Inspector's Report ACP-324031-26

Development	Construction of 110kV substation and associated infrastructure
Location	located in the townland of Walterstown, Dunboyne Co. Meath (www.esbwalterstownsubstation.ie)
Local Authority	Meath County Council
Applicant	Electricity Supply Board
Type of Application	Application for approval under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended.
Prescribed Bodies	Uisce Eireann Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Observer(s)	Stasia & Derek Ennis Camillus Woolhead Terence Woolhead
Date of Site Inspection	14th July 2026
Inspector	David Ryan

Contents

1.0 Introduction 3

2.0 Site Location and Description 3

3.0 Proposed Development 4

4.0 Consultations 7

5.0 Planning History 21

6.0 Policy Context 23

7.0 Natural Heritage Designations 36

8.0 Planning Assessment 36

9.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening 83

10.0 Appropriate Assessment Screening 84

11.0 Water Framework Directive Screening 85

12.0 Recommendation 86

13.0 Reasons and Considerations 86

1.0 Introduction

1.1. This case concerns an application for strategic infrastructure under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. It is made on foot of a pre-application consultation with the Commission under ABP-320535-24 for a proposed development of a 110kV/38kV/20kV/MV substation, where the Commission decided that the development would fall within the scope of section 182A of the Act and would be strategic infrastructure.

1.2. The proposal is located at Walterstown, Dunboyne Co. Meath and its objective is to add capacity to the network and improve distribution security of supply for the surrounding area.

2.0 Site Location and Description

2.1. The subject site has an area of 3.6 hectares and is located in the townland of Walterstown, approx. 2.8km south of Dunboyne Town Centre, approx.1.9km north of Leixlip, approx.3.2km west of Hansfield Rail Station, and is c.0.5km northwest of the Meath-Kildare county bounds. The site is accessed via the R149 from the east and south, and from the R157 from the northwest and local access roads. A narrow local public road (Jarretstown Lane) runs along the northeastern boundary of the site, providing access to the site.

2.2. The site comprises the partial areas of 3 no. fields, currently in use as pasturelands, defined by mature trees and hedgerows. The existing Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade 110kV overhead line and pylons traverse the site and define the southwestern boundary. The proposed substation compound is located within the Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade 110kV overhead line and the local road. The site details a gentle slope from north to south, with levels ranging from 70 OD to 66 OD.

2.3. The surrounding area is predominantly characterised by agricultural lands used for grazing and tillage with field boundaries consisting of mature hedgerows and treelines. In the immediate site area there is also a pattern of one-off rural housing including ribbon development.

2.4. The Oranstown watercourse is located within the northwestern area of the site, and the site is located within Flood Zone C. There are no natural heritage designations

within or adjoining the subject site. There are no recorded archaeological monuments within the subject site.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1. The applicant is seeking permission for the construction of a 110 kV/ 38 kV/ Medium Voltage (MV) electrical substation and associated infrastructure. There is a lack of capacity at existing transmission substations and transmission circuits to supply the increased demand that the Distribution System Operator (ESB Networks) has forecasted across the country. The purpose of the proposal is to add capacity to the network and improve distribution security of supply for the surrounding areas. This includes in relation to the proposed expansion of the Irish Rail Dart+ West electrification programme, which aims to modernise and improve existing rail services in the Greater Dublin Area. The proposed 110/38 kV station at Walterstown, which is to be located directly beneath an existing overhead line and within an existing circuit, will also feed 8 no. 38 kV DART stations which will support the modernisation and improvement of rail services in the wider area. Additionally, the existing Coolmine 38 kV station and the existing Leixlip 38 kV station will be transferred to the proposed new Walterstown station from the Finglas rural loop and the Griffinrath BSP respectively, reducing the load feed on both networks. Provision for a new MV busbar will facilitate connections at MV in the area and possible offloads from Macetown and from Moneycooley (which are both 20 kV).

3.2. The development will comprise the construction of a 110 kV/ 38 kV/ Medium Voltage (MV) electrical substation and will include the following:

- Construction of 1 no substation compound (c. 5650sqm) securely enclosed with 2.6m high palisade fencing and gates, containing:
- 1 no. 110 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building (c. 707sqm footprint; c. 12m in height);
- 1 no. 38 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building (c. 232sqm footprint; c. 7m in height);

- 2 no. Bunded 110 / 38 kV Transformers (c. 5m in height) with associated electrical equipment, 2 no. Bunded 38 kV/ MV Transformers (c. 5m in height) with associated electrical equipment;
- 2 no. fire walls (c. 5.5m height by c. 5m length) separating the 110 / 38 kV Transformers and 38 kV/ MV Transformers;
- 3 no. bunded Arc Suppression Coils (c. 4m high) with associated electrical equipment;
- Neutral earth resistor (c. 2m height) and neutral earth switch (c. 3.9m high);
- 2 no. 110 kV double circuit Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM) (c. 17m high);
- Concrete post and rail fence (1.4m high);
- Underground cabling between the 110 kV GIS building and the new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM);
- Dismantling of 1 no. existing 110 kV Overhead Line timber poleset (c. 20m height);
- Diversion of the existing 110 kV Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade overhead line to connect to the new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM;) and,
- All associated site development works including provision of new site entrance, internal access, lighting poles (c. 4m height), 3 no. lightning monopoles measuring c.15m high, 1 no. Emergency, stand-by Diesel Generator, telecommunications, landscaping, site services including drainage and all other ancillary works.

3.3. Details submitted outline the new substation will loop into the existing transmission Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade 110 kV circuit. The substation will be a combined Transmission and Distribution substation with the 110 kV circuits feeding the substation, the 110 kV GIS building and 110 / 38 kV transformers forming part of the 110 kV Transmission Network operated by EirGrid as the Transmission System Operator (TSO). The 38 kV & MV electrical equipment will be part of the Distribution Network operated by ESB Networks as the Distribution System Operator (DSO). The

combined substation will be owned by ESB Networks as the Transmission Asset Owner (TAO) and the Distribution Asset Owner (DAO).

The proposed development will be constructed in two phases. The first phase will include site preparation works, construction of the main building and structures, and site finishing works, and it is envisaged these works will take approx.12 months to complete. The second phase will include electrical installation and commissioning, envisaged to take approx.18 months, subject to availability of required outages of the existing 110 kV overhead line from the transmission system, time of year, weather conditions and the availability of specialised equipment.

3.4. The application to the Commission includes:

- Cover Letter prepared by the applicant.
- Completed and signed SID Application Form.
- Copies of Notification Letters.
- Copies of Public Notices.
- Drawings, plans and a drawing schedule.
- Landowner consent
- A Planning and Environmental Considerations Report ("PECR") prepared by Mott MacDonald which includes population and human health; air quality; climate; noise and vibration; biodiversity; surface water resources and flooding; land, soil, geology and hydrogeology; architecture, archaeology and cultural heritage; Landscape; traffic and transport; material assets and waste management, and
    - Appendix 3.1 Surface Water Management Plan
    - Appendix 3.2 Uisce Eireann Confirmation of Feasibility for Water Connection
    - Appendix 5.1 Construction Dust Assessment Methodology
    - Appendix 12.2 – Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan
- Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment prepared by Mott MacDonald
- Construction and Environmental Management Plan prepared by Mott MacDonald
- CEMP Appendix A – Construction Phase Resource and Waste Management Plan

- CEMP Appendix B – Construction Phase Traffic Management Plan
- LVIA Photomontages

There is no information on prior community consultation. The applicant has created a standalone website for the development: www.esbwalterstownsubstation.ie.

4.0 Consultations

4.1. Prescribed Bodies

Details of the application to the Commission were circulated to the following prescribed bodies:

- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications.
- Meath County Council
- Kildare County Council
- Commission for Regulation of Utilities, Water and Energy.
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI).
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).
- Office of Public Works
- The Heritage Council.
- An Taisce.
- An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- Failte Ireland.
- Uisce Eireann.

4.2. Submissions

4.2.1. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)

TII outline the submitted CEMP Appendix B - Construction Phase Traffic Management Plan (TMP) identifies the M3 as part of the "access route" for the construction of the scheme. TII request ACP has regard to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines in the assessment

and determination of the application. TII considers it critical to the safe and efficient operation of the national road network that any potential impacts of the proposed development, including attendant construction traffic, are adequately mitigated as part of the proposed development. Therefore, TII recommends that the following condition be considered in the event of a grant of planning permission:

A revised construction Traffic Management Plan (TMP) shall be submitted for the written agreement of the planning authority subject to the written agreement of TII and shall include the following information in relation to the national road network:-

a) details demonstrating compliance of proposed works to the national road network, including signage, to facilitate construction traffic with TII Publications;

b) demonstration of consultation with TII Bridge Management Section to ensure that national road structures are not adversely affected and to ensure adherence to required standards and procedures;

c) demonstration of consultation with all relevant PPP Companies, MMaRC Contractors and road authorities over which the haul route traverses to ascertain any operational requirements such as delivery timetabling, etc. to ensure that the strategic function of the national road network is maintained;

d) copies of any proposals agreed between the road authority, PPP Concessions and MMaRC Companies and the applicant impacting on national roads; and

e) demonstration of consultation with thirdpartyworks@HI.ie where temporary works within national road network maintenance boundaries are required to facilitate construction traffic to site, as a works specific Deed of Indemnity may be required by TII before the works can take place.

Mitigation measures of the Traffic Management Plan (TMP) shall include that any damage caused to the pavement of the existing national road due to construction traffic shall be rectified in accordance with TII Pavement Standards and details in

this regard shall be agreed with the Road Authority prior to the commencement of any development on site.

4.2.2. **Uisce Éireann**

UÉ outline the applicant has not included a proposal for a new water / wastewater connection. Furthermore, it is anticipated that there will be no adverse impact on any assets or sources belonging to Uisce Éireann. To ensure adequate provision and protection of water and wastewater facilities, Uisce Éireann recommends standard agreement requirements. Advisory Notes are detailed on build over of assets, separation distances from public infrastructure, submission of diversion enquiry, protection of drinking water source(s), WFD requirements, Trade Effluent License, surface waters and the public sewer network.

4.3. **Public Submissions**

4.3.1. 3 no. submissions have been received from Stasia & Derek Ennis, Camillus Woolhead, Terence Woolhead.

Concerns are outlined in relation to:

Residential Amenity

- Proposal overlooking garden at the side/back of residence
- Noise and visibility of LCIM (Line Cable Interface Masts), approx.height of 86.00m
- Devaluation of property

Roads and Traffic

- Increase in traffic volume, traffic delay, obstruction, impact on pedestrians

Human Health

- Stress arising from negative equity, impact on observers family

Design flexibility, Lack of project definition

- Application characterised by uncertainty, excessive design flexibility, reliance on future decisions by third parties, deficiencies undermine environmental assessment, public participation, and compliance with proper planning and sustainable development
- Excessive design flexibility and lack of project definition. Seeking permission for a 110kV or 220kV substation, AIS or GIS switchgear, 110kV or 220kV underground cabling. Alternative routing options, voltage level, switchgear type and routing materially affect: fire risk and emergency response, construction impacts, visual, noise and landscape effects, traffic and amenity, quality of life, wildlife. Deferring matters to other parties deprives Board and public of ability to assess impacts, and undermines planning principles and Aarhus Convention

Project Split, EIAR

- Project splitting and failure to assess cumulative impact with permitted and proposed solar farms, proposed substation, grid connection, associated infrastructure required to stabilise grid and manage grid export
- No EIAR has assessed combined construction impacts, combined hydrological and ecological risk, combined traffic disruption, cumulative industrialisation of the rural landscape, piecemeal approach is inconsistent with proper planning and sustainable development
- Applying the precautionary principle and relevant Irish and EU case law, the Board cannot be satisfied that the proposal will not result in adverse environmental effects.

Ecology

- Proposal will remove/damage hedgerows, fragment linear habitats, weaken ecological connectivity. Lacks hedgerow loss inventory, commitment to like for like replacement, ecological management measures, loss of bird feeding and nesting areas. CDP identifies hedgerows, field boundaries and watercourses as critical components of County Meath green infrastructure network,

incremental loss across multiple projects undermines CDP biodiversity policies.

- Environmental impact assessment on birds is inadequate, study states an ad-hoc survey was carried out, and should be completed over period of one year. Kestrels, Merlins ,Snipe,Yellowhammers, Barn owls use area with some visiting in winter. Irish Kestrel is the highest Conservation Status Red list in Ireland due to decline of habitat
- Irish Merlin, listed as Amber in the Irish Bird Convention Concern, is protected under the wildlife acts, EU Birds Directive Annex 1, Bern Convention. Main threat to Merlin is habitat loss.
- Sparrow is protected under the wildlife acts 1976, amendment act 2000, European Communities birds and habitats regulations 2001, and it is illegal to disturb nesting sites. Merlin and Sparrowhawk hunt on the lands
- Grounds hold bats with Leislers bat, an endangered species on an observer's property last year

<u>Fire Risk, Pollution, Emergency Response</u>

- Fire Risk, Environmental Pollution - No site-specific fire risk assessment has been submitted, with fire risk associated with high energy electrical equipment, oil filled transformers, continuous operation load. Firewater Runoff and Pollution Pathways can become contaminated, additional risk with sulphur hexafluoride. In People Over Wind v ABP C-323/17 the CJEU confirmed that mitigation cannot be assumed where uncertainty remains

- Emergency Response Capacity – no consultation with local fire authority, no confirmation of available equipment locally, no assessment of response times or access constraints, absence of plan is incompatible with proper planning

- Inappropriate siting in an environmentally sensitive location, with convergence of high voltage infrastructure, proximity to watercourse, uncertain emergency

response capacity. In Holohan v ABP C-461/17, CJEU emphasised that all aspects of a project capable of affecting a Natura site must be fully assessed.

Development Plan

- Proposal conflicts with Meath CDP 2022-2028 objectives, including those relating to: Protection of rural character and landscape; Avoidance of over-concentration of infrastructure; Safeguarding water quality and Natura 2000 sites; Protection of biodiversity and green infrastructure; Community well-being and participatory planning. While the MDP supports renewable energy, this support is explicitly conditional on compliance with environmental protection and proper planning. Those conditions are not satisfied

Public Consultation

- Lack of consultation – zero community consultation with local neighbours on the proposal

4.4. Planning Authority (Meath County Council (MCC))

4.4.1. The planning authority submitted a Planning Report on the proposed development (dated 10/3/2026) to the Coimisiún on the 12th March 2026. The report notes the location of the proposed development, the development description, the planning history, pre-planning consultation and applicable policy context of the site. MCC outline that the proposed development is acceptable in principle on the subject site, subject to compliance with planning and environmental considerations, noting National Strategic Outcome NSO(8) of the National Planning Framework (NPF) which emphasises the need to develop and upgrade the electricity grid to meet increasing demand and support renewable energy. In relation to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCDP), it is acknowledged that the site is located on lands zoned 'RA-Rural Areas' where utilities are permissible and that the proposed development accords with policy objectives INF POL 46, 47 and INF OBJ 50 of the MCDP which support the development of enhanced electricity networks to meet current and future needs.

4.4.2. It is noted the gross floor space for the proposal as per the application form (1749.9m2) does not correlate with that stipulated in public notices (5650m2) and it is considered the applicant provide a schedule of proposed works areas for clarity.

4.4.3. The internal report received from the Transport Department outlines in relation to site access, the proposal is located on the L-2220 inside the 60kph speed limits, and the applicant proposes sightlines of 90 metres in both directions from a setback of 2 metres from the new entrance, and setback distance should be 2.4 metres in accordance with TII document DN-GEO-03060. The sightlines drawing shows the existing hedge is obstructing the required sightlines and no works relating to the hedge have been identified. The proposed development entrance is opposite an existing domestic entrance and would give rise to risk of conflicting movements, and the proposed new entrance shall have a minimum 10-metre separation distance with the existing entrance opposite. A swept path analysis to demonstrate that HGVs can enter and turn within the site should be provided for the operational stage. In relation to abnormal loads, specific traffic management requirements and localised arrangements for the delivery of abnormal loads will be identified through the completion of an Abnormal Load Assessment. The Transport Department report received states no objection to the proposed development subject to appropriate conditions. The internal report received from the Environment Section states no objection to the proposed development from a flood risk perspective, with conditions outlined. The MCC report outlines an alternative boundary treatment to the proposed palisade fencing should be sought on the basis it would be visible to the public, would be inappropriate in this rural setting, and may permit an excess of electrical noise levels to permeate the area.

4.4.4. The report notes the findings of the LVIA, AASR and PECR and states that it is for ACP to satisfy itself that the proposed development will not give rise to significant landscape visual impacts, or require a Stage 2 Natura Impact Statement or Environmental Impact Assessment.

4.4.5. The report sets out recommended conditions in the event that permission is granted. MCC requests ACP to consider the Meath County Development Contribution Scheme 2024-2029 and supports the imposition of a community fund condition in

accordance with the provisions of Section 182B(6) of the Act to finance an education and awareness program on renewable energy and energy conservation for the community. A condition to include a cash deposit to secure reinstatement of public roads is also outlined.

4.5. **Applicant's Response**

4.5.1. The submission on the file from the PA, prescribed bodies and public observers have been circulated to the applicant. The response received from the applicant addresses each of the submissions made, as detailed in the following table:

<u>Residential Amenity (Visual/ Landscape)</u>
• Proposal site is located within a working rural landscape within the South East Lowlands Landscape Character Area, identified as being of moderate sensitivity and high landscape value. Presence of existing vegetation which will be largely retained and supplemented by planting, as illustrated in the Landscape Mitigation Plan, will successfully screen the proposal, once planting has been established. LVIA concludes that landscape and visual effects will be localised, limited in magnitude and readily mitigated, as depicted in photomontages. Beyond approx. 500m from the site boundary, effects are generally imperceptible. • One submission refers to LCIM towers as being 84-86m in height, and they will be approx.17m in height, as illustrated in drawings. • Existing overhead line circuit will be only partially realigned. LCIM structures replace, and partly rationalise, existing 110 kV overhead line infrastructure. Project represents a consolidation of existing electricity infrastructure rather than introduction of an entirely new linear element in the landscape. • MCC notes palisade fencing may be visually inappropriate. Such fencing is required for safety and security reasons; Fencing will be substantially screened by existing and new planting as depicted in photomontages.
<u>Residential Amenity (Noise)</u>

- Operational noise modelling demonstrates that predicted noise levels at the nearest noise-sensitive locations will remain below relevant assessment criteria.
- The 110 kV overhead line is an existing element of the electricity network in this location and will continue to operate at the same voltage following development. Proposal does not introduce a new overhead line, nor involve an intensification of overhead line operation. No material change in noise environment is anticipated. Construction noise will be temporary and managed in accordance with best practice mitigation measures as set out in the CEMP

Project Splitting

- Proposal is a standalone electricity transmission and distribution substation. It does not form part of a single integrated development requiring a combined application. There is no associated linear grid connection of strategic scale, no integration with multiple generation project, and no reliance on future or separate consents to render the development operational. All works necessary are fully contained in the application. Potential cumulative effects have been assessed in the PECR. No significant cumulative effects are anticipated.

