



# BALLINA FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME

## Environmental Impact Assessment Report Chapter 4: Assessment of Alternatives

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**Chapter 4: Consideration of Alternatives**

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## Chapter 4: Consideration of Alternatives

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## 4 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) presents an overview of the main reasonable alternatives studied during the development of the Proposed Scheme. It presents a summary of the detailed Options Development (RPS, 2024) that has been undertaken to identify a preferred option for the Scheme. The preferred option has been further assessed in terms of alternative layouts and location aimed at reducing potential impacts and also maximizing opportunities.

The consideration of alternatives has been undertaken by a multi-disciplinary technical, environmental and planning project team and is considered to have concluded with the identification and selection of solutions that provide the best balance between technical, environmental and community / social indicators.

### 4.2 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

The consideration of alternatives is a mandatory part of the EIA process in section 31 of the 2014 EIA Directive. Article 5(1)(d) of the Directive, for example provides that the information to be provided by the developer shall include:

*“A description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the project on the environment.”*

The 2017 “Guidance on the preparation of the environmental impact assessment report (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU)” notes that:

*“Identifying and considering Alternatives can provide a concrete opportunity to adjust the Project’s design in order to minimise environmental impacts and, thus, to minimise the Project’s significant effects on the environment. Additionally, the proper identification and consideration of Alternatives from the outset can reduce unnecessary delays in the EIA process, the adoption of the EIA decision, or the implementation of the Project.”*

The Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA, 2022) states the following in respect of alternatives:

*“The objective is for the developer to present a representative range of the practicable alternatives considered. The alternatives should be described with ‘an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option’. It is generally sufficient to provide a broad description of each main alternative and the key issues associated with each, showing how environmental considerations were taken into account in deciding on the selected option. A detailed assessment (or ‘mini-EIA’) of each alternative is not required”.*

Alternatives may be considered at several stages in the EIA process, reflective of initial stages where location and form are most relevant and at later stages where alternative designs may be required to address emerging environmental issues.

### 4.3 Consideration of Alternatives

#### 4.3.1 Do Nothing

The ‘Do Nothing’ scenario is defined as the option involving no future expenditure on water management infrastructure, flood defences and differs from the ‘Do Minimum’ alternative in that it also assumes no future maintenance of such infrastructure. This involves maintaining the status quo without taking any proactive steps to address the existing and future flood risks associated with the River Moy and its tributaries. This includes a description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the Proposed Scheme as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort based on the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.

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Hydraulic modelling has clearly demonstrated that the current infrastructure does not meet the required Target Standard of Protection (SoP) of 1% of the Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) for fluvial areas and 0.5% of the AEP for coastal areas, also referred to the 1 in 100 year and 1 in 200-year flood events, respectively. This means that there is an unacceptable risk of flooding and damage to property and infrastructure. In addition, the current flood defences need repair, in particular some of the quay walls along the River Moy and, if not addressed, may fail in the future, further increasing the flood risk and associated damage to property and infrastructure.

The 'Do Nothing' scenario could mean the failure of the existing levels of protection and thus does not meet current or future acceptable levels of flood protection and is thus not a sustainable alternative. This alternative has not been considered further.

### 4.3.2 Do Minimum

The 'Do Minimum' measure consists predominantly of repair and ongoing maintenance works to maintain the existing water management infrastructure. Although the current level of protection would be maintained in this scenario, the current infrastructure does not meet the required Target SoP, and the risk of flooding is considered unacceptable.

Although doing the minimum will not result in any impacts related to the construction and development of the Proposed Scheme, it is not a sustainable alternative, so it was not considered further.

### 4.3.3 Alternative Design

An Option Development Process (RPS, 2024) was undertaken to identify engineering options for the Ballina FRS that meet the required SoP. The process undertaken aimed at identifying options that are economically viable and environmentally acceptable while also being satisfactory to the community and other stakeholders.

#### 4.3.3.1 Screening of Structural Measures

Various structural measures were considered as FRS options for the River Moy and its tributaries:

- **Relocate and Reconstruct Properties**

This measure considers relocating receptors out of the floodplain. This may be achieved if the receptor can be physically moved, if there are suitable, equivalent replacement receptors, or if the receptors can be demolished and re-constructed in a suitable location.

- **Divert River and Flood Bypass Channel**

Diverting the river would consist of constructing a new channel or culvert network which would convey the full flow of the watercourse. The reach of the river downstream of this diversion would become redundant. A flood bypass channel would be similar but would convey part of the flood flows of the watercourse. The flood bypass channel would therefore not need to be as large as a full river diversion and the reach of the river downstream would remain active.

- **Upstream Storage**

Upstream storage was considered for risk areas in Ballina. Where suitable storage areas are available flood water can be stored during a flood event reducing flows and volumes of water in the watercourses. In screening for upstream storage, various criteria need to be confirmed. The upstream catchment needs to be able to provide suitable storage locations. The upstream catchment needs to be able to generate sufficient flood water volumes relative to flood water volumes at the risk area. These two criteria were considered for the Ballina watercourses.

- **Wall and Embankments**

Hard defences such as flood walls or embankments form a barrier between the river and the floodplain, effectively reducing the size of the river's floodplain where receptors are at risk.

- **Increased Conveyance**

Increased conveyance was considered for all the watercourses in Ballina with flood risk. This measure considered methods of reducing head loss through the watercourse system and considered alterations

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to the watercourse channel such as slope, depth, width and roughness. By improving these parameters water levels may be reduced in the channel and flood risk also reduced. Where structures, located along a watercourse, have been identified as increasing flood risk this measure was considered. By reducing the head loss at the inlet, outlet or across the structure, flood risk may be reduced.

Measures that would improve conveyance, reduce the flow in the channels or contain the flood water before reaching receptors at risk were **screened in**, as shown in **Table 4-1**. This provided a shortlist of measures to be considered in the further development of options.

**Table 4-1: Screening results of Structural Measures**

Measure	Moy	Quignamanger	Bunree	Brusna	Tullyegan	Knockanelo
Relocate / Reconstruct properties	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Divert river	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flood bypass channel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Upstream flood storage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Walls & Embankments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increase conveyance – change channel / floodplain, remove constraints, reduce roughness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increase conveyance – specify ongoing maintenance <sup>1</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sediment deposition and traps <sup>2</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tidal barrage	✓	X	X	X	X	X

### 4.3.3.2 Options Development

Options were selected based on achieving the Target SoP for protecting the areas at flood risk within the community of Ballina i.e., 1% of the AEP for fluvial areas and 0.5% of the AEP for coastal areas option development.

Potential options for inclusion in the Proposed Scheme are provided in **Table 4-2**.

**Table 4-2: Potential Design Options**

Location	Option	Option elements
Moy	Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flood walls</li> </ul>
Quignamanger	Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversion culvert upgrade</li> </ul>
	Option 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversion Culvert upgrade</li> <li>Flood walls</li> <li>Culvert upgrade</li> </ul>
Bunree	Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culvert upgrades</li> <li>Channel upgrades</li> <li>Culvert removal</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Maintenance issues not identified as a flooding mechanism.

<sup>2</sup> Sediment not identified as a flooding mechanism.

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Location	Option	Option elements
	Option 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversion culvert</li> <li>• Culvert upgrade</li> <li>• Culvert removal</li> </ul>
	Option 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New culvert</li> <li>• Culvert removal</li> </ul>
Brusna	Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood walls and embankments</li> </ul>
Tullyegan	Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood walls</li> </ul>
	Option 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upstream flood storage</li> </ul>
Knockanelo	Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversion culvert inlet upgrade</li> <li>• Culvert upgrades</li> </ul>
	Option 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversion culvert inlet upgrade</li> <li>• Upstream flood storage (online)</li> </ul>
	Option 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversion culvert upgrade</li> </ul>
	Option 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversion culvert inlet upgrade</li> <li>• Upstream flood storage (offline)</li> </ul>
	Option 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversion culvert inlet upgrade</li> <li>• Culvert replacement</li> </ul>

### 4.3.3.3 Emerging Preferred Option

A Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) and Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA), which considers technical, social, economic and environmental criteria was used to compare the options (See **Table 4-3** and **Table 4-4**). From these analyses, the options with the best value for money and providing the most positive benefits to the community of Ballina were identified.

