



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-320532-24

Development

Proposed 110kV electrical substation and associated 110kV infrastructure required to connect a solar farm to the existing Knockraha 220kV substation

Location

in the townlands of Knockraha East, Ballynanelagh and Kileena, County Cork.

Planning Authority

Cork County Council

Applicant

Ballyvatta Solar Farm Limited

Type of Application

Application for approval under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Prescribed Bodies

Cork County Council
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Observer

Patrick Geaney

Date of Site Inspection

25th October 2024

Inspector

Máire Daly

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. An application under the provisions of Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, was received by An Bord Pleanála from Ballyvatta Solar Farm Limited for the development of a 110kV substation and underground grid connection. The proposed development would provide the necessary infrastructure to support the development, as well as secure and transport the supply of electricity from the permitted Ballyvatta Solar Farm (ABP-300434-17 and CCC Reg. Ref. 17/5370 and 23/4564), approximately 1.7 kilometres (km) to the north-east of the subject site.
- 1.2. Following pre-application consultation (ABP Ref. VC04.319155), the Board determined that the proposed development fell within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and that the application should be made directly to the Board.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1. The 5.5-hectare site is in a rural area in north County Cork in the townlands of Knockraha East, Ballynanelagh and Kileena. The site is located on the northern side of the Ballynanelagh Road (L6989) and is adjacent to the existing Knockraha 220kV substation. The site's location is c. 6km northeast of the centre of Glanmire and c. 4.5km north of Glounthaune. The surrounding area is traversed by 220kV and 110kV powerlines connecting to the adjoining Knockraha 220kV substation.
- 2.2. The proposed 110kV substation is to be located in an existing agricultural field to the north of the existing Knockraha substation with the proposed cable route following the proposed access track south and under the L6989, via horizontal directional drilling, into an agricultural field on the south side of the road, before looping back to the north and returning to the road, running a length westward before connecting into the existing Knockraha substation to its north.
- 2.3. The surrounding area is characterised by large agricultural fields mainly used for pasture for livestock and scattered farmsteads and one-off rural housing. A mature hedgerow runs along the local road and along the proposed site's cable route to the south of the existing Knockraha 220kV substation site. Mature hedgerow is also

located along the proposed access road on its eastern side. The proposed 110kV substation site is screened from approach views from the west on the L6989 by the existing Knockraha 220kV substation site and vegetation cover. Due to its more elevated location the site however is visible intermittently between vegetation from the approach from the west and also from the Knockraha West and Knockraha East local roads to the north of the site. Knockraha village is located c. 1.4km to the site's northwest.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1. The proposed development is to be built for the purpose of providing a connection from an associated, but separate, solar array approximately 1.7km to the north-east of the subject site and transporting its electricity to the national grid. It will comprise 2 no. separate compounds including an EirGrid compound with substation and electrical infrastructure and an Independent Power Producer (IPP) or customer owned compound including a switchgear building, a 110kV transformer and other electrical infrastructure.

3.2. A ten-year permission is sought for the following:

- 110kV electrical substation including the following on substation compound:
 - An EirGrid control building (comprising relay room, battery room, workshop/store, mess room and W.C, and generator room); and,
 - An Independent Power Producer control building (comprising control room, switchgear room, office, store and W.C);
- 110kV grid transformer and two-house transformers within bunded enclosures (height approximately 6m) and associated infrastructure;
- MV switchgear containers;
- Lightning protection masts;
- Perimeter security fencing and entrance gates;
- Security lighting;
- Telecommunication dishes;

- Underground cabling including HDD under L6989;
- Site drainage infrastructure;
- Proposed access from the L6989 to the south;
- Removal of approximately 30m of hedgerow;
- Temporary construction compound; and,
- All associated development works above and below ground including landscaping.”

3.3. The following documents were submitted with the application;

- Planning Cover Letter, prepared by Tom Phillips + Associates.
- Completed and signed SID Application Form.
- Copies of Notification letters.
- Drawings and technical plans.
- Copies of public notices.
- Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment, prepared by PUNCH.
- Appropriate Assessment (Screening and NIS), prepared by Malone O'Regan.
- Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment, prepared by Tom Phillips and Associates.
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by Macroworks.
- Archaeological Assessment, prepared by IAC.
- Noise Impact Assessment, prepared by Wave Dynamics.
- Outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan, prepared by PUNCH.
- Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan, prepared by PUNCH.

4.0 Consultations and Submissions

4.1. Consultations

4.1.1. Details of the application were circulated to the following prescribed bodies:

- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications.
- Commission for Regulation of Utilities.
- Cork County Council.
- Health and Safety Authority.

4.1.2. Responses were received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Cork County Council which are summarised below.

4.2. Submissions received from Prescribed Bodies and Local Authority

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Development Applications Unit)

4.2.1. Regarding archaeology: the Department is broadly in agreement with the findings of the Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) in relation to archaeology and cultural heritage. It is noted that this assessment was informed by a phase of Archaeological Test Excavation (Licence No. 24E0451). The Department notes that the Archaeological Test Excavation identified a new archaeological site, designated AA1 and comprising the possible remains of a burnt mound. They note that construction of the proposed development will have a direct impact on this previously unknown site and that preservation by record of this site is proposed as part of the mitigation strategy for the project.

4.2.2. Taking the above into account, the Department therefore list conditions which they would advise should be included in any grant of planning permission. I note that these recommended conditions align with Sample Conditions C4 and C5 as set out in OPR Practice Note PN03: Planning Conditions (October 2022), with appropriate site-specific additions/adaptations based on the particular characteristics of this Development, including the requirement to retain the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist.

Cork County Council

4.2.3. The relevant planning issues in relation to the proposed development and supporting development plan objectives are set out. The submission notes the permission for the Ballyvatta Solar farm and that the proposed development is required for the purpose of providing connection from this solar farm which is located 1.7km to the northeast of the subject site to the national grid. Reference is made to other energy and electricity connection developments in the area.

4.2.4. The key points outlined in the submission are as follows:

- In principle, the proposed development is supported by the objectives of the Cork County Development Plan 2022.
- The proposed development is justified, having regard to European, National, Regional and local energy and infrastructural policy.
- Conclusion of submitted NIS considered reasonable subject to conditions i.e. compliance with NIS and EclA and CEMP.
- The Planning Authority concurs that access from the west is unsuitable due to the width of the L6989. A detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan should be secured by condition and should have regard to other projects in the area that may be under construction at a similar time.
- CCC recommend that further information is requested in relation to ecological impact assessment, Landscaping plans and Noise. Overall, no objection subject to suitable conditions/resolution of elements of ecological concern.

4.2.5. The submission includes Appendix A – copies of internal technical reports and Appendix B - suggested conditions. Internal reports are from:

- Archaeology – noted that archaeological testing was carried out on site which identified a number of small, localised deposits similar to materials associated with burnt mound/fulacht fia type activity. Recommended that any newly detected archaeological features be preserved by record (archaeological excavation) - no objection subject to conditions.
- Ecology – additional information is required to address concerns regarding the extent of tree and hedgerow removal required to accommodate this

proposal and suggests that the scheme be redesigned or a detailed assessment of the ecological impact of these works be carried out. It is considered that the landscaping scheme should be revised at a minimum to provide for compensatory planting along the roadside boundaries and replacement tree planting should be carried out elsewhere on the site to mitigate the loss of the trees adjacent to the 220kV substation.

It is also noted there was no detailed ecological assessment carried out of drains, hedgerows and trees or the potential impacts for species that may use these features.

- Area Engineer – No comment.
- Environment – Noise Impact Assessment noted, conditions recommended.
- Environmental Health Officer – no objection.

4.3. Third Party Observations

4.3.1. One submission was received from Patrick Geaney; the following issues were raised:

- Observer was not aware this application was being made and had not provided any 'letter of consent' to the applicant to make the application.

