



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report

**PL-500027-LK**

<b>Development</b>	Change of use from betting office to self-service laundrette
<b>Location</b>	Unit 4, The Orchard, Castletroy, Limerick
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Limerick City and County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	2560402
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	RevGen Solutions.
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission.
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Grant
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	First party
<b>Appellant</b>	Alfie Micks
<b>Observer(s)</b>	None.
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	13/11/2025.
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Bogan

### Contents

1.0 Site Location and Description .....	2
2.0 Proposed Development .....	3
3.0 Planning Authority Decision .....	3
4.0 Planning History .....	5
5.0 Policy Context.....	5
6.0 EIA Screening .....	6
7.0 The Appeal .....	6
8.0 Assessment.....	11
9.0 AA Screening.....	14
10.0 Water Framework Directive .....	15
11.0 Recommendation.....	15
12.0 Reasons and Considerations.....	16
13.0 Conditions.....	16

## **Appendix 1 –EIA Screening**

### **1.0 Site Location and Description**

- 1.1. The site is located in an area of mixed commercial and residential development in Castletroy, County Limerick. Groups of commercial units, a hotel and Castletroy shopping centre are located in the vicinity of the roundabout at the junction of Dublin Road and Plassey Road.
- 1.2. The site is part of a curved two-storey terrace with commercial uses at ground floor level and a mixture of commercial and residential uses overhead, and is accessed off Plassey Road. The business mix includes restaurants/takeaways, a veterinary surgery and a beauty salon. Parking is provided to the front of the units. A group of

two storey houses, sited around a central car parking area, is located to the rear (west) of the commercial units.

- 1.3. The subject commercial unit is currently vacant but was most recently in use as a betting office. A large advertising hoarding for Boyles Sport is in place on the front elevation, obscuring the windows.
- 1.4. The unit is accessed via two doors to the front. There is a small single storey rear extension and rear access door. An air conditioning unit is positioned adjacent to the rear wall of the extension. A first floor apartment is accessed via an external stairway to the rear of the building. There are a further two apartments above the adjoining units to the north, while the upper floor of the unit to the south is in use as a Pilates studio.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The development consists of change of use of an existing betting office to use as a self-service laundrette. Internal alterations are proposed to the ground floor, which is 87sqm in area. The proposed layout includes a number of self-service washing machines and dryers, a seating area for customers waiting, W/C facilities and a small staff room. The site is served by public sewerage and water supply systems. Access is via existing doors to front and rear of the unit. Details of change to signage are included. No changes are proposed at first floor level.
- 2.2. Further information submitted included a revised rear elevation drawing showing location of wall mounted vent and details of dryer extractor system.

## 3.0 Planning Authority Decision

### 3.1. Decision

- 3.1.1. The planning authority decided to grant permission on 9/09/2025, subject to two conditions.

### 3.1.2. Conditions

Condition 1 Standard condition re compliance with plans and particulars submitted.

Condition 2 The permitted use shall only operate between the hours of 08:00 to 21:00 hours, seven days a week, including weekends and bank holidays.

## 3.2. Planning Authority Reports

### 3.2.1. Planning Reports

- Planning Officer's report dated 24/06/2025, considered proposed use would not cause an unsustainable mix of similar uses in the area, proposed shopfront design is acceptable, and car parking is sufficient. Recommended further information be requested in relation to proposals to extract odour and noise from the site, details of grease traps and any chemical discharge proposed, and details of opening hours and security measures
- Concluded an EIA screening determination is not required as the proposed development is not a development included for under Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001(as amended)
- Concluded AA is not necessary as proposal should not be likely to have a significant effect on the conservation status of any SAC or SPA.
- Planning Officer's report dated 01/09/2025 found the response to further information to be acceptable, and concluded that subject to a condition controlling opening hours "the proposed laundrette represents a low-impact, well-regulated use that can be considered compatible with its urban setting" and recommended that permission be granted.

### 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Fire Service: No objection

## 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- Uisce Eireann: No objection in principle, standard requirements stated, including requirement for a grease trap.

## 3.4. Third Party Observations

- One submission received from owner of a nearby business (appellant). The issues raised are similar to those raised in the appeal.

