# Inspector's Report

# ACP-323821-25

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| **Development** | 10 year planning permission for a 110 kV AIS substation, 110 kV underground cabling and ancillary development |
| **Location** | located in the townlands of Clonmore and Strogue, County Tipperary. |
| **Planning Authority** | Tipperary County Council |
| **Applicant** | Buirios Limited |
| **Type of Application** | Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended |
| **Prescribed Bodies** | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Development Applications Unit)<br>Health Service Executive<br>Transport Infrastructure Ireland |
| **Observers** | Katie O'Sullivan |
| **Date of Site Inspection(s)** | 28th April 2026 |
| **Inspector** | T Bradley |

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# Tables

# 1.0 Introduction

Buirios Limited (the applicant) have made an application to An Coimisiún Pleanála (the Commission) under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended for the development of a 110 kV AIS substation, 110 kV underground cabling and ancillary development in the townlands of Clonmore and Strogue, County Tipperary. The site is north-east of Templemore, Co. Tipperary. The proposed development will occur in the administrative area of Tipperary County Council (TCC).

The Commission should note the pre-application case file, ABP-317089-23, relates to the proposed development. The Commission determined on the 18th of August 2025 that the proposed development constituted Strategic Infrastructure Development.

This grid connection is directly connected to the Borrisbeg Wind Farm which, by order dated 12th of September 2024 was granted subject to conditions under case file ABP-318704-23. The wind farm consists of nine wind turbines and at the conclusion of this report no material works had commenced on the wind farm site.

## 1.1 Oral Hearing

I am satisfied that an oral hearing is not required and that written evidence has allowed for a proper and full assessment of the case. It is considered that there is no issue arising that lacks clarity or detail or are so complex as to require a hearing. The holding of an oral hearing is, of course, entirely at the discretion of the Commission.

## 1.2 Further Information and Circulation

On the basis of all the information received from the applicant and observers, it is considered there is no issue arising that lacks clarity or detail or are so complex as to require any additional information be requested from the applicant or indeed the observers and the application can be satisfactorily assessed based on the information provided.

## 2.0 Site Location

The proposed development is located in the townlands of Clonmore and Strogue, County Tipperary which is approximately 3 km north-east of Templemore, Co. Tipperary.

The substation is proposed to be located off local road L7039. It will be located in the eastern side of an agricultural field and bound by the L7039 to the east, a bóithrín to the south.

The underground cable of approximately 2.1 km will be laid in the L7039 and run south until it briefly crosses the R433 Regional Road and L7038 before entering agricultural lands. Within agricultural lands it will run parallel to R433 and the Dublin to Cork mainline railway.

A loop-in loop-out arrangement is proposed in agricultural lands in which the existing 110 kV Ikerrin - Thurles Overhead Line (OHL) runs between the R433 and the Dublin to Cork mainline railway.

The site is set in a largely flat landscape with lands predominantly in agriculture with dispersed farm buildings and single rural dwelling houses. The overall site extends to approximately 17.9 hectares.

The site may be subject to flooding from the Clonmore and Strogue streams which flow into the Suir to the west of the site. In particularly at the site proposed for the loop-in loop-out is identified on the National Indicative Fluvial Mapping (NIFM) indicating a medium probability. There are no natural heritage designations or known built heritage features on the site.

# 3.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development will consist of the provision of the following:

- A 110 kilovolt (kV) 'loop-in/loop-out' Air-Insulated Switchgear (AIS) electrical substation, including 2 no. single-storey control buildings with staff
- welfare facilities, underground wastewater storage tank, all associated electrical plant, cabling, equipment and apparatus, and security fencing, within a substation compound with a total footprint of approximately 1.41 ha;
- 2.1 kilometre 110 kV underground cabling route, with 0.9 km following the public road corridor and 1.2 km along new proposed access track across agricultural grassland (including joint bays, communication and earth sheath link chambers and all ancillary works along the route);
- 2 no. lattice-type end masts with a height of 16 metres to facilitate connection to the existing 110 kV Ikerrin-Thurles overhead electricity transmission line;
- 1 no. temporary construction compound (including offices and staff welfare facilities);
- Vegetation removal and Spoil Management;
- Site Drainage; and
- All ancillary works and apparatus.

The details of the proposed development are set in out in greater detail in the public notices which are available on file for the Commission.

This application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). The appropriate period sought for the proposed development is 10 years.

Once commenced, it is expected that the construction phase will take approximately 18-24 months in line with the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

## 3.1 Development Need

The development's need, which centres on the current energy security/independence and obligations for climate change is directly related to the wind farm which was granted planning permission by the Commission in 2024. The grid connection is an integral part of the wind farm's operation.

## 3.2 Documents supporting the Proposed Development

The following documents were submitted to the Commission in the first instance in support of the proposed development:

- Cover Letter (including copy of ACP SID Determination)
- Application Form
- Newspaper Notice (Tipperary Star and National, The Irish Examiner)
- Site Notice
- EIA Portal Notification
- Proof of Payment of Planning Application Fee
- Letter from Buirios Limited in accordance with Article 22(2)(g)(ii)
- Letters of Consent:
- Schedule of Prescribed Bodies & Copy of Cover Letters of Notification
- Planning Report prepared by RPS
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) prepared by RPS, including:
    - Volume A (Non-technical Summary and Main Body)
    - Volume B (Appendices)
    - Volume C (Natura Impact Statement (NIS))
- Drawings

In January 2026, the applicant submitted information responding to the observations made to the file.

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## 4.0 Planning History

A review of the TCC Planning Portal and the Commission's case files was carried out in April 2026 to collate any relevant, recent (within 10 years) planning history for the site. For ease of reference, pertinent histories are set out by the applicant in Appendix 15-1 Cumulative Assessment List of the EIAR. It is not reiterated here; however, I am satisfied it is a comprehensive planning history and is noted and considered in all cumulative and in-combination assessments below.

In respect of the subject site, there is no material planning history save for related application for the windfarm (ABP-318704-23) by the applicant. There are numerous planning applications around the site in respect of residential and small/medium commercial/agricultural developments which is to be expected in a such a rural location. These are all noted and considered in the assessment below.

# 5.0 Policy Context

At a high level, the Commission should note several international, national and regional level policies and guidance which will be relied on in in the assessment below. These include:

- National Planning Framework Project Ireland 2040 (DHPLG, 2018 and as revised in 2025)
- National Development Plan 2021-2030 (DPE, 2021 and review in 2025)
- Climate Action Plan 2025 and associated Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021(DECC) (2025)
- National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030 (DECC, 2024)
- European Wind Power Action Plan, (European Commission, 2023)
- Long-Term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions (DECC, 2023)
- Energy Security in Ireland to 2030, Energy Security Package (DECC, 2023)
- National Energy Security Framework (DECC, 2022)
- REPowerEU Plan 2022 (European Commission, 2022)
- Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply (DECC, 2021)
- European Green Deal 2020 (European Commission, 2019)
- *White Paper on Energy – Irelands Transition to a Low Carbon future 2015-2030* (DCENR, 2015)

These are all directly and indirectly supportive of electricity infrastructure and more generally renewable energy projects which extends to wind energy. It is noted a more detailed setting out of national and regional policy is contained in Section 5.1 of the Planning Report submitted by the applicant should it be required by the Commission.

The following policy/plans are also noted.

## 5.1 National

### 5.1.1 The Water Action Plan 2024: A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland

The Water Action Plan 2024 (WAP) is Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan and it outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to improve water quality in Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters, and provide sustainable management of Ireland's water resources. The WAP is

based on a single national River Basin District for the country, broken down into 46 catchment management units, which are further broken down into 583 subcatchments.

### 5.1.2 National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030

The purpose of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) is described as follows:

*"This 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan strives for a "Whole-of-Government, Whole-of Society" approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, whilst also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to act for nature.*

*To do this, the NBAP takes account of the wide range of policies, strategies, conventions, laws and targets at the global, EU and national level that influence our shared environment in order to scale up biodiversity action."*

The NBAP sets out the following 5 No. objectives which have numerous supporting targets and actions: :

- Objective 1: Adopt a Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society Approach to Biodiversity.
- Objective 2: Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs
- Objective 3: Secure Nature's Contribution to People.
- Objective 4: Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity.
- Objective 5: Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives.

The Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023 introduced a new public sector duty on biodiversity. Section 59B states that every public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the objectives and targets in a National Biodiversity Action Plan. An Coimisiún Pleanála is included in the list of 'public bodies' under Section 59H for the purposes of that Part of the Act.

The impact of development on biodiversity, including species and habitats, can be assessed at a European, National and Local level and is taken into account in the Commission's decision-making having regard to the Habitats and Birds Directives,

Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, Water Framework Directive and other relevant legislation, strategy and policy where applicable.

### 5.1.3 National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 (NLS)

Ireland signed and ratified the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (ELC) in 2002 which came into effect on 1st of March 2004. It obliges Ireland to implement policy changes and objectives concerning the management, protection and planning of the landscape. The NLS is intended to ensure compliance with the ELC and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing it while positively managing its change. It is a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions. The objectives of this Strategy are:

'to establish and implement through a series of actions, policies aimed at understanding, protecting, managing and planning our landscape. It sets out specific measures to integrate and embed landscape considerations in all sectors which influence the landscape and improve and enhance the quality of decision-making by those who have an impact on it.'

## 5.2 Regional

In 2020 the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) published the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020 – 2032* (RSES). The following regional policy objectives are noted.

| **Table 1: Policies and Objective of the RSES** | |
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| **Policy Objective** | **Detail** |
| **RPO 50 Diversification** | It is an objective to further develop a diverse base of smart economic specialisms across our rural Region, including innovation and diversification in agriculture (agri-Tech, food and beverage), the marine (ports, fisheries and the wider blue economy potential), forestry, peatlands, renewable energy, tourism (leverage the opportunities from the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brands), social enterprise, circular economy, knowledge economy, global business services, fin-tech, specialised engineering, heritage, arts and culture, design and craft industries as dynamic divers for our rural economy |
| **RPO 95 Sustainable Renewable** | It is an objective to support implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), and the Offshore Renewable Energy Plan and the implementation of mitigation |

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| **Energy Generation** | measures outlined in their respective SEA and AA and leverage the Region as a leader and innovator in sustainable renewable energy generation. |
| **RPO 96 Integrating Renewable Energy Sources** | It is an objective to support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure to integrate renewable energy sources and ensure our national and regional energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows. |
| **RPO 97 Power Stations and Renewable Energy** | It is an objective to support the sustainable technology upgrading and conversion of power stations in the Region to increase capacity for use of energy efficient and renewable energy sources. |
| **RPO 99 Renewable Wind Energy** | It is an objective to support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on shore and off shore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the Region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines |
| **RPO 100 Indigenous Renewable Energy Production and Grid Injection** | It is an objective to support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection. |
| **RPO 219 New Energy Infrastructure** | It is an objective to support the sustainable reinforcement and provision of new energy infrastructure by infrastructure providers (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to ensure the energy needs of future population and economic expansion within designated growth areas and across the Region can be delivered in a sustainable and timely manner and that capacity is available at local and regional scale to meet future needs. |
| **RPO 221 Renewable Energy Generation and Transmission Network** | a. Local Authority City and County Development Plans shall support the sustainable development of renewable energy generation and demand centres such as data centres which can be serviced with a renewable energy source (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to spatially suitable locations to ensure efficient use of the existing transmission network |
| **RPO 222 Electricity Infrastructure** | It is an objective 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 that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this plan under EirGrid's (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to serve the existing and future needs of the Region and strengthen all-island energy infrastructure and interconnection capacity. |

## 5.3 County

The Tipperary County Development Plan 2022–2028 (TCDP or 'the plan') is the relevant plan for the subject site.

I note a variation to the plan is currently proposed and is subject to public consultation to April 2026. Regardless of whether it is adopted or not, given it related to the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities I am satisfied it will have no material bearing on any decision of the Commission on this case

The site of the proposed development has no land use zoning.

The following policies and objectives are noted.

| **Table 2: Policies and Objective of the TCDP** | |
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| **Policy/Objective** | **Detail** |
| Policy 3-1 | Promote and facilitate renewable energy development in accordance with the Tipperary Renewable Energy Strategy 2016 (and any subsequent reviews) and the Tipperary Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019. |
| Policy 10-1 | Support and facilitate new developments producing energy from local renewable sources such as hydro, bioenergy, wind, solar, geothermal, and landfill gas. This includes both renewable and non-renewable enabling infrastructure, subject to compliance with planning and environmental standards, and in cooperation with statutory and energy providers. |
| Policy 10-A | Support the Climate Action Plan (DECC, 2019) regarding renewable energy production, recognising the strategic importance and benefits of renewable energy investment to rural communities. |
| Policy 10-C: | Continue to support renewable energy development and maintain a positive planning framework through periodic review of the Renewable Energy Strategy during the Plan's lifetime |
| Objective 15-F | 15 - F Work in partnership with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications in line with their 'Policy Statement to Ensure Security of Electricity Supply and Facilitate the Target of up to 80% Renewable Electricity Generation by 2030', and to facilitate additional electricity transmission and distribution grid infrastructure, as well as additional electricity interconnection and electricity storage. |

It is noted that : Chapter 10 contains policies and objectives, most notably Objective 10-E that seek to protect and promote rural development including diversification of

the rural economy into new sectors and services, including those addressing climate change and sustainability in line the NPF.

Chapter 10 and 13 of the TCDP considers a range of policy objectives to protect and conserve all sites designated or proposed for designation this includes biodiversity, designated sites for ecology, architectural and archaeology. It also considers non-designated sites features of local value including trees and hedgerows. These are all noted. There are no protected structures, architectural heritage areas or scenic views/prospects directly related to the site.

### 5.3.1 Tipperary County Council Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The Tipperary County Council Climate Action Plan (2024-2029) sets out the actions that Tipperary County Council will take over the next 5 years to address climate change. In particular it focuses on how the Council will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use across its own buildings, fleet and assets. It also addresses how the Council will influence, facilitate and support the community, businesses, and other sectors in the county to take climate action.

### 5.3.2 Tipperary County Biodiversity Action Plan 2025–2030 (unpublished)

The Action Plan, which will be a strategic framework to protect, enhance and restore biodiversity within the County is currently being drafted.

### 5.3.3 Tipperary County Heritage Plan 2017-2021

The aim of the plan is to connect the citizens of Tipperary to their heritage and to make it an integral part of everyday life at the core of our communities.

# 6.0 Legal Context

## 6.1 Environmental Impact Assessment

Annex I to Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU requires as mandatory the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for all projects listed therein. Projects listed in Annex II to the Directive are not automatically subjected to EIA. Member States can decide to subject them to an assessment on a case-by-case basis or according to thresholds and/or criteria (for example size, location, sensitive ecological areas and potential impact).

