

PLANNER'S REPORT
FURTHER INFORMATION ASSESSMENT

APPLICATION NO.	04630/22
APPLICANT	Irish Water
DESCRIPTION	Upgrade works at the wastewater treatment plant which will consist of 1. Construction of a new storm overflow and flow splitting chamber, inlet works including grit removal system and full flow to treatment pumping station, 2 no. new integrated fixed-film activated sludge reactor tanks (Aeration Tanks), 2 no. final settlement tanks, final water sampling manhole while retaining the existing outfall to the River Sullane, return and waste activated sludge pumping stations, chemical building including lime and ferric sulphate dosing systems with bunded chemical storage tanks, 1no. storm water storage tank equipped with storm water pumps, 1 no. sludge picket fence thickener, odour control system, a sheet pile flood protection wall within the site boundary, boundary treatments include a weld mesh security fence, new internal access road and public lighting. 2. Construction of a new control and administration building. 3. Decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment plant, equipment and associated structures as part of the upgrade works. 4. Construction of a 42 kWp photovoltaic (PV) solar panels on ground mounted frames on the north western area of the site. The PV panel shall be used to supplement the energy demands of the proposed WwTP and will be arranged with a panel area of 185sqm approximately. 5. Establishment of a designated area to be utilized by Cork County Council Roads Department and construction of a new entrance point. 6. All associated site development works above and below ground. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be submitted to the planning authority with the application.
LOCATION	Wastewater Treatment Plant (WwTP) Macroom Sleeven East Co. Cork
DUE DATE	06/04/2023

Further information was requested as follows;

- a) While the proposed upgrade to the treatment plant is to be welcomed, you shall clarify whether the proposed treatment standard is compatible with meeting the standards to protect a recorded population of Freshwater Pearl Mussel downstream of the site. You shall please clarify the locations, status and extent of the recorded Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations downstream of the proposed development as part of your response. This may be submitted as a confidential report if there are relevant issues of concern relating to the locations arising.

- b) The erection of flood defence infrastructure on this site could have the potential to affect flow rates/volumes in the section of river proximal to the site. While it is noted that the conclusions of the FRA are that the flood protection works are not predicted to increase risk of flooding elsewhere, there is a concern that changes to the hydrology of the river could affect the riverbed and banks and could thereby have negative implications for freshwater habitats and species. Therefore, you are requested to submit an assessment of possible implications of the development of flood defences on natural hydrological and ecological processes in the adjoining section of the River Sullane.

The applicants have responded to the f.i. request, on 10/2/23, as follows,

It is noted that since the initial application was lodged and during the development of a response to the f.i. request additional flood study data was provided by the OPW for the River Sullane. A review of the FRA was carried out. As a result of the findings it was

considered necessary to amend the proposals and to increase the height of the proposed flood defence wall from 66.8m OD to 67.3m OD i.e. an increase of 0.5m.

Irish Water also reviewed their network model to consider a range of design storm events and to allow for future networks upgrades. The changes include the following;

- Increase in height of flood defence wall
- Amendments to the Formula A chamber – the position of same has been amended to reduce head losses within the inlet pipework mitigating the height increases required of the proposed infrastructure. The top elevation level of the formula A chamber has increased by 3.3m OD due to the increase in peak flow entering the WwTP.
- Amendments to inlet works area. Amendments to the top elevation level of the grit trap and an increase in the top level elevation of the influent sampling chamber. It is stated that to mitigate the visual impact of the height increase it is proposed to replace the initial mass concrete influent sampling chamber with a compact weir box installation with the main sampling unit located at ground level.
- Amendments to the IFAS reactor tank. The top elevation level has increased and the reactor has been rotated 180 degrees such that the inlet is now positioned at the northern side of the unit and the process flow is from north to south through the reactor.
- Amendments to the final settlement tanks (FST's). the top elevation level has increased and the position of the two FST's has been amended to the area adjacent to the IFAS reactor to enable better visual screening by the proposed landscaping. Updated photomontages have been submitted.
- Omission of the proposed return activated sludge (RAS) and waste activated sludge (WAS) pumping station chambers from the design. These have been replaced with 2 no. dry mounted pump sets adjacent to the final settlement tanks (FST's).
- It is proposed to relocate the ferric dosing system (as the IFAS reactor has been rotated) to the southern side of the lime dosing building adjacent to the IFAS outlet chamber. This is to maintain as short lengths of chemical dosing pipework as possible
- As a result of the relocation of the ferric dosing system the ESB substation has been relocated to the opposite side of the access road, which also impacts on the location of the generator and fuel tank. It means they are c. 3 to 4 metres closer to the southern site boundary and therefore closer to neighbouring properties.

Updated planning reports have been submitted as a result of the revised site layout plan. The conclusions and recommendations in all cases remains unchanged from the initial reports except for the flood study and landscape plan. The design has been amended to address any flooding potential and the landscape plan has been updated to

ensure that the same level of visual screening is provided despite the increase in height of parts of the proposed treatment plant.

The layout of the overall site has changed. Various elements of the development will now be at an increased height on the site, to address flooding concerns. The greater height does not unduly alter the character of the development as a whole and its likely visual impact on the landscape. As already outlined landscaping proposals have been revised to address the changes and to provide adequate screening.

I have compared the original photomontages against the updated (Appendix K). The proposed development should remain relatively inconspicuous on the landscape, given the site location and the backdrop.

The Ecology Office has considered the further information response and notes that the revised landscape plan is acceptable. He is satisfied with the response received to item 1 and the survey effort undertaken. The proposed scheme will likely provide an improvement on the current situation where the site is currently overloaded, not currently capable of consistently achieving the ELV's and at risk of flooding and as such have a potential knock on positive effect on Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations within the Sullane River. He is also satisfied with the response to item 2 as overall, the hydrology of the river is stated to remain the same and there will be no changes to the natural variation in the flow and strength of the river. Permission is recommended subject to conditions.

Recommendation

It is recommended that planning permission be GRANTED subject to the attached conditions.

Conclusion

Grant

Conditions/Reasons

No.	Condition	Reason
1	The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with plans and particulars lodged with the Planning Authority on 23/3/22, 12/10/22 & 10/2/23 save where	In the interests of clarity.

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	amended by the terms and conditions herein.	
2	The external materials and finishes of the proposed development shall incorporate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority a dark grey coloured finish unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority. These structures shall be maintained to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.	In the interests of visual amenity.
3	The siting and specific design of the solar panels shall be submitted to and agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.	In the interests of visual amenity.
4	External lighting within this development shall be directed and cowled as necessary so as not to interfere with passing traffic or so as not to cause any glare or additional light spill to adjoining residential properties.	In the interest of road safety and of not interfering with adjacent dwelling owners.
5	Prior to any construction work (including site clearance, grading, well boring, levelling etc.) at the proposed development site, appropriate surface water management controls shall be in place to prevent the discharge of sediment contaminated water to adjacent water courses. Unvegetated slopes shall be temporarily scarified during construction to minimise runoff velocities.	To prevent water pollution
6	There shall be no interfering with, bridging, piping, draining, or culverting of any watercourse, its banks or bankside vegetation to facilitate this development without the prior approval of the Planning Authority.	To safeguard the amenities, prevent pollution and/or erosion.
7	The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for	To safeguard the amenities of the area.

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	the development, including hours of working, noise, dust and water management measures, and off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste.	
8	<p>A wastewater treatment plant shall be provided at the location indicated in plans and particulars which accompanied the application, capable of producing an effluent quality as prescribed by the Environmental Protection Agency.</p> <p>This wastewater treatment plant shall be designed, constructed and operated as to ensure that it avoids causing nuisance through odours or noise.</p>	In the interests of orderly development.
9	Storm water and/or pumping station overflows shall comply with standards as set out in Procedures and Criteria in Relation to Storm Water Overflows (DoE,1995) and any other guidance as may be specified by the competent authority. Discharges from storm water overflows shall not cause environmental pollution	To limit water pollution.
10	Any cutting of trees, hedgerows and vegetation should only be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season. The Bird breeding season takes place between March 1st and August 31st.	To minimise risks to breeding birds.
11	Construction activities shall be carried out in accordance with good practise as set out in CIRIA Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practise.	To ensure no surface water impacts on the receiving environment.
12	<p>Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit for agreement a Final Construction and Environmental Management plan (CEMP) which shall be prepared prior to the commencement of any construction works onsite.</p> <p>The plan shall be prepared having regard to the outline CEMP and NIS submitted with the planning</p>	To ensure there will be no environmental impacts on the surrounding area during the construction phase of development.

