

Thomond RFC extension

EIA Screening Report

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Limerick City and County Council

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Contract

This report describes work commissioned by Limerick City and County Council, by an email dated 22/03/2023. Conor O'Neill of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

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Purpose

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Purpose of this Report	1
2	Description of Proposed Works	2
2.1	Site Location	2
2.2	Proposed Development.....	2
3	Purpose of Screening	3
3.1	Legislative Context for EIAR in Ireland.....	3
3.2	The Planning and Development Act 2000 - Mandatory EIAR	3
3.3	Sub-threshold EIAR	4
4	Overview of Environmental Impacts	6
4.1	Population and Human Health	6
4.2	Biodiversity.....	6
4.3	Soils and Geology	6
4.4	Hydrology and Hydrogeology	7
4.5	Cultural Heritage	7
4.6	Air and Climate.....	7
4.7	Noise and Vibration.....	7
4.8	Landscape and Visual.....	7
4.9	Material Assets including Traffic, Utilities, and Waste	8
4.10	Cumulative Impacts.....	8
5	Screening Assessment	10
5.1	Characteristics of the Proposed Development	10
5.2	Location of the Proposed Development	12
5.3	Characteristics of Potential Impacts	14
6	Conclusions and Recommendations	16
7	Appendix	17

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Site Location 2

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Natura 2000 sites within 10km of the proposed development 6

Table 5.1: Characteristics of the proposed development 10

Table 5.2: Location of the proposed development 12

Table 5.3: Characteristics of potential impacts 14

Abbreviations

- AA - Appropriate Assessment
- CEMP - Construction Environmental Management Plan
- EIAR - Environmental Impact Assessment Report
- LAP - Local Area Plan
- LCCC - Limerick City and County Council
- NIAH - National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
- NMS - National Monuments Service
- SFRA - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- WFD - Water Framework Directive

1 Introduction

JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists Ltd. (hereafter JBA) has been commissioned by Limerick City and County Council to prepare an EIA Screening Report for a proposed extension to Thomond RFC, Limerick (the 'proposed development'). The proposed development, which will be submitted under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Act (2000) as amended, consists of an extension of the current lands owned by Thomond RFC into Craeval Park, Moyross, with associated changes to boundaries and diversion of services.

1.1 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to identify whether there is a need under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for an EIAR for the proposed development.

Schedule 5 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Act lists the groups of development projects which are subject to EIA screening under the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. Part 1 lists those projects which are automatically subject to an EIAR due to the scale and nature of the project. Part 2 lists projects which are also likely to have significant environmental effects based on the nature and size of the development set out by threshold criteria.

An additional group of projects, which are considered sub-threshold developments under Part 2, may fall below the thresholds set but may, under further analysis, be deemed to have significant effects due to their location within a catchment, size, or proximity to sensitive areas.

This report documents the methodology employed to determine whether the proposed development falls under any of these groups, and therefore will have significant environmental impacts. Rationale has been given for the decision made in reference to the relevant legislation, and additional documents have been referenced where required.

This report is intended for the project as described below. Any significant changes to the project description or location would require preparation of a new EIA screening report.

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report has been prepared by JBA Consulting and has identified any potential impacts to Natura 2000 sites. This EIA Screening document, along with the AA Screening Report, will be submitted as part of the Part 8 planning process for the proposed development.

2 Description of Proposed Works

2.1 Site Location

Thomond RFC is located towards the north-west of Limerick City, shown in Figure 2.1. The proposed development is located in a largely residential area.