The European Union (Planning and Development) (EIA) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296/2018) amended the PDA and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (PDR) in order to transpose into Irish Law, the provisions of Directive 2014/52/EU.

In Ireland, Schedule 5 (Part 1 and Part 2) of the PDR, transposes Annex I and Annex II of the amended EIA Directive. Schedule 7 sets out the criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, under three headings: characteristics of the proposed development; location of the proposed development; types and characteristics of potential impacts.

Screening is the term used to describe the process for determining whether a proposed development requires an EIA by reference to mandatory classes of development and legislative threshold requirements or by reference to the type and scale of the proposed development and the significance or the environmental sensitivity of the receiving baseline environment set out in Schedule 7.

As the consented wind farm underwent a mandatory EIA, the applicant, in this instance has volunteered an EIAR for the proposed development

## 6.2 Appropriate Assessment

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (‘the Habitats Directive’) is European Community legislation aimed at nature conservation. The Habitats Directive requires that where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site(s), (and where the plan or project is not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the European site), the plan or project will be subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) to

identify any implications for the European site(s) in view of the site's Conservation Objectives The Habitats Directive is transposed into Irish law by Part XAB of the PDA, and the PDR.

Case law of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has determined that AA is required if likely significant effects cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information. Case law has also clarified that measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on European sites, must not be considered when determining whether it is necessary to carry out an AA.

The applicant in this instance has submitted an NIS.

# 7.0 Submissions

There are five  submissions received on file from the planning authority (1), prescribed bodies (3) and observers (1).

A report dated December 2025 was submitted by TCC.

The prescribed bodies include:

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)
- Health Service Executive
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)

There was one observer (listed on this report's cover) in response to the application for the proposed development. This submission objects to the proposed development. It is their view that the proposed development would fundamentally alter the character and planning context of the area, resulting in permanent loss of residential amenity and prejudice to future rural housing potential. In circumstances where residents are permanently tied to the locality due to farming activity and cannot reasonably relocate, these impacts are enduring, unavoidable and contrary to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. The submission includes a number of appendices in respect of noise and residential amenity, roads and access, land sterilisation, agricultural practices, ecology, cumulative impacts which are noted

The applicant responded to the observations outlined by submission dated January 2026. The submission considers the submissions directly. For legibility, the response of the applicant to the local authority, prescribed bodies and observers is presented in the tables below.

| Table 3: Submission of Tipperary County Council | | | |
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| **Topic** | **Observation Submitted** | **Application's Response** | **Assessment** |
| **Principle of Development** | The Planning Authority considers the proposed development as enabling works to an already permitted development and so would view the principle of same as acceptable. | The Applicant welcomes the positive report received on the file from TCC and will have no difficulty with the recommended conditions provided by the Planning Authority should they be included in a consent issued by ACP. | Section 12 Consideration of Conditions |
| **Relation to Wind Farm** | The submission refer to considerations and commentary provided by Tipperary County Council in relation to ACP-318704-23 for 9 Wind Turbines and Associated Infrastructure. It is noted that the EIAR/NIS submitted as part of this application included consideration of the proposed substation and underground cable. | | |
| **Conclusion on EIA/NIS** | The Planning Authority concluded that based on the information provided in the EIAR/NIS the Planning Authority considers that the proposed development may not result in any significant impacts, however the Commission is considered to be the competent Authority in this regard | | |
| **District Engineering** | The report from the District Engineer notes that the applicant has included all recommended mitigation measures as part of the application. | | |
| **Development Contributions** | It is considered that the Tipperary County Development Contribution Scheme, 2020 applies to the proposed development. Development contributions | | |

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| | to be levied in accordance with same noting the provisions of Classes 8 and 19. | | |
| **Conditions** | The Planning Authority has set out eight conditions which it recommends being attached to any approval of planning permission. | | |

| **Table 4: Submission of Prescribed Bodies** | | | |
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| **Topic** | **Observation Submitted** | **Application's Response** | **Assessment** |
| **Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage** | The Department advises that Sample Conditions C3, C5 and C6 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 and informed by the findings of the EIAR. Nature Conservation should be attached to any approval of planning permission. | The department's requests are included in the EIAR in Section 12.8.3.4.2 of Chapter 12 Cultural Heritage and reiterated in the CEMP and chapter 16 Schedule of Environmental Commitments (MM76, MM77 and MX14). These are standard procedures which are undertaken the Applicant in any event; however, the Applicant is happy to haves such conditions explicitly included as conditions of consent | Section 8.7 Impact to Cultural Heritage<br><br>Section 12 Consideration of Conditions |
| **Health Service Executive** | • It is recommended that the Planning Authority follows the: Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA. 2022) when considering Public Health in their decision making<br>• The National Environmental Health Service (NEHS) recommends that | • Communication between the public and the CLO has remained open since June 2021 to date,<br>• The CLO will remain contactable throughout the construction and operational phase and will ensure that any complaints logged are raised with the Site Manager and acted upon immediately. | Section 9.0 Environmental Impact Assessment<br><br>Section 12 Consideration of Conditions |

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| | there is engagement with the local community as early as possible and in particular during the construction phase. This may include a focal point person such as a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) where feedback including complaints can be received and acted upon.<br>• The NEHS recommends that the mitigation measures described under Section 9.4.2, 10.5 and the CEMP of the EIAR, in relation to the construction phase are set as minimum conditions of planning if permission is approved. Additional measures not listed may include a wheel wash for HGVs exiting the site, covering of loads and covering of soil stockpiles that may be on site. Consideration should be given to the use of vehicles, plant and machinery that do not utilise fossil fuels.<br>• The NESH recommends for construction phase that the noise mitigation measures proposed under Section 11.5 of the EIAR are adopted as minimum conditions of planning if permission is approved. The operational hours proposed should be reconsidered to finish at 1400 hrs on a Saturday with no construction | • The issues raised by the HSE have been fully addressed within the EIAR in respect of air quality and climate<br>• The Applicant agrees to cease works at 1400 hrs on Saturdays, with no works taking place on Sundays or public holidays and will accept these hours as a condition of any consent that ACP may issue although they may seek occasional working outside these hours in agreement with TCC. | |

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| | work taking place on Sundays and Public Holidays. | | |
| **Transport Infrastructure Ireland** | • TII acknowledges that the application documentation submitted in relation to the subject application for a proposed 110 kV grid connection and related works indicates no direct access requirements to the national road network in the first instance. TII's observations in relation to the associated windfarm application (ACP Case ref. PA92.318704) remain as set out in TII's previous submissions related to that application<br>• TII requests referral of all proposals agreed between the road authorities, PPP Concessions and MMaRC Companies and the applicant impacting on national roads. Mitigation measures identified by the applicant should be included as conditions in any decision to approved permission.<br>• In the interests of clarification, any proposed works to the national road network to facilitate substation component delivery to site shall comply with TII Publications and shall be subject to Road Safety Audit as appropriate. Works should ensure the ongoing safety for all road users and | • The Applicant will consult with all PPP Companies, MMaRC Contractors and road authorities<br>• All structures to be crossed by an EAL will be the subject of a full structural assessment by the project developer in accordance with TIF Publications AM-STR-06048 in order to verify that they can sustain an EAL load safely and without any damage | Section 12 Consideration of Conditions |

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| | prior to any development necessary licenses, approvals or agreements with the local road authorities shall be in place<br>• Section 6.1 of the Planning Report that accompanied the subject application confirms that the substation will connect the Consented Wind Farm to the national grid and remain part of the national grid infrastructure after decommissioning of the Consented Wind Farm. Therefore, TII is of the opinion that the 'Electricity Transmission Infrastructure Development – Roads Sector Engagement Farmwork' also included in Department of Transport Circular RW 07 of 2025 applies. | | |

| **Table 5: Submission of Observers** | | | |
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| **Topic** | **Observation Submitted** | **Application's Response** | **Assessment** |
| **Principle of the Development** | The proposed development material contravenes Tipperary County Development Plan 2022–2028, the National Planning Framework (NPF), and the National Landscape Strategy, all of which seek to protect rural landscapes, agricultural function and sustainable rural communities | The proposed development is compliant with national, regional and local policy by indirectly supporting our obligations to increase renewable energy generation, enhance energy security and achieve a low carbon transition and climate resilient economy. TCC in its submission is of the same considered view. | Section 8.1 Principle of the Development |

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| **Landscape and Visual** | The proposed development is inappropriate in its siting in open countryside with no industrial context. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that this site is necessary or that less sensitive alternatives were adequately examined. It will result in irreversible change in land use from agricultural to industrial infrastructure, fundamentally altering the character and function of the area | The proposed development was designed with regard for its surrounding context and in particular its proximity to existing residential areas. Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual Impact considers, impacts from visual effects and it considered these are Not Significant. | Section 8.4 Impact to Landscape and Visual<br><br>Table 7 EIAR Matrix l |
| **Residential Development** | The proposed development prejudges future residential development on adjoining lands; The proposed substation would create an environment fundamentally incompatible with unacceptable residential amenity standards. It therefore conflicts with sustainable rural settlement objectives by undermining the ability of local farming families to develop housing on their own lands, | The Proposed development does not preclude the application for, or development of one off rural housing in the area. There are several examples of existing substations operating in close proximity to dwellings. | Section 8.3 Use of Residential Lands<br><br>Table 7 EIAR Matrix |
| **Agricultural Impact** | The proposed development undermines the long-term sustainability of the rural community and the continued viability of family farming in this area, contrary to national and local planning policy. The surrounding lands also support dairy, beef and sheep farming. Continuous disturbance, noise and lighting constitute stressors for livestock and raise animal welfare concerns | Substations coexist in rural areas across the State and farming practises continue daily around them with no adverse effects on agriculture or livestock reported, | Section 8.2 Use of Agricultural Lands |

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| **Residential Amenity (Noise & Light)** | There will be significant impacts including to the dwelling opposite the substation in respect of residential amenity including noise pollution (quiet rural environment and nighttime noise, low-frequency and tonal transformer noise) and light pollution are all significant impacts. | With the implementation of the mitigation measures listed in Sections 4.7.3.2.2, 4.7.3.4.2 and 4.7.3.5.2 of Chapter 4 of the EIAR respectively, the effects in respect of dust, noise and traffic, are considered to be short term only and ranging from Slight to Imperceptible. Detailed mitigation measures are included for the control of artificial lighting during the construction and operational phase of the Proposed Grid Connection and Consented Wind Farm, (MM74 and MM79 in Appendix A of the CEMP (Appendix 3-2 of the EIAR). | Section 8.3 Use of Residential Lands<br><br>Table 7 EIAR Matrix |
| **Access and Traffic Impacts** | The local roads are narrow shared-use roads. Heavy construction traffic and abnormal loads associated with substation construction are incompatible with this shared rural function. | A Construction Traffic Management Plan will detail road closure and diversion requirements for the construction phase, all of which will be agreed with Tipperary County Council prior to the commencement of the construction phase. There will be No Significant effects to local traffic and transport as a result of diversions.<br>All health and safety measures as detailed across the EIAR and CEMP will be strictly adhered to and in the unlikely event that an emergency occurs on site, the procedures within the Emergency Response Plan will be activated and followed explicitly. | Section 8.5 Impact to Local Roads<br><br>Table 7 EIAR Matrix |
| **Ecology** | The area supports hedgerows, field boundaries, ditches and pastureland that | Detailed habitat, mammal and botanical surveys were undertaken at the Site as | Section 8.6 Impact to Biodiversity |

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| | collectively operate as a functioning rural (ecological) network. Disturbance can cause habitat fragmentation and wildlife displacement. | part of the Proposed Grid Connection application and the Consented Wind Farm. The habitats recorded are unlikely to support any protected/notable species or notable assemblage of invertebrate species. No protected or notable bird species or assemblage of species or evidence of breeding was encountered during the ecological walkover surveys in May 2025. It is intended to restore any hedgerows that are removed along the cable route. | Table 7 EIAR Matrix |
| **European Sites** | The site lies within the hydrological catchment of the Lower River Suir SAC, The application must demonstrate that the proposed development, alone or in combination with other plans/projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site. In the absence of adequate information to exclude adverse effects, the precautionary approach requires refusal or further assessment, | The residual effects are assessed as negative, imperceptible, indirect, short term, unlikely effect on local groundwater and surface water quality. An NIS supporting the application robustly concluded that the proposed development would not have adverse effects on any European sites. | Section 11 Appropriate Assessment<br><br>Table 7 EIAR Matrix |
| **Flood Risk** | The site is low-lying and close to the River Suir. Flood risk, drainage, and potential pollution pathways (including sediment-laden runoff, hydrocarbons and construction materials) require robust assessment and demonstration of safety over the lifetime of the development. The submission maintains that the application does not adequately | The Flood Risk Assessment concludes that design has undergone an iterative process which ensured that the sensitive elements of the development are outside of the modelled flood zones. No increase in flood risk to people, property, the economy or the environment during extreme flood events as a result of the Proposed development due to the appropriate design measures which will | Section 8.8 Risk of Flooding<br><br>Table 7 EIAR Matrix |

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| | address these issues for a sensitive receiving environment | result in imperceptible upstream and downstream effects. | |
| **Cultural Heritage** | Recorded monuments and historic field patterns in the area may be affected by ground disturbance, trenching and associated works. The protection of archaeological heritage and historic landscape character is a material planning consideration and requires a precautionary approach where irreversible harm could occur | Chapter 12 Cultural Heritage considers local heritage features and has proposed mitigation measures which are reiterated in the CEMP and will be complied with to ensure no significant impacts arise. The mitigation measures ensure a precautionary approach is taken. | Section 8.7 Impact to Cultural Heritage<br><br>Table 7 EIAR Matrix |
| **Cumulative Impact** | The proposed development contributes to cumulative industrialisation of a rural landscape when considered with existing and permitted energy infrastructure, Incremental change can erode rural character, amenity and settlement capacity over time, even where individual developments are assessed in isolation | The Cumulative Impact Assessment completed as part of the EIAR concluded that there is no significant environmental effects with other projects and/or plans within the study area. | Section 8.4 Impact to Landscape and Visual<br><br>Table 7 EIAR Matrix |
| **Mitigation Measures** | Mitigation measures cannot resolve fundamental land-use incompatibility, amenity loss or land sterilisation where permanent industrial infrastructure is located directly opposite lands intended for rural housing. | No response noted. | Section 9.8 Mitigation Measures |

# 8.0 Planning Assessment

I have read the entire contents of the file including the EIAR, NIS and all supporting documentation submitted with the application. I have visited the subject site and its surroundings. I have read in full the observations submitted in respect of both the application including the third-party observations, the observations from the planning authority and the observations from prescribed bodies.

