



An Coiste um Achomhairc  
Foraoiseachta  
Forestry Appeals Committee

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16<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Our ref: FAC327/2019

Subject: Appeal in relation to felling licence CN03-FL0047

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to the appeal to the Forestry Appeals Committee (FAC) against the decision by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine in respect of licence CN03-FL0047. The FAC established in accordance with Section 14 A (1) of the Agriculture Appeals Act 2001 has now completed an examination of the facts and evidence provided by the parties to the appeal.

#### Background

Licence CN03-FL0047 was granted by the Department on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019.

#### Hearing

A hearing of appeal FAC327/2019 was conducted by the FAC on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

**FAC Members:** Mr Des Johnson (Chairperson), Mr Vincent Upton, Mr James Conway and Mr Pat Coman

#### Decision

Having regard to the evidence before it and the following considerations, the FAC has decided to confirm the decision of the Minister regarding licence CN03-FL0047.

The decision relates to the clearfelling and replanting of 10.5ha of mainly Sitka spruce, with some Japanese larch and other species, at the meeting of a number of townlands Owencam, Tullybrack and Tullywaum, Co. Cavan. The forest was planted in 1989-1991. The site is described as moderately sloped on a mixture of mineral and organic soils, mainly gleys. The site is situated in the Erne catchment. There is another felling licence for a smaller area (7.5ha) in the vicinity but no afforestation licences. The area is remote and rural in nature.

The grounds of appeal suggest that based on the information supplied to the appellant it is not possible to make a decision which would be in compliance with the requirements of the Habitats and EIA Directives. The grounds go on to quote from a High Court decision given on 25th July 2014 in relation to

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appropriate assessment screening. The grounds also state that there was no assessment of cumulative effects.

In considering the appeal, the FAC undertook an appropriate assessment screening of the proposal under the Habitats Directive and also examined the proposal in relation to the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive. These considerations were based on information provided by the DAFM, information from public sources, including the EPA, and an independent consultant's report commissioned by the FAC. The assessment and report are available on the public file.

There are four European sites within 15km from the proposed felling and the proposal is not necessary for or connected with the management of any European site. The border of the Cullcagh - Anlierin Uplands SAC lies some 640m to the northwest of the felling site. This is the closest boundary and the majority of the SAC lies at a considerable distance from the site. The SAC covers an extensive area of 9,736 ha and includes qualifying interests primarily related to upland areas. The land between the site and the SAC is composed of agricultural land, existing forests, public roads, streams and a small number of dwellings and agricultural buildings. The forest site does not adjoin any water feature that drains from the uplands area and lies at a lower elevation to the uplands. For these reasons, coupled with the degree of separation from the SAC and the nature and scale of the proposal and taking account of other projects in the vicinity the FAC concluded that the proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not result in the possibility of a significant effect occurring. The Owensallagh river rises in Cullcagh mountain and flows to the north of the felling site but at a distance of over 200 metres. This river flows in a southeasterly direction before turning north and joins the Claddagh river at Swanlinbar where it continues into Northern Ireland and joins the Claddagh (Swanlinbar) SAC, the hydrological distance between the river at the closest point to the felling and the SAC is over 11km. The felling site is predominately situated in a separate subcatchment to the Owensallagh that drains to the southeast and is a considerable distance from the river and is separated by an area of extensive grazing land and a public road. Thus, were any sediment or nutrient run-off to occur they would not enter this waterway or the SAC. For these reasons, coupled with the degree of separation from the SAC and the nature and scale of the proposal and taking account of other projects in the vicinity the FAC concluded that the proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not result in the possibility of a significant effect occurring. A stream rises close to the south-east corner of the felling and flows southeasterly before joining the Blackwater River which flows easterly. This flows into a number of lakes from one of which the Shannon-Erne Waterway emerges which flows to the border with Northern Ireland and eventually joins part of the Lough Doughter and Associated Loughs SAC. The hydrological distance between the stream and the SAC is over 42km and the water flows through a number of larger rivers and lakes that would dilute any sediment or nutrient run-off from the felling or allow it to settle, were they to occur. The size and nature of the felling and the site and the size of the stream would severely limit the possibility of run-off of any significant amount occurring in the first instance. For these reasons, and taking account of other projects in the vicinity the FAC concluded that the proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not result in the possibility of a significant effect occurring on this SAC. Corratirrim SAC lies some 15km from the proposed felling and includes Limestone pavement as its qualifying interest. The SAC is to the northwest of the felling and is not hydrologically connected and is situated on the opposite side of the Cullcagh mountains which would preclude the possibility of a significant effect arising from this development. A significant effect arising on a European site outside of the 15km radius was not considered possible due to the nature and scale of the proposal, along with other developments in the area, the degree of separation and lack of hydrological connectivity. The FAC considered the licence and associated conditions and concluded that they did not include measures designed to mitigate any impact on a European site. The FAC concluded, overall,

that the proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not result in the possibility of a significant effect on a European site.

