



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for the

emerging Draft Policy Statement on Geothermal Energy

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) as transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications has undertaken Appropriate Assessment screening to assess if the emerging draft Policy Statement, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site(s).

In making the determination that Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required, the information on the potential effects on the integrity of European Sites presented in the "Report to Inform Screening for Appropriate Assessment" has been taken into account. Potential for likely significant effects include:

- Loss/reduction of habitat area
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Species mortality; and
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value such as decrease in water quality and quantity, changes in air quality.

On the basis of the findings of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment, it is concluded that:

- The draft Policy Statement is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site; and
- In the absence of mitigation measures, likely significant effects from the emerging draft Policy Statement on European sites, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, cannot be ruled out.

The undersigned, having carefully considered the information referred to above agrees with and adopts the reasoning and conclusion presented in the "Report to Inform Screening for Appropriate Assessment". The undersigned hereby determines pursuant to Regulation 42 of S.I. No. 477/2011, as amended, and for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, that it could not be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the emerging Draft Policy Statement, individually, or in combination with other plans and projects would have likely significant effects on a European site and therefore an AA is required.

Signatory:

Eóin Deegan
Principal Officer
Geoscience Policy Division

Date: 20 December 2021