

Fieldstown 110kV Substation and Grid Connection

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Energia Solar Holdings

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Overview of the Proposed Development

Energia Solar Holdings proposes to construct a 110 Kilo Volt (kV) Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation in Fieldstown County Dublin and 13.3 kilometre (km) underground Proposed Grid Connection connecting this Proposed Substation Development to the Finglas Substation (hereafter referred to collectively as the 'Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development is located within an area of agricultural grassland, on lands at Fieldstown East, County Dublin and is located within the administrative area of Fingal County Council (FCC).

The location of the Proposed Substation Development is referred to as the 'Proposed Substation Development' and the location of the underground cable is referred to as the 'Proposed Grid Connection'. When referring to both the Proposed Substation Development and Proposed Grid Connection together it is referred to as the 'Site'.

It is intended that three solar energy projects (Fieldstown, County Dublin (c. 75 megawatt (MW)), Ballaghawearry Co. Meath (c. 18MW) and Gerradstown County Dublin (c. 55MW)) will connect to the Proposed Substation Development via underground cables with a maximum voltage of 33kV is to provide the necessary infrastructure to support the permanent power supply for the development of three solar projects.

The Proposed Substation Development will facilitate the connection of three nearby Energia solar developments to the local electricity network via a 13.3km underground cable (Proposed Grid Connection). It is intended that three solar energy projects will connect to the Proposed Substation Development via underground cables with a maximum voltage of 33kV which are considered to be exempted development under Class 26 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. The substation is required to support, secure and transport the supply of electricity from these renewable energy developments, as part of its place on the wider solar scheme.

The Proposed Substation Development comprises a 110kV AIS tail-fed substation compound (approximately 7.5ha), diversion of existing overhead lines (OHLs), a shunt filter, diesel generator and tank, twelve lighting protection masts, two service/maintenance carparking facilities, internal roads, new site access from R122 to the west and perimeter palisade fencing.

The Proposed Grid Connection, which will comprise 13.3km underground 110kV cable connection to Finglas Substation. It will involve twenty joint bays primarily within public roadways. Trenchless installation in the form of horizontal directional drilling (HDD) will be used at watercourse crossings at Broadmeadow River Bridge (before the junction of the R122 and R125, Ward River Bridge (on R122), and under the N2 prior to entering Finglas Station.

1.2 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, which is more commonly known as 'the Habitats Directive', requires Member States of the European Union (EU) to take measures to maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and wild species of fauna and flora of Community interest. The provisions of the Habitats Directive require that Member States designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats listed in Annex I and for species listed in Annex II. Similarly, Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (more commonly known as 'the Birds Directive') provides a framework for the conservation and management of wild birds. It also requires Member States to identify and classify Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for rare or vulnerable species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, as well as for all regularly occurring migratory species. Collectively, SACs and SPAs are known as 'European sites'.

Under article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, any plan or project which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of its implications for the SAC/SPA in view of the site's conservation objectives.

In the Republic of Ireland, the requirements of Article 6(3) are transposed into national law through Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) for planning matters, and by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 in relation to other relevant approvals/consents. The legislative provisions for AA Screening for planning applications are set out in Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The competent authority which is responsible for carrying out the AA is the relevant consenting body for each plan or project, which in this case is An Bord Pleanála.

1.3 Overview of Appropriate Assessment Process

The process required by Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive is stepwise and must be followed in sequence.

The first step in the sequence of tests is to establish whether an AA is required. This is often referred to as AA Screening. The purpose of AA Screening is to determine, in view of best available scientific knowledge, whether a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could have likely significant effects on a European site, in view of that site’s conservation objectives.

For this purpose and as a result of case law ‘likely’ means ‘possible’. If the competent authority determines that there are no likely significant effects (LSEs) (including ‘in combination’ effects from other plans or projects), then no further assessment is necessary and the plan or project can, subject to any other issues, be taken forward. If, however, the competent authority determines that there are LSEs, or if there is reasonable scientific doubt, then the next step in the process must be initiated and a detailed AA is undertaken.

