

Inspector's Report ABP-311331-21

Question	Whether the deposition of construction and demolition waste at Keeagh, Maigh Cuilinn, Co. Galway is or is not development and is or is not exempted development. Keeagh, Maigh Cuilinn Co. Galway
Declaration	
Planning Authority	Galway County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	ED2165
Applicant for Declaration	Abaigáel Smyth
Planning Authority Decision	Is development and is not exempted development
Referral	
Referred by	Abaigáel Smyth
Owner/ Occupier	Unknown
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	3 rd August 2022

Inspector's Report

Inspector

Ian Campbell

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. This case relates to a referral submitted under Section 5(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, where the Planning Authority has issued a declaration on a referral and this determination is now the subject of appeal.
- 1.2. The subject of this referral comprises a site in the townland of Keeagh, Maigh Cuilinn (Moycullen), Co. Galway. The subject site is located on the western side of the L1320, approximately 3.7 km south-west of Maigh Cuilinn (Moycullen). Loughkip River is located to the north-west of the subject site.
- 1.3. The subject site accommodates a recently constructed dormer style house. An area of land to the side/east of the house appears to have been recently cleared and there are rocks and boulders strewn at this location. There is a large steel framed shed located to the rear/west of the house. To the front of this shed is a shipping container. At the time of my site inspection I observed a number of tractor tyres and a mound of sand/soil in the vicinity of the shed. I did not observe the subject site being used in connection with the deposition of construction and demolition waste.

2.0 The Question

- 2.1. The question that has been submitted in the referral is as follows:
 - Whether the deposition of construction and demolition waste at Keeagh, Maigh Cuilinn, Co. Galway is or is not development or is or is not exempted development.

3.0 **Planning Authority Declaration**

3.1. **Declaration**

On the 16th July 2021, a request for a Declaration in accordance with Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, on the above question was received by Galway County Council from Abaigáel Smyth.

In accordance with Section 5(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, Galway County Council issued a Declaration on the 16th August 2021 that

'the deposition of construction and demolition waste at Keeagh, Maigh Cuilinn, Co. Galway' is development and is not exempted development.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The report of the Planning Officer includes the following comments;

- There is no provision for the deposition of construction and demolition waste in the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.
- The deposition of construction and demolition waste is not exempt development.
- 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

None received.

4.0 **Planning History**

4.1. Subject Site:

PA. Ref. 08/462 – Permission GRANTED for a house, garage and waste water treatment system.

4.2. **Referral History:**

I have undertaken a review of the referrals database in order to determine if there are any history cases that relate to development of the same form as that the subject of this case.

<u>RL2169</u> - The question arose as to whether the filling of lands is or is not development, and whether it is or is not exempted development. The referral related to large-scale landfilling on a site with construction and demolition waste, and other items coming under the definition of landfill waste or harzardous waste. The Board decided that the filling of lands was development and not exempted development. The deposition of material on the land was considered to constitute a material change of use of the land by reference to Section 3(2)(b)(iii) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, by reason of the type of materials deposited. The deposition of materials on the land did not come within the scope of Class 11 of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations having regard to the type of materials deposited.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. **Development Plan**

5.1.1. The relevant Development Plan is the Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. The subject site is not zoned in the Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. The subject site is indicated as having a high landscape sensitivity however it is not subject to any specific objectives relating to the protection of views or prospects.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

- Moycullen Bogs NHA (Site Code 002364) located within.
- Connemara Bog Complex SAC (Site Code 002034) c. 1.6 km north-west.
- Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297) c.3.8 km east.
- Ross Lake & Woods SAC (Site Code 001312) c. 5.6 km north.
- Connemara Bog Complex SPA (Site Code 004181) c. 7.2 km south-west.
- Galway Bay Complex SAC (Site Code 000268) c. 8 km south.
- Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site Code 004031) c. 8 km south.

6.0 The Referral

6.1. Referrer's Case

The following is a summary of the main issues raised by the referrer in the submission to the Planning Authority and to the Board.

Issues raised in application for Declaration from Galway County Council:

• The proposal relates to waste tipping, past and present at the subject site.

- The referrer contends that the development is in proximity to a SAC and would require a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and as such cannot be considered to be exempt development.
- The referrer contends that the proposal does not have a waste facility permit.

