



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ACP-324115-26

Development

Proposed alterations to the terms of the permitted development Tincurry 110kV Substation, case reference number ABP-318528-23.

Location

within the townlands of Tincurry, Ballylough, Crory and Lodgewood, County Wexford

Local Authority

Wexford County Council

Requester

Lodgewood Solar Farm Limited

Type of Application

Application under Section 146B of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) to alter previously approved Strategic Infrastructure Development.

Inspector

David Ryan

Date of Site Inspection

17th June 2026

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. On the 4th June 2024, the Commission under case ref. ABP-318528-23, granted approval under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act), to Lodgewood Solar Farm Limited for the following development in County Wexford:

A 10 year permission constituting the provision of the following:

- A 110kV AIS Single Bay Tail-Fed electricity substation (with 33kV customer compound) (including two control buildings, 33kV/110kV transformer and associated structures and apparatus, lightning protection, perimeter security fencing, security lighting, telecoms pole, water and drainage infrastructure, temporary construction compound) to connect to and serve solar farm developments;
- Associated grid connection between the proposed substation and the existing Lodgewood 220/110kV substation comprising 110kV underground electricity cables of circa 10 metres in length to be provided in an excavated trench including associated fibre cable and ducting, and all associated site development and reinstatement works;
- Temporary construction and operational access from the R772, vehicular entrance and access track (including 1 no. drain deck crossing) from this public road;
- all ancillary site development, landscaping and earth works.

- 1.2. The application for the development included a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). The development was approved subject to conditions. The subject application to the Commission is for alterations to this permission, under section 146B of the Act.

- 1.3. It is noted 318528-23 included for the first phase of the grid connection between the approved substation and the existing Lodgewood 220/110kV substation, comprising 110kV underground electricity cables 10 metres in length. It was outlined in 318528, the second phase of the grid connection, entailing a grid connection of c.267 metres, connecting to the Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation, was to be the subject of a future application to ABP. It is noted the s.146B application, if approved, would

enable for a second phase grid connection between the approved substation and the existing Lodgewood 220/110kV substation.

2.0 Legislative Provisions

- 2.1. Section 146B(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (the Act), provides that, subject to subsections (2) to (8) and to section 146C, upon request of any person who is carrying out or intending to carry out a strategic infrastructure development, the Commission may alter the terms of the development the subject of planning permission, approval or other consent granted.

Under sub-section 2(a), as soon as practicable after making such a request, the Commission is required to make a decision as to whether the making of the development would constitute a material alteration to the development concerned.

Under sub-section (2)(b), before making its decision under sub-section 146B (2), the Commission may invite submissions as it considers appropriate and is required to have regard to any submission made to it on foot of the invitation.

Under sub-section (3)(a), if the Commission decide that the making of the alteration would not constitute a material alteration, it is required to alter the planning permission/approval/consent accordingly and to notify the requester and the planning authority of the alteration.

Under subsection (3)(b), if the Commission decide that the making of the alteration would constitute the making of a material alteration, the Commission is required to:

- Request the information specified in Schedule 7A, unless it or an EIAR has already been provided by the requester (sub-section (3)(b)(i)). This information is required to be accompanied by any further relevant information on the characteristics of the alteration and its likely significant effects on the environment including, where relevant, how environmental effects pertaining to EU legislation other than the EIA Directive have been taken into account (sub-section (3A)) and can include mitigation measures (sub-section (3B)).
- Following receipt of such information, determine whether to make the alteration, make an alteration of the terms of the development which differs

from the proposed alteration (subject to it not representing a more significant alteration), or refuse to make the alteration (sub-section (3)(b)(ii)).

Under subsection (4), before making a determination under sub-section (3)(b)(ii), the Commission is required to determine whether the extent and character of the alteration being requested, or being considered by the Commission, would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Under subsection (5), if the Commission determine that no significant environmental effects will arise, they proceed to make a determination under subsection (3)(b)(ii). If the Commission determines that significant effects will arise, the provisions of section 146C apply. These provisions relate to the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report.

Under subsection (7)(a), in making their determination, the Commission is required to have regard to:

- The criteria for the purposes of determining which classes of development are likely to have significant effects on the environment set out in any regulations made under section 176,
- The criteria set out in Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001,
- The Schedule 7A submitted by the requester,
- The further relevant information, if any, referred to in subsection (3A) and the description, if any, referred to in subsection (3B) (summarised above),
- The available results, where relevant, of preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to European Union legislation other than the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, and
- Whether the development is situated in or would have potential to impact on a European site, or a recognised or protected area of natural heritage,

Under subsection (7)(b), the Commission is required to include in its determination, the main reasons and considerations, with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, on which the determination is based.

Under subsection (8)(a) before making a determination under subsection (3)(b)(ii) or (4) the Commission is required to require the requester to make information about the alteration available for inspection, notify appropriate persons that the information is available and invite submissions or observations from these persons. Further under subsection 8(b) the Commission is required to have regard to these submissions in its determination.

3.0 Planning History

3.1. 'Parent' Section 182A Approval (ABP 318528-23)

3.1.1. The requester was granted approval by the Commission on 4th June 2024 for the 110kV AIS Single Bay Tail-Fed electricity substation (with 33kV customer compound) and associated grid connection and site works, which comprised development summarised as follows:

- A 110kV AIS Single Bay Tail-Fed electricity substation (with 33kV customer compound) (including two control buildings, 33kV/110kV transformer and associated structures and apparatus, lightning protection, perimeter security fencing, security lighting, telecoms pole, water and drainage infrastructure, temporary construction compound) to connect to and serve solar farm developments;
- Associated grid connection between the proposed substation and the existing Lodgewood 220/110kV substation comprising 110kV underground electricity cables of circa 10 metres in length to be provided in an excavated trench including associated fibre cable and ducting, and all associated site development and reinstatement works;
- Temporary construction and operational access from the R772, vehicular entrance and access track (including 1 no. drain deck crossing) from this public road;
- all ancillary site development, landscaping and earth works.

3.1.2. The application for the development was accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement, and in granting approval, the Commission carried out an Appropriate Assessment.

3.2. Additional Planning History onsite/adjacent

- P.A. Reg. Ref. 20221309 - 5 year permission was granted in March 2023 for a solar farm with a total area of circa 108 hectares in the townlands of Ballycarney, Ballylough, Coolbaun, Crory, Lodgewood, Scarawalsh, Tincurry and Tombrackwood.
- P.A. Reg. Ref. 20231025 - 5 year permission was granted on 2nd January 2024 for a solar farm with a total area of circa 55 hectares in the townlands of Ballylough, Coolbaun, Crory, Lodgewood, Scarawalsh and Tincurry.
- P.A. Reg. Ref. 20241593 – 5 year permission was granted on 30th July 2025 for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). The proposed development comprises a Battery Energy Storage System, and a 100 metre 33kV double circuit underground cable grid connection to the permitted Lodgewood 110kV substation (Planning Ref ABP-318528-23).
- P.A. Reg. Ref. 20260343W consisting of a modification to the permitted development (Reg Ref: 20241593) for a BESS was granted on 15th June 2026
- P.A. Reg. Ref. 20241558 - Permission was granted on 16th June 2025 for a battery energy storage system (BESS) facility. The proposed development comprises a BESS and an underground high voltage electrical cable connection to the existing 110/220kV Lodgewood Substation.
- ABP-306909-20 - Application for substitute consent for Wind Farm grid connection granted on 12th April 2024, in townlands of Ballyroebuck, Ballyandres, Tincurry, Ballaman, Ballynancoran, Corah, Kiltilly, Curralane Oldtown, Knocknalour, Moneydurtlow, Bolinahaney, Bolacheer, Graigue More, Tombrack, Boris, Ballycarney, Curraduff, Boolnadrum, Co Wexford.
- P.A. Reg. Ref. 20260563W – Conditional decision made on 7th August 2026 for permission to lay approx. 3.3km of 33kV interconnecting cable associated with Lodgewood Solar Farm which comprises the previously consented

Tincurry and Ballylough Solar Farms, to convey power to the Tincurry 110kV Substation

- P.A reg ref. 20251224W Permission granted on 31st August 2026 for a Battery Energy Storage System

3.2.1. Other permitted solar farms in the vicinity include:

- Reg. Ref. 20161097 5MW Solar farm on site of 9.66 ha permitted in 2016
- Reg. Ref. 20160594 5MW Solar farm on site of 12.94 ha permitted in 2016
- Reg. Ref. 20160595 5MW Solar farm on site of 10.84 ha permitted in 2016
- Reg. Ref. 20161231 Solar farm on site of 7.96 ha permitted in 2017

3.2.2. Solar farms to the southeast

- Solar farms permitted to the southeast include ABP 301329-18 & P.A reg. ref. 20180055, P.A reg ref. 20171127, P.A.reg. ref. 20171680, ABP 300427-17 & P.A Reg. Ref 20171275, and ABP 316163-23 & P.A reg. ref. 20230009.

4.0 Background to the Proposed Alterations

- 4.1. The requester outlines that the proposed amendment comprises a modification of the permitted Tincurry 110kV substation and associated grid connection (ABP-318528-23), which will serve the consented but not built Tincurry solar farm (reg. ref. 20221309), Ballylough solar farm (reg. ref. 20231025) and BESS (reg ref: 20241593) to the existing Lodgewood 220/110 kV substation. Proposed amendments are outlined for the permitted substation and site of 318528, the installation of HV electrical equipment, and also comprises permanent works at the ESB Lodgewood 220kV substation. The requester outlines the rationale for the amendment is due mainly to changes in the connection methodology in the final grid connection offer from EirGrid, which was received after the original planning application was granted by ABP. The requester outlines the grid offer was for an Under-the-Fence connection

as opposed to the originally envisaged Tail-Fed connection, and as a result, the infrastructure required at the Tincurry 110kV Substation has changed.

5.0 Scope of Request

5.1. The applicant is seeking to alter the terms of the development, subject of the permission granted under ABP-318528-23, summarised as follows:

1-The proposed amendments to the permitted substation includes the following elements:

- A 110kV substation compound consisting of a retained, redesigned and repositioned Independent Power Producer (IPP) Control Room and operations building (of concrete block structure with slate roof),
- A 110kV grid connection to the ESB Lodgewood 220kV substation, ESB interface kiosk, Busbar extension and new bay in the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation and all associated and ancillary infrastructure including access tracks,
- 1 No. temporary construction compound,
- 2 No. Storage Containers,
- 2 No. clear span bridge crossings (one where the access track crosses the Lodgewood Stream, the second to facilitate the Grid Connection Route (GCR) crossing of the Lodgewood Stream) and 1No. Dry Drain Culvert Crossing at the substation compound entrance,
- Widening of the access tracks in parts to accommodate the delivery of the transformer (abnormal load),
- Surface water drainage system, foul and potable water systems, and palisade fences.

2-The proposed project also includes the installation of HV electrical equipment including a retained and repositioned 110/33kV Transformer (TRAFO), with associated and ancillary equipment along with the retaining and repositioning of the following:

- Cable Sealing End (CSE);
- Surge Arrestor (SA);
- Earth Disconnect (DA, DB, DL, DT/DEM);
- Voltage Transformer (VT);
- Current Transformer (CT);
- House Transformer (HoT);
- Circuit Breaker (CB);
- Lightning Masts (LM);
- Diesel Generator;
- Harmonic filters if required by EirGrid;
- Capacitor Bank if required by EirGrid;
- Fire/Blast Wall;
- Telecoms Pole; and
- 110kV underground cable (retained, extended and repositioned)

3-The proposed project also comprises newly proposed components and permanent works at the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation including:

- New single bay connection point,
- Busbar extension,
- HV Switchgear,
- Circuit Breaker (CB),
- Isolators,
- Cable Sealing End (CSE),
- Surge Arrestor (SA),
- Earth Disconnect (DT/DEM),
- Current /Voltage Transformer (CT/VT),
- LCC and Control & Protection cabinet, and

- All associated and ancillary civil and electrical infrastructure.

NOTE: Details submitted by the requester outline no new infrastructure within the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation was proposed as part of the original application. It is further outlined the amended proposal has required an amendment to the original red line boundary.

The requester outlines the submitted Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (PECR) contains further details on the proposed amendments. The requester outlines the project NIS has been reviewed and updated for the Section 146B Application, with the NIS concluding that the project, including proposed amendments, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites. In conclusion, the requester outlines it is considered that the amendments do not represent a significant change to the impact of the development as assessed in the original application.

5.2. Submitted in support of the alteration request are the following:

- Cover letter
- Consent from landowners
- Planning and Environmental Considerations Report with the following Appendices:
 - Appendix A EIA Screening Report
 - Appendix B Construction Methodology
 - Appendix C Construction and Environmental Management Plan
 - Appendix D Decommissioning and Restoration Plan
 - Appendix E Flood Risk Assessment
 - Appendix F Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 - Appendix G Photomontages
 - Appendix H Archaeology Appendix
- Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement
- Planning application drawings

6.0 Public Consultation

- 6.1. The proposed alteration development has been subject to public consultation under Section 146B(8), with 1 no. submission received. Submission details are set out in section 7 of this report.

7.0 Notice to Requester

7.1. Reason for the Notice

- 7.1.1. Under subsection (3)(b), if the Commission decide that the making of the alteration would constitute the making of a material alteration, the Commission is required to:
- Request the information specified in Schedule 7A, unless it or an EIAR has already been provided by the requester (sub-section (3)(b)(i)). This information is required to be accompanied by any further relevant information on the characteristics of the alteration and its likely significant effects on the environment including, where relevant, how environmental effects pertaining to EU legislation other than the EIA Directive have been taken into account (sub-section (3A)) and can include mitigation measures (sub-section (3B)).
- 7.1.2. It was noted that Schedule 7A material had been submitted for the amending application.
- 7.1.3. I prepared a memorandum dated 10th June 2026 to the Assistant Director of Planning recommending that the requester be notified that the proposed alterations would constitute the making of a material alteration of the terms of the development concerned.
- 7.1.4. Having reviewed the information submitted, I considered that the proposed alterations would constitute the making of a material alteration of the terms of the development approved under ABP-318528-23 for the following reasons:
- The proposed alterations including for the 110kV underground cable and works at the existing ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation are located on lands outside of the 'red line' application site boundary for the permitted development. While landowner letters of consent have been submitted, other parties may have interests in the affected lands.

- It is proposed to connect the approved substation to the existing Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation by way of a 110kV grid connection (221 metres in length). Potential impacts may arise for the electricity transmission system and other electrical undertakers.
- The NIS in the approved ABP-318528-23 made provision for a 110kV grid cable connection from the Tincurrey substation to the Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation by way of horizontal directional drilling under the Lodgewood Stream, which has hydrological connectivity to European Sites. In the proposed alterations sought, the grid connection will be ducted through a proposed clear span bridge crossing the Lodgewood Stream. An updated Stage 2 Natura Impact Statement is submitted for the current subject application due to the potential effects on said European Sites. There is also the potential for impacts on biodiversity more generally, due to the felling of an area of forestry to accommodate the grid connection route to the Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation.
- Furthermore, Schedule 7A material has been submitted for the amending application.

7.1.5. Having regard to the foregoing, it was considered that the consultation provisions set out in subsection 146B(8)(a) be invoked. This requires that before making a determination under subsection (3)(b)(ii) or (4) that the Commission **shall** require the requester to make information about the alteration available for inspection, notify appropriate persons that the information is available and invite submissions or observations from these persons. Further under subsection 8(b) the Commission is required to have regard to these submissions in its determination.

7.2. Requesters Response to Notice

7.2.1. In response to ACP correspondence dated 26th June 2026, correspondence including for a cover letter dated 23rd July 2026 has been received from the requester, detailing the public engagement held. This includes for a copy of a revised site notice erected at locations onsite, copies of newspapers notices published in

national and local newspapers, and copies of letters issued to Wexford County Council and prescribed bodies. Notices detailed that submissions/observations were to be received by the Commission no later than the 27th of August 2026.

Prescribed bodies notified included: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Development Applications Unit); Inland Fisheries Ireland; Transport Infrastructure Ireland; The Arts Council – An Comhairle Ealaíon; Fáilte Ireland; Commission for Energy Regulation (CRU); The Heritage Council; An Taisce - The National Trust for Ireland; Irish Water – Uisce Éireann; Health and Safety Authority.

The cover letter received also detailed that a copy of the information relating to the request has been provided to Wexford County Council to be made available for public viewing.

7.3. Submissions Received in Response to Notice

- 7.3.1. 1 no. submission was received by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), who have outlined they have no observations to make.

7.4. Further Responses

- 7.4.1. On the basis of the submission received, I prepared a memorandum dated 3rd September 2026 to the Director of Planning, detailing that I considered that circulation of the submission to the applicant was not appropriate or required in this instance, and recommended the continuation of the assessment report of the proposed alteration development. The Director of Planning agreed with my recommendation.

8.0 Assessment

8.1. Assessment Stage 1 - Consideration of Materiality

- 8.1.1. There are two stages to be considered in assessing a request under section 146B. The first stage is whether the proposed alteration would constitute a material

alteration of the terms of the development concerned? If the Commission decides that it would not constitute a material alteration, it shall alter the planning permission/approval accordingly. If, however, the Commission decides that it would constitute a material alteration, then the second stage applies and the Act sets out the procedure to be followed in determining if the proposed alteration would have significant effects on the environment and other related matters.

8.1.2. As set out in section 7 of this report, having reviewed the information submitted, I consider that the proposed alterations would constitute the making of a material alteration of the terms of the development approved under ABP-318528-23 for the following reasons:

- The proposed alterations including for the 110kV underground cable and works at the existing ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation are located on lands outside of the 'red line' application site boundary for the permitted development. While landowner letters of consent have been submitted, other parties may have interests in the affected lands.
- It is proposed to connect the approved substation to the existing Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation by way of a 110kV grid connection (221 metres in length). Potential impacts may arise for the electricity transmission system and other electrical undertakers.
- The NIS in the approved ABP-318528-23 made provision for a 110kV grid cable connection from the Tincurrey substation to the Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation by way of horizontal directional drilling under the Lodgewood Stream, which has hydrological connectivity to European Sites. In the proposed alterations sought, the grid connection will be ducted through a proposed clear span bridge crossing the Lodgewood Stream. An updated Stage 2 Natura Impact Statement is submitted for the current subject application due to the potential effects on said European Sites. There is also the potential for impacts on biodiversity more generally, due to the felling of an area of forestry to accommodate the grid connection route to the Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation.

- Furthermore, Schedule 7A material has been submitted for the amending application.

8.1.3. Consequently, I prepared a memorandum dated 10th June 2026 to the Assistant Director of Planning recommending that the requester be notified that the proposed alterations would constitute the making of a material alteration of the terms of the development concerned. The Assistant Director of Planning, being authorised to make such a determination by resolution of the Commission under the provisions of the Act, agreed with my recommendation.

8.2. **Assessment Stage 2 - The Potential for Significant Environmental Effects**

8.2.1. The applicant has submitted Schedule 7A information. Section 146B(7)(a) of the Act outlines that, in making a determination, the Commission shall have regard to:

- (i) the criteria for the purposes of determining which classes of development are likely to have significant effects on the environment set out in any regulations made under section 176,*
- (ii) the criteria set out in Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001,*
- (iii) the information submitted pursuant to Schedule 7A to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001,*
- (iv) the further relevant information, if any, referred to in subsection (3A) and the description, if any, referred to in subsection (3B),*
- (v) the available results, where relevant, of preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to European Union legislation other than the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, and*
- (vi) in respect of an alteration under consideration which would be located on, or in, or have the potential to impact on—*
 - (I) a European site,*

- (II) an area the subject of a notice under section 16(2)(b) of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 (No. 38 of 2000),*
- (III) an area designated as a natural heritage area under section 18 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000,*
- (IV) land established or recognised as a nature reserve within the meaning of section 15 or 16 of the Wildlife Act 1976 (No. 39 of 1976),*
- (V) land designated as a refuge for flora or a refuge for fauna under section 17 of the Wildlife Act 1976,*
- (VI) a place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation, conservation or protection of which is an objective of a development plan or local area plan, draft development plan or draft local area plan, or proposed variation of a development plan, for the area in which the development is proposed, or*
- (VII) a place or site which has been included by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in a list of proposed Natural Heritage Areas published on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website, the likely significant effects of such alteration on such site, area, land, place or feature, as appropriate.*

8.2.2. Form 1 (Appendix 1) sets out the pre-screening undertaken and Form 3 (Appendix 2) sets out the EIA screening determination undertaken which concludes as follows:

Having regard to: -

1. the criteria set out in Schedule 7, in particular
 - (a) the nature and scale of the proposed development, which is below the thresholds in respect of *Class 1(a)* of Part 2 to Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as revised;
 - (b) the nature of the existing site and the existing and permitted pattern of development in the surrounding area;
 - (c) the location of the development outside of any sensitive location specified in article 109(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended);

(d) the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment submitted by the applicant, including the AA screening and NIS;

(e) the features and measures proposed by applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant effects on the environment; and

(f) the submission received

The Commission concluded that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and that an environmental impact assessment report is not required.

8.3. Appropriate Assessment – Screening (Stage 1)

The parent permission for the subject development, ABP-318528-23, was subject to AA Screening (Stage 1), and Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2). The proposed alteration has been subject to AA Screening:

Screening Determination

Significant effects cannot be excluded

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 it is not possible to exclude that the proposed development alone [or in combination with other plans and projects] will give rise to significant effects on European Sites Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA (004076), in view of the sites conservation objectives. Appropriate Assessment is required.

This determination is based on:

- The nature and scale of the works
- The hydrological connections to the European Sites and the potential for significant effects on QI habitats, QI species, SCI species, by way of pollution and deterioration of water quality,
- ex-situ impacts,

It is therefore determined that Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) [under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended] of the proposed alteration is required.

8.3.1. See Appendix 3 of this report for AA Screening.

8.4. **Appropriate Assessment – Stage 2**

Appropriate Assessment Conclusion: Integrity Test

In screening the need for Appropriate Assessment, it was determined that the proposed alteration could result in significant effects on Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA (004076), in view of the conservation objectives of those sites and that Appropriate Assessment under the provisions of S177V was required.

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the NIS and all associated material submitted, I consider that adverse effects on site integrity of the Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA (004076), can be excluded in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

My conclusion is based on the following:

- Detailed assessment of impacts.
- The respective site-specific conservation objectives, targets and attributes, QI's and SCI's of the respective European Sites as detailed and assessed in my Stage 2 AA as appended to this report (Appendix 4).
- Effectiveness of mitigation measures proposed and adoption of CEMP,
- Application of planning conditions to ensure measures
- the proposed development will not affect the attainment of conservation objectives for Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), and Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA (004076).

8.4.1. See Appendix 4 of this report for AA Stage 2.

8.5. Water Framework Directive Screening

- 8.5.1. An assessment of the proposed alteration 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 the River Basin Management Plan 2022–2027. The assessment is set out in Appendix 5 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 alteration development, and the mitigation measures proposed, it is concluded that the proposed alteration 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 alteration development is considered to be in compliance with the requirements of Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive.

