



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-500254-SD

Development	Addition of six lighting columns, 15m tall pitch lights and addition of non-illuminated flat board sponsor signage.
Location	Rathcreedan, Newcastle, Dublin.
Planning Authority	South Dublin County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	SD24A/0254W
Applicant(s)	St. Finian's GAA Club
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission
Type of Appeal	Third Party
Appellant(s)	Hugh Drumm Sean and Geraldine Fitzgibbon
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	20 th March 2026
Inspector	Emer Doyle

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located along and to the southern side of the R120 (Rathcoole Road) in Newcastle, Co. Dublin, where a 50kph speed limit applies. The site lies c. 1km east, southeast of the town centre between Ballynakelly Cottages, an established residential area to the west, and Newcastle Cemetery to the east. To the south lies agricultural grassland. Lands to north, on the opposite side of the R120, are also under grass. Greenogue Business Park and Greenogue Equestrian Centre are located further east.
- 1.2. The appeal site is roughly rectangular shaped. It has a stated area of 1.98ha and road frontage of some 75m. The site consists of a GAA playing field with some hardstanding adjacent to the roadside. The playing field is slightly elevated above road level. The roadside boundary is defined by a treelined hedgerow and is flanked by a public footpath and street lighting columns.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for alterations to existing planning permission granted under SD22A/098. The alterations consist of the following:
 - Six No. floodlights serving the existing GAA pitch. The proposed floodlights are 15m in height.
 - Signage consisting of a non-illuminated flat board sponsor sign with a stated area of c. 96m².The application is accompanied by a Bat Activity Report which contains a Lighting Report and Floodlighting Design Plan.
- 2.2. Further Information was received dated 19th of September 2025. The revised drawings omitted the signage proposed. Photomontages were submitted showing the proposed lighting columns in the context of their surroundings. An external lighting report was also included together with an additional bat report.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. The Planning Authority decided to **grant** permission for the proposed development on 16th October 2025, subject to 4 no. conditions.

3.1.2. Conditions of note include:

Condition 2 Ecology (Bats).

(a) During the months of September to April (inclusive) the operational hours of the floodlighting shall only include the following periods: September: 9.00pm to 9.30pm October: 8.00pm to 9.30pm November: 6.00pm to 9.30pm December and January: 5.00pm to 9.30pm February: 6.00pm to 9.30pm March: 7.00pm to 9.30pm April: 9.00pm to 9.30pm Or as otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority. (b) All other mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Bat Report prepared by JBA Consulting, dated 21/08/2025, shall be implemented.

Reason: In the interest of wildlife (bat) protection.

Condition 3 Minimise Air Blown Dust.

During the construction and or demolition phase of the development, Best Practicable Means shall be employed to minimise air blown dust being emitted from the site. This shall include covering skips and slack-heaps, netting of scaffolding, daily washing down of pavements or other public areas, and any other precautions necessary to prevent dust nuisances. The applicant/developer shall comply with British Standard B.S. 5228 Noise Control on Construction and Open sites and British Standard B.S. 6187 Code of Practice for demolition.

Reason: In the interest of public health and to uphold the Council's policies set out in the South Dublin County Council Development Plan.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

- **Planning Reports:** The initial report recommended refusal for the signage element of the proposal as advertising is not permitted in lands zoned as 'RU'.

Further Information was sought in relation to a number of aspects including visual impact, lighting design, impact on bats and impact on casement aerodrome. The second report recommended permission subject to conditions.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- **Lighting Design:** Further Information required.
- **Water Services:** No objection subject to condition.
- **Heritage Officer:** Planner's report details initial verbal communication with Heritage Officer. Following the Further Information response, a report from the Heritage Officer considered that the timing mitigations proposed for bats needed more restrictions than those outlined in the bat reports. Permission was granted subject to a condition which included timing restrictions on lighting.
- **Public Realm:** Guided by the advice of the Heritage Officer regarding impacts on bats.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- No reports.

