



Cork Area Commuter Rail Multi-Disciplinary Consultancy Services

Public Consultation No. 1: Findings Report

TRJV

November 2025



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01. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01.

Executive Summary

Transforming Cork's Rail Network

Cork is evolving as a fast-growing, modern European city. The Cork Area Commuter Rail (CACR) Programme is the largest-ever investment in the region's rail network and will help shape a better-connected, sustainable city for generations. More than a transport project, the Programme supports communities, businesses, and climate action by providing cleaner, more reliable mobility options.

Programme Vision and Benefits

CACR will deliver high-frequency, electrified services across the Mallow, Cobh, and Midleton lines, ultimately enabling service intervals of up to every 10 minutes. In collaboration with other transport providers, it will create a seamless, integrated travel experience across the Cork metropolitan area.

These improvements directly support:

- The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) 2040
- Ireland's Climate Change Targets
- A shift from private car use toward sustainable, multi-modal transport.

Supported by Project Ireland 2040, CACR is central to building a modern, efficient, low-carbon transport system for Cork.

Phase 2 and Emerging Preferred Option

Phase 1 works are underway, including the delivery of the Kent Station Through Platform, completed in April 2025, twin-tracking between Glounthaune and Midleton, and a comprehensive signalling and communications upgrade.

Phase 2 is now progressing, and Public Consultation No. 1 (PC1) sought feedback on the Emerging Preferred Option (EPO).



Tionscatal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

The EPO includes:



ELECTRIFICATION



NEW FLEET DEPOT



NEW STATIONS

Blarney/Stoneview, Monard, Blackpool/Kilbarry, Tivoli, Dunkettle, Carrigtwohill West, Water-Rock, and Ballynoe.



STRATEGIC PARK & RIDE FACILITIES

Blarney/Stoneview and Dunkettle Stations.



UPGRADES AT EXISTING STATIONS

Mallow, and Cobh.

A full Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) covering environmental, economic, technical, and accessibility considerations was used to identify the best-performing options.

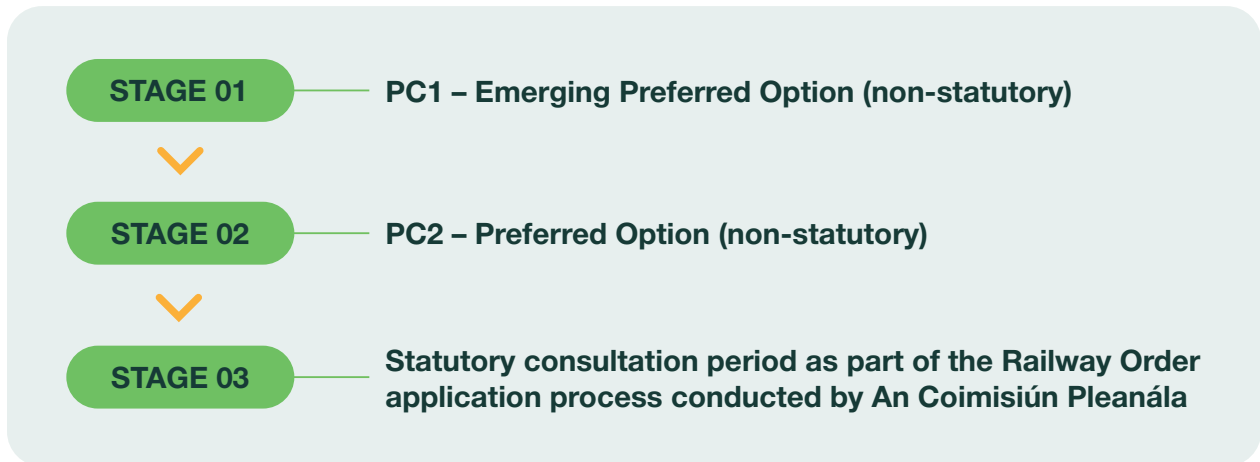
What this means for Cork

The Programme will enhance access to employment, education, healthcare, and leisure opportunities, while reducing congestion and carbon emissions. Its overarching objective is to improve quality of life by delivering a transport system that serves all users and supports sustainable housing growth across the region.



Public Consultation No. 1: Key Findings

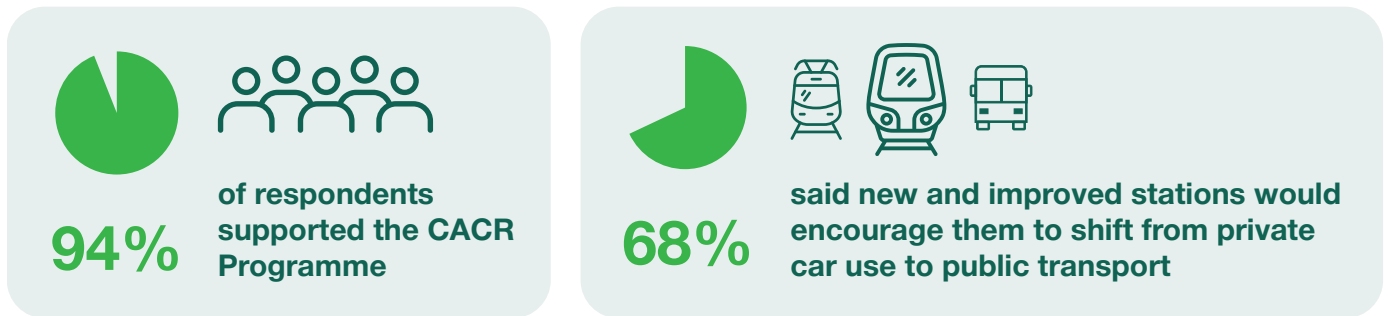
Public participation is central to the CACR design process. Three consultation stages guide project development:



Timeline



PC1 received 333 submissions, with strong overall support:



Feedback reflected a broad range of comments, concerns, and suggestions. This input is now informing the refinement of designs for PC2.

Engagement Summary

- 5 weeks formal submission
- 7 in person public information events
- 1 elected members briefing
- 1 online webinar
- 244 attendees
- 6887 webpage views
- 333 submissions / Responses

Next Steps

The project team is incorporating PC1 feedback into the next stage of design development. This document outlines the key themes raised and how they will be addressed as the CACR Programme progresses.





02. INTRODUCTION

02.

Introduction

This report provides a summary of the non-statutory Public Consultation No. 1 (PC1) on the Emerging Preferred Option (EPO) for the Cork Area Commuter Rail Programme (CACR) Phase 2 which ran from 18th June 2025 to 23rd July 2025.

The purpose of the consultation was to provide those potentially affected or interested in the proposals with an opportunity to share their feedback.

This report summarises the feedback received during PC1 on the Emerging Preferred Option (EPO). All responses have been carefully reviewed by the design team and have informed the ongoing development of the project design.

CACR PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Cork Area Commuter Rail (CACR) Programme represents a once-in-a-generation investment, delivering better travel choices, connecting communities, and unlocking Cork's full potential. It is about protecting the environment, improving quality of life, and creating a greener, more accessible city for everyone. The Cork Area Commuter Rail Programme is fully aligned with Cork's and Ireland's broader plans for sustainable growth and is a central component of the strategic vision set out in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) 2040. The programme proposes up to a 10-minute service interval on each line, including through-running services at Kent Station and a 5-minute frequency service between Kent Station and Glounthaune Station.

CACR will play a key role in a future sustainable transport system in the Cork region and nationally. In the context of the State's climate action plans, investment in public transport infrastructure is vital. CACR will be essential to the reduction in transport emissions: firstly, through the procurement of a low emissions fleet and, secondly, through supporting population and sustainable development through the provision of a quality service facilitating the reduction in emissions from transport sector including road congestion and encouraging and enabling people to choose public transport.

CACR will facilitate compact, high-density, transit-oriented, residential and commercial development along its corridors especially adjacent to proposed new rail stations. This will have a dynamic impact on land use and spatial planning for the Cork Region. Transport influences how cities grow, making CACR vital to sustainable future population and economic growth.

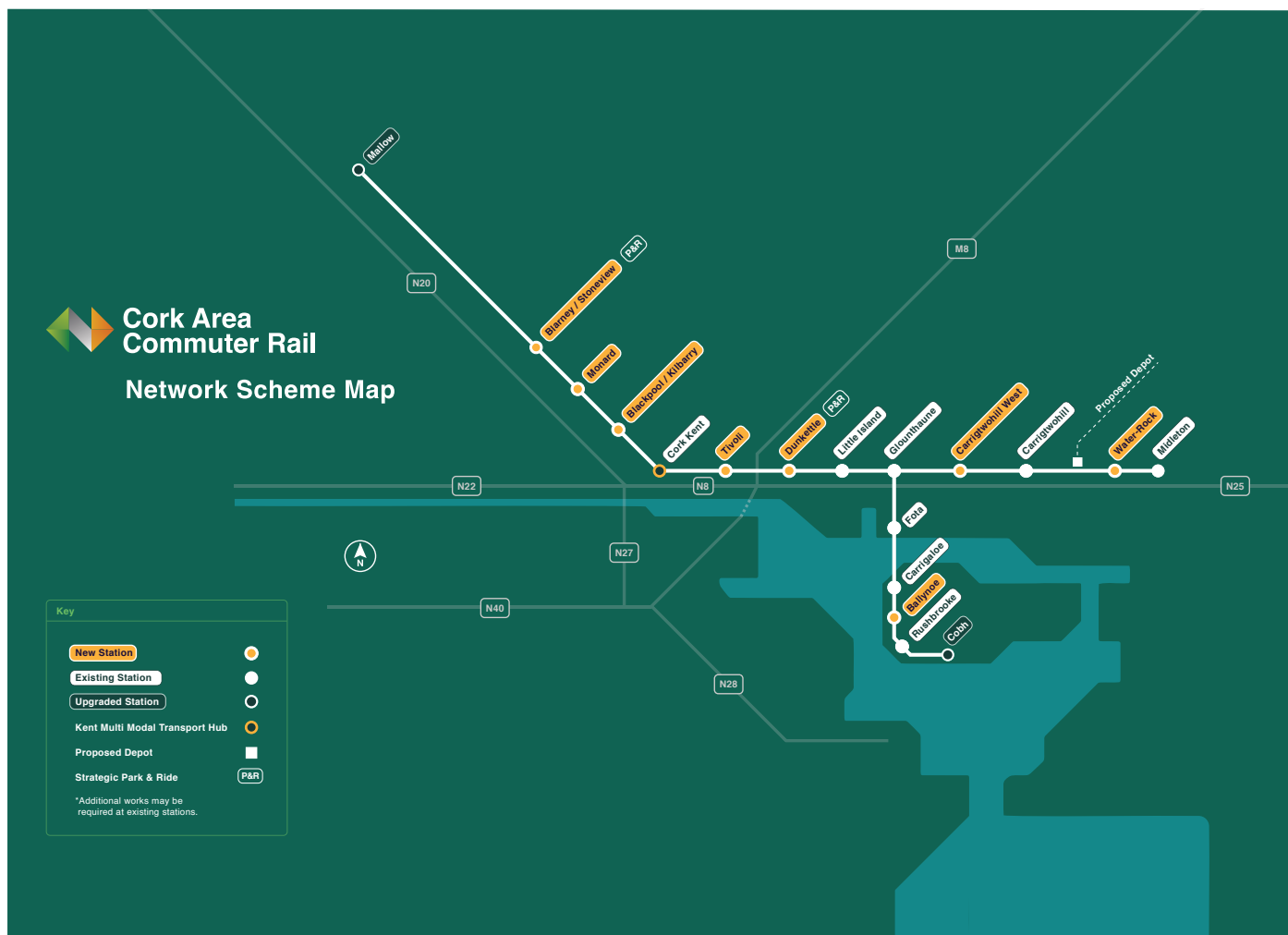


Figure 2-1 CACR Programme Phase 2 Network Scheme Map



03.

CACR PROGRAMME PHASE 2 EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION

03.

CACR Programme Phase 2 Emerging Preferred Option

As the design development has progressed, this has resulted in the selection of the Emerging Preferred End-to-End Option for the following CACR Phase 2 elements:



ELECTRIFICATION



NEW FLEET DEPOT



NEW STATIONS

Blarney/Stoneview, Monard, Blackpool/Kilbarry, Tivoli, Dunkettle, Carrigtwohill West, Water-Rock, and Ballynoe.



STRATEGIC PARK & RIDE FACILITIES

Blarney/Stoneview and Dunkettle Stations.



UPGRADES AT EXISTING STATIONS

Mallow, and Cobh.

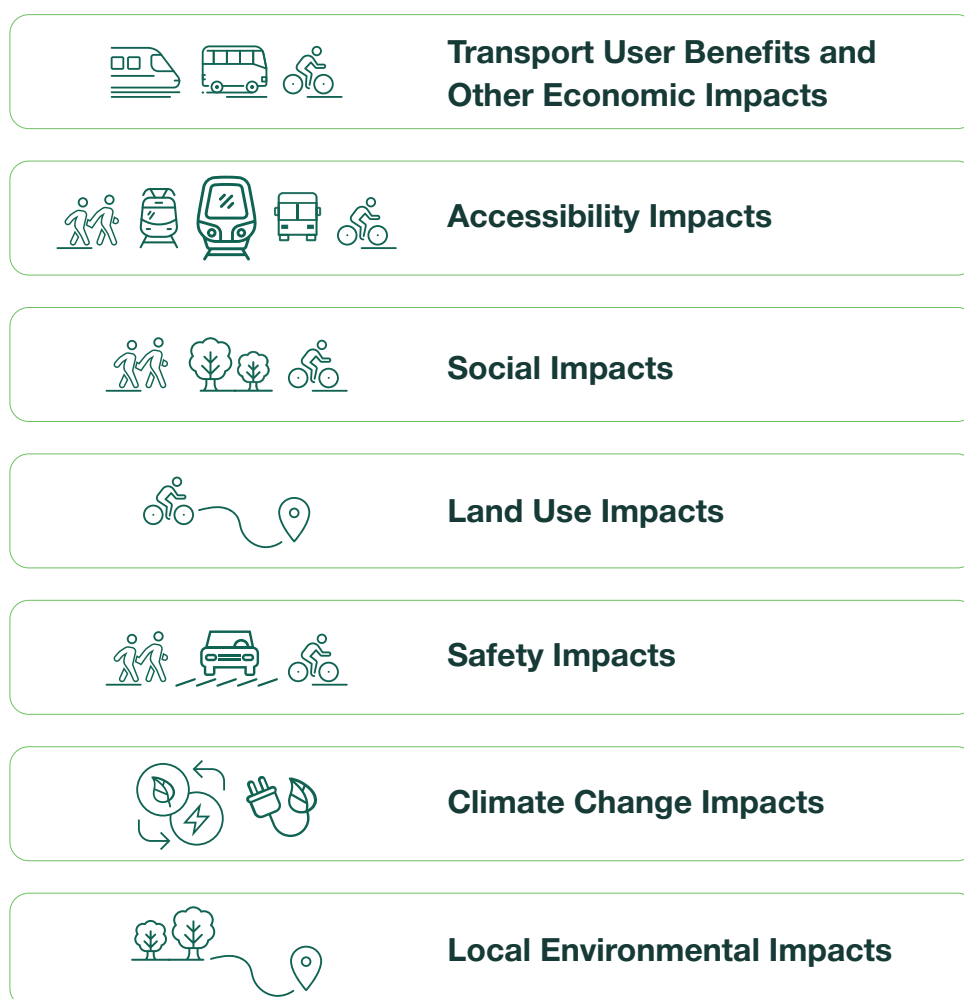


Artist representation of the CACR Programme station design.

We carried out a full review of all options using a Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA). This looked at things like environmental impact, cost, accessibility, and efficiency to make sure the best options were chosen. The Emerging Preferred Option (EPO) presents the results of this review and matches the objectives of the CACR Phase 2 project.

A comprehensive Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) was carried out on all options. The MCA process took a wide range of factors into consideration including environmental impact, cost, accessibility and operation efficiency to ensure that the optimum options were selected. The EPO reflects the optimum outcomes of this MCA that best align with the overall objectives of the CACR Phase 2 project.

Multi-Criteria Analysis: Evaluating options against the criteria set out in the Department for Transport's **Transport Appraisal Framework** (July 2024)



An Gleanntán | An tOileán Beag
GLOUNTHAUNE | LITTLE ISLAND
2603

Ardán 1
Platform 1
Sli Amach
Exit

An tOileán Beag
Little Island

Fear Tuaisle Thair
don Líne Beag
Linnéir, Taispeáin na
Linnéir agus Taispeáin na
Linnéir



04. OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

4.1 Public Consultation No. 1 - The EPO

4.2 Media Coverage

4.3 Elected Members

4.4 Website

04. Overview Of Public Consultation

Public participation is an important part of the design process, and the project includes three main consultation stages. Each stage is designed to gather feedback that will shape the next phase of the project. The stages are:

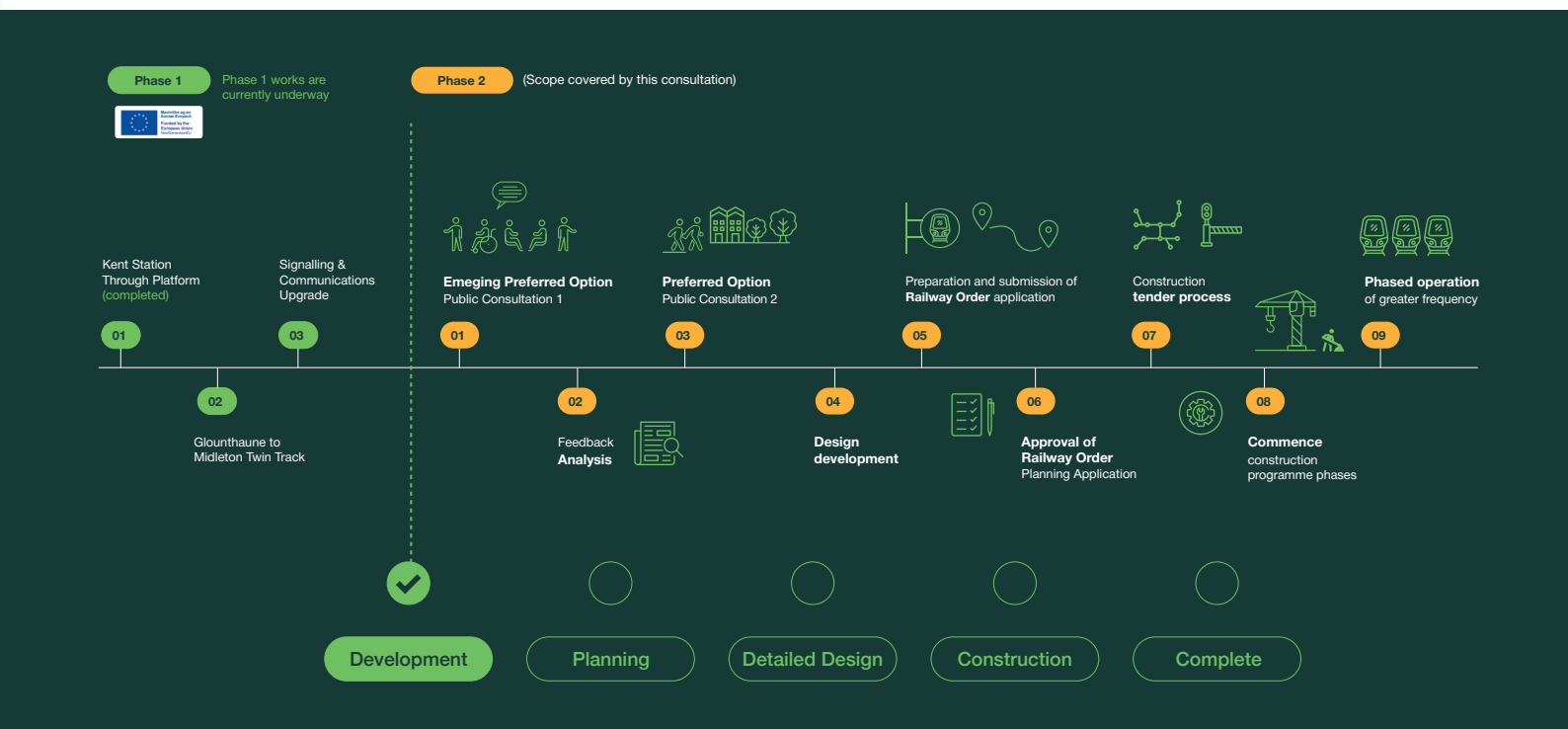
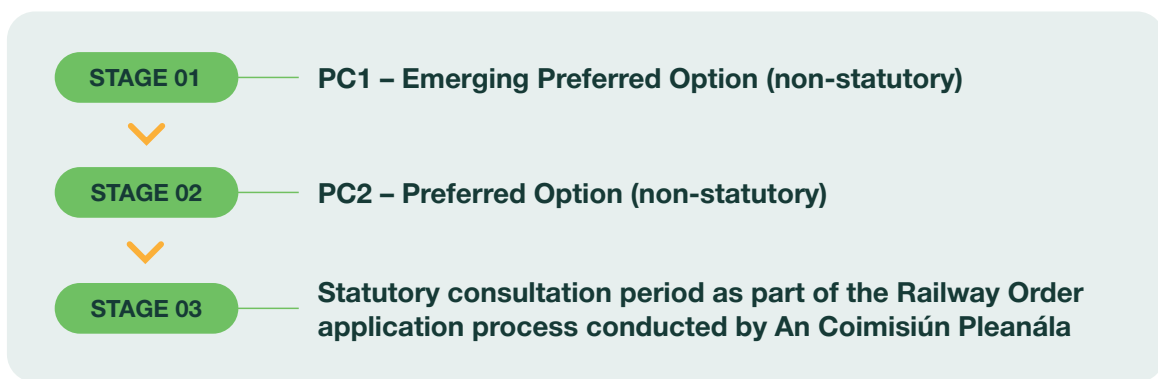


Table 4-1 below gives a high-level sequence of events for the Phase 2 projects comprising the CACR Programme.

1. Non-Statutory Public Consultation No.1 Emerging Preferred Option	Summer 2025
2. Non-Statutory Public Consultation No.2 Preferred Option	Further consultation on the Preferred Option
3. Railway Order Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála	Railway Order Application and statutory consultation
4. Commence Construction (subject to planning approval and funding)	Construction commences on a phased basis

Table 4-1 High Level Events Sequencing for Phase 2 Projects

PC1 was carried out to share the Emerging Preferred Option (EPO) with the public, explain the process and timelines, gather feedback, and collect local knowledge to help with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Railway Order (RO).

After PC1, the Project Team will continue studies and design work to confirm the Preferred Option and fully understand how the project will affect the local environment. This will allow experts to complete the required legal and environmental assessments, such as the EIA and Appropriate Assessment (AA), to make sure the project meets all standards.

4.1 Public Consultation No. 1 – The Emerging Preferred Option (EPO)

The purpose of this report is to summarise and address the key themes identified in the submissions received during PC 1 on the EPO. The consultation period ran from 18 June 2025, for a total of 5 weeks, ending on 23 July 2025.

PC1 provided an opportunity for potential users of the improved services, those likely to be affected by its development and members of the public to express their views on the project plans at an early stage in the design process. Local knowledge shared by the community is key in the option selection

process and helps to inform the design development.

This feedback and engagement will ultimately assist Iarnród Éireann in improving the project and ensuring the successful delivery of a project that best meets the needs of its users and the local communities. Throughout PC1, the Project Team responded to all queries raised, in a timely manner. The objective was to assist the public in gaining a better understanding of the project and to encourage engagement in the consultation process.

The following sections describe the various channels of communication used to notify and inform the public of PC1.

4.2 Media Coverage

PC1 was launched on 18 June 2025 and Iarnród Éireann Corporate Communications team issued a press release to all national and local media outlets in which the launch was covered widely on the day including:

The Irish Examiner

Cork Independent

The Journal

The Echo

Business Post

Mallow Star

Red FM

Cork 96 FM

C103

A selection of press clippings in relation to the launch are provided in Appendix A.

4.2.1 Social Media Coverage

Social media campaigns were initiated by Iarnród Éireann on the following social media platforms:

Instagram

Facebook

LinkedIn

TikTok



Influencer output (@Finnualajones) included traction of over **21,724 views** of Instagram and **3,517 views** on Tiktok.

4.3 Elected Members Briefing

An online briefing was held for elected representatives on 18 June 2025. A total of 13 councillors and 18 additional representatives attended the briefing. The presentation provided an overview of the CACR Phase 2 project, the project timeline, details of the EPO and information on how submissions can be made during PC1 period. The presentation provided at this session can be found in Appendix B.



4.4 Website

A CACR Project Webpage was established to present all of the project information published as part of PC1, including:

- ▶ Dual-language Project Brochure (ENG and GA)
- ▶ Online feedback submission form
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- ▶ CACR Project Report
- ▶ CACR Phase 2 Option Selection Report
- ▶ New Depot Option Selection Report
- ▶ Ballynoe Option Selection Report
- ▶ Tivoli Option Selection Report
- ▶ End to End Drawings
- ▶ Emerging Preferred Option Drawings

The FAQs on the webpage were updated throughout the consultation process to reflect queries that had frequently arisen during the PC1 period.

4.4.1 Project Webpage Analytics

Figure 4-1 below provides the CACR project webpage analytics that were gathered during PC1.

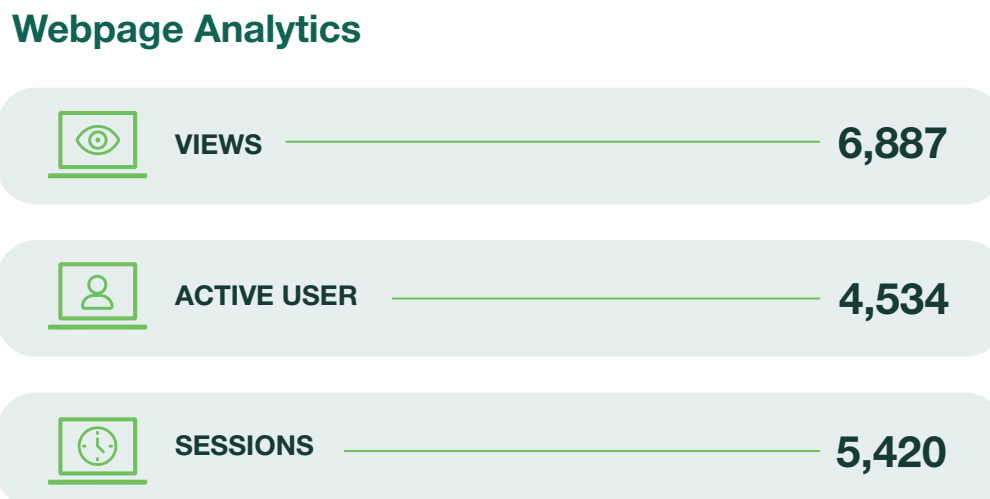


Figure 4-1 Webpage Analytics

4.4.2 Letters to Landowners

A total of 78 letters were issued by registered post to registered landowners who were identified as potentially affected by the EPO. Letters were issued to notify the affected landowners of PC1 and invited them to provide their feedback and engage with the Project Team through the available communication channels.

4.4.2.1 Letters to prescribed bodies and other stakeholders

A total of 86 letters notifying prescribed bodies and other stakeholders of the CACR Phase 2 EPO PC1 were issued via email and post.

4.4.3 Direct Correspondence via Emails, Online Forms, Project Helpline

A project email address (CACR@irishrail.ie) and postal address were provided on all PC1 materials to allow individuals to submit their feedback via email or postal response.

An online feedback form was provided on the project webpage which allowed the public to submit their feedback on the EPO. The online feedback form asked the respondents a series of project-specific questions and invited them to provide comments, suggestions, ideas and to identify what aspects of the project are of particular interest to the respondents.

A helpline was established to ensure that all calls received during the consultation period were answered, documented, passed to the dedicated Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and responded to in a timely manner.

4.4.4 Brochure and Leaflet

A 26-page PC1 brochure was published in dual language (ENG and GA), outlining key details of the CACR Phase 2 project, the Public Consultation process and the EPO. This brochure details the overview and context of the project, what is being planned, the project timeline and how the public can submit feedback. This brochure was made available on the project webpage and hard copies were made available at every in-person event.

An information leaflet was also published in dual language (ENG and GA) outlining details of PC1 and information on where to find further details. The leaflet included a Network Scheme Map including the proposed new stations and upgrades. When PC1 was launched, approximately 105,000 leaflets were delivered to properties along the railway corridor for the entirety of the proposed development, as well as within the vicinity of all proposed new stations and existing stations.



4.4.5 Public Information Events

A total of 7 in-person consultation events were open to the public to attend and engage with the Project Team. Each event took place from 16:00pm to 20:00pm. A sign language interpreter was available at the events held in Blarney, Blackpool and Cobh. Additionally, an Irish translator was available at all of the in-person events. The attendance figures for each event are outlined in Table 4-2 below. An additional online webinar was held on the 10 July 2025 at 7pm for those who preferred to consult with the Project Team online.

 Date	 Location	 Attendees
24.06.2025	Kent Station –Travel Centre on Platform 4	30
25.06.2025	Blarney GAA Club	24
26.06.2025	Blackpool Shopping Centre	70
02.07.2025	My Place Midleton	37
03.07.2025	Cobh Community Centre	33
08.07.2025	Carrigtwohill Community Centre	26
09.07.2025	Mallow- Family Resource Centre	4
Total		244

Table 4-2 In person event attendance

Engagement Summary








-  **5 weeks formal submission**
-  **244 attendees**
-  **7 in person public information events**
-  **6887 webpage views**
-  **1 elected members briefing**
-  **333 submissions / Responses**
-  **1 online webinar**



Figure 4-2 Public Information in Person Event in Cobh



Figure 4-3 Public Information in Person Event in Kent



Figure 4-4 Public Information in Person Event in Blarney/Stoneview



Figure 4-5 Public Information in Person Event in Midleton



05. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Assessment Methodology
- 5.2 Overview of Submissions Received
- 5.3 Specific Feedback from Online Feedback Forms
- 5.4 Key Themes and Responses

05.

Consultation Feedback

5.1 Assessment Methodology

All submissions received by post, telephone, online feedback forms and email were recorded and reviewed by the Project Team. Each issue, comment and suggestion was logged in a searchable database and categorised according to the key themes identified in the submission.

The online feedback form included a series of specific questions relating to the proposed project and a summary of responses to these questions is provided in Section 5.3.

5.2 Overview of Submissions Received

A total of 333 submissions were received collectively through phone, email and online feedback forms over the course of PC1. A breakdown of the feedback received during PC1 can be seen in Figure 5-1 below.

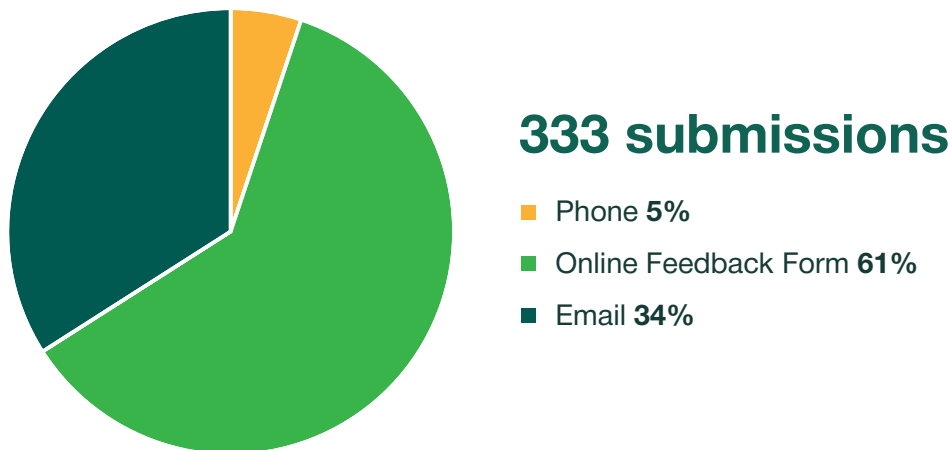


Figure 5-1 Communication Channels used during PC1

Out of the total 333 responses, **202** (61%) submissions were from the Online Feedback Form, **114** (34%) by email submission and **17** (5%) by phone submission.

5.3 Specific Feedback from Online Feedback Forms

An online feedback form was made available to the public, which requested the following information: contact details and whether they want to be added to a mailing list, their relationship to the project (landowner owner/ occupier/other), whether they support the principle of the project, aspects of interest, comments on the EPO and the project in general, whether the improved services will encourage a modal shift.

The feedback on the responses to the two specific questions outlined below was largely positive.

Q2. Do you support the principal objective for the CACR Programme? (i.e. Additional stations and improvements to existing stations to support compact urban growth and enhancing the existing heavy rail system.), followed by a prompt to expand this answer.

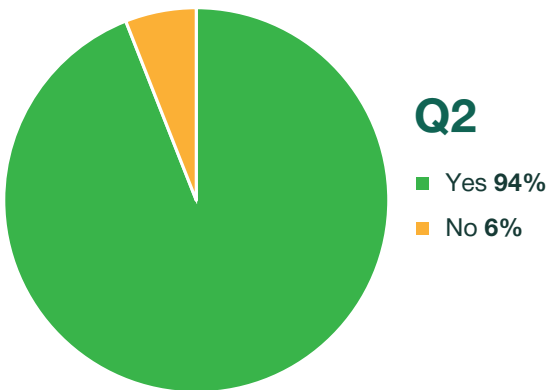


Figure 5-2 Percentage of public submissions in response to Question 2 of the online feedback form

Figure 5-2 above shows the percentage of responses expressing their support or

not for the principal objective of the CACR Programme. As indicated, out of the total 202 online feedback forms submitted, 94% responded ‘Yes’ expressing their support.

Q6. Will the additional stations, improvements to existing stations and associated general line works encourage you to change your mode of transport from private car to public transport?

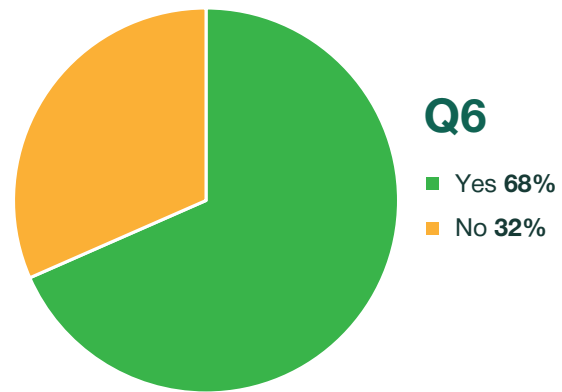


Figure 5-3 Q6 from the Online Feedback Form

The feedback indicates that 68% of respondents stated that improved services would encourage them to shift from travelling by private car to public transport.

5.4 Key Themes and Responses

All submissions were reviewed, analysed and appropriately categorised. During this process, several key themes were identified, reflecting the diversity of concerns and suggestions provided by respondents throughout PC1.

The key themes include the following:

- Accessibility
- Design
- Integrated Travel
- Journey and Fleet
- Parking
- Safety
- Noise
- Visual Impacts
- Cultural Heritage
- Outside Scope of the CACR project
- Stations
- Depot
- Overhead Line Equipment (OHLE)
- Level Crossing Myrtle Hill



The items raised under each key theme along with Iarnród Éireann's responses are outlined below:

5.4.1 Accessibility

Feedback

Respondents highlighted the importance of accessibility at all stations, particularly with consideration for vulnerable groups including wheelchair users, people with disabilities, people with temporary injuries and rail users with buggies. Respondents expressed concern about rail users with visual impairments, highlighting the importance of considering their needs throughout the design process. Concerns raised include the provision of tactile walking surfaces, the location of EV Chargers and the associated trip hazard, inclusion of shelters on all platforms, the location of passenger help points and of pole ticket validation machines.

Response

Accessibility and inclusivity are key pillars of the design development for the Cork Area Commuter Rail Programme. The provision of new stations and upgrades to existing stations made as part of the Programme will guarantee the station interventions and upgrades are fully accessible and compliant with Iarnród Éireann Accessibility Programme standards and international best practice. The Cork Area Commuter Rail Programme will provide improved access to the stations under the Programme for individuals with reduced or impaired mobility and other passengers with sensory impairments. Iarnród Éireann are also progressing a national accessibility programme to ensure the rail network becomes more accessible and inclusive to all and to ensure that more customers can access more services unaided than ever before. We are engaging with diverse accessibility groups, including those representing visual, mobility, hearing, cognitive, and other non-visible needs, to inform the development of the rail project. The team will continue to liaise with these stakeholders through the design stages. All proposals will be subject to Road User and Road Safety Audits through the design phases.



5.4.2 Design

Feedback

Common themes among the design queries included track design, accessibility at specific stations, and better integration with bicycle infrastructure.

The majority of respondents who provided feedback that included design and engineering concerns were station specific issues. These station specific design concerns have been addressed under Section 5.4.11. Overall, the design-related feedback reflects a strong focus on improving both the functionality and accessibility of the stations.

Items raised include:

- Inclusion of bathroom facilities at stations.
- Integrating express/ passing loops between Kent and Mallow to future-proof express trains being delayed by commuter trains.
- Provision for a third track to be added for passing services as well as for quad tracking between Mallow and Kent Stations.
- Consideration for a third platform or passing loop at Blackpool/ Kilbarry Station, specifically referring to issues with the bottleneck at the railway tunnel to Kent Station.
- Suggestions for reduced clearances through overbridges such as Voltage Controlled Clearances (VCC).
- Queries and comments regarding bicycle facilities/storage and suggestions for including bicycle carriages on the proposed new fleet.

Response

There are plans to explore the requirements for upgrading passenger welfare facilities at the terminal stations in Cobh, Mallow, Midleton and Cork Kent. The service modelling shows that the proposed service and frequency increase can be provided with the existing two tracks and the topography of the railway line between Mallow and Kent (rock cuttings and high embankments, tunnel) does not support quad-tracking. Iarnród Éireann will be reviewing all options available to reduce the impact of electrification of the network.

The provision of cycle carriages is currently under review. Each station will be provided with Sheffield Bike Stands and Bicycle Lockers adjacent to the station entrance to provide a level of passive security. In addition, CCTV will be provided in these areas.

5.4.3 Integrated Travel

Feedback

Several respondents referred to linking BusConnects with Iarnród Éireann services to enhance integrated travel options. Additionally, respondents suggested to introduce shuttle buses for the purpose of linking nearby areas with the proposed stations.

The following specific bus connections were requested:

- Dunkettle station to Glanmire
- Blarney station to Blarney village
- Blackpool or Blarney station to the Holyhill Industrial Estate.
- Cobh to Ballymore area along the Tay Road

Response

The CACR Project Team have been and will continue to liaise with the NTA BusConnects Cork Team in relation to integrating the public bus network with CACR. The majority of the proposed stations have been designed to cater for public bus services where sufficient space is available. The designs include dedicated accessible bus stops. At stations which are constrained spatially, set down has been provided which could facilitate buses which are smaller than the public transport bus fleet, i.e. private bus services. In relation to providing shuttle buses from certain locations, Iarnród Éireann do not intend to operate bus services currently. The feedback will be communicated to the relevant stakeholders for their consideration.



5.4.4 Journey and Fleet

Feedback

Respondents expressed concern that journey times and intercity trains would be affected by the new developments. Additionally, respondents suggested to have trains leave earlier for Dublin. Additionally, respondents queried the comfort and the features of the new rolling stock.

Response

The CACR project will deliver an increase in train frequency and capacity to meet passenger demand. any future timetabling will integrate with the timetable of the intercity and other regional services to ensure the greatest level of service for customers. Journey times will be assessed as part of the timetable development process at a later date. Current modelling shows 7 trains per hour between Mallow and Kent - 4 x electrically powered trains stopping at all stations and 3 x InterCity trains stopping only at Mallow and Cork. Testing and commissioning of any new trains for the Cork network will determine the performance and the journey time with the additional station stops compared to the current diesel Mallow to Kent commuter train. Performance improvement is expected.

The CACR Programme includes a new electrified fleet for Cork. The fleet, once operational, will further improve network accessibility and customer experience by offering:

- Independent access with low-floor height doorway being equipped with an automatic retractable step, offering the potential for unassisted level access from suitable platforms, aligned with platform enhancements.
- Wide gangways between carriages creating an open and spacious environment.
- Improved facilities for wheelchair users, families and cyclists, with dedicated wheelchair and family spaces.
- Transformed customer information systems on-board including large, high-resolution onboard displays with real-time updates, door illumination and additional features designed for the needs of sensory impaired customers including inductive hearing loops.
- An advanced on-board CCTV system with cameras throughout every carriage, to enhance safety and security for customers and employees.
- The arrival of this new fleet will enable redistribution of existing fleet to ensure the best possible comfort levels on all routes.

5.4.5 Parking

Feedback

Respondents expressed concern that the proposed strategic and local park & ride facilities would not meet the demand driven by the increased frequency of rail services. Suggestions were made for multistorey car parking to be included at specific stations, including Midleton, Blarney/Stoneview, Dunkettle and Mallow.

Response

Significant demand modelling has been undertaken to determine the parking capacity required at each station. Parking demand was assessed with consideration of promoting sustainable modes of transport. The proposed strategic and local park and ride sites reflect a balanced approach, between meeting user demand while promoting the use of sustainable transport.

The locations of the Strategic Park & Ride facilities are supported by modelling and analysis undertaken by the Cork Area Commuter Rail Programme Team during the development of the EPO to support the proposed Cork rail capacity increases. The proposed strategic Park & Ride facilities at Dunkettle and Blarney/Stoneview will each provide between 400 and 600 spaces, while the local Park & Ride facilities will offer up to 100 spaces. This capacity may be implemented on a phased basis, subject to demand. A Local Park and Ride facility is to be provided at Carrigtwohill West Station, circa 115 standard car parking spaces supplemented by disabled and cycle parking.

At Tivoli and Water-Rock station minimal parking provision is provided as it is intended that these stations will service future development in the immediate vicinity to the stations. It is the intention of the Local Authority that these stations will support sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. Providing increased parking at these stations may entice motorists from further afield to travel into these residential areas contrary to the intention of the Local Authority. When the proposed bridge is provided and a connection to the N25 provided, Iarnród Éireann in consultation with the County Council, will review the requirement for additional parking. Significant demand modelling has been undertaken to determine the parking capacity required at each station. Parking demand was assessed with consideration of promoting sustainable modes of transport. The proposed strategic and local park and ride sites reflect a balanced approach, between meeting user demand while promoting the use of sustainable transport.