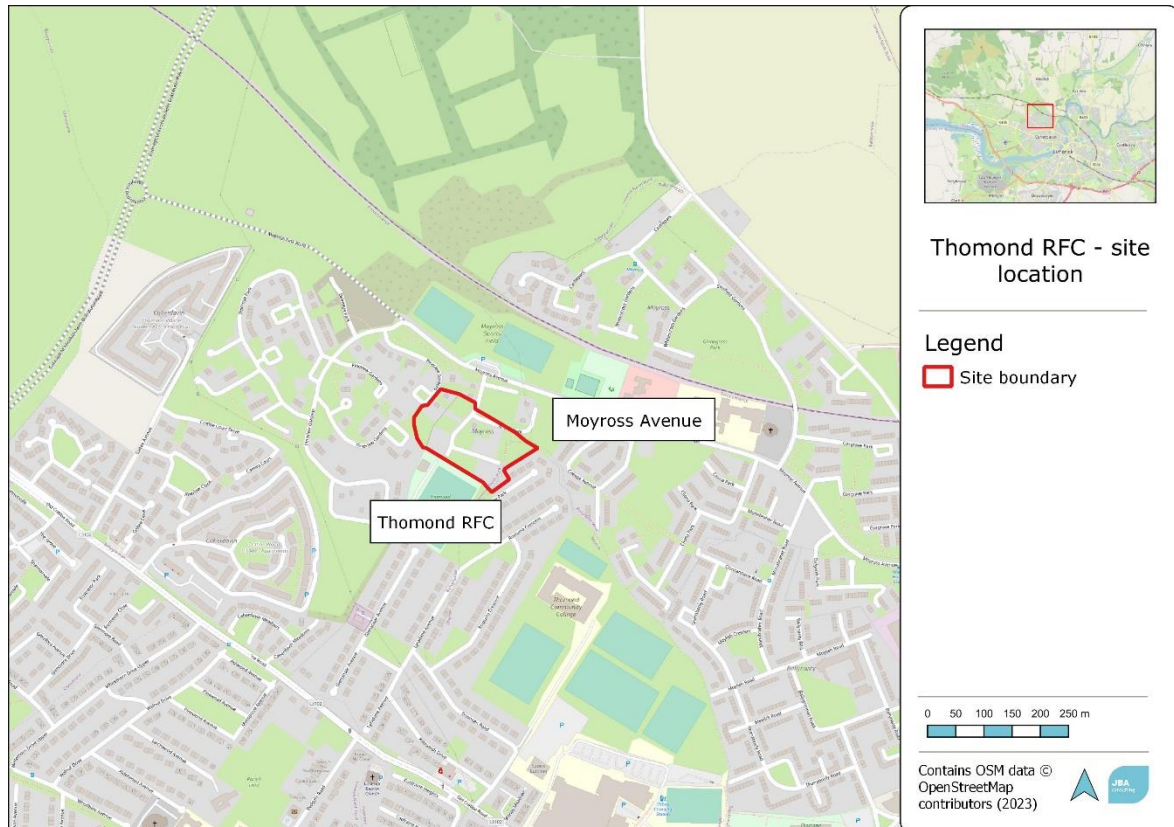


Figure 2.1: Site Location

2.2 Proposed Development

The proposed development will include:

- Raising existing ground level within the extension area to match the approx. level of existing Thomond RFC pitch, plus allowing for a gradient for future drainage,
- Construct new blockwork boundary, to be 600mm above FGL plus 1.8m high railing above,
- Gates to be installed along boundary to allow for pedestrian access, retrieval of balls, etc.
- Installation of back wall drainage to new wall as required and outfall to existing storm drain network,
- Construction of embankment on northern side of new boundary to soften the effect of the wall from the Moyross Avenue side,
- Construction of cutting in existing ground on western side of new boundary,
- Demolition of wall and railing at northside of existing TRFC boundary,
- Construction of new footpath between boundary and side of 4 Craeval Park,
- Removal of existing roads and footpaths within Craeval Park area,
- Relocation of CCTV Mast on northside of existing wall,
- Decommissioning or diversion of storm and sewer networks that are within the extension area / indicative pitch area,
- Decommission of utilities that are within the extension area – ESB, public lighting, gas; and
- A new permeable boundary to enclose the extended Thomond RFC lands.

3 Purpose of Screening

3.1 Legislative Context for EIAR in Ireland

The EU has set out mandatory requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments under the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). The Directive identifies certain project types, described under Annex I, that will always have significant environmental effects due to their nature and size. These projects are required to undergo an EIAR in every Member State.

For projects listed under Annex II, the EIA Directive gives Member States discretion to decide the limits of projects requiring an EIAR. In Ireland, mandatory thresholds have been set for projects that would otherwise fall under Annex II, which are described in Schedule 5 of The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. These thresholds are based on project characteristics including size and location. Projects within these thresholds are always subject to an EIAR. In some circumstances, projects considered below the thresholds set under Schedule 5 Part 2 may still be considered by the Planning Authority to have significant effects on the environment, such as in cases where the projects are in a location of particular environmental sensitivity and may also be subject to an EIAR. These sub-threshold projects are reviewed by the Planning Authority on a case-by-case basis.

