

APPENDIX 3

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Introduction

The content of this EIA has been prepared in accordance with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government's 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (2018)', and namely Section 8 of same entitled 'Outline and Guide to Key Sections of the Act'. The aim of this EIA is to identify and assess the effects of the proposed development on various environmental factors, in order to assist in considering whether it is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. An assessment of the adequacy of the information contained in the planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is therefore required. The content of a number of the chapters of the EIAR are more pertinent to the competent internal departments of the Planning Authority. This EIA has therefore been informed by reports received from the Planning Authority's internal departments. In the interest of clarity and legibility it is proposed to structure this EIA in line with the sequencing of the information contained in the EIAR. It is not the intention of this EIA report to summarise the content of the EIAR, but rather to address the information contained therein in a direct and succinct manner.

Description of the Proposed Development

EIAR Findings

It is stated that the proposed development is located in a primarily agricultural area within the townland of Ballyonan, Broadford, Co. Kildare, approximately 2.5km east of the village of Clonard. The River Boyne which marks the County Kildare and County Meath boundary is located 400 metres west of the site. The existing Ballyonan sand and gravel pit is located to the south of the proposed development. It is stated that this pit was registered under Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act (QR45) with the current extraction area at 4.8 hectares. It is stated that a 2.2ha area to the north of QR45 and to the south of the proposed application site is currently undergoing habitat improvement to a wetland/landscaped area. It is stated that QR45 extraction has taken place above the water table and within the Section 261 boundary.

It is stated that the closest surface water feature is located to the west of the L1011. There are no surface water features on site or in connection with the River Boyne.

It is stated that the overall landholding is approximately 23ha and the topography of the applicable area varies from approximately 63mOD at the lowest level of the worked area to approximately 70mOD at the highest point. Infrastructure associated with the sand and gravel pit comprises landscaped earthen berms surrounding most of the sand and gravel extraction, washing plant, settlement tanks, wheelwash and sprinkler system. The field boundaries are comprised of a mixture of hedgerows, treelines and fencing with the entrance to the pit located to the east of the local road.

The proposed development consists of a served concrete block making facility which will involve a small concrete batching plant, aggregate stockpiling area, with the aggregate being supplied from the existing sand and gravel pit and offloaded into storage bays. Limited volumes of cement will be imported by road, and the finished blocks will be exported by road to local markets. When the remaining sand and gravel is exhausted, it is proposed to import material via the R148.

The concrete batching plant will feed a concrete mixing truck, which will in turn fill molds in which the blocks are formed. Once the concrete has been loaded to the concrete mixer truck it is then transported to the mold, where it is poured. A forklift is used to transport a petrol generator to run a vibrating poker, which is used whilst the concrete is poured. A specific part of the site will be laid out for this purpose. Another part of the site will be used to store materials.

Ready mix concrete will also be provided for at the facility. The batching process for readymix concrete is a similar process for blocks, up to the point that the concrete emerges from the batching plant. At that point readymix concrete is poured directly into delivery trucks and taken to construction sites, whereas blocks have to be shaped and laid out for three days on the paved area to dry out before delivery.

All plant and equipment used within the application area is a mixture of fixed and mobile nature. It is stated that the concrete batching plant will operate at a capacity of 20,000 tonnes. The proposed development will comprise of the following:

- Concrete batching plant silos and associated plant 490sqm (maximum height of 12.2m);
- Block manufacturing plant and block yard;
- Offices and staff facilities 133sqm;
- Weighbridge;
- Wheel wash;
- Upgrade to the site entrance and access road;
- All other ancillary buildings, plant and facilities for the production of building products including aggregates, ready mix concrete and all ancillary site works

It is stated that the concrete batching plant combines aggregates, sand, water, cement and additives where they are first weighed individually and then combined to prepare ready mix concrete. It is stated that no fuel will be stored on site as HGVs will be fuelled off site. A spill kit will be available at the site for any minor fuel spillages.

It is stated that there is no proposed surface water wastewater discharges for the development with all wastewater tankered off site. A holding tank is proposed as limited infiltration was encountered at the site infiltration test in July 2019. Wash water from the wheelwash bay is recycled through an in-built water recycling system. The proposed settlement tanks will collect run-off from the yard for reuse within the proposed development. It is stated that surface water within the Ballyonan Pit comprise percolation to ground. Temporary percolation ponds are located in area A which will be restored prior to the development of the batching plant.

It is stated that all traffic accesses the facility directly at the site entrance located on the L1011. Entry to the site will be via a queued formation using a designated access road. The weighbridge next to the administration building is reserved for outgoing loads. It is stated that the proposed new entrance will provide greater sight lines to the development and due to the wheelwash being located away from the road this reduces potential for mud and dust from vehicles using the entrance.

It is stated that upon cessation of activities all plant and machinery will be removed from site.

Due to the nature of the project, it is stated that it is not expected that the project will result in significant adverse effects on the environment as a result of any major accidents and/or disasters. In addition, there is no history of major accidents and/or disasters in the local or regional area of the proposed development.

Planning Authority Comments

It is noted that it is stated that the proposed development will initially be supplied by the existing adjacent sand and gravel pit. In light of this and the nature of the proposal, it is considered a requirement for the applicant to submit evidence of satisfactory compliance with each of the conditions imposed under the Section 261 decision QR45. Upon investigation, it appears to the Planning Authority that the area of the quarry registered under QR45 is worked out or substantially worked out. Having regard to this, it is considered a requirement for the applicant to provide details on the level of aggregate that is remaining in the existing registered quarry that is proposed to primarily serve the proposed development.

It is also noted that the EIAR references settlement ponds to the south of the subject site (Section 2.4.10) and that it is part of the current application to rectify these (page 29). It is considered that further information is required to establish why these are referenced

in the EIAR and whether these are essential for the use of the proposed development. Clarification of the planning status of these ponds and why these works are not included in the development description or the red line boundary are required. As these works are existing the applicant should note that they would require retention permission. Under Section 34(12) of the Planning and Development Act, a Planning Authority cannot consider an application to retain unauthorised development of land where an EIA has been carried out.

It is noted that it is stated that the batching plant will have a capacity of 20,000 tonnes, however, from the submitted drawings it appears that the batching plant may have a higher capacity from what has been described in the application.

Furthermore, no details regarding the lifespan of the proposed development has been provided. It is also considered appropriate for the applicant to outline their intentions with the remaining lands to the north and east of the proposed development.

Section 2.4.9 of the EIAR refers to a holding tank for wastewater which will then be tankered off site. Details with regard to calculations for the sizing of the effluent holding tank and how often it will be required to be emptied based on the population equivalent of the operation are required.

The Applicant is required to state the purpose of the temporary ponds referred to in Section 2.4.10 located in Area A and provide an explanation as to why they will no longer be required and where that water will be directed to in the future.

In relation to the settlement tanks referred to in Section 2.4.10 and included in planning drawings 10592-2004 to 10592-2008 it is recommended that a report is submitted with detailed calculations on the sizing of the tanks and their ability to cater for the volume of surface water generated on site. The report shall take into account measures that will be put in place to cater for large unexpected rainfall events.

A methodology statement for the removal of plant, machinery, hard standings and ancillary services should be provided.

Competent Experts

EIAR Findings

Section 1.7 of the submitted EIAR outlines that Tobin Consulting Engineers are the lead consultants in the production of the planning application with additional support provided by Kennett Consulting (Landscape), Stephen Dowds (Planning) and Dr Charles Mount (Archaeology). It is stated that the EIAR has been compiled by John Dillon who is employed as a Senior Scientist with Tobin Consulting Engineers.

Planning Authority Comments

It is a requirement that the EIAR must be prepared by competent experts, under Section 172(1B) of the Planning and Development Act, as amended. It is considered that this section is inadequate as it should clearly list all the names of all the experts contributing to the various sections of the report, in accordance with para. 4.4 and 4.9 of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018). Further Information should be sought in this regard.

Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives

EIAR Findings

It is stated that in the short to medium term there are no real alternatives to the current land-based sources of construction aggregates. There is an established use at the site to the south as a sand and gravel pit. It is stated that alternative sources of aggregates will be considered when the existing resource is exhausted.

It is stated that the potential for batching plants at other KQL sites are severely constrained.

With regards to alternative design/methods, it was considered to locate the plant within the site. However, the plant would occupy areas required for aggregate extraction and stockpiling. The proposed entrance upgrade cannot be accommodated in the existing QR45 footprint.

It is stated that the proposed location provides the optimum solution, i.e. proximal to the aggregates, improved entrance sightlines and does not restrict existing operations.

Planning Authority Comments

The EIAR states that alternative sources of aggregates will be considered when the existing resource is exhausted. However, upon investigation, it appears to the Planning Authority that the area of the quarry registered under QR45 is worked out or substantially worked out. The applicant has not provided any details on the level of aggregate that is remaining in the existing registered quarry.

Furthermore, the applicant has not included reasoning as to why the existing site at Rathmoylan cannot be continued. Furthermore, no details of where the sources of material will be imported via the R148 has been provided and thus whether there are any other suitable locations closer to the source. It is considered that this section is inadequate and further information should be requested in this regard.

Chapter 3 Population and Human Health

EIAR Findings

Chapter 3 of the submitted EIAR discusses the likely significant effects of the proposed development on population and human health in the area surrounding the site. It is stated that KQL has employed approximately 2 personnel on an annual basis at this location, both directly and indirectly. Permanent employees include site personnel, administration staff and maintenance personnel, who are based at offsite locations. Indirect employment is generated in terms of contract transport drivers, suppliers of products and services, such as fuel and oil suppliers, machinery suppliers etc.

With regards to tourism and amenity, it is stated that the area around the pit is not noted as a popular destination for tourism.

With regards to traffic, it is stated that a traffic assessment was carried out by Tobin in January 2019 and outlines that the traffic generated by the proposed development will equate to 1 additional HGV arrival and 1 HGV departure per working day.

Residual Impact

It is stated that no residual impact is anticipated as the proposed development will be operated in compliance with relevant guidelines.

Cumulative Impacts

It is stated that there will be no cumulative impact of both facilities being operational.

Planning Authority Comments

It is noted that air quality, traffic and noise and vibration are assessed under different chapter within the EIAR. It is noted that a number of third parties raise concern with the operation of the existing quarry in terms of residential amenity.

