Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment

Drumdowney Substation & Grid Connection SID Application

December 2025

IE CONSULTING
WATER-ENVIRONMENTAL-CIVIL

Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment

Client: Drumdowney Solar Farm Limited

Location: Rathpatrick, County Kilkenny

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1. Introduction

IE Consulting was requested by Drumdowney Solar Farm Limited to undertake a Stage 1 / Stage 2 Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) in support of a planning application for a proposed electrical substation and grid connection. The purpose of the proposed development is to transport the electricity generated at the proposed Drumdowney Solar Farm to the national electricity grid via a new 110kV GIS electricity substation with 33kV customer compound. The substation will include a 'loop-in / loop-out' underground 110kV cable grid connection which will connect into the existing 110kV Great Island - Waterford overhead transmission line via 2 no. new Interface Towers.

The purpose of this SSFRA is to assess the potential flood risk to the proposed development site and to assess the impact that the development as proposed may or may not have on the existing hydrological regime of the area.

Quoted ground levels or estimated flood levels relate to Ordnance Datum (Malin) unless stated otherwise.

This flood risk assessment study has been undertaken in consideration of the following guidance document:

'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' DOEHLG 2009.

2. Project Description

General

The proposed development comprises of

1. A 110kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) electricity substation with two-storey GIS substation building, single-storey Independent Power Producer (IPP) control room building, High Voltage (HV) electrical equipment and associated infrastructure (to include transformer, lightning protection masts, back-up diesel generator, fire/blast wall, telecoms pole, perimeter security fencing, security lighting, water and drainage infrastructure, and temporary construction compound) to connect to and serve a solar farm;
2. Associated loop-in / loop out infrastructure to connect into an existing 110kV overhead transmission line (including underground 110kV cabling, 2 No. new interface towers and decommissioning of ca. 15m of existing 110kV overhead line);
3. Construction and operational access from the public road L34142;
4. All ancillary site development, landscaping and earthworks. The development subject to this application forms part of grid connection and access arrangements which will facilitate the connection of the proposed Drumdowney Solar Farm (Kilkenny County Council Reference 25/60391) to the national grid. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in respect of the proposed development. The NIS includes consideration of the proposed Drumdowney Solar Farm which is located in the townlands of Atateemore or Blackneys, Ballyhobuck, Ballyrahan, Carriganurra, Charlestown, Davidstown, Drumdowney Lower, Drumdowney Upper, Gorteens, Grogan, Kilmurry, Nicholastown, Rathpatrick, Scartnamoe, Tinvaucoosh and Treanaree in County Kilkenny.

The operational lifetime of the solar farms is assumed to be 40 years. However, following the decommissioning of the solar farm, it is envisaged that the substation (and underground cable grid connection) will remain in situ as a valuable functioning and operational part of the electricity transmission network managed by the Transmission Systems Operator, EirGrid.

Substation

The substation will be based on EirGrid design specifications. The substation compound will consist of a two-storey GIS substation building, single-storey IPP Control Room building, HV electrical

equipment and associated infrastructure including palisade fences and concrete post and rail fences. The installation of HV electrical equipment will include a transformer with associated equipment along with:

- Lightning Masts (LM);
- Back-Up Diesel Generator;
- Harmonic filters if required by EirGrid;
- Capacitor Bank if required by EirGrid;
- Fire/Blast Wall;
- Telecoms Pole.

The substation compound has a total area of 5,335m^2.

Earthworks will be undertaken so the compound is level, with a finish compound level of 91.65m.

Site Access

The site will be accessed for both the construction and operational phases by means of a single entrance from the L34142. This existing entrance will be subject to some upgrades, including removal of existing roadside sod and stone ditch to provide new gate as presented under Kilkenny County Council Reference 25/60391. The entrance will be suitably splayed and has been subject to sight line and Autotrack analysis, with the latter including modelling of abnormal load delivery for the transformer. Operational sightlines will be maintained by trimming back hedgerows with all necessary land within ownership.

A 4.5 metre wide compacted access track will extend from the entrance to the substation compound. The design includes a temporary construction track to cater for deliveries, which will be decommissioned post the construction phase (and land reinstated), as well as an operational access track. The track will include a geotextile base and filter membrane and 200 mm of Clause 804 sub-base.

Connection to National Grid

In order to connect to the transmission network, it is proposed to connect the 110kV substation into the national grid via a 'loop-in / loop-out' underground 110kV cable grid connection which will connect into the existing 110kV Great Island to Waterford overhead line.

Two new steel lattice interface towers of approximately 16 m in height will form part of the existing overhead line and both towers will connect to the proposed 110kV substation via underground 110kV cables. The interface towers are approximately 15 metres apart, therefore the same length of the existing 110kV Whitegate – Cow's Cross overhead line will need to be decommissioned. The underground cable is comprised of 3 no. power ducts, 2 no. telecom ducts and 1 no. earth continuity duct. The cables to each interface tower are 68 and 83 metres in length.

This connection method will constitute a new node of the transmission network, connecting the proposed substation and associated solar farm generation to the national electricity grid. The construction method for the interface towers and decommissioning of 110kV overhead lines is set out in the Drumdowney Substation & Grid Connection Construction Methodology prepared by Drumdowney Solar Farm Limited.

All works will be carried out in accordance with international best practice and full compliance with health and safety requirements.

Temporary Construction Compound

As outlined in the submitted site layout plans, it is proposed to provide a temporary construction compound west of the proposed substation, accessed from the entrance from the L34142. The temporary compound will include the following facilities at a minimum:

- Adequate canteen space to allow for all workers during the peak period;
- Office space with lighting, heating and internet facilities;
- Toilets and adequate welfare facilities for construction staff in accordance with the relevant statutory Health & Welfare guidelines;
- Parking space for both light and heavy vehicles;
- Designated skips and temporary storage areas.

Surface Water Drainage and Water Services

Surface water drainage proposals for the development have been developed to mimic the natural drainage patterns of the site and thereby be in accordance with the best management practices of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) including those set out in the SuDS Manual (C753) published by CIRIA in 2015. Specifically, this includes the following:

- The compound construction is formed with permeable stone thus mimicking a soakaway scenario. ESB compound stone is single sized for the first 150mm for safety purposes. It then changes to a graded 6F2 material.
- The main areas to be drained includes the roofs and the compound road. These equate to approximately 2359m². The compound road will be drained via series of road gullies.
- Assuming even the most basic of infiltration rates down through the permeable compound stone, the existing greenfield situation is easily maintained.

The surface water generated in the hardstanding and bunded areas will discharge to the soakaway via a Class 1 Full Retention Oil Separator. The electrical transformer in the substation is oil filled equipment and, as such, is protected with impermeable bunds. Surface water generated in this bund will be pumped out by an oil sensitive pump ensuring that only non-contaminated water enters the site drainage network.

