



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ACP-323412-25

Development

Uisce Éireann Compulsory Purchase
(Staleen Water Treatment Plant to
Duleek Trunk Watermain) Order,
2025,

Location

County Meath

Planning Authority

Meath County Council

Applicant(s)

Uisce Éireann

Type of Application

Compulsory Purchase Order

Objectors

Michael Lawlor and John Lawlor

Date of Oral Hearing

21 July 2026

Date of Site Inspection

19 May 2026

Inspector

Cáit Ryan

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This report relates to a compulsory purchase order (CPO) made by Uisce Éireann to advance the Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Watermain ('the project'). The project is included in Uisce Éireann's Capital Investment Plan 2025-2029.
- 1.2. The stated aim of the Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Watermain project is to enhance the supply security by replacing and upsizing the existing 400mm trunk main from Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek and construct a new 700mm trunk main. This increase in capacity is essential to meet the projected future water demand and support anticipated development within the region. The existing trunk main supplies treated water from Staleen Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to the East Meath region and is at the end of its lifespan. The existing water supply in East Meath is fully dependent on the existing 400mm pipeline. This trunk main has a significant history of failures, resulting in prolonged water supply interruptions, affecting over 26,000 residents of the region.
- 1.3. To facilitate the proposed works, Uisce Éireann is seeking to compulsorily acquire the lands and rights over lands as described in the CPO for the purposes of carrying out the Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Main as detailed in the accompanying maps. The scheme consists of provision of 8km long trunk main between Staleen WTP and Duleek with connections to existing infrastructure.
- 1.4. To facilitate the construction elements of the scheme, Uisce Éireann is seeking to compulsorily acquire the necessary lands to implement the scheme, namely permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas as it affects the private area depicted in the following Compulsory Purchase Order drawings:
 - UÉ/10021352/CPO/101
 - UÉ/10021352/CPO/102
 - UÉ/10021352/CPO/103
 - UÉ/10021352/CPO/104

- UÉ/10021352/CPO/105
- UÉ/10021352/CPO/106

1.5. The Commission has received one objection in respect of the CPO. This report considers the issues raised in the objection, as submitted to the Commission, and more generally, the application to acquire lands for the stated purposes.

Statutory Basis

- 1.6. The CPO was signed and has seal of Uisce Éireann affixed on the 26th day of July 2025. It was advertised in The Meath Chronicle (newspaper) on 09 August 2025. Formal notices were issued to landowners on 01 August 2025. The application was lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála on 14 August 2025.
- 1.7. Further to An Coimisiún Pleanála's request of 14 May 2026, a range of plans and particulars were received from Uisce Éireann on 20 May 2026, outlined at Section 3.0 below.
- 1.8. Further to Section 217A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, (hereafter referred to as 'the Act'), drawings and documentation were received from Uisce Éireann on 08 June 2026, which are also outlined at Section 3.0.

2.0 Site Location and Description of the Scheme

- 2.1. The area subject of the CPO extends over a distance of approx. 8km, from Staleen Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to a point approx. 2.5km south west of Duleek. The M1 is approx. 2km east of Donore and 4km east of Duleek.
- 2.2. The Staleen WTP is located approx. 340m south west of Donore village, at an elevated point in this rural area on L5611. There is much variation in ground levels at this location, whereby the lands directly east of the water treatment plant are much higher than the adjoining public road. Lands east of the plant on the southern side of the road are similarly elevated, and fall sharply to south east. The proposed CPO route continues from this elevated point adjoining the plant to the more low-lying lands in the northern, western and south western environs of Duleek, terminating in Deenes townland, approx. 2.5km south west of the town.
- 2.3. The overall route of the CPO is primarily via agricultural lands. The route crosses the

Drogheda to Navan freight-only rail track north of Duleek, just east of Newtown Bridge, within Newtown townland. Duleek Quarry is located north of the rail track, on the western side of L5610, and approx. 100m north of the proposed CPO route.

- 2.4. It is outlined that the proposed trunk main pipeline project will link Staleen WTP and Bolies Little Connection via the western environs of Duleek. The existing 400mm pipeline will be decommissioned. The private land corridor required for the planned works will consist of 10m-15m permanent wayleaves and 25m temporary construction wayleaves to facilitate construction of the trunk mains. This working corridor reduces in width crossing public roads.
- 2.5. The planned trunk main will include a number of ancillary chambers, e.g., scour valve, air valve, and sluice valve chambers, along its length to facilitate operation and maintenance of the overall pipeline. All works will be subsurface, including chambers, and there will be access covers at the surface of these chamber locations. The works will be an open-cut construction. There are three stream crossings along the pipeline route, namely Drumnan, Kellystown and Garballagh streams. There is also a gas pipeline and railway crossing of the railway line, which will be constructed using trenchless technology techniques. The anticipated construction period is 30 months.
- 2.6. In terms of detail, I note that the length of the proposed trunk main varies in the lodged plans and particulars to comprise 7.9km, 8km and 8.4km. For the purposes of this report, the length of the proposed trunk main is described as approx. 8km.
- 2.7. The proposed CPO comprises 44no. individual plots. The total site area amounts to 30.7634ha, as outlined in the updated Table 4-1 received by the Commission on 08 June 2026.
- 2.8. The proposed route crosses/adjoins roads/lanes at the following locations:
 - Adjacent to Staleen WTP at L5611 (CPO Sheet 1)
 - Short distance south of rail track at Newtown and Longford townlands to east and west of L5610 respectively (CPO Sheets 3 and 4)
 - West of Duleek on L5609 (CPO Sheet 4)
 - West of Duleek at Downestown and Garballagh townlands, to north and south of R150 respectively (CPO Sheets 4 and 5)

- At Deenes townland, to north east and south west of Gaskinstown lane, south west of Duleek (CPO Sheet 6)
- At Deenes townland on L1610, at termination point of proposed CPO route (CPO Sheet 6)

2.9. On site visit it was noted that Duleek Care Centre, located at the western edge of the town and accessed from L5609 is operational, although is not shown on CPO mapping. The proposed CPO route runs in a roughly east to west direction north of this premises, and then continues in a north to south direction to the west of same; CPO Sheet 4 refers.

2.10. It was also noted on site visit that a substantial amount of soil had been removed over an extensive area of land directly west of the existing Duleek, Bellewstown & District Community Facility CLG at Navan Road, Duleek, i.e., the R150. CPO Plot 026 and Plot 027 traverse the most westerly part of these lands.

2.11. In terms of detail, I note that the signed and sealed CPO refers to

- Staleen Water Treatment Plant, and also
- to Stalleen (Location) and Staleen with reference to Owners or Reputed Owners (at Part 2 – Permanent Wayleave; Sub-Part B – Description of Land and Part 4 – Temporary Working Area; Sub-Part B – Description of Lands)

The signed and sealed CPO Sheet 1 shows Stalleen Td. While noting the variation in the plans and particulars on file with reference to either Staleen or Stalleen, I refer to this location/address in this report hereafter as Staleen.

3.0 Application of the CPO

3.1. Accompanying Documents

The application documentation received by the Commission, as relating to the statutory CPO procedure, comprises the following:

The application lodged on 14 August 2025 was accompanied by the following:

- Chief Executive Officer's Order
- Compulsory Purchase Order, signed and sealed by a Director and the Company Secretary (3 copies)

- Compulsory Purchase Order map/s signed and sealed by a Director and the Company Secretary (3 copies)
- Report from William McKnight, Portfolio Delivery Manager, confirming that the proposed work is in conformity with the planning development objectives of the area and the Local Area Plan and that the acquisition of the land is suitable and necessary for the purpose.
- Public Notice from Meath Chronicle, dated 09th August 2025
- Sample copy of notice sent to Landowner
- Certificate of service of CPO notices

Documentation lodged on 20 May 2026 comprises

- Overview Drawing
- Planning Report (March 2025), of which Appendices A-D comprise:
 - Appendix A: East Meath Water Supply Scheme - Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main - EIA Screening Report (March 2025)
 - Appendix B: Staleen Water Treatment Plan to Duleek Trunk Watermain - Appropriate Assessment Screening (March 2025)
 - Appendix C: Archaeological Heritage Report (March 2025)
 - Appendix D: Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main – Flood Risk Assessment
- Route Selection Report (March 2025)
- Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunkmain – Route Selection Drawings (November 2024)

Documentation lodged on 08 June 2026, in response to Section 217A request, comprises

- Uisce Éireann's cover email
- Copy of Commission's letter dated 26 May 2026 to Uisce Éireann
- 2no. drawings, namely:
 - Drawing titled Plot 026 and Plot 027 Routing; Drawing No. 20814.2-NOD-XX-XX-DR-C-10101; Rev. 01
 - Drawing titled Plot 022 and Plot 023 Routing; Drawing No. 20814.2-NOD-XX-XX-DR-C-10102; Rev. P01.
- Updated Table 4-1 (within Planning Report) relating to Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main, Summary of CPO Plots (x 44)

Documentation lodged on 15 July 2026 (in advance of Limited Agenda Oral Hearing) comprises

- Cover email from law firm on behalf of Uisce Éireann
- Booklet of Information includes
 - (5) Landowner Notice (Lawlor)
 - (6) Landowner Notice (Club Secretary)
 - (10) Notification of Final Grant 24/60866
 - *(11) Witness statement of Damien Kennedy (Engineering Design)
 - (12) Witness statement of Ray Keane (Landowner Engagement)

*I have referred to this document in the Assessment as Uisce Éireann's Engineering Brief of Evidence.

3.2. Format of CPO Schedule

3.2.1. The CPO contains 44no. individual plots, of which –

- 17no. are listed within Part 2 – Permanent Wayleave
- 27no. are listed within Part 4 – Temporary Working Area.

All plots are indicated to comprise 'Agricultural Land'.

