KILDARE INNOVATION CAMPUS, LEIXLIP, CO. KILDARE.

SCREENING ASSESSMENT REPORT

IN SUPPORT OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

AS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 177U OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 TO 2022

Prepared for:

The Davy Platform ICAV, for and on behalf of the Liffey Sub Fund

Prepared by:

Ecology Ireland Wildlife Consultants Ltd.

July 2023

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Revision	Description	Prepared by	Date
B	Final Draft	AM/MK/GF	14 July 2023

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Appendices

1. INTRODUCTION

Ecology Ireland Wildlife Consultants Ltd. were commissioned by The Davy Platform ICAV, for and on behalf of the Liffey Sub Fund1, to produce a Screening Statement report in support of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process in relation to the proposed development of an integrated masterplan proposal that includes for the phased expansion of the existing campus, allowing for a mix of Deep Tech, ICT and Innovation uses.

The Project is an integrated masterplan proposal that includes for the expansion of the existing campus, allowing for a mix of Deep Tech, ICT and Innovation uses, herein referred to as the "Proposed Development". The proposed development will include for the demolition of some of the existing buildings on site and construction of new buildings, an energy centre and replacement substation. The proposed development will include significant public infrastructure including a new signalised intersection on Celbridge Road (R404), a new Public Link Road through the campus (between Barnhall Road and the new signalised intersection), a pedestrian/cycle overpass of the M4, pedestrian and cycle links through the site and along the designated protected view corridor and supporting infrastructure.

The project comprises both the proposed development which is subject to the development consent being sought, and the proposed facilitation works *i.e.,* the uprating of existing Eirgrid transmission lines and the GNI upgrade works. Future consents for the facilitation works will be required through EirGrid and GNI.

Appropriate Assessment is required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive for any project or plan that is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (including candidate and proposed sites). A screening assessment is undertaken to establish if any proposed plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on any site that has been designated under the E.U. Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), *i.e.,* a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), or the E.U. Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), *i.e.,* a Special Protection Area (SPA). Collectively, SAC's and SPA's are known as Natura 2000 sites. The conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites have been published by the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) with reference to the habitats and species for which the sites are designated. These conservation objectives are considered when carrying out screening and appropriate assessments for plans and projects that might impact upon Natura 2000 sites. The Habitats Directive is transposed in Ireland by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to 2022 in respect of land use plans and proposed development. In transposing the Directive the Irish Government extended the requirement to undertake an Appropriate Assessment to candidate sites of Community importance, sites of Community importance, candidate SPAs and candidate SACs and these sites together with SACs and SPAs are collectively referred to as "European Sites". These European sites are herein referred to as "Natura 2000 sites".

To establish whether the project is likely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, this Screening Statement report has been prepared to provide the competent authority, in this case Kildare County Council (or An Bord Pleanála if appealed), with the information it may require to undertake a screening for appropriate assessment in accordance with section 177U of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to 2022 and Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, and presents a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent experts, to assist the competent authority in identifying if the project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, in view of its conservation objectives.

1.1. Statement of Competence

This report has been prepared by Dr. Gavin Fennessy with input from a team of specialist ecologists including Athena Michaelides, John Deasy and Marie Kearns. Field surveys and *Post Hoc* analysis were carried out by Dr. Gavin Fennessy (B.Sc. PhD MCIEEM) and John Deasy.

Dr. Fennessy is a highly experienced ecologist with 25 years of experience in consultancy. He is Principal Ecologist and Managing Director of Ecology Ireland Wildlife Consultants Ltd. He is a member of the Irish Policy Group of the CIEEM. He and his team have prepared numerous ecological impact assessments, for all types of projects and plans throughout Ireland. Gavin is a guest lecturer on Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment at University College Cork.

John Deasy is an ecological consultant with experience across a range of disciplines including botanical and habitat surveys, bird surveys, mammal surveys and protected invertebrate surveys. He has nearly 10 years of experience as a professional ecologist and has undertaken a range of botanical and habitat surveys including baseline surveys for renewable energy projects, shared-use greenways and domestic and commercial properties. These surveys have included non-native invasive species surveys, rare species surveys and evaluations of habitats listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. John holds an MSc. in Ecological Assessment and a BSc. in Earth and Environmental Science from University College Cork. He is a member of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland.

Athena Michaelides (BSc) is an ecologist with over 5 years post-graduate experience. Athena has contributed to ecological reports and assessments and she is experienced in impact assessment and GIS analysis. Athena has assisted in the preparation of this report.

Marie has professional experience in ecological surveying, ecological impact assessment and the appropriate assessment process. She has worked on numerous projects related to renewable energy, infrastructure, housing, and various other development projects. She is an experienced field ecologist with a diverse ecological survey profile, including habitats and flora, marine and terrestrial mammals, and birds. She has held NPWS Licenses for photographing wild animals. She is also experienced in producing maps and visualising biological datasets using QGIS.

Figure 1-1 Site Location Map

2. APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT AND SCREENING

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43 EEC) sets out the obligation of Member States. Article 6(2) states that:

> *"Member States shall take appropriate steps to avoid, in the special areas of conservation, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of this Directive."*

Article 6(3) states:

> *'any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives'*

The first stage of the Appropriate Assessment process involves undertaking a screening exercise, the outcome of which then determines whether it is necessary to proceed with further stages. This report forms a part of the screening exercise.

A number of documents relating to the appropriate assessment process have been referred to during the preparation of this screening report. These are:

<u>European and National Legislation</u>

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (also known as the 'Habitats Directive');
- Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds, codified version, (also known as the 'Birds Directive');
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 to 2015; and
- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

<u>Guidance</u>

- European Commission (2015) Ecological flows in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive – Guidance Document No. 31.
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Practice Note PN01, Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (2021).
- European Court of Justice, Case – C-664/15
- European Court of Justice, Case – C117/00
- European Court of Justice, Case – C461/13
- European Court of Justice, Case – C323/17
- DoEHLG (2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environmental Heritage and Local Government.
- European Commission (2018) Managing European Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2021) Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (2021/C 437/01).

- European Commission (2000) Communication from the Commission on the Precautionary Principle. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. European Commission.
- European Commission (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting European Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- Commission notice Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive (C/2021/7301 European Commission; October 2021).
- European Commission (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/49/EEC; clarification of the concepts of: Alternative solutions, Imperative reasons of overriding public interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission.
- European Commission (2013) Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission
- Opinion of Advocate General Kokott delivered on 19 January 2023. ECLI identifier: ECLI:EU:C:2023:39.

Departmental/ NPWS Circulars

- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10. (DoEHLG, 2010);
- Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans. Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08;
- Water Services Investment and Rural Water Programmes – Protection of Natural Heritage and National Monuments. Circular L8/08;

2.1. SCREENING

This report presents a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by the competent experts identified in section 1.1 above, to identify if the project, in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, in view of its conservation objectives which, to facilitate the planning authority undertaking the first stage of Appropriate Assessment, the screening process in accordance with section 177U of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to 2022 and Article 6(3) (as set out in the EU Guidance documents).

The NPWS guidance (2009/2010) states:

"Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3):

- whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site; and
- whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA). Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation, unless potential impacts clearly can be avoided through the modification or redesign of the plan or project, in which case the screening process is repeated on the altered plan. The greatest level of evidence and justification will be needed in circumstances when the process ends at screening stage on grounds of no impact."

The following sections (3, 4, 5 and 6) have been prepared having regard to the guidance set out in the screening sections of the guidance documentation [identified at the start of this section[1]].

With regard to the screening process (Stage 1), EU Commission guidance[2] states:

> *"This stage examines the likely effects of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, upon a Natura 2000 site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant. This assessment comprises four steps:*

- *determining whether the project or plan is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site;*
- *describing the project or plan and the description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on the Natura 2000 site;*
- *identifying the potential effects on the Natura 2000 site;*
- *assessing the significance of any effects on the Natura 2000 site".*

Furthermore, section 177U(1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, to 2022, stipulates that screening for Appropriate Assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority, to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

Article 42(21) of the Regulations states:

> "(a) Where a public authority, referred to in this paragraph as "the first authority", has carried out a screening for Appropriate Assessment or an Appropriate Assessment in relation to a plan or project, any other public authority, referred to in this Regulation as "the second authority", that is required to carry out a screening for Appropriate Assessment or an Appropriate Assessment of the same plan or project shall take account of the screening for Appropriate Assessment or Appropriate Assessment of the first authority in relation to that plan or project, and of any information, including a Natura Impact Statement that was prepared for consideration by the first authority or another second authority in relation to the plan or project.
>
> (b) In taking account of a screening for Appropriate Assessment or Appropriate Assessment in relation to a plan or project and of a Natura Impact Statement, the second authority shall consider the extent to which the scope of that screening for Appropriate Assessment or Appropriate Assessment or Natura Impact Statement covers the issues that would be required to be addressed by the second authority in a screening for Appropriate Assessment or Appropriate Assessment of the plan or project in view of the scope of the consent to be given by it, and shall identify any issues that have not, in that regard, been adequately addressed."

The Competent Authority, in carrying out a screening exercise shall take account of *a screening for Appropriate Assessment or Appropriate Assessment of the first authority in relation to that plan or project, and of any information, including a Natura Impact Statement that was prepared for consideration by the*

[1] EC (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC European Commission.

[2] Paragraph 3.1 of 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Nov. 2001)

first authority or another second authority in relation to the plan or project. As such any assessments carried out by other competent authorities, including previously by the same competent authority, are relevant.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROJECT

3.1. SITE LOCATION AND LAYOUT

The proposed development site is located within the townlands of Parsonstown, Rinawade Lower, Rinawade Lower, and Barnhall in Co. Kildare. The *c*. 72.23 ha site primarily encompasses lands within the existing Kildare Innovation Campus, which was formerly the Hewlett Packard Campus originally permitted in 1995 under KCC Reg. Ref 95923 (See Figure 1-1). Leixlip town is located directly north/northeast and Celbridge town is located *c*. 1km to the southwest.

The campus is bordered by Celbridge Road (R404), a portion of which is within the proposed development site boundary, to the east and bordered by the M4 motorway to the north. Castletown House and associated grounds are located to the west and includes areas of woodland habitat, a band of which borders the western boundary of the campus. Barnhall Rugby Football Club and the recently completed DB Schenker logistics facility are located to the south of the campus. The proposed development site also includes lands located north the campus. These lands to the north are within the Wonderful Barn Demesne, situated between the M4 motorway to the south and the Wonderful Barn allotments and Barnhall Meadows, an existing residential housing development, to the north.

Kildare Innovation Campus is made up of an existing group of 9 no. industrial buildings, car parking areas, and access roads that are used by *c*. 1100 staff in industries including manufacturing, office, distribution, welfare and utilities. An existing 110 kV substation (Rinawade Substation), which provides electricity to the campus is located in the northwest of the campus site. Highly managed areas of amenity grassland, parkland, and ornamental planting immediately surround the campus. Areas of young broadleaved woodland and managed treelines mark the boundary of the campus site and provide screening. The campus site also contains areas of semi-natural habitat that are subject to little to no management including meadow and wet grassland areas, mature treelines and hedgerows, and developing scrub habitat.

The proposed GNI upgrade works will be carried out along a total distance of *c*. 1.5km. The route will start on Station Road, turning south and continuing down Old Hill Road/Celbridge Road before turning west into the north lands, within the proposed development site boundary, to the north of the M4. The route will cross the M4 south into the campus, connecting to a new gas skid installed at the existing gas skid location.

The proposed Eirgrid uprating works will require the replacement of overhead transmission lines, double circuit towers, pole sets and angle towers connecting Maynooth to Rinawade (Stage 1), Dunfirth/Kinnegad to Rinawade (Stage 2), Statcom (Stage 3), Derryiron to Maynooth (Stage 4), Derryiron – Kinnegad (Stage 5).

