

DECEMBER 2007

Corrib Onshore Gas Pipeline Community Update

Inside:

**Map of Route
Corridor Options**

**Approach to
Consultation**

**Community Views of the
Short-listed Corridors**

**Descriptions of
Corridor Variations**

**Designated
Conservation Areas**

Route Selection Criteria

**Further Consultation
Opportunities**

What Next?

Route Selection – Progress Update

Since our last community update in November, RPS has continued to focus on identifying a modified onshore pipeline route within the core area around the three short-listed corridors (Corridors A, B and C) which we presented to the public on September 19th. Since then RPS has continued consultation with landowners, the local community and statutory bodies.

Following further community consultation and environmental and technical studies, variations of Corridors A and C have emerged.

Corridor A – RPS have identified Corridor A1 as a further option which may address some of the environmental issues concerning the original Corridor A, by limiting the length of the corridor that traverses the intact blanket bog in Rossport.

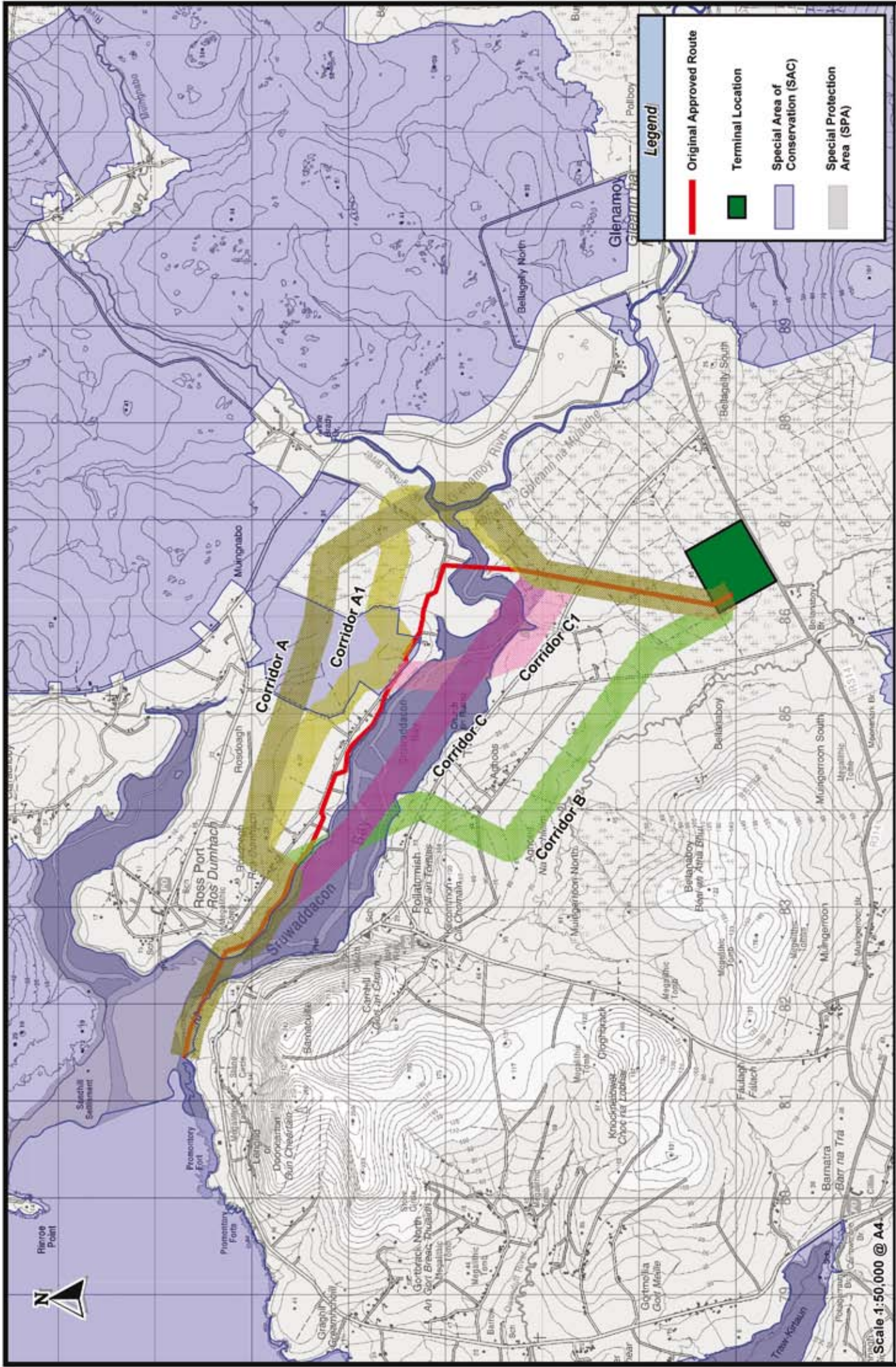
Corridor C – RPS have identified Corridor C1 as a further option which limits the length of the pipeline within Sruwaddacon Bay.

