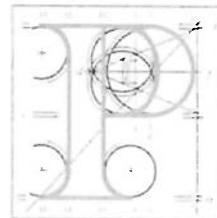


Our Case Number: ACP-324383-26



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Development Applications Unit
The Manager
Newtown Road
Wexford
Co. Wexford
Y35 AP90

Date: 06 August 2026

Re: Proposed IDA Belview Infrastructure Development
Belview, Slieverue, County Kilkenny

Dear Sir / Madam,

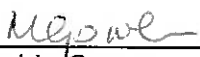
An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above-mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

Please note that the proposed development shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved it with or without modifications.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter, please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission at laps@pleanala.ie.

Please quote the above-mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,


Muirín Gowen
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8049323

AA02

Teil
Glao Áitiúil
Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Muirin Gowen

From: Housing Manager DAU <Manager.DAU@npws.gov.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 5 August 2026 09:43
To: LAPS
Subject: ACP-324383-26 177AE IDA Belview Infrastructure Development
Attachments: 177AE IDA Belview.pdf

Categories: Submissions

Caution: This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

Good morning,

Please find attached heritage-related observations and recommendations of this Department for the above-mentioned consultation.

Please acknowledge receipt of same.

Kind regards,
Amy

Amy Thornton
Executive Officer

An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Aonad na nIarratas ar Fhorbairt
Development Applications Unit

Oifigí an Rialtais, Bóthar an Bhaile Nua, Loch Garman, Contae Loch Garman Y35 AP90
Government Offices, Newtown Road, Wexford, Co Wexford, Y35 AP90



Your Ref: ACP-324383-26

Planning Ref: 177AE IDA Belview Infrastructure Development Co. Kilkenny -

(Please quote in all related correspondence)

5 August 2026

The Secretary
An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Via email to laps@pleanala.ie

Re: Notification under Section 177(AE) of the Planning Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Proposed Development: The proposed development will provide access to the IDA Ireland land bank at Kilmurry and Gorteens, Belview, Slieverue, Co. Kilkenny to facilitate IDA development as well as provide active travel modes for the area. The subject site is located in South Kilkenny approximately 3 km east of Waterford and north of IDA Science and Technology Business Park. The proposal will provide an upgrade of local road L3412 from the existing eastern IDA Ireland roundabout and will tie back into the existing L3412 to the west at Kilmurry via a new roundabout. The upgrade will be taken online on the existing road and offline on adjoining land. The development forms part of the wider L3412 upgrade connecting Abbeylands/Ferrybank to Belview Port and will integrate with future infrastructure improvements which will be progressed separately and will incorporate Active Travel facilities in accordance with Settlement Strategy Variation No. 6 of the County Development Plan 2021-2027.

A chara

I refer to correspondence received in connection with the above. Outlined below are heritage-related observations/recommendations of the Department co-ordinated by the Development Applications Unit under the stated heading(s).



Archaeology

It is noted that the proposed development is relatively large in scale (greater than 1 kilometre). It is possible that hitherto previously unknown archaeological features/deposits may be disturbed during the course of groundworks required for the proposed development.

This Department is in receipt of a report titled 'Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment at Gorteens and Kilmurry, County Kilkenny' by Mr John Gallacher of IAC Ltd. According to the report, a geophysical survey and archaeological testing (Licence No. 17E0294) were carried out within part of the western section of the proposed development. Four areas of archaeological features were identified within the footprint of the proposed development. These were a possible fulacht fia (F23/CH09) and three possible pits (F24, F25 and F26/CH10-12).

A separate programme comprising a geophysical survey and archaeological testing (Licence No. 13E068) was carried out within part of the eastern section of the proposed development. No features of archaeological significance were identified.

This Department notes that the two programmes of geophysical survey and archaeological testing were not carried out to inform the currently proposed development, a significant percentage of which has not been archaeologically investigated. It is recommended in the report to preserve by record the archaeological features CH09-12 and to archaeologically monitor all ground disturbances.

While this Department agrees with this recommendation, given the confirmed high archaeological potential of the proposed development site (and, in particular, the western section) that has not been previously thoroughly investigated, this Department recommends that all archaeological monitoring be carried out as an archaeological exercise.

Therefore, this Department, in line with national policy — see Section 3.7 of Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage 1999 — recommends that Preservation in Situ and Licensed Archaeological Monitoring, as described below, should be required as a condition of planning. A report containing the results of the archaeological monitoring and any subsequent required archaeological work should be submitted to this Department and the Planning Authority.

