

Maritime Usage Licensing and Planning Advisory Directorate

Maritime Usage Licence Assessment Report

To:	John Evans Director	From:	Maria O Connell Marine Analyst
Date:	20/05/2026	Maritime Usage Licence Application No:	MUL250003
Applicant:	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, County Hall, Marine Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, A96 K6C9, Ireland.		
Licence application received:	13/06/2025		
Types of maritime usage activities in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021:	<i>Schedule 7 (3): Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000.</i>		
Location of proposed maritime usages:	Within Dun Laoghaire Harbour as specified on application maps and Figure 1 in this report.		
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening	EIA not required (EIA Screening Form dated 14/05/2026)		
1st request for additional information (RAI) issued:	Date: 21/04/2026	Response to 1st RAI received	Date: 30/04/2026
Notice requesting Natura Impact Statement (NIS) issued:	Not applicable	NIS received:	Not applicable
Public body consultation:	19/01/2026 –19/02/2026	Observations from public bodies received:	5
Public consultation:	Not applicable	Submissions from the public received:	Not applicable

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1. Background

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (the applicant) has applied to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) for a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) to undertake marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation, falling under Schedule 7(3) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (the MAP Act). The objective of the proposed maritime usage (the site investigation activities) is to collate baseline information for the design of a dredging programme that would improve navigational access in the harbour and enable increased capacity for offshore renewable energy (ORE) survey vessels. As per S.I. No. 391/2018 - Harbours Act 2015, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council operate and manage Dún Laoghaire Harbour¹.

Application Documents submitted

The relevant documents submitted by the applicant include but are not limited to the MUL application form, the Assessment of Impacts of the Maritime Usage Report, the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) report and the Annex IV species report. All submitted documents are available on the MARA website and informed the contents of this report.

2. Location and Description of the Proposed Maritime Usage

The proposed maritime usage activities are detailed in Table 1 below which include the collection of sediment samples for: sediment characterisation, chemical analysis and characterisation of the benthic environment, geophysical techniques including Side Scan Sonar (SSS) and magnetometry which may also be employed to identify potential hazards or archaeological features. The total MUL application area is 0.26 km² (26.02ha,) which is located wholly within the Dun Laoghaire Harbour limits. Note the MUL area was increased from an original area of 25.85 ha to 26.02ha to facilitate the location of a sample point within the extended area. The applicant has highlighted that a maximum of two slow speed small survey vessels will be operating at any one time within the MUL application area during the site investigations.

The applicant has requested 5-year licence duration to allow for completion of site investigations. Indicative timeframes for site investigations have been provided by the applicant however, the exact survey schedule will be dependent on weather windows, tidal flows and vessel availability. Similarly indicative locations for the site investigations have been provided by the applicant and are available in the updated AMIU report. The estimated total duration of the site investigation is 2-3 weeks depending on the aforementioned factors.

1. [S.I. No. 391/2018 - Harbours Act 2015 \(Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company Transfer and Dissolution Day\) Order 2018](#)

Table 1: Summary of the marine site investigation activities, the associated survey areas within the MUL Area

Geophysical surveys - Side Scan Sonar (SSS) (sample frequency: 600/1600kHz), (5 – 10 days -across MUL area). - Magnetometer, (5 – 10 days -across MUL area).
Geotechnical surveys Vibrocores (16 samples) up to 100mm diameter, to depths of 3-4m, (30 min to 2 hours per location).
Environmental/ecological & archaeological surveys - Seabed imagery (drop frame camera system) (30 locations) (20 mins per location). - Benthic sampling (grab), (30 locations), (20 mins to 1 hour per location).
Survey vessels One or two low-speed survey small vessels operating within the confines of the harbour.

Brief description of the site characteristics

Dún Laoghaire Harbour extends for approximately 1.6km along the coastline of Dublin Bay with two breakwater arms (the East and West Piers) which creates the harbour's form. The enclosed water area is approximately 80 hectares (200 acres), and the landside is approximately 20 hectares (50 acres)². The harbour is situated in an area which is defined principally by a broad estuarine bay and shallow offshore waters³. Water depths range from 0 to 14 meters "MHWS" and average tidal range in Dublin Bay ranges between approximately 2 -4.5m with tidal currents operating on average at 2-3 knots in a north-easterly/south-westerly orientation. The MUL Application Area for the proposed SI activities are located entirely within the Dún Laoghaire Harbour and is depicted in Figure 1 which extends from the harbour entrance southward to include a turning circle and continues to form rectangular areas adjacent to St Michaels Pier and Carlisle Pier.

