



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report PL-500122-TY

### Development

Refurbishment works to 24.3 km of overhead line, 9 no. steel towers and 121 no. wooden polesets and all associated works. The development also includes 3 no. temporary construction compounds. A Natura Impact Statement accompanies the application.

### Location

Between the existing Cahir Substation in the townland of Ballyhenebery Co. Tipperary, and Knockraha Substation in the townland Ballynanelagh Co. Cork (full townland list provided in PECR).

### Planning Authority

Tipperary County Council

### Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

2461133

### Applicant(s)

EirGrid Plc.

### Type of Application

Permission

### Planning Authority Decision

Grant Permission + Conditions

**Type of Appeal**

**Third Party Normal Planning Appeal**

**Appellant(s)**

**John O'Brien**

**Observer(s)**

**None**

**Date of Site Inspection**

**26 January 2026**

**Inspector**

**Claire McVeigh**

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## 1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site comprises a linear stretch of 24.3km of overhead line (110kv) between the existing Cahir Substation in the townland of Ballyhenebery, Co. Tipperary and Knockraha Substation in the townland of Ballynanelagh, Co. Cork.
- 1.2. Given that the appeal specifically relates to Angle Mast (AM) no. 124, a steel lattice tower, located within the townland of Knocknagapple the focus of my assessment will principally address this location of the proposed overhead line development. The townland of Knocknagapple sits to the east of the county boundary between Tipperary and Cork and north of the townland Coolapreavan.
- 1.3. The existing mast lies approximately 10m from the road edge of the R665 and as such is positioned relatively close to the inside road edge bend of the R665 which is within an 80km/h zone. The AM is bounded by existing hedgerow and trees running alongside the inner line of the hedgerow.
- 1.4. An existing single storey detached vernacular farmhouse dwelling, the appellant's property stated to date from the 1860s, is located less than 50m from the AM which is to northwest of the dwelling (the appellant notes the AM as 45m between the dwelling and 32 m from the entrance gate of the property). There is a layby area immediately to the west/northwest of the existing dwelling adjacent to the vehicular access to the farm cluster. The ground level drops from the road level to that of the floor level of the existing dwelling with the front garden gently sloping downwards towards the front façade.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The total length of the section of the OHL is 63.6 km and extends from the Knockraha 220 kV Substation, Co. Cork, 11 km northeast of Cork City, to the Barrymore 110 kV Substation, Co. Cork, 1 km northwest of Castlelyons and to the Cahir 110 kV Substation, Co. Tipperary, 1.5 km northeast of Cahir. The OHL has a total of 348 supporting structures, comprising 325 wooden polesets and 23 steel towers, between the Cahir Substation and the Knockraha Substation.
- 2.2. The structures numbered 1-130 are in Tipperary County Council administrative area, while structures 131 -348 are in Cork County Council administrative area.

- 2.3. The proposed development, subject of this application, comprises refurbishment works to 24.3km of overhead line, 9 no. steel towers and 121 no. wooden pole sets and all associated works. The development also includes 3 no. temporary construction compounds.
- 2.4. The planning application boundary for the Proposed Development includes the following working areas:
- Temporary works area adjacent to the substations;
  - Temporary works area at each tower: defined as a maximum 30 m radial area from each tower;
  - Temporary access routes to each tower: The required width for access routes is 4 m (within 15 m allowance included within the planning application boundary which provides flexibility in determining specific access routes). Towers will be accessed using existing land access;
  - Temporary access routes to each poleset: The required width for access routes is 4 m (within 15 m allowance included within the planning application boundary which provides flexibility in determining specific access routes). Poleset will be accessed using existing land access; and
  - Temporary construction compound locations: 3 no. temporary construction compounds in the Townlands of Killeigh, Garnavilla and Knockaarum in County Tipperary.
- 2.5. The subject appeal relates specifically to the proposed replacement of one no. mast/tower (No. 124). In this respect new foundations as part of the tower replacement are proposed and the installation of anti-climbing guards are also proposed.

A Natura Impact Statement accompanies the application.

As part of the response to further information request the proposed third temporary construction compound (referred to as Compound 3) off the L-7421 was omitted from the proposals.

## 3.0 Planning Authority Decision

### 3.1. Decision

On the 8 October 2025 the planning authority granted permission subject to 9 conditions. Please refer to section 3.2.3 for a summary of those bespoke conditions.

### 3.2. Planning Authority Reports

#### 3.2.1. Planning Reports

- Initial Report – Further information requested in respect to clarification of the exact height of replacement towers at the individual locations, applicant requested to consider relocating mast no. 124 away from the poorly aligned stretch of road to allow for future roadside boundary set back, concerns raised about the increase in height of the mast no. 124 upon residential amenity applicant requested to submit a revised layout plan, plans and elevations addressing this concern, details of the sightlines at the proposed compounds, requested to relocate proposed compound no. 3 due to its position at a narrow and poorly aligned section of the L-7421 and impact on residential amenity, revised position for pole set 81 at a greater remove from the recorded monument, clarification on proposed temporary accesses and letters of consent from the landowners of the 3 no. compound locations.

EIA Screening determination, based on the proposed removal of field boundaries Part 2 Class (1) Agriculture, Silviculture and Aquaculture (a), that the proposal would not give rise to significant adverse environmental impacts and an EIA is not required.

Following a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment, with the submission of a NIS, it has been determined that subject to mitigation, the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not adversely affect the integrity of the European site, Lower River Suir SAC, or any other European site in view of the sites Conservation Objectives.

- Second report - Following receipt of further information on the 15 August 2025.

The applicant has clarified that the replacement towers will be provided on a like for like basis with no increase in height and details submitted are acceptable.

In relation to mast no. 124, the applicant has indicated that there is a separate process to manage requests on the relocation/diversion of existing infrastructure. Considers that given the length of time the mast has been at this location accepts that there is no scope to request its relocation at this time.

The applicant clarifies that compound no. 3 will no longer be required. Further information request item 4 no longer relevant. Sightlines for compounds 1 and 2 acceptable.

The submitted Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Technical note submitted outlines that poleset no. 81 is located inside the southern edge of the earthwork which defines the recorded monument. It is intended to position the replacement poleset as close as possible to the existing poleset to ensure consistency of the current conditions and minimise potential physical impact on the monument. Ground protection matting will be laid where the access route and working area are within the monument and ZOI for the duration of the construction phase at poleset 81.

Notes that there are no new entrances or widening of existing entrances, either temporarily or permanently proposed as part of the scheme.

Notes the letters of consent from landowners in respect to proposed compounds 1 and 2.

The FI response does not have a material bearing on the NIS.

No development contributions applicable.

### 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

#### *Tipperary-Cashel-Cahir (TCC) District Engineer:*

Where masts/poles are scheduled to be replaced, it should be considered that where these are currently sited close to a roadside or at junctions, they should be relocated

some distance away from the roadside or junction. Reason: For any future road safety improvements for junction Y sightlines or forward sightlines on bends. Example on this application is mast no. 124 in townland of Knocknagapple, which is scheduled to be replaced. It currently is very close to inside bend on the R665, in the interest of road safety there may be future possibility to remove and set back current roadside boundary. Location of mast no. 124 may impede this.

*Tramore House Regional Design Office:*

The preferred Transport Solution Corridor for the N24 Waterford to Cahir Project is in proximity to the townland of Ballyhenebery, the proposed development does not encroach on the corridor. No conflict between the proposed development and the N24 project.

### 3.2.3. Conditions

Condition no. 2 prior to works commencing on site the applicant shall submit a final Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to include the mitigation measures in the NIS, a site specific biosecurity plan for sites identified under section 5.1.4.2.12 (Invasive Species) of the submitted Planning and Environmental Report (PER), to include the archaeological or cultural heritage and also include details of recovery/recycling or disposal of materials including end-of-life equipment or hazardous waste (Condition no. 5 also refers).

Condition no. 3 a final Construction Management Plan including a Traffic Management Plan.

Condition no. 4 solid waste recovery and recycling.

Condition no. 6 all mitigation measures in relation to archaeology and cultural heritage (section 5.8 and Appendix H of the Planning and Environmental Considerations Report and further information response) shall be implemented in full. A suitably qualified project archaeologist shall oversee the project.

Condition no. 7 limiting cutting of trees, hedgerows and vegetation outside bird breeding season (March 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup>).

Condition no.8 A pre-construction survey for Badger to be completed by a suitably qualified specialist.

Condition no. 9 all works shall be supervised by an on-site ecological clerk of works

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

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

#### **Archaeology**

It is noted that the *Planning and Environmental Considerations Report* (PECR) submitted as part of the planning application incorporates a desk-based *Archaeological Impact Assessment* (AIA) which was carried out in relation to the proposed development (PECR Section 5.8; date November 2024).

Though the Department generally concurs with the findings of this assessment it is noted certain points of concern:

Poleset 81 is located within the low-relief earthwork that defines non-Statutory SMR site TS086-047---- (enclosure). It is noted that this pole is scheduled for replacement and have concerns that replacement could have direct impact to this site.

Replacement will require groundworks within the monument and will require that machinery and plant track over the circuit of the enclosure for access. The Department advises that consideration should be given to alternative placement of a new pole or poles that would be at greater remove from this vulnerable monument. While the works as proposed would largely avoid direct impacts to known archaeological sites, they will be carried out in proximity to a significant number of Recorded Monuments and non-Statutory SMR sites. It will be of particular importance that access routes to polesets are carefully routed to avoid any impacts to these sites and that appropriate protection measures are put in place under archaeological advice and supervision.

Therefore, the National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage advise that the following should be included as a condition of any grant of permission. Note these recommended conditions align with Sample Conditions C4, C5 and C6 as set out in *OPR Practice Note PN03: Planning*

*Conditions* (October 2022), with appropriate site-specific additions/adaptations based on the particular characteristics of this development and informed by the findings of the AIA.

Archaeological Requirements:

1. All mitigation measures in relation to archaeology and cultural heritage as set out in Section 5.8 and Appendix H of the PECR (date November 2024) shall be implemented in full, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions of this Order.
  
2. A Project Archaeologist shall be appointed to oversee and advise on all aspects of the scheme from design, through inception to completion.
  - a. The Project Archaeologist shall liaise with the Department and the Planning Authority to agree in advance an overall strategy for archaeological works to be carried out both in advance of and in parallel with construction of the development.
  - b. This shall include the location, extent and method of demarcation for any Exclusion Zones around the external-most elements of vulnerable Heritage Assets in proximity to the works or designated access routes that are to be preserved in situ.
  - c. This shall include the location and extent of any other protective measures such as ground protection matting that will be employed to protect vulnerable Heritage Assets or potential sub-surface archaeological deposits.
  