5.0 Clarification Requested by the Board

5.1. On 21st November 2024 additional information was sought from the applicant in respect of the following:

- Requested submission of EclA to address deficiencies in information.
- In relation to impacts on landscape:
 - Confirm the extent and provide a detailed description of the trees and hedgerows to be removed and an assessment of likely impacts on biodiversity.
 - Provide detailed proposals to mitigate the loss.

- Submit a revised Landscape Mitigation Plan reflecting the above details.

- Review third-party submission and respond accordingly.

5.1.1. A response from the applicant was received on 12th February 2025 and included:

- A revised Landscape Mitigation Plan (LMP) which includes revised boundaries which are now consistent with the submitted Overall Site Layout Plan. The detailed Landscape Mitigation Plan included in this response allows for the addition of c. 383 linear metres of native hedgerow to compensate for the c. 98 metres of linear hedgerow to be removed.
- An Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Malone O' Regan.
- Letter of Consent from Patrick Geaney, now highlighting consent for the inclusion of his lands as part of the planning application.

6.0 Planning History

6.1. The following developments in the area are considered relevant:

Live applications in the vicinity:

- ABP Ref: VA04.321518 currently under consideration for Proposed 220kV Substation and Grid Connection. The grid connection line runs along the local road to the front of the existing Knockraha 220kV substation and connects into same substation.

On appeal:

- ABP Ref: PL04.320276 currently under appeal for ten-year planning permission for energy storage facility and all associated site works. Approved by Cork County Council (P.A. Ref. 235992) in July 2024.

Relevant Applications/Developments in surrounding area:

- P.A. Ref. 23/4564 – Permission granted in March 2024 for Amendment of previous permission Reg. Ref: 17/5370 and ABP- 300434-17, which included an enlarged site boundary, for alterations to an permitted solar farm to provide an additional area of 7.8ha to the south. The development also included a

2.25km cable route to the south to provide a link to a future substation and all associated ancillary development works and amendment to condition no.3 of ABP Ref: PL04.300434 to seek increase of lifespan from 25 to 35 years.

- P.A. Ref. 23/0434 – Permission refused in January 2024 for 10 year planning permission to develop a low carbon inertia services (LCIA) grid support facility, which will connect to the adjoining ESB Knockraha 220kV Electricity Substation.
- ABP Ref: PL04.314972 – Permission granted in November 2023 for a synchronous compensator (electricity grid stabilization) development within the townland of Killeena, near Knockraha, Co.Cork within a site area of approximately 0.8 hectares and all associated works
- ABP Ref: VA04.310798 – Permission granted in May 2022 for a portion of the Celtic Interconnector subject to 24 No. conditions.
- ABP ref. PL04.300434 – Permission granted in July 2018 for construction, operation and decommissioning of photovoltaic solar farm comprising photovoltaic panels on ground mounted frames within a site of up to 48.4ha.

7.0 Policy Context

7.1. National and Regional Policy

National Planning Framework

- 7.1.1. On 8th April 2025, the Government approved the revised National Planning Framework (NPF – First Revision) this follows a comprehensive NPF revision process which has been underway since June 2023. A number of key drivers of change in Ireland were a significant focus for the revision process, and the final framework document sets an agenda to cater for population growth and the associated housing requirement, infrastructure delivery and climate and environment, in particular new policies in relation to renewable energy development. The Plan will shape necessary reviews of current regional strategies and local authority development plans in the near future.
- 7.1.2. The Plan seeks to support the expansion in wind and solar power necessary to meet renewable energy targets. It contains several National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs)

which include seeking to Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society and states that “New energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy to the major sources of demand”. I note that National Policy Objective 72 seeks to “Support an all-island approach to the delivery of renewable electricity through interconnection of the transmission grid”. The Plan also highlights its aim under Green Energy to “Reinforce the distribution and transmission network to facilitate planned growth and distribution of a more renewables focused source of energy across the major demand centres”.

National Development Plan, 2021-2030

- 7.1.3. Published in tandem with the NPF, the NDP seeks to drive Ireland’s long term economic, environmental and social progress up to 2030. Chapter 13 'Transition to Climate-Neutral and Climate-Resilient Society' identifies renewable energy as a strategic investment priority. The NDP recognises the need to radically transform Ireland's energy system so as to achieve its 2030 and 2050 energy and climate objectives and notes that facilitating investment in renewable energy sources is key to decarbonising our energy requirements.
- 7.1.4. Strategic Investment Priorities - SOE Investment notes "significant expansion and strengthening of the electricity transmission and distribution grid onshore and offshore, including transmission cables and substations, to link renewable electricity generation to electricity consumers and to accommodate higher levels of renewables on the electricity system and reinforcement of the natural gas network by our system operators EirGrid, ESB Networks and Gas Networks Ireland".

Climate Action Plan 2025

- 7.1.5. In the time since the publishing of the Board’s Draft Decision and the writing of this current inspector’s report the Irish Government has adopted the most recent Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25)¹. This is the third statutory annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. CAP 25 builds on the Climate Action Plan of 2024,

¹ Climate Action Plan 2025, published on 15th April 2025.

reinforcing the measures, actions and policy supports required to support Ireland's transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. It represents an update or iteration of Ireland's ongoing climate action strategy and I note the continuity between CAPs and the considerable overlap in the iterative evolution of the actions.

- 7.1.6. CAP 25 supports the acceleration of the delivery of renewable energy onto the national grid with a target of achieving 80% of electricity demand being met from renewable energy by 2030. To this end CAP 25 sets a target of providing 5GW of solar energy by 2025, and a longer-term target of 8GW by 2030.

Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

- 7.1.7. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy sets out a strategy to implement the NPF in the Southern Region, including Cork. Chapter 8 deals with Water and Energy Utilities with Section 8.2 of the document dealing with the Strategic Energy Grid. It seeks to promote sustainable economic growth, low carbon technology and an increased supply and provision of renewable energies so as to bring about positive regional benefits, such as sustainable development of renewable energy infrastructure. The RSES also states that Regional Climate Change Strategy and Local Climate Change Strategies will aim to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and promote renewable energy sources.

- 7.1.8. The following Regional Policy Objectives are noted:

- RPO 96 – to support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure ...to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.
- RPO 100 – to support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection.
- RPO 219 - to support the sustainable reinforcement and provision of new energy infrastructure by infrastructure providers....
- RPO 222 - to support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity networks and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects ...

- 7.1.9. Section 8.2 also outlines support for the development of a safe, secure, and reliable

system of transmission and distribution of electricity.

7.2. Development Plan - Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028

7.2.1. The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 is the operative plan, and it came into effect on 6th June 2022.

7.2.2. The site is situated within the Metropolitan Greenbelt. Objective RP 5-13: Land Uses within the County Metropolitan Greenbelt states: “Preserve the character of the Metropolitan Greenbelt as established in this Plan and to reserve generally for use as agriculture, open space, recreation uses and protection / enhancement of biodiversity of those lands that lie within it”.

7.2.3. Chapter 13 of the Development Plan addresses Energy and Telecommunications. Section 13.16 relates to the Transmission Network which notes that Cork has a very strong electrical grid and substation network, with this network instrumental in supporting the development of the renewable energy industry in the county. The development plan supports renewable energy and associated grid electricity infrastructure development through the following:

- Objective ET 13-1 Energy (a) Ensure that County Cork fulfils its potential in contributing to the sustainable delivery of a diverse and secure energy supply and to harness the potential of the county to assist in meeting renewable energy targets and managing overall energy demand.
- Objective ET 13-2 Renewable Energy (a) Support Ireland’s renewable energy commitments as outlined in Government Energy and Climate Change policies by facilitating the development of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, hydro and bio-energy and energy storage at suitable locations within the county where such development has satisfactorily demonstrated that it will not have adverse impacts on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or amenities.
- Objective ET 13-14: Solar Farm Development (a) ...support will be given to solar farm projects at appropriate locations, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment, landscape, historic buildings, or local amenities. (b) Promote the development of solar energy infrastructure in the county... subject to environmental safeguards and

the protection of natural or built heritage features, biodiversity views and prospects... (g) proposals for development of new solar developments and associated infrastructure including grid connections will be subject to ecological impact assessment and, where necessary Appropriate Assessment...