The MUL application area is situated within the coastal water body of Dublin Bay (EPA ref: IE_EA_090_0000) as classified under the Water Framework Directive as having good water quality and is deemed to be "not at risk" of failing to maintain its current classification. Broad-scale seabed habitat mapping indicates the presence of infralittoral sandy mud, infralittoral and circalittoral mud in the MUL application area which generally support bivalve and polychaete communities⁴

2. [dlrcoco.ie/sites/dlrcoco/files/2026-01/Dún Laoghaire Masterplan A3 Compressed 2.pdf](https://dlrcoco.ie/sites/dlrcoco/files/2026-01/Dún%20Laoghaire%20Masterplan%20A3%20Compressed%20.pdf)

3. The Marine Institute. 2020. Definition and Classification of Ireland's Seascapes. Minogue, R, Foley, K, Collins, T, Hennessy, R, Doherty, P, Vaughan, E and Black, D.

4. [EMODnet Map Viewer](#)

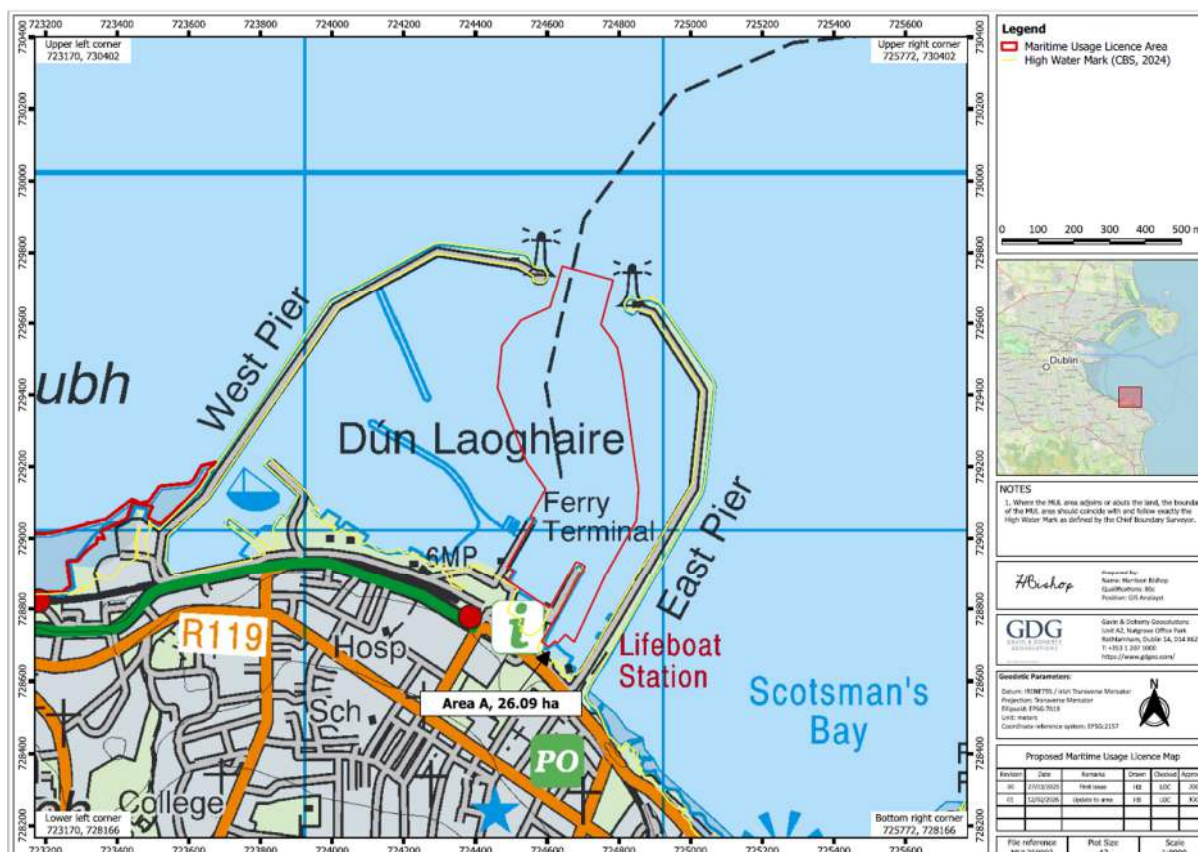


Figure 1 MUL application area (solid red boundary)

No spatial overlap exists between the MUL area and designated sites (SACs and SPAs) however South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024) is situated adjacent to the MUL area which contains intertidal areas of sand and mudflats which provide habitats for national and internationally important wintering waterfowl. The nearest special area of conservation is South Dublin Bay which is located 1.9km from MUL area⁵.