The principal piece of legislation under which an EIAR may be undertaken for various developments is The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Further regulations are explained in The Planning and Development (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2001-2018.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage published Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018). The Guidelines aim to ensure compliance with the EIA Regulations in relation to taking environmental factors into account when determining development proposals and ensuring that environmental considerations are fully addressed and properly managed.

Legislation is examined below as to whether an EIAR will be required for this project.

3.2 The Planning and Development Act 2000 - Mandatory EIAR

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, Section 172 sets out the types of projects that require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR):

An environmental impact assessment shall be carried out by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, in respect of an application for consent for proposed development where either:

- a. the proposed development would be of a class specified in
 - i. Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and either-
 - I. such development would exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or
 - II. no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned, or
 - ii. Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and either-
 - I. such development would exceed any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or
 - II. no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned, or
- b.
 - i. the proposed development would be of a class specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 but does not exceed the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, and
 - ii. the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, determines that the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

3.2.1 Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended

Projects which fall under Schedule 5, Part 1 are typically large infrastructure and energy projects and by their nature will always have significant environmental effects. The proposed development does not fall under Schedule 5, Part 1.

3.2.2 Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended

With regards to Part 2 projects, the categories and thresholds were examined. The proposed development may fall under the following category:

10. Infrastructure projects

(b) (iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.

(In this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)

The proposed development falls under the category above, but is below the 10-hectare threshold, being 2 hectares in size. Therefore, an EIAR has not been automatically triggered for this proposed development.

However, it is necessary to consider if this development could result in significant environmental effects under the category of sub-threshold developments.

3.3 Sub-threshold EIAR

In accordance with the requirement to submit an EIAR with sub-threshold planning application (Article 103 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018), where a planning application for sub-threshold development is not accompanied by an EIAR, and the Planning Authority considers that the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment it shall, by notice in writing, require the applicant to submit an EIAR. This process therefore occurs after submission of an application, if that application is not accompanied by an EIAR.

The decision as to whether a development is likely to have ‘significant effects’ on the environment must be taken with reference to the criteria set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018. Schedule 7A requires that the following information be provided for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIAR:

1. A description of the proposed development, including in particular—

- 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 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.

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) 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.
- c) The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 (DHPLG 2018).

In order to assist planning and other consenting authorities in deciding if significant effects on the environment are likely to arise in the case of development below the national mandatory EIAR thresholds, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published a Guidance document in August 2003, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development and the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DHPLG 2018b)

The criteria, as transposed in Irish legislation, are grouped under three headings:

i. Characteristics of Proposed Development

ii. Location of Proposed Development

iii. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

For the purposes of assessing if the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment in reference to these three parameters, the project is examined below in further detail.

4 Overview of Environmental Impacts

An overview of the potential environmental impacts of the development, according to theme presented in an EIAR, is provided below.

4.1 Population and Human Health

During construction, there is a risk to the health and safety of workers on the development, as with any construction project. This will be mitigated against by the operational plans devised by the contractor and will not be significant.

Residences in the vicinity of the proposed development will experience some negative impacts during the construction phase of the development. These will be temporary and will be mitigated against by the operational plans devised by the contractor and adherence to standard best practice regarding control of noise and vibration, dust, and limitations on working hours.

Once operational, the extension will provide an additional sports pitch will be an improvement in the facilities of Thomond RFC. This is in line with the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 which recognises sports and recreation facilities as key elements in ensuring good quality of life for communities. The overall impact on human health and population will be positive.

4.2 Biodiversity

Ecological receptors that must be examined include protected Natura 2000 sites under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), as well as species protected under the Wildlife Act (1976), and any ecological receptors which may be negatively impacted by the proposed development, both directly and indirectly.

4.2.1 Proximity to Protected Sites

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been completed by JBA Consulting for this project to determine whether there is a potential for impacts on nearby Natura 2000 sites.

Those sites within 10km of the proposed development are shown in Table 4.1.

The AA Screening determined that there are no likely significant impacts, on any Natura 2000 sites via surface or groundwater pathways, as a result of the proposed development.

Table 4.1: Natura 2000 sites within 10km of the proposed development

Natura 2000 site	Site Code	Approximate Distance from Site	Hydrological Distance from Site
Lower River Shannon SAC	002165	550m	Groundwater connection
River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA	004077	1.7km	Groundwater connection

4.2.2 Other Ecological Receptors

The site is mainly urban in nature, lacking in diverse habitat. There are no trees, hedgerows, or water, the site is comprised of grass and concrete footpaths. As such, the richness of species is low. Significant impacts to ecological receptors are not expected during construction or operation. The long-term permanent impact of the proposed development will be neutral for ecology.

