Maritime Usage Licence and Planning Advisory Directorate

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination Report

To:	Dr. Alison McCarthy, Senior Marine Advisor	**From:**	Maria O Connell, Marine Analyst
Date:	30/10/2026	**Maritime Usage Licence (Material Amendment) Application No:**	LIC230007MA
Applicant Name:		Dublin City Council	
Applicant Registered Address:		Dublin City Council, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8	
Type of maritime usage activity in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021:		3. Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000.	
Location of proposed maritime usage licence (Material Amendment):		River Dodder, southwest of Tom Clarke Bridge between Britain Quay and Ringsend in Dublin City	
Maritime Usage Licence Material Amendment application received:		15/12/2025	

1. Background

Dublin City Council (the applicant) has applied to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) for a material amendment to Maritime Usage Licence (LIC230007) in accordance with Section 125 of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021 (the MAP Act). Maritime Usage Licence (LIC230007) was issued to Dublin City Council on 25/06/2025 in relation to the undertaking of marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation, falling under Schedule 7(3) of the MAP Act. The objective of that Maritime Usage Licence was to undertake geophysical, geotechnical and structural investigations to inform the design requirements of the Point Bridge and Tom Clarke Bridge Widening Project in Dublin City.

The material amendment requested by the applicant consists of an extension of the Licensed Area by a total of 3,775.39m^2. The objective of the proposed material amendment is to obtain site investigation data to inform on the placement of a proposed tunnel in the River Dodder.

Table 1 Investigation works approved by the original MUL (LIC230007)

Site investigation Detail	Estimated Duration
Geophysical	
Acoustic sub-bottom profiling, marine magnetometer surveys. Multibeam echo sounder surveys using a survey vessel.	2 days 2 days
Geotechnical	
7 boreholes (rotary core) using a rotary drilling plant mounted on a jack up barge and concrete coring of the concrete slab at the bridge bascule pier. Rotary coring will be to a depth of 15–30 m. Boreholes will be concurrently. 8 Grab Samples.	Maximum of 3 months
Structural Inspections	
Dive surveys, ultrasonic testing of chloride testing, defects mapping, underwater point cloud survey.	7 days 2 days

2. Description of material amendment and local site characteristics

2.1 Brief description of the material amendment

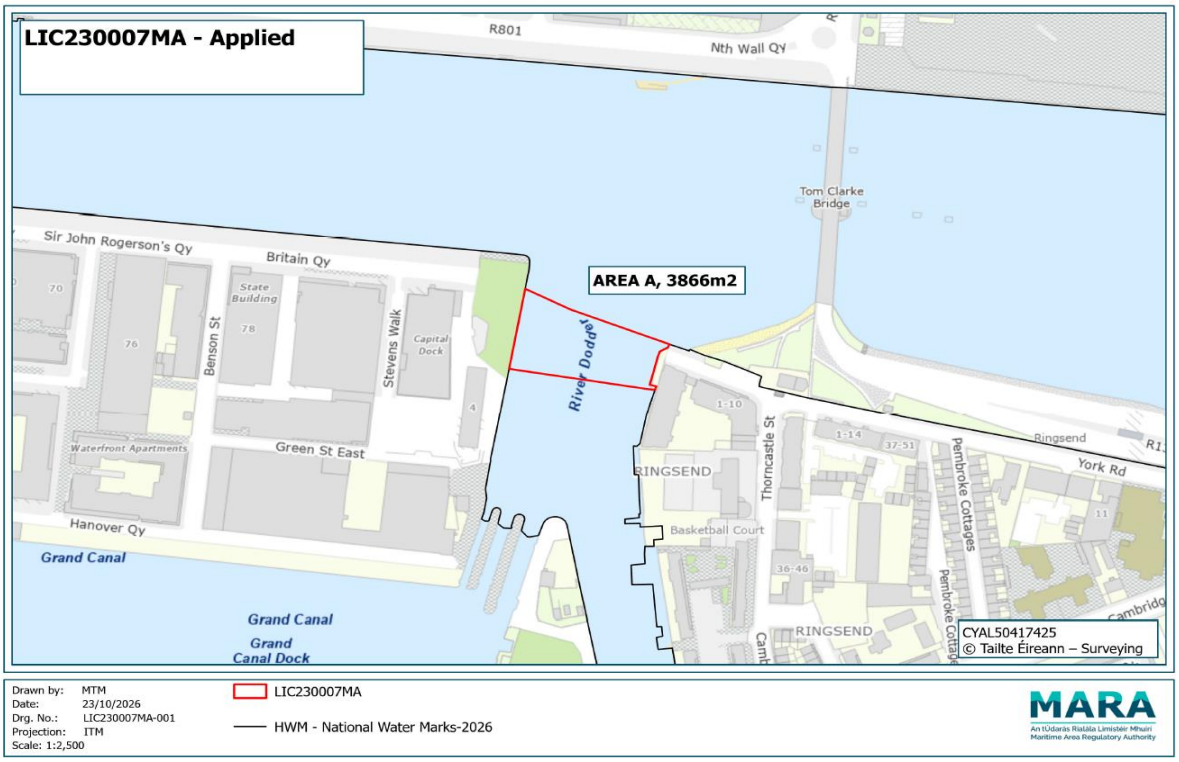
The Licensed Area of LIC230007 is 36,914.81m^2. The proposed extension via this material amendment includes an additional area of 3,775.39m^2. The proposed material amendment is located directly to the south and adjacent to the area licensed under LIC230007 which is proximal to the Thomas Clarke Bridge between Britain Quay and Ringsend (See Figure 1). Table 2 summarises the proposed material amendment activities.

