



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Vision, Objectives and Policies

Welsh National Marine Plan

December 2019

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Introduction

The Welsh National Marine Plan contains a suite of Plan **Objectives** which are supported by specific **General** and **Sector policies**.

General policies cover topics including:

- Nature conservation
- Water quality
- Sustainable use
- Seascapes
- Coastal communities and economic growth
- Cumulative impacts
- Heritage etc

and are organised under the themes of the UK High Level Marine Objectives.

Sector policies are specific to the various sectors which operate in the plan area.

This document provides an overview of the WNMP objectives and policies. It should be used to understand the range of topics covered by the WNMP. When applying the WNMP either in the development of a proposal or by a Relevant Public Authority making a decision with the potential to affect the plan area, reference should be made to the WNMP itself both in terms of the policies and supporting text. As set out in the WNMP, other supporting material and information will also be available to support plan implementation and should be used as appropriate.



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Plan Vision

Welsh seas are clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse:

- Through an ecosystem approach, natural resources are sustainably managed and our seas are healthy and resilient, supporting a sustainable and thriving economy.
- Through access to, understanding of and enjoyment of the marine environment and maritime cultural heritage, health and well-being are improving.
- Through Blue Growth more jobs and wealth are being created and are helping coastal communities become more resilient, prosperous and equitable with a vibrant culture.
- Through the responsible deployment of low carbon technologies, the Welsh marine area is making a strong contribution to energy security, and climate change emissions targets.



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Plan Objectives

HLMO theme	Objective	
Overarching	1	Support the sustainable development of the Welsh marine area by contributing across Wales' well-being goals, supporting the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) through decision making and by taking account of the cumulative effects of all uses of the marine environment.
Achieving a sustainable marine economy	2	Contribute to a thriving Welsh economy by encouraging economically productive activities and profitable and sustainable businesses that create long term employment at all skill levels.
	3	Support the opportunity to sustainably develop marine renewable energy resources with the right development in the right place, helping to achieve the UK's energy security and carbon reduction objectives, whilst fully considering other's interests, and ecosystem resilience.
	4	Provide space to support existing and future economic activity through managing multiple uses, encouraging the coexistence of compatible activities, the mitigation of conflicts between users and, where possible, by reducing the displacement of existing activities.
	5	Recognise the significant value of coastal tourism and recreation to the Welsh economy and well-being and ensure such activity and potential for future growth are appropriately safeguarded.
Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society	6	Contribute to supporting the development of vibrant, more equitable, culturally and linguistically distinct, cohesive and resilient coastal communities.
	7	Support enjoyment and stewardship of our coasts and seas and their resources by encouraging equitable and safe access to a resilient marine environment, whilst protecting and promoting valuable landscapes, seascapes and historic assets.
	8	Improve understanding and enable action supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation.
Living within environmental limits	9	Support the achievement and maintenance of Good Environmental Status (GES) and Good Ecological Status (GeS).
	10	Protect, conserve, restore and enhance marine biodiversity to halt and reverse its decline including supporting the development and functioning of a well-managed and ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and resilient populations of representative, rare and vulnerable species.
	11	Maintain and enhance the resilience of marine ecosystems and the benefits they provide in order to meet the needs of present and future generations.
Promoting good governance	12	Support proportionate, consistent and integrated decision making through implementing forward-looking policies as part of a plan-led, precautionary, risk-based and adaptive approach to managing Welsh seas.
Using sound science responsibly	13	Develop a shared, accessible marine evidence base to support use of sound evidence and provide a mechanism for the unique characteristics and opportunities of the Welsh Marine Area to be better understood.

General Policies

GEN General Policy – Planning Policy

GEN_01: Planning policy

There is a presumption in favour of the sustainable development of the plan area in order to contribute to Wales' well-being goals.

GEN_02: Planning policy

Relevant public authorities should take a proportionate, risk-based approach to application of relevant marine planning policies in decision making.

ECON General Policy – Achieving a Sustainable Marine Economy

ECON_01: Sustainable economic growth

Proposals for economically sustainable activities are encouraged, particularly where they contribute to:

- the sustainable management of natural resources thereby supporting ecosystem resilience;
- a more resilient economy;
- employment opportunities particularly for coastal communities;
- protecting and creating employment at all skill levels;
- maintaining communities with a high-density of Welsh speakers; and/or
- tackling poverty by supporting deprived coastal communities.



Image supplied by Visit Wales

ECON_02: Coexistence

Proposals should demonstrate how they have considered opportunities for coexistence with other compatible sectors in order to optimise the value and use of the marine area and marine natural resources.

SOC General Policy – Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society

SOC_01: Access to the marine environment

Proposals that maintain or enhance access to the marine environment are encouraged.

SOC_02: Well-being of coastal communities

Proposals that contribute to the well-being of coastal communities are encouraged.