3.4. Third Party Observations

- 3.4.1. The Planning Authority received 3 No. submissions. The issues raised are similar to the grounds of appeal.

4.0 Planning History

- 4.1. Appeal site:

PA Reg. Ref. SD18A/0401/ ABP 309777-21

Permission refused on appeal in May 2019 for 156-bedroom aparthotel. The Board considered that the proposed aparthotel would materially contravene a development objective in the Development Plan for the zoning of land solely or primarily for agricultural use. It also considered that the location of the aparthotel on lands immediately outside of the Newcastle LAP boundary would represent an unplanned

and haphazard form of development which would militate against any planned future extension of the LAP boundary in this area.

PA Reg. Ref. SD22A/0298/ ABP 315345-22

Permission granted by PA and by ABP for retention of unmetalled drop-off area/ carpark ancillary to the GAA pitch and permission for GAA pitch goal posts, improvement to entrance to road and all associated site works.

- 4.1.1. The planner's report details a number of enforcement files relating to the site including a live case under S9465 relating to non-compliance with condition 5 of ABP 315345 (Advertisement Signage).

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National Planning Framework 2025 (First Revision)

Relevant objectives include the following:

National Policy Objective 37 Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

National Policy Objective 69

Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions as expressed in the most recently adopted carbon budgets.

5.2. Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24)

- 5.2.1. This plan is a roadmap to cut Ireland's emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, as mandated by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.

Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25)

- 5.2.2. The Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25) is the third annual statutory update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. CAP25 builds on previous Climate Action Plans by refining and updating the measures required to deliver carbon budgets and sectorial emission ceilings. It provides a roadmap for taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by no later than 2050.

5.3. South County Dublin Development Plan 2022-2028

- 5.3.1. The appeal site is zoned 'Rural and Agriculture' (RU) with a stated zoning objective '*To protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture*'. 'Recreational-Facility' and 'Sports Club / Facility' are amongst the uses listed as open for consideration in this zoning.

Relevant Policies and Objectives include the following:

Section 8.6 sets out policies in relation to Sports Facilities and Centres

Policy COS4: Sports Facilities and Centres

Ensure that all communities are supported by a range of sporting facilities that are fit for purpose, accessible and adaptable.

COS4 Objective 1: To promote the provision and management of high-quality, multi-functional, sport and recreational infrastructure across the County, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to meet existing and future needs, to include sports hubs and multi-sport astro-pitches, in accordance with the South Dublin County Council Sports Pitch Strategy (2020), the National Sports Policy (2018-2027) and the aims of the South Dublin County Sports Partnership, consistent with RPO 9.15 of the RSES.

COS4 Objective 9: To support and facilitate a framework for the improvement, maintenance, and enhancement of existing community-based sports facilities within the County.

NCBH14 Objective 4: To require a Landscape / Visual Impact Assessment to accompany all planning applications for significant proposals, located within or adjacent to sensitive landscapes and to provide mitigation measures to address any likely negative impacts.

The site is located on lands (Athgoe and Saggart Hills) designated as having Medium to High Sensitivity as per Figure 3.1 Landscape Character Areas and Sensitivity for South Dublin County.

IE8 Objective 6: To ensure that external lighting schemes minimise light spillage or pollution in the immediate surrounding environment and do not adversely impact on residential or visual amenity and biodiversity in the surrounding areas having regard to the Institute of Lighting Engineers' Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution (UK). (see section 12.11.4 (iii)).

IE9 Objective 4: To prohibit and restrict development in the environs of Casement aerodrome, where it may cause a safety hazard. (See also Policy IE13 Public Safety Zones and Chapter 12: Implementation and Monitoring).

5.4. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.4.1. The appeal site is not located on or within proximity to any designated Natura 2000 site(s).

The nearest Natura 2000 sites are:

- Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC (Site Code 001398) c. 8.5km north.
- Glenasmole Valley SAC (Site Code 001209) c. 8.4km southeast.

