



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Record of 2nd Meeting ABP-321572-25

Case Reference / Description	Proposed development of Knockharley Landfill, Knockharley, Brownstown, Navan, County Meath		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	2 nd		
Date	31/07/25	Start Time	11:00 a.m.
Location	Virtually	End Time	12:00 a.m.

Representing An Coimisiún Pleanála		
Staff Members		
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Fiona Fair, Senior Planning Inspector		
Maeve Flynn, Ecologist		
Eimear Reilly, Executive Officer	e.reilly@pleanala.ie	01-8737184
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
David Tobin, Beauparc		
Darren Crowe, WSP		
Jonathan Gauntlett, AWN Consulting		
Brian Minogue, Tom Phillips & Associates		

Introduction

The Commission referred to its previous meeting with the applicant, which was held on 26th February 2025, and to the record of this meeting. The Commission enquired whether the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to make on the record of this meeting. The prospective applicant replied that it had no comments to make and explained its intention to address some of the key items which arose during the meeting.

Presentation made by the Prospective Applicant

The prospective applicant provided a brief recap and summary of the proposed development, noting that the facility on site is currently operational and is being expanded in line with the permission granted on the previous planning application for the site under reference number ABP-303211-18. It gave an overview of the status of development at the site by way of the drawing provided, noting that the active landfill cells are currently being filled in line with the previous permission, and highlighting the ESB overheads lines which traverse the site from north to south.

The prospective applicant provided a summary of the proposed development. The most significant revision to the proposal discussed at the first meeting was an increase in the void space proposed from the original 3.38 million m³ to 4.12 million m³. The maximum annual tonnage is proposed to remain at 440,000 tonnes in line with the proposal as outlined at the first meeting and the currently permitted intake at the site. Further diversion of the Knockharley Stream and the relocation of the existing 220kv power lines that cross the site remain part of the proposal. The lifespan of the proposed development is now estimated at approximately 17 years.

The prospective applicant provided an overview of its seven-phase approach for the construction of the proposed development, noting that construction will operate on a continuous leap-frog system from north to south whereby a pair of cells will be filled while another pair are constructed. It estimates that Phase 1 will be carried out over a period of two years, during which some existing landfill cells (indicated in blue) will be permanently capped. It explained that the red cells will be cut, the blue will be filled, three northern berms will be constructed, the Knockharley stream will be diverted, and two cells to the north of the site will be constructed.

During Phase 2, two further cells will be created as the previous two are filled, and screening berms will be constructed along the western profile of the site as it progresses through each phase. By Phase 5, the existing landfill will be capped permanently and by Phase 7, the entire facility will be permanently capped.

The prospective applicant set out the proposed engineering design of the final capping, including outlines of the typical clay layer section and typical capping section. It noted that it does not plan to extend any existing gas or leachate infrastructure at the site and that the existing permitted gas and leachate infrastructure can accommodate the proposed development. The plan is to maintain the existing surface water lagoons and services infrastructure, and it is contended that the infrastructure permitted on foot of ABP-303211-18 can adequately accommodate on site surface water and flood water associated with the proposed development.

The applicant provided an overview of the existing stormwater and foul water drainage at the site. It noted that there is a natural elevation high point in the system to the west of the site where surface water from the north will go through the northern attenuation system, while surface water captured at the southern side will fall to the southern attenuation system.

Having consulted with ESB in relation to tower relocations and overhead line diversions required to facilitate the proposed development, the prospective applicant has been advised of the necessity for seven additional towers, all of which are indicated on the drawing provided. The location of each tower, tower height and access to the tower locations has been agreed with ESB.

The prospective applicant provided an update on the draft of its Proposed Restoration Plan for when the facility is completely capped. It proposes to provide biodiversity enhancement/net gain across the site and intends to do so by inserting native woodland planting along the outside of the berms to the north and east of the site, and wildflower meadows through the centre. It highlighted the existing native woodland planting surrounding part of the site as well as some linear hedgerow habitats which will be added to as part of the proposed development.

The prospective applicant intends to provide a report and calculations in relation to biodiversity net gain when lodging the application for the proposed development and noted in particular that the loss of approximately 400m of hedgerow planting will be replaced by approximately 1.5km of new planting.

The prospective applicant provided an overview of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), as stated in the presentation provided. It also provided an update on the key environmental considerations, giving a brief overview of the ecological surveys undertaken to date, noting that they have not identified any significant constraints. It provided a drawings of stormwater pathways and flood zones, noting that there has not been an increase in stormwater runoff during active operations. It also provided an overview of its conception model of its investigation of ground conditions and groundwater, stating that groundwater flow is predominantly towards the south and southeast, away from the proposed development.

