



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-501371-CC-26

Development	Change of use of an office unit to a golf simulation centre and new signage to existing front.
Location	Building 4400, Cork Airport Business Park, Cork
Planning Authority	Cork City Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2544357
Applicant(s)	Mike Halpin
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party Normal Planning Appeal
Appellant(s)	Mike Halpin
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	13 th July 2026
Inspector	Gary Farrelly

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located within the campus of Cork Airport Business Park which is situated to the east of Cork Airport approximately 2km south of Cork city. The business park is accessed off Rory Gallagher Avenue and the site itself is accessed off the park's internal road, Avenue 4000. The subject site comprises the ground floor of a two-storey office building and has a gross floor area of 669sqm. The ground floor is currently vacant.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Permission is sought to change the use of offices on the ground floor of the building for use as a golf simulation centre together with new signage on the front elevation and associated works. A total of 8 no. simulation bays are proposed as well as a reception/snacks area and meeting room. There are no alterations proposed to the existing fenestration of the building. The proposed hours of operation of the facility are 08:00 to 22:00 hours Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 21:00 hours on Saturdays and Sundays.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

The planning authority (PA) decided to refuse permission by Order dated 23rd April 2026 for 1 no. reason.

Reason for Refusal

The proposed development is located on lands zoned objective ZO 10 Business and Technology which sets out to provide for the creation and protection of high technology related office-based industry and enterprise, to facilitate opportunities for employment creation in the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 wherein Section ZO 10.1 states the main purpose of the ZO 10 zoning objective is to facilitate opportunities for high technology office-based industry, advanced manufacturing, major office and research and development based employment. It is noted that Section ZO 10.3 states that secondary uses such as leisure facilities where they serve the local area, are open to

consideration at an appropriate scale where they are subsidiary to the main employment uses and do not conflict with the primary zoning objectives. The proposed development of a commercial leisure facility would materially contravene the ZO 10 zoning objective and Sections ZO 10.1 of the CDP as it does not protect office-based industry and enterprise and does not facilitate employment creation. The proposed development would also contravene Objective 7.14 Technology and Office-based Industry which seeks to support the development of high technology businesses in the business and technology zones. It does not accord with Objective 7.17 Commercial Leisure which sets out that commercial leisure facilities are encouraged in suitable locations throughout the city as the proposed development is a facility which would serve a wider catchment than a local area and the proposed location is not a suitable location due to the local levels of accessibility in a range of transport modes, including public transport. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

Planning Reports

There is a total of 2 no. planning reports on file from the Executive Planner (EP) which assessed the proposed change of use on a number of issues including the compatibility of the proposed leisure use with the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 zoning objective for the site and traffic and parking. The EP originally requested further information from the applicant in order to establish whether the use would not have a detrimental impact on the primary land use zoning objective and whether it would be consistent with objectives of the Plan. The request was endorsed by the Senior Executive Planner (SEP) and it included further details of the proposed operating hours as well as staff and customer numbers, details of the current occupiers of the building, details of any potential noise disturbance with the proposed use and further details on signage and parking availability.

After submission of the further information, the EP considered that the main issue was the principle of the development. The EP considered that the facility was a commercial leisure facility as it would be run on a profit basis which would generate a high level of movement where Section 7.60 of the Development Plan outlines such uses are best

located in highly accessible locations. The EP noted that commercial leisure was permissible in ZO 03 and ZO 04 zoned lands. The EP considered that the use would not solely serve the local area but would serve a wider catchment and, if granted, would be at the expense of an established office use and would set an undesirable precedent. The EP considered that the development would fail to satisfy the parameters for consideration as a secondary leisure use as set out in paragraph ZO 10.2 of the Plan. The EP also considered exceptional circumstances as set out in Section 12.5 of the Plan but considered that there were no grounds for such a use as well as noting several other zoning objectives within the Plan where sports facilities and commercial leisure are considered acceptable uses. The EP recommended refusal of the application which was endorsed by the SEP and Senior Planner.

