

LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**SECTION 179 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000
(as amended)**

**PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001
(as amended)**

PROPOSAL TO CARRY OUT A DEVELOPMENT REFERRED TO AS –

**PART 8 – NO. 118
THE MALL OUTDOOR FACILITIES UPGRADE,
LONGFORD, CO. LONGFORD**

**REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH
SECTION 179 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED)
AND
PART 8 OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED)**

To: The Cathaoirleach and Members of Longford Municipal District.

Being satisfied that the requirements of subsections (1) and (2) of Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, and Articles 79 to 85 inclusive of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) have been fully complied with in relation to the above proposed development, I have prepared the attached report in accordance with the requirements of subsection (3) of Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended and formally submit same to the Cathaoirleach and members of Longford Municipal District for consideration.

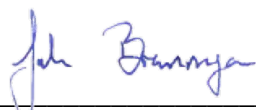
1. Introduction / Site Location of the proposed development.
2. The nature and extent of the proposed development and the principal features thereof are as set out in Section 2 of the Report.
3. Section 3 of the Report evaluates the consistency of the development with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development relates, having regard to the provisions of the development plan.

I am satisfied that all issues have been fully considered in the evaluation and that the proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development relates, having regard to the provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, for the reasons set out in the report.

4. The persons and bodies who made submissions or observations with respect to the proposed development in accordance with the provisions of the above Act and Regulations are listed at Section 4.
5. Section 5 sets out details in relation to Appropriate Assessment.
6. Section 6 sets out the EIA Screening Determination.
7. Sets out the recommendation of the Planning Authority in relation to the proposed development regarding the planning considerations and submissions and observations received.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 179(3)(b)(v) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) I recommend that the proposed development should be proceeded with subject to the modifications/conditions listed in Section 6 of the attached report.

Dated this the: 11th June 2024



**John Brannigan,
Director of Services.**

Note:

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) – Subsection 4 of Section 179.

- (4) (a) The members of the local authority shall, as soon as may be, consider the proposed development and the report of the Chief Executive under subsection (3).
- (b) Following consideration of the Chief Executive's Report under paragraph (a), the proposed development may be carried out as recommended in the Chief Executive's Report, unless the local authority, by resolution, decides to vary or modify the

development, otherwise than as recommended in the Chief Executive's Report, or decides not to proceed with the development.

- (c) A resolution under paragraph (b) must be passed not later than 6 weeks after receipt of the Chief Executive's Report.



Longford County Council
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PART VIII – NO. 118
THE MALL OUTDOOR FACILITIES UPGRADE, LONGFORD
CO. LONGFORD

Report in Accordance with
Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000
(as amended)
and
Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001
(as Amended)

JUNE 2024

1. INTRODUCTION/ SITE LOCATION

The subject lands are located within the Townland of Abbeycarton and in the development envelope of Longford Town as identified in the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. The application site is circa 9ha and it is situated within the townlands of Abbeycarton (to the north of the River Camlin) with a small section included in the townland of Templemichael (to the south of the River Camlin).

The site encompasses the entire area known as the Mall, which is a public amenity area that includes an indoor sports and leisure centre, outdoor basketball courts, an astroturf pitch, a car park, a playground and a riverside walk. The development includes the extensive refurbishment and the upgrade of the sports facilities at the leisure centre, including the astro pitch and associated pitch facilities, upgraded floodlighting, new walking loop and lighting, extended car parking area and a new strength and conditioning studio.



Fig 1 – development site



Fig 2 – site locations in yellow

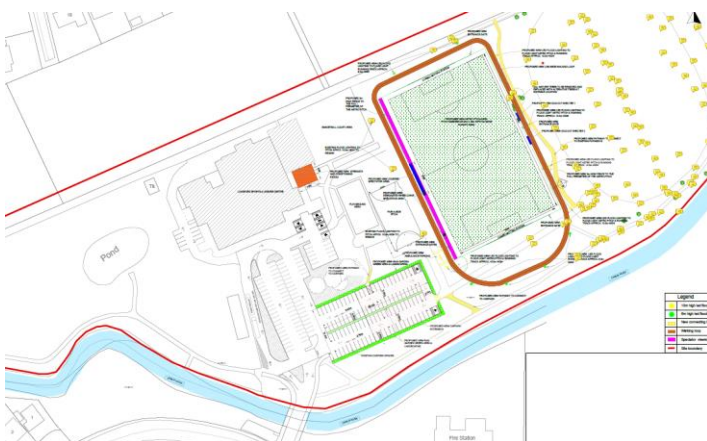


Fig 3 – Site Layout

2. NATURE AND EXTENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development consists of the following:

- Demolition and removal of existing Astro-pitch carpet, fencing, gates and dugouts
- Removal of 3 no. mature trees
- Construction of a larger Astro-pitch from 5,760m² to 6,600m², to include new 3.0m high perimeter fencing, 6.0m high combo netting behind the goals, gates, dugouts, spectator area and a spectator shelter
- Construction of walking loop around the Astro-pitch
- Upgrade of 6 no. existing 10.0m high Astro-pitch floodlighting to LED
- Relocation of 3 no. existing 10.0m high floodlighting
- Erection of 2 no. new 10.0m high LED floodlighting
- Erection of 6 no. new 6.0m high LED lighting for walking loop
- Extension of existing car park from 40 spaces to 102 spaces (including 2 no. disabled bays)
- Construction of rainwater gardens to accommodate surface water drainage within the car park
- Construction of a 12.0m x 10.0m Strength and Conditioning Studio

