



4 February 2018

Senior Executive Officer,
Forward Planning Section,
Land Use, Planning and Transportation,
South Dublin County Council,
County Hall,
Tallaght,
Dublin 24

Submission on Proposed Celbridge Link Road

Dear Sir / Madam

Celbridge Community Council was established as a voluntary community group in 1975 and has for over forty years been actively involved in many aspects of community life in Celbridge. Our goal is to promote and improve community life and to influence in a positive way the physical development of the area for the benefit of all those who live and work there. As a voluntary group, Celbridge Community Council welcomes the opportunity to express its views on the proposed Celbridge Link Road linking the Adamstown Strategic Development Zone lands to the Celbridge Road (R403) at Backweston.

Celbridge Community Council recognises that the proposed road is an essential part of the infrastructure for the Adamstown SDZ (allowing easier access to the N4 and removing traffic from currently congested link roads such as the R120) but has the following concerns about the proposed road and junction with the R403:

- an already problematic commute for Celbridge residents will be exacerbated by the introduction of yet another signalised junction and the increased traffic volume between Backweston and the N4;
- public transport has not been considered;
- the safety of vulnerable road users on the R403 has not been considered;
- the assessment of traffic impact in the Planning & Environmental Report is based on a badly timed Automated Traffic Count (ATC) and on flawed trip distribution assumptions

Commuting from Celbridge

Many who commute towards Dublin from Celbridge are already subject to lengthy delays as they queue to cross the River Liffey. No end is in sight for traffic congestion in Celbridge as

- funding is unavailable for a second river crossing
- no proposals have been made to increase the reach of public transport for more residents of the town nor to make public transport more reliable. Although the Park & Ride that has been proposed close to Junction 5 on the N4 (as part of the BusConnects programme) would be very much welcomed, it is likely to at least sustain but more likely increase the traffic volumes on the R403 as motorists travel out to avail of the new Park & Ride facility

The only clear plans that have been laid out for Celbridge are for aggressive growth as part of the Greater Dublin Area Metropolitan Region, yet public transport connectivity and commute times are not reflective of what would be expected in a metropolitan area. Commutes by public transport cannot currently be completed in an acceptable timeframe by most commuters from Celbridge and the only apparent way to keep commute times below 45 minutes for many is to travel by private car. Census 2016 figures show that Celbridge is one of the towns with the highest percentages of commuters who commute for more than an hour (18.6%)¹.