Dun Laoghaire Harbour supports a range of commercial and recreational marine activities. Maritime usages within and adjacent to the proposed maritime usage application area include but are not limited to shipping, search and rescue facilities, recreational boating, shore angling, and walking. Several clubs, organisations and groups operate within the harbour, including four sailing clubs. The landward hinterland of the MUL area is urbanised by a mix of residential, commercial and cultural spaces, road and railway corridors. There are two bathing areas located to the north (Seapoint) and south (Sandycove) of the harbour.

5. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/edf34d92e28040fd87d3d14f55d8d95f>

3. Assessment

In assessing a MUL application, MARA must have regard to Section 6(8) of the Marine Planning Policy Statement (MPPS) and the legislation and policy set out in Section 121(2) of the MAP Act, as discussed in this section.

3.1 National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

In accordance with the MAP Act, MARA must have regard to the Marine Planning Policy Statement (MPPS) which outlines the government's overarching vision, policies, and principles for managing the country's maritime area. The NMMPF sets the framework for implementing the forward planning component of our marine planning system as set out in the MPPS. The marine site investigations to be conducted as part of this licence application are proposed to contribute to plans for the development of a new underground (submarine) 220kv cable to enable accelerated deployment for renewables and enable greater efficiency of the transmission network. The applicant submitted an Assessment of Impact of the Maritime Usage (AIMU) in support of the MUL application.

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) is divided into overarching marine planning policies and sector/activity specific policies. The overarching marine planning policies are further sub divided into three categories: Environmental, Economic and Social. The environmental assessment of this application is primarily covered in Sections 3.2–3.7 of this report, including but not limited to, the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP), the Birds and Habitat Directives, the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

The climate and relevant economic and sector specific policies of the NMPF such as co-existence are covered below and under Section 4 of this report under “consideration of other maritime users” respectively. In addition, Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended (the ‘Climate Act’) requires relevant bodies, including MARA, to perform their functions in so far as practicable in a manner consistent with the governance framework set out therein. The proposed maritime usage involves site investigations to collate baseline data which will be used for the design of a dredging programme to improve navigational access and enable increased capacity for offshore renewable energy survey vessels. Such works aim to facilitate navigational safety and ORE development and maintenance and can be considered as positively contributing to adaptation measures to improve the resilience/adaptive capacity of Ireland’s ports and energy infrastructure in the face of projected climate change impacts.

The topic of underwater heritage assets falls under the social pillar of the NMPF which supports the conservation of the historic environment and heritage assets both along the coast and in the underwater environment. The policy notes that proposals not specifically contributing to enhancing cultural heritage assets must demonstrate that they avoid, minimise or mitigate against harm to heritage assets. This application considered impacts and mitigation proposals on marine archaeological or cultural heritage. To ensure alignment with the requirements of this NMPF policy it is recommended that a condition be included in the licence, if granted, requiring the holder to consult with the National Monuments Service prior to the commencement of the activities and to comply with all their requirements in relation to underwater cultural heritage.

This MUL application was also assessed against relevant sector specific policies of the NMPF. In particular there is alignment with the following NMPF policies:

- ORE Policy 7 - *Where potential for ports to contribute to ORE is identified, plans and policies related to this port must encourage development in such a way as to facilitate ORE and related supply chain activity.*
- ORE Policy 11 *Where appropriate, proposals that enable the provision of emerging renewable energy technologies and associated supply chains will be supported.*

The assessment of information submitted by the applicant and other sources indicates that the proposed site investigations align directly with at least two areas of the NMPF and does not act significantly against any other objective of the NMPF provided the recommended licence conditions and mitigations where relevant are adhered to and demonstrable.