3. The developer shall engage a suitably qualified archaeologist to monitor (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) all site clearance works, topsoil stripping, groundworks and the implementation of agreed preservation in-situ measures associated with the development.
  - a. The use of appropriate machinery to ensure the preservation and recording of any surviving archaeological remains shall be necessary.
  - b. Should archaeological remains be identified during the course of archaeological monitoring, all works shall cease in the area of

archaeological interest pending a decision of the planning authority, in consultation with the Department, regarding appropriate mitigation which may include preservation in-situ or full archaeological excavation.

- c. The developer shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any remains identified. Any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the planning authority, following consultation with the Department, shall be complied with by the developer.
4. The Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) shall include the location of any and all archaeological or cultural heritage constraints relevant to the proposed development as set out in Section 5.8 and Appendix H of the PECR (date November 2024) and by any subsequent archaeological investigations associated with the project. The CEMP shall clearly describe all identified likely archaeological impacts, both direct and indirect, and all mitigation measures to be employed to protect the archaeological or cultural heritage environment during all phases of site preparation and construction activity.
5. The planning authority and the Department shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of all archaeological monitoring and any archaeological investigative work/excavation required, following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary post-excavation specialist analysis. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

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

#### *Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)*

In the case of the above planning application, the Authority will rely on your planning authority to abide by official policy in relation to development on/affecting national roads as outlined in DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012), subject to the following:

- The Authority requests that the Council has regard to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines in the assessment and determination of the subject planning application.
- Where abnormal 'weight loads' are a feature of the development, separate structure approvals/permits and other licences may be required in connection with the proposed haul route. The planning authority should be satisfied that this matter is addressed prior to any decision on this planning application.
- The applicant/developer should consult with all PPP Companies, MMarC Contractors and road authorities over which haul routes traverse to ascertain any operational requirements such as delivery timetabling, etc. and to ensure that the strategic function of the national road network is maintained.

### 3.4. Third Party Observations

There were two third party observation made, in summary the issues raised include:

John O'Brien

- Home (constructed c. 1860s) is positioned 45 metres from pylon mast no. 124 which is situated on a slightly elevated position just northwest of the house and 32 metres from the entrance gate to the property.
- Generations of their family has lived continuously since the 1860s.
- ESB located the pylon in such close proximity to the house in the 1950s.
- Negative visual impact and devaluation of property as a result of same.
- Reference made to EirGrid response to questions at Dail committee with respect to acceptable distance of pylons to residential properties.
- Reference to current ESB/IFA Code of Practice (no date provided) that where a pylon is within 50m of a house the landowner may seek further negotiation with the Board with a view to exploring all possible alternatives.
- Questions if a feasibility study been undertaken for the permanent removal of the structure and routing the line underground or re-locating the mast further

away. Willing to make a financial contribution to facilitate either of these options.

- States there is a lack of clarity in respect to performed stakeholder engagement, the specific design and positioning of mast no. 124.
- Proposed addition of anti-climb guards would significantly add to the visual footprint of the proposed pylon. Have alternatives been considered in respect to anti-climb paints/substance as an alternative.
- What screening proposals are proposed to mitigate against the increased visual impact in the absence of alternatives.
- Why has a visual impact assessment (VIA) not been submitted as part of this application specifically for proposed mast no. 124 due to its unique site, location and proximity to a residential house, a public road and Knockmealdown Amenity Area (Primary).
- Lack of clarity in respect to the proposed new tower height, position and visual impact in the submitted documentation (reference to section 2.6.1, 2.3 and Table 2.1 of the submitted Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (PECR) and the use of the word 'similar').

#### Land & Utility Compensation Consultants Ltd.

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Deficiencies.
- Errors and omissions in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- Errors and inconsistencies in the Natural Impact Statement (NIS)
- Legal interest issues and compliance with planning legislation
- Planning report deficiencies
- There is absence of information in the CEMP and the NIS regarding mitigation measures in relation to disruption to landowner farming activities arising from the proposed development.

## 4.0 Planning History

As noted in the planner's report the overhead line traverse multiple planning application site boundaries.

Given the scope of the subject appeal, I have limited my search to relevant planning history to the environs of Angle Mast (AM) no. 124. There is no recent relevant planning history pertaining to same available on Tipperary County Council's online planning application database.

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028

The subject site the appeal focuses on is located outside of the 'Primary Amenity Area' and also outside the designated 'Secondary Amenity Areas'. The R665 is designated as a scenic route approximately 1km further to the east of the position of AM no. 124.

Figure 5.3 Rural areas with Strategic Transport Corridors and Primary Amenity Areas.

Figure 11.1 Primary and Secondary Amenity Areas and Views of Scenic Routes

Section 15.5 Electricity and Gas Supply Networks

...Improvement measures to the national grid electrical and gas networks are set out in the national infrastructure plans of 'EirGrid', 'ESB Networks' and 'Gas Networks Ireland'. The appropriate expansion of the national supply grid is important to ensure adequacy of regional connectivity for sustainable economic growth as well as facilitate the development and connectivity of sustainable renewable energy resources.

SO-10 'To protect existing infrastructural assets and utilities, and the strategic function of the existing national road and rail network, and associated junctions and support investment in strategic infrastructure both at the county, and the regional level thereby ensuring Tipperary's access to key services for economic growth and resilience.'

Planning Policy 13-4 Safeguard sites, features and objects of archaeological interest, including Recorded Monuments, National Monuments and Monuments on the Register of Historic Monuments, and archaeological remains found within Zones of Archaeological Potential located in historic towns and other urban and rural areas. In safeguarding such features of archaeological interest, the Council will seek to secure their preservation (i.e. in situ or in exceptional circumstances preservation by record) and will have regard to the advice and recommendation of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Where developments, due to their location, size or nature, may have implications for archaeological heritage, the Council may require an archaeological assessment to be carried out. This may include for a requirement for a detailed Visual Impact Assessment of the proposal and how it will impact on the character or setting of adjoining archaeological features. Such developments include those that are located at, or close to an archaeological monument or site, those that are extensive in terms of area (1/2 ha or more) or length (1 kilometre or more), those that may impact on the underwater environment and developments requiring EIA

Planning Objective 15-E Support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas infrastructure, by network providers, to enable the integration of renewable energy sources and enable an energy system that is safe, secure and adaptable

Archaeology TS02776 TS03086 Ringfort Enclosure

County Landscape Character Assessment (Volume 3) – The subject site is located within LCA 4 The River Suir Central Plan.

## 5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The relevant natural heritage designated are as follows:

- Proposed Natural Heritage Areas: Cahir Park Woodland (Site Code 00947)
- Proposed Natural Heritage Areas: Shanbally Wood (Site Code 000972)
- Proposed Natural Heritage Areas: Galtee Mountains (Site Code: 000646)
- Special Area of Conservation: Galtee Mountains SAC (Site Code 000646)
- Special Area of Conservation: Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code 002137)

## 6.0 The Appeal

### 6.1. Grounds of Appeal

One third party appeal has been submitted by John O'Brien in respect of the existing Angle Mast (AM) no. 124 (also referred to as tower and pylon in submitted documentation). I acknowledge the submission in addition to the appeal the following appendices:

**Appendix 1** - the original third-party submission dated 27 January 2025,

**Appendix 2** - the supplementary submission made to Tipperary County Council dated 26 August 2025 following submission of further information by the applicant (not accepted by Tipperary County Council as valid due to the nature of the FI),

**Appendix 3** – Cover of local authority letter dated 5 November 2025 advising that the submission received on the 5 September 2025 does not constitute a valid submission and has been returned, and

**Appendix 4** - BBC News Article on 'Underground an Existing Overhead line'.

The concerns raised in the appeal, including the points raised in the appendices listed, in summary are:

- The mast/tower as it stands is visually intrusive and dominates view from the house and detracts from the historical character of a 19th century constructed farmhouse (constructed c.1860s). Concerns about the negative effect on any re-sale value of the property.
- Appellant would be willing to make a financial contribution towards undergrounding the line or if this option is deemed not feasible towards moving the apparatus more than 50 meters from the property and would be willing to make a financial contribution towards this and additionally provide an alternative site.
- Reference made to ESB/IFA Code of Practice with respect to negotiation to explore all possible alternatives where a pylon is within 50 metres of a house. In this respect BBC article (dated 30 November 2023) provided to demonstrate an example of undergrounding of overhead power lines (4.6km

section) in an area of outstanding natural beauty on the North Wessex Downs, in Wiltshire, England.

- The application should have been considered invalid as the maps/plans and elevations submitted do not meet the requirements set out in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001) as amended. No wayleaves no contours no figures specifying the overall height of the proposed structure no septic tanks, no percolations areas or bored wells have been included in the submitted site layout plans/elevations as applicable.
- Unable to make informed comments or observations as the scaled maps and plan/elevations for Tower 124 were not submitted as part of the planning process. At a scale of not less than 1:500 and plans, elevations and sections were not submitted with a scale of not less than 1:200. Furthermore, unable to make informed comments on the proposed towers visual impact with the proposed climbing guards attached without a standalone visual impact assessment.
- Inadequate stakeholder engagement concerning proposed changes to Tower 124. Appellant willing to participate in discussions with the development but such discussions did not occur. Doorstep contact with the landowner to verify that agricultural entrance matched existing records and the provision of a business card does not constitute appropriate engagement.
- The developer should commission and publish an independent feasibility study as the first step toward evaluating the option of undergrounding the existing overhead lines.

## 6.2. Applicant Response

In response to the appeal EirGrid highlights that the proposed development comprises an uprate of long-established distribution infrastructure. As part of its essential maintenance programme EirGrid proposes to undertake uprate works on the existing Barrymore-Cahir-Knockraha 110kv OHL which forms a part of the distribution network in Co. Tipperary and Co. Cork. As such, it is an important part of the network supplying both local transmission stations and facilitating power flows to and from the south.

It is explained by the applicants that the grid needs to be made stronger and more flexible (carry more power from energy sources that vary depending on the weather) to be able to carry 80% of Ireland's electricity by renewable sources by 2030.

They state that while the Commission determined that the proposal was not Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) for the purposes of the provisions of Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) EirGrid are of the opinion that it remains one of the most strategically important projects in the Southern Region.

Key responses to the grounds of appeal as summarised:

- Maps/Plans/Elevations –

Tipperary County Council validated the planning application following pre-application consultation agreeing the appropriate scales (as per Article 22 2(b). Refers to Article 25 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) which sets out which provisions of the preceding Articles that do not apply.

- Mast 124

As outlined in the project description (Table 2.1 Description of the proposed works) Mast (or Tower) 124 will require new foundations as part of the tower replacement and anti-climbing guards for safety reasons. This tower is a key structure as it is an angle tower - i.e. this tower allows the route or angle of the overhead line to be changed to avoid constraints. Either side of an angle tower, the overhead line runs in a straight line until there is another angle tower. Any change to the location of tower 124 would result in significant changes to the overhead line either side and may also result in the need for additional structures.

No changes in height are anticipated as the replacement of the mast is a like for like replacement with the current infrastructure.

Highlight that in the further information response EirGrid noted that the comment in regard to the diversion of the mast being 'out of scope' was made as there is a separate and established mechanism for requesting alterations

to existing overhead lines, referred to as Line Conflicts process and it the exclusive responsibility of ESB Networks as Transmission Asset Owner.

Agree with the Planner's report (Page 17) that state the proposed development and in particular this long-existing structure at this particular location "*will not give rise to additional impacts*" on the appellant's residential property.

- Underground of the existing overhead line

Section 1.3 (Background and Need for the Proposed Development) of the PECR states that "*uprates of the OHL is agreed to be the best performing option to accommodate the expected generation and maintain compliance with the Transmission System Security and Planning Standards*".

Section 2.5 (Alternatives Considered) of the PECR including a do-nothing option, the installation of a new 110kv OHL or the as proposed development an uprate of the existing OHL.

Undergrounding the entire circuit or a section would require significantly more complex design, assessment and construction effort, would have a new and possibly greater environmental impact on this receiving environment, would have very significant cost implications and would also have consequences for timelines and delays to what has been identified as a pressing need.

- Visual Impact Assessment

The submitted PECR included a Landscape and Visual Assessment which considered the appellant's property. The tower will be replaced on a like-for-like basis albeit with the minor addition of the safety features and anti-climbing guards. EirGrid considered that an appropriate level of assessment was undertaken, and no further assessment is required.

- Stakeholder Engagement

EirGrid has complied with all statutory requirements on notification of the planning application and has gone beyond this by employing specialist land agents (Dalcour Maclaren) under supervision of EirGrid's Agricultural Liaison Officers to meet with the appellant pre-submission and ESBN will meet with them again pre-construction. This consultation will be key in ensuring the

construction period will have the least amount of disruption to the appellant and their land.

### 6.3. **Planning Authority Response**

- No further observations to make on the appeal of 24/61123 outside of those made in the planning reports on file.

### 6.4. **Observations**

- None

## 7.0 **Assessment**

7.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including all of the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the report/s of the local authority, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal to be considered are as follows:

- Visual impact of Angle Mast no. 124 and consideration of alternatives.
- Miscellaneous
  - Validity of the planning application.
  - Stakeholder engagement.

### 7.2. **Visual impact and consideration of alternatives**

7.2.1. The visual impact of mast/tower no. 124 within 45m from the existing residential dwelling is the key concern raised by the appellant. It is acknowledged by both the appellant and the applicant that the existing mast/tower has been in place for a significant number of years. The original structure having been place in the 1950's and the overhead line as currently exists dating circa 1982.

7.2.2. The appellant's home, built circa 1860's, is a very attractive example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century constructed farmhouse set back off the R665 which sits within the landscape character area defined as 'the River Suir Central Plain (LCA 4) which adjoins the

Knockmealdown Mountain Mosaic (LCA 23)' (Volume 3 of the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 (the development plan). I note that a section of the R665 is designated as a scenic route (V26) with views south towards Knockmealdown Mountains, this is approximately 1km east of the appellant's property. The site subject to the appeal is outside of both the designated Primary and Secondary Amenity Areas, as noted in section 5.1 above.

7.2.3. In the first instance I shall address the appellant's concerns with respect to consideration of alternatives. The appellant is keen to look at alternative solutions to enable the infrastructural upgrade but provide a greater separation between the structure and the residential dwelling or underground this section entirely to eliminate the need for the structure. In response the applicant confirms the consideration of alternatives with respect to a 'do-nothing' scenario or the installation of a new 110kv OHL have been demonstrated in Section 2.5 of the submitted Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (PECR). Both these alternatives are considered sub-optimal in terms of accommodating capacity for future renewable electricity generation in the case of the do-nothing and more intrusive works with decommissioning associated with the installation of a new OHL, as set out in section 2.5 of the submitted Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (PECR). In respect to the alternative to underground the existing overhead line the applicant states that it would not be practical, would result in a significantly more complex design, assessment and construction effort which would have a new and possible greater environmental impact on the receiving environment and impact on the viability given the significant cost implications. It is further set out by the applicant that taking into account there will be no significant effects to the environment as a result of the proposed development undergrounding of same cannot be justified. I am of the view that the applicant has demonstrated sufficiently the consideration of alternatives to the subject application and in their response document clarified the constraints to repositioning the structures and/or undergrounding the OHL.

7.2.4. From my site visit I would concur with the appellant that the ground level of the mast location is higher than that of the appellant's property and as a result does make the structure appear more dominant than its height. The applicant sets out that a landscape and visual assessment was undertaken and included within the submitted PECR. I note that section 5.2.5.2 of the assessment addresses the proposal to

replace the angle mast steel towers of similar dimensions with excavation works being undertaken around each tower to upgrade the pile foundations. It is set out that the works will be likely to result in the localised loss of vegetation within the working area around each tower. Mitigation measures outlined in section 5.2.6 set out that all disturbed ground and vegetation loss due to foundation works, excavation machinery access and movement will be reinstated as appropriate to match existing conditions prior to the works. During operational phase it is determined in the PECR that the proposed development would be unlikely to cause a discernible change to visual amenity of landscape character, as the replacement polesets and metal towers would appear broadly similar to the existing infrastructure (section 5.2.7 Residual Effects). It is concluded the proposed development would not result in significant adverse effects on landscape and visual amenities and features within the receiving environment.

- 7.2.5. The Landscape Character Assessment as contained in Volume 3 of the development plan defines the area surrounding mast/tower 124 as having a high capacity/low sensitivity (Class 1 Landscape) where change or development is generally acceptable subject to all other relevant objectives and policies. I am of the view, in agreement with the conclusions of the landscape and visual assessment submitted with the application, that the landscape is capable of absorbing the proposed changes to the tower/mast without detriment to same.
- 7.2.6. In respect to the impact on the existing residential property and view towards the mast/tower from their property I accept that the difference in ground level does result in the AM appearing dominant in views from the existing dwelling. I do not agree with the appellant that the information provided with the planning application is insufficient to assess the proposed changes, having regard to the submitted drawing of the standard anti-climbing guard in response to the further information request by the planning authority. I am of the opinion that the proposed changes, including the provision of anti-climbing guards, would not be of such magnitude to result in a significantly adverse impact over and above the existing visual impact.
- 7.2.7. In conclusion on this point, accepting that: -

- a change to the location of the Angle Mast (AM) no. 124 would result in significant changes to the overhead line either side and may result in the need for additional structures,
- the Barrymore-Cahir-Knockraha 110kv OHL circuit is likely to become increasingly at risk of large power flows (in excess of its thermal capacity), and
- the need for the electricity grid to carry more power from energy sources that vary depending on the weather,

I am of the opinion that the visual impact of the replacement mast/tower no. 124 would be not of such magnitude to warrant a refusal of permission on these grounds.

### 7.3. **Miscellaneous**

#### 7.3.1. Validity of planning application

I note the appellant has raised issue with the validity of the application, in terms of the detail presented on the plans and particulars. I note for the Commission that these matters were considered acceptable by the planning authority. The issues raised with respect to visual impact assessment are already addressed in section 7.2 of my report.

#### 7.3.2. Stakeholder engagement

It is evident that there are conflicting viewpoints on the adequacy of stakeholder engagement on this project. I consider that a satisfactory level of engagement has been demonstrated by the applicant to raise awareness of the project with those living in the immediate environs. The appellant has been actively involved in the statutory decision-making process through their third-party submissions and subsequent appeal.

Separately, I am satisfied that the planning authority have adequately addressed the issue relating to the constraints relating to repositioning the Angle Mast (AM) no. 124 to provide a greater set back from the current roadside boundary in terms of road safety. Furthermore, I am also satisfied that the planning authority have addressed

by way of further information request and the recommended attachment of conditions the archaeological concerns raised by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in respect to Poleset no. 81.

## 8.0 **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Determination**

8.1. Please also refer to Appendix 2 EIA Screening Determination.

Having regard to: -

1. the criteria set out in Schedule 7, in particular

(a) the nature and scale of the proposed development, comprising the refurbishment of existing distribution network in Co. Tipperary,

(b) the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity,

(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)

2. the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment submitted by the applicant.

3. the features and measures proposed by applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant effects on the environment.

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.

## 9.0 **Appropriate Assessment**

The proposed development has been considered in light of the assessment requirements of Sections 177U and 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

In screening the need for Appropriate Assessment, it was determined that the proposed development could result in significant effects on the Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code: 002137) in view of the conservation objectives of that site and that Appropriate Assessment under the provisions of S177U/ 177AE was required.

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the NIS, all associated material submitted and the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment report of the Tipperary County Council I consider that adverse effects on site integrity of the Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code:002137) 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 construction and operational impacts.
- Effectiveness of mitigation measures (detailed in NIS and accompanying Construction and Environmental Plan (CEMP) proposed including supervision and monitoring and integration into the CEMP ensuring smooth transition of obligations to eventual contractor.
- Application of planning conditions to ensure application of mitigation measures.

The proposed development would not affect the attainment of conservation objectives for the Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code:003137).

## 10.0 **Water Framework Directive (WFD) Screening**

The proposed development comprises refurbishments works to 24.3km of overhead line, 9 no. steel towers and 121 no. wooden polesets and all associated works. The development includes 3 no. temporary construction compounds.

Water deterioration concerns were raised in a third-party submission/observation in respect to the hydrological connections to Natura 2000 sites. Please refer to section 9.0 and Appendix 3 in respect to this issue.

I have assessed the proposed refurbishment works in respect to the existing overhead line (OHL) and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be

eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- Nature of works
- Mitigation measures contained within the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) incorporating relevant measures included in the Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (PECR) and Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

#### Conclusion

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

### 11.0 Recommendation

I recommend that planning permission should be granted, subject to conditions for the reasons and considerations as set out below.

### 12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the existing electricity distribution infrastructure already in place, demonstrated constraints to reposition Angle Mast (AM no. 124 and the justification provided to uprate the existing overhead line, which is considered reasonable given the need to accommodate the expected generation of power from renewable sources, it is considered that the proposed development, including the proposed replacement Angle Mast (AM) no. 124, would not result in a significantly adverse visual impact over and above the existing overhead line and ancillary structures. In this respect, the proposed changes to Angle Mast (AM) no. 124 located within Landscape Character Area 4 (LCA 4) 'The River Suir Plain' described as having a high capacity/low sensitivity where change or development is generally acceptable,

located outside of both the visually sensitive designated Primary and Secondary Amenity Areas as per the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028, would not result in a significantly additional adverse impacts on the character of the area or the visual amenities of adjoining properties. As such, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### 13.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars received by the planning authority on the 15 day of August 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity.

