

## Finding of no significant effects report:

Name of project or plan:

Installation of a gas pipeline across the River Tolka in connection with the East Wall to Santry Pipeline using trenchless technology (MS51/4/546).

Name and location of Natura 2000 site:

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA (Site Code 004024) and North Dublin Bay SAC(Site Code 000206)

The North Dublin Bay site is a candidate SAC covering the inner part of Dublin Bay. The North Bull Island is the focal point of this site. Habitat species occurring include various types of dunes,(from fixed dune grassland to pioneer communities on fore dunes),Marram Grass,Lyme Grass, Sea Couchgrass,Wild Pansy, Kidney vetch, Birds foot Trefoil, Red Harrow, Yellow Rattle, pyramid orchid, bee orchid,Saltmarsh Rush, Meadow Sweet Marsh ,Hellibourine,Common Twayblade, Autumn lady's tresses, Marsh orchids, Glasswort, Salt marsh grass ,Annual sea blite,Greater sea spurrey, Sea Plantain, Sea Aster, Sea Arrowgrass, Sea Pink, Scurvy grass ,Sea Milkworth and Sea rushes. Green algal mats cover large areas of the flats during summer. These sediments have rich macrofauna with high densities of lugworms in parts of the North Lagoon. Mussels occur in places along with bivalves such as *Cerastoderma edule*, *Macoma baltica* and *Scrobicularia* crustaceans. Three rare plant species legally protected under the Flora Protection Order 1987 have been recorded on the Bull Island(lesser centaury, Hemp nettle and Meadow Saxifrage)Two further species listed as threatened in the Red Data Book, Wild Sage and Spring Vetch have also been recorded. A rare liverwort(*Petalophyllum ralfsii*)has been confirmed as still present on the Island .This is of high conservation value and it is listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive. The North Bull is the only known extant site for this species away from the western seaboard. North Dublin Bay is of international importance for Winterfowl.and is of ornithological importance for a number of EU Bird Directive species including Brent Geese,Knot,Bar-tailed Godwit,Shelduck,Wigeon,Teal,Pintail,Shoveler,Oystercatcher,Ringed Plover,Grey Plover,Sanderling,Dunlin,Blacktailed Godwit,Curlew,Turnstone and Redshank.Some of these species frequent South Dublin Bay and Tolka Estuary for feeding and/or roosting purposes(mostly Brent Goose,Oystercatcher,Ringed Plover and Sanderling and Dunlin).

The Tolka Bay SPA site is of ornithological importance for a number of E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species including Light bellied Brent Goose,Oystercatcher,Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Grey Plover ,Knot,Sanderling,Dunlin,Bar tailed godwit,redshank,Black headed gull, Roseate tern, Common Tern and Artic Tern. The site is an important site for wintering waterfowl being an integral part of the of the internationally important Dublin Bay complex. An internationally important population of Light bellied brent goose(525) occurs regularly and newly arrived birds in the autumn feed on the Eelgrass bed at Merrion.Light bellied Brent Goose are also known to feed on the grassland at Poolbeg.The site supports nationally important numbers for a further nine species:

	<p>Oystercatcher(1263),Ringed Plover(161),Golden Plover(1452),Grey Plover(183),Knot(1151),Sanderling(349),Dunlin(2753),Bar-tailed Godwit(866),and Redshank(713).The Tolka Estuary SPA is of international importance for Light bellied Brent Goose and of national importance for the nine species listed above. As an autumn tern roost, it is also of international importance. The site supports a nationally important colony of Common Tern .All of the tern species using the site are listed in Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive as are Bar tailed Godwit and Mediterranean Gull</p>								
Description of the project or plan	<p>The proposed works are shown in detail on Drawing No FL 003 and also with reference to various Figures and Photos in the Method Statement and Environmental Report accompanying the application The proposed works involves the installation of a submarine gas pipeline across the River Tolka just upstream of John Mc Cormack Bridge using trenchless technology. The pipeline design features are as follows</p> <table> <tr> <td>Crossing length</td><td>26m</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pipe Diameter</td><td>300mm</td></tr> <tr> <td>Steel Wall thickness</td><td>11.9mm</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tunnel Bore</td><td>650mm</td></tr> </table> <p>Foreshore Lease Area 0.036ha( incl sterile wayleave of 14m )</p> <p>The pipeline will be installed a minimum of 1.6m below the bed of the river. The trenchless crossing technique will be used to ensure that disturbance to the river itself including the river banks and river bed will not be significant. tPipe ramming or a similar technique will be used There will be a requirement to excavate two pits on either side of the crossing(launch and reception pits). The location of these pits are as shown on Drawing No FL 003 and also with reference to Fig 2.2 (ref Method Statement).The dimensions of the pits will be 8m by 2.5m (launch pit) and 3.5m diameter(reception pit)with both pits excavated to a depth of app 0.5m below invert level of the proposed pipe. Any excavated excess material will be disposed of to an appropriately licensed waste management facility and there will be no temporary storage of excavated material on the foreshore. It is envisaged that the construction of the pipeline between East Wall Road and Coolock will commence in April 2012 and the construction of the trenchless crossing of the Tolka will take app 1month to complete. The gas pipeline will be designed and constructed in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006 (SI 504 of 2006) and will also be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with the requirements of the Irish Standard IS 328 Code of Practice for Gas Transmission Pipelines and Pipeline Installations (2003).</p>	Crossing length	26m	Pipe Diameter	300mm	Steel Wall thickness	11.9mm	Tunnel Bore	650mm
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Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?	No.								

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?

Dublin City Council proposes to construct a watermain through Fairview Park and along Alfie Byrne Road and Clontarf Road. However the timing of the construction of this watermain is unknown. There are no other developments in planning that would have a cumulative effect.

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.

The works could potentially;

- impact on macro-invertebrate communities in estuarine environments as a result of the installation
- disturb and displace bird species due to construction noise
- introduce pollutants into the water column during the works

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

The licence application area on the foreshore is 0.036ha. The proposed works will result in a very small area of interaction with the seabed of estuarine and a smaller area of intertidal mudflat. Any impacts will be minor, localised and temporary. Similarly any increase in water column turbidity will be temporary, localised and within the natural range of variability caused by current induced sediment resuspension. There will be no direct discharges into the environment during the works. The work sites and all associated activity will be located a minimum of 60m from boundary of the North Dublin Bay SAC and approx 400m upstream from the aquatic boundary of the South Dublin Bay and Tolka River SPA and any excavated material will be stored separately and protected during storage to prevent loss or spread of materials by wind, rain etc. Fuels and other chemicals will be stored in secured bunded areas. Silt traps and settlement ponds will be employed, thus minimising the risk of siltation.

The full implementation of the noise mitigation measures as set out in Section 3.2.1 of the Environmental Report, including adherence to the NRA "Guidelines for the treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Roads Schemes (NRA 2004)" and BS 5226 for Noise Control on Construction will minimise any potential noise related impacts and disturbance to birds during the construction phase.

As the pipeline will be installed at a minimum depth of 2m below the bed of the estuary there will be no impacts on the SAC or SPA post installation.

On the basis of the above it is concluded that there are not likely to be significant effects as a result of the installation of a gas pipeline across the River Tolka using trenchless technology on the Conservation Objectives of either the North Dublin Bay SAC or the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA

Who carried out the assessment?

Marine Institute, on behalf of the MLVC, 9<sup>TH</sup> March 2012