



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Commission Order ABP-318314-23

Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended

Planning Authority: Longford County Council

Application by Longford County Council for approval under section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in accordance with plans and particulars, including a Natura Impact Statement, lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 20th day of October 2023, as amended by the further information received by An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 29th day of August 2025.

Proposed Development: The proposed development consists of the construction of a 500-seat outdoor Community Amphitheatre.

The proposed development will comprise of:

1. Permanent tiered seating (500 seats).
2. Stage with canvas canopy and steel support structure.
3. Temporary public 'porta-loos' including one number accessible 'porta-loo'.
4. One number 20-foot container (14 square metres) modified for equipment storage.
5. One number 20-foot container (14 square metres) modified to contain function services (temporary bar, first aid).
6. One number sound booth (7 square metres).
7. Site lighting.
8. Associated landscaping and ancillary site works.

All located at the former Council Depot at Commons North Lime Quarry, Lanesborough, County Longford.

Decision

Approve the above proposed development based on the reasons and considerations set out under and subject to the conditions set out below.

Reasons and Considerations

The Commission had regard to the following in coming to its decision:

1. European legislation, including of particular relevance:
 - (a) Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC (Birds Directive) which set the requirements for Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union,
 - (b) Directive 2011/92/EU (The Environmental Impact Assessment Directive) as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU as implemented by Article 94 and Schedule 6 (paragraphs 1 and 2) of the Planning Regulations as amended, and,
 - (c) Directive 2000/60/EC, the Water Framework Directive and the requirement to exercise its functions in a manner which is consistent with the provisions of the Directive and which achieves or promotes compliance with the requirements of the Directive.
2. National and regional planning and related policy, including:
 - (a) the National Planning Framework First Revision April 2025, and,
 - (b) the objectives and targets of Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030.
3. Regional and local planning policy, including:

- (a) the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019–2031, and,
 - (b) Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.
4. Other relevant national policy and guidance documents.
 5. The nature, scale and design of the proposed development as set out in the application for approval and the pattern of development in the vicinity.
 6. 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 European Sites.
 7. The conservation objectives, qualifying interests and special conservation interests for the Lough Ree Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004064), and the Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000440).
 8. The information submitted in relation to the potential impacts on habitats, flora and fauna, including the Natura Impact Statement, Outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan, Report on Supporting Ecological Surveys, Hydrological Investigation and Noise Impact Assessment.
 9. The submissions and observations received in relation to the proposed development.
 10. The further information response received from the applicant on the 29th day of August 2025 and submissions received in response to same.
 11. The reports carried out by the Inspectorate Ecologist and Commission's Environmental Scientist.
 12. The report and recommendation of the Inspector, including the examination, analysis and evaluation undertaken in relation to appropriate assessment.

Further to Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, the Commission performed its functions in a manner consistent with Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and

the national long term climate action strategy, national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans set out in those Plans and in furtherance of the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1:

The Commission agreed with and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report that the Lough Ree Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004064), and the Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000440), are the only European Sites in respect of which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2:

The Commission 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 Commission completed an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the affected European Sites, namely the Lough Ree Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004064) and the Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000440), in view of the Sites' conservation objectives. The Commission considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an appropriate assessment. In completing the appropriate assessment, the Commission 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 Commission 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 Commission 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/Likely effects on the environment:

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would support the further development of Lanesborough as a key location for population and economic growth, would support the delivery of resource-based tourism initiatives, would support regeneration of publicly owned landbanks for inter alia cultural and recreational opportunities, would support the development of Lanesborough as a key tourism hub within the county and the development of a strong evening and nighttime tourism economy across the county, 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, would not interfere with the existing land uses in the area and would not interfere with traffic and pedestrian safety. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Conditions

1. The proposed development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application as updated by the revised plans and details received on the 29th day of August 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where any mitigation measures set out in the Natura Impact Statement, or any conditions of approval require further 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 interests of clarity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to ensure the protection of the environment.

2. Prior to the commencement of development revised plans and details shall be placed on file and retained as part of the public record. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the revised plans and details which shall provide for the following alterations:
 - (a) A revised layout plan showing the omission the proposed portaloo compound area to the south of the existing stone wall and all relevant associated works. These works shall be omitted and an alternative location for the temporary provision of portaloo's for events provided within the established red-line application boundary at a location north of the existing stone wall on lands that do not encroach on woodland areas.
 - (b) The revised layout plan (referenced at 2(a) above) and an updated tiered seating section shall be provided to detail the reduced levels achieved through reductions in the tiered seating rise height from 500 millimetres to 480 millimetres, achieving the lowering the height of the amphitheatre mound and sound booth by 240 millimetres as set out in the application

documentation received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025.

Reason: In the interests of the environment and residential amenity.

3. The mitigation and monitoring measures identified in the Natura Impact Statement submitted with the application shall be implemented in full. Prior to the commencement of development, details of a time schedule for implementation of mitigation measures and associated monitoring shall be prepared by the local authority and placed on file and retained as part of the public record.

Reason: To protect European Sites

4. A suitably qualified and experienced 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 as set out in the submitted Natura Impact Statement, and Report on Supporting Ecological Surveys, as well as the Construction and Environmental Management Plan. The ecologist shall be present during the works and shall inform and approve the lighting design for the development here consented. 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 interests of nature conservation and biodiversity.