Design Flexibility / Lack of Project Definition

- It is noted that significant portions of the wording used in submissions closely mirror objections previously made in relation to a separate Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) proposal for the Ballyloo Electricity Substation in County Carlow (ACP Case Ref's. 323860 and 321858), which involved materially different characteristics, including alternative voltage ranges, alternative switchgear types, extensive underground grid connections, direct integration with multiple permitted and proposed solar developments. Proposal relates to a 110 kV/ 38 kV MV Gas Insulated Switchgear substation, with no alternative voltages, no alternative switchgear technologies and no optional routing or layout parameters proposed
- No reliance is placed on future decisions by third parties to determine fundamental characteristics, nor is permission sought in an open-ended

form. No open-ended flexibility is proposed that would undermine environmental assessment or public participation
Ecology
• *Survey Scope and Methodology* – PECR Chapter 8 sets out a comprehensive ecological assessment undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists, in accordance with best practice. • *Birds* – Site supports common and widespread bird species. Merlin, Kestrel and sparrowhaw will continue to forage in the local area including habitats retained around the site boundary. Possible nest features will be retained and tree planting will benefit sparrowhawk. The site is not suitable for breeding Merlin, and may turn up occasionally, but abundant alternative foraging habitat is widespread in area. Proposal does not give rise to habitat loss/fragmentation of a scale that would adversely affect bird populations, nor does it introduce collision risk beyond that associated with the existing overhead line infrastructure already present. • *Bats and Other Protected Species* - The PECR identifies that no buildings, mature trees or features with high bat roost potential will be removed. Boundary hedgerows will be largely retained and supplemented, maintaining commuting and foraging connectivity across the landscape. Standard best practice mitigation measures are proposed, PECR concludes that no significant impacts on bats/other protected species are anticipated. • *Hedgerow Removal and Habitat Fragmentation* - Limited hedgerow removal is required solely to facilitate the site access. Affected sections are of common species composition and local importance only. Proposal incorporates landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures, including planting of approx. 0.5 hectares (5,000m2) of native woodland planting within the site, greatly exceeding any required/proposed hedgerow loss (approx. 54m2) and will result in a new gain in habitat diversity and ecological value. • *Cumulative Effects* - PECR concludes that no significant cumulative ecological effects arise.

- *Appropriate Assessment* - An Appropriate Assessment Screening exercise has been undertaken and there is no potential for likely significant effects on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Accordingly, the need for a Natura Impact Statement does not arise.

Fire Risk, Pollution and Emergency Response

- *Fire Risk* - Proposal incorporates standard, industry-accepted fire prevention, containment and pollution control measures, including: All power transformers will be located within raised concrete bunds; Transformers will be separated by purpose designed fire walls to prevent fire propagation and radiant heat transfer between units (PECR Chapter 3); GIS equipment will be fully enclosed, and sulphur hexafluoride (SF,) handling monitoring and maintenance will be governed by recognised international standards (including the BS EN 62271 series) with leak detection and controlled handling forming part of normal operational procedures (PECR Chapter 6); A SuDS-based drainage system with impermeable lining and emergency shut-off capability (PECR Chapter 3). Measures materially reduce both the likelihood and consequences of fire incidents and are consistent with best practice for transmission and distribution infrastructure.
- *Site-specific Firewater Runoff and Pollution Pathway Assessment* - PECR and Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) provide a site-specific assessment of pollution pathways and containment measures. Includes: Identification of all potential surface-water pathways and incorporates a controlled SuDS-based drainage network; Transformer bunds fitted with oil-water separation systems to prevent discharge of contaminated water; The attenuation basin will be impermeably lined, preventing infiltration of contaminated water to groundwater; Drainage system will include emergency shut-off valve chambers upstream and downstream of the attenuation basin, allowing full isolation of the system in the event of an incident, including transformer fire or firefighting activity (Chapter 3). Measures ensure that, contaminated firewater can be contained on-site pending appropriate removal and disposal.

- *Emergency Response Capacity and Consultation with the Local Fire Authority* - Vehicular access, via a new site entrance and internal circulation access, has been designed in accordance with national geometric standards, ensuring access for emergency vehicles. CEMP includes an Emergency Incident Response Plan, setting out procedures for spills, fire and pollution incidents, notifying statutory authorities.

Conflict with Policies and Zoning of Meath County Development Plan

- As recognised by Meath County Council, utility structures, including electricity infrastructure, are permissible within the zoning 'RA-Rural Area' and the proposed development is thus considered acceptable in principle, subject to design, mitigation and compliance with relevant standards
- Proposal accords with the MCDP's Infrastructure Strategy, including policies which support the provision, reinforcement and upgrading of electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure to meet existing and future demand and to facilitate the transition to renewable energy and grid resilience. Proposal aligns with Development Plan policies that support enhanced electricity networks, cooperation with statutory infrastructure providers, and the delivery of grid infrastructure necessary to support economic growth population expansion and climate action objectives
- PECR demonstrates that potential impacts on landscape character, residential amenity, ecology, traffic and water management are localised and can be adequately mitigated, consistent with Development Plan objectives relating to landscape protection, biodiversity, surface water management and sustainable development.

Traffic

- *Construction Traffic* - Construction of the proposal will comprise two phases: a civil construction phase (approx.12 months), followed by electrical installation and commissioning works over a further period (approx.18 months). Construction traffic generation is not continuous over this period and is concentrated during the early stages of the civil works. During this peak period, traffic is forecast to be approx.30 HGVs per day (60 movements), together with construction staff vehicles. Traffic levels reduce significantly following completion of the bulk civil works.

Management of construction traffic will be controlled through the implementation of the Construction Phase Traffic Management Plan (TMP), forming part of the CEMP.

- Neither MCC nor TII raised any objection, in principle, to the proposal on traffic grounds, subject to the conditioning of appropriate traffic management measures. Applicant acknowledges that matters such as refinement of traffic management arrangements, abnormal load delivery protocols and localised mitigation measures can be addressed prior to commencement, by condition.
- *Operational Traffic* - Operational traffic is minimal. Facility will typically generate approx. two vehicle movements per week, associated with routine inspection and maintenance. There will be no permanent staffing of the substation.
- *Access and Sightlines* - Drawings submitted which indicate the sightline visibility splays and required setback of 2.0m, have been undertaken and produced strictly in accordance with the most recent TII standards document DN-GEO-03060 (May 2023), the relevant visibility measures table of which (Table 5,4) is attached.
- As noted in the drawing extract provided, a short section of the visibility envelope marginally overlaps the existing hedge with regard to creation of the proposed entrance. Any such hedge obstructing visibility will be removed/cut back to create the entrance – the sightline drawing illustrates that no hedge removal is specifically required to achieve sightlines. This is also noted in Chapter 8, which states that a 27m section of hedgerow will be required to be removed to facilitate sufficient sightlines and width requirements for the new entrance. It should be noted in this regard, that in relation to neighbouring trees which are also indicated on the drawing, the drawing represents the canopies of these trees and visibility sightlines would still be available at the required heights.
- It is also noted that the proposed site entrance is offset by approx.5m from the centreline of the existing house entrance on the opposite side of the road, and the two entrances are not directly opposing each other. Having reviewed relevant TII guidance, applicant cannot identify any

requirement which specifies a minimum 10m separation distance between entrances, as suggested by MCC.

- Notwithstanding the above, in the event ACP considers that any refinement of setback distance, trimming of hedgerows within the application (red line) boundary, demonstration of vehicle turning movements or confirmation of parking provision is required, it is considered that these are matters that could be addressed through the imposition of an appropriate condition(s).

Flooding, Surface Water and Drainage

- The Council raises no objection in principle to the proposal development on flood risk grounds, and matters to be addressed in relation to surface water management are standard requirements capable of being addressed by condition. Applicant confirms the drainage strategy and Surface Water Management Plan provides a SuDS compliant system consistent with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study.

Development Contributions/Community Fund

- The proposal is a Section 182A application made under Part XI of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), where there is no mechanism for local authority Contribution Schemes to be attached to grants. ESB request that ACP do not attach a condition requiring payment of Development Contributions, should permission be granted.
- In response to MCC's request to consider the imposition of a community-based or awareness initiative (community fund) condition, ESB notes that such an invitation is discretionary in nature and considers the attachment of such associated conditions to be unnecessary. The project is strategic electricity network infrastructure designed to improve continuity of electricity supply and facilitate the integration of renewable energy for the wider region. As part of its statutory role, the ESB already undertakes a range of national and local campaigns and schemes to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate awareness across the country. In these circumstances, a site specific or localised community fund or awareness programme is not considered necessary or appropriate.

Other Matters

- UE raises no objection. Notes UE states that the application does not include for new water / wastewater connection. Applicant notes that the development does not require connection to the public wastewater network, with foul effluent managed via an on-site holding tank to be emptied by a licenced contractor. In relation to water supply, potable water supply is proposed to be sourced via a new connection from the existing public watermain located within Jarretstown Lane, subject to connection request application to UE. A Confirmation of Feasibility (CoF) was received from UE on 12 November 2025 (pre-connection enquiry reference CDS25007947). The applicant accepts UE's advisory comments. In the event that works are proposed in proximity to any UE infrastructure, consultation will be undertaken.

5.0 Planning History

5.1. The following planning applications are relevant to the proposed development:

Within the subject site:

- ABP-320535-24 - Commission decided on 25th October 2024 that the proposed development of a 110kV/38kV/20kV/MV substation, would fall within the scope of section 182A of the Act and would be strategic infrastructure.
- PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 - Permission granted to EirGrid PLC on 5th February 2026, with the consent and approval of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), for works to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad 110kV overhead line (OHL). The Rinawade - Dunfirth Tee - Kinnegad 110 kV OHL circuit runs through County Meath, County Kildare and County Offaly. A Natura Impact Statement was submitted with the application.
- PA Reg. Ref DA60037 - Construction of dwelling refused in 2006
- PA Reg. Ref DA20102 – application for dwelling withdrawn in 2003.

Opposite:

- PA Reg. Ref. DA803073 - permission granted in 2009 to erect a first floor extension over existing single storey extension to rear of existing bungalow, installation of a Biocycle waste treatment plant and percolation area to replace existing septic tank system
- PA Reg. Ref. 221247 - Permission granted on 6/1/23 to construct a part storey and a half, part single storey dwelling house, detached garage, new wastewater treatment and percolation area, new entrance from the public road and all associated site development works
- PA Reg. Ref. 221246 - Permission granted on 6/1/23 to construct a part storey and a half, part single storey dwelling house, detached garage, new wastewater treatment system and percolation area, new entrance from the public road and all associated site development works
- PA Reg. Ref. 961225 - Permission refused in 1996 for change of use of existing farmyard to storage yard for builder's machinery and to reposition and widen existing entrance gate to same
- PA Reg. Ref. 90678 - permission granted on 26/07/1990 retention of roof to porch and roof to extension of dwelling

Adjacent/neighbouring to the east:

- PA Reg. Ref. RA200960 - Permission granted on 3/11/20 to demolish existing single storey dwelling house and shed and to construct a replacement 1.5 storey dwelling house, new wastewater treatment system and percolation area and all associated site development works, on site adjacent to the east.
- PA Reg. Ref. RA180668 - Permission granted on 25/9/18 to construct a dwelling

Adjacent/neighbouring to the west:

- PA Reg. Ref. DA30498 - Permission granted in 2004 for the conversion of existing garage and shed to a single storey 2 bed granny flat
- PA Reg. Ref. 981470 - Permission refused in 2002 to construct three dormer bungalows

- PA Reg. Ref. DA801806 - Permission refused in 2008 for the construction of a private dwelling, domestic garage, private well, proprietary wastewater treatment system, horse walker

Other Relevant planning

- ABP-314232-22 - A decision to make railway order for DART+ West was made on 18 July 2024

- ABP-304862-19 - Permission approved 21st November 2019 for 220 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear substation, 2 no. 220 kV underground circuits forming a loop-in/loop-out to the existing Maynooth-Woodland 220 kV Overhead Line and 6 no. 220 kV underground circuits and associated low voltage and communication underground cabling connecting the proposed substation with electricity transformers within the Intel Ireland Facility, and all associated and ancillary site development works, within the townlands of Bogganstown, County Meath, and Ravensdale, Kellystown, Blakestown (North Salt By) and Leixlip, County Kildare.

6.0 Policy Context

EU, National and Regional Legislation/Policy

6.1. EU, national and regional policy documents are relevant in respect of the proposed development and include:

- EU Directive 2009/28/EC and Directive 2018/2001/EU (Renewable Energy).
- National Planning Framework, Project Ireland 2040
- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended
- Climate Action Plan, 2024 and 2025
- Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply (November 2021)
- National Energy Security Framework (April 2022)
- National Energy and Climate Action Plan 2021-2030 (“NECP”)
- Ireland’s Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions 2024

- The National Adaptation Framework; Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland (June 2024)
- Electricity and Gas Sectoral Plan 2025
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030
- Eastern & Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031.

The legislation and policy documents essentially promote, and set targets for, transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society and support the development of associated infrastructure, including the development of the electricity transmission system, to support this transition (e.g., to accommodate more diverse flows), subject to environmental safeguards.

6.2. Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework ("NPF"), First Revision of the NPF and the National Development Plan ("NDP 2021-2030)

6.2.1. Project Ireland 2040 is the Government's long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all and to build a more resilient and sustainable future. The NPF and the NDP combine for Project Ireland 2040. The NPF sets out to deliver a spatial strategy through a set of National Strategic Outcomes ("NSO's"), including: 'Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society' which establishes a national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. The first revision of the NPF has been approved by both Houses of the Oireachtas, following the decision of the Government to approve the final revised NPF on 8th April, 2025. The 'First Revision' introduces regional renewable electricity capacity allocations for each of the three Regional Assemblies to be achieved by 2030 which for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Area is an additional 5,260MW. This is the minimum required to meet the 2030 emission reductions in the electricity sector.

6.2.2. The NPF recognises that Ireland's national energy policy is focussed on three pillars: (1) sustainability, (2) security of supply, and (3) competitiveness. The NPF recognises that in order to meet Regional Renewable Electricity Capacity Allocations and to ensure that the electricity can be both accepted on the national grid and

brought to demand users, the development and expansion of the electricity grid at a national and local level is required in a coordinated manner and that it is imperative that the national grid is developed and upgraded to accommodate increasing levels of demand and supply. It is a National Policy Objective of the NPF (*First Revision*) to:

"*Support the development and upgrading of the national electricity grid infrastructure, including supporting the delivery of renewable electricity generating development*." - NPO71.

6.3. National Development Plan

6.3.1. The NDP 2018-2027 sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the implementation of the National Planning Framework. The Plan recognises that energy supply is vital for the proper functioning of society and the economy and that ensuring the continued security of energy supply is a strategic investment priority at national level requiring investment in grid infrastructure, interconnection and storage. It also recognises that Ireland's energy system requires radical transformation and investment in electricity infrastructure if Ireland is to realise its objective of transitioning by 2050 to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy as detailed in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015, as amended, Climate Action Plan and the National Adaptation Framework.

6.4. Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended

6.4.1. The Act commits Ireland to the objective of becoming a carbon-neutral economy by 2050, reducing emissions by 51% by the end of the decade. Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021 amends the principal act such that Section 15(1) requires:

Section 15(1) of the Act, as amended states:

'A relevant body shall, in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with—

(a) the most recent approved climate action plan,

(b) the most recent approved national long term climate action strategy,

(c) the most recent approved national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans,

(d) the furtherance of the national climate objective, and

(e) the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State'

6.5. Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2024 ("CAP24") and 2025 ("CAP25")

6.5.1. Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015, as amended, Irelands national climate objective requires the State to transition to a resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of 2050. This national climate objective meets Irelands obligations under EU and international treaties, including the Paris Agreement (2015), the European Green Deal and the EU's objective to reduce GHG emissions by at least 51% by 2030 (compared to 2018) and achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

6.5.2. To meet its targets and obligations CAP 24 sets a course for Ireland to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net-zero no later than 2050. In terms of the electricity sector a 75% reduction in emissions based on 2018 levels is required by 2030 and CAP 24 provides that central to achieving this is the strategic increase in the share of renewable electricity to 80% by 2030 including ambitious targets of deploying 9GW of onshore wind, 8GW of solar power and at least 5GW from offshore wind projects. CAP 2025 was published on 15th April, 2025. It re-affirms the previous commitment to increase the share of renewable electricity generation to 50% by 2025 and 80% by 2030.

6.6. Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply (November 2021)

6.6.1. The Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply sets out a number of updates to national policy in the context of the Programme for Government commitments relevant to the electricity sector and includes explicit Government approval that (inter alia): '*it is appropriate for additional electricity transmission and distribution grid*

infrastructure, electricity interconnection and electricity storage to be permitted and developed in order to support the growth of renewable energy and to support security of electricity supply'.

6.7. National Energy Security Framework (April 2022)

6.7.1. The National Energy Security Framework provides an overarching and comprehensive response to Ireland's energy security needs in the context of the war in Ukraine. The Framework sets out the government's action in response to increased demand as the country emerged from the Covid-19 public health pandemic, coupled with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the associated sanctions on Russia, which brought new challenges for the security of energy supplies across Europe. The Framework responds to these challenges across three themes which includes ensuring security of energy supply.

6.8. National Energy and Climate Action Plan 2021-2030 ("NECP")

6.8.1. The updated NECP reflects Ireland and the European Union's increased ambition on energy and climate targets at the National and European level in a range of areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency and land-use, to enable the EU to meet its target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030. In line with the programme for Government it sets out key policies and measures including to: '*Develop, maintain and upgrade the electricity and gas networks to ensure that our energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand'*.

6.9. Ireland's Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions 2024

6.9.1. The National long-term Climate Action Strategy, entitled Ireland's Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions 2024, sets out indicative pathways, beyond 2030, towards achieving carbon neutrality for Ireland by 2050. The Strategy provides a pathway to a whole-of-society transformation and serves as a vital link between shorter-term Climate Action Plans and Carbon Budgets and the longer-term objective of the European Climate Law and Ireland's National Climate Objective.

6.10. **The National Adaptation Framework; Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland (June 2024)**

6.10.1. The most recent approved national adaptation framework, the National Adaptation Framework; Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland June 2024 (NAF) is Ireland's second statutory National Adaptation Framework (NAF) and was published on 5th of June 2024. The NAF and its successors do not identify specific locations or propose adaptation measures or projects in individual sectors, but sets out the context to ensure local authorities, regions and key sectors can assess the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change, implement climate resilience actions and ensure climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all local, regional and national policy making. The NAF identifies 13 (previously 12) priority sectors under 7 lead Departments that are required to prepare sectoral adaptation plans under the Climate Act in accordance with the Sectoral Planning Guidelines for Climate Change Adaptation which were published in 2018 and updated in 2024. The original 12 sectoral Plans prepared in 2019 and a new sectoral Plan for tourism are to be updated/prepared by end of Q3 2025. The following Electricity and Gas Sectoral Plan is relevant to the subject proposal.

6.11. **Electricity and Gas Sectoral Plan 2025**

6.11.1. This is the second Sectoral Climate Change Adaptation Pan for the Electricity and Gas Networks Sector and the Plan is designed to build long term resilience against the risks posed by climate change to the electricity and gas networks. The plan focuses on identifying vulnerabilities such as extreme weather and changing temperature patterns and how they could affect the electricity and gas networks. Specific measures to minimise the potential negative effects of climate change are outlined including strengthening sector resilience, avoiding maladaptive outcomes (such as increasing GHG emissions), supporting just resilience and maximising the co-benefits of adaptation actions (e.g use of nature-based solutions). The Plan also seeks to exploit opportunities and the potential benefits arising from climate change adaptation such as increased energy efficiency, the development of new renewable energy sources and innovative approaches to strengthen energy network resilience.

6.12. National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030 (NBAP)

6.12.1. Ireland's 4th NBAP sets the biodiversity agenda for the period 2023 – 2030. The NBAP has a list of Objectives which promotes biodiversity as follows, 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 Irelands contribution to international biodiversity initiatives.

6.13. Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region ("RSES") 2019-2031.

6.13.1. The RSES is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs). It seeks to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic and climate policies of Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and investment framework for the region. It includes a Spatial Strategy, a Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), an Economic Strategy, a Climate Action Strategy and an Investment Framework.

