



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination CP1251a Finglas-North Wall Cable Decommissioning [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, whether CP1251a Finglas-North Wall Cable Decommissioning [Exempted Development] ('the Works') individually or in-combination with other plans or projects will result in likely significant effects on a European site(s).

The Works comprise the removal of 220 kilovolt (kV) fluid-filled cable circuits between Finglas and North Wall Substations. The decommissioning activities that will be required are as follows:

- A fluid extraction process:
 - The oil from the tanks in Finglas and North Wall 220kV Substations will be extracted in line with regulatory requirements.
- A pipeline removal process:
 - A winch will be connected to the existing high voltage (HV) cables to pull them into a banded area within the respective substation where they can be cut and removed to a lined waste skip, in accordance with waste regulatory requirements.
- A cleaning and assessment process:
 - Once the HV cables have been removed, the steel pipeline will be cleaned using a methodology in line regulatory requirements, until all fluid is removed, and the pipeline is fully cleaned.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

According to relevant evidence-based guidance¹, the maximum distance travelled (between roosting and feeding sites) by non-breeding bird species for which the complex of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Dublin Bay are designated is 20km. Ten European sites designated for mobile Special Conservation Interest (SCI) bird species are located within 20km of the Works, as follows (listed in order of increasing distance from the Works):

- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024², approximately 350m distant);
- North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006³, approximately 2.2km distant);
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236⁴, approximately 3.8km distant);
- Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016⁵, approximately 7.7km away);
- Howth Head Coast SPA (site code 004113⁶, approximately 10.4km away);
- Dalkey Islands SPA (site code 004172⁷, approximately 10.8km away);

¹ Published by NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH; SNH (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Version 3 - June 2016. Core foraging distance of 20 km applies to greylag geese, whooper swan, and barnacle goose.

² 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.

³ NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: North Bull Island SPA 004006. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁴ NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: North-west Irish Sea SPA 004236. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁵ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Baldoyle Bay SPA 004016. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁶ NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Howth Head Coast SPA 004113. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁷ NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Dalkey Islands SPA 004172. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

- Ireland's Eye SPA (site code 004117⁸, approximately 11.1km away);
- Malahide Estuary SPA (site code 004025⁹, approximately 11.1km distant);
- Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site code 004015¹⁰, approximately 10.7km distant); and
- Lambay Island SPA (site code 004069¹¹, approximately 18.7km distant).

There is no potentially suitable foraging habitat for light-bellied Brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota* or other non-breeding wetland SCI species of the complex of coastal Dublin SPAs adjacent to the Works at Northwall or Finglas 200kV Stations, or within the wider Zone of Influence for Likely Significant Effects. The nearest wetland low tide feeding and/or high tide roosting sites¹² are c. 500m distant from the Northwall station in the Toka estuary to the north. There are no such wetland sites within more than 8km of Finglas station. These are entirely visually and acoustically screened from the station, and from all Works, by intervening industrial built fabric. There are no known¹³ urban inland (amenity grassland) wetland bird feeding site within more than 1km, and 2km of Northwall and Finglas stations respectively.

Common tern *Sterna hirundo* nest and/or roost in post-breeding congregations at Tolka Pontoon, in the estuary approximately 900m north-east of the Works, at Grand Canal Dock, approximately 700m south of the Works, and in intertidal muds throughout south Dublin Bay. This is an SCI species of the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, North-west Irish Sea SPA, and Dalkey Islands SPA. The Works are visually and acoustically screened from these breeding sites by numerous large industrial developments in Dublin Port. As such, there is no potential for likely significant disturbance effects on SCI common tern populations, either during the breeding or post-breeding seasons.

The closest European site to the Works is South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, located approximately 350m from the Works. The Works are sufficiently far from all SPAs that there is no potential for disturbance impacts on SCI birds when occurring within the European site boundary. Therefore, likely significant effects are excluded.

The Works traverse one transitional waterbody - the Tolka estuary - which is hydrologically-linked to another, the Lower Liffey Estuary. These waterbodies mark the transition between freshwater and marine environments. There is a direct hydrological link between the Tolka Estuary and/or the Lower Liffey Estuary and the following European sites in Dublin Bay (in order of increasing distance from the Works):

- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024, approximately 350m away);
- South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210¹⁵, approximately 1.4km away);
- North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006, approximately 2.4km away);
- North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206¹⁶, approximately 2.4km away);
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236, approximately 4km away); and,
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000¹⁷, approximately 8.2km away).

⁸ NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Ireland's Eye SPA 004117. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁹ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Malahide Estuary SPA 004025. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

¹⁰ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Rogerstown Estuary SPA 004015. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

¹¹ NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Lambay Island SPA 004069. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

¹² Informed by (2022) NPWS wetland bird data on Site Specific Conservation Objectives available from <https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data>

¹³ Based on Benson, L. (2009). Use of Inland feeding sites by Light-bellied Brent Geese in Dublin 20008-2009. Irish Birds 8: 563-570, and Scott Cawley (2017). Natura Impact Statement: Information for Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment - Proposed Residential Development, St. Paul's College, Sybil Hill, Raheny, Dublin 5. Report produce for Crekav by Scott Cawley. An Bord Pleanála case reference PL29N.302225

¹⁵ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

¹⁶ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: North Dublin Bay SAC 000206. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

¹⁷ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The waste regulatory requirements for oil containment inherent in the project design will prevent any Likely Significant pollution event as a result of the Works, noting no in-stream activities are proposed, and noting also the existing unpolluted status of the Transitional Waters , as well as the very high dilution rates of any contaminations entering Dublin Bay. As such, likely significant pollution effects of the Works on European sites can be excluded.

There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Works 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 Works, 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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21 May 2025