



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Commission Order ABP-321144-24

**Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended**

**Planning Authority: Galway County Council**

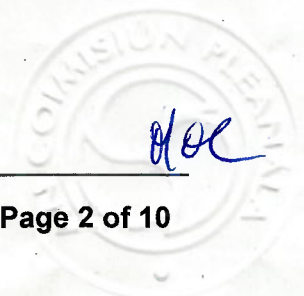
**Application** by Galway County Council for approval under section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in accordance with plans and particulars, including a Natura Impact Statement, lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of October 2024, amended by the further information received by An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of June 2025.

**The proposed works include:** Proposed public realm scheme which will include:

- (i) Alterations works to the Clifden Town Centre area on Seaview Road, Main Street, Market Street, Market Hill, Bridgewell Lane, Bridge Street, and Hulk Street comprising:
  - a. the reconfiguration and resurfacing of roads and realignment of parking spaces including removal of 58 number on-street parking spaces leaving a total of 155 number on street parking spaces,
  - b. the widening and realignment of existing footpath areas, including the provision of new soft and hard landscaping,
  - c. the installation of new and upgraded public lighting throughout the town,
  - d. relocation of The Beacon Statue, and,
  - e. installation of new public art.
- (ii) Alterations to and resurfacing of Beach Road Quay public realm comprising:

- a. the provision of pedestrian and seating areas on the quay side of Beach Road quay, including the installation of 6 number seating areas, and ancillary paving and landscaping,
  - b. remedial works to the quay wall (National Inventory of Architectural Heritage registration number: 30325017), including the resetting of dislodged stones, the removal of vegetation, and remedial masonry works,
  - c. the replacement of existing railings along the quay wall, and,
  - d. the installation of public lighting along the roadside.
- (iii) Redevelopment of the Harbour Park area south of Beach Road and to the west of Clifden town centre.
- a. The demolition of the existing playground on site, and the construction of a new park including multi-age playground areas, including the provision of:
    - i. cycle parking,
    - ii. timber play furniture,
    - iii. picnic benches and seating areas,
    - iv. an amphitheatre performance Spaces,
    - v. climbing wall,
    - vi. pump track,
    - vii. running track,
    - viii. car park, and
    - ix. sports pitch.
  - b. Resurfacing, paving and hard and soft landscaping of the park area.
- (iv) All other associated and ancillary works.

All located in Clifden, County Galway.





## Decision

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

### Reasons and Considerations

In performing its functions in relation to the making of its decision, the Commission had regard to:

Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, and the requirement to, in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and the national long term climate action strategy, national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans set out in those Plans and in furtherance of the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.

In coming to its decision, the Commission also had regard to the following:

- (a) the European Union Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),
- (b) the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended,
- (c) the National Planning Framework First Revision April 2025,
- (d) the Ireland's 4<sup>th</sup> National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030,
- (e) the Northern and Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032,
- (f) the policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028,
- (g) 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 European Sites,

- (h) the conservation objectives, and qualifying interests for the Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002031), Slyne Head Peninsula Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002074), West Connacht Coast Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002998), Slyne Head Islands Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000328), and the Connemara Bog Complex Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002034),
- (i) the nature and extent of the proposed works as set out in the application for approval,
- (j) the information submitted in relation to the potential impacts on habitats, flora and fauna, including the Natura Impact Statement, and the information submitted at further information stage including the updated Natura Impact Statement,
- (k) the submissions received in relation to the proposed development, and,
- (l) the report and recommendation of the person appointed by the Commission to make a report and recommendation on the matter.

#### **Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1:**

The Commission agreed with and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report that the Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002031), Slyne Head Peninsula Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002074), West Connacht Coast Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002998), Slyne Head Islands Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000328), and the Connemara Bog Complex Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002034) 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 Commission considered the Natura Impact Statement and updated Natura Impact Statement, and associated documentation submitted with the application for approval, the mitigation measures contained therein, the submissions on file, and the Inspector's assessment. The Commission completed an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the affected European Sites,

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namely the Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002031), Slyne Head Peninsula Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002074), West Connacht Coast Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002998), Slyne Head Islands Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000328), and the Connemara Bog Complex Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002034) in view of the Sites' conservation objectives. The Commission considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an appropriate assessment. In completing the appropriate assessment, the Commission 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 Commission 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 Commission 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/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 be detrimental to the visual or landscape amenities of the area, would not seriously injure the amenities of property in the vicinity, would not adversely impact on the cultural, archaeological and built heritage of the area, would not interfere with

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the existing land uses in the area and would not interfere with traffic and pedestrian safety.

The proposed public realm improvement works would ensure the delivery of good quality open space, encourage modal shift, enhance the shared use of spaces with a priority on pedestrian uses and facilitate the development of Clifden as a key tourist destination whilst ensuring that the town centre remains the primary focus for retail and service activity and delivering appropriate public realm enhancements in line with the objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. 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, as amended by the further plans and particulars received by An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of June 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where any mitigation measures set out in the updated 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. The mitigation and monitoring measures identified in the updated Natura Impact Statement shall be implemented in full.

**Reason:** In the interest of protecting European Sites.



3. The mitigation and monitoring measures identified in the Ecological Impact Assessment submitted with the application shall be implemented in full.

**Reason:** In the interest of protecting the environment.

4. A suitably qualified 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. The ecologist shall be present during the 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 interests of nature conservation and biodiversity.

5. Prior to the commencement of development, the local authority, or any agent acting on its behalf, shall, in consultation with the project ecologist and relevant statutory agencies, update the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating all mitigation measures indicated in the Natura Impact Statement and Ecological Impact Assessment and demonstration of proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols. The CEMP shall include:
  - (a) all mitigation measures indicated in the updated Natura Impact Statement and Ecological Impact Assessment,
  - (b) location and extent of silt fencing to be installed on site,
  - (c) specific proposals as to how the measures outlined in the CEMP will be measured and monitored for effectiveness,
  - (d) a traffic management plan,
  - (e) mitigation measures to ensure that all plant and machinery used during the works are thoroughly cleaned and washed before delivery to the site to prevent the spread of hazardous invasive species and pathogens, and,
  - (f) mitigation measures indicated in the asbestos management plan.

The updated CEMP shall be placed on the file and retained as part of the public record.

**Reason:** In the interest of protecting the environment and the European Sites, and in the interests of public safety and health.

6. The following nature conservation requirements shall be complied with:
- (a) Prior to the commencement of development, details of measures to protect fisheries and water quality of the river system shall be outlined and placed on file. 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.
  - (b) No vegetation removal shall take place during the period of the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March to the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August (inclusive) without the written approval of the Ecological Clerk of Works. Such approval shall be placed on the public file.
  - (c) A pre-construction otter survey by a suitably qualified ecologist shall be carried out before works commence.
  - (d) Inland Fisheries Ireland shall be notified prior to the treatment of invasive species.
  - (e) Prior to the commencement of development, Inland Fisheries Ireland shall be consulted in relation to any construction works near waterways.

**Reason:** In the interests of biodiversity, nature conservation and protecting European Sites.

7. (a) The local authority shall engage a suitably qualified archaeologist to monitor (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) all site clearance works, topsoil stripping, groundworks associated with the development. Should archaeological remains be identified during the course of archaeological monitoring, all works shall cease in the area of





archaeological interest pending a decision of the local authority, in consultation with the National Monuments Service, regarding appropriate mitigation. The local authority shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any remains identified. Any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the local authority, following consultation with the National Monuments Service, shall be complied with.

- (b) Following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary post-excavation specialist analysis, the local authority and the National Monuments Service shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of the monitoring and any subsequent required archaeological investigative work/excavation required. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the local authority.

**Reason:** To ensure the continued preservation of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

8. The mitigation measures making provision for recording and supervision of works as set out in the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment Report submitted shall be implemented.

**Reason:** In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the site and to secure its preservation and protection.


9. (a) The site shall be landscaped in accordance with the details submitted.  
(b) All planting shall be adequately protected from damage until established. Any plants which die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of five years from the completion of the development shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

**Reason:** In the interest of visual amenity.

10. Prior to commencement of development, plans shall be revised for the following requirements:
- (a) All loading bays shall comply with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets dimensions.
  - (b) The rain garden planting areas at the junction of Market Street and Bridewell Lane shall be revised to maintain existing access/egress and ensure safe left turning movements for vehicles onto Market Street.
  - (c) Signage for pedestrians and vehicles shall be provided at and to the Beach Road and at the Beach Road Quay.

These details shall be placed on the file and retained as part of the public record.

**Reason:** In the interests of proper planning, road and public safety.

  
Marie O' Connor

Planning Commissioner of An Coimisiún  
Pleanála duly authorised to authenticate  
the seal of the Commission.



Dated this 06 day of November 2025