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	<p>application and shall be in accordance with (CIRIA Guidance No C532 - Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites) and shall incorporate details of all other ecological mitigation measures as set out in the planning documents.</p> <p>It shall include programmes for environmental and ecological monitoring and supervision, as appropriate to the site. A suitably qualified and experienced person shall be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the CEMP including environmental protection measures.</p> <p>A copy of the CEMP will be kept on site and will be available for inspection during the construction phase.</p>	
13	<p>A pre-construction survey for otter shall be completed by a suitably qualified specialist to establish whether otter is using the site, and to identify and implement measures to ensure that active breeding sites or resting places of this protected species is not disturbed. In the event that breeding sites or resting places for otter are identified, the developers will be required to contact the National Parks and Wildlife Service to determine whether a (Section 23 (5)(d) Wildlife Act derogation license is required to allow the works to proceed. Where a license is required, works may only proceed following the obtainment of such a license from NPWS and in accordance with any conditions imposed by the license.</p>	<p>In the interest of ensuring the protection of a protected mammalian species.</p>
14	<p>All works shall be implemented in accordance with Invasive species management plan submitted to the Planning Authority on the 23/03/2023. It shall be the responsibility of the clerk of works and/or site supervisor to ensure the</p>	<p>To prevent the spread of alien invasive species.</p>

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	implementation of the measures detailed within the plan and the monitoring of the same.	
15	All works shall be implemented in accordance with mitigation measures specified in the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) received by the Planning Authority on the 10/02/2023 and as updated by conditions of planning herein.	To protect European Designated Site(s).
16	Landscaping of this site shall be carried out in accordance with the [landscaping Mitigation Plan received by the Planning Authority on 10/02/2023. All landscape planting shall be completed within 2-3years of the granting of permission for this development. Any trees that die or are removed within the lifetime of the proposal shall be replaced in the first planting season thereafter.	To protect biodiversity.
17	At least one month before commencing development or at the discretion of the Planning Authority within such further period or periods of time as it may nominate in writing, the developer shall pay a special contribution of €12600.00 to Cork County Council, updated monthly in accordance with the Consumer Price Index from the date of grant of permission to the date of payment, in respect of specific exceptional costs not covered in the Council's General Contributions Scheme, in respect of works proposed to be carried out, for the provision of Road resurfacing The payment of the said contribution shall be subject to the following: : - (a) where the works in question— (i) are not commenced within 5 years of the date of payment of the contribution (or final instalment if paid by phased payment), (ii) have commenced but have not been completed within 7 years of the date of payment of the contribution (or final instalment if paid by phased payment), or (iii) where the	It is considered appropriate that the developer should contribute towards these specific exceptional costs, for works which will benefit the proposed development.

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	<p>Council has decided not to proceed with the proposed works or part thereof, the contribution shall, subject to paragraph (b) below, be refunded to the applicant together with any interest which may have accrued over the period while held by the Council. (b) Where under sub-paragraphs (ii) or (iii) of paragraph (a) above, any local authority has incurred expenditure within the required period in respect of a proportion of the works proposed to be carried out, any refund shall be in proportion to those proposed works which have not been carried out. (c) payment of interest at the prevailing interest rate payable by the Council's Treasurer on the Council's General Account on the contribution or any instalments thereof that have been paid, so long and in so far as it is or they are retained unexpended by the Council.</p>	
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Carol Stack

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28/03/2023

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