



CONSULTANTS IN ENGINEERING,
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE &
PLANNING

PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT WORKS AT LOUGH BRACKEN CO. MEATH

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Prepared for:
Meath County Council



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

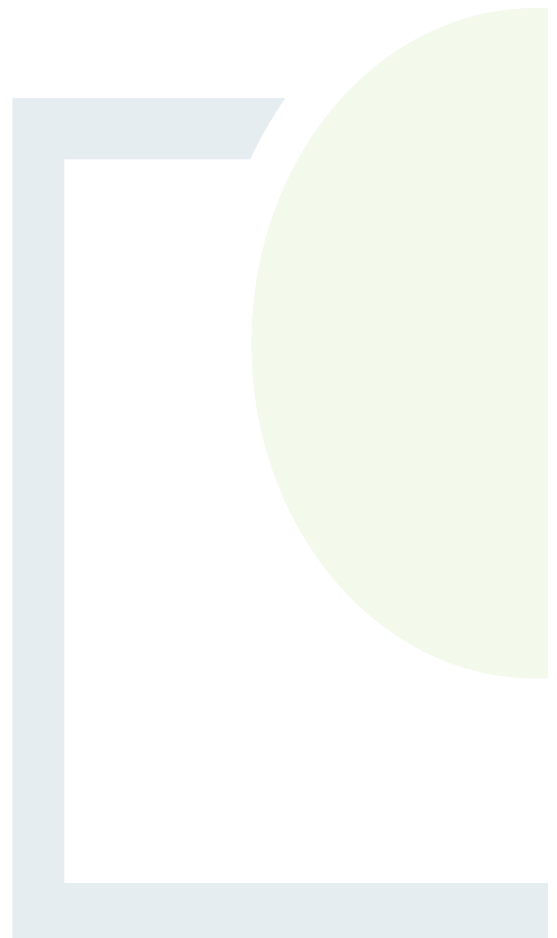
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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

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Abstract: Fehily Timoney and Company is pleased to submit this EIA Screening Report to Meath County Council for the Proposed Enhancement Work at Lough Bracken, Co. Meath.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of projects is a key instrument of European Union environmental policy. It is currently governed by the terms of European Union Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private Projects on the environment (EIA Directive). The relevant regulations transposing this Directive are referenced within this report. The EIA Directive requires that public and private projects that are likely to have significant effects on the environment be made subject to an assessment prior to grant of planning permission referred to as Development Consent. Before Development Consent can be granted, an EIA is required if a project is likely to impact significantly upon the environment.

Under Irish legislation transposing the Directive, there are four instances in which the need for an EIA can arise: specified project types for which an EIA is mandatory, sub-threshold developments where the planning authority considers it would have likely significant effects on the environment, the development is a change or an extension to an existing EIA project or that the development is integral to an EIA project. The Screening Stage determines if a projects effect on the environment is likely to be significant, that is, if it meets one of the four criteria above. If an EIA is required, the planning authority carries out the EIA. The applicant prepares an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) to facilitate the assessment.

This is the Screening Report for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Proposed Enhancement Works at Lough Bracken, Co. Meath on behalf of Meath County Council (MCC).

This report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance:

- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening, (European Commission, 2017)
- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Environmental Protection Agency, 2022)
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018)

The following reports informed the preparation of this report:

- Lough Bracken Enhancement Feasibility Study and Landscape Master Plan (Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants 2022)
- Appropriate Assessment Screening Report of Lough Bracken Enhancement Feasibility Study and Landscape Master Plan (Forest, Environmental Research and Services Ltd. (FERS) 2022)
- Archaeological Impact Assessment of a site at Lough Bracken, Co. Meath (Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit, 2023)
- Junction Options Assessment (Fehily Timoney and Company, 2024)



1.2 Overview of the Proposed Development

MCC are seeking planning permission for works associated with the enhancement of the existing recreational area at Lough Bracken, Co. Meath. Lough Bracken is located c. 2 km south-west of the village of Drumconrath in north Co. Meath.

Currently, the facilities include angling stands, a car park and a boardwalk, with angling as one of the main activities carried out at Lough Bracken. MCC propose to improve the function of Lough Bracken as a public amenity and to provide recreational space for new amenity features, whilst also serving to improve, maintain and protect water quality conditions of the lake itself (hereafter referred to as the "Proposed Development").

The site of the Proposed Development is owned by both private landowners and the State (Coillte). MCC currently have no ownership of any of the lands included within the Proposed Development. Refer to Section 2 of this report for full details on the Proposed Development.

1.3 Report Structure

The structure of this EIA Screening Report is as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Description of the Existing Site
- Section 3: Project Description
- Section 4: EIA Screening
- Section 5: Summary

1.4 Relevant Experience and Expertise of Assessor

Eoin O'Connor of Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) was responsible for completing the EIA Screening Report. Eoin is an Environmental Scientist working as part of the Waste and Circular Economy group in FT. Eoin holds an BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science and Health from Dublin City University (DCU) and a MSc in Environmental Technology from University College Dublin (UCD). Eoin is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Wastes Management (CIWM). Eoin has over seven years' experience working in the area of environmental assessment / management.

Eoin is experienced in preparing, project managing and coordinating planning applications and contributing to Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIARs) and environmental assessment. He also has a vast amount of experience developing Environmental Management Plans and Systems, carrying out Environmental Auditing, licensing (IED/IPC/Waste), environmental compliance and environmental monitoring.

Eoin has a wide and thorough understanding of the various environmental factors that need to be considered during the EIA process and has an in-depth understanding of the legislation and up-to-date case law governing EIA practice in Ireland and the EU. Eoin has an in-depth understanding of every stage of the EIA process from the Screening Stage to the Scoping Stage, up to the EIAR completion stage.



2. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING SITE

2.1 Introduction

Lough Bracken is located c. 2 km south-west of Drumconrath village in the townland of Loughbracken, Co. Meath. The nearest major town is Ardee located c. 8 km to the west, and the towns of Dundalk and Drogheda are located c. 25 km to the north-east and south-east respectively.

The immediate surroundings consist of agricultural pastureland, commercial forest (owned and managed by Coillte) and semi-natural woodland. One-off and linear housing and farmsteads surround Lough Bracken in all cardinal directions. The nearest sensitive receptor to the site is a one-off house situated c. 90 m north-east of the site.

Lough Bracken is accessed via a dedicated, single lane access track (LT34042), off a local road L34040 (Nobber Road). At the entrance to Lough Bracken there is a wide junction and a lay-by area at the end of the access road to facilitate the passing of vehicles. A site location map is provided in Figure 2-1.