Consultation around the short-listed corridors and their variations will continue until January 18th, 2008 after which RPS will identify a single preferred corridor and ultimately a final preferred route. RPS will inform the community as this happens.



Produced by:
RPS Project Office, Seafeld House
Belmullet, Co Mayo

T 097 20720
E routeinfo@rpsgroup.com
www.corribgaspipeline.ie
www.corribgas.ie



Corrib Onshore Pipeline - Route Corridor Options

Approach to Consultation

Over the past ten months RPS has engaged in a process of community consultation and has endeavoured to keep the community and landowners up-to-date with our progress in the route selection process.

We have hosted a number of public events where we have sought community input into the route selection process. These briefly include:

- Open Day 1 held in the Broadhaven Bay Hotel on February 27th.
- Workshop on route selection criteria held on March 31st in Geesala.
- 'Open House' in the RPS Project Office in Seafield House, Belmullet, held between April 30th and May 4th.
- Open Day 2, where RPS presented eight route corridor options in the Broadhaven Bay Hotel on June 12th.
- Public display of short-listed corridors held in the RPS project office and open to the public from September 19th onwards.
- 'Focus Week' held in our project office held from November 12th to 16th.

Since short-listing in September we have talked to many landowners and members of the community who have given us their views on the short-listed corridors.

Community Views of the Short-listed Corridors

Below is a snapshot of some of the feedback we have received from the community to date. This together with the other route selection criteria will inform the route selection process.

Corridor A

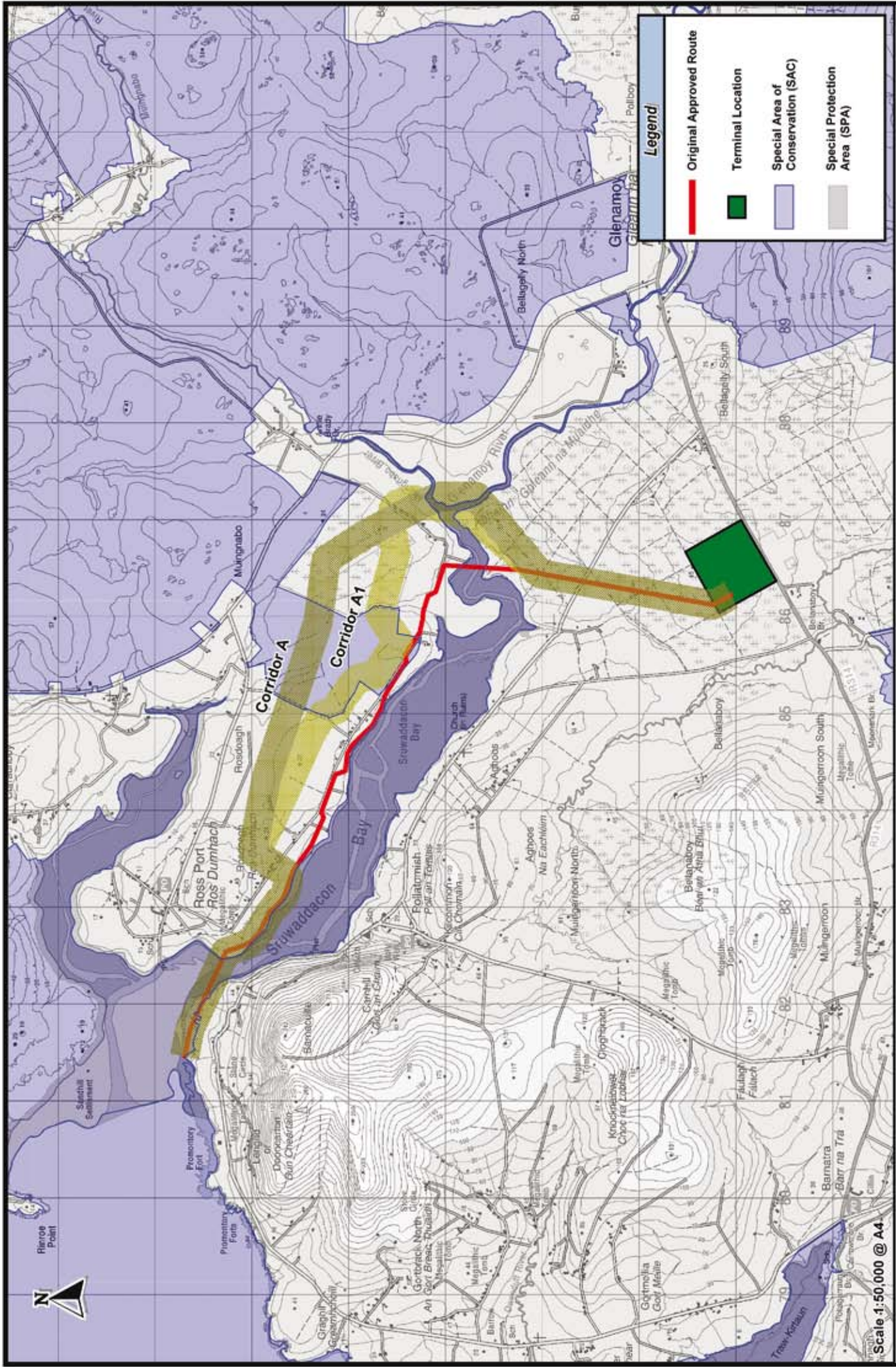
- Traverses a section of commonage.
- Traverses a section of intact blanket bog in the Glenamoy Bog Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Corridor B

