

Belfield/Blackrock to City Core Bus Corridor Scheme – Section 146B Application

Environmental Assessments Review

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

On 6 May 2022, pursuant to Section 51(2) of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) the National Transport Authority (NTA) lodged an application with An Bord Pleanála (ABP) (now An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP)) relating to a proposed road development for the construction and operation of the Belfield/Blackrock to City Centre Core Bus Corridor (CBC) Scheme (the 'Approved Scheme'), part of the NTA's BusConnects programme for Dublin (ACP ref. ABP-313509-22).

The Approved Scheme, which measures approximately 8.3km, is comprised of two main sections in terms of the route it follows, namely Blackrock to the City Centre and along Nutley Lane. The Blackrock to City Centre section, which measures 7.4km, commences on the R113 at Temple Hill, approximately 80m to the north of the R827 Stradbroke Road, travels along the N31 Frascati Road, the R118 Rock Road / Merrion Road / Pembroke Road, the R816 Pembroke Road / Baggot Street Upper / Baggot Street Lower, turns onto Fitzwilliam Street Lower and terminates at the junction of Mount Street Upper / Merrion Square South / Merrion Square East. The Nutley Lane section, which measures approximately 0.9km, commences at the tie-in with the signalised junction on the R138 Stillorgan Road on the southern end of Nutley Lane, travels along Nutley Lane and terminates at the junction with the R118 Merrion Road.

On 27 March 2024, ACP approved the scheme subject to 19 conditions. On the same date, the associated Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) (ACP ref. ABP-313565-22) was confirmed by ACP without modification, authorising the NTA to acquire lands and rights for the purposes of constructing and operating the Approved Scheme.

The application for the Approved Scheme was the subject of Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment carried out by ACP. To provide the information to support these assessments, the NTA submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) as part of documentation accompanying the application for the Approved Scheme.

Separately, on 7 July 2023, the Commission issued its decision to grant permission (DLR Ref. D21A/0627, ABP Ref. ABP-312908-22) to Blackrock Clinic Ltd for the relocation of the existing main vehicular entrance into Blackrock Clinic from the Rock Road and the associated signalised junction on Rock Road to a location approximately 60m further south along the Rock Road, together with associated works. Blackrock Clinic's development is currently under construction noting that the revised entrance/access is now in operation.

The NTA is therefore submitting a request to ACP under Section 146B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to alter the terms of the Approved Scheme accordingly (the 'Proposed Minor Alteration').

1.2 The Proposed Minor Alteration

1.2.1 Summary of the proposed works

The Proposed Minor Alteration to the Approved Scheme relates to a small section of the Approved Scheme on the Rock Road (R118) adjoining the Blackrock Clinic, including the junctions with Phoenix Terrace and Emmet Square. It will achieve consistency between the Approved Scheme and the new as-built Blackrock Clinic entrance, and will principally comprise:

- Incorporation of the new as-built entrance to Blackrock Clinic and signalised junction serving Blackrock Clinic and Phoenix Terrace in place of the previously permitted upgrade to the signalised junction at the former Blackrock Clinic entrance;
- Associated amendments to highway, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the vicinity of Blackrock Clinic and Emmet Square junctions, including modifications to pedestrian crossing facilities (including upgrading to Toucan Crossings), utilities/services, road markings, stoplines and landscaping; and

- Amendments to the extent and location of land acquisition required to facilitate the revised layout.

The Proposed Minor Alteration is shown in Figure 1. Further information on the Proposed Minor Alteration can be found in the Engineering Technical Note which accompanies this Section 146b application and the general arrangement drawing is also included in the Section 146b application.

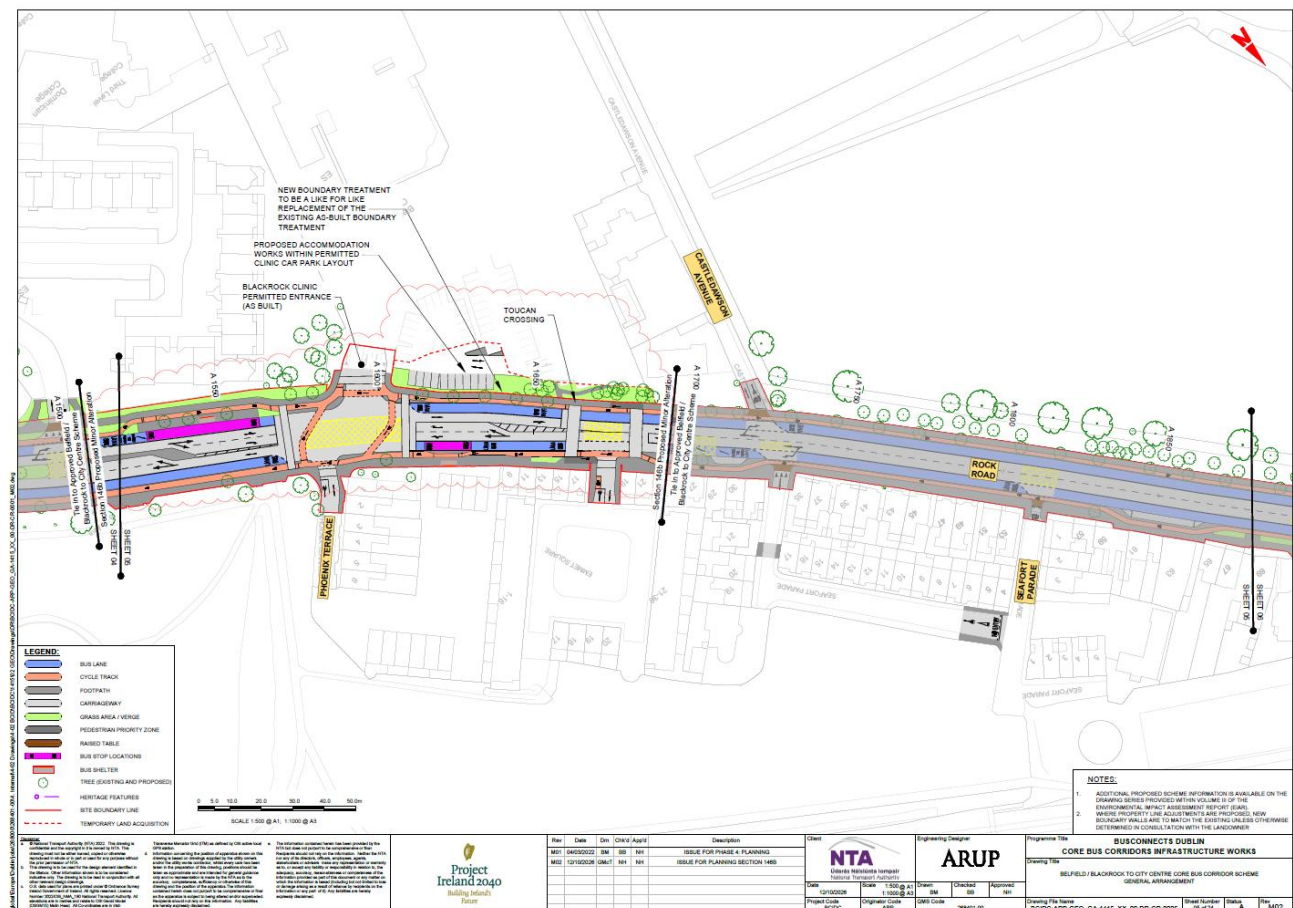


Figure 1: Proposed Minor Alteration – General Arrangement

1.2.2 Overview of the changes in land take/parking layout required

There will be a change to the land required (both temporary and permanent) required to implement the Proposed Minor Alteration and this is described in the following Section – refer also to the Engineering Technical Note which accompanies this application.

Given the location of the new entrance to Blackrock Clinic, the acquisition of certain limited lands will now be required to facilitate the Proposed Minor Alteration, if granted by the Commission. Accordingly, the NTA will be lodging an application for confirmation of a limited Compulsory Purchase Order so that (subject to the Commission confirming same) the NTA can acquire the lands necessary for the Proposed Minor Alteration. To maintain the internal traffic management routing as proposed by Blackrock Clinic's permitted development, the proposed temporary land take for the Proposed Alteration is as shown on the General Arrangement drawing to facilitate internal rearrangement of Blackrock Clinic's car park during construction. The area of perpendicular parking along the newly as-built boundary of Blackrock Clinic shall be relocated to along the future boundary of the Proposed Alteration, requiring the temporary loss of this car parking area during construction. The operation of the remainder of the future car park in Blackrock Clinic can be maintained through minimal civil works such as re-marking of the car park road markings, relocating concrete upstands, relocating signage, etc, all within the proposed temporary land take line and in consultation with Blackrock Clinic.

