



Leitrim County Council Planning Report

Planning Reference No:

25/60303

Applicant:

David K. Trotter & Sons Ltd.

Location:

Nure Townland, Lurganboy, Manorhamilton, County Leitrim F91 EY28

Application Type:

Permission

Proposed Development

The proposed development will consist of the following:

- 1) Continued use of the existing operational quarry (3.4ha) (granted under Plan File Ref. No. 20140).
 - 2) Recommencement of extraction of a partially extracted area previously authorised under SU0057 (3.9 ha) to a final floor level of 148 mOD.
 - 3) Recommencement of use for stockpiling of the remainder of the historic quarry floor (2.9 ha) previously authorised under plan ref. SU0057.
 - 4) Lateral extension of the existing quarry including extraction of rock and all associated facilities/works over an area of c. 2 ha to a final floor level of 148 mOD.
 - 5) The continuation of use of an existing pre-cast concrete manufacturing building, concrete batching plant, machine storage building and existing yard area (Granted under Plan File Ref. No. 21251).
 - 6) Continuation of use of the existing settlement lagoons granted under Plan File Ref. No. 20140.
 - 7) Construction of two new buildings: - Building 1 (1,595 m²): A shed to enclose the existing pre-stressed beds/moulds, complete with a store. - Building 2 (85 m²): Incorporating a store for two items of equipment associated with block making, compressor house, and substation with switch room for 3-phase supply, to be located adjacent to the existing ready-mix plant.
 - 8) Importation of sand for use in concrete manufacturing.
 - 9) Import approx. 70,000m³ (c. 125,000 tonnes) of Article 27 clean, uncontaminated soil and stone byproduct (a non-EIA scheduled activity that does not require waste authorisation), to construct a screening berm to the south of the extraction area and to restore part of the application area following the completion of extraction.
 - 10) All related ancillary development and associated site facilities/works including processing (crushing, screening and washing) and stockpiling of materials; workshop, site office, block yard, and all other related activities.
- The proposed development is within an overall application area of c.20 hectares and is for a total period of 25 years, with an additional 2 years for final site restoration

Date of Site Inspection:

12/01/2026

Site Notice:	Site notice visible and legible in accordance with the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, when inspected.
Due Date:	13/02/2026

Description of Proposed Development

Permission is sought for the following development at the existing Trotter's quarry site in the townland of Nure, Lurganboy, Manorhamilton, County Leitrim:

- 1) *Continued use of the existing operational quarry (3.4ha) (granted under Plan File Ref. No. 20140).*
- 2) *Recommencement of extraction of a partially extracted area previously authorised under SU0057 (3.9 ha) to a final floor level of 148 mOD.*
- 3) *Recommencement of use for stockpiling of the remainder of the historic quarry floor (2.9 ha) previously authorised under plan ref. SU0057.*
- 4) *Lateral extension of the existing quarry including extraction of rock and all associated facilities/works over an area of c. 2 ha to a final floor level of 148 mOD.*
- 5) *The continuation of use of an existing pre-cast concrete manufacturing building, concrete batching plant, machine storage building and existing yard area (Granted under Plan File Ref. No. 21251).*
- 6) *Continuation of use of the existing settlement lagoons granted under Plan File Ref. No. 20140.*
- 7) *Construction of two new buildings: - Building 1 (1,595 m²): A shed to enclose the existing pre-stressed beds/moulds, complete with a store. - Building 2 (85 m²): Incorporating a store for two items of equipment associated with block making, compressor house, and substation with switch room for 3-phase supply, to be located adjacent to the existing ready-mix plant.*
- 8) *Importation of sand for use in concrete manufacturing.*
- 9) *Import approx. 70,000m³ (c. 125,000 tonnes) of Article 27 clean, uncontaminated soil and stone byproduct (a non-EIA scheduled activity that does not require waste authorisation), to construct a screening berm to the south of the extraction area and to restore part of the application area following the completion of extraction.*
- 10) *All related ancillary development and associated site facilities/works including processing (crushing, screening and washing) and stockpiling of materials; workshop, site office, block yard, and all other related activities.*

The proposed development is within an overall application area of c.20 hectares and is for a total period of 25 years, with an additional 2 years for final site restoration.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report prepared by Quarry Consulting has been submitted with the application.

Site Location and Context

The subject site is located in the townland of Nure, approximately 1km northwest of Lurganboy village. The land is well established as a limestone quarry, operating as D. K. Trotter & Sons Ltd., and is listed as Ref QR9 on the Local Authority Quarry Register (recorded pursuant to Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended). The proposed lateral extension area covers approximately 2ha of agricultural land lying to the west of the existing quarry.

The subject site has a stated site area of approximately 20ha and comprises the existing limestone quarry with ‘*extraction areas, processing and stockpiling areas, associated access routes, settlement lagoons, a section of greenfield land, and a concrete manufacturing area. The proposed quarry extension lands currently comprise agricultural land consisting of a field of sloping pastureland, enclosed by hedgerows and post and wire fencing*’ (EIAR Section 1.8).

‘*The site is situated between the 140m OD and 208m OD contour lines, with the highest point located at the north of the site, sloping downwards towards the south*’ (EIAR Section 1.8).

The EIAR details at Section 1.6 how ‘*the company supplies aggregates produced through its quarry operations... and manufactures and supplies high-quality products, including concrete blocks, ready-mix concrete, aggregates, pre-stressed flooring, and precast concrete stair flights with landing units designed to meet specific requirements. The existing concrete batching plant at the quarry supplies construction and infrastructure projects across the region.*’

‘*Extraction is the primary activity at the operational quarry. Extraction operations are carried out centrally within the site, with internal haul roads linking different areas of the quarry. The site has planning permissions covering both extraction and concrete manufacturing. Ancillary infrastructure supporting the quarry’s operations includes a weighbridge, wheelwash, office building, fuel storage area, stockpiling areas, settlement lagoons and processing facilities for crushing, screening, and washing. The site accommodates a concrete batching plant, a pre-cast concrete manufacturing plant for concrete mould production, existing concrete block production, a block making machine storage building, and additional yard areas essential for day-to-day operations*’ (EIAR Section 1.10).

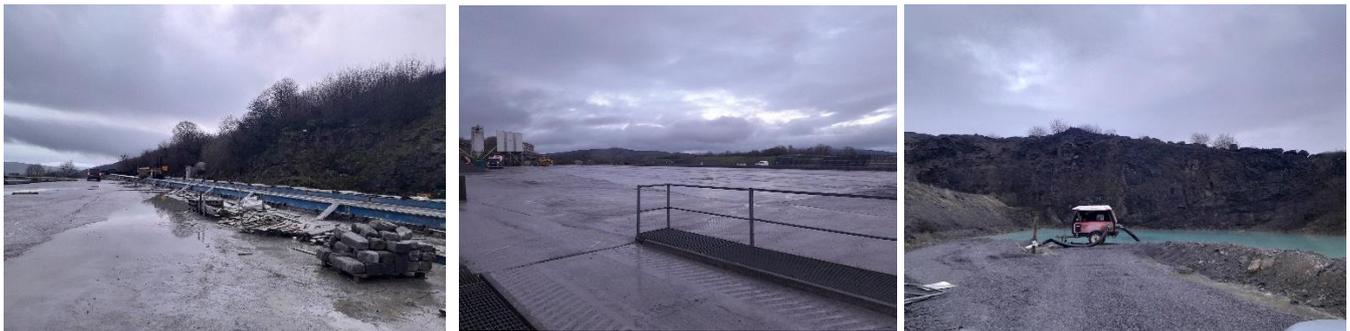


Fig. 1 – images within quarry

Planning History

- **P.23/5** – on 23/11/2023 permission was granted to the subject applicants for *the filling of lands with imported inert waste consisting of soil & stone material (application area = 1.2 Ha, volume 24,500 tonnes over a period of 10 years), construction of a landscaping berm and all associated ancillary works.* The permission was subject to 16 conditions.

Condition 2 restricted the permission to a period of 10 years.

Condition 3 required as follows:

- a) The total amount of inert waste accepted onto the site over the 10-year duration of this permission shall not exceed 24,500 tonnes.
- b) The operator shall maintain, record and make available to the Planning Authority at all times, a Waste Record Log of all materials received for the filling of these lands which shall include weight, material type and dates as provided in Appendix 2 of the Further Information response received on the 28th September 2023 and which shall be maintained and updated for the duration of this permission. The operator shall, if so directed by the Planning Authority, carry out additional monitoring at such intervals and locations as the Planning Authority deems necessary. Copies of all total annual results and analysis shall be submitted to the Planning Authority each year for the duration of this permission.

Condition 4 required as follows:

Prior to commencement of any works, the applicant shall apply to the Environment Section of Leitrim County Council for, and obtain, a Waste Facility Permit under the Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) Regulations 2007. On receipt of the waste permit a copy of the permit shall be submitted to the Planning Authority.

Condition 5 required as follows:

The conditions attaching to the grant of planning permission in respect of planning register ref. no. P.21-251, P.20-140 and the Substitute Consent by An Bord Pleanála Ref Number: 12.SU.0057 are hereby restated in respect of the continued use of the lands as associated with the overall development contained on the wider landholding in which the development the subject of this permission is situate.

Condition 6 required as follows:

All works carried out on this site shall be carried out in compliance with the relevant Waste Management Legislation and Waste Management Licences.

Condition 16 required as follows:

Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall pay to the Planning Authority a financial contribution of €10,500 (ten thousand and five hundred euro) in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the Planning Authority that is provided or is intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the County Leitrim Development Contribution Scheme 2023 made under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. In the event of works not having commenced on site after the expiration of one year from the date of grant of permission, these charges shall be increased quarterly in accordance with the Consumer Price Index.

- **P.21/251** – on 22 July 2022 permission granted to the subject applicants for the following:
 - a) retention and an extension of an existing pre-cast concrete manufacturing building;
 - b) retention and an extension of an existing concrete batching plant;
 - c) retention of an existing machine storage building (for the storage of a concrete block making machine),
 - d) retention of the use of part of the existing yard area for the storage of precast concrete shuttering pans/moulds, and permission to install a hard surfaced yard to be used for the storage of precast concrete products and the construction of screening berms to the perimeter of the yard together with associated drainage, landscaping and ancillary works.

Condition 2 required as follows:

The conditions attaching to the grant of planning permission in respect of planning register ref. no. P.20-140 and the Substitute Consent by An Bord Pleanála Ref Number: 12.SU.0057 are hereby restated in respect of the continued use of the lands as associated with the overall development contained on the wider landholding in which the development the subject of this permission is situate.

- **P.20/140** – on 20 May 2021 permission granted to the subject applicants for the following:

Permission and Retention Permission for development at Nure Townland, Lurganboy, Co Leitrim. The application consists of a total area of 3.45 hectares located within the existing quarry void and comprises of the following:

 - Retention of extraction of rock from 1.11 Ha. consisting of 0.72 Ha. which will be subject to further extraction and 0.39 Ha. which is known complete and will be subject to processing and storage of material;
 - Extraction and processing of rock from 1.24 Ha. area;
 - Continuance of non-extractive use of settlement lagoons (0.71 Ha.), existing quarry floor (0.29 Ha.) and haul road (0.1 Ha.); extraction of rock will be by blasting means down to a level of 148mOD which is the floor level of the existing quarry with processing of material using mobile plant;
 - Landscaping and restoration of the quarry;
 - All other ancillary facilities and works;

- *All of the above areas comprise part of the area previously authorised under SU0057, and a term of 10 years is proposed for the development.*

Condition 2 required as follows:

Prior to commencement of works on site, a contribution of €30,550 (thirty thousand, five hundred and fifty euro) as required under the Development Contributions Scheme shall be paid to the Planning Authority.

Condition 3 required as follows:

Prior to the commencement of work on site, a special contribution of €4,500 shall be paid to the Planning Authority to contribute towards the costs of on-going strengthening and upgrading of local roads in the general area.

Condition 4 required as follows:

Blasting operations shall be confined to between 09:00Hrs and 18:00Hrs Monday to Friday only. Blasting outside these hours shall only be permitted for emergency or safety reasons beyond the control of the operator. Advance notification, a minimum of 24 hours in writing, shall be given to all residents within 500 metres of the quarry when blasting is to be undertaken. An “all clear” signal shall be sounded when the blasting process is completed. Reason: In the interests of development control, noise control and the protection of residential amenities in the vicinity.

Condition 6 required as follows:

The operator shall monitor ground-borne vibrations, air over-pressure and noise levels for each blast and shall record results of such monitoring. Monitoring locations shall be agreed with the Planning Authority within 4 weeks of the grant of permission. The results of such monitoring shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within 28 days of the blast or 5 working days before any subsequent blast, whichever is the earlier.

Condition 16 required as follows:

Details of a re-habilitation programme shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within 1 year of the imposition of the conditions. The restoration, reinstatement and landscaping of the site shall be carried out in accordance with the guidance in section 3.6 of the Environmental Management Guidelines – Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non-Scheduled Minerals). The rock faces shall not be left exposed and shall be soiled. Final restoration shall be completed no later than 5 years after the cessation of extraction. The final surface at restoration stage shall not be level but shall be graded to falls in order to control the surface water runoff and shall include the provision of open drains to drain the land to the existing settlement ponds. Any proposals for post quarry development or uses, other than agricultural use, shall be the subject of a separate application for Planning Permission.

Condition 18 required as follows:

The quarry shall operate in accordance with the existing Waste Management Plan for the facility. Any new Waste Management Plan, or alterations to the existing Plan, that shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority prior to coming into use. Any new Plan shall include for the provision of designated storage areas for short term storage of litter waste, waste oils, batteries, scrap metals and other hazardous materials associated with the operation of the quarry. The Plan shall be implemented in full and shall remain in operation for the duration of the operation of the extraction operations and rehabilitation works at the quarry.

- **QR09/ An Bord Pleanála reference 12.QV.0019 and SU 12.SU0057**

The Operator sought registration of the Quarry under Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. A letter was issued to the subject applicants in February 2006 advising that the quarry constitutes unauthorised development. A Section 47 agreement was entered into in July 2009 which expired on 31 December 2011 to facilitate use of the quarry for a 2 year period whilst the regularisation of planning was resolved on foot of the decision of the European Court of Justice in relation to retention applications for developments requiring an environmental impact assessment. At the time it had provided that an EIA cannot be done retrospectively and as a consequence planning applications for retention in such situations could not be considered. In July 2018,

the Planning Authority formally determined that the quarry development required an EIA and in April 2013 a determination was made by An Bord Pleanála, reference 12.QV.0019, that a remedial EIS and NIS were required. In April 2013, An Bord Pleanála, reference 12.SH.0071, granted the subject applicants an extension of time for the making of a substitute consent application to prepare a remedial EIS and NIS. The substitute consent application was lodged with the Board on 9th August 2013. Substitute consent, reference SU12.SU0057, was granted on 03 June 2015, covering a quarry area of approximately 13.6ha, subject to 6 conditions.

