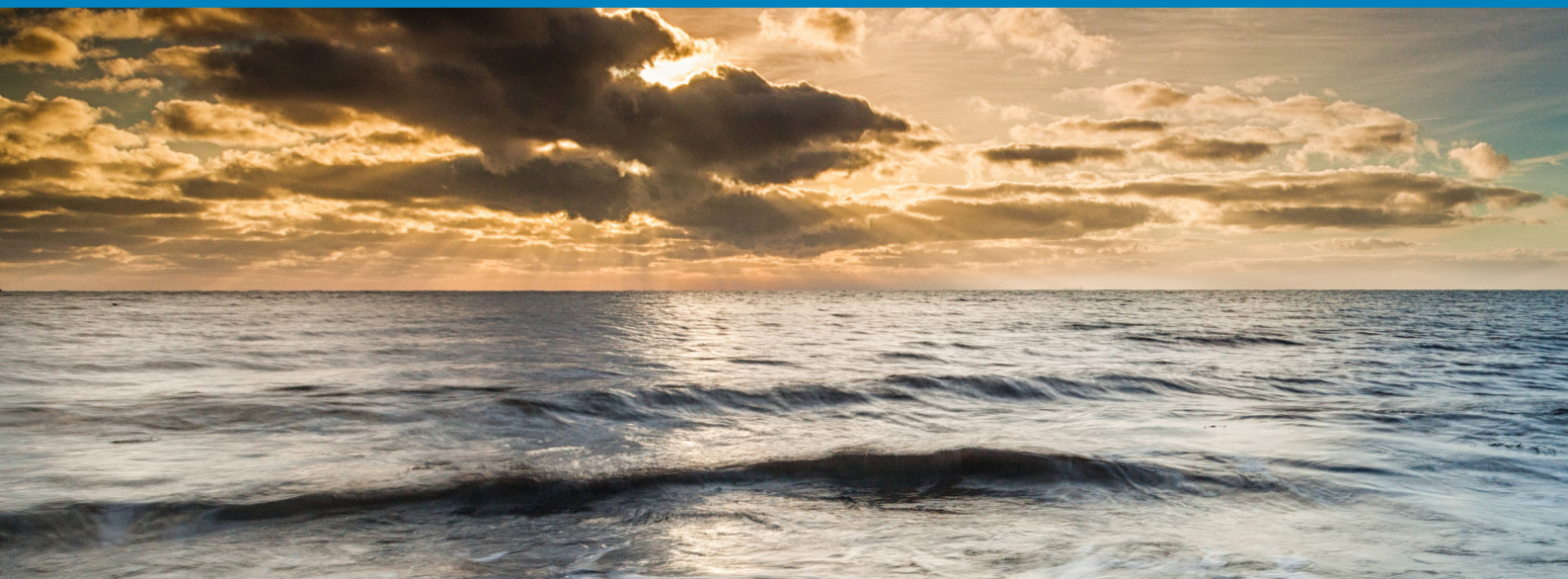


'England's maritime gateway to the world'



Vision

The vision for the south east marine plan area in 2041

The South East Marine Plan area is centred by the Thames Estuary. The diverse maritime economy thrives with the international ports of Harwich and Felixstowe in the north of the area and Dover in the south. The Thames and Medway Estuaries continue to be a busy gateway for shipping routes that rely upon ports enabling sustainable access to the capital and beyond. In the South East Marine Plan area the shallow estuarine environment and sandbanks are being conserved and enhanced ensuring healthy habitats for species, including migratory birds and juvenile fish, as well as ensuring that marine activities prosper. Recreational activities including boating and sailing on the Essex and Kent coast continue to be important and enable a range of opportunities. In Essex, a distinct sense of remoteness is gained from the wilderness of extensive salt marshes and mudflats, which contrasts the busy Medway Towns and Greater London. The iconic seascape of the white cliffs of Dover and extensive coastal chalk are a distinctive backdrop to the busy coastal communities in East Kent. The tidal Thames is managed as a single ecosystem with the twenty two local authorities and Port of London Authority working effectively together and utilising the marine plan.

How will the south east marine plan area look in 2041?

Economy

By 2041 the economy in the south east continues to be one of the strongest, aided by a diverse and rich marine economy. The south east is the gateway to the UK with some of the country's busiest ports meeting global demand. The tidal Thames is a key transport corridor with increasing passenger and freight transport facilitated through sufficient terminals and piers. Aggregate extraction in the Thames Estuary continues to enable a strong marine aggregate industry where significant south east demand is met by locally sourced material. Nuclear energy and marine renewable energy in the South East Marine Plan area provides sustainable energy for the country and supports the local skilled workforce. The coastal economy has improved at destinations, such as Clacton-on-Sea and Jaywick through diversification of the tourism industry. New and imaginative tourism developments elsewhere have increased local employment outside of the South East cities.

Social

By 2041, those who live, work and visit the South East Marine Plan area have an improved sense of knowledge, pride and enjoy the marine area and its attributes. Sustainable shellfisheries, fisheries and aquaculture activities are flourishing in the greater Thames Estuary area, including at Leigh-on-Sea. Supported by the local economy high quality seafood is being produced, including Whitstable and Essex oysters, Thames estuary cockles and whelks, flatfish and herring. Further upstream, more London citizens and visitors are enjoying the Thames through good riverside access and a high involvement in events and recreational activities. Historic assets, including those from WW2 and ship and plane wrecks, continue to be preserved and underpin the south east's character. A prosperous tourism industry is also supported by iconic landscapes such as the white cliffs of Dover and the remote and wildlife rich wetlands of Essex as well as structures such as Southend Pier and Tower Bridge.

Environment

By 2041, the marine environment for the South East Marine Plan area is being conserved and enhanced for the benefit of all. A network of MPAs, along with managed sustainable development has ensured a healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystem. To the south of the marine plan area a diverse coastline including continuous coastal chalk support nationally important birds and marine life. The environment and water quality in the river Thames continues to improve. The Thames and Medway estuaries are healthy and essential migration routes and fish nurseries that support diverse habitats and species as well as North Sea fish populations. Extensive salt marshes and mudflats continue to be preserved on the greater Thames estuary, Essex and Suffolk coast. Sandbanks in the outer Thames continue to be vital for habitats and species, including flatfish, shellfish and the Red-throated Diver. The important role the coast and Essex saltmarsh can play in mitigating and having capacity to adapt to climate change has been harnessed.

Governance and using sound science

By 2041 The South East Marine Plan continues to use sound science to review policies that give guidance for developers allowing consistent sustainable development. The marine plan ensures that the estuaries and tidal rivers in the plan area are managed as a single ecosystem. Within the Thames the marine plan is a tool that integrates the Port of London Authority, the Thames policy areas strategies, the London Plan and Kent and Essex plans. The marine plan has appropriate cross-border compliance with France in the Haut-de-France region as well as aligns with the adjacent English marine plans. Marine and terrestrial planning authorities are working efficiently together and are responsive to change, effectively integrating decisions to ensure that appropriate marine development occurs whilst maintaining access to the marine and estuarine environment for local communities. For the whole plan area, ecosystem services, cumulative and in-combination impacts are understood and addressed appropriately, with time given for ecosystem recovery following any significant developments. Multi-use of resources and appropriate co-location of activities are considered.