Other Technical Reports

- Traffic (*reports dated 27/01/26 and 01/04/26*) – This section originally requested further information on carparking. After submission of further information, this section recommended a grant of permission subject to the provision of 1 no. EV parking space.
- Environmental Management (*report dated 13/04/26*) – This section recommended a grant of permission subject to conditions.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

None

3.4. Third Party Observations

None

4.0 Relevant Planning History

PA ref. 99/642 (*wider business park*)

Permission was granted for phase 2 of Cork Airport Business Park comprising the construction of 13 no. buildings intended for internationally traded services (data processing, software development, technical and consulting, health care, research

and development, media recording, training, publishing, administrative headquarters) state of the art business and high-tech industries on a site of 10.5 hectares.

PA ref. 03/1507 (*wider business park*)

Permission was granted for a business park totalling 30,194 sqm on 9.6 ha, comprising of 10 no. Blocks, ESB MV substations, carparking & associated works.

ACP ref. 312565 (PA ref. 21/40048) (*Units 28 and 29 of Business Park*)

Permission was granted for the construction of a four-storey office building (6,770sqm) with an option for subdivision to provide for up to 7 no. office units.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

This Plan was adopted by the Council on 10th June 2022 and came into effect on 8th August 2022. There have been 3 no. Variations to date. Variation No. 1 related to revised parking standards and came into effect on 8th May 2023. Variation No. 2 related to amendments to the Cork Docklands and came into effect on 14th July 2025. Variation No. 3 related to consistent population and housing supply targets with the First Revision of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the 'NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025) and came into effect on 13th July 2026.

Volume 2 – Mapped Objectives (Chapter A Zoning Maps)

The subject site is zoned 'ZO 10, Business and Technology' (Map 15).

Volume 1 – Written Statement

Chapter 7 Economy and Employment

Commercial Leisure (Section 7.60 – 7.61)

Commercial leisure facilities are those run on a profit basis and include cinemas, family entertainment centres such as bowling, indoor children's play centres, fitness centres, gyms, swimming pools, hotels, restaurants, public houses etc. Commercial leisure facilities generate a high level of movement and are best located in places that offer the highest levels of accessibility to a range of transport modes, in particular public transport.

Objective 7.14 Technology and Office-based Industry

To support the development of high technology businesses in the Commercial Core Area of the City Centre, Docklands and Business and Technology Zones.

Objective 7.17 Commercial Leisure

Encourage a broad range of commercial leisure activities in key locations and in suitable locations throughout the city.

Chapter 12 Land Use Zoning Objectives

Section 12.3 - Zoning objectives cannot be considered in isolation and must be read in association with all Development Plan objectives set out in this Plan.

Section 12.4 (Permitted Uses)

While the primary objective of each land use zoning is clearly stated, the various uses listed are intended as a general guide and are not an exhaustive list. Land uses open for consideration may be acceptable where the Planning Authority is satisfied that:

- they would not have a detrimental impact on the primary land use zoning objective;
- they would be consistent with the relevant objectives and criteria set out in this Plan; and
- there would not be any significant adverse impacts on-site or on the surrounding environment.

Zoning Objective (ZO) 10 Business and Technology

To provide for the creation and protection of high technology related office-based industry and enterprise, to facilitate opportunities for employment creation.

Paragraph ZO 10.1 – The main purpose of this zoning objective is to facilitate opportunities for high technology office-based industry, advanced manufacturing, major office and research and development-based employment.

Paragraph ZO 10.2 – Primary uses could include software development, information technology, green technologies, creative technologies and emerging industries,

telemarketing, commercial research and development, data processing, publishing and media recording and media associated activities

Paragraph ZO 10.3 – Other uses that may be acceptable in this zone, subject to local considerations, include light industrial uses set out under ZO 10 Light Industry and Related Uses, primary healthcare centres and hospitals and commercial laboratories. Secondary uses such as residential uses, childcare facilities, leisure facilities and small-scale local services, where they serve the local area, are open for consideration at an appropriate scale where they are subsidiary to the main employment uses and do not conflict with the primary zoning objectives.