Both the proposed development site and the proposed GNI upgrade route are located within the Liffey and Dublin Bay catchment in Hydrometric Area 09 (sub-catchment: Liffey_SC_080). The Kilmacredock Stream which originally flowed through Kildare Innovation Campus has been diverted to flow around the main part of the campus and is completely culverted within the proposed development site boundary. The Kilmacredock Upper Stream flows through the 1.5m culvert into the Leixlip Reservoir, to the southeast of the proposed development site, which is located *c*. 60m from the proposed development site boundary at its nearest point. Two attenuation ponds (with an additional fire water retention pond) are located in proximity to the southeast boundary of the campus site surrounded by a mix of bankside vegetation and scrub. The ponds attenuate water from the campus and release runoff into the adjacent Leixlip Reservoir via an underground culvert crossing the Celbridge road to the east of the proposed development site. The

existing foul water drainage network servicing Kildare Innovation Campus connects to the local municipal sewerage network where wastewater streams drain by gravity to the Kildare County Council sewer and is treated within Leixlip wastewater treatment plant (WWTP where the primary emission point is located in the River Liffey upstream of Leixlip Reservoir and the proposed development site. The River Liffey flows northwest through the Leixlip Reservoir, discharging from the Leixlip Dam before continuing west and ultimately flowing out to Dublin Bay. Under the Water Frameworks Directive (WFD), the reaches of the River Liffey flowing into and out from the Leixlip Reservoir are considered to be of "Good" status with a risk status currently "Under Review", while the Leixlip Reservoir is of "Poor status"[3]. The proposed GNI upgrade route does not cross any watercourses. The overhead transmission lines which comprise the proposed Eirgrid uprating route cross a number of water courses, with no in-stream works required.

3.2. SITE ECOLOGY

Ecology Ireland Wildlife Consultants Ltd. carried out a desktop study and a number of ecological field surveys between April 2022 and May 2023 of the proposed development site and the proposed GNI upgrade route. The proposed Eirgrid uprate works were primarily assessed by a desktop review of aerial mapping and available sources of ecological data, with no dedicated ecological field surveys undertaken. An objective of the ecological surveys was to gain an overview of the study area, as well as to note ecological points of interest such as the presence of invasive plant species and species that are protected or are part of the qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites relevant here.

No botanical species protected under the Flora (Protection) Order (1999; and as amended 2022), listed in Annex II or IV of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), or listed in the Irish Red Data Books were recorded. All flora and fauna species recorded during the walkover were considered common and widespread throughout Ireland (Fossitt, 2000). No qualifying species of any Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development were recorded during the site visits.

No invasive species listed on Invasive Species Ireland's 'most-unwanted list' were found within the study area. No species listed on the Third Schedule of the 2011 European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations (*i.e.,* species of which it is an offense to disperse, spread or otherwise cause to grow in any place) were found within the study area.

No Annex I habitats, those listed under the EU Habitats Directive, are present within the study area. The study area primarily comprises habitats such buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3), Dry meadow and grassy verges (GS2), and Amenity grassland (GA2), which are considered to be of lower ecological value. There are habitats present that were assessed as being of local importance (higher value) as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), namely mature Hedgerows (WL1) and Treelines (WL2) as well as some young uniform woodland blocks (WD1)). Overall, the site is not of any importance for habitats or species which are qualifying/special conservation interests of designated Natura 2000 sites in the wider area.

A number of mammal species were recorded during ecological surveys of the study area including eleven non-volant mammal species and five bat species. While Otter (Lutra lutra) was not recorded during ecological surveys, the NBDC database holds records for Otter (*Lutra lutra*) for the 10km grid square (N93)

[3] https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/

that encompasses the study area[4]. Otter is listed on Annex II and Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive. Otter is a highly mobile species that can occur at a distance from the nearest suitable watercourse which in this case are the River Liffey and the Rye Water River. No Otter activity was recorded during site walkovers of the study area. There is no optimal foraging/breeding habitat for Otter within the campus or along the proposed GNI upgrade route. Therefore, any occurrence of Otter within the proposed development site would likely to be on a transient basis at most.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) was recorded in flight over the main campus buildings at the centre of the study area during the dedicated transect surveys completed at the study area on the 28th of April 2022. Peregrine Falcon is on the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) Annex I list and is therefore considered of high conservation concern across Europe.

3.3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.3.1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been prepared for the proposed development (CSEA, 2023) The proposed development (the principal works) is for the expansion of the existing Kildare Innovation Campus (KIC) and is described in the statutory notices as follows:

- Demolition of existing Buildings No's 7, 8 and 9 (total gfa c. 84,838sqm).
- Existing Buildings No's 1 – 6 will be retained for deep tech and innovation related uses (total gfa c. 42,862sqm)
- Construction of 2 no. new deep tech buildings and 4 no. new data centre buildings, all including ancillary office spaces. The deep tech buildings will have an overall maximum height of c.16m and vary in size from 30,945sqm – 41,190sqm with a combined total gfa of c. 72,135 sqm. The data centres will be c.15 m in height to parapet and c.16.5m in height to top of roof plant screening. The data centres will vary in size from 13,225 sqm – 21,000 sqm with a combined total gfa of c. 76,225sqm. All buildings will be provided with Solar PV panels at roof level and green walls along selected elevations.
- The new deep tech buildings (A1 & A2) will be provided with service yard areas, loading docks, car parking, access roads, security fencing/gates and landscaping. The deep tech buildings will include rainwater harvesting tanks and green roofs over office areas.
- Each data centre (B1, C1, C2 & C3) will include data halls, admin blocks (comprising offices, breakroom, loading dock, storage, and ancillary areas) and a variety of mechanical and electrical plant areas/structures including battery storage rooms and mechanical rooms. Car parking, access roads, security fencing/gates, gate houses and landscaping will also be provided.
- B1 will include 14 no. fuel oil generators, MV rooms and associated mechanical flues. C1 – C3 will each include 22 no. fuel oil generators, MV rooms and associated mechanical flues (each c.18.6m high). Car parking, access roads, security fencing/gates, gate houses and landscaping will also be provided.
- 2 no. district heating pump house areas and inground piping for district heating system.
- Construction of a Replacement 110kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation adjacent to the existing 110kV Rinawade Substation. The current Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation known as the Rinawade 110kV sub is fed by 2 x 110kV Overhead lines. The new substation will connect to

[4] https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map

these overhead lines via short runs of underground cable. The replacement 110kV substation will include 6 No. transformers, with client control building and a 2 storey GIS substation building within a 2.4m high fenced compound.

- Decommissioning and removal of the existing 110kV Rinawade substation.
- Construction of an on-site energy centre to provide dispatchable power to the national electrical grid. The Energy Centre will include 9 no. gas powered combustion turbine generators (CTG's) and 9no. flues with a maximum height of c.15 metres. The turbines will be enclosed by a screen wall c.14m in height. The energy compound will include all required infrastructure including 2no. back-up fuel oil (HVO) tanks, an administration building, pump house, fire water tank, access roads, 14no. parking bays, security fencing etc.
- Provision of a Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) gas skid surrounded by a 2.4m high fence and access from Celbridge Road (R404). The GNI skid will replace the existing gas skid along Celbridge Road.
- Provision of a GNI AGI (Above Ground Installation) including 1no. kiosk building, c3.2m high, surrounded by a 2.4m high fence.
- Closure of the existing main entrance to the campus on Celbridge Road and reinstatement of the boundary.
- Construction of a new signalised entrance/exit on Celbridge Road c. 80metres north of the existing main entrance.
- Use of the existing secondary entrance/exit off Barnhall Road Roundabout in the south-east as a principal entry/exit.
- Construction of internal access roads, footpaths and cycle paths including a publicly accessible link road between Celbridge Road (R404) to the east and Barnhall Road (R449) to the west.
- Construction of a new pedestrian and cycle overpass across the M4 motorway and pedestrian/cycle path adjacent to lands known as the Wonderful Barn Allotments; the overpass will link the new publicly accessible link road within Kildare Innovation Campus to the entrance of Barnhall Meadows estate.
- Undergrounding and diversion of the existing overhead 10 Kv/20kv overhead line adjacent to the M4 motorway.
- The pedestrian and cycle route within the Kildare Innovation Campus will provide a link from the new public link road, along the protected view corridor (between Castletown Estate & Wonderful Barn) to the north-eastern boundary of Castletown Estate.
- The provision of a net increase of 678 new car spaces, resulting in a total of 2291 car spaces across the site (including a total of 244 EV car spaces).
- The provision of a new private EV Bus charging hub with parking for 10no. electric buses.
- The provision of a net increase of 310 new bicycle spaces, resulting in a total of 350 bicycle spaces across the site.
- The diversion of the c. 500 m stretch of an existing 1.5 m culvert, located to the north of the site along the existing loop road, southwest by c. 60 m; the diverted culvert will be located along the proposed link road.
- All associated site development works, drainage and services provision, landscaping, boundary treatments (including security fencing), and associated works.

<u>Surface-Water Drainage Network</u>

The existing surface-water drainage network servicing Kildare Innovation Campus flows into the attenuation ponds before discharging to the Leixlip Reservoir and the River Liffey. There are no uncovered watercourses within the proposed development site. The Kilmacredock Stream flows beneath the site along a diverted path through a 1.5m culvert before entering Leixlip Reservoir. The existing surface-water drainage network discharges to the ponds and does not discharge directly to the culverted Kilmacredock

Stream. Discharge from the ponds is released following confirmation of water quality through electronic monitoring mechanisms inclusive of shut off valves, upstream of the existing attenuation ponds near the existing site entrance off the Celbridge Road. The culverted Kilmacredock Stream and surface-water run-off from the attenuation ponds discharge from the proposed development site at the same point in the surface-water run-off system, just prior to exiting the site to the east, before ultimately discharging to the Leixlip Reservoir.

For the proposed development, the surface-water drainage network will be re-designed in order to accommodate the increase (*c*. 171,641.88 m^2) in hardstanding area. For the proposed surface-water drainage system, the proposed development site has been divided into five catchment areas where the surface-water run-off from each catchment is attenuated within its own pond and/or wetland area. This will require the installation of 2 No. attenuation basins (2,993.3m^3), 2 No. attenuation ponds (13, 347.7m^3) and 1 No infiltration basin (1093.8 m^3), as well as the retention of the 2 no. existing attenuation ponds & 1 no. firewater pond. Each catchment will release water to the two existing attenuation ponds, and the surface-water drainage network for the proposed development will continue to discharge from these ponds to Leixlip Reservoir and the River Liffey.

Along with the redesign of the surface-water run-off management system to service the proposed development site during the operational phase, it is proposed to redesign the culvert as part of the proposed scheme. The proposed culvert will then be fully constructed except for the tie-in locations to the existing culvert. Once the proposed culvert is constructed, cleaned, and inspected the tie-in locations to the existing culvert will be completed. This will ensure minimal operational disturbance to the existing infrastructure. Once the existing water course has been diverted through the new route, the existing culvert will be removed. The proposed diverted culvert will be *c*. 360m in length, located *c*. 90 south-west of the existing culvert. The work will be achieved over 8 weeks. The proposed design of the culvert will ensure that there is no reduction in the hydraulic capacity of the culvert and no resultant increase in flood risk. As outlined in the CEMP (CSEA, 2023), the proposed culvert will be constructed prior to the decommissioning of the existing culvert, ensuring minimal operational disturbance of the existing infrastructure.

<u>Foul Water Drainage Network</u>

The existing foul water drainage network connects to the municipal sewerage network and is ultimately treated at Leixlip wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) (Lower Liffey Valley Regional Sewerage Scheme – D0004).

As part of the proposed development, the existing foul pumping stations will be retained and upgraded where necessary, with underground 24-hour storage tanks to be provided at each of the existing stations. The existing foul water drainage network will be realigned to accommodate the proposed development and will collect domestic foul water from the administration block of the proposed Data Storage Facilities, the Deep Technology Buildings, Energy Centre and the 110kV substation. There are no new requirements for new foul connections outside of the overall landholding. There are no proposed process water emissions as part of the operational phase of the proposed development. Leixlip WWTP discharges treated wastewater at the primary emission point into River Liffey, upstream of the proposed development site and Leixlip Reservoir.

A pre-connection enquiry (PCE) form was submitted to Irish Water (Uisce Éireann) which addressed water and wastewater demand for the development. A response to the Pre-Connection Enquiry is awaited. It is anticipated that no upgrades to the surrounding infrastructure is required.

3.3.2. FACILITATION WORKS

Eirgrid Uprating Works

Upon completion of Phase 1 of the KIC Masterplan, including the development of the proposed replacement 110kV Substation, uprating of existing overhead lines from the replacement 110kV Rinawade substation to Derryiron/Maynooth and Dunfirth/Kinnegad will be required to facilitate commencement of Phase 3 of the KIC Masterplan (See Figure 3-2). The proposed uprating will be carried out to existing lines along established wayleaves, utilising existing infrastructure (existing access roads/tracks, existing poleset/tower foundations, *etc*.).

The proposed replacement substation is included in the application for development consent and is identified on the relevant drawings submitted with the application. The proposed uprating works will be carried out by Eirgrid and will subject to a separate consent process.

