

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. 133

Re-development of the former Longford Post Office, 43 Main Street, Longford, Co. Longford, to a multi-purpose tourism and community/energy hub, a Protected Structure (RPS:458)

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 County Council.

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 County Council for consideration.

1. Site location and description 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. 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 under Section 6 & 7.
4. Section 8 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 Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

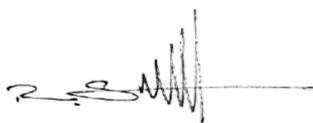
I am satisfied that all issues have been fully considered in the evaluation and that the proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development relates, having regard to the provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027,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

5. Section 8.4 sets out details in relation to Appropriate Assessment.
6. Section 8.5 sets out the EIA Screening Determination.
7. Section 9 sets out the recommendation of the Planning Authority in relation to the proposed development regarding the planning considerations and referral submission 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/amendments listed in Section 7 of the attached report.

Dated this the:

20th August 2025



**Richard Smith,
A/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. 133

Re-development of the former Longford Post Office, 43 Main Street, Longford, Co. Longford, to a multi-purpose tourism and community/energy hub, a Protected Structure (RPS:458)

The proposed development will consist of:

- Refurbishment with internal alterations, external alterations, repairs and upgrades to the Protected Structure (former Longford Post Office) plus all associated site development works, for conversion of the building into a multi-purpose hub.
- Internal modifications and upgrades to include new toilets, offices, kitchenette, storage, event space and meeting rooms.
- Demolition of rear and side single storey non – original extension.
- Installation of solar photo voltaic panels to the rear roof area.
- Installation of feature lighting and signage to former Post Office façade.

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)

August 2025

1.0 Site Location & Description

The application site is located on town core zoned lands at no. 43 Main Street, Longford.

The application site comprises a protected structure RPS 458 (Terraced four-bay three-storey former post office, built c. 1894, renovated c. 1985. Later used as urban district council office, heritage centre and museum, now disused).

The application site is not located within or in close proximity to any designated SAC, SPA, NHA or Broadzone area.

The application site is located within a sites and monument zone R182069.





2.0 Proposed development

Longford County Council is proposing to carry out the following works;

- Refurbishment with internal alterations external alterations, repairs and upgrades to the Protected Structure (former Longford Post Office) plus all associated site development works, for conversion of the building into a multi-purpose hub.
- Internal modifications and upgrades to include new toilets, offices, kitchenette, storage, event space and meeting rooms.
- Demolition of rear and side single storey non – original extension.
- Installation of solar photo voltaic panels to the rear roof area.
- Installation of feature lighting and signage to former Post Office façade.

3.0 Planning History

04700128; Permission granted to Trustees of Midland Design Services Ltd Pension Fund on '17/02/05' for Change of use of ground floor of existing building to restaurant facility including kitchen, storage and ancillaries associated with the preparation of and serving of food and beverages, single storey extension to rear and side of building (at ground floor level), provision of fire escape to rear at ground floor level, and change of use of first and second floors from current office usage to 2 no. dwelling units, restoration works to front facade in accordance with guidelines for treatment of protected structures and repair of roof, repositioning of services traversing building connection/making good to existing utility services and ancillary works. This building is a protected structure.

4.0 National and Local Planning Policy

Project Ireland 2040, The National Planning Framework (NPF)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) 2019-2031

Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027

- Section 4.8.7 Key Town – Longford Town
- Chapter 10 - Natural Heritage and Environment

- Chapter 11 – Built and Cultural Heritage
- Chapter 16 – Development Management Standards

Longford Town Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031

All other relevant Section 28 Planning Guidelines have been considered in this assessment of this application.

5.0 Submissions

None

6.0 Public & Statutory Bodies Consultation

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 Re-development of the former Longford Post Office, 43 Main Street, Longford, Co. Longford, to a multi-purpose tourism and community/energy hub, a Protected Structure (RPS:458) 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, from 4th of July 2025 up to and including 31st of July 2025.

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 the 15th of August 2025.

The following statutory bodies were consulted:

Dept. of Housing, Local Government & Heritage – no comment received.

An Taisce, no comment received.

Faite Ireland, no comment received.

The Heritage Council, no comment received.