SOC_03: Marine pollution incidents

Proposals should demonstrate how they minimise their risk of causing or contributing to marine pollution incidents.

SOC_04: Welsh language and culture

Proposals that contribute to the promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language and culture are encouraged.

SOC_05: Historic assets

Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on historic assets and their settings have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:

- a) avoid adverse impacts on historic assets and their settings; and/or
- b) minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or
- c) mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Opportunities to enhance historic assets are encouraged.

SOC_06: Designated landscapes

Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on the purposes and special qualities for which National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have been designated have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:

- a) avoid adverse impacts on designated landscapes; and/or
- b) minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or
- c) mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Opportunities to enhance designated landscapes are encouraged.

SOC_07: Seascapes

Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on seascapes have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:

- a) avoid adverse impacts on seascapes; and/or
- b) minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or
- c) mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Opportunities to enhance seascapes are encouraged.

SOC_08: Resilience to coastal change and flooding

Proposals should demonstrate how they are resilient to coastal change and flooding over their lifetime.

SOC_09: Effects on coastal change and flooding

Proposals should demonstrate how they:

- avoid significant adverse impacts upon coastal processes; and
- minimise the risk of coastal change and flooding;

Proposals that align with the relevant Shoreline Management Plan(s) and its policies are encouraged.

SOC_10: Minimising climate change

Proposals should demonstrate how they, in order of preference:

- a) avoid the emission of greenhouse gases; and/or
- b) minimise them where they cannot be avoided; and/or
- c) mitigate them where they cannot be minimised.

Where significant emission of greenhouse gases cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals for regulated activities must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

SOC_11: Resilience to climate change

Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the impacts of climate change and have incorporated appropriate adaptation measures, taking into account Climate Change Risk Assessments for Wales.

Proposals that contribute to climate change adaptation and/or mitigation are encouraged.

ENV General Policy – Living within Environmental Limits

ENV_01: Resilient marine ecosystems

Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on marine ecosystems have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:

- a) avoid adverse impacts; and/or
- b) minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or
- c) mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Proposals that contribute to the protection, restoration and/or enhancement of marine ecosystems are encouraged.

ENV_02: Marine Protected Areas

Proposals should demonstrate how they:

- avoid adverse impacts on individual Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the coherence of the network as a whole;
- have regard to the measures to manage MPAs; and
- avoid adverse impacts on designated sites that are not part of the MPA network.

ENV_03: Invasive non-native species

Proposals should demonstrate how they avoid or minimise the risk of introducing and spreading invasive non-native species.

Where appropriate, proposals should include biosecurity measures to reduce the risk of introducing and spreading of invasive non-native species.

ENV_04: Marine litter

Proposals should demonstrate how they:

- avoid the deliberate introduction of litter into the marine plan area; and
- minimise the risk of accidental release of litter.

ENV_05: Underwater noise

Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered man-made noise impacts on the marine environment and, in order of preference:

- a) avoid adverse impacts; and/or
- b) minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or
- c) mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

ENV_06: Air and water quality

Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered their potential air and water quality impacts and should, in order of preference:

- a) avoid adverse impacts; and/or
- b) minimise adverse impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or
- c) mitigate adverse impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

ENV_07: Fish Species and Habitats

Proposals potentially affecting important feeding, breeding (including spawning & nursery) and migration areas or habitats for key fish and shellfish species of commercial or ecological importance should demonstrate how they, in order of preference:

- a) avoid adverse impacts on those areas; and/or
- b) minimise adverse impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or
- c) mitigate adverse impacts where they cannot be minimised;

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

GOV General Policy – Promoting Good Governance

GOV_01: Cumulative effects

Proposals should demonstrate that they have assessed potential cumulative effects and should, in order of preference:

- a) avoid adverse effects; and/or
- b) minimise effects where they cannot be avoided; and/or
- c) mitigate effects where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse effects cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Proposals that contribute to positive cumulative effects are encouraged.

GOV_02: Cross-border and plan compatibility

Relevant public authorities, in making their decisions, should have regard to:

- any applicable policy in a relevant marine plan;
- any applicable policy in relevant terrestrial development plans or related documents;
- the Natural Resources Policy;
- any relevant local well-being plan(s) (including the local well-being assessment); and
- evidence in any relevant Area Statement(s) produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

SCI General Policy – Using Sound Science Responsibly

SCI_01: Using sound science responsibly

Relevant public authorities should make decisions using sound evidence and a risk-based, proportionate approach. Where appropriate they should apply the precautionary principle and consider opportunities to apply adaptive management.



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Image courtesy of the British Marine Aggregate Producers Association

Sector Supporting Policies

Aggregates

Sector Objective

To continue to use marine aggregates resources at a rate and in locations which best meet our current and future needs by ensuring adequate reserves are provided for through long-term licences.

