Inspector's Report ACP-323668-25

Development	Proposed development of N59 Carrowrevagh Bridge Rehabilitation Work.
Location	Carrowrevagh, County Mayo
Local Authority	Mayo County Council
Type of Application	Application for approval made under Section 177(AE) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (local authority development requiring appropriate assessment)
Prescribed Bodies	1. Transport Infrastructure Ireland 2. Uisce Éireann
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	12th January 2026
Inspector	Donal Donnelly

Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Mayo County Council is seeking approval from An Coimisiún Pleanála to undertake remediation works to Carrowrevagh Bridge, which carries the N59 National Secondary Road over a minor watercourse in the townlands of Carrowrevagh and Carrowkennedy, Co. Mayo. The watercourse (Rooghaun_32) is located upstream and at a distance of approximately 205m from the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC. This part of the SAC also forms part of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex pNHA. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and application under Section 177AE was lodged by the Local Authority on the basis of the proposed development's likely significant effect on a European site.

1.2. Section 177AE of the Planning and Development act 2000 (as amended) requires that where an appropriate assessment is required in respect of development by a local authority, the authority shall prepare an NIS and the development shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved the development with or without modifications. Furthermore, Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that the appropriate assessment shall include a determination by the Commission as to whether or not the proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of a European site and the appropriate assessment shall be carried out by the Commission before consent is given for the proposed development.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1. The proposed rehabilitation works will consist of the following:

- Reinstatement of original bed levels at the upstream elevation of the structure,
- Masonry repairs and repointing to the masonry arch section of the bridge,
- Localised concrete repairs to the reinforced concrete deck slab soffit,
- Installation of rock armour to the north-east embankment downstream of the structure,
- Increasing the height of the existing bridge parapets using masonry construction,

- Waterproofing the existing reinforced concrete deck slab,
- Installation of safety barriers on both verges over the structure and on approaches.

2.2. **Accompanying documents:**

- Cover letter,
- Planning Report,
- Public Notices,
- Construction Environmental Management Plan,
- EIA Screening,
- Landowner letters of consent,
- Natura Impact Statement,
- Notice to Prescribed Bodies,
- Planning Drawings,
- Resource & Waste Management Plan,
- Road Safety Audit Report,
- Structural Assessment Report,
- Vehicle Restraint System Preliminary Design Report,
- Schedule of documents.

3.0 Site and Location

3.1. Carrowrevagh Bridge is located on the N59 National Secondary Road, which continues around Connacht from Ballysadare in Co. Sligo to Galway City. The bridge is on a scenic section of this road between Westport, Co. Mayo and Leenaun on the northern edge of Connemara. Westport is approximately 13km to the north and the closest village is Liscarney approximately 4km north. The surrounding area is characterised by a hilly rural landscape mostly in agricultural use with occasional

forestry plantations. There are residential properties to the north-east and south of the proposed development boundary.

3.2. The subject bridge comprises a single span arch structure of random rubble limestone masonry, extended to the north by a reinforced concrete slab. The overall width of the structure is 11.2m. The stone bridge has a span of 1.7m and the concrete section has a square span of 1.85m and a skew span of 1.92m. The date of the bridge is unknown; however, the road and bridge are evident at this location on the earliest historic 6-inch ordnance survey mapping. The bridge is not a protected structure and is not listed within the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

3.3. The site has an area of 0.088 hectare. The speed limit along this section of the N59 is 80 kph.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. No relevant planning history.

5.0 Legislative and Policy Context

5.1. **The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC):** This Directive deals with the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union. Article 6(3) and 6(4) requires an appropriate assessment of the likely significant effects of a proposed development on its own and in combination with other plans and projects which may have an effect on a European Site (SAC or SPA).

5.2. **European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011:** These Regulations consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010, as well as addressing transposition failures identified in CJEU judgements. The Regulations in particular require in Reg. 42(21) that where an appropriate assessment has already been carried out by a 'first' public authority for the same project (under a separate code of legislation) then a 'second' public authority considering that project for appropriate assessment under

its own code of legislation is required to take account of the appropriate assessment of the first authority.

5.3. **National nature conservation designations:** The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the National Parks and Wildlife Service are responsible for the designation of conservation sites throughout the country. The three main types of designation are Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and the latter two form part of the European Natura 2000 Network.

5.4. European site located in proximity to the subject site is:

- Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC

5.5. **Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended):** Part XAB sets out the requirements for the appropriate assessment of developments which could have an effect on a European site or its conservation objectives.

- 177(AE) sets out the requirements for the appropriate assessment of developments carried out by or on behalf of local authorities.
- Section 177(AE) (1) requires a local authority to prepare, or cause to be prepared, a Natura impact statement in respect of the proposed development.
- Section 177(AE) (2) states that a proposed development in respect of which an appropriate assessment is required shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved it with or without modifications.
- Section 177(AE) (3) states that where a Natura impact assessment has been prepared pursuant to subsection (1), the local authority shall apply to the Commission for approval and the provisions of Part XAB shall apply to the carrying out of the appropriate assessment.
- Section 177(V) (3) states that a competent authority shall give consent for a proposed development only after having determined that the proposed development shall not adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

- Section 177AE (6) (a) states that before making a decision in respect of a proposed development the Commission shall consider the NIS, any submissions or observations received and any other information relating to:
    - The likely effects on the environment.
    - The likely consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
    - The likely significant effects on a European site.

5.6. Policies and Guidelines of Relevance

5.6.1. National Strategic Outcome 2 of the **National Planning Framework (First Revision)** seeks to maintain the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network including planning for future capacity enhancements.

5.6.2. **Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012** emphasise the importance of protecting the capacity, efficiency, and safety of national roads through appropriate planning policies and collaboration between relevant authorities.

5.6.3. **Construction, Replacement or Alteration of Bridges and Culverts, A Guide to Applying for Consent under Section 50 of the Arterial Drainage Act, 1945 (OPW, 2021)** assists those applying for consent from the Commissioners of Public Works to construct, replace or alter a bridge or culvert.

5.6.4. **Water Action Plan 2024: A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland** focuses on protecting and restoring water quality by preventing and reducing pollution, by restoring the natural ecosystem functions of rivers, and by continuing to invest in water infrastructure.

5.6.5. The **Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2011** recognise that there is a rich heritage of bridges throughout the country that requires careful consideration when any repair or alteration work is proposed.

5.6.6. Chapter 6 of the **Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028** sets out the strategic aim of supporting increased use of sustainable modes of transport; the integration of spatial planning with transport planning; enhanced county and regional accessibility;

the transition to a low carbon energy efficient transport system; and the development of a safer, more efficient, effective and connected transport system within Mayo.

5.6.7. Policy MTP 7 aims *"to support sustainable mobility, enhanced regional accessibility and connectivity within County Mayo in accordance with the National Strategic Outcomes of Project 2040 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region."*

5.6.8. The following policies relating to national roads are contained in the Development Plan:

> *"MTP 20 To enhance regional accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions through the protection of the capacity, efficiency and safety of the national road network in County Mayo.*
>
> *MTP 23 To protect the capacity, efficiency and safety of the national road network in Mayo by complying with the 'Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for planning authorities' (2012)."*

5.6.9. In terms of the natural environment, Policy NEP1 seeks *"to support the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural heritage and biodiversity of County Mayo, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves and Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations)."*

5.6.10. In addition, Policy NEO seeks *"to ensure that the impact of development within or adjacent to national designated sites, Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves likely to result in significant adverse effects on the designated site is assessed by requiring the submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment report (EcIA), Environmental Report (ER), an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), if deemed necessary, and/ or a Natura Impact Assessment (NIS), if deemed necessary, prepared by a suitably qualified professional, which should accompany planning applications."*

5.6.11. Policy NH 5 seeks to *"prevent development that would adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site located within and immediately adjacent to the county and*

promote favourable conservation status of habitats and protected species including those listed under the Birds Directive, the Wildlife Acts and the Habitats Directive."

5.6.12. The subject bridge is not a protected structure and is not located in any Architectural Conservation Area. However, Mayo County Council recognises the important contribution that all historic structures, features and landscapes, including those which are not listed in the RPS, makes to the county's heritage.