The prospective applicant provided an update on its engagement with stakeholders, noting that it has scheduled a site walk with Meath County Council for the week following the instant meeting. It stated that extensive and favourable engagement has taken place with Meath County Council, the Local Government Management Agency, and the Regional Waste Management Authority. It also provided a sample of the informational leaflet which it intends to distribute to the local residents and community groups, and gave an overview of its engagement with the community.

The prospective applicant provided a summary of the overall proposed development. Addressing the discussions between itself and the Commission's representatives at the previous meeting, the prospective applicant provided further clarity in relation to the mix of waste streams, stating that the mix is changing and will be indicated within the application documents. It explained the changing nature of the waste industry and noted, as an example, that the roll-out of brown bins to approximately 85% of the population has been instrumental in this change. It explained that, as a result of these changes, the proposed development will deal primarily with construction and demolition fines and will be available in the event of any outages in existing incineration capacity. The prospective applicant also noted that the changing profile of the waste stream is such that gas and odour emissions are significantly less than previously the case.

The prospective applicant stated its opinion that the proposed development constitutes a strategic infrastructure development and outlined its intention to request closure of the pre-application meetings and proceed to lodge the application in approximately four to six weeks.

Discussion:

The following matters were discussed:

- The Commission's representatives noted the prospective applicants update on the waste flow predictions and the changing nature of the waste industry and advised the prospective applicant that as much detail as possible would be provided in relation to this within the application documents.
- In response to a query from the Commission's representatives, the prospective applicant acknowledged its decision to withdraw its Design Flexibility Pre-application request (ABP-322929-25). It clarified that the proposed tower heights have now been confirmed with ESB, and as such, no opinion under Section 37CD is required. It also clarified that these towers will be included as part of the application for the proposed development.
- The Commission's representatives recognised that key environmental considerations have been identified, and an environmental assessment update is ongoing by the applicant. Subsequent to the previous meeting, the Commission's representatives noted the ecological survey work carried out through September 2024 to May 2025.
- In relation to material balance, the Commission's representatives queried whether there would be any significant removal of material offsite during the phasing approach, and whether the proposed berm height will be from the same OD level / elevation height, as that which is currently at the existing facility. The prospective applicant clarified that part of the cut storage area will be used extend. The existing permitted berm's and some of the cut will be removed from the site by the same HGV's which will be transporting waste into the site. This material will be used as a by-product under Article 27 and will go towards restoration works at a nearby mine. The prospective applicant

maintained that this would not give rise to an increase in traffic. It also clarified that the proposed berm heights will match the height of the existing berm to the east of the current facility. The Commission representatives advised that this should be detailed in any application submitted.

- The prospective applicant clarified that it proposes an increase in tree-felling to the north of the site. The Commission's representatives acknowledged that the permission granted on the previous planning application for the site under reference number ABP-303211-18 included a condition regarding tree-felling and tree replacement and so advised the prospective applicant to adequately address and justify this within any future application for the proposed development.
- The Commission's representatives noted the volume increase from 3.38 million to 4.12 million since the previous meeting, as well as the shortening of the lifespan of the proposed development. It was highlighted that the volume, quantum and lifespan of the proposed development needs to be clearly set out and justified in any future application.
- The Commission's representatives emphasised the importance of formal engagement with the relevant local authorities and prescribed bodies, including EPA, IFI, and NPWS in advance of submitting an application and any outstanding issues addressed. Ensuring that provision was made for otter was specifically highlighted by representatives of the Commission.
- In relation to the proposed culvert design, the Commission's representatives advised the prospective applicant to consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland in order to adequately consider the current and future state of the watercourse and water quality.
- Consideration and compliance with the Water Framework Directive was highlighted as being of significance by the Commission's representatives.
- In terms of restoration, the Commission's representatives advised the prospective applicant to have regard to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and to include native species where possible. The representatives also advised that

attention be given to the proposed management of the grassland post-restoration, noting that this would influence the species of planting to be used.

- The Commission's representatives acknowledged the proposed biodiversity net gain in the project and advised the prospective applicant to emphasise this within the application documents, acknowledging that there is currently no Irish guidance available. The use of DEFRA or other UK guidance is therefore considered appropriate.
- The Commission's representatives gave the preliminary view that the proposed development would likely constitute strategic infrastructure development but advised that the ultimate determination on the issue is for the Commission.

Conclusion:

The Commission's representatives advised that following the meeting the onus is on the prospective applicant to either request formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process or to request a further meeting. The Commission's representatives advised that the record of the instant meeting will be issued in the meantime, and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing. The prospective applicant stated its intention to request closure following its review of the record of the instant meeting.

Stephen Kay

Assistant Director of Planning