



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group meeting: 23 November 2021

Minutes of the Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group meeting of 23 November 2021.

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Attendees

Eluned Jones, Phil Coates & Sarah Bound (Welsh Government), **Adrian Judd & Rachel Mulholland** (Cefas), **Mike Frost** (Wood Group UK Ltd), **Lucie Skates, Karen Perrow, Helen Bloomfield & Lee Murray** (NRW), **Emma Harrison** (Crown Estate), **Emily Williams & Claire Stephenson** (RSPB), **Kam Tang** (Swansea University), **Jetske Germing** (PCF), **Alys Morris, Katie Havard-Smith & Emma McKinley** (Severn Estuary Partnership), **Clare Trotman** (MCS), **Alex Curd** (MMO), **Dr Julian Whitewright** (RCAHMW), **Jim Evans** (WFA), **John Wrottesley** (ESCA), **Sarah Canning & Thomas Fey** (JNCC), **David Jones** (Blue Gem Wind), **Richard Hill** (RYA), **Mark Russell** (Mineral Products Association).

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1. Development of Strategic Resource Areas (SRAs) contract – Privacy Notice

Sarah gave a high level overview of the Welsh Government's (WG) requirement to obtain members' verbal or written consent of their agreement to their personal information (name, email address & organisation) being shared with the successful contractor for the SRA development work. Members who agreed to share their personal information verbally did so by using the virtual hand tool on the teams meeting.

2. HRA / SEA on Marine Planning Notices (MPNs) and SRA Development

In September 2021, Wood Group UK Ltd (Wood Group) were commissioned by WG to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Exercise and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Exercise on the SRA Marine Planning Notice (MPN).

Mike Frost, Technical Director at Wood Group, presented to members on this work. Mike discussed the characteristics of an MPN & of SRAs and noted that Wood Group's initial review suggests a reasonable case for a "no significant effects" conclusion, based on:

- the fundamental characteristics of an MPN
- SRAs as a neutral 'safeguarding' designation
- case-practice from HRA in other sectors (e.g. minerals safeguarding)

A number of members endorsed Mike's presentation. Eluned re-iterated the role of SRAs, should they be introduced, and how they would be applied. She also advised that implementation guidance on SRAs will be prepared, with input from members, and invited any queries via the Marine Planning mailbox.

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3. Lee Murray presented in respect of the NRW work mapping of environmental considerations

Lee is continuing to:

- engage with technical specialists to identify relevant evidence and develop and apply mapping methodologies;
- develop and run GIS models to generate environmental considerations maps;
- identify impact pathways for additional sectors and receptors;
- incorporate newly identified datasets into the mapping;
- identify case studies to explore Sustainable Management of Marine Natural Resources (SMMNR) outputs;
- update 'Impact pathway' adjustment scoring for all sectors; and
- provide advice on environmental considerations for aggregates, floating offshore wind, and tidal lagoons (report and maps).

Lee noted that he hopes to discuss with and receive further input from members in relation to GIS mapping and datasets at the next SRG meeting on 17 February 2022.

4. Monitoring and Reporting on the effectiveness of the Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP)

Eluned noted that the first formal report reviewing the effectiveness of the WNMP, including considering opportunities for further development of marine planning, will be laid before the Senedd by November 2022. The WG Marine Planning Team are starting to consider approaches to this review.

Eluned highlighted the work currently going forward, which provides context to these considerations and includes:

- SRA Development, a contract to progress this work will be awarded in

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- December 2021;
- Sector Location Guidance (SLG), Wave and Tidal SLG are currently being finalised, Aquaculture SLG is currently being drafted;
 - NRW's work on mapping environmental considerations, which building on the SMMNR project;
 - Ambitions detailed in the WNMP to provides greater certainty to developers and marine users;
 - The Ministerial Renewable Energy Deep Dive; and
 - Work being initiated by Defra to consider marine sector prioritisation.

Lucie presented an overview on the development of indicators over the past 3-4 years. She also highlighted that a second User Survey is due to be issued in the Spring of 2022.

Lucie asked members if they would share with her any guidance which their organisation has produced or which has been provided to them, together with any feedback on the use of the WNMP policies.

Discussion were held in respect of:

- environment assessments adequately taking on displacement;
- engaging with the communities to achieve the WNMP aims;
- making more use of published information, such as the RYA coastal access atlas; and
- Publishing additional information.

Eluned suggested that an in-depth discussion in respect of Monitoring & Reporting be added as an agenda item at the next SRG meeting.

5. AOB

NRW: Subscription to the NRW marine licensing stakeholder newsletter is available at WLBMRA@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Dr Julian Whitewright advised members that the Fisheries Act 2020 includes the

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protection of heritage aspects. He is working with other administrations to pull together a definition and would welcome member's views via the Marine Planning mailbox.

Next meeting 17 February 2022 @ 2pm.

Queries to: marineplanning@gov.wales

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