

***This Report has been cleared for submission to the Director by Senior Inspector Niamh O Donoghue***

**Signed:** 

**Date: 09/06/23**



**OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**INSPECTOR'S REPORT ON AN INDUSTRIAL EMISSIONS LICENCE APPLICATION, LICENCE REGISTER NUMBER 1148-01**

**TO: MICHEAL LEHANE, DIRECTOR**

**FROM: Linda Cahill, ELP Inspector**

**DATE: 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2023**

Applicant:	M.A.G. World Limited
CRO number:	413375
Location address:	Lisgar and Corglass, Bailieboro, County Cavan
Application date:	12 March 2021
Class of activity (under EPA Act 1992 as amended):	6.1(a): The rearing of poultry in installations where the capacity exceeds 40,000 places.
Category of activity under IED (2010/75/EU):	6.6(a): Intensive rearing of poultry with more than 40,000 places for poultry.
Main CID:	CID (EU) 2017/302 (15 February 2017). Establishing (BAT) conclusions, under Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs.
All relevant CIDs, BREF documents and legislation are listed in appendices of this report.	
Activity description/background: Expansion of an activity for the rearing of poultry (broilers) in an installation with a capacity increasing from a sub-threshold (i.e. < 40,000 birds) free-range system to 100,000 birds in conventional housing, or 85,000 birds in a free-range housing system.	
Additional information received:	Yes: 23 March 2021; 11 October 2021; 24 March 2022, 23 January 2023 and 08 March 2023
No of submissions received:	Six
Environmental Impact Assessment required: Yes	Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment required: No
Environmental Impact Assessment Report submitted (EIAR): Yes (12 March 2021)	Natura Impact Statement (NIS) submitted: N/A
Site visit: None	

## 1. Introduction

This is an assessment of an application for an Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) licence to carry on an activity under Part IV of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, as amended (hereafter referred to as the EPA Act).

M.A.G World Limited owns and operates a poultry (broiler) rearing farm at Lisgar and Corglass, Bailieboro, County Cavan. Details of the current and proposed site capacity and infrastructure are provided in Table 1.1 below.

The applicant has proposed two alternative operating scenarios, one free-range (Proposal A) and one non-free-range (Proposal B). The installation will operate at a capacity of 85,000 free-range broilers (Proposal A) or 100,000 conventionally raised broilers (Proposal B), depending on market demand.

**Table 1.1. Poultry Numbers**

	Existing	Proposal A	Proposal B
Bird type	Broiler (free-range)	Broiler (free-range)	Broiler (conventional)
Current numbers	<40,000	85,000	100,000
No. of poultry houses	1	2	2

Maps of the site layout are included in Appendix 1 of this report.

## 2. Description of activity

The installation is located in a rural location, with most development near the installation consisting of dwelling houses and farmyards. Poultry farming commenced on this site in 2021.

The main activities at this installation occur during normal working hours between 06:00 and 20:00. Stock inspections will be carried out every day, including weekends and bank holidays and additional essential activities may be undertaken outside of core working hours. The installation will operate in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and under the Bord Bia Poultry Products Quality Assurance Scheme (PPQAS).

Under Proposal A (free-range), day old birds will be delivered from the hatchery and held indoors for a four-week period. For the following three to four weeks they will have access to the outdoor "range" area around each house during daylight hours, but this access will be closed in at night. At the end of each rearing cycle (at approximately eight weeks of age), the houses will be destocked, and the birds will be removed from the installation to the processing installation.

Under Proposal B (conventional), day old chicks will be delivered from the hatchery and reared indoors until they are removed from site and taken to the processing installation (at approximately 5 – 6 weeks).

For both proposals, at the end of the rearing cycle, the houses will be destocked, and the birds will be sold for processing. Following the removal of poultry litter (also termed

organic fertiliser<sup>1</sup>), the poultry houses will be cleaned and left empty for a period of 1 – 2 weeks, to allow for complete drying after the cleaning process. The houses will then be re-stocked.

The type of poultry house used for this activity is a simple closed building of concrete/steel/pre-fabricated panel construction on an impervious concrete base. The houses will be thermally insulated, with a computer-controlled ventilation system and artificial lighting. Automatic feeding and ventilation systems operate on a 24-hour basis. The solid flooring of each broiler house will be bedded with wood shavings/chopped straw over its entire area immediately prior to housing each new batch brought from the hatchery. The principal inputs to the operation are bedding, feed, water, veterinary medicines and energy (electricity, diesel for back-up generator, and gas for heating). The main by-product of poultry rearing is organic fertiliser (poultry litter and wash water). These are discussed in further detail below.

### **3. Planning Status**

A number of planning applications have been made by the applicant for the area within the installation boundary. On 08 October 2021, Cavan County Council granted planning permission (Ref: 21/123) for the construction of one new poultry house to accommodate an overall capacity on the farm of 100,000 places for conventional broilers or 85,000 places for free-range broilers, and associated works (meal bins, soiled water tanks). This expansion work has not yet been completed. Cavan County Council previously granted planning permission (Ref: 20/416) on 08 January 2021 for the construction of one poultry house and associated works. This construction work has been completed. Details of these planning applications and permissions have been provided in the application form.

The applicant has submitted the EIAR associated with planning permission Ref. No. 21/123. Having reviewed the planner's reports for previous planning permissions, it is considered that the EIAR submitted with the licence application, along with the licence application and the further information received, contains adequate information to inform the Agency's assessment and that the EIARs relating to previous planning permissions are not required for the Agency's assessment.

The Agency has had regard to the reasoned conclusions reached by the planning authority in undertaking its environmental impact assessment of the activity.

Schedule A of the RD limits the number of birds housed on-site to 100,000 non-free-range broilers, or 85,000 free-range broilers. This is the capacity that is specified in the application, in the EIAR submitted in support of the application, and in the planning permissions granted for the installation.

### **4. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening**

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<sup>1</sup> Any fertiliser other than that manufactured by industrial process, and includes livestock manure, dungstead manure, farmyard manure, slurry, soiled water, silage effluent, non-farm organic substances such as sewage sludge, industrial by-products and residues from fish farms.

In accordance with Section 83(2A) of the EPA Act, the Agency must ensure that before a licence or revised licence is granted, that the application is made subject to an EIA, where the activity meets the criteria outlined in Section 83(2A)(b) and 83(2A)(c).

In accordance with the EIA Screening Determination, the Agency has determined that the activity is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, and accordingly is carrying out an assessment for the purposes of EIA.

The activity exceeds the following threshold in Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended:

- 17(a) Installations for the intensive rearing of poultry with more than 85,000 places for broilers.

An EIAR was submitted to the Agency as part of the application on 12 March 2021. This is addressed in the 'EIA' Section later in this report.

## **5. Best Available Techniques and CID**

BAT for the installation was assessed against the BAT conclusions contained in Commission Implementing Decision of 15 February 2017 establishing BAT conclusions for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs (2017/302/EU) and in any other relevant BREF documents specified in the appendices of this report. A detailed BAT assessment was carried out by the applicant and is included in Section 4.7 of the application form. Additional conditions incorporated into the RD to address BAT Conclusions are detailed throughout this report. Any relevant BAT-AELs have been specified in the emissions sections of this report.

I consider that the applicable BAT Conclusion requirements are addressed through the technologies and techniques as described in the application, as well as the conditions and limits specified in the RD.

## **6. Emissions**

### **6.1 Emissions to Air**

This section addresses emissions to air from the installation and the environmental impact of those emissions.

#### **6.1.1 Channelled Emissions to Air**

There are no main emission points to air from the installation.

#### **6.1.2 Fugitive Emissions**

The only fugitive emissions from this sector are dust, odour and ammonia. These are discussed below. The nearest third-party dwellings potentially affected by fugitive emissions are detailed in Table 6.1 below.

**Table 6.1: Nearest third-party residential dwellings**

Distance from Site <sup>Note 1</sup> (and number of dwellings)	Direction from Site
55 m (1)	west

220 m (1)	west
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Note 1: The distances above are to the range areas. The nearest third-party residential dwelling is 220 m south-west of the poultry houses.

### **6.1.3 Dust**

Dust may arise from the expulsion of warm air from ventilation systems on-site, vehicle movements, removal of organic fertiliser, filling of meal storage bins and the loading and unloading of animals during periods of dry weather. Minimal dust impact may occur locally within the installation boundary during site operations. No complaints or submissions were received in relation to dust for this site by the Agency, or by the applicant.

The applicant has stated that good housekeeping at the installation and keeping the concrete surface in a clean condition will minimise dust from the installation.

The RD specifies the following to prevent the generation and emission of dust:

- That dust from the activity shall not result in an impairment of, or an interference with amenities or the environment beyond the installation boundary (Condition 5).
- To use one or a combination of the techniques listed in BAT 11 to prevent or reduce dust emissions from the animal houses (Condition 6).

Dust is not expected to be a significant issue beyond the installation boundary.

### **6.1.4 Odour**

The potential impact from odour from poultry house odours is minimal as houses are stocked at optimum levels, adequately ventilated, and the litter kept as dry as possible. Odour may arise when removing the organic fertiliser from the houses and when the houses are cleaned; however, this is deemed to be minor because it is removed once in every 10-week cycle for free-range broilers and once in every 7-8-week cycle for non-free-range broilers (approximately 5 and 6-7 times per annum respectively) and takes 4-5 hours to completely remove the organic fertiliser from the houses.

No complaints or submissions relating to odour have been received by the Agency, the HSE, or by the applicant.

The animal houses will be cleaned at the end of each batch. All organic fertiliser from the houses will be directly removed off-site by a registered contractor. Houses will be stocked at optimum levels and adequately ventilated, to minimise odour emissions.

Therefore, odour is not expected to be a significant issue.

The RD specifies the following odour control conditions:

- That odour from the activity shall not result in an impairment of, or an interference with amenities or the environment beyond the installation boundary (Condition 5).
- To use a diet formulation and nutritional strategy to reduce the total nitrogen and phosphorus excreted, as per BAT 3 and BAT 4 (Condition 6).
- To use a combination of the techniques listed in BAT 13 to prevent/reduce odour emissions/impact from the site (Condition 6).

- That the applicant carries out an odour survey of the site operations as required by the Agency or in response to any complaint received (Condition 6).
- That carcasses stored on-site will be stored in covered leak-proof containers and transported off-site in covered, leak proof containers at least fortnightly (Condition 8).
- That organic fertiliser shall not be stored in the open pending its collection (Condition 8).

