

Following amendments proposed to the dry heath habitat creation, as well as increasing the area of barn owl habitat enhancement at Menlough from c.8ha to c.8.9ha (area indicated on the plate below), the following is the revised text which was presented in Section 1.1 of the Response to Queries Raised in Module 1 of the N6 Galway City Ring Road Oral Hearing document (page 4).

“In conclusion, whilst the proposed road development will result in an estimated loss of c.9.9ha of barn owl habitat within 5km of the Menlo Castle nest site, the creation of: (i) c.8.9ha of rough grassland habitat at Menlough (by applying the revised cattle grazing approach); (ii) c.1.81ha of Calcareous grassland habitat at Menlough; and (iii) c.~~0.41.95~~ha of Dry heath habitat west of the River Corrib will result in c.11.~~1176~~ha of barn owl habitat being created/enhanced. This will provide an overall gain of c.1.~~2186~~ha of barn owl habitat within the foraging range of the Menlo Castle nest site as a result of the proposed road development.”

As a consequence of the increase in area of habitat being managed the number of cattle required to meet the required stocking density increases from 11 to 13. The following is the revised text which was presented in Section 1.1 of the Response to Queries Raised in Module 1 of the N6 Galway City Ring Road Oral Hearing document (page 3).

“Following the NPWS’s query on Tuesday 25 February 2020 at the oral hearing, an enhanced alternative approach was discussed with John Lusby (BirdWatch Ireland) to manage the entirety of the c.8ha of grasslands at Menlo Castle, currently proposed for bat habitat enhancement, for barn owl habitat (Plate 1 of Aebhin Cawley’s Biodiversity EIA Statement of Evidence). This would involve grazing the area for a three-month period between July and October by cattle at a stocking rate of 0.35 livestock units/ha (i.e. using c.~~11~~ 13 cattle). This revised approach to barn owl habitat creation would result in c.8ha of low intensity managed farmland habitat which would offer a greater benefit to the local barn owl population than the current proposal. It is now proposed to adopt this enhanced approach, and this will result in a gain of c.8ha of barn owl habitat at this location.”

The revisions do not change the statement already provided that there will be an overall net gain of barn owl habitat within the foraging range of the Menlo Castle nest site as a result of the proposed road development.

**Plate showing 8.9ha Area of barn owl habitat enhancement at Menlough**