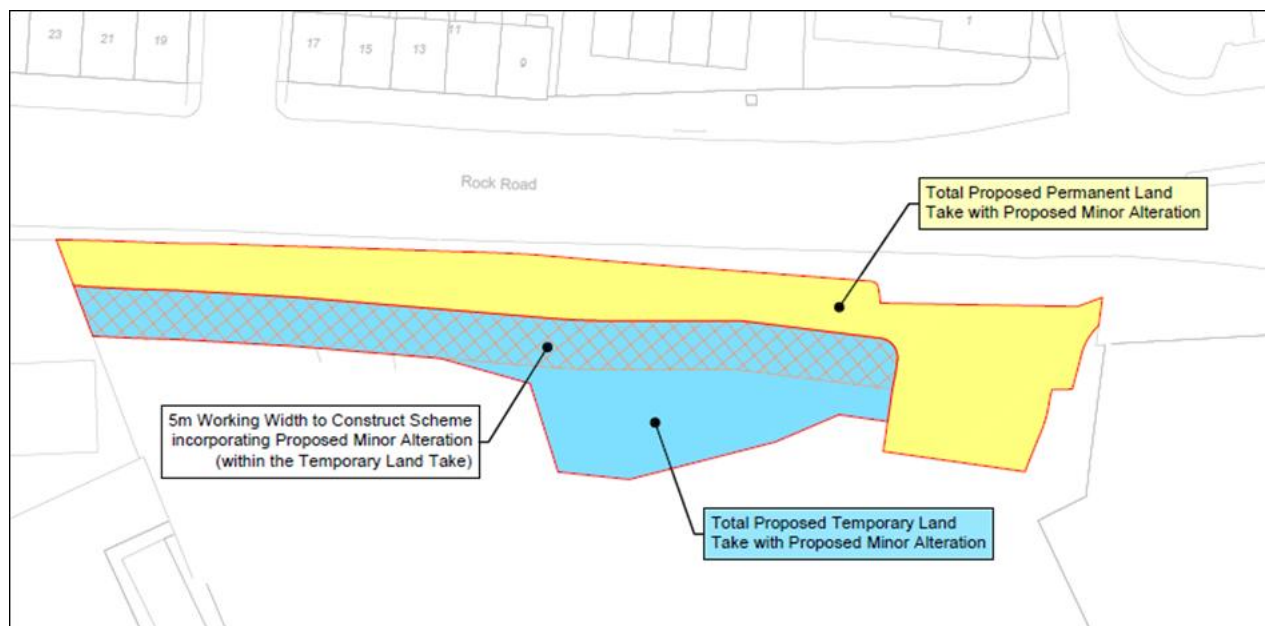


Figure 2: Total Permanent and Temporary Land Take for Approved Scheme and Proposed Minor Alteration

The net change in lands to be acquired is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of Revised Permanent and Temporary Land Requirements

	Land Requirement	Area Acquired under Approved Scheme	Area Acquired with Proposed Minor Alteration in Place
1	Permanent land take	460.5m ²	749.4m ²
2	Temporary Acquisition Needed for Construction*	450.9m ²	416.2m ²
3	Temporary Acquisition to reconfigure existing car park to facilitate construction**	N/A	293.5m ²

*The parcel of land at Blackrock Clinic's former entrance would remain required temporarily during construction but would no longer be required permanently following completion of the works.

**This land will be temporarily occupied at the initial stage of construction to reconfigure the part of the car park remaining following the fencing off of the construction corridor. On completion of the scheme, this land will be reinstated with the rest of the temporarily acquired land.

This identifies that the areas of land to be acquired both temporarily and permanently do not materially change when the Proposed Minor Alteration is considered, when the initial temporary car parking reconfiguration has been accounted for.

Further, and for completeness, it is noted that certain works identified in the Proposed Minor Alteration, at the new entrance, have already been carried out as part of Blackrock Clinic's separately consented development, and the acquisition here primarily relate to maintenance of the signalling.

With regard to car parking, the provision of the Approved Scheme would have resulted in the permanent net loss of 6 no. car parking spaces from the Blackrock Clinic car park. The Proposed Minor Alteration is also envisaged to result in the permanent net loss of 6 no. car parking spaces (i.e., the same number of car parking spaces as under the Approved Scheme). While it is acknowledged that the recently constructed new Blackrock Clinic entrance and new right turn lane has resulted in the Blackrock Clinic's permitted development having an impact on its own car park layout and quantum of car parking spaces, the Proposed Minor Alteration results in no greater loss of car parking spaces in comparison to the Approved Scheme.

During the Construction Phase of the Proposed Minor Alteration, the proposed temporary land take (which will be the subject matter of a limited CPO to be lodged shortly with ACP), takes account of the Blackrock Clinic's proposed car park layout as per their planning permission. To maintain the internal traffic management routing as proposed by Blackrock Clinic's permitted development, the proposed temporary land take for the Proposed Minor Alteration facilitates internal rearrangement of Blackrock Clinic's car park during the construction phase of the Proposed Minor Alteration. The area of perpendicular parking along the newly as-built boundary of Blackrock Clinic shall be relocated to along the future boundary of the Proposed Minor Alteration, requiring the temporary loss of this car parking area during construction. The operation of the remainder of the future car park in Blackrock Clinic can be maintained through minimal civil works such as re-marking of the car park road markings, relocating concrete upstands, relocating signage, etc, all within the proposed temporary land take line and in consultation with Blackrock Clinic. Once the Approved Scheme as altered by this Proposed Minor Alteration is completed and operational, there will be a net loss of 6 no. car park spaces within Blackrock Clinic's proposed car park.

1.2.3 Overview of Tree Provision

There is no additional tree removal required as a result of the revised permanent land requirements. There were 12 no. proposed trees that fell within the temporary land take of the Approved Scheme. The same quantum of trees is proposed locally in this area under the Proposed Minor Alteration. This will be delivered by redistributing locally within the updated temporary land take. Further information is set out in the Engineering Technical Note that forms part of this application.

1.3 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform the Commission's consideration of a request for a minor alteration of the Approved Scheme under Section 146B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as described above. This report considers the environmental matters relevant to the Commission's consideration of the application, and in particular whether the Proposed Minor Alteration would result in any likely significant environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in relation to the Approved Scheme, or any materially different effects requiring further assessment, and whether it would give rise to any additional or materially different effects on European sites over and above those already assessed as part of the Approved Scheme.

