

James Sweeney

From: Geraldine O'Mahony <Geraldine.OMahony@CorkCoCo.ie>
Sent: Monday 13 July 2026 13:38
To: Appeals2
Subject: SU04.324277 ACP-324277-26: Ardcahan, Dunmanway. Substitute Consent S.177I(1) Report - Response from the Planning Authority
Attachments: Letter to ACP re. SU04.324277 - Ardcahan, Substitute Consent Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála Report.pdf; SU04.324277 - Ardcahan, Substitute Consent Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála Report.pdf

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An Coimisiún Pleanála: SU04.324277 ACP-324277-26

Re: Application for Substitute Consent pursuant of Section 177E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) consisting of the quarrying of rock that took place between February 1990 and October 2014, along with all associated site development works at Ardcahan, Dunmanway, Co. Cork. The application is accompanied by a remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report (rEIAR) and a remedial Natura Impact Statement (rNIS).

13/07/26

Dear Sir/ Madam,

As required by section 177I(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and as requested in your correspondence received 20/05/26, attached please find the report of the Planning Authority setting out the views of the authority on the effects of the proposed development on the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

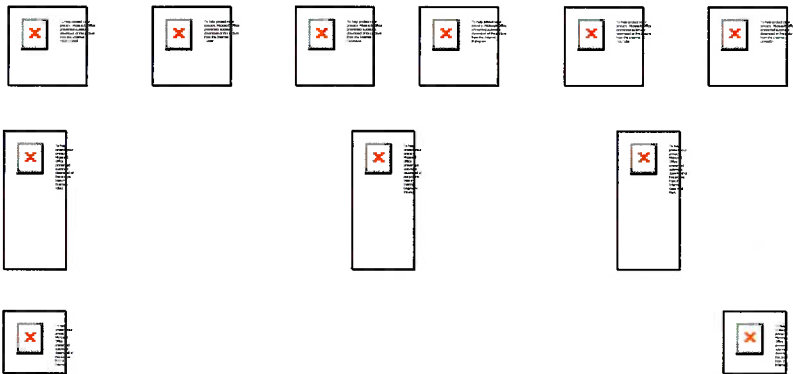
I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this email.

Yours sincerely,



G.O'Mahony
Senior Planner

www.corkcoco.ie



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Yours sincerely,

G.O'Mahony
Senior Planner
Planning and Environment Directorate
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An Coimisiún Pleanála Ref. No:	FD04.324278
Applicant:	Murray Bros. Tarmacadam
Site Location:	Ardcahan, Dunmanway, Co. Cork.
Proposed Development as per ACP:	Application for Substitute Consent pursuant of Section 177E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended consisting of the quarrying of rock that took place between February 1990 and October 2014, along with all associated site development works. The application is accompanied by a remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report (rEIAR) and a remedial Natura Impact Statement (rNIS).
Nature of Proposal	Application for Substitute Consent

1. Introduction

This application is being made to An Coimisiún Pleanála as an application for Substitute Consent pursuant of Section 177E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

The application is accompanied by a remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report (rEIAR) and a remedial Natura Impact Statement (rNIS).

A concurrent application for further development of the quarry has been submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála under s.37L of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

2. Purpose of This Report

In accordance with the requirements of section 177(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the purpose of this report is to set out the views of the Planning Authority on the effects of the proposed development on the environment and on the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3. Development Description

3.1 Site Location and Description

The subject site is located in a rural area within the townland of Ardcahan, approx. 3km north-east of Dunmanway Town. The site comprises an existing quarry. The site is accessed from the L4621-9 which joins the R587 junction. A permitted tarmacadam/ asphalt manufacturing plant and ancillary works, granted to Murray Brothers in 1998 under W/98/0294, operates within the existing quarry. The 1998 planning file notes the existing quarry was operated as a stone quarry by Mid-Cork Quarries Ltd. under licence from Cork County Council until 1996.

A watercourse flows along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site which drains into the Bandon River. The Bandon River is located a stated 260m southwest of the site and is a Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 002171) designated for the following:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitans* and *Callitriche-Batrachium* vegetation [3260].
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) [91E0].
- *Margaritifera margaritifera* (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029].
- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096].

The Caha River is located a stated 360m northwest of the site and drains into the Bandon River.

The site has a designated Landscape Character Type '*Rolling Marginal Middleground*' and is not located within a high value landscape or adjacent to designated scenic routes, as set out in the Cork County Development Plan, 2022.

3.2 Proposal

The current application relates to the following:

- Quarry development which took place between February 1990 and October 2014 with an extraction area of 5.2 ha and where Environmental Impact Assessment would have been required under the EIA Directive;
- Quarry development which took place between February 1997 and 2014, where Appropriate Assessment would have been required under the Habitats Directive.

The area subject to the substitute consent application is a stated 19.1ha.

Between 1990 and 2014, it is stated that an extraction area of 5.2ha was quarried. It is also stated that 5.1ha were extracted prior to 1990, giving a total extraction area of 10.3ha up to 2014 (see Table 11.4 'Extent of Former Extraction Area 1990-2014').

It is submitted that the total amount of quartzitic sandstone excavated between 1990 and 2014 is estimated to be c.2.2 million tonnes (2,234,000 tonnes) or an average of 93,083 tonnes of stone per annum during the 24-year period. Boring, blasting, crushing, screening and stockpiling of materials was carried out during the substitute consent period.

Settlement ponds are present on the site which were used for water reuse and storage during the substitute consent period. It is stated that coagulating agent poly aluminium chloride (PAC), used to assist settlement of particulates, has been used in ponds with a medium risk of impacting water quality in the adjoining watercourse. The rEIAR states that approx. 25 litres of PAC was used on site annually. There were/ are direct hydrological linkages to the stream from the onsite ponds, drains and ditches. It is submitted in Chapters 7 and 14 of the rEIAR that assessment of the local stream and the Bandon River (directly below the quarry) do not show any significant biological or physical impacts to the surface water environment.

The rEIAR identifies the spoil heap for the tarmac plant, which is located on the southeastern section of the site, and suspended sediment from the permitted tarmac plant as having potential to contribute to cumulative negative impacts on water quality in the adjacent stream and the installation of two interceptors have been identified in the event that quarrying recommences. The rEIAR states that there is no evidence that significant effects on the environment have occurred or continue to occur on water attributes due to quarrying activities.

It is stated that extraction was carried out above the permanent water table and the site was operated as a dry quarry without need for dewatering.

Much of the site was formerly wooded (Clashnagallagh Wood) with open heath habitat and grasslands, which have been modified/ cleared, largely to the north of the site. Chapter 14 of the rEIAR and Table 14-7 '*Aerial Imagery Historic Habitat Description*' identifies wooded areas and open heath habitats as nationally important 'Oak-Birch-Holly Woodland' and 'Dry Siliceous Heath', which have occurred (removed as a consequence of quarrying activities) or are occurring on site. The rEIAR also identifies 'Dry Siliceous Heath/ Wet Grassland/ Dense Bracken Mosaic' and 'Mixed Broadleaved Woodland/ Scrub' as High Value Local Importance habitats due to modifications/ changes to these habitats associated with the quarry. Remnants of old woodland remain intact in the northwest section of the quarry and in an area to the south of the access road with scrub woodland regenerating in the northern areas of the site with some areas of intact heath habitat present onsite.

Species recorded on site or in aquatic habitats with a hydrological linkage to the site are recorded in Chapter 14 of the rEIAR and include the Freshwater Pear Mussel, Smooth Newt, Badger as well as identified bat and bird species, of which 24 bird species have been confirmed as breeding or likely breeding at the site. Mammal species including Pine Marten, Red Squirrel and Stoat have been recorded/ likely to occur on site.

The rEIAR has identified the historic biodiversity value of the site as High Value (nationally important Oak woodland and Dry Heath habitat) with hydrological linkage to the Bandon River. Current biodiversity value of the site is assessed to be of High Value owing to the continued occurrence of oak woodland and dry heath habitat on site as well as the presence of developing natural/semi-natural habitats on site and their associated species.

Two high impact invasive alien plant species have been recorded on site (Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron) with three medium impact invasive species also recorded (Sycamore, Butterfly Bush and Traveller's Joy).

A site remediation plan is proposed which provides for the retention of some existing habitats identified to be of high local value on site in addition to other habitats including existing areas of scrub and ponds. While ecological mitigation measures are proposed, these measures appear to be primarily designed to offset impacts and habitat loss from further development of quarrying proposed at the site. These include the creation of amphibian hibernaculae to off-set the proposed removal of wetland habitat, avoidance of removal of vegetation where possible during bird breeding season, best practice measures including supervision of works by an ecological clerk of works and implementation of an invasive species management plan as well as biodiversity net gain measures including installation of bat boxes.

It is submitted that no significant negative ecological effects are anticipated to be likely to arise on implementation of the remediation plan and identified mitigation measures and adherence to best practice procedures.

The rEIAR has assessed the potential for noise and vibration impacts arising from quarrying activities during the substitute consent period. It is stated that the quarry did not operate outside of the hours 07.30 hours -17.30 hours Monday to Friday during the substitute consent period.

Data from a noise survey carried out on 19/06/14 has been used to inform the assessment. It is submitted that noise from general onsite operations would have given rise to slight to moderate negative impacts of momentary to temporary duration, noise from HGV traffic on public roads would have given rise to negligible to slight negative impacts of long term duration and noise from blasting and vibration would have given rise to slight to moderate negative impacts of momentary duration. In

addition to stated mitigation measures, it is stated that the landscape characteristics of the quarry and blast area locations would have assisted in providing natural acoustic screening to noise sensitive receptors.

4. Cork County Development Plans

Relevant plans in operation during the substitute consent period include:

- Cork County Development Plan 1986,
- Cork County Development Plan 1996,
- Cork County Development Plan 2003,
- Cork County Development Plan, 2009,
- Cork County Development Plan, 2014.

Local Area plans in operation during the substitute consent period include:

- Skibbereen Local Area Plan, 2005,
- Skibbereen Electoral Area Local Area Plan, 2011,
- West Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan, 2017.

Relevant sections relating to quarrying and extractive industries as well as the subject site contained in the above plans are as outlined in the 'Planning Statement' accompanying the substitute consent application.

Cork County Development Plan, 2022

Section 8.17.1 (Chapter 8) of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 recognises the economic value and significance of the aggregate and mineral sector to the local, regional and national economy in terms of employment generation and providing raw materials for the construction industry. The Council aims to protect and safeguard the operations of working quarries and proven aggregate resources from incompatible developments to ensure the continued viability of the extractive industry, whilst also ensuring that environmental, rural, scenic and residential amenities are protected.

Section 8.17.2 states that the Planning Authority recognises the essential role of aggregates and the need for the preparation of a County Minerals Strategy which will support a sustainable extractive industry during the lifetime of the County Development Plan.