6.0 Consultations

6.1. The application was circulated by the applicant to the following bodies:

- An Taisce
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
- EirGrid
- ESB Networks
- Fáilte Ireland
- National Ambulance Service
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Mayo County Council Planning Department
- Mayo National Roads Design Office
- National Monuments Service
- Office of Public Works
- The Heritage Council
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland

- Uisce Éireann

6.2. The following responses were received by the Board:

6.3. **Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)**

6.3.1. The Land Use and Planning Unit of TII note that the subject application has been progressed in accordance with TII Publications design standards and procedures and represents an essential bridge maintenance project on the strategic national road network. It is stated that the proposed works give effect to the National Planning Framework NSO 2 'Enhanced Regional Accessibility' to maintain the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network on the relevant provisions of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. `

6.3.2. Accordingly, TII welcomes and confirms support for the subject development proposal.

6.4. **Uisce Éireann (UE)**

6.4.1. UE notes the presence of a 110mm HDPE watermain running parallel to the N59 and through the project area. Standard codes and practices must be achieved where any works impact on minimum separation distances, and where separation distances cannot be achieved, the applicant is required to liaise with UE diversions team to find suitable mitigation. A suitable condition reflecting same is recommended to provide adequate water and wastewater facilities.

6.5. **Public Submissions:**

6.5.1. None received.

6.6. **Planning Authority Response**

6.6.1. Mayo County Council (MCC) confirmed from liaisons with Uisce Éireann's (UE) technical Operations Lead that a diversion of the existing 110mm HDPE watermain was not required by UE for the proposed works.

6.6.2. MCC also welcomed the support of TII in relation to the application.

7.0 EIA Screening

7.1. The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination, (refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1). Furthermore, the proposal does not fall under any prescribed type of road development pursuant to Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) that requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

7.2. I note that the applicant has submitted a EIA Screening Report, which includes a Schedule 7 assessment. Notwithstanding this, I do not consider it is necessary to complete Form 3 given that the proposal is not a class of development for the purposes of EIA.

8.0 Assessment

8.1. The assessment will be undertaken in three parts as per the requirements of Section 177AE as follows:

- The likely consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- The likely effects on the environment.
- The likely significant effects on a European site.

8.2. **The likely consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area:**

8.2.1. Carrowrevagh Bridge is a small scale single span stone and concrete bridge that carries the N59 over a second order stream in southern Co. Mayo. The N59 is a national secondary route that extends around Connacht from Co. Sligo, through Co. Mayo and as far as Galway City.

8.2.2. Mayo County Council is seeking permission from the Commission for remediation works to Carrowrevagh Bridge. The purpose of the approval project is to carry out maintenance and refurbishment works to the bridge to increase its carrying capacity

and to ensure the serviceability of the structure as part of the road infrastructure within the County.

8.2.3. The proposed works will include reinstatement of original bed levels at the upstream elevation of the structure; masonry repairs and repointing to the masonry arch section of the bridge; localised concrete repairs to the reinforced concrete deck slab soffit; installation of rock armour to the north-east embankment downstream of the structure; increasing the height of the existing bridge parapets using masonry construction; waterproofing the existing reinforced concrete deck slab; and installation of safety barriers on both verges over the structure and on approaches. It is expected that the proposed works will take approximately one month.

8.2.4. It is a strategic aim of the Mayo County Development Plan, 2022-2028 *"to maintain the strategic function, capacity and safety of the national roads network, including planning for future capacity enhancements, and to ensure that the existing extensive transport networks, are maintained to a high level to ensure quality levels of service, safety, accessibility and connectivity to transport users."* The proposed works are essential and necessary to safeguard the structural condition of a river crossing on this national secondary road. Subject to an assessment of the proposal on the surrounding environment and European sites, I consider that the proposed bridge remediation works are acceptable in principle and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

8.3. The likely effects on the environment

8.3.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, I consider that the main environmental effects to be assessed, other than those covered under the Appropriate Assessment, are as follows:

- Biodiversity
- Cultural Heritage
- Roads and Traffic

Biodiversity

8.3.2. The planning application is accompanied by an EIA Screening Report, a Natura Impact Statement and a Construction Environmental Management Plan. A Planning

Report also accompanies the planning application, along with a Structural Assessment Report.

8.3.3. The Commission is advised that an Appropriate Assessment is carried out in Section 8.4, which considers if the proposed bridge remediation works, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would adversely affect the integrity of any European site in view of each relevant site's Conservation Objectives.

8.3.4. A site survey was carried out by project ecologists on 7th May 2025. No evidence was found of freshwater pearl mussel or white-clawed crayfish in the vicinity of the bridge structure. The riverbed at this location is generally poor given the presence of filamentous algae and is therefore unlikely to support these species.

8.3.5. A Dipper nest was recorded in the vicinity of the bridge behind the voussoir on the upstream side of bridge structure. No other breeding birds were identified and no evidence of other terrestrial fauna recorded. A bat survey was also conducted and it was found that no bats were roosting in the bridge but a single crevice had old droppings. These crevices were marked for retention at the time of the survey. A bat and nesting bird survey check will also be carried out prior to masonry works.

8.3.6. Potential impacts on biodiversity could occur from removal of vegetation overgrowth; spread of invasive species; disturbance of otter; increase in suspended solids and accidental spillages impacting on water quality; disturbance of bat commuting and roosting; and disturbance of birds during construction.

8.3.7. Mitigation measures will be set out within the CEMP, which will include information on timing of works, limiting access outside of works area, biosecurity protocols and water quality protection measures. The bridge shall also be surveyed for bats prior to commencement of works and vegetation removal shall not take place during the bird breeding season. Strict mitigation measures will be required to protect water quality and aquatic ecology to include bunded storage for oils and fuels; silt fencing; measures for storage and stockpiling; and on-site monitoring.

8.3.8. Subject to the compliance with the mitigation measures put forward within the Natura Impact Statement, I am satisfied that the proposed development will not give rise to any significant effects on biodiversity. A CEMP for project works will be prepared and the Ecological Clerk of Works will monitor works and to ensure that all mitigation measures are properly implemented. The Ecological Clerk of Works will also have

the power to suspend works if mitigation is not functioning adequately to minimise the potential impact on local ecology.

Cultural Heritage

8.3.9. Carrowrevagh Bridge is not a protected structure and is not listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. However, the structure appears to be present on Ordnance Survey mapping dating from 1829-1841, and Mayo County Council recognises the important contribution that all historic structures, features and landscapes, including those which are not listed in the RPS, makes to the county's heritage.

8.3.10. The CEMP confirms that the contractors shall undertake a qualitative archaeological and heritage risk assessment or appraisal prior to the commencement of construction activities. It is also advised that contractors should develop, implement and maintain an Archaeology and Heritage Management Plan. This will provide for monitoring to prevent accidental damage in areas where gaining access for construction is deemed to have potential to impact the archaeological, architectural or cultural integrity of the site.

8.3.11. Overall, I am satisfied that the proposed works are essential to maintain the structural integrity of a historic bridge. The proposed works and alterations will be locally invasive; however, efforts have been made to ensure that the least possible structural damage is caused to the bridge. Following the completion of work, the remediated bridge will safeguard any historic characteristics associated with it.

Roads and Traffic

8.3.12. The purpose of the proposed work is to return the bridge structure to good condition and to increase its load carrying capacity to full normal traffic. A Stage 1 Structural Assessment Report determined the masonry arch section of the existing bridge to have a reduced vehicle load carrying capacity of 3 tonnes due to extensive pointing and masonry loss. In addition, there is scour damage to the riverbed at the south elevation of the structure.

8.3.13. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit was carried out at the bridge and a number of issues were identified, including the safety barrier partially obscuring sight lines, and the potential for pedestrians falling over the low parapet. Furthermore, a preliminary

design report was carried out for a vehicle restraint system at this location and this report identified a number of existing hazards.

