

ATTACHMENT 17 – ASSESSMENT OF ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS

There are no designated or proposed Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within or contiguous to the application site and Roadstone's wider landholding at Calary Quarry. The Great Sugar Loaf and its environs are designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act of 2000. The western boundary of the proposed NHA extends up to and runs along the eastern boundary of the Roadstone property at Calary Quarry.

The application site comprises an existing quarry void that currently supports habitats which are ubiquitous, anthropogenic (human origin) and of intrinsically low nature conservation value and which are considered to be of low ecological value. The proposed backfilling of the quarry void using imported inert soil and stone will result in the loss of 9.1 ha of such habitats, an impact which is not predicted to be significant. In the longer term, the proposed development will facilitate re-establishment of habitat previously removed by quarrying.

Outside of the existing / proposed development footprint, there would be no direct habitat loss, damage or fragmentation of any designated sites including that of the Great Sugar Loaf pNHA immediately to the east.

The application site provides limited opportunities for fauna (insects, birds and animals) and is unlikely to be important or critical for any particular species or population given the availability of extensive similar habitats in the wider surrounding area.

The habitats within the Great Sugar Loaf pNHA immediately adjacent to the application site have been subject to varying levels of impact from former quarrying operations. No significant impacts are predicted on any individual or groups of species that may be present within the Great Sugar Loaf pNHA by virtue of noise or dust emissions from the proposed recovery facility.

Although the quarry is likely to form part of a territory used by peregrine falcon, it is not currently being used for breeding purposes. Any peregrine falcons with territories extending across the quarry, adjoining Great Sugar Loaf pNHA and wider surrounding areas will already be somewhat habituated to a degree of human disturbance. The proposed backfilling operations are not predicted to have any significant impact in the behaviour, distribution or local population status of peregrine falcon in the immediate and wider surrounding area.

No significant deterioration of water quality in the Killough and Dargle Rivers is predicted as a result of dewatering operations at Calary Quarry or any subsequent backfilling activity, nor are any significant effects likely on the Dargle River Valley pNHA.

Details of the existing (baseline) ecological environment and the impact of the proposed waste recovery facility and associated emissions thereon are provided in Chapter 4 of the Environmental Impact Statement which accompanies this waste licence application.