

**Planning Reference No.:** LA02/24

**Description of development:**

- The erection of park entrance signage (11.0 m x 2.1 m and 5.0 m x 2.1 m) at the main entrance to the site.
- The development of road-markings, signage and a traffic barrier arrangement at the point the existing site access road enters the main body of the site, to prevent and minimize conflict between amenity park users and occasional landfill maintenance and aftercare related traffic.
- The installation of fencing to restrict access to former landfill maintenance and operation areas (total length of fencing – 3,825 m).
- The development of an on-site parking areas at a central area at the main body of the site, with 88 no. of bicycle parking spaces, 57 no. of car parking spaces including six no. electric vehicle charging spaces, three no. of accessible parking spaces, one no. accessible electric vehicle charging space and 24 no. electric vehicle ready charging spaces.
- The development of a circulation area for a mobile café (335 m<sup>2</sup> in area), adjacent to the onsite parking area.
- The development of a toilet and changing room facility on-site (principle dimensions – 12.2m x 3.0m x 2.5 m high).
- The development of an amphitheatre on-site to the rear of the parking and circulation areas (principle dimensions – 18.0 m x 20.0 m)
- The development of a dedicated activity zone at a central area on-site for the carrying out of a variety of recreational activities (4,500 m<sup>2</sup> in area)
- The development of a bicycle pump track at a central area on-site (principle dimensions – 60.0 m x 35.0 m, 2,100 m<sup>2</sup> in area.)
- The development of a fenced off dog park at a central area on-site (2,000 m<sup>2</sup> in area), with surrounding fencing and gated access 240 m in length
- The conversion of a network of existing tracks on-site to amenity trails. This network of amenity trails to be developed will interlink all of the proposed development components listed above. The following amenity trails will be developed on-site: o Adventure trail (Ca. 1.0 km in distance) o Picnic trail (Ca. 0.6 km in distance) o Small loop (Ca. 0.9 km in distance) o Main loop (Ca. 2.0 km in distance) o Perimeter loop (Ca. 3.6 km in distance) o Dome trail (Ca. 0.5 km in distance). This dome path will traverse the area of the existing landfill cap on-site.
- The development of an adventure/sensory play path with nature play elements on-site.
- The use of the proposed development site as an amenity and biodiversity park to be known as 'East Galway Eco Park.

**Location:** Killagh More, Ballybaun (E.D. Killaan), Ballintoher (E.D. Killaan), Ballinasloe, Galway.

**Site Notice visible and legible:** Site Notice erected and legible on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

### **Site Description and Development Proposal**

The site (58.3 hectares) is located in the townlands of Killagh More, Ballybaun and Ballintober, approximately 2.5km southwest of Kilconnell village. The site currently contains the capped landfill, associated landfill infrastructure, extensive open areas of grassland and woodland, and a network of tracks. The former landfill site is undergoing aftercare and is being managed by Galway County Council.

### **Planning History**

Pl. Ref 023811 Celtic Waste Ltd. - For the construction of an engineered Landfill Site for Residual Waste and for Ancillary Facilities - Granted (Conditional)

Pl. Ref 08324 Greenstar Holdings Limited - For 1) the construction of a single storey extension (approx. 160 sqm) to existing offices and 2) to remove the regional restriction of the origin of the waste accepted at the facility by modifying Condition No. 2 of Permission Reg. Ref No. 02/3811 so that the facility can accept waste from other waste regions. Landfill access will continue at the existing permitted access at the R348. The proposed development relates to an activity covered by Waste Licence Ref. No. W0178-01 issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. The proposed development will not require a review of the Waste Licence. The proposed development is located at the East Galway Residual Landfill. Granted

Pl. Ref. 081133 Greenstar Gas Energy - For a landfill gas utilisation plant on a 0.13 hectare site. The proposed development will be phased and will generate up to 4.2 MW of electricity for input into the national grid. The proposed development will consist of: (i) Three separate purpose build and environmentally controlled containers; (each circa 2.5m x 12.2m x 2.6m high) enclosing a landfill gas engine with a 6.0m high stack generating approx. 1.4MW of power each; (ii) Three separate purpose build and environmentally controlled containers (each 3.0m x 3.0m x 3.0m high) enclosing a transformer; (iii) ESB substation (ca 6.0m x 9.7m x 4.5m high); (iv) A steel equipment storage container (ca 2.5m x 12.2m x 2.5m high); (v) 2 No. bunded oil tanks (each 5m<sup>3</sup> capacity); and (vi) Ancillary concrete foundation slabs; earthworks and site grading; paladin fencing (2.4m high x ca. 180m long); double gates, ducting and services; above ground piping and all associated works. The proposed development relates to an activity covered by Waste Licence No. W0178-01 issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. The proposed development will not require a review of the Waste Licence (Gross floor area 210.7 sqm) - Granted.

