

DTI
**Third Strategic Environmental Assessment
of the UK Continental Shelf (SEA3)**

Stakeholder Dialogue Workshop
6 August 2002

Transcript

Date of issue: 12 September 2002

The meeting was designed and facilitated by independent facilitator Andrew Acland, Dialogue by Design Ltd, for The Environment Council. The meeting was supported by independent facilitators Rowena Harris, Carl Reynolds and Elizabeth Rivers for The Environment Council.

Produced by The Environment Council

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Transcript of Written Records

PLEASE NOTE

This document is a transcript of the flip charts produced during the meeting. The points here are reproduced as they were RECORDED by the facilitators with the following exceptions:

- Paragraphs in **bold type** are written by the facilitators to describe the meeting process and aid recall of the context in which the participants' contributions were made.
- Words in *italic* are those written on flip charts by the facilitators.
- Words or phrases in [square brackets] have been added by the facilitators where the original meaning of the flip chart recording is unclear but can be deduced
- A [?] indicates the facilitators are unsure of a meaning and cannot deduce it.
- Spellings have been standardised, abbreviations spelled out and punctuation inserted where it may help to clarify meaning.

Finally, it needs to be remembered that complex discussion cannot always be adequately captured on flip charts. If you feel that a particular contribution by you was not satisfactorily recorded, please contact The Environment Council and ask that it be corrected.

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Opening Session

The meeting opened with brief introductions and clarification of the workshop's purpose and ground rules:

Purpose

- *Update on SEA3 progress & issues*
- *To gather input and comments on SEA3 information and analysis*

Agenda

- 10.00** **Welcome**
Introductions
Agenda
- 10.30** **Session 1**
SEA3 process
Licensing
Environment
- 11.45** **Break**
- 12.00** **Session 2**
Oil & Gas
Effect, controls, mitigation
- 13.00** **Lunch**
- 13.45** **Review posters**
- 14.00** **Session 3**
Carousel process to identify info gaps
- 15.45** **Break**
- 16.00** **Session 4**
Discussion and next steps
- 16.45** **End**

Groundrules

- *Mobiles off*
- *No attribution*
- *Tight focus*
- *Note sheets*
- *Check recording*

Session 1: SEA3 Context (1)

- ❖ **SEA3 Process**
- ❖ **Licensing and context, socio-economic considerations**
- ❖ **Overview of SEA3 environment**

Presentations on the above points were made by DTI and Hartley Anderson Ltd to give information to stakeholders about SEA3.

The presentation slides will be available on the DTI SEA website www.habitats-directive.org

Following each presentation, stakeholders had an opportunity to put questions to the presenters to gain clarification.

SEA3 Process

Slides will be made available.

SEA3 Environment

- Shell Fishery – data omitted for Humber Region. When will data be added? Data has been omitted from EIA in past.
- Many banks and reefs within 12 mile limit that need to be assessed.
- Is data managed in a GIS and is it accessible?
 - Looking at which GIS to put data into
 - Can't afford to put data in all GIS; looking at most useful
 - But, data is available via other sources
 - Geology; info is being stored at BGS

Session 2: SEA3 Context (2)

- ❖ **Overview of oil & gas activity**
- ❖ **Sources of effect and controls & mitigation**

Two presentations were made by Hartley Anderson Ltd on the above topics to give further information to stakeholders about the SEA3 context.

Copies of these presentation slides are available on the DTI SEA website www.habitats-directive.org.

Following each presentation, stakeholders had an opportunity to put questions to the presenters to gain clarification.

Oil & Gas Activities

- Is survey requirement at decommissioning and beyond?
Yes, but not a seismic survey unless going to redevelop.
 - Need side scan to see what left on sea bed
 - Shallow & deep seismic
 - Clear sea bed
- Role of auditing & monitoring
 - Looking at predictions in environmental management
- Ongoing liabilities after decommissioning – e.g. left in situ pipelines
 - Government picks up final liability
 - Operators ability to deal with liability considered
 - Operators are fully audited before approval
 - Suggestion to include matrix GF accepted practices and controls in SEA – will be included
- Description of oil and gas activities on www.habitats-directive.org website
- Co-generation projects?
 - Effect on facilities life
 - May result in less emissions
 - Until have proposals, just beginning to look at
- Alternative use of pipelines for CO₂ injection
 - Currently illegal
 - OSPAR considering where stand on issue
 - Onshore been done for many years successfully
 - Cuttings material from onshore to offshore considered in same way as offshore cuttings

Session 3: Issues and Information Base

Four different stations areas were set up for interactive group sessions, each to consider different strategic issue areas for SEA3. Each station area had poster information displays. These were available for participants to browse through prior to the start of the session to gain more detailed information about SEA3.

