

South Marine Plan Areas

Sustainability Appraisal Statement

May 2018



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South Marine Plan Areas

Sustainability Appraisal Statement

May 2018

Report prepared by: Ramboll Environ, Marine Planning Consultants and ClearLead Consulting Ltd.



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1. Introduction

This Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Statement forms the final output from the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the South Marine Plan. The South Marine Plan has been subject to an integrated SA and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)¹ (hereafter referred to as SA) in line with the requirements of Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Under the terms of the SEA regulations² when a plan is adopted, a statement must be produced summarising:

- How environmental / sustainability considerations have been integrated into the plan;
- How the SA report has been taken into account;
- How opinions expressed in response to consultation have been taken into account;
- The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternative options dealt with; and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant sustainability effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

To reflect these requirements, the format of this report is as follows:

- Chapter 2 describes how sustainability considerations identified through the SA process have been integrated into the South Marine Plan;
- Chapter 3 describes the reasons for choosing the Plan as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives;
- Chapter 4 describes how the opinions expressed in response to the relevant consultations have been taken into account; and
- Chapter 5 describes the measures decided upon to monitor all of the potential significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan.

If you have any queries relating to this report or the marine planning process, please contact the Marine Planning Team planning@marinemanagement.org.uk

¹ An integrated SEA/SA refers to the fact that the assessment adheres to the requirements of the SEA regulations (see below) but also fully reflects relevant social and economic issues

² Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

2. The South Marine Plan and sustainability

2.1 How the South Marine Plan addresses sustainability

The UK Government vision for the marine environment is for, “clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas”. The UK high level marine objectives, published in April 2009, set the broad outcomes for the marine area in achieving this vision, and reflect the principles for sustainable development. The High Level Marine Objectives are:

- Achieving a sustainable marine economy;
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
- Living within environmental limits;
- Promoting good governance; and
- Using sound science responsibly.

The aim of marine planning is to ensure a sustainable future for coastal and offshore waters through managing and balancing the many activities, resources and assets in our marine area and in so doing, deliver these high-level marine objectives. Marine plans (including the South Marine Plan) are intended to guide:

- Marine users to the most suitable locations for different activities;
- The use of marine resources to ensure sustainable levels;
- All marine users, to ensure everyone with an interest has an opportunity to contribute to marine plans; and
- A holistic approach to decision making and consideration of all the benefits and impacts of all the current and future activities that occur in the marine area.

Therefore, the concept of sustainability is integrated throughout the South Marine Plan from the vision and objectives downwards. For example the vision of the plan states:

By 2037, the South Marine Plan areas’ iconic and unique qualities, characteristics and culture will be conserved, promoted and where needed enhanced, through good management of its marine space. The natural beauty of the coastline and busy coastal and offshore waters are qualities that make the South Marine Plan area distinctive. By 2037 the South Marine Plan area will have maintained this distinctive natural beauty and diversity while sustainable economic growth, protection of the natural and historic environment as well as the wellbeing of those who live, work and visit the south coast will have been enhanced through balanced and sustainable use of its resources.

The objectives of the plan are shown below:

- Objective 1: To promote effective use of space to support existing, and facilitate future sustainable economic activity through the encouragement of co-existence, mitigation of conflicts and minimisation of development footprints;

- Objective 2: To manage existing, and facilitate the provision of new, infrastructure supporting marine and terrestrial activity;
- Objective 3: To support diversification of activities which improve socio-economic conditions in coastal communities;
- Objective 4: To support marine activities that increase or enhance employment opportunities at all skills levels among the workforce of coastal communities, particularly where they support existing or developing industries within the south marine plan areas;
- Objective 5: To avoid, minimise or mitigate displacement of marine activities, particularly where of importance to adjacent coastal communities, and where this is not practical to ensure adverse effects on social benefits are avoided;
- Objective 6: To maintain and enhance inclusive access to, and within, the South Marine Plan areas appropriate to its setting and in a way that is equitable to users;
- Objective 7: To support the reduction of the environmental, social and economic impacts of climate change, through encouraging the implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures that:
 - avoid proposals' indirect contributions to greenhouse gas emissions
 - reduce vulnerability
 - improve resilience to climate and coastal change
 - consider habitats that provide related ecosystem services.
- Objective 8: To identify and conserve heritage assets that are significant to the historic environment of the South Marine Plan areas;
- Objective 9: To consider the seascape and its constituent marine character and visual resource and the landscape of the south marine plan areas,
- Objective 10: To support marine protected area objectives and the delivery of a well managed ecologically coherent network with enhanced resilience and capability to adapt to change.
- Objective 11: Compliment and contribute to the achievement or maintenance of;
 - Good Environmental Status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and
 - Good Ecological Status or Potential under the Water Framework Directive with respect to descriptors for marine litter, non-indigenous species and underwater noise.
- Objective 12: To safeguard space for, and improve the quality of, the natural marine environment, including to enable continued provision of ecosystem goods and services, particularly in relation to coastal and seabed habitats, fisheries, cumulative impacts on highly mobile species.