Condition 2 required as follows:

A detailed restoration scheme for the site according to the broad principles indicated on Figures 2-1 and 2-2 of the remedial Environmental Impact Statement which accompanied the application for substitute consent to the Board and which shall include a programme for the orderly decommissioning of the surface and ground water management system for the entire site, shall be submitted to the planning authority for written agreement within six months of the date of this order, unless before that date, an application for planning permission for continuation of quarrying is submitted. The following shall apply in relation to the design and timing of the restoration plan: (a) Details relating to measures to ensure safety during site restoration shall be provided. (b) A timescale for implementation and proposals for an aftercare programme of five years shall be submitted to the planning authority for written agreement.

Condition 5 required a bond to be lodged with the Planning Authority to ensure the reinstatement of the site and condition 6 required the payment of a development contribution.

- **P.14821** – an application received on 19 July 1999 from David Trotter to erect offices, weighbridge and septic tank. The application was deemed incomplete on 15 September 1999.
- **P.97/13038** – in May 1997, permission was granted to David Trotter to erect workshop and store for the servicing of lorries, site plant and to store spare parts machinery, toilet facilities and provide septic tank on the subject site.
- **P.5946** – in July 1981, permission was granted to Mr. Patrick McBride to develop a quarry on the subject site. This was the original permission which facilitated the development of a quarry at this location.

The following applications relate to adjacent land to the east:

- **P.08/930** – in December 2008, Mervyn Regan applied for permission for the following:
 1. *provide a quarry for excavation of aggregates,*
 2. *upgrade and extend existing road through Coillte lands to include road widening, tree felling, barrier erection and improvement of the junction with the R280 road,*
 3. *to construct hardstand area for site compound for administration portacabin, mobile bunded chemical storage unit, bunded fuel station and toilet block,*
 4. *to provide mobile crusher with silt trap and petrol interceptor,*
 5. *to provide weighbridge with administration portacabin,*
 6. *to provide wheel wash with integrated petrol interceptor, silt trap, reservoir, pump house and soakway,*
 7. *to provide proprietary effluent treatment system and percolation area and*
 8. *to carry out associated site works*

Further information was requested in February 2009, and the application was subsequently withdrawn in July 2009.

- **P.04/305** – in April 2005, the Planning Authority issued a notification of decision to grant permission to Mr Mervyn Regan for the following development on the subject site:
 - (1) *provide a quarry for excavation of aggregates (site area circa 10.11 hectares).*
 - (2) *construct new entrance with access road to quarry.*
 - (3) *construct hardstand area for administration portacabin, (floor area 18.61m²), mobile chemical portaloo, refuelling point, site compound with chemical store.*

- (4) place mobile crusher complete with silt trap on site.
- (5) construct wheel wash with combined silt trap.
- (6) install petrol interceptor with soakaway and
- (7) carry out associated site works and
- (8) to carry out road widening and construct new right hand turning lane and road improvements at the proposed entrance.

This decision was subject to a third-party appeal from An Taisce and was subsequently refused by An Bord Pleanála in September 2005. The Board was not satisfied that an appropriate assessment of the effects of the development on the environment had been carried out and that the development would seriously injure the amenities and depreciate the value of properties in the vicinity.

Services/Infrastructure

Wastewater

The application documentation has indicated that the quarry utilises an existing conventional septic tank for wastewater treatment.

Water Supply

The application documentation has indicated that the quarry utilises an existing private well for water supply.

Surface Water Disposal

The application documentation has indicated that surface water disposal is to a watercourse.

Natural, Archaeological and Architectural Heritage

Natural Heritage

Lough Gill Special Area of Conservation (SAC Site Code: 001976) is located approximately 1.8km southeast of the subject site.

The Bonet River proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA Site Code 001404) forms part of the SAC upstream, 1.3km east of the subject site.

The subject site is not located within a landscape designated for amenity value in the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029.

Archaeological and Architectural Heritage

There are no protected structures or structures listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) located within the application site. There are no protected national monuments within the application site but as the proposed development is large in scale, it was referred to the Development Applications Unit at the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

Internal and Prescribed Bodies Referrals

The application was referred to the following, with responses indicated below:

Consultant's Name	Status	Response
North Leitrim District Engineer	Internal	No report received
An Taisce	External	Submission dated 23/01/2026
Chief Fire Officer	Internal	No report received
Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage	External	Submission dated 23/01/2026 requesting that archaeological test excavations be carried out.

Environment	Internal	Report dated 21/01/2026 citing no objection subject to conditions
SEE Road Design	Internal	No report received
HSE	External	Submission dated 15/01/2026 contains a number of recommendations and reiterates the need to adhere to the mitigation measures detailed in the EIAR in addition to additional noise monitoring and dust reduction measures. Recommends the inclusion of a condition requiring the submission of a full Site Restoration Plan.
Inland Fisheries Ireland	External	No report received
Water Services	Internal	No report received
The Heritage Council	External	No report received
Transport Infrastructure Ireland	External	Submission dated 06/01/2026 – generic response reminding Local Authority of their obligation in relation to proposals impacting national roads.

Submissions/Observations

A submission has been received from the following referral bodies:

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)

Requests that regard be had to the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities and relevant TII publications.

Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage

Archaeology

Due to the scale of the proposed development, the Department recommends that pre-development testing as described below should be carried out on site.

A report of the testing should be submitted as Further Information. This will enable this Department and the Planning Authority to formulate an informed archaeological recommendation before a planning decision is taken. Archaeological test excavations should be carried out as follows:

- The applicant is required to engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist to carry out an archaeological assessment of the development site. No sub-surface work should be undertaken in the absence of the archaeologist without his/her express consent.*
- The archaeologist shall carry out any relevant documentary research and inspect the site. Test trenches shall be excavated at locations chosen by the archaeologist, having consulted the site drawings.*
- The archaeologist is required to notify this Department in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of site preparations. This will allow the archaeologist sufficient time to obtain a licence to carry out the work.*
- Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report to the Planning Authority and to this Department in advance of the planning decision. Where archaeological material/features are shown to be present, preservation in situ, preservation by record (excavation) or monitoring may be required.*
- It should be borne in mind that, if significant archaeological remains are found, refusal might still be recommended, and/or further monitoring or excavation required. No decision should be made on this application until this Department and the Planning Authority has had the opportunity to evaluate the Archaeological Assessment. This Department will forward a recommendation based on the Archaeological Assessment to the Planning Authority.*

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation (either in situ or by record) of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

Nature Conservation

A submission is also made in the context of the Department's role in relation to nature conservation. The observations are intended to assist Leitrim County Council in relation to identifying potential impacts on European and national nature conservation sites, biodiversity and environmental protection in general, in the context of the current proposal.

It is noted that the current application relates primarily to the continuation of quarrying operations on site as per previously permitted activities. An additional increase in the extraction area with associated infrastructure is also proposed, which includes a deepening and widening of the existing quarry basin. The Department notes the typically low impermeable nature of the limestone basin to the Ground Waterbody (GWB 2024IE_WE_G_0060), with occasional surface water runoff to the Nure Stream during periods of heavy rainfall post-treatment (discharge Licence WPL/07/04). However, hydrological connectivity exists to the Lough Gill SAC (site code: 001976) via the Shanvaus River. The current WFD River Waterbody (2019-2024) for the Shanvaus River (IE_WE_35S011100) is recorded as of good status. The Department acknowledges the low likelihood of adverse hydrological impacts arising as a result of the quarry expansion and additional infrastructure. It is therefore recommended that all mitigations as outlined in the EIAR and NIS should be strictly adhered within the conditions of any consent for the proposed development, including the facilitation of the existing closed-loop water management system on site.

National Environmental Health Service (HSE)

Should permission be granted for the proposed development, the National Environmental Health Service makes the following recommendations:

- That the local community is informed of the proposed development and that any issues of concern expressed by them are taken into consideration in the operation of the proposed quarry extension. A system should be put in place for dealing with enquiries and/or complaints from members of the public during the operational phase of the quarry.
- Water monitoring results should be reviewed and where there is indication of contamination or significant dewatering of drinking water supplies, additional mitigation should be agreed with the Planning Authority. The effectiveness of the additional mitigation should be verified through a sampling programme. Any wells identified as a drinking water supply and located within 150m of the gravel extraction facility are sampled prior to the commencement of extension works. Sampling parameters should be agreed with the Local Authority. These wells should also be sampled at least biannually during the extraction period and once within the first year following cessation of operations on site to establish if there are any changes in water quality.
- Mitigation measures proposed for the protection of surface and groundwater are implemented in full and are monitored on an on-going basis (as part of an Environmental Management Plan) in order to mitigate any potentially significant effects.
- Dust mitigation measures and air quality measures outlined in Chapter 8 are included as conditions of planning permission (if granted); are implemented in full and are monitored to ensure the effectiveness of the mitigation.
- The proposed noise mitigation measures outlined in Chapter 11 are included as conditions of planning permission, if granted.
- Noise monitoring is also undertaken outside of 'daytime' hours.
- Corrective action should be included in the Environmental Management Plan if exceedances of permitted noise limits are recorded.
- The condition of the haul roads should be checked weekly for damage/potholes. An agreement must be put in place between the local Roads Authority and the applicant for the on-going maintenance of haul roads during the construction and operation of the proposed development. Any damage/potholes identified should be repaired within 24 hours of identification.

- *The submission of a Site Restoration Plan, which includes a timeframe for undertaking restoration works, and actual works detail is included as a condition of planning permission, if granted.*
- *To minimise the risk of future water safety issues, consideration be given to a restoration plan for the quarry void involving filling the void and restoring it to agricultural use or as a public amenity.*

An Taisce

1. Review of Compliance

Compliance with the conditions of existing permissions on the site should be fully assessed and demonstrated as a preliminary matter. An Taisce also submit that the permission period be limited to ten years to allow for a full review of compliance. An Taisce note the following from the Quarries and Ancillary Activities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004) which emphasise the need for this interim review of compliance:

*“Where the expected life of the proposed quarry exceeds 5 years, it will normally be appropriate to grant permission for a longer period (such as 10 - 20 years), particularly where major capital investment is required at the outset. In deciding the length of the planning permission, planning authorities should have regard to the expected life of the reserves within the site. The purpose of setting a finite period is not to anticipate that extraction should not continue after the expiry of that period, but rather to **enable the planning authority, in conjunction with the developer and environmental authorities, to review changes in environmental standards and technology over a decade or more since the original permission was granted.**” [An Taisce emphasis]*

2. Water Framework Directive

It is noted that the proposed extraction extension area is in close proximity to the river waterbody labelled as ‘Shanvaus_010’ by the EPA under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC) and is considered to be at risk of not achieving good status by 2027, requiring close consideration by the Council. Furthermore, the underlying Dromahair ground waterbody is currently designated as good water quality status and not at risk, necessitating retention of these designations to secure WFD objectives.

The objectives of the WFD are to protect all high status waters, prevent further deterioration of all waters and to restore degraded surface and ground waters to good status by 2027. Specifically, where there is bad or moderate water quality, there is the legal imperative to bring that water body up to good status by 2027.

Therefore, the proposal should be assessed against Article 4 of the WFD to determine whether the project may cause a deterioration of the status of a surface or ground water body or if it may jeopardise the attainment of good surface or ground water status or of good ecological potential and good surface or ground water chemical status.

An Taisce would recommend the following elements for particular close consideration:

- *Plans detailing proposed lowest excavation levels/quarry floor levels, and the different proposed phases of excavation, to ensure that groundwater quality remains intact by having regard to extraction that may occur below the water table.*
- *Detailed topographical survey of existing drainage ditches on site which may act as vectors for contamination upon surface water receptors in the vicinity.*
- *Stripping back of soil and potential contamination of underlying groundwater via hydrocarbons, etc.*

3. Appropriate Assessment

The importance of considering potential surface and/or ground water quality impacts is exemplified by the occurrence of Lough Gill SAC (site code: 001976) approximately 1.8 kilometres to the southeast of the proposal. Given that groundwater is a source of baseflow into rivers and streams, contaminated groundwater could enter surface water receptors and introduce adverse downstream impacts for the wider catchment, including the SAC.

Consequently, it should be ensured that the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) with regard to the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the proposed development are satisfied. In this way, it can be determined whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect, either individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives. It is now well established in law that approval can only be granted for plans and projects when it has been established beyond all reasonable scientific doubt that the subject proposal will not adversely impact any Natura 2000 sites.

4. Biosecurity

An Taisce submit that an invasive species screening and soil and stone infill management plan should be conducted as part of plans for the restoration phase of the proposal, due to the potential for unintended invasive species introduction when importing the inert soil and stone material. These would bring significant ecological pressures to the existing vegetation contained within the riparian area of surface water receptors in the vicinity of the proposal and would be extremely difficult to control once established in the area surrounding the subject site.

An Taisce bring the Council's attention to a guidance document regarding the reduction of invasive species transport through soil and stone, compiled by the NPWS and DHLGH:

*"Since the 1960's the number of invasive alien species in Ireland has steadily increased with a variety of species now widespread in Ireland with **continued risk of spread** including terrestrial invasive alien species such as American skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*), Chilean rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*), Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), New Zealand flatworm (*Arthurdendyus triangulatus*) and **Japanese Knotweed** (*Fallopia japonica*; synonyms *Reynoutria japonica* and *Polygonum cuspidatum*), as well as aquatic invasive alien species such as Zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*), Quagga mussel (*Dreissena rostriformis bugensis*), Craayfish plague (*Aphanomyces astaci*), Nuttall's waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*) and African curly waterweed (*Lagarosiphon major*). As more invasive alien species are poised to be introduced to Ireland from Great Britain and continental Europe, **good awareness and implementation of biosecurity measures by all relevant stakeholders are required.**" [An Taisce emphasis added].*

In addition to the invasive floral species mentioned in the previous paragraph, An Taisce would also highlight Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron as highly damaging in the Irish context due to their rapid spread across the Irish landscape and ability to outcompete native species. All invasive non-native plant species listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, should also be targeted within an invasive species management plan. It should also be ensured that such management is in adherence to EU Regulation 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of invasive alien species.