Chapter 5 Biodiversity

EIAR Findings

Chapter 5 of the EIAR provides an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA). An ecological site visit was conducted by a Tobin Ecologist on the 13th August and 18th September 2018. It is stated that the River Boyne is located 400 metres to the west of the site and a Natura Impact Statement has been prepared in relation to this application.

No invasive species were recorded on the landholding during the field visit. Sycamore was recorded within hedgerows and treelines to the south and east of the site which is listed on Invasive Species Ireland's Amber risk list which does not pose a high risk to native species or habitats.

It is stated that there are no key ecological receptors within the red line boundary. There are no surface water connections between the site and the River Boyne and Blackwater.

The overall landholding does not lie within or is adjacent to any site designated for nature conservation. It is stated that there are no potential direct impacts identified. The existing berms and hedges will be maintained and managed for wildlife.

It is stated that the potential for significant impacts during the construction stage as a result of the temporary loss of current habitats is evaluated as being low, temporary and negative in the local context. No treelines or hedgerows will be lost as a result of the proposed development as access routes will use an upgraded road entrance. A low value hedge will be removed along the road in the interest of traffic safety.

It is stated that there are no instream works proposed within watercourses. The proposed construction works give rise to the potential for increased mobilisation of silt and suspended solids via surface water run-off. No surface water run-off to the River Boyne will occur. Surface water protective measures will be designed for the site.

It is stated that there are no red-listed birds of conservation concern recorded within the proposed development site. No sand martin nests were recorded on the sand and gravel pit area. The EIAR finds that the potential effects affecting birds are imperceptible and limited to the local context. One potential tree was identified as having potential for a summer bat roost to the south of the sand and gravel pit. Bat species use treelines as commuting corridors and no treelines will be lost as a result of the proposed development.

Cumulative Impact

It is stated that given the distance of the site to other plans and projects, there will be no cumulative impact associated with the proposed development of this site or the ongoing sand and gravel operation. The potential for indirect or cumulative impacts are assessed as being unlikely and not significant, taking account of the absence for pathways for significant adverse effects, as set out in the submitted Natura Impact Statement.

Residual Impacts

It is stated in the Conclusion in Section 5.6 that once the mitigation measures are implemented, potential effects are of low magnitude in the temporary to short-term and therefore are insignificant.

Planning Authority Comments

I note that the EIAR references a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), however, a Screening for Appropriate Assessment was submitted, not a NIS. The Planning Authority has undertaken an AA Screening under Appendix 2 of the Planner's Report.

I note the internal report from the Heritage Officer. No birds on the amber or red list of conservation concern were found on site. It is considered that relevant ecological surveys

have been undertaken with a justifiable level of survey effort. Impact of the proposed development on the receiving environment were identified for the construction phase and the operational phase of the development. It is considered that the impacts identified are appropriate and the level of impact identified is adequate. Having regard to this, to the mitigation measures outlined in Section 5.5 of the EIAR and to the cumulative and residual impacts identified, it is considered that this chapter adequately addresses the potential significant impact on the environment in terms of biodiversity.

Chapter 6 Land, Soils and Geology

EIAR findings

It is stated that this chapter assesses the potential impact of the proposed works within the Ballyonan Pit and the planning application area and includes an assessment of any potential impact on the geological environment (soils, subsoils, bedrock) at and surrounding Ballyonan Pit.

It is stated that potential effects of the proposed development and ongoing operation include movement and placement of soils which can result in temporary and permanent impacts on the geological environment. Potential effects may include material being carried on to the local roads and localised contamination of the ground as a result of fuel spillages from plant operating on site. Wherever there are vehicles and plant in use there is the potential for a direct hydrocarbon release which may contaminate the soil and subsoil. A spill has the potential to directly pollute water, if the soil and subsoil act as a pathway from any source of pollution. It is stated that any spill of fuel or oil would potentially present a low probability slight, long term negative effect on the soil and geological environment.

Topsoil should be stockpiled no higher than 2.5 metres. There is a potential for a slight negative effect on soil due to erosion of inappropriately stored excavated materials. However, any risk from the stockpiling of excavated materials can be managed through good site practice. The relatively flat topography of the site combined with a robust sediment and erosion plan greatly reduces the risk of erosion or sediment release to surface waters.

The presence and operation of machinery may lead to occasional accidental emissions in the form of oil, petrol or diesel leaks which could cause contamination if the contaminants enter the soil environment.

Cumulative Impact

It is stated that there is no additional cumulative impact as a result of the proposed development. A slight beneficial impact may occur in the recolonization and habitat enhancement of Area A and QR45 in the long term.

Residual Impact

The conclusion states that there will be no significant alterations to the local and regional environment as a result of the proposed development. The removal of 1ha of land from agricultural use will result in a minor impact on agricultural activity in the area.

Chapter 13 of the EIAR also describes the effects on land of the proposed development. It is stated that the land use on and adjacent to the site is primarily agricultural. There are no public amenities on the proposed development site such as walking routes. There are no agricultural, horticultural or commercial forestry activities taking place on the subject lands.

It is stated that the potential effect on land will consist of a change of land use which will include the construction of buildings, surface water attenuation lagoons within the site. It is stated that the proposed development will continue the emerging trend within the applicant's landholding of land changing in use from agricultural land to sand and gravel extraction and associated facilities.

