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## A Summary of Consultation Responses

# Sustainable Development for Welsh Seas: Our Approach to Marine Planning in Wales



## **A summary of responses to ‘Sustainable development for Welsh seas: Our approach to marine planning in Wales’**

### **Overview**

On 16 February 2011 a consultation was launched entitled ‘Sustainable development for Welsh seas: Our approach to marine planning in Wales’. The consultation sought views on how we intended developing marine planning in Wales in line with our powers and responsibilities under the Marine & Coastal Act 2009. The consultation ended 11 May 2011.

The consultation set out our intention to develop a national plan for the Welsh inshore area and a national plan for the Welsh offshore area. The consultation also set out options for, and asked questions on, how we should plan on a sub-national level to embed more detail into the national plans.

In total 47 responses were received for this consultation. The responses represented organisation groups as follows:

Local Authority	4
Government Agency / Other Public Sector	7
Higher Education / Further Education / School	1
Professional Body	4
Other Interest Group	16
Individual	2
Industry	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>

### **General**

Some minor factual amendments were suggested.

Several respondents felt the interactive PDF demonstrating some marine datasets that Welsh Government can access was too complex and not user friendly. It was recommended that Welsh Government uses a web based geographic information system (GIS) tool instead.

None of the respondents indicated disagreement with the approach suggested to marine planning in Wales. Respondents particularly highlighted planning jointly for the Welsh inshore and Welsh offshore as desirable.

Respondents from all sectors requested further detail on sub national plans with several respondents suggesting sub-national planning should be considered after the approach on national planning has been presented in detail.

A variety of data gaps were identified and several respondents offered data that they housed.

Respondents from all sectors highlighted the need for integration with terrestrial planning and with public agencies and other administrations. Respondents welcomed the commitment to work with the Marine Management Organisation in the cross border areas.

Respondents from a variety of sectors highlighted that marine planning would be resource intensive, with some respondents particularly concerned that Welsh Government allocate resources adequately in order to : a) plan properly, b) plug evidence Gaps, and c) engage with stakeholders fully.

Some respondents noted the importance of marine planning in the UK linking with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and asked for further information as to how marine spatial planning would support implementation of the directive.

No respondents disagreed with the proposed governance arrangements although further detail was requested. Some respondents questioned whether the Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership or the regional coastal partnerships were sufficiently representative.

The need for early stakeholder engagement was a key theme.

## **Summary of responses to the specific questions in the consultation document**

### ***Question 1: Are there any other key features, resources or activities in Welsh seas that we need to take account of?***

A variety of additions for each of the sectors was suggested. Some respondents felt climate change should be specifically highlighted and linked to coastal defence.

Some respondents felt that the energy section should be expanded with more account taken of non renewable sources– especially oil and gas exploration, carbon capture, nuclear and thermal power.

Some respondents felt that more account should be taken of the importance of marine conservation and more detail should be added.

Several respondents gave detailed introductions to their respective sectors, as well as additional information that could be used as evidence in the marine planning process.

### ***Q.2 Are there other ways in which integration could be improved?***

Some respondents supported a joint programme of training for both Welsh Government and local government terrestrial planning officials. One

respondent suggested seconding terrestrial planners within Welsh Government to gain experience of marine planning and vice versa.

Whilst several respondents highlighted the need to link up with terrestrial planning and learn lessons, some respondents cautioned that the marine environment was different, that terrestrial planning approaches could not be 'grafted' onto the marine area and marine spatial planners will need to take that into account.

Some respondents suggested a revision of TAN 14 was needed to ensure terrestrial planners have a duty to take regard of marine plans.

There was strong support for Welsh Government updating its integrated coastal zone management strategy to improve integration.

Some respondents highlighted that Welsh Government should form strong links with other marine planning authorities in the UK and beyond, but in particular with the Marine Management Organisation.

***Q.3 What sectors do you think need to be included in the governance arrangements?***

There was broad support for the approach Welsh Government is taking and support for a need to include all sectoral interests. Several respondents offered to sit on the stakeholder and marine evidence groups.

Fisheries interests requested multiple representation as there is no single representative body in Wales.

Renewable energy and other energy interests requested multiple representatives to take into account the different sectors within the energy sector.

Some respondents expressed reservations about the ability of the Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership to be the stakeholder group due to lack of resources, with some suggesting that the Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership is not balanced in sectoral or geographical make up.

***Question 4: What other key Welsh documents do you think need to be taken into account and why?***

Respondents highlighted several documents that Welsh Government should also take into account in the marine planning process:

- Relevant river basin management plans
- The work undertaken by the Finding Sanctuary and Irish Sea Marine Conservation Zone projects in Welsh Offshore waters
- Welsh Rural Development Plan

- Event Wales - Developing a Major Events Strategy for Wales (2010 - 2020)
- European Site Management Schemes

Some respondents highlighted the importance of relevant UK documents that affect Welsh waters, citing National Policy Statements as an example.

It was also suggested that policies and relevant documents should be listed by 'type' to aid clarity; strategy documents, sector documents, local documents and territorial/spatial documents.

***Question 5: Do you think that there are currently any significant information or data requirements that we need to have in order to plan for the Welsh marine area?***

In general, respondents felt that evidence, data and information in the marine environment was weak at a UK and devolved level and more resource should be allocated.

Respondents from all sectors identified several potential needs in the evidence base for marine planning. The following needs were specifically identified as areas where there were evidence gaps; fisheries, mobile species, habitats, tourism, recreation and leisure, seascape assessments and sea bed mapping.

Respondents from all sectors commented on the need for data to be quality assured and some respondents requested that Welsh Government perform a data and information audit at the start of the marine planning process.

