

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

**Board Direction**  
**BD-009870-22**  
**ABP-307528-20**

At a meeting held on 26/01/2022, the Board considered the objections made to the proposed development, the report of the Inspector, and the documents and submissions on file generally in relation to the proposed development at Waterford Regional Airport, including the extension to, and widening of, the existing runway, the widening of the taxiway, an extension to the car parking area, along with associated works, in the townlands of Lisselan, Killowen, Ballygarren, Monamintra and Keiloge, County Waterford.

The Board decided to approve the above proposed development, based on the following reasons and considerations and subject to the conditions set out below.

### **Reasons and Considerations**

In coming to its decision, the Board had regard to the following:

- (a) The relevant provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU (EIA Directive) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC (Birds Directives) which set the requirements for Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union.
- (b) the national, regional and local aviation policies and objectives, inclusive of those set out in National Planning Framework,

(c) the range of proposed mitigation measures set out in the submitted environmental impact assessment report, Natura impact statement, and Schedule of Commitments, and

(d) the submissions made in relation to the application and the report and recommendation of the Inspector.

**Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1:**

The Board agreed with the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report that the Tramore Dunes and Backstrand Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000671) and Tramore Back Strand Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004027) by way of habitat degradation as a result of hydrological and hydrogeological impacts are the only European Sites in respect of which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect.

**Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment**

The Board considered the Natura Impact Statement, the revised Natura Impact Statement, the mitigation measures contained therein, and all other relevant submissions including expert submissions received and the Inspector's assessment. The Board completed an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the affected European Sites namely Tramore Dunes and Backstrand Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000671) and Tramore Back Strand Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004027) in view of the Sites' Conservation Objectives.

The Board considered that the information before it was sufficient to undertake a complete assessment of all aspects of the proposed development in relation to the Sites' Conservation Objectives, using the best available scientific knowledge in the field.

In completing the assessment, the Board considered, in particular, the following;

- i. the site-specific Conservation Objectives for these European Sites,



- ii. the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development both individually or in combination with other plans or projects,
- iii. mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal.

The Board identified that the main likely impact arising from the proposed development on the Tramore Dunes & Backstrand Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000671) and Tramore Back Strand Special Protection Area (Site Code 004027) by way of habitat degradation as a result of hydrological and hydrogeological impacts. Having regard to the mitigation measures proposed, the Board concluded that the proposed development would not, adversely affect any of the species within the relevant European Sites.

In completing the appropriate assessment, the Board accepted and adopted the appropriate assessment carried out in the Inspector's report in respect of the potential effects of the proposed development on the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the Sites' Conservation Objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Board was satisfied that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites in view of the Sites' conservation objectives and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of such effects.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment**

The Board completed an environmental impact assessment of the proposed development, taking into account:

- a) The nature, scale, location and extent of the proposed development;
- b) The Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Addendum Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted with the application;

- c) The submissions from the objectors and the prescribed bodies in the course of the application; and
- d) The Inspector's report.

The Board considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Addendum Environmental Impact Assessment Report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant, identifies and describes adequately the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment. The Board is satisfied that the information contained in the EIAR complies with the provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU.

The Board agreed with the summary and examination, set out in the Inspector's report, of the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Addendum Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted by the applicant and submissions made in the course of the application. The Board is satisfied that the Inspector's report sets out how these were addressed in the assessment and recommendation (including environmental conditions) and are incorporated into the Board's decision.

The Board completed an environmental impact assessment in relation to the proposed development and concluded that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed, as set out in the schedule of Mitigation Measures in the EIAR, and subject to compliance with the conditions set out herein, the effects on the environment of the proposed development by itself and cumulatively with other development in the vicinity would be acceptable. In doing so, the Board adopted the report and conclusions of the reporting inspector.

The Board considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment are, and would be mitigated as follows:



- Negative impacts on **human health and population** arising from construction include noise, traffic and dust disturbance to residents of neighbouring dwellings. All of these impacts are insignificant to slight and temporary in nature. Adequate mitigation measures are proposed to ensure that these impacts are not significant.
- Benefits / positive impacts to **population** will arise in relation to residual impacts on socio-economic considerations, the proposed development would have positive, long-term and significant impacts.
- There is a potential for construction activity to impact on **air quality** in terms of dust, but adequate mitigation is proposed will ensure that impacts will be short-term and not significant. In terms of the operational phase in relation to air quality, the modelling indicates that NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub> and CO levels which would be generated would be below the relevant air quality standards. In relation to **climate**, having regard to the overall magnitude of the proposal and the limited extent to which the proposed extension of operations at Waterford Airport would contribute to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to Ireland's overall EU 2030 target, I am satisfied that the likely overall magnitude of the proposal on climate in the operational stage is negligible and long-term.
- Negative impacts on **hydrology** during the construction phase could arise as a result of accidental spillages of chemicals, hydrocarbons or other contaminants entering the existing drainage network and watercourses in the vicinity of the site. Mitigation measures are proposed to manage surface water from the site. These impacts will be mitigated by measures outlined within the application and can therefore be ruled out. During the operational phase, hydrological impacts will be imperceptible. I am, therefore, satisfied that the potential for direct or indirect impacts on hydrology can be ruled out.
- Negative **traffic** impacts would arise during the construction phase of the development, these impacts will be mitigated through the implementation of a traffic management plan and a construction management plan. In relation to

the operational phase, traffic impacts would be slight. I am, therefore, satisfied that the potential for direct or indirect impacts on traffic can be ruled out.