1.4 Sources of Guidance

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission (EC) guidance document *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (EC, 2001). It also accords with the guidance provided in the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) document on *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management* (OPR, 2021), and follows the structure and approach recommended, as shown on Image 1.

Image 1 The AA Screening Process (Taken From OPR (2021))



In addition, the following sources of guidance have also been used when carrying out this AA Screening exercise:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (DoEHLG, 2010).
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018).
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular Letter NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 (NPWS, 2010).

1.5 Purpose of this Report

Whilst the various steps involved in the Appropriate Assessment process must be carried out by a competent authority, under Section 177U(3) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), project proponents or their consultants may undertake a form of screening to establish if an AA is required and provide advice or may submit the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct a screening of an application for consent. Specifically, Section 177U (3) states that “*in carrying out a screening for appropriate assessment of a proposed development a competent authority may request such information from the applicant as it may consider necessary to enable it to carry out that screening and may consult with such persons as it considers appropriate...*”.

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report therefore serves to provide AECOM's opinion on the requirement for further AA, and to provide the information needed by the competent authority, An Bord Pleanála, to make their own screening decision as competent authority for the planning application for the Proposed Development.

2. Relevant European Sites

A range of data sources were used to identify relevant European sites to this AA Screening:

- EPA maps website (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>) (accessed January 2023).
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Protected Sites in Ireland website (<https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>) (accessed January 2023).
- The Status of European Union (EU) Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 Report) (<https://www.npws.ie/publications/article-17-reports/article-17-reports-2019>) (accessed January 2023),
- information on local watercourses (www.catchments.ie) and water quality (www.epa.ie) (accessed January 2023).

When seeking to identify relevant European sites, consideration has been given primarily to identified impact pathways and the source-pathway-receptor approach (see OPR (2021)), rather than adopting a purely 'zones'-based approach. The source-pathway-receptor approach is a standard tool in environmental assessment. In order for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for an effect to occur. Furthermore, even where an impact is predicted to occur, it may not result in significant effects.

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidance (DoEHLG, 2010) states that European sites with the potential to be affected by a plan or project should be identified taking into consideration the potential for direct, indirect and/or cumulative (in-combination) effects. It also states that the specific approach in each case is likely to differ depending on the scale and likely effects of the plan or project. However, it advises that the following sites should generally be included:

- All European sites within or immediately adjacent to the plan or project area.
- All European sites within the likely 'zone of impact' of the plan or project.
- Adopting the Precautionary Principle (UNESCO, 2005), all European sites for which there is doubt as to whether or not such sites might be significantly affected.

The likely zone of impact (also referred to as the likely 'zone of influence' (Zol)) of a plan or project is the geographic extent over which significant ecological effects are likely to occur. The DoEHLG guidance document prescribes a 15km distance threshold for European sites from the boundary of a plan area. In the case of projects, the guidance acknowledges that the zone of influence must be devised on a case-by-case basis with reference to the following criteria: the nature, size/scale and location of the project, sensitivity of ecological features under consideration and cumulative effects.

In the first instance, therefore, a search was made for European sites within 15km of the Site. An overview of the thirteen sites identified within this search area is given in Table 1.