It is stated that as the development is located adjacent to the 'existing waste management activity', it is considered that it will not result in a significant change of use to the overall applicant's landholding. Mitigation measures are proposed in any case such as the retention of all existing perimeter planting and regenerating vegetation. Disturbance of existing vegetation will be minimised where possible and proposed planting will help integrate the proposed development into the landscape. The main long-term mitigation measure will be the staged topsoil and grassing of the area.

Planning Authority Comments

Having assessed the potential impact, to the mitigation measures proposed in Sections 6.5 and 13.4 of the EIAR, to the residual and cumulative impact, the Planning Authority considers that the EIAR has adequately identified and assessed the potential environmental impacts on land, soils and geology arising from the proposed development.

Chapter 7 Water

EIAR Findings

Chapter 7 of the EIAR assesses any potential impact on the water environment within and surrounding Ballyonan Pit. It is stated that as the surface water and groundwater environment within the pit is managed as a unit, it was deemed appropriate to assess the site as a unit with references to the specific planning application area within the land ownership boundary.

According to the EPA River Water Quality data, the quality of surface water upstream of Ballyonan Pit is described as Moderate upgradient on the River Boyne with a marked improvement in the water quality towards the Boyne and Deel River. According to the EPA Water Framework Directive data, the surface water in the area has an overall risk rating of not at risk of not achieving good status. This data source also describes the river status near Ballyonan Pit as Good.

It is stated that there are no proposed surface water or groundwater abstractions or discharges from the proposed development. It is concluded that the development will not impact the abundance and quality of the River Boyne.

It is stated that based on the water levels taken at Ballyonan Pit, works were completed above the water table and, therefore, there has been no direct impact on the groundwater environment within the application area, or the overall site. It is stated that there will be no direct impacts on the groundwater table as a result of the proposed works.

It is stated that due to perched water in the site where sand horizon is interbedded with low permeability gravelly clays, the site is not suitable for a standard septic tank system and percolation area. The decision to have a sealed tank for wastewater was taken as a result of low permeability results from the T and P Tests.

It is stated that an important factor in relation to water is the control and management of rainwater falling within the site. The movement of vehicles within the site represents a potential risk, by means of spillages and leakages to ground. The processing of materials can result in fine particle sizes. Uncontrolled emissions of sediment laden waters can result in sedimentation of natural watercourses and can impact on fisheries potential. It is stated that there has been no significant impact on the local or regional water environment as a result of works to date at this location. The proposed development will not significantly alter the surface water environment. Run-off generated on site will be reused in the concrete batching process on site.

Section 7.5 detail a number of mitigation measures including implementation of the wheel wash, storage of pollutants in a covered area, spill kits and settlement tanks.

Cumulative Impact

It is stated that there will be no cumulative impact associated with the proposed development. A slight beneficial cumulative impact may occur in the restoration of the QR45.

Residual Impact

It is stated that implementation of the mitigation measures will significantly ameliorate the risk to the water environment during the proposed operations at Ballyonan Pit, and any impact on the local and regional water environment will be negligible.

Planning Authority Comments

It is noted that no detail has been provided by the applicant outlining that the existing pit is operating in accordance with the conditions of the Section 261 registration.

Internal reports from Environment Section and the Environmental Health Service has been received and it is considered that inadequate detail has been submitted.

Section 7.3.5 states that works in Ballyonan Pit have not gone below the water table, however, during a site inspection it was noted that there was a water filled depression in the middle of the pit floor. Section 7.3.5 also states that there are no proposed surface water or groundwater abstractions. This contradicts Section 2.4.11 Vehicle/Wheelwash which states that the wheelwash system is occasionally topped up from the existing borehole.

It is noted that it is recommended that there is no direct emission into surface from rain water run-off from the site. The mitigation measures in the EIAR are considered not to be detailed enough to be confident this will be the case from the proposed activities and thus the applicant needs to provide detailed mitigation of drainage and capture of rainwater run-off and methods of verification of the effectiveness of the system.

No details on the volume of surface water that will be required to be used in the batching plant process, required for the dampening down of dust during dry periods and required for wheel wash top ups has been provided. Furthermore, no quantity of the proposed volume of water to be extracted from the borehole on site during dry periods and no impact that this will have on surrounding private wells in the vicinity has been outlined.

Bunding of chemical storage, designated refuelling areas, details of how materials are to be managed on site, and action to be taken to verify that ground and surface water is being adequately protected is required to be provided.

Chapter 8 Climate

EIAR Findings

This chapter of the EIAR assesses the potential impact on climate arising from the proposed development. In-combination effects of the existing sand and gravel pit and the proposed development are also assessed.

It is stated that on a local, regional and global scale, the climate has not been altered by the activities of the pit to date and will not be impacted as a result of the proposed works at the site. The site is not a significant industrial generator of greenhouse gas emissions. The site has not created and will not create any temperature inversions, alter any current wind circulation patterns nor affect the sunshine or any other climatic factors in the area beyond the site boundaries of the pit.

Mitigation measures are outlined including managing all staff and contractors to ensure that machinery used on site is properly maintained and is switched off when not in use to avoid unnecessary dust and exhaust emissions from construction traffic and that the site and all plant equipment on site are operated according to Best Available Technique (BAT) Guidelines.

