#### ABP Reg. Ref. VA0015

Brendan Allen
Planning Team Leader
Civil Environmental & Renewable Engineering
Engineering & Major Projects
One Dublin Airport Central
Dublin Airport
Cloghran
Co. Dublin
K67 XF72

7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Re:

Discharge of Planning Condition 10 for Laois Kilkenny Electricity Reinforcement Project – ABP Reg. Ref. VA0015

#### A Chara

I refer to your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 regarding the Archaeological Monitoring with respect to the construction of an Access Road to the approved 400/110Kv Substation Facility at Coolnabacky. By way of reference condition 10 of ABP Reg Reference VA0015 reads:

The undertaker shall facilitate the archaeological appraisal of the site and shall provide for the preservation, recording and protection of archaeological materials or features which may exist within the site. In this regard, the undertaker shall: -

- (a) notify the planning authority in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation (including hydrological and geotechnical investigations) relating to the proposed development,
- (b) employ a suitably-qualified archaeologist prior to commencement of development. The archaeologist shall assess the site and monitor all site development works. The assessment shall address the following issues: -
- (i) the nature and location of archaeological material on the site, and
- (ii) the impact of the proposed development on such archaeological material, and
- (c) particular care shall be taken in replacing polesets close to archaeological features.

A report, containing the results of the assessment, shall be submitted to the planning authority and, arising from this assessment, the undertaker shall agree in writing with the planning authority details regarding any further archaeological requirements (including, if necessary, archaeological excavation) prior to commencement of construction works. In default of agreement on any of these requirements, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

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Reason: In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the area and to secure the preservation (in-situ or by record) and protection of any archaeological remains that may exist within the site.

The Planning Authority notes that the "Archaeological Monitoring Report No.1 – Construction of Access Road" (dated May 2022) states that "No subsurface features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no artefacts of archaeological/historical interest were recovered".

The Planning Authority is satisfied that condition 10 of ABP Reg Reference VA.0015 for the access road has been complied with. However, condition no.10 has not been fully discharged until a report(s) have been submitted for the remaining phases of the development.

Is mise le

Marie Murray

Senior Staff Officer Planning Department

#### Valerie O'Reilly

From:

Nathan Smith

Sent:

Monday 5 December 2022 14:15

To:

Valerie O'Reilly David O'Hara

Cc: Subject:

RE: Planning Compliance Submission re Condition 10 Archaeology Laois Kilkenny

Project VA001 FAO Marie Murray

Valerie

Suggest you use the following text to Brendan Allen

Dear Mr Allen

Discharge of Planning Condition 10 for Laois Kilkenny Electricity Reinforcement Project - ABP Reg. Ref. VA0015

I refer to your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 regarding the Archaeological Monitoring with respect to the construction of an Access Road to the approved 400/110Kv Substation Facility at Coolnabacky. By way of reference condition 10 of ABP Reg Reference VA0015 reads:

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Yours sincerely

Nathan Smith
Executive Planner
Planning Section

Áras an Chontae | Portlaoise | Co. Laois | E32 EHP9

Contact Details: E: nsmith@laoiscoco.ie T: (057) 8664000 W: www.laois.ie Social Media: 👪 🗟

From: Valerie O'Reilly <voreilly@laoiscoco.ie>

Sent: Friday 2 December 2022 11:38

To: Nathan Smith <nsmith@laoiscoco.ie>

Subject: FW: Planning Compliance Submission re Condition 10 Archaeology Laois Kilkenny Project VA001 FAO Marie

Murray

Nathan

Not sure if this was replied too.

Regards Valerie

From: Valerie O'Reilly

Sent: Tuesday 8 November 2022 12:00

To: David O'Hara <dohara@laoiscoco.ie>

Subject: FW: Planning Compliance Submission re Condition 10 Archaeology Laois Kilkenny Project VA001 FAO Marie

Murray

From: Allen. Brendan (Engineering and Major Projects) < brendan.allen@esb.ie>

Sent: Wednesday 19 October 2022 14:37
To: Planning planning@laoiscoco.ie>

Subject: Planning Compliance Submission re Condition 10 Archaeology Laois Kilkenny Project VA001 FAO Marie

Murray

David/Marie

Please find attached a planning compliance update in relation to condition 10 archaeology testing for the Coolnabacky site as approved under ABP VA0015.

A hard copy will issue by post.