The additional marine boreholes are to be undertaken sequentially and not concurrently to the previously approved marine boreholes for LIC230007. A licence duration of two years was granted for LIC230007 on the 25/06/2025, no change to this timeframe has been requested via this material amendment application.

Table 2 Summary of the proposed material amendment site investigations.

Geotechnical Investigations	Estimated duration
4 marine boreholes using a rotary drilling plant or Geobor-S system mounted on a jack up barge. Drilling is proposed to a depth of 30m. A jack up barge either 18mx12m or 18mx18m with 27m legs is proposed for this activity.	4 weeks (as per application form)

Figure 1 – Location of the proposed material amendment



2.2 Brief description of the site characteristics

The proposed material amendment is to be undertaken within the tidal reaches of the River Liffey, which is defined as a transitional waterbody via the Water Framework Directive (IE_EA_090_0300: Liffey Estuary Lower). The location of the proposed extension to the Licensed Area occurs at the confluence between the River Dodder and the River Liffey where the substrate is characterised by both intertidal mudflats and subtidal muds.

There is no spatial overlap between the proposed extension to the Licensed Area and designated sites however the South Dublin Bay SAC and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA are nearby (circa 1.5km). The River Liffey is utilised by recreational and commercial vessels. Dublin Port is located to the north of the existing Licensed Area LIC230007 which generates a high volume of commercial marine traffic. The landward hinterland of the proposed extension to the Licensed Area is urbanised with commercial buildings/operations, road corridors, residential areas and utility operations.

3. Identification of relevant European sites

The proposed material amendment is subject to screening for appropriate assessment in accordance with Regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, to determine if it alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on any European sites, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the sites. The applicant submitted an Addendum report on the Supporting Information for Screening of Appropriate Assessment (SISAA) report (submitted in relation to the original licence) in support of the application which was referred to during this assessment.

The proposed material amendment is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s). The European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) listed on Table 3 have been considered for appropriate assessment, given the nature, scale and zone of influence of the material amendment, the conservation objectives of the European sites and using the SourcePathway-Receptor model.

Table 3 - Identification of relevant European sites, their qualifying interests and site-specific conservation objectives. Those Qualifying Interests marked in bold have been screened in for Stage 2 appropriate assessment.