3.2.2. For clarity, I draw to the Commission's attention that the Planning Report (received by the Commission on 20 May 2026) states the CPO comprises 42no. plots, 25no. of which are temporary working area plots. Table 4-1 in that Report does not include Plot 125 and Plot 126, both of which are located in Deenes townland, are included in the Schedule's Part 4 – Temporary Working Area and are shown on CPO Sheet 6.

3.2.3. However, Uisce Éireann have clarified by way of updated Table 4-1 received by the Commission on 08 June 2026 that the CPO consists of 44no. plots, totalling 30.7634ha.

3.2.4. If confirmed, the Order will authorise Uisce Éireann to compulsorily acquire for the purposes of the Water Services Acts, 2007 to 2013 and of the Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Watermain –

- (a) **Permanently, the wayleaves** described in Sub-Part A of Part 2 of the Schedule hereto, over the lands described in Sub-Part B, of Part 2 of the Schedule hereto – which wayleaves are shown coloured **yellow** on the

drawings marked “Uisce Éireann Compulsory Purchase (Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Watermain) Order, 2025” and numbered UÉ/10021352/CPO/101, UÉ/10021352/CPO/102, UÉ/10021352/CPO/103, UÉ/10021352/CPO/104, UÉ/10021352/CPO/105 and UÉ/10021352/CPO/106.

- (b) **Temporarily, the rights** described in Sub-Part A of Part 4 of the Schedule hereto, over the lands described in in Sub-Part B, of Part 4 of the Schedule hereto – which said lands are shown coloured **green** on the drawings marked “Uisce Éireann Compulsory Purchase (Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Watermain) Order, 2025” and numbered UÉ/10021352/CPO/101, UÉ/10021352/CPO/102, UÉ/10021352/CPO/103, UÉ/10021352/CPO/104, UÉ/10021352/CPO/105 and UÉ/10021352/CPO/106.

All of the said lands described in the Schedule hereto are situated in the County of Meath.

- 3.2.5. Uisce Éireann highlights that there are 2no. plots of land which are currently unregistered, namely CPO Plot 012 (permanent wayleave) and Plot 013 (temporary working area) at Clonlusk townland.

4.0 Planning History

The planning history and current planning applications outlined below are based on the 4no. planning cases outlined in the submitted Planning Report (March 2025), and also based on information viewed on planning authority’s and the Commission’s websites (accessed on 21 May 2026)

P.A. Ref. 2660184: Live application for creation of 14no. temporary access points along public roads, where pipeline corridor intersects with public road along routing of Staleen WTP to Deenes townland trunk water main and the Staleen WTP to Donore Reservoir trunk water main. Further Information was requested in April 2026.

P.A. Ref. 2460866: Permission granted in 2025 for 3m walking track and floodlit playing pitch at Navan Road, Duleek. The proposed CPO traverses the most westerly part of this site; CPO Plot 026 (permanent wayleave) and Plot 027 (temporary working area) shown on CPO Sheet 4 refer.

It was noted on site visit that a substantial amount of soil had been recently removed

from this site. Uisce Éireann's Engineering Brief of Evidence (15 July 2026), states that Duleek GFC have proceeded with the P.A. Ref. 2460866 permission, have constructed the walkway and are preparing playing pitch to sow grass in the coming weeks.

P.A. Ref. 22972 and ABP-317209-23: 10 year permission granted in 2024 for solar PV energy development at Downestown, Duleek. The proposed CPO traverses this permitted development; CPO Plot 022 (permanent wayleave) and Plot 023 (temporary working area) shown on CPO Sheet 4 refer.

P.A. Ref. 23458 and ABP-317568-23: Permission granted in 2024 for upgrade of Gorman to Platin 110 kV overhead line (19.76 km long and comprising 109 supporting structures). The proposed CPO traverses a very limited part of this permitted development; CPO Plots 022 and 023 refer.

ACP-322992-25: UÉ CPO for Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Donore Trunk Main was confirmed in 2025.

LB201519/PL17.310768: Permission granted in 2023 for continuation of use and further quarrying of limestone within 57.5ha site, granted by substitute consent (PL17.SU0088) at Duleek Quarry, Newtown. EIA and NIS lodged. This quarry is located north of the rail track, a short distance east of L5610. The CPO route runs in a north to south alignment directly west of this application site; CPO Sheet 3 refers.

Note: The planning application site described above as 'Duleek Quarry' should not be confused with 'Duleek Quarry' which is located north of the rail track, directly west of L5610, as identified on Development Plan mapping, and on the Geological Survey of Ireland website (www.gsi.ie). This is discussed further at Section 5.0 of this report.

P.A. Ref. 2561187 and PL-501323-MH-26: Live case for RED III - erection of a 19.48 MWp ground-mounted Solar Photovoltaic farm and site works at Commons, Carranstown and Platin, accessed off L1609 Station Road, Duleek. This site is approx. 800m east of the CPO route.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The operative Development Plan is Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. 5no. Variations to the Plan have been adopted.

Variation No. 5 (adopted 08 June 2026) is to update the County Development Plan to take account of Section 28 National Planning Framework Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines (DHLGH, July 2025), and amend the Written Statement and Maps to ensure consistency with the NPF and accommodate revised housing targets for the County. Amendments to land use zoning objectives in Duleek approved as part of Variation No. 5 are not relevant to this proposed CPO. No amendments to land use zoning objectives were proposed in Donore.

Volume 1: Written Statement

Land use zoning:

The subject lands are located outside the settlement boundaries of Donore and Duleek as shown on Development Plan mapping.

All lands subject of this CPO are zoned Rural Area (RA), whereby the objective is to protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and rural-related enterprise, biodiversity, rural landscape, and built and cultural heritage.

'Utility structures' are a Permitted Use under the RA land use zoning objective.

Vol. 2: Written Statement and Maps for Settlements

Donore: With regard to water services infrastructure/capacity, it outlines that there is available capacity in East Meath Water Supply Scheme/Staleen WTP.

It states (at Section 4.3) that Donore is supplied by East Meath Water Supply Scheme. It considers there is adequate spare capacity to serve development provided for in the Plan, and there may be some localised network constraints.

Objective DON OBJ 4: Liaise with and support Irish Water to endeavour to provide adequate water services to meet the village's development needs within Plan period.

Duleek: It outlines (at Section 5.3) that Duleek is supplied with water from East Meath Water Supply Scheme, which serves a large catchment area. The principal water source is Staleen Water Treatment Plant. Capacity in water supply is limited as regard must be had to significant extant planning permissions for multiple

residential units permitted in Drogheda Environs, Ashbourne, Ratoath, Laytown / Bettystown and Stamullen. Some localised network constraints exist in Duleek.

Objective DUL OBJ 5: Liaise with and support Irish Water to endeavour to provide adequate water services to meet Duleek's development needs within the Plan period

Volume 1: Written Statement

Chapter 2: Core Strategy

Table 2.4 Settlement hierarchy for Meath states

- Donore is 'Rural' (villages less than 1,500 population and wider rural region)
- Duleek is a Self-Sustaining Town

It outlines (at Section 2.10.2) that the focus of growth in Self-Sustaining Towns will be on attracting employment and investment in services alongside limited population growth and a more balanced delivery of housing.

Chapter 4 - Economy and Employment Strategy

Objective ED OBJ 5: Work with Irish Water (IW) and other infrastructure providers, support provision of services and facilities to accommodate County's future economic growth and seek to reserve infrastructure capacity for employment generating uses

Chapter 6: Infrastructure Strategy

Objective INF OBJ 2: Liaise and work in conjunction with IW to ensure that an adequate supply of drinking water for domestic, commercial, industrial and other uses is available for the sustainable development of the County.

Objective INF OBJ 3: Liaise and work in conjunction with IW during lifetime of the Plan to develop and identify an additional sustainable water source serving Eastern and Midlands Region while also facilitating sustainable development of the County, in accordance with the requirements of the Core and Settlement Strategies.

Objective INF OBJ 5: Liaise and work in conjunction with IW to realise the Navan and Mid-Meath/East Meath Water Supply Scheme. Development of the project will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.

INF POL 20: Require that FRA is carried out for any development proposal, where

flood risk may be an issue in accordance with “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (DoECLG/OPW, 2009), appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to and from the potential development and shall consider climate change impact

INF POL 26: Undertake a review of the ‘Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Meath’ in light of the completed flood mapping which has been developed as part of the Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study.

Chapter 8: Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy

Policy HER POL 4: Require archaeological impact assessments, geophysical survey, test excavations or monitoring, where development proposals involve ground clearance of more than ½ hectare or for linear developments over 1km in length; or developments in proximity to areas with density of known archaeological monuments and history of discovery as identified by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

Policy HER POL 28: Integrate in the development management process protection and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape features wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats (whether designated or not) and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate.

Policy HER POL 31: Ensure ecological impact of all development proposals on habitats and species are appropriately assessed by suitably qualified professional(s) in accordance with best practice guidelines

Policy HER POL 52: Protect and enhance quality, character, and distinctiveness of County’s landscapes in accordance with national policy and guidelines and recommendations of Meath Landscape Character Assessment (2007) in Appendix 5, to ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.

Policy HER POL 53: Discourage proposals necessitating removal of extensive amount of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments

Policy HER POL 45: Maintain geological and geomorphological heritage values of County Geological Sites in Table 8.7, protect them from inappropriate development

Table 8.7 County Geological Sites lists Duleek Quarry (No.24). Development Plan mapping describes Duleek Quarry (Site Code MH020) as a working quarry, its

geological feature being exposed faces of limestone. This quarry is located at Longford townland, directly north of rail track at Newtown Bridge. The proposed CPO extends along the eastern (opposite) site of L5610, then continues in a south easterly direction approx. 100m south of the quarry in Longford townland (CPO Sheets 3 and 4 refer)

Development Plan Mapping

Flood Zones: The CPO route

- (Sheet 4 of 6) would traverse Flood Zone A and to much lesser extent Flood Zone B to north east and north of Downestown Manor housing estate, in the northwestern area of Duleek village (north of L5609).
- (Sheet 5 of 6) would traverse Flood Zone A and to a very limited extent Flood Zone B a short distance south of R150 and also traverse a separate Flood Zone A further to the south.