In relation to wastewater, a 5m^3 foul holding tank is proposed as part of the operational development. These tanks are normally used in ESB substations. It will be emptied periodically, with the capacity in excess of modelled holding requirements.

It is proposed to provide the required potable water demand of the station with a bored well on site. The potable water demand within the site will be low as the proposed station is to be unmanned. To avoid issues like stagnation in the water supply line and problems resulting from this, there will be a continual water demand of 24 litres per week from automatically flushing WCs within the station.

Site Restoration and Landscaping

This will involve the reinstatement of all other excavated materials and associated landscaping works. It will include the replacement of topsoil in disturbed ground areas such as access tracks and the removal of the construction compound and other temporary work areas.

The proposed landscaping provides for the removal of c.87 metres of hedgerow to facilitate the proposed development. Approximately 531 metres of existing hedgerow will be bolstered (Type 1) as part of the development, with an additional 287 linear metres of new hedgerow planting (Type 2) as per the submitted Landscape Mitigation Plan.

Other Planned Works

Kilkenny County Council Reference 25/60391

It is intended that the proposed 110kV substation and grid connection will service the Drumdowney Solar Farm, which is currently the subject of a planning application to Kilkenny County Council. At the time of writing, the solar farm application is undetermined.

The proposed solar farm will consist of solar panels on ground mounted frames, 27 no. single storey electrical inverter/transformer stations, 5 no. single storey spare parts containers, 3 no. Ring Main Units, 5 no. weather stations, underground electrical ducting and cabling within the development site, private lands and within the L3429, L7523, L7563, L7469, L3407, L3414, L34144, L7466, L3406, L7483, L3415, N25 and N29 public roads to connect solar farm field parcels, security fencing, CCTV, access tracks, 7 no. watercourse/drain deck crossings and 4 no. horizontal directional drill crossings (under the N25 and N29 public roads and the Luffany River), temporary construction compounds, landscaping and all associated ancillary development and drainage works. Construction and operational access will be via 7 no. existing entrances from the L3429, L7469, L7466, L4783 and L34142 which will be subject to entrance upgrade works. Separate construction phase access options are proposed for Parcel 4 via Port of Waterford and the L4783. The operational lifespan of the solar farm will be 40 years.

The solar farm will contribute directly to a carbon dioxide emission reduction of 41,647tonnes per annum or the equivalent of approximately 1,665,917 tonnes of CO2 over the 40 year lifetime of the project.

3. Site Description

3.1. General

The proposed substation and grid connection is located in a rural setting within the townland of Rathpatrick in County Kilkenny.

The location of the proposed development site is illustrated on *Figure 1* below and shown on *Drawing Number IE3299-001-A* in *Appendix A*.

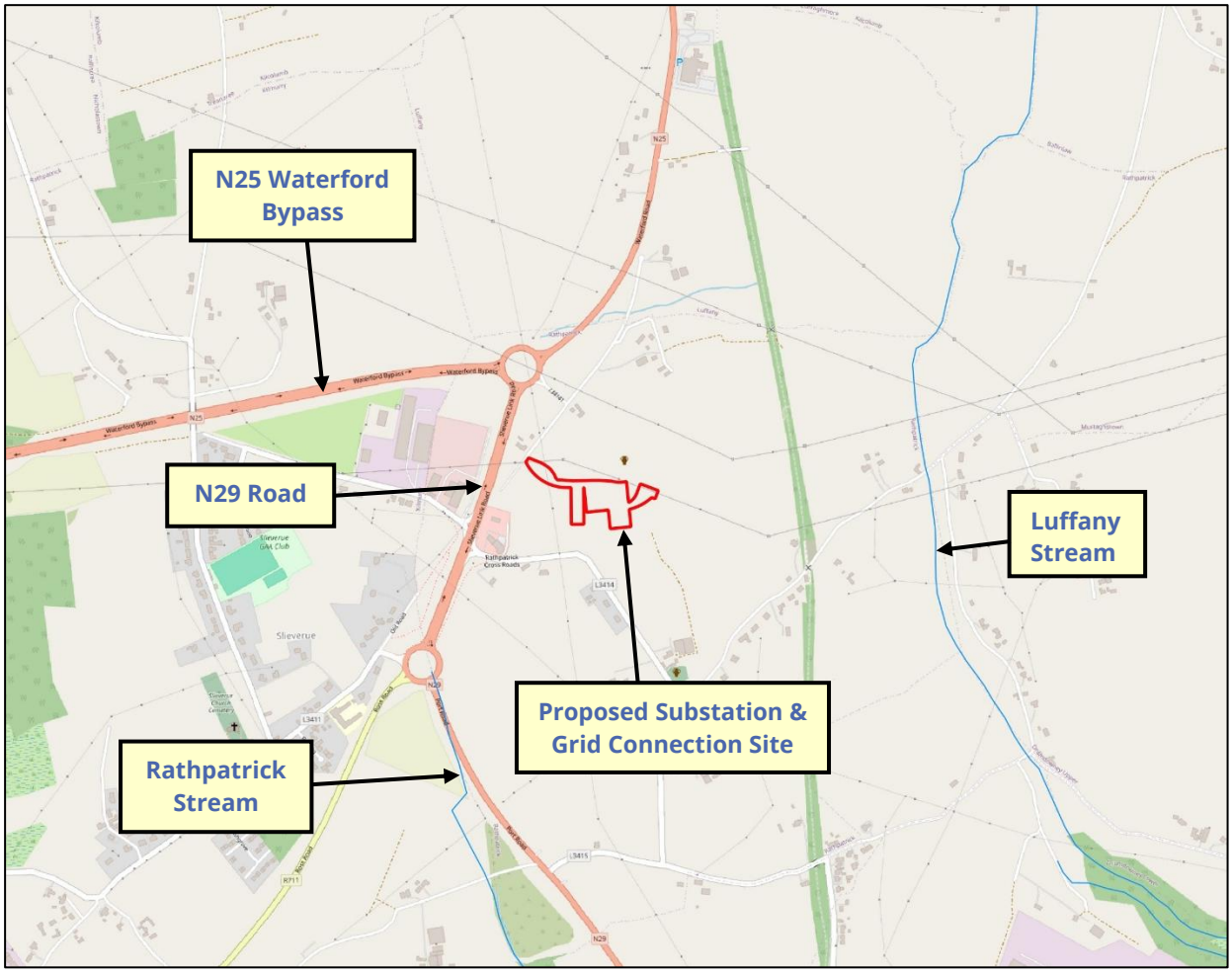

Figure 1 – Site Location

3.2. Existing Topography Levels at Site

Existing ground elevations within the proposed development site range from approximately 87.4m OD (Malin) in the north-eastern area of the site to 84.5m OD (Malin) in the south-western area of the site.