The Lough Bracken Enhancement Feasibility Study and Landscape Master Plan (2022), prepared by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (2022) prepared by FERS Ltd., on behalf of MCC, were used in the preparation of this Screening Report. These reports include a description of the baseline habitats, an amenities survey, stakeholder engagement and an enhancement master plan which informs the planning application to which this Screening Report relates. The Master Plan seeks to enhance the habitats, the recreational amenity value and water quality.

2.2 Existing Uses and Amenities

Currently, the site is partially developed for amenity use and includes a dedicated access lane, tarmac surface and kerbed car park, angling stands and discrete sections of wooden walkways and stone paths. There are 10 no. angling stands located along the lakeshore of which 3 no. are formal and 7 no. are informal consisting of cleared bank vegetation and constructed gabion walls at points along the shoreline. The three formal angling stands were previously installed by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI).

Existing access around the lake shoreline is primarily provided via undefined mud paths and tracks. The entire lake is looped by a 1 km walking track, and track conditions and surfaces vary significantly along its extent. Along one section, there are two trail options, via Coillte woodland path or along the lake edge. Some sections of the trail are informal or muddy and it is not a universal access loop.

Lough Bracken is currently used for recreational amenity and as a drinking water resource. An enclosed abstraction facility is located at the southern shore of the lake. It serves the Drumconrath Water Treatment Plant (WTP) which produces c. 600 m³/day of water serving c. 1200 people on the Drumconrath public water supply (PWS). This water is supplied through a lake abstraction on two groundwater wells, which were constructed in 2001.

2.3 Existing Environmental Features

The Killadden stream flows into and out of Lough Bracken and is a tributary of the River Dee. A land drain at the most northern tip of the lake is the point of entry and the water discharges via a land drain and stream, which flows in a south-easterly direction, eventually meeting the River Dee c. 1.5 km south-east of the lake.



Another stream (EPA Name: Drumminshin) is located along the western boundary of the site (c. 0.27 km west of Lough Bracken) and flows adjacent to Coillte forest lands. This stream flows in a southerly direction eventually meeting the River Dee.

Lough Bracken is surrounded by a number of semi-natural habitats that form part of the lake's amenity area. The surrounding landscape and topography is dominated by drumlins.

The western portion of the lake shore is surrounded by a small fringe of deciduous woodland vegetation that grades into conifer plantation varying in ages from 10 – 25 years old. This area is commercial forestry, however no commercial tree felling activity has taken place in recent years and there is no intention for it to continue.

A protected archaeological feature in the form of a motte and bailey site (ME006-027----) is located within the Proposed Development boundary, located c. 170 m west of western shore of Lough Bracken. A 100 m Zone of Archaeological Notification applies to this recorded monument. Five additional monuments are also located in the immediate environs of the site, comprising an additional castle – motte (ME006-026----) to the far west of the lake, a barrow – ring barrow (ME006-022----) to the northeast, and a graveyard (ME006-028001-) with an associated church (ME006-028- ----) and font (ME006-028002) to the southeast.

2.4 Existing Environmental Pressures

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) water quality status for Lough Bracken is 'Moderate' for the 2016-2021 monitoring period and is classified as 'At Risk' for not meeting the 2027 WFD objectives (EPA, 2024). The WFD water quality status for the River Dee is 'Poor' during the same period and also 'At Risk'.

As noted in the Enhancement Feasibility Study and Landscape Master Plan (Flynn Furney, 2022), Lough Bracken water quality issues are notably from phosphate enrichment, eutrophication and water abstraction for the village of Drumconrath. Nutrient enrichment an ongoing issue that is contributing to the reduction in ecological status, with other notable effects such as spikes in Trihalomethanes (THM), fluoride and Colony Count, meaning that Boil Notices are sometimes put into effect by Uisce Éireann (Irish Water). The main pressures are likely coming from agricultural runoff, which is exacerbated by the poorly draining soils of the area. The issue of sedimentation from land drainage and bank erosion from livestock access have also been identified as issues.

In the most recent River Basin Management Plan "The Water Action Plan: A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027" (DHLGH 2024), Lough Bracken is listed as an Area for Action (AFA) for "Local Authority restoration", due to "struggles with poor raw water quality; algal growth in lake resulting in THMs" (DHLGH 2024).

Conifer plantations close to the water have historically caused significant impacts to water quality within the lake. Drains were created during planting, flowing towards the lake. As noted above, this major release of sediments led to significant water quality issues including blue-green algal outbreaks. It is not believed that these trees are now having as significant an impact on water quality as in the recent past. However, the acidic nature of pine needles and soil under pine trees is likely to have at least localised impacts to the inherently alkaline waters of the lake (Flynn Furney, 2022).

Littering and fly tipping are impacting the lake as an amenity, and the car park area has littering problems. There is also no public toilet facility at the lake.