The decision pertains to the felling and replanting of a mature forest of 10.5 ha and does not include a change in land use. The surrounding area is remote and rural in nature with primarily agricultural and forest land. There are a limited number of dwellings and agricultural buildings and the forest is well setback or screened from dwellings and public roads. As described above, the FAC concluded that proposal would not result in a significant effect on a European site. The proposal does not fall within a class of project covered by the EIA Directive and an EIA screening or the submission of an EIA Report under the EIA Directive is not considered to be required in this case.

Before making its decision to confirm the licence, the FAC considered all of the information submitted with the application, the processing of the application by the DAFM, an independent consultants report commissioned by the FAC and the grounds of appeal and submissions and observations received.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Coman', written over a horizontal line.

Pat Coman On Behalf of the Forestry Appeals Committee







FAC327/2019 CN03-FL0047

10<sup>th</sup> April 2020

The decision relates to the clearfelling and replanting of 10.5ha of mainly Sitka spruce, with some Japanese larch and other species, at the meeting of a number of townlands Owencam, Tullybrack and Tullywaum, Co. Cavan. The forest was planted in 1989-1991. The site is described as moderately sloped on a mixture of mineral and organic soils, mainly gleys. The site is situated in the Erne catchment. There is another felling licence for a smaller area (7.5ha) in the area but no afforestation licences. The area is remote and rural and there are few other developments in the vicinity mainly dwellings and agricultural buildings with few new permissions granted. The area is not zoned for development and no issues were identified in the Cavan County Development Plan related to this area. The FAC undertook an appropriate assessment screening of the proposal under the Habitats Directive and also examined the proposal in relation to the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive. These considerations were based on information provided by the DAFM, information from public sources, including the EPA, and an independent consultants report commissioned by the FAC.

#### **Appropriate Assessment Screening**

There are four European sites within 15km from the proposed felling which are listed below along with their qualifying interests and direct distances to the felling site. The proposal is not necessary for or connected with the management of any European site.

The border of the Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC lies some 640m to the northwest of the felling site. This is the closest boundary and the majority of the SAC lies at a considerable distance from the site. The SAC covers an extensive area of 9,736 ha and includes qualifying interests primarily related to upland areas that are listed below. The land between the site and the SAC is composed of agricultural land, existing forests, public roads, streams and a small number of dwellings and agricultural buildings. The forest site does not adjoin any water feature that drains from the uplands area and lies at a lower elevation to the uplands. For these reasons, coupled with the degree of separation from the SAC and the nature and scale of the proposal and taking account of other projects in the vicinity the FAC concluded that the proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not result in the possibility of a significant effect occurring.

The Owensallagh river rises in Cuilcagh mountain and flows to the north of the felling site but at a distance of over 200 metres. This river flows in a southeasterly direction before turning north and joins the Claddagh river at Swanlinbar where it continues into Northern Ireland and joins the Claddagh (Swanlinbar) SAC, the hydrological distance between the river at the closest point to the felling and the SAC is over 11km. The felling site is predominately situated in a separate subcatchment to the Owensallagh that drains to the southeast and is a considerable distance from the river and is separated by an area of extensive grazing land and a public road. Thus, were any sediment or nutrient run-off to occur they would not enter this waterway or the SAC. For these reasons, coupled with the degree of separation from the SAC and the nature and scale of the proposal and taking account of other projects in the vicinity the FAC concluded that the proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not result in the possibility of a significant effect occurring.



A stream rises close to the south-east corner of the felling and flows south-easterly before joining the Blackwater River which flows easterly. This flows into a number of lakes from one of which the Shannon-Erne Waterway emerges which flows to the border with Northern Ireland and eventually joins part of the Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC. The hydrological distance between the stream and the SAC is over 42km and the water flows through a number of larger rivers and lakes that would dilute any sediment or nutrient run-off from the felling or allow it to settle, were they to occur. The size and nature of the felling and the site and the size of the stream would severely limit the possibility of run-off of any significant amount occurring in the first instance. For these reasons, and taking account of other projects in the vicinity the FAC concluded that the proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not result in the possibility of a significant effect occurring on this SAC.