Issues raised in application for Declaration from An Bord Pleanala:

- The referrer is in agreement with the decision of Galway County Council however is seeking a Declaration from An Bord Pleanala for a number of reasons;
 - Galway County Council issued a decision 3 days after the last date for making the decision, rendering the decision legally flawed for the purposes of enforcement action;
 - Galway County Council did not assess the need for EIA and/or NIA, and as such the application is precluded under Section 34(12), and;
 - The decision of Galway County Council was based on a 'proposed development', whereas the proposal has been ongoing for a number of years and the Board are requested to address past and ongoing development in this regard.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

None received.

7.0 Statutory Provisions

7.1. Planning and Development Act, 2000

Section 2 (Works)

Works includes any act or operation of construction, excavation, demolition, extension, alteration, repair or renewal and, in relation to a protected structure or proposed protected structure, includes any act or operation involving the application or removal of plaster, paint, wallpaper, tiles or other material to or from the surfaces of the interior or exterior of a structure.

Section 3(1) (Development)

Development means, except where the context otherwise requires, the carrying out of any works on, in, over or under land or the making of any material change in the use of any structures or other land.

Section 3(2) (b) (ii)

For the purposes of subsection (1) and without prejudice to the generality of that subsection — (b) where land becomes used for any of the following purposes — (iii) the deposit of vehicles whether or not usable for the purpose for which they were constructed or last used, old metal, mining or industrial waste, builders' waste, rubbish or debris, the use of the land shall be taken as having materially changed.

Section 4 (4) (Environmental Impact Assessment or Appropriate Assessment)

Notwithstanding paragraphs (a), (i), (ia) and (l) of subsection (1) and any regulations under subsection (2), development shall not be exempted development if an environmental impact assessment or an appropriate assessment of the development is required.

Section 177U (9) (Appropriate Assessment)

In deciding upon a declaration or a referral under section 5 of this Act a planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, shall where appropriate, conduct a screening for appropriate assessment in accordance with the provisions of this section.

7.2. Planning and Development Regulations, 2001

Article 6 (1) states the following:

Subject to Article 9 the development of a Class specified in Column 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 2 shall be exempted development for the purposes of the Act, provided that such development complies with conditions and limitations

specified in Column 2 of the Act opposite the mention of that Class in the said Column 1.

Article 9 (1)(a) provides that development to which Article 6 relates shall not be exempted development for the purposes of the Act, if the carrying out of such development would,

- (vi) interfere with the character of a landscape, or a view or prospect of special amenity value or special interest, the preservation of which is an objective of a development plan for the area in which the development is proposed or, pending the variation of a development plan or the making of a new development plan, in the draft variation of the development plan or the draft development plan,
- (viiB) comprise development in relation to which a planning authority or An Bord Pleanála is the competent authority in relation to appropriate assessment and the development would require an appropriate assessment because it would be likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site,
- (viiC) consist of or comprise development which would be likely to have an adverse impact on an area designated as a natural heritage area by order made under section 18 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.

8.0 Assessment

8.1. I have examined all the documentation on the file, inspected the site, and have had regard to the legislative provisions set out in both the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as

amended. I consider that the issues raised in the referral can be assessed under the following headings.

- Whether the deposition of construction and demolition waste at Keeagh, Maigh Cuilinn, Co. Galway, is or is not development, or is or is not exempted development.
- Whether the works can be considered exempted development under the provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended, or under the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

8.2. Is or is not development

8.2.1. Section 3(2) (b) (ii) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, states that where land becomes used for the deposit of mining or industrial waste, builders' waste, rubbish or debris, the use of the land shall be taken as having materially changed. Section (3) (1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended defines development as including 'the making of any material change in the use of any structures or other land'. I therefore consider that the deposition of construction and demolition waste is development.

8.3. Is or is not exempted development

- 8.3.1. Section 4 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, sets out certain forms of development which shall be exempted development. Additionally, Schedule 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended set out forms of development which are exempted development within specific context.
- 8.3.2. The referrer is contending that the proposal is not exempted development and as such is not proposing that any specific exemption is provided under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, or the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended. I have reviewed the provisions relating to exempted development set out in both the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, and in my opinion, having regard to the information contained on the file, I consider that there are no provisions

under either the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, or the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, which would afford an exemption for the deposition of construction and demolition waste, and as such, the proposal <u>is not exempted development</u>.

8.4. Restrictions on exempted development

- 8.4.1. The restrictions provided in Article 9 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, relate to exemptions provided under Article 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended. However, as stated above at paragraph 8.3.2, there are no provisions under the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, which would afford an exemption for the deposition of construction and demolition waste.
- 8.4.2. Regarding the issue of unauthorised development at the subject site, I note that the purpose of An Bord Pleanála in relation to Section 5 referrals is to ascertain what is and is not development and if development, whether that development is exempted development or not. An Bord Pleanála does not have a role in relation to unauthorised development, which falls under the remit of the planning authority.

8.5. Appropriate Assessment – Screening

8.5.1. A summary of European Sites that occur within a possible zone of influence of the referral site is presented below in Table 8.1. Where a possible connection between the referral site and a European site has been identified, these sites are examined in more detail. I am satisfied that other European sites proximate to the referral site can be 'screened out' on the basis that significant impacts on such European sites could be ruled out, either as a result of the separation distance from the referral site or given the absence of any direct hydrological or other pathway to the referral site.

influence of the refer				
European Site (code)	List of Qualifying interest /Special conservation Interest	Distance from referral site (Km)	Connections (source, pathway receptor	Considered further in screening Y/N

Table 8.1 - Summary Table of European Sites within a possible zone of

Connomara Bag Complay CDA	C	a un t	o 70 km	Thora io no	N
Connemara Bog Complex SPA (Site Code 004181)	Cormor		c. 7.2 km	There is no	N
			(south-west)	connectivity between	
	carbo)	[A017]		the referral site and	
				Connemara Bog	
	Merlin (Complex SPA. I do	
	columb	arius)		not consider a	
	[A098]			likelihood of	
	Quidan	Discourse		significant effects.	
	Golden				
	(Pluvial				
	apricari	a) [A140]			
	Commo	on Gull			
	(Larus				
	[A182]	oundoy			
	[7102]				
Connemara Bog Complex SAC	Coasta	l lagoons	c. 1.7 km	There is no	N
(Site Code 002034)	[1150]		(west)	connectivity between	
				the referral site and	
	Reefs [1170]		Connemara Bog	
	~ "			Complex SAC. I do	
	Oligotro			not consider a	
		containing		likelihood of	
	very fev	w minerals		significant effects.	
	of sand	y plains		significant enects.	
	(Littore	lletalia			
	uniflora	e) [3110]			
		ophic to			
	mesotre				
		g waters			
		getation of			
		orelletea			
		e and/or			
	Isoeto-				
	Nanoju	ncetea			
	[3130]				
	Natural	dystrophic			
		nd ponds			
	[3160]				
	[0100]				
	Water of	courses of			
	plain to	montane			
	levels v	vith the			
	Ranund	culion			
	fluitanti	s and			
	Callitric	ho-			
	Batrach				
		ion [3260]			
		n Atlantic			
	wet hea	aths with			

	 Erica tetralix [4010] European dry heaths [4030] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] Alkaline fens [7230] Old sessile oak woods with llex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] Euphydryas aurinia (Marsh Fritillary) [1065] Salmo salar 			
	aurinia (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]			
	 Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Najas flexilis (Slender Naiad) [1833] 			
Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297)	 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains 	c. 3.8 km (east)	Noting the proximity of the referral site to Loughkip River and the connectivity between Loughkip	Y