European site & site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site-specific conservation objectives
Special Areas of Conservation					
South Dublin Bay SAC	<2km	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	No significant SPR	No	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Rockabill to Dalkey SAC [IE003000]	<10	*Reefs [1170]* --- ***Phocoena phocoena (*Harbour Porpoise) *[1351]***	No significant SPR --- Yes: Potential disturbance from underwater noise.	Yes	NPWS 2013. Conservation Objectives: Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Lambay Island SAC [IE000204]	25–30	Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] --- ***Phocoena phocoena (*Harbour Porpoise) *[1351]***	No significant SPR --- ---	Yes	NPWS 2024 Conservation Objectives: Lambay Island SAC 000204. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

		***Halichoerus grypus (*Grey Seal) [1364]** ***Phoca vitulina (*Harbour Seal) [1365]**	Yes: Potential disturbance from underwater noise.		
Codling Fault Zone SAC [003015]	35–40	Submarine structures made by leaking gases [1180] --- ***Phocoena phocoena (*Harbour Porpoise) [1351]**	No significant SPR --- Yes: Potential disturbance from underwater noise.	Yes	NPWS 2025 Conservation Objectives: Codling Fault Zone SAC 003015. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Blackwater Bank SAC [002953]	~100	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110] --- ***Phocoena phocoena (*Harbour Porpoise) [1351]**	No significant SPR --- Yes: Potential disturbance from underwater noise	Yes	NPWS 2024 Conservation Objectives: Blackwater Bank SAC 002953. Version 3. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Carnsore Point SAC [002269]	130–150	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Reefs [1170] --- ***Phocoena phocoena* (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]**	No significant SPR --- Yes: Potential disturbance from underwater noise	Yes	NPWS 2024 Citation: NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Carnsore Point SAC 002269. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Special Protection Areas					
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA [004024]	<2	Light-bellied Brent Goose *(Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]* *Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130]*			NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024. Version 1. National Parks and

		Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula) [A137]* Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]* Knot (*Calidris canutus) [A143]* Sanderling (*Calidris alba) [A144]* Dunlin (*Calidris alpina) [A149]* Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica) [A157]* Redshank (*Tringa totanus) [A162]* Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] - Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* [A179] Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii)* [A192] Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo)* [A193] Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea)* [A194]	No significant SPR	No	Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
North Bull Island SPA [004006]	<5	Light-bellied Brent Goose *(Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]* Shelduck *(Tadorna tadorna) [A048]* Teal *(Anas crecca) [A052]* Pintail *(Anas acuta) [A054]* Oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus) [A130]* Golden Plover *(Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]* Grey Plover *(Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]* Knot *(Calidris canutus) [A143]* Sanderling *(Calidris alba) [A144]* Dunlin *(Calidris alpina) [A149]* Black-tailed Godwit *(Limosa limosa) [A156]*	No significant SPR	No	NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: North Bull Island SPA 004006. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht**.**

		Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica) [A157]* Curlew *(Numenius arquata) [A160]* Redshank *(Tringa totanus) [A162]* Turnstone *(Arenaria interpres) [A169]* Shoveler *(Spatula clypeata) [A857]* Wetland and Waterbirds [A999*]* Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]*			
North West Irish Sea SPA [004236]	<6	Red-throated Diver *(Gavia stellata) [A001]* Great Northern Diver *(Gavia immer) [A003]* Fulmar *(Fulmarus glacialis) [A009]* Manx Shearwater *(Puffinus puffinus) [A013]* Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017]* Shag *(Phalacrocorax aristotelis) [A018]* Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra) [A065]* Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]* Common Gull (*Larus canus) [A182]* Lesser Black-backed Gull *(Larus fuscus) [A183]* Herring Gull *(Larus argentatus) [A184]* Great Black-backed Gull *(Larus marinus) [A187]* Kittiwake *(Rissa tridactyla) [A188]* Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii) [A192]* Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo) [A193]* Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea) [A194]*	No significant SPR	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**.**