- 5.4.2. Slade of Saggart and Crooksling Glen proposed Natural Heritage Area (Site Code 000211) is c. 4km to the southeast of the site.

5.5. EIA Screening

- 5.5.1. The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations

2001, as amended (or Part V of the 1994 Roads Regulations). No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of report.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1. The two No. Third Party Appeals can be summarised as follows:

Hugh Drumm

- Concerns in relation to visual impact of floodlighting and impacts of light spill to his property at 5A Ballynakelly Cottages.
- Concerns regarding impact on bats particularly in light of the issues raised in the Heritage Officer's report.
- It is stated in the planner's report that this is a secondary site for the local GAA club. Without data or analysis to substantiate this claim, how can it be assumed that this will stay a secondary site and that usage won't expand.

Sean and Geraldine Fitzgibbon

- The appellants have 3 No. family homes located to the immediate west of the application site.
- Concerns regarding impacts on residential amenity and biodiversity.
- The advertising sign was not specifically excluded by condition.
- The condition regarding times of operation of floodlighting is unenforceable.
- Concern regarding expanded opening times and impacts on elderly neighbours.
- The appeal is accompanied by an addendum report which sets out 2 No. issues as follows:
 - The club has a history of non-compliance- the Commission can refuse permission for past failures to comply in accordance with Section 35 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

- Insufficient assessment was carried out by the Planning Authority in relation to the landscaping proposals. The club did not carry out landscaping as required by Condition 4 of ABP315345-22.

6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

- 6.2.1. The Planning Authority confirms its decision. The issues raised in the appeal have been covered in the Chief Executive Order.

6.3. **Observations**

- None.

6.4. **Further Responses**

- None.

7.0 **Assessment**

- 7.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on the appeal file, including the appeal submission, and inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local, regional and national policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues in this appeal can be addressed under the following headings:

- Principle of Development
- Impacts on Residential and Visual Amenity
- Impacts on Bats
- Other Matters

7.2. **Principle of Development**

- 7.2.1. The appeal site is located within the existing St. Finian's GAA grounds. The site is subject to zoning objective 'RU' – 'To protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture'. This is an established use at this location

and the plan provides that recreational facilities and sports clubs are open for consideration under this 'RU' Zoning.

- 7.2.2. I consider that the proposed floodlighting is ancillary to the existing use. The planner's report noted that advertisements and advertising structures are not permitted within lands zoned 'RU' and planning permission should therefore be refused for this element. The applicant omitted the proposed signage from the application in response to the Further Information request and permission was granted for the floodlighting element only.
- 7.2.3. Having regard to the above, I am satisfied that the proposal is supported by adopted objectives within the plan, notably Objective COS4 Objective 1 in promoting the provision of high quality sporting infrastructure to meet existing and future needs, and COS4 Objective 9 in supporting and facilitating a framework for the improvement, maintenance, and enhancement of existing community-based sports facilities within the County. As such, I am satisfied that the principle of the development proposed would positively contribute to the enhancement of existing facilities at the GAA grounds at this location and also, positively contribute to the health and well-being of its users and is acceptable, subject to compliance with normal planning considerations.

7.3. Impact on Residential and Visual Amenity

Residential Amenity

- 7.3.1. The main concerns raised in relation to residential amenity relate to light spill into neighbouring gardens. Concerns are also raised in relation to negative impacts associated with antisocial behaviour due to longer opening hours of the pitches.
- 7.3.2. I note that whilst the site is located on lands zoned as 'RU'- 'To protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture', it is located proximate to the town of Newcastle and adjacent to lands zoned as 'Residential'. It is served by a footpath and public lighting and is within easy walking and cycling distance of the village of Newcastle. I note that there is an established GAA pitch at this location which is stated to be a secondary pitch for Newcastle. The existing pitch

would have limited use especially during the Winter months due to the absence of floodlighting at present.

