



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P-LG/1093/17

Local Authority Leaders and Directors of the Environment
Chief Executives of Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia National Park Authorities
Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales
Chief Executive of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water
Chief Executive of Milford Haven Port Authority
Managing Director, Port of Mostyn Ltd

8 May 2017

Dear all

Managing our Marine Protected Areas

This letter sets out how the Welsh Government has been working as part of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) Management Steering Group (MPAMSG) with organisations who are also marine protected area managing authorities. The MPAMSG has been looking at ways to further ensure our MPAs are effectively managed so they achieve and remain in favourable condition and meet our organisation's statutory obligations.

Effectively managed MPAs contribute to the conservation and improvement of the marine area. A well-designed and well-managed network of MPAs, alongside wider marine management measures such as marine planning, is integral to achieving clean healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas. This provides the resilience and long term sustainability of our seas which is important to our coastal communities, the well-being of the people of Wales and to those who visit our shores.

No single organisation is responsible for managing our MPAs. MPAs are managed by placing duties and responsibilities on organisations such as yours. Such organisations, referred to as management authorities, therefore either have statutory responsibilities in relation to the marine area or are significant seabed or coastal land owners. We are required, collectively and individually, to take steps which will help achieve and/or maintain the ecological interest of a MPA to a favourable condition. Management authorities principally manage sites through the regulatory consenting process and by introducing measures to achieve a site's conservation objectives. This may include measures to modify or restrict human activity if necessary.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

My officials have been facilitating the work of the MPAMSG to look at the ways in which we can enhance the management of the network of MPAs in Wales. The MPAMSG was set up in March 2014 and meets at least twice a year. Members represent the main management authorities in Wales, including yours. The MPAMSG decided an important step is to remind ourselves of our statutory obligations towards managing MPAs. **You are receiving this letter as a managing authority and a key contributor to the statutory management of Marine Protected Areas in Wales.**

The MPAMSG has agreed a vision for a well managed network, and has also considered options for an area based approach to management across Wales. However, following a period of stakeholder engagement, the MPAMSG concluded replicating the preferred option was unaffordable for the management authorities concerned. The work of the MPAMSG has now moved to focus on providing strategic support and guidance to management authorities to facilitate activity which has greatest impact on the condition of MPAs, their features and network as a whole.

I attach supporting information to help clarify the roles and responsibilities of the management authorities across Wales in achieving favourable site condition, should you require it. Attached is an overview of:

- the network of MPAs in Welsh waters, including protected features;
- the organisations responsible for managing our MPAs and their duties;
- the work to date in considering an area based approach to managing the network of MPAs; and
- the legislation and guidance underpinning MPA management.

If you have any questions regarding the content of this letter please contact Richard Lowcock James at the Welsh Government's Marine Conservation and Biodiversity Branch on 03000 253241.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Lesley Griffiths'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs