Welcome

Welcome to the Detailed Design exhibition for the Silvermines Hydroelectric Power Station Project (Silvermines Hydro).

Thank you for taking the time to visit and for your continued engagement throughout the pre-application consultation process. Your feedback and contributions over the past 18-months have played an important role in helping to shape the project's design. This is the final planned stage of public consultation before the planning application is submitted. It provides an opportunity to review the updated proposals and share any further feedback before the design is finalised.

We look forward to receiving your feedback on the final design proposals. Written submissions are welcome until 5pm on Monday 21st December 2026, when the pre-application consultation process will formally close.



Silvermines Hydro is an important energy storage project that will support Ireland's transition to a cleaner, more sustainable energy future. By helping to integrate more renewable electricity into the energy system, the project will contribute to greater energy security, a more diverse energy supply and Ireland's and the EU's wider climate and energy objectives.

Design Updates

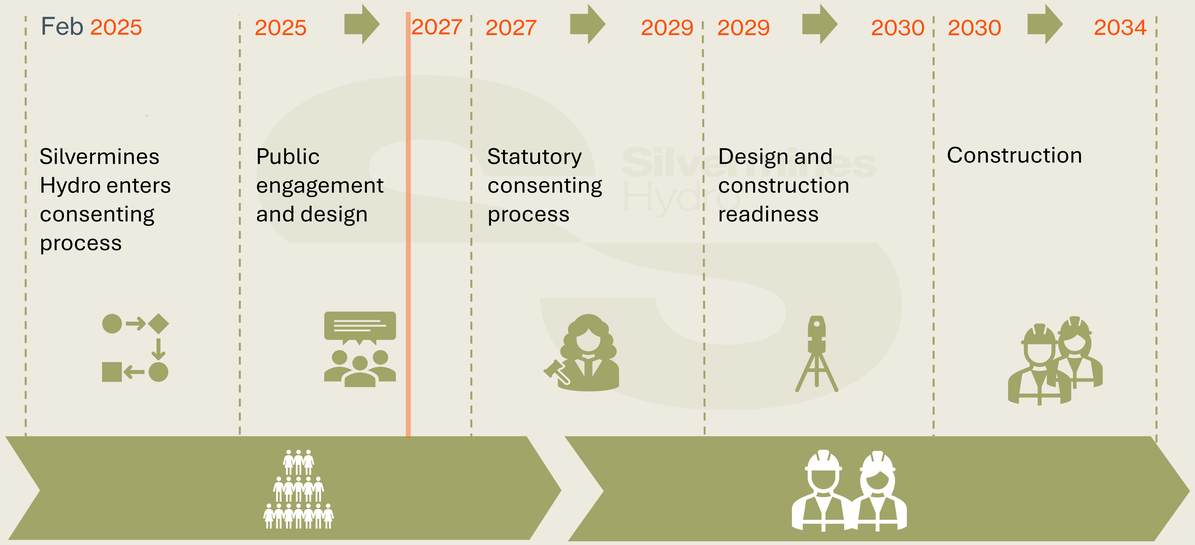
In response to the feedback received during previous consultation events, we have developed these exhibition boards providing updated information on the key issues and areas of interest raised by the community and public stakeholders.

These include:

- **Project Design:** The overall site layout, design progress, and grid connection details.
- **Water and the Environment:** Water management, drainage, wetlands, biodiversity, landscape and environmental protection.
- **Construction and Access:** Construction activities, traffic management, road safety, noise and measures to minimise disruption.
- **Community and Local Benefits:** Public amenities, employment opportunities, socio-economic benefits and the Community Benefit Fund.

Project Timeline

2025 - 2034
Project Timeline **Phase 4 – 7**



Project Contact Details

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Scan here to view Upcoming Events

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Silvermines Hydro

Project Overview

The project will have **a generating capacity of 296 MW** and the ability to **store up to 2,175 MWh of energy**, helping to support Ireland's transition to renewable energy and improve the flexibility and reliability of the national electricity grid.

How will the Project Work?

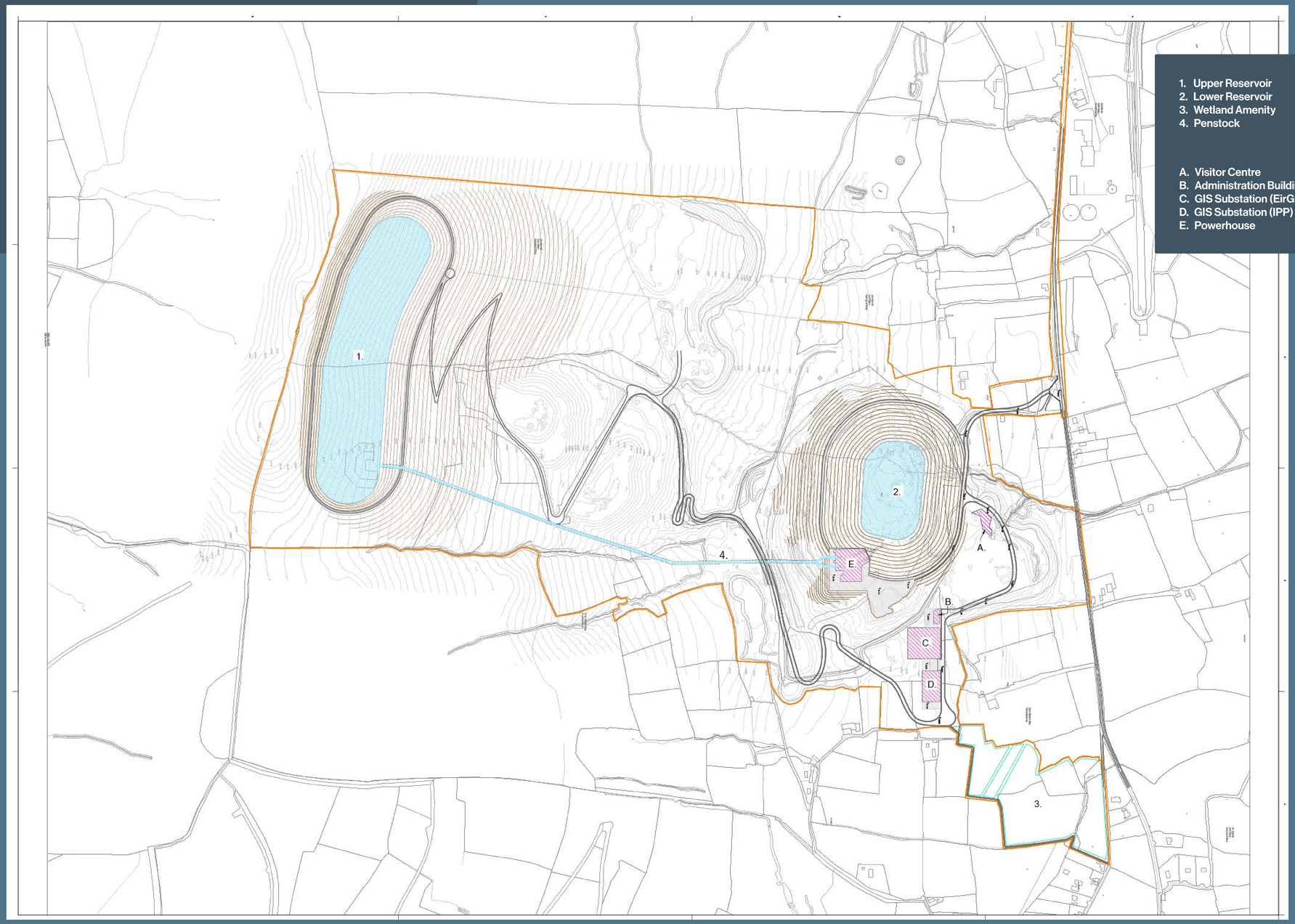
Pumped-storage hydro power is a large scale energy storage technology that uses water and gravity to store electricity and generate power when needed.

When surplus electricity is available on the electricity system, water is pumped from a lower reservoir to an upper reservoir, storing energy for later use. When electricity is needed, water is released back downhill through large pipes, passing through turbines that generate electricity. The water returns to the lower reservoir, allowing the cycle to be repeated.

Main Project Components

The proposed development will include:

- **Upper Reservoir:** A new reservoir constructed on the slopes of Silvermines Mountain, with a storage capacity of approximately 3.1 million cubic metres.
- **Lower Reservoir:** The existing water-filled open-cast mine pit will be reshaped and enlarged to form the lower water storage facility.
- **Penstock Pipes:** One underground steel pipe, approximately 1.25 km long, connecting the two reservoirs.
- **Powerhouse:** Located beside the Lower Reservoir, housing the pump-turbine units and associated equipment.
- **Grid Connection:** Substations and underground electricity cables connecting the power station to the national electricity grid.
- **Visitor Centre:** A public hub connecting visitors with the site, the power generation facility, and local heritage.



1. Upper Reservoir
2. Lower Reservoir
3. Wetland Amenity
4. Penstock

A. Visitor Centre
B. Administration Building
C. GIS Substation (EirGrid)
D. GIS Substation (IPP)
E. Powerhouse

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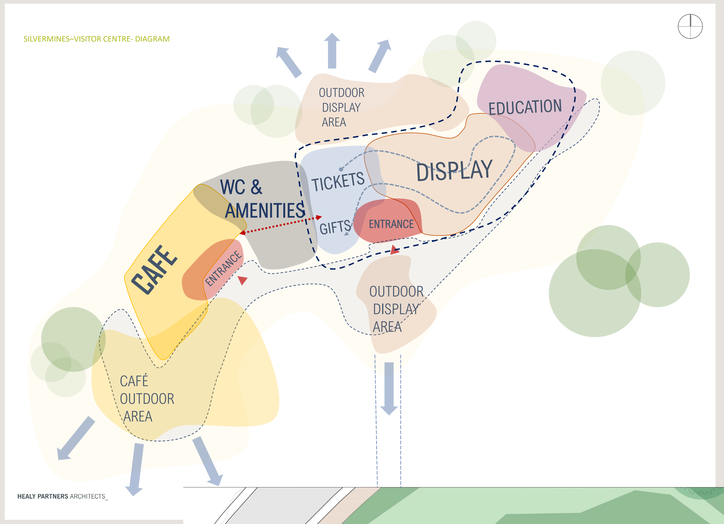
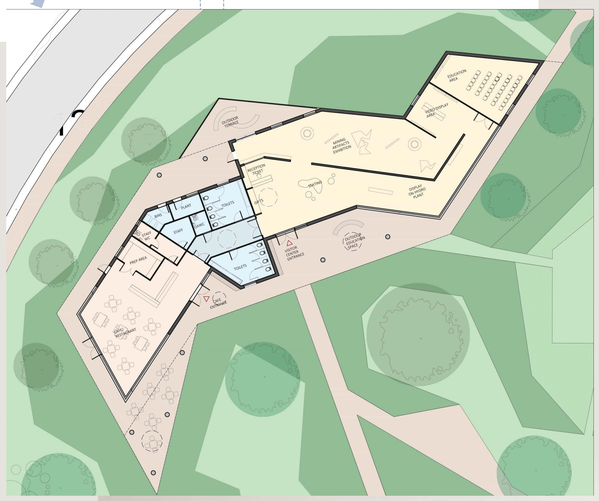
Amenities & Landscape