EC 8-16: Safeguarding Mineral Reserves

- a) Protect and safeguard the county's natural mineral resources from inappropriate development, by seeking to prevent incompatible land uses that could be located elsewhere, from being located in the vicinity of the resource, since the extraction of minerals and aggregates is resource based.
- b) Prepare a Minerals Strategy Plan to support a sustainable extractive industry during the lifetime of the plan. This strategy will be prepared taking account of environmental, nature, conservation, heritage, landscape, and other planning considerations.

Other relevant Policy Objectives include:

Objective GI 14-9: Landscape

- a) Protect the visual and scenic amenities of County Cork's built and natural environment.
- b) Landscape issues will be an important factor in all land-use proposals, ensuring that a pro-active view of development is undertaken while protecting the environment and heritage generally in line with the principle of sustainability.
- c) Ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.
- d) Protect skylines and ridgelines from development.

e) Discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

Objective GI 14-12: General Views and Prospects

Preserve the character of all important views and prospects, particularly sea views, river or lake views, views of unspoilt mountains, upland or coastal landscapes, views of historical or cultural significance (including buildings and townscapes) and views of natural beauty as recognized in the Draft Landscape Strategy

Objective GI 14-13 - Scenic Routes

Protect the character of those views and prospects obtainable from scenic routes and in stretches of scenic routes that have very special views and prospects identified in this Plan. The scenic routes identified in this Plan are shown on the scenic amenity maps in the COP Map Browser and are listed in Volume 2 Heritage and Amenity Chapter 5 Scenic Routes of this Plan.

Objective GI 14-14 - Development on Scenic Routes

a) Require those seeking to carry out development in the environs of a scenic route and/or an area with important views and prospects, to demonstrate that there will be no adverse obstruction or degradation of the views towards and from vulnerable landscape features. In such areas, the appropriateness of the design, site layout, and landscaping of the proposed development must be demonstrated along with mitigation measures to prevent significant alterations to the appearance or character of the area.

b) Encourage appropriate landscaping and screen planting of developments along scenic routes (See Chapter 16 Built and Cultural Heritage).

Objective BE 15-2: Protect sites, habitats, and species

a) Protect all natural heritage sites which are designated or proposed for designation under European legislation, National legislation, and International Agreements. Maintain and where possible enhance appropriate ecological linkages between these. This includes Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Marine Protected Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Ramsar Sites. These sites are listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.

b) Provide protection to species listed in the Flora Protection Order 2015, to Annexes of the Habitats and Birds Directives, and to animal species protected under the Wildlife Acts in accordance with relevant legal requirements. These species are listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.

c) Protect and where possible enhance areas of local biodiversity value, ecological corridors and habitats that are features of the County's ecological network. This includes rivers, lakes, streams and ponds, peatland and other wetland habitats, woodlands, hedgerows, tree lines, veteran trees, natural and semi-natural grasslands as well as coastal and marine habitats. It particularly includes habitats of special conservation significance in Cork as listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.

d) Recognise the value of protecting geological heritage sites of local and national interest, as they become notified to the local authority, and protect them from inappropriate development

e) Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the protection and enhancement of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

Objective BE 15-6: Biodiversity and New Development

Provide for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the development management process and when licensing or permitting other activities by: a) Providing ongoing support and guidance to developers on incorporating biodiversity considerations into new development through preplanning communications and the Council's guidance document 'Biodiversity and the Planning Process – guidance for developments on the management of biodiversity issues during the planning process' and any updated versions of this advice; b) Encouraging the retention and integration of existing trees,

hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments; c) Requiring the incorporation of primarily native tree and other plant species, particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments; d) Fulfilling Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment obligations and carrying out Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to development and activities, as appropriate; e) Ensuring that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation. This includes lakes and ponds, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats; f) Ensuring that the implementation of appropriate mitigation (including habitat enhancement, new planting or other habitat creation initiatives) is incorporated into new development, where the implementation of such development would result in unavoidable impacts on biodiversity - supporting the principle of biodiversity net gain.

Objective HE 16-2: Protection of Archaeological Sites and Monuments

Objective HE 16-3: Underwater Archaeology

Objective HE 16-5: Zones of Archaeological Potential

Objective HE 16-6: Industrial and Post Medieval Archaeology

Objective HE 16-7: Battlefield, Ambush and Siege Sites and Defensive Archaeology

Objective HE 16-9: Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes

All large-scale planning applications (i.e., development of lands on 0.5 ha or more in area or 1km or more in length) and Infrastructure schemes and proposed roadworks are subjected to an archaeological assessment as part of the planning application process which should comply with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's codes of practice. It is recommended that the assessment is carried out following pre planning consultation with the County Archaeologist, by an appropriately experienced archaeologist to guide the design and layout of the proposed scheme/development, safeguarding the archaeological heritage in line with Development Management Guidelines.

Objective HE 16-11: Archaeological Landscapes

Objective HE 16-12: Raising Archaeological Awareness

Objective HE 16-13: Undiscovered Archaeological Sites

To protect and preserve previously unrecorded archaeological sites within County Cork as part of any development proposals. The Council will require preservation in situ to protect archaeological monuments discovered. Preservation by record will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Objective CA 17-1 Support national and local climate change objectives set out in the following:

- National Planning Framework.
- Southern Region Spatial and Economic Strategy.
- Climate Action Plan (2021 or any successor plan).
- National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 or any successor framework).
- National Mitigation Plan (2017 or any successor plan).
- Cork County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

5. Technical Reports

Relevant Internal Reports include:

5.1 Archaeological Officer

The rEIAR notes that quarrying works and associated quarry operations carried out between 1990 and 2014 altered ground levels and transformed the natural terrain. In the absence of archaeological oversight, any previously unknown surface or subsurface archaeological sites that may have existed in these areas may have been lost. From 2014, the site was subject to visual/ walkover surveys and with overgrowth and the nature of sub-surface archaeology, the effectiveness of field assessment was limited.

The Archaeological Officer notes that the significance of effects on any archaeology that may have been present within the substitute consent area and ancillary areas of development is unquantifiable as it is not certain if sub-surface archaeology existed, any excavation/construction that occurred would have had a direct, negative and permanent effect on archaeology and any damage to same is irreversible and no remedial action can address this impact (if it occurred).

In terms of Cultural Landscape, the Archaeological Officer notes that the dense woodland identified on the early 19th century maps has been lost irreversibly, as detailed in Chapter 15 of the rEIAR.

No mitigation measures and conditions of planning to reduce or remove any impacts that may have occurred are proposed.

5.2 Ecology Officer

The Ecology Officer advises that, based on historic imagery and mapping, much of the site was formerly wooded (Clashnagallagh Wood) and was/is surrounded by open heath type habitat (primarily to the north) and small agricultural fields. The stream which flows along the eastern and southern boundaries meets the Bandon River close to the south of the entrance to the quarry and the Bandon River Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies adjacent to the site. The report notes that remnants of old woodland remain intact within the site boundary with scrub woodland regenerating in the northern areas of the site with some areas of intact heath habitat present.

The Ecology Officer notes that permanent shallow ponds/lakes have been developed on the site for water storage and water reuse. The rEIAR advises that poly aluminium chloride (PAC) has been used at the site to ensure settlement of fine particulates out of suspension. The rEIAR notes that the coagulating agent was used in ponds with a medium risk of impacting water quality in the adjoining watercourse and that there are direct hydrological linkages to the stream from ponds and drains established in the east and south of the site at various periods during its development with some of these posing a high to very high risk of impact to water quality.

Quarry activity risks, including the release of hydrocarbons, suspended solids and ammonia, which would have had the potential to impact negatively on water quality, are stated in the rEIAR to have been likely reduced through the use of attenuation ponds with the Bandon River (below the quarry) stated not to show any significant biological or physical impacts. When assessed cumulatively, the spoil heap located on the southeastern section of the site and suspended sediment from the permitted tarmac plant have been identified as having potential to contribute to cumulative negative impacts on water quality in the adjacent stream. The rEIAR states that there is no evidence that significant effects on the environment have occurred or continue to occur on water attributes due to quarrying activities and the installation of two interceptors have been identified in the event that quarrying recommences.

The Ecology Officer advises that approx. 9ha of broadleaved woodland was originally located on the southern section of the site, with 2 woodland areas comprising Oak-Birch-Holly woodland now remaining, including an area in the northwestern section of the quarry (a stated 0.6ha) and an area to the south of the access road (a stated 1.5ha). Of the approx. 7ha of woodland cleared, approx. 4.5ha would have been located in the area of the quarry subject to the substitute consent application. In terms of heath and grassland habitats which were located in the northern section of the site, the rEIAR advises that approx. 13ha of this habitat has been modified or cleared in this area with revegetated scrub/ immature woodland and some areas of heath currently recorded on the site.

Nationally important 'Oak-Birch-Holly woodland' and 'Dry Siliceous Heath' habitats have been identified as having occurred (habitat type removed as a consequence of quarrying activities) or are occurring on site with 'Dry Siliceous Heath/ Wet Grassland/ Dense Bracken Mosaic and 'Mixed Broadleaved Woodland/ Scrub' identified as High Value Local Importance habitats due to modifications/ changes to these habitats associated with the quarry.

Species recorded on site or in aquatic habitats with a hydrological linkage to the site include the Freshwater Pear Mussel, Smooth Newt, Badger as well as identified bat and bird species of which 24 bird species have been confirmed as breeding or likely breeding at the site. Mammal species including the Pine Marten, Red Squirrel and Stoat have been recorded/ likely to occur on site.

The rEIAR has identified the historic biodiversity value of the site as High Value due to the nationally important Oak Woodland and Dry Heath habitats and hydrological linkage to the Bandon River. Current biodiversity value of the site is assessed to be of High Value owing to the continued occurrence of oak woodland and dry heath habitat on site and noting also the presence of other developing natural/semi-natural habitats on site and their associated species.

Two high impact invasive alien plant species have been recorded on site (Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron) with three medium impact invasive species also recorded (Sycamore, Butterfly Bush and Traveller's Joy).

A site remediation plan is proposed which provides for the retention of some existing habitats identified to be of high local value on site including:

- the existing quarry floor and ledges;
- all remaining long-established woodland;
- dry siliceous heath on the outer boundaries of the site (outside the proposed further development zone);
- some existing ponds; and
- existing wet woodland

Other habitats including existing areas of scrub, which will be allowed to develop into woodland, and some of the existing ponds are also proposed for retention.

Ecological mitigation measures are proposed which, the Ecology Officer notes, primarily offset impacts of further proposed activity at the site and include necessary measures to prevent/ minimise disturbance to breeding birds, amphibians and other wildlife during future active quarrying, as well as measures to offset further proposed habitat loss on site. These include:

- creation of amphibian hibernaculae to off-set the proposed removal of wetland habitat;
- avoidance of any further removal of vegetation on site where possible during the bird breeding season. Where not possible, the removal of vegetation on site to only be undertaken under supervision by an ecological clerk of works;
- the installation of bat boxes on suitable trees to provide roosting places including a roost box specifically dedicated to lesser horseshoe bats; and

- the implementation of an invasive species management plan.

The rEIAR concludes that, with the implementation of the remediation plan and identified mitigation measures and adherence to standard best practice procedures, no significant negative ecological effects are anticipated to be likely to arise.

