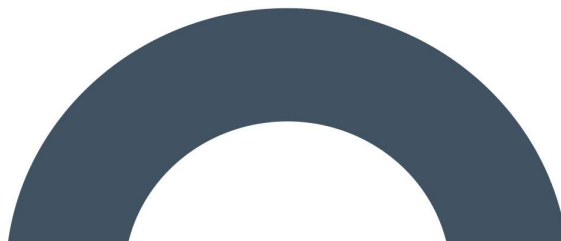


Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Section 146(B) Request for
an Amended Grid
Connection Route,
Ballinrea, Co. Cork





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Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1	Statement of Authority	4
2.	DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT	6
2.1	The Permitted Development.....	6
2.2	The Proposed Development.....	7
2.3	Site Context	7
2.4	Projects Considered for the Cumulative Assessment	8
3.	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING.....	11
3.1	Information Under Schedule 7A EIA Screening.....	13
3.2	Location of the Proposed Development	15
3.3	Characteristics of Potential Impacts.....	16
4.	CONCLUSION	20
5.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	21

Table of tables

<i>Table 3-1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Table 3-2 Location of the Proposed Development.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Table 3-3 Significance of Impact According to Theme (as in EIA)</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Table 3-4 Characteristics of the Potential Impacts Matrix.....</i>	<i>18</i>

1.

INTRODUCTION

MKO has been commissioned by Ballinrea Solar Farm Ltd to provide the information necessary to allow An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) to determine, in relation to the Proposed Development (to amend the permitted grid connection (An Coimisiún Pleanála Case number: 317706) between the permitted Ballinrea Solar Farm (Cork County Council Planning Ref. No. 17/6784 & ABP-303013-18, as subsequently modified by Planning Ref. No. 23/4563 & ABP-318915-24) and the existing Raffeen substation, whether such development is material or not under section 146B(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (the 'PDA').

It is respectfully submitted that the information provided demonstrates that the Proposed Development is not material. There are no changes to the Permitted Development of significance to any environmental effects. However, should ACP consider the Proposed Development to be material, it is required to determine whether the extent and character of the development, were it to be made, would be likely to have significant effects on the environment (section 146B(4) PDA)). Thus, the information required under Schedule 7a of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) (the 'PDR') (section 146B(3)(b)(i) PDA) has been provided

The conclusions within this EIA Screening Report (EIASR) have been based on the assessments and conclusions in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) and Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), both prepared by MKO and other relevant technical reports and assessments for this s146B application and the previous planning application to ACP (Pl. Ref. ACP 317706-23).

1.1

Statement of Authority

This report has been prepared by Conor Jackson and Tom Madden and reviewed by Thomas Blackwell, all of MKO.

Conor is an Environmental Scientist with MKO with over one year of experience in environmental consulting. He holds a B.Sc. (Hons) in Geography and Geosystems from the University of Galway. Since joining MKO in 2024 Conor has contributed to a range of projects, including the preparation of Construction and Environmental Management Plans, Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Reports, and Environmental Impact Assessment Reports. He has also been involved in license monitoring and GIS mapping across various sectors such as wastewater treatment plants, solar grid connections, quarries, and residential developments.

Tom Madden is a Project Environmental Scientist with MKO with over 6 years of experience in environmental consultancies. Tom holds B.Sc. (Hons) in Environmental Science from the University of Limerick. Prior to taking up his position with MKO in March 2022, Tom worked as an Environmental Consultant with Panther Environmental and held previous posts with Mulroy Environmental whilst being based in Dublin. Tom has specialist knowledge in environmental sampling (water, groundwater, dust and soil) and has experience in preparing an array of environmental reports such as Construction Environmental Management Plans, EIA Screenings, Decommissioning Plans and more. Since joining MKO, Tom has been involved on a significant range of energy infrastructure, commercial, housing and residential projects in addition to project managing quarry EIA planning applications through the statutory planning system, with more projects in the pipeline. Within MKO, Tom plays a large role in the management and confidence building of junior members of staff and works as part of a large multi-disciplinary team to produce EIA Reports. Tom is in the process of becoming a chartered member of CIWEM.

