

Part of the Breedon Group



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1. INTRODUCTION

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1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND

Projects likely to have significant effects on the environment *by virtue of their nature, size and location* are subject to the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), prior to gaining development consent. The EIA is a systematic process undertaken to identify and evaluate the potential environmental impact of proposed projects. The EIA also seeks to consider alternatives and propose mitigation measures to ensure the development is carried out within recognised and accepted standards. Thus, the EIA is a dynamic process in which environmental protection and sustainability. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), which replaces the previous Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), is the new formal statement or document produced as a result of that process.

This Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) pertains to a proposed development at an existing limestone quarry at Deerpark, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath, known as Castlepollard Quarry. The development, will consist of the continued use and operation of the existing quarry (permitted under P.A. Ref. 01/525), including deepening of the quarry, along with minor amendments to the permitted quarry layout comprising an extraction area of c. 4 ha within an overall application area of c. 11.4 ha. The development will include provision of new site infrastructure including water management system, wheelwash and other ancillaries.

This EIAR accompanies a planning application submitted to Westmeath County Council by Lagan Materials Ltd (Lagan). Lagan is part of Breedon Group plc. Refer to Appendix 1.1 for statement on **Need for Development**.

The EIAR and accompanying planning application are being submitted for consideration to Westmeath County Council, which is the competent authority for the proposed development. The application has been prepared and compiled under the supervision of John Sheils, (B.Eng. (Mining), MSCS, MRICS) on behalf of the applicant, Lagan. John Sheils is the principal of "J Sheils Planning & Environmental Ltd" (JSPE), a company that provides planning, environmental and valuation services and specialises in the areas of mineral extraction and inert waste management.

In addition to the studies within the EIAR carried out by J Sheils Planning & Environmental Ltd (JSPE), some additional technical studies have been carried out by independent consultants. These studies are incorporated within the EIAR or are attached to the EIAR as appendices.



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1.2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

The site is located in the Townland of Deerpark c. 2 km southeast of Castlepollard and c. 13.5 km northwest of Delvin, Co. Westmeath. The quarry is located on the southwest side of, and with direct access onto, the R395 regional road connecting Edgeworthstown, Castlepollard, Collinstown and Delvin (Refer to Figure 1.1 & 1.2).

The site is almost rectangular with an axial orientation of NW-SE. The proposed extraction area is irregular in shape and runs axially to the southern boundary occupying the central and southern sections of the site. The site is bounded by a copse of trees on both the eastern and western boundaries and by hedgerows on the remaining boundaries, with stock fencing on the boundaries of the access road to the main site entrance. The access road extends from the northeastern corner of the main section of the site c. 130 m to the R395 regional road. Sight distances at the site entrance of at least c. 160 m are achievable in both directions along the R395 at a distance of 3 m back from the edge of the major road.

The site occurs at an elevation of 88 m AOD along the northern boundary and a maximum elevation of 128 m AOD within the site and along the longitudinal axis of the ridge. The surrounding lands are largely agricultural, specifically pasture, with a substantial level of forestry plantation in the wider area. The topography of the region is characterised by a rolling, hilly landform with prominent hills topped with cherty limestone with enclosed lakes and areas of peat deposits. The site is situated near the northern end of the Carboniferous limestone terrain of the Irish Midlands, where elevations typically vary from 90 to 200 m AOD.

The proposed quarry layout comprising an extraction area of c. 4 ha within an overall application area of c. 11.4 ha (Refer to EIAR Figures 1.2 & 1.3). The applicant has full control of the lands via a leasehold interest in the property. To date, extraction has taken place in the northern and central sections of the quarry. The quarry comprises disturbed ground in a large, level processing area located in the northern section of the site and a central horseshoe-shaped extraction area driven into the northern end of the limestone ridge. The extraction area is bordered by copses of trees on the flanks of the ridge with grassland atop, which has been stripped of overburden within the area proposed for extraction. A perimeter earthen berm has been constructed and seeded on the boundaries of the extraction area at the southern end of the site.

The floor of the existing quarry is at c. 88 m AOD. It is proposed to develop an additional extractive bench to c. 70m AOD. The site will continue to be worked from the existing quarry area in a southeasterly direction in a series of 14 to 18 meter benches between 128 and 70 m AOD (Refer to Figure 3.1).

The proposed development will include upgrading of the Water Management System. Development of the quarry at depth below the current floor will require dewatering and discharge to surface water. The proposed discharge to surface water will be subject to a licence to discharge to surface water as required under Section 4 of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act, 1977. The Water Management Plan is presented in EIAR Section 7.0 and includes design specifications for settlement tanks and mechanisms of discharge, and an appropriately sized hydrocarbon interceptor.

The asphalt plant previously granted planning permission under P.A. Ref. 01/525 has been removed and will not be reinstalled as part of this proposed application.



There will be no changes to the method of extraction and processing as a result of this planning application.

The site has the benefit of being strategically located on the R395 regional road, which connects Edgeworthstown and Castlepollard c. 20 and 2 km, respectively, to the northwest with Delvin c. 13.5 km to the southeast. The proposed haulage route for all site-related HGV traffic is therefore directly onto the R395 (Refer to Figure 1.1). As such, site traffic will be immediately directed onto the regional road network and thus avoid adversely impacting the local road network.

An average extraction capacity of 100,000 tonnes is anticipated as part of the proposed development over a 20 year extraction life for the proposed development plus an additional two years to complete final restoration works.

The volume of traffic generated by the proposed development will result in an average daily vehicle flow of 44 vehicles, 32 of which would be HGVs. It has been shown that these increases can be comfortably accommodated by the local road network.

Land-use in the area consists of a patchwork of variably small to large agricultural fields, which are predominantly held in pasture, with lesser coniferous and mixed forest, and transitional woodland scrub. There are two remnant areas of mixed broad leaved woodland located on the verges of the main quarry area. The dominant species are Ash and Hazel, with hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, willow, ivy, bramble and gorse.

Outside of the immediate environs of the urban areas of Castlepollard and Delvin, and the rural villages of Collinstown, Multyfarnham, Dromone, Coole, Fore and Drumcree, the settlement pattern in the area can be described as low-intensity rural settlement, with dispersed farmsteads and one-off residences, as well as diffuse or discontinuous ribbon development along roadsides on the approaches to the town of Castlepollard. Residential property in the area typically comprises one-off single residences and farmsteads along public roads and to a minor extent, along and at the end of lanes off the public roads.

The closest large residential settlement to the site is Castlepollard, which is located c. 2 km to the northwest. There are 10 residences within 250 m, 16 within 500 m and 42 within 1 km of the site planning application boundary (Refer Figure 4.1). There are several clusters of residential dwellings located near the site. A cluster of 6 residences are located within 250 m on the east side of the R395 across from the site entrance and north along the L5743 (i.e., nos. 5-10), while another cluster of 4 residences are located within 250 m west of the site adjacent to the drainage ditch into which it is proposed to discharge surface waters (i.e., nos. 1-4).

There are no occupied residences within the application site or landholding, and the closest is located c. 270 m northeast of the quarry extraction area. There has been a long historical association with quarrying at this location and consideration has been given to screening of the development, phasing and direction of working with respect to receptors, in order to reduce environmental impacts.



1.3 **LEGISLATION**

1.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION

As a member State of the EU, Ireland is required to transpose EU directives into Irish Law within specified periods of their enactment. The EIA process is covered by the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC), which has been amended three times, and more recently consolidated in the Directive 2011/92/EU. In particular, Annex I of the directive specifies projects requiring an EIA, whilst Annex II specifies those projects where the Member state decides on the thresholds in terms of project scale, as to whether an EIA is required.

Prior to 2000, the rules in respect of EIA contained in the various EC directives were brought into force by the European Communities (EIA) Regulations 1989 and the EC (EIA) (Amendment) Regulations, 1999 and the Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations 1999. These were largely consolidated within the terms of Part X of the Planning & Development 2000 Act, and Part 10 and Schedules 5, 6 and 7 of the 2001 Planning and Development Regulations, 2001. Therefore, under Irish Law, proposed developments are required to comply with the Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2016 and related secondary legislation in the form of Statutory Instruments or Regulations. These pieces of legislation require an EIA to be conducted, typically by specialist consultants on behalf of the developer, before consent is given for projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by reason of their size, nature or location.

The responsibility for the planning and environmental regulation of developments rests with the local authorities, the designated Competent Authority in this instance. These and An Bord Pleanála enforce compliance by attaching conditions relating to the environmental management of granted planning permissions. Licenses and permits may be required from local authorities where discharges, emissions or waste activities occur.

In respect of the Planning & Development Regulations S.I. No. 600 of 2001, Schedule 5, Part 1 specifies projects requiring an EIA (reflecting Annex I of the EIA Directive), and Schedule 5, Part 2 specifies those projects where the Member State decides on the thresholds in terms of project scale, as to whether an EIA is required (reflecting Annex II of the EIA Directive). Schedule 6 specifies information to be contained in an EIA, whilst Schedule 7 specifies the criteria used for determining Sub-Threshold projects, which for reasons of location and characteristics of the development and related impacts, require an EIA.

A new EIA Directive 2014/52/EU came into effect in 2014, which each Member State was required to have transposed into law by May 16th 2017.

A new EIA Directive 2014/52/EU came into effect in 2014, which each Member State was required to have transposed into law by May 16th, 2017. The objective of the Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU), as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, is to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, through the establishment of minimum requirements for environmental impact assessment (EIA), prior to development consent being given, of public and private developments that are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Directive 2014/52/EU was finally transposed into Irish Law and adopted on September 1st, 2018. The new European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018) seek to transpose EIA Directive



2014/52/EU, and to give further effect to the 2011 Directive by means of extensive amendments to the existing planning legislation.

The amended Directive uses the term Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for what was formerly referred to in Irish legislation as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In 2017, the EU Commission published guidance titled Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EU 2017).

In May 2017, the EPA published Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in environmental impact assessment reports (EPA 2017). The Guidelines have been drafted with the primary objective of improving the quality of EIARs with a view to facilitating compliance (with the Directive). As new guidelines superseding the draft guidelines have not yet been published by the EPA, due consideration of the draft guidelines was taken with respect to the preparation of the EIAR.

Consideration has also been given to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DoHPLG 2018). The purpose of the new guidelines is to give practical guidance on procedural issues and the EIA process arising from the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU and to assist with the achievement of a consistency of approach in the implementation of the Directive.



1.4 SCREENING

1.4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An EIA is a systematic process to identify and evaluate the environmental impact of proposed projects, developments and programmes, and is a key environmental policy instrument of the European Union (EU). The process requires proposed developments likely to have a significant impact on the environment to gain consent from the competent authority prior to proceeding with the project.

As stated above, in Irish Law, the principal Acts under which EIA's are regulated are the Planning & Development Acts, 2000-2010. The Act consolidates previous Planning Acts and much of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, where the latter is covered in Part 10 of the Act. In addition, secondary legislation consisting of Statutory Instruments or Regulations, made under the Planning & Development Act are also applicable.

Screening is the initial phase of the EIA process, whereby the proposed project is evaluated to determine if an EIA is required. Projects requiring EIA are listed in Part 1 and 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations (PDR) 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001) as amended. Part 1 lists projects for which an EIA is obligatory under European law (specified in Annex 1 of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU). In contrast, Part 2 lists projects for which an EIA is required, based on criteria and/or thresholds determined by the Member State, Ireland in this case (reflecting Annex II of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU).

The development, will consist of the continued use and operation of the existing quarry (permitted under P.A. Ref. 01/525), including deepening of the quarry, along with minor amendments to the permitted quarry layout comprising an extraction area of c. 4 ha within an overall application area of c. 11.4 ha. The development will include provision of new site infrastructure including water management system, wheelwash and other ancillaries.

Quarries are covered under Section 2 of Part 2, of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations (PDR) 2001. Section 2 of Part 2 refers to "Extractive Industry"; specifically Clause (b) refers to "Extraction of stone, gravel, sand or clay, where the area of extraction would be greater than 5 hectares." Therefore, it is considered that in accordance with the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), the subject development is of a nature and scale such that it would require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Thus, as the operation exceeds the applicable threshold of 5 hectares, an EIA is required on the basis of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the PDR 2001.

It is considered that due to the nature of the development and its location in proximity to multiple Natura 2000 sites within 15 km, the proposed development would require an Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats' Directive and the DoEHLG Guidelines February 2010. The nearest site is the Lough Lene SAC (Site Code 002121), which lies c. 1.25 km to the east, while there is also the Lough Derravaragh SPA (Site Code 004043), which lies c. 4.25 km to the southwest at its nearest point (Refer Figure 11.6).



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1.4.2 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Appropriate assessment was introduced by the EU Habitats Directive as a way of determining during the planning process whether a project is likely to have a significant effect on one of the Natura 2000 sites so far designated (i.e., the candidate SAC's and SPA's), or their conservation objectives.

Article 6(3) states:

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives...."

In the Irish context this has been interpreted as a four-stage process. Firstly, a screening exercise (Stage 1) determines if a project could have significant effects on a Natura site. If it does or the situation is unclear a Natura Impact Statement (Stage 2) is provided to the planning or regulatory authority which then conducts an Assessment of the information supplied. Examples of significant effects are a loss of habitat area, fragmentation of the habitat, disturbance to species using the site and changes in water resources or quality. If such negative effects come to light in the assessment, alternative solutions are investigated by the proponent (Stage 3) and modifications made unless the project is deemed to be driven by 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' in its current form. In this case Stage 4 then deals with compensatory action.