The Council should ensure that the applicant adheres to the listed biosecurity measures contained within this document:

1. *Site risk assessment: Check for the presence of invasive species and risk of introducing them prior to commencing works.*
2. *Managing risk: Put in place a plan for site biosecurity.*
3. *Check: Have visual inspection checklists for machinery/equipment.*
4. *Clean: Removal of heavy debris adhering to machinery with a brush or trowel prior to leaving a worksite, wash down if possible.*
5. *Responsible disposal: Dispose of soil and stone containing invasive species following regulations and best practice guidance.*
6. *Depot cleaning station: Use self-contained cleaning stations for incoming machinery or equipment at central depots.*
7. *Stay informed: Keep up to date with compliance and reporting procedures. Adherence to these measures are imperative to ensure a rigorous biosecurity*

management procedure and to tackle the growing issue of invasive species spread throughout Ireland.

Representations

None received.

Part V

Part V provision is not applicable to the subject application.

Pre-Planning Consultations

No pre-planning consultation referenced in the application form.

Policy Context

National Policy

Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (2018 and First Revision April 2025) and National Development Plan 2021-2030

National Policy Objective 30

Facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.

Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2025

Climate Action Plan 2025 includes measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and it should be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024. The Plan provides a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030

The NBAP includes five strategic objectives aimed at addressing existing challenges and new and emerging issues associated with biodiversity loss.

Water Action Plan 2024, A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland

The Plan responds to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, to accelerate the identification and implementation of the right measures in the right places to both restore and protect all water bodies.

National Guidelines

- Quarries and Ancillary Activities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, April 2004)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009)
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018)
- Heritage and Local Government; the '*Environmental Management Guidelines - Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry*', as published by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2006;
- '*Archaeological Code of Practice*' between the DoEHLG and the Irish Concrete Federation, 2009;
- '*Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry*', 2008

- *'Wildlife, Habitats and the Extractive Industry- Guidelines for the Protection of biodiversity within the Extractive Industry'*, NPWS 2009.

Regional Policy

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032

Provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region that supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework. The RSES seeks to protect, conserve and manage the landscape and its natural, built and cultural assets so that its potential is fully realised for the benefit of all. Specifically, it contains a policy objective to protect manage and conserve the quality, character and distinctiveness of the landscapes and seascapes.

Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

The Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 recognises that quarrying and extractive industry has an important function in the economy of the county and that it is an important source of employment. Policies therefore facilitate the extraction of minerals and aggregates and associated processing where such activities do not have significant negative environmental effects and where such operations are in compliance with all national regulations and guidelines applicable to quarrying activities (Section 10.7 Extractive Industry and Building Materials Production).

'Leitrim is a predominantly rural county, with much of its population rural-based and the majority of the land in the county is in agricultural or forestry use. Construction, engineering, manufacturing, quarrying, tourism related services, transport, energy production, forestry, agriculture, food, education, waste disposal and health are all areas of employment in the rural areas of Co. Leitrim' (Section 10.4 Rural Economy).

The following extracts of Volume I – Written Statement of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 are relevant in the assessment of this application:

WQ POL 1 To protect existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the county and to manage development in a manner consistent with the protection of these resources.

WQ POL 10 To assess proposals for development in terms of their impact on human health to include, inter alia, the potential impact on existing adjacent developments, on existing land uses and/or the surrounding landscape. Where proposed developments would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of the area through pollution by noise, fumes, odours, dust, grit or vibration, or cause pollution of air, water and/or soil, mitigation measures shall be introduced in order to eliminate adverse environmental impacts or reduce them to an acceptable operating level.

AQ POL 1 To promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/5/0/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 201) (or any updated/superseding documents).

NP POL 1 To support the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006.

NP POL 2 To require industrial and warehousing development proposals to be assessed against the Noise Assessment Criteria contained in Section 13.12.2 of Chapter 13, Development Management Standards.

AGG RES POL 1 To facilitate adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet the future growth needs of the county and the wider region while addressing key environmental, traffic and social impacts and details of rehabilitation.

AGG RES POL 2 To facilitate the further development of the extractive industry by permitting the continuation and extension of existing quarries and the development of new quarries, where such development does not adversely impact on human health, the receiving environment including the visual quality of the landscape, existing infrastructure, adjoining land uses and the amenity value of neighbouring lands and of adjoining residential development.

AGG RES POL 3 To facilitate the exploitation of the county's natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development, including rural housing, taking place in areas containing proven deposits, whilst also ensuring that such developments are carried out in a manner which would not unduly impinge on the visual amenity or environmental quality in the area.

AGG RES POL 4 To ensure that projects associated with the extractive industry carry out screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.U. Habitats Directive and comply with all relevant environmental legislation as required.

AGG RES POL 5 To ensure that the extractive industry and associated development minimises adverse impacts on the road network in the area and that the full cost of road improvements, including during operations and at time of closure, which are necessary to facilitate those industries are borne by the industry itself.

AGG RES POL 6 To ensure that all existing workings are rehabilitated to suitable land uses and that all future extraction activities allow for the rehabilitation of pits and proper land use management. The biodiversity value of the site should be considered in the first instance when preparing restoration plans. Where land filling is proposed, inert material is the preferred method. Each planning application shall be considered on a case by case basis and where relevant will be dealt with under the relevant regional Waste Management Plan.

AGG RES POL 7 To ensure that development for aggregates/mineral extraction, processing and associated processes does not significantly impact in the following areas:

- a) Special Areas of Conservation and/or Special Protection Area
- b) Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas
- c) other areas of importance for the conservation of flora and fauna
- d) areas of significant archaeological potential
- e) in the vicinity of a recorded National Monument
- f) sensitive landscapes
- g) County Geological Sites and/or sites of geological importance.

AGG RES POL 8 To ensure that the extraction of minerals and aggregates protects to the maximum practicable extent the visual quality of the receiving landscape and do not adversely affect the environment or adjoining existing land uses.

AGG RES POL 9 The use of the following chemicals as a processing agent shall not be permitted as part of any proposed processing operation located above or adjacent to surface or ground waters, or which could potentially impact such waters regardless of their location - mercury, cyanide or cyanide compounds, breakdown products of cyanide, or sulfuric acid. These present an unreasonable risk of environmental harm due to the toxicity of such chemicals and their demonstrated potential to cause damage to the environment.

Section 11.3 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

Section 11.3 of the Plan sets out the following policies and objectives for the protection of the environment:

NH POL 1 To protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

NH POL 2 To implement Article 6(3) and where necessary Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects with the potential to impact European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or

project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, and the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended as relevant.

NH POL 3 To protect designated Natural Heritage Area (NHA) sites, including proposed Natural Heritage Area sites (pNHA) and seek to develop linkages between designated sites and other non-designated sites of ecological importance, where feasible and as resources permit.

NH POL 4 To consult with relevant prescribed bodies, such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service (DoHLGH), and take account of any licensing requirements when undertaking, approving and authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species or habitats protected by law.

NH POL 5 To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact on plant, animal or bird species or habitats protected by law, subject to satisfactory mitigation measures.

LCA POL 1 To conserve and enhance the high nature conservation value of the Landscape Character Areas in order to create/protect ecologically resilient and varied landscapes.

LCA POL 2 To protect, enhance and contribute to the physical, visual and scenic character of Co. Leitrim and to preserve its unique landscape character.

LCA POL 3 To ensure that landscape sensitivity and the preservation of the uniqueness of a landscape character area (where appropriate) is an important consideration in determining the appropriateness of development uses and proposals in areas of landscape sensitivity, (scenery, nature conservation or archaeology) in conjunction with the siting, design and materials proposed.

LD POL 5 To ensure that development proposals have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment, the value of the landscape, its character, importance, sensitivity and capacity to absorb change.

ARCH POL 1 To secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in-situ or in particular circumstances where the Council is satisfied that this is not possible, preservation by record as a minimum) of all archaeological remains and sites of importance such as National Monuments, Recorded Monuments, protected wrecks and underwater archaeological heritage, to include their setting and context.

RE POL 1 To encourage and facilitate the production of energy from renewable sources, such as from wind, solar, bioenergy, hydroelectricity, and geothermal, subject to compliance with proper planning and environmental considerations.

SE POL 5 To promote the integration of solar energy into existing and planned developments.

Development Management Standards.

Noise Assessment Criteria Section 13.12.2 detail how *'noise levels shall generally not exceed 55 dB (a) Leq when measured at the boundary of the site where such noise would result in an adverse impact on amenity to an adjoining sensitive land use such as residential development.'*

Section 13.18.2 Extractive Industries

The Planning Authority will not facilitate the development of the extractive industry and permit such workings unless it has been shown that the following criteria can be met; having taken into account the reduced demand for aggregates that will come about through improved recycling of construction and demolition waste:

- The environment and the landscape will be safeguarded to the greatest possible extent during all life cycle stages of the process,
- Such operations have good access to, or are within reasonable distance of, the national or regional road network and do not adversely affect the residential or tourism amenity of the area,
- Satisfactory provision will be made for a beneficial after use of the land that does not conflict with other planning objectives for the area,

- The working, landscaping, restoration and after care of the site will be carried out to the highest standards in accordance with the approved scheme.

The development, continuation of use or diversification of activities relating to the extractive industry will be assessed having regard to the 'Quarrying and Ancillary Activities Guidelines' (DoEHLG, 2004) (or any superseding national policy document), 'Guidelines for Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry' (EPA, 2006), 'Guidance on Biodiversity in the Extractive Industry (NPWS), 'Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry' (GSI, 2008), the Archaeological Code of Practice (2009) and the Irish Concrete Federation Environmental Code (2005) and any other relevant superseding policy guidance.

Applicants should submit the following information at application stage:

- *Map showing total site area, highlighting area to be excavated, and any ancillary proposed development, nearest dwellings, or any other development (within 1 km of the site)*
- *Description of the aggregate(s) to be extracted, method of extraction, any ancillary processes (such as crushing, concrete manufacture, etc.), equipment to be used, stockpiles, storage of soil and overburden, storage of waste materials and proposed/existing settling ponds*
- *Total and annual tonnage of extracted aggregates, expected life of the extraction, maximum extent and depth of working and proposed phasing programme*
- *Description of development works (buildings, fixed and mobile plant, roads, fuel tanks, water supply and drainage, earth mounds, etc.)*
- *Description of water courses and water table depth, natural and cultural heritage, traffic impact and waste management*
- *Description of cumulative impact when taken together with other quarries in the vicinity*
- *Likely environmental effects including the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report where relevant*
- *Proposed mitigation measures*
- *Phased restoration and after-care proposals, and*
- *Proposals for surface water management and flood risk minimisation.*

Where proposals for the working out of minerals and aggregates are submitted in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or an Area of High Visual Amenity (AHVA), existing landscape quality shall remain the overriding priority and such proposals must illustrate that the benefits of the development will outweigh any adverse environmental consequences. The Planning Authority shall evaluate the need to conserve the environment, character and natural beauty of AONBs and AHVAs and the extent to which the proposed development would materially damage these qualities. It shall also examine the national need for that specific mineral or aggregate substance to be worked and the availability of the resource in less sensitive locations.

The Council may require the submission of an EIAR for sub-threshold development where it is considered that the development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The restoration of disused pits and quarries to productive agricultural use will be encouraged where appropriate having regard to all appropriate environmental considerations. Other possible post closure uses may be considered such as recreational facilities and natural habitat areas.

A condition requiring the lodgement of a financial bond will be included in any grant of permission to ensure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site following the completion of extraction. A Special Development Contribution in accordance with Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), may be imposed for the upgrade or maintenance of the local road network to facilitate the proposed development.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The relevant classes of development that require EIA are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. Part 1 of Schedule 5 sets out the categories and scale of development that qualify for mandatory EIA as per Annex I of the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU). The relevant class of development in this case relates to:

- “19. Quarries and open-cast mining where the surface of the site exceeds 25 hectares.”
- “22. Any change to or extension of projects listed in this Annex where such a change or extension in itself meets the thresholds, if any, set out in this Annex.”

Part 2 of Schedule 5 sets out the Annex II projects that may require EIA based on the scale of development. The relevant class of development in this case relates to:

- “2(b) Extraction of stone, gravel, sand or clay, where the area of extraction would be greater than 5 hectares.”
- “13(a) Any change or extension of development already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed (not being a change or extension referred to in Part 1) which would:-

(i) result in the development being of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule, and

(ii) result in an increase in size greater than –

- 25 per cent, or

- an amount equal to 50 per cent of the appropriate threshold,

whichever is the greater.”

The proposed development provides for the extraction of stone over an area greater than 5 hectares, thereby exceeding the threshold area stated under Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. Accordingly, the proposed development is deemed to be subject to EIA.

Section 171A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, defines EIA as:

(a) consisting of—

(i) the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report by the applicant in accordance with this Act and regulations made thereunder,

(ii) the carrying out of consultations in accordance with this Act and regulations made thereunder,

(iii) the examination by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, of— (I) the information contained in the environmental impact assessment report, (II) any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the applicant in accordance with section 172(1D) and (1E), and (III) any relevant information received through the consultations carried out pursuant to subparagraph (ii),

(iv) the reasoned conclusion by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, on the significant effects on the environment of the proposed development, taking into account the results of the examination carried out pursuant to subparagraph (iii) and, where appropriate, its own supplementary examination, and

(v) the integration of the reasoned conclusion of the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, into the decision on the proposed development, and

(b) which includes—

(i) an examination, analysis and evaluation, carried out by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, in accordance with this Part and regulations made thereunder, that identifies, describes and assesses, in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed development on the following: (I) population and human health; (II) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive; (III) land, soil, water, air and climate; (IV) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape; (V) the interaction between the factors mentioned in clauses (I) to (IV), and

(ii) as regards the factors mentioned in subparagraph (i)(I) to (V), such examination, analysis and evaluation of the expected direct and indirect significant effects on the environment derived from the vulnerability of the proposed development to risks of major accidents or disasters, or both major accidents and disasters, that are relevant to that development

I am satisfied that the information contained in the EIAR and associated drawings adequately identifies and describes the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment and complies with Article 94 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2000, as amended, in relation to the requisite content of an EIAR. It includes a non-technical summary, details of sources used for the descriptions and assessments and a list of experts who contributed to the report. In terms of the information specified in paragraph 1 and 2 of schedule 6 (relating to information to be contained in the EIAR), I am satisfied that the EIAR contains a description of the likely effects of the development on the environment, of measures to mitigate significant effects and a description of the reasonable alternatives considered.