1.4 Structure of this Report

The contents of this report are set out as follows:

- **Section 2** presents the findings of the Environmental Assessments Review – the headings in the Section address each of the environmental disciplines considered as part of this review;
- **Section 3** provides the conclusions of the review.

2. Environmental Assessments Review

2.1.1 Construction Methodology

As mentioned previously, the Proposed Minor Alteration affects an approximately 185m section of the Approved Scheme and therefore represents a limited and localised change in the context of the overall Approved Scheme which is 8.3 km in length. The physical construction works associated with the Proposed Minor Alteration comprise similar activities, materials and methodologies to those of the Approved Scheme which have already been assessed in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, including pavement works, junction modifications, utility works, traffic management, ancillary infrastructure works and boundary treatments. The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce any new elements, construction methodologies or environmental impact pathways, but instead represents a rearrangement of localised scheme elements to accommodate the relocated Blackrock Clinic entrance. The construction management measures described in Chapter 5 of the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, and the construction phase mitigation measures (where relevant) included in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) appended to that EIAR, will remain applicable and will be implemented in full.

2.1.2 Traffic and Transport Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed the potential Traffic and Transport impacts associated with both the Construction and Operational Phases of the Approved Scheme, and concluded in relation to the area of the Proposed Minor Modification that the proposed junction improvements in the vicinity of Blackrock Clinic would result in a positive, very significant and long-term effect on pedestrian infrastructure, together with positive effects arising from enhanced cycling, bus and accessibility infrastructure along the corridor.

The Proposed Minor Alteration will result in localised changes to the junction arrangement and construction activities previously assessed; however, it does not introduce new transport infrastructure types or new traffic and transport impact pathways beyond those considered in the EIAR. As mentioned above, construction activities would remain similar in nature and scale to those assessed for the Approved Scheme and the construction traffic management measures identified in the EIAR would remain fully applicable.

The Proposed Minor Alteration provides high-quality facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, which is aligned with the Approved Scheme. Toucan crossings are proposed across the Rock Road (R118) at its junction with Emmet Square, while a protected junction layout in line with the Cycle Design Manual is proposed at the Rock Road (R118)/Phoenix Terrace/Blackrock Clinic junction, providing a high level of service for pedestrians and cyclists at this location. The signalisation of Rock Road and Phoenix Terrace Junction and the provision of protected dedicated infrastructure and signal phasing for pedestrians and cyclists will further improve the Level of Service (LoS) for pedestrians at this junction. The two toucan crossings for pedestrians and cyclists at the Rock Road and Emmet Square Junction are retained as part of the Proposed Alteration, which also improves the LOS.

The Proposed Minor Alteration will therefore provide a the same or a better level of service as the Approved Scheme.

The Proposed Minor Alteration would not result in a material change to construction traffic impacts, operational traffic conditions, accessibility, junction performance, pedestrian and cyclist provision, bus operations or people movement compared with the Approved Scheme. Accordingly, the Proposed Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Traffic and Transport.**

2.1.3 Air Quality Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed the potential air quality effects arising from construction dust, construction traffic and operational traffic emissions, and concluded that construction dust impacts would be negative, not significant and short-term following mitigation, while operational air quality impacts would be neutral and long-term.

The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce any new air emission sources or air quality impact pathways beyond those assessed in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme. While localised changes to construction activities would occur, these would remain consistent with the types of works previously assessed as mentioned above, and the mitigation measures identified in the EIAR will remain applicable and will be implemented in full. The Proposed Minor Alteration would not result in a material change to construction traffic volumes, operational traffic flows or traffic-related emissions compared with the Approved Scheme such that there would be any change in the air quality assessment in the EIAR.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Air Quality.**

2.1.4 Climate Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed climate impacts arising from embodied carbon, construction traffic emissions, operational traffic emissions and the vulnerability of the scheme to climate change. The assessment concluded that the Construction Phase would result in negative, significant and short-term effects, while the Operational Phase would result in positive, significant and permanent effects through supporting sustainable travel and associated reductions in transport emissions.

The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new climate impact pathways, materially alter the climate resilience measures incorporated into the Approved Scheme, or affect the overall objective of promoting sustainable transport. The Proposed Minor Alteration would not result in a material change to construction traffic, operational traffic flows, mode share or transport-related greenhouse gas emissions compared with the Approved Scheme.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Climate.**

Further, the manner in which the Proposed Minor Alteration is consistent with the matters set out in Section 15 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended), and the obligations of the Commission in that regard, is addressed in Section 3 of the Planning Report submitted with this application.

2.1.5 Noise and Vibration Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed the potential noise and vibration effects associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the scheme, and concluded that Blackrock Clinic, located approximately 60 m from the road widening works, would experience a temporary noise impact ranging from negative, not significant to moderate in the absence of mitigation.

