



## Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

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### Iarród Éireann Public Consultation on DART+ West

#### Introduction to the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA)

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) welcomes the launch by Iarród Éireann of the public consultation on the Emerging Preferred Option for the DART+ West project. This is the first phase of the DART Expansion Programme, which is a key strategic infrastructure that will support the needs of a growing population and expanding workforce in our Region, as set out in Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF) 2018-2040 and National Development Plan 2018-2027.

EMRA is part of the regional tier of governance in Ireland and comprises of 38 elected Members nominated by the 12 constituent local authorities within the region, including the counties of Dublin, Louth, Meath, Wicklow, Kildare, Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. EMRA is focussed on the implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region, which was made on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The primary statutory objective of the RSES is to support implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic and climate policies of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the Region.

One of the key challenges facing the Eastern and Midland Region is the need for better alignment between the location of residential development and employment to reduce the need for long distance car-based commuting, which is leading to congestion and negative impacts on people's quality of life and the environment. RSO 6 'Integrated Transport and Land use' of the RSES seeks; *"To promote best use of transport infrastructure, existing and planned and promote sustainable and active modes of travel to ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning"*.

#### Planning and Transport Policy

The success of planning in meeting societies needs requires close integration of transport investment and land use planning, to ensure the best distribution of residential and employment development in the Region. The RSES is required by legislation to be consistent with the National Transport Authority (NTA) Transportation Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), likewise the NTA Transport Strategy for the GDA is also required by legislation to be consistent with the RSES.

In order to achieve better integration of planning and transport policy, EMRA worked closely with the transport agencies in the preparation of the RSES, which includes a number of Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) that seek to ensure future development should be planned in a way that supports a shift to public transport and active modes of travel, including support for the delivery of strategic rail projects for the Region.

Specifically, Table 8.2 Rail Projects of the Region supports delivery of; *“DART Expansion Programme - new infrastructure and electrification of existing lines, including provision of electrified services to Drogheda or further north on the Northern Line, Celbridge-Hazelhatch or further south on the Kildare Line, Maynooth and M3 Parkway on the Maynooth/Sligo Line, while continuing to provide DART services on the South-Eastern Line as far south as Greystones”*.

Furthermore, the RSES also includes for the first time a statutory Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) to support sustainable population and employment growth in the Dublin Metropolitan Area, in tandem with the delivery and integration of an expanded public transport network including the DART expansion programme. Table 5.1 of the MASP further identifies a sequence of infrastructure priorities to promote greater co-ordination between local authorities, transport and infrastructure providers for the phased delivery of strategic development areas.

#### Invitation to engage with Elected Members of the Regional Assembly

In conclusion, the Regional Assembly welcomes the opportunity to engage in the DART + West consultation and look forward to continuing engagement with Iarnród Éireann and the relevant transport agencies in the development and delivery of strategic transport projects in the Region.

To that end we would like to extend an invitation to Iarnród Éireann to present the DART + West project to our members at a meeting of the Regional Assembly and would be grateful if you could reply via the email in the signature below to indicate your availability in this regard. Having regard to current COVID restrictions it is possible that this will be online.

Best Regards

Regards,



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Jim Conway  
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Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly  
5<sup>th</sup> October, 2020  
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