The plan objectives have been aligned with the High-Level Marine Objectives in the Marine Policy Statement, to demonstrate how the plans will contribute to their delivery and this is shown in Table 2 of the South Marine Plan. The objectives cover the full scope of sustainable development, integrating themes of achieving a sustainable marine economy, ensuring a strong, healthy and just society and living within environmental limits.

The plan policies then support the delivery of the marine plan objectives and address the issues outlined for the sustainable development of the plan areas. Where gaps in achievement of the objective have been identified, new plan policies have been drafted to either clarify existing requirements or make them relevant to the plan areas. The policies are all very clearly set out and sit under a particular objective, making it clear how they will guide decisions, leading to the achievement of that objective. Most policies are relevant, even if indirectly, to a number of objectives. Where this is the case, the policy text highlights the linkages across the marine plans.

The effectiveness of the South Marine Plan is then monitored to ensure that the plan is helping to achieve its objectives.

2.2 How the SA report has been taken into account

The SA report identified a number of significant positive effects of the draft plan mainly in relation to economic effects and the support given for certain industries or communities such as fishing. The SA of the Draft Plan did not report any significant negative effects but did report some uncertain effects (please note that the Final Plan did not have any uncertain effects as these were all dealt with through changes to the plan).

The SA report includes several recommendations in the form of mitigation measures to reduce the likelihood of these uncertain effects occurring and it was recommended that these recommendations were built into the final plan.

These recommendations are shown in Table 2.1 along with the response of the MMO to show how the recommendations were taken into account in the final plan.

As well as building in the SA comments at the draft plan stage the MMO considered the results of the SA at the following stages:

- At the options appraisal stage (see below). The SA report sets out in Annex D the recommendations that were made at the options stage and the MMO's response to this; and
- During an informal assessment of an early draft.

Table 2.1: Recommendations of the SA report and MMO response

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Response of the MMO (changes made to the final plan)	Residual effect
<p>Major / significant positive effect on fishing communities</p> <p>This is because draft South Marine Plan includes many policies related to protecting and supporting the fishing industry, feeding grounds, essential habitats, reducing the spread of non-indigenous species and draft South Marine Plan also include additional protection for herring through policy S-FISH-4-HER.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>Major / significant positive effect on fishing communities</p>
<p>Uncertain effect on coastal assets and marine assets</p> <p>This is because the draft policy on heritage (S-HER-1) refers only to 'newly-discovered heritage assets' and 'non-designated assets that are yet to be assessed for designation'. The policy makes no reference to other classes of heritage asset. There is also uncertainty because of the way in which the policy is framed, i.e. 'Proposals with the potential to have a significant adverse impact [on heritage assets] are more likely to be supported if ...' This suggests a presumption to support proposals that have significant adverse impacts on heritage assets, which contrasts with</p>	<p>The uncertain effects of the draft South Marine Plan could be mitigated by rewording the draft policy on heritage so that it is comprehensive in its application to different categories of heritage asset, including heritage assets and their settings; gives effect to a presumption on proposals that affect the conservation of heritage assets that is consistent with the UK MPS and other relevant policies; and is able to balance other plan policies that are likely to have a negative effect on heritage assets.</p>	<p>No major / significant negative effects, major / significant positive effects or uncertain effects recorded.</p> <p>The plan will have a neutral effect on cultural heritage. The policy has been strengthened and now applies to all forms of heritage assets and also centres on the effect of proposals on the significance of heritage assets.</p> <p>The effect of the plan is still not as positive as it might be because there are no policies positively supporting proposals that would augment the social and economic benefits that arise</p>	<p>Neutral effect cultural heritage</p>