2. The mitigation measures contained in the submitted Natura Impact Statement (NIS), shall be implemented.

**Reason:** To protect the integrity of European Sites.

3. Prior to works commencing on the site the developer shall submit to and agree in writing with the planning authority, a final Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which shall be adhered to during construction. The submitted CEMP shall include for the mitigation measures included in the NIS and shall also address the requirements of condition 7 relating to Archaeology and Cultural Heritage. The CEMP shall also include a site-specific biosecurity plan for the sites identified under section 5.1.4.2.12 (Invasive Species) of the Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (PECR).

The CEMP shall clearly define all mitigation and monitoring arrangements to be implemented.

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

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

The haul route for construction traffic to and from the site shall be clearly identified in addition to any necessary temporary road signage that is proposed to be erected.

During development works, the developer shall ensure that material from the site is not spread or deposited on the public roadway and shall maintain the roadway in a clean, tidy and safe condition. In addition, appropriate advance warning signs shall be erected, in accordance with proposals, which shall have the prior written consent of the Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In the interest of traffic safety and convenience.

5. All solid waste arising on the site including site clearance waste, construction waste, demolition waste, rock, soil etc. shall be recycled as far as possible. Any materials exported from the site for recovery, recycling or disposal shall be managed at an approved licensed waste facility. Adequate on-site arrangements shall be made to the written satisfaction of the Planning Authority for the storage of recyclable materials prior to collection.

**Reason:** To protect the local environment.

6. Any end-of-life metal equipment shall not be allowed to accumulate on site. Any such end-of-life equipment or hazardous wastes arising on the site shall be recycled as far as possible. Materials exported from the site for recovery, recycling or disposal shall be managed at an approved facility. Adequate on-

site arrangements shall be made to the written satisfaction of the Planning Authority for the storage of recyclable materials prior to collection.

**Reason:** To protect the local environment.

7. (a) All mitigation measures in relation to archaeology and cultural heritage as set out in Section 5.8 and Appendix H of the Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (date November 2024) and the Further Information Response to item No 5 submitted 15 August 2025 shall be implemented in full, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with this condition.

(b) The applicant shall engage the services of a suitably qualified project archaeologist to oversee the project. Prior to works commencing on the site the Project Archaeologist shall submit, for the written agreement of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DoHLGH) and the Planning Authority, an overall strategy for archaeological works to be carried out both in advance of and in parallel with construction of the development. This shall include the location, extent and method of demarcation for any Exclusion Zones around the external-most elements of vulnerable Heritage Assets in proximity to the works or designated access routes that are to be preserved in situ. This shall also include the location and extent of any other protective measures such as ground protection matting that will be employed to protect vulnerable Heritage Assets or potential sub-surface archaeological deposits.

(c) The engaged archaeologist shall monitor (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) all site clearance works, topsoil stripping, groundworks and the implementation of agreed preservation in-situ measures associated with the development.

- i. The use of appropriate machinery to ensure the preservation and recording of any surviving archaeological remains shall be necessary.
- ii. Should archaeological remains be identified during the course of archaeological monitoring, all works shall cease in the area of archaeological interest pending a decision of the planning authority, in consultation with the DoHLGH, regarding appropriate mitigation which may include preservation in-situ or full archaeological excavation.

iii. The developer shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any remains identified. Any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the planning authority, following consultation with the DoHLGH, shall be complied with by the developer.

(d) The Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) shall include the location of any and all archaeological or cultural heritage constraints relevant to the proposed development as set out in Section 5.8 and Appendix H of the PECR (date November 2024) and by any subsequent archaeological investigations associated with the project. The CEMP shall clearly describe all identified likely archaeological impacts, both direct and indirect, and all mitigation measures to be employed to protect the archaeological or cultural heritage environment during all phases of site preparation and construction activity.

(e) The planning authority and the DoHLGH shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of all archaeological monitoring and any archaeological investigative work/excavation required, following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary post-excavation specialist analysis. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

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

8. Any cutting of trees, hedgerows and vegetation should only be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season. The bird breeding season takes place between March 1st and August 31st. In the event that clearance / cutting works are unavoidable during this period, a pre-works breeding bird survey shall be undertaken by an experienced ecologist / ornithologist to identify nest sites which are to be marked and avoided by construction if found until such time that the site is vacated by fledglings, submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority.

**Reason:** To protect nesting birds and other wildlife.

9. A pre-construction survey for Badger shall be completed by a suitably qualified specialist to implement measures to ensure that active breeding sites or resting places of this protected species are not disturbed. The developer shall submit a Badger Mitigation and Protection Plan for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works within the zone of influence of breeding sites and/or resting places.

**Reason:** To ensure the protection of Badger.

10. All works shall be supervised by an on-site Ecological Clerk of Works who will report on compliance with the relevant mitigation measures. The Ecological Clerk of Works shall be empowered to halt works where they consider that the continuation of the works is likely to result in a significant pollution or siltation incident or impact on protected habitats or species, and on-site works will cease until authorised to continue by the planning authority. A compliance monitoring report shall be prepared by the Ecological Clerk of Works and shall be submitted to the planning authority at the end of the main construction period.

**Reason:** To ensure compliance with mitigation measures and to protect biodiversity.

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

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Claire McVeigh

23 February 2026

## Appendix 1 – EIA Screening Form 1

<b>Case Reference</b>	PL-500122-TY
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	Refurbishment works to 24.3 km of overhead line, 9 no. steel towers and 121 no. wooden polesets and all associated works. The development also includes 3 no. temporary construction compounds. A Natura Impact Statement accompanies the application.
<b>Development Address</b>	Between the existing Cahir Substation in the townland of Ballyhenebery Co. Tipperary, and Knockraha Substation in the townland Ballynanelagh Co. Cork.
<b>In all cases check box /or leave blank</b>	
<b>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a ‘project’ for the purposes of EIA?</b>  (For the purposes of the Directive, “Project” means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes,  - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a ‘Project’. Proceed to Q2.
	<input type="checkbox"/> No, no further action required.
<b>2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1.  <b>EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.</b>	N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
<b>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?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed	N/A

<p>type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994.</p> <p><b>No Screening required.</b></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold.</p> <p><b>EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.</p> <p><b>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</b></p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><b>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</b></p>	<p>The submitted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report prepared by <i>Jacobs</i> is noted and in this respect, I have included their considerations in respect to whether the development is of a Class but is sub-threshold, as below.</p> <p><i>"While the Proposed Development relates to transmission of electrical energy by OHL not included in Part 1 of Schedule 5, the voltage would not be 200 kV or more as works relates only to the 110 kV line. The Proposed Development is a line uprate and refurbishment of an existing 110 kV line and as such it is considered that it does not fall within this class of project in 3(b) of Part 2 and therefore mandatory EIA is not required. The Proposed Development will not result in a change or extension which will result in a threshold set out in Annex I or II of the 2014 Directive or within Part 1 or 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) being met or exceeded.</i></p> <p><i>The DAFM "EIA (Agriculture) Regulations Guide for Farmers provides clarity that "restructuring of rural land-holdings" involves changing the layout of the farm". Having regard to this, while temporary localised field boundary change may arise for the working areas for steel towers / polesets along the OHL circuit, the existing field configuration is maintained by inter alia using temporary fencing to protect livestock and agricultural practices pending reinstatement. No restructuring of rural land-holdings, is therefore considered to occur.</i></p> <p><i>Notwithstanding the above, having regard to the scope of S.I. 383/2023, and the important role of hedgerows as rural field boundaries, the extent of rural field boundaries to be cleared to facilitate construction of the Proposed Development has been calculated using Arc GIS. This</i></p>

	<p><i>calculation is based on the working areas for steel towers / polesets along the OHL circuit within vegetation clearance may arise to delivery ancillary works. This calculation includes for all boundaries (hedged, fenced, walled etc), regardless of vegetation and this reflects the broad ambit of the term 'field boundary'.</i></p> <p><i>Having regard to the overall length of the circuit, the working areas required for a 110 kV uprate /refurbishment project, and the specifics of the Proposed Development (as described in Section 1.1), the cumulative length of field boundary to be removed as part of the Proposed Development is 677m. Where vegetation clearance has been necessary, replanting will occur.</i></p> <p><i>Given the absence of guidelines on how S.I. 383/2023 should be interpreted, and the fact that the Proposed Development, along its cumulative length (although of very localised extent at any particular location), will result in 677m of field boundary to be removed (on a temporary basis), the project constitutes a project type specified in Schedule 5, Part 2, which does not meet or exceed the specified threshold of 4 km. Therefore, further assessment of whether the Proposed Development (as a 'subthreshold' project) is likely to have significant effects on the environment is required."</i></p> <p>Having regard to the above considerations I would concur on the basis of the wide scope and broad purpose of the EIA procedure.</p>
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<b>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)?</b>	
<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Screening determination required (Complete Form 3).
<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	

Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2 – EIA Screening Determination

A. CASE DETAILS	
<b>An Coimisiún Pleanála Case Reference</b>	PL-500122-TY
<b>Development Summary</b>	Refurbishment works to 24.3 km of overhead line, 9 no. steel towers and 121 no. wooden polesets and all associated works. The development also includes 3 no. temporary construction compounds. A Natura Impact Statement accompanies the application.
<b>Sub-threshold - development class referred to under Schedule 5 of Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) or Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994:</b>	<p>The proposed development does not fall within the class of projects listed in Part 1, Schedule 5; mandatory EIA is, therefore, not required under Part 1.</p> <p>The proposal does not specifically fall under any of the classes set out in Schedule 5 Part 2 including Class 3 Energy which relates to the transmission of electrical energy where the voltage would be 200 kilovolts or more. The proposed development is for the refurbishment works to an existing overhead power line. A mandatory EIA is not required under Schedule 5 Part 2.</p> <p>Regarding Class 13, Changes, extensions, development and testing, the proposal would not result in changes that would bring the proposal into a class listed in Part 1 or classes 1-12 of Part 2 of Schedule 5. Having regard to the existing development and as the application as described is not proposed to increase in size greater than 25 per cent of the existing development, or an amount equal to 50 per cent of the appropriate threshold nor is it anticipated that the replacement of the towers and poles would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, it is considered that the proposal does not fall within Class 13 of Part 2.</p> <p>The submitted screening report has indicated that as the proposal will involve the temporary removal of up to 677 metres of field boundaries, consideration is to be given to the threshold set out under Schedule 2 Part 2 Class 4 Projects for the Restructuring of Landholdings 1 (a).</p>

