

Introductory Statement from Anne Graham, Chief Executive, National Transport Authority

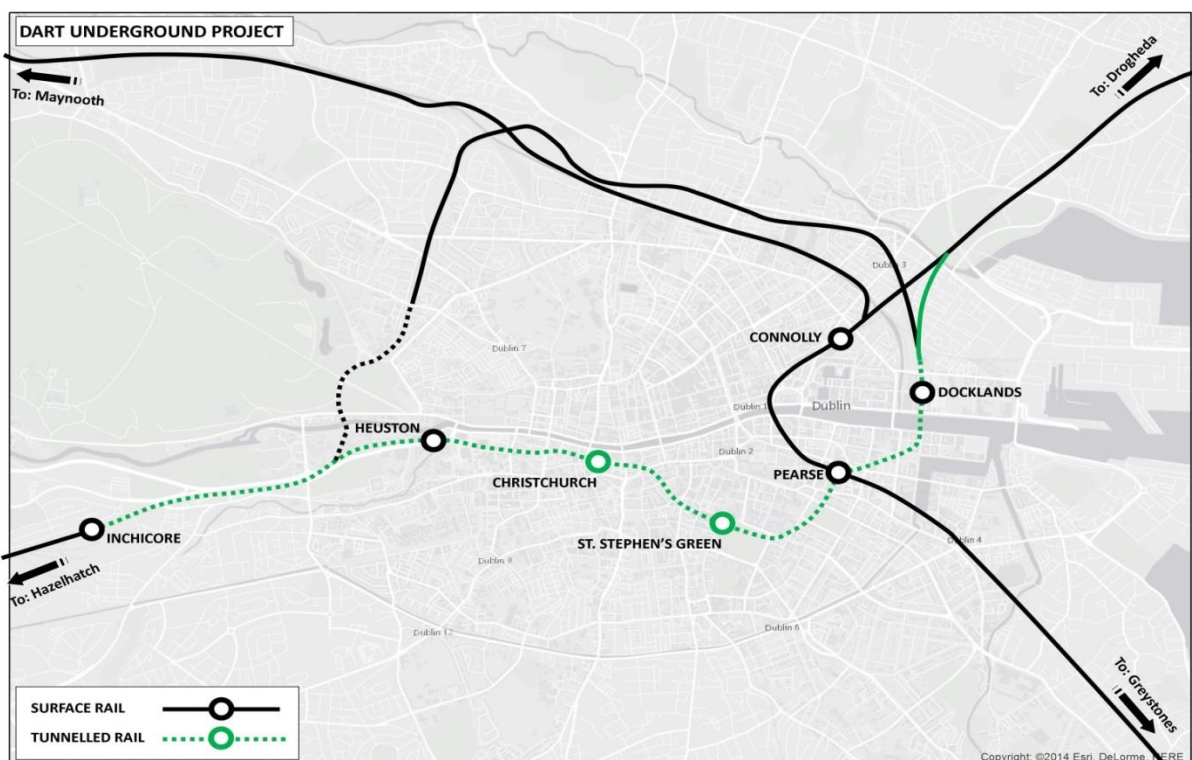
Thank you for the invitation to attend. I understand that there are two particular areas of our activity that the Committee wishes to focus upon. These are the **recent decision to defer the DART Underground project** and issues associated with **Kerry Flyer and school transport provision**.

I will deal very briefly with each in turn. To assist me in dealing with your subsequent questions I am joined by two directors- Hugh Creegan, Deputy CEO who manages transport investment and also taxi regulation and Tim Gaston who manages public transport services and integration measures.

Firstly, the decision related to the DART Underground project....

