

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
BANAGHER CHILLING LIMITED, BANAGHER, CO. OFFALY

SECTION D - MATERIAL ASSETS

This section of the Environment Impact Assessment Report deals with material assets that would potentially be affected by the proposed development, which comprises of the refurbishment and extension of the existing abattoir on the site, at Meenwaun / Boheradurrow, Banagher, Co. Offaly. The discharge of treated effluent to the Feeghroe, via the proposed WWTP and integrated wetlands, is also included within the scope of this section.

Material assets are grouped into:

- Material Assets: **Agriculture** including all agricultural enterprises.
- Material Assets: **Utilities** including electricity, gas, foul sewer and telecommunications.
- Material Assets: **Natural or other resources** including mineral resources, land and energy.
- Material Assets: **Waste Management**, including all potential waste streams during both the construction and operational phases.

Material Assets are generally considered to be the physical resources in the environment which may be either of human or natural origin. The object of the assessment of these resources is to identify the impact of the development on individual enterprises or properties and to ensure that natural resources are used in a sustainable manner in order to ensure availability for future generations.

Agricultural enterprises interact, to a large extent, with the natural environment in terms of climate, air quality, soil, hydrology and hydrogeology. Some domestic animals, such as horses and milking cows, may be impacted by traffic-generated noise.

Resources required for the proposed development include existing land, fill material which would have to be sourced from quarries and electricity / fuel oil required for the operation of the proposed development.

13.0 MATERIAL ASSETS - AGRICULTURE

13.1 INTRODUCTION

This section outlines the potential agricultural impact with respect to an application for planning permission to Offaly County Council for the upgrade and construction of an extension to an existing beef abattoir plant within the townlands of Boheradurrow and Meenwaun, Banagher, Co. Offaly. The proposed development includes for an onsite waste water treatment plant and integrated constructed wetlands system.

The proposed development is located in a rural, farming area predominately comprised of pastureland, hedgerows and peatland.

The proposed development site comprises of a number of agricultural fields, mainly in use for pasture, an existing abattoir (which ceased operation circa November 2016) and an established farmyard complex of buildings. The proposed development would be situated primarily on grassland and disturbed ground, with the integrated wetlands situated upon areas of grassland and previously tilled ground.

No other agricultural holdings would be directly impacted through the loss of land by the proposed development, as all lands proposed for development are under the ownership of the applicant, Banagher Chilling Limited.

13.2 METHODOLOGY

A field survey and a desktop study were carried out to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on agriculture in the area.

The field survey consisted of a walkover inspection of the proposed development site, which was conducted on Friday 21st September 2018. A photo log is included as Attachment 9.5.

The desktop survey assessed potential impacts using statistical information from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and mapping data from the 50,000 Discovery Series, 2,500 Ordnance Survey mapping, CORINE land use mapping and myplan.ie.

13.3 DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

13.3.1 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE OVERVIEW

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Ireland undertakes an agricultural census every ten years, the most recent of which was carried out in 2010. According to the Census of Agriculture (2010), the agricultural area used (excluding commonage), amounted to approximately 4.6 million hectares, while commonage in Ireland amounted to approximately 422,415 hectares. A breakdown of the utilisation of agricultural land in Ireland is provided in Figure 13.1 below.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
BANAGHER CHILLING LIMITED, BANAGHER, CO. OFFALY

