

# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project



**FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **Ballymastone Recreational Hub Development Project**

**Part 8 Planning Application  
July 2021**



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## Recreational Hub Overall Site Plan



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

## Ballymastone Recreational Hub Development Project Part 8 Planning Application July 2021

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# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## 1.0 Introduction

Fingal County Council is proposing to develop a major active Recreational Hub incorporating a 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation GAA sized/2 Soccer sized all-weather pitches, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation surface all-weather running track constructed around a full sized grass soccer pitch, play/skatepark facilities and significant ancillary infrastructure located in Ballymastone, Donabate, Co. Dublin. The proposed Recreational Hub is located adjoining the newly constructed Donabate Distributor Road and between a planned Educational Hub and extensive planned Residential Development. The facilities will be serviced by new carparking (including special needs car parking and extensive cycle parking provision) and a new

access road linking the facilities to the recently constructed Donabate Distributor Road. Soil excavated during the construction of these facilities will be used to form earthen berms adjacent to and overlooking the track and sports pitches. A perimeter fence will be provided around the facilities. The Recreational Hub will feature resilient design with extensive cycling and walking infrastructure linking to the wider network and coastal amenities. All drainage for these facilities will be attenuated locally within the parkland setting of the site. Tree and hedge removal will be minimised with extensive replacement planting of mainly native trees and shrubs. Low energy lighting will be used throughout.



## 1.1 Site Location & Description

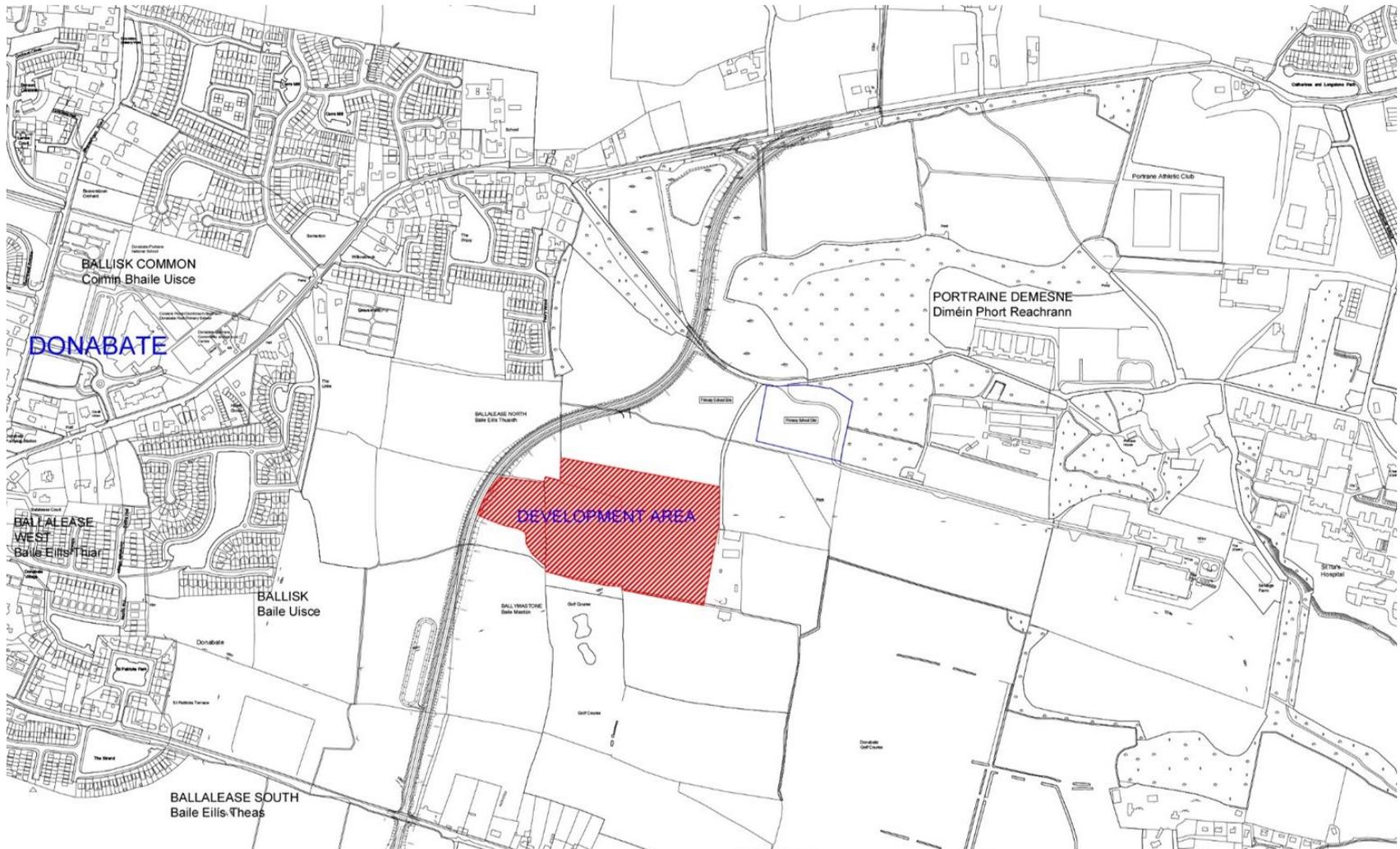
The site comprises approximately 7.4 Hectares of land to the east of the recently constructed Donabate Distributor Road, and are generally rectangular in shape. The lands are mostly comprised of a recreational pitch, with associated land to the north and west comprising agricultural fields. The lands contain some hedgerows and tree lines. St. Patrick's GAA Club is located to the east and south of the site,

