



## Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

### CP1514 Deenes-Drybridge 110kV Circuit Dynamic Line Rating (DLR) [Exempted Development] Counties Louth and 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 CP1514 Deenes-Drybridge 110kV Circuit Dynamic Line Rating DLR [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 installing DLR measurement devices on the overhead line (OHL) of Deenes-Drybridge 110kV circuit.

All works for the Development will be carried out above ground on existing structures. The Development will require no vegetation clearance or intrusive works. The Development works are minor in scale, short term and of a temporary nature.

#### Analysis of Pathways to European sites

Based on the works involved, the following possible impacts are considered potentially relevant to the Development:

- Waterborne pollution of qualifying, supporting or functionally linked habitat(s), or of qualifying or supporting species using such habitats.
- Disturbance of qualifying species (e.g. visual, noise, vibration or artificial light). According to published research<sup>1</sup>, the maximum distance to which non-breeding bird species for which Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated may theoretically travel to forage is 20km from the boundary of such a site (though in reality, most species foraging distances are significantly lower than this). Cutts *et al.* (2013)<sup>2</sup> provides species-specific information on the sensitivity of several bird species which are qualifying features of SPAs to disturbance impacts from construction works.

Consequently, the following European sites are considered to be within the potential zone of influence (Zoi) of the Development:

- River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 002299<sup>3</sup>). Oversailed by the OHL between polesets 45 and 46. Designated for the Annex I habitats Alkaline fens and Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) and the mobile Qualifying Interest (QI) species river lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*, salmon *Salmo salar* and otter *Lutra lutra*. Potential hydrological connection between the SAC and the OHL of the Development which oversail waterbodies between polesets 36, 37, 38, 45 and 46.
- River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (site code 004232<sup>4</sup>). Oversailed by the OHL between polesets 45 and 46. Designated for the Special Conservation Interest (SCI) Kingfisher *Alcedo*

<sup>1</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Version 3 – June 2016 (online). Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/assessing-connectivity-special-protection-areas> (Accessed 13 February 2026).

<sup>2</sup> Cutts, N., Hemingway, K and Spencer, J. (2013). Waterbird Disturbance Mitigation Toolkit: Informing Estuarine Planning & Construction Projects. Produced by the Institute of Estuarine & Coastal Studies (IECS) University of Hull. (online). Available at: [https://www.tide-toolbox.eu/tidetools/waterbird\\_disturbance\\_mitigation\\_toolkit/](https://www.tide-toolbox.eu/tidetools/waterbird_disturbance_mitigation_toolkit/) (Accessed 13 February 2026).

<sup>3</sup> NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC 002299. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>4</sup> NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA 004232. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

*atthis*. Potential hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development via the River Boyne between polesets 36, 37, 38, 45 and 46.

- Boyne Estuary SPA (site code 004080<sup>5</sup>). Approximately 5.1km east of the OHL at its nearest point, Mast 48. The SPA is designated for a range of wetland and waterbirds and wetland habitat. Potential hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development c. 5.6km via the River Boyne between polesets 36, 37, 38, 45 and 46.
- Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (site code 001957<sup>6</sup>). Approximately 6.2km east of the OHL at its nearest point, Mast 48. The SAC is designated for a range of coastal Annex I and Annex II habitats, comprising estuaries, mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, annual vegetation of drift lines, *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows *Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*, embryonic shifting dunes, shifting dunes along the shoreline with white dunes *Ammophila arenaria*, and fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes). Potential hydrological connection between the SAC and the OHL of the Development which oversail waterbodies c. 7.1km via the River Boyne between polesets 36, 37, 38, 45 and 46.
- River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (site code 004158<sup>7</sup>). Approximately 10.5km north-east of the OHL at its nearest point, Mast 1. Designated for a range of wetland and waterbirds. Potential hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development c. 13km via the Nanny (Meath)\_40 watercourse, which the OHL oversails between polesets 2 and 3 and 10 and 11.
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236<sup>8</sup>). Approximately 10.5km east of the OHL at its nearest point, Mast 48. Designated for a range of marine breeding and wintering birds. Potential hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development via the River Boyne, between polesets 36, 37, 38, 45 and 46, and from the Nanny(Meath)\_40 watercourse between polesets 2 and 3 and 10 and 11.
- Stabannan-Braganstown SPA (site code 004091<sup>9</sup>). Approximately 17km north of the OHL at its nearest point, Mast 48. Designated for greylag goose *Anser anser*. No hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development.
- Dundalk Bay SPA (site code 004026<sup>10</sup>). Approximately 17.5km north-east of the OHL at its nearest point, Mast 48. Designated for range of wetland and waterbirds, including the long-ranging species greylag goose and light-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota*, and wetland habitat. No hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development.

The Development is not within or hydrologically connected to a known freshwater pearl mussel catchment.

Between polesets 45 and 46, approximately 235m of the OHL oversails River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC. However, the OHL is located aurally in these locations, with no infrastructure present within the SAC. Due to the nature and scale of the Development, which will only comprise the installation of small DLR measurement devices on the existing OHL, the potential for negative water quality impact pathway to the SAC is negligible. Therefore, there is no likelihood of likely significant effects regarding water quality.

For the same reasons as outlined above in respect of River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC, there is no likelihood of significant effects to River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA, Boyne Estuary SPA, Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC, River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA and North-West Irish Sea SPA regarding water quality.

The nature of works comprises the installation of a small DLR devices on the existing OHL, which is not intrusive. Due to the minor scale of the Development and short term, temporary

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<sup>5</sup> NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Boyne Estuary SPA 004080. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>6</sup> NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC 001957. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>7</sup> NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA 004158. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>8</sup> NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: North-west Irish Sea SPA 004236. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>9</sup> NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Stabannan-Braganstown SPA 004091. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>10</sup> NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Dundalk Bay SAC 000455 and Dundalk Bay SPA 004026. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

nature of the works, there will be no pathways for likely significant effects associated with noise and visual disturbance of QI species of River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC within the bounds of the SAC, or using functionally linked watercourses along the OHL route.

Kingfisher is a SCI of River Blackwater SPA. Due to the minor scale of the Development, which will not involve any significant noise-generating activities, and short-term, temporary nature of the works, there will be no likely significant effects associated with noise and visual disturbance of kingfisher associated with River Blackwater SPA.

SCI may occur outside their European site boundaries, and disturbance may occur at a distance up to 500m<sup>2</sup> from any works. Due to the distance of the SPAs within the potential Zol from the works and the minor scale of the Development, which will not involve any significant noise-generating activities, and short term, temporary nature of the works, there will be no likely significant effect associated with noise and visual disturbance of SCI species of Stabannan-Braganstown SPA, Dundalk Bay SPA, River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA or Boyne Estuary SPA using functionally linked arable fields along the OHL route.

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 relevant European site's 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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Susanne Dunne ACIEEM Senior Ecologist

20 February 2026