

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ACP-323953-25

Development	The proposed installation of the Beaufort sub-sea fibre optic cable system from the terminus of works under the granted Foreshore Licence [FS007361] at the 12 nautical mile (nM) limit to the extent of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
Location	Within the Irish Exclusive Economic Marine Zone and beyond the 12 nautical mile (nM) limit off the south coast, south of Carnsore point, Wexford, out to the edge of Irish Territorial waters
Coastal Planning Authority	Wexford
Prospective Applicant	Amazon MCS Ireland Ltd.
Type of Application	Pre Application Consultation under s.287 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).
Date of Pre-Application Meeting	15 th January 2026,
Date of Site Inspection:	Coastal Location 16 th February 2026
Inspector:	Jimmy Green

1.0 Introduction.

- 1.1. This report relates to pre-application discussions held with Amazon MCS Ireland Ltd. One Burlington Plaza, Burlington Road, Dublin 4, 'the Prospective Applicant' in respect of the proposed development of a subsea fibre optic cable system in the maritime area from a point at the 12 nautical mile limit through the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to the boundary of the Irish EEZ with UK waters. The pre-application consultation request was received by An Coimisiún Pleanála ('the Commission') on the 5th of December 2025.
- 1.2. This report describes the location and nature of the proposed development, the applicant's submission, the consultations held and the legal provisions which are relevant to the proposed development.
- 1.3. Subsequent to a pre-application consultation meeting held on the 15th of January 2026 the Commission received correspondence from the prospective applicant on the 4th March 2026 outlining further details of the project, the upcoming application, nature of documentation being prepared and setting out the further engagement that is taking place inform the future substantive application.
- 1.4. The correspondence received on the 4th of March, 2026 acknowledges that the closure of the pre-application consultation process is at the sole discretion of the Commission. The prospective applicant has, however, cited concerns over project delivery deadlines and in light of the additional detail included with the recent correspondence requests that the pre-application consultation stage be closed to allow progression to the next stage. The correspondence of the 4th of March has provided additional clarifications in relation to some of the issues discussed at the pre-application consultation and does not present any fundamental changes or alterations to what was originally proposed. Overall, I am satisfied, on the basis of the scope and nature of the meeting discussions and the clarifications that have been now provided that it is appropriate to close the pre-application consultation process at this stage.
- 1.5. The Commission should note that the prospective applicant has also submitted a design flexibility opinion request under Section 287A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) ('the Act'), ACP 323954-25 refers, and that

the Commission should consider that file concurrent with this pre-application consultation.

2.0 Site Location and Description.

- 2.1. The proposed development ultimately forms part of an overall sub-sea fibre optic cable ('the Beaufort cable') that will run from Kilmore Quay on the southeast coast of Wexford seaward in a westerly direction, (to avoid the Saltee Islands SAC [Site Code 000707]) before turning south and south east, towards the 12 nautical mile limit of the Irish territorial sea, through the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), before reaching UK waters and continuing on until it reaches landfall again at St. Brides Bay, Newgale in Wales. The intent of the cable is to provide next-generation connectivity between Ireland and the UK, with onward connectivity to Europe.
- 2.2. For ease of description the totality of the sub-sea cable route can be broken up into three sections:
- Inshore – From landfall at Kilmore Quay to the 12nm limit of Irish territorial waters (the subsea cable works for this portion of the route have been previously consented under foreshore licence FS007361 on the 29th November, 2023).
 - Offshore – From the 12nm limit of Irish territorial waters across the Irish EEZ to the Irish/UK EEZ border/boundary. The Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) granted the prospective applicant a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) in relation to this portion of the works under MAC240030 in November, 2025.
 - UK Section – From the Irish/UK EEZ border/boundary to Newgale in Wales, traversing both the EEZ and territorial waters of the UK. These works will be subject to a separate consent from that jurisdiction. Correspondence received by the Commission on the 4th of March confirms the relevant consenting authority for these works as Natural Resource Wales under the reference no. CML2606.
- 2.3. The site subject of the current pre-application consultation (and future application) only relates to the 'offshore' section (as described above) of the overall project and constitutes a corridor 400m wide and 38 km long, with a total area of approximately

15.38km². For clarity this area will be referred to in the remainder of this recommendation as the subject site.

- 2.4. The seabed sediment within the subject site is classified as sand with sea depths ranging from c. 52m (at the 12nm limit) to c. 90m in depth (in the vicinity of the Irish/UK EEZ boundary).
- 2.5. The subject site does not traverse any Natura 2000 sites although the inshore part of the overall project does overlap with the Seas off Wexford cSPA, and runs proximate to the Saltee Islands SAC.
- 2.6. The subject site is also traversed by two existing in-service telecommunications cables:
 - UK-IRL Crossing 1, which runs from Kilmore Quay to Land's End and crosses the subject site twice where the seabed depths are 55 and 66m respectively.
 - Hibernia Atlantic/EXA south which runs from Southport in the UK to Halifax in Canada via Dublin, where the seabed is 76m in depth.

and one electrical interconnector:

- Greenlink Interconnector Celtic – connecting County Wexford to Pembrokeshire in Wales.
- 2.7. The prospective applicant has provided a list of co-ordinates setting out the latitude and longitude of the various points of the installation corridor along which it is proposed to lay the subject cable. Furthermore, the prospective applicant has confirmed that the MAC granted by MARA (discussed further at Section 7 below) refers to the subject cable segment, and that any future application red-line boundary will be consistent with that set out in the MAC. On preliminary review of the available mapping the MAC boundary appears consistent with that presented by the prospective applicant in their submission on this file.