It is noted that the concurrent further development application proposes to remove approx. 5ha of natural and semi-natural habitats of ecological value.

The Ecology Officer notes that the rNIS identifies a possibility that quarry operations led to occasional increases in suspended solids reaching the Bandon River during high-flow events and would not likely have smothered adult mussels. The rNIS submits that the quarry played a role in contributing to the cumulative silt load to the Bandon River, including silt loading from the tarmac plant which likely entered the bounding stream during periods of heavy rainfall several times a year. The impact of the quarry on silt loading is assessed to have been slight to moderate with medium to long-term negative effects on the quality of juvenile pearl mussel habitat within the SAC.

No significant impacts to water quality associated with the use of contaminants including PACs and hydrocarbons on site are identified in the rNIS based on the closed surface water drainage system which was in place and historical mitigation measures which were in place during the substitute consent period. It is submitted that with the implementation of mitigation measures historically, the development did not, either alone or in combination with other plan or projects, adversely affect the integrity of the conservation status of any of the qualifying interests of the Bandon River SAC or any other European site in light of best scientific knowledge.

In regard to biodiversity and the rEIAR, the Ecology Officer is of the opinion that development which has been undertaken at this site has resulted in extensive significant effects on habitats of national importance and likely their associated species. While it is submitted that no significant negative ecological effects would be likely to arise if the remediation plan was to be implemented, the Ecology Officer is of the view that the current remediation proposals are limited in scope and have not been demonstrated to provide sufficient compensation for the damage which has incurred at this site since 1990 (estimated by the Ecology Officer to include removal of approx. 4.5ha Oak Woodland and approx. 13.5ha of Heath/Exposed Rock/Wet Grassland Habitat).

The Ecology Officer advises that a revised remediation plan be submitted where the full extent (ha) of each habitat identified to be of, at least, high local value which has been removed or damaged during the period of relevance, would be quantified in the plan, and that significant additional efforts be put forward to compensate for the impacts incurred. Interventions should be designed to specifically compensate for the impacts incurred, should be quantified and should be prepared taking account of sections 6.6 and 6.7 of CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland, Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine (Sept 2024), and having regard to national policy as cited in the rEIAR. The Ecology Officer also advises that the commitment to not further intervene in nationally important habitats within the site should not be used in the assessment of the adequacy of proposed compensation measures.

Additionally, the Ecology Officer is of the view that no decision should be taken in relation to the concurrent application for further development of the quarry until such time as adequate and appropriate compensatory mitigation is proposed and agreed in respect of the substitute consent application. The Ecology Officer has advised of concern with the concurrent further development proposal, where further habitat of high ecological value is proposed to be removed for which insufficient detail in relation to post works remediation has been provided. This is relevant as land

proposed for further development may be required to be incorporated into the remediation plan, together with proposals for active restoration of damaged habitats in this area, in order to achieve meaningful compensation for the extent of (at least) nationally important habitat which was removed from the site between the years 1990 and 2014.

In regard to the rNIS, the Ecology Officer is of the view that based on the information contained in the NIS, it is not certain at this stage that the quarry did not contribute to impacts to water quality in the Bandon River, which impacts may have interfered with the achievement of targets linked to the Conservation Objective established for Freshwater Pearl Mussel, in particular targets relating to the maintenance and restoration of the condition and extent of mussel habitat and the restoration of water quality in the Bandon River downstream of the quarry site.

The Ecology Officer is further of the view that it is a matter for An Coimisiún Pleanála to complete Appropriate Assessment of this application and to determine whether any additional pollution control measures are required to ensure the avoidance of any contaminants to the bounding stream in the future, regardless of whether the application for further development is permitted or not.

5.3 Environment Officer (Air and Water)

No issues have been raised by the Environment Officer from an air quality perspective. The Environment Officer notes that the permitted tarmac plant has the benefit of an existing Section 30 Air Pollution Act licence and no issues in respect of compliance with this licence are noted. The rEIAR states that historic quarrying activities lead to a dust deposition level, averaged over the full year, of 16.7 mg/m²/day at the land ownership boundary to the quarry with a worst case scenario combined dust deposition level peaks at 55.7 mg/m²/day, which is 16% of the TA Luft Limit Value of 350 mg/m²/day.

The site is located within the Bandon Groundwater Body IE_SW_G_086 which sits within the Bandon-Ilen Catchment. The stream located on the east and southern boundaries of the site flows into the Bandon River which is a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with populations of Freshwater Pearl Mussel (down gradient of the site). In regard to water quality, the Environment Officer has advised that the Caha (IE_SW_20C010700) and Bandon River (IE_SW_20B020200) waterbodies have declined in status ('Moderate') and are currently "At Risk" of failing to achieve "Good Status". The Environment Officer does, however, note that the loss in classification occurred when the extraction element had ceased during the substitute consent period.

Five discharge locations are identified in the rEIAR. The Environment Officer is of the opinion that the further information is required on surface water runoff details and potential impact on the adjacent stream.

The use of poly aluminium chloride, which produces a sludge and its possible classification as a waste, is required to be clarified in terms of a potential Article 27 notification to the EPA.

More details are also required on the sampling results which have been carried out on the onsite well and stream.

5.4 Environment Officer (Noise and Vibration)

The Environment Officer has reviewed the potential for noise and vibration impacts arising from the historic quarrying activity during the substitute consent period. The rEIAR states that the quarry did not operate outside of the hours 07.30 hours -17.30 hours, Monday through Friday during the

substitute consent period and submits that relevant noise sensitive locations comprised solely of residential properties with the nearest sensitive locations to the substitute consent site located approximately 150 to 550 metres to the nearest property boundary.

Data from a noise survey conducted on 19th June, 2014 has been used to inform the rEIAR assessment. It is contended that the prevailing noise climate towards the end of the substitute consent period would be generally representative of that throughout the substitute consent period. It is submitted that the noise climate at noise sensitive locations would have been dominated by local road traffic which has not increased significantly over the substitute consent period and that road traffic volumes on the R587 have increased marginally over the period but not enough to significantly increase the ambient noise levels for receptors in close proximity to the road.

Details of predicted impacts from onsite noise generating activities are outlined and detailed in section 10.3 of the rEIAR. Operational phase effects include noise from general onsite operations which would have given rise to slight to moderate negative impacts of momentary to temporary duration, noise from HGV traffic on public roads would have given rise to negligible to slight negative impacts of long term duration and noise from blasting and vibration would have given rise to slight to moderate negative impacts of momentary duration. The Environment Officer has queried why blast monitoring in relation to air overpressure/vibration was not undertaken in the vicinity of the nearest sensitive location at the time.

Mitigation measures implemented to control noise and vibration in addition to general quarry operations are detailed in section 10.4 of the rEIAR. The rEIAR also states that the landscape characteristics of the quarry and blast area locations would have provided natural acoustic screening to the nearest residential dwellings.

While there is limited historic noise monitoring data covering the substitute consent period and while noting the data for the period 2019-2014, the Environment Officer is of the view that the applicants have made a reasonable attempt to assess the impact, based on the information and data available.

Clarity is required by the Environment Officer in respect to the number and distances of all noise sensitive receptors, which should be mapped, as well as details as to why blast monitoring in relation to air overpressure/vibration was not undertaken in the vicinity of the nearest sensitive location at the time and the rationale behind the selected chosen location(s) as well as details, if any, of any record of complaints received directly during the substitute consent period in relation to noise (including blasting) and any subsequent follow-up investigation(s).

5.5 Environment Officer (Waste)

No issues have been identified in the report of the Environment Officer, with one condition relating to a Resource Waste Management Plan recommended to be attached.

5.6 Roads Directorate

The Roads Directorate Engineer advises that the site is a rural setting characterised by undulating topography, irregularly shaped fields and clusters of mixed woodland. It is naturally very well screened and has a relatively low visual impact on the wider area. No issues have been raised by the Roads Engineer in respect to the application for substitute consent.

6. Assessment

The long history associated with the existing quarry and the current application for substitute consent is noted.

Having regard to the application and the internal reports, there are a number of issues to be addressed from the Planning Authority's perspective.

One of the key issues raised by the current application relates to uncertainty regarding impacts to water quality in the Bandon River during the substitute consent period, which may have interfered with achievement of targets linked to the Conservation Objective established for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel. This issue was raised in the reports of both the Ecology Officer and the Environment Officer (Air and Water) in respect to discharge of suspended solids and poly aluminium chloride to the adjoining stream with conflicting information contained within the rNIS and rEIAR. While noting the views of the Environment Officer (Air and Water) that the loss in classification of the Bandon River waterbody to 'Moderate Status' occurred when the extraction element associated with the substitute consent period had ceased, more information is required to enable a detailed assessment. An examination of any additional pollution control measures is also required to ensure the avoidance of any contaminants entering the bounding stream in the future. Further issues raised in relation to the requirement for a Water Framework Impact Assessment, groundwater monitoring reports as well as issues in respect to the discharge locations and use of poly aluminium chloride have been raised by the Environment Officer (Air and Water) with clarity required on these items.

A second key issue relates to the permanent loss/ removal of habitats of national importance and their associated species during the substitute consent period. Taking this into consideration, the proposed remediation plan and associated proposals are viewed to be limited in scope and have not demonstrated sufficient compensation for the damage which has incurred at this site since 1990 in terms of removal of Oak Woodland and Heath/Exposed Rock/Wet Grassland Habitat. A revised remediation plan is, therefore, required to be prepared by competent ecologists, with expertise in habitat restoration and enhancement, where the full extent (ha) of each habitat identified to be of, at least, high local value which has been removed or damaged during the substitute consent period is quantified and that significant additional measures should be proposed to compensate for the impacts incurred. Proposed additional compensatory measures should be prepared in line with CIEEM guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland, Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine (Sept 2024) and national policy. It is noted that the commitment to not further intervene in nationally important habitats within the site should not be used in the assessment of the adequacy of proposed compensation measures.

A third issue raised relates to the concurrent application for further development of the quarry under s.37L which is currently before An Coimisiún Pleanála. It is the Planning Authority's view that adequate and appropriate compensatory mitigation is required to be proposed and agreed in respect of the substitute consent application prior to any decision being made on the application for further development. Further habitats of high ecological value are proposed to be removed for which insufficient detail has been provided in relation to post works remediation. In addition, land proposed for further development of the quarry may be required to be incorporated into the remediation plan, together with proposals for active restoration of damaged habitats in this area, in order to achieve meaningful compensation for the extent of (at least) nationally important habitat which was removed from the site during the substitute consent period (between 1990 and 2014).

The Environment Officer (Noise and Vibration) is of the view that the applicant has made a reasonable attempt to assess the noise and vibration impact, based on the information and data available. However, clarity is required on a number of issues including the number and distances of all noise

sensitive receptors, details as to why blast monitoring in relation to air overpressure/vibration was not undertaken in the vicinity of the nearest sensitive location at the time and details, if any, of any record of complaints received directly during the substitute consent period in relation to noise (including blasting) and any subsequent follow-up investigation(s).

