

Planning Report

Part X (Section 175) and Part XAB (Section 177AE) Planning Application for the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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The Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just
Transition Fund



DOCUMENT DETAILS

Client: **Roscommon County Council**

Project Title: **Part X (Section 175) and Part XAB (Section 177AE) Planning Application for the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park**

Project Number: **241220-c**

Document Title: **Planning Report**

Document File Name: **2026.08.24 - Hodson Bay - Planning Report - Final - 241220-c**

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Rev	Status	Date	Author(s)	Approved By
01	Draft	13.10.2025	ML/AS	AS
02/03	Draft	28.07.2026	AS	AS
04	Draft for RCC Feedback	05.08.2026	AS	RCC (Client)
05/06	Final Draft for RCC Sign off	13.08.2026 / 18.08.2026	AS	RCC (Client)
07	Final Report	21.08.2026	AS	RCC (Client)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

This Planning Report has been prepared by MKO, for the proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project, submitted on behalf of Roscommon County Council (RCC). Waterways Ireland (WI) are a key stakeholder in the delivery of this project, and the design and project stages are supported by Fáilte Ireland under the EU Just Transition Fund – Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme.

The proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park is envisioned as a landmark amenity at the established tourism destination of Hodson Bay that will enhance and celebrate the exceptional natural setting of Lough Ree, creating new opportunities for recreation, community engagement and appreciation of the lakeshore environment. Through the sensitive development of high-quality public spaces and visitor facilities, the project seeks to establish an enduring legacy for the region, improving access to the waterfront and strengthening the connection between people and place. Designed with future generations in mind, the Waterfront Park will contribute to the long-term social, recreational and tourism value of Hodson Bay while respecting and responding to its unique landscape setting.

The Project consists of the following elements (please refer to the development description under Section 1.3 for a detailed description of the proposed works):

- **Water Sports Pavilion (WSP) Development**
- **Marina Redevelopment and Extension**
- **Public Realm Upgrades**
- **Active Travel and Site Access Improvements**
- **All associated ancillary site development infrastructure**

Planning Drawings HB-RKD-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1020 to HB-RKD-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1023 provide an overview of the Proposed Development site layout.

The planning application will be submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála in line with Sections 175 (3) and 177AE (3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ('the PDA').

The full description of the proposed development can be found in **Section 1.3** of this report, as well as the public notices.

1.2 The Project Team

The Proposal has been carefully considered and designed by a multi-disciplinary design team, who have prepared a comprehensive planning application in line with the requirements under Section 175 and 177AE of the PDA for submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP). The multi-disciplinary Design Team comprises of:

- MKO – Planning and Environmental Consultants
- CIVIC – Civil and Traffic Engineering Consultants
- RKD – Architects
- OKRA – Landscape Architects
- CHL – Economic and Tourism Consultants
- OHAC – Access Consultants
- Arch Henderson – Marin Design
- Aegis Safety – Project Supervisor Design Process

In addition to this Planning Report, a complete schedule of the documents, technical reports and drawings is summarised in the Cover Letter and submitted with this application. This Planning Application is also accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) in line with the requirements of the PDA.

Project Description

The Project Description as per the Public Notices is set out below:

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 175(4) and Section 177AE (4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), notice is hereby given that Roscommon County Council is seeking the approval of An Coimisiún Pleanála for the development of a waterfront park and marina development over an area measuring approximately 9.0 hectares (ha) at Hodson Bay, Townland of Barrymore, Co. Roscommon.

The proposed development consists of the following elements:

1. Water Sports Pavilion Development: This includes:

- Demolition of the existing water sports building and adjacent public toilet block
- Temporary relocation of the existing Water Sports Facility during the construction period of the Water Sports Pavilion
- Construction of a new 'Water Sports Pavilion', which incorporates the following elements:
 - 1 no. 1-storey café
 - 1 no. 1-storey Water Sports Pavilion building consisting of a briefing/mixed use space, staff canteen, office, storage spaces, changing facilities, showers and toilets
 - 1 no permanent Plaza Canopy Structure
 - 10 no. seasonally dismountable marquee structures providing for changing facilities during the peak tourism season, and multifunctional uses as required during shoulder season
 - 1 no. 1-storey maintenance building
 - External showers and bin stores
 - An enclosed plaza space which can be closed off by 3 no. gates or left open to the public.

2. Marina Redevelopment and Extension: This includes the redevelopment of the existing Waterways Ireland operated marina at Hodson Bay comprising an extension to the existing breakwater and the creation of a jetty extension for boats to berth. The redevelopment and extension consist of:

- Expansion of the existing marina providing for a new floating breakwater secured by guided piles and connected to the existing breakwater structure by a gangway
- Upgrades to the marina utilities to include provision of electricity hook-up, potable water and foul water pump-out for marina users
- Provision of improved access for non-motorised recreational water activities such as canoeing, kayaking and paddle boarding
- Provision of c. 29 no. additional berths, resulting in a total capacity of hosting c. 59 berths for cruisers and visiting watercraft
- Provision of a 1-storey marina pavilion with toilets and showers.

3. Public Realm Upgrades: This includes:

- Construction of a playground, nature observation space, picnic areas, benches, bicycle storage & service areas, sauna pods, wellness meadow, swimming canopy and events spaces
- Development of a continuous promenade pathway along the lakeshore along with secondary connection path
- Provision of extensive natural landscaping to ensure the proposed development integrates with the natural environment, including planting of native trees and shrubs throughout the site
- Provision of a flexible public space to accommodate programmed activities and events while serving a functional amenity for waterfront activities
- Provision of a waterfront promenade pathway to facilitate public access to the waterfront at key public areas with viewpoints incorporating rest area, secondary pathway and suitable public lighting designed to minimise disturbance to wildlife.

4. Active Travel and Site Access Improvements: The proposed development includes:

- Alterations and upgrades to the L2020 Local Road to provide for a 3m wide shared cycle / pedestrian pathway along the length of the L2020 from the N61 National Road junction to the Hodson Bay Marina. Works will include:
 - i. Reduction of the existing road carriageway width at locations along a section of the L2020 to facilitate the provision of a shared cycle / pedestrian pathway
 - ii. Widening & repurposing of the existing footpath along a section of the western side of the L2020 to form the shared cycle / pedestrian pathway
 - iii. Widening & repurposing of the existing footway along a section of the eastern side of the L2020 to form the shared cycle / pedestrian pathway
 - iv. Upgrade of existing public lighting scheme along the L2020
 - v. Provision of new road & pedestrian signage to include regulatory, warning, directional, wayfinding & information signage
 - vi. Provision of new road marking
 - vii. Provision of 2 no. bus set down locations adjacent to the Water Sports Pavilion.
- Implementation of traffic calming measures along the L2020 Local Road accessing the site including vertical deflection ramps & raised crossings at key pedestrian crossing locations
- Creation of a pedestrian priority environment resulting in the re-location of 57 no. car parking spaces from the lakelfront areas to improve landscape and visual context of the site
- Alterations to existing car parking & provision of new carparking at Hodson Bay to include the following:
 - i. Provision of 151 no. additional car parking spaces to increase the number of parking spaces to 504 no. spaces.
 - ii. The provision of 30 no. EV (Electric Vehicle) spaces, 28 no. accessible parking spaces, 3 no. bus parking bays, and 3 no. boat trailer parking bays.
 - iii. Provision of safe pedestrian connection to & from carpark areas.
 - iv. Upgrade of existing & provision of new public lighting to carpark areas.
 - v. Provision of signage & road marking to carparks.

5. Ancillary works: The proposed development includes all associated and ancillary development and works including:

- Site clearance, boundary treatments, associated public lighting, bin storage, hard and soft landscaping, site drainage upgrades including SuDS measures, connections to existing utilities to include foul and surface water drainage, water supply, electrical & telecommunications networks.
- Boundary treatments involve upgrades to the existing golf course boundary safety netting (between 3m to 20m in height) and fencing in sections where the boundary is altered to accommodate the proposed development and maintain public safety.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development. The application documentation, including the EIAR and NIS, (which more comprehensively describe the nature and location of the proposed development), may be inspected free of charge, or purchased on payment of a specified fee (which fee shall not exceed the reasonable cost of making such copy), during public opening hours from 2nd September to 16th of October 2026 at the following locations and times:

- The Office of An Coimisiún Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 V902 (between 9.15am and 5.30 pm Monday to Friday).
- Áras an Chontae Roscommon, County Roscommon, F42 VR98 (between 9.30 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 3.30 pm Monday to Friday).

- The application (including EIAR and NIS) may also be viewed/downloaded on the following website:
<https://www.roscommoncoco.ie/en/services/tourism/eujif-projects/hodson-bay-waterfront-park/planning-documents/>

Submissions or observations may be made on payment of the prescribed fee of €50 (with the exception of certain prescribed bodies). Prescribed bodies can make their submissions/observations by hand/post, or by email to laps@pleanala.ie. Submissions/observations can be made by hand/post to the offices of the Commission (An Coimisiún Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 V902), or through the Commission's website through the following link: <https://online.pleanala.ie/en-ie/sid/observation>, during the above-mentioned period.

All submissions / observations should be received by the Commission on or before 5.30 p.m. on the 16th of October 2026 - relating to:

- The implications of the proposed development, if carried out, for proper planning and sustainable development in the area concerned,
- The likely effects on the environment of the proposed development, if carried out, and
- The likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European Site(s), if carried out.

An Coimisiún Pleanála (the Commission) may give approval to the application for development with or without conditions or may refuse the application for development.

For completeness, it is noted that Section 177AE (15) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provides that:

"Where a proposed development to which this section [s.177AE] applies is also required to be submitted to the [Commission] under section 175, it shall be sufficient for the applicant to make one application to the [Commission] provided that the applicant complies with this section and section 175 and in such a case the [Commission] shall issue one decision in relation to the application under this section and section 175."

A person may question the validity of any such decision by An Coimisiún Pleanála by way of an application for judicial review under, *inter alia*, Order 84 and Order 103 of the Rules of the Superior Courts (as amended) (available at www.courts.ie), pursuant to, *inter alia*, the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (as amended) - see, *inter alia*, Part 9 and s.303A of the said 2024 Act (as amended) (noting, *inter alia*, that s.303A was introduced by the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026 and was commenced on 12 August 2026 - pursuant to Commencement Order SI 414/2026). Practical information on the judicial review mechanism can be accessed under the heading Legal Notices – Judicial Review Notice on the An Coimisiún Pleanála website www.pleanala.ie or on the Citizens Information website www.citizensinformation.ie.

Figure 1-1 below provides an overview of the extent of Proposed Development Works (Redline Boundary).

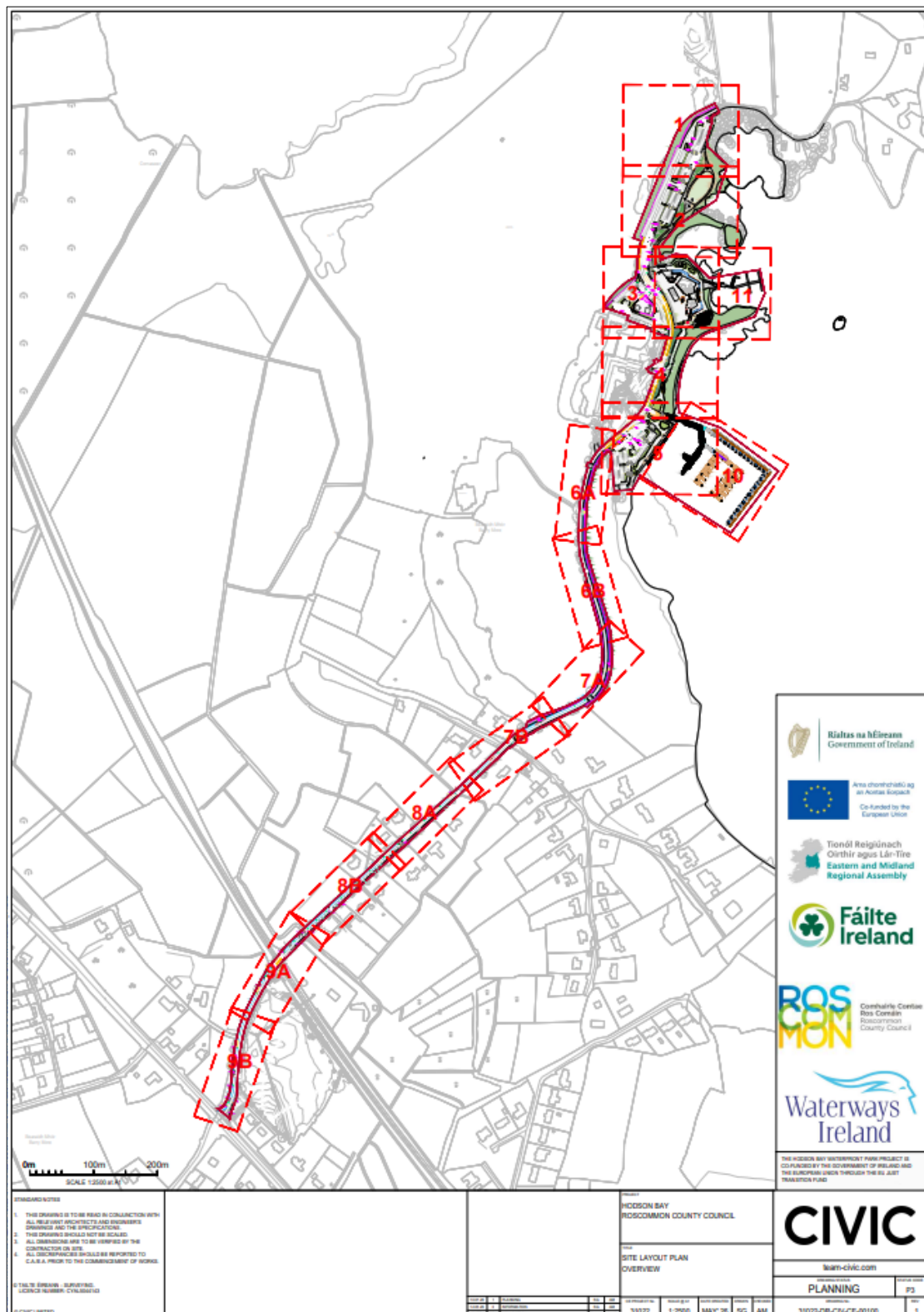


Figure 1-1 Application Site / Redline Boundary (Source: CIVIC Engineers Drawing No. 31022-DR-CIV-CE-00100)

Planning Drawings HB-RKD-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1020 to HB-RKD-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1023 (Architect Drawings) and 31022-DR-CIV-CE-00100 to 31022-DR-CIV-CE-00111 (Engineer Drawings) provide an overview of the Proposed Development site layout / works.

1.4

Rationale for the Proposed Development

The Hodson Bay Waterfront Park has been conceived by RCC and Waterways Ireland as an opportunity to develop the tourism sector in County Roscommon through the enhancement of outdoor recreation facilities at the established tourism destination of Hodson Bay. Building on the recognised appeal of Hodson Bay, the project will create an exceptional waterfront destination that strengthens the connection between people and place, enhance access to the lake and its amenities, and deliver a high-quality public asset whose benefits will be experienced by local communities and visitors for generations to come. The proposed facilities, will modernise and broaden the tourism offering at Hodson Bay, providing for improved access to the waterfront, augmented water sports facilities which can accommodate a greater number of visitors in a comfortable environment and the provision of enhanced access by boat, bicycle and on foot through, an extended marina and safer active travel facilities. The proposal is therefore consistent with the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 (RCDP) interconnected objectives of supporting tourism development, outdoor and water-based recreation, sustainable economic activity, improved accessibility and connectivity, quality placemaking and the responsible utilisation of the county's natural assets.

The design and planning stages of this project are part financed by the European Union Just Transition Fund which aims to address employment, economic, social and environmental impacts that come with the shift away from carbon-intense activities in the Midlands Region of Ireland. The Hodson Bay Waterfront Park has been conceived by RCC and Waterways Ireland as a transformative tourism and recreation project that will reposition Hodson Bay as a premier waterfront destination on Lough Ree and the River Shannon. Through significant investment in infrastructure, the project will enhance the visitor experience, expand opportunities for outdoor recreation, and create a vibrant public space that can be enjoyed by local communities and visitors alike.

Hodson Bay Waterfront Park is a coherent multi-dimensional proposition which aims to transform the lakeside offerings at Hodson Bay through investment in best-in-class infrastructure. The scheme proposed is not simply an upgrade of existing facilities but rather a radical re-imaging of its lakeside location as a significant addition to the leisure and tourism offering in the region. It presents added value opportunities for range of visitors and regular users including on and in water access and quality social and leisure amenities.

Tourism is recognised within the RCDP as an important contributor to the economic development of County Roscommon. The RCDP seeks to support the sustainable development of the county's tourism assets and recognises the considerable potential associated with its landscape, waterways, recreation resources and natural environment. Hodson Bay is particularly well placed to contribute to these objectives because the attractiveness and identity of the destination are intrinsically connected with Lough Ree and water-based recreation. Accordingly, the proposal represents tourism infrastructure with a wider economic development function, supporting the RCDP's objective of harnessing the county's assets to create sustainable economic activity and employment.