Thomas Blackwell has over 20 years' of progressive experience in environmental consulting. Thomas' professional experience includes managing Environmental Impact Assessments, environmental permitting, environmental due diligence and compliance, and general environmental assessment on behalf of clients in the renewable energy, mining, solid waste management, residential and commercial development, and public sectors. Thomas' multi-sector experience working on

projects in multiple jurisdictions has allowed him to develop a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the challenges involved in guiding complex project through the regulatory and planning process. Thomas also has experience in habitat restoration design and implementation for impact mitigation and offsetting. Thomas holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Natural Science from Trinity College Dublin, and a Master of Science Degree in Environmental Resource Management from University College Dublin, and is a Professional Wetland Scientist.

2.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

2.1

The Permitted Development

In this report, the “Permitted Development” refers to the permitted 110kV substation, underground grid connection and associated infrastructure at Ballinrea, Co. Cork (Pl. Ref. ACP 317706-23). The Permitted Development was previously granted planning permission by An Coimisiún Pleanála (formerly An Bord Pleanála) as a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) to connect the permitted but not yet constructed Ballinrea Solar Farm (Pl. Ref. 17/6784, ABP Ref. PL04.303013) to the existing Raffeen 220 kV Substation.

The permitted development comprises the following;

- *The construction of a permanent 110 kV electrical substation in the townland of Ballinrea at the site of the permitted Ballinrea Solar Farm (Pl Ref. 17/6784, ABP Ref. PL04.303013). The proposed 110kV electrical substation includes 2 no. single storey control buildings with welfare facilities, associated electrical plant and apparatus, security fencing, entrance gate, fire wall, 4 no. lighting columns, 1 no. telecoms pole (c. 20.7m above ground), 7 no. lightning masts (c. 18m above ground), underground cabling, wastewater holding tank, watermains connection, site drainage; and all ancillary works;*
- *1 no temporary construction compound with temporary site offices and staff facilities, in the townland of Ballinrea;*
- *Realignment of the permitted internal access track permitted under Pl Ref. 17/6784, ABP Ref. PL04.303013 and the provision of a new internal cable maintenance track;*
- *Temporary alterations to the site entrance for construction phase and reinstatement of same post-construction;*
- *110kV tail fed underground electricity interconnection cables c. 6.25km in length and associated fibre cable connecting the proposed 110kV Substation at Ballinrea to the existing 220kV Raffeen Substation with underground ducting, 9 no. joint bays, communication chambers and associated site development and reinstatement works;*
- *A new 110kV cable bay, electrical equipment, the provision of a new cable maintenance track and ancillary works at the existing 220kV Raffeen Substation compound;*
- *All associated site development works, landscaping and apparatus.*

The 110kV substation and grid connection to Raffeen 220kV substation facilitate the connection of two permitted solar farms in the local area to the national grid;

- Ballinrea Solar Farm – Planning Ref. No. 17/6784 & ABP-303013-18, as subsequently modified by Planning Ref. No. 23/4563 & ABP-318915-24;
- Ballinvuskig Solar Farm – Planning Ref. No. 19/5371 & ABP-305186-19, as modified by Planning Ref. No. 23/41837 & ABP-318925-24.

Ballinrea solar farm is over midway through construction with civil works and piling for solar PV arrays nearing completion, Mechanical assembly and cable installations are also ongoing across the site. Civil works are ongoing on Ballinvuskig Solar Farm and ramming works commenced in January 2026 with completion forecast for early April 2026. All major solar farm deliveries including, PV modules, support structures, inverters and transformer centres were complete as of early January 2026.

Regarding the Grid and the civil installation for the 33kV cable connection between the Ballinrea and Ballinvuskig sites is complete and the IPP substation and 110kV substation works are significantly advanced with buildings substantially complete from a civils perspective and electrical fit-out ongoing. The grid transformer was delivered to site in late January 2026.

2.2

The Proposed Development

This EIA Screening is prepared in support of a request to ACP to alter the permitted SID scheme in accordance with Section 146B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

In summary the proposed amendment (Proposed Development) comprises the relocation of c. 370m of the permitted 110kV grid connection from the public road (L2473 Shannonpark Road) to adjacent consented third-party lands.

The proposed amendments, hereinafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development' is described in detail as follows:

- The underground cable will leave the Shannonpark road (L2473), passing through an existing entrance onto consented third-party lands (Folio no. CK77185F) for approximately 370m before joining existing ducting at the M28 crossing in the east (as per the permitted SID route). The proposed works include the relocation of one joint bay (Joint Bay 06) to the consented third-party lands.
- A corridor of c. 5-10m in width will be required to accommodate the cable trenching works and installation of the joint bay. The underground cable works will consist of the installation of 6 No. ducts in an excavated trench to accommodate 3 No. power cables, 2 No. fibre communications cables and 1 No. earth continuity conductor. The altered grid route will be mainly through agricultural lands, and will require removal of c. 100m of scrub in proximity to the M28 crossing.
- Once the cable trenching is complete the ground will be reinstated with an access track c. 3m in width. This is required as per Eirgrid specifications to permit future access to the joint bay (bay (refer to drawing no. 300101179-DR-807)

It should be noted that details with regards the method of construction for the permitted cable grid route and substation were provided in the Construction Methodology, prepared by the TLI Group (Report ref 05887-R04-01, June 2023). TLI have prepared an addendum report to accompany this alteration application. Note that there will be no changes to the methodology for constructing the cable or joint bay in the proposed offroad sections.

2.3

Site Context

The Proposed Development site is located in Ballinrea, Co. Cork, approximately 2.3 km north of Carrigaline and approx. 15 km south west of Cork city at Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) coordinates X 572409 Y 564517. The site lies roughly 2.65km to the west of the Cork harbour SPA. The Proposed Development site is accessed via the Ballinrea Road (L2464) and the Shannonpark Road (L2473).

As set out in the EcIA prepared by MKO, the habitats recorded within the Proposed Development site consist of Improved agricultural grassland, Dry meadows and grassy verges, Scrub, Treelines and hedgerows.

The surrounding area is mainly comprised of agricultural fields, treelines and hedgerows, and private residential properties.

As outlined in the AASR, which has been prepared by MKO, no habitats listed under Annex I of the European Union (EU) Habitats Directive were recorded within the Proposed Development site and no suitable supporting habitat for species listed under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive was identified during the walkover survey carried out by MKO staff.

No birds listed under Annex I of EU Birds Directive, nor significant suitable habitat, were recorded within the Proposed Development site.

No protected floral species including those listed on the Annex II of the Habitats Directive, Ireland Red List No. 10 Vascular Plants (Wyse Jackson *et al.*, 2016) or protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 were recorded within the Proposed Development site.

No invasive plant species listed on the First Schedule under Part 1 of the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 374 of 2024) were recorded.

The Proposed Development site is not located within, nor in close proximity to, any designated European Sites. The closest European Site is Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) [Code: 004030] located approximately 2.65 km south of the Proposed Development site.

According to the EPA online map viewer (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>) the closest mapped watercourse is the Hilltown (EPA Code 19H05 – Order 2) stream which is located approximately 320m east of the Proposed Development site. This watercourse is also the nearest Water Framework Directive (WFD) designated waterbody (IE_SW_19H050470) and is classified as having ‘good’ status.

An unmapped watercourse was discovered within the Proposed Development site during the site walkover survey carried out by MKO staff. The watercourse enters the site via a culvert from Shannonpark Road and runs parallel to the site boundary in an eastern direction.

The Proposed Development site is located entirely within the WFD Catchment 19, Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay. Within this catchment, the site falls under the Owenboy[Cork]_SC_010 sub catchment.

The Proposed Development site is located within the Ballinhassig East Groundwater Body (IE_SW_G_004). This groundwater body has been classified as having ‘good’ status in the 2019-2024 WFD Groundwater Monitoring Programme.”

The bedrock underlying the Proposed Development site consists of Flaser-bedded sandstone & mudstone and is part of the *Cuskinny Member* bedrock unit. The subsoils underlying the Proposed Development site consists of limestone till (Devonian).

There are no recorded sites of archaeological or architectural significance located within the Proposed Development site. The closest sites of archaeological and architectural significance include a Fulacht fia (Code: CO086-115) located approximately 50m northeast and a House (CO086-062-) located approximately 60m south of the Proposed Development site.

2.4

Projects Considered for the Cumulative Assessment

The proposed alterations to the Permitted Development were considered in combination with other projects in the area that could result in cumulative effects on the environment. The comprehensive review of the Cork County Council and Cork City Council planning register documented relevant general development planning applications within the vicinity of the proposed works:

- Permission for development of a 110kV substation, grid connection and associated infrastructure (**ACP Ref. 317706**)
- Cork County Council has made an application for the provision of a Motorway Scheme between Cork and Ringaskiddy, referred to as the proposed M28 Road Scheme. The proposed scheme comprises 12.5km. It commences at the Bloomfield Interchange on the existing N28/N40 junction and terminates at the Port of Cork to the east of the village of Ringaskiddy. Part of the Scheme is online along the route of the N28, (approx. 2km) but a substantial part of the scheme is off-line, from Carr’s Hill to Ringaskiddy. The final 1.6km section of the road from Barnahely is a single carriageway, Protected Road Scheme and there is a proposed Service Area near the termination point (ABP Case Reference HA04.HA0053).