Table 1 European Sites within 15km of the Proposed Development

Site Name [Site Code]	Approximate Distance (as the crow flies) from the Proposed Development	Summary of Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA [004024]	7.2km southeast of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light-bellied Brent goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> • Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> • Ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> • Grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> • Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> • Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> • Bar-tailed godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> • Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> • Black-headed gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> • Roseate tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i> • Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> • Arctic tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> • Wetland and waterbirds
Malahide Estuary SAC [000205]	7.4km southeast of the Proposed Substation Development 7.4km southeast of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Atlantic salt meadows • Mediterranean salt meadows • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)
Malahide Estuary SPA [004025]	7.8km southeast of the Proposed Substation Development 7.8km southeast of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great crested grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> • Light-bellied Brent goose • Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> • Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i> • Red-breasted merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i> • Oystercatcher • Golden plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> • Grey plover • Knot • Dunlin • Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> • Bar-tailed godwit • Redshank • Wetlands and waterbirds
Rogerstown Estuary SAC [000208]	7.9km northeast of the Proposed Substation Development 8.1km east of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuaries • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Atlantic salt meadows • Mediterranean salt meadows • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)
Rogerstown Estuary SPA [004015]	8.8km northeast of the Proposed Substation Development 9.0km northeast of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greylag goose <i>Anser anser</i> • Light-bellied Brent goose • Shelduck • Oystercatcher • Ringed plover • Grey plover • Knot • Dunlin • Black-tailed godwit • Redshank • Wetlands and waterbirds

Site Name [Site Code]	Approximate Distance (as the crow flies) from the Proposed Development	Summary of Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests
North Dublin Bay SAC [000206]	9.4km southeast of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Annual vegetation of drift lines • <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Atlantic salt meadows • Mediterranean salt meadows • Embryonic shifting dunes • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) • Humid dune slacks • Petalwort <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>
North Bull Island SPA [004006]	9.4km southeast of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light-bellied Brent goose • Shelduck • Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> • Pintail • Shoveler • Oystercatcher • Golden plover • Grey plover • Knot • Sanderling • Dunlin • Black-tailed godwit • Bar-tailed godwit • Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> • Redshank • Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i> • Black-headed gull • Wetland and waterbirds
South Dublin Bay SAC [000210]	9.9km southeast of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Annual vegetation of drift lines • <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Embryonic shifting dunes
Baldoye Bay SAC [000199]	13.7km southeast of the Proposed Substation Development 10.5km east of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Atlantic salt meadows • Mediterranean salt meadows
Baldoye Bay SPA [004016]	13.7km southeast of the Proposed Substation Development 10.5km east of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light-bellied Brent goose • Shelduck • Ringed plover • Golden plover • Grey plover • Bar-tailed godwit • Wetland and waterbirds
North-west Irish Sea SPA [004236]	Approximately 12.4 km east of the Substation Site Approximately 12.2 km east of the Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i> • Red-throated diver <i>Gavia stellata</i> • Great northern diver <i>Gavia immer</i> • Fulmar <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> • Manx shearwater <i>Puffinus puffinus</i> • Shag <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> • Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> • Little gull <i>Larus minutus</i> • Kittiwake <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> • Black-headed gull • Common gull <i>Larus canus</i>

Site Name [Site Code]	Approximate Distance (as the crow flies) from the Proposed Development	Summary of Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser black-backed gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> • Herring gull <i>Larus argentatus</i> • Great black-backed gull <i>Larus marinus</i> • Little tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> • Roseate tern • Common tern • Arctic tern • Puffin <i>Fratercula arctica</i> • Razorbill <i>Alca torda</i> • Guillemot <i>Uria aalge</i>
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC [001398]	12.4km southwest of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petrifying springs with tufa formation <i>Cratoneurion</i> • Narrow-mouthed whorl snail <i>Vertigo angustior</i> • Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>
Howth Head SAC [000202]	14.0km southeast of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • European dry heaths
Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC [003000]	14.7km southeast of the Proposed Grid Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reefs • Harbour porpoise <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>

Having identified the European sites within 15 km, consideration was next given to potential impact sources from the Proposed Development at all stages¹ and pathways to European sites (including those located at distances of more than 15 km) by which effects could arise from these impacts on relevant receptors².

Based on all possible impacts, pathways, and receptors, the Zol of the Proposed Development was estimated. A description of this process is given in Table 2. The locations of all European sites referred to in Table 1 are shown on Figure 1.

It can be seen from Table 2 that it is possible to conclude that there are no European sites which will be subject to likely significant effects from the Proposed Development.