This is a reissue of a previous submission (12 September) whereby I attached an incorrect document If you have any queries please contact me.

Regards,

Brendan Allen | Planning Team Leader Civil Environmental & Renewable Engineering | Engineering & Major Projects | ESB T: +353 1 703 8195 M: 086 8336990 | www.esb.ie
One Dublin Airport Central, Dublin Airport, Cloghran, Co. Dublin, K67 XF72.

My location is One DAC and I typically work from there every Tuesday. Feel free to catch up with me in person/book in person meetings – otherwise you can reach me on Teams/e-mail and mobile.

At ESB, we are committeed to working flexibly while also respecting our right to disconnect. While it suits me to email now, I do not expect a response or action outside your working hours.

An timpeallacht? - Smaoinigh air sula bpriontáileann tú an r-phost seo. Please consider the Environment before printing this email.

Tá an t-eolas sa ríomhphost seo agus in aon chomhad a ghabhann leis rúnda agus ceaptha le haghaidh úsáide an té nó an aonáin ar seoladh chuige iad agus na húsáide sin amháin.

Is tuairimí nó dearcthaí an údair amháin aon tuairimí nó dearcthaí ann, agus ní gá gurb ionann iad agus tuairimí nó dearcthaí ESB.

Má bhfuair tú an ríomhphost seo trí earráid, ar mhiste leat é sin a chur in iúl don seoltóir.

Scanann ESB ríomhphoist agus ceangaltáin le haghaidh víreas, ach ní ráthaíonn sé go bhfuil ceachtar díobh saor ó víreas agus ní glacann dliteanas ar bith as aon damáiste de dhroim víreas.

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Innealtóireacht agus Mórthionscadail, Aon Lárcheantar Aerfort Bhaile Átha Cliath, Clochrán, Co. Bhaile Átha Cliath, K67 XF72, Éire Fón +353 1703 8000 Engineering and Major Projects, One Dublin Airport Central, Dublin Airport, Cloghran, Co. Dublin, K67 XF72, Ireland Phone +353 1 703 8000

David O Hara SEP,
Laois County Council,
Planning Department,
County Hall,
JFL Avenue,
Portlaoise,
Co. Laois.

By post and email to: <a href="mailto:planning@laoiscoco.ie">planning@laoiscoco.ie</a>

18th October 2022

Re: Update in Relation to Discharge of Planning Permission Conditions for Laois Kilkenny Electricity Reinforcement Project – ABP Reg. Ref. VA0015

Dear David,

I refer to your letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in relation to the above. In that letter you advised that the incorrect document was submitted with my letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022. That submission was meant to be the submission of the archaeology report associated with construction of the substation access road. I attached the incorrect document in error, please accept my apologies for the inconvenience caused. Attached to this letter is the correct document and a reissue of my previous cover letter.

I refer to previous correspondence in relation to this matter, and in particular to the letter issued by ESB to Laois County Council (LCC) dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 in relation to upcoming works at that time consisting of completion of access road works. The works are now complete.

Attached to this letter is the Archaeological Monitoring with respect to the construction of an Access Road to the approved 400/110Kv Substation Facility at Coolnabacky which is being submitted in order to comply with the requirements of Condition 10 – Archaeology.



All stripping of topsoil/ploughsoil onto the surface of the underlying archaeologically sterile subsoils was monitored. Monitoring of initial trial pit excavations was undertaken on 14th March 2022, with the main ground reduction works monitored, on a phased basis, from 4th April – 11th May 2022. The works generally required that the existing access track leading east from the R426 to the existing agricultural facility was widened along the southern extent; thereafter, the existing track to the substation area was widened along its northern extent, with some widening also along its southern extent near its easternmost end. No subsurface features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no artefacts of archaeological/historical interest were recovered.

