TECHNICAL NOTE

Fingal Coastal Way

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National Marine Planning Framework Objective Response	5188509	September 2026

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Attachment 4.1 – National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) Objective Response

1. Introduction

The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate how the proposed maritime usage aligns with the objectives and policies of Ireland's National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). The responses to the NMPF Objectives have been categorised under the overarching marine planning policies (OMPPs) high-level objectives – Environmental, Economic and Social.

Due to the scale and limited nature of the proposed works, not all objectives and policies contained within the NMPF are directly relevant to the proposed maritime usage. Accordingly, this assessment focuses on the relevant overarching marine planning policy headings and key sectoral marine planning policies, and demonstrates how the proposed works align with the NMPF's Environmental, Economic, Social and Sectoral objectives. The level of assessment has been prepared in accordance with the principle of proportionality underpinning the NMPF and reflects the temporary and small-scale nature of the proposed works.

1.1 Project Details

The Fingal Coastal Way is a proposed 32 km coastal greenway being developed by Fingal County Council to provide a high-quality walking and cycling route between Donabate and the County Meath boundary north of Balbriggan. The scheme will form part of the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (Route FG1/N5) and will connect with the proposed Broadmeadow Way Greenway at Newbridge Demesne.

The scheme is divided into a number of sections and aims to improve active travel, recreation and tourism opportunities along the Fingal coastline through the provision of a safe, attractive and environmentally sensitive route.

The proposed Ground Investigation (GI) works at Rogerstown Estuary are required to inform the design and assessment of the proposed estuary crossing and associated infrastructure.

The proposed GI works comprise geotechnical and geophysical surveys, including boreholes, trial pits and associated investigations necessary to inform the design of the proposed Fingal Coastal Way infrastructure, including the proposed Rogerstown Estuary Bridge, coastal protection works, retaining structures and active travel route.