6.13.2. Chapter 10 'Infrastructure' of the RSES recognises that the sustainable growth of the Region requires the provision of services and infrastructure in a plan led manner to ensure that there is adequate capacity to support future development. In relation to 'Energy' it recognises that a "secure and resilient supply of energy is critical to a well-functioning region" and it supports the "development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and the development of enhanced electricity networks as well as new transmission infrastructure projects" which may be brought forward in the lifetime of the RSES under EirGrid's (2017) Grid Development Strategy.

It is a Regional Policy Objective (RPO) of the RSES to:

- **RPO 10.20** - Support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, and associated networks, to serve the existing and future

needs of the Region and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this Strategy…….

- **RPO 10.22** - Support the reinforcement and strengthening of the electricity transmission and distribution network to facilitate planned growth and transmission/ distribution of a renewable energy focused generation across the major demand centres to support an island population of 8 million people……
- **RPO 10.23** - Support EirGrid's Implementation Plan 2017 – 2022 and Transmission Development Plan (TDP) 2016 and any subsequent plans prepared during the lifetime of the RSES that facilitate the timely delivery of major investment projects subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the outcome of the planning process…….

6.14. **Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied) ("MCDP")**

6.14.1. The consolidated Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (Inc. Variations) is the operative plan. The proposed development site is located c.2km south of Dunboyne, which is a designated 'self-sustaining growth town' in the core strategy of the MCDP.

6.14.2. In 2026, Dunboyne had a population of 7,272, and has core strategy household allocation of 2,002 units under the MCDP and a population projection of 10,572 by 2027. The site is located on lands zoned 'RA - Rural Areas' with an objective *'To protect and promote in a balanced way, the development of agriculture, forestry and rural-related enterprise, biodiversity, the rural landscape, and the built and cultural heritage'.* The MCDP guidance states that 'utility structures' and 'sustainable energy installations' are permitted uses – Section 11.14.6, Chapter 11, Development Management Standards and Land use Zoning Objectives.

6.14.3. **Chapter 6** sets out the Infrastructure Strategy of the Plan and Section 6.15.4 relates to Energy Networks Infrastructure. The plan details the two main energy sources currently serving the County are electricity and gas. The plan details the importance of ensuring that the existing networks can be upgraded and can provide enhanced

capacity, which is essential to facilitate the future development of the County in line with the Core and Settlement Strategies. The plan also recognises the importance of the strengthening of the national grid to improve security of supply for the domestic, residential and enterprise market as well as attracting high-end enterprise which often require significant energy capacity and reliability.

It is a policy/objective of the MCDP to:

INF POL46 - To support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, and associated networks, to serve the existing and future needs of the County and to facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that may be brought forward during the lifetime of the plan including the delivery and integration, including linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner.

INF POL 47 - To co-operate and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in relation to power generation in order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future business and enterprise needs of the County.

INF POL 48 - To ensure that energy transmission infrastructure follows best practice with regard to siting, design and least environmental impact in the interest of landscape protection.

INF OBJ 50 - To seek the delivery of the necessary integration of transmission network requirements to facilitate linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner.

INF POL 32 - To ensure, through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan(s) and the associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation or revised plans with all relevant stakeholders, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the County.

INF OBJ 15 - To require the use of SuDS in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works for new developments (including extensions).

INF OBJ 16 - To ensure that all new developments comply with Section 3.12 of the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works V6 which sets out the requirements for new developments to allow for Climate Change.

INF POL 20 - To require that a Flood Risk Assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue in accordance with the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoECLG/OPW, 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to and from the potential development and shall consider the impact of climate change

INF OBJ 25 - To require the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques where appropriate, for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.

INF OBJ 29 - To strive to achieve 'good status' in all water bodies in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and to cooperate with the implementation of the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021.

Chapter 8 Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy includes:

HER POL 27 - To protect, conserve and enhance the County's biodiversity where appropriate.

HER POL 28 - To integrate in the development management process the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape features wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats (whether designated or not) and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate.

HER POL 31 - To ensure that the ecological impact of all development proposals on habitats and species are appropriately assessed by suitably qualified professional(s) in accordance with best practice guidelines – e.g. the preparation of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Natura Impact Statement (NIS), species surveys etc. (as appropriate).

HER OBJ 31 - To implement, in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, relevant stakeholders and the community, the objectives and actions of the County Meath Biodiversity Plan 2015-2020 and any revisions thereof.

HER OBJ 32 - To actively support the implementation of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 and any revisions thereof.

HER OBJ 33 - To ensure an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC) and in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

HER OBJ 34 - To protect and conserve the conservation value of candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas as identified by the Minister for the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives and to permit development in or affecting same only in accordance with the provisions of those Directives as transposed into Irish Law.

HER OBJ 35 - To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory avoidance or mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.

HER POL 37 - To encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where practically possible. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required.

HER POL 38 - To promote and encourage planting of native hedgerow species in new developments and as part of the Council's own landscaping works.

HER POL 39 To recognise the archaeological importance of townland boundaries including hedgerows and promote their protection and retention.

HER POL 40 - To protect and encourage the effective management of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees and to encourage the retention of mature trees and the use of tree surgery rather than felling, where possible, when undertaking, approving or authorising development.

HER POL 48 - To manage, enhance and protect the wetlands of the County having regard to the 'County Meath Wetland Survey 2010' and ensure that there is an appropriate level of assessment in relation to proposals which would involve draining, reclaiming or infilling of wetland habitats.

HER POL 52 - To protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the landscapes of the County in accordance with national policy and guidelines and the recommendations of the Meath Landscape Character Assessment (2007) in Appendix 5, to ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.

HER POL 53 - To discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amount of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

HER OBJ 49 - To ensure that the management of development will have regard to the value of the landscape, its character, importance, sensitivity and capacity to absorb change as outlined in Appendix 5 Meath Landscape Character Assessment and its recommendations.

HER POL 55 - To recognise the economic, social, environmental and physical value of Green Infrastructure.

HER OBJ 60 - To encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

6.14.4. Chapter 11 includes for Development Management Standards. Section 11.8.4. 'Energy Networks' details the criteria set out in Section 11.8.1. will be taken into account in the assessment of energy developments, which includes:

DM OBJ 76: In the assessment of individual energy development proposals, the Council will take the following criteria into account:

• The proper planning and sustainable development of the area;

• The environmental and social impacts of the proposed development;

• Traffic impacts including details of haul routes;

• Impact of the development on the landscape, (please refer to Appendix 5 Landscape Character Assessment);

• Impact on protected Views and Prospects, (please refer to Appendix 10 Protected Views and Prospects); Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Chapter 11

• Impact on public rights of way and walking routes, (please refer to Appendix 12 Public Rights of Way);

• Connection to the National Grid (where applicable);

• Mitigation features, where impacts are inevitable;

• Protection of designated areas - NHAs, SPAs and SACs, areas of archaeological potential and scenic importance;

• proximity to structures that are listed for protection, national monuments, etc. (Please refer to Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Appendices 6-9 inclusive for further details);

• Cumulative Impact of proposal.

Section 11.4.4 Trees and Hedgerows

DM OBJ 11: Existing trees and hedgerows of biodiversity and/or amenity value shall be retained, where possible.

Section 11.5.13 Boundary Treatments

DM POL 9: To support the retention of field boundaries for their ecological/habitat significance, as demonstrated by a suitably qualified professional. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same boundary type will be required.

6.14.5. In Map 8.3 ‘Natural Heritage Designations', the site is located c. 2km north of the pNHA Royal Canal 002103. Map 8.6 details the ‘views & prospects’ of the MCDP,

and the proposed development is not considered to be within the viewshed of any views/prospects. The R157 and R147 are identified as a 'strategic corridors' on Map 9.2.

7.0 Natural Heritage Designations

7.1. The nearest sites are:

- Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (001398) – 2.1 south
- pNHA Royal Canal (002103) – 2km south
- pNHA Rye Water Valley/Carton (002103) – 2.1 km south
- pNHA Liffey River Valley (000128) - 3.3km south
- pNHA Grand Canal (002104) – 7km south
- pNHA Lugmore Glen (001212) – 14.6km south
- pNHA Slade of Saggart and Crooksling Glen (000211) – 14.6km south

8.0 Planning Assessment

8.1. Context

Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the application, and inspected the site, I consider that the main issues in the planning assessment relate to the following matters:

- Procedure
- Principle of development, Planning Policy, and Legislation
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Biodiversity
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Water and Flood risk
- Access, Roads and Traffic

- Noise, Vibration and Residential Amenity
- Public Health/Fire Risk/Emergency Response
- Other Matters
- Conditions recommended by the Planning Authority (Development Contributions/Community Fund)

Issues raised in respect of EIA are addressed in section 9 of this report. Issues raised in respect of appropriate assessment are addressed in section 10 of this report. Issues arising in respect of Water Framework Directive are addressed in Section 11.

8.2. Procedure

Pre-application consultation ABP-320535-24

8.2.1. Following a pre-application consultation in ABP-320535-24 for a proposed development of a 110kV/38kV/20kV/MV substation, the Commission decided that the development would fall within the scope of section 182A of the Act and would be strategic infrastructure.

8.2.2. In relation to procedural matters, I note the proposed development at the planning application stage is not as per that indicated in the pre-application consultation stage. The pre-application consultation stage included for an entrance located to the northwestern area of the site. The subject application has made provision for an entrance to the northeastern area of the site. I note that this has resulted in a change to the application red line from that outlined at the pre-application stage.

8.2.3. I note there is no explicit requirement under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that development subject of an application matches that indicated in the pre application consultation and there is no clear basis that the application be invalidated on this basis. This is an issue to which the Commission may wish to give consideration.

Design Flexibility

8.2.4. Observers have raised concerns in relation to the application being characterised by excessive design flexibility, a lack of project definition, with reliance on future decisions by third parties, and deficiencies undermining environmental assessment, public participation and the Aarhus Convention. The applicant in their response to submissions has outlined that the submissions mirror objections made in relation to a SID proposal for the Ballyloo Electricity Substation in County Carlow (ACP Case Ref's. 323860 and 321858), which involved materially different characteristics, including alternative voltage ranges and switchgear types, extensive underground grid connections, and direct integration with multiple permitted and proposed solar developments. The applicant outlines the subject proposal relates to a 110 kV/ 38 kV MV Gas Insulated switchgear substation, with no alternative voltages, no alternative switchgear technologies and no optional routing or layout parameters proposed. It is stated no reliance is placed on future decisions by third parties to determine fundamental characteristics, nor is permission sought in an open-ended form.

8.2.5. The proposal comprises the construction of a 110 kV/ 38 kV/ Medium Voltage (MV) electrical substation, which will loop into the existing transmission Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade 110 kV circuit. This will involve the diversion of the existing 110 kV Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade overhead line to connect to the new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM). From the details and plans submitted and the public notices, I am satisfied that the parameters and project elements of the proposal are clearly set out, and that the proposal does not include for any excessive design flexibility or range of alternatives in relation to project characteristics, or its routing. I also note the documentation and assessments submitted are based on the subject proposal before the Commission. In addition, any decision made in relation to the proposal will fall under the remit of the Commission, and the proposal is not reliant on any future decisions by third parties to determine its characteristics. On the basis of the above, I am satisfied that that project parameters, as set out, would not result in the undermining of environmental assessments, the public participation process or Aarhus Convention.

Project Split

8.2.6. Observers have also raised concerns in relation to project splitting, with a failure to assess cumulative impacts with permitted and proposed solar farm developments, the proposal and associated infrastructure. It is further outlined no EIAR has assessed impacts. The applicant in their response to submissions outlines the proposal is a standalone electricity transmission and distribution substation, and it does not form part of a single integrated development requiring a combined application. It is stated there is no associated linear grid connection of strategic scale, no integration with multiple generation project, no reliance on future or separate consents to render the development operational, and that potential cumulative effects have been assessed in the PECR.

8.2.7. I note the recent permission in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 for works to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad 110kV overhead line (OHL) which includes for the current subject site, in which the PA determined that an EIA was not required. The permitted development included for the existing northwestern mast on the current subject site to be retained, the existing southeastern mast to be replaced, and the existing pole set onsite to be replaced.

8.2.8. Having regard to the nature of the subject proposed development, entailing a standalone electricity transmission and distribution substation, I am of the view that the proposal does not constitute a project split under the EIA Directive. EIA Screening is addressed in Section 10 of this report. In addition, potential cumulative impacts are assessed in the relevant sections of this report.

Public Consultation

8.2.9. Observers have raised concerns in relation to the lack of consultation, detailing no community consultation was held. In relation to consultation, details submitted by the applicant outline a pre-application meeting was held with Meath County Council (MCC) on 11 November 2025. I note the application has been subject to public notices. I consider that the approach undertaken aligns with statutory requirements in terms of the application being accompanied by copies of public notices and includes the website where documentation can be accessed.

Plans and Particulars

8.2.10. MCC in their submission note the gross floor space for the proposal as per the application form (1749.9m2) does not correlate with that stipulated in public notices (5650m2) and it is considered the applicant provide a schedule of proposed works areas for clarity. I note that the figure of 5,650m2 relates to the substation compound and does not relate to the gross floor space (1749.9m2), which is detailed in the application form. No further assessment is therefore required.

8.3. Principle of development, Planning Policy and Legislation

8.3.1. Section 15 of Climate Action & Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, Section 15(1) of the Act, as amended states: 'A relevant body shall, in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with—

(a) the most recent approved climate action plan,

(b) the most recent approved national long term climate action strategy,

(c) the most recent approved national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans,

(d) the furtherance of the national climate objective, and

(e) the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State

8.3.2. As a relevant body, An Coimisiun Pleanala is required to exercise its function in a manner consistent with the applicable climate objectives, in so far as is practicable, and I have set out the following consideration to enable the Commission make their decision within that framework.

8.3.3. As outlined in respect of policy at Section 5 above, CAP 2025 was published on 15th April, 2025 and re-affirms the previous commitment in CAP 2024 to increase the share of renewable electricity generation to 50% by 2025 and 80% by 2030. There is clear support for the development of the national electricity grid infrastructure within this context. Ireland's long-term Climate Action Strategy, entitled Ireland's Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions 2024, sets out indicative

pathways, beyond 2030, towards achieving carbon neutrality for Ireland by 2050. The Strategy provides a pathway to a whole-of-society transformation and serves as a vital link between shorter-term Climate Action Plans and Carbon Budgets and the longer-term objective of the European Climate Law and Ireland's National Climate Objective. The National Adaptation Framework; Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland (June 2024), the most recent approved national adaptation framework, the National Adaptation Framework; Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland June 2024 (NAF) is Ireland's second statutory National Adaptation Framework (NAF) and was published on 5th of June 2024. The NAF sets out the context to ensure local authorities, regions and key sectors can assess the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change, implement climate resilience actions and ensure climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all local, regional and national policy making. The NAF identifies 13 (previously 12) priority sectors under 7 lead Departments that are required to prepare sectoral adaptation plans under the Climate Act in accordance with the Sectoral Planning Guidelines for Climate Change Adaptation which were published in 2018 and updated in 2024 with 13 sectoral Plans prepared in 2025 including an Electricity and Gas Sectoral Plan. It is noted that the furtherance of the national climate objective is a central tenet of the above referenced Plans and strategies as is the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State. I will address the local policy context in the following section, but I would refer to the conclusion therein that the proposal would comply with the relevant policy provisions in relation to energy networks infrastructure for Meath.

8.3.4. As set out above, permission is sought for the construction of a 110 kV/ 38 kV/ Medium Voltage (MV) electrical substation and associated infrastructure. There is a lack of capacity at existing transmission substations and transmission circuits to supply the increased demand that the Distribution System Operator has forecasted across the country. The purpose of the proposal is to add capacity to the network and improve distribution security of supply for the surrounding areas, which includes in relation to the proposed expansion of the Irish Rail Dart+ West electrification programme, which aims to modernise and improve existing rail services in the Greater Dublin Area. The proposal will also feed Dart stations and enable existing 38 kV stations to be transferred to the new substation.

8.3.5. Existing policy at the national level seeks to support the development and expansion of the electricity grid, to achieve climate target objectives and ensure for continued security of energy supply. The NPF in its National Strategic Outcomes includes to 'transition Ireland to a carbon neutral and climate Resilient Society', and includes in its first revision National Policy Objective 071 to '*support the development and upgrading of the national electricity grid infrastructure'.* The proposal is therefore supported at a national policy level.

8.3.6. At a regional level, the RSES for the for the Eastern and Midlands Region supports the development of enhanced electricity supplies (RPO 10.20), the reinforcement and strengthening of the electricity transmission and distribution network to facilitate planned growth (RPO 10.22), and EirGrid's Implementation Plan 2017 (RPO 10.23).

8.3.7. At a local level, the MCDP recognises the importance of strengthening the national grid to improve security of supply for the domestic, residential and enterprise market. The plan also details the importance of ensuring that the existing networks can be upgraded and can provide enhanced capacity, which is essential to facilitate the future development of the County. INF POL46 seeks to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity supplies, and INF POL 47 aims to co-operate and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future business and enterprise needs of the County. The site is located on lands zoned 'RA - Rural Areas' within the MCDP, where 'utility structures' are a permitted use. MCC have outlined that the proposed development is acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with planning and environmental considerations. I am satisfied that the proposed development aligns with the relevant outlined CDP policies.

8.3.8. Having regard to the foregoing and the national, regional and local planning policy which supports the development and expansion of the electricity grid, with the proposal seeking to add capacity to the network and improve distribution, I consider the principle of the proposed development is acceptable, subject to the consideration of proper planning and sustainable development, and DM OBJ 76 of the MCDP. This assessment and planning and environmental considerations are addressed in the following sections of my report.

Development Plan Policy, Objectives, and Material Contravention

8.3.9. Observers have outlined that the proposed development conflicts with multiple Meath CDP objectives, including those relating to: Protection of rural character and landscape; Avoidance of over-concentration of infrastructure; Safeguarding water quality and Natura 2000 sites; Protection of biodiversity and green infrastructure; Community well-being and participatory planning. It is further stated that the proposal undermines CDP biodiversity policies, and while the MDP supports renewable energy, this support is explicitly conditional on compliance with environmental protection and proper planning.

8.3.10. The following is considered relevant in relation to any material contravention of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied):

8.3.11. As highlighted at 8.3.7, it is considered that the proposed development aligns with the relevant CDP policies in terms of energy networks infrastructure. In terms of rural character and landscape, the proposed development is located within the Landscape Character Area South East Lowlands in the CDP, which has a medium/moderate Landscape Sensitivity. In relation to capacity, the CDP Landscape Character Assessment outlines the South East Lowlands has a medium potential capacity to accommodate overhead cables and substations, due to the enclosed nature of the drumlin landscape which offers good opportunities to screen such development or reduce its prominence. Having regard to the design, scale, extent and nature of the scheme, the site and landscape context, and the demonstration of the visual and landscape effects in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), I consider the receiving environment has the capacity to accommodate and absorb the proposed scheme at this location from a visual and landscape perspective, and the proposal would not result in a significant impact on the visual amenities of the area, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures. I therefore consider that the proposed development is acceptable from a visual and landscape perspective and aligns with relevant CDP policies and objectives including HER POL 52, HER OBJ 49, and DM OBJ 76. These matters are addressed in the Landscape and Visual Impact section of this report. In addition, I note RD OBJ 9 seeks *'To promote the retention of field boundaries and mature trees and hedgerows to protect the rural*

character of the area'. It is considered that the wording of the objective is general, in seeking to promote the retention of field boundaries, mature trees and hedgerows, and it is noted that the proposal will include for the very limited removal of field boundaries, mature trees and hedgerows (27 metres) to facilitate the creation of a new vehicular entrance. Aside from the proposed roadside entrance area of the site, the design of the proposal ensures that all existing field boundaries within the site will be retained and protected, with all existing field patterns being maintained, and I therefore consider that the proposed layout would protect the areas rural character, in terms of the retention of field boundaries, mature trees and hedgerow. Having regard to the design and layout of the proposal, I do not consider that the proposal would seriously prejudice or contravene this objective.