3.0 The Proposed Development.

3.1. Overview

- 3.1.1. The Beaufort subsea cable is proposed to be a high-capacity fibre-optic cable system linking Ireland to the UK to support international telecommunications. The

operational lifespan of the cable will be 35 years, and it will reuse the existing ESAT-1 landfall infrastructure (including beach manhole, ducting to the cable landing station and the cable landing station) at Kilmore Quay. The existing ESAT-1 cable has been partially decommissioned/removed and there remains a remnant of the existing cable and ducting exposed and visible on the beach at Kilmore Quay following storm damage at the face of the dunes¹. The prospective applicant has received planning permission from Wexford County Council to remediate this portion of ducting and carry out Horizontal Direct Drilling (HDD) to provide new ducting under the dune system at this location from the manhole east of the dunes to the high water mark to facilitate the provision of the new telecommunications cable.

3.2. Detailed Description of the Subject Works

- 3.2.1. The subject subsea cable is a c. 33mm diameter fibre optic cable, which is not powered (i.e. 'unrepeated') and will be double armoured in Irish waters. The subsea cable will be simultaneously laid and buried beneath the seabed using a jetting trencher², which will be powered and controlled by umbilical from the cable installation vessel.
- 3.2.2. The works within the Irish EEZ will constitute the Main Lay Vessel (MLV) picking up and jointing the end of the cable from the inshore section of works (at a depth of c. 15m) to the subject/main cable on board. The jointing process is stated as taking approximately 18-24 hours. From there the MLV will deploy and lay the cable in the seabed using a jetting trenching/burial tool powered via an umbilical from the MLV.
- 3.2.3. The jetting trencher being used will be capable of trenching depths of up to 3m dependent on soil conditions and can operate in a variety of seabed types in waters up to 2,000m deep, and is subject to real-time monitoring using high-definition video cameras and imaging sonar.
- 3.2.4. The target burial depth of the cable will be 1.5m where seabed geology allows, but may need to be reduced at times, with the aim to ensure sufficient depth is achieved

¹ See photographs accompanying this report.

² A system which simultaneously lays and buries the cable by forming a narrow trench using high-pressure focused water jets (using the surrounding seawater) to fluidise the seabed sediment beneath the cable and installing it through the cable depressor. The seabed sediment is displaced temporarily to form the trench during burial and then allowed to reform/backfill naturally after the jetting tool has passed.

to protect the cable from fishing operations. The applicant has stated that where burial may be prevented should there be reef or rock on the seabed, the cable will be laid directly on the seabed surface,

- 3.2.5. The cable will have to cross two other telecoms cables (UK-IRL Crossing 1 – twice, and Hibernia Atlantic/EXA south – once). These crossings will be carried out by allowing the trenching tool sword to enter free-floating mode, which will allow the proposed cable to be laid over the existing cable by reducing the burial depth of the new cable for a short length.
- 3.2.6. The proposed cable will also cross the Greenlink interconnector. The works for this crossing involves the installation of an articulated concrete mattress over the buried interconnector at the crossing point, then establishing a ‘no-jetting zone’ in the vicinity of the interconnector (c. 25m on each side), and laying the Beaufort cable on the surface of the seabed and over the concrete mattress during the main-lay process. A marine notice will issue in relation to the location of the rock mattress as well as the extent of the cable which will be temporarily exposed along the seabed surface. A guard vessel will be put in place at this location pending completion of the post-lay works. The post-lay works involve inspection with a remotely operated vehicle (ROV), additional post-lay burial and the provision of a rock berm (a minimum of 0.8m deep) over the portion of the cable on the surface of the seabed (within the no-jetting zone) as well as an additional area c.7m in extent covering the transitional area where the cable extends down to its target burial depth of 1.5m. The rock berm will be graded to allow fishing activity to continue.
- 3.2.7. The works will involve the use of Ultra-Short baseline (USBL) subsea positioning systems which use acoustic signals and the prospective applicant has confirmed that the use of any such instrumentation will follow the issued Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from man-made Sound Sources in Irish Waters³.
- 3.2.8. As with all construction at sea timelines are weather dependent, however, it is anticipated that the main lay operations for the works within the subject site should take less than 2 weeks and will be completed over a 2-month period.

³ Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht, 2014.

4.0 Policy Context.

4.1. The following policy documents are of relevance but, it should be noted, do not comprise an exhaustive list:

- National Maritime Planning Framework (NMPF),
- Marine Planning Policy Statement 2019 (and any updates),
- Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework First Revision and the National Development Plan 2018-2027,
- Climate Action Plan 2025 (and any updates),
- Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2019, and
- The South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable energy (South Coast D-MAP).

4.2. In particular in relation to the above policy documents the Commission should be aware that Section 22, of the NMPF refers to telecommunications and includes an objective to facilitate international high-speed connectivity between Ireland and other countries. Telecommunications Policy 1 of the NMPF includes the following statement:

'Proposals that guarantee existing and future international telecommunications connectivity which is critically important to support the future needs of society, Government, the provision of Public Services and enterprise in Ireland, should be supported.'

