



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-501188-CK-26

Development	Construction of a new rowing clubhouse facility consisting of a three-bay boatshed and all associated site works.
Location	Nadrid, Coachford, Co. Cork.
Planning Authority	Cork County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	254577
Applicant(s)	Lee Valley Rowing Club
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission + Conditions
Type of Appeal	Third Party Normal Planning Appeal
Appellant(s)	Ann McCarthy and John Irwin
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	10 th July 2026
Inspector	Carol Smyth

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located within the administrative boundary of Cork County Council, in the townland of Nadrid, approximately 1.5 km to the south of Coachford village. The appeal site has a stated area of 0.53 hectares and is located on the northern bank of the River Lee / Inniscarra Lough (reservoir) immediately to the west of Roove's Bridge.
- 1.2. In terms of topography the site is predominantly flat and is currently in agricultural use. Access to the site is from the L6811 and from the Coachford Greenway which cuts through the site. The Greenway extends through the site with a band of mature trees on its southern side and grassland to the north. On-road parking associated with the Greenway bounds the site to the east.
- 1.3. The surrounding area largely comprises agricultural lands with some residential dwellings in the vicinity. The National Rowing Centre and the existing Lee Valley Rowing Club is located approximately 1.6 km to the south of the site on the opposite side of Inniscarra Lough.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises:
 - Construction of a new rowing clubhouse facility consisting of a three-bay boatshed, an ancillary boatshed with toilet facilities, hardstanding, a concrete slipway and a pontoon ramp with the installation of a floating pontoon.
 - Construction of a new gated vehicular entrance onto the L6811 to the west of the site adjacent to the greenway pedestrian access point which will provide access to parking for 24 vehicles, two boat trailers and bicycle parking to serve the rowing clubhouse facility.
 - Construction of additional greenway car parking to the east of the site, to include demolition of a 6m section of the existing stone wall, construction of a new vehicle entrance onto the L6811, provision of 13 car parking spaces, and all ancillary works.

- Rerouting of the existing greenway along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site and provision of a new pedestrian entrance and gate onto the greenway from the proposed car parking area.
- All associated ancillary works including landscaping, signage, underground wastewater holding tank, rainwater harvesting tank and boundary treatments.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

The Planning Authority issued a decision to Grant permission on the 31st March 2026, subject to 24 no. conditions.

The following bespoke conditions in relation to vehicular access, wastewater treatment, biodiversity and events were attached by the Planning Authority to the grant of permission.

3.1.1. Conditions

Condition No.4

Relates to vehicular access and requires the retention of the existing sod and stone boundary fronting the public road except where its removal is required for the construction of an entrance to serve the development. Where required to achieve the vehicular sightlines and access the height of the condition requires that boundary/sod and stone wall to be reduced to 0.9 metres in height.

Condition No. 5

Relates to ecology and requires that the mitigation measures specified in the submitted EclA be implemented and a compliance monitoring report submitted to the planning authority at the end of the main construction period.

Condition No. 8

Relates to ecology and requires protective fencing to be installed under the supervision of an ecologist to protect all trees/ hedgerows/habitats identified to be retained. The condition requires the fencing to be retained until the works are completed.

Condition No. 9

Relates to vehicular access and requires that no vegetation or structures shall exceed a height of 0.9 metres above the level of the public road within the sightlines.

Condition No. 10

Relates to vehicular access and requires that vegetation or any structure shall not exceed a height of 0.9m above the level of the public road within the sight distance triangles.

Condition No. 11

Relates to vehicular access and requires the entrance be recessed a minimum of 4.5m from the front boundary fence and the side walls to be splayed at an angle of 45 degrees. The condition also requires that the walls and piers shall not exceed a height of 0.9 metres over the level of the adjoining public road.

Condition No. 17

Relates to foul drainage and requires that the secondary treatment unit, tertiary treatment system and infiltration area meet the requirements of the Code of Practice, Wastewater Treatment Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e.< 10) EPA 2021 and shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Condition No. 18

Relates to foul drainage and requires that the tertiary infiltration area shall have a minimum surface area of 15m² and comply with Table 6.3 of the EPA Code of Practice 2021 and that the tertiary treatment system and infiltration area shall meet all the requirements of the EPA Code of Practice 2021.

Condition No. 19

Relates to foul drainage and requires photographic records of the installation/construction of the secondary wastewater treatment unit, tertiary treatment system and infiltration area to be submitted to the Planning Authority for verification prior to first use of the development.

Condition No. 20

Relates to foul drainage and requires written evidence of a maintenance contract to ensure the continuous operation of the treatment system to be submitted to the Planning Authority

Condition No. 22

Requires that rowing competitions or regattas shall not be held at the site unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to any such event.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Primary Reports

3.2.2. Environment Report

Report dated 16th May 2025. Refusal recommended.

The Report states that the proposal for a holding tank for wastewater in close proximity to a major infrastructural waterbody (drinking water source), amenity and habitat is not an appropriate solution for the holding /treatment of wastewater. There is no evidence given that the waterbody and amenity are protected in the event of failure of the holding tank. Other than putting the tank underground there are no details of measures taken to avoid failure in the first instance.

3.2.3. Engineering Report

Report dated 22nd May 2025. Further Information requested.

The Engineers report noted that 24 parking spaces are proposed within the site for use of the rowing club as well as a one-way system for drop off and collection. A new vehicular entrance and a carpark comprising 13 no. spaces is also proposed to the east of the site for Greenway users. Vehicular access to the rowing club is proposed via the existing Greenway entrance. Sightlines from the existing entrance cuts through the existing roadside parking to the west of the entrance and the overflow parking to the east. Revised drawings are required indicating that both entrances achieve 80m clear sightlines from a point 3m back from the edge of the public road.

Concerns were raised in relation to the proposed 6,000L wastewater holding tank, to be emptied monthly which is considered unsuitable by the Council's Engineer due to

the lack of pollution prevention measures and the cost of emptying the tank each month. Concerns are also raised in relation to the separation distances between the holding tank and the high-water level in the reservoir. The Council's Area Engineer required a revised proposal for wastewater treatment system and infiltration area and the submission of a site suitability assessment/site characterisation form.

It was further noted that a significant portion of the site is located within Flood Zone A, therefore a site-specific flood risk assessment was required.

3.2.4. Ecology Report - Primary Report

Report dated 23rd May 2025. The Report notes that the Area Engineer has requested Further Information regarding the wastewater facility within the floodplain and that until such information is submitted, the potential impacts to otters or the ecology of the reservoir cannot be assessed.

The Council's Ecologist raised concerns regarding the extent of the existing trees within the site and requested a revised site layout plan to include all trees within the site boundary. The Applicant was also requested to revise the proposed landscaping plan to provide planting of native trees and multi-species hedgerow.

The Report notes that the lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), which is a light sensitive species, is known to be in the vicinity of the site. The Applicants were requested to provide information of a suitable lighting plan which will ensure no light disturbance impacts will occur to this species of bat.

3.2.5. Area Planner

Report dated 27th May 2024. Further Information requested.

Accepts the principle of the development. Concerns raised in relation to design, integration with the landscape and submitted photomontages. Considers that the development would not negatively impact upon adjacent residential amenity. Notes the ecological, environmental, drainage, flood risk and access concerns raised by internal technical departments.

Further information requested in relation to ecology, access arrangements, environment, wastewater infrastructure, flood risk assessment, design, landscape integration and visual impact.

3.2.6. **Further Information**

3.2.7. Applicants Response to FI

On the 3rd February 2026 the Applicant submitted a response to the Planning Authority's Further Information request. The response included an amended proposal for the development reconfiguring and repositioning the previously proposed 2 no. boat storage sheds to provide a single boat storage shed located to the west of the site. Landscape proposals were also revised. Vehicular access to the site was amended to provide a singular vehicular entrance of 15 metres to serve the Greenway overflow carpark entrance, parking for the rowing club, as well as access for boat trailers. Foul drainage proposals were reconsidered to provide an on-site tertiary packaged wastewater treatment system, located in the northwest of the site. It is submitted that the location of the wastewater treatment system provides separation distances from the reservoir in excess of 50m and is compliant with EPA Guidelines. In addition, the Applicant submitted a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

3.2.8. Engineering – Assessment of FI

Following the submission of the Applicants response to the Further Information request, the Area Engineer sought Clarification of Further Information on the 20th February 2026.

A Site Suitability Assessment/Site Characterisation Form was submitted, and a tertiary treatment system and infiltration area was now proposed to dispose of sewage. The Area Engineer noted that the revised drawings indicated the high-water line/max water level as 48.60m and a separation distance of 65.4m between this high-water line and the wastewater treatment system. Clarification was required regarding the high-water line/max water level, site levels and the FFL as the levels shown on the drawings indicate that the site and the public road are below the max water level.

The Area Engineer further noted that the revised site layout drawing indicating the shed moved to the west of the site and a singular vehicular entrance to the east of the site. Sightlines of 80m in both directions were indicated measured from the centre point of the entrance 3m back from the edge of the public road. The amendments result in the reduction in the number of parking spaces and the loss of the one-way system. Confirmation was therefore required regarding the holding of

events such as rowing competitions/regattas on the site. The Applicant was advised that if it was intended to hold events than a traffic management plan would be required.

3.2.9. **Clarification**

3.2.10. Applicants Response to Clarification

On the 2nd March 2026 the Applicant submitted a response to the Planning Authority's Clarification of Further Information request.

The Applicant confirmed that 48.60m OD was annotated on the drawing in error and the high-water level should have been stated as 46.60m OD and that the highwater line and 50m separation distance were correctly shown on the submitted drawings. An updated layout plan was submitted with the correct highwater level of 46.60 m OD stated on the drawing.

The Applicant also confirmed that no rowing competitions or regattas will take place at the site.

3.2.11. Engineering – Assessment Clarification

Report dated 23rd March 2026. No objection subject to conditions.

3.2.12. Ecology Report – Assessment of FI

Report dated 2nd March 2026. No objection subject to conditions.

Notes that the boathouse has been relocated to provide sufficient setbacks in excess of 10 metres from the top of the bank and considers that the structure is sufficiently distant from the top of the bank of the reservoir.

Notes that the revised Tree Survey and Recommendations report submitted with the Further Information request outlines that the Bristol Tree Forum approach for achieving net gain was considered and recommends planting 65 trees to replace the 12 that are proposed for removal. The landscaping plan submitted outlines native species to be planted and a mix of native hedgerows. This was considered acceptable by the Council's Ecologist.

Notes that the Applicants have outlined that the rowing club will only operate during daylight hours for reasons of safety and that Committee meetings will be held every two months involving a small number of attendees which will be held indoors only

and will not require external lighting. The club AGM will be held off site. Notes that the Applicant has outlined that it is not anticipated that activities will be undertaken after dark and therefore no external lighting is proposed which is considered acceptable.

3.2.13. Area Planners – Assessment of FI and Clarification

Report dated 26th March 2026. A grant of permission recommended which is consistent with the decision notices issued.

The report assesses both the response to the further information and subsequent clarification of further information requests. Notes that the development's siting and site layout has been revised and addresses the concerns raised by the Council's Ecologist. Notes that the Area Engineer is satisfied with the proposed development in terms of flood risk, revised access and parking arrangements, and wastewater treatment proposals.

Notes the submission of a Planning Stage CEMP. Recommends that an updated construction stage CEMP which includes more specific and tailored measures could be agreed by condition once a contractor is in place.

Considered the revised proposals for the boatshed in terms of location, siting, form, design and external material finishes to be satisfactory and notes that the precise RAL colour of the sheeting could be agreed by condition.

Considers the revised approach to landscaping to be acceptable and notes that the mixed native hedgerow planted along the building edge will reduce the visual impact of the built structure. Notes that the submitted response indicates that the majority of the trees along the waterbody will be retained except where it is necessary to build and access the boat slip and pontoon.

Notes the revised photomontages submitted and the additional photomontage from the L6811 to the immediate northwest/east of the subject site. Considers that the photomontages demonstrate that the proposed development can be accommodated at this sensitive location in a high value scenic landscape.

Considers that the revised proposals for the boatshed in terms of location, siting, form, design and external material finishes are acceptable and subject to full

implementation are likely to provide a good quality of development in this sensitive and scenic high value landscape.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

None on file.

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

There were 4 no. submissions in relation to the proposal. Concerns were raised regarding the relocated entrance to the Greenway, community and procedural concerns, visual and environmental impacts, infrastructure, noise, effects on neighbouring properties, design and economic impact. In addition, concerns were raised regarding alternative sites, traffic Impact and environmental impact which also form the grounds of appeal and are addressed in Sections 7 and 8 below.

4.0 **Planning History**

Cork County Council Reg. Ref. 23/5378:

Application Withdrawn by Lee Valley Rowing Club, Construction of a new boat shed, parking, boundary fencing, access ramp to lake and relocation of greenway entrance

Cork County Council Reg. Ref. 13/4161:

Planning Permission Granted to Inniscarra Lake Tourism/Development Community Group were granted permission for an amenity walk at Inniscarra Lake approximately 2.8km in length. The proposed development also includes the provision of a slipway to the lake and a temporary access road and entrance to the public road which will cater for the improved access required.

Adjacent Planning History

Cork County Council Reg. Ref. 16/4482:

Planning Permission Granted to Irish Amateur Rowing Union Ltd for the installation of a floating boathouse structure to securely house boats overnight. The single storey structure will be 12m x 10m on plan and will include anchoring piles and access bridge.

Cork County Council Reg. Ref. 12/4027:

Planning Permission Granted to Irish Amateur Rowing Union for the installation of a demountable floating start line pontoon structure at Rooves Bridge, an associated demountable floating start tower pontoon structure, and a 3m x 3m concrete base for start line official's demountable shelter, the extension of the existing concrete slipways at the NRC for boat launching, alteration/regrading of the ground at the existing spectator viewing area and the surfacing of the area surrounding the National Rowing Centre Building, and a portion of the entrance road.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan.

5.1.1. Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028

The site is governed by the policy and objectives of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 (referred to hereafter as the Development Plan).

The subject site is located within the 'Greater Cork Ring Strategic Planning Area' and is designated as a 'Rural Area Under Strong Urban Influence'. The site is also located within a designated High Value Landscape and is located within Flood Zone A. There is also a designated Scenic Route S38 (Road between Classis, Curraghbeg and Coachford) located across the River Lee / Lough Inniscarra to the west and south.

5.1.2. Objective GI 14-9: Landscape

a) Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Cork's built and natural environment.

b) Landscape issues will be an important factor in all land-use proposals, ensuring that a pro-active view of development is undertaken while protecting the environment and heritage generally in line with the principle of sustainability.

c) Ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.

d) Protect skylines and ridgelines from development.

e) Discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

5.1.3. Objective GI 14-12 General Views and Prospects

Preserve the character of all important views and prospects, particularly sea views, river or lake views, views of unspoilt mountains, upland or coastal landscapes, views of historical or cultural significance (including buildings and townscapes) and views of natural beauty as recognized in the Draft Landscape Strategy.

