



**Decision on selection of third and fourth  
marine areas for plan production  
August 2012**



## Contents

Executive summary .....	1
Summary of decision streams .....	1
Overall summary and decision .....	4
Introduction .....	5
Background .....	5
Stakeholder engagement in marine planning .....	5
Stakeholder events .....	6
Marine planning projects in England .....	6
Assessment of coastal stakeholder partnerships .....	8
Technical report of economic, environmental and social information .....	10
Implications of current and proposed marine protected areas.....	14
The MPA network .....	14
Marine conservation zones .....	15
Future pressures and their implications.....	16
Characteristics and future indications for plan areas .....	17
Implications of planning inshore and offshore together .....	18
Implications of planning with bordering nations.....	19
Current state of play with bordering nations.....	20

## Executive summary

This report describes the way in which the MMO has selected the **South Inshore** and **South Offshore** marine areas to be planned next.

The Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) decision methodology for selecting the second tranche of marine plan areas to be planned is based on seven decision streams that were examined collectively to ensure a robust decision was made. This is the same methodology that was used to select the first marine plan areas. The decision streams are:

1. Stakeholder engagement in marine planning.
2. Assessment of coastal stakeholder partnerships.
3. Technical report of economic, environmental and social information.
4. Implications of current and proposed marine protected areas.
5. Future pressures and their implications.
6. Implications of planning inshore and offshore together.
7. Implications of planning with bordering nations.

## Summary of decision streams

### 1. Stakeholder engagement in marine planning

Stakeholder engagement has taken place across all marine plan areas since April 2011. This has ensured that stakeholders have been kept up to speed with the MMO's development of the first marine plans. The reporting areas<sup>1</sup> have received more focused engagement as they are potentially impacted by and also have an impact upon the East marine plan areas. Consequently stakeholders in the **North East** and **South East** areas have been involved to a greater extent than other areas currently not being planned.

Stakeholder engagement has also been greater where projects associated with marine planning or marine management have taken place or are in progress. While all marine areas have benefitted from projects, the **South** marine areas have benefitted from a greater number of projects. As well as stakeholder engagement, some of these projects have contributed to the marine evidence base.

### 2. Assessment of coastal stakeholder partnerships

In spring 2012, the MMO commissioned a study of coastal stakeholder partnerships that exist in England. The study is due to be completed in late summer 2012. An interim report has shown there are 40 stakeholder partnerships in existence ranging from four in the South West areas, to ten in the South areas.

The number of partnerships does not necessarily indicate a readiness to engage in marine planning as the remit and responsibility of these partnerships varies significantly. However, all the inshore areas have the advantage of existing

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<sup>1</sup> A reporting area is defined as the plan areas adjacent to the current plan areas. For the East Inshore and East Offshore areas this includes North East Inshore and North East Offshore and the South East area as well as international colleagues in Norway, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.

partnerships that the MMO has and could work with to facilitate stakeholder participation.

### **3. Technical report of economic, environmental and social information**

The MMO has reviewed the technical report the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) carried out to complete a quantitative assessment of the marine plan areas, based on sustainable development criteria for initial plan area selection. The conclusions of the review continue to support the original findings, namely:

- Economic criteria: **North West, East Inshore and South Inshore and South Offshore areas** have high levels of human activity.
- Environment: **North West and South West Offshore areas** scored highly on these impacts, **South West Inshore and South West Offshore areas** are also among the most environmentally sensitive. **South Inshore and South Offshore areas** tending towards most poor environmental status or declining condition.
- Social criteria: **East Inshore area** had the highest opportunity to tackle coastal community deprivation with **North West area** scoring at mid-level.

In addition to the Cefas technical report, two more recent pieces of evidence have been considered:

- the MMO's socio-economic study (2011) shows that the deprived communities most likely to benefit from marine planning through the potential for job creation are in **East Inshore, North East Inshore, North West Inshore** and some in the **South Inshore areas**
- plan areas that have the highest percentage of surveyed seabed are **South East, South West** and the **South** plan areas.

### **4. Implications of current and proposed marine protected areas**

Although designation of marine protected areas (MPAs) occurs outside of the MMO's control, MPAs will be a consideration in marine planning. Management measures designed to meet the conservation objectives will be reflected in marine plans as part of the contribution to sustainable development. Where there is a greater density of MPAs in a particular plan area this could have an impact on the delivery of marine plans, depending on the management measures that apply to individual sites.

Recommended marine conservation zones (rMCZs) exist in all plan areas. **South West Inshore and South Inshore** have the highest number of rMCZs with the largest area covered by rMCZs in the **South West Offshore and North East Offshore areas**. Looking at the proportion of the plan areas covered, the **South East area and North East Offshore areas** have the greatest amount.

There is significant coverage of new candidate special areas of conservation (cSACs) in the **East Inshore and East Offshore areas**, and some coverage in the **South West Inshore area**. Existing SACs with marine components are present in all inshore plan areas. There are SACs in every cross border area where the MMO's plan area boundaries interact with devolved administrations, for example the Severn Estuary and the Solway Firth.

There are large areas of new special protection areas (SPAs) in the **North East Inshore, East Inshore and South East areas**. There are also notable areas of existing SPAs with marine components in these areas<sup>2</sup>.

