

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

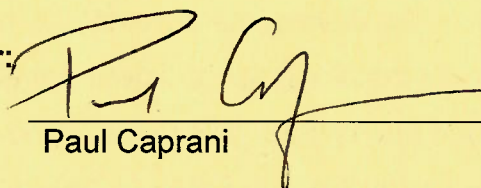
Direction
CD-021571-25
ABP-322007-25

Decision

DIRECT the local authority to prepare a Natura Impact Statement in respect of the proposed development, based on the reasons and considerations set out below.

Planning

Commissioner:


Paul Caprani

Date: 15/12/2025

Reasons and Considerations

The Commission had regard to the following:

- (a) The contribution of the subject development alone and in combination with other plans and projects to increased influent to the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- (b) The historical and ongoing contribution of the Wastewater Treatment Plant effluent to estuarine pollution as reported by Uisce Éireann resulting in a *deterioration in BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand), TON (Total Organic Nitrogen), Dissolved Oxygen, TSS (Total Suspended Solids) and Ortho-P (orthophosphate) concentrations downstream of the effluent discharge within the Boyne Estuary*

- (c) Ongoing operation of Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant in breach of Emission Limit Values set in discharge license reference: D0041-01 for Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- (d) The Screening for Appropriate Assessment carried out on behalf of the Local Authority by NM Ecology dated September 13th 2024 which states “that the wastewater treatment plant is not currently compliant with the Emission Limit Values in its Wastewater Discharge Licence and it appears to be having a negative effect on water quality at its discharge point in the Boyne Estuary”. On foot of the further information request, and in particular Uisce Eireann’s letter dated 23 July 2025 which states that works to be completed by Q2/Q3 of 2026 “should restore the wastewater treatment plant to full compliance”, the Commission can only conclude on the basis of the information submitted that the wastewater treatment plant appears to be having a negative effect on water quality and works have not been undertaken to date to fully address this issue. Until such time that works are completed at the wastewater treatment plant to ensure full compliance with emission limit values set out in the EPA licence, any further organic loadings from the development would give rise to a situation where it is not possible to exclude that the proposed development alone or in combination with other plans and projects will give rise to significant effects on the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002299) and Boyne Coast and Estuary Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 001957) European Sites in view of the Sites’ conservation objectives.

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, on the basis of the information considered in the appropriate assessment screening set of in the Inspector’s Report dated the 21st day of May 2025 and the addendum report dated the 24th day of November 2025, it is not possible to exclude that the proposed development alone or in combination with other plans and projects will give rise to significant effects on the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002299) and Boyne Coast and Estuary Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 001957) European Sites in view of the Sites’ conservation objectives. Objectives include to restore the favourable conservation condition of 1106 Salmon *Salmo salar* and 1099 River Lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis* and to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the estuary and associated

habitats. Appropriate assessment and the submission of a Natura Impact Statement for the proposed development is therefore required.