
**COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF RIGHTS/INTEREST
OVER LAND**

**UISCE ÉIREANN COMPULSORY PURCHASE
(STALEEN WTP TO DULEEK TRUNK MAIN) ORDER,
2025**

CO. MEATH

PLANNING REPORT



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CO. MEATH****PLANNING REPORT**

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PROJECT NO. 20814.2					
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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Location of Proposed Trunk Main in Co. Meath	4
1.2	Project Background	5
1.3	Structure of CPO Planning Report	6
2	OUTLINE PROJECT DESCRIPTION & TRUNK MAIN REQUIREMENTS	6
2.1	Outline Project Description & Trunk Main Requirements	6
3	PURPOSE OF CPO APPLICATION	7
4	DETAILED SUMMARY OF CPO PLOTS	9
5	RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	11
6	LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT	14
6.1	International/UNSDGs/EEC	14
6.2	Uisce Éireann Strategies and Plans	16
6.3	National, Regional and Local Planning Policy	19
6.4	Local Policy Context – Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027	21
6.5	Summary of Policy Compliance and Support at a National, Regional and Local Level	25
7	SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYS AND ASSESSMENTS	25
7.1	Landscape Character in County Meath: LCTs and LCAs	25
7.2	Appropriate Assessment Screening	26
7.3	Archaeological Heritage Report	26
7.4	Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)	27
7.5	Summary	28
8	CONCLUSIONS	28

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1: Existing Staleen WTP to Windmill Hill Trunk Main.....	5
Figure 3-1: Trunk Main Route and Townlands in Co. Meath.....	8

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2-1: Typical Pipeline Depth of Underground Trenches.....	7
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Table 4-1: Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main, Summary of CPO Plots (x 42)	10
Table 5-1: Planning History Search (March 2025)	12
Table 6-1: SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation	14
Table 6-2: UÉ's Biodiversity Action Plan – 7 Objectives & Key Benefits	18
Table 6-3: National Planning Framework Policy Objectives (NPOs)	19
Table 6-4: EMRA's Regional Policy Objectives	21
Table 6-5: CDP Policy Objectives – Chapter 4	22
Table 6-6: CDP Policy Objectives – Chapter 6	22
Table 6-7: CDP Policy – Chapter 8	23
Table 6-8: CDP Strategic Objectives – Chapter 9	24

APPENDICES: ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYS/REPORTS

Appendix A: EIA Screening, Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd. March 2025

Appendix B: AA Screening, APEM, March 2025

Appendix C: Archaeological Assessment, Courtney Deery, March 2025

Appendix D: Flood Risk Assessment, Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd., December 2024

1 INTRODUCTION

This Planning Report has been prepared by Laura O'Brien Osman, Principal Town Planner (MRTPI, MIPI) with Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd. (NOD), in support of an application by Uisce Éireann for confirmation of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), titled '*Uisce Éireann Compulsory Purchase (Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main) Order, 2025*'. The Compulsory Purchase Order relates to the compulsory acquisition of rights/interest over lands in nine townlands in County Meath. The CPO application is made pursuant to the powers conferred on Uisce Éireann, which is designated as a water services authority, under the provisions of sections 32 and 93 of the Water Services Act 2007, (as amended). The nine townlands which are the subject of the CPO are Staleen, Cruicerath, Newtown, Clonlusk, Longford, Downestown, Commons, Garballagh and Deenes.

As of 14th January 2014, Uisce Éireann assumed responsibility from local authorities for water services functions nationally. A key element of the infrastructure challenge for Uisce Éireann is to meet the demands of decades of underinvestment in water services infrastructure. Uisce Éireann is a regulated water services utility. Ireland's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the technical and environmental regulator. The Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) is the financial regulator and aims to ensure water services are delivered in a safe, secure, and sustainable manner and that Uisce Éireann operates in an efficient manner. One of the key ways in which the CRU regulates this is through the revenue control process. These are defined periods of allowable capital (and current) expenditure, which Uisce Éireann is required to comply with on an annual basis.

The purpose of this report is to provide the planning and sustainable development context in relation to Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) proceedings, and to demonstrate that the proposed project fully accords and supports the delivery of the National Planning Framework (2018 & draft revised NPF November 2024), the Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region (EMRA), and the core strategy and all relevant policies and objectives of the statutory County Development Plan *i.e.*, Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Investing in water quality and water network capacity is a key objective of Uisce Éireann's overall capital programme and addressing water network deficiencies in Co. Meath is a high priority for Uisce Éireann. This application is for the confirmation of a CPO relating solely to the acquisition of rights/interests in land *i.e.*, permanent wayleaves and temporary working areas. Should the CPO be confirmed, it is Uisce Éireann's responsibility to ensure that all necessary permissions, licences and/or consents are in place prior to undertaking the trunk main works in County Meath.

It should be highlighted that Irish Water became Uisce Éireann on the 31st December 2022 following a commencement order for the Water Services (Amendment) Act 2022. This report refers to Uisce Éireann throughout and direct extracts sourced from the statutory Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, which predate the commencement order, will refer to Irish Water.

1.1 Location of Proposed Trunk Main in Co. Meath

This application for CPO confirmation relates to a trunk main project involving the replacement and upsizing of the initial section of the existing DN400 uPVC Staleen WTP to Windmill Hill Reservoir trunk main, extending south from Staleen WTP to Bolies Little Connection, and is hereafter referred to as the 'Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main'. The subsequent section of the existing trunk main from Bolies Little Connection to Windmill Hill Reservoir will be upgraded at a later phase.

The proposed trunk main, will increase from an existing outer diameter (OD) 400mm trunk main to a proposed new OD 700/800mm trunk main, would be 8.4km in length and would be located within Co. Meath running south from the existing Staleen Water Treatment Plant (WTP) ca., 900m south-west of Donore Village, continuing southwards through agricultural lands to the west of Duleek. The trunk main route would run along the western boundary of Duleek GAA Club/District Community Centre and continue southwards onto Bolies Little Connection.

The proposed trunk main pipeline route would be located to the west of the existing pipeline within a rural landscape consisting of mainly agricultural land and open fields. The subject lands are all zoned as '*Rural Areas*' under the current county development plan and are all located beyond the settlement and development boundaries of both Donore Village and Duleek, which are illustrated in Sheets 10a and 12a of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

It is submitted that the proposed trunk main project will not impact on the overall 'use' of the subject lands as the planned trunk main will be located below ground. The pipeline route has been designed to run along the edge of agricultural lands, including agricultural lands that have recently been developed for solar farm use. In addition, in relation to agricultural lands owned by quarry operators, it should be highlighted that their land certificate excluded the right for the minerals. Therefore, the route would not have any negative impact on the overall use of the CPO lands in the long-term.

In the wider surrounding area are pockets of extractive land uses, *e.g.*, two quarries (Keegan Quarries Ltd., Stoneyford Quarry and Irish Cement Ltd./CRH), an approved solar farm, community facility (Duleek GAA Club and Duleek Bellewstown District Community Facility), and an existing solar farm. The pipeline will be constructed in a private land corridor with reduced width crossings over existing local and national roads (L5609, 2 no. crossings and L5610 1 no. crossing). The planned pipeline route runs under three small streams, a gas pipeline, the Drybridge to Baltrasna 110Kv power line, and the railway line that serves Platin CRH (Irish Cement Ltd.), as part of the freight-only Drogheda to Navan railway line, which previously served Tara Mines.

The proposed trunk main will end at Bolies Little Connection on the north-western side of the L1610 approximately 200m north of the River Nanny.

1.2 Project Background

The rural land subject to this compulsory acquisition application is required to undertake the replacement and upsizing of the existing trunk main from Staleen WTP to Bolies Little Connection, which is the initial 8.4km section of the overall existing trunk main that supplies water from Staleen WTP to Windmill Hill Reservoir in Co. Meath. The existing overall trunk main is 16km and is illustrated in **Figure 1-1** below.