8.3.14. Following completion of the proposed works, the carrying capacity of the bridge will increase to 40 tonnes. It should be noted that the Annual Average Daily Traffic (TMU N59 130.0 S 2024) is 3680 with 2.2% HCV (80). The proposed works will require an alternating single lane closure on the N59 National Road for approximately 4 weeks. A detailed Traffic Management Plan will be implemented for the duration of the works. The proposed development also includes a new road restraint system measuring approximately 74.5m on the northern verge and 60m on the southern verge. This will improve road safety for motorists at this location.

8.3.15. In my opinion, the proposed works are consistent with the strategic function of the National Secondary Route. The proposal will also prolong the design life of the bridge and ensure the serviceability of the road infrastructure within the County. I also note that TII welcomes and confirms support for the subject development proposal, which gives effect to the National Planning Framework NSO 2 'Enhanced Regional Accessibility' to maintain the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network.

8.4. The likely significant effects on a European site

8.4.1. The areas addressed in this section are as follows:

- Compliance with Articles 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive
- The Natura Impact Statement
- Geographical Scope and Main Characteristics
- Appropriate Assessment

8.4.2. **Compliance with Articles 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive:** The Habitats Directive deals with the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union. Article 6(3) of this Directive requires that any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The competent

authority must be satisfied that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site.

8.4.3. The proposed development comprises remediation works at Carrowrevagh Bridge over a second order watercourse. This watercourse flows into the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC, (site code: 001932) approximately 205m downstream from the bridge. The proposal is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site and is therefore subject to the provisions of Article 6(3).

8.4.4. **Geographical Scope and Main Characteristics**

8.4.4.1. Carrowrevagh Bridge is located on the N59 National Secondary Route between Westport, Co. Mayo and Leenaun, Co. Galway. The subject bridge comprises a single span arch structure of random rubble limestone masonry, extended to the north by a reinforced concrete slab. The overall width of the structure is 11.2m.

8.4.4.2. The bridge crosses the Derrycraff watercourse (EPA name: ROOGHAUN 32), which is a tributary of the River Erriff. The confluence of these two watercourses is approximately 6.6km downstream from the bridge. The bridge is within the Erriff_SC_010 sub catchment, and the Erriff-Clew Bay catchment and hydrometric area. The second-order stream over which Carrowrevagh Bridge crosses, is categorised as 'Good' status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2016-2021) both upstream, downstream and at the bridge. No historical flooding events were recorded within 2.5km of the bridge and National Indicative Fluvial Mapping indicates that high flood levels further downstream along the Erriff River are classed at 'Medium' probability.

8.4.4.3. A site visit was carried out on 7th May 2025, which included surveys for freshwater pearl mussel, crayfish and fish habitat. No evidence of freshwater pearl mussel or white-clawed crayfish was discovered in the vicinity of the bridge structure, and it was noted that the riverbed at this location is generally poor. No other aquatic species that are qualifying interest species for the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC were recorded during the site visit. There was no incidental sightings or evidence of otter or invasive plant species. Flora species listed on the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 ("the FPO"14) recorded within the L97 10km grid square

include Narrow-leaved Helleborine (Cephalanthera longifolia) and Slender Naiad (Najas flexilis).

8.4.4.4. The proposed works include the reinstatement of original bed levels at the upstream elevation of the structure; increasing the height of the existing masonry parapets; waterproofing the existing concrete deck slab; masonry repairs and repointing to the masonry arch section; localised concrete repairs to the deck slab soffit; installation of rock armour on embankments; and the installation of safety barriers on both verges over the structure and on approaches.

8.4.4.5. A dry working area will be required through full dewatering of the channel prior to all works apart from site setup. Following this, the existing riverbed at the upstream inlet will be excavated by a combination of machine and hand excavated to a depth of 500mm below the final proposed bed level in order to install suitable rock armour. Excavated material will be stored on the southeast embankment for reinstatement upon completion of the works. Masonry repairs and repairs to spalled areas of concrete will also be undertaken by hand within the dry working area.

8.4.4.6. Following the completion of excavations, all aspects of rock armour installation, light scaffolding and parapet repairs, concrete repair and masonry repair works, and the dewatered channel will then be demobilised. The removal of the dams will be completed on a two-stage basis. The level of Dam 1 will be lowered by hand to allow the area between Dam 1 and 2 to partially fill with water, and the water within these dams will be allowed to settle overnight. The remainder of the dams will then be removed completely the following morning to minimise any plumes of silt, and the flow of the channel will return to the existing condition.

8.4.4.7. The nearest European site is the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC, (site code: 001932) approximately 205m downstream from the bridge. The next nearest European site is Brackloon Woods SAC (site code: 000471), which is 4.7km to the north. Lough Mask SPA (site code: 004062) is the nearest SPA at a distance of approximately 14.5km to the south-east.

8.4.5. **Screening the need for Appropriate Assessment**

8.4.6. The first test of Article 6(3) is to establish if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects to a European site. This is considered stage 1 of the

appropriate assessment process, i.e., *screening.* The screening stage is intended to be a preliminary examination. If the possibility of significant effects cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information, without extensive investigation or the application of mitigation, a plan or project should be considered to have a likely significant effect and Appropriate Assessment shall be carried out.

8.4.7. Having regard to the information and submissions available, the nature, size and location of the proposed development and its likely direct, indirect and cumulative effects, the source pathway receptor principle and sensitivities of the ecological receptors, the European Site set out in Table 1 below is the only site considered relevant to include for the purposes of initial screening for the requirement for Stage 2 appropriate assessment on the basis of likely significant effects.

Table 1: European sites considered for Stage 1 screening:

European site (SAC/SPA)	Site code	Distance to subject site	Connections (source, pathway, receptor)	Considered further in Screening (Y/N)
Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC	001932	205m downstream	Potential connections	Y

Table 1 – Summary Table of European Sites considered in Screening for Appropriate Assessment

8.4.8. Based on my examination of the Natural Impact Statement, together with other supporting information, the NPWS website, aerial and satellite imagery, the scale of the proposed development and likely effects, separation distances and functional relationships between the proposed works and the European site, the conservation objectives, and taken in conjunction with my assessment of the subject site and the surrounding area, I conclude that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required for the following European Site in view of the conservation objectives of this site:

- Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC

8.4.9. Table 2 below provides a screening summary matrix where there is a possibility of significant effects, or where the possibility of significant effects cannot be excluded without further detailed assessment.

Site name Qualifying Interest feature	Is there a possibility of significant effects in view of the conservation objectives of the site? General impact categories presented		
Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex **SAC**	Habitat loss/ modification	Water quality and water dependent habitats (pollution)	Disturbance/ displacement barrier effects
Special Conservation Interests: Coastal lagoons [1150] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea) [2150] Dunes with Salix repens ssp. argentea (Salicion arenariae) [2170]	Yes Potential for invasive species to spread or be introduced to downstream habitats.	Yes Potential for release of contaminated surface water run-off and/ or accidental spillage or pollution event during construction.	Yes Temporary increase in noise/ vibration and human activity during construction could disturb/ displace fauna, e.g., Otter.

Humid dune slacks [2190] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010] European dry heaths [4030] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]			

Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] Alkaline fens [7230] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) [8110] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220] Vertigo geyeri (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013] Vertigo angustior (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Petalophyllum ralfsii (Petalwort) [1395] Najas flexilis (Slender Naiad) [1833]			

Table 2 Screening summary matrix: European Sites for which there is a possibility of significant effects (or where the possibility of significant effects cannot be excluded without further detailed assessment)

8.4.10. There is hydrological connection between the subject site and the Maumturk Mountains SAC (002008) and the West Connaught Coast SAC (002998). However, both of these European sites are at a distance greater than 20km via Killary Fjord. The large geographic distance is such that there are no pathways for impacts from the proposed works to these European sites.

8.4.11. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on European Site No's. 002008 and 002998 in view of the sites' conservation objectives and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required for these sites.

8.4.12. I am satisfied that no additional sites other than that assessed in the NIS (Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC) need to be brought forward for Appropriate Assessment. I confirm that no mitigation has been taken into account at the screening stage.

8.5. **Natura Impact Statement**

8.5.1. The application was accompanied by a NIS which describes the proposed development, the project site and the surrounding area. The NIS contained a screening assessment, which concluded that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment was required. The NIS outlined the methodology used for assessing potential impacts on the habitats and species within European Sites that have the potential to be affected by the proposed development. It predicted the potential impacts for these sites and their conservation objectives, it suggested mitigation measures, assessed in-combination effects with other plans and projects, and it identified any residual effects on the European sites and their conservation objectives.