There are a variety of issues raised within the submissions received, I have considered them on a themed basis within the relevant sections of the report hereunder. I consider the critical issues in determining the current application before the Commission are as follows:

- Principle of the Development
- Use of Agricultural Lands
- Use of Residential Lands/Residential Amenity

The Commission should also have regard to other sections of this report including:

- Planning Assessment (this Section)
- EIA (Section 9.0)
- WFD (Section 10.0)
- AA (Section 11.0)

Each assessment has had regard to all submissions made by parties to the planning application. There is an inevitable overlap between the assessments with certain matters falling into the planning assessment, EIA, AA and WFD. In the interest of brevity, matters are not repeated but the Commission should have regard to all sections when deliberating and reaching its conclusions in respect of the planning application and each discrete assessment under EIA, WFD and AA.

## 8.1 Principle of the Development

In terms of tackling climate change, reducing dependency on fossil fuels in energy production and achieving reduced greenhouse gas emissions, there is clear policy support at international, national, regional and local level for renewable energy development. The proposed development forms part of and is directly related to the development of a renewable energy project, the permitted Borrisbeg Wind Farm

In the same manner that the permitted windfarm is compatible with European and National climate change and renewable energy policy and legislation (including the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015 (as amended). The grid connection is equally compatible and would contribute to the achievement of European and National renewable energy targets and in particular with the objectives of the Climate Action Plans 2025 (CAP25) which has sets targets for wind energy including:

- achieving 9 GW of onshore wind, 8 GW of solar power, and at least 5 GW from offshore wind projects by 2030; and
- achieving an 80% share of renewable electricity by 2030.

The proposed development would be compatible with national planning policy as set out in the National Planning Framework Plan, 2018-2040 which recognises the need to move toward a low carbon and climate resilient society with a sustainable renewable energy supply. National Policy Objective 71 in particular supports the development and upgrading of electricity grid infrastructure including supporting the delivery of renewable energy.

I am satisfied that the proposed development is also consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, 2020 and notably Regional Policy Objectives 96 and 100 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy which seeks to facilitate the sustainable development of additional electricity generation capacity throughout the region and to support the sustainable expansion of the transmission network.

The proposed windfarm would be compatible with the general climate change and renewable energy aspirations contained in the current TCDP, which seek to promote sustainable development and measures to reduce energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt to climate change. I note Policy 10-1 in particular which supports and facilitates new developments including non-renewable enabling infrastructure, subject to compliance with planning and environmental standards, and in cooperation with statutory undertakers and energy providers. This would clearly encompass grid infrastructure to support a renewable energy development.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that the proposed development is supported by national, regional and local policies for renewable energy development. The proposed grid

connection is also compatible with European, National and local climate change and renewable energy policy and legislation. Consequently, I consider the use of the site for the purposes of electricity transmission to be an acceptable and sustainable use of the land.

The Commission should note that I also have completed an EIAR and an NIS of the proposed development and I am satisfied that there are no likely significant effects on the environment, and I am also satisfied that there would be no significant adverse effects upon any local European Designated Sites.

## 8.2 Use of Agricultural Lands

The observer raises concern about the displacement and disturbance of adjacent agricultural practices and animal welfare. While the concern is noted, and some temporary displacement/disturbance may occur to adjacent agricultural practices during the construction phase, I note there is a strong policy support for the diversification of farming practice in the TCDP. The landowners are supported in policy to diversify their incomes and work the land in the most resourceful way possible subject to relevant consents and licences. The principle of the substation and underground grid connection, which is directly related and necessary for the operation of the wind farm on and adjacent to agricultural lands is acceptable.

It may be preferable to direct these utility infrastructure to brownfield and industrial lands to avoid the potential displacement and disturbance to farming practices, however, given its context and relationship to the wind farm the substation and grid connection have a justification to be at this location. I am also of the view that substations and underground cables are common features across Ireland and in particular on agricultural lands and farmers and animals have been working and functioning along one and other for decades.

In the absence of any prescriptive policy prohibiting and/or directing substations/grid connections to certain locations, the report considers the principle of a grid connection on and adjacent to agricultural lands is acceptable subject to compliance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with the relevant plan.

In respect of animal welfare, no specific evidence has been provided to indicate that there will be an impact on animals due to the existence of a substation, nor has any

corroborated evidence been supplied to indicate that this is the case elsewhere. Again, I am satisfied that electrical infrastructure has operate successfully on and adjacent to agricultural uses for decades now. As evidenced by the applicant in Chapter 11 of the EIAR, there are no significant impacts predicted for noise during the operational period. There are some mitigation measures proposed in terms of operational lighting. While these are mainly aimed at reducing impacts to bats, they would equally prevent light pollution spilling over to adjoining agricultural lands.

It is considered unlikely, that significant impacts would arise on agricultural practices and welfare.

## 8.3 Use of Residential Lands/Residential Amenity

The observer is concerned that the proposed development would undermine future residential development on the adjoining lands and present an unacceptable impact to future residential amenity.

While the substation will result in certain lands not being available for single rural housing, it is unknown whether adjoining land would have ever been made available for residential and it may simply continue in traditional agriculture. The argument around displacement of residential uses is therefore moot and there is sufficient land in the area to provide for housing should it be required.

While I understand the dissatisfaction raised by the observer in respect of sustainable rural settlement objectives This report is satisfied it has applied the policies required by the TCDP for grid connection and that any future application for housing will have to be considered on its merits at that stage. The applicant has chosen the proposed site on the basis of existing residential receptors, which is reasonable, and achieved a setback of over 250 m from the noise emanating part of the substation.

Regardless, I agree with the applicant that the existence of a substation does not necessarily prohibit the development of residential uses on the adjoining sites and that electrical infrastructure has operate successfully on and adjacent to residential uses for decades now.

In respect of the impact to residential amenity. As evidenced by the applicant in Chapter 11 of the EIAR, there are no significant impacts predicted for noise during

the operational period. There are some mitigation measures proposed in terms of operational lighting. While these are mainly aimed at reducing impacts to bats, they would equally prevent light pollution spilling over to adjoining residential lands

It is accepted the proposed development will be a significant intervention in the landscape, and the residential amenity impact may predominantly be related to landscape or visual impact. The topic of landscape and visual issues is addressed in Table 7 of this report. However, in the context of residential amenity, it is considered that the proposed development will be reasonably screened with existing treelines and hedgerows. It should be noted that attendance at the site during operation stage will be minimal and primarily for maintenance purposes.

During the construction phase there will be routine construction related pollution and nuisance generated including noise, light, dust and traffic related impacts with the potential to cause nuisance and impact on the amenities of adjoining dwellings. These impacts will be temporary and short-term and would be controlled as part of the standard and best practice construction measures as well as specific mitigation measures set out in the CEMP.

It is considered unlikely, subject to mitigation measures, that significant impacts would arise on residential amenity.

## 8.4 Impact to Landscape and Visual

There is significant concern from the observer in respect the landscape and visual impact of the proposed development. A primary criticism of the proposed development from the observer is it will in effect ‘industrialise’ agricultural land. In addition, owing to its nature and scale, it will significantly impact the character of the area. The applicant is of the view that the proposed development will have no significant impact on the landscape and can be screened with existing hedgerows and berm.

A LVIA was carried out by Macro Works Ltd. It concluded that the proposed development will not give rise to any significant landscape and visual impacts. This conclusion is qualified with photomontages from certain locations.

The site is in ‘The Plains’ Landscape Archetype, the ‘A1 Lowland Pasture and Arable’ Landscape Character Type’ and LCA 5 – Templemore Plains’. LCA 5 is attributed a landscape sensitivity classification of Class 1 out of a scale of 5.

Such a sensitivity is considered a common character type with a potential to absorb a wide range of new developments. On this basis and having visited the site and its surrounding area, the conclusion of the LVIA is considered reasonable.

While the proposed development will be an intervention in the landscape, and there will be certain impacts from certain receptors and viewpoints, the landscape has the capacity to absorb the proposed development in the context of the wider rural area which is intensively used for agriculture. The site is reasonably screened with existing treelines and hedgerows. While the observer is right to be concerned about the landscape and visual impact, the impact is not considered significant and substations are part of the rural fabric and diverse agricultural sector and well supported by policy.

I note the observer’s concern in respect of cumulative impact and that development is increasing the sense of industrialisation of the landscape. The applicant has carried out an extensive cumulative impact assessment in respect of landscape and visual with Chapter 13 of the EIAR in the context of projects and plans listed in Appendix 15-1 which includes relevant existing, permitted or proposed projects and plans in the vicinity of the site. The wind farm will be a predominant feature in the landscape and I am satisfied that the substation and underground cable can be successfully integrated into the environment in this context and would not give rise to any adverse impacts.

I am satisfied that the proposed development complies with the provisions of the National Landscape Strategy and local landscape policies as set out in the TCDP.

Overall, it is considered unlikely, that significant impacts would arise in respect of landscape and visual.

## 8.5 Impact to Local Roads

The proposed development does not generate significant traffic volumes and access during the operational phase will be minimal and primarily for maintenance purposes. Any construction measures required are addressed in the CEMP, which includes a

framework for a Traffic Management Plan (TMP), which should be implemented in full.

It is considered that the cumulative impacts arising from grid infrastructure and wind farm can be reasonably mitigated through good practice and several construction entrances would not be uncommon for such works. The adjoining road network, which includes the national and regional network, has the capacity to accommodate it.

The observer raises concern about typical road users and the local roads 'shared rural function' being displaced. This concern is noted and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the safety of all road users, not just users of construction related vehicles during works. Several measures in relation to traffic management are included in Section 13 of the PECR. However, it is considered that a condition requiring a CEMP is required to ensure TCC can enforce relevant standards for all road users including vulnerable road users.

The CEMP and TMP should be finalised prior to the commencement of the proposed development. Regardless, these impacts will be temporary and short-term and would be controlled as part of standard and best practice construction measures included in the CEMP.

It is considered unlikely, subject to mitigation measures, that significant impacts would arise on the traffic and transport of the area

## 8.6 Impact to Biodiversity

It is acknowledged that the area of the proposed development supports hedgerows, field boundaries, ditches and pastureland that collectively operate as a functioning ecological network and that any disturbance can cause habitat fragmentation and wildlife displacement.

The site itself does not have any specific natural heritage designations. The area may be used by mammals, birds and other species. The use of the site by any species is limited in any case given the existing use for agriculture. As a result of the agricultural use the majority of the site is improved agricultural grassland. Overall, the site is not considered to be environmentally sensitive and has capacity to absorb

the proposed development subject to standard and best practice construction and operation measures.

I do note that the applicant has carried out detailed habitat, mammal and botanical surveys and that the habitats recorded are unlikely to support any protected/notable species or notable assemblage of invertebrate species. No protected or notable bird species or assemblage of species or evidence of breeding was encountered during the ecological walkover surveys in May 2025. It is also noted that it is intended to restore any hedgerows that are removed along the cable route.

The proposed development will result in the direct loss and potential disturbance to a certain amount of trees and hedgerows as well as the loss of certain areas of improved agricultural grassland.

Temporary construction phase impacts including noise, dust and traffic impacts may also arise and disturb hedgerows and trees. In terms of biodiversity, the proposed development will result in some disruption of existing habitats on site and disturbance/displacement of species using the site. There is also potential to impact the streams crossing the site, although there are no instream works proposed.

In practice there are no significant works proposed to trees and hedgerows and the majority are intended to be retained. While conscious that some sections of hedgerow will be removed, primarily to provide access, it is not considered to be significant and on the basis of the mitigation measures the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on biodiversity.

In respect of water crossing, the applicant is intending to utilise Horizonal Directional Drilling on the Clonmore Stream, a clear span crossing on the Strogue Stream and install culverts on three field drains. These methods can be impactful; however, Horizonal Directional Drilling and clear spans do not involve instream construction works and there will be no direct impacts to the watercourses subject to standard and best practice construction measures. I was concerned in respect of the use of culverts, however, given their nature and limited flow, I am of the view the culverts could be appropriate. Should the Commission be minded to approve planning permission however, a seasonal restriction is recommended for their installation. Installation during the dry summer period would further reduce the significance of

any impact. Otherwise, the potential for indirect impacts from runoff of pollutants and sediment is comprehensively mitigated.

It is considered unlikely, subject to mitigation measures, that significant impacts would arise on biodiversity.

## 8.7 Impact to Cultural Heritage

I note the concern of the observer in respect of cultural heritage and notably recorded monuments and historic field patterns which may be affected by ground disturbance, trenching and associated works. I have considered Chapter 12 of the EIAR and am of the view that, with the implementation of mitigation measures there would be no significant impacts to recorded monuments and historic field patterns.

To allay any concern of the observer, they should note the submission of the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage which has considered the proposed development in the context of these matters and have no material concerns.

They have recommended conditions in respect of archaeology and I note the applicant's acceptance of these in spite of their inclusion in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments already.

In the interest of clarity, I have included these conditions in the recommendation below should the Commission be minded to approve. However, I am equally satisfied the applicant in implementing EIAR mitigation measures would carry these out.

## 8.8 Risk of Flooding

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is included in Appendix 8-1 of the EIAR and was prepared by Hydro Environmental Services who hold appropriate competence in respect of this matter. It concluded that the risk of flooding to the proposed development will be minimal, and that the development will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

The assessment focused on the substation which is classified as essential infrastructure and 'highly vulnerable' in terms of their sensitivity to flooding. The proposed substation are therefore considered appropriate in Flood Zone C, where the probability of flooding is less than 1-in-1,000-years (<0.1% AEP). The flood risk

has been largely mitigated by avoidance due to the location of the substation which is most sensitive.

The grid connection does interact with flood zones related to the Clonmore Stream and Strogue Stream. However, I am in agreement that due to the nature of the development in the floodplain (an underground cable and steel lattice masts) there will be no potential to increase the downstream flood risk.

On the basis of the information provided by the applicant, relevant mapping and data from the OPW and the nature, characteristics of the site and design of the proposed development and the justification test provided in Section 5.3 of the FRA– the conclusion of the FRA is considered reasonable

It is considered unlikely, that significant impacts would arise from flood risk.

## 8.9 Construction Period

The applicant has applied for planning permission for an appropriate construction period of 10 years. Once commenced, it is expected that the construction phase will take approximately 24 months.

The construction timeframe can be managed by the local authority through an appropriate condition agreeing the details of the CEMP, should the Commission be minded to approve the proposed development.

A period of ten years is considered appropriate.

## 8.10 Consultation and Engagement

I note the submission of the HSE in respect of adequate public consultation. The applicant has responded in detail on the extent of engagement which is detailed in which included a dedicated Community Liaison Officer for the project. Whether there is a perceived or actual lack of engagement, I am satisfied that the applicant has met the minimum statutory requirements for same in the context of the planning process. The consultation and engagement undertaken is considered reasonable.

