

Our Case Number: ACP-322958-25



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Anne Hanley
The Docks
Athlone
Co. Westmeath
N37F6W8

Date: 29 August 2025

Re: Athlone link road phase 2. Proposed link road, joining the Crescent Junction (R915) to Southern Station Road Junction
Athlone, County Westmeath

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

Please note that the proposed development shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved it with or without modifications.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

Lauren Griffin
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737244

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August 26th, 2025

An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
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Observation Re: ACP-322958-25
Athlone Link Road Phase 2 Joining The Crescent Junction (R915) to Coosan Point Road/
Southern Station Road Junction in Athlone, County Westmeath.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make an observation re: development for Athlone Link Road Phase 2, Coimisiún Pleanála case number ACP-322958-25.

I make this observation in relation to the implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development and with reference to Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and [Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities Nov. 2009 \(DHPLG/OPW, Nov 2009\)](#).

One of the core objectives of the Nov. 2009 Guidelines document and stated in the Westmeath County Development plan is to avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface run-off.

The Link Road Phase 2 development will increase the flood risk for our property and lands at Abbey Road, also known as Coosan Road, Athlone, Eircode N37AY20,

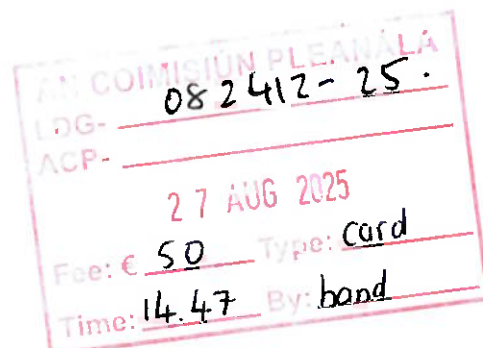
Engineer's report is attached.

Thank you for your consideration of this observation.

Kind regards,

Anne Hanley

Anne Hanley





**CIVIL ENGINEERING AND SURVEYING
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Ms. Anne Hanley
The Docks'
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath.

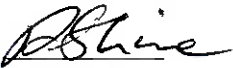
25th August 2025

**Re: Athlone Link Road Phase 2 and Extension to Bus Eireann Depot
An Comisiún Pleanála Reference No. ACP-322958-25**

Dear Ms. Hanley,

I attach my report on the above proposed development. It includes two maps to assist with interpretation of various elements of referred to in the report.
If you have any enquiries or require any clarifications, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,


Patrick Shine



Proposed Athlone Link Road Phase 2 and Proposed Reconfiguration and Extension of Athlone Bus Eireann Depot Yard

Coimisiun Pleanála Reference Number ACP-322958-25

and

Observations and possible implications for flooding on downstream Lands and Properties, including Hanleys Property at Abbey Road

The following observations and assessments are based on a review of the relevant reports and drawings submitted as part of this Part 10 Planning Application and on an inspection of Hanleys Property which is located at the lower end of the catchment on which the stream draining the subject development site outfalls to the River Shannon

1.0 Proposed Development Site – Link Road and Bus Depot Extension

- General Description

The proposed development site comprises a substantial relatively permeable area of vegetation, extending to 60 -75% of the site. The remainder of the site, towards its eastern end, comprises a bus depot and surrounding bus park and access road from the public road, the Southern Station Road. The existing stream, which drains the site, and some surrounding areas runs in a generally east-west direction through the centre of the site and discharges to a culvert under the Southern Station Road at the western boundary of the site. The stream continues in this direction as an open channel, except for culvert crossings under Coosan Point Road and Abbey Road, respectively, to the River Shannon at the lower end of its catchment area, which is approximately 350m from the western boundary of the subject site.

The extensive hard surface area between the northern boundary of the site and the railway to the north of the site, and between Coosan Point Road to the west and Newtown Terrace to the east, includes the train station car park, the station building, a bus parking area and Southern Station Road, includes approximately 13,000m² of impermeable surface. The surface water drainage route/s from this area has not been determined.

2.0 The Proposed Development

The proposed development, comprising the proposed Link Road and an extended paved bus depot extension, would result in a relatively impermeable paved surface on virtually all of the development site. A wetland area including a retention pond and surrounding vegetation, c. 400m² is provided for at the western corner of the site.

The proposed Link Road will extend across the entire southern end of the site. The bus depot extension will extend across the site from the edge of the Link Road on the south side to the edge of an embankment along the site's northern boundary, i.e. to a line varying between 4.0m and 7.5m from the northern boundary of the site.

