This application relates to the Leenane agglomeration in County Galway. The agglomeration currently has a population equivalent (p.e.) of 377. The agglomeration is serviced by one waste water treatment plant (WWTP). The WWTP provides secondary treatment, consisting of an aeration tank, settlement tank and sludge tank, and has a design capacity of 550 p.e.

The WWTP discharges to the Letterbrickaun River (IE_WE_32L080780) which confluences with Killary Harbour (IE_WE_310_0000), approximately 240m downstream of the primary discharge point. Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Letterbrickaun River is unassigned (2015) and Killary Harbour is assigned ‘Moderate’ status (2014).

There is a designated shellfish water located in the vicinity of the agglomeration (Killary Harbour). The Pollution Reduction Programme (PRP) identifies Leenane agglomeration as a key pressure. Condition 3.5 of the Recommended Certificate of Authorisation (RCoA) requires the Certificate of Authorisation holder to carry out an assessment of the impact of the discharge(s) on the microbiological quality (including viruses) of the shellfish in the designated shellfish waters. Where the assessment indicates that the discharge(s) are
having a deleterious microbiological (including viruses) effect on the quality of shellfish in the adjacent designated shellfish waters, Condition 3.6 of the Recommended Certificate of Authorisation requires the certificate of authorisation holder to install UV disinfection or other appropriate disinfection system. In the case of any incident relating to a discharge to a designated shellfish water, the certificate of authorisation holder shall notify the Marine Institute (MI), Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), Food Safety Authority (FSAI) and an Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) as soon as practicable after such an incident.

The receiving water (Letterbrickaun River, IE_WE_32L080780) is unassigned under the WFD. Killary Harbour, approximately 240 m downstream of the primary discharge, is assigned 'Moderate' status under the WFD. It is acknowledged that the discharge(s) from the agglomeration may not be the only cause of the waterbody being less than good status.

Condition 3.16 of the RCoA specifies that the Authorisation holder shall prepare a risk assessment for the protection of any drinking water abstraction points within six months of the date of grant of the Certificate of Authorisation, the risk assessment shall address as a minimum the identification and minimisation of risks. The measures identified shall be implemented within twelve months thereafter.

The Recommended Certificate of Authorisation (RCoA) includes Condition 2.2 whereby the Certificate of Authorisation holder shall immediately notify the group responsible for downstream abstraction points of any incidents in the agglomeration.

The Recommended Certificate of Authorisation (RCoA) states that within twelve months the authorisation holder shall identify appropriate improvements to the wastewater works. These improvements shall ensure all discharge(s) from the agglomeration contribute towards achieving at least good status in accordance with the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and/or the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010.


The Leenane WWTP discharges into the Letterbrickaun River which drains to Killary Harbour. The Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC and the Maumturk Mountains SAC are located 1.2 km North of the primary discharge and 1.3 km West of the primary discharge respectively. The sites are protected for priority habitats listed under Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive. They are also selected for protection of species listed under Annex II of the same directive. Appendix 1 lists the European sites assessed, their associated qualifying interests and conservation objectives along with the assessment of the effects of the activity on the European sites.

A screening for Appropriate Assessment 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 Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC (Site code: 001932) and Maumturk Mountains SAC (Site code: 002008).

The Agency considered, for the reasons set out below, that the activity is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site and that it cannot 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 of the activity is required, and for this reason determined to require the applicant to submit a Natura Impact Statement.

This determination is based on the ‘Moderate’ Water Framework Directive (WFD) water quality status of Killary Harbour (IE_WE_310_0000), approximately 240 meters downstream of the primary discharge and the proximity of the primary discharge to the European Sites. The contribution from the Leenane discharge, in combination with other activities within the catchment, may have implications for the qualifying interests of the SACs. Indirect impacts on the qualifying interests may arise as a consequence.

An Inspector’s Appropriate Assessment has been completed and has determined, based on best scientific knowledge in the field and in accordance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended, pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, that the activity, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site, in particular the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC (Site code: 001932) and Maumturk Mountains SAC (Site code: 002008), having regard to its conservation objectives and will not affect the preservation of these sites at favourable conservation status if carried out in accordance with this Recommended Certificate of Authorisation and the conditions attached hereto for the following reasons:

- Condition 3.3 of the Recommended Certificate of Authorisation requires the holder to operate the waste water works in accordance with best practice to ensure that discharges from the works do not cause environmental pollution or a deterioration in the status of the receiving surface water body or groundwater body on either a temporal basis or a spatial basis.

- Condition 3.4 of the Recommended Certificate of Authorisation requires the holder to, within twelve months, identify appropriate improvements to the wastewater works. These improvements shall ensure all discharge(s) from the agglomeration contribute towards achieving at least good status in accordance with the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and/or the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010.

- Condition 3.12 of the Recommended Certificate of Authorisation requires that the holder shall ensure waste water discharges from the agglomeration covered by the Certificate of Authorisation do not result in environmental pollution as defined in Article 3 of the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, as amended.

