An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

Planning Ref: 2660265

10 July 2026

Planning Section
Roscommon County Council

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: 2660265 - Erection of dwelling house and construction of septic tank and percolation area AT Castleplunket, Co. Roscommon

Comment

The Heritage Council was established in 1995 as a statutory body under the Heritage Act 1995 with a Council (the Board of the body) appointed by the Minister. The Heritage Council is a prescribed body under the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 and S.I. No. 600/2001 of the Planning and Development Regulations, section 28 inter alia, in accordance with its functions under Section 6 of the Heritage Act, 1995. We seek to provide submissions on forward planning, development management and strategic infrastructure developments as they relate to Ireland's heritage, namely built, cultural and natural heritage.

The proposed development site is located within the Castleplunket Turlough proposed NHA (pNHA) [000598]. pNHAs are among our most important natural heritage sites at a national level and therefore receive commensurate policy provision in county development plans. In this case, the adopted Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 includes policy objective NH 10.7 which actively promotes "*the conservation and protection of areas designated as an NHA (including proposed sites) and to only consider proposals for developing within our affecting an NHA where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse effect on the NHA or pNHA"*

Furthermore, Castleplunket Turlough is also listed as a County Geological Site in the county development plan (Table 10.1). In this regard, policy objective 10.7 seeks to "*preserve and protect sites of county geological importance from inappropriate development where they comprise designated sites or national heritage areas*".

The site synopsis for the pNHA notes that this feature is a fine example of a large turlough, colonised mainly by wet grassland amongst scattered limestone outcrops. It is considered to contain a good diversity of contrasting vegetation types including the largest area of tall herb communities seen on any other known Irish turlough, with Greater Duckweed (*Spirodela polyrhiza*) and Common Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus aquatilis*) being of particular interest. It also is of ornithological interest with lapwing, golden plover, and curlew present during past surveys, in

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relatively significant numbers; while it has also been noted as having a population of widgeon of national importance.

The development is to the southwestern corner of the pNHA. In this case we recommend to the local authority that careful consideration be given to the historic and future projections for changing water levels throughout the pNHA including the area of the development site. In doing so, an assessment of the development's impact on the key features of the pNHA should be undertaken. Potential impacts on groundwater pathways from any wastewater treatment system and the construction phase of the development should also be undertaken. By association, any changes to the biochemistry upon which certain species may depend should be clearly assessed/identified.

Please note that the Heritage Council has concerns regarding the principle of development in nature conservation sites and designations. If the local authority is of the view that the site may be suitable for development, an ecological impact assessment will be required.

We believe that this is necessary to comply with policy objective NH 10.7 noted above, insofar as the need to demonstrate that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse effect.

I trust this observation will aid the local authority in its determination of the application.

Yours sincerely

Virginia Teehan

Chief Executive Officer

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