## 5. Future pressures and their implications

An analysis of future pressures on marine areas has shown that most areas will be impacted as a result of the demand on the overall marine resource. Several activities that will be introduced or increase their existing use: wind, tidal and wave energy, carbon capture and storage, gas storage and marine wind energy.

All areas have pressures in some form depending on which sectors are considered. In summary:

- **North East areas** have strategically important ports and undeveloped areas of coastline of high environmental and tourism value
- **South East** also has strategically important ports and important aggregate extraction areas.
- **South Inshore and South Offshore areas** have a wide variety of activities across many sectors and a significant number of environmental designations, all competing for limited space
- **South West** is important for power and telecommunications cables as well as a diverse range of inshore fisheries and tourism and recreation activities
- **North West** has a range of important activities in a relatively small area creating significant competition for space.

This shows that there are many different drivers influencing the decision on where to plan next in each of the remaining plan areas. There are good reasons to go to any one of these areas next.

## 6. Implications of planning inshore and offshore together

The advantages of planning inshore and offshore areas together have been proven through marine planning in the East plan areas, and is widely supported by stakeholders.

- National stakeholders tend to have interests in the offshore plan areas and local stakeholders tend to have interests in inshore plan areas. By planning together the widest possible spread of stakeholders are involved.
- Economic, social and environmental processes cross inshore and offshore divides, so a wide range of processes can be planned for in a holistic way.
- Planning an inshore-offshore divide together reduces the burden on stakeholders in both plan areas, as they will not have to feed into two different processes.

## 7. Implications of planning with bordering nations

Stakeholders and the MMO strongly believe that co-ordinated planning across administrative borders is the right approach. The MMO is committed to this approach.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1458>

Devolved administrations are at different stages in the marine planning process. For example, Scotland is producing a national marine plan with regional planning to follow, and Wales is developing its overall approach to marine planning. As a result, planning across the borders with Wales and Scotland would add a layer of complexity at this stage. This has an impact on **North West, South West and North East** plan areas.

The international engagement with bordering nations for the East plan areas has developed relationships with a range of international partners. In terms of EU member states, the **North East, South East, South and South West** areas all offer the opportunity to continue working with EU member states.

## **Overall summary and decision**

We applied the same decision process to the selection of the next two plan areas, incorporating relevant additional criteria, evidence and experience gained from the last two years. The marine areas that will benefit the most from marine planning at this stage are **South Inshore and South Offshore** areas.

Planning the South Inshore and South Offshore areas next will:

- harness the work of marine planning and management projects, both in terms of stakeholder engagement and evidence base
- continue to build on work with the established coastal partnerships in the area
- give us the opportunity to address the declining environmental status
- assess the busyness of the marine areas, and analyse the best use of the limited space in the inshore and offshore areas
- use the existing seabed habitat maps to ensure we make robust decisions
- incorporate the rMCZs that are designated during 2013
- take advantage of planning the inshore and offshore marine areas together, using one planning process to do so
- work with France to ensure cross-border planning takes place, EC continuing to gain confidence in our desire and ability to work with bordering member states.

The MMO will start marine planning in the South plan areas towards the end of 2012, preparing a statement of public participation and starting to gather the evidence base.

## **Introduction**

The MMO is tasked with delivering statutory marine plans in the areas that make up English inshore and offshore regions. Marine plan making started in April 2011 considering the East Inshore and East Offshore plan areas, first.

The draft marine plans for East Inshore and East Offshore areas will be submitted to the Government by the end of September 2012 and will be released for public consultation early in 2013. The MMO has decided to overlap the production of marine plans, and will commence planning the next two marine plan areas towards the end of 2012.

## **Background**

The overall objective of marine planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainability in the marine area by enabling strategic management of marine activities, achieving integration of different objectives, managing conflicts and complementarities and taking account of how ecosystems function. Statutory marine plans will apply the Government's Marine Policy Statement and implement tailored and locally specific marine policy objectives and targets for each of the English marine plan areas. This will significantly contribute towards the UK vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas.

The MMO's decision methodology is the same as the methodology used to select the first two marine areas for plan production, the East Inshore and East Offshore areas. It was based on advice from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on the criteria that should be considered in determining areas for plan making.

In addition to this the MMO has been in operation for over two years and marine planning has evolved, these MMO operational approaches and activities are also considered here throughout the decision streams.

The seven decision streams used to determine the next areas to be planned are:

1. Stakeholder engagement in marine planning
2. Assessment of coastal stakeholder partnerships
3. Technical report of economic, environmental and social information
4. Implications of current and proposed marine protected areas
5. Future pressures and their implications
6. Implications of planning inshore and offshore together
7. Implications of planning with bordering nations.

## **Stakeholder engagement in marine planning**

In reaching the previous decision, the majority of stakeholder engagement focused around the Marine Policy Statement (MPS), both in development and during the public consultation launched by Defra in July 2010.

Since then marine planning in the East Inshore and East Offshore plan areas has commenced. To support the process the Future Planning Unit engaged with stakeholders outside of the plan areas, with a particular focus on the South East and North East reporting areas<sup>3</sup>.