Therefore, with the redevelopment of the Hodson Bay waterfront, RCC will realise the following objectives;

- Enhancing a visitor experience at Hodson Bay: address capacity constraints at the existing marina, improve the visitor experience and dwell time through the provision of the high-quality facilities proposed.
- Providing a redeveloped water sports/activity centre and additional facilities to provide a unique inclusive play experience to appeal to visitors of all ages at Hodson Bay.
- Enhancing opportunities to be active in nature by improving access to outdoor recreation and strengthening both physical and visual connections with Lough Ree and the River Shannon.
- Creating a better interface with the Hodson Bay waterfront and improvement of the quality of the buildings and public space.

Hodson Bay is a strategically significant location within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands with strong potential to develop as an important amenity and tourism asset. The water sports pavilion and marina redevelopment will provide the physical infrastructure necessary to broaden participation in water-based activities and improve the quality of facilities available to visitors and recreational users. This strengthening of the recreational offer will increase the attractiveness of Hodson Bay as a destination, encourage longer visitor dwell times and support repeat visitation. The economic benefits are therefore not confined to the operation of the proposed facilities themselves. An enhanced destination can generate additional expenditure within accommodation, hospitality, recreation and other tourism-related businesses in Hodson Bay and the wider Roscommon area.

The proposal is directly aligned with Fáilte Ireland's place-based destination-development approach and the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023–2027, which seeks sustainable growth of the visitor economy, greater regional spread of tourism benefits, longer stays, high-quality employment and enhancement of the natural environment. Fáilte Ireland specifically supports infrastructure that opens up rivers, lakes and the outdoors for walking, cycling and water-based activity. The Hodson Bay project creates precisely this type of compelling, connected outdoor experience and can increase stay time, visitor spend and year-round use while strengthening local tourism businesses. The existing amenities at Hodson Bay already make a significant contribution to tourism and economic activity in County Roscommon. The proposed development will build on this success by delivering a flagship waterfront destination with the capacity to attract new visitor markets, accommodate increased boating traffic and generate additional tourism spending across the local economy.

The Hodson Bay location has proved very attractive for groups and individuals seeking an exciting and entertaining experience on the water. There has been a particular interest amongst school and corporate groups as the facilities are ideal for this market. The Proposed Development offers an opportunity to reimagine the existing water sports facilities at Hodson Bay. The existing facility has been successful in establishing the location as a water sports area, but the facilities are not at the standard currently expected at quality water parks. Currently there are several tourism facilities at this site including the Hodson Bay Hotel, a water sports facility operated by Bay Sports, a number of mobile sauna pods, a marina and the Athlone Golf Club. Hodson Bay is already an established visitor and recreation destination of significant scale. Roscommon County Council's Hodson Bay Constraints Study records approximately 80,000 visitors to water sports at Hodson Bay in 2020, compared with approximately 40,000 in 2016.

The *Demand Analysis & Projection* carried out by CHL & Associates in their *Tourism and Economic Study* (submitted with this planning application) sets out an estimated demand for approximately 168,000 visitors annually at full operation (based on conservative penetration rates and benchmarking) of the proposed development. This established visitor base demonstrates both the existing tourism significance of Hodson Bay and the potential for appropriately scaled investment in marina, water sports, public realm and active travel infrastructure to increase visitor dwell time, broaden the range of activities available and generate greater economic benefit from existing and future visitation.

The Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project is directly outlined in the County Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2025-2030 as a 'Strategic Vision Project' which has the potential to substantially grow tourism in the County. The RCDP additionally supports greater access to tourism sites and attractions and the development of sustainable tourism. The RCDP specifically supports the development of facilities supporting outdoor recreation tourism attractions such as walking and cycling routes. The development of tourism, recreational and leisure facilities at Hodson Bay is supported in the RCDP through the inclusion of land use zoning specifically for 'Leisure Tourism / Amenity'.

It is considered that the Hodson Bay Waterfront Project is a critical component in the continued development of County Roscommon's tourism sector. By building upon existing tourism assets and enhancing the area's role as a gateway destination, the project will establish Hodson Bay as a premier waterfront attraction within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The proposed development will strengthen the county's tourism offering, support increased visitor activity and expenditure, and provide enhanced recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

Public Engagement

The accompanying **Public Engagement Report** details the process undertaken to engage with the local community and key stakeholders as part of the development and planning for the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project.

The Design Team undertook extensive engagement with the local community, with the core aim of resolving any issues at the non-statutory process stage and to secure community support for the proposed Waterfront Park Project. The approach to public engagement was to empower the local community to enable them to interact and engage with RCC and the Design Team in a two-way participatory process.

Two public consultation events were held to provide the local community and relevant stakeholders an opportunity to engage with the design of the Proposed Development.

The first in-person public consultation event took place on the 23rd of October 2025 at the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone. This provided the public with an opportunity to engage with members of the project team who were also in attendance. A Community Survey was also launched on the 23rd of October 2025 to provide an opportunity for people to engage with the process and express their views on the Proposed Development. The community survey was open for feedback for a period of 3 weeks between 23rd October and 14th of November 2025.

Following the first public consultation event, the project team reviewed the responses to the community survey, with the feedback influencing the emerging preferred design for the project. A second in-person public consultation event was held on the 22nd of April 2026 at the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone. As with the first public consultation, the event was attended by representatives from the project team. A second Community Survey was also launched on the 22nd of April 2026 to provide an opportunity for people to further engage with the process and provide feedback on the emerging design. This community survey was open for feedback for a period of 2 weeks between the 22nd of April and the 6th of May.

A number of methods were utilised to inform the local community of these public consultation events. Advertisements were placed in newspapers and flyers were distributed to local residents, businesses and schools prior to each event. An electronic copy of the flyer was additionally emailed to relevant local businesses, local schools and relevant community groups and organisations. RCC also published press releases, prior to the day of, on the day of and after the event, to encourage public participation and feedback in addition to providing updates about the process and progress of the public consultation event.

Feedback received during the consultations related to:

- The provision of facilities for swimmers
- Active travel facilities
- Parking facilities
- Design of the Water Sports Pavilion
- The provision of infrastructure for fishing
- Construction phasing plan
- Potential impact on ecology and the environment
- Impact on the Athlone Golf Club

Public Consultation Reports prepared following the first and second public consultation outlining the full details of the consultation, its format and the responses received from the community on the Proposed Development can be found in Appendix 2-3 and Appendix 2-4 of the EIAR respectively.

This outcome confirms that the Engagement Strategy adopted by the Design Team was successful in fostering collaboration, encouraging meaningful participation, resolving issues at the non-statutory stage, securing community support, and ensuring that local voices shaped the creation of the preferred designs for the proposed project.

1.6

Táilte Éireann Land Register Information

The Proposed Development red line boundary encompasses lands subject to a number of ownership interests. **Drawing No. 31022-DR-CIV-CE-00005 to 31022-DR-CIV-CE-00007** prepared by CIVIC Engineers illustrates land register information obtained from Táilte Éireann records and is provided for contextual and informational purposes only. The drawing should not be interpreted as a definitive record of all ownership interests, legal rights, burdens, easements, wayleaves, or other interests that may exist within the Proposed Development boundary.

1.7

Phasing and Delivery

The construction impacts of the Proposed Development have been assessed on the basis of an estimated 30-month construction programme. The sequence and timing of individual work elements may vary having regard to funding availability, procurement arrangements and detailed design requirements. However, any variation in implementation sequencing would not alter the nature of the works assessed or materially increase the extent of construction activity assessed within the EIAR.

Please refer to **Chapter 4 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), Section 4.4**, which sets out further details of the Construction Programme.

1.8

Structure of the Report

Following this Introductions section, the report is set out as follows:

- **Section 2** - Provides a description of the site's context within the surrounding areas.
- **Section 3** - Itemises the relevant planning history of the application sites and other relevant sites in the surrounding area.
- **Section 4** - Provides an overview of the Policy Context in line with the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 and alignment with relevant EU, National and Regional Policy Frameworks
- **Section 5** - Provides an overview of the design and assessment considered in relation to the proposed development.
- **Section 6** - Summarises the key features of the proposed development, in addition to providing a concluding statement on the proposed scheme's contribution to the proper planning and development of the area.

2.

SITE LOCATION, CONTEXT, AND DESCRIPTION

The Proposed Development site is situated at Hodson Bay within the townland of Barrymore, Co. Roscommon, extending northwards from the junction of the L2020 Local Road and the N61 National Road. The site is located approximately 4 kilometres (km) northwest of Athlone and extends over an area of approximately 9 ha. The location of the site in the context of Athlone and its surrounding area is illustrated in Figure 2-1.

The site is bounded to the east by Lough Ree and to the west by Athlone Golf Club. The grounds of the Hodson Bay Hotel and Athlone Golf Club are located partially within the site boundary. The immediate surrounding area is characterised by established tourism and recreational uses. Athlone Golf Club and the Hodson Bay Hotel represent key tourism assets adjoining the site, while Hodson Bay also supports a range of water sports and recreational activities, including those operated by Baysports. These existing uses contribute to the area's established role as a recreational and leisure destination. The wider surrounding area of Hodson Bay/Barrymore is predominantly low density residential in nature.



Figure 2-1: Site context

2.1

Characteristics of the Site and Surroundings

The Proposed Development site comprises a mix of established built development and open waterfront lands. The Hodson Bay Hotel forms a prominent feature within the site, accompanied by existing marina infrastructure along the shoreline of Lough Ree. These elements reflect the established recreational and tourism function of the site.

The eastern boundary of the site is defined by the shoreline of Lough Ree, which includes a combination of managed edges associated with marina uses and more natural shoreline features. The site transitions inland to landscaped grounds associated with the hotel, while the western boundary adjoins the managed grounds of Athlone Golf Club. The wider area also includes linear residential development along the L2020 Local Road, forming a pattern typical of the rural setting.

The Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 Volume 2 sets out a Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan. While the Area Plan identifies lands as either under 'Leisure, Tourism and Amenity' or 'Green Belt' land use zonings, these are not formal land use zonings which are guided by land use zoning objectives or a land use zoning matrix. The development of these zones is therefore guided by general Policy Objectives set out for the development of the Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan. The lands closer to the lakeshore are zoned 'Green Belt' and lands further inland area zoned 'Leisure, Tourism and Amenity'.

Surrounding land uses are primarily recreational and tourism-related, including the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone Golf Club, and established water sports activities, contributing to the area's role as a key amenity and leisure destination.

The site is located within an area of high environmental sensitivity. Lough Ree, which the Proposed Development site is located adjacent to and partially within, forms part of the Natura 2000 Network and is designated as both a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Site Code: 000440) and a Special Protection Area (SPA) (Site Code: 004064). In addition, Lough Ree is designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) (Site Code: 000440). These designations reflect the ecological importance and biodiversity value of the lake and its associated habitats.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was prepared by CAAS Ltd. for Roscommon County Council (RCC) as part preparation of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2029 (RCDP). The SFRA is prepared in line with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), hereafter referred to as the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009. The Guidelines set out the likelihood of flooding within a geographical area through the assignment of Flood Zones. In terms of risk the probability of flooding from rivers, the Flood Zones are defined as follows:

- > Flood Zone A: The probability of flooding from rivers is greater than 1% or 1 in 100;
- > Flood Zone B: The probability of flooding from rivers is greater than 0.1% or 1 in 1000;
- > Flood Zone C: The probability of flooding from rivers is less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000.

The SFRA has examined the flood risk at Hodson Bay, and the assignment of Flood Zones at Hodson Bay are shown in Figure 2-2. There is a portion of the site located along the shoreline of Lough Ree designated as Flood Zone A and further west, away from the shoreline of Lough Ree, a portion of the site is designated as Flood Zone B. In accordance with the OPW Guidelines, development within these areas is subject to the sequential approach and, where applicable, the justification test¹.

¹ Office of Public Works (OPW) (2009) *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* November 2009.



Figure 2-2 Flood Risk Map

A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (Appendix 8-1) has been prepared to assess flood risk and inform the design of the Proposed Development.

There are four recorded archaeological monuments (CH001-CH004) within the Cultural Heritage study area. Of these, two are redundant records, while RO049-005002- : 'Causeway'.is located adjacent to the Proposed Development Site. See Section 12.3.2.4 of Chapter 12 Cultural Heritage for further information. The closest structure listed on the Record of Protected Structures and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage is 'Ballybay Presbytery' (RPS Ref 04900577 / NIAH Ref 31949002) located approximately 860m northeast of the site.

2.1.1 Site Access

The Proposed Development site is accessed via the national road network, the N61 National Road, with local access provided by the L2020 Local Road, which directly serves the site. The existing road infrastructure facilitates vehicular access to the Hodson Bay Hotel, marina facilities, and associated recreational uses. Internal circulation within the site is supported by a network of local roads, parking areas, and service routes.

A railway line runs broadly parallel to the N61 National Road and crosses the L2020 Local Road at a level crossing within the Planning Application site boundary; however, there is no rail station in the immediate vicinity of the site. The nearest stations are located in Athlone, approximately 10 km to the south, and in Roscommon town approximately 27.5 km to the north. Athlone Railway Station is serviced by the Dublin-Galway and Dublin-Westport railway lines which provide regular services connecting to urban centres along these lines.

3.

PLANNING HISTORY

A planning history search was carried out for the area within the Planning Application site boundary at Hodson Bay, as well as for applications for developments within a 1 km radius of the site boundary. There are several previous planning applications within the site according to RCC's Online Planning Register, and the An Coimisiún Pleanála Online Planning Register. The valid planning applications for development which were decided within the last 5 years (June 2021 onwards), within the site at Hodson Bay and within 1 km of the site boundary, are summarised in Table 3-2 and Appendix 2-1 of the EIAR, respectively.

The applications noted in the tables overleaf illustrate the development of tourism facilities at Hodson Bay. Permission has previously been granted for the construction of tourism facilities, primarily tourism accommodation and associated works, and for the installation of water sports facilities including inflatable waterslides and associated marquees to be operated on a seasonal basis. This showcases the focus on tourism development in this area. Permission has also been granted for residential developments primarily along the L2020 Local Road.

3.1.1

Planning Applications within the Site Boundary

Table 3-1: Noted planning history of the site at Hodson Bay.

Pl. Ref.	Applicant	Description	Decision
2460049	Niamh O'Donohue	Permission for erection of single storey dwelling with associated ancillary site works, single storey outbuilding and new proposed site entrance with new gates and piers at Hodson Bay, Barrymore, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.	Granted with conditions (06/01/2025)
2360194	David Heavey	Permission for the construction of a new two storey dwelling (280 sqm) and associated ancillary works to facilitate the development including site development works, parking, drainage, foul connection to the mains drainage and landscaping at Hodson's Bay, Barrymore Townland, Athlone, Co. Roscommon, N37C6V9.	Granted with conditions (18/06/2024)
2360204	New Island Resorts Limited	Permission for development consisting of: a) Conservation and protection of all existing woodland areas and the natural environment as a fundamental objective of the development, b) Regeneration of the former woodland areas towards the centre of the Yew Point peninsula, now largely depleted following generations of agricultural activity, with the extensive planting of native tree species of Irish provenance, c) Construction of 36 no. timber eco-cabins providing 12 no. family cabins and 24 no. two-person cabins raised on stilts above ground levels, to conserve existing ground conditions and preserve through routes for movement of wildlife. The cabins arranged in five clusters confined to the southern portion of the lands, carefully respond to their specific site context, respecting existing woodlands and topographical conditions, d) Provision of 4 no. timber guest shelters distributed across the site, and a covered shelter to facilitate the charging and storing of electric golf buggies, e) Extension and refurbishment of the existing building/shop, with minor internal reconfigurations and the upgrading of the exterior with slatted timber screens, new doors and windows and a covered deck area,	Granted with Conditions (16/02/2024)

Pl. Ref.	Applicant	Description	Decision
		f) Construction of an Environmental Induction Area to facilitate the immersion of guests in environmental topics and the principles of fully sustainable living, and inform them, specifically, on the ecology and biodiversity of the Yew Point/Lough Ree area, g) All cabins and other new structures are designed to minimise environmental impact and disruption through the off-site fabrication of the main components, careful siting and reversible forms of construction. Materials of low embedded carbon are to be used, and operational carbon is minimised through the use of renewable sources of energy. Surface water run-off is dealt with by strategically located Rain Gardens to filter and slowly release rainwater into the ground, h) Sustainable energy sources with the use of renewable solar photovoltaic panels as the primary source of energy generation for the entire development, i) Provision of slatted timber entrance gate structure to provide vehicular access and a covered pedestrian entrance with related signage, j) Construction of 1 no. reinforced "Grass-crete" surfaced car park at the existing site entrance providing 48 no. car parking spaces in total (1 no. car parking space per cabin and 12 no. staff car parking spaces). The car parking provision includes 10 no. EV charging spaces (with provision for future expansion of EV charging facilities) and 3 no. spaces associated with the accessible cabins, k) Resurfacing in gravel of existing pathways with minor extensions and realignments to avoid tree canopy overhangs to proposed cabin locations, l) Provision of low-level public lighting and appropriate way-finding signage specifically designed to minimise visual intrusion and impact on wildlife, m) Provision of foul sewer drainage network and vacuum pump station, with new connection to the existing Hodson Bay Wastewater Pumping Station located to the south of the site, n) Upgrading of the existing 50mm watermain from the existing Hodson Bay Hotel to provide a 100mm watermain to service the proposed site (approx. 550m in length), o) all ancillary and associated site works (See newspaper notice for full description).	