- The construction of 98 no. dwelling houses and all ancillary site development works. The proposed development consists of the construction of 4 no. 5 bedroom detached dwelling houses, 5 no. 4 bedroom detached dwelling houses, 12 no. 4 bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses, 48 no. 3 bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses, 20 no. 3 bedroom townhouses and 9 no. 2 bedroom townhouses. The proposed development also provides for a revised central amenity parkland from that previously permitted by Cork County Council Planning Reference 16/4289. Access to the proposed development will be via the existing junction with the Carrigaline Road and internal road network permitted by planning reference 16/4289 (as amended by planning references 20/4650 and 20/5451) (**Planning Ref. 215556**).
- Modifications to the permitted solar farm (Pl. Ref. No.: 17/6784, ABP Ref. PL04.303013). The modifications are within the boundary of the permitted development and will consist of: i) Changes to the layout and dimensions of the permitted solar photovoltaic layout which will decrease the solar photovoltaic footprint from c. 159,100 sq.m of solar panels, to c. 145,000 sq.m of solar panels on ground mounted frames (this modification is to allow for the inclusion of a proposed 110kV substation and grid connection which will be subject to a separate application); ii) Amendments to the internal track layout and the removal of the permitted battery storage unit; iii) 6 no. single storey inverter/transformer stations (reduced from 10 no. permitted inverter/transformer stations). Permission is also sought for the provision of a 33kV internal network cable (c. 3,760m underground with c. 114m of overhead line) linking the Ballinrea solar farm with the Ballinvuskig solar farm (c. 1.74 km to the northwest). The proposed development includes all associated site works and ancillary infrastructure. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in respect of the proposed development and the NIS will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the application (**Planning Ref. 234563**).
- The construction of a single dwelling house, the construction of a detached domestic garage, the closure of the existing site entrance, the construction of a new site entrance, the installation of a new connection to public water mains, the installation of a wastewater treatment unit and associated raised soil polishing filter, and all ancillary works (**Planning Ref. 214245**).
- Construction of a dwelling house, a garage for domestic purpose, installation of a domestic water treatment system, construction of a new vehicular entrance and to carry out all associated site works (**Planning Ref. 217371**).
- The construction of 98 no. dwelling houses and all ancillary site development works. The proposed development consists of the construction of 9 no. 5 bedroom detached dwelling houses, 1 no. 4 bedroom detached dwelling house, 22 no. 4 bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses, 30 no. 3 bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses, 26 no. 3 bedroom townhouses and 10 no. 2 bedroom townhouses. Access to the proposed development will be via the existing junction with the Carrigaline Road and internal road network permitted by planning reference 16/4289 (as amended by planning references 20/4650 and 20/5451) (**Planning Ref. 215936**).
- The construction of 12 no. dwelling houses comprising 8 no. 3 bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses and 4 no. 4 bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses and all ancillary site development works. The proposed development is a change of plan from that permitted by Cork County Council planning reference 16/4289 (as amended by Cork County Council planning reference 19/5801). Access to the proposed development will be via the existing junction with the Carrigaline Road and internal road network permitted by Cork County Council planning reference 16/4289 (**Planning Ref. 215151**).
- Proposed development of a 110kV substation, grid connection and associated infrastructure (**ACP Ref. 317706**).
- The construction of 98 no. dwelling houses and all ancillary site development works. The proposed development consists of the construction of 3 no. 5 bedroom detached dwelling houses, 3 no 4 bedroom detached dwelling houses, 14 no 4 bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses, 46 no 3 bedroom semi-detached dwelling houses, 18 no 3 bedroom townhouses and 14 no 2 bedroom townhouses. The proposed development also makes provision for a two storey creche with associated surface car park, bicycle parking and bin stores. The proposed development provides for the extension of the Janeville Spine Road permitted by planning

reference 16/4289 (as amended and extended by planning references 20/4650, 20/5451, 21/5556 and 21/5936) to accommodate the provision of a new vehicular entrance to Janeville from the Rock Road (L-2490) with associated footpath and road upgrades. The proposed development also comprises minor amendments from that previously permitted by planning reference 21/5936 to the west of the site (**Planning Ref. 224809**).

