



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group meeting: 28 June 2023

Minutes of the Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group meeting of 28 June 2023.

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Attendees

Eluned Jones (Chair), John Hamer, Hishiv Shah & Sarah Bound (Welsh Government), Adrian Judd & Charlotte Brill (Cefas), Helen Bloomfield, Karen Perrow, Lucie Skates & Lee Murray (NRW), Dr Julian Wainwright (RCAHMMW), Thomas Fey & Emma Thorpe (JNCC), Tristan Bromley & Emma Harrison (TCE), Emily Williams (RSPB), Kam Tang (Swansea University), John Wrottesley (ESCA), Mark Simmonds (British Ports), Chloe Wenman (MCS), Helen Croxson (MCA), Jennifer Goodwin (SUDG), Jetske Germing (PCF), Mark Russell (BMAPA), Noemi Donigiewicz (Seafish).

Apologies

Jim Evans (WFA)

1. Welcome and introductions

Eluned welcomed members.

2. Purpose of the meeting

To give sectors an opportunity to say what they think marine planning could usefully be focusing on, in terms of supporting forward planning and management for their specific sectors. It's also an opportunity for members to showcase their sector and/or any particular sector initiatives.

Eluned introduced:

Paper 1 - Marine Planning: Mapping for Sustainable Development

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The paper signposts the members to a **Ministerial Written Statement** published on 1 March 2023 on taking forward Marine Planning following the three year review of the Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP). The Written Statement reflects on the first three years of the WNMP's implementation and updates on priorities for taking forward marine planning and continuing the implementation of the WNMP. These include developing understanding and planning tools to enable an increasingly spatial and prescriptive approach to marine planning, balancing protecting the marine environment with supporting thriving coastal communities and marine industries. Welsh Government aims to work with members of the Group to scope this work in greater detail.

3. Presentations from MPSRG members on considerations for taking forward marine planning

Group members presented an overview of their sector/organisation, including background, an overview of current activity, priorities, and future visions and needs. Common themes emerging from member's presentations included:

- future proofing; taking a long-term view using a cross-sectoral holistic approach;
- safeguarding both existing activity and resource for future use;
- industry need certainty for planning and capital investment;
- working in partnership with stakeholders;
- acknowledging and building on what works already and intervening where there's a genuine need.

1. Jennifer Godwin, representing the Seabed User and Developer Group (SUDG), outlined the group's policy drivers, being: net zero, national security, biodiversity loss and levelling up – recognising the role (and

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opportunity) that marine industries play in the Welsh economy.

Jennifer suggested that future marine planning policy areas cannot be viewed in isolation or delivered by one sector alone. A holistic and long-term vision is important to underpin planning. SUDG sees value in consistency on spatial prioritisation and planning across the UK, underpinned by a common evidence base. Jennifer highlighted the need for flexibility (to accommodate changing needs / emerging sectors), consistency across geographical and administrative boundaries, international collaboration and understanding and addressing cumulative impacts.

Jennifer also indicated that industry could build on existing good practice and evidence and address data gaps. She recognised the importance of open and pragmatic dialogue between all users of the marine space.

2. Mark Russell, representing the British Marine Aggregate Producers Association (BMAPA), gave some background to the industry and outlined how both the spatial area of industry operation and market demand change over time. He noted current new and emerging industries, linked to decarbonisation and net zero, will require significant infrastructure (and therefore building materials).

Mark emphasised the importance of taking a long term view (going beyond the current WNMP plan period) and the need for certainty for industry planning and long term capital investment. He also highlighted the importance of safeguarding for the aggregates industry, covering existing licensed areas, future prospects and areas of strategic resource potential, and identified this as a key role for marine planning.

3. John Wrottesley, representing the European Subsea Cables Association (ESCA), highlighted the significance of subsea cables and their crucial role in society. John presented an overview of KIS-ORCA, which displays existing cable routes and landfall sites. He also highlighted the industry's

ability and success in maintaining a resilient, diverse, secure and robust cables network.

John emphasised the importance of taking a long-term view. He highlighted that, unlike other uses or Marine Protected Areas, cables need linear routing from one place to another, often crossing boundaries and multiple jurisdictions. He also noted that offshore development is expanding rapidly and noted the importance of understanding the inter-connected nature of all industries providing services for offshore wind, and not considering individual sectors in isolation. John also emphasised the importance of building on existing good practice, rather than duplicating areas where industry already works well together.

4. Mark Simmonds, representing the British Ports Association (BPA), outlined that planning and consenting is key to ports' competitiveness. Ports interact with both terrestrial and marine planning. They need to be recognised in marine planning as critical in their own right and also as the foundation for a range of other marine industries. Harbour authorities have a consenting role as well as being users of the marine planning system. It's anticipated that more port capacity will be required in the future to service growing sectors, such as offshore energy.

A key focus for most ports in Wales is to get infrastructure in place to service offshore wind; this requires planning, consenting and possibly funding support.

5. Tristan Bromley, representing The Crown Estate (TCE), presented on their 'Whole of Seabed' approach and spatial modelling capability. The approach focuses on taking a long-term view of seabed resources and the demands upon them to 2050, with a twin focus on nature recovery as well as marine industries. This approach aims to complement and support marine planning in Wales by:

- creating a shared understanding of cross-sector and cross-boundary

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challenges;

- bringing together cross-sector and cross-boundary evidence to underpin decision making;
- working in partnership with Welsh Government and stakeholders to address key areas of policy.

Tristan noted that TCE's marine priorities are to optimise broad value from the seabed, help catalyse Net Zero and deliver a thriving environment.

6. Jetske Germing, representing Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum (PCF), outlined their vision and mission to inspire, collaborate and deliver solutions for sustainable coastal communities. PCF works in marine renewable energy, climate change engagement, education and skills, payment for eco systems service / water quality, outdoor health, stakeholder support and responsible recreation. Jetske gave an overview of current initiatives and noted PCF would welcome involvement from and collaboration with members of the Group. She emphasised the important of marine planning being based on a clear vision, providing clarity and adopting a consistent approach, planning holistically across sectors and administrative/geographical boundaries, working in partnership with stakeholders and being underpinned by evidence.
7. Helen Bloomfield from NRW presented an update on the mapping ecosystem restoration opportunities work. The purpose of the mapping is to:
 - help communicate NRW's position on where and what the most significant opportunities are to enhance the resilience of the marine ecosystems in Wales and where further evidence is required to underpin ecosystem enhancement;
 - engage with partners to agree, influence and work collaboratively to deliver restoration and enhancement activities and develop funding mechanisms.

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Helen shared the initial mapping output, which focuses on sites known to have one or more feature in unfavourable condition based on the **Indicative feature condition assessments for European Marine Sites** undertaken by NRW in 2018. The mapping will feed into the Nature Networks recommendation from the Biodiversity Deep Dive.

4. Questions and discussion

Members agreed that Strategic Resource Area development is a positive step forward. They also felt that the **Welsh Government's Marine Planning Technical Statements** have worked particularly well.

Members are keen to hear from the fisheries perspective at a future meeting. TCE offered to present an update on their 'Whole of Seabed' programme at a future meeting.

Members shared links to:

Climate change hotspots and implications for the global subsea telecommunications network - ScienceDirect

<https://www.pembrokeshirecoastalforum.org.uk/climate-adaptation-strategy/>

5. Any other business and next meeting

Next meeting – September 2023

Queries to: marineplanning@gov.wales

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