

Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended

Planning Authority: Galway County Council

Application by Galway 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 27th day of September 2024, as amended by the further information received on the 16th day of July 2025.

Proposed Development: The development will consist of the following:

1. Repair works comprising:
 - a. Repair of the existing pier surfaces.
 - b. Repair of the existing slipway to provide safe launching point for kayaks and stand-up paddle boards.
2. Demolition of an existing changing shelter to facilitate passive surveillance and views of Lough Rea.
3. Alteration to existing toilet and shower building to provide storage, plant, and a changing places toilet (accessible toilet, shower and changing facility) (93 square metres).
4. Provision of new changing, toilet and shower facilities in a single storey building (86 square metres) including sheltered outdoor shower changing area.
5. Provision of a lifeguard station building (16 square metres).
6. Provision of a circular viewing deck to the south of the existing pier.
7. Provision of a totem sign extending to circa 4 metres in height.

8. Alteration to existing beach area and provision of a deck, steps and ramp to water's edge and beach area for access for all to the water.
9. Provision of a shared active travel route along the sites eastern boundary adjacent to the Lake Road (R351) and the provision of designated bicycle parking spaces.
10. Removal of 2 number existing vehicular access points and alterations and junction upgrade works to the existing central access point, and provision of internal pedestrian crossings.
11. Reconfiguration of and upgrades to the existing car parking areas to provide increased parking provision and to accommodate age friendly and set down spaces and trading bays, and the provision of 1 number new car parking area which includes Electric Vehicle charging and accessible parking spaces.
12. Provision of hard and soft site landscaping works, sustainable drainage systems measures, pumping and water stations all connections, public lighting, photovoltaic panels at roof level, and site services.
13. All ancillary services and associated site development works.

All locate at Long Point, Lake Road(R351) in the townlands of Knockanima, Loughrea, County Galway.

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 performed its functions in relation to the making of its decision, in a manner consistent with Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, consistent with the Climate Action Plan 2025 and Climate Action Plan 2024 and The National Adaptation Framework; Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland June 2024 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.

In coming to its decision, the Commission also had regard to the following European, national, regional and local planning, energy, climate and other policy of relevance.

1. European, policy/legislation including:
 - (a) Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU (Environmental Impact Assessment Directive),
 - (b) the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 2018,
 - (c) the European Union Directive Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC (Birds Directive),
 - (d) Directive 2000/60/EC (Water Framework Directive), and
 - (e) the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended.
2. National policy and guidance including:
 - (a) the National Development Plan 2021-2030,
 - (b) the National Planning Framework First Revision, April 2025,
 - (c) Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030,
 - (d) Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030.
3. Regional and local policy support, in particular:
 - (a) the Northern and Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032,
 - (b) Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028,
 - (c) Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030,

4. The nature, scale, extent and layout of the proposed development.
5. The pattern of development within the area and context of the receiving environment, including the existing established recreation and amenity use of the site.
6. The documentation submitted with the application.
7. The submissions on file including those from observers, prescribed bodies and the local authority.
8. The mitigation measures proposed.
9. The report and recommendation of the person appointed by the Commission to make a report and recommendation on the matter.

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening:

The Commission completed an environmental impact assessment screening of the proposed development and considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report and other documents and drawings submitted by the local authority identifies and describes adequately the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment

Having regard to: -

1. the criteria set out in Schedule 7, in particular:
 - (a) the limited nature and scale of the proposed recreational and amenity development, in an established amenity area served by public infrastructure,
 - (b) the absence of any significant unmitigated environmental sensitivity in the vicinity, and
 - (c) the absence of potential for the development to impact on any sensitive location specified in article 109(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended,
2. the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment submitted by the local authority including:
 - (a) the updated Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report,

- (b) the Further Information Response Report,
 - (c) the updated Ecological Impact Assessment,
 - (d) the updated Natura Impact Statement,
 - (e) the Arboricultural Report,
 - (f) the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment,
 - (g) the Habitat Management Plan,
 - (h) the Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment,
 - (i) the updated Construction and Environmental Management Plan, and
 - (j) the updated civil drawing pack,
3. the features and measures proposed by the local authority envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant effects on the environment, and
 4. the responses from prescribed bodies and submission received.

the Commission concluded that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required.

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 Rea Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000304), Lough Rea Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004134), Rahasane Turlough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000322) 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 Rea Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000304), Lough Rea Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004134), Rahasane Turlough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000322) in view of the Site's 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 by condition proposed by the Inspector,
- iii. the conservation objectives for the European Sites.

In completing the appropriate assessment, the Commission determined that the proposed development by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, subject to conditions omitting those elements of the proposal within or immediately bounding the lake (the Lough Rea Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000304)) and appropriate mitigation measures, would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites in view of the Sites' conservation objectives.