3.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING

The legislative basis for EIA Screening for a Section 146B application is under Section 146B(4). This requires ACP to determine whether the extent and character of an alteration, were it to be made, would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. In making this determination, ACP must have regard to the criteria in section 146B(7)(a) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended):

- (i) *the criteria for the purposes of determining which classes of development are likely to have significant effects on the environment set out in any regulations made under section 176,*
- (ii) *the criteria set out in schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001,*
- (iii) *the information submitted pursuant to Schedule 7A to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001,*
- (iv) *the further relevant information, if any, referred to in subsection (3A) and the description, if any, referred to in subsection (3B),*
- (v) *the available results, where relevant, of preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to European Union legislation other than the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, and*
- (vi) *in respect of an alteration under consideration which would be located on, or in, or have the potential to impact on—*
 - I. *A European site,*
 - II. *an area the subject of a notice under section 16(2)(b) Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000,*
 - III. *an area designated as a natural heritage area under section 18 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, (IV) land established or recognised as a nature reserve within the meaning of section 15 or 16 of the Wildlife Act 1976 (No. 39 of 1976),*
 - IV. *land designated as refuge as a refuge for flora or a refuge for fauna under section 17 of the Wildlife Act 1976,*
 - V. *a place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation, conservation or protection of which is an objective of a development plan or local area plan, draft development plan or draft local area plan, or proposed variation of a development plan, for the area in which the development is proposed, or*
 - VI. *a place or site which has been included by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in a list of proposed Natural Heritage Areas published on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website,*

Further to the above, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) sets out a number of classes of development that require an EIA. In this EIA Screening, the Proposed Development has been assessed against the classes and their relevant quantity, area, or other limit specified in Schedule 5, Parts 1 and 2.

The Permitted Development was previously subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Determination. The Proposed Development relates solely to relocation of c. 370m of the permitted 110kV grid connection from the public road (L2473 Shannonpark Road) to adjacent consented third party lands.

The class that may be considered of relevance to the Proposed Development is as follows:

Class 13(a)

“Any change or extension of development already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed (not being a change or extension referred to in Part 1) which would:-

- (i) result in the development being of class listed in Part 1 or paragraph 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule, and*
- (ii) result in an increase in size greater than –
--25 per cent, or
--An amount equal to 50 per cent of the appropriate threshold, whichever is the greater.”*

In relation to Class 13(a)(i), it should be noted that the Permitted Development (Pl. Ref. ACP 317706-23) did not fall within any class of development listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

The Proposed Development will not cause the Permitted Development to become of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1-12 of Part 2 of Schedule 5. The Proposed Development relates solely to relocation of c. 370m of the permitted 110kV grid connection from the public road (L2473 Shannonpark Road) to adjacent consented third-party lands. The nature of the Proposed Development is minor and localised and does not alter the function, scale or operational characteristics of the wider Permitted Development.

Therefore, the Proposed Development does not fall under a class listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of this schedule or exceed the threshold in Class 13, Part 2. Therefore, a mandatory EIAR is not required.

However, for completeness and in order to allow ACP to make an appropriate decision, an EIA Screening inclusive of Schedule 7a information has been provided in the sections below.

3.1

Information Under Schedule 7A EIA Screening

As set out above, the Proposed Development is not of a type of development which comes under the scope of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and consequently, the Proposed Alteration is not subject to a mandatory EIA.

As the Proposed Development is not of a class of development listed in Schedule 5, it is not considered to be a sub-threshold development. Should ACP consider the Proposed Development to be material, the information set out in Schedule 7a of the Planning & Development Regulation 2001 (as amended) has been provided below.