5.4.6 Safety

Feedback

Respondents addressed safety concerns in their submissions. Respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring sufficient lighting and shelter at stations and queried what measures would be in place to reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour at stations along the Cork Rail Network.

Response

Safety of staff and customers remains central to the planning and delivery of new infrastructure, as well as the operation of the existing network. All stations will be well lit and monitored 24 hours a day by CCTV to support the safety and security of all rail users. Iarnród Éireann will review safety provisions as part of the new station designs. We continue to work closely with An Garda Síochána and our security teams to maintain a safe travelling environment across the Cork network and at future station locations. Enhanced monitoring, coordinated incident response and dedicated security personnel help prevent anti-social behaviour, and these measures will continue to develop as new stations are delivered.

5.4.7 Noise

Feedback

Respondents expressed concerns relating to potential increases in noise levels resulting from the construction works and the increase in train frequency during operational phase. Similarly, additional public announcements (PA) at the proposed stations.

Response

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is mandatory for a Railway Order application and will be prepared for the project. The EIAR will present a description of the existing environment, an assessment of the potential impacts of the scheme (including but not limited to noise impacts), will set out measures to avoid or reduce any adverse impacts and will identify any remaining residual effects. During the operational phase, as electric trains are quieter than diesel trains, it is not expected that noise levels will increase significantly. Should noise levels increase significantly at any location and exceed the permitted guideline levels, mitigation measures will be employed.

5.4.8 Visual Impacts

Feedback

Respondents raised concerns about the visual impact of the new stations, platforms, OHLE and the Depot, particularly when these are planned in proximity to their homes. This includes the impact of the additional lighting required at the proposed new stations.

Response

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is mandatory for a Railway Order application and will be prepared for the project. The EIAR will present a description of the existing environment, an assessment of the potential impacts (including but not limited to landscape and visual amenity impacts), will set out measures to avoid or reduce any adverse impacts and will identify any remaining residual effects.

5.4.9 Cultural Heritage

Feedback

Respondents emphasised the importance of protecting the cultural heritage of certain areas in Cork, highlighting the need to preserve the character of these locations, including the protection of stone walls, historic architecture and protected structures.

Response

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be conducted out as part of the EIAR process, which includes assessing the potential impacts on cultural heritage and archaeological heritage associated with the proposed development.



5.4.10 Outside of Project Scope

Several issues raised in the submissions that are outside of the scope of the proposed CACR Phase 2 works, or which were not directly related to the proposals.

Feedback

A significant number of submissions requested the re-opening of the Youghal to Midleton line (85 responses). This includes any submission that referenced the Youghal to Midleton line, including any queries, comments or suggestions on the topic. The respondents outlined their concerns, referencing traffic congestion and reliance of private car use, lack of tourism opportunities and negative socio-economic impacts of not re-opening the rail line. Additionally, respondents referenced locations that were outside the scope of CACR Phase 2 works including: Rathduff, Carrigaline, Mourneabbey and Buttevant. Respondents suggested to re-open some of these station locations.

Response

The Cork Area Commuter Rail programme is delivering the heavy rail element of Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) and fulfilling plans outlined in the All-Island Strategic Rail Review (AISRR). In line with these policy documents, infrastructure works being delivered under the Programme do not include the reopening of the line to Youghal.

We appreciate the strong public support for reopening the Midleton to Youghal railway line. While the Midleton to Youghal line remains under Iarnród Éireann ownership, it is currently been converted into a greenway for walkers and cyclists under a lease agreement. Works being progressed as part of the Cork Area Commuter Rail Programme would not prevent reinstatement of the rail line if required at some stage in the future, subject to the relevant planning and funding approvals being granted.

The historic stations referenced in the submissions are no longer in Iarnród Éireann ownership. There is no intention to reopen stations at the above locations as part of the CACR programme. Iarnród Éireann will review the need/demand for stations at these locations and across the wider CACR network once the CACR service is operational.

5.4.11 Stations Referenced in PC1 Submissions

Figure 5-4 provides the breakdown of the frequency at which each station in the CACR programme was mentioned. The most referenced station was Midleton (**43 responses**) (some of which specifically referring to the Midleton to Youghal Line), followed by Carrigtwohill West (**27 responses**), Tivoli (**26 responses**) and Blarney/ Stoneview (**25 responses**). 44 respondents referenced stations that were outside the scope of the CACR Project.

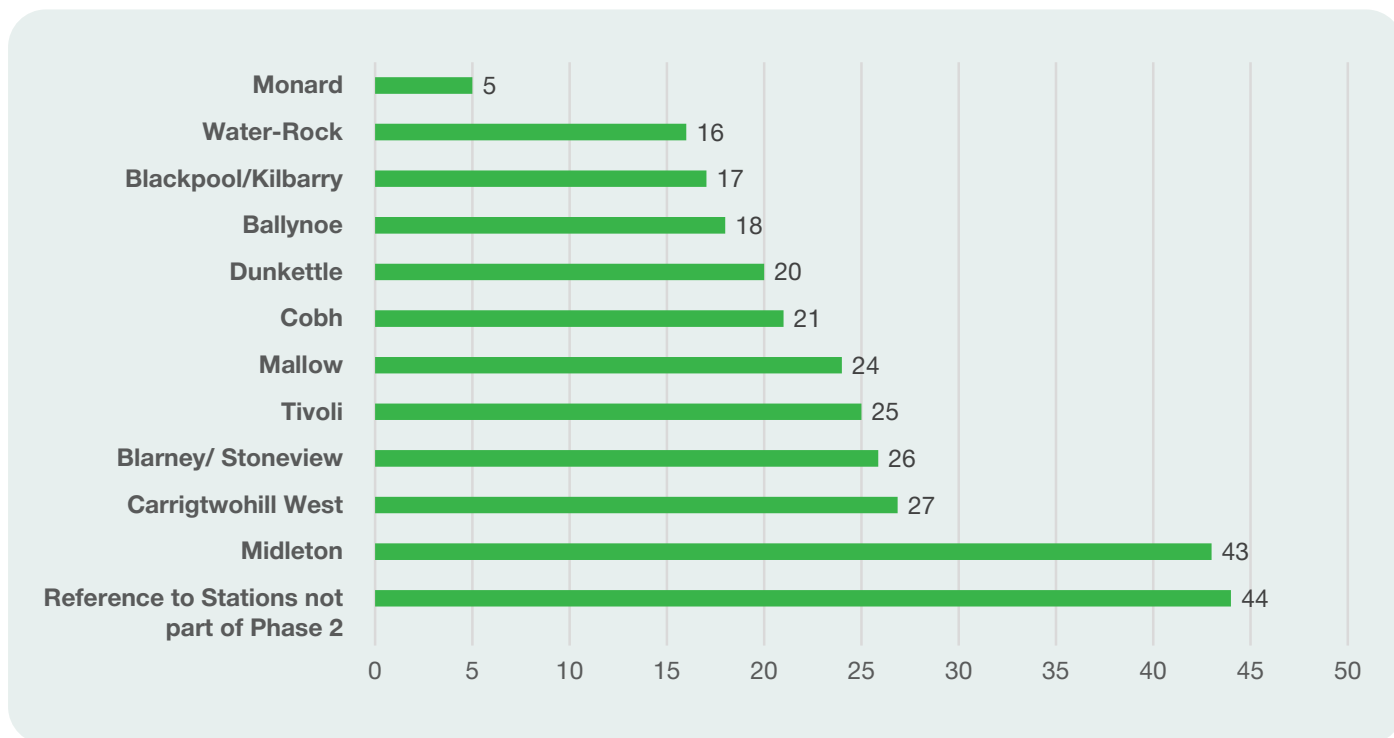


Figure 5-4 Stations referenced in the submission responses with frequency of mention



5.4.11.1 Mallow Station

Key issues raised for Mallow station included parking, wheelchair accessibility, train times, bicycle facilities and queries about access to public bathrooms, which have been all been addressed in the Key Themes section of this report.



5.4.11.2 Blarney/ Stoneview

Feedback

Key issues raised for Blarney/Stoneview Station included parking availability, integrated travel and bicycle facilities, which have all been addressed in Section 5.4 of this report. Respondents emphasised the importance of the effective phasing, safety measures and the management of N20 access for long-distance commuters, given the privately controlled access to the Blarney Park and Ride pending the final operation of the M20. Respondents commented on the high traffic volume of the N20. Additionally, respondents noted that the speed limit at this location is 100kph.