9.0 Conditions of the Permission

- 9.1. As it is considered that the proposed alterations would constitute the making of a material alteration of the terms of the development approved under ABP-318528-23, it is therefore considered necessary to include a number of conditions. The outlined conditions, as set out in the Draft Order, are necessary to ensure that the overall development is carried out in accordance with the previous approval, to ensure the

protection of the environment, European Sites and their QI, SCI, and to mitigate ecological damage associated with the development.

10.0 Recommendation

I recommend that the Commission decides that (a) the making of the alterations subject of this request do constitute the making of a material alteration of the terms of the development as permitted under ABP-318528-23, and (b) the proposed modifications will not give rise to significant environmental effects or significant effects on the integrity of any European site, for the reasons stated below.

DRAFT ORDER

REQUEST received by An Coimisiun Pleanála on the 27th day of February 2026 from Lodgewood Solar Farm Limited under section 146B of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, to alter the terms of a strategic infrastructure development, approved under ABP-318528-23 for a ten-year permission that will constitute the provision of the following:

- A 110 kilovolt air-insulated substation (AIS) Single Bay Tail-Fed electricity substation (with 33 kilovolt customer compound) (including two control buildings, 33 kilovolt/110 kilovolt transformer and associated structures and apparatus, lightning protection, perimeter security fencing, security lighting, telecoms pole, water and drainage infrastructure, temporary construction compound) to connect to and serve solar farm developments; Associated grid connection between the proposed substation and the existing Lodgewood 220/110 kilovolt substation comprising 110 kilovolt underground electricity cables of circa 10 metres in length to be provided in an excavated trench including associated fibre cable and ducting, and all associated site development and reinstatement works;
- Temporary construction and operational access from the R772, vehicular entrance and access track (including one number drain deck crossing) from this public road; all ancillary site development, landscaping and earth works, all within the townlands of Tincurry, Ballylough and Crory, County Wexford.

WHEREAS the Commission made a decision to approve the proposed development, subject to conditions, for the above-mentioned development by order dated the 4th day of June, 2024.

AND WHEREAS the proposed alteration is described as follows:

1-The proposed amendments to the permitted substation includes the following elements:

- A 110kV substation compound consisting of a retained, redesigned and repositioned Independent Power Producer (IPP) Control Room and operations building (of concrete block structure with slate roof),
- A 110kV grid connection to the ESB Lodgewood 220kV substation, ESB interface kiosk, Busbar extension and new bay in the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation and all associated and ancillary infrastructure including access tracks,
- 1 No. temporary construction compound,
- 2 No. Storage Containers,
- 2 No. clear span bridge crossings (one where the access track crosses the Lodgewood Stream, the second to facilitate the Grid Connection Route (GCR) crossing of the Lodgewood Stream) and 1No. Dry Drain Culvert Crossing at the substation compound entrance,
- Widening of the access tracks in parts to accommodate the delivery of the transformer (abnormal load),
- Surface water drainage system, foul and potable water systems, and palisade fences.

2-The proposed project also includes the installation of HV electrical equipment including a retained and repositioned 110/33kV Transformer (TRAFO), with associated and ancillary equipment along with the retaining and repositioning of the following:

- Cable Sealing End (CSE);
- Surge Arrestor (SA);
- Earth Disconnect (DA, DB, DL, DT/DEM);
- Voltage Transformer (VT);
- Current Transformer (CT);
- House Transformer (HoT);
- Circuit Breaker (CB);
- Lightning Masts (LM);
- Diesel Generator;

- Harmonic filters if required by EirGrid;
- Capacitor Bank if required by EirGrid;
- Fire/Blast Wall;
- Telecoms Pole; and
- 110kV underground cable (retained, extended and repositioned)

3-The proposed project also comprises newly proposed components and permanent works at the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation including:

- New single bay connection point,
- Busbar extension,
- HV Switchgear,
- Circuit Breaker (CB),
- Isolators,
- Cable Sealing End (CSE),
- Surge Arrestor (SA),
- Earth Disconnect (DT/DEM),
- Current /Voltage Transformer (CT/VT),
- LCC and Control & Protection cabinet, and
- All associated and ancillary civil and electrical infrastructure.

AND WHEREAS the Commission decided, in accordance with section 146B(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that the proposed alterations would result in a material alteration to the terms of the development, the subject of the approval,

AND WHEREAS having regard to the issues involved, the Commission decided, in accordance with section 146B(8)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, to invite submissions or observations from the public in relation to the matter,

AND WHEREAS having considered all of the documents on file and the Inspector's report, the Commission considered that the making of the proposed alteration would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment or on any European Site, **NOW THEREFORE** in accordance with section 146B(3)(b)(ii)(I) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, the Commission hereby alters the abovementioned decision so that the approved development shall be altered in accordance with the plans and particulars received by An Coimisiun Pleanála on the 27th day of February 2026, for the reasons and considerations set out below.

REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

In coming to its decision, the Commission had regard to the following:

- (a) the nature and scale of the development approved by An Coimisiun Pleanála under Reference Number ABP-318528-23
- (b) the examination of the environmental impacts, including in relation to European Sites, carried out in the course of that application,
- (c) The nature and scale of the proposed alteration,
- (d) The documentation and submission on file, and
- (e) The report of the Commission's Inspector, which is adopted

The Commission was satisfied that the information before it was adequate to undertake a screening for environmental impact assessment and Appropriate Assessment in respect of the proposed alteration, and considered that the proposed alteration would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment or on any European Site. In accordance with section 146B(3)(b)(ii) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, the Commission hereby makes the said alteration.

Appropriate Assessment Screening (Stage 1)

In conducting a screening exercise for appropriate assessment, the Commission considered the nature, scale and context of the proposed alteration, the documentation on file including the Report in Support of AA Screening submitted with the application, and the assessment of the Inspector in relation to the potential for effects on European Sites. In undertaking the screening exercise, the Commission accepted the analysis and conclusions of the Inspector. The Commission concluded that, by itself or in combination with other development in the vicinity, the proposed alteration would be likely to have significant effects on the European Sites, Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), Wexford Harbour and Sloba SPA (004076), in view of their conservation objectives. A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is therefore, required.

Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2)

The Commission considered the Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted with the application, the mitigation measures contained therein, and the Inspector's assessment. The Commission completed an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the European sites for which potential to have a significant effect had been identified, namely, Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), Wexford Harbour and Sloba SPA (004076), in view of the site's conservation objectives. The Commission considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an appropriate assessment. In completing the appropriate assessment, the Commission considered, in particular, the following:

- i. the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development both individually or in combination with other plans or projects,
- ii. the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal, and
- iii. the conservation objectives for the European Sites.

In completing the appropriate assessment, the Commission accepted and adopted the appropriate assessment carried out in the Inspector's report in respect of the

potential effects of the proposed development on the integrity of the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the site's conservation objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Commission was satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Having regard to: -

1. the criteria set out in Schedule 7, in particular
 - (a) the nature and scale of the proposed development, which is below the thresholds in respect of *Class 1(a)* of Part 2 to Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as revised;
 - (b) the nature of the existing site and the existing and permitted pattern of development in the surrounding area;
 - (c) the location of the development outside of any sensitive location specified in article 109(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended);
 - (d) the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment submitted by the applicant, including the AA screening and NIS;
 - (e) the features and measures proposed by applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant effects on the environment; and
 - (f) the submission received

The Commission concluded that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and that an environmental impact assessment report is not required.

11.0 Conditions

1. Apart from the alterations hereby authorised, as detailed in the plans and particulars lodged with the request, the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the approval granted on the 4th day of June 2024 under application reference number ABP-318528-23, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and to ensure that the overall development is carried out in accordance with the previous approval.

2.(a) The additional environmental, construction and ecological mitigation and monitoring measures set out in the Planning and Environmental Considerations Report, the Natura Impact Statement and other particulars submitted with the request shall be incorporated into the Construction and Environmental Management Plan required under Condition 4 of approval reference number ABP-318528-23 and shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority.

(b) Details of the mitigation measures for Qualifying Interest otter species of the Slaney River Valley SAC, as set out in the Natura Impact Statement in the approval reference number ABP-318528-23, shall be incorporated into the Construction and Environmental Management Plan and shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of clarity and the protection of the environment, and European Sites and their QI species during the construction phase of the development.

3. Details of measures to create an area of compensatory habitat in order to mitigate ecological damage, as set out in Section 3.9 of the Planning and Environmental

Considerations Report, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of mitigating ecological damage associated with the development

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

8th September 2026

Appendix 1

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ACP-324115-26
Proposed Development Summary	Section 146B application for proposed alterations to the terms of the permitted development Tincurry 110kV Substation, case reference number ABP-318528-23, summarised as follows: 1-The proposed amendments to the permitted substation includes the following elements: • A 110kV substation compound consisting of a retained, redesigned and repositioned Independent Power Producer (IPP) Control Room and operations building (of concrete block structure with slate roof), • A 110kV grid connection to the ESB Lodgewood 220kV substation, ESB interface kiosk, Busbar extension and new bay in the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation and all associated and ancillary infrastructure including access tracks, • 1 No. temporary construction compound, • 2 No. Storage Containers, • 2 No. clear span bridge crossings (one where the access track crosses the Lodgewood Stream, the second to facilitate the Grid Connection Route (GCR) crossing of the Lodgewood Stream) and 1No. Dry Drain Culvert Crossing at the substation compound entrance, • Widening of the access tracks in parts to accommodate the delivery of the transformer (abnormal load), • Surface water drainage system, foul and potable water systems, and palisade fences. 2-The proposed project also includes the installation of HV electrical equipment including a retained and repositioned 110/33kV Transformer (TRAFO), with associated and ancillary equipment along with the retaining and repositioning of the following: • Cable Sealing End (CSE); • Surge Arrestor (SA); • Earth Disconnect (DA, DB, DL, DT/DEM); • Voltage Transformer (VT); • Current Transformer (CT); • House Transformer (HoT); • Circuit Breaker (CB); • Lightning Masts (LM); • Diesel Generator; • Harmonic filters if required by EirGrid; • Capacitor Bank if required by EirGrid; • Fire/Blast Wall; • Telecoms Pole; and • 110kV underground cable (retained, extended and repositioned) 3-The proposed project also comprises newly proposed components and permanent works at the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation including: • New single bay connection point,

	• Busbar extension, • HV Switchgear, • Circuit Breaker (CB), • Isolators, • Cable Sealing End (CSE), • Surge Arrestor (SA), • Earth Disconnect (DT/DEM), • Current /Voltage Transformer (CT/VT), • LCC and Control & Protection cabinet, and • All associated and ancillary civil and electrical infrastructure.
Development Address	Within the townlands of Tincurry, Ballylough, Crory and Lodgewood, County Wexford
	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 Part 1, 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. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
☒ 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.	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
☒ 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)	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: <i>(a) 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.</i> The proposal will involve the removal of hedgerow of 72 metres to facilitate access, which is well below the 4km threshold specified. Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, I do not consider that issues arise in relation to re-contouring of lands. On the basis of the removal of field boundaries, it is considered that the proposal does come within the scope of this class, and it is subthreshold. Class 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 5: Infrastructure Projects: This includes: <i>(dd) All private roads which would exceed 2000m in length.</i> The proposed development will include for permeable gravel access tracks. I consider that the proposed internal access tracks are not a 'private road' by virtue of these being used as internal access tracks. In addition, the access tracks will be used for operational and maintenance purposes once the site is operational. It is therefore my opinion that the site access tracks are not a 'private road' for the purposes of EIA screening. Class 15 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 - 'Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7'. Schedule 7A information has been submitted as part of the application, and Form 3 is required and has been completed, as set out below.
4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes ☒	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No ☐	