		Guillemot *(Uria aalge) [A199]* Razorbill *(Alca torda) [A200]* Puffin *(Fratercula arctica) [A204]* Little Gull *(Hydrocoloeus minutus) [A862]* Little Tern *(Sternula albifrons) [A885]*			
Ireland's Eye SPA [004117]	10–15	Cormoran*t (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017]* Herring Gull *(Larus argentatus) [A184]* Kittiwake *(Rissa tridactyla) [A188]* Guillemo*t (Uria aalge) [A199]* Razorbill *(Alca torda) [A200]*	No significant SPR	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Ireland's Eye SPA 004117. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Howth Head Coast SPA [004113]	10–15	Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla) [A188]	No significant SPR	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Howth Head Coast SPA 004113. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Lambay Island SPA [004069]	15–20	Greylag Goose (*Anser anser) [A043]* Fulmar *(Fulmarus glacialis) [A009]* Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017]* Sha*g (Phalacrocorax aristotelis) [A018]* Lesser Black-backed Gull *(Larus fuscus) [A183]* Herring Gull *(Larus argentatus) [A184]* Kittiwake *(Rissa tridactyla) [A188]* Guillemot *(Uria aalge) [A199]* Razorbill *(Alca torda) [A200]*	No significant SPR	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Lambay Island SPA 004069. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

		Puffin *(Fratercula arctica) [A204]*			
Skerries Islands SPA [004122]	25–30	Red-throated Diver *(Gavia stellata) [A001]* Great Northern Diver *(Gavia immer) [A003]* Fulmar *(Fulmarus glacialis) [A009]* Manx Shearwater *(Puffinus puffinus) [A013]* Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017]* Shag *(Phalacrocorax aristotelis) [A018]* Common Scoter *(Melanitta nigra) [A065]* Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]* Common Gull *(Larus canus) [A182]* Lesser Black-backed Gull *(Larus fuscus) [A183]* Great Black-backed Gull *(Larus marinus) [A187]* Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla) [A188]* Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii) [A192]* Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo) [A193]* Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea) [A194]* Guillemot *(Uria aalge) [A199]* Razorbill *(Alca torda) [A200]* Puffin *(Fratercula arctica) [A204]* Little Gull *(Hydrocoloeus minutus) [A862]* Little Tern *(Sternula albifrons) [A885]* Herring Gull *(Larus argentatus) [A184]*	No significant SPR	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.

River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA [004158]	30–35	Red-throated Diver *(Gavia stellata) [A001]* Great Northern Diver *(Gavia immer) [A003]* Fulmar *(Fulmarus glacialis) [A009]* Manx Shearwater *(Puffinus puffinus) [A013]* Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017]* Shag *(Phalacrocorax aristotelis) [A018]* Common Scoter *(Melanitta nigra) [A065]* Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]* Common Gull *(Larus canus) [A182]* Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183] *Herring Gull* (Larus argentatus) [A184] Great Black-backed Gull (Larus marinus) [A187] Kittiwake *(Rissa tridactyla) [A188]* Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii) [A192]* Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo) [A193]* Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea) [A194]* Guillemot *(Uria aalge) [A199]* *R*azorbill *(Alca torda) [A200]* Puffin *(Fratercula arctica) [A204]* Little Gull *(Hydrocoloeus minutus) [A862]* Little Tern *(Sternula albifrons) [A885]*	No significant SPR	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**.**
Dalkey Islands SPA (004172)	<12	Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii) [A192]* Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo) [A193]* Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea) [A194]*	No significant SPR	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Dalkey Islands SPA 004172. Version 1. National Parks

					and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

4. Assessment of likely significant effects

Table 4 identification of potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of European sites, taking into account the nature and scale of the proposed maritime usage.

Potential Impacts	**Possible significance of Potential impacts (duration, magnitude, etc.)**
Disturbance from underwater noise	It is considered that there is potential for sound sources from the proposed material amendment (site investigations) to be at a level and duration that could cause a significant negative impact on marine mammals.
Physical disturbance of habitat and habitat loss	The potential for habitat disturbance, loss and associated declines in water quality as a result of the proposed site investigations is not considered likely to cause significant effects on protected habitats due to the scale, location and duration of site investigations.
Visual and above water noise disturbance	Potential temporal impacts on birds or other species are not considered likely to contribute to significant impacts on protected habitats and species given the nature, location and duration of the proposed site investigations.