Response

The Project Team are in consultation with the Local Road Authority and TII in relation to the operation of the access from the N20 and Blarney Business Park. Additional traffic modelling will be undertaken in the coming months to aid analysis of the junction and traffic flows.

Current traffic volumes, necessary safety measures and the speed on the N20 have been taken into consideration in the design process, these factors will help to guide planning to ensure safe and efficient access to the station.



5.4.11.3 Monard

Feedback

Few respondents referenced Monard in their submissions. The main issues in relation to Monard Station have been addressed in Section 5.4 of this report. Respondents highlighted that at Monard, the design of the access road does not allow vehicles to turn around from the exit lane and stay inside the car park.

Response

The Project Team are currently assessing the preliminary designs of proposed stations and will ensure the adequacy of road network within these designs. If required, the Project Team will evaluate whether the road infrastructure works as intended, and if any additional measures are needed.



5.4.11.4 Blackpool/ Kilbarry Station

Feedback

Key issues raised for Blackpool/ Kilbarry Station included parking availability, bicycle infrastructure, design, which have all been addressed in Section 5.4 of this report. Respondents raised concerns in relation to cultural heritage, referring to the external wall outside the station that is of cultural heritage importance to the area, as well as the potential for archaeological remains within the proposed site. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding the lack of traffic plan for cars entering/ leaving the station resulting in congestion. Suggestions were made to not allow a right turn on exiting the proposed station, to ensure traffic moves uphill towards the new Northern Distributor Road. Further recommendations also include the implementation of a one-way system in place to avoid traffic causing obstruction by crossing lanes to turn into the proposed station. Respondents also raised the issue of the pedestrian access directly onto Dublin Hill Road. It was suggested that this access, including lifts should be considered from the proposed station to the Blackpool retail park.

Response

The Project Team note that the boundary wall possesses cultural heritage merit but is not subject to any statutory protection and that the station site at Blackpool is highly disturbed and has been subject to significant scarping and excavation. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA) is mandatory for a Railway Order application and will be prepared for the project. The EIA will present a description of the existing environment, an assessment of the potential impacts of the scheme (including but not limited to cultural heritage impacts), will set out measures to avoid or reduce any adverse impacts and will identify any remaining residual effects.

Comments regarding access and safety on the Dublin Hill Road have been acknowledged and Iarnród Éireann will be assessing options to enhance pedestrian safety and improving overall access.

It is not envisaged that the right turn from the car park will be banned as part of the project. This would likely result in vehicles attempting unsafe manoeuvres in attempt to travel south or turn down local residential roads to turn. Both scenarios are not desirable and would create a road safety issue. Further traffic and junction analysis will be undertaken in the coming months to determine if additional intervention at the entrance will be required.



5.4.11.5 Tivoli Station

Feedback

Key issues raised for Tivoli Station included accessibility, noise pollution and parking availability, which have all been addressed in Section 5.4 of this report. Respondents commented that The N8 road cuts off access to areas such as Silver Springs, Mayfield, Tivoli, etc. Furthermore, respondents raised concern about this lack of access to the N8. Additional responses also highlighted the need for better and safer accessibility to Tivoli Station from the N8 (TII).

Response

The proposed Tivoli station is located within the Tivoli Docklands area and is intended to serve the future development of the Tivoli Docklands area. As part of that development, it is intended to upgrade and improve the access across the N8. Measures will be put in place to enhance safety and accessibility, to ensure that Tivoli station will be accessible from the N8. We are engaging with the local roads authority regarding appropriate access to and from the station.



5.4.11.6 Dunkettle Station

Key issues raised for Dunkettle Station included accessibility, bicycle infrastructure and park and ride, which have all been addressed in Section 5.4 of this report.





5.4.11.7 Ballynoe Station

Feedback

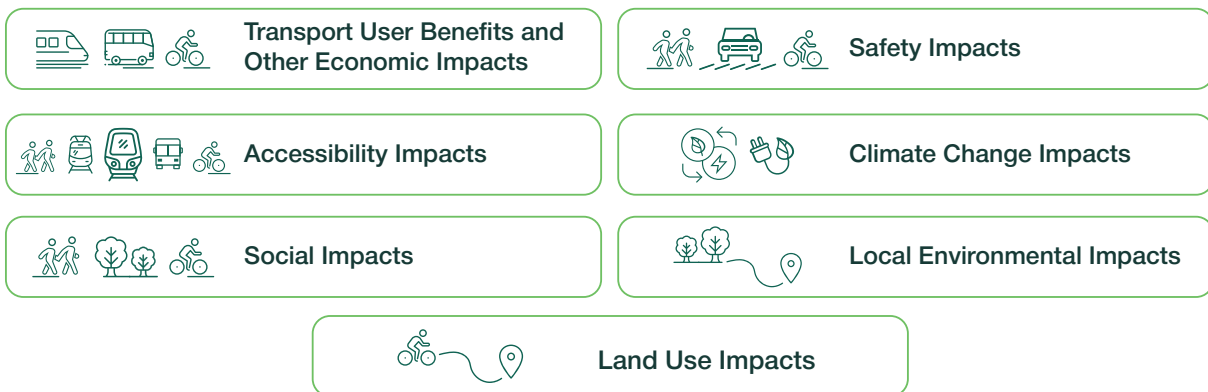
Key issues raised for Ballynoe station included parking, safety, accessibility and integrated travel, which have all been addressed in in Section 5.4 of this report. Respondents addressed their concerns about the access through Tay Road, highlighting that it can be unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. Some respondents also suggested that the speed limit should be lowered on the R624 due to pedestrian volume and safety concerns. Respondents suggested that the Ballynoe car park lay-out should provide the option for a bus to come in and turn with the radii being planned for accordingly, and a potential bus stop earmarked to physically facilitate the operation of a feeder bus into the station.

Landowners expressed concern in relation to the proximity of the planned station to their property and expressed dissatisfaction with the MCA assessment undertaken as part of the Option Selection process. They noted that the location of the proposed platform will result in rail users having a direct view into their property and that the station entrance was also their property entrance.

Response

As part of the CACR programme, approach roads to the existing and proposed stations will be reviewed in relation to safety and accessibility deficiencies. Following this review Iarnród Éireann will consult with the Local Authorities to raise any deficiencies and discuss plans to upgrade approaches where practicable. The provision of the bus turning space is being considered by the Project Team.

The Project Team undertook a phased site selection process to ensure a robust assessment which is aligned with the Department of Transport: Transport Appraisal Framework Guidelines, July 2024. The Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) mechanism used to identify the preferred option considers a number of Criteria of which are all options are assessed against:



An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is mandatory for a Railway Order application and will be prepared for the project. The EIAR will present a description of the existing environment, an assessment of the potential impacts (including but not limited to landscape and visual amenity impacts), will set out measures to avoid or reduce any adverse impacts and will identify any remaining residual effects. IE are committed to engaging and consulting with landowners impacted by the proposed Ballynoe Station.



5.4.11.8 Cobh

Feedback

Key issues raised for Cobh Station included accessibility, train times and integrated travel, which have all been addressed in Section 5.4 of this report. Concerns were raised about where coaches collect passengers, as the coaches can block the narrow footpath, making the entrance hard to use at these times. Suggestions were made to keep the secondary pedestrian entrance gate that exits onto the quay open while the station is open, respondents commented that this causes issues for local users. Suggestions were made that if this is not possible, to explore the option for a new footbridge from the parking area to the platform.

Response

The Iarnród Éireann Project Team is exploring options for providing additional access points to Cobh Station. The access from the quay side is across private land along an operational docking point for many different types of ships. Access through this area is not within the control of Iarnród Éireann and it is unlikely that it can be made a permanent access point for safety of passengers and operation of the dock. Cork County Council has developed a public realm plan for Cobh town centre, aiming to focus on people-centred urban design. This approach will also help improve accessibility in Cobh, including access to Cobh station.



5.4.11.9 Carrigtwohill West

Feedback

Key issues raised for Carrigtwohill West Station included accessibility, noise and park and ride which have all been addressed in Section 5.4 of this report. Suggestions were made to provide access on the north side into the various industrial units which have significant employment. The proposed access while good for units on the south of the line leaves the units north of the station unreachable.

Response

The proposed station design does include both access to the station from the north side as well as from the south side.



5.4.11.10 Water-Rock

Feedback

Key issues raised for Water-Rock Station included accessibility and parking, which have been addressed in Section 5.4 of this report. Access from both sides of the rail line (incl. later from the south) should be considered for the future.

Response

The proposed station infrastructure for future access from the south will be in place at Water-Rock Station. This will become operational following development and adequate access arrangements.