During Session 3, participants divided into four self-selecting groups and 'toured' separately around each of the stations in turn. A facilitated discussion took place at each station to gather opinions and information from each group. A member of the DTI SEA team was also on hand at each station to provide clarification and answer questions as required.

Station 1: SEA3 Context and Background

Issue areas covered at this station included:

- ❖ Background
- ❖ Area & Licensing History
- ❖ Projected Activity Scenarios
- ❖ Scoping Input

A facilitator asked each group to consider the following question in their discussion:

- What would improve the SEA process in future?

- Fishermen and major users to Assessment Meetings
- Make concept of sustainability explicit
- Links to other activities – broader strategic view
 - This data can be used for other assessments e.g. wind farms
- Is the learning applied retrospectively?
 - E.g. Marine archaeology will be included in guidance for SEA2 etc.
- SEA7 only as far south as Galloway and Kintyre
- Funding released to projects more quickly
- No meetings in August
- Talk to the people who didn't come today but were invited
- Extend invitation & distribution lists for Assessment Meetings
- In graphics, show major fishery areas and likely wind farm developments and other users
 - These will be on the website
- Highlight quadrants more clearly
- Co-ordinate with other assessments
- Impact of cumulative effects
 - More is known in coastal regions
- Monitoring/ evaluation of earlier SEAs?
 - Information on how they were used
- Information on relationship between licensing rounds and SEA and match between predictions / reality

- Links to other countries' application of the directive
 - Make these explicit
- Glossary of who's involved and their responsibilities will be on web site
 - E.g. who has responsibility
- Make sure UK's application of directive is uniform among sectors
 - The approach to doing SEAs
 - Evolving best practice that is shared
 - Aim of holistic SEA for UKCS?
- Water Quality Directive: DEFRA (Northern Ireland Office) for information on application
- Include divers
 - They have been!
- Bathing Water Directive
 - Include Relevant parameters
- Whale Watchers – include in dialogue
- Facilities needed to decommission
 - Some decommissioning issues are included if they are of strategic importance
- Strategic issue of decommissioning 300+ installations – dealt with elsewhere
- NERC scientific stakeholders
 - Include them
- SEA6 could complement the Irish Sea Study. No point in duplicating – tie them in together
- Link to DEFRA South Coast England study (SEA8) on coastal zone.
- MoD / QinetiQ military range work on FIAs & SEA
- Change name of web site
- Printing page – lost words
- Synopsis of documents on web site
 - Signpost
- Hot link embedded in e-mails to web site
- Good to have face to face meetings
- Summary documents to people before meetings

Station 2: SEA3 Environment

Issue areas covered at this station included:

- ❖ Ecological environment
- ❖ Human environment
- ❖ Physical and chemical environment

Each group of participants was asked by a facilitator to consider the following in their deliberations at this station:

- What other strategic issues needed to be considered?
- What additional information sources could be used?
- What process improvements for future SEAs could be made?

Strategic Issues

- Are SEAs revisited when new information / ideas come to light?
 - Yes; and
 - No - if licensing decision has been made
- Can you include feedback loops so [you] don't reinvent the wheel?
- How will SEA resource be used for other sectors?
- Need inbuilt element of flexibility because of changes that arise
- How were SEAs selected?
 - Because e.g. from fishing perspective group separately
- Are other countries being consulted? e.g. Norway provided original input, UK now ahead
 - Yes. Get copies of documents
- In assessment: offshore fisheries completely different from inshore fisheries – impact on different fisheries completely different
- Does SEA consider landfill? - Yes
 - At strategic level should be considered
 - SEA3 doesn't involve construction of new pipeline
- Not knowing where marine protective areas are, specifically commitment under OSPAR
 - new information available shortly in OSPAR workshop
- Will extraction of oil & gas reduce seabed level?
 - Seabed subsidence included under BGS commissioned reports
 - Sea level rise will lead to potentially significant changes in climate in next 50+ years
- Dynamism - as changes are made are reassessments made? Viz if climatic changes
 - Licences are issued e.g. in Ekofisk on long time span e.g. 25 years
 - Maybe shorter term licences? review process built in
- Noise – ambient noise map?
e.g. Where noisy, more noise might not make a difference, if very quiet, noise might