Discrepancies have been noted in the rEIAR in regard to proximity to dwellings:

- Chapter 3 states "The nearest dwellings to the quarry site (red line boundary) are located approximately 300m south; 275m west; 450m north and 400m east of the site."
- Chapter 5 states "The nearest dwellings are located approximately 370 m south; 275 m west; 540 m north and 680 m east of the development."
- Chapter 10 states "The nearest noise sensitive locations to the substitute consent site are located approximately 150 to 550 metres to the nearest property boundary. The relevant noise sensitive locations are comprised solely of residential properties."

These discrepancies may be clarified by the further detail which the Environment Officer (Noise and Vibration) has identified as being required.

In terms of visual impact, the quarry is located in a rural area characterised by undulating topography, agricultural grassland, scrub and clusters of woodland. In terms of magnitude of change, the substitute consent period should be viewed against both the backdrop of the quarry which was operating before 1990 and the backdrop of Clashnagallagh Wood which was present at that time based on historical imagery. The remedial Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has assessed the effects of the quarrying activities which occurred from 1990 to 2014 as well as any that are still occurring or can reasonably be expected to occur. The operational phase is considered to have had a likely slight to moderate negative impact on landscape and visual resources with cumulative impacts assessed to have been slight to moderate and long term. When mitigation such as intervening topography and screening vegetation are considered, including the planted berms on the south and southwestern boundaries, views of the quarry in the wider landscape are restricted. In this regard, the submitted 9 viewpoints contained in Chapter 11 of the rEIAR are noted (numbering issue noted). Additional mitigation measures are also proposed as part of the remediation plan including the retention of woodland along the western boundary of the site, retention of wet woodland and retention of the southern boundary woodland. The rEIAR submits that the quarrying activity carried out during the substitute consent period does not result in any significant negative effects on landscape and visual attributes and with implementation measures taken into consideration, the impact is submitted to give rise to moderate to slight impacts on landscape character assets. Having reviewed the documentation, it is reasonable to concur with the conclusion of the rEIAR that the quarrying activity carried out during the substitute consent period did not result in any significant negative effects on landscape and visual attributes.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above assessment, the documentation and drawings submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála and the interdepartmental reports, it is the opinion of the Planning Authority that further information is required in order to enable further assessment of the proposal. An Coimisiún Pleanála may wish to seek further information in respect to the following:

1. Submit a revised remediation plan where the full extent (ha) of each habitat identified to be of at least high local value which has been removed or damaged during the period of relevance would be quantified in the plan, and that significant additional efforts be put forward to compensate for the impacts incurred. Interventions should be designed to specifically compensate for the impacts incurred, should be quantified and should be prepared taking account of sections 6.6 and 6.7 of CIEEM guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the

UK and Ireland, Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine (Sept 2024), and having regard to national policy as cited in the rEIAR. The remediation plan should be prepared by ecologists with expertise in habitat restoration and enhancement rather than a landscape architect. The commitment to not further intervene in nationally important habitats within the site should not be used in the assessment of the adequacy of proposed compensation measures.

2. The respective number and distances of all noise sensitive receptors within 500m and 1000m of the substitute consent application should be quantified and presented in tabular form with exact distances from the red line boundary stated as well as illustrated on a suitably scaled map. This map should also include the 2014 noise monitoring locations.
3. The Applicants should clarify why blast monitoring in relation to air overpressure/vibration was not undertaken in the vicinity of the nearest sensitive location at the time, and the rationale behind the selected chosen location(s).
4. The Applicants should clarify records of number of complaints received directly during the substitute consent period in relation to noise (inc. blasting) and any subsequent follow-up investigation(s), if any.
5. The Applicants should submit a Water Framework Impact Assessment, clearly providing all monitoring data referenced. The Applicants should clearly demonstrate historic trends in water quality status during the substitute consent period, and a Source-Pathway-Receptor Risk Assessment Model of the substitute consent activity on water quality objectives.
6. All monitoring (chemistry and biological) data should be provided in one report.
7. The Applicants should provide groundwater monitoring records (or if none are available, a report on the quality of the underlying aquifer).
8. The Applicants are required to submit an Article 27 notification to the EPA in respect of the poly aluminium chloride sludge and furnish the Agency's response to An Coimisiún Pleanála.



Geraldine O'Mahony

Senior Planner

13/07/26

Appendix 1 – Internal Reports

Archaeological Officer

County Development Plan 2022

Cork County Council have been notified of an application from An Coimisiún Pleanála in respect to a quarry at Ardcahan Quarry, Dunmanway. This includes an application for Substitute Consent (under s. 177E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended) consisting of the quarrying of rock that took place between February 1990 and October 2014, along with all associated site development works. The application is accompanied by a *remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report* (rEIAR) and a *remedial Natura Impact Statement* (rNIS). The ACP Case reference is SU04.324277.

County Development Plan 2022

County Development Plan 2022 Objectives HE 16-2:

Protection of Archaeological Sites and Monuments

Secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional cases preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments and their setting included in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) (see www.archaeology.ie) and the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and of sites, features and objects of archaeological and historical interest generally. In securing such preservation, the planning authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Development Applications Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage as outlined in the Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage policy document or any changes to the policy within the lifetime of the Plan.

County Development Plan 2022 Objectives HE 16-3:

Underwater Archaeology

Protect and preserve the archaeological value of underwater archaeological sites and associated underwater and terrestrial features. In assessing proposals for development, the development will take account of the potential underwater archaeology of rivers, lakes, wetlands, intertidal and sub-tidal environments through appropriate archaeological assessment by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

County Development Plan 2022 Objectives HE 16-5:

Zones of Archaeological Potential

Protect the Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAPs) located within historic towns, urban areas and around archaeological monuments generally. Any development within the ZAPs will need to take cognisance of the upstanding and potential for subsurface archaeology, through appropriate archaeological assessment.

County Development Plan 2022 Objectives HE 16-6:

Industrial and Post Medieval Archaeology

Protect and preserve industrial and post-medieval archaeology and long-term management of heritage features such as mills, limekilns, forges, bridges, piers and harbours, water-related engineering works and buildings, penal chapels, dwellings, walls and boundaries, farm buildings, estate features, military and coastal installations. There is a general presumption for retention of these

structures and features. Proposals for appropriate redevelopment including conversion should be subject to an appropriate assessment and record by a suitably qualified specialist/s.

County Development Plan 2022 Objectives HE 16-7:

Battlefield, Ambush and Siege Sites and Defensive Archaeology

Protect and preserve the defensive archaeological record of County Cork including strategic battlefield, ambush and siege sites, and coastal fortifications and their associated landscape due to their historical and cultural value. Any development within or adjoining these areas shall undertake a historic assessment by a suitably qualified specialist to ensure development does not negatively impact on this historic landscape.

County Development Plan Objectives HE 16-8:

Burial Places

Protect all historical burial places and their setting in County Cork and encourage their maintenance and care in accordance with appropriate conservation principles.

County Development Plan Objectives HE 16-9:

Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes

All large-scale planning applications (i.e., development of lands on 0.5 ha or more in area or 1km or more in length) and Infrastructure schemes and proposed roadworks are subjected to an archaeological assessment as part of the planning application process which should comply with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's codes of practice. It is recommended that the assessment is carried out following pre planning consultation with the County Archaeologist, by an appropriately experienced archaeologist to guide the design and layout of the proposed scheme/development, safeguarding the archaeological heritage in line with Development Management Guidelines.

County Development Plan Objectives HE 16-10:

Management of Monuments within Development Sites

Where archaeological sites are accommodated within a development it shall be appropriately conservation/ protection with provision for a suitable buffer zone and long-term management plan put in place all to be agreed in advance with the County Archaeologist.

County Development Plan Objectives HE 16-11:

Archaeological Landscapes

To protect archaeological landscapes and their setting where the number and extent of archaeological monuments are significant and as a collective are considered an important archaeological landscape of heritage value.

County Development Plan Objectives HE 16-12:

Raising Archaeological Awareness

As part of the Heritage Plan, it is an objective to develop a management plan, if resources allow, for the archaeology of County Cork, which could include an evaluation of the Historic Character Assessment of Cork County helping to identify areas for tourism potential, and strategic research while also promoting best practice in archaeology and encouraging the interpretation, publication and dissemination of archaeological findings from the development application process.

County Development Plan Objectives HE 16-13:

Undiscovered Archaeological Sites

To protect and preserve previously unrecorded archaeological sites within County Cork as part of any development proposals. The Council will require preservation in situ to protect archaeological monuments discovered. Preservation by record will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

County Archaeologist Comments 19/06/2026

Chapter 15 of the rEIAR pertains to Archaeology, Architectural and Cultural Heritage (Lane Purcell Archaeologists). The baseline environment has been assessed as well as the wider archaeological environment.

The archaeologist has included a review of all potential past archaeological inputs to the quarry where relevant which has assisted in ascertaining past impacts. This was described as follows:

A review of the Cork County Council planning enquiry system was undertaken for the Substitute Consent Area (SCA). An application lodged in 2011 was refused. A subsequent application submitted in 2014, accompanied by an EIS (Purcell 2014), progressed to a grant of permission subject to archaeological monitoring; however, this decision was later quashed by Judicial Review and no associated works were undertaken. A 1998 permission for a macadam plant was identified outside the current SCA boundary; no archaeological reports are attached to that file.

The quarry commenced operations prior to the introduction of planning controls in 1963 and subsequently continued in use as an unregistered quarry. In 2002, the government and quarrying industry introduced the Irish Concrete Federation/National Monuments Service Code of Practice, establishing guidance on archaeological protection for operating quarries, with revisions issued in 2009. From 2002 onward, the quarry, still operating outside the Section 261 registration process, would notionally have been required to comply with this Code, particularly in the period leading up to the 30th of April 2005 registration deadline.

However, no archaeological assessments, fieldwork or licensed monitoring are recorded within the SCA prior to the 2011 planning application. A review of the Cork County Council planning archive, National Monuments Service datasets (including the SMR/RMP and licensed work records), and the Excavations Bulletin (Excavations.ie) confirms that no archaeological mitigation, monitoring or reporting is documented for the quarry during this period.

It has been acknowledged in Chapter 15 that given the sub-surface nature of previously unrecorded archaeological features, that quarrying works carried out between 1990 and 2014 altered ground levels and transformed the natural terrain. Furthermore, areas outside the quarried footprint were historically used for ancillary quarry operations, including access routes, hardstanding, storage areas and settling ponds. In the absence of archaeological oversight, whether through archaeological assessment, monitoring, testing etc, any previously unknown surface or subsurface archaeological sites that may have existed in these areas may have been lost.

After 2014, the site was subject to visual / walkover surveys and overgrowth and the nature of sub-surface archaeology is such that 'the effectiveness of field assessment' was limited.

It is clear that the Significance of Effects on any archaeology that may have been present within the SCA area and ancillary areas of development is unquantifiable as

- a. it is not certain if indeed sub-surface archaeology existed
- b. Any excavation/construction that occurred would certainly have had a direct, negative and permanent effect on archaeology.