The site is not located within any designated areas, such as candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA). Most of these Natura 2000 sites are too distant (> 5 km) from the site and/or occur either upstream of in different subcatchments, such that there is no reasonable pathway by which the quarry at Deerpark could impact their habitats or species.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) was carried out with respect to the proposed development, and a copy of this report is included (Refer to Appendix 8). There are eight SACs and six SPA within 15 km, and these are:

SACs:

Lough Lene SAC (Site Code 002121); Lough Bane and Lough Glass SAC (Site Code 002120); River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299); Lough Owel SAC (Site Code: 000688); White Lough, Ben Loughs and Lough Doo SAC (Site Code: 001810); Garriskil Bog SAC (000679); Derragh Bog SAC (Site Code: 002201); and Moneybeg and Clareisland Bogs SAC (Site Code: 002340).

SPAs:

Lough Derravaragh SPA (Site Code: 004043); Garriskil Bog SPA (Site Code 004102); Lough Owel SPA (Site Code: 004047); Lough Iron SPA (Site Code 004046); Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA (Site Code: 004061); and Lough Sheelin SPA (004065).

The nearest European sites to the Proposed Development are associated with Lough Lene and include the Lough Lene SAC (Site Code 002121), which is located just over 1.18 km to the east. However, this site is located in a different hydrological catchment.



The proposed development is located within the hydrological catchment of two unnamed streams and the Castlepollard stream, approximately 320 m, 353 m and 391 m to the north, south and east of the streams, respectively, and in the rural environment of Deerpark, Castlepollard.

Downstream, the waters of the three streams enter the Yellow River, which in turns flows west into Lough Derravaragh with its European site, the Lough Derravaragh SPA (Site Code 004043), which is located approximately 4 km to the west of the Proposed Development and c. 7 river km downstream of the quarry discharge point.

Only Lough Derravaragh lies downstream of the quarry site at Deerpark, and thus could be potentially impacted by the proposed development. The findings of the assessment were that the potential for significant adverse effects on the Lough Derravarragh SPA (004043) is uncertain in the absence of control on potential pollution of discharge water during operation. The proposed development will require a Water Management Plan to avoid potential impacts on the receiving environment of the Yellow River and Lough Derravaragh downstream. In the absence of mitigation measures for the control of surface water discharge, it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site and as such Stage 2 AA is required. A copy of the Stage 2 Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is included in Appendix 9.

This NIS has reviewed the predicted impacts arising from the Proposed Development and found that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, specifically with regard to surface water, significant effects on the integrity of the Lough Derravaragh SPA can be ruled out.

It is the conclusion of this NIS, on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available, and subject to the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, that the possibility of any adverse effects on the integrity of the European Sites considered in this NIS, or on the integrity of any other European Site (having regard to their conservation objectives), arising from the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, can be excluded beyond a reasonable scientific doubt.



1.5 SCOPING & CONSULTATION

1.5.1 SCOPING

Scoping should ensure that the constituent environmental studies of the EIA provide all of the relevant information, particularly with respect to: (1) significant impacts of the project; and (2) alternatives to the project. As such, the scoping process identifies the issues that are likely to be important during the EIA and eliminates those that are not. The information can be compiled through a formal process, whereby the competent authority is asked to consult with relevant agencies to draw up an opinion about the scope of the coverage required. More informal scoping can also be carried out to ensure that all relevant issues are identified and addressed to an appropriate level of detail.

Implementation of Directive 2014/52/EU

The new EIA Directive 2014/52/EU came into effect in 2014, and was transposed into Irish Law and adopted on September 1st 2018. The new European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018) seek to transpose EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, and to give further effect to the 2011 Directive by means of extensive amendments to the existing planning legislation.

In May 2017, the EPA published Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in environmental impact assessment reports (EPA 2017). The Guidelines were drafted with the primary objective of improving the quality of EIARs with a view to facilitating compliance (with the Directive). In August 2018, the Dept. of Housing, Planning & Local Government published Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DoHPLG 2018). The purpose of the new guidelines is to give practical guidance on procedural issues and the EIA process arising from the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU and to assist with the achievement of a consistency of approach in the implementation of the Directive.

The only new definition given in the amended Directive pertains to EIA (Article 1(2)(g) of the Directive), which is defined as a process consisting of:

- 1. The preparation of an environmental impact assessment report (EIAR) by the developer (Article 5(1) and (2) of the Directive);
- 2. The carrying out of consultations with the public, prescribed bodies and other Member States where transboundary effects have the potential to occur (Article 6 and, where relevant, Article 7 of the Directive);
- 3. The examination by the competent authority of the EIAR, any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the developer (Article 5(3) of the Directive) and relevant information received through consultations with the public, prescribed bodies and any affected Member States (Articles 6 and 7 of the Directive);
- 4. The reasoned conclusion by the competent authority on the significant effects of the project on the environment, taking into account the results of the examination referred to in point (3) above and, where appropriate, its own supplementary examination; and



5. The integration of the competent authority's reasoned conclusion on the significance of the effects into its decision to refuse or grant consent with conditions.

The DoHPLG 2018 Guidelines state that the environmental impact assessment must identify, describe and assess the direct and indirect significant effects of the project on specified environmental factors (Article 3(1) of the Directive). These factors include changes from the 2011 Directive, the most notable being the replacement of 'Human Beings' by 'Population and Human Health', the addition of 'Land' and the replacement of 'Flora and Fauna' by 'Biodiversity with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC' (the Habitats and Birds Directives). The significant effects on these environmental factors must include the expected significant effects arising from the vulnerability of the project to the risks of major accidents and/or disasters that are relevant to the project (Article 3(2) of the Directive).

The DoHPLG 2018 Guidelines give the key amendments introduced by the 2014 Directive as follows:

- The refinement of environmental factors to be considered in the assessment process resource efficiency, climate change, population and human health, biodiversity and disaster risk prevention and management;
- Strengthening of the procedures for screening, particularly through the introduction of new information requirements to be provided by the developer (Annex IIA) and revised selection criteria to be used by the competent authority in making a determination (Annex III) (Schedule 7A and 7, respectively, as inserted by article 97 of S.I. No. 296 of 2018);
- Expansion of the information to be included in the EIAR (formerly known in Ireland as EIS)(Annex III of Directive) (Schedule 6, as substituted by article 97 of S.I. No. 296 of 2018);
- Requirement that the EIAR must be prepared by competent experts and for the competent authority to have, or have access to, sufficient expertise to examine the EIAR;
- Expansion of the information to be included in a development consent decision including a requirement for a 'reasoned conclusion' to be incorporated into the decision in respect of the significant effects of the project on the environment;
- Requirements to inform the public and to make relevant environmental information publicly accessible through electronic means and in a timely fashion during the assessment process and at the time of the decision; and
- Requirement for monitoring of significant adverse effects resulting from the construction and operation of a project.

The Directive requires that information provided by the developer in an EIAR shall include a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer. These are reasonable alternatives that are relevant to the project and its specific characteristics. The developer must also indicate the main reasons for the option chosen taking into account the effects of the project on the environment (Article 5(1)(d) of Directive). Reasonable alternatives may relate to matters such as project design, technology, location, size and scale (Annex IV (2) of Directive).