8.3.12. In relation to water, the proposed development has the potential to impact on water quality, including on watercourses onsite and downstream. A Flood Risk Assessment of the proposal has been carried out, with the proposed development located within Flood Zone C where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding). The proposed surface water management system will allow for the drainage of surface waters from pluvial sources, and is designed to ensure that no flooding of the proposed site occurs for the critical storm with a 1 in 100-year return period, including a 30% allowance for climate change. On the basis of the information submitted, I am satisfied that sufficient detail has been provided and consider that the risk of flooding to the proposed development is low, nor will it increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. I also consider that significant impacts on water would not arise, with the potential for significant effects arising on water from contamination, sediment loading will be mitigated by measures outlined in the PECR and CEMP. I am also of the view the proposed development, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures, complies with WFD Objectives. I therefore consider that the proposed development is acceptable from water perspective and aligns with relevant CDP policies and objectives including INF POL 32, INF OBJ 15, INF OBJ 16, INF POL 20, INF OBJ 25, INF OBJ 29 and DM OBJ 76. These matters are addressed in the Water section of this report.

8.3.13. In terms of biodiversity and green infrastructure, the proposal includes for the loss of agricultural grassland habitat, and the limited loss of hedgerow (27 metres) to facilitate access to the site. Aside from the proposed entrance area to the site, all existing field boundaries will be retained onsite. There will be extensive replanting by way of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement measures, with an area of approx. 5000m2 (0.5Ha) being planted with a native woodland mix of tree species, and there will also be an extensive area of grassland provided within the site. There is a potential for impacts on biodiversity, and I note these potential impacts would be mitigated by measures outlined in the PECR and CEMP. The PECR and CEMP also includes for water quality controls. I also note the site's location relative to Natura 2000 sites. Having regard to the nature, scale and siting of the scheme, I am satisfied that significant effects on biodiversity would not arise subject to the implementation of the outlined mitigation measures and conditions.

8.3.14. CDP policy HER POL 37 seeks *'To encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where practically possible. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required'*. It is considered that the policy provision wording is general, seeking to encourage the retention of hedgerows and boundary treatments, where practically possible. In this case, with electrical infrastructure existing onsite, and the site being bounded by hedgerow and trees to roadside, it is considered that the creation of an entrance into the site is unavoidable. The facilitation of the proposed entrance will result in the very limited loss of hedgerow and trees. To ensure the proposal is consistent with the policy, and to mitigate the limited hedgerow and tree loss proposed, I consider that replacement hedgerow and tree planting, consisting of the existing hedgerow and tree species type to be removed, be carried out to the roadside entrance area of the site at the proposed post and rail fence locations. This can be addressed by way of condition, in the event of a grant. Subject to the implementation of this condition, I do not consider that the proposal would contravene the policy provision.

8.3.15. CDP Objective DM OBJ 11 details *'Existing trees and hedgerows of biodiversity and/or amenity value shall be retained, where possible'*. While I consider that the

existing hedgerows, trees to be removed to facilitate the entrance are of biodiversity value (of local importance), given the details outlined in relation to HER POL 37, it is considered that the creation of an entrance at this location is unavoidable, and it is not possible to retain existing hedgerows, trees along a very limited area of the roadside. Having regard to the nature of the proposal, I do not consider that the proposal would contravene this objective.

8.3.16. DM POL 9 seeks to *'To support the retention of field boundaries for their ecological/habitat significance, as demonstrated by a suitably qualified professional. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same boundary type will be required'*. As highlighted for HER POL 37, it is considered that the creation of an entrance into the site at this location is unavoidable, and I consider that replacement mitigation planting be carried out, which can be addressed by way of condition. Subject to the implementation of this condition, I do not consider that the proposal would contravene this objective.

8.3.17. I therefore consider that, subject to the implementation of the outlined mitigation measures and conditions, the proposed development is acceptable from a biodiversity and green infrastructure perspective and is consistent with relevant CDP policies and objectives including HER POL 27, HER POL 28, HER POL 31, HER OBJ 33, HER OBJ 34, HER OBJ 35, HER POL 37, HER POL 55, HER OBJ 60, DM OBJ 11, DM POL 9. The above issues are addressed in the Biodiversity and AA sections of this report.

8.3.18. In relation to community well-being and participatory planning, the proposal's objective is to add capacity to the network and improve distribution security of supply for the surrounding area, which in turn will benefit communities in the immediate and surrounding area. I therefore consider that the proposed development would support the community building strategy policies and objectives detailed the CDP, and aligns with CDP DM OBJ 76. These matters are addressed in the following sections of this report.

8.3.19. Having regard to the foregoing, it is considered that the proposed development would not materially contravene the listed policies or objectives of the CDP, would not result in a departure from a fundamental provision of the plan, nor would it seriously prejudice a policy or objective of the plan.

8.4. Landscape and Visual Impact

8.4.1. Observers detail that the proposal conflicts with Meath CDP 2022-2028 objectives relating to the protection of rural character and landscape, with concerns raised in relation to the visibility of the LCIM (Line Cable Interface Masts), at an approx. height of 86 metres. The MCC Report outlines an alternative boundary treatment to the proposed palisade fencing should be sought on the basis it would be visible to the public, and is inappropriate in this rural setting. The applicant in the response to submissions outlines the proposal site is located within a working rural landscape within the South East Lowlands Landscape Character Area, identified as being of moderate sensitivity and high landscape value. It is stated the presence of existing vegetation which will be largely retained and supplemented by planting, as illustrated in the Landscape Mitigation Plan, will successfully screen the proposal, once planting has been established, and the LVIA concludes that landscape and visual effects will be localised, limited in magnitude and mitigated. It is outlined the existing overhead line circuit will be only partially realigned, and the LCIM structures (approx.17m in height), replace, and partly rationalise, existing 110 kV overhead line infrastructure. It is further detailed the palisade fencing is required for safety and security reasons, and will be substantially screened by existing and new planting as depicted in photomontages.

8.4.2. In the MCDP Landscape Character Assessment, the site is located within the Landscape Character Type: 2.Lowland Areas, which covers the largest proportion of Meath. The site is located within the Landscape Character Area South East Lowlands (11), which has a Very High Landscape Value, a medium/moderate Landscape Sensitivity, and a Regional Landscape Importance. In relation to capacity, the Landscape Character Assessment outlines the South East Lowlands has a medium potential capacity to accommodate overhead cables and substations, due to the enclosed nature of the drumlin landscape which offers good opportunities

to screen such development or reduce its prominence. It is stated it has medium potential capacity to accommodate underground services as this LCA is not as archaeologically rich as other areas although the loss of landscape features such as hedgerows would need to be restored to reduce negative impacts. I note there are no scenic routes or viewpoints in the immediate vicinity of the site in the MCDP, and there are no cultural heritage structures in the immediate site vicinity, which have a potential to be impacted.

8.4.3. In terms of the LCA in the Fingal CDP 2023-2029, the site is located to the west of River Valley/Canal Landscape Type, which is attributed a High Landscape Value and High Landscape Sensitivity. In the LCA in the Kildare CDP 2023-2029, the site is located to the north of the Northern Lowland LCT, which has a low Landscape Sensitivity. The Kildare CDP includes for a designated scenic route and designated scenic views to the south of the proposal site, which relate to views of the Royal Canal, and the Rye Water/Carton Demesne/House/River Liffey. Given the separation distance of proposal site to these scenic routes/viewpoints and presence of existing screening, I consider there is no potential for such designations to be impacted.

8.4.4. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which includes for baseline photography has been carried out by Mott MacDonald and Macro Works. The report assesses the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development on the receiving environment, identifying an area across a 5km radius, with a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) outlined in Figure 12.8. The study is supported by viewpoints taken from various receptors within the study area. The viewpoints detail the extent of the proposed development visible within views.

8.4.5. In relation to construction phase landscape considerations, the LVIA outlines the primary impacts are deemed to be those associated with earthworks and site clearance. It is outlined impacts will be short term, and in combination with the Medium-low landscape sensitivity designation identified, the significance of construction stage impacts is deemed to be Moderate-slight within the site and its immediate surrounds, with the quality of effects being negative.

8.4.6. In relation to operational landscape effects, the LVIA outlines the magnitude of landscape effect is deemed to be Medium-low within the central study area (<500m). It is outlined on balance of the Medium-low landscape sensitivity of the site and the Medium-low magnitude of landscape effect within the central study area, the significance of operational stage impacts is deemed to be Moderate-slight within the site and its immediate surrounds, however, this quickly reduces to Slight and Imperceptible within the wider study area. The quality of the operational stage effects will be negative.

8.4.7. In relation to visual impacts, the LVIA outlines the significance of visual effects on receptors within the immediate and wider vicinity of the site (VP1-8), would range from Imperceptible/Neutral/Permanent, to Slight/Neutral-Negative/Permanent at the Post-mitigation stage. Mitigation measures to reduce impacts arising from the scheme are set out in Section 12.6.1 of the LVIA, and include retaining existing hedgerows within around the site, bolstering existing hedgerows, and new planting around the northern and eastern areas of the site as detailed in the Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan (Appendix 2.2).

Construction Stage

8.4.8. In relation to the construction stage, I note activities would be localised, temporary and standard for a development of this type. There will be impacts by way of visibility of construction activities and temporary construction compounds. Given the temporary nature and scale of such activities, I consider these will not negatively impact on the local or wider landscape, nor have an undue negative impact on the visual environment.

Operational Stage

8.4.9. In relation to the operational stage, I note the submitted ZTV as indicated in the LVIA indicates the main visual influence will arise within the central study area within c.1km of the site and this continues unabated for the full eastern portion of the study area. Theoretical visibility extends from about 2km to the south before it breaks for the River Liffey corridor, and re-emerges on the southern side of the Liffey. There is an absence of visibility to the northwestern extents of the study area.

8.4.10. The LVIA viewshed reference points entails local community views including those from roads in the immediate and wider site vicinity. I note in Table 12.6 Assessment of Visual Impact, the significance of effects from all viewpoints (VP1-VP8), aside from VP3, is deemed to be Imperceptible/Neutral/Permanent. I further note that the significance of effect (post mitigation) from Viewpoint 3, located from the L2220 local road adjacent the site, is deemed to be Slight/Neutral-Negative/Permanent. Given the proposed mitigation planting, intervening screening, and effect of distance, I consider visual effects arising from VP1-2, VP4-8 would be imperceptible/neutral, as demonstrated in LVIA. With the establishment of screen planting, I consider that the significance of effects arising from VP3 would range from moderate to slight.

8.4.11. Following an inspection of the site, the surrounding area and an examination of the information submitted including the visual aids, it is noted while the proposed scheme would be visible from a number of locations within the immediate and wider surrounding area, I consider the receiving environment, which is set within a landscape sensitivity rating of medium/moderate in the LCA, has the capacity to accommodate and absorb the proposed scheme at this location from a visual and landscape perspective.

8.4.12. Having regard to the scale, height and layout of the proposed development, the topography of the site and surrounding lands, the existing vegetation bounding the site area at a number of locations, the mitigation screen planting proposed, the network of hedgerows and treelines adjacent the surrounding road network, and the separation distances of substation and OHL infrastructure to residential development, I consider that the proposed scheme would not result in a significant impact on the visual amenities of the area. I therefore consider that the proposed development is acceptable from a visual and landscape perspective and aligns with relevant CDP policies including HER POL 52.

8.4.13. I also note the recent permission PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 for works to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad 110kV overhead line (OHL), which includes for permitted works within the current subject site. This includes for the northwestern mast onsite being retained, the southeastern mast onsite being replaced (with a replacement tower height of 20 metres maximum), and the existing pole set onsite being replaced. Given the nature of the subject proposal and its site

context, and the nature, scale and location of the development permitted in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103, set within a landscape sensitivity of medium/moderate, it is considered that subject to implementation of the outlined mitigation for the proposed development, it would not give rise to any significant cumulative landscape or visual effects with any existing or permitted developments onsite or in the area.

8.4.14. An observation has raised concerns in relation to the height of the LCIM structures. With these structures detailing a height of c.17m, I consider there is the potential for visual effects to arise at a number of residential receptors located within the immediate vicinity of the site. However, having regard to the separation distance of masts to residential receptors (with nearest receptor located c.112metres from a mast), I am of the opinion the proposed development would not give rise to any significant visual effects on these receptors. An observer has also raised concerns in relation to the proposals overlooking of a garden at the side/back of residence. I note the above ground floor level of the 110 kV GIS Substation building includes a GIS equipment room, with no windows to its elevations. Having regard to the separation distance of the building to residential receptors (nearest receptors located c.68-80 metres from the building), and the proposed elevations, I consider overlooking of residential receptor locations would not arise.

8.4.15. In relation to the alternative boundary treatment to proposed palisade fencing as sought by MCC, I note this is being sought for safety and security reasons by the applicant. I note that the fencing will be screened by existing and proposed new thicket planting, as demonstrated in the Landscape Mitigation Plan and photomontages, and I am satisfied that such treatment is appropriate, having regard to the nature of the development sought, and that it will not be visible from the public road.

8.5. **Biodiversity**

8.5.1. Section 8 of the submitted PECR includes for an assessment on biodiversity, with the application also accompanied by an AA Screening Report. Section 8 was informed by desk study and field surveys. Observers have raised concerns in relation to: the proposal impacts on birds, bats, the adequacy of the assessment undertaken, the removal of hedgerows, ecological risk, and the proposals conflict

with Meath CDP 2022-2028 objectives for the protection of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

Habitats

8.5.2. Habitats onsite include improved agricultural grassland, drainage ditches, hedgerows and depositing/lowland river. It is outlined the Oranstown Stream runs c.90m west and south of the proposed construction works, crosses the existing overhead line, and that the closest construction works will be 90m from this watercourse. No rare and protected flora species were identified in the desktop study as having been recorded within the 2km grid square surrounding the site. No invasive species were recorded onsite.

8.5.3. There are no NHA's within the site. I note the pNHA Royal Canal is located c.2km to the south, and the pNHA Rye Water Valley/Carton and Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC are located 2.1 km south of the site. The site has a hydrological connection to the pNHA Liffey River Valley, located c.3.3km to the south. Cappaghgreen Commonage wetland habitat (MIW_MH527), listed on the Map of Irish Wetlands, is located on the opposite side of the local road to the north of the proposal site. This is a wet grassland of local (moderate) conservation value.

8.5.4. It is submitted in the PECR that the loss of agricultural grassland habitat, which is species-poor, is not significant at any scale. There will be the loss of 27 metres of hedgerow, which is of local importance, to facilitate access to the site. There will be extensive replanting by way of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement measures, with an area of approx. 5000m2 (0.5Ha) being planted with a native woodland mix of tree species, which exceeds the woodland (hedgerow) loss. There will also be an extensive area of grassland provided within the site. Given the abundance of these habitats in the immediate and wider area, and their value, and with the implementation of mitigation measures to include replanting, I consider that significant effects arising on habitats unlikely.

8.5.5. Observers outline the proposal will remove/damage hedgerows, fragment linear habitats, weaken ecological connectivity, with the CDP identifying hedgerows, field boundaries and watercourses as critical components of County Meath green infrastructure network. I note there will be no loss of watercourses. I further note CDP policy and objectives in relation to trees, hedgerows and boundary treatments,

with policy HER POL 37 seeking to encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments and prevent loss and fragmentation, where practically possible, and where removal is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required. To ensure the proposal minimises habitat fragmentation and is consistent with CDP policy and objectives, and to mitigate the limited hedgerow loss proposed, I consider that replacement hedgerow planting be carried out to the roadside entrance area of the site at the proposed post and rail fence locations. This can be addressed by way of condition, in the event of a grant.

8.5.6. The PECR outlines given the hydrological connectivity to downstream aquatic habitats of ecological importance, there is potential for surface water run-off associated with site clearance, excavations, and stockpiled materials. It is outlined with the incorporation of good practise construction controls and standard control measures as outlined in Chapter 9 (Surface Water and Flooding), it is considered that any runoff impacts to aquatic habitats and fisheries downstream are likely to have an imperceptible effect. Having regard to the topography of the site and limited nature of excavations, subject to the implementation of the water protection mitigation measures set out in the PECR and CEMP, and the implementation of the surface water management system and dust suppression measures, I consider effects to aquatic species, wetlands, habitats or pNHAs unlikely.

Invasive species

8.5.7. While no invasive species were recorded onsite, it is outlined that a pre-construction survey for invasive species and an Invasive Species Management Plan will be carried out. Measures will include the marking of restricted areas, a Check, Clean, Dry protocol to be undertaken for equipment, machinery and vehicles entering and leaving the site, with fill required being from a licensed facility. I consider the above measures set out are satisfactory in terms of controlling the management and spread of invasive species.

Badgers

8.5.8. It is outlined noise and vibration associated with general construction works can affect badger setts at distances of up to 50m, and an active badger sett was identified 110m south of the southern site boundary. With the sett outside the 50m buffer (NRA Guidelines 2019) from general construction works, and as construction

works will typically be undertaken during normal daylight working hours and badgers are nocturnal animals, it is stated displacement from their foraging areas is unlikely to affect the local badger population. The loss of foraging habitat for badger has been assessed as negative, slight and permanent at a local scale. Mitigation measures include for pre-construction surveys being carried out for badgers with a range of measures to apply in the event of setts being identified, including works being set back from setts, and the timing of works. Measures will also include for excavations being covered overnight. Given the potential for badger species to arise within the proposal site during construction, I consider the mitigation as outlined appropriate, which can be addressed by way of condition. Having regard to the temporary nature of the works, the nature of the development, and subject to the implementation of mitigation measures, I consider the proposed development would not give rise to significant effects on faunal species by way of disturbance/displacement at construction the stage. The PECR outlines that the proposed security fencing may pose a barrier to commuting badgers at the operational stage, and that residual effects on non-volant mammals are likely to be imperceptible given extensive alternative habitat in the wider area. Given the extent of alternative habitat available in the area, I consider significant operational stage effects on faunal species unlikely.

Otter

8.5.9. The PECR outlines no conclusive evidence for the presence or activity of otter species was detected in field surveys. While I note the proposed works are set back from the onsite watercourse, drainage ditches exist onsite. However, given the temporary duration and scale of the proposed works, the mitigation outlined in relation to water quality, and the absence of evidence for the presence or activity of otter species, I consider that there will be no significant effects to otters by way of impacts on water quality, disturbance or displacement from the proposal.

Birds

8.5.10. Observers have raised concerns in relation to the loss of bird feeding and nesting areas, and that the environmental impact assessment on birds is inadequate, stating the study should be completed over a period of one year. Concerns are also outlined in relation to Kestrels, Merlins ,Snipe, Yellowhammers, Barn owls, sparrow. The

PECR outlines two male yellowhammer were recorded within the boundary of the proposed development during the walkover survey, which was an ad hoc survey carried out in one day. It is outlined the boundary hedgerows and scrub habitats support typical common breeding bird species, and should vegetation clearance be carried out during the nesting season (1st March-31st August), there is the potential for negative, slight and temporary impacts to nesting birds (including Yellowhammer). It is outlined the proposal is unlikely to result in the loss of important foraging habitat for birds, which is largely improved grazed agricultural grassland, which is not an important foraging habitat for yellowhammer. Mitigation will include for the removal of vegetation outside of the bird breeding season, with pre-construction nesting surveys and exclusion zones established where this period cannot be avoided. It is stated the biodiversity enhancement plan will include additional habitat for common woodland/ hedgerow nesting passerine species.

8.5.11. Having regard to the nature of the proposal and the existing habitats onsite, I consider that the survey details submitted are adequate to inform the assessment. I note the extent of habitat loss proposed, which includes for a limited loss of hedgerow, and I consider that the implementation of the outlined measures entailing the timing of vegetation removal and nest checks will ensure bird species are protected from harm. Having regard to the bird species and habitats recorded onsite and the abundance of suitable foraging habitat in the immediate and wider area, I also consider that any displacement possibly occurring during the construction and operational phases would not lead to any long-term impacts on any bird species. I further note the biodiversity enhancement measures proposed will benefit passerine species.

