From: [redacted]@chg.gov.ie]
Sent: Friday 3 July 2020 09:28
To: [redacted]@housing.gov.ie>
Subject: RE: For urgent response - FS006837 Extension of Jetty - Shannon Foynes Port

A chara,

Please find the heritage recommendations of the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht for the above mentioned application.

Nature Conservation
The Department refers to the proposed jetty extension as illustrated in Drawing No. M0679-RPS-00-FS-DR-C-0001 accompanying the application, and the Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

The proposed jetty is within the Lower River Shannon candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) (2165), and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) (4077). Conservation objectives for these sites are available at https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002165.pdf and https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004077.pdf respectively.

The jetty is part of a larger port extension development, which is the subject of conditional planning permission from An Bord Pleanála, granted in 2018. In its submission to An Bord Pleanála, after reviewing the NIS, this Department recommended a number of items of further information. As the NIS submitted as part of this foreshore application (available on the DHPLG website) is undated, it is assumed to be the same as that submitted to An Bord Pleanála (ABP); therefore, any further information recommended to ABP would also be recommended now, insofar as it relates to the jetty. The following further information relates to the proposed jetty.

1. Piling
(a) Clarification of whether timing of pile-driving will be seasonally restricted, based on a more detailed assessment of its effects on wintering birds in the adjacent SPA;
(b) The NIS should, for the proposed piling operations, refer in more detail to the use of 'soft start' methods, in order to minimise any potential noise impacts on marine mammals and fish species. If there is a pause in the piling operations for a period of greater than 10 minutes, then the soft-start procedure should be repeated. This would ensure that mammals which are present within the zone of ensonification would be able to move away from this area before full operational power is achieved. Where piling operations may need to be conducted in periods of low light or poor visibility, Passive Acoustic Monitoring Systems (PAMS) equipment may be used as an alternative to Marine Mammal Observer scans of the area.
(c) The requirements of Regulation 51 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 in relation to strict protection of cetaceans must be fully taken into account.

2. Jetty
(a) Clarification, with regard to the loss of 0.0080 ha of subtidal bank habitat, of the relative diversity of the habitat present.
(b) Clarification on the overall state of the subtidal bank habitat in the cSAC as a whole, and whether there are widespread piecemeal losses of subtidal sandbanks elsewhere in the cSAC.

3. Larger ships
Further assessment of the effects of facilitation of larger ships on the following:

(a) Noise changes in the outer estuary (bottle-nose dolphin habitat).
(b) Changes in accident risks in the outer estuary.
(c) Changes in the risk of estuarine invasive species being introduced in ballast or on ship hulls.

Responses to the above information have already been sent to An Bord Pleanála, but these responses would also need to be considered as part of the appropriate assessment, prior to deciding on the Foreshore Application.

Mise le meas,

[redacted]
Executive Officer