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## News

# RPA says building cross-city Luas line will not hurt businesses

Olivia Kelly

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THE CONSTRUCTION work for Dublin's cross-city Luas line would have an insignificant or "no effect" on city centre businesses, the Railway Procurement Agency (RPA) has claimed.

Metro North, which is also an RPA project, would have significantly greater impact on the operation of businesses during its construction phase, a Bord Pleanála hearing on the proposed Luas line was told.

The Luas Broombridge, which would provide the "missing link" through the city centre between the existing red and green Luas line, would have long-term benefits for businesses greatly outweighing any impact of construction, Simon Clear, a town planner engaged by the RPA, said.

"In a city over 1,000 years in existence and which has continuously evolved, developed and changed over that time, the building period is relatively insignificant," he said.

Mr Clear, a former senior inspector with An Bord Pleanála, said it was accepted that constant development maintenance repair and renewal was a normal part of the functioning of a city. There would be "inevitable physical impacts" during construction.

Accessibility to some businesses may be reduced, there could be a decrease in passing trade due to temporary fencing and pedestrian diversions, and deliveries may be disrupted because of the temporary relocation of loading bays.

However he said there would be no effect on businesses on O'Connell Street, while access to businesses on other streets would be maintained at all times.

"While it is acknowledged that for some businesses close to works there will be some – albeit insignificant – effects, for most businesses there will be no effects."

The construction of Luas Broombridge would have a less significant impact on businesses than the metro construction at St Stephen's Green and at Westmoreland Street.

"A very significant structure is permitted at Westmoreland Street in conjunction with Metro North, more so affecting the west side of the street than Luas Broombridge."

The planning hearing continues at the Gresham Hotel Dublin.

The proposed 5.6km line Luas line would run from the terminus of the green line at St Stephen's Green through the city centre, via Dawson Street, College Green, Westmoreland Street and O'Connell Street, where it would connect to the red line.

It then would run northwest to Broadstone, Grangegorman and Phibsboro via the disused midland railway line before terminating at Broombridge Station in Cabra.

On its return, the line would bypass O'Connell Street and use Marlborough Street to access a new Liffey bridge to Hawkins Street, before meeting back with the northbound line at College Green.

The line would initially have 13 stops, with a 14th planned for Grangegorman once the DIT campus has relocated to the former mental hospital site. The route has also been designed to allow an extension to Finglas.

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