	<p>As per this class, an EIA is required for projects for the restructuring of rural land holdings, undertaken as part of a wider proposed development, and not as an agricultural activity that must comply with the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations 2011, where the length of field boundary to be removed is above 4 kilometres, or where re-contouring is above 5 hectares, or where the area of lands to be restructured by removal of field boundaries is above 50 hectares. The removal of 677 metres of field boundaries is significantly below the 4 km threshold.</p> <p>On the basis of the wide scope and broad purpose of the EIA procedure I concur with the precautionary approach applied by the applicants to undertake the non-statutory Planning and Environmental Considerations Report (PECR) in tandem with the EIA Screening Report.</p>	
	<b>Yes / No / N/A</b>	<b>Comment (if relevant)</b>
1. Was a Screening Determination carried out by the PA?	Yes	The PA determined that the proposal would not give rise to significant adverse environmental impacts, and an EIA is not required.
2. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?	Yes	The applicant has submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report Appendix B of the submitted Planning and Environmental Considerations report (PECR). Section 4.2.1 of the PECR is a summary of the EIA screening.
3. Has an AA screening report or NIS been submitted?	Yes	Natura Impact Statement submitted.
4. Is an IED/IPC or Waste Licence or (or review of licence/) required from the EPA for the subject development? If YES has the EPA been consulted?	No	
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?	Yes	Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

		The EirGrid Grid Implementation Plan 2023-2028 has been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment which has regard to the Grid development program including updates.	
<b>B. EXAMINATION</b>	<b>Yes/ No/ Uncertain</b>	<b>Briefly describe the nature and extent and Mitigation Measures (where relevant)</b>  (having regard to the probability, magnitude (including population size affected), complexity, duration, frequency, intensity, and reversibility of impact)  <b>Mitigation measures</b> –Where relevant specify features or measures proposed by the applicant to avoid or prevent a significant effect.	<b>Is this likely to result in significant effects on the environment?</b>  <b>Yes/ No/ Uncertain</b>
<b>1. Characteristics of proposed development (including demolition, construction, operation, or decommissioning)</b>			
<b>1.1</b> Is the project significantly different in character or scale to the existing surrounding or environment?	No	Table 5.2 of the submitted EIA Screening report (Appendix 2) describes the characteristics of the proposed development. The project, involves refurbishment works to the existing 110 kV Over Head Line (OHL) and will be confined to the existing route, are not exceptional in the context of the existing environment	No
<b>1.2</b> Will construction, operation, decommissioning or demolition works cause physical changes to the locality (topography, land use, waterbodies)?	Yes	Potential landscape and visual impacts from construction activities.	No, with mitigation and management measures the

		No significant operational effects expected.	potential physical changes as a result of construction will be reduced.
<b>1.3</b> 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	<p>The proposed development will replace an existing OHL, with minimum additional land take resulting from changes to the type of technology used. While the impacts resulting from the Proposed Development on natural resources will not result in significant adverse environmental effects during operation (as evidenced with the PECR). During construction, where temporary effects arise, they will be mitigated in accordance with the CEMP.</p> <p>The Proposed Development, along its cumulative length (although of very localised extent at any particular location), will result in 677m of field boundary to be removed on a temporary basis. Where vegetation clearance has been necessary, replanting will occur.</p> <p>There will ultimately be a net gain of planting resulting from the proposed development.</p>	No
<b>1.4</b> Will the project involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of substance which	Yes	An assessment on pollution and nuisances has been carried out and are provided in the	No

<p>would be harmful to human health or the environment?</p>		<p>PECR submitted with the planning application.</p> <p>Including the potential for accidental release of potentially polluting substances such as cement and oils (hydrocarbons) can result in adverse effects on the surface water environment and associated aquatic environment.</p> <p>Suitable precautions will be taken to prevent spillages from equipment containing small quantities of hazardous substances (for example, chainsaws and jerry cans).</p> <p>See Section 5.3 (Population and Human Health), Section 5.4 (Air Quality and Climate) and Section 5.5 (Noise and vibration) of the submitted PECR.</p>	
<p><b>1.5</b> Will the project produce solid waste, release pollutants or any hazardous / toxic / noxious substances?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>An assessment regarding the production of waste has been included in the PECR submitted with the planning application.</p> <p>See Section 5.7 (Resource Use and Waste Management) in the PECR.</p> <p>The proposed development is not likely to have a significant environmental effect with regard to the production of waste. Waste materials will be produced during</p>	<p>No</p>

		construction as a result of construction activities / processes. All waste generated will be handled, reused where possible, or transferred and disposed of to an appropriately licensed / permitted waste disposal / recovery facility.	
<b>1.6</b> 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	An assessment on pollution and nuisances has been carried out and are provided in the PECR submitted with the planning application. See Section 5.3 (Population and Human Health), Section 5.4 (Air Quality and Climate) and Section 5.5 (Noise and vibration).	No
<b>1.7</b> Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes	Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs) surround any object that is generating, transmitting or using electricity. Section 5.3.3.5.3 of the submitted PECR outlines that the design of the distribution infrastructure has ensured that the strength of the electric and magnetic fields during operation of the Proposed Development will comply with the ICNIRP and EU guidelines on exposure of the general public to EMFs.  EMFs are not considered a risk factor or constraint for the Proposed Development.	No

		<p>EirGrid’s design standards require all substations and associated infrastructure to operate under existing public exposure guidelines from the ICNIRP, and as such, there will be no direct impact from EMFs in terms of human health and interference to other electrical devices and systems.</p> <p>Construction noise and vibration thresholds are predicted to be exceeded at several noise sensitive receptors, but the short duration of the works is considered to mean that no significant noise effects are likely. The construction works will be subject to applicable standards including BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 Code of practice for noise and vibration Control on construction and open sites – Part 1: Noise and comply with Best Practicable Means (BPM).</p>	
<p><b>1.8</b> Will there be any risks to human health, for example due to water contamination or air pollution?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Human health has been assessed in Section 5.3 (Population and Human Health) of the PECR submitted with the planning application.</p> <p>As reported by the residual effects sections of the PECR assessment of Landscape and Visual (Section 5.2.7), Air Quality (Section 5.4.6), Noise &amp; Vibration (Section 5.5.6), and Traffic and Transport (Section 5.6.6), no significant effects are anticipated during the</p>	<p>No</p>

		construction or operational phases of the proposed development in respect to any of these assessments. Therefore, there is expected to be no significant adverse effects on the population or human health of individuals within the area of the proposed development.	
<b>1.9</b> Will there be any risk of major accidents that could affect human health or the environment?	Yes	Major accidents and disasters have been assessed in Section 5.11 (Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters) of the PECR. The assessment considers the risk associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development, including in relation to SEVESO Sites. The likelihood of any accidents or incidents during construction and operation will be managed in accordance with relevant health and safety legislation and by the implementation of best practice construction and operational procedure management.	No
<b>1.10</b> Will the project affect the social environment (population, employment)	Yes	Refer to Section 5.3 (Population and Human Health) of the PECR submitted as part of this planning application. With the implementation of mitigation measures proposed in the relevant subsequent environmental sections, it is anticipated that there will be no significant effects.	No

<p><b>1.11</b> Is the project part of a wider large scale change that could result in cumulative effects on the environment?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A cumulative impact assessment has been included in the PECR submitted with the planning application (See Section 5.12 (Cumulative Impacts) of the PECR).</p> <p>Considering the nature of the Proposed Development and the other existing or permitted projects, it is concluded that no significant cumulative impacts would arise.</p> <p>The planning history in the vicinity of the site is noted and does not give rise to a concern in terms of cumulative impacts.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>2. Location of proposed development</b></p>			
<p><b>2.1</b> Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining or have the potential to impact on any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- European site (SAC/ SPA/ pSAC/ pSPA)</li> <li>- NHA/ pNHA</li> <li>- Designated Nature Reserve</li> <li>- Designated refuge for flora or fauna</li> <li>- Place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation/conservation/ protection of which is an objective of a development plan/ LAP/ draft plan or variation of a plan</li> </ul>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will consist of the refurbishment works of the existing Barrymore-Cahir-Knockraha 110kV OHL. This is a predominately rural landscape and does not overlap any designated settlements. Table 5.3 and section 2.2 of the submitted EIA Screening report describes the location of the proposed development.</p> <p>Eight European sites were considered to be within the Zol of the Proposed Development due to their connectivity (proximity, ecological, hydrological, etc.)</p> <p>Specifically see Table 5.4 and Table 5.5 in Section 5.1.3 of the PECR which identifies</p>	<p>No</p>

		<p>where structures are located within or adjacent to ecologically sensitive locations.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to any hydrological linkages as part of the assessment. Refer to Section 5.1 (Biodiversity) of the PECR submitted as part of this planning application.</p> <p>An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) was prepared, and a report of its findings accompanies the PECR (See Appendix C (Appropriate Assessment Screening Report)) which forms part of the planning application.</p> <p>A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was also prepared and examined whether, in view of best scientific knowledge and applying the precautionary principle, the Proposed Development either individually, or in-combination with other plans or projects, may have an adverse effect on the integrity of Natura 2000 Sites (also known as European sites) (See Appendix D (NIS) and refer to Section 9.0 of my report and Appendix 3).</p> <p>I note that Table 5.4 of the submitted EIA screening report sets out the type and characteristics of potential impacts on a number of different receptors including, population and human health, Biodiversity, Land, soil, water, air and climate, Material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape</p>
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		and Cumulative impacts. Transboundary impacts are also considered.	
<b>2.2</b> 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	The site boundary overlaps the Lower River Suir SAC and is within 15 km of the Galtee mountains SAC. A Natura Impact Statement has been submitted and is considered below. No significant impacts arise.	No
<b>2.3</b> Are there any other features of landscape, historic, archaeological, or cultural importance that could be affected?	Yes	The Proposed Development is directly related to an existing OHL which is an established and integral feature within the landscape.  Refer to Section 5.8 (Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage) of the PECR submitted as part of this planning application.	No
<b>2.4</b> 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	Due to the localised nature of the works no significant residual impacts are predicted for the Proposed Development as permanent losses of important ecological receptors have been avoided / minimised through mitigation and design.  Refer to Section 5.7 (Resource Use and Waste Management) of the PECR submitted as part of this planning application.	No

<p><b>2.5</b> 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?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>See Table 5.6 of the PECR which identifies where existing structures are located within or adjacent to waterbodies</p> <p>See Section 5.10 (Hydrology) of the PECR submitted as part of the planning application which considered the potential impacts of the Proposed Development in relation to surface, water drainage, water supply and wastewater discharge, and Water Framework Directive (WFD) surface water objectives and flood risk.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>2.6</b> Is the location susceptible to subsidence, landslides or erosion?</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Section 5.10.4.1.1 Surface Water Quality addresses erosion of material.</p> <p>Section 5.1.5.3.1.2.6 Concrete - Turbidity and erosion control is proposed to mitigate risks associated with concrete pouring.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>2.7</b> Are there any key transport routes (e.g. 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?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>It is envisaged that the traffic generated during the construction of the Proposed Development will use Regional, National and Motorway networks to approach the site, with the last, shorter portion of the trip completed primarily on local access roads. Access to the sites itself will be provided by existing local access roads and temporary access route tracks. (See section 5.6 of the submitted PECR).</p>	<p>No</p>