Pl. Ref.	Applicant	Description	Decision
		The planning application is supported by a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), at Yew Point, Hodson Bay, townlands of Barrymore, Kiltoom, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.	
2262 ABP-315842-23	Athlone Baysports Ltd.	Permission for development consisting of the following recreational facilities: Part A. Landside installations details of which are outlined below: 2 No. marquees for use as a reception and wet suit distribution, measuring 9m X 9m X 6.6m high and 21m X 15m X 7.8M high; 1 No. 9m X 9m X 3.8m high disabled changing marquee; 1 No. 9m X 9m X 4.7m high safety briefing marquee; 9 No. 12m X 6m X 3.3m high changing marquees; 3 No. 12m X 15M X 5m high marquees for use as a customer observation area, a dining area and a gift shop; 1 No. 4m X 8m X 3.7m high café marquee; 2 No. 3m X 6m X 3m high prefabricated office buildings; - Outdoor showers 5m X 6m; - Realignment of existing fencing. All the marquees will be coloured white. The proposed development includes all ancillary and enabling site works. The changing rooms and coffee shop will be connected by gravity to existing public sewerage. Part B. Waterside Installations, details of which are outlined below: - Main waterpark consisting of inflatable platforms, slides and climbing walls with overall dimensions of 35m X 40m X 8m high; - Inflatable junior waterpark measuring 8m X 15m X 5.2 high; - No. 1 inflatable water slide measuring 15m X 12m X 12m high; - No. 1 inflatable water slide measuring 31m x 22m x 16m high; - No. 1 inflatable water slide measuring 20m X 8m X 13m high; - No. 1 inflatable water slide measuring 32m X 16m X 13m high;	Granted with Conditions (11/04/2024)

Pl. Ref.	Applicant	Description	Decision
		7. 50 No. cylindrical shaped inflatable safety booms 4m by .4m diameter. All of the above installations are inflatable PVC structures which are permanently fixed to the lakebed using ropes and anchors. Proposed Operation Periods: It is intended that the overall facility will be operational annually between the 15th March and the 15th of October. The facility will operate during daylight hours only and will not operate past 21:00 hours on any day. A NIS will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the planning application) at Barrymore Townland, Hodson Bay, Kiltoom, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.	
2347	David Heavey	Permission for the construction of a single new dwelling including a new connection to the public mains, all associated landscaping and earthworks and all associated drainage at Hodson Bay, Barrymore, Athlone, Co Roscommon.	Refused (13/04/2023)

3.1.2

Other Planning Applications within the Vicinity of the Application Site

Applications identified on the Planning Applications Registers for RCC which are within c. 1km radius of the site are summarised in Appendix 2-1 of the EIAR. The identified applications are valid applications which have received a decision from the planning authority in the last five years (since June 2021). This 1 km radius has been applied to capture the planning history within the surrounding area of the Proposed Development site, which is considered a reasonable distance to capture sufficient information on the planning history of the surrounding area.

Table 3-2: Noted planning history of the subject site at Hodson Bay.

Ref.	Applicant	Description	Decision
2460049	Niamh O'Donohue	Permission for erection of single storey dwelling with associated ancillary site works, single storey outbuilding and new proposed site entrance with new gates and piers at Hodson Bay, Barrymore, Athlone, Co. Roscommon	Granted with conditions (06/01/2025)
2360194	David Heavey	Permission for the construction of a new two storey dwelling (280 sqm) and associated ancillary works to facilitate the development including site development works, parking, drainage, foul connection to the mains drainage and landscaping at Hodson's Bay, Barrymore Townland, Athlone, Co. Roscommon, N37C6V9	Granted with conditions (18/06/2024)
2360204	New Island Resorts Limited	Permission for development consisting of: a) Conservation and protection of all existing woodland areas and the natural environment as a fundamental objective of the development, b) Regeneration of the former woodland areas towards the centre of the Yew Point peninsula, now largely depleted following generations of agricultural activity, with the extensive planting of native tree species of Irish provenance, c) Construction of 36 no. timber eco-cabins providing 12 no. family cabins and 24 no. two-person cabins raised on stilts above ground levels, to conserve existing ground conditions and preserve through routes for movement of wildlife. The cabins arranged in five clusters confined to the southern portion of the lands, carefully respond to their specific site context, respecting existing woodlands and topographical conditions, d) Provision of 4 no. timber guest shelters distributed across the site, and a covered shelter to facilitate the charging and storing of electric golf buggies, e) Extension and refurbishment of the existing building/shop, with minor internal reconfigurations and the upgrading of the exterior with slatted timber screens, new doors and windows and a covered deck area, f) Construction of an Environmental Induction Area to facilitate the immersion of guests in environmental topics and the principles of fully sustainable living, and inform them, specifically, on the ecology and biodiversity of the Yew Point/Lough Ree area,	Granted with Conditions (16/02/2024)

		g) All cabins and other new structures are designed to minimise environmental impact and disruption through the off-site fabrication of the main components, careful siting and reversible forms of construction. Materials of low embedded carbon are to be used and operational carbon is minimised through the use of renewable sources of energy. Surface water run-off is dealt with by strategically located Rain Gardens to filter and slowly release rainwater into the ground, h) Sustainable energy sources with the use of renewable solar photovoltaic panels as the primary source of energy generation for the entire development, i) Provision of slatted timber entrance gate structure to provide vehicular access and a covered pedestrian entrance with related signage, j) Construction of 1 no. reinforced "Grass-crete" surfaced car park at the existing site entrance providing 48 no. car parking spaces in total (1 no. car parking space per cabin and 12 no. staff car parking spaces). The car parking provision includes 10 no. EV charging spaces (with provision for future expansion of EV charging facilities) and 3 no. spaces associated with the accessible cabins, k) Resurfacing in gravel of existing pathways with minor extensions and realignments to avoid tree canopy overhangs to proposed cabin locations, l) Provision of low level public lighting and appropriate way-finding signage specifically designed to minimise visual intrusion and impact on wildlife, m) Provision of foul sewer drainage network and vacuum pump station, with new connection to the existing Hodson Bay Waste Water Pumping Station located to the south of the site, n) Upgrading of the existing 50mm watermain from the existing Hodson Bay Hotel to provide a 100mm watermain to service the proposed site (approx. 550m in length), o) all ancillary and associated site works (See newspaper notice for full description). The planning application is supported by a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), at Yew Point, Hodson Bay, townlands of Barrymore, Kiltoom, Athlone, Co. Roscommon	
2262 ABP-315842-23	Athlone Baysports Ltd.	Permission for development consisting of the following recreational facilities: Part A. Landside installations details of which are outlined below:	Granted with Conditions (11/04/2024)

		2 No. marquees for use as a reception and wet suit distribution, measuring 9m X 9m X 6.6m high and 21m X 15m X 7.8M high; 1 No. 9m X 9m X 3.8m high disabled changing marquee; 1 No. 9m X 9m X 4.7m high safety briefing marquee; 9 No. 12m X 6m X 3.3m high changing marquees; 3 No. 12m X 15M X 5m high marquees for use as a customer observation area, a dining area and a gift shop; 1 No. 4m X 8m X 3.7m high café marquee; 2 No. 3m X 6m X 3m high prefabricated office buildings; - Outdoor showers 5m X 6m; - Realignment of existing fencing. All the marquees will be coloured white. The proposed development includes all ancillary and enabling site works. The changing rooms and coffee shop will be connected by gravity to existing public sewerage. Part B. Waterside Installations, details of which are outlined below: - Main waterpark consisting of inflatable platforms, slides and climbing walls with overall dimensions of 35m X 40m X 8m high; - Inflatable junior waterpark measuring 8m X 15m X 5.2 high; - No. 1 inflatable water slide measuring 15m X 12m high; - No. 1 inflatable water slide measuring 31m x 22m x 16m high; - No. 1 inflatable water slide measuring 20m X 8m X 13m high; - No. 1 inflatable water slide measuring 32m X 16m X 13m high; 50 No. cylindrical shaped inflatable safety booms 4m by .4m diameter. All of the above installations are inflatable PVC structures which are permanently fixed to the lake bed using ropes and anchors. Proposed Operation Periods: It is intended that the overall facility will be operational annually between the 15th March and the 15th of October. The facility will operate during daylight hours only and will not operate past 21:00 hours on any day (a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the planning application) at Barrymore Townland, Hodson Bay, Kiltoom, Athlone, Co. Roscommon	
2347	David Heavey	Permission for the construction of a single new dwelling including a new connection to the public mains, all associated landscaping and earthworks and all associated drainage at Hodson Bay, Barrymore, Athlone, Co Roscommon	Refused (13/04/2023)

16267	Inland Properties Ltd.	For construction of a single storey extension lounge room extension (164 sq. mts) to rear of existing hotel along with conversion of existing plant room and office at side of existing hotel to form new link corridor (73 sq. mts) and construction of new first floor office and bedroom extension (44 sq. mts) to side of existing hotel at existing hotel premises, Hodson Bay Hotel, Barrymore Townland, Athlone, Co. Roscommon	Granted with conditions (22/09/2021)
17224	Paul and Maeve Davis	The development consists of the following:- Retention of the following amendments to the as built dwelling consisting of:- (1) an additional door and window to the north east elevation, a double door and window to the south west elevation and two additional windows to the north west elevation; (2) the revised location of a door to the south west elevation; (3) changing of two windows on the north west elevation to doors; (4) additional roof lights to the north west elevation; (5) the changing of a flat roof section to the rear of the existing dwelling to a pitched roof; (6) the relocation of a section of the north east external wall and resulting additional floor area. Permission is also sought for a change of use of a section of the existing dwelling to change from dwelling space to an orthotic practice, and all ancillary site works at Barrymore Townland, Kiltoom, Athlone, Co. Roscommon	Granted with conditions (13/09/2017)
13346	Mr. Richard O'Hara	For temporary inflatable floating play area, to include two inflatable water trampolines, inflatable water slides, inflatable platforms, inflatable logs, inflatable booms and inflatable climbing frame at Hodson Bay Boat Training Centre, Hodson Bay, Kiltoom, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.	Granted with conditions (03/02/2014)
12383	Inland Properties Ltd.	for development of a new single storey ESB MV substation and adjoining switch room having a total gross floor area of 18.0 sq. m. to be constructed at the rear of The Hodson Bay Hotel, Barrymore Townland, Kiltoom, Co. Roscommon,	Granted with conditions (20/03/2013)
051324	Inland Properties Ltd.	For alterations to a previously permitted development (Ref No. PD/04/813). The development will consist of amendments to the previously permitted staff accommodation block comprising revisions to internal layout of the staff quarters resulting in a total of 10 no. ensuite bedrooms with revised communal living and kitchen areas; the provision of an additional 94 sq m of ground and first floor accommodation, all over a new basement area (148 sq m). The development will also include the provisions of ancillary plant areas and a landscaped feature garden. The amendments will result in an increase in the permitted height of 1.1 meters	Granted with conditions (02/03/2006)

		approximately and an increase in the permitted building length of 5.6 meters approximately at Hodson Bay Hotel, Barrymore Td, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.	
04813	Hodson Bay Hotel, Inland Properties Limited	For development of an extension to the existing hotel on a 2.22ha site, approximately, the development will consist of a two storey extension with a central six storey element over basement plant area (529.sq.m.) comprising a health and fitness centre and spa treatment facility (including a 20 metre swimming pool, gymnasium, thermal suite, outdoor garden area, spa-related treatment rooms and changing facilities); 54 no. additional hotel bedrooms, a two storey staff accommodation block (218 sq. m.) and the demolition of an existing habitable single storey house (222 sq. m.). The total floor area of the spa facility and health centre will be 2,659sq. m. The total floor area of the proposed development will be 5,753sq. m approximately (including basement). The development will also consist of the provision of 68 no. additional surface level car parking spaces; the re-configuration of existing car park layout; an extension to the existing kitchen area of the ground floor hotel breakfast room (37.5sq.m.) landscaping; boundary treatments; plant; storage areas; site excavation works; changes in level and all associated site development works. An Environmental Impact Statement will accompany this application at Barrymore Townland, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.	Granted with conditions (23/08/2004)
021398	John Bracken	To erect at 10m high safety fence along the road boundary. This new fence to be located along 2nd, 3rd and 16th Fairways and is to replace existing fence at Barrymore Townland, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.	Granted with conditions (20/03/2003)
02867	Inland Properties Ltd.	For a new single storey extension to existing breakfast room at front of hotel and a new single-storey extension to existing staff canteen at rear of existing Hodson Bay and ancillary works at Barrymore Townland, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.	Granted with conditions (21/11/2002)

4.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT: OVERVIEW

A detailed Planning Policy review in the context of the Proposed Development has been set out under Chapter 2, Section 2.4 of the EIAR submitted along with this planning application. The policy review under the Chapter 2 sets out a detailed overview of the European, National, Regional and Local Planning Policy Context and how the proposal has been designed in line with the policies and objectives at each level. A high-level statement of compliance response has been set out in this section of the planning report for context.

The proposed enhancement of Hodson Bay Waterfront Park represents a coordinated investment in an established Lough Ree tourism destination. The project will improve access to the water, broaden outdoor recreation, enhance the visitor experience and create an attractive, inclusive waterfront for visitors and the local community. By integrating water-based activity, placemaking and sustainable mobility, it supports tourism-led economic development while concentrating investment within an existing destination.

The Proposed Development directly aligns with the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022–2028 and the National Planning Framework, First Revision (2025), including **NSO 3** and **NPO 34**, which support strengthened rural economies, tourism, greenways, blueways and outdoor recreation. It also reflects Fáilte Ireland’s place-based destination-development approach and the Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023–2027 by creating a connected outdoor experience capable of increasing visitor dwell time, spend and year-round use. The Shannon Tourism Masterplan 2020–2030 provides particularly strong support, identifying Lough Ree as a key Discovery Zone and promoting an expanded Lough Ree experience, improved cycling, boating, waterside public realm and the Glasson–Coosan–Wineport–Killinure–Hodson Bay activity and food nexus.

Hodson Bay is also strongly aligned with the EU Just Transition Fund 2021–2027, for which all of County Roscommon forms part of the eligible territory. The Fund is intended to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the transition away from carbon-intensive activity in the wider Midlands, with priorities including diversification of the local economy, employment creation, smart and sustainable mobility and a resilient climate transition. Fáilte Ireland’s JTF tourism measures focus on regenerative tourism and trail development to create new visitor experiences, employment and local enterprise opportunities. The Proposed Development directly supports these objectives by combining sustainable tourism infrastructure, active travel, public-realm regeneration and water-based recreation in a manner that can strengthen the visitor economy and diversify local economic activity.

The proposal is consistent with the national climate framework established by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25) and the County Roscommon Climate Action Plan 2024–2029. CAP25 is the current statutory annual update and builds upon, and is intended to be read in conjunction with, CAP24 in progressing Ireland’s carbon budgets, sectoral emissions ceilings and national climate objective. Of particular relevance, **Section 15** requires a relevant body, insofar as practicable, to perform its functions in a manner consistent with the most recent approved Climate Action Plan, the national long-term climate action strategy, the National Adaptation Framework and relevant sectoral adaptation plans, and in persistence of the national climate objective, greenhouse-gas mitigation and climate adaptation. The project responds to the Climate Action Plan 2025, building upon the Climate Action Plan 2024 and County Roscommon Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 through active travel, sustainable mobility, energy-efficient design, climate-resilient public realm, SuDS and biodiversity-sensitive landscaping. By combining tourism investment with mitigation and adaptation measures, the project supports a sustainable, resilient and low-carbon tourism destination.

Taken together, the policy framework provides a clear basis for consolidating Hodson Bay as a sustainable tourism and recreation hub. The project can support activity providers, hospitality and accommodation businesses, increase visitor dwell time and expenditure and reinforce south Roscommon within Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands. Subject to appropriate environmental safeguards, it represents proportionate investment capable of delivering economic, recreational and community benefits while protecting the landscape, biodiversity and water environment on which the destination depends.

4.1

European Planning Policy

The Proposed Development was considered in line with the following Policy Framework(s) at the European Level:

- European Union 'Just Transition Fund'

RCC (the Applicant) and Waterways Ireland have received funding from Fáilte Ireland under the EU JTF, to take the project to the Design & Environmental Evaluation and Statutory Consent Stages. This funding stream ensures that the local community, which has been identified as being affected by the green transition to a climate resilient economy, will benefit from a balanced socio-economic transition through the diversification of the local economy, restoration of degraded environmental assets and provision of smart and sustainable mobility.