- Objective ET 13-21: Electricity Network a) Support and facilitate the sustainable development, upgrade and expansion of the electricity transmission grid, storage, and distribution network infrastructure. b) Support the sustainable development of the grid c) Facilitate... infrastructure connections to wind farms, solar farms, and other renewable energy sources subject to normal proper planning considerations. d) Proposals for development which would be likely to have a significant effect on nature conservation-sites and/or habitats or species of high conservation value will only be approved if it can be ascertained, by means of an Appropriate Assessment or other ecological assessment, that the integrity of these sites will not be adversely affected.
- Objective ET 13-22: Transmission Network c) Proposals for development which would be likely to have a significant effect on nature conservation-sites and/or habitats or species of high conservation value will only be approved if it can be ascertained... that the integrity of these sites will not be adversely affected.
- Objective BE 15-2: Protect sites, habitats, and species b) Provide protection to species listed in the Flora Protection Order 2015, to Annexes of the Habitats and Birds Directives, and to animal species protected under the Wildlife Acts in accordance with relevant legal requirements. These species are listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.
- Objective BE 15-6: Biodiversity and New Development b) Encouraging the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments; c) Requiring the incorporation of primarily native tree and other plant species, particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments; d) Fulfilling Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment obligations and carrying

out f) Ensuring that the implementation of appropriate mitigation (including habitat enhancement, new planting or other habitat creation initiatives) is incorporated into new development, where the implementation of such development would result in unavoidable impacts on biodiversity - supporting the principle of biodiversity net gain;

- Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to development and activities, as appropriate;
- Objective BE 15-8: Trees and Woodlands d) Preserve and enhance the general level of tree cover in both town and country. Ensure that development proposals do not compromise important trees and include an appropriate level of new tree planting. e) Where appropriate, to protect mature trees/groups of mature trees and mature hedgerows that are not formally protected under Tree Preservation Order.

7.2.4. The site is located within an area identified as 'Fissured Fertile Middleground' landscape character type in the County Landscape Character Assessment (2007).

7.3. Natural Heritage Designations

7.3.1. The site is c. 4.6km to the Great Island Channel SAC (site code: 001058) and Cork Harbour SPA (site code 004030) both to the south. The site is c. 8.6km from the Blackwater River (Cork / Waterford) SAC (Site Code: 002170). The proposed Natural Heritage Areas: Leamlara Wood is c. 4.7km to the southeast.

8.0 EIA Screening

8.1. The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (or Part V of the 1994 Roads Regulations). No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of report.

8.2. The Board should note that notwithstanding the above the applicant prepared and submitted a screening assessment based on the criteria of Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended, I note that an electrical substation and/or underground cabling is not a class of development contained in

Parts 1 or 2 of Schedule 5 of the Regulations which sets out the prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory EIAR and neither a mandatory EIA, nor screening for EIA, is required for the substation and/or the underground cable.

9.0 Assessment

9.1. Introduction

9.1.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the application, and inspected the site, and having regard to relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues in the planning assessment are as follows:

- Principle of Development and Planning Policy
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Ecology
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Other Matters
 - Access, Roads and Traffic
 - Noise Impact Assessment and Residential Amenity
 - Flood Risk
 - Consent Letter and proposed site boundary

9.2. Principle of Development and Planning Policy

- 9.2.1. As set out above, the proposed development comprises a 110kV substation and associated electrical and other infrastructure, which is required to connect a permitted solar farm to the national grid. Renewable energy projects are supported 'in principle' at national, regional and local policy levels, with the imperative at all policy levels being the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and combat climate change.
- 9.2.2. In line with EU ambition, the Programme for Government, Our Shared Future commits to achieving a 51% reduction in Ireland's overall GHG emissions from 2021

to 2030, and to achieving net-zero emissions no later than 2050. The Revised NPF seeks to support the expansion in wind and solar power necessary to meet renewable energy targets and contains several National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) which include seeking to Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society. In particular I also note National Policy Objective 72 which seeks to “Support an all-island approach to the delivery of renewable electricity through interconnection of the transmission grid”. Thus support for this type of project at a national level is confirmed.

- 9.2.3. At a regional level, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region, Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) 96, 100, 219 and 222 support the upgrading and provision of new energy infrastructure to integrate renewable energy sources and meet future energy needs. At a local level, the Cork County Development Plan supports the proposal and I am satisfied that the project accords with the relevant Development Plan Objectives ET 13-1 Energy, ET 13-2 Renewable Energy, ET 13-14 Solar Farm Development, ET 13-21 Electricity Network which all support the development of energy infrastructure, including the integration of transmission network requirements facilitating linkages of renewable energy proposals. The submission received from Cork County Council considers that, in principle, the proposed development would be supported by the objectives of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 and outlines that they have no objection in principle.
- 9.2.4. The Board should note that the principle of the solar farm is not under determination as part of this planning application. The principle of the Ballyvatta solar farm has already been accepted, under ABP Ref. 300434-17 (CCC Reg. Ref. 17/5370) and CCC Reg. Ref. 23/4564 (extension of site area) and it follows that the principle of any development required to enable the permitted development should also be acceptable in principle subject to an assessment under any other relevant criteria, as covered below.
- 9.2.5. I am satisfied that the proposal generally complies with national and regional policy and the energy objectives of the Cork County Development Plan as listed under section of this report above. In summary, I consider that the proposed development is acceptable in principle in this location, which is strategically positioned in close

proximity to the existing Knockraha substation, providing ease of connection to the national grid.

9.3. Landscape and Visual Impact

- 9.3.1. As mentioned above, the site is located within an area identified as a 'Fissured Fertile Middleground' landscape character type, which is classified as having Medium Landscape Value, High Landscape Sensitivity and County Landscape Importance in the Landscape Character Assessment of County Cork (see Appendix F of the Cork County Development Plan 2022). I note there are no scenic views or scenic routes in the area with the potential to be impacted. Whilst the surrounding landscape is not identified as being particularly sensitive in terms of landscape value, the visual impacts of the proposed development on the local rural community must be considered. As part of my assessment, I carried out a detailed site inspection of the subject site and surrounding area. As outlined above, the rural landscape is characterised by dispersed housing and agricultural fields enclosed by semi-mature to mature hedgerows, however in addition it is noted that there is an amalgamation of energy utilities and infrastructure within this area of Knockraha, with the existing Knockraha 220KV substation located within close proximity to the proposed development site and several other both proposed and approved energy infrastructure projects within the vicinity as outlined in detail under Section 6.0 of my report above.
- 9.3.2. The overall height of the proposed substation buildings ranges from 6m for the independent power producer control building to 8.7m for the EirGrid control building. The tallest structure proposed on site comprises the 18m high lightning monopoles proposed along the northern boundary with 3.2m high lighting columns around the site perimeter. The site will be enclosed by a 2.6m high palisade fence with an outer 1.4m high post and rail fence. I note the proposed temporary construction compound is to be located adjacent, on the substation site's eastern side.
- 9.3.3. Drawings indicating the extent of cut and fill required to accommodate the proposal have been submitted. It is stated that cut volume will be c. 4,778m³ and fill volume will be c. 3,642m³.
- 9.3.4. The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) completed by Macroworks. The report asserts that given that the proposed

development will be difficult to discern and not likely to give rise to significant landscape/townscape or visual impacts beyond 2km then for the purposes of the assessment the study area should be confined to this radius of 2km. Having visited the site and the surrounding area I would concur with this approach. The report is accompanied by photomontages from 5 no. local viewshed reference points (VRP). I consider that the photomontages are comprehensive in their extent and are representative of the main views available towards the site.