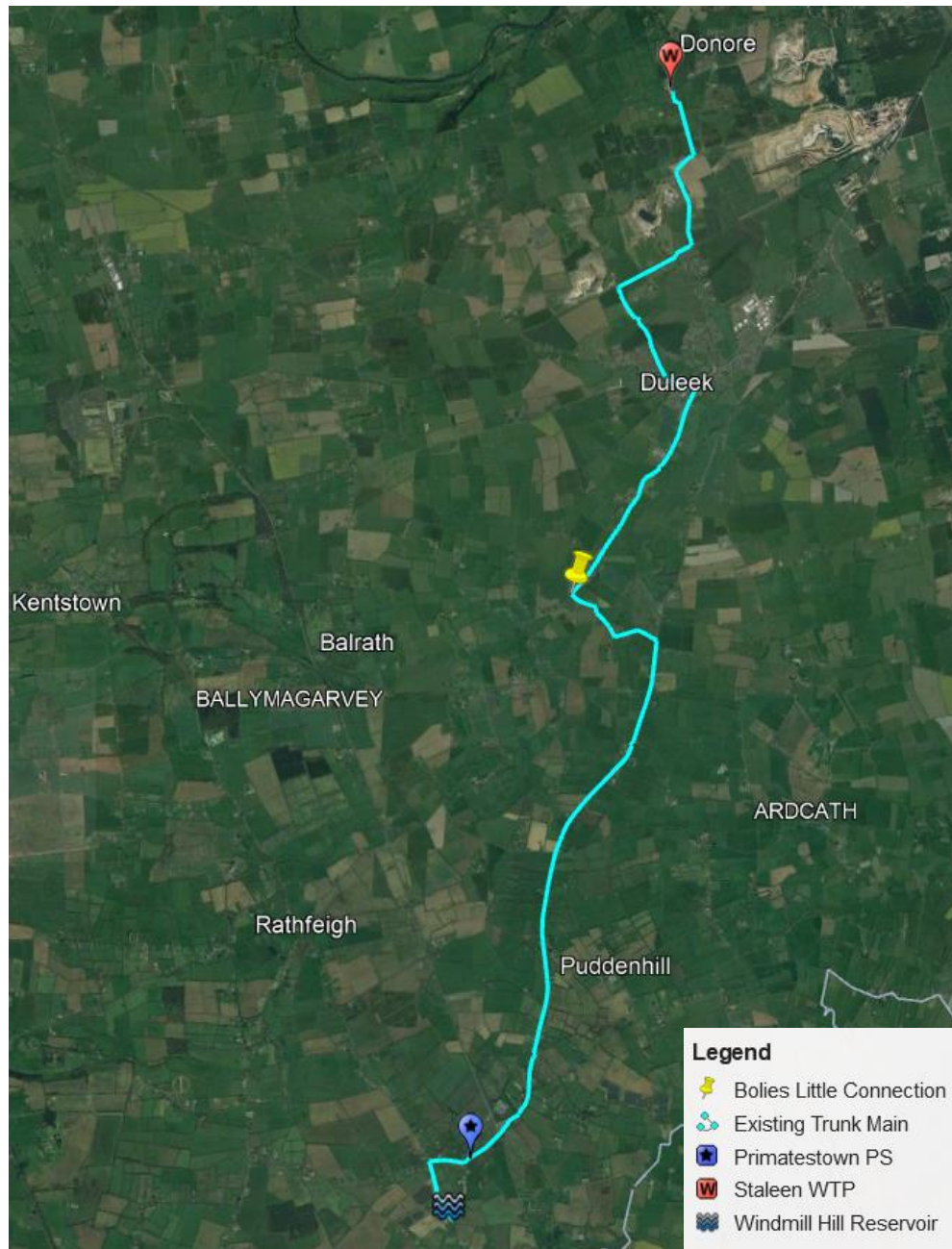


Figure 1-1: Existing Staleen WTP to Windmill Hill Trunk Main

The existing trunk main is nearing the end of its life and is prone to failure. Since 2008 the trunk main has failed 38 times, each failure causing prolonged water supply interruptions to over 26,000 people across East Meath, from Duleek to Ashbourne. Replacing the existing pipeline with new, modern pipes will improve pipeline capacity resilience and security of supply across the East Meath Water Supply Zones (WSZs).

1.3 Structure of CPO Planning Report

We provide an overview of the Project Description and trunk main requirements for the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main project in **Section 2**.

The purpose of the CPO application is set out in **Section 3** along with drawings showing the proposed boundaries for the CPO Plots (42 no. CPO Plots in total). **Section 4** provides a detailed summary of the CPO plots and examines the location description and context of the CPO lands/plots in relation to existing and proposed land use.

The preferred route of the proposed trunk main pipeline from Staleen WTP to the Bolies Little Connection was selected following a detailed route options assessment process. The results of the route selection assessment are set out in the detailed *Route Selection Report* prepared by NOD in November 2024.

This report also examines relevant planning history along the planned trunk main pipeline route, as listed on Meath County Council's online planning portal in **Section 5** and provides an overview of the legislative and planning policy context at an international, national, regional and local level at **Section 6**.

In addition, the CPO lands have been subject to an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening (March 2025), an Archaeological Heritage Report (March 2025) and a Flood Risk Assessment (December 2024), copies of which are provided in the relevant appendices. An overview of the environmental assessments is provided in **Section 7** below.

Finally, conclusions are provided at **Section 8**.

It should be highlighted that access to a number of the CPO subject lands was denied by landowners at the time of writing this CPO Planning Report in March 2025. As a result, the CPO Planning Report is informed by desk-based environmental assessments prepared in 2024 and 2025, along with previous site visits undertaken in 2023 and early 2024.

2 OUTLINE PROJECT DESCRIPTION & TRUNK MAIN REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Outline Project Description & Trunk Main Requirements

The proposed trunk main pipeline project involves the construction of a new ca. 8.4km 800/700mm trunk main to link Staleen WTP and Bolies Little Connection *via* the western environs of Duleek. The existing 400mm uPVC trunk main will be decommissioned.

The private land corridor required for the planned works will consist of a 10-15m permanent wayleave and 25m temporary working areas to facilitate the construction of the trunk mains. This working corridor is only for private lands, and it reduces in width crossing public roads.

The pipeline corridor requirements are the minimum distances, clearances and land use constraints necessary to ensure with reasonable confidence that the objective of protection of pipelines against damage is achieved and that adequate access and working space are available for pipeline construction, future inspection and repair. Significant local restrictions and obstacles inevitably determine the extent to which these requirements are achieved over the entire length of the route. At such locations, special construction and pipeline protection measures will be required. For example, one parcel of land owned by

Irish Cement Ltd. (CPO Plot 015), will have a maximum working strip for the temporary area of 51m to facilitate the construction of the trenchless dual railway crossing.

The planned 800/700mm trunk main will include a number of ancillary chambers, e.g., scour valve, air valve, and sluice valve chambers, along the length of the trunk main to facilitate the operation and maintenance of the overall pipeline. All the works will be subsurface, including chambers, and there will be access covers at the surface of these chamber locations. Typical trench depths are set out in **Table 2-1** below.

Table 2-1: Typical Pipeline Depth of Underground Trenches

Location	Depth of Underground Trenches
Across Roads (e.g., L5609 x 2, L5610 x 1)	1,200mm
In fields/private lands	900mm

As noted above, the works will be primarily within a private land corridor and will be an open-cut construction. There are three stream crossings along the pipeline route, i.e., Drumnahan, Kellystown and Garballagh streams. The technical design of the proposed crossings will be determined after the site surveys are completed and will comprise open-cut construction. There is also a gas pipeline and railway crossing of the Drogheda to Navan railway line, which will be constructed using trenchless technology techniques.