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The information to be provided by the developer must, at least, address the matters detailed in Article 5(1)(a) to (f) of the Directive as follows:

- 1. A description of the project comprising information on the site, design, size and any other relevant features of the project;
- 2. A description of the likely significant effects of the project on the environment;
- A description of the features of the project and/or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;
- 4. A description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the project on the environment;
- 5. A non-technical summary of the information referred to in points (a) to (d);
- 6. Any additional information specified in Annex IV of the Directive/Schedule 6 to the 2001 Regulations, as amended, relevant to the specific characteristics of a particular project or type of project and to the environmental features likely to be affected.

An informal scoping exercise has been carried out in order to identify the range of impacts that may be associated with the proposed development, the likely concerns of local residents and landowners, and to assess the information and detail that is required to be included within the EIAR.



1.5.2 CONSULTATION

Consultation for the purpose of an EIA provides an opportunity to solicit expertise and advice from a wide range of organisations and interested parties. The EIAR has been prepared by specialist Mineral Planning and Environmental consultants with over 30 years' experience in preparing EIAR for quarry developments. Consultation has also taken place with sub-consultants appointed to prepare studies on specialised subjects. These include hydrogeologists, geologists, ecologists, traffic and archaeological consultants (Refer to Section 1.9 below). The proposed development relates to continued use and operation of the existing quarry (permitted under P.A. Ref. 01/525) and such the impacts of the proposed development and concerns of local residents and landowners are well understood and have been considered in the EIAR.

A pre-consultation document was issued to the following NGOs and stakeholders (Refer to Table 1.1 and Appendix 4 for responses):

Consultee	Address	Email	Response
Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	c/o The Manager, Development Applications Unit (DAU) Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Newtown	manager.dau@housing.gov.ie	Acknowledged Ref: G Pre00305/2021
Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)	Road, Wexford, Y35 AP90 Geoheritage & Planning Programme, Beggar's Bush, Haddington Road, Dublin 4, D04 K7X4	₽ GSIPlanning@gsi.ie	Yes
Health Service Executive (HSE)	Mr Andrew Sulley, Environmental Health Services Ennistymon Health Centre, Ennistymon, Co. Clare V95 W681	By Post	No
Inland Fisheries Ireland	Inland Fisheries Ireland 3044 Lake Drive Citywest Business Campus Dublin D24 Y265 Ireland	info@fisheriesireland.ie	Acknowledged
An Taisce	The Tailor's Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8, D08 X2A3	planning@antaisce.org	Acknowledged
Irish Water	Spatial Planning, Irish Water HQ Offices Colville House 24-26 Talbot Street Dublin 1	By Post	No

Table 1.1 List of Statutory Consultees Contacted and Response



A third party well survey was carried out by an environmental scientific officer of Lagan Materials Ltd, under direction and telephone assistance from one of the project's hydrogeologists. Dr. Pamela Bartley visited all properties within 600 m of the application site during October 2021. Of the 11 houses visited, all were confirmed to be connected to the Irish Water mains network and did not abstract from a well source. A piggery 300 m to the south was also confirmed, in telephone conversation with Pamela Bartley, as being connected to the Irish Water mains network. The locations of the dwellings surveyed is presented as Figure 7.9.

Given the level of discussion with stakeholders, including identifying the issues and emphasis that are likely to be important during the EIA, it was not considered necessary to formally request a written opinion ("scoping") on the information to be contained in the EIAR in accordance with Section 173 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Consultation by a developer with the wider public during preparation of an EIAR tends to be used where the affected population may be very large and/or difficult to identify (EPA 2017), which however, was not the case here.

su . their Following this scoping exercise, it is recognised that some issues have the potential for greater impact than others. Within the EIAR, these impacts and their mitigation will be given priority.



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1.6 FORMAT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

The EIAR consists of a systematic analysis and assessment of the potential effects of a proposed project on the receiving environment.

The format and scope of this document has been produced having regard to:

- Schedule 6 and 7 of Planning & Development Regulation 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001);
- EU Commission published guidance titled Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EU 2017);
- Westmeath County Development Plan (2021-2027);
- Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements, Draft (EPA 2017); and
- Advice Notes on Current Practice for preparing Environmental Impact Statements, Draft (EPA 2015).

The EIAR takes into account these and other Government and commonly accepted standards and guidelines that affect various aspects of the proposed development. The provisions of the revised EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, as transposed into Irish Law by the European Union (Planning and Development)(Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018), and the above revised draft guidance issued by the EPA, were taken into account during preparation of the EIAR.

National Guidelines on Quarries and Ancillary Activities (2004) have been issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG). These guidelines set out typical planning conditions and suggest environmental limits which may be imposed subsequent to any planning consent. Due consideration has been given within Sections 3 and 4 of the EIAR to comply with best practice mitigation measures set out in Chapter 3 of these guidelines. In this regard detailed best practice mitigation measures which will be implemented on site are described within the relevant sections of the EIAR.

Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non-Scheduled Minerals) Environmental Management Guidelines (2006) have also been produced by the EPA (EPA 2006). These guidelines are intended to provide general advice and guidance in relation to environmental issues to practitioners involved with the planning, design, development, operation and restoration of quarry developments and ancillary facilities.

In order to ensure transparency and public awareness of the environmental implications of development decisions, an EIAR is required to contain a non-technical summary according to Article 94 of the PDR 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001). Clause 94(C) specifies "a summary in non-technical language of the information" required to be contained in the EIAR by the preceding clauses 94(a) and 94(b). Thus, the non-technical summary includes descriptions of the project, existing environment, impacts and mitigation measures, as well as graphic elements such as location map, site layout plan, etc. Furthermore, the non-technical summary is written in a format and language that can be understood by persons without the appropriate technical background.



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1.7 OBJECTIVES OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Formal environmental assessment enables the environmental effects which may be caused by a development to be systematically identified and evaluated. The EIAR presents the results in a manner that enables the importance of the predicted effects, and the scope for modifying or mitigating these effects, to be properly evaluated by the relevant decision-making body prior to deciding with respect to development consent.

This EIAR seeks to provide an objective analysis of the possible environmental effects resulting from the continued operation of the quarry at Deerpark, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath. These effects are assessed against a comprehensive checklist of relevant environmental criteria. The EIAR then systematically evaluates the positive and negative impacts of the project on both natural and human environments.

The overall aims of the Report are:

- To provide relevant and complete environmental information to all project stakeholders, including the general public, in a self-contained and comprehensive document;
- To identify and provide objective analysis of the potential effects of the proposed development on the existing environment, so as to inform the competent authority and other interested parties in the decision-making process;
- To describe available measures to mitigate, either by avoidance, reduction or remediation, any environmental effects that may be identified;
- To assess the likely effectiveness of the mitigation measures, and the acceptability of residual effects; and
- To provide a framework for the ongoing monitoring of residual environmental effects.