- 9.3.5. I note the visual baseline as presented in the report and the computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). The results of an assessment of the ZTV demonstrate that despite the site's locally elevated location, approximately half of the study area will have no view of the proposed development due to the rolling nature of the surrounding landscape context. The proposed lightning masts c. 18m in height above the finished compound level (FCL) of 147.3m have the potential to be somewhat visually exposed in the surrounding landscape, however, these structures are likely to be difficult to discern from further than c. 2km. I note that the proposed development's likely visibility from many parts of the area surrounding the application site boundary is also considerably reduced as the existing hedgerow network notably limits the potential for views of the proposal.
- 9.3.6. The overall significance of visual impacts ranged between 'Slight-imperceptible' (VP5) and 'Imperceptible' (VP1 to VP4). The results of an examination of possible impacts from each of the VRPs presented clearly demonstrate that the proposal would have an imperceptible impact on the landscape following mitigation which is discussed further below.
- 9.3.7. The Board will note that a revised Landscape Mitigation Plan (LMP) was submitted in response to the request for further information. This was in response to discrepancies which were noted between the Overall Site Layout and the LMP drawing and these were corrected on the revised drawing. Revised drawing Ref. LD.KNCKRH 1.0 of the LMP now outlines that the southern portion of the site no longer includes for any proposed works to the stretch of linear vegetation located to the front of the existing Knockraha 220kV substation where the proposed 110kV underground cable is proposed to connect into the 220kV substation. Therefore, no visual impacts are anticipated in this area.

9.3.8. In addition to the above I also note the applicant's response to Item 1 of the Board's RFI which sought confirmation of the extent and detail of the trees and hedgerows to be removed and an assessment of likely impacts on biodiversity. The applicant confirmed that as part of the proposed development c. 98m of hedgerow is to be removed to facilitate the proposed access and grid connection, however, to compensate for the loss of suitable nesting habitat, c. 383m of hedgerow will be planted throughout the site. The details of this replacement hedgerow and enhancement measures are contained in the submitted revised LMP and I note that a section of native hedgerow, comprising a native whip planting and advanced nursery stock to be managed at a height of c. 2m is to be planted around the perimeter of the substation site compound. The Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) which was also submitted in response to the RFI further details those species and habitats occurring on the site and the plant species which are to be removed and compensation proposed. This is discussed in further detail under my assessment of potential ecological impacts under Section 9.4 below. In summary however, with regard to landscape impacts, I note that the majority of existing hedgerow / treeline on site is to be retained as part of the proposed development and that all boundary trees and hedgerow / treelines that are to be retained will be protected from unnecessary damage during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

9.3.9. In relation to the cumulative impact from the proposal I note that Section 1.5 of the LVIA examines this. This section considers the Proposed Knockraha Power Reserve (ABP Ref. 320276) which is currently a live application under appeal to the Board. The Knockraha Synchronous Compensator (ABP Ref. 314972 approved by the Board in November 2023) and the Ballyvatta Solar Farm (ABP Ref. 300434 approved by the Board in July 2018). Additionally, I have also examined the possible impacts of the proposal cumulatively with the permitted Celtic Interconnector works (ABP Ref. 310798 approved in May 2022). I note this project includes for transformers to be located adjacent to the Knockraha substation to convert the 400kV power from the interconnector to 220kV power. I do not consider that the cumulative impact from the proposal and the Celtic Interconnector would be significant. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development cumulatively with other developments in the vicinity is unlikely to noticeably alter or detract from the

visual amenity afforded by the surrounding area, which is already characterised by the existing electrical infrastructure.

- 9.3.10. Having regard to the site location and the existing site context which is characterised by established electrical infrastructure, the nature and scale of the proposed development and the existing landscape features and topography it is considered that the development will not give rise to significant adverse landscape and visual impacts. The cumulative impact of this development and other existing and permitted developments in the immediate area has also been considered and as demonstrated in the photomontages the impact is not considered to be significant. I also consider that enhanced landscaping proposals as discussed above would further screen the development and enhance biodiversity at the site, which is further discussed in the following section.

9.4. Ecology

- 9.4.1. In response to the Board's request for further information an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) dated January 2025 prepared by Malone O'Regan, was submitted. This outlines the habitats and species occurring on the site informed by both desk studies and field surveys. The site was assessed and surveyed for a variety of species including bats, badgers, amphibians, birds, otters, hedgehog and pygmy shrew. The site was also visually assessed for the presence of any notable flora species or habitats (as per the Fossitt Guide i.e. the Heritage Council's – A 'Guide to Habitats in Ireland'. Visual surveys were also conducted to identify any noxious/invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed.
- 9.4.2. The site mainly comprises improved agricultural grassland (Fossitt category: GA1), hedgerow/treeline (WL1/WL2) and drainage ditches (FW4). No plant species protected under the Flora Protection order were identified on site.
- 9.4.3. A hydrological connection via onsite drainage ditches was identified from the site to the Ballingohig stream which is located c. 1.6km northwest of the site. However as outlined in the EclA no impacts are expected on the surface water network given that runoff collected in the proposed stormwater network on site will pass through an oil / petrol Interceptor prior to discharging to the soakaway / attenuation system which will provide attenuation of the increased volumes of surface water runoff generated from the hard surfaces of the development when compared to the current greenfield

condition. There will be no direct discharge of surface water without proper attenuation and treatment. Construction methodologies and best practice measures including the requirement for a CEMP are set out to ensure that work is carried out in a manner which blocks all potential pathways for impact on aquatic receptors.

- 9.4.4. With regard to protected or notable species on site, following site surveys it was confirmed that no amphibians or badger evidence was present on site. Though in both cases it is noted that the site may contain suitable habitat for these species and therefore they are considered further.
- 9.4.5. The site is considered to be of low-moderate suitability for bats with the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) holding records for three species within the 2km radius of the site, these include common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and leisler's bat. The well-established hedgerows/treelines which border the site and extend to adjacent fields may provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for these species.
- 9.4.6. Bird species recorded during the initial field surveys were considered to be species common to the countryside and it was deemed unnecessary to carry out any further surveys. No direct evidence of either hedgehogs or pygmy shrews was recorded on site. It is also noted that no invasive species were identified during the habitat survey.
- 9.4.7. Section 5.2.1 of the EclA examines the potential impacts that may occur to species which have been identified on site, as discussed above. Mitigation measures are presented under section 5.3, and these include specific measures to address impacts which are summarised as follows:
- At Construction Phase – e.g., including the completion of a CEMP and appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) to inspect the site in advance of any works commencing and then undertake monthly inspections to ensure that the construction phase is completed in line with the mitigation measures identified in the EclA and the plans submitted in support of the application including the landscape plan.
 - Protection of Water Quality - construction stage works to be undertaken in accordance with an approved CEMP; sediment and oil control measures to prevent suspended solids in runoff entering the drainage ditch network

discharging to rivers downstream; a site environment plan (SEP) which will include methods and procedures in relation to all site and construction works.

- Protection measures for trees and root systems.
- Protection measures for species on site including those specifically for amphibians, bats and nocturnal species, birds, non-volant mammals and invasive species.

9.4.8. Ecological enhancement measures are also proposed on site, and I note that as part of the development though 98m of existing hedgerow is to be removed it is proposed to plant c. 383m of native hedgerow species as detailed in the submitted Landscape Mitigation Plan which was submitted in response to the Board's further information request.

Conclusion on Ecological Matters

9.4.9. Overall, having regard to the ecological value of the habitats present and that the development will occur largely within managed cultivated lands, and the absence of any protected or rare species within the development site, I am satisfied that the proposed development subject to conditions will not have any significant effect on the overall ecology and general biodiversity of the area. Regarding cumulative assessment I am satisfied that it has been demonstrated that there is no potential for the proposed development to contribute to any cumulative adverse effect on biodiversity when considered in combination with other plans and projects.

9.5. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

9.5.1. The application is accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment Report dated July 2024 completed by IAC Ltd. A study area, defined as 500m from the boundary of the proposed development area was assessed to inform this report. There are two archaeological sites within a c. 500m radius of the proposed development all within the townland of Killeena, the first an enclosure, RMP no. CO064-074 is located c. 188m southwest of the site and the second a Ringfort-Rath, RMP No. CO064-075 is located c. 419m to the south. There are no recorded monuments sites within the site of the proposed substation.

