

19th December 2025

MARA
2nd Floor,
Menapia House,
Drinagh Business Park,
Drinagh,
Wexford,
Y35RF29
Via email: licence@mara.gov.ie

Request for Observations – MUL Reference: MUL250020

A Chara,

Clare County Council welcomes the opportunity to provide observations in relation to the application by Kilrush Maritime Ltd. for maintenance dredging of the approach channel to Kilrush Marina on the Shannon Estuary, in Kilrush Co. Clare.

Dredging Requirements

The council notes the details pertaining to the dredging campaign which will be completed every 2 years over an 8-year period with an additional dredging campaign proposed for the final year of the licence. It is noted that each dredging campaign will take between 5 and 10 days to complete via plough dredging which is a recognised method used throughout the estuary.

Support for the Project

Clare County Council fully supports the MUL application given the economic importance of Kilrush Marina to the not only the town of Kilrush but to the wider West and North Clare area. Indirectly Kilrush Marina is a key economic driver for the tourism sector with berthing, accommodation and other maritime facilities offered at the marina. The successful operation of the marina is critically dependent on keeping the approach to the marina accessible and safe in terms of navigation. The council is acutely aware of the service the marina provides in terms of access to Scattery Island by the OPW, the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, berthage to the Irish Navel Service and Aran Island Ferries

at times together with the Irish Customs patrol boat and not least access to the boat yard to the rear where many leisure and commercial boats are brought for maintenance and dry docked. It would simply not be possible for the marina or the boat yard to operate should this maintenance dredging not take place in a timely manner.

Consistence with the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

Marina developments have grown in importance and are necessary to cater for the requirements of pleasure craft such as yachts and cruisers. They not only provide services for tourists and residents involved in water-based activities but are also an important mechanism through which visitors can access local towns and villages and their associated services and amenities which is vital to the rural coastal communities of West Clare.

Chapter 9 relates to Tourism, Chapter 12 to the Shannon Estuary and Chapter 13 to Marine and Coastal Zone Management all of which support the economic opportunities which marina's such as Kilrush provide together with the enterprises that it supports through tours, visitors, commercial berthing and more, therefore the application for this maintenance dredging licence aligns with the principles and objectives of the County Development while also ensuring a high level of protection for the natural environment.

CDP Objective 12.16 relates specifically to Marina Developments and states it is an objective of Clare County Council

To facilitate the sustainable development of marinas and associated amenities at appropriate locations along the Shannon Estuary ensuring that all such developments shall not adversely affect species and habitats designated by the Birds and Habitats Directives and is in compliance with all relevant environmental objectives.

The application for a Marine Usage Licence clearly meets this objective through the undertaking of significant site investigations and assessments.

Environmental Assessments

Having reviewed the Natura Impact Statement and the associated ecological reports it is clear that a thorough assessment has been undertaken of the activities which has informed the comprehensive list of Mitigation Measures. The Council is satisfied that through the correct implementation of these measures it removes the risk of significant effects on the Qualifying Interest Features of the Lower River Shannon SAC. Given the multi-year approach to this dredging campaign, ongoing compliance and enforcement of the adherence to the Mitigation Measures will be important and should be conditioned as part of any grant of a Marine Usage Licence by MARA.

In addition, given it is some time since any maintenance or capital dredging has taken place at this location the baseline data collection undertaken to inform the assessments through benthic surveys, sediment transport modelling, transects etc. provide key insights into the condition of the marine species and associated habitats within the dredge location and around Scatterry Island. MARA should consider the warehousing of this data in terms of GIS and other data sources which can be used to inform future maritime applications or the preparation of the forthcoming national DMAP. In addition, given the multi-year approach there will be ongoing data collection through the implementation of

mitigation measures e.g. through the presence of the Marine Mammal Observer where marine mammal records will be recorded and would be a valuable data source for future developments.

Clare County Council looks forward to a positive and timely granting of this Marine Usage Licence for maintenance dredging given its critical requirement for navigational safety predominantly together with ensuring the ongoing operation of not only the marine but also the boatyard to the rear. Their economic importance to West Clare is dependent on the access remaining open.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Quinn".

Helen Quinn
Senior Planner
Planning, Placemaking & Economic Development