The Eirgrid uprating will be delivered through two separate overhead line (OHL) uprates a local upgrade.

This uprating would occur in four stages identified as follows:

Stage	Line to be Uprated	Identified Works	Line Replacements
Stage 1	Maynooth to Rinawade	7.1km Power lines 100%, DC tower review, conductor replacements	mixture of 200 mm², 300mm² and 430mm²
Stage 2	Dunfirth/Kinnegad to Rinawade	50km of Power line Poleset, Angle towers and 5km DC Towers review, conductor replacements	mixture of 200 mm², 300mm² and 430mm²
Stage 3	Statcom	150 MVAr STATCOM at Rinawade	
Stage 4	Derryiron to Maynooth	43km of Power lines – Poleset and Angle Towers review	430mm² (Station equipment to be upgraded)
Stage 5	Derryiron – Kinnegad	15.1km - Poleset and Angle Towers reviews	mixture of 200 mm², 300mm² and 430mm² (TBC)

GNI Upgrade Route

The GNI upgrades will be delivered through a local upgrade of the gas network over a length of approximately 1.5km Ryevale Lawns along Station Road, Old Hill and Celbridge Road for a distance of approximately 1.5km up to the entrance of Barnhall Meadows. The pipe will run under the existing road pavement. At the entrance to Barnhall Meadows, the pipe will run underground through the Barnhall Meadows lands (adjacent to the existing haul road) and will then cross the M4 Motorway through Horizontal Directional Drilling and enter the Kildare Innovation Campus then connecting to the proposed Gas Skid.

For the proposed GNI upgrade route, *c.* 1.18 km of the route will be installed within public roads under existing blacktop, with *c.* 0.14m of the route installed within the lands north of the M4 comprising a haul road that is under construction at the time of this report, and meadow grassland. From the lands north of the M4, the route will cross beneath the M4 south into the campus via Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) process (*c.* 0.18km), connecting to a new gas skid installed at the existing gas skid location. The existing gas skid will be decommissioned and removed. The proposed HDD process will avoid tree removal, with all works to occur outside Root Protection Areas (RPA). The proposed HDD route will be below the RPA of any trees within the north lands and within the campus (minimum 1m depth). The launch pit for the HDD will be adjacent to the haul road which currently comprises a brownfield site. The exit pit will be directly adjacent to the temporary site compound within the campus. The preferred route for the proposed GNI upgrade works is shown in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-1 Proposed Site Masterplan (from the CEMP by CSEA, 2023)

Figure 3-2 Existing 110kV routes requiring uprating to facilitate the proposed development (from Chapter 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report)

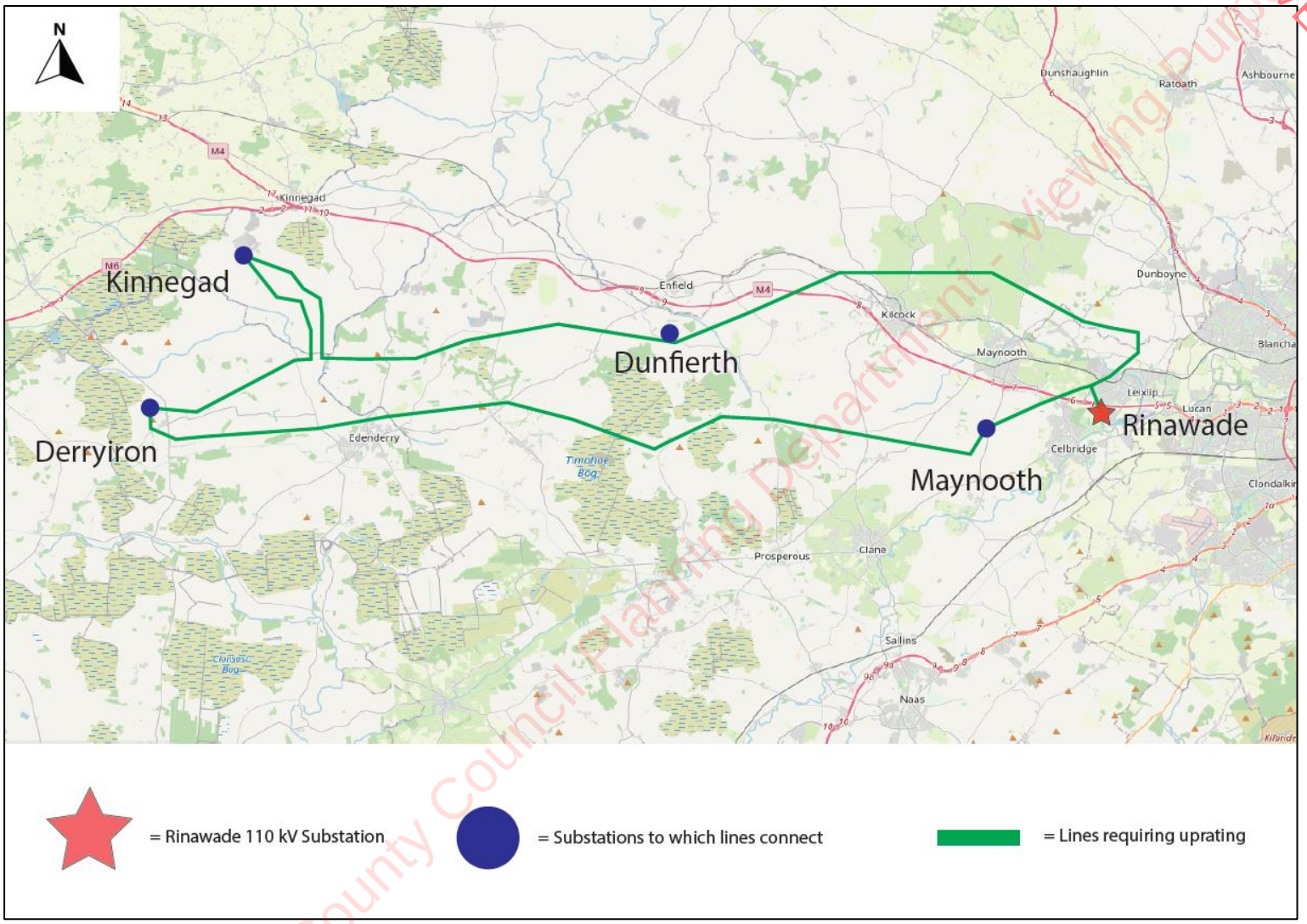


Figure 3-3 Map of the preferred route for the proposed GNI upgrade works

4. NATURA 2000 SITES

The European network of Natura sites comprises Special Protection Areas (SPAs) - designated under Directive 79/409/EEC of 2nd April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (the Birds Directive); and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - designated under EU Directive 92/43/EEC of 21st May 1992, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive). The directives have been transposed into Irish law in the case of land use plans and proposed development, by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to 2022. A European site is defined in Part XAB as "(a) a candidate site of Community importance, (b) a site of Community importance, (c) a candidate special area of conservation, (d) a special area of conservation, (e) a candidate special protection area, or (f) a special protection area," and for the purposes of this screening report and compliance with the requirements of Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive this definition of European site has been adopted.

Natura 2000 sites within a zone of potential impact influence were identified and considered as part of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment. This includes sites that occur within 15km of the proposed development site, in accordance with NPWS guidance[5]. On a precautionary basis, Natura 2000 sites that are located outside 15km that may be significantly impacted as a result of the proposed works were also considered. Also included are Natura 2000 sites where a potential source-pathway-receptor (SPR) link exists, connecting the project to the protected species or habitat for which the Natura 2000 site is designated.

The proposed development site is not located within any designated Natura 2000 sites or nationally designated conservation sites.

In all, there are two SACs and no SPAs within 15 km of the proposed development site. The closest of these is the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC which is located 960m north of the proposed development site. There are an additional four Natura 2000 sites located outside of the 15km buffer but with a distant hydrological connection (a potential source-pathway-receptor link) to the proposed development site as discussed below. While not formally considered as part of the Appropriate Assessment process, there are 10 pNHA sites located within 15km of the proposed development site. See Table 4-1, Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2 for the locations of the designated conservation sites and the distance of the sites to the proposed development site. The qualifying interests/special conservation interests and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites in the 15km hinterland are summarised below.

Natura 2000 sites were also considered with regards to the proposed facilitation works *i.e.*, the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works.

Based on the information provided, it was determined that there are 13 no. Natura 2000 sites (12 no. SACs and 1 no. SPA) within 15km of the proposed Eirgrid uprating route. Of these Natura 2000 sites, the proposed uprating route crosses directly over the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC, with the next nearest Natura 2000 site, The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC, located less than 5km from the proposed uprating route. Additionally, the Eirgrid uprating route crosses one NHA site, Carbury Bog NHA, and two pNHA sites,

[5] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf

the Royal Canal and the Rye Water Valley/Carton. See Table 1 in Appendix A for the estimated distances of these sites to the proposed Eirgrid uprating route.

The preferred route for the proposed GNI upgrade works does not cross any designated Natura 2000 sites or nationally designated conservation sites. There are two Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed GNI upgrade route, the closest being the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC which is located 180m to the east and northeast. There are 10 no. pNHA sites within 15km of the proposed GNI upgrade route. See Table 2 in Appendix A for the distances of these sites to the proposed GNI upgrading route.

Conservation objectives for the European sites in the Natura 2000 network are published on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht at https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives.

Table 4-1 Distance from the development site to designated nature conservation sites in the wider area.

Site Name	Site Code	Proposed Development Site Distance (km)
Natura 2000 sites		
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	001398	1.0
Glenasmole Valley SAC	001209	13.8
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	004024	18.3
South Dublin Bay SAC	000210	19.6
North Bull Island SPA	004006	21.5
North Dublin Bay SAC	000206	21.5
Nationally designated sites (no NHA sites within 15km)		
Rye Water Valley/Carton pNHA	001398	1.0
Royal Canal pNHA	002103	1.1
Liffey Valley pNHA	000128	1.3
Grand Canal pNHA	002104	2.6
Slade of Saggart and Crooksling Glen pNHA	000211	10.4
Lugmore Glen pNHA	001212	11.2
Kilteel Wood pNHA	001394	12.4
Dodder Valley pNHA	000991	13.2
Donadea Wood pNHA	001391	13.5
Glenasmole Valley pNHA	001209	13.8

Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC

Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC is located approximately 1km from the proposed development. The site is designated for; Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) [7220], *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] and *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016].

As outlined in Section 3.2 and 3.3, the River Liffey is hydrologically connected to the proposed development site by the surface-water drainage system that releases run-off via controlled discharge to the Leixlip Reservoir and the foul water drainage network that discharges treated foul water to the River Liffey via the

Leixlip WWTP primary emission point. The Rye Water River flows into the River Liffey *c.* 450m downstream of the surface-water discharge point in the Leixlip Reservoir and *c.* 1km upstream of Leixlip WWTP primary emission point. Given the location of the confluence of the River Liffey and the Rye Water River, it is considered that no elements of the proposed development are likely to result in significant impacts on the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC.

The Eirgrid uprating works crosses the Rye Water River and therefore the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. The proposed works comprise the uprating of existing overhead lines with no exaction works or in-stream works within the SAC required. The replacement of polesets and the upgrading of the towers, where required, will not occur within the SAC as they are located outside of the SAC boundary. Given the nature of the proposed works and the fact that no instream works or poleset/tower replacement works will be required within the SAC, no significant impacts to the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC are likely.

The proposed GNI upgrade route does not cross the Rye Water River or any other watercourses. Given the urban nature of the intervening distance, along with the size/scale of the proposed GNI upgrade works, no significant impacts to the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC are likely.

The facilitation works *i.e.*, the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works will be subject to a separate consent process including Appropriate Assessment.

Glenasmole Valley SAC

Glenasmole Valley SAC is located approximately 13.8km from the proposed development. The site is designated for; Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (*important orchid sites) [6210], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils *(Molinion caeruleae*) [6410] and Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) [7220]

Glenasmole Valley SAC is located southeast of the proposed development site and in a different sub-catchment. It is not hydrologically connected to the proposed development site, nor to the facilitation works routes; therefore, no significant effects are likely on this SAC.

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA is located approximately 18.3km from the proposed development (*c.* 28km downstream). The site is designated for; Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A046], Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130], Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A137], Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141], Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A143], Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A144], Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149], Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157], Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162], Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179], Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) [A192], Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193], Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A194] and Wetland and Waterbirds [A999].