Corratirrim SAC lies some 15km from the proposed felling and includes Limestone pavement as its qualifying interest. The SAC is to the northwest of the felling and is not hydrologically connected and is situated on the opposite side of the Cuilcagh mountains which would preclude the possibility of a significant effect arising from this development.

A significant effect arising on a European site outside of the 15km radius was not considered possible due to the nature and scale of the proposal, along with other developments in the area, the degree of separation and lack of hydrological connectivity. The FAC considered the licence and associated conditions and concluded that they did not include measures designed to mitigate any impact on a European site. The FAC concluded, overall, that the proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not result in the possibility of a significant effect on a European site.

Site Type	Site Code	Site Name	Direct Distance To (m)	Qualifying Interests
				(* denotes a priority habitat)
SAC	584	Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC	644	Habitats
				3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains ( <i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i> )
				3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds
				4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>
				4030 European dry heaths
				4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths
				6230 Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)*
				7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog)
				7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs
				7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> )*
				8110 Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels ( <i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i> )
				8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation
				Species
				1393 Slender Green Feather-moss ( <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i> )
SAC	UK0030116	Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River	9000	Habitats
				Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitans</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation

				Species
				Freshwater Pearl Mussel ( <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> )
				Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )
				Brook Lamprey ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> )
				Atlantic Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> )
SAC	7	Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC	14960	Habitats
				3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation
				91D0 Bog woodland*
				Species
				1355 Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )
SAC	979	Corratirrim SAC	14990	Habitats
				8240 Limestone pavements*

### Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Examination

The decision pertains to the felling and replanting of an area of 10.5 ha and does not include a change in land use. The surrounding area is remote and rural in nature with primarily agricultural and forest land. There are a limited number of dwellings and agricultural buildings and the forest is well setback or screened from dwellings and public roads. As described above, the FAC concluded that proposal would not result in a significant effect on a European site. The proposal does not fall within a class of project covered by the EIA Directive and an EIA screening or the submission of an EIA Report under the EIA Directive is not required in this case.

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Vincent Upton on Behalf of the Forestry Appeals Committee





**FAC Case Ref. 327/2019**

**DAFM Case Ref. CN03-FL0047**

*Details of application:*

The application is to clearfell and replant an area of 10.5 Hectares of mature coniferous (Sitka Spruce) forest in northwest Co. Cavan

*Details of location and of site:*

The site is part of a larger forested area located between the 500 and 600 foot contours, in a rural area, about 9 Kilometres south of Swanlinbar and 15 Kilometres west of Ballyconnell in County Cavan.

Land use in the area is a combination of agriculture and forestry. There is a significant amount of forestry in the general area. The soil appears generally poorly drained and the information submitted indicates peat and gley soils at the location of the subject lands. There are some isolated houses scattered along the local road network.

The documents submitted with the application indicate a stream abutting the south-eastern end of the lands. This stream appears to flow towards the southeast. There is also a stream or river located a short distance to the north of the northern projection of the subject lands. This appears to be called the Owensallagh River, and it flows towards the northeast. It joins the Swanlinbar River further north near Swanlinbar.

*Decision of Department:*

The decision was to grant a licence subject to 8 conditions.

The conditions are of a standard variety and require replanting and compliance with various standards and guidelines.

*Grounds of appeal:*

It is submitted that based on the information submitted it is not possible to make a decision which would be in compliance with the requirements of the Habitats and EIA Directives.

The appellant refers to a High Court decision given by Ms Finlay Geoghegan on 25 July 2014. The judgement states that for Appropriate Assessment to be a mandatory requirement there is no need to *establish* that there would be a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. It is merely necessary to determine that there *may* be such an effect. A further quotation from the judgement states that "It follows that the possibility of there being a significant effect on the site will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3).

In an earlier submission, which he requested be attached to all his appeals, the appellant stated that there is a lack of proper assessment. He submits, for example, that there is no assessment of cumulative effects.