For the River Moy, Option 1, flood walls were the only option identified. It is the most economic and sustainable solution identified for the River Moy and can accommodate additional flow through the provision of freeboard. Environmentally, it didn't score as well as the other tributaries due to potential impact to the River Moy SAC and to the flora and fauna in and around the River Moy

For the Quignamanger, Option 1 and 2 performed similarly in the MCA and CBA. Overall Option 2, which allows for a diversion culvert upgrade, flood walls and outfall culvert upgrade, was identified as the most sustainable solution. Option 2 scored the best environmentally. The main factor influencing this score was the impact the options have to fisheries in culverting the lower reaches of the culvert.

For the Bunree, Option 3, a new culvert scored highest in the MCA and CBA. The freeboard assessment showed Option 3 to also be the most robust solution to increased flows.

For the Brusna, Option 1, hard defences including walls and embankments was the only option identified. It is the most economic and sustainable solution identified for the River Brusna and can accommodate additional flow through the provision of freeboard. Option 1 has a low environmental score due to the potential impact it may have to the River Moy SAC and to the River Brusna fisheries habitats.

For the Tullyegan Option 1, hard defences scored highest in the MCA and CBA. A freeboard assessment showed Option 1 to also be the most robust solution to increased flows, requiring the least amount of freeboard and avoids additional impact to agricultural land upstream. Option 1 scored better than Option 2 environmentally. The main factor influencing this was barrier that would be placed across the stream in Option 2 disconnecting the upstream and downstream reaches and creating a potential barrier to fish.

For the Knockanelo, Option 1, a combination of diversion culvert inlet upgrade and culvert upgrade, scored the highest in the MCA and CBA. However, Option 1 would not be able to accommodate additional flows in the Knockanelo Stream. Given that there is a high level of uncertainty associated with the flows in the Knockanelo Stream, Option 1's ability to provide the design SoP would be uncertain. As such Option 1 was not considered the most sustainable option. Option 2, diversion culvert inlet upgrade with online upstream storage scored best after Option 1 in the MCA and CBA. The freeboard assessment identified that Option 2 could only accommodate additional flow if additional flood embankments were provided upstream of the

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storage dam to protect properties. This potential increased flood risk due to the construction of a storage dam is considered socially unacceptable while other viable options are available. Option 2 was therefore not considered the most sustainable option. Option 5, a combination of diversion culvert inlet upgrade and culvert replacement scored best, after Options 1 and 2 in the MCA and CBA. The freeboard assessment identified that Option 5 can accommodate additional flows with further inlet wing wall modifications. Option 5 was identified as the most sustainable option for the Knockanelo. However, given that the Knockanelo Stream Catchment is ungauged with a high level of uncertainty used in the freeboard assessment, the most sustainable option, option 5, would become technically complex to accommodate the freeboard flows leading to difficulties in buildability. It is therefore recommended to decouple the Knockanelo Stream from the main scheme and progress it in parallel allowing additional time to monitor the watercourse and reduce the hydrological uncertainty (see **Section 4.3.3.4**). Out of the 228 residential and 69 commercial properties at risk from flooding in Ballina, the Proposed Scheme will provide flood protection to 187 residential properties and 54 commercial properties. The future Knockanelo Scheme will provide protection to the remaining at risk properties.

**Table 4-3: MCA Scoring**

Watercourse	Option No.	Technical Score	Social Score	Economic Score	Environmental Score	Total
Quignamanger	Option 1	670	279	337	-149	1137
	Option 2	770	279	337	-144	1242
Bunree	Option 1	570	742	764	-121	1955
	Option 2	560	742	764	-121	1945
	Option 3	670	742	764	-121	2055
Brusna	Option 1	740	71	168	-632	347
Tullyegan	Option 1	900	126	289	-56	1260
	Option 2	680	126	253	-262	798
Knockanelo	Option 1	200	823	714	-118	1219
	Option 2	480	823	678	-92	1889
	Option 3	450	823	714	-126	1861
	Option 4	430	823	642	-92	1803
	Option 5	450	823	714	-118	1869
Moy	Option 1	550	830	1156	-806	1729