Pl. Ref. 15300 Greenstar Properties Limited - Extension of duration for the construction of an engineered Landfill Site for Residual Waste and for Ancillary Facilities as described in attachment No. 2, previous planning reference no. 02/3811, ABP Ref 07/205181 - Granted

### **Pre-Planning**

N/A

### **Consultation**

#### **Prescribed Bodies & Statutory Consultees**

The case file was referred to the following consultees for comment/observation:

- Roads Section

The Roads Department have made the following comments:

1. Having regard to the horizontal and vertical alignment of the Regional road R-348 and the vehicular access arrangements situated on the radius of a curve, Roads & Transportation have the following concerns regarding the junction visibility and potential restricted forward and stopping sight distance visibility for right hand turning movements to occur at the development site entrance coupled with the trafficked speed of the public road. The applicant is therefore requested to submit the following information, for further consideration:
    - (i) The Applicant shall prepare a detailed set of drawings inclusive of a revised site layout plan presenting the vertical and horizontal sight distances at the proposed vehicular entrance onto the public road. The drawings shall also include the relevant forward sight distances (both vertical and horizontal) on the public road from both approaches to the development site access junction off the R-348. All sight distances shall be in accordance to DM Standard 28 of the Galway County Development Plan and the relevant Transport Infrastructure Ireland design standards, DN-GEO-03031 Rural Road Link Design. The survey of the public road and surrounds shall be sufficiently detailed to allow any potential visual obstructions to be readily identified.
    - (ii) The revised site layout plan per item 1(i) above should clearly annotate the type and extent of remedial set back works inclusive of proposed fencing, landscaping and boundary treatments to achieve the entry and exit visibility sightlines.
    - (iii) The applicant shall further prepare a stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit for the development owing to the required sightline improvements and significant offline works. All associated Road Safety Audit recommendations shall be itemised and shown to correlate with the RSA numbering on a revised drawing for ease of reference.
  2. In regards to the internal layout, the applicant shall revise the active travel control measures on approach to proposed pedestrian road crossing in accordance to TII publications Rural Cycle way Design (offline & Greenway) in relation to layout recommendations for crossing.
- DoELG

The comments received from the Development Applications Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage have recommended archaeological conditions in the event of planning permission being granted. The Department highlights the CIEEM advice note regarding the lifespan of ecological surveys and notes no recent ecological impact assessment report has been included with the application.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Party Submissions / Observations**

No submissions / observations were received on this application.

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| <b>Relevant Planning Policy</b> |
|---------------------------------|

The **Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028** is the strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the functional area of Galway County. The following are considered relevant in this case:

### **Chapter 7 Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection**

## **Chapter 8 Tourism and Landscape**

*Section 8.13 – Landscape*

## **Chapter 10 Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green/Blue Infrastructure**

*Section 10.6 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity*

*Section 10.15 Green and Blue Infrastructure*

## **Chapter 12 Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage**

## **Chapter 14 Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resources**

*Section 14.4 Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation*

*Section 14.6 Flooding*

## **Chapter 15 - Development Management Standards**

*Section 15.3.2 -Agriculture*

*Section 15.6 - Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection*

*Section 15.7.2- Landscape Sensitivity*

*Section 15.13.2 Surface Water Drainage and Flooding*

*DM Standard 53 - Community Facilities*

### **Environmental Assessments**

#### **Appropriate Assessment**

##### **Within a designated site: No**

Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive requires that ‘any application or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but is likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives’. In terms of plans/projects, there are no recent significant developments permitted in the immediate area. In terms of plans, the current proposal is being assessed under the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021, which was subject to a NIR and includes the following provisions to protect European Sites: Policy NHB 1, Objectives DS 6, Objective NHB 1, Objective NHB 2, Objective NHB 3, Objective DS 6, Objective AFF 5 and DM Standard 40. The River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 has also been considered.