The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new construction activities or noise-generating sources beyond those assessed in the EIAR. Construction activities will as mentioned above remain similar in nature to those previously assessed and any resulting changes in construction noise and vibration effects would be localised and limited in extent. A marginal increase (ranging from approximately 2-4 m) is proposed in the setback distance of the reinstated retaining wall along the affected section of the Blackrock Clinic boundary. This change will not materially alter the Construction Phase noise impacts on Blackrock Clinic previously assessed in the EIAR, including the significance of those impacts.

The Proposed Minor Alteration would not result in a material change to operational traffic conditions compared with the Approved Scheme. Accordingly, the operational traffic noise and vibration assessment set out in the EIAR remains applicable and hence no changes to the operational noise or vibration effects are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Minor Alteration.

Accordingly, the Proposed Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Noise and Vibration.**

2.1.6 Population Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed the potential effects on population arising from community and commercial amenity, land use and accessibility. Blackrock Clinic was assessed as a community facility and was identified as experiencing a negative, moderate and short-term impact associated with temporary land take during the Construction Phase and a negative, moderate and long-term impact associated with permanent land take during the Operational Phase. The assessment noted that the land take would not affect the ability of users to utilise the facility. The EIAR also concluded that community areas along the corridor, including Blackrock, would experience positive long-term accessibility effects as a result of improved walking, cycling and bus infrastructure, with community facilities including Blackrock Clinic benefiting from improved access for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users.

The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new receptors, materially alter accessibility, or introduce new population impact pathways beyond those assessed in the EIAR. The change in temporary and permanent land take occurs within the same general area as previously assessed and does not alter the type or overall scale of impact on Blackrock Clinic.

The provision of the Approved Scheme would have resulted in the permanent net loss of 6 no. car parking spaces from the Blackrock Clinic car park. The Proposed Minor Alteration is also envisaged to result in the permanent net loss of 6 no. car parking spaces (i.e., the same number of car parking spaces as under the Approved Scheme). While it is acknowledged that the recently constructed new Blackrock Clinic entrance and new right turn lane has resulted in the Blackrock Clinic's permitted development having an impact on its own car park layout and quantum of car parking spaces, the Proposed Minor Alteration results in no greater loss of car parking spaces in comparison to the Approved Scheme.

There will be a temporary impact on Blackrock Clinic's car parking layout during the construction phase for the Proposed Minor Alteration. The proposed temporary land take for the Proposed Minor Alteration facilitates internal rearrangement of Blackrock Clinic's car park during the construction phase

Taking account of the limited scale and nature of the additional land acquisition, the significance of the land take effects on Blackrock Clinic is still considered to be negative, moderate and short-term during the Construction Phase and negative, moderate and long-term during the Operational Phase.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Population.**

2.1.7 Human Health Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed potential human health effects associated with accessibility, active travel, air quality, noise and vibration, road safety, access to healthcare services, community severance and health inequalities. The assessment concluded that the Approved Scheme would result in significant positive long-term effects associated with increased physical activity, improved access to services and improved safety for vulnerable road users, while no significant adverse residual effects on human health were identified.

The Proposed Minor Alteration is localised in nature and does not introduce new human health impact pathways beyond those assessed in the EIAR. The Proposed Minor Alteration will not result in a material change to accessibility, active travel provision, operational traffic conditions, air quality, noise or road safety compared with the Approved Scheme. Accordingly, the health outcomes and conclusions identified in the EIAR remain applicable.

Accordingly, the Proposed Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Human Health.**

2.1.8 Biodiversity Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme identified a range of biodiversity receptors in the vicinity of the Proposed Minor Alteration, including designated sites, habitats, breeding and wintering birds, SCI bird species using supporting habitat within the wider area, and bats. Blackrock Park and associated supporting habitat in the vicinity of the Proposed Minor Alteration were considered as part of the original assessment. Potential effects identified included habitat loss, habitat degradation, disturbance and displacement arising from construction-related noise and lighting, mortality or changes in food availability resulting from pollution, and impacts associated with changes in air quality. Comprehensive mitigation measures were identified within the EIAR to avoid or reduce potential effects, including controls relating to construction activities, lighting, pollution prevention and reinstatement works.

The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new construction activities, new biodiversity impact pathways or a material change to the construction methodology. While there will be changes to the layout and extent of land acquisition, these changes occur within the area that is predominantly used as a car park and are not considered capable of altering the nature, magnitude or significance of the biodiversity effects identified in the EIAR. Any changes in operational effects arising from the Proposed Minor Alteration are not considered to give rise to any significant residual adverse effects. Further, the mitigation measures identified in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme remain applicable to the Proposed Minor Alteration and will be implemented in full.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Biodiversity.**

2.1.9 Water Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed potential impacts on hydrology, hydromorphology and water quality during the Construction and Operational Phases and concluded that there would be no significant residual impacts on any water body and no deterioration in Water Framework Directive status.

