



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP-300875-18.

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<b>Development</b>	Proposed Boat Slipways.
<b>Location</b>	River Boyne and River Blackwater.
<b>Planning Authority / Applicant</b>	Meath County Council.
<b>Type of Application</b>	Application for approval under Section 177 AE of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended.
<b>Observers</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Frank Reilly.</li><li>2. Navan &amp; District Angling Association.</li><li>3. David O'Connell.</li></ol>
<b>Prescribed Bodies</b>	Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> April 2018.
<b>Inspector</b>	Karen Kenny.

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This is an application to the Board for approval for the construction of 7 no. Boat Slipways on the River Boyne at Monorlands (1<sup>st</sup> Division) and Bective, Trim and at Athlumney, Ferganstown and Ballymacon, Balreask Old and Ardmulchan, Navan and on the River Blackwater at Abbeyland, Navan and for the construction of access to these slipways from adjacent roadways.
- 1.2. The application is made pursuant to Section 177 AE (appropriate assessment of local authority development) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.
- 1.3. Meath County Council published notice of the proposed development in the Meath Chronicle dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Notice of the proposed development was republished in the Meath Chronicle dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 2018, to address a discrepancy.
- 1.4. The notice advised that a Natura Impact Statement had been prepared in respect of the development. The notice dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 2018 advised that submissions / observations could be made to An Bord Pleanála up to and including 4.30 p.m. on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018. Submissions received by the Board are summarised in Section 6 below.
- 1.5. The application was received by the Board on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018, and included the following:
  - Cover Letter.
  - Natura Impact Statement for each location.
  - Ecological Appraisal Report for each location.
  - Technical Engineering Report.
  - Preliminary Construction Environmental Management Plan.
  - Archaeological Desk Based Review and Assessment.
  - Drawings (Site Location and Layout; Plans and Sections) for each location.
  - Public Notice.
  - Photographs and location plan of the site notices.
  - Copies of letters issued to prescribed bodies.

- Letters of support from Meath County Council Fire Service Department, Meath River Rescue Service and Meath County Council Civil Defence Services.
- Electronic copy of the application.

The main issues arising from the NIS are summarised in Section 9.0 below.

- 1.5.1. Additional Information was requested by the Board on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018 in respect of a number of items. Further information was received on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018. The further information states that the applicant has decided not to proceed with the proposed development of a Boat Slipway at Bective. The further information includes an Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment in respect of the Trim Castle site and an assessment of impacts of the proposed slipways on architectural heritage / monuments and on industrial and infrastructural structures associated with the river.

The further information was not considered to be significant.

## **2.0 Natural Heritage Designations**

- 2.1. The 6 no. sites are located within and adjacent to the designated area of the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002299) and the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004232).

## **3.0 Legislative Requirements**

- 3.1. Section 177 AE (1) of the Act states that 'where an Appropriate Assessment is required in respect of a development by a local authority that is within the local authority's functional area, the local authority shall prepare or cause to be prepared a Natura Impact Statement'.
- 3.2. In accordance with subsection (3), where a Natura Impact Statement has been prepared, pursuant to subsection (1) the local authority shall apply to the Board for approval and the provisions of Part XAB shall apply to the carrying out of the Appropriate Assessment.

3.3. Section 177 AE (6) states that before making a decision in respect of the proposed development, the Board shall consider the NIS submitted by the local authority and any observations associated with it. The Board shall consider

- (i) The likely impacts on the environment of the proposed development.
- (ii) The likely consequence for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- (iii) The likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European site.

Article 6 of the EU (Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats) (2) Regulations 2011 exempts Part 8 requirements for local authority development where there is an appropriate assessment requirement.

## 4.0 Site Location and Description

The application (as amended) relates to the construction of 6 no. boat slipways at locations on the River Boyne and River Blackwater in the Trim and Navan areas as follows:

### 4.1. Trim Castle (MH\_BS\_003)

- 4.1.1. This site is located on the River Boyne in the townland of Monorlands (1<sup>st</sup> Division), Trim. The site is in the town of Trim, located in open amenity grasslands that form a parkland setting around Trim Castle and the River Boyne. The site is located to the north of Castle Street and approximately 100 metres south east of the walled enclosure surrounding Trim Castle (RMP ME036-048004, ME036-048033, ME036-048052). There is an existing grassed over gravel access to the site from Castle Street that serves an Irish Water pumping station and provides access to the riverside. The riverside habit is dominated by amenity grassland and a thin strip of marshy grassland along the edge of the river. The submitted ecological assessment states that the river is relatively silty at this location with aquatic and emerging plants. The river is c. 25-30 metres wide at this location.

#### **4.2. Navan Old Bridge (MS\_BS\_005)**

- 4.2.1. This site is located on the River Boyne in the townland of Athlumney, Navan, on the southern outskirts of Navan Town. It is adjacent to and downstream of Kilcarn Bridge (c. 1599) (RMP ME025-039) an old road bridge that now accommodates pedestrian and cyclist traffic. The R147 (Dublin Road and former N3) runs to the immediate west of the site. The site is to the north of Kilcarn Bridge and comprises an existing gravel path that leads to the river. The access track is surrounded by tall ruderal and small patch scrub. The submitted ecological assessment states that the river bed at this location comprises coarse stone and gravel. The appraisal states that both aquatic and emergence plants were noted across the river at this section and notes that there is a small island within the river that is dominated by willow. The river is c. 35-40 metres wide at this location.

