



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1319 Blake-Maynooth-Newbridge 110kV Uprate Project [Exempted Development] County Kildare

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 CP1319 Blake-Maynooth-Newbridge 110kV Uprate Project [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 will comprise a range of works, including:

- Replacement ('restringing') of existing overhead line circuit conductor wires with new conductor wires (including a telecommunications cable);
- Replacement of existing polesets, angle masts, associated hardware and development works (e.g. foundation and shear block upgrades), with any new structures being located at or immediately adjacent to existing structures that will be replaced, as well as being of similar height and appearance;
- Associated works within existing associated energised substations to facilitate the uprated circuit, including the repair, renewal, alteration and removal of existing equipment; and
- Associated temporary site development works to gain access and work at the relevant existing structures, including vegetation clearance, disassembly/reassembly of gate posts/piers and removal/reinstatement of existing fencing.

Analysis of Pathways to European Sites

The closest European sites to the Development are the Mouds Bog Special Area of Conservation (SAC; site code 002331¹) and Pollardstown Fen SAC (site code 000396²) at approximate distances of 191m and 432m respectively. The Mouds Bog SAC is designated for several Qualifying Interest (QI) habitats, including active raised bogs, degraded raised bogs and depressions on peat substrates. The Pollardstown Fen SAC is designated for several water-dependent QI habitats, as well as the QI species Geyer's whorl snail *Vertigo geyeri*, narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior* and Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*. Both European sites are sensitive to construction-related water pollution, but the Development does not cross any of the major waterbodies in connectivity with the SACs (i.e. Cloncumber Stream, Grand Canal Milltown Feeder (Barrow) and Liffey River). While the Development traverses several ditches and drains that are in potential hydrological continuity with the SACs or rivers identified above, any such connection is likely to be intermittent. The Development is also hydrologically connected with the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162³) via the Slate and Figile Rivers (approximate flowpath distance of 27km). Overall, given the minor nature of the Development and attenuation / dilution processes that would take place in all connecting waterbodies, the Development will not result in likely significant effects on these SACs regarding water quality.

Further north to the east of Blake 110kV Station, the Development runs within approximately 1.3km and 2.9km of the Ballynafagh Lake SAC (site code 001387⁴) and Ballynafagh Bog SAC (site

¹ NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Mouds Bog SAC 002331. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

² NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Pollardstown Fen SAC 000396. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

³ 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.

⁴ NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Ballynafagh Lake SAC 001387. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

code 000391⁵) respectively. An assessment of the main waterbodies traversed by the Development indicates that there is no hydrological linkage to the Ballynafagh Bog SAC. The Development crosses the Slate River to the south of Newtown Donore, but the river runs downstream to the west of the SAC. While the Slate River is in hydrological connectivity with the Ballynafagh Lake SAC, this connection occurs upstream from the Development. Therefore, there will be no likely significant effects on the Ballynafagh Lake SAC in relation to water quality.

The Poulaphouca Reservoir Special Protection Area (SPA; site code 004063⁶) lies approximately 14.4km to the south-east of the Development. The SPA is designated for mobile Special Conservation Interest (SCI) greylag goose *Anser anser*, which forage in grasslands and arable fields outside the designated site boundary and are sensitive to direct noise / visual disturbance impacts (where utilising functionally-linked habitats in proximity to the Development) and direct loss of functionally-linked habitats potentially arising from the Development. While there are suitable foraging habitats along the Development, any direct disturbance impacts to SCI birds will be negligible based on the limited scale, sequential nature and temporary duration of the works. For the same reasons, and with any impacted fields being restored to their former condition following completion of the works, it is considered that there will be no likely significant long-term loss of functionally-linked habitat. The Development is sufficiently far from the SPA that there is no potential for disturbance impacts on SCI birds when occurring within the European site boundary.

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 the temporary nature of works, and has not taken account of mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Signed:

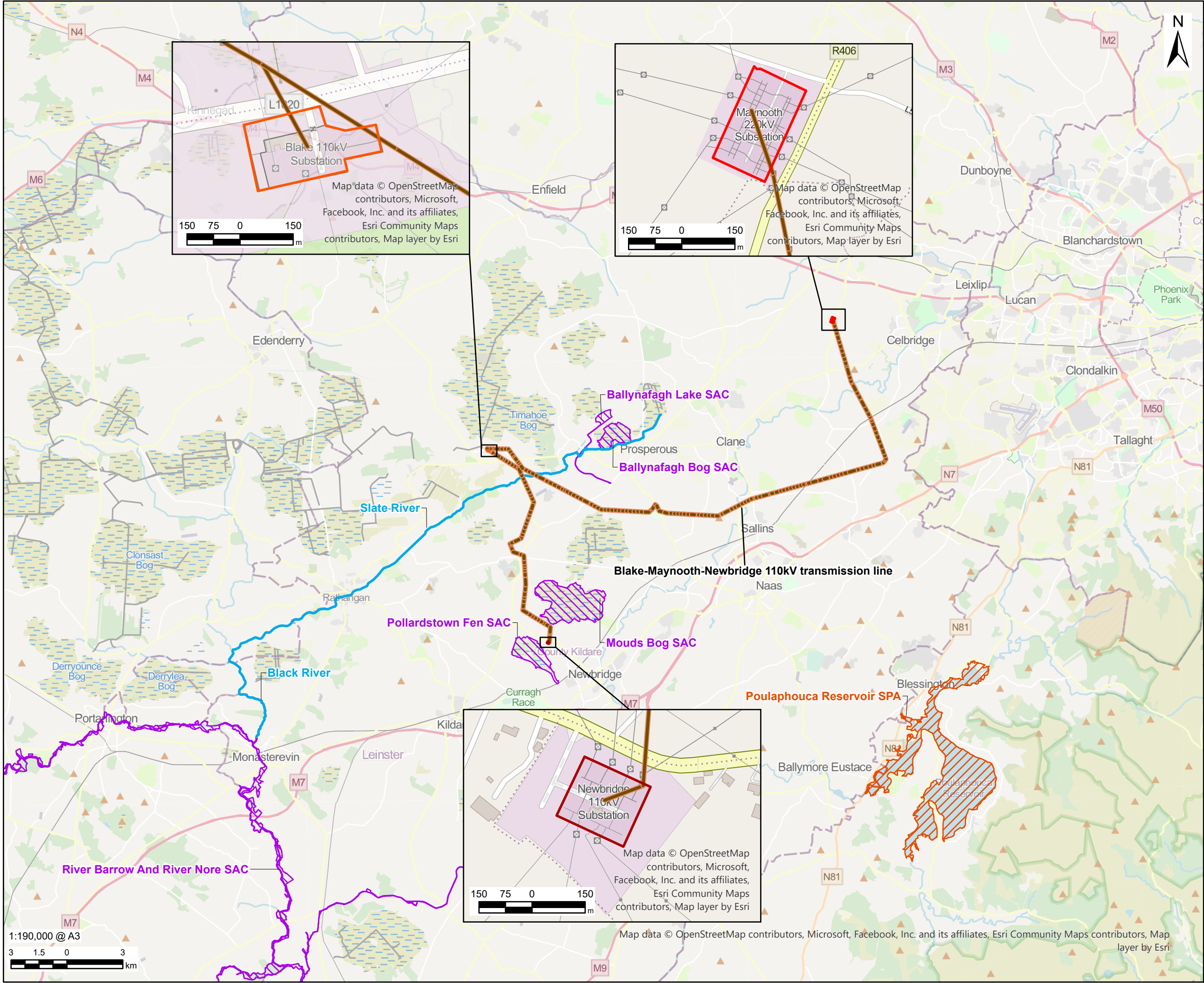


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21 May 2024

⁵ NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Ballynafagh Bog SAC 000391. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁶ NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA [004063]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.



AECOM

PROJECT

AA Screening Determination
for CP1319 Blake-Maynooth-
Newbridge 110kV Uprate
Project

CLIENT

CONSULTANT

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LEGEND

- Blake 110kV Station
- Maynooth 220kV Station
- Newbridge 110kV Station
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Watercourses
- Blake-Maynooth-Newbridge 110kV transmission line

NOTES

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ISSUE PURPOSE

FINAL

PROJECT NUMBER

60709780

FIGURE TITLE

European sites within the Zone of Influence of the Blake-Maynooth-Newbridge 110kV Transmission Line

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 1