Planning Authority Comments

It is considered that this chapter of the EIAR adequately addresses the proposed development in terms of impact on climate.

Chapter 9 Air Quality

EIAR Findings

Chapter 9 of the EIAR assesses the potential impact on air quality within the surrounding area. In-combination effects of the existing sand and gravel pit and the proposed development are also assessed.

It is stated that there are no statutory limits for dust deposition from quarry/pit developments in Ireland. In recent years, the TA Luft/VDI 2119/Bergerhoff Method of dust emission monitoring has become the most commonly used method. This method involves using a direct collection pot to standardised dimensions of either glass or plastic. The method is defined as an internationally recognised standard and has been adopted by the EPA as the method of choice for licenced facilities. The compliance threshold limit is 350mg/sqm/day.

It is stated that dust monitoring was undertaken in 2017 and 2018 with the results presented in Table 9.1. All dust levels recorded are below the compliance threshold limit of 350mg/sqm/day for dust.

It is stated that impacts during the construction phase will be temporary in duration and are not considered likely to give rise to significant impacts following the implementation of mitigation measures.

It is stated that given the processes involved, dust generation from the site is likely to arise due to the transportation of material in and out of the site, on site vehicle movement and the processing of material and movement of material. It is stated that the implementation of mitigation measures such as watering stockpiles, on-site speed limits, the presence of a wheelwash, hardstanding between the wheelwash and the entrance and dust monitoring will significantly reduce the potential for dust emissions.

Residual Impact

It is stated that the implementation of the mitigation measures will ensure that the proposed works will not result in an increase in dust levels in the environment and the potential impact on air quality will be low. It is not anticipated that there will be any impact on air quality.

Planning Authority Comments

The Environmental Health Service (EHS) have assessed the findings of this Chapter of the EIAR. It is noted that there are no measurements of PM10 exposure to the local population and assessment against Air Quality Standards. There is no attempt to quantify any increase in dust emissions from the proposed development or any change in the extraction activities as a consequence of the development. The EIAR states that an assessment as per NRA guidelines has been undertaken but does not detail the assessment. The comparison of the extraction activities and batching process to a construction site with impacts limited to 25 metres for dust deposition and 10 metres for vegetation does not seem to be representative of the existing activities and the proposed development. Third party submissions would indicate dust impacts are significantly further away than 25 metres from the existing extraction activities.

It is considered that the assessment contains a number of assumptions and opinions that are not evidence based on the impacts of air quality from the proposed development and consequence on the extraction activities as a consequence of the development.

The conclusion that due to the distance to sensitive receptors being less than 250 metres the potential impact on air quality will be minor appears to be in error. It should be noted that compliance with the TA Luft Levels for dust deposition is guidance. It is an averaging standard over a period of time and there is therefore potential for nuisance levels of

exposure within the averaged results. Full dust minimisation mitigation is therefore required irrespective of the monitoring results.

Chapter 10 Noise & Vibration

EIAR Findings

This chapter of the EIAR assesses the impact that the existing and the proposed activities will have on the local and regional environment in terms of noise. It is stated that the methodology has been undertaken in line with best practice EIS guidelines.

A noise survey has been undertaken at the closest noise sensitive locations to the quarry to establish the baseline noise levels in the absence of the operational quarry. A review of best practice guidance has been undertaken to set appropriate operation noise and vibration limits at the site. Predictive noise calculations associated with the operation of the quarry and bitumen/asphalt plant have been undertaken at the nearest noise sensitive locations and compared against the relevant criteria and mitigation measures have been proposed, where necessary, to reduce noise impacts to within the relevant criteria.

It is stated that there are three noise sensitive receptors within a 500m radius of the site – SR1, residential properties 300m to the south, SR2 – a farmyard with a residential dwelling 420m to the northwest and SR3 – residential properties 350m to the north.

It is stated that the main noise sources associated with the paving plant will be those from the traffic movements to the site, transfer of raw material via conveyors and the block forming machine. All of the buildings and the associated internal noise attenuation measures have been designed to ensure the internal noise levels will not exceed 85dB(A). It is stated that noise generation at the site will be non-continuous, limited to the hours of operation and lifetime of the facility. It is stated that there will be no changes in concentration of noise levels from traffic movements given that the volume of HGV site traffic will remain the same. A number of mitigation measures are outlined within Section 10.4 to limit noise levels on site and in the surrounding area.

Cumulative Impacts

It is stated that the facility will not operate in conjunction with any other facilities or proposed developments in the area and therefore there are no cumulative impacts in terms of noise from the proposed site.

Planning Authority Comments

Environment Section has reviewed this chapter of the submitted EIAR. It is considered that the noise monitoring locations shown in Figure 10.1 are not representative of Sensitive Receptors SR2 and SR3 and that more suitable locations close to the receptors

need to be submitted. There also appears to be a contradiction in Section 10.2 where there is reference made to both 30min LAeq readings and measurements carried out over 15 minute periods. The noise monitoring times and dates referred to on page 112 of the EIAR do not correspond to the time and dates in Table 10.1.