- 7.3.3. The appellants are concerned that the provision of floodlighting would provide intensification of the use of the pitch and would increase impacts such as anti-social behaviour and trespassing onto their properties in addition to impacts such as light pollution and light glare.
- 7.3.4. I consider that the provision of floodlighting would indeed allow for more use of the pitch and such intensification would have positive benefits for the wider local community in terms of the provision of an outdoor sports and recreational facility which could be used during the Winter months.
- 7.3.5. It is concerning that there is anti-social behaviour associated with the existing pitch, however, this is a matter for appropriate management by the GAA rather than the planning system.
- 7.3.6. With regard to lighting impacts, the main method of determining surface luminance on an adjacent property is with reference to LUX. A lighting report was submitted in response to the Further Information Request. Whilst the lighting report submitted by the applicant is based on software modelling, it is site specific, and as such I am satisfied that it forms an appropriate base for modelling light spill at the site and in the vicinity. I am not aware of any standard or guidance on this matter in Ireland however I note that the UK guidance by the 'ILP2 'The Reduction of Obtrusive Light' GN01:21' provides guidelines in relation to light spill, and provides that in rural areas, classed as Environmental Zone E2, luminance on the vertical plane should be a maximum of 5 lux pre-curfew and 1 lux post-curfew (assumed to be between 2100 hours or 23.00hrs, and 0700 hours). In terms of the impacts of lighting, I note that 6 No. 15m tall columns are proposed. A total of 3 of the columns are to be located to the west of the pitch closest to existing residential properties, whilst the other 3 columns are located to the east, adjacent to an existing graveyard. From reviewing the technical information submitted, I note that the positioning of the lighting can be seen on the drawing 'St. Finian's GAA Club External Lighting – Light Spill Analysis along with the calculation summary. Details of orientation and tilt are also provided for each light (15 No. lights with 3 lights on each column to the west of the site and 2 No. lights on each column to the east of the site). I note that light levels are

illustrated for 11 No. buildings to the west of the site together with the pitch. The maximum lux level is for Building 8 with a maximum lux of 1.64. I note that this property has not appealed the decision to the Commission. The calculations submitted for all other properties range between a maximum lux of 0.01 at building 7 and 0.94 for building 11. I note that there is an intermittent hedge along the western boundary which would reduce lumination levels reaching the appellant's gardens. Additional planting is also proposed at this location.

- 7.3.7. I am satisfied that the 15m high columns and the arrangements proposed in terms of tilt and orientation of the lighting will allow for light to ensure more downward directional illuminance and therefore reduce the levels of light spill.
- 7.3.8. In conclusion, whilst the lighting will be readily apparent from the 3 family properties in the ownership of the Fitzgibbon family (as indicated in the third party appeal), and the property of Mr. Drumm, it will not have a significant effect on residential amenity in my view. Having regard to the foregoing, I am satisfied that the proposed floodlights are acceptable and would not warrant a refusal of permission.

Visual Impact

- 7.3.9. Two matters were raised in relation to visual impact- firstly the impact of signage and secondly the impact of floodlighting.
- 7.3.10. The site is located in an area designated as medium/ high sensitivity in the current development plan. The Planning Authority raised concerns in relation to the zoning of the site and the impact of signage and floodlighting. It was stated that advertising and advertising structures were not permitted on lands zoned as 'RU' and that this element of the application should be refused. The lands have a Medium- High Sensitivity rating and it is a requirement of Policy NCBH14 that applications for significant proposals within these lands provide a landscape/ visual assessment. This was raised as item 2 of the Further Information Request and the applicant stated that all signage would be omitted and provided photomontages of the proposed lighting columns.
- 7.4. The site is located on the eastern edge of the village of Newcastle where there is already public lighting in place serving the R120. Whilst the lands are zoned 'RU' at present, I would consider them to be suburban in nature and the zoning may change in the future. I have viewed the photomontages submitted and consider that the

principle of development has already been established by previous applications and floodlighting is a common feature associated with GAA pitches. It is acknowledged that poles are taller than the prevailing ridge height of existing dwellings to the west of the site, however, the structures are slender in appearance and will not have any significant undue visual impacts on the visual amenity of the area. In this regard, I do not consider that the proposal would be incongruous within this context.