5.2. National Guidelines

- Development Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)

5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

The subject site is not located within any designated site. The nearest designated site is Cork Lough proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) which is located approximately 4km north of the site. Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) (Site Code 004030) is located approximately 4.3km northeast of the site. This area is also designated as the Douglas River Estuary pNHA.

6.0 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

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

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

A first-party appeal was lodged to the Commission on 20th May 2026. The grounds of appeal are summarised as follows:

- It is respectfully requested that the Commission overturns the decision of the PA and grants permission for the proposed development. Notwithstanding this,

the applicant would be open to a five-year temporary permission if the Commission has any concerns regarding the planning implications of the proposed change of use.

- The proposed change of use is open for consideration under the site's ZO-10 zoning objective. Therefore, the zoning objective does not expressly prohibit the provision of leisure facilities.
- As per paragraph ZO 10.3 of the Cork City Development Plan, leisure facilities are open for consideration in principle subject to meeting 4 criteria; where they serve the local area, are at an appropriate scale, are subsidiary to the main employment uses and do not conflict with the primary zoning objective.
- The CDP does not define a local area. The proposed facility will draw from a local catchment within a 15-20 minute travel radius encompassing Cork Airport Business Park, Cork Airport Employment Zone and the South Cork suburban population.
- The site represents one of the most accessible locations in the city region outside of the city centre being adjacent to the second largest airport in the country. The site is located on a priority public transport corridor as proposed in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS). Bus Éireann services 225 and 226 provide connections between the airport and the city centre. City Link services also provide 8 daily services connecting the airport with Limerick and Galway.
- It is acknowledged that the site is not located within a residential area, however, there are established residential uses within the immediate area and new large scale residential developments have been permitted nearby. However, the nature of business parks is that they are located in areas characterised overwhelmingly by employment uses. Therefore, the presence of, or proximity to, residential uses cannot be reasonably considered as a key determinative factor in whether a proposed leisure facility use is appropriate within ZO-10 zones. This would have the effect of rendering expressly open to condition ZO-10 uses undeliverable within such zones which would be contrary to the intent and objectives of the CDP.

- The proposal is modest in scale and is appropriately sized to serve local demand rather than functioning as a large leisure destination. Six simulators are proposed which would result in a likely maximum of between 24-30 persons at any one time. Session lengths would be 1 hour and would be by appointment only. There would be 2 staff on site at any one time. There is sufficient carparking available and cycle parking and EV parking can be made available.
- The total floor area of the business park is approximately 70,000sqm and permission is in place for a further 6,770sqm (ref. ABP-312565-22). Therefore, the change of use represents less than 0.9% of the floorspace within the business park.
- The PA has placed emphasis on policies and objectives related to commercial leisure uses. However, this is not a noisy, late-night leisure venue but a quiet, controlled, appointment-based activity operating within set opening hours. Leisure facilities are specially provided for within the supporting text of zoning objective ZO10. The PA has referenced commercial leisure, however, there is no distinction between leisure uses and commercial leisure uses within the CDP. There is also no distinction made between for profit and not for profit leisure uses, and by the very nature of business and technology parks they are not usually located within residential areas.
- There is no established office use on the ground floor of the building as it is vacant. It has been vacant for some time and the applicant has tried to re-let the building but there has been no interest. The applicant's further information response to the PA clarified the nature of the proposed use and demonstrated that it would not conflict with the main employment uses within the business park. There is one other tenant in the building which rarely uses the space and they did not object to the proposal, nor did the business park management. There is no conflict with the primary use.
- This leisure use will support employment within the business park which other leisure facilities would not provide for. It will provide a facility for corporate welfare, team-building activities, client entertainment and skills development. Examples of these facilities within existing business parks in Cork and Dublin are provided. The facility would align with modern workplace expectations for

on-site or proximate employee amenities, improving the attractiveness and functionality of the business park as an employment location.