As outlined in Section 3.2 and 3.3, the River Liffey is hydrologically connected to the proposed development site by the surface-water drainage system that releases run-off via controlled discharge to the Leixlip Reservoir and the foul water drainage network that discharges treated foul water to the River Liffey via the Leixlip WWTP primary emission point. The River Liffey ultimately flows into Dublin Bay which makes up

part of the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA. Therefore, a distant hydrological connection between South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and the proposed development site exists.

The proposed Eirgrid uprating route crosses the Rye Water River which ultimately flows into the River Liffey. No instream works will be required as part of the uprating works nor are any significant excavation works required given that the transmission lines are overhead and any replacement of polesets or upgrading of towers, where required, will use existing foundations. The proposed GNI upgrades do not cross any watercourses. Coupled with the intervening distance between this coastal SPA and the proposed routes for the facilitation works, no significant effects as a result of the facilitation works are considered likely.

The facilitation works *i.e.*, the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works will be subject to a separate consent process including Appropriate Assessment.

South Dublin Bay SAC

South Dublin Bay SAC is located approximately 19.6km from the proposed development (*c.* 28km downstream). The site is designated for; Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210], Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] and Embryonic shifting dunes [2110].

As outlined in Section 3.2 and 3.3, the River Liffey is hydrologically connected to the proposed development site by the surface-water drainage system that releases run-off via controlled discharge to the Leixlip Reservoir and the foul water drainage network that discharges treated foul water to the River Liffey via the Leixlip WWTP primary emission point. The River Liffey ultimately flows into Dublin Bay which makes up part of the South Dublin Bay SAC. A distant hydrological connection between South Dublin Bay SAC and the proposed development site exists.

The proposed Eirgrid uprating route crosses the Rye Water River which ultimately flows into the River Liffey. No instream works will be required as part of the uprating works nor are any significant excavation works required given that the transmission lines are overhead and any replacement of polesets or upgrading of towers, where required, will use existing foundations. The proposed GNI does not cross any watercourses. Coupled with the intervening distance between this coastal SAC and the proposed routes for the facilitation works, no significant effects as a result of the facilitation works are considered likely.

The facilitation works *i.e.*, the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works will be subject to a separate consent process including Appropriate Assessment.

North Bull Island SPA

North Bull Island SPA is located approximately 21.5km from the proposed development (*c.* 28km downstream). The site is designated for; Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A046], Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048], Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052], Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054], Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) [A056], Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130], Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140], Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141], Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A143], Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A144], Dunlin *(Calidris alpina*) [A149], Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A156], Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157], Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160], Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162], Turnstone (*Arenaria*

interpres) [A169], Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] and Wetland and Waterbirds [A999].

As outlined in Section 3.2 and 3.3, the River Liffey is hydrologically connected to the proposed development site by the surface-water drainage system that releases run-off via controlled discharge to the Leixlip Reservoir and the foul water drainage network that discharges treated foul water to the River Liffey via the Leixlip WWTP primary emission point. The River Liffey ultimately flows into Dublin Bay which makes up part of the North Bull Island SPA. A distant hydrological connection between North Bull Island SPA and the proposed development site exists.

The proposed Eirgrid uprating route crosses the Rye Water River which ultimately flows into the River Liffey. No instream works will be required as part of the uprating works nor are any significant excavation works required given that the transmission lines are overhead and any replacement of polesets or upgrading of towers, where required, will use existing foundations. The proposed GNI route does not cross any watercourses. Coupled with the intervening distance between this coastal SAC and the proposed routes for the facilitation works, no significant effects as a result of the facilitation works are considered likely.

The facilitation works *i.e.*, the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works will be subject to a separate consent process including Appropriate Assessment.

North Dublin Bay SAC

North Dublin Bay SAC is located approximately 21.5km from the proposed development (*c.* 28km downstream). The site is designated for; Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210], Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330], Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [1410], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) [2120], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130], Humid dune slacks [2190] and *Petalophyllum ralfsii* (Petalwort) [1395].

As outlined in Section 3.2 and 3.3, the River Liffey is hydrologically connected to the proposed development site by the surface-water drainage system that releases run-off via controlled discharge to the Leixlip Reservoir and the foul water drainage network that discharges treated foul water to the River Liffey via the Leixlip WWTP primary emission point. The River Liffey ultimately flows into Dublin Bay which makes up part of the North Dublin Bay SAC. A distant hydrological connection between North Dublin Bay SAC and the proposed development site exists.

The proposed Eirgrid uprating route crosses the Rye Water River which ultimately flows into the River Liffey. No instream works will be required as part of the uprating works nor are any significant excavation works required given that the transmission lines are overhead and any replacement of polesets or upgrading of towers, where required, will use existing foundations. The proposed GNI does not cross any watercourses. Coupled with the intervening distance between this coastal SPA and the proposed routes for the facilitation works, no significant effects as a result of the facilitation works are considered likely.

The facilitation works *i.e.*, the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works will be subject to a separate consent process including Appropriate Assessment.

Figure 4-1 Designated Natura 2000 sites located in wider hinterland.

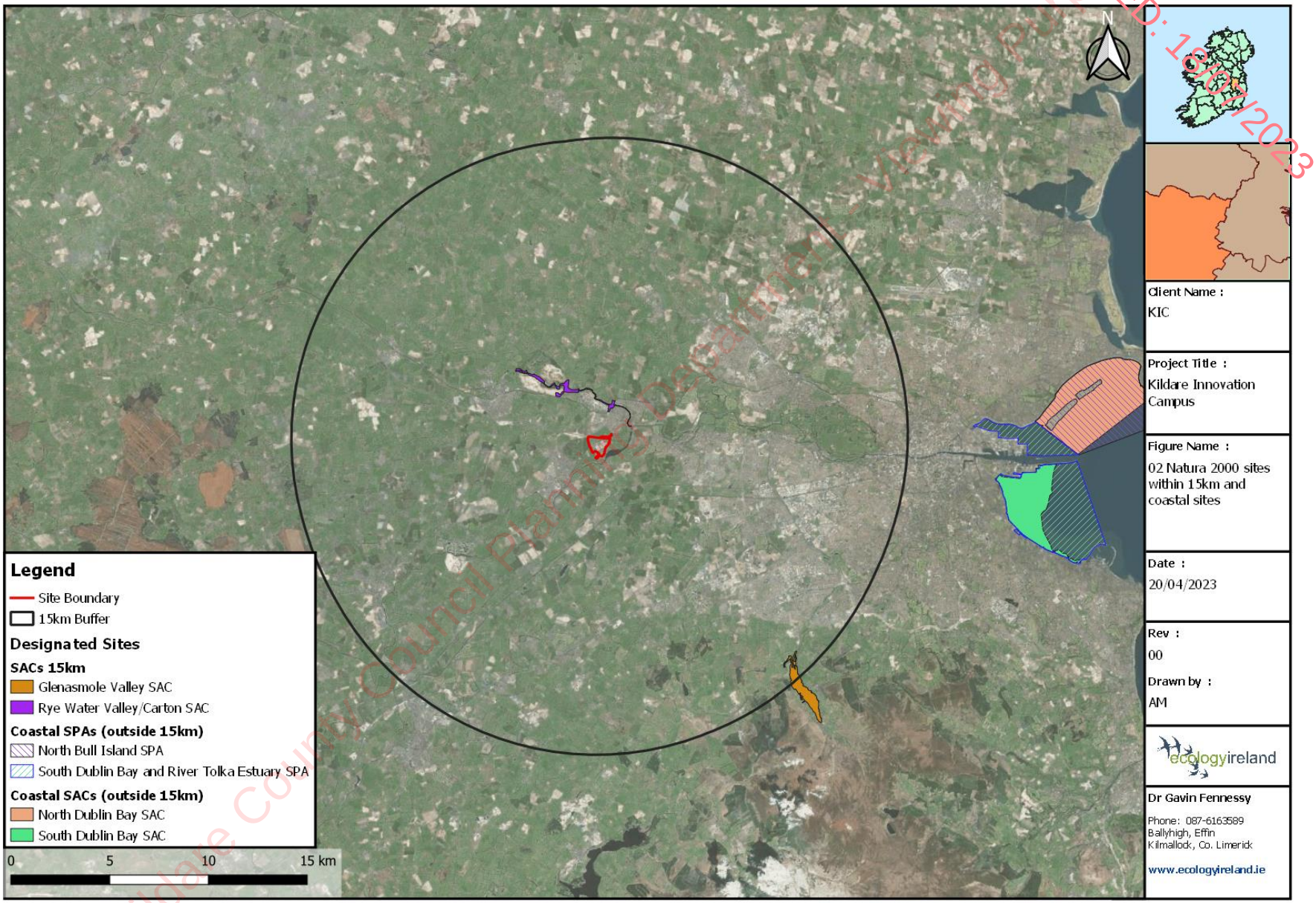
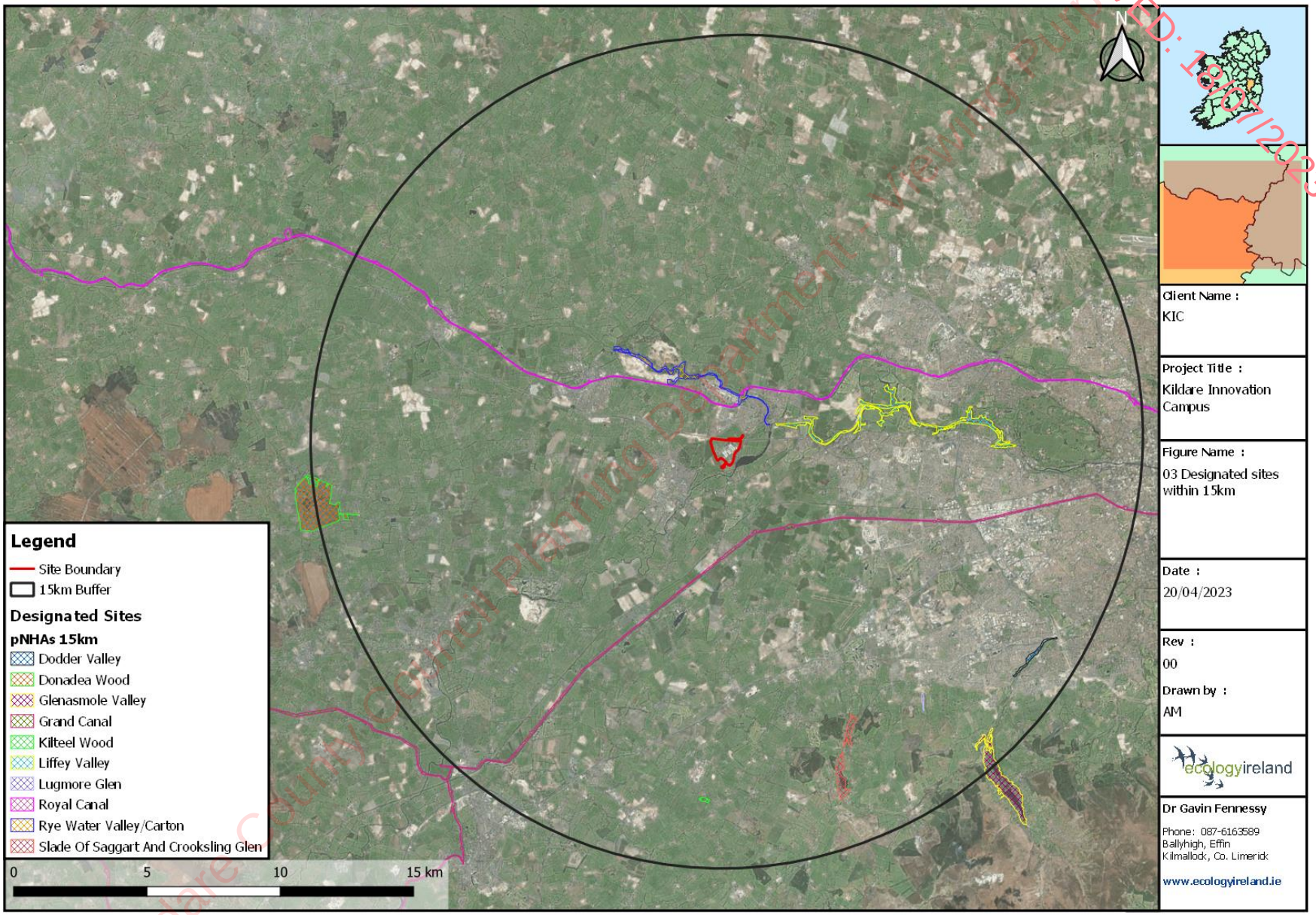


Figure 4-2 Nationally designated sites in wider hinterland.