The EIAR is intended to be a self-contained document which addresses all of the potential environmental issues that may arise as a result of the proposed development.



1.8 LAYOUT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

The EIAR has been prepared in accordance with 'Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' published by the Environment Protection Agency. The draft version of these guidelines was published in 2017. The EIAR also takes into account 'Draft Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements published in 2015. While the 2015 draft version of the guidance document was intended for consultation purposes only, the guidance documents do incorporate the expected provisions of the new law, and are thus being used as an interim measure until the new guidance is published. Practitioners are expected to adhere to the guidance while preparing EIARs, for applications made on or after May 16th 2017. In addition, the policies contained within the Westmeath County Development Plan (2021-2027) have been considered and taken into account.

The EIAR has been prepared using the "Grouped Format Structure", where each topic is examined as a separate section referring to the existing environment, the proposed development, impacts and mitigation measures.

The Statement is sub-divided into four main sections:

Section 1 sets out general introductory comments concerning the project and a brief explanation of the aims and format of the EIAR. It also identifies the various consultees and professional consultants who have contributed to this EIAR and any difficulties encountered in preparation of the EIAR.

Section 2 describes reasonable alternative project locations, layouts, designs and processes that were considered with regards to their environmental effects.

Section 3 describes the details and nature of the proposed development and introduces some of the potential environmental effects that may result. It also details any proposed or anticipated growth of the development and possible associated projects.

Section 4 provides detailed information on all aspects of the existing environment, identifies potential impacts on the environment by the proposed development, and recommends mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or remedy these impacts. They are grouped under the following sub-sections:

- 4. Population & Human Health;
- 5. Biodiversity;
- 6. Land, Soils and Geology;
 - Water;
 - Climate;
- 9. Air;
- 10. Noise & Vibration;
- 11. Landscape;
- 12. Cultural Heritage;



- 13. Material Assets;
- 14. Roads & Traffic; and
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1.9 THE PROJECT TEAM

The EIAR has been prepared by J Sheils Planning and Environmental Ltd. (JSPE). JSPE were commissioned on behalf of the client, Lagan (Breedon Group), to prepare the EIAR in respect of the quarry at Deerpark, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath. The principal, John Sheils B.Eng. (Mining), Dip. Environ. Prot., MSCSI, MRICS, MIEI, MIQ, is a chartered minerals surveyor and mining engineer with a postgraduate diploma in environmental protection. He has also attained professional membership status of the Institute of Quarrying (MIQ).

Mr. Sheils is former chairman of the Minerals Surveying Professional Group of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI). He is also former chairman of the Committee of the Extractives Industries Division within the Institution of Engineers of Ireland (IEI). He represented the IEI on the steering committee for New Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Quarries) Regulations 2006 and associated guidelines. He was technical advisor to the Planning and Environmental Committee of the Irish Concrete Federation (ICF) between 1996 and 2004. He was also a senior project team member responsible for the development of the "Environmental Management Guidelines - Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non-Scheduled Minerals)" Environmental Protection Agency (2006).

Mr. Sheils has written several papers and given numerous presentations on subjects relating to mineral planning, environmental management and health and safety to the mining and quarrying industries. He has presented a number of lectures on Environmental Management Systems, EIS, Occupational Health, Noise & Vibration monitoring to ACP Countries in the Caribbean and is co-author of "Code of Environmental Practice Mining Projects", a guide produced for Centre for the Development of Enterprise (CDE), an institution of the ACP Group of States.

Mr. Sheils has over 30 years' experience in the extractives industries in Ireland, U.K and Africa across a broad range of disciplines and areas including mineral exploration, mining, opencast coal mining, quarrying and inert waste. He also has 30 years' experience in the compilation of planning applications and the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIARs) for quarry developments.

A list of the other experts who contributed to the individual sections of the EIAR is given in Table 1.2, which shows which factors and topics they covered. Their qualifications, experience and any other relevant credentials are provided below.

Raymond E. Healy B.Sc., M.Sc., Dip. GIS, Dip. Sust. Dev., Research Geologist, contributed to several sections of the EIAR. Mr. Healy formerly operated the consulting firm Minoretek in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, where he held the professional designation of P.Geo. He has over twenty years' experience in applied mineralogy, mining and exploration geology. He holds an M.Sc. in Geology (1991), a Diploma in GIS from DIT (2012) and a Specialist Diploma in Environmental Sustainability from NUIG (2013).

Mr. Healy is the author of multiple scientific papers and scientific communications in refereed scientific journals, monographs, and conference proceedings, as well as technical reports, and has substantial experience in the preparation of multiple sections of EIS/EIARs since 2013. He also has five years of experience as a geoscience and English language editor for a major



global scientific communications company, editing scientific abstracts, communiques, journal papers and books.

The Moore Group is a multi-disciplinary environmental, planning and heritage resource management consultancy. They were retained to undertake the ecological assessment of the site and preparation of the Biodiversity section of the EIAR (Refer to Section 5). They also carried out a screening (Stage 1) for Appropriate Assessment and preparation of a follow on Natura Impact Statement (Stage 2) (Refer to Appendices 8 and 9, respectively).

This work was carried out by Ger O'Donohoe, Environmental Manager (Moore Group), Consultant Ecologist. He has over 25 years' experience as an environmental consultant with particular experience in the management and planning of Environmental Impact Assessments. He graduated from GMIT in 1993 with a B.Sc. in Applied Aquatic Sciences, and subsequently worked in environmental consultancy while completing an M.Sc. in Environmental Sciences, graduating from Trinity College, Dublin in 1999. He joined the Moore Group in 2002. He has extensive experience in freshwater and marine ecology and in terrestrial habitat surveying and mapping. In addition to freshwater and marine ecology, Ger has carried out bat and mammal surveys.

His primary role in Moore Group is as Principal Ecologist in the management and compilation of Environmental Impact Assessment Reports and undertaking Ecological Impact Assessments (EcIA/Biodiversity Assessment/Habitat Surveys) of the terrestrial and aquatic environments of any particular development. Ger has excellent knowledge of Environmental Legislation, Planning and Policy. He has extensive experience in freshwater and marine ecology and in terrestrial habitat surveying and mapping.

Dr. Charles Mount is a Ph.D. level qualified archaeologist and EIAR consultant with more than 25 years' experience of Irish archaeology and cultural heritage. He is a graduate of University College Dublin with an M.A. and Ph.D. in Archaeology, and a professional diploma in EIA and SEA management. He also holds an M.B.A. in Management from the Open University. He has worked in a variety of heritage and management roles and has prepared more than 80 cultural heritage assessments for Environmental Impact Assessments. He has worked in both the State and industrial sectors and has extensive experience of the commissioning and management of all types of archaeological services from desk-based reports to test and full excavations and geophysical surveys. He is capable of assessing impacts on archaeology and cultural heritage at all stages of land use planning and development from site selection, through EIAR to planning condition compliance. Dr. Mount provides Project Archaeology Services to the Irish Concrete Federation (ICF), Bord na Mona, and a range of private sector organisations, and is responsible for implementing the ICF Code of Practice.