Table 3-1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Characteristics of the Proposed Development – Screening Questions	Comment
Could the scale of the proposed works be considered significant?	No. The size and design of the Proposed Development is in keeping with the scale of the already Permitted Development. The geographic extent of the Proposed Development works are confined to the immediate area. Accordingly, there is no impact associated with the operational phase as a result of the Proposed Development works.
Considered cumulatively with other adjacent proposed developments, would the size of the proposed works be considered significant?	No. The proposed works have been assessed cumulatively by MKO within this Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report and within the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) and concludes that there is no potential for cumulative impacts on the environment or European sites in combination with other plans and projects.
Is the nature of the proposed works significant?	No. The Proposed Development will be carried out within the permitted and proposed site boundary. The project design and best practice construction methodologies will ensure that any potential for significant impacts are either eliminated or reduced to low risk.
Will the proposed works utilise a significant quantity of natural resources?	No. The Proposed Development works will reuse excavated materials in the backfilling and reinstatement. Imported stone/gravel material may be used as part of the Proposed Development, the quantities of which are not considered significant when considering the scale of the proposal.
Will the proposed works produce a significant quantity of waste?	No. The proposed works will reuse excavated materials in the reinstatement of and landscaping areas where appropriate. Waste where it arises during the construction phase, will be source segregated to accommodate re-use and recycling opportunities with provisions implemented on site in waste management areas. No waste will be generated during the operational phase of the Proposed Development.
Will the proposed works create a significant amount or type of pollution?	No. No significant water or air borne pollution are envisaged as a result of the proposed works. The Permitted Development and any subsequent alterations proposed would not be considered a recognised emitter of greenhouse gases with the potential to effect climate change. Plant and equipment utilised during construction will use fossil fuels, but the potential impact associated with this is imperceptible due to the temporary duration and scale of the works.

Characteristics of the Proposed Development – Screening Questions	Comment
Will the proposed works create a significant amount of nuisance?	No. Limited temporary disruption may arise during the proposed construction process, however, the Proposed Development proposes works within third party lands away from the public road and thus any such impacts are anticipated to be imperceptible.
Will there be a risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used?	No. The proposed works and construction methods to be used are well established and will be subject to contractor's safety statements and risk assessments. It should be noted that details with regards the method of construction for the permitted cable grid route and substation were provided in the Construction Methodology, prepared by the TLI Group (Report ref 05887-R04-01, June 2023). TLI have prepared an addendum report to accompany this alteration application. It is important to note that there will be no changes to the methodology for constructing the cable or joint bay in the proposed offroad sections
Would any combination of the above factors be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment?	No. The actual environmental effects of construction projects locally are well established. There are no potential impacts to sensitive receptors including European Sites There are no factors above which when combined would result in the proposed alterations to the permitted development, due to its characteristics, having a significant effect on the environment.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the nature of the Proposed Development is not considered to have likely significant effects on the environment.

Reasoning

The works relating to the Proposed Development will comprise alterations to the permitted grid connection route, relocating approximately 370m of underground cabling from being installed adjacent to a public road to being installed within consented third party lands.

It should be noted that details with regards the method of construction for the permitted cable grid route and substation were provided in the Construction Methodology, prepared by the TLI Group (Report ref 05887-R04-01, June 2023). TLI have prepared an addendum report to accompany this alteration application. There will be no changes to the methodology for constructing the cable or joint bay in the proposed offroad sections

The works will be undertaken according to the construction methodologies designed to reduce or eliminate the potential for environmental impacts as summarised in in accordance with the design and best practice that is described within the application of the permitted development and all survey reports and assessment which accompany the S146B application. The Proposed Development works will be carried out as part of the overall construction of these elements of the Permitted Development and the works will comprise site excavation, the installation of underground cabling, joint bay and reinstatement. The works will be restricted to the footprint of the site for the permitted development and to the Proposed Development site boundary.

3.2

Location of the Proposed Development

Table 3-2 Location of the Proposed Development

Location of the Proposed Development – Screening Questions	Comment
Have the proposed works the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any site designated for conservation interest (e.g. SAC, SPA, pNHA)?	No, the AASR concluded the following: <i>It is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a significant effect on any European Site.</i>
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any habitats listed as Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive?	No. The AASR includes detailed site-specific habitat assessment and confirms that no Annex I habitats were recorded within or adjacent to the proposed development site boundary
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any habitats listed as Priority Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive?	No. The works will be completed generally within the site of the proposed development and no Annex I species will be affected.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any species listed as Annex II in the EU Habitats Directive?	No. The AASR includes detailed site-specific information and confirms that Annex II species will not be impacted by the proposed works.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any species listed as Annex I of the EU Birds Directive?	No. The AASR includes detailed site-specific information and concludes the following: <i>No birds listed under Annex I of EU Birds Directive, nor significant suitable habitat, were recorded within the Proposed Development site during the walkover survey.</i>
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on the breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act?	An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) has been prepared for this application and concludes the following: <i>Taking the above information and detailed assessment set out in the preceding sections of this chapter into consideration, and having regard to the precautionary principle, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of habitats or species of high ecological significance and will not have any significant effects on the ecology of the Proposed Development site or the wider area.</i> <i>The potential residual impacts on ecological receptors will not be significant and no potential for the Proposed Development to contribute to any cumulative impacts on</i>