Table 4-1 Summary of Compliance with European Planning Policy Framework

Compliance With European Planning Policy
The Proposed Development aligns with the objectives of the EU Just Transition Fund (Regulation (EU) 2021/1056) by supporting the sustainable economic diversification of the Midlands region, which has been significantly impacted by the transition away from peat-based industries. Through its integration within the Fáilte Ireland Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme (2023–2026), the development will enhance the tourism offering of the area by providing upgraded marina facilities, water sports facilities, active travel facilities and an enhanced public realm, thereby contributing to job creation and increased visitor activity in accordance with Priority 1 of the Fund. Accordingly, the Proposed Development supports a balanced socio-economic and environmental transition and is consistent with the overarching aims of EU climate and cohesion policy.

4.2

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Documents reviewed in line with the proposed development includes:

- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework
- Climate Action Plan 2025 (which builds upon and updates CAP24 and is considered in conjunction with CAP24).
- Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025
- A New Era for Irish Tourism: National Tourism Policy Statement (2025)
- Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2023)
- The Cycle Design Manual (2023)
- Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025
- National Physical Activity Plan (2016)

Table 4-2 Summary of Compliance with National Planning Policy Framework

Compliance with National Planning Policy Framework
The Proposed Development is consistent with the National Planning Framework (NPF) NSO 3 which recognises that rural areas are important economic and community assets and seeks to develop and diversify rural economies, including through investment in rural infrastructure, regeneration and tourism; NPO 34 which seeks to facilitate tourism development and supports the coordinated and sustainable development of Greenways, Blueways and outdoor recreation infrastructure. The integrated development of the various elements proposed vis-à-vis the water sports pavilion, marina redevelopment, enhancement and upgrades to public realm and active travel infrastructure at Hodson

Bay will strengthen an established Lough Ree tourism destination while supporting increased visitor activity, local expenditure and sustainable economic development.

It supports **NSO 7** through the provision of enhanced amenity, recreational and waterfront infrastructure, while conserving and integrating the natural environment to reinforce sense of place.

The development is in line with **NSO 8** and **9** of the NPF supporting the shift toward a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy through regenerative tourism and sustainable land use, and through the protection and sustainable management of environmental resources including water resources.

At the national level, the Proposed Development also complies with the Climate Action Plan 2025 (which builds upon and updates CAP24) including the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 to 2021 (as amended). In accordance with **Section 15** of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, the project has been developed so that, insofar as practicable, the exercise of the Council's functions is consistent with the most recent approved Climate Action Plan, the National Adaptation Framework, the national climate objective and the objectives of mitigating greenhouse-gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change. This is reflected in the project's integrated active-travel provision, sustainable mobility, energy-efficient design, sustainable drainage, biodiversity-sensitive landscaping and climate-resilient waterfront and public realm infrastructure.

The Proposed Development further aligns with Our Rural Future 2021 and 'People, Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025' and their approach to the diversification of the regional economy through the promotion of sustainable tourism which facilitates investment and employment opportunities in a rural economy.

The Proposed Development enhances access to facilities for land and water based physical activity, benefitting the health of visitors of all ages to Hodson Bay in line with the National Physical Activity Plan and the Healthy Ireland Framework.

The streetscape and active travel facilities have been designed in line with the DMURS and CDM to provide for a safe and comfortable environment for all road users, in particular pedestrians and cyclists, providing traffic calming measures while successfully creating a sense of place.

Accordingly, the Proposed Development represents a coherent and policy-aligned intervention that supports sustainable tourism growth, environmental stewardship, and climate resilience at a national level.

4.3

Regional Planning Policy

The Proposed Development aligns with the following key policy frameworks:

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
- Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027
- Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon Region 2020-2030

Table 4-3 Summary of Compliance with Regional Planning Policy Framework

Compliance with Regional Planning Policy Framework

The Proposed Development responds to several regional policies, frameworks and strategies by supporting the growth of Athlone and its hinterland as a key tourism destination within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The development aligns with the RSES, including **RPOs 3.7.4** and **3.7.8**, which promote Athlone as a tourism hub centred on the River Shannon and Lough Ree building on Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and the Shannon Tourism Masterplan and developing the recreation and amenity potential of Lough Ree and the River Shannon, together with the Greenway network. The proposal further advances **RPO 3.7.11** through waterfront public realm and amenity enhancement. **RPOs 4.1-4.3**, which support enhanced access to waterways, recreational infrastructure and visitor experience

development. **RPO 4.12** through sustainable development of water-based leisure, **RPO 4.13** through implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan and **RPO 4.14** through integrated walking and cycling infrastructure. The proposal will improve access to Lough Ree, expand water-based recreational opportunities and strengthen tourism infrastructure, thereby contributing to regional economic growth and employment.

The Proposed Development is also consistent with the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Tourism Strategy 2023–2027, supporting eco-tourism, visitor experience enhancement and regenerative tourism, and with the Shannon Tourism Masterplan 2020–2030, which promotes marina development, waterfront enhancement and investment in harbour infrastructure.

Overall, the development represents a coordinated and policy-aligned intervention that enhances the region's tourism offering while supporting the sustainable use of natural assets.

4.4

Local Planning Policy

The Proposed Development falls within the administrative boundaries of Roscommon County Council and therefore the current Statutory Planning Document applicable is the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 (RCDP). This section of the Report also sets out other relevant local planning policies that align with the Proposed Development in addition to the RCDP.

4.4.1

Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 (RCDP) was enacted on the 19th of April 2022. This document guides the sustainable economic, social and cultural development of the county up to 2028. The following strategic aims set out in the RCDP are of relevance to the Proposed Development:

“Strategic Aim 11:

Protect and enhance the natural assets of County Roscommon, including clean water, biodiversity, landscape, green infrastructure, heritage and agricultural land.

Strategic Aim 12:

Foster the creation of an attractive and competitive business environment by supporting economic development, job creation, tourism and prosperity for all.

Strategic Aim 13:

Ensure that the county is served by adequate community facilities and amenities, which add to the quality of life of residents of the county.

Strategic Aim 14:

To protect, conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage and the landscape of County Roscommon for future generations; and reinforce the distinctive character of the county through ensuring that recognised sites and species of environmental importance are conserved and managed appropriately.”

The RCDP seeks to encourage the development of new employment opportunities and to diversify existing employment sectors within the county in a co-ordinated approach with population growth. It notes the central location of the County within Ireland and its strategic location in close proximity to the Regional Growth centre of Athlone and its strategic transport connections to other Regional Growth Centres, Metropolitan Areas and international airports.

The RCDP notes the opportunities presented by the county's natural landscape, history and heritage which provide opportunities to attract tourists to the county. The Council have outlined their support for growing tourism in the County. It notes the increasing demand for walking and cycling tourism related experiences and investment in these facilities would benefit local communities access to local amenities. The following Policy Objectives are relevant to the Proposed Development:

Policy Objective ED 6.22:

Promote tourism as an integral part of County Roscommon's economic profile, supporting urban and rural enterprise, and recognising the key strategic location of the county and access to tourist sites and attractions

Policy Objective ED 6.25:

Promote the development of sustainable tourism as part of our economy, that recognises our landscapes, our cultural heritage and our environment.

Policy Objective ED 6.29:

Facilitate the creation of a network of cycling/ walking routes (including existing footpaths and walking routes, off road routes, local walks, tourist walks, medium and long-distance walking routes) within the county.

The Proposed Development will provide for an enhanced tourism offering at Hodson Bay, providing for a more attractive destination for prospective tourists. This would support the diversification of the local economy through the provision of additional employment in the tourism sector. The design has carefully considered local environmental factors and complements the natural landscape of the surrounding area. The development provides for high quality and safe walking and cycling routes within Hodson Bay, for use by locals and tourist alike. This ensures local residents have easy access to the enhanced water sport facilities and public realm facilities to be provided.

The RCDP notes the opportunities provided by walking and cycling as modes of transport which can reduce the use of private vehicles and which reduces greenhouse gas emissions and promotes a healthier lifestyle. RCC supports the delivery of additional pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in line with the following Policy Objectives:

Policy Objective ITC 7.25:

Promote walking and cycling as efficient, healthy and environmentally friendly modes of transport by securing the development of a network of direct, comfortable, convenient and safe cycle routes and footpaths, particularly in urban areas and in the vicinity of schools.

Policy Objective ITC 7.26:

Identify and implement a strategic, coherent and high-quality cycling and walking network across the county that is integrated with public transport and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations and attractions.

Policy Objective ITC 7.27:

Design pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards set out in the National Cycle Manual, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, the TII publication 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' and any subsequent revisions with a focus on a high level of service and encourage a modal shift from the private car to cycling and walking.

Policy Objective ITC 7.28:

Improve the streetscape environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and people with special mobility needs by providing facilities to enhance safety and convenience, including separation for pedestrian infrastructure from vehicular traffic.

Policy Objective ITC 7.30:

To support the retrospective provision of walking and cycling infrastructure in existing settlements, where feasible, to achieve growth in sustainable mobility and strengthen and improve the walking and cycling network.

The Proposed Development includes the provision of enhanced walking and cycling facilities along the L2020 Local Road between Hodson Bay and the junction with the N61 National Road and the provision of enhanced pedestrian infrastructure at Hodson Bay.

In cognisance of the risks posed by flooding, the RCDP sets out the following Policy Objectives to prevent the inappropriate development in areas prone to flooding and to mitigate against the risk of flooding in the existing built environment:

Policy Objective ITC 7.51:

Have regard to the EU Flood Risk Directive, the Flood Risk Regulations (S.I. No. 122 of 2010) and the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management and Circular PL2/2014, through the use of the sequential approach and application of the Justification Tests in Development Management.

Policy Objective ITC 7.52:

Ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for development proposals impacting on flood risk areas, in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management. This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to the potential development.

Policy Objective ITC 7.53:

Protect and enhance the county's turloughs, lake/river floodplains and wetlands as strategically important green infrastructure which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater and enables flood risk to be more effectively managed, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

A Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment is submitted with this application (see Appendix 8-1 of the EIAR).

The RCDP outlines the importance of protecting the county's environmental quality and biodiversity and the range of economic and social benefits arising from this. The impact of landscape on the sense of place is outlined as a means for landscape preservation. The following Policy Objectives outline measures to protect the county's natural heritage, through the protection of ecological assets, biodiversity, geology and landscape features including woodlands, hedgerows, peatlands and wetlands and to develop green infrastructure:

"Policy Objective NH 10.4:

Proposals where woodland, tree or hedgerow removal is proposed will be required to demonstrate a sufficient level of protection to Annex IV species, such as Bats and Otter, in accordance with the Habitats Directive.

Policy Objective NH 10.6:

Require all new developments in the early pre-planning stage of the planning process to identify, protect and enhance ecological features by making provision for local biodiversity (e.g. through provision of swift boxes, bat roost sites, green roofs, etc.) having regard to the recommendations outlined in the Habitat Mapping in Co. Roscommon, 2011 and the County Roscommon Swift Survey, 2020

Policy Objective NH 10.7:

Implement Article 6(3) and where necessary Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.

Policy Objective NH 10.8:

Ensure that no plans, programmes, etc. or projects are permitted that give rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of European Sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects, (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects).

Policy Objective NH 10.9:

Ensure that any plan or project that could have a significant adverse impact (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) upon the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 Site or would result in the deterioration of any habitat or any species reliant on that habitat will not be permitted unless in exceptional circumstances.

Policy Objective NH 10.10:

Actively promote the conservation and protection of areas designated as an NHA (including proposed sites) and to only consider proposals for development within or affecting an NHA where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse effect on the NHA or pNHA.

Policy Objective NH 10.19:

Ensure that the county's watercourses are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values and to conserve and enhance where possible, the wildlife habitats of the County's rivers and riparian zones, lakes, canals and streams which occur outside of designated areas to provide a network of habitats and biodiversity corridors throughout the county. The Council shall be available to engage with the NPWS with the objective of facilitating the monitoring and surveying of wetland sites in Roscommon.

Policy Objective NH 10.20:

Protect waterbodies and watercourses from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. To this effect, consideration should be given to Inland Fisheries Ireland's guidance document Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment (2020).

Policy Objective NH 10.29:

Facilitate the on-going development and improvement of green infrastructure in the Plan area, including green networks, green amenities and linked green corridors which ensure the provision of recreational amenities, natural areas for the growth of wildlife and biodiversity, and a network of infrastructure which results in a better quality of life for visitors and inhabitants alike."

4.4.2

Volume 2: Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan

The Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan, hereafter referred to as the 'Area Plan', has been prepared as part of the RCDP to guide the future development of this area, in recognition of the opportunity to further develop tourism and recreational facilities and to consolidate the existing low density residential developments.

The area is noted for being a primary tourism destination in County Roscommon. RCC aims to further develop tourism facilities within Hodson Bay while ensuring the protection of the sensitive lake and lakeside environment in line with the following Policy Objectives:

“Policy Objective HB 1:

Facilitate suitable leisure, tourism and amenity developments on lands zoned Leisure Tourism / Amenity in order to strengthen the significance of Hodson Bay / Barrymore as one of the main tourism/recreational attractions in County Roscommon and regionally.

Policy Objective HB 2:

Support the future expansion of existing tourism and leisure facilities, while ensuring that access to facilities continues to be provided for the general public, so that Hodson Bay continues to function as a valuable amenity resource for Roscommon.”

Policy Objective HB 3:

Encourage developments which are quality driven and of high architectural merit, which will enhance their surroundings and respect this visually and environmentally sensitive area.

Policy Objective HB 4:

Facilitate low intensity tourism and amenity development only (for example, camping or glamping facilities, walking / cycling routes) in currently undeveloped areas within the Leisure Tourism / Amenity zone which is in proximity to Natura 2000 designated sites. Proposals should utilise existing servicing infrastructure.

Policy Objective HB 5:

Support the provision of low intensity green infrastructure which will be accessible by all users.

Policy Objective HB 6:

Require all new permanent facilities to be designed to high architectural standards, and to visually complement the area.

The area is additionally noted for being of a high landscape and environmental sensitivity due to its location on the shore of Lough Ree, an SPA, SAC and pNHA. Greenbelt lands are therefore set out in the Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan, and the development of these lands are guided by the following policy objectives:

“Policy Objective HB 7:

Protect the existing Natura 2000 sites and pNHAs and any sites which become designated and notified to Roscommon County Council during the lifetime of this Plan.

Policy Objective HB 8:

Maintain greenbelt lands as a visual and environmental buffer to preserve the natural amenity of the area such as alongside waterways, rivers and floodplains.

Policy Objective HB 9:

Protect greenbelt lands from inappropriate developments which would give rise to an adverse impact upon the receiving environment and/or undermine the biodiversity/ landscape or amenity value of the area.

Policy Objective HB 10:

Ensure the protection of lands liable to flooding from development which would give rise to adverse impacts upon the receiving environment."

The Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan identifies lands as either under 'Leisure, Tourism and Amenity' or 'Green Belt' land use zonings, as shown in Figure 4-1. These land use zonings are not accompanied by specific Land Use Zoning Objectives or a Land Use Zoning matrix setting out permissible uses. Therefore, the development of the 'Leisure, Tourism and Amenity' land use zoning is guided by Policy Objectives HB 1-6, and the development of the 'Green Belt' land use zoning is largely set out by Policy Objectives HB 7-10 as set out above.

The land use zoning of the site of the Proposed Development is shown in Figure 4-1. It noted that the areas of the site where all the development works, except some of the works to the L2020 Local Road corridor are located within the 'Greenbelt' and 'Leisure Tourism / Amenity' land use zonings.

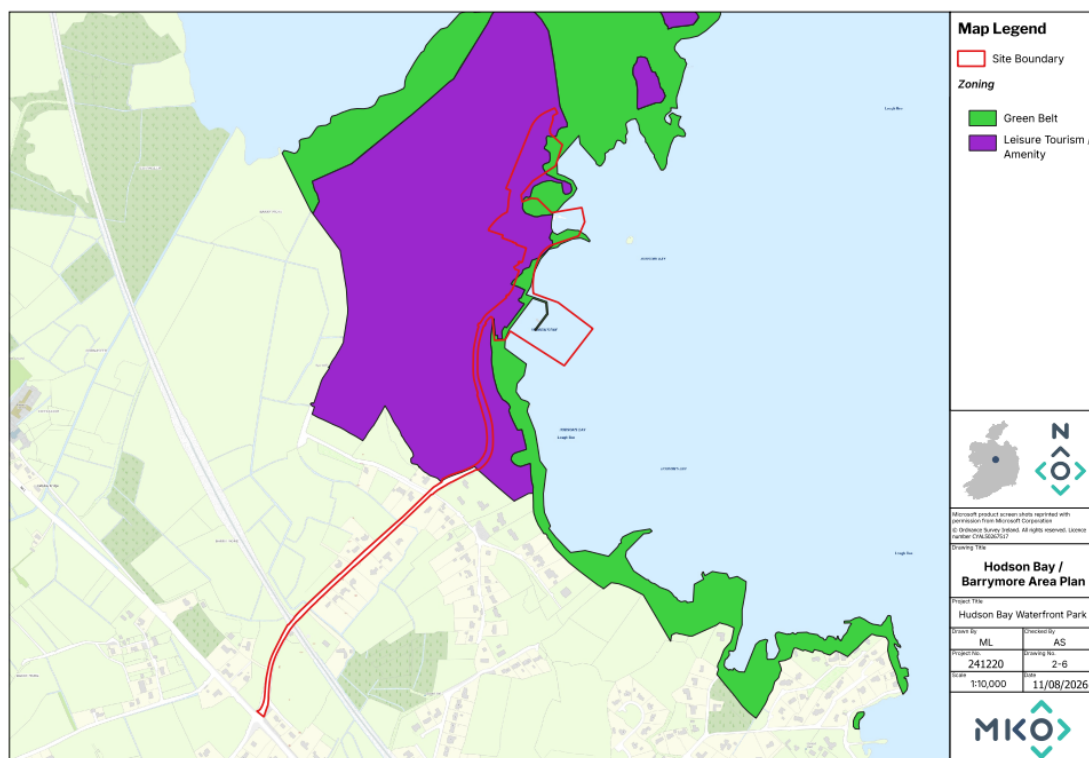


Figure 4-1 Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan

The more intensive works associated with the Proposed Development including the development of a Water Sports Pavilion and active travel facilities along the L2020 and part of the proposed public realm enhancements and car park amendments are concentrated in the 'Leisure Tourism / Amenity'. Meanwhile the less intensive works including the remaining public realm works and amendments to car parking are taking place in the 'Greenbelt' zone. The location of these developments is in line with the policies guiding the development of Hodson Bay set out in Volume 2 of the RCDP.

