

An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Order ABP-318182-23

Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2022

Planning Authority: Limerick City and County Council

Application by Limerick City and County Council for approval under section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in accordance with plans and particulars, including a Natura Impact Statement, lodged with An Bord Pleanála on the 5th day of October 2023.

Proposed Development: The proposed works at Mohernagh Bridge comprise of replacing the bridge deck, slab, and beams with a new precast concrete culvert as well as a constructing new reinforced concrete wing walls and foundations. The proposed works will involve instream work and excavation of the riverbed to a depth of up to 1.7 meters.

All located on the River Owwane, County Limerick.

Decision

APPROVE the above proposed development based on the reasons and considerations under and subject to the conditions set out below.

Reasons and Considerations

In coming to its decision, the Board had regard to the following:

- (a) the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),
- (b) the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended),
- (c) the likely consequences for the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is proposed to carry out the proposed development and the likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European Site,
- (d) the conservation objectives for the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002165) and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004077),
- (e) the policies and objectives of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028,
- (f) the nature and extent of the proposed works as set out in the application for approval,
- (g) the information submitted in relation to the potential impacts on habitats, flora and fauna, including the Natura Impact Statement, and
- (h) the report and recommendation of the Inspector.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1:

The Board agreed with and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report that the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002165) and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004077), are the only European Sites in respect of which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2:

The Board considered the Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted with the application for approval, the mitigation measures contained therein, the submissions and observations on file, and the Inspector's assessment. The Board completed an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the affected European Sites, namely the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002165) and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004077), in view of the Sites' conservation objectives. The Board considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an appropriate assessment. In completing the appropriate assessment, the Board considered, in particular, the following:

- i. the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development both individually or in combination with other plans or projects,
- ii. the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal, and,
- iii. the conservation objectives for the European Sites.

In completing the appropriate assessment, the Board accepted and adopted the appropriate assessment carried out in the Inspector's report in respect of the potential effects of the proposed development on the integrity of the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the Sites' conservation objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Board was satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, in view of the Sites' conservation objectives.

Proper Planning and Sustainable Development and Likely effects on the environment

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not have significant negative effects on the environment or the community in the vicinity, would not give rise to a risk of pollution, would not adversely impact on the cultural, archaeological, and built heritage of the area and would not interfere with the existing land uses in the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

CONDITIONS

1. The proposed development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where any mitigation measures as set out in the Natura Impact Statement, or any conditions of approval require further details to be prepared by or on behalf of the local authority, these details shall be placed on the file and retained as part of the public record.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to ensure the protection of the environment.

2. A suitably qualified Site Ecologist shall be retained by the local authority to oversee the site set up and construction of the proposed development and implementation of mitigation measures relating to ecology set out in outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan and the Natura Impact Statement. The ecologist shall be present during site construction works. Upon completion of works, an ecological report of the site works shall be prepared by the appointed ecologist to be kept on file as part of the public record.

Reason: In the interest of nature conservation and the protection of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity.

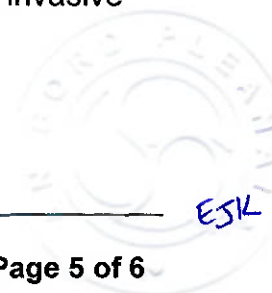
3. Prior to the commencement of development, the local authority, or any agent acting on its behalf, shall prepare in consultation with the appointed Site Ecologist and relevant statutory agencies, a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) incorporating all mitigation measures indicated in the Natura Impact Statement and demonstration of proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols. The CEMP shall include:
 - (a) Specific proposals as to how the measures outlined in the CEMP will be measured and monitored for effectiveness.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the environment and the European Sites.

4. Prior to the commencement of development, details of measures to protect fisheries and water quality of the river systems shall be outlined and placed on file. In-channel works shall adhere to the timing restrictions set out in Section 8 of the Natura Impact Statement. Full regard shall be had to Inland Fisheries Ireland's published guidelines for construction works near waterways (Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and Adjacent to Waters, 2016). A programme of water quality monitoring shall be prepared in consultation with the contractor, the local authority and relevant statutory agencies and the programme shall be implemented thereafter.

Reason: In the interest of the protecting of receiving water quality, fisheries, and aquatic habitats.

5. The local authority and any agent acting on its behalf shall 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.



The local authority shall ensure the control and eventual eradication of Japanese Knotweed and the use of strict biosecurity measures as per the best practice guidance listed in Section 7.4 of the Natura Impact Statement.

Reason: In the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to ensure the protection of the European Sites.

Eamonn James Kelly

Eamonn James Kelly
Member of An Bord Pleanála
duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Board.



Dated this *15th* day of *February*, 2024