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Response of the MMO (changes made to the final plan)	Residual effect
Options 1-3 considered previously and the way that other receptors are treated in the draft South Marine Plan		from heritage assets.	
<p>Uncertain effect on seabed habitats / benthos</p> <p>This is due to a lack of clarity regarding the policies supporting certain types of development. Policy S-OG-1 regarding oil and gas development, Policy S-AQ-2 on aquaculture and Policy S-INF-1 could be deemed to have higher priority than other plan activities or environmental sensitivities due to the way the policies are phrased.</p>	<p>There is a mismatch between supporting text and the policies (specifically S-OG-1, S-AQ-2 and S-INF-1). The policies as worded imply that these activities will be supported in preference to other considerations. The supporting text does contain information regarding environmental safeguards and issues related to co-existence with other activities (and there is existing protection through other measures). However, we would recommend a stronger link between policy wording and supporting text.</p>	<p>There remains an emphasis on priority for certain types of development (specifically S-OG-1). However, greater emphasis has been placed in policies S-OG-1, S-AQ-1 and S-AQ-2 to ensure compatibility is considered when addressing proposals for developments within and between sectors.</p> <p>There has been improved reference to and guidance on the need for proposals to demonstrate compliance with relevant environmental legislation and guidance to demonstrate they avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts and support various policy objectives. The Final Plan also includes references to the Marine Information System and its role in guiding applicants on policy application. This will help to ensure that infrastructure proposals appropriately take into account relevant constraints and opportunities.</p>	Neutral effect on seabed habitats / benthos
<p>Major / significant positive effect on ports</p> <p>This is due to strong policies which protect shipping routes, ports and harbours and support development of skills</p>	NA	NA	Major / significant positive effect on ports

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Response of the MMO (changes made to the final plan)	Residual effect
<p>Major / significant positive effect on fisheries industry (see above for comments in relation to how the plan affects the communities that rely on fishing)</p> <p>This is due to strong policies which support the diversification of the fishing industry and enhance fishing industry resilience and support development of skills.</p>	NA	NA	Major / significant positive effect on fisheries
<p>Major / significant positive effect on marine manufacturing and defence</p> <p>This is due to strong policies which protect Ministry of Defence Danger and Exercise Areas, support the immediate and future development of the skills base within the local community and seek to enhance employment opportunities</p>	NA	NA	Major / significant positive effect on marine manufacturing and defence
<p>Major / significant positive effect on aggregates</p> <p>This is due to strong policies which require the consideration of existing licenses for extraction of aggregates and through support for the use of sustainable sources of aggregate.</p>	NA	NA	Major / significant positive effect on aggregates
<p>Major / significant positive effect on oil and gas</p> <p>This is due to the fact that the draft South Marine Plan give strong support to the oil and gas sector through policy S-OG-1.</p>	NA	NA	Major / significant positive effect on oil and gas

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Response of the MMO (changes made to the final plan)	Residual effect
<p>Uncertain effect on statutory and non-statutory landscape designations</p> <p>There is an uncertainty regarding the coverage of the draft South Marine Plan in relation to landscape as it is not clear how the draft South Marine Plan will implement the intent of the MPS. In addition there is a lack of clarity between the policy and the supporting text.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the draft South Marine Plan needs to be clearer regarding the coverage of landscape in the draft South Marine Plan. This is not necessarily a policy gap but it is felt that better explanation is needed in the supporting text.</p>	<p>Box 3 has been added to the Technical Annex which provides some clarity on the issues of landscape.</p>	<p>Neutral effect on statutory and non-statutory landscape designations</p>
<p>Uncertain effect on statutory and non-statutory landscape designations</p> <p>Uncertain effect due a lack of clarity regarding the policies supporting certain types of development. Policy S-OG-1 regarding oil and gas development, Policy S-AQ-2 on aquaculture and Policy S-INF-1 could be deemed to have higher priority than other plan activities or environmental sensitivities due to the way the policies are phrased.</p>	<p>There is a mismatch between supporting text and the policies (specifically S-OG-1, S-AQ-2 and S-INF-1). The policies as worded imply that these activities will be supported in preference to other considerations. The supporting text does contain information regarding environmental safeguards and issues related to co-existence with other activities (and there is existing protection through other measures). However, we would recommend a stronger link between policy wording and supporting text.</p>	<p>There remains an emphasis on priority for certain types of development (specifically S-OG-1). However, greater emphasis has been placed in policies S-OG-1, S-AQ-1 and S-AQ-2 to ensure compatibility is considered when addressing proposals for developments within and between sectors.</p> <p>There has been improved reference to and guidance on the need for proposals to demonstrate compliance with relevant environmental legislation and guidance to demonstrate they avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts and support various policy objectives. The Final Plan also includes references to the Marine Information System and its role in guiding applicants on policy application. This will help to ensure that infrastructure proposals appropriately take into account relevant constraints and opportunities.</p>	<p>Neutral effect on statutory and non-statutory landscape designations</p>