### **6.1.5 Ammonia**

The report “*Ireland’s Informative Inventory Report 2023*”<sup>2</sup> (EPA, 2022) identifies agriculture as the primary contributor (99.4%) of Irish ammonia emissions in 2021, emitting a total of 124.65 kilotonnes (kt) of ammonia in that year. According to that report, ammonia emissions from the poultry sector in 2021 were approximately 5 kt. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) has published a ‘*Code of Good Agricultural Practice for reducing Ammonia Emissions from Agriculture*’<sup>3</sup>, as required by the National Emission Ceiling Directive (NECD).

This installation will emit approximately 8 tonnes of ammonia per annum at the full proposed capacity of 100,000 conventionally raised broilers or approximately 7.4 tonnes of ammonia per annum at the proposed capacity of 85,000 free-range broilers.

The Agency has issued a guidance document to assist applicants and licensees in undertaking an assessment of the impacts of ammonia and nitrogen titled “Assessment of the impact of ammonia and nitrogen on Natura sites from intensive agriculture installations” (EPA, March 2023<sup>4</sup>). The potential impact of ammonia on Natura sites was assessed in accordance with the above procedure. Ammonia emissions from this activity may have the potential to impact sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the installation. However, ammonia emissions and nitrogen deposition have been modelled by the applicant, and checked by the EPA, using a screen model (SCAIL Agriculture<sup>5</sup>) and the predicted concentration of ammonia and nitrogen deposition at European sites will not cause an impact on the designated sites (See the ‘Appropriate Assessment’ section of this report).

Qualifying interests in European sites will not be affected by ammonia emissions from the installation, due to the distance between the installation and the designated sites.

The applicant has stated that the design of the buildings, adherence to good management practices, and implementation of the required mitigation measures will reduce ammonia emissions from the installation. The RD specifies the following additional ammonia minimisation conditions:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/Ireland-IIR-2023-finalv2.1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9a6c6-code-of-good-agricultural-practice-for-reducing-ammonia-emissions-from-agriculture/>

<sup>4</sup> [Assessment-of-Impact-of--Ammonia-and-Nitrogen-on-Natura-sites-from-Intensive-Agriculture-Installations-2023.pdf \(epa.ie\)](https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/Ireland-IIR-2023-finalv2.1.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> SCAIL Agriculture is a web based screening tool available at <http://www.scail.ceh.ac.uk/>

- To establish, maintain and implement an Ammonia Management Programme prior to commencement of the activity (i.e., operating above the licensable threshold of 40,000 birds) and, in accordance with BAT 23, undertake an estimation/calculation of the reduction in ammonia emissions from the activity achieved by implementing BAT (Condition 5).
- To use a diet formulation and nutritional strategy to reduce the total nitrogen excreted, as per BAT 3 (Condition 6).
- To use one or a combination of the techniques listed in BAT 32 to reduce ammonia emissions to air from each house for broilers (Condition 6).
- To complete an estimation of ammonia emissions from the animal houses in accordance with BAT 25 (Schedule C).

The emission limits in Schedule B.1 are in accordance with those set out in the CID.

The potential for ammonia emissions from the landspreading of poultry litter is covered in the Organic Fertiliser section later in this report.

## **6.2 Emissions to Water and Ground**

### **6.2.1 Emissions to Surface Waters**

There are no direct process emissions to surface waters from this activity.

### **6.2.2 Emissions to ground/groundwater**

The applicant states in the application that there has been no historical contamination of groundwater at the site.

Under Proposal A (free-range), the only emission to ground from the activity is animal defecation during the time that the birds have access to the range areas. The Nitrates Regulations<sup>6</sup> will apply to the range area and therefore organic nitrogen application must not exceed 170kg per hectare. There is no outdoor access during the first four weeks of the eight-week cycle, and during the second four weeks of the cycle, access is only available for an average of eight hours a day. During this period, approximately 20% of the birds are outdoors at any one time. Based on this, the applicant has calculated that approximately 5% of the total volume of organic fertiliser generated by the activity will be deposited in the range area. This equates to a nutrient loading of 48.5kg of nitrogen and 26.5kg of phosphorus per hectare per annum, once stocked at the proposed 85,000 broilers, which is compliant with the Nitrates Regulations. Condition 6 of the RD requires a comprehensive risk assessment to determine the risk posed to ground/groundwater by the free-range aspect of the operation as a Scheduled Activity.

Under Proposal B (conventional), there are no direct process emissions to ground/groundwater from this activity.

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<sup>6</sup> S.I. No. 113 of 2022 European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022.

The RD requires the applicant to do the following:

- Carryout a comprehensive risk assessment to determine the risk posed to ground/groundwater by the free-range aspect of the operation (condition 6).

### 6.2.3 Other emissions to ground/groundwater

There are no other emissions to ground or groundwater.

### 6.3 Storm water discharges

Storm water arises on-site from rainwater collected from clean yards and from the roofs of buildings.

All clean storm water will be diverted away from soiled areas of the site by a storm water collection system around each house and will be diverted by gravity for discharge via eight discharge points. Four discharge points are existing and discharge into field drains near the southern, eastern and western boundaries of the site. Three discharge points are proposed to discharge into field drains near the eastern and north-western boundaries of the site. One further discharge point is proposed which would discharge into a proposed soakaway on-site. All storm water discharges from the hardstanding areas of the installation will pass through a silt trap in advance of discharge.

The table below gives details on installation's storm water discharges to waters/ground, the type of on-site abatement, as well as details of the receiving water.

**Table 6.1: Stormwater discharge point details**

Discharge Reference	Monitored parameters (monitoring frequency)	Abatement	Drainage areas	Discharging to
SW1	Visual (weekly); COD/BOD (as required by the Agency)	None as roof water only.	Roofs	Field drain >> Castle Lough >> River Blackwater (Kells)
SW2		None as roof water only.	Roofs	
SW3		None as roof water only.	Roofs	
SW4		Silt trap	Roofs and clean yards	
SW5 (proposed)		None as roof water only.	Roofs	
SW6 (proposed)		None as roof water only.	Roofs	
SW7 (proposed)		None as roof water only.	Roofs	
SW8 (proposed)		Silt trap	Roofs and clean yards	Soakaway



The field drains flow south to Castle Lough approximately 500 m downstream of the installation. The River Blackwater (Kells) emerges from Castle Lough. The River Blackwater (Kells) currently has a WFD status of 'poor' (waterbody code: IE\_EA\_07B010280). There are no identified drinking water abstraction points within 20 km downstream of the installation. The installation is located within the Bailieborough groundwater body (IE\_EA\_G\_006) which currently has a WFD status of 'good'.

The storm water discharged from the installation should be uncontaminated and, therefore, should have no qualitative impact on receiving waters.

The only period during which there is potential for contamination of surface waters is during removal of organic fertiliser from the poultry houses and when the houses are washed out. All wash water will be diverted to two wash water storage tanks. Wash water from the yard at the front of the houses flows into the same collection drains which channel clean storm water, however during the wash out of houses, this wash water is diverted by a diversion chamber into the wash water tanks for storage.

The applicant has stated that the proposed infrastructure, adherence to good management practices, and implementation of the required mitigation measures will mitigate the risk of storm water contamination.

The RD requires the following in relation to storm water management:

- That all uncontaminated storm water be diverted to the storm water drainage system (Condition 6).
- That an up-to-date site drainage map be maintained on-site, and that the storm water drainage system be inspected weekly and maintained properly at all times (Condition 6).
- That a storm water/rainwater collection and drainage system for all poultry houses on-site be provided and maintained (Condition 6).
- That inspection chambers at the outlets of the storm water drainage system be provided and maintained prior to the commencement of the activity (Condition 3).
- That silt traps be provided and maintained on all storm water discharge points prior to the commencement of the licensable activity (i.e. operating above 40,000 broiler capacity), to ensure that all storm water discharges from the hardstanding areas of the installation, pass through the silt trap in advance of discharge.
- That wash water is diverted to the wash water storage tanks prior to the commencement of poultry litter removal and washing of the houses, until such time that wash down activities are completed, and that a written procedure and records of this are maintained (Condition 6).
- That the storm water discharge is visually inspected weekly and monitored for Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) or Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) etc. as required by the Agency, in accordance with Schedule C.2.3 *Monitoring of Storm Water Discharges*.
- Schedule C.2.3 *Monitoring of Storm Water Discharges* of the RD further requires the applicant to submit the exact location of the proposed discharge points upon installation and prior to commencement of the discharge.

The RD contains standard conditions in relation to the storage and management of materials and wastes. The RD also requires that accident and emergency response

procedures are put in place. The controls pertaining to accidents and emergencies are addressed in the Prevention of Accidents section later in this report.

## 6.4 Noise

The main sources of noise at the installation include the operation of equipment, ventilation systems, the back-up generator, vehicle deliveries/collections, and animals. As mentioned earlier, the nearest third-party residential dwelling is ~220 m away.

Under Proposal A (free-range), birds will be outside during daylight hours only and confined to the poultry houses during night time hours. Feeding activities will only be carried out indoors. Under Proposal B (conventional), birds will be confined to the poultry houses for the entire cycle.

There has been no history of noise complaints at the installation and none have been received by the Agency, the applicant, or the HSE. No submissions have been received outlining that noise is a cause for concern from the installation.

Noise emissions will primarily be minimised by implementing good management practices. Noise conditions and emission limit values, which apply at the noise-sensitive locations, have been included in the RD.

- Noise from the installation shall not exceed the limit values set out in Schedule *B.4 Noise Emissions* of the RD at the noise sensitive locations (Condition 4).
- The use of one or a combination of the techniques listed in BAT 10 to prevent/reduce noise emissions from the site (Condition 6).
- A requirement that a noise survey be carried out of the site operations, as required by the Agency (Condition 6).

## 7. Waste Generation

Certain wastes are generated on-site as part of the licensable activity. Waste generated on-site will mainly comprise of spent fluorescent tubes, fallen stock (animal carcasses), veterinary/chemical waste containers and general waste. The total quantities estimated to be generated are given in Table 7.1 below. The applicant employs/will employ a number of measures at the installation for the prevention and/or minimisation of waste.

