

# Welsh Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMAAG)

## Extraordinary Meeting

Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP)

26 September 2018

10:30 – 15:30

### Notes

#### Attendees

Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Peter Davies (PD) (Chair)	PD Partnership	Chris O'Brien	RSPB
Gill Bell	MCS	Nick O'Sullivan	WMFAG Chair
Wendy Dodds	MCS	David Jones	PCF/MEW
Phil Hollington	Cragen	Phil Coates (PJC)	WG (presenting)
Natalie Frost	ABP (presenting)	Adrian Judd (AJ)	CEFAS (presenting)
David Harding	BMAPA	Sarah Bound (SB)	WG (presenting)
Nick Barcock	DCWW	Pat Cowdy (PC)	WG (presenting)
Neville Rookes	WLGA	Rachel Mulholland (RM)	CEFAS (presenting)
Lee Murray	NRW	Lucie Skates (LS)	NRW (presenting)

#### Apologies

David McDermott (OVW), Mark Russell (BMAPA), Mark Simmonds (BPA), Rachel Sharp (WTW), Trevor Jones (BM), Peter Barham (SUDG), Jetske Germing (PCF), Lucy Taylor (SEP), Deanna Groom (RCAHMW)

#### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

PD welcomed the group and gave a short introduction. Peter reminded members that WMAAG had requested a more detailed presentation on the WNMP at an appropriate time following the summary given in November 2017. Around the table introductions were given.

#### **2. Overview**

PJC gave the group an overview of the WNMP and the legislation behind it.

### **3. Progress to date and next steps (Paper 1 & 2)**

SB gave an update to the group on the responses received to the consultation and the main themes. SB outlined the stakeholder engagement undertaken including workshops with WNMP Stakeholder Reference Group (MPSRG) exploring these themes. SB also presented a proposed timeline to reach adoption of the WNMP and gave a brief overview of the ongoing work streams which are contributing to WNMP implementation.

Members indicated that the target to adopt the plan in the spring of 2019 was ambitious. Members also felt that advice to the Cabinet Secretary on the need for an independent investigation would be more appropriate after the plan has been redrafted rather than in September.

### **4. Planning Framework (Paper 3)**

SB presented a paper to the members detailing the proposed structural changes to the WNMP. These changes reflect responses received to the consultation and discussion held with the MPSRG.

Members were content with the proposed changes and will send any further comments to officials (if necessary) once they have had time to digest these further.

### **5. Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR)**

LS updated members on the latest position in respect of SMNR.

Much of the feedback on the draft WNMP to date has revolved around the balance or level of priority given to socio-economic and environmental considerations within the draft WNMP. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has been inputting into discussions around this with Welsh Government and other stakeholders, including inputting into a meeting on the 1 August where a detailed discussion was held.

NRW will continue to work with Welsh Government to develop evidence and advice to support the marine planning process in line with the principles of SMNR.

NRW consider that a marine Area Statement offers a key mechanism to develop relevant evidence to support the implementation of WNMP policy in line with the principles of SMNR. WMAAG members also contributed to a short workshop on the marine Area Statement in June of this year and NRW will continue to work with a range of stakeholders to explore the opportunities to support SMNR through the marine planning process over the coming months.

NRW and Welsh Government are developing a narrative to describe how the process of marine planning and the Environment Act will interact. Once finalised, this will be shared more widely, including with WMAAG.

LS confirmed that SNMR applies out to 12nm. Members were please to see works being undertaken in respect of SMNR, although some were concerned that all of the supporting policies in the draft plan could end up as a barrier to SMNR. One member confirmed that RPAs will be subject to the duties of the '5 ways of working' as part of meeting Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG) requirements and suggested that Welsh Government should mainstream these to show consistency as well as compliance.

## **6. Socio-economic**

PC presented Welsh Governments recent progress in developing socio-economic policy for the WNMP and confirmed that a detailed paper would be produced in due course.

Discussions were held on how to balance social, economic and environmental factors in decision making. Further work will be required to look at how policies in the plan will be implemented taking account of socio-economics as well as the environmental considerations. This will involve working with stakeholders, considering relevant terrestrial planning practice and developing case studies.