4.3 Soils and Geology

The underlying bedrock of the site is composed of undifferentiated limestone. The subsoils underlying the site are made ground. Limestone till and estuarine sediments are present to the east, west and north of the area around the proposed development.

Excavations required for the installation of manholes and wall foundations will be limited to a maximum of 2m below ground level for new manholes. Excavated material will be reused as fill where appropriate and material not required for fill will be exported from the site and disposed of at appropriate licensed facilities. The expected amount of material to be excavated is not significant.

4.4 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

4.4.1 Surface Water

The proposed site lies within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Lower Shannon (25D) catchment and Shannon[Lower]_SC_100 sub-catchment (EPA, 2020), and North Ballycannon_010 river sub-basin (WFD waterbody). The WFD waterbody is classed as Good, and Not at Risk. There are no WFD waterbodies within the site boundary or the immediate vicinity. A new back of wall drainage system will convey surface water run-off to the existing stormwater network at the southwest and northeast corners of site. No discharge is anticipated during construction.

The proposed development is outside the CFRAM Flood Zones A and B.

Significant impacts on surface waterbodies are not expected during the construction or operational phase. This is due to the nature of the proposed works, the distance to any surface waterbodies, and mitigation measures for the protection of water quality and silt and pollution control which will be contained in operating plans of the appointed contractor and will ensure that risks of watercourse pollution and sedimentation are minimised.

4.4.2 Groundwater

The Limerick City North (IE_SH_G_139) groundwater body is beneath the proposed development. The groundwater body currently has a 'Good' WFD status and is Not at Risk of failing to meet 2027 WFD objectives.

Groundwater vulnerability, a measure of the likelihood of groundwater contamination occurring, is Moderate across the site. The site is therefore at a medium risk of groundwater contamination.

There are no Groundwater Zone of Contribution sites listed by the EPA near the development site, nor any drinking water sites with groundwater abstraction that are not on the groundwater quality monitoring network.

The risk of groundwater contamination will only be present during the construction phase of the development; once operational, the development is unlikely to result in groundwater impacts. Groundwater strike is not anticipated due to the minimal excavation depths.

4.5 Cultural Heritage

There are no archaeological features or protected structures within or directly bordering the proposed site, and therefore no likely impacts on recorded cultural heritage features are expected. During construction, there is the potential for undiscovered archaeological features to be uncovered. However, due to the lack of deep excavations and the development history of the proposed site, this is unlikely.

4.6 Air and Climate

There is the potential for impacts to air quality through emissions during the construction phase of the development, due to the operation of machinery on site and transport of materials to and from the site. These impacts will be mitigated against with measures outlined in the contractor's operating plans.

No operational impacts on air and climate are expected.

4.7 Noise and Vibration

There is the potential for localised noise and vibration impacts in the vicinity of the proposed development during the construction phase due to operation of machinery on site. These impacts would be temporary and only during the construction phase. Mitigation measures against such impacts will be outlined in the operating plans to be devised by the contractor.

The proposed development will not lead to any significant noise or vibration impacts during operational period.

4.8 Landscape and Visual

There are no protected landscapes or views in proximity to the site. The proposed development will give rise to temporary negative visual impacts to residents living in proximity to the development

during the construction phase due to the presence of on-site machinery, excavated material, building materials, temporary signage, and temporary diversions.

Once operational, the proposed development will have similar visual characteristics to the existing sports pitch to the south of the development. The development will be low in landscape and visual impact and will be in character with the surrounding urban landscape.

It is recommended that a dedicated Landscape Plan be put in place for the development and its boundary treatment in order to improve the visual amenity of the surroundings.

4.9 Material Assets including Traffic, Utilities, and Waste

4.9.1 Traffic

During construction, there will be temporary disruptions on local roads during deliveries or due to machinery operating. Alternative routes are available in the area, and it is expected that such disruptions will be temporary and limited.

Once operational, the proposed development will not have a significant effect on traffic.

4.9.2 Utilities

As part of the proposed development, works will include the decommissioning or diversion of several utilities which will be within the indicative pitch area, these are ESB cables, EIR cables, public lighting, gas networks, and Virgin Media utilities. This will require liaison with relevant stakeholders, however, the planned decommissioning/diversion within the proposed development area will result in at worst a temporary disruption of services. Services will be reinstated as part of the development.

A back of wall drainage network will be constructed to convey surface water run-off from the site to the existing stormwater network. This connection is not expected to have a significant impact on the capacity of the network.

Due to the nature of works and lack of deep excavations needed for the proposed development impacts to utilities are not anticipated.

4.9.3 Waste

Small volumes of waste arising from demolition, excavation, and typical construction activities are expected.

Waste generated from site clearance will be inert and/or organic material and is expected to be redistributed or re-used within the site extents where possible. Significant amounts of construction waste are not anticipated. Material that cannot be reused will be exported off-site by a licenced hauler to an appropriate licensed facility for disposal.

Once operational, the proposed development will not generate waste.

4.10 Cumulative Impacts

4.10.1 Plans

Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028

The Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect in July 2022. The plan calls for compact growth, and good urban design in the delivery of new and existing, sustainable communities. The Plan's Strategic Vision is for Limerick to become a green city connected through people and places. It aims to do so through engagement, innovation and resilient urban development and self-sustaining rural communities. Sports and recreational facilities are key elements in ensuring a good quality of life is achieved for all members of the community. The proposed development is in line with the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, in particular the following objectives:

- Objective SCSI O19: Protection of lands zoned for Open Space and Recreation. It is an objective of the Council to:
 - Protect existing open space, by not permitting development which encroaches on open space and would result in reducing the recreational value to the public. b) Protect semi-natural open space areas from inappropriate development in the

interest of recreational enjoyment, community health and well-being, flood protection and biodiversity

- Objective SCSi O20: Protection of Sports Grounds/Facilities. It is an objective of the Council to:
 - Ensure that adequate playing fields for formal active recreation are provided for in new development areas.
 - Protect, retain and enhance existing sports facilities and grounds.
- Objective SCSi O21 Improve Open Space Provision It is an objective of the Council to:
 - Co-operate with sports clubs, schools, cultural groups and community organisations to provide quality sports and recreational facilities to the community. The Council encourages a multi-use and co-use of facilities of a complementary nature to support a more diverse range of sport and recreational opportunities. Proposed development shall demonstrate quality pedestrian and cyclist linkage.

4.10.2 Projects

There are several other recent developments or planning applications at the site of the proposed development. No other proposed developments in the area are likely to lead to cumulative impacts.

Planning Application Reference 141167	
Development address	Fitzgerald Park, Ballygrennan, Woodview
Description: the construction of a vehicular entrance consisting of entrance gates and piers on the North Eastern boundary of the property into Craeval Park including access road widening outside the North Eastern boundary and to decommission and close off the existing vehicular entrance on the South Western boundary at Pine View Gardens. The installation of rugby match standard floodlighting to existing rugby playing field, upgrading of playing field perimeter boundary and hard surfacing and all ancillary site works	
Final Decision on Application	Grant permission
Decision Date	01-April-2015

Planning Application Reference 21312	
Development address	Thomond Rugby Grounds, Ballygrennan, Limerick
Description: an existing telecommunications support structure (previously granted under Planning ref. no. 12/770141), together with associated ground equipment cabinets within a fenced compound	
Final Decision on Application	Grant permission
Decision Date	19-April-2021

Planning Application Reference 21256	
Development address	Thomond Rugby Club, Liam Fitzgerald Park, Ballygrennan, Woodview, Limerick
Description: the installation of a new 18 metre high slimline monopole carrying antennas, dishes, associated equipment, ground based equipment cabinets and all associated site development works for high speed wireless data and broadband services	
Final Decision on Application	Grant permission
Decision Date	30-Sep-2021

The potential for cumulative impact of the plans and projects identified above are assessed in the Screening section below in combination with the currently proposed project.

5 Screening Assessment

5.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

To determine whether the characteristics of the proposed development are likely to have significant impacts on the environment, the following questions are answered in Table 5.1, following guidelines set out in Guidance for Consenting Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development (DoEHLG 2003).