¹ In other words, the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. There is no expectation of a decommissioning stage.

² i.e., Qualifying Interests (QI) or Special Conservation Interests (SCI) or the ecological features or process which support them.

Table 2 Consideration of all Possible Impacts and Pathways for Effects on European Sites from Proposed Development

Potential Impact Source	Pathway to European Site(s)	Potential for Effects on Receptors*	European Sites which Could be Subject to Likely Significant Effects
Construction Phase			
Disturbance of qualifying animal species as a result of increased noise, artificial lighting and/or the increased presence of personnel, plant and machinery during construction.	<p>The nearest European sites for which animal species are qualifying interest (QI)/Special Conservation Interest (SCI) are the estuarine SPAs on the coast, at least 7km distant from the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Substation Development is situated in a grazed agricultural field which may be suitable for foraging by certain waterbird species, including those which are SCI of the coastal SPAs to the east. For example, greylag goose (SCI of the Rogerstown Estuary SPA) has a core foraging range of 15-20km (SNH, 2016). Other species may also forage over such distances, but published literature for these is unavailable.</p> <p>The Proposed Grid Connection follows the course of the regional road R122 south from Fieldstown to the existing Finglas Substation. The route is predominantly artificial surfaces, but there are some off-road sections. These areas consist of improved agricultural grasslands, a treeline, tilled land, dry meadows and grassy verges and scrub. As is the case with the Proposed Substation Development, the grazed fields off-road may be suitable for foraging by certain waterbird species, including those which are SCI of the coastal SPAs to the east.</p>	<p>At more than 7km distant from the Proposed Development, there is no potential for direct disturbance of the SCI bird species of the Malahide Estuary SPA or the other SPAs set out in Table 1, when within the boundary of these designations.</p> <p>Although the Proposed Development lies within the core foraging range of greylag goose and potentially of other waterbird species, it is almost 8km from the nearest SPA (Malahide Estuary SPA). For the following reasons, even if SCI species were to occur in the vicinity of the Proposed Development, there is not expected to be any significant effect from disturbance:</p> <p>There is a large area of similar suitable foraging habitat for these species between the Proposed Development and the SPAs which could be used should disturbance/displacement occur.</p> <p>The site of the Proposed Substation Development is relatively small (approximately 7.5ha). The loss of the Site would have negligible effect on the overall availability of foraging habitat for SCI species.</p> <p>The Proposed Grid Connection follows the route of the existing regional road R122. The route does not pass through or near any European sites. At its closest point, it is 7.2km from a European site, the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA. The route is along an existing road and is unsuitable for foraging. The Proposed Grid Connection will involve minimal temporary works along mainly hardstanding and occasional small off-road areas. Therefore, no significant effect from disturbance is expected.</p>	None.
Airborne or waterborne pollution of QI or SCI habitats/species, or habitats supporting QI/SCI.	<p>Works in the Proposed Substation Development will be limited to the construction of the new substation and will be relatively minor in nature.</p> <p>Works to the Proposed Grid Connection will mostly be along the route of regional road R122 south from Fieldstown to the existing Finglas substation.</p> <p>The Proposed Grid Connection crosses five watercourses: Broadmeadow River, Rowlestown West River, Ward River, Huntstown River, and Dunbro River. The Grid Connection also passes in close proximity to Castlefarm River, Fieldstown River, Skephubble River and Ballystraha River. All of the watercourses flow into the Malahide Estuary SAC and Malahide Estuary SPA.</p>	<p>The very minor construction works will not generate sufficient quantities, even in a worst-case scenario, of airborne pollution (e.g., dust) to result in likely significant effects on any European site.</p> <p>The Broadmeadow River is 200m from the Proposed Substation Development, with intervening land being agricultural grassland with trees and hedges. Any pollution generated by the construction of the Proposed Development would be very unlikely to reach the watercourse due to natural filtration by vegetation. Moreover, although the watercourse connects to European sites downstream (Malahide Estuary SAC and Malahide Estuary SPA), these are more than 7km distant. Over such a distance, the degree of dilution would be extremely large and there is no possibility of any waterborne pollution generated by construction of the Proposed Development having an effect on any European site.</p> <p>Similar to the Proposed Substation Development, the sections of the watercourses crossed by the Proposed Grid Connection are all more than 7km from the European sites they flow into, Malahide Estuary SAC and Malahide Estuary SPA. Furthermore, trenchless installation in the form of horizontal directional drilling (HDD) will be used at watercourse crossings.</p>	None.