**Table 4-4 CBA Scoring**

Watercourse	Option No.	Basic Construction Cost	Total Cost excluding Optimism Bias	Optimism Bias	Total Cost including Optimism Bias
Quignamanger	Option 1	€1,083,014	€1,809,176	60%	€2,894,681
	Option 2	€1,229,546	€2,037,671	60%	€3,260,273
Bunree	Option 1	€2,237,898	€3,520,689	60%	€5,633,102
	Option 2	€2,079,838	€3,168,410	60%	€5,069,456
	Option 3	€1,279,315	€2,029,684	60%	€3,247,495
Brusna	Option 1	€1,617,594	€2,466,918	60%	€3,947,069
Tullyegan	Option 1	€607,944	€927,664	60%	€1,484,262
	Option 2	€429,184	€927,814	60%	€1,484,502
Knockanelo	Option 1	€431,959	€740,855	60%	€1,185,369
	Option 2	€1,369,288	€2,403,854	60%	€3,846,166
	Option 3	€3,582,579	€5,588,363	60%	€8,941,380
	Option 4	€4,004,135	€7,520,183	60%	€12,032,293
	Option 5	€2,695,073	€4,370,864	60%	€6,993,383



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Watercourse	Option No.	Basic Construction Cost	Total Cost excluding Optimism Bias	Optimism Bias	Total Cost including Optimism Bias
Moy	Option 1	€10,542,818	€14,719,665	60%	€23,551,463

### 4.3.3.4 Decoupling the Knockanelo

Upon further design development, all options for the Knockanelo were found to have significant uncertainties leading to increased design flows (and increased size of culverts etc;). To identify suitable options for the Knockanelo further investigations are required. A flow monitoring regime has been established for the Knockanelo Stream which will allow more accurate flow estimations and reduce the extent and size of any freeboard upgrades required to any potential option. The installed level monitor can be viewed at <https://waterlevel.ie/0000034125/0001/week/>. To allow time to gather and assess the additional flow data, it was agreed to decouple the Knockanelo Stream from the main scheme.

To avoid delaying the main scheme, the Knockanelo will be progressed separately. The preferred option will be confirmed following receipt of data from the flow monitoring, and it will be progressed through a separate consenting process in the future. Properties that are impacted by the Knockanelo, (41 residential and 15 commercial), will be protected once the Knockanelo scheme is advanced.

The Knockanelo is not integral to the efficacy of the proposed Ballina Flood Relief Scheme and as such, neither the Ballina FRS nor any potential future Knockanelo relief works are necessary to the functionality of the other.

The main scheme is properly screened and assessed under the EIA Directive.

### 4.3.3.5 Nature-Based Solutions

RPS completed a Nature-based Catchment Management (NbCM) assessment for the Ballina catchment to better understand what nature-based solutions (NBS) could be considered within the Proposed Scheme catchment area. The measures proposed would intercept rainfall, slow overland flow, and/or store water. The NBS will also be considered as part of the Climate Adaptation Pathway (See **Section 4.3.3.6**).

The assessment concluded that there were no NBS solutions that would entirely address the SoP required for the Proposed Scheme due to the predominately tidal nature of flooding along the River Moy. Fluvial flooding risk could be reduced with the implementation of NBS within the wider catchment; however, current legislation and an onus to prove 1 in a 100-year flood resilience would make these options unsuited to meet the project requirements.

Government funding for Flood Relief Schemes is typically based on a positive CBA where a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of greater than 1 can be demonstrated. This requires a monetary demonstration of the benefit that the scheme will provide in the form of damages avoided from flooding. The effectiveness of the NbCM measures identified is very uncertain making it difficult to demonstrate the monetary benefit. At present, there is no guidance on how to account for this uncertainty and bring NbCM measures into the Flood Relief Scheme.

Various NbCM measures will require specialist input, separate plans, large scale landowner negotiations, and large-scale environmental assessments. This will likely increase the programme for the development and implementation of the scheme. It has therefore been recommended that the NbCM measures identified be progressed through a separate and parallel strategy using a coordination group led by Mayo County Council (MCC) and will therefore not form part of the Ballina FRS. This group would have the required specialist and local knowledge to implement the NbCM measures and be tasked with procuring the funds, agreements and permissions to do so.