- c. Any damage to same is irreversible and no remedial action can address this impact (if it occurred)

The Cultural Landscape indicated as a dense Woodland on the 19th century maps has been lost irreversibly and this is acknowledged by the author of Chapter 15.

There are no mitigation measures and therefore conditions of planning relating specifically to the SCA that would reduce or remove any impacts that may have occurred to hitherto unknown sub-surface archaeology since ground reduction works would have removed the features if present thereby resulting in a permanent and adverse loss of heritage.

Some assessment/indicators as to the presence or otherwise of sub-surface archaeology on the site can be dealt with by a condition for archaeological monitoring on the site to cover any future groundworks in areas not subject to quarrying/excavation/topsoil removal. This has been proposed separately under the application for Further Development (under s.37L of the Planning and Development Act as amended) consisting of further quarrying of rock along with all associated site development works.

Annette Quinn

Archaeological Officer
Cork County Council.

Ecology Officer

To be read in conjunction with report of Ecology Office in relation to application for further development at Ardcahan Quarry, ACP Ref FD04.324278 comprising 5.01 new extraction area plus 5.39 ha of ancillary areas including existing quarry floor and stormwater wetland/attenuation ponds.

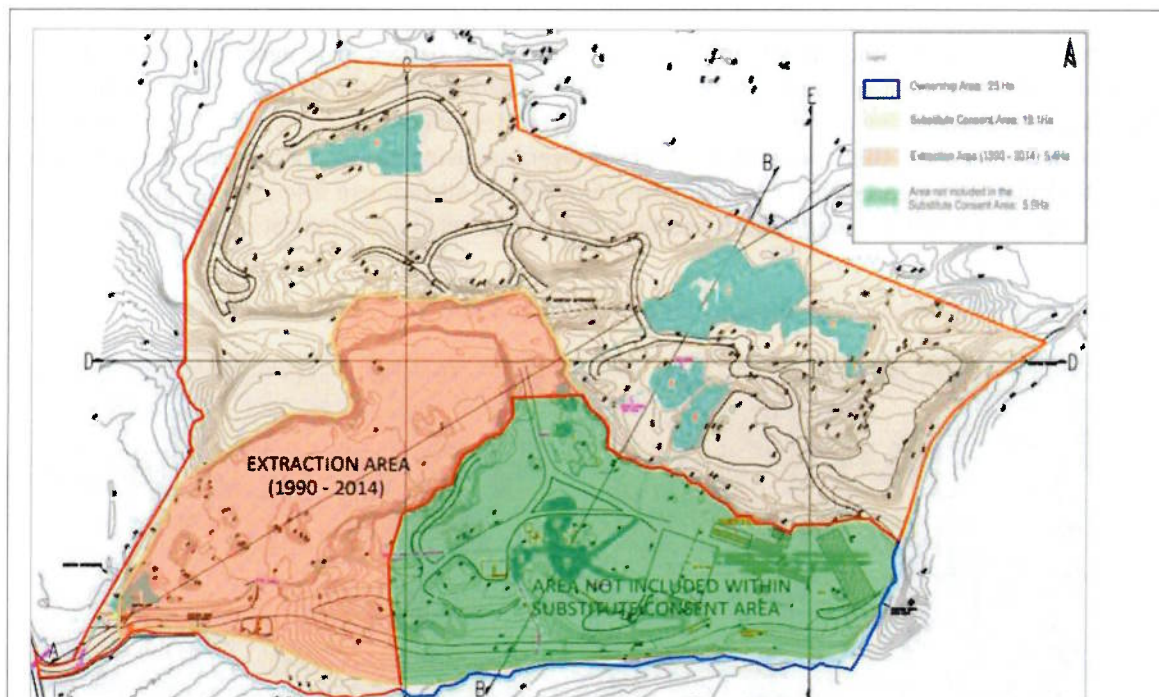
Note: no detailed review of ecological survey methodologies, extent of ecological survey effort or survey results has been undertaken due to workload and time constraints. It is assumed that this will all be checked by suitably qualified ecologists on behalf of ACP.

Documents reviewed:

Planning Statement, Remedial EIAR, Remedial NIS, Substitute Consent Drawings and public observations.

Application Details:

Application for granting of substitute consent for 19.1 ha quarry described to comprise quarrying undertaken at Ardcahan Quarry between 1990 (when EIA Directive came into force) and 2014 (when quarrying ceased). The area to which the application for substitute consent applies is shown bounded by the redline in the figure below which is copied from the remedial EIAR document (Figure 1-1) ie all areas outside the green zone. It is the applicant's contention that the area shown in green (5.9ha) comprises an existing macadam plant which has a planning permission and, (per rEIAR), land quarried prior to 1990).



Quarry Location and Characteristics:

The quarry (quartz rich sandstone) is located in the townland of Ardcahan, 3.5km north-east of Dunmanway off the L4621-9 local road. Site is understood to lie within an overall landholding of 25ha. Historic imagery and mapping indicate that much of the site was formerly wooded (Clashnagallagh Wood) and was/is surrounded by open heath type habitat (primarily to the north) and small agricultural fields. A small stream which marks the townland boundary flows from the north along the eastern and southern boundary of the quarry in a westerly/southerly direction to meet the Bandon River approx. 300m to the south of the entrance to the quarry. The Bandon River is a Special Area of

Conservation and the boundary of the SAC which encompasses its flood zone, adjoins the entrance to the quarry site. In addition to the still active asphalt plant and the quarry floor, remnants of the old woodland remain intact within the site boundary. Scrub woodland appears to be regenerating in areas of land in the north of the site which were previously disturbed (per rEIAR, portions of this area were used for storing crushed product, as a settling pond, for backfilling and for storage of waste sludge material). Aerial imagery indicates the presence of some areas of intact heath habitat as well as manmade settlement ponds, tracks and roads within the site boundary, particularly in the north of the site.

It is understood that that all extraction was done above the permanent water table and the site was operated as a dry quarry without any need for dewatering.

However, per the rEIAR, a number of permanent shallow ponds/lakes have also been developed by placing berms around natural depressions and lower-lying areas in the northern part of the site. It is stated that settlement ponds were used for water storage and water re-use in the quarry and tarmac areas as necessary and that they have also been used for cooling and for quarry washing. It is stated that a coagulating agent (poly aluminium chloride (PAC)) is used at the site to ensure the settlement of fine particulates out of suspension after washing particular grades of the finer sand material. Per the rEIAR, this agent was used in ponds with a medium risk of impacting water quality in the adjoining watercourse. There are direct hydrological linkages to the stream from ponds and drains established in the east and south of the site at various periods during its development with some of these posing a high to very high risk of impact to water quality.

The quarrying activity and extent and volumes of material extracted is described in the EIAR. In summary, the total rock excavated during the period 1990-2014 is estimated to be 2,234,000 tonnes. The extraction process involved the stripping of overburden which was transported to other parts of the site and stockpiled, then the removal of rock in layers involving boring, blasting, crushing, screening and stockpiling of materials prior to ultimate removal from site for use elsewhere. Figure 1 below is imagery taken from the remedial EIAR and provides a relatively recent indication of the status of the site.

Figure 1 Undated aerial image showing land ownership boundary copied from rEIAR.



Water Quality and Hydrology

Activities associated with the operation of the quarry which would have had the potential to impact negatively on water quality are described in the EIAR to include risk of release/introduction of ammonia, silt/clay, hydrocarbons and faecal coliforms to the environment. The risks are described to have been higher during heavy rainfall, and likely to have been reduced by the use of attenuation ponds on site. It is stated that the Bandon River below the quarry does not show any significant biological or physical impacts to the surface water environment. Suspended sediment emanating from the tarmac plant, and fine waste sludge which is deposited in a spoil heap on the southeastern part of the site close to the stream are identified to be potential pollution sources which could contribute to cumulative negative impacts to water quality in the stream. It is stated that there is no evidence that significant effects on the environment have occurred or continue to occur on water attributes due to quarrying activities. An interceptor is identified to be required to be installed at the tarmac plant to reduce risk of impact to the stream. In addition, an interceptor is identified to be required on the outflow from Pond L in the central quarry area, if quarrying is to recommence at the site.

No significant change in the extent of surface water run off from the site is identified to be linked with the quarry. No impacts to the hydrology of the area are identified per the rEIAR.

Habitats and Species

Per a review of aerial imagery and historic mapping, it is evident that the southern half of the site once supported an area of long-established broadleaved woodland (approx. 9ha), most of which has been cleared to make way for quarrying activity with just two areas of original woodland remaining. One of these areas (approx. 0.6 ha) is located to the north-west of the quarry void. The other area (approx. 1.5ha) is located to the south of the access road along the bounding stream. These areas of woodland are described in the rEIAR to comprise Oak-Birch-Holly woodland, and it is reasonable to conclude that similar woodland type prevailed throughout the site where woodland was mapped prior to clearance. A total of approximately 7ha of the 9ha of woodland appears to have been cleared, and approximately 4.5ha of woodland clearance appears to have been undertaken within the area to which the substitute consent application applies (ie cleared since 1990). A review of mapping and aerial imagery and information provided in the rEIAR indicates that the area described as active quarry and parts of the area described as mixed broadleaved woodland/scrub once formed part of the original woodland which has been cleared.

The area in the north of the site appears to have comprised a mosaic of heath and grassland habitats with exposed rock prior to intervention. Aerial imagery indicates extensive intervention in the area since 2000, in particular post 2005. This area is described in the rEIAR to currently comprise scrub / immature woodland with areas of heath including dry silicious heath, marsh, dense bracken and artificial ponds also recorded. The quarry void has been extended into this area during the relevant period and there are tracks throughout. Scrub and other natural/semi-natural habitats appear to be developing in these areas since activity ceased in 2014. Approximately 13ha of habitat in this area appears to have been cleared or modified within the area to which the application for substitute consent applies.

The rEIAR includes a description of ecological surveys undertaken and the habitats and species encountered on site. In addition to the identified hydrological linkage to the Bandon River SAC, ecological receptors of at least higher value local importance which have been identified as having occurred or occurring on site include:

Habitat Type	Ecological Value	Notes
Oak-Birch-Holly woodland.	National Importance	Noted to correspond to Annex I Old Sessile Oak Woods habitat

		type. Area has significantly reduced arising from quarrying activity
Dry Siliceous Heath.	National Importance	Noted to correspond to Annex I habitat type European Dry Heaths. Per the rEIAR, a significant amount of this habitat type was removed from within the site boundary during quarrying activity.
Dry Siliceous heath/ Wet grassland/ Dense bracken mosaic.	High value local importance	Dry siliceous heath is noted to correspond to the Annex I habitat type European Dry Heaths. This area has been significantly altered since 1990. The quarry void has extended into the area and the heath grassland mosaic appears to have been largely replaced with scrub / immature woodland outside the void itself. There are tracks throughout and per the description of activities included in the rEIAR, this area was used for backfilling and storage of topsoil and waste sludge.
Mixed broadleaved woodland/scrub	High value local importance	The extent of the area covered by this habitat appears to have changed over time, possibly influenced by on site activity, habitat regeneration and landscape planting interventions?