7.5. Impact on Bats

- 7.5.1. The provision of floodlighting requires the assessment and protection of sensitive species such as bats. It is an objective of the Development Plan under IE8 Objective 6 to ensure that external lighting schemes minimise light spillage or pollution in the immediate surrounding environment and do not adversely impact on residential or visual amenity and biodiversity in the surrounding areas having regard to the Institute of Lighting Engineers' Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution (UK). (see section 12.11.4 (iii)).
- 7.5.2. In the documentation submitted with the application, the applicant provided a Bat Transect Survey, which was undertaken on the 25th of September 2024 to record bat foraging and commuting behaviour and potential areas of activity. The survey concluded that the site did not offer potential roost habitat for bats. The activity survey observed a low level of foraging and commuting along the treeline and hedgerow bounding the site, which offered moderate suitability due to connectivity to the wider environment. The habitat features of the site were also assessed. Section 5.3 sets out that the site provided foraging and commuting habitat which is of moderate suitability to bats. The conifer treeline to the east of the site was deemed to have no bat roost potential. Only one species was recorded on the site during the autumn activity survey, namely lesser noctule. This species was recorded primarily commuting and foraging along the hedgerow and treeline habitat on site. The surveyors noted that artificial lighting from road lights along the R120 spilled over and illuminated a large portion of the site.
- 7.5.3. The planner's report notes a verbal report with the Heritage Officer. Item 4 of the Further Information Request stated that the Heritage Officer noted that the bat survey was done at the end of season and in rain and was insufficient.

7.5.4. In response to this an additional survey was carried out on the 30th of June 2025. This survey noted a total of 5 bats with 3 No. Common Pipistrelle and 2 No. Leisler's Bat. A static activity device was deployed within the western hedgerow habitat with the results shown in Table 4-2 as follows:

Table 4-2: Number of bat pass recordings for individual species between 30th June – 7th July

Bat Species	Dates								Species Total
	30/06	01/07	02/07	03/07	04/07	05/07	06/07	07/07	
Common Pipistrelle	209	211	210	151	201	121	408	131	1,642
Soprano Pipistrelle	2	2	1	6	6	8	14	13	52
Leisler's Bat	38	75	52	30	31	60	12	24	322
Brown Long-eared Bat	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Daily Total	249	288	264	187	238	190	434	168	2,018
Overall Total									

7.5.5. Section 5 sets out potential impacts. In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for long-term disruptions to the commuting routes of the four species identified in Table 4-2 and their foraging activities. Mitigation measures are set out in Section 6 including construction lighting mitigations, operation restrictions and landscape proposals. Section 7 sets out residual impacts. It highlights that common and soprano pipistrelles and Leisler's Bat are generally more tolerant to anthropogenic impacts including lighting impacts and considers when the lighting mitigation measures together with the landscaping are implemented throughout the site, the residual impacts on bats will not be significant.

7.5.6. The Lighting Report also provided for mitigation proposals to tilt lighting towards the site and away from boundary trees and hedgerow and neighbouring properties and restrictions on timing.

7.5.7. The Heritage Officer's report stated that the light levels are acceptable but expressed concerns in relation to the mitigation measures. Concern was expressed that due to climate warming, it is no longer guaranteed that bats commence their hibernation period in late autumn, and they have been noted to be still active in a particularly mild December. Permission was recommended with the following condition as set out in the Heritage Officers Report:

Ecology (Bats).

(a) During the months of September to April (inclusive) the operational hours of the floodlighting shall only include the following periods: September: 9.00pm to 9.30pm October: 8.00pm to 9.30pm November: 6.00pm to 9.30pm December and January: 5.00pm to 9.30pm February: 6.00pm to 9.30pm March: 7.00pm to 9.30pm April: 9.00pm to 9.30pm Or as otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority. (b) All other mitigation measures as outlined in the submitted Bat Report prepared by JBA Consulting, dated 21/08/2025, shall be implemented.