Appendix 2

Form 3 - EIA Screening Determination

A. CASE DETAILS	
Case Reference	ACP-324115-26
Development Summary	Section 146B application for proposed alterations to the terms of the permitted development Tincurry 110kV Substation, case reference number ABP-318528-23, summarised as follows: 1-The proposed amendments to the permitted substation includes the following elements: • A 110kV substation compound consisting of a retained, redesigned and repositioned Independent Power Producer (IPP) Control Room and operations building (of concrete block structure with slate roof), • A 110kV grid connection to the ESB Lodgewood 220kV substation, ESB interface kiosk, Busbar extension and new bay in the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation and all associated and ancillary infrastructure including access tracks, • 1 No. temporary construction compound, • 2 No. Storage Containers, • 2 No. clear span bridge crossings (one where the access track crosses the Lodgewood Stream, the second to facilitate the Grid Connection Route (GCR) crossing of the Lodgewood Stream) and 1No. Dry Drain Culvert Crossing at the substation compound entrance, • Widening of the access tracks in parts to accommodate the delivery of the transformer (abnormal load), • Surface water drainage system, foul and potable water systems, and palisade fences. 2-The proposed project also includes the installation of HV electrical equipment including a retained and repositioned 110/33kV Transformer (TRAFO), with associated and ancillary equipment along with the retaining and repositioning of the following: • Cable Sealing End (CSE); • Surge Arrestor (SA); • Earth Disconnect (DA, DB, DL, DT/DEM); • Voltage Transformer (VT); • Current Transformer (CT); • House Transformer (HoT); • Circuit Breaker (CB); • Lightning Masts (LM); • Diesel Generator; • Harmonic filters if required by EirGrid; • Capacitor Bank if required by EirGrid;

	• Fire/Blast Wall; • Telecoms Pole; and • 110kV underground cable (retained, extended and repositioned) 3-The proposed project also comprises newly proposed components and permanent works at the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation including: • New single bay connection point, • Busbar extension, • HV Switchgear, • Circuit Breaker (CB), • Isolators, • Cable Sealing End (CSE), • Surge Arrestor (SA), • Earth Disconnect (DT/DEM), • Current /Voltage Transformer (CT/VT), • LCC and Control & Protection cabinet, and • All associated and ancillary civil and electrical infrastructure	
	Yes / No / N/A	Comment (if relevant)
1. Was a Screening determination carried out by the PA?	n/a	n/a
2. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?	Yes	An EIA Screening Report has been submitted.
3. Has an AA screening report or NIS been submitted?	Yes	An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been submitted.
4. Is a IED/ IPC or Waste Licence (or review of licence) required from the EPA? If YES has the EPA commented on the need for an EIAR?	No	n/a
5. Have any other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment which have a significant bearing on the project been carried out pursuant to other relevant Directives – for example SEA		SEA and AA were undertaken in respect of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 A submitted Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (PECR) includes for: • Biodiversity Assessment • Hydrology and Hydrogeology Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment • Soils and Geology Assessment • Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment • Noise and Vibration Assessment • Cultural Heritage Assessment • Traffic and Transport Assessment

		• Mitigation outlined in a CEMP • Arboricultural Impact Assessment • Decommissioning and Restoration Plan	
B. EXAMINATION	Yes/ No/ Uncertain	Briefly describe the nature and extent and Mitigation Measures (where relevant) (having regard to the probability, magnitude (including population size affected), complexity, duration, frequency, intensity, and reversibility of impact) Mitigation measures –Where relevant specify features or measures proposed by the applicant to avoid or prevent a significant effect.	Is this likely to result in significant effects on the environment? Yes/ No/ Uncertain
This screening examination should be read with, and in light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith			
1. Characteristics of proposed development (including demolition, construction, operation, or decommissioning)			
1.1 Is the project significantly different in character or scale to the existing surrounding or environment?	Yes	The surrounding environment includes agricultural lands. There is also a clear consistency in the nature and scale of development in the immediate surrounding area, with an existing 220kV and 110kV substation located to the west of the site. It is envisaged that the proposal will result in the loss of c.72 meters of hedgerow to facilitate access. The volume of hedgerow to be removed is considered not significant given the remaining linear features present in the surrounding environment.	No

		As such I do not consider that the proposed development would be considered to be significantly different in character or scale to the existing and surrounding pattern of development.	
1.2 Will construction, operation, decommissioning or demolition works cause physical changes to the locality (topography, land use, waterbodies)?	Yes	The proposed development has been designed to logically address the alterations in topography on site, resulting in minimal change in the locality. The proposal includes the removal of hedgerows to facilitate access (c72 m). There will be the removal of 800 sq m of woodland habitat. Compensation planting for the loss of woodland habitat includes an area of 1,600 sq m of native shrub and tree species, and hedgerow planting.	No
1.3 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy, especially resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes	Use of natural resources include land, woodland, hedgerow, construction materials. The extent of land use is limited in the context of the rural area. The process will be managed through the implementation of a CEMP (Construction and Environmental Management Plan). The loss of natural resources (hedgerow) is not regarded as significant in nature.	No
1.4 Will the project involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of substance which would be harmful to human health or the environment?	Yes	Hedgerow removal activities will require the use of potentially harmful materials, such as fuels and other such substances. Use of such materials would be typical for construction sites. Any impacts would be local and temporary in nature and the implementation of the standard construction practice measures in a CEMP and Construction Methodology would satisfactorily mitigate potential impacts. No operational impacts in this regard are anticipated.	No
1.5 Will the project produce solid waste, release pollutants or any hazardous / toxic / noxious substances?	Yes	Hedgerow removal activities will require the use of potentially harmful materials, such as fuels and other similar substances for necessary machinery and	No

		may give rise to waste for disposal. The use of these materials would be typical for construction sites. Noise and dust emissions during these activities are likely. Such impacts would be local and temporary in nature, and and with the implementation of the standard measures outlined in the Construction and Environmental Management Plan, the project would satisfactorily mitigate the potential impacts.	
1.6 Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes	The project involves removal of hedgerow at a number of locations within the site. To facilitate same, standard construction methods, materials and equipment are to be used, and the process would be managed through the implementation of the CEMP and best practice construction methods to prevent water pollution. Accordingly, as risks of contamination to ground or water bodies are mitigated and managed, I do not consider this aspect of the project would be likely to result in a significant effect on the environment.	No
1.7 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes	There is potential for hedgerow removal activity to give rise to noise and vibration emissions. The works would be short term in duration, and impacts arising would be temporary, localised, and be managed through implementation of the CEMP, which would comply with the recognised best practice standards typically adopted for such projects.	No
1.8 Will there be any risks to human health, for example due to water contamination or air pollution?	Yes	Hedgerow removal activity would be temporary and localised in nature and the application of standard measures within the CEMP would satisfactorily address potential risks on human health. During construction any material or substance which could	No

		cause pollution, will be prevented from entering groundwater, surface water drains or watercourses by the measures set out in the CEMP. No significant operational impacts are anticipated.	
1.9 Will there be any risk of major accidents that could affect human health or the environment?	Yes	Having regard to the nature of the proposed alteration, I do not consider that it gives rise to any significant risk of major accidents or disasters, other than construction phase health and safety risks which can be readily mitigated through compliance with good practice construction methods and H&S legislation and guidance. Risks of accidental spillages or pollution can be addressed through implementation of the CEMP.	No
1.10 Will the project affect the social environment (population, employment)	Yes	I do not consider the removal of hedgerow will likely result in a significant effect on the social environment of the area.	No
1.11 Is the project part of a wider large scale change that could result in cumulative effects on the environment?	Yes	Solar farm and BESS developments have been permitted in the immediate area in recent years (as set out in Section 3 'Planning History'). The greatest potential for cumulative effects would be landscape and visual effects. Given the existing intervening topography and vegetation which exists between the proposed and permitted developments, I consider that significant cumulative impacts would not occur.	No
2. Location of proposed development			
2.1 Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining or have the potential to impact on any of the following: - European site (SAC/ SPA/ pSAC/ pSPA) - NHA/ pNHA - Designated Nature Reserve - Designated refuge for flora or fauna - Place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation/conservation/	Yes	The project is not located on or in any designated or proposed NHA, or any other listed area of ecological interest or protection. The pNHA Clone Fox Covert is located c.0.7km southeast of the site, with the pNHA Slaney River Valley c.2.6km south of the site. The closest European site is the Slaney River Valley SAC, within 0.2km of the proposed	No

protection of which is an objective of a development plan/ LAP/ draft plan or variation of a plan		development, with the Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA c.8.8km from the site. I have considered impacts on European Sites in Appendix 3 and 4 and I have concluded therein that adverse effects on site integrity of the Slaney River Valley SAC, and the Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA can be excluded, in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects. In conclusion, I do not consider the project will likely result in a significant effect on the environment in terms of ecological designations or biodiversity.	
2.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, for example: for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?	Yes	No rare or protected floral species were recorded. The Biodiversity Assessment states that badger setts were identified on site, as well as suitable habitat existing for otter, fish, amphibians, invertebrates. Habitat with potential bat roosting is identified. The Biodiversity Assessment notes that bird species were identified within the mixed broadleaved woodland onsite. Where potential for effects on species are identified, mitigation measures are set out in the Biodiversity Assessment and CEMP to ensure no significant impacts on same. Mitigation measures as set out would include compensation planting. With mitigation, as set out in the Biodiversity Assessment, I am satisfied that no significant effects on any species are likely to arise. Issues in relation to European Sites and QI/SCI are addressed under AA.	No
2.3 Are there any other features of landscape, historic, archaeological, or cultural importance that could be affected?	No	There are no recorded sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance within the site of the proposed alteration or in the immediate	No

		vicinity. I do not therefore consider hedgerow removal will likely result in a significant effect on the environment in terms of archaeology and cultural heritage.	
2.4 Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, for example: forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals?	Yes	The proposed development will include the use of agricultural lands, woodland and hedgerows. Mitigation measures as set out would include compensation planting. The extent of hedgerow removal is minimal in the context of the rural area.	No
2.5 Are there any water resources including surface waters, for example: rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or groundwaters which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	Yes	Water courses are located onsite, and the site is located within Flood Zone C. However, the removal of hedgerow is not expected to give rise to increased surface water runoff (volumes or rates). As such, no significant impact on water courses, nor any significantly increased flood risk, will result from same.	No
2.6 Is the location susceptible to subsidence, landslides or erosion?	No	There is no evidence identified of these risks.	No
2.7 Are there any key transport routes(eg National primary Roads) on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	No	The site is served by regional and national roads. No significant contribution to traffic congestion is anticipated to arise from the proposed development, subject to the application of standard mitigation measures.	No
2.8 Are there existing sensitive land uses or community facilities (such as hospitals, schools etc) which could be affected by the project?	No	No such uses in the immediate area which could be affected by the project.	No
3. Any other factors that should be considered which could lead to environmental impacts			
3.1 Cumulative Effects: Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulative effects during the construction/ operation phase?	Yes	There are a number of existing and permitted developments in the surrounding area, including solar and BESS development. Given the nature and extent of the proposed	No

		alteration and the identified mitigation, including the CEMP, and mitigation planting, I do not consider that any significant cumulative impacts are likely.	
3.2 Transboundary Effects: Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	No	No transboundary effects arise	No
3.3 Are there any other relevant considerations?	No		No
C. CONCLUSION			
No real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	x	EIAR Not Required	
Real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.		EIAR Required	
D. MAIN REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS			
Having regard to: - 1. the criteria set out in Schedule 7, in particular (a) the nature and scale of the proposed development, which is below the thresholds in respect of <i>Class 1(a)</i> of Part 2 to Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as revised; (b) the nature of the existing site and the existing and permitted pattern of development in the surrounding area; (c) the location of the development outside of any sensitive location specified in article 109(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended); (d) the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment submitted by the applicant, including the AA screening and NIS; (e) the features and measures proposed by applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant effects on the environment; and (f) the submission received The Commission concluded that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and that an environmental impact assessment report is not required.			

