

Marine Planning Decision Maker's Group (MPDMG)

3 July 2020



Attendees

Chair - Phil Coates, Rebecca Rees, Geraint Horton (Welsh Government), Rachel Mulholland (Cefas), Karen Perrow & Wendy Dodds (NRW), Lindsay Christian (Newport Council), Wayne Hope (Denbighshire Council), Suzanne Thomas (WG – Tourism), Alan Groves (WG - Planning), Morgan Edwards (WG – Marine Licensing), Jennifer Grubb (Dwr Cymru), Johnathon Monk (MHPA), Nathan Slater (Vale of Glamorgan Council), Andrew Brown (Big Lottery Fund), Martin Thomas (Trinity House), James Stewart (Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority), Karin Bennett, Emma Burden & Jon Wilson (MOD), Inger Soderstrom (OPRED), Nick Salter (MCGA), Richard Matthams (Bridgend Council)

1. Attendees were informed that following policy lead sign off the [Implementation Guidance](#) (IG) had now been published and Group members were free to share this with their stakeholders. Members were thanked for their comments and input into the process of producing and finalising the document. The plan for managing production of future iterations of the IG was to understand what had worked well for stakeholders and look at further areas where more guidance would be useful. There would be a full review of the guidance once it had been used with the Plan for a sensible amount of time. Stakeholders would be informed of when this would happen so they could feed into the updated version. In the meantime the team were happy to take any comments or feedback on the IG via the Marine Planning [mailbox](#).
2. The Group were given an overview of the main structure of the IG. The Introductory Section covers things that are relevant to all proposals, decisions or policies. It has sections on the role of Relevant Public Authorities, information on preparing a proposal, how to apply the policies in the Plan and terminology used in both the Plan and the IG. There is chapter for both General Policies and Sector Policies. The IG makes it clear that it should be read in conjunction with the Plan and that it does not introduce new policy. When the draft Welsh National Marine Plan was consulted on, feedback was that it was too long. The final Plan is more concise with the IG separate. This means that the IG can now be amended and updated if there are changes to be incorporated without following the same formal consultation process that the Plan would need to go through.
3. The Marine Planning team are producing a Governance report which is a reference document that sits arm's length from the Marine Plan and sets out what organisations have which types of functions within the Welsh Marine Plan Area. Group members had been sent the introductory text and the first sector chapter – Aquaculture with feedback requested. The other ten chapters would now be completed in close consultation with the sector reps. Similar to the IG as this is a reference document it can be easily updated.
4. The group were updated on some of the key projects that were being progressed by the Marine Planning team which includes recorded webinars to explain the Marine Planning process, the Marine Planning Portal, EMFF Sustainable Management of Marine Natural Resources project which addresses gaps in evidence collation and

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work to progress Sector Locational Guidance (SLG). SLG applies marine biodiversity and socio economic evidence which facilitates sectoral planning to support projects at an earlier stage in the development process and enable more informed decision making. SLG will be a supplementary planning tool and will provide an overview of the extent, location of sector activities and anticipation of future sector needs and interactions and will help inform any future consideration of sector Strategic Resource Areas (SRAs) – should they be separately progressed in the future.

5. There was an update on the Monitoring & Reporting framework & indicators. In January Welsh Government had published the [Monitoring and Reporting framework](#) which sets out the broad approach to develop the suite of indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the Welsh National Marine Plan. The aim is to get the full set of indicators developed and published in late 2020, in line with that approach. The first three yearly monitoring report will be published in 2022. The approach is one that integrates requirements across both the Marine and Coastal Access Act legislative driver and obligations under the SEA regulations to monitor the Plan's effects on sustainability. The indicators will be divided into three categories; Marine Plan / decision making monitoring, Objective / Policy monitoring and Sustainability monitoring. The proposed indicators would be further discussed with the Monitoring and Reporting sub group.
6. The Marine Planning team acknowledged that given the current COVID-19 situation it was recognised that priorities had changed for both Welsh Government and Relevant Public Authorities (RPAs). Engagement had slowed but prior to this the team had met with a number of RPAs and were in the process of preparing material to help them engage internally within their organisations. A independent report to map out which organisations take which decisions within the Welsh Marine Plan Area had now been received by Welsh Government but this would need to be quality assured with stakeholders before it could be finalised.