Reason: In the interest of wildlife (bat) protection.

- 7.5.8. The grounds of appeal set out that the Heritage Officer's report have not been properly addressed. Further, it is stated that it is difficult to enforce or monitor this condition.
- 7.5.9. I accept that a number of items raised in the Heritage Officer's report are not addressed in full. However, ultimately, the Heritage Officer recommended a grant of permission for the proposed development subject to a condition restricting lighting on the site. Whilst the site provides foraging and commuting habitat of moderate suitability for bats, there was no evidence of bats roosting on the site from the two bat surveys carried out and 3 of the 4 species identified were tolerable to lighting impacts. Of the species that isn't tolerant to lighting impacts (Brown Long-eared Bat), a very low number of bat passes were detected with only 2 bat passes of a total number of 2,018 bat passes recorded. In addition, I note that there is already a residual level of lighting on the site associated with public lighting along the site boundary with the R120.
- 7.5.10. I note that the lighting condition set out by the Heritage Officer goes further than the proposed lighting mitigation measures set out in the bat report and the lighting report. The lighting time restrictions set out in the Bat Survey and the lighting report is as follows:
- April: no active lighting between 20:30 and 6:00
- May: no active lighting between 21:30 and 05:00
- August: no active lighting between 22:00 and 04:30
- September: no active lighting between 21:00 and 05:30

- 7.5.11. The main purpose of condition No. 2 as set out above is the protection of bats which is reasonable and appropriate and in line with Development Plan policy. The presence of lighting is particularly problematic for bats in November/ early December and in late March/ early April as these months overlap with the initial emergence times of bats. Having regard to the use of the site, which is to prolong training during the Winter months and the use as a secondary pitch, I consider it is unlikely that the pitch would need lighting after 21:30. The floodlighting would be confined essentially to autumn and winter months when bats generally go into hibernation. I accept that due to climate warming, there may be changes to this due to milder autumn and winter months.
- 7.5.12. I have examined the criteria for conditions set out in Section 7.3 of the Development Management Guidelines and consider that whilst the wording of the condition set out by the Planning Authority is precise, I share the concerns that it may be difficult to enforce, particularly when almost all of the GAA coaching would be run by volunteers. The appellants are concerned that an unfair burden would be put on them to report any infringements to the Planning Authority. I consider that it would be possible to protect the impacts of floodlighting on bats by the use of a differently worded condition which requires a restriction on floodlighting between the hours of 21.30 and 10:00.
- 7.5.13. I consider that taking together with the design measures to minimise light spill set out in the lighting report, and having regard to the residual level of light already associated with the R120, and the capacity of 3 of the 4 bat species to adjust to lighting changes, this condition is sufficient to uphold protections to the local bat population.

7.6. **Other Matters**

Enforcement/ Past Failure to Comply

The appellants raise the matter of unauthorised development on the site including signage and past failing to comply with Planning conditions. It is noted that the Commission can refuse permission under Section 35 of the Planning and Development Act.

I note in this regard that the Planning Authority have a 'live' enforcement file on the site regarding advertising. As such, I consider that this is a matter for the Planning Authority and the Commission has no role in this matter.

Conditions

- The appellants consider that condition 2 places a heavy burden on a member of the public to bring any infringement to the attention of the Planning Authority. I concur with this and recommend that if they are minded to grant permission, an alternative condition should be used by the Commission as set out above.
- It is pointed out that the Planning Authority failed to explicitly exclude the advertising sign by condition. The applicant omitted this element of the application in the details submitted in response to the Further Information Request. I concur with this and consider that should the Commission be minded to grant permission, such a condition would be useful in the interests of clarity.
- Concerns are expressed in relation to increased activity associated with the proposed lighting. It was noted by the appellants that the Commission did not previously include a condition regarding activities on the grounds. The previous application granted by the Commission referenced a 9pm finish, whereas the current application references a 10pm finish. I am of the view that a specific condition regarding activities is unnecessary as the condition I have recommended regarding lighting sets out that floodlighting shall not operate after 9.30pm.

