

**Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determination under:
Europeans Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for:
Network Implementation Plan (NIP) 2020-2023**

An Appropriate Assessment determination has been made by Gas Networks Ireland relating to the NIP 2020-2023.

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended), Gas Networks Ireland, as the competent authority, is responsible for undertaking AA screening assessment to determine if the NIP 2020-2023, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have a significant effect on any European site(s)

The determination was made by Gas Networks Ireland following consideration of the information contained in the Report for the Purposes of AA Screening, as prepared by Arup (accompanying this determination), the content of the NIP 2020-2023 and the consultation responses received. Following analysis and evaluation of the information, Gas Networks Ireland determined that Appropriate Assessment was required for the NIP 2020-2023, by virtue of the fact that:

- Of the 27 No. capital investment proposals outlined in the NIP 2020-2023, 11 No. proposals have the potential to give rise to significant effects on Natura 2000 due to the nature of the works involved. It is noted however that the precautionary principle was applied here in the absence of more detail such as site location, scale of works etc.
- There is potential for a number of impacts such as:
 - Habitat loss, degradation or fragmentation
 - Disturbance and displacement

Gas Networks Ireland has thus undertaken an Appropriate Assessment of the NIP 2020-2023. This determination by Gas Networks Ireland, as the competent authority having regard to:

- The Natura Impact Report (NIR) dated September 2020, prepared by Arup on behalf of Gas Networks Ireland, and the detailed assessment of likely impacts and mitigation measures therein;
- The incorporation of all mitigation measures as outlined in the NIR within the NIP 2020-2023, in order to avoid likely significant effects on European Sites; and
- The fact that any projects arising from the NIP 2020-2023 shall be required to conform to the policy measures, including mitigation measures, detailed in the NIR and set out in the said NIP 2020-2023.

Gas Networks Ireland has determined, pursuant to Regulation 42 (11) of the European Communities (birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (as amended), taking into account all matters relevant and subject to the full and proper implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the NIR, that the NIP 2020-2023 will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site. The decision to adopt the NIP 2020-2023 was made by Gas Networks Ireland in January 2021.

This determination and associated documentation are available on the Gas Networks Ireland website at <https://www.gasnetworks.ie> and for public inspection (for a period of 3 months) at the offices of Gas Networks Ireland during office hours (9.00am – 5.00pm) in Gas Networks Ireland Headquarters, Gasworks Road, Cork T12 RX96.

Signed: 

On behalf of:

GAS NETWORKS IRELAND LIMITED