It is recognised that there will be a number of activities located outside of the marine plan area that could be affected by development of the marine plan, such as shipping routes to and from ports on Tyneside, Teesside and the Thames Estuary. Due to their relevance and location, it has been important to ensure that these areas have had a greater focus on engagement.

### **Stakeholder events**

Alongside stakeholder workshops held in December 2011 in the plan area, drop-in sessions were held in the reporting area, London, Scarborough and Newcastle to inform stakeholders of the evidence and issues gathering process and seek feedback on the draft report. Reporting area stakeholders took the opportunity to get involved with over 100 attendees at the three events.

Stakeholders were encouraged to submit evidence to support their sector or area of interest in the plan area or how they could support marine planning in their area. This evidence provided a useful insight into the views held in the plan areas and where a preference for marine planning would well received.

Outside of these consultation events, since April 2011, the Future Planning Unit has also been engaging with the South, South West and North West areas. This has been through a series of face to face meetings with key stakeholders, presentations at future plan area events, for example forum meetings, or attending key marine events in those areas.

### **Marine planning projects in England**

The overarching picture of research in place to support marine planning in England is mixed. In terms of focus, projects place emphasis on a range of objectives including:

- examination of data and evidence to build knowledge – such as BLAST (Bringing Land and Sea Together)
- awareness raising to engender participation – such as IMCORE (Innovative Management for Europe's Changing Coastal Resource)
- building stakeholder consensus for the purposes of better sectoral or spatial integration – such as CAMIS (Channel Arc Manche Integrated Strategy)
- putting together specific outputs ranging from marine plans to broad guidance – such as C-SCOPE (Combining Sea and Coastal Planning in Europe).

Projects may also be thematic with common topics including climate change – particularly adaptation in coastal communities – and conservation – particularly

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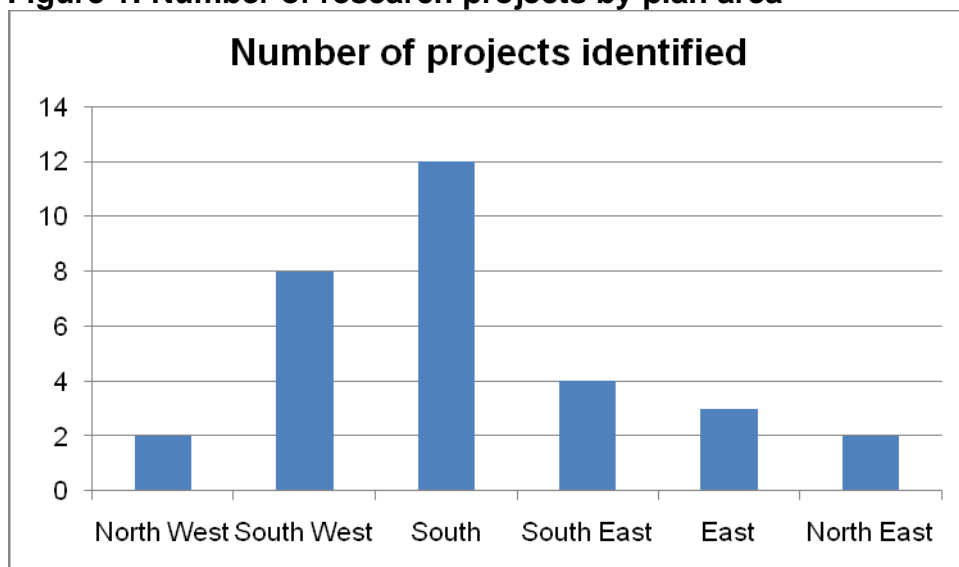


linked with the UK marine conservation zone (MCZ) process and marine protected area (MPA) network. There is great variation in the size and type of English organisations involved in these projects, including local authorities, non-governmental organisations and coastal partnerships.

Where projects partner with other countries there are two approaches. In the first case a participating English body is conducting activities as part of a wider European network of organisations, seeking to pool experiences, share lessons and develop products jointly such as guidance – such as the SUSTAIN, an EU funded project in the North West that aims to assess sustainability and strengthen operational policy. The second approach is more direct, with English organisations partnering with neighbouring or proximate coastal organisations from European states to examine common problems in a shared geographic space. Common delineations for these around England are the North Sea – such as SUSCOD (Sustainable Coastal Development) – and the Channel – such as CHARM (Channel Integrated Approach for Marine Resource Management).

Figure 1 below provides a breakdown of projects examined for this overview based upon the marine plan areas that fall wholly or partially within defined project boundaries (note that numerous projects cover more than one plan area and in these cases a project has been attributed to each of the plan areas concerned). Areas have been grouped for simplicity rather than looking at Inshore and Offshore areas separately, though there are likely to be projects that may not involve themselves directly with offshore or inshore activity accordingly (such as those working on coastal climate change adaptation).

**Figure 1: Number of research projects by plan area**



The graph illustrates that the **South** marine areas have benefitted from the greatest number of projects.

The timelines for delivery of these projects vary across the plan areas, some are complete, some are due to deliver during the next planning window and some are just commencing. The projects add value to the context of the marine environment

and where outputs are appropriate they could add useful information to the marine planning process.