It is anticipated that the construction period for the 8.4km trunk main in Co. Meath will be for a maximum 30 months, and it is intended that works will commence in October 2025.

3 PURPOSE OF CPO APPLICATION

The purpose of this CPO application is to acquire rights/interest to lands along a corridor for the proposed route of the trunk main, which could not be acquired by agreement. The CPO plots that are needed for the planned Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main route are located in a north-south direction within nine Townlands in County Meath and encompasses a total corridor of **29.783 ha** of land.

As noted above, the proposed route of the trunk main is predominantly agricultural and is located to the west of the designated development boundary for Duleek Town, County Meath. In relation to an existing and a proposed solar farm (CPO Plots 022 & 023), the pipeline has been relocated adjacent to the land boundary, to avoid significant impact on these commercial operations. Land use is examined further in **Section 5 Relevant Planning History** below.

In total, 42 no. plots are being advanced under the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main Project and are the subject of this CPO application for rights/interest in land within a total of nine townlands in Co. Meath, namely:

1. Staleen;
2. Cruicerath;
3. Newtown;
4. Clonlusk;
5. Longford;

6. Downestown;
7. Commons;
8. Garballagh; and
9. Deenes.

The route of the 8.4km trunk main, within the nine townlands in Co. Meath, is illustrated in **Figure 3-1** below.

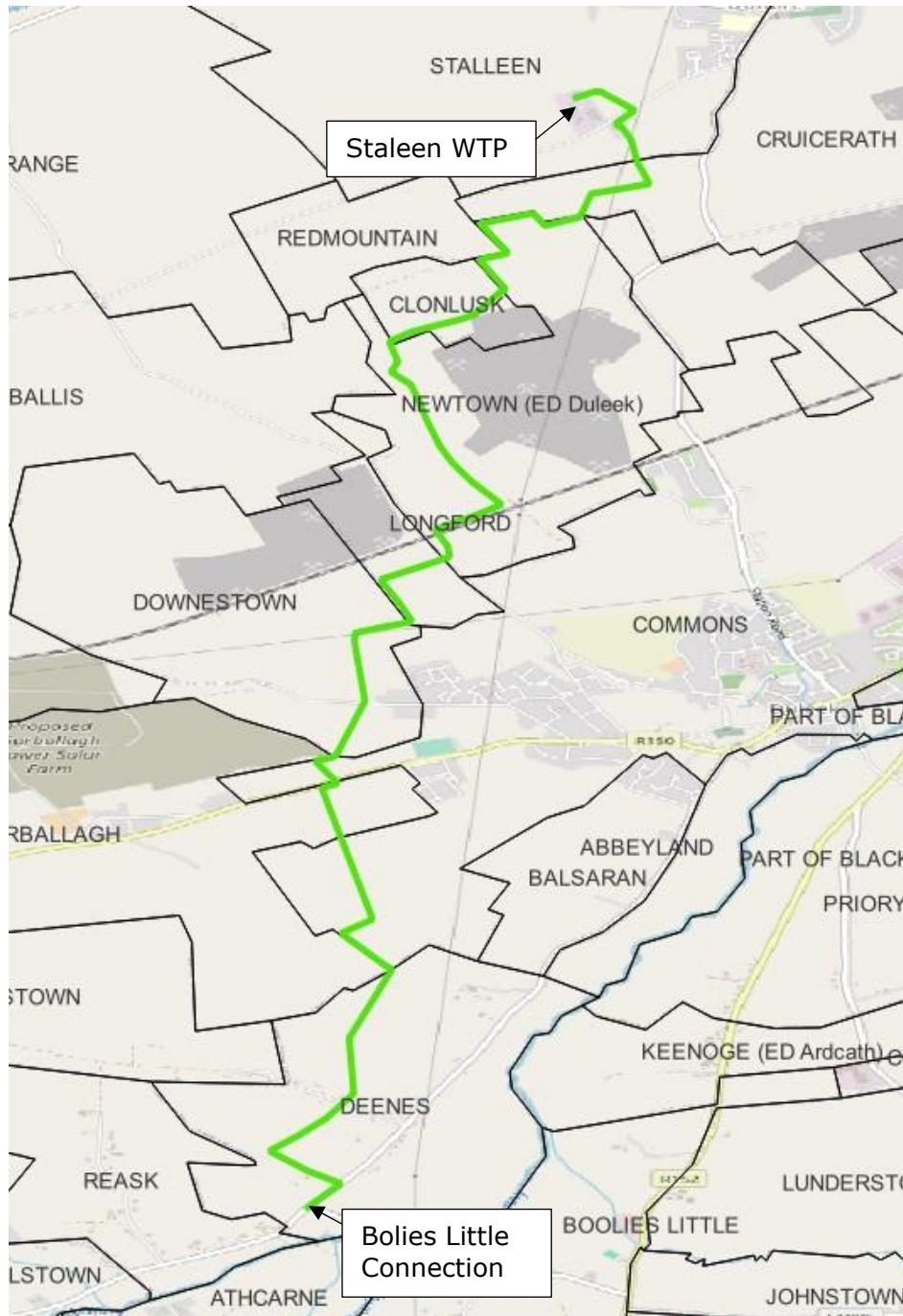


Figure 3-1: Trunk Main Route and Townlands in Co. Meath

The subject lands for CPO are covered by land and property Folios for Co. Meath and can be classified by the following types:

- 1. Permanent Wayleaves (x 17 CPO Plots); and**
- 2. Temporary Working Area (x 25 CPO Plots).**

These property Folios consist of 17 no. landowners that includes 16 no. private landowners and 1 No. GAA Club/Community Facility (CPO Plots 026 & 027). 2 No. of the private landowners are registered quarry owners, although the land is owned by quarry owners, the lands are currently under agricultural use.

The land corridors are required for the pipeline works, construction and maintenance activities in the short, medium and long term.

Permanent Wayleaves:

17 no. CPO Plots are required as permanent wayleaves by Uisce Éireann to enable pipeline construction, future inspection and repair of the proposed trunk main on lands located within nine townlands in Co. Meath. These CPOs will allow for a permanent wayleave width of maximum 10m (Sterilised width) on most parcels of land. Plot 001 requires a wider wayleave of up to 15 meters to accommodate two pipelines, while Plots 014 and 017 also require a maximum width of 15 meters to facilitate the dual trenchless railway crossing. It is anticipated that this grant of rights/interest in the CPO lands will be protected by registration at Land Registry, *i.e.*, Tailte Éireann.

Temporary Working Areas:

In addition, 25 no. temporary working areas are required to enable the pipeline construction on lands located within nine Townlands in Co. Meath. These lands will be required for the construction phase of the trunk main pipeline only, which is envisaged to be a maximum period of 30 months, commencing in October 2025.

4 DETAILED SUMMARY OF CPO PLOTS

The CPO plots are all zoned as 'Rural Areas' under the current county development plan and are all located beyond the settlement and development boundaries of both Donore Village and Duleek, which are illustrated in Sheets 10a and 12a of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

In addition, the pipeline route has been specifically designed to run along the edge of agricultural lands, including agricultural lands that have recently been developed for solar farm use. The construction phase will be temporary and in the short-term. In addition, as noted above, in relation to agricultural lands owned by quarry operators, it should be highlighted that their land certificate excluded the right for the minerals.

Therefore, the (below ground) pipeline route would not have a negative impact on the overall 'use' of the CPO plots/land in the medium to long-term.

A detailed summary of the 42 no. plots including acquisition type, *i.e.*, permanent wayleave and/or temporary working area, along with area in hectares, location/Townland, and Property Folio Number (MH=Meath) is set out in **Table 4-1** below.

It should be noted that there are two plots of land, which are currently unregistered and are therefore without any land or property Folio numbers *i.e.*, CPO Plots 012 and 013. These lands are marked by an asterisk in the table.