Artificial ponds which have been developed within the past 20 years are also described. The ecological value of these habitats is likely increasing over time.

Species of note recorded as occurring on site or in aquatic habitats with a direct hydrological linkage to the site include the following:

Species	Ecological Value	Notes
Freshwater Pearl Mussel	Habitats Directive Annex II species. Qualifying interest species for which the Bandon River SAC is designated.	Recorded as occurring in Bandon River at confluence with stream which bounds the quarry.
Irish Marsh Orchid	None assigned.	Not listed on FPO, but recorded as notable species occurring on site.
Smooth Newt	Protected under the Wildlife Act.	Recorded during surveys as occurring within ponds on site.

Badger	Protected under the Wildlife Act.	Assessed as to have been likely to have occurred on site pre quarrying. Badger scatt recorded within the site during survey work.
Bat Species	All species are strictly protected in accordance with the Habitats Directive. All species also protected under the Wildlife Act.	Common Pip, Soprano Pip, Leisler's, brown long-eared bat and <i>Myotis</i> sp all recorded commuting and foraging within the site. One record of the Annex II species Lesser Horseshoe Bat made. Likely that there is a bat roosts in the local area. No roosts recorded on site.
Bird Species	All bird species protected under the Wildlife Act. Peregrine Falcon is listed under Annex I of the Birds Directive.	Per rEIAR 28 species recorded during the breeding season on site, 24 species confirmed as breeding or likely breeding at the site. Peregrine Falcon and Kestrel also noted to be breeding on site in recent years (rEIAR and NPWS pers comm).

Other notable mammalian species recorded as likely to have occurred or to occur on site include Pine Marten, Red Squirrel and Stoat.

Two high impact invasive alien plant species have been recorded on site, Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron. In addition, three medium impact invasive species, Sycamore, Butterfly Bush and Traveller's Joy have also been recorded.

Applicants have assessed the historic biodiversity value of the site as High value with the presence of nationally important Oak woodland and Dry Heath habitat on site and the direct hydrological linkage to the Bandon River to be of particular note.

Notwithstanding the removal of woodland and heath habitat as a result of quarrying, they have assessed the current value biodiversity value of the site to be of High value owing to the continued occurrence of oak woodland and dry heath habitat on site and noting also the presence of other developing natural/semi-natural habitats on site and their associated species.

Quarrying activity has resulted in the removal of the following habitats from site:

- Dry Siliceous Heath;
- Exposed Rock;
- Oak-Birch-Holly Woodland;
- Scrub;
- Scrub/Dry Siliceous Heath Mosaic;
- Scrub/Immature Woodland Mosaic; and
- Hedgerow/Treeline

The impact of removal of these habitats is significant, and in terms of the impacts it has likely had on associated species including volant and non-volant mammalian species and to breeding birds. Impairment of water quality has had potential to significantly impact aquatic habitats and species.

Activities at the site have also likely resulted in the introduction and spread of invasive alien plant species including Japanese Knotweed on site.

Applicants have proposed a site remediation plan which includes proposals for the retention of *some* extant habitats identified to be of high local value on site.

The remediation plan proposes the retention

- of the existing quarry floor and ledges;
- all remaining long-established woodland;
- dry silicious heath on the outer boundaries of the site (outside the proposed further development zone);
- some existing ponds; and
- existing wet woodland

on site. No active interventions are proposed within these habitats with the exception of fencing and installation of signage. Other habitats proposed to be retained include some existing areas of scrub, which will be allowed to develop into woodland, and some of the existing ponds. (Note approx. 5ha of additional areas of natural and semi-natural habitats of ecological value including scrub and immature woodland, dry heath, marsh, wet grassland and dense bracken are proposed to be removed (see Further Development application).

Some ecological mitigation measures are proposed in the rEIAR. These measures appear to primarily to offset impacts of further proposed activity at the site and include necessary measures to prevent/minimise disturbance to breeding birds, amphibians and other wildlife during future active quarrying, as well as measures to offset further proposed habitat loss on site. Proposals include

- creation of amphibian hibernaculae to off-set the proposed removal of wetland habitat;
- avoidance of any further removal of vegetation on site where possible during the bird breeding season. Where not possible, the removal of vegetation on site to only be undertaken under supervision by an ecological clerk of works;
- the installation of bat boxes on suitable trees to provide roosting places including a roost box specifically dedicated to lesser horseshoe bats; and
- the implementation of an invasive species management plan to include measures relating to Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron.

It is stated in the rEIAR that it is reasonable to conclude that, with the implementation of the remediation measures and appropriate mitigation measures and adherence to standard best practice procedures, no significant negative ecological effects are anticipated to be likely to arise as a result of the implementation of the mitigation proposals.

Remedial Natura Impact Statement

The application for substitute consent is accompanied by a remedial NIS which repeats the descriptions of the site, activities which have been undertaken at the site and its hydrological linkages to the Bandon River which is a Special Area of Conservation. The focus of the report is on the assessment of historic and current impacts on the Bandon River SAC to which there is a direct hydrological linkage dating from the time that legal protection applied to the cSAC (given to be 1997).

No other EU sites are identified which could be impacted by the development.

The Bandon River SAC is designated for the protection of

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation [3260]
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) [91E0]

- *Margaritifera margaritifera* (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]
- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096]

The protection of a very high standard of water quality and the maintenance of a stable of hydrological regime are critical requirements to protect favourable conservation condition of these habitats and species. One of the qualifying interest species, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, particularly sensitive to any deterioration in water quality including arising from the introduction of silt, toxic contaminants or nutrients to the aquatic environment. This species is known to occur within 300m of the quarry site.

In relation to historic activity at the site, the rNIS identifies a possibility that quarry operations led to occasional increases in suspended solids reaching the Bandon River during high-flow events. It is stated that such events appear to have been rare and would not likely have smothered adult mussels. However, it is also acknowledged that the quarry played a role in contributing to the cumulative silt load to the river. The contribution of silt loading from the tarmac plant is also described in the NIS where it is stated that in all likelihood, contaminated run-off the tarmacadam plant entered the bounding stream during periods of heavy rainfall several times a year. The impact of the quarry on silt loading is assessed to have been slight to moderate with medium to long-term negative effects on the quality of juvenile pearl mussel habitat within the SAC.

No significant impacts to water quality associated with the use of PACs, hydrocarbons on site are identified in the NIS. These conclusions are based the closed surface water drainage system which was in place which would have minimised risk of release of PACs or hydrocarbons from the site and the mitigation measures which are stated to have been in place during the relevant period.

The overall conclusion of the NIS is that with the implementation of mitigation measures historically, the development did not, either alone or in combination with other plan or projects, adversely affect the integrity of the conservation status of any of the qualifying interests of the Bandon River SAC or any other European site in light of best scientific knowledge.

Ecology Office Assessment of Chap 14 of rEIAR - Biodiversity

It is clear from the information which has been provided that the development which has been undertaken at this site has resulted in extensive significant effects on habitats of national importance and likely their associated species. I note the proposed remediation plan, and I am of the opinion that no significant negative ecological effects would be likely to arise if the plan were to be implemented, and that the proposals contained in the plan have the potential to assist with the enhancement of the ecological value of habitats on site from their current baseline. However, I am also of the view that the current proposals for remediation are limited in scope and have not been demonstrated to provide sufficient compensation for the damage which has been incurred at this site since 1990 (estimated by me to be approx. 4.5ha Oak Woodland removed and approx. 13.5ha heath/exposed rock/wet grassland habitat removed) taking account of current best practice. Furthermore, it is impossible to assess this application without considering the application for further development of the site which would, if permitted, result in further significant loss of habitat of high ecological value from within the site (see my report on the Further Development application).

It is my recommendation that the applicants be requested to submit a revised remediation plan with the application for substitute consent. It is advised that the full extent (ha) of each habitat identified to be of at least high local value which has been removed or damaged during the period of relevance would be quantified in the plan, and that significant additional efforts be put forward to compensate for the impacts incurred. Interventions should be designed to specifically compensate for the impacts incurred, should be quantified and should be prepared taking account of sections 6.6 and 6.7 of CIEEM

guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland, Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine (Sept 2024), and having regard to national policy as cited in the rEIAR (NPO's 85 and 86):

National Policy Objective 85:

'In line with the National Biodiversity Action Plan; the conservation, enhancement, mitigation and restoration of biodiversity is to be supported by:

- *Integrating policies and objectives for the protection and restoration of biodiversity, including the principles of the mitigation hierarchy of - avoid, minimise, restore and offset - of potential biodiversity impacts, in statutory land-use plan.*
- *Retention of existing habitats which are currently important for maintaining biodiversity (at local/regional/national/international levels), in the first instance, is preferable to replacement/restoration of habitats, in the interests of ensuring continuity of habitat provision and reduction of associated risks and costs.'*

National Policy Objective 86:

'In line with the objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan, planning authorities should seek to address no net loss of biodiversity within their plan making functions.'

and also to County Development Plan Policies, in particular BE 15-2 (c) and BE 15-6. It is further my advice that the remediation plan be prepared by ecologists with expertise in habitat restoration and enhancement rather than a landscape architect. I advise that the commitment to not further intervene in nationally important habitats within the site should not be used in the assessment of the adequacy of proposed compensation measures.

Finally, it is my recommendation that no decision should be taken in relation to the application for Further Development of the quarry until such time as adequate and appropriate compensatory mitigation is proposed and agreed in respect of the Substitute Consent application. However, at this point, I am flagging my concern with that proposal, and the further extent of habitat of high ecological value which is proposed to be removed (see my report in relation to the application for further development) for which insufficient detail in relation to post works remediation has been provided. It is my view that land proposed for further development may be required to be incorporated into the remediation plan, together with proposals for active restoration of damaged habitats in this area, in order to achieve meaningful compensation for the extent of (at least) nationally important habitat which was removed from the site between the years 1990 and 2014.