4.1. POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE NATURA 2000 SITES

4.1.1. DIRECT IMPACTS

The proposed development site is not located within the boundaries of any Natura 2000 sites, does not include any habitats relating to the conservation objectives of the designated sites in the wider receiving environment, and will not require any resources from these sites, thereby ruling out any direct habitat loss from the conservation sites discussed in Section 4 above. No habitat loss of relevance to the Natura 2000 sites in the wider area will be lost as a result of the development.

4.1.2. INDIRECT IMPACTS

Habitat Loss/Alteration

Indirect impacts to Natura 2000 sites within the surrounding area arising from the construction and/or operation of the proposed development can occur as a result of the introduction of environmental inputs (pollutants, uncontrolled sediment release, etc.) causing increased siltation, nutrient release and/or contamination. This requires connectivity between the proposed development site and the Natura 2000 sites in question through watercourses and/or drainage.

Leixlip Reservoir is located to the east of the proposed development site, forming part of the River Liffey. The intervening environment separating Leixlip Reservoir from the proposed development site comprises Celbridge road, treelines, grassland, and bank-side vegetation. No negative impacts to the River Liffey or any designated sites downstream are likely as result of direct surface-water run-off to the River Liffey. However, as outlined in Section 3.1, the existing surface-water drainage system servicing Kildare Innovation Campus ultimately discharges to Leixlip Reservoir via the attenuation ponds.

The construction phase of the proposed development requires extensive earthworks to level the site in order to facilitate the construction and landscaping works for the proposed development. As part of the construction phase, 115,117m^3 of the cut material generated during site preparation/levelling (365,750 m^3) will be reused to facilitate construction of the proposed roads, carparks, buildings and landscaping berms. It is estimated *c.* 250,634m^3 will be exported off the site and disposed of in accordance with relevant requirements. No fill will be required to be imported to the site to accommodate the development. The excavation, movement and storage of soil can potentially lead to the release of sediment-loaded run-off, resulting in indirect negative impacts to aquatic habitats within and immediately downstream of the proposed development site. Additionally, the proposed works associated with the culvert re-design could potentially result in sediment-loaded run-off and contamination to enter the watercourse with potential for downstream impacts.

Construction machinery and associated equipment will be the principal sources of pollutants such as oil, lubricants, fuel and hydrocarbons. The accidental release of fuel, oil spills or harmful chemicals to the River Liffey could result in adverse water quality impacts.

During the operational phase, the surface-water drainage system currently servicing Kildare Innovation Campus will be redesigned to support the proposed development, which will result in an increase in hardstanding area within the site over all (171,641.88m^2). Once the new site-specific surface-water drainage system becomes operational, surface water run-off will continue to be discharged to Leixlip Reservoir via the existing attenuation ponds. In addition, the proposed development will have 9 combustion turbine generators (CTGs) and 80 back-up generators. The back-up generators will provide power in the event of an interruption to the supply of power from the National Grid. The fuel for the generators will be stored in individual, double-skinned storage

tanks. The proposed development is committed to the use of HVO as a back -up fuel supply for the generators over diesel. The energy centre will have its own HVO bulk storage of *c.* 3440 tonnes.

The existing foul water drainage network connects to the municipal sewerage network and is ultimately treated at Leixlip WWTP (Lower Liffey Valley Regional Sewerage Scheme – D0004), which has its primary emissions point in the River Liffey, upstream of the Leixlip Reservoir and the proposed development site. During the construction phase of the proposed development, welfare facilities (canteens, toilets *etc*.) will be available within the temporary construction site compound which will connect, for the duration of the construction period, to the existing foul water drainage network that is currently servicing Kildare Innovation Campus. During the operational phase of the proposed development, it is proposed that Leixlip WWTP will continue to treat flows from the foul water drainage network that will service the proposed development site.

There are therefore distant, but direct, hydrological connections (potential source-receptor pathway) between the proposed development site and the coastal designated sites, *i.e.* South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA and South Dublin Bay SAC and the North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA by virtue of their location in Dublin Bay.

As outlined in Section 3.3, the project also comprises the proposed facilitation works *i.e.,* the uprating of existing Eirgrid transmission lines and the GNI upgrade works. These works will be subject to a separate consent process including Appropriate Assessment.

The preferred route of the proposed GNI upgrade works is not within any designated site and the works will be limited to the route corridor (*c*. 1.5km). the works will be highly localised and temporary in nature, with the effected highly modified habitats returned to their original state following completion of works. The nearest designated sites to the proposed GNI upgrade route are the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC and pNHA which is located 179m to the northeast, separated by suburban development, greenfields and treelines. The preferred route does not cross any watercourses, therefore there is no direct hydrological link connecting the proposed GNI upgrade route to the Rye Water River and associated designated sites, nor to other designated sites present downstream.

With regards to the Eirgrid uprating works, while the transmission lines do cross watercourses, there will be no instream works required in order to facilitate the proposed uprating works. The overhead lines cross one Natura 2000 site, the Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC. However, no ground works will be required within this protected area.

It is noted that future consent for the facilitation works will be required through Gas Networks Ireland and Eirgrid which will include the submission of a Screening Assessment report in support of the Appropriate Assessment process and the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Disturbance/Displacement

Noise and/or visual cues arising from the proposed development can potentially act as sources of disturbance/displacement for qualifying interest species of Natura 2000 sites. Displacement impacts can potentially occur ex-situ, on species that are highly mobile, occurring outside the designated Natura 2000 site boundary of which they are a qualifying interest species.

Peregrine Falcon, an Annex I bird species, was recorded on one occasion during a dedicated bird transect. There is no suitable breeding habitat for this species although the habitats within the campus could provide occasional foraging/hunting opportunities for this species.

The habitats within the proposed development site have no intrinsic value for the qualifying species of the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (Narrow-mouthed Whorl and Desmoulin's Whorl Snail), both of which cannot be considered highly mobile species. For the Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species of the coastal SPAs in Dublin Bay, the habitats within the site are of negligible value for these species and there are no feeding, roosting, or breeding grounds for these species within the site. Therefore, no significant impacts to these species or other SCI species of the relevant SPAs as a result of disturbance/displacement arising from the proposed development are expected.

With regards to the proposed facilitation works *i.e.,* the uprating of existing Eirgrid transmission lines and the GNI upgrade works, the majority of the Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed routes are designated for habitats only, or for species such as the Desmoulin's Whorl-snail and Marsh Fritillary butterfly (*Euphydryas aurinia*) which are not considered highly mobile and have very specific habitat requirements. The River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC, located 5km-10km north of the proposed Eirgrid uprating route, is designated for Otter (*Lutra lutra),* a highly mobile species that is listed under Annex II and Annex IV of the Habitats Directive. Given that no instream works will be required and the highly localised and temporary nature of the proposed works associated with the Eirgrid uprating route, it is considered unlikely that these works will significantly impact this species as a result of disturbance/displacement effects.

It is noted that future consent for the facilitation works will be required through Gas Networks Ireland and Eirgrid which will include the submission of a Screening Assessment report in support of the Appropriate Assessment process and the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

4.1.1. POTENTIAL IMPACTS: SUMMARY

The location of the confluence of the River Liffey and the Rye Water River is as such that no elements of the proposed development are likely to result in significant impacts on the qualifying interests of the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. As there is hydrological connectivity, albeit at a great distance, from the proposed development site to a number of Natura 2000 sites, namely the South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA and South Dublin Bay SAC and the North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA, these are considered further in this Screening Assessment.

With regard to the facilitation works *i.e.,* the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works, we have considered the information provided on the proposed facilitation works, including the nature, location and scale of the GNI upgrade and Eirgrid uprating. Based on this information and the location of Natura 2000 sites in the receiving environment, it is concluded that no likely significant effects will arise in relation to these associated facilitation works. As described above, future consent for the facilitation works will be required through Gas Networks Ireland and Eirgrid which will include the submission of a Screening Assessment report in support of the Appropriate Assessment process and the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

5. STAGE 1: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

5.1. ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT LIKELY TO IMPACT ON THE NATURA 2000 SITES

As outlined in Section 4 above, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA are all hydrologically connected, albeit at a distance, to the proposed development site via the Liffey River. South Dublin Bay SAC and North Dublin Bay SAC are designated for a range of coastal habitats. South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, and North Bull Island SPA are designed for a range of waterbirds and supporting wetland habitat.

The scale and nature of the development are such that significant impacts on the Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests of the relevant Natura 2000 sites are considered highly unlikely. This is comprehensively discussed below.

As outlined in Section 3.3, the construction phase of the proposed development will involve site preparation (*e.g.*, site clearance and earthworks), demolition, excavation works and construction activity.

The existing surface-water drainage system has mechanisms in place whereby surface-water run-off for Kildare innovation Campus, collected by the existing attenuation ponds, is released in a controlled manner that protects water quality downstream of the site. The existing surface water drainage regimen minimises the risk of downstream effects through impacts on water quality. The distance and dilution effect ensures that there is no likelihood of significant effects on the distant hydrologically linked sites even in the absence of the standard site management environmental controls that will be implemented at the site. No risks of likely significant effects were identified, and no bespoke mitigation measures have been required by the ecological specialists. There are construction phase environmental protection measures outlined in the CEMP (CSEA, 2023) and these are standard measures designed to minimise the risks to the immediate receiving environment. These will include for the protection of the ponds whereby excavated soil will be temporarily stored and protected in designated storage areas at least 30m from open water with no links or pathways to any open water. All pollutants (fuel, oil, lubricant, *etc*.) will be stored within bunded impermeable containers away from open water within the temporary site compound which will be located outside of the 30m pond buffer. A 30m buffer around the ponds will be maintained for the duration of the construction works period within which there will be no storage of construction material/vehicles or pollutants (fuel, oil, lubricant, *etc*.), with pollutants stored within bunded impermeable containers away from open water within the temporary site compound which will be located outside of the 30m buffer. There will be limited construction-related activity within this 30m buffer and where works are required, *e.g.,* proposed internal roads, additional water-protection measures will be put in place. As is the case with the management of surface-water outlined above, while there will be best practice environmental controls put in place to ensure no damage to the immediate aquatic receiving environment of the Kilmacredock stream during the construction of the proposed culvert (CSEA, 2023), likely significant effects as a result of the proposed culvert works were identified, and no specific mitigation measures for the protection of the distantly connected coastal Natura 2000 sites are considered necessary. Best practice environmental controls will include for the control of run-off where silt-fences will be in place to capture silt from runoff and prevent it from entering the existing culverted stream. The proposed construction works will adhere to best practice regarding standard environmental protection as set out in CIRIA (2001), CIRIA (2002), CIRIA (2005), CIRIA (2007) and CIRIA (2015).

For the operational phase, the proposed surface-water drainage system will implement an innovative and nature-based sustainable drainage system (SuDS) strategy, which complies with the requirements of Sections

15.8 of Kildare County Council Development Plan 2017-2023. The implementation of SuDS measures can be taken into account at Screening Stage. The Kelly judgement [2019] IEHC 84) clarified that "*as a matter of fact and law, that SUDS are not mitigation measures which a competent authority is precluded from considering at the stage 1 screening stage*". Note also the recent judgement (Case C-721/21) that supports the conclusion that such measures may properly be taken into at Screening Stage "*features of that plan or project which involve the removal of contaminants and which therefore may have the effect of reducing the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site, where those features have been incorporated into that plan or project as standard features, inherent in such a plan or project, irrespective of any effect on the site*". The SuDs strategy for the proposed development site will reduce surface-water run-off by utilising controls including bio-retention areas (*i.e.*, wetland areas), attenuation ponds (proposed and existing), swales, filter drains, permeable paving and hydrocarbon interceptors. The proposed surface-water drainage system will continue to discharge to the existing ponds and will not discharge to the culverted Kilmacredock Stream. While the proposed development will result in an overall increase in hardstanding areas within the site, the proposed surface-water drainage system will result in an overall reduction in surface water discharge from the proposed development site. With regard to the storage of fuel for the back-up generators, there is full containment for bulk fuel oil, use of interceptors as part of the SuDs approach, additional dilution within the attenuation ponds and no direct pathway to surface water from this site. Taking the above into consideration, no significant negative impacts as a result of surface-water run-off to the distantly connected Natura 2000 sites located downstream are expected.