9.5.2. Archaeological testing was carried out to inform this report with a total of 16 out of a total of 18 identified trench locations were dug targeting geophysical anomalies and

open green space in order to fully investigate the archaeological potential of the site. In total 1,056m of trenches were excavated.

- 9.5.3. Test trenching at test trench no.17 identified one area of archaeological potential (AA1) within the site. The small, localised scatter of potential burnt mound deposits identified may be transient to a larger burnt mound deposit/site, similar to material associated with burnt mound/fulacht fia type activity, although such a site was not definitively located during testing. I note that the report also highlights that there may also be potential impacts to small-scale or isolated archaeological features or deposits that have the potential to survive beneath the current ground level, outside of the footprint of the excavated trenches.
- 9.5.4. An Impact Assessment and Mitigation Strategy is included under Section 5 of the submitted report. I note that preservation by record is proposed for the previously unknown site discussed above as part of the mitigation strategy for the project. I also note the submission by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Development Applications Unit (DAU) which acknowledges the Archaeological Assessment Report and associated survey results and states that the Department are broadly in agreement with the findings in relation to archaeological and cultural heritage. The Department recommends conditions are attached in the event of a grant of permission. It is noted that the report received on file from Cork County Council also states that they have no objection to the proposed development from an archaeological perspective subject to conditions.

Conclusion on Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

- 9.5.5. Having regard to the application documentation, including the Archaeological Assessment, the observation of the Department and the planning authority's submission informed by the Council's archaeologist, if the Board are minded to grant the permission then I consider that suitable conditions can be attached to any grant of permission to adequately mitigate impact on archaeology and cultural heritage.

9.6. Other Matters

Access, Roads and Traffic

- 9.6.1. The proposed site is to be accessed off the L6989 to the south and an access track is proposed running northwards through the site to the proposed substation

compound which is to be set back a substantial distance from the road, and approximately 150m north of the existing Knockraha 220kV substation site. As illustrated on the Overall Site Layout Plan the access track runs between the western boundary of the existing substation site and the existing western field boundaries. The proposed access is located to the east of the access serving the Knockraha 220kV substation and a new vehicular access proposed to serve the Celtic Interconnector project (ABP-318258-23). The proposed access road will be visible passing through the pasture field in the foreground but it is not expected to cause any visual obstruction and will look broadly similar to a contemporary farm access road.

- 9.6.2. Access to the site will require the translocation of approximately 50m of perimeter hedgerow on the northern side of the road to facilitate the full extent of the proposed site entrance and its associated sightlines. In addition to this I note that three additional sections of hedgerow will also require removal (approximately 30m in total) to facilitate access to the proposed substation compound. The submitted landscaping plan also shows that the roadside hedgerow on the opposite side of the road will be removed.
- 9.6.3. With regard to the proposed underground cable this will largely occur within the existing road network or adjoin the proposed access road. Given that this is proposed to be installed via horizontal directional drilling (HDD) it is not anticipated that this will result in any notable adverse impacts on the physical landscape or road usage. The proposed grid connection follows the access track, under the L6989 using HDD which will exit south of the L6989, before returning to the road, and running for a length westward before connecting into the existing Knockraha substation. I consider this approach acceptable.
- 9.6.4. An Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP) and Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) have been submitted with the application. Construction and operational traffic will access the site via the new entrance off the L6989 along the southern site boundary, the traffic will approach from the east at the junction of the L6989, L3604 and L2966. I note that access from the west is considered unsuitable due to the width of the western section of the L6989. I note that the OCTMP identifies two route options which are proposed for

vehicles accessing the site from the M8. I consider the applicant's proposed access routes acceptable.

9.6.5. With regard to construction traffic and activities it is estimated that 20 no. vehicles will arrive and depart the site each day. I note that 160m sightlines are proposed in either direction at a 3m setback from the road edge which as stated previously can only be achieved by the removal of c. 30m of hedgerow. The proposed entrance arrangements are considered acceptable.

9.6.6. Should the Board be minded to grant permission I would suggest that a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan and Construction Traffic Management Plan should be secured by condition and should have regard to other projects in the area that may be under construction at a similar time.

Noise Impact Assessment and Residential Amenity

9.6.7. The closest residential property is located c.500 metres to the northeast of the proposed site. I note that the Outline Construction Management Plan submitted as part of the application includes the proposed construction hours and noise and dust mitigation. The measures proposed are considered acceptable and it is noted that a final CEMP is to be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of works on site.

9.6.8. A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) has also been submitted as part of the application documentation. This concludes that the expected construction noise and any vibration impacts from the proposed substation development will comply with recognised best practice standards and that operational noise will also comply with the project criteria at all noise sensitive locations. I note the original comments from the Environment Section of Cork County Council regarding noise which questioned the baseline noise assumptions for the area, but I consider them to be in line with what would be expected for a rural area of this nature.

9.6.9. I conclude that the NIA is adequate and is in accordance with stated guidelines for noise assessment. While I acknowledge that there is always an element of uncertainty with noise emissions from the operation of plant such as substations, not least the potential for poorly maintained plant to become noisier over time, or to change its tonal quality, I consider a condition requiring a protocol for long term monitoring, with appropriate measures to be taken if a problem arises to be a

reasonable approach to addressing any potential amenity or noise impacts from the proposed works.

Flood Risk

- 9.6.10. A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment dated June 2024 was submitted with the planning application. I note that National Indicative Flood Mapping (NIFM) and the Cork CDP 2022-2028 Flood Zone mapping were consulted to assess the appropriate Flood Zone for the site. It was determined that the site is currently located in Flood Zone C. The proposed development is therefore considered to be at low risk of flooding and is deemed appropriate for the site. The proposed development is at a low risk of flooding and is deemed appropriate provided the residual risk of pluvial flooding is addressed by on site surface water drainage.

Consent Letter and proposed site boundary

- 9.6.11. In response to the Board's request for further information, the applicant has submitted a letter of consent from Patrick Geaney, the landowner of the portion of the subject site to the south of the L6989. This letter of consent now highlights agreement for the inclusion of his lands as part of the planning application.
- 9.6.12. The Board will also note in response to the further information request that the site boundary submitted with the updated LMP prepared by Macro Works is now consistent with the Overall Site Layout Plan.
- 9.6.13. Both the above matters are now consider addressed.

10.0 Appropriate Assessment – Screening Determination

- 10.1. In accordance with section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in the AA screening (See Appendix 3), having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site.
- 10.2. The Board will note that notwithstanding the submission by the applicant of a NIS, following a detailed examination of the information presented at screening stage and an examination of possible impacts, it was determined that no likely significant effects were expected on the Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code: 004030) or any other European

site in view of the sites' conservation objectives. It is noted that standard construction practice and protection measures are to be implemented as part of the construction works and these are outlined within the OCEMP. I am satisfied that none of these measures are required in order to mitigate any impacts on European sites. Therefore, in conclusion it is worth noting that no account was taken of mitigation measures in concluding that the proposed development can be screened out for Appropriate Assessment.

10.3. I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on the Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code: 004030) in view of the conservation objectives of this site and is therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

10.4. This determination is based on:

- Scientific information provided in the Screening report.
- Scale of the proposed development.
- Distance from and no or weak indirect connections to the European sites.
- No ex-situ impacts on wintering birds.
- Possible impacts identified would not be significant in terms of site-specific conservation objectives for the Cork Harbour SPA and would not undermine the maintenance of favourable conservation condition or delay or undermine the achievement of restoring favourable conservation status for those special conservation interests of unfavourable conservation status.

10.5. No mitigation measures aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts on European sites were required to be considered in reaching this conclusion. Please refer to Appendix 3 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment for further details.

11.0 Water Framework Directive (WFD)

11.1.1. The subject site is located within the Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay Water Framework Directive ('WFD') Catchment [Catchment_ID: 19] and the Glashaboy [L.Mahon] subcatchment [Subcatchment_ID: 19_11 [14].

11.1.2. The Subject Site is located in close proximity to Lisheenroe Stream (c. 605m east of the site), Killena_19 Stream (c. 640m south of the site), Gogganstown Stream (c.

820m southwest of the site) and Ballingohig Stream (c. 1.6km northwest of the site). Lisheenroe Stream, Killena_19 Stream and Gogganstown Stream, under the most recent WFD data (2016-2021) are classified as having 'Moderate' status and 'Not at Risk' of not achieving 'Good' status. Ballingohig Stream is classified as having 'Good' status which is currently 'Under review'.

- 11.1.3. A hydrological connection via field drains was identified from the site to the Ballingohig stream only. The Ballingohig stream is located c. 1.6km northwest of the site, at its closest point. This stream flows easterly before draining into the Butlerstown River, referenced above. The Butlerstown stream flows in a southwesterly direction for ca. 7.3km before draining into the Glashaboy [L.Mahon] river and Cork Harbour SPA.
- 11.1.4. The hydrological connection is via an onsite drainage ditch which is located in the eastern section of the site travelling north. A section of the drainage ditch will be diverted away from the north-eastern corner of the substation. It will also be culverted for a short distance under the proposed access road. The drainage network drains in a northerly direction before draining to the west where it is culverted under the L6898 local road. Following this culvert the network drains to the west, where it discharges into the Ballingohig stream.
- 11.1.5. The Proposed Development is not located in a groundwater source protection area. Groundwater beneath the proposed development forms part of the Ballinhassig East groundwater body (groundwater body code IE_SW_G_004), classified as a 'Moderately Productive only in Local Zones'. Under the most recent WFD data (2016-2021) groundwater beneath the Site is classified as having 'Good' status and 'Not at Risk' of not achieving 'Good' status.
- 11.1.6. The proposed development comprises of the construction of 110kV electrical substation and associated 110kV infrastructure required to connect a solar farm to the existing Knockraha 220kV substation in in the townlands of Knockraha East, Ballynanelagh and Kileena, County Cork. The proposed works will result in substantial hardstanding on what is currently agricultural land. As stated previously there are no watercourses on the site, but there are some field drains in the vicinity (none of the land has been identified as having a history of flooding and it is naturally well drained). The submitted drawings address drainage at the entrances of the site,

and potential impacts from constructing/using the entrances. The Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) similarly addresses these issues and the required mitigation measures. In overall terms, there would not be a significant increase in run-off from the site compared to existing or potential agricultural uses, subject to appropriate mitigation during construction. Standard mitigation measures as set out in the OCEMP and appropriate standard conditions will address concerns of flows at the site entrances, along access roads, or at field drains.

11.1.7. I have assessed the proposed substation development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. I have undertaken a WFD Impact Assessment Stage 1: Screening and which is included in Appendix 2 after my report. This assessment considered the impact of the development on the:

- Ballingohig stream/Butlerstown River which flows in a southwesterly direction and joins the Glashaboy River which drains into Cork Harbour and Cork Harbour SPA.
- Ballinhassig East Groundwater Body.

11.1.8. The impact from the development was considered in terms of the construction and operational and decommissioning phases. Through the use of best practice construction practice and implementation of a CEMP at the construction phase and through the use of soakaways and drainage systems during the operation phase, all potential impacts can be screened out.

Conclusion on WFD

11.1.9. I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

12.0 Recommendation

12.1. Having regard to the foregoing I recommend that permission for the proposed development be granted, subject to conditions, for the following reasons and considerations and subject to attached conditions.

13.0 Reasons and Considerations

In coming to its decision, the Board had regard to:

- (a) the nature, scale and extent of the proposed development,
- (b) the characteristics of the site and of the general vicinity,
- (c) national, regional and local policy support for developing renewable energy, in particular:
 - National Planning Framework,
 - Climate Action Plan, 2025,
 - Government Policy Statement on the Security of Electricity Supply, 2021,
 - Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region,
 - Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028,
- (d) the distance to dwellings or other sensitive receptors from the proposed development,
- (e) the planning history of the immediate area including the adjoining Knockraha substation development,
- (f) the submissions on file,
- (g) the likely consequences for the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is proposed to carry out the proposed development and the likely effects of the proposed development on European Sites,
- (h) the report of the Inspector.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

The Board noted that the proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site. In completing the screening for Appropriate Assessment, the Board accepted and adopted the screening

assessment and conclusion in the Inspector's report in respect of the identification of the European sites which could potentially be affected, Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code: 004030), and the identification and assessment of the potential likely significant effects of the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on this European site in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. The Board was satisfied that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European site, in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives.

This screening determination is based on the assessment of the nature and scale of the proposed development, the proximity of the project to the European sites, to the nature of the qualifying interest habitats and species, and the special conservation interest species, and the conservation objectives of the European sites, and to the available information as presented in the supporting documents regarding ground and surface water pathways and consideration of any mobile connections between the project and the European sites, and other information available. The proposed development does not have the potential to affect any European sites having regard to the conservation objectives of the relevant sites, and that progression to a Stage 2 AA is not required.

Proper planning and sustainable development:

It is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below the proposed development would accord with European, national, regional and local planning and related policy, it would not have an unacceptable impact on the landscape or ecology, it would not seriously injure the visual or residential amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, and it would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience, and would make a positive contribution towards Ireland's renewable energy and security of energy supply requirements. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

14.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as supplemented by the information received on 12th February 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to the commencement of development and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. All the environmental, construction and ecological mitigation and monitoring measures set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment and all other particulars submitted with the application, shall be implemented by the undertaker in conjunction with the timelines set out therein, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and the protection of the environment during the construction and operational phases of the development.

3. The developer shall appoint a suitably qualified ecologist to monitor all works relating to the proposed development and ensure that all avoidance/mitigation measures relating to the protection of flora and fauna identified in the particulars submitted with the planning application are implemented in full in accordance with best ecological practice.

Reason: To protect the environmental and natural heritage of the area.

4. The developer shall engage a suitably qualified archaeologist (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) to carry out pre-development archaeological testing in areas of proposed ground disturbance and to submit an archaeological impact assessment report for the written agreement of the planning authority, following consultation with the National Monuments

Service, in advance of any site preparation works or groundworks, including site investigation works/topsoil stripping/site clearance and/or construction works.

The preservation, recording and protection of archaeological materials or features that may exist within the site shall be facilitated. In this regard,

- (i) In advance of the commencement of any construction works, the developer shall engage a suitably qualified archaeologist to carry out Full Archaeological Excavation (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) of the archaeological site designated AA1 in the Archaeological Assessment (IAC Ltd; date July 2024).
- (ii) The Project Archaeologist shall liaise with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to agree in advance the appropriate scope for the full archaeological excavation.
- (iii) The Full Archaeological Excavation shall be carried out in accordance with Best Archaeological Practice and in accordance with an approved method statement that shall incorporate a strategy for environmental sampling, finds retrieval and conservation and subsequent publication or other suitable dissemination of results.
- (iv) If significant archaeological features are discovered during the course of the Full Archaeological Excavation, work on site shall stop pending a decision of the planning authority, in consultation with the Department, regarding appropriate additional mitigation measures which may include preservation in-situ or full archaeological excavation. Any additional archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the planning authority, following consultation with the Department, shall be complied with by the developer.
- (v) No construction works shall be carried out on site until a Preliminary Excavation Report on the Full Archaeological Excavation has been submitted to the Department and the Planning Authority and approval to proceed is agreed in writing.
- (vi) The developer shall ensure that any necessary Post-Excavation Analysis- as set out in the Preliminary Excavation Report-including (but not limited

to) specialist analysis of finds and samples, scientific dating and conservation of artefacts is completed.

- (vii) The developer shall ensure that the results of the Full Archaeological Excavation are adequately disseminated to the public by way of publication or other appropriate means.

Reason: In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the site and to secure the preservation and protection of any remains that may exist within the site.

5. The mitigation measures identified in the OCEMP and other plans and particulars submitted with the planning application, shall be implemented in full by the developer, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and protection of the environment during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

6. Prior to commencement of development, a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the construction phase shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority, generally in accordance with the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan. The CEMP shall incorporate the following:

- (a) a detailed plan for the construction phase incorporating, inter alia, construction programme, supervisory measures, noise, dust and surface water management measures including appointment of a site noise liaison officer, construction hours and the management, transport and disposal of construction waste;
- (b) a comprehensive programme for the implementation of all monitoring commitments made in the application and supporting documentation during the construction period;
- (c) an emergency response plan; and
- (d) proposals in relation to public information and communication. A record of daily checks that the works are being undertaken in accordance with the

Construction Environmental Management Plan shall be kept for inspection by the planning authority.

(e) The Construction Environment Management Plan shall include the location of any and all archaeological or cultural heritage constraints relevant to the proposed development as set out the Archaeological Assessment (IAC Ltd; date July 2024). The CEMP shall clearly describe all identified likely archaeological impacts, both direct and indirect, and all mitigation measures to be employed to protect the archaeological or cultural heritage environment during all phases of site preparation and construction activity.

Reason: In the interest of environmental protection and orderly development.

7. The landscaping scheme shown on drawing number LD.KNCKRH 1.0 (Landscape Mitigation Plan), as submitted to the An Bord Pleanála on the 12th day of February, 2025 shall be carried out within the first planting season following substantial completion of external construction works.

All planting shall be adequately protected from damage until established.

Any plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of five years from the completion of the development, shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: In order to screen the development, in the interest of visual amenity.

8. A detailed construction traffic management plan shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. The plan shall include details of arrangements for routes for construction traffic, parking during the construction phase, the location of the compound for storage of plant and machinery and the location for storage of deliveries to the site.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable transport and safety.

9. During the operational phase of the substation, the noise level arising from the development, as measured at the nearest noise sensitive location shall not exceed:

- (i) An LeqT, value of 55 dB(A) during the period 0800 to 2200 hours from Monday to Saturday inclusive. [The T value shall be one hour]
- (ii) An Leq, 15 min value of 45 dB(A) at any other time. [The T value shall be 15 minutes]. The noise at such time shall not contain a tonal component.

At no time shall the noise generated on site result in an increase in noise level of more than 10 dB(A) above background levels at the boundary of the site.

All sound measurement shall be carried out in accordance with ISO Recommendation 1996:2007: Acoustics - Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise.

Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall agree with the planning authority a protocol for the monitoring of noise from electrical apparatus within the sites. This protocol shall include provision for the shielding or removal of any such apparatus in the event of the exceedance of agreed noise limits as perceived at identified receptors.

Reason: To protect the amenities of property in the vicinity of the site.

10. The undertaker shall comply with the following requirements:

- a) No additional artificial lighting shall be installed or operated on site unless authorised by a prior grant of planning permission.
 - b) CCTV cameras shall be fixed and angled to face into the site and shall not be directed towards adjoining property or roads.
 - c) Cables within the site shall be located underground.
 - d) All fencing, gates and exposed metalwork shall be dark green in colour.
- The roofs of the buildings within the substation compound shall be dark grey or black and the external walls shall be finished in neutral colours such as grey or off-white.

Reason: In the interest of clarity, of visual and residential amenity.

11. All road surfaces, culverts, watercourses, verges, and public lands shall be protected during construction and, in the case of any damage occurring, shall be reinstated to the satisfaction of the planning authority at the developer's expense. Prior to commencement of development, a road condition survey

shall be carried out to provide a basis for reinstatement works. Details in this regard shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory standard of development.

12. The site development and construction works shall be carried out in such a manner as to ensure that the adjoining roads are kept clear of debris, soil and other material and cleaning works shall be carried on the adjoining public roads by the developer and at the developer's expense on a daily basis.

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.

13. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0800 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 0800 to 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or public holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of property in the vicinity.

14. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the planning authority, to secure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site on cessation of the project coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to such reinstatement. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory reinstatement of the site.

15. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and

Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Máire Daly

Senior Planning Inspector

10th June 2025

Appendix 1 – Form 1 – EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ABP-320532-24
Proposed Development Summary	Proposed 110kV electrical substation and associated 110kV infrastructure required to connect a solar farm to the existing Knockraha 220kV substation.
Development Address	Townlands of Knockraha East, Ballynanelagh and Kileena, County Cork
	In all cases check box /or leave blank
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2. <input type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed	

<p>type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994.</p> <p>No Screening required.</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold.</p> <p>EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.</p> <p>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</p>	

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2: WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING

Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality

An Bord Pleanála ref. no.	ABP-320532-24	Townland, address	Knockraha East, Ballynanelagh and Kileena, County Cork.
Description of project	Proposed 110kV electrical substation and associated 110kV infrastructure required to connect a solar farm to the existing Knockraha 220kV substation.		
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,	Site is clear of all structures and consists of a greenfield agricultural site with deep well drained mineral soils (mainly acidic) within a rural area. The site is well drained grassland with a drainage ditch located along the northern portion of the site. There is a water course located 1.6km northwest of the site called the Ballingohig stream.		
Proposed surface water details	According to the submitted Drainage Layout Plan runoff from impermeable areas is to be directed to a soakaway to the south of the substation compound. It is noted that runoff will pass through an oil interceptor prior to discharging to the soakway and that this interceptor will also be incorporated into the Bund dewatering system. As stated in the submitted NIS the surface water drainage strategy is to replicate predevelopment Greenfield surface water runoff conditions.		

	The submitted SSFRA states that suitable surface water drainage system including SuDS measures for the proposed development on the site will mitigate against pluvial flood risk.					
Proposed water supply source & available capacity	It is proposed to use rainwater harvesting for toilet flushing and hand washing and bottled water will be supplied to staff on site for drinking where necessary.					
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues	2 no. foul what the substation control buildings. The tanks are to be removed by tanker to a licensed disposal facility at regular intervals.					
Others?	N/A					
Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection						
Identified water body	Distance to (m)	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater)
River waterbody	1.6km to the northwest of the site.	Butlerstown_020	Good	Review	N/A	Surface water run-off

		(IE_SW_19B05 0800)					
Groundwater body	0m	Ballinhassig East (IE_SW_G_004)	Good	Not at Risk	N/A	Groundwater	
Step 4: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage.							
CONSTRUCTION PHASE							
No.	Component	Water body receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact/ what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure*	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment? (if 'screened' in or 'uncertain' proceed to Stage 2.
1.	Surface:	River: Butlerstown _020	Indirect impact via potential hydrological	Water Pollution from construction run off - Siltation,	Use of Standard Constructio	No	Screen out at this stage.

	Site clearance & Construction	(IE_SW_19 B050800)	pathway via field drains and then Ballingohig stream which links into Butlerstown river.	pH (Concrete), Hydrocarbon spillages.	n Practice and CEMP/ Conditions		
2.	Ground: Site clearance & Construction	Groundwater r Ballinhassig East (IE_SW_G_004)	Indirect impact via Potential hydrological pathway	Water Pollution from construction run off - Siltation, pH (Concrete), Hydrocarbon spillages.	Use of Standard Construction Practice and CEMP/ Conditions	No	Screen out at this stage.
OPERATIONAL PHASE							
4.	Surface Water Run-off	River: Butlerstown _020 (IE_SW_19 B050800)	Indirect impact via Potential hydrological pathway	Water Pollution - Siltation, pH (Concrete),	Use of Standard Construction Practice and CEMP/ SuDS/ Conditions	No	Screen out at this stage.