Ecology Office Assessment rNIS

It is acknowledged that it is very difficult to make a retrospective assessment in relation to matters relating to historic impacts to water quality. However, I am less than certain, based on the information contained in the NIS, that the quarry did not contribute to impacts to water quality in the Bandon River, which impacts may have interfered with achievement of targets linked to the Conservation Objective established for Freshwater Pearl Mussel, in particular targets relating to the maintenance and restoration of the condition and extent of mussel habitat and the restoration of water quality in the Bandon River downstream of the quarry site, as set out in the Conservation Objectives published by the NPWS in 2019 as follows

			and non-banded mussels, as well as high mussel levels, have been recorded downstream of the Long Bridge in 2017 and 2018 (Ross, 2017; Moorkens, 2017, 2018). The target is for sufficient survival of adults to allow the species to maintain itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of the Bandon system
Suitable habitat: extent	Kilometres	Maintain habitat extent at 12.2km in the Bandon system (see map 3) and any additional stretches necessary for salmonid spawning	The full extent of the mussel habitat in the Bandon system is not fully mapped, but within the SAC it is considered to be from the SAC boundary on the Caha to below Caha Bridge and, on the Bandon main channel, from just above the Caha confluence to below the braided channel and Milleenanannig. The mussel habitat is impacted by hydromorphological change, sedimentation and nutrient enrichment (Moorkens, 2009; NPWS, 2010). Bank clearance in 2015 has led to severe degradation of the habitat downstream of the Long Bridge (Ross, 2015, 2016, 2017; Moorkens, 2017, 2018). The target is for sufficient habitat in favourable condition to allow the species to maintain itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of the Bandon system
Suitable habitat: condition	Kilometres	Restore condition of suitable habitat	The habitat is a combination of the area of 1) habitat adult and juvenile mussels can occupy; 2) spawning and nursery habitats host fish can occupy. Fish nursery habitat typically overlaps with mussel habitat. Fish spawning habitat is generally adjacent to mussel habitat, but may lie upstream of the generalised mussel distribution. Only spawning areas that regularly contribute juvenile fish to adult mussel habitat should be considered. Mussel and fish habitat availability is determined by flow and substratum and is highly sensitive to hydromorphological, sedimentation and enrichment pressures from throughout the catchment (map 3). See I.S. EN 16859:2017. Mussel habitat is widespread in the Bandon system and within the SAC, but is in unfavourable condition as a result of nutrient enrichment and sedimentation. The target is for sufficient habitat in favourable condition to allow the species to maintain itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of the Bandon system
Water quality: macroinvertebrate and phytobenthos (diatoms)	Ecological quality ratio (EQR)	Restore water quality-macroinvertebrates: EQR greater than 0.90 (Q4-5 or Q5); phytobenthos: EQR greater than 0.93	The EQR targets correspond to high ecological status for these two Water Framework Directive biological quality elements. They represent high water quality with very low nutrient concentrations (oligotrophic conditions). In 2009, the habitat in the Bandon system failed the macroinvertebrate target, but passed the diatom target; however, confidence in the diatom result was low owing to abundant <i>Ranunculus</i> shading cobbles and impairing sampling (Conservation Services, 2009; Ní Chatháin, 2010; NPWS, 2010). See also The European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009. The target is for sufficient habitat in favourable condition to allow the species to maintain itself on a long-term basis as a viable

It will be a matter for ACP to complete the Appropriate Assessment of this application and to determine whether any additional pollution control measures are required to ensure the avoidance of any contaminants to the bounding stream in the future, regardless of whether the application for Further Development is permitted or not.

Sharon Casey

A/ Senior Executive Ecologist,
Cork County Council.

Environment Officer (Noise & Vibration)

This report relates to noise and vibration. Chapter 10 of the submitted documentation evaluates the impacts and remedial measures if required, for historic quarrying activity at Ardcahan Quarry, Dunmanway in terms of noise and vibration. The substitute consent planning application covers the period 1990-2014.

An outline of the guidelines and legislation relevant to discipline as well as the noise and vibration criteria is outlined as per Section 10.1.2-10.1.4. It is submitted that the quarry did not operate outside of the hours 0730 hours -1730 hours, Monday through Friday during the substitute consent period.

The receiving Environment is described as per Section 10.2 of the submitted documentation. It is submitted that the nearest sensitive locations to the substitute consent site are located approximately 150 to 550 metres to the nearest property boundary, with the relevant noise sensitive locations comprised solely of residential properties. It is also submitted that the noise climate at these locations would have been dominated by local road traffic which has not increased significantly over the period of interest. It is further stated that a review of the traffic chapter of the rEIAR confirms that road traffic volumes on the R587 have increased marginally over the period but not enough to significantly to increase the ambient noise levels for receptors in close proximity to the road. It is further stated that it is the opinion of CLV consulting, given the context of the site, that it is reasonable to consider that the prevailing noise climate towards the end of the substitute consent period would be generally representative of that throughout the entire substitute consent period.

Data from a noise survey conducted on the 19th June, 2014 has been used to inform the rEIAR assessment. The specific details of the survey are outlined as per Section 10.2.1 of the submission, where it is detailed that the dominant source of noise at all locations was intermittent road traffic. Considering the contributory sources to the prevailing noise climate, it is submitted that the 2014 survey can therefore be considered largely representative of noise levels over the substitute consent period.

Details of the predicted impacts are outlined and detailed as per Section 10.3. Onsite quarry activity having the potential to generate noise during the substitute consent period are summarised into a number of key groups as reproduced and detailed per Table 10.4 below;

Table 10.4 Summary of noise generating activities onsite

Activity	Typical Noise Generating Tasks
Preparation of Quarry Area	*Ground clearance and removal of vegetation *Excavation and removal of soil and overburden *Drilling of blast holes
Processed Quarried Material	*Loading and operation of crushers and screens
Material Handling	*Stockpiling quarried aggregate within the site *Stockpiling of soil and overburden *Loading customer vehicles *Loading Murray Brothers trucks and movement offsite.

It is also submitted that it is understood that ancillary construction works also occurred during the period as required; with these works including construction of internal roads, settlement pond and an earth berm.

The activities as outlined above are further detailed and discussed as per Section 10.3.2.1 -10.3.2.3 and 10.3.3 of the submission.

Blasting noise and vibration are detailed and discussed as per Section 10.3.4 and 10.3.5 of the submission. Historical blasting air overpressure and vibration measurements from 2009 to 2014 are presented as per Table 10.5 and 10.6 respectively. Although the measured historic data for the site demonstrates compliance with the adopted criteria, It is noted from the submission that the measurement location does not represent the nearest noise sensitive location to the blast in each case and as such it cannot be determined if other receptors located closer to the blast site were exposed to peak levels greater than those permitted.

It is submitted however that due to the elevated profile of intermediate ground between the blast areas within the substitute area and the receptors to the west and the north, there would have been sufficient acoustic screening to compensate against the potentially increased proximity of blasting locations to these receptors. Similarly in relation to vibration it is submitted that based on the proximity of the onsite monitoring location, which was generally within 370 metres of the blast site, it may be reasonable to assume that vibration magnitudes generated at other receptors, within this range should not be significantly higher than potentially perceptible.

Overall, it is submitted that blasting noise and vibration would have given rise to slight to moderate negative impacts of momentary duration over the assessment period.

Mitigation measures implemented in relation to general quarry operations and to control noise and vibration impact from blasting are detailed as per section 10.4 of the submission. It is also submitted that the site layout itself and the surround topography provides a significant degree of natural acoustic screening to the nearest residential dwellings.

In relation to residual impacts, it is submitted as per section 10.5, that there would have been no significant residual noise and vibration impacts as a result of the quarry operation during the substitute consent period and that any impact would not have given rise to any significant increase above existing noise and vibration levels.

The noise and vibration effects for the operational phase are summarised and submitted as follows;

- * Noise from general onsite operations -slight to moderate negative impacts of momentary to temporary duration.

- *Noise from Heavy Good Vehicle Movement on public roads -negligible to slight negative impacts, of long term duration

- *Blasting noise and vibration -slight to moderate negative impacts of momentary duration

Further to this a statement on the significant effects of noise and vibration during the substitute consent period have been outlined as per Table 10.7.

Having reviewed the above, it is noted the substitute consent planning application covers the period 1990-2014. There is limited historic noise monitoring data in respect of this site covering this period, apart from the survey referenced above dated 19th June,2014. Air overpressure and vibration data in respect of blasting events at the site refers to the period 2019-2014. Overall, in respect of a retrospective assessment, the applicant has made a reasonable attempt in my view to assess the impact, based on the information and data available.

Items An Coimisiún Pleanála may request or seek further clarification in relation to Noise (inc vibration):

- 1.) The respective number and distances of all noise sensitive receptors within 500m and 1000m of the substitute consent application should be quantified and presented in tabular form as well as illustrated on a suitably scaled map. This map should also include the 2014 noise monitoring locations.
- 2.) Clarification on why blast monitoring in relation to air overpressure/vibration was not undertaken in the vicinity of the nearest sensitive location at the time, and the rationale behind the selected chosen location(s).
- 3.) Clarification of any records of number of complaints received directly during the substitute consent period in relation to noise (inc. blasting) and any subsequent follow-up investigation(s).

Andrew McDonnell

Executive Scientist
Environment & Planning Directorate
Cork County Council.
Date: 7th July, 2026.

Environment Officer (Air & Water)

Documents reviewed:

- Planning Statement;
- Remedial EIAR;
- Remedial NIS;
- Substitute Consent Drawings; and
- public observations.
- Cork Co.Co. Complaints Database.

Air Quality

The asphalt plant enjoys the benefit of a Section 30 Air Pollution Act licence. No compliance issues are noted. Licence No. 01/98. The Applicant claims quarrying activities ceased on site by 2014 and there are no activities taking place on site at present, there are currently no impacts to air quality associated with the development site.

A number of issues are raised in respect of the asphalt plant (Ref. TB & SB). Disappointingly these were not reported to the local authority.

Using predicted ground level concentrations of PM, quarrying operations from the site lead to a dust deposition level, averaged over the full year, of at most 16.7 mg/m²/day at the land ownership boundary to the quarry (see Table 8.6). Based on a worst case background dust deposition of 39 mg/m²/day in the region of the site, the combined dust deposition level peaks at 55.7 mg/m²/day which is 16% of the TA Luft Limit Value of 350 mg/m²/day. Dust deposition contours and sensitive receptors are provided.

Dust deposition monitoring data is referenced from 1999, but absent from Section 8.3.2. Pg 8-16 states *"Historic quarrying operations from the site lead to a dust deposition level, averaged over the full year, of at most 16.7 mg/m²/day at the land ownership boundary to the quarry (see Table 8.6). Based on a worst-case background dust deposition of 39 mg/m²/day in the region of the site, the combined dust deposition level peaks at 55.7 mg/m²/day which is 16% of the TA Luft Limit Value of 350 mg/m²/day."*

Noise & Vibration

Data from the noise survey completed in 2014 as part of the previous EIAR for the site (refer to P.R. #14/616 Chapter 8 Noise & Vibration) has therefore been utilised to inform the rEIAR assessment.

Background noise climate was established on a Thursday. LA90 of 34, 35 and 33 were measured at monitoring locations S01, S02 and S03 respectively. Dominant noise was reported to be road traffic. Noise sensitive receptors are identified. Noise sources are provided, and mitigation measures provided at the time identified.

Blasting vibration monitoring data is provided demonstrating no exceedances of 12mm/s.

Having regard to the age of the SC, I am satisfied that historic issues can be prevented with appropriate controls, with a programme of efficacy monitoring should the SC/future development be considered.

Water Framework Directive / Hydrology

The site overlies the Bandon Ground water body IE_SW_G_086.

Current WFD Status 2016-2021 is "Good" and "Not At Risk" of failing to meet WFD Objectives.

To the West is the Caha River (IE_SW_20C010700) and to the South West of the site is the the Bandon River (IE_SW_20B020200). These waterbodies have declined in status, and are currently “At Risk” of failing to achieve “Good Status”.

