

**THOMOND RFC EXTENSION
PART 8 PLANNING REPORT**

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (As Amended)
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS (As Amended)**

**Report prepared pursuant to the requirements of Part 8, Article 81 of the
Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (As Amended)**

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1. Introduction

The Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan, launched in September 2013, aims to enhance communities by providing people good quality of life, a decent home, and a sense of pride about their neighbourhood.

To facilitate expansion of sporting facilities within the Moyross Regeneration Area, the Regeneration Department of Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) proposes to extend the existing grounds owned by Thomond Rugby Football Club (Thomond RFC) at Liam Fitzgerald Park into the Craeval Park area of Moyross. Refer to Figure 1 which shows the existing Thomond RFC facility and the proposed extension area.

This report defines the need for the Project, the project objectives and provides a general description of the proposed works.

This report has been prepared for inclusion with the documentation made available for public inspection by LCCC under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).



Figure 1: Site Location

2. Background

The Regeneration Department of LCCC is progressing the Thomond RFC extension project. Engineering Consultants will be procured in order to progress this project through detailed design, procurement of contractors, construction and handover.

Consent for the works is being sought under the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended), and public consultation on the project is taking place pursuant to Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

3. Policy Context

There are several local legislative and planning policies to support the proposed project.

As noted above, the proposed site is located within public open space in Craeval Park, Moyross. Volume 1, Section 3.4.6.5 of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 notes an issue with “*over-provision of underutilised public open space*” within the Moyross area. The extension of the Thomond RFC grounds seeks to use some of this underutilised public space within the Craeval Park area.

The proposed project supports the policies and objectives of the Limerick Development Plan and the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan.

Objective M O1 of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 notes that:

“It is an objective of the Council to:

...

(s) Retain the existing active playing pitches associated with ... Thomond RFC as sporting facilities.”

As part of the Open Space and Public Realm Strategy within the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan, it is an objective to:

“Retain the existing active playing pitches associated with ... Thomond RFC as sporting facilities.”

4. Project Need

Thomond RFC is located in the heart of Moyross, refer to Figure 1. It is bounded to the north by Craeval Park, to the south by Glenanaar Avenue, to the east by Woodview Close and to the west by Pineview Gardens.

Thomond RFC currently caters for three senior teams (75 players), four youth teams (60 players) and six mini teams (80 players, mixed boys and girls). In addition the Club has a ‘Thomond Rugby for All’ team, which caters for 20 boys and girls who require assisted care on the autism spectrum.

Noting all these players, Thomond RFC has only one pitch of their own to hold training sessions and games. This constraint means the Club needs to hire additional pitches elsewhere in Limerick, at a considerable cost.

From a Regeneration perspective, the current boundary (refer to Figure 2) along the northern edge of the Thomond RFC grounds, which consists of a 2m high wall and 1.2m high palisade

fence on top, lacks permeability/visibility into/out of Moyross. Furthermore, this boundary presents a visible physical barrier between Moyross and the wider community.



Figure 2: Existing boundary between Thomond RFC and Craeval Park, Moyross

5. Project Objectives

To address the strategic, social and sporting needs of the area, the objectives of the proposed project include:

- Achieving the objectives identified in the Limerick Development Plan and the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan;
- Improving social and sporting opportunity for the Moyross Regeneration Area and the wider community;
- Demolition of the northern boundary wall, thereby increasing permeability/visibility into/out of Moyross and removal of a significant physical barrier within the community; and
- Providing more playing space to meet Thomond RFC's needs.

6. Project Details

The project site is located within Craeval Park, Moyross. The proposed extension area is located within a public open space on the site of former housing, which have all been demolished as part of the Limerick Regeneration Programme.

LCCC is facilitating the extension whereby Thomond RFC can provide an additional training area and/or a second playing pitch. The additional land being afforded by LCCC will facilitate a full sized rugby pitch (as per IRFU requirements), with clearances to the proposed boundary agreed with Thomond RFC.

While LCCC is providing land to facilitate the development of additional training pitches or a full size playing pitch, costs for development such as pitch drainage, goal posts, upgraded playing surface, etc. will need to be funded by Thomond RFC.

The proposed extension area will be enclosed by a new boundary. The ground level within the extension area will be adjusted to match the approximate level of the existing Thomond RFC pitch.

A preliminary design has been developed in-house by the Regeneration Department of LCCC, supported by external consultants for environmental and ecological reporting.