The Proposed Development will further develop Hodson Bay as a tourism destination in County Roscommon through the enhancement of tourism facilities. The Proposed Development has been designed in consideration of the policy objectives for the protection of the role of the greenbelt in Hodson Bay and protect the areas subject to environmental protections. The new facilities to be provided are to be developed to high architectural standards in line with national and local building design standards.

4.4.3

Roscommon County Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029

The Roscommon County Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029 (LECP) sets out objectives and actions to promote and support the economic development of the County. This Plan has been developed with input from community members and stakeholders within the county and provides a framework that aims to make County Roscommon “a location of choice to live, visit, learn, work, and play”.

The LECP notes that the County’s employment landscape is changing with an increase in employment in certain sectors including tourism. The County also faces several challenges including the transition away from traditional extractive industries which have supported the local economy and employment. This Plan is guided by six high-level goals which inform sustainable community and economic development objectives and actions. The six goals are:

- › Goal 1: A welcoming, supportive County that celebrates its communities and unique sense of place.
- › Goal 2: A county that attracts, retains and promotes ongoing employment and economic growth.
- › Goal 3: A vibrant County that values its culture, arts and heritage.
- › Goal 4: A collaborative County where people are encouraged to work together towards common aims.
- › Goal 5: A county where people’s health and wellbeing are supported.
- › Goal 6: An environmentally conscious and resilient County that prioritises sustainability.

The LECP notes that there is a variety of tourism attractions existing within County Roscommon and outlines a regional tourism policy that support the creation of key visitor experiences and unique tourism offerings. Goal 3 sets out the following objective in relation to the development of tourism in County Roscommon:

“SEDO 3.4 Develop and support tourism initiatives, assets and secondary supporting industries”.

The Proposed Development which seeks to enhance the existing tourism facilities at Hodson Bay and develop new facilities in line with the provisions of the County Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2025-2030 will contribute to the realisation of the following action:

“Action 3.4.4:

Facilitate the development and implementation of Roscommon’s Tourism Strategy”

The Proposed Development will support the growth of employment in the tourism sector at Hodson Bay in line with Goal 2 of the LECP. This provides for a diversification of the local economy and supports the transition away from extractive industries in the County. The provision of enhanced facilities will also support the creation of a distinct sense of place in Roscommon benefitting both the local community and tourists in line with Goal 1 of the LECP. Overall, the Proposed Development will support the economic and community development of County Roscommon.

4.4.4

The Roscommon Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2028

The Roscommon Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2028, hereafter referred to as the Outdoor Recreation Strategy, provides a framework to seize the opportunities presented by County Roscommon’s existing natural amenities and enhance outdoor recreation facilities. This will provide easier access to outdoor recreational amenities for local residents and tourists.

The variety of landscapes present within the County including rivers, loughs, canals, forests, woodlands and bogs are noted along with the county's rich heritage and archaeology. The following outdoor recreation activities were identified as taking place within the county:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| ➤ Walking | ➤ Paddle sports |
| ➤ Hill walking | ➤ Angling |
| ➤ Leisure cycling | ➤ Sailing |
| ➤ Trail running | ➤ Wind surfing |
| ➤ Orienteering | ➤ Open water swimming |
| ➤ Horse riding | ➤ Rowing |

Hodson Bay is identified as the county's second most popular outdoor recreation site, after Lough Key Forest Park in the north of the county. It is noted in the Outdoor Recreation Strategy that Hodson Bay welcomed 91,000 visitors in 2021.

The Outdoor Recreation Strategy outlines the difficulty for County Roscommon in attracting visitors who pass through the county when travelling to more established tourism attractions on the west coast. Gaps in access to outdoor recreational activities have been identified, with particular note given to the limited access to the River Shannon.

The Outdoor Recreation Strategy sets out several priorities which include planning development of high quality, accessible and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities across the county to develop recreational facilities in a hierarchical manner and ensure an appropriate geographic spread. Hodson Bay has been identified as a signature destination. This is the second highest tier in the hierarchy of the Product Development Framework.

The Proposed Development will promote participation in outdoor recreation at Hodson Bay, through the enhancement of existing facilities and development of new facilities. This will provide access to a variety of land and water-based sports and enhance access to Lough Ree, promoting tourism activities and a view to attracting increased visitor footfall.

4.4.5

County Roscommon Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The County Roscommon Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, hereafter referred to as the LACAP, has been prepared under the Climate Action and Low-carbon development (Amendment) Act 2021. This document considers international and national climate policy and sets out local based actions which enable the County to adapt to climate change and reduce local emissions. A Framework of Climate Actions are set out under the following five themes:

- Governance and leadership
- Built Environment and Transport
- Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure
- Communities; Resilience and Transition
- Sustainable resource management

The Proposed Development will align with the following Strategic Objectives:

Built Environment and Transport Objectives:

“BET (vi): Focus ancillary tourism facilities in established destinations to promote sustainable travel choices, rationalise investment in services and utilities, consolidate destination benefits and protect amenity assets in accordance with appropriate guidance including the National Investment framework for Transport”

Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure Objectives:

“NEGI (ii): Engage with local stakeholders to progress projects under the regenerative tourism element of the JTF

NEGI (vi): Maintain, augment and enhance green infrastructural resources to provide ecosystem services and amenity benefits.”

Community Resilience and Transition Objectives:

“CRT (iii): Align with the Just Transition process to ensure that those communities most affected by the transition to a low carbon society have access to enhanced social, economic and environmental opportunities.”

Sustainable Resource Management Objectives:

“SRM (v) Ensure that existing, planned and proposed infrastructure is protected from the future potential effects of Climate Change.”

The Proposed Development will support the just transition of the Midlands communities in the vicinity of Hodson Bay by providing for enhanced employment and economic opportunities in the tourism sector. The enhancement of water sports facilities aims to draw more tourist thus providing more employment opportunities within these facilities. The design of the Proposed Development has aimed to reduce negative environmental impacts on the surrounding environment. The proposed water sports facility is of a design standard, providing a function space that also integrates into the surrounding natural environment. The public realm development provides for improvements to green infrastructure, which has been developed in line with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).

4.4.6

County Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2025-2030

The Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2025-2030, hereafter referred to as the Tourism Strategy, sets out an overall objective *“to develop and promote County Roscommon as a year-round immersive tourist destination that offers high-quality visitor experiences”*. The Tourism Strategy notes that Fáilte Ireland reported that in 2023 202,179 visitors visited the county’s 12 paid tourist attractions. It is noted that a ‘Visit Roscommon’ brand has been established and this will expand to include the creation of a new ‘Visit Roscommon’ website. The Tourism Strategy adopts a sustainable tourism approach to ensure the long-term viability of the tourism sector which benefits local communities and conserves natural and cultural resources.

The Tourism Strategy sets out five Key Strategic Pillars to grow the county’s tourism sector:

- 》 Strategic Pillar 1: Destination Management
- 》 Strategic Pillar 2: Visitor Experience Development
- 》 Strategic Pillar 3: Marketing and Communications
- 》 Strategic Pillar 4: Industry Support and Collaboration
- 》 Strategic Pillar 5: Accessible Outdoor Recreation

As the Proposed Development primarily consists of the enhancement of outdoor recreational facilities at Hodson Bay, the following actions set out under Strategic Pillar 5 are relevant to the Proposed Development:

Action 1: Develop and Promote Signature Trails and Greenways Enhance existing walking, cycling, and greenway trails, promote signature routes, and support TII-led greenway development to attract active tourism.

Action 2: Expand Water-Based Tourism Experiences Develop a dedicated water trail, support water-based activities on the River Shannon and River Suck and implement the Lough Key and Hodson Bay Waterfront Park masterplans.

Action 3: Improve Trail and Outdoor Accessibility Upgrade trail infrastructure to ensure accessibility for all and support the introduction of bike rental services at key locations.

Action 4: Enhance Wildlife and Nature-Based Tourism Promote wildlife watching and nature experiences in key natural areas to appeal to eco-conscious visitors.

Action 5: Invest in Recreational Infrastructure Develop public amenities like rest areas, changing rooms, picnic spots, and shelters at popular outdoor and waterside locations.

Action 6: Support the River Shannon Discovery Points Initiative Roll out and promote Discovery Points along the Shannon to strengthen its role as a central tourism asset.

The ‘Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Just Transition Fund Project’ is outlined as a Strategic Vision Project under Strategic Pillar 5. The following main elements of the project are set out:

- › Water Sports Pavilion
- › Marina Enhancement
- › Sun Deck and Lagoon
- › Marina Square and Gardens
- › Events Space
- › Enabling Public Realm

This application represents a realisation of the ‘Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Just Transition Fund Project’ as outlined as a Strategic Vision Project in the Tourism Strategy. This will deliver the modernisation and enhancement of existing facilities at Hodson Bay to increase the attractiveness of the location to tourists and act as a gateway to other tourist attractions in County Roscommon.

4.4.7

Roscommon Heritage Strategy 2025-2029

The Roscommon Heritage Strategy 2025-2029 sets out a high-level vision for the management and protection of heritage in County Roscommon. The Strategy utilises the Heritage Act 1995 definition for heritage as outlined in the following extract from the Strategy:

“The Heritage Act, 1995 defines heritage as including monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, inland waterways and heritage gardens and parks.”

This vision informs local actions which protect and promote the preservation of heritage in County Roscommon. The Strategy vision is set out:

“Conserve our past and inspire our future, protect and celebrate the built, natural, cultural and intangible heritage of County Roscommon.”

This vision is broken down into the following strategic objectives:

1. Champion Best Practices
2. Foster Collaborative Partnerships
3. Promote the Value of Heritage
4. Integrate Climate Change and Biodiversity
5. Support Research

The Proposed Development has been designed with consideration of the local heritage assets of Hodson Bay including known built, cultural and natural heritage. The Proposed Development will enhance access to heritage, in particular to the lakeshore landscape at Hodson Bay through the development of walking trails along the lakeshore. The proposed Water Sports Pavilion has been designed to integrate into the surrounding landscape, protecting the landscape heritage of this site.

4.4.8

Summary of Compliance with Local Planning Policy Framework

Table 4-4 Summary of Compliance with Local Planning Policy Framework

Compliance with Local Planning Policy Framework
The Proposed Development addresses several local policies, frameworks and strategies by supporting the sustainable development of tourism, recreation and environmental protection within County Roscommon. The development aligns with the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022–2028 by contributing to economic growth, tourism development and community amenity (Strategic Aims 11–14; ED 6.22, ED 6.25) while promoting sustainable mobility and recreational connectivity (ITC 7.25–7.30). It also incorporates environmental safeguards in accordance with policies relating to flood risk management, biodiversity protection and water resource management (ITC 7.51–7.53; NH objectives). The Proposed Development additionally supports the generation of employment supporting the local economy and the creation of a sense of place for the local community in line with the LECP. The proposal is strongly supported by the Hodson Bay/Barrymore Area Plan, which promotes the expansion of tourism and amenity uses in the area, and the Roscommon Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023–2028, which identifies Hodson Bay as as the county’s second most popular outdoor recreation site. The development further aligns with the Roscommon Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 by promoting tourism development in an established location and supporting green infrastructure, and with the County Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2025–2030, which promotes water-based tourism, improved recreational infrastructure and enhanced visitor experiences. Overall, the development represents a policy-compliant intervention that strengthens Hodson Bay as a key tourism and recreation asset while supporting environmental sustainability and community benefit.

5.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1

Principle of Development

The proposed design has been assessed from a Planning Policy perspective whether it complies with the specific policy objectives and subsequent development standards as set out under the Roscommon County Development Plan 2023-2029 – Volumes 1 & 2. The policy objectives and standards examined specifically correspond to developments of similar nature as the Proposed Development.

Volume 2 of the RCDP, which sets out the Area Plan for the Hodson Bay and Barrymore Area states the following:

In addition to specific policy objectives set out in this Area Plan, all development proposals arising within the Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan boundary will be required to adhere to relevant policy objectives and development management standards set out in Volume I of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028, as the overarching Plan, and to adhere to the General Policy Objectives set out in Section 1 of Volume II of the Plan, including in respect of all environmental and flood related policy objectives.

The project vision as described in the Architectural Design Statement prepared by RKD is set out below:

1. *The project vision focuses on creating a flexible, high-quality water sports facility that serves both watersports users and the wider community.*
2. *The proposal responds to the context, history and heritage of the area. Located next to a SPA and SAC, it aims to minimise its overall impact on the natural landscape while reflecting the historical character of the site. The design is influenced by the form and arrangement of crannogs, helping to connect the proposal to the cultural history of Lough Ree.*
3. *A key aim is to activate the public realm. The proposal extends approximately 550 metres along the edge of Lough Ree, creating a necklace of activities from north to south. These interconnected amenities are linked by the landscape proposal, encouraging movement through the site.*

The Proposed Development is considered acceptable in principle having regard to the land-use zoning and specific policy objectives for Hodson Bay contained within Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the RCDP.

The proposal directly responds to the Leisure Tourism/Amenity zoning and established tourism and recreational function of Hodson Bay. Policy Objective HB 1 seeks to facilitate suitable leisure, tourism and amenity development on lands zoned Leisure Tourism/Amenity and to strengthen Hodson Bay/Barrymore as a principal tourism and recreational attraction within County Roscommon and the wider region. HB 2 further supports the expansion of existing tourism and leisure facilities while maintaining public access and the area's amenity function.

The Proposed Development represents the consolidation and enhancement of an established tourism destination. The watersports pavilion and marina are intrinsically linked to Lough Ree and the established recreational function of the waterfront, while the public realm and active travel works will improve public access, connectivity and the overall visitor experience. The development therefore directly expands the purpose of the Leisure Tourism/Amenity zoning and Objectives HB 1 and HB 2.

HB 3 and HB 6 require development at Hodson Bay to be quality-driven, of high architectural merit and visually complementary to its sensitive lakeside setting. HB 4 and HB 5 support appropriately scaled, low-intensity tourism, amenity and green infrastructure, including walking and cycling routes, particularly where environmental sensitivities require a restrained development response.

The Proposed Development will be developed as an integrated, site-responsive waterfront intervention, with scale, form, materials and landscaping informed by the landscape character of Lough Ree and reinforcing the natural character of the shoreline. Walking and cycling infrastructure will provide low-intensity recreational access and improved connectivity while landscaping and green infrastructure are incorporated into the public realm. Built development will be appropriately concentrated within

established/developed tourism areas, with interventions within more environmentally sensitive areas limited to uses compatible with their landscape, amenity and ecological function.

Section 12.18 – Tourism and Recreation Facilities supports sustainable tourism and recreational development where proposals demonstrate high-quality design, sensitive siting, an appropriate scale of activity and a clear site-specific locational justification. It also requires consideration of the effects of increased visitor activity on sensitive environments and supporting infrastructure.

There is a compelling locational requirement for the Proposed Development at Hodson Bay. Watersports and the marina redevelopment necessarily require direct access to Lough Ree, while the associated public realm and active travel measures are required to provide safe, accessible and sustainable connections to these facilities. Importantly, the project will provide managed recreational access to the waterfront, concentrating activity within an established tourism destination where appropriate infrastructure can be provided and visitor activity effectively managed.

The proposal must also satisfy HB 7–HB 10 and the applicable Additional Development Management Standards (as set out under Chapter 12) relating to biodiversity and Natura 2000 protection, landscape and visual amenity, Greenbelt protection, flood risk, drainage, access and infrastructure provision.

Environmental and Ecological considerations have informed the development from the outset. The design will protect the ecological integrity of Lough Ree and its associated European sites through appropriate environmental assessment and mitigation. Flood risk has been addressed through the appropriate site-specific assessment, with climate-resilient design and SuDS integrated into the design. The scheme will also demonstrate appropriate water, wastewater, surface-water, transport and other servicing arrangements. Active travel infrastructure, biodiversity-sensitive landscaping and high-quality public realm will further ensure that increased recreational use is accommodated sustainably.

Having regard to the Leisure Tourism/Amenity zoning, Objectives HB 1–HB 10, Section 12.18 Tourism and Recreation Facilities, and the applicable Additional Development Management Standards of the RCDP, the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle.

The scheme represents a plan-led enhancement of Hodson Bay's established tourism and recreational function, combining water-based recreation with improved public access, public realm and sustainable mobility. The proposed development will strengthen Hodson Bay as a significant Lough Ree tourism, leisure and amenity destination while ensuring that its environmental and landscape assets are appropriately protected.

As set out under Section 1 of this Report, with the redevelopment of the Hodson Bay waterfront, RCC will realise the following objectives;

- Enhancing a visitor experience at Hodson Bay: address capacity constraints at the existing marina, improve the visitor experience and dwell time through the provision of the high-quality facilities proposed.
- Providing a redeveloped water sports/activity centre and additional facilities to provide a unique inclusive play experience to appeal to visitors of all ages at Hodson Bay.
- Enhancing opportunities to be active in nature by improving access to outdoor recreation and strengthening both physical and visual connections with Lough Ree and the River Shannon.
- Creating a better interface with the Hodson Bay waterfront and improvement of the quality of the buildings and public space.

The existing amenities at Hodson Bay make a significant contribution to economic development in Roscommon and the Proposed Development offers a flagship tourism facility building on the recognised appeal of Hodson Bay. The project will create an exceptional waterfront destination that strengthens the connection between people and place, enhance access to the lake and its amenities, and deliver a high-quality public asset whose benefits will be experienced by local communities and visitors for generations to come. The proposed facilities, will modernise and broaden the tourism offering at Hodson Bay, providing for improved access to the waterfront, augmented water sports facilities which can

accommodate a greater number of visitors in a comfortable environment and the provision of enhanced access by boat, bicycle and on foot through, an extended marina and safer active travel facilities. The proposal is therefore consistent with the RCDP's interconnected objectives of supporting tourism development, outdoor and water-based recreation, sustainable economic activity, improved accessibility and connectivity, quality placemaking and the responsible utilisation of the county's natural assets.

5.2

Land Use Zoning

The proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park is subject to the Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan. While this Plan does not set out formal land use zonings with a matrix of permitted developments, it does identify areas of the Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area as 'Greenbelt' and 'Leisure Tourism / Amenity' as outlined in Figure 5-1.

The Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan in relation to Leisure Tourism / Amenity acknowledges that Hodson Bay / Barrymore is an important destination in County Roscommon in terms of its leisure tourism and recreation offering. Tourism activity within the Plan area is centred on Lough Ree and the adjacent facilities and amenities, including particularly the marina, hotel, caravan park, golf course and watersports centre.

The Council recognise the potential of this area to develop further as an important amenity and tourism asset and the Council will seek to support this, whilst ensuring the protection of the sensitive environment of the lake and its shores from inappropriate tourism development.

The Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan in relation to Green Belt areas note that *the Council will seek to conserve the nature conservation value of the Lough Ree proposed Heritage Area (pNHA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as well as other environmentally sensitive areas.* Green belt zoning is generally applied to specific zones to protect the setting, character and environmental quality of these areas of high natural beauty and safeguard their environmental, archaeological and ecological amenities.

Any proposed development which is in proximity to Lough Ree must have minimal effect on the natural environment and may need Appropriate Assessments in terms of the Habitats Directive to demonstrate that they will not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites in the area i.e. Lough Ree SPA/SAC, either alone or in combination with other projects and plans.

The proposed development is in line with the designated zoning objective for 'Leisure Tourism / Amenity' and Green Belt and therefore the proposal would be considered acceptable in principle.

The more intensive works associated with the proposed development including the development of a Sports Pavilion Building, active travel facilities along the L2020 and part of the proposed public realm enhancements and car park amendments are located in the 'Leisure Tourism / Amenity'. Meanwhile the less intensive works including the remaining public realm works and amendments to car parking are taking place in the 'Greenbelt' zone. This approach to development at Hodson Bay provides for the environmental protection of the Greenbelt zone while enabling easier access for low impact recreation such as walking and cycling within this zone. The more intense tourism activities such as those related to water sport are concentrated in areas which will have less on an impact on the lake and its protected environment.

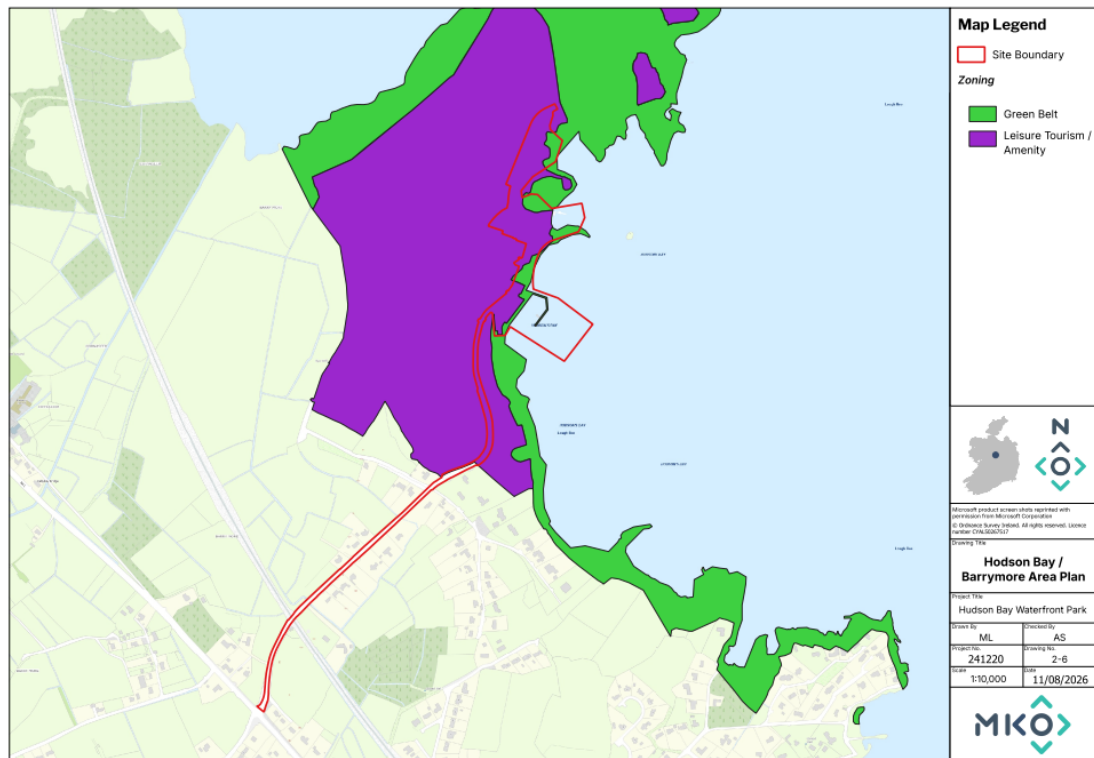


Figure 5-1 Hodson Bay / Barrymore Area Plan

5.3 Proposed Design

The RCDP sets out that the Proposed Design should achieve a high standard of architectural and landscape design, responding to the sensitive lakeshore setting. Building height, massing, materials, roof form, lighting, signage and marina structures should minimise visual intrusion and protect important views across and from Lough Ree. This should be reinforced through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment where appropriate.

5.3.1 Water Sports Pavilion

The Proposed Development will include for the demolition of the existing 500m² water sports building and the adjacent 40m² public toilet facility. The marquees housing the Baysports reception, changing facilities, safety briefing, and café will be dismantled.

The WSP will be designed to incorporate three main buildings and a plaza canopy structure. The WSP will be constructed in the area where the existing water sports building and associated temporary structures are located. In order to mitigate against future flood risk, the new WSP buildings will be constructed at a finished floor level of 38 metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).

The Proposed Water Sports Pavilion building will be located at the same location as the existing facility operated by Bay Sports. The site layout designed by RKD (Project Architects) represents a coherent approach with the building pavilion facing the water and an enclosed plaza between the buildings and the road. The water sports and cafe pavilions are separated with the main pedestrian entrance to the site between them. The multi-use canopy structure sits in the centre of the plaza. This can be used as the main entrance reception for check in and wetsuit collection. Alternatively in the shoulder and winter season the main building desk and reception can be used.

The ancillary buildings include the maintenance and storage shed and the ESB substations. A perimeter fence is designed with the landscaped boundary to enclose the plaza. This ensures the water sports activities, and changing areas are safe and secure. The plaza space is intended to operate as a multi -use space in the shoulder and winter season. It is intended that sports, wellness and leisure activities will be hosted there by the water sports operator. Thus, making the plaza available for activities to the public throughout the year.

The marina pavilion is located beside the marina. It serves boat users and other visitors by providing facilities, including WCs, showers, and a wash -down tap for equipment. The swimming canopy is located further north, within an area already popular with local swimmers. the canopy is set back from the water edge, so it is set above the typical winter water level.

Pedestrian Access throughout the site will be aligned to the upgraded road. The pedestrian path, north from the marina, will be offset from the road closer to the water edge. Cycle and cargo bike parking is strategically located at key points around the site. Vehicular access is from the road which will be upgraded as part of the project. Vehicular parking is reorganised and removed from the waterside plaza. A coach drop off zone is located adjacent to the water sports facility.

Please refer to the Architectural Design Statement in conjunction with the Planning Drawings prepared by RKD Architects and submitted with this planning application.

5.3.2 Marina Redevelopment

The Proposed Development will include for the redevelopment of the existing Waterways Ireland-operated marina at Hodson Bay comprising an extension to the existing breakwater and the creation of a new jetty extension for boats to berth.

The existing marina structure will remain in place. A gangway will connect the existing breakwater structure to a new extended breakwater. The breakwater extension will be a floating breakwater of up to 6m in width and it will be secured in place by guided vertical piles. The new jetty will be comprised of a series of floating pontoons which will also be secured in place by guided vertical piles. A canoe step

launch platform will be included in the new jetty design. The marina extension will have a footprint of approximately 130m x 110m in the lake. The length of the floating breakwater will total approximately 218m.

The new floating breakwater will comprise of a series of concrete platforms finished with timber or plastic and connected together by stainless steel wire rope and rubber buffers. The new jetty will be comprised of a series of steel and concrete floating pontoons likely finished in glass fibre reinforced concrete or glass fibre reinforced plastic. The vertical piles which will secure the floating breakwater and jetty in place will be made of steel.

The marina redevelopment and extension will provide approximately 29 no. additional boat berths, ensuring that the extended marina will be capable of hosting approximately 59 no. berths for cruisers and visiting watercraft. The redevelopment will also include for the provision of services for boat users including potable water, electricity and foul water pump-out facilities. A new marina service block building covering an area of 74m² will be constructed as part of the Proposed Development adjacent to the marina which will provide shower and toilet facilities for marina users. The marina service block building will be constructed with concrete and steel and finished with concrete terracotta tiles similar to the Water Sports Pavilion buildings.

The marina will be an integral part of the public realm and promenade design, and it will have adequate provision for drop off and short-term parking alongside the jetty.

5.3.3

Public Realm Upgrades

The Public Realm Upgrades will provide a flexible public space at the centre of the site, providing a space for programmed activity and events while serving as a functional amenity for marina activities. Public picnic areas, play areas, and benches and rest areas at viewpoints will also be incorporated into the design.

The upgrades along the lake shore aim to enhance the visitor experience through the development of a continuous promenade along the lakeshore. This element will also focus on the improvement and redevelopment of the shoreline and providing public access to the River Shannon, creating a pedestrian priority environment. Figure 5-2 below illustrates the Masterplan Public Realm Design for the Proposed Development.

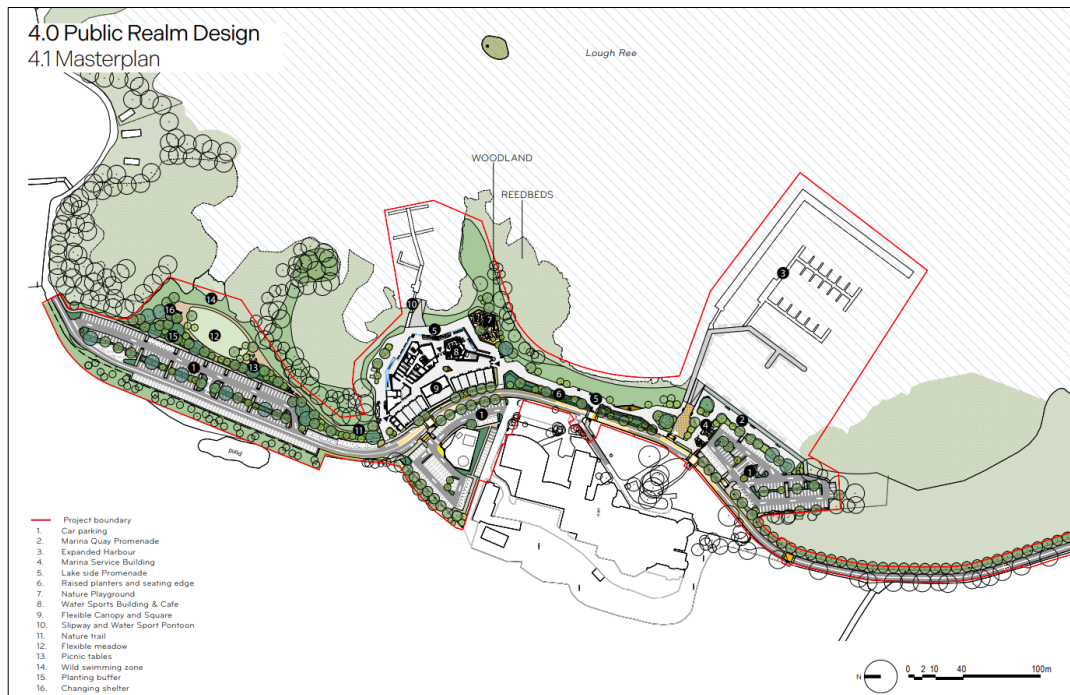


Figure 5-2 Public Realm Design. (Source: OKRA Landscape Design Report)

5.3.3.1 Amenities

The Public Realm Upgrades will include for the construction of a playground, nature observation space, picnic areas, benches, wellness meadow, changing shelter and events space including the development of a continuous promenade along the lakeshore.

The playground which will measure approximately 400m², will be located adjacent to the WSP and will be constructed largely with wood with surfacing using plastic Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer (EPDM).

The swimming changing shelter will be a precast concrete structure and will cover an area of approximately 19m². The shelter will be constructed in the north of the Proposed Development site.

5.3.3.2 Landscaping

A key feature of the Public Realm Upgrades will be the provision of extensive natural landscaping to ensure that the Proposed Development assimilates with the natural environment. The Public Realm Upgrades will incorporate extensive planting of native trees and shrubs throughout the site.

The Proposed Development will result in the removal of approximately 239 no. trees throughout the site. A total of 240 trees will be planted as part of the replanting scheme, with all trees replanted being native species. Details of the tree replanting scheme across the site are found in Planning Drawing HBWP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-OKR-LA-001201.

The site landscaping will also include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) planting zones, integrated planter boxes with public seating, open grassed areas including the wellness meadow in the north of the site and green lake shore areas.

The Public Realm Upgrades will include a variety of finishes for pedestrian areas including promenade areas, steps and ramps finished in high-quality concrete. The promenade along the marina quay will be constructed with timber decking. Sections of the Public Realm will include resin bound and self-bound gravel footpaths. Public Realm seating will include high-quality concrete benches and timber insert benches.

5.3.3.3 Lighting

The Public Realm Upgrades will include a lighting scheme which is designed ensure visitor safety and to minimise disturbance to wildlife. Key principles in the lighting design included minimising disturbance to bats and preventing lighting from shining directly on to the lake. The existing lighting infrastructure on the site will be removed and disposed of in appropriate waste facilities.

Site lighting has been designed to the following principles:

- The lighting scheme includes the use of warm white 2700 Kelvin light emitting diode (LED) luminaires, precision optical control, shielding where required, careful luminaire orientation and an intelligent lighting control strategy that progressively reduces light output during periods of reduced site activity. Collectively, these measures seek to minimise obtrusive light, reduce sky glow and limit unnecessary illumination of surrounding habitats.
- The external lighting has been designed around the principle of providing the right level of light, in the right location, for the right duration. Lighting has been designed to ensure a minimum overall uniformity to the areas where illumination is required in principal circulation routes and external public spaces to support safe movement, accessibility and operational requirements, whilst avoiding excessive illumination or ornamental lighting that would increase disturbance through the lighting management system. This operating philosophy contributes to a reduction in operational energy consumption while also reducing the duration and intensity of artificial lighting during periods when ecological activity is generally greatest.

- The proposed lighting design has been prepared using recognised lighting design software together with manufacturer-verified photometric data and has been developed in accordance with the relevant industry standards and guidance applicable to external lighting installations.

5.3.4 Materials

The material palette reinforces the natural character of the design through a restrained selection of finishes. The main promenade comprises seamless exposed aggregate concrete, with smooth concrete inserts highlighting key routes and spaces. Timber accents, including a quay-side deck, add warmth and strengthen the waterfront character. Resin-bound paving is used within the nature zone, while the playground features a soft permeable surface. Planting and landscape form remain the dominant elements, with materials providing a complementary framework. The Landscape Design sets out the key principles considered in determining the material palette for the scheme, demonstrating quality design standards:

- Distinct promenade and nature zone character areas.
- Durable materials suitable for a waterfront environment.
- Permeable surfaces maximised where feasible.
- Natural colour palette and finishes
- Water-resistant and slip-resistant surface treatments.

See Figure 5-3, which illustrates the material palette for the site as set out in the *Landscape Report prepared OKRA Landscape Architects*.



Figure 5-3 Material Map as prepared by OKRA and set out under Section 5.1 of the Landscape Report.

Please refer to the Landscape Report which has been submitted with this planning application, for further details in relation to the material and other design strategies for the Proposed Development.

5.3.5 Visual Impact

The Proposed Development is located within an area of “Very High Value” due to its setting along the waterfront of Hodson Bay.

The RCDP, under Volume 1 Chapter 10 and Section 10.13 includes the following policy in relation to landscape value:

“It is a Policy of Roscommon County Council to: NH 10.25: Minimise visual impacts on areas categorised within the County Roscommon Landscape Character Assessment including “moderate value,” “high value,” “very high value” and with special emphasis on areas classified as “exceptional value” and where deemed necessary, require the use of Visual Impact Assessment where proposed development may have significant effect on such designated areas.”

The RCDP, under Volume 1 Chapter 12 sets out the general requirements for planning applications. Under Section 12.18 Tourism and Recreational Facilities, the RCDP states that *“structures proposed should generally comprise a high-quality design with sensitive siting and design so as not to interfere with the visual setting of sensitive visual attractions...”*. The RCDP under this section also notes that in all cases the facility shall be of an appropriate scale for the location and shall have a high standard of design, layout, landscape and environmental protection so as not to impact negatively on the visual and residential amenity of the area or have significant adverse effects on the environment.

Chapter 13 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report submitted with this planning application comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park. The LVIA assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual amenity. The LVIA also includes the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects. The LVIA focuses on the key aspects of the Water Sports Pavilion and the Marina Redevelopment and Extension, which constitute the largest footprints of change within the Proposed Development site, and which are highly integrated with the shoreline and within the shallow water environment of Hodson Bay/Lough Ree/Shannon River Corridor. In addition, the LVIA considers the extensive landscape works associated with the Public Realm Upgrades aspect of the Proposed Development, which would result in material changes to the appearance of the wider shoreline areas to the north and south of the water sports and marina sites.

The LVIA confirms that mitigation, remedial, and avoidance measures have been integral in the design of the Proposed Development with regard to landscape and visual effects. All efforts have been made to ensure that the Proposed Development is designed to effectively assimilate with the existing landscape setting and character at the shoreline of Lough Ree and Yew Point. From a visual impact assessment perspective, the design of the Proposed Development, where possible, avoids obstruction of open views looking out across Lough Ree from the shore and avoids interrupting recreational amenities at Hodson Bay. Consideration has been given to the location, scale, massing and height of all above-ground infrastructure with the potential to interrupt or obstruct valued scenic views from viewpoints and publicly accessible locations immediately west of the Proposed Development; namely at the site of Hodson Bay Hotel. While there are no protected views within Hodson Bay itself, where possible, the above-ground infrastructure (e.g. proposed buildings) has been strategically positioned to ensure they are effectively integrated into the landscape and do not obstruct views of the lake. This was achieved, for example, by availing of areas where visual obstruction of the lake already exists, such as areas of existing mature woodland in the north of the Proposed Development site.

Details of the various layout iterations included as part of the design process are included in Chapter 3 “Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives” of the EIAR and the landscape and visual “mitigating” factors of key relevance to the LVIA, assessment of the significance of effects including the cumulative impacts are set out under Chapter 13 of the EIAR submitted with this planning application.

5.4 Economic Benefits

A Tourism and Economic Benefit study has been undertaken by CHL & Associates along with Red C market research specialists for the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Development. The study aligned to the wider project programme and design team outputs to ensure continuity in the assessment of the performance potential of the proposed scheme.

The study was carried out in two stages:

Stage A: focused on market research and current position analysis to establish a baseline. This study also considers the ways in which the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park development would contribute to destination development, specifically in line with the strategic agendas for tourism development in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Shannon Tourism Masterplan 2020-2030, the Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2025-2030.

Stage B: assessed the likely impact of the Proposed Development from a tourism and economic perspective. This included considering bringing the new development to the market and operational and governance models which would provide a sustainable viable model moving forward.

The Proposed Development is expected to generate economic benefits during both the construction and operational phases, including employment and regional spend. The broader benefits include enhanced destination attractiveness, increased visitor satisfaction, and contribution to regional tourism growth. The study also concluded that additionality extends beyond visitor numbers to include value capture, extended stays and improved tourism quality. The study utilises the Fáilte Ireland visitor spend profiles and CSO estimates for daytrip expenditure to estimate that *the Proposed Development in its operational phase would generate an average of up to €4.07 million additional spend in the local economy each year of operation*. This is the increase in spend generated by the project over current levels.

Please refer to the *Tourism and Economic Study prepared by CHL and Associates* and submitted with this planning application.

5.5 Community Benefits

The proposed development will deliver significant community benefits through the provision of enhanced recreational, amenity and outdoor leisure facilities that are accessible to residents of all ages and abilities. By creating high-quality public spaces along the shores of Lough Ree, the development will provide new opportunities for walking, cycling, passive recreation, outdoor activity and social interaction in a safe and attractive setting. The Waterfront Park will strengthen the connection between the local community and the lake, encouraging greater engagement with the area's natural and recreational assets while promoting health, wellbeing and active lifestyles.

The proposed facilities have been designed to support a wide range of users, from families and children to older persons, community groups and visitors, fostering a shared space where people can gather, participate in recreational activities and enjoy the lakeside environment. The development will enhance the quality of life within the area by creating an enduring public amenity that supports community interaction, social inclusion and outdoor enjoyment, while establishing a lasting legacy for current and future generations.

5.6 Active Travel Site Access Improvements

The proposed Active Travel site access improvements aim to prioritise sustainability and enable a safe environment for non-motorised visitors to the area. The Proposed Development includes for a 3m wide shared cycle / pedestrian pathway along the length of the L2020 Local Road from the N61 National Road junction to the Hodson Bay Marina. The upgrades to the L2020 Local Road and pathway will involve two elements:

1. Widening and repurposing of c. 900m of the existing footpath along the western side of the L2020 Local Road from the junction with the N61 National Road and the pedestrian crossing at the Athlone Golf Club lands. The L2020 Local Road will be narrowed between 5.5m and 6m to facilitate space for the 3m wide pathway in this section.
2. The Active Travel corridor then crosses the L2020 Local Road and the existing footpath along the eastern side of the L2020 Local Road will be widened along a c. 415m section terminating at the Hodson Bay Marina. The existing carriageway widths in this section will be retained, and land acquisition from Athlone Golf Club is required to widen the pathway to 3m.

The Proposed Development will also see the implementation of traffic calming measures along the L2020 Local Road accessing the site including c. 6 no. speed humps at c. 150m spacing and 7 no. raised crossings at key pedestrian crossing locations. The creation of a pedestrian priority environment will include the re-location of car parking and creation of a low-speed driving environment around the waterfront area to prioritise safety.

The Proposed Development has been considered in line with the access, traffic and parking requirements and demonstrates safe vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist access, appropriate servicing / emergency access and parking strategy. The proposed active travel infrastructure forms an integral mitigation and accessibility measure, with appropriate provision for parking to ensure visitors of all age groups can have equal access and experience.

5.6.1 Mobility Management Plan

A Mobility Management Plan (MMP) has been developed by CIVIC Engineers for the Proposed Development and has been submitted as part of this planning application. The MMP sets out measures that will be implemented to improve access, circulation and movement throughout the site while promoting sustainable travel and enhancing the overall visitor experience.

The objectives of this Mobility Management Plan are to:

- Improve accessibility for all visitors regardless of their chosen mode of travel;
- Encourage walking and cycling as attractive means of travelling to and from Hodson Bay;
- Maximise the efficiency of the proposed parking provision;
- Improve internal vehicle circulation and reduce conflict between vehicles;
- Provide a clear, consistent and intuitive wayfinding strategy for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists;
- Support access to the marina, water sports facilities, nature meadow and wider recreational areas;
- Reduce unnecessary vehicle circulation and congestion within the site; and
- Improve the overall visitor experience.

In addition to the objectives above, the operation of the MMP will seek to achieve a more balanced distribution of parking demand across the site, improve utilisation of the Northern Carpark during peak visitor periods, reduce vehicle circulation associated with parking search activity, and increase the use of walking and cycling for trips within and to Hodson Bay.

Overall, the MMP provides a coordinated framework for managing movement throughout Hodson Bay by integrating parking management, active travel infrastructure, accessibility measures and a comprehensive wayfinding strategy. The MMP supports safer and more efficient internal circulation, encourage walking and cycling, improve utilisation of existing parking capacity, reduce unnecessary vehicle activity within the waterfront area and enhance the overall visitor experience, while supporting the sustainable mobility objectives of the Proposed Development.

Please refer to the *Mobility Management Plan prepared by CIVIC* and submitted with this planning application for further details on the proposed Sustainable Travel Measures, Accessibility and Wayfinding Strategies.

5.6.2 Parking

Car Parking

Chapter 12, Section 12.4 of the RCDP sets out the car parking standards for development proposals. The RCDP notes that the purpose and application of the car parking standards is to ensure that when assessing development proposals, consideration is given to the accommodation of vehicles that will potentially be generated by the development proposed in accordance with national and regional policy objectives and to facilitate a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport. Additionally, where a realistic and achievable smarter travel plan can be implemented, a reduction in car parking space requirements may be considered.

The Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) prepared by CIVIC Engineers sets out details of the existing parking facilities including parking demand and subsequently the proposed parking strategy. The TTA notes that owing to its rural location and limited availability of alternative transport options, most visitors travelling to Hodson Bay and the surrounding attractions rely on private vehicles as their primary mode of transport. The parking areas, which have been expanded over time, serve a range of users including patrons of the Hodson Bay Hotel, Baysports Waterpark visitors, people accessing the marina, and individuals accessing the shoreline and waters of Lough Ree. The existing parking distributed across several locations currently comprises a total of 353 no. spaces with no formal bus or boat trailer parking.

The TTA undertook an analysis of the existing parking spaces, access to these spaces and the current and future parking demand generated from the area and the Proposed Development. To accommodate the forecast parking demand associated with the Proposed Development, the design includes the reconfiguration and expansion of parking provision across the Hodson Bay area. The proposed parking comprises:

1. Central Hodson Bay (Car Parks A & B): 268 no. spaces;
2. North Hodson Bay (Car Park C): 236 no. spaces;

Therefore, the Total Car Parking Provision proposed as part of the Proposed Development is c. 504 no. spaces. This demonstrates an increase in the existing car parking by c. 151 no. spaces. Although the parking assessment carried out (and detailed within the TTA) identified a requirement for 470 no. car parking spaces to serve the Proposed Development, the additional provision is informed by stakeholder consultation and in recognition of the seasonal nature of visitor demand, rural context of Hodson Bay, and the site's location and continued reliance on private vehicle access.

In addition to increasing capacity, the parking layout has been redesigned to improve the operation and appearance of the waterfront area by relocating existing on-street parking away from the immediate lakeshore, thereby enhancing the visual amenity, landscape setting and pedestrian environment. The layout also seeks to improve the distribution of parking demand across the site through enhanced wayfinding and signage, encouraging greater utilisation of the northern car park, particularly by visitors accessing the water sports facilities and café. This will improve the overall efficiency of the parking provision and reduce vehicle congestion within the central waterfront area. The parking provision also includes:

- 30 electric vehicle (EV) charging spaces;
- 28 accessible parking spaces;
- Three dedicated bus parking bays within the northern car park;
- Three dedicated boat trailer parking bays within to the marina car park.

Please refer to **Drawing No. 31022-DR-CIV-CE-00100 to 31022-DR-CIV-CE-00111** for full details on the proposed arrangements for car parking.

Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

The RCDP under Section 12.24 notes that the provision of secure cycle storage facilities is essential to support the promotion and development of cycling as a more sustainable mode of transport. High-quality secure cycle storage at origins and destinations is key element of any strategy aimed at encouraging cycling. The RCDP further sets out that parking should be in an accessible location close to the entrance to buildings, is secure, overlooked, lit and sheltered.

The proposed development includes a comprehensive proposal for active travel improvements designed to encourage walking and cycling and improve connectivity throughout the Hodson Bay area -

- A new 3.0 m wide shared pedestrian and cycle facility along the L2020 between the N61 junction and Hodson Bay Marina;
- A continuous lakeshore pathway with connecting links to improve public access to the waterfront;
- Bicycle parking and servicing facilities;
- Enhanced pedestrian connections between the car parks and key destinations.

5.6.3 Road Safety

The safety of the proposed road network has been thoroughly assessed as part of this Part X application. The pedestrian and road network has been developed in line with the design principles set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). A Statement of Compliance with DMURS, prepared by CIVIC, also accompanies this planning application. Furthermore, a Stage 1 Road Safety / Quality Audit has been undertaken by NRB Consulting Engineers and submitted along with this Planning Application.

The RSA identified a number of issues relating to Road Carriageway Widths; Vehicle Tracking; Crossing; Existing footpath width; Pedestrian/Cycle Crossing Route Points; Existing Speed Limits; Existing Signage; Bus Routes and Parking; Bus Parking and Pedestrian Routes; Trees obscuring Street Lighting. **All items in both Road Safety Audits have been addressed in the final design, and the proposed solutions either accepted by the Design Team or new solutions proposed and accepted by the auditor.** Further details are contained in the RSA's which accompany this application.

A Stage 2 RSA will be undertaken at detailed design (post planning consent), and a Stage 3 RSA will be undertaken prior to the opening of the proposed development.

5.6.4 Design of Roads and Streets

The proposed transport and public realm improvements have been designed in accordance with the principles of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS Design Manual for Roads and Streets (2019) (DMURS). The Proposed Development promotes a balanced approach to movement and place by prioritising walking and cycling, encouraging lower vehicle speeds, improving accessibility and enhancing the quality of the public realm, while maintaining appropriate access for private vehicles, coaches, service vehicles and emergency services.

The Proposed Development comprises the enhancement of transport infrastructure serving Hodson Bay, including increased parking provision, improved walking and cycling infrastructure, traffic calming measures, upgraded public transport facilities and enhancements to the public realm. The design seeks to create a safer, more accessible and attractive environment that balances the movement of vehicles with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users while supporting the continued operation of Hodson Bay as a strategic tourism and recreation destination.

A DMURS Statement of Compliance has been prepared by CIVIC Engineers and submitted with this planning application. The Statement concludes that *the Proposed Development demonstrates a high level of compliance with the objectives and design principles of DMURS and represents a significant improvement to the existing transport environment at Hodson Bay.*

Please refer to the DMURS Statement of Compliance prepared by CIVIC for further details on how the proposal aligns with the principles of this guidance.

5.6.5 Traffic and Transport Assessment

The Traffic and Transport Assessment prepared by CIVIC Engineers sets out the Traffic Proposals for the Proposed Development which comprises the expansion and enhancement of transport infrastructure serving the Hodson Bay area, including increased parking provision, improved walking and cycling facilities, enhanced public transport infrastructure and road safety improvements.

The TTA identified that the existing transport network is characterised by relatively low traffic volumes, with pronounced seasonal peaks associated with tourism, recreation and hotel activity. Existing surveys also identified persistent parking capacity constraints during peak periods, together with excessive vehicle speeds along the L2020 and a reliance on private car travel resulting from the limited availability of alternative transport options. The operational characteristics of the Hodson Bay Level Crossing have also been considered and, while periodic delays occur, these are primarily governed by rail operations rather than road traffic demand.

The Proposed Development is forecast to generate a modest increase in traffic movements, with approximately 44 two-way vehicle trips during the peak hour. When assessed against the existing traffic environment, this increase is not considered significant and can be accommodated by the surrounding road network without materially affecting the operation of the L2020, the N61 junction or the Hodson Bay Level Crossing. The predicted increase in queue lengths at the level crossing is limited to approximately three additional vehicles under a worst-case barrier closure scenario and is not expected to result in queues extending to the N61 junction.

The TTA further demonstrates that there is an existing shortfall in parking provision during periods of peak demand. The proposed increase in parking supply from 353 to 504 spaces addresses this deficiency while also improving the quality, distribution and management of parking throughout the site. The relocation of parking away from the immediate waterfront, together with enhanced wayfinding, dedicated coach, boat trailer, accessible and electric vehicle facilities, will significantly improve the efficiency, accessibility and overall visitor experience within Hodson Bay.

In addition to accommodating forecast demand, the TTA sets out that the development delivers substantial sustainable transport benefits through the provision of a continuous shared pedestrian and cycle facility, improved pedestrian connectivity, enhanced public transport infrastructure, traffic calming measures and road safety improvements. These measures are consistent with the principles of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and support national, regional and local transport policy objectives by promoting safer, more sustainable travel choices.

Overall, the Proposed Development represents a balanced and appropriate transport solution that responds to existing operational deficiencies while supporting the continued growth of Hodson Bay as a key tourism, recreation and leisure destination.

5.7

Universal Access

Chapter 12, Section 12.5 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out the importance of universal equality of access and inclusive design within all aspects of the built environment is recognised by the Council.

The Council encourages all new development proposals to be designed in accordance with the standards outlined in the *'National Disability Authority - Building for Everyone; A Universal Design Approach 2012'* and *Technical Guidance Document M - Access and Use of the Building Regulations 2010* or any subsequent update.

A Universal Access Statement has been prepared by O'Herlihy Access Consultancy to ensure that the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park is inclusive and accessible to all users, regardless of ability. The design methodology is rooted in Universal Design principles and strictly complies with Part M of the Second Schedule of the Building Regulations and the guidance within Technical Guidance Document M (TGD M) 2022.

The strategy ensures that all project elements—including the Water Sports Pavilion, café, marina, and public realm—are independently accessible. Key provisions include the allocation of a minimum of 5% accessible parking spaces, the implementation of 1,800mm turning areas in communal zones, and the provision of level landings at all building entrances. Notably, the Water Sports Pavilion will include a specialised 'Changing Places' toilet facility to support users with high support needs.

For a comprehensive breakdown of the accessibility features, including circulation routes, sanitary provision, and communication aids, please refer to the *Universal Access Statement (July 2026)* accompanying this submission, prepared by O'Herlihy Access Consultancy.

5.8

Drainage Strategy

CIVIC Engineers have prepared a drainage strategy which sets out the details of the surface water and foul water drainage strategy including anticipated measures to be incorporated into the detailed design stage to control both the quantity and quality of surface water discharge from the Proposed Development.

Separate foul and surface water drainage systems are proposed. Foul water will connect to the existing Uisce Éireann network, and surface water will discharge to Lough Ree. The Drainage Strategy notes that further survey works are required to confirm the location, levels and capacity of all existing networks and outfalls.

The surface water strategy delivers betterment through approximately 9,390m² of SuDS features including rain gardens, permeable/porous surfacing, bioretention systems and tree pits. These provide approximately 1,470 m³ of attenuation storage. This attenuation restricts discharge to 249.1l/s across five outfalls in the critical storm event. While this remains above the calculated greenfield runoff rate of 20 l/s, achieving full greenfield rates was not considered practicable given the site's topography and reliance on gravity drainage. Hydrocarbon and integrated silt separation interceptors are included to treat runoff from car parking and vehicular areas prior to discharge to Lough Ree.

A pre-connection enquiry has been submitted to Uisce Éireann for the foul water connection. A Confirmation of Feasibility certificate will be submitted following Uisce Éireann consultation and design vetting.

Please refer to the Drainage Strategy prepared by CIVIC for further details on the proposed strategy.

5.9

Ecological Assessments

A Natura Impact Statement with Appropriate Assessment Screening, as well as an Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, prepared by MKO, are included with the planning application. The assessments quantify any potential effects relating to biodiversity and identifies the measures required to avoid, reduce and mitigate likely significant effects.

The Natura Impact Assessment concludes:

“Where the potential for any adverse effect on any European Site has been identified, the pathway by which any such effect may occur has been robustly blocked through the use of avoidance, appropriate design and mitigation measures as set out within this report and its appendices. The measures ensure that the construction and operation of the Proposed Development do not adversely affect the integrity of European sites.

Therefore, it can be objectively concluded that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.”

The Ecological Impact Assessment concludes:

“The potential residual impacts on ecological receptors will not be significant and no potential for the Proposed Development to contribute to any cumulative impacts on biodiversity when considered in combination with other plans and projects was identified.

In conclusion, provided that the Proposed Development is constructed and operated in accordance with the design described within this application, there will be no significant effects on biodiversity, protected sites or other natural heritage interests at any geographic scale.”

Therefore, it is submitted that the proposed development is not likely to have a significant adverse effect on biodiversity and is in compliance with national and local biodiversity protection and enhancement policies.

5.10

Environment

5.10.1

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

This Planning Application is subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment which has been submitted along with this Planning Application.

The EIAR has been prepared in compliance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU and Irish implementing legislation, including Part X of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001), as amended in particular as amended by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018).

The European Union Directive 2011/92/EU, amended by EU Directive 2014/52/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the 'EIA Directive'), requires Member States to ensure that a competent authority carries out an assessment of the likely significant effects of certain types of projects, as listed in the Directive, prior to development consent being given for the project.

The EIA of the Proposed Development will be undertaken by An Coimisiún Pleanála as the competent authority, in compliance with the provisions of EU and Irish law and guidance. This EIAR complies with the EIA Directive in terms of the structure and content of the information required. The purpose of the EIAR submitted along with this planning application is to document the current state of the environment in the vicinity of the Proposed Development and to assess the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment.

The EIAR uses the grouped structure method to describe the existing environment, the potential impacts of the Proposed Development thereon and the proposed mitigation measures. Background information relating to the Proposed Development, consultation undertaken and a description of the Proposed Development is presented in separate sections. The grouped format sections describe the impacts of the Proposed Development in terms of human beings and population, flora and fauna, soils and geology, water, air and climate, noise, landscape, cultural heritage and material assets such as traffic and transportation, together with the interaction of the foregoing.

All EIAR chapters will assess the Proposed Development for cumulative effects with regard to their relevant discipline in their respective chapter. The chapters of this EIAR are as follows:

1. *Introduction*
2. *Background to the Proposed Development*
3. *Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives*
4. *Description of the Proposed Development*
5. *Population & Human Health*
6. *Biodiversity*
7. *Geology and Soils*
8. *Hydrology & Hydrogeology*
9. *Air*
10. *Climate*
11. *Noise and Vibration*
12. *Cultural Heritage*
13. *Landscape and Visual*
14. *Material Assets - including Traffic*
15. *Vulnerability to Major Accidents and Natural Disasters*
16. *Interaction of the Foregoing*
17. *Schedule of Commitments*

The EIAR also includes a Non-Technical Summary (NTS), which is a condensed and easily comprehensible version of the EIAR document. The NTS is laid out in a similar format to the main EIAR document and comprises a description of the Proposed Development followed by the existing environment, impacts and mitigation measures presented in the grouped format.

5.10.2 Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Chapter 8 of the RCDP sets out the Climate Action, Energy and Environment Policies and Objectives for the Roscommon Administrative area. Section 8.3 sets out the strategic vision for climate action in County Roscommon, which notes that *“one of the strategic aims of this plan is to set out appropriate policy objectives in order to reduce the county’s overall carbon footprint and increase energy efficiencies across a range of sectors...”*

An Energy Statement has been prepared by CIVIC MEP and sets out the proposed strategy for minimising the operational energy demand of the development through a fabric-first approach, the use of energy-efficient building services and the integration of appropriate renewable energy technologies.

The energy strategy proposed, follows a three-stage hierarchy:

Stage 1: Minimise Energy Demand:

The building envelope will be designed to reduce heat loss, uncontrolled air infiltration and avoidable cooling demand. The proposed U-values and air-permeability rate are substantially better than the elemental backstops in TGD L 2022 and provide an appropriate basis for a robust fabric-first strategy. The typical measures proposed under this stage includes passive design, high-performance fabric, airtightness, reduced thermal bridging, solar control and effective use of daylight.

Stage 2: Using Energy Efficiently:

The proposed building-services systems are designed to meet the operational needs of the water sports pavilion and café while reducing energy use for fans, pumps, heating, cooling, hot water, and lighting. The typical measures as set out under the Energy Statement includes high-efficiency heating, cooling and ventilation, heat recovery, efficient hot-water generation, LED lighting, zoning and automatic controls.

Stage 3: Low and Zero Carbon Technologies

A qualitative review of low- and zero-carbon technologies has been undertaken for the planning-stage design and set out in the Energy Statement. The assessment considers technical fit, site constraints, likely operational profile, maintenance and compatibility with the all-electric strategy. Quantitative lifecycle cost and carbon calculations have not been completed at this stage. Based on this review, the combined low- and zero-carbon strategy as set out under the Energy Statement is:

- ASHP-based VRF heating and cooling with heat recovery where practicable
- Dedicated central ASHP domestic-hot-water generation with insulated hot-water storage tanks
- A maximised roof-mounted solar PV array serving on-site electrical demand.

Typical measures considered includes solar PV array, heat pumps and other site-appropriate low- and zero-carbon technologies.

The Proposal includes for:

Solar PV Array: The PV array has been maximised to the suitable available roof area. The electricity generated will be used on-site in preference to imports from the grid, with any surplus exported through the final electrical connection arrangement. No battery storage is proposed.

It is proposed to include 45 panels on the water sports pavilion and 9 panels on the café, totalling 54 panels with an area of 108m². The array will have 21.6 kW peak, assuming 400W per panel, and would generate approximately 16-20 MWh of electricity annually, depending on the final module efficiency.

EV Charging and Electrical Capacity: The development is expected to include an initial provision of approximately 18 no. 7 kVA slow electric vehicle chargers and 12 no. 24 kVA rapid chargers. The

electrical infrastructure will allow for future expansion to approximately 150 slow chargers and 12 rapid chargers, subject to the final operational requirements and detailed design of the charging strategy.

The estimated maximum electrical demand for the development, including the initial electric vehicle charging provision, is approximately 716 kVA. Allowing for the future expansion of the charging infrastructure, the estimated maximum demand increases to approximately 1,202 kVA, of which the future electric vehicle charging provision is expected to contribute approximately 835 kVA of connected load. The final electrical demand and charging capacity will be confirmed during detailed design stages.

The Energy Statement concludes that the proposed buildings have been designed to comply with the requirements of Building Regulations Part L (Buildings Other Than Dwellings) and achieve the Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) standard. An initial NEAP assessment has been completed, confirming that the proposed buildings satisfy the applicable Part L compliance criteria. The assessment will be reviewed and updated during detailed design, with final BER certification completed by an SEAI Registered Non-Domestic BER Assessor prior to occupation.

5.10.3 Climate Resilience

The Proposed Development has been considered in line with the national climate objective established under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, which provides the statutory framework for Ireland's transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich and climate-neutral economy by 2050. Section 15 requires a relevant body, insofar as practicable, to perform its functions in a manner consistent with the most recent approved Climate Action Plan, the national long-term climate action strategy, the National Adaptation Framework and relevant sectoral adaptation plans, and in persistence of the national climate objective, greenhouse-gas mitigation and climate adaptation.

The project responds to the Climate Action Plan 2025 and County Roscommon Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 through active travel, sustainable mobility, energy-efficient design, climate-resilient public realm, SuDS and biodiversity-sensitive landscaping. The use of SuDS will help to store and slowly release rainfall during heavy precipitation events, minimising the impact on the storm sewer network. In addition, a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken to inform the design and layout of surface water management measures.

The climate chapter (Chapter 10) of the EIAR assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development on climate and sets out proposed mitigation measures to avoid, reduce, or offset any potential significant effects that are identified. Please refer to Chapter 10 of the EIAR submitted along with this planning application for further details.

5.10.4 Flood Risk

Appendix 3 of the RCDP Volume 1 sets out the advice for developments within constrained land use zones. As set out under Section 2.1 of this Report, there is a portion of the Proposed Development site located along the shoreline of Lough Ree is designated as Flood Zone A and further west, away from the shoreline of Lough Ree, a portion of the site is designated as Flood Zone B.

Appendix 3 of the RCDP therefore deals with applications for developments in flood vulnerable zones and sets out that such proposals shall provide details of structural and non-structural risk management measures including (and not limited) to specifications of the following:

- **Floor levels:** In areas of limited flood depth, the specification of the threshold and floor levels of new structures shall be raised above expected flood levels to reduce the risk of flood losses to a building, by raising floor heights within the building structure using a suspended floor arrangement or raised internal concrete platforms.
- **Internal Layout:** The layout of internal space shall be designed and specified to reduce the impact of flooding [for example, living accommodation, essential services, storage space for provisions and equipment shall be designed to be located above the predicted flood level]. In addition, designs and specifications shall ensure that, wherever reasonably practicable, the siting of living accommodation (particularly sleeping areas) shall be above flood level.

Other specification also includes (and may not be restricted to):

- > *Flood Resistant Construction*
- > *Flood Resilient Construction*
- > *Emergency Response Planning*
- > *Access and Egress During Flood Events*

The landscape and engineering strategy is closely integrated with the flood strategy. As the Hodson Bay Water Sports Facility is located within a flood zone, the ground levels around the water sports building and café have been raised to +38.00. From this level, the ground gently slopes down along the northern and southern perimeters. The perimeter planting and raised beds also function as flood defence measures, helping to contain and manage flood risk around the plaza.

A Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) has been carried out by CIVIC Engineers in line with the requirements of the RCDP for areas within the vulnerable zones. The SSFRA confirms that the proposed café and watersports facility at Hodson Bay has been designed in accordance with national and local flood risk management policy. Flood risk at the site arises from elevated lake levels within Lough Ree during extreme, catchment-wide rainfall events.

A conservative 0.1% AEP design flood level of 37.5m OD has been adopted based on CFRAM predictive modelling and long-term OPW hydrometric analysis. The proposed Finished Floor Level of 38.0m OD incorporates a 0.5m freeboard allowance above the design flood level, providing resilience to extreme flood events inclusive of climate change and residual uncertainty. The SSFRA notes that the development does not encroach upon functional floodplain storage, does not obstruct flood conveyance and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. While sections of the retained promenade access may be inundated during extreme events, the gradual nature of lake flooding and the non-residential use of the building ensure that residual risk is low and manageable.

The SSFRA concludes that the proposal satisfies the requirements of the OPW Flood Risk Management Guidelines, the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022–2028 and its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. It is therefore concluded that the development is acceptable in flood risk terms and consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

5.10.5 Construction and Environmental Management Plan

A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been prepared by MKO for the proposed development to ensure that the relevant standards for environmental control are met across all stages of the construction process. Measures to control dust, noise, traffic, invasive species, and vibration are included. In addition, a detailed waste management plan is included to ensure the efficient, safe, and environmentally conservative management of all waste on site.

6.

CONCLUSION

This Planning Report supports the proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project, submitted on behalf of Roscommon County Council (RCC). The Project consists of the following elements (please refer to the development description for a detailed description of the proposed works):

- **Water Sports Pavilion (WSP) Development**
- **Marina Redevelopment and Extension**
- **Public Realm Upgrades**
- **Active Travel and Site Access Improvements**
- **All associated ancillary site development infrastructure**

The planning application will be submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála in line with Sections 175 (3) and 177AE (3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that the Proposed Development at Hodson Bay is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and is supported by the applicable European, national, regional and local planning and tourism policy framework.

At local level, the proposal accords with the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022–2028, in particular the Leisure Tourism/Amenity zoning applicable to the Hodson Bay waterfront, the relevant HB policy objectives which seek to strengthen Hodson Bay as a tourism, leisure and amenity destination, and the Section 12.18 Tourism and Recreation Development Management Standards. The proposal represents the enhancement and consolidation of an established tourism and recreational destination rather than the introduction of an unrelated land use.

At national and regional level, the development supports NSO 3: Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities, NSO 6: A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills and NPO 34 of the Revised National Planning Framework, including the sustainable development of tourism, outdoor recreation, Greenways and Blueways. In particular, the proposal accords with the Northern and Western RSES 2020–2032, including RPO 3.7.4, which supports development of the recreation and amenity potential of Lough Ree and the River Shannon, and RPOs 4.12–4.14, relating to water-based leisure, implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan and integrated walking and cycling infrastructure. NPO 34 expressly supports tourism development and a coordinated approach to sustainable management of outdoor recreation sites.

The development will deliver these policy objectives through direct investment in Lough Ree's recreational infrastructure, including improved marina facilities and a dedicated watersports pavilion; a substantially enhanced and more accessible waterfront public realm; improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity; universal access; and managed recreational access to the lakeshore. Collectively, these interventions will enhance the visitor experience, support longer dwell times and tourism expenditure, provide opportunities for local enterprise and employment and strengthen Hodson Bay's role within the wider Lough Ree and Shannon tourism offering.

Importantly, this economic and recreational development will be delivered alongside appropriate environmental protection, biodiversity-sensitive landscaping, sustainable drainage, flood-resilient design, active travel and management of visitor activity. This approach also supports the statutory climate framework, specifically Section 15 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by the 2021 Act which requires relevant bodies, insofar as practicable, to perform their functions consistently with the Climate Action Plan, national climate objective and the objectives of mitigating greenhouse-gas emissions and adapting to climate change.

Accordingly, subject to the detailed environmental assessments and mitigation measures identified through the design process, the proposal constitutes a plan-led, sustainable enhancement of an established tourism destination, balancing economic and recreational development with sustainable mobility, climate resilience and protection of the sensitive Lough Ree environment. The development is therefore considered to accord with the relevant planning policy framework and with the proper planning and sustainable development of Hodson Bay and the wider area.