# 9.0 Environmental Impact Assessment

The applicant has submitted to the Commission an EIAR prepared in accordance with Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and Council, 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014.

This section of the report comprises an EIA of the proposed development. Some of the matters considered have already been addressed in the Planning Assessment above. This section of the report should be read, where necessary, in conjunction with relevant sections of the Planning Assessment and the Appropriate Assessment section below.

## 9.1 Environmental Impact Assessment Report

An EIAR prepared on behalf of the applicant by RPS has been submitted with the application. The EIAR consists of several parts:

1. Volume A
    - Non-Technical Summary (NTS) which summarises the EIAR in plain language.
    - Main Report which considers a range of specific environmental topics in compliance with Article 5 of the EIA Directive and Schedule 6 of the PDR.
2. Volume B
    - Appendices which contain supplemental information to the main body.

The likely significant direct and indirect effects of the development are considered under the following specific headings, which collectively address the factors set out in Article 3 of the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU:

- 4 Population and Human Health
- 5 Biodiversity
- 6 Major Accidents & Natural Disasters
- 7 Land, Soil, Geology
- 8 Hydrology and Hydrogeology
- 9 Air Quality
- 10 Climate

- 11 Noise and Vibration
- 12 Landscape and Visual
- 13 Material Assets including Traffic & Transport
- 14 Cultural Heritage
- 15 Interactions and Cumulative Effects
- 16 Schedule of Environmental Commitments

The impact of the proposed development was assessed under all the relevant topics as set above. Mitigation measures are set out in each chapter. Where further detailed surveys or assessments were required under each topic these have been compiled and are contained in the appendices.

The documentation prepared by RPS with the support on specific topics for different specialist consultants and dated September 2025 is in line with current best practice guidance and allows for a complete examination and identification of any potential significant effects of the development, alone, or in cumulation with other plans and projects. I am satisfied that the information provided in the EIAR is up to date.

I am satisfied that authors of each chapter of the EIAR, as provided in Table 1-3 of the EIAR, have suitable professional competencies, qualifications and experience to prepare an EIAR in their respective field. The EIAR and supplementary information provided by the applicant complies with Article 94 of the PDR – see full assessment below.

I have carried out an examination of the information presented by the applicant, including the EIAR and the response to the observations/submissions received. A summary of the submissions made by the local authorities, prescribed bodies and observers have been set out in Section 7.0 above. The relevant issues arising are addressed below under the relevant headings, and, as appropriate, in the reasoned conclusions and recommendation.

The Commission should also have regard to other sections of this report including:

- Planning Assessment (Section 8.0)
- EIA (this Section)
- WFD (Section 10.0)
- AA (Section 11.0)

Each assessment has had regard to all submissions made by parties to the planning application. There is an inevitable overlap between the assessments with certain matters falling into the planning assessment, EIA, AA and WFD. In the interest of brevity, matters are not repeated but the Commission should have regard to all sections when deliberating and reaching its conclusions in respect of the planning application and each discrete assessment under EIA, WFD and AA.

Details of the consultations entered into by the applicant as part of the preparation of the are set out in Section 4 of the Planning Report. I consider that the applicant has taken all reasonable steps to engage with the local community. As required the application is accompanied by copies of the relevant notices, with the website on which the documentation can be assessed provided. I consider that the engagement has been effective in terms of advising the public of the proposed development and that third parties were not disenfranchised.

The limitations of the EIAR set out in respect of each topic of the EIAR are noted, however, none are considered material to the assessment or result in a defective assessment which occurs below.

| **Table 6: Article 94 (a) Information to be contained in an EIAR** |
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| **Schedule 6, paragraph 1** |
| A description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the proposed development (including the additional information referred to under section 94(b). |
| A description of the proposed development is provided in Chapter 3 of the EIAR. It includes details on the proposed development site, the design and size of the proposed development, temporary and permanent land take, requirement for materials, details of the construction programme and operation phases. Further details on the development site are provided in the technical chapters of the EIAR. There is no material aspects of the development require further clarification. I am satisfied therefore that sufficient information has been presented to enable an assessment of likely significant environmental effects to be carried out. |
| A description of the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed development (including the additional information referred to under section 94(b). |
| An assessment of the likely significant direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the development is carried out for each of the technical chapters of the EIAR as well as Chapter 15 Interactions and Cumulative Impacts. These are considered in the technical assessment of this EIA below. I am satisfied that the likely significant effects of the development on the environment have been described. |

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| A description of the features, if any, of the proposed development and the measures, if any, envisaged to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment of the development (including the additional information referred to under section 94(b). |
| Measures to mitigate predicted environmental effects are set out in each technical chapter of the EIAR (where relevant), in summary in Chapter 16 and in the CEMP. Having regard to my examination of the EIAR and the submissions made, and my assessment of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment, I am satisfied that the EIAR provides a description of the features and measures to avoid, prevent or reduce significant adverse effects. |
| A description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the person or persons who prepared the EIAR, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the proposed development on the environment (including the additional information referred to under section 94(b). |
| Alternatives are considered in Chapter 2 of the EIAR and include a 'do nothing' scenario and alternative design and layouts. Having regard to the details presented I am satisfied that the applicant has provided a description of the reasonable alternatives, relevant to the grid connection, and an indication of the main reasons for the resultant proposed development, with reference to effects on the environment (see further comments below on alternatives). I am satisfied to proceed on the basis of information presented by the applicant |
| **Schedule 6, Paragraph 2** |
| A description of the baseline environment and likely evolution in the absence of the development. |
| A description of the baseline environment is typically included in each technical chapter of the EIAR and an assessment of the likely evolution of it, in the absence of the development (do nothing scenario). Where it has not been addressed in the EIAR, the baseline environment and its likely evolution can be readily assessed from the information on the file/inspection of the development site. |
| A description of the forecasting methods or evidence used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information, and the main uncertainties involved |
| A description of the forecasting methods or evidence used to identify and assess the significance of effects is included in each technical chapter of the EIAR. Any difficulties encountered, or areas of uncertainty, are also identified in the technical chapters. Having regard to my review of the EIAR and to the environmental impact assessment carried out below, I am satisfied that there are no significant impediments to the assessment of environmental effects, by virtue of difficulties encountered or areas of uncertainty. |

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| A description of the expected significant adverse effects on the environment of the proposed development deriving from its vulnerability to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to it. |
| Vulnerability of the proposed development to environmental effects arising from the risks of major accidents and/or disasters is appropriately considered in Chapter 6 of the EIAR. |
| Article 94 (c) A summary of the information in non-technical language. |
| The EIAR comprises a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the proposed development. I have read the report, and it summarises, in non-technical language, the information contained in the EIAR and likely environmental effects of the development. |
| Article 94 (d) Sources used for the description and the assessments used in the report |
| The sources used to inform the description, and the assessment of the environmental effects of the development are set out in each chapter, typically at the beginning of the technical assessment under methodology and in more detail at the end of the chapter under References. I consider the sources relied upon are generally appropriate and sufficient. |
| Article 94 (e) A list of the experts who contributed to the preparation of the report |
| A list of the various experts who contributed to the EIAR is set out in Table 1.3 of the EIAR. Where relevant, this information is repeated in the introductory sector of each chapter. Details include the name and qualification of the expert, their area of expertise and years of relevant experience. I have reviewed each of the technical sections of the report, and I am satisfied that it has been prepared by experts with competency in the technical subject areas. |

I am satisfied that the information provided is reasonable and sufficient to allow the Commission to reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment. I am also satisfied that the information contained in the EIAR complies with the provisions of Articles 3, 5 and Annex (IV) of EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU.

## 9.2 Consideration of Alternatives

The applicant provides a Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives in Section 2.0 of the EIAR. The proposed development is considered in the context of the following:

- Do Nothing Alternative
- Alternative 110 kV Substation Location
- Alternative National Node Connection Point

- Alternative Grid Route Connection Design
- Alternative Mitigation Measures

In the context of the conclusions of Section 8.1 Principle of the Development set out above, the 'Do Nothing' scenario has not been progressed. This is acceptable in the context of the opportunity to contribute to meeting Government and EU targets for the production and consumption of electricity from renewable resources and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality would be lost. Construction phase impacts will not occur and site of the substation will generally continue as it is and be used for agricultural uses. No significant positive or negative effects are expected in any topic as a result of the do-nothing scenario.

The location, design and layout of the substation and grid connection was informed by the environmental and technical constraints associated with the site, including residential amenity, biodiversity, soils and geology, water, noise and vibration, cultural heritage and material assets. I note that two options were considered for the substation, an assessment of appropriate connection points on the national grid and use of underground cables and overhead lines was considered. This is a comprehensive and reasonable approach to a grid connection for a consented wind farm.

It is considered that the applicant has sufficiently considered the design and layout alternatives within the site and indeed in the context of the residential amenity, local roads and environmental factors including inter alia biodiversity and water.

The design of the proposed development as it currently stands in the context of the site is the best outcome of an iterative process to ensure mitigation of impacts by avoidance and in turn design. In terms of alternative technology, given the location of the proposed development, AIS and underground cables are an appropriate technology at this location. I am satisfied that GIS and overhead technology may also have been appropriate at this location but I understand the applicant's balancing of environmental and social factors.

It is considered that the EIAR has adequately addressed reasonable alternatives. In particular, it has adequately addressed that repowering the site is a reasonable alternative to other greenfield sites that may be available in the area. More pertinently, given the policy context for the site, there is little justification now to 'do

nothing' at the permitted wind farm site in order to achieve Government and EU targets for the production and consumption of electricity from renewable resources and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

## 9.3 Assessment of Environmental Factors

Each topic in the EIAR has been for the most part considered in the following format:

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Receiving Environment
- Potential Effects
- Mitigation Measures
- Residual Impacts
- Cumulative Impacts
- References

The EPA published the Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports in 2022. The applicant is consistent with these guidelines as appropriate.

Unless otherwise stated below the methodology and the approach to, description of the receiving environment of each topic is considered appropriate. This assessment can rely on the EIAR submitted and addresses key issues, impacts and mitigations of the proposed development. Table 7 below provides the Assessment of Environmental Factors.

I have considered the submissions on file within the table below and have made references to Section 8 of this report also in which the details of the submission were addressed. Section 8.0 is also relevant to the consideration of the table below and should be read in conjunction.

It is considered that the corresponding sections of the EIAR has adequately identified, described and assessed the direct and indirect effects of the proposed development in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive.

It is considered that the proposed development, on the basis of information submitted and submission received on the file, and subject to mitigation and monitoring measures, would be likely to have significant effects on any topic.

| Table 7: Assessment of Environmental Factors | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1 Population and Human Health** | | | | | | |
| | **Construction Phase** | | | **Operational Phase** | | |
| **Impacts** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** |
| **Population Level** | I am satisfied there will be no effects on population as a result of construction phase activities given the nature, scale and rural environment of the proposed development. | N/A | No Significant Effects | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Economic Effects** | I agree that there will be a slight positive impact in respect of employment, with some 20 employees being required for the construction phase. This is significant in a rural context. | N/A | Short-term slight positive indirect effect | I am not satisfied that the proposed development will have a positive impact on employment during operation phase. While the applicant considers it positive, I would disagree and consider it neutral. The applicant has not qualified or evidenced such employment in a robust manner | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Land Use Patterns and Activities** | The use agricultural lands is limited and not significant impact arise. I am satisfied agricultural activities can continue on adjacent lands also, | CEMP/TMP<br>Continued Access/Egress for Local Residents/Agricultural Activities | Negative, direct, slight, permanent impact on Land Use<br>Negative, direct, slight short term impact on activities | The use agricultural lands is limited and not significant impact arise. I am satisfied agricultural activities can continue on adjacent lands also, | N/A | Slight |

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| | with some minor impacts.<br>There will be temporary impacts to the roads proposed for the underground grid connection. This will be temporary, short term and slight significance.<br>The Commission should refer to Section 8.2 of this report for additional commentary on use of agricultural lands. | | | with some minor impacts.<br>The Commission should refer to Section 8.2 of this report for additional commentary on use of agricultural lands. | | |
| **Property Value** | I am satisfied that electrical infrastructure is a common feature in the Irish landscape. There may be some temporary, short term impact during construction. | N/A | short term negative imperceptible | I am satisfied that electrical infrastructure is a common feature in the Irish landscape. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Residential Amenity** | There will be temporary impacts as a result of construction phase activities and to the roads proposed for the underground grid connection. This will be temporary, short term and slight significance.<br>The Commission should refer to Section | There are extensive mitigation measures proposed in respect of Air Quality, Noise and Vibration, Material Assets | See specific topics. (Air Quality – Imperceptible, Water Quality – Imperceptible, Noise and Vibration – Slight) | There will be ongoing impacts as a result of the operational phase primarily as a result of noise from the substation and its various apparatus However, there is a material distance to the nearest residential receptors. | There are extensive mitigation measures proposed in respect of Air Quality, Noise and Vibration, Material Assets | Negative, slight permanent |

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| | 8.3 of this report for additional commentary on use of agricultural lands for residential uses and residential amenity. | | | The Commission should refer to Section 8.3 of this report for additional commentary on use of agricultural lands for residential uses and residential amenity. | | |
| **Recreational, Community and Tourism Facilities** | While there may be some impact, as a result of temporary impacts to the roads proposed for the underground grid connection. This is very limited and no significant as there are sufficient alternatives routes to access any recreational and tourism facilities in the wider area and in particular Clonmore and Templemore. | N/A | short term, negative imperceptible impact | Once operational, there would be no impact to Recreational, Community and Tourism Facilities given their absence at this location. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Transport, Connectivity and Accessibility** | There will be temporary impacts as a result of construction phase activities and to the roads proposed for the underground grid connection. This will be temporary, short term and slight significance. | CEMP<br>TMP<br>Continued Access/Egress for Local Residents/Agricultural Activities | short term negative Slight | During operation, 1-2 movements per day are expected for maintenance. | N/A | imperceptible |
| **Human Health** | It is accepted that working with electrical infrastructure and | There is extensive health and safety legislation which shall | Short-term slight negative | It is accepted that working with electrical infrastructure has | There is extensive health and safety legislation which shall | Permanent, imperceptible |