5.1.4. Objective BE 15-2: Protect sites, habitats and species

a) Protect all natural heritage sites which are designated or proposed for designation under European legislation, National legislation and International Agreements.

Maintain and where possible enhance appropriate ecological linkages between these. This includes Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Marine Protected Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Ramsar Sites. These sites are listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.

b) Provide protection to species listed in the Flora Protection Order 2015, to Annexes of the Habitats and Birds Directives, and to animal species protected under the Wildlife Acts in accordance with relevant legal requirements. These species are listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.

c) Protect and where possible enhance areas of local biodiversity value, ecological corridors and habitats that are features of the County's ecological network. This includes rivers, lakes, streams and ponds, peatland and other wetland habitats, woodlands, hedgerows, tree lines, veteran trees, natural and semi-natural grasslands as well as coastal and marine habitats. It particularly includes habitats of special conservation significance in Cork as listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.

d) Recognise the value of protecting geological heritage sites of local and national interest, as they become notified to the local authority, and protect them from inappropriate development

e) Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the protection and enhancement of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries,

important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

5.1.5. Objective BE 15-6: Biodiversity and New Development

Provide for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the development management process and when licensing or permitting other activities by:

- a) Providing ongoing support and guidance to developers on incorporating biodiversity considerations into new development through preplanning communications and the Council's guidance document 'Biodiversity and the Planning Process – guidance for developments on the management of biodiversity issues during the planning process' and any updated versions of this advice;*
- b) Encouraging the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments;*
- c) Requiring the incorporation of primarily native tree and other plant species, particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments;*
- d) Fulfilling Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment obligations and carrying out Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to development and activities, as appropriate;*
- e) Ensuring that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation. This includes lakes and ponds, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats;*
- f) Ensuring that the implementation of appropriate mitigation (including habitat enhancement, new planting or other habitat creation initiatives) is incorporated into new development, where the implementation of such development would result in unavoidable impacts on biodiversity - supporting the principle of biodiversity net gain.*

5.1.6. Objective GI 14-4 Recreation and Amenity

- a) Support the provision of recreation and amenity facilities in new developments and ensure that the widest range of facilities is provided at locations which can serve the wider community and intergenerational activities, which are accessible to members of the community of all ages and abilities, through initiatives in partnership with community groups and sporting organisations.*

b) Seek opportunities to improve the quality and capacity of existing recreation and amenity facilities, through initiatives with both public and private sector (sports governing bodies, local community partnerships and private development proposals) and where appropriate the Council will use its powers under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to require development levies to achieve the enhancement of these facilities.

c) Ensure the protection, and seek the enhancement and wise management of existing recreational facilities and public open space, and ensure that all new developments make adequate provision for recreational and amenity facilities in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Recreation and Amenity Policy (Interim) and any successor policy and having regard to the Council's policy regarding the management of Green Infrastructure assets.

d) To work with the various relevant stakeholders in the preparation of a Metropolitan Cork Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy.

5.1.7. Objective GI 14-5: Replacement/Redevelopment of Leisure and Recreational Facilities

Protect and improve existing areas of public and private open space, including sports grounds, or other recreational facilities in accordance with the Council's Recreation and Amenity Policy and any successor policy and protect such areas from development or change of use. Where changes of use or redevelopment of existing leisure or recreational facilities are proposed, the following requirements must be clearly demonstrated:

- (i) That the existing facility is seriously inadequate and capacity constrained, and*
- (ii) Suitable replacement facilities of a higher quality than the existing facility are identified that are both accessible and benefit the community served by the facility being replaced, and*
- (iii) That the proposed alternative use(s) for the lands occupied by the existing facilities adequately address the loss of amenity to the area served by the existing facility and complies with the objectives of the County Development Plan.*

5.1.8. Objective GI 14-9: Landscape

- a) Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Cork's built and natural environment.*
- b) Landscape issues will be an important factor in all land-use proposals, ensuring that a pro-active view of development is undertaken while protecting the environment and heritage generally in line with the principle of sustainability.*
- c) Ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.*
- d) Protect skylines and ridgelines from development.*
- e) Discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.*

5.1.9. Objective WM 11-1: EU Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan

- a) Protect and improve the County's water resources and ensure that development permitted meets the requirements of the River Basin Management Plan and does not contravene the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive.*
- b) Promote compliance with the River Basin Management Plan and associated environmental standards and objectives set out in the European Communities (Environmental Objectives) Surface Water Regulations, 2009 and the European Communities (Environmental Objectives) Groundwater Regulations, 2010, to prevent deterioration; restore good status; reduce chemical pollution, and achieve water related protected areas objectives in rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters (as applicable).*
- c) Secure the objectives and facilitate the implementation of the associated Programme of Measures of the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any successor plan for ground, surface, estuarine, coastal and transitional waters in the Plan area as part of the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.*
- d) Support an integrated and collaborative approach to local catchment management in order to assist in the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan.*
- e) In acknowledgement of the sustained pressures on ecological status being experienced in Blue Dot catchment waterbodies, additional measures, as deemed necessary to protect and restore these waterbodies to high status may be required for development permitted in such catchments. Measures may include, but are not*

limited to, a water management plan (including the construction phase), tertiary treatment and appropriate SUDs measures.

f) Support the prioritisation of the provision of water services infrastructure in:

- Metropolitan Cork, the Key Towns and Main Towns to complement the overall strategy for economic and population growth while ensuring appropriate protection of the environment.*
- All settlements where services are not meeting current needs, are failing to meet the requirements of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, and where these deficiencies are – interfering with Councils ability to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive; or – having negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites; and*

g) Development may only proceed where appropriate wastewater treatment is available which meets the requirements of environmental legislation, the Water Framework Directive and the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

5.1.10. Objective WM 11-2: Surface Water Protection

a) Protect and improve the status and quality of all surface waters throughout the County, including transitional and coastal waters.

b) At least secondary treatment should be provided to all wastewater discharges from any new development, to surface waters.

5.1.11. Objective WM 11-11: River Channel Protection

a) Ensure adequate protection measures along watercourses, keeping them free from development by ensuring development is kept 10m or other appropriate distance from stream and river banks is line with best practice for riparian corridors. Development altering the hydromorphology of a watercourse will not normally be permitted, where it may result in the deterioration in the status of a water body through for example, impacts on water quality, quantity or flow rate, riparian habitat or protected species.

b) There will be a presumption against the use of culverts and opportunities to actively remove existing culverts and re-naturalise/ daylighting watercourses will be encouraged in development proposals.

c) Where river crossings are considered necessary, clear span river crossing structures shall be used on fisheries waters where possible. The Council will consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to any such proposals.

5.1.12. Section 12.11 Traffic/Mobility Management and Road Safety

This Section of the Development Plan sets out that mobility planning by business and institutions that have high numbers of employees can assist employers in achieving reduced car dependency. It is a way of promoting sustainable travel, reducing traffic congestion in urban areas and making more efficient use of land by reducing the need for car parking. The development Plan requires mobility management plans for significant new development or trip intensive developments.

Where traffic movements associated with a development proposal have the potential to have a material impact on the safety and free flow of traffic on a National or Regional Route, this Plan will require the submission of a Traffic Impact Assessment, Traffic and Transport Assessment and a Road Safety Audit.

5.2. Relevant National or Regional Plans/Policies

5.2.1. Climate Action Plan 2025

The Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25) is the third annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan. It should be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024. The purpose of the Climate Action Plan is to lay out a roadmap of actions which will ultimately lead us to meeting our national climate objective of pursuing and achieving, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. It aligns with the legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings that were agreed by Government in July 2022.