The Environmental Health Service has also reviewed this chapter of the submitted EIAR. The EIAR states that there will be no change in the existing traffic noise as the level of activity will remain the same. Consideration needs to be given to the likely significant impacts from traffic noise when the extraction finishes at the existing site and the batching plant is being supplied from other sources.

Clarification needs to be provided outlining whether reference to the dominance of traffic noise is traffic as a consequence of the existing development.

Furthermore, the assessment conclusion states that this is a worst case situation with all plant and machinery operating and noise is likely to be less than predicted but the methodology employed has a rate of utilisation of 66% of plant and machinery built into the predictive calculations. The text of the assessment does not show how the conclusions are reached that there will be compliance with the standard noise levels. Table 10.3 and 10.4 show noise source calculations and the text states 'noise sources associated with the facility are therefore compliant'.

It is noted that there is inconsistency between the proposed permitted hours of operation in the EIAR.

The EIAR should clearly state the existing noise from current activities, the predicted increase from the proposed development, the cumulative noise impact of the existing and the proposed development. This should include any increase from the existing extraction activities as a consequence of the proposal.

The predicted noise levels as a result of the batching plant activity are to be amended based on the baseline survey resulting from the new monitoring locations and times and dates referred to above.

Chapter 11 Traffic

EIAR Findings

This chapter of the EIAR assesses the issue of traffic generated from the proposed development. It is proposed to provide a new access onto the L1011, 260 metres to the north of the existing access serving the existing sand and gravel pit. It is stated that it is proposed to close this existing access with raw materials from the pit being fed to the batching plant via an internal access track.

It is stated that the proposed facility will import a total of 2,000 tonnes of cement materials and export 21,000 tonnes of concrete per annum, over a 20 year period. It is stated that the existing permitted traffic volume granted in accordance with permission for the quarry is 20,000 tonnes per annum.

It is stated that having regard to the current levels of traffic using the L1011 road and the R148 road through Cloncard, it is noted that these levels of traffic growth will not have a material impact on the operating capacity of the road network. There is no proposed increase in output from the facility and the proposed development will result in a decrease in traffic at the KQL Rathmolyon facility.

Section 11.5 of the EIAR outlines the mitigation measures including that no haul traffic enters or departs the site from the north via the L1011/R160 junction.

Planning Authority Comments

This chapter of the submitted EIAR has been assessed by the Roads and Transportation Department. A swept path analysis for HGVs for the proposed entrance to the development onto the L1011 and the junction of the L1011 and R148 is required. Furthermore, an independent Road Safety Audit for the proposed development, taking into account existing and proposed traffic on the road network in this area, including the entrance, sightlines and junction of L1011 and R148, is also required.

It is noted that page 16 of the EIAR states that when the remaining sand and gravel is exhausted, it is proposed to import material via the R148. However, no details of the sources of the material which will be imported via the R148, their planning status, quantity of material to be provided or proposed haul routes have been provided. Furthermore, no details of the routes of the product leaving the site, including their proposed destination have been provided.

Chapter 12 Landscape and Visual

EIAR Findings

This chapter of the EIAR assesses the landscape and visual impact of the development. The site is located in a landscape area characterised as the North-Western Lowlands.

It is stated that the main landscape impact arising due to the development is the change in landform within the tillage field. The other landscape impact includes the ongoing sand and gravel extraction. Works include the removal of small areas of existing vegetation such as grassland and grassy verges located in the entrance and stockpiles of the application site area. The existing hedgerows and trees along the boundary would be retained and allowed to increase in height and width. It is stated that the potential

landscape effects would be largely confined inside the boundary of the pit with short visibility from the existing L1011. It is stated that there are no views from houses along the R148.

In terms of visual impact, it is stated that the actual extent of the development's potential visibility will be restricted to within the application site. It is stated that the proposed operations would be visually screened by dense hedgerow boundaries to the west along the local road and internal hedgerows on site. The proposed works would be screened from the north due to the dense screening provided by the mature hedgerow and treeline boundaries. There are no views of the operations from the south due to a steep gravel ridge and dense hedgerow. It is stated that there would be no change to the existing visual amenity of the receptors within the study area due to the proposed works at the site. Section 12.4 outlines a number of mitigation measures.

Cumulative Impact

It is stated that the proposed operations at QR45 would continue and as with the batching plant the material is well screened in all direction due to topography and intervening vegetation. Therefore, there will be no cumulative impact of both facilities being operational. There are no additional cumulative impact associated with the proposed development of this site and the subject site. A slight beneficial cumulative impact may occur in the restoration of the land in the longer term.

Residual Impact

It is stated that on completion of all mitigation measures it is anticipated that the restoration area within Ballyonan Pit will be restored to align with the surrounding topographical levels.

Planning Authority comments

Having regard to the height of the proposed batching plant it is recommended that a visual impact assessment including photomontages are provided showing the development when viewed from the R148 and locations to the north of the site.

Chapter 14 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

EIAR Findings

This chapter of the EIAR addresses the effects on cultural heritage, archaeology and architecture. It is stated that there will be no direct or indirect impacts on any other known items of cultural heritage, archaeology or buildings of heritage interest in the

application area or the vicinity. It is stated that due to the possibility of the survival of previously unknown subsurface archaeological deposits or finds within areas 1 and 2 soil stripping in these areas should be archaeologically monitored.