**Table 7.1: Estimated waste generation**

Waste Type	Estimated quantity (tonnes) per annum
Animal Carcasses	5 - 10
General Waste	<2

In accordance with the hierarchy specified in the IED, waste generated at the site will, in order of priority, be minimised, be prepared for re-use, recycling, recovery or disposal. Conditions relating to waste management have been included in Condition 8 of the RD. Carcasses will be stored temporarily on-site in covered skips, before being transported to an appropriately licensed installation.

A fly and rodent control programme will be developed to cover the installation. The programme to be implemented will be in line with Bord Bia and Department of Agriculture, Food and The Marine requirements.

Condition 3 of the RD requires the applicant to establish, maintain and implement a pest control programme in accordance with relevant DAFM guidelines. These guidelines take account of the requirements of the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (Ireland).

## 8. Organic Fertiliser

The installation will necessarily generate organic fertiliser (poultry litter and wash water). Details are given in Table 8.1 below.

**Table 8.1: Organic fertiliser**

	Wash water	Poultry litter
Quantity produced per annum	200 m <sup>3</sup>	650-750 tonnes
Number of storage tanks/stores on-site	2	N/A
Total storage capacity on-site (ex. freeboard)	126.7 m <sup>3</sup>	N/A
No. weeks storage on-site	32	N/A
End use off-site	Landspreading by applicant	Mushroom composting or landspreading via contractor
Contractor Name	N/A	McCartney Contractors Ltd.
Contractor DAFM No.	N/A	HAC 2338

Condition 8 of the RD requires that the applicant maintains a record of organic fertiliser sent off-site for use on land or for compost production in accordance with the requirements of the Nitrates Regulations. The applicant will be required under the licence to submit to DAFM by the 31<sup>st</sup> of December annually details in relation to the quantity of organic fertiliser (poultry litter and wash water) exported (Record 3 form) off-site. The record must also be maintained at the installation for inspection by the Agency, Local Authority or DAFM. DAFM may use the record of export of organic fertiliser to identify the recipient of the organic fertiliser and the quantity received.

The Animal By-product (ABP) Regulations<sup>7</sup> impose legal requirements on the applicant, the 'commercial haulier' and the user of the organic fertiliser. These requirements include use of a 'commercial document' to record details required under the regulations. The applicant will be required to receive a completed copy of the 'commercial document' from the transporter confirming the final destination.

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<sup>7</sup> EU Animal By-Product Regulation (EC) No. 1069 of 2009 and Regulation (EU) No. 142 of 2011, given legal effect by The European Union (Animal By-Product) Regulations 2014 (SI No. 187/2014), laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 (Animal By-Products Regulation) as amended.

Other than defecation in the range areas under Proposal A (free-range), there will be no landspreading of organic fertiliser conducted or permitted within the installation boundary, and consequently there will be no additional ammonia emissions from landspreading activities within the installation boundary. It is important to note that the IE licence relates to the site of the activity for which the licence application is made and does not extend to the lands on which organic fertiliser may be used as fertiliser. The Nitrates Regulations specify when organic fertiliser can be applied to land and the application rates, and these are enforced by the DAFM and Local Authorities.

## **8.1 Organic Fertiliser (Poultry Litter)**

Under the ABP Regulations, poultry litter is categorised as a category 2 Animal By-product and the options for its disposal/recovery are set out in Article 13 of Regulation 1069/2009, as amended. Poultry litter must be transported either by the applicant (or staff member) or by a haulier registered with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Poultry litter is and will be moved off-site by an approved and registered contractor for use in mushroom compost production, and/or for use as an organic fertiliser. The DAFM provides detailed Codes of Practice for the handling and use of poultry litter, which includes, amongst other things, disease prevention (poultry litter may cause botulism in cattle on the farm on which it is spread and neighbouring farms).

The application includes a letter from McCartney Contractors Ltd., confirming they will take poultry litter from the installation (details given in Table 8.1 above).

The Nitrates Regulations (Article 11(1)) require that a minimum of 26-weeks' storage capacity for organic fertiliser is provided. The applicant is exempt from this storage period once there is a contract in place for the removal of poultry litter by a registered contractor, as set out above. Such exemption is provided in accordance with Article 14(1) of the Nitrates Regulations. Condition 3 of the RD requires compliance with the relevant articles of the Nitrates Regulations, i.e. that either such a contract or the required storage is in place.

The quantity of nitrogen and phosphorus generated by the activity at the maximum proposed licence capacity of 100,000 broilers is approximately:

- 20,400 kg N per year (free-range) or 24,000 kg N per year (conventional), and
- 7,650 kg P per year (free-range) or 9,000 kg P per year (conventional),

based on figures available in the Nitrates Regulations (annual nutrient excretion rates for livestock)

The RD contains the following additional requirements relating to the management of poultry litter:

- To monitor the total nitrogen and phosphorus excreted in manure annually, in accordance with BAT 24 (Condition 6).
- To inspect the integrity of the floors of all deep litter houses after each wash down, repair any damaged or cracked floors as necessary, and maintain a record of inspections and any necessary remedial actions taken (Condition 6).
- That any organic fertiliser spilled to ground during loading, shall be collected and returned to storage or to the vehicle into which it was being loaded (Condition 8)

## 8.2 Wash water

Wash water will be generated by the activity every 7-8 weeks for non-free-range broilers, or every 10 weeks for free-range broilers. Prior to washing, the floors will be brushed to reduce the quantity of poultry litter that could potentially enter the wash water system. After washing, the houses are allowed to dry and then disinfectant applied. The wash water may contain insignificant quantities of disinfectant from the previous washing cycle.

Wash water details are given in Table 8.1 above. The total wash water storage capacity is sufficient to meet the 26-week storage capacity requirement in the Nitrates Regulations. The wash water is considered suitable for use on land as an organic fertiliser and such use is provided for by the Nitrates Regulations and Animal By-product Regulations.

The applicant has identified approximately 13.4 ha of farmland on the applicant's brother's landholding in the vicinity of the activity, outside the boundary to which this licence relates, on which the wash water will be landspread. The applicant has demonstrated in the application that the addition of wash water from the installation will not result in a stocking rate above 170 kg organic Nitrogen per hectare stocking rate, the maximum specified in the Nitrates Regulations.

The RD contains the following conditions relating to the management of wash water:

- That wash water storage tanks be fitted with high liquid level indicators prior to the date of commencement of the activity and in advance of utilisation for new tanks. (Condition 3).
- That all storage tanks are integrity assessed prior to the date of commencement of the activity and in advance of utilisation for new tanks, and at least once every three years thereafter (Condition 6).
- That a combination of the techniques listed in BAT 6 be used to reduce the generation of wash water on-site (Condition 6).
- That one or a combination of the techniques listed in BAT 7 be used to reduce the emissions to water from wash water on-site (Condition 6).
- That a freeboard of at least 200 mm from the top of covered wash water storage tanks and 300 mm from the top of uncovered wash water storage tanks is maintained, as a minimum, at all times and that this is clearly indicated in the tank (Condition 6).
- That the loading and unloading of materials shall be carried out in designated areas protected against spillage and leachate run-off (Condition 8).

## 9. Energy Efficiency and Resource Use

The operation of the installation involves the consumption of fuel, electricity and resources. The proposed quantities to be used at a capacity of 100,000 birds are given below.

**Table 9.1: Estimated resource usage**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Quantity per annum</b>
Electricity	100 MWH
Liquified Petroleum Gas	27,000 m <sup>3</sup>
Water (Drumkeery Group Water Scheme) Water Abstraction registration required:	5,000 m <sup>3</sup> No
Feed	2,700 t

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Quantity per annum</b>
Diesel	Back-up generator only

The applicant employs a variety of technologies to maximise the efficient use of energy within the installation, including regular preventative maintenance of equipment, use of energy efficient lighting systems and thermal insulation.

The primary source of water for the activity is provided by the Drumkeery Group Water Scheme. An on-site well is available as back-up. The RD requires the applicant to carry out monitoring of the well annually.

The installation is located on the Bailieborough groundwater body (IE\_EA\_G\_006), a generally unproductive bedrock except for local zones, which has a WFD status of 'good'.

In accordance with the European Union (Water Policy) (Abstractions Registration) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 261 of 2018) those who abstract 25m<sup>3</sup> of water or more per day are required to register their water abstraction with the EPA. The applicant is not required to register their abstraction. The Drumkeery Group Water Scheme is registered (Reg. No. R00322-01).

The RD specifies that the applicant undertake the following in relation to energy and resource efficiency:

- Annual maintenance of the animal house heating systems and the back-up generator (Condition 3).
- To install and maintain a water meter on all water supplies (Condition 3).
- To use a combination of the techniques listed in BAT 8 (efficient use of energy) and BAT 5 (efficient use of water) (Condition 7).
- To undertake an assessment of the efficient use of resources and energy in all site operations, undertake an energy audit, repeated at intervals as required by the Agency with the recommendations of the audit being incorporated into the Schedule of Environmental Objectives and Targets as outlined in Condition 2 (Condition 7).

## **10. Prevention of Accidents**

A certain amount of accident risk is associated with the licensable activity. For this installation, potential accidents and measures for prevention/limitation of consequences are given in the table below.

**Table 10.1: Potential accidents and measures for prevention/limitation of consequences**

Potential for an accident or hazardous/emergency situation to arise from activities at the installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surface water and/or ground/groundwater contamination during poultry removal and washing.</li> <li>- Surface water and/or ground/groundwater contamination by spillage of organic fertiliser, fuel or other polluting materials.</li> <li>- Surface water and/or ground/groundwater contamination due to leaks from tanks.</li> <li>- Accidental diversion of wash water to storm water drainage system.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accidental emissions of noise, dust or odour such as to cause nuisance outside the site boundary.</li> </ul>
Preventative/Mitigation measures to reduce the likelihood of accidents and mitigate the effects of the consequences of an accident at the installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The provision and maintenance of adequate wash water storage facilities.</li> <li>- On-site generator has an integrated bund.</li> <li>- The storage of potentially polluting liquids in bunded areas.</li> <li>- The provision of concrete aprons around wash water areas.</li> <li>- The protection of gas/fuel tanks from accidental damage.</li> <li>- The separation of wash water and clean storm water including diversion of the storm water collection system to a wash water holding tank during cleaning.</li> </ul>
Additional measures provided for in the RD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrity assessment and maintenance of the wash water network and poultry house floors as required (Condition 6).</li> <li>- The regular visual examination and inspection of the storm water discharge points and storm water drainage system (Condition 6).</li> <li>- No storage of organic fertiliser (poultry litter) on-site, other than what is in the animal houses during the poultry rearing cycle at the installation (Condition 8) or deposited in the free-range areas.</li> <li>- The provision of more than 26-weeks organic fertiliser (wash water) storage capacity (Condition 3).</li> <li>- Accident prevention and emergency response procedures requirements (Condition 9).</li> <li>- A preventative maintenance programme (Condition 2).</li> </ul>

The risk of accidents and their consequences, and the preventative and mitigation measures listed above, have been considered in full in the assessments carried out throughout this report. It is considered that the conditions of the RD and the mitigation measures proposed will significantly reduce the likelihood of accidental emissions occurring and limit the environmental consequences of such an event should it occur.