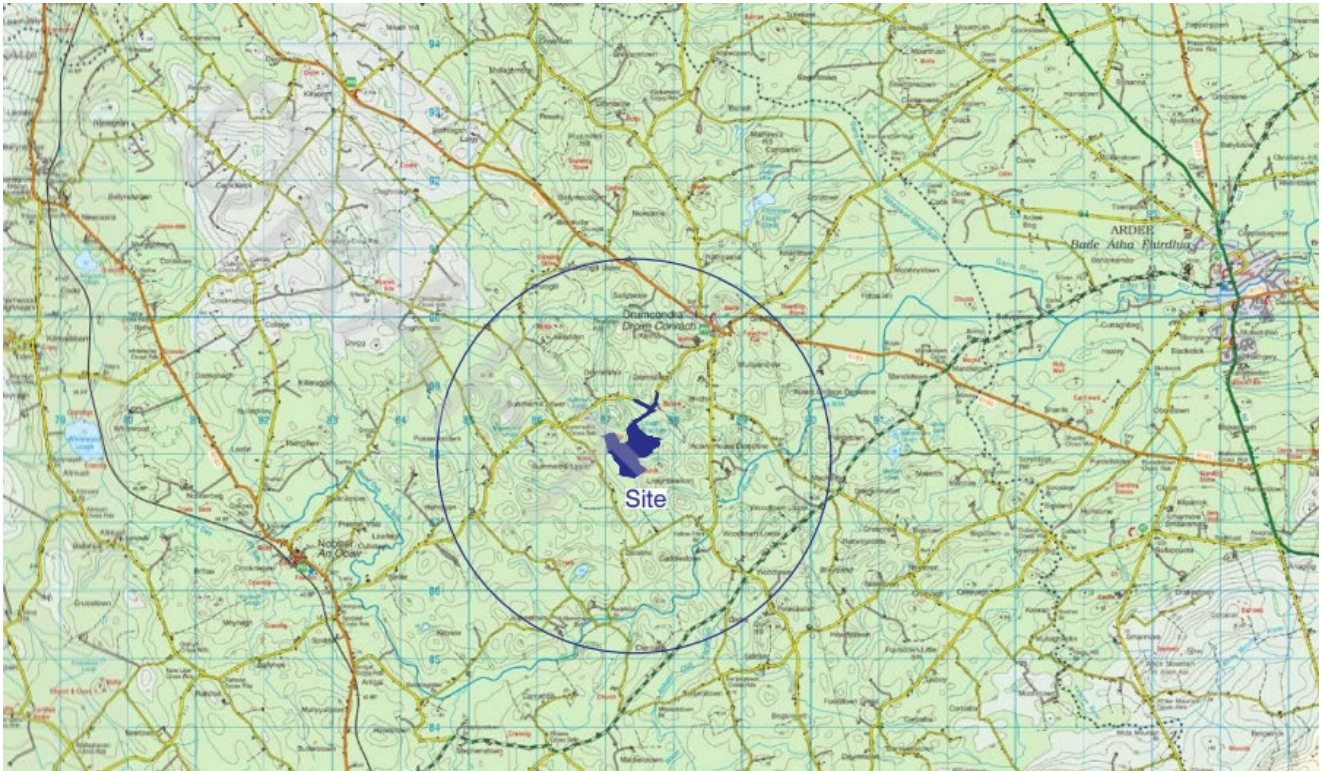


Figure 2-1: Site Location Map



3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 Introduction

The Proposed Development area is 26 ha (54 acres) and includes Lough Bracken, adjacent forestry land and the access road. Description of the Proposed Development

As noted, Lough Bracken is located 2 km south-west of the village of Drumconrath in north Co. Meath. The Proposed Development will seek to improve the usability and sustainability of the existing recreational areas at Lough Bracken. The Proposed Development will improve the function of the lake for all users and provide a recreational space with new amenities, while maintaining and protecting the water quality of the lake.

The Proposed Development will include the following elements:

- **Angling Stands** - To improve the usability and sustainability of Lough Bracken for anglers, the total number and distribution of angling stands is to be increased to eight around the lake shoreline. The proposed works will allow the opportunity for the inclusion of more functional and sustainable angling stands.
- **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 will comprise:

- 3 no. new angling stands in addition to the existing 3 no. formal angling stands to improve the angling facilities at the lake
- improvement of existing walking trails and construct new trails for universal access
- bird hides for birdwatching
- a fence to separate livestock from the lake to mitigate waste pollution
- a picnic area
- a changing room and toilet facility
- provide a universal access playground
- replacement of non-native trees
- improvement of the site access

The Proposed Development is likely to be implemented in a number of phases. The priority works / enhancement is to improve access and walking trails around the lake and through woodland to ensure suitable and safe access for visitors, prior to any other facilities being installed or constructed.

The following Drawings have been submitted as part of the planning application:

- P23-013-0100-0001 1:2500 Site Location Map
- P23-013-0100-0002 1:2500 Site Ownership
- P23-013-0100-0003 Existing Site Layout Plan Sheet 1 of 3
- P23-013-0100-0004 Existing Site Layout Plan Sheet 2 of 3
- P23-013-0100-0005 Existing Site Layout Plan Sheet 3 of 3
- P23-013-0100-0006 Proposed Site Layout Plan Sheet 1 of 3
- P23-013-0100-0007 Proposed Site Layout Plan Sheet 2 of 3
- P23-013-0100-0008 Proposed Site Layout Plan Sheet 3 of 3
- P23-013-0400-0001 Proposed Boardwalk without Railing
- P23-013-0400-0002 Proposed Boardwalk with Railing
- P23-013-0400-0003 Proposed Angling Stand
- P23-013-0400-0004 Proposed Jetty
- P23-013-0400-0005 Universal Access WC Facilities
- P23-013-0400-0006 Proposed Bird Hide
- P23-013-0400-0007 Proposed Bird Hide
- P23-013-0400-0007 Proposed Changing Cabin



- P23-013-0400-0007 Proposed Fencing
- P23-013-0101-0001 Junction Visibility Analysis: Extents of Existing Sight Distance
- P23-013-0101-0002 Junction Visibility Analysis: Sight Distance Requirement for an 85km/h design speed
- P23-013-0101-0003 Junction Visibility Analysis: Sight Distance Requirement for a 70km/h design speed
- P23-013-0101-0004 Proposed Upgrade Measures 85km/h design speed
- P23-013-0101-0005 Proposed Upgrade Measures 70km/h design speed
- P23-013-0101-0006 Proposed Upgrade Measures No Land Acquisition
- P23-013-0101-0007 Proposed Layout of Lay-Bys



4. EIA SCREENING

4.1 Introduction

Before Development Consent can be given to the Proposed Enhancement Works at Lough Bracken, Co. Meath, there is a requirement to determine if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Where significant effects are likely, the planning authority is required to carry out an environmental impact assessment (EIA). There is legislation and guidance which defines projects where significant effects are deemed likely due to the nature of the project and in these cases, a mandatory EIA is required.

In other instances, the planning authority must determine through a screening process whether a proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment and whether an EIA is required.

4.2 EIA Project Types

The European Union (EU) Directive 2014/52/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, requires member states to ensure that a competent authority carries out an assessment of the environmental impacts of certain types of projects, as listed in the Directive.

The EIA Directive requires that, *“in order to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, screening procedures and EIA assessments should take account of the impact of the whole project in question, including where relevant, its subsurface and underground, during the construction, operational and, where relevant demolition phases”*.

The requirement for the EIA of various types of development are transposed into Irish legislation under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2001-2024 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001).

Schedule 5, Part 1 of the 'Planning Regulations' includes a list of projects which are subject to EIA based on their type. Part 2 of the same schedule includes a list of projects which by reason of scale also fall into the EIA category. Schedule 5 also includes a section on extensions or changes to developments for example, any change or extension to existing projects which would result in the development being of a class listed in Schedule 5 or result in an increase in size greater than 25% or 50% of the appropriate thresholds would fall into Schedule 5 and thus require an EIA. These types of EIA are termed 'Mandatory' EIA.

The EIA criteria above are quite clear and prescriptive, however in addition to the above Schedule 5 also includes a section relating to 'Sub-threshold' (or discretionary) EIA. This is where any project listed in Schedule 5 Part 2 which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in respect of the relevant class of development should be subject to EIA where the project would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning Regulations.

4.3 Mandatory EIA Screening

The Proposed Development do not fall into a class of development set out in Schedule 5, Part 1 of the Planning Regulations (S.I. No. 600 of 2001).



Schedule 5, Part 2 (Paragraphs 1 - 14) does not include any class of development directly and specifically relevant to the Proposed Development at Lough Bracken. The Proposed Development will not exceed any quality, area or limits specified in Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2001-2024, of the relevant classes of development so on this basis it can be concluded therefore that a 'Mandatory' EIA is not required.

Class 15 states:

'Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.' See section 4.4 Sub-Threshold Screening.

4.4 Sub-Threshold EIA Screening

In the circumstances, although a 'Mandatory' EIA is not triggered for the Proposed Development, an assessment of the likelihood of the proposed works having a significant effect on the environment having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 will be undertaken. If it is likely that the project will have a significant effect on the environment having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule, a 'Sub-threshold' EIA will be required.

The 2022 EPA Guidelines on Information to be contained in an Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA, 2022) notes that even where a proposed project is not a type that is included in the statutory EIA project list, the determination of 'Sub-threshold' EIA Screening is an increasingly complex issue and should not be decided on without full consideration of the 2014 EIA Directives 'wide scope and broad purpose', as set out in the EU Documents of Interpretation of definitions of project categories of Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive 2008.

This section of this report screens the Proposed Development in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 7 and Annex III of the EIA Directive. This EIA Screening considers the 'whole project' including all secondary ancillary / subsidiary elements essential to the construction and maintenance of the remediation works.

Annex III of the EIA Directive details the criteria to be used to determine whether a project should be subject to EIA and Schedule 7A of the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, implements this Directive in Ireland.

The requirements are as follows:

1. *Characteristics of the proposed development*

The characteristics of proposed development, in particular:

- a) *The size and design of the whole of the proposed development,*
- b) *Cumulation with other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment,*
- c) *The nature of any associated demolition works,*
- d) *The use of natural resources in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity,*
- e) *The production of waste,*
- f) *Pollution and nuisances,*



- g) The risk of major accidents and / or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge, and*
- h) The risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).*

2. Location of proposed development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development, having regard to:

- a) The existing and approved land use,*
- b) The relative abundance, quality and regeneration capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,*
- c) The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following area:*
 - i. Wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths,*
 - ii. Coastal zones and marine environment,*
 - iii. Mountain and forest area,*
 - iv. Nature reserves and parks,*
 - v. Areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive,*
 - vi. Areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure,*
 - vii. Densely populated areas*
 - viii. Landscapes and sites of historical, cultural, or archaeological significance.*

3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts

The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in the definition of 'environmental impact assessment report', taking into account:

- a) The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),*
- b) The nature of the impact,*
- c) The transboundary nature of the impact,*
- d) The intensity and complexity of the impact,*
- e) The probability of the impact,*
- f) The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,*
- g) The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects, and*
- h) The possibility of effectively reducing the impact.*

This assessment utilises the Screening Checklist as detailed in the guidelines (European Commission, 2017) to screen the Proposed Development with regard to EIA requirements and this checklist encompasses the details required under Annex III of the EIA Directive and in Schedule 7A of the 2018 EIA Regulations, refer to Table 4.1. Any likely significant effects are then assessed with regard to their characteristics.



The checklist of criteria for evaluating the significance of environmental impacts in the guidelines (European Commission, 2017) was used when evaluating the significance of any impacts set out in Table 4.1.

Under the Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2023 (S.I. No. 383 of 2023), ‘projects for the restructuring of rural land holdings’ were reinserted into Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2001 -2024, to allow planning authorities to screen projects for the restructuring of rural land holdings, not undertaken as an agricultural activity, for EIA. Restructuring of rural land holdings could include removal of field boundaries or recontouring a field. S.I. No. 383 of 2023 states:

“(a) Projects for the restructuring of rural land holdings, undertaken as part of a wider proposed development, and not as an agricultural activity that must comply with the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment)(Agriculture) Regulations 2011, where the length of field boundary to be removed is above 4 kilometres, or where re-contouring is above 5 hectares, or where the area of lands to be restructured by removal of field boundaries is above 50 hectares.”

This threshold is included in Table 4.2.