Location of the Proposed Development – Screening Questions	Comment
	<i>biodiversity when considered in-combination with other plans and projects was identified.</i>
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on existing land use?	No. The proposed works will be restricted to the permitted and proposed development site. The scale of the Proposed Development is small in nature comprising approximately 370m of an underground cable. All works areas associated with the Proposed Development will be reinstated on completion of construction works.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structures or Recorded Monuments and Places of Archaeological Interest?	No. There are no recorded sites of archaeological or architectural significance located within the Proposed Development site. The closest sites of archaeological and architectural significance include a Fulacht fia (Code: CO086-115) located approximately 50m northeast and a House (CO086-062-) located approximately 60m south of the Proposed Development site.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on listed or scenic views or protected landscapes as outlined in the County Development Plan?	No. There are no landscape designations on the subject site. It is not considered that there will be likely significant effects on the environment in relation to landscape as the Proposed Development, during its operational phase will be located underground..

Conclusion

It can be concluded that there will be no significant direct or indirect impacts by virtue of the location of the Proposed and Permitted Development on the receiving environment.

Reasoning

The European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 requires that an Article 6(3) assessment be carried out where it is considered that a development is likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites (SAC/SPA). In this regard an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) has been completed for the Proposed Development. This report concludes the following:

“It is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a significant effect on any European Site”.

The natural environment within the proposed site can accommodate the development without significant impact.

3.3

Characteristics of Potential Impacts

A further screening exercise was completed to assess the most significant potential impacts, as outlined in Table 3-3 below. These are the sections that would be covered in any EIA as specified in the EU Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directive 97/11/EC).

Table 3-3 Significance of Impact According to Theme (as in EIA)

EIA Section	Brief Assessment of Impacts
Human Beings, Population and Human Health	There may be possible temporary nuisances to human beings from noise, dust and vibration. These are not likely to be at a scale or significance that would warrant the completion of a sub threshold EIAR. Noise and dust or pollution will be subject to standard mitigation measures as per typical construction projects. A Construction Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared by Aona Environmental for the Proposed Development. This report concludes that provided that the appropriate mitigation measures as listed in Section 6 of the Construction Noise Impact Report are implemented, any residual impacts from the Proposed Development will not be significant.
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	The EcIA prepared for the site concluded that: <i>“Taking the above information and detailed assessment set out in the preceding sections of this chapter into consideration, and having regard to the precautionary principle, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of habitats or species of high ecological significance and will not have any significant effects on the ecology of the Proposed Development site or the wider area.</i> <i>The potential residual impacts on ecological receptors will not be significant and no potential for the Proposed Development to contribute to any cumulative impacts on biodiversity when considered in-combination with other plans and projects was identified”</i>
Soils & Geology	Imperceptible impact, the development will be carried out in accordance with the environmentally sensitive construction methods and environmental management systems. Excavated soils and subsoils will be reused as part of site reinstatement and landscaping.
Water	No natural watercourses will be traversed by the development, and no instream work will take place. The construction phase will be carried out in accordance with detailed methodologies as outlined in the previous application documents for the Permitted Development. Potential impacts on water quality are considered to be imperceptible. The site development does not involve structures that would alter the natural floodplain conditions and does not involve permanent lowering of groundwater levels.
Air & Climate	Potential temporary low probability impact on air quality in particular dust emissions during construction activities however this will be managed through standard best practice measures. The Permitted Development and any subsequent alterations (Proposed Development) proposed would not be considered a recognised emitter of greenhouse gases with the potential to effect climate change. Plant and equipment utilised during construction phase will use fossil fuels, but the potential impact associated with this is imperceptible due to the temporary duration and scale of the works. There will be no emissions during the operational phase as a result of the Proposed Development.
Noise & Vibration	Potential temporary noise impact during construction activities however this will be managed through standard best practice measures and mitigation measures as outlined in the Construction Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Aona Environmental. Given the scale, location and duration (15 days – temporary) of the Proposed Development works, no significant impacts are anticipated.
Landscape	No significant impact. The Proposed Development will involve the installation of an underground cable and other minor ancillary works.

