

'England's Ocean Peninsula'



Vision

The vision for the south west marine plan areas in 2041

By 2041 the south west marine plan areas will continue to have a strong cultural and economic association with the Atlantic Ocean and the Western Approaches. These areas are distinctive for the prevalence of fishing and tourism and recreation activities in a traditional and quintessential maritime setting. In the Severn Estuary, marine related employment and renewable tidal-range energy opportunities continue to grow. In the west and south, a strong maritime economy based on commercial fishing, tourism and sustainable port development encourages economic growth. The diversity of habitats and species continues to be protected by a network of Marine Conservation Zones. The offshore area stretches out into the Atlantic Ocean to the edge of the continental shelf. It hosts the Isles of Scilly archipelago where extensive environmental protection covers the islands and their surrounding reefs.

How will the south west marine plan areas look in 2041?

Economy

By 2041, the inshore plan area is economically productive and employment opportunities for maritime related businesses have increased. Employers are taking advantage of local marine skills and essential coastal infrastructure is in place or safeguarded. Smaller and more vulnerable harbour communities, previously reliant on commercial fishing are now supporting diversified and profitable marine businesses. Marine sectors, particularly commercial fishing and port operations, have adapted to new opportunities over the past twenty years and displacement of activities has been minimised. Marine businesses are competitive and, acting in ways which respects environmental limits, are socially responsible. This has led to increased prosperity and opportunities to sustainably grow the local economy. Taking advantage of a plan-led system, through education, training and development, the plan areas are now recognised as a centre of excellence for marine renewable energy projects. Ports are actively working in collaboration with developers to drive inward investment and construction of offshore renewable energy facilities. Sustainable tourism and recreation, such as boating and surfing, compliment a thriving economy. The economy is benefiting from an extended tourist season beyond traditional boundaries and locations.

Social

By 2041, the health, physical and mental well-being of communities in the South-West plan areas has been enhanced through a better appreciation of, and improved public access to the coast. Those who live, work or visit the plan areas continue to appreciate the unique sense of place and the cultural, environmental and historic landscapes which define the uniqueness of England's ocean peninsula. This has led to better community cohesion as residents and visitors are able to fully appreciate and benefit from the social and cultural heritage of the plan areas. The continued importance of commercial fishing is recognised and the heritage of traditional fishing communities of the plan area are safeguarded through increased opportunities and enhanced access to sustainable fisheries. Existing sectors including ports, defence, and tourism continue to be major employers in the area. Development of some seaside towns has helped attract investment for regeneration, increasing sustainable tourism and recreation activities and stimulating local economies. There is an appreciation and greater awareness of the role of the seas in mitigating the effects of climate change. Working with terrestrial and marine planning authorities, coastal communities' enjoy an enhanced resilience and capacity to reduce vulnerability caused by climate change and sea-level rise.

Environment

By 2041, the marine and coastal environment of the south-west plan areas is being conserved and enhanced, both for its intrinsic value and for the important role it plays in providing natural resources. Ecosystems services ensure ecological communities are preserved, enhanced and increased, within the network of protected marine areas which abound in the South-West. Commercial fish populations are healthy and fish nursery functions are enhanced. There are reduced impacts on birds, fish, cetaceans and seals from pressures such as disturbance, pollution, and underwater noise. The abundance of highly mobile species in the south west plan areas has increased thanks to healthy marine and coastal habitats. Improved and sustainable access to the coast is being maintained within limits to prevent and avoid disturbance to important roosting and haul-out sites. In suitable coastal areas, beneficial habitat has increased through new opportunities to create and regenerate wetlands as a natural flood defence. Flood resilience has increased and natural carbon sequestration processes are occurring. The importance of the marine environment in mitigating the impacts of climate change is appreciated and all marine sectors have taken steps to adapt to, and manage, the effects of climate change.

Governance and using sound science

By 2041, our understanding of the marine environment continues to develop through effective monitoring and sound scientific research. Marine and terrestrial planning authorities are working efficiently together and are responsive to change, effectively integrating decisions to ensure that appropriate coastal development occurs whilst maintaining access to the marine environment for local communities. Complex environmental issues that impact upon both marine and terrestrial environments, such as coastal squeeze, are tackled through an established plan-led relationship between marine and terrestrial plans. Stakeholders and coastal communities understand the interlinkages between different management systems that exist through administrative and political boundaries. The Severn Estuary is being managed collaboratively between the Welsh and English administrations as a single ecosystem through effective cross-boundary integration of Welsh and English marine plans. The Isles of Scilly sit within a spatially planned marine environment based on an ecosystems approach integrated with an adaptability to climate change. For the whole plan area, cumulative and in-combination impacts are understood and responded to appropriately. Resources are managed sustainably and appropriate co-location and co-existence of activities are considered. Potential displacement of commercial fishing and port activities through inappropriate or insensitive development is well-managed.