Bats

8.5.12. An observer details the grounds hold bats with Leislers bat, an endangered species identified on an observer's property last year. The PECR outlines one possible bat roost (tree) feature was recorded within the hedgerow on the site boundary, and this tree will not be disturbed by the proposal. It is outlined the small-scale loss of c. 27m of hedgerows will not result in a significant loss of foraging and commuting habitat for common bat species as they will continue to forage over gaps in hedgerows. In the absence of mitigation, this is assessed as negative, not significant and a permanent effect at a local scale. At the construction stage, lighting will be cowled and

directional to reduce light splay. At the operational stage, it is outlined that low level security lighting will be automatic and not permanent, triggered only when human access is required. It is outlined this lighting will be cowled and directional, will be consistent with the recommendations of Collins (2023), and result in an imperceptible effect.

8.5.13. While there will be a limited loss of foraging and commuting habitat available for bats, having regard to the extent of hedgerow habitat onsite, which is largely to be retained, and habitats in the immediate vicinity of the site, I consider that proposed development would not give rise to any significant effects on bats foraging or commuting habitat. As highlighted, to ensure the proposal minimises habitat fragmentation, replacement hedgerow planting can be carried out to the roadside areas of the site, which can be addressed by way of condition. Subject to the implementation of measures to control artificial lighting at construction and operational stages, I consider significant effects arising from the proposal on bat species activity unlikely.

Amphibian species

8.5.14. The PECR outlines the drainage ditch habitats may provide suitable breeding habitat for common frogs. Where construction works are proposed between the frog breeding season (1st February to 31st July inclusive), pre-construction surveys will be conducted to check for frog spawn, which can be relocated. Subject to the application of this measure, and the outlined water quality control measures, I consider significant effects arising from the proposal on reptile and amphibian species unlikely.

Cumulative effects

8.5.15. I note the recent permission PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 for works to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad 110kV overhead line (OHL), which includes for permitted works within the current subject site. This includes for the existing northwestern mast onsite being retained and being subject to foundation strengthening works and the repairing of damaged elements, the existing southeastern mast onsite being replaced (with a replacement tower height of 20 metres maximum), and the existing pole set onsite being replaced. Given the nature

of the subject proposal and its site context, and the nature, scale and location of the development permitted in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103, the mitigation measures outlined for the subject proposal and the mitigation measures detailed in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103, it is considered that subject to implementation of the outlined mitigation for the proposed development, it would not give rise to any significant cumulative effects on biodiversity with any existing or permitted developments onsite or in the area.

8.5.16. Having regard to the existing baseline, the PECR and CEMP submitted and the mitigation measures as set out, I am satisfied that the mitigation measures are capable of being successfully implemented. This is a relatively common construction project of relatively limited construction phase duration and I do not consider that the proposed development would have an undue effect on the biodiversity of the site or area at construction or operational phases.

8.6. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

8.6.1. Section 11 of the PECR includes for an Architecture, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage assessment, which was informed by data sources and a field inspection on 31st July 2025. The defined study area is detailed as being within 1km of the proposal. There are four known monuments within the study area, including recorded monuments ME053-005-Church, ME053-005001- Graveyard, ME053-003-Castle – motte, and ME053-004-Church. None of the monuments are within the proposed development and none have their zone of notification crossed. I note ME053-005001- Graveyard is the nearest monuments to the site at a distance of 0.7km. In terms of architectural heritage, there are no protected structures or structures on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) within the study area.

8.6.2. Section 11.5 outlines the proposed development will avoid direct impact on known archaeological features during construction, however, there remains a potential for impact on unknown sub-surface archaeology. Mitigation measures set out in Section 11.7 for the construction stage include for: monitoring of ground investigation works performed under licence from the National Monuments Service; prior to construction a combination of advance archaeological geophysical survey and advance archaeological test trenching will be undertaken under license; archaeological monitoring of construction groundworks being undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeologist; Should archaeological features be discovered, a strategy will be

proposed to the County Archaeologist and NMS to preserve the site in situ, and where this cannot be achieved, a programme of full archaeological excavation will be proposed. The PECR concludes that subject to the implementation of the archaeological mitigation measures during construction, no significant residual impacts on archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage are predicted.

8.6.3. The planning authority has not raised any concerns in relation to the scheme from an archaeological or cultural heritage perspective. Given the information outlined in the PECR, I consider the mitigation measures set out including for archaeological monitoring and testing to be appropriate. Any potential for impacts on unknown archaeological monuments or features, can be addressed by way of the implementation of mitigation measures, and this can addressed by way of condition. I am satisfied, subject to appropriate conditions, that the proposed development is satisfactory from an archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage perspective and that no significant effects are likely to arise.

Cumulative effects

8.6.4. Given the nature of the subject proposal and its site context, and the nature, scale and location of the development permitted in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103, as referenced in the Landscape and Visual Impact section of this report, the mitigation measures outlined for the subject proposal and the archaeological mitigation measures detailed in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103, it is considered that subject to the implementation of the outlined mitigation for the proposed development, it would not give rise to any significant cumulative effects on archaeology with any existing or permitted developments onsite or in the area.

8.7. Water and Flood risk

8.7.1. The PA has recommended a condition to include for a revised surface water drainage system that is SuDS compliant. UÉ outline the applicant has not included a proposal for a new water / wastewater connection. Observers outline concerns in relation to hydrological risk, and the proposals conflict with CDP objectives relating to the safeguarding of water quality.

8.7.2. A Surface Water Resources and Flooding assessment is carried out in Section 9 of the PECR. A desktop study has been undertaken to inform the assessments. A

250m radius from the proposed boundary has been applied for the study area. The proposal is in the Liffey and Dublin Bay (ID 09) WFD catchment, Liffey_SC_100 (ID 09_1) sub catchment and Liffey_160 river sub basin, with two watercourses within the study area. The Oranstown Stream runs along the application site boundary as outlined in Figure 9.1, and approx. 90m to the south and west of from the proposed construction works. It is outlined the watercourse drains into the River Liffey approx. 4.6km downstream of the site. Drainage ditches onsite drain to the Oranstown Stream. The PECR outlines the slope and vegetation of ditches to the roadside suggest they retain and infiltrate water, and the Ellickstown Stream is located 168m from the application site boundary, with the site downhill from this stream.

8.7.3. The PECR outlines at construction stage, there is a potential for effects on surface water quality by way of sediment run-off, spillages, accidental spillages or leaks of hydrocarbon / chemical contaminants or concrete, release of cement, and impacts on drainage patterns, which could impact the freshwater environment. It is outlined no instream works are proposed to the Oranstown Stream, with works to be set back from drainage ditches. At the operational stage, surface water runoff from the substation compound will discharge to the southern boundary field ditch, which connects to the Oranstown Stream. The PECR outlines the drainage design incorporates SuDS principles to manage the quantity and quality of runoff during rainfall events, with Appendix 3.1 including a Surface Water Management Plan. Runoff from the substation compound will be collected via a gravity drainage system and managed using an attenuation pond/retention basin with a flow control device on the outlet. Bunds onsite will be pumped and treated via oil/water separator pumps and discharged into the proposed surface water drains. Filter drains will be used to treat runoff from the access road. With embedded mitigation, the PECR anticipates that no effects are likely on surface water quality of the water system within the development site.

8.7.4. Mitigation measures set out in section 9.7 for the construction stage include for the appointment of an Environmental Clerk of works, timing of works, the implementation of a CEMP, emergency response plan and resource and waste management plan, sediment and pollution controls including the installation of slit fencing and traps, daily inspections of sediment measures, establishment of buffer zones to drainage ditches, and fuel storage measures. The operational stage surface water drainage

system will include for silt traps and filter drains. I note that the construction works are temporary in nature, and are removed from the Oranstown Stream, with work buffer zones to be established from drainage ditches onsite. Having regard to the site topography, I am satisfied that the mitigation measures as set out are robust and capable of being successfully implemented. The measures align with best practice and subject to their implementation, I consider that significant effects arising on the water environment at the construction and operational stages are unlikely, and that the proposal would align with the relevant objectives set out in the CDP in relation to the protection of water quality.

8.7.5. In response to the PA's recommended condition relating to the requirement for a revised surface water drainage system that is SuDS compliant, I note the applicant has outlined that the drainage strategy and Surface Water Management Plan provides a SuDS compliant system consistent with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study. I consider that the submitted SuDS and onsite drainage measures as set out in section 8.7.3 above, the Flood Risk Assessment undertaken, and in the drawings submitted, are satisfactory.

8.7.6. UÉ outline the applicant has not included a proposal for a new water / wastewater connection, and recommends that the applicant enters into a connection agreement. The applicant in response outlines that the development does not require connection to the public wastewater network, with foul effluent being managed via an on-site holding tank to be emptied by a licenced contractor. In relation to water supply, the applicant outlines the potable water supply is proposed to be sourced via a new connection from the existing public watermain located within Jarretstown Lane, and a Confirmation of Feasibility (CoF) was received from UE on 12 November 2025 (pre-connection enquiry reference CDS25007947), which I note is included in the application documentation. I note this states a water connection is feasible without infrastructure upgrade. I consider a service connection to the public water supply can be addressed by way of a condition in any grant.

Flood Risk Assessment

8.7.7. A Flood Risk Assessment of the proposal has been carried out in the PECR in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities. Potential sources of flood risk include the Oranstown Stream

which crosses the application site boundary. It is outlined the OPW River and Fluvial present day flood extents do not extend within the application site boundary, as indicated on the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management mapping in Figure 9.2. Other potential flood risk sources include pluvial surface water and runoff, and it is outlined no past surface water flood events have been recorded at the site as recorded on OPW Flood Maps. The development is located within Flood Zone C where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding).

8.7.8. The proposed surface water management system will allow for the drainage of surface waters from pluvial sources, and is designed to ensure that no flooding of the proposed site occurs for the critical storm with a 1 in 100-year return period, including a 30% allowance for climate change. With the drainage design resulting in land draining at a rate comparable to the baseline scenario, the assessment outlines the proposal will not increase flood risk in the area, and the proposal is not considered to be at risk from pluvial sources in the site vicinity. With the site located within Flood Zone C, the FRA concludes the proposal does not require a justification test.

8.7.9. The PA has not raised any issues in relation to the proposal from a flood risk perspective. On the basis of the information submitted, and the site being located within Flood Zone C, the proposed development is considered appropriate from a flood risk perspective. I am satisfied that sufficient detail has been provided and consider that the risk of flood risk to the proposed development is low, nor will it increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Cumulative effects

8.7.10. Given the nature of the subject proposal and its site context, and the nature, scale and location of the development permitted in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103, as referenced in the Landscape and Visual Impact section of this report, the mitigation measures outlined for the subject proposal and the mitigation measures detailed in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 in relation to the protection of waters, it is considered that subject to implementation of the outlined mitigation for the proposed development, it would not give rise to any significant cumulative effects on water with any existing or permitted developments onsite or in the area.

8.8. **Access, Roads and Traffic**

8.8.1. Section 13 of the PECR considers the potential effects arising from the proposal on traffic and transport. The methodology for the assessment is set out in 13.3, with the assessment undertaken in line with guidance set out in Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (TII, 2014).

Traffic Generation, Road Capacity

8.8.2. Traffic generation at the operational stage will be negligible, associated with maintenance visits, with an estimated three vehicles accessing the site per week. It is estimated that construction personnel during the peak construction period will be 45, and assuming vehicle occupancy of 1.25 persons, it will result in 36 vehicles visiting the site on a daily basis. It is estimated the peak daily number of HGVs at construction stage will be 30 (60 HGV movements), with c. 2800 HGV vehicle movements anticipated, which will be front loaded in the early stage of construction. Peak construction personnel and HGV movements are estimated to generate a total of 132 additional vehicle movements per day during the peak of construction, which is estimated to last approximately two months. Jarretstown Lane (L2220) links to the R157 via the L2218 c.2km to the west, with the R149 c.3km east of the site, with both routes accessing the M3, and it is considered that peak additional movements would not result in a significant effect on the local road network during construction. Mitigation measures at the construction stage include for the adoption of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP), to include for signage, wheel washing facilities, and monitoring of the construction stage. The PCER outlines there are no significant residual traffic and transport impacts predicted during the construction phase.

8.8.3. The PA Transport Department has outlined there is no objection to the proposed development subject to recommended conditions, which includes for a TMP to be submitted for agreement, and to incorporate mitigation proposals to address potential conflicts between arriving and departing HGVs and local traffic on the L-2220 and adjoining local roads. An observer has also raised concerns in relation to increased traffic generation and road obstruction arising, and impacts on pedestrians.

8.8.4. I note the adjacent and surrounding local roads accessing the site entail narrow two-way single carriageway roads. Given the narrow width of the local road network, I consider that a traffic management plan arrangement should be outlined for the L-2220 and adjoining local roads at the construction stage, in the interests of road and pedestrian safety. Having regard to the details on file and the sites rural location, I do not consider there is a deficiency in the network that would render it unsuitable to carry the additional load required during the construction phase of the proposed development, subject to the above traffic management measure, which can be attached by way of condition in the event of a grant. Additional traffic movements associated with the construction phase would be short-term in duration, and subject to the above measure, would not, in my view, lead to any undue congestion or hazard. I consider the level of trip generation at operational stage would not result in any material intensification given the low levels of traffic associated with the proposal and low levels of traffic which occur in such rural locations. Subject to the implementation of mitigation measures, as outlined in the PECR and CEMP, and conditions including for a TMP, the applicability of which is considered standard for such developments, I consider issues of traffic and safety can be adequately addressed.

Haul Routes, Abnormal Loads

8.8.5. The proposed haul route intended to serve the site is from the R149 (east of the site) or the R157 (northwest of the site), both of which are off the M3 Motorway. The PECR outlines specific traffic management requirements for the delivery of abnormal loads will be identified through the completion of an Abnormal Load Assessment to be undertaken by the appointed Contractor(s) and agreed with in advance of construction with the appropriate authorities. The PA has recommended by way of a condition that the TMP incorporate details of the road network/haulage routes and an abnormal load assessment for the proposal. With the M3 part of the access route for construction of the scheme, TII have requested regard is had to the povisions of Chapter 3 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines. TII also outlines to safeguard the operation of the national road network that any potential impacts of the proposal are adequately mitigated. In the event of a permission, it is recommended a condition include a revised TMP, to be submitted for the written

agreement of the PA subject to the written agreement of TII, to include details demonstrating: compliance of proposed works to national road network TII publications; demonstration of consultation with TII Bridge Management Section to ensure that national road structures are not adversely affected; consultations with relevant entities, including in relation to the haul route to ascertain operational requirements; with any damage to the national road pavement due to construction traffic being rectified.

8.8.6. As highlighted, it is estimated that trip generation arising from the proposal would result in an increase of 1% on the R157. I consider that the submission of a TMP addressing the aforementioned requirements in relation to haul routes, an abnormal load assessment and relevant consultations, are standard measures for development of this type, would ensure that the strategic function of the national road network is maintained, and can be addressed by way of condition.

Site Access, Entrance

8.8.7. The PA Transport Department report outlines in relation to site access, the proposal is located on the L-2220 inside the 60kph speed limits, and the applicant proposes sightlines of 90 metres in both directions from a setback of 2 metres from the new entrance, and setback distance should be 2.4 metres in accordance with TII document DN-GEO-03060. It is outlined the sightlines drawing shows the existing hedge is obstructing the required sightlines and no works relating to the hedge have been identified. Condition no. 4 of the PA Report details the sightlines required within the red line, and for landowner consents to be submitted. The applicant in their response to submissions outlines the drawings submitted indicate the sightline visibility splays and the required setback of 2.0m, have been undertaken in accordance TII standards document DN-GEO-03060 (May 2023). It is outlined in the drawing extract provided, a short section of the visibility envelope marginally overlaps the existing hedge with regard to creation of the proposed entrance, and that any such hedge obstructing visibility will be removed/cut back to create the entrance – with the sightline drawing illustrating that no hedge removal is specifically required to achieve sightlines. I note the applicants response to submissions further outlines that a 27m section of hedgerow will be required to be removed to facilitate sufficient sightlines. The applicant further notes the neighbouring trees indicated on

drawing represents the canopies of these trees and visibility sightlines would still be available at the required heights.

8.8.8. I note the 'x' Distance(m) demonstrated in the applicants drawing aligns with DN-GEO-03060. I further note the sightline drawing 229101684-MMD-00-XX-DR-C-0150 submitted details the existing hedge and vegetation partially encroach on the required sightlines and no works relating to the hedge have been identified on plans, and this includes for hedging outside of the site boundary red line. However, from a site inspection, I note very limited and minimal trimming is required to achieve sightlines, and where the existing vegetation indicated on the drawing represents tree canopies, visibility sightlines are available. On the basis of same, I consider the required sightlines can be provided. In the interests of traffic safety, a revised sightline drawing should be submitted, indicating hedgerow trimming within the site red line, and this can be addressed by way of condition in any grant.

8.8.9. The PA report outlines the proposed development entrance is opposite an existing domestic entrance and would give rise to risk of conflicting movements. It is outlined the proposed new entrance shall have a minimum 10-meter separation distance with the existing entrance on the opposite side of the road, as detailed in Condition no. 4 of the PA Report. The applicant in their response notes that the proposed site entrance is offset by approx. 5m from the centreline of the existing house entrance on the opposite side of the road, the two entrances are not directly opposing each other, and there is no requirement from TII which specifies such as separation distance. While the siting of the proposed development entrance opposite an existing domestic entrance is noted, I note the construction stage will be temporary in duration and will be subject to a traffic management plan, which will enable for appropriate management of traffic movements. In addition, the level of trip generation at operational stage would not result in any material intensification, and subject to the entrance being designed to accommodate traffic movements, which can be addressed by way of condition, I consider the proposed development can be considered at this location from a roads and traffic viewpoint.

8.8.10. The PA report outlines that car parking has not been demonstrated, and it is unclear if the site can be serviced by HGVs during the operational phase. Condition no.4 of

the PA report requires the submission of swept path analysis and car parking provision. Having regard to the nature of the proposal, the width of the L-2220 and the extent of the site area adjacent to the L-2220 within the site boundary red line, and extent of the overall site, I consider that design matters in relation to swept path analysis, car parking provision, turning movements, and entrance arrangements can be addressed by way of condition in any grant.

Cumulative effects

8.8.11. An observer has raised concerns in relation to cumulative traffic disruption. Given the nature of the subject proposal and its site context, and the nature, scale and location of the development permitted in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103, as referenced in the Landscape and Visual Impact section of this report, the mitigation measures outlined for the subject proposal and the mitigation measures detailed in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 in relation to the traffic and road safety, it is considered that subject to implementation of the outlined mitigation for the proposed development, it would not give rise to any significant cumulative effects on roads or traffic with any existing or permitted developments onsite or in the area.

8.8.12. Having regard to the foregoing, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures and conditions, I consider issues of traffic and safety can be adequately addressed and that the proposed development would be acceptable from a roads and traffic safety perspective.

8.9. Noise, Vibration and Residential Amenity

8.9.1. The PECR in Section 7 includes for a Noise and Vibration Assessment, which is informed by relevant guidelines including (BS) 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 ‘Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites’, EPA Guidance Note NG4 (2016), and WHO guidelines. In terms of the methodology described at Section 7.3, data sources are utilised. Section 7.4.2 details baseline monitoring has not been undertaken with the assessment assuming that baseline ambient noise levels are such that for construction, the cut-off values for the assessment of construction noise are applied without relaxation on a precautionary basis (and likely due to rural/quiet environment). For the operational phase, the

criteria for Areas with Low Background Noise apply as described in the NG4 guidance. A total of 5 noise sensitive locations (NSL) were included in the assessment within a 300-metre study area around the application site, with receptors including residential dwellings.