Table 4-1: Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main, Summary of CPO Plots (x 42)

No.	Plot No.	Acquisition Type	Type	Area (Ha)	Townland	Folio No.
1	Plot 001	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.3039	STALLEEN	MH4575
2	Plot 002	Temporary Working Area	T	1.1874	STALLEEN	MH4575
3	Plot 003	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.3339	STALLEEN	MH5119
4	Plot 004	Temporary Working Area	T	0.7282	STALLEEN	MH5119
5	Plot 123	Temporary Working Area	T	0.1611	STALLEEN	MH5119
6	Plot 005	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.3313	CRUICERATH	MH72136F
7	Plot 006	Temporary Working Area	T	0.3656	CRUICERATH	MH72136F
8	Plot 007	Temporary Working Area	T	0.5363	CRUICERATH	MH72136F
9	Plot 008	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.1376	CRUICERATH	MH85
10	Plot 009	Temporary Working Area	T	0.3623	CRUICERATH	MH85
11	Plot 010	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.9221	NEWTOWN	MH7758
12	Plot 011	Temporary Working Area	T	2.1787	NEWTOWN	MH7758
13	Plot 012	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.4807	CLONLUSK	N/A*
14	Plot 013	Temporary Working Area	T	1.1849	CLONLUSK	N/A*
15	Plot 014	Permanent Wayleave	W	1.3704	NEWTOWN	MH11074F
16	Plot 015	Temporary Working Area	T	2.8710	NEWTOWN	MH11074F
17	Plot 016	Temporary Working Area	T	0.0233	NEWTOWN	MH11074F
18	Plot 117	Temporary Working Area	T	0.4275	NEWTOWN	MH11074F
19	Plot 118	Temporary Working Area	T	0.2221	NEWTOWN	MH11074F
20	Plot 017	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.1786	NEWTOWN	MH25778F
21	Plot 018	Temporary Working Area	T	0.3368	NEWTOWN	MH25778F
22	Plot 019	Temporary Working Area	T	0.3268	NEWTOWN	MH25778F
23	Plot 020	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.4856	LONGFORD	MH11512
24	Plot 021	Temporary Working Area	T	0.5971	LONGFORD	MH11512
25	Plot 121	Temporary Working Area	T	0.6165	LONGFORD	MH11512
26	Plot 124	Temporary Working Area	T	0.0722	LONGFORD	MH11512
27	Plot 022	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.5944	DOWNESTOWN	MH19236F
28	Plot 023	Temporary Working Area	T	1.5364	DOWNESTOWN	MH19236F
29	Plot 024	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.3278	DOWNESTOWN	MH10697
30	Plot 025	Temporary Working Area	T	0.7680	DOWNESTOWN	MH10697
31	Plot 026	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.2106	COMMONS	MH69879F
32	Plot 027	Temporary Working Area	T	0.4049	COMMONS	MH69879F
33	Plot 030	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.3576	GARBALLAGH	MH15069
34	Plot 031	Temporary Working Area	T	0.8375	GARBALLAGH	MH15069
35	Plot 032	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.4422	COMMONS	MH10231F
36	Plot 033	Temporary Working Area	T	1.0663	COMMONS	MH10231F
37	Plot 034	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.4460	COMMONS	MH7243
38	Plot 035	Temporary Working Area	T	1.1142	COMMONS	MH7243
39	Plot 036	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.7972	DEENES	MH11594

40	Plot 037	Temporary Working Area	T	2.0054	DEENES	MH11594
41	Plot 038	Permanent Wayleave	W	0.6318	DEENES	MH24936
42	Plot 039	Temporary Working Area	T	1.5004	DEENES	MH24936
		Total		29.783 ha		

The location and boundaries of the CPO lands for the replacement trunk main (8.4km), consisting of 42 no. plots consisting of **Permanent Wayleave (x 17 CPO Plots); and Temporary Working Area (x 25 CPO Plots)** in nine townlands in County Meath, is set out in Drawing Nos. **UÉ/10021352/CWL/001 to UÉ/10021352/CWL/018**, which are provided as part of the CPO submission pack.

As noted above, with regard to the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main, this application is for the confirmation of a CPO relating solely to the acquisition of rights/interests in land. Should the CPO be confirmed, it is Uisce Éireann's responsibility to ensure that all necessary permissions, licences and/or consents are in place prior to undertaking the proposed development.

5 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Live and/or recently approved planning applications were reviewed by NOD in March 2025 on the online planning records of Meath County Council for the surrounding area of the proposed route of the trunk main. There are four planning applications relevant to the CPO land corridor and planned Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main pipeline project, which are set out in **Table 5-1** below.

Table 5-1: Planning History Search (March 2025)

MCC Ref. No.	Date of MCC Order/Submission	Description of Permitted Development	Townland	Relevance to CPO
1. No. 22972	2 nd May 2023, MCC issued a Final Grant of Permission:	<i>The development will consist of a 10-year permission for the construction of a solar PV energy development within a total site area of approximately 18.92ha, include solar PV panels ground mounted on steel support structures, IPP electrical control building and associated compound, electrical transformer/inverter station modules, battery storage modules, storage containers, CCTV cameras, access tracks, fencing and associated electrical cabling, ducting and ancillary infrastructure. Significant further information/revised plans submitted on this application.</i>	Downestown	Route corridor is going through the boundary of the solar farm.
2. No. LB201519/PL17.310768	3 rd March 2023, ABP issued a Final Grant of Permission.	<i>The continuation of the use and further quarrying of limestone within the 57.5Ha site, granted by Substitute consent (PL17.su0088), comprising extraction from a 20.6Ha area which includes a lateral extension of 6.2ha, using conventional drilling and blasting techniques and mineral reduction using mobile crushing and screening to a depth of 30mAOD. The development includes some 3.4ha of advanced woodland planting, new administration office and workshop, associated septic tank with raised sand polishing filter and an oil interceptor with soak-away trench, etc. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report and a Natura Impact Statement. Significant further information/revised plans submitted on this application.</i>	Clonlusk	Route corridor is outside of this planning application. The project is routed in the outside boundary of the quarry.
3. No. LB200487	10 th November 2020, MCC issued a Final Grant of Permission:	<i>A 10-year permission for the construction of a solar PV Energy development within a total site area of up to 81.3ha, to include solar PV panels ground mounted on steel support structures, electrical transformer/inverter station modules, battery storage modules, storage containers, CCTV cameras, access tracks, fencing and associated electrical cabling, ducting and ancillary</i>	Garballagh & Gaskinstown	The route corridor crosses the underground power cables (110Kv) that connect the sub-station to the Drybridge to Baltrasna 110Kv line, which traverses the site adjacent to the sub-station.

MCC Ref. No.	Date of MCC Order/Submission	Description of Permitted Development	Townland	Relevance to CPO
		<i>infrastructure. Significant further information/revised plans submitted on this application.</i>		
4. 2460866	14 th February 2025, MCC issued a Final Grant of Permission:	<i>the construction of a new 3m walking track complete with 8m lighting columns, a new floodlit playing pitch complete with 16m high floodlighting columns, a new Information Sign and all associated works.</i>	Commons	This new planning application is for development at the GAA grounds. The route corridor impacts this land parcel. However, UÉ/NOD are in negotiations with the GAA and are re-routing the pipeline at the boundaries to avoid going through the playing pitch and also to have minimum impact on the proposed walking track. It should be highlighted that the GAA grounds are located outside the settlement and development boundary of Duleek, as illustrated in Sheet 12a of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

NOD understands that this search in March 2025 represents the full extent of the planning history relevant to the CPO land corridor for the proposed trunk main pipeline in Co. Meath.

6 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are a number of strategic planning and sustainable development policies to support the proposed Trunk Main development, and hence the proposed CPO, at an international, national, regional, and local policy level, as follows:

6.1 International/UNSDGs/EEC

6.1.1 UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015 to date)

In 2015, Ireland was tasked (with Kenya) by the UN Secretary General to bring the world together to agree a plan to tackle global challenges by 2030. Following on from the key tenets of the Brundtland Commission (Our Common Future, 1987, which popularised the term 'Sustainable Development'), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (adopted in 2015) is a blueprint for sustainable development for the future. At its core, are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that cover the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection.

Along with 17 SDGs, there are 169 targets (and indicators) and the UN Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) evaluates the system-wide implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which focuses on the principle of '*Leave No-one Behind*'. Ireland, as one of the 191 UN Member States, must display a commitment to implement the global sustainable development goals. SDG6 and a description of SDG6 Targets are set out in **Table 6-1** below.

Table 6-1: SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation

	SDG 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Target	Description
6.1	By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.
6.2	By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.
6.3	By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.
6.4	By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.
6.5	By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.
6.6	By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.
6.a	By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water

	SDG 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Target	Description
	harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies.
6.b	Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.

The proposed CPO will support the planned Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main Project, which will provide adequate and sustainable water supply to accommodate the projected needs of the future population of County Meath, and is in accordance with UN SDG 6, as outlined above.

6.1.2 EU/EC Environmental Impact Assessment

The EIA Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effect of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, sets out the process by which the likely significant effects of a project on the environment are assessed. The planning code to give effect to the 2014 EIA Directive, *i.e.*, S.I. No. 296 of 2018 European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, has been made and took effect on 1st September 2018.

A Report to inform an Environmental impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been carried out for the proposed development (Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd, March 2025) and is included in **Appendix A**.

The EIA Screening Assessment Report has concluded that the proposed works relating to the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk main do not exceed any of the thresholds that trigger the mandatory requirement for EIA. As the proposed development is sub-threshold, the proposed development has been screened in accordance with the criteria as outlined within Annex III of the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU. Having regard to these criteria it is considered that the characteristics of the potential impacts of the proposed development are not considered significant and there are no long-term adverse impacts. Any potential impact on sensitive receptors during the construction phase will be temporary and short term. Impacts will be effectively managed through best practice approaches and specific mitigation measures. A permanent long-term positive impact in terms of water supply security can be anticipated from the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main.

It is submitted that there is no requirement for Uisce Éireann to prepare an EIA Report in relation to the proposed development.

6.1.3 EU/EC Birds and Habitats Directives

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires that plans and projects must be screened for the likelihood of significant effects on European Sites *i.e.*, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

To inform this CPO Planning Report, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening for the planned trunk main was undertaken by APEM on behalf of Uisce Éireann in March 2025. The report considers whether there is the potential for likely significant effects on any European sites either individually, or in combination with other plans or projects.

The aim of this AA Screening is to provide information to the competent authority in completing their statutory obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive), as implemented in Ireland under *inter alia* the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

The proposed trunk main pipeline works are within 15km of three European sites considered to be within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the development, namely the following:

1. River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299);
2. River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code 004232); and
3. River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (Site Code 004158).

The AA Screening concluded that in view of best scientific knowledge on the basis of objective information and, applying the precautionary principle, that, it could be excluded that the proposed trunk main development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on the above mentioned European site and therefore an AA, and the production of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), was deemed **not to be required**.

Refer to **Appendix B** for the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, prepared by APEM in March 2025.

6.2 Uisce Éireann Strategies and Plans

6.2.1 Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 (currently being updated)

Uisce Éireann's Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 provides the framework for water infrastructure investment in Ireland over the period from 2020-2024. The plan aims to provide high quality infrastructure to facilitate economic development and states:

'Irish Water has an approved amount of €5.35 billion to invest in public water and wastewater infrastructure between 2020 and 2024...Irish Water is focused on key deliverables that will bring our water infrastructure and services to a good standard, while supporting economic and social development as our economy continues to grow'.

Benefits from the proposed investment include supporting social and economic growth, as follows:

'Supporting Social and Economic Growth: Investment in water services is a key factor in enabling proper planning and sustainable development in the national, regional and local context'.

The plan aims to achieve investment in infrastructure through several large projects and several smaller projects. It is considered that a CPO for a land corridor for a trunk main in County Meath accords with the key objectives of the Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024.

6.2.2 National Water Resources Plan – Framework Plan (2021)

Uisce Éireann's first National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) states that:

"A national water resources plan is a strategic plan used to identify deficiencies and need across an entire water supply, and to develop plan level capital and operational solutions to address these issues. Irish Water's National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) will be the first such plan for the entire public water supply in Ireland. It will allow us to integrate Government Policy, Legislation and external factors including climate change that have the potential to impact our water supplies, into the planning and operation of our existing and future supply asset base."

The NWRP states that Water Resource Zones (WRZs) consist of multiple Water Supply Zones (WSZs). Water Supply Zones are used to delineate differing areas of water supplies, in order to assess the quality and compliance of drinking water, including within complex networks, where multiple water types are blended. The primary function of a WSZ is to report on drinking water compliance to the regulator, the EPA.

The CPO application for plots of land to form a land corridor will enable a much-needed replacement of an outdated pipeline in accordance with the NWRP.

6.2.3 Water Services Act, 2007 & 2013

In January 2014, Uisce Éireann assumed national responsibility for the provision of public water services from Local Authorities, as set out in the Water Services Act, 2007.

The powers of a water service authority are set out in Section 31 of the Water Services Act 2007. Section 31(2) states, *inter alia*, that a water service authority may provide water services or supervise the provision of water services in accordance with any prescribed standards, 'taking full account of the following aspects of public policy', namely (a) proper planning and sustainable development in its functional area, (b) protection of human health and the environment; (h) relevant development plans, regional or spatial planning guidelines, housing strategies or special amenity area orders, as appropriate, made under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013, also required that Uisce Éireann prepare a Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) setting out the company's objectives in relation to the provision of public water services for the State over a 25-year period.

6.2.4 Uisce Éireann's Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) 2040

The Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services over a 25-year period up to 2040. It details current and future challenges which affect the provision of water services and identifies the priorities to be tackled in the short and medium term. The plan considers its interaction with other national and regional strategic plans. One of the key strategic objectives as outlined in the Water Services Strategic Plan (2015) is presented as follows: 'Ensure a Safe and Reliable Water Supply'.

The pertinent aims of this key strategic objective are to:

- *Manage the sustainability and quality of drinking water from source to tap to protect human health.*
- *Manage the availability, sustainability, and reliability of water supply now and into the future.*
- *Manage water supplies in an efficient and economic manner.*

The proposed CPO will support the replacement of an outdated trunk main in County Meath and is in accordance with Uisce Éireann's strategic objectives, as outlined above.

6.2.5 Water Services Policy Statement 2018-2025

The (former) Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government's Water Services Policy Statement 2018-2025 identifies high level objectives and priorities for the delivery of water and wastewater services over the period to 2025. The Policy Statement has been prepared by Government, in line with the Water Services Acts 2007 & 2013, to give clear direction to strategic planning and decision making on water and wastewater services in Ireland. The policy statement seeks to ensure that there should be priority public health and environmental quality outcomes across the sector. An objective of the Policy Statement relates to Security of Supply, which includes the following measures:

- *Build greater resilience in our water services infrastructure, to ensure that there is headroom across the network to deal with outages and planned maintenance.*
- *Explore and pursue the scope for the interconnection of water supply networks and larger and more secure water sources serving regional schemes.*
- *On-going review of risks and risk assessment based on best available information is an important aspect of building resilience.*

6.2.6 Uisce Éireann's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

Uisce Éireann's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) sets out a national programme of measures to protect and enhance biodiversity across all its operations and sites. The seven key objectives of the BAP are set out in **Table 6-2** below.