5. Prior to the commencement of development, the local authority, or any agent acting on its behalf, shall prepare in consultation with the project ecologist and relevant statutory agencies, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating all mitigation measures set out in the applicant's

submission received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025, and demonstration of proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols. The CEMP shall be placed on file and retained as part of the public record prior to commencement of development and shall include:

- (a) all mitigation measures indicated in the Natura Impact Statement, Noise Impact Assessment and Report on Supporting Ecological Surveys received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025,
- (b) all mitigation measures set out in the submitted outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan, and Hydrological Investigation received on the 29th day of August 2025,
- (c) location and extent of silt fencing, shuttering and bunding to be installed on site,
- (d) location of any temporary construction compound required, which must be located within the submitted red line application boundary,
- (e) a construction traffic management plan to include:
 - i. measures which will ensure the continued access for members of the public to the amenity walkways in the vicinity and Lough Ree,
 - ii. all construction access to the site will be in accordance with outline Construction Management drawing received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025,
- (f) details of protection measures for the identified Zone of Ecological Importance as set out in outline Construction Management drawing received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025,
- (g) construction lighting proposals, informed by the ecological clerk of works to minimise impacts on sensitive ecological receptors in the vicinity, and
- (h) specific proposals as to how the measures outlined in the CEMP will be measured, audited and monitored for effectiveness.

A record of daily checks that the works are being undertaken in accordance with the CEMP shall be maintained on file as part of the public record.

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

6. The following nature conservation requirements shall be complied with:
- (a) Prior to the commencement of development, details of measures to protect water and groundwater quality shall be outlined and placed on file. These measures shall include all those set out in Section V of the Hydrological Investigation Report received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025 and provide for the groundwater and site monitoring and reporting provided for in Section V.7 of that report. A programme of water quality monitoring shall be prepared in consultation with the contractor, the local authority and relevant statutory agencies and the programme shall be implemented thereafter, with all details including the results of the monitoring to be placed on the file and retained as part of the public record.
 - (b) No vegetation removal shall take place during the period of the 1st day of March to the 31st day of August (inclusive) without the written approval of the Ecological Clerk of Works. Such approval shall be placed on the public file.
 - (c) No works (including vegetation removal) shall occur along the existing quarry face.
 - (d) A pre-construction bat survey shall be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist during the active bat season and, relocation of bat species if required, to facilitate construction, shall only be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist with any relevant required consents or licences.
 - (e) A detailed landscaping plan including species list shall be prepared in accordance with the details received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025 and placed on the file for public record. The species list for the landscaping plan must incorporate all native species of Irish provenance suitable for the local soil conditions. Species planting will be carried out in accordance with the landscaping plan, and no fertilisers or other chemicals will be used.
 - (f) A detailed lighting design shall be prepared and placed on file for the public record. The lighting plan shall follow the provisions of Section 5.1 of

the submitted Report on Supporting Ecological Surveys, 3.3 of the submitted Natura Impact Statement and be informed by EUROBATS 8, Guidelines for Consideration of Bats in Lighting Projects. A suitably experienced ecological clerk of works shall be assigned to the design stages of the proposed development to ensure that the lighting design measures are implemented into the operational phase lighting design for the proposed development.

- (g) No event/temporary car parking will be carried out on amenity grass areas long the access route to the venue.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and nature conservation.

- 7. (a) The local authority, or any agent acting on its behalf shall ensure that all plant and machinery used during the works should be thoroughly cleaned and washed before delivery to the site to prevent the spread of hazardous invasive species and pathogens.
- (b) The measures detailed in Section 12 (Invasive species) of the Outline CEMP received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025, shall be implemented in full, and monitored by the Ecological Clerk of Works. Results of the monitoring of these measures shall be placed on file.

Reason: In the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to ensure the protection of the European Sites.

- 8. (a) The local authority shall appoint a suitably qualified and experienced noise control consultant, to the approval of the local authority, prior to live events involving amplified music or theatrical performances taking place at the venue. The noise control consultant shall liaise between all parties including the licensee, sound system engineer and the local authority on all matters relating to noise control prior to and during events.

- (b) The noise control consultant shall carry out a survey to determine the background noise levels (as defined by the Code of Practice on Environmental Noise Control at Concerts, 1995) at four locations around the venue representative of the noise sensitive receptors likely to experience the largest increase in noise as a result of an event as well as at ecological receptors E01, E02, E03 and E04 identified in the Noise Impact Assessment – Response to Further Information Report received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025. The information obtained from this survey shall be made available to the local authority in advance of an event taking place.
- (c) A noise propagation test shall be undertaken prior to the start of an event in order to set appropriate control limits at the sound mixer position. The sound system shall be configured and operated in a similar manner as intended for the event. The sound source used for the test shall be similar in character to the sound likely to be produced during the event.
- (d) The control limits set at the mixer position shall be adequate to ensure that Music Noise Level shall not at any noise sensitive receptor exceed the background noise level by more than 15 decibels (A-weighted) measured over a 15-minute period throughout an event, rehearsal or sound check. Similarly, noise levels at ecological receptors E01, E02, E03 and E04 (identified at 7(b) above) should not exceed these levels.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and sensitive ecological receptors in the vicinity, as well as in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

- 9. The proposed development shall be managed and operate in compliance with the operational plan and documentation received by the Commission on the 29th day of August 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with stated conditions. In the interests of clarity:

- (a) The venue will be vacated and locked by 23:00 on the night of events to ensure minimal disruption to local residents,
- (b) Access to the site for events will be solely from Lanesborough Main Street, with no access provided from Rathcline Road.

Reason: In order to ensure orderly development, protect residential amenities and in the interest of proper planning and sustainable development.

Eamon James Kelly

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Planning Commissioner of An Coimisiún

**Pleanála duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Commission.**



Dated this *9th* day of *March*, 2026