In-combination effects

The potential impacts of the proposed material amendment must be considered individually and also in combination with other plans or projects. All types of plans or projects that could, in combination with this application, have a significant effect have been considered. This in-combination assessment has been undertaken using professional and scientific judgement and is assessed primarily in terms of potential spatial and temporal impacts.

The spatial scope of the in-combination assessment is the area of the material amendment plus a 2km precautionary buffer zone. The temporal scope of the in-combination assessment is the remaining term of the licence (LIC230007) which is 8 months.

A search of relevant databases, including EPA (Leap), An Coimisiún Pleanála, Foreshore Unit, MARA and Dublin City Planning was undertaken on 28/10/2026. Table 5 below outlines those activities which are considered to have the potential to act in combination with the proposed maritime usage.

Table 5 List of projects which were considered to have potential in-combination impacts on European sites.

Application Ref.	Project description	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	Project Status
MAC20230034	Ringsend to City Centre Core Bus Corridor	0.01 km	Consented
MAC260012	Construction of a pedestrian and cyclist bridge	0.05 km	Applied
MAC240014	Construction of a pedestrian and cyclist bridge	0.2 km	Consented
MAC240028	Outfall at Sir John Rogerson's Quay	0.49 km	Consented
2022-MAC-006	Offshore Windfarm	1.58 km	Consented
2022-MAC-003 /004	Offshore Windfarm	1.59 km	Consented
MAC240013	Replacement of high voltage underground cables.	2.32 km	Consented
LIC230007	Environmental survey and ground investigation works	Directly adjacent	Licensed
MUL260049	Survey to support a strategic modelling study of water currents	Overlap	Applied
MUL240010	Site investigations offshore wind.	1.55km	Licensed
MUL230034	Site investigations offshore wind.	1.55km	Licensed
MUL260055	Site investigation MetroLink Project	1.75km	Applied
FS004459	Maintenance tunnel East Link Toll bridge	0.07 km	Licensed
FS007132	Dredging MP2	0.19 km	Licensed
FS007164	Capital Dredging Dublin Port	0.74km	Licensed
FS007164	Dredging	1.1km	Licensed
FS006893	Dublin Port MP2 Project	1.52km	Licensed
FS007546	Site Investigations for Wind Farm	1.58km	Licensed
FS007188	Site Investigations for Wind Farm	1.68km	Licensed

The following plans, related to the development of the maritime environment were also considered:

- Dublin Port Masterplan 2040
- Dublin City Council Development Plan 2022–2028
- Dublin City Council -Climate Neutral Dublin 2030
- Climate Action Plan 2025
- The Climate Action Plan 2025.
- The Water Action Plan 2024

These plans promote sustainable development and integrated management planning in the maritime environment. It is unlikely that any of these plans will result in a negative in-combination effect on the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites as they lack specific mechanisms to enable assessment. Likely significant in-combination effects between this application and the projects listed on Table 5 on the conservation objectives of the European sites cannot be excluded at this stage given the potential for underwater noise in combination impacts.

Were mitigation measures considered during the screening process?

No

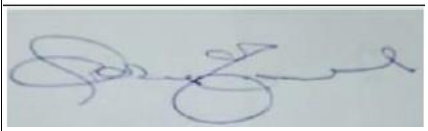
5. Screening Determination Statement

The assessment of significant effects:

Having considered the legal framework applicable to appropriate assessment, the information on file, and having regard to:

- The nature, scale, duration of the proposed material amendment.
- The distance to the nearest European sites
- Possible disturbance from underwater noise
- The potential for in-combination effects with other projects

it was concluded that the proposed material amendment by Dublin City Council, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8 to amend their current maritime usage licence in order to carry out **marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000**, at the River Dodder in Dublin City (**LIC230013MA**) will require Stage 2 appropriate assessment. It cannot 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 a European site.

Signature and Date of Recommending Officer	 Maria O Connell Marine Analyst	03/11/2026
Signature and Date of Decision Maker	 Dr. Alison McCarthy Senior Marine Advisor	03/11/2026