The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new water crossings, new discharge locations, new drainage outfalls or new impact pathways to the water environment beyond those assessed in the EIAR. The nature of the construction activities remains consistent with those previously assessed and the mitigation measures identified in the EIAR will remain applicable and be implemented in full.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Water.**

2.1.10 Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrogeology Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed potential impacts on land, soils, geology and hydrogeology arising from excavation works, disturbance of contaminated ground, impacts on aquifers and accidental

pollution during construction. The assessment concluded that, following implementation of mitigation measures, no significant residual impacts would occur.

The Proposed Minor Alteration would result in minor localised changes to the extent of construction works and land acquisition in the vicinity of Blackrock Clinic. It does not introduce new geological or hydrogeological receptors, materially alter excavation requirements, or introduce new contamination pathways beyond those assessed in the EIAR. The mitigation measures identified in the EIAR will remain applicable and be implemented in full.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Land, Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology.**

2.1.11 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed potential impacts on recorded archaeological monuments, areas of archaeological potential, non-designated archaeological sites and cultural heritage assets. Potential impacts identified in the EIAR were associated with ground disturbance in areas of archaeological potential and are to be addressed through archaeological monitoring and, where required, preservation by record.

None of the archaeological or cultural heritage receptors identified in the study area are located within the footprint of, or in the immediate vicinity of, the Proposed Minor Alteration. The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new archaeological or cultural heritage receptors, new areas of archaeological potential, or materially different construction activities beyond those assessed in the EIAR. Any ground disturbance associated with the Proposed Minor Alteration would remain subject to the archaeological mitigation measures identified in the EIAR, including archaeological monitoring, where required, which will be implemented in full.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Archaeological and Cultural Heritage.**

2.1.12 Architectural Heritage Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed potential impacts on protected structures, designed landscapes, architectural conservation areas, historic streetscapes and other architectural heritage assets. Architectural heritage assets identified within the footprint and immediate vicinity of the Proposed Minor Alteration include the post box at Phoenix Terrace, the 19th century entrance gate piers and railings at the boundary to Blackrock Park, and a number of 19th century houses along this section of Rock Road. These features were assessed in the EIAR and will not be removed, altered or otherwise directly impacted by the Proposed Minor Alteration.

The EIAR identified potential indirect operational impacts associated with the installation of cantilever signal poles on Rock Road in the vicinity of Blackrock Clinic and Emmet Square. These impacts related to the setting of Blackrock College (DLR RPS 99) and the 19th century residential properties at 9 to 30 Rock Road and were assessed as Indirect, Negative, Slight and Long-term. The original assessment concluded that no significant residual operational impacts on architectural heritage would arise.

As part of the Proposed Minor Alteration, an additional cantilever signal pole will be required at the southern arm of new as-built junction at Phoenix Terrace. This has the potential to result in an additional indirect visual effect on the setting of architectural heritage assets in the vicinity, including Blackrock Park (DLR RPS

112/115) and the 19th century residential properties at 9 to 30 Rock Road. However, any such effect will be of the same nature as those previously assessed in the EIAR and will remain localised in extent. The mitigation measures identified in the EIAR will remain applicable and will be implemented in full.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Architectural Heritage.**

2.1.13 Landscape (Townscape) and Visual Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed potential landscape (townscape) and visual effects associated with changes to streetscape character, property boundaries, trees and vegetation, protected views, amenity areas and visual receptors along the corridor. The area surrounding Blackrock Clinic formed part of the Stradbroke Road to Booterstown Avenue assessment area and was identified as containing a number of landscape and townscape features, including protected structures at Phoenix Terrace, tree preservation objectives associated with trees within the grounds of Blackrock Clinic and mature trees within the clinic lands. The assessment also considered changes to the Blackrock Clinic boundary, land acquisition requirements and the removal of a mature tree at the former Blackrock Clinic entrance.

The Proposed Minor Alteration will result in localised changes to the layout of the Approved Scheme in the vicinity of Blackrock Clinic, including changed temporary and permanent land acquisition requirements and amendments to the junction arrangement to accommodate the as-built Blackrock Clinic entrance at Phoenix Terrace.

There is no additional tree removal required as a result of the revised permanent land requirements. There were 12 no. proposed trees that fell within the temporary land take of the Approved Scheme. The same quantum of trees is proposed locally in this area under the Proposed Minor Alteration. This will be delivered by redistributing locally within the updated temporary land take. Further information is set out in the Engineering Report that forms part of this application.

Management measures identified in the EIAR relating to boundary reinstatement, trees and landscape reinstatement will remain applicable to the Proposed Minor Alteration and will be implemented in full.

The Proposed Minor Alteration will not introduce new landscape or visual impact pathways, materially alter the assessed townscape character, or affect any additional designated landscape, townscape or visual receptors beyond those previously assessed.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Landscape (Townscape) and Visual.**

2.1.14 Waste and Resources Impacts

The Proposed Minor Alteration comprises the localised relocation of a signalised junction and associated modifications to land acquisition requirements at Blackrock Clinic. It does not introduce any new construction activities, waste streams, material types, waste management processes or operational activities that differ materially from those assessed in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme. Any resulting changes in waste generation would be minor in the context of the overall Scheme and would not alter the significance of the impacts previously assessed.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it**

give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Waste and Resources.