5.4.11.11 Midleton

Feedback

Key issues raised for Midleton Station included accessibility, train times and integrated travel which have been addressed in Section 5.4 of this report. Concerns were raised in relation to the need for additional flood protection measures for Midleton station. Respondents suggested for additional access from the new greenway to the south side of Midleton station to provide a more direct route to Midleton. Concerns raised about safety on the N25, highlighting that there are high traffic volumes and serious accidents on this road. Respondents expressed concern about the closure of the Mill Road level crossing, highlighting that it would be closed more than it would be open, potentially leading to access issues for local residents and road users.

Response

A Flood Risk Assessment is being undertaken as part of the design development as well as to inform the EIAR. The outcome of the FRA will be reviewed by the Iarnród Éireann Project Team. The Iarnród Éireann Project Team is reviewing access to the new and existing stations for all modes of transport. This review will be discussed with relevant stakeholders to determine what improvements can be undertaken outside the Iarnród Éireann boundary to improve access to the stations.

Traffic volumes and driver behaviour on the N25 fall outside the scope of the CACR project as it is not within the remit of Iarnród Éireann to manage these issues. However, it is anticipated that increasing the frequency of rail services will encourage greater use of public transport, which may in turn help to reduce traffic levels on the N25. Level crossing closure times will be carefully managed and optimised as part of the train timetable, ensuring that any increase in service frequency does not result in unnecessary or prolonged closures.

5.4.12 Depot

Feedback

A number of submissions received highlighted concerns about the proposed Depot. Key issues in relation to the proposed Depot included impact on residents, location choice and impact on the proposed pedestrian bridge.

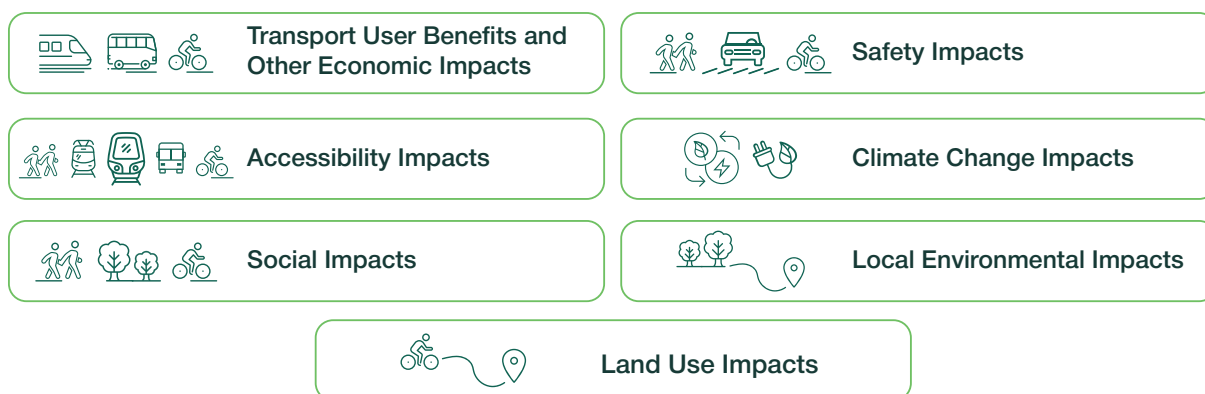
Respondents, particularly impacted landowners raised concerns in relation to the Option Selection process undertaken as part of the Depot Site selection.

Respondents indicated that the Ballyrichard More area is only safely accessible by car. Several respondents suggested that the Cork County Council plans for a footbridge over the railway line between the cul-de-sac south of the railway line and north of the railway line at Ballyrichard More be prioritised to ensure connectivity for local residents. Access, construction and operational management requirements for the N25 associated with the new proposed Depot to be in Ballyrichard.

Multiple respondents highlighted the need to prioritise building the pedestrian footbridge & cycle path linking the cul de sac (Ballyrichard More) to Midleton area. Additionally, queries on how the Phase 2 Carrigtwohill to Midleton Inter-Urban Cycle Route will be integrated into the proposed development without delaying the delivery of the cycleway.

Response

The Project Team undertook a phased site selection process to ensure a robust assessment which is aligned with the Department of Transport: Transport Appraisal Framework Guidelines, July 2024. The Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) mechanism used to identify the preferred option considers a number of Criteria of which are all options are assessed against:



Iarnród Éireann are committed to engaging and consulting with potentially impacted landowners and to date, and every effort has been made to consult with the respective landowners impacted by the proposed Depot location.

The CACR proposals will not hinder Cork County Council proposals for connectivity in the Ballyrichard More area. Access to the Depot site is currently the subject of an ongoing optioneering exercise, which is being developed in coordination with key stakeholders, including the County Council and TII. Feedback on the pedestrian footbridge and cycle path has been shared with the Local Authority, with whom we have already engaged on this matter.

5.4.13 Electrification/Overhead Line Equipment (OHLE)

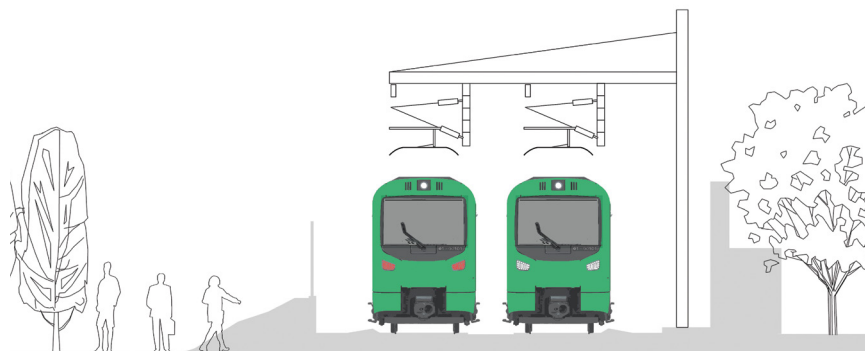
Feedback

Multiple respondents referenced OHLE in their submissions. The main concerns in relation to OHLE were the following: the visual impact relating to the introduction of OHLE along the network and the impact on its protected structures along the existing rail line.

Response

The CACR Phase 2 is seeking to modernise the existing railway to achieve up to a 10-minute service frequency, to increase capacity and provide a better customer experience for Cork Rail users. The electrification will be required to accommodate the new low-emission electric fleet to reduce congestion and cut transport carbon emissions. The OHLE is an essential element to achieve the project objectives. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is mandatory for a Railway Order application and will be prepared for the project. The EIAR will present a description of the existing environment, an assessment of the potential impacts of the scheme (including but not limited to visual impacts), will set out measures to avoid or reduce any adverse impacts and will identify any remaining residual effects.

In order to construct the electrification system, certain interventions are required that will impact on specific bridges. The Project Team are considering the architectural heritage of all bridge structures in options assessments and physical interventions will only be undertaken where absolutely necessary. An architectural heritage assessment of the proposed development and all protected structures impacted by the proposed works will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).



5.4.14 Level Crossing Myrtle Hill

Feedback

Submissions were received regarding to the proposed closure of the Myrtle Hill level crossing. The key concerns expressed by those currently residing on Myrtle Hill terrace include the impact on access to their properties (and consideration of vulnerable users with limited mobility), the potential safety and security impacts associated with any changes to the entrance to the terrace from the west side to the eastern side, the need for road resurfacing to be undertaken, the increase in noise and vibration associated with the construction and operation of the CACR Phase 2 works, landscape and visual impacts and impacts on cultural heritage. Additionally, the residents are concerned about the devaluation of their properties and the residents legal right of way across the railway.

Response

Iarnród Éireann is fully committed to engaging and consulting with potentially impacted landowners. To date, we have held multiple meetings with the affected parties and have carefully reviewed their detailed submissions. Ongoing engagement will continue as we work collaboratively to develop and agree a design solution that addresses concerns and is mutually acceptable.



06. SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

06.

Summary and Next Steps

The purpose of this public consultation process was to present the EPO for the proposed CACR Phase 2 project and to request the views of the public. A total of c. 333 submissions were received during the consultation period covering a broad range of concerns and suggestions from the public.

Next steps:

As part of the ongoing design development process, a comprehensive submissions tracker has been established to record all feedback received to date. This tracker provides a clear thread showing how each submission is being assessed, what elements are being incorporated into the evolving design, and—where a suggestion cannot be taken forward—the rationale for this decision.

The Project Team is now progressing the preliminary design, integrating the feedback, concerns, and suggestions raised during Public Consultation No.1. This updated design will form the basis of Public Consultation No. 2, which is scheduled for Spring 2026. At that stage, the EPO will be further developed to reflect the input received from the public, stakeholders, and landowners during PC1.

We remain committed to maintaining an open, transparent, and iterative consultation process as the project advances toward option selection and the identification of the Preferred Option.

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