		<p>The primary mitigation measures will be the development of the Construction Traffic Management Plan (included in Appendix F) by the appointed contractor. The appointed contractor will develop and finalise a CTMP in consultation with the Roads Authorities, Cork County Council and Tipperary County Council as well as Transport Infrastructure Ireland and appropriate Emergency Services.</p>	
<p><b>2.8</b> Are there existing sensitive land uses or community facilities (such as hospitals, schools etc) which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is directly related to an existing OHL which is an established and integral feature within the landscape.</p> <p>The subject appeal relates specifically to proposed replacement of tower/Angle Mast (AM) no. 124 which sits within approximately 45m of an existing residential dwelling. The proposed changes to the existing mast are not deemed to be of such a scale over and above the existing visual impact of the AM to significantly impact on either the landscape or the sensitive residential land use to the southeast of this AM.</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.2 (Landscape and Visual) of the PECR submitted as part of this planning application.</p>	<p>No</p>

<b>3. Any other factors that should be considered which could lead to environmental impacts</b>			
<b>3.1 Cumulative Effects:</b> Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulative effects during the construction/ operation phase?	Yes	The PECR contains a cumulative effects assessment and has identified the Proposed Development will interact with other developments in the area.  It is proposed to manage these impacts through liaison with the developers and contractors on the other projects to manage programme to minimise conflicts.	No
<b>3.2 Transboundary Effects:</b> Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	No	N/A	No
<b>3.3</b> Are there any other relevant considerations?			
<b>C. CONCLUSION</b>			
<b>No real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.</b>	√	EIAR Not Required	
<b>Real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.</b>			
<b>D. MAIN REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS</b>			
Having regard to: -			

1. the criteria set out in Schedule 7, in particular
  - (a) the nature and scale of the proposed development, comprising the refurbishment of existing electrical network in Co Tipperary,
  - (b) the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity having regard to the existing land use,
  - (c) the likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development taking into account the magnitude and spatial extent of the likely impacts.
2. the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment submitted by the applicant.
3. the features and measures proposed by applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant effects on the environment.

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 – Appropriate Assessment**

### **1.0 Appropriate Assessment**

1.1. The requirements of Article 6(3) as related to appropriate assessment of a project under part XAB, sections 177U and 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) are considered fully in this section. The areas addressed in this section are as follows:

- Compliance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive
- Screening the need for appropriate assessment
- The Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and associated documents
- Appropriate assessment of implications of the proposed development on the integrity of the European site.

### **1.2. Compliance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive**

The Habitats Directive deals with the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union. Article 6(3) of this Directive requires that any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The competent authority must be satisfied that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site before consent can be given.

The proposed development is not directly connected to or necessary to the management of any European site and therefore is subject to the provisions of Article 6(3).

### 1.3. Screening the need for Appropriate Assessment

#### **Appropriate Assessment: Screening Determination**

##### **(Stage 1, Article 6(3) of Habitats Directive)**

I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements of S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

A screening report for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared by *Jacobs* on behalf of the applicant.

The objective information presented in these reports informs this screening determination.

##### **Description of the proposed development**

It is proposed to carry out refurbishments works to 24.3km of overhead line, 9 no. steel towers and 121 no. wooden polesets and all associated works. The development includes 3 no. temporary construction compounds.

I have provided a detailed description of the development in my report (Section 2.0) and detailed specifications of the proposal are provided in the NIS and other planning documents provided by the applicant.

##### **Consultations and submissions**

Land and Utility Compensation Consultants Ltd.'s third party submission to Tipperary County Council at planning application stage raised concerns in respect to "errors and inconsistencies" in the submitted Natura Impact Statement (NIS). Key issues raised include:

- Inadequate consideration on in-combination effects,
- Deficient baseline Characterisation and that the baseline habitat survey lacks sufficient detail on seasonality and fails to establish a comprehensive ecological context,
- Insufficient consideration of watercourse crossings as the proposed mitigation measures are generic and do not account of site-specific hydrological characteristics, and
- Inconsistent conservation objectives referenced for designated sites i.e., do not align with the latest published objectives of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

The Development Applications Unit (DAU) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage have made no comments in respect to Appropriate Assessment Screening and/ or Appropriate Assessment in their submissions.

### **European Sites**

The submitted Appropriate Assessment Screening Report identifies three European Sites where the proposed development site is partially located within three European sites:

- The Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code:002137) located at the northern extent of the proposed development.
- The Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (Site Code:002170) located in the central and southern extent of the proposed development.
- The Blackwater Callows SPA (Site Code: 004094) overlaps with large sections of the Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC.

In addition to these three European Sites, five additional SPAs are identified as within the proposed development's Zone of Influence (Zoi):

- Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code:004030)
- Kilcolman Bog SPA (Site Code: 004095)
- Ballycotton Bay SPA (Site Code: 004022)
- Blackwater Estuary SPA (Site Code: 004028)
- Dungarvan Harbour SPA (Site Code:004032)

Table 3-1 of the Appropriate Assessment Screening report indicates the annexed and QI Species within 2km of the proposed development. Table 4.5 details the QI and conservation objectives of the eight European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.

Two European Sites were identified geographically close to the proposed development, but they are not considered further in the submitted AA Screening Report due to the lack of any potential pathway for impact. These sites are:

- Galtee Mountains SAC (Site Code: 000646) and Great Island Channel SAC (Site Code:001058).

European Site	Qualifying Interests	Distance	Connections
<p>Lower River Suir SAC (002137)</p> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002137">https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002137</a> (Accessed on 18/02/2026)</p>	<p>Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330]</p> <p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260]</p> <p>Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430]</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]</p> <p>Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]</p> <p>Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [91J0]</p> <p>Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</p> <p>Austropotamobius pallipes (White-</p>	<p>0m (poleset 23 is within the SAC boundary)</p>	<p>Directly within and hydrological</p>

	<p>clawed Crayfish) [1092]</p> <p>Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</p> <p>Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</p> <p>Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]</p> <p>Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad) [1103]</p> <p>Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]</p> <p>Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</p>		
<p>Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (002170)</p> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002170">https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/002170</a> (Accessed 18/02/2026)</p>	<p>Estuaries [1130]</p> <p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</p> <p>Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</p> <p>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</p> <p>Atlantic salt meadows (Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima) [1330]</p>	<p>0M (Polesets 187, 188, 200, 201, 202 and 203 are within the SAC boundary) <i>*I highlight that structures numbered 1-130 relate to those within Tipperary County Council's administrative boundary.</i></p>	<p>Directly within and hydrological</p>

	<p>Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]</p> <p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</p> <p>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]</p> <p><i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</p> <p><i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</p> <p><i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</p>		
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	<p>Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</p> <p>Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]</p> <p>Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad) [1103]</p> <p>Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]</p> <p>Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</p> <p>Vandenboschia speciosa (Killarney Fern) [6985]</p>		
<p>Blackwater Callows SPA (004094)</p> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004094">https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004094</a></p> <p>(Accessed on 18/02/2026)</p>	<p>Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]</p> <p>Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]</p> <p>Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]</p> <p>Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855]</p> <p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>0m (Polesets 200, 201, 202 and 203 are within the SPA boundary) <i>*I highlight that structures numbered 1-130 relate to those within Tipperary County Council's administrative boundary.</i></p>	<p>Directly within</p>
<p>Cork Harbour SPA (004030)</p> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004030">https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004030</a></p> <p>(Accessed on 18/02/2026)</p>	<p>Little Grebe (Tachybaptus ruficollis) [A004]</p>	<p>4.76km from proposed development</p>	<p>Closest point to the south of the proposed</p>

	<p>Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005]</p> <p>Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017]</p> <p>Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028]</p> <p>Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]</p> <p>Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]</p> <p>Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]</p> <p>Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054]</p> <p>Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056]</p> <p>Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069]</p> <p>Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]</p> <p>Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</p> <p>Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]</p>		development Knockraha.
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	<p>Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</p> <p>Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]</p> <p>Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</p> <p>Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]</p> <p>Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]</p> <p>Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]</p> <p>Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]</p> <p>Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]</p> <p>Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183]</p> <p>Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]</p> <p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>		
Ballycotton Bay SPA (004022)	Teal ( <i>Anas crecca</i> ) [A052]	24km from proposed development	Closest point is to the south of the

<p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004022">https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004022</a> (Accessed 18/02/2026)</p>	<p>Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137]</p> <p>Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]</p> <p>Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]</p> <p>Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142]</p> <p>Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]</p> <p>Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157]</p> <p>Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160]</p> <p>Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) [A169]</p> <p>Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182]</p> <p>Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183]</p> <p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>		<p>proposed development at Knockraha.</p>
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<p>Kilcolman Bog SPA (004095)</p> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004095">https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004095</a></p> <p>(Accessed 18/02/2026)</p>	<p>Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]</p> <p>Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]</p> <p>Shoveler (Anas clypeata) [A056]</p> <p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>26km from proposed development</p>	<p>Closest point is in the middle section near to Mitchelstown.</p>
<p>Blackwater Estuary SPA (004028)</p> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004028">https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004028</a></p> <p>(Accessed 18/02/2026)</p>	<p>Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050]</p> <p>Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]</p> <p>Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142]</p> <p>Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149]</p> <p>Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]</p> <p>Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157]</p> <p>Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160]</p> <p>Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162]</p> <p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>25.8km from proposed development.</p>	<p>Closest point is to the south of the proposed development at Knockraha.</p>
<p>Dungarvan Harbour SPA (004032)</p> <p><a href="https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004032">https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004032</a></p> <p>(Accessed 18/02/2026)</p>	<p>Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) [A005]</p> <p>Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]</p>	<p>40.7km from proposed development.</p>	<p>Closest point is the centre of the proposed development at Barrymore.</p>

	<p>Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]</p> <p>Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069]</p> <p>Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]</p> <p>Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</p> <p>Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]</p> <p>Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</p> <p>Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]</p> <p>Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]</p> <p>Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</p> <p>Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]</p> <p>Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]</p> <p>Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]</p>		
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	Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) [A169]		
	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]		

**Table 1.1**

I note that the screening for AA was undertaken by Tipperary County Council (page 13 of the second planner’s report) identifies four European Sites within 15km of the subject site (red-line boundary in Tipperary County Council), namely:

- Lower River Suir SAC
- Galtee Mountains SAC
- River Blackwater SAC
- River Blackwater Callows SPA

Given the separation distance and the lack of any direct connection, the planning authority considers that there will be no impact from either the works to be retained or the works proposed on either the Galtee Mountains SAC, the River Blackwater SAC and the River Blackwater Callows SPA.

In respect to watercourse crossings the AA Screening undertaken by Tipperary County Council sets out that there are several mapped river waterbodies that intersect the proposed development, which belong to the Lower River Suir river systems; in Co Tipperary and the River Blackwater SAC is Co. Cork. They state that *“the works proposed within the administrative area of Tipperary do not intersect with the River Blackwater SAC”*.