5.	Ground	Groundwater r Ballinhassig East (IE_SW_G_ 004)	Drainage	Hydrocarbon Spillages	Use of Standard Constructio n Practice and CEMP/ SuDS/ Conditions	No	Screen out at this stage.
DECOMMISSIONING PHASE							
6.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Appendix 3 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects	
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics Case File: ABP-320532-24	
Brief description of project	Proposed 110kV electrical substation and associated 110kV infrastructure required to connect a solar farm to the existing Knockraha 220kV substation.
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	<p>The proposed development is to be located on agricultural lands (c. 5.5 ha in area) to the northeast of the existing Knockraha 220kV substation c. 1.2km east of Knockraha village in north County Cork. The site comprises agricultural fields, hedgerows/treelines and drainage ditches. The surrounding area is comprised of agricultural lands and the existing Knockraha substation. The closest residential property is located c. 350m to the east. A detailed description of the proposed development is provided in Section 2.0 of the Inspector's report and detailed specifications of the proposal are provided in the AA screening report/ NIS and other planning documents provided by the applicant.</p> <p>Site preparation work and construction works will require ground clearance and excavations with the removal of a number of hedgerows and treelines that currently cross the site. An Outline Construction and Environment Management Plan (OCEMP) accompanies the application. Good practice construction site management measures are integrated into the project design.</p> <p>Surface water runoff from impermeable areas is to be directed to a soakaway to the south of the substation compound. It is noted that runoff will pass through an oil interceptor prior to discharging to the soakway and that this interceptor will</p>

	<p>also be incorporated into the bund dewatering system. As stated in the applicant's information the surface water drainage strategy is to replicate predevelopment greenfield surface water runoff conditions.</p> <p>With regard to designated sites, the Great Island Channel SAC (site Code: 001058) and Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code: 004030) are located c. 4.7km to the south, the Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (Site Code: 002170) is located 8.6km to the northeast. A weak hydrological connection is noted to the Cork Harbour SPA.</p>
Screening report	Yes (Prepared by Henry Tennyson of Malone O' Regan Environmental)
Natura Impact Statement	Yes (As above)
Relevant submissions	The Development Applications Unit has been consulted on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) however no comments have been received to date in relation to any nature conservation concerns.
<p>Step 2: Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model</p> <p>The Site is not located within or directly adjacent to any European sites, however, the boundaries of three are located within 15km of the proposed site. Given the localised nature and short duration of the construction works, the distance separating the site from the Great Island Channel SAC and the Blackwater River (Cork / Waterford) SAC (Site Code: 002170), and the intervening lands separating the site from these European sites and the lack of impact pathways, it is considered that the proposed development will not result in adverse effects to these European sites and they have therefore been screened out from further consideration (see below).</p> <p>The Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code: 004030) detailed in the table below has been identified for further consideration to assess potential significant effects resulting from the Proposed Development. I am satisfied that the Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code:004030) as identified in the submitted AA screening is the only European site of relevance which could be impacted by the proposed development applying the source-pathway-receptor model. Further investigation is outlined under Step 3 below.</p>	

European Site (code)	Qualifying interests ¹ Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)	Distance from proposed development (km)	Ecological connections ²	Consider further in screening Y/N
Great Island Channel SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] - Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] <p>Source: https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001058 https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/si/206/made/en</p>	4.7km southeast of proposed site	Weak connection	N – very weak connection, localised and short nature of construction works, distance separating the site from proposed development. The contained nature of the site (serviced, defined site boundaries, no direct ecological connections or pathways) and distance from receiving features connected to the SAC make it highly unlikely that the proposed development could generate impacts of a magnitude that could affect habitat quality within the SAC for the QIs listed. Conclusion: Conservation objectives would not be undermined.
Blackwater River (Cork / Waterford) SAC (Site Code: 002170)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estuaries [1130] - Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] - Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] - Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] - Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] 	8.6km northeast of proposed site	No connection	N – The contained nature of the site (serviced, defined site boundaries, no direct ecological connections or pathways) and distance from receiving features connected to the SAC make it highly unlikely that the proposed development could generate impacts of a magnitude

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] - Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculon fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] - Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] - Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] - <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] - <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] - <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] - <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096] - <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099] - <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> (Twaite Shad) [1103] - <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] - <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] - <i>Vandenboschia speciosa</i> (Killarney Fern) [6985] <p>Source: https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002170 https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2024/si/452/made/en/pdf</p>			<p>that could affect habitat quality or species within the SAC for the QIs listed.</p> <p>Conclusion: Conservation objectives would not be undermined.</p>
Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code:004030) ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] - Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] - Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] 	4.7km to the south of proposed site	Indirect (proximity and	Y – Considered further under Step 3 below.

² The Board should note that the QI's listed for the Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code:004030) have been listed from the most recent source - S.I. No. 391/2021 - European Union Conservation of Wild Birds (Cork Harbour Special Protection Area 004030) Regulations 2021. The list now includes for both Mallard and Greenshank. These species were not previously considered in the applicants submitted documentation. These species have been considered in this Screening Determination.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] - Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] - Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A855] - Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] - Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] - Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] - Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] - Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] - Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] - Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] - Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] - Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] - Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] - Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] - Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] - Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] - Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>) [A164]. - Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] - Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] - Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] - Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] - Shoveler (<i>Spatula clypeata</i>) [A857] - Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] <p>Source: https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004030 S.I. No. 391/2021 - European Union Conservation of Wild Birds (Cork Harbour Special Protection Area 004030) Regulations 2021</p>		via drainage channel)	
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Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone or in combination) on European Sites

The likely effects of the proposed substation development in the townlands of Knockraha East, Ballynanelagh and Kileena, County Cork are primarily related to potential impacts on water quality and the surrounding environment. These effects are categorised in the table below as well as the sources of impact and likely significant effects:

Screening matrix

Site name Qualifying interests	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*	
	Impacts	Effects
Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code:004030)	<p>No direct impacts and no risk of habitat loss, fragmentation or any other direct impact.</p> <p>Loss of grassland/agricultural land.</p> <p>Indirect pathway to SPA – Low risk of surface water runoff from construction reaching sensitive receptors but could potentially enter via drainage ditch network on site which drains into the Ballingohig stream which in turn discharges into the Butlerstown River before draining into the Glashaboy river and Cork Harbour SPA. Intervening habitat provides buffer of 4.7km and a distance of c. 7km of watercourse and estuarine influence would dilute any minor emissions.</p>	<p>Ecological information shows the current land use is not suitable for regular use by SCI wintering waterbirds of the SPA.</p> <p>No wintering birds were recorded at the site.</p> <p>No direct or ex-situ effects on wintering water birds from disturbance during construction or operation of the proposed development. Conservation objectives related to ensuring adequate supporting habitat outside of the SPA will not be undermined.</p> <p>Low risk of surface water borne pollutants reaching the wetland habitats of the SPA or foraging feeding extents for SCI's (c. 7Km downstream). No significant changes in ecological functions due to any minor construction related emissions are predicted for the estuarine environment.</p> <p>Low risk of surface water borne pollutants reaching the wetland habitats of the SPA. No significant changes in ecological functions due to any construction related emissions are predicted for the estuarine environment. The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the SPA are considered to have relatively low sensitivity</p>

		to suspended sediments or other pollutants, and their conservation objectives would not be compromised and there would be no significant changes in ecological functions due to any possible minor construction related emissions.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): No	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? Other plans and projects and ‘in-combination effects’ examined in the Screening Report. I am satisfied that there are no other effects of magnitude that could add to other plans and projects.	
Step 4: Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site		
Based on the information provided in the screening report, site visit, review of the conservation objectives and supporting documents, I conclude that the proposed development (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) would not result in likely significant effects on European sites. No further assessment is required for the project. This conclusion has been determined in the absence of mitigation measures beyond best practice construction methods.		
Screening Determination		
Finding of no likely significant effects		
In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on the Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code:004030) or any other European site, in view of the Conservation Objectives of those sites and notwithstanding the submission of an NIS it has been concluded likely significant effects can be screened out, and therefore Appropriate Assessment is not necessary. This determination is based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scientific information provided in the Screening report;• The scale of the development;		

- Distance from and weak indirect connections to the European sites;
 - No ex-situ impacts on wintering birds;
 - Possible impacts identified would not be significant in terms of site-specific conservation objectives for the Cork Harbour SPA and would not undermine the maintenance of favorable conservation condition or delay or undermine the achievement of restoring favorable conservation status for those qualifying interest features of unfavorable conservation status.
- No mitigation measures aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts on European sites were required to be considered in reaching this conclusion.