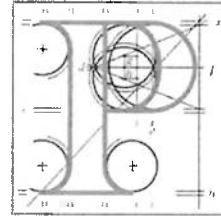


Our Case Number: ACP-324414-26



**An
Coimisiún
Pleanála**

Fáilte Ireland
c/o Yvonne Jackson
National Tourism Development Authority
88 - 95 Amiens Street
Dublin 1
D01 WR86

Date: 12 August 2026

Re: The Proposed Development of the 'Nore River Facilities Kilkenny'
Johns Street Lower, Collegepark, Kilkenny City, Co. Kilkenny

Dear Sir / Madam,

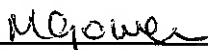
An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above-mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

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,


Muirín Gowen
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8049323

AA02

Teil
Glao Áitiúil
Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

Tel
LoCall
Website
Email

(01) 858 8100
1800 275 175
www.pleanala.ie
communications@pleanala.ie

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Muirin Gowen

From: Yvonne Jackson <Yvonne.Jackson@failteireland.ie>
Sent: Tuesday 11 August 2026 11:13
To: LAPS
Subject: Case Ref: JP10.324414 Submission Fáilte Ireland
Attachments: Case Ref: JP10.324414 Submission Fáilte Ireland.pdf

You don't often get email from yvonne.jackson@failteireland.ie. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

Dear Secretary,

Fáilte Ireland would like to take the opportunity to make a submission to **Case Ref: JP10.324414** re the proposed development of the 'Nore River Facilities Kilkenny'.

The attached submission has been prepared by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

I would be grateful if you could send a reply email acknowledging receipt of submission.

Regards,

Yvonne

Yvonne Jackson

Product Development-Environment & Planning Support | Fáilte Ireland

88-95 Amiens Street, Dublin 1, D01 WR86
M +353 (0)86 0357590



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**Fáilte
Ireland**

**Turasóireacht Náisiúnta
An tÚdara Eorbartha**
National Tourism
Development Authority

The Secretary,
An Coimisiún Pleanála,
64, Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 V902

By email to: laps@pleanala.ie

11th August 2026

Re: L.A. Dev.-AA Application JP10.324414

Notice Of Application for Approval to An Coimisiún Pleanála, Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) for proposed construction of the Nore River Facilities Kilkenny.

Construction of a water-based Activity Facility consisting of showers, changing cubicles, toilets, storage spaces, including a new pontoon and associated site works at the Nore River Facilities, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny City.

Dear Secretary,

I refer to the planning application reference number JP10.324414 which has been lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála for the proposed Fáilte Ireland Platforms for Growth: Facility Centres for Water Sports Activities at the Nore River Facilities.

Background

In order to be recognised internationally as a best-in-class activity destination, it is crucial that Ireland invests in compelling activity infrastructure to improve the visitor experience and at the same time, building the capacity of the activity providers to ensure the Irish tourism experience meets and exceeds visitor expectations. With a temperate climate, Ireland has the potential to offer high-quality outdoor experiences for a minimum of nine months of the year, however, the quality of activity experience currently falls behind international standards due to the lack of adequate visitor facilities and an ad hoc approach to the delivery of activity experiences.

In April 2021, Fáilte Ireland announced an investment to develop state-of-the-art facilities for outdoor water-based activities. This investment scheme, which falls under the Government's Project Ireland 2040 strategy, and is unlike any other Fáilte Ireland project as it explicitly targets 'platforms' or project types that have the greatest potential to grow tourism across Ireland throughout the year. These facilities developed in partnership between Fáilte Ireland and Local Authorities, will support the local economy and the outdoor activity sector by significantly enhancing the overall visitor



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An tÚdara Eorbartha**
National Tourism
Development Authority

experience, providing new business opportunities in local communities and allowing for the extension of the tourism season beyond the traditional summer months. The funding will be used to build world-class facility centres at locations across the country where water-based activities are a key visitor attraction and Kilkenny City is one of the locations to benefit from this strategic investment.

Certain types of community groups such as kayaking, swim or other water-based clubs will use the facilities on a regular basis. These users are likely to be drawn from the local area. The water-based activity facility centre will provide much needed facilities for these local communities nearby, allowing them to enjoy water-based activities, extending their own activity beyond the summer months, and creating a focal point for locals and groups to meet, be active and socialise together. Indeed, it is the intention of Fáilte Ireland through this investment scheme to create a sense of ownership among the local community of these facilities.