If you have any queries in relation to this submission please contact me on 086 8336990 or brendan.allen@esb.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Boundan ally

**Brendan Allen** 

Planning Team Leader FIPI

### **ELECTRICAL SUBSTATION**

## COOLNABACKY & ESKER Tds, TIMAHOE, Co. LAOIS

**ABP REG. REF: 11.VA0015** 

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT No. 1 - CONSTRUCTION OF ACCESS ROAD

CLARE MULLINS, MA, PhD, Dip. EIA/SEA Mgmt

Report Commissioned by
ESB ENGINEERING & MAJOR PROJECTS
One Dublin Airport Central,
Dublin Airport,
Cloghran,
Co. Dublin

**MAY 2022** 

BYRNE MULLINS & ASSOCIATES ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL HERITAGE CONSULTANTS 7 CNOC NA GREINE SQUARE, KILCULLEN, Co. KILDARE. PHONE 045 480688 FAX 045 442505 e-mail:bymemullins@eircom.net

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ALL MAPS AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS ARE REPRODUCED UNDER OSI LICENCE No.: EN0074512

#### SUBSTATION DEVELOPMENT

## COOLNABACKY & ESKER Tds, TIMAHOE, Co. LAOIS

ABP Reg. Ref: 11.VA0015

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT No. 1 - CONSTRUCTION OF ACCESS ROAD

Clare Mullins, MA, PhD, Dip. EIA/SEA Mgmt
BYRNE MULLINS & ASSOCIATES — ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a programme of Archaeological Monitoring with respect to the construction of an Access Road to the approved 400/110Kv Substation Facility at Coolnabacky and Esker townlands, Timahoe, Co. Laois. The work was commissioned by ESB Engineering & Major Projects, One Dublin Airport Central, Dublin Airport, Cloghran, Co. Dublin

#### 1.1 Reason for Monitoring

The subject development forms part of a much larger project – The Laois-Kilkenny Reinforcement Project – for which planning permission was granted by An Bord Pleanála (ABP) in 2014 (Reg. Ref: 11.VA0015).

The overall Grant of Planning includes a number of Conditions, two of which (Nos. 9 & 10) relate to Archaeological Heritage. In particular, Condition 10 is considered to largely relate to the overall substation development site and requires that an Archaeological Appraisal in advance of the commencement of development be undertaken, and that monitoring of site development works be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. The condition is worded as follows:

- "The undertaker shall facilitate the archaeological appraisal of the site and shall provide for the preservation, recording and protection of archaeological materials or features, which may exist within the site. In this regard, the undertaker shall:
- a) Notify the planning authority in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation (including hydrological and geotechnical investigations) relating to the proposed development,
- b) Employ a suitably-qualified archaeologist prior to the commencement of development. The archaeologist shall assess the site and monitor all site development works. The assessment shall address the following issues:
  - i. The nature and location of archaeological material on the site, and,
  - ii. The impact of the proposed development on such archaeological material, and
- c) Particular care shall be taken in replacing polesets close to archaeological features

A report, containing the results of the assessment, shall be submitted to the planning authority and arising from this assessment, the undertaker shall agree in writing with the planning authority details regarding any further archaeological requirements (including, if necessary, archaeological excavation) prior to the commencement of construction works. In default of agreement on any of these requirements, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

**Reason:** In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the area and to secure the preservation (insitu or by record) and protection of any archaeological remains that may exist within the site.

The required Archaeological Appraisal was undertaken by Martin Byrne. Byrne Mullins & Associates (March 2022); this included a programme of Archaeological Testing under licence from the Department of

Housing, Local Government & Heritage (Ref: 21E0824). No subsurface features of archaeological interest and/or potential were uncovered and it was concluded that the subject development would not cause and impacts with respect to Archaeological Heritage.

#### 2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The subject development site is located in approx. 8.5km to the southeast of Portlaoise and 2.2km north of the village of Timahoe, and on the eastern side of the R426 road – Figure 1.

As illustrated in Figure 2 and Plate 1, the substation development area is located to the eastern extent of the overall development area and comprises a subrectangular pasture field with planted boundaries; that along the northwest is also formed by a watercourse (stream) and there are open drains along sections of the remaining boundaries; there is a slightly raised area in the western central area of the field from which the surface slopes down gently in all directions. An existing track leads east from the R426 road (Plate 2) providing access to an agricultural facility and disused quarry with a temporary access track leading from this area to the substation site (Plate 3); this track and associated hard-stand area (Plate 4) were constructed as part of the works associated with the diversion of the existing 110kV overhead line and the construction of associated angle-masts, together with the construction of a 400kV tower mast.