The development site is located within a 15km radius of the following Natura 2000 designations:

##### **Special Protection Areas**

- 12 km Special Protection Areas: River Suck Callows SPA

##### **Special Area of Conservation**

- 10.79 km Special Area of Conservation: Lough Corrib SAC
- 10.9 km Special Area of Conservation: Glenloughan Esker SAC

See [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) for the specific conservation objectives of the above sites.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Fehily Timoney environmental consultants and submitted with the application. The report has highlighted that the River Suck Callows

SPA, Lough Corrib SAC, Glenloughan Esker and Rahasane Turlough SAC are within the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.

The report has confirmed that there is no connectivity to three of the European sites within or outside the potential Zone of Influence. However, The Rahasane Turlough SAC is hydrologically linked to the project site through the Raford River. It is proposed to use pre-cast concrete over a single watercourse crossing, and mitigation measures include the requirement to construct the bridge crossing under dry works conditions and temporary nature of the construction works. Further information shall issue regarding these measures.

The AA screening report also referred to 3 field surveys which informed the report –

- Mammal survey carried out by Beo Ecology in 2021;
- Breeding bird survey carried out by JL Ecology in 2022;
- Bat Roost Assessment and survey carried out by FGE Consulting in 2021.

There reports were not submitted with the screening report. The DoELG highlighted in their report the CIEEM advice note regarding the lifespan of ecological surveys and notes no recent ecological impact assessment report has been included with the application. Further information shall issue in this regard.

In the absence of updated field surveys and details regarding a proposed stream crossing over the Rafard River which is hydrologically linked to the Rahasane Turlough SAC, the Planning Authority is not satisfied that the proposed development at this site, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, would not have a likely significant effect (direct/indirect) on any European designated sites, their qualifying interests or conservation objectives, at this stage. Therefore, an Appropriate Assessment screening cannot be fully carried out by the Planning Authority at this time.

#### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

The EIA Screening report concludes that the proposed development works are not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment and consequently do not require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report as prescribed under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.

#### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Determination**

Under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), current government and EU guidance, the Planning Authority must screen the proposed development for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and decide if the planning application for the proposed development does or does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

The current requirements for EIA are outlined in Part X of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended and Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulation 2001, as amended. The prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory EIS are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

The proposed development does not fall into a class of development contained in Schedule 5, Parts 1 or 2 and therefore the requirements for an EIA can be screened out. Class 15 of the Schedule 5 states that EIA can be required in the case of subthreshold development that would be likely to have

significant effects on the environment having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 and Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

In considering the criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, I consider that having regard to the characteristics of the proposed development and the location of the development and the characteristics of potential impacts there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment such that an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

#### **Flood Risk Assessment**

The Planning Authority note that small amounts of pluvial flooding are identified on the GIS mapping. However, the uses proposed are water compatible uses as set out in The Planning System and Flood Risk Management guidance document. No further assessment required.

#### **Statutory & Other Designations**

##### **Built Heritage:**

There is no built / architectural heritage (Record of Protected Structures / National Inventory of Architectural Heritage) within 100m of the subject site.

##### **Archaeology:**

An enclosure (Reference: GA086-165) is situated at the south end of the site.

A ringfort (Reference: GA086-253) is situated at the centre of the site to the south of the footprint of the capped landfill.

The comments received from the Development Applications Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage have recommended archaeological conditions in the event of planning permission being granted.

#### **Planning Assessment**

##### **Strategic Assessment (Policy issues):**

**\*Note:** This section concerns strategic policy issues and relates to the acceptability of a development proposal in principle. Where a development is considered acceptable in principle in this assessment, this will be subject to normal planning considerations which are considered in the following section.

The proposed development consists of:

The erection of park entrance signage (11.0 m x 2.1 m and 5.0 m x 2.1 m) at the main entrance to the site.

- The development of road-markings, signage and a traffic barrier arrangement at the point the existing site access road enters the main body of the site, to prevent and minimize conflict between amenity park users and occasional landfill maintenance and aftercare related traffic.