The MMO has engaged with a broad spectrum of stakeholders in future marine plan areas to identify key issues, attributes of future plan areas and provide updated information on how marine plans are developing in the East of England.

The MMO has used a range of approaches to engage with stakeholders. It was recognised that while there was a need to build stakeholder engagement and gain intelligence in all future plan areas, it was felt particularly important to engage with those stakeholders who border the current marine plan area (that is those in the North East and South East marine plan areas), as their activities may be directly affected by work to develop adjacent marine plans, such as shipping and ports.

Level of engagement in the reporting areas has been higher than in the other future plan areas, which reflects the requirement to engage with those affected by the East plan areas

This has allowed us to identify key issues in the reporting areas and the future plan areas that marine planning can help to address.

Stakeholder engagement has also been greater where projects associated with marine planning or marine management have taken place or are in progress. While all marine areas have benefitted from projects, the South marine areas have benefitted from the greatest number of projects. As well as interaction through direct stakeholder engagement, some of these projects have contributed to the marine evidence base.

## **Assessment of coastal stakeholder partnerships**

The MMO has explored a number of local and national engagement mechanisms in order to effectively deliver the Marine Planning System in England. The engagement mechanisms within plan areas are set out in the East Inshore and East Offshore marine plan areas Statement of Public Participation (SPP).

A crucial part of the MMO's work is to understand the density, roles, structures and spatial coverage of existing non-statutory coastal stakeholder partnerships (CSPs) around the English coast. An assessment of CSPs in England is being carried out to list all such partnerships as of June 2012. This report will be finalised and published in late summer 2012.

Defining CSPs is difficult, as definitions differ according to the criteria used and names can sometimes be misleading. For example, some bodies with 'forum' in their name are in fact umbrella bodies for smaller CSPs. Others are themselves the organisation that produces plans and strategies. It is also pertinent to note that the groups vary in their efficacy and relevance, some being very narrow in their geographical focus.

The MMO commissioned a mapping study alongside this piece of work that will:

- spatially identify the geographic coverage of each English partnership to reveal geographic gaps.
- propose a method of engagement in areas where gaps in coverage have been identified and analyse how important the lack of coverage is in marine planning communication terms
- provide details of membership organisations for each partnership including the diversity of membership and frequency of meetings
- provide details of how each coastal partnership communicates its news, meetings and minutes of meetings
- provide details of any sub groups or thematic groups that report to the coastal partnership
- provide details as to whether coastal partnerships are solely issue-based and report any specific pieces of work that have been completed
- provide information on how the work of each coastal partnership addresses the range of social, economic and environmental factors
- show how the coastal group uses any web-based resources (own website, part of council website or none)
- show how the partnership is funded and whether any recent successful funding bids have been made
- identify how many of the partnerships are members of local nature partnerships or local enterprise partnerships or are proposing to become members.

Based on the above study, there are, as of June 2012, 40 coastal stakeholder partnerships in England<sup>4</sup>. They are listed by plan area in Table 1 below. The table is taken from the draft study commissioned by the MMO into the distribution of coastal partnerships. The final study is due to deliver in summer 2012.

**Table 1: Summary table from MMO coastal partnerships study**

<b>Marine planning areas</b>	<b>Participating coastal partnerships</b>
North East Inshore and North East Offshore	Wear Estuary Forum
	North East Coastal Forum
	North York Moors National Park Authority
	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast
	Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast European Marine Site
	Industry for Nature Conservation Association
	Durham Heritage Coast Partnership
	Druridge Bay Partnership (c/o Northumberland Wildlife Trust)
East Inshore and East Offshore	Humber Advisory Group
	Humber Management Scheme
	Norfolk Coast Partnership
	Colne Estuary Partnership

<sup>4</sup> This list has been derived from the following sources: [www.coastnet.org.uk](http://www.coastnet.org.uk), information from Coastal Partnership Working Group at the Coastal Futures Conference 2010, the Entec Financial Benefits to Working in Partnership at the Coast report (July 2008, see Appendix A), and Defra's list of consultees on the Coastal Change Policy, available at [www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coastal-change/consultlist.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coastal-change/consultlist.htm)

<b>Marine planning areas</b>	<b>Participating coastal partnerships</b>
	The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site Management Scheme
	Suffolk Coast and Heath Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
South East Inshore	Medway Swale Estuary Partnership
	Kent Coastal Network
	Thanet Coast Project (North East Kent European Marine Site)
	Thames Estuary Partnership
South Inshore and South Offshore	Hamble Estuary Partnership
	Manhood Peninsula Partnership
	Solent Forum
	White Cliffs Countryside Partnership
	Dorset Coast Forum
	South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
	Exe Estuary Partnership
	Devon Maritime Forum
	Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum
	Isles of Wight Estuaries Project
South West Inshore and South West Offshore	North Devon World Biosphere Reserve
	Fowey Estuary Partnership/Fowey Harbour Commissioners
	Severn Estuary Partnership
	Devon Maritime Forum
North West	Morecambe Bay Partnership
	Wirral Council Destination Marketing
	Copeland Borough Council
	North West Coastal Forum
	Duddon Estuary Partnership
	Solway Firth Partnership

This analysis confirms to us that there are a variety of CSPs in all the inshore areas and therefore all the inshore areas have the advantage of existing partnerships that the MMO can work and has worked with to facilitate stakeholder participation.