- Traverses an area of 'striped land' where there are a significant number of share-owners.
- This is a new geographical area and therefore impacts people not previously involved in the project.

Corridor C

- Has the least impact on people and land and is the furthest from housing.
- Traverses Sruwaddacon Bay, which is part of an SAC / SPA designated conservation area.



Corrib Onshore Pipeline - Route Corridor A Variation

Descriptions of Corridor Variations

Corridor A and A1

Community

- As these corridors divert north from the previously approved route, they achieve separation distances from dwellings that are greater than 70 metres.
- These corridors mainly traverse areas of improved agricultural land, plantation forestry and peatland.
- They also traverse an area of commonage to the east of Rossport.

Environment

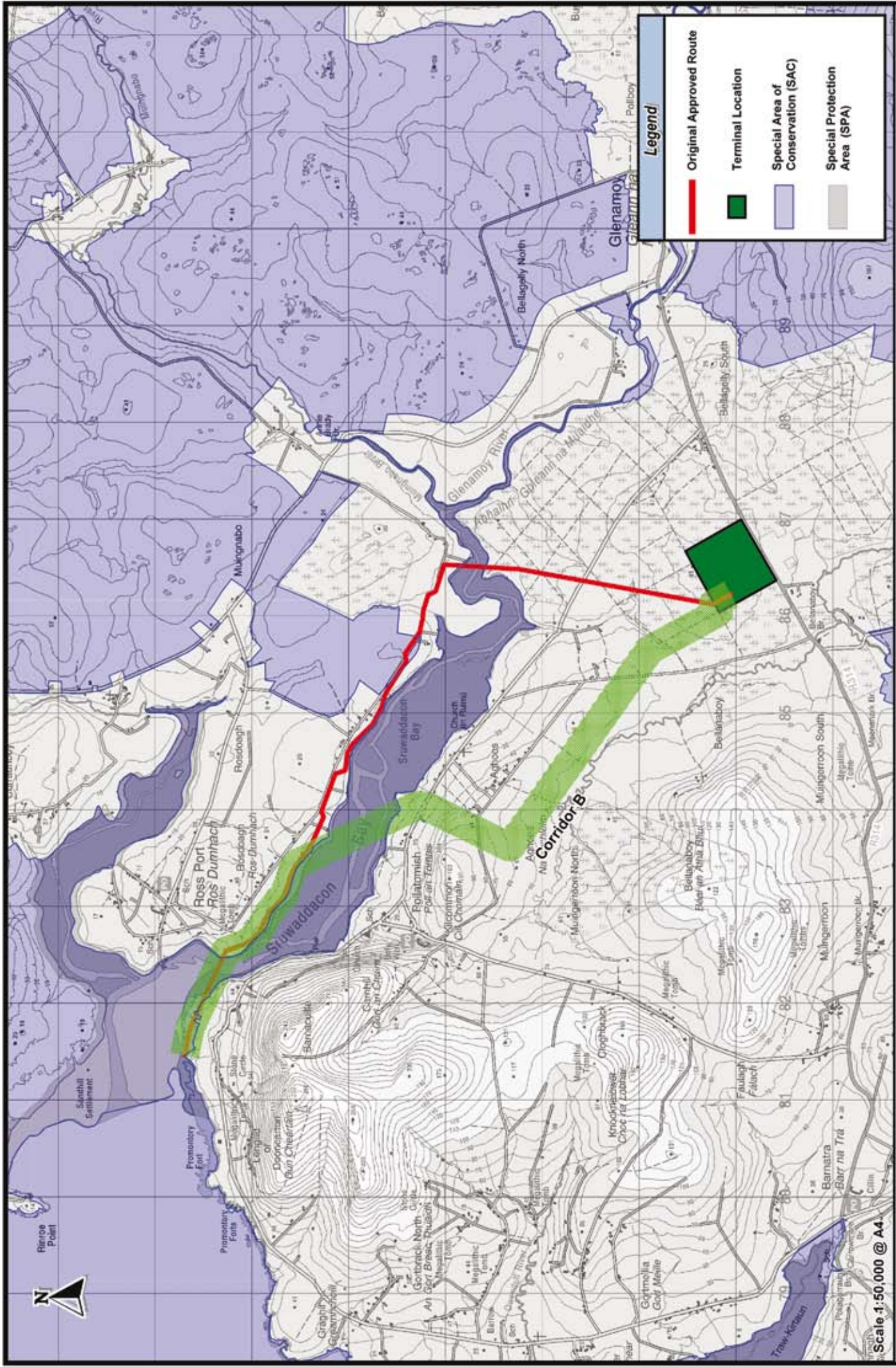
- The offshore approach and landfall construction will have minimum impact on the Blacksod / Broadhaven SPA.
- The short crossing of Sruwaddacon Bay and two river crossings (Glenamoy and Muingnabo) are all within the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC. The estuarine and intertidal approaches to Sruwaddacon Bay are Annex I habitats under the EU Habitats Directive.
- The Bay also forms an integral part of the Glenamoy River salmonid fishery and is important for salmon and sea trout. This is also important from a local fisheries and tourism perspective.

Technical

- Corridor A is approximately 10.5km long while Corridor A1 is approximately 10.8km long.
- These corridors will use the previously approved landfall location at Glengad.

Main Difference Between Corridor A and A1

- Corridor A1 traverses less of the intact blanket bog in the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC.



