

# Westside Running Track Floodlighting

## Part 8 Planning Report

February 2024



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# 1. Introduction

Galway City Council is seeking planning permission, under Part XI of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), for the proposed installation of 20no. floodlights at Westside running track, Westside (in the townland of Ragoon), Galway.

The purpose of this report is to describe in detail all relevant aspects of the proposed development and to demonstrate its conformance with the policies, objectives and standards of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 and consistency with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## 1.1 Project Background

Westside running track is an existing running track situated in Westside Amenity Park (Figure 1.1). The running track was constructed in 2014 as part of a major redevelopment of the park. The park comprises a range of facilities including soccer and GAA pitches, a running track, basketball and tennis courts, skatepark, outdoor exercise equipment, table tennis and teqball tables and 2no. playgrounds. The park is a public park with unrestricted access to the public at all times throughout the day.



Figure 1.1: Aerial image of site (site outlined in red)

The running track provides a vital amenity as the only public 400m running track in Galway City. The track is a very popular amenity and is in regular use every day for both running and walking by people of all ages. It is well recognised that running and walking have major health benefits both from a physical and mental health perspective. The track also provides a social outlet for people and is used regularly by walking/running groups, local schools and local sports clubs. However, due to the lack of floodlighting, use of the track is curtailed to daylight hours only. This significantly reduces the availability of the track for use, particularly during the winter period when darkness can set in as early as 4:15pm. In order to increase availability of the track for use, it is proposed to install floodlighting around the perimeter of the track.

The proposed development will consist of the following:

- Erection of 20no. LED floodlight luminaires mounted on 10no. lighting columns (12m height) positioned around the perimeter of the running track.
- Laying of 530m of underground electrical cables, including connection to electrical grid.
- Installation of an above-ground mini-pillar cabinet structure to house lighting controls (refer to Appendix A for details).

## **2. List of Planning Documents submitted as part of Application**

The following documentation is enclosed in relation to this application:

- 1no. copy of site notice (11no. originals on site)
- 1no. copy of photographs of 11no. site notices as erected
- 1no. copy of original full page of newspaper notice
- 1no. copy of the following drawings:
  - PKS21-02-001 – Site Location Map
  - PKS21-02-002 – Site Layout
  - PKS21-02-003 – Proposed Lighting Layout
- 1no. copy of the following technical reports:
  - Planning Report (this report)
  - Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
  - Ecological Impact Assessment Report
  - Lighting Design Report

### 3. Site Planning History

A review of previous planning applications in relation to the Westside Amenity Park was carried out using Galway City Council's search facility. The results are tabulated in the following table:

*Table 3.1: Previous planning applications*

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Decision</b>
LA6/2012	Intention to apply for permission to :1) Construct 1no. soccer pitch and 1no. GAA pitch and associated ball stop netting, 2) Construction of new athletics track and associated field sports areas, 3) Relocated training area, new children and youth playgrounds, 4) New public footpaths associated underground ducting, 5) Upgrade and widening of existing perimeter pedestrian entrances, 6) Closing of existing perimeter pedestrian entrances and creation of new perimeter pedestrian entrances, 7) Installation of exercise equipment for the elderly, public seating, recreational grass areas, tree and hedge planting at Westside, Galway.	Permission granted
08483	Permission for retention for the erection of two 38kv Lattice Steel Masts in Westside Park, one on Siobhain McKenna Road and one on Circular Road.	Permission granted
LA6/2004	Westside Dressing Rooms development of changing facilities with floor area of 271m <sup>2</sup> at westside pitches, Westside, Galway this development consists of 3no. changing rooms, shower and toilet facilities, disabled changing facility, meeting room, referee's room, office, storage area and ancillary facilities.	Permission granted

## **4. Environmental Impact**

### **4.1 Appropriate Assessment Screening**

An appropriate assessment (AA) screening was undertaken for the proposed development and is enclosed with this planning application. The AA screening concludes the following:

- Following examination of the proposed development, including the nature and location of works, it is concluded that there is no potential to impact on Annex I habitats or Annex II species associated with nearby European Sites.
- As this assessment has not identified any potential significant impacts to nearby European sites, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and subsequent Natura Impact Statement are not deemed necessary.