3.2 Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2014/52/EU) (EIA Directive)

MARA carried out a screening for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the proposed site investigations having considered Schedules 5 and 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. An EIA Screening Form was issued by MARA on 14/05/2026 and it was concluded that the activities do not fall within the scope of the EIA Directive and therefore an EIA is not required.

3.3 National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP)

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023–2030. The objectives of the NBAP focus on the conservation and restoration of biodiversity. Objective 2 of the NBAP is to meet urgent conservation and restoration needs. Part of its focus is to elevate efforts to tackle invasive alien species. It is recommended that a condition be included in the licence to address the potential risks from invasive alien species as a result of the site investigations.

Sections 3.5–3.8 of this report also address the Habitats and Birds Directives, WFD and MSFD and recommend conditions to minimise impacts on biodiversity from the proposed site investigations.

3.4 Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended

Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended (the ‘Climate Act’) requires relevant bodies, including MARA, to perform their functions in so far as practicable in a manner consistent with the governance framework set out therein. The Act sets legally binding targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. Considering the temporary nature of the proposed maritime usages no significant increases in carbon emissions are expected to be produced. Additionally, as set out in Section 3.1 above, the proposed objective of the project is to obtain data that will enable collate baseline data which will be used for the design of a dredging programme to improve navigational access and enable increased capacity for offshore wind farm (OWF) survey vessels. In consideration of the aforementioned objectives, it is expected that the proposed maritime usage will contribute to enhanced resilience and adaptive capacity of such infrastructure in the face of projected climate change impacts and assist in the delivery of low carbon energy infrastructure.

3.5 Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires EU member states to protect and improve water quality in all waters to achieve at least good ecological status in inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater by 2027, at the latest.

The ecological status of coastal waterbodies is based on the assessment of biological quality elements (phytoplankton, benthic invertebrates, macroalgae, angiosperms) as well as supporting chemical (specific pollutants), physico-chemical (e.g. temperature, salinity, nutrients) and hydromorphological quality elements. The Dublin Bay coastal waterbody (EPA ref: IE_EA_090_0000) which spatially overlaps with the MUL application area is deemed to be “not at risk” and to have “good” water quality. Table 2 shows the proposed activities within the waterbody concerned.

Table 2: Water Framework Directive waterbodies in relation to MUL application areas from the reporting period 2019–2024.

Waterbody name & code	Waterbody type	Ecological status & Risk*	WFD pressures significant	Proposed activities within waterbody
Dublin Bay IE_EA_090_0000	Coastal	Good & not at risk	n/a	Side Scan Sonar. Magnetometer. Seabed imagery. Benthic sampling. Vibrocores.

*At risk means at risk of not achieving good status by 2027; not at risk means no risk in maintaining current status.

In terms of the biological quality elements, the intrusive geotechnical activities (grab sampling, vibrocore testing) have the potential to directly damage benthic invertebrates in soft substrates. However, the soft substrate habitats and species described generally have a high resilience and low sensitivity to penetration or disturbance of the substratum subsurface⁶. Many of the characteristic species are mobile and can recolonise affected areas relatively quickly. Hard substrates and intertidal reefs are not noted in the confines of the harbour therefore the survey will avoid intrusive negative impacts on any associated macroalgae.

There is potential that the release of fine sediment and or contaminants may give rise to temporary deterioration of water quality during the site investigations. However, it is not expected that the proposed site investigations will result in a significant amount of disturbance of sediments given the substrate type, the scale and duration of site investigations. Similarly, it is not expected that there will be nutrient emissions or changes to the temperature and salinity of the receiving waters as a result of the proposed investigations. Therefore, phytoplankton and angiosperms will not be significantly altered. Given the site characteristics, the scale and duration of the proposed site investigations it is not expected that the biological quality elements of waterbody (IE_EA_090_0000) will be negatively impacted.

There is a low risk that the accidental release of contaminants may give rise to temporary deterioration of water quality during surveys. However, the applicant has outlined that the small vessels used for the site investigation activities will adhere to national legislation for the prevention of pollution. Such regulations incorporates both operational and accidental discharges from vessels. It is a standard condition of MUL licences to retain and produce relevant documentation on request to demonstrate compliance.