Section 14, Traffic & Roads, was prepared by Alan O'Reilly BA BAI MSc CEng MIEI RSACert. Alan is a Chartered Engineer with PMCE and has almost 10 years' experience in the area of Traffic and Transport Engineering including Road Safety Audits, Traffic and Transport Assessments, Collision Investigation and Road Design. Alan also has extensive experience working on road safety schemes in the UK and the Middle East.

Section 7, Water, of the EIAR was prepared by Hydro-G & Envirologic Ltd. Dr. Colin O'Reilly (Envirologic) & Dr. Pamela Bartley (Hydro-G) worked jointly on this project.



Dr. Pamela Bartley is a water focused civil engineer with 24 year's field-based practice in groundwater, surface water and wastewater. Upon completion of a Diploma in Water and Wastewater Technology at Sligo RTC, Pamela completed her primary degree in Civil Engineering at Queen's University, Belfast, followed by postgraduate education at the School of Civil Engineering at Trinity College, Dublin. While a postgraduate at TCD, she completed a MSc. in Environmental Engineering at the School of Civil Engineering, with geotechnical, hydrogeological, legislation and water specialities, and later a hydrogeologically focused Ph.D. As a result of her work in evaluating planning appeals, Pamela has become a specialist in quarry and discharge evaluations in the context of enacted Irish Regulation and EU Directives concerning the environment, such as the Groundwater Regulations (2010, 2011, 2012, 2016), Surface Water Regulations (2009, 2012, 2015), EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations (2011), and Water Framework and Habitats' Directives.

Pamela's key work areas include the development of large-scale public supply water boreholes, surface water and groundwater assessments with a discharge focus, soil systems, soil hydrology and hydrogeological evaluations for quarries with a specific regulatory focus on water and ecological constraints. Pamela is qualified and IOSH certified to act as Project Supervisor Design Phase (PSDP) and Project Supervisor Construction Stage (PSCS) as defined in the Construction Regulations. The company is a registered Irish Water Supplier (no. 1855), while Pamela Bartley is HSQE approved within Irish Water and is one of their Hydrogeologist service providers. She is a professional member of Engineers Ireland and International Hydrogeologists (Irish Group).

Dr. Colin O'Reilly has over 15 years of professional experience as a hydrogeologist, coupled with a doctorate degree in hydrology, awarded by the Centre for Water Resources Research, School of Architecture, Landscape and Civil Engineering, UCD, while a recipient of a Teagasc Walsh Fellowship. Colin's company is Envirologic, which has key competencies in hydrogeology and hydrology, with expertise in flood assessments in addition to assessment of quarries across a range of diverse hydrogeological conditions across Ireland. Colin is a current and active member of Engineers Ireland and International Association of Hydrogeologists (Irish Group).

Patrick Breheny MSc (Hydrogeology) PGeo. EurGeol. works with Colin O'Reilly in Envirologic. Patrick completed much of the monitoring, sampling, hydrogeological response investigation works and the analysis and interpretation of the field data at Castlepollard Quarry. Patrick Breheny has 12 years of post-graduate experience in environmental consultancy having worked extensively in Ireland and the UK, with a background specialising in hydrogeology, hydrology and contaminated land. Patrick holds a Master of Science Degree (MSc) in Hydrogeology, which he attained at the University of Leeds, UK. He is a member of the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH) and is a Chartered Geologist, as awarded by the Institute of Geologist Ireland (IGI). Working as a senior hydrogeologist, Patrick's key skills and experience include site investigation, groundwater resources, risk assessment, groundwater remediation, environmental permitting and management and liability assessment for soil and groundwater remediation projects.



Table 1.2 List of Expert Contributors by Section of the EIAR



1.10 APPLICANT

The applicant, Lagan Materials Limited ('Lagan'), is part of Breedon Group plc. Breedon is a public company with ordinary shares traded on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM). Breedon is a leading construction materials group in Britain and Ireland. The company employs approximately c. 3,600 people, and operates 2 cement plants, 70 quarries, 40 asphalt plants, 200 ready-mixed concrete plants, 9 concrete and clay products plants, 4 contract surfacing businesses, 6 import/export terminals and 2 slate production facilities.

Breedon trades in the Republic of Ireland as Lagan, a fully-integrated aggregates and downstream products business headquartered in Dublin. It comprises all Breedon's construction materials and contracting services businesses (aggregates, asphalt, ready–mixed concrete, bitumen, contract surfacing highway maintenance, civil engineering and airfield construction) in the Republic of Ireland.

Lagan and the wider Breedon Group are fully committed to sustainability and social responsibility. This commitment is one of the six pillars of the company's growth strategy, which was announced in their most recent Annual Report. In September 2020, Breedon committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The company has a "Sustainability Working Group", which aims to ensure that the company can sustain long-term success, ensuring positive social, environmental and/or economic impact through their actions and activities.

The company recently published new policy statements covering the key pillars of sustainability including Environment, Biodiversity, Social Responsibility, Health, Safety & Wellbeing and Responsible Resource Use. The policy statements are enclosed in Appendix 5.



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1.11 ANY DIFFICULTIES IN COMPILING SPECIFIED INFORMATION

No major difficulties arising from either deficiencies in technology, knowledge or expertise were encountered in the preparation of the EIAR. The contents of a prior EIS from 2001 (produced by Pat Byrne Consultants, Pullamore, Cavan Town, Co. Cavan), which accompanied a planning application in relation to the quarry at Deerpark, ensured a considerable volume of relevant data was available, albeit somewhat dated. Furthermore, a report by Apex Geophysics (Refer to Appendix 6.1) provided additional up to date data.

erore. smert The EIAR has been prepared by consultants with considerable experience in the compilation of planning applications and the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment Reports



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http://www.epa.ie/ Environmental Protection Agency

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/index en.htm European Commission, Environmental Impact Assessment