The EIAR chapters are set out as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Scope & Methodology
3. Project Description
4. Alternatives
5. Population & Human Health
6. Biodiversity
7. Land, Soils & Geology
8. Water
9. Climate
10. Air Quality
11. Noise & Vibration
12. Visual & Landscape
13. Traffic
14. Heritage
15. Material Assets
16. Interactions
17. Mitigation & Monitoring

Compliance with the requirements of Article 94 and Schedule 6 of the Regulations 2001 is assessed below:

Article 94 (a) Information to be contained in an EIAR (Schedule 6, paragraph 1)
<i>A description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the proposed development.</i>
A description of the proposed development is contained within chapter 3 of the EIAR. It includes details on the location, site, existing quarry operation, proposed extension, design and size of the development and proposed buildings. In each technical chapter, the EIAR details are provided on use of natural resources and the production of emissions and/or waste (where relevant).
<i>A description of the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed development.</i>
An assessment of the likely significant direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the development is carried out for each of the technical chapters of the EIAR. I am satisfied that the assessment of significant effects is comprehensive and robust and enables decision making.
<i>A description of the features, if any, of the proposed development and the measures, if any, envisaged to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment of the development.</i>

The EIAR includes designed in mitigation measures and measures to address potential adverse effects identified in technical studies. These, and arrangements for monitoring, are summarised in each environmental chapter. Mitigation measures comprise standard good practices and site-specific measures and offset significant adverse effects identified in the EIAR.

A description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the person or persons who prepared the EIAR, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the proposed development on the environment.

A description of the alternatives considered is contained in Chapter 4 of the EIAR. The alternatives considered include using variations of recycled aggregates and marine-derived aggregates but are not feasible as reliable alternatives due to the quality and quantity of stone required for construction projects. The main reasons for opting for the current proposal and location were based on the presence of the required quality of aggregate and established infrastructure and services to support the activity including established haulage routes. The design layout was chosen to minimise the potential impacts on the environment from noise, dust and visual impacts. I am satisfied, therefore, that the applicant has studied reasonable alternatives in assessing the proposed development and has outlined the main reasons for opting for the current proposal and in doing so the applicant has taken into account the potential impacts on the environment.

Article 94(b) Additional information, relevant to the specific characteristics of the development and to the environmental features likely to be affected and methods of assessment (Schedule 6, Paragraph 2).

A description of the baseline environment and likely evolution in the absence of the development.

A description of the baseline environment is included in each technical chapter of the EIAR and an assessment of the potential impacts at operational and post-operational phase.

A description of the forecasting methods or evidence used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information, and the main uncertainties involved.

The methodology employed in carrying out the EIA is set out in each of the individual chapters assessing the environmental effects. The applicant has indicated in the different chapters of where difficulties have been encountered (technical or otherwise) in compiling the information to carry out EIA. I am satisfied that forecasting methods are adequate in respect of likely effects on biodiversity.

A description of the expected significant adverse effects on the environment of the proposed development deriving from its vulnerability to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to it.

The site is not at risk to natural disaster, and no dangerous substances will be used at the site. Chapter 5 (Population and Human Health) states at Section 5.94 that *'the quarry has no Seveso substances, no bulk hydrocarbons storage, and no hazardous industrial processes; therefore, major accident risk is inherently low'*.

Article 94 (c) A summary of the information in non-technical language.

A non-technical summary has been provided with the EIAR. I am satisfied that it is concise and comprehensive and is written in a language that is easily understood by a lay member of the public.

Article 94 (d) Sources used for the description and the assessments used in the report.

The sources used to inform the description, and the assessment of the potential environmental impact are set out in the EIAR and are generally appropriate.

Article 94 (e) A list of the experts who contributed to the preparation of the report.

A list of the various experts who contributed to the report are set out in Section 1.33 to 1.43 of the Report (and in Table 1-1 and 1-2). I am satisfied that the EIAR has been prepared by experts with competency in the technical subject areas.

Consultations

The application has been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, in respect of public notices. Submissions have been received from statutory bodies and have been considered in this report, in advance of decision making. I am satisfied, therefore, that appropriate consultations have been carried out and that third parties have had the opportunity to comment on the proposed development in advance of decision making.

Compliance

Having regard to the foregoing, I am satisfied that the information contained in the EIAR, and associated planning application documentation provided by the applicant is sufficient to comply with Article 94 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Summary Assessment of Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Assessment of Alternatives

The Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, requires the EIAR to provide a description of the reasonable alternatives studied which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment.

Chapter 4 of the EIAR describes the development and alternatives considered in the proposed development and examines the following:

- 'Do Nothing Alternative';
- Alternative Sources of Aggregates;
- Alternative Locations;
- Alternative Designs/Layouts; and
- Alternative Processes

It refers to the longstanding nature of the quarry on the site and to the rationale for the proposed development in utilising the existing proven limestone reserves and investment in infrastructure already made at this established site. The proposed lateral extension is proposed as it reduces risks to groundwater and the environment, while keeping operations efficient.

Having regard to these requirements, and the long-established nature of the existing quarry at the subject site, the alternatives considered by the applicant are reasonable and sufficient in terms of detail. The Report details how if quarrying were to stop, that local concrete production would end, leading to higher costs and delays for construction projects. The environmental benefits of sourcing materials locally would also be lost. The Report concludes that extending the existing quarry is the most viable and sustainable solution, supporting local jobs and development while following environmental regulations and best practices.

I am satisfied that alternatives have been considered and adequately addressed in the EIAR and that justification for the proposed development has been detailed.

Assessment of Population and Human Health

Chapter 5 of the EIAR deals with impacts on population and human health. The extension will be consistent with current operations at the site and after quarrying ends, the land will be restored to natural habitats with no significant negative impact on property values as quarrying is a long-established activity in the area. The quarry will continue to employ 25 people resulting in continued work for those employed. There is no tourist attraction or recreational area directly affected. The main health risks considered are noise, dust (including silica), and radon gas. All risks are managed by existing safety measures and legal requirements. Risks to workers and the public are considered low and not significant. The site is in a high radon area, but outdoor quarry work poses minimal risk. Silica dust is controlled by safety procedures and personal protective equipment.

The EIAR sets out mitigation measures stating that the quarry will continue to follow best practice for health and safety, dust, noise, and water management. Regular monitoring will ensure compliance and protect local people and the environment.

The proposed development will extend the life of an existing quarry. It operates in a rural area and provides direct and indirect employment. I am satisfied that the development will make a positive contribution to the local economy by the provision of direct and indirect employment and the availability of aggregates to the region. I am satisfied that, subject to the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, significant direct, indirect and cumulative effects on human health will not arise as a consequence of the development.

Assessment of Biodiversity

Chapter 6 of the EIAR provides an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) undertaken by Green and Blue Ecology on the likely significant impacts from the proposed continuation of use and extension of the existing limestone quarry on biodiversity.

The survey area includes the existing quarry, agricultural land, and some natural habitats – scrub, hedgerows, and grassland. The surrounding landscape is mostly farmland, woodland, and bog. The habitats were deemed to be of low ecological value. No rare or protected plant species were found on site. Some common mammals (like rabbits) and birds (including Meadow Pipit and Linnet) were observed, but none are of high conservation concern. There are two protected sites within 2km of the quarry—Lough Gill SAC (international importance) and Bonet River pNHA (national importance).

During quarry operations, the main risks considered were habitat loss, disturbance from noise and vibration, dust, and changes to water quality. The assessment found that:

- No significant loss of important habitats (scrub or hedgerows) is expected.
- No significant impacts are predicted for protected areas nearby, local water quality, or important species.
- Birds and bats are unlikely to be affected in a way that would harm local populations, provided vegetation clearance avoids the bird breeding season

The assessment determined that no special ecological mitigation or monitoring is required, as impacts are concluded as not being significant. The proposed continuation of use and extension to the existing limestone quarry at Nure will have no residual impacts on biodiversity.

Regard is also had to the submission received from An Taisce on the subject application wherein it is recommended that an invasive species screening and soil and stone infill management plan should feature as part of plans for the restoration phase of the proposal due to the potential for unintended invasive species introduction when importing the inert soil and stone material. On this broader issue, it is noted that during the habitat survey of the subject site, no statutory non-native invasive species were recorded as present in the application site. Notwithstanding, it is considered appropriate to require the submission of a detailed Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) by way of condition for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any restoration works associated with this proposal.

Separately, regard is also had to the comments of An Taisce in relation to more broader Appropriate Assessment implications for the proposal and, specifically, the potential for impacts on Lough Gill SAC (Site Code: 001976) given that groundwater is a source of baseflow into rivers and streams and the risk of contamination of such groundwater from the proposal to enter surface water receptors and introduce adverse downstream impacts for the wider catchment, including the SAC. This issue is specifically addressed in the assessment provided under the environmental theme of 'Water' in this EIA and under the heading 'Appropriate Assessment' of this report. On this issue, regard is had to the existing closed-loop water management system on site which is

authorised and monitored under the existing Section 4 Discharge Licence (WPL/07/04) which preserves both the hydro morphological and hydrogeological integrity of the receiving environment.

Appropriate mitigation measures have been included to address the development during the operational phase and the blasting and extraction of bedrock, earthworks, use of machinery, lowering of water table, settlement ponds, wheelwash, hydrocarbons, the pumped discharge of quarry waters and monitoring activities. The proposed development is not anticipated to influence groundwater levels or flows in sensitive downstream receptors, including the Lough Gill SAC along the River Bonet or any private wells in the surrounding area. Furthermore, regard is had to the submission of the Development Applications Units (DAU) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) on the subject application wherein, under the heading 'Nature Conservation', the DAU notes the typically low impermeable nature of the limestone basin to the receiving Ground Waterbody (GWB 2024IE_WE_G_0060), with occasional surface water runoff to the Nure Stream during periods of heavy rainfall following post-treatment as authorised under Discharge Licence WPL/07/04. Whilst hydrological connectivity from the subject site to the Lough Gill SAC (site code: 001976) via the Shanvaus River exists, the current Water Framework Directive (WFD) River Waterbody (2019-2024) for the Shanvaus River (IE_WE_35S011100) is recorded as of 'good' status.

On the basis of the information provided in the application documentation, including the appraisal of potential impacts and associated mitigation measures documented in the submitted EIAR, the submission of the DAU and having regard to the conservation objectives and qualifying interests of the Lough Gill SAC and the 'good' status of the Shanvaus River (IE_WE_35S011100), as per the current Water Framework Directive (WFD) River Waterbody (2019-2024), I am satisfied that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse direct, indirect or cumulative effect on biodiversity in the area.

Assessment of Land, Soils and Geology

Chapter 7 of the EIAR deals with land, soils and geology presenting the baseline land, soils and geological environment and assessing potential impacts, mitigation measures and the potential residual impacts. Potential cumulative impacts are also addressed. The methodology for assessment included available desktop information, inspection of the existing quarry faces, groundwater and geology borehole logs and professional experience. The report advises that there were no limitations or difficulties encountered in the preparation of the assessment.

Table 7.2 provides a concise summary of the potential impacts during construction, operational and restoration phases including unplanned events. Mitigation measures are set out in Table 7.3 and will be adopted for the proposed extraction activities to reduce the potential impacts to the receiving land, soils and geology environment.

The assessment details how there will be no significant, long-term, adverse residual impacts during the operational phase, other than the inevitable loss of mineral resources, and following full restoration and closure of the site that there will be no significant, long-term, adverse impacts in terms of land, soils and geology.

Mitigation measures are detailed at Table 7.3 and include measures for the retention and reuse of soils, monitoring of water levels, designated storage area for waste, remediation of the quarry on cessation and adherence to quarry regulations. The operation of the quarry already includes monitoring activities to demonstrate that the development is not having an adverse impact on the surrounding environment and geotechnical assessment will continue to be carried out in compliance with quarry regulations.

Subject to the mitigation measure being included in a single comprehensive 'Schedule of Monitoring and Mitigation Measures', I am satisfied that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse direct, indirect or cumulative effect on land, soils or geology.

Assessment of Water

Chapter 8 of the EIAR deals with the likely interaction of the quarry with the water environment, in terms of hydrogeology and hydrology. The assessment is based on plans and particulars in relation to the development,

desk and field survey work has been prepared by Aqua Geoservices Ltd. who specialise in Hydrogeology, Hydrology and Environmental Geology. The quarry uses a closed-loop water management system, recycling water and only occasionally releasing treated water into a nearby stream, in accordance with its discharge licence whereby all water collected on site is returned to its natural hydrological pathway— the Shanvaus River. This preserves both the hydromorphological and hydrogeological integrity of the receiving environment. The existing Section 4 Discharge Licence (WPL/07/04) was reviewed and approved in 2020 and remains compliant with regulatory standards. Under the terms of this licence, occasional surface water runoff to the Nure Stream during periods of heavy rainfall is authorised following post-treatment involving runoff settling within collection sumps and discharged off site into a polishing filter via an oil interceptor.

Mitigation measures have been included to address the build during the construction phase and the blasting and extraction of bedrock, earthworks, use of machinery and lowering of water table, settlement ponds, wheelwash, hydrocarbons, the pumped discharge of quarry waters and monitoring activities. The proposed development is not anticipated to influence groundwater levels or flows in sensitive downstream receptors, including the Lough Gill SAC along the River Bonet or any private wells in the surrounding area. Mitigation during the restoration phase of decommissioning, earthworks and cessation of pumping and discharge and in the event of a major accident has been considered. The mitigation measures are detailed in Table 8-20. No significant residual effects are anticipated.

Chapter 8 concludes that *‘based on the continuation of established site controls, the provision of the appropriate mitigation measures for the construction of the substation within the proposed building 2 and the hydrogeological assessment undertaken, it is concluded that the proposed development will result in no residual impacts on the hydrological or hydrogeological environment, including Lough Gill SAC, the Shanvaus River and its tributaries, or groundwater-fed springs in the vicinity of the site.’*

Data has been presented which indicates the quarry is not having any significant adverse effects on either surface or groundwater in the area of the site.

The submission from An Taisce on the subject application is noted, wherein reference is made to the proposed extraction extension area in close proximity to the river waterbody labelled as ‘Shanvaus_010’ by the EPA under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC) and the reference in its submission that this waterbody is considered to be at risk of not achieving ‘good’ status by 2027. Equally, it is noted that the submission references that the underlying Dromahair ground waterbody is currently designated as ‘good’ water quality status and not at risk.