- The installation of fencing to restrict access to former landfill maintenance and operation areas (total length of fencing – 3,825 m).
- The development of an on-site parking areas at a central area at the main body of the site, with 88 no. of bicycle parking spaces, 57 no. of car parking spaces including six no. electric vehicle charging spaces, three no. of accessible parking spaces, one no. accessible electric vehicle charging space and 24 no. electric vehicle ready charging spaces.
- The development of a circulation area for a mobile café (335 m<sup>2</sup> in area), adjacent to the on-site parking area.
- The development of a toilet and changing room facility on-site (principle dimensions – 12.2m x 3.0m x 2.5 m high).
- The development of an amphitheatre on-site to the rear of the parking and circulation areas (principle dimensions – 18.0 m x 20.0 m) • The development of a dedicated activity zone at a central area on-site for the carrying out of a variety of recreational activities (4,500 m<sup>2</sup> in area) • The development of a pump track at a central area on-site (principle dimensions – 60.0 m x 35.0 m, 2,100 m<sup>2</sup> in area.)
- The development of a fenced off dog park at a central area on-site (2,000 m<sup>2</sup> in area), with surrounding fencing and gated access 240 m in length.
- The conversion of a network of existing tracks on-site to amenity trails. This network of amenity trails to be developed will interlink all of the proposed development components listed above. The following amenity trails will be developed on-site: Adventure trail (Ca. 1.0 km in distance), Picnic trail (Ca. 0.6 km in distance) Small loop (Ca. 0.9 km in distance), Main loop (Ca. 2.0 km in distance), Perimeter loop (Ca. 3.6 km in distance), Dome trail (Ca. 0.5 km in distance). This dome path will traverse the area of the existing landfill cap on-site.
- The development of an adventure/sensory play path with nature play elements on-site.
- The use of the proposed development site as an amenity and biodiversity park to be known as ‘East Galway Eco Park.’

The site (58.3 hectares) is located in the townlands of Killagh More, Ballybaun and Ballintober, approximately 2.5km southwest of Kilconnell village. The site currently contains the capped landfill, associated landfill infrastructure, extensive open areas of grassland and woodland, and a network of tracks. The former landfill site is undergoing aftercare and is being managed by Galway County Council.

It is intended that this development will advance the potential of this ecologically rich site and develop an amenity and biodiversity park which will act as a local and regional attraction, providing a range of amenity offerings to the public of all ages and abilities, local community and interest groups. The proposed development site will also serve as a green infrastructure asset in Co. Galway that will be managed to deliver ecosystem services, enhance biodiversity, provide recreational space and mitigate anthropogenic impacts on climate changes. In this regard support for the biodiversity park are addressed under Chapter 7 - Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection Specifically Section 7.6, Chapter 8 – Tourism and Landscape, specifically Section 8.9 and Chapter 10 – Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green/Blue Infrastructure, of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, and in particular the following policy objectives:

NHB 11 - Increases in Visitor Numbers to Semi-Natural Areas, Visitor and Habitat Management –

Seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones.

Where relevant, the Planning Authority and those receiving permission for development under the Plan shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects, including loss of habitat and disturbance. Management measures may include ensuring that new projects and activities are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.

ATE 1 - Additional Tourism Initiatives: To facilitate the sustainable development of the tourism sector and provide for the delivery of a unique combination of tourism opportunities drawing on the network of attractions in County Galway and potential future attractions.

GBW 1 Walkways and Cycleways - To promote and facilitate the development of walkways and cycleways at appropriate locations throughout the County subject to environmental considerations.

Two policy objectives contained in the CDP that more specifically support the development of the East Galway Eco Park are as follows:

WM10 - Landfill Sites: 'Galway County Council will put in place a plan during the lifetime of 2022-2028 County Development Plan for Kilconnell Landfill to deal with the remediation of the Kilconnell Landfill site to a standard consistent with the end use of Kilconnell Landfill to open space park amenity area for community use including community sustainable energy/ climate action measures.

SRA 4 - Passive and Active Open Space: Seek to develop multifunctional open spaces throughout the County which will support a range of recreational and amenity activities that provides for active and passive needs.

Having regard to the aforementioned policy objectives the principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable at this location. This acceptability will be subject to normal planning considerations, such for example, as the avoidance of adverse impacts on the receiving environment and landscape character.

#### **Site Specific Assessment (Technical issues):**

##### **Roads:**

The site is accessed via the R348 road from Kilconnell to New Inn. The existing site entrance has been constructed to the required standard and has suitable visibility splays and sightlines. This entrance was previously utilized for landfill related traffic during the operation of the former East Galway Landfill. Drawing No. P 22-032-0300-0001 'Proposed Entrance Upgrade Works' submitted with the application indicate site visibility distances of 160m and 129m which is acceptable for developments along regional roads as per DM Standard 28 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The application states that will be relatively limited levels of construction phase traffic due to the minimal scale of construction activity proposed. A Construction Phase Traffic Management Plan (detailed in the CEMP) is proposed to manage construction traffic that does arise.



