Planning Department.,

Laois County Council,

Aras an Chontae,

James Fintan Lalor Ave.,

Kylekiproe

Portlaoise,

Co Laois

R32 EHP9

30/03/2022

**RE: Section 254 Licence application 2021LS0424 TI NBI Deployment DAC DA069, Portlaoise County Laois**

In relation to the above reference application under section 254 of the planning and Development Act 2000, please see below response to further information request received on the 4th of March 2022.

1. Further to a meeting with Laois Co. Co. on the 10th March an updated AA Screening has been provided in response to item no.1. The AA Screening completed by Enviroguide Consulting has considered the likelihood of a significant effect on any European Site from the proposed installation activities and has concluded that ‘the possibility can be excluded that the Proposed Project will have a likely significant effect’ on any of the European Sites considered in the screening and that a Natura Impact Statement is therefore not required. It should be noted that the AA Screening undertaken by Enviroguide Consulting on behalf of NBI has been prepared for the purposes of providing information to the competent authority and its conclusions in no way purport to be those of the competent authority.
2. There will be no contactors compounds required to facilitate the installation activities described with respect to DA069 in the AA Screening and S254 applications, this has been clarified in the AA Screening report
3. Table 5 of the AA Screening presents all European Sites within the zone of influence of the project and if there is no possibility that the proposed installation activities will have an effect on a given European site by virtue of there being no pathway between the source and the receptor a rational for exclusion of the European Site from any further consideration is presented. Regarding the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (002162) no rational for exclusion is presented as the report identifies that there is a potential land/hydrological pathway between the installation activities and the European Site and therefore further consideration is required as to the likelihood that the proposed installation activities will have a significant effect on the specific European Site. This is explained in detail in Section 2.7 of the AA Screening Report
4. The number of features to be installed within 30m of European Sites has been clarified as 27 (12 poles and 15 lengths of fibreduct). Section 2.6 of the AA Screening presents the number of proposed features that will lie within a European Site, the number of features that will lie within a 30m buffer of a European Site and the number of features that lie within a 30m buffer of watercourses that may ultimately flow into a European Site.
5. The summary report submitted in support of the S254 application relates to installation activities in the Graguecullen/Portarlington Municipal District. The summary report verifies that none of the proposed items of infrastructure to be installed under the applicable S254 licence are proposed to be installed within a European Site.
6. All incorrect bookmarks and Error! occurrences have been removed from the report
7. The conclusion of the AA Screening has been made more definitive and now states that ‘the possibility can be excluded that the Proposed Project will have a likely significant effect’ on the European Sites considered during the screening process. The updated AA Screening is available on the MRL portal under licence reference 2021LS0424 and also enclosed with this response.

Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me. NBI would be grateful if Laois County Council can expedite the assessment of the subject application as to ensure there no delays delivering the National Broadband Plan in County Laois.

Yours faithfully

Padraig Herlihy

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NBI Infrastructure DAC