#### **4.3. Navan Centre (MS\_BS\_006)**

- 4.3.1. This site is located on the River Boyne in the townland of Athlumney, Navan approximately 0.5 kilometres to the east of the town centre. The site is within the built-up area of Navan to the north of the R153 Boyne Road. The site of the proposed slipway comprises an area of built / bare ground. The surface comprises an area of gravel and coarse stone which has been laid and compacted to create an access track leading to the river. To the west of the site there is a small area of amenity grassland and beyond this an area of broadleaved woodland, which extends along the river. The site is accessed from the public road via a public car park and a bridge over the canal. The Ramparts Canal and Boyne River Walk run alongside the River Boyne at this location. Ruxton Lock and Ruxton Lock Bridge (RPS NTO 025-124 and NTO025-123) are to the immediate east of the site, while the Upper Boyne Navigation runs to east and south (RPS NTO 025-123) and the Canal Towpath is to the south. The submitted ecological appraisal states that the river bed comprises coarse gravels and stone with small silty sections. It states that both aquatic and emergence plants were noted within the margins of the river. The river is c. 35-40 metres wide at this location and the river banks have been largely modified over time to channel the river and to create footpaths and amenity areas.

#### 4.4. **Navan Weir (MS-BS\_007)**

- 4.4.1. The site is located on the River Boyne in the townland of Ferganstown and Ballymacon, Navan, approximately 1.5 kilometres east of the town centre and to the north of the R153 Boyne Road. The site includes an existing gravelled access track and car parking area to the west of the proposed boat slipway that would be used for access. The site of the proposed boat slipway is dominated by sections of cleared bank and tall ruderal with patches of grassland. The submitted ecological appraisal states that the river bed at this section is relatively silty. It states that both aquatic and emergence plants were noted within the margins. The river bank along this section has been modified over time to channel the river, with a concrete wall running along some sections. The river is c. 35-40 metres wide at this location. The Boyne Way walkway, along this section of the river is boarded to the north by an area of semi-natural woodland and to the south by a disused section of canal.

#### 4.5. **Stackallan (MH\_BS\_008)**

- 4.5.1. The site is located on the River Boyne in the townland of Ardmulchan, Navan, approximately 8.6 kilometres north of Navan and 1.1 kilometres off the L1600 local road. There is a disused mill and weir and a detached dwelling to the immediate east of the site. There is a large quarry to the south of the site that is separated from the site by a local road. The bankside habitat is dominated by semi-improved grassland / wet grassland and there are patches of hedgerow and trees to the south west of the site adjacent to a stone wall. The trees are semi-mature and are relatively unmanaged. There is an existing gravel / stone access to the river at the site. There is a large weir located downstream of the site. The submitted ecological appraisal states that the riverbed is relatively silty with both aquatic and emergence plants noted across the margins of the river. The river is c. 40-45 metres wide along this location.

#### 4.6. **Navan Blackwater (MH\_BS\_009)**

- 4.6.1. The site is located within the Blackwater Park in the Townland of Abbeyland, Navan. The site is located within the built-up area of Navan on the northern bank of the River Blackwater. The site comprises semi-improved grassland and the area leading

down to the water edge appears to be in regular use by walkers. The flow of the River Blackwater is interrupted at this location by two weirs located up and down stream of the proposed slipway, and there is a disused mill on the far side of the river. The submitted ecological appraisal states that the river bed at this section is relatively silty and that both aquatic and emergence plants were noted on the margins. The river is c. 20-25 metres wide at this location.

## 5.0 Proposed Development

- 5.1. The proposed development (as amended) consists of the construction of 6 no. slipways along the River Boyne and River Blackwater at the locations detailed in Section 4.0 above. The slipways are to facilitate access to the River Boyne and Blackwater by emergency services.
- 5.2. The slipways are 4.8 metres wide by 11 metres in length, comprising concrete mattress sections laid over compacted hardcore and a geotextile layer. The slipways include a flat concrete slab with anchor beam at the head of the slipway, a sloped slipway of 8 metres in length and a precast concrete toe beam at the riverside end.
- 5.3. The construction process described in the submitted Engineering Report can be summarised as follows:
- A cofferdam will be installed at the toe of the slipways. Water will be pumped out of the cofferdam and will pass through a temporary mobile settlement tank before being returned to the river.
  - The river bank will be excavated to achieve the required formation level for the boat ramp.
  - Stone 'riprap'<sup>1</sup> material will be installed at the toe of the ramp.
  - A precast concrete beam will be lifted into position at the toe of the ramp.
  - Compacted hardcore will be installed above the existing bank. A maximum hardcore depth of 400 mm is detailed in the section drawings, save at the Navan Centre site where a hardcore depth of up to 1.5 metres is detailed.

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1. <sup>1</sup> Loose stone used to form a foundation on a shoreline.



- A geotextile layer will be installed above the hardcore.
- Concrete mattress sections to form the slipway deck will be delivered to the site and lifted into position and secured.
- The existing ground will be re-graded to tie in with the proposed new slipway. Access arrangements and the extent of regrading will vary depending on local conditions.
- At the Navan Weir site, the river bank is steeper than at the other sites. It is proposed to cut into the existing bank and to locally lower the level of the bank at this location. In order to minimise disruption to the existing bank, gabion baskets have been indicated on both sides of the slipway, to allow a step to be formed between the level of the slipway at the river edge and the adjacent ground level.
- It is proposed to use grasscrete, reinforced grass or other variations on the access routes / turning areas at the Trim Castle, Navan Old Bridge, Navan Central, Navan Weir, Stackallan and Navan Blackwater sites.

## 6.0 Written Submissions

### 6.1. Prescribed Bodies

6.1.1. In accordance with the provisions of Section 177 AE (4)(b), a number of prescribed bodies were notified of the proposal and copies of the application and NIS were circulated to same. The following bodies were notified:

- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Applications Unit)
- Failte Ireland
- The Heritage Council
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Office of Public Works (OPW)
- Waterways Ireland
- An Taisce

6.1.2. A submission was received from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The issues raised can be summarised as follows:

### **Archaeology**

- Navan Old Bridge (MS\_BS\_005): The development is located within a zone of archaeological potential established around Kilcarn Bridge - RMP Ref. ME025-030. Should works disturb areas of subsoil or riverbed which have not been disturbed previously, it is possible that material of archaeological significance may be impacted. The Department recommends archaeological monitoring in areas of undisturbed riverbed and riverbank during the works.
- Trim Castle (MH\_BS\_003): The development is located within a zone of archaeological potential established around Trim Castle - RMP Ref. ME036-048004. The Department recommends that an Underwater Archaeological Assessment is undertaken to assess those areas of riverbed which shall be impacted by the proposed development. In addition, the Department recommends that archaeological monitoring be undertaken in areas of the riverbank which might be impacted by the proposed works.
- Bective (MH\_BS\_004): The proposed development is located within a zone of archaeological potential established around Bective Bridge - RMP Ref. ME031-042. The Department recommends that an Underwater Archaeological Assessment is undertaken to assess any areas of riverbed which shall be impacted by the proposed development. In addition, the Department recommends that archaeological monitoring be undertaken in areas of the riverbank which might be impacted by the proposed works.

### **Architectural Heritage**

- The works are in the context of settlements of early origins founded along the river course at significant crossing points, water course changes etc. Concern raised in relation to the lack of overall awareness of the historic context and the lack of proposed mitigation measures to safeguard the sensitive settings.
- The submission states that the scope of work should allow for a high-quality design response to allow, where possible, the added value of recreational infrastructure and aquatic tourism. Where possible consideration of the potential of improved amenity and access to the linear river route should be

accommodated as part of a future cultural tourism strategy i.e. the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Initiative.

- The Department suggests that a request for additional information be considered in relation to the impact of each development on the character and setting of surviving architectural heritage / monuments and industrial and infrastructural structures associated with the river; and the visual impact of the proposed development on the setting of the principal structures including historic bridge crossings, abutments and breakwaters.

6.1.3. The Board has not received any other submission from prescribed bodies.

## 6.2. Other Third-Party Submissions

6.2.1. A submission has been received from Frank Reilly in relation to the proposed slipway at Stackallen. The issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- Welcome proposal to regularise facilities available to emergency services on the River Boyne.
- Suggest that entry to the slipway is restricted to emergency vehicles by way of a gate or barrier.
- Reference to anti-social behaviour, accidents on slipways and slipways being blocked.

6.2.2. A submission has been received from Navan & District Angling Association. The submission states that the association is not opposed to the principle of the scheme. The submission focuses primarily on the proposed slipway at 'Navan Weir'. The issues raised, that are relevant to the subject application, can be summarised as follows:

- Request that the slipway at Navan Weir be omitted from the development.
- Concern in relation to the impact of in-river works on Atlantic Salmon, which are known to spawn directly adjacent to the proposed slipway.
- Malone O'Regan Reports fail to extensively review the River Boyne at the Navan Weir site. Irrespective of the commitment to avoid key migration periods for Atlantic Salmon and River Lamprey, there is high potential that the development works will detrimentally impact and potentially destroy this

important Salmon spawning ground, regardless of its scale in the context of the river channel.

- The proposed turnabout arrangements at Navan Weir are unacceptable, unrealistic and unachievable. Swept path analysis indicates turning on a hard-surfaced area that is used as a car park for anglers and people using the Boyne Ramparts Heritage Walk.
- Proposal to close towpath during construction works is unacceptable as the towpath is heavily used by angling club members and members of the public.
- No objection to the proposed boat slipway at Athlumney. An existing temporary boat slipway c. 275 metres downstream of the proposed slipway could have been a more suitable alternative to the Navan Weir slipway. This slipway is accessible from Morgan's Lock on the Boyne Road and would not require a turning area.
- The land at the proposed 'Navan Weir' site is in the control of Navan & District Angling Association as part of a 99-year lease. Landowner or leaseholder consent was not sought.
- The development would impact on Angling and Conservation initiatives in the area.

6.2.3. A submission has been received from Mr. David O'Connell, Troutbeck, Bective, Navan, Co. Meath in relation to the proposed slipway at Bective Bridge. The issues raised, that are relevant to the subject application, can be summarised as follows:

- The development includes an unauthorised hardcore area that was constructed in a SAC.
- The proposed development would result in the regularisation of unauthorised development, without going through the proper procedures of carrying out a remedial NIS and applying for substitute consent.
- The observer commissioned an AA Screening Report in response to a planning application that related to Bective Mill. The Screening Report concludes that the hardcore development would have significant impacts on the SAC due to direct loss of habitat and deterioration in water quality.
- The submitted documents state that "the Boat Slipways will be used principally by emergency services to launch boats and attend emergencies

along sections of these rivers”. The wording would enable use by others. The development would, therefore, facilitate the use of the slipway on a regular basis by boating enthusiasts and could even result in their use on a commercial basis.

- The proposed development could give rise to anti-social behaviour and noise at the location.
- In the event that the slipway is permitted, a condition is requested as follows: ‘The Boat Slipways will be used solely by the emergency services to launch boats and attend emergencies along sections of these rivers and a gate shall be erected to prevent unauthorised access. In the interest of orderly development’.

## **7.0 Planning History**

- 7.1.1. There would appear to be no recent planning history associated with the subject sites.

## **8.0 Planning Policy Context**

### **8.1. Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019**

- 8.1.1. The Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 is the relevant statutory Plan for the County of Meath.

- The Stackallan site is located in a rural area that is outside of the designated settlements identified in the Development Plan and are not subject to a land-use zoning objective. It is a core principle (no. 7) of the Development Plan ‘to protect and support rural areas through careful management of physical and environmental resources and appropriate, sustainable development’.
- The Trim Castle site is located within the development envelope of Trim as defined by the Trim Development Plan 2014-2020, and is zoned “High Amenity” with an objective to ‘protect and improve areas of high amenity’. The site is also within the Trim Historic Core ACA, is at the source of Trim Protected View No. 5 and is adjacent to the Zone of Archaeological Potential detailed on Conservation Map No. 3.

- The Navan Old Bridge, Navan Centre, Navan Weir and Navan Blackwater sites fall within the development envelope of Navan as defined by the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015. The sites at Navan Old Bridge, Navan Centre and Navan Weir are zoned 'High Amenity' with an objective 'to protect and improve areas of high amenity'. The site at Navan Blackwater is zoned 'Open Space' with an objective 'to provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities'.

8.1.2. The following policies of the Meath County Development Plan are also considered to be relevant.

- Core Principle 4: To support the sustainable heritage of the County by safeguarding the cultural, natural and built heritage and natural resources, including biodiversity, of the County.
- Core Principle 7: To protect and support rural areas through careful management of physical and environmental resources and appropriate, sustainable development.
- CSA SP 2: To ensure that features of Meath's natural heritage and green infrastructure that provide ecosystem services are protected; that biodiversity is conserved and where possible enhanced, and; that the character of landscapes are maintained and enriched, and that tourist and recreational uses are facilitated in a sensitive manner.
- CH POL 7: To ensure that development in the immediate vicinity of a recorded monument is sensitively sited and designed so that it does not significantly detract from the monument. Where upstanding remains exist, a visual impact assessment may be required.
- CH OBJ 7: To protect archaeological sites and monuments, underwater archaeology, and archaeological objects, which are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, and to seek their preservation in situ (or at a minimum, preservation by record) through the planning process.
- CH POL 10: To conserve and protect the architectural heritage of Meath.
- CH POL 16: To protect the industrial heritage of Meath, including the Royal Canal and Boyne Navigation, historic bridges, roadside features and street furniture.

- NH POL 1: To protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the County's biodiversity.
- NH POL 5: To permit development on or adjacent to designated Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Heritage Area or those proposed to be designated over the period of the plan, only where an assessment carried out to the satisfaction of the Meath County Council, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service, indicates that it will have no significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site.
- NH POL 6: To have regard to the views and guidance of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in respect of proposed development where there is a possibility that such development may have an impact on a designated European or National site or a site proposed for such designation.
- NH POL 8: To seek to ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory avoidance or mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.
- NH POL 9: To consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and take account of any licensing requirements, when undertaking, approving or authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law.
- NH POL 21: To protect the recreational, educational and amenity potential of navigational and non-navigational waterways within the County, towpaths and adjacent wetlands.

## 9.0 Planning Assessment

9.1. Under the provisions of Section 177AE (6) the Board is required to consider the following in respect of this type of application:

- (i) The likely effects on the environment,
- (ii) The likely consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, and
- (iii) The likely impact on any European sites.

I propose to assess the subject proposal under these three broad headings.

## 9.2. Likely Effects on the Environment

9.2.1. The most significant potential for impacts arises in relation to water, flora and fauna and these are discussed in detail in Section 9.4 below. In addition to these, I consider the following environmental impacts to be relevant:

- Archaeology
- Visual Impact and Impact on Architectural Heritage
- Human Beings
- Traffic

### Archaeology

9.2.2. The application was accompanied by an Archaeology Review and Assessment. The assessment comprises a desk-based review of previously published information relating to the archaeological potential of the sites.

9.2.3. The Trim Castle Site (MH\_BS\_003) is adjacent to the zones of archaeological potential associated with Trim Castle (RMP Ref. ME036-048004) and Trim Town. The Archaeological Assessment submitted with the application states that the area has been subject to previous disturbance during the construction of an adjacent Waste Water Treatment Works in 1999 and in conjunction with large-scale archaeological and refurbishment works at Trim Castle undertaken in the 1990's, which extended into the Castle Field area. The assessment notes that the area of the proposed slipway was used for spoil heaps and soil management. The archaeological assessment recommends that works at this location are subject to archaeological monitoring. The submission from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht stated that the site is within a zone of archaeological potential associated with Trim Castle and recommends that an Underwater Archaeological Assessment is undertaken to assess areas of riverbed that would be impacted by the proposed development, in addition to undertaking archaeological monitoring during the proposed works. Details of an Underwater Archaeological Assessment have been submitted as additional information. The report concludes that no material of archaeological interest was observed and that a metal detector survey did not reveal material of archaeological interest in this zone. I accept the findings of this report.

9.2.4. The Old Bridge site (MH\_BS\_005) is located within a zone of archaeological potential established around Kilcarn Bridge (RMP Ref. ME025-030). The submitted



archaeological assessment states that the site has been subject to previous disturbance, as the slipway is within the area of the Kilcarn Bridge refurbishment works undertaken in 2016. The submission from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht states that it is possible that material of archaeological significance may be impacted, should the proposed works disturb areas that have not been disturbed previously. The Department recommends archaeological monitoring of works in areas of undisturbed riverbed and riverbank during the proposed works.

- 9.2.5. The submitted assessment and the submission received from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht also identifies archaeological at the Bective Site. However, this site was omitted from the scheme at additional information stage.
- 9.2.6. On the basis of the submitted information, I consider that archaeological supervision of works at the Trim Castle and Old Bridge sites would be sufficient to mitigate any potential impacts. I am, therefore, satisfied that issues raised in relation to archaeology can be addressed by way of condition. Should the Board be minded to approve the development I recommend that a condition is attached that requires all works at the Trim Castle and Old Bridge sites to be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and that provision is made for resolution of any archaeological features or deposits that may be identified during the works in consultation with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

### **Visual Impact and Impact on Architectural Heritage**

- 9.2.7. The proposed slipways are of modest scale. They are setback from and below the level of adjoining roads or pathways and the sites at Navan Centre, Navan Weir and Stackallan are surrounded by significant vegetation. The extent of excavation and regrading proposed has been minimised through the siting and design of the proposed slipways.
- 9.2.8. The submission from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht raised concerns in relation to the historic context of the sites and recommended that further information be requested in relation to the impact on the character and setting of surviving architectural heritage and monuments associated with the river, and the visual impact on the setting of historic structures. In this regard I would note that the

site at Trim Castle site is situated c. 100 metres south of Trim Castle which is listed on the Record of Protected Structures and the Recorded of Monuments and Places (RPS TT036-057, RMP ME036-048004, ME036-048033 and ME036-048052). The Old Bridge site sits adjacent to Kilcarn Bridge, a limestone bridge dating from the 1500's that is listed on the Record of Protected Structures and the Recorded of Monuments and Places (RPS NT025-187 and RMP ME025-039). The Navan Central site adjoins the Upper Boyne Navigation, Ruxton Lock Bridge and Ruxton Lock which are listed in the Recorded of Protected Structures (RPS NTO25-122, NTO25-123 and NTO25-124). The Stackallen site is proximate to Stackallen Lock which is listed on the Record of Protected Structures and an Earthwork which is listed on the Record of Monuments and Places (RPS NT025-120 and RMP ME025-047). The Navan Blackwater site is proximate to Spicer's Blackwater Mill and as associated Sluice which are listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS NT025-106 and NT025-107).

- 9.2.9. A number of the proposed slipways are clearly proximity to features of architectural or archaeological heritage along the River Boyne and Blackwater. The additional information submitted to the Board on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 includes an assessment of impact on architectural heritage and monuments in the vicinity of the Trim Castle, Navan Old Bridge, Navan Centre, Stackallen and Navan Blackwater sites undertaken by Meath County Council's Conservation Officer. The assessment lists architectural heritage features / monuments in the vicinity of each site and concludes in respect of each of the sites listed above that the insertion of a low laying slipway will have no effect on the setting or the character of any of the surviving architectural heritage / monuments, industrial and infrastructural services associated with the river.
- 9.2.10. I consider that the proposed slipways are of a modest scale and that the design is sympathy to the historic river context, with the slipways effectively sitting into the existing river banks with minimal disturbance and alteration. I consider that the main visual impacts would occur during the construction phase and be short-term in nature. In the operational phase of the development I consider that the visual impact of the completed slipways would be negligible and that they would not unduly alter the setting of Protected Structures or Recorded Monuments in the vicinity.

## **Human Beings**

9.2.11. The main impacts in respect of Human Beings arise from safety issues, particularly in relation to conflicts arising between human beings using the riverside and vehicles accessing the slipways and during the construction phase of the development. The boat slipways will be used principally by the emergency services to launch boats to attend emergencies along sections of the rivers. The submitted documents state that the construction of the slipways will expedite response times in dealing with emergencies and provide safe access for all personnel launching boats onto the rivers, thus improving the existing situation. There will be limited vehicular traffic associated with the slipways and I would note that turning areas are proposed, where none exist, thus reducing the potential for conflict. The Engineering Report submitted with the application states that the design of the slipways incorporates a number of safety benefits including a slip resistant surface and the use of pre-cast concrete to minimise the amount of work undertaken in or adjacent to the river. It is also proposed to carry out the works in the summer months when the river levels are low, which will ensure a safer working environment. I consider that the proposal will have an overall positive environmental impact in terms of Human Beings.

## **Traffic**

9.2.12. The main traffic impacts from the development relate to the proposed accesses to the riverside locations to include turning areas. Vehicular access to the slipways would be via existing laneways or informal access points that will be upgraded where necessary, to ensure that there is adequate access for vehicles and boats. The submission from the Navan & District Angling Association expresses concerns in relation to the turning area at the Navan Weir site stating that the turning area is on a hard-surfaced area that is regularly used as a car park by anglers and others and is rarely free. I would note that there is also a turning area at the slipway that would suffice in the event that the area used for car parking is not available. I would not expect a significant volume of traffic at any of the proposed sites as a result of the proposed development, as the slipways will be used principally by the emergency services. In this regard, I would note that public access to the sites at Trim Castle, Navan Old Bridge and Navan Blackwater is restricted by gates or bollards and that new bollards are proposed at the Navan Centre and Navan Weir sites. I consider

that the proposed accesses will have an overall positive impact and improve traffic safety.

### 9.3. Likely Consequences for the Proper Planning and Sustainable Development of the Area

9.3.1. In terms of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, I consider the following issues to be relevant:

- Principle of Development
- Legal Issues
- Other Issues

#### Principle of Development

9.3.2. The Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 is the relevant statutory plan for the County of Meath. The Stackallan site is located in a rural area that is outside of the designated settlements identified in the Development Plan and is not subject to a land-use zoning objective. It is a core principle of the Development Plan to protect and support rural areas through careful management of physical and environmental resources and appropriate sustainable development. The Trim Castle site is located within the development envelope of Trim as defined by the Trim Development Plan 2014-2020, wherein it is zoned “High Amenity” with an objective to ‘protect and improve areas of high amenity’. The Navan Development Plan 2009 – 2015 provides the most recent zoning framework for the town of Navan. The Navan Old Bridge, Navan Centre, Navan Weir and Navan Blackwater sites fall within the development envelope of Navan as defined by the Navan Development Plan. The sites at Navan Old Bridge, Navan Centre and Navan Weir are zoned “High Amenity” with an objective ‘to protect and improve areas of high amenity’. The site at Navan Blackwater is zoned ‘Open Space’ with an objective ‘to provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities’. I consider that the proposed development is acceptable in principle within each area and that it would not be in conflict with the zoning objectives for the area. Furthermore, I am satisfied that the proposed development responds to the objectives of the Development Plans in relation to the protection of natural and built heritage features. I am also satisfied that the development will not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the visual or residential amenities of the area.

## **Legal Issues**

- 9.3.3. One submission states that the lands at the Navan Weir site, are in the control of the Navan & District Angling Association as part of a 99-year lease and questions whether Meath County Council have sufficient legal interest to carry out the proposed works. However, I would note that the terms of Article 22 (2) (g) do not apply in respect of application made under Section 177 AE of the Planning and Development Act and that the limitations of any agreement (s) that may exist are not a matter for the Boards consideration.

## **Other Issues**

- 9.3.4. A submission in relation to the Navan Weir site expresses concern in relation to the closure of the towpath during construction works. In this regard, I am satisfied that any impacts on the towpath would be limited to the construction phase of the development, and as such, would be short-term in nature.
- 9.3.5. In relation to the request to apply a condition restricting the use of the slipways to emergency services, I am satisfied that adequate provisions are in place or proposed to limit public access to the slipways.
- 9.3.6. I consider that the likely consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development in the area will, on the whole, be positive in terms of support for infrastructure and would accord with the development plan. Accordingly, I consider that the development accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## **9.4. Likely Significant Effects on a European Site**

### **Introduction**

- 9.4.1. The EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance through the establishment of a network of designated conservation areas collectively referred to as Natura 2000 or European sites. The network includes sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive and sites designated as Special Protection Areas (SPA) under the Birds Directive. Appropriate Assessment (AA) considers whether a plan or project individually, or in combination with other plans or projects would be

likely to adversely affect the integrity of a European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

- 9.4.2. Following an initial screening of the proposed development the local authority concluded that in the absence of mitigation or further details, the possibility of significant effects on the integrity of a European site (s) could not be excluded and that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment would be required. In accordance with the requirements of Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, a Natura Impact Statement was prepared in respect of each site and an application submitted to An Bord Pleanála pursuant to Section 177AE of the Act.

### **Stage 1 – Appropriate Assessment Screening**

- 9.4.3. The application is accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal Report and a Natural Impact Statement for each location. Baseline ecological surveys carried out at each site between May and July 2016 and updated in August 2017. I am satisfied that the information provided is sufficient to allow me to undertake Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the proposed development.

### **Description of European sites/Proposed Development**

- 9.4.4. In accordance with Departmental Guidance<sup>2</sup> and having regard to the nature and scale of the development at each location the Natural Impact Statements (Section 4) identify European Sites within a 5km radius of each of the sites for the purpose of AA Screening. I consider this to be reasonable.
- 9.4.5. The following European Sites are located within the 5 km radius of the sites:
- River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC
  - River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC
- 9.4.6. Table 9.1 below sets out the proximity of the European sites to each location and the qualifying interests and conservations objectives of each site.

**Table 9.1**

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Proximity</b>	<b>Qualifying Interests / Conservation Objectives</b>
<b>River Boyne</b>	Immediately	Objective: To maintain or restore the favorable

<sup>2</sup> Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects In Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (Section 3.2.3) – DEHG, 2009.

<p><b>and River Blackwater SAC</b></p> <p>Site Code: 002299</p>	<p>Adjoins / Partially within</p>	<p>conservation condition of the Annex 1 habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alkaline fens.</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae).</li> <li>• River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>).</li> <li>• Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>).</li> <li>• Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>).</li> </ul>
<p><b>River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA</b></p> <p>Site Code: 004232</p>	<p>Immediately Adjoins / Partially within</p>	<p>Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>).</li> </ul>

### **Stage 1 Screening:**

- 9.5.1. The project (as amended) relates to a total of 6 no. sites that are located adjacent to and are partially within the designated area of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA. It is proposed to construct slipways along the river bank at each location and associated access tracks. The NIS's assume that the works at each site will be undertaken simultaneously and consider the 'in-combination' impacts of the individual projects.
- 9.5.2. The NISs conclude that there will be no long-term loss of river habitat as a result of the development and that the qualifying habitats, namely alluvial forests or alkaline fens, are not present within or adjoining any of the sites. As the works at each site will be within and adjacent to the designated areas of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC / SPA, it is concluded that there is potential for the project to result in direct impacts on qualifying features of the SAC / SPA due to disruption or obstruction to fish migration (Salmon & Lamprey) and disturbance to the foraging of otters and kingfisher during the construction process. In terms of water quality and pollution, it is noted that there is potential, in the absence of adequate mitigation, for pollutants to enter the river and to impact on Annex 1 Species and Annex 2 Species for which the SAC and SPA are designated.
- 9.5.3. I conclude, on the basis of the foregoing, that the potential for likely significant effects on the qualifying interests of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code: 002299) and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code: 004232) cannot be excluded in the absence of mitigation and that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required in respect of these European Sites.

### **Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment**

- 9.5.4. The potential for impacts on the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code: 002299) and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code: 004232) is assessed in light of the qualifying features (habitats and species) that are likely to be affected by the proposed development. The qualifying features and an assessment of potential impacts is outlined in Table 6 and 7 of the submitted NISs and in Table 9.2 and 9.3 below.



**Table 9.2 River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC**

Qualifying Interest	Potential for Adverse Effect
Alkaline fens.	No. Given the absence of this habitat within the area close to the proposed sites and adjoining areas and the small scale of the project it is considered unlikely that works will have any significant negative impact on this habitat during the construction or operational phase.
Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion <i>incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ).	No. Given the absence of this habitat within the area close to the proposed sites and adjoining areas and the small scale of the project it is considered unlikely that works will have any significant negative impact on this habitat during the construction or operational phase.
River Lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> ).	Yes. 2006 surveys confirm that significant populations of river lamprey occur throughout the River Boyne catchment. Assumed that the species is present throughout the catchment. Potential for adverse effects from pollutants entering surface water and disturbance to migration during construction and operation phases.
Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> ).	Yes. Assumed that the species is present throughout the catchment. Potential for adverse effects from pollutants entering surface water and disturbance to migration during construction and operation phases.
Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ).	Yes. Otters use the River Boyne and Blackwater River as foraging areas. Potential for disturbance.

9.5.5. **Table 9.3 River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA**

Qualifying Interest	Potential for Adverse Effect
Kingfisher	Yes. No suitable kingfisher nests were located on or within close proximity to sites, save for the Navan Centre site, where holes that may be kingfisher nesting holes were identified. There is potential for temporary displacement at this location. There is potential for Kingfisher to occur downstream or upstream of all sites and for adverse effects on kingfisher from water pollution.

9.5.6. In conclusion, it is considered highly unlikely that the works will have a significant negative impact on alluvial forests or alkaline fens, during the construction or operational phases of the development, given the absence of these habitats within or adjoining the sites and taking account of the nature and scale of the proposed development. On this basis, these qualifying interests are screened out for further assessment. The potential for significant impacts on otter, atlantic salmon, and river lamprey could not be excluded, in the absence of mitigation. There is potential for otters to be impacted by disturbance during the construction phase. In respect of atlantic salmon and river lamprey, there is potential for impacts arising from pollution and disturbance of fish migration. In terms of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA, there is potential for impacts on Kingfisher, resulting from disturbance and water pollution.

**Potential Impacts**

9.5.7. To assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on the qualifying interests that were carried forward the following areas were examined:

- Loss of, or disturbance to habitats or species;
- Potential impairment of water quality due to construction works; and
- Pollution with suspended solids.

9.5.8. Key points set out in the assessment are summarised as follows:

- There would be no significant habitat loss or alteration.

- The flow pattern of the river would not be significantly altered, and as such, will not impact on the hydrology of the river or habitats and species within the surrounding area.
- The slipway will have minimal maintenance requirements, thus mitigating the effect of further works at the site.
- As works will take place within the SAC and SPA, there is potential for pollutants to enter the river and cause disruption or obstruction of fish migration (Salmon & Lamprey) and disturbance to the foraging of otters and kingfisher during the construction phase.

### **Atlantic Salmon & River Lamprey**

9.5.9. The works, if carried out at time of upstream spawning migrations, could potentially have significant effects on salmon and lamprey. To mitigate this impact, it is proposed to undertake in-river works between July and September when water levels and flow within the river is at its lowest and to avoid key migration periods for Atlantic Salmon & Lamprey. The assessment also notes that the sections of the river impacted are relatively wide and that the works are small scale and localised in nature. Should any fish be migrating up the river during the works, the width of the river would allow them to pass up the river with very little disturbance. I consider this to be a reasonable assumption. The NISs states that best practice construction guidance will be followed to ensure that significant impacts on water quality can be avoided and mitigation measures include consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland and the National Parks & Wildlife Service. It is therefore considered that the works will not significantly impact migratory fish.

### **Otter**

9.5.10. Given the short-term temporary nature of the works, it is considered that any short term or temporary displacement to otter, would not adversely impact on their survival or reproduction success. Mitigation measures include limiting construction works to daylight hours in the vicinity of the River Boyne, in order to allow otters and other wildlife to forage along the watercourse at dawn, dusk and during the night. In addition, it is highlighted that the level of human disturbance within and close to the sites, reduce the suitability of these areas for otters. The otter survey did not identify any otter activity, holts or couches within the survey area of the Trim Castle, Navan

Old Bridge, Navan Centre, Navan Weir and Navan Blackwater Sites. While Otter spraints were noted in the vicinity of the Stackallan site, there is no report of holts or couches within or in the vicinity of the sites. In view of the fact that the works will not result in any significant change in the activities at the site it is concluded that there will be no impact on otter in the wider area.

### **Kingfisher**

9.5.11. In the case of all sites, with the exception of the Navan Centre site, no suitable kingfisher nests were located on or within close proximity to the site and it is therefore considered that the proposed works will not result in any significant impacts on nesting Kingfisher. While no kingfishers were observed during the survey at the Navan Centre site, assessment of the habitat noted holes that may be kingfisher nest holes. Given the proximity of the possible kingfisher nesting holes to the proposed boat slipway, there is potential for breeding kingfisher to be temporarily disturbed / displaced as a result of works at this location. However, as the potential nesting holes will not be directly impacted by the works and the works will take place outside of the kingfisher breeding season, the assessment concludes that no impacts will occur. Given that the kingfisher territories can extend up to 6 km, the assessment concludes that any temporary displacement of kingfisher as a result of the proposed works would be small in scale and not significant.

### **Mitigation**

9.5.12. Section 7 of each NIS sets out a comprehensive list of mitigation measures. These are summarised below, and I would recommend that these be conditioned in the event that the Board is minded to grant approval. Worth noting are measures to avoid the key migration period for both Atlantic Salmon and River Lamprey and to prevent the impairment of water quality during construction.

9.5.13. Summary of Recommended Mitigation Measures

- Construction works will only be permitted between July and September to avoid the key migration period for Atlantic Salmon and River Lamprey.
- Pre-construction surveys will be undertaken at each site to check for any otter holts and kingfisher nests.

- Construction works will be limited to daytime hours in the vicinity of the River in order to allow otters, kingfisher and other wildlife to forage along the watercourses at dawn, dusk and during the night.
- All concrete materials within the river will be precast off site and will be lifted into place to limit the extent of in-river works.
- Construction works will be carried out in accordance with a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan. Mitigation measures include the management of fuels, lubricants and hydraulic fluids, plant and wheel washing and disposal of waste, use of hydrophilic grouting and quick setting mixes or rapid hardener additives.
- Emergency Response Plan to be formulated to address leaks / spills.
- Minimal disturbance to riverbanks and riparian habitats
- Eroded sediments will be retained on site with erosion and sediment control structures such as sediment traps and slit fences if required.
- Temporary fills or stockpiled materials will be covered to prevent run-off.
- Access roads will be stoned, to prevent erosion of fines and /or rutting by site traffic.
- An exclusion zone will be established along the river bank to eliminate non-essential plant and personnel from encroaching onto the River Bank and
- Construction of a temporary cofferdam and mobile settlement tank will be created at the toe of the slipway.
- To mitigate against the unintentional introduction of invasive species, washing, cleaning and inspection of equipment will be undertaken to ensure that all adherent material and debris has been removed and materials and additional planting will be sourced from a reputable supplier and records kept.

### **In Combination Effects**

9.5.14. The in-combination effects of each project is considered and it is concluded that there will be no significant 'in-combination' impacts associated with the projects.

### **Appropriate Assessment Conclusion**

9.5.15. I consider it reasonable to conclude on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider adequate in order to carry out a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment, that the

proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Site No. 002299 (River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC) and No. 004232 (River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA), or any other European Sites, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

## 10.0 **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### 10.1. **Conclusion**

Further to the above, I consider it reasonable to conclude on the basis of the information available, which I consider adequate in order to carry out a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment, that the proposed development, individually and in combination with other plans or projects would not adversely affect the integrity of European Site No. 002299 (River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC) and No. 004232 (River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA) in view of the sites' conservation objectives. Further, I consider the proposal to be acceptable in respect of its likely effects on the environment and its likely consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### 10.2. **Recommendation**

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

### **REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

Having regard to

- (a) the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),
- (b) the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011,
- (c) the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EEC),

- (d) the document entitled “Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (amended 2010)
- (e) the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019,
- (f) the submissions and observations received in relation to the likely effects on the environment,
- (g) the report and recommendation of the reporting inspector,
- (h) 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,

10.2.1. The Board completed an Appropriate Assessment Screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on designated European sites. The Board noted that the proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site. The Board considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, the Natura Impact Statements submitted with the application, the submissions on file and the report of the Inspector. In completing the screening exercise, the Board adopted the report of the Inspector and concluded that the likelihood of significant effects on the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA could not be excluded and that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is therefore required in respect of these sites.

10.2.2. The Board completed an Appropriate Assessment exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on the affected Natura 2000 site, namely the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA and in doing so took into account the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, the Natura Impact Statements submitted with the application, the

submissions on file and the report of the Inspector's assessment. In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Board adopted the report of the Inspector and concluded that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans and projects on the environment, on the amenities of the area or on the European sites referred to. The Board concluded that the proposed scheme would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites, having regard to the Conservation Objectives for the sites.

The Board considered, given the established need for the scheme to improve access to the River Boyne and River Blackwater for emergency services, and having regard to the nature, scale and extent of the proposed development and the location of the subject site that, subject to compliance with conditions set out below, the proposed development would not adversely affect the environment and would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or property in the vicinity. 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, including the Ecological Appraisals and Natural Impact Statements and other associated documentation, lodged with An Bord Pleanála on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions set out below. Where any mitigation measures set out in the Ecological Appraisals or any conditions of this 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. Boat Slipway No. 2 and all associated works, in the townland of Bective shall be omitted from the scheme.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity.

3. The mitigation measures and associated monitoring outlined in the plans and particulars submitted with the application, including the Ecological Appraisal Reports and Natural Impact Statements, shall be carried out in full except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with other conditions.

Prior to commencement of the development, details of a time schedule for implementation of the mitigation measures and associated monitoring shall be prepared by Cavan County Council.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity and protection of the environment and in the interest of public health.

4. Prior to the commencement of development, Meath County Council or any agent acting on its behalf shall prepare in consultation with the relevant statutory agencies, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), that adheres to best practice environmental management. The CEMP shall include specific proposals for monitoring of the effectiveness of the environmental management measures outlined in the CEMP.

**Reason:** In the interest of protecting the environment, protection of European sites and in the interest of public health.

5. Prior to commencement of the development, details of measures to protect fisheries and the water quality of the river systems shall be outlined and placed on file.

Full regard shall be had to the IFI's published updated 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 protection of receiving water quality, fisheries and aquatic habitats.

6. A suitably qualified ecologist shall be appointed by Meath County Council to oversee the site set-up and construction of the proposed development in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the Natura Impact Statement. Upon completion of the construction stage, an audit report of the site works shall be prepared by the appointed ecologist and submitted to the local authority to be maintained on record.

**Reason:** To ensure the protection of the designated sites during construction.

7. During construction stage, all topsoil stripping associated with the proposed scheme at the Trim Castle and Old Bridge sites shall be subject to full time archaeological monitoring by a suitably qualified archaeologist under licence from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Provision shall be made available for the resolution of any archaeological features or deposits that may be identified.

**Reason:** In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the site and to secure the preservation and protection of any remains that may exist within the site.

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Karen Kenny

Senior Planning Inspector

31<sup>st</sup> October 2018