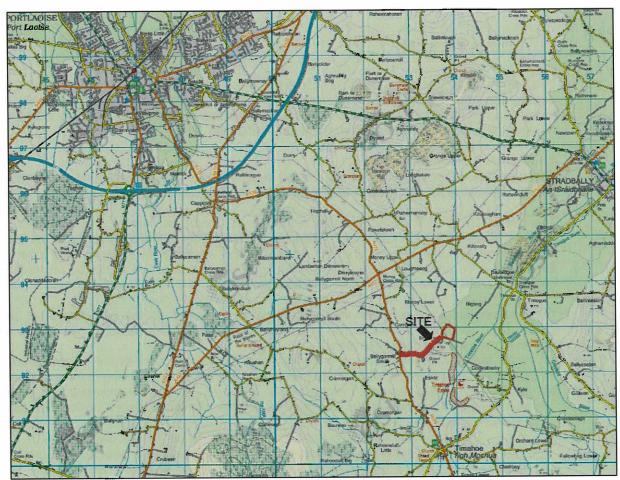


Figure 1 General Site Location

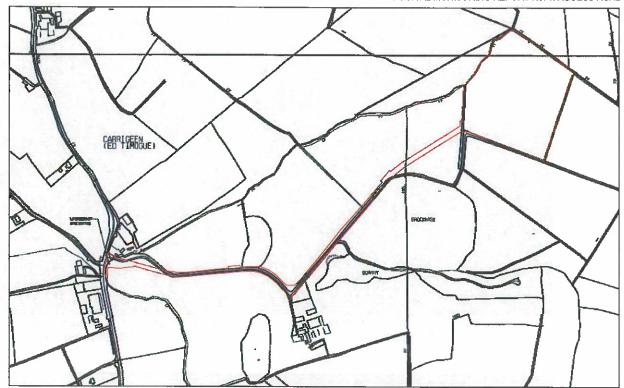


Figure 2 Site Location/Extent of Development Site



Plate 1 Aerial View of Development Area



Plate 2 Existing Entrance to R426 Road (looking west)

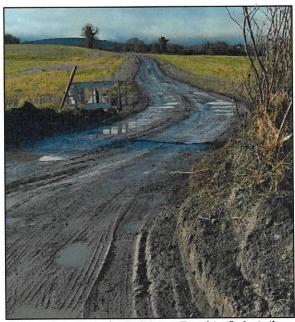


Plate 3 Section of Temporary Road to Substation Site (looking west)



Plate 4 View from Substation Site Area looking west with temporary hard0stand carpark in background and new masts to left and right

#### 3. DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The overall Laois-Kilkenny Reinforcement Project comprises eight separate elements; that relating to the subject site comprises the construction of a new 400/110 kV gas insulated switchgear (GIS) substation, consisting of two GIS substation buildings, one operated at 400kV (building dimensions: 64m x 15.5m x 13m) and the other operated at 110kV (building dimensions: 50m x 11.5m x 12,5m); these will be positioned within a 98m x 117m compound secured by a 2.6m high palisade fence. It also consists of a 400kV gantry and associated line equipment required to divert the 400kV overhead lines (OHL) into the 400kV GIS substation; two 400.110kV, 500-megavolt ampere transformers and two shunt reactors which will be positioned in transformer bunds between the two substation buildings; associated development including eight separate sedimentation/attenuation ponds (average area: 110 sq. m); vehicular access is via a modification to the existing private road including the access point; foul holding tank and all other ancillary site works.

A layout plan of the overall development is illustrated in Figure 3, with a more detailed plan of the substation layout illustrated in Figure 4.

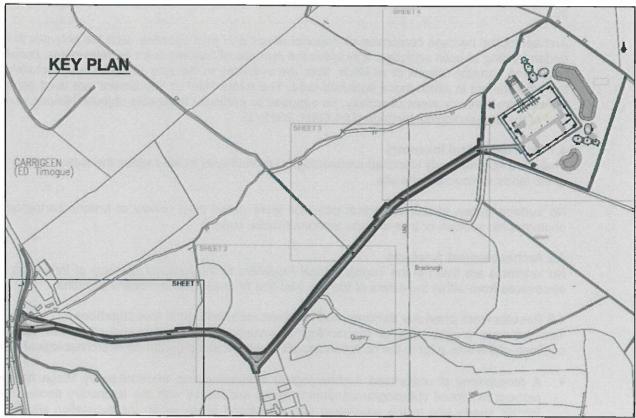


Figure 3 Overall Layout Plan

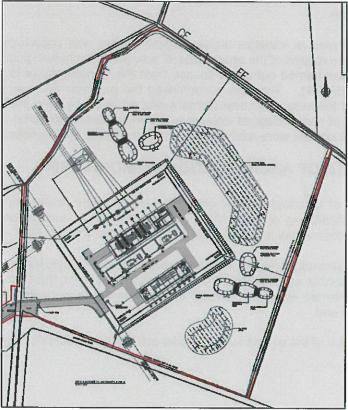


Figure 4 Substation Layout

#### 4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Archaeology is the study of past societies through their material remains and the landscapes they lived in. "The archaeological heritage consists of such material remains (whether in the form of sites and monuments or artefacts in the sense of moveable objects) and environmental evidence" (DoAHG 1999,

p9).

