



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).

Disconnection of the Finglas - North Wall 220 kV HPOF cable from the system and the HPOF system depressurisation will be required before the HPOF system decommissioning can commence. The HPOF system decommissioning works will include the following:

- Removal of majority of the mineral oil from the existing steel pipe into the oil storage tank at Finglas 220 kV substation (i.e., in multiple purges).
- Removal of the HV cable and any residual oil at the HV cable joint bays (and at the HV cable termination points at the respective HV substations).
 - All mineral oil removed in the substation will temporarily be stored in a storage tank before being evacuated into the mobile tankers and transported to an appropriately licensed waste facility
 - Additionally, bunded area with an industrial containment unit (ICU) and an impervious membrane resistant to hydrocarbons (High Density Polyethylene (HDPE), or equivalent) will be used in the respective HV substations at the HV cable termination points to contain the oil from the steel pipe in the area before being evacuated into the mobile tankers and transported to an appropriately licensed waste facility.
 - All HV cable joint bays will be lined up with an impervious membrane resistant to hydrocarbons (High Density Polyethylene (HDPE), or equivalent) and their immediate surrounding area will be bunded with an industrial containment unit (ICU) - mineral oil removed at joint bays will be stored in a mobile tanker and transported to an appropriately licenced waste facility.
- Decommissioning and dismantling of the oil storage tank and associated oil control station.

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);

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.

- 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);
- 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 the joint bays, North Wall or Finglas 200kV Stations, or within the wider Zone of Influence (Zoi) for likely significant effects. The nearest wetland low tide feeding and/or high tide roosting sites¹² are c. 500m distant from the North Wall station in the Tolka 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 known¹³ urban inland (amenity grassland) wetland bird feeding site within 150 m of the Works. The Works at joint bays will be undertaken within the road in an urban setting. There is intervening habitat of buildings, treelines and hedgerows, thus no potential for a likely significant effect to foraging Brent geese. There are no feeding sites within more than 1km, and 2km of North Wall 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

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.

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>

¹³Based 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

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 000210¹⁴, approximately 1.4km away);
- North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006, approximately 2.4km away);
- North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206¹⁵, approximately 2.4km away);
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236, approximately 4km away); and,
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000¹⁶, approximately 8.2km away).

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:



Susanne Dunne ACIEEM Senior Ecologist
19 August 2026

¹⁴ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

¹⁵ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: North Dublin Bay SAC 000206. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

¹⁶ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.