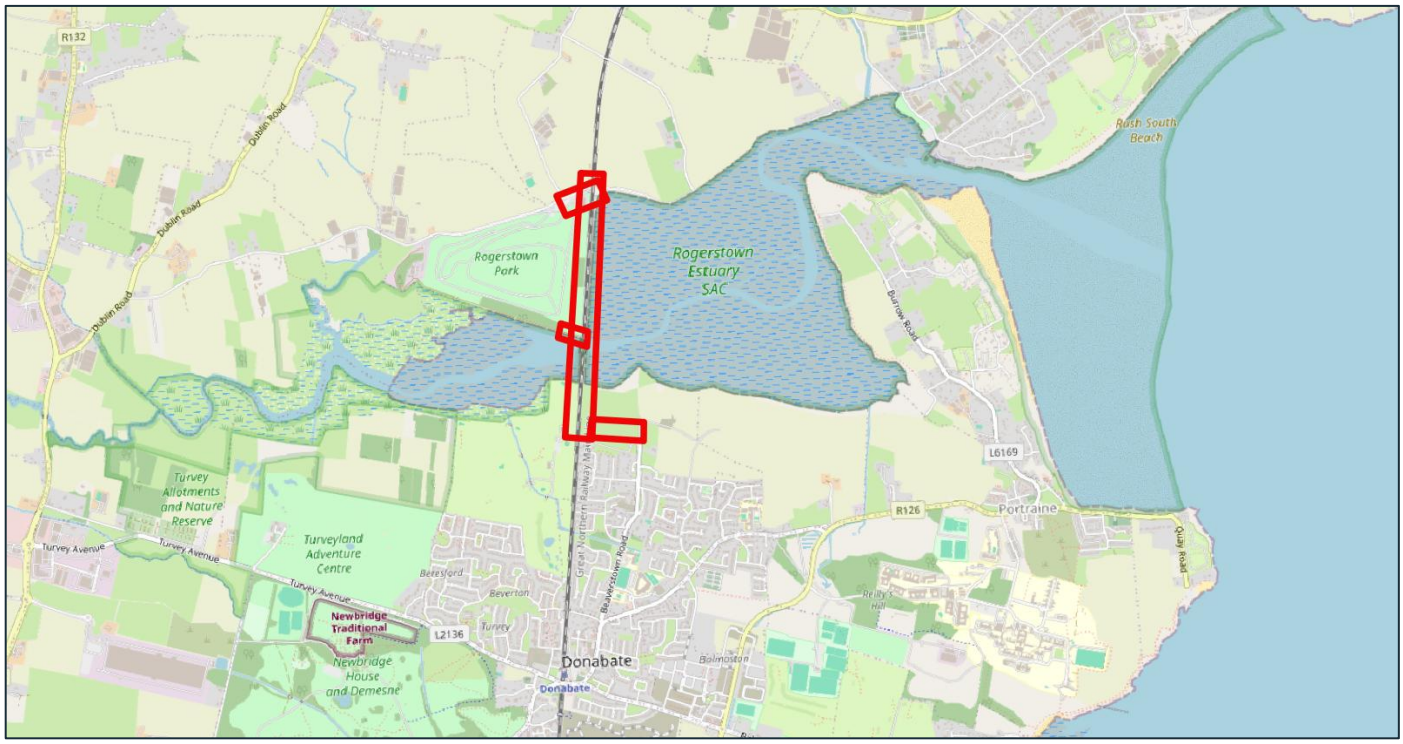
1.2 Description of Site

This application refers to Section 2 of the Fingal Coastal Way, extending for approximately 3.1km from Donabate to Rogerstown Park. The scheme includes two new bridges, reinforced earth retaining structures and a new sea wall. The scheme will comprise of a 3m to 4m wide greenway accommodating both pedestrians and cyclists.

The starting point of the proposed route is at the junction of the Beaverstown Road and Kingsland in Donabate. The route extends northward before travelling west, crossing the existing Dublin to Belfast railway line at Beaverstown Golf Club. From there, it travels northwards adjacent to the existing railway line, crossing Rogerstown Estuary and through Rogerstown Park, where it terminates at the northeast side of the park, adjacent to Baleally Lane in Rush.

The ground investigation is required in order to understand the ground conditions and soil parameters for the design of the proposed route and the key structures along the scheme. The investigation area is shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Aerial image of the Site (Open Street Maps)



2. Objectives Compliance

The proposed maritime usage is temporary, site-specific and investigative in nature. The works are required to obtain baseline geotechnical and environmental information to facilitate the environmentally responsible design of the proposed Fingal Coastal Way Scheme. The proposed investigations will not result in permanent occupation of the maritime area and any interaction with the marine environment will be localised and temporary.

Table 1 below summarises the proposed works compliance with the NMPF overarching policies.

Table 1 - NMPF Policies and Objectives Compliance

Policy Grouping	Compliance Commentary
Overarching Marine Planning Policy	
Environmental – Ocean Health Policy Headings ▪ Environmental – Ocean Health ▪ Biodiversity ▪ Protected Marine Sites ▪ Non-Indigenous Species ▪ Water Quality ▪ Sea-floor Integrity ▪ Marine Litter ▪ Underwater Noise ▪ Air Quality ▪ Climate Change	The proposed Ground Investigation (GI) works are located within and adjacent to the Rogerstown Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA), and have therefore been developed with environmental protection as a primary consideration. The MUL application is accompanied by the relevant environmental assessments which consider potential effects on designated sites, protected habitats and species, and identify appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or minimise environmental impacts. The proposed investigations are temporary, localised and non-extractive in nature, and are required solely to obtain geotechnical and environmental information to support the design of the Fingal Coastal Way scheme. The works will not involve dredging, reclamation, disposal of material at sea, extraction of marine resources within the maritime area. Any disturbance to marine sediments, habitats or species will be limited in extent, temporary in duration and fully reversible. The project risk assessment identifies the potential presence of invasive species within parts of the study area and requires appropriate controls to prevent their inadvertent spread during the investigation works. The risk of introducing or spreading non-native invasive species will be managed through the adherence to all good practice Check Clean Dry procedures from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (available via https://invasives.ie/). Underwater noise associated with the proposed works will be limited in scale, duration and intensity and will not result in significant impacts on marine fauna. Any potential effects will be temporary and localised. In relation to water quality, the investigations will not result in permanent changes to the seabed, water column or hydrological characteristics of Rogerstown Estuary. With regard to air quality and climate change, the scale and duration of the proposed GI works are such that emissions associated with plant and equipment will be limited and temporary. Furthermore, the information obtained through the investigations will inform the design of the Fingal Coastal Way Scheme, which includes project

Policy Grouping	Compliance Commentary
	objectives relating to sustainable development and the consideration of climate change and coastal change within the future design process. **The proposed maritime usage is therefore considered to be consistent with the Overarching Marine Planning Policies relating to Environmental – Ocean Health.**
Economic – Thriving Maritime Economy Policy Headings ▪ Co-existence ▪ Infrastructure	The proposed maritime usage include ground investigation works of limited duration and scale to inform the design of the Fingal Coastal Way Scheme. The works will have a small spatial footprint, will not permanently occupy marine space nor result in any long-term interference with other marine users. The investigations will provide essential geotechnical and environmental information to support the design of the proposed Rogerstown Estuary crossing and associated active travel infrastructure. As an enabling element of the wider Fingal Coastal Way scheme, the works support the development of infrastructure that will improve connectivity, recreation and tourism opportunities along the Fingal coastline. No aquaculture sites, port operations, or energy infrastructure overlap with the survey area. Where required, standard Notices to Mariners and appropriate charting information will be issued. **Therefore, the proposed maritime usage aligns with the NMPF objective of supporting a thriving maritime economy and facilitating appropriate marine infrastructure development.**

Policy Grouping	Compliance Commentary
Social – Engagement with the Sea Policy Headings ▪ Access ▪ Employment ▪ Heritage Assets ▪ Rural Coastal Communities ▪ Seascape and Landscape ▪ Social Benefits Transboundary	The proposed GI works will not increase or restrict public access to the maritime area and are temporary, localised and limited in duration. The works will have no permanent impact on seascape, landscape or visual amenity, and all investigation locations will be reinstated upon completion. The investigations will provide essential information to support the design and future delivery of the Fingal Coastal Way scheme, which will improve coastal connectivity, recreation, active travel and tourism opportunities along the Fingal coastline. The works will also assist in identifying environmental and heritage constraints to ensure these are appropriately considered during the design process. Due to the limited extent and temporary nature of the proposed works, no impacts on coastal communities or existing social benefits are anticipated. **The proposed maritime usage is therefore aligned with the Overarching Marine Planning Policies – Social: Engagement with the Sea, and no significant adverse social impacts are expected to arise.**
Sectoral Marine Planning Policy	
Tourism	The proposed works will provide essential geotechnical information to support the design and future delivery of the Fingal Coastal Way scheme. The wider project will create a continuous coastal walking and cycling route between Donabate and Balbriggan, improving access to the coastline and enhancing recreational and tourism opportunities along the Fingal coast. The scheme supports the NMPF Tourism sector objective of developing sustainable tourism infrastructure that encourages access to and enjoyment of the marine environment while protecting environmental and heritage assets. **As an enabling element of the wider Fingal Coastal Way scheme, the proposed maritime usage is considered consistent with the Sectoral Marine Planning Policies – Tourism.**

3. Conclusion

The proposed Ground Investigation works for the Fingal Coastal Way Scheme are temporary, low-impact and necessary to inform the sustainable design of infrastructure at Rogerstown Estuary. The works have been developed with appropriate environmental safeguards and will not result in significant adverse impacts on marine ecology, water quality, designated sites or other marine users.

The proposed works:

- Protect biodiversity, water quality and air quality through implementation of appropriate environmental management measures.
- Facilitate the future delivery of strategic active travel and tourism infrastructure.
- Support the promotion of long-term economic, social and recreational benefits for local communities.
- Will not result in significant or permanent impacts on the marine environment.

The proposed maritime usage is therefore considered to be consistent with the objectives and policies of the National Marine Planning Framework.