Table 4.1: EIA Screening Checklist

Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>1. Will construction, operation, decommissioning, or demolition works of the Project involve actions that will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc.)?</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development will be consistent with the existing land use around Lough Bracken, which pertains to recreational and amenity use.</p> <p>During in the construction phase there is the potential for release of sediment and / or surface water run-off to land and / or waterbodies, due to the nature of the construction works and the close proximity to the lake.</p> <p>The operational phase will result in a positive benefit to the local community and users of Lough Bracken with improved recreational amenities, and universal access.</p>	<p>No. The construction of the Proposed Development will not result in a significant negative effect on the environment.</p> <p>During construction, water will not be abstracted from rivers / lakes or streams. Water will not be pumped directly into Lough Bracken or rivers / streams or surface water drains.</p> <p>A CEMP will be prepared and will include an emergency response procedure for any leaks and spills that may occur during the construction phase. Best practice measures to avoid or manage the risk of pollutants entering nearby watercourses, land or ground waterbodies.</p> <p>Construction methods will be in line with good practice methods as per CIRIA - Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice.</p> <p>During operations, the Proposed Development will include an increase the number of fishing stands at the lake, which reduce the risk of erosion and wear at the banks and will also increase water safety.</p>
<p>2. Will construction or the operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or are in short supply?</p>	<p>Yes. The construction of the Proposed Development will require the use of non-renewable resources e.g., fuel for construction vehicles, building materials etc.</p>	<p>No. The construction of the Proposed Development will not result in a significant negative effect on natural resources.</p> <p>The quantity of natural resources that will be used for the construction phase will be slight, due to the nature of the upgrading works of the amenities around the lake.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>3. Will the Project involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health, to the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?</p>	<p>Yes. The construction of the Proposed Development will involve the use, storage, transport and handling of substances and materials such as cement and concrete, etc. that could be harmful to human health and / or to the environment.</p> <p>During construction, welfare facilities will be provided on site. Foul water will be collected in a temporary holding tank and will be collected by a licensed contractor.</p> <p>During operations, a new toilet facility is proposed. However, this will be designed to be a compost toilet and will therefore not require connection the mains.</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development will not result in an adverse significant effect.</p> <p>Due to the nature of the works for the improvement and upgrade of amenity facilities, it is not anticipated that significant quantities or storage, transport and handling of substances / materials will be required during either the construction and operational phases that could be harmful to human health or the environment.</p> <p>Appropriate mitigation measures will be in place during the construction phase, ensuring all potentially harmful substances are correctly and safely stored and handled to mitigate the potential risk of release to the environment. Construction works will be undertaken in accordance with Health and Safety standards and legislation and regulations.</p>
<p>4. Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?</p>	<p>Yes. There will be small amounts of construction and demolition related materials generated during the construction phase.</p> <p>Some existing materials and structures may be removed from site if they are deemed to be no longer safe and / or fit for purpose e.g. existing angling stands, boardwalk etc.</p> <p>All other incidental construction related waste material will be managed at appropriately authorised waste management facilities.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that solid waste quantities will be produced during the operational phase.</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development will not result in a significant effect. It is anticipated the quantity of solid waste during construction will be slight, due to the nature of the upgrade works.</p> <p>Waste and material management during construction will be considered in the CEMP to be prepared by the contractor.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>5. Will the Project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air or lead to exceeding Ambient Air Quality standards in Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC?</p>	<p>No. The primary pollutants of concern relating to the Proposed Development are dust emissions associated with works during the construction phase.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will not cause any dust nuisance exceedances given the very limited scale of the works and the lack of nearby sensitive receptors.</p> <p>Emissions relating to the operational phase, will be in line with existing operating conditions, for cars / vehicles that visit and use the facilities at Lough Bracken.</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development will not result in any significant negative effect on air quality.</p> <p>The construction phase will be short-term and imperceptible, given the magnitude of construction works.</p> <p>During operations, there will be no significant adverse effects as a result of the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>6. Will the Project cause noise and vibration or the releasing of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?</p>	<p>Yes. The Proposed Development will give rise to noise emissions during the construction phase.</p> <p>There will be potential for light emissions during the construction phase, to facilitate the works.</p> <p>During operations, there will be no operational noise emissions associated with the Proposed Development.</p>	<p>No. During the construction phase noise emissions will be slight and temporary and is not anticipated that the EPA prescribed noise limits will be exceeded.</p> <p>A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be prepared by the contractor.</p>
<p>7. Will the Project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?</p>	<p>Yes. The Proposed Development is located at Lough Bracken.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located within the River Dee sub-catchment (Dee_SC_020).</p>	<p>No. During the construction phase, water will not be abstracted from rivers / lakes or streams. Water will not be pumped directly into Lough Bracken or rivers / streams or surface water drains.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
	<p>The WFD water quality status for Lough Bracken is 'Moderate' for the 2016-2021 monitoring period and is classified as 'At Risk' for not meeting the 2027 WFD objectives (EPA, 2024). The WFD water quality status for the River Dee is 'Poor' during the same period and also 'At Risk'.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located within the Ardee ground waterbody and its 2016-2021 WFD status is 'Good'. This ground waterbody risk status is 'Not at Risk' to meet the 2027 WFD objectives.</p> <p>During in the construction phase there is the potential for release of sediment and / or surface water run-off to land and / or waterbodies, due to the nature of the construction works and the close proximity to the lake.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is not designated as a flood risk zone under the CFRAM programme and this type of development is compatible with areas prone to flooding. The Proposed Development is classified as a "Water Compatible Development".</p> <p>The operational phase of the Proposed Development will not result in any environmental contamination. Run-off from the car park will be managed over the edge as per existing.</p>	<p>A CEMP will be prepared and will include an emergency response procedure for any leaks and spills that may occur during the construction phase, as well as best practice measures to avoid or manage the risk of pollutants entering nearby watercourses, land or ground waterbodies. However, the potential for accidents or incidents causing oil and chemical spillages is considered Slight.</p> <p>Construction methods will be in line with good practice methods as per CIRIA - Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice.</p> <p>During the operational phase, run-off from the car park will be over the edge as per existing.</p> <p>Fencing to the south of lake will prevent livestock from accessing the lake and causing potential contamination of the water supply.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>8. Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project that could affect human health or the environment?</p>	<p>Yes. Construction activities have the potential to cause a risk to human health and safety (H&S) and the environment.</p> <p>During operations, the amenity facilities at Lough Bracken have the potential cause a risk to human health and safety (H&S), due to the proximity to open water.</p> <p>The Proposed Development works aim to improve the overall views and character of the site and ensure safe access for visitors to utilise the site.</p>	<p>No. Construction works will be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in a CEMP, which will mitigate any potential negative effects to the environment and human health.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will be constructed in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (as amended) and the requirements of the Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (as amended) and relevant Health and Safety legislation.</p> <p>During operations, the Proposed Development will include an increase the number of fishing stands at the lake, which reduce the risk of erosion and wear at the banks and will also increase water safety.</p> <p>During operations, a child safe swimming area is proposed for the western shoreline. This floating pier will create an enclosure / edge at shallow depths to allow children ease of access and to ensure it is safe. Buoys will be installed in the water to guide swimmers along the safest route around the lake. Jetty ladders will be placed at frequent intervals to facilitate all swimming abilities.</p> <p>The bathing areas will adhere to Water Safety Ireland guidelines.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>9. Will the Project result in environmentally related social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?</p>	<p>Yes. During the construction phase, construction workers will travel to the site for the works. Levels of employment will vary over the construction period. This will result in an Imperceptible increase in traffic volumes as a result of employees travelling to and from the site.</p> <p>However, due to the nature and scale of the works, the volume of workers will be Not Significant.</p> <p>The operational phase will result in a positive benefit to the local community and users of Lough Bracken with improved recreational amenities, and universal access.</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development will not have a significant impact on demography or employment due to its scale and nature.</p> <p>During the operational phase, the Proposed Development will have a positive, beneficial and long-term effect.</p>
<p>10. Are there any other factors that should be considered such as consequential development which could lead to environmental impacts or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development will not lead to any additional consequential development.</p> <p>A review of proposed and existing planning applications in the area largely relate to small scale commercial and agricultural and developments.</p> <p>The only relevant development identified was a development proposed by Uisce Eireann regarding a public drinking water supply which includes upgrades to the existing WTP (water supply) at Lough Bracken.</p> <p>The Proposed Development planning boundary includes the existing WTP and a portion of the immediately adjacent grassland and existing access road through Coillte land.</p>	<p>No significant effects from consequential development or cumulative effects are anticipated.</p> <p>During construction appropriate environmental and pollution control measures will be implemented to prevent any contamination of Lough Bracken that would adversely affect the quality of the drinking water supply.</p> <p>However, any proposed and existing planning applications would have gone through the planning process and would, like the Proposed Development, implement standard and best practice mitigation measures to manage potential effects.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>11. Is the Project located within or close to any areas which are protected under international, EU or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>Yes. There is one European site within 15 km of the Proposed Development and two European sites hydrologically connected to the site, beyond 15 km. There are 12 proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within 15 km.</p> <p>There is one Special Protection Area (SPA) within 15 km of Lough Bracken; Stabannan - Braganstown SPA (004091).</p> <p>The Killadden watercourse, which flows into and out of Lough Bracken is a tributary of the River Dee.</p> <p>Water from the River Dee eventually discharges to Dundalk Bay, the primary constituent of the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA.</p> <p>The following pNHA's are within 15 km: Mentrim Lough pNHA (001587); Corstown Loughs pNHA (000552); Ardee Cutaway Bog pNHA (001454); Ballyhoe Lough pNHA (001594); Reaghstown Marsh pNHA (001828); Lough Fea Demesne pNHA (000560); Lough Naglack pNHA (000561); Monalty Lough pNHA (001608); Louth Hall and Ardee Woods pNHA (001616); Stabannan-Braganstown pNHA (000456); Mellifont Abbey Woods pNHA (001464); Breakey Loughs pNHA (001558).</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development will include some loss of habitat and works within and around the lake.</p> <p>During the construction phase, water will not be abstracted from rivers / lakes or streams and water will not be discharged directly into the Lough Bracken, Killadden watercourse or surface water drains.</p> <p>An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening was prepared. It concluded that the Proposed Development:</p> <p><i>"(1) Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site and (2) Does not have the potential to have significant negative impacts on the Natura 2000 network."</i></p> <p>The Proposed Development will not impact any pNHA's due its proximity from these sites and mitigation measures that will be in place.</p> <p>A CEMP will be prepared and will include an emergency response procedure for any leaks and spills that may occur during the construction phase, as well as best practice measures to avoid or manage the risk of pollutants entering nearby watercourses, land or ground waterbodies.</p> <p>Construction methods will be in line with good practice methods as per CIRIA - Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
	<p>Lough Bracken is considered a marl lake as it is base-rich and poor to moderately rich in nutrients. Much of the lake is surrounded by a reed fringe composed of stands of herbaceous vegetation that is dominated by reeds and other large grasses and sedges. Other habitats around the lake dense hedgerows and scrub, amenity grassland, conifer plantations, broadleaved trees and riparian woodland.</p> <p>A historic motte and bailey site, (ME006-027----) in State Ownership, is within the Proposed Development boundary.</p> <p>Additional monuments also located in the immediate environs of the site, comprising an additional castle – motte (ME006-026----) to the far west of the lake, a barrow – ring barrow (ME006-022----) to the northeast, and a graveyard (ME006-028001-) with an associated church (ME006-028- ---) and font (ME006-028002) to the southeast.</p>	<p>An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) (ACS, 2023) was completed in 2023. It concluded that: <i>"that while the site contains no Protected Structures nor Wrecks, it does contain National Monument in State Ownership No. 543, represented by a motte and bailey (ME006-027----). Furthermore, the lake shore and the area in proximity of the monument has some potential for archaeologically significant remains to be uncovered. It is recommended that the areas of the shoreline to be affected by proposed works are subject to a wade survey with the use of metal detector and at a minimum, monitoring is carried out of any tree felling and ground disturbances in proximity to National Monument No. 543.</i></p> <p><i>It is recommended the survey is carried out prior to works commencing. Monitoring in proximity to the National Monument will require Ministerial Consent to be obtained by a licence-eligible archaeologist. Should archaeological features be exposed during monitoring, a full impact statement should be prepared in consultation with the National Monuments Service".</i></p>
<p>12. Are there any other areas on or around the location that are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g., wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, that could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>Yes. Lough Bracken is considered a marl lake as it is base-rich and poor to moderately rich in nutrients. Much of the lake is surrounded by a reed fringe composed of stands of herbaceous vegetation that is dominated by reeds and other large grasses and sedges. Other habitats around the lake dense hedgerows and scrub, amenity grassland, conifer plantations, broadleaved trees and riparian woodland.</p> <p>Lough Bracken has the potential to be impacted by construction works.</p>	<p>No. Construction works will be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in a CEMP, which will mitigate any potential negative effects to the environment.</p> <p>Construction methods will be in line with good practice methods as per CIRIA - Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice.</p> <p>The Proposed Development works will seek to improve the habitat loss and degradation around the waters edge and improve water quality of the lake.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
		Fencing to the south of lake will prevent livestock from accessing the lake and causing potential contamination of the water supply.
13. Are there any areas on or around the location that are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g., for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the Project?	<p>Yes. A diverse range of habitats are present at Lough Bracken. These ranged from valuable natural habitats such as riparian woodland and marsh, semi-natural grassland areas to some highly modified habitats, like conifer plantation.</p> <p>The existing habitats on-site almost certainly support numerous species of conservation concern, including species such as Otter (Annex II Habitats Directive) and Kingfisher (Annex I Birds Directive) although breeding habitat is not present. In addition, the habitats present are likely to support populations of commuting / foraging / roosting bats of several species.</p> <p>All species of bat occurring in Ireland are listed on Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive.</p> <p>Lough Bracken is also likely to support numerous species of overwintering bird species of conservation concern.</p> <p>The lake is a valuable for coarse fishery with Bream and Roach being among the popular quarry species here.</p>	<p>No. Construction works will be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in a CEMP, which will mitigate any potential negative effects to the environment.</p> <p>Construction methods will be in line with good practice methods as per CIRIA - Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice.</p> <p>The Proposed Development works will seek to improve the habitat loss and degradation around the water's edge and improve water quality of the lake. Fencing to the south of lake will prevent livestock from accessing the lake and causing potential contamination of the water supply.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>14. Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters (or features of the marine environment) on or around the location that could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>Yes. The Proposed Development is located at Lough Bracken.</p> <p>Yes. There is a potential for impacts to groundwater, as there will be the required for minor excavation works to facilitate the angling stands. The groundwater GSI vulnerability is Moderate for contamination around the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The site is not within the vicinity of a coastal zone or a marine environment. The nearest coastal zone / marine environment is the Outer Dundalk Bay (ID: IE_NB_040_000), located over 21 km away, to the north-east.</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development will not result in any significant effects on inland, coastal, marine or underground waters (or features of the marine environment).</p> <p>Construction methods will be in line with good practice methods as per CIRIA - Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the scale and type of works, and the implementation of mitigation measures within a CEMP, there will be no risk of a pollution event impacting inland, marine or the coastal environment.</p>
<p>15. Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development is located in a rural area.</p> <p>The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the county designates the Landscape Character Type of the site location as Lowland Landscape, of 'Moderate Value' and 'Moderate Sensitivity'.</p> <p>There are no scenic views towards the existing or Proposed Development.</p> <p>A historic motte and bailey site, (ME006-027----) in State Ownership, is within the Proposed Development boundary.</p>	<p>No. Given the nature and scale of the proposed works, it is unlikely that the Proposed Development will result in any significant adverse effects on areas or features of high landscape or scenic value.</p> <p>An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) (ACS, 2023) was completed in 2023. It concluded that: <i>It is recommended that the areas of the shoreline to be affected by proposed works are subject to a wade survey with the use of metal detector and at a minimum, monitoring is carried out of any tree felling and ground disturbances in proximity to National Monument No. 543.</i></p> <p><i>It is recommended the survey is carried out prior to works commencing. Monitoring in proximity to the National Monument will require Ministerial Consent to be obtained by a licence-eligible archaeologist".</i></p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
	<p>Additional monuments also located in the immediate environs of the site, comprising an additional castle – motte (ME006-026----) to the far west of the lake, a barrow – ring barrow (ME006-022----) to the northeast, and a graveyard (ME006-028001-) with an associated church (ME006-028- ---) and font (ME006-028002) to the southeast.</p>	
<p>16. Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>Yes. Lough Bracken is c. 2 km south-west of Drumconrath village, and Ardee is located c. 8 km to the west.</p> <p>Lough Bracken is accessed via a dedicated, single lane access track (LT34042), off a local road L34040 (Nobber Road). At the entrance to Lough Bracken there is a wide junction and a lay-by area at the end of the access road to facilitate the passing of vehicles.</p> <p>The wider area surrounding the site is rural in nature with one-off and linear housing and farmsteads.</p> <p>During construction the recreational and amenity facilities at Lough Bracken will be restricted at times, depending on the nature of the works required.</p>	<p>No. Lough Bracken is currently used for recreational amenity. During construction, works will be required to facilitate the upgrade and improve the function of the lake as a public amenity will cause a slight disruption to existing users of the lake. However, this disruption will be short-term in nature.</p> <p>The operational phase will have a positive long-term effect to the visitors of Lough Bracken. The Proposed Development will improve the function of the existing amenities and provide recreational space for new amenity feature, whilst also serving to improve, maintain and protect water quality conditions.</p> <p>Fencing to the south of lake will prevent livestock from accessing the lake and causing potential contamination of the water supply.</p> <p>The operational phase of the development will not impact any surrounding facilities or routes in the location.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>17. Are there any transport routes on or around the location that are susceptible to congestion, or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>No. During construction the site will be accessed through the existing entrance to the site.</p> <p>Lough Bracken is accessed via a dedicated, single lane access track (LT34042), off a local road L34040 (Nobber Road).</p> <p>No traffic congestion or environmental problems are foreseen.</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development will not create any adverse traffic or environmental problems during either the construction or operational phases.</p> <p>The wider road network will have capacity to accommodate the slight increase in additional traffic generated during construction.</p> <p>During operations, traffic volumes are expected to be in line with current operations and will not create any significant adverse traffic effects.</p>
<p>18. Is the Project in a location in which it is likely to be highly visible to many people?</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development is located in a rural setting.</p> <p>Lough Bracken is surrounded by a number of semi-natural habitats. The western portion of the lake shore is surrounded by a small fringe of deciduous woodland vegetation.</p> <p>Due to the location and nature of the Proposed Development, it is not anticipated that the construction or operational phase will be highly visible.</p>	<p>No. There will be no significant visual effects during the construction phase due to the scale, nature and location of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Construction will be temporary in nature and the existing site will provide a natural visible boundary.</p> <p>During operations the Proposed Development will not generate any significant effects on landscape character or visual amenity and will be in line with the existing uses at the lake.</p>
<p>19. Are there any areas or features of closed or cultural importance on or around the location that could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>Yes. A historic motte and bailey site, (ME006-027----) in State Ownership, is within the Proposed Development boundary.</p> <p>It is located c. 170 m west of western shore of Lough Bracken.</p>	<p>No. Construction works will be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in a CEMP, which will mitigate any potential negative effects to the environment.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
	<p>Five additional monuments are also located in the immediate environs of the site, comprising an additional castle – motte (ME006-026----) to the far west of the lake, a barrow – ring barrow (ME006-022----) to the north-east, and a graveyard (ME006-028001-) with an associated church (ME006-028- ---) and font (ME006-028002) to the south-east.</p> <p>Over 400m to the south-west, a second motte is recorded in the adjacent townland of Summerhill Upper, situated on a ridge or drumlin.</p> <p>Loughbrackan church and graveyard is located over 730m to the southeast of Loughbrackan Fort, just off the summit of a drumlin and overlooking the lake.</p>	<p>An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) (ACS, 2023) was completed in 2023. It concluded that: <i>"that while the site contains no Protected Structures nor Wrecks, it does contain National Monument in State Ownership No. 543, represented by a motte and bailey (ME006-027----).</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, the lake shore and the area in proximity of the monument has some potential for archaeologically significant remains to be uncovered. It is recommended that the areas of the shoreline to be affected by proposed works are subject to a wade survey with the use of metal detector and at a minimum, monitoring is carried out of any tree felling and ground disturbances in proximity to National Monument No. 543.</i></p> <p><i>It is recommended the survey is carried out prior to works commencing. Monitoring in proximity to the National Monument will require Ministerial Consent to be obtained by a licence-eligible archaeologist. Should archaeological features be exposed during monitoring, a full impact statement should be prepared in consultation with the National Monuments Service".</i></p>
<p>20. Is the Project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be a loss of greenfield land?</p>	<p>Yes. The Proposed Development will include some loss of habitat and works within and around the lake.</p>	<p>No. Construction works will be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in a CEMP, which will mitigate any potential negative effects to the environment.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will seek to improve the habitat loss and degradation around the water's edge and improve water quality of the lake.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
		The works include the installation of fencing to the south of lake to prevent livestock from adjacent farmland from accessing the lake shore and causing potential contamination of the water supply.
21. Are there existing land uses within or around the location e.g., homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying that could be affected by the Project?	No. Lough Bracken is currently used for recreational amenity. The Proposed Development will be consistent with the existing land use around Lough Bracken, which pertains to recreational and amenity use.	No. During construction, works will be required to facilitate the upgrade and improve the function of the lake as a public amenity will cause a slight disruption to existing users of the lake. However, this disruption will be short-term in nature. The operational phase will have a positive long-term effect to the visitors of Lough Bracken. The Proposed Development will improve the function of the existing amenities and provide recreational space for new amenity features.
22. Are there any plans for future land uses within or around the location that could be affected by the Project?	No. There are no plans for future land uses within or around the location that could be affected by the Proposed Development.	No. The Proposed Development will not result in a likely significant effect on any known future land uses or plans. The Proposed Development is in line with the existing uses of Lough Bracken.
23. Are there areas within or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, that could be affected by the Project?	No. The Proposed Development is located in a rural setting.	No. During the construction phase, works will be short-term in nature. Construction works will be undertaken in accordance with the commitments to be set out in a CEMP, which will mitigate any potential negative effects to the environment. The operational phase will have a positive long-term effect to the visitors of Lough Bracken. The Proposed Development will provide recreational space for new amenity features.