Policy

The National Tourism Policy Statement, entitled “A New Era for Irish Tourism”, was published by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment in December 2025 and provides the strategic framework for tourism development in Ireland to 2031. The policy explicitly recognises the importance of a diverse range of outdoor activities, including walking, hiking, cycling, angling, cruising, water sports, boating and other nature-based experiences, as key elements of Ireland's tourism offering and future tourism development. While much of our attractiveness as a tourism destination is down to the natural environment, since the early 1990s, the State has supported the development and improvement of our place by investing in our physical visitor attractions, visitor infrastructure, and facilities for visitor activities. It is considered the proposed development is critically important to implementing on current national tourism policy.

Fáilte Ireland has developed a five-year Destination Experience Development Plan for Kilkenny, launched in April 2024. A key project of the plan is to strengthen the profile of outdoor tourism activities in Kilkenny and in particular on-the-water experiences through the delivery of shared water sports facilities at Nore River Facilities. This seeks to maximise the local tourism opportunity through the development of the platforms for growth facilities centre as the basis for developing year-round outdoor recreation activity. From the research undertaken and community engagement as part of the plan preparation, a recurring theme is that the use of the water and outdoors offers a strong opportunity to Kilkenny City to develop into a much more sustainable destination offering more than what is currently approx. 10 weeks of the year, when businesses are open fulltime. This would also align with a strategic product development objective of the Irelands Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027 which in partnership with local authorities seeks to deliver a suite of water sports facility centres across the region (both coastal and inland) to enhance and expand the quality and seasonality of water-based activities.

Furthermore, the proposed development would be consistent with Regional Park Objective 8A of the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 which reads as follows;

“To undertake a feasibility study to determine the optimal location for, and to develop, a water sports hub on the River Nore”.

Scheme Design

The concept and strategy behind the scheme's design-led approach is to appoint one design team that will develop universal and standardised design options for all of the Water-based Activity Facility Centres to be delivered under the scheme, but which are adapted to suit individual location and site specifications (size, dimensions, capacity, etc.) as well as the surrounding environment and landscape. This has allowed for one exemplar design with a consistent function and form, and one material palette, specified to individual sites to be developed. If all water sports facilities are granted permission and built, there will be up to 19 of these buildings spread throughout Ireland.

As a condition of the investment grant scheme, all new build facilities are required to conform to nearly zero energy building standards and be appropriately and sensitively designed to integrate with the site's natural environment and surrounding location. The concept behind the scheme's collaborative design-led approach is to drive sustainability and innovation, create efficiencies, leverage economies of scale and deliver a consistent, world class experience for visitors. The design project for the Water-based Activity Centre in Kilkenny City proposes an opportunity to revitalise an under-utilised, river-adjacent urban site within the city centre, and to ensure that it provides suitable and accessible facilities for all, which will incorporate all design elements of the exemplar design. It is intended that this investment will be a catalyst for further inward investment and consideration of the importance and the value of urban sites along waterfronts. This shall be transformative for both the community and visitors alike.

This investment grant scheme proposes that following the initial capital investment by Fáilte Ireland in the construction and fit out of the water sports facility centre, the Local Authority will own, operate, maintain, and reinvest in the facility.

Environmental Best Practice

Fáilte Ireland developed a four phased approach to ensuring that environmental protection and promotion form an integral element of the development, assessment and implementation of the Platforms for Growth and resulting in a proposed facility for Kilkenny City. In developing this approach, we believe that the Platform is in line with the VICE Model for Sustainable Tourism Development. It has aided the applicants in choosing suitable sites, contributed to suitable design, siting, construction and operation of facilities. Also, the development of environmental mitigation and monitoring that will be implemented during both development and operation phases of the facilities.

Summary

The proposed development at Nore River Facilities which is located in Ireland's Ancient East will not only strengthen the appeal of Kilkenny with strong outdoor water-based activities and facilities, but

it will also create new opportunities for activity operators in the area. This will benefit local jobs and businesses alike. It will also entice visitors to stay longer in the area by adding significantly to the range of things to see and do, increasing dwell time and visitor dispersion across the destination.

Therefore, from a tourism perspective we are fully supportive of the proposed development in line with all proper planning and environmental requirements being met.

Yours sincerely,



Manager of Environment and Planning, Fáilte Ireland