8.5.2. The NIS was informed by the following studies, surveys and consultations:

- A desk top study.
- An examination of aerial photography and maps
- A survey of the proposal site and surroundings

- Consultations with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Inland Fisheries Ireland.

8.5.3. The report concluded, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that subject to the implementation of best practice and the recommended mitigation measures, the proposed development would not, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, give rise to any impacts which would constitute adverse effects on the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC or any other Natura 2000 site, in view of their conservation objectives.

8.5.4. Having reviewed the NIS and the supporting documentation, I am satisfied that it provides adequate information in respect of the baseline conditions, clearly identifies the potential impacts, and uses best scientific information and knowledge. Details of mitigation measures are provided, and they are summarised in Section 7.2 of the NIS. I am satisfied that the information is sufficient to allow for appropriate assessment of the proposed development (see further analysis below).

8.6. Appropriate Assessment of implications of the proposed development on each European Site

8.6.1. The following is an assessment of the implications of the project on the relevant conservation objectives of the European site using the best scientific knowledge in the field. All aspects of the project which could result in significant effects are identified and mitigation measures designed to avoid or reduce any adverse effects are examined and assessed.

8.6.2. I have relied on the following guidance:

- DoEHLG (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- EC (2002) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EC
- EC (2018) Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC

- EC (2011) Guidelines on the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives in Estuaries and coastal zones.
- EC (2022) Guidance document on assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - A summary (European Commission. Directorate General for Environment).

8.6.3. Relevant European site: The following site is subject to appropriate assessment.

- Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC (Site code: 001932)

8.6.4. A description of this site and its Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Interests, including any relevant attributes and targets for these sites, are set out in the NIS and outlined in Table 3 below. I have also examined the Natura 2000 data forms as relevant and the Conservation Objectives supporting documents for these sites available through the NPWS website (www.npws.ie).

8.6.5. **Aspects of the proposed development:** The main aspects of the proposed development that could adversely affect the conservation objectives of the European sites include:

- Loss of, or disturbance to habitats or species,
- Potential Impairment of water quality,
- Introduction of invasive species.

8.6.6. **Tables 3** summarises the appropriate assessment and site integrity test. The conservation objectives, targets and attributes as relevant to the identified potential significant effects are examined and assessed in relation to the aspects of the project (alone and in combination with other plans and projects). Mitigation measures are examined, and clear, precise and definitive conclusions reached in terms of adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.

8.6.7. Supplemental to the summary tables, any key issues that arose through consultation and through my examination and assessment of the NIS are expanded upon in the text below:

Table 3

Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC (Site code: 001932)

Key Issues:

- Loss of, or disturbance to habitats or species
- Potential impairment of water quality
- Introduction of invasive species

Conservation Objectives: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001932.pdf

		Summary of Appropriate Assessment			
Conservation Objective: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the following:	Targets & Attributes (as relevant)	Potential adverse effects	All Mitigation Measures	In-combination effects	Can adverse effects on site integrity be excluded?
Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]	Stable or increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain appropriate physical structure (functionality and sediment supply/ presence/ absence of physical barriers/ maintain natural circulation or sediment and organic matter); maintain range of	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this marine aquatic habitat occurs >20km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge.	-	-	Yes

	coastal habitat; maintain presence of species-poor communities with typical species; and appropriate levels of negative indicator species.				
Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain appropriate physical structure (functionality and sediment supply); maintain range of coastal habitat; maintain healthy sand couch grass and/ or lyme-grass; maintain presence of species-poor communities with typical species; and appropriate levels of negative indicator species.	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this marine aquatic habitat occurs >15km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge.	-	-	Yes
Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain appropriate physical structure (functionality and sediment supply); maintain range of coastal habitat; maintain healthy marram grass and/ or lyme-grass; maintain presence of species-poor communities dominated by marram grass; and appropriate levels of	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this marine aquatic habitat occurs >23km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge.	-	-	Yes

	negative indicator species.				
Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea) [2150]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain appropriate physical structure (functionality and sediment supply); maintain range of coastal habitat; bare ground should not exceed 10%; maintain structural variation within sward and range of sub-communities with typical species; and appropriate levels of negative indicator species/ scrub/ trees.	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this coastal habitat occurs >23km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge.	-	-	Yes
Dunes with Salix repens ssp. argentea (Salicion arenariae) [2170]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain appropriate physical structure (functionality and sediment supply); maintain range of coastal habitat; bare ground should not exceed 10%; maintain structural variation within sward and range of sub-communities with typical species; maintain more than 10% cover of creeping willow; and appropriate levels of negative indicator species/ scrub/ trees.	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this coastal habitat occurs >23km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge.	-	-	Yes

Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; typical species and all characteristic zones present; maintain maximum depth of vegetation and appropriate natural hydrological regime, and substratum type, extent and chemistry; maintain/restore appropriate Secchi transparency, and concentration of nutrients; maintain appropriate water quality to support the habitat; maintain trace/absent attached algal biomass; maintain high macrophyte status; maintain appropriate water and sediment pH, alkalinity and cation concentrations; maintain appropriate water colour, organic carbon levels and turbidity; and maintain the area and condition of fringing habitats.	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this habitat type lies c. 8.3km from the site of proposed works over land.	-	-	Yes
Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; typical species and all characteristic zones present; maintain maximum depth of	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this	-	-	Yes

and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130]	vegetation and appropriate natural hydrological regime, and substratum type, extent and chemistry; maintain/restore appropriate Secchi transparency, and concentration of nutrients; maintain appropriate water quality to support the habitat; maintain trace/absent attached algal biomass; maintain high macrophyte status; maintain appropriate water and sediment pH, alkalinity and cation concentrations; maintain appropriate water colour, organic carbon levels and turbidity; and maintain the area and condition of fringing habitats.	habitat type lies c. 23km from the site of proposed works over land.			
Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; typical species and all characteristic zones present; maintain maximum depth of vegetation and appropriate natural hydrological regime, and substratum type, extent and chemistry; maintain/restore appropriate Secchi	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this habitat type lies c. 2km from the site of proposed works over land.	-	-	Yes

	transparency, and concentration of nutrients; maintain appropriate water quality to support the habitat; maintain trace/absent attached algal biomass; maintain high macrophyte status; maintain appropriate water and sediment pH, alkalinity and cation concentrations; maintain appropriate water colour, organic carbon levels and turbidity; and maintain the area and condition of fringing habitats.				
Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260]	No decline in habitat distribution; stable/ increasing habitat area; maintain appropriate hydrological regime; maintain/ restore appropriate sub-stratum, and water quality; typical species present in good condition; are of active floodplain maintained; and maintain area and condition of fringing habitat.	- Habitat type is understood to be widespread within Ireland's river systems and is sensitive to water quality impacts which may arise, particularly during construction. As such, there is a complete source-pathway-receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. - Risk of impacts to water quality given the nature of the proposed works and the use of heavy machinery and plant in proximity to the river.	*General Measures:* - Appointment of Ecological Clerk of Works to ensure compliance with mitigation and to liaise with IFI and NPWS. - All operations to be carried out in accordance with relevant guidelines relating to control of water pollution and protection of fisheries. - Site manager to monitor weather and no works to take place during heavy rainfall. Dam system will	No in combination effect: - Plans subject to AA prior to adoption and contain policies and objectives to ensure protection of European sites. - Proposed scheme alone will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites, and therefore will not act in combination any other major project to have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites.	Yes - Due to mitigation measures, best practice measures and implementation of monitoring, no adverse effects on water quality or the designated conservation interests of the European site will occur.