There are several plan-area wide organisations. For example, in the North West the North West Coastal Forum covers the whole plan area and works with the more local-specific partnerships and similarly in the North East with the North East Coastal Forum acting in a similar way. In the South East, the Thames Estuary Partnership covers a large proportion of the plan area.

## **Technical report of economic, environmental and social information**

As a part of the decision to plan the East Inshore and East Offshore marine areas, in November 2012 the MMO commissioned the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) to undertake a quantitative assessment of the marine plan areas based on sustainable development criteria<sup>5</sup>.

The Cefas technical report took as its starting point the premise that the marine plan areas to be planned first should be those that make the greatest contribution to the achievement of sustainable development within the UK marine area. As such, this work broke down sustainable development into its social, economic and environmental components, and presented a quantitative analysis using readily available data based on the following sustainable development focused criteria.

- a) **Intensity of human activity (as a proxy for economic activity).** This criterion broadly examined the pattern of human activity in the marine environment. It particularly focused on the range and intensity of existing and planned activities, and potential future natural resource utilisation.
- b) **The extent to which the environmental aspects of sustainable development are currently being delivered.** This criterion examined the broad scale environmental status of each plan area and included an examination of differences in sensitivity or resilience between areas based on natural physical dynamics and biological diversity. A key challenge for this criterion was the need to attempt to provide sub-national differentiation of environmental status when data sets either tend to be national (therefore generalised), or local (therefore too detailed).
- c) **The contribution towards achieving the social aspects of sustainable development.** Work under this criterion provided a review of broad scale social aspects of sustainable development with an emphasis on gaining an understanding of social inequalities and differences across England's coastal towns. This approach allowed exploration of the contribution that marine planning might make towards the potential resolution of maritime related social deprivation.
- d) **Equal weighting of sustainable development criteria.** To give a balanced view and support the sustainable development approach that marine planning seeks to achieve.

Where empirical analysis was used to guide report recommendations, an objective assessment method was adopted which included:

- a combination of geographic information system (GIS) analysis
- ranking or matrix creation
- plan area discrimination using principal component analysis (PCA)<sup>6</sup>
- scenario testing.

Cefas noted that data coverage and type was patchy and inconsistent across plan areas and that further urgent work is required to identify, negotiate access to, and collate strategically important datasets at the plan area level. It was also noted that the adaptive capacity of different plan areas to marine climate change will be an important consideration over forthcoming years.

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<sup>5</sup> The technical report and the methodological feeder report associated with it can be provided on request.

<sup>6</sup> PCA is a way of identifying patterns in data, and expressing the data in such a way as to highlight their similarities and differences.

As a part of the decision on where to plan next, the MMO Evidence, Data and Knowledge Management Team have re-visited this document and have concluded that some areas of data have been updated since the report was written. However without further investigation into the regional signalling within that data it is difficult to identify any differences in outcome to the original report. Otherwise the original report is still valid to this point.

The Cefas report assessed each of the three aspects of sustainable development – human activity, environmental, and social aspects and weighted each one to give a ranking for each plan area. They considered each plan area separately. A ranking of 1 is high indication and 10 is low indication.

Table 2 below shows the conclusions of the Cefas report which gives a ranking to each plan area following a set of criteria being applied.

**Table 2: Summary of the Cefas analysis**

Plan area	Equal weighting of sustainable development criteria	Focus on human activity	Focus on environment	Focus on social aspects
North East Inshore	6	6	5	6
East Inshore	2	2	7	1
South East	6	6	5	6
South Inshore	4	3	4	5
South West Inshore	3	4	2	4
North West	1	1	1	3
North East Offshore	8	8	8	8
East Offshore	5	5	10	2
South Offshore	8	8	8	8
South West Offshore	8	8	3	10

As a part of marine plan production for the East Inshore and East Offshore areas, the MMO commissioned a socio-economic study of England's coastal areas.

The MMO has reviewed the technical report the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) carried out to complete a quantitative assessment of the marine plan areas based on sustainable development criteria for initial plan area selection. The conclusions of the review continue to support the original findings:

- Economic criteria: **North West, East Inshore and South Inshore and Offshore areas** have high levels of human activity.
- Environment: **North West and South West Offshore areas** scored highly on these impacts, **South West Inshore and South West Offshore areas** are also among the most environmentally sensitive. **South Inshore and South Offshore areas** tending towards most poor environmental status or declining condition.
- Social criteria: **East Inshore area** had the highest opportunity to tackle coastal community deprivation with **North West area** scoring at mid-level.

In addition to the Cefas analysis, the availability of accurate habitat data is a useful factor to consider in the selection of the next marine plan areas. In place of a comprehensive assessment of all data, the degree to which areas have been mapped is a relevant surrogate. The habitat map being used for the East marine plan areas has been significantly improved as a result of newly available multi-beam survey data. It is therefore possible to consider the potential for improved knowledge of habitats in other marine plan areas based on the availability of new multi-beam survey data in those areas. We can make a reasonable assumption that we will have increased confidence in the habitats of plan areas with greater quantities of multi-beam survey data.