Respondents from some sectors expressed concern about the level of resource allocated in Welsh Government currently and the level that will be needed to address the evidence base for marine planning, and cautioned Welsh Government not to underestimate this.

***Question 6: Could you help fill them, and how?***

A wide range of respondents from all sectors offered to share data and information, with many giving details of specific data sets in their responses.

***Question 7: Do you think we need to plan on a more sub-national level?***

None of the respondents indicated disagreement with the approach suggested to marine planning in Wales – a national marine plan for the inshore and a national plan for the offshore, with spatial priorities. Respondents particularly highlighted that jointly planning for the Welsh inshore and Welsh offshore would be desirable.

Twenty eight respondents felt that Wales would need to plan on a more sub-national level. Some respondents did not feel it was appropriate to comment on Welsh Government policy but urged Welsh Government to work with other marine planning authorities in the cross border areas.

Several respondents had a caveat in their response to this question, commenting that it was difficult to comment on the level of sub-national planning that may be needed in Wales without more detail being given on the level of depth and detail that national planning might cover.

Respondents across all sectors requested further detail on sub-national plans with some respondents suggesting sub-national planning should be considered after the approach on national planning has been presented in detail.

Specifically some industry respondents linked the level of sub-national planning to the amount of resources available for marine planning in Wales, highlighting that sub-national planning would be very resource intensive. Some respondents also cautioned against neglecting national planning in favour of a regional approach, citing the Wales Spatial Plan as an example where this approach had not delivered expected outcomes due to a perceived lack of national direction.

***Question 8: If you do, what approach would you like us to take to sub-national marine planning and why?***

Of those respondents who advocated sub-national planning, twelve opted for an 'activity hotspots' based approach, six for regional planning for some of the Welsh marine area and four opted for regional planning for all of the Welsh marine area.

***Question 9: Are there different approaches that we could take?***

A minority of respondents felt that both a regional approach and a local hotspot approach to planning may be needed. However some respondents also raised concerns about possible stakeholder fatigue and bureaucracy if too many tiers of marine planning were created.

***Question 10: Are there other countries or authorities that we need to have close or formal relationships with?***

Whilst agreeing with the list given, respondents also felt that a close relationship would be needed with countries whose fishing fleets operated in Welsh waters and cross border authorities (Natural England, English Heritage, Environment Agency, English Local Authorities).

Several respondents also highlighted the need for a close relationship with the North West Coastal Forum in England and the Liverpool Bay Coastal sub-group.

***Question 11: Do you agree with this approach? (Governance structure)***

Respondents broadly accepted the approach but asked for more detail of the governance arrangements.

Two key concerns emerged from responses. Firstly, some respondents felt that the membership scope of the Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership needed to be widened, with fisheries interest groups specifically expressing concerns that fishers (both commercial and recreational) were not represented by the Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership and the Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership does not adequately represent North Wales interests. Secondly, a cross section of respondents felt the Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership was inadequately resourced to form the stakeholder group for marine planning.

***Question 12: How do you think we can make best use of existing coastal partnerships?***

Responses concentrated on two themes; existing partnerships and the creation of new partnerships. Respondents raised concerns about the resources of existing coastal partnerships not being sufficient and suggested that the Welsh Government would have to be very clear about exactly what they were asking regional partnerships to undertake. Linked to concerns raised regarding the representativeness of the Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership, some respondents raised similar concerns about regional coastal partnerships.

Two concerns emerged about creating new coastal partnerships where gaps are present on the coast. Firstly, coastal partnerships are organic and emerge independently, normally out of a single issue or a perceived need for dialogue in a locality and they cannot be “created” by government. Secondly, respondents were concerned about the time it might take to create new coastal partnerships where gaps exist specifically raising the possibility that by the time new partnerships are functioning effectively marine planning will have already have been completed.

***Question 13: How else can we reach the public?***

Respondents requested that Welsh Government engage early and fully on marine planning.

Respondents suggested using a variety of media types (local, regional and national) to raise awareness of marine planning and marine issues per se, as well as sending direct emails to stakeholders, clubs and organisations.

Respondents suggested that any workshops that are planned should be held in strategic locations and at different times of the day to ensure that interested people could attend outside of working hours.



## **Next Steps**

The Welsh Government would like to thank respondents for their comments and ideas. We are currently considering the responses from this consultation as part of our wider considerations on planning, including natural resources planning, which was consulted on as part of the Sustaining a Living Wales: A Green Paper on a new approach to natural resource management in Wales, 30 January 2012 until 31 May 2012.

## **Annex A - List of responses to Sustainable development for Welsh seas: Our approach to marine planning in Wales**

Associated British Ports  
Association for Geographic Information  
B Bullimore  
Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales  
Cardiff County Council  
Cardigan Bay Fisherman's Association Ltd  
Centrica Energy Renewable Investments Limited  
City and County of Swansea  
Countryside Council for Wales  
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd  
Environment Agency Wales  
G&M Roberts Fishing Ltd  
Horizon Nuclear Power  
Isle of Man Government  
Joint Nature Conservation Council  
MAREN Project  
M Parry  
Milford Haven Port Authority  
Ministry of Defence  
National Grid  
National Trust  
Natural England  
North West Coastal Forum  
Ordnance Survey  
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  
Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum  
RES-Offshore  
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors  
Royal Yachting Association/Welsh Yachting Association  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Cymru  
Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru  
RWE npower Plc  
RWE npower renewables Ltd  
Sea Fish Industry Authority  
Severn Estuary Partnership  
Snowdonia National Park Authority  
The British Association for Shooting and Conservation  
The Crown Estate  
The Law Society  
The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations  
The Port of Mostyn Ltd  
Tidal Energy Ltd  
Wales Environment Link  
Wales Landscape Partnership  
Welsh Ports Group  
Welsh Water  
World Wildlife Fund Cymru