



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1363 Mullingar 110kV Station Works and Blundelstown Hill 110kV Station Works, and Fibre-wrapping of Mullingar – Blundelstown 110kV Overhead Line [Exempted Development] County Westmeath and County Meath

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 CP1363 Mullingar 110kV Station Works and Blundelstown Hill 110kV Station Works, and Fibre-wrapping of Blundelstown-Mullingar 110kV Overhead Line (OHL) [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:

- Fibre Wrapping of the Blundelstown-Mullingar 110kV OHL circuit.
- Relocation of modular equipment / apparatus / structures within Mullingar substation and Blundelstown substation.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

Fibre Wrapping of Blundelstown-Mullingar 110kV OHL Circuit

The closest European site to Blundelstown-Mullingar 110kV OHL is River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (site code 002299¹), located within the footprint of Structure 207 where works (non-intrusive) are required. None of the structures, including Structure 207, require replacement, foundation strengthening, or other intrusive works to enable fibre-wrapping. From aerial imagery, the habitat surrounding Structure 207 is wet grassland which is not a Qualifying Interest (QI) habitat of the SAC. The SAC is designated for alkaline fens [7230], however likely significant fen with no possible contamination effect. Structure 207 is more than 110 m from the closest waterbody within the SAC (an unnamed waterbody identified on the Tailte Éireann PRIME2 Watercourses layer). The SAC is designated for mobile QI species; otter *Lutra lutra*, river lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*, and salmon *Salmo salar*. In the event where the QI species are present during the works, the minor and temporary nature of the works mean that there is no potential for likely significant effects on mobile QIs of the SAC relating to visual and noise disturbance. The risk of ex-situ impacts to the QI species has also been excluded, following analysis of known and potential habitats for mobile bird and other animal populations.

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.

Development within Mullingar 110kV Station

The nearest European site to Mullingar 110kV Station is Lough Owel Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 000688²) and Lough Owel Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 004047³), which are located approximately 1.3km away. The Development will occur within the existing substation boundary, containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for QI / Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species.

¹ NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC 002299. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

² NPWS (2018) Conservation Objectives: Lough Owel SAC 000688. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

³ NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Lough Owel SPA 004047. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

All works will be carried out within the existing station boundaries containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging SCI species. Moreover, there is an extensive resource of suitable agricultural fields much closer to SPAs outside the zone of influence. This, combined with the relatively minor nature of the works, means that any noise disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of SPA boundaries but in the vicinity of the Development will be immaterial. Therefore, there is no potential for likely significant effects on mobile SCI associated with these European sites as a result of the Development. There are no waterbodies surrounding Mullingar 110kV Station, and there is therefore no potential for pollution to any European site. 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.

Development within Blundelstown 110kV Station

The nearest European site to Blundelstown 110kV Station is Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC⁴, located approximately 6.6km away. The Development will occur within the existing substation boundary, containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for QI / SCI species.

All works will be carried out within the existing station boundaries containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging SCI species. Moreover, there is an extensive resource of suitable agricultural fields much closer to SPAs outside the zone of influence. This, combined with the relatively minor nature of the works, means that any noise disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of SPA boundaries but in the vicinity of the Development will be immaterial. Therefore, there is no potential for likely significant effects on mobile SCI associated with these European sites as a result of the Development.

There are no waterbodies surrounding Blundelstown 110kV Station, and there is therefore no potential for pollution to any European site. 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

25 April 2025

⁴ NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.