4.3. I have also referenced the South Coast DMAP in the list above, and while I note that this plan is specific to offshore renewable energy the route of the proposed cable is proximate to and may overlap with Maritime Area D. Notwithstanding this, however, policy TEL 1 of the South Coast D-Map supports the principle of co-existence of ORE development with digital telecommunications infrastructure, and states that "No exclusions shall be placed on the deployment, operation or maintenance of subsea telecommunications cables within or around ORE developments or the associated cabling, unless required for safety, environmental reasons or other exceptional circumstances.' Furthermore, the South Coast D-Map notes the critical importance of national and international telecommunications connectivity and acknowledges that

the maritime areas designated are of sufficient size to facilitate project flexibility to design and plan for cable routes and any associated crossing points.

5.0 Meeting Held.

- 5.1. The Commission's representatives met with the prospective applicant on the 15th of January 2026. The presentation provided by the prospective applicant and written record of that meeting are on file. This report should be read in conjunction with the written record on file of the pre-application consultation meeting. It is not proposed to repeat the contents of that record in detail here.

6.0 Legislative Context.

- 6.1. Section 285 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended ('the Act') state that the provisions of Chapter III, Part XXI of the Act (Maritime Development) are applicable for development situated wholly in the outer maritime area⁴ (S285(1)(a)(i) of the Act refers). Section 285(2)(c) clarifies that the provisions of Chapter III, Part XXI of the Act are not applicable to development that had previously been consented under a foreshore lease or licence granted under the Foreshore Act of 1933, however, this exclusion will cease to apply for any development that has not been completed by the fifth anniversary of the commencement of section 251 of the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, which occurs in December 2028.
- 6.2. Section 286 of the Act states that permission shall be required for development that is not exempted development to which chapter III applies (S286(1) refers), and that a person shall not be eligible to apply for permission unless they are the holder of a MAC, a foreshore licence/lease, or are acting on behalf of or are the owner of the land in the maritime area.
- 6.3. Section 287(1) of the Act, states that a person who proposes to make an application for permission under Section 291 shall consult with the Commission. Section 287(2)

⁴ The 'Outer Maritime Area' means that part of the maritime area that is not within the nearshore area of any coastal planning authority – Section 2(1) of the Act refers.

of the Act states that the Commission may provide its opinion regarding the making of the application and in particular, as respects:

- (a) *'the procedures to be followed by the prospective applicant when making the application and by the Board when considering the application,*
- (b) *the documents required to accompany the application,*
- (c) *the need for the prospective applicant to create an internet website for the purpose of publishing the application and all documentation accompanying the application,*
- (d) *the publication of notices in accordance with this Act, the furnishing of documentation to persons referred to in subsection (3) of section 291 and the making of submissions and observations in relation to an application under that section,*
- (e) *such persons as may be prescribed for the purposes of this Chapter,*
- (f) *some or all of the matters that the Board is likely to take into consideration relating to—*
 - (i) *the National Marine Planning Framework,*
 - (ii) *objectives of maritime spatial planning,*
 - (iii) *principles of proper planning and sustainable development, and*
 - (iv) *the environment or any European site,**when making a decision under section 293 in relation to the application,*
- (g) *the fees payable to the Board in relation to the making of the application,*
and
- (h) *compliance by the prospective applicant with any direction of the Board under subsection (3) of section 291.'*

6.4. Of note, under S.287(3) the Board may at any time conclude a consultation under this section where it considers it appropriate to do so, the Commission will note that all references to the Board in these sections are direct quotes from the Act, however, the enactment of Part 17, Section 295 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 in June 2025 changed all such references to 'An Coimisiún Pleanála'.

6.5. Section 287A of the Act relates to the ability for an applicant to engage with the Commission for the purposes of seeking an opinion as to flexibility in relation to the details of any future application which may not be confirmed at the time of application. The prospective applicant has made an application for an opinion under S.287A in relation to design options for certain elements of the proposed development, I have addressed such matters separately in my report on that file under, ABP-323954-25.

7.0 Relevant Cases/Planning History.

7.1. The following comprise a list of relevant planning and consent history cases in relation to the subject development which are considered of note.

- Foreshore Licence **FS007361**: Granted by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, on the 19th December 2023 to Amazon MCS Ireland Ltd. to lay, construct, install, operate repair, maintain, and decommission a subsea fibre optic cable system on the licenced area for the permitted use and as specified in the plans submitted. The licence application was accompanied by inter-alia, a Natura Impact Statement, an Ecological Impact Assessment, a Non-Statutory Environmental Report, as well as a Marine Archaeological Assessment and Policy Support Statement. While the foreshore licence granted relates solely to that part of the cable route from landfall to the 12nM boundary, it is noted that the report of the Marine Licence Vetting Committee⁵ (MLVC) informing the decision on this foreshore licence includes the following statements that are considered of relevance to the development the subject of this pre-application consultation –
 - ‘Having considered the project as proposed it is concluded that it does not fall within the classes defined under Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive and therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is not required’

⁵ The Marine Licence Vetting Committee (MLVC) is a committee convened as required for the purposes of undertaking a technical, including environmental, assessment of any application under the Foreshore Act 1933, at the request of the Foreshore Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

- '.....it is concluded that from an appropriate assessment point of view the proposed development is environmentally acceptable'.

'In the interests of clarity the environmental considerations that have informed this assessment has taken account of environmental implications for the whole project as it is within the EEZ waters. As part of the process a range of detailed considerations have been given to the compliance of this proposed project with the various environmental directives. It is concluded that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on the integrity of any designated European sites.'