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Response of the MMO (changes made to the final plan)	Residual effect
<p>Uncertain effect on pollution and water quality</p> <p>Uncertain effect due a lack of clarity regarding the policies supporting certain types of development. Policy S-OG-1 regarding oil and gas development, Policy S-AQ-2 on aquaculture and Policy S-INF-1 could be deemed to have higher priority than other plan activities or environmental sensitivities due to the way the policies are phrased.</p>	<p>There is a mismatch between supporting text and the policies (specifically S-OG-1, S-AQ-2 and S-INF-1). The policies as worded imply that these activities will be supported in preference to other considerations. The supporting text does contain information regarding environmental safeguards and issues related to co-existence with other activities (and there is existing protection through other measures). However, we would recommend a stronger link between policy wording and supporting text.</p>	<p>There remains an emphasis on priority for certain types of development (specifically S-OG-1). However, greater emphasis has been placed in policies S-OG-1, S-AQ-1 and S-AQ-2 to ensure compatibility is considered when addressing proposals for developments within and between sectors.</p> <p>There has been improved reference to and guidance on the need for proposals to demonstrate compliance with relevant environmental legislation and guidance to demonstrate they avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts and support various policy objectives. The Final Plan also includes references to the Marine Information System and its role in guiding applicants on policy application. This will help to ensure that infrastructure proposals appropriately take into account relevant constraints and opportunities.</p>	<p>Neutral effect on pollution and water quality</p>
<p>Major / significant positive effects on marine litter</p> <p>This is due to strong policies in relation to the removal of marine litter</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>No changes have been made to the final plan that would change the assessment. However, the assessment has been changed from major positive to minor positive because of the plan's limited ability to influence marine litter (as the majority of litter originates on land).</p>	<p>Minor positive effect on marine litter</p>

3. Selection of the final South Marine Plan

3.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that, ‘... reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated.’ A number of different levels of alternative options were developed and assessed and these are shown in Figure 3.1.

3.2. The reasons for selecting the options dealt with

Three alternative options for the development of the South Marine Plan were designed, each delivering the objectives as a whole but distinct from one another in terms of how the different combinations of policies achieve the desired outcomes. These options were:

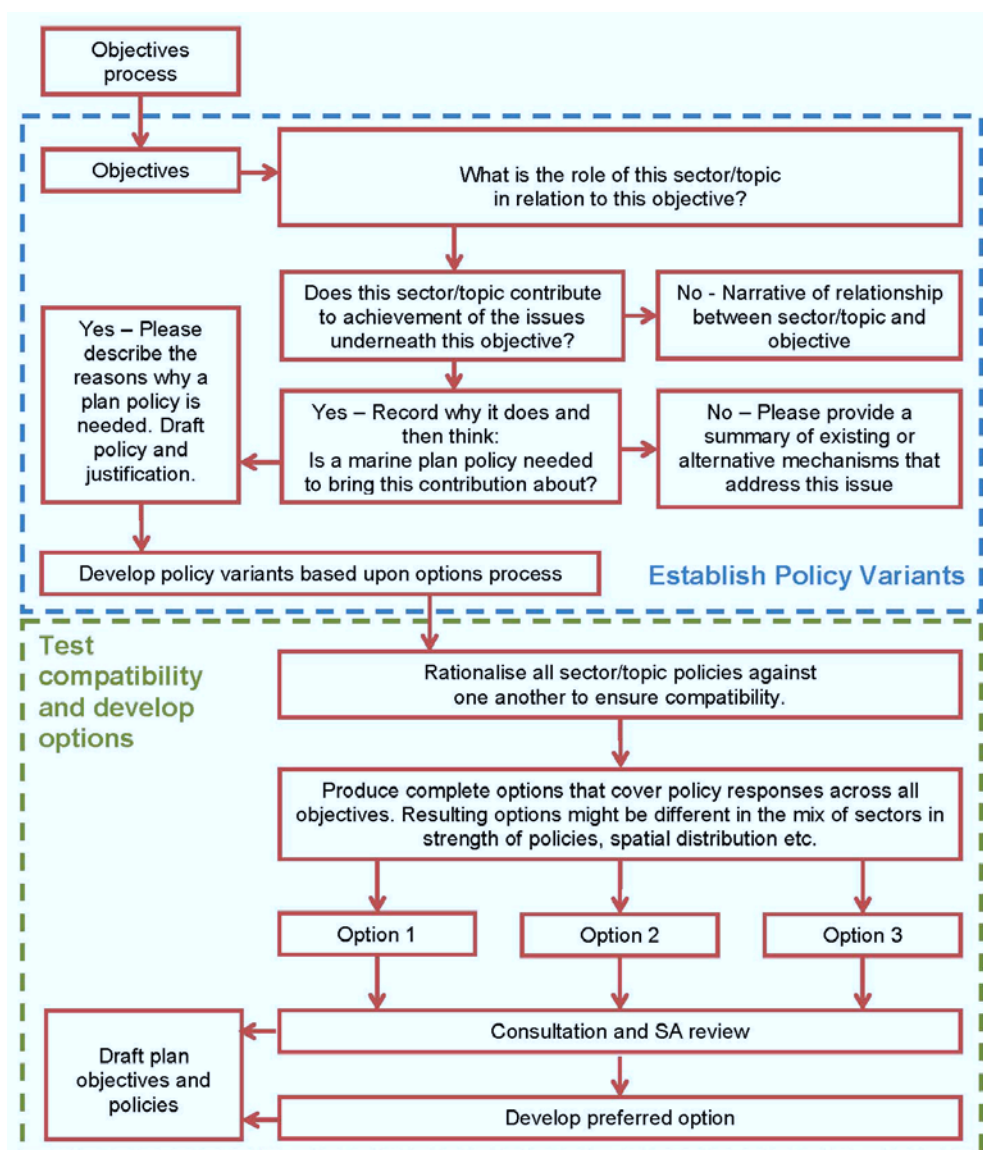
- Option 1 – Balanced Option: A high strength option that includes the highest possible number of high-strength policies.
- Option 2 – Flexible Option: An option that looks to find the middle ground across objectives (and therefore contains primarily medium strength policies).
- Option 3 – Prescriptive Option: An option that seeks to be more prescriptive and looks to achieve more certain outcomes for issues that have been highlighted as being particularly important for the South Marine Plan areas, notably the protection of the environment and a number of sectors of very high economic or social importance, namely:
 - i. Tourism and recreation
 - ii. Ports
 - iii. Shipping
 - iv. Fishing
 - v. Aggregates

The options paper produced by the MMO³ discusses the evolution of the alternative options and the reason for selecting the alternative options tested. Annex 2 of the MMO options paper in particular goes into detail regarding the different approaches to options development that have been considered by the MMO. The information below is a summary of this report.

The MMO tested various approaches to developing options. The selected approach is illustrated in Figure 3.1. This process was undertaken for each sector or topic and appropriate policy variants devised through the methodology outlined in phase one of this diagram. Where policies were not necessary or could not realistically be designed to address an issue, a justification and signposting narrative was produced. Where it was decided that a policy was needed to address the issues identified, the MMO attempted to draft a ‘high’, ‘medium’ and ‘low’ strength policy variant.

³ Marine Management Organisation (February 2015): South Marine Plan Areas Options Report.

Figure 3.1: Methodology for devising policy options



In this way, the MMO designed a suite of policies for each option that represented the reasonable ways to address each issue that the South Marine Plan needs to address. This was done by checking the different policy variants against the core issues identified in the South Plan Analytical Report⁴.

3.3. Further consideration of alternatives

As part of the draft plan consultation a number of respondents suggested alternative policy wordings. As these could be viewed as alternatives, analysis has been undertaken regarding whether these policies would be seen as reasonable alternatives to that which has already been tested and therefore, whether they

⁴ Marine Management Organisation (June 2014): South Inshore and South Offshore Marine Plan Areas: South Plan Area Analytical Report

should be tested. This analysis showed that all of the suggested alternative wordings proposed had already been tested as part of the SA or alternatively did not present an alternative that could be considered reasonable. This was mainly because the suggestions were unfairly prioritising one sector over others, were issues outside the remit of marine plans or were against UK marine policy or standard planning practice. Therefore, no reasonable alternatives have been presented which have not already been presented so no further testing of alternatives has been undertaken.