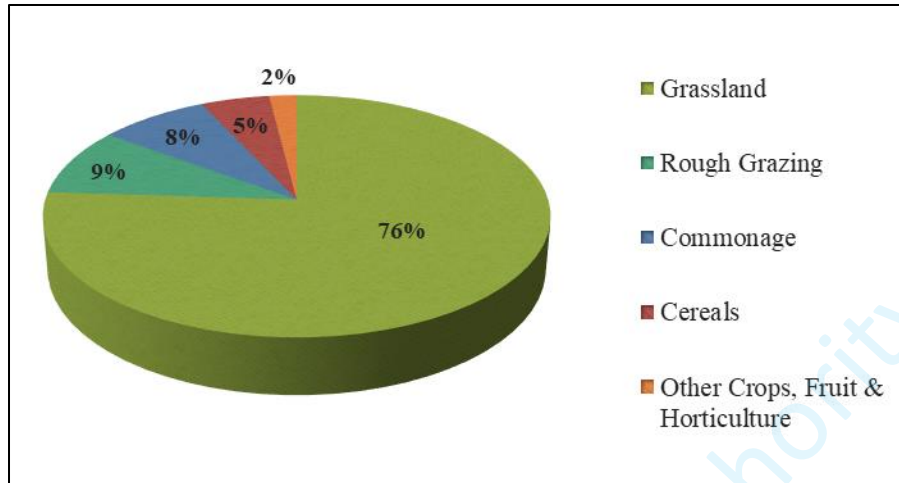


Figure 13.1: Utilisation of agricultural land in Ireland as of 2010

13.3.2 OFFALY

According to the Census of Agriculture (2010), there are 126,483 hectares of agricultural land in County Offaly, 235 hectares of which is in commonage. The average farm size in Offaly is 36.5 hectares, which is above the national average of 32.7 hectares.

There are 3,462 farms in Offaly, the majority (67%) of which are specialist beef production farms, 8% are mixed grazing livestock, 8% are specialist dairying and the remainder are mixed field crops, specialist tillage, mixed crops and livestock, specialist sheep and “other”.

13.3.3 BOHERADURROW & MEENWAUN TOWNLANDS, CO. OFFALY

The proposed development would take place within the townlands of Boheradurrow and Meenwaun, Co. Offaly. The proposed development is located within a rural agricultural landscape, dominated by pasture fields of varying sizes, bordered by hedgerows, in addition to peatlands. Arable fields and wooded areas, including bog woodland, can also be found scattered around the landscape. Residential development in the area is predominantly linearly aligned along the existing road network. A number of farmyard complexes are located within the area.

The proposed development site comprises of a number of agricultural fields, mainly in use for pasture, an existing abattoir (which ceased operation circa November 2016) and an established farmyard complex of buildings. Field boundaries comprise of a mixture of hedgerows, treelines and drainage ditches, while the Feeghroe Stream passes along the western site boundary.

The CORINE data series shows that the land of the proposed development and the land within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development is primarily used for pasture. The CORINE data series also shows that a good proportion of the surrounding region is comprised of pastureland, with areas of peat bogs, transitional woodland scrub and mixed forest also present. Other land cover in the general region consists of land principally occupied by agriculture with

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
BANAGHER CHILLING LIMITED, BANAGHER, CO. OFFALY

areas of natural vegetation, complex cultivation patterns and discontinuous urban fabric and industrial and commercial units associated with Banagher town.

13.3.4 AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

The existing abattoir at the development site was operated by Ossory Meats, and ceased operation circa November 2016. At the time of their operation, Ossory Meats were slaughtering 100 cattle per week, and for a short period, the site was slaughtering horses under licence.

In addition to agricultural farms and holdings, two agricultural enterprises licenced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a class of activity defined as “Intensive Agriculture”, are located within 15km of the proposed development, as outlined in Table 13.1 below.

Table 13.1: EPA Licenced Agricultural Enterprises within 15km of the Proposed Development

LICENCE No.	LICENSEE NAME	LICENCE TYPE (FIRST SCHEDULE OF EPA ACT, 1992, AS AMENDED)	APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
P0412-01	Harvest Lodge Pigs Ltd	6.2 (b): Intensive Agriculture	12.8km East
P0437-02	Mr Michael Monagle (Sharragh Pig farms)	6.2 (a): Intensive Agriculture	12.9km South-East

13.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development would comprise of the proposed upgrade and extension of an existing abattoir facility within the townlands of Meenwaun and Boheradurrow, at Banagher, Co. Offaly. The proposed development would also include the construction of stormwater and effluent drainage systems, water treatment plant, electrical sub-station, truck wash, security hut, waste and by-product area and gas compound, site access roads and all ancillary development including internal road surfacing, the provision of outdoor artificial lighting, an extension to the existing lairage facility and site landscaping.

The proposed development would facilitate a maximum slaughter rate of 140 cattle per day. Slaughtering activities at the proposed facility would typically operate Monday to Friday. However, slaughtering may be undertaken at weekends for reasons such as casualty animals and demand.

Should conditions allow, it is proposed that the site’s water requirement would be sourced via water abstraction onsite.

New stormwater and effluent drainage systems would be constructed. Stormwater from clean-yard areas and car parking areas would pass through a silt trap and Class 1 By-Pass Separator

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
BANAGHER CHILLING LIMITED, BANAGHER, CO. OFFALY

before being directed to a modular underground attenuation system. From here, stormwater would be pumped to a manhole prior to discharge to the Feeghroe Stream.

All process drains, domestic drains and dirty yard surface water drains would be directed to the site's new WWTP, which would comprise of an inlet sump, meva screen, drum screen, balancing tank, dissolved air flotation (DAF) unit, sludge tank, anoxic tank, two aeration tanks, clarifier, sand filters and an outlet sump. From here, the treated final effluent would be directed to the proposed integrated constructed wetlands (ICWs), comprising of a five-treatment cell system, prior to discharge to the Feeghroe Stream.

The proposed upgrade and extension of the existing abattoir facility would result in a loss of agricultural grassland, disturbed ground (including a section of previously tilled land), sections of hedgerows and drainage ditches and a limited area of bog woodland.

The expected construction timeframe would be approximately 18 months, with hours of operation from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 2pm on Saturdays. A temporary site compound would be established and would house the temporary offices, equipment and materials storage and construction staff welfare facilities. The temporary site compound would also be used for the storage of fuels and oils required for the various construction plant, in addition to housing waste receptacles.

13.5 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

13.5.1 CONSTRUCTION PHASE

There are a number of specific issues that may impact on agriculture during the construction phase of the proposed development. These include:

Noise: Increased noise from construction machinery has the potential to be an issue with certain sensitive livestock such as dairy cows and horses.

Dust: The proliferation of dust during construction has a nuisance value and livestock are at risk to eye irritation from high levels of wind blowing dust particles.

Traffic: There would be construction-related traffic during the construction phase of the proposed development, which could generate noise emissions and potential dust emissions.

The potential impact of land take on agriculture is discussed in Section 13.5.2.

13.5.2 OPERATIONAL PHASE

Should the proposed development be granted planning permission, there would be a loss of agricultural grassland and a limited area of previously tilled land. However, the loss of this agricultural land would not have an adverse impact upon agricultural assets of the area, given that the lands are wholly within the ownership of the applicant, Banagher Chilling Limited, and

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
BANAGHER CHILLING LIMITED, BANAGHER, CO. OFFALY

given that the proposed development would strengthen the local economy of the agri-food sector by providing employment and by sourcing cattle from farmers and suppliers within the catchment area.

The potential for operational noise associated with the proposed development to cause disturbance to livestock within grassland surrounding the proposed site would be considered low. Animals would quickly become acclimatised to the new noise environment adjacent to the development, as with similar projects such as new roads and motorways.

A transportation assessment has been undertaken as part of the planning application (included as Attachment 8.1 and discussed in Section 8), which notes that the total traffic generated by the development comprises an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 283 Passenger Car Units (PCUs, or car equivalents) within a 24 hour period. The report notes that while the local roads within the vicinity of the development are lightly trafficked, the increase in traffic movements due to the development can be considered small.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in decrease or loss of material assets with regards agriculture.

13.5.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACT

It is not considered that there would be any significant adverse cumulative impacts upon agricultural assets, given that the loss of agricultural land to accommodate the proposed development would benefit the agri-food sector by sourcing cattle from local farmers and suppliers.

13.5.4 “DO-NOTHING”

Should the proposed development not be built, the existing abattoir would continue to become increasingly dilapidated, while the farmland may either be left fallow, or would continue to be used for pasture / tillage purposes. There would be no alterations to landuse in the area.

13.6 MITIGATION MEASURES

13.6.1 CONSTRUCTION PHASE

The construction works contractor, once appointed, would prepare a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for all construction activities, in line with the outline CEMP prepared as part of this application. The CEMP would include control measures for noise and dust generation and traffic.