## **11. Cessation of Activity**

A certain amount of environmental risk is associated with the cessation of any licensable activity (site closure). The applicant has provided a list of measures to be taken in the event of site closure/cessation of activity. These measures are listed in attachment 9.1 of the application form. Condition 10 of the RD requires the proper closure of the activity with the aim of protecting the environment.

Where an activity involves the use, production or release of Relevant Hazardous Substances, and having regard to the possibility of soil and groundwater contamination at the site of the installation, the IED requires operators to prepare a baseline report. A baseline screening assessment was undertaken by the applicant, in accordance with Stages 1 to 3 of European Commission Guidance<sup>8</sup>.

The screening assessment determined that, considering the type and quantity of substances used as part of the activity, the location of these substances on the site, in view of the soil and groundwater characteristics, and the measures to be taken to prevent accidents and incidents, the possibility of soil and groundwater contamination at the site of the installation is considered to be low. I am satisfied that a full baseline report (stages 4 to 8) is not required.

Nonetheless, upon cessation of the activity, Condition 10 of the RD requires the applicant to take certain measures to ensure that there is, to the satisfaction of the Agency, no remaining risk of environmental pollution at the site.

## **12. Fit and Proper Person**

### Technical Ability

The applicant has provided details of the technical knowledge and experience of key personnel. The applicant has held a licence from the EPA for another similar installation since 2018 (P1053-01). It is considered that the applicant has demonstrated the technical knowledge required to operate this installation.

### Legal Standing

Neither the applicant nor any relevant person has relevant convictions under the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, as amended, or under any other relevant environmental legislation.

### ELRA, CRAMP and Financial Provision

The licence category and proposed installation were assessed for the requirements of Environmental Liabilities Risk Assessment (ELRA), Closure, Restoration and Aftercare Management Plan (CRAMP) and Financial Provision (FP), in accordance with Agency guidance. Under this assessment it has been determined that ELRA, CRAMP and FP were not required.

### Fit and Proper Conclusion

It is my view that the applicant can be deemed a Fit and Proper Person for the purpose of this application.

## **13. Submissions**

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<sup>8</sup> European Commission Guidance concerning baseline reports under Article 22(2) of Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions.



While the main points raised in the submissions are briefly summarised in the table below, the original submission should be referred to at all times for greater detail and expansion of particular points.

The issues raised in the submissions are noted and addressed in this Inspector's Report and the submissions were taken into consideration during the preparation of the Recommended Determination (RD).

**Table 13.1: Summary of submissions received.**

<b>Submissions</b>			
1.	<b>Name &amp; Position:</b> Ms. Trish Smullen	<b>Organisation:</b> Geological Survey Ireland, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications	<b>Date received:</b> 24 March 2021
<b>Issues raised:</b> <i>The submission stated "the Geological Survey Ireland has no specific comment or observations to make on this matter at this time".</i>			
<b>Agency Response:</b> None required.			
2.	<b>Name &amp; Position:</b> Ms. Claire O'Dwyer, Principal Environmental Health Officer	<b>Organisation:</b> Health Service Executive (HSE)	<b>Date received:</b> 13 April 2021
<b>Issues raised:</b> <i>The submission makes a number of observations in relation to the licence application. The issues raised include site location, manure (poultry litter), soiled water (wash water), surface/storm water, water supply, waste, odour, noise, dust, pest control, and oil and chemical storage. The HSE also confirmed in their submission that they have not received any complaints relating to odour or noise from the installation to date. The submission refers only to those areas within the remit of the HSE.</i>			
<i>Specific recommendations and observations highlighted by the HSE include:</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Water supply is via a local group water scheme and on-farm well.</i></li> <li>• <i>The EIAR did not provide adequate information on local groundwater supplies in the vicinity of the site. A door-to-door well survey of dwellings within 300 m of the site is recommended.</i></li> <li>• <i>They recommend that a minimum of six months storage capacity is available and that the tanks meet DAFM specifications and be certified as such by a chartered engineer. They further recommend that the wash water tanks have high level monitors installed.</i></li> </ul>			

## Submissions

- *The HSE recommends that the applicant monitors soil nutrients on spread lands by way of a Nutrient Management Plan which should be updated annually.*
- *The submission includes a summary of the surface water in the vicinity of the site, and the storm water from the site. The HSE recommends that care is taken during the emptying and cleaning stages of the activity, that all discharge points are labelled and monitored, that baseline conditions of the groundwater on-site and in the landspreading areas are established and that a surface water quality monitoring scheme be put in place.*
- *Manure is removed off-site by an authorised contractor. The HSE recommends that the applicant conform to the Nitrates regulations in relation to transport off-site.*
- *The HSE recommends that adequate storage and removal of dead bird carcasses and other wastes is required on-site.*
- *The HSE do not foresee adverse effects from odour if the management practices outlined in the application are implemented.*
- *The HSE are satisfied that there will be no noise nuisance from the proposed development.*
- *A pest control programme should be implemented on-site and the HSE provide recommendations in relation to pest control on-site.*

### **Agency response:**

The main issues raised in the submission are noted and addressed in the relevant sections of the Inspector's Report.

Landspreading of organic fertiliser occurs outside of the licensed boundary and is and will be carried out in accordance with the Nitrates Regulations and Animal By-product Regulations. This is monitored and controlled by the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and the Local Authorities.

The RD includes conditions in relation to wash water storage, tank specifications as well as leak detection facilities.

The RD includes a number of conditions in relation to the protection of waters. The 'Emissions to water and ground' and 'Storm water discharges' sections of this report contain more information on this. The RD includes conditions in relation to storm water discharges from the site.

The applicant has confirmed that there is a contract in place for the removal of poultry litter by a registered contractor. The RD prevents the storage of litter on-site, other than what is in the animal houses during a poultry rearing cycle.

The RD requires the applicant to have adequate and appropriate storage on-site for dead birds.

Odour and noise are addressed in the relevant sections of this report.

Pest control is addressed in the 'Waste Generation' Section of this report.

<b>Submissions</b>			
3.	<p><b>Name &amp; Position</b> M. Peter Sweetman</p>	<p><b>Organisation:</b> Peter Sweetman and Wild Ireland Defense CLG</p>	<p><b>Date received:</b> 27 October 2022</p>
<p><b>Issues raised:</b></p> <p><i>The submission states that the CJEU has found that compliance with European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017 (S.I. 605 of 2017) cannot be considered a mitigation measure when conducting an appropriate assessment.</i></p> <p><b>Agency response:</b></p> <p>The submission did not provide a reference to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) case to which it refers. This application was screened out for appropriate assessment. However, the judgments of the CJEU form part of this application assessment, as appropriate.</p>			
4.	<p><b>Name &amp; Position:</b> Aislinn Byrne</p>	<p><b>Organisation:</b> Member of the public</p>	<p><b>Date received:</b> 14 December 2022</p>
<p><b>Issues raised:</b></p> <p><i>The issues raised in the submission are as follows:</i></p> <p><i>"I am objecting to the following applications on the grounds that factory farming, or intensive agriculture, is seriously damaging the environment. The systems currently in place in the respective counties of the applicants are insufficient to deal with the current level of animal agriculture. Approving licenses for additional intensive farming would be wilfully destroying the land and the environment and putting people's health at risk.</i></p> <p><i>Separately it is cruel to farm animals in this manner. It's raises questions around the health of the animals and therefore the end product that is being sold to humans. It is putting smaller farmers out of business".</i></p> <p><i>The submission goes on to list by Reg. No., all of the pig and poultry licence applications upon which the submission is to be made.</i></p> <p><b>Agency response:</b></p> <p>The assessment of this application included an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), an examination of the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and undertaking of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the activity. The EIA Directive, among other things, sets down various factors to be considered during the EIA process for project categories such as intensive agriculture developments, and includes impacts on the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) population and human health;</li> <li>(b) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;</li> </ul>			

Submissions			
	<p>(c) land, soil, water, air and climate;</p> <p>(d) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape;</p> <p>(e) the interaction between the factors referred to in points (a) to (d).</p> <p>The Agency will not grant a licence or revised licence unless it is satisfied that emissions comply with relevant emission limit values and standards prescribed under regulations.</p> <p>The submission also mentions animal cruelty concerns and Ireland has legislation governing animal welfare, which are the responsibility of the Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).</p> <p>The submission also mentions financial implications of intensive farming over "smaller farmers". The viability of a business, including farming, is beyond the scope of the EPA Licensing Process.</p>		
5.	<p><b>Name &amp; Position:</b> Laura Broxson</p>	<p><b>Organisation:</b> National Animal Rights Association</p>	<p><b>Date received:</b> 17 December 2022</p>
	<p><b>Issues raised:</b></p> <p><i>The issues raised in the submission are as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The submitter states that the application should be refused as it is "not ethically acceptable to kill or consume any living creature".</i></li> <li>• <i>The submission states that "Ireland's ammonia emissions have not met EU limits for 7 out of the last 9 years" and that "almost all of Ireland's ammonia emissions come from agriculture". It states that "more than half are located in Monaghan and Cavan, counties already struggling with excess manure".</i></li> <li>• <i>The submission goes on to include some of the damage that can be caused by ammonia pollution and PM2.5 to the environment and human beings.</i></li> <li>• <i>It concludes that "for animal rights, human health and safety, and the impact it would have on the environment, these 36 applications need to be refused".</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The submission goes on to list by Reg. No., all of the pig and poultry licence applications upon which the submission is to be made.</i></p> <p><b>Agency response:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principle of whether or not it is ethical to consume meat is beyond the remit of the EPA.</li> <li>• Ireland is addressing ammonia emissions from the agricultural sector through the implementation of 'Ag Climatise – A roadmap towards Climate Neutrality'. The recommendations of this document, regarding the national reduction of ammonia levels, are considered during the assessment of licence applications.</li> <li>• All intensive agriculture EPA licensed facilities are required to operate to the best available techniques (BAT) standard as specified in the</li> </ul>		