- There were no issues raised from internal departments of the PA including in terms of traffic and car parking. There have been no third-party objections.
- The use does not generate noise, vibration or emissions that would impact adjoining occupiers. The simulator bays are acoustically contained, and activity levels are comparable to a standard office environment. There is no associated bar, amplified music or late-night congregation, and the use is therefore materially different from traditional leisure or licenced premises. There is no outdoor activity and no external plant required.

7.2. Planning Authority Response

The PA did not issue a response to the grounds of appeal.

8.0 Assessment

- 8.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the reports of the local authority, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local, regional and national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issue in this appeal to be considered is whether the principle of the proposed change of use is compatible with the land use zoning objective pertaining to the site.

Principle of the development

- 8.2. I note that the PA's refusal of the application was based on its contention that the change of use to a golf simulation centre materially contravened the ZO 10 zoning objective pertaining to the site as well as Section ZO 10.1 of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 (herein referred to as "the CDP"). It acknowledged that whilst secondary uses such as leisure facilities were open to consideration under Section ZO 10.3 this was subject to them serving the local area, being subsidiary to the main employment uses and not being in conflict with the primary zoning objectives. The PA considered that the proposed use was a commercial leisure facility which does not protect office-based industry and enterprise nor does it facilitate employment

creation. Moreover, the PA considered that the change of use would contravene Objective 7.14 (Technology and Office-based Industry) as well as Objective 7.17 (Commercial Leisure) of the CDP in that it would serve a wider catchment than the local area and the site had low levels of accessibility in a range of transport modes including public transport.

- 8.3. I note that the applicant has provided a detailed response to the PA's reason for refusal and contends that the proposed change of use is open to consideration as a secondary use within the zoning and which would not have a detrimental impact on the primary land use zoning objective. The applicant contends that the proposed facility will draw from a local catchment, is highly accessible by public transport and represents a change of use of less than 0.9% of the total floorspace within the business park.

Commercial Leisure Use

- 8.4. Firstly, I consider that the use class associated with the proposed golf simulation centre would be that of a commercial leisure activity as defined by Section 7.60 (Commercial Leisure) of the CDP. The Commission should note that this states that such facilities are run on a profit basis and include cinemas, family entertainment centres such as bowling, fitness centres, restaurants and public houses. I note that the PA in its assessment (prior to the submission of further information) appeared to differentiate between the 'commercial leisure' use and the wider 'leisure facilities' terminology specified within Section ZO 10.3 of the CDP. I note that this was on the basis that 'commercial leisure' is specifically referenced and permissible within land use zonings ZO 3 (Long-term Strategic Regeneration) and ZO 4 (Mixed Use Development) of the CDP, as well as it being open to consideration in ZO 19 (Rivers and Water Bodies Protection), and to the fact a commercial leisure use is not specifically provided for in the supporting text of Section ZO 10.3.
- 8.5. I note the applicant contends that there is no distinction between leisure and commercial leisure within the CDP. The Commission should note that after submission of the further information, the PA appeared to accept that commercial leisure was open to consideration as a secondary use within ZO 10.
- 8.6. In my view, the reference to leisure facilities within ZO 10.3 must include a commercial leisure use. My reasoning for this is due to the other provisions of the CDP, in particular Table 11.13 (Maximum car parking standards for non-residential developments)

where 'commercial leisure' is included as a subheading within the overall 'leisure' class, as well as Objective 10.9 (City Centre Leisure and Entertainment) which references restaurants, public houses and cinemas as 'leisure' facilities, notwithstanding such facilities included in the commercial leisure definition of Section 7.60.