		Diver and Lawsh
	(Littorelletalia	River and Lough
	uniflorae) [3110]	Corrib SAC, a
•	Oligotrophic to	likelihood of
	mesotrophic	significant effects
	standing waters	exists.
	-	
	with vegetation of	
	the Littorelletea	
	uniflorae and/or	
	Isoeto-	
	Nanojuncetea	
	[3130]	
•	-	
	mesotrophic	
	waters with benthic	
	vegetation of	
	Chara spp. [3140]	
•	Water courses of	
	plain to montane	
	levels with the	
	Ranunculion	
	fluitantis and	
	Callitricho-	
	Batrachion	
	vegetation [3260]	
· · ·	Semi-natural dry	
	scrubland facies	
	on calcareous	
	substrates	
	(Festuco-	
	Brometalia) (*	
	important orchid	
	sites) [6210]	
•	Molinia meadows	
	on calcareous,	
	peaty or clayey-	
	silt-laden soils	
	(Molinion	
	caeruleae) [6410]	
	Active raised bogs	
•		
	[7110]	
•	Degraded raised	
	bogs still capable	
	of natural	
	regeneration	
	[7120]	
•	Depressions on	
	peat substrates of	

ГГ	
	the Rhynchosporion [7150]
•	Calcareous fens with Cladium
	mariscus and species of the Caricion
	davallianae [7210]
•	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)
	[7220]
•	Alkaline fens [7230]
•	Limestone pavements [8240]
•	Old sessile oak woods with llex and Blechnum in the British Isles
	[91A0]
•	Bog woodland [91D0]
•	Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]
	Austropotamobius pallipes (White- clawed Crayfish) [1092]
•	Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]
•	Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]
•	Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]
•	Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
•	Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]

	 Najas flexilis (Slender Naiad) [1833] Hamatocaulis vernicosus (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216] 			
Ross Lake & Woods SAC (Site Code 001312)	 Hard oligo- mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] 	c. 5.6 km (north)	There is no connectivity between the referral site and Ross Lake & Woods SAC. The referral site is located outside the foraging range of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat. I do not consider a likelihood of significant effects.	Ν
Galway Bay Complex SAC (Site Code 000268)	 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] 	c. 8 km (south)	There is no connectivity between the referral site and Galway Bay Complex SAC. I do not consider a likelihood of significant effects.	N

r	Manufatad and
	Vegetated sea
	cliffs of the Atlantic
	and Baltic coasts
	[1230]
	Salicornia and
	other annuals
	colonising mud
	and sand [1310]
	Atlantic salt
	meadows (Glauco-
	Puccinellietalia
	maritimae) [1330]
	Mediterranean salt
	meadows
	(Juncetalia
	maritimi) [1410]
	Turloughs [3180]
	Juniperus
	communis
	formations on
	heaths or
	calcareous
	grasslands [5130]
	grassianus [5150]
	Semi-natural dry
	grasslands and
	scrubland facies
	on calcareous
	substrates
	(Festuco-
	Brometalia) (*
	important orchid
	sites) [6210]
	Calcareous fens
	with Cladium
	mariscus and
	species of the
	Caricion
	davallianae [7210]
	Alkaline fens
	[7230]
	Limestone
	pavements [8240]

	Lutra lutra (Otter)			
	[1355]			
	Phoca vitulina			
	(Harbour Seal)			
	[1365]			
	Black-throated	c. 8 km	There is no	N
Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site	Diver (Gavia	(south).	connectivity between	
Code 004031)	arctica) [A002]		the referral site and	
	Great Northern		Inner Galway Bay	
	Diver (Gavia		SPA. I do not consider a likelihood	
	immer) [A003]		of significant effects.	
	Cormorant			
	(Phalacrocorax			
	carbo) [A017]			
	Crow Horon (Ardon			
	Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea) [A028]			
	Light-bellied Brent Cossee (Brente			
	Goose (Branta bernicla hrota)			
	[A046]			
	Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050]			
	Teal (Anas crecca)			
	[A052]			
	Red-breasted			
	Merganser			
	(Mergus serrator) [A069]			
	Ringed Plover (Charadrius)			
	(Charadrius hiaticula) [A137]			
	Golden Plover (Dissipling environment)			
	(Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]			
	Lapwing (Vanellus			
	vanellus) [A142]			
	• Dunlin (Calidris			
	alpina) [A149]			

• F	Bar-tailed Godwit
	Limosa lapponica)
	A157]
•	Curlew (Numenius
a	arquata) [A160]
• F	Redshank (Tringa
L L	otanus) [A162]
• 1	urnstone
	Arenaria
	nterpres) [A169]
• E	Black-headed Gull
	Chroicocephalus
ſ	idibundus) [A179]
•	Common Gull
	Larus canus)
L.	A182]
• 5	Sandwich Tern
	Sterna
	andvicensis)
l.	A191]
	Common Tern
	Sterna hirundo)
l.	A193]
	Vetland and
	Vaterbirds [A999]
	ימוטוטא [דפפרא]