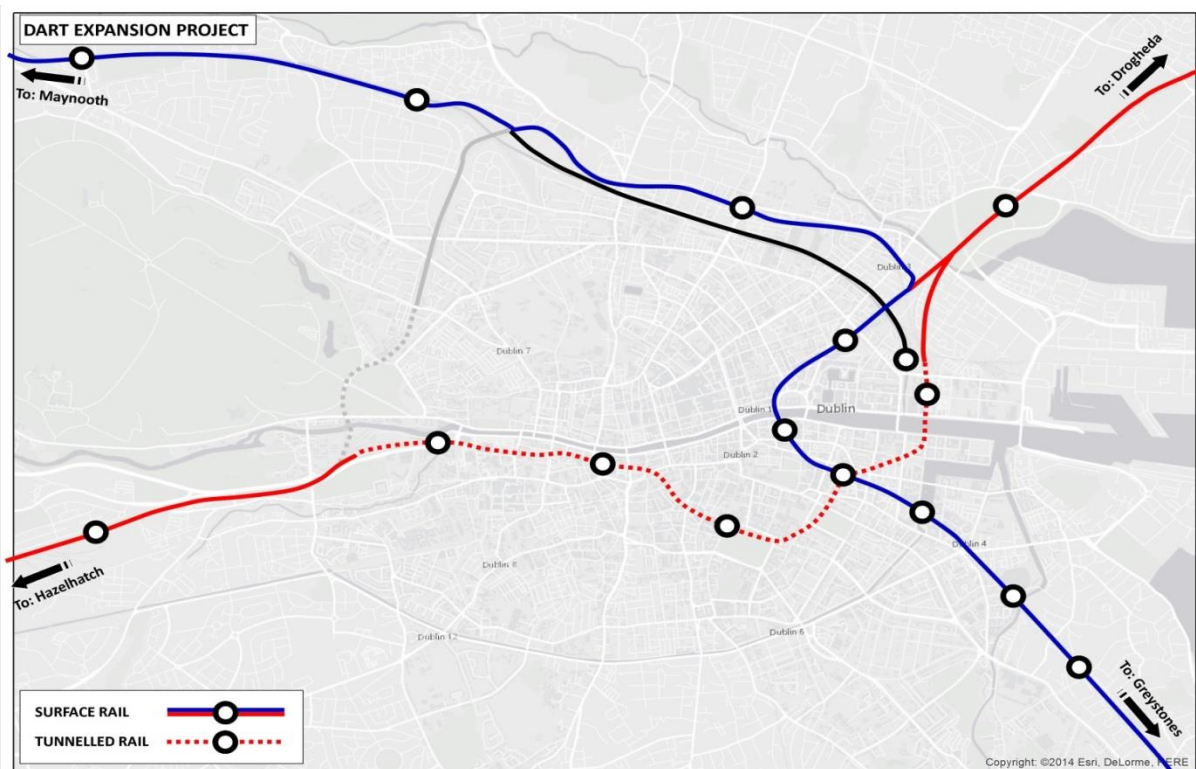
The National Transport Authority carried out a review of the key transport infrastructure projects that were proposed to support the growth of the Greater Dublin Region. This included the DART Expansion Scheme which included DART Underground, the Fingal/North Dublin Study and a study of the orbital movements around Dublin all designed to inform the draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 to 2035 that has been recently published and which is open for public consultation.

DART Underground is a rail link proposal, predominately underground, from the Northern Line just north of Connolly Station, to Inchicore on the Kildare Line, and with stations proposed at Docklands, Pearse, St. Stephen's Green, Christchurch, Heuston and Inchicore. The project received planning consent in 2011, which became operative in March 2014 following judicial review proceedings taken by a number of third parties.



The estimated cost of the currently designed DART Underground Project is €3 billion and the cost of the currently envisaged DART Expansion Programme is €4 billion. The DART Expansion Programme comprises DART Underground, as outlined above, **plus**:

- Electrification of the Northern Line to Drogheda;
- Electrification of the Cork Line from Heuston to Hazelhatch and completion of 4 tracking from Park West to Inchicore;
- Electrification of the Sligo Line from Connolly to Maynooth, together with removal of level crossings and re-signalling; and
- Expansion of fleet and depot facilities.