2.1.15 Material Assets Impacts

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed potential impacts on material assets, including major infrastructure and utilities, utility diversions, utility demand and the importation of construction materials. The assessment concluded that, following implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, no significant residual impacts on material assets would arise during either the Construction or Operational Phases.

The Proposed Minor Alteration would result in localised changes to the extent of construction works and associated utility diversions in the vicinity of Blackrock Clinic. It does not introduce new categories of utility infrastructure, materially increase demand on utility networks, or introduce new material asset impact pathways beyond those assessed in the EIAR. Similarly, any changes in the quantities of imported construction materials required would be minor in the context of the overall Approved Scheme and would not alter the significance of the impacts previously assessed.

The change in land take associated with the Proposed minor Alteration is considered under Section 2.1.6, Population Impacts.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Material Assets.**

2.1.16 Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme assessed the vulnerability of the Approved Scheme to a range of major accident and disaster scenarios during the Construction and Operational Phases, including utility strikes, contamination events, transport accidents, spread of invasive species, extreme weather events and disruption to emergency response vehicles. Following implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, no significant residual impacts were identified.

The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new construction activities, hazardous substances, major infrastructure or accident and disaster pathways beyond those already assessed in the EIAR. The mitigation measures and management procedures identified in the EIAR, including those relating to utility protection, traffic management, pollution prevention, invasive species management and emergency access, will remain applicable to the Proposed Minor Alteration and be implemented in full.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment, in respect of Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters.**

2.1.17 Cumulative Impacts and Environmental Interactions

The EIAR for the Approved Scheme included a comprehensive assessment of the potential cumulative impacts arising from the Approved Scheme in combination with other existing, permitted and reasonably foreseeable developments, plans and projects. The assessment considered cumulative effects during both the Construction and Operational Phases across all relevant environmental topics.

The Proposed Minor Alteration does not change the overall scale, nature or function of the Approved Scheme and, as set out above in relation to the various relevant environmental disciplines, does not introduce new environmental impact pathways beyond those previously assessed.

The completion of the Blackrock Clinic entrance relocation and the Proposed Minor Alteration are not considered to increase the likelihood or significance of cumulative impacts previously identified in the EIAR, nor are they considered likely to give rise to new cumulative impacts or cumulative impact pathways in combination with the plans and projects assessed as part of the original cumulative impact assessment. Given the very limited scale of the Proposed Alteration, which is considered not to give rise to any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in relation to the Approved Scheme, it is considered unlikely that the Proposed Minor Alteration in combination with projects over and above those identified in the EIAR would not give rise to likely significant adverse cumulative environmental effects.

It would also not give rise to new or additional environmental interactions.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration **will not result in any likely significant adverse cumulative environmental effects or environmental interactions not previously identified, assessed or described in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme, nor will it give rise to any materially different cumulative effects or environmental interactions requiring further assessment.**

2.1.18 Summary

Table 2 provides a summary of the findings of the Environmental Assessments Review.

Table 2: Environmental Assessments Review– summary of findings

Chapter	Further assessment required?	Overview of rationale
Construction Methodology	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration represents a localised modification to a limited section of the Approved Scheme. The works comprise substantially the same construction activities, materials and methodologies already assessed in the EIAR and do not introduce new construction impact pathways.
Traffic and Transport Impacts	No	Blackrock Clinic and its access junction were specifically assessed within the Approved Scheme EIAR. The Proposed Minor Alteration will not materially alter construction traffic impacts, operational traffic conditions, accessibility, junction performance, bus operations, or pedestrian and cyclist provision compared with the Approved Scheme.
Air Quality Impacts	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new air emission sources or air quality impact pathways beyond those assessed in the EIAR. There will be no change to the assessment of air quality impacts.
Climate Impacts	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new climate impact pathways, materially alter climate resilience measures, or affect the sustainable transport function of the Approved Scheme. There will be no change to the assessment of climate impacts.
Noise and Vibration Impacts	No	Blackrock Clinic was assessed as a noise-sensitive receptor within the EIAR, including construction noise effects associated with nearby retaining wall works. The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new noise or vibration sources and will not result in a material change to construction or operational noise associated with traffic.
Population Impacts	No	Additional temporary and permanent land take will affect the same general area of the Blackrock Clinic grounds and will not introduce new receptors or alter the type or overall scale of impact. There will be a temporary loss of car parking during the construction phase of the Proposed Minor Alteration and permanent net loss of 6 no. spaces (the same number as in the Approved Scheme). Land take effects remain negative, moderate and short-term during construction and negative, moderate and long-term during operation, consistent with the EIAR for the Approved Scheme.