As such the European Sites relevant to the proposed development are further refined and the planning authority determined that the Lower River Suir SAC is the only relevant European Site to be considered further within the screening.

I concur that there is no ecological justification for a wider consideration of sites, and I am satisfied that the above listed Natura site as identified in the submitted AA screening, and as refined in the AA Screening of the planning authority, is the only European sites of relevance which could be impacted by the proposed development applying the source-pathway-receptor model.

**Likely impacts of the project.**

Table 5.1 of the submitted AA Screening Report sets out the potential for likely significant effects on the Lower River Suir SAC.

Given that works are proposed within the SAC and over water bodies that are hydrologically connected to the SAC, there is the potential for impacts upon the Lower

River Suir SAC and the qualifying interests for which that SAC is designated, from the construction and operational phase of the development proposed.

- During the construction phase, there is potential for the generation of silt-laden surface waters which could contaminate surface water generated on site with other construction-related materials such as hydrocarbons, cement-based products or other construction solutions.
- Habitat loss where work is required and from access tracks to work areas.
- Habitat degradation impacts and direct mortality impacts may occur via a pollution incident with the use of machinery during construction.
- Disturbance impacts to otter are possible during the construction phase.
- During the operational phase potential exists for surface water generated on hard surfaces to be contaminated with hydrocarbons from vehicles.

### **Likely significant effects on the European sites in view of the conservation objectives**

Based on the information provided in the screening report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS), site visit, review of the conservation objectives and supporting documents, I consider that in the absence of mitigation measures beyond best practice construction methods, the proposed development has the potential to result in the following impacts:

- Habitat loss at Poleset 23 within the SAC boundary and at works proposed at Tower 22 which is in close proximity to the SAC boundary.
- Habitat degradation, deterioration of water quality and the wetland components of European Sites.
- Mortality via a pollution event entering watercourses which are hydrologically linked as supporting habitat for QI species.
- Disturbance during the construction phase via the use of machinery.

An examination and analysis of the potential for other plans and/or projects to act in combination with the proposed project to have a significant effect on any European site within its zone of influence is considered in Table 5.2 of the AA Screening Report.

I concur with the applicants' findings that such impacts could be significant when considered on their own and in combination with other projects and plans.

### **Overall Conclusion**

#### **Screening determination**

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of objective information provided by the applicant, I conclude that the proposed development could result in significant effects on the Lower River Suir SAC in view of the conservation objectives of a number of qualifying interest features of that site.

It is therefore determined that Appropriate Assessment (stage 2) under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 of the proposed development is required.

### **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 development in view of the relevant conservation objectives of the Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code: 002137) based on scientific information provided by the applicant.

The information relied upon includes the following:

- Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment undertaken by Tipperary County Council.
- Natura Impact Statement (NIS) prepared by *Jacobs* and its Annexes.

I note the third-party submission made in respect to contested errors and inconsistencies in the NIS. I am of the opinion that sufficient evidence of contended errors and inconsistencies has not been demonstrated. As such, 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**

As already addressed above, I note the third-party submission, as already detailed above in my screening determination, raises concerns with respect to the submitted NIS. I shall have regard to same in my assessment undertaken below.

The Development Applications Unit (DAU), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, have no comments in respect to Appropriate Assessment Screening and/ or Appropriate Assessment in their submissions.

**European sites**

**Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code: 002137)**

**Summary of key issues that could give rise to adverse effects:**

- (i) **Habitat loss**
- (ii) **Habitat degradation**
- (iii) **Mortality**
- (iv) **Disturbance**

The submitted NIS outlines that the conservation status of relevant QIs at national and site level, key conditions underpinning favourable conservation status, attributes and threats to key conditions are presented in Table 6.1.

Please refer also to Table 6-2: Conservation objectives (CO) for QIs, Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche - Batrachion* vegetation, white-clawed crayfish, sea lamprey, brook lamprey, river lamprey, twaite shad, salmon and otter from Lower River Suir SAC (NPWS, 2017) in the submitted NIS.

<b>Qualifying Interest features likely to be affected</b>	<b>Conservation Objectives Targets and Attributes</b>	<b>Potential Adverse effects</b>
	<p>(NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lower River Suir SAC 002137. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs) (Viewed 18/02/2026)</p>	

	<b>Maintain/restore favourable conservation condition</b>	
<p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260]</p> <p>(Maintain)</p>	<p>Habitat area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.</p> <p>Habitat distribution: No decline, subject to natural processes.</p> <p>River flow: Maintain appropriate hydrological regimes.</p> <p>Groundwater discharge: Maintain appropriate hydrological regime.</p> <p>Tidal influence: maintain natural tidal regime.</p> <p>Maintain appropriate substratum particle size range, quantity and quality, subject to natural processes.</p> <p>Maintain appropriate water quality to support the natural structure and functioning of the habitat</p> <p>Maintain typical species in good condition, including appropriate distribution and abundance</p> <p>Maintain floodplain connectivity necessary to support the typical species and vegetation composition of the habitat</p> <p>Maintain marginal fringing habitats</p>	<p>Pollution incidents may impact the total habitat area, total habitat distribution and could lead to an increase in fine sediment.</p> <p>Pollution incidents may impact water quality, species distribution and abundance.</p>

	that support the typical species and vegetation composition of the habitat	
Austropotamobius pallipes (White clawed Crayfish) [1092]  (Maintain)	No reduction in baseline distribution.  Juveniles/females with eggs in all occupied tributaries.  No alien crayfish species.  No instances of disease. At least Q3-4 at all sites sampled.  No decline in habitat heterogeneity or habitat quality.	Pollution incidents may indirectly impact distribution, impact indirectly juveniles/females with eggs and impact water quality.
Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]  (Restore)	Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary.  At least three age/size groups present.  Juvenile density at least 1/m <sup>2</sup> .  No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds.  More than 50% of sample sites suitable for juvenile lamprey.	Pollution incidents may act as a temporary barrier to access upstream, may indirectly impact distribution and may impact habitat suitability for juvenile lamprey.
Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] and Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]  (Restore)	Access to all water courses down to first order streams.  At least three age/size groups present.	Pollution incidents may act as a temporary barrier to access upstream, may indirectly impact distribution and may impact habitat suitability for juvenile lamprey.

	<p>Mean catchment juvenile density of brook/river lamprey at least 2/m<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>No decline in extent and distribution of spawning beds.</p> <p>More than 50% of sample sites suitable for juvenile lamprey.</p>	
<p><i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> (Twaite Shad) [1103]  (Restore)</p>	<p>Greater than 75% of main stem length of rivers accessible from estuary.</p> <p>More than one age class present</p> <p>No decline in extent and distribution of spawning habitats. No lower than 5mg/l oxygen.</p> <p>Maintain stable gravel substrate with very little fine material, free of filamentous algal and macrophyte growth.</p>	<p>Pollution incidents may act as a temporary barrier to access upstream. Disturbance from noise, lighting and vibration may act as a temporary barrier to access upstream.</p> <p>A pollution event impacting on juvenile habitat downstream (estuarine water) of the proposed works could impact on juvenile abundance at these locations.</p> <p>A pollution event could impact the suitability of habitats for spawning. Pollution during construction activities could lead to a reduction in water quality <b>and</b> an increase in fine sediment.</p>
<p><i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]  (Restore)</p>	<p>Distribution: 100% of river channels down to second order accessible from estuary Spawning: Conservation Limit (CL) for each system consistently exceeded</p>	<p>A pollution event could act as a temporary barrier to migration. Disturbance from noise, lighting and vibration may act as a temporary barrier to access upstream.</p> <p>A pollution event could cause mortality which</p>

	<p>Fry abundance: Maintain or exceed 0+ fry mean catchment-wide abundance threshold value No significant decline in out-migrating smolt abundance.</p> <p>No decline in number and distribution of spawning redds due to anthropogenic causes.</p> <p>Water quality of at least EPA Q4 at all sites</p>	<p>has potential to undermine the conservation limit values of adult spawning fish. Pollution could also impact the spawning beds which in turn would affect the recruitment of adult spawning population.</p> <p>A pollution event impacting on juvenile habitat downstream of the proposed works could impact on fry abundance at these locations.</p> <p>A pollution event during construction activities could lead to an increase in fine sediment and a reduction in water quality.</p>
<p>Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]  (Maintain)</p>	<p>No significant decline in the distribution of otter.</p> <p>No significant decline in extent of terrestrial habitat.</p> <p>No significant decline in extent of marine habitat</p> <p>No significant decline in the extent of freshwater river habitat.</p> <p>No significant decline in the number of couching sites or holts.</p> <p>No significant decline in the fish biomass available. Broad diet that varies locally and seasonally, but dominated by fish, in</p>	<p>Given the broad diet and range over which otters forage and that any pollution event during construction would be short-term there is no potential for the proposed development to cause a significant decline in the distribution of otter. Disturbance from noise, lighting and vibration during construction may act as a temporary barrier to access along the watercourse but this would be short-term and therefore there is no potential to cause a significant decline in the distribution of otter.</p>

	<p>particular salmonids, eels and sticklebacks.</p> <p>No significant increase in barriers to connectivity.</p>	
Other QI's		
<p>The following QIs are not considered to have an effect pathway to the proposed development. These QIs are either not hydrologically connected or are located a significant distance downstream:</p> <p>Atlantic salt meadows are located 90kmdownstream of the proposed development.</p> <p>Mediterranean salt meadows are located 90km. downstream of the proposed development.</p> <p>Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels have not been mapped extensively but occur in association with alluvial forests, which are located 50km downstream.</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles are located upstream of the proposed development.</p> <p>*Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) are</p>	No effect pathway.	No effect pathway.

<p>located 50km downstream</p> <p>*Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles has not been mapped for the SAC but the one known area of habitat is upstream of the proposed development.</p> <p>Freshwater pearl mussel is located in the Clodaigh catchment within the SAC, which is upstream of a confluence with the main River Suir and thus not hydrologically connected to the proposed development.</p>		
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The above table is based on the documentation and information provided on the file and I am satisfied that the submitted NIS has identified the relevant attributes and targets of the Qualifying Interests.

**Assessment of issues that could give rise to adverse effects:**

Habitat Loss: The Proposed Development is located within the SAC boundary at Poleset 23 and located 53 m outside the SAC boundary at Polesets 71 and 72. The access track for Poleset 71 goes through the SAC boundary, and access for Poleset 72 is directly adjacent to the SAC. In the absence of mitigation, the creation of access tracks for the mobilisation of machinery required for the works could result in damage to habitat within the SAC boundary, some of which may be supporting habitat for QI species (i.e. riparian woodland is within the terrestrial buffer zone for otter). Pollution incidents during construction could enter watercourses and affect the total area and distribution of suitable habitat, particularly of water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation.

