



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-310201-21 2nd meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-310201-21 Proposed upgrade of an existing waste water treatment plant at Castletroy, Co. Limerick.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	2nd		
Date	30/08/22	Start Time	14:30
Location	N/A	End Time	15:30

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Alaine Clarke, Planning Inspector
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Majella Keating, Irish Water
Seamus Glynn, Irish Water
Paul Fallon, Irish Water
Paul Judge, J.P. Barry's & Partners
Orla O'Brien, J.P. Barry's & Partners
Ben Gaffney, J.P. Barry's & Partners
Conor Frehill, HW Planning
Rachel Walsh, MKO Ireland

The Board's representatives referred to the last meeting in June, 2021 and welcomed the prospective applicant to the second consultation meeting.

Presentation:

The prospective applicant gave a presentation which included a recap on the need for the proposed project, details of the proposed development works and project updates since the first meeting in June, 2021.

The prospective applicant stated that it is now at an advanced stage in the design of the project and that significant survey work had been undertaken in the last year.

The existing Wastewater Treatment Plant (WwTP) has a capacity of 39,000 P.E. It is proposed to increase this capacity to 77,500 P.E. The key drivers for this increase are listed below:

- Provide stormwater storage to achieve compliance with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations and EPA Wastewater Discharge Licence (WWDL).
- To maintain compliance with Irish and EU legislation whilst catering for the population growth demands, industrial growth and to facilitate current EPA IPC licence holders.
- Provision of 20% headroom in accordance with Irish Water guidelines for large urban settlements.

No compulsory purchase of land is required. All proposed works will take place within the boundary of the existing WwTP. A review of the Wastewater Discharge Licence will be required.

The Castletroy WwTP serves the domestic populations of Castletroy, Annacotty, Mountshannon and Castleconnell, as well as treating discharges from the University of Limerick and the local industrial sectors.

It was noted that the site is located in a flood zone A. It is proposed to build outside the flood zone. The prospective applicant indicated that flood events are anticipated based on previous events and that a pumping station will be required.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the existing infrastructure on site and proposed new infrastructure and upgrade works.

Further details regarding sludge disposal were presented. It is proposed that sludge produced will be thickened and dewatered to a minimum of 18% dry solids and transported to one or more licenced facilities for further treatment and disposal. Currently, sludge is thickened to 14% dry solids and transferred to Bunlicky Sludge Hub. This will remain the preferred solution for future sludge production but depending on capacity at Bunlicky, private off-site licenced facilities may be used i.e. lime stabilisation and/or composting centres.

An EIAR and NIS will accompany the planning application. An EIA Scoping report has been published and numerous site-specific assessments and surveys have been completed.

The NIS and EIAR will consider the impacts on the Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA.

Ecological Walkovers, an Invasive Species Survey and Invasive Species Management Plan, and a Terrestrial Mammal Survey (Badgers) have all been completed. The prospective applicant has been in consultation with the NPWS regarding a badger sett found on site. Invasive species have also been found on site.

The prospective applicant stated that it had conducted a non-statutory consultation which included webinars, an information web page, social media and poster campaign and a dedicated email address for submissions. Only one submission was received which was in favour of the proposed development. A consultation report will form part of the application documentation.

Regarding planning policy, the prospective applicant stated that the new Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect on 29th July, 2022. This Development Plan revokes the Castletroy Local Area Plan 2019-2024 and identifies the proposed project as a support to projected growth in Limerick City and Suburbs. The Draft Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 is in preparation.

The prospective applicant stated that it believes the proposed development meets the three criteria for SID as listed in section 37A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

Discussion:

The Board's representatives asked if the wastewater brought to site is all piped. The prospective applicant clarified that it is piped by a gravity sewer and some outlying pumping stations are located in Castleconnell and Mountshannon.

The Board's representatives enquired about the capacity of Bunlicky and if it has the capacity for sludge produced at 77,500 P.E. It was clarified that Bunlicky is currently working at maximum capacity. Upgrade works are proposed but this project is advancing at a slower rate. Treated sludge goes to lime-stabilisation after Bunlicky in any case.

The Board's representatives stated that it is acceptable to provide options regarding sludge treatment and disposal in the EIAR, provided all options are clearly assessed.

Regarding the flood risk on site it was advised that a site-specific assessment should include a justification test.

The Board's representatives stated that the applicant should state where its growth projection figures come from and demonstrate that they are in compliance with policy. It was indicated that less 50% of industrial licensing provision is being used. It was stated that the documentation should clarify why the figures presented do not change to provide for future growth of industry. A definition and statement on 'headroom' can be included.

The Board's representatives advised that the drawings submitted should distinguish clearly between existing infrastructure and new infrastructure/upgrades etc.

The prospective applicant stated that it is intending to submit the planning application at the end of this year.

Conclusion:

The onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the pre-application consultation process.

The record of the instant meeting will issue in the meantime and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have.

The meeting concluded at 15:30 p.m.

 13/9/22

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning