

Prescribes bodies consultations MS51/4/545

Marine Survey Office

- This office has no objections from a navigational viewpoint to the above application. However it is felt that the works will have a significant short-term impact on marine traffic departing and arriving at Dublin Port. This will also have an effect on through traffic passing the Dublin port area. The applicant is therefore required to carry out the following:
- **The applicant is required** to arrange the publication of a marine notice through the Maritime Safety Directorate. This marine notice should give a general description of operations and approximate dates of commencement and completion.
- Full consultation with Dublin Harbour Master is required in this matter.
- The views of the Divisional Engineer should be sought with respect to landfall.
- Liaise with the Irish Coast Guard to arrange appropriate Radio / nav-text broadcast warnings to advise shipping approaching the works area.
- Submit to the Marine Survey Office Dublin, a list containing the names of all vessels associated with this development, including proposed interfacing with Dublin Port. The M.S.O. Dublin will then make an assessment regarding the requirements if any in relation to Irish Load Line Certification.

Inland Fisheries Ireland

Comprehensive documentation has been provided with this application. Volume 1: Environmental Review compiled by Noordhoek Survey B.V. provides detail on the commercial fisheries and on the habitat use by target fish species in the area where cable laying would occur. This is helpful coverage of the subject. I would point out that the relevant figures in section 3.5 are very small and the legends are not legible to me. This is a pity and detracts from an otherwise-helpful report.

There are no issues arising or conditions required, insofar as I am concerned. I am forwarding my comments to my colleague Brian Beckett in IFI's Eastern River Basin District office, who may have specific comments.

NPWS

The proposed development (DECLG Ref: MS51/4/545) would seek to lay a fibre optic telecommunications cable that would extend from Portmarnock, Co. Dublin across the Irish Sea to the UK. As part of the application the proponents have generated an environmental review report to assess the interaction of the proposed works with designated habitats and protected species. It is indicated that the cable would have a

diameter of 5cm. It would be laid in both the intertidal and subtidal. It is envisaged that the cable would be trenched within the intertidal and laid by means of plough and cover vessel in the subtidal. It is envisaged that the impact of the proposed development would have a minor or temporary effect on intertidal and subtidal habitats. There would be no direct interaction with designated Natura 2000 sites.

The proposed development would occur approximately 300m north of the boundary for Baldoyle Bay cSAC (site code: 000199) designated inter alia for the marine Annex I habitats: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide. It would occur approximately 1.5km south of the boundary of Malahide Estuary cSAC (Site Code: 000205). The boundary for Baldoyle Bay SPA is 500m west on the other side of the Portmarnock Point.

It is unlikely that the proposed works would have an indirect impact upon the habitats contained within those designated areas. The applicant has indicated that the effect of the slow moving vessel in the marine environment in terms of direct and indirect impact would be analogous to that of the fishing trawler. As a mitigating measure the applicant has indicated that a Marine Mammal Observer would be present on board the vessel at all times to ensure that no negative interaction would occur with protected species. This level of mitigation is likely to be sufficient.

It is recommended that all mitigating measures proposed within the Environmental Review Report circulated by the applicant related to the marine habitats and species be applied in full.

DAFM

Having consulted our technical advisors the Department is satisfied that this development will not adversely affect aquaculture or sea fisheries related activities, given its location.

The following observations were made which DECLG may wish to take into consideration:

1. There are no licensed aquaculture sites along the proposed cable route. The proposed route does go through the designated Malahide Shellfish Water area where suction dredging for razor fish takes place. During the cable laying operation therefore, there is the possibility of disruption to fishing activity in the cable laying corridor. This, however, will be temporary in nature and of short duration.
2. While the immediate installation impacts on these fisheries has been mentioned in the report there seems to be a lack of information on the likely post construction impacts on the existing fishing activity. E.g. the cable is due to be installed at a depth of up to a meter depending on sub sea ground conditions so in effect it may be installed at a depth of less than a metre and may even be laying on the seabed surface itself if particularly difficult ground is encountered. What impact this shallow installation if encountered is likely to have on an existing fisheries dredging operation that takes place at up to 0.6m, is not addressed. The SFPA would be in a better position to give advice on this matter and it should be brought to their attention

3. In order to ensure that interactions with fishing activity is minimised it is recommended that the applicants should be required to liaise and communicate with local fishermen and fisheries representatives well in advance of cable laying operations taking place.

SPFA

With regards to the application by Emerald Bridge Fibres Ltd, MS51/4/545, it is important to note that the proposed cable route will cross through two known shellfish beds, the first is the Malahide shellfish bed which is currently classified for razor clams (*Ensis spp.*) and the second area is East of Lambay Island which is fished for scallops (both *Pecten maximus* and *Aequipecten opercularis*).

The Malahide Shellfish bed is also designated under the shellfish water regulations Statutory Instrument number 268 of 2006.

Given that the process for catching razor clams is by fluidised dredges into the seabed to a depth of approximately 50cm I do not see a problem with fishing gear becoming snagged in the cable or damaging the cable as the depth of the cable will be 1m below the substrate.

The fishing for scallops to the East of Lambay Island is also by dredges but in this case the dredges only penetrate the top surface of the substrate so this should also not cause any issues.

It is worth noting that the main port of operations is Howth Fishery Harbour Centre for both of the fisheries mentioned above and it is custom and practice for the Harbourmaster to be made aware of any operations within the area so he can display the intended area of operation for trenching for the local fishermen to see.

The contact details for the harbour master in the Howth Office are hmhowth@agriculture.gov.ie

The SFPA have in principal no objection to this application proceeding and a foreshore licence/lease being issued.

Underwater Archaeology

Our Ref: M00093/2011
Your Ref. MS51/4/545

14/12/11

Foreshore Unit
Department of Environment, Community & Local Government
Newtown Road,
Wexford

Re: Application by Geo Networks Ltd for a Foreshore Licence to lay a Subsea Telecomm Cable from Portmarnock to Port Darfach in Wales

A Chara,

We refer to your notification in relation to the above proposed development. Outlined below are the archaeological recommendations of the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

After reviewing the foreshore licence application further information is required.

Section 1.2 (page 4) of the 'Archaeological Assessment of Marine Geophysical Data (Vol.3)' states that the report is "intended to be read with the Noordhoek Survey B.V. reports (2011)". These reports were not included in the foreshore licence application submitted to this Department. A copy of these reports should be submitted to this Department for assessment prior to the granting of the foreshore licence application. We also request that detailed maps showing the survey lines, tracks and plots from the geophysical surveys are provided to this Department for review. Once we have reviewed the above requested data, further archaeological mitigation may be requested to be included as conditions on the grant of the foreshore licence application.

Appendix A, page 2 of the *Cable installation Report Ireland* describes a sidescan anomaly located at KP 111.910 as the possible remains of a wooden boat. Archaeological interpretation in the archaeological report has described this anomaly (HA70) as "debris or possible objects". Further detail is sought on the nature of the anomaly and associated anomalies close by and on their interpretation. We require further imagery of the anomalies at this location and the surrounding seabed including multibeam and sub-bottom imagery and any other relevant information. It is recommended that an exclusion zone of 100m shall be established around the furthest known extent of these sites.

Bathymetric multibeam data acquired by the National Seabed Survey (INFOMAR/GSI) should be assessed by an archaeologist suitably qualified in marine archaeological geophysics. A report describing the results of this assessment should be submitted to this office for review.

It is recommended that the following conditions be included as part of the grant of the foreshore licence application.

The results of the "pre-lay geophysical survey" should be assessed by an archaeologist suitably qualified in marine archaeological geophysics. A report should be submitted to this office for review prior to the cable laying works proceeding.

The developer shall engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist to carry out an intertidal survey of the landfall, incorporating metal detector survey licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. This survey shall be carried out well in advance of the proposed construction works.

Anchoring activity for operational vessels should avoid all known sites documented in the archaeological reports. Details of proposed anchoring outside of the survey corridor should be agreed with this Department prior to the works commencing.

Once the cable is laid, where cable burial is not achieved due to hard ground or anomalies, the monitoring archaeologist should assess the dive reports/ ROV surveys to ascertain if archaeological material may have been impacted. Further archaeological mitigation may be required should archaeological material be impacted.

It is recommended that exclusion zones are established around the following wreck sites, sidescan targets and magnetometer targets:

A 100m exclusion zone shall be established around the furthest known extent of site HA2040.

50m exclusion zones shall be established around the furthest known extent of the following sites: HA11, HA65, HA67, HA70, HA71, HA102, HA103, HA104, HA105, HA113, HA115, HA116, HA117, HA122, HA123, HA124, HA125, HA126, HA130, HA132, HA135, HA136 and HA137

A detailed table and charts illustrating these exclusion zones and the proposed cable route should be submitted to this department prior to works commencing.

The developer shall provide this Department with a programme of works prior to the commencement of works.

This Department should be informed of any changes to the proposed cable route or any changes to the proposed construction methodology documented in the archaeological assessment.

Further archaeological mitigation may be required should archaeological material be discovered during the programme of works.

It is also recommended that Archaeological Monitoring, as described below, be carried out at this site during all ground and seabed disturbance works.

“Archaeological Monitoring shall consist of the following:

1. In order to ensure the preservation of underwater archaeological sites and features the applicant is required to engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist to monitor all ground and seabed disturbance works associated with the development, including the pre-lay surveys and grapnel/debris clearance works, all cable laying works and any excavation/dredging operations at the landfall. It is recommended that the archaeologist be licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.
2. Should archaeological material be found during the course of monitoring, the archaeologist may have work on the site stopped, pending a decision as to how best to deal with the archaeology. The developer shall be advised by the National Monuments Service with regard to any necessary mitigating action (e.g. preservation *in situ*, dive and/or geophysical survey or excavation). The applicant shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any material found.
3. The National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht shall be furnished with a report describing the results of the monitoring.

Kindly forward to this office any Further Information or documentation received by the Council or in the event of a final decision being made please forward a copy of same to the following address as soon as it issues:

The Manager
Development Application Unit
The National Monuments Service
The Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht
Newtown Road,
Wexford

If any clarification is required on any of the above do not hesitate to contact this office.
An officer from this office would also be available to meet to discuss the above.

Mise le meas,

Karl Brady
Archaeologist