

## Lough Bracken Amenity Development

**Re: Part 8 Planning Application (PT8 MH 187) Cover Letter for the above proposed development**

**Description:** In accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000- 2022 (Part XI) and Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2024 (Part 8), Meath County Council proposes to undertake the following development in the Townland of Lough Bracken, Drumconrath, County Meath. The proposed development will consist of:

- **Angling Stands** - To improve the usability and sustainability of Lough bracken for anglers
- **Walking Tracks** - Walking tracks have been designed based on the multifaceted use of the lake circulation patterns which allow for the management of recreational users, anglers, families and people of all abilities. All walking track loops are to be clearly mapped at the car park showing site amenities along each route. Some forestry trees will be removed in some areas to facilitate woodland boardwalks and trails to be created, and this will also provide space and opportunities for micro sites and ecological enhancement works.
- **Bird Hides** - Bird hides are proposed along the lake's western shore approximately 300 m from the car park. This will be an all-access facility.
- **Fencing** - Treated posts and rail fences are to be constructed along the lake's southern and eastern shoreline. These will be placed at a contour at least 600 cm above the high-water level of the lake.
- **Picnic and Amenity Areas** - Adjacent to the existing car park, the area of unused amenity grassland is proposed as a picnic area with a toilet and changing room facility. Proposed is a universal access compost toilet. The toilet block could be fitted with a solar panel roof to provide hot water for hand washing and the block will be connected by boardwalk to the rest of the universal access areas. A series of interlinking picnic areas are to be created within the amenity area beside the car park.
- **Playground** - The current amenity grassland will also provide space for a universal access children's playground. Nature-based play structures will include slides, swings and a climbable castle structure.
- **Carpark, Cycling and Signage** - The car park is approximately 0.1 hectares of tarmac with kerbing surrounding the edges. The western edge of the car park is bounded by a small area of amenity grassland that appears to be unmanaged. This is fringed to the west by semi-mature and mature trees. The car park was seen to be in good condition overall. The surface is largely intact and suitable for use. It is proposed that a picnic / resting furniture is installed adjacent to the car park.

The facilities should include a secure bicycle-parking rack. Signage is proposed to be installed to inform a range of visitors at Lough Bracken. A key component of the signage is environmental information. This should highlight the importance of clean water at Lough Bracken and the lake's significance for water supply.

- **Tree Planting** - Clearance of non-native commercial conifers around the car park and around the lake's eastern shoreline will provide opportunities for ecological enhancement, particularly tree planting.

- **Site Access** - improvement of existing site access and junction between the LT34042 access lane and local road L34040 (Nobber Road).

The proposed development has been subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2022. In accordance with Article 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2024, Meath County Council has concluded from a preliminary examination under Article 120(1)(b)(i), that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

The aim of the Proposed Development is to improve the function of the site as an amenity whilst also serving to improve, maintain and protect water quality conditions of the lake itself.