With regard to the management of foul water drainage, Leixlip WWTP has sufficient capacity to accommodate the existing peak foul water outflow from Kildare Innovation Campus, c. 965m^3/day, as the peak hydraulic capacity of Leixlip WWTP is 65,405 m^3/day and the current hydraulic loading is 50,837m^3/day. The latest Annual Environmental report for Leixlip WWTP states that it is compliant with Emission Limit Values (ELVs), and "*it is considered that the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant does not have an observable negative impact on the Water Framework Directive status*" (Irish Water, 2021). The report also states that the capacity of this WWTP is not expected to be exceeded within the next three years, with a remaining organic capacity limit of 11880 PE, with the estimated PE for the operational phase of the proposed development: 2080. Taking the above into consideration, there is no likelihood for significant impact arising from the existing foul water drainage network servicing Kildare Innovation campus or from the proposed foul water drainage network for the proposed development on the distantly connected Natura 2000 sites downstream of the proposed development site and Leixlip WWTP.

Taking the above into consideration, it is considered that no elements of the project are likely to result in significant impacts on any Natura 2000 sites or their conservation objectives.

5.2. LIKELY IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT ON THE NATURA 2000 SITES

As outlined in Section 5.1 above, it is deemed unlikely that the proposed development will significantly impact on South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA or any other Natura 2000 sites.

5.2.1. SIZE, SCALE & LAND-TAKE

The overall site extends to over ca. 72.23 hectares (ha). There will be no direct impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.

5.2.2. DISTANCE FROM OR KEY FEATURES OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES

As described in Table 4-1 and shown in Figure 4-1.

5.2.3. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS (WATER ABSTRACTION *ETC.*)

There will be no resource requirements (including water abstraction) from Natura 2000 sites as a result of proposed development.

5.2.1. EXCAVATION REQUIREMENTS

Extensive excavation works will be required to level parts of the site in order to facilitate the construction and landscaping works for the proposed development. No excavation works will be carried out within any Natura 2000 site and, given the nature of the works and the distance of the relevant Natura 2000 sites, no impacts related to excavation works on the Natura 2000 sites are considered likely.

5.2.1. EMISSION (DISPOSAL TO LAND, WATER OR AIR)

The CEMP (CSEA, 2023) details the approach that will be taken to manage construction phase risks of emissions to the immediate receiving environment e.g., dust suppression. Surface water run-off and foul wastewater will be discharged to the existing municipal system (storm sewer and foul sewer network). A site-specific surface-water management system has been designed for the proposed development according to SuDS principles. The attenuated surface water run-off will be discharged to the existing municipal drainage network and ultimately to the Liffey Catchment. Under the foul-water management system, foul wastewater will discharge to the existing foul sewer network which ultimately is collected by the Leixlip WWTP, to be discharged to Dublin Bay post-treatment.

During the operational phase of the proposed development, the back-up generators will power the data centre in the event of an interruption to the supply of power from the National Grid. In addition, weekly scheduled testing and quarterly load-banking of all back-up generators will be carried out. The modelling of air emissions from the site was carried out to determine the maximum number of operational hours that the back-up generators can operate, and the continuous operation of the CTGs without having a negative impact on ambient air quality as a result of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) emissions (AWN Consulting Limited, 2023). It is noted that the air quality assessment modelled air quality using standard diesel as he standard generator emissions data sheets have not been updated to reflect the use of HVO over standard diesel. The results of the air quality modelling assessment found that ambient NO_2 concentrations as a result of the proposed development are in compliance with the relevant ambient air quality limit values at all locations at or beyond the site boundary. Therefore, potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 sites arising from impacts to air quality during the operation of the proposed development are not expected.

There is no likelihood of any significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites as a result of emissions from the proposed development site.

5.2.2. TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS

Transport requirements during the construction phase will use existing infrastructure and will not occur within the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites under consideration. During the construction phase, there will be localised increases in traffic associated with the works. There is no concern that this will impact upon any Natura 2000 sites. Consequently, there is no concern of likely impacts relating to the transport requirements of the project and the Natura 2000 sites in question.

5.2.3. DURATION OF CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION

The construction works will be completed across different phases with Phase one expected to take 2.5 – 3 years between 2024 and 2027, Phase 2 is expected to take 1.5 – 2 years between 2026 and 2028 and Phase 3 is expected to take 6 – 7 years between 2028 and 2035.

No potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites as a result of construction duration are envisaged.

5.2.4. CUMULATIVE AND IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

Cumulative effects are defined by EPA Guidance (2017) as; '*the addition of many minor or significant effects, including the effects of other projects, to create larger, more significant effects'*. An assessment of plans and projects occurring in within the proposed development site boundary and within the wider landscape were evaluated in combination with the project. A review of permitted projects and plans in the wider area of the proposed development was completed and a selection of these projects are discussed in more detail in this section (See Appendix B). The potential for any significant cumulative and in combination effects on the receiving environment were considered for the construction and operational phases of the proposed development below.

The plans and projects that have been proposed or implemented in recent years were considered as part of the assessment of potential cumulative and in combination effects. For instance, the current Kildare County Development Plan (2023-2029) was adopted in December 2022. In addition, the Leixlip Local Area Plan (2020-2023) and the Celbridge Biodiversity Action Plan (2021 – 2025) were also considered in relation to the local ecology and planned actions for the protection and restoration of local biodiversity.

There are several mechanisms by which projects in general may act in concert with each other to impact on the local flora, fauna and habitats in a given area. The scale at which these impacts may be felt depends greatly on the nature of these projects and the type of species and habitats in the receiving environment. Loss of habitat associated with a particular project may be exacerbated by multiple similar losses of habitat occurring in the wider area. Increases in noise or lighting from one project can have greater impact if the loss of screening vegetation associated with a neighbouring development allows for a wider cumulative 'spill' of impacts into the wider environment. Similarly, if pressures arising from the connection to wastewater services by multiple projects being developed means that the capacity of local wastewater treatment infrastructure is overwhelmed, the potential for downstream cumulative impacts must be considered. There are also potential positive cumulative effects that can be associated with the delivery of unrelated projects. For instance, if these projects cumulatively increase the amounts of a certain habitat attractive for species of importance and through their own landscaping commitments help improve the ecological connectivity through the wider area.

There are several developments that have either been submitted for planning permission or have been granted permission within and in close proximity to the proposed development site. The client, The Davy Platform ICAV, received planning permission for the development of 4 no. 20 kV ESB double substations at four sites within the proposed development site (planning ref: 22/1096). The location of these substations is within habitats considered to be of low ecological value (Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3), *etc*.) and cover a total floor area of 591m^2. Given the location of the substations, the scale of the works required and the type/condition of the habitats in which the substations will be located, no significant impacts in combination with the project are

expected. Barnhall Rugby club received permission (Planning Ref. 21/730) for the construction of a new vehicle access and all ancillary works. The site is directly adjacent and overlaps in places, with the proposed development site boundary to the south. In combination effects between this development and the proposed development are not expected to result in significant impacts. Glenveagh Development (Planning Ref 23/513), a large scale residential development is located northeast of the proposed development site, opposite the entrance to the Barnhall Meadows estate. The site primarily comprises agricultural grassland bounded by hedgerows and treelines that provide commuting corridors for various species to habitats in the wider environment. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment and the Biodiversity chapter of the EIAR completed by Enviroguide Consulting (2023) found that "*no significant negative impact to any valued habitats, designated sites or individual or group of species as a result of the proposed development*".

The Wonderful Barn lands are likely to be the subject of a regeneration project including the restoration of the main features of the complex and its historical landscape by Kildare County Council in the foreseeable future. The Wonderful Barn is directly adjacent to and overlapping with the lands north of the M4 within the proposed development site boundary. Given the estimated time period in which the different stages of the proposed development are going to be completed, there is potential for in-combination effects on the habitats and flora between this project and the proposed development. This project will require the submission of a Screening Assessment report in support of the Appropriate Assessment process and the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

There are a number of large-scale developments in the wider area that have the potential to interact with the project, resulting in in-combination and/or cumulative impacts in the receiving environment. Several of the notable projects are discussed below.

Intel Ireland Limited were granted planning permission for the revised design of their manufacturing facility in May 2017 (Planning Ref: 16/1229 amended under reg. ref. 1991). The facility is located *c.*1.5km north of Kildare Innovation Campus, and the granted revised design is currently under construction. The original Natura Impact Statement completed by Environmental Impact Services (2016), found that wastewater discharged to Leixlip WWTP would remain inside the licensed limits for the facility and have a negligible impact on the River Liffey. The Natura Impact Statement submitted for the amended planning application (Planning Ref: 1991) takes into account the environmental protection policies outlined in the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and Leixlip Local Area Plan 2017 – 2023 and states that "*the proposed development itself will not have any effects on the conservation objectives of any European sites*" (Scott Cawley, 2019). The Intel campus has been developed over a number of phases and has had to implement stringent design and environmental controls, particularly as it is located directly adjacent to the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. These include management of surface water and wastewater in accordance with EPA licence requirements, as outlined. Several development projects at this facility have been subject to the Appropriate Assessment process. Having considered the location and design of the Intel facility, no interactions resulting in significant cumulative effects upon the receiving environment in relation to the Intel development and the proposed development are expected. We have also considered the potential for cumulative effects arising between the Intel Facility and the proposed facilitation works *i.e.,* the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works, that will be required as part of the current project. While the overhead transmission lines traverse the Intel facility, the uprating works are highly localised, temporary and of a nature that no potential for significant cumulative effects upon the receiving environment in relation to the Intel development and the proposed development are expected.

Irish Water have applied for permission to upgrade Leixlip WWTP which would involve the demolition of the existing workshop and activated carbon building, and the construction of a new Sulphuric Acid Storage and Dosing Facility (Planning Ref: SD21A/0272). The site of the proposed works is located in proximity to the River Liffey, on the opposite bank to the proposed development site, less than 1km form the proposed development site. There were no interactions between the proposed works and any designated Natura 2000 site identified (Ryan Hanley, 2021). No interactions resulting in significant cumulative effects upon the receiving environment in relation to this WWTP upgrade and the proposed development are expected. With regard to the facilitation works *i.e.,* the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works, we have considered the information provided on the proposed facilitation works, including the nature, location and scale of the GNI upgrade and Eirgrid uprating. Based on this information, no interactions resulting in significant cumulative effects upon the receiving environment in relation to the Leixlip WWTP upgrades and the facilitation works are expected.

A 10-year planning permission was granted for a *c*. 47.44 ha Solar Farm development (Planning Ref: 18250) in Killeenlea, Co. Kildare, located to the southwest of the proposed development site. The Screening report in support of the AA process completed by Scott Cawley (2018) stated that there is no pathway linking to designated sites upstream. Given this and the distance of this site from the proposed development site, no interactions resulting in significant cumulative effects upon the receiving environment in relation to this solar farm development and the proposed development are expected. With regard to the facilitation works *i.e.,* the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works, we have considered the information provided on the proposed facilitation works, including the nature, location and scale of the GNI upgrade and Eirgrid uprating. Based on this information, no interactions resulting in significant cumulative effects upon the receiving environment in relation to this solar farm and the facilitation works are expected.

The DART+ West project (ABP ref: NA29S.314232) is seeking permission to significantly increase rail capacity on the Maynooth & M3 Parkway lines. The route of this project passes to the southeast of the proposed development site, opposite the Leixlip Reservoir. The Natura Impact Statement completed by IDOM and ROD on behalf of CIÉ (2022) found that "*given the full and proper implementation of the mitigation prescribed in this NIS, the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC, the South Dublin Bay and the River Tolka Estuary SPA, the North Bull Island SPA or any other European site*". Having considered the nature and scale of the Dart+ West project and the environmental commitments provided for in the EIAR and NIS, we conclude that there is no potential for interaction resulting in significant cumulative effects with the current proposed KIC development. We have also considered the potential for cumulative effects arising between this project and the proposed facilitation works *i.e.,* the proposed Eirgrid uprating works and the proposed GNI upgrade works, that will be required as part of the current project. The overhead transmission lines that form part of the Eirgrid uprating route traverse the Dart+ upgrade route. For the same reasons as outlined above, no potential for significant cumulative effects upon the receiving environment in relation to the Intel development and the proposed development are expected.

There are several large residential developments that have been granted permission in the wider environment of the proposed development (See Appendix B). These developments and other active sites in the wider area are to be seen in the context of a well-developed urban infrastructure with appropriate planning, monitoring, and licensing in place.