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| | construction in general has potential for hazards and associate human health impacts. | be implemented to mitigate impacts to humans. The applicant has also proposed the preparation of a Health and Safety Plan and implementation of best practice on site. | | potential for hazards and associate human health impacts. | be implemented to mitigate impacts to humans. The applicant has also proposed the preparation of a Health and Safety Plan and implementation of best practice on site. | |
| **2 Biodiversity** | | | | | | |
| **Impacts** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** |
| **Strogue River**<br>**Clonmore Stream** | Surface water run-off of pollutants may have an indirect impact on habitats and species These are Depositing/Lowland Rivers (FW2) and there will be a significant impact locally due to their proximity and construction activity adjacent to them.<br>Such an impact would be significant. | Standard pollution prevention, control and response measures including specific measures for Horizonal Directional Drilling and Clearspan Bridges<br>Appointment of an ECoW, Project Ecologists, Pre-Construction Surveys | No Significant Effects | Surface water run-off of pollutants may have an indirect impact on habitats and species. Maintenance works will be of a minor nature and infrequent. | Standard pollution prevention, control and response measures | No Significant Effects |
| **Lower River Suir SAC**<br>**Cabragh Wetlands pNHA** | Surface water run-off of pollutants may have an indirect impact on habitats and species. There will be works in proximity to the Strogue and Clonmore water features. | | No Significant Effects | | | |

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| | However, I note the construction methodologies which include Horizonal Directional Drilling and clear span bridges. The primary concern would be downstream, however, given the distance to the SAC and pNHA, I am satisfied the impact would not be significant. | | | | | |
| **Birds which may use surrounding hedgerow** | Disturbance noise, vibration, lighting, and human presence and fragmentation due to removal would give rise to significant impacts, however, no protected and/or notable species have been identified through surveys The applicants approach to these species is noted and while they are not currently present, given their mobility they could use the habitat in future | Precautionary mitigation included to ensure such species are not present prior to works. Including pre-commencement surveys | No Significant Effects | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Mobile Species, (invasive species, bats, badgers and otter)** | | | | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Note** | I note Section 5.5.2 of the EIAR which considered potential impacts and screened them out. I agree with the applicant's position and the impacts scope out is based on survey results (which often indicated absence of species), methodologies and best practice guidance on how certain species are assessed.<br>The Commission should refer to Section 8.6 of this report for additional commentary on biodiversity impacts. | | | | | |

**3 Major Accidents**

Chapter 6.0 of the EIAR identifies, describes and assesses the potential direct and indirect risks of major accidents and natural disasters from the proposed development during its construction, operation and decommissioning phases. This topic has numerous interactions with other chapters of the EIAR which are addressed in separate sections of this assessment.

The risks of substations and associated underground and overhead electrical infrastructure is well understood and I am entirely satisfied with the assessment report put forward by the applicant in terms of Critical Infrastructure Emergencies, severe weather, flooding, traffic incidents, contamination, fire/gas explosions, collapse or damage to structures. All are classified as 'low risk scenarios

t is accepted that risks will arise to during the construction phase in particular largely as a result of construction machinery and vehicles operating – this is temporary, short-term and routine to any construction phase of a development.

I have interrogated the methodology, assumptions and evaluation of the likely and significant effects and associated mitigation measures and consider the conclusion in the EIAR robust and complete. No other party to the file has raised any material issue in respect of major accidents and natural disasters.

It is considered that any impacts would be acceptable subject to the mitigation and monitoring measures set out which will result in a reasonable possibility of effectively reducing their significance. There is no bespoke or extraordinary mitigations measures of note proposed.

It is considered that the corresponding section of the EIAR has adequately identified, described and assessed the direct and indirect effects of the proposed development in respect of this topic and in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive.

It is considered that the proposed development, on the basis of information submitted and submission received on the file, and subject to mitigation and monitoring measures, would not be likely to have significant effects on air quality and climate.

**4 Lands, Soils and Geology**

| **Impacts** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** |
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| **Land and Land use** | Existing agricultural lands will change is used to electrical infrastructure and hardstanding. Additional land take is required to provide for temporary construction compounds and work areas. Placing the underground cable on the road has limited the impact as both uses can operate | Standard and good practice measures. | negative, direct, slight, likely, long-term effect | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |

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| | concurrently following construction. It is accepted that this will have a Negative, slight, direct, likely, long-term effect on land and land use/ However, this loss overall is minimal and imperceptible. | | | | | |
| **Soil and Subsoil Excavation** | The estimate volume of spoil to be managed for the proposed development is 18,810 $m^3$. This excavation will result in a Negative, slight, direct, likely, permanent effect on soil and subsoil. | N/A | a negative, slight, direct, likely, permanent effect on soil and subsoils | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Contamination of Soil by Leakage and Spillage** | This is a standard risk on any construction site with provide and effective mitigation measures to manage such risk | Standard and good practice measures. | negative, imperceptible, direct, short-term | This is related specifically to any spill leaks due to the operation/maintenance of the transformer in which oil/hydrocarbons are used. | Bunded, over capacity Plinth, emergency plans in event o leak/spill | negative, imperceptible, direct, short-term, unlikely |
| **Erosion of Exposed Soil and Subsoils During Construction** | Tracking of vehicles across soils and subsoils has the potential to erode the land/ | Use of soil on site for landscaping, etc.<br>Limiting runoff through drainage systems.<br>Reseeding and planting | negative, imperceptible, direct, permanent, | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Geological Heritage and Designated Sites** | N/A | N/A | N/A | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |

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| **Site Road Maintenance** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | During operation, the applicant is expecting additional material will be required to maintain the roads at the substation | Use of local quarries | negative, imperceptible, indirect, short-term, unlikely |
| **5 Hydrology and Hydrogeology** | | | | | | |
| **Impacts** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** |
| **Earthworks Resulting in Suspended Solids Entrainment in Surface Waters** | The civil works has the potential to impact surface water quality in the Clonmore Stream and River Suir and associated water-dependent ecosystems. This could have a Negative, significant, indirect, temporary, likely effect on downstream surface water quality | There is extensive mitigation measures proposed, the majority being standard and best practice including source/inline controls, treatment systems, drainage, silt fences/bags, construction timing during weather events | negative, imperceptible, indirect, short term | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Groundwater Levels during Excavation Works** | Due to the limited nature of the works, there is no significant impacts expected to ground water. | N/A | negative, imperceptible, direct, temporary, | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Surface Water Quality from Excavation Dewatering** | This is a standard risk on any construction site with provide and effective mitigation measures to manage such risk | Standard and good practice measures. | negative, imperceptible, direct, short-term | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |

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| **Accidental Release of Hydrocarbons** | This is a standard risk on any construction site with proven and effective mitigation measures to manage such risk | Standard and good practice measures. | negative, imperceptible, indirect, short-term | This is a standard risk on any operation site with proven and effective mitigation measures to manage such risk | Standard and good practice measures. | negative, imperceptible, indirect, short-term |
| **Wastewater Disposal** | During construction, a Portaloo is proposed to be installed and has the potential to release effluent | Maintenance and removal of Portaloo<br>No discharge to site. | no significant effects | A permanent W/C in a substation control room will have effluent that requires treatment. | sealed underground storage tank, with periodic offsite removal to a licenced facility. | no significant effects |
| **Release of Cement-Based Products** | This is a standard risk on any construction site with provide and effective mitigation measures to manage such risk | Standard and good practice measures. | negative, imperceptible, indirect, short-term | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **New Proposed Watercourse Crossing** | The clear span bridge and Horizonal Directional Drilling methods of crossing rivers avoid direct instream works and has the potential to effect on surface water quality | Standard and good practice measures. As outlined in Section 8.5.2.7 and 8.5.2.8 of the EIAR. | negative, imperceptible, direct, long term, | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Local Private Groundwater Well Supplies** | There will be no potential for effects on local private groundwater | Standard and good practice measures. | negative, imperceptible, indirect, long-term | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Use of Siltbuster** | Overdosing with chemical agents could impact downstream watercourses | Standard and good practice measures. As outlined in Section 8.5.2.10 of the EIAR. | negative, imperceptible, indirect, temporary, | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |

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| **Fluvial Flooding** | Parts of the proposed development occur in a flood zones, notably the two end masts.<br>The Commission should refer to Section 8.2 of this report for additional commentary on flooding. | Avoidance of yellow or greater rainfall warning | negative, slight, direct, short-term | End masts and approximately 200 m of proposed new access road along the underground cabling route are located in the fluvial flood zones.<br>The Commission should refer to Section 8.2 of this report for additional commentary on flooding. | No mitigation proposed. | Negative, imperceptible, indirect, brief, |
| **Hydrologically Connected Designated Sites** | Impact to water quality and downstream receptors, Lower River Suir SAC and the Cabragh Wetlands pNHA | Standard and good practice measures. | No effects | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Surface Water and Groundwater WFD** | Appendix 8-3 contains a detailed WFD Compliance Assessment Report and notably surface water bodies (Suir_ 020 and Clonmore Stream (Suir)_010 SWBs) and GWBs (Templemore GWB). The proposed development has the potential for Indirect, negative, imperceptible, short term, likely effect on these surface water and groundwater bodies | Standard and good practice measure are set out in Chapter 8 of the EIAR, all will contribute to ensuring high quality is maintained. On this basis I am satisfied that there will be no deterioration in the status of any WFD waterbody | No effects | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |

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| **Progressive Replacement of Natural Surface with Lower Permeability Surfaces** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | The proposed development extends to a footprint approx. 17,190 $m^2$. Particularly at the substation, reduced natural surface could increase hydraulic loading and result in erosion and impact downstream | The drainage system designed for the proposed development is proven and effective in attenuating run-off and reducing the risk of flooding. | neutral, indirect, long term |
| **Runoff Resulting in Entrained Sediment** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | During operation, there is potential for silt-laden runoff | Standard and good practice measures. | negative, imperceptible, indirect, temporary |
| **Water Supply at Substation** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | It is proposed to either install to either harvest rainwater from the roofs of the buildings or, alternatively, install a groundwater well adjacent to the substation. This has potential to effect local groundwater levels minimally | No mitigation proposed. | negative, imperceptible, permanent |
| **6 Air Quality** | | | | | | |
| **Impact** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** |
| **Exhaust Emissions** | There will be an indirect short-term, slight, negative impact on air quality as a result of construction phase activities, primarily from machinery, vehicles | Standard and good practice measures including the implementation of the CEMP | Imperceptible/slight, negative impact and short-term | Sporadic maintenance vehicles attending site, estimated at 1-2 times a day. | Standard and good practice measures | Imperceptible negative |

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| | and trips to and from sites | | | | | |
| **Dust Emissions from Construction** | As a result of machinery, vehicles and trips to and from sites, dust will be generated with some 6 no. receptors within 50 m of the grid connection. There will be a short term, slight negative impact as a result. | Standard and good practice measures including the implementation of the CEMP which includes wetting of surfaces. | short-term, imperceptible, negative | Sporadic maintenance vehicles attending site, estimated at 1-2 times a day. | Standard and good practice measures | permanent imperceptible negative |
| **7 Climate** | | | | | | |
| No issues have been raised by any party to the appeal/application in respect of climate. I have examined Chapter 10 of the EIAR which deals with this topic. Having regard to the location of the site in rural environment, the absence of any operational carbon intensive activities, the arrangements for the management of construction and construction traffic set out in the application documents and proposed Construction Traffic Management Plan, and standard arrangements for the management of construction and operational waste, I am satisfied that there is no potential for any significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects on climate as a result of the proposed development.<br><br>Overall, the Commission should note that by providing an alternative to electricity derived from coal, oil or gas-fired power stations, the Proposed Development will facilitate the connection of the permitted wind farm and will result in emission savings of carbon dioxide (CO2), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), and sulphur dioxide (SO2). The production of renewable energy through the Proposed Development will have a long-term significant positive impact on air quality due to the offsetting of approximately 58,808 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) per annum. | | | | | | |
| **8 Noise and Vibration** | | | | | | |
| **Impact** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** |
| **Noise** | During the construction of the substation underground cable and access and maintenance tracks there a likely impact from noise. This is a result of the operation of machinery and | I am satisfied that the applicant can successfully implement abatement measures where necessary and comply with the recommendations of BS5228-1:2009+A1:2014. Other measures | Negative Not Significant Temporary | Once operational the majority of infrastructure is non-noise generating. The primary noise impact will come from the substation and in particular the transformer which can reach 92 dB(A) Lw. | No mitigation required | Cable - Neutral Imperceptible Permanent<br><br>Transformer - Negative Not Significant Permanent |

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| | construction traffic moving through the site and road network. Such construction noise is to be expected and common in the course of any construction project. | include the selection of Quieter Plant. Controlling the noise at source, continued liaison with the community and ensuring the programme of work is managed to minimise noisy periods. | | However, the nearest receptor (H016) the predicted level will be 33 dBA $L_{Aeq}$. | | Should the Commission be minded to approve planning permission a condition has been attached below to ensure noise limits are complied with and the impact of the proposed development during operation does not exceed certain limits. This is a general condition in the absence of any specific mitigation measures and will ensure noise impacts does not impact receptors in the vicinity. |
| **Vibration** | The most intensive activity will be ground-breaking and this has the potential to generate vibration at neighbouring receptors. This would be a temporary and short-term impact | The applicant has set out vibration criteria set out in Table 11-3 of the EIAR which comes from TII Guidance Guidelines for the Treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Road Schemes. | Negative, Temporary | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **9 Cultural Heritage** | | | | | | |
| **Impact** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** |
| **UNESCO World Heritage Sites and** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |

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| **those on Tentative List** | | | | | | |
| **National Monuments** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | The applicant is of the view that a visual impact may arise on this feature as a result of the end masts. This will be imperceptible, neutral and long term. While I accept the applicant's conservative approach, there is likely to be limited impact give there are no features within 1 km of the proposed development. | N/A | Imperceptible |
| **Recorded Monuments** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | No effects identified. While there are recorded monuments within 1 km, they no longer have above ground features. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Sub-Surface Archaeological Potential** | There is the potential to find sub-surface archaeology in the course of construction works owing to the ground works in particular and also the linear nature of the grid connection. This could be direct and negative if not mitigated. | Pre-development archaeological testing<br>licence from the National Monuments Service<br>If required, reservation in situ (avoidance), preservation by record (excavation), buffer zones | No Significant Effects | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |

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| | The Commission should refer to Section 8.6 of this report for additional commentary on use of archaeology requirements submitted by the DAU. | | | | | |
| **Protected Structures** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | The applicant is of the view that a visual impact may arise on this feature as a result of the end masts. This will be imperceptible, neutral and long term. While I accept the applicant's conservative approach, there is likely to be limited impact give there are no features within 1 km of the proposed development. | N/A | Imperceptible |
| **NIAH Structures and Historic Gardens** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | The applicant is of the view that a visual impact may arise on this feature as a result of the end masts. This will be imperceptible. While I accept the applicant's conservative approach, there is likely to be limited impact give there are no features within 1 km of the | N/A | Imperceptible |