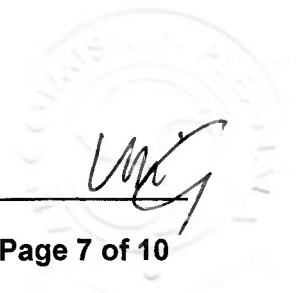
Proper Planning and Sustainable Development/Likely effects on the environment:

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would have significant positive impacts on the environment and the community in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030. The proposal would, subject to conditions omitting those elements of the proposal within or immediately bounding the lake (the Lough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000304)) and appropriate mitigation measures, not have significant negative effects on the environment, would result in an enhancement of public amenities in the area, would not adversely impact on the landscape, cultural or archaeological heritage of the area, would not interfere with the existing land uses in the area and

would result in improved traffic and pedestrian safety. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In deciding not to accept the Inspector's recommendation the Commission considered the report from the Senior Ecologist which was attached to the Inspector's Addendum Report, and noted the comments from the Inspector (paragraph 3.4 of Inspector's Addendum Report) that a split decision omitting certain elements of the project which either be within or immediately bounding the lake (the Lough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000304)) would fully and effectively mitigate the identified concerns and would facilitate an appropriate assessment determination that the consented development would not adversely affect the integrity of European Site in view of the Site's conservation objectives. However, the Commission did not agree with the Inspector's assessment that the lake-edge elements were integral parts of the proposed development which could not be separated from the other elements of the project. The Commission considered that the proposed repairs to the existing pier surfaces, demolition of existing changing shelter, alterations to existing toilet and shower building, provision of new changing, toilet and shower facilities, provision of new lifeguard station building, provision of totem sign extending, provision of shared active travel route along the sites eastern boundary adjacent to the Lake Road (R351), alterations to vehicular access, reconfiguration of and upgrades to the existing car parking areas, provision of hard and soft site landscaping works, sustainable urban drainage systems measures, pumping and water stations all connections, public lighting, and site services could be carried out without any adverse impact on the integrity of European Site in view of the Site's conservation objectives and that those works could be separated from those works within or immediately bounding the lake (the Lough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000304)) and would deliver a significant enhancement of the existing public amenity area at the subject site.

Conditions



1. The proposed development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, received by An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 27th day of September 2024 as amended by the plans and particulars received 16th day of July 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The proposed development shall be amended as follows:
 - (a) The following elements of the proposed development within or immediately bounding the lake (the Lough Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000304)) shall be omitted:
 - i. Repair of existing slipway to provide launching point for kayaks and stand-up paddle boards.
 - ii. Provision of a circular viewing deck to the south of the existing pier.
 - iii. Alteration of the lake edge, including the existing beach area, and provision of a deck, steps and ramp to water's edge and beach area.
 - (b) Following consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland, details of which shall be made available on the public file, provision shall be made for the incorporation of a biosecurity/information station into the proposal.
 - (c) A final project layout, design and schedule of mitigation measures, having regard to the above amendments, shall be placed on the public file and kept as part of the public record.

Reason: To protect the integrity of European Sites.

3. Subject to compliance with condition number two above, all of the mitigation measures contained in the submitted Natura Impact Statement (NIS), shall be fully implemented.

Reason: To protect the integrity of the of Lough Rea Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000304).

4. 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 indicated in the Natura Impact Statement and Ecological Impact Assessment and shall demonstrate proposals adhere to best practice and protocols. The CEMP shall include:
 - (a) a programme of works setting out the extent and duration of restrictions on public access to the subject site,
 - (b) a construction traffic management plan,
 - (c) the location, extent and layout of construction compounds to be installed on site, and
 - (d) the location and extent of silt fencing to be installed on site.

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

5.
 - (a) The site shall be landscaped, using native species from local stock.
 - (b) Amenity grassland shall be subject to minimalised or eliminated fertilisation regimes.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to ensure the protection of the adjacent European Sites.

6.
 - (a) The local authority shall engage a suitably qualified archaeologist, licensed under the National Monuments Acts, to monitor all site clearance works,

topsoil stripping and groundworks associated with the proposed development.

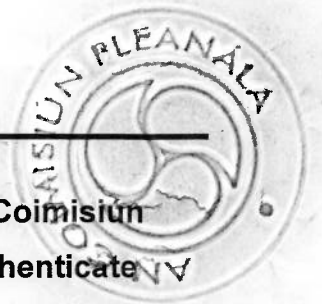
- (b) Prior to the commencement of development, the archaeologist shall consult with and forward to National Monuments Service a method statement for written agreement.
- (c) Should archaeological remains be identified during the course of archaeological monitoring, all works shall cease in the area of archaeological interest pending a decision of the National Monuments Service, regarding appropriate mitigation.
- (d) The local authority shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any remains identified and any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the National Monuments Service.
- (e) Following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary post-excavation specialist analysis, the National Monuments Service shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of the monitoring and any subsequent required archaeological investigative work/excavation required.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation [either in situ or by record] of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.



Liam McGree

Planning Commissioner of An Coimisiún
Pleanála duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Commission.



Dated this 10th day of MAY 2026