Table 6-2: UÉ's Biodiversity Action Plan – 7 Objectives & Key Benefits

Objective	Description	Key Benefits
1	<i>All Uisce Éireann sites will have a set of measures that will enhance and protect biodiversity.</i>	<i>Managers of Uisce Éireann sites will be issued with resources to support the enhancement and management of biodiversity on their sites.</i>
2	<i>Raise awareness and provide educational supports to Uisce Éireann staff and its partners.</i>	<i>Empower others to act in ways that will better support nature and benefit wider communities.</i>
3	<i>Ensure "no net loss" of biodiversity across Uisce Éireann sites when carrying out activities or delivering plans</i>	<i>Biodiversity will be protected for all new Uisce Éireann developments.</i>
4	<i>Implement actions from the All Ireland Pollinator Plan across all Uisce Éireann sites to support and increase our pollinator population.</i>	<i>Aid pollinator recovery which will benefit the greater natural environment.</i>

5	<i>Promote the use of nature-based solutions for water protection and wastewater treatment.</i>	<i>Promote the use of nature-based solutions for water protection and wastewater treatment.</i>
6	<i>Management of invasive alien species on Uisce Éireann sites.</i>	<i>Increase biodiversity on our sites and reduce risks to our assets.</i>
7	<i>Collaborate with key internal and external stakeholders and the wider community, in protecting and enhancing biodiversity.</i>	<i>Enable us to share and develop in other areas, ensuring the most appropriate and efficient actions are implemented.</i>

This trunk main project and the CPO Plots supports the seven key objectives of Uisce Éireann's BAP.

6.3 National, Regional and Local Planning Policy

6.3.1 National Planning Framework (2018 & Draft Revision November 2024)

The Updated Draft Revised National Planning Framework (November 2024) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of our country out to the year 2040. The NPF envisages that in the period between 2022 and 2040, it is expected that there will be roughly an extra one million people living in our country. In relation to this population growth, NPF Chapter 9 Climate Transition and Our Economy states that *"It is essential that we have a resilient water supply to serve the existing population and for the additional 1 million people projected by 2040"*.

The planned Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main Project accords with the National Planning Framework and, in particular, the following National Policy Objectives (NPOs), which are set out in **Table 6-3** below.

Table 6-3: National Planning Framework Policy Objectives (NPOs)

National Policy Objective	NPF Policy Description
26	<i>Continue to support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.</i>
27	<i>Continue to support programmes for 'new homes in small towns and villages' with local authorities, public infrastructure agencies such as Uisce Éireann and local communities to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages.</i>
43	<i>Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.</i>
66	<i>The planning system will be responsive to our national environmental challenges and ensure that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the medium and longer-term requirements of all relevant environmental and climate legislation and the sustainable management of our natural capital.</i>
85	<i>In line with the National Biodiversity Action Plan; the conservation, enhancement, mitigation and restoration of biodiversity is to be supported by:</i> <i>Integrating policies and objectives for the protection and restoration of biodiversity, including the principles of the mitigation hierarchy of - avoid, minimise, restore and offset - of potential biodiversity impacts, in statutory land-use plan.</i> <i>Retention of existing habitats which are currently important for maintaining biodiversity (at local/ regional/national/international levels), in the first instance, is preferable to replacement/restoration of habitats, in the interests</i>

National Policy Objective	NPF Policy Description
	<i>of ensuring continuity of habitat provision and reduction of associated risks and costs.</i>
86	<i>In line with the objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan, planning authorities should seek to address no net loss of biodiversity within their plan making functions.</i>
87	<i>Enhance the conservation status and improve the management of protected areas and protected species by:</i> <i>• Implementing relevant EU Directives to protect Ireland's environment and wildlife and support the objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan;</i> <i>• Developing and utilising licensing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites;</i> <i>• Continued research, survey programmes and monitoring of habitats and species.</i>
91	<i>Ensure the alignment of planned growth with the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure, in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment</i>
103	<i>Planning Authorities will use compulsory purchase powers to facilitate the delivery of enabling infrastructure to prioritised zoned lands, to accommodate planned growth.</i>

According to the Updated Draft Revised National Planning Framework (November 2024), the major policy emphasis on renewing and developing existing settlements established under the NPF 2018 will be continued, rather than allowing the continual expansion and sprawl of cities and towns out into the countryside, at the expense of town centres and smaller villages. The target is for at least 40% of all new housing to be delivered within the existing built-up areas of cities, towns and villages on infill and/or brownfield sites. The remainder of Ireland's homes will continue to be delivered at the edge of settlements and in rural areas.

The planned Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main Project will ensure that the NPF (2018 & November 2024) is fully supported in relation to enabling and facilitating the future growth and sustainable development of the East Meath and South Louth Water Supply Zone (WSZ). The proposed development aims to ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water services infrastructure that will support an enhanced quality of life and economic development within East Meath Water Supply Zone (WSZ) and the wider region.

Improving water supply infrastructure for the East Meath Water Supply Zone (WSZ) will ensure that current and future commerce and industries will be able to prosper, contributing towards the socio-economic growth and development of the area without comprising the environmental character and uniqueness.

6.3.2 Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

In respect of water infrastructure for the region, much of the focus in the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, in terms of growth ambitions, is on the provision and maintenance of economic infrastructure, including water and wastewater. These are considered key to delivering on climate action, enabling healthy placemaking, and creating sustainable economic growth in the future. The RSES recognises the role of Uisce Éireann in supporting planned development and maintaining and improving existing services in the Region.

The CPO for the planned trunk main is aligned with numerous Regional Policy Objectives, as set out in **Table 6-4** below.

Table 6-4: EMRA's Regional Policy Objectives

Regional Policy Objective	RSES Policy Description
RPO 10.1:	<i>'Local authorities shall include proposals in development plans to ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment'.</i>
RPO 10.2:	<i>'EMRA supports the delivery of the strategic water services projects set out in Table 10.1, subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process'.</i>
RPO 10.3:	<i>'The Regional Assembly and local authorities shall liaise and cooperate with Irish Water to ensure the delivery of Irish Water's Investments and other relevant investment works programme of Irish Water that will provide infrastructure to increase capacity to service settlements in accordance with the settlement strategy of the RSES and local authority core strategies, and provide for long term solutions for waste water treatment for the Region'.</i>
RPO 10.4:	<i>'Support Irish Water and the relevant local authorities in the Region to reduce leakage, minimising demand for capital investment'.</i>
RPO 10.9:	<i>'Local authorities and Irish Water should work together to examine significant raw water sources which may be made redundant by the Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region with a view to reserving and protecting them for future back up or 'windfall' type economic development opportunities where high water use is required'.</i>

6.4 Local Policy Context – Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the CPO and planned trunk main pipeline aligns with, and also, supports delivery of key county development plan policies and objectives for County Meath. This section considers the following planning policies set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and sets out how the proposed pipeline project aligns with Meath County Council's policies:

- Chapter 2 - Core Strategy – Vision;
- Chapter 4 - Economy and Employment Strategy;
- Chapter 6 - Infrastructure Strategy;
- Chapter 8 - Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy;
- Chapter 9 – Rural Development Strategy; and
- Chapter 11 – Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives

Chapter 2 – Core Strategy - Vision:

One of the purposes of Chapter 2 is to show that the CDP is in alignment with other national and regional planning guidelines. The Core Strategy Vision of the Meath County Development Plan is:

'To continue to support the creation of socio-economically progressive vibrant, dynamic, and healthy communities throughout the County and ensure that future growth is based on the principles of sustainable development that delivers a high-quality living and working environment that meets the needs of all residents, in accordance with National and Regional Guidance.'

Chapter 2.4 states that:

'There will be a focus on investment in rural towns, villages and rural nodes to combat the decline of rural areas. The regeneration of vacant and under-utilised sites alongside the roll out of a 'New Homes in Small Towns and Villages' initiative between local authorities, infrastructure agencies, and local communities will provide opportunities to boost economic development and rejuvenate rural communities.'

Improving water infrastructure for Co. Meath will ensure that regeneration and future residential and commercial development can occur within the county, including its towns and villages, with the improved water services and increased capacity such works will provide.

Chapter 4 – Economy and Employment Strategy:

Chapter 4 highlights that the CDP seeks to promote County Meath as a nationally and internationally attractive and distinctive location in which to conduct business. The following objective that is highly relevant is set out in **Table 6-5** below.

Table 6-5: CDP Policy Objectives – Chapter 4

Meath CDP Objective	CDP Policy Description
Objective ED5:	<i>'To work with Irish Water and other infrastructure providers, to support the provision of services and facilities to accommodate the future economic growth of the County and to seek to reserve infrastructure capacity for employment generating uses.'</i>

The CPO for the planned trunk main pipeline in Co. Meath will support and contribute to the current and future economic growth in the county-at-large.

Chapter 6 – Infrastructure Strategy:

Chapter 6 of the CDP states that the sustainable, future, socio-economic growth of the County is dependent on the provision of the required water and wastewater infrastructure and ensuring high-quality reliable service provision. The following planning objectives that are relevant are set out in **Table 6-6** below.

Table 6-6: CDP Policy Objectives – Chapter 6

Meath CDP Objective	CDP Policy Description
Objective INF OBJ 1:	<i>'To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water to promote the sustainable development of water supply and drainage infrastructure in the county and the region, in accordance with the objectives and recommendations set out in the Greater Dublin Drainage Study and Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan.'</i>
Objective INF OBJ 2:	<i>'To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water to ensure that an adequate supply of drinking water for domestic, commercial, industrial and other uses is available for the sustainable development of the County.'</i>
Objective INF OBJ 3:	<i>'To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water during the lifetime of the Plan to develop and identify an additional sustainable water source serving the Eastern and Midlands Region while also facilitating the sustainable development of the County, in accordance with the requirements of the Core and Settlement Strategies.'</i>
Objective INF OBJ 4:	<i>'To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the delivery of the Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024 and any subsequent Capital Investment Plans.'</i>

The planned trunk main in Co. Meath will result in a necessary upgrade in the infrastructure network providing a significant benefit in reliability and security of supply to existing and future Uisce Éireann customers.

Chapter 8 – Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy:

Section 8.6 of the CDP highlights that County Meath has a significant archaeological heritage, and provides a valuable cultural, educational and tourism resource. The following policy is relevant to the proposed revised access:

HER POL 4: *'To require, as part of the development management process, archaeological impact assessments, geophysical survey, test excavations or monitoring as appropriate, where development proposals involve ground clearance of more than half a hectare or for linear developments over one kilometre in length; or developments in proximity to areas with a density of known archaeological monuments and history of discovery as identified by a suitably qualified archaeologist.'*

The Archaeological Heritage Report undertaken by Courtney Deery in March 2025 confirms that the proposed trunk main pipeline is not predicted to have any adverse impacts on archaeology and cultural heritage along the route.

Section 8.9 of the County Development Plan sets out the strategy in relation to natural heritage and biodiversity and notes that the protection and prudent use of the county's natural resources is vital to achieving sustainable development. Relevant policies are set out in **Table 6-7** below.

Table 6-7: CDP Policy – Chapter 8

Meath CDP Policy	CDP Policy Description
HER POL 27:	<i>'To protect, conserve and enhance the County's biodiversity where appropriate.'</i>
HER POL 28:	<i>'To integrate in the development management process the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape features wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats (whether designated or not) and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate.'</i>
HER POL 31:	<i>'To ensure that the ecological impact of all development proposals on habitats and species are appropriately assessed by suitably qualified professional(s) in accordance with best practice guidelines – e.g. the preparation of an Ecological</i>

	<i>Impact Assessment (EcIA), Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Natura Impact Statement (NIS), species surveys, etc. (as appropriate).'</i>
HER POL 44:	<i>'To require all development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an Invasive Species Management Plan where such species exists to comply with the provisions of the European Communities (Bird and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.'</i>
HER POL 52:	<i>'To protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the landscapes of the County in accordance with national policy and guidelines and the recommendations of the Meath Landscape Character Assessment (2007) in Appendix 5, to ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.'</i>
HER POL 53:	<i>'To discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amount of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.'</i>

As noted above, the Appropriate Assessment Screening concluded that an AA **was not** required. In addition, landscape character is examined in Section 8.1 below.

Chapter 9 – Rural Development Strategy:

Chapter 9 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out a number of Strategic Objectives (SOs) for the county, which are set out in **Table 6-8** below.

Table 6-8: CDP Strategic Objectives – Chapter 9

Meath SOs	CDP	CDP Policy Description
RUR DEV SO 1:		<i>'To support the continued vitality and viability of rural areas, environmentally, socially and commercially by promoting sustainable social and economic development.'</i>
RUR DEV SO 2:		<i>'To identify and protect rural resources such as locally and regionally important aquifers and water sources from development which would prejudice their sustainable future usage.'</i>

Chapter 11 – Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives:

Section 14 of the CDP sets out the general land use and zoning policies and objectives of the Plan and primarily relate to urban areas.

As noted above, the CPO plots are all zoned as 'Rural Areas' under the current CDP. The objective of the 'Rural Areas' zoning designation in the CDP 2021-2027 is to:

"Protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and sustainable rural-related enterprise, community facilities, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage".

It is noted that 'Utility Structures' are listed as a specific 'Permitted Use' for this zoning designation within the CDP. In addition, the pipeline route has been specifically designed to run along the edge of agricultural lands. The construction phase will be temporary and in the short-term. Therefore, the (below ground) pipeline route would not have a negative impact on the overall 'use' of the CPO plots/land in the medium to long-term.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is consistent with, and will not materially contravene, any land use or zoning objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

6.5 Summary of Policy Compliance and Support at a National, Regional and Local Level

The CPO and planned trunk main pipeline fully supports the delivery of UN SDG6, Uisce Éireann's ongoing capital programme, the NPF (2018 & draft revised NPF 2024) and Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs), including investment in existing resources.

The CPO also supports an extensive range of policies and objectives, as set out in the Meath CDP. The trunk main pipeline will also support much-needed investment in water infrastructure and the enhancement of existing water supply within the East Meath Water Supply Zone (WSZ).

7 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYS AND ASSESSMENTS

As noted above, and in accordance with the above policy, a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (March 2025), an Archaeological Heritage Report (March 2025) and a Flood Risk Assessment (December 2024) were undertaken on behalf of Uisce Éireann to inform this CPO and the overall proposed Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main and are included as appendices.

7.1 Landscape Character in County Meath: LCTs and LCAs

An assessment of the Landscape Character of County Meath has been undertaken, as part of the County Development Plan, and this assessment reveals that the most relevant Landscape Character Assessment Type (LCT) for County Meath to the proposed (below-ground) pipeline route is '*River Corridors and Estuaries*' and '*Lowland Landscapes*'. In addition, the 8.4km route of the proposed trunk main pipeline is located within the following Landscape Character Areas (LCAs):

- *LCA5: Boyne Valley*: 1.3km (15.5%) of the trunk main pipeline; and
- *LCA6: Central Lowlands*: 7.1km (84.5%) of the trunk main pipeline.

It should be highlighted that the vast majority of the (below-ground) pipeline is mostly located within *LCA 6: Central Lowlands*. Only a very small section will be located in *LCA5: Boyne Valley*. This portion of the pipeline is also located on the edge of the outer buffer zone for the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site (WHS). We examine this specific section of the proposed pipeline in the Archaeological Heritage Report undertaken for the proposed route, which is summarised in **Section 8.4** below.

LCA5: Boyne Valley has been classified as having an '*exceptional*' landscape value, '*high*' landscape sensitivity, and of '*international*' landscape importance. It is important to note that this important landscape is part of a '*living landscape*' that, as the county development plan highlights, has been inhabited for over 9,000 years, *i.e.*, the River Boyne has been an important communications corridor for several millennia. Only a small portion of the pipeline will be located within LCA5.

LCA6: Central Lowlands has been classified as having a '*high*' landscape value, '*medium*' landscape sensitivity, and of '*regional*' landscape importance. It is important to note that these are not the highest ratings in terms of landscape classifications and with regard to '*high*' landscape value classification, this is the third lowest rating out of five landscape classifications.

Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 provides detailed descriptions in relation to acceptable development for the various landscape character areas and LCA6: Central Lowlands is identified as having a: *'medium potential capacity to accommodate underground services as the small scale farmland and variety of land use **is not as sensitive to change and is not as archaeologically rich** as other areas although the loss of landscape features such as hedgerows would need to be avoided to minimise negative impacts.'*

As outlined above, the relevant landscape designation for LCA6 supports the proposed development for a below-ground pipeline, the construction of which is *'temporary'* in nature, *i.e.*, maximum 30 months. Furthermore, while it is expected that there will be temporary construction related impacts from the proposed temporary working areas at each of the CPO lands, given the underground nature of the proposed trunk main, it is considered the proposed development, once constructed, will have no impact on the landscape character of the area.

7.2 Appropriate Assessment Screening

As noted above in **Section 6.1.3**, an Appropriate Assessment Screening was undertaken by APEM in March 2025. This screening concluded that it can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information that the proposed trunk main pipeline works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects will have an significant effect on any European site. Therefore, it was concluded that an AA **is not required**.

Refer to **Appendix B** for a copy of the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

7.3 Archaeological Heritage Report

In addition, an Archaeological Heritage Report was carried out by Courtney Deery in March 2025 to inform the project design and to ascertain the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeological and historical resources that may exist within the immediate and surrounding area of the trunk main works in Co. Meath.

The Archaeological Heritage Report involved a detailed desk study of the archaeological and historical background of the proposed route and surrounding area, supported by a targeted field inspection of areas identified as archaeologically sensitive. The archaeological assessment study area included a 250m corridor either side of the proposed 8.4km route of the pipeline. This assessment included information from the Record of Monuments and Places (RMPs) and Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs) of Co. Meath, the topographical files within the National Museum and all available cartographic and documentary sources for the area.

The Archaeological Heritage Report paid particular attention to the small section (15.5%) of the proposed trunk main pipeline that is located on the south-eastern edge of the outer buffer zone of the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Property (WHP). The remainder of the pipeline (84.5%) is located outside the outer buffer area (as noted above in *LCA6: Central Lowlands*).

The Archaeological Heritage Report (March 2025) includes the following important finding: *'Given the location of the proposed scheme – beginning just inside the outer edge of the buffer zone, but predominantly outside of it – and the nature of the development (a below-ground pipeline), there will be **no negative effects** on the Outstanding Universal Value*

(OUV) of the WHP. Nor will the proposed scheme result in any negative visual impacts on the recorded archaeological sites in the wider landscape surrounding it.'

The assessment also finds that: *'there are no recorded monuments (RMP/SMR sites) within the proposed scheme boundary'* and highlights that the proposed scheme runs through predominantly agricultural greenfield areas, which have an inherent archaeological potential. Considering the known and recorded archaeological sites in the wider landscape, there is therefore the potential for the discovery of previously unknown archaeological sites, features or deposits along the length of the proposed pipeline.

A geophysical survey (Licence No. 24R0184), undertaken for the proposed scheme in 2024, covers ca. 40% of the current proposed pipeline route. The survey identified a number of features of potential archaeological interest, which demonstrates the inherent below-ground potential of the agricultural greenfield areas along the remainder of the proposed pipeline route. Further, the railway line (MIHS027-001) crossed by the proposed scheme survives in good working order and is of interest from an industrial heritage perspective.

As such, Courtney Deery's Archaeological Heritage Report (March 2025) also sets out the following Recommendation:

'Given the inherent below-ground archaeological potential of the agricultural fields, it is recommended that a geophysical survey be undertaken along the proposed pipeline in greenfield areas not previously surveyed'. Further recommendations will be made 'based on the results of the geophysical survey. These may include archaeological testing to establish the nature, extent and date of any potential archaeological sites or features that lie within the proposed development site, and archaeological monitoring.' It is also recommended that any disturbance to the railway line (MIHS027-001) *'be made good to ensure the preservation of this industrial heritage asset'*.

Geophysical surveys on CPO Plots/lands, with permission for access from the landowner(s), have been completed. At present, access is denied by a number of landowners and it is envisaged that the CPO will need to be confirmed in order to carry out with the remaining surveys. In addition, the contractor will be responsible for the completion of the remaining surveys to finalise the design before starting the construction, as per the Archaeological Assessment recommendations.

It is submitted that if any features of archaeological potential are discovered during the course of the trunk main pipeline works, further archaeological mitigation may be required, such as preservation *in-situ* or by record. In addition, any further mitigation measures will require approval from the National Monuments Service (NMS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It is also considered that further recommendations may be made by the National Monuments Service and/or Meath County Council, as a result of the Archaeological Heritage Report.

The Archaeological Heritage Report by Courtney Deery (March 2025) is provided at **Appendix C**.

7.4 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)

A Stage 1 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared by Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd. (December 2024) on behalf of Uisce Éireann to assess the risk of flooding relating to the proposed development. The assessment has identified that the risk from pluvial, coastal

and groundwater sources along the route is considered low. A small portion of the proposed trunk main lies within Flood Zone A for the fluvial risk. However, since the vulnerability of the proposed development is '*Water-Compatible Development*', as per the definition given in '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*', a Stage 2 FRA is not required.

The proposed route is only comprised of a trunk main, without any facilities such as pumping stations, which will be buried in the ground and fully sealed. As such, it is not expected that the trunk main will have any impact on the flood zone. The construction of the pipeline crossing the flood zone will be carried out with consideration for the potential flood risks during construction. The crossing location will be reinstated to avoid changes to the channel conveyance. Any valves will be placed outside of the small section crossing the flood zone. As such, no increased flood risk is anticipated from the project.

7.5 Summary

In summary, the proposed CPO will support the planned replacement of a key water supply infrastructure asset in County Meath and involves essential works to ensure that County Meath has a sufficient and sustainable supply of treated water to cater for the current population, and also for the future projected growth in population, as set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

8 CONCLUSIONS

The proposed CPO, to support the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main Project, is in accordance with UN SDG6 and national, regional, and local Planning Policy for County Meath. This planning policy compliance and support is illustrated by the policies and objectives identified above in the Climate Action Plan 2024, NPF (2018 and draft revision July 2024), Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region, and the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, which are all consistent with the aims of the Trunk Main project in County Meath.

Uisce Éireann considers that the proposed CPO, in relation to the Staleen WTP to Duleek Trunk Main, is required to fulfil its duties under the Water Services Acts, 2007 and 2013, and to support the delivery of Ireland's National Planning Framework (2018 and draft revision July 2024).

Having regard to all of the above information set out in the sections above, it is considered that the:

- proposed CPO does not materially contravene the County Development Plan, *i.e.*, Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027; and
- acquisition is necessary and timely to meet an identified need for sustainable water supply infrastructure in County Meath, which is located within the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

In summary, this CPO Planning Report clearly demonstrates that the proposed CPO is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of County Meath and the East Meath Water Supply Zone (WSZ).

Appendix A: EIA Screening
Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd, March 2025

Appendix B:
AA Screening,
APEM, March 2025

Appendix C:
Archaeological Heritage Report
Courtney Deery, March 2025.

Appendix D:
Flood Risk Assessment
Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd., December 2024.