6. [Home - MarLIN - The Marine Life Information Network](#)

It is specifically recommended that conditions in any licence granted should ensure that the holder:

- conforms to the appropriate certification standards for the prevention of pollution from vessels and training, as required by the Marine Survey Office, Ireland.
- arrange for the publication of a marine notice via Dún Laoghaire Harbour Master at Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.
- ensure that there is an oil pollution emergency response plan on-board vessels engaged in the proposed maritime usage.

With regard to the hydromorphological conditions of the waterbodies, the intrusive sampling activities, could lead to a temporary increase in suspended sediments in the water column and sediment deposition on the surrounding seabed. However, the intrusive survey activities will take place mainly sandy mud sediments in a port environment which will return to background conditions following completion and suspended sediments will quickly dissipate. Given the assessments above and recommended conditions, it is not expected that a significant deterioration in the biological, physical and chemical status of any WFD waterbody will occur as a result of the proposed site investigations.

3.6 Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) sets the framework for European marine environmental policy. It aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) for all marine waters in Europe and protect the resource base for marine related economic and social activities. Ireland's 2024 assessment⁷ under Article 8 of the MFSD sets out the status of the 11 qualitative descriptors that describe the state of the marine environment. Table 3 sets out the status of the relevant descriptors and assesses the potential impacts of the proposed activities.

7. [Ireland's Marine Strategy Part 1 2025 online version.pdf](#)

Table 3: Assessment of impact of proposed activities on MSFD descriptors

MFSD Descriptor	Good Environmental Status achieved	Assessment
Biological diversity	Partially achieved	MARA has undertaken an AA Screening in respect to the proposed site investigations and reviewed the applicants SSIA, NIS and Annex IV reports submitted in support of the proposed site investigation. Potential impacts on biological diversity (including protected habitats and species) will not be at a scale or duration to impact the conservation objectives of protected species and habitats.
Non-indigenous species	Yes	To ensure that the proposed activities will not result in the unintended introduction of non-indigenous species, a condition is recommended in the Proposed Licence regarding the control of invasive species as outlined in Section 3.3 above.
Population of commercial fish/shellfish	Partially achieved	The MUL application area lies within known nursery grounds for a number of commercial fisheries, primarily cod, haddock and horse mackerel. There are also known spawning grounds for cod and withing within Dublin Bay. To the east of the MUL application there are known spawning grounds for haddock. The proposed geophysical and boat-based survey activities are of a scale, duration and nature which are not expected to result in either incidental bycatch or a significant disturbance to populations of commercially exploited stocks. Pot and net fishing are common fishing methods used within the outer Dublin Bay region, however there is no overlap between this area and the MUL application area. Dún Laoghaire Harbour is utilized by fishing vessels and therefore while conducting the Permitted Maritime Usage the Holder should demonstrate that due regard has been taken regarding the protection of third-party infrastructure. There are no designated shellfish waters or commercial aquaculture sites within or approximate to Dublin Bay. There is a small scale unlicensed native oyster cultivation project within the marina at Dun Laoghaire Harbour. This project is not located within the proposed MUL area, and it is not expected it will be negatively impacted, given the short term and small-scale duration of the activities.
Marine food webs	Unclear	The balance and diversity in marine food webs are not expected be impacted as a result of the proposed site investigations. Impacts on habitats and associated benthic communities and water quality have been assessed in Section 3.5 of this report in relation to the Water Framework Directive.
Eutrophication	Yes	The proposed site investigations do not involve the addition of nutrients to the marine environment and as such will not impact this descriptor achieving GES.