		- Potential for the accidental release of polluting matter from equipment and machinery. - No invasive species were recorded during site visits; however, biosecurity protocols will prevent the spread of aquatic diseases. - No potential for operational stage impacts.	be removed and reinstated as necessary. - Toolbax talks, standard working hours, and measures to prevent/ control spillages. *Watercourse Protection:* - Establishment of dry working area by setting up a dam system. - All water pumped from the works area must pass through silt fences before entering the river. - Pipe used to flume flows through the works area will be fitted with a filter to ensure no fish enter the pipe. Outfall of pipe will be fitted with a silt sock. - Temporary working platform must be clean and free from foreign debris. No debris or waste material from the works area shall enter the live channel. - Measures for use of primer products. - At no point will any equipment be washed out	- No projects identified on the EIA Portal within the geographical scope of the proposed development. - Varying nature and scale of developments within 1km of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC and connected waterbodies. Such projects must comply with the EPA's Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤10) (EPA, 2021). - Other activities undertaken by farmers and landowners would include prior consultation with NPWS and compliance with European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations, 2011 (as amended).	

			within the work area or adjacent to a watercourse. - Dissipation of sediment and reinstatement with washed and clean gravel. Removal and disposal of materials used on site, including sandbags, silt fencing and components of temporary working platform. *Biosecurity protocols:* - Implemented on site following the 'Clean-Check-Dry' principle. - Excavator shall be dry, clean and free from debris prior to being brought to site. - Washing down of dam materials and other equipment at suitable remote location. Washed equipment to be left unused for 48 hours once dry. - Operative to disinfect boots and waders (away from river) after entering watercourse to install silt fencing and sandbag dams.		
Juniperus communis formations on heaths	No decline in habitat distribution; stable/ increasing habitat area;	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor	-	-	Yes

or calcareous grasslands [5130]	juniper population size at least 50 plants per formation; at least 50% of positive indicator species; negative indicator species under control; at least 10% juniper plants bearing cones and are seedlings; and mean percentage of each juniper plant dead less than 10%.	chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this terrestrial habitat occurs >22km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge.			
Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430]	No decline in habitat distribution; stable/ increasing habitat area; maintain soil nutrient status and variety of vegetation communities; at least one positive indicator species and cover of at least 25%; cover of non-native species less than 1%; At least 50% of tall herb stems should be greater than 20cm with signs of flowering; live shoots of flowering tall herb shoots showing signs of grazing less than 50%; cover of disturbed bare ground in monitoring stop less than 25% and less than 10% in local vicinity of monitoring stop; and no decline in hepatic mats and in distribution or population	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this habitat occurs c. 5km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge.	-	-	Yes

	sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species.				
Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]	Habitat area stable or increasing; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain appropriate hydrological regimes; no increase from baseline nitrate and phosphate levels; at least three positive/ high quality indicator species; potentially negative indicator species should not be dominant and invasive species should be absent; sward height between 10 and 50cm and	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. Examples of this habitat occur exclusively within the SAC >23km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge. There is no hydrological connectivity between the site of proposed works and any example of this habitat.	-	-	Yes
Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]	Habitat area stable or increasing; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status; number of ferns and Saxifraga indicators at each monitoring stop is at least one; number of positive indicator species at each monitoring stop is at least three; proportion of vegetation composed of non-native species less than 1%; total cover of bracken, native trees and shrubs less than 25%; live leaves of forbs and shoots of dwarf shrubs showing	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this terrestrial montane habitat occurs > 5km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge. There is no hydrological connectivity to any example of this habitat type as according to available datasets.	-	-	Yes

	signs of grazing or browsing collectively less than 50%; and no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species associated with the habitat.				
Geyer's Whorl Snail Vertigo geyer [1013]	No decline in distribution at occupied sites; number of positive samples at least stable; no decline in soil wetness; and habitat area stable or increasing (no less than 30ha of at least sub-optimal habitat).	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. Records of this species within the SAC are limited to >22km over land close to the coast. Species or habitat capable of supporting this species was not identified during site surveys.	-	-	Yes
Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail Vertigo angustio [1014]	No decline in distribution at occupied sites; number of positive samples at least stable; no decline in optimal soil wetness; and habitat area stable or increasing (no less than 0.23ha of optmal habitat and 0.44 ha of sub-optimal habitat).	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. Records of this species within the SAC are limited to >22km over land close to the coast.	-	-	Yes
Otter Lutra lutra [1355]	No significant decline in distribution or extent of terrestrial, marine and freshwater habitat; no	Otter is likely to occur on the Derrycraff watercourse system. Species is sensitive to	- General Measures (as above).	No in combination effect:	Yes - Due to mitigation measures, best practice

	significant decline in couching sites and holts; no significant decline in available fish biomass; and no increase in barrier to connectivity.	noise and visual disturbance which may arise, particularly during construction. As such, there is a complete source-pathway-receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. - Risk of impacts to water quality given the nature of the proposed works and the use of heavy machinery and plant in proximity to the river. - Potential for the accidental release of polluting matter from equipment and machinery. - No invasive species were recorded during site visits; however, biosecurity protocols will prevent the spread of aquatic diseases. - Potential for noise disturbance from machinery and disturbance due to the presence of personnel. - No potential for operational stage impacts.	- Watercourse Protection (as above). - Biosecurity protocols (as above). *Noise control:* - All plant and equipment to be switched off when idling. - The use of white noise reversing alarms. - Restriction on the dropping and loading of materials to less sensitive hours. - The use of local screening for noisy activities or works with hand tools. - Ensure all plant and equipment is well maintained and clean, all lubrication in line with manufacturers' guidelines. - Working hours shall be restricted to standard working hours only and there shall be no overnight artificial lighting of the site.	- Plans subject to AA prior to adoption and contain policies and objectives to ensure protection of European sites. - Proposed scheme alone will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites, and therefore will not act in combination any other major project to have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites. - No projects identified on the EIA Portal within the geographical scope of the proposed development. - Varying nature and scale of developments within 1km of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC and connected waterbodies. Such projects must comply with the EPA's Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤10) (EPA, 2021).	measures and implementation of monitoring, no adverse effects on water quality or the designated conservation interests of the European site will occur.

				- Other activities undertaken by farmers and landowners would include prior consultation with NPWS and compliance with European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations, 2011 (as amended).	
Petalwort Petalophyllum ralfsii [1395]	No decline in distribution and area of suitable habitat; maintain hydrological conditions so that substrate is kept moist and damp throughout the year, but is not subject to prolonged inundation; mean groundwater level should not be more than 80cm from ground surface; mean percentage cover of bare soil should be more than 5%; mean vegetation height should be less than 6cm; and mean percentage shrub cover should be less than 25%.	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The population of this species for which the SAC is designated is contained >22km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge. Species or suitable supporting habitat were not recorded during site surveys.	-	-	Yes
Slender Naiad Najas flexile [1833]	No change to the spatial extent and to depth range within Lough Nahaltora; no decline in plant fitness;	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the	-	-	Yes

	no change to the cover abundance; no decline of species distribution and habitat extent; maintain appropriate natural hydrological regime, substratum type, extent and chemistry, water quality, water and sediment pH, and alkalinity and cation concentrations; maintain/ restore appropriate water colour; and maintain appropriate associated species and vegetation communities, and area and condition of fringing habitats.	proposed works to this qualifying interest. The population of this species for which the SAC is designated is contained >17km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge. Species or suitable supporting habitat were not recorded during site surveys.			
To restore the favourable conservation condition of the following:	Targets & Attributes (as relevant)	Potential adverse effects	All Mitigation Measures	In-combination effects	Can adverse effects on site integrity be excluded?
Coastal lagoons [1150]	Stable habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; annual median salinity and temporal variation, water level fluctuations and minima within natural ranges; appropriate hydrological connections between lagoon and sea; annual median chlorophyll a, MRP and DIN within natural ranges; macrophyte colonisation	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this marine aquatic habitat occurs >20km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge.	-	-	Yes

	to maximum depth; maintain number and extent of listed lagoonal specialists; and negative indicator species absent or under control.				
Atlantic Salt Meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330]	No decline in habitat distribution; stable/ increasing habitat area; maintain natural circulation of sediments/ organic matter; maintain creek and pan structure and natural tidal regime; maintain range of coastal habitat and structural variation within sward; maintain >90% of areas outside creeks vegetated; maintain range of sub-communities with typical species; and prevention of establishment of common cordgrass.	Given the lack of pathways, due to the nature of works and geographical separation distance, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this marine aquatic habitat occurs >20km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge.	-	-	Yes
Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritime) [1410]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain appropriate physical structure (sediment and organic matter); maintain creek and pan structure; maintain natural tidal regime; maintain range of coastal habitat; maintain structural variation in sward; maintain more than 90% of the area	Given the lack of pathways, due to the nature of works and geographical separation distance, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this marine aquatic habitat occurs >20km over land	-	-	Yes