5.2.2. National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.

5.4 Natural Heritage Designations

The site is not located within a designated Natura 2000 site. The following European sites are proximate to the subject site:

- Approximately 11.8 km to the east of The Gearagh SAC (Site Code 000108)
- Approximately 13.2 km to the east of The Gearagh SPA (Site Code 004109)
- Approximately 17.6 km to the east of Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA (Site code 004162)

6.0 EIA Screening

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.

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

This is a third-party appeal against the Planning Authority's decision to grant permission for a rowing clubhouse facility. The grounds of appeal have been summarised as follows:

- The Planning Authority failed to assess the need for the proposed development or the site selection process.
- Adequate justification for the need for the relocation of the club has not been provided.
- Lee Valley Rowing Club have had a permanent home in Farren Woods for over 25 years adjacent to the National Rowing Centre.
- The applicant has provided insufficient information as to why they cannot continue to share the existing facility with Rowing Ireland.
- The segregation of participation athletes from international athletes is contrary to Sports Irelands and Government Policy.

- The proposal is contrary to Coillte's 'Land use Strategic Implementation Plan'.
- The facility should be at a location identified within the 'Metropolitan Cork Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy'.
- The proposal is contrary to Development Plan Policy GI 14-4.
- The development will result in a traffic hazard and obstruction of users of the current greenway.
- The proposal is unsuitable as it will conflict with users of the Greenway.
- Refers to previous planning application on the site and the requests for a Traffic Impact Assessment or a Stage 1 and 2 Road Safety Audit. Notes that these reports were not submitted with the current application and considers the traffic impacts of the development cannot be assessed.
- The potential future operations of the Club cannot be assessed without the submission of a mobility management plan.
- The proposed development will have a negative environmental impact on the water quality and habitats of the River Lee.
- The proposal has a direct hydrological link with The Gearagh SAC and The Gearagh SPA. A formal AA screening should therefore have been carried out.
- No AA Screening Report was submitted with the Planning Application and no assessment of the cumulative impacts on conservation sites.
- Wastewater treatment systems were changed as a result of the Further Information request and the Planning Authority failed to reassess if EIA was required.
- Based on the lack of AA and EIA screening is contrary to the Habitats Directive, the Development Plan and proper planning and sustainable development of area.

7.2. Applicant Response

None on file.

7.3. **Planning Authority Response**

None on file.

7.4. **Observations**

None on file.

8.0 **Assessment**

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

- Principle of Development
- Access and Traffic Impacts
- Environmental Issues
- Other Matters

8.2. **Principle of Development**

8.2.1. The proposed development as submitted to the Planning Authority comprised a rowing clubhouse facility consisting of a three-bay boatshed, an ancillary boatshed and toilet facilities, an area of hardstanding, a concrete slipway and a pontoon ramp with the installation of a floating pontoon on the edge of Innishcarra Lough for Lee Valley Rowing Club. A new vehicular entrance was proposed off the L6811. In addition, it was proposed to widen the existing greenway entrance to provide an additional vehicular access to an overflow carpark for the Greenway.

8.2.2. The Planning Authority accepted the principle of the relocation of the rowing club and considered that the proposed development accorded with Development Plan Objective GI 14-4: Recreation and Amenity to support and improve the quality and capacity of recreation and amenity facilities.

- 8.2.3. On foot of a Further Information request by the Planning Authority, the Applicant submitted a revised proposal for the scheme. The revisions included the amalgamation, reconfiguration and design of the proposed 2 no. boatsheds to provide a single boatshed. The proposed boatshed was repositioned to the western portion of the site. Vehicular access was also amended to provide a single access point along the eastern section of the site. The revisions omitted the proposed additional vehicular access at the entrance to the Greenway and proposed to retain the existing pedestrian Greenway arrangement from the L6811. The revised scheme included the partial rerouting of the section of the Greenway which traverses the site to a position along the northern boundary and revisions to landscaping and boundary proposals. The foul drainage proposal was also amended to provide a tertiary wastewater treatment plant located at the northwestern portion of the site above the high-water mark. The Planning Authority considered the revisions to be acceptable, and permission was subsequently granted on 30th March 2026.
- 8.2.4. The grounds of appeal contends that the Planning Authority failed to assess the need for the proposed development, that adequate justification for the relocation of the club has not been provided and that the proposal is contrary to Development Plan Objective GI 14-4. In addition, the Appellant considers that the planning Authority failed to assess the site selection process.
- 8.2.5. I note that the Lee Valley Rowing Club currently shares facilities with Rowing Ireland in the National Rowing Centre (NRC) in Farren Woods on the opposite side of Innishcarra Lough. The Appellant contends that the Applicant has not demonstrated why they cannot continue to share the existing facility in Farren Woods with Rowing Ireland. In terms of the justification for the relocation of the Rowing Club, I refer the Commission to Section 2.3 of the Applicants Planning Statement submitted to the Planning Authority. The Applicant states that following the success of the sport at international level, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of Rowing Ireland athletes training fulltime at the NRC. As a result of the development of a standalone High-Performance Centre for selected National Sports by Sports Ireland, there has been a decrease in the training facilities available to Lee Valley Rowing Club at the NRC. The Applicant further sets out that the Club are currently utilising a temporary base within the NRC comprising storage containers, tarpaulin cover and open storage. The Planning Statement provides details of the members of the Club,

which I note currently stands at 107 no. persons. It is stated that due to the decrease in training facilities in conjunction with the growth in membership, an independent facility is required to provide adequate facilities for its members. The submitted Planning Statement outlines that the construction of the permanent club facility would focus on on-water rowing and that the site at Nadrid would not have the facilities or capacity to host a regatta which would continue to be held at the NRC.

8.2.6. Development Plan Objective GI 14-4: Recreation and Amenity, seeks to improve the quality and capacity of existing recreation and amenity facilities. In addition, Development Plan Objective GI 14-5: Replacement/Redevelopment of Leisure and Recreational Facilities, sets out that where a redevelopment is required then the applicant must demonstrate that the existing facility is inadequate and that a better accessible replacement is provided.

8.2.7. Having visited the site and having regard to the training constraints that the Rowing Club is currently operating under and to the reasoning set out by the Applicant for the relocation of the Lee Valley Rowing Club, I am satisfied that it has been demonstrated that the existing facilities are inadequate and constrained in terms of capacity. Furthermore, having reviewed the submitted drawings I am satisfied that the proposal for the Rowing Club facility will improve the quality and capacity of the training facility. I am satisfied that the applicant has provided sufficient justification for the relocation of the Rowing Club and I consider that the proposal accords with Development Plan Objectives GI 14-4 and GI 14-5 in this regard.

8.2.8. The grounds of appeal considers that the site selection process was not sufficiently assessed by the Planning Authority. In this regard I note that Section 2.4 Alternatives Considered, of the Planning Statement submitted to the Planning Authority, sets out that a number of alternatives were explored. These included a proposal to build a separate boat shed at the NRC which was rejected by both Rowing Ireland and Sport Ireland who have plans to further improve the facilities for international athletes. It is further set out that the Applicant considered developing a facility on a separate identified location in Farran Woods which was also discounted due to the impacts on other users of the park. The submitted Planning Statement outlines that a survey of all possible locations for a rowing facility in the greater mid Cork area was conducted and that all areas apart from Inniscarra Lough were discounted due to unsuitable water. Within Inniscarra Lough 3 no. further sites were

considered namely Innisleena, Carhoo East and Nadrid. Of these 3 no. site Innisleena was discounted as the area is currently used for sailing, power boats and water skiing which are not compatible with rowing. Carhoo East was also discounted due to access issues. Nadrid, where rowing and fishing are the main activities and which considered compatible, was therefore identified as the preferred location.