- **MAC 240030** was granted in November 2025 by MARA to the prospective applicant for 'the installation, use, operation, and maintenance of a telecommunications fibre optic cable including all associated decommissioning, demolition, rehabilitation and any other works required on foot of any development permission relating to the infrastructure', and for the applicant to occupy the seabed, from the 12nm limit, to the outer extent of the EEZ. The MAC was issued for a 35-year term and subject to an application for permission/consent being submitted to the Commission within 18 months of the grant date. The MAC is subject to a range of conditions including those relating to the need to apply for development permission which must include a Rehabilitation Schedule,
- Wexford County Council **PI. Ref. 20250330**: Permission granted on the 25th March 2025 for the installation of a cable duct (via new horizontal directional drilling under the dune system), remediation of the existing exposed ductwork and all other associated works above and below ground at Crossfamoge Bay Beach/Kilmore Quay.
- **ABP-321898-25**, referral to An Bord Pleanála in relation to the subject works lodged with An Bord Pleanála on 29th January 2025. The prospective applicant sought confirmation that the proposed development constituted exempted development under the provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Referral was decided on the 29th of

April, 2025, concluding that the works were development but did not constitute exempted development and that therefore planning permission was required.

- MARA have also granted a licence (Ref. No. LIC230017) to Microsoft Ireland Operation Ltd. to carry out marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation. This licence appears to partially overlap with the referrer's foreshore licence discussed above within and at the 12nM limit, but takes a different route to the east of the subject works within the EEZ. This licence was issued in July 2024 and has a 2-year term.
- Natural Resource Wales **CML2606** refers to an application for a marine licence for the installation of the Beaufort fibre optic submarine telecommunications cable system from landfall at Newgale (in Wales) to the limit of the UK EEZ. This application has been considered 'duly made' since the 11th of March 2026, and is under the consideration of Natural Resource Wales.

7.2. The prospective applicant has also cited a number of cable systems that have been provided in the wider vicinity in the Celtic Sea over the last 25 years, these include:

- Celtic, Kilmore Quay to Land's End, 1994
- ESAT-1, Kilmore Quay to Land's End, 1998 (this is the link that has been partially removed and is being replaced by the current proposal).
- UK-IRL Crossing 1, Kilmore Quay to Land's End – 1999
- UK-IRL Crossing 2, Ballinesker Co. Wexford, to Bude Cornwall, 1999
- Solas – Kilmore Quay to South Wales – 2000
- Greenlink Interconnector – Baginbun Beach Co. Wexford to Freshwater West, Pembrokeshire, Wales – 2025.

The presence of these cables demonstrate that the proposed development, while new, will not be novel at this location, that there is broad familiarity within the industry of the nature of the seabed in the wider area, and that it is an appropriate/established location for the provisions of such infrastructure.

8.0 Matters Arising.

8.1. Proper Planning and Sustainable Development:

8.1.1. During the pre-application consultation there were broad discussions on a range of issues with the prospective applicant and the Commission is referred to the record of the meeting that is attached to the file. I have summarised the broad matters arising below which include inter alia:

- **Proposed Development:**

The prospective applicant has provided an appropriate level of detail setting out the nature of the proposed development, in their recent submission and through discussions held at the pre-application meeting.

The proposed development constitutes the provision of a telecommunications subsea cable and forms part of a larger connection that will run from Wexford to Wales as discussed above. The works that will be subject to the future planning application will be entirely within the outer marine area (between the 12nm limit of Irish territorial waters and the border between the Irish and UK EEZs), and will join the portion of the subsea cable that has already been consented through foreshore licence **FS007361** (within the 12nm limit of Irish territorial waters) with the portion of the subsea cable that will be subject to another consent from a separate authority with jurisdiction over the UK waters (Natural Resource Wales).

All construction activities will be carried out at sea from specialist cable laying vessel(s) using modern cable laying jetting systems. Procedures for crossing existing subsea infrastructure have been outlined and the prospective applicant has confirmed that engagement with relevant stakeholders is ongoing in this regard.

The applicant has confirmed that the seabed conditions along the route of the proposed subsea cabling have an established history of being able to accommodate works of the nature proposed. Furthermore, there have been several similar subsea cables laid through this area in the past and accordingly the industry has an established knowledge of the nature of the

seabed conditions. The prospective applicant has therefore stated that they are confident both in terms of the accuracy of the available mapping of the benthic conditions and that their proposed construction methods will be appropriate to implement the required works with minimal environmental impact.

The prospective applicant has also been advised to ensure that any future application is adequately described and documentation is sufficiently detailed to cover all aspects of the proposed development for which permission will be sought in terms of the duration of the consent, clear description of the works and setting out any potential operational routine and non-routine maintenance or repairs that may be necessary throughout the operational phase.

Furthermore, the applicant has been made aware of the need for any future application to incorporate a rehabilitation scheme which is a requirement under the issued MAC.

▪ **Planning Policy Context National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF):**

Due to the location of the subject works the primary planning policy context document to consider is the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) , discussions noted that any future application documentation should demonstrate compliance with the full range of overarching marine planning policies in terms of environmental ocean health as well as the relevant economic and social policies, along with ensuring that best scientific practice and methods were relied on within any accompanying assessments.