Protected Views and Prospects: There are no protected views or prospects along the proposed CPO route; Appendix 10 and Chapter 8 – Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy refer. 3no. protected views/prospects in the vicinity are outlined as follows:

- View No. 63: approx. 1.6km south west of Staleen WTP, located on County road between Donore and Redmountain, is in a 'North' direction, includes middle distance views of Newgrange and Knowth and is of International significance
- View No. 64: approx. 2km south west of Staleen WTP, located on County road between Duleek and Boyne Canal II, is in a 'North West' direction, includes middle distance views of Newgrange and Knowth and is of International significance.
- View No. 92: approx. 2.1km south west of Staleen WTP, located in Corballis, is in a 'North West' direction towards the Core Area of the World Heritage Site and is of Regional significance.

Note: There appears to be a discrepancy between mapping for Chapter 8 - Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy and the separate Vol. 2 mapping with Cultural and Natural Heritage overlay. The latter indicates that there is a protected view/prospect

in very close proximity to the northernmost point of CPO Plot 001, whereas this designation is not shown on the former. I consider that the relevant Development Plan mapping as it relates to protected views and prospects is that viewed in Chapter 8 - Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy.

Cultural and Natural Heritage mapping

UNESCO World Heritage Site Brú na Bóinne; Map 8.1 refers: The northern part of the proposed CPO site, in the vicinity of Staleen WTP, is within the Brú na Bóinne Buffer Area. No part of the CPO lands is within the Brú na Bóinne Core Area.

Landscape: 2no. Landscape Character Types apply to the overall CPO route. River Corridor and Estuary applies to the lesser northerly part of the route in the vicinity of Donore, and Lowland Landscape applies to the larger southerly part of the route in the vicinity of Duleek. Development Plan content relating these landscapes is summarised in the table below.

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Area	Landscape Sensitivity Area
River Corridor and Estuary Description: Boyne Valley	Description: Boyne Valley Character Type: Exceptional Value	Character Type: High Sensitivity Description: Boyne Valley
Lowland Landscape Description: Central Lowlands	Description: Central Lowlands Character Type: High Value	Character Type: Moderate Sensitivity Description: Central Lowlands

5.2 Archaeology

The National Monuments Service website (www.archaeology.ie, accessed on 21 May 2026) shows that there are a number of Recorded Monuments in the vicinity of the proposed CPO route. The proposed route does not traverse or adjoin any Recorded Monuments.

5.3 Other National and Regional Plans and Policies

- National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision, 2025
- Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
- Water Services Policy Statement 2024-2030, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Uisce Éireann Capital Investment Plan 2025-2029
- Uisce Éireann Water Services Strategic Plan 2050
- Uisce Éireann National Water Resources Plan (NWRP)
- Uisce Éireann Strategic Funding Plan 2025-2029
- Uisce Éireann Biodiversity Action Plan

5.3 Section 28 Guidelines

The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009.

6.0 The Objection

The Commission received 1no. valid objection to the CPO. The objection is from Mr. Michael Lawlor and Mr. John Lawlor, joint owners, and refers to Part 4 – temporary working area of 1.1874ha. Key issues raised in the objection are:

- At all stages of this project, objectors consented to Uisce Éireann's various studies and requests as regards the wayleave
- They were in active negotiations with UÉ through their Irish Farmer's Association (IFA) representatives when this order was served on them. UÉ did not inform them that these talks had stopped.
- They sent IFA reps to act on their behalf to reach an agreement on compensation and other issues regarding air valves they wanted shifted closer to the road boundary. These valves will be permanent above-ground structure which is completely different to having an underground pipe, and they do not consider them to be part of a wayleave. These valves will be an obstruction to the working part of their land in future years.

- It is important that a water supply pipe that traverses the permanent right of way and working area be maintained at all times during the works.
- It is unclear how lands coloured green (described as temporarily sub part A of part 4; the 1.1874ha area) will be used.

6.1.1. For clarity, I note that the 2no. plots which form part of the CPO relating to the objectors' lands at Staleen townland are as follows:

Table 1: Overview of Plot 001 and Plot 002.

Plot Number (Coloured Yellow)	Plot Number (Coloured Green)	Site Area	Schedule
Plot 001	-	0.3039ha	Part 2 – Permanent Wayleave
-	Plot 002	1.1874ha	Part 4 – Temporary Working Area

7.0 Oral Hearing

7.1. Limited Agenda Oral Hearing

7.1.1. A limited agenda Oral Hearing was held on 21 July 2026. The invited attendees were:

- Uisce Éireann
- Owners of Plots 026 and 027 (lands located at Duleek Bellewstown GFC on R150, west of Duleek)
- The Objector

7.1.2. The item of this Limited Agenda Oral Hearing is for Uisce Éireann to provide a justification for land acquisition at CPO Plots 026 (permanent wayleave) and 027 (temporary working area) with reference to impacts on development permitted by P.A. Ref. 2460866, particularly impacts of Plot 026 on the walkway.

7.1.3. Oral submissions were heard on behalf of the applicant, Uisce Éireann.

7.1.4. A summary of the Hearing is included in Appendix 1 of this report. Proceedings

commenced with the opening statement. Participants were informed that the limited agenda oral hearing is to provide an opportunity for the invited parties, who wish to do so, to make submissions and to allow the Inspector to seek clarification on any relevant issues arising, that the Inspector will prepare a report and recommendation to the Commission.

7.1.5. Participants were also reminded that the Commission has no role or jurisdiction in the determination of compensation.

7.1.6. The participants to the hearing were attendees on behalf of Uisce Éireann only. The remaining 2no. invited parties (a) owners of Plots 026 and 027 and (b) the objector did not attend the hearing.

7.1.7. The principal issue covered in this limited agenda oral hearing is discussed in detail in the Appendix and is considered as applicable within the assessment.

7.2. Modifications

7.2.1. For clarity, I note that no modifications to the CPO route were proposed in Uisce Éireann's submissions of 08 June 2026 or 15 July 2026, nor during the course of the Oral Hearing. This matter was further confirmed in Uisce Éireann's Closing Statement at the Oral Hearing.

8.0 Assessment

8.1. Overview

8.1.1. My assessment of the proposed CPO considers the issues raised in the written objection submitted to the Commission and the general principles to be applied in assessing CPOs of this nature. Accordingly, for the Commission to confirm the CPO, it must be satisfied that the following criteria have been met:

- There is a community need that is to be met by the acquisition of the lands in question.
- The project proposed and associated acquisition of lands is suitable to meet the community need.
- Any alternative methods of meeting the community need have been

considered but are not demonstrably preferable.

- The extent of land-take should have due regard to the issue of proportionality.
- The works to be carried out should accord with or at least not be in material contravention of the policies and objectives contained in the statutory development plan relating to the area.

8.1.2. The proposed CPO is assessed in the following sections in the context of the above tests, and also addresses the specific issues raised in the objection lodged where relevant. Other specific issues raised in the objection are discussed at Section 8.7 of this report.

8.2. Community Need

8.2.1. The Community Need underlying the Scheme is set out at Sections 5 – 9 inclusive of the Engineer's Report. It outlines that all drinking water for the East Meath Water Supply Zone (WSZ) is supplied from Staleen Water Treatment Plant (WTP). Water is provided through an existing 400mm diameter gravity pipeline constructed in the early 1980s. It is currently operating above its maximum capacity and recent failures (38no. since 2008) have resulted in loss of supply to the WSZ. The project aims to

- provide additional transfer capacity to East Meath WSZ through the new trunk main in lands west of Duleek, and increase capacity of the existing strategic network to cater for future residential development of up to 10,660 new housing units.
- improve security of supply and provide greater network resilience of the East Meath WSZ

8.2.2. The UÉ Compulsory Purchase (Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main) Order 2025, signed 19 July 2025, states the existing 400uPVC trunk main is at the end of its lifespan. Each of the 38no. bursts since 2008 has resulted in prolonged water supply interruptions, affecting over 26,000 residents across the East Meath region. The lands, permanent wayleaves, rights of way, temporary construction rights and temporary working areas detailed in the Schedule are necessary (for) implementation of the trunk main.

8.2.3. The proposed upgrade works are detailed in the documentation accompanying the CPO. In summary, the works comprise:

- Replace and upsize the existing 400mm uPVC trunk main from Staleen WTP to Duleek and construct a new 700mm Ductile Iron trunk main
- Ancillary development works
- Associated temporary development works, including a temporary working area and temporary access for the construction period.

8.2.4. The Engineer's Report outlines the project is required to comply UÉ National Water Resources Plan (NWRP), Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) and Capital Investment Plan (RC4), providing for future growth in the WSZ.

8.2.5. The Planning Report references a number of additional Uisce Éireann strategies and plans, and Water Services legislation. These include UÉ Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 (currently being updated), Water Services Act 2007 and 2013, Water Services Policy Statement 2018-2025 and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). It sets the proposed CPO in a wider context, whereby the rural land subject of this CPO is required to undertake the replacement and upsizing of the existing trunk main from Staleen WTP to Bolies Little Connection, which is the initial 8.4km section of the overall existing trunk main that supplies water from Staleen WTP to Windmill Hill Reservoir in Co. Meath. The existing overall trunk water main is 16km, shown in Figure 1-1.