National Environmental Health Service, response received – no comments to make.

7.0 Internal Referrals

Chief Fire Officer, no comment received.

Roads Design Office, comment received and noted.

Heritage Officer, no comment received.

Roads Area Engineer, no comment received.

8.0 Planning Assessment

The main planning considerations in the determination of this application are:

- Design & Layout
- Services
- Road Design
- Appropriate Assessment
- EIA Screening

8.1 Design & Layout

It is proposed to bring back into use the former Longford Post Office at no. 43 Main Street. This structure is a protected structure and is currently vacant.

The applicant is seeking permission to use the building as a multi-purpose tourism and community/energy hub.

An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (Conservation Report, Repair and Methodology) has been submitted prepared by O'BF_A Architects. This report has detailed the extent of the works required to bring the building back into use and the methods to be used to conserve and maintain the historic features of this protected structure.

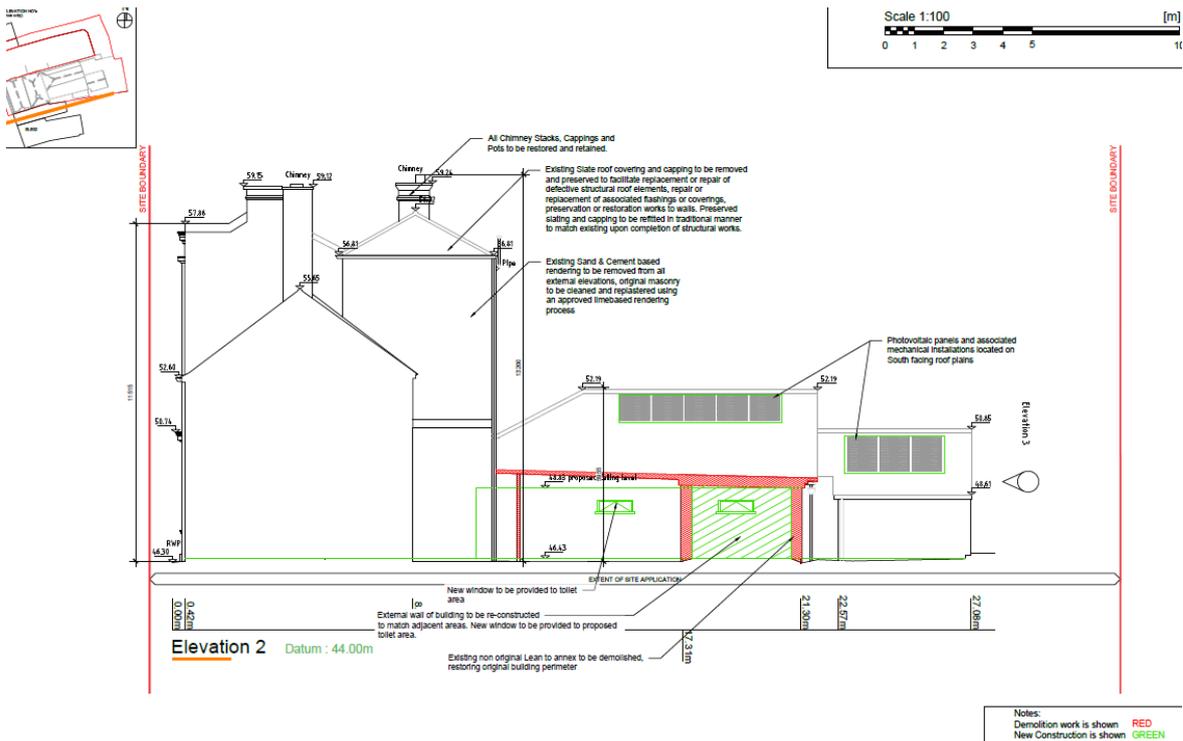
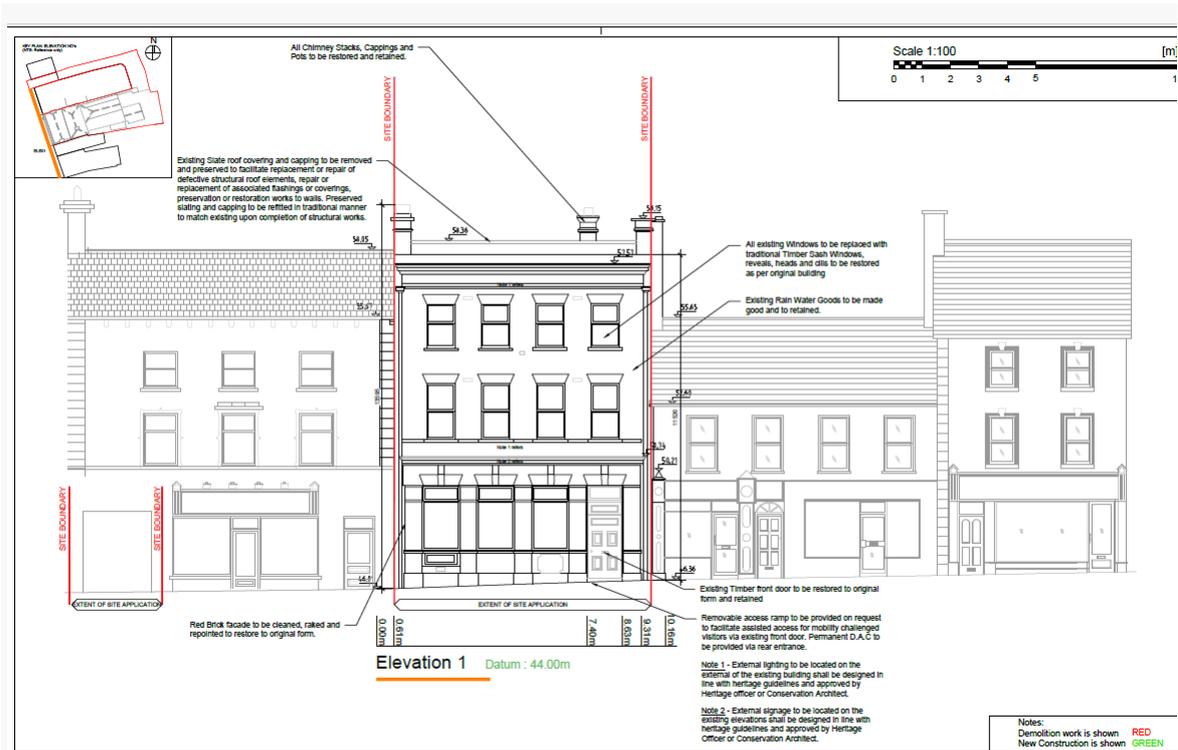
The extent of the proposed works will be minor modifications with small areas to the rear form demolition/reconfiguration (and internal walls (fixed and moveable) to subdivide rooms.

