



Your Ref: ACP-324156-26

Our Ref: SID-CL-2026-013

(Please quote in all related correspondence)

21 August 2026

The Secretary
An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Via email to: laps@pleanala.ie

Re: Notification under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

Proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID): 10-year planning permission for a 110kV grid connection to the national grid at the existing 110kV Moneypoint Substation

A chara,

I refer to correspondence received in connection with the above. Outlined below are heritage-related observations/recommendations of the Department under the stated heading(s).

Nature Conservation

The Department has reviewed the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and associated ecological information submitted in support of the proposed development.

The Department acknowledges the extent of the ecological survey work undertaken and the detailed assessment of potential effects on European Sites.

European Sites and Appropriate Assessment

The NIS identifies potential pathways to the following European Sites:

- Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Site Code: 002165)



- Carrowmore Dunes SAC (Site Code: 002250)
- Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands SAC (Site Code: 001021)
- River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) (Site Code: 004077)
- Mid-Clare Coast SPA (Site Code: 004182)

Water Quality and Hydrological Connectivity

The Department considers water quality to be an important consideration, particularly in relation to the proposed grid connection. The grid connection is approximately 25 kilometres in length and crosses a significant number of watercourses, with downstream connectivity to European Sites. Potential impacts include the mobilisation of suspended solids, hydrocarbons and other pollutants during construction, with the potential for downstream effects on qualifying interests and associated habitats.

The proposed mitigation measures, including drainage controls, settlement measures, silt controls and pollution-prevention measures, are noted. The Department recommends that these measures are clearly detailed, implemented and secured through the Construction Environmental Management Plan and any conditions attached to a permission.

Watercourse Crossings

The proposed grid connection involves approximately 24 mapped watercourse crossings. Given the number and geographical extent of these crossings, the Department considers that particular care will be required during construction to avoid impacts on water quality and aquatic ecology. Detailed construction methodologies should be provided for the watercourse crossings, including measures to prevent:

- Sediment mobilisation
- Fuel or hydrocarbon contamination
- Concrete/cementitious pollution
- Accidental spills
- Obstruction of watercourses



The Department recommends that appropriate ecological and environmental supervision is provided during works at sensitive watercourse crossings.

Otter

Otter is a qualifying interest of the Lower River Shannon SAC and the assessment identifies the potential for impacts associated with construction activities and watercourse crossings. The Department notes the proposed mitigation measures, including measures relating to potential Otter holts, working hours, lighting and noise. The Department recommends that pre-construction surveys are undertaken where appropriate to confirm the status of any Otter holts or resting places which could be affected. Watercourse crossings and associated fencing should also be designed and maintained to ensure that Otter movement and connectivity are retained.

Wintering Birds

The Department notes the assessment of potential disturbance and displacement of wintering birds associated with the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. The NIS proposes restrictions on construction activities within 500 metres of the SPA during the wintering period, October to March. The Department welcomes the proposed seasonal restriction.

The Department recommends that the relevant areas are clearly identified on construction drawings and that the restriction is expressly secured as part of any permission. Where works are proposed close to sensitive bird habitat outside the restricted period, appropriate ecological supervision and monitoring should be undertaken where necessary.

Invasive Species

The presence of invasive species within the proposed development area and along sections of the grid connection route, including Rhododendron and Japanese Knotweed, have been noted. The proposed Invasive Species Management Plan is welcomed.

Given the length of the grid connection and the number of watercourses crossed, there is potential for construction activity and movement of machinery or soil to contribute to the spread of invasive species.

The Department recommends that the Invasive Species Management Plan is fully incorporated into the construction environmental management arrangements and includes appropriate measures for:



- Machinery and equipment hygiene
- Soil movement
- Storage and disposal of contaminated material
- Treatment of invasive species
- Monitoring
- Follow-up management

Cumulative and In-combination Effects

A number of other wind-energy developments and projects have been considered in the cumulative and in-combination assessment. The Department considers that cumulative effects should be assessed particularly carefully where developments have common hydrological connections to European Sites. The potential for multiple construction projects to result in cumulative sedimentation, pollution or disturbance should be considered in a precautionary manner.

The Department recommends that the mitigation measures relied upon in the in-combination assessment are clearly identified and capable of being secured through the relevant planning permissions.

Monitoring and Adaptive Management

The Department recommends that appropriate ecological monitoring is undertaken during construction and, where necessary, during the operational phase.

Monitoring should be capable of identifying any unforeseen impacts and should include clear procedures for responding where monitoring identifies a requirement for additional mitigation.

Mitigation and Certainty

The NIS concludes that, following implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the development will not adversely affect the integrity of the relevant European Sites. The Department notes the mitigation proposed and considers that many of the measures are appropriate in principle.



However, the effectiveness of the Appropriate Assessment conclusion is dependent upon the successful implementation of these measures.

Accordingly, where permission is granted, the Department recommends that the relevant mitigation measures are expressly secured through conditions, including the Construction Environmental Management Plan, water-quality controls, watercourse crossing measures, wintering-bird restrictions, Otter protection and invasive-species management.

Department Conclusion

The Department acknowledges the extensive ecological survey work undertaken and the detailed assessment contained within the NIS, together with the range of mitigation measures proposed.

Having regard to the hydrological connectivity of the proposed development to a number of European Sites, the scale of the proposed grid connection, the number of watercourses crossed, the presence of invasive species and the wider cumulative development context, the Department considers that the matters identified above warrant consideration by An Coimisiún Pleanála as part of its Appropriate Assessment.

You are requested to send any further communications to this Department's Development Applications Unit (DAU) at: manager.dau@npws.gov.ie, or to the following address:

The Manager
Development Applications Unit (DAU)
Government Offices
Newtown Road
Wexford
Y35 AP90

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Julie Sullivan', is written over a horizontal line.

Julie Sullivan
Assistant Principal
Development Applications Unit
Administration