Visitor Centre

The proposed Visitor Centre, overlooking the lower reservoir, will welcome up to 15,000 visitors annually, offering opportunities to explore the area's mining heritage, environmental restoration and role in renewable energy through interactive exhibitions and educational spaces.

A cafe with indoor and outdoor seating will provide a welcoming space for visitors and the local community. Outdoor amenities, including a viewing platform, children's play area and adventure trails, will connect visitors with the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Masterplan and Visual Integration

The Landscape Masterplan for the project is being developed in coordination with architectural, engineering and ecological teams.

The aim is to integrate the proposed infrastructure into the surrounding landscape, minimise visual impacts and enhance opportunities for biodiversity and public recreation. A comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), including viewpoints selected for verified photomontages, will inform the evolving design.

Landscape Character and Biodiversity

The strategy aims to retain, protect and enhance existing ecology while progressively restoring the former mining landscape through natural regeneration and the development of a diverse mosaic of habitats.

The landscape strategy responds to three distinctive zones:

- **Lower landscape:** Encouraging woodland and scrub development to help screen infrastructure, while retaining open wetland habitats.
- **Middle landscape:** Supporting the natural regeneration of birch woodland and scrub across the former mine waste areas, supplemented by new planting to integrate the former mining landscape into its surroundings, provide screening, and retain selected views and exposed rock features.
- **Upper landscape:** Retaining the predominantly open heathland character, with protection of sensitive habitats.

Planting and natural regeneration will progressively establish a more integrated landscape, with ecological enhancement and compensation measures developed alongside the project ecologists.



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Shallee Substation and Cable Route

Silvermines Hydro will connect to Ireland's national electricity transmission network on the 220 kV line. This will enable the facility to both import electricity for pumping water to the upper reservoir and export electricity when generating power.

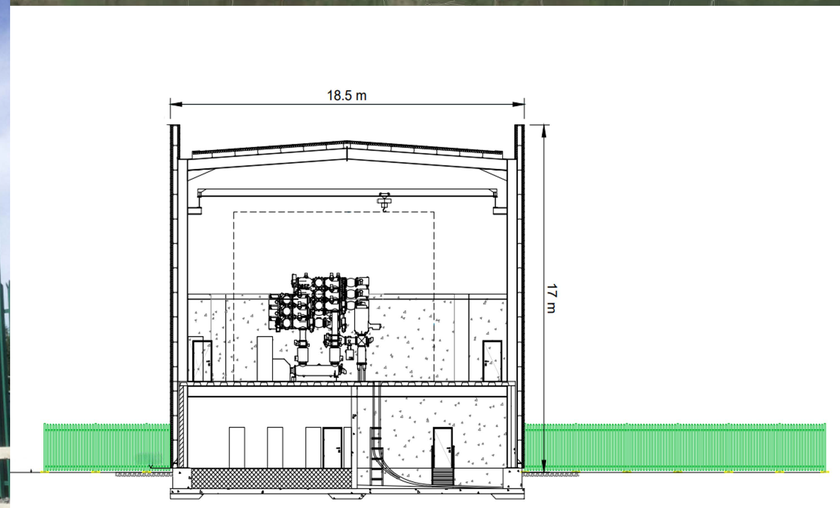
The grid connection will include new on-site substations, underground electricity cables and a new 220 kV substation at Shallee, which will connect the project to the existing Killonan–Shannonbridge 220 kV overhead transmission line.

The Shallee substation will provide a secure connection to the national grid, while modern Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) technology will minimise the footprint of the electrical infrastructure.