Potential Impact Source	Pathway to European Site(s)	Potential for Effects on Receptors*	European Sites which Could be Subject to Likely Significant Effects
		Given the nature of the works and the distance, there would be a dilution of any possible waterborne pollution resulting in no likelihood of waterborne pollution of European sites.	
Direct loss of or damage to qualifying or supporting habitat(s)	<p>There will be no works within the boundary of any European site for the Proposed Development including the Proposed Substation Development and the Proposed Grid Connection.</p> <p>As set out above in relation to the potential for disturbance of SCI species, the Site lies within the core foraging range of greylag goose, as well as potentially of other waterbird SCI species.</p>	<p>There is no potential for direct loss of or damage to qualifying or supporting habitats.</p> <p>For the reasons set out above in relation to the potential for disturbance, loss of supporting habitat is not expected to result in any significant effects on any SCI species.</p>	None.
Spread of invasive non-native species	A field survey found evidence of the non-scheduled invasive non-native species snowberry <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> , winter heliotrope <i>Petasites pyrenaicus</i> and butterfly-bush <i>Buddleja davidii</i> along the Proposed Grid Connection.	There is no potential for invasive non-native species to spread to a European site during the construction phase. None of the locations that invasive species were recorded are within or beside a European site. The locations are not beside any of the watercourses crossed by the Proposed Grid Connection. Additionally, the European site that has a hydrological connection to the Proposed Grid Connection is saline in nature and not a hospitable environment for the terrestrial floral species recorded.	None.
Operational Phase			
Disturbance of qualifying animal species as a result of increased noise, artificial lighting and/or the increased presence of personnel, plant and machinery during construction.	As described for the construction phase.	Operational activities are likely to be very minor in nature and will involve infrequent visits by small numbers of personnel to conduct operational and maintenance activities. There is a low likelihood of such activities having an effect through disturbance of SCI species occurring in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.	None.
Airborne or waterborne pollution of QI or SCI habitats/species, or habitats supporting QI/SCI.	<p>There is very low potential for small amounts of dust to be generated during the operational phase as there will be only a small number of occasional vehicle movements. The Proposed Development will not emit to air, thus there will be no impacts on air quality.</p> <p>The electrical equipment within the new substation is designed so as to contain any spillages of potentially polluting material. This is done as a matter of good practice and to comply with relevant environmental legislation, and not to avoid adverse effects on European sites.</p>	<p>There will be no impacts from dust or other airborne pollution, thus there is no possibility of effects.</p> <p>Due to the inherent design of the equipment within the substation, there is no potential for liquid pollutants to escape the Site and enter the surface water system.</p>	None.

* Receptors here means any Qualifying Interest(s) of SAC(s) or Special Conservation Interest(s) of SPA(s), or any other ecological features which support Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests.

3. In-Combination Effects

Cumulative effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated in a location (CIEEM, 2018). Effects which arise in-combination with other projects or plans must be considered as part of AA Screening. In accordance with OPR (2021), the assessment of in-combination effects must examine:

- Completed projects.
- Projects which are approved but not completed.
- Proposed Developments (i.e., for which an application for approval or consent has been made, including refusals subject to appeal and not yet determined).
- Proposals in adopted plans.
- Proposals in finalised draft plans formally published or submitted for consultation or adoption.

Projects and plans that are not yet proposed do not generally need to be considered in the assessment of in-combination effects. The exception to this is where the project is considered to be functionally interdependent with the development being put before the competent authority.

