



## **Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination CP1513 Meath Hill and Gorman Station Works and Fibre-wrapping of Gorman – Meath Hill 110kV OHL [Exempted Development] 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 CP1513 Meath Hill and Gorman Station Works and Fibre-wrapping of Gorman - Meath Hill 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 involves the fibre wrapping of Gorman - Meath Hill 110kV OHL, and relocation of modular equipment / apparatus / structures within Gorman 220kV station and Meath Hill 110kV station.

### **Analysis of Pathways to European sites**

#### **Gorman 220kV Station**

The closest European sites to the Development are River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 002299<sup>1</sup>) and River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Protection Area (site code 004232<sup>2</sup>), both located approximately 2.6km away ('as the crow flies') from Gorman 220kV Station. The SAC is designated for the Qualifying Interests (QIs) otter *Lutra lutra*, Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, river lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis* and a range of Annex I habitats; the SPA is designated for the Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*. The Boyne\_160<sup>3</sup> stream lies adjacent to the southern boundary of Gorman 220kV Station and flows into the SAC and SPA downstream at a hydrological distance of approximately 3km and 3.2km, respectively. Furthermore, numerous waterbodies traverse the OHL, which eventually drain into River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA. However, should a pollution event occur, then there would be dilution due to the intervening distance. The works to Gorman 220kV Station will occur within the existing station boundary, which limits the likelihood of pollution reaching any watercourse, as any spillage of pollutants would be contained on the hardstanding areas of the station. There is therefore no potential for likely significant effects on the SAC or SPA regarding water quality.

Given the minor and temporary works involved, there is no potential for likely significant effects related to visual and noise disturbance of mobile QIs and SCI species, should they be present along the Boyne\_160 stream.

#### **Meath Hill 110kV Station**

The closest European site to the Meath Hill 110kV Station is Stabannan-Braganstown SPA (site code 004091<sup>4</sup>), located approximately 17.1km away, and designated for SCI graylag goose *Anser anser*. Graylag geese are associated with foraging habitats beyond the designated site boundary (also known as 'functionally-linked' habitat), and have a core foraging range of 15-20km<sup>5</sup>. The works to Meath Hill 110kV Station will be carried out within the existing substation boundary,

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA 004232. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maps website <http://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/> (accessed 14 February 2025)

<sup>4</sup> NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Stabannan-Braganstown SPA 004091. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (June 2016) Assessing connectivity with Special protection Areas (SPAs) Guidance. 4pp.

containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging graylag goose.

#### **Fibre-wrapping of Gorman - Meath Hill 110kV OHL**

The closest European site is River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC, located 3.1km from Structure 1, which is the closest structures to a European site where works (non-intrusive) are required. None of the structures require replacement, foundation strengthening, or other intrusive works to enable fibre-wrapping. Neither the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC, nor are no other European sites within the zone of influence of likely significant effects from the development.

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:



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24 February 2025