Inspector _____ **Date** _____

Approved (DP/ADP) _____ **Date** _____

Appendix 3 - 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-324115-26	
Brief description of project	A detailed description of the proposed alteration is included in Section 5.0 of the Inspector Report and detailed specifications of the proposal are provided in the AA Screening and NIS and other planning documents provided by the applicant. The proposed alteration comprises a modification of the permitted Tincurry 110kV substation and associated grid connection (ABP-318528-23), which will serve the consented but not built Tincurry solar farm (reg. ref. 20221309), Ballylough solar farm (reg. ref. 20231025) and BESS (reg ref: 20241593) to the existing Lodgewood 220/110 kV substation. The applicant is seeking to alter the terms of the development, subject of the permission granted under ABP-318528-23, summarised as follows: 1-The proposed amendments to the permitted substation includes the following elements: • A 110kV substation compound consisting of a retained, redesigned and repositioned Independent Power Producer (IPP) Control Room and operations building (of concrete block structure with slate roof), • A 110kV grid connection to the ESB Lodgewood 220kV substation, ESB interface kiosk, Busbar extension and new bay in the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation and all associated and ancillary infrastructure including access tracks, • 1 No. temporary construction compound, • 2 No. Storage Containers, • 2 No. clear span bridge crossings (one where the access track crosses the Lodgewood Stream, the second to facilitate the Grid Connection Route (GCR) crossing of the Lodgewood Stream) and 1No. Dry Drain Culvert Crossing at the substation compound entrance, • Widening of the access tracks in parts to accommodate the delivery of the transformer (abnormal load),

	• Surface water drainage system, foul and potable water systems, and palisade fences. 2-The proposed project also includes the installation of HV electrical equipment including a retained and repositioned 110/33kV Transformer (TRAFO), with associated and ancillary equipment along with the retaining and repositioning of the following: • Cable Sealing End (CSE); • Surge Arrestor (SA); • Earth Disconnect (DA, DB, DL, DT/DEM); • Voltage Transformer (VT); • Current Transformer (CT); • House Transformer (HoT); • Circuit Breaker (CB); • Lightning Masts (LM); • Diesel Generator; • Harmonic filters if required by EirGrid; • Capacitor Bank if required by EirGrid; • Fire/Blast Wall; • Telecoms Pole; and • 110kV underground cable (retained, extended and repositioned) 3-The proposed project also comprises newly proposed components and permanent works at the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation including: • New single bay connection point, • Busbar extension, • HV Switchgear, • Circuit Breaker (CB), • Isolators, • Cable Sealing End (CSE), • Surge Arrestor (SA), • Earth Disconnect (DT/DEM), • Current /Voltage Transformer (CT/VT), • LCC and Control & Protection cabinet, and • All associated and ancillary civil and electrical infrastructure. The Construction Methodology document submitted outlines the grid connection cable will be c.221 metres in length and will connect the 110kV substation to a proposed new cable bay within the existing Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation. The cable will consist of a cable trench 825mm wide and 1315mm deep containing ducts (for power, communication,
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	earth continuity). The cable will also include a control and protection cable trench 449mm wide and 925mm deep. The cable route will include a 10.85m bridge to facilitate a dry crossing of the Lodgewood Stream. The bridge will consist of concrete deck on precast beams, pilecaps and bored cast in-situ piles. A 3 metre wide access track is included above the grid connection cable between the Lodgewood stream crossing and the Lodgewood 220kV/110kV Substation.
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	In summary, the proposed alteration site comprises an area of 4.86 hectares, entailing agricultural lands, forestry, and part of the existing Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation site. The construction phase will be 24 months. The proposal will involve earthworks, the removal of trees, hedgerow, with replanting proposed. The alteration includes for 2 No. clear span bridge crossings (one where the access track crosses the Lodgewood Stream, the second to facilitate the grid connection route crossing of the Lodgewood Stream). The proposed grid connection cable will be ducted through the proposed clear span bridge crossing the stream at the approved substation site. One abutment of this bridge will be constructed in a parallel dry channel. The grid connection will continue west passing through a combination of forest and greenfield lands before entering the existing ESB Lodgewood 220kV substation. A corridor free of trees and roots will be created for the installation of the cable. Potential impact mechanisms include for: impacts on surface waters, by way of pollution, contamination; the potential loss of foraging habitat; Potential disturbance by way of noise at construction stage. NOTE: It is noted that the NIS in the approved ABP-318528-23 made provision for a 110kV grid cable connection from the Tincurrey substation to the Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation by way of horizontal directional drilling under the Lodgewood Stream. In ABP-318528-23, the second phase of the grid connection, while not forming part of the application, was included in the NIS for completeness purposes in order to ensure a 'whole project' description was provided.
Screening report	Y – The project AA Screening Report and NIS in 318528-23 has been revised and updated for the S.146B application.
Natura Impact Statement	Y
Relevant submissions	n/a
Additional Information – n/a	

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

Sources of potential effects considered in the applicants AA Screening, prepared by Tobin (February 2026) include: Generation of silt-laden runoff; Generated dust deposition into river water bodies; Accidental release of fine sediment or cement to river channels; Accidental spillage of contaminants to river channels; Habitat removal; Noise; Vibration; Visual causes of disturbance/displacement. Potential pathways include for hydrological pathways, ex-situ habitat loss, ex-situ disturbance.

2 no. European sites were 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 hydrological pathways, and foraging, and/or roosting ranges of SCI and QI species of the SPA, SAC.

The applicants AA screening report has not considered the following European Sites which were considered in the AA screening process in ABP-318528-23: Blackstairs Mountains SAC (000770), River Barrow and River Nore SAC (002162), The Raven SPA (004019), and I have included these sites in my AA screening assessment.

I have therefore included for 5 no. European sites in further screening considerations as follows.

European Site (code)	Qualifying interests	Distance proposed development (km)	Ecological connections	Consider further in screening ³ Y/N
Slaney River Valley SAC 000781	1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> 1095 Sea Lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> 1096 Brook Lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> 1099 River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> 1103 Twaite Shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> 1106 Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> (only in fresh water) 1130 Estuaries 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> 1365 Harbour Seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i> 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles 91E0* Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	0.2km over land c.0.8km downstream	Hydrological connection exists between site and SAC. Site is connected to SAC by the Lodgewood and Tincurry Streams which are tributaries of the River Bann, which are within or within close proximity to the site.	Yes

	(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) Atlantic salt meadows (Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]			
Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076)	A004 Little Grebe Tachybaptus ruficollis wintering A005 Great Crested Grebe Podiceps cristatus wintering A017 Cormorant Phalacrocorax carbo wintering A028 Grey Heron Ardea cinerea wintering A037 Bewick's Swan Cygnus columbianus wintering A038 Whooper Swan Cygnus cygnus wintering A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose Branta bernicla hrota wintering A048 Shelduck Tadorna tadorna wintering A050 Wigeon Anas penelope wintering A052 Teal Anas crecca wintering A053 Mallard Anas platyrhynchos wintering A054 Pintail Anas acuta wintering A062 Scaup Aythya marila wintering A067 Goldeneye Bucephala clangula wintering A069 Red-breasted Merganser Mergus serrator wintering A082 Hen Harrier Circus cyaneus post-breeding/roost A125 Coot Fulica atra wintering A130 Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus wintering A140 Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria wintering A141 Grey Plover Pluvialis squatarola wintering A142 Lapwing Vanellus vanellus wintering	c.8.8km over land c.12.3km downstream	Hydrological connection exists between site and SPA. Site is connected to SPA by the Lodgewood and Tincurry Streams which are tributaries of the River Bann, which are within or within close proximity to the site. Potential ornithological connection exists.	Yes

	A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> wintering A144 Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> wintering A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> wintering A156 Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> wintering A157 Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> wintering A160 Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> wintering A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> wintering A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> wintering A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> wintering A195 Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> breeding A395 Greenland White-fronted goose <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i> wintering A999 Wetlands			
Blackstairs Mountains SAC (000770)	Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010] European dry heaths [4030]	c.12km over land	The proposed development site is located downstream and c.12km from the upland SAC. Therefore the project can have no effect on the upstream SAC.	No
River Barrow and River Nore SAC (002162)	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Reefs [1170] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] European dry heaths [4030] Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]	c.15.7km over land	Given the distance and hydrological separation from the SAC there is no likelihood of significant effects to arise on this site	No

	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016] Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095] Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099] Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad) [1103] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern) [1421]			
The Raven SPA (004019)	Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) [A001] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017] Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144] Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris) [A395] Wetlands and Waterbirds [A999]	c.22km over land c.40km Downstream	Hydrological connection exists between site and SPA. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, the separation distance of the proposed development from this site, the length of the hydrological link, the dilution and dispersion action of watercourses and waterbodies, the potential for significant effects on this site to arise from the proposed development is unlikely.	No
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 ³if no connections: N				
Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone <u>or</u> in combination) on European Sites				

With a hydrological connection to the **Slaney River Valley SAC**, the proposed alteration development has the potential to result in indirect effects on QI habitats and QI species of the SAC by way of water pollution, siltation and contamination during the construction phase. This includes for potential for ex-situ effects on QI otter species, with desk studies and surveys identifying this species being active within the vicinity of the proposed alteration site. I note aquatic systems and the species/habitats which are dependent on these systems are sensitive to pollution/contamination of surface waters.

With a hydrological connection to the **Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA**, the proposed development also has the potential to result in indirect effects on QI habitat and SCI species of the SPA, by way of water pollution, siltation and contamination during the construction phase. I note aquatic systems and the species/habitats which are dependent on these systems are sensitive to pollution/contamination of surface waters. There is also a potential for ex-situ effects on SCI species by way of disturbance.

Other European Sites

The possibility of significant effects on remaining European Sites listed has been excluded on the basis of objective information. No direct habitat loss will occur within a European Site given the distance of the proposed development site from these sites. The proposed development site is located downstream of the upland **Blackstairs Mountains SAC (000770)** and is situated over 12km from the SAC. Given this separation distance and the lack of hydrological connectivity, the potential for significant effects to arise on this site can be ruled out. Disturbance impacts on the SAC can be ruled out as its conservation objectives relate to habitats and not fauna. The **River Barrow and River Nore SAC (002162)** is located c.15.7km from the site. Given the distance and hydrological separation of the proposed development from the SAC there is no likelihood of significant effects to arise on this site.

The European sites as set out **Blackstairs Mountains SAC (site code 000770)**, **River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162)**, can be screened out from further assessment because of the nature and scale of the proposed works, their separation distances from the proposed development site, and the lack of any substantive hydrological linkage between the proposed works and these European sites. It is therefore considered that the potential for significant effects on these sites to arise from the proposed development are unlikely.

The Raven SPA (004019) can be screened out from further assessment because of the nature and scale of the proposed works, the nature of the Conservation Objectives, Qualifying and Special Conservation 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 SPA which is via streams and rivers at a significant distance of approx. 40km (nearest point is 22km), 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, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on **European Site No. 004019 (The Raven SPA)** in view of the sites conservation objectives and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required for this site.