The Redeveloped Old Post Office building once complete is envisioned to include:

- Tourism Information desk
- Multi-use event space at Ground Floor.
- Toilet Facilities (Including DAC WC)
- A small kitchenette
- Improved access to Ground Floor
- Co-working hot desks and designated offices on 1st and 2nd floors.
- Toilet and coffee dock at upper levels to support upper-level office uses.
- Full Mechanical and Electrical upgrades required.
- Upgrades to improve the overall energy rating to the building.

The proposed works to bring the former post office building back into use is considered to be compliant with the current Longford County Development Plan 2021 - 2027. The proposed works are therefore considered to be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Proposed Elevation works:

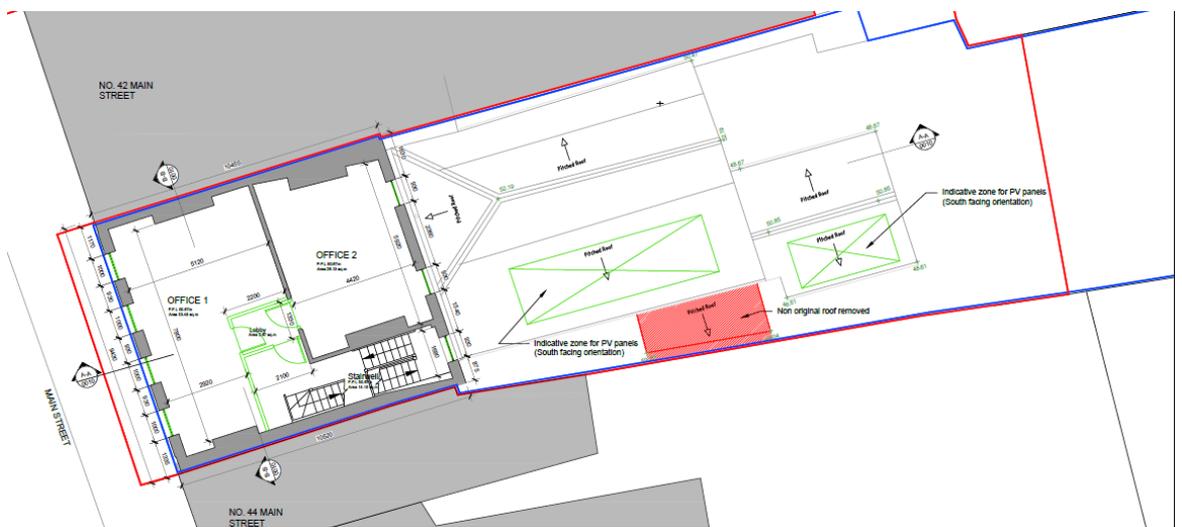


Floor Plans Proposed

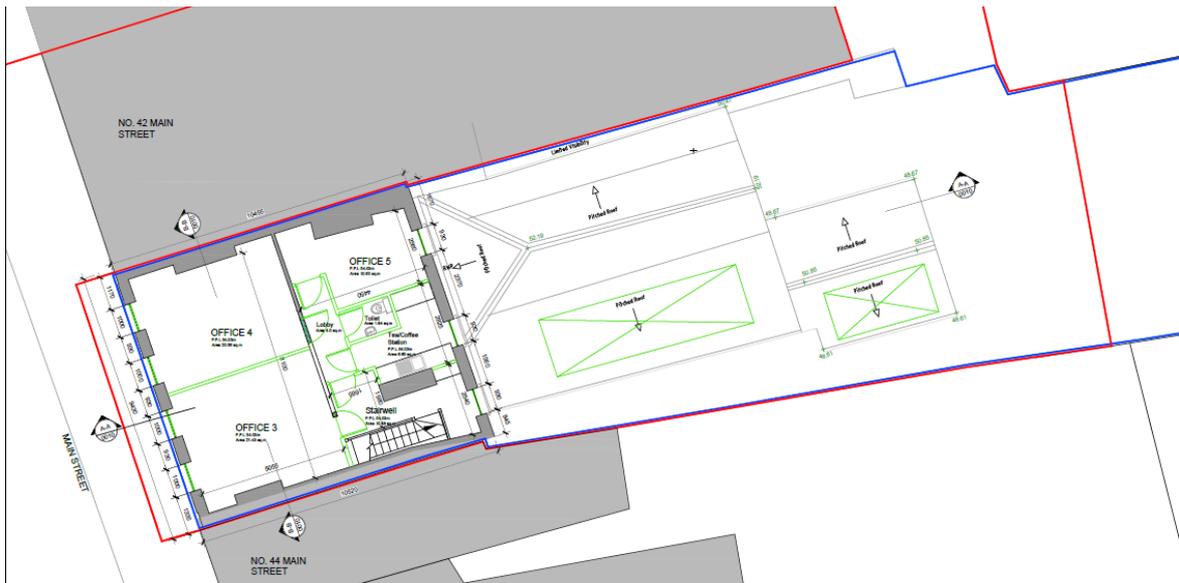
Ground floor:



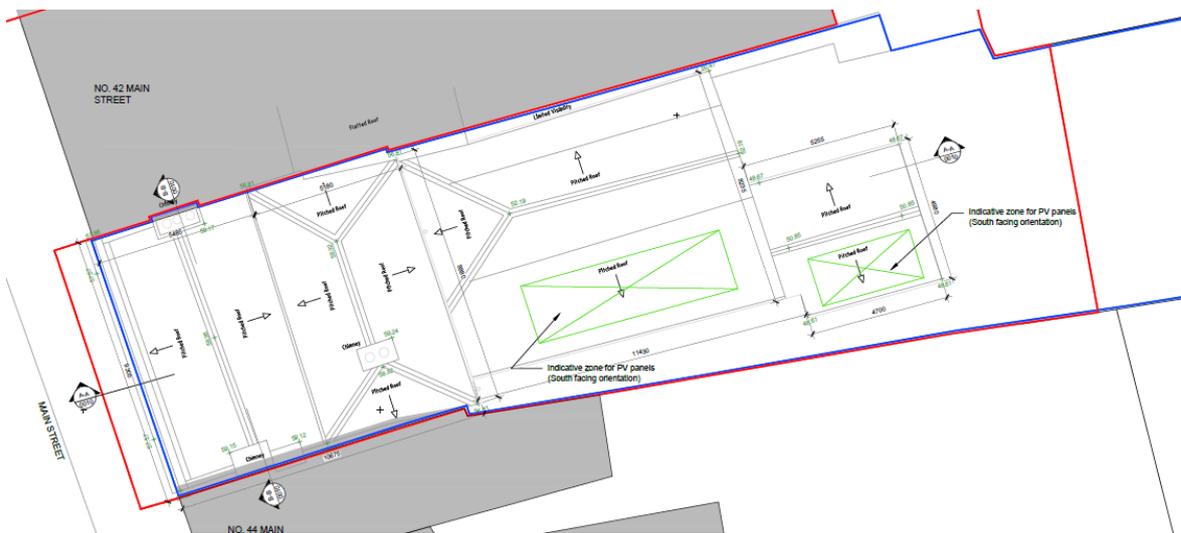
First Floor



Second Floor



Roof Plan



8.2 Services

The building is connected to the existing public water mains and public sewer.

8.3 Road Design

The following comments have been received from LCC Road Design Department;

1. *The **Noise Action Plan**. The applicant has applied for planning beside the R198 Lower Main Street Longford Town in a (PIA) Priority Important Area, with exposure to noise levels in accordance with Longford County Council Noise Action Plan 2024 -2028. The applicant shall be required to determine*

if the development is affected by the environmental noise generated by the R198. The applicant shall implement any mitigation measures to protect the potential of noise causing harm to health and quality of life within the life cycle of the building.

It is considered that the above consideration be taken onto consideration.

8.4 Appropriate Assessment

The document, Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities, states that where from the nature, size and location of the development it is unclear if the proposal, will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (s) a Natura Impact Statement will be required. The subject site is not located in close proximity to any designated Natura 2000 site.

An Appropriate Assessment screening was carried out by Whitehill Environmental. This report concluded as follows:

“It is of the opinion of the author that an AA of the proposed development is not required as it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information provided in this report, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites.”

The Planning Authority has considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development and other plans and projects (where there could be potential for cumulative or in-combination effects), the conservation objectives/ qualifying interests of European Sites within the vicinity of the site and the distance to European Sites, any protected habitats or species, the WFD catchment location, the underlying aquifer type and vulnerability and the excavation works, emissions, transportation requirements and duration of construction and operation and cumulative impacts associated with the proposal.

The Planning Authority’s Screening for Appropriate Assessment has considered the potential effects including direct, indirect and in-combination effects of the proposed development, individually or in combination with the permitted developments and cumulatively with other plans or projects on European Sites. The Planning Authority concludes that the proposed development (entire project), by itself or in combination

with other plans and developments in the vicinity, would not be likely to have a significant effect on European Site(s). In light of this, it is considered that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement) is not required in this instance.

8.5 EIA Screening

It is considered that the proposed development is not a development type listed under Part 1 or 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations (PDR) 2001 (as amended) nor is it considered a sub-threshold development for the purposes of Schedule 7 PDR and will not on its own or cumulatively with other projects result in significant effects on the environment and as such an EIAR is not required.

9.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

Having regard to the above-mentioned planning considerations and to the 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 all additional requirements indicated in the Road Design submission being included in the proposed development.

Any layout alterations as a result of these additional requirements shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for file purposes.

- 1) Longford County Councils Road Design Section shall be consulted at the detailed design stage of the project and the Noise Action Plan matters raised in their report shall be addressed in full.