- Seal epizootic (virus) effect of that if it reached here
 - Is that a natural cycle?
 - Is it a cumulative effect?
- Importance of coastal fronts

Information

- Anglian Coastal Authority report
- Southern North Sea sediment study
- North Eastern Sea Fisheries and all sea fisheries information on shell fisheries
- CEFAS info on shellfish
- N.B. Satellite monitoring will leave gaps

Additions

- No commitments on sites under OSPAR
 - Process going that might lead to them - are committed to process
 - OSPAR won't bind
- Noise – greatest noise from storms
 - Noise map: human noise map
- Subsidence data on North East Coast for coal extraction
 - Anywhere extract oil & gas could subside
- Epizootic – highly likely has arrived
 - Don't know if natural
 - 2nd I have records for
 - Unlikely to be cumulative
 - Mainly common seal

New Input

- Interaction between biology & substrate hasn't been exploited properly for SEA strategy
- Information is on structure of systems, less on processes
- Everything is scale based – need to talk at same scale
- Split what is nice to know and what is needed for SEA
 - Need prioritisation
 - Need sufficient information so Secretary of State can decide
? what is reliable information?
- Dislike Minke whale diagrams
 - Reference Cetacean atlas due out shortly
- How SEAs should include technology advances?

Process

- Is range of commission studies broad enough?
- Do we have enough information on habitats in coastal 12 miles - gap of 8 miles where [there is] not enough information.
- Genuine near off-shore data gap
- Ways of improving interpretations
 - Biotope definition has been redefined for soft sediments
 - Has to be implemented -> define areas on map

Additions

- SEA3 activities may have development plans that might have impact [on?] pipelines with sites that have existing licences
 - DTI say this is what to see, not what is happening [?]
- Pipelines that go through area without touching (not starting or finishing in area)
- In areas not subjected to SEA pipeline surveys are going on e.g. Liverpool Bay
 - How does this fit in?
 - Project specific so go through EIA process
 - New developments happening because already licensed
- Any responsibility on licence holders to update information on that area?
 - Due diligence buyer needs to satisfy concerns
 - Laws different in Scotland and England
- Will be ever get enough data e.g. on cetaceans to satisfy us?
 - Value judgement on previous SEAs did know enough
 - Future?
- Because of nature of near shore environment very hard to predict – makes SEA3 different
 - Modelling techniques applied in near shore zone
 - Study on typology with reference to water framework directive (SNIFER funded)
- Decommissioning?
 - Nature conservation objectives for after decommissioning
 - What do we want to achieve after decommissioning - what do we want the sea bed to be like?
 - Guarantors in place for liabilities
 - Complimentary across industries
- Meteor rings / crater impacts on sea bed – any relevance?
- Coastline shelf – impacts of coastal processes – coastal erosion
- Are there any uncertainties about skilled experts in the future?
 - Skills & expertise

Comments

- OSPAR have decided on Marine Protection Areas but haven't decided where
- Similarly, EU have not yet decided where SACs will be
 - Have general idea – adopting precautionary approach
- Navy generate ambient noise maps
- Lobsters & absence from East coast
- Fisheries looking at new ways of making money - experimenting with different shellfish e.g. Razor fish, discovered new species on sandbanks – where do you go with that info?
 - Always finding new species – can't stop
 - What if it's rare?
- Incongruity between terrestrial and marine environment
- CROW Act
 - Principle of SSSI to marine environment?
 - Private Members Bill didn't pass
- Maps of cetacean strands exist
- In near shore zone, 1 in 100 year storms can be significant
- Near shore sandbanks as reservoir of sediment – is that relevant?
- Off shore agriculture
- Historic wrecks?