	outside of creeks vegetated; maintain range of sub-communities with typical species; and no expansion of common cordgrass.	from Carrowrevagh Bridge.			
Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain appropriate physical structure (functionality and sediment supply); maintain hydrological regime and range of coastal habitat; bare ground should not exceed 10%; maintain structural variation within sward and range of sub-communities with typical species; appropriate levels of negative indicator species; and bryophytes should always be at least an occasional component of the vegetation.	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this coastal habitat occurs >23km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge. Examples of this habitat within the SAC share no direct hydrological links to the site of the proposed works	-	-	Yes
Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status and variety of vegetation communities; cross-leaved heath present within a 20m radius of each monitoring stop; cover of positive indicator species at least 50%; total	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this habitat occurs downstream of the proposed site c. 320m; however, examples of this	-	-	Yes

	cover of Cladonia and Sphagnum species, Racomitrium lanuginosum and pleurocarpous mosses at least 10%; Cover of ericoid species and crowberry at least 15%; cover of dwarf shrubs less than 75%; total cover of negative indicator and non-native species less than 1%; cover of scattered native trees and shrubs less than 20%; cover of bracken and soft rushes less than 10%; less than 10% of the Sphagnum cover is crushed, broken and/or pulled up; less than 33% collectively of the last complete growing season's shoots of ericoids, crowberry and bog-myrtle showing signs of browsing; no signs of burning in sensitive areas; cover of disturbed bare ground and area showing signs of drainage from heavy trampling, tracking or ditches less than 10%; and no decline in hepatic mats or distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species.	habitat type within the SAC share no direct hydrological links to the site of the proposed works.			

European dry heaths [4030]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status and variety of vegetation communities; no. of bryophyte or non-crustose lichen species present at each monitoring stop at least three, excluding Campylopus and Polytrichum mosses; positive indicator species present at each monitoring stop is at least two; cover of positive indicator species at least 50% for siliceous dry heath and 50- 75% for calcareous dry heath; proportion of dwarf shrub cover composed collectively of bog-myrtle (Myrica gale), creeping willow (Salix repens) and western gorse (Ulex gallii) is less than 50%; total cover of negative indicator and non-native species less than 1%; cover of scattered native trees and shrubs less than 20%; cover of bracken and soft rushes less than 10%; senescent proportion of ling (Calluna vulgaris) cover less than 50%; less than 33% collectively of	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this habitat with connectivity to the proposed works site occurs >4km downstream from Carrowrevagh Bridge. Examples of this habitat type within the SAC share no direct hydrological links to the site of the proposed works.	-	-	Yes

	the last complete growing season's shoots of ericoids and crowberry showing signs of browsing; no signs of burning in sensitive areas; outside sensitive areas, all growth phases of ling should occur throughout, with at least 10% of cover in the mature phase; cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10%; and no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species associated with the habitat and no decline in status of hepatic mats associated with this habitat.				
Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status and variety of vegetation communities; no. of bryophyte or non-crustose lichen species present at each monitoring stop at least three; cover of positive indicator species at least 66%; cover of dwarf shrub species at least 10%; total cover of negative indicator species less than 10%; cover of	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this habitat to the proposed works site occurs >1.8km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge. This habitat lies in close proximity to riparian environments but there is no hydrological connectivity between the	-	-	Yes

	non-native species less than 1%; less than 10% collectively of the live leaves of specific graminoids showing signs of grazing; less than 33% collectively of the last complete growing season's shoots of ericoids and crowberry showing signs of browsing; no signs of burning within the habitat; cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10%; and no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species, and no decline in status of hepatic mats.	site of proposed works and any example of this habitat.			
Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status; at least 99% of the total Annex I blanket bog area is active; natural hydrology unaffected by drains and erosion; maintain variety of vegetation communities; number of positive indicator species present at each monitoring stop is at least seven; cover of bryophytes or lichens, excluding Sphagnum	The closest example of this habitat occurs downstream of the proposed site c. 320m. There is a complete source-pathway-receptor chain of impacts, and given the proximity of this qualifying interest habitat and its sensitivity to water quality impacts which may arise, particularly during construction, adverse effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest	- General Measures (as above). - Watercourse Protection (as above). - Biosecurity protocols (as above).	No in combination effect: - Plans subject to AA prior to adoption and contain policies and objectives to ensure protection of European sites. - Proposed scheme alone will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites, and therefore will not act in combination any other major project to have an	Yes - Due to mitigation measures, best practice measures and implementation of monitoring, no adverse effects on water quality or the designated conservation interests of the European site will occur.

	fallax, at least 10%; cover of each of the potential dominant species less than 75%; total cover of negative indicator species and non-native species less than 1%; cover of scattered native trees and shrubs less than 10%; less than 10% of the Sphagnum cover is crushed, broken and/or pulled up; last complete growing season's shoots of ericoids, crowberry and bog-myrtle showing signs of browsing collectively less than 33%; no signs of burning in sensitive areas; cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10%; area showing signs of drainage from heavy trampling, tracking or ditches less than 10%; less than 5% of the greater bog mosaic comprises erosion gullies and eroded areas; and no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species associated with the habitat.	cannot be ruled out at this stage. - Risk of impacts to water quality given the nature of the proposed works and the use of heavy machinery and plant in proximity to the river. - Potential for the accidental release of polluting matter from equipment and machinery. - No invasive species were recorded during site visits; however, biosecurity protocols will prevent the spread of aquatic diseases. - No potential for operational stage impacts.		adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites. - No projects identified on the EIA Portal within the geographical scope of the proposed development. - Varying nature and scale of developments within 1km of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC and connected waterbodies. Such projects must comply with the EPA's Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤10) (EPA, 2021). - Other activities undertaken by farmers and landowners would include prior consultation with NPWS and compliance with European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations, 2011 (as amended).	

Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status and variety of vegetation communities; no. of positive indicator species at each monitoring stop is at least three for infilling pools and flushes and at least six for fens; at least one core positive indicator species present; total cover of positive indicator species is at least 25%; total cover of negative indicator species and non-native species less than 1%; proportion of live leaves and/or flowering shoots of vascular plants that are more than 15cm above the ground surface should be at least 50%; cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10%; area showing signs of drainage from heavy trampling, tracking or ditches less than 10%; and no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species.	The closest example of this habitat occurs downstream of the proposed site c. 3km. There is a complete source-pathway-receptor chain of impacts, and given the proximity of this qualifying interest habitat and its sensitivity to water quality impacts which may arise, particularly during construction, adverse effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest cannot be ruled out at this stage. - Risk of impacts to water quality given the nature of the proposed works and the use of heavy machinery and plant in proximity to the river. - Potential for the accidental release of polluting matter from equipment and machinery. - No invasive species were recorded during site visits; however, biosecurity protocols will prevent the spread of aquatic diseases.	- General Measures (as above). - Watercourse Protection (as above). - Biosecurity protocols (as above).	No in combination effect: - Plans subject to AA prior to adoption and contain policies and objectives to ensure protection of European sites. - Proposed scheme alone will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites, and therefore will not act in combination any other major project to have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites. - No projects identified on the EIA Portal within the geographical scope of the proposed development. - Varying nature and scale of developments within 1km of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC and connected waterbodies. Such projects must comply with the EPA's Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems	Yes - Due to mitigation measures, best practice measures and implementation of monitoring, no adverse effects on water quality or the designated conservation interests of the European site will occur.