A potential NbCM plan for the River Moy would include the following:

- Woodland creation
- Land management practices
- Land management features

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- River restoration

Assuming that NbCM measures are implemented in the Ballina catchment it will be essential that their performance is measured through flood flow monitoring. Suitable river monitoring of the ungauged tributaries to the River Moy should be commenced as soon as possible to record current catchment conditions.

Further assessment of strategies for implementation of a NbCM Plan is provided in the NbCM report, which has been included as an appendix of the Ballina FRS Option Development Report (RPS, 2024) and available on the project website (ballinafrs.ie).

### 4.3.3.6 Climate Adaptation

The adaptability of the Proposed Scheme to predicted climate change scenarios has been assessed as part of the hydrology report, options report and Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). The hydrology report examined the effects of climate change on sea levels, river flows was assessed in the Mid-Range Future Scenario (MRFS) and High-End Future Scenario (HEFS). It was identified that for the preferred adaptation pathway to remain open, additional works would be required to the preferred option in year one of the construction phase. These works are:

- Quignamanger Stream - no adaptation required in year 1.
- Bunree Stream - Upsizing the proposed culvert to convey the 1% AEP HEFS flow.
- Brusna River - Constructing the wall foundations to accommodate a wall height to the 1 % AEP HEFS SoP in case the walls have to be raised to reach the SoP in the future and securing land to accommodate a larger flood embankment to the 1 % AEP HEFS SoP. The foundations have been designed to accommodate the HEFS.
- Tullyegan Stream - Constructing the wall foundations to accommodate a wall height to the 1 % AEP HEFS SoP in case the walls have to be raised to reach the SOP in the future and securing land to accommodate a larger flood embankment to the 1 % AEP HEFS SoP. The foundations have been designed to accommodate the HEFS.
- River Moy - Constructing the wall foundations to accommodate a wall height to the 1% AEP HEFS SoP in case the walls have to be raised to reach the SoP in the future. The foundations have been designed to accommodate the HEFS.

## 4.3.4 Alternative Locations

### 4.3.4.1 Construction Compound Locations

Construction compound locations were strategically identified across the Proposed Scheme based on proximity to the proposed works. Priority was given to disturbed areas owned by MCC. Private lands on which access is likely to be granted were also considered. The locations (**Figure 5-2 in Chapter 5: Project Description**) are as follows:

- Ballina Diaries site and adjacent boat club site.
- MCC lands on Barrett Street.
- Sites owned by Bourke Builders located on:
  - Ridgepool Road.
  - Behy Road.
  - Bonniconlon Road

Further details regarding the proposed compound locations are provided in **Chapter 5: Project Description**.

Baseline ecological surveys did not identify any sensitivities at the proposed sites. Furthermore, consultation with landowners has indicated that the sites would be made available for use as construction compounds. For this reason, no further alternatives were considered.

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### 4.3.5 Alternative Layouts

Alternative layouts for each of the scheme's sections evolved over a design process that included input from environmental experts, as well as contributions from stakeholders and feedback from public consultations (**Chapter 3: Consultation**).

#### 4.3.5.1 Public Open Space - River Moy

Opportunities for the Proposed Scheme to be incorporated in the future Ballina Town Public Realm were considered. This culminated in the improvement of the plaza opposite Muredach's Cathedral along Cathedral Road into a Public Open Space area that can be incorporated into the future public realm (see **Chapter 5: Project Description** for more details). The planned open space will consist of a raised platform which will serve the necessary flood protection. Access to the River Moy will be maintained and visual connectivity will be facilitated for all users (including wheelchair users). The landscape design has included architectural input from MCC as well as a specialist Conservation Architect (**Chapter 19: Landscape and Visual**) to ensure that it is in keeping with the built heritage of Ballina.