▪ **Consultations Undertaken:**

The prospective applicant was advised that detailed liaison should occur with all relevant stakeholders and public bodies which would have an interest in any future application and which would be engaged in the process. In this regard the prospective applicant had advised that the full range of bodies had been engaged with as part of the previous foreshore licence application so there was an awareness of the project, however, notwithstanding this that they would engage further again in order to ensure all stakeholders were aware of the consenting process and the nature of the works that would be subject to the new application. The prospective applicant was advised in

particular that engagement with the NPWS should be carried out in light of the potential for impact on Annex IV species and to ensure that there is clarity as to whether a derogation may be required. If any such licence is required it will be necessary to be on hand and available to the Commission in advance of any future decision.

- **Coastal Planning Authority and Transboundary Consultees:**

The fact that the proposed development forms part of an overall subsea cable project that runs from Wexford to Wales was acknowledged. Under the future planning application no works are being proposed within the functional area of Wexford County Council, as all such works relevant to the overall project have either been previously consented under the issued foreshore licence (nearshore works) or under PI. Ref. 20250330 (terrestrial works).

Notwithstanding this, and the fact that the subject works do not infringe on the functional area of Wexford County Council, as the most proximate coastal planning authority I consider it appropriate that they are advised of any future application and invited to comment.

That part of the overall project within UK waters is subject to a separate consenting process, which the prospective applicant has now engaged upon as noted previously above. As the works form part of a larger project connecting the state to UK transboundary consultation and engagement will be required as part of any future application.

- **Cultural Heritage and Biodiversity:**

Potential impacts on cultural heritage and biodiversity were discussed in broad terms and it was stated that these would be dealt with in the relevant assessments accompanying any future planning. The applicant has stated that the application will be supported by a Marine Archaeological Assessment and all appropriate ecological reporting.

- **Fisheries:**

In relation to impact on fisheries the applicants stated that there is ongoing engagement and a fisheries liaison has been appointed to the project and it is anticipated that adverse impacts will not arise. Marine notices will issue where

required, with guard vessels used as necessary to ensure works will not adversely affect other sea-users. Furthermore, additional design detail has been provided which clarifies that the cable burial will facilitate any on-going trawling activity and, rock berms where provided to protect cable laid at the surface (e.g. at the greenlink crossing) will be grade/sloped to mitigate against gear snagging.

▪ **Construction:**

Construction methods of the various elements of the proposed development were discussed. Any future application will be accompanied by sufficiently detailed documentation including a Construction and Environmental Management Plan that will describe the various construction practices and methodologies as well as setting out details of how construction can be carried out while minimising the potential for impacts to arise.

▪ **Consistency with MAC:**

The prospective applicant was advised that any future planning application boundary should not exceed the boundaries set out in the issued MAC, the applicant has confirmed that the current pre-application consultation (and future planning application) will be consistent with the boundaries established in the MAC issued by MARA under MAC 240030.

▪ **Application Documentation:**

In terms of the application documentation being prepared, the prospective applicant has stated that the future planning application will be accompanied by a Planning Report, Ecological Impact Assessment, Natura Impact Statement, Assessment of Impact of Maritime Usage, Annex IV (species) Assessment, Marine Archaeological Assessment and all relevant planning drawings. In this regard it is noted that the proposed development forms part of an overall larger project, and the applicant was advised that it is important that the application documentation submitted stands on its own merits and does not rely on assumptions or assertions made in relation to previous consents or decisions through other processes. Furthermore, the applicant is aware of the need to consider the potential in-combination affects of the entirety of the project and potential for cumulative effects as necessary.

The applicant has also been advised to ensure that any future application provides clarity in terms of the nature of the works being consented including any routine and non-routine maintenance and/or repairs that may be necessary throughout the operational phase of the proposed development. The need for adequate documentation and description of works were raised as a discussion points at the pre-application consultation meeting and I note that the applicant has provided a revised and expanded development description within their latest correspondence (Appendix C of that letter refers). The revised development description does not contain any reference to operational maintenance works, so these may not be considered necessary. In any event, in relation to the preparation of notices for a future application it is open to the applicant to engage with An Coimisiún Pleanála closer to the date of lodgement.

The prospective applicant has also been advised to submit detailed documentation describing the subject works, construction methodologies and to incorporate any mitigation measures or techniques that can be used to minimise environmental impacts, the optimum means of setting out such details is usually through the provision of an appropriate Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Furthermore, the application is aware of the need to consider and set out the details of a relevant rehabilitation plan. The Commission will note that the revised development description submitted by the applicant refers to the provision of both a rehabilitation plan and a CEMP. I would note that the reference to rehabilitation within the development description is appropriate, however, the majority of planning applications which contain a CEMP do not include a reference to that document within the development description as it is not a statutory requirement.

8.2. Environmental Impact Assessment

- 8.2.1. The matter of EIA was also discussed during the pre-application consultation, where the prospective applicant noted the Department's consideration of this issue in their reporting on the Foreshore licence (FS007361) for the inshore component of the project. In their consideration of the Foreshore licence the Department has stated

that the proposed subsea cable works did not fall within any of the classes of development under Annex I or II of the EIA Directive and accordingly EIA was not required. The prospective applicant was advised that while this was noted by the Commission, it remains important that any future application includes comprehensive documentation that can be considered on its own merit and not rely solely on previous decisions. Accordingly, any justification or discussion in relation to the applicability or otherwise of the EIA process should be clearly set out within any future planning application documentation.

8.3. Appropriate Assessment

- 8.3.1. The applicant has stated that they are intending to submit a Natura Impact Statement with the proposed application. The Commission will note that the full range of potential impacts arising from the subject works, review of their potential zones of influence, and the detailed consideration of the source-pathway-receptor model in the context of the various qualifying interests (QI) of the relevant Natura sites, has not yet been completed. Notwithstanding this, given the fact that the proposed development forms part of a larger overall subsea cable, the highly mobile nature of the various QI species, the range of relevant Natura Sites, and the fact that the foreshore licence application for the inshore works included an NIS I consider this approach to be appropriate. The applicant has been advised of the benefit of early and detailed engagement with the NPWS in this regard.

8.4. Procedures

- 8.4.1. At the pre-application consultation, the proposed applicant confirmed that they were aware of the general procedures involved in making a planning application and were advised to consider in detail the development description of the proposed development so that all relevant works would be included and considered. The applicant was also advised of and is aware of the sunset clause applied to foreshore licences that have been consented prior to the enactment of Part XXI (Maritime Development) of the Act which effectively requires the inshore portion of the overall project as it stands consented under Foreshore licence ref FS007361 must be completed by December 2028 (Section 285(2) and (3) of the Act refers).

- 8.4.2. The prospective applicant has also been advised in broad terms of the Commissions requirements and the relevant procedures in relation to the overall application process and informed that the Commission is open to reviewing drawing scales and any other relevant application matters closer to the date of lodgement of any future application.
- 8.4.3. In relation to the prescribed bodies for the purposes of any future application I recommend that the Commission consider that the persons listed hereunder be served with the application and accompanying documents. In forming the list hereunder, regard was had to, inter alia, the requirements under Schedule 1 of the Planning and Development (Maritime Development) Regulations 2023. Regard was also had, in drawing up the list below, to the provisions of S.291(3)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- 8.4.4. The prospective applicant should send the following persons a copy of the application, accompanying documents (including EIAR and NIS) and a copy of the public notice:
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
 - The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications;
 - The Minister of Transport;
 - The Minister of Defence;
 - The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
 - The Environmental Protection Agency;
 - The Maritime Area Regulatory Authority;
 - The Minister for Rural and Community Development;
 - The Marine Institute;
 - Inland Fisheries Ireland;
 - Health and Safety Authority;
 - Commission for Regulation of Utilities
 - An Taisce;

- Wexford County Council (as the most proximate relevant coastal planning authority);
- The Southern Regional Assembly;
- National Transport Authority;
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland;
- Eirgrid;
- Commissioner of Irish Lights;
- Irish Coastguard; and
- The Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Commission may wish to review the above list and satisfy itself that it is sufficient. In this regard, I note that the above list has been compiled on the basis of information that is available from the pre-application consultations and that the applicant who has been carrying out detailed studies and surveys in preparing the application documentation and NIS may consider other bodies to be relevant. Accordingly, I recommend that any communication with the Prospective Applicant advise them that it is open to them to send copies of the application and its associated documentation to any other bodies that they consider relevant on the basis of the studies that they have carried out.

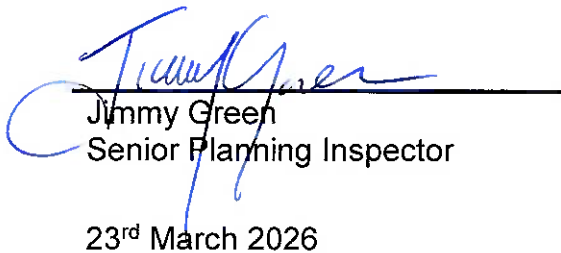
8.4.5. Transboundary Consultation

8.4.6. In addition to the above persons, and having regard to the provisions of S.291(3)(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the nature and location of the proposed development, the potential for cumulative effects to arise, and on consideration of commercial fisheries, biodiversity and human health, ornithology, and marine mammals I recommend that the following states should be notified and engaged with as transboundary states in any future application:

- Wales and
- England.