The only possible impacts which were identified when determining the Zol of the Proposed Development was the possibility for construction-related disturbance of SCI waterbird species belonging to coastal SPAs to the east, or the loss of supporting habitat used for foraging by these species outside of the boundaries of these designations. Although such impacts may occur, for the reasons given in Table 2, they are very unlikely to result in significant effects on the SCI species.

The assessment of in-combination effects has therefore been limited to projects or plans which could result in the same impacts, which if they occurred could add to the impacts from the Proposed Development to ultimately give rise to significant effects.

There are no approved projects or plans nearby the Proposed Substation Development which could result in construction-related disturbance of SCI waterbird species.

Furthermore, given the nature of the Proposed Grid Connection development, which will involve temporary works to install an underground Proposed Grid Connection mainly along an existing road, it is not anticipated that the Proposed Grid Connection will result in any significant effects acting cumulative with other plans or projects.

There is a consented solar energy development in Fieldstown and Whitestown, Kilsallaghan, Co. Dublin (planning reference F21A/0042) located approximately 800m northwest of the Proposed Substation Development that could result in the possibility of construction-related disturbance of SCI waterbird species. This project includes solar panels, one substation, and associated cabling and ducting. The total site area is approximately 105ha. An AA Screening report was submitted for this project, which specifically considered the associated grid infrastructure to the associated substation (i.e., the Proposed Development which is the subject of this AA Screening Report). It was concluded that the solar energy development will not lead to a significant adverse effect upon European sites, alone or in combination with other proposed developments in the wider area. Furthermore, there are plentiful fields in the wider area that are similar to those within this proposed solar PV energy development site and similar to those within the Site.

It is therefore possible to concluded that there is no possibility of the Proposed Development acting in-combination with other projects or plans to result in likely significant effects on any European site.

4. Conclusion

Thirteen European sites are located within 15km of the Proposed Substation Development and Proposed Grid Connection. There is potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Substation Development and Proposed Grid Connection and two of these sites via surface water systems: the Malahide Estuary SAC and the Malahide Estuary SPA. There is also habitat within the Proposed Substation Development, area surrounding the Proposed Development which is likely to be suitable for foraging by greylag goose, and other SCI waterbird species of SPAs within 15km (or further afield).

Despite this, it has been shown in this AA Screening Report that there are no European sites which will be subject to likely significant effects from the Proposed Development, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Therefore, in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, it is concluded that likely significant effects from the Proposed Development on any European site, whether individually or in combination with other plans or projects, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, can be excluded.

There is consequently no requirement to proceed to the next stage of Appropriate Assessment.