Construction Stage

8.9.2. Construction working hours are expected to be Monday to Friday from 07:00 to 19:00 and Saturday from 08.00 to 14.00. Noise levels for emitting plant expected to be used during construction is set out in Table 7.4. Based on BS 5228 2009+A1:2014, it is outlined noise levels generated by site activities are deemed to be potentially significant if the total noise (pre-construction ambient plus site noise) exceeds the pre-construction ambient noise by 5dB or more, subject to lower cut-off values of 65dB, 55dB and 45dB LAeq, T from site noise alone, for the daytime, evening and night-time periods, respectively; and a duration of one month or more, unless works of a shorter duration are likely to result in significant effect.

8.9.3. The proposed substation perimeter fence is located approx. 75 metres from the nearest NSL. The assessment details that site preparation works at the site entrance area, at approx.20 metres from the closest NSL, and with a noise screening effect incorporated into calculations, will exceed noise thresholds at NSL 1 and NSL 2, with a predicted noise level of up to 68 LAeq (dB). It is outlined the site preparation phase is programmed over eight weeks for the entire site, and consequently the duration of this phase by the site entrance area would be considerably shorter. It is predicted that vibration levels would not exceed thresholds for complaint in terms of human perception and cosmetic damage. Mitigation is proposed which will include the implementation of a CEMP, the phasing and timing of works, use of quieter equipment and enhanced noise reduction kit (e.g. exhaust silencers), use of a temporary acoustic barrier (2.4m height) during site preparation to provide screening of activities affecting NSL1 and NSL2, residential engagement, a complaints procedure, and noise and vibration monitoring.

8.9.4. It is anticipated that vibration effects arising from the proposal would be minor, and having regard to the details submitted, and the nature and location of the proposal, this view is accepted. There is a potential for impacts to arise on residential amenity by way of noise, having regard to the proximity of the proposed development to existing residential development. However, I note this would be of temporary duration, and that site preparation works would exceed the threshold limit by a marginal value of +3 LAeq (dB) only with mitigation, and further noise mitigation will also be implemented at the construction phase by way of measures in a CEMP. Having regard to the nature of the works, their temporary duration, the hours of construction applying and the mitigation as set out which will serve to reduce potential significant noise effects arising, I consider the above effects would not warrant a refusal based on temporary noise impacts. Impacts will be short term with no significant noise generated at operational stage. To ensure any potential significant noise effects are minimised, a condition requiring mitigation as set out in the CEMP can be applied, should the Commission be minded to grant.

Operational stage

8.9.5. The operational noise assessment utilises the procedures of ISO 9613-2, using an acoustic model developed using DataKustik CadnaA software to predict operational phase noise levels. Table 7.8 includes a list of noise sources considered within the model which includes transformers, with 3 scenarios considered within the model, including normal operation, an earth fault and mains supply failure. Areas with Low Background Noise have been applied as described in the NG4 guidance. The noise impact assessment criteria for NSLs with low background noise are: Daytime (07:00 to 19:00) 45dB LAr,T; Evening (19:00 to 23:00) 40dB LAr,T; and Night-time (23:00 to 07:00) 35dB LAeq,T. The results are presented in Table 7.9, and noise levels with a +5dB tonality penalty are applied to Scenario 1 (normal operation) and Scenario 2 (earth fault) at NSLs, and these are predicted to be below the NG4 guidance criteria for quiet areas. For scenario 3, only NSL1 is predicted to marginally exceed the 35dB LAeq night-time criteria set out in NG4, and this is an emergency scenario, with no noise mitigation suggested. The assessment outlines no specific mitigation or monitoring measures are proposed for the operational phase. Having regard to details submitted, and the predicted operational noise levels as set out in Table 7.9,

which details the noise levels at NSLs are well below the guidance criteria for quiet areas, I am satisfied that there is no potential for significant noise impacts to arise at the operational stage**.**

8.9.6. MCC outline the proposed palisade fencing may permit an excess of electrical noise levels to permeate the area. Observers have also raised concerns in relation to noise, and noise arising from the Line Cable Interface Masts. As outlined, the operational noise modelling details that the predicted levels at NSLs will be below the guidance criteria for quiet areas. In addition, I note the proposal includes for the diversion of the existing 110 kV overhead line to connect to the new Line Cable Interface Masts, and does not include for the introduction of a new overhead line at this location.

Cumulative noise effects

8.9.7. Given the nature of the subject proposal and its site context, and the nature, scale and location of the development permitted in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103, as referenced in the Landscape and Visual Impact section of this report, there is a potential for significant cumulative effects to arise by way of noise on residential amenity at the construction stage. However, having regard to the nature of the works, their temporary duration, the hours of construction applying and the mitigation as set out which will serve to reduce potential significant noise effects arising for the current subject proposal, and the noise mitigation set out in PA Reg. Ref. 2561103, I consider the above effects would not warrant a refusal based on temporary noise impacts. To ensure any potential significant noise effects are minimised, a condition requiring mitigation as set out in the CEMP can be applied, as highlighted.

8.9.8. Having regard to the foregoing, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures, I consider issues of noise can be adequately addressed and that the proposed development would be acceptable from a noise perspective.

8.10. Public Health/Fire Risk/Emergency Response

8.10.1. Observers have raised concerns in relation to fire risk, and pollution by way of firewater runoff and pathways, and the emergency response capacity. The applicant in their response to submissions outlines for fire risk, the proposal incorporates standard, industry-accepted fire prevention, containment and pollution control measures, which includes for power transformers being located within raised concrete bunds, and transformers being separated by purpose designed fire walls to prevent fire propagation and radiant heat transfer between units. It is outlined the GIS equipment will be fully enclosed, and sulphur hexafluoride handling, monitoring and maintenance will be governed by recognised international standards, including the BS EN 62271 series, with leak detection and controlled handling forming part of normal operational procedures. It is stated the measures materially reduce both the likelihood and consequences of fire incidents and are consistent with best practice for transmission and distribution infrastructure.

8.10.2. I note the measures set out in relation to fire risk, and sulphur hexafluoride as detailed in PECR Section 6 relating to Climate, and consider the proposed measures to be undertaken align with best practice. Having regard to the nature of the development and its location, I am satisfied that appropriate fire risk measures are outlined for the proposal.

8.10.3. In relation to firewater runoff and pollution pathways, the applicant in response to submissions details the PECR and Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) provide an assessment of pollution pathways and containment measures, which includes: the identification of all potential surface-water pathways and incorporates a controlled SuDS-based drainage network; includes transformer bunds fitted with oil-water separation systems to prevent discharge of contaminated water; the attenuation basin will be impermeably lined, preventing infiltration of contaminated water to groundwater; and the drainage system will include emergency shut-off valve chambers upstream and downstream of the attenuation basin, allowing full isolation of the system in the event of an incident, including transformer fire or firefighting activity. It is stated the measures ensure that contaminated firewater can be contained on-site pending appropriate removal and disposal. I note the measures

outlined in the PECR Chapter 3, including for details to manage the drainage network in an emergency event, and I am satisfied that appropriate measures will be in place to address contaminated firewater and the potential for any runoff associated with same.

8.10.4. In terms of emergency response capacity, an observer outlines there has been no consultation with the local fire authority, confirmation of available equipment, or assessment of response times or access constraints. The applicant in response outlines access has been designed in accordance with national geometric standards, ensuring access for emergency vehicles, and that the CEMP includes an Emergency Incident Response Plan, setting out procedures for spills, fire and pollution incidents, and the notification of statutory authorities. I note the Emergency Incident Response Plan relates to the construction stage, and I consider given the nature of the proposal, that an operational Emergency Response Plan should also be outlined. This can be addressed by way of condition in the event of a grant.

8.11. Other Matters

Health, Devaluation of Property

8.11.1. An observer has raised concerns in relation to impacts arising by way of stress, due to negative equity, and impacts on the observers family. I consider that the proposed development would not give rise to negative impacts on property values, given the existence of substations and their associated infrastructure relative to residential areas, and in the absence of any definitive evidence being presented in relation to these matters. In addition, I note Section 4 of the PECR (Population and Human Health) anticipates there will be no impacts on human health within the study area at the operational stage, and having regard to the nature and location of the proposal, I concur with this view.

Community well-being and participatory planning

8.11.2. An observer has outlined the proposal conflicts with CDP objectives in relation to community well-being and participatory planning. The proposal's objective is to add capacity to the network and improve distribution security of supply for the

surrounding area, which in turn will benefit communities in the immediate and surrounding area. I also consider that the proposal, by way of public notices, enables for participation in the planning process. In addition, I note a community fund/initiative has not been proposed by the applicant, and this matter is further addressed under PA Conditions below.

8.12. **Conditions recommended by the Planning Authority (Development Contributions/Community Fund)**

8.12.1. I note that the report received from the planning authority sets out a list of recommended conditions in the event that planning permission is granted. These conditions are set out below, together with information on their inclusion or exclusion in the recommended schedule of conditions to this report.

Consideration of PA Conditions		
Condition No.	Recommended Conditions	Included/Excluded in Schedule of 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 commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars. **Reason: In the interest of clarity.**	Included. Recommended Condition No.1 refers.

2	Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall submit for the written agreement of the Planning Authority, a detailed schedule of floor areas proposed compound in specific correlation with the total proposed area as stipulated in the development description. **Reason: In the interest of clarity.**	Excluded. Not considered necessary. The gross floor space is as per the application form (1749.9m2)
3	Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall submit for the written agreement with the Planning Authority, a revised boundary treatment plan in lieu of palisade fencing that serves to mitigate against any potential for undue noise levels from plant within the compound. Boundary treatment(s) should also seek to preserve visual amenity within the rural area. **Reason: In the interest of environmental, residential and visual amenity.**	Excluded. Not considered necessary. The submitted fencing measure is satisfactory.
4	Prior to the commencement of development, the applicant shall submit/address the following for the written agreement of the Planning Authority in relation to Transportation requirements: (i) The applicant shall demonstrate sightlines of 90 metres to the nearside edge of the road from a setback of 2.4 metres, in accordance with TII	Excluded. (i)Details are satisfactory and final design can be addressed by condition. (ii) Details are satisfactory. iii) Addressed by condition. (iv) Addressed by condition

	document DN-GEO-03060, from the entrance. The nearside road edge shall be visible over the entire sight distance. Where works are required to provide unobstructed sightlines, they shall be identified in a revised site layout and included within the redline boundary. Where works are required in third party lands, written consent from the landowner shall be submitted. (ii) The proposed new entrance shall have a minimum 10-metre separation distance with the existing entrance on the opposite side of the road. (iii) A swept path analysis to demonstrate that Heavy Goods Vehicles truck can enter and turn within the site should be provided. (iv) The entrance gate shall be recessed at least 17 metres from the edge of the road to allow an HGV to pull in fully off the road prior to opening the gate. (v) The applicant should submit details of the car parking to serve the development. **Reason: In the interest of traffic safety**	(v) Addressed by condition
5	Prior to the commencement of development, a Traffic Management Plan for the construction phase shall be submitted for agreement. The traffic plan shall	(i)Alternative condition included (ii), (iii), (iv) Addressed by condition

	incorporate the following: (i) Details of the road network/haulage routes and the vehicle types to be used to transport materials to and from the site and a schedule of control measures for exceptionally wide and heavy delivery loads. This includes abnormal load assessment information for the proposed project. (ii) Detailed arrangements for temporary traffic arrangements/control on roads and protocols to keep residents informed of upcoming traffic related matters, temporary lanes/road closures etc. (iii) On site HGV Turning Facilities. (iv) Mitigation proposals included proposals to address potential conflicts between arriving and departing HGVs and local traffic particularly on the L-2220 and adjoining local roads. **Reason: In the interest of traffic safety. (Transportation**)	
6	Road drainage shall be provided in compliance with the Department of Transport "Guidelines for Road Drainage - 2nd Edition, 2022". Any drainage pipe installed shall be at least 300mm in diameter and in any case be no less than the nearest downstream pipe diameter. **Reason: In the interest of traffic safety. (Transportation)**	Addressed by alternative condition

7	Surface Water (i) Prior to the commencement of any of the development on site, the applicant shall agree in writing with the planning authority a revised surface water drainage system that is SuDS compliant (ii) Prior to the commencement of any of the development on site, the applicant shall submit a detailed topographical survey that includes all details of any nearby drainage ditches or water courses. Details required to be agreed with the planning authority. (iii) Prior to the commencement of any of the development on site, the applicant shall agree in writing any soiled water/contaminated water management systems that may be required for the proposed development. (iv) Prior to the commencement of any of the development on site, the applicant shall engage with and secure the written permission of the Municipal District Engineer for access to any surface water drain. The applicant shall undertake any remedial works to the existing surface water drainage network which the Municipal District Engineer considers necessary to facilitate the discharge from the proposed development.	(i),(iii),(v),(vi) -Excluded. The submitted Suds and drainage measures are satisfactory. (ii). Included (iv) Part not necessary, part is included.

	(v) All surface water design/work shall comply fully with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) Regional Drainage Policies Volume 2, for New Developments. (vi) All surface water design/work shall comply fully with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works Volume 6. **Reason: In the interest of proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to ensure a satisfactory form of development. (Environment – Surface Water)**	
8	Lighting shall be designed and installed as per "Meath County Council: Public Lighting Technical Specification & Requirements" document. Prior to the commencement of development on site the applicant shall submit a lighting design in accordance with the above for the written agreement of the Planning Authority. **Reason: In the interests of public safety. (Public Lighting)**	An alternative lighting condition is included.
9	The applicant/developer shall comply with the following Environmental Condition(s): (i) The construction works shall be carried out in accordance with the noise guidance set out by BS 5228-1:2009 Code of Practice for Noise and	(i)(ii)Addressed by way of alternative condition. (iii)-(vii) Excluded. Either not considered necessary or concern matters governed under other

	Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites and the NRA Guidelines for the treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Roads Schemes. (ii) During the construction phase noise levels at noise sensitive locations shall not exceed 70dB(A) between 0700 to 1900 hours Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1400 hours Saturday and 45dB(A) at any other time. Noise exceedance activities must be agreed in writing with Meath County Council prior to the activity taking place. (iii) Dust emissions during the construction phase shall not exceed 350mg/m2/day at the site boundaries. (iv) In the event it is necessary to import soil and stone or topsoil for any element of the proposed development to Applicant shall ensure a Certificate of Registration or Waste Facility Permit as per the Waste Management (Facility and Registration) Regulations 2007, as amended is secured in advance of the works. Alternatively, soil and stone or topsoil may be imported/ exported from the site under a By Product Notification to the Environmental Protection Agency (Article 27). In accordance with Article 27 of the EC (Waste Directive) Regulations (2011). A log of all	primary legislation or codes (viii)An alternative condition is included. (ix), (x), (xi), (xii) Excluded. Measures proposed in application and recommended conditions are sufficient. (xiii) Excluded. Significant waste streams will not arise. Recommended conditions are sufficient. (xiv) Excluded. Recommended conditions are sufficient. (xv) Excluded. Recommended conditions are sufficient.

	ByProduct material movements will be recorded and maintained. (v) Burning of waste, including green waste, is prohibited on site. (vi) Prior to the commencement of site clearance the applicant shall notify the Environment Waste Department, Meath County Council regarding a commencement date for same (vii) The production and use of waste derived aggregates shall not be used onsite in the absence of an Article 28 'End of Waste' status issued by the Agency. All waste derived onsite shall be removed to an appropriately licensed facility and there will be NO crushing conducted onsite. (viii) The applicant has submitted a CEMP to Meath County Council. The Applicant shall provide an updated Construction Environmental Monitoring Plan (CEMP) for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any site activity. The CEMP shall include but not be limited to operational controls for dust, noise and vibration, waste management, protection of soils and groundwaters, protection of flora and fauna, site housekeeping, emergency response planning, site environmental policy, environmental regulatory	

	requirements and project roles and responsibilities. The CEMP shall also address extreme of weather (drought, wind, precipitation, temperature extremes) and the possible impacts on receptors and mitigation of same. The CEMP shall be treated as a live document. (ix) If applicable, an Invasive Alien Species (IAS) management Plan will be developed upon identification of an invasive species, which will identify mitigation measures to prevent uncontrolled transportation and dispersion of invasive species to and from the Proposed Development Site. (x) During the construction stage arrangements shall be made for the collection, storage and disposal of all foul sewage effluent arising from the construction works and transferred to an authorised facility, if applicable. (xi) If applicable, any re-fuelling of plant and machinery shall take place in dedicated areas and the applicant/contractor shall have spill kits available on site. (xii) The applicant/contractor shall utilise a silenced generator for the duration of the works, if applicable. (xiii) A RWMP should be prepared. The RWMP shall include but not be limited to	

	project description, legislation requirements, demolition waste, construction phase waste, categories of construction waste, anticipated hazardous waste, non-construction waste, segregation of waste streams, estimated waste generated, waste hierarchy and adherence to same, roles and responsibilities and communication of WMP, details of recovery and disposal sites, details of waste hauliers, record keeping and documentation, waste audit procedures. (xiv) During the operational phase of the development noise levels emanating from the proposed site when measured at noise sensitive locations in the vicinity shall not exceed 45dB(A) between the hours of 07.00 and 23.00 and 43dB(A) between the hours of 23.00 and 07.00. The applicant shall undertake a noise survey within 3 months of commissioning of the development to ensure that emissions for the development comply with the noise conditions attached to any grant of planning permission and to identify potential issues requiring mitigation. The applicant shall submit the report to the Planning Authority for review and agreement on any required mitigation measures.	

	(xv) The applicant will implement formal environmental complaints register for the construction and operational phases, this register shall include but not be limited to complaints due to glint and glare, noise, dust and environmental nuisances. The Complaints Register shall include details of the complaint and measures taken to address the complaint and prevent repetition of the complaint. This register shall be available for inspection upon request. **Reason: In the interests of environmental protection, the protection of surrounding residential amenities and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. (Environment)**	
10	Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the Planning Authority a cash deposit, to secure the reinstatement of public roads that may be damaged by construction transport coupled with an agreement empowering the Planning Authority to apply such security of part thereof to such reinstatement. The form and amount of the security shall be agreed between the Planning Authority and the developer.	Excluded. An alternative reinstatement condition is included.

	Reason: To ensure the reinstatement of public roads that may be damaged by construction transport.	
N/A	The PA request ACP to consider the contents of the Meath County Development Contribution Scheme 2024 – 2029.	Excluded. There is no provision to include development contributions in Section 182A cases.
N/A	The Planning Authority reminds the Commission of Section 182B(6) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) and in this specific case, the PA supports the imposition of a condition to finance an education and awareness program on renewable energy and energy conservation for the community.	Excluded. I do not consider that the proposed development meets the requirements for imposition of such a financial condition under the provisions of the Act having regard to the fact that it consists of a development which of itself constitutes a substantial gain to the community.

8.12.2. I am satisfied having regard to the conclusions of my assessment set out above and to the conclusions set out at Section 9, 10, and 11 below, that the proposed development is acceptable having regard to the criteria for assessment listed in DM OBJ 76 of the MCDP and would therefore be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

9.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

9.1.1. The proposed development has been subject to EIA Pre-Screening for environmental impact assessment (refer to Form 1 in Appendices of this report). The

development is not of a Class Specified in Part 1 or Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the P&DR 2000, as amended, or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No screening is therefore required.