3. PLANNING CONSIDERATION/ EVALUATION

The site is located within the functional area of Longford County Council and lies within the Designated Development Envelope of Longford town. As such the provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 apply.



Fig 4 – Longford land zonings

The lands are zoned Recreation/Amenity/Green Space - *To primarily provide for recreational open space and ancillary structures.*

To preserve, provide for and improve active and passive recreational public and private open space, environmental buffers and ancillary structures. The areas included in this zoning objective cover both private and public open space and are dispersed throughout urban centres of every size. The Council will not normally permit development that would result in a loss of open space and green infrastructure. This zoning provides for the planned increase in green infrastructure throughout the town including open spaces, parks and development incidental to the enjoyment of open space including sport and leisure facilities such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, meeting rooms, a gym, sports training halls, catering facilities, caretaker accommodation.

Furthermore, the lands are Constrained Land Use - *To facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas.*

This zoning objective limits new development, while recognising that existing development uses within these zones may require small scale development, as outlined below, over the life of the Plan, which would contribute towards the compact and sustainable urban development of the County's zoned settlements.

The underlying zoning or the existing permitted uses are deemed to be acceptable in principle for minor developments to existing buildings (such as small extensions to houses, most changes of use of existing buildings), which are unlikely to raise significant flooding issues, provided they do not obstruct important flow paths, introduce a significant additional number of people into flood risk areas, or entail the storage of hazardous substances.

Development proposals within this zone shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines and Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.

Proposals shall only be considered where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations. The nature and design of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required for development in such areas will also be required to be demonstrated, to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development.

Specifications for developments in flood vulnerable areas set out in this Plan shall be complied with as appropriate (Please also refer to CPO 5.120 and DMS16.206).

Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 Policy Objectives:

Chapter 6 – Regeneration:

CPO 6.71 Connect educational, recreational, employment, civic and town centre economic activity, and in particular improve the relationship between the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall) and the town core.

CPO 6.72 Build on tourism investment and the profile of the Camlin River in Longford Town through the strategic development of recreational trails and networks.

CPO 6.75 Develop the Camlin Quarter (including Connolly Barracks, Church St. Great Water Street, Little Water Street onto the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall), by enhancing the public realm, investigation of potential land uses, landbank assembly and connectivity improvements.

Chapter 7 – Placemaking:

CPO 7.42 Support the development of recreation and open space in accordance with the EMRA RSES Recreation and Open Space Guiding Principles and Guiding Principles for Healthy Placemaking.

CPO 7.43 Promote the development of a wide variety of high quality accessible open space areas, for both active and passive use, and formal and informal activities in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.

CPO7.44 Provide multifunctional open spaces at locations deemed appropriate providing for both passive and active uses.

CPO 7.48 Support the provision of multi-purpose sports halls, all-weather playing pitches and associated facilities in appropriate locations and promote the provision, improvement and expansion of sports facilities within the County subject to normal planning criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

Chapter 16 – Flooding:

DMS 16.205 Flood Zones and Appropriate land-uses - The table below indicates the types of land uses that are appropriate in each of the Flood Zones identified within the Plan area,

in accordance with the 2009 Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and Departmental Circular PL2/2014 (or any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance).

The proposed development is considered to support the Regeneration and Placemaking policy objectives of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the land use zoning objectives of Longford town.

As such it is considered that the proposed development is substantially in keeping with the zoning as outlined in the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027. The proposed development is located within an area of constrained land use areas and as such it is suggested that it should be screened for flood risk prior to the commencement of the development.

4. PUBLIC/ STATUTORY BODIES CONSULTATION, SUBMISSIONS, REPORTS, ETC.

The proposed works were duly and properly notified as required by Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

The plans and particulars for the proposed development at the Mall, Longford Sports and Recreation Complex and Albert Reynolds Peace Park; were made available for public inspection at the offices of Longford County Council, Áras an Chontae, Great Water Street, Longford and during official public opening hours, excluding weekends and bank holidays, and online from Friday 19th of April 2024 up to and including Monday 20th of May 2024.

Submissions or observations with respect to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the development would be situated, were invited to be made in writing to the Planning Section, Longford County Council, Áras an Chontae, Great Water Street, Longford, Co. Longford to arrive not later than 4pm on Wednesday the 5th of June 2024.