		- No potential for operational stage impacts.		(Population Equivalent ≤10) (EPA, 2021). - Other activities undertaken by farmers and landowners would include prior consultation with NPWS and compliance with European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations, 2011 (as amended).	
Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status; no. of positive indicator species at each monitoring stop is at least five; total cover of white beaked sedge and brown beaked sedge at least 10%; cover of each of the potential dominant species individually less than 35%; total cover of negative indicator species and non-native species less than 1%; cover of scattered native trees and shrubs less than 10%; less than 10% of the Sphagnum cover is crushed, broken and/or	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this terrestrial habitat with connectivity occurs 5.7km downstream of Carrowrevagh Bridge. Examples of this habitat type within the SAC share no direct hydrological links to the site	-	-	Yes

	pulled up; last complete growing season's shoots of ericoids, crowberry and bog-myrtle showing signs of browsing collectively less than 33%; no signs of burning in sensitive areas; cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10%; area showing signs of drainage from heavy trampling, tracking or ditches less than 10%; less than 5% of the greater bog mosaic comprises erosion gullies and eroded areas; and no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species associated with the habitat.				
Alkaline fens [7230]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status; maintain active peat formation, appropriate natural hydrological regimes, appropriate water quality, and variety of vegetation communities; no. of brown moss species present at each monitoring stop is at least one; no. of positive vascular plant indicator species present at each monitoring stop is at least	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this terrestrial habitat occurs c. 19km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge. There is no hydrological connectivity to any example of this habitat type as according to available datasets.	-	-	Yes

	two for small-sedge flushes and at least three for black bog-rush flush and bottle sedge fen; total cover of brown moss species and positive vascular plant indicator species at least 20% for small-sedge flushes and at least 75% cover for black bog-rush flush and bottle sedge fen; total cover of negative indicator species and non-native species less than 1%; cover of scattered native trees and shrubs, and of soft rush and common reed less than 10%; proportion of live leaves and/or flowering shoots of vascular plants that are more than 5cm above the ground surface should be at least 50%; cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10%; area showing signs of drainage from heavy trampling, tracking or ditches less than 10%; disturbed proportion of vegetation cover where tufa is present is less than 1%; and no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species				

	associated with the habitat.				
Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) [8110]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status; cover of bryophyte or non-crustose lichen species at least 5%; proportion of vegetation composed of negative indicator species and non-native species less than 1%; at least one positive indicator species present in vicinity of each monitoring stop in block scree; total cover of grass species and dwarf shrubs less than 20%; total cover of bracken (Pteridium aquilinum), native trees and shrubs less than 25%; live leaves of forbs and shoots of dwarf shrubs showing signs of grazing or browsing collectively less than 50%; ground disturbed by human and animal paths, scree running, vehicles less than 10%; and no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species, and no decline in status of hepatic mats.	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this terrestrial montane habitat occurs > 5km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge. There is no hydrological connectivity to any example of this habitat type as according to available datasets.	-	-	Yes

Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]	Stable/ increasing habitat area; no decline in habitat distribution; maintain soil nutrient status; at least one positive indicator species present in vicinity of each monitoring stop; proportion of vegetation composed of non-native species less than 1%; Total cover of bracken, native trees and shrubs less than 25%; live leaves of forbs and shoots of dwarf shrubs showing signs of grazing or browsing collectively less than 50%; and no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species associated with the habitat and no decline in status of hepatic mats associated with this habitat.	Given the lack of pathways, there is no source-pathway receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to this qualifying interest. The closest example of this terrestrial montane habitat occurs > 5km over land from Carrowrevagh Bridge. There is no hydrological connectivity to any example of this habitat type as according to available datasets.	-	-	Yes
Freshwater Pearl Mussel Margaritifera margaritifera [1029]	Maintain distribution at 4.34km; restore populations to at least 2 million adult mussels; restore to at least 20% of population no more than 65mm in length; and at least 5% of population no more than 30mm in length; no more than 5% decline from previous number of live adults	Individual records of this species occurs downstream of Carrowrevagh Bridge, the closest within 5km. Freshwater pearl mussel are sensitive to disturbance and water quality impacts which may arise, particularly during construction. As such, there is a complete	- General Measures (as above). - Watercourse Protection (as above). - Biosecurity protocols (as above).	No in combination effect: - Plans subject to AA prior to adoption and contain policies and objectives to ensure protection of European sites. - Proposed scheme alone will not adversely	Yes - Due to mitigation measures, best practice measures and implementation of monitoring, no adverse effects on water quality or the designated conservation interests of

	counted; dead shells less than 1% of the adult population and scattered in distribution; maintain suitable habitat extent in 2.67km of the Bundorragha and any additional stretches necessary for salmonid spawning, (suitable habitat target length includes the perimeter of Fin Lough); restore condition of suitable habitat; restore water quality - macroinvertebrates: EQR greater than 0.90 (Q4-5 or Q5); phytobenthos: EQR greater than 0.93; restore substratum quality - filamentous algae: absent or trace (less than 5%); macrophytes: absent or trace (less than 5%); restore substratum quality - stable cobble and gravel substrate with very little fine material; no artificially elevated levels of fine sediment; restore to no more than 20% decline from water column to 5cm depth in substrate; restore appropriate hydrological regime; maintain sufficient juvenile salmonids to host glochidial larvae; and	source-pathway-receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to these qualifying interest. - Risk of impacts to water quality given the nature of the proposed works and the use of heavy machinery and plant in proximity to the river. - Potential for the accidental release of polluting matter from equipment and machinery. - No invasive species were recorded during site visits; however, biosecurity protocols will prevent the spread of aquatic diseases. - No potential for operational stage impacts.		affect the integrity of any European sites, and therefore will not act in combination any other major project to have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites. - No projects identified on the EIA Portal within the geographical scope of the proposed development. - Varying nature and scale of developments within 1km of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC and connected waterbodies. Such projects must comply with the EPA's Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤10) (EPA, 2021). - Other activities undertaken by farmers and landowners would include prior consultation with NPWS and compliance with European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture)	the European site will occur.

	maintain the area and condition of fringing habitats necessary to support the population.			Regulations, 2011 (as amended).	
Salmon Salmo salar [1106]	100% of river channels down to 2nd order accessible from estuary; conservation limit for each system consistently exceeded; maintain or exceed 0+ fry mean catchment-wide abundance threshold value- currently set at 17 salmon fry/5 minutes sampling; no significant decline in out-migrating smolt abundance; no decline in no. & distribution of spawning redds due to anthropogenic causes; and water quality at least Q4 at all sampled sites.	Species known to occur within the Erriff-Clew Bay catchment, the Erriff River, and its tributaries which includes the Derrycraff watercourse. No suitable habitat or individuals of this species were identified during surveys; however, Salmon are sensitive to disturbance and water quality impacts which may arise, particularly during construction. As such, there is a complete source-pathway-receptor chain for impacts from the proposed works to these qualifying interest. - Risk of impacts to water quality given the nature of the proposed works and the use of heavy machinery and plant in proximity to the river. - Potential for the accidental release of polluting matter from equipment and machinery.	- General Measures (as above). - Watercourse Protection (as above). - Biosecurity protocols (as above).	No in combination effect: - Plans subject to AA prior to adoption and contain policies and objectives to ensure protection of European sites. - Proposed scheme alone will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites, and therefore will not act in combination any other major project to have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites. - No projects identified on the EIA Portal within the geographical scope of the proposed development. - Varying nature and scale of developments within 1km of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC and connected waterbodies. Such projects must	Yes - Due to mitigation measures, best practice measures and implementation of monitoring, no adverse effects on water quality or the designated conservation interests of the European site will occur.

		- No invasive species were recorded during site visits; however, biosecurity protocols will prevent the spread of aquatic diseases. - No potential for operational stage impacts.		comply with the EPA's Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent ≤10) (EPA, 2021). - Other activities undertaken by farmers and landowners would include prior consultation with NPWS and compliance with European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations, 2011 (as amended).	

Overall Conclusion: Integrity test

The applicant determined that following the implementation of mitigation, the construction and operation of the proposed development alone or in combination with other plans and projects will not adversely affect the integrity of this European site.

Based on the information provided, I am satisfied that adverse effects can be excluded for the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC and that no effects of any significance will occur.

The proposed bridge rehabilitation works are located approximately 205m upstream of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC. There is hydrological connection linking the proposed project site to this SAC via the 2nd order watercourse that the bridge crosses. No in-stream works are proposed within the watercourse; a dry working area will be established at the bridge by setting up a dam system. Conservation objective targets for the qualifying interest habitats and species could be undermined through reduction in water quality; habitat alteration; indirect disturbance or displacement; and spread of invasive species during the construction phase in combination with other plans and projects.

No habitat loss within the European designated sites will occur and adverse in-combination effects from water contamination, spread of invasive species and disturbance can be effectively prevented by mitigation measures ensuring the protection of the watercourse. These mitigation measures will include the appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works, strict water pollution controls (e.g., sandbag dams, silt fences, biosecurity protocols); timing works to avoid sensitive periods for aquatic fauna; pre-construction surveys for otter holts; noise and lighting controls to minimise disturbance; and measure to address the risk pollution incidents.

Based on the information submitted, surveys carried out analysis provided, I am satisfied that no uncertainty remains.

The proposed development would not delay or prevent the attainment of the Conservation objectives of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC and adverse effects on site integrity can be excluded.

8.7. Appropriate Assessment Conclusions

8.7.1. Having carried out screening for appropriate assessment of the proposed remediation works to Carrowrevagh Bridge, which carries the N59 National Secondary Road over a second order watercourse in the townlands of Carrowrevagh and Carrowkennedy, Co. Mayo, it was concluded that the works may result in significant effects on the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC. Consequently, an appropriate assessment was required of the implications of the project on the qualifying features of this site in light of its conservation objectives.

8.7.2. Following an appropriate assessment, it has been ascertained that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not adversely affect the integrity of this European site, or any other European site, in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. No reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

8.7.3. This conclusion is based on:

- A full and detailed assessment of all aspects of the proposed project including proposed mitigation measures and ecological monitoring in relation to the Conservation Objectives of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC.
- Detailed assessment of all aspects of the proposed development that could result in significant effects on the European site within a zone of influence of the proposed scheme.
- Application of mitigation measures designed to avoid adverse effects on site integrity and likely effectiveness of same.
- Detailed assessment of in combination effects with other plans and projects including historical projects, current proposals and future plans.
- No reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of adverse effects on the integrity of the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC.

9.0 Recommendation

On the basis of the above assessment, I recommend that the Commission approve the proposed development subject to the reasons and considerations below and

subject to conditions including requiring compliance with the submitted details and with the mitigation measures as set out in the NIS.

Reasons and Considerations

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

(a) the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),

(b) the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015,

(c) the likely consequences for the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is proposed to carry out the proposed development and the likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European Site,

(d) the conservation objectives, qualifying interests and special conservation interests for the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC (Site code: 001932),

(e) the policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan, 2022-2028,

(f) the nature and extent of the proposed works as set out in the application for approval,

(g) the information submitted in relation to the potential impacts on habitats, flora and fauna, including the Natura Impact Statement,

(h) the submissions and observations received in relation to the proposed development,

(i) the report and recommendation of the person appointed by the Board to make a report and recommendation on the matter.

Appropriate Assessment:

The Commission agreed with and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report that the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC is the only European Site for which there is a likelihood of significant effects. The Commission considered the Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted with the application for approval, the mitigation measures contained therein, the submissions and observations on file, and the Inspector's

assessment. The Commission completed an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the affected European Sites, namely the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC (Site code: 001932) in view of the site's conservation objectives. The Commission considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an appropriate assessment. In completing the appropriate assessment, the Commission considered, in particular, the following:

i. the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development both individually or in combination with other plans or projects,

ii. the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal, and

iii. the conservation objectives for the European Sites.

In completing the appropriate assessment, the Commission accepted and adopted the appropriate assessment carried out in the Inspector's report in respect of the potential effects of the proposed development on the integrity of the aforementioned European Site, having regard to the site's conservation objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Commission was satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Proper Planning and Sustainable Development/Likely effects on the environment:

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not have significant negative effects on the environment or the community in the vicinity, would not give rise to a risk of pollution, would not be detrimental to the amenities of the area, would not adversely impact on the cultural, archaeological and built heritage of the area, would not interfere with the existing land uses in the area, and would not interfere with traffic and pedestrian safety. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where any mitigation measures set out in the Natura Impact Statement or any conditions of approval require further details to be prepared by or on behalf of the local authority, these details shall be placed on the file and retained as part of the public record.

   Reason: In the interest of clarity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to ensure the protection of the environment.

2. The mitigation and monitoring measures identified in the Natura Impact Statement submitted with the application shall be implemented in full. Prior to the commencement of development, details of a time schedule for implementation of mitigation measures and associated monitoring shall be prepared by the local authority and placed on file and retained as part of the public record.

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

3. Prior to the commencement of development, the local authority, or any agent acting on its behalf, shall prepare in consultation with the project ecologist and relevant statutory agencies, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating all mitigation measures indicated in the Natura Impact Statement and demonstration of proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols. The CEMP shall include:

   a. all mitigation measures indicated in the Natura Impact Statement,

   b. location and extent of silt fencing to be installed on site.

   c. specific proposals as to how the measures outlined in the CEMP will be measured and monitored for effectiveness,

Reason: In the interest of protecting the environment and the European Site.

4. A suitably qualified ecologist shall be retained by the local authority to oversee the site set up and construction of the proposed development and implementation of mitigation measures relating to ecology. The ecologist shall be present during the works. Upon completion of works, an ecological report of the site works shall be prepared by the appointed ecologist to be kept on file as part of the public record.

   Reason: In the interest of nature conservation and biodiversity.

5. The following nature conservation requirements shall be complied with:

   a. Prior to the commencement of development, details of measures to protect fisheries and water quality of the river system shall be outlined and placed on file. Full regard shall be had to Inland Fisheries Ireland's published guidelines for construction works near waterways (Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and Adjacent to Waters, 2016). A programme of water quality monitoring shall be prepared in consultation with the contractor, the local authority and relevant statutory agencies and the programme shall be implemented thereafter.

   b. no vegetation removal shall take place during the period of the 1st day of March to the 31st day of August (inclusive) without the written approval of the Ecological Clerk of Works. Such approval shall be placed on the public file.

   c. a pre-construction otter survey by a suitability qualified ecologist shall be carried out before works commence.

   d. a pre-construction bat survey shall be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist during the active bat season, and,

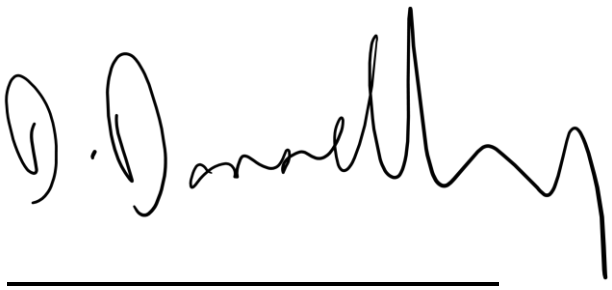
   any destruction of bat roosting sites or relocation of bat species shall be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist under a Derogation Licence granted by the Minster of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and nature conservation.

6. The Local Authority and any agent acting on its behalf shall ensure that all plant and machinery used during the works should be thoroughly cleaned and washed before delivery to the site to prevent the spread of hazardous invasive species and pathogens.

   Reason: In the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to ensure the protection of the European sites.

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.



Donal Donnelly
Senior Planning Inspector

14th January 2026

Appendix 1: Form 1 – EIA Pre-Screening

An Bord Pleanála Case Reference	ABP-322038-25		
Proposed Development Summary	Proposed development of N59 Carrowrevagh Bridge Rehabilitation Work.		
Development Address	Carrowrevagh, County Mayo		
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)		**Yes** ✓	Tick if relevant and proceed to Q2.
		No	Tick if relevant. No further action required
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?			
Yes			
No	✓		Tick if relevant. No further action required
3. Does the proposed development equal or exceed any relevant THRESHOLD set out in the relevant Class?			
Yes			
No			
4. Is the proposed development below the relevant threshold for the Class of development [sub-threshold development]?			
No			

5. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?		
No		**Screening determination remains as above (Q1 to Q4)**
Yes	✓	**Screening Determination required**

Inspector: _____ **Date:** 14th January 2026