#### 4.3.5.2 Protection of Tufa Habitat – Quignamanger Stream

The majority of flood defence works on the Quignamanger consist of the replacement of the existing diversion culvert. The original preferred option included the extension of this culvert to replace the current open section of the river, including the upgrade of the section under Quay Road and extending into the River Moy. However, based on the identification of Tufa habitat in this area as part of the ecological baseline studies, the option of flood walls within this area was selected as the preferred option. In addition, to facilitate the movement of fish into the river, the culvert underneath Quay Road will be replaced with a box culvert (2 m x 1 m), and the existing culvert on the River Moy side of the Quay Road will be removed. The alternative layout includes the set back of the southern flood wall to protect existing habitat on the bank of the open channel and allows for a small area of natural floodplain. The biodiversity potential of this area is further detailed in **Chapter 9: Aquatic Biodiversity**.

#### 4.3.5.3 Access to Rathkip/Shanaghy - Brusna River

It was originally proposed to raise the road to the river bridge that leads to Rathkip/Shanaghy. The alternative of providing a flood embankment on the river side of the road was considered. The option is preferred as it will negate the need for a road diversion during construction thus lowering the ecological impact footprint in a sensitive habitat (part of the River Moy SAC). It is expected to be a lower impact solution while still achieving the flood management objectives.

#### 4.3.5.4 Protection of Trees and Otter Habitat – Tullyegan Stream

Based on the tree survey undertaken for the EIAR, it was apparent that many mature trees would need to be removed to accommodate the proposed flood walls along the Tullyegan Stream. The layout of the flood walls has thus been reconfigured and moved inland from the riparian zone to allow for the protection of these trees and negate their removal.

In addition, terrestrial ecological surveys revealed that the wooded section on the northern side of the river, adjacent to the railway embankment acts as a passage for otters (a species protected under the Habitats Directive). The scheme layout was changed in this section to substitute the proposed flood walls with embankments in this section to facilitate passage of otters in this area. The layout of the flood defences in this area are given in **Chapter 5: Project Description**.

#### 4.3.5.5 Ridgepool – Protection of Habitat

Given the sensitivities of the River Moy, instream works have been avoided where possible to minimise potential impacts on salmon and lamprey which are qualifying interests (QI species) of the SAC. However, given the limited available space on the left bank of the River Moy in the section from the Salmon Weir to the Upper Bridge (Ridgepool), it will not be possible to avoid instream works in that area. This is further complicated by the need to restrict the construction works to times that will minimise the impacts on salmon

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angling season (April-September), a key activity within Ballina as well as, spawning season for lamprey (April-June).

Options were considered for the undertaking of the works on both sides of the river including the use of cofferdams (sheet piling, sandbags) as well as the installation of causeways or ramp to allow access to the construction areas. Based on initial noise and vibration assessments undertaken as part of the EIAR, it was concluded that sheet piling will result in unacceptable noise and vibration impacts on residents. Piling was also rejected due to the likely presence of shallow bedrock. In light of the removal of sheet piling from the design, the requirement for a hydroacoustic assessment for the Proposed Scheme was removed.

Further consideration has deemed it possible that most of the construction works on the quay wall adjacent to Ridgepool Road can be undertaken from the roadside and works on the instream side will be limited to that which is deemed necessary. This work will be undertaken using cofferdams constructed using 1-tonne sandbags, as necessary and will be limited to short sections of no more than 50m along the quay wall at any one time. On the western bank of the river there is restricted access to the river and thus a ramp will be needed to facilitate works.

A ramp is to be constructed along the banks of the river from the IFI building in order to gain access to the area in front of the warehouse and apartments located immediately upstream of the IFI building. This will allow for flood walls to be constructed in this area and connect to the existing defences at the Ballina Arts Centre.

The ramp layout has been planned in consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) together with the aquatic specialist's input to minimise any impact on lamprey spawning habitat. The necessary machinery and materials will be craned over the Upper Bridge and will be limited to the size needed to complete the works. In addition, the IFI agreed to restrict the angling season to June and July during the 2 year that construction will be taking place to facilitate the works to be undertaken during periods of low water. More detail is provided in **Chapter 5: Project Description** and the potential impacts are described in **Chapter 9: Aquatic Biodiversity**.

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### 4.4 Chapter References

RPS, 2024. *Ballina Flood Relief Scheme Options Report*, s.l.: s.n.