AGG_01a: Aggregates (supporting)

Proposals for new aggregate extraction will be supported, within any tonnage limits, where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

AGG_01b: Aggregates (supporting)

Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities:

- for the sustainable use of wider marine aggregate natural resources;
- to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for aggregates

in order to support the sustainable development of the aggregate sector through marine planning.

Aquaculture

Sector Objective

To facilitate the development of sustainable aquaculture in Welsh waters, including promoting innovative finfish, shellfish and marine algal businesses and associated supply chains.

AQU_01a: Aquaculture (supporting)

Proposals for new aquaculture developments will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

AQU_01b: Aquaculture (supporting)

Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for the sustainable use of aquaculture resources including the identification of:

- natural resources that provide aquaculture potential
- opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for aquaculture

in order to support the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector through marine planning.

Defence

Sector Objective

To contribute to the defence of the nation by ensuring that Defence and National Security activities are not compromised.

Dredging and Disposal

Sector Objective

To maintain safe and effective navigational access for shipping, fishing and leisure craft and support future growth and increases in port facilities and vessel size whilst promoting the optimal sustainable use of dredged material and ensuring adequate disposal facilities are available.

D&D_01: Dredging and Disposal (supporting)

Proposals that maintain navigable channels and long term access to open at-sea disposal sites for appropriate material will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

Energy – Low Carbon

Sector Objective

To contribute significantly to the decarbonisation of our economy and to our prosperity by increasing the amount of marine renewable energy generated, through:

- Supporting further commercial deployment of offshore wind technologies at scale over the lifetime of this Plan;
- Supporting the development and demonstration of wave energy and tidal stream technologies in the short to medium term;
- Increasing (where appropriate) the number of wave energy and tidal stream energy generation devices deployed in commercial scale developments over the medium term;
- Developing a better understanding of the potential for tidal lagoon power technology; and
- Recognising the potential role of the marine environment in new coastal nuclear energy generation facilities.

To develop Wales as an exemplar of marine renewable energy technology by developing the essential skill base, infrastructure and technical knowledge to support the development of the industry over the next 20 years.

ELC_01a: Low carbon energy (supporting) wind

Proposals for offshore wind energy generation will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

Proposals for wind >350MW will be considered by UK Government in accordance with relevant national policy. In determining an NSIP for a wind proposal, the decision maker will have regard to this plan. Any determination in relation to energy developments of any scale will be taken in accordance with this plan alongside any other relevant considerations.

ELC_01b: Low carbon energy (supporting) wind

In order to understand future opportunities for offshore wind development, including floating technologies, this plan supports strategic planning for the sector. Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for the sustainable use of wind energy resources including identification of:

- natural resources that provide potential opportunity for future use;
- evidence to de-risk consenting for the sector; and
- opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for offshore wind energy resource safeguarding;

in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning.

Relevant public authorities should make appropriate evidence available to support planning and decision making in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning, where it is appropriate to do so.

ELC_02a: Low carbon energy (supporting) wave

Proposals for wave energy generation will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

ELC_02b: Low carbon energy (supporting) wave

In order to understand future opportunities for wave energy development, relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for the sustainable use of wave energy resources including identification of:

- natural resources that provide potential opportunity for future use;
- evidence to de-risk consenting for the sector; and
- opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for wave energy resource safeguarding;

in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning.

Relevant public authorities should make appropriate evidence available to support planning and decision making in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning, where it is appropriate to do so.

ELC_03a: Low carbon energy (supporting) tidal stream

Proposals for tidal stream energy generation will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.



Image supplied by Innogy

ELC_03b: Low carbon energy (supporting) tidal stream

In order to understand future opportunities for tidal stream energy development, relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for the sustainable use of tidal stream energy resources including identification of:

- natural resources that provide potential opportunity for future use;
- evidence to de-risk consenting for the sector; and
- opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for tidal stream energy resource safeguarding;

in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning.

Relevant public authorities should make appropriate evidence available to support planning and decision making in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning, where it is appropriate to do so.

ELC_04: Low carbon energy (supporting) tidal range

In order to understand future opportunities for tidal range development, strategic planning for the sector is encouraged. Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to:

- collect evidence to support understanding of environmental constraints and opportunities for the sustainable use of the tidal range resource;
- support understanding of the optimal siting of tidal lagoon developments across Wales as part of a wider, UK perspective; and
- identify opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for tidal lagoon safeguarding purposes.

Relevant public authorities should make appropriate evidence available to support planning and decision making in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning, where it is appropriate to do so.



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Energy – Oil and Gas

Sector Objective

Maximising the sustainable recovery of UK oil and gas in order to provide commercial and domestic consumers with a secure, affordable and resilient supply of energy whilst meeting UK decarbonisation goals.