Corrib Onshore Pipeline - Route Corridor B

Corridor B

Community

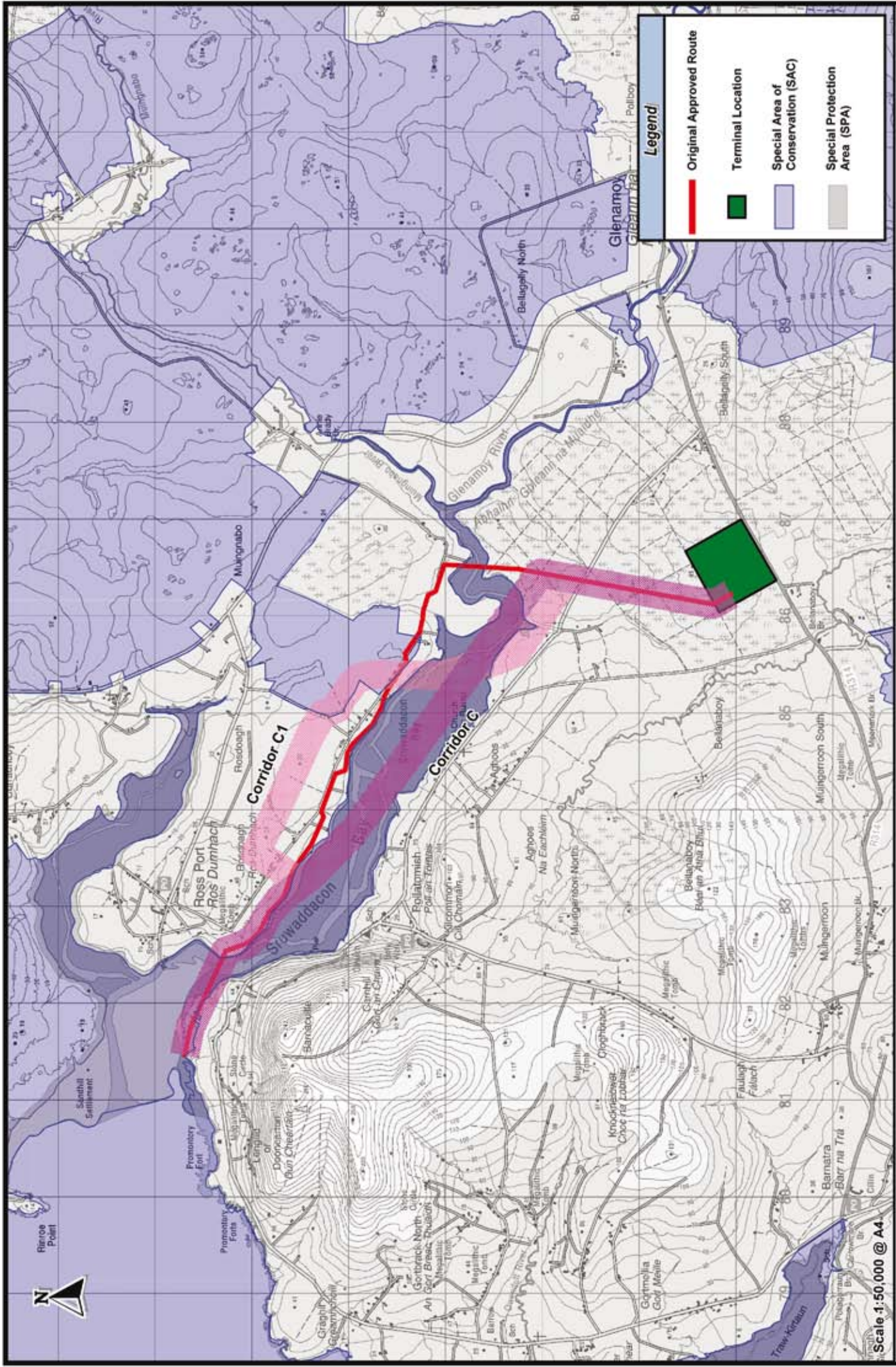
- There are no dwellings within the 300 metre corridor.
- This corridor mainly traverses areas of improved agricultural land and areas of plantation forestry.

Environment

- The offshore approach and landfall construction will have minimum impact on the Blacksod / Broadhaven SPA.
- This corridor includes two crossings of Sruwaddacon Bay within the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC for approximately 0.5km and 1km, respectively. The longer crossing is across two shallow channels and open sand flats. The estuarine and intertidal approaches to Sruwaddacon Bay are Annex I habitats under the EU Habitats Directive.
- The Bay also forms an integral part of the Glenamoy River salmonid fishery and is important for salmon and sea trout. This is also important from a local fisheries and tourism perspective.

Technical

- This corridor is approximately 8.3km and is mostly on land. The longer of the two crossings of Sruwaddacon Bay would be approximately 1km long.
- This corridor will use the previously approved landfall location at Glengad.



Legend

- Original Approved Route
- Terminal Location
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)

Corrib Onshore Pipeline - Route Corridor C Variation

Scale 1:50,000 @ A4

Corridor C and C1

Community

- As these corridors divert north from the previously approved route, they achieve separation distances from dwellings that are greater than 70 metres.

Environment

- The offshore approach and landfall construction will have minimum impact on the Blacksod / Broadhaven SPA.
- Corridor C and C1 include two crossings of Sruwaddacon Bay within the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC. In both corridors one crossing is 0.5km, whilst the other is 4km in Corridor C and 1km in Corridor C1. The longer crossing is across two shallow channels and open sand flats. The estuarine and intertidal approaches to Sruwaddacon Bay are Annex I habitats under the EU Habitats Directive.
- The Bay also forms an integral part of the Glenamoy River salmonid fishery and is important for salmon and sea trout. This is also important from a local fisheries and tourism perspective.

Technical

- Corridor C is approximately 8.2km long and Corridor C1 is approximately 9.1km long.
- Specialised construction methods will be required within Sruwaddacon Bay.
- These corridors will use the previously approved landfall location at Glengad.