Please note that this recommended Condition aligns with Sample Condition C3 as set out in OPR Practice Note PN03: Planning Conditions (October 2022), with appropriate site-specific



additions/adaptations based on the particular characteristics of this development and informed by the findings of the archaeological report.

Recommended Archaeological Condition:

1. The developer shall engage a suitably qualified archaeologist to monitor (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) all topsoil stripping associated with the development as an archaeological exercise. The use of appropriate machinery to ensure the preservation and recording of any surviving archaeological remains shall be necessary.
2. A Method Statement for the licensed archaeological monitoring, to be approved by the National Monuments Service of this Department, will include methodology for the preservation by record of the archaeological features F23 – F26/CH09 – CH12 that were identified during testing under Licence 17E0294.
3. Should archaeological remains be identified during the course of archaeological monitoring, all works shall cease in the area of archaeological interest pending a decision of the Planning Authority, in consultation with this Department, regarding appropriate mitigation [preservation in-situ/excavation].
4. Following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary post-excavation specialist analysis, the Planning Authority and this Department shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of the monitoring and any subsequent required archaeological investigative work/excavation required. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation (either in situ or by record) of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

Please note that it is strongly recommended that the wording of the Archaeological Condition above be retained in the grant of permission to ensure that the archaeological requirements are understood and carried out by the relevant professional.

Nature Conservation

These observations are provided by this Department in its role as the statutory nature conservation authority and having regard to its functions under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended), the Wildlife Acts 1976-2023,



and the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Article 4 of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC). The comments are made in the context of the Part 8 proposal and are intended to assist the competent authority in its consideration of the Natura Impact Statement (NIS), the Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EclAR), and the potential effects of the development on protected habitats, protected species and wider biodiversity interests.

AA/NIS Comments

Having reviewed the NIS, this Department considers that the assessment is largely confined to the potential water quality impacts arising from construction works and does not adequately address a number of ecological receptors associated with the receiving environment.

In particular, the assessment of otter appears deficient. Otter is a Qualifying Interest of the Lower River Suir Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Site Code: 002137), and the NIS acknowledges that a stream traverses the site and is hydrologically connected to the SAC. However, no dedicated otter survey appears to have been undertaken and the assessment relies primarily on a one-week wildlife camera deployment which did not record the species. The absence of otter records during a short-duration camera survey cannot be relied upon to demonstrate absence from a watercourse corridor. No evidence has been provided of a systematic otter survey assessing the stream corridor for spraints, tracks, couches, holts, resting sites or commuting routes.

The proposed development includes culvert works and road infrastructure adjacent to a watercourse corridor. However, there is limited assessment of potential impacts on otter movement, habitat connectivity, or use of the stream corridor during either the construction or operational phases.

The Department notes that the EclA recommends that a dedicated otter survey is carried out prior to commencement of works. This Department does not consider it best practice to defer baseline ecological surveys for protected species until after consent has been granted. The purpose of ecological assessment, including Appropriate Assessment, is to ensure that sufficient information is available to the competent authority at the time of decision-making to enable a robust assessment of potential effects on protected species and ecological receptors. In this instance, the EclA acknowledges the need for a pre-construction otter survey and bat roost survey, indicating that the ecological baseline has not been fully established.



Reliance on post-consent surveys introduces uncertainty regarding the presence, distribution and use of habitats by protected species. Should subsequent surveys identify otter holts, couches, significant commuting routes, bat roosts or other ecological constraints, there may be limited opportunity to avoid or minimise impacts through design modifications, as the principle and layout of the development would already have been approved. This may result in additional licensing requirements, delays to project delivery, pressure to rely on mitigation rather than avoidance, and increased risk of impacts on protected species and their habitats. From an Appropriate Assessment perspective, such an approach may undermine confidence that all impact pathways have been adequately identified and assessed prior to determination of the application.

Accordingly, this Department is not satisfied that the baseline information currently available is sufficient to fully assess the potential effects of the proposed development on otter. Additional survey information should be provided prior to determination to enable a robust assessment of likely impacts and any necessary avoidance, mitigation or licensing requirements.

This Department notes that otter are strictly protected species under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

Recommendation: Further Otter Survey Work

Any otter survey should be undertaken in accordance with recognised best-practice guidance and should include a systematic survey of suitable habitat both upstream and downstream of the proposed works area. The survey should assess the presence of spraints, prints, feeding remains, couches, holts, lying-up areas, access points, crossing points and commuting routes, as well as the suitability of existing and proposed culvert structures for otter passage. At a minimum, the survey should be undertaken in accordance with TII/NRA *Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters Prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes* and should be completed prior to determination of the Part 8 proposal in order to adequately establish the ecological baseline and inform the assessment of potential effects.