3.4 The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted

Options were selected as a result of feedback from respondents and were also supported by the findings of the SA of options. As respondents favoured a mix of options 1 and 3 the preferred option was a combination of the above. Therefore, summarised in Table 3.1 is a breakdown of each of the objectives presented at the options stage of the planning process and the preferred option chosen for each of these objectives.

Table 3.1: Reasons for selecting the plan as adopted

Objective subject	Preferred Option	Justification
<i>Climate Change</i>	3	A stronger policy was preferred by attendees at the options workshops as well as being supported by the SA of options.
<i>Marine Protected Areas</i>	3	It was felt that given the high value of MPAs they required strong protection to retain their resilience. It was also felt that option 3 was the most deliverable of the options presented and that option 2 added little to existing legislation.
<i>Good Environmental and Good Ecological Status</i>	3	The majority of respondents supported more prescriptive policies and welcomed the focus on MSFD and WFD.
<i>Ecology and Ecosystem services</i>	3	Respondents supported greater prescription in policies.
<i>Disturbance</i>	1	Favoured by respondents as a high strength policy.
<i>Water Quality</i>	3	Chosen as a prescriptive policy after respondents identified this as being a key issue in the South Marine Plan areas and therefore that stronger policy was needed in order to tackle it.
<i>Displacement of Marine Activities and Access</i>	1	Chosen as being a balance between too flexible and too prescriptive and was favoured by respondents in the options consultation.

Objective subject	Preferred Option	Justification
<i>Heritage Assets</i>	3	Selected as the preferred option due to receiving the most positive responses from stakeholders and being supported by the SA.
<i>Seascape</i>	1	Slightly more popular among respondents although this was only marginal.
<i>Co-location</i>	1	Chosen as the preferred option as there were concerns that option 3 could restrict new and developing ideas and therefore option 1 was favoured by respondents.
<i>Infrastructure</i>	1	The most popular among respondents and was therefore selected. There were no further comments from respondents.
<i>Regeneration and diversification of activities that improve socio-economic conditions</i>	1	Chosen as the preferred option as respondents favoured this option feeling that it was a well-balanced option that would allow for achievable improvements.

During the options process a series of different strength policies addressed the issues that had been raised. Each plan wide option then presented a selection of these policies of varying strengths and the implications of the selecting that option as well as projections for the 20 year horizon of the marine plan. These plan wide options had been through a compatibility testing process to ensure that there were no conflicts between policies.

Following the selection of a hybrid preferred option, a compatibility testing process was completed again to ensure no new conflicts between policies. This preferred option then led to a draft plan.

Following consultation on the south plan, and revisions of the policies the final plan has also been through a similar review for any conflict. Overall the process of policy development and assessment of preferred options has remained consistent for the South marine plan process.

4. Consultation

4.1 Introduction

Consultation is an essential part of the plan making and SA processes. This section of the report sets out the main issues raised through consultation and outlines how these comments have been taken into account in the development of the final South Marine Plan.

An excel recommendations tracker has been produced which sets out all the comments received on the different SA reports (scoping report and draft plan report) and this is available [here](#). The recommendations tracker also sets out the comments made by the SA Advisory Group at each of their meetings and includes information on how these comments were dealt with. The recommendations tracker forms part of this SA adoption statement and in this way means that the MMO does not need to produce an overly long SA adoption statement. Therefore, this section of the SA statement is a summary of the responses received (and action taken) rather than a list that details every response.

4.2 SA Advisory Group

The SA Advisory Group was convened by the MMO to informally advise on the approach, development and delivery of the SA. The terms of reference for the group are as follows:

- To provide a forum for discussion between the MMO, SA consultants, statutory consultees and other interested parties for SA (and marine planning).
- To provide a means of seeking informal advice from members of the Advisory Group for the MMO and SA contractors on, for example:
 - Overall approach;
 - Data sources;
 - Early versions of documents; and
 - To provide other advice and support as appropriate;

All advice and discussion is informal, in recognition of the fact that members of the group may want to (or may be required to) respond to formal consultations on the SA Scoping Report and final SA Report.