Sea-floor integrity	Partially achieved	The seabed habitat in the MUL application area will experience minor temporary disturbance due to the vibrocore activities. However, the seabed habitat conditions are under continual change in a port environment. Benthic impacts are summarised in Section 3.5 WFD. It is not expected that the activities will negatively impact on the GES status of this descriptor.
Alteration of hydrographical conditions	Yes	The proposed activities will not significantly alter the hydrographical conditions (e.g. changes in wave action, currents, salinity, temperature) in the MUL application area or adjoining areas. There will be no impact on the GES status of this descriptor.
Concentrations of contaminants	Yes	The licence, if granted, will require inclusion of a condition relating to preparation of response plan to mitigate for any accidental introduction of oil/contaminants to the marine environment. Operational discharges from vessel are regulated by the Marine Survey Office. It is recommended that the holder conforms to the appropriate certification standards regarding crew training and the prevention of pollution from vessels, as required by the Marine Survey Office and that consultation takes place with the Marine Division of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Co Co regarding discharges within its functional area. See Section 3.5 on the WFD for further discussion on this topic. Given the nature and duration of the activities proposed, and the proposed conditions recommended to mitigate against impacts on water quality, it is not expected that the activities will negatively impact on the GES status of this descriptor.
Contaminants in fish/seafood for human consumption	Yes	There are no licensed aquaculture sites or designated shellfish areas within or approximate to the MUL application area. The oysters growing in proximity to the MUL area are not for human consumption. Given the nature and duration of the proposed site investigation it is not expected that the site investigations will result in the introduction of contaminants in fish or seafood for human consumption and therefore, will not impact on the GES status of this descriptor.
Marine Litter	No	The proposed maritime usage/activities will not result in the introduction of marine litter to the marine environment and thus will not impact on the achievement of GES status of this descriptor.
Introduction of energy including underwater noise	Yes	The impacts of underwater noise arising from the proposed site investigations are assessed in the AA screening report and Determination. It is recommended that the holder should provide details of all acoustic surveys to the Marine Environment Section of the relevant government department in the reporting format of the OSPAR Impulsive Noise Registry.

3.7 Annex IV species

Articles 12 and 13 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC) impose obligations on Member States to establish a system of strict protection for animal and plant species listed on Annex IV of the Directive. The risk assessment considered the scope of the proposed maritime usage, the relevant Annex IV species (otters, cetaceans and turtles) and the potential impacts of the proposed maritime usage on those species as well as proposed mitigations where required. The Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species concluded that the proposed maritime usage complies with the system of strict protection. Further to the review of the assessment MARA agrees with this conclusion.

The applicant has stated that a derogation licence from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) under the (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended, is not required for the proposed site investigations under (Article 16) Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended.

3.8 Appropriate Assessment Screening

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EC) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) are transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended (the Regulations) and by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The application was subject to screening for appropriate assessment (AA) by MARA in accordance with the Regulations. MARA made an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination on 14/05/2026, which concluded that the proposed site investigation will not require Stage 2 AA as it could be excluded, on the basis of objective scientific information, that the proposed project, either individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on European sites.

4. Consideration of other maritime users

MARA has had regard to the rights of other users as set out in Section 3 (3)(b) of the MAP Act. Conditions are recommended in the Proposed Licence to ensure minimal disruption to other users and alignment with the objectives and policies of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF).

It is noted that the proposed maritime usage will be on a non-exclusive basis and together with the nature of the proposed activities, any licence granted should not significantly conflict with any existing and proposed consents or ownerships and ensure all necessary permissions are obtained.

4.1 Ports, harbours, Shipping and Safety at Sea.

The proposed MUL application area is situated within Dun Laoghaire Harbour which is used extensively by recreational vessels, survey and utility ships, cruise ship operations and fishing vessels. In order to ensure maritime safety requirements are upheld it is recommended in any licence granted that the Holder, prior to the commencement of the Permitted Maritime Usage, arrange for the publication of a Marine Notice by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Co Council and schedule the Permitted Maritime Usage in order that any potential disruption to port operations is managed.

Additionally on completion of the site investigations the Holder shall provide the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) and the INFOMAR program with the final bathymetric data from this Permitted Maritime Usage so that the appropriate charts can be updated to ensure the safety of navigation at sea and the protection of the marine environment through the availability of monitoring data.

4.2 Aquaculture and Fishing

In addition to the aforementioned conditions regarding fisheries considered under the MSFD section, it is recommended to include a condition in any licence granted to ensure that due regard is provided in relation to third party property.

4.3 Sport and Recreation a Marine Notice is to be published by the applicant via the Marine Division at Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council which will bring the site investigations to the attention of recreational vessel users via marine notice.

5. Site visit

A site visit of the proposed MUL application area was undertaken on 29/04/2026 which highlighted the variety of activities which occur in Dún Laoghaire Harbour. Ambient water quality displayed increased turbidity which was attributed to natural sea state conditions at the time of inspection.

6. Public body consultation

Observations on the MUL application were invited from relevant public bodies to ensure that MARA takes account of all other relevant maritime usages and interests in the consent area. Five responses were received. The following tables summarise the observations from public bodies with a response given below each observation summary. The MARA website should be consulted to view the full details of the observations received.

