

**PROPOSED ALL-WEATHER RUNNING TRACK
AND SPORTS PITCH**

PORTERSTOWN PARK, DUBLIN 15

EIA Screening Statement

Fingal County Council

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1.1 Background

Fingal County Council has been developing Porterstown Park as a major recreational hub for the Dublin 15 area for more than 20 years. Today, the park supports 9 grass pitches, a cricket oval, a car park for 85 cars, an grassed overflow car park for 120 cars, a network of paths and the club house for Castleknock United. The park is divided into distinct sections due to the presence of mature hedgerows and associated drains.

Consultation with local sports clubs in 2017-2018 identified the need for an all-weather facility as a priority for development in the park. Currently the local clubs travel across County Dublin and beyond to avail of all-weather facilities to allow them to use pitches and running tracks during autumn to spring period. The Council is now proposing to develop a 17,000m² 3rd Generation synthetic surface all-weather running track and sports pitch in Porterstown Park, (See Fig No. 1 below). The facility will be serviced by the existing carpark and a network of approximately 1,500 metres of new footpaths.

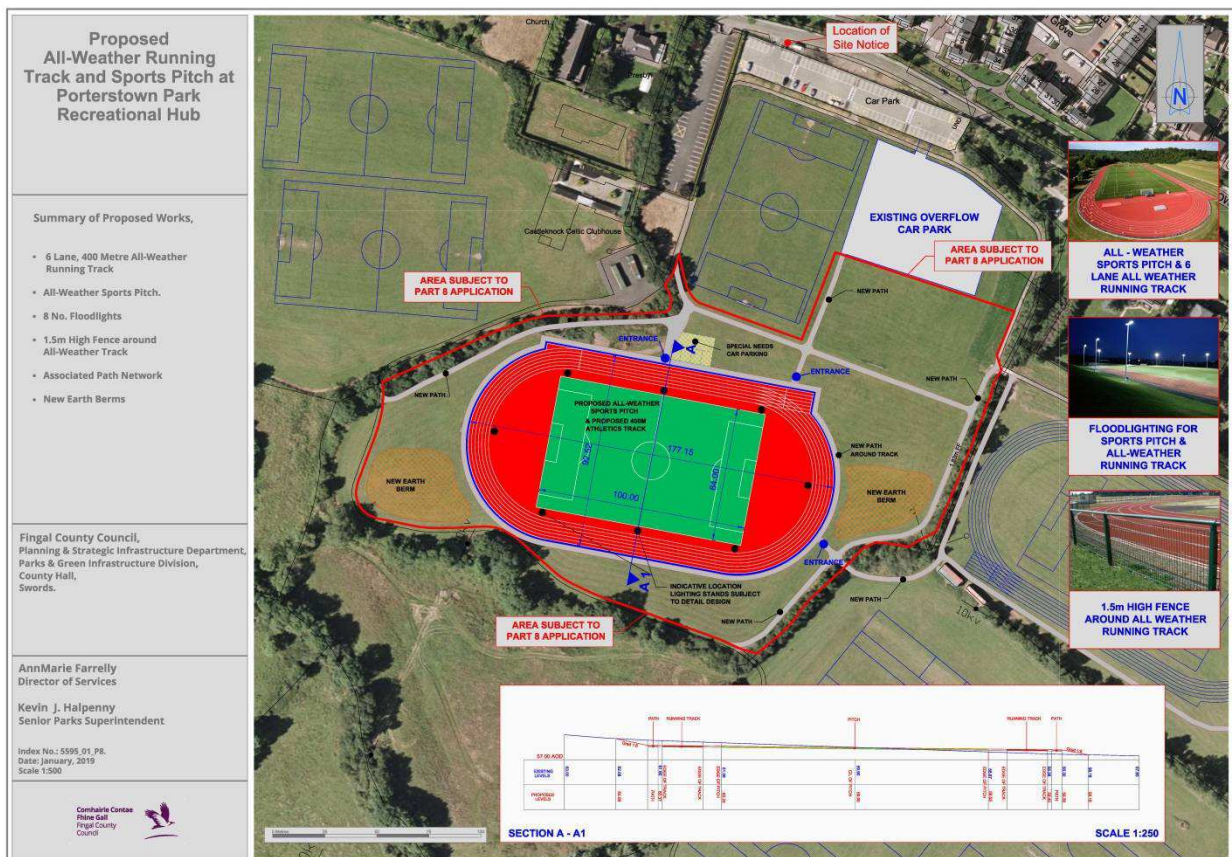


Figure 1: Proposed All-Weather running Track and Sports Pitch

1.2 Purpose of this report

This report has been prepared to support the planning application by Fingal County Council by describing the proposed scheme and its potential impact on the surrounding environment. The report has been prepared by Hans Visser BSc Forestry & Nature Management M. Env Sc, whom has 16 years of experience as a Biodiversity Officer and Parks Superintendent with Fingal County Council.

The purpose of this report is to determine whether the project requires an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The proposed development of an all-weather running track and sports pitch will be screened to generate a summarised overview of the potential impacts of the proposal on the receiving environment and in the context of the relevant statutory requirements. Should the likelihood of significant environmental effects exist, mitigation measures and alternative solutions will be advised such that, as far as is practicable, there will be no significant environmental effect on the receiving environment as a result of this development.