During Session 3 at station 2, individual participants had an opportunity to produce the following detailed points:

Point: To complete a more comprehensive data set on fisheries

Eastern Sea Fisheries [Committee]; Bergen Way, Kings Lynn, [PE30 2JG. Tel: 01553 770231]

North Eastern SFC - Town Hall, Bridlington, YO16 4LP, 01482 393 691, [www.neseafish.gov.uk]

- For comprehensive data on inshore shell fisheries and environments.
- Gaps in main shellfish species e.g. lobster, whelk, velvet crab
- Inaccurate representation of species / fishery areas

Point: Process Improvements: Physical & Chemical Environment

There is a gap in tying science, integration of multi-disciplinary processes in order to get a coherent perspective of the environment for a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Point: Environment

There does not seem to be any base line ambient noise map of the area. As this is quite important for sonar, the Navy have addressed this in the form of modelling. Can be validated by the extensive ambient noise measurements that they have done. The background noise may be very important to determine whether any new development will have a significant effect on, for example, marine mammals. QinetiQ can advise on the MoD approach to ambient noise.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Tony Heathershaw or Roland Rogers, QinetiQ, Winfrith Technology Centre, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1RT

Point: Additional Information

The Anglian Coastal Authorities Group has completed (2002) the Southern North Sea Sediment Transport Study. Study area Flamborough Hd -> N. Thames & median line offshore. Consultant HR Wallingford.

Contact:

Peter Frew

North Norfolk District Council

PO Box 1 Council Offices

Holt Road

Cromer NR27 9PZ

01263 516180

email: pfrew@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Point: Consultation

For high level (early) input to / from coastal operators, I suggest you make contact through to coastal groups. Robin McInnes of Isle of White Council is chairman of the chairmen. Peter Frew.

Station 3: SEA3 Consideration of implications of licensing (1)

Issue areas covered at this station included:

- ❖ **Assessment process**
- ❖ **Anticipated interactions**
- ❖ **Public consultation document**

A facilitator asked each group to consider the following in their discussions:

- **What other strategic issues needed to be considered?**
- **What additional information sources could be used?**
- **What process improvements for future SEAs could be made?**

Strategic Issues

- Consideration of land based pollution that could impact on SEA3 e.g. atmospheric inputs
- Incorporation of needs of other industries within the SEA e.g. offshore wind
 - Raw information is available for future SEAs
- Long term ideal would be an 'integrated UK SEA' but not possible yet
- Impact of underwater noise on MoD operations (esp. for SEA617)
 - (and other way round!)
- Incorporation of socio-economic impacts
- Impact on fisheries has been assessed on too broad a level
 - Needs breaking down into inshore / offshore
- Scale of fishing satellite tracking (satellite monitoring only fills some of the info gaps)
 - Not available...data protection act
- Co-ordination of interest and impacts between land and sea issues: planning in its widest sense
- Cumulative effect of development, especially on fisheries
- Impact on marine mammals during decommissioning
- Inclusion of probability to give accurate risk assessments
- Need to recognise that there are information gaps in our scientific understanding but we need to still take licensing decisions

Additional Information

- 'Safety Zone Infringements' on the Humber (DoE report)
- What happened to the work on "Disaster Scenarios"? - this needs including

Process Improvements

- Inclusion of people who will be affected by socio-economic factors
 - via RDA?
- Involvement of fishing experts / representatives at an earlier stage
- Need more time to respond to consultation
- Should circulate output of Assessment Workshop in advance
- Presentation of data
 - “Other users” may need splitting up, especially for MoD
- Matrices should have separate spatial and temporal components
- Aim of SEAs needs to include “identify research gaps and prioritise them”
 - Suggest resourcing needs
 - N.B. need to avoid rehashing existing data
- Need to evaluate effectiveness of SEA process

Station 4: Consideration of implications of licensing (2)

Issue areas covered at this station included:

- ❖ Key issues, effects and mitigation

A facilitator asked each group to consider the following questions in relation to the issue area for this station:

- What other strategic issues needed to be considered?
- What additional information sources could be used?
- What process improvements for future SEAs could be made?