### **4.2 Ecological Impact Assessment**

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) was undertaken for the proposed development and is enclosed with this planning application. The EclA concludes the following:

- This site does not encompass qualifying international or nationally important species.
- No bat foraging or roosting habitats are present on site.
- The construction phase and operation phase of the project incorporates features which will effectively avoid the potential for specific negative impacts on sensitive receptors.

## 5. Planning Policy Context

The current statutory planning policy document for the subject lands is the Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (GCDP). There are a number of other relevant policy documents that inform the GCDP.

### 5.1 Galway City Development Plan 2023 - 2029

#### 5.1.1 Zoning Objectives

The Westside Amenity Park site is zoned Recreational and Amenity in the GCDP as indicated in Figure 5.1 below

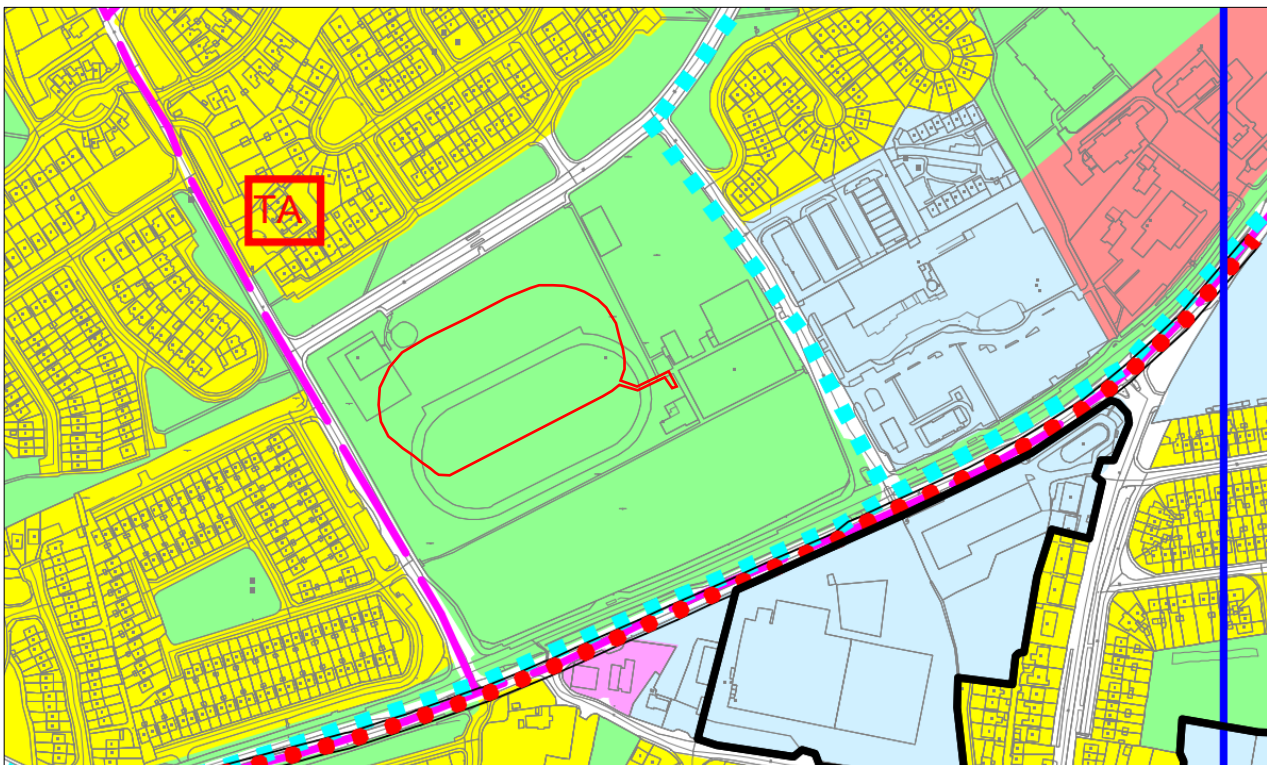


Figure 5.1: Extract from Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 Land Zoning Map (site outlined in red)

The development plan outlines examples of the types of development that are compatible with the zoning objective and outlined in Table 5.1 (extract from GCDP, '11.2.2 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity RA Land Use Zoning Objectives')

**Table 5.1: Examples of types of development compatible with RA zoning objective**

<p><b>Zoning Objective RA</b></p> <p>To provide for and protect recreational uses, open space, amenity uses, natural heritage and biodiversity.</p>	
<p>Uses which are compatible with and contribute to the zoning objective, for example:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdoor recreation</li> </ul>
<p>Uses which may contribute to the zoning objectives, dependent on the RA location and scale of development, for example:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of buildings of a recreational, cultural or educational nature or car parking areas related to and secondary to the primary use of land/water body for outdoor recreation</li> <li>- Public utilities</li> <li>- Burial grounds and associated services</li> </ul>

### 5.1.2 Policy

Chapter 5 of the GCDP sets out policy relating to recreation and amenity under Policy 5.1 – ‘Green Network and Biodiversity’ and includes the following:

- Support sustainable use and management of areas of ecological importance, parks and recreation amenity areas and facilities through an integrated green network policy approach in line with the Galway Recreation and Amenity Needs Study and where superseded by the Green Space Strategy, where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts on the integrity of European sites.
- Achieve a sustainable balance between meeting future recreational needs (both passive and active) and the preservation of the city’s biodiversity and ecological and cultural heritage.
- Improve accessibility to the City Parks, recreation and amenity areas and facilities and include for sustainable modes of transport, where appropriate.
- Retain, extend and enhance opportunities for recreation within the green network for all members of the community including people with disabilities.
- Ensure that all passive and active recreational proposals are considered in the context of potential impact on the environment, sites of ecological and biodiversity importance and general amenity.
- Support the actions of the National Physical Activity Plan (DH, 2021) and National Sports Policy 2018-2027 (DTTS, 2018).

Chapter 9 of the GCDP sets out policy relating to lighting design under Policy 5.1 – ‘Light Pollution’ and includes the following:

- Ensure the design of external lighting minimises the incidence of light pollution, glare and spillage into the surrounding environment and has due regard to the visual and residential amenities of surrounding areas.
- Require all new developments to be designed with the inclusion of energy efficient lighting schemes
- Lighting on linear infrastructure, including greenways and blueways, should be carefully managed to ensure coherence of the supporting habitats of European sites, as outlined in article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
- Ensure the design of external lighting does not have an adverse impact on wildlife and ecosystems and encourage the use of dark zones and sensor lighting where feasible.

### 5.1.3 Specific Objectives

There are no specific objectives identified regarding this site in the GCDP.

## 5.2 Galway City Council Recreation and Amenity Needs Study (2008)

The Galway City Council Recreation and Amenity Needs Study (2008) (RANS), under Section 6.4.2, highlights the importance of the Westside running track as the only public formal running facility in Galway (O’Sullivan Park 200m track has since been developed). It also highlights the need for improved management and promotion, making it fit for purpose as a citywide facility. This study precedes the redevelopment of Westside Amenity Park and newly constructed running track. The following specific policies are included in the RANS:

- **Policy SF2:** Explore options for diversifying and broadening sporting opportunities/ activities through the provision of a greater range of facilities and amenities within parks.
- **Policy SF3:** Promote accessibility for all to recreational facilities.

## 5.3 Galway Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2016-2020

The Galway Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2016-2020 reflects the partnership’s vision for sport and physical activity in Galway up to 2020. This document has not been superseded to date and remains the current policy document. The plan includes the following relevant objective:

- **Objective 2.4:** Increase the use of the natural environment in Galway, to provide more accessible and sustainable opportunities for communities to participate in sport and physical activities. Targeting: Sports clubs, Walking/Cycling groups, General population of Galway

## 5.4 National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027

The National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027 sets out the government of Ireland’s strategy for delivering objectives related to the development and promotion of sports in Ireland up to 2027. Relevant actions included in the plan include the following:

- **Action 5:** We will prioritise sports like swimming, cycling and running which we believe have the greatest potential for generating higher levels of active participation across the life course, seeking to ensure that our children have the necessary skills to engage in these activities in a meaningful way while also investing in the development of infrastructure, programmes and people to help sustain participation throughout adolescence and adulthood.
- **Action 13:** Apart from investment in traditional sports infrastructure we will examine how the wider natural and built environment can facilitate participation in sport and physical activity. This consideration will also take account of the type of activities towards which adults are increasingly gravitating such as running, cycling, outdoor adventure pursuits, recreational walking, etc.
- **Action 22:** We will encourage Local Authorities to promote and facilitate more sharing of facilities locally, especially where capacity is available at off-peak times during the day, in the evening or during holiday periods in the case of educational establishments. This will involve working closely with clubs and sporting bodies, schools and colleges, leisure facility providers and others. As part of the Local Sport Plans, Local Authorities will also lead on other collaborative initiatives to improve access locally e.g. Local Authorities and LSPs will combine to see how recreational areas can be utilised more fully by local communities for sport and physical activity e.g. for parkruns.