8.2.6. At an international level, the Planning Report outlines (at Section 6.1.1) the proposed CPO is in accordance with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (adopted 2015), which is to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. It outlines that the proposed CPO will support the planned Staleen to Duleek Trunk Main Project, which will provide adequate and sustainable water supply for the projected needs of the future population of County Meath. The Planning Report concludes that acquisition is necessary and timely to meet an identified need for sustainable water supply infrastructure in County Meath, which is located in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

8.2.7. Separately, the separate Route Selection Report (March 2025) states (at Section 1.1) that the subsequent section, Bolies Little Connection to Windmill Hill Reservoir, will be upgraded as part of a later phase.

- 8.2.8. I note that Uisce Éireann's Capital Investment Plan 2025-2029 lists (at Q1 2026 Capital Investment Plan Refreshed Position, www.water.ie, accessed 24 July 2026) *Navan-Mid-Meath Programme - Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Windmill Hill Reservoir Trunk Watermain*. The strategic aims of this project are Availability, Sustainability and Reliability. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the proposed CPO is identified, as part of a broader scheme, within Uisce Éireann current Capital Investment Plan.
- 8.2.9. I note that a number of the strategies/plans cited in the Planning Report have been updated. For example, Water Services Policy Statement 2018-2025 has been superseded by that dated 2024-2030, as viewed on www.gov.ie (accessed on 10 June 2026). Notwithstanding this, I note Objective 1: Availability & Reliability of the current Statement states water services will support regionally balanced economic and social development through accessible, dependable and reliable water services. Priorities include investing to maintain existing water services. It sets out that UÉ needs to deliver the strategic capital investment programme set out under the National Development Plan over the period 2021-2030 to improve resilience in areas most vulnerable to shortfall in water supply and wastewater services, and identify further long term investments that will improve the security of supply and reduce the cost of service provision. I consider that this current policy statement underlies at a national level the importance of the provision of fit-for-purpose water infrastructure.
- 8.2.10. In conclusion, I would agree based on the information on file that the proposed trunk main is in the best interest of the community. I am satisfied that the existing pipeline represents outdated infrastructure, is no longer fit for purpose is and operating above its maximum capacity. There is an imperative requirement for a trunk main serving the wider community, and also the future population of County Meath, to be made fit for purpose.
- 8.2.11. I consider that the needs of the public would be met by the CPO of the lands in question, that UÉ has demonstrated that a clear and pressing community need would be met by the project, and that this would be facilitated by the acquisition of temporary working areas and permanent wayleaves over the lands in question, should the Commission confirm the CPO.

8.3. **Suitability of Lands to Serve a Community Need**

8.3.1. The UÉ Compulsory Purchase (Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main) Order 2025, signed 19 July 2025, states that the lands, permanent wayleaves, rights of way, temporary construction rights and temporary working areas are necessary and suitable for the purpose for which they are required.

8.3.2. For clarity, I draw to the Commission's attention that the Schedule outlines

- Part 1 – Land Acquisition states 'Not Applicable'
- Part 3 – Permanent Right of Way states 'Not Applicable'

In this regard therefore I note that 'lands' are not proposed to be acquired (as per Part 1), and permanent rights of way (as per Part 3) are not subject of this CPO.

8.3.3. As outlined previously, the proposed CPO extends to approx. 8km in length and comprises 44no. individual plots totalling 30.7634ha.

8.3.4. The Engineer's Report outlines (at Section 15) that these permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas are necessary for the project, and suitable for the purpose for which they are required.

8.3.5. I draw the Commission's attention to the 2no. recent planning decisions, whereby the proposed CPO route traverses the permitted development sites, namely P.A. Ref. 2460866, at which development is underway, and P.A. Ref. 22972 (ABP-317209-23). These 2no. developments are discussed further under Section 8.5 Proportionality and the Necessity for the Level of Acquisition Proposed.

8.3.6. For completeness, I note that the objection received did not raise concerns relating to the suitability of the lands to serve a community need.

8.3.7. Having regard to the extent of the proposed acquisition of land for the purposes of temporary working areas and permanent wayleaves, and having reviewed the maps and other material submitted as part of this CPO application, and the further documentation received by the Commission on 20 May 2026, 08 June 2026 and 15 July 2026, I am satisfied that the extent of the lands that Uisce Éireann is seeking to acquire are proportionate to the identified community need and that the amount of land-take is necessary to provide for a new trunk main to serve the East Meath Water Supply Zone (WSZ).

8.3.8. I do not consider that plots of land have been included unnecessarily.

- 8.3.9. In conclusion, based on the information on file, including the submission of the objector, I am satisfied that the lands subject of this CPO are suitable and required to support the provision of a new approx. 8km long trunk main.
- 8.3.10. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the proposed project and associated acquisition of lands for the purposes of temporary working areas and permanent wayleaves are suitable to meet a community need.

8.4. Consideration of Alternatives

- 8.4.1. A Route Selection Report (March 2025) was received by the Commission on 20 May 2026, and I have had regard to this document in the assessment of the proposed CPO.
- 8.4.2. For completeness, a separate Route Selection Report dated November 2024, also referenced in the Engineers Report (at Section 14), was received by the Commission on 20 May 2026.
- 8.4.3. The Route Selection Report (March 2025) divides the study area into 2 sections to facilitate route identification and assessment, namely Study Area 1 and Study Area 2. 4no. potential routes were identified in each of Study Areas 1 and 2. Shortlisting of the 8no. potential route options for the two Study Areas includes an overview of routing direction, description of area, length of route, route rationale, land ownership and constructability. Each of the 8no. options are progressed to detailed selection criteria. The least constrained and most preferred routes were determined to be
- within Study Area 1: Route 1D
 - within Study Area 2: Route 2D
- 8.4.4. The reasons for not progressing the alternative routes considered are set out. It is outlined (at Section 7.2) that the reasons for the combined 1D and 2D Routes being the emerging preferred route are –
- it is the shortest and most direct, at an overall 7.96km length
 - entire route is on private lands, with only a few road crossings, minimizing traffic management measures
 - avoids river crossing, reducing requirement for trenchless pipe laying method

- avoids going through Duleek and has minimal impact on dwellings

8.4.5. In addition, I note that the Engineering Brief of Evidence (15 July 2026) states (at Section 2.2. that the technical feasibility assessment within the Route Selection Report took into account the specific risks of causing damage to the existing 400mm diameter main, the main source of water supply to over 26,000 people.

8.4.6. The Route Selection Report (March 2025) also outlines that the key constraint that needs further assessment is access options from the public road to the wayleaves for this route. As outlined previously at Section 4.0 (Planning History) of this report, permission is currently sought for 14no. temporary access points along public roads. This is a live application with Meath County Council at the time of writing; P.A. Ref. 2660184 refers.

8.4.7. In this regard I note that the planning consent process is separate to the CPO process. As outlined in the submitted Planning Report (at Section 1), this application for the confirmation of a CPO relates solely to the acquisition of rights/interests in land i.e., permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas, and should the CPO be confirmed, it is Uisce Éireann's responsibility to ensure that all necessary permissions, licences and/or consents are in place prior to undertaking the trunk main works.

8.4.8. Having regard to the above, I consider that all viable and alternative route options and related considerations have been adequately explored by the applicant. The proposed route and lands required for permanent wayleaves and temporary works areas represent the most reasonable means of achieving the project objectives, and I consider that this would meet the identified community need. I consider that UÉ has demonstrated a reasonable consideration of alternatives available and the proposed route is the optimum one.

8.4.9. Having regard to all information on file, I am of the opinion that alternative methods of meeting the community need have been considered but are not demonstrably preferable.

8.5. Proportionality and Necessity for the Level of Acquisition Proposed

8.5.1. I consider that the delivery of a new trunk watermain from Staleen WTP to lands south west of Duleek, which aims to enhance security of supply and increase

capacity to meet the projected future water demand and provide greater network resilience of the East Meath WSZ would benefit all users in the long run, including existing residents, businesses, etc. However, I note that the proposed acquisition of land for the purposes of a permanent wayleave and temporary working area has the potential to have a negative impact on the objector, primarily during the construction phase. The required works would lead to temporary disruptions and nuisances, which are an unavoidable aspect for such projects. The matter of proportionality and necessity for the level of acquisition proposed is not expressly referred to in the objection received. The concerns raised by the objector are discussed further in this section.

8.5.2. I note that the CPO does not seek to acquire any residential dwellings.

8.5.3. As outlined previously, the proposed CPO route traverses 2no. recently permitted developments, namely P.A. Ref. 2460866 and P.A. Ref. 22972 (ABP-317209-23). This section of the report comprises 4 distinct sub-sections, relating to

(A) Proportionality and Necessity for the Level of Acquisition Proposed with regard to P.A. Ref. 2460866 (Duleek, Bellewstown & District Community Facility CLG)

(B) Proportionality and Necessity for the Level of Acquisition Proposed with regard to P.A. Ref. 22972 and ABP-317209-23 (Solar Energy Development)

(C) Issues raised by the Objector

(D) Overall Conclusion regarding Proportionality and Necessity for the Level of Acquisition Proposed

8.5.4. For completeness, the Section 217A response outlines the location of the existing 400mm pipeline is not in the location of these developments and is routed through the western environs of Duleek town (response to Item 1(c) refers).

(A) Proportionality and Necessity for the Level of Acquisition Proposed with regard to P.A. Ref. 2460866 (Duleek, Bellewstown & District Community Facility CLG)

General: Description of Plots 026 and 027 with reference to development permitted pursuant to P.A. Ref. 2460866

8.5.5. No valid objection was received from Duleek, Bellewstown & District Community

Facility CLG. As outlined under Planning History (Section 4.0) of this report, permission was granted pursuant to P.A. Ref. 2460866 for a walking track and floodlit playing pitch at Duleek, Bellewstown & District Community Facility CLG; Final Grant date is 27 March 2025.

8.5.6. For the purposes of this assessment, the Duleek, Bellewstown & District Community Facility CLG is referred to as 'Duleek-Bellewstown GFC' or 'GFC lands'.

