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| **Information requested from the PAC** | **Interpretation and Response** |
| The Project Team’s latest assessment of Risk 9 on the risk register for the scheme. | It is assumed that the PAC is referring to Risk 9 within Appendix I of the OBC Risk Register which was in the folder of display materials from the Expert Witnesses for the Public Inquiry (PI) 2020. Please see the extract from Risk 9 below:    Post the 2020 PI, a report for additional information (18/06/2020) was developed by WSP on behalf of the Department at the request of the Commissioner. This report is centred around the justification of Risk 9. Risk 9 has evolved and has since been updated over this period. It has been captured within WS.04 below:      Since July 2007 both the NI Executive and the Irish Government have been committed to the delivery of the A5WTC. As such, it is designated as a Flagship Project of the Northern Ireland (NI) Executive. This means that it is prioritised ahead of other capital projects for funding. The continuing commitment to funding over the years is evidenced through the Fresh Start agreement in 2015 and New Decade New approach in 2020. Furthermore, following the release of the Draft Budget 2022-2025 in December 2021, the then Finance Minister, Conor Murphy, reconfirmed the Proposed Scheme’s Flagship status and the NI Executive’s commitment to the scheme.    Ireland’s 2021 National Development Plan 2021-2030 lists the Proposed Scheme as one of its strategic investment priorities and the recent update to the Irish Government’s Building a Shared Island, extends the budget to 2030 with a EUR1 billion commitment ring-fenced for investment in collaborative North/ South projects to deliver key cross-border initiatives including working with the Executive to deliver key cross-border infrastructure initiatives, including the A5WTC.  It is therefore assumed that the full capital allocation for the Proposed Scheme will be provided at the Executive level alongside contributions from the Irish Government, rather than being funded from within the Department’s typical budget allocations.  Final value for money and affordability factors will be considered again in detail as part of any decision to authorise the scheme; however, at this stage, the Department does not foresee any difficulties with either given the rationale set out above. |