5. References

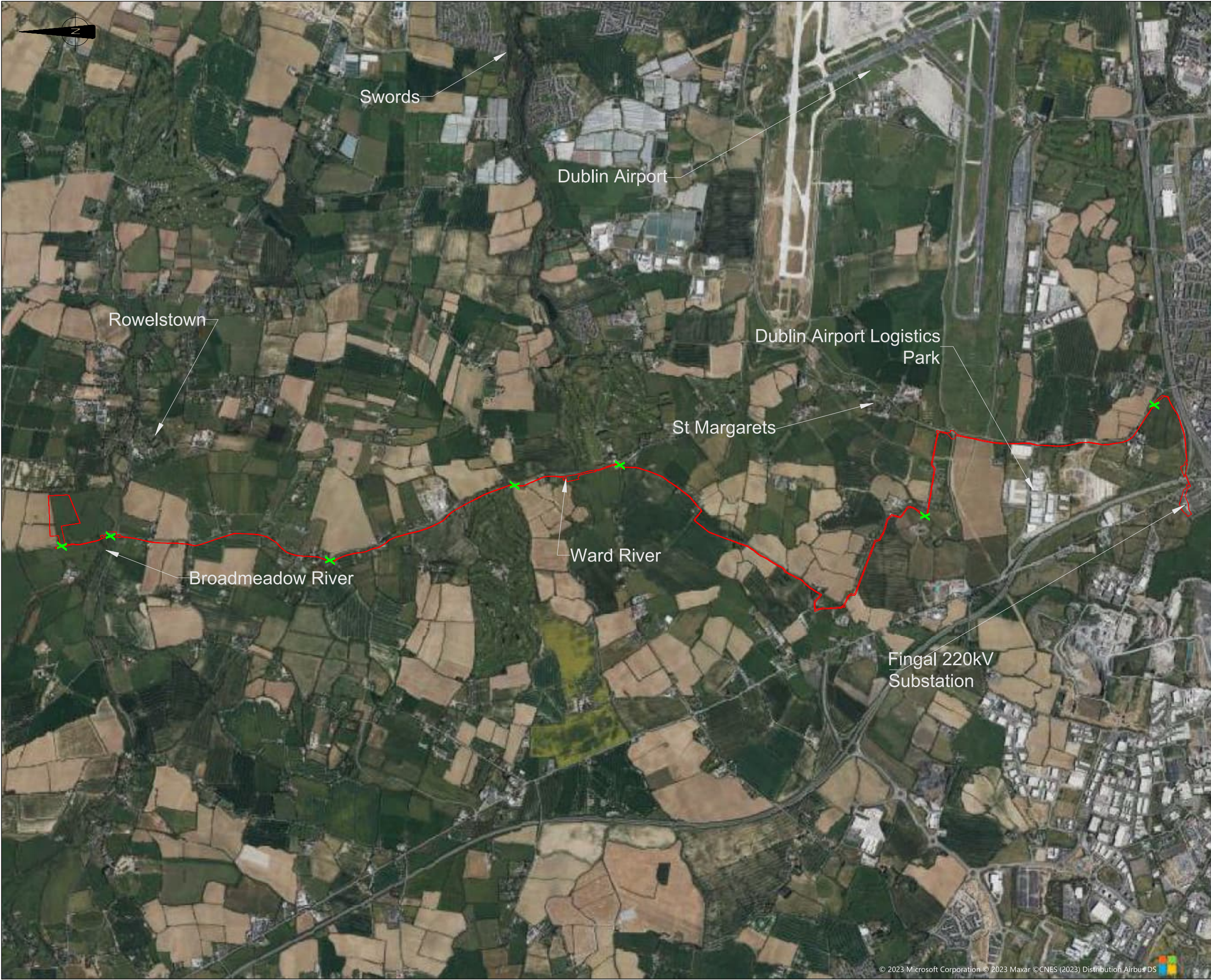
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Appendix A Figures

60657534_ACM_DWG_FT_101 Fieldstown 110kV Substation & Proposed Grid Connection Site Layout (Aerial)

Figure 1 – European Sites

Last saved by: BERNICE.CAHILL (2023-11-02) Last Plotted: 2023-12-01
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 PM Initials - Designer dk
 Checked LOB
 Approved BC



PROJECT
 FIELDSTOWN 110 kV
 SUBSTATION & GRID
 CONNECTION

CLIENT
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LEGEND
— PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY
X SITE NOTICE LOCATION

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 1. DRAWINGS ARE FOR PLANNING ONLY

ISSUE/REVISION		
NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION
P1	01.12.2023	RLB UPDATE
P0	02.11.2023	ISSUE
IR		