8.5.7. I refer the Commission to CPO Sheet 4, which includes Plot 026 (permanent wayleave) and Plot 027 (temporary working area) at western part of Duleek-Bellewstown GFC lands at Navan Road, Duleek. As outlined previously at Section 5.0 of this report, Plot 026 and Plot 027 are both located within Rural Area (RA) land use zoning, and as such are not located within the Duleek development boundary.

8.5.8. The Planning Report (at Section 1.1) outlines that the trunk main route would run along the western boundary of Duleek GAA Club/District Community Centre and continue southwards onto Bolies Little Connection. As viewed on site visit, a substantial amount of soil was noted to have been recently removed from this P.A. Ref. 2460866 site. In terms of detail, I note that the walkway and associated lighting columns adjoin the western boundary of the P.A. Ref. 2460866 site, as viewed on Site Layout Plan Sheet 1 (Drawing No. 004) and Sheet 2 (Drawing No. 005) submitted as Further Information to the planning authority on 03 January 2025, as viewed on the planning authority's website (www.meath.ie).

8.5.9. The CPO route, namely Plot 026 (permanent wayleave) and Plot 027 (temporary working area), traverses the westerly part of this P.A. Ref. 2460866 planning application site, but does not adjoin the western site boundary. The CPO was signed and sealed on 26 July 2025, i.e., subsequent to the Final Grant date on P.A. Ref. 2460866.

8.5.10. It is set out in UÉ's Engineering Brief of Evidence (15 July 2025) that it is understood that Duleek GFC have constructed the walkway and are preparing the playing pitch to sow grass. As further outlined on behalf of UÉ at the Oral Hearing, the walkway's final wearing course has yet to be constructed but it is ongoing, and lighting pillars have been constructed. The pitch has been levelled but not sowed, and it is believed that lighting for the pitch has not been constructed as yet.

8.5.11. In this regard I draw to the Commission's attention, and as outlined above, that there

has been a change to the P.A. Ref. 2460866 site since the signing of the CPO on 26 July 2025, insofar as this planning permission is currently being implemented, as confirmed on behalf of Uisce Éireann at the Oral Hearing on 21 July 2026.

8.5.12. For completeness, the Planning Report lodged with the CPO states (at Table 5-1) that the route corridor impacts the P.A. Ref. 2460866 land parcel. It outlines that UÉ/their consultant are in negotiations with the GAA and are re-routing the pipeline at the boundaries to avoid going through the playing pitch and to have minimum impact on the proposed walking track. Accordingly, the reference to the 'proposed' walking track has been superceded, as information has subsequently been provided in the Engineering Brief of Evidence and at the Oral Hearing to indicate that construction of this walkway is substantially progressed, as outlined above.

8.5.13. The information received by the Commission on 08 June 2026 refers to Drawing No. 20814.2-NOD-XX-XX-DR-C-10101 for Plot 026 (permanent wayleave) and Plot 027 (temporary working area), stating that

- it includes indicative location of proposed pipeline noting that its final detailed design and location are yet to be finalised within the permanent wayleave
- as part of consultation process with landowner and to minimise impact on existing walkway, route shown was preferred option for the following reasons:
 - proposed permanent wayleave avoids linear section of the walkway along the western site boundary
 - route avoids all floodlighting
 - route avoids location of proposed playing pitch
 - any overlap with northern section of walkway is minimal. Construction works in this area will be short term. All permanent infrastructure will be located below ground, ensuring no lasting impact on use or amenity of the walkway
 - Landowner advised during consultation of planned future development within the northern area currently identified as temporary working area. To prevent potential conflict, permanent wayleave has therefore been positioned along the northern boundary

8.5.14. I note that Drawing No. 20814.2-NOD-XX-XX-DR-C-10101; Rev. P01 discussed

above shows that Plot P026 (permanent walkway) is offset from the walkway along the western site boundary. Also at the western end of the Duleek-Bellewstown GFC lands, Plot 026 traverses to a limited extend part of the walkway along the northern site boundary and along its roadside frontage.

- 8.5.15. In addition to the information received on 08 June 2026, the Engineering Brief of Evidence further outlines (at Section 3.2.1 Preferred Route Consultation with Duleek GFC) the iterative process relating to the eventual wayleave issued for Plots 026 and 027; Fig. 3-7 refers. In brief, a wayleave is offset from the walkway at the western boundary; Fig. 3-4 refers. The northern part of the wayleave was subsequently re-positioned to the northern boundary of the (Duleek-Bellewstown GFC) site, as GFC representative had noted that a future proposed development (a running track) would be located in the northern section of the pipeline route corridor; Fig. 3-6 refers.
- 8.5.16. Plot 027 (temporary working area) would traverse the walkway over minor distances near the northern and southern (roadside) boundaries at the western end of the GFC site. This Plot also traverses the western end of the pitch.

Construction Phase

- 8.5.17. I draw to the Commission's attention the Engineering Brief of Evidence which outlines (at Section 3.3 Construction Impacts) that
- It expects Duleek GFC will have the development substantially complete by the time the pipeline project will commence on site. It is proposed that Plots 026 and 027 are fenced off during construction, and the walkway, pitch and surrounding grassed areas within these plots will be in temporary possession of UÉ until the pipeline is constructed and pipeline corridor is fully reinstated to its pre-construction condition.
 - To address the project's anticipated construction impacts on Duleek GFC's substantially completed development, the following mitigation measures subject to Duleek GFC's agreement are proposed to minimise disruption:
 - Construction of the pipeline through the Duleek GFC development would be undertaken sequentially, with walkway and associated lands reinstated before completion of overall pipeline works. This would help reduce duration of construction activity within the Duleek GFC development.

- UÉ is committed to the full and proper restoration of Duleek GFC lands following construction of the pipeline. All areas including the walkway, playing pitch and other grass and hard standing areas affected will be reinstated in line with UÉ Code of Practice.

8.5.18. It further outlines (at Section 3.5 Conclusion) that engagement with Duleek GFC has sought to ensure that the common good associated with the delivery of the UÉ project is aligned with the use of Duleek GFC lands in a proportionate and reasonable manner, such that construction will be carried out to ensure minimal interference with the overall use of the lands.

8.5.19. Based on the information on file and as presented at the oral hearing, whereby UÉ outlined that the walkway is 'ongoing completion', I am satisfied that construction of the walkway is substantially advanced. I note that the proposed CPO would, should the Commission approve same, have construction phase impacts on the walkway. However, given UÉ's proposed mitigation measures to help reduce the duration of the construction phase within these lands, its intention that the pipeline corridor will be fully reinstated to its pre-construction condition, and that all areas including the walkway, playing pitch and hard standing areas affected will be reinstated in line with UÉ Code of Practice, I am satisfied that the mitigation measures outlined would adequately address the construction phase impacts and would be acceptable.

8.5.20. In addition, I note that Duleek Bellewstown GFC confirmed to the Commission on 21 July 2026 with regard to CPO Plots 026 and 027 that they would no longer be attending the Oral Hearing as they had reached an understanding with UE.

8.5.21. Accordingly, I consider that the construction phase impacts and measures to address same at Plots 026 and 027 would be acceptable in terms of proportionality and the necessity for the level of acquisition proposed.

Operational Phase

8.5.22. UÉ's Engineering Brief of Evidence outlines (at Section 3.4 Operational/Long-Term Impacts) that

- following testing, commissioning and reinstatement of the pipeline within Duleek GFC lands, the pipeline and associated air valve will not affect the beneficial use of the lands. All UÉ infrastructure will be below ground and will

not impede on the walkway. The permanent wayleave is outside the playing pitch, avoiding impacts on its future use.

- Plot 026 has been located to reflect previous discussions with Duleek GFC and supports future development of the grassed area shown in Fig. 3-5.
- Walkover inspections and valve maintenance checks would typically be carried out annually. Plant or equipment would rarely need to be brought to a valve location and generally only be required in the unlikely event of a burst.

8.5.23. With reference to the Operational/Long-Term Impacts outlined above which include that Plot 026 has been located to reflect previous discussions with Duleek GFC, this Brief of Evidence outlines that Duleek GFC noted that a future proposed development (running track) would be located in the northern section of the pipeline route corridor, indicated on Fig. 3-5. It outlines (at Section 3.1.2 Preferred Route Consultation with the Duleek GFC) that a revised route was issued to Duleek GFC on 21 January 2025 (Fig. 3-6 refers) and the final wayleave map issued on 20 February 2025 took account of all discussions and minimised the impacts on the use of the Duleek GFC development.

8.5.24. In addition, with the regard to consultation, I draw to the Commission's attention that Uisce Éireann's Booklet of Documentation (received 15 July 2026) includes

- (11) Witness Statement (Engineering Report) appends Communications by Uisce Éireann (Appendix B) and Communications by Avison Young (Appendix C)
- (12) Witness Statement (Landowner Engagement)

I consider that the information set out in the documentation outlined above indicates that Avison Young, instructed by UÉ to provide property valuation and negotiations services in respect of the proposed scheme, had extensive contact with landowner of Plots 026 and 027, commencing in 2023.

8.5.25. I note that the Engineering Brief of Evidence concludes (at Section 3.5) that engagement with Duleek GFC has sought to ensure that the common good associated with the delivery of this project is aligned with the use of the Duleek GFC lands in a proportionate and reasonable manner, such that operationally, the impact of the UÉ infrastructure on the GFC lands will be negligible.

8.5.26. I am satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated that all reasonable endeavours

have been undertaken to carry out positive consultation with the owner of Plots 026 and 027, and to modify proposals originally presented following discussions with the landowner. Based on all information on file, I consider that the proposed CPO would not result in significant impacts on the use of Duleek GFC grounds at operational phase. Accordingly, I consider that the measures to address operational phase impacts at Plot 026 would be acceptable in terms of proportionality and the necessity for the level of acquisition proposed.

