Inspector's Report

ABP-309314-21

Development	N17 Milltown to Gortnagunned Road Realignment Scheme
Location	Gortnagunned to Milltown, Co. Galway
Planning Authority	Galway County Council
Applicant(s)	Galway County Council
Type of Application	EIA Direction
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	14th April 2021
Inspector	Donal Donnelly

Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Under the provisions of Section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended), Galway County Council is seeking a direction from the Board as to whether or not the proposed N17 Milltown to Gortnagunned Road Realignment Scheme requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report. Galway County Council has concluded itself that the proposed scheme would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

1.2. A concurrent first party application is being made by Galway County Council to the Board for a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) Direction in relation to the N17 Milltown to Gortnagunned Road Realignment Scheme. This application is made under the provisions of Article 250(3) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) seeking a determination from the Board as to whether the proposed road realignment scheme would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site.

2.0 Site Location and Description

2.1. The site of the proposed road realignment is along the N17 National Primary Route to the north-west of Milltown village in northern Co. Galway. The proposal will continue for a distance of approximately 3km through the townlands of Milltown, Cartron, Gortnaloura, Cloonnacross, Killerneen, Drum and Gortnagunned. The road is mostly rural in character and is aligned on both sides with agricultural pastures and occasional road-fronting development.

2.2. At its south-eastern end, the proposed realignment commences at the point where the speed limit changes from 50k/hr to 80k/hr outside Milltown village. The 80k/hr speed limit applies for the remainder of the proposed realignment before it changes to 100k/hr as the road continues north-west. There are solid double white lines or single solid/ broken white lines in the centre of the road for most of the length of the realignment. The carriageway edge is delineated with broken yellow lines and there are no hardshoulders or pedestrian/ cyclist facilities. Several bends with chevron signage on the approaches occur along the road and there are six “T” junctions with minor roads on both sides.

3.0 **Proposed Development**

3.1. The screening determination relates to the proposed realignment of a 3km section of the N17 between Milltown and Gortnagunned, Co. Galway. The realignment consists of both online (1,550m) and offline (1,450m) construction of a Type 1 carriageway that will tie at its northern end with an already upgraded section of the N17. The main components of the scheme can be summarised as follows:

- Roadway consisting of two lanes of 3.65m, a hard shoulder for each carriageway of 2.5m and verges of 3m (CH+0 to CH 2 +560)
- Single carriageway urban road with footway and cycleway on both sides of carriageway (Ch 2 + 560 to end of scheme).
- Design speeds as follows:
    - 100k/hr from Ch +0 to Ch 2 + 180
    - 85k/hr from Ch 2+280 to Ch 2+560
    - 60k/hr form Ch 2+560 to Ch 2+945
- 8 no. simple “T” junction improvements
- 36 no. direct access connections (19 no. agricultural).
- Replacement road drainage system discharging to the local drainage network and eventually connecting to the Clare River approximately 1.5km downstream.
- Protection/ diversion of existing utility services.
- Earthwork operations including 2 no. spoil repository / borrow pits.
- Traffic management plan.

4.0 **Request for Direction and Submitted Documents**

4.1. Galway County Council seeks an opinion from the Board as to whether or not it agrees with the Environmental Impact Assessment determination prepared on behalf of the Council for the proposed N17 Milltown to Gortnagunned Road Realignment Scheme. The following documentation is submitted with the application:

- Chief Executive Order (CE Order No. 1331)

- Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Document
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Drawings of proposed works

4.2. The application is also accompanied by an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report to inform the Board on a concurrent first party application for an Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination.

