

### **Marine Planning Decision Makers Group (MPDMG)**

Welsh Government published the first [Welsh National Marine Plan \(WNMP\)](#) on 12 November 2019. Now the plan has been adopted obligations fall upon **relevant Public Authorities**, to take decisions in line with the plan, as set out in [Section 58 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act \(2009\)](#) where:

- **S.58(1)** *A public authority must take any authorisation or enforcement decision in accordance with the appropriate marine policy documents\*, unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise. \*in Wales, these are the UK Marine Policy Statement<sup>1</sup> and, once adopted, the Welsh National Marine Plan which covers the inshore and offshore Welsh planning regions.*
- A further general duty also arises under **S.58(3)** *to have a regard to the appropriate marine policy documents in taking any decision which relates to any function capable of affecting the whole or any part of the UK marine area which is not an authorisation or enforcement decision.*

Welsh Government has developed its approach to marine planning in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of public authorities and other key users of the plan. We are keen to build on this collaborative approach to marine planning.

In recognition of the particular role of these authorities in supporting plan implementation under S.58 (ie as a body that may make authorisation and enforcement decisions that *may affect* the marine area) and given the new nature of marine planning, we have established a **Marine Planning Decision Makers Group (MPDMG)**.

The purpose of the group is to help relevant public authorities meet their statutory responsibilities (for example for decisions taken on land that may affect the sea or decisions in England that may affect the Welsh Marine Area), and in doing so enable the effective, efficient, timely and consistent implementation of Wales' first Marine Plan.

This group first convened in October 2018, well in advance of the plan being adopted to play a key role in advising us on the approach to planning and practical aspects related to plan implementation over the next few years. A particular challenge is the number of potential public authorities and their dispersion across the UK and beyond.

#### **Progress so far**

- **August 2018** We held three webinars with the relevant public authorities.
- **October 2018** The group met face to face, where we introduced the draft marine plan and held initial discussions about responsibilities, possible approaches and membership.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-marine-policy-statement>

- **February 2019** The group met to discuss the Implementation Guidance, that will accompany the WNMP. A workshop was held to look at case study examples of how the WNMP might operate in practice.
- **July 2019** The meeting focussed on the finalised Implementation Guidance, defining s58 duties and the proposals for Monitoring and Reporting of the WNMP.
- **November 2019** First meeting of the group since plan publication. Short webinar to give an update on progress and discuss key issues for RPAs.
- **February 2020** Next scheduled face to face meeting.

Contact [Rebecca.Rees2@gov.wales](mailto:Rebecca.Rees2@gov.wales) for more information