Grid Connection







Typical Eirgrid GIS

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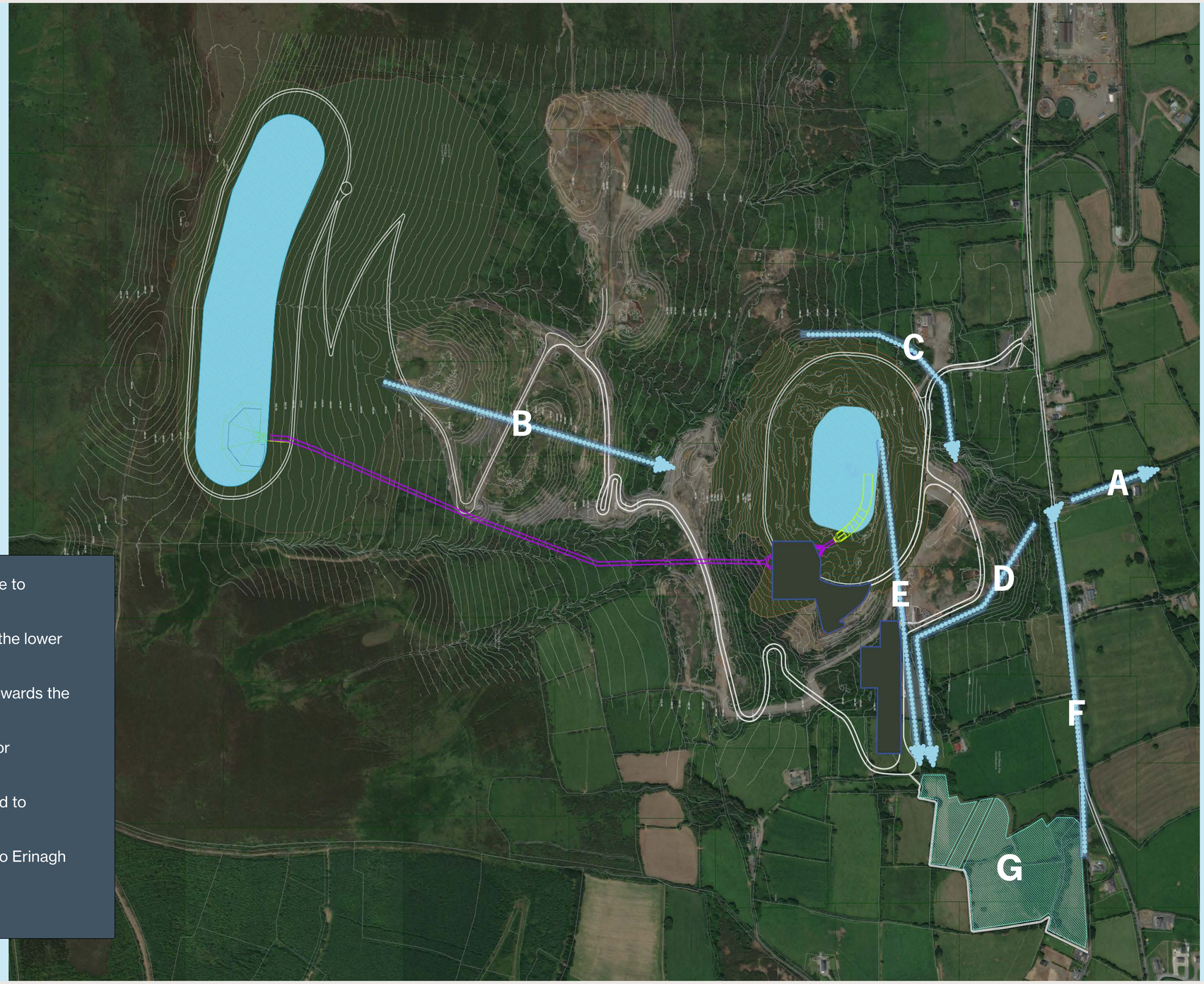
Water Management

Silvermines Hydro will be a closed loop system that will use the existing water in the lower reservoir during operations. The same water will be cycled up and down between the lower and upper reservoirs.

No additional water from outside the main site will be required.



A. Site outflow will continue under Tommy Jacks Bridge to Erinagh Stream. All outflow treated by wetlands.

B. Much of the surface water from main site will enter the lower reservoir.

C. Some surface water from the site will be directed towards the northerly end of the site.

D. Water from lower part of site pumped to wetlands for treatment.

E. Drainage water from lower reservoir area discharged to wetlands.

F. Treated water from wetlands flows under roadway to Erinagh Stream.

G. Wetlands

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Wetland Amenity

Constructed wetlands are specially designed areas that use plants, soils and naturally occurring biological processes to improve water quality.

A landscaped wetland treatment system is proposed to manage and treat water from the site, including surface-water runoff. Its function is to reduce suspended solids, dissolved metals and other substances, helping ensure water is of improved quality before discharge to local watercourses.

Biodiversity

The wetlands offer an opportunity to create a well-landscaped green space, incorporating grasslands, native planting and reed beds that complement the surrounding agricultural landscape.

Alongside their water-treatment function, the planted wetlands will provide a valuable habitat for birds and other wildlife, supporting local biodiversity.

A pedestrian entrance and walking route are also proposed through the wetland landscape, connecting Silvermines village with the public spaces within the wider project site. This would provide a new walking connection while allowing visitors to experience the landscaped wetland environment.

