



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1086 Transformer Works at Dunstown and Woodland 400 kV Stations [Exempted Development] County Kildare and County Meath.

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 CP1086 Transformer Works at Dunstown and Woodland 400 kV Stations [Exempted Development] ('the Development') individually or in-combination with other plans or projects will result in likely significant effects on a European site(s).

The Development comprises the installation of tertiary chokes on transformers at Dunstown 400kV Station and Woodland 400kV station, as well as installation of a new transformer at Dunstown 400kV station.

All works are to be carried out entirely within the boundary of the existing substations.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

Woodland 400kV Station

The substation is approximately 23.2km from the closest European site which is Ballynafagh Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 001387)¹.

There are no watercourses or drainage ditches within the substation site with hydrological connectivity to this or any other European sites. There is a waterbody (Woodland_09) approximately 16m from the Development which is hydrologically linked 28km downstream to South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 004024)². However, as this is outside the Development boundary within which all works will take place, there is no potential for likely significant effects as no source-pathway-receptor linkage exists.

There are no SPAs within 20km of the substation.

None of the works require instream works, or works within or adjacent wetlands (including sites monitored by Birdwatch Ireland, bogs, or woodlands). None of the works are within the catchment of any Qualifying Interest (QI) freshwater pearl mussels *Margaritifera margaritifera*, Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, or lamprey species.

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

Dunstown 400 kV Station

The substation is approximately 9.4km from the closest European site which is Pollardstown Fen SAC (site code 000396)³, designated for several habitats and whorl snail species (which have very limited mobility and would not be expected to occur beyond a very short distance outside of the site). There is no mechanism by which the SAC could be affected by the Development works as there is no hydrological link or possible ecological pathway between the substation and the SAC.

¹ NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Ballynafagh Lake SAC 001387. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

² NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

³ NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Pollardstown Fen SAC 000396. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (site code 004063)⁴ is 7.6km from the substation. Owing to the Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the site, its primary sensitivities relate to loss of functionally-linked habitat and noise and visual disturbance. The Development lies within the maximum foraging distance of 15-20km reported for greylag goose *Anser anser*⁵, an SCI species of this SPA. Notwithstanding this, all works will be carried out within the existing station boundary comprising hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging / loafing by greylag goose. Lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*, the other SCI species, are habitat generalists for which loss of functionally-linked habitat is not a primary concern. At 9.4km distance, the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA lies beyond a precautionary impact buffer zone for visual and noise disturbance and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundary. Moreover, the relatively minor nature of the proposed works means that any noise disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development will be immaterial.

Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040)⁶ is 14.4km from the substation. The SPA is designated for merlin *Falco columbarius* and peregrine *Falco peregrinus*. The Development does not lie within the maximum foraging distance of merlin, however it is within the maximum foraging distance of peregrine⁷. Notwithstanding this, all works will be carried out within the existing station boundary comprising hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging / roosting SCI peregrine. At 14.4km distance, the SPA lies beyond a precautionary impact buffer zone for visual and noise disturbance, and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundary. Moreover, the relatively minor nature of the proposed works means that any noise disturbance of SCI outside of the SPA will be immaterial.

There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link that may result in likely significant effects 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 likely significant effects 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 temporary works, and has not taken account of measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Signed:



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⁴ NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA [004063]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁵ Scottish Natural Heritage (June 2016) Assessing connectivity with Special protection Areas (SPAs) Guidance. 4pp.

⁶ NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Wicklow Mountains SPA [004040]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁷ Scottish Natural Heritage (June 2016) Assessing connectivity with Special protection Areas (SPAs) Guidance. 4pp.