3.3. Local Hydrology & Existing Drainage

As illustrated in *Figure 1* above, the most immediate hydrological features in the vicinity of the proposed development site are the Rathpatrick Stream, which flows in a north to south direction approximately 485m beyond the southern boundary of the site, and the Luffany Stream, which flows in a north to south direction approximately 636m beyond the eastern boundary of the site.

Utilising the OPW Flood Studies Update (FSU) catchment data, the catchment area for the Rathpatrick Stream was delineated and found to be approximately 1.076km^2 to the point downstream of the proposed development site. An assessment of the catchment area indicates a predominantly rural catchment with the urban fraction accounting for 23.5% of the upstream catchment area.

The catchment area of the Luffany Stream was delineated and found to be approximately 11.552km^2 to the point downstream of the proposed development site. An assessment of the catchment area indicates an entirely rural catchment with no urban fraction in the upstream catchment area.

There are no surface hydrological features mapped within or immediately adjacent to the proposed development site.

4. Initial Flood Risk Assessment

The flood risk assessment for the proposed development site is undertaken in three principal stages, these being 'Step 1 – Screening', 'Step 2 – Scoping' and 'Step 3 – Assessing'.

4.1. Possible Flooding Mechanisms

Table 1 below summarises the possible flooding mechanisms in consideration of the site:

Source/Pathway	Significant?	Comment/Reason
Tidal/Coastal	No	The site is not located within a coastal or tidally influenced region.
Fluvial	Possible	The Luffany Stream and the Rathpatrick Stream are located within the general vicinity of the site.
Pluvial (urban drainage)	No	There is no significant urban drainage or water supply infrastructure located within the vicinity of the site.
Pluvial (overland flow)	No	The site is not surrounded by significantly elevated lands and does not provide an important surface water discharge point to adjacent lands.
Blockage	Possible	There is a local road watercourse crossing on the Luffany Stream in the vicinity of the site.
Groundwater	No	There are no significant springs or groundwater discharges mapped or recorded within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Table 1: Flooding Mechanisms

The primary potential flood risk to the proposed development site can be attributed to an extreme fluvial flood event in the Luffany Stream or Rathpatrick Stream watercourses located in the general vicinity of the site. Secondary and residual flood risk can be attributed to potential surcharge due to blockage of the watercourse crossing on the Luffany Stream located in the vicinity of the site.

In accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities - DOEHLG 2009' the potential flood risk to the proposed development site is analysed in the subsequent 'Screening Assessment' and "Scoping Assessment" section of this study report.

5. Screening Assessment

The purpose of the screening assessment is to establish the level of flooding risk that may or may not exist for a particular site and to collate and assess existing current or historical information and data which may indicate the level or extent of any flood risk.

If there is a potential flood risk issue, then the flood risk assessment procedure should move to 'Step 2 – Scoping Assessment' or if no potential flood risk is identified from the screening stage, then the overall flood risk assessment can end at 'Step 1'.

The following information and data was collated as part of the flood risk screening assessment for the proposed development site.

5.1. OPW/EPA/Local Authority Hydrometric Data

Existing sources of OPW, EPA, and local authority hydrometric data were investigated. As illustrated in *Figure 2* below, this assessment has determined that there are no hydrometric gauging stations located in the vicinity of the site.

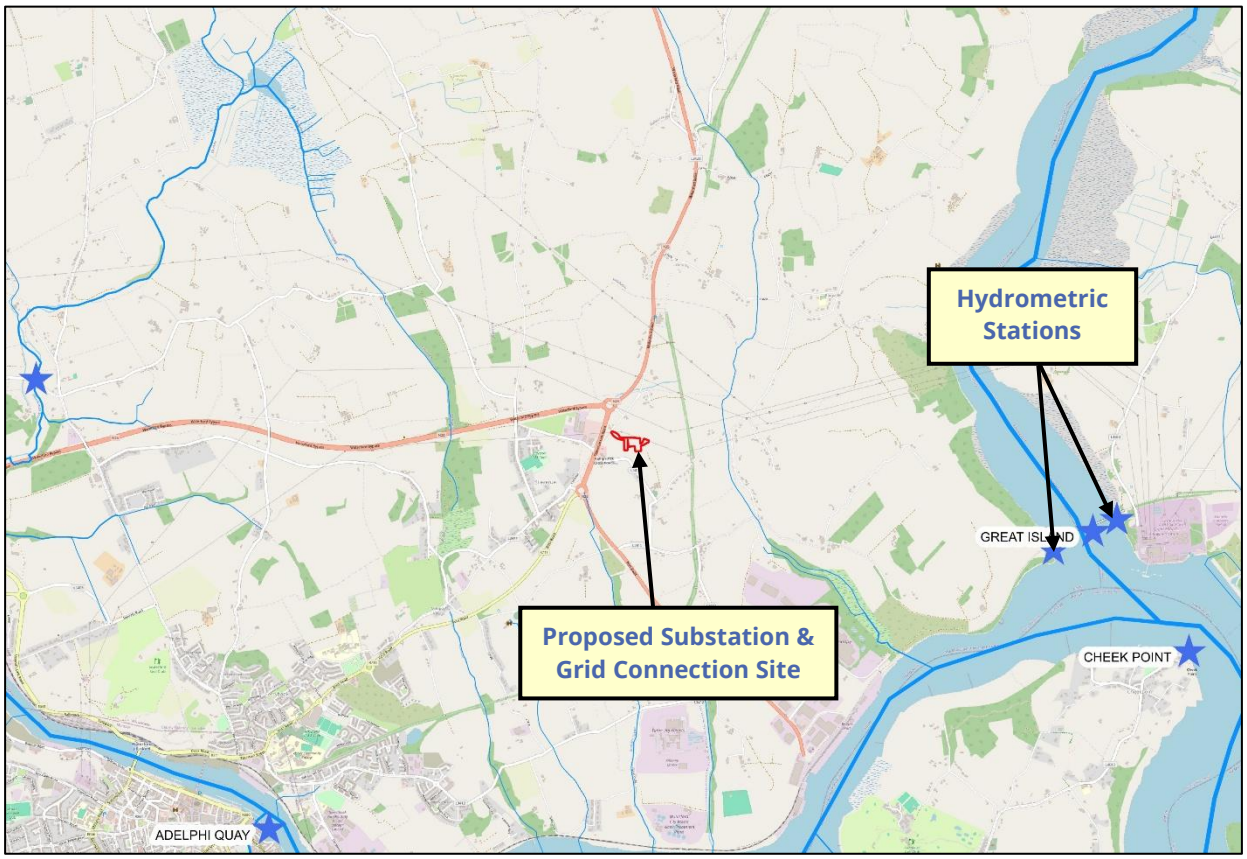

Figure 2 - Hydrometric Gauging Stations

5.2. OPW PFRA Indicative Flood Mapping

Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) Mapping for Ireland was produced by the OPW in 2011. OPW PFRA flood map number *2019/MAP/89/A* illustrates indicative flood zones within this area of County Kilkenny.