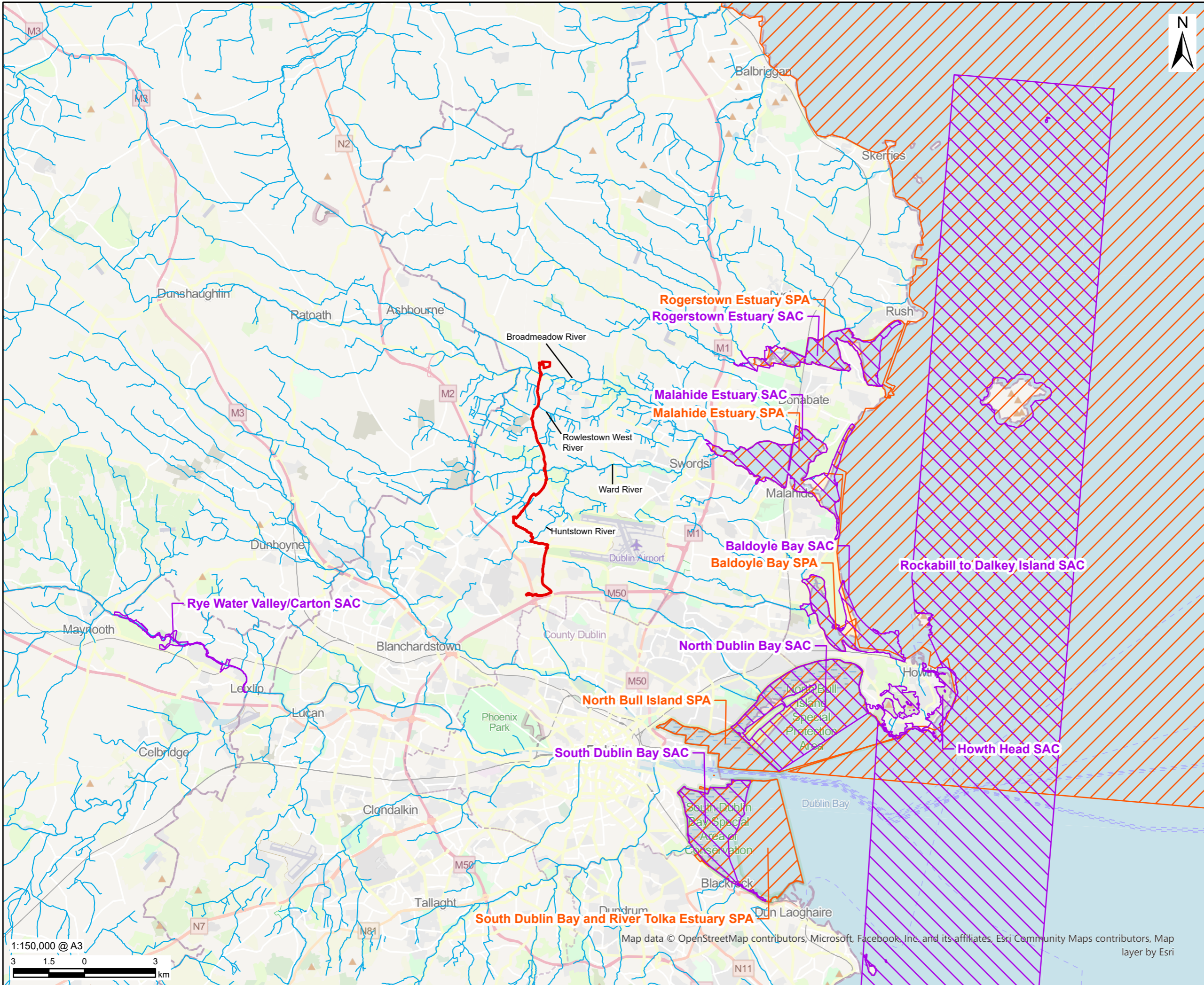
STATUS
 FOR PLANNING

PROJECT NUMBER 60657534 **SCALE** 1:15000 @ A1

SHEET TITLE
 FIELDSTOWN 110kV SUBSTATION
 & GRID CONNECTION
 SITE LAYOUT

SHEET NUMBER 60657534-ACM-DWG-FT-100 **REV** P1

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ISSUE PURPOSE
FINAL
PROJECT NUMBER
60657534
FIGURE TITLE
European sites

FIGURE NUMBER
Figure 1