A separate Appropriate Assessment screening report which assesses the potential impacts on designated Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed scheme has been prepared by Brady Shipman Martin. The AA screening report has also been submitted as part of the technical documents in support of the planning application.

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

The determination of the environmental topics to be considered in this report, as well as the scope of each chapter, were informed by the following best practice guidance documents: -

- Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, EPA, 2018;
- Revised Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements – Draft', EPA, 2017;
- Advice Notes For Preparing Environmental Impact Statements', EPA, 2015; and
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Subthreshold Development DoEHLG, 2003.
- Environmental Impact of Projects, Guidance on Screening, European Union, 2017

Relevant discipline specific guidance on impact assessment / best practice was also consulted

1.4 Description of proposed scheme

The Council is proposing to develop a 3rd Generation synthetic surface all-weather running track and sports pitch located in Porterstown Park, Dublin 15.

The facility will include a 6 lane 400 metre All-weather Running Track surrounding a 3rd Generation All-weather Sports Pitch. The Council is proposing to use artificial sports turf because this surface can be used all year round without deterioration in performance. 3G artificial grasses are generally soft to the touch and designed to replicate the best quality natural turf in aesthetics and playability. The playing area of the proposed pitch is 100m x 64m or 6,400sq.m. The all-weather facility will be floodlit by 8 No. 15 metre high LED floodlights to a minimum of 500 lux. The facility will be serviced by the existing carpark, but 4 new car parking spaces reserved for people with Special Needs will be developed beside the facility. 1,500 meters of 2.5m wide tarmac paths will be constructed to provide pedestrian access to and around the new facility. A 1.5m high weldmesh perimeter fence will surround the track with three entrances (including two vehicular entrances). Soil excavated during the construction of this facility will be spread in the adjacent parkland to complement the landscape setting of the facility. The site will be drained using soakaways located underneath the new facility. New standard trees will be planted along the northern perimeter of the proposed development to provide for screen planting.

1.5 Construction Methodology

1.5.1 Excavation and Earthworks and Clearance

Topsoil shall be excavated within the footprint of the facility to an average depth of 200mm. This will be retained on site. The final finished level of the new pitch will be calculated to match the existing surrounding land levels and will not exceed 1% cross fall in any direction.

1.5.2 Drainage design (Subject to further design/build specification)

Drainage trenches will be dug at 8m centres and 80mm perforated drainage pipes will be laid and backfilled with 10mm single sized clean stone. The drainage pipes will connect to a 160mm perforated carrier pipe which will collect all drainage water and discharge this into appropriately scaled soakaways within the footprint of the development area. The piped drainage system will be designed to be self-cleansing and will not require any routine maintenance. Catch-pits and or rodding points will be installed to enable the system to be cleaned if required at any time in the future.

1.5.3 Geotextile

Geotextile by Terram or equivalent will be installed to the entire area prior to the sub base material being installed in order to prevent contamination of the subsoil from the stone/gravel base.

1.5.4 Kerbing

To the perimeter of the field construction area, spectator and recessed areas, a 50mm x 150mm precast concrete edging will be installed and laid to correct fall and levels. All edgings will be laid to level, bedded and haunched in concrete and installed so the top of the edging will be level with finished level of the playing surface.

1.5.5 Sub base system (Subject to further Design Build detail)

The sub-base will be constructed to the full pitch area to a finished total depth of approximately 260mm using 230mm of Quarried Hard-core and 30mm of Porous Macadam. The surface will be laid to the full pitch and track area with the aid of a laser-operated dozer and road paving machinery and compacted with a twin drum vibrating roller to the correct levels, tolerances, and pitch fall. The pitch base will be designed in order to provide stability which will not deviate outside of the specified tolerances for a minimum 8 year period.

1.5.6 Shock Pad

A high load bearing geotextile will be loose laid under the artificial turf systems so that the turf layer can be exchanged when needed, without any problems.

1.5.7 Synthetic Surface

A synthetic surface which conforms to 3G specifications will be laid over the sports pitch areas and a porous synthetic surface constructed from 10-12mm thick Black SBR and overlaid with 2-3mm of coloured spray textured coat. Line markings will be as per the approved layout drawing. The majority of the lines on the pitch will be tufted into the supplied carpet during manufacturing and the track lines sprayed on during the track laying process. The playing surface of the pitch will be brushed to ensure the fibre is in a vertical position prior to infilling. The new 3rd Generation synthetic grass will be infilled with kiln dried silica sand and black SBR rubber at the rates required using specialist spreading equipment.

1.5.8 Fencing

The fencing system will be 540m of 1.50m high 8/6/8 standard twin bar panel fencing to the perimeter of the all-weather facility. 3 x 3.00m wide pairs of double leaf gates in the 1.50m high fencing c/w gate end posts and lintel panels to suit.

1.5.9 Floodlighting

The new scheme will include 8 x 15m high lighting columns, 1 control cabinet and associated ducting and cable connections. The installation will consist of erecting the eight floodlighting columns onto prepared column foundation blocks. The ducting and electricity supply cable will be laid around the inner perimeter of the running track area and back to a vandal-proof distribution switch pillar adjacent to the playing area.

1.5.10 Access and Spectator Paths

A 2.5m wide perimeter spectator path and access footpaths will be constructed using 200mm of Clause 804 broken stone for sub-base under 40mm of 20mm open graded binder course macadam and 25mm of 6mm dense graded surface course macadam.

1.5.11 Reinstatement/Landscaping

Top soil shall be placed adjacent to kerb lines to a minimum depth of 250mm and all areas shall be ripped, cultivated and stones removed prior to the final seeding operation. Surplus sub-soil and topsoil will be incorporated into landscaped berms located immediately adjoining the all-weather areas and graded to improve the setting of the new pitch and running track. Areas of exposed soil will be seeded at a rate of 28grms/m² of approved amenity grass seed. Standard trees will be planted along the northern perimeter to provide screen planting

1.6 Operational phase

3G all weather facilities require regular maintenance such as

- Drag matting / brushing to redistribute infill
- The localised topping up (penalty spot, centre spot, corner kick areas etc) of fill materials to ensure consistent ball and foot responses from the surface and to provide support to the carpet's pile
- The removal of litter, leaves and other debris from the surface.

No chemicals are used for the maintenance of the pitches that may spill into the groundwater or dissolve into the air.

The above maintenance operations are usually carried out with specialised artificial turf machinery and are unlikely to have any detrimental impact on the environment.

2. Methodology

2.1 EIA Screening

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening was undertaken in line with Section 3 of the Guidelines for planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (EPA August 2018).

The first step is to determine if the proposed works represent a project as understood by the Directive. Such projects are defined in part I and II of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2016. However, it is not just a question of comparing the proposed works to the general description of project types; it may also be necessary to go further and consider the component parts of the proposed works and any processes arising from them.

The next step is to determine whether the project exceeds a specific threshold as set out in the legislation. The only type of project to which thresholds do not apply are those considered to always be likely to have significant effects and therefore require an EIAR.

There are no exacting rules as to what constitutes “significant” in terms of environmental impacts. The responsibility is on Planning Authorities to carefully examine every aspect of a development in the context of Characterisation of the Project; Location of the project and Type & Characteristics of potential impacts. It is generally not necessary to provide specialist studies or technical reports to complete this screening process, rather to investigate where further studies may be required, and where risks, if any, to the integrity of the receiving environment may lie.

Additionally, the screening process can be aided using the checklists contained within the European Commission publication Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening (2017), in particular the “Screening Checklist” and the “Checklist of Criteria for Evaluating the Significance of Environmental Impacts”. A detailed screening checklist was completed for the proposed development and is contained within Appendix B.

2.2 Legislative Context

The Environmental Impact Directive (85/337/EEC) was brought into force in 1985. Subsequent amendments were made with the following pieces of legislation - 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC, 2009/31/EC and 2014/52/EU. The Directive was originally transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989 (S.I. No. 349/1989). This amended the Local Government (Planning and Development Act)

1963, and introduced the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment in certain specified circumstances.

Annex I of the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations lists the activities for which a Mandatory EIA is required. Annex II of the Regulations lists the activities for which the relevant Member State is to exercise discretion on whether or not an EIA is necessary. This decision must be made on a case-by-case basis. Annex III of the Regulations outlines the criteria which must be taken into consideration when a sub-threshold project is being examined for Environmental Impact. Screening is the process of deciding whether a development requires an EIAR. The mandatory and discretionary provisions within Part I & II of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001–2016 deem whether an EIAR is mandatory for a project.

2.3 Mandatory Requirement for EIA

An EIA is required as a matter of course on specified large-scale projects which have a high likelihood of impacting on the receiving environment. These projects are listed in detail in the EIA Directive, Annex I, (85/337/EU – amended 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC, 2009/31/EC, 2014/52/EU) and are listed in the Planning & Development Regulations, Schedule 5, Part 1 – Development for the purposes of Part 10. See Table 2.1 below for a list of activities requiring mandatory EIA.

Table 2.1 Activities requiring Mandatory EIA

Process or Activity
Crude-oil refinery
Gasification & Liquifaction
Nuclear Power
Radioactive Waste Storage & Disposal
Melting of cast-iron or steel
Extraction or processing of asbestos, or products containing asbestos
Integrated chemical installation
Railway line
Aerodrome runway
Trading port or inland waterway
Disposal of hazardous waste

The proposed project does not fall within the above list of activities requiring mandatory EIA. Accordingly, this project has been further considered under the relevant list of activities which warrant discretionary consideration for the requirement of an EIA.

2.4 Requirement for Member State Discretionary Decision on EIA

Each EU Member State has discretionary consideration for the requirement of an EIA in relation to the various processes and activities as listed in the Planning & Development Regulations, Schedule 5, Part 2 – Development for the purposes of Part 10 (see table 2.2):

Table 2.2 Activities requiring consideration for EIA.

Process or Activity
Intensive Agriculture, including salmon farming and land reclamation
Extractive industries, including peat extraction, associated processes and geothermal drilling.
Energy industry
Processing of metals
Manufacture of glass
Chemical Industry
Food industry
Textile, leather, wood and paper industries
Rubber industry
Infrastructure projects
Other projects
All modifications to specified developments

The proposed All-weather Running Track and Pitch does not fall within the above list of activities which would warrant discretionary consideration for the requirement of an EIA. Hence the preparation of an EIAR for this project is not required under Schedule 5, Part 1 or Part 2 of the relevant Planning & Development Regulations.