The socio-economic study<sup>7</sup> completed by Roger Tym and Partners identified various coastal community typologies. Looking at the most deprived of those typologies that the study identified, prime examples of those exist in the **East Inshore, North East Inshore, North West Inshore and some in the South Inshore areas.**

The study identified that deprived coastal communities were most likely to benefit from marine planning where connections were made with the growth of offshore industries as it could create jobs and prosperity in those areas.

Having undertaken an initial assessment, the results indicate that the southern plan areas have a greater proportion of multi-beam survey data and therefore potential for greater confidence in an improved habitat map (with the South East achieving the highest result here followed by the South West and then the South). However, the varying sizes of the plan areas must be taken into account here as while the South West Offshore may exhibit a large proportion of multi-beam surveyed habitat (24 per cent), the remaining area of unsurveyed habitat is far greater than many of the other plan areas (67,000 square kilometres). The plan areas with the least unsurveyed area are the South East, North East Inshore and the North West (please see Table 3 below for further values).

**Table 3: Distribution of surveyed data by plan area**

Area name	Plan area (square kilometres)	Survey area (square kilometres)	Non survey area (square kilometres)	Percentage surveyed
South East	3,928.60	2,179.89	1,748.71	55.49
South West Inshore	16,111.63	7,297.00	8,814.63	45.29
South Offshore	12,082.08	3,184.91	8,897.17	26.36
South West Offshore	89,355.85	21,701.96	67,653.88	24.29
South Inshore	10,512.84	2,238.94	8,273.90	21.30
North East Offshore	49,126.27	7,891.02	41,235.26	16.06
East Inshore	10,225.80	1,627.95	8,597.85	15.92
North West	7,093.13	931.49	6,161.63	13.13
East Offshore	48,541.71	2,558.58	45,983.13	5.27
North East Inshore	6,025.87	31.33	5,994.54	0.52

<sup>7</sup> [www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/key/se.htm](http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/key/se.htm)

## Implications of current and proposed marine protected areas

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are designated sites at sea that protect habitats and species from damage and disturbance<sup>8</sup>. The UK Government is committed to having a well understood and supported ecologically coherent network of MPAs to support the requirements of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive – good environmental status by 2020.

The role of the MMO, along with other statutory bodies, will be to implement effective management measures for the MPAs and ensure that marine planning reflects the conservation of these sites within the wider context of sustainable development.

### The MPA network

MPAs will be a consideration of marine planning as their designation occurs outside of the MMO's control, however management measures for some of these sites is within the MMO's responsibilities.

There are five designations which together will form the MPA network in England:

1. sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) – there are some SSSIs which extend below low water mark, although most are land-based
2. special protection areas (SPAs) – protect populations of specific species of birds of European importance
3. special areas of conservation (SACs) – in this context, primarily protects marine habitats of European importance
4. Ramsar sites – protect internationally important sites for wetland birds
5. marine conservation zones (MCZs) – will protect nationally important habitats, species and geology.

SSSIs with intertidal or marine features provide significant coverage throughout all of England's inshore plan areas, but in many cases are less prominent in areas of dense coastal development. There are notable exceptions to this, such as the Solent region within the South Inshore plan area.

There is significant coverage of new candidate SACs in the **East Inshore and East Offshore** areas, and some coverage in the **South West Inshore** area. Existing SACs with marine components are present in all inshore plan areas. There are SACs in every cross border area where the MMO's plan area boundaries interact with devolved administrations, for example the Severn Estuary and the Solway Firth. There are large areas of new SPAs in the **North East Inshore, East Inshore** and **South East** areas. There are also notable areas of existing SPAs with marine components in these areas<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> MPAs are often defined as any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlaying water and associated fauna, flora, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or the entire enclosed environment (Kelleher and Kenchington, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1458>



Other considerations include areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) as well as considerations attached to seascape characterisation. For example, if seascape in particular is a concern, then areas with more AONBs may need to be given priority than those with fewer designations.

**Table 4: Distribution of AONBs by plan area**

Plan area	Number	Area (square kilometres)
South West Inshore	7	256
South East	2	11
South Inshore	7	74
North West	2	20
North East Inshore	1	49
East Inshore	2	91

Table 4 shows that **South West Inshore** and **South Inshore** have the highest number of AONBs, with **East Inshore** having the second highest area covered by AONBs.

### Marine conservation zones

The four marine conservation zone projects in England have undertaken a significant stakeholder engagement process to establish recommendations on locations of MCZs. Consultation is scheduled for late 2012, with the first tranche of MCZs formally designated by the Government during 2013.

The distribution of MCZs is shown in Table 5.

The JNCC and Natural England advice on recommended MCZs published in July 2012 shows that the following proportions of rMCZs have been defined as being at 'higher risk' of damage or deterioration than at other sites<sup>10</sup>.

**Table 5: Number of MCZs by plan area**

Plan area	Number of rMCZs	Area in square km of rMCZs in plan area	Area in square km of plan area	Percentage of plan area taken up by rMCZs	Number of rMCZs 'at risk' (JNCC <sup>11</sup> )	Percentage of rMCZs 'at risk'
South West Inshore	30	1,787	16,231	11	11	37
South West Offshore	14	14,241	90,377	16	11	79
South Inshore	34	1,419	10,531	13	22	65

<sup>10</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/2030218>

<sup>11</sup> As some rMCZs straddle the inshore and offshore boundaries they will be counted in both the inshore and offshore totals in the table.