https://www.google.ie/maps Google Maps

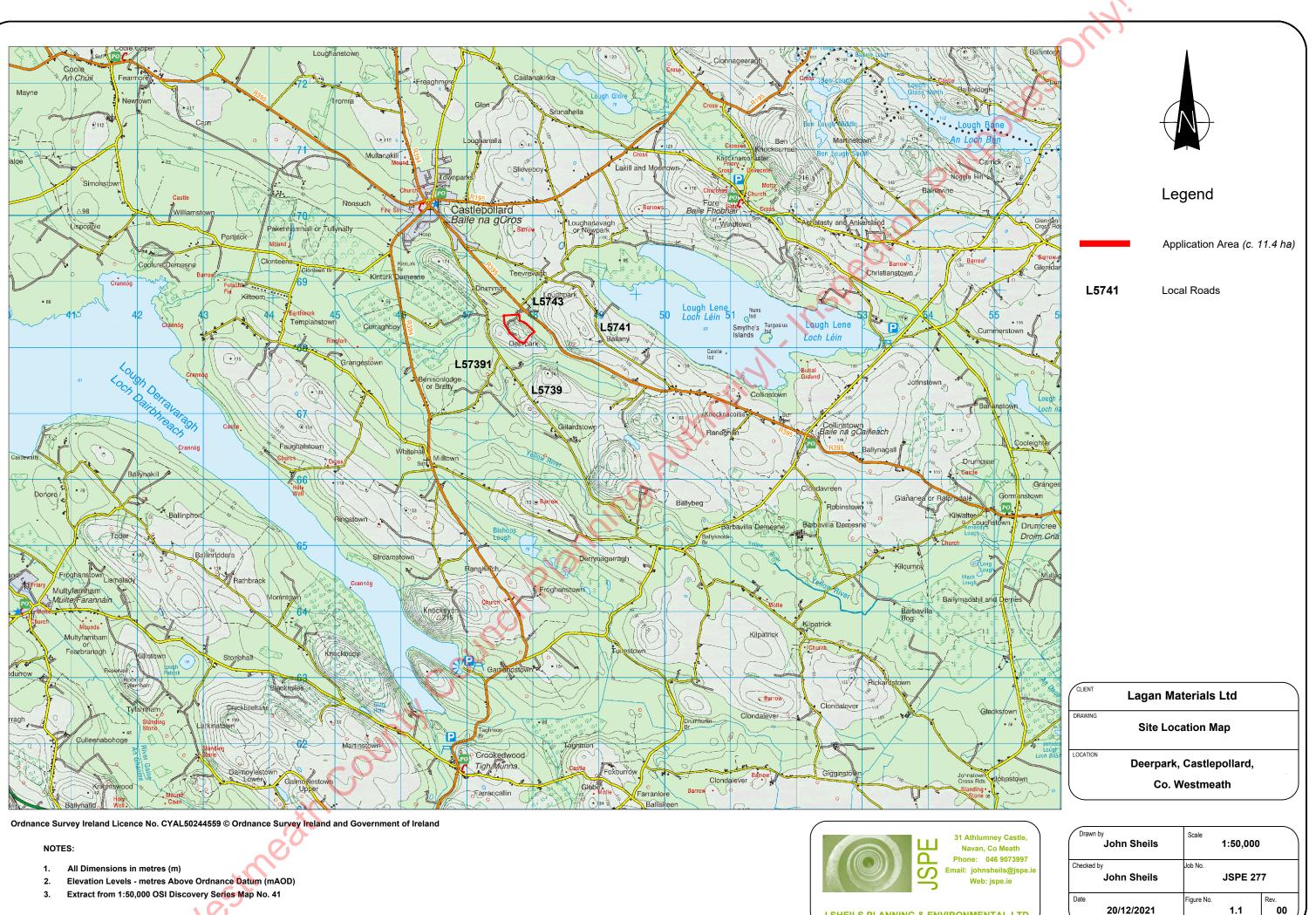
http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/home.html Irish Statute Book, Office of the Attorney General

Ref Manning Aut Country Council Planning Aut Mestmeath http://www.eplanning.ie/WestmeathCC/AppFileRefDetails/01525/0 Planning File 01/525,



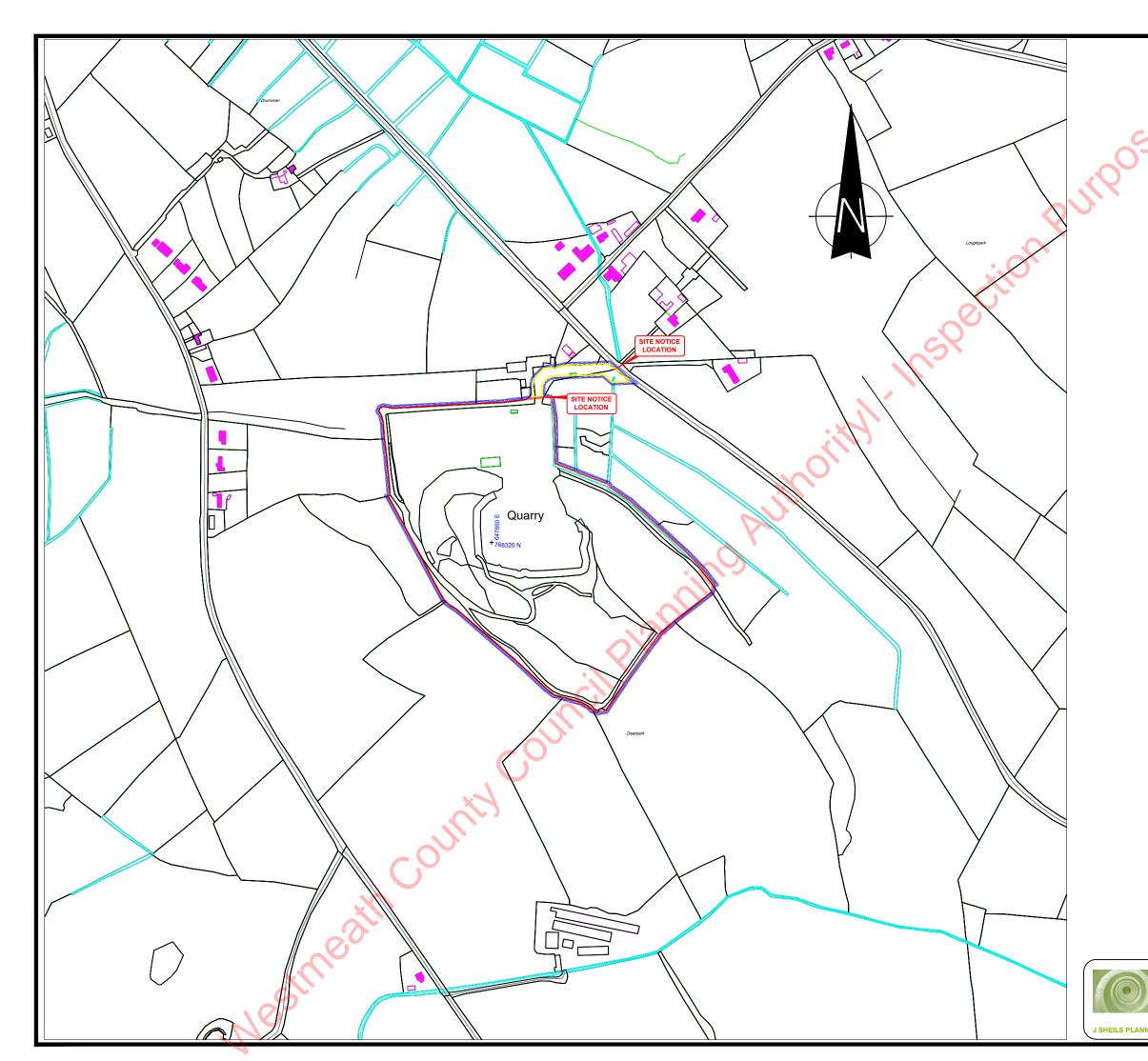
Meethooth country planting without the period purposes only 1.13 **FIGURES**