5.3. LIKELY CHANGES TO THE NATURA 2000 SITES

As outlined in Section 5.1 above, it is deemed unlikely that the proposed development will significantly impact on the Natura 2000 sites under consideration here (South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA) or indeed any other Natura 2000 sites.

5.3.1. REDUCTION OF HABITAT AREA

Not applicable.

5.3.2. DISTURBANCE TO KEY SPECIES

Not applicable.

5.3.3. HABITAT OR SPECIES FRAGMENTATION

Not applicable.

5.3.4. REDUCTION IN SPECIES DENSITY

Not applicable.

5.3.5. CHANGES IN KEY ELEMENTS OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES (WATER QUALITY ETC.)

Not applicable.

5.4. LIKELY IMPACTS ON THE NATURA 2000 SITES AS A WHOLE

Based on the screening assessment, there will be no impacts on the key relationships that define the local Natura 2000 sites or designated sites.

5.5. INDICATORS OF SIGNIFICANCE AS A RESULT OF THE IDENTIFICATION OF EFFECTS SET OUT ABOVE

Not applicable.

5.6. ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT LIKELY TO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT ON THE NATURA 2000 SITES OR WHERE THE SCALE OR MAGNITUDE OF IMPACTS ARE UNKNOWN

Taking the above into consideration, it can be objectively concluded, based on the best scientific knowledge available, that no significant effects whether arising from the project itself or in combination with any other plan or project, are likely to occur to the Natura 2000 sites: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA or any other European site in the wider hinterland

This conclusion is reached in light of the special conservation and qualifying interests of the sites in question and in view of the site's conservation objectives.

6. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT

Name and location of the Natura 2000 sites.	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA and all other Natura 2000 sites in wider hinterland. See Figure 4-1
Description of the project or plan.	The proposed development (the principal works) is for the expansion of the existing Kildare Innovation Campus (KIC) and is described in the statutory notices as follows: • Demolition of existing Buildings No's 7, 8 and 9 (total gfa c. 84,838sqm). • Existing Buildings No's 1 – 6 will be retained for deep tech and innovation related uses (total gfa c. 42,862sqm) • Construction of 2 no. new deep tech buildings and 4 no. new data centre buildings, all including ancillary office spaces. The deep tech buildings will have an overall maximum height of c.16m and vary in size from 30,945sqm – 41,190sqm with a combined total gfa of c. 72,135 sqm. The data centres will be c.15 m in height to parapet and c.16.5m in height to top of roof plant screening. The data centres will vary in size from 13,225 sqm – 21,000 sqm with a combined total gfa of c. 76,225sqm. All buildings will be provided with Solar PV panels at roof level and green walls along selected elevations. • The new deep tech buildings (A1 & A2) will be provided with service yard areas, loading docks, car parking, access roads, security fencing/gates and landscaping. The deep tech buildings will include rainwater harvesting tanks and green roofs over office areas. • Each data centre (B1, C1, C2 & C3) will include data halls, admin blocks (comprising offices, breakroom, loading dock, storage, and ancillary areas) and a variety of mechanical and electrical plant areas/structures including battery storage rooms and mechanical rooms. Car parking, access roads, security fencing/gates, gate houses and landscaping will also be provided. • B1 will include 14 no. fuel oil generators, MV rooms and associated mechanical flues. C1 – C3 will each include 22 no. fuel oil generators, MV rooms and associated mechanical flues (each c.18.6m high). Car parking, access roads, security fencing/gates, gate houses and landscaping will also be provided. • 2 no. district heating pump house areas and inground piping for district heating system. • Construction of a Replacement 110kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation adjacent to the existing 110kV Rinawade Substation. The current Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation known as the Rinawade 110kV sub is fed by 2 x 110kV Overhead lines. The new substation will connect to these overhead lines via short runs of underground cable. The replacement 110kV substation will include 6 No. transformers, with client control building and a 2 storey GIS substation building within a 2.4m high fenced compound. • Decommissioning and removal of the existing 110kV Rinawade substation. • Construction of an on-site energy centre to provide dispatchable power to the national electrical grid. The Energy Centre will include 9 no. gas powered combustion turbine generators (CTG's) and 9no. flues with a maximum height of c.15 metres. The turbines will be enclosed by a screen wall c.14m in height. The energy compound will include all required infrastructure including 2no.

	back-up fuel oil (HVO) tanks, an administration building, pump house, fire water tank, access roads, 14no. parking bays, security fencing etc. • Provision of a Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) gas skid surrounded by a 2.4m high fence and access from Celbridge Road (R404). The GNI skid will replace the existing gas skid along Celbridge Road. • Provision of a GNI AGI (Above Ground Installation) including 1no. kiosk building, c3.2m high, surrounded by a 2.4m high fence. • Closure of the existing main entrance to the campus on Celbridge Road and reinstatement of the boundary. • Construction of a new signalised entrance/exit on Celbridge Road c. 80metres north of the existing main entrance. • Use of the existing secondary entrance/exit off Barnhall Road Roundabout in the south-east as a principal entry/exit. • Construction of internal access roads, footpaths and cycle paths including a publicly accessible link road between Celbridge Road (R404) to the east and Barnhall Road (R449) to the west. • Construction of a new pedestrian and cycle overpass across the M4 motorway and pedestrian/cycle path adjacent to lands known as the Wonderful Barn Allotments; the overpass will link the new publicly accessible link road within Kildare Innovation Campus to the entrance of Barnhall Meadows estate. • Undergrounding and diversion of the existing overhead 10 Kv/20kv overhead line adjacent to the M4 motorway. • The pedestrian and cycle route within the Kildare Innovation Campus will provide a link from the new public link road, along the protected view corridor (between Castletown Estate & Wonderful Barn) to the north-eastern boundary of Castletown Estate. • The provision of a net increase of 678 new car spaces, resulting in a total of 2291 car spaces across the site (including a total of 244 EV car spaces). • The provision of a new private EV Bus charging hub with parking for 10no. electric buses. • The provision of a net increase of 310 new bicycle spaces, resulting in a total of 350 bicycle spaces across the site. • The diversion of the c. 500 m stretch of an existing 1.5 m culvert, located to the north of the site along the existing loop road, southwest by c. 60 m; the diverted culvert will be located along the proposed link road. • All associated site development works, drainage and services provision, landscaping, boundary treatments (including security fencing), and associated works. Upon completion of Phase 1 of the KIC Masterplan, including the development of the proposed replacement 110kV Substation, uprating of existing overhead lines from the replacement 110kV Rinawade substation to Derryiron/Maynooth and Dunfirth/Kinnegad will be required to facilitate build out of Phase 3 of the KIC Masterplan. The proposed uprating will be carried out to existing lines along established wayleaves, utilising existing infrastructure (existing access roads/tracks, existing poleset/tower foundations, etc.).

	For the proposed GNI upgrade route, *c.* 1.5km of the route will be installed within public roads under existing blacktop, with *c.* 0.14m of the route installed within the lands north of the M4 comprising a haul road that is under construction at the time of this report, and meadow grassland. From the lands north of the M4, the route will cross beneath the M4 south into the campus via Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) process (*c.* 0.18km). The proposed HDD process will avoid tree removal, with all works to occur outside Root Protection Areas (RPA). The proposed HDD route will be below the RPA of any trees within the north lands and within the campus (minimum 1m depth). The launch pit for the HDD will be adjacent to the haul road which currently comprises a brownfield site. The exit pit will be directly adjacent to the temporary site compound within the campus. All associated site development works, drainage and services provision, landscaping, boundary treatments (including security fencing), and associated works.
Is the Project or Plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?	No.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the project of plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?	No.
The Assessment of Significant Effects	
Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.	Due to the reasons outlined in the following section, no likely changes to the key elements of the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA and all other Natura 2000 sites in wider hinterland are anticipated as a result of the proposed works at KIC, alone or in combination with any other plan or project.
Explain why these effects are not considered significant.	No likely changes to the key elements of South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA and all other Natura 2000 sites in wider hinterland are anticipated as a result of the proposed works at KIC. This is based on the following considerations: ▪ The proposed development site is not within or adjacent to any Natura 2000 site, and nor does it provide habitat suitable for any qualifying interest species of Natura 2000 sites.

	▪ The conservation interests of the North Dublin Bay SAC, North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin & River Tolka Estuary SPA and South Dublin Bay SAC relate to coastal habitats which are not associated with the surrounding environment of the study site. ▪ The site is not proximate to the relevant coastal Natura 2000 sites and the distance and potential dispersion and dilution of any pollutants arising on site would be such as to make any measurable impacts highly unlikely. ▪ The existing surface-water drainage system has mechanisms in place whereby surface-water run-off for Kildare innovation Campus, collected by the existing attenuation ponds, is released in a controlled manner that protects water quality downstream of the site ▪ For the operational phase of the proposed development, SuDS) strategy will be implemented, as required under the Kildare County Development plan The proposed surface-water drainage system will implement an innovative and nature-based SuDS strategy, including bio-retention areas (*i.e.,* wetland areas), attenuation ponds (proposed and existing), swales, filter drains, permeable paving and hydrocarbon interceptors. ▪ The proposed surface-water drainage system will result in an overall reduction in surface water discharge from the proposed development site. ▪ Leixlip WWTP has sufficient capacity to accommodate the existing peak foul water outflow from Kildare Innovation Campus, c. 965m3/day, as the peak hydraulic capacity of Leixlip WWTP is 65,405 m3/day and the current hydraulic loading is 50,837m3/day. ▪ The capacity of this WWTP is not expected to be exceeded within the next three years, with a remaining organic capacity limit of 11880 PE, with the estimated PE for the operational phase of the proposed development: 2080.
List of agencies consulted.	n/a
Response to consultation.	n/a

Data Collected to Carry out the Assessment			
Who carried out the assessment	**Sources of Data**	**Level of assessment completed**	**Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed**
Dr Gavin Fennessy (BSc PhD MCIEEM) of Ecology Ireland Ltd. Marie Kearns of Ecology Ireland Ltd. BSc. & MSc., Ecologist	▪ Pers. comm. with project team ▪ Associated documents/drawings. ▪ Site walkovers. ▪ NPWS online designated site data/mapping. ▪ National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) online mapping	Desktop study & field study; am satisfied that this has yielded enough information to adequately complete Stage 1	Full results of the assessment are available in the above screening statement report.

Athena Michaelides (BSc Zoology) on behalf of Ecology Ireland Ltd.	▪ EPA online river mapping database ▪ Water Framework Directive online river database ▪ References (below)	Screening Statement.	

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APPENDIX A
List of Natura 2000 and Nationally Designated Sites within 15km of the Facilitation Works *i.e.,* the Proposed Eirgrid Uprating Route and the Proposed GNI Upgrade Route

Table 1. Natura 2000 and nationally designated sites estimated to be within 15km of the proposed Eirgrid uprating route. Based on the information provided, distance bands are used.

Site Name	Site Code	Estimated Distance and Location
Natura 2000 Sites		
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	001398	The route crosses this SAC
The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC	000925	<5km to the south
Ballynafagh Lake SAC	001387	5km – 10km to the south
Ballynafagh Bog SAC	000391	5km – 10km to the south
Mount Hevey Bog SAC	002342	5km – 10km to the north
River Boyne And River Blackwater SAC	002299	5km – 10km to the north
Raheenmore Bog SAC	000582	5km – 10km to the west
Mouds Bog SAC	002331	10km – 15km to the south
Wooddown Bog SAC	002205	10km – 15km to the northwest
Split Hills And Long Hill Esker SAC	001831	10km – 15km to the west
Glenasmole Valley SAC	001209	10km – 15km to the southeast
Lough Ennell SAC	000685	10km – 15km to the west
River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA	004232	5km – 10km to the north
Nationally Designated Sites		
Carbury Bog NHA	001388	The route crosses this NHA
Black Castle Bog NHA	000570	<1km to the north and south
Hodgestown Bog NHA	001393	<5km to the south
Milltownpass Bog NHA	002323	5km – 10km to the north
Molerick Bog NHA	001582	5km – 10km to the north
Daingean Bog NHA	002033	5km – 10km to the southwest
Cloncrow Bog (New Forest) NHA	000677	10km – 15km to the west
Wooddown Bog NHA	000694	10km – 15km to the northwest
Royal Canal pNHA	002103	The route crosses this pNHA
Rye Water Valley/Carton pNHA	001398	The route crosses this pNHA
Donadea Wood pNHA	001391	<1km to the south
Grand Canal pNHA	002104	<1km to the south
Ballina Bog pNHA	000390	<5km to the north
Liffey Valley pNHA	000128	<5km to the east
The Long Derries, Edenderry pNHA	000925	<5km to the south
Ballynafagh Lake pNHA	001387	5km – 10km to the south
Ballynafagh Bog pNHA	000391	5km – 10km to the south
Mount Hevey Bog pNHA	002342	5km – 10km to the north
Ballynabarny Fen pNHA	001573	5km – 10km to the north

Rathmoylan Esker pNHA	000557	5km – 10km to the north
Raheenmore Bog pNHA	000582	5km – 10km to the west
Slade Of Saggart And Crooksling Glen pNHA	000211	10km – 15km to the southeast
Rahugh Ridge (Kiltober Esker) pNHA	000918	10km – 15km to the west
Lugmore Glen pNHA	001212	10km – 15km to the southeast
Kilteel Wood pNHA	001394	10km – 15km to the southeast
Mouds Bog pNHA	000395	10km – 15km to the south
Liffey At Osberstown pNHA	001395	10km – 15km to the south
Split Hills And Long Hill Esker pNHA	001831	10km – 15km to the west
Dodder Valley	000991	10km – 15km to the southeast
Murphy's Bridge Esker	001775	10km – 15km to the west
Ardan Wood	001711	10km – 15km to the west
Glenasmole Valley	001209	10km – 15km to the southeast
Trim	001357	10km – 15km to the north
Lough Ennell	000685	10km – 15km to the west

Table 2. Natura 2000 and nationally designated sites within 15km of the proposed GNI upgrade route.