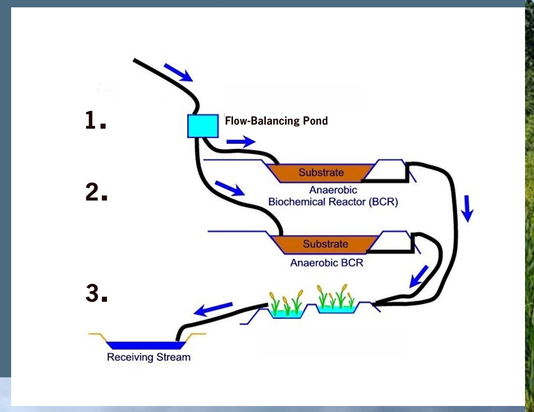
Passive treatment system

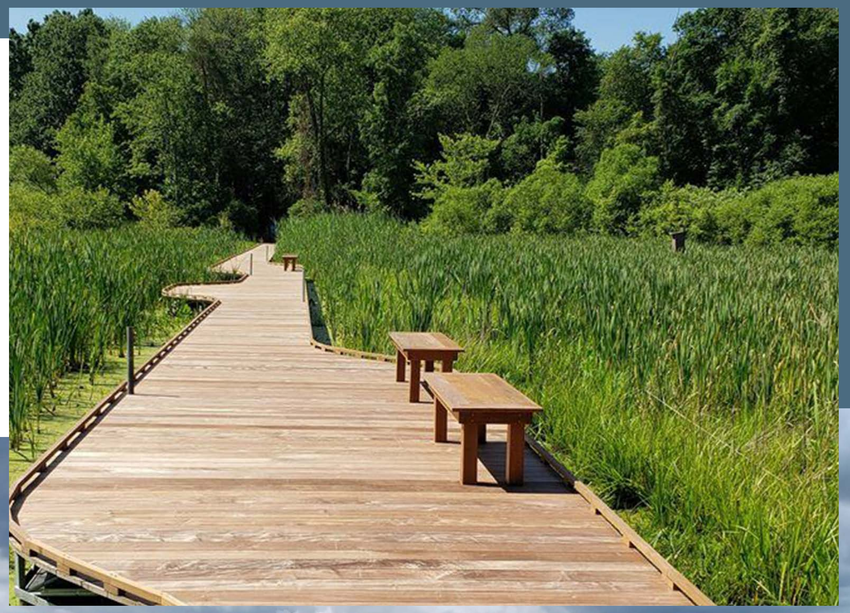
The system has three stages:

1. **Flow-Balancing Pond:** Water will initially enter a pond to regulate flow rates and provide a more consistent rate of supply of water to the treatment system.
2. **Anaerobic Treatment:** Water will flow through the wetland containing natural materials such as woodchips, straw, mulch and crushed limestone. Naturally occurring bacteria help remove dissolved metals, by converting them into solid compounds that remain trapped within the wetland, which can later be removed for appropriate disposal. The limestone helps maintain the right conditions for this passive treatment process.
3. **Aerobic Reed Beds:** Water will then flow through shallow, planted wetlands containing vegetation such as reeds. These wetlands help add oxygen to the water and remove remaining organic matter, further improving water quality before discharge.

This is known as passive water treatment, as it uses natural processes with minimal ongoing chemical or electrical inputs.

Schematic Passive Treatment System







Typical wetland amenity

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Traffic

Construction will involve substantial works, with traffic levels varying throughout the construction period. Traffic will be managed in consultation with the relevant authorities and local community to support road safety and minimise disruption.

Construction Traffic and Site Access

Temporary construction compounds will support the different elements of the project, providing space for deliveries, materials, equipment and staff parking. Most are expected to be located within the project site, with some potentially required nearby. Their locations will be confirmed as construction planning progresses.

The main project site will have a permanent entrance designed to modern road safety standards. Any necessary local road improvements will be identified through the Traffic and Transport Assessment and progressed in consultation with the relevant authorities and local community.

Planning for Peak Construction Activity

Traffic management and parking arrangements are being developed to accommodate the busiest periods of construction. Peak workforce activity is expected towards the later stages of the programme, during the installation of mechanical and electrical equipment.

For planning purposes, the following peak levels have been allowed for:

- **350 – 400 workers** on site.
- **500 – 550 light-vehicle movements per day**, mainly staff travelling to and from site.
- **100 – 300 heavy-vehicle movements per day**, depending on the construction phase.

These figures represent anticipated peak activity, rather than typical daily levels throughout construction. Workforce and heavy-vehicle peaks may occur at different stages, depending on the work underway.

Designated parking will be provided on site and at the temporary construction compounds, including a proposed three-acre parking area accommodating up to 400 cars, to minimise parking on local roads and in Silvermines village.

Underground Cable Works

Installing underground cable ducts along a section of the R499 may require temporary road closures so that work can be carried out safely.

Any closures would be carefully planned, kept as brief as practicable and managed through an approved traffic management plan, with local diversions where required.

Traffic During Operation

Once construction is complete, traffic will mainly relate to operational staff, maintenance activities and visitors.

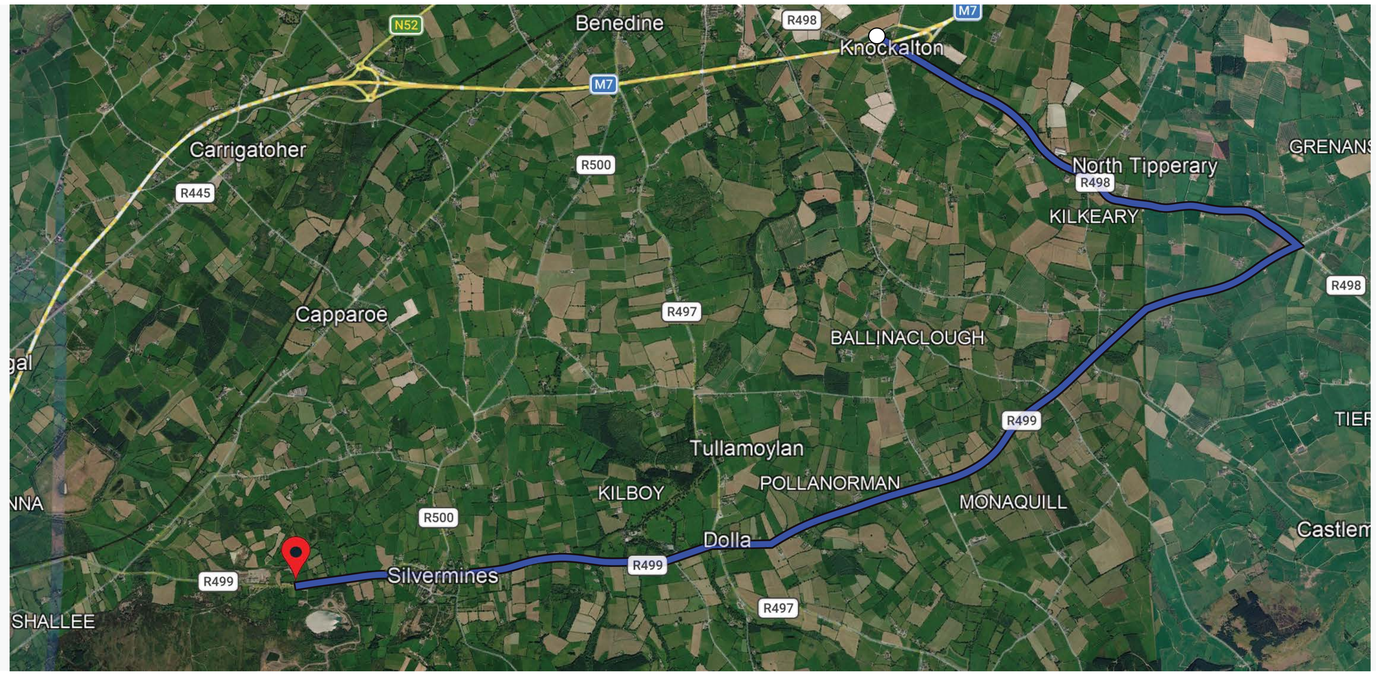
- **Staff & maintenance:** The project is expected to support 20–25 full-time equivalent operational roles, with additional maintenance personnel attending as required.
- **Parking:** The car park will provide 35–40 visitor spaces, 25–30 staff spaces and two bus spaces, with a bus drop-off area beside the Visitor Centre.
- **Site Access:** Operational traffic will use the permanent entrance established during construction.

Traffic Safety and Mitigation measures

A range of measures will be used to minimise road safety risks, noise and disruption to nearby communities:

- **Designated Haul Routes:** Construction vehicles will be directed away from villages, schools and busy crossroads wherever possible.
- **Road Safety:** Speed controls, signage, driver briefings and strict route-adherence requirements will be implemented.
- **Noise & Disruption:** HGV movements will be scheduled away from early mornings and late evenings where possible, with deliveries planned to reduce disturbance to nearby homes, farms and schools.
- **Traffic Management:** Temporary traffic lights, lane restrictions, speed management and local diversions will be implemented where required.
- **Road Cleanliness:** Wheel-washing at site exits, regular road cleaning and dust suppression during dry periods to minimise mud and dust on local roads.

All construction vehicles will follow safety and environmental requirements, with temporary impacts addressed promptly.



HGV Routes

Other roads and site access points will also be used to serve different elements of the project. Routes will be selected according to the works being undertaken, vehicle requirements and local road conditions, with appropriate traffic management measures developed in consultation with the relevant roads authorities.

Construction

Construction is expected to take approximately 4 - 5 years, with works carried out in planned stages. These will include site preparation, building the main infrastructure and installing equipment. The level of activity will vary throughout this period.

The workforce is expected to peak at 350 - 400 people during the later stages, when electrical and mechanical equipment is being installed.

As areas are no longer needed for construction, temporary facilities will be removed and disturbed ground will be landscaped or restored, including replanting where appropriate.

A main contractor will be appointed through a formal procurement process. Throughout construction, works will be managed to minimise disruption to the local community and impacts on the surrounding environment.

Construction Impact Mitigation Measures

Measures to minimise disturbance to nearby communities will include:

- **Working Hours:** Working hours will be set by the consenting authority to minimse impacts on the local community.
- **Noise:** Noise monitoring and control will be implemented throughout the construction in compliance with industry standards.
- **Dust:** Water sprays, covered loads, wheel-washing and regular road cleaning will take place.
- **Lighting:** Low-glare, directional lighting will be focused on work areas. No continuous 24-hour lighting is expected, with out-of-hours lighting limited to safety, security and occasional specialised works.
- **Visual Impacts:** Visual impacts during construction will be assessed, with appropriate mitigation measures developed as the design progresses.
- **Blasting:** Controlled blasting will be required during rock excavation, with nearby residents notified in advance by text, email or local information channels. The timing and size of blasts will be carefully planned to reduce disruption to the local community.

Blasting will be monitored by trained specialists to assess vibration, noise and air pressure, in accordance with BS 5228-2 guidelines and limits set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

Ground Conditions & Stability

Detailed ground investigations, including boreholes, trial pits, peat probing and laboratory testing, have been carried out.

Excavation works will be carefully controlled and monitored in accordance with national safety standards to protect surrounding land and nearby properties. The stability of all structures will be independently assessed by suitably qualified experts.



Any mine waste encountered will be identified and safely managed using specialist procedures. Appropriate testing and controls will be in place before any material is moved.

typical construction schedule

Construction Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Initial site preparation and enabling works	■	■	■	■																
Upper Reservoir construction			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Penstock installation				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■								
Powerhouse and structural works					■	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Lower Reservoir works									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Turbine and electrical installation											■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Cable route													■	■	■					
Substations												■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Final commissioning and testing																	■	■	■	■



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Environmental Protections

Environmentally Informed Design and Enhancements

Environmental considerations are at the heart of the design process. Extensive environmental surveys covering water quality, air, noise, habitats and wildlife have informed the project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and design.

These findings have helped refine the upper reservoir footprint, penstock alignment, infrastructure placement and underground cable route to minimise impacts on sensitive habitats and wildlife. The use of the flooded former Magcobar open pit mine as the lower reservoir also avoids the need to excavate a new basin, reducing further disturbance to the landscape.

During construction, measures including water management controls, silt traps and appropriate safeguards for protected species will help protect the surrounding environment. Excavated materials will be reused on-site where possible, with habitat restoration and planting helping to reinstate disturbed areas. Particular attention is also being given to protecting existing newt ponds and their surrounding habitats.

The project also presents opportunities to address the legacy of historic mining. Mineralised waste rock will be securely capped to reduce the risk of acidic drainage and heavy metal release, while constructed wetlands will naturally treat runoff and seepage, helping to improve water quality before discharge to local waterways.

Environmental monitoring is already underway and will continue in accordance with regulatory requirements, supporting long-term environmental protection. Our aim is to deliver essential clean energy infrastructure while protecting the natural environment and creating a positive legacy for the local community.







Habitat Protection and Compensation

The project has been designed with particular consideration for the Silvermines Mountain West Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains Special Protection Area (SPA), designated for the protection of Hen Harrier.

Despite efforts to minimise environmental impacts, some habitat loss within the SAC and SPA cannot be avoided. To address this, Siga-Hydro has undertaken a comprehensive process to identify suitable lands for ecological compensation for wet and dry heath, and Hen Harrier foraging habitats.

An initial ecological assessment considered thousands of acres of land adjoining the Natura 2000 network, identifying approximately 500 acres for further investigation. This was followed by extensive engagement with landowners and more detailed ecological assessments, including site walkover surveys, soil sampling and habitat studies. Through this process, up to 200 acres have been identified as potentially suitable for ecological compensation. Further studies are ongoing to confirm their suitability, with the findings to be included in the final planning application.

The proposed compensation programme is being developed in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive to maintain the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network.



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Socio-Economic Benefits

Independent assessment of European, national and regional benefits

Silvermines Hydro commissioned an independent economic and social assessment to examine the project's potential contribution during construction and throughout its expected operating life of 50 years or more.

Prepared by Warner Economics Consulting, the report brings together economic-impact analysis and independent electricity-system modelling by Frontier Economics and LCP Delta. It identifies positive contributions to energy security, decarbonisation, economic activity and employment.

European significance

Europe's transition towards renewable electricity requires storage that can supply power when wind and solar generation are lower. The project would provide 296 MW of generating capacity and 2,175 MWh of storage, allowing more than seven hours of generation at full output.

The project would support renewable energy integration in Ireland and the operation of the interconnected European electricity system. By reducing reliance on gas-fired generation, it would also contribute to European energy-security and climate objectives.

Achieving decarbonisation at lower system cost

Earlier modelling estimated €3.3–€4.0 billion in potential electricity-system cost savings.

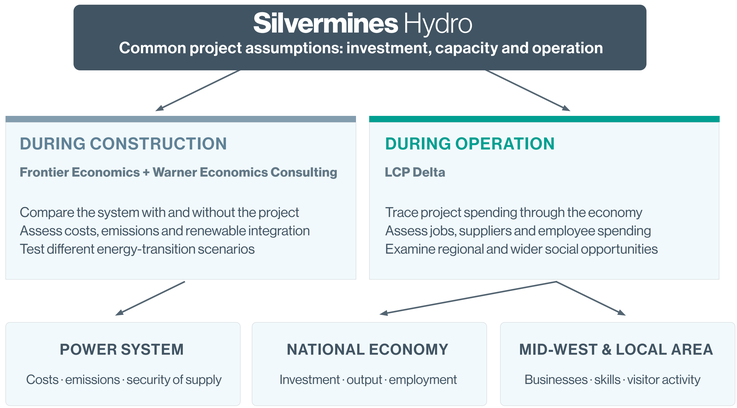
The independent analysis examined how the electricity system could achieve the same carbon-emissions outcome with and without Silvermines Hydro.

It found that storage could reduce the additional generating capacity needed to achieve that outcome, lowering investment and operating costs. Estimated savings ranged from €3.3 billion under Modest Progression to €4.0 billion under Accelerated Ambition.

Under Modest Progression, the analysis indicated that the same emissions outcome could be achieved with approximately 730 MW less wind capacity.

HOW THE BENEFITS WERE ASSESSED

Independent studies examine different, complimentary effects.



Source: Warner Economics Consulting, Silvermines Hydro - Total Economic Impact, October 2026.

WHEN THE BENEFITS ARISE

From construction opportunities to long-term operation.

DURING CONSTRUCTION

350 - 400

workers expected at peak activity

Opportunities for traders and local suppliers
Sponsored apprenticships and practical training
Demand for accommodation and local services

DURING OPERATION

50+ years

expected operating life

Electricity storage and grid-support services
Ongoing operations and maintenance roles
Visitor, education and research opportunities

Skills developed during construction can support careers beyond the project

Workforce varies through construction. Apprenticeships are a project commitment; opportunities depend on delivery.