The Board concluded that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Addendum Environmental Impact Assessment Report and subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the effects of the proposed development on the environment, by itself and in combination with other plans and projects in the vicinity, would be acceptable, having regard to its overall benefits.

### **Proper Planning and Sustainable Development**

It is considered that the proposed development is necessary to meet the foreseeable need for aviation travel at Waterford Regional Airport and to provide for the safe expansion of air traffic at the airport. It is further considered that, subject to the mitigation measures proposed and the conditions set out below, the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience, would not present an unacceptable risk of water or air pollution, would not be prejudicial to public health due to noise impacts or otherwise and would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

It is considered that the proposed extension to, and widening of, the existing runway would accord with European, national, regional and local planning and that it is acceptable in respect of its likely effects on the environment and its likely consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### **Conditions**

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars received by An Bord Pleanála on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of September 2021, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be prepared



by or on behalf of the local authority, these details shall be placed on the file and retained as part of the public record.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity.

2. The proposed upgrade of the wastewater treatment system shall be subject to a separate application for planning permission.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity.

3. Passenger numbers using the airport shall not exceed the number specified in design Year 2 as detailed in the further information submitted to the Board on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of September 2021. Upon completed and operation of the upgrade of the wastewater treatment system, which shall be subject to a separate application for planning permission, passenger numbers using the airport shall increase to those between design Year 3 and design Year 5 as detailed in the further information submitted to the Board on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of September 2021, in accordance with the operational requirements.

**Reason:** In the interest of public health and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

4. (a) All mitigation, environmental commitments and monitoring measures identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Addendum Environmental Impact Assessment Report shall be implemented in full as part of the proposed development.

(b) All mitigation and environmental commitments identified in the Natura Impact Statement and Revised Natura Impact Statement shall be implemented in full as part of the proposed development.

**Reason:** In the interest of environmental protection and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

5. All excavated material shall, where practicable, be used on site. Any surplus excavated material to be removed from the site shall be brought to an authorised facility. Prior to removal of any surplus material, the Environment Department of Waterford City and County Council shall be informed of the appropriate quantity of material and the location of the proposed facility. No material shall be removed from the site until such time as the Environment Department has authorised its removal.

**Reason:** In the interests of environmental protection and development of the area.

6. A species identity bird strike log shall be kept at Waterford Regional Airport in order to monitor impact of the runway extension on qualifying species of the Special Protection Area. The remit of the bird strike log shall be agreed in writing with Waterford City and County Council's Heritage Officer. Prior to the commencement of development, details of the agreed bird strike log shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with the Heritage Officer.

**Reason:** Having regard to the proximity of the site to a Special Protection Area, in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7. Prior to commencement of development, copies of reports detailing any site investigations carried out shall be submitted to the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment for record purposes. Should any significant bedrock cuttings or coring be created, they shall be designed to remain visible as rock exposure rather than covered with soil and vegetation, in accordance with safety guidelines and engineering constraints. A digital photographic record of significant new excavations shall be provided to the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.



**Reason:** In order to facilitate the monitoring and recording of the geology of the site by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

8. Prior to commencement of development, the local authority or any agent acting on its behalf shall prepare a scheme for the voluntary noise insulation of existing dwellings. The scheme shall include all dwellings predicted to fall within the contour of 63 dB LAeq 16 hours. The scheme shall include for a review every two years of the dwellings eligible for insulation.

**Reason:** In the interest of residential amenity.

9. Surface water from the proposed development shall be drained in accordance with the proposals outlined in the planning application and the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. Full details of the design, construction, operation and monitoring of the surface water attenuation, treatment and disposal system shall be agreed by the local authority or any agent acting on its behalf, in consultation with the Southern Regional Fisheries Board, prior to commencement of development.

**Reason:** In the interest of public health, prevention of flooding and limiting the risk of pollution of receiving waters.

10. The local authority shall facilitate the archaeological appraisal of the site and in preserving and recording or otherwise protecting archaeological materials or features which may exist within the site. In this regard, the local authority shall:-

(a) prepare in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation (including hydrological and geotechnical investigations) relating to the proposed development, and

(b) employ a suitably qualified archaeologist prior to the commencement of development. The archaeologist shall assess the site and monitor all site development works.

The assessment shall address the following issues:-

- (i) the nature and location of archaeological material on the site, and
- (ii) the impact of the proposed development on such archaeological material.

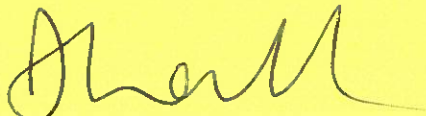
Prior to commencement of development, a report containing the results of the assessment shall be prepared by the local authority. Arising from this assessment, the local authority shall record details regarding any further archaeological requirements (including, if necessary, archaeological excavation), prior to commencement of construction works.

**Reason:** In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the site and to secure the preservation of any remains which may exist within the site.

11. A detailed construction traffic management plan shall be prepared by the local authority prior to commencement of development. The plan shall include details of arrangements for routes for construction traffic, parking during the construction phase, the location of the compound for storage of plant and machinery and the location for storage of deliveries to the site.

**Reason:** In the interests of public safety and residential amenity.

**Board Member:**



Dave Walsh

**Date:** 26/01/2022