



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination CP1374 Ballyvouskill 220kV Substation Works [Exempted Development] County Cork

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 CP1374 Ballyvouskill 220kV Substation Works [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 the following and all associated works:

- A new Ballyvouskil Battery Storage Bay;
- Installation of a new Ballyvouskil Battery Storage - Ballyvouskil 110kV Cable;
- Cable Sealing Ends at Ballyvouskil Battery Storage;
- Battery Storage Remote Terminal Unit (RTU);
- Battery Storage Power Quality Recorder (PQR) including all associated works;
- An Anti-Islanding Protection Scheme for Ballyvouskil Battery Storage;
- Battery Storage Metering;
- Battery Storage Cable Terminations; and,
- Ballyvouskil Battery Storage Interface Kiosk.

All works will occur within the boundary of the existing substation.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

According to published research¹, the maximum distance to which non-breeding bird species for which Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated will typically travel to forage is 20km from the boundary of such a site. There are two SPAs designated for Special Conservation Interest (SCI) non-breeding bird species located within 20km of the Development, which are:

- Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA [004162]² (located approximately 220m away); and,
- The Gearagh SPA [004109]³ (located approximately 14.0km away).

The Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA is designated for hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*. This SPA supports 2% of the Irish population of hen harrier, providing nesting and foraging habitat.. Any local hen harrier populations are likely to exhibit a degree of habituation to the operating substation. Furthermore, given the size of the SPA relative to the area within 300-500m of the Development, sufficient suitable habitat is available across the remaining area of the SPA should any individuals be temporarily displaced. There would in this case be no effect on breeding success. Finally, with all work occurring within the existing substation boundary, there will be no temporary or permanent loss of functionally-linked habitat. Therefore, likely significant effects on SCI hen harrier are excluded.

There is no potential for significant disturbance effects to SCI species of The Gearagh SPA due to the limited scale and duration of the works. All works will occur within the existing boundary

¹ SNH (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Version 3 – June 2016.

² NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

³ NPWS (2025). Conservation Objectives: The Gearagh SPA. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

of the substation, such that there is no potential for the temporary or permanent loss of functionally-linked habitat. Furthermore, suitable roosting and foraging habitats are available nearer to the SPA, further reducing the likelihood that significant numbers of SCI birds would be present in the vicinity of the Development. Therefore, likely significant effects on SCI birds of the Gearagh SPA are excluded.

The nearest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is the Killarney National Park, Macgillicuddy's Reeks and Caragh River Catchment SAC [000365]⁴, which is located 3.9km from the Development. The Development is not hydrologically connected to this SAC. Furthermore, as all the works are confined within the boundary of the substation, there is no pathway to this SAC and likely significant effects are therefore excluded. The Kilmeedy East Stream is located approximately 30m to the north of the existing substation. This stream outflows into Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC [002170]⁵ approximately 4.9km downstream of the Development. However, given that there will be no instream works and that all activities will take place on an existing hard-standing substation, likely significant effects from waterborne pollution are excluded.

Potential noise and visual disturbance of Qualifying Interest (QI) otter from Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC, was also considered. Due to their extensive home ranges, otter are likely to frequently utilise resting places and holts along watercourses beyond the European site boundary, including the hydrologically connected Kilmeedy East Stream (which is located approximately 30m from the Development). However, the minor and temporary nature of the Development within the substation boundary only is unlikely to be associated with significant disturbance impacts. For example, even if works were undertaken close to watercourses within the home ranges of QI otter, such activities would be very short-term. Moreover, works will typically be undertaken during the daytime, whereas otter show peak activity levels at night. Works for the Development will also not involve any piling activities (works with greatest at-source sound pressure levels). Therefore, likely significant effects are excluded.

There are no other direct hydrological connections between the Development and any additional European sites, nor are there any other European sites nearby which are connected to the Development that may result in likely significant effects to 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:



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⁴ NPWS (2017). Conservation Objectives: Killarney National Park, Macgillicuddy's Reeks and Caragh River Catchment SAC. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁵ NPWS (2012). Conservation Objectives: River Blackwater (Cork/Waterford) SAC. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