Source and modelling basis

Warner Economics Consulting, *Silvermines Hydro – Total Economic Impact, October 2026 - Electricity-system figures are modelled estimates for 2032–2050, expressed in present-value terms where monetary.*



Lower consumer costs and emissions

A separate analysis, keeping the wider renewable generation build-out unchanged, estimated:

- €410 million in net consumer electricity-cost savings.
- 1.7 million tonnes of CO_2 emissions avoided.

These results relate to the main Modest Progression scenario. They represent an alternative assessment and should not be added to the €3.3 – €4.0 billion figures.

A more flexible and secure electricity supply

The project will store electricity during lower-price periods and release it when demand is higher or renewable output is lower. This would help Ireland use renewable electricity more effectively and reduce reliance on gas-fired generation when it would otherwise be needed.

The rotating generating equipment would also help maintain grid stability, supporting a reliable electricity supply as the proportion of wind and solar generation increases.

Supporting Ireland's economy and the Mid-West

Project investment would support economic activity through construction contracts, equipment and service purchases, and spending by employees. These benefits would extend through supply chains across Ireland.

Locally, construction would generate demand for accommodation, shops, food and other services. Operations, tourism and educational visits could provide continuing activity after construction.

The assessment also identifies opportunities for education, research and interpretation of Silvermines' mining heritage through the proposed visitor centre.

Employment, apprenticeships and lasting skills

Construction is expected to require 350–400 workers at peak activity, with workforce requirements varying throughout the programme. This will create opportunities for tradespeople, engineers, plant operators and construction workers, alongside contractors, suppliers and service businesses.

The project will sponsor apprenticeships during construction, combining practical on-site experience with classroom learning. The programme will support skills relevant to construction, civil engineering and electrical work, helping participants develop experience for careers beyond the project.

Once operational, the facility would provide longer-term employment opportunities in engineering, operations, maintenance and associated services.

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Proposed Community Benefits

Help shape the amenities and community support being considered

We are seeking your views on a proposed package of public amenities and community funding. These ideas are being presented to understand local priorities and help inform the project's final design and community-benefit proposals.

These are proposals for consultation — not approved commitments. Delivery would depend on the project proceeding, the necessary planning permissions, Board approvals, funding and detailed design.

Feedback will be considered as the proposals develop. Facilities, budgets and arrangements may change, and some proposals may not proceed.

Public amenities and community support

The package being explored extends beyond a financial fund. It includes walking routes, visitor facilities and public spaces that could provide lasting recreational, educational and social benefits.

Proposals being explored	Preliminary budget allowance
Visitor centre, cafe and heritage spaces - exhibitions, education and community use. Outdoor recreation and visitor facilities – active play area, public outdoor spaces, parking and supporting infrastructure	**€2.4 million**
Walking routes and wetland amenities — gravel paths, wetland boardwalk, seating and interpretation	**€1.3 million**
Community benefit fund — cash support for community-led projects (€100,000 per year during construction)	**€500,000**
Combined indicative package	**€4.2 million**

These figures are preliminary estimates for consultation.

A visitor centre for heritage, learning and community use

The proposed visitor centre could bring together Silvermines' mining heritage and its future role in sustainable energy. Potential uses include:

- A cafe serving residents, walkers and visitors.
- Mining heritage displays and interpretation.
- Exhibition and community-use space.
- Educational facilities for school visits and organised tours.

These facilities could create opportunities for tourism, local enterprise and employment. Their scope and operating arrangements have not yet been finalised.

Accessibility and long-term care

The intention is to create amenities that the community and visitors can use and enjoy. The design would consider different ages and abilities, particularly around the visitor centre and principal public spaces.

The extent of accessible routes, opening times, and arrangements for operation, maintenance and public safety remain to be developed. These would be clarified before any facilities open.

We welcome your views on accessibility and how the facilities could best serve the community.



Connecting the village and surrounding landscape

A proposed 3 km looped walking network aims to connect the village, the visitor centre and routes through the site towards existing mountain walks.

The concept includes gravel paths, seating and information at points of interest, together with approximately 500 m of elevated boardwalk through the wetland amenity area.

An active play area and outdoor gathering spaces are also being considered. Routes will provide appropriate separation from operational infrastructure.

We welcome feedback on the connections, destinations and recreational facilities that would be most useful locally.

Community Benefit Fund

A Community Benefit Fund of approximately €500,000 in total is proposed, with contributions phased through construction up to commissioning.

The fund could support:

- Community-led activities and improvements.
- Feasibility studies, designs and grant applications.
- Seed or match funding to help attract additional investment for larger community projects.

The proposed approach is for the fund to be administered independently, under a separate policy.

That policy would define the eligible area and applicants, contribution schedule, assessment process, community participation, administration costs, financial oversight and public reporting.



Exploring funding partnerships

Public funding support would be sought for appropriate capital elements, reflecting potential benefits for recreation, heritage, tourism and education. Opportunities would be explored with relevant government departments, agencies and the local authority.

Your feedback will help shape the proposals

We would particularly welcome your views on:

- Which amenities would provide the greatest local benefit?
- How should the walking routes and public spaces connect with the village?
- What community projects and priorities could the proposed fund support?
- What access or management arrangements would matter most to you?

Please share your views with the project team at this consultation. Feedback will be considered alongside design, environmental, planning, funding and operational requirements when developing the final proposals.

SIGA - HYDRO
Strategic Infrastructure Grid Asset

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to keep updated on what is happening at Silvermines and to talk to the team. If you would like to make an appointment for a one-to-one consultation meeting with the team, please contact us at the address above.