Figure 3 below illustrates an extract from the above indicative flood map in the vicinity of proposed development site.

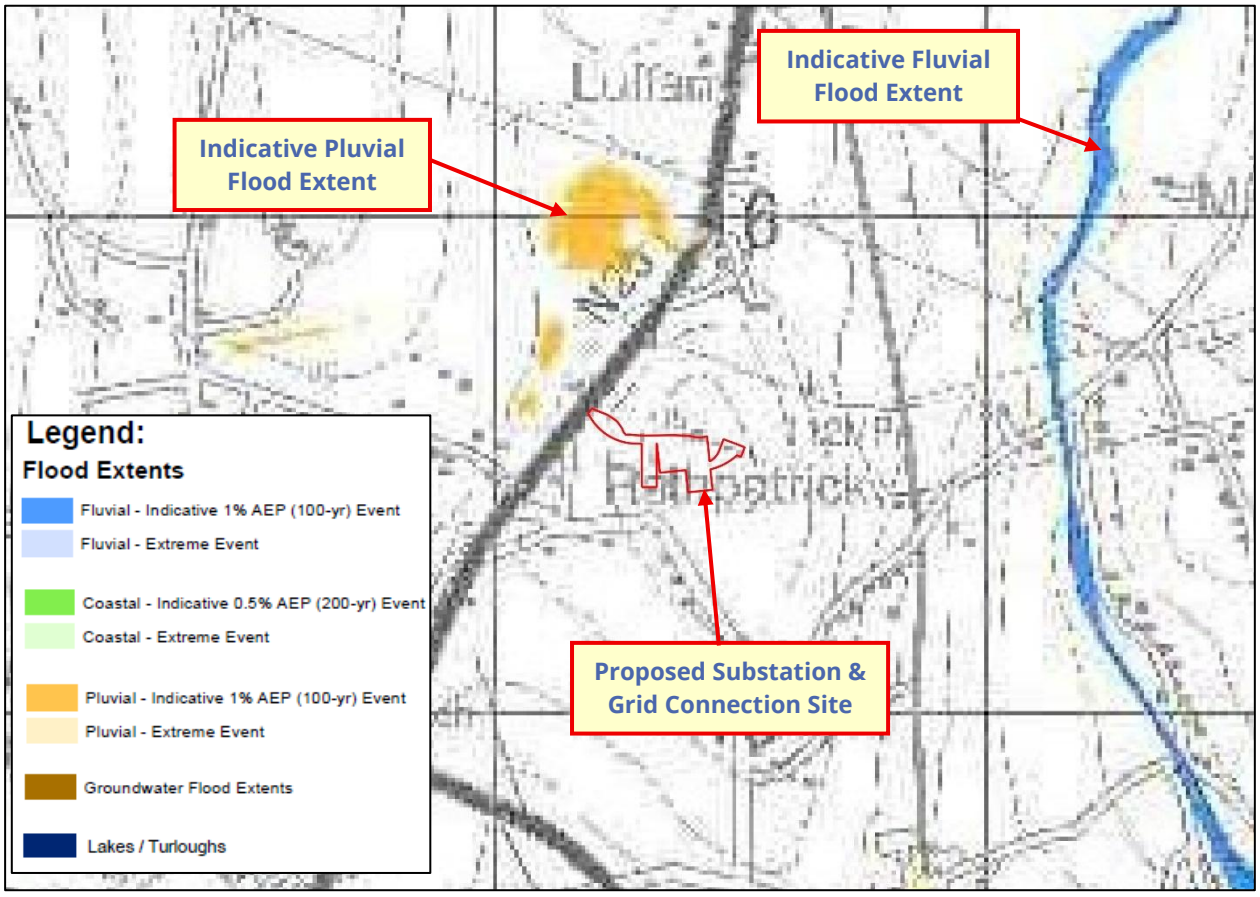

Figure 3 - OPW PFRA Mapping

The OPW PFRA flood mapping indicates that the proposed development site does not fall within an indicative fluvial, tidal/coastal, pluvial or groundwater flood zone.

It should be noted that the extent of flooding illustrated on these maps was developed using a low-resolution digital terrain model (DTM) and illustrated flood extents are intended to be indicative only. The flood extents mapped on the OPW PFRA maps are not intended to be used on a site-specific basis.

5.3. Ordnance Survey Historic Mapping

Available historic mapping for the area was consulted, as this can provide evidence of historical flooding incidences or occurrences. The maps that were consulted were the historical 6-inch maps (pre-1900), and the historic 25-inch map series.

Figure 4 and *Figure 5* below illustrates the historic mapping for the area of the proposed development site.