Plan area	Number of rMCZs	Area in square km of rMCZs in plan area	Area in square km of plan area	Percentage of plan area taken up by rMCZs	Number of rMCZs 'at risk' (JNCC <sup>11</sup> )	Percentage of rMCZs 'at risk'
South Offshore	7	1,626	12,105	13	5	71
South East	12	1,131	3,921	29	8	67
East Inshore	9	1,536	10,211	15	3	33
East Offshore	9	1,716	48,417	4	3	33
North East Inshore	5	672	6,033	11	0	0
North East Offshore	5	8,768	49,087	18	1	20
North West	13	948	7,125	13	5	38

Table 5 also shows that on a number level the **South Inshore** has the highest number of rMCZs 'at risk', on a percentage level assessment of rMCZs in the **South West Offshore, South Offshore, South East** and **South Inshore** all have a high proportion of rMCZs 'at risk'.

## Future pressures and their implications

Charting Progress 2 (CP2) provides an assessment of the productivity of our seas, and the extent to which human uses and existing natural pressures are affecting their quality. It addresses specific species, habitats and economic issues of the eight UK marine regions. It also helps show whether current environmental protection measures are working, and aims to provide policy makers, planners and the public with a clear evaluation of our progress towards the vision. CP2 forms a component of the initial assessment of UK seas being undertaken for the purpose of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

The work conducted as part of CP2 presents an overview of the situation in the UK at present and is a valuable baseline of current human activities and pressures for the UK seas. A condensed version of this summary is presented below.

Activity	Productivity		Pressure
	Trend	Output	Trend
Oil and gas	I	D	NC
Maritime transport	NC	NC	NC
Telecom cables	I	I	I
Leisure and recreation	I	I	I
Defence: military	NC	?	NC

Activity	Productivity		Pressure
	Trend	Output	Trend
Fisheries	NC	NC	C
Aquaculture	I	NC	I
Water abstraction	NC	NC	NC
Mineral extraction	NC	NC	NC
Renewable energy	LI	LI	LI
Coastal defence	LI	LI	LI
Waste disposal	NC	NC	NC
Education	NC	NC	NC
Research and development	NC	NC	NC
Power transmission	NC	NC	NC
Storage of gases	NC	NC	NC

I = increase, LI = large increase, D = decrease, NC = no change at all, C = change but no overall difference

The Cefas report also considered future marine use by considering those sectors that would benefit from early planning. Cefas interpreted this to include sectors where significant future activity is scheduled and where there may be clear added value for sustainable use in the early introduction of marine planning.

Cefas assessed policies<sup>12</sup> laid out by government with a future-looking aspect for future uses of the marine area and concluded that energy, for example, has the most detail and policy support in the policy documents reviewed, whereas other policy areas, for example related to navigation dredging, have a much lower profile. In other cases, (such as fisheries and aggregates) the policy statements simply state that an activity 'will continue'.

### Characteristics and future indications for plan areas

The Strategic Scoping Report<sup>13</sup> produced by MMO in June 2011 looked at all evidence available to it including Charting Progress 2. The summary of key characteristics of each plan area (except East Inshore and East Offshore) is below:

The East areas (inshore and offshore) have the most concentrated activity and contain the majority of the oil and gas activity and proposed renewables in the form of offshore wind Round 3. The East areas, with proposed new sites, will have 75 per cent of the English marine area designated under Natura 2000

The North East areas are the least busy, but have representation from many sectors and locally this diversity is important. The relatively undeveloped areas of coastline are of high environmental and tourism value. The ports are strategically important for transport and have the potential to be developed in future to support the offshore wind industry.

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<sup>12</sup> UK Marine Policy Statement: A Draft for Consultation (Defra, 2010c), Draft Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (DECC, 2010) and Draft National Policy Statement for Ports (DfT, 2009)

<sup>13</sup> [www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/key/ssr.htm](http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/key/ssr.htm)

The South East area has a significant proportion of the port and associated shipping activity and aggregate extraction areas, both current and proposed due to the imminent development around London and the wider Thames Estuary.

The South areas are very mixed with a variety of sectors present including ports, shipping (English Channel route), communications and power cabling, aggregate extraction and high recreational value. The coastline has a number of environmental designations and a large offshore draft SAC is being considered. Potential aggregate resource activity exists here and opportunity for tidal stream power generation. The Cefas report noted that South Inshore and South Offshore both have high levels of activity and are tending most towards poor environmental status or declining condition.

The South West areas are an important landing site for power transmission and telecommunications cables, including transatlantic infrastructure. The Channel is a very important shipping route connecting the Atlantic with the Southern North Sea and this activity dominates the offshore area. Inshore fisheries are diverse and widespread and are of significant local importance to the economy, along with tourism and recreation. These activities rely on the diversity and high quality of the natural environment.

The North West area has a lower amount of overall activity, but due to its small size this is more concentrated. Strategically important industry includes gas production and renewables, with further development of offshore wind proposed. Potential aggregate interests and significant tidal range power opportunities are also present here.