¹ <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp6ci/p6cii/p6td/>

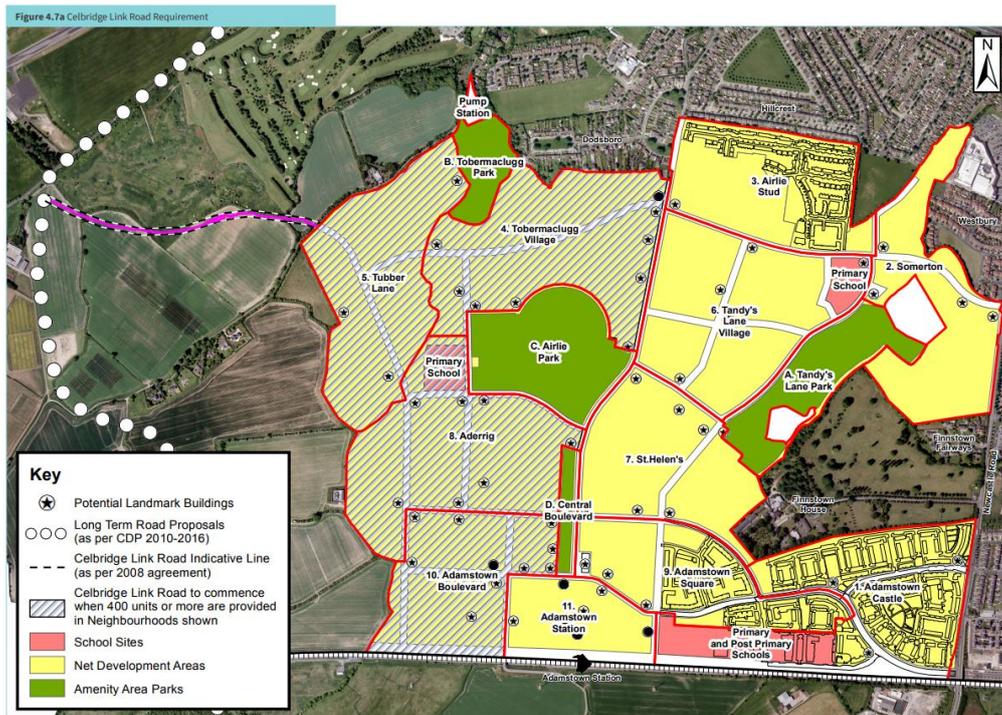


Due to the expected extra volume on the R403 as the populations of Celbridge and Adamstown grow, Celbridge Community Council expects that the morning peak hour congestion on the R403 (circled in pink in this congestion map from the [BusConnects Brochure](#)²) will be pushed from Moderate to Significant / Severe sooner than 2032. This will cause yet another delay for bus users and motorists on top of the numerous existing delays.



Exacerbation of commuting difficulties by the introduction of another traffic bottleneck will impact the wellbeing of the people of Celbridge.

The proposed Celbridge Link Road (marked in pink with dashed outline on top left) forms part of a much bigger plan as can be seen in this map from the revised [Phasing and Implementation](#)³ document for the Adamstown SDZ.



The proposed Western Dublin Orbital Route (a long term high capacity road proposal to connect the N7 to Junction 5 on the N4 via Backweston) can be seen to the west of the proposed Celbridge Link Road.

If, as part of the proposed Western Dublin Orbital Route, the R403 between Backweston and N4 Junction 5 is upgraded then a number of the concerns raised in this submission about traffic congestion between Backweston and the N4 may be resolved. However, no dependencies on the Western Dublin Orbital Route are stated so construction of the junction between the proposed Celbridge Link Road and the R403 needs to be done properly, fully expecting that the Western Dublin Orbital Route might never happen.

² https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/BusConnects_Brochure_Final.pdf

³ <http://www.sdcc.ie/sites/default/files/publications/adamstown-section-4-29-mar.pdf>



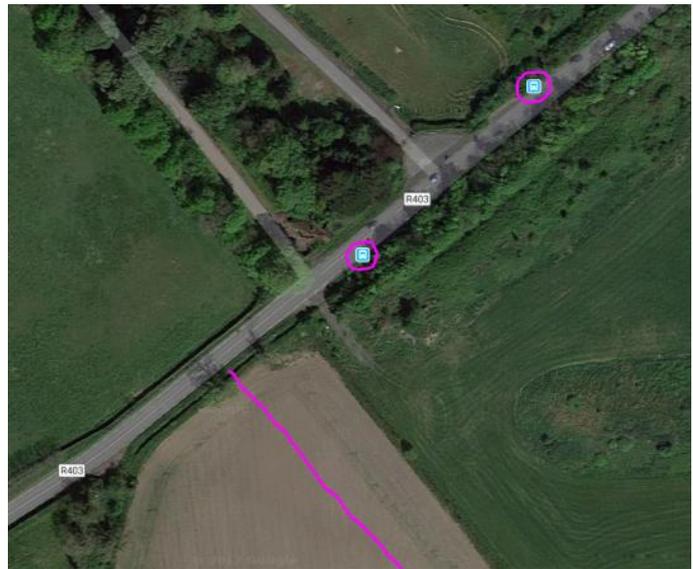
Public Transport

In recognition of the aggressive rate of development planned in the Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017-2023 (dwelling units to increase by 3,250), public transport will become increasingly important for commuters from Celbridge. Of notable concern is the fact that the drawings for the proposed link road show neither measures to prioritise movement of buses nor measures to ensure that throughput at the junction is not hindered by stopping buses. The two “Backwestonpark, Weston Aerodrome” bus stops circled in pink in this aerial view are close to the proposed junction. There is no evidence in the drawings of accommodation being made for bus prioritisation measures or alterations to bus stops necessitated by the changed road layout. The Celbridge bound Dublin Bus stop (stop 3895) in particular will require relocation due to the new left-turn filter lane.

Commuters from Celbridge rely heavily on bus transport so everything possible needs to be done to avoid delays to buses. The critically important bus routes along the R403 that would be affected by congestion here are

- Dublin Bus 67 & 67X
- Bus Eireann 120 & 123

Celbridge Community Council suggests that consideration be given to bus prioritisation measures at the proposed junction.



The lay-by shown in this aerial view is the one at the Dublin-bound bus stop at the junction of R404 and R403 (Celbridge, Coneyburrow, stop 3939) and is pivotal in keeping traffic moving at this junction when buses are stopped.