Sources of impact and likely significant effects are 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: Slaney River Valley SAC 000781 QI list 1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel	Direct: Works are not proposed within the SAC and there will be no direct impact on the SAC.	Potential damage to QI habitats associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the QI habitats and QI species dependent on water quality,

Margaritifera margaritifera 1095 Sea Lamprey Petromyzon marinus 1096 Brook Lamprey Lampetra planeri 1099 River Lamprey Lampetra fluviatilis 1103 Twaite Shad Alosa fallax 1106 Atlantic Salmon Salmo salar (only in fresh water) 1130 Estuaries 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1355 Otter Lutra lutra 1365 Harbour Seal Phoca vitulina 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion Fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles 91E0* Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]	Indirect: There is a potential for release of sediment during site works, release of construction related pollution including contaminants to surface waters, which could impact QI habitats and QI species. Increased human disturbance at proposed site, particularly during the construction phase.	an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives Disturbance of QI species otter.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Y	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects?	
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* Possibility of significant effects cannot be ruled out without further analysis and assessment	
	Impacts	Effects
Site 2: Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA QI list A004 Little Grebe Tachybaptus ruficollis wintering A005 Great Crested Grebe Podiceps cristatus wintering	Direct: None Indirect: There is a potential for release of sediment during site works, release of construction related pollution including contaminants to surface waters, which could impact QI habitat and SCI species.	Potential damage to QI habitat associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the QI habitat and SCI species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives. Disturbance of SCI species.

A017 Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> wintering A028 Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i> winte ring A037 Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbia</i> nus wintering A038 Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> wintering A046 Light- bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta berni</i> cla hrota wintering A048 Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> winte ring A050 Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i> winterin g A052 Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> wintering A053 Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> wint ering A054 Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> wintering A062 Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i> wintering A067 Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i> wintering A069 Red- breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serr</i> ator wintering A082 Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> pos t-breeding/roost A125 Coot <i>Fulica atra</i> wintering A130 Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostr</i> legus wintering A140 Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> wintering A141 Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> wintering A142 Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> winte ring A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> wintering A144	Increased human disturbance at proposed site, particularly during the construction phase.	
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Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> wintering A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> wintering A156 Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> wintering A157 Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> wintering A160 Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> wintering A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> wintering A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> wintering A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> wintering A195 Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> breeding A395 Greenland White-fronted goose <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i> wintering A999 Wetlands		
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Y	
	If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects?	
	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site* Possibility of significant effects cannot be ruled out without further analysis and assessment	
Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site		
Based on the information provided in the AA screening report, my site visit, and a review of the conservation objectives and supporting documents, I consider that in the absence of mitigation measures, the proposed development has the potential to result in significant effects on Slaney River Valley SAC, and Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA, from effects associated with the proposed development including potential damage to QI habitats, QI species and SCI species by way of pollution and deterioration of water quality; from ex-situ impacts, due to disturbance. I concur with the applicants' findings that potential effects could be significant, in terms of the stated conservation objectives of the Slaney River Valley SAC, and Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA. An appropriate assessment is required on the basis of the possible effects of the project 'alone'.		

Screening Determination

Significant effects cannot be excluded

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 it is not possible to exclude that the proposed development alone [or in combination with other plans and projects] will give rise to significant effects on European Sites Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA (004076), in view of the sites conservation objectives. Appropriate Assessment is required.

This determination is based on:

- The nature and scale of the works
- The hydrological connections to the European Sites and the potential for significant effects on QI habitats, QI species, SCI species, by way of pollution and deterioration of water quality,
- ex-situ impacts,

It is therefore determined that Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) [under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended] of the proposed alteration is required.

Appendix 4 - Appropriate Assessment and AA Determination

Appropriate Assessment				
The requirements of Article 6(3) as related to appropriate assessment of a project under part XAB, sections 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) are considered fully in this section.				
Taking account of the preceding screening determination, the following is an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed alteration development in view of the relevant conservation objectives of European Sites Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), and Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA (004076). The information relied upon includes the following: • Natura Impact Statement prepared by Tobin • Construction and Environmental Management Plan • NPWS data I am satisfied that the information provided is adequate to allow for Appropriate Assessment. I am satisfied that all aspects of the project which could result in significant effects are considered and assessed in the NIS and mitigation measures designed to avoid or reduce any adverse effects on site integrity are included and assessed for effectiveness.				
Submissions/observations See Step 1 of Appendix 3 of the preceding screening determination				
Site 1 Slaney River Valley SAC (000781) Summary of Key issues that could give rise to adverse effects (from screening stage): i)Water quality pollution/degradation of QI Habitats (ii)Water quality degradation and QI species iii)Disturbance of Otter See Table 6-1 NIS				
Qualifying Interest features likely to be affected	Conservation Objectives Targets and attributes (summary)	Potential adverse effects	Mitigation measures (summary)	
1130 Estuaries	To maintain the favourable conservation condition Habitat area-The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes; Community distribution-following community types should be maintained in, or restored to, a natural condition: Mixed sediment community complex; Estuarine muds dominated by polychaetes and crustaceans community complex; and Sand dominated by polychaetes community complex.	Potential damage to QI habitat associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives	NIS SECTION 7 Best practice pollution control measures at construction stage Supervision by Ecological Clerk of Works, Implementation of CEMP Water quality protection and management measures (with measures outlined for prevention, secluding works, stock piling areas, use of silt fencing; spillage and cement controls; designated storage areas for contaminants; refuelling controls; best practice machinery movement, operation and maintenance	
1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	To maintain the favourable conservation condition	Potential damage to QI habitat associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons		

	Habitat area- The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes; Community distribution- The following community types should be maintained in a natural condition: Estuarine muds dominated by polychaetes and crustaceans community complex; and Sand dominated by polychaetes community complex.	and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives	measures; An emergency plan. Biosecurity measures will be employed and have regard to IFI Biosecurity Protocols including: 'IFI Biosecurity Protocol for Field Survey Work (December 2010)'; In relation to mitigation for other species, see section <i>Assessment of issues that could give rise to adverse effects in view of conservation objectives</i>	
3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion Fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation	To maintain the favourable conservation condition Habitat distribution- No decline, subject to Natural processes; Habitat area- Area stable at 12.6km or increasing, subject to natural processes; Hydrological regime: river flow- Maintain appropriate hydrological regimes; Hydrological regime: tidal influence- Maintain natural tidal regime	Potential damage to QI habitat associated with siltation, inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives		
91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles	To restore the favourable conservation condition No risk- no viable pathway exists			
91E0* Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)	To restore the favourable conservation condition Habitat area- Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, at least 18.7ha for sites surveyed; Habitat distribution- No decline	Potential damage to QI habitat associated with siltation, inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives		
Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330] As detailed in S.I. No. 637 of 2023		Potential damage to habitat associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase;		
Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] As detailed in S.I. No. 637 of 2023		Potential damage to habitat associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase;		
1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel Margaritifera margaritifera	The status of the freshwater pearl mussel (Margaritifera margaritifera) as a qualifying Annex II species for the Slaney River Valley SAC is currently under review. The outcome of this review	Potential damage to habitats associated with siltation, inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI species dependant on water quality, an		

	will determine whether a site-specific conservation objective is set for this species	impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine any site specific conservation objectives which are set	
1095 Sea Lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	To restore the favourable conservation condition Distribution: extent of anadromy- Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary; Population structure of juveniles- At least three age/size groups present; Juvenile density in fine sediment-at least 1/m ² ; Extent and distribution of spawning habitat- No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds. Improved dispersal of spawning beds into areas upstream of barriers; Availability of juvenile habitat- More than 50% of sample sites positive	Potential damage to habitats associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives	
1096 Brook Lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>	To restore the favourable conservation condition Distribution- Access to all water courses down to first order streams; Population structure of juveniles- At least three age/size groups of brook/river lamprey present; Juvenile density in fine sediment- Mean catchment juvenile density of brook/river lamprey at least 2/m ² ; Extent and distribution of spawning habitat- no decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds; Availability of juvenile Habitat- More than 50% of sample sites positive	Potential damage to habitats associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives	
1099 River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>	To restore the favourable conservation condition Distribution: extent of Anadromy-greater than 75% of main stem and major tributaries down to second order accessible from estuary; Population structure of juveniles- At least three age/size groups of river/brook lamprey present; Juvenile density in fine sediment- Mean catchment	Potential damage to habitats associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives	

	juvenile density of brook/river lamprey at least 2/m ² ; Extent and distribution of spawning habitat- no decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds; Availability of juvenile habitat- More than 50% of sample sites positive		
1103 Twaite Shad <i>Alosa fallax</i>	To restore the favourable conservation condition Distribution: extent of anadromy- Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary; Population structure- age classes- More than one age class present; Extent and distribution of spawning habitat- No decline in extent and distribution of spawning habitats; Water quality oxygen levels- No lower than 5mg/l	Potential damage to habitats associated with siltation, inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives	
1106 Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> (only in fresh water)	To restore the favourable conservation condition Distribution: extent of anadromy-100% of river channels down to second order accessible from estuary; Adult spawning fish- Conservation Limit (CL) for each system consistently exceeded; Water quality-At least Q4 at all sites sampled by EPA; Salmon fry abundance- Maintain or exceed 0+ fry mean catchment-wide abundance threshold value. Currently set at 17 salmon fry/5 min sampling; Out-migrating smolt abundance-No significant decline; Number and distribution of redds-No decline in number and distribution of spawning redds due to anthropogenic causes	Potential damage to habitats associated with siltation, inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives	
1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>	To restore the favourable conservation condition Distribution-No significant decline; Extent of terrestrial habitat- No significant decline; Extent of freshwater	Potential damage to habitats associated with siltation, inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI species dependent on water quality, an	

	(river) habitat-No significant decline; Fish biomass available-No significant decline; Barriers to connectivity-No significant increase	impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives This could potentially impact on SCI species other by way of water quality, food availability, foraging. There is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on SCI by way of disturbance. There is a potential for entrapment of species at construction stage. See section <i>Assessment of issues that could give rise to adverse effects in view of conservation objectives</i>		
1365 Harbour Seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i>	To maintain the favourable conservation condition Access to suitable habitat-Species range within the site should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use; Breeding behaviour-breeding sites should be maintained in a natural condition; Moulting behaviour-moult haul-out sites should be maintained in a natural condition; Resting behaviour-resting haul-out sites should be maintained in a natural condition Disturbance-human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the harbour seal population	Potential damage to habitats associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of QI species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives		
The above table is based on the documentation and information provided on the file, NPWS data, and I am satisfied that the submitted NIS and data identifies the relevant attributes and targets of the QI.				
Assessment of issues that could give rise to adverse effects in view of conservation objectives Construction Stage i)Water quality pollution/degradation of QI Habitats With a hydrological connection to the Slaney River Valley SAC, the proposed alteration development has the potential to result in indirect effects on QI habitats of the SAC by way of water pollution, siltation and contamination during the construction phase. I note aquatic systems and the habitats which are dependent on these systems are sensitive to pollution/contamination of surface waters. This has the potential to undermine the respective SSCO and the attributes and targets in relation to habitats. These effects also have the potential to give rise to effects on natural habitat types listed in S.I. No. 637 of 2023 for the SAC. Having regard to the separation distance to the SAC (0.2km over land, c.0.8km hydrological connection), I consider that the effects of dilution and dispersion would serve to reduce this potential indirect effect on the SAC QI habitats, and natural habitat types listed. Mitigation measures and conditions				

The focus of mitigation measures proposed are at preventing ingress of pollutants and silt into waters. This is to be achieved via the application of specific mitigation measures. Detail is provided on silt controls, chemical controls, water management.