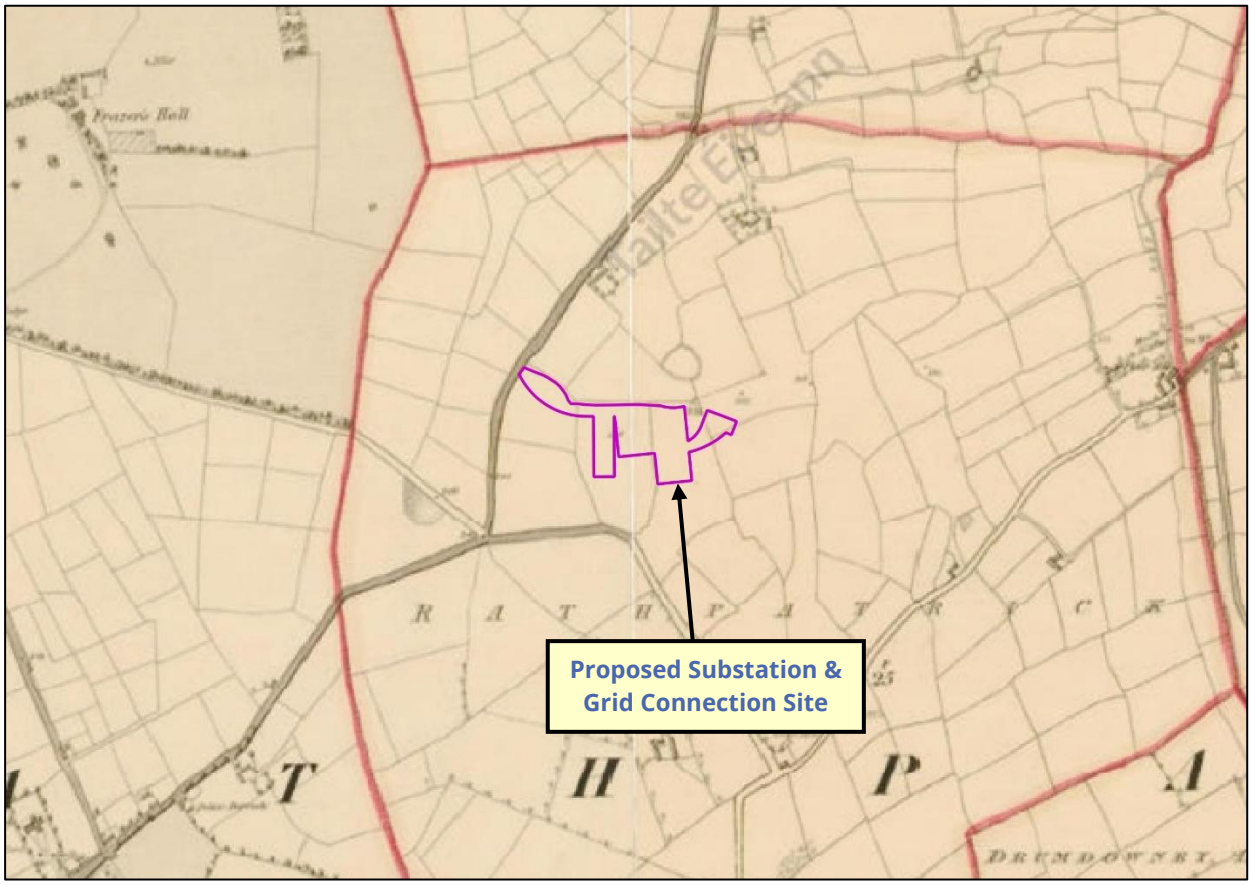

Figure 4 - Historic 6 Inch Mapping

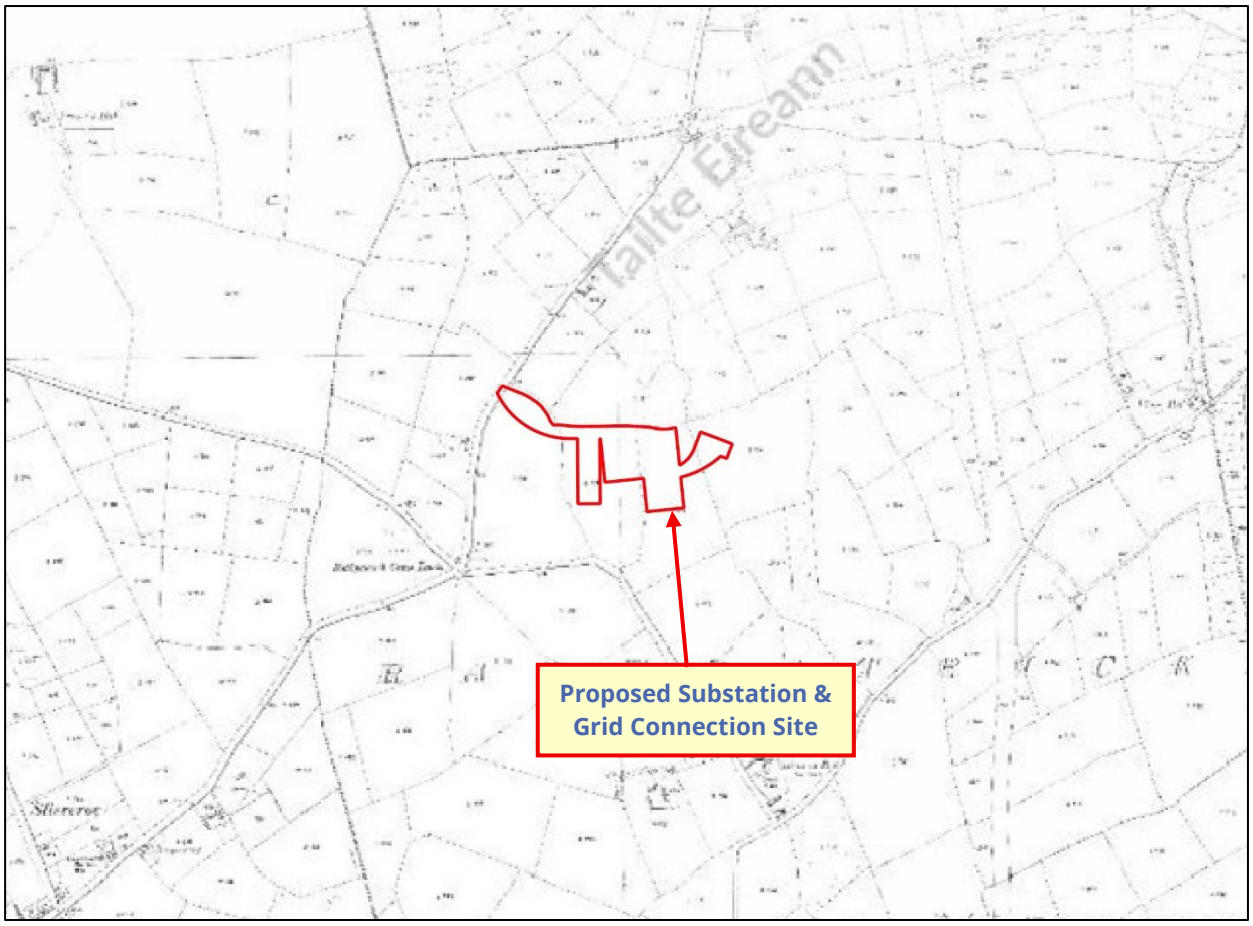

Figure 5 - Historic 25 Inch Mapping

The historic 6 inch and 25 inch mapping does not indicate any historical or anecdotal instances of flooding within or adjacent to the boundary of the proposed development site.

5.4. Geological Survey of Ireland Mapping

The alluvial deposit maps of the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) were consulted to assess the extent of any alluvial deposits in the vicinity of the proposed development site. Alluvial deposits can be an indicator of areas that have been subject to flooding in the recent geological past.

Figure 6 below illustrates the subsoil mapping for the general area of the proposed development site.