Table 5.1: Characteristics of the proposed development

Characteristics of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comment
Could the scale (size or design) of the proposed development be considered significant?	<p>The footprint of the proposed development is c. 15,000m² and will consist of the extension of Thomond RFC, construction of an indicative pitch area, and associated works. Works will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the existing ground level • Construction of a new blockwork boundary • A new permeable boundary to enclose the extended Thomond RFC lands. • Installation of back of wall drainage with connection to existing stormwater network • Embankment construction on northern side of boundary, • Demolition of wall on western sided of boundary, • Construction of new footpath between new boundary and 4 Craeval Park. <p>The scale of the proposed development is therefore not considered to be significant.</p>
Considered cumulatively with other adjacent proposed developments, would the size of the proposed development be considered significant?	<p>The development is small. Permission previously granted for small developments in Thomond RFC, including the installing of a monopole for broadband services, have been completed. Considered cumulatively with other similar developments, the impact of the proposals will not be significant.</p>
Will the proposed development utilise a significant quantity of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water or biodiversity?	<p>In terms of land area, the footprint of the proposed development is small, and the majority of the proposed works will be concentrated along the boundary of the development area. Excavated material will be reused as fill where appropriate and no water is required for the development. The site is located within an urban area and was previously housing, which has since been demolished. The site therefore has been developed and has low value in terms of biodiversity or natural resources, and is not a greenfield site at present. Therefore, there will not be a significant quantity of natural resources used.</p>

Will the proposed development produce a significant quantity of waste?	No. Significant excavations are not required. Debris or rubbish generated during construction will be disposed of at appropriately licenced agents.
Will the proposed development create a significant amount or type of pollution?	No. Temporary air and noise pollution may occur during the construction phase, but the amount will not be significant and will be mitigated against by operational plans devised by the contractor.
Will the proposed development create a significant amount of nuisance?	No. During construction, some noise and vibration will be created, however this will be temporary and short-term. Construction works will be limited to certain times of day. The construction phase is expected to last 6 - 8 months. Once operational, the proposed development will not produce a significant amount of nuisance.
Will there be a risk of major accidents having regard to substances or technologies used?	No. The risks of this development will be those typically associated with normal construction practices. Construction machinery will be used during the construction phase and will be operated by licensed contractors following best practice guidance.
Will there be a risk of natural disasters which are relevant to the project, including those caused by climate change?	The proposed development is outside the Flood Zone A and B extents as described in the Limerick SFRA. Risk of natural disasters to the project is therefore low.
Will there be a risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)?	No. Any potential risk to human health will be as a result of the construction phase of this project. All contractors will be subject to best practice methodologies and risk assessments in order to minimize any risk to human health.
Would any combination of the above factors be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment?	No. The development is relatively small scale. The environmental impacts are predictable and can be easily mitigated through the use of best practice guidelines during the construction phase. As such, significant impacts on the environment are not expected as a result of the proposed development.

Conclusion: The characteristics of the proposed development are not considered likely to result in a significant impact on the environment by virtue of its size, nature, or operational activities.

Reasoning: The proposed development is relatively small in extent and will form an extension to an existing sports pitch located to the south. Any environmental or noise impacts will be during the construction phase and not during operation of the development. Construction will not require significant use of natural resources, nor will it generate significant amounts of waste.

5.2 Location of the Proposed Development

The following questions are answered below in Table 5.2 to determine whether the geographical location of the proposed development can be considered ecologically or environmentally sensitive.

Table 5.2: Location of the proposed development

Location of the Proposed Development - Screening Questions	Comment
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any site designated for conservation interest (e.g., SAC, SPA, pNHA)?	No. The AA Screening for the site concluded that there are no Natura 2000 sites likely to be directly or indirectly impacted by the development.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any habitats listed as Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive?	No. The AA Screening for the site found no potential impacts on habitats listed as Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any habitats listed as Priority Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive?	No. The AA Screening for the site found no potential impacts on habitats listed as Priority Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any species listed as Annex II in the EU Habitats Directive?	No. The AA Screening for the site found no potential impacts on species listed as Annex II in the EU Habitats Directive.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on the breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act?	No. The area to be developed is composed of amenity grassland and concrete surfaces, with no other habitats present.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on the existing or approved land use?	No. The proposed development is in line with the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, and is in line with the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan.
Has the proposed development the potential to significantly impact directly or indirectly the relative abundance, availability, quality or regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground?	No. The proposed development will not impact the relative abundance, availability, or regenerative capacity of natural resources.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structures or Recorded Monuments and Places of Archaeological Interest?	No. There are no recorded archaeological or architectural features on site or in the near vicinity of the proposed development.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on listed or scenic views or protected landscapes as outlined in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028?	No.

Conclusion: The location of the proposed development is not considered likely to result in a significant impact on the environment.

Reasoning: The proposed development is situated within an existing urban and residential area. The conversion of the area from an open space park into a sports pitch will result in little change to the current type of land use as both are considered recreational facilities. There are no Natura 2000 sites or designated ecological sites which will be impacted by the proposed development.

5.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The following questions were answered in Table 5.3, in line with Guidance on EIA Screening - June 2001, prepared for the European Commission by ERM (UK), to determine whether the environmental impacts of the development can be considered significant.

Table 5.3: Characteristics of potential impacts

Characteristics of Potential Impacts - Screening Questions	Comment
Will there be a large change in environmental conditions?	No. The development is small in scale, on land currently designated as recreational open space in a residential area. The proposed development will include a permanent raising of ground level by up to 1.3m to match the elevation of the existing TRFC pitch. There will not be a large change in conditions, with long-term positive impacts from hedgerow and tree planting.
Will new features be out of scale with the existing environment?	No. The proposed development will be similar in scale to the existing sports pitch to the south.
Will the effect be particularly complex?	No. The primary environmental impacts are expected to occur during the construction phase. These include temporary impacts to surface water quality, air quality, noise, and vibration, and through the generation of waste. Potential impacts will be mitigated against by operational plans devised by the on-site contractor and are not expected to be significant.
Will the effect extend over a large area?	No. Given the small scale and nature of the proposed development this is highly unlikely.
Will there be any potential for trans-frontier impacts?	No.
Will many people be affected?	Only residents and business owners in the local vicinity will be affected by the construction phase, however, such impacts will be temporary.
Will many receptors of other types (fauna and flora, businesses, facilities) be affected?	No. Impacts on other receptors are expected to be temporary and limited to the construction phase. Once operational, impacts to receptors are expected to be negligible.
Will valuable or scarce features or resources be affected?	No. There will be no effect on scarce features or resources.
Is there a risk that environmental standards will be breached?	No. The appointed contractor will be contractually obligated to follow environmental guidance and standards, which will be outlined in the contract documents and operating plans devised for construction.
Is there a risk that protected sites, areas, features will be affected?	No.
Is there a high probability of the effect occurring?	No.
Will the effect continue for a long time?	No. Potential impacts would be brief to temporary, only occurring occasionally within the construction phase of the development or in the case of a breach of environmental standards.

Will the effect be permanent rather than temporary?	No. Potential impacts would be temporary.
Will the impact be continuous rather than intermittent?	No. Potential impacts would be intermittent.
If it is intermittent, will it be frequent rather than rare?	No. Potential impacts would be rare, occurring only in the case of accidental breach of environmental standards during the construction phase.
Will the impacts be irreversible?	No.
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effect?	No. Mitigation measures to be put in place during construction will be sufficient to avoid or reduce potential impacts.

Conclusions: The characteristics of the potential impacts as a result of the proposed development are unlikely to be significant and are easily mitigated.

Reasoning: The potential impacts from this development would be primarily during the construction phase. Due to the nature and location of the proposed development it is easy to predict these impacts and mitigate them through the use of standard environmental procedures.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this report was to identify whether there is a need under The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for an EIAR for the proposed extension of Thomond RFC pitch.

It was determined that the proposed development does not fall under Schedule 5 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Act. As such, an EIAR has not been automatically triggered. To determine whether the development may fall under the category of Sub-threshold development, with the potential to give rise to significant environmental effects, a screening exercise was undertaken.

During construction, typical impacts such as noise, dust, traffic disruption, and the generation of small amounts of waste are to be expected. These are typical construction phase impacts and will be mitigated against by environmental operating plans devised by the on-site contractor, following best practice guidance.

An AA Screening Report completed by JBA for the proposed development determined that no likely significant impacts are expected as a result of the proposed development. This is due to the small size of the development and the distance and lack of pathways to Natura 2000 sites.

Once operational, the proposed development will be low in environmental impact. The proposed extension will upgrade the site area and improve its amenity value. It will also improve the Thomond RFC sporting facilities for the local community. A long-term positive impact will likely result from the proposed development in terms of population and human health.

It has been concluded that the proposed development does not fall under the category of sub-threshold development, and thus an EIAR is not required.

The overall conclusion is based on the details of the scheme available at the time of preparation of this report. If the extent of the scheme or the construction methods for the scheme are changed then the EIA Screening assessment should be reviewed.

7 Appendix



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