



## Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

### **CP1236 Shannonbridge – Ikerrin Tee – Thurles 110 kV Overhead Line Fibre Wrap [Exempted Development] (Counties Tipperary and Offaly)**

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 CP1236 Shannonbridge – Ikerrin Tee – Thurles 110 kV Overhead Line Fibre Wrap [Exempted Development] ('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 fibre wrapping of the existing Shannonbridge – Ikerrin Tee – Thurles 110 kV Overhead Line.

The development will require no removal of existing wooden polesets or steel masts, no vegetation removal, no instream works, and no hardstanding, or other land-use changes.

The development is not located within any European site; but is adjacent to the Slieve Bloom Mountains Special Protection Area (SPA; site code 4160<sup>1</sup>), located c.10 m the east of the development at its nearest point, and designated for breeding hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*. The next nearest European site is the Slieve Bloom Mountains Special Area of Conservation (SAC; sitecode 412<sup>2</sup>), c. 2.5 km from the development.

Analysis of the NPWS' Hen Harrier habitat mapping<sup>3</sup> and works locations indicates there is no optimal breeding habitat (second rotation and other forestry habitats, or peatlands) within the upper limit of disturbance distance for hen harrier.<sup>4</sup>

The development is partially located (c. 7.3 km of fibrewrapping works) within the Nore catchment Freshwater Pearl Mussels *Margaritifera*, for which the River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation is designated (site code 2162)<sup>5</sup>. However there will be no vegetation removal, breaking of ground, or instream works for the development, or associated temporary works. As such, there is no pathway for likely significant siltation or pollution effects.

The risk of ex-situ impacts to the Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests roosting, foraging, or nesting away from European sites has also been excluded, following analysis of known and potential habitats for mobile bird and other animal populations.

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 of the development, or because the development is outside the range of populations (e.g. which is the case for lesser horseshoe bat, *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, and marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*).

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Lough Oughter Complex SPA [004049]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>2</sup> NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives: Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC 000412.

Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

<sup>3</sup> Moran, P. & Wilson-Parr, R. (2015) Hen Harrier Special Protection Area (SPA) Habitat Mapping Project 2014. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 83. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Ireland


<sup>4</sup> 750m, for Flight Initiation Distance and Alert Distance : Whitfield, D.P., Ruddock, M. and Bullman, R., 2008. Expert opinion as a tool for quantifying bird tolerance to human disturbance. *Biological Conservation*, 141(11), pp.2708-2717.

<sup>5</sup> NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: River Barrow and River Nore SAC 002162. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

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 proposed development, including temporary works, and has not taken account of measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Signed

 5 May 2023

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