This shows that there are many different drivers to all of the remaining plan areas. There are good reasons to go to any one of these areas next.

## **Implications of planning inshore and offshore together**

Part of the decision to plan the East Inshore and East Offshore areas first was based on stakeholder feedback and the MMO assessment that there were efficiencies to be gained by planning the inshore and offshore areas at the same time. The planning process for the East plan areas has reinforced the approach of planning inshore and offshore areas together.

Stakeholders have seen the benefits of consulting for the inshore and offshore areas as an efficient use of time and still support this approach<sup>14</sup>. National stakeholders tend to have a greater level of interest in the offshore plan areas with local stakeholders having greater interest in inshore plan areas – by planning both areas together the widest possible engagement of stakeholders is achieved. This promotes a goal of marine planning, to stimulate dialogue and shared understanding between sea users.

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<sup>14</sup> Feedback from December 2011 workshops on evidence and issues in plan area.

Economic, social and environmental processes cross inshore and offshore divides, so a wide range of processes can be planned for in a holistic way. This helps integration with local authority planning systems and highlights opportunities from offshore industries.

The MMO supports a bio-geographical regional seas approach to delivering ecosystem based marine planning and management. In some respects, the planning boundary between inshore and offshore at 12 nautical miles could be seen to be at odds with this approach and the concept of strategic spatial integration within marine planning. While this boundary is a legal one, it does not always support an ecosystem approach to planning.

The separation of bio-regional marine plans into inshore and offshore marine plans could result in a duplication of effort, time and resources from coastal stakeholders, including local authorities. There are efficiency benefits to be gained by producing inshore and offshore plans together. The integration between terrestrial and marine plans would be facilitated by planning inshore and offshore together. It would encourage engagement from terrestrial authorities in the wider marine area and generate more consideration of land based impacts on the marine environment and vice versa. Managing impacts in the offshore areas caused by industries connected to the land (such as renewables) will be more difficult without engagement from terrestrial stakeholders.

The inshore-offshore boundary is important for marine industry, particularly aggregates and renewables. Many existing marine aggregate permissions and future applications straddle the boundaries as well as many of the Round 3 offshore wind energy zones. To avoid difficulties in development and decision making, it would make sense to plan across these boundaries in an integrated manner.

The MMO is committed to working with key nature conservation partners and stakeholders to help deliver an integrated network of marine protected areas through the delivery framework of marine planning. For this to be most effective, it would be preferable to plan inshore and offshore areas together where there are nature conservation designations that cross the boundary.

## **Implications of planning with bordering nations**

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 divides English waters into marine regions with an inshore (0 to 12 nautical miles<sup>15</sup>) and offshore region (12 to 200 nautical miles). The act also creates offshore regions around Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>16</sup>.

The act refers to "marine plan authorities" that are responsible for planning in each region with the exception of the Scottish and Northern Ireland inshore regions which

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<sup>15</sup> As the landward boundary of marine plans is mean high water springs, this means that in some locations, marine plan areas will extend for some miles inland along the estuaries of tidal rivers.

<sup>16</sup> Most relevant legislation divides the UK marine area into inshore and offshore parts. This is because international and EU law usually places different rights and obligations on states in respect of their territorial waters (0 to 12 nautical miles).

are, or will be, covered by separate legislation, such as the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010.

### **Current state of play with bordering nations**

The approaches to marine planning being taken by England, Scotland and Wales are different. This reflects the differences in nature of the marine areas or regions under the administration of each country.

Stakeholders in plan areas bordering devolved administrations have strongly advised the MMO to carry out marine planning in a co-ordinated fashion with Scotland and/or Wales. The MMO agrees and it will ensure that when it plans at the borders, it will be in a holistic way.

Devolved administrations are at different stages in the marine planning process. Scotland has progressed with the development of their approach to marine planning, both in terms of the production of a national marine plan for Scotland, with regional planning around Scotland to follow. Wales is in the process of developing its overall approach to marine planning. As a result, planning across the borders with Wales and Scotland would add a layer of complexity at this stage. This has an impact on **North West, South West and North East** plan areas.

Bordering EU member states are at differing stages of marine planning and have used different approaches. It will not be possible to plan at the same timelines as them and, even if this was an option, the difference in approaches to marine planning would limit the advantages of simultaneous planning.

The MMO has engaged with international colleagues since October 2010 and it is clear that EU colleagues are impressed with the ways of working that have been developed. Bordering EU member states are confident that our approach will have a positive impact on marine planning across the southern North Sea. This engagement will continue through the planning of the East marine plan areas and MMO will continue to regularly meet with European colleagues to discuss key stages of the marine planning process<sup>17</sup>.

The European Commission (EC) is currently considering a Marine Spatial Planning Directive. This could have a significant impact on the approach to marine planning. One of the EC officers involved in the consideration of a directive attended the MMO's meeting in April 2012 with marine planning representatives from bordering EU member states. It was clear from the meeting that England's approach to cross-border collaboration is being viewed favourably and there would be a strong political advantage in selecting plan areas that allow for the existing collaboration to continue.

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<sup>17</sup> International meetings held with colleagues most recently in April 2012.