



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING

Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group meeting: 24 May 2022

Minutes of the Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group meeting of 24 May 2022.

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Contents

Attendees

1. Marine Planning Update
2. NRW mapping of environmental considerations
3. Implementation Guidance for Strategic Resource Area's (SRA's) - Paper 3
4. NRW guidance on restoration and enhancement (ENV_01)
5. Any other business and next meeting

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Attendees

Eluned Jones (Chair), Sarah Bound, Phil Coates (Welsh Government), **Adrian Judd** (Cefas), **Helen Bloomfield, Lee Murray, Karen Perrow & Lucie Skates** (NRW), **Chloe Wenman** (MCS), **Claire Stephenson** (RSPB), **Alex Curd** (MMO), **Emma Harrison** (TCE), **Eunice Pinn** (Seafish), **Jim Evans** (WFA), **Kam Tang** (Swansea University), **Katie Havard-Smith, Alys Morris** (Severn Estuary Partnership), **Mark Russell** (BMAPA), **Jetske Germing** (PCF), **Richard Hill** (RYA), **Thomas Fey & Sarah Canning** (JNCC).

1. Marine Planning Update

Eluned Jones presented an update on marine planning.

Paper 1 - Overview of marine planning products:

A directory of current and developing marine planning documents and tools was circulated with the agenda and papers.

Staff changes:

Phil Coates is retiring from Welsh Government at the end of May 2022. The group thanked Phil for all of his hard work and wished him a happy and healthy retirement.

Cross Border:

Effective cross-border planning was one of the considerations raised by the Hinkley Stakeholder Reference Group's report in 2021.

Welsh Government regularly engages with UK marine planning administrations,

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including MMO, to discuss all aspects of marine planning and management. To develop cross-border planning, Welsh Government and MMO, have together, over the last 6 months:

- reviewed and updated the 'Ways of working agreement' between the two organisations and formalised a meeting schedule.
- agreed to produce a 'joint cross-border marine planning guide' for the Severn and Dee estuaries. Welsh Government hopes to share more detail on the guide and receive input and feedback from the group at a future meeting.

Monitoring and Reporting on the effectiveness of the Welsh National Marine Plan:

Sarah Bound updated that Welsh Government launched its 2nd Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP) User Survey on 9 May 2022. This voluntary User Survey is being carried out to better understand stakeholders' awareness of the WNMP and how the plan and supporting guidance and resources are used. This User Survey follows on from an initial survey which was undertaken between December 2020 and February 2021. The key findings from both User Surveys will be used to inform the first formal 3 year report on the WNMP, which is due to be laid before the Senedd in November 2022.

Sarah invited members of the group to share any guidance or case studies, which their organisation has produced or which has been provided to them, together with any feedback on use of the WNMP.

Governance Report:

Phil Coates has produced a governance report which provides an overview of sector-specific marine planning governance arrangements that apply in the Welsh marine plan area. Eluned thanked the group for their feedback on the draft report, which is now in its final stages before being translated and

published.

Marine Planning Technical Statements:

Eluned advised the group of Welsh Government's intention to develop Marine Planning Technical Statements, to promote and support effective implementation of WNMP sector safeguarding policy. Technical Statements will not amend WNMP policy or introduce new policy.

Two Technical Statements are currently being drafted in respect of recreational boating and ports and shipping, drafts will be circulated to the group in due course. Eluned invited the group to contact her if they are interested in the development of a Technical Statement for their sector(s).

2. NRW mapping of environmental considerations

Lee Murray presented **Paper 2 - Mapping Environmental Considerations for Marine Spatial Planning**. An overview of the approach being taken by NRW to map environmental considerations in the Welsh marine plan area.

Lee requested from the group:

- feedback on the approach being taken to map environmental considerations and the methodology;
- information on any additional data sets available; and
- information on migration routes for fish.

Lee addressed the following points:

- NRW's mapping of environmental considerations work is separate to, but aligned with, the mapping of strategic resource areas (SRAs).
- Work to look at cumulative effects has been discussed internally, it's been

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agreed that it would need to be considered on a project level on a case-by-case basis.

- The Marine Evidence Strategy work has been used to inform the mapping of environmental considerations.
- The mapping of environmental considerations work will need to be reviewed and updated frequently so that it doesn't become out of date.

Eunice Pinn kindly shared a link to [this JNCC webpage](#) as a good example of presenting confidence levels on data in relation to species distributions.

Lee encouraged the group to share Paper 2 with colleagues, requesting their feedback. Lee will continue to update the group on the progression of the mapping of environmental considerations at future meetings.

3. Implementation Guidance for Strategic Resource Area's (SRA's) - Paper 3

As the SRA mapping work develops, Welsh Government has started to consider what implementation guidance might be required to support the implementation of SRA's. To inform this work, Eluned invited views from the group on the guidance they consider will be required to assist them in making effective decisions.

Paper 3 provides background regarding issues to be considered and previous discussions held with the group.

The group suggested implementation guidance could usefully cover:

- definition of terms – i.e. adequate compatibility; unacceptable adverse impacts;
- guidance on determining adequate compatibility and/or a case for

proceeding;

- how to prioritise the interests of different sectors;
- where co-location and co-existence can be achieved; and
- sector economic, social and environmental evidence on the Marine Planning Portal to help make informed decisions.

Mark Russell highlighted that the definition of safeguarding areas is already an established process. He kindly shared a link to the [British Geological Survey advice for mineral safeguarding](#) as an example of good practice, with the likelihood of the principles being comparable. Mark also highlighted the importance of being proportionate and avoiding unintended consequences. Safeguarding should be a prompt to support regulators and developers in determining the best outcome and long-term considerations.

Eluned advised that:

- the detail of the consultation process on proposals will be at the discretion of the decision maker;
- implementation guidance could indicate factors to take into consideration when determining adequate compatibility or a case for proceeding; and

Eluned thanked the group for its input. The views raised during discussions and feedback received will inform and guide work to develop implementation guidance on SRA's. Further information will be shared at the next meeting to continue this discussion on implementation guidance.

4. NRW guidance on restoration and enhancement (ENV_01)

Helen Bloomfield presented guidance, developed by NRW, on the principles supporting restoration and enhancement in marine or coastal development

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proposals - GN059.

The guidance sets out NRW's approach to advising on inclusion of restoration or enhancement elements in a marine or coastal development proposal. The guidance is focussed on a set of core principles and is intended to support discussion between NRW advisory colleagues and developers / project proposers who are considering including restoration or enhancement as part of their application for development consent or a licence.

Recognising that these are high level principles, NRW are looking to plan and prioritise more specific guidance and evidence to support building resilience through their marine development planning advice. Helen invited suggestions to help shape this ongoing work, and any feedback on the guidance itself.

5. Any other business and next meeting

Next meeting – 27 September 2022

Queries to: marineplanning@gov.wales

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