Planning Authority Comments

The Heritage Officer has reviewed this chapter of the EIAR. The methodology for both desk and field surveys and various surveys are provided, and they are considered appropriate in terms of survey effort and scope. It is proposed to monitor all soil stripping that will occur on site.

It is considered that this chapter adequately considers the impact of the proposed development on the archaeology of the area and provides relevant and appropriate mitigation measures.

Chapter 15 Interaction of the foregoing

EIAR Findings

This chapter discusses the potential for interaction between impacts of the different environmental aspects. Interactions include human beings/socio-economic, flora and fauna/water, soils/geology and hydrogeology, water, air quality and climate, noise and vibration, landscape and visual assessment, cultural heritage and archaeology and traffic and roads assessment.

It is stated that whilst there is potential for the above parameters to interact and result in a cumulative impact, it has been demonstrated within this EIAR that none of these cumulative impacts will result in significant environmental degradation.

Planning Authority Comments

This chapter of the EIAR appears satisfactory.

Conclusion

Having regard to the above, it is recommended that further information is requested in order to undertake a full Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed

development. Please note that this report and the further information request below informs and is consistent with the Planner's report. The following further information should be requested.

Further Information

1. The Planning Authority notes that the EIAR states that the proposed development will initially be supplied by the existing adjacent sand and gravel pit. In light of this and the nature of the proposal, the Applicant is requested to submit evidence of satisfactory compliance with each of the conditions imposed under Section 261 decision QR45.
2. Upon investigation, it appears to the Planning Authority that the area of the quarry registered under QR45 is worked out or substantially worked out. The Applicant is requested to provide details on the level of aggregate that is remaining in the existing registered quarry that is proposed to primarily serve the proposed development.
3. (a) It is noted that Page 16 of the EIAR states that when the remaining sand and gravel is exhausted, it is proposed to import material via the R148. The Applicant is requested to provide details of the sources of the material which will be imported via the R148. Details to include their location, their planning status, quantity of material, proposed haul routes and a full traffic impact assessment on the haul routes.
(b) In addition, you are requested to provide full details of the routes of the product leaving the site, including details of the proposed destination.
4. The Planning Authority considers that the section on reasonable alternatives is inadequate. The Applicant has not included reasoning as to why the existing site at Rathmoylan cannot be continued. Furthermore, no details of where the sources of material will be imported via the R148 has been provided and thus whether there are any other suitable locations closer to the source.
5. The Planning Authority considers that the section on competent experts is inadequate. Please submit a revised section which clearly lists the names of all the experts contributing to the various sections of the report, in accordance with para. 4.4 and 4.9 of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018).
6. The Applicant is requested to clarify the lifespan of the proposed development.
7. The Planning Authority notes that the EIAR references settlement ponds to the south of the subject site (Section 2.4.10) and that it is part of the current application to rectify these (page 29). The Applicant is requested to clarify why these are referenced in the EIAR, state whether these are essential for the use of the proposed development and clarify the planning status of these ponds.

Furthermore, the Applicant is requested to clarify why these works are not included in the development description or the red line boundary. As these works are existing the Applicant should note that they would require retention permission.

8. The Applicant is requested to outline their intentions with the remaining lands to the north and east of the proposed development.
9. It is noted from the submitted drawings that the batching plant may have a higher capacity from what has been described in the application. The Applicant is requested to comment.
10. The Applicant is requested to submit a swept path analysis for HGVs for the proposed entrance to the development onto the L1011 and the junction of the L1011 and R148.
11. The Applicant is requested to provide an independent Road Safety Audit for the proposed development, taking into account existing and proposed traffic on the road network in this area, including the entrance, sightlines and junction of L1011 and R148. All RSA recommendations to be incorporated into the proposed design.
12. The Planning Authority considers the EIAR submitted lacks adequate detail with regards to water treatment in order to carry out a full EIA in respect of the development and as such further information is required as follows:
 - a) Section 2.4.9 of the EIAR refers to a holding tank for wastewater which will then be tankered off site. The Applicant is requested to submit calculations for the sizing of the effluent holding tank and provide an accurate proposal as to how often it will be required to be emptied based on the population equivalent of the operation.
 - b) The Applicant is requested to state the purpose of the temporary ponds referred to in Section 2.4.10 located in Area A and provide an explanation as to why they will no longer be required and where that water will be directed to in the future.
 - c) In relation to the settlement tanks referred to in Section 2.4.10 and included in planning drawings 10592-2004 to 10592-2008 the Applicant is requested to submit a report with detailed calculations on the sizing of the tanks and their ability to cater for the volume of surface water generated on site. The report shall take into account measures that will be put in place to cater for large unexpected rainfall events.
 - d) The Applicant is requested to submit a report quantifying the volume of surface water that will be required to be used in the batching plant process, required for the dampening down of dust during dry periods and required for wheel wash top ups. It shall also be necessary to quantify the proposed volume of water to be extracted from the borehole on site during dry periods and to identify what impact this will have on surrounding private wells in the vicinity.