The proposed car park is 1,760m<sup>2</sup>. The car park shall provide 57 no. car parking spaces including 3 no. accessible parking spaces, 6 no. EV charging spaces, 1 no. accessible EV charging space and 24 no. EV ready parking spaces (a landscaping strip can be reutilized for charging connections at these spaces in the future). The proposed car park shall be constructed of geo-grid infilled with decorative gravel atop the existing hardcore. Bicycle parking is proposed at the main car park, mobile café and pump track. The three bicycle parking areas shall provide parking for 128 no. bicycles. The proposed bike parking shall be constructed of geo-grid infilled with gravel.

A coach set down area and turning area shall be provided adjacent to the car park. The coach set down area provides parking for 3 no. large coaches. The coach set down area shall be constructed with asphalt surfacing. The coach turning area avails of an existing concrete hardstanding area adjacent to the set down area.

### Traffic Management

Traffic will enter and exit the site via an existing planning approved site entrance (Pl. Ref 023811) which was designed to have suitable visibility splays and sightlines. Traffic will access and exit the main body of the site via the use of a site access road running from the R348. Electronic entrance gates will be used to control access to the site in accordance with the proposed opening hours for the park. A raised table pedestrian crossing and signage will be developed where the proposed perimeter loop crosses the site access road to safely manage traffic and increase pedestrian safety. A system of signs, road marking and bollards will be used to manage traffic entering the main body of the site. This system will serve to suitably segregate park visitor traffic and occasional landfill maintenance activity related traffic. Traffic entering the main body of the site will be directed via signage along an access road leading to the proposed car park and proposed bicycle parking areas on-site. Access to landfill infrastructure components in the area surrounding the site entrance will be controlled through the use of proposed gates and fencing.

The Roads Department have commented on the proposal and have requested information relating to the following:

1. Having regard to the horizontal and vertical alignment of the Regional road R-348 and the vehicular access arrangements situated on the radius of a curve, Roads & Transportation have the following concerns regarding the junction visibility and potential restricted forward and stopping sight distance visibility for right hand turning movements to occur at the development site entrance coupled with the trafficked speed of the public road. The applicant is therefore requested to submit the following information, for further consideration:

(i) The Applicant shall prepare a detailed set of drawings inclusive of a revised site layout plan presenting the vertical and horizontal sight distances at the proposed vehicular entrance onto the public road. The drawings shall also include the relevant forward sight distances (both vertical and horizontal) on the public road from both approaches to the development site access junction off the R-348. All sight distances shall be in accordance to DM Standard 28 of the Galway County Development Plan and the relevant Transport Infrastructure Ireland design standards, DN-GEO-03031 Rural Road Link Design. The survey of the public road and surrounds shall be sufficiently detailed to allow any potential visual obstructions to be readily identified.

(ii) The revised site layout plan per item 1(i) above should clearly annotate the type and extent of remedial set back works inclusive of proposed fencing, landscaping and boundary treatments to achieve the entry and exit visibility sightlines.

(iii) The applicant shall further prepare a stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit for the development owing to the required sightline improvements and significant offline works. All associated Road Safety Audit recommendations shall be itemised and shown to correlate with the RSA numbering on a revised drawing for ease of reference.

2. In regards to the internal layout, the applicant shall revise the active travel control measures on approach to proposed pedestrian road crossing in accordance to TII publications Rural Cycle way Design (offline & Greenway) in relation to layout recommendations for crossing.

### **Surface Water Drainage:**

#### **Construction Phase:**

During construction there will be resource requirements related to materials such as cement and building waste. The site will utilise a combination of over the edge drainage and natural percolation to ground for the construction phase. The majority of the project site drains into the Raford subcatchment, with a small section in the southeast draining into the Suck subcatchment. A single stream crossing will be constructed as part of the proposed project along one of the walking trails. This crossing will utilise pre-cast concrete, with works carried out under dry working conditions (i.e. the works area will be isolated from flow to allow the construction). Earthworks will be required in the construction of the activity zone, pump track, dog park and amphitheater. These works will be temporary and span across the entirety of the works.

#### **Operational Phase:**

The proposed project will continue to utilise over the edge drainage and natural percolation to ground during its operation. This level of water run-off will be comparable to current levels within the project site. Wastewater from the toilet facilities will be discharged to a macerator pump prior to discharge to the on-site leachate system.

### **Water Supply:**

Existing supply.

### **Effluent Treatment:**

The toilet and changing facilities shall comprise a modular toilet block constructed within a modified 40ft container. The toilet block shall include male, female and accessible toilets. Unisex changing facilities will also be provided. The toilet block shall be clad with recovered timber cladding. Foul water from the toilet facilities shall be discharged to a macerator pump prior to discharge to the on-site leachate system. Leachate/wastewater is collected from the site and brought to an authorized wastewater treatment facility on an occasional basis.

### **Design, Landscape & Visual Impact:**

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Landscape Sensitivity Class:   | 1 (Low) |
| Protected View / Scenic Route: | No      |

Landscape Sensitivity as outlined in the Galway County Development Plan 2022- 2028 is designated as follows; **1. Low:** *Unlikely to be adversely affected by change*; **2. High:** *Elevated sensitivity to change*; **3. Special:** *High sensitivity to change*; **4. Iconic:** *Unique landscape with high sensitivity to change*.

The proposed development site is situated in the Castlegar Basin Unit of the North Galway Complex Landscape which has a Low landscape sensitivity. There are no designated protected views or scenic routes in the vicinity of the proposed development site. The site is mostly low lying in nature and is visually screened. There are minimal views into or out of the site from/to the wider area. The existing landfill cap (dome) at the site rises above other parts of the site and is more visually prominent. Construction activities inclusive of associated vehicle movements and mobile plant operation will be undertaken within the confines of the site during development works. Working areas will be surrounded by perimeter fencing with non-transparent netting to minimize views into site areas from the surrounding public realm during construction wherever there are views from public areas into working areas. Visual changes associated with construction activities will be temporary in nature and there will be no lasting, significant adverse visual impact on the surrounding area due to construction. The proposed development works aim to improve the overall views and character of the site. A dome trail will be constructed to allow Park users access the top of landfill cap (dome) where they will be able to enjoy views of the wider landscape. The addition of aesthetically pleasing hard and soft landscaping features will improve the visual amenity at the site. It is considered that there will be no negative visual impacts associated with the proposed development works once complete. proposed finishes will be high quality in nature.

### **Design:**

#### **Main Entrance Signage:**

The main entrance features will comprise 2 no. entrance signs. The primary sign on the west of the entrance measures 11.0m in length by 2.1m high. The secondary sign on the east of the entrance measures 5.0m in length by 2.1m high. The entrance signs shall comprise Corten steel panels with extruded stainless steel lettering attached. The lettering will be backlit by LED lights.

#### **Fencing:**

The fencing shall comprise approximately 3,500m of 1.2m high timber post and wire mesh fencing to restrict access to the following areas:

- Landfill maintenance and aftercare areas.
- Steep slopes adjacent to on-site streams.

#### **Toilet and Changing Facilities:**

The toilet and changing facilities shall comprise a modular toilet block constructed within a modified 40ft container. The toilet block shall be clad with recovered timber cladding.

#### **The Amphitheatre:**

The amphitheatre shall comprise a main stage measuring approximately 65m<sup>2</sup> and sloped seating terrace. The main stage shall contain a tensile canopy roof structure mounted to a concrete base. A stepped footpath shall connect the main stage to the seating terrace. The seating to the amphitheatre shall be constructed into the natural slope retained by gabion baskets topped with natural timber seating affixed atop.

#### Trails:

Six no. trails are proposed at the site:

- Adventure trail (1.0 km in distance)
- Picnic trail (0.6 km in distance)
- Small loop (0.9 km in distance)
- Main loop (2.0 km in distance)
- Perimeter loop (3.6 km in distance)
- Dome trail (0.5 km in distance).

#### The Activity Zone:

The activity zone shall comprise a large grass/reinforced safagrass/bark mulch surface area (approximately 4,500m<sup>2</sup>). The area shall contain a low-level adventure/obstacle, twin trail course with earth mounding, planting and seeding.

#### The Pump Track:

The pump track shall comprise of approximately 280 linear metres of asphalt cycle tracks over an area of approximately 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> (within a total area of 2,100 m<sup>2</sup> which includes the track itself and intervening and surrounding space) The asphalt cycle tracks shall contain undulating ground to achieve the required profile for the pump track.