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| | | | | proposed development. | | |
| **Features of Local Cultural Heritage Merit** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **10 Landscape and Visual** | | | | | | |
| **Impact** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** |
| **Physical Landscape** | This landscape is considered low sensitivity given its highly modified agricultural nature and absence of any scenic amenity designations. I accept this characterisation. Any change, in the context of a electrical infrastructure would be minor. It would primarily arise as a result of ground works and hedgerow loss. | N/A | Slight, Negative, Not significant. | There will be an indenisation of electrical infrastructure due to the end masts adjacent to the railway. These are tall structures but an OHL already exists at this location and would be ready similarly.<br>The substation will be an intensive utilitarian facility in the landscape; it will be novel at this location but will be read in conjunction with the wind farm with little or no in combination impact due to modest heights of infrastructure therein. I agree the impact will be localised to within 1 km. | perimeter grassed berm to integrate the substation into the landscape. | Slight, Negative, Not significant. |
| **Viewpoints** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | The applicant has prepared photomontages from | The substation will be landscaped with a grassed berm around | Moderate-slight/ Negative/ Permanent |

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| | | | | certain locations to represent the proposed development once operational. The represent the cumulative impact of both the wind farm and grid connection. Given the topography and vegetation on the landscape, there are limited long term views to the grid connection, although the wind farm owing to the height of the turbines will be visible for longer distance. Viewpoint 3 is taken from the local road toward the substation site. It will be visible and it is considered a moderate impact. | it. This will reduce the lower levels of the substation and assimilate it into the wider landscape.<br><br>To ensure further assimilation, Condition 9 of the recommendation below includes measures, should the Commission be minded the approve the proposed development, to minimise artificial lighting, CCTV and control the colour finishes for buildings and fencing. | |
| **Note** | I have considered in more detail observations in relation to land scape and visual in Section 8.4 of this report and it should be read in conjunction with this table. | | | | | |
| **11 Material Assets** | | | | | | |
| **Impact** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** | **Potential, Direct and Indirect Effects** | **Mitigation and Monitoring** | **Residual** |
| **Diversions/ Road closures** | Approximately 19 of the 31 days required to develop the grid connection will require temporary road closures on the local road network. This will | Traffic Management Plan (TMP) in consultation with Tipperary County Council and a range of standard and best | Slight, Temporary | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |

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| | be negative temporary and slight.<br><br>The Commission should refer to Section 8.5 of this report for additional commentary on use of local roads for construction of the proposed development. | practice construction traffic measures<br><br>Engagement with Community | | | | |
| **Increased traffic volumes** | The applicant estimates that an additional daily traffic flow of 150 PCUs will be generated for 31 days for the grid connection and 1 PCUs will be generated for 224 days. For the substation. This will be noticeable on the local road network and be negative temporary and slight.<br><br>The Commission should refer to Section 8.5 of this report for additional commentary on use of local roads for construction of the proposed development. | TMP | | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Electricity Infrastructure and Supply** | Due to the proposed development's interaction and connection into the | Standard and good practice measures including the implementation of the | temporary slight negative | If maintenance is required, there is | Standard and good practice measures | slight negative |

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| | 110 kV OHL, there is potential for unplanned accident interference. Which could have a moderate impact. | CEMP which includes goal posts to prevent accident damage to the line. | | potential for unplanned accident interference. | | |
| **Water Infrastructure and Supply** | There will be a crossing of the watermain on the R433. This could have a moderate temporary impact. | Confirmatory surveys for buried services<br>Compliance of specifications of the relevant utility provider | imperceptible, temporary negative | If maintenance is required, there is potential for unplanned accident interference. | Standard and good practice measures | imperceptible long-term negative |
| **Gas Infrastructure and Supply** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Waste Management** | There is a short-term negative moderate impact on waste generated during construction. This is standard and common in the course of a construction project | Standard and good practice measures including the implementation of the CEMP which includes use of authorised/licenced waste contractors/facilities | short term slight negative | Small amounts of municipal waste will be generated as a result of maintenance at the proposed development. This will be imperceptible but long term. | Standard and good practice measures | imperceptible effect long-term |
| **Telecommunications** | No effects identified including any Irish Rail communication infrastructure/services | N/A | No Significant Effects | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects |
| **Electro Magnetic Fields** | No effects identified. | N/A | No Significant Effects | There will be an imperceptible, long-term effect on residential dwellings and Irish Rail communications infrastructure due to EMF during the operational phase. However, ICNIRP | None proposed. | imperceptible, long-term |

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| | | | | guidelines will not be exceeded | | |

## 9.4 Decommissioning

It is expected that the substation and grid infrastructure will remain operational even if the wind farm were to be decommissioned given it will come under the ownership of ESB/EirGrid and form part of the national grid. If it were to be decommissioned, I am satisfied that the impacts would be similar to the construction phase, even lesser due to the shorter duration of activities and extent and would not give rise to significant impacts.

To minimise environmental impacts, cables may largely be left in situ and where in ducts the cable will be removed and ducting will largely be left in situ. I accept that attempts to extract cables and ducting would generate unnecessary environmental impact and leaving them in situ will not generate any significant impact in respect of any environmental topic area.

Should the site be fully decommissioned; it would in any case be subject to the appropriate planning mechanism under the prevailing legislation at such a time it is required and would be assessed based on the environmental requirements at that time.

It is considered that the corresponding sections of the EIAR has adequately identified, described and assessed the direct and indirect effects of the decommissioning of the proposed development and in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive.

I am satisfied with the approach to decommissioning.

## 9.5 Cumulative Impacts

Each chapter of the EIAR describes the potential cumulative impacts of the proposed development as it relates to that topic during its construction, operation and decommissioning phases. The applicant has included a significant volume of information in its EIAR, in relation to the proposed development, related developments and planning histories in the area and the likely significant effects on the environment.

The proposed development is directly related to the permitted wind farm on the adjacent connected site and comparatively will have a lesser impact owing to its nature, extent and scale. Regardless I would be of the view that the nature, extent

and scope of the proposed development in isolation is minimal and not significant to act in combination with other developments in the area in particular the wind farm. The development will not result in significant emissions to the environment, particularly in terms of pollution to water, noise and air.

The construction of the proposed development is likely to occur in tandem with the wind farm, the majority of impacts would be of a temporary nature and short-term given:

- the limited, localised nature of works,
- the expected duration of the works (18-24 months),
- the location of lands to be developed,
- the location and distance to the other existing and/or approved projects.
- the likelihood of temporal overlap of construction works between projects.
- the implementation of standard and best practice construction (in particular the CEMP and TMP), operation and decommissioning measures.

It is considered, on the basis of information submitted and submission received on the file, unlikely that significant cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects would arise subject to mitigation and monitoring measures.

It is considered that the corresponding sections of the EIAR has adequately identified, described and assessed the direct and indirect cumulative effects of the proposed development in respect of all topics and in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive.

## 9.6 Transboundary Effects

Given the location of the proposed development there is no potential for significant transboundary effects.

## 9.7 Interactive Impacts

Chapter 15 of the EIAR identifies, describes and assesses the potential interactives impacts of the proposed development during its construction, operation and decommissioning phases. Table 15-1 of the EIAR provides a matrix of impacts of environmental factors and any interactions between them.

There are no major interactions, and any interactions are minor in nature. The most dynamic interaction and interdependency relates to the connection between ecology, soils and hydrology. Site run-off and removal of soil cover may have secondary ecological effects on vegetation patterns and habitat species.

It is considered that the corresponding section of the EIAR has adequately identified, described and assessed the direct and indirect interactive impacts of the proposed development in respect of all topics and in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive.

Overall, it can be concluded that many of the interactions will take place during the construction phase of the proposed development and will therefore be short term. Mitigation measures are set out

I am satisfied that the overall inter-related effects will not be significant or will be adequately mitigated in each of the relevant chapters and can also be applicable to other environmental factors.

## 9.8 Mitigation Measures

I note the submission of the observer in which they are of the view that mitigation measures cannot resolve fundamental land-use incompatibility, amenity loss or land sterilisation where permanent industrial infrastructure is located directly opposite lands intended for rural housing. I have addressed the principle of the development extensively in Section 8.1 of this report and it is considered acceptable. Similarly, use of lands for agriculture or future residential is also addressed extensively and there is no policy measure that would directly prohibit the development electrical infrastructure at this location. I am satisfied that electrical infrastructure, residential and agricultural lands can be compatible. I disagree with the observer that mitigation measures cannot be relied on for the proposed development, during construction and operation they are required to reduce the magnitude and significance of the impact and ensure residential amenity is protected. There are no bespoke or extraordinary mitigation measures of note proposed. It is considered that any impacts would be acceptable subject to the mitigation and monitoring measures set out which will result in a reasonable possibility of effectively reducing significance.

The Commission will note that the applicant has cited its CEMP which integrates Chapter 16: Schedule of Environmental Commitments as an integral components of

the mitigation strategy. This is found in Appendix 3-2. I am satisfied that the CEMP has been set out in line with best practice. I also note that it will include a number of site specific construction methodologies, environmental management plans and controls, roles and responsibilities for specific roles on site, environmental awareness and training for staff, health and safety measures, an emergency response plan; inspections, auditing and monitoring compliance strategy. Should the Commission be minded to approve planning permission a condition is attached seek the CEMP be agreed with the planning authority and ensure its full implementation.

## 9.9 Reasoned Conclusion

I consider that the EIAR provided information which is reasonable and sufficient to allow the Commission to reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment. I am satisfied that the information contained in the EIAR is up to date and complies with the provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU.

Having regard to the examination of the environmental information contained above, and in particular the EIAR and supplementary information provided by the applicant, and the submissions from third parties and from prescribed bodies in the course of the application, it is considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment are as follows:

**Population and Human Health:**

- Short-term, positive impacts during the construction phase on population in terms of the local economy from increased spending and jobs.
- Short-term, negative impacts during the construction phase on residential amenity, recreational, community and tourism facilities, transport, connectivity and accessibility human health in terms of general disturbance, noise, dust and potential traffic disruptions on the public road network. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments .
- Permanent, slight, negative impacts post construction as a result of the impact to residential amenity, use of agricultural lands and land use change to utility uses. Residential amenity and agricultural activity on adjacent lands can continue

subject to standard good practices and measures as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

**Biodiversity**

- No significant effects on biodiversity with the implementation of pre-construction surveys and standard pollution prevention, control and response measures including specific measures for Horizontal Directional Drilling and installation of clearspan bridges. Their implementation will be supervised through the appointment of an Environmental Clerk of Works, a Project Ecologists.

**Lands, Soils and Geology**

- Permanent, slight negative impacts on land and land use due to the use of agricultural lands for utility uses. Residential amenity and agricultural activity on adjacent lands can continue subject to standard good practices and measures as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments
- Permanent, slight negative impacts on soil and subsoil as a result of its excavation to facilitate the substation and electrical infrastructure. This is unavoidable but mitigated through design and selection of the site which limited volume of material to be managed.
- Short-term, imperceptible, negative impacts as a result of contamination, leakage and spillage and erosion of exposed soil during construction. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

**Hydrology and Hydrogeology**

- Short-term, imperceptible to slight, negative impacts as a result of suspended solids entrainment in surface waters, dewatering, accidental release of hydrocarbons, release of cement-based products, use of siltbuster. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.
- Permeant, imperceptible negative impact as a result of new proposed watercourse crossing. There are a range of mitigation measures set out for Horizonal Directional Drilling and clear span bridges r in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

**Air Quality**

- Short-term, imperceptible to slight, negative impacts from exhaust emissions and dust emissions during construction. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

**Climate**

- Long-term, positive impacts in respect of climate and the connection of the wind farm to the national grid. This will result in the offsetting of approximately 58,808 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) per annum

**Noise and Vibration**

- Short-term, negative impacts from noise and vibration during construction phase as a result of construction vehicles, use of machinery and activities like ground breaking. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.
- Permeant, not significant, negative impacts as a result of the ongoing operation of the transformer at the substation site. The magnitude of the impact has largely been mitigated by design and the siting of the transformer at sufficient distances from neighbouring residential receptors.

**Cultural Heritage**

- No significant effects on unrecorded sub-surface archaeological features on the basis that mitigation will be implemented in respect of pre-construction testing, obtaining licences from the National Monuments Service and if required avoidance, preservation by record and buffer zones.

**Landscape and Visual**

- Permanent, moderate to slight, negative but not significant impacts to the physical landscape and viewpoints which cannot be avoided but due to siting of the proposed development in a low sensitive landscape and inclusion of berms at the substation the impacts can be considered acceptable.

**Material Assets**

- Short-term, slight impacts to traffic and transport as a result of temporary diversions and road closures and increase traffic volumes. This is readily

mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments which includes a Traffic Management Plan.

- Imperceptible to slight negative impacts to other utilities (electricity, gas, water, waste) during construction and operation. This will be mitigated through ongoing liaison with utility operators and adherence with relevant laws, standards and guidelines.
- Imperceptible, long-term impact during operation from EMF to residential dwellings and Irish Rail infrastructure, however, any impact will be within International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) guidelines

I have completed an environmental impact assessment in relation to the proposed development and conclude that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures set out in the EIAR, and subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the effects on the environment of the proposed development, by itself and in combination with other development in the vicinity, would be acceptable.

## 10.0 Water Framework Directive Assessment

The subject site is located close to several waterbodies, as outlined in Section 2.0 of this report and document in Appendix 8-3: Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment. The proposed development is limited in natures an interacts primarily with water bodies (Suir_ 020 and Clonmore Stream (Suir)_010 SWBs) and GWBs (Templemore GWB).

I have assessed the proposed development, Horizonal Directional Drilling and clear span bridges and works in flood risk zone. Please refer to the Table 7 of the EIAR above. I 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.

Having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.

The reason for this conclusion is due to the nature and location of the proposed works which will be subject to extensive mitigation measures during the construction and operational phases as tabulated in Chapter 16 Schedule of Environmental Commitments of the EIAR and individually in Chapters 8 in respect of hydrology and hydrogeology, respectively. I am satisfied in the detailed consideration of reasonable alternatives and the applicant has undertaken extensive site selection exercises which considered water impacts as a criteria and generally avoided impact to same.

Where impacts could not be avoided detailed surface water control measures and best practice construction methods are included in the design. The applicant also intends to monitor the water quality, both surface and ground water, during the construction phase and can take relevant action as required.

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, streams, 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.

## 11.0 Appropriate Assessment

The applicant has submitted an AA Screening Report and NIS which are dated September 2025 as part of the particulars supporting the planning application. The documentation is in line with current best practice guidance and provides adequate information to allow a complete examination and identification of any potential significant effects of the development, alone, and in combination with other plans and projects on European sites.

