

VERDÉ ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS LTD
HEAD OFFICE
E7 Network Enterprise Park,
Kilcoole,
Co. Wicklow, Ireland.
Tel +353 1 201 1260
www.Verde.ie
VAT No. IE9664296J



ESB Networks,
Engineering & Major Projects,
One Dublin Airport Central,
Dublin Airport,
Cloghran,
Co Dublin.

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Verde Ref: 52458

**RE: Recommended Scope of Work following completion of a Preliminary Site Assessment Report for Fairhill – Wolfe
Tone Street, Cork City.
ESB Site Ref: 2 Fairhill – Kilbarry 38kV**

To Whom it May Concern,

Verde Environmental Consultants (Verde) have prepared this letter to provide detail in relation to future site investigations and risk assessments proposed for the above site. These proposals follow on from the completion of a Preliminary Site Assessment (PSA) report which identified potential environmental impacts associated with a suspected cable fluid leak from a power cable on the junction of Fairhill and Wolfe Tone Street (ESB Ref: 2 Fairhill – Kilbarry 38kV) in Verde's Report dated 12th November 2019.

As you are aware the updated April 2020 PSA report was completed in response to an ESB electricity cable fluid leak, predominantly comprising a mix of linear alkyl benzenes (LAB) and mineral oil (MO) with an estimated loss volume of 1,595 litres (l) lost to ground from the leak point at an approximate rate of 266l/month for six months. The leak was reported to have started in September 2018 and was repaired in February 2019. The known leak point (ESB Ref: 2) is located 15m south of the junction of Wolfe Tone Street and North Monastery Road in a mixed residential and greenspace area dominated by residential properties and small open greenfield parklands and institutional areas.

This report was intended as a preliminary stage assessment of the site in question and, as such, all assessments and risk analysis of the environmental aspects of the site, whilst based on the best-available data and information, are theoretical and conservative in nature. This is in-keeping with best practice guidelines and does not necessarily reflect the actual environmental scenario on site. Further environmental information, as it becomes available, would likely change the assessments and analysis contained within the report



Based on the findings of the site walkover and desk study, consideration of the known cable leak point, identification of contaminants of potential concern (COPC) and their likely fate and transport, a conceptual site model (CSM) was developed. At the time of reporting, Irish Water have examined all available drinking water quality sample data and have concluded that there is no evidence that COPCs from the leak site have infiltrated the local drinking water supply. This evaluation is based on a review of all samples taken from customer-points, between 2014 and 2019; which showed no evidence that the COPCs (PAHs and Benzenes) were present in the water supply at levels above drinking water standards (PAHs: 0.1µg/L; Benzene: 1.0µg/L). These results (which are from samples taken at the customer tap) would not indicate that leaks from oil filled cables have contaminated the drinking water supply for these areas, or at least to an extent where any contamination arising has resulted in a breach of the parametric value for PAHs and Benzene (Appendix G).

The findings identified that the risk for several of the potential pollutant linkages was considered to be low but identified several potential pollutant linkages requiring further investigation and assessment as follows;

- Moderate risk potential for Linear Alkyl Benzene (LAB) and Mineral Oil (MO) contamination migration to the adjacent watercourse/sewerage network and the downstream River Bride/Kiln and the Upper Lee Estuary given the short distance to the culverted Glasheen Stream/storm sewer which poses a potential pollutant linkage between the leak site and the surface water receptors;
- Moderate risk potential for Linear Alkyl Benzene (LAB) and Mineral Oil (MO) contamination migration to the underlying aquifer given the possible connection to shallow groundwater or directly to bedrock through shallow rock in the area indicated by the high to extreme vulnerability;
- Low/Moderate risk potential for migration of hydrocarbon vapours in preferential pathways such as services ducts to residents or other building users;
- Low/Moderate risk potential for Linear Alkyl Benzene (LAB) and Mineral Oil (MO) contamination leaching to shallow groundwater given the contaminant properties of low mobility and high sorption to soil, with rare shallow groundwater unlikely to be a viable groundwater resource in the residential urban setting.

Proposed Site Investigation

There is a low/moderate potential Human Health risk from potential LAB volatilisation from soil, groundwater and LNAPL into soil pore spaces (Vapour Phase in unsaturated soils), upward migration into houses and other properties to indoor air and then inhalation. In order to further develop the CSM and determine required remediation, if any, Verde recommend that slit trenches are excavated at lateral (perpendicular) positions to the former cable route and leak point to examine the potential for contamination migration along preferential pathways including other service trenches, drainage channels and permeable ground. This site assessment will allow for visual inspection, soil sampling and also tracing contaminant movement along service trenches and in any service trenches leading towards properties. Monitoring for soil, shallow groundwater and air will be assessed and undertaken as required in order to determine any human health risks.



There is a moderate potential risk that a pollutant linkage exists between the known leak point and the underlying bedrock aquifer and nearby surface water streams and/or drainage channels. The findings from the above slit trenches would be used to determine a location for a suitable groundwater monitoring borehole. An investigation borehole would be drilled in proximity to the leak point dependant on the results of the slit trench investigation and sample analysis results. The first will be located as close to the leak point as possible, with the aim of proving the top of bedrock, whether it comprises of a more permeable gravel weathered horizon and also finding shallow groundwater to allow for subsequent sampling and monitoring of groundwater. This well installation would aim to investigate the potential pollutant linkages between the known leak point and the underlying shallow groundwater and nearby surface water streams; which are both currently thought to have a moderate potential risk.

Additional Precautionary Recommendation

Should the slit trenches identify LAB NAPL next to mains water supply pipes, then drinking water samples should be collected, where access has been permitted, to determine whether LAB has permeated through any plastic pipes to contaminant drinking water. It is envisaged that samples will be collected from the properties closest to the identified NAPL locations. Sampling should be undertaken in accordance with sampling best practice documents such as that produced by the EPA titled "Handbook on implementation for Water Services Authorities for public water supplies".

It should be noted here that, whilst the current risk rating relating to water supply pipes is currently assessed to be Low, the recommendation to carry out potable water sampling is entirely precautionary in nature. This is not a regular approach but has been included in the event that NAPL is identified during recommended slit trenching investigations.

Revision of Risk Assessment

Following completion of the above scope of work at the Fairhill-Wolfe Tone Street site, Cork City (ESB Ref: 2 Fairhill – Kilbarry 38kV), the results should be used to update the Conceptual Site Model and risk assessment in regard to potential risks to human health, water and ecological receptors. This will determine the necessary next steps such as further investigations and assessments potentially including a Detailed Quantitative Risk Assessment (DQRA) and/or remedial measures/corrective actions required to break the plausible pollutant linkages.

Yours sincerely,


Senior Environmental Consultant


Project Director