#### The Dog Park:

The dog park shall comprise of 2 no. grassed areas (approximately 2,000 m<sup>2</sup>) catering for both large and small dogs. The entire area shall be fenced securely fenced with 1.2m high paladin fencing. A "bell jar" dual gate system shall be operated to the dog park entrance which allows dog owners to bring their dog into a confined space, on-leash, where the dog can be unleashed before entry to the park. The park shall contain selected dog agility equipment, hardstanding area with benches, refuse bins and water drinking points.

### **Recommendation**

I recommend that a decision be DEFERRED pending the following FURTHER INFORMATION:

1. Having regard to case law of the CJEU (Case C-258/11, Sweetman and others) which has established that determinations cannot have lacunae and must contain complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt as to the effects of a project on a European site the Planning Authority are not satisfied due to the outdated Mammal Survey, Breeding Bird Survey and Bat Roost Assessment and Survey which were used to inform the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report. The documents as submitted are required to be complete, precise and include definitive findings to satisfy the Planning Authority that the proposal would not result in adverse impacts on nearby Natura 2000 Sites. Therefore, further information is requested as follows:
  - (a) Please submit an updated Appropriate Assessment Screening Report informed by an up to date Mammal Survey, Breeding Bird Survey and Bat Roost Assessment and Survey (based on parameters set out in the CIEEM advice note <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>). Please also submit the Mammal Survey, Breeding Bird Survey and Bat Roost Assessment and Survey which will be used to inform the AA Screening Report.

- (b) The Planning Authority note, based on the submitted AA Screening Report (page 17) that the Rahasane Turlough SAC is hydrologically linked to the project site through the Rafard River. It is also noted that there appears to be a significant volume of structural infill being deposited around the proposed pre cast concrete foundations and abutments which would support the proposed stream crossing. The Planning Authority also note the reliance on good industry practice with regard to protecting the stream from silt laden surface ingress. The Planning Authority consider that there is a significant lacunae within the documents as submitted as it is unclear what the existing status of the stream at this location is, and the extent of the works which are required in terms of excavation, manipulation of the stream etc. to accommodate the proposed stream crossing. The applicant is therefore requested to submit an updated CEMP which shall provide clear and definitive information as to how this element of the proposed development will be carried out and to clarify the extent of any mitigation measures which maybe required. The content of this updated CEMP shall be reflected within an amended AA Screening/NIS as appropriate.
2. Please submit an Ecological Impact Assessment for the proposed development.
3. Having regard to the horizontal and vertical alignment of the Regional road R-348 and the vehicular access arrangements situated on the radius of a curve, Roads & Transportation have the following concerns regarding the junction visibility and potential restricted forward and stopping sight distance visibility for right hand turning movements to occur at the development site entrance coupled with the trafficked speed of the public road. The applicant is therefore requested to submit the following information, for further consideration:
- (i) The Applicant shall prepare a detailed set of drawings inclusive of a revised site layout plan presenting the vertical and horizontal sight distances at the proposed vehicular entrance onto the public road. The drawings shall also include the relevant forward sight distances (both vertical and horizontal) on the public road from both approaches to the development site access junction off the R-348. All sight distances shall be in accordance to DM Standard 28 of the Galway County Development Plan and the relevant Transport Infrastructure Ireland design standards, DN-GEO-03031 Rural Road Link Design. The survey of the public road and surrounds shall be sufficiently detailed to allow any potential visual obstructions to be readily identified.
- (ii) The revised site layout plan per item 1(i) above should clearly annotate the type and extent of remedial set back works inclusive of proposed fencing, landscaping and boundary treatments to achieve the entry and exit visibility sightlines.
- (iii) The applicant shall further prepare a stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit for the development owing to the required sightline improvements and significant offline works. All associated Road Safety Audit recommendations shall be itemised and shown to correlate with the RSA numbering on a revised drawing for ease of reference.
4. In regards to the internal layout, the applicant shall revise the active travel control measures on approach to proposed pedestrian road crossing in accordance to TII publications Rural Cycle way Design (offline & Greenway) in relation to layout recommendations for crossing.

Cora Keane

Recommendation by: Cora Keane Executive Planner (03.07.2024)

Valerie Loughnane

Recommendation by: Valerie Loughnane – Senior Planner. Date: 05/07/2024

## Site Photos