- 8.2.9. Having regard to the alternative sites considered, the applicants reasoning for selecting the site at Nadrid, and the requirement for the proposed development to be adjacent to the river with compatible adjoining uses, I am satisfied that the appeal site is the most appropriate location for the proposed rowing club. Furthermore, I am satisfied that the Applicant has explored alternative options and that the proposed site is the most suitable. Furthermore, I consider that the Applicant has demonstrated the need for a permanent location for the Lee Rowing Club. Having regard to the location of the site in Nadrid along the edge of the Innishcarra Lough, the design and layout of the proposed development and Development Plan Objectives GI14-4 and GI 14-5 I consider the principle of development to be acceptable.

8.3. Traffic Impact

- 8.3.1. The subject site comprises a section of the Coachford Greenway which cuts diagonally through the site extending along the site's southern boundary at the river. There is a public car parking area along the L6811 to the west of the subject site which serves the greenway. Currently pedestrian access to the greenway from the car parking along the road is within the site boundary. With regard to the re-routing of the greenway, I note that the greenway is located on lands owned by the ESB and that a letter of consent from the ESB and the landowner of the remainder of the site was submitted in conjunction with the planning application material.
- 8.3.2. The grounds of appeal sets out that the proposed development will result in a traffic hazard and will conflict with users of the greenway and that the traffic impacts and the future operations of the Club have not been assessed.
- 8.3.3. In terms of the access arrangement, the original scheme as submitted to the Planning Authority comprised a vehicular access to the proposed rowing club off the L6811 via the existing greenway entrance to a car park for the proposed club which provided a total of 24 no. car parking spaces. It was proposed to reroute the existing

greenway along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site and to construct an overflow greenway car park providing 13 no. car parking spaces with a separate vehicular access to the east of the site. The proposed works included the demolition of a 6 metre section of the existing stone wall and the provision of a new pedestrian entrance and gate onto the greenway from the proposed public car parking area.

8.3.4. Cork County Council's Area Engineer noted that the 'Sightlines at Proposed New Entrance' drawing submitted with the planning application indicated sightline distances in both directions from the centre point of the entrances, 2 metres back from the edge of the public road, as 45 metres. The Area Engineer further noted that the sightlines from the existing entrance cut through the existing roadside parking to the west of the entrance and the overflow parking to the east. The Area Engineer required that both entrances provide 80 metre clear sightlines in each direction from a point 3 metres back from the edge of the public road. Further information was requested to address this issue.

8.3.5. In response to the further information request, the applicant revised the site layout to provide a single vehicular entrance of 15 metres in width along the L6811 towards the western side of the site. The proposed entrance provides access to the greenway overflow carpark entrance, a separate car parking area for the rowing club and access for boat trailers to the west of the new entrance. In this regard I refer the Commission to the revised 'Site Plan' drawing submitted by the Applicant in response to the Planning Authority's further information request which indicates that the proposed vehicular entrance achieves 80 metre clear sightlines to the junction with the L6811. I note that the report from the Planning Authority raised no objection to the proposed development in terms of vehicular access subject to conditions. In this regard I note that there were 4 no. separate conditions attached to the Planning Authority's grant of permission requiring the height of the boundary treatment at 900mm within the sightline distance, the vehicular entrance to be recessed 4.5 metres from the front boundary and that the side walls of the vehicular entrance be angled at 45 degrees. I note that the requirements of the conditions differ from the submitted 'Site Plan' drawing. Therefore, should the Commission be mindful to grant permission, I recommend that a single compliance condition be attached requiring details of vehicular entrance to be agreed with the Planning Authority.

- 8.3.6. I have no information before me that the proposed development will cause a traffic hazard, and I am satisfied that the proposed vehicular entrance can accommodate traffic movement to and from the development and will not impact on traffic safety.
- 8.3.7. I further note that the revised vehicular access arrangements result in no changes to the existing greenway entrance. Within the site boundary a portion of the greenway from the pedestrian access has been rerouted to northern boundary of the site before it reaches the greenway car parking area and where it links to the existing greenway route along the river. An internal gate separates the proposed car parking area for the Rowing Club from the greenway and overflow greenway car park. I have no information before me that the proposed development will conflict with the greenway, and I am therefore satisfied that the proposed development will not obstruct users of the greenway.
- 8.3.8. The grounds of appeal contends that the development cannot be adequately assessed without the submission of a Transport Impact Assessment and a Road Safety Audit. It is further contended that the future operations of the Rowing Club cannot be assessed without the submission of a Mobility Management Plan.
- 8.3.9. Section 12.11 Traffic/Mobility Management and Road Safety of the Development Plan sets out that where traffic movements associated with a development proposal have the potential to have a material impact on the safety and free flow of traffic on a national or regional route, the submission of a Traffic Impact Assessment, Traffic and Transport Assessment and a Road Safety Audit will be required. Having regard to the scale of the proposal and the location of the site off a local road I am satisfied that the proposal would not result in traffic congestion or materially impact on safety and free flow traffic. I am therefore satisfied that a Traffic Impact Assessment and a Road Safety Audit are not required in this instance.
- 8.3.10. I refer the Commission to the Planning Authority's clarification of the further information request, where the applicant was requested to confirm whether regattas or competitions would be held on site, and if so then Traffic Management Plan would be required. I note that in response to the Planning Authority's request the Applicant confirmed that regattas or competitions would not be held at the facility and that the operations in the Rowing Club facility would be limited to on-water training. I have no information before me that during the operational phase the proposed

development would impact on traffic in the area. Having regard to the scale of the proposal, the onsite car parking provision and the purpose of the Rowing Club as a training facility, I am satisfied that a Mobility Management Plan is not required in this instance. Should the Commission be mindful to grant permission than I recommend that a condition be attached prohibiting events or regattas on the site without the written agreement of the Planning Authority.

- 8.3.11. To conclude this section, I have no information before me that the proposed development would impact traffic safety or result in traffic congestion, and I am satisfied that the proposed development accords with the provision of Section 12.11 Traffic/Mobility Management and Road Safety of the Development Plan. Furthermore, I am satisfied that the proposed development will not obstruct users of the greenway.

8.4. Environmental Impact

- 8.4.1. The grounds of appeal sets out that the proposed development will have a negative environmental impact on the water quality and habitats of the River Lee.
- 8.4.2. Development Plan Objective WM 11-1: EU Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan, seeks to protect and improve water resources and ensure that development does not contravene the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive. The Objective specifies that development may only proceed where appropriate wastewater treatment is available which meets the requirements of environmental legislation, the Water Framework Directive and the requirements of the Habitats Directive. In addition, Development Plan Objective WM 11-5: Discharges in Unsewered Areas, seeks to protect waters from wastewater pollution and ensure that proposals for development which incorporate on-site wastewater disposal systems comply with the EPA Code of Practice Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems March 2021 (Population Equivalent ≤ 10) and Wastewater Treatment Manual - Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business Centres, Leisure Centres and Hotels (1999).
- 8.4.3. The proposed site adjoins the River Lee/Inniscarra Reservoir which provides an amenity and is a drinking water source and habitat. In relation to wastewater, in the scheme as submitted to the Planning Authority the Applicant proposed a 6,000L wastewater holding tank, to be emptied monthly. On foot of the Further Information

request, the Applicant amended the scheme to provide a wastewater treatment system which comprises a secondary wastewater treatment system discharging to a tertiary treatment system and infiltration treatment area, located in the northwest corner of the site. I note that the location provides separation distances from the reservoir in excess of 50 metres and is therefore compliant with Table 6.2 Minimum Separation Distances of the EPA Guidelines.

