

**Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report for Playground and
Carpark Development at Leixlip Amenities Sports Grounds, Maynooth Road,
Leixlip, Co. Kildare**

REPORT FOR KILDARE CO. COUNCIL MARCH 2023

Mary O'Connor

ECOLOGIST/ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST | SHANACLOON NEWTOWN, CO. KILDARE

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Mary O'Connor Environmental Scientist 30/03/2023

1. Introduction

As amended, the EIA Directive 85/337/EEC aims to determine the likely significant effects of a project on the environment. EIA Screening determines whether an EIA is required for a specified project. Projects requiring mandatory EIA are listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. In the case of development, which is under these thresholds, planning authorities are required under Article 103 of the 2001 Regulations, (as amended) to request an EIS where it considers that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Screening involves appraisal of impacts from the proposed development according to three main criteria:

1. Characteristics of the project
2. Location of the proposed project
3. Characteristics of potential impacts.

Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), outlines the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by a proposed development. These are human beings, flora and fauna, soil and geology, water, air & climate, landscape, material assets, cultural heritage and the inter-relationships between the range of environmental criteria.

Sources Used

Plans and specifications for the proposed development including the Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the Proposed Playground, Leixlip Amenities Sports Ground, Maynooth Road, Leixlip Co. Kildare, as supplied by the Parks Department Kildare County Council.

Bedrock, soil, subsoil, surface water and groundwater maps from the Geological Survey of Ireland web mapping service (www.gsi.ie/mapping.htm),

National Biodiversity Data Centre (<http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/>),

Environmental Protection Agency web viewer (<http://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>)

The Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023, and details of permitted or proposed developments from the local authority's online planning records.

Statement of Authority

The assessment is carried out by Mary O'Connor, who has a PhD. in plant ecology and over 20 years of professional experience as an ecologist/environmental scientist. She has worked for public and private sector clients and has several years experience of ecological/environmental assessment and input into Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Report

2. Project Description The proposed development comprises of the following works:

The site is in an urban setting in Leixlip Town, Co. Kildare. The proposed development consists of, the development of a Playground and Carpark extension within the grounds of the Leixlip Amenities Sports Centre, Maynooth Road Leixlip. The site location map is included in Appendix 1.

Geology and soils

The site is located in the Urban Area of Leixlip. The underlying bedrock is dark limestone & shale, which is a locally-important aquifer (Geological Survey of Ireland). Sub-soils are limestone till, and soils are a combination of made ground and cohesive deposits were encountered beneath the made ground and were described typically as brown slightly sandy gravelly CLAY with occasional cobbles drift. The soils and subsoil appear to be poorly permeable, so it is expected that most rainfall on the site would not percolate to ground and would flow into surface water features.

Hydrology/Water Quality

There are no rivers, streams or open drainage ditches within or adjacent to the proposed development site. The closest watercourse on the EPA Rivers Database is the Rye Water River which is located approx. 500-600m north of the proposed development site. The Royal Canal is located *circa* 400m east of the proposed development site, There is no direct natural surface water connection between the proposed development site and the Rye Water River, i.e. streams.

Water quality in the 'Rye River is monitored as part of the Water Framework Directive status assessments and has been assessed as of Poor Ecological status and as At Risk. The main threats in the sub-catchment of this waterbody have been assessed as domestic wastewater, agriculture and urban run-off (EPA monitoring data).

Habitats of the Proposed Development Site

The habitats of the development site are entirely of an urban character, comprising buildings and artificial surfaces and amenity grassland, dry meadow grassy verge and a low hedgerow.

Ecological Value

The site is highly modified and urban with a low ecological value.

Overall Ecological Value

The location of the proposed works is in a highly modified urban area which is of low habitat and species diversity and of low ecological interest.

No annexed habitats or species of conservation interest occur within the footprint of the development.

The main potential impact to the environmental quality of the zone of influence of the proposed development determined during the screening for appropriate assessment for this site was found as follows.

Description of the proposed development

The project as outlined is not required for the proper management of a European Site i.e. a SAC or SPA site.

The project involves the proposed development of a Playground and Carpark extension within the grounds of the Leixlip Amenities Sports Centre, Maynooth Road Leixlip. The site location map is included in Appendix 1.

The design of the proposed development takes into account the best environmental engineering design to ensure the least impact to the environment.

Engineering details have been provided by the Parks Section of Kildare Co. Council.

The proposal includes the provision of 79 car parking spaces. This will include 75 standard spaces (2.4 x 4.8m) and 4 spaces designated as accessible car parking spaces (3.6 x 6m). Accessible parking for a multi-purpose vehicle with ramps or hoist (7.8 x 5.4 m) will also be included within the proposed design. Parking for 10 bicycles will be provided at the entrance to the playground. A tarmac-paved surface will be installed in the car and bike parking areas.

The proposed works area will 3900 sq. M approximately.

The proposed playground will occupy 1130 square metres and the carpark area will be *circa* 2800 square metres.

It is proposed to utilize the existing hedge on the northern boundary and existing weld-mesh fencing on the south and east boundaries will be retained, a new 2-metre mesh fence will be constructed on the western boundary.

The entrance to the playground will provide both pedestrian and service access. The pedestrian entrance will be 1.8m wide with a self-closing gate and a 2.2 m gate which will give additional width for maintenance and servicing of the playground.

The playground will contain a range of equipment Swings, Slides, Rockers, Seesaw, zip wire, Play Panels, Multi Play Units, Sand & Water Play & landscaping.

It is envisaged that the grass will be utilized as a play surface where possible.

Additional surfaces which may be used in the design of the playground are rubber surfacing, woodchip and sand.

The design also contains landscape features such as mounding, sand pit, planting and living willow structures and tree and shrub planting.

It is envisaged that the carpark construction will take place before the playground construction, and carpark works will be circa 12 weeks in duration. In addition, it is likely the construction of the playground will take 12-16 weeks from starting on-site to completion and opening. This timeframe is dependent on weather and ground conditions.

Carpark grey water and surface water from the Playground area will be directed through a network of drainage channels to a fuel and oil separator and hence to an existing stormwater drain as outlined in the engineering design included with this application.

A hydro-brake is included in the design to ensure that water draining from the carpark and playground areas will be managed to ensure that the amount of water runoff from the drained areas will be minimised in conditions of extreme rainfall.

Site water management has been designed in consultation with consultant engineers to ensure that water leaving the site will be treated and controlled.

The construction phase will involve soil excavation, movement and reprofiling.

The construction of the car parking spaces and playground involves the import of construction materials, concrete, tarmac and vehicle and machinery operation on-site.

Construction of foundations of carpark, pathways, and fencing structures will not exceed 500mm in depth.

Landscaping will only use clean uncontaminated topsoil or topsoil excavated from within the site.

Minor vegetation clearance may be required, this will not occur within the bird breeding season from 1st of March to the 1st of September.

Planting schemes will not include any known invasive alien species as defined by Invasive Species Ireland.

Location and Layout

See Site Location, Layout and Architectural Drawings attached in **Appendix 1**.

Potential Environmental Impact

Due to the very small footprint (sub-threshold for EIAR) of the proposed development, the urban nature of its location and the short duration of site works it is highly unlikely that any deleterious impact will occur to the local environment as a result of this development. However as the site is located *circa 350-400m* from a European Site it is essential that any receptor/pathway indicator linkages to the proposed development are examined in detail, the main receptor pathway has been identified as impact on water quality, described below.

Potential changes in water quality: Construction works typically generate fine sediments, and may occasionally cause accidental spills of oil or other toxic chemicals, the operation of a carpark also has the potential to cause run-off of fuel and grey water.

During site works the site will be protected from hydro chemical spills and sediment loss to the drainage network by bunds as outlined in the accompanying Screening for Appropriate Assessment document.

As outlined in the appropriate assessment the best practice environmental design for this site utilises an existing network of drainage channels in the carpark and extends this network to allow for the addition of the proposed playground and carpark extension area. This network of site drains will be connected to a hydrocarbon interceptor, which facilitates the settlement of grey water and the removal of fuels and oils. This interceptor ensures fuels and any other chemicals will not enter the local main drain which discharges to the Rye Water River and therefore, potential water quality impact to this SAC will not occur.

All receptor pathway linkages to the SAC from the proposed Carpark & Playground Development site at the Leixlip Amenities Sports Centre can be ruled out at this stage, as only treated water will leave the proposed playground site and therefore there will be no deleterious water quality impact to the SAC.

The proposed development is located at *circa* 350m/400m from the nearest SAC and impact to any European Site i.e. SAC or SPA was screened out in the Screening for Appropriate Assessment, document included with this application, which concluded no significant impact to any European Site as a result of this work.

The design to protect water quality on site also protects the water quality of the nearby Royal Canal NHA.

3. Screening Assessment

Table 1. Characteristics of proposed development

Is the size and design of the proposed works significant?	No
Potential for impacts from project in cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects	No
Use of natural resources in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity?	No
Will the works produce waste?	No
Will the works create a significant amount of pollution or nuisance?	No

Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the project including those caused by Climate Change in accordance with scientific knowledge?	No
Risks to human health (water contamination, air pollution)	No
Potential for cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects?	No

Table 2. Location of Proposed Development

Environmental Sensitivity of project in relation to existing and approved land use.	The site is of an urban character with habitats of low ecological value.
Relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	The development will not impact on site regenerative capacity for natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground
Absorption capacity of the natural environment including wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths, coastal zones and the marine environment, mountain and forest area	Not Applicable
Potential of works to impact directly or indirectly on sites designated for nature conservation (NHA/SAC/SPA)	None, the conclusion of the screening for appropriate assessment found that there was not a risk to the integrity or function of any European Site as a result of the proposed development. Likewise there is no risk to any NHA due to water quality protection on site
Potential for impacts directly or indirectly on Habitats or Species listed on Annex I, II and IV of the Habitats Directive	None (no annexed habitat or species occurs within the proposed development site)
Potential for impacts on breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act?	None
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any listed ACA in the County Development Plan?	None
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structure or recorded monuments and places of Archaeological Interest	None

Potential to impact directly or indirectly on listed or scenic views or protected landscape in the County Development Plan?	None
Potential to impact on areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure	None
Potential to impact on densely populated areas.	None

Table 3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Human Beings	No impacts are identified
Flora and Fauna	No habitat loss will be incurred by the proposed development
Soils and Geology	No impact on existing soil characteristics by the proposed development
Water	The site development will use drainage systems interceptors and water retention areas which are of sufficient quality to ensure no impact to local water quality.
Air and Climate	No impact on air quality by the proposed development
Noise and Vibration	Noise and Vibration levels will be restricted during the works, no potential impacts following construction
Landscape	The site is within the core urban fabric of Leixlip and the proposed development will not have a negative impact on the existing landscape.
Material Assets	The proposed development will not have any significant impact on material assets including public utilities and natural resources
Cultural Heritage	None
Interaction of Foregoing	No significant effects likely to arise associated with the characteristics of the potential impacts.

Table 4. Discussion of Potential Impacts

Will a large geographical area be impacted as a result of the proposed works?	No
Will a large population be impacted as a result of the proposed works?	No
Are any trans-frontier impacts likely to arise from proposed works?	No
Is the intensity and complexity of impacts associated with the proposed works considered significant?	No
Is there a high probability that the impacts will occur?	Conservation led design will provide safeguards in relation to potential impacts ensuring low probability that impacts will occur
What is the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact?	Conservation led design will provide safeguards in relation to potential impacts ensuring low probability that impacts will occur
Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects?	It is considered that no significant cumulative effects will arise
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effects?	No

4. Conclusion

The DoEHLG Guidance Document “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development” notes that “The greater the number of different aspects of the environment which are likely to be affected and the greater the links between the effects, the more likely it is that an EIS should be carried out. Where 5 complexity of impacts is deemed to apply in the case of a specific sub-threshold development proposal, there should be a predisposition towards the preparation of an EIS”.

In consideration of the above involving appraisal of characteristics and location of proposed development and characteristics of potential impacts and having regard to Annex III criteria of the EIA Directive it is concluded that an EIAR is not required for the proposed development.

Appendix 1. Site Location Map, Layout and Plans