- River Waterbody WFD Status 2013-2018: Good
- River Waterbody WFD Status 2019-2024: Moderate
- Ground Waterbody WFD Status 2016-2021: Moderate
-

A small unnamed stream flows along the sites eastern and southern boundaries, known as the boundary stream. The Bandon River down gradient of the site is a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with populations of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel (FPM) identified in this part of the river system.

According to the WFD Cycle 2 Catchment Bandon-Ilen Subcatchment Bandon_SC_01, siltation may be an issue, with significant pressures being Agriculture, Hydromorphology, Extractive Industries and forestry.

EPA Monitoring station RS20B020150 downstream at Chapel St. Bandon is too far removed to draw conclusions of the impact of the quarry on the Caha/Bandon waterbodies.

However, it should be noted that the loss in classification occurred when the extraction element had ceased.

According to the EIAR, Section 7.2.3, five discharges to the boundary stream “evolved” over the course of development, from Pond E (Discharge Location 01) established most recently; The runoff from the roadside ditch to the north of the aggregate shed (Discharge Location 02) and the Tarmac Plant area discharge (Discharge Location 03).. The original surface water runoff, via the central area of the site (Discharge Location 04) was established with the quarry’s original development (pre- 1990) and the out flow in the south-western corner of the site (Discharge Location 05).

However, it also states “it is important to note “despite the quarry’s proximity to the adjacent boundary stream the surface water runoff is prevented from directly entering it”. This contradictory statement should be clarified to the PA’s satisfaction, considering other sections report overflows and discharges through wood. Relying on a 2014 assessment, “Some suspended sediment sampling by the project ecologist in 2014 identified elevated sediments in the stream after a heavy rainfall event due to runoff from the quarry and tarmac plant areas”.

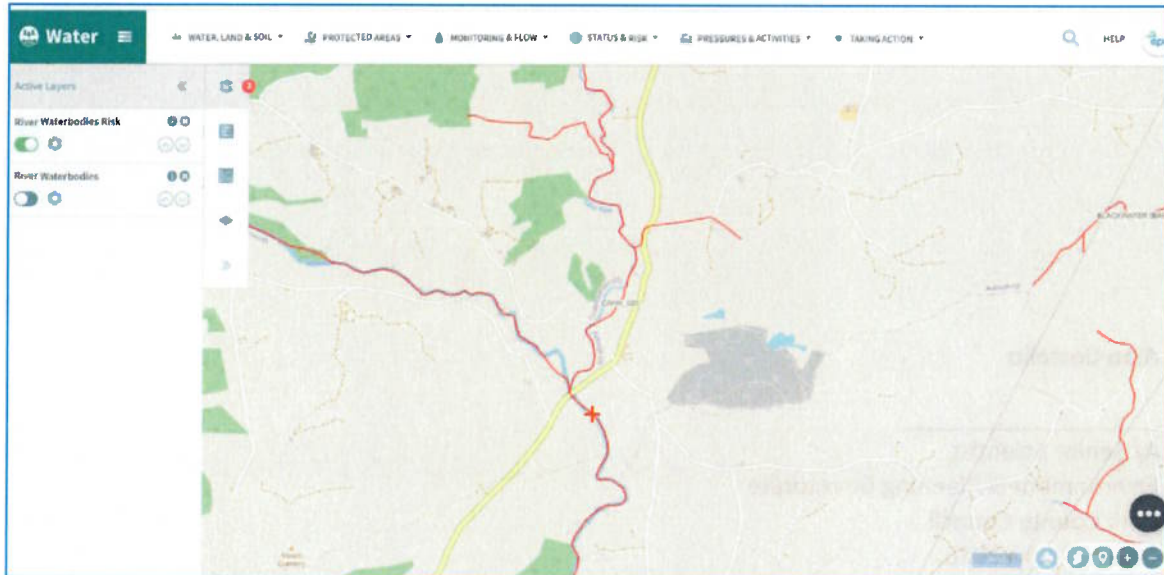
Section 7.2.5 rEIAR/ 7.1.2.3 of the NIS discloses poly aluminium chloride was used on site as a coagulant to settle solids. I have concerns re the unregulated use of PAC as coagulant, particularly in the context of toxicity to aquatic life when discharged in concentrated doses (c.f. 2024 Freemount water treatment plant fish kill)

- Can this be remobilised?
- Are these lagoons holding PAC contaminated land requiring remediation and/or a waste permit?

The use of PAC has produced a sludge, which could be defined as a Waste under the EWC - 01 04 99 - wastes from physical and chemical processing of non-metalliferous minerals - waste not otherwise specified. The applicant has not addressed this serious regulatory issue. Given the WFD catchment

report states siltation is an issue, this should have been explored further, and the applicant should be afforded the opportunity to clarify to the PAs satisfaction.

The site has never enjoyed the benefit of a discharge licence, which would have assessed the impact and likely rejected, the use of a coagulant in such an environment.



The conceptual site model submitted shows water levels across a cross section of the site. Quarrying is claimed to have never taken place below the ground water level. No detail is provided whether this is a summer/winter water table. No historical surface water groundwater monitoring data is available. It is claimed the onsite well was used as a potable drinking water supply.

It is claimed in more recent times the site has periodically sampled the on-site groundwater well and local stream to access its chemical quality. Similarly biological Q-Rating assessment of the local stream has been completed for previous EIA assessments and planning applications. The results have not indicated any significant impact on the local surface water environment from previous quarry works. I am unable to find these records in the submitted documentation.

Conclusion.

The submitted documents in respect of the impact of the site on local receiving waters is a rather confusing and a contradictory hodgepodge of reports and assessments referencing each other in other documents, but not clearly providing the necessary information to make a reasonable assessment.

1. The Applicant should submit a Water Framework Impact Assessment, clearly providing all monitoring data referenced. The Applicant should clearly demonstrate historic trends in water quality status during the SC period, and a Source-Pathway-Receptor Risk Assessment Model of the SC activity on water quality objectives.
2. All monitoring (chemistry and biological) data should be provided in one report.
3. The Applicant should provide groundwater monitoring records (or if none available, a report on the quality of the underlying aquifer).

4. The Applicant is required to submit an Article 27 notification to the EPA in respect of the PAC sludge, and furnish the Agency's response to the PA.

Alan Costello

A/ Senior Scientist
Environment & Planning Directorate
Cork County Council.
Date: 6th July, 2026.

Environment Officer (Waste)

Murray Bros Tarmacadam Ltd have applied to An Coimisiun Planala for planning permission to retain site development works of rock quarrying that occurred in the past.

Waste Management of soil and stone and Reinstatement Works

While no reinstatement works of the site are proposed in the application documents provided, should any waste soil and stone be imported into the site, then a Waste Import Authorisation Permit will/may be required by the site developer.

Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP)

Should planning permission be granted and should any waste soil and stone be imported into the site for site re-instatement works, then a Resource Waste Management Plan should be prepared by the developer, prior to any works occurring on site.

Condition;

Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP)

Prior to any works commencing on site a Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP) should be prepared, using the EPA guide “Best Practice Guidelines for preparation of Resource and Waste Management Plans for C&D Projects” (2021).

The RWMP should be available on site for inspection at all times.

John Earley

Environment Section
Cork County Council

Executive Engineer Report

General Information

Murray Brothers Tarmacadam Ltd. are applying for substitute consent for development at Ardcahan (townland), Dunmanway, Co. Cork.

The development consists of the quarrying of rock that took place between February 1990 and October 2014, along with all associated site development works.

The overall site boundary for this substitute consent application includes lands measuring c.19.1 hectares, including an extraction area of c.5.2 hectares and adjoining areas which were used for ancillary purposes such as access roads, drainage (including settlement ponds) and stockpiling of topsoil/quarried material.

The site shares an access with the adjacent macadam production plant which was granted planning permission by Cork County Council under Planning Reg No. 98/284 (the macadam production plant is not included within the substitute consent application).

The application includes a remediation plan which includes vegetation and woodland management areas.

The site is a rural setting characterised by undulating topography, irregularly shaped fields and clusters of mixed woodland. It is naturally very well screened and has a relatively low visual impact on the wider area.

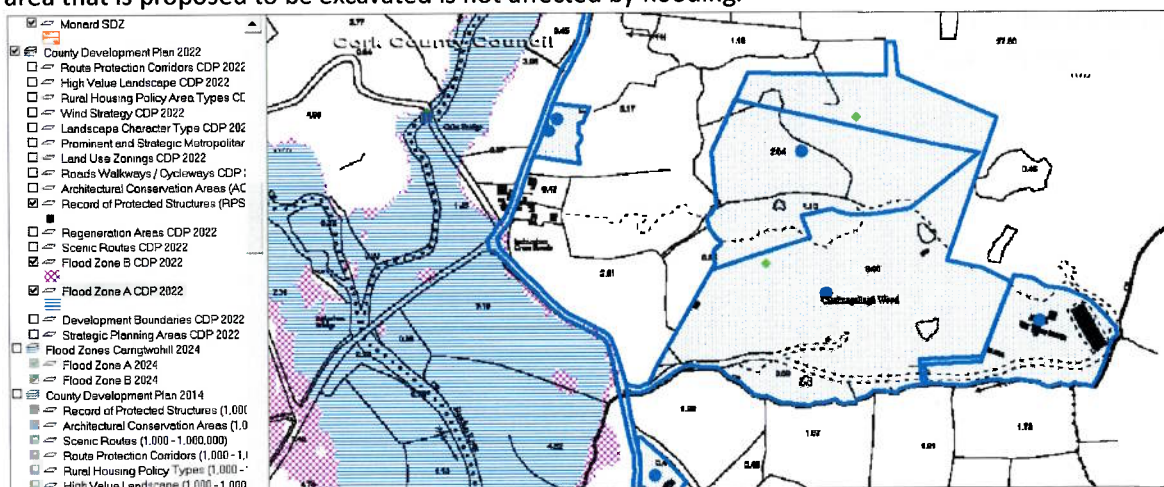
Roads

The site is served by existing entrance off Local Primary Road L4621 and which is approximately 300m east of Regional Road R587, roads are in reasonably good condition.

The existing quarry and will be served by an existing entrance. The sight lines at the existing entrance are adequate for the road classification.

Flooding

The Bandon River that runs on the south of the application site is within the flood risk mapping. The area that is proposed to be excavated is not affected by flooding.



It is proposed to retain the existing ground profile along the existing border. No formal Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted, but it is addressed in EIAR chapter 17.5.2 Flood Risk.

Sewerage Disposal

The applicant states that the site is served by an existing septic tank system.

Drinking Water

The applicant states that they have their own private supply of water

Surface Water

The site falls away from the public road, so surface water runoff is not an issue.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT & CONCLUSION

I would not have any issues with the Substitute Consent (under s. 177E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended) consisting of the quarrying of rock that took place between February 1990 and October 2014, along with all associated site development works.

I would recommend granting

Cait Lehane

Executive Engineer
Roads Directorate
Cork County Council.