## 4.0 Planning History

### 4.1. Current Site

- 96/1570: Permission granted to E.A. Gleeson for change of use of commercial unit to Betting Office and installation of satellite dish
- 94/1294: Permission granted to Patrick Hoare for the construction of 14 houses, 9 apartments, two-storey restaurant, 5 no shops, 2 no offices and ancillary works at Newcastle, Castletroy

### Adjacent

- 24/61013: Permission granted to TM Jewell Medical Services for the change of use to Medical Centre, signage to front elevation and all ancillary site works
- 03/2204: Permission granted to Michael Canty & Hugh O'Callaghan for the change of use from dry cleaners to veterinary retail unit / clinic, new sign, general refurbishment and ancillary works
- 03/1887: Refusal of permission for Daithi O Rian for the change of use of existing commercial unit to traditional Fish & Chip take away
- 99/451: Permission granted to Laurence Choi for the change of use of existing unit from commercial shop to Chinese take-away.

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Development Plan

#### **Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028**

Zoning: District Centre Uses, with objective to provide for a mixture of retail, residential, commercial, civic and other uses.

Purpose: To facilitate a district level centre consisting of a compatible mix of uses complementary to the City Centre, having regard to the principles of compact growth, consolidation and densification. A diversity of uses for both day and evening may be considered. These areas require high levels of accessibility, including pedestrian, cyclists and public transport (where feasible).

## 5.2. **Natural Heritage Designations**

- Lower River Shannon SAC is 970m north of the site
- River Shannon and River Fergus SPA is 5.5km from the site

## 6.0 **EIA Screening**

- 6.1. The proposed development does not come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA, that is, it does not comprise construction works, demolition or intervention in the natural surroundings. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of report.

## 7.0 **The Appeal**

### 7.1. **Grounds of Appeal**

- Appellant operates fully staffed laundry/dry cleaning business in same block, five or six units from the site
- Contends decision adversely impacts residential amenity, fair competition and proper planning
- Relies on application documentation, planning reports, Uisce Eireann observations, and a precedent decision (PI93.248333 (Waterford) in support of grounds

#### Residential Amenity and Operation Hours

- Proposed laundrette is in a residential block with scope for impact from noise, footfall, vibration, customer activity and lighting

- Planning reports fail to acknowledge competitive threat of proposed business to existing local providers such as Mr Jeeves Dry Cleaners
- Unmanned operation as proposed, has competitive advantage over manned businesses that provide local employment
- Economic viability of staffed services is unfairly jeopardised

#### Unmanned operations, anti-social behaviour risk

- Remote monitoring is insufficient to deter antisocial behaviour after hours
- In PL93.2483333 conditions for odour, exhaust, signage and operation hours were imposed because unsupervised laundrettes can become nuisance sources
- Requests more robust conditions or refusal given residential context and commercial units

#### Technical and Infrastructure concerns

- Contends Irish Water raised concerns about wastewater, drainage, trade effluent and load on public infrastructure. Full engineering assessment should be a prerequisite, due to water intensive nature of operation
- Possible emission of carbon monoxide from dryers
- Concern that volume of water consumption in laundrette not addressed

#### Commercial Impact and Business Viability

- Proposed full commercial laundrette could under-cut a full service business
- This raises valid concerns about imbalanced commercial dynamics in a compact retail complex

#### Unauthorised Development/ Compliance Doubts

- Laundrette kiosks have repeatedly been installed in petrol stations and retail parks without planning, later regularised via retention applications.
- Granting permission without strong controls may enable expansion or operation outside these bounds

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#### Procedural /Public Awareness

- 7.2. Prior application invalidated due to non-compliant newspaper notice, indicating pattern of procedural deficiencies. Raises concerns as to whether current notice is compliant. May have deprived public of fair opportunity to participate

#### **Applicant Response**

- Submits that appeal does not raise any material planning considerations to justify overturning planning authority decision

#### Residential Amenity and Operation

- Launderette will be a low-impact, community serving facility
- While mainly self-service, will be manned at regular intervals each day
- Energy efficient equipment will ensure minimal noise and vibration
- Fit out will include acoustic insulation and security measures to safeguard residential amenity
- Fixed opening hours would undermine model of providing for customers needing access outside conventional business hours e.g. shift workers, students, those without laundry equipment
- Equipment will be configured to ensure quiet operation and compliance with environmental standards

#### Nature of Business and Market Distinction

- While RevGen Solutions operate both dry cleaning and self-service businesses, this self-service model does not overlap with traditional dry cleaners such as Mr Jeeves
- Proposed unit will not provide dry cleaning/drop off service/ironing/key cutting. Focus is on self-service washing and drying including pet laundry area
- Claims of 'direct competition' therefore not relevant planning considerations under Planning Acts