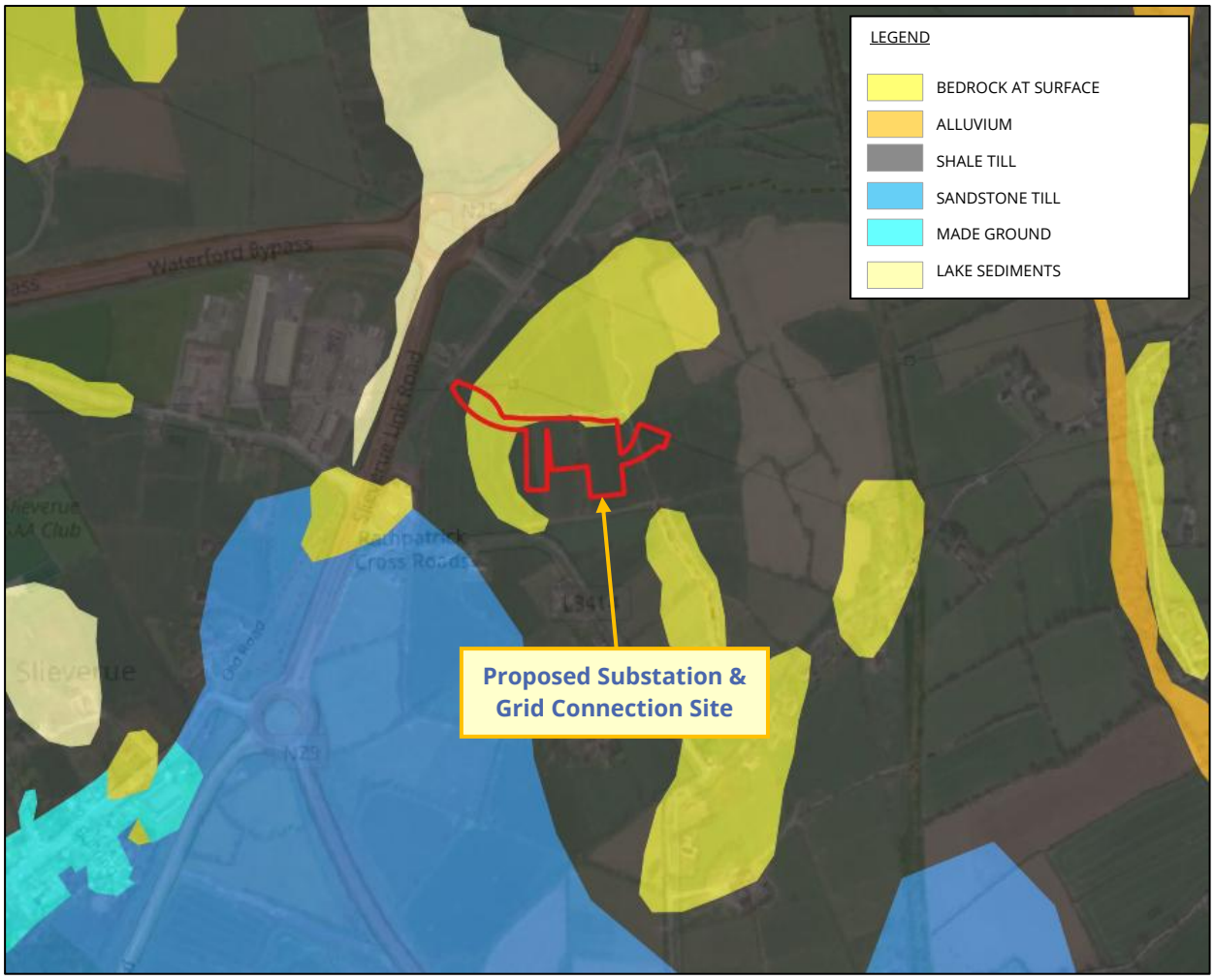

Figure 6 - GSI Subsoil Mapping

Figure 6 above indicates that the site is underlain by Shale Till and Bedrock at Surface. There are no alluvial deposits mapped within the location of the proposed substation site.

5.5. Geological Survey of Ireland Groundwater Flood Mapping

Historic and Predictive Groundwater Mapping for Ireland was prepared by the GSi Department of Communication, Climate Action, and Environment in collaboration with Trinity College Dublin and the Institute of Technology Carlow.

Figure 7 below illustrates an extract from the above groundwater flood mapping in the vicinity of the proposed development site.