<b>Submissions</b>			
	<p>Commission Implementing Decision (CID) for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs. This includes the requirement to implement techniques for the reduction and control of ammonia emissions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the number of intensive agriculture applications/reviews and licences, especially in the Cavan/Monaghan, the EPA published guidance on how applicants should assess the predicted impact of air emissions. This has specific restrictions on applications in the Cavan/Monaghan area.</li> </ul> <p>The assessment of this application included the assessment of emissions to air, including ammonia and dust emissions. It also included an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), an examination of the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and undertaking of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the activity. Further information on these can be seen in the 'ammonia', 'dust' and 'EIA' sections of the "Inspector's Report" for this licence application.</p>		
6.	<b>Name &amp; Position:</b> Mr Peter Sweetman	<b>Organisation:</b> Peter Sweetman	<b>Date received:</b> 27 March 2023
	<p><b>Issues raised:</b></p> <p><i>In the submission Mr. Sweetman quotes the following from the Courts of Justice of the European Union judgement for cases C-29317 and C-29417:</i></p> <p><i>1. Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora must be interpreted as meaning that the grazing of cattle and the application of fertilizers on the surface of land or below its surface in the vicinity of Natura 2000 sites may be classified as a 'project' within the meaning of that provision, even if those activities, in so far as they are not a physical intervention in the natural surroundings, do not constitute a 'project' within the meaning of Article 1(2)(a) of Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.</i></p> <p><b>Agency response:</b></p> <p>Organic fertiliser is something which may be distributed to farmers for use on their farms, but that ultimate use does not form part of the project in respect of which the Agency was considering a licence application. Ultimately, the location on which landspreading of organic fertiliser from the installation may occur, can vary across and within any given year.</p> <p>The spreading of organic fertiliser on farms is regulated by the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 113 of 2022) which gives effect to the 5th Nitrates Action Programme (2022 to 2025), published in accordance with the Nitrates Directive.</p> <p>In 2022, the 5th Nitrates Action Programme was subject to appropriate assessment (as referred to in this Agency's Inspector's Report) and a strategic environmental assessment. In addition, the referenced Courts of Justice</p>		

<b>Submissions</b>	
	<p>ruling stated that "Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43 must be interpreted as not precluding national programmatic legislation which allows the competent authorities to authorise projects on the basis of an 'appropriate assessment' within the meaning of that provision, carried out in advance and in which a specific overall amount of nitrogen deposition has been deemed compatible with that legislation's objectives of protection."</p> <p>The appropriate assessment conducted as part of this application is considered in compliance with the rulings of the Courts of Justice of the European Union judgement for cases C-29317 and C-29417.</p>

## **14. Consultations**

### **14.1 Cross Office Consultation**

The Environmental Licensing Programme (ELP) and the Office of Environmental Enforcement (OEE) routinely liaise in relation to the licensing of the intensive agricultural sector. This in part has informed the assessment of this application.

### **14.2 Transboundary Consultations**

There were no transboundary consultations undertaken as there were no transboundary impacts identified.

## **15. Appropriate Assessment**

Appendix 2 lists the European sites assessed, their associated qualifying interests and conservation objectives.

A screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) was undertaken to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the site, if the activity, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site. In this context, particular attention was paid to the European Sites at Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC (Site Code: 000006); River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code: 002299); and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code: 004232).

The activity is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Site and the Agency considered, for the reasons set out below, that it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the activity, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any European Site and accordingly determined that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the activity was not required.

- The closest European site is greater than 16 km away.
- Based on the use of the screening model, SCAIL Agriculture, ammonia emissions from this activity are not predicted to have a significant impact on sensitive receptors within the European Sites listed above. Based on the model output, nitrogen deposition as a result of this activity will not have a significant effect on sensitive receptors within these European sites.

- There will be no surface water pathway within 27 km downstream of the installation connecting the installation to any European site. The only surface water pathway connecting the installation to the European sites is where the clean storm water from the proposed installation will discharge via a series of drains, streams and rivers to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC, and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA, approximately 27 km downstream.
- The risk of surface water or groundwater contamination because of accidental emissions during washing activities, or from spillage from the wash water tanks, is minimal given the distance between the activity and the European sites.
- The quantity and type of waste to be produced by the activity per annum is not considered significant.
- The litter to be generated at the installation will have a high dry matter content.
- The litter will remain within the concrete-floored covered broiler houses until all broilers are removed at the end of the batch. Therefore, there is no pathway between the litter and surface water/groundwater while the houses are stocked.
- When the houses are destocked, the litter is to be removed from the animal houses and taken off-site.
- Calculations supplied regarding nutrient stocking rates of the free-range areas demonstrate that the range areas have capacity to accept the increased load when the birds are outside.
- Wash water is to be used as a fertiliser on lands that are not within the installation boundary, in accordance with the Nitrates Regulations.
- Poultry litter is to be transported by a contractor to composting facilities or may be used as an organic fertiliser on land in accordance with the Nitrates Regulations.
- The licence, if granted, relates to the site of the activity for which the licence application is made, i.e., the rearing of poultry within the installation boundary, and other than the range areas, does not extend to the lands on which organic fertiliser may be used as fertiliser.
- Activities which can take place within European sites are restricted by legislation. All persons must obtain the written consent from the relevant Minister before performing particular operations on, or affecting, particular habitats where they occur on lands/waters within the SACs and/or SPA.
- Noise levels from poultry installations are very low and as the nearest European Site is more than 16 km south of the installation (Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC), it is considered that noise will not impact on the qualifying interests within that, or any other European Site.
- Given the small scale of emissions associated with this activity, it is considered that the activity in combination with other plans or projects will not have a significant effect on any protected sites.

## **16. Environmental Impact Assessment**

### **16.1 EIA Introduction**

This assessment is being undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

The application was accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

As part of this environmental impact assessment, I have carried out an examination, analysis and evaluation of all the information provided by the applicant (including the EIAR), information received through consultation, the documents associated with the assessments carried out by Cavan County Council and its reasoned conclusion, and the issues that interact with the matters that were considered by that authority and which relate to the activity, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information where appropriate. All of the documentation received was examined and I consider that the EIAR complies with the provisions of Article 5 of the 2014 EIA Directive when considered in conjunction with the additional material submitted with the application.

I am satisfied that the information contained in the EIAR has been prepared by competent experts and that the environmental effects arising as a consequence of the activity have been satisfactorily identified, described and assessed.

Having specific regard to EIA, this Inspector's Report as a whole is intended to identify, describe and assess for the Agency the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the activity on the environment, as respects the matters that come within the functions of the Agency, for each of the following environmental factors: population and human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air and climate, the landscape, material assets and cultural heritage.

This Inspector's Report addresses the interaction between those effects. The cumulative effects, with other developments in the vicinity of the activities have also been considered, as regards the combined effects of emissions. In addition, the vulnerability of the activity to risks of major accidents and/or disasters has been considered. The mitigation measures proposed to address the range of predicted significant effects arising from the activity have been outlined. This Inspector's Report provides conclusions to the Agency in relation to such effects.

A summary of the submissions made by third parties has been set out above in the 'Submissions' Section of this report.

I am satisfied that the public have been given early and effective opportunity to participate in the environmental decision-making procedure.

## **16.2 Consultation with Planning Authorities in relation to EIA**

Consultation was carried out between Cavan County Council and the Agency under the relevant section of the EPA Act.

Cavan County Council did not provide any observations to the Agency on the licence application and EIAR.

## **16.3 Consultation with other competent authorities**



There was no consultation with other competent authorities in relation to this application.

## **16.4 Alternatives**

The matter of alternatives is addressed in Chapter 3 of the EIAR. Alternative sites, layout and design, size, processes, and management of by-products were considered. The proposed site was considered the most suitable due to scale, topography, access, distance from third party dwellings and the integration of the proposed development with the remaining existing structures and existing farming activities/practices. The house design is in line with BAT and scale is sufficient to cover development and operational costs.

In this regard, I consider that the matter of the examination of alternatives has been satisfactorily addressed.

## **16.5 Likely Significant Direct and Indirect Effects**

The likely significant direct and indirect effects of the activity on the following factors as set out in Article 3 of the EIA Directive are considered in this section:

- (a) population and human health;*
- (b) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;*
- (c) land, soil, water, air and climate;*
- (d) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape;*
- (e) the interaction between the factors referred to in points (a) to (d).*

### **16.5.1 Population & Human Health**

#### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

Population and human health are mainly addressed in Chapter 4.3.1 of the EIAR. The potential direct and indirect effects on population and human health are associated with emissions to air, dust, odour, noise emissions, emissions to water, waste generation, and accidental emissions. Should emissions cause an exceedance of environmental quality standards, this could have implications for population and human health.

The effects identified and described above have been assessed in the following sections of the licence assessment part of this report:

- Emissions to Air;
- Emissions to Water and Ground;
- Noise;
- Waste Generation;
- Organic Fertiliser; and
- Prevention of Accidents.

There is also the potential for accidental emissions to the environment, due to human error or failure of containment infrastructure. Accidental emissions are addressed in the 'Prevention of Accidents' section of this report.

Cumulative effects of the activity in relation to population and human health have been assessed and it is considered that there is not likely to be a significant cumulative effect from the activity and other activities/developments. There are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to population and human health are detailed in the following sections of this report:

- Emissions to Air;
- Emissions to Water and Ground;
- Noise;
- Waste Generation;
- Organic Fertiliser; and
- Prevention of Accidents.

### **Conclusions**

I have examined all the information on population and human health, provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects in terms of population and human health.

## **16.5.2 Biodiversity**

### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

Biodiversity is mainly addressed in Chapter 4.3.2 of the EIAR. The EIAR describes the habitats and species at and in the vicinity of the installation. The site of the proposed development is located adjacent to the existing poultry house. The site forms part of the applicant's existing farming activities. There are three Natura 2000 designated sites within 20 km of the application site, the closest being over 16 km away from the installation. The site of the application is typical of the agricultural nature of the surrounding land.

The applicant also submitted an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (Refer to the Appropriate Assessment section of this report).