9.0 Conclusion

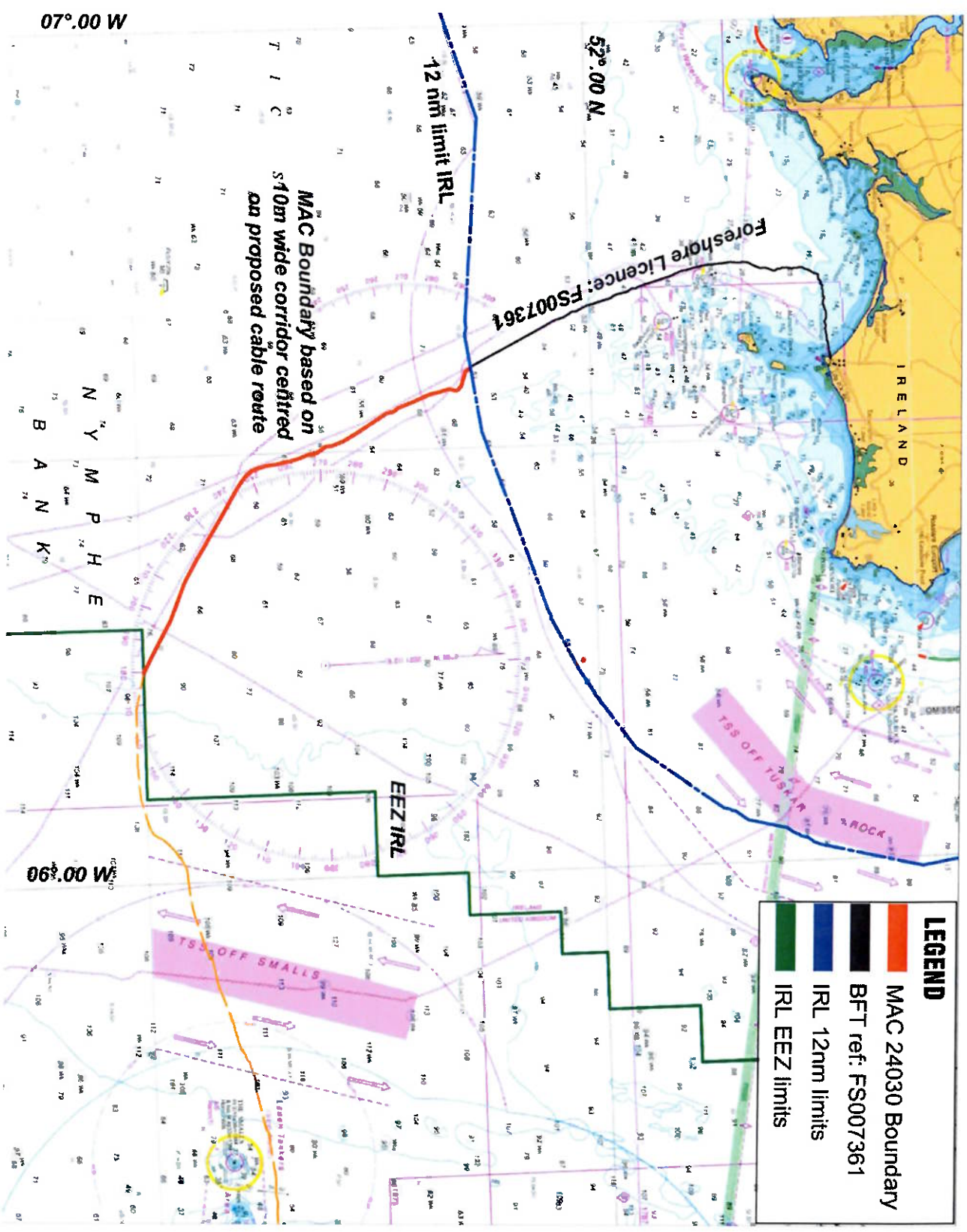
- 9.1. Following the completion of the pre-application meeting on the 15th of January, and on review of the correspondence and details received by the Commission on the 4th of March 2026, I am of the opinion that the process should be concluded, and the Commission should notify the prospective applicant that the process is closed and include the attached list of bodies that the applicant is requested to send copies of the application to in accordance with S291(3)(b) and S291(3)(d).
- 9.2. I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.



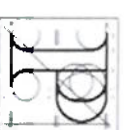
Jimmy Green
Senior Planning Inspector

23rd March 2026

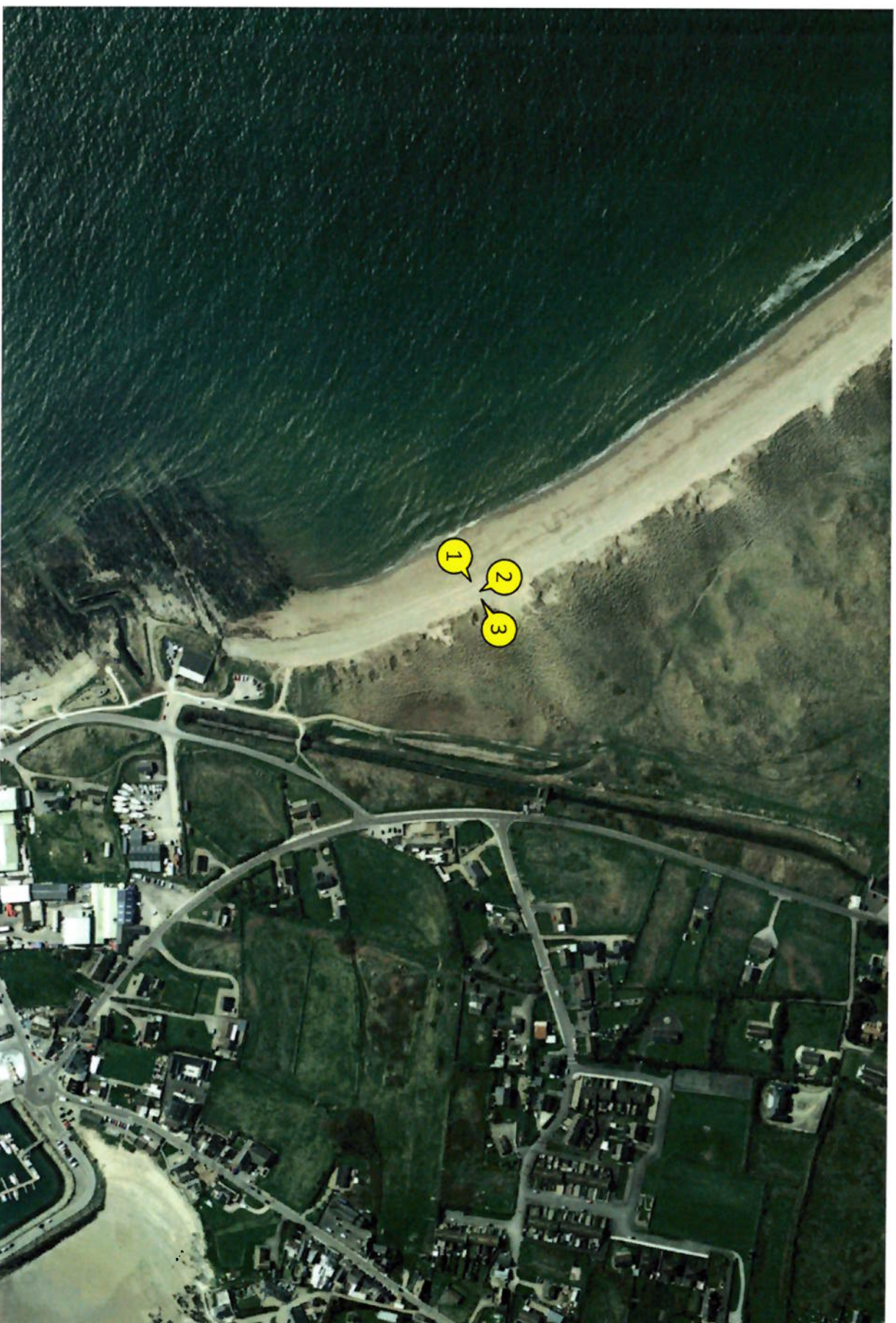
Site Location Map – subject pre-application site is marked by red line – i.e. MAC area



Approximate/Estimated (due to lack of landmarks on beach) location of views of existing remnant of ESAT 1 cable at Crossfarmoge Bay Beach, Kilmore Quay, Wexford

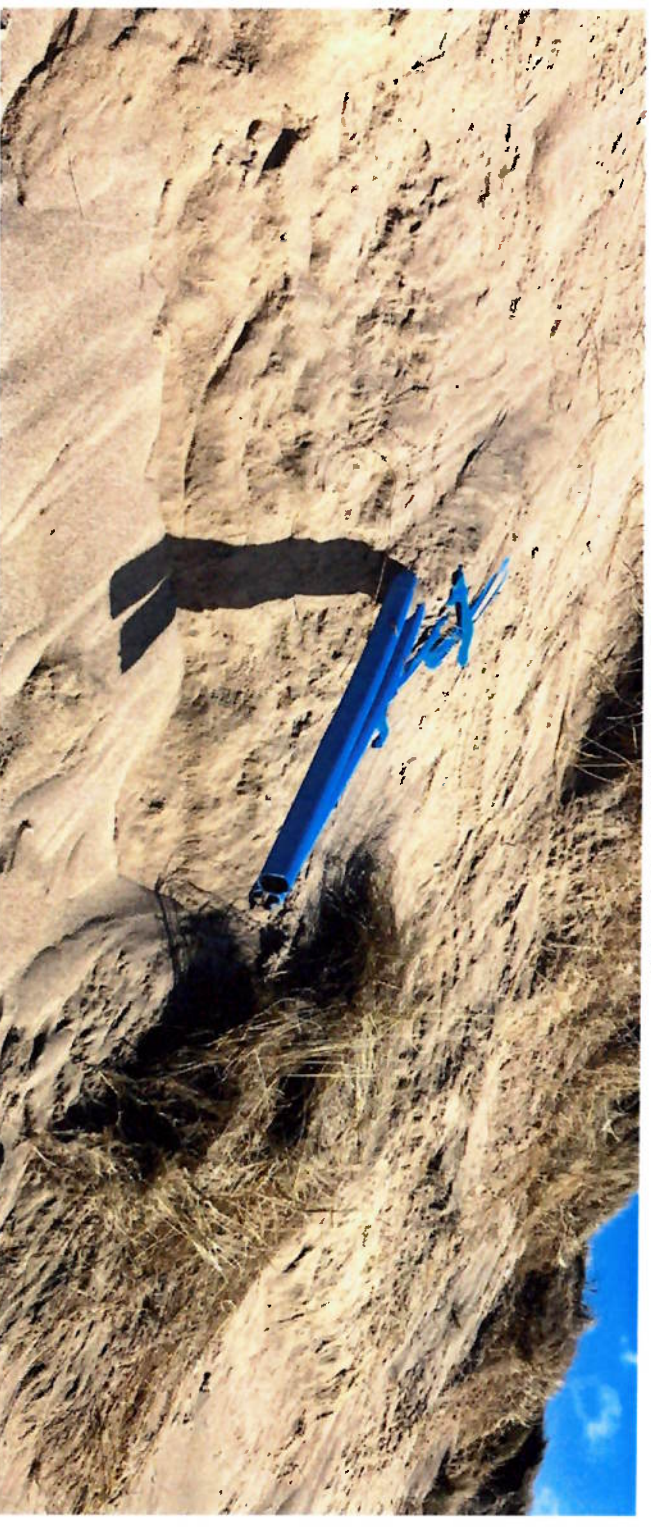


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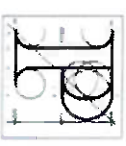


View 1 – Existing remnant of ESAT 1 cable works exposed from storm damage on dunes, looking shoreside landward to be remediated as part of the consent issued from Wexford County Council. Note – the blue duct on right contains a cut-off of the telecoms cable visible



View 2: Existing remnant of ESAT 1 projecting from dunes.

View 3: ESAT 1 cable remnant from top of dune facing seaward



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