The documentation was prepared by RPS who are scientifically and technically competent to do so and the qualifications and experience of the authors of the report and various appendices associated with it are suitable and relevant. I am satisfied that all survey work has been undertaken and prepared by competent experts also in line with best practice and scientific and technical methods.

The application documentation includes information required in respect of the methodology applied, a description of the existing sites and 'Stage 1' and 'Stage 2' assessments. The scientific assessment to inform AA is presented in Sections 7 of the NIS submitted to the Commission as part of the application. The conservation objectives of the various Qualifying Interests (QI) features and Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species are listed. Impact pathways are identified and the assessment of likely significant effects which could give rise to adverse effects on site integrity presented. Mitigation measures are presented from Section 6 of the NIS. The NIS is supported by a Construction Environmental Management Plan which provided detailed mitigation measures. An assessment of potential in-combination effects is presented in Section 5.4 of the NIS.

The NIS submitted with the application concluded that, following the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed, that the proposed development will not adversely affect (either directly or indirectly) the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusion.

The requirements of Article 6(3) as related to AA of a project under Part XAB of the PDA are considered fully below. The areas addressed in this assessment includes an AA of the implications of the proposed development on the integrity of each European site.

The observations on the proposed development received by the Commission were circulated to the applicant for comment and its response is noted.

Each assessment has had regard to all submissions made by parties to the planning application. There is an inevitable overlap between the assessments with certain matters falling into the planning assessment, EIA, AA and WFD. In the interest of brevity, matters are not repeated but the Commission should have regard to all sections when deliberating and reaching its conclusions in respect of the planning application and each discrete assessment under EIA, WFD and AA.

The proposed development is not directly connected with the management of European Sites and therefore it needs be determined if the development is likely to have significant effects on European site(s). I am satisfied that all possible European Sites that could in anyway be affected have been considered by the applicant. I am also satisfied that all potential impact mechanisms have been considered and appropriately assessed within the NIS document.

The Commission should satisfy itself that the proposed development will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site before consent can be given.

This assessment has had regard to relevant guidance including:

- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021), Office of the Planning Regulator Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment for Development Management.
- Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) (2009), AA of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- European Commission (2002), Assessment of Plans and Projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EC.

## 11.1 Receiving Environment

The proposed scheme does not overlap with any European sites. The nearest European site to the proposed development is Kilduff, Devilsbit Mountain SAC which is approximately 7 km west and the River Nore SPA which is approximately 16 km northeast and Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA which is approximately 16 km north of the proposed development – none of these three sites are hydrologically connected

to the site of the proposed development. The site is hydrologically connected to the Lower River Suir SAC which is 24.5 km downstream.

The applicant has carried out field surveys which included habitat otter and invasive species. No species of note were recorded.

## 11.2 Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Stage 1)

The AA Screening Assessment describes the proposed development, its receiving environment and relevant European Sites in the zone of influence of the development. The first test of Article 6(3) is to establish if the proposed scheme could result in likely significant effects to a European site, in which case the development is 'screened in' for further detailed assessment- AA (Stage 2).

The AA Screening concluded that there is the possibility for significant effects, in the absence of mitigation, either arising from the project alone, or in combination with other plans and projects, as a result of:

- Habitat loss, deterioration or fragmentation
- Accidental release of pollutants during construction
- Groundwater interference
- Air pollution from dust and vehicle emissions
- Disturbance of QI/SCI species during construction and operation
- Spread of invasive species during construction and operation

The AA Screening Report considers European sites within a 15 km range with consideration of those outside this range also depending on the potential for a source-pathway-receptor. This Zone of Influence was established based on the extent at which potential impacts may be carried via identified pathways (i.e., hydrological connection). Having regard to the nature of the proposed development, the nature of the receiving environment and the source-pathway-receptor model, it is considered that this is a reasonable approach to identifying the Zone of Influence. The parameters applied to determining the likely zone of influence is set out in Section 4.1.3. I consider this approach to screening acceptable.

Where there is no potential for meaningful biological or relevant hydrological connectivity to these sites it is considered that the potential for impacts to arise from

the construction, operation and decommissioning phase of the proposed development is unlikely.

In determining the potential significant effects of the proposed scheme, the applicant took account of the potential for ex-situ effects for foraging birds and mammals such as otter and avian species. It is of note that a precautionary approach has been taken in including SAC and SPA sites in the wider area in the screening exercise. Given that bird species can travel up to significant distances from designated sites the applicant has included sites at some remove from the proposed scheme site. Similarly, a precautionary approach has been taken in relation to SCIs associated with SACs in the wider area.

| **Table 8: Sites screened for the likelihood of significant effects** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Potential Impacts** | **Potential Impacts** | |
| Lower River Suir SAC | Habitat degradation due to water quality impacts; | The potential release of contaminated surface water runoff and/or an accidental spillage or pollution event into any surface water features during construction, has the potential to affect water quality in the receiving aquatic environment of the relevant rivers, estuaries and sea. No potential for water quality impacts during the operational phase. |
| Kilduff, Devilsbit Mountain SAC | No | This site is a significant distance and there is no direct hydrological connection from the proposed development I consider that the likelihood of significant effects can be ruled out, particularly given the non-mobile nature of the habitat which is Species-rich Nardus grasslands. |
| River Nore SPA | No | This site is a significant distance and there is no direct hydrological connection from the proposed development I consider that the likelihood of significant effects can be ruled out, particularly given the kingfisher is not present on site and the site is not a suitable ex-situ habitat. |
| Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA | No | This site is a significant distance and there is no direct hydrological connection from the proposed development I consider that the likelihood of significant effects can be |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | ruled out, particularly given the kingfisher is not present on site and the site is not a suitable ex-situ habitat. |

There is potential for cumulative effects, in the absence of mitigation measures, with Borrisbeg Wind Farm which is consented. However, it is noted that the permitted wind farm has been subject to its own discrete AA in the course of the planning process and all contain relevant mitigation measures. I am satisfied, in considering these projects cumulatively, that no additional sites are required to be screened in for the purposes of AA and all necessary sites are included already on the basis of the individual proposed development.

Therefore, having regard to:

- the information and submissions available.
- the nature, size and location of the proposed development.
- its likely direct, indirect and in-combination effects.
- the source-pathway-receptor model; and
- the sensitivities of the ecological receptors.

It is considered that the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the following European sites.

- Lower River Suir SAC

Further analysis in the AA (Stage 2) is required to determine the significance of such impacts to these sites and QIs and to apply any mitigation measures to exclude adverse effects.

No measures designed or intended to avoid or reduce any harmful effects of the proposed development on a European Site have been relied upon in this screening exercise.

## 11.3 Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2)

The following objective assessment of the implications of the proposed development on the relevant conservation objectives of the European sites is based on the scientific information provided by the applicant and taking into account submissions on nature conservation. It is based on an examination of all relevant documentation

and submissions, analysis and evaluation of potential impacts, findings conclusions. A final determination will be made by the Commission.

This assessment has had regard to relevant guidance including:

- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021) AA Screening for Development Management: OPR Practice Note PN01
- EC (2021) Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EC.
- EC (2018) Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2010) AA of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities
- NPWS (2010) AA under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.

All aspects of the proposed development which could result in significant effects are assessed and mitigation measures designed to avoid or reduce any adverse effects on site integrity are examined and evaluated for effectiveness.

A description of the sites and their Conservation Objectives and QIs/SCIs, including relevant attributes and targets for these sites, are set out in Section 5 of the NIS. The NIS, in Section 2, outlines the methodology used for assessing potential impacts on the habitats and species within the European Sites that have the potential to be affected by the proposed development. It predicts the potential impacts for these sites and their conservation objectives, it suggests mitigation measures, assesses in-combination effects with other plans and projects and it identifies any residual effects on the European sites and their conservation objectives. The NIS was informed by a desk top study and several field based studies and surveys.

The report concluded that, taking into account the project design and the implementation of mitigation measures identified in the NIS, the proposed development will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site. Having reviewed the NIS and the supporting documentation, I am satisfied that it provides adequate information in respect of the baseline conditions, clearly identifies the potential impacts, and uses best scientific information and knowledge

to assess any potential impacts. Details of mitigation measures are provided, and they are summarised in Section 6 of the NIS. I am satisfied that the information is sufficient to allow for an appropriate assessment of the proposed development.

Having reviewed the NIS and the supporting documentation, I am satisfied that it provides adequate information in respect of the baseline conditions, clearly identifies the potential impacts, and uses best scientific information and knowledge to assess any potential impacts. Details of mitigation measures are provided, and they are summarised in Section 6 of the NIS. I am satisfied that the information is sufficient to allow for an appropriate assessment of the proposed development.

### 11.3.1 Assessment of Sites

The following tables summarise the information considered for the AA and site integrity test. I have taken this information from that provided by the applicant within the NIS. I expand on certain issues further in my report.

| Table 9: Appropriate Assessment Summary Matrix | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Detailed Conservation Objectives available: https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites | | | |
| **2. Lower River Suir SAC [002137]** | | | |
| **Summary of Appropriate Assessment** | | | |
| **QI** | **Conservation Objectives** | **Potential Adverse Effects** | **Mitigation Measures** |
| Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] | Restore | No potential for effects given location of QI a considerable distance downstream and/or outside of the ZoI. | Not applicable. |
| Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) | Restore | | |
| Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] | Restore | | |
| Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [91J0] | Restore | | |
| Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] | Maintain | | |
| Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430] | Maintain | | |
| Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno- | Restore | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] | | | |
| Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] | Maintain | | |
| Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430] | Maintain | | |
| Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] | Restore | No potential for effects given absence of hydrological connection. The QI is located in a different river catchment. | Not applicable. |
| Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad) [1103] | Restore | During construction, contaminants, pollutants and other water runoff into water receptors has the potential to affect water quality. This may result in habitat degradation, particularly in a sustained pollution event. | Mitigation measures outlined in Section 6.2.3 of NIS<br><br>I generally consider these mitigation measures good practice and the applicant have sufficiently demonstrated its commitment to ensuring no water quality event occurs through the appointment of an ECoW. responsible for sediment, erosion and pollution control. |
| Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] | Maintain | | |
| Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095] | Restore | | |
| Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] | Restore | | |
| Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099] | Restore | | |
| Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] | Restore | | |
| Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] | Maintain | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | A CEMP will be implemented during construction to manage water quality and will be prepared by the contractor and agreed with the applicant. |

**Overall Conclusion: Integrity Test**

The applicant determined that following the implementation of mitigation, the construction and operation of this proposed scheme alone or in combination with other plans and projects will not adversely affect the integrity of these European sites.

Based on the information provided, I am satisfied that adverse effects can be excluded. No riverine habitat loss will occur. Adverse effects from water contamination and sediment release can be effectively prevented by mitigation measures ensuring the protection of the watercourses. No increase in existing runoff rates will occur and appropriate treatment will ensure runoff quality.

The proposed scheme would not delay or prevent the attainment of the Conservation objectives of the Lower River Suir SAC [002137]

Based on the information submitted, surveys carried out analysis provided I am satisfied that no uncertainty remains

### 11.3.2 Potential for Adverse Effects

Having reviewed the proposed development I submit that the main aspects that could adversely affect the conservation objectives of the above-mentioned European Sites include:

- Habitat degradation due to water quality impacts;

The proposed development interacts with several watercourses and often a distance of less than 10 m. The release of contaminated surface water runoff and/or an accidental spillage or pollution event into any surface water features during construction, or operation, has the potential to affect water quality in the receiving aquatic environment. Such a pollution event may include: the release of sediment into receiving waters and the subsequent increase in mobilised suspended solids and the accidental spillage and/or leaks of contaminants into receiving waters. The associated effects of a reduction of surface water quality could potentially extend for a considerable distance downstream of the location of the accidental pollution event or the discharge.

This only relates to certain species in the SAC, including:

- White-clawed crayfish (Austropotamobius pallipes)
- Sea lamprey (Petromyzon marinus)
- Brook lamprey (Lampetra planeri)
- River Lamprey (Lampetra fluviatilis)
- Twaite Shad (Alosa fallax fallax)
- Salmon (Salmo salar)
- Otter (Lutra lutra)

Therefore, (albeit unlikely) this reduction in water quality (either alone or in combination with other pressures on water quality) could result in the degradation of sensitive habitats present at the site and downstream. These potential impacts could occur to such a degree that they result in significant effects which could have implications for the conservation objectives of the European Sites.

*In-Combination*

In combination effects are examined within the NIS submitted. The primary concern I would raise in an in combination context would be any effects from water

contamination and sediment release from other plans and projects in the water catchments, in particular the permitted wind farm. Were there a cumulation of events this would result could adversely affect the water quality and in turn the SCIs and QIs of the various European sites that rely on it.

This being said, this project is subject to the relevant regulatory process in order to receive consent or permission. The development plans have clear policies and objectives for the protection of water quality and European sites. It should be noted that the relevant development plans were themselves subject to AA.

It is accepted that the NIS was written at a point in time and proposals come and go in the planning system while any proposed development is being assessed by the Commission. I have reviewed the relevant planning registers in April 2026 to ensure no other projects arose. I note the submission of the observers also who identify certain projects, mainly residential schemes in their areas. These are all noted and considered in the assessment.

### 11.3.3 Mitigation Measures and Monitoring

The most obvious impacts relate to habitat degradation due to water quality impacts. The associated effects of a reduction of surface water quality, albeit unlikely, could potentially extend for a considerable distance downstream of the location of the accidental pollution event or the discharge. The potential changes to water quality from pollution and sedimentation of watercourses and given the proximity of the coast, during the construction phase, could potentially result in adverse effects.

Based on the information provided and mitigation measures included in relation to protection of water during the construction period, adverse effects from water contamination and sediment release can be effectively prevented by mitigation measures ensuring the protection of the relevant watercourses.

During construction, these measures are often standard and good working practices which a commonly applied during wind farm construction. A CEMP will be maintained during that period to ensure implementation of surface water quality mitigation measures which include measures for

- Site Environmental Clerk of Works
- Project Ecologist/Ornithologist

- Pre-Construction Surveys
- Water Quality Protection Measures which include management of sedimentation and pollutants

During operation measures include extensive embedded design features including measures set out in Section 3.2.4 of the CEMP.

The applicant has cited its CEMP as an integral components of the mitigation strategy. I am satisfied that the CEMP has been set out in line with best practice. I also note that it will include a number of site specific method statements or management plans including an Emergency Response Plan, procedures for incidents and complaints.

Furthermore, where deemed necessary a suitably experienced and qualified ecologist will be employed by the appointed contractor. The ecologist will advise the appointed contractor on ecological matters during construction, communicate all findings in a timely manner to the applicant, its contractors and statutory authorities, acquire any licences / consents required to conduct the work, and supervise and direct the ecological measures associated with the proposed development .