10.0 Appropriate Assessment Screening

Screening Determination - Finding of no likely significant effects

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on **Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398, South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236,** in view of the conservation objectives of these sites, and these sites are therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

This determination is based on:

- The relatively minor scale of the development and lack of impact mechanisms that could significantly affect a European Site
- Absence of viable hydrological or ecological connections to the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398,
- Distances from, and weak indirect connections to European sites South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236,
- The low likelihood of a possible construction related impact from surface water reaching the European Sites and which would not be significant in terms of site-specific conservation objectives for the South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236, and would not undermine the maintenance of favourable conservation conditions, or

delay or undermine the achievement of restoring favourable conservation status for those QI/SCI features of unfavourable conservation status

- No mitigation measures aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts on European Sites were required to be considered in reaching this conclusion

11.0 Water Framework Directive Screening

11.1.1. An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken in accordance with Article 4 of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), as transposed by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003, as amended, and with regard to River Basin Management Plan 2022–2027. The assessment is set out in Appendix 3 attached to this report.

The receiving water environment has been identified and assessed, see Table 1 attached. Having regard to the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, and the mitigation measures proposed, it is concluded that the proposed development will not:

- Result in deterioration of the ecological, chemical, or quantitative status of any relevant surface water or groundwater body;
- Increase pollutant loading or alter the hydrological regime of any receiving watercourse;
- Prevent or impede achievement of environmental objectives under the applicable River Basin Management Plan.

Any residual risks are capable of being addressed through the proposed mitigation measures, mitigation conditions, and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan. The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with the requirements of Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive.

12.0 Recommendation

Having regard to the foregoing, I recommend that permission for the proposed development be granted, subject to conditions, for the following reasons and considerations as outlined in the Draft Order below.

DRAFT ORDER

13.0 Reasons and Considerations

The Commission performed its functions in relation to the making of its decision, in a manner consistent with Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, (consistent with the relevant provisions of the Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and the Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions 2024, the National Adaptation Framework; Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland June 2024 and the relevant sectoral adaptation plans in particular the Electricity and Gas Sectoral Plan 2019 and in furtherance of the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State), and otherwise had regard to:

European, national, regional and local planning, energy, climate and other policy of relevance, including in particular the following:

- **European Policy/Legislation** including**:**
- Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU (Environmental Impact Assessment Directive);
- Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC (Birds Directive);
- Directive 2000/60/EC (Water Framework Directive)

- **National Policy and Guidance** including**:**
- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework ("NPF"), First Revision of the NPF;
- National Development Plan 2021-2030
- The objectives and targets of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030;
- Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply (November 2021);
- National Energy Security Framework (April 2022);
- National Energy and Climate Action Plan (2021-2030);
- Ireland's Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions 2024
- The National Adaptation Framework; Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland (June 2024)
- Electricity and Gas Sectoral Plan 2025

- **Regional and Local Planning Policy,** including in particular:
  - Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019-2031*;*
  - Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027;

- The location, nature, scale and layout of the proposed development and the pattern of development in the vicinity
- the nature of the landscape and absence of any specific conservation or amenity designation for the site,
- the planning history of the immediate area
- the submissions on file including those from observers, prescribed bodies and the Planning Authority,
- mitigation measures proposed for construction and operation of the site,
- the report and recommendation of the Inspector.

Appropriate Assessment Stage 1 Screening Determination

The Coimisiún considered the Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment and all the other relevant submissions and carried out an appropriate assessment screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on designated European Sites. The Coimisiún agreed with and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on **Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398, South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236,** in view of the conservation objectives of these sites, and these sites are therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

This determination is based on:

- The relatively minor scale of the development and lack of impact mechanisms that could significantly affect a European Site
- Absence of viable hydrological or ecological connections to the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398,
- Distances from, and weak indirect connections to European sites South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236,
- The low likelihood of a possible construction related impact from surface water reaching the European Sites and which would not be significant in terms of site-specific conservation objectives for the South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236, and

would not undermine the maintenance of favourable conservation conditions, or delay or undermine the achievement of restoring favourable conservation status for those QI/SCI features of unfavourable conservation status

- No mitigation measures aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts on European Sites were required to be considered in reaching this conclusion

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 European, national, and regional renewable energy policies and with the provisions of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, would not seriously injure the visual or residential amenities of the area or otherwise of property in the vicinity or have an unacceptable impact on the character of the landscape or on cultural or archaeological heritage, would not have a significant adverse impact on ecology, would be acceptable in terms of traffic impacts and safety and would make a positive contribution to Ireland's renewable energy and security of energy supply requirements. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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 commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

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

2.All of the environmental, construction and ecological mitigation measures, as set out in the Planning and Environmental Considerations Report and the Construction and Environmental Management Plan, and all other particulars submitted with the application, shall be implemented by the developer in conjunction with the timelines set out therein, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions of this Order.

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

3.Site development and building works shall be carried out during daylight hours only within the hours of 0700 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 0800 to 1300 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or public holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

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

4.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 protect the road network

5.Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall comply with the transportation requirements of the planning authority for such works and services as appropriate. Such requirements shall require provision of a detailed Traffic Management Plan and shall include the following details:

(a) Consultation with TII and all private and public companies and road authorities.

(b) Details of haulage routes, control measures for abnormally sized vehicles and an Abnormal Load Assessment.

(c) A road condition survey of roads and bridges along the haul route to be carried out at the developer's expense and to the satisfaction of the planning authority.

(d) Detailed arrangements for construction damage to be made good by the developer to the satisfaction of the planning authority.

(e) Detailed arrangements for temporary traffic management/controls, to include arrangements for the safe operation of the L-2220 and adjoining local roads.

(f) Provide protocols to keep residents informed of upcoming traffic related matters, temporary lanes/road closures etc.

(g) Construction Route Signage,

(h) Detailed design of the site entrance onto the L-2220, with the provision of sightlines, to include hedgerow trimming within the site boundary, and a recessed entrance gate, to the satisfaction of the planning authority

(i) Provision of swept path analysis to demonstrate that HGVs can enter and turn within the site to the satisfaction of the planning authority

(j) Provision of on-site HGV turning facilities and details of car parking to serve the development to the satisfaction of the planning authority

Reason: In the interest of traffic and pedestrian safety.

6. (a) Prior to the commencement of development, details of roadside drainage treatments for the entrance shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority. Any road drainage pipe installed shall be at least 300mm in diameter.

(b) Prior to the commencement of any development on site, the applicant shall submit a detailed topographical survey to the Planning Authority that includes details of onsite and nearby drainage ditches and water courses.

(c) Prior to the commencement of any development on site, the applicant shall undertake any remedial works to the existing surface water drainage network which

the Planning Authority considers necessary to facilitate the discharge from the proposed development.

Reason: In the interest of proper planning and sustainable development of the area and traffic safety

7. (a) Construction activity shall be managed in accordance with a construction noise and vibration management plan, which shall be agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to the commencement of development. This plan shall be subject to periodic review and shall specify the construction practice, including measures for the suppression and mitigation of on-site noise and vibration and shall include the appointment of a site noise liaison officer.
(b) The plan shall be developed having regard to, and all construction activity shall be undertaken in accordance with, best practise guidelines, including BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014, parts 1 & 2.
(c) The mitigation measures described in the Planning and Environmental Considerations Report and the Construction and Environmental Management Plan shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In order to protect the amenities of the area.

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:

(a) 45 dB(A) rated sound level between the hours of 0700 to 2300, and
(b) 43 dB(A) at all other times. The noise at such time shall not contain a tonal component. 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 site. 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.Prior to commencement of development, a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the construction phase shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority, generally in accordance with the Outline Construction Methodology submitted with the application. The CEMP shall incorporate the following:

(a) a detailed plan for the construction phase incorporating, inter alia, construction programme, supervisory measures, noise, dust and surface water management measures including construction hours and the management, transport and disposal of construction waste.

(b) a comprehensive programme for the implementation of all monitoring commitments made in the application and supporting documentation during the construction period;

(c) an emergency response plan for the construction and operation stages;

(d) proposals in relation to public information and communication. A record of daily checks that the works are being undertaken in accordance with the Construction Environmental Management Plan shall be kept for inspection by the planning authority, and

(e) The Construction Environment Management Plan shall include the Construction noise and vibration management plan agreed in accordance with the requirements of Condition No.7.

Reason: In the interest of environmental protection, amenities, public health and safety.

10. (a)All mitigation measures in relation to archaeology and cultural heritage as set out in the Section 11 of the Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (Mott

MacDonald, January 2026) shall be implemented in full, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions of this order.

(b) The developer shall engage a suitably qualified licence eligible archaeologist (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) to carry out pre-development archaeological testing in areas of proposed ground disturbance and to submit an archaeological impact assessment report for the written agreement of the planning authority, following consultation with the National Monuments Service, in advance of any site preparation works or groundworks, including site investigation works/topsoil stripping/site clearance and/or construction works. The report shall include an archaeological impact statement and mitigation strategy. Where archaeological material is shown to be present, avoidance, preservation in-situ, preservation by record [archaeological excavation] and/or monitoring may be required. Any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the planning authority, following consultation with the National Monuments Service, shall be complied with by the developer. No site preparation and/or construction works shall be carried out on site until the archaeologist's report has been submitted to and approval to proceed is agreed in writing with the planning authority.

(c) The developer shall engage a suitably qualified (licensed eligible) archaeologist to monitor (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) all site clearance works, topsoil stripping, groundworks associated with the development.

(d)The planning authority and the National Monuments Service shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of any subsequent archaeological investigative works and/or monitoring following the completion of all archaeological work on site and the completion of any necessary post-excavation work. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation either in situ or by record of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest

11.(a)The landscaping scheme shown on drawing number LD_WLTSTWN_LMP_1.0

(Landscape Mitigation Plan), shall be carried out within the first planting season following substantial completion of external construction works. All planting shall be adequately protected from damage until established. Any plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of five years from the completion of the development, shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

(b) Prior to commencement of development, a revised site layout plan detailing the provision of replacement hedgerow and tree planting at post and rail fence locations at both sides of the entrance, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority. The replacement planting shall consist of the same type of species as that to be removed.

Reason: In the interest of the environment and visual amenity.

12.The developer shall comply with the following requirements:

a) Prior to the commencement of development, the precise luminaries to be used at construction and operational stages shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority. The luminaries shall be in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in Sections 8.7.1.5 and 8.7.2 of the Planning and Environmental Considerations report.

(b) No additional artificial lighting shall be installed or operated on site unless authorised by a prior grant of planning permission.

(c) Cables within the site shall be located underground.

(d) External finishes to fencing, gates and exposed metalwork (non-galvanised/subject to EirGrid requirements), roof and external walls of substation, shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority.

(e) CCTV cameras shall be fixed and angled to face into the site and shall not be directed towards adjoining property or roads.

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

13. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall enter into a Connection Agreement with Uisce Éireann to provide for a service connection to the public water supply.

Reason: In the interest of public health and to ensure adequate water facilities.

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 me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

David Ryan
Planning Inspector

24th September 2026

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ACP- 324031-26
Proposed Development Summary	Construction of 110kV substation and associated infrastructure The development will comprise the construction of a 110 kV/ 38 kV/ Medium Voltage (MV) electrical substation and will include the following: • Construction of 1 no substation compound (c. 5650sqm) securely enclosed with 2.6m high palisade fencing and gates, containing: • 1 no. 110 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building (c. 707sqm footprint; c. 12m in height); • 1 no. 38 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building (c. 232sqm footprint; c. 7m in height); • 2 no. Bunded 110 / 38 kV Transformers (c. 5m in height) with associated electrical equipment, 2 no. Bunded 38 kV/ MV Transformers (c. 5m in height) with associated electrical equipment; • 2 no. fire walls (c. 5.5m height by c. 5m length) separating the 110 / 38 kV Transformers and 38 kV/ MV Transformers; • 3 no. bunded Arc Suppression Coils (c. 4m high) with associated electrical equipment; • Neutral earth resistor (c. 2m height) and neutral earth switch (c. 3.9m high); • 2 no. 110 kV double circuit Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM) (c. 17m high); • Concrete post and rail fence (1.4m high); • Underground cabling between the 110 kV GIS building and the new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM); • Dismantling of 1 no. existing 110 kV Overhead Line timber poleset (c. 20m height); • Diversion of the existing 110 kV Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade overhead line to connect to the new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM;) and, • All associated site development works including provision of new site entrance, internal access, lighting poles (c. 4m height), 3 no. lightning monopoles measuring c.15m high, 1 no.

	Emergency, stand-by Diesel Generator, telecommunications, landscaping, site services including drainage and all other ancillary works.
Development Address	Townland of Walterstown, Dunboyne Co. Meath
	In all cases check box /or leave blank
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2. ☐ No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in <u>Part 1</u>, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified **in Part 1.** **EIA is mandatory. No Screening required.**	
☒ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
☒ No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. **No Screening required.**	The development of a substation is not a specified class of development in Part 1 or Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Regulations. The following classes of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Regulations are relevant in the assessment of the proposal: **Schedule 5, Part 2, Class 1 (a) Rural Restructuring.** This includes: '*Projects for the restructuring of rural land holdings, undertaken as part of a wider proposed development, and not as an agricultural activity that must comply with the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations 2011, where the*

	length of field boundary to be removed is above 4 kilometres, or where re-contouring is above 5 hectares, or where the area of lands to be restructured by removal of field boundaries is above 50 hectares'. The proposal will involve the removal of hedgerow of 27 metres at a roadside location to facilitate access and sightlines. This limited extent of hedgerow removal is considered to be incidental and de minimis. Therefore, this element of the proposed development is not considered to be of a class under 1(a) listed in Part 2.
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. **EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required**	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. **Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)** **OR** **If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)**	

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
No ☒	**Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)**

Appendix 2 - AA Screening Determination

Test for likely significant effects

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects	
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics **Case File: ACP-324031-26**	
Brief description of project	The development will comprise the construction of a 110 kV/ 38 kV/ Medium Voltage (MV) electrical substation and will include the following: • Construction of 1 no substation compound (c. 5650sqm) securely enclosed with 2.6m high palisade fencing and gates, containing: • 1 no. 110 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building (c. 707sqm footprint; c. 12m in height); • 1 no. 38 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building (c. 232sqm footprint; c. 7m in height); • 2 no. Bunded 110 / 38 kV Transformers (c. 5m in height) with associated electrical equipment, 2 no. Bunded 38 kV/ MV Transformers (c. 5m in height) with associated electrical equipment; • 2 no. fire walls (c. 5.5m height by c. 5m length) separating the 110 / 38 kV Transformers and 38 kV/ MV Transformers; • 3 no. bunded Arc Suppression Coils (c. 4m high) with associated electrical equipment; • Neutral earth resistor (c. 2m height) and neutral earth switch (c. 3.9m high); • 2 no. 110 kV double circuit Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM) (c. 17m high); • Concrete post and rail fence (1.4m high); • Underground cabling between the 110 kV GIS building and the new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM); • Dismantling of 1 no. existing 110 kV Overhead Line timber poleset (c. 20m height);

	• Diversion of the existing 110 kV Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade overhead line to connect to the new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM;) and, All associated site development works including provision of new site entrance, internal access, lighting poles (c. 4m height), 3 no. lightning monopoles measuring c.15m high, 1 no. Emergency, stand-by Diesel Generator, telecommunications, landscaping, site services including drainage and all other ancillary works. Detailed specifications of the proposal are provided in the AA Screening Report and other planning documents provided by the applicant.
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	A detailed description of the proposed development site is included in Section 2.0 of the Inspector Report. In summary, the proposed development site comprises an area of 3.6 hectares within the partial areas of 3 no. fields, currently in use as pasturelands, defined by mature trees and hedgerows. The existing Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade 110kV overhead line and pylons traverse the site. The proposal will involve earthworks, and the clearance of 27m of hedgerow. The construction phase will be short-term lasting approx. 12 months, followed by a electrical installation and commissioning period of c.18 months. The site includes for drainage ditches which connect to the Oranstown Stream watercourse. The applicants AA Screening Report details the Oranstown stream flows along the application site boundary and is located approximately 90m from the nearest proposed construction works. The Oranstown stream flows to the River Liffey, c.4.6km (hydrological connection) south of the proposed development site, at a point approximately 370m downstream of the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. The AASR outlines there is no direct hydrological connectivity between the proposed development and the SAC. The AASR outlines there is tenuous hydrological connectivity between the proposed development site and European sites in Dublin Bay and Irish Sea. The site is located within Flood Zone C. Potential impact mechanisms include for: impacts on surface waters, by way of contamination.
Screening report	Y
Natura Impact Statement	N

Relevant submissions	PA report outlines it is for ACP to satisfy itself that the proposed development will not require a Stage 2 Natura Impact Statement. Observers outline the proposal conflicts with Meath CDP 2022-2028 objectives, including those relating to safeguarding Natura 2000 sites. Outline sparrow is protected under the European Communities birds and habitats regulations 2001, and it is illegal to disturb nesting sites. Detail in Holohan v ABP C-461/17, the CJEU emphasised that all aspects of a project capable of affecting a Natura site must be fully assessed. Outline in People Over Wind v ABP C-323/17 the CJEU confirmed that mitigation cannot be assumed where uncertainty remains

The 'Report for the Screening of Appropriate Assessment', prepared by Mott MacDonald (January 2026), outlines no species-specific fauna surveys were completed, and fauna were instead recorded on an ad hoc basis during the multidisciplinary walkover survey on 31 July 2025. It is outlined this is not considered to be a limitation as the proposal is a relatively small project to install a new electricity distribution station in managed agricultural farmland where habitats of ecological value will largely be retained. It is stated all areas of the proposed development site were accessible and considered sufficient to inform locations and evaluation of sensitive ecological receptors.

Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model

Sources of potential impact considered in the applicants AASR include: hydrological connectivity and water quality degradation.
1 no. European site, Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398, located 2.1km (over land) from the proposed development site, was identified in the applicants AA screening report as being located within a potential zone of influence of the proposed development. The ZOI was informed by way of source-pathway-receptor connectivity. The AASR outlines there is no viable hydrological connectivity between the proposed site and the SAC, and therefore, there is no potential for the proposed development to have significant direct or indirect effects on this SAC, or on its QI habitats and species.

The applicants AASR outlines European sites in Dublin Bay and Irish Sea are considered in the AA Screening assessment as there is tenuous hydrological connectivity. The AASR outlines given the small scale of the proposed development relative to the catchment area and extensive distance (>25km), no adverse effects are likely to European sites in Dublin Bay and the Irish Sea.

It was noted that the applicants AA screening report in its assessment has not considered in detail the following European Sites: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, and North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236. Given the hydrological connectivity to these listed sites, and the limited separation distance between the Oranstown Stream and the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398, I have included these listed sites in my AA screening assessment.