The potential direct and indirect effects on biodiversity are related to effects on aquatic flora and fauna and their habitats due to effects on water quality, disturbance to fauna due to noise emissions, and effects due to air emissions (e.g. ammonia emissions and nitrogen deposition). The effects identified and described above have been assessed in the following sections of this report:

- Emissions to Air;
- Emissions to Water and Ground;
- Storm water Discharges;
- Waste Generation;
- Noise;
- Organic Fertiliser; and
- Prevention of Accidents.

There is also the potential for accidental emissions to the environment, due to spillages or human error, which may impact on biodiversity. Accidental emissions are addressed

in the Prevention of Accidents section earlier in this report. Landspreading of organic fertiliser could impact on water quality, however, this occurs outside of the licensed boundary. This must be carried out in accordance with the Nitrates Regulations and Animal By-product Regulations, which are enforced by DAFM and the Local Authorities.

Cumulative effects of the activity in relation to biodiversity have been assessed and it is considered that there is not likely to be a significant cumulative effect from the activity and other activities/developments. There are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to biodiversity are detailed in the following sections of this report:

- Emissions to Air;
- Emissions to Water and Ground;
- Storm Water Discharges;
- Waste Generation;
- Noise;
- Organic Fertiliser; and
- Prevention of Accidents

### **Conclusions**

I have examined all the information on biodiversity, provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects in terms of biodiversity.

### **16.5.3 Land and Soil**

#### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

Land and soil are addressed in Chapter 4.3.3 of the EIAR. The site of the proposed development is located adjacent to the existing poultry house. The site forms part of the applicant's existing farming activities. Land use currently in the development area is improved agricultural grassland. Any potential contamination issues are dealt with in the 'baseline report' section of this report.

The potential direct and indirect effects on land and soil are associated with emissions to air, emissions to water, and accidental emissions and access to range areas under Proposal A (free-range). Should emissions cause an exceedance of environmental quality standards, this could have implications for land and soil. The potential effects identified and described above have been assessed in the following sections of this report:

- Emissions to Air;
- Emissions to Water and Ground;
- Storm Water Discharges;
- Organic Fertiliser;
- Waste Generation;
- Prevention of Accidents; and
- Cessation of Activity.

There is also the potential for accidental emissions to the environment, due to spillages or human error, which may impact on land or soil. Accidental emissions are addressed in the 'Prevention of Accidents' section earlier in this report. Landspreading of organic fertiliser could impact on land or soil, however, this occurs outside of the licensed boundary. This must be carried out in accordance with the Nitrates Regulations and Animal By-product Regulations, which are enforced by DAFM and the Local Authorities.

Cumulative effects of the activity in relation to land and soil have been assessed and it is considered that there is not likely to be a significant cumulative effect from the activity and other activities/developments. There are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to land and soil are detailed in the following sections of this report:

- Emissions to Air;
- Emissions to Water and Ground;
- Storm Water Discharges;
- Organic Fertiliser;
- Waste Generation;
- Prevention of Accidents; and
- Cessation of Activity.

### **Conclusions**

I have examined all the information on land and soil, provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects on land and soil.

## **16.5.4 Water**

### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

Water is mainly addressed in Chapter 4.3.5 of the EIAR. The site is within the Bailieborough groundwater body (IE\_EA\_G\_006) which has a Water Framework Status of 'good' and a vulnerability of 'extreme' to 'rock at or near surface'. The free-range area ranges from 'high' to 'extreme' to 'rock at or near surface' vulnerability.

The site lies within the Boyne catchment area and Blackwater (Kells) sub-catchment. Storm water from the roofs and yard area will discharge to a soakaway on-site or to field drains which flow south to Castle Lough approximately 500 m downstream of the installation. The River Blackwater (Kells) emerges from Castle Lough. The River Blackwater (Kells) currently has a WFD status of 'poor' (waterbody code: IE\_EA\_07B010280). Storm water discharges from the yard areas will pass through the silt trap in advance of discharge.

There are no emissions to water or groundwater from the site. The potential direct and indirect effects on water relate to storm water discharges. Should the discharges cause an exceedance of Water Quality Standards in the receiving water, this could have potential effects on water quality, aquatic biodiversity and human health. The

effects identified and described above have been assessed in the following sections of this report:

- Emissions to Water and Ground;
- Storm Water Discharges;
- Organic Fertiliser; and
- Prevention of Accidents.

There is also the potential for accidental emissions to water or groundwater to occur. The likelihood of accidental emissions to water is considered low in light of the measures outlined in the 'Prevention of Accidents' section above and in light of the conditions in the RD. This is addressed in Prevention of Accidents section of this report.

The site is in a rural area with most of the developments in the vicinity of the installation being dwelling houses and farmyards. There is one other intensive agriculture EPA licensed installation within 5 km of the installation and two other significant industrial developments (one food & drink installation and one landfill site). These installations are each required to operate in accordance with the conditions of an EPA licence. Due to the nature of those activities and the controls in place, it is considered that there will be no significant cumulative effect from storm water discharges from the activity and from other activities/developments in the area.

Landspreading of organic fertiliser, which occurs outside of the licensed boundary, could cause pollution of surface waters or groundwater. To prevent this, the application of fertilisers to land is controlled by the Nitrates Regulations. These give legal effect in Ireland to the Nitrates Directive and to our Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) and controls the management and application of livestock manure and other fertilisers. The NAP is required to be reviewed every four years. In 2022, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage undertook an Appropriate Assessment of the current NAP (5<sup>th</sup> NAP 2022-2025), which included a Natura Impact Statement (February 2022) for Irelands NAP, and concluded that the NAP would not result in adverse effects on European site integrity either alone or in combination with other plans and programmes.

The National River Basin Management Plan (2018-2021) was published in April 2018. Over the period of this river basin planning cycle, there are measures being undertaken to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD. These include measures such as implementation of the Nitrates Action Programme (Nitrates Regulations) and associated inspection regime. Targeted monitoring as envisaged under the Plan allied with multi-party enforcement (EPA/Local Authority/DAFM) provides an early warning of potential problems/improvements and of the possible need to adapt the Plan to ensure protection of our waters.

Cumulative effects of the activity in relation to water have been assessed and it is considered that there is not likely to be a significant cumulative effect from the activity and other activities/developments. There are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to water are detailed in the following sections of this report:

- Emissions to Water and Ground;
- Storm Water Discharges;
- Organic Fertiliser; and

- Prevention of Accidents.

### **Conclusions**

I have examined all the information on water (including Storm Water, Emissions to Water and Groundwater) provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects on water.

### **16.5.5 Noise**

#### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

Noise is mainly addressed in Chapter 4.1.3 of the EIAR. The potential direct and indirect effects of noise associated with the operation of the activity are the potential to cause nuisance for those living near the activity or to affect noise sensitive species near the site. The effects have been assessed in the 'noise' section of this report.

There is also the potential for accidental noise emissions. This is addressed in the 'Prevention of Accidents' section of this report.

Cumulative effects of the activity in relation to noise have been assessed and it is considered that there is not likely to be a significant cumulative effect from the activity and other activities/developments. There are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

#### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to noise are detailed in the 'Noise' section of this report.

### **Conclusions**

I have examined all the information on noise provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects in terms of noise.

### **16.5.6 Air**

#### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

Air is mainly addressed in Chapter 4.3.6 of the EIAR. The potential direct and indirect effects on air are associated with emissions to air of ammonia, dust and odour from the poultry housing, and dust from the installation yard. Should emissions cause an exceedance of air quality standards or critical levels/loads, this could have implications for air quality, human health and biodiversity within and beyond the site boundary. General site dust and odour emissions have the potential to impact human health and cause nuisance.

The effects identified and described above have been assessed in the following sections-of this report:

- Emissions to Air;
- Organic Fertiliser; and
- Prevention of Accidents.

There is also the potential for accidental emissions to the environment. This is addressed in the 'Prevention of Accidents' section of this report.

In relation to cumulative effects, it is noted that there is one EPA-licensed intensive agriculture installation and two EPA licensed activities (one food & drink installation and one landfill site) within 5 km of the installation.

Emissions to air from these activities have been considered during the licensing process for each of these installations and as they are required to comply with the conditions of their licences, these installations should not have any significant emissions of odour, dust or ammonia under normal operations. In this assessment, it has already been determined that air emissions from the installation will not significantly affect local air quality.

A screening model (SCAIL) was used, which took into account the background levels of ammonia, and it is considered that there is not likely to be a significant cumulative effect on sensitive receptors as a result of the ammonia emissions from the installation and those generated by other activities/developments in the area.

As stated previously, the Agency has issued a guidance document to assist applicants in undertaking an assessment of the impacts of ammonia and nitrogen, including cumulative assessments, titled "Assessment of the impact of ammonia and nitrogen on Natura sites from intensive agriculture installations" (EPA, March 2023).

According to 'Ireland's Informative Inventory Report 2023' (EPA 2023), which contains the most recent data, ammonia emissions in 2021 from the poultry sector were 5 kt (or 4% of Ireland's National emissions). This installation will emit a maximum of 8 tonnes per annum (conventionally raised broilers). In December 2020, the Government issued 'Ag Climatise – A Roadmap towards Climate Neutrality'. This is a roadmap of actions for agriculture to cut GHG emissions as well as ammonia emissions significantly over the next decade, and up to 2050. The road map lists actions aiming to reduce the cumulative impact of ammonia emissions from the sector as a whole.

As detailed previously in the 'Emissions to Air' section of this report, Ireland is addressing ammonia emissions (including emissions from landspreading) in accordance with the NECD and S.I. No. 232/2018, European Union (National Emission Ceilings) Regulations 2018. The Code of Good Agricultural Practice as referred to earlier in this report contains guidelines on topics including *inter alia* low emission spreading and fertiliser management, as well as animal feed and housing.

Approximately 3.4% of the ammonia emissions that originate from landspreading in Ireland come from the poultry sector. This equates to 1% of Ireland's total ammonia emissions. The organic fertiliser generated by the activity represents a negligible quantity relative to the total quantity of organic fertiliser arising from the livestock sectors in Ireland (cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry).

Cumulative effects of the activity in relation to air have been assessed and it is considered that there is not likely to be a significant cumulative effect from the activity

and other activities/developments. There are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to air, including ammonia, dust and odour, are detailed in the following sections of this report:

- Emissions to Air;
- Organic Fertiliser; and
- Prevention of Accidents.

### **Conclusions**

I have examined all the information on Air (including ammonia, dust and odour) provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects in terms of Air (including ammonia, dust and odour).

