

Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group (MPSRG)

4 September 2019



Attendees

Eluned Jones (Welsh Government), **Phil Coates** (Welsh Government), **Rebecca Rees** (Welsh Government), **Rafe Osborne** (Welsh Government), **Adrian Judd** (Cefas), **Rachel Mulholland** (Cefas), **Mark Russell** (Mineral Producers Association), **Mike Wilkinson** (RSPB), **Kirsty Lindenbaum** (NRW), **Lucie Skates** (NRW), **Harriet Robinson** (NRW), **Lisa Phillips** (NRW), **Karen Perrow** (NRW), **Amy Martin** (NRW), **Duncan Savage** (RYA), **Mike Butterfield** (RYA), **Mel Nicholls** (MMO), **Jillian Whyte** (JNCC), **Stephen Jay** (Liverpool University), **Alice Collier** (Crown Estate), **Eunice Pinn** (Seafish), **Colin Trigg** (ABPMer), **Natalie Frost** (ABPMer)

1. Following policy lead sign off, the redrafted Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP) had now been referred for Ministerial review. As the plan covers a number of retained functions, this involves referral to both the Welsh Government Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs and the UK Government Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. While this process is ongoing, the team is working on a suite of documents which will accompany the plan, including Implementation Guidance, a Monitoring and Reporting Framework, an updated Marine Planning Portal and an updated Wales Marine Evidence Report.
2. The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss the work currently being taken forward on developing a spatial approach to marine planning and for NRW to discuss the Marine Area Statement they are currently producing.
3. Following the introduction of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, NRW has been tasked with delivering Area Statements, including one focussed on the Marine Area. When published in March 2020, Area Statements will explain why a statement has been prepared for the area, by reference to:
 - the natural resources in that area,
 - the benefits derived from these natural resources,
 - the priorities, risks and opportunities that need to be addressed,
 - what NRW and others can do to address the priorities identified within the Natural Resources Policy.
4. NRW had identified three themes for the Marine Area Statement, based on a discussion with the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMAAG), and asked the meeting to explore the theme of: Supporting the implementation of marine planning.
5. The second half of the meeting focused on work to develop a spatial approach to marine planning. To progress marine planning in Wales, Welsh Government is working with Expert Panels, comprising members of this MPSRG and Welsh Government sector policy leads, to further explore and define opportunities and constraints for the Aggregates, Aquaculture and Tidal Stream Energy and Wave Energy sectors. This work will inform considerations of whether there may be a

potential case for proceeding with developing proposals for Strategic Resource Areas (SRAs) to introduce a degree of safeguarding related to potential future sustainable resource use.

6. The Expert Panels met virtually for the first time in August and will be meeting further throughout the Autumn. The availability of evidence to underpin this work and inform the development of any potential SRAs is an important consideration, and consideration will also be given to whether addressing evidence gaps should be prioritised as part of this work. There is no presumption that any SRAs would go ahead for any particular sector and cases for proceeding or not proceeding will be produced and shared with the MPSRG. Welsh Government is keen to work with a wide range of stakeholders to progress this work, as understanding stakeholder needs will enable the tailoring of outputs in the most appropriate and applicable way.
7. The group also received an update from ABPMer on the Sustainable Management of Marine Natural Resources (SMMNR) project. Phase One of the project has been completed and the outputs are now available on the Welsh Government website. Phase Two is now commencing and is considering the recommendations made during Phase One, including addressing knowledge gaps.

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