(B) Proportionality and Necessity for the Level of Acquisition Proposed with regard to P.A. Ref. 22972 and ABP-317209-23; Solar Energy Development:

- 8.5.27. As outlined under Section 4.0 Planning History, a 10-year permission was granted in 2024 for solar energy development at Downestown, Duleek. The proposed CPO traverses this permitted development; Plot 022 (permanent wayleave) and Plot 023 (temporary working area) shown on CPO Sheet 4 refer. No objection was received in respect of CPO Plots 022 and 023.
- 8.5.28. The Planning Report outlines (at Section 3) that in relation to an existing and proposed solar farm (CPO Plots 022 and 023), the pipeline has been relocated adjacent to the land boundary, to avoid significant impact on these commercial operations.
- 8.5.29. The applicant's response to the Section 217A request (received by the Commission on 08 June 2026) refers to Drawing 20814.2-NOD-XX-XX-DR-C-10102 (Rev. 01), whereby CPO Plot 022 (permanent wayleave) and Plot 023 (temporary working area) are overlaid onto the P.A. Ref. 22972 and ABP-317209-23 map. It outlines -
- As part of consultation process, Plot 022 has been designed to fully avoid all key infrastructure of the commercial operation, including solar panel arrays.
 - In the event that both the solar farm development and proposed Uisce Éireann works commence concurrently, further engagement will be undertaken to coordinate activities and avoid any potential overlap between installation of solar panel arrays and the temporary works within Plot 023.
 - Uisce Éireann is aware that the developer does not anticipate commencing on site for approx. 24 months. This is expected to eliminate any potential overlap in construction, as Uisce Éireann intends to commence works immediately

upon receipt of the CPO.

8.5.30. I note Drawing 20814.2-NOD-XX-XX-DR-C-10102; Rev. 01 indicates that

- a minor portion of Plot 023 (temporary working area) overlaps with solar arrays, where this plot takes an almost 90° turn near the HV overhead lines.
- the most southerly part of Plot 023 overlaps slightly with red line boundary of the P.A. Ref. 22972 and ABP-317209-23 site, at its site entrance on L5609.

8.5.31. I note that while UÉ outlines that it intends to commence works immediately upon receipt of the CPO, the planning consent process is separate to the CPO process and it is UÉ's responsibility to ensure that all necessary permissions, licences and/or consents are in place prior to undertaking the trunk main works.

8.5.32. I note that should the Commission be minded to approve this CPO, there is potential for the timing of construction works relating to Plots 022 and 023 and the ABP-317209-23 (P.A. Ref. 22972) planning permission to coincide. However, I consider that Uisce Eireann's submission of 08 June 2026, indicating that further engagement will be undertaken to coordinate activities and avoid any potential overlap between installation of solar panel arrays and the temporary works within Plots 023, would be acceptable to mitigate the proposed CPO's potential construction phase impacts at this location.

8.5.33. Accordingly, I consider that the measures to address construction phase impacts at Plot 023 would be acceptable in terms of proportionality and the necessity for the level of acquisition proposed, and that any temporary disruption during the construction phase would also be proportionate to the delivery of the project in the interest of the common good.

(C) Issues raised by the Objector

Concerns raised by Objector – General

8.5.34. I note the Engineering Brief of Evidence (15 July 2025) includes (at Section 4) *Concerns of Landowners who have made Objections in the CPO Confirmation Process for Plot 001 and Plot 002*. Given the nature of the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing, which does not relate to Plots 001 and 002, Section 4 of the Brief of Evidence was not discussed at the Oral Hearing. However, I discuss the content of Section 4 where relevant further in this section.

Concerns raised by Objector – Construction phase water supply

8.5.35. At construction phase, the objector raise the importance of a water supply pipe that traverses the permanent right of way and working area to be maintained at all times. I note that the location of the water supply pipe referred to is not shown on the CPO drawings or documentation on file, nor is its location identified in the objection received.

8.5.36. The Engineering Brief of Evidence outlines (at Section 4.2) that the water supply pipe that supplies water from Staleen WTP to the landowners' property will be maintained during the construction of the proposed watermain. Based on this information on file I am satisfied that the concerns raised by the objectors relating maintenance of water supply during construction would be adequately addressed.

Concerns raised by Objector – Use of lands as temporary working area

8.5.37. The objectors consider that it is unclear how lands coloured green (described as temporarily sub part A of part 4; the 1.1874ha area) will be used, as this has not been explained in detail.

8.5.38. I draw to the Commission's attention that the proposed CPO Part 4 – Temporary Working Area, Sub-Part A – Description of Rights includes the temporary rights for the Company, agents and contractors to enter the land with all necessary vehicles and machinery for all purposes of the use by the Company, agents and contractors for the purposes of the Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Watermain. Such rights include the right to anything reasonably necessary for or ancillary to the construction of the structures and the water works defined in the Water Services Act 2007 to be laid or constructed on the wayleaves described in Part 2 (Permanent Wayleave) in, on, under or over the lands specified in Sub-Part B (including Plot 002). In this regard I note the nature of works set out in Description of Rights.

8.5.39. However, I note that the Engineering Brief of Evidence outlines more specifically (at Section 4.3) the lands in green defined as temporary working area provide –

- A temporary access to the pipeline corridor during construction
- A storage area for excavated material during construction
- A storage area for pipework during construction

8.5.40. I consider that the information outlined above provides an adequate overview of the

nature for which the temporary working area would be used, and that the information provided is satisfactory. I note also, as previously outlined, that the construction phase of the overall project is estimated to be 30 months. However, given that this element of the proposed CPO relates to lands to be used as a temporary working area, specifically related to the provision of a trunk main, I consider that any temporary interference experienced by the objector during construction would be proportionate to the delivery of the project and that this is being pursued in the interests of the common good.

Concerns raised by Objector - Permanent Wayleave

- 8.5.41. The objectors seek to have air valves moved closer to the road boundary, as these will be a permanent above-ground structure, they do not consider them to be part of a wayleave and they will be an obstruction in future years.
- 8.5.42. While the CPO map (Sheet 1) does not specifically show the provision of 'air valves' at Plot 001 or at any other plots, the Planning Report (at Section 2.1) outlines that the trunk main will include a number of ancillary chambers, e.g., scour valve, air valve, and sluice valve chambers, along its length to facilitate the operation and maintenance of the overall pipeline, all works will be subsurface, including chambers, and there will be access covers at the surface of these chamber locations.
- 8.5.43. Further details of the air valves are outlined in the Engineering Brief of Evidence (at Section 4.1), which states that the air valves are a permanent below ground structure required to ensure air is released from the pipeline during normal operation and maintenance. The air valve structures are constructed to finished ground level and are designed to accommodate heavy machinery during farming. Fig.4-1 shows Uisce Éireann Standard Detail for Air Valves. The proposed air valve location shown in Fig. 4-2 is at point where the pipeline alignment increases in downward slope to facilitate the crossing under the L5611 local road. There is a steep embankment between Plot 001 and L5611. To avoid future impacts on this embankment from thrust forces associated with the change in pipeline direction, the bend that creates the change in direction has been set back from the embankment. Based on current specimen design, the air valve is located at the downward bend, approx. 10m-15m from the land boundary. The final location of the air valves will be determined during detailed design. Where possible, these air valves will be located as close as reasonably

practicable to the headland to avoid impact to the lands.

8.5.44. I note that Fig.4-2 Specimen Design Air Valve Locations shows 'Approximate location of Air Valves' on plan and on longitudinal section near the south eastern end of Plot 001, and close to the L5611.

8.5.45. I noted on site visit that there is a significant difference in ground levels between Plot 001 and the adjoining public road.

8.5.46. While noting the imposition of a wayleave at Plot 001, inclusive of any valves, I consider that it has been adequately demonstrated in the information on file that the provision of air valves is an integral part of the overall design of the proposed trunk main infrastructure, and I note in particular that the Engineering Brief of Evidence outlines that the proposed air valve structures would be constructed to finished ground level and are designed to accommodate heavy machinery. Having regard to all information on file, I consider that the provision of air valves within Plot 001 would be reasonable, that this would be proportionate to the delivery of the project and that this is being pursued in the interests of the common good.

(D) Overall Conclusion regarding Proportionality and Necessity for the Level of Acquisition Proposed

8.5.47. Having examined the documentation before me, including the maps and other materials of a technical standing, including all plans and particulars lodged with the CPO and received from UÉ on 20 May 2026, 08 June 2026 and 15 July 2026, the information presented at the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing and having regard to the submission received from the objector, it is my opinion that the proposed scheme incorporates the minimum land take necessary to achieve the required technical standard for the scheme.

8.5.48. Therefore, I consider the proposed extent of land take would be proportionate and necessary to achieve the project objectives. In addition, I consider that any temporary disruption during construction phase would also be proportionate to the delivery of the project in the interest of the common good. I conclude that UÉ has demonstrated that the CPO would meet the relevant criteria for establishing that the proposed acquisition of land for the purposes of permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas would be clearly justified and in the interest of the common good.

