



## Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

### CP1430 Lanesboro 110kV Station Works [Exempted Development] County Longford

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended ('the Regulations'), EirGrid has undertaken Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of relevant European sites, if the Lanesboro 110kV Station Works [Exempted Development] ('the Development') individually or in-combination with other plans or projects will result in likely significant effects on a European site(s).

The Development involves:

- Installation & commissioning of jointing into an existing portion of the Lanesboro 110kV bay H4 circuit with new cable to create the new Lanesboro-Middleton Solar 110kV circuit.
- Protection uprate & commissioning of Transformer Bay at the Lanesboro 110kV Station.
- Installation and commissioning of the Middleton Solar Interface Kiosk, Metering, PQR and RTU.

### Analysis of Pathways to European Sites

There are no waterbodies within the Lanesboro 110kV Station. The River Shannon (Upper) is within 10m of the Station boundary to the west. The River Shannon (Upper) is hydrologically-linked approximately 390m downstream to Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 000440)<sup>1</sup>, approximately 410m downstream to Lough Ree Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 004064)<sup>2</sup> and approximately 14.1km upstream to both Lough Forbes Complex SAC (site code 001818)<sup>3</sup> and Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (site code 004101)<sup>4</sup>.

Lough Ree SAC is 238m away ('as the crow flies') from the Development and Lough Ree SPA is 249m away. Lough Forbes Complex SAC and Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA are 8.2km from the Development ('as the crow flies'). Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA is designated for Greenland white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*. According to guidance published by Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot), the core foraging range of Greenland white-fronted goose is 5-8km<sup>5</sup>, placing the Development within the wider area potentially used by this Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species.

Although the River Shannon (Upper) is within 10m of the Development, likely significant effects on the water environment in this or other hydrologically-linked European sites from the Development can be excluded, given the nature and small scale of the contained works.

The Development does not require in-stream activities or works within or adjacent to wetlands (including sites monitored by Birdwatch Ireland, bogs, or woodlands). None of the works are within the catchment of any freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*, Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, or lamprey species. Lough Forbes Complex SAC is not designated for any QI species and otter *Lutra lutra* are the only Qualifying Interest (QI) species of Lough Ree SAC. Potential noise and visual disturbance impacts of the Development on otter from the SAC were

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives: Lough Ree SAC 000440. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Lough Ree SPA [004064]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>3</sup> NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives: Lough Forbes Complex SAC 001818. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>4</sup> NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA [004101]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage. (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). 4pp.

considered. Due to their extensive home ranges, otter frequently utilise resting places and holts along watercourses beyond the designated site boundary. However, otter are tolerant of anthropogenic disturbance and construction works for the Development will not involve any piling activities (works with greatest at-source sound pressure levels).

The scope of the works are all within the Station boundary containing hardstanding and electrical installations, rather than converting any greenfield site to development. Therefore, there will be no loss of functionally-linked habitat for any SCI species of Lough Ree SPA or Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA.

At a distance of approximately 249m from the Development, Lough Ree SPA is within the precautionary impact buffer for disturbance. However, the relatively minor nature of the proposed works means that any noise disturbance will not result in likely significant effects linked with disturbance to foraging or roosting birds.. Additionally, there is vegetation, residential and commercial properties and the N63 road separating the Development from the Lough Ree SPA. The vegetation and properties will act as a buffer for any noise and visual disturbance.

There are no other European sites nearby that are potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

### **AA Screening Statement**

In accordance with Regulation 42(7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 SI 477 as amended, EirGrid has made a Determination following screening that an Appropriate Assessment is not required as the project individually or in combination with other plans or projects is not likely to have a significant effect on any European sites. The risk of likely significant effects on European sites can be excluded on the basis of objective evidence.

This Determination is based on the location, scale, extent and duration of the Development, including the temporary nature of works, and has not taken account of mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Signed:



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20 November 2023