## **16.5.7 Climate**

### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

Chapter 4.3.7 of the EIAR addresses Climate. Climate change is a significant global issue which affects weather and environmental conditions (air, water and soil) which consequently affects population and human health, material assets, cultural heritage, the landscape and biodiversity. Climate change is caused by warming of the climate system by enhanced levels of atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHG) due to human activities. GHGs are carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), nitrogen trifluoride (NF<sub>3</sub>) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>).

The installation does not operate under a GHG Emissions Permit in accordance with the European Communities (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading) Regulations 2012, (S.I. 490 of 2012 and amendments). Therefore, this site is not subject to the European Communities (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading) Regulations 2012, (S.I. 490 of 2012 and amendments) (the EU ETS). It is therefore a requirement of the IED to investigate how direct emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> might be minimised.

Indirect emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> may arise due to the use of electricity from the national grid. These emissions are covered under the EU ETS at the generating plant but the applicant is also required to address electricity usage as part of energy efficiency management.

The potential direct and indirect effects on climate are associated with storage and spreading of organic fertiliser (litter) (nitrous oxide) and usage of fossil fuels (carbon dioxide). However, any discussion of GHG emissions must be extended to national and global climate impact. As part of the non-ETS (Emissions Trading Scheme) sector the GHG emissions from this site are covered by Ireland's commitments under the Effort Sharing Decision (Decision No 406/2009/EC) and the Effort Sharing Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2018/842) from 2021.

In December 2022, the Irish Government released the 'Climate Action Plan 2023', under the 'Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021',



which will support Ireland's transition to Net Zero and achieve a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050.

Given the small quantity of climate altering substances that could be released from the activity, in a national context, I consider that the impact of any emissions from the installation on climatic considerations should be minimal.

It is considered that the likelihood of accidental emissions occurring which could affect climate is low in light of the measures outlined in the 'Prevention of Accidents' section above and the proposed conditions in the RD.

Therefore, there are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to climate are detailed in the following sections of this report:

- Emissions to Air;
- Organic Fertiliser;
- Prevention of Accidents; and
- Energy Efficiency.

Conditions 2 and 7 of the RD deal with energy efficiency matters at the installation.

### **Conclusions**

I have examined all the information on climate provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects in terms of climatic factors.

## **16.5.8 Material Assets, Cultural Heritage and the Landscape**

### **16.5.8.1 Material Assets (including resource use and waste generation)**

#### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

Chapter 4.3.10 of the EIAR addresses Material Assets, and include information on traffic, transport, agricultural and non-agricultural property, and resources (both natural and others) such as energy and water. Material assets such as roads and traffic and built services are dealt with in the decision of the planning authority to grant permission for the development and are not controlled by the Agency. The planning authority has considered the effect to be acceptable.

The use of natural resources by the activity will not have significant effects in terms of material assets. There are sufficient supplies of electricity and water to serve the requirements of the development. These matters are dealt with in the decision of the planning authority to grant planning permission for the developments on-site. The production of waste by the activity is assessed in the 'Waste Generation' section of this report.

The effects identified and described above have been assessed in the following section of this report:

- Waste Generation; and

- Energy Efficiency and Resource Use.

No significant cumulative effects on material assets have been identified. Therefore, there are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to material assets are detailed in the following sections of this report:

- Waste Generation;
- Energy Efficiency and Resource Use.

### **Material Assets Conclusions**

I have examined all the information on material assets provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects in terms of Material Assets.

The planning authority has also identified, described and assessed the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the development on material assets. Their assessment concluded that "there are no significant adverse impacts during construction or operational phases of the proposed development. Where real impacts are identified, mitigation measures are proposed to be put in place to reduce their effects insofar as possible."

The RD does not propose to include any additional mitigation measures in relation to material assets.

## **16.5.8.2 Cultural Heritage**

### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

Chapter 4.3.9 of the EIAR addresses the potential direct and indirect effects on cultural heritage. Any loss of archaeological or architectural heritage could impact negatively on human beings. These matters are dealt with in the decision of the planning authority to grant planning permission for the developments on-site and are not controlled by the Agency. The planning authority has considered the effect to be acceptable.

There are no buildings or features of architectural significance and three known archaeological features at or near the site of the installation. There are individual ringforts located 300 m west of the site, 500 m east of the site and 600 m southeast of the site. It is very difficult to envisage any pathway by which emissions from the operation of the activity could impact any feature which might be present.

No significant cumulative effects on the cultural heritage have been identified. Therefore, there are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

There are no specific mitigation measures or monitoring proposed in the RD.

### **Cultural Heritage Conclusions**

The Planning Authority has identified, described and assessed the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the development on cultural heritage. Their assessment concluded that "there are no significant adverse impacts during construction or operational phases of the proposed development. Where real impacts are identified, mitigation measures are proposed to be put in place to reduce their effects insofar as possible."

The RD does not propose to include any additional mitigation measures in relation to cultural heritage.

### **16.5.8.3 The Landscape**

#### **Identification, Description and Assessment of Effects**

The potential direct and indirect effects on the landscape are described in Chapter 4.3.8 of the EIAR. Any disturbance of the landscape has the potential to impact on human beings and their enjoyment of the surrounding area due to visual impacts. These matters are dealt with in the decision of the planning authority to grant planning permission for the developments on-site and are not controlled by the Agency. The planning authority has considered the effects to be acceptable.

The installation is located in a rural, predominantly agricultural area. Emissions from the operation of the activity will not affect the agricultural landscape of the area.

No significant cumulative effects on the landscape have been identified. Therefore, there are no likely significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects identified.

#### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

There are no specific mitigation measures or monitoring proposed in the RD.

#### **The Landscape Conclusions**

The Planning Authority has identified, described and assessed the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the development on the landscape. Their assessment concluded that "there are no significant adverse impacts during construction or operational phases of the proposed development. Where real impacts are identified, mitigation measures are proposed to be put in place to reduce their effects insofar as possible."

The RD does not propose to include any additional mitigation measures in relation to landscape.

### **16.5.8.4 Overall Conclusions for Material Assets, Cultural Heritage and the Landscape**

I have examined all the information on material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects in terms of material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape.

### **16.5.9 Interactions Between Environmental Factors**

Interactions of effects are considered in Chapter 4.7 of the EIAR. The most significant interactions between the factors as a result of the activity are summarised below.

#### **Population and human health, air, and biodiversity**

Potential effects from emissions to air may impact on human beings, air quality and flora and fauna as demonstrated in the 'Emissions to Air' section above. As demonstrated such effects are considered not to be likely or significant.

#### **Water, soil, and biodiversity**

Accidental discharges of wash water or other substances to ground may directly and indirectly affect soil, groundwater quality, surface water quality downstream, aquatic habitats and aquatic flora and fauna. Indirect effects on soil, groundwater quality, surface water quality, habitats and flora and fauna may arise from landspreading wash water which arises from the activity. As demonstrated in the 'Emissions to Water and Ground' section above, such effects are not considered to be likely or significant.

#### **Conclusions**

I have considered the interactions between population and human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape, and the interaction of the likely effects identified throughout this report. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects in terms of the interaction between the foregoing environmental factors.

### **16.5.10 Vulnerability of the Project to Risks of Major Accidents and/or Disasters**

Chapter 4.4 of the EIAR describes the expected effects deriving from the vulnerability of the activity to risks of major accidents and/or disasters that are relevant to the activity. The potential risk of effects from accidents and/or disasters is limited due to the innate nature of the production system and activities on-site. There are no significant high risk/hazardous products used, produced and/or released by the proposed development which would pose a risk outside of the site boundary as a result of any accident/disaster.

The Seveso Directive<sup>9</sup> and Regulations are not applicable at the installation. The risks of accidents associated with the activity are dealt with in the 'Prevention of Accidents' and 'Cessation of Activity' sections of this report. The applicant assessed the vulnerability of the project and determined that due to the nature of the processes on-site, no significant risks occur and consequently, no specific mitigation measures have been proposed in relation to these effects.

#### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

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<sup>9</sup> Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directive 96/82/EC.

There are no specific mitigation measures proposed in relation to major accidents and/or disasters at the installation.

### **Conclusions**

I have examined all the information on major accidents and/or disasters provided by the applicant, received through consultations, written submissions, as well as considering any supplementary information, where appropriate. I am satisfied that the potential effects identified will be avoided, managed and mitigated by the measures identified and through the proposed conditions of the RD. I am, therefore, satisfied that the operation of the activity is not likely to have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects in terms of major accidents and/or disasters.

### **16.6 Reasoned Conclusion on the significant effects**

Having regard to the examination of environmental information contained above, and in particular to the content of the EIAR and supplementary information provided by the applicant, and the submissions from third parties in the course of the application, it is considered that the potential significant direct and indirect effects of the activity on the environment are as follows:

- Emissions to air;
- Noise emissions; and
- Accidental leakages or spills.

Having assessed those potential effects, I have concluded as follows:

- Emissions to air will be mitigated through: imposing emission limit values to comply with the CID; and implementing monitoring, maintenance and control measures;
- Noise emissions will be mitigated through: imposing daytime, evening-time and night-time noise limits at noise sensitive locations; and implementing monitoring, maintenance and control measures; and
- Accidental leakages or spills will be mitigated through: inspection and maintenance of bunds and tanks; and accident and emergency requirements specified in the RD.

Having regard to the effects (and interactions) identified, described and assessed throughout this report, I consider that the monitoring, mitigation and preventative measures proposed will enable the activity to operate without causing environmental pollution, subject to compliance with the RD. The conditions of the RD and the mitigation measures proposed will significantly reduce the likelihood of accidental emissions occurring and limit the environmental consequences of an accidental emission should one occur.

### **17. EPA Charges**

The annual enforcement charge recommended in the RD is €2,389 which reflects the anticipated enforcement effort required and the cost of monitoring.

### **18. Recommendation**

The Agency, in considering an application for a licence or the review of a licence, shall have regard to Section 83 of the EPA Act. The Agency shall not grant a licence or revised licence unless it is satisfied that emissions comply with relevant emission limit

values and standards prescribed under regulation. In setting such limits and standards, the Agency must ensure they are established based on the stricter of either, or both, the limits and controls required under BAT, and those required to comply with any relevant environmental quality standard. The Agency shall perform its functions in a manner consistent with Section 15 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 as amended.

The RD specifies the necessary measures to provide that the installation shall be operated in accordance with the requirements of Section 83(5) of the EPA Act, and has regard to the AA Screening and the EIA. The assessment is consistent with Section 15 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 as amended. The RD gives effect to the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, as amended and has regard to submissions made.

This report was prepared by Linda Cahill, Philip Stack, Máire Buckley and Bríd Horgan.

I recommend that a Proposed Determination be issued subject to the conditions and for the reasons as drafted in the RD.

Signed



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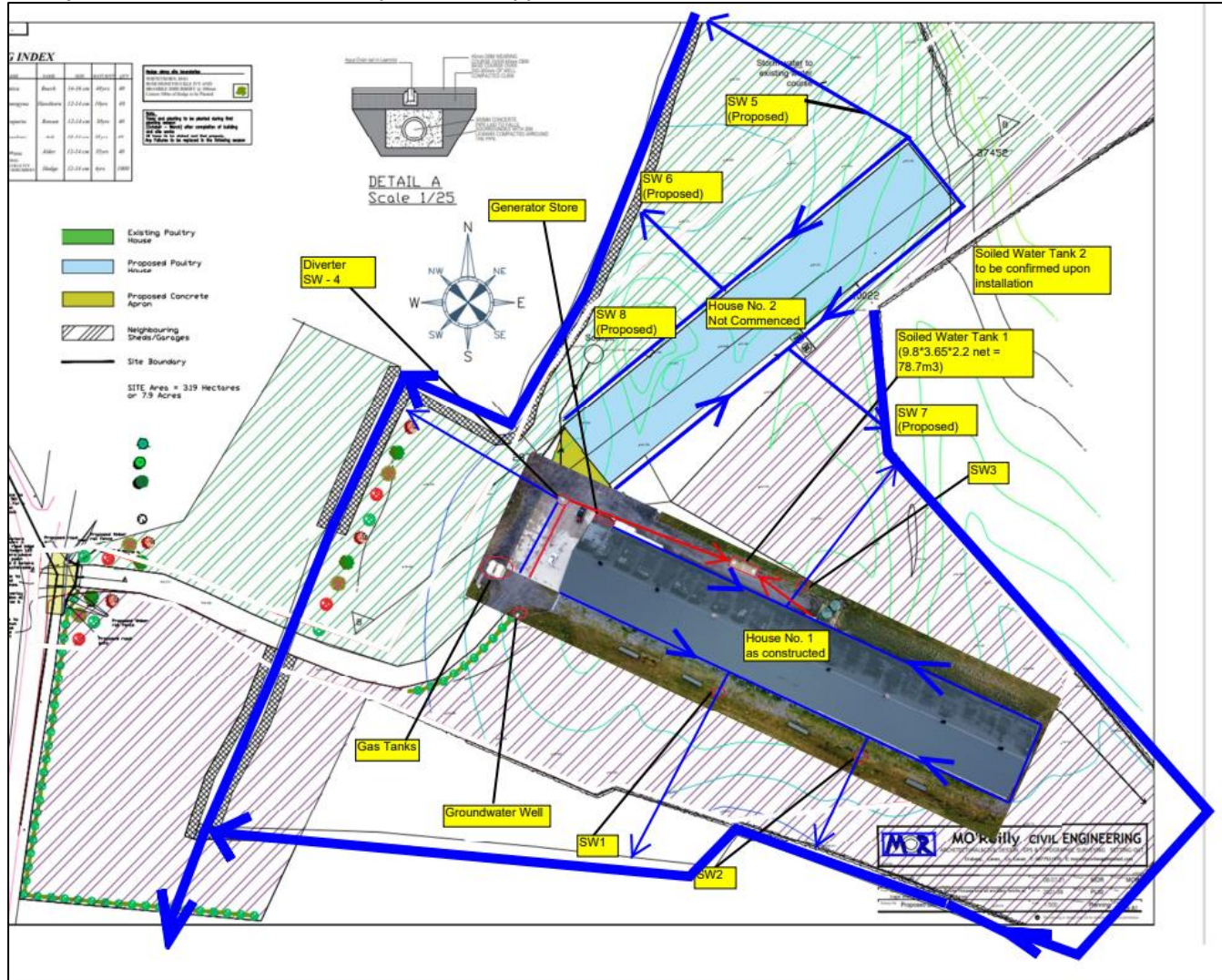
Linda Cahill, ELP Inspector

**Procedural Note**

In the event that no objections are received to the Proposed Determination on the application, a licence will be granted in accordance with Section 87(4) of the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 as amended, as soon as may be after the expiration of the appropriate period.

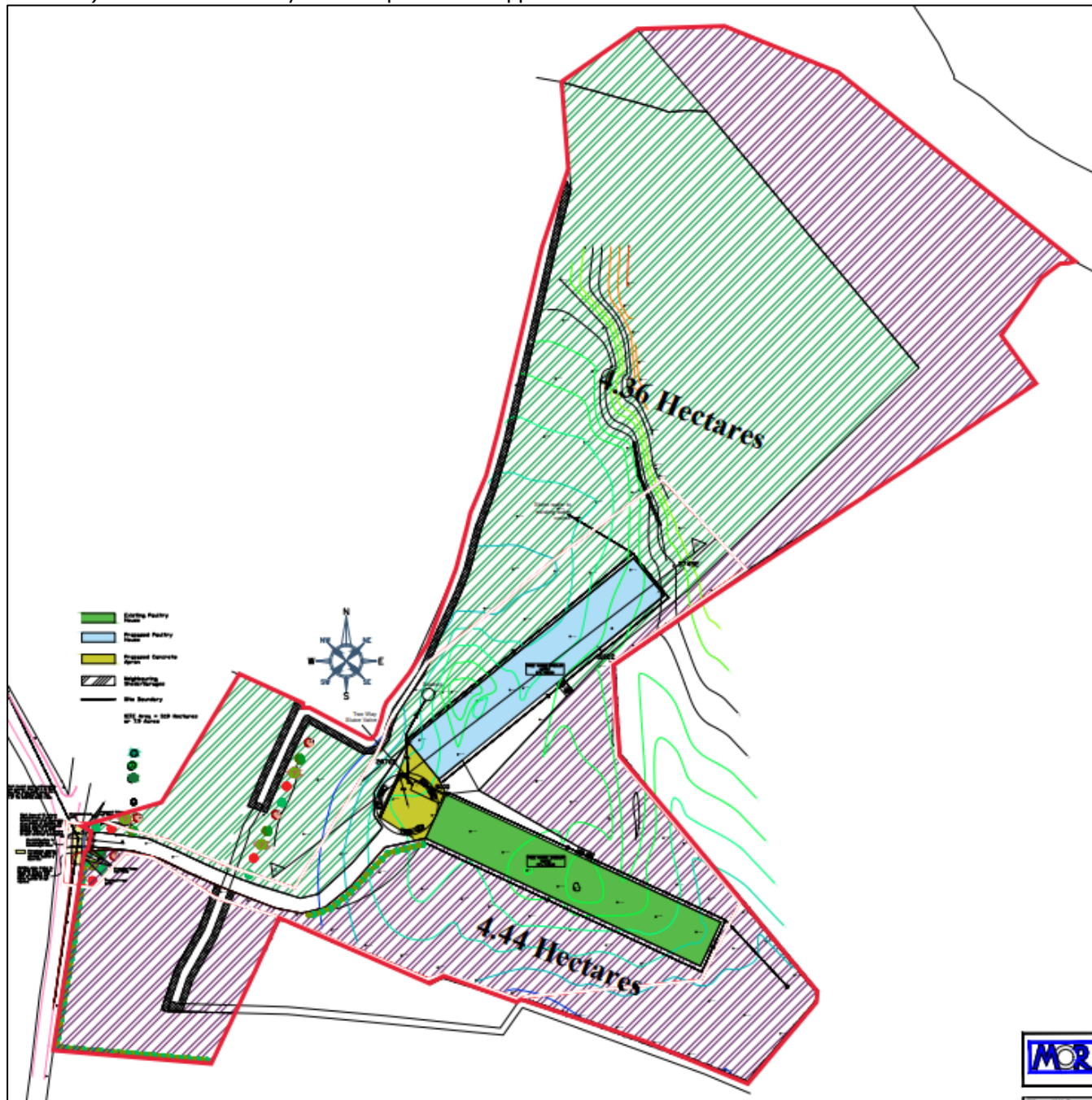
## Appendices

**Appendix 1(a):** Excerpt from the site layout plan titled "Proposed Site Plan" (Drawing No. PL-02) received 08 March 2023 as part of the application.





**Appendix 1(b):** Excerpt from the site layout plan titled "Site Range Area Map" (Drawing No. PL08) received 23 January 2023 as part of the application.





## Appendix 2: AA table

List of European sites assessed, their associated qualifying interests and conservation objectives.

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests <i>(* denotes a priority habitat)</i>	Conservation Objectives
000006	Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC	<b>Habitats</b> 7110 Active raised bogs* 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	As per NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC 000006. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
002299	River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC	<b>Habitats</b> 7230 Alkaline fens 91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> )*  <b>Species</b> 1099 River Lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> ) 1106 Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> ) 1355 Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )	As per NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC 002299. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA	<b>Birds</b> A229 Kingfisher ( <i>Alcedo atthis</i> )	As per NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232). First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

### Appendix 3: Relevant Legislation

The following European instruments which have been transposed into Irish legislation are regarded as relevant to this application assessment and have been considered in the drafting of the Recommended Determination.
National Emissions Ceilings Directive (2016/2284)
Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) (2010/75/EU)
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU)
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) & Birds Directive (79/409/EC)
Water Framework Directive [2000/60/EC]
Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)
Air Quality Directives (2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC)
Groundwater Directive (80/68/EEC) and 2006/118/EC
Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/CE)
Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009, as amended (Animal By-products Regulation)
Nitrates Directive (91/676/ EEC)
Energy Efficiency Directive (2018/2002/EU)

### Appendix 4: Other CIDs/BREF/BAT documents relevant to this assessment

Commission Implementing Decisions	Publication Date
COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 15 February 2017 establishing best available techniques (BAT) conclusions, under Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs (2017/302/EU)	February 2017
Sectoral BREF	Publication date
Reference Document on the Best Available Techniques for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs	July 2017
Horizontal BREF	Publication date
Reference Document on the Best Available Techniques on Emissions from Storage	July 2006
Reference Document on the Best Available Techniques for Energy Efficiency	February 2009