EclAR Comments

This Department notes that the bat assessment contained within the EclA raises a number of concerns regarding survey scope, completeness of baseline information and the assessment of potential impacts.

The assessment was informed by a single activity transect undertaken on 6 May 2025 and a static detector survey conducted over a one-week period between 6 and 13 May 2025. Five



bat species were recorded, namely Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Leisler's Bat, Brown Long-eared Bat and Nathusius' Pipistrelle. The static survey recorded in excess of 1,100 bat passes.

Notwithstanding these records, the report concludes that bat activity is of low to moderate significance, without providing a detailed assessment of the stream corridor, treelines and hedgerows as bat commuting and foraging habitat.

Of particular concern is the apparent absence of a Preliminary Roost Assessment of trees proposed for removal. The EclA instead proposes that a bat roost survey be undertaken immediately prior to vegetation clearance. This again represents a deferral of baseline survey work to the construction phase and raises questions as to whether the Planning Authority has been provided with sufficient information to fully assess the potential impacts on roosting bats.

The proposed development includes public lighting as part of the road scheme. However, the EclA does not appear to contain a detailed assessment of operational lighting impacts on bats, including potential impacts on commuting routes, foraging habitat or light-sensitive species such as Brown Long-eared Bat.

Furthermore, only one static detector location appears to have been deployed at the site, notwithstanding the linear nature of the development and the presence of multiple habitat features including a stream corridor, treelines and hedgerows. It is therefore unclear whether the spatial extent and seasonal pattern of bat activity have been adequately characterised.

Overall, it is considered that the bat assessment does not adequately establish:

- the roost potential of trees proposed for removal;
- the significance of treelines, hedgerows and the stream corridor as commuting habitat;
- the potential effects of operational lighting; or
- whether sufficient survey effort has been undertaken to characterise bat usage of the site.

This Department notes that bats are strictly protected species under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

Recommendation: Further Bat Survey Work

This Department considers that the bat baseline presented is insufficient to robustly characterise the importance of the site for roosting, commuting and foraging bats. The



proposed development involves the removal of trees and hedgerows, works adjacent to a stream corridor, and the introduction of public lighting, all of which have the potential to affect bat populations. This Department notes that the EclA proposes that bat roost surveys be undertaken immediately prior to vegetation clearance, indicating that the baseline assessment has not yet fully established whether trees proposed for removal contain Potential Roost Features (PRFs).

It is recommended that a suitably qualified bat specialist undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of all trees proposed for removal or substantial alteration, with further surveys undertaken where PRFs are identified. Any subsequent survey effort should be designed in accordance with current best practice guidance, including Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland (NPWS, 2022) and relevant Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines. Survey requirements should be informed by the results of the PRA and may include emergence/re-entry surveys, activity surveys, static detector surveys and assessment of key commuting and foraging habitats associated with treelines, hedgerows and the stream corridor. Particular attention should be given to the potential effects of operational lighting on bat commuting routes and habitat connectivity.

Given that the proposed development includes public lighting, a bat-sensitive lighting assessment should be prepared in accordance with current bat conservation guidance and should demonstrate how important commuting and foraging features will be protected from artificial light spill.

This Department considers that these surveys should be completed prior to determination of the proposal in order to ensure that the ecological baseline is adequately established and that the Planning Authority can fully assess the potential impacts of the development on protected bat species before making a decision.

Protected Species Licensing

The Department notes that both otter and all bat species recorded within the State are strictly protected under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended). Where works have the potential to result in disturbance, injury or mortality of individuals, or damage or destruction of breeding sites or resting places, a derogation licence from the National Parks and Wildlife Service of this Department may be required prior to the commencement of works. In the absence of adequate baseline survey information, it is not currently possible to determine whether the proposed development could give rise to impacts requiring such licensing. This Department therefore considers that the necessary ecological surveys should be completed prior to determination of the proposal to establish whether otter



holts, couches, commuting routes, bat roosts or other protected features are present within the zone of influence of the development and to inform the need for avoidance measures, project redesign, mitigation and/or derogation licensing requirements. Deferral of such assessments until the construction phase may result in the late identification of ecological constraints, with consequential implications for project delivery, mitigation design and compliance with nature conservation legislation.

You are requested to send any further communications to this Department's Development Applications Unit (DAU) at manager.dau@npws.gov.ie, or to the following address:

The Manager
Development Applications Unit (DAU)
Government Offices
Newtown Road
Wexford
Y35 AP90

Is mise, le meas

Amy Thornton
Development Applications Unit
Administration