



4 KEY ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

4.1 Introduction

This chapter has been compiled by Gavin Lawlor and Bernard Dwyer of Tom Phillips + Associates on behalf of the Applicant – Milford Quarries Limited. The rEIAR accompanies an application under Section 177E of the *Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended*, for development at an existing sandstone quarry at a site in the townland of Clogrenan, Co. Carlow.

Gavin Lawlor is a Director of Tom Phillips + Associates. He holds a BA (Social Science) from University College Dublin, where he graduated in 1995 with a Masters in Regional and Urban Planning (MRUP) Degree and is a Full Member of the Irish Planning Institute (IPI) with 25 years' experience. Further competent experts have been engaged to address specific issues and/or portions of the EIAR.

Bernard Dwyer is an Associate at Tom Phillips and Associates. He holds a Master's in Planning and Sustainable Development (MPLAN) from University College Cork where he graduated in 2014 and is a full member of the Irish Planning Institute (IPI) with 11 years' experience.

This Chapter assesses the key alternatives considered by the Applicant in line with Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended, Section 2 (b) which states:

"A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the person or persons who prepared the EIAR, which are relevant to the Proposed Development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the Proposed Development on the environment."

From the outset it is important to highlight that the subject chapter forms part of a remedial EIAR and therefore the assessment is retrospective. The historic development occurred prior to the purchase of the site by the Applicant, this chapter examines the alternatives available to the Applicant following receipt of ownership of the site. The Applicant has had regard to alternative considerations in relation to location, technology and remediation in the assessment of the historic development. It is not possible to scrutinise possible alternatives that may have been available in relation to project design, size or scale as the Applicant has inherited the site and the historic development.

4.2 Alternative Location

The Applicant was not involved in the historic extraction at this location, but it is understood that the previous landowner extracted materials from the site due to the presence of valuable sandstone. Other desirable factors of the location could include its relative remoteness from sensitive receptors and lack of visual impact due to its elevation. The site is in proximity to the national road network, approximately 8km from the M9 and 10km from the N78 which provides onward connection to relevant destinations.

As described in Chapter 2, the site has slowly developed over time but is recorded as being the source of either quarrying activity or a borrow pit going back to 1906. Alternative locations may be unsuitable or inappropriate for extraction due to factors such as ground conditions or



proximity to sensitive receptors. The existence of further aggregate resource at this location (the extraction of which will be subject to a separate planning application in accordance with Section 37L of the Planning and Development Act, as amended) demonstrates the ready availability of additional usable deposits of aggregate.

4.3 Alternative Technology

The Inspector's Report for ABP Ref. QV01.QV0145 (review of the Carlow County Council determination made under s.261A(2)(a)) noted that there was no evidence of blasting as a method of extraction, nor were there conditions relating to such in the S.261 registration. Discussions between the applicants and previous operators have indicated that mechanical digging was the employed method of extraction. Mechanical digging is less invasive than blasting and may have been chosen for this reason. Mechanical digging is the least impactful form of rock extraction.

4.4 Alternative Remediation

4.4.1 Obtain Substitute Consent

The Applicant's preferred option is to obtain substitute consent. As the Applicant wishes to apply for permission for extraction at the site under Section 37L of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, and intends to regularise the extraction that has already occurred without consent prior to the purchase of the site.

A grant of Substitute Consent would confirm that the historic development has not resulted in a significant impact to the receiving environment and is not resulting in any negative impacts on the natural environment which would deem the historic development to have been permitted at the time development commenced.

4.4.2 Complete Restoration

As described in Chapter 2, the site is currently idle, and commercial operations have ceased since circa 2014. It does not appear that enforcement proceedings were taken by the Planning Authority against the landowner at the time that would have requested regularisation through Substitute Consent or restoration of the site. The restoration of site to a greenfield agricultural use would result in the loss of a supply of nationally important resources available from the quarry. The Applicant is applying for Section 37L Permission for the further extraction of materials from the subject site.

Furthermore, the restoration of this site could lead to the extraction of essential aggregates at another, existing greenfield site which may comprise habitat loss and potential significant effects requiring mitigation. As outlined above in Section 1.2, the site is a suitable location for the extraction of raw materials essential in the construction industry.

4.4.3 Do Nothing

A 'Do Nothing' scenario would involve leaving the site to restore naturally without any management or mitigation of any potential impacts. It would result in an unusable site that could attract antisocial activity such as illegal dumping and could potentially have significant



environmental impacts such as a breakdown in the settlement pond system that would allow for sediment run-off to pollute the waterway. A Do-Nothing scenario would also preclude the rehabilitation of the site through the implementation of an effective restoration plan.