3. Criteria for Evaluation of Processes and Activities

Although the project may not be subject to mandatory EIAR, the County Council considered the proposal in line with sub-threshold development criteria to determine if any significant impact on the environment is likely. Criteria to evaluate whether impacts are significant on the environment arising from developments are listed in Table 2.3 below (based on Schedule 7 of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001: Criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment).

Criteria	Summary of Level of Detail	Phase
Characterisation of the project	The characteristics of proposed development, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the size of the proposed development, • the cumulation with other proposed development, • the nature of any associated demolition works, • the use of natural resources, • the production of waste, • pollution and nuisances, • the risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used 	Construction Operational
Location of the project	The existing land use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area, • the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) wetlands, (b) coastal zones, (c) mountain and forest areas, (d) nature reserves and parks, (e) areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC, (f) areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded, (g) densely populated areas, (h) landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance. 	
Type and characteristics of the potential impact	Extent of the impact having particular regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population), • the transfrontier nature of the impact, • the magnitude and complexity of the impact, • the probability of the impact, • the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact 	Construction Operational

Each of the criteria Characterisation of the project, Location of the project and the Type and Characteristics of the potential impact have been considered in the tables below.

3.1 Characterisation of the project

Screening elements	Summary
size of the proposed development	<p>Given the overall size of Porterstown park, the footprint of the proposed range of facilities is relatively small (1.7ha running track and pitch and 0.375ha for pathways out of a total of 20ha of parkland). The land take relates to amenity grassland, which is considered to be of low ecological interest.</p>
Cumulative impact with other proposed development,	<p>An initial review of recent plans and projects that may have the potential to result in cumulative impacts has been undertaken. This section considers plans and projects in Fingal that were considered. Data sources included the Fingal County Council website and Fingal Development Plan (2017 - 2023)</p> <p>Most recent developments in the Liffey Valley relate to amendments to existing properties and not to any large scale developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FW15A/0157 Permission for a 3 storey extension at the Castleknock Hotel • FW16A/0003 permission for replacement of the sports hall at Castleknock College, • FW17A/0082: Permission for alterations the outbuildings of Somerton House and FW17A/0141 erection of a steel glass canopy at Somerton House. • FW16A/0052 and FW18A/0182 Permissions for demolition of existing dwellings and the development of a new dwelling at both sites • FW18A/0002 Permission for demolition of existing out-buildings & extension to rear of an existing dwelling house <p>Planning permission FW16A/0007 for the construction of a two storey extension to the existing secondary school on the Porterstown road, including a new community facility may lead to more traffic on the Portertown road at school opening and closing times.</p> <p>There is an application for permission FW18a/0155 for the erection of 15 no. ten & twelve metre high floodlighting</p>

	<p>masts and lighting together with an ancillary shed (45sq.m), and 4 no. thirteen metre high poles for the provision of a retaining net, on a site area measuring 4.5ha within the sports grounds of the Castleknock Hurling & Football Club at Diswellstown, Castleknock, Dublin 15. This application is currently under consideration by the Council.</p> <p>Having considered the anticipated overall potential impact with respect to each of these developments, it is considered that there are no likely significant effects on the environment when considered in combination with each other. It is therefore considered that the cumulative impact of the Project in combination with existing baseline conditions (the projects listed above) is not significantly worse than any of the individual impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development.</p>
Demolition works,	The proposed development does not include any demolition works
Use of natural resources,	<p>The All-weather Running Track and Pitch comprises a natural stone base, topped by a shockpad and an artificial grass mat filled with fine sand and recycled rubber crumb. The pathways are made up of a gravel base with a tarmac surface.</p> <p>None of the above materials are short in supply and most of these materials can be recycled. All materials will be sourced locally where possible.</p>
Production of waste	<p>The development of the facility and the pathways will require excavation. Most of the excavated material will be used as fill within the footprint of the track to level out the site for the track and pitch. Any surplus excavated soil will be spread and graded to create a gently undulating area adjacent to the facility. The typical excavation depth will be approximately 0.2m along the northern boundary of the Running Track, while the ground levels at the southern part of the facility will be raised approx 0.2m. Pathways will be excavated 0.3m deep. Deeper excavations will be required during the installation of underground lighting ducts; however, such excavations will be localised.</p> <p>The construction phase of the development may generate waste such as plastic wrapping or wooden pallets etc. This type of construction waste will be segregated and removed from the site for disposal or recycling at licenced facilities, in accordance with all relevant Waste Management Legislation.</p>

Pollution and nuisances,

There will be CO2 emissions associated with the construction works and the transportation of materials to the site as a result of emissions of the vehicles. During the operation of the proposed facility there will be some emissions from the maintenance vehicles that sweep and level the rubber-sand fill on the pitch.

There are no hydrological links between the proposed development and nearby water courses such as the River Liffey. It is proposed to use soakaways underneath the pitch for surface water drainage. The stone base underneath the pitch can also hold a significant amount of surface water, which will slowly drain away via the soakaways. Drainage of the pathways will be by over-the-edge drainage and infiltration.

It is envisaged that there will be minimal direct disturbance to humans and wildlife during the construction phase, which is planned to be carried out during the summer. No habitats of potential local importance such as hedgerows will be removed as part of this scheme and the existing pathway network will remain open so park users can continue to use the park.

Flood lighting is proposed to allow for greater use of the facility in winter and night time in other seasons. This type of lighting can be a nuisance to both wildlife and people. Light trespass takes place when facilities are lit inaccurately so that direct illumination goes beyond their boundaries to cause a nuisance to those in the vicinity. Research has shown that night lighting can have a detrimental impact on nocturnal wildlife such as bats and moths. A bat survey undertaken in 2018 showed that three species of bat use the hedgerow to the south of proposed development for commuting and foraging. Lighting has the potential to affect bats in several ways including abandonment of roost sites, avoidance of areas previously used as feeding sites or commuting routes or increasing the likelihood of predation by birds such as sparrowhawks and owls. Lighting will most probably have its greatest impact when sunset is earlier, and lighting would be present for the two hours following sunset (or several minutes before it) when bats are most active. In winter, bat activity in Porterstown and along the River Liffey is likely to be very low with occasional flights to feed, drink or move roosts.

	<p>To prevent impacts on wildlife and nearby residents, the floodlights are to be fitted with louvres, hoods, shields or cowls. This will ensure that the light is directed to the intended area and avoids light spill towards the nearby hedgerows (max light level near hedge is 3 lux) and towards dwellings in the vicinity of the park. Furthermore the lights are to be turned off completely after 10pm.</p> <p>An indirect effect of floodlighting is the extended use of the site during the winter months and the evenings compared to the existing situation. This will lead to more traffic on local roads during these extended opening hours. Evenings will be divided up in hourly training sessions which may attract up to 40-50 members. If all these members come by individual cars this would mean an additional flow of traffic of up to 250 cars over a 5 hour period during the autumn-spring months. The car park will be able to cope with this and it is envisaged that local roads will be able to cope with this extra volume of traffic.</p>
<p>Risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used</p>	<p>The risk of accidents associated with this development would not cause unusual, significant or adverse effects of a type that would, in themselves, require an EIA.</p> <p>During the construction stage, the likelihood of an accidental spillage of construction materials into the aquatic environment is low as there are no direct links with any nearby watercourses. Similarly, the risk of pollution accidents during the operational stage is low.</p>

3.2 Location of Proposed Development

Screening Elements	Summary of Impacts
<p>The existing land use</p>	<p>The proposed development is located within an existing park on the site of existing grass pitch. The project complies with the Development Plan as Porterstown Park has the Zoning Objective “OS” To Preserve and Provide for Open Space and Recreational Amenities”.</p> <p>Furthermore, there is a specific objective in the County Development Plan to upgrade recreational facilities in Porterstown Park: Objective GIM6: <i>Upgrade existing Active Recreation Hubs in Skerries, Ridgewood (Swords), Broomfield (Malahide), Hartstown, Porterstown and St. Catherine’s Park (Liffey Valley).</i></p>

<p>The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area,</p>	<p>The proposed site for the all-weather facility is an amenity grassland. There is plenty of this type of grassland in the Porterstown Park. No other landscape features and natural habitats will be affected.</p>
<p>The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) wetlands, (b) coastal zones, (c) mountain and forest areas, (d) nature reserves and parks, (e) areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC, (f) areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded, (g) densely populated areas, (h) landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance. 	<p>The environmental sensitivity of the proposed site is considered relatively low. The only habitat affected is frequently mown amenity grassland. No hedgerows or trees will be removed. Bats are the only protected species known on the site and their foraging and commuting behavior could be affected by the flood lighting. This issue will be addressed by means of fitting louvres, shields or cowls on the flood lights to prevent any light spill towards the nearby hedgerows and by turning off the lights after 10pm. In terms of other potential impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) No wetlands will be affected by this proposal (b) No coastal zones will be affected by this proposal (c) No mountain or Forest Areas will be affected by this proposed. (d) No nature reserves will be affected. The development is located in Porterstown Park, which is also designated as a recreational hub under the Fingal Development Plan. (e) The proposed development is is not located in an area under any wildlife or conservation legislation. Furthermore, no rare, threatened or legally protected plant species are known to occur on the site. No features of ecological significance are likely to be affected by this proposed development. <p>The nearest designated site is the Liffey Valley pNHa. The site is located approx. 190m away from this proposed Natural Heritage Area at Luttrellstown Demesne and the proposed development will not have detrimental impact on this site as it is not directly or indirectly linked to the proposed development.</p>

The AA screening report for the project noted that the proposals do not have a direct impact on any SAC's or SPA's within a 15km radius designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.

(f) The site is within the catchment of the River Liffey. Any surface and ground water from the park most likely makes its way to this river. The River Waterbody Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status for the River Liffey is poor and the River Waterbody score for the River Liffey is 'at risk of not achieving good status'. It is proposed to install soakaways for draining the surface water underneath the all-weather facility. The stone foundation can also hold a significant amount of surface water, thereby avoiding any standing water on the pitch. This will allow for the surface water to ultimately feed into the groundwater aquifer. There will therefore be no direct surface water discharge from the site to the river Liffey or any change in hydrology on the site due to the construction of the all-weather pitch. Groundwater from the higher parts of the Liffey Valley will likely discharge on the flanks of the Liffey Valley and into the river. This water will have been filtered by the soil and should be clean at discharge. Accordingly, the proposed development will not affected the water quality of the river Liffey in a detrimental way.

(g) Porterstown Park is located south and away from the densely populated areas and the proposed development is therefore unlikely to impact upon a large population.

(h) The proposed development is located in Porterstown Park. This park is located outside the Liffey Valley SAAO boundary.

The park is located in a highly sensitive River Valley Landscape character type. The County Development Plan lists a number of principles of development that are relevant to the all-weather pitch and running track proposal:

- *Skylines, horizon and ridgelines should be protected from development.* The pitch and fencing are below the height of the hedge to the south of the proposed development and are therefore not visible against the horizon. The flood lights associated with the development will be visible along the skyline. Various heights were considered, but only the 15m high floodlights provide the 500 lux required on the pitch and surrounding running track. Appendix A shows a photo montage of the flood lights against the skyline. It is considered that the visual impact of these lights is not considered significant during the day time, but will be more obvious at dusk when the mountain background is still visible prior to darkness setting in.
- *Sites with natural boundaries should be chosen, rather than elevated or open parts of fields. The form of new developments should be kept simple and they should be sites within the existing shelter planting or within the contours of the land to minimise visual impact.* The site is bounded by a hedgerow to the south and it is proposed to plant trees in front of the development to give the area a more natural appearance when looking south from the Porterstown road towards the Dublin mountains.
- *The use of trees and woodlands to contain new development should be encouraged. Strong planting schemes using native species, to integrate development into these sensitive landscapes will be required.* Trees will be planted to screen the proposed development which will help to blend it into the natural setting of the park

The park is not of significant archaeological significance, but archaeological finds have been made in the north-western and eastern parts of the park. Although there are no known historical sites or monuments located on the site of the proposed all-weather facility, it is proposed that an archaeologist is present during the excavation works in case any finds are uncovered.

3.3 Type and characteristics of the potential impact

Screening elements	Summary of Impacts
the extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population),	The effects of the proposed development are limited to the immediate vicinity of the park. There will be a minor increase in traffic to deliver materials during the construction period. There will be a minor increase in traffic after hours of darkness during the late-autumn-early spring months when the facility is in operation with the floodlights on.
the transfrontier nature of the impact,	There are no transfrontier impacts associated with this development
the magnitude and complexity of the impact,	Significant effects on the receiving environment are not anticipated as a result of the provision of all-weather facility. The magnitude and complexity of the impacts on local traffic volumes and light spill are minimal.
the probability of the impact,	The minor increase in traffic during construction and operation of the facility are probable. The probability of impact of light spill on bats and local resident is low as these will be fitted with shields and cowls. The impact of the floodlights against the skyline is probable.
the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	<p>There will be an impact of increased traffic movement during the construction period. There will be an increase in car traffic on the Porterstown Road during the autumn to late spring period when more people will be visiting the park for sports activities compared to the existing situation. These additional impacts are linked to extended evening opening hours between 5pm and 10pm.</p> <p>The impact of flood lighting will be in the autumn to late spring period and the site is likely to be lit every day to facilitate sports activities during hours of darkness up to 10pm.</p> <p>All impacts can be reversed by amending the opening and closing times of the proposed facility.</p>

4 Screening Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

This screening report has been carried out in accordance with a methodology that is based on the Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA 2018), Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development (DEHLG, 2003), Revised Guidelines on information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (EPA 2017) and the European Commission Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening (2017).

4.2 Mandatory EIA

The proposed development does not fall in a category of development as outlined in Part I and Part II of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations and therefore the Project does not meet the criteria for which the preparation of an EIAR is a mandatory requirement. The project is not a subthreshold development either, but the project has been assessed in accordance with the criteria for sub-threshold development to determine the potential impact on the environment of the project.

4.3 Characteristics Proposed development

The proposal for an All-Weather Running Track and Pitch and a pathway network at Porterstown Parks covers approx. 2ha out of a total of 20ha of parkland. The only loss is frequently mown amenity grassland, which is considered to be of low ecological value. Most of the materials used for the proposed facility are natural or recycled materials such as gravel, sand, plastic, metal and rubber.

Surface water will be attenuated on site, thereby avoiding a possible risk of water pollution to nearby watercourses and the river Liffey during the construction and operational period. It also reduces the potential for changes to the local hydrology as surface water can still percolate through the soil, feeding local aquifers. Flood lighting may have a detrimental impact on wildlife and nearby properties, but by fitting the lights with louvres or shields, the light can be projected onto the intended area and away from nearby hedgerows and properties. Furthermore, the lights will be switched off after 10pm to ensure that there is no unnecessary light emission and energy use. Accordingly, the proposals will not lead to a major change in the overall environmental conditions and visual amenity of the park.

No other major infrastructural or development schemes are planned in the area, so complex and cumulative effects with other schemes can be discounted.

4.4 Location of the Proposed Development

The proposed development is located within an existing park on the site of existing grass pitch. The project complies with the Development Plan as Porterstown Park has the Zoning Objective "OS" To Preserve and Provide for Open Space and Recreational Amenities".