1. Applications Unit (DAU), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Observation summary
The DAU made a submission regarding the nature conservation and underwater archaeological aspects of the application. In terms of nature conservation, the Department stated that, having reviewed the applicants SISSA Report it concurs that the proposed site investigation works, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site. In terms of underwater archaeology, the Department provided an overview of legal codes and policy context as well as a list of recommendations for conditions to be applied to the proposed licence if granted.

MARA response: MARA notes the submission of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. In terms of nature conservation, any licence granted to the applicant for the proposed maritime usage will include a condition requiring them to adhere to the plans and particulars of their submitted application documents. Any change to the plans or particulars will require an application for a material amendment and subsequent assessment.

In terms of underwater archaeology, the onus is on the applicant to ensure that all the required statutory consents are in place in order for the proposed marine usage activity to go ahead. It is recommended that a condition be included in the licence, if granted, stating that the MUL does not negate the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have all the necessary consents to undertake the proposed activity and it is further recommended that the licence, if granted, include a condition to consult with, and comply with the requirements of, the National Monuments Service prior to commencing the proposed maritime usage.

2. Irish Lights
Observation summary
Irish Lights submitted no objection to the granting of this licence from the perspective of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974 regarding the requirement to provide such aids to navigation as the volume of traffic justifies and the degree of risk requires. Irish Lights outlined that it has assessed the activity proposed and concluded that no change to the level of provision of marine aids to navigation is required and that any subsequent alteration of the activity should be notified to Irish Lights and will be subject to a new assessment.

MARA response: MARA notes the submission of Irish Lights. In order to address the issue of subsequent alternations to the proposed activity a standard condition of maritime usage licences is that the licence holder should furnish in writing (at the earliest possible opportunity) a notice regarding any material change of circumstances within the meaning of section 136 of the Act.

3. Department of Transport – Marine Survey Office
Observation Summary
The Marine Survey Office has no objection to the site investigations proposed in the application from a navigational safety perspective. The requirements regarding the publication of a marine notice (s) via Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Harbour Master, conformity with Irish certification standards for vessels, Irish load line surveys, suitably qualified personnel and the provision of data to the UK Hydrographic Office and INFOMAR. The MSO outline the importance of maintaining safety of navigation, use of appropriate communications channels and that any marking and lighting required for moored instruments should be carried out in consultation with the MSO and Irish Lights.

MARAs response: MARA notes the issues raised by the MSO. Conditions are included as standard in Marine Usage Licences in respect of the requirement to publish marine notices and the need for vessels to conform with the requirements of Irish certification standards. All MULs include a condition as standard, stating that the MUL does not negate the holders' statutory obligations or requirements under any other law. A condition will be included in any licence granted relating to submitting data to the UKHO and INFOMAR.

4. Department Agriculture, Food, Marine (DAFM) – BIM and Marine Institute
Observation Summary:
The submission states that while the proposed works are not anticipated to unduly impact on inshore fisheries, relevant local fishing organisations should be included on the provision of any Notices to Mariners. The Marine Institute submits that the survey operations should not interfere with fishing activities (assuming any necessary Marine Notices are made) fish ecology/biology or aquaculture, considering the short nature and small area of the proposed operations but that cumulative impacts should be given consideration.

MARA's Response: MARA notes the content of the submission from DAFM, with additional comments from the Bord Iascaigh Mhara and the Marine Institute. It is recommended that a specific condition be included regarding the issuance of a Marine Notice prior to the commencement of the proposed maritime usage, should a licence be granted.

5. Geological Survey of Ireland
Observation Summary:
Geological Survey Ireland is the national earth science agency and is a division of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications who provide independent geological information, interpretation and collation of various data. Recommendations were provided on various data sets available from GSI when conducting assessments.

MARA's Response: MARA notes the submission from the GSI.

7. Public consultation

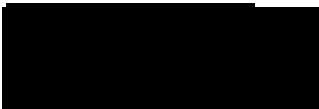
A public consultation was not required for this application as it screened out for appropriate assessment.

8. Recommendation

Having considered the information submitted in support of the application, I recommend that a Maritime Usage Licence in accordance with Section 119 of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021, as amended, be granted to **Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, County Hall, Marine Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, A96 K6C9, Ireland** for the purposes of *marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000 (Schedule 7 (3) MAP Act)*, subject to the conditions in the proposed licence.