The following organisations are members of the group:

- Natural England;
- Historic England (formerly English Heritage)
- The Environment Agency;
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC);
- Defra;
- East Sussex County Council/South East Aggregates Working Party;
- Visit England;

- Plymouth Marine Laboratory;
- The Crown Estate;
- Coastal Partnerships (Solent Forum);
- Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Manager;
- UK Chamber of Shipping;
- National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO);
- Associated British Ports Southampton;
- Marine Conservation Society;
- Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust;
- The National Trust;
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF);
- The Wildlife Trusts; and
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

As well as formal consultation on the SA, the SA Advisory Group has agreed the methodology used and has assisted in assessing both the options and the Draft Plan.

4.3 SA scoping

A draft scoping report was published in April 2014 and was finalised in March 2015 after public consultation. The scoping report is the primary mechanism for consulting on the scope and level of detail of the SA, and was consulted upon in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 12(5) and (6) of the SEA Regulations. The scoping consultation began on the 24th November 2014 and closed on 2nd January 2015. The scoping report was issued to the following statutory environmental bodies:

- Natural England;
- Historic England (formerly English Heritage); and
- The Environment Agency.

It was also issued to members of the SA Advisory Group and was published on the MMO's website where anyone could submit a comment.

Consultees were broadly happy with the work that had been carried out but recommended some changes to the report. Where appropriate these comments have been taken into account in the SA scoping report. These comments could be broken down into the following main themes:

- Consultees welcoming the extensive baseline that the scoping report provides;
- Additional plans, policies and data that consultees wanted the revised scoping report to consider;
- Amendments to the lists of key issues or changes of emphasis;
- Comments regarding the consistency in the way different topics are dealt with;
- Local initiatives that should be addressed; and
- Better referencing of statements made.

Please refer to the recommendations tracker to see the detailed response to each issue raised.

4.4 Consultation on the options

An options assessment report was completed and presented to the MMO to assist in the drafting of the plan. This report presented an assessment of the options presented in the MMO options assessment paper⁵ (February 2015). The options assessment report was not published separately for consultation (as this is not a requirement of the SEA regulations). However, the information was presented in the SA report. Therefore, consultees had the opportunity to comment on the assessment of the options as part of the consultation below and if consultees made comments on the assessment of the options these are shown in the recommendations tracker referred to below.

4.5 Consultation on the Draft South Marine Plan and SA report

The consultation took place between November 7th 2016 and January 27th 2017. 81 individual written responses were received which included 1570 comments.

Where possible these comments have been taken into account in the SA report. These comments can be broken down into the following main themes:

- Comments regarding the information contained in Part 2 of the SA report (the scoping report). Whilst comments on the information contained in the scoping report are welcomed, the scoping report has already been subject to consultation. Therefore, comments have been checked to ensure that they would not impact on the results of the SA. As this is the case updates of the scoping report have not been undertaken at this stage;
- Minor inconsistencies between the Non Technical Summary and the SA report;
- A number of comments which related to policy coverage (which are matters for the plan makers and have been passed to the MMO); and
- Discussion as to whether uncertain impacts should be expressed as significant impacts.

Please refer to the recommendations tracker to see the detailed response to each issue raised.

⁵ Marine Management Organisation (February 2015): South Marine Plan Areas Options Report.

5. Monitoring

The SEA Regulations require the significant environmental effects of plans and programmes to be monitored, in order to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to take appropriate remedial action. Therefore, monitoring undertaken on the South Marine Plan as part of the Sustainability Appraisal and as part of the implementation and monitoring of the adopted South Marine Plan should help to:

- Monitor the significant effects of the draft South Marine Plan;
- Track whether the draft South Marine Plan has had any unforeseen effects; and
- Ensure that action can be taken to reduce / offset the significant positive and negative effects of the plan.

The requirements of the SEA Regulations focus on monitoring the significant and unforeseen effects of the Plan. Therefore, the SA monitoring framework should be focused only on monitoring those effects that are significantly negative or uncertain. Due to the fact that no major / significant negative effects or uncertain effects were identified it has not been necessary to outline a monitoring programme for the South Marine Plan that relates specifically to the results of the SA.

However, this does not mean that the plan will not be monitored. The South Marine Plan process will itself include a comprehensive monitoring programme which is focused on the achievement of the plan's objectives. This monitoring programme will enable the MMO to track the success of policies and also to monitor the baseline environmental, economic and social conditions of the plan area.