## 5.5 National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland (2016)

The National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland was published in 2016 by the Government of Ireland. This document sets out a list of actions to be undertaken by various public and sporting bodies to promote physical activity in Ireland up to 2025. The plan includes the following relevant objectives:

- **Action 34:** Ensure that the planning, development and design of towns, cities and schools promotes cycling and walking with the aim of delivering a network of cycle routes and footpaths.

- **Action 35:** Ensure that the planning, development and design of towns and cities promotes the development of local and regional parks and recreational spaces that encourage physical activity.
- **Action 36:** Prioritise the planning and development of walking and cycling and general recreational /physical activity infrastructure.

## **5.6 Consistency with Planning Policy**

As evidenced by the above information, the proposed development is consistent with the zoning objectives for the area and complies with policy set out in Chapter 5 of GCDP. The proposed floodlighting has been designed in accordance with the requirements set out in Chapter 9 of GCDP and has undergone appropriate assessment screening in accordance with the Habitats Directive (refer to Sections 5 and 6 for further details).

The proposed development supports policy and objectives set out in Galway City Council's RANS (2008) and the Galway Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

In a national context, the proposed development is consistent with a wide range of actions set out in the National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027 and National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland (2016).

## 6. Floodlighting Design

A lighting design report prepared by Electric Skyline Ltd. is included separately with this planning application. The proposed sports lighting system will entail the erection of 20no. LED floodlight luminaires mounted on 10no. lighting columns (2no. luminaires/column) positioned around the perimeter of the running track. Each lighting column will be 12m in height above track level. Galway City Council will ensure that floodlights are installed and commissioned by suitability qualified contractor and inspected and signed off by a suitability qualified specialist in accordance with the lighting design report.

### 6.1 Design Standards

The system has been designed to meet club competition standard in accordance with the IAAF Track and Field Facilities Manual 2008 (Table 6.1). As presented in the lighting design report, the proposed lighting design yields the horizontal illuminance results as outlined in Table 6.2 below.

*Table 6.1: IAAF lighting design standards – Club competitions*

Activity Level	Horizontal Illuminance	Uniformity		Colour Properties of Lamps	
	Eh ave. (lux)*	U1 Emin./Emax.	U2 Emin./Eave.	Colour Temperature Tk (K)	Colour Rendering Ra
Club Competitions	200	0.4	0.6	> 4000	≥ 65

*Table 6.2: Illuminance standard of proposed floodlighting*

Horizontal Illuminance	Uniformity		Colour Properties of Lamps	
Eh ave. (lux)	U1 Emin./Emax.	U2 Emin./Eave.	Colour Temperature Tk (K)	Colour Rendering Ra
276	0.47	0.71	>5700	>70

### 6.2 Light Spill

Light spill is almost entirely confined to within the park grounds, with negligible levels of spill (<2 lumens) reaching the footpath west of the park. The maximum distance of light spill from the running track perimeter is approximately 32m. The nearest dwelling is located approximately 65m west of the running track and therefore will not be affected by light spill. The soccer pitch in the centre of the running track will receive low levels of light spill, however this will be insufficient to warrant the pitch useable. The proposed luminaires used may also be fitted with louvres to further reduce light spill if necessary.

### **6.3 Floodlight Operation**

The floodlights will be activated using motion sensor technology enabling them to be automatically switched on when the running track is in use. Once the running track is no longer in use the lights will automatically switch off. This will significantly reduce energy consumption by switching them off during periods of inactivity. The floodlights will be programmed to only be operational between the hours of 7am and 10pm, during hours of darkness. This will increase the window of availability of the running track by approximately 25% over the course of a year. Signage will be erected around the perimeter of the running track to notify members of the public how to activate the lights.

### **6.4 Connection to Electricity Grid**

In order to provide electricity supply to the floodlights it will be necessary to lay circa 530m of underground electrical cables around the perimeter of the running track and make a connection to the electrical grid at the St. Micheal's GAA clubhouse, located east of the track. The ducting will primarily be laid in grassed areas with trenching also required in the hardstand and playground adjacent to St. Micheal's GAA clubhouse. Care will be taken to avoid any impact on existing trees in the park and all surfaces will be fully reinstated on completion of the works.

## **7. Summary & Conclusions**

It is submitted that the proposed development fully accords with the proper planning and development of the area while providing a significant recreation and amenity gain for the citizens of Galway City for the following reasons:

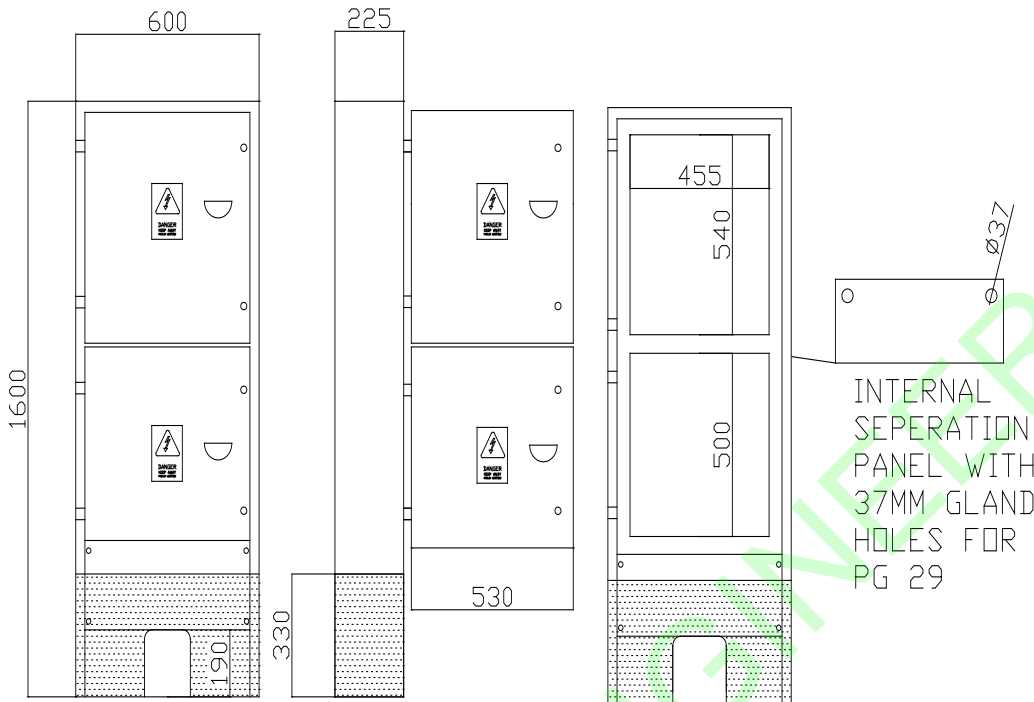
1. The proposed development is consistent with the zoning objectives and policies of the GCDP and prevailing local and national policy.
2. The proposed development will provide a significant amenity benefit, increasing the window of availability of the running track by approximately 25% over the course of a year.
3. The floodlights will not impact nearby residential areas with lighting spill and the lights will be programmed to only be operational between the hours of 7am and 10pm.
4. An AA screening concluded the proposed development would have no potential to impact on Annex I habitats or Annex II species associated with nearby European Sites.
5. An ecological impact assessment concluded there are no bat foraging or roosting habitats present on site.

# **Appendix A**

## **Millar Pillar Details**



## THREE/SINGLE PHASED METERED PILLAR 1600 SPLIT DOOR



Three/Single phased metered pillar is constructed from 3mm sheet steel.

The pillar is fitted with two hinged fully removable lockable doors.

Hinges are manufactured from solid stainless steel blocks.

Tri-head tamper proof locks fitted as standard.

Pillar comes complete with rubber gasket door seal. And has IP44 rating.

Earth lead connections supplied from pillar body to doors.

Pillar is galvanised internally and externally to BS EN 1461.

Backboard made from 12mm thick exterior grade plywood, treated with low flame spread wood preservative and can be removed for wiring.

Bitumen paint is applied externally on the planting depth for protection.

Two separate compartments: top section - ESB meter; base section - contractor connections.

Danger warning label fitted to doors.