## **7. Strategic Resource Areas (SRA) (Paper 4)**

PJC presented revised SRA policy proposals to members. SRAs support the sustainable use and development of natural resources. SRAs are a planning tool that will develop with time (and in turn support the development and refinement of marine planning). The level of detail for the safeguarding of each sector reflects this approach.

Whilst accepting the view that policy weightings remained unchanged, members found the practical implications of the suggested changes difficult to visualise without seeing all general and sector policy parts together. Some also commented that in respect of tidal lagoon policy it is difficult to assess various impacts without knowing what scale of development was supported by Welsh Government and by the plan. Members are still concerned that SRAs are still more focused on blue growth than environment / SMNR and are based on variable evidence etc. They suggest that such a focus is not aligned to the stated vision and plan objectives. Members noted the suggestion to defer producing SRAs (to be introduced through supplementary documents) post adoption of the plan and at a rate that reflects the extent of available evidence. No immediate views were offered on this approach.

PJC invited members to submit any further comments to officials once they'd had further time to consider the proposals at [MarinePlanning@gov.wales](mailto:MarinePlanning@gov.wales)

## **8. Cross Border**

RM presented members with a breakdown of responses received to the consultation in relation to Cross Border and how these responses are being actioned. RM also updated the group on the recent engagement and activity undertaken with the other administrations.

Members inquired about the Marine Policy Statement (MPS) which states in a footnote that joint estuary plans would be produced for the Severn and Dee and asked about the consultation on sub-national planning. RM advised members of the restrictions in place due to other administrations plans being at different stages in development to the WNMP and that joint plans will evolve in time.

## **9. Workshop session – evidence priorities for marine planning (Paper 5)**

AJ updated members on the evidence which has been obtained and how we are making it accessible. AJ also set out our proposed approach of a targeted / deliverable list of marine planning specific needs and held 2 workshops session asking members:

- Do they agree with our approach?
- Do they agree with the categories?
- Do they agree with the marine planning evidence needs identified?
- What their thoughts are on social and economic evidence needs and how these should be identified / incorporated? and
- Wales Marine Evidence Report (WMER) updates.

Members noted the approach and agreed to provide any comments to [MarinePlanning@gov.wales](mailto:MarinePlanning@gov.wales).

## **10. A presentation by ABPMer - EMFF Sustainable use of marine natural resources project**

NF from ABPMer outlined the objectives of the project, to:

- Inform marine spatial planning;
- Address the need for fit for purpose data and knowledge; and
- Support marine environmental protection and sustainable use of tidal energy, wave energy and aquaculture resources; and

Members were very supportive of the project and offered to send over their databases of research and/or research led information. NF confirmed that invertebrate and algae data is being gathered. Focus for gathering data has been on 3 areas but all resource areas have been researched. NF also confirmed that not all information gathered will be made available but they will be able to signpost.

## **11. Marine plan implementation decision making**

PJC gave an overview of the different types of relevant authority decision making. He also updated the group on the recently established Relevant Authorities Decision Makers Group, established to ensure we understand what public authorities are using the plan for and how and what needs they may have as we progress to marine plan implementation.

Members queried how we will make sure that land based activities don't adversely affect or do have consideration of the plan? It was also noted that overlapping planning regimes (land and sea) will be a challenge and questioned if this was something that the National Development Framework (NDF) could pick up on? Officials were advised to contact the Planning Officers Society for Wales and make an appointment to present the WNMP.

## **12. Workshop session - Monitoring and reporting framework progress**

LS conveyed that Welsh Government would like to develop an approach to monitoring and reporting through engagement across government and public authorities and in collaboration with stakeholders to learn from other's experience of monitoring and reporting of planning policy.

Members highlighted the knock on consequences on resources to monitor and report licenses. LS led a workshop to consider 4 policy areas, Aggregates (supporting), Marine Protected Areas, Seascapes and Tourism and Recreation (safeguarding). LS also invited the members to join the Monitoring and Reporting Task & Finish Group.

## **13. Summary of the day**

PD thanked officials and members for attending and sharing their views. PD also invited members to submit any further queries to the Marine Planning Team.