The principal characteristics of the preliminary design are:

- Raising existing ground level within the extension area to match approx. level of the existing Thomond RFC pitch.
- Construction of a new boundary around the extension area, comprising a low wall and railing above, with piers and gates.
- Installation of back of wall drainage and outfall to existing storm drain network.
- Construction of an embankment on northern side of new boundary.
- Construction of a cutting in existing ground on western side of new boundary.
- Demolition of the existing northern boundary to Thomond RFC.
- Construction of a new footpath between new boundary and side of 4 Craeval Park.
- Decommission or divert storm/sewer networks and other utilities that will be within the extension area.

The nature and extent of the proposed project is shown on the drawings listed in Table 1 below, which are to be read in conjunction with this report. These drawings are included in the planning documentation.

Vehicular access to the extended grounds will remain via the existing entrance to Tim Fitzgerald Park at Pineview Gardens. The 1.5m wide gates proposed along the new boundary will cater for retrieval of rugby balls and possible pedestrian access (depending on Thomond RFC operations). The proposed 6m wide gate close to the existing clubhouse will allow for a future access depending on the development of the Pineview Gardens estate.

Drawing No.	Drawing Title
TRFC-PP-001	Site Location Map
TRFC-PP-002	Site Layout Plan - Proposed Works
TRFC-PP-003	Site Layout Plan - Utilities
TRFC-PP-004	Sections and Details - Sheet 1 of 2
TRFC-PP-005	Sections and Details - Sheet 2 of 2
TRFC-PP-006	Contiguous Elevations

Table 1: List of Preliminary Design Drawings

7. Land Ownership and Transfer

As part of the legal agreement between LCCC and Thomond RFC, the Council will:

- Transfer/dispose an area of approx. 1.23 hectares to Thomond RFC (area shown in cyan in Figure 3 below); and
- Permit temporary use of Council-owned land by Thomond RFC (part of area shown in green in Figure 3 below).

LCCC owns the majority of development area. To facilitate the disposal of land from LCCC to Thomond RFC, land has been acquired from two separate landowners within Craeval Park.

Regarding the plot at the eastern end of Craeval Park (folio LK11547F), discussions are ongoing with the landowner in conjunction with Thomond RFC. A Letter of Consent has been signed by this landowner in relation to this application.

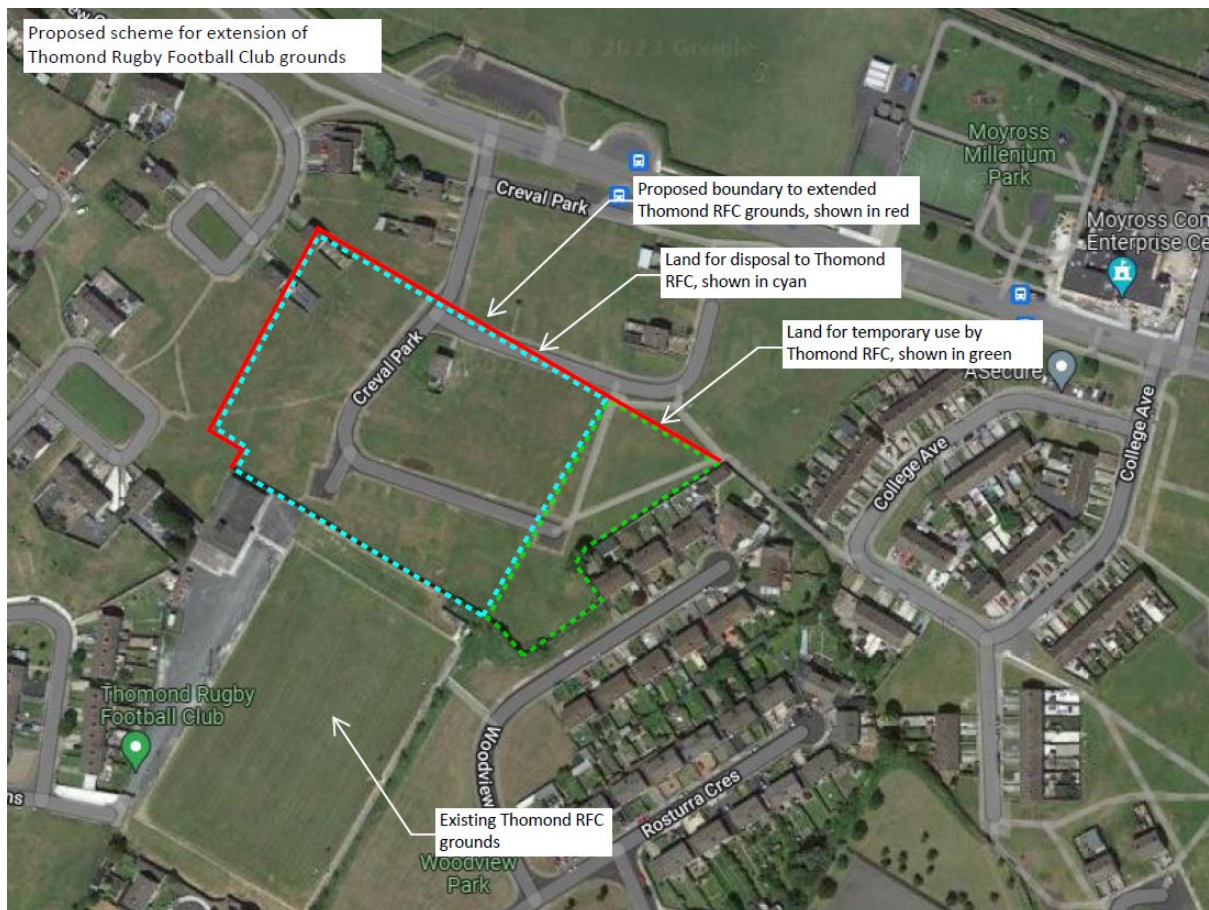


Figure 3: Existing boundary between Thomond RFC and Craeval Park, Moyross

8. The Environment

8.1 Environmental and Ecological Reports

JBA Consulting was contracted to prepare Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening reports for this project and concluded that significant effects are not anticipated via surface water, groundwater, or land/air pathways on the following Natura 2000 sites:

- Lower River Shannon SAC; and
- River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA

As such, a stage 2 Natura Impact Statement is not required for the proposed works.

A copy of the AA Screening Report, which should be read in conjunction with this report, is included in the planning documentation.

An EIA screening report has been completed for this project and it has been concluded that the proposed development does not fall under the category of subthreshold development, and thus an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required.

A copy of the EIA Screening Report, which should be read in conjunction with this report, is included in the planning documentation.

8.2 Archaeological and Heritage Assessment

There are no recorded monuments or protected structures, identified in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, that are impacted by the development works.

Consultation with LCCC's Executive Archaeologist has noted that there is no known archaeology within the project extents.

8.3 Flood Risk Analysis

The project extent is not located within Flood Zones A or B, as outlined in the Limerick City and Suburbs Map of the Limerick Development Plan.

8.4 Existing Ground Conditions

As noted above, the ground level area within the new boundary will be adjusted to match the approximate level of the existing Thomond RFC pitch. This will involve raising the existing ground level (mainly in the northern half of the proposed extension area) and localised lowering.

Noting that the site previously contained housing, LCCC conducted site investigation works with the proposed extension area to determine the existing ground conditions.

Several trial pits were excavated within the existing green areas, and the following points were noted:

- Approximate 100mm depth of topsoil;
- Loose building rubble mixed within the existing subsoil below topsoil level;
- Rising walls (100mm wide block on edge) located below topsoil level in some locations (likely footprint of some previously demolished houses);
- Foundations for rising walls located approx. 800mm below existing ground level. Foundations approx. 600mm wide;
- No evidence of water holding within the trial pits excavated. Trial pits were excavated to between 0.75m and 1.1m in depth.

8.5 Existing Roads and Footpaths

As per a separate contract, and outside the scope of this planning application, LCCC plans to remove all existing roads and footpaths within the proposed extension area. These works will include removal of all road pavement and footpaths to formation level and includes reinstatement with subsoil and topsoil to match existing levels.

8.6 Utilities

As noted above, the project proposals include for decommissioning or diverting existing utilities within the proposed extension area. Utilities, and their current status, within the project area is summarised below.

- **Foul sewer:** An existing 225mm diameter foul sewer runs along the western side of the proposed extension area. A design proposal was issued to Uisce Éireann (UÉ) for diversion of the pipeline to outside the extension area. Based on further discussions with UÉ, the design has been updated and a Confirmation of Feasibility letter has been issued. A copy of this letter is included in the planning documentation.

Once a detailed design cost estimate is completed for the project, this diversion will be reviewed against the available project budget.

- **Storm sewer:** Existing 300mm and 450mm diameter storm sewer pipelines run within the extension area. To mitigate any conflict between any future pitch (developed by Thomond RFC) and the storm network in the south east corner of the extension area, local diversion of the 300mm diameter pipeline is proposed.

Once a detailed design cost estimate is completed for the project, this diversion will be reviewed against the available project budget.

- **Gas:** All Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) infrastructure within the old Craeval Park housing estate has been decommissioned. The works by GNI have also included amending the supply to the Thomond RFC clubhouse.
- **ESB:** Upon removal of the roads and footpaths within the Craeval Park area, the existing ESB infrastructure will be decommissioned.
- **Openeir:** All Openeir infrastructure within the extension area has been decommissioned.
- **Virgin Media:** Discussions with representatives of Virgin Media have concluded that their service will require to be diverted around the new boundary. A draft proposal has been agreed and will be included in the detailed design.
- **CCTV:** The existing CCTV mast and camera located within the extension area will be relocated prior to the Works commencing. Relocation of this asset is being coordinated by the LCCC Digital Services Department.
- **Public Lighting:** There are 9no. public lighting columns within the overall project area. The six public lighting columns within the extension area will be removed. The three columns located to the north of the proposed boundary will be removed upon completion of the Works.

All works undertaken shall comply with the respective utility provider's requirements.

8.7 Noise

The proposed works will be subject to working times of 08:00-18:00 on weekdays and 09:00-13:00 on Saturdays. Working outside this period will be prohibited. The Works will produce short term noise associated with construction activities including excavations and deliveries to site.

8.8 Construction Management Plan

The Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and agreed with the LCCC Environment and Planning Department prior to commencement of the Works.

This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the duration of the Works, including hours of working, acceptable noise/vibration limits, site access/egress measures and off-site disposal/recovery of construction/demolition waste.

9. Pre-Planning

9.1 Meeting with Area Planner

A pre-planning review and discussion with the LCCC Area Planner was held on 14 November 2023.

This meeting focused on:

- Review of the preliminary design drawings;
- Planning applications within the local area;
- Limerick City and Suburbs Zoning Map;
- Consultation required with other LCCC Departments; and
- The preparation of the AA and EIA screening reports.

At the conclusion of this meeting, it was noted that no conditions or actions could be applied to the proposals.

9.2 Internal Consultation

The preliminary design drawings were circulated to internal departments within LCCC for comment. Comments received during the internal review period have been reviewed and the project documents have been updated accordingly.

The draft AA and EIA screening reports were circulated to the LCCC Heritage Officer for comment. Review comments received have been incorporated into the final version of the reports, which are included in Appendices B and C. The final version of these reports were issued to the LCCC Senior Planner on 8 January 2024.

9.3 Briefing with Elected Members

The project proposals were presented to the Limerick City Metropolitan District Councillors via a blended briefing held on 17 November 2023. Those in attendance expressed support for the proposals presented.

A number of queries were raised during the briefing which were addressed and where required, have been incorporated into the process. There was no request for a further briefing prior to commencing the Part 8 process.

9.4 Briefings with External Stakeholders

The proposed layout plans were presented to the Moyross Regeneration Committee on 20 November 2023 and to the Woodview Residents Association on 1 February 2024. Those in attendance expressed support for the proposals presented.

A number of queries were raised during these briefings which were addressed and, where required, have been incorporated into the process.

10. Planning Application

As prescribed in the regulations, LCCC has placed site notices at the proposed project site and advertised the proposals in a local newspaper. A copy of the Part 8 newspaper notice is included in the planning documentation.

Plans and particulars of the proposed project will be available for inspection during normal office hours or purchase, at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of Limerick City and County Council, Dooradoyle Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick and Limerick City and County Council, Corporate Headquarters, Merchants Quay, Limerick, V94 EH90 from 29 February 2024 up to and including 28 March 2024.

Submissions and observations in relation to the proposed development, dealing with proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the development would be situated may be made:

- In writing to the Director of Service, Regeneration, Sports and Recreation Directorate, Limerick City and County Council, Unit 10, Watch House Cross Shopping Centre, Moyross, Limerick. V94 XYK5
- By email to planning@limerick.ie
- Online at <https://planning.localgov.ie>

Submissions must be received on or before 16:00 on 11 April 2024.

Submissions should be clearly marked: "Thomond RFC Extension".

11. Conclusion

This Part 8 Planning Report has been prepared in accordance with Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. The Report and associated drawings outline the preliminary design.

The proposed project supports the policies and objectives of the Limerick Development Plan and the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan.

It should be noted that the project will not have a negative impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area, or the residential amenity of the residential properties in the vicinity. Significant effects arising from the project are not anticipated via surface water, groundwater, or land/air pathways on the local Natura 2000 sites.

The opening up and extension of the Thomond RFC grounds will be advantageous to the Club and residents of all ages in Moyross and the surrounding area.

The project will improve social and sporting opportunity for the Moyross Regeneration Area and the wider community. Furthermore, the proposals represent a positive step in the removal of further physical barriers in the heart of Moyross.

The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.