Archaeological heritage comprises all material remains of past societies, with the potential to enhance our understanding of such societies. It includes the remains of features such as settlements, burials, ships and boats and portable objects of all kinds, from the everyday to the very special. It also includes evidence of the environment in which those societies lived. The terms "site" or "monument" are used generally to refer to fixed structures or areas of activity, as opposed to particular moveable objects. Historic wrecks are also part of the archaeological heritage (DHLG&H, 2021, 3).

4.1 Archaeological Inventory

There are no previously identified archaeological monuments located within the subject site or within 500m of the lands surrounding the site.

No surface traces of archaeological potential were noted by a review of historic cartographic or aerial photographic sources or by a surface reconnaissance survey.

4.2 Archaeological Artefacts

No 'artefacts are listed in the Topographical Registers of the National Museum of Ireland as having been discovered from within the extent of the site (red-line boundary) or immediate environs.

4.3 Results from previous documented relevant archaeological investigations

Two previous programmes of Archaeological Investigations have been undertaken within the overall confines of the site, prior to the commencement of the subject programme of archaeological monitoring.

- A programme of unlicensed Archaeological Monitoring was undertaken by Mizen Archaeology with respect to topsoil stripping/development works associated with the temporary access road from the former quarry site to the substation site, hardstand areas within the substation site and foundation excavations with respect to recently erected tower masts associated with a required diversion of an existing 110kV overhead line (OHL) and an end tower mast associated with a proposed 400kv OHL connection.
- A programme of intrusive archaeological testing was undertaken by Martin Byrne, Byrne Mullins & Associates as part of the preparation of a required Archaeological Appraisal Report (March 2022); such testing was carried out under licence from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (Ref: 21E0824). The testing comprised the machine excavation of 11 trenches within the available extent of the substation development site; all of these were positioned in pastureland. No subsurface features of archaeological interest or potential were uncovered and no artefacts of archaeological or historical interest were recovered in any of the excavated trenches.

#### 5. RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

All stripping of topsoil/ploughsoil onto the surface of the underlying archaeologically sterile subsoils was monitored. Monitoring of initial trial pit excavations was undertaken on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022, with the main ground reduction works monitored, on a phased basis, from 4<sup>th</sup> April – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

The works generally required that the existing access track leading east from the R426 to the existing agricultural facility was widened along the southern extent; thereafter, the existing track to the substation area was widened along its northern extent, with some widening also along its southern extent near its easternmost end.

Plans of extent of the overall subject works are illustrated below in Figures 5-7.

