Attachment 4.1

Consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the objectives of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), published in 2021, sets out Ireland's overarching spatial plan for the sustainable development of the maritime area. The proposed maintenance dredging of the approach channel to Kilrush Marina has been assessed against the framework's relevant policies. Table 4.1.1 demonstrates how the project is consistent with, and in several cases actively supports, the achievement of relevant policy objectives. The proposed Maritime Usage ensures safe navigation for marina users, supports tourism and recreation, and contributes to the resilience of the local coastal economy. No significant effects are anticipated on biodiversity, fisheries, or aquaculture. The proposed Maritime Usage therefore aligns with national marine planning policy and the long-term objectives for the Shannon Estuary.

Table 4.1.1

NMPF Policy	Relevant Sub-Objective	Consistency with Kilrush Marina Dredging
Environmental – Ocean Health		
Biodiversity Policy 2	Avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts on habitats, species and designated sites.	Compliant – please see Attachment 4.6 for Consistency of Maritime Usage with Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Ireland's Marine Strategy.
Protected Marine Sites Policy 1	Ensure human activities do not adversely affect the integrity of SACs and SPAs.	Compliant – please see Attachment 4.6 for Consistency of Maritime Usage with Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Ireland's Marine Strategy.
MSFD Descriptors – Biodiversity & Food Webs	Maintain biological diversity and ecosystem health consistent with Good Environmental Status.	Compliant – please see Attachment 4.6 for Consistency of Maritime Usage with Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Ireland's Marine Strategy.
Climate Change Policy 1	Plan and manage activities to enhance climate resilience.	Dredging maintains existing marina operations without new infrastructure, supporting adaptive reuse and resilience of marine facilities under changing conditions.
Social – Engagement with the Sea		
Seascape and Landscape Policy 1	Protect distinctive seascapes and landscapes by avoiding or mitigating adverse impacts.	Dredging is temporary, vessel-based, and confined to an established approach channel; no onshore works or long-term visual impacts occur.
Heritage Assets Policy 1	Safeguard underwater and coastal cultural heritage from adverse impacts.	Archaeological assessment for previous DaS permit confirmed no recorded underwater heritage in the dredge area; a precautionary watching brief will be maintained.

Tourism Policy 1	Position Ireland as a world-class sustainable coastal and marine tourism destination.	Maintaining safe marina access supports visiting yachts and sailing tourism along the Wild Atlantic Way.
Tourism Policy 2	Support coastal communities through sustainable marine-based tourism.	Kilrush Marina sustains local businesses and hospitality in West Clare; dredging enables continued operation and associated economic activity.
Sport and Recreation Policy 1	Promote sustainable water-based recreation that benefits wellbeing.	The marina supports sailing, angling, and kayaking; dredging ensures ongoing safe access for these activities.
Sport and Recreation Policy 2	Ensure safe navigation for marine sport and leisure.	Maintaining navigable depths in the approach channel protects safety for recreational sailors and visiting yachts.
Access Policy 2	Safeguard and enhance public access to the maritime area for recreation and tourism.	Dredging keeps Kilrush Marina accessible to local and visiting users, safeguarding its function as a community access point to the Shannon Estuary.
Rural Coastal and Island Communities Policy 1	Support diversification and resilience of rural coastal economies.	The marina underpins tourism and recreation in West Clare; dredging ensures continued employment and local economic resilience.
Social Benefits Policy 1	Promote marine-related activities that support wellbeing and identity.	Marina operations foster community engagement with sailing and estuary use, contributing to culture and social cohesion.
Sector-Related Policies		
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 1	Safeguard the operation of ports, harbours, and marinas as essential infrastructure.	Kilrush Marina is a regional hub for sailing and tourism; dredging ensures safe navigation and continuity of service.
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 7	Support maintenance dredging subject to assessment and best practice dredge material management.	The project includes an appropriate assessment and a Natura Impact Statement, uses best-practice plough dredging methods and will also be subject to a Dumping at Sea permit application process.
Fisheries Policy 1	Safeguard sustainable commercial fisheries and avoid significant disruption to fishing activity.	No active fisheries operate in the approach channel. Dredging is short in duration (5–10 days per campaign) and commercial fishing effort is concentrated in the main estuary channel, so no disruption is expected.
Aquaculture Policy 1	Support sustainable aquaculture development while avoiding conflicts with other marine uses.	The closest aquaculture is shellfish farms in Poulnasherry Bay. Hydrodynamic modelling shows suspended solids disperse into the main channel and dilute quickly, so no effect on aquaculture sites is expected.

Attachment 4.1 Appendix 1 – NMS1 report from DaS application for consideration of underwater archaeology

ANNEX 3: NMS Forms 1 and 2

NMS FORM 1

REQUEST: applicant's case that no archaeological monitoring is required for the proposed dumping at sea (DAS) activity.

To note:

- See criteria for the assessment by the National Monuments Service of the request submitted by the applicant in the DAS Permit Application Guidance Note (Annex 3).

The following details need to be included as part of the DAS permit application to the EPA.