As referenced previously in this EIA in relation to the environmental theme of ‘Biodiversity’, regard is had to the submission received from the Development Applications Units (DAU) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) on the subject application wherein, under the heading ‘*Nature Conservation*’, the DAU notes the typically low impermeable nature of the limestone basin to the receiving Ground Waterbody (GWB 2024IE_WE_G_0060), with occasional surface water runoff to the Nure Stream during periods of heavy rainfall following post-treatment as authorised under Discharge Licence WPL/07/04. The DAU acknowledges that hydrological connectivity exists to the Lough Gill SAC (site code: 001976) via the Shanvaus River with the current Water Framework Directive (WFD) River Waterbody (2019-2024) for the Shanvaus River (IE_WE_35S011100) recorded as of ‘good’ status. The DAU concludes its submission by acknowledging the low likelihood of adverse hydrological impacts arising as a result of the quarry expansion and additional infrastructure, and recommends that all mitigations as outlined in the EIAR should be strictly adhered within the conditions of any consent for the proposed development, including the facilitation of the existing closed-loop water management system on site.

Set within this context and having examined the documentation on file pertaining to the subject application, including the submission received from the DAU, I am satisfied that the proposed development is unlikely to adversely impact on water quality or water quantity in the area of the site or therefore to have any significant direct, indirect or cumulative impact on the water environment.

Moreover, having considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive, which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface and ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status and to prevent deterioration, I am satisfied that on the basis of the information provided in the application documentation, including the appraisal of potential impacts and associated mitigation measures documented in the submitted EIA, the submission of the DAU, and having regard to the 'good' status of the Shanvaus River (IE_WE_35S011100), the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives.

Assessment of Climate

Chapter 9 of the EIA addresses climate and how the proposed quarry extension may affect the climate and greenhouse gas emissions, and how climate change could impact the quarry itself. A carbon footprint assessment was carried out and the main sources of emissions from the quarry are machinery, transport, and concrete production. The assessment considered climate change risks such as flooding, extreme temperatures, drought, storms, and landslides. The quarry is considered to have low vulnerability to these risks, meaning that the likelihood and potential impact of climate-related events are low. No significant negative effects are expected from climate change on the quarry's operations. A range of mitigation measures are proposed to reduce emissions and increase resilience to climate change. These include regular maintenance of machinery, efficient use of energy and water, exploring renewable energy options, and following safety and engineering standards. Restoration of the site after quarrying will also help offset some emissions. The proposed quarry extension is expected to have a minimal impact on climate and greenhouse gas emissions. The site is not highly vulnerable to climate change risks, and planned mitigation measures are considered appropriate in further reducing any potential impacts.

I am satisfied that the impact of climate change has been considered and addressed and do not consider that the development is likely to give rise to significant adverse effects on climate and greenhouse gas emissions.

Assessment of Air Quality

Chapter 10 of the EIA deals with air quality related to processes like blasting, extraction, crushing, and transport of the quarried limestone. The report details how *'dust and particulate emissions from quarries are generally coarse in nature and settle rapidly. Fine particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) comprises only a very small proportion of quarry emissions, and the project does not include any combustion processes that materially influence PM levels.'*

In terms of potential impacts arising from the proposed development, day to day activities associated with quarrying activity could have the potential to give rise to elevated dust levels if activities associated with extraction and transportation of material are not managed correctly. The EIA states that primary sources of air emissions from the development will be related to plant and machinery operating across various activities, including, extraction, materials handling, and both on-site and off-site transportation of materials. Wind-blown dust can also arise under dry and windy conditions. The EIA references that due to the high level of precipitation in the study area, dust generation is naturally suppressed and potential impacts from these activities are primarily related to dust deposition and vehicle and plant emissions.

In terms of existing dust deposition associated with existing operations on site, monitoring (based on the Bergerhoff Method VDI 4320 Part 2) to date at the site boundary demonstrates that deposited dust is within guideline limits established by grant of planning permission under P.20-140.

In its assessment of potential impacts arising from the proposed development, the EIA states that the impact of dust affecting nearby sensitive receptors is low to negligible, especially with existing mitigation measures in place. The impact of fine particles (PM10 and PM2.5) is expected to remain well below both current and future legal limits. Vehicle movements associated with the quarry are not expected to significantly affect local air quality, as traffic volumes and changes do not meet thresholds that would require further assessment.

Best practice mitigation measures are detailed for plant and machinery, stockpiles, processing plant and concrete batching plant, including:

- Water sprays on roads and quarry floors during dry weather;
- Screening berms, hedgerows, and trees to block dust;
- Enclosed crushers and batching plants; and
- Regular cleaning of access roads and use of truck washes.

Section 10.114 states that *‘with the range of mitigation measures to be implemented, design measures to be incorporated into the working scheme and history of dust monitoring results, it is considered that the risk of dust impact at receptors from the proposed application reduces further. The existing screening berms and the existing mitigation measures in place at the quarry and concrete batching plant act as significant mitigation measures against the dispersal of dust and other gaseous pollutants.’* The report concludes that there will be no significant adverse air quality effects for both human and ecological receptors. A dust monitoring program will be carried out.

After applying all mitigation measures, the remaining impacts on air quality are not considered significant. There are no other major sources of air emissions nearby, so cumulative impacts are also not significant. I do not consider that the development is likely to give rise to significant adverse effects on air quality.

Assessment of Noise and Vibration

Chapter 11 considers the impact of noise and vibration at the quarry with sources from blasting, machinery, washing and batching plants. The report was prepared by Brendan O’Reilly of Noise and Vibration Consultants Ltd. The report details that the number of blasts per year will remain unchanged. Noise levels were measured at various locations around the quarry. The results showed that measured noise and vibration levels from the quarry are within the existing limits for the quarry and within guideline as published by the EPA. The predicted noise levels assume that all plant will be operating together which is a scenario that will be extremely rare and may never occur.

Ground vibration and air-overpressure will be kept below the guidelines recommended. To ensure compliance with regulatory limits, monitoring of all blasts will continue to be carried out. Keeping within the statutory limits will ensure that blast vibration or air overpressure levels generated will ensure that the likelihood of damage (or superficial damage) to property approaches zero.

I am satisfied with the assessment which demonstrates that subject to ongoing best practices and mitigation measures the proposed development will not cause significant noise or vibration impacts for local residents or the environment.

Assessment of Visual and Landscape

Chapter 12 provides a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) prepared by Jorden Derecourt, Landscape Architect at Macro Works Ltd, a consultancy firm specialising in Landscape and Visual Assessment and associated maps and graphics. The LVIA has been informed by desktop studies establishing an appropriate study area based on a 5km radius from the subject site with a particular focus on areas within 2km of the site, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping, a review of landscape and scenic view/route designations contained within the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029, a selection of potential Viewshed Reference Points (8 no.). fieldwork comprising a recording of the description of landscape elements and characteristics within the study area and the selection of a refined set of VRPs for the preparation of photomontages which also accompany the LVIA assessment documentation.

In terms of the existing baseline, the subject site is located in a rural area with a mix of farmland, uplands, and valleys. The landscape includes agricultural land, forestry, wind farms, and existing quarrying. There are several scenic areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the wider region, but these are generally more than 1km from the site. The EIAR states that the study area is overlaid by a pattern of rapid transition between

the upland areas and surrounding valleys and glens with significant contrasts in the landforms across the study area, which correspondingly influence different land uses, resulting in distinct land covers.

Section 12.64 of the EIAR states that *‘the main mitigation by avoidance measure employed in this instance is the siting of the proposed development predominantly within the existing extent of extraction and the associated existing mitigation measures. Additional mitigation measures include a proposed planted screening berm to the south and west of the proposed extraction area, while the vegetation across existing embankments and peripheral field boundaries is intended to be retained.’*

In its assessment of the potential landscape effects arising, the EIAR states that the proposed development will result in some permanent changes to the landscape, mainly by increasing the visible area of extraction. However, these changes are largely contained within the existing site and are reduced by screening berms and existing vegetation. The overall effect on the wider landscape is considered moderate to slight, and not significant, due to the site’s location in a working, transitional landscape and the presence of similar land uses nearby. Section 12.78 states that *‘there will be screening berms along the south and southwest boundary of the proposed extraction area extension, which will be planted with a woodland screening mix. These berms, which will screen and soften the development from surrounding visual receptors, combined with the majority of works occurring within the existing extraction area extent, reduces the potential for the proposed development to notably alter the surrounding landscape character.’*

In terms of potential visual effects, the EIAR states that most viewpoints in the area will experience either slight or imperceptible changes to views. The most noticeable effects are from locations closest to the site, where the screening berm and some increased visibility of quarry faces will be apparent. However, these changes are generally minor and do not significantly alter the character of the views. The highest visual impact is considered *‘slight’* and is not significant in planning terms.

The LVIA details at Section 12.100 that the development will not give rise to any significant residual effect detailing that *‘landscape effects are not considered to exceed ‘Moderate’ significance, even in the immediate context of the site and residual visual effects are not considered to exceed ‘Slight’ significance. In the context of this development, it is deemed that these moderate to low level residual effects are not significant.’*

I am satisfied with the landscape and visual impact assessment submitted and to the conclusion that the proposed development is not expected to result in any significant adverse landscape or visual effects. The design includes mitigation measures such as screening berms and careful siting within the existing quarry footprint, which help to minimize impacts on the surrounding landscape and views.

Assessment of Traffic

Chapter 13 comprises a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) carried out by Jennings O’Donovan and Partners Limited to determine the effects of the traffic associated with the proposed development on the public road network for a further 25 years and to determine the significance of effects resulting from all related quarry traffic on sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the development.

The proposed development will not increase the number of vehicles using the public road network. Traffic levels are expected to remain similar to current operations. Working at peak capacity, the quarry has the potential to generate 75 daily trips on the public road network, 75 arrivals (60 HGV and 15 LGV) and 75 departures (60 HGV and 15LGV). During the busiest hour in the morning, up to 27 trips may occur, and 21 trips during the evening peak hour. All quarry traffic will use the L4134 and L4135 local roads, connecting to the N16 national road. Analysis shows that these roads and key junctions will continue to operate well within their capacity, even with future traffic growth up to and beyond 2052. No significant delays or congestion are expected for road users. Routine maintenance and safety measures, such as trimming vegetation and maintaining signage, will continue. No alterations are proposed to the alignment of the existing roads and junctions. The significance of effects resulting from quarry traffic on sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the proposed development have been assessed as *‘Not Significant’*. I am satisfied with the submitted traffic and transport assessment and the

comprehensive data provided and the conclusion that the proposed development will not create capacity issues on the public road network.

Assessment of Cultural Heritage

Chapter 14 addresses the impact of the proposed development on cultural heritage and provides an impact assessment and mitigation strategy prepared by Dr. Charles Mount, an experienced and qualified archaeologist. The assessment included a review of historical records, maps, aerial photographs, previous studies, and a field inspection. It is concluded that the proposed development will not directly or indirectly affect any known items of archaeological, architectural, or cultural heritage significance. No cumulative or residual impacts on cultural heritage are expected and the only potential risk is the possibility of encountering previously unknown subsurface archaeological remains in the extension area so it is recommended that topsoil stripping be archaeologically monitored under license from the National Monuments Service. The assessment concludes that the proposed quarry extension will not have any significant impact on the cultural heritage of the area.

I am satisfied with the archaeological assessment submitted and the conclusion that the proposed development will not have any significant impact on cultural heritage. Archaeological monitoring of groundworks will be carried out to safeguard any previously unknown remains.

The submission from the DAU on the proposed development is also noted, in particular its comments under the heading 'Archaeology', wherein the DAU recommends that pre-development archaeological test excavations be carried out with a report on such testing to be submitted as further information. In this regard, whilst it is noted that the scale of the development (in terms of its planimetric area) will necessitate pre-development testing as recommended by the DAU, it is considered that such testing can similarly be achieved by way of condition to any grant of permission and subject to appropriate oversight by the Department and National Monuments Service prior to commencement of any works pertaining to this proposed development.

Assessment of Material Assets

Chapter 15 evaluates the potential impact of the proposed development on material assets of natural (land resources, geological resources, natural resources and raw materials and waste) and human origin (land use, property, transport network, recreational facilities and amenities, public utilities). The characteristics of the proposed development were considered and the changes occurring as a result of aspects of the construction, operation and restoration of the proposed development were identified. The impact of these effects on material assets (beneficial and adverse) was identified and assessed. Standard measures will be in place to manage noise, dust, and waste with no significant negative impacts on material assets expected. The assessment details that the quarry extension is not expected to have significant negative effects on local resources, property, or the environment. The project fits with the established use of the site, and restoration will provide long-term benefits for nature and the local landscape.

Having regard to the assessment carried out and data presented, the location of the proposed extraction area adjacent the existing quarry which benefits from existing infrastructure onsite, and to the capacity of the existing road network and traffic associated with the proposed development as set out in the road and traffic report, I consider that there is no potential for significant environmental effects on material assets.

Assessment of Interactions

Chapter 16 assesses the potential for interaction between effects of the different environmental aspects whose interactions may either exacerbate the magnitude of the effect or may ameliorate it. Cumulative interactions with continued quarrying in the area, including the on-site concrete manufacturing facility have been assessed and no significant cumulative effects were identified. Table 16.1 presents a matrix of interactions likely to occur from the proposed development with data presented in a clear and concise manner. I am satisfied with the assessment of potential interactions and the conclusion that there are no significant cumulative effects as a result.

Assessment of Mitigation and Monitoring

Chapter 17, mitigation and monitoring outlines the specific actions and strategies to be implemented to mitigate potential environmental impacts identified during the environmental assessment phase of the proposed development. Table 17-1 details both the mitigation and monitoring measures to be employed specific to each of the EIAR chapters namely population and human health, biodiversity, water, climate, air quality, noise and vibration, landscape and visual, traffic, cultural heritage, material assets. I note however that this table does not incorporate the mitigation measures proposed following assessment of the proposed development on land, soils and geology in Chapter 7 of the EIAR with mitigation measures identified in Table 7.3. Table 17-2 details proposed monitoring. I am satisfied that subject to the incorporation of Table 7.3 that the mitigation and monitoring required is clearly detailed at Tables 17-1 and 17-2 so that it can be easily interpreted and adopted.