Key Effects, Issues & Mitigation

- Important to consider cumulative effects of oil and gas activities and all offshore activities
 - Need to have prioritisation of effects
 - EIA results need to be more accessible
 - Transport to and from installation and recognise increase in transport levels
 - work with new industries to share facilities and resources where possible
 - SEA process can be extended to other industries
 - Needs to be ongoing auditing of accuracy of SEA findings at strategic level
 - Other SEAs around the world – Norway & Gulf of Mexico – only other e.g.s from around the world (when started)
 - Knowledge from previous oil & gas activity – have 30 years data – taken into account
 - New knowledge constantly emerging which needs to be considered e.g. endocrine disruptions, noise to cetaceans
 - Atmospheric emissions – Met office good source of information regarding modelling air pollution
- Q. How is quality of SEA monitored?
- A. ▫ Use experts in fields
- Peer review
 - Consultation process
- Q. How does Government use info?
- A. Minister can over rule environmental findings
- Reasons for conclusions need to be explicit – especially re: coastal waters
 - Effects of onshore installations need to be taken into account (e.g. emissions and discharges from Balton terminal)
 - Effects from seismic activity – disrupting to fishing activity (size of area affected)
 - Conflict between static gear fishing and seismic activity – increasing due to increase in static gear activity (also should be considered in later SEAs)
 - Fishing patterns are constantly changing as well as other marine users
 - Some findings from SEA3 will apply to future SEAs
 - But each area has different stakeholders
 - Fishermen feeling under pressure by increased marine activity

- Have other requirements for ISO 14001 been taken into account?
- Other worldwide SEAs – USA – offshore of all USA, not just G.O.M.
- Needs to be prioritisation of information gaps between what need and what nice to have
 - Be done by Steering Group
- Add 1 or 2 international members to Steering Group to bring neutral perspective
- Need overview of environmental, social and economic effects
- Need to look at functional aspects as well as structural aspects
- Assessment workshop considerations – comment regarding rock platforms is wrong, as are some other parts

During Session 3 at station 4, individual participants had an opportunity to produce additional detailed points:

Point: Information Gaps

- Importance of coastal / shelf fronts
- Decisions on where marine protected areas will be (under OSPAR Annex V / North Sea Bergen Ministerial Declaration March 2002) therefore need to be precautionary about habitats and species not covered by existing measures (Habitats Directive / Birds Directive)

Session 4: Plenary Discussion

This session was an open, whole group discussion on the outputs from the day's deliberations.

Plenary Discussion

- Emergent issues about process rather than strategic issues
- Need to get sea users involved in assessment process
- Assessment workshop – too much science, not enough people
 - But need to gather all the data first
 - Need to prioritise the information
 - Need better balance in Assessment Workshop
- Missing elements from the Assessment Workshop – a lot of catching up to do today (presentations useful)
- Difficulty with engaging right person in each organisation
- Financial considerations not given enough weight – how does process contribute to overall sustainability?
- Purpose of Assessment Workshop to produce scientific reports – experts analysing impact on their field
- Assessment workshop biased because did not have any fishermen there
- At Assessment Workshop – trying to second guess what the view of a stakeholder might be
- SEA needs to be bigger than one sector – feedback into DTI
 - Process is happening in DTI – will be even more impetus when Directive comes in
- SEA process is long – is this meeting being held at the right stage? Should there be another meeting?
 - Fits in with timetable of process to have meeting now
- To have broader stakeholder consultation before Assessment Workshop would push us back into scoping.
- This workshop not about going through all conclusions of Assessment Workshop therefore order probably irrelevant
- How much of today is about SEA3 as compared with general SEA process?
 - Mostly general SEA process
- This workshop is not about going through Assessment Workshop findings line by line
- If this workshop [was] earlier or later in the process [it] would be less useful
- Need for overall integrated UK SEA (key theme).