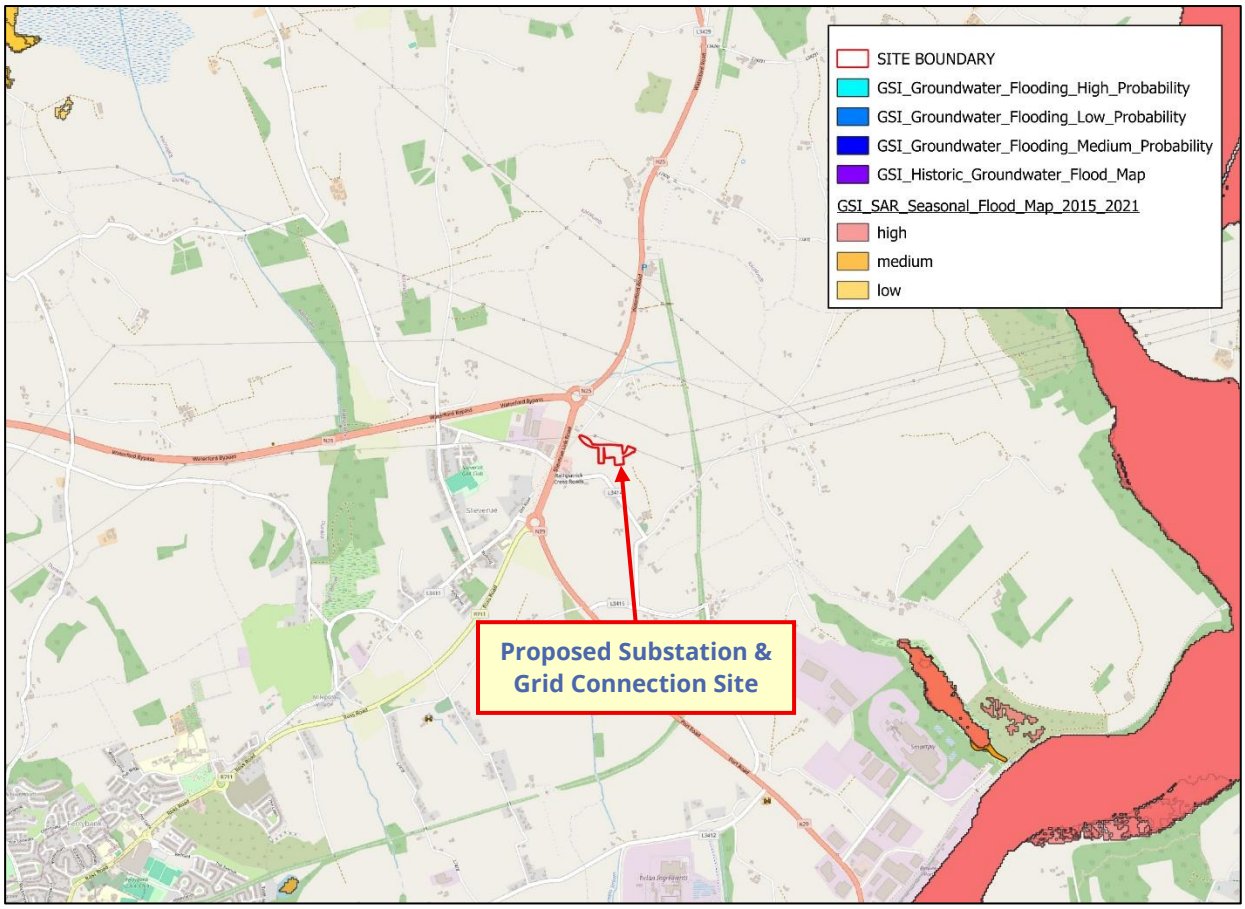

Figure 7 - GSI Groundwater Flood Mapping

The above GSI Groundwater Mapping indicates no areas of historical or predictive groundwater flooding or SAR seasonal surface water flooding mapped within the proposed development site. Overall the groundwater flood risk to the proposed development site is LOW.

5.6. National Indicative Flood Mapping

The OPW National Indicative Fluvial Mapping (NIFM) set has been produced in 2020 for catchments greater than 5km^2 in areas for which flood maps were not produced under the OPW National CFRAM Programme. These maps indicate areas predicted to flood during a theoretical flood event. The OPW National Indicative Fluvial Mapping (NIFM) flood extent maps are based on the results of a more detailed and higher resolution hydraulic modelling exercise undertaken along the watercourses (with catchment areas > 5km^2) in the vicinity of the proposed development site in comparison to the OPW PFRA indicative flood maps and therefore provide a reasonably accurate delineation of extreme fluvial flood zones in the general vicinity of the site. This mapping set is intended to supersede the OPW PFRA mapping set by producing a higher quality fluvial mapping set.

Figure 8 below illustrates an extract from the OPW NIFM data set in the vicinity of the proposed development site for the present day scenario 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) and 0.1% AEP (1 in 1000 year) fluvial flood events.

Figure 8 – OPW Present Day Scenario National Indicative Fluvial Flood Mapping

Figure 8 above indicates that the proposed development site does not fall within a present day scenario 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) or 0.1% AEP (1 in 1000 year) OPW NIFM flood zone.

Figure 9 below illustrates an extract from the OPW NIFM data set in the vicinity of the proposed development site for the Mid-Range Future climate change Scenario (MRFS) 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) and 0.1% AEP (1 in 1000 year) fluvial flood events.

Figure 9 - OPW MRFS National Indicative Fluvial Flood Mapping

Figure 9 above indicates that the proposed development site does not fall within a Mid-Range Future climate change Scenario (MRFS) 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) or 0.1% AEP (1 in 1000 year) OPW NIFM flood zone.

5.7. OPW Flood Info Past Flood Events

The OPW Flood Info website (www.floodinfo.ie) was consulted in relation to available historical or anecdotal information on any flooding incidences or occurrences in the vicinity of the proposed development site.

Figure 10 below illustrates mapping from the Flood Info website in the vicinity of the site.

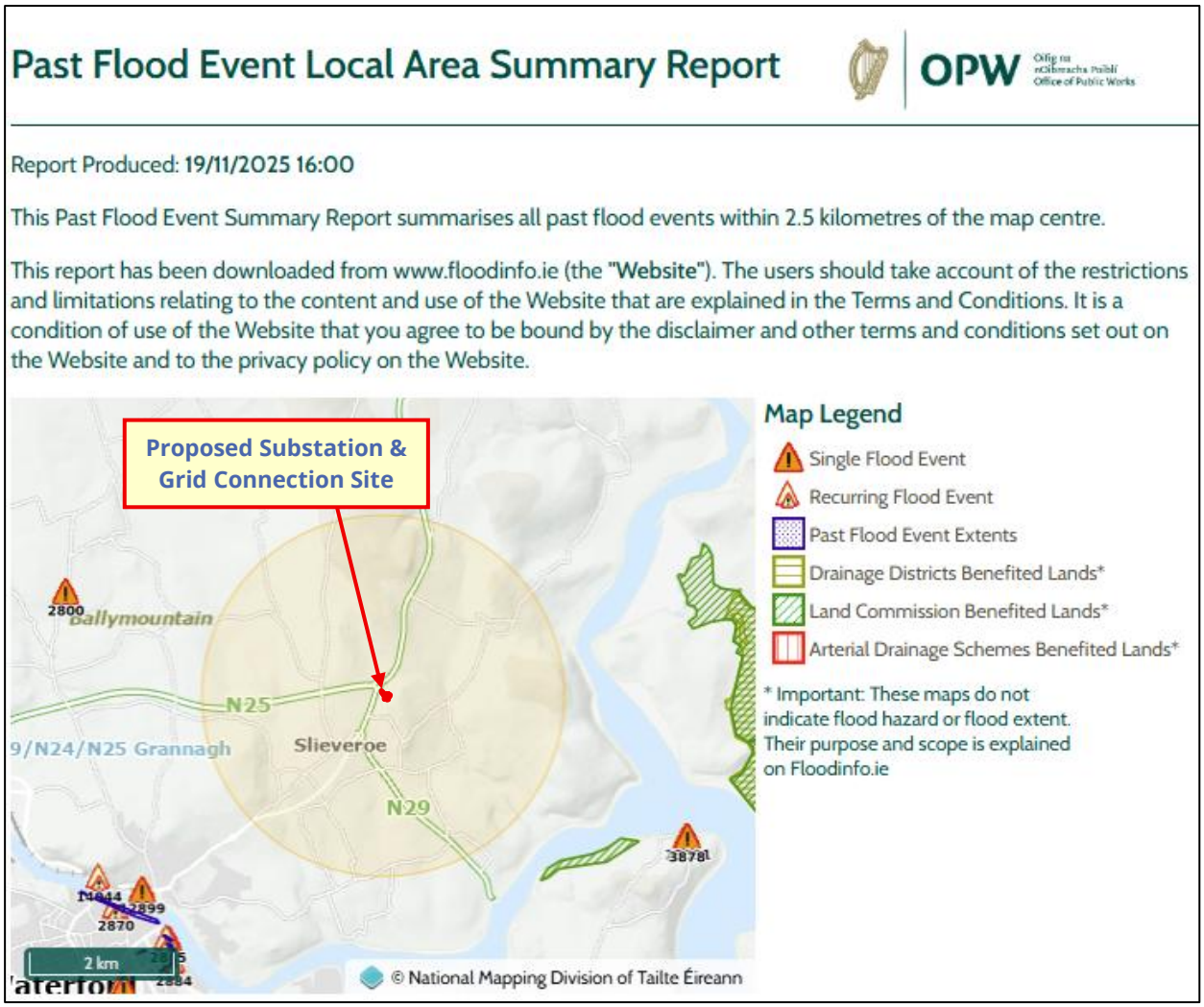

Figure 10 - OPW Flood Info Past Flood Events

As shown in *Figure 10* above, there are no recorded single or recurring flood events at, or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site.