8.5.2. The proposal entails the deposition of construction and demolition waste on the subject site. No details have been provided in the referral in relation to how material is to be managed or stored. Loughkip River is located c. 130 metres west of the subject site. Loughkip River connects into Lough Corrib SAC, c. 3.8 km east of the subject site. Based on the information submitted with the referral it is unclear whether there are any surface water connections (including ditches etc.) between the referral site and Loughkip River. I note that Geological Survey Ireland mapping indicates that groundwater vulnerability on the subject site is extreme, and that there is rock at or near the surface, or karsk. Having regard to the nature of the proposal I consider that there is potential for contaminated run-off from the subject site to reach Loughkip River through groundwater. Given the potential for contaminated run-off from the referral site

to enter Loughkip River and reach Lough Corrib SAC, I consider that the proposal could negatively impact water sensitive habitats within Lough Corrib SAC.

8.5.3. On the basis of the information provided with the referral, having regard to the connectivity between Loughkip River and Lough Corrib SAC, and in the absence of a Natura Impact Statement, the Board cannot be satisfied that the proposed development individually, or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on the Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297), in view of the site's Conservation Objectives¹ and as such an Appropriate Assessment of the proposal would be required. Having regard to Section 4 (4) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, the proposal cannot be considered exempted development.

8.6. EIA - Screening

8.6.1. The proposal entails the deposition of construction and demolition waste. No details have been provided in the referral in relation to the quantum of waste material which has/will be deposited on the subject site, nor has any information been submitted in relation to the rate of intake of material. I note the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for Class 11 (b), Part 2, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended², to which the proposal may be analogous to. Having regard to this provision, and notwithstanding that there are no provisions under either the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, or the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, which would afford an exemption for the deposition of construction and demolition waste, it is unclear whether an EIA would be required in respect of the proposal. Therefore, having regard to Section 4 (4) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, the proposal cannot be considered exempted development. A separate question arises in relation to any retrospective assessment of works which may require EIA but it is not necessary to consider that question in this case.

¹ There is no Conservation Management Plan for Lough Corrib SAC. The generic Conservation Objective for Lough Corrib SAC is; 'to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II habitats for which the SAC has been selected'.

² 'Other Projects' 'installations for the disposal of waste with an annual intake greater than 25,000 tonnes not included in Part 1 of this Schedule'

9.0 **Recommendation**

9.1. I recommend that the Board should decide this referral in accordance with the following draft order.

WHEREAS a question has arisen as to whether the deposition of construction and demolition waste is or is not development or is or is not exempted development:

AND WHEREAS Abaigáel Smyth requested a declaration on this question from Galway County Council and the Council issued a declaration on the 16th day of August 2021 stating that the matter was development and was not exempted development:

AND WHEREAS Abaigáel Smyth referred this declaration for review to An Bord Pleanála on the 3rd day of September 2021:

AND WHEREAS An Bord Pleanála, in considering this referral, had regard particularly to –

- (a) Section 2(1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended,
- (b) Section 3(1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended,
- (c) Section 3(2)(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended,
- (d) Section 4(4) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended,
- (e) Parts 1 and 3 of Schedule 2 to the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended,

AND WHEREAS An Bord Pleanála has concluded that:

- (a) In accordance with Section 3(2) (b) (ii) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, where land becomes used for the deposit of mining or industrial waste, builders' waste, rubbish or debris, the use of the land shall be taken as having materially changed.
- (b) In accordance with Section (3) (1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, development includes 'the making of any material change in the use of any structures or other land', the proposal is considered to constitute development.
- (c) There are no provisions under either the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, or the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, which provide an exemption for the deposition of construction and demolition waste.
- (d) The proposal would require an Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken.
- (e) The requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment cannot be screened out.

NOW THEREFORE An Bord Pleanála, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by section 5 (3) (a) of the 2000 Act, hereby decides that the deposition of construction and demolition waste is development and is not exempted development.

Ian Campbell Planning Inspector

18th November 2022