Reasoned Conclusion on the Significant Effects of the Project on the Environment

I consider that the submitted EIAR is sufficient to identify, describe, and assess the likely significant effects of the project on the environment. Having regard to the examination of environmental information contained above, as set out in the EIAR provided by the applicant, the submissions from the prescribed bodies and reports from the relevant sections within Leitrim County Council in the course of the application, it is considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development, which can be mitigated, on the environment are as follows:

- **Population and human health** – potential for adverse impacts arising from dust and noise arising from the operational phase of the development affecting air quality. Mitigation measures are proposed. Having regard to the context of the site, being located within an area which has been subject to extensive quarrying, together with the indication that the development will not result in an increase in traffic, the impacts associated with these aspects are considered acceptable in the context of population and human health and residential amenity.
- **Biodiversity** – potential for adverse impacts arising from habitat loss and damage as the proposed development will give rise to the loss of greenfield areas, hedgerows and trees. Other potential impacts identified include disturbance from noise and vibration, dust and changes to water quality. It is noted that the proposed development will not give rise to any significant loss of important habitat, nor will it lead to any significant impacts on protected sites in the vicinity, local water quality or important species. Mitigation measures are proposed to protect the bird species including the limiting of vegetation clearance to periods outside of nesting season, March to September. The restoration of the site to natural habitats and agricultural use following cessation of quarrying operations is expected to benefit local wildlife.
- Potential adverse effects on receiving **water, soil, geology** and **air** environments may arise during the operational phase of the proposed development. Given that the site is located within and adjoining an active quarry, consideration is given in terms of cumulative impacts. Appropriate mitigation measures have been identified to prevent any significant adverse effects on these receiving environments.
- In terms of **Cultural Heritage**, having regard to the information available, I am generally satisfied that the development would not have any significant adverse archaeological impacts and no significant residual impacts are likely to arise, subject to appropriate mitigation measures outlined and following pre-development archaeological test excavations being carried out and in consultation with the Department and National Monuments Service.
- **Noise and vibration** – potential adverse impacts arising from the proposed development include noise from quarrying operations and machinery such as rishers, screeners, washing and batching plants, and from occasional blasting. Noise monitoring was carried out at locations within and in the vicinity of the site and demonstrates that existing and predicted noise levels are and will be within current national limits. Blasting does and will occur occasionally on site and this is strictly monitored, with past monitoring demonstrating that the quarry has consistently stayed within safe limits for both vibration

and air pressure. Appropriate mitigation measures are identified in relation to this specific process, including regular maintenance, careful planning of blasts, and giving advance notice to local residents before blasting. There will be no increase in traffic and noise levels are not expected to increase. I consider that the development, if permitted, would not have a significant impact on existing residential amenities of properties in the vicinity of the site by reason of noise and vibration.

- **Landscape and Visual** - the proposed development will, if permitted, result in changes to the existing landscape, with the extension of the quarry to the west into a greenfield site. The site is located within a landscape character area which has the capacity to absorb a development of this scale in landscape and visual terms subject to the implementation of mitigation measures such as screening berms and careful siting within the existing quarry footprint, which help to minimise impacts on the surrounding landscape and views.

The EIAR has considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment would be primarily mitigated by environmental management measures, as appropriate. Thus, having regard to the foregoing assessment, I am therefore satisfied that the proposed development would not have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects on the environment.

Summary of Key Planning Issues and Assessment

Principle of the proposed development

The principle of the proposed development is acceptable as the existing quarry is well established at this location with significant infrastructure and investment at the site in conjunction with an established customer base and haul routes. The quality and quantity of the resource have been proven at this location and the proposed extension of the quarry area has been justified and will assist in maintaining a secure supply of construction aggregates to the region. The proposed development is in accordance with the specific policies on extraction of aggregates namely **AGG RES POL 1** which seeks *‘to facilitate adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet the future growth needs of the county and the wider region while addressing key environmental, traffic and social impacts and details of rehabilitation’* and **AGG RES POL 2** *to facilitate the further development of the extractive industry by permitting the continuation and extension of existing quarries and the development of new quarries, where such development does not adversely impact on human health, the receiving environment including the visual quality of the landscape, existing infrastructure, adjoining land uses and the amenity value of neighbouring lands and of adjoining residential development’.*

The application documentation details how the average annual quarry extraction rate is approximately 150,000 tonnes per annum. Upon the cessation of extraction operations, it is proposed to return the quarry area to natural habitat after-uses. Section 12.3.4 (Industry) of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 details how industry in Leitrim accounts for just 7% of total county CO² emissions, reflecting the low level of industrial activity in the county. I consider the proposed development to be in accordance with the County Development Plan 2023-2029 which supports the development of aggregate resources which do not adversely affect environmental resources, including the Natura 2000 network.

Moreover, the history of quarrying development at this location has been the subject of a well-documented planning history and compliance with associated conditions in terms of environmental monitoring as well as through compliance with separate consent mechanism such as Discharge Licence (WPL/07/04) under Section 4 of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts 1977 to 1990.

It is noted that the subject application seeks an operational permission for a total period of 25 years, with an additional 2 years for final site restoration. Whilst the long history of quarrying at this location is acknowledged, regard is had to the submission of An Taisce which cautions that the permission period be limited to 10 years to allow for a full review of compliance, citing the *Quarries and Ancillary Activities Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2004) which emphasise the need for an interim review of compliance and *“to review changes in environmental standards and technology over a decade or more since the original permission was granted”*. Set within this context, and having regard to the dynamic nature of such changes to environmental standards and

technology, as well as to the long history of compliant development on site, it is considered appropriate that any operational period associated with any grant of permission be limited to 15 years.

Traffic

The continuation of use and extension of the quarry is not anticipated to materially increase the annual average daily total of heavy goods vehicles movements to and from the site. The application documentation details that the importation of Article 27 soil and stone materials is anticipated to increase the annual average daily total of heavy goods vehicles movements by 1 based on an estimated 5,000 tonnes of imported material annually with largely similar quantities of sand imported for concrete manufacturing. The proposed development will result in no material change to existing access arrangements, traffic volumes, operating hours, security measures or extraction and processing methodologies. The number of employees will remain unchanged and I am satisfied that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on traffic junctions or road safety, as existing haulage patterns and vehicle trip distribution will remain broadly consistent with current site operations.

Landscape

Section 10.7 (Extractive Industry and Building Materials Production) of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 details how *'in the assessment of planning applications relating to the extractive industry, including related buildings and restoration/rehabilitation of existing quarries, the Council will have regard to the policies/objectives for the specific landscape character of the area.'*

The subject site is located within Landscape Character Area 5, Tievebaun Uplands, and Landscape Character Type 7, Upland Farmland and Foothills as designated in the Landscape Character Assessment which forms Appendix VII of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029. Landscape Character Type 7, Upland Farmland and Foothills, are described as follows:

This Upland Farmland and Foothills is located generally between 100 and 200m AOD and comprises a transitional landscape between the Moorland Hills and the more intensively farmed lowlands. This transitional landscape usually occupies the sides of the long U-shaped valleys that lie between the mountain uplands. Landform is diverse, ranging from gentle sloping foothills to steeper hillsides. Pastures are grazed within a patchwork of hedged fields which stretch up the hillsides often within distinctive linear formations. This hedgerow field pattern tends to become weaker with increasing elevation. Tree cover is sporadic. Plantation coniferous forests are located on many slopes, replacing marginal pastures. Many streams draining the hillsides cut narrow valleys which are often colonised by scrub and trees. Waterfalls are found where the streams cross harder layers of geology. Road routes extend along the length of the valley sides and afford views of opposite sides of valleys and mountain tops. A sparse network of minor, narrow roads wind through the hills extending from these routes. A higher proportion of settlement is located in these farmed areas when compared to the upper slopes of the Moorland Hills. Isolated farmhouses are often located at the end of long winding lanes.'

Landscape Character Area 5, Tievebaun Uplands, described as follows:

Tievebaun is a large mountainous upland which is an extension of a limestone mountain range associated with Ben Bulbin, Truskmore and Kings Mountain in County Sligo. Within Leitrim, these mountains overlook the Glenade Valley to the north and The Glencar Valley to the south. The more elevated areas comprise moorland plateaus which is a wild, remote and largely inaccessible landscape. The scree slopes and landslips fringing Glenade and Glencar are highly visible from the lowlands and contribute significantly to the scenic quality of the glens.

Section 6.5.6.3 of the Landscape Character Assessment details the landscape quality, condition and sensitivity as follows:

Parts of this landscape associated with the uplands, moorland plateaus, corries, glens and lakes are of some considerable scenic quality owing to the unique topography and landcover which, featuring an absence of development, confers a remote scenic and wilderness like quality to the area.

This landscape is generally in good condition. The character is generally intact. Peat cutting has eroded the bogland landcover in places. A telecommunications mast, on the summit of Truskmore is clearly apparent from many locations within this landscape character area and detracts from the surrounding scenic quality of the uplands. Small numbers of wind turbines are present in the farmed foothills to the east. The infrastructure confers a developed character to this particular area which affects the underlying landscape character. The lowland areas to the east feature areas of commercial coniferous forestry which has partially eroded the original field pattern as a key aspect of its character.

The landscape is valued as recognised in the County Designations and the valued and sensitive attributes documented above.

The lower farmed slopes and foothills to the mountains are particularly sensitive to change due to their visual openness and their visibility from the surrounding lowlands. The Tievebaun Uplands is a sensitive landscape. The upland moorland areas are valued for their biodiversity interests and are largely intact although sheep trespass threatens to erode large areas of peat bog and heath and important habitats. These areas of moorland plateaus are particularly sensitive change due to their visual openness and their distinctive skylines which are seen from much of the surrounding lowlands. They are sensitive to change which would undermine their open, wild and isolated character and habitats therein. The steep slopes facing onto Glenade and Glencar are also particularly sensitive to change. Scrub encroachment and commercial coniferous forestry threaten to obscure views to the lowlands and obscure areas of scree and landslips which contribute to the character and visual amenity of the glens.

A landscaped screening berm is proposed along the southern boundary of the extension area with a height of approximately 6 metres and a width of approximately 10 metres. The berm will be planted with native trees to enhance visual screening, integrate the development into the surrounding landscape, and provide additional ecological benefits. The application documents detail how soil for the berm construction will be sourced from overburden material arising within the extension area, supplemented by the import of approximately 70,000 m³ (c. 125,000 tonnes) of Article 27 clean, uncontaminated soil and stone by-product. The berms will be planted with native tree and shrub species to reduce visual impact and enhance biodiversity.

The landscape and visual impact assessment demonstrates how the proposed development would have no significant effects on the landscape as it extends into lands to the west, whereby such lands are visually contained by the existing landscape features and screening berms/planting, and which also have an existing visual association with extraction. I am satisfied that once the screening measures have been carried out that the proposed extension will be unremarkable in the landscape and appear as part of the existing quarry with no significant cumulative impact on the receiving landscape.

Noise

The nature of the quarry activity requires blasting to be carried out within the designated extraction area to fragment the stone prior to processing. The application details that blasting is undertaken at a maximum rate of two days per 30-day period. This corresponds to up to 24 blasting days per calendar year. Blasting will not take place outside the hours of 0900 to 1800 Monday – Friday inclusive. The Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 details that in general noise levels should not exceed 55 dB (a) Leq when measured at the boundary of the site where such noise would result in an adverse impact on amenity to an adjoining sensitive land use such as residential development. The noise monitoring data submitted details that the noise measurement at the monitoring locations did not exceed 55 dB (a) Leq. The report details that the potential effects in terms of noise and atmospheric emissions are predicted to be in keeping with emission limits. The existing operation has measures in place to prevent uncontrolled emissions, and these are to be extended as part of the proposed development. Ongoing and continuous monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that the site is operating in accordance with best practice. I am satisfied that the issue of noise has been adequately addressed and can be reinforced by condition to ensure ongoing monitoring and availability of noise survey data.

Water Quality

Section 9.5 (Water Quality) of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 details how ‘the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) sets out the protection and enhancement of the country’s water resources. This Directive establishes a framework for the protection of all waterbodies for the benefit of everyone, in terms of water quality and quantity. The protection of water for wildlife and their habitats is also included under the Directive.

The WFD sets out the strategic response to the threat of pollution and its four objectives are:

1. prevent further deterioration of water quality.
2. restore ‘good’ status of water quality and quantity for ground waters and ‘good’ or ‘high’ status for surface waters
3. reduce chemical pollution of water sources
4. achieve protected area objectives

“The area’s surface water features include two major rivers: the Shanvaus River (EPA code: IE_WE_35S011100), situated 820 metres south of the application area, and the Bonet River (EPA code: IE_WE_35B060100), located 1.2km to the north. Several tributaries feed into these rivers near the quarry site”. (Section 1.13 EIAR).

The Glencar Ground Water Body (GWB) and the Dromahair GWB were assessed under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) as being of ‘Good’ status (2016-2021). Both the Shanvaus River and Bonet River (up and downstream of the confluence of the Shanvaus River) were assessed under the WFD as being of ‘Good’ quality status (2016-2021) and there has been no change of status between Cycles 1 and 2 as a direct result of the discharge from the quarry.

The EPA’s latest assessment of water quality for the Shanvaus River shows it has a Q-rating of Q4 Good upstream at the river station at second Bridge u/s Shanvaus Bridge(2006) and downstream at the river station at second Bridge d/s Shanvaus Bridge (1990) of where the tributary receiving the discharge joins the main river, and remains ‘Good’ status at the river station at Bridge u/s Bonet River and until it reaches the River Bonet (2024). The River Bonet has a Q-rating of Q4 Good (2021) upstream and downstream of the Shanvaus confluence at the river stations at Bridge d/s Owenmore River (2021) and Bridge at Gortgarrigan (2021).

The application documents advise that although the existing floor of the quarry has extended below the natural water table in places, no dewatering operations are required or will be required at the quarry. Incidental rainwater and groundwater seepages currently entering the quarry are and will continue to be directed to sumps located in the existing quarry floor. Water is then either pumped from the sump(s) where it is reused as part of the aggregate processing process, dust suppression and in the ready-mix concrete plant, or passed through settlement lagoons before being stored for later use. Although the water management system is mostly a closed system, during periods of high and prolonged rainfall the quarry can discharge treated surplus process water under 2008 Discharge Licence Ref: WPL/07/08, via a two-stage settlement/polishing pond and through an oil interceptor, to the Nure Stream which is a small tributary of the Shanvaus River. The existing quality of treated surplus process water arising from the quarry and discharged to the Nure Stream, typically conforms to the Surface Water Regulations 2009 (as amended) and in accordance with Discharge Licence Ref. WPL/07/08 consented parameters. No contamination from blasting residues have been recorded with nitrate, nitrite, and ammonia all remaining within background variable ranges. The continuation and extension of quarrying operations at Nure will not require any changes or modifications water management system or to the existing discharge licence.

Table 6.11 of the EIAR assess the hydrogeological and hydrological effects of the proposed development as not significant stating as follows:

The quarry at Nure sits on a small hill rising up to 202mOD and on the hydrogeological boundary of two groundwater bodies (GWB). The northwestern part of the quarry is underlain by the Glencar GWB and the southeastern part of the quarry including the proposed extension area underlain by the Dromahair GWB. The groundwater flows are shallow, unconfined and expected to follow the topographic gradient of the hill

discharging to the small tributaries of the Bonet River to the north of the quarry and towards the small tributaries of Shanvaus River to the south. Although the existing floor of the quarry has extended below the natural water table in places, no dewatering operations are required at the quarry indicating the limestone at this location have low permeability. As such the drawdown effect of the quarry on groundwater is very localised with a limited cone of depression that is likely extend up to a maximum distance of 100-200m around the quarry void. Given the limited drawdown effect of the existing quarry and the low permeability of the local geology, the continuation of use and extension of the quarry will not result in any significant changes in the extent of any drawdown and in the hydrogeological regime outside the existing cone of depression and where there would be any changes in the hydrological regime of any surface water bodies through the interaction of ground and surface waters. The main ingress of water to the quarry will continue to be from rainfall. The continuation and extension of the quarry will not require any changes to the existing discharge licence (Reference No. WPL/07/08 issued by Leitrim County Council in March 2008) for the volume of water discharged from the quarry. Therefore no changes are predicted of the hydrological regime of the receiving water body or on the Shanvaus River.

Table 6.11 of the EIAR details how the proposed development will not adversely affect water quality detailing as follows:

The quarry can discharge treated wastewater under Discharge Licence Ref: WPL/07/08, via a two stage settlement pond and through an oil interceptor, to the Nure Stream a small tributary of the Shanvaus River where it flows for approximately 3.8km before the Shanvaus River forms part of Lough Gill SAC at the second Bridge d/s of Shanvaus Bridge. However, the water management system at the quarry is mostly a closed-system with the recycling and re-use of water and therefore the discharge of wastewater is on an ad-hoc basis depending upon largely on the amount of rainfall. Water quality monitoring at the quarry indicates that it has complied with the emission limit values (ELV) for its Discharge Licence over the last 5-years (2020-24). The continuation and extension of quarrying operations at Nure will not require any changes or modifications water management system or to the existing discharge licence.

The Environment Department of the Local Authority requests that the existing planning conditions associated with permission Ref P20/140 in relation to dust and noise are extended and retained. In addition, in relation to Water, Air, Noise, they request the following:

- To be notified when additional quarrying works commence so that the corresponding Section 4 Discharge monitoring results can be assessed for any changes. While it is not expected, the Licence conditions / monitoring frequency of the Section 4 Discharge Licence may require review.
- That the two proposed additional groundwater monitoring boreholes are installed at the site as per consultant's recommendations and specification.
- That an appropriately designed biannual ground and surface water monitoring programme is undertaken at the site by suitably competent and qualified environmental scientist / environmental consultant for a period of three years beyond commencement of the additional proposed works, and that a detailed report discussing the findings and summarising surface and groundwater parameter results and trends (compared to historic data where available) is presented to the Environment Department annually (before the end of February) for review. Parameters analysed are to be in line with historical data.

Subject to ongoing compliance and monitoring, I am satisfied that the proposed development will not adversely affect water quality.

Archaeology

ARCH POL 1 seeks 'to secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in-situ or in particular circumstances where the Council is satisfied that this is not possible, preservation by record as a minimum) of all archaeological remains and sites of importance such as National Monuments, Recorded Monuments, protected wrecks and underwater archaeological heritage, to include their setting and context.'

The application documentation includes an archaeological assessment which did not reveal archaeological remains but recommends that topsoil stripping be archaeologically monitored under license from the National Monuments Service. The Development Applications Unit of the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage recommends that pre-development testing be carried out and submitted as further information. The DAU submission is welcomed but I do not consider it necessary to submit this as further information as adequate information has been presented in the EIAR and an appropriately worded condition can be included to ensure that archaeological monitoring of groundworks will be carried out to safeguard any previously unknown remains.

I am satisfied that the proposed development will not affect any existing known archaeological resources and suitable mitigation measures are proposed to address the potential for effects on unknown resources during the site clearance phase of the proposed development. I consider that the archaeologist has adequately addressed archaeology and that the proposed development complies with ARCH POL 1.

Conclusion

The existing quarry is well established at this location with a history of good practice, and I am satisfied that the proposed development can be monitored effectively with no significant adverse impacts on the environment. Section 10.7 (Extractive Industry and Building Materials Production) of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 details what is expected from quarry operators detailing how *‘any development of aggregate extraction, processing, delivery and associated concrete production must be carried out in a manner which minimises adverse effects on the environment and the local community. Applications for planning permission will require to demonstrate their commitment to good environmental management through the implementation of a recognised environmental code of practice. Transportation of extracted material from the source must be carried out without causing nuisance to other road users. Developers must ensure that on completion of operations that the site of the former quarry is left in a satisfactory state and be of beneficial use.’* The applicant has demonstrated *‘their commitment to good environmental management’* and the continued operation and expansion at this location is acceptable and in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029.

Appropriate Assessment

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Green & Blue Ecology which identifies the Natura 2000 sites evaluated in accordance with the source-pathway-receptor model as follows:

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Location at Closest Point to the Proposed Project
Lough Gill SAC	001976	1.05km north east
Arroo Mountain SAC	001403	3.27km north
Ben Bulbin, Gleniff & Glenach Complex SAC	000623	4.11km north west
Glenade Lough SAC	001919	4.07km north northwest
Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA	004187	5.27km north northwest
Lough Melvin SAC	000428	8.22km north east
Boleybrack Mountain SAC	002032	9.23km south east

Lough Gill SAC was screened in for further assessment and all other Natura 2000 sites were considered to be of sufficient distance from the quarry site and with no potential source-pathway-receptor links to the quarry.

A review of the potential impacts, based on the scale and nature of the project and the distance and vulnerabilities of the Lough Gill SAC, that might affect the interest features for which this site was designated from the proposed continuation of use and extension of the quarry at Nure include:

- alterations to hydrogeological and hydrological conditions; and
- changes in water quality (groundwater/surface waters).

In relation to alterations to hydrogeological and hydrological conditions the screening report has determined as follows:

Given the limited drawdown effect of the existing quarry and the low permeability of the local geology, the continuation of use and extension of the quarry will not result in any significant changes in the extent of any drawdown and in the hydrogeological regime outside the existing cone of depression and where there would be any changes in the hydrological regime of any surface water bodies through the interaction of ground and surface waters. The continuation and extension of the quarry will not require any changes to the existing discharge licence (Reference No. WPL/07/08 issued by Leitrim County Council in March 2008) for the volume of water discharged from the quarry. Therefore no changes are predicted of the hydrological regime of the Shanvaus River and which forms part of the Lough Gill SAC at a point approximately 3.8km downstream of the quarry. The continuation of use and extension of the quarry at Nure will not result in any changes in the hydrogeological and hydrological regimes of Lough Gill and its associated water bodies. No effects predicted on Lough Gill SAC or on any of its qualifying Annex I habitats and/or Annex II species from the proposed continuation of use and extension of the quarry at Nure.

In relation to alterations to changes in water quality (groundwater / surface waters) the screening report has determined as follows:

Based on current baseline environmental conditions of the surface waters of the Shanvaus River, the existing quarry operations have not resulted in any deterioration in the WFD status or water quality of this surface water body or in groundwater body status and the interaction between ground and surface waters. The continuation of use and extension of the quarry and concrete manufacturing facilities at Nure is not predicted to result in any future deterioration in the status of the Shanvaus River. The importation of Article 27 clean, uncontaminated soil and stone has no implications for groundwater quality or on the quality of treated water that may be discharged from site. Similarly the restoration of the site to natural habitats on cessation of quarrying operations is not predicted to result in any negative effects on groundwater quality or would have a detrimental effect on the status of any surface waterbody. No effects predicted on Lough Gill SAC or on any of its qualifying Annex I habitats and/or Annex II species from the proposed continuation of use and extension of the quarry at Nure.

The Screening Statement at Section 6.1 states that “*based on the appraisal of the proposed project as a stand-alone project and in-combination with other plans and projects, it is considered that the proposed continuation of use and extension of the quarry at Nure will not have any likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 site, or sites, or on any of the features of importance for which a site has been designated as being of European importance.*”

The Screening Report concludes ‘*that the Competent Authority can determine that an Appropriate Assessment is not required under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), as it can be excluded, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that the proposed continuation of use and extension of the existing quarry at Nure, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site(s).*’

The proposal has been assessed having regard to the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive. The proposed development has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA), and it has been determined that an AA is not required. See Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening report attached.

Development Contributions

Section 6 of the Leitrim County Development Contribution Scheme 2023 applies a rate of €1.50 per m² of site area for extraction (per bench). The proposed quarry extension comprises an area of 2 ha, over two benches (Bench 1 over 1.2579ha = €18,869 and Bench 2 over 0.7876ha = €23,628), which equates to a development contribution charge of €42,497. The proposed development will also see the recommencement of extraction of a partially extracted area previously authorised under SU0057 to a final floor level of 148m AOD. This element has an area of 3.9ha, with extraction proposed over 3 benches (Bench 1 over 0.2924ha = €4,386; Bench 2 over 2.8666ha = €85,998; and Bench 3 over 0.7397ha = €33,287) and therefore a development contribution arising equates to €123,671.

The two no. proposed buildings comprise a total floor area of 1,680m² (1,595m² and 85m²). The submitted Planning Statement document refers to the larger building as being an enclosure of the existing pre-stressed beds/moulds, complete with a store; and will serve only as an environmental cover to existing authorised development and will not serve to increase production output. The Planning Statement submits that this structure should be exempt from development contributions. Having regard to the existing authorised use of this enclosure, it is recommended that no development contribution is required for this proposed larger structure. Accordingly, the smaller proposed store structure of floor area 85m² will accrue a development contribution of 85m² x €25 = €2,125.

The application seeks to 'import approx. 70,000m³ (c. 125,000 tonnes) of Article 27 clean, uncontaminated soil and stone byproduct to construct a screening berm'. The screening berm is identified as covering an area of 0.2784ha. Section 6 of the Leitrim County Development Contribution Scheme 2023 applies a rate of €1.50 per m² for the 'landfill/raising of sites for non-agricultural purposes.' This equates to a development contribution of €4,176.

In accordance with the Leitrim County Development Contribution Scheme 2023, the proposed development attracts a total development contribution charge of (€42,497 + €123,671 + €2,125 + €4,176) = €172,469.

Recommendation

Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local, regional and national policies and guidance, I recommend that permission be granted, subject to conditions as set out in the Second Schedule.

FIRST SCHEDULE

The Planning Authority has had regard to

- i) the location of the quarry in a rural area and the location of the extension areas at distances removed from sensitive receptors,
- ii) the policy context for the development which recognises the importance of quarrying and the extractive industry to the local economy and the provisions of:
 - The National Planning Framework (First Revision), including National Policy Objective 30 which seeks to support extractive industries within the rural economy,
 - The provisions of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Quarries and Ancillary Activities issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2004,
 - The Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029,
- iii) together with the scale, nature and design of the proposed development,
- iv) to the planning history and the established history of quarrying at the site,
- v) to the detailed survey work which has been carried out in respect of the environmental protection,

- vi) to the mitigation and monitoring measures proposed as part of the construction, operational and restoration phases of the development,
- vii) to the distance to dwellings and other sensitive receptors,
- viii) and the lack of adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites,
- ix) the submissions made in connection with the planning application, and
- x) the report and recommendation of Executive Planner endorsed by the Senior Planner.

Environmental Impact Assessment

As the competent authority, Leitrim County Council undertook an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development, considering:

- a) the nature, scale and location of the proposed development,
- b) the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted in support of the application, and
- c) the submissions made in connection with the planning application.

It is considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant, adequately considers alternatives to the proposed development and identifies and describes adequately the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment.

The Planning Authority considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development, which can be mitigated, on the environment are as follows:

- Population and human health – potential for adverse impacts arising from dust and noise arising from the operational phase of the development affecting air quality. Mitigation measures are proposed. Having regard to the context of the site, being located within an area which has been subject to extensive quarrying, together with the indication that the development will not result in an increase in traffic, the impacts associated with these aspects are considered acceptable in the context of population and human health and residential amenity.
- Biodiversity – potential for adverse impacts arising from habitat loss and damage as the proposed development will give rise to the loss of greenfield areas, hedgerows and trees. Other potential impacts identified include disturbance from noise and vibration, dust and changes to water quality. It is noted that the proposed development will not give rise to any significant loss of important habitat, nor will it lead to any significant impacts on protected sites in the vicinity, local water quality or important species. Mitigation measures are proposed to protect the bird species including the limiting of vegetation clearance to periods outside of nesting season, March to September. The restoration of the site to natural habitats and agricultural use following cessation of quarrying operations is expected to benefit local wildlife.
- Potential adverse effects on receiving water, soil, geology and air environments may arise during the operational phase of the proposed development. Given that the site is located within and adjoining an active quarry, consideration is given in terms of cumulative impacts. Appropriate mitigation measures have been identified to prevent any significant adverse effects on these receiving environments.
- In terms of Cultural Heritage, having regard to the information available, the Planning Authority is satisfied that the development would not have any significant adverse archaeological impacts and no significant residual impacts are likely to arise, subject to appropriate mitigation measures outlined and following pre-development archaeological test excavations being carried out and in consultation with the Department and National Monuments Service.

- Noise and vibration – potential adverse impacts arising from the proposed development include noise from quarrying operations and machinery such as rishers, screeners, washing and batching plants, and from occasional blasting. Noise monitoring was carried out at locations within and in the vicinity of the site and demonstrates that existing and predicted noise levels are and will be within current national limits. Blasting does and will occur occasionally on site and this is strictly monitored, with past monitoring demonstrating that the quarry has consistently stayed within safe limits for both vibration and air pressure. Appropriate mitigation measures are identified in relation to this specific process, including regular maintenance, careful planning of blasts, and giving advance notice to local residents before blasting. There will be no increase in traffic and noise levels are not expected to increase. The Planning Authority considers that the development, if permitted, would not have a significant impact on existing residential amenities of properties in the vicinity of the site by reason of noise and vibration.
- Landscape and Visual - the proposed development will, if permitted, result in changes to the existing landscape, with the extension of the quarry to the west into a greenfield site. The site is located within a landscape character area which has the capacity to absorb a development of this scale in landscape and visual terms subject to the implementation of mitigation measures such as screening berms and careful siting within the existing quarry footprint, which help to minimise impacts on the surrounding landscape and views.

The Planning Authority completed an Environmental Impact Assessment in relation to the proposed development and concluded that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the effects of the proposed development on the environment, by itself and in combination with other plans and projects in the vicinity, would be acceptable. In doing so, the Planning Authority adopted the report and conclusions of the Executive Planner as endorsed by the Senior Planner.

Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below in the Second Schedule, the proposed would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or property in the vicinity of the site, would not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the landscape or cultural heritage, would not have a significant adverse impact on biodiversity, or be prejudicial to public health or biodiversity and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety. Furthermore, the proposed development would not prevent attainment or potential to achieve the Water Framework Directive objective of good or high status in waterbodies.

The proposed development would therefore be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

SECOND SCHEDULE

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application submitted on the 11 December 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the Planning Authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The grant of permission shall be for a period of 15 years from the date of Final Grant. At the end of this period, the quarry use shall then cease and all related structures removed and remedial works including restoration works, in accordance with the general principles set out in the application documentation, shall be carried out, unless, before the end of that period, planning permission shall have been granted for the continuance

of quarrying for a further period. The site restoration works described in the application documentation shall be completed within two years of the cessation of quarrying on the site.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

3. No extraction of material shall take place below 148m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

4. The conditions attached to the grant of planning permission in respect of planning register ref. no. P.21-251 & P.20-140 are hereby restated in respect of the continued use of the lands associated with the overall development contained on the wider landholding in which the development the subject of this permission is situate.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and to ensure the satisfactory operation of the quarry in the interest of proper planning and development of the area

5. Prior to commencement of works on site, a contribution of €172,469 (one hundred and seventy two thousand, four hundred and sixty nine euro) as required under the Development Contribution Scheme 2023 shall be paid to the Planning Authority. This financial contribution is with respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of Leitrim County Council that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme 2023 made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. In the event of works not having commenced on site after the expiration of one year from the date of grant of permission, these charges shall be increased quarterly in accordance with the Consumer Price Index.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of the Development Contribution Scheme 2023 for Co. Leitrim.

6. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the Planning Authority a cash deposit or a bond of an insurance company to secure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site, coupled with an agreement empowering the Planning Authority to apply such security or part thereof to such reinstatement. The amount of the bond shall be commensurate with an accompanying costing of the reinstatement works, prepared by a quantity surveyor experienced in similar estimations, to be submitted to the Planning Authority for agreement.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site in the interest of visual amenity.

7. A detailed restoration scheme shall include a programme for the orderly decommissioning of the surface and ground water management system for the entire site. The following shall apply in relation to the design and timing of the restoration plan:

- i) Details relating to measures to ensure safety during site restoration shall be provided.
- ii) A timescale for implementation and proposals for an aftercare programme of five years shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for written agreement.
- iii) The submission of a detailed Invasive Species Management Plan which includes details of a pre-restoration survey to be carried out. The developer shall also ensure that all plant and machinery used during the works should be thoroughly cleaned and washed before delivery to the site to prevent the spread of hazardous invasive species and pathogens.

Reason: In the interest of the visual amenities of the area and of the protection of biodiversity and to ensure public safety.

8. Monitoring and Mitigation Measures

- i) Mitigation and monitoring measures outlined in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and associated documents submitted with this application, shall be compiled into a single Schedule of Monitoring and Mitigation Measures and submitted to the Planning Authority. These measures shall be carried out in full, except where otherwise required by conditions attached to this permission.
- ii) The Schedule shall be included in an updated Environmental Management System and an updated Site Specific Environmental Monitoring Plan which shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of the development.
- iii) The Environmental Management System and Environmental Monitoring Plan shall be integrated with the discharge licence and any subsequent amendments to same, and shall include arrangements for monitoring emissions to water, air, noise, dust, HGV movements and restoration.
- iv) The development shall be operated and managed in accordance with the agreed Environmental Monitoring Plan.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the environment and the residential amenities of property in the vicinity and in the interest of public health

9. Monitoring Requirements

- i) The developer shall monitor and record groundwater, surface water flow, noise, ground vibration, and dust deposition levels at monitoring and recording stations, the location of which shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development. Monitoring results shall be submitted to the Planning Authority at agreed intervals for groundwater, surface water, noise and ground vibration. This shall include at least dust monitoring on a monthly basis, ground borne vibration and air overpressure for each blast and noise surveys on a quarterly basis. The two proposed additional groundwater monitoring boreholes shall be installed as per consultants' recommendations and specification.
- ii) On an annual basis, for the lifetime of the facility (within two months of each year end), the developer shall submit to the Planning Authority a hard copy and electronic copy of an environmental audit. Independent environmental auditors approved of in writing by the Planning Authority shall carry out this audit. This audit shall be carried out at the expense of the developer and shall be made available for public inspection at the offices of the Planning Authority. This report shall contain:
 - a) A written record derived from the on-site weighbridge of the quantity of material entering and leaving the site for all operations. This quantity shall be specified in tonnes. The information shall be submitted to the Planning Authority as part of the annual environmental audit and shall be made available for future planning applications in respect of the site.
 - b) An annual topographical survey carried out by an independent qualified surveyor approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This survey shall show all areas excavated, depth of excavation, those areas being actively managed for biodiversity gain and restored.
 - c) A written record of all complaints, including actions taken in response to each complaint.
- iii) All incidents where levels of noise, dust or emissions to water exceed the levels specified in this permission shall be notified to the Planning Authority within two working days.
- iv) Following submission of the audit or of such reports, or where such incidents occur, the developer shall comply with any requirements that the planning authority may impose in writing in order to bring the development in compliance with the conditions of this permission to further develop the quarry.

Reason: In the interest of protecting residential amenities and ensuring a sustainable use of non-renewable resources.

10. Prior to the commencement of any development on the site, pre-development testing shall be carried out and shall consist of the following:

- i) The applicant/developer shall engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist (licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004) to carry out pre-development testing of the site. No

sub-surface work shall be undertaken in the absence of the archaeologist without his/her express consent.

- ii) The archaeologist shall notify the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in writing at least 4 weeks prior to the commencement of site preparations to allow the archaeologist sufficient time to obtain a licence to carry out the work.
- iii) The archaeologist shall carry out any relevant documentary research and may excavate test trenches at locations chosen by the archaeologist, having consulted the proposed development plans.
- iv) On completion of the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report to the Planning Authority and to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- v) Where archaeological material is shown to be present, avoidance, preservation in situ, preservation by record (excavation) and/or monitoring may be required, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will advise the applicant/developer with regard to these matters.
- vi) No site preparation or construction shall be carried out until after the archaeologist's report has been submitted and permission to proceed has been received in writing from the Planning Authority in consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation (either in situ or by record) of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

11. Operational Matters

- i) The quarry shall only operate between 0730 hours and 1900 hours, Monday to Friday and between 0730 hours and 1400 hours on Saturdays. No activity (e.g. loading, movement of machinery or material, etc.) shall take place outside these hours or on Sundays or public holidays.
- ii) Notwithstanding the above, blasting operations shall only take place between 1000 hours and 1700 hours, Monday to Friday, and shall not take place on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays. Monitoring of the noise and vibration arising from blasting and the frequency of such blasting shall be carried out at the developer's expense by an independent contractor who shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.
- iii) Prior to the firing of any blast, the developer shall give notice of their intention to the occupiers of all dwellings within 500 metres of the site. An audible alarm for a minimum period of one minute shall be sounded. This alarm shall be of sufficient power to be heard at all such dwellings.
- iv) Vibration levels from blasting shall not exceed a peak particle velocity of 12 millimetres/second, when measured in any three mutually orthogonal directions at any sensitive location.
- v) Blasting shall not give rise to air overpressure values at sensitive locations which are in excess of 125dB (Lin) maximum peak with a 95% confidence limit. No individual air overpressure value shall exceed the limit value by more than 5dB (Lin).
- vi) A monitoring programme, which shall include reviews to be undertaken at annual intervals, shall be developed to assess the impact of quarry blasts. Details of this programme shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of any quarrying works on the site. This programme shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified person acceptable to the Planning Authority. The results of the reviews shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within two weeks of completion. The developer shall carry out any amendments to the programme required by the planning authority following this annual review.

Reason: In the interest of public safety and to protect the residential amenity of properties in the vicinity.

12. During the operational phase of the proposed development, with the exception of blasting operations, the noise level from within the boundaries of the site measured at noise sensitive locations in the vicinity, shall not exceed:

- an LArT value of 55 dB(A) during 0730 and 1900 hours. The T value shall be one hour, and
- an LAeqT value of 45 dB(A) at any other time. The T value shall be 5 minutes.

Reason: In order to protect the amenities of property in the vicinity.

13. Dust levels at the site boundary shall not exceed 350 milligrams per square metre per day averaged over a continuous period of 30 days (Bergerhoff Gauge). Details of a monitoring programme for dust shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development. Details to be submitted shall include monitoring locations, commencement date and the frequency of monitoring results, and details of all dust suppression measures.

Reason: To control dust emissions arising from the development and in the interest of the amenity of the area.

14. All Heavy Goods Vehicles departing the site shall do so via wheel-washes adjacent to the public road.

Reason: In the interest of ensuring that a clean road surface is maintained and in the interest of traffic safety.

15. Oil and fuel storage areas shall be bunded to 110% of the capacity of the largest tank contained within the bund. All filter and outlet valves to be contained within the bunded area shall be roofed to prevent ingress of rainwater. All fuel dispensers shall have a positive cut-off at supply point and shall be housed upright when not in use. All empty containers shall be stored in a designated area that shall be bunded. All bunds shall be constructed in reinforced concrete and the use of block work bunds is not permitted.

Reason: In the interests of health and safety and pollution control.

16. The operator shall clean off any spillages on the public road and shall, during dry weather, spray roads that have become dusty as a result of activities and haulage.

Reason: In the interests of traffic safety, amenity and public health.

17. No structures, machines or plant, whether by way of exempted development or not, shall be installed on the lands without the prior written notification to the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the proper planning and development of the area.

Advice Notes to Applicant

- Notwithstanding the grant of planning permission in relation to this application, the development is subject to the requirements of both the Building Regulations and the Building Control Regulations. In this regard you are advised that it will be necessary that you submit a commencement notice, in accordance with the Building Control Regulations, prior to any works commencing on this development.
- All works shall be carried out in compliance with the relevant Waste Management Legislation and Waste Management Licences.
- Prior to commencement of quarrying works on the extension area, Leitrim County Council's Environment Department shall be notified to facilitate a review of the corresponding Section 4 Discharge monitoring requirements.
- Only clean, uncontaminated soil and stone which complies with the requirements of *Article 27 of the Waste Framework Directive* and the *National By-Product Criteria (Ref. No. BP-N002/024)* shall be imported to the site. Any material which does not comply with these requirements shall be regarded as waste and shall not be accepted.

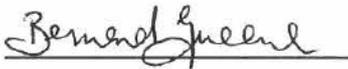
- In accordance with Section 6 of BP-N002/024, the end user shall maintain a record-keeping system which includes:
 - completion, sign-off, distribution and recording of the End User’s Declaration;
 - acceptance, control, traceability and quantification of each load transferred;
 - monitoring of the quality of the greenfield soil and stone by-product;
 - confirmation that the soil and stone has not been processed other than in accordance with normal industry practice; and
 - procedures for the quarantine, segregation and control of any non-compliant by-product.

Such records shall be retained and made available for inspection by competent authorities upon request.

- In addition to the records required above, a register of all imported loads shall be maintained on site and shall include:
 - name of the carrier;
 - vehicle registration number;
 - description of the soil and stone, including details of any rejected loads;
 - quantity of soil and stone imported, recorded in tonnes;
 - name of the person inspecting the load; and
 - date and time of departure.



Deirdre Lardner
Executive Planner
Date: 03/02/2026



Bernard Greene
Senior Planner
Date: 10th February 2026



Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination

STEP 1. Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics:

(a) File Reference No:	25-60303
(b) Brief description of the project or plan:	As per planning report
(c) Brief description of site characteristics:	As per planning report
(d) Relevant prescribed bodies consulted: e.g. DHLGH (NPWS), EPA, OPW	DAU (NPWS) An Taisce The Heritage Council
(e) Response to consultation:	DAU & An Taisce submissions as detailed in the planning report

STEP 2. Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information on Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives.

European Site (code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest	Distance from proposed development (km)	Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Lough Gill SAC (001976)	https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001976	1.8km	Hydrological connection with potential for alterations to hydrogeological and hydrological conditions; and changes in water quality	Yes
Please Select				
Please Select				

STEP 3. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project under the following headings:

Impacts:	Possible Significance of Impacts: (duration/magnitude etc.)
Construction phase e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetation clearance Demolition Surface water runoff from soil excavation/infill/landscaping (including borrow pits) Dust, noise, vibration Lighting disturbance Impact on groundwater/dewatering Storage of excavated/construction materials 	No significant potential impacts.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to site • Pests 	
Operational phase e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct emission to air and water • Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment • Lighting disturbance • Noise/vibration • Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction • Presence of people, vehicles and activities • Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks) • Potential for accidents or incidents 	No significant potential impacts.
In-combination/Other	No significant potential impacts.

(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area • Disturbance to QI species • Habitat or species fragmentation • Reduction or fragmentation in species density • Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water or air quality etc.) • Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI • Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site 	No significant potential impacts.

(c) Are ‘mitigation’ measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening? Yes No

Step 4. Screening Determination Statement

The assessment of significance of effects:
Describe how the proposed development (alone or in-combination) is/is **not likely** to have **significant** effects on European site(s) in view of its conservation objectives.

Having regard to the information on file, the established nature of the existing quarry operations at this location, the comprehensive Appropriate Assessment Screening Report prepared by Green & Blue Ecology where it has been demonstrated that the proposed development will not result in any changes in the hydrogeological and hydrological regimes of Lough Gill and its associated water bodies and that the existing quarry operations have not resulted in any deterioration in the WFD status or water quality of this surface water body or in groundwater body status and the interaction between ground and surface waters. No effects are predicted on Lough Gill SAC or on any of its qualifying Annex I habitats and/or Annex II species from the proposed development and it is thereby concluded that the proposed development, either alone or in-combination with other developments, is not likely to have any significant effects on any European site in view of its conservation objectives.

Conclusion:

	Tick as Appropriate:	Recommendation:
(i) It is clear that there is no likelihood of significant effects on a European site.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The proposal can be screened out: Appropriate assessment not required.

<p>(ii) It is uncertain whether the proposal will have a significant effect on a European site.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Request further information to complete screening <input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission
<p>(iii) Significant effects are likely.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission
<p>Signature of Recommending Planner:</p>		
<p>Date: 03/02/2026</p>		