Furthermore, there is a specific objective in the County Development Plan to upgrade recreational facilities in Porterstown Park: Objective GIM6: *Upgrade existing Active Recreation Hubs in Skerries, Ridgewood (Swords), Broomfield (Malahide), Hartstown, Porterstown and St. Catherine's Park (Liffey Valley).*

The environmental sensitivity of the proposed site is considered relatively low. The proposed development is not located in an area under any wildlife or nature conservation legislation. Furthermore, no rare, threatened or legally protected plant species are known to occur on the site. No features of ecological significance are likely to be affected by this proposed development. Bats are the only protected species known on the site and their foraging and commuting behavior could be affected by the flood lighting. This issue will be addressed by means of fitting louvres, shields or cowls on the flood lights to prevent any light spill towards the nearby hedgerows and by turning off the lights after 10pm.

The park is located in a highly sensitive River Valley Landscape character type. The pitch and fencing are below the height of the hedge to the south of the proposed development and are therefore not visible against the horizon. The flood lights associated with the development will be visible along the skyline. It is considered that the visual impact of these lights is not considered significant during the day time, but will be more obvious for a 1 or 2 hours around dusk when the mountain background is still visible while darkness is setting in. It is proposed to plant trees in front of the development which will help to blend it into the natural setting of the park.

It is considered that the proposed development at this particular location will not have a significant detrimental impact on the environment, the park and surrounding communities.

4.5 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The effects of the proposed development are limited to the immediate vicinity of the park. There will be a small increase in traffic during the construction period and there will be a small increase in traffic after hours of darkness during the Autumn to early spring months when the facility is in operation with the floodlights on compared to existing conditions. The likelihood of impact of light spill on bats and local resident is low as the floodlights will be fitted with shields and cowls. The traffic and lighting impacts are reversible by amending the opening and closing times of the proposed facility.

It is considered that the characteristics of the Potential impacts will not have a significant detrimental impact on the environment, the park and surrounding communities.

4.6 Impacts on Natura 2000 sites

It has been concluded, in view of best scientific knowledge, that the proposed Project, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, does not have the potential to give rise to likely significant effects on any Special Conservation Interests / Qualifying Interests of any

Natura 2000 site. Significant effects are not likely to arise as a result of construction works for the proposed Project and direct impacts can be objectively ruled out. The AA Screening concluded that the construction of the proposed all-weather facility was “screened out” and a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment was not required.

4.7 Conclusion

Having assessed the proposed All-Weather Running Track and Pitch and associated infrastructure under the environmental impact criteria outlined in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, it is considered that the proposed development does not have the potential to have significant effects on the environment. Accordingly it is concluded that an an EIAR is not required.

Appendix A: Visual Analysis Flood lighting All-Weather facility



Existing View
5595 (Porterstown Road)



View Post Development of All-Weather Facility
5595 (Porterstown Road)

Appendix B: Screening Checklist

Questions to be Considered	Yes / No /? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant impact? Yes/No/? – Why?
Brief Project Description: Development of All Weather running track and pitch with floodlighting and associated infrastructure		
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.)?	Yes. A new all-weather running track and pitch will be developed on the site of an existing grass pitch.	No. The small scale of the Project will ensure any physical changes will not result in a significant effect
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?	Yes. Land and natural resources will be required.	No. The volume of materials required will not be large enough to result in a significant effect
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?	Yes. Concrete, tarmacadam, oils, etc. will be used during construction.	No. Construction best practice and guidance will be followed during construction.
4. 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)?	Yes. The construction phase may produce dust.	No. Dust levels are not anticipated to exceed permitted thresholds and can be addressed with dust suppression techniques during the construction phase. Bare ground will be sown with grass as soon as possible upon completion of the works
5. Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes. The development of the facility and the pathways will require excavation. Most of the excavated material will be used as fill within the footprint of the track to level out the site for the track and pitch. Any surplus excavated soil will be spread and graded to create a gently undulating area adjacent to the facility. The construction phase of the development may generate waste such as plastic wrapping or wooden pallets etc.	No. Excavated material will be re-used on site and any other construction related waste such as pallets and plastic wrapping will be segregated and removed from the site for disposal or recycling at licenced facilities, in accordance with all relevant Waste Management Legislation

6. Will the Project cause noise and vibration or the releasing of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes. The construction phase will create noise and vibration.	No. The extent of construction works will be small scale and short term and therefore will not result in significant effects. It is not expected that there will be an increase in noise and vibration during the operation phase in comparison to those at present.
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?	Yes. During the construction phase there is potential for contamination of the lands and ground water within the project area.	No. The proposed development will be designed and constructed in accordance with best practice guidelines in order to reduce these risks and to remove likely significant effects.
8. Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project that could affect human health or the environment?	Yes. The construction phase will have risk of accidents which could affect human health or the environment.	No. The proposed development will be designed and constructed in accordance with best practice guidelines.
9. Will the Project result in environmentally related social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No. The site is used as a local park and will continue to function as a local park. It is envisaged that there will be higher number of people using the park as a result of the development of this facility	No.
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?	No. Recently approved developments in the Liffey Valley area mainly relate to upgrading works to existing properties and the replacing of older dwellings with new ones. The approved extension to a nearby local school may lead to an increase in local traffic during school opening and closing times. The opening times of the proposed facility do not coincide with the opening and closing time of the school . Accordingly, this project is not considered to have a cumulative impact on the Liffey Valley landscape or traffic congestion.	No.
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?	No. The proposed development is not located in an area under any wildlife or natural & cultural conservation legislation. The nearest designated site is the Liffey Valley pNHA, but this site is not affected directly or indirectly by the proposed development.	No.
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?	No. No sensitive habitat will be removed or affected as part of the proposed development.	No.

<p>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>	<p>Yes. The foraging and commuting route for bats along the southern hedgerow boundary may be affected by the proposed floodlighting.</p>	<p>No. To prevent impacts on wildlife the floodlights shall be fitted with louvres, hoods, shields or cowls. This will ensure that the light is directed to the intended area and avoids light spill towards the nearby hedgerows (max light level near hedge is 3 lux) Furthermore the lights are to be turned off completely after 10pm.</p>
<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>No. All surface water will be retained within the footprint of the development and be allowed to drain into the ground via soakaways. This is similar to the existing natural drainage pattern of the site.</p>	<p>No.</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>Yes. The proposed development is located in a highly sensitive river valley landscape and the skyline, horizon and ridgelines should be protected from development.</p>	<p>No. The pitch and fencing are below the height of the hedge to the south of the proposed development and are therefore not visible against the horizon. The flood lights associated with the development will be visible along the skyline. Various heights were considered, but only the 15m high floodlights provide the 500 lux required on the pitch and surrounding running track. Appendix A shows a photo montage of the flood lights against the skyline. It is considered that the visual impact of these lights is not considered significant during the day time, but will be more obvious for a short duration at dusk when the mountain background is still visible prior to darkness setting in.</p>
<p>16. Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access for recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>No. The site is used as a local park and will continue to function as a local park. It is envisaged that there will be higher number of people using the park as a result of the development of this facility. No walking routes around the park will be affected by proposed development during the construction or operational phase.</p>	<p>No</p>
<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>Yes. The Porterstown road is a busy road during rush hour and school opening and closing times.</p>	<p>No. The use of this facility will primarily be in the weekends, evenings and holidays when the Porterstown road will not be subject to congestion. There will be an increase in traffic to the site during the Autumn to Spring period compared to the existing situation as floodlighting will allow for the site to be used during hours of darkness up till 10pm. This is unlikely to have a significant traffic impact however.</p>

<p>18. Is the Project in a location in which it is likely to be highly visible to many people?</p>	<p>Yes. The pitch itself is not located in a visible location, but the fencing and floodlighting will be visible to other park users, Porterstown Road users and from some houses in the Fernleigh estate and some houses adjoining the park along the Porterstown road.</p>	<p>No. There is only a small number of houses that have a direct view on the All-Weather facility in Fernleigh estate and from properties adjoining the park. Some Screening planting in the form of trees and shrubs is already present between Fernleigh and the properties adjoining the park. Accordingly only a small number of people will be able to see the proposed development from their house. It is not known how many people use the park. Many sports clubs use the park on a regular basis and these clubs will be direct beneficiaries of the all-weather facility. Many users are local walkers and although they will be able to see the floodlights and fencing on a regular basis, they may also benefit from the extended opening hours during the autumn and winter months to walk the park. Trees will be planted along the northern boundary of the proposed development to screen the fencing and the poles at much as possible and blend the proposed development into the wooded landscape.</p>
<p>19. Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location that could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>No. The park is not of significant archaeological significance, but archaeological finds have been made in the north-western and eastern parts of the park.</p>	<p>No. It is proposed that an archaeologist is present during the excavation works in case any finds are uncovered.</p>
<p>20. Is the Project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?</p>	<p>Yes. The All-weather facility will replace an existing grass pitch.</p>	<p>No. The all weather running track and pitch is replacing an existing pitch. So there is a loss of high amenity grassland, the pitch function remains the same.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>No. The All-weather facility is located in Porterstown Park, which is to be developed as a recreational hub in accordance with the County Development Plan</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>22. Are there any plans for future land uses within or around the location that could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>No. The All-weather facility is located in Porterstown Park, which is to be developed as a recreational hub in accordance with the County Development Plan</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>23. Are there areas within or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, that could be affected by the Project?</p>	<p>No. Porterstown park is located south and away from the densely populated areas of the Dublin 15 area and the proposed development is therefore unlikely to impact upon a large population.</p>	<p>No.</p>

<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>Yes. The existing park facilities and the nearby church could be affected by the project during the construction and operational phase.</p>	<p>No. The existing parkland will remain accessible during the construction and operational phase of the project. Any increases in car traffic to the site can be catered for in the existing and overflow car park within the site and shall not affect the nearby church car park.</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>No</p>	<p>No</p>
<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>No. The site is within the catchment of the River Liffey. Any surface and ground water from the park most likely makes its way to this river. The River Waterbody Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status for the River Liffey is poor and the River Waterbody score for the River Liffey is 'at risk of not achieving good status'. It is proposed to install soakaways for surface water drainage underneath the all-weather facility. This will allow the surface water to ultimately feed into the groundwater aquifer. There will therefore be no direct surface water discharge from the site to the river Liffey or any change in hydrology on the site due to the construction of the all-weather facility. Groundwater from the higher parts of the Liffey Valley will likely discharge on the flanks of the Liffey Valley and into the river. This water will have been filtered by the soil and should be clean at discharge. Accordingly, the proposed development will not affect the water quality of the river Liffey in a detrimental way.</p>	<p>No.</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</p>	<p>No</p>

