



## Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

### **CP1146 – Site Investigation Works: Carrickmines to Blackrock -Onshore Cable Replacement Project[Exempted Development] (County Dublin)**

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 Site Investigation Works for CP1146 Carrickmines to Blackrock Onshore Cable Replacement Project (the development) individually or in combination with other plans or projects would be likely to have a significant effect (s) on a European site(s).

The development comprises a number of rotary core boreholes (hereafter 'proposed GI locations') in suburban Dublin, to obtain geotechnical information for the Carrickmines to Blackrock - Onshore Cable Replacement Project.

The development is not located within any European site.

Proposed GI locations RC01-RC04 are located inland, between 4 and 5km from the nearest European sites in Dublin Bay, the closest of which are the South Dublin Bay SAC Conservation (SAC; site code 000210)<sup>1</sup> and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Special Protection Area (SPA; site code 004024)<sup>2</sup>. These GI locations are located on either side of the M50 motorway, on amenity grassland within private land. These proposed GI locations are c. 20m east of the Carrickmines Stream\_010, however, this watercourse is culverted underground for this section as it runs parallel with the M50. Therefore, there is no hydrological connection with the watercourse via surface water run-off. There are no hydrological or other pathways between these GI locations and any European sites.

The proposed GI location within Blackrock Park (RC05), is located c. 80m southwest of the high-water mark of the Dublin Bay coastal waterbody. This is also the boundary of the SAC and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA. Light-bellied Brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota*, is a Special Conservation Interest of numerous SPAs in Dublin Bay, the nearest of which is the nearby the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA. A relatively small number of Light-bellied Brent geese roosts in the ornamental lake at Blackrock Park at high tide (approximately 10, equivalent to c. 5% of the population for which SPAs in Ireland are designated). This relatively small population of Brent geese also occasionally graze on the grass bank on the roadside of the lake. However, none of the locations used by Brent in the vicinity of the proposed GI location at Blackrock Park are within the Zone of Influence of disturbance from the proposed GI location (or the main Carrickmines to Blackrock - Onshore Cable Replacement Project). This is because all locations used by Brent are screened from the works by the existing topography and vegetation. There are no watercourses near the proposed GI location which provide hydrological linkages within the designated sites of Dublin Bay or any other European sites.

The proposed GI location at Shellybanks (RC06) is within the hardstanding area of the Shelley Banks car park, 40m west of the high-water mark of the Dublin Bay coastal waterbody. The distance to the boundaries of the South Dublin Bay SAC and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA are located closer than the stated high water mark, 7m and c. 20m respectively. Significantly, there are no watercourses offering hydrological linkages between the works and these European sites. Significantly also, there are no high tide wintering bird roosts associated with the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA within the zone of influence of disturbance from the GI location. There are no hydrological or other pathways between these GI locations and any European sites.

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>2</sup> NPWS (2015) 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.

None of the proposed GI locations are within the catchment of any freshwater pearl mussels *Margaritifera*, or other sensitive aquatic species which are the QIs of European sites. Impact pathways to other far-flying mobile QI/SCI species from distant European sites do not arise, due to the absence of supporting habitats for such species within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the development, or because the development is outside the range of QI populations of a given species (e.g. which is the case lesser horseshoe bat, *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, and marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*).

As such, as discussed above, the risk of ex-situ impacts to Qualifying Interests (QI) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) roosting, foraging, or nesting away from European sites can be excluded, following analysis of known and potential habitats for mobile bird and other animal populations.

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 Development 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 proposed 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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30 August 2024