*Departmental response to appeal:*

In its response the Department states that having considered the information submitted which included a pre-screening AA report, and the designated Natura sites in the area the Department deemed that the proposal, of itself or in combination with other projects (identified in the pre-screening report), would not give rise to the possibility of a significant effect on any of the designated sites. An Appropriate Assessment was not deemed necessary. The documentation on file includes the screening assessment carried out by the Department prior to the decision but does not include any pre-screening report done by the applicant. (It is stated on the AA Screening Form that there are 7.5 Hectares of private forest licenced for clearfelling in the vicinity but there are no further details of other projects)

*Appropriate Assessment screening:*

There are 2 SACs in the Irish Republic located at least in part within 15 Kilometres of the subject lands.

The 2 SACs in the Republic of Ireland referred to above are the Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC and the Cuilcagh- Anierin Uplands SAC. The closest of these to the lands is the Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands.

The Cuilcagh -Anierin Uplands SAC is located, at the nearest point, about 640 metres from the nearest part of the subject lands. The nearest part of this large SAC is located to the northwest of the subject lands. The SAC is located in an upland area on the opposite side of the Owensallagh River.

The qualifying interests of the Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands SAC with EU codes are

1393 Slender Green Feather-moss Drepanocladus vernicosus 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) 3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix 4030 European dry heaths 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths 6230 Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)\* 7130 Blanket bogs (\* if active bog) 7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)\* 8110 Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) 8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation.

The conservation objectives are generally to maintain and/or restore the favourable conservation condition of the qualifying interests.

As the lands where the treefelling is proposed are on the opposite side of the river and there are no pathways through which the development proposed could impact on the qualifying interests it can be concluded that the proposed treefelling is not likely to have any significant effect on the Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands SAC having regard to the qualifying interests and the conservation objectives for that site.



The other SAC located in the Republic and at least in part within 15 Kilometres is the Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC. This SAC, at the nearest point, is about 14.5 Kilometres from the lands.

The special conservation interests of and conservation objectives for the SAC are

Code 3150, Description, Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation, and Code 91D0, Description, Bog woodland\*

\* denotes a priority habitat

Code 1355 Common Name Otter Scientific Name *Lutra lutra*

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

The direct distance between the subject lands and the SAC being considered considerably underestimates the distance along the watercourses connecting the lands to the SAC. The connection here would be from the stream flowing to the southeast from the south-eastern end of the lands. The watercourses in question take a very circuitous route. I estimate a distance of over 27 Km to the point where the watercourse actually hits the designated site. I consider that at this distance, taking account of dilution, sedimentation, etc it can reasonably be concluded that the tree-felling would not have any significant effect on the SAC having regard to its qualifying interests and conservation objectives.

A third site i.e. the Corratirrim SAC was also considered by the Department. I estimate that this site is about 15 Km from the subject lands. The SAC is to the northwest on the far side of the Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands SAC. The qualifying interest is Limestone Pavement. There is no hydrological connection with this SAC. It can be concluded that there would not be any significant effect on the SAC having regard to its qualifying interest and conservation objective.

Part of the Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs area is also a designated a SPA. The special conservation interests of this SPA are:

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [A005]

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) [A038]

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]

Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

The conservation objectives are:

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA and to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Lough Oughter Complex SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.

I estimate that the SPA in question is over 21 Kilometres from the subject lands. The mature Sitka Spruce plantation in question is not a suitable habitat for the special



conservation interests referred to. The project would not have any significant effect on the SPA having regard to its conservation interests and objectives.

In addition to considering designated sites in the Republic of Ireland it is necessary to also consider these in Northern Ireland.

The Lough Oughter complex in Northern Ireland is also designated as a SAC and a SPA. I consider that similar conclusions apply to the parts of this complex designated in Northern Ireland as apply to the parts designated in the Republic of Ireland. In coming to this conclusion, I have taken in to account that part of the lands may drain to the Owensallagh River to the north of the subject lands. (The direction of drainage is not clear from the documentation). I estimate the distance to the SAC and SPA in question to be about 25 Km in this direction (measured along the watercourse). It is reasonable to conclude that there would not be any significant effect on the SAC or SPA referred to.

The Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River in Northern Ireland is also designated as a SAC. This is the river that the Owensallagh River joins further to the north near Swanlinbar. The qualifying interests for this SAC are (extract from Northern Ireland Departmental designation):

1. *Margaritifera margaritifera* • for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Freshwater pearl mussel. The freshwater pearl mussel spends its larval stage attached to the gills of salmon and trout. Eventually the larvae drop off and settle in the riverbed gravel where they grow to adulthood. The species is widely distributed in the northern hemisphere but populations have declined sharply throughout Europe. Threats to its survival include disturbance to gravel beds and flow rates, water pollution, and pearl-fishing. The UK is now considered to be the main European stronghold for this species but in recent years it has been lost or has ceased breeding at many sites.

2. Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation • for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by water-crowfoot. Rivers that support characteristic communities of water-crowfoot *Ranunculus* species, which often dominate the plant community in the river channel. This vegetation occurs in relatively unpolluted waters, in a diverse range of river types.

It is not clear from the documentation whether or not this SAC was considered in the pre-screening report which the Department states was submitted with the application. It is not referred to in the Department's own screening. Neither is it apparent if the application was forwarded to the NPWS for comment prior to the decision of the Department.

I estimate the hydrological distance from the northern part of the subject lands to the SAC to be over 13 Km. I consider that at this distance the project is unlikely to have any significant effect on the SAC. The FAC may, however, consider seeking further comment on this issue.

The applicant has not given details of other projects in the near vicinity which have been considered in assessing in-combination effects. The information indicates that clear-felling of 7.5 Hectares of private forest has been licensed in the area. I consider that the effects of clear felling the individual blocks would be locally confined and I do



not consider that any in-combination effects with this 7.5 Hectare felling would be significant in terms of impact on the Natura sites. On checking recent planning permissions in the area, I note that these are few in number and small in scale e.g. single houses, house extensions and small-scale farm developments. I do not consider that these would result in any significant in-combination effects.

In the above assessment I have not considered the normal good felling practices referred to in the documentation in forming my conclusions. I consider, however, that compliance with the various guidelines etc referred to would re-enforce my conclusions. I also consider that the practices referred to are designed to protect the local environment, as they are general standards for all felling, and are not designed to prevent any significant effect on the Natura sites.

I conclude that the proposed felling of itself or in combination with any other plans or projects is not likely to have any significant effect on any Natura 2000 sit

*Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):*

In my screening for EIA I have regard to the requirements contained in the EU Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU), in Irish regulations transposing the Directive into Irish law and to the Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development published by the Department of the Environment in August 2003. I have had regard to the characteristics of the project, the location of the project (including the environmental sensitivity of the area) and the types and characteristics of potential impacts of the development as referred to in Annex 11 of the Directive. I have also taken account of my conclusions, set out above, in relation to the likely impact of the development on any Natura 2000 site.

The EU Directive sets out, in Annex 1 a list of projects for which EIA is mandatory. Annex 11 contains a list of projects for which member states must determine through thresholds or on a case by case basis (or both) whether or not EIA is required. Neither afforestation nor deforestation (nor clear-felling) are referred to in Annex 1. Annex 11 contains a class of project specified as "initial afforestation and deforestation for the purpose of conversion to another type of land use". (Class 1 (d) of Annex 11). The Irish Regulations in relation to forestry licence applications require the compliance with the EIA process for applications relating to afforestation involving an area of more than 50 Hectares, the construction of a forest road of a length greater than 2000 metres and any afforestation or forest road below the specified parameters where the Minister considers such development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. It appears to me that felling of trees and subsequent replanting, as part of a forestry operation with no change in land use, does not fall within the classes referred to in the Directive, and is similarly not covered by the Irish regulations (S.I. 191 of 2017). I will, however, consider the likely effects of the proposal on the environment.

The site is located in an area where the predominant land uses are agriculture and forestry. Forestry by its nature involves afforestation, thinning, clear-felling and replanting. Such activities are normal and not out of character visually or otherwise in an area such as that in question. The area is not designated as being of exceptional or special visual amenity significance. The trees in question are visible from some

locations along the surrounding road network. They are not however particularly prominent and are not of such exceptional amenity value as to warrant retention. I consider that the felling proposed would not have a significant impact on the landscape.

The felling will give rise to the transport of timber on the local roads. This will cause some inconvenience in the short term but is an inevitable consequence of the afforestation and would not of itself result in such likely significant effects on the environment as to require compliance with the full Environmental Impact Assessment process. I also consider that it would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment due to water or air pollution.

I consider that the felling proposed does not come within the classes of project covered by the EU EIA Directive. I also consider that it would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment. I consider that the possibility of significant effects on the environment can be ruled out on the basis of this preliminary screening

*Overall conclusion:*

I conclude that the proposed project would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and the carrying out of EIA is not required. I also conclude that the project individually, or in combination with other plans or projects, is not likely to have any significant effect on any Natura 2000 site, having regard to the reasons for designating the sites and their conservation objectives.

Padraic Thornton

24 March 2020