- 8.7. Therefore, I am satisfied that the proposed change of use to a golf simulation centre is open to consideration as a secondary use within the subject site where it serves the local area, is at an appropriate scale where it is subsidiary to the main employment use and does not conflict with the primary zoning objective. Moreover, Section 12.3 of the CDP outlines that zoning objectives cannot be considered in isolation and must be read in association with all CDP objectives. Section 12.4 (Permitted Uses) of the CDP states that open to consideration uses may only be acceptable where they do not have a detrimental impact on the primary land use zoning objective, are consistent with the relevant objectives and criteria set out in the CDP and where there would not be any significant adverse impacts on-site or on the surrounding environment.
- 8.8. The Commission should note that I consider the relevant objectives and criteria of the CDP to be Section 7.60 (Commercial Leisure) and Objective 7.17 (Commercial Leisure) as well as Objective 7.14 (Technology and Office-based Industry) which seeks to support the development of high technology businesses in business and technology zones. I will now assess on whether the proposed development is in accordance with the criteria outlined above.

Scale & subsidiary to main employment use

- 8.9. The Commission should note that the proposed change of use will encompass the entire ground floor of the existing office building and will measure approximately 625sqm. The submitted plans illustrate that the ground floor comprises of two office units. The submitted section drawings also illustrate office space within the first floor, and therefore, this is the main employment use of the building. The applicant has stated that the first floor is also partially vacant with a partially occupied use comprising of an electronics laboratory. I note that no floor plans of the first floor were provided as part of the submitted documentation.
- 8.10. The Commission should note that the applicant states that the scale of the proposed change of use is appropriate on the basis that the facility would comprise of 6 no.

simulator bays which would only serve local demand (maximum capacity of 24-30 people at any one time) rather than it functioning as a large leisure destination, and the fact that the change of use would only represent less than 0.9% of the overall existing and permitted floorspace within the business park (c. 76,770sqm). The Commission should note that the submitted plans illustrate 8 no. simulator bays.

- 8.11. Notwithstanding the case put forward by the applicant, it is my view that the floor area of the wider business park should not be the determinative factor on the appropriateness of the scale and whether the proposed use is subsidiary to the main employment use. I consider the relevant issue to be whether the proposed leisure use would support the main employment use of the business park. Whilst the applicant states that the facility would only serve local demand which would support the employment base within the business park, it is my view that it would also serve a wider catchment. This is due to the specialist nature of the leisure use, as well as the facility being open to bookings from members of the public and its proposed operational hours during late evenings and weekends. It is my view that the proposed use would serve as an independent leisure facility within the business park and thus would not be subsidiary to the main employment use. Having regard to this, as well as the scale of the proposed change of use which encompasses the entire ground floor of the building resulting in the removal of offices, I consider that the proposed development would not be in accordance with the criteria set out in Section ZO 10.3 of the CDP.

Conflict with Primary Zoning Objective

- 8.12. The Commission should note that the primary zoning objective of ZO 10 seeks to provide for the creation and protection of office-based industry and enterprise, and facilitate opportunities for employment creation. As stated above, the proposed change of use from offices to commercial leisure will encompass the entire ground floor of the building. Whilst the applicant has stated that the unit has been vacant for some time, there has been no information provided with the application with regards to the duration of the vacancy or the overall vacancy rate of the business park. In contrast, the Commission should note that permission was granted in 2023 (ACP ref. 312565) for a 6,770sqm extension to the business park which suggests that there is continuing demand for office use associated with the primary zoning objective.

- 8.13. Having regard to the above, and on the basis of the information submitted with the application, I consider that the proposed change of use would conflict with the primary zoning objective of ZO 10 due to the loss of floorspace associated with office-based industry and enterprise and employment creation. Therefore, I consider that the proposed development would not be in accordance with Objective 7.14 (Technology and Office-based Industry) or with the open to consideration criteria set out in Section ZO 10.3 of the CDP.

Consistency with Other Relevant Development Plan Objectives

- 8.14. As stated within paragraph 8.8 above, I consider the relevant objectives and criteria of the CDP to be Section 7.60 (Commercial Leisure), Objective 7.17 (Commercial Leisure) and Objective 7.14 (Technology and Office-based Industry). I have determined above that the proposed development would not be consistent with Objective 7.14. I note that Section 7.60 (Commercial Leisure) recognises that commercial leisure facilities generate a high level of movement and are best located in places that offer the highest levels of accessibility to a range of transport modes, in particular public transport. I note that this is reflected in Objective 7.17 (Commercial Leisure) which seeks to encourage such activities within suitable locations throughout the city.
- 8.15. The Commission should note that the PA's reason for refusal considered that the proposed change of use did not accord with Objective 7.17 on the basis that the facility would serve a wider catchment than the local area and the area had low levels of accessibility, including public transport. I note the response from the applicant who states that a 'local area' is not defined in the CDP, however, the proposed facility will draw from a local catchment of a 15-20 minute travel radius encompassing the business park, Cork Airport Employment Zone and the South Cork suburban population. The applicant also states that the area is one of the most accessible locations in the city region being located adjacent to the country's second largest airport and its location on a priority public transport corridor as proposed within the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS).
- 8.16. As I have outlined above within paragraph 8.11, whilst I consider that the proposed facility would be utilised by employees within the business park, it would also be utilised by a wider catchment. Therefore, in order for the subject site to be considered

a suitable location for the proposed leisure use in accordance with Section 7.60 and Objective 7.17 of the CDP, as well as the criteria set out in Section 12.4 of the CDP, I consider that there must be a high level of accessibility in terms of public transport.

- 8.17. The Commission should note that the business park (Farmer's Cross bus stop) is served by Bus Éireann services (route nos. 225 and 226), and I note that the combined bus services are at a frequency of approximately every 30 minutes. Having reviewed National Transport Authority's (NTA) Bus Connects network map for the southeast, I note that the frequency will continue at 30 minutes. I have reviewed the NTA Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) analysis and note that the subject site is located within an area currently designated as a low level of public transport service. Having regard to this, to the current and proposed frequency of bus services serving the business park and to the nature of the proposed use which will serve a wider catchment than the business park, I am in agreement with the PA that the proposed development would be within a location that is not suitable due to the low level of accessibility by public transport. Accordingly, I consider that the proposed development would contravene Section 7.60 and Objective 7.17 (Commercial Leisure) and Section 12.4 (Permitted Uses) of the CDP in this regard.

Other Issues

- 8.18. I note that Section 12.4 also specifies that land uses open for consideration should not have any significant adverse impacts onsite or on the surrounding environment. I note that the PA did not raise any concerns regarding traffic safety or amenity concerns. I note that the applicant states that the use would not generate noise, vibration or emissions that would impact adjoining occupiers. The simulator bays would be acoustically contained and there would be no associated bar, amplified music or late night congregation. The applicant notes that there is only 1 other tenant in the building who rarely uses the space. The Commission should note that there were no third-party submissions on the application or appeal. Overall, I have no significant concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development in terms of traffic safety or surrounding amenity.

Precedent

- 8.19. The Commission should note that the applicant has stated that such leisure facilities are already found in employment areas within Cork and Dublin. The cases referenced

in Dublin relate to a separate jurisdiction and development plan and, therefore, I do not consider these cases to be comparable. With regards to the facilities referenced within Cork City, I note that no associated planning reference numbers are provided by the applicant. Having reviewed the PA's planning register, I note that there is no planning history associated with the facilities within Northpoint Business Park or Marina Commercial Park. Notwithstanding that each case is determined on its own merits, on the basis of the information submitted by the applicant, I am not satisfied that it has been demonstrated that precedent has been set by the PA for the location of such facilities within ZO 10 zoned lands.