Signed:	
Prepared by:	<i>Maria O Connell</i> <i>Marine Analyst</i>
Date:	21/05/2026

9. Approval

Signed:	
Approved and determined by:	<i>John Evans</i> <i>Director of Maritime Usage Licensing</i>
Date:	26 th May 2026

Appendix 1

European sites and qualifying interests which were screened in for appropriate assessment along with potential source of impact and site-specific conservation objectives.

European site & site code	Approx. distance from MUL application area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site-specific conservation objectives
SACs					
South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)	1.9km	<i>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</i> <i>Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]</i> <i>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</i> <i>Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</i>	No	No	NPWS (2013) . Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (03000)	2.63	<i>Reefs [1170]</i> <i>Phocoena phocoena (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</i>	No	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

North Dublin Bay SAC (003000)	5.36	<i>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</i> <i>Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]</i> <i>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</i> <i>Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]</i> <i>Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]</i> <i>Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</i> <i>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120]</i> <i>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</i> <i>Humid dune slacks [2190]</i> <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii (Petalwort) [1395]</i>	No	No	NPWS (2013). Conservation Objectives: North Dublin Bay SAC 000206. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Baldoyle Bay SAC (000199)	13.5	<i>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</i> <i>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</i> <i>Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]</i> <i>Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]</i>	No	No	NPWS (2012). Conservation Objectives: Baldoyle Bay SAC 000199. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Lambay Island SAC (000204)	21.7	Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]	No	No	NPWS (2024). Conservation Objectives: Lambay Island SAC 000204. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
SPAs					
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)	0.07	<i>Light-bellied Brent Goose</i> (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] <i>Oystercatcher</i> (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] <i>Ringed Plover</i> (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] <i>Grey Plover</i> (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] <i>Knot</i> (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] <i>Sanderling</i> (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] <i>Dunlin</i> (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] <i>Bar-tailed Godwit</i> (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] <i>Redshank</i> (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] <i>Black-headed Gull</i> (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] <i>Roseate Tern</i> (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] <i>Common Tern</i> (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] <i>Arctic Tern</i> (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] <i>Wetland and Waterbirds</i> [A999]	No	No	NPWS 2015 Conservation Objectives: NPWS (2015) South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Dalkey Islands SPA (004172)]	3.19	<i>Roseate Tern (Sterna dougallii) [A192]</i> <i>Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193]</i> <i>Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194]</i>	No	No	NPWS (2024). Conservation Objectives: Dalkey Islands SPA 004172. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
North-west Irish Sea SPA (004236)	5.06	<i>Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) [A001]</i> <i>Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer) [A003]</i> <i>Fulmar (Fulmarus glacialis) [A009]</i> <i>Manx Shearwater (Puffinus puffinus) [A013]</i> <i>Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017]</i> <i>Shag (Phalacrocorax aristotelis) [A018]</i> <i>Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065]</i> <i>Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus)</i> <i>Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182]</i> <i>Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183]</i> <i>Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184]</i> <i>Great Black-backed Gull (Larus marinus) [A187]</i> <i>Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla) [A188]</i> <i>Roseate Tern (Sterna dougallii) [A192]</i> <i>Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193]</i> <i>Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194]</i> <i>Guillemot (Uria aalge) [A199]</i>	No	No	NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: North-west Irish Sea SPA 004236. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

		<i>Razorbill (Alca torda) [A200]</i> <i>Puffin (Fratercula arctica) [A204]</i> <i>Little Gull (Hydrocoloeus minutus) [A862]</i> <i>Little Tern (Sternula albifrons) [A885]</i>			
North Bull Island SPA (004006)	5.29	<i>Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]</i> <i>Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048]</i> <i>Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]</i> <i>Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054]</i> <i>Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130]</i> <i>Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]</i> <i>Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]</i> <i>Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143]</i> <i>Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144]</i> <i>Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149]</i> <i>Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]</i> <i>Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157]</i> <i>Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160]</i> <i>Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162]</i> <i>Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) [A169]</i> <i>Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]</i> <i>Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857]</i>	No	No	NPWS (2015) . Conservation Objectives: North Bull Island SPA 004006. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

		<i>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</i>			
Howth Head Coast SPA (004113)	8.59	<i>Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla) [A188]</i>	No	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Howth Head Coast SPA 004113. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.