**Kathryn Hosey
A/Senior Planner**

Kathryn Hosey

Date: 18/08/25

Appendix 1 AA and EIAR Screening

AA Screening Form

STEP 1. Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics:	
(a) File Reference No:	Part 8 No.133
(b) Brief description of the project or plan:	Permission for re-development of the former Longford Post Office, 43 Main Street, to a multi-purpose tourism and community/energy hub, a Protected Structure (RPS:458)
(c) Brief description of site characteristics:	No. 43 Main Street, Longford
(d) Relevant prescribed bodies consulted: e.g. DHLGH (NPWS), EPA, OPW	None
(e) Response to consultation:	NA

STEP 2. Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information on Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives.				
European Site (code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest ¹	Distance from proposed development ² (km)	Connections (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Brown Bog SAC (002346)	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002346	3.7km	None	N
Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101)	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/004101	4.27km	None	N
Lough Forbes SAC (001818)	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001818	4.7km	None	N
Mount Jessop Bog SAC (002202)	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002202	5.1km	None	N

¹ Short paraphrasing and/or cross reference to NPWS is acceptable – it is not necessary to

reproduce the full text on the QI/SCI.

² If the site or part thereof is within the European site or adjacent to the European site, state here.

STEP 3. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects	
(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project under the following headings:	
Impacts:	Possible Significance of Impacts: (duration/magnitude etc.)
Construction phase e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation clearance • Demolition • Surface water runoff from soil excavation/infill/landscaping (including borrow pits) • Dust, noise, vibration • Lighting disturbance • Impact on groundwater/dewatering • Storage of excavated/construction materials • Access to site • Pests 	NA
Operational phase e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct emission to air and water • Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment • Lighting disturbance • Noise/vibration • Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction • Presence of people, vehicles and activities • Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks) • Potential for accidents or incidents 	NA
In-combination/Other	NA
(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site:	
Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area • Disturbance to QI species • Habitat or species fragmentation • Reduction or fragmentation in species density • Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water or air quality etc.) • Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI • Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site 	NA

(c) Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?

Yes No

No

Step 4. Screening Determination Statement

The assessment of significance of effects:

Describe how the proposed development (alone or in-combination) is/is **not likely** to have **significant** effects on European site(s) in view of its conservation objectives.

Given the nature and scale of the development proposed, and given that there is no direct hydrological link to a Natura 2000 site, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects on the Natura 2000 network arising from the proposed works either alone or in combination with other plans and/or projects by way of a loss fragmentation, disruption, disturbance to habitats, species or habitats of species that are of conservation interest.

Conclusion:

	Tick as Appropriate:	Recommendation:
(i) It is clear that there is no likelihood of significant effects on a European site.	X	The proposal can be screened out: Appropriate assessment not required.
(ii) It is uncertain whether the proposal will have a significant effect on a European site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Request further information to complete screening <input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission
(iii) Significant effects are likely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission
Signature and Date of Recommending Officer:	Kathryn Hosey A/Senior Planner 12/08/25	

EIA Screening Form

Form 1

EIA Pre-Screening Establishing a development is a ‘sub-threshold development’:	
Planning Reference:	Part 8 No.133
Development Summary:	Permission for re-development of the former Longford Post Office, 43 Main Street, to a multi-purpose tourism and community/energy hub, a Protected Structure (RPS:458)
Was a Screening Determination carried out under Section 176A-C?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, no further action required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, Proceed to Part A
A. Schedule 5 Part 1 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 1, of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)? (Tick as appropriate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, specify class _____	EIA is mandatory No Screening required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Proceed to Part B
B. Schedule 5 Part 2 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2, of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and does it meet/exceed the thresholds? (Tick as appropriate)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2	No Screening required
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes the project is listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 and meets/exceeds the threshold, specify class (including threshold): _____ [specify class & threshold here] _____	EIA is mandatory No Screening required
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes the project is of a type listed but is <i>sub-threshold</i> : _____ [insert here] _____	Proceed to Part C
C. If Yes, has Schedule 7A information/screening report been submitted?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Schedule 7A information/screening report has been submitted by the applicant	Screening Determination required
<input type="checkbox"/> No, Schedule 7A information/screening report has not been submitted by the applicant	Preliminary Examination required