6. Scoping Assessment

The purpose of the scoping stage is to identify possible flood risks and to implement the necessary level of detail and assessment to assess these possible risks, and to ensure these can be adequately addressed in the flood risk assessment. The scoping exercise should also identify that sufficient quantitative information is already available to complete a flood risk assessment appropriate to the scale and nature of the development being assessed.

The above screening assessment indicates that the proposed development site is not at risk of fluvial, tidal/coastal, pluvial or groundwater flooding.

It is noted that there is one existing watercourse crossing on the Luffany Stream approximately 640m east of the proposed development site. This watercourse crossing is likely to be overtopped in any case during an extreme flood event and therefore a significant blockage is unlikely to pose an additional or residual flood risk to the proposed development site.

In consideration of the information collated as part of the screening exercise, and the availability of other information and data specific to the proposed development site, it is considered that sufficient quantitative information to complete an appropriate flood risk assessment can be derived from the information collated as part of the screening exercise alone.

Overall, the flood risk to the specific area of the proposed development site is considered to be LOW.

7. Potential Flood Risk from the Development

Surface water drainage proposals for the proposed substation compound have been designed to mimic the natural drainage patterns of the site and thereby be in accordance with the Best Management Practices (BMPs) of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

This is achieved when the following parameters are considered:

- The compound construction is formed with permeable stone thus mimicking a soakaway scenario.
- The main areas to be drained includes the roofs and the compound road. The compound road will be drained via series of road gullies.
- Assuming even the most basic of infiltration rates down through the permeable compound stone, the existing greenfield situation is easily maintained.

The surface water generated in the hardstanding areas and in the bunded areas within the substation compound will discharge to soakaway via Class 1 Full Retention Oil Separators. The electrical transformer in the substation is oil filled equipment and, as such, is protected with impermeable bunds. Surface water generated in this bund will be pumped out by an oil sensitive pump ensuring that only non-contaminated water enters the site drainage network.

In consideration of the above surface water management proposals the development as proposed is not expected to result in an adverse impact to the existing hydrological regime of the area or increase flood risk elsewhere.

8. Development in the Context of the Guidelines

In the context of the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines, DOEHLG, 2009' three flood zones are designated in consideration of flood risk to a particular development site.

Flood Zone 'A' – where the probability of flooding from rivers and watercourses is the highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 year for river and watercourse flooding and 0.5% or 1 on 200 for coastal or tidal flooding).

Flood Zone 'B' – where the probability of flooding from rivers and watercourses is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 year for river and watercourse flooding and 0.5% or 1 on 200 for coastal or tidal flooding).

Flood Zone 'C' – where the probability of flooding from rivers and watercourses is low or negligible (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 year for both river and watercourse and coastal flooding). Flood Zone 'C' covers all areas that are not in Zones 'A' or 'B'.

The 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines' list the planning implications for each flood zone, as summarised below:

Zone A – High Probability of Flooding. Most types of development would not be considered in this zone. Development in this zone should be only be considered in exceptional circumstances, such as in city and town centres, or in the case of essential infrastructure that cannot be located elsewhere, and where the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines' justification test has been applied. Only water-compatible development, such as docks and marinas, dockside activities that require a waterside location, amenity open space and outdoor sports and recreation would be considered appropriate in this zone.

Zone B – Moderate Probability of Flooding. Highly vulnerable development such as hospitals, residential care homes, Garda, fire and ambulance stations, dwelling houses, strategic transport and essential utilities infrastructure would generally be considered inappropriate in this zone, unless the requirements of the justification test can be met. Less vulnerable development such as retail, commercial and industrial uses and recreational facilities might be considered appropriate in this zone. In general however, less vulnerable development should only be considered in this zone if adequate lands or sites are not available in Zone 'C' and subject to a flood risk assessment to the appropriate level of detail to demonstrate that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and that development in this zone will not adversely affect adjacent lands and properties.

Zone C – Low to Negligible Probability of Flooding. Development in this zone is appropriate from a flood risk perspective. Developments in this zone are generally not considered at risk of fluvial flooding and would not adversely affect adjacent lands and properties from a flood risk perspective.

In the context of the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines, DOEHLG, 2009' the assessment and analysis undertaken as part of this Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment indicates that the proposed development site falls does not fall within a predictive, indicative, historic or anecdotal Flood Zone 'A' or Flood Zone 'B'. The proposed development site falls within Flood Zone 'C'.

In accordance with the 'Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines, DOEGLG, 2009' the development as proposed is not subject to the requirements of the Justification Test.

9. Summary Conclusions

In consideration of the findings of this Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and analysis the following conclusions are made in respect of the proposed development:

- A Site Specific Flood Risk (SSFRA) assessment, appropriate to the type and scale of development proposed, and in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines – DoEHLG-2009' has been undertaken.
- The proposed development site has been screened, scoped and assessed for flood risk in accordance with the above guidelines.
- The site is not at risk of fluvial, tidal/coastal, pluvial or groundwater flooding. The development as proposed is located within Flood Zone 'C' and is therefore not subject to the requirements of the Justification Test.
- Overall, the flood risk to the specific area of the proposed development site is considered to be LOW. The development as proposed is not expected to result in an adverse impact to the existing hydrological regime of the area or increase flood risk elsewhere and is therefore considered to be appropriate from a flood risk perspective.

Appendices

Appendix A. Drawings

IE3299-001-A Site Location

LEGEND

SITE BOUNDARY

A	04.12.25	PLANNING	NOM	PMS
rev.	date	amendment	drn	ckd

PROPOSED DRUMDOWNEY SUBSTATION & GRID CONNECTION SID APPLICATION, RATHPATRICK, CO. KILKENNY

SITE SPECIFIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

LOCATION PLAN

IE CONSULTING
WATER-ENVIRONMENTAL-CIVIL

CARLOW OFFICE:
INNOVATION CENTRE
GREEN ROAD
CARLOW R95 W248

NEWRY OFFICE:
7 LINENHALL
WIN BUSINESS PARK
NEWRY BT35 6PH

file location: N:\IE3299\DRAWINGS\GIS		scale: 1:20,000	A3
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