1. Maintenance loading/dumping activities have been undertaken for the area in question in recent times and to the same depth (i.e. not historic dredging works)

1a. Details:
This Application is to enable Maintenance Dredging to be carried out to the approach channel to Kilrush Marina. This channel was formed by Capital Dredging in 1990-1992, and has been maintained by dredging since in at least 9 separate dredging campaigns.

1b. Location details: Supply separate map or chart if required, to indicate full extent of area.
The subject area is illustrated on drawing no 15003-5303 (Attachment D2) which forms part of this application

2. Area (including loading area and/or dumping area) has been the focus of an Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment (UAIA) and/or full-time archaeological monitoring previously with no archaeological findings/discoveries:

To note: Archaeological results to date will be taken into account when assessing this request, as well as the archaeological potential of the area.

Note: where no loading is proposed (e.g., in the case of plough dredging, water injection dredging or side-cast dredging which are included in the definition of "dumping" in the Dumping at Sea Act), Section 2a should be left blank and all information on the proposed operations should be provided in 2b Dumping area below.

2a. Loading area: Provide area, scale and summary of archaeological results:

2b. Dumping area: Provide area, scale and summary of archaeological result

See response to question 5 below

2c. Name and details of Archaeological Consultant who undertook the monitoring:

- Name of Archaeological Consultant: N/A
- Archaeological Excavation License number: N/A

2d. Date of Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment (UAIA) if relevant and Archaeological Monitoring Report as submitted to the National Monuments Service:

Archaeological Assessment Report undertaken by Geomara – 2014

Archaeo-geophysical Report by Geomara - 2018

3. Area is made ground/reclaimed/was excavated out to and now comprises rock/introduced/modern material only:

3a. Detail

Between 1990 and 1992 during Marina construction an impounding embankment was built at the mouth of the harbour, with double lock gate access through the embankment. A 250m long, 20m wide channel was dredged from the lock gates seaward to a depth of 2.5m below chart datum. Soil and rock were removed.
In subsequent years this channel has silted up, and has required maintenance dredging to maintain the navigable depth.

3b. Date works done:

The capital dredging was carried out between 1990 and 1992.
The previous Marina owners, SFADCo, carried out at least 4 maintenance dredging campaigns between 1992 and 2014. By grab dredger.
The current owner Kilrush Maritime Ltd, (previously L&M Keating Ltd) carried out maintenance dredging in 2015, 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024. Ploughing was used in all cases.

4. Area is predominantly boulder clay/bedrock/rock outcrop:

4a. Details:

The channel was excavated in glacial till and weathered mudstone. It periodically fills with water suspended silt and fine-grained sands which are the subject of the proposed dredging consent process.

5. Statement by applicant outlining case as to why no archaeological monitoring of loading and/or dumping works is necessary for this current programme of works:

In 2014 L&M Keating Ltd commissioned an archaeological assessment requested by the Environment Protection Agency as additional information following a Dumping at Sea Permit (DaS) application (Reg No. S0020-01) in relation to proposed dredging works. The assessment aimed to ascertain the presence of archaeological remains within the proposed dredge pocket and assess the potential for any unrecorded remains to be present. The recommendations of the assessment included a marine geophysical survey be undertaken and the results reviewed and assessed by a marine archaeologist to identify any potential cultural heritage remains (Geomara 2014).

Subsequently, the condition as part of the 2017 DaS permit Soo20-02 required that:

4.6 Archaeology

4.6.1 The permit holder shall engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeogeophysicist to undertake a detailed and comprehensive geophysical survey of the Plough Dredging area to the specifications and resolution for the detection of underwater cultural heritage, under Detection Device Licence from the National Monuments Service. A detailed report, to include desktop study entitled, *'Archaeological Impact Assessment of Proposed Maintenance Dredging in respect of Kilrush Marina'*, dated 5th December 2014, and full results of the geophysical survey, including recommendations for any further archaeological mitigation, as necessary, shall be submitted to the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for consideration and formal comment prior to the first dredging campaign.

4.6.2 The permit holder shall notify the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht prior to the commencement of the permitted dumping activity.

4.6.3 The permit holder shall comply with the archaeological monitoring requirements of the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and shall undertake any further archaeological mitigation measures required by the Underwater Archaeological Unit, as necessary.

4.6.4 The permit holder shall immediately notify the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht if any material of archaeological potential is encountered during the course of the permitted activities.

The marine geophysical survey and archaeological review/assessment of the data was subsequently undertaken in 2018 (Detection Device License Number 18R0166) and the report concluded that:

'Due to the limited potential impact of the dredging which has been demonstrated by the desk study and the high resolution geophysical survey and also having regard to the proposed dredge methodology it is recommended that no further archaeological mitigation measures are necessary to mitigate the

impact of the proposed dredging of the pre existing approach channel.' (Geomara 2018, 27).

It is therefore concluded that archaeological monitoring of the loading/dumping activities is not necessary for the current proposed dredging works.

Dr Dan Atkinson
AMS Consultancy Group,

October 2025