The link Road, the bus depot extension combined with the existing bus depot at the eastern end of the site will result in a substantial increase in storm water runoff from the area to the stream flowing through the centre of the site. The design proposals include a number of retention measures.



3.0 Storm Water Retention Measures

The Drainage Design Report, Section 2.2, Surface Water Drainage Design Options, considers two options, 1. Infiltration to Groundwater, and 2, Discharge to the existing storm water drain to the west. The report recommends Option 2 and accordingly recommends replicating existing run-off rates by providing on-site attenuation together with a restrictor to ensure run-off is controlled to pre-development or local authority dictated run-off rates. The report recommends that drainage attenuation system should be sized to accommodate all storm durations and intensities up to the 1:30 year storm without surface water leaving the site. Drainage Drawing No.120278-501 submitted with the application indicates attenuation measures including hydro-brakes at two locations and an attenuation tank on the bus depot extension site. Section 2.3 of the Report

states that discharge from the development site will be controlled by a hydro-brake to limit flows equivalent to greenfield run-off and that lagoons will be sized to accommodate surface water run-off arising from the new hard paved surface areas for up to and including the 1:30 year rainfall event plus an allowance for climate change (20%). It states that exceptional events in excess of the 30-year storm may overtop the discharge control (hydro-brake) and result in short term uncontrolled flows towards the culvert. The report states that this will not impact the surrounding residential dwellings. However, the surrounding residential dwellings, including St. Francis Terrance and The Manse, are on the upstream side of the catchment in relation to the proposed development site. The concern is the downstream part of the catchment from the point at which the surface water discharges from the site at the culvert under Southern Station Road to the final discharge at the outfall point to the River Shannon c. 350m west of the site. In its Flood Risk Management (FRM) General Guidance, the OPW states that reference should be made to the Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management, (DHPLG/OPW, Nov. 2009), issued under Section 28 of the Planning Acts, to ensure that the key principles of flood risk management and sustainable planning are adopted. The guidelines set out a three Stage Flood Risk Assessment process for the Planning Authorities to identify whether a flood risk may exist, and the degree to which it is an issue, and what assessment to a scale proportionate to the risk should be carried out. In an overview of this three-stage process, the OPW describes stage 1 as: 'Stage 1 Flood risk identification – To identify whether there may be any flooding or surface water management issues related to a plan area or proposed development site that may warrant further investigation'.

However, surface water drainage issues in the part of the catchment downstream of the subject site do not appear to have been considered.

4.0 Flood Defence Works in Athlone

Athlone has a well-documented history of fluvial flooding. The Athlone Flood Alleviation Scheme (AFAS), is managed by the OPW. The scheme comprises eight flood cells, including the Marine View Cell (Cell 5). The outfall to the River Shannon from the stream draining the subject development site is included in the Marine View Cell.

The flood defences in the town are designed to an Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) of 1%, i.e. to protect against a 1:100-year flood event. The flood defence wall at the Marine View Cell is design to a level of 37.243m MHD and has a capping to level 37.243m MHD. The flood defences for the Marine View Cell were designed prior to the proposals to design an extensive impermeable area at the bus station.



5.0 Downstream Catchment – Hanleys Property

Hanleys property, which is located in the AFAS Marine View Cell, has the following characteristics which increase the risk of flooding on the property:

- (a) The property is low lying; it is located at the extreme low end of the stream catchment – the stream outfall point to the River Shannon is on the southwest corner of the property.
- (b) The property which was impacted in 2009 and 2015 by 1:100 year floods (AEP 1% and 1.1% respectively) is located in a flood prone area, (refer to attached Map No. 1, - *extract from OPW Floodmap*).
- (c) The property comprises an extensive impermeable area which extends to 72% of the property area. The impermeable surface includes roof area of c.1736m², and bitumen surfaced yard of c.1764m². The remaining 28% of the property area comprises a mixture of a compacted clay and concrete surface and also a grass surface, which have varying degrees of permeability. Approximately 40% of the grass surface, i.e. 420m², is located outside, (the River Shannon side), of a partially constructed flood defence wall.
- (d) The floor level of the extensive store building, (area of 1736m² (18,686 sq.ft.)) varies between 50mm and 180mm above ground level and consequently the building is at risk of flooding at this low-lying location.
- (e) The proposed development site has an impermeable surface area between 4 to 5 times greater than the area of Hanleys property, (refer to Map 2 attached).
- (f) The flood defence wall on the property, when completed, will incorporate a headwall at the point of outfall of the stream which drains the entire catchment area including the area which is the subject of this planning application. It is proposed to culvert the c.65m length of the stream which is located on Hanleys property in a 1.2m diameter pipe. It is proposed to incorporate a non-return valve or flap valve in the 1.2m culvert at the outfall point.