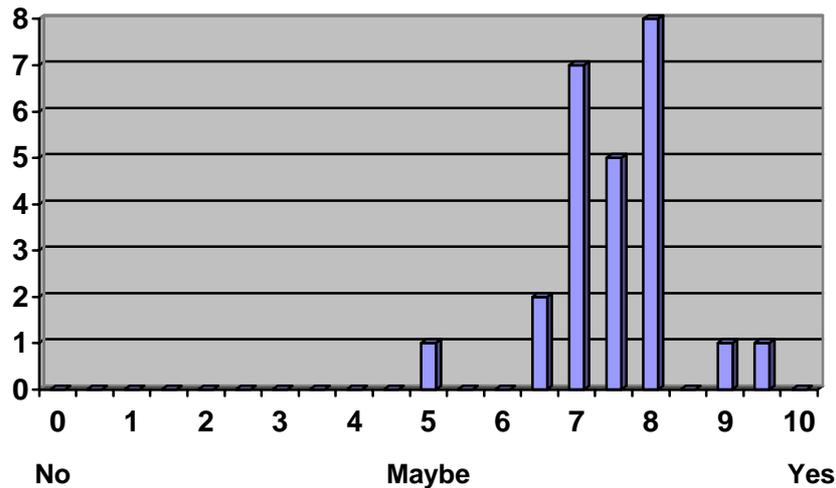
Next Steps

- Presentations from this morning will be placed on web site until reports finalised

Evaluation

The following section details the evaluation of the meeting. Stakeholders had the opportunity to complete a form on which they could give feedback on the workshop on a numerical scale and /or write comments in response to a number of broad questions. From the responses returned the 'scale' feedback has been collated on a graph with all comments (in no particular order and without attribution) listed underneath:

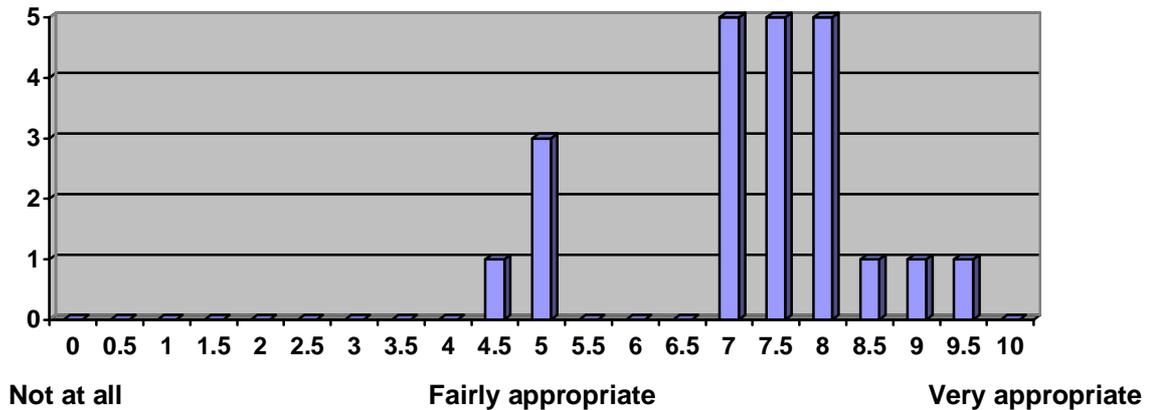
Q1. Do you think today's meeting will have improved the SEA process?



Comments

- I hope so! The key issues have been identified, however, given that the SEA is still immature it is important that these issues are now incorporated.
- The majority of the participants were able to make valid contributions. The format made that very easy.
- The meeting would / should have generated an understanding of how well the SEA3 process has been performed.
- The SEA process is evolving with experience. Only time will tell if it is going in the right direction.
- Better than the first meeting.
- Carousel process raised lots of questions – didn't answer many. Also, general focus on SEA, rather than SEA3 specifically.
- I found it more useful and interesting than I anticipated. There was a lot of consensus on many issues raised and I think it will have strengthened the process.
- Hopefully! By discussion of the 'level' at which SEA is based, i.e. does it have a high enough functional perspective?
- Still need to clarify fundamental questions as to the purpose of SEA not just complying with forthcoming directive. Needs to have much greater benefit to other sectoral interests.
- Highlighted some shortcomings / information gaps.
- More sophisticated discussion & analysis than SEA1. Many good ideas to improve SEAs in general.
- Pleased with the level of discussion.

Q3. Did you find the meeting format and method appropriate for the meeting's purpose?



