

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION AND CONCLUSION STATEMENT

Project reference: FS007028 Drogheda Port Company – maintenance dredging within the commercial estuary of the River Boyne and the disposal of the material at sea.

The proposed project is to carry out maintenance dredging between the period 2021 and 2029 within the commercial estuary of the River Boyne and seaward approaches and to land ashore a portion of this dredge material for beneficial reuse in the construction industry. The remainder of the material is dumped at sea.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening process determined that likely significant effects could not be ruled out for a number of Natura 2000 sites from the proposed works.

In accordance with Regulation 42(6) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 SI 477 as amended, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage made a determination following screening that an Appropriate Assessment was required as the project individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on any European sites.

The Appropriate Assessment identified accidental pollution as a result of the proposed works as the only risk to Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence. Mitigation includes the Drogheda Port's Pollution Response Plan, as per the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation 1990 Harbour Authorities. Dredging vessels also have their own approved Pollution Plans with retained pollution response equipment on board. An emergency spill kit and oil spill containment equipment will be held on board by dredging operators to be able to deal with potential oil spills during dredging operation. An Environmental Liabilities Risk Assessment (2015) has been prepared by Aquafact International Services Ltd and is in-use for dredging and disposal operations at Drogheda Port.

The implementation of such measures is considered appropriate mitigation to avoid significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites identified within the Appropriate Assessment Process.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed project, either alone or in-combination with other projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of European sites, in view of the said sites' conservation objectives.

Signature and Date of Recommending Officer:  14th of July 2021

Signature and Date of the Decision Maker: