



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination CP1251c Refurbishment of North Wall 220kV Substation [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 CP1251c Refurbishment of North Wall 220kV Substation [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:

- Refurbishment of the existing Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) including herewith the internal Busducts, Gas Segregation Compartments, and other GIS components;
- Local Control Cabinets (LCCs) Replacements;
- Protection Upgrades;
- Replacement of Current Transformers on the three bays at North Wall Station;
- Replacement of Voltage Transformers on the three bays at North Wall Station;
- Introduction of the Gas-Insulated Busducts (GIBs) including GIS modifications and adaptor(s) at North Wall Station and adding new GIS high voltage (HV) cable boxes suitable for the modern XLPE cables outside of the substation building;
- The future Finglas - Pigeonhouse (CP1100 and CP1216) 220 kV XLPE cable Loop-in to North Wall Station; and
- Decommissioning of the existing Northwall T2004/5 LPOF cable, including herewith the accessories, such as HV cable sealing ends and ancillary equipment.

All works will occur within the boundary of the substation except for the HV cabling works; this will be done between two joint bays directly adjacent to the substation on Alexandra Road.

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 Development, as follows (listed in order of increasing distance from the Development):

- 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 3.9km 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.

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.

- Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016⁵, approximately 7.7km distant);
- Howth Head Coast SPA (site code 004113⁶, approximately 10.4km distant);
- Dalkey Islands SPA (site code 004172⁷, approximately 11.0km distant);
- Ireland's Eye SPA (site code 004117⁸, approximately 11.0km distant);
- Malahide Estuary SPA (site code 004025⁹, approximately 11.8km distant);
- Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site code 004015¹⁰, approximately 16.6km distant); and,
- Lambay Island SPA (site code 004069¹¹, approximately 19.0km 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 to be found adjacent to the Development at North Wall 200kV Station, or within the wider Zone of Influence for likely significant effects. The nearest wetland low tide feeding and/or high tide roosting sites¹² are approximately 500m distant from the North Wall Station, in the Tolka estuary to the north. 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 sites within more than 1km of North Wall Station.

Common tern *Sterna hirundo* nest and/or roost in post-breeding congregations at Tolka Pontoon, in the estuary approximately 900m north-east of the Development, at Grand Canal Dock, approximately 1.2km southwest of the Development, 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 Development is 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.

There is no habitat suitable for use by breeding SCI bird species within the site of the Development. There is consequently no potential for loss of functionally-linked habitat, nor for disturbance of these species.

The closest European site to the Development is South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, located approximately 350m distant. Given that existing disturbance is high in the urban environment (i.e. Dublin Port), any increase in visual, noise, vibration or artificial light as a result of the Development is extremely unlikely to be detectable. The Development is 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 from disturbance.

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>

¹³ Based on Benson, L. (2009). Use of Inland feeding sites by Light-bellied Brent Geese in Dublin 2008-2009. 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 produced for Crekav by Scott Cawley. An Bord Pleanála case reference PL29N.302225

The Liffey Estuary is approximately 160m south of the Development, and the Tolka Estuary is approximately 350m north. 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 Development):

- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024, approximately 350m distant);
- North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206¹⁴, approximately 350m distant);
- South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210¹⁵, approximately 1.3km distant);
- North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006, approximately 2.2km distant);
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236, approximately 3.9km distant); and,
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000¹⁶, approximately 7.9km distant).

Given that no in-stream activities are proposed, all works will take place on existing areas of hard-standing/artificial surface with existing drainage arrangements, and the distance between the Development and these waterbodies, any significant pollution events are unlikely. Noting as well as the very high dilution rates of any contaminations entering Dublin Bay; likely significant pollution effects of the Development on European sites can be excluded.

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:



Susanne Dunne ACIEEM Senior Ecologist

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¹⁴ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: North Dublin Bay SAC 000206. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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: Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.