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#### Local Economic Contribution

- Fit-out works will be by local traders/suppliers contributing to local economy  
Ongoing operation will generate employment through regular maintenance and servicing
- Launderettes in their network have been proven to enhance retail activity and footfall in mixed use developments

#### Security and anti-social behaviour

- Company has laundrettes in 25 locations, without a single incidence of antisocial behaviour/misuse
- Attributable to 24hour CCTV surveillance, regular staff attendance, controlled lighting, secure acoustic panels and reinforced fit out materials that enhance safety and sound proofing

#### Technical and Infrastructure Compliance

- Development has been assessed and designed to comply with Irish Water requirements
- Water usage of launderette equipment is efficient and within local networks capacity
- Appellants calculations re water and drainage are speculative. RevGen's laundrettes operate well within acceptable environmental thresholds, with no impact on local infrastructure
- Where dryers use gas systems, they will be in compliance with Building Regulations and appropriate venting

#### Precedent and Procedural Integrity

- Ref to PL-93.248333 is a retention application to regularise an unauthorised development. RevGen has proceeded through appropriate planning process with full public consultation
- Proposed launderette is a minor change of use in keeping with zoning and character of area

7.3.

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### **Planning Authority Response**

- None

#### 7.4. **Observations**

- None

#### 7.5. **Further Responses**

- None

### 8.0 **Assessment**

8.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including the appeal documentation, the report of the local authority, having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues to be considered in this appeal are as follows:

- Development Plan Zoning and business mix
- Impact on Residential Amenity
- Infrastructure issues
- Other issues

#### 8.2. **Development Plan Zoning and Business Mix**

8.2.1. The site is zoned as District Centre and is part of a group of mixed commercial areas and a shopping centre at the junction of Dublin Road and Plassey Road, which are zoned as the District Retail Centre for the Castletroy area. The objective of the zoning is to provide for a mixture of retail, residential, commercial, civic and other uses. Its purpose is “to facilitate a district level centre consisting of a compatible mix of uses complementary to the City Centre” and “a diversity of uses for both day and evening may be considered”. I believe the proposed launderette use is therefore in keeping with the zoning objectives for the area.

8.2.2. The appellant raises concerns that the proposed self-service launderette would be in direct competition with his existing dry cleaning business which is located in an adjoining group of commercial units, similar to the Orchard. In that context I note that restriction of competition is not generally a matter for the planning regulatory system. The Castletroy area has a large residential population, with significant areas zoned

for further residential development as well as a large student and employment base associated with the University and High Technology Campus. It therefore has capacity for a wide range and quantity of businesses to serve those living and working in the area. I note also that the proposal is for a self-service launderette operation rather than a conventional fully manned dry cleaning business. I am satisfied that the proposed launderette will make a positive contribution to the mix of services in the area and I consider that the proposed use is acceptable in principle.

### **8.3. Impact on Residential Amenity**

8.3.1. As outlined above, there is an apartment on the floor above the proposed launderette and two further adjoining apartments to the north. The potential impacts of the operation of the launderette on residential amenity must therefore be considered. The planning authority sought details from the applicant as to how issues such as noise, odours and security would be addressed.

8.3.2. As part of its response to the further information request, the applicant submitted a technical report from RevGen Solutions setting out details of the proposed extraction system. It stated that no mechanical ventilation is required beyond that the standard system, similar to domestic dwellings. The discharge will consist of recycled hot air and water vapour with no fumes or hazardous emissions.

8.3.3. The system is stated as producing noise levels consistent with domestic dryers and well below levels likely to cause nuisance. No mechanical fans are proposed and the system will incorporate insulated ducting and anti-vibration fixings to minimise noise. Vents will be located to the rear of the unit and will not be positioned directly beneath apartment windows or accessways.

8.3.4. It is proposed that dryers will be ducted to converge at a single rear facing outlet vent, shown on the revised rear elevation drawing submitted on 22/08/2025. It is to be located in the rear(west) wall of the ground floor extension. The vent is relatively discreet in design and will be approximately 3.3m from the nearest apartment window.

8.3.5. I accept that the proposed extraction system to serve the launderette is appropriately designed and located, and if installed as proposed is unlikely to detract significantly

from existing residential amenity in this mixed use location, subject to consideration of appropriate hours of operation.

8.3.6. The proposed hours of operation are from 7.00hrs to 22.00hrs daily, with the possibility of extended hours to meet customer demand. This is not unusual for a laundrette, however as the planning authority points out, the proposal must be considered in light of its locational context, and close proximity to residential uses. While accepting that the extraction system is designed to minimise noise levels, I agree that the proposed opening hours create the potential for undue disturbance of adjacent residents, particularly in early morning and late evening. I am satisfied that condition No 2 proposed by the planning authority, restricting opening hours to 08.00hrs-21.00hrs would create a better balance between the commercial operation and residential amenity.

8.3.7. I believe the security arrangements outlined by the applicant are appropriate, should deter anti-social behaviour and nuisance, and ensure public safety and residential amenity are not compromised.

8.3.8. In conclusion, based on the information available, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on residential amenity in the area, subject to condition restricting hours of operation.

#### 8.4. **Infrastructure Issues**

8.4.1. The appellant raises concerns that the level of water usage by the proposed laundrette could put excess load on the infrastructure systems. The further information received from the applicant states that wastewater volumes will remain well within the capacity of the local drainage network. Uisce Eireann in their report submitted on 16/05/2025 state they have no objection in principle to the proposal and raise no concerns in terms of the capacity of the public water and sewerage systems to cater for the proposed development.

8.4.2. The report also lists standard Uisce Eireann requirements relating to connections to their systems, including a requirement that a suitable grease trap be installed on the foul sewer serving the development. The applicant submitted details to demonstrate that the laundrette would not produce concentrated grease or oil residues and that grease traps are not justified. The Planner's report notes oil and grease present on

fabrics is saponified into soap or emulsified by detergents, allowing for safe dispersion into the wastewater system and accepts that the absence of grease traps is justified.

8.4.3. Overall, I agree with the planning authority that the information provided demonstrates that the proposed development will operate in an environmentally sustainable manner and will not have a negative impact on the public water and wastewater systems and I do not consider any additional conditions are required.

## 8.5. **Other Issues**

8.5.1. Issues raised relating to unauthorised development in other locations, such as laundry facilities in garage forecourts, have no direct bearing on the current proposal, which must be assessed on its merits.

8.5.2. Based on the documentation provided, I am satisfied there is no evidence to suggest the public notice submitted with the application is not compliant with planning regulations or that it could have misled the public.

## 9.0 **AA Screening**

9.1. I have considered the development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The Lower River Shannon SAC is 970m from the site, and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA is 5.5km from the site. The proposed development comprises change of use of a betting shop to a self-service launderette at unit No.4, The Orchard, Castletroy, Limerick.

9.2. No nature conservation issues were raised in the planning appeal.

9.3. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The small scale and nature of the development
- Location and-distance from nearest European site and lack of connections

9.4. I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in

combination with other plans or projects. Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

## **10.0 Water Framework Directive**

10.1. The subject site is located at The Orchard, Castletroy, Limerick and the nearest waterbody is the lower River Shannon.

10.2. The proposed development consists of change of use of a betting shop to a selfservice launderette.

10.3. I have assessed the proposed development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.

10.4. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The small scale and nature of the development
- The distance from nearest water bodies and lack of hydrological connections

10.5. I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

## **11.0 Recommendation**

11.1. I recommend that permission for change of use be granted.

## 12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the provisions of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, to the nature and scale of the development and to the existing pattern of development in this area, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area, or of property in the vicinity and would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## 13.0 Conditions

1.	The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by further plans and particulars received on the 22 <sup>nd</sup> day of August 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.  Reason: In the interest of clarity.
2.	The proposed laundrette shall not operate outside the period of 0800 to 2100, seven days a week, including weekends and bank holidays.  Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

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Ann Bogan Planning  
Inspector  
27 November 2025

## Appendix 1 - Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

<b>Case Reference</b>	PL-500027-LK
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	Change of use from betting shop to self-service laundrette
<b>Development Address</b>	Unit No.04, The Orchard, Castletroy, Limerick
	<b>In all cases check box /or leave blank</b>
<b>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA?</b>  (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes,  - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
	X No, No further action required.
<b>2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1.  <b>EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.</b>	State the Class here
No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
<b>3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?</b>	

<p>No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road</p>	
<p>development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994.</p> <p><b>No Screening required.</b></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold.</p> <p><b>EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</b></p>	<p><b>State the Class and state the relevant threshold</b></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is subthreshold.</p> <p><b>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</b></p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><b>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</b></p>	<p><b>State the Class and state the relevant threshold</b></p>

**4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?**

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
No	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: Ann Bogan

Date: 27/11/2024