Comments

- Yes, it was good (although not sure why it was in York!)
- Format allowed free comment and promoted useful interaction.
- Presentations were too quiet – amplification needed. Perhaps more discussions after presentations.
- The four groups / stations in the afternoon were not distinctly different enough. Many of the same discussions happened four times.
- Duplication during individual discussions.
- I had insufficient time to brief myself (largely due to other priorities & holiday) and found the posters more useful than a 'wadge' of photocopied briefing notes.
- Meeting format formal but relaxed – plenty of room. Room was hot until air conditioning was sorted.
- Yes – we seem to have got through it okay. I would have anticipated a more in-depth discussion / consideration of the outputs of the assessment workshop.
- Not used the format before. Thought it worked well to encourage large amount of participation.
- Need wider range of stakeholders, other industries and sea users.
- People can get side-tracked at times, but that's a side-effect of large numbers.

Q4. *Is there anyone else, either individual or organisation who you would like to see involved?*

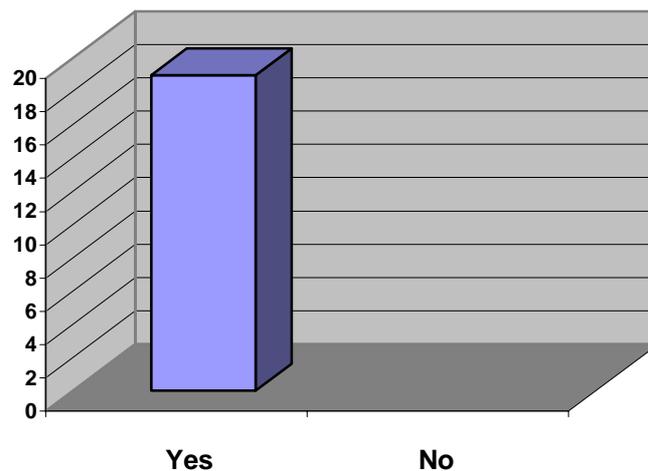
Comments

- Time of year (Aug) a problem for this meeting
- Environmental NGOs
- Need wider range of stakeholders, other industries and sea users.
- Possibly some form of tourism rep for coastal states.
- Other marine environment industrial users to be involved earlier in the process.
- WWF regional / devolved national offices.
- More local authorities.
- QineitQ attended as a result (I believe) of seeing them 'not' on the original invite list.
- The difficulty would appear to be in getting them to come. Again, no representation from SNH or SEPA – did they not think it is important?
- Sea fisheries committees.
- Was anyone from the Navy invited? Defence Estates were represented but not other bits of MoD.
- MoD / Royal Navy – CESO(RN).
- The Anglian Coastal Authorities Group as completed (2002) the Southern North Sea Sediment Transport Study. Study area Flanborough Hd – North Thames & median line offshore. Consultant HR Wallingford.

Contact: Peter Frew, North Norfolk District Council, P.O. Box 1, Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9PZ, Tel: 01263 516 180, email: pfrew@north-norfolk.gov.uk

- No, although I think it would be useful to have a list of attendees to compare with the list of invitees.
- I think that all those relevant were invited, but of course not all were represented.

Q5. Do you want to be kept informed of this consultation process?



Comments

- How would this happen?
- Am already on SEA mailing list.
- I'm on the steering group so hopefully this will happen automatically.
- Please forward a copy of the consultation document on CD rom to NESRC, Town Hall, Bridlington, YO16 4LP
- Please direct correspondence to Jean Edward, The Wildlife Trusts, The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, NG24 1WT
- The gas industry in particular is vital to the economy of North Norfolk. The Council needs to know the general direction it is taking.
- I am a member of the SEA steering group, so will be automatically

Please Note

We have endeavoured to transcribe the hand-written comments with complete accuracy. Any errors are the responsibility of The Environment Council and are due to difficulties reading some of the hand-writing. Copies of the originals are held at our offices.

Appendix 1

List of presentations made by DTI SEA team at the workshop

Session 1

- SEA3 Process
- Licensing and context, socio-economic considerations
- Overview of SEA3 environment

Session 2

- Overview of oil & gas activity
- Sources of effect and controls & mitigation

These presentations will be available on the DTI SEA website www.habitats-directive.org