Main Difference Between Corridor C and C1

- Corridor C1 follows Corridor A1 until it diverts into the Bay.
- Corridor C1 includes two crossings of Sruwaddacon Bay, the longest of which is 1km long. This crossing is shorter than Corridor C which includes a 4km crossing of the Bay.
- Corridor C1 is approximately 9.1km long whereas Corridor C is approximately 8.2km long.
- Corridor C1 goes through a small section of intact blanket bog.

Designated Conservation Areas

A number of queries have been received in relation to the designated areas within the study area i.e. the Glenamoy Bog Complex which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EU Habitats Directive. Sruwaddacon Bay forms part of the Blacksod / Broadhaven Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive. Further information on the designated conservation areas within the study area is outlined within the description of the individual corridors on pages 4-9.

Relevance of SACs and SPAs to the Route Selection Process

The Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive are significant pieces of EU environmental legislation that have relevance to the route selection process, because Ireland as a member state must abide by this legislation where applicable.

For example, in considering whether or not a development would impact on an SAC or SPA, the competent authorities will consider the manner in which the proposed development is being carried out and whether the development is likely to have an adverse impact.

It is important to note that the existence of SACs and SPAs does not preclude developments in these areas. Indeed there are many examples of both gas pipelines and other large infrastructural projects that have been developed within SACs / SPAs in Ireland.

The Gas Pipeline to the West (Bord Gáis Eireann) crossed a number of designated conservation areas which include the Shannon Callows SAC, the Suck Callows SPA, the River Fergus SPA and the Shannon Estuary SAC. The crossing of the River Shannon was deemed a critical factor in the route selection process and identification of a suitable crossing point with the least environmental impact had a major influence on the route selection process.

The South / North Gas Pipeline traversed the Boyne Islands SAC and the Boyne and Blackwater SAC. It also crossed the Stabbannan SPA adjacent to the M1 motorway from Belfast to Dublin. Construction methodologies were devised to minimise impact on the designated SAC areas. The environmental impact on the SPA was also limited by carrying out construction outside the over-wintering period for Brent Geese.

RPS supervised the safe construction of these two major gas pipelines in close co-operation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Route Selection Criteria

The final choice of pipeline route will be made on the basis of feedback from consultation together with an evaluation of the options against all of the following selection criteria.

Community

- Maximise safety
- Minimise impacts on people
- Proximity to dwellings / public centres
- Planning and land use

Environmental

- Minimise impacts on wildlife/habitats
- Avoid impacts on archaeology/cultural heritage
- Minimise visual impact

Technical Criteria and Project Requirements

- Pipeline construction and operation
- Minimise environmental disturbance
- Optimise pipeline design and operation
- Minimise pipeline length
- Location and access to landfall
- Project requirements (including cost and schedule)

Further Consultation Opportunities

We continue to welcome your input and views on the short-listed corridors and their variations. We would also like to advise that consultation around the route selection process will finish on January 18th, 2008.

There are a number of ways that landowners and the community can input into this process and make your views known to us:

- Drop into the RPS Project Office in Seafield House, Belmullet and view the short-listed corridors and their variations which are currently on display during office hours (Monday to Friday from 10am–5pm). Please note that we can only accommodate small groups due to the limited size of our project office.
- Log onto www.corribgaspipeline.ie which contains a map and descriptions of the short-listed corridors and their variations and other relevant information in relation to the onshore gas pipeline. You can also send us any queries or questions you may have through the ‘Tell Us Your Views’ link on the website homepage.
- Contact Lorraine Herity, RPS Consultation Team Manger directly in our Project Office on (097) 20720 to obtain project information or to discuss any concerns or queries you may have in relation to the onshore gas pipeline.
- You can also fill out the attached ‘Tell us Your Views’ forms and return to us using the free post service available.

What Next?

The final months of the route selection process will involve:

- Continued consultation with landowners and the community.
- Further detailed environmental and technical studies of the corridors.
- Continued efforts to seek access to the commonage areas of Corridor A and A1.
- Continued consultation with statutory bodies.
- Identification of a preferred corridor and a final route. We will inform the community of both choices as we progress the selection process and prior to submission of an application for consent.
- The submission of an application for consent will be followed by a statutory period whereby the public can view the application and make submissions.

RPS Project Office - Christmas Holidays

The RPS Project Office will close over the Christmas period from Friday December 21st and will reopen on Wednesday January 2nd.