I note there are a number of additional European Sites in the wider vicinity of the proposal site which have no ecological connection with the proposed development site and therefore there is no pathway way for effects. Having regard to the proposed developments separation distances to these sites, and the absence of hydrological or ecological connections, these sites have been

excluded from further screening consideration. I have therefore included for 6 no. European sites in screening considerations as follows.				
European Site (code)	**Qualifying interests[1] Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)**	**Distance from proposed development (km)**	**Ecological connections[2]**	**Consider further in screening[3] Y/N**
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] Vertigo angustior (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]	2.1 km south (over land)	No viable hydrological or ecological connections. Oranstown stream connects to the River Liffey, c.4.6km (hydrological connection) south of the proposed development site, at a point c.370m downstream of the SAC.	**y**
South Dublin Bay SAC 000210	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	28km (hydrological connection) 19.5km (over land)	Hydrological connection exists between site and SAC.	**y**
North Dublin Bay SAC 000206	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]	29km (hydrological connection) 20.7km (over land)	Hydrological connection exists between site and SAC.	y

	Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Humid dune slacks [2190] Petalophyllum ralfsii (Petalwort) [1395]			
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130] Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143] Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144]	26km (hydrological connection) 17.7km (over land)	Hydrological connection exists between site and SPA.	y

	Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Roseate Tern (Sterna dougallii) [A192] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
North Bull Island SPA 004006	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048] Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054] Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]	27.5km (hydrological connection) 20.7km (over land)	Hydrological connection exists between site and SPA.	y

	Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143] Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) [A169] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236	Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) [A001] Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer) [A003] Fulmar (Fulmarus glacialis) [A009] Manx Shearwater (Puffinus puffinus) [A013]	28.4km (hydrological connection) 23.4km (over land/sea)	Hydrological connection exists between site and SPA.	y

	Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017] Shag (Phalacrocorax aristotelis) [A018] Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182] Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183] Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184] Great Black-backed Gull (Larus marinus) [A187] Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla) [A188] Roseate Tern (Sterna dougallii) [A192] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194] Guillemot (Uria aalge) [A199] Razorbill (Alca torda) [A200] Puffin (Fratercula arctica) [A204] Little Gull (Hydrocoloeus minutus) [A862]			

	Little Tern (Sternula albifrons) [A885]			

[1] Summary description / **cross reference to NPWS website** is acceptable at this stage in the report
[2] Based on source-pathway-receptor: Direct/ indirect/ tentative/ none, via surface water/ ground water/ air/ use of habitats by mobile species
[3]if no connections: N

Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone <u>or</u> in combination) on European Sites

The **Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398** can be screened out at the screening stage because of the nature and scale of the proposed works, the nature of the Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Interests, the separation distances and the lack of a viable hydrological or ecological connection to the SAC. The drainage ditches onsite connect into the Oranstown stream. The Oranstown stream flows under the Royal Canal c.3.3km to the south, and flows into the River Liffey c.4.6km south of the proposed development site. The Oranstown stream connects to the River Liffey at a location which is c.370 metres downstream of the SAC. I note the River Liffey becomes tidal at Islandbridge, which is c.11km downstream of this confluence point, as detailed in the Liffey Catchment Assessment 2010-2015 (EPA, 2018). As there is no viable hydrological connectivity between the proposed development site and the SAC, it is considered there is no potential for the proposal to have significant direct or indirect effects on the SAC, or on its QI habitats and species.

There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. As there is a hydrological pathway from the source to the **South Dublin Bay SAC 000210**, the SAC is screened in for further screening assessment.

There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. As there is a hydrological pathway from the source to the **North Dublin Bay SAC 000206,** the SAC is screened in for further screening assessment.

There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. As there is a hydrological pathway from the source to the **South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024,** the SPA is screened in for further screening assessment.

There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. As there is a hydrological pathway from the source to the **North Bull Island SPA 004006,** the SPA is screened in for further screening assessment.

There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. As there is a hydrological pathway from the source to the **North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236,** the SPA is screened in for further screening assessment.

Sources of impact and likely significant effects are considered further and detailed in the Table below		
AA Screening matrix		
Site name Qualifying interests	**Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site***	
	Impacts	**Effects**
Site 1: Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398 QI list Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] Vertigo angustior (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]	Direct: None There are no viable hydrological or ecological connections. Indirect: None There are no viable hydrological or ecological connections.	None There are no viable hydrological or ecological connections. The SAC is located upstream of the confluence of the Oranstown Stream and River Liffey, and the River Liffey is not a tidal system at this location. I am satisfied that this site can be screened out and that there is no ecological justification for further consideration of this site. Conservation Objectives will not be undermined.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone):No	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? No – see below comment	
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* There are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development. The Meath CDP 2021-2027 is the relevant plan. Other projects are examined in the AASR. I note PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 included for permission being granted for works onsite to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad 110kV overhead line (OHL) and was subject to the AA process. As there are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development, there is no likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects.	
	Impacts	**Effects**
Site 2: **South Dublin Bay SAC 000210**	Direct: None	None

QI list Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	Indirect: None There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. However, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses, waterbodies, and tidal waters, would occur, I consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the QI habitats of the SAC. At operational stage surface water will be attenuated by a SUDs system with a filtration system.	There is a very low risk of surface water borne pollutants reaching the SAC, with the SAC located c.28km (hydrological connection) downstream of the proposal site. I consider that no significant changes in ecological functions would arise due to any minor construction related emissions. I am satisfied that this site can be screened out and that there is no ecological justification for further consideration of this site. Conservation Objectives will not be undermined.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): No	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects?No– see below comment	
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* There are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development. The Meath CDP 2021-2027 is the relevant plan. Other projects are examined in the AASR. I note PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 included for permission being granted for works onsite to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad 110kV overhead line (OHL) and was subject to the AA process. As there are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development, there is no likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects.	
	Impacts	**Effects**
Site 3: North Dublin Bay SAC 000206 QI list	Direct: None Indirect: None	None There is a very low risk of surface water borne pollutants reaching the SAC, with the SAC located c.29km

Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Humid dune slacks [2190] Petalophyllum ralfsii (Petalwort) [1395]	There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. However, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses, waterbodies, and tidal waters, would occur, I consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the QI's of the SAC. At operational stage surface water will be attenuated by a SUDs system with filtration system.	(hydrological connection) downstream of the proposal site. I consider that no significant changes in ecological functions would arise due to any minor construction related emissions. I am satisfied that this site can be screened out and that there is no ecological justification for further consideration of this site. Conservation Objectives will not be undermined.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): N	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? N- see below comment	
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* There are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development. The Meath CDP 2021-2027 is the relevant plan. Other projects are examined in the AASR. I note PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 included for permission being granted for works onsite to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad	

	110kV overhead line (OHL) and was subject to the AA process. As there are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development, there is no likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects.	
	Impacts	**Effects**
Site 4: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024 QI list Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130] Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143] Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Roseate Tern (Sterna dougallii) [A192]	Direct: None Indirect: None There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. However, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses, waterbodies, and tidal waters, would occur, I consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the SCI's or QI of the SPA. At operational stage surface water will be attenuated by a SUDs system with filtration system.	None There is a very low risk of surface water borne pollutants reaching the SPA, with the SPA located c.26km (hydrological connection) downstream of the proposal site. I consider that no significant changes in ecological functions would arise due to any minor construction related emissions. I am satisfied that this site can be screened out and that there is no ecological justification for further consideration of this site. Conservation Objectives will not be undermined.

Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]		
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): N	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? N- see below comment	
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* There are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development. The Meath CDP 2021-2027 is the relevant plan. Other projects are examined in the AASR. I note PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 included for permission being granted for works onsite to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad 110kV overhead line (OHL) and was subject to the AA process. As there are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development, there is no likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects.	
	Impacts	**Effects**
Site 5: North Bull Island SPA 004006 QI list Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048] Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054]	Direct: None Indirect: None There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. However, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses, waterbodies, and tidal waters, would occur, I consider that the proposed development would not	None There is a very low risk of surface water borne pollutants reaching the SPA, with the SPA located c.27.5km (hydrological connection) downstream of the proposal site. I consider that no significant changes in ecological functions would arise due to any minor construction related emissions. I am satisfied that this site can be screened out and that there is no ecological justification for further consideration of this site. Conservation Objectives will not be undermined.

Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143] Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) [A169] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	be likely to have a significant effect on the SCI's or QI of the SPA. At operational stage surface water will be attenuated by a SUDs system with filtration system.	
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): N	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? N-see below comment	

	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* There are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development. The Meath CDP 2021-2027 is the relevant plan. Other projects are examined in the AASR. I note PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 included for permission being granted for works onsite to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad 110kV overhead line (OHL) and was subject to the AA process. As there are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development, there is no likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects.	
	Impacts	**Effects**
Site 6: **North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236** QI list Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) [A001] Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer) [A003] Fulmar (Fulmarus glacialis) [A009] Manx Shearwater (Puffinus puffinus) [A013] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017] Shag (Phalacrocorax aristotelis) [A018] Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182]	Direct: None Indirect: None There is a potential for negative impacts (temporary) on surface water/water quality due to construction related emissions including increased sedimentation and construction related pollution. However, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses, waterbodies, and tidal waters, would occur, I consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the SCI's of the SPA. At operational stage surface water will be attenuated by a SUDs system with filtration system.	None There is a very low risk of surface water borne pollutants reaching the SPA, with the SPA located c.28.4km (hydrological connection) downstream of the proposal site. I consider that no significant changes in ecological functions would arise due to any minor construction related emissions. I am satisfied that this site can be screened out and that there is no ecological justification for further consideration of this site. Conservation Objectives will not be undermined.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183] Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184] Great Black-backed Gull (Larus marinus) [A187] Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla) [A188] Roseate Tern (Sterna dougallii) [A192] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194] Guillemot (Uria aalge) [A199] Razorbill (Alca torda) [A200] Puffin (Fratercula arctica) [A204] Little Gull (Hydrocoloeus minutus) [A862] Little Tern (Sternula albifrons) [A885]		
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): N	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? N-see below comment	
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* There are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development. The Meath CDP 2021-2027 is the relevant plan. Other projects are examined in the AASR. I note PA Reg. Ref. 2561103 included for permission being granted for works onsite to uprate the existing Rinawade – Dunfirth Tee – Kinnegad 110kV overhead line (OHL) and was subject to the AA process. As there	

	are no significant effects occurring from the proposed development, there is no likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects.

Further Commentary / discussion

The project includes embedded design measures. These include the following elements:

-Surface water runoff from the substation compound will be collected via a gravity drainage system (consisting of filter and carrier drains) and managed using an attenuation pond/retention basin with a flow control device on the outlet.
-The transformers are proposed to be constructed within raised concrete bunds. The surface water within these bunds will be pumped and treated via oil/water separator pumps (e.g. Entexol Bund-Sep or similar) and discharged into the proposed surface water drains.
-Silt trap chamber and oil/fuel interceptor located upstream of the attenuation basin to remove pollutants;
-Attenuation basin will have impermeable geomembrane lining to reduce the risk of potentially contaminated surface water infiltration into the groundwater;
-Surface water runoff from the site access road will locally infiltrate into ground. Surface water runoff from roads within the site will be collected via infiltration drains.
-Environmental commitments and mitigation measures are set out in a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The measures are embedded in the design of the project and are focused on pollution prevention measures to safeguard the environment, site personnel and nearby sensitive receptors. I note that the CEMP measures comprise pollution control and sediment measures that are generally expected as part of good construction practice and which would be undertaken regardless of the presence of European sites downstream.

I am satisfied that these measures are standard best practice construction design and operational measures, and are not mitigation measures for the purposes of avoiding or preventing impacts or significant effects on a European Site. I am satisfied that no mitigation measures are required to come to the following outlined conclusions in relation to European Sites.

Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC

As there is no viable hydrological connectivity between the proposed development site and the **Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398,** it is considered there is no potential for the proposal to have significant direct or indirect effects on the SAC, or on its QI habitat and species. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on **Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398,** in view of the sites conservation objectives and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required for this site.

South Dublin Bay SAC

South Dublin Bay SAC 000210 can be screened out from further assessment because of the nature and scale of the proposed works, the nature of the Conservation Objectives, Qualifying Interests, the separation distances and the lack of a substantive linkage between the proposed

works and the European site. I consider that the hydrological pathway from the source to the SAC which is via a stream, a river waterbody, and a transitional waterbody at a significant distance of approx. 28km, is weak, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses would occur. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the SAC. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on **South Dublin Bay SAC 000210** in view of the sites conservation objectives and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required for this site.

North Dublin Bay SAC

North Dublin Bay SAC 000206 can be screened out from further assessment because of the nature and scale of the proposed works, the nature of the Conservation Objectives, Qualifying Interests, the separation distances and the lack of a substantive linkage between the proposed works and the European site. I consider that the hydrological pathway from the source to the SAC which is via a stream, a river waterbody, and a transitional waterbody at a significant distance of approx. 29km, is weak, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses would occur. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the SAC. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on **North Dublin Bay SAC 000206** in view of the sites conservation objectives and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required for this site.

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024 can be screened out from further assessment because of the nature and scale of the proposed works, the nature of the Conservation Objectives, SCI, QI, the separation distances and the lack of a substantive linkage between the proposed works and the European site. I consider that the hydrological pathway from the source to the SPA which is via a stream, a river waterbody, and a transitional waterbody at a significant distance of approx. 26km, is weak, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses would occur. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the SPA. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on **South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024** in view of the sites conservation objectives and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required for this site.

North Bull Island SPA

North Bull Island SPA 004006 can be screened out from further assessment because of the nature and scale of the proposed works, the nature of the Conservation Objectives, SCI, QI, the separation distances and the lack of a substantive linkage between the proposed works and the European site. I consider that the hydrological pathway from the source to the SPA which is via a stream, a river waterbody, and a transitional waterbody at a significant distance of approx. 27.5 km,

is weak, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses would occur. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the SPA. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on **North Bull Island SPA 004006** in view of the sites conservation objectives and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required for this site.

North-West Irish Sea SPA

North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236 can be screened out from further assessment because of the nature and scale of the proposed works, the nature of the Conservation Objectives, SCI, the separation distances and the lack of a substantive linkage between the proposed works and the European site. I consider that the hydrological pathway from the source to the SPA which is via a stream, a river waterbody, and a transitional waterbody at a significant distance of approx. 28.4 km, is weak, given the separation distance and that dilution and dispersion of any potential pollutants in watercourses would occur. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the SPA. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on **North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236** in view of the sites conservation objectives and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required for this site.

Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site

I conclude that the proposed development (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) would not result in likely significant effects on **Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398, South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236.** No further assessment is required for the project.

No mitigation measures are required to come to these conclusions. I consider that the embedded surface water and pollution control design measures described above are not mitigation measures for the purpose of avoiding or preventing impacts to SAC's or SPA's.

Screening Determination

Finding of no likely significant effects
In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give

rise to significant effects on **Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398, South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236,** in view of the conservation objectives of these sites, and these sites are therefore excluded from further consideration. Appropriate Assessment is not required.

This determination is based on:

- The relatively minor scale of the development and lack of impact mechanisms that could significantly affect a European Site
- Absence of viable hydrological or ecological connections to the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398,
- Distances from, and weak indirect connections to European sites South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236,
- The low likelihood of a possible construction related impact from surface water reaching the European Sites and which would not be significant in terms of site-specific conservation objectives for the South Dublin Bay SAC 000210, North Dublin Bay SAC 000206, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024, North Bull Island SPA 004006, North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236, and would not undermine the maintenance of favourable conservation conditions, or delay or undermine the achievement of restoring favourable conservation status for those QI/SCI features of unfavourable conservation status
- No mitigation measures aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts on European Sites were required to be considered in reaching this conclusion

Appendix 3: WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: Scoping

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING TABLE 1			
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality			
An Coimisiún Pleanála ref. no.	PL-324031-26	**Townland, address**	Townland of Walterstown, Dunboyne Co. Meath
Description of project		Construction of 110kV substation and associated infrastructure The development will comprise the construction of a 110 kV/ 38 kV/ Medium Voltage (MV) electrical substation and will include the following: • Construction of 1 no substation compound (c. 5650sqm) securely enclosed with 2.6m high palisade fencing and gates, containing: • 1 no. 110 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building (c. 707sqm footprint; c. 12m in height); • 1 no. 38 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building (c. 232sqm footprint; c. 7m in height); • 2 no. Bunded 110 / 38 kV Transformers (c. 5m in height) with associated electrical equipment, 2 no. Bunded 38 kV/ MV Transformers (c. 5m in height) with associated electrical equipment; • 2 no. fire walls (c. 5.5m height by c. 5m length) separating the 110 / 38 kV Transformers and 38 kV/ MV Transformers;	

	• 3 no. bunded Arc Suppression Coils (c. 4m high) with associated electrical equipment; • Neutral earth resistor (c. 2m height) and neutral earth switch (c. 3.9m high); • 2 no. 110 kV double circuit Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM) (c. 17m high); • Concrete post and rail fence (1.4m high); • Underground cabling between the 110 kV GIS building and the new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM); • Dismantling of 1 no. existing 110 kV Overhead Line timber poleset (c. 20m height); • Diversion of the existing 110 kV Dunfirth-Kinnegad-Rinawade overhead line to connect to the new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIM;) and, all associated site development works including provision of new site entrance, internal access, lighting poles (c. 4m height), 3 no. lightning monopoles measuring c.15m high, 1 no. Emergency, stand-by Diesel Generator, telecommunications, landscaping, site services including drainage and all other ancillary works.
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,	The topography of the site ranges from 70 OD to 66 OD. The Oranstown Stream is located within the proposed site, running c.90m west and south of the proposed construction works, and crosses under the path of the existing overhead line. Drainage ditches onsite connect to the watercourse. The Cappaghgreen Commonage wetland habitat (a wet grassland of local (moderate) conservation value), is located on the opposite side of the local road to the north of the proposal site.

	The surrounding area is predominantly characterised by agricultural lands used for grazing and tillage. In the immediate site area there is also a pattern of one-off rural housing including ribbon development. The site includes for deep, well-drained soils, with excessively well-drained soils to the south of the site study area. The proposal is underlain by till derived from bedrock limestone. Bedrock underlying the study area consists of a succession of gently folded Carboniferous Limestone Formations.
Proposed surface water details	The drainage design incorporates SuDS principles to manage the quantity and quality of runoff during rainfall events, with Appendix 3.1 including a Surface Water Management Plan. Runoff from the substation compound will be collected via a gravity drainage system and managed using an attenuation pond/retention basin with a flow control device on the outlet. Bunds onsite will be pumped and treated via oil/water separator pumps and discharged into the proposed surface water drains. Filter drains will be used to treat runoff from the access road. The development site is located within Flood Zone C where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding). The proposed surface water management system will allow for the drainage of surface waters from pluvial sources, and is designed to ensure that no flooding of the proposed site occurs for the critical storm with a 1 in 100-year return period, including a 30% allowance for climate change. The FRA assessment outlines the proposal will not increase flood risk in the area, and the proposal is not considered to be at risk from pluvial sources in the site vicinity.
Proposed water supply source & available capacity	The water supply is proposed to be sourced via a new connection from the existing public watermain located within Jarretstown Lane, and a Confirmation of

	Feasibility (CoF) was received from UE on 12 November 2025. This states a water connection is feasible without infrastructure upgrade.
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues	During construction, portable chemical toilets will be provided. All waste material will be removed from site and disposed of to an appropriately licensed facility. Foul effluent will be managed via an on-site holding tank to be emptied by a licenced contractor at operational stage.
Others?	n/a

Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection							
Identified water body	**Water body name(s) (code)**	**WFD Status**	**Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk**	**Identified pressures on that water body**	**Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, ground water)**	**Mitigation Measures proposed**	**Is mitigation sufficient? Will there be any residual impacts?**
Oranstown	Oranstown IE_EA_09L012040	Poor	Review	n/a	Surface run-off.	Surface water Management plan, mitigation measures in CEMP and Section 9 of	Yes. No risk. Screened out.

						Planning and Environmental Considerations Report	
Liffey	Liffey IE_EA_09L 012040	Poor	Review	n/a	Surface run-off.	Surface water Management plan, mitigation measures in CEMP and Section 9 of Planning and Environmental Considerations Report	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
LIFFEY	Liffey IE_EA_09L 012100	Poor	At Risk	UR,UWW	Surface run-off.	As above	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
LIFFEY	Liffey IE_EA_09L 012350	Poor	At Risk	UR,UWW	Surface run-off.	As above	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
LIFFEY	Liffey IE_EA_09L 012360	Poor	At Risk	UR,UWW	Surface run-off.	As above	Yes. No risk. Scree

							ned out.
Liffey Estuary Upper	EA_090_0400 Liffey Estuary Upper	Moderate	Review	n/a	Surface run-off.	As above	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
Liffey Estuary Lower	IE_EA_090_0300 Liffey Estuary Lower	Moderate	At Risk	UWW	Surface run-off.	As above	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
WFD groundwater body: Dublin	IE_EA_G_008 Dublin	Good	Review	n/a	Surface run-off. Hydraulic connection between surface water and groundwater	As above	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
Groundwater abstractions /source protection areas:	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			