Site Name	Site Code	Distance (km)
Nature 2000 Sites		
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	001398	0.2
Glenasmole Valley SAC	001209	14.1
Nationally Designated Sites		
Rye Water Valley/Carton pNHA	001398	0.2
Royal Canal pNHA	002103	0.6
Liffey Valley pNHA	000128	0.6
Grand Canal pNHA	002104	3.2
Slade of Saggart and Crooksling Glen pNHA	000211	10.9
Lugmore Glen pNHA	001212	11.5
Kilteel Wood pNHA	001394	13.3
Dodder Valley pNHA	000991	13.4
Donadea Wood pNHA	001391	14.5
Glenasmole Valley pNHA	001209	14.1

APPENDIX B

List of projects within 5km of the proposed development site. Source: TPA

Reg. Ref.	Planning Authority	Status	Development Description
SDZ22A/0005	South Dublin	under construction	Phase Three of the Adamstown District Centre and consists of 37,402sq.m (gross floor area including car parking and storage) of residential development to be constructed in 3 blocks ranging in height from 2 to 9 storeys; There is a total of 436 apartment
SDZ19A/0004	South Dublin	under construction	237 dwellings (up to a maximum of c.24,911sq.m GFA) in a mixture of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses, duplexes and apartments as follows; 119 apartment units shall be accommodated in 4 blocks of 2-5 storeys; Block 01 (4 storey) to consist of 2
SDZ21A/0003	South Dublin	under construction	Residential development (12,096sq.m) comprises of 128 dwellings (46 one bed apartments, 70 two bed apartments, 6 three bed duplex units and 6 four bed houses) arranged over 4 blocks as follows; Block A (4,049sq.m)
SDZ20A/0008	South Dublin	under construction	Construction of Phase One of the Adamstown District Centre; proposed development is a mixed use commercial and residential development of c.36,621sq.m (gross floor area) in total (excluding the multi-storey car park)
SDZ21A/0007	South Dublin	under construction	Phase Two of the Adamstown District Centre and consists of 17,764sq.m (gross floor area, including car park and storage) of residential development to be constructed in 2 buildings ranging in height from 4 to 9 storeys; a total of 185 apartments
SD20A/0147	South Dublin	under construction	Construction of P3 Phase II expansion of the existing P3 biopharma production facility which includes the construction of a circa 2,155sq.m, two storey biopharma production facility to a maximum height of circa 14.9m
SDZ21A/0023	South Dublin	not under construction	455 residential units (including a mixture of 2 and 3 storey semi-detached and terraced houses, and duplex units and apartments in 3 and 4 storey blocks), new internal roads and footpaths, site access, public open space, car parking, cycle stores
SD20A/0058	South Dublin	not under construction	Demolition of the existing single storey house of 'Little Acre' and its associated garage and other buildings; demolition of the single storey stable building on the overall site; construction of a gas powered Power Plant with all its associated elements
SD16A/0398	South Dublin	not under construction	Amendments to previously granted planning permission, Reg. Ref. SD15A/0061, consisting of the following: reduction of capacity of the plant from 115MW to 96MW; removal of 1 duel fired engine
SD15A/0061	South Dublin	not under construction	10 year permission for the construction of a 115MW Peaker Power Plant in a single storey building with a mezzanine level office and electrical control area. This building has a platform height of 17.52m, 7 shafts with a height of 20.74m and 2 stacks
SD18A/0323	South Dublin	not under construction	Construction of a two storey data centre with three storey central service spine (7,246sq.m) with plant at roof level, that includes a reception area (274.4sq.m), shipping area (264.3sq.m) and three data halls (each 582.5sq.m - total 1,747.5sq.m)
SDZ21A/0014	South Dublin	not under construction	Development of 227 dwellings (24,513.8sq.m gross floor area); 95 3-bed, 2 storey terraced houses and associated gardens; 28 4-bed, 3 storey terraced houses and associated gardens; 48 3-bed, 2 storey duplex apartments over 48 2-bed apartments

SD22A/0303	South Dublin	not under construction	Construction of a Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) Abatement system comprising of a thermal oxidiser (TO), associated plant equipment and scrubbers positioned on a bunded concrete plinth with a maximum single stack height of 12m
SDZ22A/0007	South Dublin	not under construction	Comprising Phase 1 of the Adamstown Boulevard Development Area and consists of 38,768.21sq.m. of residential development to be constructed in a mix of housing and apartment units, with 423 residential units proposed in total
SDZ22A/0006	South Dublin	not under construction	Construction of 352 residential units (terraced, semidetached and detached) comprising 253 two storey houses (15 two bed units and 238 three bed units ranging in size from c. 86sq.m to c. 118sq.m) and 99 three storey houses
SD21A/0272	South Dublin	not under construction	Demolition of existing workshop and (defunct) Activated Carbon Building adjacent the old/northern Treatment Plant Building; construction of a Sulphuric Acid Storage and Dosing Facility Building (single storey up to approximately 8.7 metres in height)
SDZ20A/0017	South Dublin	not under construction	235 dwellings (up to a maximum of c.23,858.7sq.m GFA) in a mixture of terraced houses and apartments as follows: 159 houses shall consist of 109 2 storey, 3-bedroom houses; 7 3 storey, 3-bedroom houses and 43 3 storey, 4 bedroom houses; 76 apartment units
SD21A/0042	South Dublin	not under construction	Construction of two single storey data centres with associated office and service areas; and three gas powered generation plant buildings with an overall gross floor area of 24,624sq.m that will comprise of the following:
SDZ20A/0020	South Dublin	not under construction	Demolition of 3 existing dwelling houses in addition to 9 farm structures and outbuildings and the construction of 113 residential units comprising 70 two storey dwelling houses (comprising 61 three bed units and 9 four bed units
FW19A/0073	Fingal	not under construction	Erection of a 70 Kw 600 m2 ground-mounted photovoltaic array
161153	Kildare	under construction	residential development of 214 no. dwellings, a 2-storey crèche (552m2) and all associated and ancillary site development works including link road. The housing breakdown is as follows; 21 no. House Type A (4 bed, 2.5 storey, 174m2); 28 no.
161229 (amended under reg. ref. 1991)	Kildare	under construction	10 year permission for development comprising: Revised design and configuration of previously permitted manufacturing building Planning Reg Ref 12/435 – PL09.241071, over four levels (parapet height of 31m) with a total floor area of 88,740sqm
18233	Kildare	under construction	a new wastewater pumping station, control building, change of use of the existing balance tank western cell to a pumping station wet well, additional mechanical and electrical plant equipment , landscaping , internal access road, and hardstanding area
181481	Kildare	under construction	the construction of 58 No. residential dwellings comprised of 4 No. 4 bed detached houses (Type A and A1); 14 No. 3 bed semi-detached houses (Type B); 10 No. 3 bed terraced houses (Type C and C1); 4 No. 2 bed terraced houses (Type D); 2 No. 1 bed bungalow

191282	Kildare	under construction	the construction of 75 no. residential dwellings consisting of 51no. two storey houses; 12 no. 2 bed own door duplex units contained in a three-storey block (Block 1) and 12 no. own door/duplex apartment units
15565	Kildare	not under construction	The proposed addition of 2 No. bunded chemical tanks sized 3 metres diameter and 18.2 metres high including steel framework and its associated tanker parking to the rear of FAB 24 and the addition of 1 No. exhaust stack on roof of FAB 24
16777	Kildare	not under construction	the development of a solar PV panel array with an export capacity of 7.8MW comprising approximately 30, 100 photovoltaic panels on ground mounted frames within a site area of 12.10 hectares, 6 no. single storey MV substations,
18250	Kildare	not under construction	a 10 year permission (to construct development) for a solar farm comprising: the installation of photovoltaic panels on ground mounted frames in rows on a site of C.47.44 hectares, a single storey onsite 38kV substation with compound
19889	Kildare	not under construction	the replacement of the existing railway sleeper embankment structure with new masonry block work embankment structure along 100 linear metres approximately of river bank frontage to the river Liffey/Leixlip Reservoir at the existing (0.812 hectare) club
2048	Kildare	not under construction	18 no. warehouse/light industrial units with ancillary office and staff facilities in 1 no. block totalling 1,972 sq. metres. The proposed development includes connections to existing services at M4 Interchange Park, signs, internal roads, carparking
308585	SID - An Bord Pleanála	under construction	Clutterland 110kV GIS Substation building and 2 underground single circuit transmission lines
309146	SID - An Bord Pleanála	under construction	2 no. 110kV transmission lines and a 110kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation
309951	SID - An Bord Pleanála	Built	Provision of two 110kV transmission lines. Connecting Coolderrig 110kV GIS Substation to Grange Castle - Kilmahud circuits.
314232	SID - An Bord Pleanála	not under construction	DART+ West Railway Order - Dublin City to Maynooth and M3 Parkway
314567	SID - An Bord Pleanála	not under construction	Underground 110kV transmission line connections between the permitted Kishoge 110kV GIS substation and the permitted Aungierstown - Castlebaggot underground 110kV transmission line
314942	SID - An Bord Pleanála	not under construction	BusConnects Lucan to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme
304862	SID - An Bord Pleanála	under construction	220 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear substation, 2 no. 220 kV underground circuits forming a loop-in/loop-out to the existing Maynooth-Woodland 220 kV Overhead Line and 6 no. 220 kV underground circuits and associated low voltage and communication underground cabling connecting the proposed substation with electricity transformers within the Intel Ireland Facility, and all associated and ancillary site development works
308130	SID - An Bord Pleanála	not under construction	220kV substation with 2 underground transmission cables
300606	SHD - An Bord Pleanála	under construction	450 no. residential units (350 no. houses, 100 no. apartments), childcare facility, new roundabout on the Celbridge Road (R404) and associated road alignment to facilitate vehicular access with revised entrance arrangement to the Wonderful Barn Complex (Protected Structure), and incorporating landscape features

			and signage to the Wonderful Barn Complex (Protected Structure); associated internal roads, pedestrian and cycle paths and linkages; open space and all associated site and development works
303295	SHD - An Bord Pleanála	under construction	251 no. residential units (167 no. houses and 84 no. apartments), creche and all associated site works. www.oakleymanor.ie
306504	SHD - An Bord Pleanála	under construction	Demolition of existing structure, construction of 372 no. residential units (218 no. houses, 154 no. apartments), childcare facility and associated site works
307100	SHD - An Bord Pleanála	not under construction	467 no. residential units (199 no. houses, 216 no. apartments, 52 no. duplexes), childcare facility and associated site works
307223	SHD - An Bord Pleanála	not under construction	Demolition of existing buildings, construction of 239 no. residential units (136 no. houses, 103 no. apartments), creche and associated site works.
310865	SHD - An Bord Pleanála	under construction	194 no. residential units (119 no. houses, 75 no. apartments). creche and associated site works
305343	SHD - An Bord Pleanála	under construction	Demolition of 5 no. structures, construction of 406 no. residential units (281 no. houses, 125 no. apartments) creche and associated site works