Noise

Noise control measures are outlined in detail in Section 6 and Attachment 6.1, and within Section 5.5 of the Outline CEMP. Measures include the following:

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
BANAGHER CHILLING LIMITED, BANAGHER, CO. OFFALY

- Cognisance would be taken of the National Roads Authority's "*Guidelines for the Treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Road Schemes*", the British Standard 5228: Part 1 "*Code of practice for Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites*" and the CIRIA 2015 "*Environmental Good Practice on Site*";
- Where required, screens or barriers would be installed to shield particularly noisy activities;
- Care would be taken when unloading vehicles to minimise noise disturbance;
- Regular maintenance would be carried out on all construction equipment, machinery and vehicles;
- Construction plant would be operated in accordance with the operator's instructions;
- Engine and machinery covers would be maintained in good working order and would remain closed whenever machinery is in use;
- Where practicable, all mechanical plant would be fitted with effective exhaust silences and pneumatic tools fitted with mufflers or silencers;
- Any compressors required would be silenced or of sound reduced models fitted with acoustic enclosures;
- Construction plant would be selected, where possible, with low inherent potential for the generation of noise;
- Construction plant would be switched off or throttled back to a minimum when not in use;
- Staff personnel would be instructed to avoid unnecessary revving of machinery.

Dust

Dust control measures are outlined in detail in Section 5 and Attachment 5.1, and within Section 5.1 of the Outline CEMP. Measures include the following:

- Cognisance would be taken of the guidelines published by the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM), "*Assessment of dust from demolition and construction 2014*";
- Material handling systems and site stockpiling of materials would be designed and laid out to minimise exposure to wind;
- Prolonged storage of materials onsite would be avoided;
- When transporting materials to and from the site, vehicles would be fitted with covers where possible to prevent material loss;
- Public roads outside the site would be regularly inspected for cleanliness and cleaned as necessary. A road sweeper would be used where required;

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
BANAGHER CHILLING LIMITED, BANAGHER, CO. OFFALY

- Regular visual inspections would be undertaken around the proposed site boundary to monitor the effectiveness of dust control measures;
- Should additional dust control measures be required, for instance during particularly dry weather, dust suppression measures would be undertaken, such as the use of water misting plant and wheel-wash facilities.

Traffic

The following measures would be undertaken during construction works:

- A 15kph speed limit would be implemented for all traffic onsite to reduce the potential for dust and noise generation;
- Discussions would take place with local landowners to ensure that construction traffic causes minimum interference with movements of stock and does not hinder farm operations;
- Deliveries to the site would be via suitably contained vehicles, with sheeting and covers where required;
- Local roads would be inspected and cleaned as necessary.

13.6.2 OPERATIONAL PHASE

No mitigation measures are required as the development of this land would increase its material value to the landowner and not cause significant impacts upon the agricultural material assets of other parties. Furthermore, the proposed development would have a positive impact upon the area by strengthening the local economy of the agri-food sector, by sourcing cattle from local farmers and suppliers.

13.7 RESIDUAL IMPACTS

There would be no significant residual impacts on agriculture as a result of the construction phase or operational phase of the proposed development.

13.8 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN COMPILING INFORMATION

No difficulties were encountered during the assessment of potential impacts of the proposed development on agriculture.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT
BANAGHER CHILLING LIMITED, BANAGHER, CO. OFFALY

13.9 REFERENCES

Central Statistics Office (2010). *Census of Agriculture 2010*. Available at: <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/agriculture/2010/full2010.pdf>

Environmental Protection Agency (2017) Draft. *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*.

Environmental Protection Agency (2015) Draft. *Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements*.

Environmental Protection Agency (2003) *Advice Notes on Current Practice (in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements)*.

Environmental Protection Agency Licence public access information, Available at: <http://www.epa.ie/licensing/iedipcse/>

EPA Envision Online Mapping, Available at: <http://gis.epa.ie/Envision/>

Myplan.ie Viewer. Available at: <http://www.myplan.ie/viewer/>

Offaly County Council (2014) *Offaly County Development Plan 2014 – 2020*. Available at: <https://www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Planning/Development-Plans/County-Development-Plan-2014-2020/>

Teagasc Subsoil Mapping. Available at: <http://gis.teagasc.ie/soils/map.php>