4.3. Galway County Council Chief Executive Order No. 1331 agrees with the conclusions of the Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Document prepared on its behalf and has determined that the proposed N17 Milltown to Gortnagunned Road Realignment Scheme would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

4.4. The Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Document prepared by MKO Planning and Environmental Consultants provides information for the competent authority on the following:

- Statement of Authority,
- Description of Proposed Development,
- Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Exercise:
    - Legislation
    - Methodology
    - Mandatory EIA
    - Projects considered for cumulative assessment
    - Sub-threshold assessment
- Conclusions and Recommendations

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021

5.1.1. It is stated in Chapter 5 – Roads & Transportation that future options will be explored to improve priority transport infrastructure, subject to the requirements of the

Habitats Directive. Table 5.1 sets out priority transportation infrastructure objectives to be provided and/ or for improvement during the Development Plan period. This includes the N17 Tuam to Claremorris Scheme. The project status is listed by Transport Infrastructure Ireland as being suspended and the N17 Milltown to Gortnagunned re-alignment is listed as being under planning.

5.1.2. There is also a priority objective within the Development Plan to examine the possibility of identifying a cycle route linking Ballindine (in Co. Mayo) with Milltown and Tuam and its environs to the National Cycling Network and/or the Tuam/Athenry cycle route.

5.1.3. It is a strategic aim to support the opening of the Western Rail Corridor route from Athenry, Tuam Hub Town, Claremorris to Collooney (4 Sections) as an option for passenger and cargo transportation.

5.1.4. Policy TI 6 – Protection of Strategic Transportation Infrastructure, seeks *"…to protect and safeguard the significant investment made in strategic transportation infrastructure, in particular the network of national roads, the existing rail lines and the Western Rail Corridor."*

5.1.5. Under Policy TI 9 – Road Network Improvements and Western Rail Corridor/Greenway, *"it shall be the policy of Galway County Council to ensure that any works to be carried out by Galway County Council or other statutory authority to any part of the road network which may affect the delivery of either the Western Rail corridor or any Greenway proposal shall be carried out in such a way so as not to compromise the longer term delivery of such alternative transportation proposals or any interim objectives to use the railway as a greenway."*

5.1.6. Objective TI 6 – Protection of National Routes and Strategically Important Regional Road Networks seeks *"…to protect the capacity and safety of the National Road Network and Strategically Important Regional Road network (listed in DM Standard 19) in the County and ensure compliance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads Planning Guidelines (2012). Galway County Council will not normally permit development proposals for future development that include direct access or intensification of traffic from existing accesses onto any national primary or secondary road outside of the 50-60 kph speed limit zone of towns and villages."*

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

5.2.1. The Lough Corrib SAC (site code: 000297) is adjoining the site boundary at one point. There are no other European Sites within 5km of the site boundary.

5.2.2. Altore Lake is the closest proposed Natural Heritage Area and is located approximately 3.2km to the south-west.

6.0 Planning History

An Bord Pleanala Ref: CH3224

6.1. Galway County Council (N17 Carrownurlaur to Ballindine Scheme) Compulsory Purchase Order, No. 4 2014. No objections received.

7.0 Legislation

7.1. Section 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) states that a road development that is proposed that comprises *inter alia* any prescribed type of road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road shall be subject to an environmental impact assessment.

7.2. Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994 sets out the prescribed types of proposed road for the above purposes and includes:

a) the construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area;

b) the construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length.

7.3. It is stated under Section 50(1)(b) that *"if An Bord Pleanála considers that any road development proposed (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment it*

shall direct that the development be subject to an environmental impact assessment."

7.4. Under Section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act, 1993, (as amended) *"where a road authority or, as the case may be, the Authority considers that a road development that it proposes (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, it shall inform An Bord Pleanála in writing prior to making any application to the Bord for an approval referred to in section 51(1) in respect of the development."*

7.5. Annex III of EIA Directive 2014/52/EU as set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), sets out criteria for determining whether a project should be subject to environmental impact assessment. These are as follows:

1. The characteristics of the proposed development
2. Location of the proposed development
3. Types and characteristic of potential impacts

8.0 Assessment

8.1. Requirement for Mandatory EIA

8.1.1. Section 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act,1993 sets out the types of road development that require the preparation of an EIAR. This includes any prescribed type of proposed road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.

8.2. Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994 sets out the prescribed types of proposed road for the above purposes and includes the construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area, or the construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length.

8.3. The proposed single carriageway road realignment over a distance of 3km in a rural area does not therefore fall within the categories of development under Article 8. The proposed development does not therefore require mandatory EIA.

8.4. **Requirement for Sub-Threshold EIA**

8.4.1. Under Section 50(1)(e) of the Roads Act, the Board shall have regard to the criteria specified in Annex III of the EIA Directive when making a decision on whether a proposed road development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The criteria under Annex III are reproduced as Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended). The applicant has submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Document that includes the Schedule 7A information for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA. The following assessment considers the Schedule 7A information and the criteria set out under Schedule 7 before arriving at a conclusion on whether or not the proposed development should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment.

Characteristics of the Project

<u>The Size and Design of the Whole Project</u>

8.4.2. The proposed realignment of a 3km section of the N17 from Milltown to Gortnagunned will include approximately 1,550m of online and 1,450m of offline construction. The proposed development will be largely confined to the immediate area of the existing road.

8.4.3. Preliminary design drawings show the proposed road along the alignment of the existing road, together with the realigned sections. The majority of the proposed road will consist of two lanes of 3.65m, a 2.5m hard shoulder for each carriageway and verges of 3m. The final section closest to Milltown village will be a single carriageway urban road with footway and cycleway on both sides. Attenuation ponds and spoil areas will also form part of the proposed development site, together with 8 no. simple “T” junction improvements and 36 no. direct access connections (19 no. agricultural).

Cumulation with other existing and/ or approved projects

8.4.4. The Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Document includes an assessment of other projects in the area that could result in cumulative effects on the environment. Recent planning applications within the townlands through which the proposed development traverses have been extracted from online planning systems.

8.4.5. The types of developments granted permission are small scale and include residential units, commercial units and recreational facilities. There are no permitted developments affecting the proposed new road itself. No other road realignment schemes have been permitted in the surrounding area. It is a Development Plan priority transportation infrastructure objective to provide the N17 Tuam to Claremorris Scheme. However, the project status is listed by Transport Infrastructure Ireland as being suspended and the N17 Milltown to Gortnagunned re-alignment is listed as being under planning.

Nature of any associated demolition works

8.4.6. The proposal includes small scale demolitions of 5 no. buildings comprising residential properties and derelict buildings. These works will be completed by means of a mechanical excavator and waste materials will be managed in accordance with a Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan prepared in advance of demolition works.

Use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity

8.4.7. The proposed realignment works will comprise of both on-line and off-line works over a 3km stretch of the N17 through a predominately rural landscape. The road corridor is mostly aligned with improved agricultural grassland with occasional wet grassland and dry meadow and grassy verges. There are buildings and artificial surfaces at the south-eastern end in proximity to the village and occasional road-fronting developments elsewhere. The roadway and field boundaries are aligned with mature hedgerow and treelines.

8.4.8. Drum Stream flows south-east on the southern side of the road, entering the Carrownageeha River close to the western side of the commencement of the proposed roadworks at the village. The Carrownageeha River enters the Clare River

approximately 1.4km downstream of this point. Part of Drum Stream, the Carrownageeha River and Clare River are within the Lough Corrib SAC.

8.4.9. Construction compounds will be located on dry land and set back from watercourses and ecologically sensitive areas. All surface water run-off from compounds will be intercepted and directed to appropriate treatment systems. Fuels, hydrocarbons and other chemicals within compounds shall be stored in accordance with relevant legislation and best practice.

8.4.10. Clearance works will be required along the road corridor and stockpiling in advance of excavation will be restricted to the minimum required for efficient earthworks. Each construction area unit will be topsoiled as work proceeds. Stockpiles will be limited in height, surrounded with silt fencing and situated a minimum of 25m from any watercourse. Excavated materials will be used in the reinstatement of road verges wherever possible. The quantities of stone that will be imported are not considered to be significant having regard to the scale of the proposed development. Excavation of peat will be carried out in a manner that minimises runoff.

8.4.11. The existing road drainage system discharges road run-off directly to receiving watercourses and groundwater without any pollution control or attenuation. The new drainage system will include petrol interceptors and attenuation/ sediment ponds. All drainage proposals will be developed in accordance with the TII Design Manual for Urban Roads and Bridges and the principles of SuDS, and an Outline Erosion and Sediment Control Plan has been prepared to offset potential construction stage pollution impacts adjacent to watercourses. Measures such as silt fencing, cut off drains with check dams, settlement ponds, etc. will be included for the protection of water quality. A 5m grassed strip along riverbanks will be maintained and existing watercourse crossings will be replaced with piped or box crossings. Landscaping of the new road will be carried out as work progresses and if seeding of cut/ fill slopes is not practical, roughened slope surfaces which encourage water infiltration will be provided. Control measures will also be put in place where the use of concrete near watercourses cannot be avoided.

8.4.12. Habitats and species identified in the Ecological Impact Assessment as key ecological receptors include trees, hedgerow and scrub; watercourses; bat species; otter; badger; and fish and aquatic invertebrates. It is concluded that significant

residual effects on these receptors with regards to habitat loss/ degradation, species disturbance/ displacement or collision mortality are not anticipated following implementation of best practice and mitigation.

8.4.13. The concurrent Appropriate Assessment screening assessment carried out under Ref: ABP-309313-21 concludes that a Natura Impact Statement should be prepared in respect of the proposed road realignment scheme having regard to the location, nature and scale of the proposed works and the potential for hydrological connections to the Lough Corrib SAC and Lough Corrib SPA.

Production of waste/ pollution/ nuisance

8.4.14. Excavated materials will be reused in the reinstatement of road verges wherever possible. Any other waste materials arising from the construction phase of the proposed development will be taken off site by a suitably licenced contractor to appropriately permitted waste facilities. Five buildings will be demolished as part of the proposed development and these works and the overall construction phase will be carried out in accordance with a Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan.

8.4.15. Adherence to best practice construction and environmental management during the construction phase will ensure that development will not result in pollution of groundwater or surface water. The most likely source of nuisance from the proposed development will also be during the construction phase. Construction noise, dust, traffic, etc. will be temporary in nature. Issues relating to construction sequencing and programming, earthworks, stockpiling construction traffic management and construction waste management can be addressed within the Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan.

Risk of major accidents, and/ or disasters

8.4.16. Having regard to the nature of the proposed development and the receiving environment, it is not considered that the project is of a type that would cause an increased risk of major accidents / disasters, including those caused by climate change.

Risk to human health

8.4.17. There are no perceived risks to human health (e.g., due to water contamination or air pollution) arising from the construction or operational phases of the proposed development.

Location of Proposed Development

8.4.18. This section addresses the environmental sensitivity of the geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development having regard to the following:

Existing and approved land use

8.4.19. The land uses within the site boundary comprises of public roadway and adjoining verges/ hedgerow and tree lines, together with the existing junction with side roads. The realigned sections of road will pass through the edge of agricultural fields. A number of dwellings and derelict buildings will be demolished to make way for the proposed road realignment.

8.4.20. The proposed development would result in a change in the character of the existing rural road to a Type 1 single carriageway. The new road will be wider with hard shoulders along most of its length and the horizontal alignment will be improved to allow for greater forward visibility. At the north-western end, the new road will tie in with a previously improved section of the N17. The section of new roadway in proximity to the village will include an extension of existing footpaths and new cycleways to the offline section of the old road corridor.

Relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources

8.4.21. Natural resources in the area of the proposed development include improved agricultural grasslands, wet grasslands, scrub, dry meadow and grassy verges, treelines and hedgerow. Treelines and hedgerows have local ecological importance (higher value) and may be used by breeding birds and for commuting and foraging by bats. Pathways for impact arising from the proposed development were also identified for otter, badger, and fish and aquatic invertebrates.

8.4.22. The construction phase of the proposed development will result in the clearance of habitat of local importance of both lower and higher value. A total of 3.64km of hedgerow/ treeline habitat will be reinstated with native hedge/ tree species to equal

length along the road corridor. Over time, and with the establishment of new landscaping, it is expected that the area's natural resources will regenerate, and this effect can be described as reversible.

8.4.23. Local wildlife will also benefit from the planting of native species by providing additional feeding and breeding habitat. The biodiversity value of the completed development will be enhanced by the use of native species and pollinators and care will be taken to ensure that vegetation clearance takes place outside the bird breeding season. Adequate provision at affected watercourse crossings will allow continued access for otter foraging and mammal resistant fencing will prevent badgers from crossing roads other than underpasses.

8.4.24. A network of drainage ditches in the vicinity of the proposed development connect to the Drum Stream. The Drum Stream flows into the Carrownageeha River which in turn is a tributary of the Clare River. The lower reaches of the Drum Stream and Carrownageeha River and the River Clare are within the Lough Corrib SAC. These rivers are maintained channels and have been heavily modified with maintenance work, including sediment and vegetation removal and vegetation cutback. Any effects on water quality can be remedied through appropriate design and mitigation and will therefore be reversible. The new drainage system will contribute to the regenerative capacity on waterbodies during the operational phase through improved attenuation and filtration.

Absorption capacity of the natural environment

8.4.25. There are a number of areas of wet grassland along the route of the proposed alignment. However, these are not identified as key ecological receptors within the Ecological Impact Assessment.

8.4.26. The Drum Stream is a depositing/ lowland river that has been heavily modified and channelised. The lower reaches of the stream are within the Lough Corrib SAC. No instream works are proposed within the Drum Stream; however, the proposed development will cross a number of drainage ditches that feed into the stream and indirect effects could occur from runoff of silt and other pollutants. An Outline Erosion and Sediment Control Plan will offset potential construction stage impacts by providing best practice guidance and mitigation measures.

8.4.27. It is accepted in the concurrent Appropriate Assessment screening assessment under Ref. ABP-309313-21 that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment will be required in respect of the proposed development. Galway County Council would therefore be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and an application for approval to the Board under the provisions of Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) on the basis of the proposed development's likely significant effect on European sites.

8.4.28. Surveys conducted for the Ecological Impact Assessment confirm that there is no evidence of otter recorded in the study area and the proposed development site does not provide any significant foraging or roosting habitat for protected bird species. The Drum Stream has negligible suitability for salmonids, lamprey or white clawed crayfish due to its silty substrate and dense in-stream vegetation. No non-native invasive species were recorded on site. Bat species, otter, badger fish and invertebrates and breeding birds are nonetheless identified as key ecological receptors in the Ecological Impact Assessment. However, it is concluded that the proposed road development will not result in any significant effects on any of these receptors.

8.4.29. There are no landscapes and sites of historical, cultural, or archaeological significance that would be directly affected by the proposed development. Three recorded monuments were reported in the study area; however, these monuments would appear to be outside the alignment of the proposed new road. Archaeological monitoring would be outgoing throughout the development process.

8.4.30. Overall, the proposed development will easily be absorbed into the road network and there will be no significant disruption to the existing population. Further assessment on the impact on European Sites will be carried out within the NIS that accompanies any further planning application under Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). The likely effects of the proposal of the environment and on the proper planning and sustainable development of the area will also be further assessed under any future application to the Board.

Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Magnitude and spatial extent

8.4.31. Having regard to the above assessment, I consider that the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact of the proposed development in terms of geographical area and population will be very limited. The site is relatively small in the context of the overall N17, the surrounding environment and the relative abundance of habitats and species in the area. The road realignment continues through a rural area that is sparsely populated. I consider that there are no likely significant adverse impacts arising specifically from the area of the site or extent of population in its vicinity. There will be positive impacts in terms of pedestrian, cyclist and traffic safety and convenience.

8.4.32. It should be noted that the proposed development is well below the threshold for prescribed development requiring EIA under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994, i.e., the construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area. The proposed development is single carriageway over a length of only 3km.

Nature of impact

8.4.33. The main aspects of the environment that would potentially be impacted by the proposed development are population and human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, material assets (traffic and transport), and cultural heritage. Any impacts arising from the proposed development would be localised and/ or temporary in nature and with limited potential adverse impacts on the wider environment. Positive impacts on population and human health will occur through the provision of improved transport infrastructure.

Transboundary impacts

8.4.34. There are no transboundary impacts associated with the proposed development.

Intensity and complexity of impact

8.4.35. Any Impacts on population and human health arising from the proposed development would be limited mainly to the construction phase. This would be an

intense but temporary period of activity affecting nearby residents and road users in terms of noise, traffic, dust, etc.

8.4.36. Impacts on biodiversity would also be restricted to the construction period for the most part through removal and disturbance of habitat and species. Having regard to the low value of habitat and the limit species using the site and surroundings, and to the proposed mitigation measures, it is not expected that impacts on biodiversity associated with the proposed development will be long term or particularly complex.

8.4.37. Impact on land, soil and water will also be mainly confined to the construction period. Approximately half of the new road will be developed on the existing road corridor and the realigned section will not deviate substantially from the existing road. Land requirements will not therefore be substantial. Excavated materials will be reused in the reinstatement of road verges and waste material will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant waste legislation.

8.4.38. A new surface water drainage system will discharge to the Drum Stream following suitable attenuation and treatment thereby improving the quality of discharge from the site to watercourses. The construction phase of this element of the project will require the implementation of mitigation measures set out an Outline Erosion and Sediment Control Plan. These works will take place over a short and intense period and in compliance with best practice construction and environmental management standards.

8.4.39. It is not anticipated that there will be any particularly intense or complex impacts generated by the proposed development in terms of biodiversity, traffic and transport or cultural heritage, or any other environmental factor.

Probability of Impact

8.4.40. Some of the potential effects identified above may have a high or moderate degree of probability; however, the extent of impacts will not be significant, and the overall magnitude is considered to be low.

Expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact

8.4.41. Upon commencement and throughout the duration of construction works, the proposed development would result in immediate, permanent and long-term change to the road corridor. This change would be irreversible. The impacts associated with

the proposed development on various environmental factors would be more temporary and short-term in nature, and subject to appropriate standards and mitigation, would not be considered significant. Certain impacts would also have a degree of reversibility, e.g., establishment of new landscaping.

Cumulation of impact

8.4.42. There are no other existing developments or proposed developments in the vicinity of the subject site that are currently the subject of Environmental Impact Assessment and that might give rise to cumulative impacts.

Possibility of effectively reducing impact

8.4.43. Implementation of standard best practice methodologies during the construction phase of the proposed development will result in a reasonable probability of effectively reducing impact.

8.4.44. The Ecological Impact Assessment and Outline Erosion and Sediment Control Plan will contain measures that will mitigate impacts on the local environment. A Section 177AE application to the Board will also be accompanied by a Natural Impact Statement containing mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the project on European sites.

8.4.45. Subject to compliance with the above documents, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development.

9.0 Recommendation

Having regard to my assessment above, I consider that the proposed N17 Milltown to Gortnagunned Road Realignment Scheme in the townlands of Milltown, Cartron, Gortnaloura, Cloonnacross, Killerneen, Drum and Gortnagunned, Co. Galway would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment. I, therefore, recommend that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report should not be prepared in respect of the proposed development the subject of this report based on the reasons and considerations set out below.

10.0 **Reasons and Considerations**

Having regard to;

(a) the provisions of Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) and Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994 (as amended)

(b) the criteria set out in Schedule 7 and the information provided in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended),

(c) the nature and limited scale of the proposed development which is below the threshold for prescribed road development set out in Article 8(b) of the Roads Regulations, 1994 (as amended),

(d) the limited potential for significant effects on the environment,

(e) the submissions made in this case by the applicant for screening determination and by the Galway County Council,

(f) the Inspector's Report,

It is considered that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that the preparation and submission of an environmental impact assessment report is not, therefore, required.

Donal Donnelly
Senior Planning Inspector

22nd April 2021