Habitat degradation: The Proposed Development is located within the SAC boundary at Poleset 23 and located 53 m outside the SAC boundary at Poleset 71 and 72. Several towers are within 50 m of watercourses and drainage ditches which are hydrologically connected to the SAC, namely Polesets 50, 56, 87, 112, 118 and 127. The access track for Poleset 71 goes through the SAC boundary, and access for Poleset 72 is directly adjacent to the SAC. A number of access tracks cross watercourses and drainage ditches that are hydrologically connected to the SAC, including access tracks for Polesets 27 and 28, 61, 109, 110, 111, 112 and 113, and the access track for 115 is in close proximity (7 m) to watercourse. During the construction phase, in the absence of mitigation, a pollution event resulting from material spillages, hydrocarbon leaks, or sediment laden surface

water runoff may enter watercourses and subsequently impact the QI habitat and species.

A pollution event from the Proposed Development may result in a deterioration of water quality and lead to impacts upon several conservation objectives for Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche - Batrachion* vegetation and white-clawed crayfish as presented in Table 6.2 above. Pollution resulting in nutrient enrichment of the water can result in increased growth of macrophytes and filamentous algae which obscures the juvenile and spawning habitats and potentially diminishing their value as spawning/egg development habitat of the three lamprey QI species and twaite shad (NPWS, 2019c; Maitland & Hatton-Ellis, 2003; King & Roche, 2008; Maas *et al.*, 2008). A pollution event resulting in a release of sediment can also trigger this effect by obscuring the riverbed. A pollution event also has the potential to act as a temporary barrier to movement within the watercourses, which can impact the conservation objectives of the three lamprey species, twaite shad, salmon. Very good water quality is required at all stages of the salmon life cycle (Hendry and Cragg-Hine, 2003). Chronic pollution even if small in nature would reduce water quality overtime. Raised levels of suspended solids can lead to increased mortality through clogging the respiratory structures (i.e. gills) of fish (Bash *et al.*, 2001).

Juveniles remain in freshwater for up to three years and are more sensitive than adults to water quality parameters as they are less mobile and dependent more so on specific habitats during development stages (Hendry & Cragg-Hine, 2003). Although the Irish otter population is one of the most stable in Europe, threats to the population remain, such as the availability of food and resting sites (Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT), ND). Otter diet is predominantly fish, but they also commonly feed on frog (*Rana temporaria*) and crayfish. The assumption is that otter will utilise freshwater habitats from estuary to headwaters (Chapman and Chapman, 1982) and a terrestrial buffer of 10m along shoreline and riverbanks is critical (NPWS, 2007). During the construction phase, in the absence of mitigation, a pollution event resulting from material spillages, hydrocarbon leaks, or sediment laden surface water runoff may enter watercourses and lead to indirect impacts upon water quality and prey availability for otter as presented in Table 6.2.

Mortality: In the absence of mitigation, the effects from pollution produced by the Proposed Development has potential to cause mortality impacts. Mortality may occur via QI species interacting with and consuming polluted waters directly, via QI species consuming prey which occur in supporting habitats which may be laden with pollutants or via the reduction of prey causing starvation and mortality.

Disturbance: Two signs of otter were found within the SAC boundary during baseline surveys: otter spraint was recorded 115m from Tower 22 and a potential couch was recorded 125 m from Poleset 23. There may be further signs such as resting places or animals found during pre-construction surveys, as NBDC records of otter were returned at all sections of the route excluding between polesets/towers 1 – 40, where the surveyors found signs. Therefore, due to the proximity of the works to several watercourses hydrologically linked to the SAC there may be impacts on otter due to disturbance. Impacts from noise, vibration

and lighting due to major works may occur from plant and machinery mobilising to site and working at poleset/tower locations, as well as from vegetation clearance. This disturbance could affect otter, white-clawed crayfish, sea lamprey, brook lamprey, river lamprey, twaite shad and salmon.

**Mitigation measures and conditions**

Mitigation measures (See section 7 of the submitted NIS).

**In-combination effects**

I am satisfied that in-combination effects have been assessed adequately in the NIS (see table 8.1).

I am satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated that no residual adverse effects would remain post the application of mitigation measures.

**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, would not adversely affect the integrity of Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code: 002137) in view of the conservation objectives.

Based on the information provided, I am satisfied that adverse effects arising from proposed development can be excluded.

Direct and indirect impacts would be temporary in nature and mitigation measures are described to prevent deterioration in water quality or changes to in-situ hydrological regimes. Monitoring measures are also proposed. I am satisfied that the mitigation measures proposed to prevent such effects have been assessed as effective and can be implemented. No significant in combination effects are predicated.

**Reasonable scientific doubt**

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

**Site Integrity**

The proposed development would not affect the attainment of Conservation Objectives of the Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code: 002137).

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**

The proposed development has been considered in light of the assessment requirements of Sections 177U and 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

In screening the need for Appropriate Assessment, it was determined that the proposed development could result in significant effects on the Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code: 002137) in view of the conservation objectives of that site and that Appropriate Assessment under the provisions of S177U/ 177AE was required.

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the NIS, all associated material submitted and the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment report of the Tipperary County Council I consider that adverse effects on site integrity of the Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code:002137) 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 construction and operational impacts.
- Effectiveness of mitigation measures (detailed in NIS and accompanying Construction and Environmental Plan (CEMP) proposed including supervision and monitoring and integration into the CEMP ensuring smooth transition of obligations to eventual contractor.
- Application of planning conditions to ensure application of mitigation measures.

The proposed development would not affect the attainment of conservation objectives for the Lower River Suir SAC (Site Code:003137).

## Appendix 4 - Water Framework Directive (WFD) Screening

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING			
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality			
<b>An Coimisiún Pleanála ref. no.</b>	PL-500122-TY	<b>Townland, address</b>	Between the existing Cahir Substation in the townland of Ballyhenebery Co. Tipperary and Knockraha Substation in the townland Ballynanelagh, Co. Cork. List of full townlands provided in the submitted Planning and Environmental Considerations report (PECR).
<b>Description of project</b>		Refurbishment works to 24.3 km of overhead line, 9 no. steel towers and 121 no. wooden polesets and all associated works. The development also includes 3 no. temporary construction compounds. A Natura Impact Statement accompanies the application.	
<b>Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening</b>		The subject site comprises a linear overhead line (OHL) of 24.3km in length with associated infrastructure of steel towers and wooden polesets. Three temporary construction compounds are also proposed to be created along the route. The water bodies crossed by the proposed development are shown in Table 4.2 of the submitted Natura Impact Statement (NIS) for the entire route	

	from the Cahir Substation in Ballyhenebery County Tipperary to Knockraha substation in the townland of Ballynanelagh Co. Cork. I shall outline the relevant water bodies as they apply to this application and the associated planning application boundary (PAB) and the nearest Tower/Poleset as described by the applicant in table 4.2.
<b>Proposed surface water details</b>	Refurbishment works and uprating of the distribution line with temporary construction compounds and temporary access routes, where required. I note that the report of the District Engineer Tipperary County Council has raised no concerns with surface water management.
<b>Proposed water supply source &amp; available capacity</b>	Not relevant.
<b>Proposed wastewater treatment system &amp; available capacity, other issues</b>	Not relevant.
<b>Others?</b>	
<b>Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection</b> - For clarity in referencing below, as noted already in section 2.0 of my report, the structures numbered 1-130 are in Tipperary County Council administrative area, e.g. Tower 124 and Poleset 23.	

Identified water body	Distance to (m)	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status (16-21)	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body.	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater)
River Waterbody	44m from Planning Application Boundary (PAB) and 125m from Tower 22	SUIR_140 IE_SE_16S021 930	Good	Review	None identified.	Surface water runoff and drainage
River Waterbody	0m from PAB, 100m from	SUIR_150 IE_SE_16S022 000	Good	Review	None identified.	Surface water runoff and drainage

	Poleset 23 and 108m from Poleset 28.					
River Waterbody	0m from PAB, 37m from Poleset 50 and 54m from Poleset 56	THONGE_030 IE_SE_16T020 200	Good	Not at Risk	None identified.	Surface water runoff and drainage
River Waterbody	0m from PAB, 93m from Poleset 71, 41m from	TAR_020 (Lower River Suir SAC connection) IE_SE_16T010 300	Good	Not at Risk	None identified.	Surface water runoff and drainage

	Poleset 87					
River Waterbody	0m from PAB, 32m from Poleset 112, 84m from Poleset 116.	DUAG_020 (Lower River Suir SAC connection)  IE_SE_16D03 0400	Moderate	At Risk	Nutrients (Ag)	Surface water runoff and drainage
River Waterbody	0m from PAB, 139m from Poleset 119, 124m from Poleset 126,	DUAG_010 (Lower River Suir SAC connection)  IE_SE_16D03 0100	Moderate	At Risk	Nutrients (Ag)	Surface water runoff and drainage

	113m from Poleset 131					
Groundwater Waterbody	Directly below	The Proposed Development intersects nine WFD groundwater waterbodies (Table 5.54 of the submitted PECR). The relevant groundwater Waterbodies to this application are:	Good	At Risk (Clonmel, Carrick-on-Suir)  Not at Risk (Comeragh and Knockmealdown)	DWTS, For, Ag	As a result of the proposed excavations and use of concrete and hydrocarbon-based materials at towers as well as at construction compounds, and where there may be the storage of some toxic materials and fuels, there is the potential for contamination to infiltrate the ground and reach the underlying aquifer.

	<p>Clonmel (IE_SE_G_040 )</p> <p>Carrick-on-Suir (IE_SE_G_030 )</p> <p>Comeragh (IE_SE_G_154 )</p> <p>Knockmealdow n (IE_SE_G_047 )</p>				
<b>Step 4: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage.</b>					
<b>CONSTRUCTION PHASE</b>					

No.	Component	Waterbody receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact/ what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure*	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	<b>Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment? (if 'screened' in or 'uncertain' proceed to Stage 2.</b>
1.	Surface	As identified above.	Existing drainage ditches, watercourses	Siltation, pH (Concrete), hydrocarbon spillages	Yes -As included in Section 7 of submitted NIS and the CEMP	No	Screened out
2.	Ground	As identified above.	Pathway exists	Spillages	Mitigation measures specified in Section 4.11 of the CEMP (Appendix	No	Screened out

					<p>E)  regarding  the  storage,  use and  recovery  of  concrete  or  hydrocarb  on-based  materials  and  pollution  control will  significantl  y reduce  the risks.</p>		
<b>OPERATIONAL PHASE</b>							

3.	Surface	As identified above.	Existing drainage ditches, watercourses	Spillages	Yes -As included in Section 7 of submitted NIS and the CEMP.	No	Screened out
4.	Ground	As identified above.	Pathway exists	Spillages	Yes -As included in Section 7 of submitted NIS and the CEMP.	No	Screened out
<b>DECOMMISSIONING PHASE</b>							
5.	NA	As identified above.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA