

2. Cooldown Commons Area Plan, 2006

An Action Area Plan was prepared by South Dublin County Council in 1999 for “A1” residentially zoned lands west of Citywest Road (N81) and south of Fortunestown Lane. Additional lands were zoned residential in the area north of Fortunestown Lane in the 2004 Development Plan and to fulfil the requirement for an Area Plan for these lands, South Dublin issued the Cooldown Commons Area Plan in July 2006. This framework presented for the development of the lands includes objectives for higher residential densities which are contingent on the delivery of the Luas spur to Citywest.

3. Variation No.2 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004 – 2010: Fortunestown Lane & Garter Lane, Saggart

In December 2006, Variation No. 2 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2004 – 2010 was adopted by South Dublin County Council in respect of lands at Fortunestown Lane and Garter Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin “*in order to secure an extension of the Luas line to Citywest and Saggart*”. Under this Variation, the zoning of lands at Fortunestown Lane and Garters Lane has been revised from Zoning Objective ‘GB’ (“To preserve a ‘Green Belt’ between development areas”) to Zoning Objective ‘A1’ (“To provide for new Residential Communities in accordance with approved Area Plans”). In accordance with Variation No.2, Specific Local Objective Number 124 has been adopted at this location providing, inter alia, that the lands be subject to a micro Local Area Plan and that planning permission for development shall not be issued until such time as the construction of the Luas extension to Citywest / Saggart has commenced.

In addition to the above, in terms of their exercising of their development control functions, South Dublin County Council have been cognisant of the emerging preferred route for Luas Line A1 and have made accommodation for its introduction in the context of a number of planning applications in the general area.

2.4.5 Conclusion

Luas Line A1 conforms to the objectives of the local and national land use policy documents pertaining to the area, allowing for greater sustainable development, social inclusion through the provision of a safe and integrated transport system.

Figure 2.3: Extract from South Dublin County Development Plan 2004-2010