- 8.4.4. A Site Suitability Assessment was carried out for the proposed on-site wastewater treatment system and a Site Characterisation Form in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice was prepared and submitted with the application. The submitted form states that it is proposed to install a wastewater treatment unit in accordance with the EPA Small Communities Table 3. I note that the Planning Authority raised no concerns in relation to the proposed wastewater treatment system and considered the revised approach to be a positive change and a more appropriate solution for the holding/treatment of wastewater from an environmental perspective.
- 8.4.5. The site overlies the Ballinhassig East ground water body which is classified as 'Not at Risk' and 'Good Status'. The proposed wastewater treatment system is located approximately 50 metres from the River Lee which is also classified as 'Not at Risk' and 'Good Status'.
- 8.4.6. A trial hole was opened on the 25th of August 2025 to a depth of 2.1 metres. The location of the trial hole was not visible on the occasion of the site visit. Based on the percolation values returned, I am satisfied that the site is suitable for a secondary wastewater treatment system with a tertiary treatment system and infiltration area. This conclusion is supported by the guidance contained in the EPA Code of Practice. Furthermore, I am satisfied that all separation distances shown are in accordance with the requirements of Section 6.3 of the Code of Practice. In total 4 no. conditions in relation to wastewater treatment were attached to the Planning authority's decision to grant of permission. Should the Commission be mindful to grant permission then I recommend that the standard condition in relation to compliance with the EPA Code of Practice be attached. Given the location of the site adjoining a reservoir I also recommend that the Planning Authority condition in relation to the submission of written evidence of a maintenance contract for the wastewater treatment plant also be attached.

- 8.4.7. SUDS measures are proposed including a rainwater harvesting tank to collect surface water from the shed roof and permeable gravel for the parking areas. The underground rainwater holding tank will provide temporary water storage prior to use in WC facilities. I note that the Council's Area Engineer did not raise any issues in relation to surface water.
- 8.4.8. I refer the Commission to Section 10 Water Framework Directive below where I have assessed the proposed development and considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive and concluded that the proposal can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.
- 8.4.9. On the basis of the information submitted, I consider that the proposed wastewater and surface water drainage proposals to be acceptable. I have no information before me that the development will negatively impact the River Lee. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal will not negatively impact upon the water quality of the River Lee and therefore accords with Development Plan Objectives WM 11-1: EU Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan and WM 11-5: Discharges in Unsewered Areas.
- 8.4.10. Concern is expressed in the grounds of appeal that the proposed development would have an environmental effect on the habitats of the River Lee and that the Planning Authority did not carry out environmental impact assessment (EIA) screening.
- 8.4.11. EIA assesses the potential for significant environmental effects. I note that the Council's Area Planner's Primary report refers to EIA stating that the development is not of a class listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. The Report further states that the development will be further assessed upon receipt of further information. I have no further information on file that further screening of the proposal was undertaken by the Planning Authority. I am satisfied that the proposed development is not of 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). As indicated in the EIA preliminary examination below there is

no potential for significant environmental effects and no mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination.

- 8.4.12. Development Plan Objective WM 11-11: River Channel Protection seeks to ensure adequate protection measures along watercourses, keeping them free from development by ensuring development is kept 10 metres or other appropriate distance from stream and riverbanks in line with best practice for riparian corridors. In this regard I note that on foot of the Further Information request the Applicant repositioned the boat storage shed and area of hard standing within the redline boundary of the site to provide sufficient setbacks from the bank of the river. I am therefore satisfied that the development is in accordance with Development Plan Objective WM 11-11: River Channel Protection.
- 8.4.13. Development Plan Objective BE 15-2 - Protect Sites, Habitats and Species, seeks to provide protection to all natural heritage sites and where possible enhance areas of local biodiversity value and habitats. In addition, I note that Development Plan Objective BE 15-6: Biodiversity and New Development, seeks to provide for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and to ensure that an appropriate level of assessment and mitigation is completed in relation to habitats. I consider these objectives to be reasonable.
- 8.4.14. Impacts on bats, badgers, otters, avifauna, treelines, riparian woodland and on the reservoir was considered by the applicant in the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and Tree Survey and Recommendations report (updated) and is also addressed in Section 5.2.2 Biodiversity and Environment of the Planning Statement submitted to the Planning Authority.
- 8.4.15. The EclA notes that the site supports suitable roosting habitats for bats in a mature Sycamore tree and a mature Monterey Pine which are to be retained. The Assessment noted that the area along the shoreline indicated the highest level of bat foraging activity and the most frequently recorded species was the pipistrelle. The Tree Survey and Recommendations (updated) report submitted with the Further Information request outlines that the Bristol Tree Forum approach for achieving net gain was considered and recommends planting 65 trees to replace the 12 that are proposed for removal. The landscaping plan submitted outlines native species to be planted and a mix of native hedgerows. This was considered acceptable by the

Council's Ecologist. The EclA sets out that the bat foraging habitat along the shoreline will be retained and that construction operations during hours of darkness will be kept to a minimum. I further note that in response to the Further Information request the Applicant has stated that the facility will only operate during daylight hours for reasons of safety and that it is not anticipated that activities will be undertaken after dark and therefore no external lighting is proposed.

- 8.4.16. The EclA notes that there is no evidence of badger or otter activity recorded on the site and sets out that a pre-construction survey will be conducted for both species. Mitigation measures proposed include buffer distances should any badger setts uncovered. The EclA further sets out that any otter holts which may be created in the intervening period they may need to be excluded under a derogation licence and consultation with the NPWs will be required. Construction phase mitigation measures for water quality were also outlined in the EclA to control hydrocarbons, sediment control and concrete control. It is further outlined that construction works for the slipway and pontoon ramp will be conducted in dry conditions on temporary sheet piles.
- 8.4.17. Having regard to the information contained in the EclA, the retention of the mature trees on the site and the foraging habitats along the shoreline, and the mitigation measures proposed during the construction phase I am satisfied that the construction works will not have a direct impact on any habitats. I am further satisfied that the operational phase of the development will not directly impact on any habitats. I have no information before me to indicate that the proposed development would negatively impact upon any habitats, and I am therefore satisfied that the proposed development therefore accords with Development Plan Objectives WM 11-11: River Channel Protection, BE 15-2 - Protect Sites, Habitats and Species and BE 15-6: Biodiversity and New Development.
- 8.4.18. The Appellant contends that the proposal has a direct link with The Gearagh SAC and The Gearagh SPA and that the Planning Authority failed to carry out Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening. In this regard I note that the Council's Ecology Report dated 23rd May 2025 contains AA screening and concludes that AA is not required.
- 8.4.19. I refer the Commission to the AA Screening Report appended and Section 9 below. I note that the closest European site, The Gearagh SAC, is approximately 11.8 km

upstream while the Gearagh SPA is approximately 13.2 km upstream. As there are no pathways for the proposed development to lead to significant impacts on the SAC or SPA, I am satisfied that there will be no impacts to the Gearagh SAC, and the Gearagh SPA (further upstream) as a result of the proposed development. The proposed site has a hydrological connection to the Cork Harbour SPA, over 30km downstream. Given the nature of the development, the assimilation capacity of the intervening lake, river and estuary, and the significantly remote distance between the proposed works and the SPA, I am satisfied that significant impacts to the SPA can be screened out. I am therefore satisfied that AA is not required.