In order to ensure maximum throughput at the proposed new junction, Celbridge Community Council suggests that consideration be given to provision of lay-bys for both the 3895 and 3944 bus stops.

Vulnerable Road Users

The safety of cyclists on the R403 does not appear to have been addressed in the design of the junction but Celbridge Community Council feels that this is crucial. Perhaps changes can be made in tandem with bus priority measures.



Traffic Impact Assessment

The [Planning and Environmental Report](#)⁴ carried out for this road contains a technical note towards the end regarding assessment of the traffic impact. The technical note states that

- traffic volumes on the R403 were calculated based on an Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) that was carried out on 31st August 2017 with an assumed growth as per the Transport Infrastructure Ireland Project Appraisal Guidelines.
- only traffic distributed towards the N4 Westbound and towards Celbridge was considered for the purposes of this junction assessment.
- traffic using the Celbridge Link Road has been assumed to be travelling to/from the Adamstown SDZ area only.

Celbridge Community Council questions whether the Planning and Environmental Report accurately projects the traffic volume and distribution realities that will actually unfold by 2032 on the R403 for the following reasons:

- The **BusConnects programme**, in its quest to enable more people to use bus services instead of private cars, envisages Park & Ride Facilities at the Junction 5 interchange on the N4. This is a very positive development and Celbridge Community Council expects that a notable number of commuters will switch to using the bus.

With

- a higher frequency service to and from the Park & Ride facility than can ever be expected to serve Celbridge, and
- increased opportunities to actually get a space on a bus in rush hour

it will become far more attractive for commuters who are currently car dependent to use the bus but it also means that there is a risk of many existing bus users who usually board the bus in Celbridge driving out to the Park & Ride to reduce the frustrations of commuting by bus. This, of course, will attract greater traffic levels than projected on the R403.

- 31st August (the **date on which the ATC was carried out**) was at the end of the summer holidays with some schools back and others not. Many families take holidays during this week of the summer as better deals can be obtained and the number of parents commuting to work on their children's first day back at school would not be representative (some parents will take a day's annual leave and others will drop their children off and commute to their jobs later than they usually would).
- Existing **congestion in the Lucan area**, most notably on the N4 when there is an accident and daily on the Newcastle Road (R120), suggests that
 - a number of drivers who do not reside in Adamstown will divert via Adamstown and the new link road whenever they see it as presenting an opportunity to avoid traffic bottlenecks
 - the failure to consider traffic distributed towards the N4 Eastbound for the purposes of this junction assessment is flawed. There is a significant risk that commuters trying to avoid congestion on the Newcastle Road (R120) will go west before heading East on the N4. Taking those accessing the N4 Eastbound into consideration, it's not inconceivable that the number of Adamstown residents who will use the proposed Celbridge Link Road and junction to access the N4 will be significantly higher than those projected by the traffic impact assessment.
- The **Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017-2023** targets to increase the number of dwelling units in Celbridge by 3,250 to 10,333. 2,000 of the 3,250 new units are to be provided to the south of the town so Junction 6 on the M4 will not be a viable route for these new residents and most of them will use the R403. The expectation is that future Local Area Plans will continue the aggressive development in the Celbridge area.

⁴ <https://consult.sdblincoco.ie/en/system/files/materials/2154/Environmental%20and%20Planning%20Report.pdf>



Conclusion

Celbridge Community Council feels strongly that planning of this junction needs to be based on realistic traffic projections and that appropriate measures must be taken to handle the volume whilst prioritising public transport and vulnerable road users.

Celbridge Community Council recommends the following

- that steps be taken to ensure throughput at the junction is not hindered by stopping buses;
- that consideration be given to bus prioritisation measures at the junction;
- that steps be taken to improve the safety of cyclists on the R403 at the proposed junction;
- that a more accurate ATC be obtained for traffic on the R403 at Backweston on a date that is more typical of traffic volume at that location – this is the most solid metric available so absolutely needs to be representative;
- that traffic modelling upon which the traffic impact assessment was based should be repeated, this time making allowances for the likely traffic flow patterns that will arise after completion of the new route - whilst it is acknowledged that modelling for human behaviour can be difficult, it is essential that a more credible attempt be made to give a more realistic projection of traffic volumes.

We trust that the points raised by Celbridge Community Council will be taken into consideration in your planning of the proposed Celbridge Link Road.

Yours faithfully,

David Trost

Secretary

Celbridge Community Council