The DART Expansion Programme will provide a DART service from Drogheda to Hazelhatch via the city centre tunnel and a second segregated DART service operating from Maynooth to Greystones. The two segregated services will intersect at Pearse station, which will be the main passenger interchange.

The DART Expansion Programme remains a key project in the delivery of an integrated rail transport network for the Dublin region and continues to feature as a key project in the draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area. The overall DART Expansion Programme has been assessed as a positive project from an economic perspective with a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1:1.4. While the DART Underground Project has received planning approval from An Bord Pleanála, the business case for that project, prepared by Iarnród Éireann, indicates that its development alone under the current

railway order is not economically justified with a BCR of 1:0.8. The DART Expansion Programme Business Case is available on the National Transport Authority website at the following link:

http://nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/DART_Expansion_Programme_Revised_Business_Case_2015.pdf

Given the very significant cost of the DART Expansion Programme, and recognising that a lower cost alternative for the tunnel element is possible, the Authority recommended the following:

1. That the compulsory acquisition powers of the approved railway order for the DART Underground Project were not activated - i.e. the “notices to treat” were not issued;
2. That the DART Underground Project is redesigned to provide a lower cost technical solution for the project, whilst retaining the required rail connectivity;
3. That a new railway order is sought for the revised, lower cost DART Underground Project, together with any remaining elements of the overall DART Expansion Programme which have not already been approved under separate approval processes;
4. That the design and planning work of the revised DART Underground Project is advanced in order to be available for commencement of construction after 2020; and
5. That the non-tunnelled elements of the DART Expansion Programme be progressed in line with available funding.

Some alternatives that the Authority will explore in relation to a lower cost solution for DART Underground are:

- Tunnel to Heuston not Inchicore
- Tunnel only between Heuston and Pearse Stn and not Docklands
- Tunnel between Heuston and Pearse with fewer intermediate stations

The government’s Capital Investment Plan 2016 – 2021 has made provision for advancing the DART Expansion programme commencing with the extension of the DART line as far as Balbriggan and the design and planning to progress for expansion of DART services to Maynooth in the west and Hazelhatch in the southwest.

Finally the issues related to Kerry Flyer and School transport provision.....

Firstly I must inform the Committee that the National Transport Authority has no role to play in the provision of school transport services funded by the Department of Education and Science. Bus Éireann procures school transport services under an administrative agreement with that department. Therefore the Authority is not in a position to comment on any school transport contract as we are not a party in their procurement.

The Authority, however, is responsible for the management of rural transport service provision funded by the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport under the Rural Transport Programme.

As the Committee would be aware having taken responsibility for the programme in 2012, the Authority devised a new organisational framework for these services in mid-2013 reducing the 35 groups to 17 Transport Co-Ordination Units, based on local authority boundaries.

All 17 Locallink offices are now up and running very successfully with many operating from local authority offices which has been of great benefit in integrating service provision with other services of the local authority. The Authority hopes to build off this new structure and provide new services in 2016 where gaps have been identified.

Kerry Flyer is one of the operators that provides rural transport services under contract with the National Transport Authority and the Kerry Locallink office, managed by Kerry Community Transport Ltd. Many of these contracts were novated from Kerry Community Transport Ltd. to the National Transport Authority. In 2014, Kerry Flyer received €172,899.50 as a contracted operator for the delivery of 26 rural transport services all of which were wheelchair accessible. The majority of this funding came from the National Transport Authority through the Rural Transport Programme.

This week we intend starting the retendering of all rural transport services provided by private bus operators with the publication on the etenders website of a call for interested operators to register their interest in future tender competitions for rural transport services. Currently there are in the region of 290 contracts in place which now need to be refreshed – gradually over the next 12 months these will be tendered by the Authority.

That concludes my introductory presentation. I trust that we can answer any queries that arise.

November 2015