Chapter	Further assessment required?	Overview of rationale
Human Health Impacts	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new human health impact pathways and will not materially alter accessibility, active travel, road safety, air quality or noise. Consequently, no materially different effects on human health are anticipated.
Biodiversity Impacts	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration occurs within the area previously assessed and does not introduce new construction activities, biodiversity receptors or impact pathways. Any changes in operational effects arising from the Proposed Minor Alteration will not give rise to any significant residual adverse effects.
Water Impacts	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new water crossings, discharges, drainage outfalls or impact pathways to the water environment. There will be no change to the assessment of impacts on water.
Land, Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology Impacts	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new geological or hydrogeological receptors, materially alter excavation requirements or create new contamination pathways. There will be no change to the assessment of impacts on land, soils, geology, and hydrogeology.
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impacts	No	No identified archaeological or cultural heritage receptors are located within the footprint or immediate vicinity of the Proposed Minor Alteration. The works do not introduce new areas of archaeological potential and there is no change to the assessment of impacts on Archaeological and Cultural Heritage.
Architectural Heritage Impacts	No	Architectural heritage assets within the footprint and vicinity of the Proposed Minor Alteration will remain in situ and will not be directly affected. While an additional cantilever signal pole at the Phoenix Terrace junction may result in additional localised indirect effects on the setting of nearby architectural heritage assets, these effects will be of the same nature and significance as those previously assessed and will not give rise to any additional significant impacts or materially alter the overall significance of the operational effects identified in the EIAR for the Approved Scheme. There is no change to the assessment of impacts on Archaeological and Cultural Heritage.
Landscape (Townscape) and Visual Impacts	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration results in minor changes to the local visual composition and land requirements at Blackrock Clinic, but does not result in any additional impacts, introduce new material landscape or visual receptors or impact pathways.
Waste and Resources Impacts	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new construction activities, waste streams, material types or waste-management processes. Any change in waste generation will be minor in the context of the Approved Scheme and will not alter the significance of the impacts assessed.
Material Assets Impacts	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration may result in localised changes to utility diversions and material requirements but does not introduce new utility infrastructure, materially increase utility demand or create new impact pathways. Any change in imported material quantities will be minor in the context of the Approved Scheme.
Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration does not introduce new hazardous substances, major infrastructure, construction activities or major accident and disaster pathways.

Chapter	Further assessment required?	Overview of rationale
Cumulative Impacts and Environmental Interactions	No	The Proposed Minor Alteration does not alter the overall scale, nature or function of the Approved Scheme or introduce new environmental impact pathways. It will not increase the likelihood or significance of cumulative impacts, or give rise to new cumulative effects or interactions, in combination with the plans and projects considered in the original assessment. In addition, given the very limited scale of the Proposed Alteration, in combination with projects over and above those identified in the EIAR would not give rise to likely significant adverse cumulative environmental effects.

2.2 Effects on European Sites

The Natura Impact Statement (NIS) prepared for the Approved Scheme identified potential effects on the qualifying interests of European sites within the Zone of Influence, including the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, the nearest European site designated for SCI bird species. The assessment recognised that supporting habitat for SCI bird species occurs within the wider area, including Blackrock Park and other suitable habitats in the vicinity of the Proposed Minor Alteration. Potential effects identified in the vicinity of Blackrock Clinic included disturbance and displacement of SCI bird species and habitat degradation arising from construction-related noise, lighting and pollution. Appropriate mitigation measures were identified within the NIS to avoid or reduce potential effects, including controls relating to construction activities, lighting, pollution prevention and reinstatement works.

The Proposed Minor Alteration is located within the area assessed in the NIS and does not introduce new construction activities, new effect pathways, or a material change to the construction methodology. While there will be minor changes to the layout and extent of land acquisition, these changes will not result in any alteration the nature, magnitude or significance of the effects on any European Sites.

Any changes in operational effects arising from the Proposed Minor Alteration will not give rise to any likely significant residual adverse effects and there is no doubt to that conclusion.

The mitigation measures identified in the NIS remain applicable to an altered Approved Scheme and will be implemented in full. Accordingly, **the Proposed Minor Alteration would not result in any additional or materially different effects on European sites beyond those previously identified and assessed in the NIS for the Approved Scheme.**

3. Conclusion

The Proposed Minor Alteration comprises a small, localised rearrangement of limited elements of the Approved Scheme to accommodate the relocated entrance to Blackrock Clinic. It does not alter the overall nature, function or objectives of the Approved Scheme, and the works will use substantially the same construction activities, materials and methodologies as those assessed in the EIAR and NIS submitted for the Approved Scheme. The review set out in this Report has found that the Proposed Minor Alteration would not introduce new environmental receptors, activities or impact pathways, and the mitigation and monitoring measures identified in the EIAR and NIS for the Approved Scheme remain relevant and will be implemented in full should the Commission make the Proposed Minor Alteration.

Accordingly, the Proposed Minor Alteration will not result in any likely significant adverse environmental effects not previously identified, assessed or described in relation to the Approved Scheme, including any likely significant effects on European Sites, nor will it give rise to any materially different effects requiring further assessment.

On the basis of the Environmental Assessments Review, the Proposed Minor Alteration is **not considered to constitute a material alteration to the Approved Scheme** for the purposes of Section 146B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. This is further set out in the Planning Report and other supporting documents submitted with this application.

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