6.0 Assessment of Hanleys Property and Flood Risk

Therefore, in the event of extreme rainfall events of durations and intensities exceeding the 1:30 year flood event, the lands and properties downstream of the discharge point from the site will be at risk of flooding. If such extreme rainfall events coincide with the closure of the non-return valve at the stream outfall point and sustained high water at levels on the River Shannon prevent the opening of the non-return valve, Hanleys property and surrounding properties to the east of Hanleys will be at risk of immediate and extremely damaging local flooding and, from a commercial perspective, potentially catastrophic flooding. This scenario cannot be discounted in the light of the unpredictability of severe weather events associated with climate change.

7.0 Conclusion

It is likely to be inevitable that the extensive impermeable paving proposed for the Link Road and Bus Depot Extension Site will have a significant impact on the volumes of surface water run-off from this relatively small and confined catchment area. The attenuation measures proposed, while practical in most development scenarios, have stated limitations when considered in the context of the downstream catchment area. It is recommended that additional preventative and protection measures be considered. A review of the storm return period and an increase in attenuation capacity in addition to a permanent automatic pump installation at the outfall location at the River Shannon, are measures that should be considered.

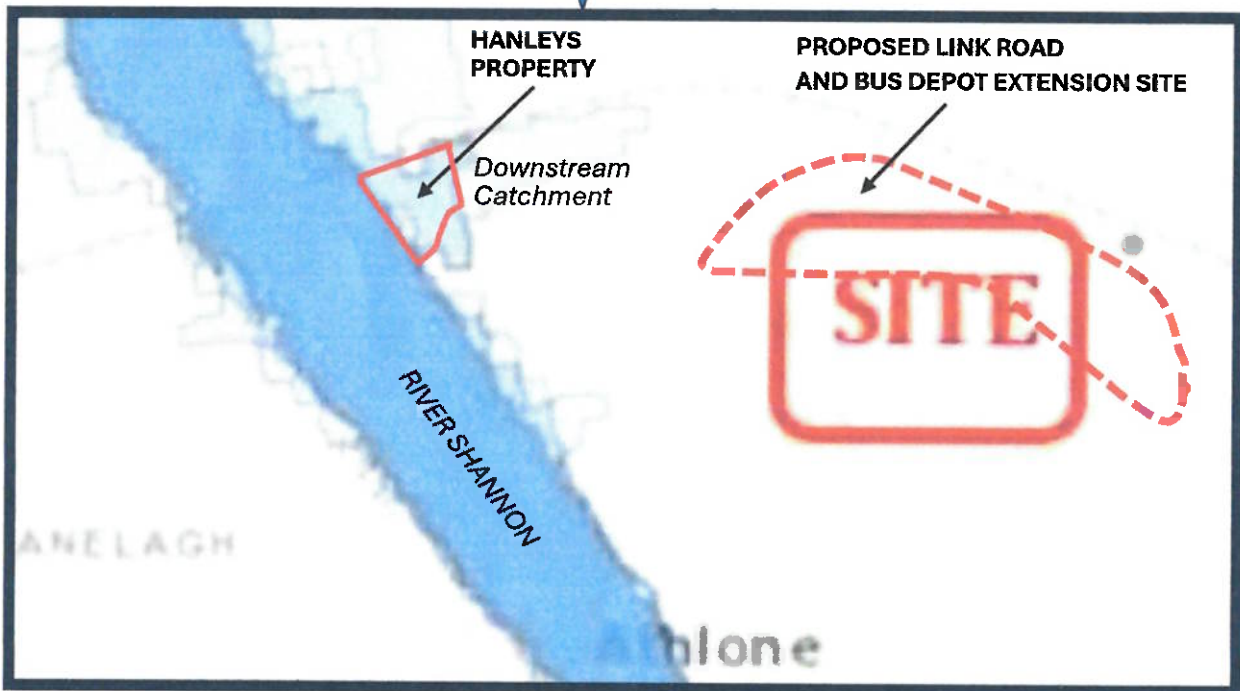

Patrick Shine

Chartered Civil Engineer

25th August 2025



Figure 1: OPW Floodmaps Extract
From Drainage Design Report Section 2.1



Extract from above section of OPW Floodmap with Notes added