4.1 Submissions:

1 (one) no. submissions were received during the consultation timeframe:

1. HSE Environmental Health Officer (TII) dated the 07/05/2024, this report identified no comments/objections.

4.2 Internal Reports

- Roads Design Section – No report received
- Area Engineer – No report received

5. APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The proposed development was the subject of a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening, a report was undertaken by Whitehill Environmental (Ms. Noreen McLoughlin) in which it was noted that the nearest Natura 2000 sites are as follows:

- Brown Bog SAC 002346 – 3.4km west of the site, screened out
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC 001818 – 5.1km west and downstream via the River Camlin, screened In
- Ballykenny – Fisherstown Bog SPA 004101 - 5.1km west and downstream via the River Camlin, screened In
- Mount Jessop Bos SAC 002202 5.3km south of the site, screened out
- Clooneen Bog SAC 002348 9.3km north-west of the site screened out
- Lough Ree SAC 000440 15.3km south-west and downstream of the River Camlin screened out
- Lough Ree SPA 004064 14.7km south-west and downstream of the River Camlin, screened out

Site Name & Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Potential Effects?
Lough Forbes Complex SAC 001818	5.1km west / ~6km downstream via the River Camlin	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation Active raised bogs Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion	Having regards to the fact that the works are upstream of this SAC (7km), then the potential for significant effects to arise on this SAC and its QIs will be considered further.

		Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	
Ballykenny – Fisherstown Bog SPA 004101	5.1km west / 6km downstream via the River Camlin	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>)	Having regards to the fact that the works are upstream of this SPA (7km), then the potential for significant effects to arise on this SPA and its QI will be considered further.

The AA Report undertook an Impact Assessment of the proposed development on the two identified Natura 2000 sites above. This concluded that *“the proposed amenity works in the Mall Complex, Longford will have no significant effects upon the designated sites identified, in particular the sites that are downstream, i.e., Lough Forbes SAC and the Ballykenny-Fisherstown SPA. There are no individual elements of the proposed works that are likely to give rise to significant negative effects on these aforementioned sites. The application site is 6km upstream of these sites, however no significant effects on the QIs of these sites are anticipated as the QIs of these SACs/SPAs are all upstream of the confluence of the River Camlin with Lough Forbes and the River Shannon.”*

Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site: It is not considered likely that there will be any impacts on the key relationships that define the structure or function of the Natura 2000 sites identified.

Loss - Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat: None

Fragmentation: None

Disruption & disturbance: None

Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.): None

Therefore, on the basis of the detailed report and the assessment undertaken by the Planning Authority and given the nature and extent of the proposed development, as well as its location, it is not considered that the development would result in any significant impacts on the Natura 2000 network.

Having reviewed the qualifying interests (habitats and species related interests) of the Natura 2000 sites closest to the proposed development, it is considered that there are no likely adverse impacts arising from the proposed development on the integrity of the

Natura 2000 network. Accordingly, it is considered that there is no requirement to progress to a full Appropriate Assessment in this case.

6. EIA SCREENING

There is no specific requirement to conduct an EIA or EIA Screening of the proposed development. An EIAR Screening has not been submitted as part of the application.


7. RECOMMENDATION

Having regard to the above-mentioned planning considerations and to the submissions and observations received, it is considered that the proposed development would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and that the proposals align with the policy objectives and the development management standards of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027. It is therefore recommended that the proposed development now be proceeded with, subject to the attachment of the following modifications/conditions set out below.

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1. The proposed Part 8 shall be in accordance with the plans and particulars placed on public display on 19th of April 2024 except where amended by the conditions set out below.
2. A Consulting Engineer shall be employed to carry out the final detailed design of the works, to prepare tender documents and drawings, to assist in the procurement of a Contractor and to assist in the supervision of the works on site.
3. Given the nature of the proposed works it is advised that users, members and patrons of the leisure centre be notified and informed in advance about the proposed works, including the commencement dates, duration of work activities and any impact in terms of temporary closures of the facilities.

4. The trees for felling shall be assessed by an ecologist in order to identify and confirm if they are hosting any nesting birds/bats. The mature trees removed shall be replaced with additional new planting, implemented in an identified suitable location within the subject site.
5. All measures shall be taken by the works contractor to prevent muck, dirt, debris or other materials being deposited on the adjoining footpaths and public roads by machinery or vehicles travelling to and from the site during the construction phase. The works contractor shall arrange for vehicles leaving the site to be kept clean.
6. Site development works shall be confined to the hours of 07:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 14:00 Saturdays. No site development works or construction related deliveries shall take place outside of these hours, or on Sundays or Public Holidays. Any alterations to these times shall be subject to the prior written consent of the Planning Authority.



Date : 07/06/2024

Ian Lacey - Executive Planner



Date : 07/06/2024

**Rita Connaughton
Senior Planner**

APPENDIX 1 -Site Photographs

