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Re: Closure of Level Crossings

Dear Resident,

I know there has been a lot of concern locally about proposals to close the level crossings at Porterstown and Coolmine. The situation is as follows:

In the longer term, it is intended to upgrade and electrify our train line to DART as part of the DART-Underground or DART-2 project. This will mean trains running much more frequently than they do at present. It will be of huge benefit to us in terms of public transport but will present one major problem. Namely, the level crossing gates will go down more frequently and for much longer than they are now. So, during peak times there will be only one effective crossing point over the railway line between Castleknock and Leixlip (i.e. Dr Troy Bridge). For this reason, the National Transport Authority and the Council drew up preliminary plans to close or bypass all of the level crossings on the Maynooth line. A new bridge over the railway line at Reilly's crossing is currently under construction. In Dublin 15, only Porterstown got as far as detailed design. Initial studies at Coolmine indicated that either a bridge or tunnel would be needed both of which would have significant impacts on nearby residential areas. No detailed design was carried out.

Since then, the DART-Underground project has been suspended and even if it does go ahead it will be well into the next decade before our line is actually upgraded to DART. Even so, I thought it important to continue to develop a plan for the level crossings. Too often in Ireland we do not plan ahead. We wait until schools are full before building new ones and we wait until roads are congested before upgrading them. And then it takes years.

Nonetheless, given the level of local concern and the fact that the line will not be upgraded for some time, it has been decided to suspend any further work of closing or by-passing the level crossings until the end of 2018. At that point, consultation with local residents will take place long before any plans are put on public display.

On the back is a letter from the National Transport Authority (NTA) confirming the same.

Separately, I asked for examination on whether modern technology or automation could be used to reduce the time the level crossing had to be down. The examination confirmed that this could not be done due to sightlines and rail safety regulations.

Yours faithfully,



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