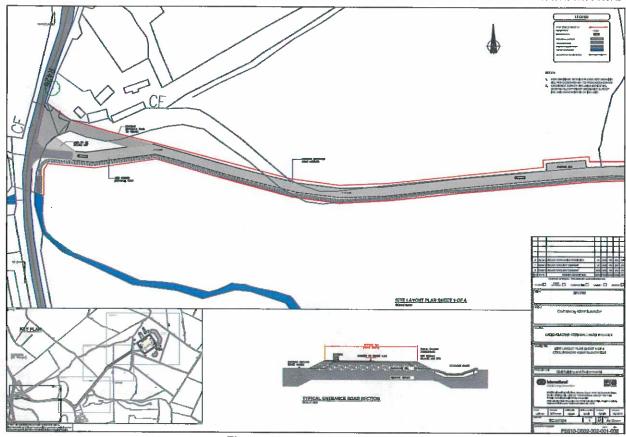


Figure 5 Layout Plan - Sheet 1

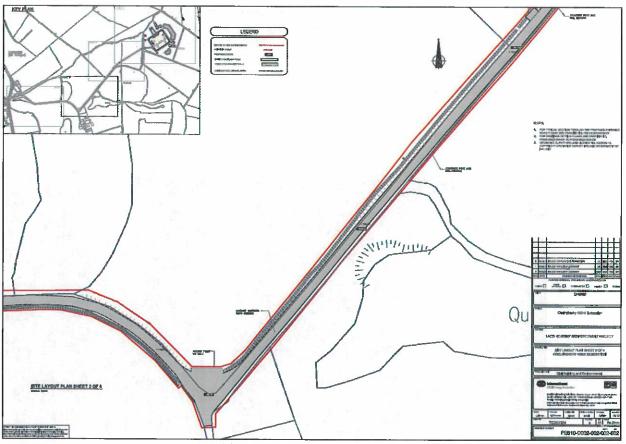


Figure 6 Layout Plan - Sheet 2

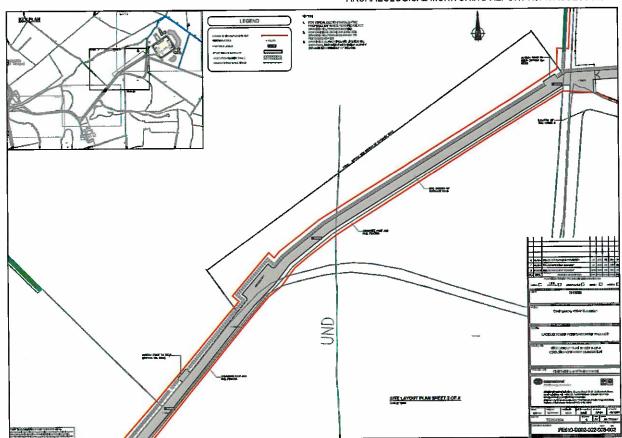


Figure 7 Layout Plan - Sheet 3

In general, the topsoil/ploughsoil in the western and central extents of the subject works (Figures 5 & 6) comprised moderately compact mid-brown silty clay with moderate pebbles and small-medium cobbles dispersed randomly throughout; it was up to 380mm in depth/thickness and lay directly upon orange/mid-brown subsoil which was gravelly in places – Plates 5 – 7). The topsoil/ploughsoil for much of the easternmost extent (Figure 7) largely comprised moderately compact dark brown peaty clay, which was up to 480mm in depth and lay directly upon mid-brown gravelly clay subsoil – Plate 8.

No subsurface features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no artefacts of archaeological/historical interest were recovered.



Plate 5 Topsoil Stripped Area (Sheet 1 Area)



Plate 6 Topsoil Stripped Area (Sheet 1 Area)



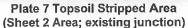




Plate 8 Topsoil Stripped Area (Sheet 3)

#### 6. SUMMARY DISCUSSION

A programme of Archaeological Monitoring of site preparation works/ground reduction works onto the surface of the underlying archaeologically sterile subsoils associated with the provision of a new/upgraded access road at the Coolnabacky Substation site was undertaken in compliance with Condition 10 of the Grant of Planning (see Section 1.1 above).

The works generally required that the existing access track leading east from the R426 to the existing agricultural facility was widened along the southern extent; thereafter, the existing track to the substation area was widened along its northern extent, with some widening also along its southern extent near its easternmost end.

Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered during the course of the works.

A further programme of archaeological monitoring will be undertaken, in due course, with respect to site development works associated with the construction of the substation element of the development.

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#### ABP Reg. Ref. VA0015

Brendan Allen
Planning Team Leader
Civil Environmental & Renewable Engineering
Engineering & Major Projects
One Dublin Airport Central
Dublin Airport
Cloghran
Co. Dublin
K67 XF72

7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Re: Discharge of Planning Condition 10 for Laois Kilkenny Electricity
Reinforcement Project – ABP Reg. Ref. VA0015

#### A Chara

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Reason: In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the area and to secure the preservation (in-situ or by record) and protection of any archaeological remains that may exist within the site.

The Planning Authority notes that the "Archaeological Monitoring Report No.1 — Construction of Access Road" (dated May 2022) states that "No subsurface features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no artefacts of archaeological/historical interest were recovered".

The Planning Authority is satisfied that condition 10 of ABP Reg Reference VA.0015 for the access road has been complied with. However, condition no.10 has not been fully discharged until a report(s) have been submitted for the remaining phases of the development.

Is mise le

Marie Murray Senior Staff Officer Planning Department