8.6. Compliance with Planning Policy

- 8.6.1. As outlined at Section 5.1 of this report, the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 includes a number of provisions which seek to support the provision of improved water infrastructure. This is in order to ensure that an adequate supply of drinking water for domestic, commercial, industrial and other uses is available for the sustainable development of the County.
- 8.6.2. While Donore is a 'Rural' village and Duleek is a 'Self-Sustaining Town' in the Core Strategy, I note that the stated aim of the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Watermain project is to enhance the security of water supply, and that it is outlined that increase in capacity is essential to meet the projected future water demand and support anticipated development within the region. I note therefore that the proposed CPO relates to a wider area and is not limited to serving development needs of Donore and Duleek.
- 8.6.3. In this regard I consider that the proposed CPO would be consistent with Objective INF OBJ 2 (Vol.1) and also with Objectives DON OBJ 4 and DUL OBJ 5 (Vol.2) to support Irish Water to endeavour to provide adequate water services to meet development needs of Donore and Duleek respectively within the Plan period.
- 8.6.4. I note that an EIA Screening Report, Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report, Archaeological Heritage Report, and a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) are appended to the Planning Report. In this regard I note that this application for confirmation of a CPO relates exclusively to the acquisition of interests in land relating to permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas and there is no scope to interrogate processes or assessments undertaken in relation to planning or environmental matters. As outlined previously, I note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they have obtained the necessary planning permissions and consents, prior to undertaking the development for which the CPO is intended to facilitate.
- 8.6.5. However, for clarity, I comment on Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy (Chapter 8) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) vis-a-vis compliance with the Development Plan in the following sections.
- 8.6.6. The submitted Planning Report sets out policies relating to Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy (Chapter 8). It outlines (at Section 7.1) that while temporary

construction related impacts from temporary working areas are expected, given the underground nature of the proposed trunk main, it is considered that the proposed development once constructed, will have no impact on landscape character of the area. The Archaeological Heritage Report concludes that the proposed scheme will have no negative effects on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Property, nor result in negative visual impacts on recorded archaeological sites in the wider landscape. Having regard to the distance of the proposed CPO route from the nearest protected views and prospects and to the nature of the proposed CPO, I am satisfied that the proposed CPO would not adversely impact on such views and prospects, and would not be inconsistent with Policy HER POL 52.

8.6.7. With regard to flood risk, I draw to the Commission's attention that the submitted FRA Figure 2-1 is stated to be 'Extract from CFRAM Fluvial Flooding Map for the Site Area (Source: Floodinfo.ie, data retrieved Dec. 2024, based on OPW, 2016)'. It outlines that Fig. 2-1 shows the proposed trunk main crosses Flood Zone A as it encounters a small stream. I have viewed the OPW's Flood Maps (www.floodinfo.ie, accessed on 24 July 2026) and note that there is one flood zone only over the length of the CPO route, located south of R150, i.e., that which is shown in FRA Fig. 2-1.

8.6.8. In contrast, the current Development Plan's SFRA indicates the proposed CPO route would traverse Flood Zones A and/or B at 3no. separate locations. Separately, the submitted constraints mapping (submitted on 20 May 2026) for both Study Areas 1 and 2 show flood zones which appear to be based on current Development Plan SFRA mapping:

- Constraints Map Study Area 1 (Drawing No. 20814.2-NOD-XX-XX-DR-C-012; Rev. P01) includes Flood Zones A and B north west of Downestown Manor housing scheme (north of L5609).
- Constraints Map Study Area 2 (Drawing No. 20814.2-NOD-XX-XX-DR-C-012; Rev. P01) includes 2no. areas of Flood Zones A and B south of R150.

I note that Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 pre-dates the information shown in FRA Fig. 2-1, which is stated to have been retrieved from www.floodinfo.ie in December 2024. While the FRA refers to the current Development Plan, it does not include Development Plan SFRA mapping. However, I consider that the relevant

baseline information in this case is that shown in FRA Fig. 2-1, and accordingly, I consider that the information provided showing only Flood Zone A south of R150 is acceptable, and would not be in conflict with Development Plan INF POL 26.

- 8.6.9. The FRA outlines that the proposed route is only comprised of a trunk main, buried in the ground and fully sealed, and is not expected to have any impact on the flood zone. Construction crossing the flood zone will be carried out with consideration for potential flood risks, the crossing location will be reinstated to avoid changes to the channel conveyance, and any valves will be placed outside the section crossing the flood zone. In this regard I consider that the submitted FRA would not be in conflict with Development Plan INF POL 20.
- 8.6.10. I note that the objection received does not raise any issues relating to compliance with planning policy.
- 8.6.11. Having regard to the foregoing, I am satisfied that the lands affected by the proposed CPO substantially accord with national, regional and local planning policy and there would be no material contravention of the Development Plan.
- 8.6.12. However, for clarity, I comment below on the reference in the lodged plans and particulars to Duleek Local Area Plan 2017-2023.

Duleek Local Area Plan 2017-2023

- 8.6.13. In terms of detail, I note that the UÉ Compulsory Purchase (Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main) Order, 2025, dated 19 July 2025, refers to the proposal being compliant with Local Area Plans including Duleek Local Area Plan 2017-2023. I note that this LAP does not appear to be available on the planning authority's website (www.meath.ie, accessed on 21 May 2026).
- 8.6.14. The planning authority's website states that all LAPs have been superceded by a Written Statement and Land Use Zoning Map contained in Volume 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied). 6no. previous LAPs are listed on the website, none of which relate to Duleek.
- 8.6.15. Based on the information on file, the information viewed on the planning authority's website, including the current Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, and in particular Volume 2 Written Statement and Maps for Settlements which includes Duleek (and also Donore), I am satisfied that the reference to Duleek Local Area

Plan 2017-2023 in the UÉ Compulsory Purchase (Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main) Order, 2025, is not relevant in this instance. While there therefore appears to be a discrepancy in the lodged plans and particulars which refer to a Duleek LAP, in contrast to the planning authority's website which states that all LAPs have been superceded, I do not consider that this matter materially impacts on the assessment of the proposed CPO.

8.7. Other Issues

Consultation

- 8.7.1. The objectors set out that they were in active negotiations with UÉ through their Irish Farmer's Association (IFA) representatives when this order was served on them, and that UÉ did not inform them at any stage that these talks had stopped.
- 8.7.2. I note that UÉ have also provided a schedule of engagement within the submitted Engineers Report.
- 8.7.3. The Engineers Report outlines (at Section 18) that UÉ introduced the project in person and that there were multiple engagements with landowners, their solicitors and other representatives by phone, email and in person. It sets out that formal correspondence was issued on 6no. dates from 31 August 2023 to 18 December 2024 and that consultation/open days and meetings were held on 4 dates – 5 December 2023, 9 December 2024, 12 December 2024 and 21 February 2025.
- 8.7.4. The Report outlines (at Sections 12 and 13) that attempts were made between 2023 to date (July 2025) to acquire the permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas by agreement, and when it was determined that this would not be possible, it was decided to seek a CPO.
- 8.7.5. I consider that all reasonable endeavours have been undertaken by the applicant to undertake positive consultation with the landowner and other parties as required. I am satisfied that a genuine attempt was made to acquire the plots of land in question on a voluntary agreement basis.
- 8.7.6. In conclusion, I am satisfied that the manner in which the CPO consultation stage has been administered has remained fair, transparent and thorough.

Compensation

- 8.7.7. With regard to the concerns raised by the objectors that they had sent IFA representatives to act on their behalf to reach an agreement on compensation, I consider this is a matter for the arbitrator.

9.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

- 9.1.1. I am satisfied that the process and procedures undertaken by Uisce Éireann seeking confirmation of the CPO have been fair and reasonable, that Uisce Éireann seeking confirmation of the CPO has demonstrated the need for the lands and that all the lands being acquired for the purposes of permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas are both necessary and suitable to facilitate the provision of the Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Watermain. The plans and particulars lodged with the CPO on 15 August 2025 and received by the Commission on 20 May 2026, 08 June 2026 and 15 July 2026 are noted in this regard.
- 9.1.2. Having regard to the constitutional and Convention rights protection afforded to property rights, I consider that the acquisition of land for the purposes of permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas as set out in the compulsory purchase order and on the maps, pursues and is rationally connected to a legitimate objective in the public interest, namely Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Watermain.
- 9.1.3. I am satisfied that the acquiring authority has demonstrated that the means chosen to achieve that objective impact the property rights of affected landowners as little as possible. In this respect, I have considered alternative means of achieving the objective referred to in the Route Selection Report (March 2025) and submitted to the Commission on 20 May 2026. I am satisfied that the acquiring authority has established that none of the alternatives are such as to render the means chosen the CPO made by the acquiring authority unreasonable or disproportionate.
- 9.1.4. The effects of the CPO on the property rights of affected landowners are proportionate to the objective being pursued. I am satisfied that the proposed acquisition of land for the purposes of permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas as set out in the compulsory purchase order and on deposited maps would be consistent with the policies and objectives of Meath County Development Plan

2021-2027 and gives effect to the Objective INF OBJ 5, which specifically identifies the need for the realisation of East Meath Water Supply Scheme (Vol. 1 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027). Accordingly, I am satisfied that the confirmation of the CPO is clearly justified by the exigencies of the common good.

- 9.1.5. I recommend that the Commission CONFIRM the Compulsory Purchase Order based on the reasons and considerations set out in Section 10.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having considered the objection made to the compulsory purchase order, the purpose for which the lands are to be acquired as set out in the compulsory purchase order, to provide for the Staleen Treatment Plan to Duleek Trunk Watermain and also having regard to the following:

- (i) The constitutional and European Human Rights Convention protection afforded to property rights,
- (ii) The existing water supply network serving East Meath, which is currently operating above its maximum capacity, and failures of which result in loss of supply to the East Meath Water Supply Zone (WSZ),
- (iii) The community need, the public interest served and overall benefits, especially in terms of additional transfer capacity provided to East Meath WSZ through the new trunk main, thereby increasing capacity of the existing strategic network to cater for future residential development of up to 10,660 new housing units
- (iv) The design response, which has been appropriately tailored to the identified need
- (v) The suitability of the lands and the necessity of their acquisition for the purposes of permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas to facilitate the provision of the proposed Staleen Water Treatment to Duleek Trunk Watermain,
- (vi) National Policy Objective 92 of the National Planning Framework First Revision 2025 to ensure the alignment of planned growth with the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water

services infrastructure, in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment

- (vii) The provisions of Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, including Objective INF OBJ 2, whereby it is an objective to liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water to ensure that an adequate supply of drinking water for domestic, commercial, industrial and other uses is available for the sustainable development of the County
- (viii) The report and recommendation of the Inspector,

it is considered that the acquisition of land for the purposes of permanent wayleave and temporary working areas as set out in the Order, Schedule and on the deposited maps by Uisce Éireann, is necessary for the stated purpose, which is a legitimate objective being pursued in the public interest, and that the Compulsory Purchase Order and its effects on the property rights of the affected landowners are proportionate to that objective and justified by the exigencies of the common good.

