



## **Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination**

### **CP0933 Thurles Station STATCOM-110kV [Exempted Development] County Tipperary**

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended ('the Regulations'), EirGrid has undertaken Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of relevant European sites, if the CP0933 Thurles Station PCR [Exempted Development] ('the Development') individually or in combination with other plans or projects will result in Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) on a European site(s).

The Development comprises the replacement of the existing gate to the substation, replacement of the chain-link fence around the entrance with palisade fencing and resurfacing the entrance area. All works are to be carried out entirely within the boundary of ESB-owned land.

### **Analysis of Pathways to European Sites**

The nearest European site to the Thurles 110kV Station is the Lower River Suir Special Area of Conservation (SAC)<sup>1</sup> approximately 6.1km from the substation boundary. Owing to the Qualifying Interests (QIs) of the site, its primary sensitivities relate to water pollution, changes in hydrological regime and disturbance of QI species within the site / functionally linked habitats.

Any potential negative impacts on the water environment in this SAC is excluded based on the limited scale and duration of the works, as well as the long distance to the closest European site. The closest waterbody that connects to the Lower River Suir SAC is the River Drish approximately 300m from Thurles substation. Any water quality impacts from the Development would be sufficiently diluted and attenuated at such flow distances. Therefore, there is no potential for negative interactions with QI freshwater pearl mussel, white-clawed crayfish, Atlantic salmon, twaite shad or lamprey species.

Potential impacts to QIs reproducing, spawning or foraging within and moving along habitats that are functionally linked to European sites was also excluded following consideration of the works involved and appraisal of the habitat requirements of the QI species. The Development does not comprise any works within waterbodies. The closest waterbody to Thurles substation potentially used by otter is the River Drish. However, at a distance of 300m, this lies beyond the maximum noise impact distance for otter, even considering the noisiest construction activities.

There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link that may result in LSEs in view of the applicable site Conservation Objectives.

### **AA Screening Statement**

In accordance with Regulation 42(7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 SI 477 as amended, EirGrid has made a determination following screening that an Appropriate Assessment is not required as the project individually or in combination with other plans or projects is not likely to have a significant effect on any European sites. The risk of LSEs on European sites can be excluded on the basis of objective evidence.

This Determination is based on the location, scale, extent and duration of the Development, including the temporary nature of works, and has not taken account of mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lower River Suir SAC 002137. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

Signed:



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28 June 2023