Overall Conclusion on Principle

To conclude, whilst I acknowledge that the proposed change of use is open to consideration as a secondary use under Section ZO 10.3 of the CDP this is subject to compliance with criteria set out within Section 12.4 and ZO 10.3. It is my view that the proposed development would not be of an appropriate scale, would not be subsidiary to the main employment use and would conflict with the primary zoning objective of ZO 10 which seeks to provide for the creation and protection of high technology related office based industry and enterprise, and employment creation. Accordingly, I consider that the proposed development would not be consistent with Section 7.60 and Objectives 7.14 and 7.17 of the CDP. Therefore, it is my recommendation to the Commission that the PA's reason for refusal should be upheld.

Material Contravention

- 8.20. The Commission should note that the PA refused permission on the basis of a material contravention of ZO 10 and Section ZO 10.1 of the CDP. Based on my assessment and conclusion above, I concur with the conclusions of the PA in this regard. Therefore, if the Commission is minded to grant permission for the proposed development, and is in agreement that such a material contravention does arise, it may only grant permission if it considers it meets one of the criteria under Section 37(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Temporary Permission

- 8.21. The Commission should also note that the applicant has requested that it considers a temporary permission of 5 years if it has any concerns with the proposed change of use. However, having regard to my assessment and conclusions above regarding the

principle of the development, and to Section 7.5 (Temporary Permissions) of the Development Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007), I would consider it inappropriate to grant permission on a temporary basis.

9.0 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening

9.1. I have considered the project in light of the requirements of Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The subject site is located approximately 4.3km southwest of Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) (Site Code 004030). No nature conservation concerns were raised in the planning appeal.

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

- To the nature of the proposed development being a change of use and to the absence of physical works,
- To the nature of the site comprising of an existing building within an established business park and to the separation distance and level of intervening lands between the development and European sites in terms of potential ex-situ effects.
- Taking into account the screening determination of the PA.

9.3. I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European site, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. Likely significant effects are excluded, and therefore, AA under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, is not required.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

10.1. An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken with regard to the objectives set out in Article 4 of the European Union Water Framework Directive. Having considered the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, it is concluded that the proposal will not result in any risk of deterioration in the status of any water body, including surface waters (rivers and lakes), groundwater, transitional

waters, or coastal waters. This applies to both qualitative and quantitative status, and in respect of temporary and permanent effects.

- 10.2. In addition, the proposed development will not adversely affect the achievement of established environmental objectives, including the protection, maintenance, and improvement of water body status, as required under the Directive. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the requirements of Article 4.

11.0 Recommendation

It is my recommendation to the Commission that permission is **refused** for the reasons and considerations set out below.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the location of the proposed development on lands zoned 'ZO 10 Business and Technology' under the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028, where the main purpose of the zoning objective is to provide for the creation and protection of high technology related office-based industry and enterprise and to facilitate opportunities for employment creation, and where secondary uses such as leisure facilities where they serve the local area are open to consideration at an appropriate scale where they are subsidiary to the main employment uses and do not conflict with the primary zoning objective, to the nature and scale of the proposed commercial leisure use, and on the basis of the information submitted with the application and appeal, it is considered that the proposed development would materially contravene zoning objective ZO 10 of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 due to the loss of facilities for high technology office-based industry and enterprise and employment creation. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development would contravene Objective 7.14 (Technology and Office-based Industry) of the City Development Plan which seeks to support such development within business and technology zones. Furthermore, having regard to the location of the proposed development in an area that is not highly accessible by public transport, it is considered that the proposed commercial leisure use would not

be in accordance with Section 7.60 (Commercial Leisure) and Objective 7.17 (Commercial Leisure) of the City Development Plan which seek to locate such facilities in suitable locations that offer high levels of accessibility to a range of transport modes, in particular public transport. Overall, it is therefore considered that the proposed development would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Gary Farrelly
Planning Inspector

25th August 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-501371-CC-26
Proposed Development Summary	Change of Use of an office unit to a golf simulation centre with new signage and associated works
Development Address	Building 4400, Cork Airport Business Park, 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)?	
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?	
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)?	

Inspector: _____ Date: 25th August 2026