J SHEILS PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL LTD



Legend

Lands under Operators Control (c.11.7 ha)

Application Area (c. 11.4 ha)

Wayleave

+

Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) geographic coordinates



Residence

Description

Digital Cartographic Model (DCM)

Publisher / Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi)

Projection= IRENET95_Irish_Transverse_Mercator

Centre Point Coordinates: X,Y= 647756.5,768302.0

Reference Index: Map Series | Map Sheets 1:5,000 | 2496 1:5,000 | 2429 1:5,000 | 2429 1:5,000 | 2497 1:5,000 | 2428 Data Extraction Date:

Date= 10-May-2021

NOTES:

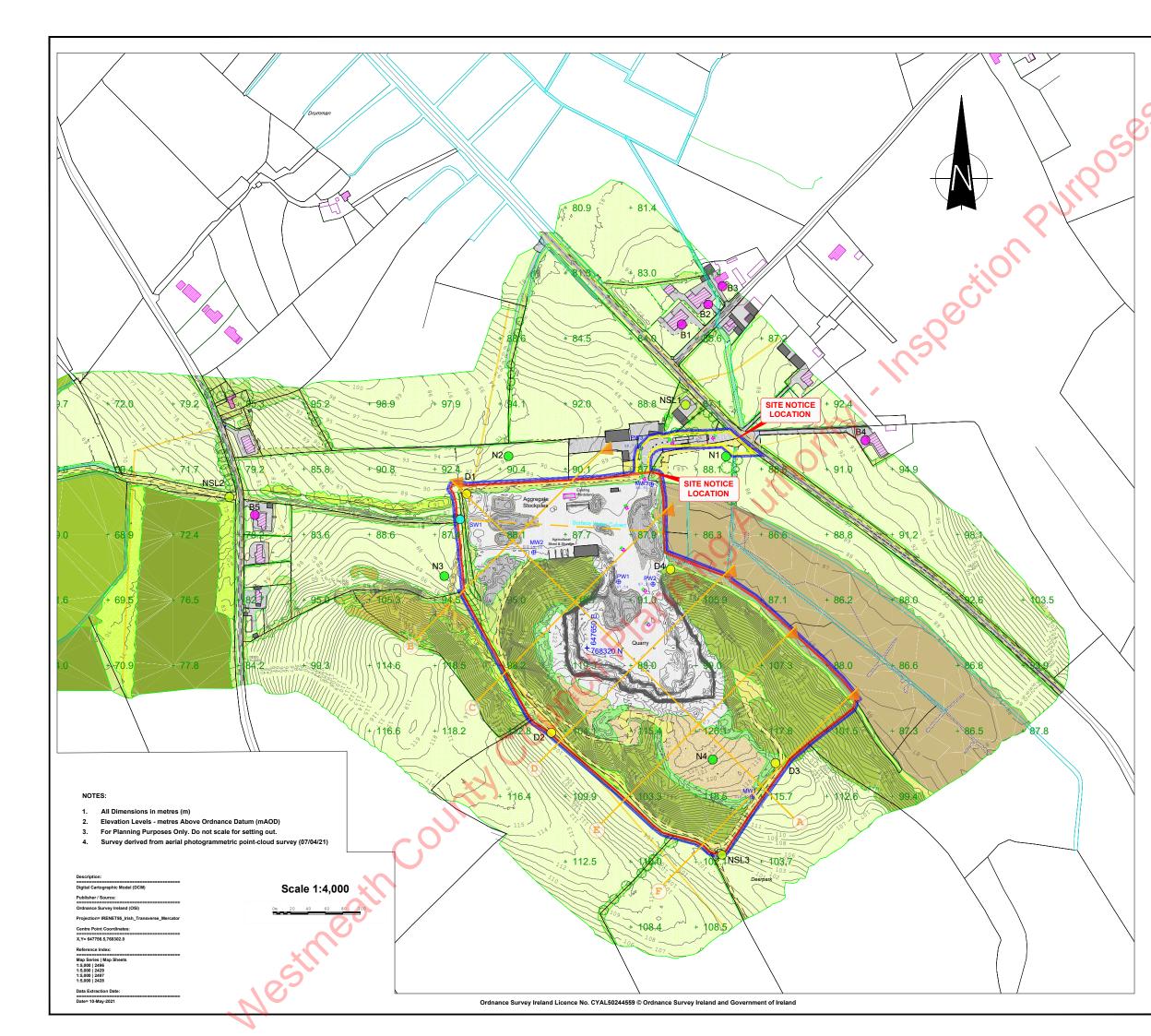
- All Dimensions in metres (m)
 Elevation Levels metres Above Ordnance Datum (mAOD)
 For Planning Purposes Only. Do not scale for setting out.

Scale 1:5,000

0m 50m 100m 150m 200m

Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. CYAL50244559 © Ordnance Survey Ireland and Government of Ireland

	CLENT Lagan Materials Ltd DRAWING Application Area Map LOCATION Deerpark, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath		
31 Athlumney Castle, Navan, Co Meath	Drawn by John Sheils	Scale 1:5,000	
Phone: 046 9073997 Email: johnsheils@jspe.ie Web: jspe.ie	Checked by John Sheils	Job No. JSPE 280	
NING & ENVIRONMENTAL LTD	Date 20/12/2021	Figure No. Rev. 00	



	-	Lege Lands under Operators		7 ha)
(-		Application Area (c. 11.	4 ha)	
0-		Wayleave		
j.		Quarry Area	1/	Hard Standing/Asphalt
	ee,	Pasture		Track
	75	Rough Pasture	36.3. 1 + 88	Marshy Area
		Scrubland		Aggregate Stockpiles
£	E	Buildings/Structures		Telephone Lines
1/2	A.	Hedgerows		Power Lines
H		Gorse	68 9	Forestry
		Berms	BI	Residence
	Surface Water Culvert Soil Stripping			Soil Stripping
_	1-	Fence		Traffic In
		Gate	Ę	Traffic Out
	Contours (mAOD) 87.7 Spot Levels (mAOD)			
	+ Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) geographic coordinates			
	Sections (Refer to Drawing D06)			
D	1 🔵	Dust Monitoring Points		
N	1 🔵	Noise Monitoring Points	6	
NSL	1 🔘	Noise Sensitive Locatio	'n	
В	¹ 🔴	Blast Monitoring Points		
SW1	\bigcirc	Surface Water Monitor	ing Points	
PW MP	\oplus	Groundwater Monitoring	g Points & We	lls
J SHEILS PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL LTD				
CLIENT Lagan Materials Ltd				
DRAWING Site Plan - Existing				
LOCATION Deerpark, Castlepollard,				
Co. Westmeath				
Co. Westineati				

Drawn by John Sheils	Scale 1: 4,000		
Checked by John Sheils	Job No. JSPE 277		
Date 20/12/21	Figure No. 1.3	Rev.	