EIA Section	Brief Assessment of Impacts
	An Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Technical Note has been prepared by Macroworks for the Proposed Development. This report concludes the following: <i>Overall, it is considered that proposed realignment of the consented grid connection route will result in similar effects to what is stated in the consented grid connection application (An Coimsiún Planeála planning ref: 317706). Thus, the conclusions of the LVIA remain unchanged and no significant impact are anticipated.</i>
Material Assets	Potential temporary low probability impact. During construction there is the potential for temporary minor impacts related to traffic inconvenience. It should be noted, as outlined in the TTA, that the modification of the location of this section of the grid connection route from the public road into third party lands will reduce the duration of road closures by almost four days, thereby removing the need for a significant number of vehicles to undertake diversion routes during the construction phase. Accordingly, the proposed amendment will result in a reduction in overall traffic disruption when compared to the permitted scheme.
Cultural Heritage	As outlined in the Archaeological Note prepared by Rubicon, outlines that there may be a number of direct/indirect impacts during the construction phase of the Proposed Amendment. Any such effects will be mitigated by the measures outlined in Section 4 of the Archaeological Note.

Table 3-4 Characteristics of the Potential Impacts Matrix

Characteristics of Potential Impacts – Screening Questions	Comment
Would a large geographical area be impacted as a result of the proposed development?	No. The geographic extent of the Proposed Development is limited to approximately 370m of underground cabling within consented third-party lands. Accordingly, there is no impact associated with the operational phase.
Would a large population of people be affected as a result of the proposed development?	No. The Proposed Development is located in a rural area and it is not considered that the population will be significantly impacted by the Proposed Development either during the construction or operational phase.
Are any transboundary impacts likely to arise as a result of the proposed development?	No. The works will be contained largely within the defined site boundary.
Would the magnitude of impacts associated with the proposed development be considered significant?	No. The proposed works will be carried out in line with construction methodologies which have been previously permitted in the previous application. Therefore, no significant impacts will arise.
In considering the various aspects of the environment, would the impacts of the proposed development be considered complex?	No. All impacts on areas of general environmental sensitivity will be minimised by standard best practice construction measures to insignificance and therefore any interactions between potentially sensitive receptors are not anticipated to be complex.

Characteristics of Potential Impacts – Screening Questions	Comment
Is there a high probability that the effects will occur?	Whilst temporary impacts relating to construction activities have the potential to occur, best practice measures will result in any impacts being imperceptible/insignificant.
Will the effects continue for a long time?	No. Any effects are only associated with the temporary construction period. There are no anticipated effects during the operational phase.
Will the effects be permanent rather than temporary?	The potential effects during construction are considered temporary, with no operational phase effects anticipated.
Will the impacts be irreversible?	No. The Proposed Development will be installed underground where they will remain a part of the electrical infrastructure of the Permitted and Proposed Development until such a time that decommissioning takes place.
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effects?	The construction process will avoid any significant effects of the Proposed Development through the implementation of standard best practice construction methodologies which have been outlined previously as part of the Permitted Development.

Conclusion

It is concluded that, the characteristics of the potential impacts are not considered significant. There are no long-term negative impacts. Whilst temporary noise levels and disturbance are typical of any construction phase, any potential impact on sensitive receptors will be temporary and effectively managed through best practice measures. No impact interactions have been identified and it is considered that any minor impacts will be avoided through the implementation of best working practices. No likely significant long-term or permanent negative environmental impacts have been identified in the course of the screening process.

Reasoning

An AASR has been prepared which outlines that the proposal will not impact on designated sites. The potential for any direct or indirect impact on habitats is low and the likelihood of any significant effects occurring as a result of the works can be excluded.

4.

CONCLUSION

The Proposed Development seeks to relocate approximately 370m of permitted but not yet constructed underground cable and other ancillary works from adjacent to a public road to within consented third party lands.

The Proposed Development does not increase the footprint, does not increase export capacity, does not introduce new environmental pathways, does not alter cumulative impact conclusions and does not affect European Sites.

Having regard to Section 146B(4) and Section 146B(7)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the criteria in Schedule 7, the information provided under Schedule 7A, the findings of the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Ecological Impact Assessment, it is concluded that the Proposed Development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

As outlined previously, MKO submits that the Proposed Development is not material. However, should ACP consider the Proposed Development to be material, MKO have provided the information required under Schedule 7A of the PDR to assist ACP in its screening determination.

After consideration of the information provided, it can be concluded that the Proposed Development does not require EIAR.

5.

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