In reaching this conclusion, the Commission agrees with and adopts the analysis contained in the Inspector's report.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

Cáit Ryan
Senior Planning Inspector

27 July 2026

Appendix 1: Proceedings of the Limited Agenda Oral Hearing

A. Background

A limited agenda oral hearing was held on 21 July 2026 in relation to the proposed Compulsory Purchase (Staleen Water Treatment Plant to Duleek Trunk Watermain) Order, 2025, sought by Uisce Éireann to provide a trunk main pipeline over a distance of approx. 8km from Staleen WTP to Bolies Little Connection via the western environs of Duleek, all within County Meath.

It was held remotely at the offices of An Coimisiún Pleanála using Microsoft Teams software.

The OH was recorded. This report does not constitute a verbatim record of the hearing. Should the Commission wish further detail, a recording of the OH is available.

List of attendees:

On behalf of Uisce Éireann
Ms. Áine Gilhooly, Uisce Éireann
Mr. Greg Curran, Uisce Éireann
Mr. William McKnight, Uisce Éireann
Mr. Paul McLoughlin, Uisce Éireann
Mr. Damien Kennedy, Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd.
Mr. Ray Keane, Avison Young
Mr. Damian Keaney – barrister, instructed by Byrne Wallace Shields
Ms. Aoife Coughlan – Byrne Wallace Shields
Mr. Kenny McArdle – Byrne Wallace Shields

B. Participants

Uisce Éireann

Mr. Damian Keaney – barrister

Mr. Damien Kennedy – engineer (Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd.)

Note: The remaining 2no. invited parties to the limited agenda oral hearing did not attend nor were represented at the hearing –

- Owners of Plots 026 and 027 (Duleek and Bellewstown GFC), who confirmed by email to the Commission on 21 July 2026 their non-attendance, due to having reached an understanding with Uisce Éireann
- The objector (Mr. Michael Lawlor and Mr. John Lawlor)

C. Opening of Oral Hearing

- The Inspector formally opened the hearing at 10:00am
- The agenda of the hearing was outlined.

The Inspector noted one change to the circulated agenda, whereby it had been confirmed that the owner of Plots 026 and 027 (Duleek and Bellewstown GFC) would not be attending the hearing, as outlined above.

D. Submission by Uisce Éireann

Mr. Damian Keaney

Mr. Damian Keaney outlined that Mr. Damien Kennedy's Brief of Evidence sets out the background to the scheme, engagement with the landowner, impacts of the proposed works on the landowner and an overall conclusion.

Mr. Keaney queried whether Mr. Kennedy could use slides in his presentation. The Inspector declined the use of slides not contained in the submitted Brief of Evidence, and stated that maps previously submitted may be shown. Mr. Kennedy proceeded with a verbal overview of his Brief of Evidence.

Mr. Damien Kennedy

- Mr. Kennedy outlined that Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd. were engaged for

engineering services for this project, which included carrying out a route alignment assessment of the Staleen to Duleek project. The project is a 700mm pipeline, 8km long and links Staleen WTP to the network in Deenes townland.

- As part of the route selection, they used engineering, planning and environmental criteria and constraints. The determined route assessment was to west of Duleek town, and part of this routing was decided to be through Duleek GFC. Part of the justification for this routing was based on a number of constraints which existed between local road L5609 and R150 regional road:
 - An existing solar farm constrained viable routes to west of GFC
 - Duleek town development area and presence of an overhead high voltage powerline cuts through lands to the east, preventing route going to east of GFC lands
 - Presence of a development, which although did not receive planning (permission), the preference was not to sterilise land for future housing

To avoid these constraints including the GFC (lands) would have resulted in an extremely long pipeline, and without any engineering, planning or environmental benefit. Justification for routing through the GFC includes that following completion, it was felt that there would be no adverse effect on the beneficial use of the walkway and playing pitch.

- Consultation proceeded with Duleek GFC and landowners to north and south. A wayleave consultation map was issued on 23 July 2024, included in the Brief of Evidence. Mr. Kennedy attended a site meeting with GFC representatives and brought 2no. maps, included in the Brief of Evidence:
 - Fig. 3.3: map includes wayleave Plot 026 027 overlaid onto the development. It includes a walkway overlaid onto a permanent wayleave
 - Fig. 3.4: alternative option is permanent wayleave offset from walkwayMr. Kennedy's opinion leaving this meeting was that the preference was for Fig. 3.4, i.e., the permanent wayleave off-set from the walkway. Both maps were issued to the Duleek GFC representative on 30 September 2024. UÉ

held a public consultation day on 12 December 2024, at which Mr. Kennedy was present. At this there was a request from Duleek GFC representatives to avoid an area to north of Duleek (GFC) lands, represented in Fig. 3.5. This area was subject to a future potential running track. The request was to avoid sterilisation of this potential future development. Uisce Éireann developed another map represented in Fig. 3.6. where they moved the permanent wayleave running east/west to the very northern boundary of the site. This helped avoid the sterilisation of a section of land to the north. This was issued on 21 January 2025.

A further map issued on 20 February 2025 was the final wayleave map, which was issued as part of the CPO. This took in all the considerations and consultations with Duleek GFC.

- The development is entirely below ground, it includes a 700mm pipeline and an air valve chamber, also underground. A manhole cover at ground level for future inspections is flush with the ground level and would not impact on the beneficial use of the walkway and playing pitch.
- It is intended that were the CPO is granted, UÉ is to proceed to construction shortly. It is intended -
 - Plots 026 and 027 are entirely fenced off from surrounding areas, meaning these areas will be in temporary possession of UÉ until the pipeline is built, tested and commissioned and fully reinstated and handed back to the GFC
 - pipeline is constructed sequentially to help reduce timelines within Duleek GFC lands.w
- Regarding operational impacts,
 - There is no negligible impact, considering that the infrastructure is located below ground and the beneficial use will be with Duleek GFC.
 - Walkover inspections for the air valve will be carried out annually, but it is not intended that large plant or equipment would be brought onto the lands. This may happen if a burst happens, but this is very unlikely.

- Based on extensive engagement with Duleek GFC regarding location of Plots 026 and 027, they are satisfied that the proposed route is justified and represents minimum interference necessary. Final location was determined following ongoing engagement with Duleek GFC and sought to minimise the interference with the lands and also help with future development that the GAA requested as part of public consultation on 12 December. Plot 026 will not impact on the beneficial use of the walkway and playing pitch following construction.
- In conclusion it is submitted that engagement with Duleek GFC sought to ensure that the common good associated with the delivery of the UÉ project as described in the Brief of Evidence is aligned with the use of the Duleek GFC lands in a proportionate and reasonable manner, such as the construction will be carried out to ensure minimum interference on the overall use of the lands and operationally the impact of the UÉ infrastructure on the GFC lands will be negligible.

Mr. Damien Keaney:

Mr. Keaney outlined that Mr. Ray Keane was available to give an overview of the level of landowner engagement as outlined in the Brief of Evidence, should this be required. Mr. Keane's engagement has continued until just before the oral hearing to reach an accommodation with the landowners.

The Inspector stated that unless there is a very specific matter that is requested to be highlighted, that Mr. Keane can highlight this, and that she was satisfied that the information in Brief of Evidence had been read.

Mr. Keaney responded that he did not think so, that Mr. Kennedy has covered the relevant level of engagement in his statement, showing the iterative process undertaken with the landowner in an effort to achieve the final location of the permanent and temporary wayleave plots.

E. Questioning between the parties

(i) Inspector to Uisce Éireann

(a) The Inspector posed 2no. queries to Uisce Éireann.

- The Inspector referred to the Brief of Evidence at Section 3.3 Construction Impacts, which states that the walkway has been constructed. The Inspector queried if the walkway is complete.

Mr. Kennedy confirmed –

- It is ongoing completion. Gravel sub-base has been constructed. The final wearing course has yet to be constructed but it is ongoing. Lighting pillars have been constructed.
 - The pitch has been levelled but not sowed, and believes lighting for the pitch has not been constructed as yet.
- The Inspector referred to the email from the owner of Plots 026 and 027 received by the Commission on date of the OH, stating that they have reached an understanding with UÉ and that they will not be attending or making representations at today's oral hearing. The Inspector queried if Uisce Éireann has any comment or wishes to confirm this.
 - Mr. Kennedy outlined that they have a confirmed agreement with Duleek GFC.

F. Closing Statements

(i) Uisce Éireann

Mr. Keaney on behalf of Uisce Éireann considers that Mr. Kennedy's evidence provides a sufficient justification for proposed acquisition of the two plots, it demonstrates an iterative process of engagement and ultimately agreement with the landowner in a manner they consider to be the most proportionate and least intrusive way of interfering with the landowner's property rights.

UÉ are satisfied that insofar as the appropriate tests of proportionality for compulsory acquisition fall to be considered, that this is a proportionate and necessary interference which balances the property rights of the Gaelic Athletic club with the clear common good that Mr. Kennedy's statement has addressed, and that the common good is best achieved by the confirmation of this CPO without modification

as regards these lands.

G. Closing of the Oral Hearing

The Inspector made final comments and thanked the participants. It was confirmed that a report would be prepared and submitted to the Commission who will make a determination on the CPO, and all parties will be informed of the Commission's decision in due course.

The Inspector closed the Oral Hearing at approx. 10:37am.