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>24. Are there any areas within or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g., hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, that could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development is located in a rural setting.</p> <p>Lough Bracken is c. 2 km south-west of Drumconrath village. The closest school is St. Peter and Paul's national school in Drumconrath and there are approximately five schools in Ardee, c. 8 km to the west.</p> <p>Hospitals and community facilities are located in the nearby towns.</p>	<p>No. There are no hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities within in 500 m of the site.</p> <p>Given the location, scale and the nature of the Proposed Development, it will not result in any likely significant adverse effects.</p>
<p>25. Are there any areas within or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g., groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, that could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>Yes. Lough Bracken is currently used as a drinking water resource.</p> <p>Angling is one of the main activities carried out at Lough Bracken.</p> <p>An enclosed abstraction facility is located at the southern shore of the lake. It serves the Drumconrath Water Treatment Plant (WTP) which produces c. 600 m³/day of water serving c. 1200 people on the Drumconrath public water supply (PWS). This water is supplied through a lake abstraction on two groundwater wells, which were constructed in 2001.</p> <p>A proportion of the existing amenity area and site is occupied by commercial forestry, however no commercial tree felling activity has taken place in recent years.</p>	<p>No. There will be no significant effects on high quality or scarce natural resources.</p> <p>During the construction phase mitigation measures will be in place, which will mitigate any potential negative effects to the environment. There will be no discharges to groundwater or surface waters as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>During construction appropriate environmental and pollution control measures will be implemented to prevent any contamination of Lough Bracken that would adversely affect the quality of the drinking water supply. Construction methods will be in line with good practice methods as per CIRIA - Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice.</p> <p>A CEMP will include an emergency response procedure for any leaks and spills that may occur during the construction phase, as well as best practice measures.</p>



Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/Why?
<p>26. Are there any areas within or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g., where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, that could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>Yes. With regards to hydrology the WFD.</p> <p>The WFD water quality status for Lough Bracken is 'Moderate' for the 2016-2021 monitoring period and is classified as 'At Risk' for not meeting the 2027 WFD objectives (EPA, 2024). The WFD water quality status for the River Dee is 'Poor' during the same period and also 'At Risk'.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located within Ardee ground waterbody and its 2016-2021 WFD status is 'Good'. This ground waterbody risk status is 'Not at Risk' to meet the 2027 WFD objectives.</p>	<p>No. During the construction phase, water will not be abstracted from rivers or streams and water will not be pumped directly into the Lurgy River or surface water drains.</p> <p>A CEMP will include practice measures to avoid or manage the risk of pollutants entering nearby watercourses, land or ground waterbodies. Construction methods will be in line with good practice methods as per CIRIA - Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice.</p> <p>The works include the installation of fencing to the south of lake to prevent livestock from adjacent farmland from accessing the lake shore and causing potential contamination of the water supply.</p>
<p>27. Is the Project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g., temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the Project to present environmental problems?</p>	<p>No. Flood maps available on the OPW website were examined for the Proposed Development, showing no vulnerability in Zones A and B.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is classified as a "Water Compatible Development". As a result, a Stage 2 Initial Flood Risk Assessment and Stage 3 Detailed Flood Risk assessment was not required.</p> <p>The Proposed Development footprint is not susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides (GSI, 2024).</p> <p>There is potential for adverse weather, but it is not expected to present environmental problems.</p>	<p>No. The Proposed Development is designed and sited is not susceptible to natural disasters or major accidents.</p>



Table 4.2: Screening for Restructuring of Rural Land Holdings

Checklist Questions	Yes/No/Briefly describe	Screen In or Out on restructuring of rural landholdings?
Is the length of field boundary to be removed above 4 kilometres?	No. Hedgerow removal is less than 4 km.	Screen out.
Is there re-contouring of land area above 5 hectares?	No. There will be no re-contouring of land to facilitate the Proposed Development.	Screen out.
Is the area of lands to be restructured by removal of field boundaries above 50 hectares?	No. Removal of hedgerows or field boundaries will be less than 50 ha.	Screen out.



Table 4.3: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Criteria

Annex III Requirement	Description
1. A description of the proposed development, including in particular –	A description of the Proposed Development is outlined in Sections 2 and 3 and has been assessed with regard to Annex III criteria in Table 4.1.
a. A description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development, and, where relevant, of demolition works, and	
b. A description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.	
2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.	A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development is included in Table 4.1. It concludes no likely significant effects with mitigation.
3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from:	A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the Proposed Development on the environment resulting from the Proposed Development is included in Table 4.1. It concludes no likely significant effects with mitigation.
a. The expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant, and	
b. The use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.	
4. The criteria of Annex III shall be taken into account, where relevant, when compiling the information in accordance to points 1-3 above.	The compilation of information in paragraphs (1) to (3) is in Section 2 of this report. This information has been screened in Table 4.1 of this report.



5. SUMMARY

The requirements for the carrying out of EIA for various types of developments is defined in Ireland under the Planning and Development Act (as amended) and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2001-2024.

Schedule 5 of the Planning Regulations lists the different project types that mandatorily require an EIA. This project does not constitute one of those project types. The Proposed Development does not individually or cumulatively fall into a class of development set out in Schedule 5, Part 1 and 2 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2001-2024 and therefore, the requirements for a mandatory EIA can be screened out.

Sub-threshold EIA may be required where the project would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. Criteria for the consideration of sub-threshold EIA is set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2001-2024 and Annex III of the EIA Directive. These criteria have been set out within this report with respect to the Proposed Development.

Potential impacts on the receiving environment during construction have been set out in Table 4.1. There is the potential for slight, short-term effects on biodiversity, water, groundwater, soils, air, noise, cultural heritage and material assets during the construction phase of the Proposed Development in the absence of good construction practice. However, a CEMP will be prepared by the contractor and appropriate mitigation measures will be in place during construction, to minimise adverse environmental effects on all receptors. Construction works will be in line with good practice methods as per CIRIA - Guidelines Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites – Guide to Good Practice. The CEMP will be submitted to MCC for approval prior to commencement of construction.

The Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening report concluded that: *"(1) Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site and (2) Does not have the potential to have significant negative impacts on the Natura 2000 network."* The Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) (ACS, 2023) report concluded that: *"that while the site contains no Protected Structures nor Wrecks, it does contain National Monument in State Ownership No. 543, represented by a motte and bailey (ME006-027----). Furthermore, the lake shore and the area in proximity of the monument has some potential for archaeologically significant remains to be uncovered. It is recommended that the areas of the shoreline to be affected by proposed works are subject to a wade survey with the use of metal detector and at a minimum, monitoring is carried out of any tree felling and ground disturbances in proximity to National Monument No. 543. It is recommended the survey is carried out prior to works commencing. Monitoring in proximity to the National Monument will require Ministerial Consent to be obtained by a licence-eligible archaeologist. Should archaeological features be exposed during monitoring, a full impact statement should be prepared in consultation with the National Monuments Service"*.

It is therefore submitted that sub-threshold EIA is not required for the Proposed Development, due to the limited impact on the receiving environment with respect to Annex II and III of the EIA Directive and the screening checklist provided in the Guidance document for EIA Screening (European Commission, 2017), as set out in this report.



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