O&G_01a: Oil and gas (supporting)

Proposals that maximise the economic recovery of oil and gas sustainably will be supported where they comply with the objectives of this plan, and fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within the statutory processes of awarding production licences and subsequent activity-specific approvals. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

O&G_01b: Oil and gas (supporting)

Welsh Government policy is to avoid the continued extraction of fossil fuels in intertidal areas and estuaries and coastal inlet waters that fall within the Welsh onshore licence area. Applications for new petroleum licenses in these areas should not be supported, unless required for mine safety or scientific purposes. Proposals for the development and extraction of oil and gas in these areas with land based elements must provide robust and credible evidence to demonstrate how they conform to the Planning Policy Wales Energy Hierarchy for Planning, including how they make a necessary contribution towards decarbonising the energy system.

O&G_02: Oil and gas (supporting)

Proposals that support the long-term development of carbon capture and storage technology will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

Fisheries

Sector Objective

To support and safeguard a sustainable, diversified and profitable fishing sector including promoting sustainable capture fisheries and optimising the economic value of fish caught as a supply of sustainable protein.

FIS_01a: Fisheries (supporting)

Proposals that support and enhance sustainable fishing activities will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

FIS_01b: Fisheries (supporting)

Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities to develop a strategic evidence base to improve understanding of opportunities for the sustainable development of fisheries in order to support the sustainable development of the fisheries sector through marine planning.

Ports and Shipping

Sector Objective

To safeguard established shipping routes and support sustainable development in the shipping and ports sector.

P&S_01a: Ports and Shipping (supporting)

Proposals for ports, harbours and shipping activities will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

P&S_01b: Ports and Shipping (supporting)

Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities to support the sustainable development of the ports and shipping sector through marine planning.

P&S_02: Ports and Shipping (supporting)

Proposals that provide for the maintenance, repair, development and diversification of port and harbour facilities will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

Subsea Cabling

Sector Objective

To support the optimal distribution of electricity and better global communications through the growth of digital communication networks.

CAB_01: Subsea cabling (supporting)

Proposals that facilitate the growth of digital communications networks and/or the optimal distribution of electricity will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

Surface Water and Wastewater Treatment and Disposal

Sector Objective

To safeguard the capacity to safely and effectively treat and discharge surface water runoff and wastewater.

Tourism and Recreation

Sector Objective

To contribute to sustainable development by protecting and promoting access to the coast and improving the quality of the visitor experience thereby increasing Wales' reputation as a world class sustainable marine tourism and recreation destination.

T&R_01a: Tourism and recreation (supporting)

Proposals that demonstrate a positive contribution to tourism and recreation opportunities and policy objectives (for the sector) around the Welsh coast will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

T&R_01b: Tourism and recreation (supporting)

Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for sustainable tourism and recreation around the Welsh coast, including:

- a) developing a strategic evidence base to improve understanding of current and potential tourism and recreation activities, including eco-tourism and other low impact activities; and
- b) opportunities to define areas of future opportunity for tourism and recreation;

in order to support the sustainable development of the tourism and recreation sector through marine planning.

Sector Safeguarding Policies

SAF_01: Safeguarding existing activity

- a) Proposals likely to have significant adverse impacts upon an established activity covered by a formal application or authorisation must demonstrate how they will address compatibility issues with that activity.

Proposals unable to demonstrate adequate compatibility must present a clear and convincing case for the proposal to progress under exceptional circumstances.

- b) Proposals likely to have significant adverse impacts upon an established activity not subject to a formal authorisation must demonstrate how they will address compatibility issues with that activity.

Proposals unable to demonstrate adequate compatibility must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Under SAF 01 a and b, compatibility should be demonstrated through, in order of preference:

- Avoiding significant adverse impacts on those activities, and/or
- Minimising significant adverse impacts where these cannot be avoided; and/or
- Mitigating significant adverse impacts where they cannot be minimised.

SAF_02: Safeguarding strategic resources

Proposals which may have significant adverse impacts upon the prospects of any sector covered by this plan to engage in sustainable future strategic resource use (of resources identified by an SRA) must demonstrate how they will address compatibility issues with that potential resource use.

Proposals unable to demonstrate adequate compatibility must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Compatibility should be demonstrated through, in order of preference:

- Avoiding significant adverse impacts on this potential strategic resource use, and/or
- Minimising significant adverse impacts where these cannot be avoided; and/or
- Mitigating significant adverse impacts where they cannot be minimised.



DEF_01: Defence (safeguarding)

Proposals that:

- potentially affect Ministry of Defence (MOD) Danger Areas, Exercise Areas or strategic defence interests; and/or
- potentially interfere with communication, surveillance and navigation facilities necessary for defence and national security;

should only be authorised with the agreement of MOD.



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