while St. Ita's AFC Soccer Club is located to the east. Car parking and an access lane associated with the two clubs form the eastern site boundary. Donabate Golf Club forms part of the southern boundary of the site. The lands are generally level.



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## Map 1 - Site Location



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## 1.2 Main Features of the Recreational Hub

- 1 No. 8 Lane 400m Athletics Track (All weather surface)
- 1 No. Grass Sports Pitch (100m x 64m)
- 1No. All-weather Pitch (1GAA/2Soccer) (150m x 106m)
- Combined Public Skatepark and Playground Facility
- Car Park (191 No. Spaces incl 20 No. Universally Accessible Spaces)
- Coach Park (6 Spaces) -
- Bicycle Parking: 300 No. Bicycle Parking Spaces
- 3 No. Bleacher seating structures
- Sports Hub enclosure fencing (1.8 M high Security Fencing)
- 6 m wide Vehicular Access Road through site from cycle protected junction on Donabate Distributor Road.
- Extensive dedicated Walking and Cycling infrastructure linking to adjoining networks.
- Associated Foul/Fresh Water & ESB Connections and Fibre Optic Communications Connections.
- Recreational Hub Lighting Including:
  - Public lighting of primary Circulation/Road Network
  - Public lighting of Car Park
  - 8 No. Floodlights around All-weather Sports Pitches
  - 8 No. Floodlights around Athletics Track & Grass Sports Pitch
  - Extensive Landscape Planting using predominately native Tree and Shrub Species.
  - Extensive Earthen Berms to incorporate excavated soil and to enclose and screen the facility from surrounding areas.
  - Sustainable Urban Drainage Infrastructure (SuDS) to ensure surface water is attenuated within the site.
  - All ancillary Site Works



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## Map 2 – Summary of Proposed Works

### Ballymastone Recreational Hub

#### Summary of Proposed Works

- ☒ 8 Lane, 400 Metre All-Weather Running Track
- ☒ All-Weather Sports Pitch
- ☒ Bleacher Stands
- ☒ Carpark (191 Spaces)
- ☒ Playground
- ☒ Skatepark
- ☒ 16 No. Floodlights
- ☒ 1.5m High Fence around All-Weather Track
- ☒ Associated Path Network
- ☒ Earth Berms

Fingal County Council,  
 Planning & Strategic Infrastructure Department,  
 Parks & Green Infrastructure Division,  
 County Hall,  
 Swords.



## 2.0 National and Regional Planning Policy Context

In terms of National and Regional planning policy, the provision of infrastructure for recreational and amenity purposes within an existing town supports National Strategic Outcomes set out in Project Ireland 2040 – the National Planning Framework (NPF) to provide for well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. The NPF recognises that attractive places include a combination of factors, including vitality and diversity of uses, ease of access to amenities and services supported by integrated transport systems and green modes of movement such as pedestrian and cycling facilities. Appealing places are also defined by their character, heritage and sense of community.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

for the Eastern and Midlands Region identifies Donabate as a self-sustaining growth town within the Metropolitan region. Self-Sustaining Growth Towns are positioned at the sub-county town level in the settlement hierarchy and have a moderate level of jobs and services with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining. As a Self-Sustaining Growth Town, Donabate will continue to play an important role within a consolidated Metropolitan Area. Development in Donabate should be linked to the capacity of high-quality public transport connections and the provision of social and community infrastructure such as schools and leisure facilities.



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## 2.1 Local Planning Policy Context: Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

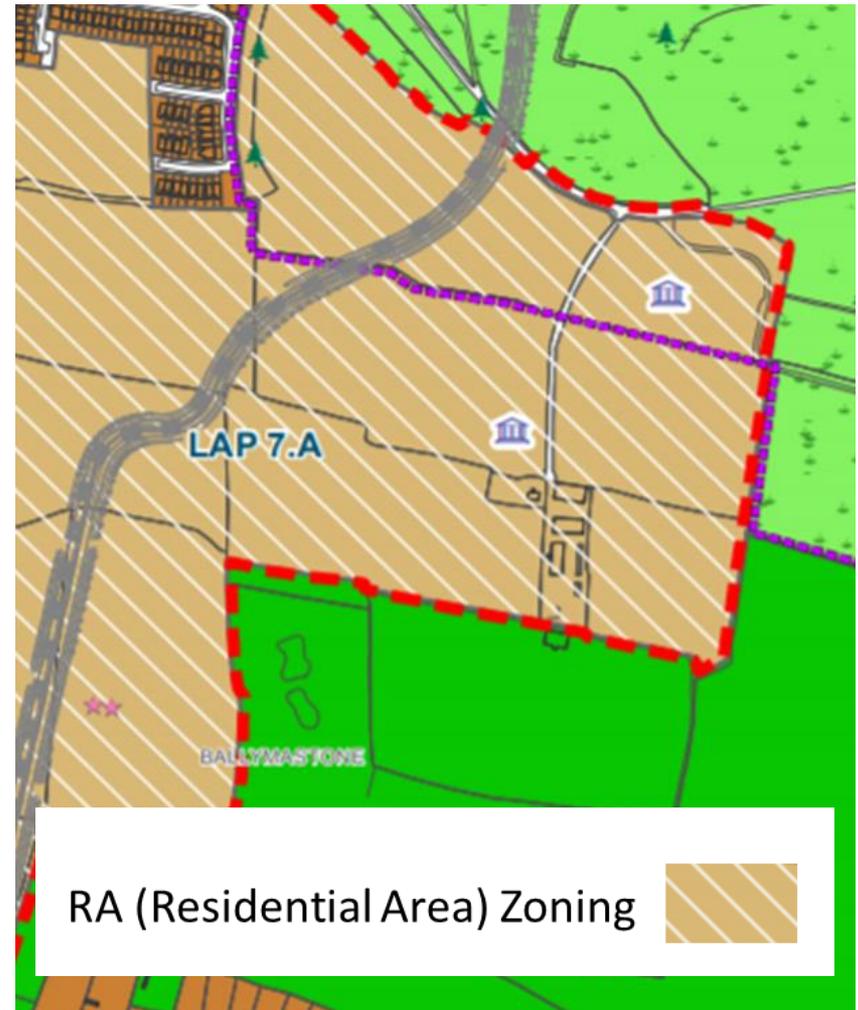
In the current Fingal Development Plan, the application site is located on an RA (Residential Area) zoning objective:

**Objective:** *“Provide for new residential communities subject to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure”*

**Vision:**

*“Ensure the provision of high quality new residential environments with good layout and design, with adequate public transport and cycle links and within walking distance of community facilities. Provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet household needs and to promote balanced communities.”*

The proposal comprises uses which fall within ‘Recreational Facility/Sports Club’ and ‘Open Space’ use classes, both of which are ‘Permitted in Principle’ under the RA zoning.



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## 2.1 Local Planning Policy Context Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023 Contd.

The proposal comprises uses which fall within 'Recreational Facility/Sports Club' and 'Open Space' use classes, both of which are 'Permitted in Principle' under the RA zoning.

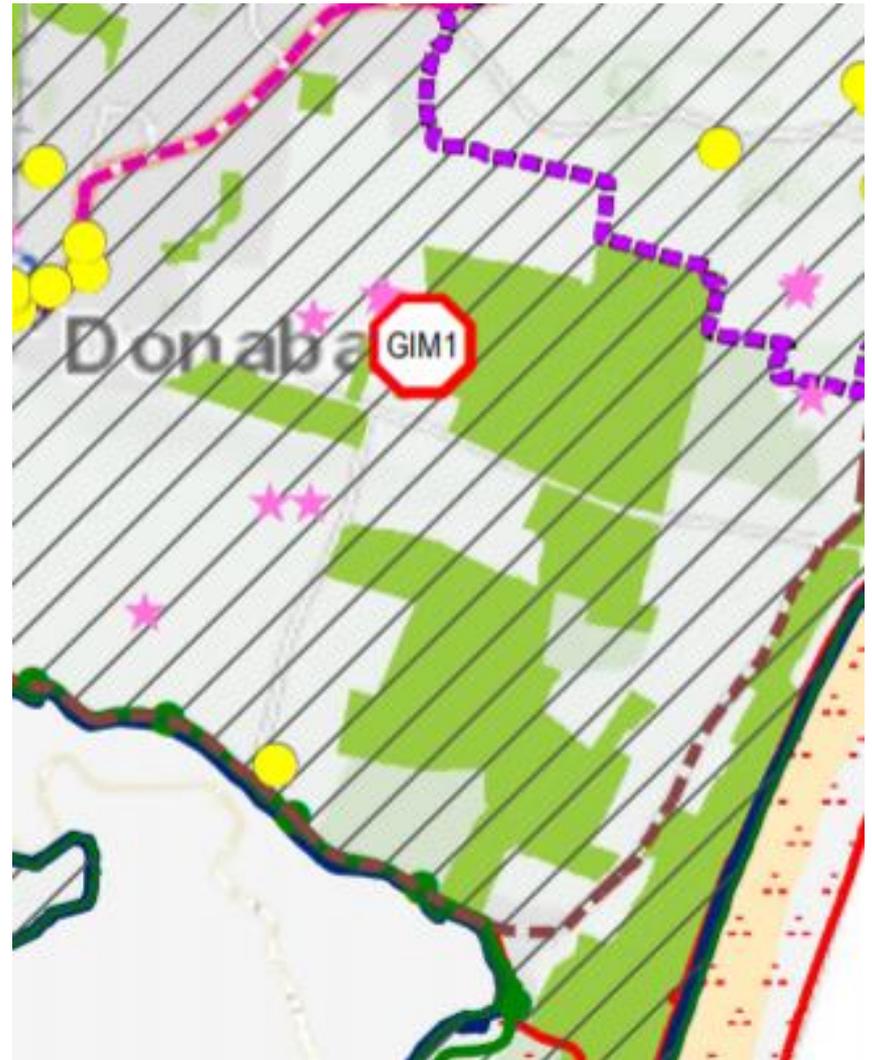
The site is located within the Donabate Development Boundary.

The application site includes the following designations within the Fingal Development Plan:

- A map based objective for a proposed school overlaps with the north-eastern corner of the site.
- Historic Landscape Characterisation Area:
- Landscape Character Area: Coastal
- Highly Sensitive Landscape: Coast

The site is the subject of a Green Infrastructure Mapped Objective (GIM) as follows:

**GIM 1** – Provide new active recreational hubs in Bremore Regional Park, St. Catherine's Park Rush, Lusk, Donabate, Mooretown/Oldtown (swords), Drinan, Baldoyle Racecourse Park and Phoenix Park.



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## 2.1 Local Planning Policy Context Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 Contd.

The following objectives and policy contained within the Written Statement of the current Fingal Development Plan are relevant to this application:

### ***Development Strategy (page 111)***

Protect and enhance the natural amenities and heritage of the Peninsula by consolidating future development within well-defined town boundaries. Promote the development of a vibrant town core by providing a high quality living environment for the existing and future population and providing for the development of the necessary community, commercial, cultural and social facilities in tandem with new residential development

**Objective DONABATE 3** Provide for the further development of recreational, community and educational (primary and second level) facilities

**Objective DONABATE 5** Provide for a comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycle ways linking residential areas to one another, to the town centre, schools, the recreational campus at Ballymastone and the railway station

**Objective DONABATE 10** Prepare and/or implement a Local Area Plan for Donabate providing for the structured

development of the identified new residential areas of Donabate such that they integrate into the established village and support the continued growth of a vibrant and attractive town for existing and future residents

**Objective DONABATE 13** Promote and facilitate the provision of a skate park in the Donabate / Portrane area

**Objective SS17** Manage the development and growth of Donabate in a planned manner linked to the capacity of local infrastructure to support new development of the area and taking account of the ecological sensitivity of qualifying features of nearby European Sites.

**Objective PM55:** Ensure coherent clustering of recreational and open space facilities into a recreational hub arrangement unless a more practicable solution is demonstrated.

The Plan sets out policies and objectives for the provision of a hierarchy of high quality, attractive and secure public and private open spaces, ranging from regional parks and major local parks down to smaller pocket parks, private gardens and balconies, as well as intensive recreational, amenity and community facilities such as active Recreational Hubs and Multiple Games Areas (MUGAs).



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## 2.2 Local Planning Policy Context, Donabate Local Area Plan (LAP) 2016

### **2.2 Strategic Aims of the LAP**

Provide a framework for a growing population with phased development of new housing delivered in tandem with supporting community and physical infrastructure.

#### **LAP Objectives**

**OBJECTIVE 3.7** Provide for good quality bicycle parking facilities at key locations within the LAP lands such as the Corballis Local Centre and the Ballymastone Campus, in accordance with Fingal Development Plan standards.

**OBJECTIVE 4.7** To provide a large multi-functional playground at Ballymastone with a range of facilities to cater for a variety of age-groups (toddlers to teens)

**OBJECTIVE 5.5** Protect, preserve and ensure the effective management of trees and groups of trees.

**OBJECTIVE 5.6** Require the use of native planting where appropriate in new developments in consultation with the Council. Indigenous, non-invasive species should be considered to provide habitat for locally occurring fauna ensuring, at a minimum, there should be no net loss of the tree and hedgerow resource.

**OBJECTIVE 6.2** Provide an education, sporting, recreation and community development in a campus environment at Ballymastone which supports the consolidation of existing sporting facilities and includes an All-Weather pitch, a full sized running track, new school development together with shared supporting infrastructure, in line with an agreed Masterplan.

**OBJECTIVE 8.2** Prepare a Campus Masterplan to support the creation of an Educational and Recreational hub at Ballymastone to include the consolidation of existing sporting facilities in this area and to collocate new recreational amenities adjacent to new school site facilities, supporting the Fingal Schools Model. The entrance gates and setting together with the old tree-lined avenue leading to Ballymastone which forms the original right-of-way to Portrane Demesne shall be preserved in any development in this area. The Masterplan, including any new development, shall take account of the Architectural Conservation Area at Portrane Demesne (St Ita's Hospital) where these lands adjoin this sensitive landscape.

**OBJECTIVE 8.3** Improve vehicular and pedestrian access to St Ita's and St Pat's Football Club facilities.

#### **Section 4.3.1 Open Space Hierarchy**

*'Ballymastone Educational and Recreational Hub. The designated open space lands at Ballymastone will accommodate the expansion and consolidation of active recreation facilities to form a significant Active Recreational Hub, including a new all-weather pitch, athletics track and other sporting facilities. The facilities proposed here will support and strengthen existing recreational facilities (St Pats and St Ita's football clubs) and will be accessible to existing and proposed residential communities. School site provision is also included at this location. A Masterplan for this area will guide its development in the future.'*

#### **Section 8.2.3 Ballymastone Area 'Recreation / Education Hub**

*The eastern portion of the lands represent an appropriate location for the creation of an 'Educational and Recreational Hub', which will include the consolidation of the established sporting amenities, which will be co-located with proposed new school facilities. This will provide an opportunity to deliver community, sporting and recreational facilities in an integrated manner, supporting the Fingal Schools Model. Approximately 7.2ha have been designated for the Educational and Recreation Campus at this location, adjoining the existing football club.'*

#### **9.2.1 Phasing of Ballymastone Educational and Recreational Campus**

*'The established football and GAA clubs at Ballymastone will provide the focus for the development and expansion of the education, community and sports hub. The provision of road access to this location is important in the overall development of the area for recreational and sporting facilities ('Campus Link Road' referred to above). Efficient and deliverable co-location of various facilities with different operators/ clubs/interest groups will require the preparation of a Masterplan for the campus. This will deal with issues of building siting, access arrangements, car parking, urban design and overall layout in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. The preparation of a Campus Masterplan will be an important first step in securing the future of the project and is included in the Phasing Schedule. Provision of road infrastructure, school and recreation facilities will also be detailed.'*



## 3.0 Planning Assessment:

As regards the assessment of the proposals in terms of Planning Compliance, the key considerations are as follows:

- Fingal Development Plan Objectives
- Donabate Local Area Plan Objectives
- Visual and Residential Amenities
- Landscape
- Transportation
- Water & Drainage
- Archaeology & Conservation
- Appropriate Assessment
- EIA Screening.



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## 3.1 Compliance with Development Plan/Local Area Plan

The proposal involves the provision of a Recreational Hub and improvement works to an existing area of open space. The uses proposed are permitted in principle on the RA zoning serving the lands.

The proposed development will provide for additional and enhanced recreational infrastructure to serve Donabate. As noted above, Donabate is defined as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town characterised by a young and expanding population. The proposed development will benefit the town having regard to the population expansion that has occurred in recent years and will actively support the achievement of FDP Objective SS17 which seeks to 'Manage the development and growth of Donabate in a planned manner linked to the capacity of local infrastructure to support new development of the area and taking account of the ecological sensitivity of qualifying features of nearby European Sites' and Objective DONABATE 3 and DONABATE 13 which seeks to provide for a skatepark and improved recreational facilities in the town.

The proposal seeks to provide for a sports and recreational hub on land which is specifically identified for this purpose within the Fingal Development Plan

through the Green Infrastructure Mapped Objective GIM1 in addition to specific objectives within the Donabate Local Area Plan identifying Ballymastone as the location for a recreational and educational hub.

The design of the recreational hub, specifically the potential for shared car parking, drop off and ease off access from the site to the lands to the north, will facilitate sharing of facilities with future educational uses. The layout as proposed fulfils the recreational requirements of the planned development of the area, while also ensuring planned residential development can easily use, integrate with and benefit from the sporting facilities proposed. Furthermore the ease of access to the recreational campus via the DDR will ensure that active travel uses are encouraged.

In this respect, the proposal is consistent with the Fingal Development Plan objectives and the Donabate Local Area Plan Objectives which seek to enhance the provision of open space and recreation in tandem with other development.



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## 3.2 Visual and Residential Amenity

The proposed development relates to sports and recreational facilities. The facility will be largely located on an existing sports pitch, and is abutted by sporting facilities to the south and east, with agricultural fields to the west and north. The lands to the north are identified for educational use. The closest existing residential uses are in Priory Wood, 140m to the north, beyond the Donabate Distributor Road (DDR). The existing undeveloped lands to the west of the DDR and to the southwest of the site are identified for future housing development under the Local Area Plan (LAP). The land to the west of the DDR will be separated from the use by that road, while the RA zoned land to the south will benefit from mitigation in the form of defined boundary fencing and associated planted hedgerows at the interface of the south-western section of the athletics track with the undeveloped RA zoned lands. The proposed development increases access to and participation in sport and recreational amenity,

which will be to the benefit of the future inhabitants of new and existing housing. The skatepark and playground will be located within the Recreational Hub such that they will not be proximate to future housing and are not considered to have a significant negative noise or nuisance impact in that regard.

Having regard to the existing uses, the RA zoning of the land, the identification of the land as being for a recreational and educational hub and the presence of a significant amount of existing pitches and flood lighting, it is not considered that the proposed recreational uses would result in a significant negative impact on existing or future residential uses, subject to recommended hours of operation of 9am to 10pm Monday to Sunday, maximum lighting levels of no more than 5 lux at the elevations of habitable structures and the provision of directional cowling associated with all flood lighting.



## 3.3 Landscape

The submitted ecological studies indicate that the proposal will have a negative impact on the existing landscape. This is largely due to the necessary removal of hedges and trees on the site in order to facilitate the intensive level of facilities on the site. Having regard to the rigid dimensions which are expected of high quality athletic and sporting facilities, the ability to reduce the size and scale of the tracks and pitches to accommodate this hedgerow retention is minimal. A detailed landscape plan for the site will be prepared in advance of the project proceeding. This landscape plan will include provision for compensatory hedgerow and tree planting along the

boundary of the site to maintain habitat connectivity. Local species, such as those currently present will be used as the the main constituent species of replacement hedgerows. Species such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Dog-rose and Elderberry have been demonstrated as suitable for the local climate and soil. As well as having high biodiversity value, these species also display attractive variation throughout the seasons, with blossoms and berries providing significant amenity and wildlife value. These species can also provide effective screening if densely planted. The use of Hazel will also be a suitable addition to the planting palette due to its considerable wildlife value.



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## 3.4 Transportation

The proposed recreational hub will provide a substantial car park with associated cycle parking and coach parking, all accessible via an avenue off the Donabate Distributor Road (DDR). Paths and cycle paths are proposed throughout the development to provide ease of access to the recreational facilities. Emergency vehicle access is provided for throughout the layout, allowing ease of movement to the athletics track and sports pitches. A vehicular access point is provided for through the layout to the laneway access to St. Patrick's GAA Club and St. Ita's AFC. This access facilitates resilience of movement, permeability for cyclists and walkers, and also looped access for future use by users of the educational and recreational campus. Control of this access will be detailed as part of a campus management plan.

The Transportation Planning Section has outlined no objection to the proposed development. A significant amount of bike parking (300 spaces) has been provided for close to the sports facilities. The avenue access to the campus provides for off-road cycle paths and footpaths. The finalised design will be in compliance with the Design Manual for

Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) to ensure pedestrian priority, especially from the playground/skatepark location to the athletics track/pitches. The extensive inclusion of permeable paving throughout the development area will contribute significantly to the environmental resilience of the completed project. In order to future proof direct cyclist and pedestrian access to the school campus to the north, provision should be made for 4m wide paths at the eastern and western ends of the car park layout with these links should be carried through the berm proposed to the north of the car park providing visible and direct links to the school facilities. The car parking provision is significant but necessary having regards to the level of facilities provided and the differing codes proposing to use these facilities and the times of operation proposed.



## 3.5 Water & Drainage

A Stage 1 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) confirmed that the site is not considered to be at significant risk of flooding from any source.

In relation to Flood Zones as defined by the OPW Guidelines, the initial assessment suggests that the site is within Flood Zone C. As such the proposed development at the site will not cause an increase in flood risk elsewhere. Further to this, the proposal is for water compatible development,

being sporting facilities.

As regards connections to water/wastewater infrastructure Fingal County Council will engage with Irish Water in relation to any necessary connection / diversion agreements .



## 3.6 Archaeology

Geophysical survey and archaeological test trenching undertaken for the Donabate Local Area Plan (LAP) identified the proposed development site as an 'archaeological risk zone'. Discrete test-excavation (2 trenches) identified a burnt mound/possible "fulacht fiadh" and an associated ditch suggestive of Bronze Age (c. 2400–500 BC) date. These identified archaeological features will be detrimentally impacted and require pre-development preservation by record, that is archaeologically resolved prior to development. The Heritage Officer has recommended further test excavation on the land

prior to the commencement of development. Having regard to the locations identified and the presence of a townland boundary on the site, it is considered appropriate to require excavation in the identified locations.

## 3.7 Conservation

The recreational hub will be separated from the St. Ita's Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) by other sporting grounds. It is not considered that the proposal will have a significant impact on the ACA.



## 3.8 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening

A Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been undertaken in relation to the proposed development to determine whether it can be excluded on the basis of objective information that the proposed development will have an effect on any Natura 2000 site, individually or together with other plans and projects.

In view of best scientific knowledge the Appropriate Assessment(AA) Screening Report concludes that the proposed Recreational Hub individually or in combination with another plan or project, will not have

a significant effect on any European sites. This assessment was reached without considering or taking into account mitigation measures or measures intended to avoid or reduce any impact on European sites. It is considered that this report provides sufficient relevant information to allow the Competent Authority (Fingal County Council) to carry out an AA Screening, and reach a determination that the Proposed Project will not have any likely significant effects on European sites under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in light of their conservation objectives.



## 3.9 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report for the project has been prepared in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. The screening report examines the characteristics of the proposed development, the location of the proposed development and the type and characteristics of the potential impacts.

Having regard to the nature and scale of proposed development and

to the limited nature of environmental sensitivities, the Preliminary Examination has concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development at Ballymastone Recreational Hub.

The need for further screening for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and therefore, in accordance with article 120(1)(b)(i) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2021, the requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) can be excluded on the basis of the Preliminary Examination



# Ballymastone Recreational Hub – Development Project

## FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

### Ballymastone Recreational Hub

### Development Project

### Part 8 Planning Application

July 2021

#### 4.0 Conclusion

The proposed Ballymastone Recreational Hub development project is consistent with the land use zoning objectives pertaining to the lands set out in the Fingal Development Plan, 2017-2023.

The proposal accords with the relevant and applicable objectives of the Fingal Development Plan, 2017-2023 and the Donabate Local Area Plan 2016.