Measures include:

- Application of Best practice pollution control measures
- Supervision by Ecological Clerk of Works
- Implementation of CEMP
- Installation of clear span bridges will only take place during periods of dry weather and low water levels,
- Water quality protection and management measures, with measures outlined for prevention of siltation, including timing of works, secluding of works, use of stock piling areas from rivers, use of silt fencing;
- Silt fencing will be installed prior to the installation of the proposed clear span bridge and related access works to prevent discharge into the Lodgewood stream. The silt fences will be used to prevent sediment entering the river during the installation of the span bridges; Silt fencing will be positioned on each side of the river, where the proposed bridges are being installed. They will be positioned 2m back on the river bank between the river and the proposed foundation site for the span bridge. When the foundations are laid and set, a section of silt fence will be removed to allow the bridge to be laid down in position. The remaining curtains will stay in position during the full construction phase. The silt fencing will be extended at least 10m upstream and downstream of the two proposed watercourse crossings;
- Water quality protection and management measures, with measures outlined for contamination, including best practice measures, timing of works, minimising and containing spillage, concrete controls, use of designated storage areas for contaminants; refuelling controls; best practice machinery movement, operation and maintenance measures; preparation of an emergency plan.
- Biosecurity measures will be employed and have regard to IFI Biosecurity Protocols including: 'IFI Biosecurity Protocol for Field Survey Work (December 2010)'.

I am satisfied that the preventative measures which are aimed at interrupting the source-pathway-receptor are targeted at the key threats to protected habitats and by arresting these pathways or reducing possible effects to a non-significant level, adverse effects can be prevented. Mitigation measures related to water quality are captured in Planning conditions of the Inspectors Report

(ii)Water quality degradation, and QI species

With a hydrological connection to the **Slaney River Valley SAC**, the proposed alteration development has the potential to result in indirect effects on QI habitats and QI species of the SAC by way of water pollution, siltation and contamination during the construction phase. I note aquatic systems and the habitats which are dependent on these systems are sensitive to pollution/contamination of surface waters. In the event of pollution run off to local watercourses, there is a potential for negative impacts to arise on a range of QI species including Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Salmon, Lamprey. In addition, this could potentially lead to a degradation of habitat and with resultant impacts decreasing food availability for QI. In the event of pollution run off there is a potential for water quality to affect foraging of otter species. These effects have the potential to undermine the respective SSCO and the attributes and targets in relation to QI species, including any potential SSCO which may apply to Freshwater Pearl Mussel, the status of which as a qualifying Annex II species for the SAC is currently under review. Having regard to the separation distance to the SAC (0.2 km over land, c.0.8km hydrological connection) and the receiving waters, I consider that the effects of dilution and dispersion would serve to reduce this potential indirect impact.

Mitigation measures and conditions

As above at (i)

I am satisfied that the preventative measures which are aimed at interrupting the source-pathway-receptor are targeted at the key threats to protected species and by arresting these pathways or reducing possible effects to a non-significant level, adverse effects can be prevented. Mitigation measures related to water quality are captured in Planning conditions of the Inspectors Report

(iii)Disturbance of Otter, QI Species

In terms of ex-situ disturbance, the AA Screening outlines the construction phase of the project will require the operation and movement of vehicles, machinery and personnel in close proximity to aquatic features, within which

mobile QI species of the Slaney River Valley SAC could potentially occur. It is outlined the wetlands in close proximity of the project do not hold sufficient size or feeding resources to accommodate for their likely presence, and given the short duration of the construction phase and the tolerance to disturbance reported for Otter (Reid et al., 2010), the construction phase is unlikely to give rise to significant disturbance effects to QIs. I note research indicates otters can be tolerant of human related disturbance.

I note an indirect physical pathway exists via a mobile species (otter) of the SAC. However having regard to the nature of the site, the temporary nature of the works, and the timing of works, I consider there is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on QI otter or any QI species during the construction phase by way of ex-situ disturbance.

I also note mitigation measures to safeguard otter species outlined in the NIS in 318528 have not been included in the updated project NIS for the alteration development. These measures included: all excavations/trenches covered at night/escape board provided; in event fauna found using the site for breeding during construction phase, works will cease until advice is sought from an ecologist; excavations open overnight will be inspected; fence around substation will be mammal proof. I consider that the application of such measures would ensure there is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on QI otter species during the construction phase. Mitigation measures related to protecting otter species are captured in Planning conditions of the Inspectors Report.

Operational Stage

The NIS outlines that considering the restricted nature of the activities planned for the operational phase (i.e. intermittent vegetation management, access road maintenance and inspection of newly constructed water crossings), it is unlikely that any significant effects on European sites will occur. Having regard to the nature of the scheme and operational phase activities associated with same, I consider there is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on the QI of the SAC during the operational phase.

In-combination effects

Projects that could act in combination with the proposed development are detailed in the NIS, and the Wexford CDP is the relevant CDP. The plans and projects considered in the assessment of in-combination effects are listed in Table 5-2 which include for solar farms, BESS. The NIS outlines following implementation of mitigation measures for the subject alteration project, no significant adverse effects on the integrity of European sites are predicted, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

I am satisfied that these developments and other developments in the site vicinity were considered and that they are not at a location, or of a type of development which would give rise to significant in-combination effects. I note P.A. Reg. Ref. 20260343W which included for a grant of permission for a modification to a permitted BESS was subject to AA. I further note the applications for a BESS, PA. reg. ref. 20251224W, to the west of the site, and P.A. reg. ref. 20260563W, for a cable to convey power from Lodgewood Solar Farm to the Tincurry 110kV Substation, have been subject to AA processes. I am satisfied that in-combination effects have been assessed adequately in the NIS. The applicant has demonstrated satisfactorily that no significant residual effects will remain post the application of mitigation measures and there is therefore no potential for in-combination effects.

Findings and conclusions

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

Based on the information provided, and my assessment set out in the preceding section, I am satisfied that adverse effects arising from aspects of the proposed development can be excluded for the European site Slaney River Valley SAC considered in the Appropriate Assessment. I am satisfied that the mitigation measures proposed to prevent adverse effects have been assessed as effective and can be implemented.

Reasonable scientific doubt

I am satisfied that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of adverse effects.

Site Integrity

The proposed development will not affect the attainment of the Conservation objectives of the Slaney River Valley SAC. Adverse effects on site integrity can be excluded and no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

Site 2 Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076)			
Summary of Key issues that could give rise to adverse effects (from screening stage): i)Water quality pollution/degradation of QI Habitat (ii)Water quality degradation and SCI species iii)Disturbance of SCI species See Table 6.1 NIS			
Qualifying Interest features likely to be affected	Conservation Objectives Targets and attributes (summary- inserted)	Potential adverse effects	Mitigation measures (summary) NIS Section 7
A999 Wetlands	To maintain the favourable conservation condition Wetland habitat area- The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat (see map 3) should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 4,241ha, other than that due to natural patterns of variation	Potential damage to QI habitat associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of SCI dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives	Best practice pollution control measures Supervision by Ecological Clerk of Works, Implementation of CEMP Water quality protection and management measures (with measures outlined for prevention, secluding works, stock piling areas, use of silt fencing; spillage and cement controls; designated storage areas for contaminants; refuelling controls; best practice machinery movement, operation and maintenance measures; An emergency plan.
A004 Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> wintering A005 Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> wintering A017 Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> wintering A028 Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i> wintering A069 Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i> wintering	To maintain the favourable conservation condition Population trend- Long term population trend stable or increasing; Distribution- There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	Potential damage to habitats associated with siltation, inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of SCI species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives There is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on SCI by way of disturbance. See section <i>Assessment of issues that could give rise to adverse effects in view of conservation objectives</i>	Biosecurity measures will be employed and have regard to IFI Biosecurity Protocols including: 'IFI Biosecurity Protocol for Field Survey Work (December 2010)';
A195 Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> breeding	To maintain the favourable conservation condition Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied nests (AONs) - No significant decline; Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair- No significant decline; Prey biomass available- No significant decline	Potential damage to habitats associated with siltation, inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of SCI species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives There is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on SCI by way of disturbance. See section <i>Assessment of issues that could give rise to adverse effects in view of conservation objectives</i>	
A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta</i>	To maintain the favourable conservation condition	Potential damage to habitats associated with inadvertent	

bernicla hrota wintering A048 Shelduck Tadorna tadorna wintering A050 Wigeon Anas penelope wintering A052 Teal Anas crecca wintering A053 Mallard Anas platyrhynchos wintering A054 Pintail Anas acuta wintering A062 Scaup Aythya marila wintering A067 Goldeneye Bucephala clangula wintering A125 Coot Fulica atra wintering A130 Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus wintering A140 Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria wintering A141 Grey Plover Pluvialis squatarola wintering A142 Lapwing Vanellus vanellus wintering A156 Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa wintering A157 Bar-ailed Godwit Limosa lapponica wintering A160 Curlew Numenius arquata wintering A162 Redshank Tringa totanus wintering A179 Black-headed Gull Chroicocephalus ridibundus wintering A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull Larus fuscus wintering A037 Bewick's Swan Cygnus columbianus wintering A038 Whooper Swan Cygnus cygnus wintering	Population trend- Long term population trend stable or increasing ;Distribution- There should be no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation	spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of SCI species There is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on SCI by way of disturbance. See section <i>Assessment of issues that could give rise to adverse effects in view of conservation objectives</i>		
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A395 Greenland White-fronted goose <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i> wintering A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> wintering A144 Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> wintering A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> wintering				
A082 Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> post-breeding/roost	To maintain the favourable conservation condition Suitable foraging habitat- No significant decline;	Potential damage to habitats associated with inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons and/or other chemicals during construction phase; Potential damage to the habitats of SCI species There is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on SCI by way of disturbance. See section <i>Assessment of issues that could give rise to adverse effects in view of conservation objectives</i>		
The above table is based on the documentation and information provided on the file, NPWS data, and I am satisfied that the submitted NIS and data identifies the relevant attributes and targets of the QI.				
Assessment of issues that could give rise to adverse effects in view of conservation objectives Construction Stage i) Water quality pollution/degradation of QI Habitat With a hydrological connection to the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA , the proposed alteration development has the potential to result in indirect effects on QI habitat of the SPA by way of water pollution, siltation and contamination during the construction phase. I note aquatic systems and the habitats which are dependent on these systems are sensitive to pollution/contamination of surface waters. This has the potential to undermine the respective SSCO and the attributes and targets in relation to habitat. Having regard to the separation distance to the SPA (c.12.3km hydrological connection), I consider that the effects of dilution and dispersion would serve to reduce this potential indirect effect on the QI Habitat. Mitigation measures and conditions The focus of mitigation measures proposed are at preventing ingress of pollutants and silt into waters. This is to be achieved via the application of specific mitigation measures. Detail is provided on silt controls, chemical controls, water management. Measures include: • Application of Best practice pollution control measures • Supervision by Ecological Clerk of Works • Implementation of CEMP • Installation of clear span bridges will only take place during periods of dry weather and low water levels, • Water quality protection and management measures, with measures outlined for prevention of siltation, including timing of works, secluding of works, use of stock piling areas from rivers, use of silt fencing; • Silt fencing will be installed prior to the installation of the proposed clear span bridge and related access works to prevent discharge into the Lodgewood stream. The silt fences will be used to prevent sediment entering the river during the installation of the span bridges; Silt fencing will be positioned on each side of the river, where the proposed bridges are being installed. They will be positioned 2m back on the river				

