

An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Direction
BD-009931-22
ABP-311213-21

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 03/02/2022.

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

Reasons and Considerations

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

- (a) the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),
- (b) the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015,
- (c) the Government of Ireland Climate Action Plan, 2019,
- (d) the Northern & Western Regional Economic & Spatial Strategy 2020 – 2033,
- (e) the likely consequences for the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is proposed to carry out the proposed development and the likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European Site,
- (f) the conservation objectives, qualifying interests and special conservation interests for the Lough Rea Special Area of Conservation (site code: 000304) and Lough Rea Special Protection Area (site code: 004134),

- (g) the policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2015 to 2021,
- (h) the policies and objectives of the Loughrea Local Area Plan 2012 – 2022,
- (i) the nature and extent of the proposed works as set out in the application for approval,
- (j) the information submitted in relation to the potential impacts on habitats, flora and fauna, including the Natura Impact Statement, and
- (k) the report and recommendation of the person appointed by the Board to make a report and recommendation on the matter.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1

The Board considered the Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted with the application for approval, the mitigation measures contained therein, the submissions and observations on file, and the Inspector's assessment. The Board considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an appropriate assessment.

The Board agreed with and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report that the Lough Rea Special Area of Conservation (site code: 000304) and Lough Rea Special Protection Area (site code: 004134) are the only European Sites in respect of which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect, in view of the Sites' conservation objectives.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2

The Board completed an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the affected European Sites, namely the Lough Rea Special Area of Conservation (site code: 000304) and Lough Rea Special Protection Area, in view of the Sites' conservation objectives.

In completing the appropriate assessment, the Board considered, in particular, the following:

- i. the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development both individually or in combination with other plans or projects,
- ii. the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal, and
- iii. the conservation objectives for the 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 integrity of the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the Sites' conservation objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Board was satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, in view of the Sites' conservation objectives.

Proper Planning and Sustainable Development and Likely effects on the environment:

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not have significant negative effects on the environment or the community in the vicinity, would not give rise to a risk of pollution, would not be detrimental to the visual or landscape amenities of the area, would not seriously injure the amenities of property in the vicinity, would not adversely impact on the cultural, archaeological and built heritage of the area and would not interfere with the existing land uses in the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and it would not give rise to likely effects on the environment.

Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The mitigation and monitoring measures outlined in the plans and particulars relating to the proposed development or as may be required in order to comply with the following conditions shall be implemented. Prior to the commencement of development, details of a time schedule for implementation of mitigation measures, including the commitments set down in the Natura Impact Statement, and associated monitoring shall be prepared by the local authority and placed on file and retained as part of the public record.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the environment and European Sites.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, the local authority, or any agent acting on its behalf, shall prepare in consultation with the relevant statutory agencies, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating all mitigation measures indicated in the Natura Impact Statement, and demonstration of proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the European Sites and biodiversity.

4. The local authority, or any agent acting on its behalf, shall arrange for the installation of at least two litter bins and two dog waste bins at the entrance to and/or within the park itself.

Reason: In the interest of protection of the environment and minimising litter.

5. The following nature conservation requirements shall be complied with:
 - (a) The works shall be undertaken from 15th August to 30th September if possible, and failing that, 1st March to 15th April as an alternative.
 - (b) No machinery or materials shall be stored within or close to the Lough Rea SAC and SPA site boundaries.

(c) Refuelling, concrete mixing and vehicle washing shall take place off-site and not within any designated area on-site.

(d) The construction works compound shall be located a substantial distance from the boundary with the Lough Rea SAC and SPA site boundaries and the on-site drainage channels.

Reason: In the interest of nature conservation and biodiversity.

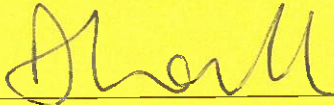
6. A suitably qualified ecologist shall be retained by the local authority to oversee the site set up and construction of the proposed development and implementation of mitigation measures relating to ecology. The ecologist shall be present during repair and remediation works. Upon completion of works, an ecological report of the site works shall be prepared by the appointed ecologist to be kept on file as part of the public record.

Reason: In the interest of nature conservation and biodiversity.

7. The County Council and any agent acting on its behalf shall facilitate the preservation, recording, protection or removal of archaeological materials or features that may exist within the site. A suitably qualified archaeologist shall be appointed by the County Council to oversee the site set-up and construction of the proposed development and the archaeologist shall be present on-site during construction works.

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

Board Member



Dave Walsh

Date: 03/02/2022

