Appropriate Assessment Report
Marine survey and site investigation works in Galway Bay (FS007016)

Project Description:

DeepSea Fibre Networks Ltd has submitted an application for a Foreshore Licence to facilitate a geophysical survey and site investigations works in Galway Bay. The survey and site investigation works are part of a project involving the possible future installation of a subsea fibre optic cable system (IRIS) extending from Iceland to Ireland with landfall at Ballyloughane Strand in Galway.

The locations of the proposed survey and site investigations works on the foreshore are shown in the following drawings submitted by the applicant:

- Drawing No. 1334-A-101, Rev 01, "Foreshore Licence Map 1 Galway Bay Ref:FS007016", dated 22/10/2019
- Drawing No. 1334-A-102, Rev 01, "Foreshore Licence Map 2 Route to the 12 Mile Limit Ref:FS007016" dated 20/10/2019
- Drawing No. 1334-A-103, Rev 01,"Site Location Map Landfall at Ballyloughane Ref:FS007016", dated 22/10/2019
- Drawing No. 1334-A-104, Rev 01,"Site Location Map 2 Landfall at Ballyloughane Ref:FS007016", dated 22/10/2019
- Drawing No. 1334-A-105, Rev 01," Foreshore Licence Map Route to the 12 Mile Limit Ref:FS007016" dated 18/12/2019

On foot of issues raised during the Public Consultation Stage the applicant advised that proposed survey route would be reduced and limited to Sections A and C only as shown in Drawing No. 1334-A-102, Rev 01, "Foreshore Licence Map 2 Route to the 12 Mile Limit Ref:FS007016" dated 20/10/2019.

The proposed geophysical survey will include collection of bathymetric, side scan sonar, sub-bottom profiler and magnetometer data along the survey route.

Site investigations at Ballyloughane Strand will include the following;

- 3 Trial Pits at 50m centres. The target depth for the pits is 2.5m. The pits will be excavated, logged, photographed and backfilled, by JCB, in a single intertidal period of 1 hour.
- A total of 24 bar probes on the beach and a further 20 bar probes from the Low Water Line to the 3m water depth contour.

- The area extending seaward from the 3m water depth contour and inshore of the safe working draft limits of the primary survey vessel will surveyed with a small craft using Multibeam Echosounder, sidescan sonar and sub-bottom profile equipment

Additionally it is intended to collect a total of 6 sediment grab samples from the 3m contour to the 15m contour and gravity cores or Cone Penetration tests will be collected at 10Km intervals from the 15m contour to the 12 nautical mile limit.

It is also intended to carry out a drop down underwater video survey along a number of transects within the boundaries of the Galway Bay SAC to map the distribution and density of the sensitive Sea Pen *Virgularia mirabilis* and within the Inishmore Island SAC within which reef outcrops are a feature of interest.

Specifications for the survey and associated site investigations are set in the "Planning Report" document, dated October 2019, submitted by the applicant.

It is anticipated that the proposed survey and site investigation works would be completed within 1 month.

The Foreshore Licence application was accompanied by a document entitled *"Appropriate Assessment Screening & Natura Impact Statement - Information for a Stage 1 (AA Screening) and Stage 2 (Natura Impact Statement) AA for marine survey and site investigations for a fibre optic cable with a landfall at Ballyloughane Strand, Galway Bay",* dated 24th October 2019, prepared by Altemar Ltd

Identification of Natura 2000 sites

Based on the guidance set out in NPWS (2009)[1] the following Natura 2000 sites within 15Km of the proposed survey route and site investigations area were identified and considered in the assessment process.

The survey route and site investigation sites are located within the Galway Bay Complex SAC (Site Code 000268), the Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site Code 004031) and the Inishmore Island SAC (Site Code000213) and adjacent to (within 15Km) of a number of other Natura Sites. These sites include

- Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC
- Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC
- Lough Corrib SAC
- Inisheer Island SAC
- Inishmaan Island SAC
- Connemara Bog Complex SAC

[1] NPWS (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities

- Moneen Mountain SAC
- East Burren Complex
- Inagh River Estuary SAC
- Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC
- Lough Fingall Complex SAC
- Ballyteige (Clare) SAC
- Lough Nageeron SAC
- Kiltiernan Turlough SAC
- Inishmore SPA
- Lough Corrib SPA
- Cregganna Marsh SPA
- Cliffs of Moher SPA
- Connemara Bog Complex SPA
- Slyne Head To Ardmore Point SPA

The proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any of the Natura 2000 sites listed above.

Galway Bay Complex SAC (Site Code 000268)

This site comprises the inner, shallow part of a large bay which is partially sheltered by the Aran Islands. There are numerous shallow and intertidal inlets on the eastern and southern sides, notably Muckinish, Aughinish and Kinvarra Bays. A number of small islands composed of glacial deposits are located along the eastern side. These include Eddy Island, Deer Island and Tawin Island. A diverse range of marine, coastal and terrestrial habitats, including several listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, occur within the site.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[2]

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide in Galway Bay Complex SAC
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Coastal lagoons in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Large shallow inlets and bays in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand in Galway Bay Complex SAC,

[2]NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Galway Bay Complex SAC 000268. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Turloughs in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Harbour Seal in Galway Bay Complex SAC

Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site Code 004031)

Inner Galway Bay SPA is a very large, marine-dominated site situated on the west coast of Ireland. The inner bay is protected from exposure to Atlantic swells by the Aran Islands and Black Head. Subsidiary bays and inlets (e.g. Poulnaclough, Aughinish and Kinvarra Bays) add texture to the patterns of water movement and sediment deposition, which lends variety to the marine habitats and communities. The long shoreline is noted for its diversity, and comprises complex mixtures of bedrock shore, shingle beach, sandy beach and fringing salt marshes. Intertidal sand and mud flats occur around much of the shoreline, with the largest areas being found on the sheltered eastern coast between Oranmore Bay and Kinvarra Bay. A number of small islands and rocky islets in the Bay are included within the site.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[3]

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Great Northern Diver in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Cormorant in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Grey Heron in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Light-bellied Brent Goose in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Teal in Inner Galway Bay SPA

[3] NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Inner Galway Bay SPA 004031. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Wigeon in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Shoveler in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Red-breasted Merganser in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Ringed Plover in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Golden Plover in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Lapwing in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Dunlin in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Bar-tailed Godwit in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Curlew in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Redshank in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Turnstone in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Black-headed Gull in Inner Galway Bay SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Common Gull in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Sandwich Tern in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Common Tern in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitat in Inner Galway Bay SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.

Inishmore Island SAC (Site Code 000213)

Inishmore Island is the largest of the three Aran Islands, situated approximately 8 km off the south coast of Co. Galway. Geologically an extension of the Burren, Co. Clare, the island is formed of Upper Carboniferous limestone strata, interleaved with layers of shale and clay. In places along the coast, spectacular cliffs rise to 90 m. A thin cover of rendzina occurs in pockets between blocks of bare limestone. This soil is combined with a mixture of sand and seaw eed to form a partially man-made soil cover, built up over the centuries. The site also includes a large area of marine waters surrounding the island.

The Conservation Objectives of this site are[4]

[4] NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Inishmore Island SAC 000213. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Coastal lagoons in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Embryonic shifting dunes in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ('white dunes') in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes') in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Dunes with *Salix repens ssp. argentea (Salicion arenariae*) in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Humid dune slacks in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Machairs in Inishmore Island SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of European dry heaths in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*) in Inishmore Island SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis*) in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Submerged or partially submerged sea caves in Inishmore Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail in Inishmore Island SAC,

Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC (Site Code 002111)

Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC is located just north of Galway Bay and extends from Keeraun Point, south of Carraroe, westwards to Mace Head, west of Carna, all in Co. Galway. The site contains a large area of open marine water, many islands and rocky islets, and the coastline is much indented with a series of bays (notably the inter-connected Kilkieran Bay and Greatman's Bay), channels and inlets. The entrances of the bays face the prevailing south-westerly winds and they are subject to strong tidal streams as the sea funnels between islands and through channels. A number of streams, lakes and lagoons drain into the bays. Generally, the site has a rocky shoreline which in most places gives way to mud in shallow water. The surrounding land is dominated by lowland blanket bog, with rock outcrops and small hills to the north.

The Conservation Objectives of this site are[5]

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Coastal lagoons in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Large shallow inlets and bays in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Machairs in Kilkieran Bay and IslandsSAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis) in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Harbour Seal in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Slender Naiad in Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC,

Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC (Site Code 000020)

The Black Head-Poulsallagh complex encompasses a complete range of rocky Burren habitats from coastal, glacially planed limestone pavements to high level heaths. The Caher River, the only river found in the high Burren, and Fanore dunes, one of the best dune systems in Clare, are included in the site. The shoreline, littoral and sublittoral areas are also interesting because of the rock type, physical exposure, and flora and fauna communities.

The Conservation Objectives of this site are[6]

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,

[5] NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC 002111. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
[6] NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC 000020. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation in Black Head- Poulsallagh Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alpine and Boreal heaths in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Lowland hay meadows Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis) in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Submerged or partially submerged sea caves in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Petalwort in Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC,

Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297)

Lough Corrib is situated to the north of Galway city and is the second largest lake in Ireland, with an area of approximately 18,240 ha (the entire site is 20,556 ha). The lake can be divided into two parts: a relatively shallow basin, underlain by Carboniferous limestone, in the south, and a larger, deeper basin, underlain by more acidic granite, schists, shales and sandstones to the north. The surrounding lands to the south and east are mostly pastoral farmland, while bog and heath predominate to the west and north. A number of rivers are included within the cSAC as they are important for Atlantic Salmon. These rivers include the Clare, Grange, Abbert, Sinking, Dalgan and Black to the east, as well as the Cong, Bealanabrack, Failmore, Cornamona, Drimneen and Owenriff to the west. In addition to the rivers and lake basin, adjoining areas of conservation interest, including raised bog, woodland, grassland and limestone pavement, have been incorporated into the site

The Conservation Objectives of this site are[7]

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoëto-Nanojuncetea in Lough Corrib SAC,

[7] NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) in Lough Corrib SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Active raised bogs* in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Petrifying springs with tufa ormation (Cratoneurion)* in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements* in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Bog woodland* in Lough Corrib SAC
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Freshwater Pearl Mussel in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of White-clawed Crayfish in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Sea Lamprey in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Brook Lamprey in Lough Corrib SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic Salmon in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Lesser Horseshoe Bat in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Lough Corrib SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Slender Green Feather-moss (Shining Sickle-moss) in Lough Corrib SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Slender Naiad in Lough Corrib SAC,

Inisheer Island SAC (Site Code 001275)

Inisheer is the smallest of the three Aran Islands, situated approximately 10 km off the west coast of Co. Clare. The island is a geological extension of the karstic Carboniferous region of the Burren. The soil cover is thin, with pockets of rendzina between the bare limestone. This naturally-occurring soil has been combined with a mixture of sand and seaweed to form a man-made soil unique to these Islands. The land surface is subdivided into a labyrinth of high stone

walls, each one enclosing a small area, typically composed of species-rich calcareous grassland and associated limestone pavement.

The Conservation Objectives of this site are[8]

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Coastal lagoons in Inisheer Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Inisheer Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of European dry heaths in Inisheer Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco Brometalia*) in Inisheer Island SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis*) in Inisheer Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements in Inisheer Island SAC,

Inishmaan Island SAC (Site Code 000212)

Inishmaan is the middle of the three Aran Islands, situated approximately 15 km off the west coast of Co. Clare (though the Aran Islands are part of Co. Galway). Geologically, the island is an extension of the Burren. The shallow soil is, in many places, a man-made combination of sand and seaweed built up over the centuries. Pockets of rendzina are also found. This site is of major scientific importance owing to the range of outstanding karstic Carboniferous limestone and coastal habitats, many of which are listed as priority and Annex I habitats under the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is dominated by limestone pavement and its associated calcareous grasslands. Other Annex I habitats which occur include dry heath, lowland hay meadows and orchid-rich calcareous grassland.

The Conservation Objectives of this site are[9]

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Inishmaan Island SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Inishmaan Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts in Inishmaan Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Embryonic shifting dunes in Inishmaan Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Shifting dunes along the shorelinewith *Ammophila arenaria* ('white dunes') in Inishmaan Island SAC,

[8] NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Inisheer Island SAC 001275. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
[9] NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Inishmaan Island SAC 000212. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Machairs in Inishmaan Island SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Machairs in Inishmaan Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*) in Inishmaan Island SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis*) in Inishmaan Island SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements in Inishmaan Island SAC,

Connemara Bog Complex SAC (Site Code 002034)

The Connemara Bog Complex SAC is a large site encompassing the majority of the south Connemara lowlands in Co. Galway. The site is bounded to the north by the Galway–Clifden road and stretches as far east as the Moycullen–Spiddal road. The site supports a wide range of habitats, including extensive tracts of western blanket bog, which form the core interest, as well as areas of heath, fen, woodlands, lakes, rivers and coastal habitats. The Connemara Bog Complex is characterized by areas of deep peat surrounded by rocky granite outcrops covered by heath vegetation. However, the main habitat within this site is lowland Atlantic blanket bog, as most of the area is covered by blanket peat greater than 1 m in depth. Both oligotrophic and dystrophic lakes are found within Connemara Bog Complex SAC, with the greatest concentration in the west of the site.. Four main lagoons occur within this site: Lough Ahalia, Doire Bhanbh, Lough Aconeera and Salt Lake. All four are regarded as saline lake lagoons and they range in size from 1–90 ha. Atlantic Salmon occurs in many of the rivers within the site. The Annex II butterfly species, Marsh Fritillary, is known to occur and Otter have been recorded at this site.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[10]:

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Coastal lagoons in Connemara Bog Complex SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) in Connemara Bog Complex SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea in Connemara Bog Complex SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,

[10] NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Connemara Bog Complex SAC 002034. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of European dry heaths in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) in Connemara Bog Complex SAC
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Blanket bogs in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Transition mires and quaking bogs in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Marsh Fritillary in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic Salmon in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Slender Naiad in Connemara Bog Complex SAC,

Moneen Mountain SAC (Site Code 000054)

Moneen Mountain is a large, composite site situated in north County Clare. It encompasses a complete range of inland Burren habitats, from open limestone pavement and its associated calcareous grasslands and heaths, to dense Hazel (Corylus avellana) scrub and patches of Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) woodland. The site extends inland from Muckinish Point and includes all of the higher ground bet bgween Ballyvaughan and Bell Harbour in a southerly direction for approximately 20 km. Traces of Galway Granite are found within the site, particularly to the north. Soil cover is shallow and the soil type most common in the area is rendzina.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[11]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

- Turloughs*

[11] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Moneen Mountain SAC [000054]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- Alpine and Boreal heaths
- Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)*
- Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*
- Limestone pavements*
- Marsh Fritillary
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat
- Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*

* denotes a priority habitat

East Burren Complex (Site Code 001926)

This large site incorporates all of the high ground in the east Burren in Counties Clare and Galway, and extends south-eastwards to include a complex of calcareous wetlands. The area encompasses a range of limestone habitats that include limestone pavement and associated calcareous grasslands and heath, scrub and woodland together with a network of calcareous lakes and turloughs. The site exhibits some of the best and most extensive areas of oligotrophic limestone wetlands to be found in the Burren and in Europe.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[12]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

- Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp.
- Turloughs*
- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation
- Alpine and Boreal heaths
- Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands
- Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)*
- Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis)
- Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae*
- Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*
- Alkaline fens
- Limestone pavements*
- Caves not open to the public

[12] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for East Burren Complex SAC [001926]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*

* denotes a priority habitat

Inagh River Estuary SAC (Site Code 000036)

The Inagh River Estuary is an estuarine channel that flows westwards to the sea from Ennistimon, in the south-west of Co. Clare. The site includes the estuaries of both the Inagh and Dealagh Rivers. These channels meander through a wide, flat valley, which is sheltered from the sea by an extensive sand dune system to the west. Low undulating hills surround the valley, giving it a secluded nature. The soils vary from gleys to peats.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[13]

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand in Inagh River Estuary SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) in Inagh River Estuary SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) in Inagh River Estuary SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) in Inagh River Estuary SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* in Inagh River Estuary SAC,

* denotes a priority habitat

Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC (Site Code 000996)

This site consists of a small, rather dry turlough and is situated about 1.5 km south-west of Ballyvaughan in Co. Clare.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[14]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

- Turloughs*

* denotes a priority habitat

[13] NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Inagh River Estuary SAC 000036. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

[14] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC [000996]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Lough Fingall Complex SAC (Site Code 000606)

This site is situated immediately south-east of Ballindeereen in Co. Galway, and within 2-3 km of Galway Bay. It is within the stretch of flat low-lying bare limestones known as the Ardrahan limestones, which extend from the foot of the Burren hills northwards towards Craughwell. The site comprises a complex of habitats, the dominant being turloughs and limestone pavement.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[15]

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Turloughs* in Lough Fingall Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alpine and Boreal heaths in Lough Fingall Complex SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands in Lough Fingall Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) in Lough Fingall Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae* in Lough Fingall Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements* in Lough Fingall Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Lesser Horseshoe Bat in Lough Fingall Complex SAC,

* denotes a priority habitat

Ballyteige (Clare) SAC (Site Code 000994)

This site is located 2 km west of Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare. It lies over shales of Upper Carboniferous age and adjoins the boundary of these geological strata with the Lower Carboniferous limestone series which constitute the bulk of the Burren region. The soils are of the gley type and are poor-draining. The site consists of wet meadow and heath which have been managed in a traditional way for hay-making. Molinia meadows, a habitat listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, is well represented at the site.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[16]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

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[15] NPWS (2019) Conservation Objectives: Lough Fingall Complex SAC 000606. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

[16] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Ballyteige (Clare) SAC [000994]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)

Lough Nageeron SAC (Site Code 0021190)

Lough Nageeron SAC consists of a small lake is situated about 9 km west of Kilkieran in Connemara, Co. Galway. It overlooks Ard Bay and is connected to the sea by a small channel. It is, however, raised above sea level and it does not receive any saline water. The lake is an oligotrophic system with apparently good quality water.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[17]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

- Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea

Kiltiernan Turlough SAC (Site Code 001285)

Kiltiernan Turlough lies in a linear depression running south-westwards from the main Galway-Limerick road, north-west of Ardrahan in Co. Galway. It has a flattish basin which lies approximately 2 m below road level, and includes about eight further depressions which are joined in times of high water. The site includes a low ridge on the south-eastern side. Towards the west the topography becomes flatter and the basin breaks into separate hollows.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[18]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

- Turloughs*

* denotes a priority habitat

Inishmore SPA (Site Code 004152)

Situated approximately 8 km off the south coast of County Galway, Inishmore (Árainn) is the largest of the three Aran Islands. Geologically an extension of the Burren, County Clare, the island is formed of Upper Carboniferous limestone strata, interleaved with layers of shale and clay. The site comprises all of the cliffs and rocky shore along the entire southern side of the

[17] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Lough Nageeron SAC [002119]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
[18] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Kiltiernan Turlough SAC [001285]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

island, part of the low cliffs/rocky shore at the west end, and the low cliffs/rocky shore at the east end - a distance of over 17 km of coastline. Also included are the two islands west of Inishmore (Brannock Island and Rock Island), Straw Island at the east end of Inishmore, the dune system at Barr na Coise, and the adjacent seas out to 500 m from the shoreline. Littoral and sublittoral reef communities are well-developed within the site.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[19]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- Kittiwake
- Arctic Tern
- Little Tern
- Guillemot

Lough Corrib SPA (Site Code 004042)

Lough Corrib is the largest lake in the country and is located, for the most part, in County Galway, with a small section in the north extending into County Mayo. The lake can be divided into two parts: a relatively shallow basin in the south, which is underlain by Carboniferous limestone, and a larger, deeper basin to the north, which is underlain by more acidic granite, schists, shales and sandstones. The main inflowing rivers are the Black, Clare, Dooghta, Cregg, Owenriff and the channel from Lough Mask. The main outflowing river is the Corrib, which reaches the sea at Galway City.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[20]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- Gadwell
- Shoveler
- Pochard
- Tufted Duck
- Common Scoter
- Hen Harrier
- Coot
- Golden Plover
- Black-Headed Gull
- Common Gull

[19] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Inishmore SPA [004152]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
[20] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Lough Corrib SPA [004042]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- Common Tern
- Arctic Tern
- Greenland White-fronted Goose
- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Lough Corrib SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.

Cregganna Marsh SPA (Site Code 004142)

Cregganna Marsh is situated about 3 km south of Oranmore, to the west of the Galway - Ennis road. The predominant habitats on the site are lowland wet grassland and improved grassland, but areas of limestone pavement and other exposed rock, Hazel (Corylus avellana) scrub, freshwater marsh, drainage ditches and dry grassland are also represented.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[21]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- Greenland White-fronted Goose

Cliffs of Moher SPA (Site Code 0040050)

This site extends a distance of some 9.5 km along the north Clare coast from Faunmore in the north to just south of Cancregga Point in the south. The cliffs, which rise to 203 m in height, are formed of horizontal beds of coal measure sandstones and shales. Cleavage in the rock is so good that the term flagstone has been applied, and the Liscannor Flag is the rock type best exposed in a quarry near Hag's Head. The line of cliffs shows faulting and slumping to good effect but these are difficult to observe from the cliff top. The site includes the cliffs, the land adjacent to the cliff edge (inland for 300 m) as well as the adjacent sea area to a distance of up to 500 m from the cliff base.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[22]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- Fulmar
- Kittiwake
- Guillemot

[21] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Cregganna Marsh SPA [004142]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
[22] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Cliffs of Moher SPA [004005]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- Razorbill
- Puffin
- Chough

Connemara Bog Complex SPA (Site Code 004181)

The Connemara Bog Complex SPA is a large site encompassing much of the south Connemara lowlands of Co. Galway. The site consists of three separate areas - north of Roundstone, south of Recess and north-west of Spiddal. The Connemara Bog Complex SPA is characterized by areas of deep peat surrounded by heath-covered rocky outcrops. The deeper peat areas are often bordered by river systems and the many oligotrophic lakes that occur, resulting in an intricate mosaic of various peatland/wetland habitats and vegetation communities; these include Atlantic blanket bog with hummock/hollow systems, inter-connecting pools, Atlantic blanket bog pools, flushes, transition and quaking mires, as well as freshwater marshes, lakeshore, lake and river systems.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[23]

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- Cormorant
- Merlin
- Golden Plover
- Common Gull

Slyne Head To Ardmore Point SPA (Site Code

The site includes a number of islands along the Connemara coast, Co. Galway, from Slyne Head to Kilkieran Bay. It is characterised by a large number of small, uninhabited islands, rocks and skerries. Some of the islands are up to 4 km from the mainland, whilst others are in very shallow waters close to the shoreline. The larger islands in the site include Inishlackan, Croaghnakeela Island, St Macdara's Island, Masson Island, Birmore Island, Freaghillaun, Illaunamid and Illaunurra. Most of the larger islands support maritime grassland; machair occurs on Masson Island. The surrounding seas to a distance of 200 m, which are used as foraging areas by terns and other seabirds, are included within the site.

The Conservation Objectives for this site are[24]

[23] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Connemara Bog Complex SPA [004181]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
[24] NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Slyne Head to Ardmore Point Islands SPA [004159]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- Barnacle Goose
- Sandwich Tern
- Arctic Tern
- Little Tern

Screening Assessment

The proposed marine survey and site investigations would take place solely within the marine environment. There would, therefore, be no spatial overlap with those Natura sites which are purely terrestrial and which have no marine features. Additionally, considering the nature of the proposed marine survey and site investigations, there is no "source – receptor" pathway which could result in impacts on species or habitats or disturbance to species of conservation interest within these sites. There would be no habitat loss and habitat or species fragmentation. On this basis likely significant effects can be excluded and the Natura sites listed below can be "screened out" and are not considered further.

- Lough Corrib SAC
- Connemara Bog Complex SAC
- Moneen Mountain SAC
- East Burren Complex SAC
- Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC
- Lough Fingall Complex SAC
- Ballyteige (Clare) SAC
- Lough Nageeron SAC
- Kiltiernan Turlough SAC
- Lough Corrib SPA
- Cregganna Marsh SPA
- Connemara Bog Complex SPA k

There also would be no spatial overlap and therefore no direct impact on a number of the adjacent Natura sites which have marine features. Considering the nature of the proposed marine survey and site investigations, there is no "source – receptor" pathway which could result in impacts on species or habitats within these sites or disturbance to species of conservation interest. There would be no habitat loss and habitat or species fragmentation. Water quality would not be effected within these Natura sites. On this basis, likely significant effects on these sites can be also excluded and therefore the Natura sites listed below can also be "screened out" and are not considered further.

- Inishmore SPA
- Cliffs of Moher SPA
- Slyne Head To Ardmore Point SPA

- Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC
- Inisheer Island SAC
- Inishmaan Island SAC
- Inagh River Estuary SAC

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment

Based on the findings of the Stage 1 AA Screening Assessment above it is concluded that an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed marine survey and site investigations on the following European sites in view of certain conservation objectives is required:

- potential for disturbance of the specific qualifying interests of Inner Galway Bay SPA through the survey activities within the SPA including physical impact on the intertidal and subtidal sediments within the SPA

- in the absence of mitigation measures there may be potential for impact on the features of interest of Galway Bay Complex SAC through physical impact on the intertidal and subtidal sediments within the SAC and disturbance which could impact the Features of Interest of this SAC, including Harbour Seals and otters

- in the absence of mitigation measures there may be potential for impact on the features of interest of the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC by way of disturbance to marine mammals, in particular Harbour Seals.

- potential for impact on the features of interest of Inishmore Island SAC through the survey activities within the SAC including physical impact on the and subtidal habitats within the SAC, in particular Reefs.

The proposed survey route within the Inner Galway Bay SPA is in an area of high disturbance at a time outside of overwintering bird season. Terns are not located in the vicinity of the landfall and would be used to vessel activity in the region of Mutton Island where they nest during the summer. The proposed survey route in the intertidal is within the Mudflats and Sandflats not covered by Low tide habitat which would be an area where birds would forage when disturbance levels are low.

It is proposed that all works will be carried out outside of the overwintering bird season of September to March, so as to eliminate disturbance impacts on the overwintering features of interest of this SPA. Mitigation measures are proposed including having an ecologist present on site to ensure birds (roosting or foraging) are not disturbed by the proposed works.

Damage to the seabed habitat and invertebrate mortalities would occur along the machinery access areas and in the vicinity of the trial pits. This would be primarily due to compression by the machinery in a maximum 1m wide track (Tyre width) and the disturbance of sand during survey, during one tidal cycle. These impacts would be limited in nature (1m x 460m and disturbance in the vicinity of the trial pits) and would be short term.

Otters may be present within the proposed landfall and shallow intertidal area within the Galway Bay Complex SAC. Short term disturbance may occur, but significant human disturbance already occurs at Ballyloughane Beach and the "additional" disturbance due to the works in not likely to be significant. Disturbance in this area during the site investigations would be limited to approximately 1-2 days in an area of human disturbance and in close proximity to Galway Port where there is marine vessel activity. No holts or couches were noted during fieldwork in the area. The works will not significantly impact fish biomass or introduce barriers to connectivity.

Harbour seal may be present in proximity to the cable survey route within the Galway Bay Complex SAC . Short term disturbance may occur. The proposed survey route is not proximal to resting and moulting sites. The proposed route is at least 1.5km from the nearest breeding sites at Earls Rock and Kilcolgan Point. Disturbance in this area would be limited to approximately 1-2 days for marine survey within the SAC in an area of human disturbance and in close proximity to Galway Port where there is marine vessel activity. The works will not significantly impact on haul out, resting or breeding sites.

Harbour seal within the Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC may also be present in proximity of the cable survey route. Disturbance may occur but this would be of short duration. The proposed survey works are not likely to result in the permanent exclusion or prevent access to suitable habitat. The proposed survey route is not proximal to resting and moulting sites.

It is considered that full compliance with the requirements set out in the "Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from Man-made Sound Sources in Irish Waters" (January 2014) in respect of marine survey and site investigations on the foreshore will minimise and mitigate any such interactions with these marine mammals.

The proposed survey route passes through Inishmore Island SAC. The features of interest of this SAC are primarily terrestrial and coastal habitats and the presence of a vessel offshore will not impact on these habitats or the terrestrial species. In relation to Reef Habitat, the aim of the proposed survey is to identify areas for good burial of the cable, away from reef habitat. In line with standard marine survey methodologies, the benthic sampling methods outlined will not be possible in areas of reef. As a result, non-intrusive methods can only be used in reef areas due to potential damage to equipment and the failure to obtain sediment samples in reef areas. Impacts on reef habitat within the Inishmore Island SAC are therefore not likely.

A series of mitigation measures are proposed in the Section 5(G) of the document entitled *"Appropriate Assessment Screening & Natura Impact Statement - Information for a Stage 1 (AA Screening) and Stage 2 (Natura Impact Statement) AA for marine survey and site investigations for a fibre optic cable with a landfall at Ballyloughane Strand, Galway Bay"*, submitted by the applicant. These measures include

- Timing of the survey - The survey in the landfall, intertidal and shallow subtidal is to be carried out after all over-wintering birds have left and prior to the arrival of species for the overwintering season.

- An ecologist would be onsite during the surveys within the SPA in order to minimise disturbance and ensure site integrity is maintained. If roosting birds are present on the

shore, the site investigations should be postponed until the birds depart, without provocation.

- Noise generated from machinery could cause a disturbance. The bucket of the digger used in digging trial pits should have teeth, so as to minimize scraping of metal against the cobble or boulders (if present).

- The surveys should commence on a receding tide. This is to ensure all operations are done within one tide. Operations must be completed before an incoming tide when many of the birds return to feed. This should result in the site investigations being imperceptible following a single or several tidal cycles.

- Any temporary access arrangements or structures that are put in place to allow machinery access to the beach area should be prepared in consultation with an ecologist and the site should be fully reinstated post works.

- Reinstatement of the intertidal habitat should be carried out to pre-construction conditions. Any concerns in relation to the survey process or resulting reinstatement of the habitat to pre survey conditions will be raised with NPWS by the project ecologist prior to the removal of personnel from the site.

- Implementation of the requirements set out in the NPWS (2014) "Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from Man-made Sound sources in Irish Waters".

The implementation of these mitigation measure will minimise the minimise impacts on habitats and species within the Natura 2000 sites.

Conclusion

Based on the above it is concluded that the proposed Site Investigation works are not likely to pose a significant likely risk to nature conservation interests of any Natura 2000 site provided the recommended mitigations are fully implemented.

Prepared by Marine Institute, on behalf of the MLVC
22 July 2020