bank between the river and the proposed foundation site for the span bridge. When the foundations are laid and set, a section of silt fence will be removed to allow the bridge to be laid down in position. The remaining curtains will stay in position during the full construction phase. The silt fencing will be extended at least 10m upstream and downstream of the two proposed watercourse crossings; • Water quality protection and management measures, with measures outlined for contamination, including best practice measures, timing of works, minimising and containing spillage, concrete controls, use of designated storage areas for contaminants; refuelling controls; best practice machinery movement, operation and maintenance measures; preparation of an emergency plan. • Biosecurity measures will be employed and have regard to IFI Biosecurity Protocols including: 'IFI Biosecurity Protocol for Field Survey Work (December 2010)'. I am satisfied that the preventative measures which are aimed at interrupting the source-pathway-receptor are targeted at the key threats to protected habitat and by arresting these pathways or reducing possible effects to a non-significant level, adverse effects can be prevented. Mitigation measures related to water quality are captured in Planning conditions of the Inspectors Report (ii)Water quality degradation and SCI species With a hydrological connection to the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA, the proposed alteration development has the potential to result in indirect effects on QI habitat and SCI species of the SPA by way of water pollution, siltation and contamination during the construction phase. I note aquatic systems and the habitats which are dependent on these systems are sensitive to pollution/contamination of surface waters. In the event of pollution run off to local watercourses, there is a potential for negative impacts to arise on a range of SCI species including Red-breasted Merganser and Cormorant, who are dependent on a diet of fish. These effects have the potential to undermine the respective SSCO and the attributes and targets in relation to SCI species. Having regard to the separation distance to the SPA (hydrological linkage 12.3 km) and the receiving waters, I consider that the effects of dilution and dispersion would serve to reduce this potential indirect impact. Mitigation measures and conditions As above at (i) I am satisfied that the preventative measures which are aimed at interrupting the source-pathway-receptor are targeted at the key threats to protected species and by arresting these pathways or reducing possible effects to a non-significant level, adverse effects can be prevented. Mitigation measures related to water quality are captured in Planning conditions of the Inspectors Report (iii)Disturbance of SCI Species The AA Screening report submitted outlines the construction phase will require the operation and movement of vehicles, machinery and personnel in close proximity to aquatic features, within which mobile SCI species of the SPA could potentially occur, including Hen Harrier, and waterbirds such as Cormorant, Lesser Black-backed Gull. It is outlined however that the wetlands in close proximity of the project do not hold sufficient size or feeding resources to accommodate for their likely presence. It is also outlined, considering the absence of local historical records for the SCIs of the SPA that could potentially occur at the project vicinity, and the short construction phase duration, the proposed project is unlikely to give rise to significant disturbance effects to the SCIs of the SPA. I note an indirect physical pathway exists via mobile species of the SPA. However having regard to the temporary nature of the works, the details presented in the Screening Report and NIS in relation to the site, its separation distance to the SPA and its habitats, I consider there is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on SCI by way of indirect disturbance during the construction phase. Operational Stage The NIS outlines that considering the restricted nature of the activities planned for the operational phase (i.e. intermittent vegetation management, access road maintenance and inspection of newly constructed water crossings), it is unlikely that any significant effects on European sites will occur. Having regard to the nature of the scheme and operational phase activities associated with same, I consider there is no real likelihood of any significant effects to arise on the QI habitat, or SCI species of the SPA during the operational phase. In-combination effects	
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Projects that could act in combination with the proposed development are detailed in the NIS, and the Wexford CDP is the relevant CDP. The plans and projects considered in the assessment of in-combination effects are listed in Table 5-2 which include for solar farms, BESS. The NIS outlines following implementation of mitigation measures for the subject alteration project, no significant adverse effects on the integrity of European sites are predicted, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

I am satisfied that these developments and other developments in the site vicinity were considered and that they are not at a location, or of a type of development which would give rise to significant in-combination effects. I note P.A. Reg. Ref. 20260343W which included for a grant of permission for a modification to a permitted BESS was subject to AA. I further note the applications for a BESS, PA. reg. ref. 20251224W, to the west of the site, and P.A. reg. ref. 20260563W, for a cable to convey power from Lodgewood Solar Farm to the Tincurry 110kV Substation, have been subject to AA processes. I am satisfied that in-combination effects have been assessed adequately in the NIS. The applicant has demonstrated satisfactorily that no significant residual effects will remain post the application of mitigation measures and there is therefore no potential for in-combination effects.

Findings and conclusions

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

Based on the information provided, and my assessment set out in the preceding section, I am satisfied that adverse effects arising from aspects of the proposed development can be excluded for the European site Wexford Harbour and Slob SPA considered in the Appropriate Assessment. I am satisfied that the mitigation measures proposed to prevent adverse effects have been assessed as effective and can be implemented.

Reasonable scientific doubt

I am satisfied that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of adverse effects.

Site Integrity

The proposed development will not affect the attainment of the Conservation objectives of the Wexford Harbour and Slob SPA. Adverse effects on site integrity can be excluded and no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

Appropriate Assessment Conclusion: Integrity Test

In screening the need for Appropriate Assessment, it was determined that the proposed alteration could result in significant effects on Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA (004076), in view of the conservation objectives of those sites and that Appropriate Assessment under the provisions of S177V was required.

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the NIS and all associated material submitted, I consider that adverse effects on site integrity of the Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA (004076), can be excluded in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

My conclusion is based on the following:

- Detailed assessment of impacts.
- The respective site-specific conservation objectives, targets and attributes, QI's and SCI's of the respective European Sites as detailed and assessed in my Stage 2 AA as appended to this report (Appendix 4).
- Effectiveness of mitigation measures proposed and adoption of CEMP,
- Application of planning conditions to ensure measures
- the proposed development will not affect the attainment of conservation objectives for Slaney River Valley SAC (000781), and Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA (004076).

Appendix 5: WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: Scoping

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING TABLE			
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality			
An Coimisiún Pleanála ref. no.	ACP-324115-26	Townland, address	Within the townlands of Tincurry, Ballylough, Crory and Lodgewood, County Wexford
Description of project		The applicant is seeking to alter the terms of the development, subject of the permission granted under ABP-318528-23, summarised as follows: 1-The proposed amendments to the permitted substation includes the following elements: • A 110kV substation compound consisting of a retained, redesigned and repositioned Independent Power Producer (IPP) Control Room and operations building (of concrete block structure with slate roof), • A 110kV grid connection to the ESB Lodgewood 220kV substation, ESB interface kiosk, Busbar extension and new bay in the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation and all associated and ancillary infrastructure including access tracks, • 1 No. temporary construction compound, • 2 No. Storage Containers, • 2 No. clear span bridge crossings (one where the access track crosses the Lodgewood Stream, the second to facilitate the Grid Connection Route (GCR) crossing of the Lodgewood Stream) and 1No. Dry Drain Culvert Crossing at the substation compound entrance, • Widening of the access tracks in parts to accommodate the delivery of the transformer (abnormal load), • Surface water drainage system, foul and potable water systems, and palisade fences. 2-The proposed project also includes the installation of HV electrical equipment including a retained and repositioned 110/33kV Transformer (TRAFO), with associated and ancillary equipment along with the retaining and repositioning of the following: • Cable Sealing End (CSE); • Surge Arrestor (SA); • Earth Disconnect (DA, DB, DL, DT/DEM); • Voltage Transformer (VT); • Current Transformer (CT); • House Transformer (HoT);	

	• Circuit Breaker (CB); • Lightning Masts (LM); • Diesel Generator; • Harmonic filters if required by EirGrid; • Capacitor Bank if required by EirGrid; • Fire/Blast Wall; • Telecoms Pole; and • 110kV underground cable (retained, extended and repositioned) 3-The proposed project also comprises newly proposed components and permanent works at the ESB Lodgewood 220kV Substation including: • New single bay connection point, • Busbar extension, • HV Switchgear, • Circuit Breaker (CB), • Isolators, • Cable Sealing End (CSE), • Surge Arrestor (SA), • Earth Disconnect (DT/DEM), • Current /Voltage Transformer (CT/VT), • LCC and Control & Protection cabinet, and • All associated and ancillary civil and electrical infrastructure.
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening	In summary, the proposed alteration site comprises an area of 4.86 hectares, entailing agricultural lands, forestry, and part of the existing Lodgewood 220kV/110kV substation site. The proposal will involve earthworks, the removal of trees, hedgerow, with replanting proposed. The alteration includes for 2 No. clear span bridge crossings. Existing ground levels within the project site range from c.30.7mOD to 55.7mOD. The Lodgewood Stream and Tincurry Stream flow through the site, and join the River Bann to the southeast of the site. A flood extent area is located onsite. The site is hydrologically connected to the Slaney River Valley SAC (0.8 km) and the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (12.3km). The site includes for poor and well drained soils. The site is predominantly underlain by the Oaklands Formation, with a small section of the proposed access road underlain by the Campile Formation. There are no karst features mapped in the surrounding area of the proposed project. The site is intensively farmed tillage and pastoral land. The area is characterized by a pattern of one-off rural housing. Electricity infrastructure is present in the site vicinity.
Proposed surface water details	Surface water will be managed by a dedicated stormwater drainage system in accordance with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) principles, limiting discharge from the site to greenfield runoff

	rates. Gravel hardstanding will be used to allow rainfall to infiltrate to ground during the operation of the proposed project. A petrol interceptor will be installed on the substation site. All operational areas will drain to the surface water management system.
Proposed water supply source & available capacity	Potable water will be provided by means of an on-site bored well. There will also be a harvested water holding tank (3500 litre) to allow rainwater be re-used as potable water.
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues	Temporary welfare facilities will not have any discharge to ground or surface waters. All wastewater will be collected in a tank, and will be emptied as required by a licenced waste collector according to the manufacturer's guidelines. At operational stage, wastewater generation will be low due to the limited staffing required. Wastewater from toilets will be directed to a sealed and alarmed storage tank, which will be collected and tankered off site by an appropriately consented and licensed waste collector to wastewater treatment plants.
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, groundwater)	Mitigation Measures proposed	Is mitigation sufficient? Will there be any residual impacts?
Bann_070	Bann_070 IE_SE_12B011000 NOTE: This waterbody and code include the Lodgewood, Tincurry and Bann waterbodies	Good	Not at risk	n/a	Surface run-off, drainage	Implementation of CEMP, Best practice pollution control measures at construction stage; Operational stage surface water drainage plan	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
Slaney_170	Slaney_170 IE_SE_12S022300	Moderate	Not at risk	n/a	Surface run-off, drainage	Implementation of CEMP, Best practice pollution control measures at construction stage; Operational stage surface	Yes. No risk. Screened out.

						water drainage plan	
Upper Slaney Estuary	Upper Slaney Estuary IE_SE_040_0300	Moderate	At Risk	Ag	Surface run-off, drainage	Implementation of CEMP, Best practice pollution control measures at construction stage; Operational stage surface water drainage plan	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
Lower Slaney Estuary	Lower Slaney Estuary IE_SE_040_0200	Poor	At Risk	Ag, UWW	Surface run-off, drainage	Implementation of CEMP, Best practice pollution control measures at construction stage; Operational stage surface water drainage plan	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
WFD groundwater body: Ballyglass	Ballyglass IE_SE_G_011	Good	At risk	Unknown, AG	Surface run-off, hydraulic connection between surface water and groundwater	Implementation of CEMP, Best practice pollution control measures at construction stage; Operational stage surface water drainage plan	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
WFD groundwater body: Enniscorthy	Enniscorthy IE_SE_G_061	Good	At Risk	Unknown, AG	Surface run-off, hydraulic connection between surface water and groundwater	Implementation of CEMP, Best practice pollution control measures at construction stage; Operational stage surface water drainage plan	Yes. No risk. Screened out.
GWDTEs (features other than those listed above)	n/a						
Groundwater abstractions/source protection areas:	n/a						