

## Marine Planning Decision Maker's Group (MPDMG)

19 February 2020



### Attendees

Phil Coates, Rafe Osborne, Geraint Horton & Rebecca Rees (Welsh Government), Rachel Mulholland (Cefas), Alan Groves (WG – Planning), Sharon Davies (WG – Marine Licensing), Suzanne Thomas (WG – Tourism), Gemma Christian (WG – NDF), Mel Nicholls (MMO), Karen Perrow and Maria Alvarez (NRW), Helen Croxson (MCGA), John Williams (Anglesey Council), Lindsay Christian and Stephen Williams (Newport Council), Judith Oakley (Swansea Council), Tony Thickett (PINS), Jennifer Grubb (Dwr Cymru), Gavin Ross (O&G Authority), Alice Collier (Crown Estate), Nicola Abrams (OPRED), James Stewart (Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority), Simon Power & Ria Monkton (Mott Macdonald), Elena San Martin (ABPMer)

1. Since plan adoption on 12 November, a number of further documents had been published to support plan implementation. This included a Sustainability Appraisal Post Adoption Statement, a Vision, Objectives & Policies summary, an Overview of the WNMP, an updated animation, a Monitoring and Reporting framework and Update to the Wales Marine Evidence report. The Marine Planning team had produced hard copies of the WNMP and Overview document and were happy to send these to stakeholders on request.
2. In the last week Welsh Government had written to the Chief Executives of all Local Authorities in Wales and the National Parks with copy to appropriate members of this group and the Heads of Planning. The letter made them aware the plan was now in place and their duties under it. Alongside this group, of decision makers in relevant public authorities, the Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group (MPSRG) also continues to meet to advise the Marine Planning team on plan development, with the last meeting in December.
3. Members of both groups had provided feedback on the draft Implementation Guidance (IG). The current version of the document was the one this group had received last year which had not changed substantially and given appropriate weight is a relevant consideration in decisions relating to the WNMP. It was not intended to formally consult on the IG which would soon be published in its final form. It was currently with Policy leads for sign off and there were a few technical aspects to consider before the final version could be shared with the group.
4. The group were given an update on the proposed approach to develop Strategic Resource Areas (SRAs) to support plan safeguarding policy. SRAs were included in maps in the draft WNMP but were taken out of the final plan. However, provision was made for them to be introduced at a later stage through Marine Planning Notices (MPN). In the first instance Welsh Government were looking at whether there was a Case for Proceeding (CfP) in identifying SRAs. Expert groups had been established to help us weigh up any CfP for the four sectors, initially; Aquaculture, Aggregates, Tidal Stream and Wave Energy. The expert panels comprise members from industry, academia Government and NGOs and final feedback has just been received from them. Advice would then be sent to the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural

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Affairs to consider whether to move beyond the CfP and develop SRAs. This would involve mapping work taking account a range of considerations to be agreed with stakeholders. The proposed SRA would be consulted on via the issue of a MPN and the process would likely take 1 – 2 years.

5. Welsh Government provided an update on a piece of work commissioned through consultants to map out all the relevant decisions taken by RPAs in Wales, building upon a similar exercise undertaken by the MMO in England. This work would mainly focus on authorities with Section 58.1 MCAA responsibilities and would help the Marine Planning team and plan users understand the breadth of effect of the plan. The project was being delivered by Mott Macdonald who were in the process of issuing questionnaires to RPAs and would then follow this up with more focussed engagement. This work was due to be completed by the end of March 2020.
6. The group had an update from Welsh Government on the draft National Development Framework (NDF) and links to the WNMP. Consultation on the draft NDF had recently concluded, with 1,100 responses received. During the consultation process a number of questions had been raised about the evidence base and so explanatory papers had been produced, including one paper on links between the NDF and the Marine Plan. The team had also produced an infographic to demonstrate the relationship and boundaries of the WNMP and NDF. The timeframe for publication of final NDF is September 2020.
7. NRW gave an update on their proportionate consideration of Marine Licenses based on their banding scheme. A signposting document would be made available on NRW's website shortly.
8. There was a presentation from ABPMer on the work they are doing to develop draft indicators for Monitoring and Reporting of WNMP following the publication of the M&R framework earlier this year. A report would be produced by the end of March and then there would be further refinement of the indicators through the M&R sub group of the MPDMG.
9. There was an open forum section of the meeting where attendees fed back on experience they had on implementation of the WNMP to date that other RPAs and WG might learn from.