8.5. Other Matters

- 8.5.1. The grounds of appeal contends that the proposed development is contrary to Sports Irelands Policy and Coillte's 'Land use Strategic Implementation Plan' and that the facility should be at a location identified within the 'Metropolitan Cork Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy'.
- 8.5.2. The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan identifies the preparation of a 'Metropolitan Cork Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy' which is set out in Cork MASP Policy Objective 17. I note that the strategy has not yet been prepared. Furthermore, I note that Sports Irelands Policy and Coillte's 'Land use Strategic Implementation Plan' are not statutory planning documents. The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 is the statutory land-use planning framework and serves as the primary policy document to guide the future growth and development of the county.
- 8.5.3. Having regard to my assessment above I am satisfied that the proposed development accords with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and is therefore acceptable.

9.0 AA Screening

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on The

Gearagh SAC (Site Code 000108), The Gearagh SPA (Site Code 004109) or the Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code 004030) in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

This determination is based on:

- Nature of works
- Location-distance from nearest European site and lack of connections

10.0 Water Framework Directive

An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken in accordance with Article 4 of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), as transposed by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003, as amended, and with regard to the Eastern/South Eastern River Basin Management Plan 2022–2027.

The receiving water environment has been identified and assessed, see Table 1 attached. Having regard to the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, and the mitigation measures proposed and conditioned, it is concluded that the proposed development will not:

- Result in deterioration of the ecological, chemical, or quantitative status of any relevant surface water or groundwater body;
- Increase pollutant loading or alter the hydrological regime of any receiving watercourse;
- Prevent or impede achievement of environmental objectives under the applicable River Basin Management Plan.

Any residual risks are capable of being addressed through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with the requirements of Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. I recommend that planning permission be granted for the proposed development based on the reasons and considerations set out hereunder.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to:

- the nature, scale and design of the proposed development, which is considered sympathetic to the site location in a designated High Value Landscape;
- The provisions of Objectives GI 14-4: Recreation and Amenity, and GI 14-5: Replacement/Redevelopment of Leisure and Recreational Facilities, of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 which seeks to improve the quality and capacity of existing recreation and amenity facilities and allows for redevelopment and replacement of such facilities,
- the specific locational requirements of the rowing activity which the proposed development will facilitate,
- the technical assessments undertaken by the applicant, including the Ecological Impact Assessment and the Tree survey and Recommendations Report,

the proposed development is considered acceptable at this location and would have no significant negative visual or environmental impacts on the immediate vicinity or surrounding area, including on the adjoining River Lee/ Inniscarra Lough (reservoir), and would 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 the further plans and particulars received by the planning authority on the 3 rd day of February 2026 and on the 2 nd day of March 2026 except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.
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	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.	Details of the materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes to the proposed development shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to ensure an appropriate high standard of development.
3.	The existing front boundary wall shall be retained except to the extent that its removal is necessary to provide for the entrance to the site. Reason: In the interest of visual amenity
4.	The mitigation measures contained in the Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EclA) shall be implemented. Reason: To protect the environment.
5.	Prior to the operation of the proposed development, the applicant shall submit written confirmation to the Planning Authority confirming the cessation of rowing activities from the existing facility. Reason: In the interest of clarity.
6.	Rowing competitions or regattas shall not be held at the site unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to any such event. Reason: In the interest of road safety and orderly development.
7.	Prior to the commencement of any works associated with the development hereby permitted, the developer shall submit a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the written agreement of the planning authority. The CEMP shall incorporate details for the following: collection and disposal of construction waste, surface water run-off from the site, traffic management measures and environmental management measures during construction including working hours, noise control, dust

	and vibration control and monitoring of such measures. A record of daily checks that the construction works are being undertaken in accordance with the CEMP shall be kept at the construction site office for inspection by the Planning Authority. The agreed CEMP shall be implemented in full in the carrying out of the development. Reason: In the interest of environmental protection.
8.	(a) The attenuation and disposal of surface water shall comply with the requirements of the Planning Authority for such works and services. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit details for the disposal of surface water from the site for the written agreement of the Planning Authority. (b) Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit details of proposed measures for the ongoing maintenance of SUDS infrastructure on the site for the written agreement of the Planning Authority. Reason: To prevent flooding and in the interests of sustainable drainage.
9.	A plan containing details for the management of waste (in particular, recyclable materials) within the development, including the provision of facilities for the storage, separation and collection of the waste, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development. Thereafter, the agreed waste facilities shall be maintained, and waste shall be managed in accordance with the agreed plan. Reason: To provide for the appropriate management of waste in the interest of protecting the environment and the amenities of properties in the vicinity.
10.	(a) The developer shall engage the services of a suitably qualified arborist to oversee all ground works, development works, tree removal and site landscaping. (b) Tree protection measures shall be undertaken in accordance with the Tree Survey and Recommendations submitted to the Planning Authority on 3rd February 2026.

	(c) The project arborist shall carry out a post construction tree survey and assessment of the condition of the retained trees. A completion certificate shall be signed off by the project arborist when all permitted development works are completed in line with the recommendations of the Tree Survey and Recommendations. The certificate shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority upon completion of the works. Reason: To ensure that site trees are not damaged or otherwise adversely affected by building operations.
11.	(a) The landscaping scheme submitted to the Planning Authority on the 3rd day of February 2026 shall be carried out within the first planting season following substantial completion of external construction works. (b) All planting shall be adequately protected from damage until established. Any plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority. (c) Prior to the commencement of the development, the developer shall appoint and retain the services of a qualified Landscape Architect as a Landscape Consultant throughout the life of the construction works and shall notify the planning authority of that appointment in writing. A Practical Completion Certificate shall be signed off by the Landscape Architect when all landscape works are fully completed to the satisfaction of the planning authority in accordance with the permitted landscape proposals. Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.
12.	Final design and construction details of the proposed site access from regional road L6811, pedestrian access, greenway route and parking areas shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. Reason: In the interest of road, traffic and pedestrian safety and to ensure an appropriate standard of development.
13.	Construction hours for the proposed demolition and construction shall be in accordance with the following:

	No works shall take place on site outside the hours of 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday, and 08.00 to 13.00 Saturday, or on Sundays or public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority. Reason: In the interest of the protection of residential amenity.
14.	(a) The septic tank/wastewater treatment system hereby permitted shall be installed in accordance with the recommendations included within the site characterisation report submitted with this application on 3rd February 2026 and shall be in accordance with the standards set out in the document entitled “Code of Practice - Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10)” – Environmental Protection Agency, 2021 and Wastewater Treatment Manual - Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business Centres, Leisure Centres and Hotels (1999) (b) Treated effluent from the wastewater treatment system shall be discharged to a polishing filter which shall be provided in accordance with the standards set out in the document entitled “Code of Practice - Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤ 10)” – Environmental Protection Agency, 2021 (c) Within three months of the development becoming operational, the developer shall submit a report to the planning authority from a suitably qualified person (with professional indemnity insurance) certifying that the wastewater treatment system and associated works is constructed and operating in accordance with the standards set out in the Environmental Protection Agency document referred to above. Reason: In the interest of public health and to prevent water pollution.
15.	A monitoring and maintenance plan for Waste Water Treatment Plant shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to the development becoming operational. Reason: In the interests of public health and to prevent water pollution.
16.	The disposal of surface water shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit details for the disposal of

	surface water from the site for the written agreement of the planning authority. Reason: To prevent flooding and in the interests of sustainable drainage.
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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 me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.”

Carol Smyth
Planning Inspector

27th July 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	R501188
Proposed Development Summary	1) Construction of a new rowing clubhouse facility consisting of a three-bay boatshed, an ancillary boatshed with toilet facilities, hardstanding, a concrete slipway and a pontoon ramp with the installation of a floating pontoon. 2) Construction of a new gated vehicular entrance onto the L6811 to the west of the site adjacent to the greenway pedestrian access point which will provide access to parking for 24 vehicles, two boat trailers and bicycle parking to serve the rowing clubhouse facility. 3) Construction of additional greenway car parking to the east of the site, to include demolition of a 6m section of the existing stone wall, construction of a new vehicle entrance onto the L6811, provision of 13 car parking spaces, and all ancillary works. 4) Rerouting of the existing greenway along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, and provision of a new pedestrian entrance and gate onto the greenway from the proposed car parking area. 5) All associated ancillary works including landscaping, signage, underground waste water holding tank, rainwater harvesting tank and boundary treatments.
Development Address	Nadrid, Coachford, Co. Cork.
IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX / OR LEAVE BLANK	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'Project' for the purposes of EIA?	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q.2.
	☐ No, No further action required.

(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)	
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
☒ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
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?	
☒ 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.	

☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
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)?	
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3: Standard AA Screening Determination Template 2

Test for likely significant effects

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects	
Case Reference Number: 501188	
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics	
Brief description of project	1) Construction of a new rowing clubhouse facility consisting of a three-bay boatshed, an ancillary boatshed with toilet facilities, hardstanding, a concrete slipway and a pontoon ramp with the installation of a floating pontoon. 2) Construction of a new gated vehicular entrance onto the L6811 to the west of the site adjacent to the greenway pedestrian access point which will provide access to parking for 24 vehicles, two boat trailers and bicycle parking to serve the rowing clubhouse facility. 3) Construction of additional greenway car parking to the east of the site, to include demolition of a 6m section of the existing stone wall, construction of a new vehicle entrance onto the L6811, provision of 13 car parking spaces, and all ancillary works. 4) Rerouting of the existing greenway along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, and provision of a new pedestrian entrance and gate onto the greenway from the proposed car parking area. 5) All associated ancillary works including landscaping, signage, underground waste water holding tank, rainwater harvesting tank and boundary treatments.

Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms		The development site adjoins the Lee River/ Inniscarra Lough (reservoir). The site is a greenfield site which comprises a section of the Coachford Greenway. The closest European site, The Gearagh SAC, is approximately 11.8 km upstream while the Gearagh SPA is approximately 13.2 km upstream. Given the location of the appeal site downstream from these European sites there are no hydrological pathways for the proposed development to lead to significant impacts on the Gearagh SAC or Gearagh SPA. The proposed site has hydrological connection to Cork Harbour SPA, over 30km downstream.		
Screening report		No		
Natura Impact Statement		No		
Relevant submissions		No		
Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model				
European Site (code)	Qualifying interests¹ Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)	Distance from proposed development (km)	Ecological connections²	Consider further in screening³ Y/N
The Gearagh SAC (Site Code 000108)	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-	11.8km	No	No

	Batrachion vegetation [3260] Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidenton</i> p.p. vegetation [3270] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]			
The Gearagh SPA (Site Code 004109)	Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125]	13.2 km	No	No

	Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) [A855] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
Cork Harbour SPA Site code 004030	Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]	30 km	Hydrological	Yes

	Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182] Lesser Black- backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183]			
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	Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855] Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
¹ Summary description / cross reference to NPWS website is acceptable at this stage in the report ² Based on source-pathway-receptor: Direct/ indirect/ tentative/ none, via surface water/ ground water/ air/ use of habitats by mobile species ³ if no connections: N				
Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone <u>or</u> in combination) on European Sites [From the AA Screening Report or the Inspector's own assessment if no Screening Report submitted, complete the following table where European sites need further consideration taking the following into account: (a) Identify potential direct or indirect impacts (if any) arising from the project alone that could have an effect on the European Site(s) taking into account the size and scale of the proposed development and all relevant stages of the project (See Appendix 9 in Advice note 1A). (b) Are there any design or standard practice measures proposed that would reduce the risk of impacts to surface water, wastewater etc. that would be implemented regardless of proximity to a European Site? (c) Identify possible significant effects on the European sites in view of the conservation objectives (alone <u>or</u> in combination with other plans and projects) AA Screening matrix				
Site name Qualifying interests		Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*		

	Impacts	Effects
Cork Harbour SPA Site code 004030 QI's Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]	Direct: Direct hydrological link	Given the significant separation distance to the SPA, and the limited scale of the proposed works and the assimilation capacity of the intervening lake, river and estuary it is highly unlikely that the proposed development could generate impacts of a magnitude that could affect habitat quality within the SPA for the qualifying interests listed. No potential impact is foreseen. The construction and operation of the proposed development will not impact on the conservation interests of the site.

Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) [A855] Shoveler (<i>Spatula clypeata</i>) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]		
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): No	

	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? No
Step 4: Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site	
I conclude that the proposed development (alone) would not result in likely significant effects on The Gearagh SAC (Site Code 000108), The Gearagh SPA (Site Code 004109) or the Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code 004030). The proposed development would have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on any European site(s). No further assessment is required for the project]. No mitigation measures are required to come to these conclusions.	

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING

Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality

An Bord Pleanála ref. no.	PL-501188-CK-26	Townland, address	Nadrid, Coachford, Co. Cork
Description of project	Construction of a rowing clubhouse facility consisting of a three-bay boatshed, an ancillary boatshed with toilet facilities, hardstanding, a concrete slipway and a pontoon ramp with the installation of a floating pontoon, vehicular entrance, car parking, rerouting of the existing greenway. All associated ancillary works including landscaping, signage, underground waste water holding tank, rainwater harvesting tank and boundary treatments.		
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,	The site is located within a rural area on the northern bank of the River Lee/ Inniscarra Reservoir immediately west of Roove's Bridge. The site is agricultural in use. The subsoil type on site is identified as ORS, sandstone, conglomerate and mudstone (Palaeozoic, Devonian).		
Proposed surface water details	SUDS measures are proposed including permeable gravel for the parking areas and a rain water harvesting tank to collect surface water from the shed roof.		
Proposed water supply source & available capacity	No potable water supply proposed. It is proposed to use the rain water harvesting tank to supply no-potable water for WC facilities.		

Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues			On site septic tank and percolation area.			
Others?			No			
Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection						
Identified water body	Distance to (m)	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater)
Groundwater Waterbody	Underlying the site	Ballinhassig East Ground Water Body (IE_SW_G_004)	Good	Not at risk		Drainage to ground
River Waterbody	Within basin catchment	River Lee _080 (IE_SW_19L030600)	Good	Not at risk		Surface water run-off
Step 4: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage.						
CONSTRUCTION PHASE						

No.	Component	Water body receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact/ what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure*	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment? (if 'screened' in or 'uncertain' proceed to Stage 2.
1.	Surface	River Lee _080 (IE_SW_19L030 600)	Surface water run off	Water Pollution - Deterioration of surface water quality from pollution of surface water run-off during site preparation and construction	Standard construction practice, and condition requiring the submission of a Construction Management Plan	No	Screened out
2	Discharges to Ground	Ballinhassig East Ground Water Body (IE_SW_G_004)	Drainage to ground	Reduction in groundwater quality from pollution of surface water run-off	Standard construction practice, and condition requiring the submission of a Construction Management Plan	No	Screened out
OPERATIONAL PHASE							

4.	Surface	River Lee _080 (IE_SW_19L030 600)	Surface water run off	Spillages Deterioration of water quality	Surface water discharged to soakpit	No	Screened out
5	Discharges to Ground	Ballinhassig East Ground Water Body (IE_SW_G_004)	Drainage to ground	Pollution associated with wastewater discharge.	Compliance with EPA Code of Practice for wastewater treatment systems.	No	Screened out
DECOMMISSIONING PHASE							
4.	Decommissioning is not anticipated as this is a permanent rowing club						Screened out