- e) Section 7.3.5 Surface Water states that there are no proposed surface water or groundwater abstractions. This contradicts Section 2.4.11 Vehicle/Wheelwash which states that the wheelwash system is occasionally topped up from the existing borehole. The Applicant is requested to clarify this.
 - f) Section 7.3.5 Surface Water states that works in Ballyonan Pit have not gone below the water table however during a site inspection there was a water filled depression in the middle of the pit floor. This water body is also marked as a wetland feature on the Landscaping Layout Plan Drawing No. Figure 12.2 located in Chapter 12 Landscaping and Visual. The Applicant is requested to clarify.
 - g) It is recommended that there are no direct emission into surface from rain water run-off from the site. The mitigation measures in the EIAR are considered not to be detailed enough to be confident this will be the case from the proposed activities. The Applicant is requested to provide detailed mitigation of drainage and capture of rain water run-off and methods of verification of the effectiveness of the system.
 - h) Bunding of chemical storage, designated refuelling areas, details of how materials are to be managed on site, and action to be taken to verify that ground and surface water is being adequately protected is to be provided by the Applicant.
 - i) There should be no direct emissions of foul waste water to ground water. All waste water must be contained and taken off site for treatment at an authorised treatment facility.
13. The Planning Authority considers the EIAR submitted lacks adequate detail with regards to noise in order to carry out a full EIA in respect of the development and as such further information is required as follows:
- a) The noise monitoring locations shown in Figure 10.1 are not representative of Sensitive Receptors SR2 and SR3. The Applicant is requested to select more suitable locations close to the receptors and submit new baseline monitoring results.
 - b) There appears to be a contradiction in Section 10.2 where there is reference made to both 30min LAeq readings and measurements carried out over 15 minute periods. The Applicant is requested to clarify this.
 - c) The noise monitoring times and dates referred to on page 112 of the EIAR do not correspond to the time and dates in Table 10.1. The Applicant is requested to submit noise measurements corresponding to the times and dates referred to on page 112.

- d) The predicted noise levels as a result of the batching plant activity are to be amended based on the baseline survey resulting from the new monitoring locations and times and dates referred to above.
 - e) The EIAR states that there will be no change in the existing traffic noise as the level of activity will remain the same. The Applicant is required to give consideration to the likely significant impacts from traffic noise when the extraction finishes at the existing site and the batching plant is being supplied from other sources.
 - f) The Applicant is requested to clarify whether reference to the dominance of traffic noise is traffic as a consequence of the existing development.
 - g) It is noted that there is inconsistency between the proposed permitted hours of operation in the EIAR. The Applicant is requested to clarify.
 - h) The assessment conclusion states that this is a worst case situation with all plant and machinery operating and noise is likely to be less than predicted but the methodology employed has a rate of utilisation of 66% of plant and machinery built into the predictive calculations. The Applicant is requested to clarify.
 - i) The text of the assessment does not show how the conclusions are reached that there will be compliance with the standard noise levels. Table 10.3 and 10.4 show noise source calculations and the text states 'noise sources associated with the facility are therefore compliant'. The Applicant is requested to clarify.
 - j) The EIAR should clearly state the existing noise from current activities, the predicted increase from the proposed development, the cumulative noise impact of the existing and the proposed development. This should include any increase from the existing extraction activities as a consequence of the proposal.
 - k) Mitigation measures should not be qualified by 'where practicable' or 'reasonable'. The practicability of mitigation is part of the EIA process and specific commitments are required in the EIAR.
14. The Applicant is requested to provide details on the proposed source of drinking water, how it will be stored on site and how will it be used on site for sanitary purposes as well as for drinking purposes.
15. The Planning Authority considers the EIAR submitted lacks adequate detail with regards to Air Quality in order to carry out a full EIA in respect of the development and as such further information is required as follows:
- a) There are no measurements of PM10 exposure to the local population and assessment against Air Quality Standards.
 - b) There is no attempt to quantify any increase in dust emissions from the proposed development or any change in the extraction activities as a consequence of the development.

- c) The EIAR states that an assessment as per NRA guidelines has been undertaken but does not detail the assessment.
 - d) The comparison of the extraction activities and batching process to a construction site with impacts limited to 25 metres for dust deposition and 10 metres for vegetation does not seem to be representative of the existing activities and the proposed development. Third party submissions would indicate dust impacts are significantly further away than 25 metres from the existing extraction activities.
 - e) The assessment contains a number of assumptions and opinions that are not evidence based on the impacts of air quality from the proposed development and consequence on the extraction activities as a consequence of the development.
 - f) The conclusion that due to the distance to sensitive receptors being less than 250 metres the potential impact on air quality will be minor appears to be in error.
 - g) It should be noted that compliance with the TA Luft Levels for dust deposition is guidance. It is an averaging standard over a period of time and there is therefore potential for nuisance levels of exposure within the averaged results. Full dust minimisation mitigation is therefore required irrespective of the monitoring results.
16. The Applicant has not demonstrated the visual impact of the proposed development when viewed from remote locations. The Applicant is requested to submit a visual impact assessment prepared by a suitably qualified person that includes photomontages of the proposed development when viewed remotely, including from the R148 and remote locations to the north.
17. The Applicant is requested to submit a methodology statement for the removal of plant, machinery, hard standings and ancillary services.
18. The Applicant is advised that there have been a number of third-party submissions on this application. The Applicant is requested to comment on the issues raised.


Gary Farrelly
Assistant Planner

9th December 2019