8.0 Appropriate Assessment

- 8.1. I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.
- 8.2. The site is not situated within or adjacent to any European Site. The nearest European Site is Glenasmole Valley SAC c. 8.4km to the southeast.

- 8.3. The proposed development is set out previously in Section 2 of this report. In summary, a total of 6 No. lighting columns are proposed together with an advertising sign. The advertising sign was omitted following a Further Information Request.
- 8.4. 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 appreciable effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- The small scale and domestic nature of the proposed development in a serviced urban area, distance from European sites and urban nature of intervening habitats, absence of ecological pathways to any European sites.
- 8.5. I consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect individually, or in-combination with other plans and projects, on a European Site and appropriate assessment is therefore not required.

9.0 Water Framework Directive

- 9.1. 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 and ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration.
- 9.2. The Site is located within the Liffey and Dublin Bay catchment and the Liffey_SC_090 sub-catchment. The Grifeen River (IE_EA_09L012100) is located c. 430m to the south east of the site. This is classified as having poor ecological status 2019-2024 and being 'At Risk' as per the WFD River Waterbodies Risk 3rd Cycle. The site is located within the Dublin groundwater body IE_EA_G_008. Groundwater quality provided by the EPA indicates the waterbody to be Good status.
- 9.3. 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.
- 9.4. 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.

9.5. This conclusion is based on:

- Nature of the project, site and receiving environment.
- Objective information presented in the case documentation.
- Hydrological and hydrogeological characteristics of proximate waterbodies.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1. Having regard to the above it is recommended that permission is granted based on the following reasons and considerations and subject to the attached conditions.

11.0 Reasons and Considerations

11.1. Having regard to the location of the proposed development on lands already developed and in use for sports purposes, the provisions of South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028, and in particular Objective COS4 Objective 1 in promoting the provision of high quality sporting infrastructure to meet existing and future needs, and Objective COS4 Objective 9 in supporting and facilitating a framework for the improvement, maintenance, and enhancement of existing community-based sports facilities within the County, and the nature and scale of the proposed development, is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area, and would be acceptable in terms of road and traffic safety and would be in keeping with the established character of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

12.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application as amended by the further

plans and particulars submitted on the 19th day of September 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 advertising signage shall be omitted from the proposed development.

Reason: In the interests of clarity and visual amenity.

3. (a) The floodlighting system shall operate between the hours of 10:00 and 21:30 on any day. No floodlighting shall operate outside of those hours.

(b) All other mitigation measures outlined in the submitted Bat Report prepared by JBA Consulting submitted to the Planning Authority dated the 19th day of September 2025, shall be implemented.

Reason: To reduce the impact of the proposed development on nocturnal species and in the interest of clarity and residential amenity.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, or any statutory provision amending or replacing them, no advertisement signs, advertisement structures, banners, canopies, flags, or other structures shall be displayed, erected or placed within the curtilage of the site, unless authorised by a further grant of planning permission.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the area.

5. The site shall be landscaped in accordance with a comprehensive scheme of landscaping, details of which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development. All trees and

hedgerow as indicated in the landscaping plan included in the Bat Report submitted to the Planning Authority on the 19th day of September 2025 shall be retained.

Reason: In the interests of visual 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.

Emer Doyle

Planning Inspector

29th May 2026

Appendix 1- Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	500254-SD
Proposed Development Summary	Addition of 6 No. lighting columns together with non-illuminated flat board sign.
Development Address	Rathcreedan, Newcastle, Dublin.
	In all cases check box /or leave blank
<p>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA?</p> <p>(For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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) 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.</p>
<p>2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1.</p>	<p>State the Class here</p>

<p>EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.</p>	
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3</p>	
<p>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?</p>	
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR</p>	

<p>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</p>	
<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)?</p>	
<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

Inspector: _____ **Date:** _____