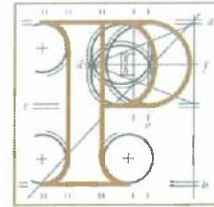


**Our Case Number:** ABP-318314-23



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

Longford County Council  
c/o Adrian Kielty  
County Buildings  
Great Water Street  
Co. Longford  
N39NH56

**Date:** 15 May 2024

**Re:** 500 seat outdoor community amphitheatre.  
Former Council Depot at Commons North Lime Quarry, Lanesborough, Co. Longford.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I have been asked by An Bord Pleanála to refer further to the above-mentioned proposed development which is before the Board for consideration.

Please be advised that the Board, in accordance with section 177AE(5)(a)(i) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010, hereby requires you to furnish the following further information in relation to the effects of the environment of the proposed development:

1. The Board notes the nature and location of the proposed works within the Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (SAC) [site code 000440], and proximate to the Lough Ree Special Protection Area (SPA) [site code 004064] and the content of the submitted Natura Impact Statement (NIS). Having regard to the sensitive location of the site and the need to ensure that any proposed development does not adversely affect (either directly or indirectly) the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects the applicant is asked to provide comprehensive details of the following:
  - (a) In relation to the construction phase, the 'Construction Management' drawing that has been submitted is noted, however, this does not provide sufficient detail to demonstrate how the construction activities on site can be carried out, scheduled, and suitably mitigated while ensuring the integrity of the European Sites. A comprehensive Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) must be submitted in relation to the proposed development. The CEMP shall set out the detailed construction practices, and measures that will be implemented to ensure the protection of the environment and shall incorporate comprehensive details in relation to:
    - The construction phasing, methodologies and approach to the proposed development works, which will include details of all proposed works (including methodologies to be adopted for all construction and excavation related activities).
    - Good housekeeping on the site which will include noise/disturbance reduction measures throughout.

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- The timeframes for the proposed works (including firm commitments to phasing or scheduling of works to avoid more sensitive times of the year or species activities).
  - Full written, clear, and unambiguous confirmation from the applicant to any mitigation measures set out within the submitted NIS, and any additional measures that can be achieved to ensure impacts do not arise and sensitive habitats/species will be protected.
  - Proposed construction hours and any construction lighting requirements arising. Should temporary lighting be required at any locations given seasonal restrictions or the nature of works comprehensive details of the design/layout of such lighting shall be provided which must prioritise limitation of light spill into habitats or features used by light sensitive species.
  - Implementation and monitoring of environmental/ecological mitigation measures throughout the construction process, including clear assignment of roles and responsibilities.
  - The location and arrangement of any proposed construction compound(s) detailing how construction activities arising will be mitigated to minimise environmental impacts.
  - Map layouts accurately showing the extent of works and all construction activities in the context of (i) existing on-site habitats as well as habitats in the vicinity, (ii) boundaries of the Lough Ree SPA and Lough Ree SAC, and (iii) existing or proposed drainage measures.
  - Details of how construction deliveries to site and activities will be managed while maintaining public access to walks and the adjacent amenities.
  - Comprehensive details of Invasive Species Management proposals, to include measures reviewing the importation of materials and topsoil to the site and any grassland seed mixes proposed for landscaping.
  - Drainage measures for water and waste management for the duration of the proposed works.
  - Measures to ensure that cement/concrete, hydrocarbons or any other hazardous materials from the proposed works will not enter watercourses, drains or sensitive habitats.
  - Confirmation of whether any pumping is necessary to facilitate construction and if required detail how these works are to be carried out without significant impact on sensitive ecological receptors.
  - Details of extent of existing trees to be retained on site and along the site boundaries including methodologies to be adopted and any root protection zones for works etc.
- (b) In relation to the operational phase the applicant must provide details of how the proposed facility is to be run, and events managed in a manner which will ensure that adverse impacts do not arise on the European designated sites, or on ecologically sensitive habitats and species. In this regard there is insufficient detail of the operational phase throughout the application documentation and accordingly the following must, at a minimum be provided:

- Comprehensive details demonstrating how access to the site (public, services, waste management, event traffic, and attendee access) can be provided and impacts arising (traffic, noise, litter, temporary lighting if required) controlled, monitored, and managed in a manner that will ensure adverse impacts on the integrity of designated sites or associated species will not arise.
- Commitment in relation to the number, range, and timing (both seasonal and proposed operating/opening hours), of events and consideration of impacts of the number and timing of events on ecological receptors in the vicinity.
- Comprehensive details of the nature and type of sound system(s), and lighting arrangements which will be used within the Proposed Development. In this regard, while it is noted that a noise report has been prepared to inform the submitted NIS, the basis for this has been a specified sound/amplification system, and there has been no commitment or comment from the applicant as to whether this will be the sole type of sound equipment used. Furthermore, the submitted documentation does not appear to give consideration or an allowance for crowd-generated noise (during events or accessing events) and whether this will give rise to additional impact or require additional mitigation. The noise report should be updated to accordingly and detailed commitment to event noise management and operations provided.

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It should be noted that due to the sensitivity of the location of the site and on the basis of the documentation submitted to date, a restriction on the extent and nature of noise levels arising and timing of events may be necessary to avoid intrusive events taking place.

- Details of the proposed event lighting - both in terms of providing sufficient lighting for access and the staging of events, to include the extent and arrangement of permanent and/or temporary lighting arrangements. It is noted that comprehensive details in relation to event lighting may be difficult to set out at this stage, nonetheless, the parameters for setting up stage and access lighting to minimise effects and impact beyond the extent of the Proposed Development should be provided. The design and layout of lighting proposals should be informed by an appropriately qualified and experienced ecologist to ensure impacts are minimised.
- Firm details of who will be responsible for scheduling, running, and monitoring, events as well as ensuring the application of all relevant mitigation measures throughout must be provided.

In relation to this matter the Board notes that the submitted NIS provides several aspirational mitigation measures and/or loosely worded commitments in relation to some construction and operational activities. Given the sensitivity of the site, combined with the nature and scale of works proposed, the submitted details do not give adequate clarity or certainty to complete the required assessment of this application and is insufficient to inform a comprehensive decision. The applicant is advised that an appropriately qualified and experienced ecologist should be consulted in the preparation of items (a) and (b) above.

2. The submitted 'construction management' drawing appears to show temporary shuttering being erected outside the site boundary within the Lough Ree SAC and proximate to the SPA. The NIS states that such shuttering "should" be undertaken, however, it also states "it is assumed that plant will be using the pathway to the east to enter the works area". This ambiguity of language is not appropriate, does not provide sufficient clarity, and must be avoided in any response to this request given the sensitivity of the site. Should this shuttering prove necessary following the review of the item (1) request above, details of erection and removal methodologies must be provided within the CEMP as well as duration of placement, visual appearance and assessment of any impacts included in the NIS.
3. Should any operational or construction activities require works beyond the established red-line boundary of the submitted application documentation revised location and layout maps delineating any updated red-line boundary should be submitted.
4. The submitted NIS shall be updated, to consider the additional details provided in response to this further information request, and the following additional ecological surveying must be carried out to fully inform any NIS conclusion and assessment:
  - (a) Updated winter Bird survey undertaken in line with standard methodology (details of which shall be included with the response) to provide best scientific information on the importance or otherwise of the area for special conservation interest bird species of the Lough Ree SPA. Any such bird survey effort and methodology should be designed and carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced ornithologist/ecologist.
  - (b) Updated habitat survey to be carried out at the optimum time of the year to permit identification of qualifying interest habitats within or adjacent to the Proposed Development having regard to the full range of proposed works and construction activity required.
  - (c) Detailed consideration of any potential hydrological connectivity between the proposed site and limestone and lake habitats in the vicinity.
  - (d) Identification of areas where existing habitats are to be removed to facilitate the proposed development.

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- (e) Consideration of potential lighting impacts and any associated specific design or mitigation measures proposed to ensure impacts on the qualifying interest species of the Lough Ree SAC and SPA do not arise.
5. (a) The applicant is requested to provide comprehensive details/survey results in relation to the presence or otherwise of bats at the location of the proposed development and in the vicinity of areas of construction activities. In response to this issue the applicant is requested to submit the findings of bat surveying carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist to provide any details or evidence of bat presence, usage, activity and/or roosting, the surveying should also detail the survey methodologies and effort adopted. The applicant is also requested to submit comprehensive evidence of the potential impacts of the proposed development with this species and, if appropriate, set out in detail any mitigation measures (to include appropriate lighting) to ensure the proposed development will not adversely impact bats. In this regard any additional mitigation measures should also be incorporated within the CEMP and operational management plan requested above with clear statements in relation to responsibilities for implementation, timing, and monitoring commitments.
- (b) Additional detail to be provided in relation to the breeding amphibian surveys to be provided and additional consideration of the suitability of the site as a breeding habitat for such species.
6. The CEMP and operational management plan required under item (1) above shall provide for appropriate mitigation measures in relation to the protection of breeding birds both at the development site and in its surrounding woodland and scrub habitats. Any additional mitigation measures required shall be informed by a breeding bird survey and detailed input from an appropriately qualified and experienced ornithologist/ecologist.
7. The details requested under item 1 above (including event/crowd management, lighting, noise levels, litter etc.) must also ensure that residential amenities of dwellings in the vicinity are not significantly adversely affected. Drawings and submitted details appear to indicate that an existing access path to the rear of 4 no. existing residential dwellings which is currently gated/closed off may be used as a potential access for events and/or construction. All construction and event management proposals must provide for the protection of residential amenities as well as sensitive ecological features.
8. The site of the proposed development is designated as "Protected Area/Passive Amenity", as well as an "Area of Constrained Land Use", with a specific tourism objective to support the provision of a heritage and amenity centre under the provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2001. In order to satisfy the provisions of the County Development Plan the following must be provided:
- A detailed flood risk assessment carried out in accordance with the relevant guidelines. The County Development Plan requires applications for development in areas designated as 'Constrained Land Use' to be accompanied by a detailed flood risk assessment in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines'. Furthermore, the relevant provisions of CPO 5.120 and DMS 16.206 of the County Development should also be incorporated as appropriate/necessary (page 45, Appendix 1C of the County Plan refers). The County Development Plan also notes under the tourism provision that "Any application for an amphitheatre at this [the subject] location would have to be subject to a site- specific FRA and will be subject to compliance with the provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives and subject to completion of a site-specific flood risk assessment."
  - Additional details demonstrating how the Proposed Development can be provided, maintained and managed while enhancing the potential of the overall area to continue as a valuable recreational and educational resource for Lanesborough in accordance with the Protected Area/Passive Amenity zoning of this site/wider area.
9. While some points of the Further Information request above have been informed by the submissions made in relation to the application by the Development Applications Unit (DAU) of the

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Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage you are invited to review and consider the entirety of this submission, as well as the other third party submissions which have raised inter-alia, concerns in relation to the visual impact of, and from, the proposed development, event management, traffic and transportation, overall design as well as alternatives in terms of scale and landscaping. Given the sensitive nature of the proposed development site you are invited to provide any further responses you consider appropriate to the submissions that have been lodged.

The Board considers that the above response should be submitted within 12 months of this request, however, the applicant is advised that the Board would be amenable to agreeing sufficient additional time to ensure a comprehensive response to the queries raised having particular regard to the additional surveying required, once the applicant has taken further advice from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist. Should additional time be required the applicant should contact the Board in order to agree any additional time period for response.

The further information referred to above should be received by the Board within 12 months from the date of this notice (**i.e. no later than 5.30 p.m. on the 23rd May 2025**). Please note that in accordance with section 251 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, (as amended), the period beginning on 24th December and ending on 1st January, both dates inclusive, has been disregarded for the purpose of calculating the last date for lodgement of submissions or observations.

Please note that following its examination of any information lodged in response to this request for additional information, the Board will then decide whether or not to invoke its powers under section 177AE(5)(d) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010, requiring you to publish notice of the furnishing of any additional information and to allow for inspection or purchase of same and the making of further written submissions in relation to same to the Board.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Board at [laps@pleanala.ie](mailto:laps@pleanala.ie)

Please quote the above-mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,



Breda Ingile  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-8737291

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