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| Project: | Balbriggan Harbour Dredging | | | | | | |
| Client | Fingal County Council | | | | | | |
| Subject | MARA MUL Application – National or European Strategic or Policy Objectives | | | | | | |
| Orig. by | DM | Appr. by | AA | Date | 13/02/2026 | Doc. Ref: | C0203-AYE-XX-ZZ-TN-MA-0411 |

National or European Strategic or Policy

Ireland 2040 Plan: National Planning Framework

In 2019, the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government is published the Ireland 2040 Plan: National Planning Framework (NPF), replacing the National Spatial Strategy. It is intended that the NPF will focus on integrating Ireland’s economic development, spatial planning, infrastructure planning and social considerations. It promotes environmentally focused planning at local level to tackle climate change and the implementation of appropriate measures to mitigate existing issues, guiding regional and local development plans

It also underscores the strategic importance of ports in enabling economic growth and regional development. The proposed maritime usage aligns with the NPF as harbour maintenance is essential to keep coastal communities connected and sustain local economic sectors in an environmentally sustainable manner.

National Ports Policy 2013

The core objective of the National Ports Policy (NPP) is to facilitate a competitive market for maritime transport services. The policy identifies that the long-term international trend in ports and shipping is toward increased consolidation of resources to achieve optimum efficiencies of scale. It also recognises ports as essential infrastructure for connectivity and commerce that can support regional and national economic activity.

The proposed maritime usages ensure safe navigability and operational reliability of Balbriggan Harbour aligning with the NPP 2013.

EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directive

EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (known as the ‘Habitats Directive’) protects habitats and species of European nature conservation importance. Together with Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the ‘Birds Directive’), the Habitats Directive establishes a network of nationally important sites designated for their ecological status. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Internationally important wetlands designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention are also afforded the same protection as SPAs and SACs.

The Project is subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with the EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (known as the ‘Habitats Directive’), given the proximity to European Sites and the nature of the work resulting in potentially significant effects on these.



The AA has been prepared as well as a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) for the proposed maritime usages and accompanies this license application. Therefore, the proposed maritime usages are compliant with the EU habitats and Birds Directive.