## 11.4 Appropriate Assessment Conclusion: Integrity Test

In screening the need for AA, it was determined that the proposed development, Borrisbeg Grid Connection, which consists of a substation, underground cable and lattice structures had the potential to result in significant effects on European Sites, and that AA was required in view of the conservation objectives of those sites.

Following a detailed examination and evaluation of the NIS all associated material submitted with the application as relevant to the AA process including submissions of third parties, I am satisfied that based on the design of the proposed development, combined with the proposed mitigation measures, adverse effects on the integrity of the Lower River Suir SAC can be excluded with confidence in view of the conservation objectives of those sites.

This conclusion is based on the following:

- A detailed assessment of all aspects of the proposed development that could result in significant effects or adverse effects on European Sites within a Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the development site.

- Consideration of the conservation objectives and conservation status of QI habitats and species.
- A full assessment of risks to SCI bird species and QI habitats and species
- Application of mitigation measures designed to avoid adverse effects on site integrity and likely effectiveness of same.

The proposed development would not undermine the favourable conservation condition of any QI feature or delay the attainment of favourable conservation condition for any QI habitats and species for these European sites.

# 12.0 Consideration of Conditions

It is noted that the planning authority and prescribed bodies, seek the imposition of conditions should the Commission be minded to approve the proposed development.

The majority relate to the continued engagement between the applicant and planning authority or prescribed body. It is noted that the applicant intends to continue collaboration in advance of, and during, the subsequent construction stage.

## 12.1 Conditions requested by Planning Authority

TCC has requested eight conditions be attached to any approval should the Commission be so minded. The conditions set out are all reasonable and valid and I am satisfied that they have been captured in the Reasons and Consideration's below. I have indicated below where conditions requested and not required and reasons for same.

- TCC Condition 1 is captured under ACP Condition 3, 4 and 5 which seeks to implement measures contained in the EIAR, AA and CEMP and subsidiary plans and assessments. There is provision for planning authority within Condition 5 to agree the CEMP and ensure mitigation measures are implemented.
    - TCC Condition 2, 3 (b) and 3 (c), 4, 7 is captured in ACP Condition 10, which seeks to ensure management, maintenance and reinstatement of the public road network. There is provision for the planning authority within Condition 9 to agree the details and ensure satisfactory management, maintenance and reinstatement.
    - TCC Condition 3 (a) in respect of sightlines/visibility splays is not required in this instance and I am satisfied that applicant has demonstrated the standard for such can be achieved in Drawing A14-2-1. ACP Condition 1 will ensure the proposed development is carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged.
- TCC Condition 4 in respect of haul routes is captured under ACP Condition 12 and the agreement of a TMP. There is provision for the planning authority within Condition 11 to agree the details.
- TCC Condition 5 in respect of landscaping is captured under ACP Condition 11. There is provision for the planning authority within Condition 10 to agree the details.

- TCC Condition 6 in respect of noise is captured under ACP Condition 8. There is provision for the planning authority within Condition 8 to agree the details.
- TCC Condition 7 in respect of development contributions is noted. The proposed contributions reflect the rates set out in the Tipperary County Council Development Contribution Scheme 2020. The introduction to Tipperary Development Contributions Scheme 2020 states that Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) enables the Planning Authority, when granting planning permission under Section 34 of the Act, to include conditions requiring the payment of a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area. This application for approval has been submitted to the Coimisiún under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the provisions of Section 48 do not apply to it. For that reason, I am satisfied that the provisions of the development contribution scheme do not apply to the proposed development.

## 12.2 Conditions requested by the Development Applications Unit

An condition in respect of archaeology has been attached under Condition 7 reflecting Sample Conditions C3, C5 and C6 as set out in OPR Practice Note PN03: Planning Conditions (October 2022).

## 12.3 Conditions requested by the Health Service Executive

The condition of the HSE , whose submission is detailed in Table 4 of this report, in respecting of working hours is already found in 9.1 Construction Schedule of the CEMP and therefore no condition is required.

Similarly, mitigation measures have already been committed to in the EIAR for a wheel wash for HGVs exiting the site, covering of loads and covering of soil stockpiles that may be on site.

While I note the HSEs request for the use of vehicles, plant and machinery that do not utilise fossil fuels, I do not consider it a reasonable request or condition of permission at this time and there is no policy requirement to do so. The applicant has committed in the EIAR to a range of reasonable measures to minimise reduction of fossil fuels including maintaining vehicles/plant in good order and no idling of vehicles when not in use.

## 12.4 Conditions requested by the Transport Infrastructure Ireland

In respect of TIIs request for ongoing engagement with all PPP Companies, MMaRC Contractors and road authorities, a condition has been attached to agree a construction traffic management plan prior to commencement of development in consultation with these agencies. This is found in Condition 12 should the Commission be minded to approve the proposed development.

## 13.0 Recommendation

**APPROVE** the proposed development in accordance with the said documentation based on the following reasons and considerations and subject to the conditions set out below.

# 14.0 Reasons and Considerations

In performing its functions in relation to the making of its decision, the Commission had regard to the following in coming to its decision:

(a) European legislation, including of particular relevance:

- Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU (EIA Directive) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment,
- Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC (Birds Directives) which set the requirements for Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union, and
- Directive 2000/60/EC (Water Framework Directive) and the requirement to exercise its functions in a manner which is consistent with the provisions of the Directive, and which achieves or promotes compliance with the requirements of the Directive.
- Directive 2023/2413/EU (Red III Directive) as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources,

(b) National planning and related policy, including:

- Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, and the requirement to, in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and the national long term climate action strategy (Ireland's Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction 2024), national adaptation framework (National Adaptation Framework 2024) and approved sectoral adaptation plans in furtherance of the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.
- National Development Plan 2021-2030, and review in 2025,
- Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework, as revised April 2025,
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030;
- Water Action Plan 2024: A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland;

- Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure, July 2012

(c) Regional level policy, including:

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020 – 2032

(d) local planning policy, including:

- Tipperary County Development Plan, 2022-2028

(e) the nature, scale, extent and design of the proposed development as set out in the planning application and the characteristics and pattern of development and the character of the landscape of the area and immediate area and in the vicinity,

- the entirety of the documentation submitted by the applicant in support of the proposed development, including the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and the Natura Impact Statement, the range of mitigation and monitoring measures proposed and in particular to the response to submissions made in January 2026,
- the submissions made to An Coimisiún Pleanála in connection with the planning application,

(f) 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 significant effects of the proposed development on European Sites, and

- the examination, analysis and evaluation undertaken in relation to planning and sustainable development, environmental impact assessment, appropriate assessment and, water framework directive assessment in the Inspector's Report and recommendation of the Inspector.

## Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would be in accordance with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended), Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025, National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2020, the National Planning Framework (as revised), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy of the Southern Region 2020-2032 and the provisions of the Tipperary County Development Plan, 2022-2028. The proposed development would make a positive contribution to Ireland's national strategic policy on renewable energy and its move to a low energy carbon future, would not seriously injure the residential amenities of the area, would not adversely affect population and human health, natural heritage, biodiversity or, cultural heritage tourism, would not have an unduly adverse impact on the landscape, and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## Environmental Impact Assessment

The Commission completed an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development taking into account:

(i) the nature, scale and extent of the proposed development,
(ii) the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted in support of the application,
(iii) the submissions made in the course of the application; and

The Commission considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant, adequately considers alternatives to the proposed development and identifies and describes adequately the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment and complies with the provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU.

The Commission agreed with the examination, set out in the Inspector's report, of the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted by the applicant and submissions made in the course of the application.

The Commission considered, and agreed with the Inspector's reasoned conclusions, that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment are as follows:

**Population and Human Health**

- Short-term, positive impacts during the construction phase on population in terms of the local economy from increased spending and jobs.
- Short-term, negative impacts during the construction phase on residential amenity, recreational, community and tourism facilities, transport, connectivity and accessibility human health in terms of general disturbance, noise, dust and potential traffic disruptions on the public road network. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.
- Permanent, slight, negative impacts post construction as a result of the impact to residential amenity, use of agricultural lands and land use change to utility uses.

Residential amenity and agricultural activity on adjacent lands can continue subject to standard good practices and measures as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

**Biodiversity**

- No significant effects on biodiversity with the implementation of pre-construction surveys and standard pollution prevention, control and response measures including specific measures for Horizontal Directional Drilling and installation of clearspan bridges. Their implementation will be supervised through the appointment of an Environmental Clerk of Works, a Project Ecologists.

**Lands, Soils and Geology**

- Permanent, slight negative impacts on land and land use due to the use of agricultural lands for utility uses. Residential amenity and agricultural activity on adjacent lands can continue subject to standard good practices and measures as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments
- Permanent, slight negative impacts on soil and subsoil as a result of its excavation to facilitate the substation and electrical infrastructure. This is unavoidable but mitigated through design and selection of the site which limited volume of material to be managed.
- Short-term, imperceptible, negative impacts as a result of contamination, leakage and spillage and erosion of exposed soil during construction. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

**Hydrology and Hydrogeology**

- Short-term, imperceptible to slight, negative impacts as a result of suspended solids entrainment in surface waters, dewatering, accidental release of hydrocarbons, release of cement-based products, use of siltbuster. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.
- Permeant, imperceptible negative impact as a result of new proposed watercourse crossing. There are a range of mitigation measures set out for Horizonal Directional Drilling and clear span bridges in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

**Air Quality**

- Short-term, imperceptible to slight, negative impacts from exhaust emissions and dust emissions during construction. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.

**Climate**

- Long-term, positive impacts in respect of climate and the connection of the wind farm to the national grid. This will result in the offsetting of approximately 58,808 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) per annum

**Noise and Vibration**

- Short-term, negative impacts from noise and vibration during construction phase as a result of construction vehicles, use of machinery and activities like ground breaking. This is readily mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments.
- Permeant, not significant, negative impacts as a result of the ongoing operation of the transformer at the substation site. The magnitude of the impact has largely been mitigated by design and the siting of the transformer at sufficient distances from neighbouring residential receptors.

**Cultural Heritage**

- No significant effects on unrecorded sub-surface archaeological features on the basis that mitigation will be implemented in respect of pre-construction testing, obtaining licences from the National Monuments Service and if required avoidance, preservation by record and buffer zones.

**Landscape and Visual**

- Permanent, moderate to slight, negative but not significant impacts to the physical landscape and viewpoints which cannot be avoided but due to siting of the proposed development in a low sensitive landscape and inclusion of berms at the substation the impacts can be considered acceptable.

**Material Assets**

- Short-term, slight impacts to traffic and transport as a result of temporary diversions and road closures and increase traffic volumes. This is readily

mitigated by standard good practices as outlined in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments which includes a Traffic Management Plan.

- Imperceptible to slight negative impacts to other utilities (electricity, gas, water, waste) during construction and operation. This will be mitigated through ongoing liaison with utility operators and adherence with relevant laws, standards and guidelines.
- Imperceptible, long-term impact during operation from Electro-magnetic Fields (EMF) to residential dwellings and Irish Rail infrastructure, however, any impact will be within International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) guidelines

The Commission completed an environmental impact assessment in relation to the proposed development and concluded that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the effects on the environment of the proposed development, by itself and in combination with other development in the vicinity, would be acceptable. In doing so, the Commission adopted the report and conclusions of the Inspector.

## Appropriate Assessment

**Stage 1:**

The Commission completed an Appropriate Assessment screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on European Sites, taking into account the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted with the application, the Inspector's Report, and the submissions on file.

The Commission agreed with the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's Report that the *Lower River Suir Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is* the only European Sites in respect of which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect in view of the conservation objectives for the sites and that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is, therefore, required.

**Stage 2:**

The Commission considered the Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted with the application, the mitigation measures contained therein, the submissions and observations on file, and the Inspector's Report.

The Commission completed an Appropriate Assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the *Lower River Suir Special Area of Conservation (SAC)*, in view of the conservation objectives of the sites.

The Commission considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment. In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Commission considered, in particular, the following:

(i) the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development either individually or in combination with other plans or projects,

(ii) the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal, and
(iii) the conservation objectives for the European Sites.

In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Commission accepted and adopted the Appropriate Assessment carried out in the Inspector's Report in respect of the potential effects of the proposed development on the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the conservation objectives of the sites.

In overall conclusion, the Commission was satisfied that the proposed development, either by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of the *Lower River Suir Special Area of Conservation (SAC)*, in view of the conservation objectives of the sites.

## Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, 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 proposed development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.
   **Reason**: In the interest of clarity.

2. The period during which the development hereby permitted may be carried out shall be ten years from the date of this Order.
   **Reason**: Having regard to the nature and extent of the proposed development, the Commission considered it appropriate to specify a period of validity of this permission in excess of five years.

3. The developer shall ensure that all construction methods and environmental mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAR), and associated documents are implemented in full in conjunction with the timelines therein, except as may be otherwise required in order to comply with the conditions of this order.
   **Reason**: To protect the environment.

4. The developer shall ensure that all construction methods and environmental mitigation measures set out in the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and associated documents are implemented in full in conjunction with the timelines therein, except as may be otherwise required in order to comply with the conditions of this order.
5. **Reason**: To protect the integrity of European sites.

6. The construction of the proposed development shall be managed in accordance with a final Construction and Environmental Management Plan, which shall be

submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development

**Reason:** In the interest of environmental protection and residential amenity.

7. The developer shall facilitate the archaeological appraisal of the site and shall provide for the preservation, recording and protection of archaeological materials or features which may exist within the site. In this regard, the developer shall:
(a) employ a suitably-qualified archaeologist prior to the commencement of development. The archaeologist shall assess and monitor all preparatory works and all site development works,
(b) investigate areas of archaeological potential by means of geophysical survey and, depending on the findings, carry out test excavations if deemed necessary following consultation with the National Monuments Services,
(c) notify the planning authority in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation relating to the proposed development, and
(d) submit a report to the planning authority, containing the results of the archaeological investigations and assessment. In default of agreement on any of these requirements, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

**Reason**: In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the area and to secure the preservation in-situ or by record and protection of any archaeological remains that may exist within the site.

8. 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.

9. The developer 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) 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 unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.

**Reason**: In the interest of clarity, of visual amenity.

10. 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.

11. The site shall be landscaped, using only indigenous deciduous trees and hedging species and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Any plants, trees or hedging 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 and assimilate it into the surrounding rural landscape, in the interest of visual amenity.

12. 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. The Applicant shall consult with all relevant PPP Companies, MMaRC Contractors prior to its submission.

**Reason**: In the interest of sustainable transport and safety.

**Professional Declaration**

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.

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T Bradley,

Senior Planning Inspector

29th April 2026