In light of the foregoing no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of adverse effects on the integrity of those European sites, the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC (Site code: 001932) and Maumturk Mountains SAC (Site code: 002008)

The discharge(s) from the agglomeration are considered not likely to have a significant impact on the receiving waterbody subject to the Certificate of Authorisation Holder complying with the conditions of the RCoA.
Recommendation

I recommend that a Final Certificate of Authorisation be issued subject to the conditions and for the reasons as set out in the attached Recommended Certificate of Authorisation.

Signed

Michael Martin,
Inspector
Office of Climate, Licensing and Resource Use
### Appendix 1: Assessment of the effect of discharges on European sites and proposed mitigate measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Site (site code)</th>
<th>Distance/Direction from discharge(s)</th>
<th>Qualifying interests (* denotes a priority habitat)</th>
<th>Conservation objectives</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC (001932) | The primary discharges into the Letterbrickaun River which drains to Killary Harbour. The Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC is located 1.2 km North of the primary discharge. | **Habitats:**  
Water Dependent  
*Coastal Lagoons. Annual vegetation of drift lines.  
Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*).  
Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritime*).  
Embryonic shifting dunes.  
Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes).  
*Atlantic decalcified dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*).  
Dunes with *Salix repens ssp. argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*).  
*Machairs.  
Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*).  
Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelleta uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea.  
Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds.  
Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Brachythion vegetation.  
Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*.  
*Blanket bogs.  
Discharge of effluent to water systems can lead to an altered nutrient balance (eutrophication), increase in particulate matter, potential threat of toxicity, reduction in biological status and loss of habitat. The marine habitat, Coastal Lagoons is dependent on water quality. Species such as the Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Salmon are sensitive to point source pollution and high levels of sediment. While Otter are sensitive to point source pollution, they also feed on species (e.g. salmon) which are dependent on good water quality. Alluvial forests are surface water dependent and are at risk from nutrient enrichment of surface water. Alluvial forests, Calcareous fens and Alkaline fens can be influenced by the freshwater environment as they are periodically inundated by the annual rise of river levels. These events supply water to maintain the habitat. Consequently, any change in water quality has the potential to impact these qualifying interests. **Conclusion:**  
Condition 3.3 of the RCoA requires the Certificate of Authorisation holder to operate the waste water works in accordance with best practice to ensure that discharges from the works do not cause environmental pollution or a deterioration in the status of the receiving surface water body or groundwater body on either a temporal basis or a spatial basis. |
Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion.
*Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion).
Alkaline fens.
Geyer’s Whorl Snail (*Vertigo geyeri*).
Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (*Vertigo angustior*).
Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*).
Salmon (*Salmo salar*).
Otter (*Lutra lutra*).
Petalworth (*Petalophyllum ralfsii*).
Slender Naiad (*Naja flexilis*).

**Non Water Dependent**
European dry heaths.
Alpine and Boreal heaths.
*Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands.
Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation.
Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation.

or accidents/incidents, as may be associated with discharges or overflows from the waste water works.
<table>
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<td>2 Maumturk Mountains SAC (002008)</td>
<td>The primary discharges into the Letterbrickaun River which drains to Killary Harbour. The Maumturk Mountains SAC is located 1.3 km West of the primary discharge.</td>
<td><strong>Species:</strong> Water Dependent Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<em>Littorelletalia uniflorae</em>). Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <em>Erica tetralix</em>. <em>Blanket bogs.</em> Depressions on peat substrates of the <em>Rhynchosporion.</em> Salmon (<em>Salmo salar</em>). Slender Naiad (<em>Najas flexilis</em>). <strong>Non Water Dependent</strong> Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation. Alpine and Boreal heaths.</td>
<td>As per NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for Maumturk Mountains SAC [002008]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. (dated 13/02/215).</td>
<td><strong>Emission to Water</strong> Salmon are sensitive to point source pollution and high levels of sediment. Discharge of effluent to water systems can lead to an altered nutrient balance (eutrophication), increase in particulate matter, potential threat of toxicity, reduction in biological status and loss of habitat. <strong>Conclusion:</strong> Condition 3.3 of the RCoA requires the Certificate of Authorisation holder to operate the waste water works in accordance with best practice to ensure that discharges from the works do not cause environmental pollution or a deterioration in the status of the receiving surface water body or groundwater body on either a temporal basis or a spatial basis. <strong>Potential for Accidents to Arise</strong> There is the potential for accidents and emergency situations arising at a wastewater treatment works resulting in partially treated or untreated waste waters discharging to the receiving waters. Such incidents or events could lead to the discharge of elevated levels of polluting organic matter, which would have the potential to impact on the receiving water environment. <strong>Conclusion:</strong> Condition 2.6 of the RCoA requires the Certificate of Authorisation holder to prepare on an annual basis, a statement as to the measures taken or adopted in relation to the prevention of damage to the environment following anticipated events (including closure) or accidents/incidents, as may be associated with discharges or overflows from the waste water works.</td>
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