

# South Marine Plan Areas Sustainability Appraisal

## Final Sustainability Appraisal Report Part 3

May 2018



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

Bronze



Marine  
Management  
Organisation

## South Marine Plan Areas

# Final Sustainability Appraisal Report Part 3

May 2018

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



**Project funded by:** Marine Management Organisation

Version	Author	Note
A	Emma Jones	Final SA report – internal draft
1	Emma Jones	Final for client review

© Marine Management Organisation 2018

You may use and re-use the information featured on this website (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. Visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/) to view the licence or write to:

Information Policy Team  
The National Archives  
Kew  
London  
TW9 4DU  
Email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

Information about this publication and further copies are available from:

Marine Management Organisation  
Lancaster House  
Hampshire Court  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 7YH

Tel: 0300 123 1032  
Email: [info@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:info@marinemanagement.org.uk)  
Website: [www.gov.uk/mmo](http://www.gov.uk/mmo)

If referencing this document, please cite it as: MMO (2018) South Marine Plan Areas Final Sustainability Appraisal Report Part 3. A report produced for the Marine Management Organisation

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
1.1. This report.....	1
1.2. Format of this report.....	1
2. The Reasons for Selecting Alternatives .....	2
2.1. Introduction .....	2
2.2 The alternatives developed .....	2
2.3. The reasons for selecting the alternatives.....	3
2.4. Further consideration of alternatives .....	6
2.5. The reason for choosing the final plan .....	7
3. Summary of Assessment Results.....	9
3.1. Introduction .....	9
4. Results of the Assessment – Communities, Health and Wellbeing .....	15
4.1. Introduction .....	15
4.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives .....	15
4.3. Results of the options assessment.....	15
4.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessments .....	16
5. Results of the Assessment – Cultural Heritage .....	19
5.1. Introduction .....	19
5.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives .....	19
5.3. Results of the options assessment.....	19
5.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessments .....	19
6. Results of the Assessment – Marine Ecology .....	23
6.1. Introduction .....	23
6.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives .....	23
6.3. Results of the options assessment.....	23
6.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment .....	24
7. Results of the Assessment – Economy.....	27
7.1. Introduction .....	27
7.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives .....	27
7.3. Results of the options assessment.....	27
7.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment .....	29
8. Results of the Assessment – Geology, Geomorphology and Coastal Processes	33
8.1. Introduction .....	33
8.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives .....	33
8.3. Results of the options assessment.....	33
8.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment .....	33
9. Results of the Assessment – Landscape and Seascape.....	37
9.1. Introduction .....	37
9.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives .....	37

9.3. Results of the options assessment.....	37
9.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment .....	37
10. Results of the Assessment – Water .....	41
10.1. Introduction .....	41
10.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives .....	41
10.3. Results of the options assessment.....	41
10.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment .....	42
11. Cumulative Effects Assessment.....	45
11.1. Introduction .....	45
11.2. Cumulative effects – conclusions.....	45
12. Monitoring .....	47

## Figures

Figure 2.1: Methodology for devising policy options.....	4
--	---

## Tables

Table 2.1: The reason for selecting the preferred approach.....	7
Table 3.1: Summary of the assessment .....	10
Table 4.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (communities, health and well being) .....	17
Table 4.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (communities, health and well being) .....	18
Table 5.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (cultural heritage) .....	21
Table 5.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (cultural heritage) .....	22
Table 6.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (marine ecology).....	25
Table 6.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (marine ecology).....	25
Table 7.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (economy) .....	30
Table 7.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (economy) .....	32
Table 8.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (geology, geomorphology and coastal processes) .....	35
Table 8.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (geology, geomorphology and coastal processes) .....	35
Table 9.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (landscape and seascape) .....	39
Table 9.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (landscape and seascape) .....	40
Table 10.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (water environment) .....	43
Table 10.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (water environment) .....	44



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. This report

This is Part 3 of the South Marine Plan Final Sustainability Appraisal report (SA report). This part of the report outlines the results of the assessment of the final South Marine Plan and reasonable alternatives. It also reports on the assessment of the draft plan that was undertaken in October 2015. This enables readers to see how the plan has evolved between the draft and final stages in terms of its sustainability effects. The other parts of the SA report are as follows:

- Part 1: Introduction and Methodology; and
- Part 2: Scoping information.

A Non-Technical Summary is also available.

All reports are available [here](#).

### 1.2. Format of this report

This report addresses the following:

- The reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (Section 2 of this report);
- The results of the assessment (effects of the plan objectives, alternative options, effects of the draft and final South Marine Plan and mitigation measures for each assessment topic as follows):
  - Communities, health and wellbeing (Section 4)
  - Cultural heritage (Section 5)
  - Marine ecology (Section 6)
  - Economy (Section 7)
  - Geology, geomorphology and coastal processes (Section 8)
  - Landscape and seascape (Section 9)
  - Water environment (Section 10)
- In addition to the topic based assessment above, details of a brief review of an early draft South Marine Plan have been included in Annex B. This review took place in July 2015 and provided a brief review of the document and provided recommendations of how to improve the sustainability performance of the draft South Marine Plan;
- Cumulative effects assessment; and
- Monitoring programme.

## 2. The Reasons for Selecting Alternatives

### 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this stage of the planning process is to identify reasonable alternative options for the South Marine Plan that can be tested. The SEA Regulations require that the SA report identifies the reasons for selecting the alternatives tested in light of the others available (SEA Regulations Schedule 2 (8)).

In SA practice this is usually understood as having two meanings:

1. Discuss why it was 'reasonable' to select the alternatives that were developed to be tested (this is outlined in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 below); and
2. Discuss why the preferred approach was selected in light of the SA of alternatives (this is set out in Section 2.4 below).

### 2.2 The alternatives developed

Three 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 as follows:

1. Option 1 – Balanced Option: A high strength option that includes the highest possible number of high-strength policies. To enable compatibility of high strength policies, some require clauses allowing an applicant to state the case for proceeding with a proposal even when it does not conform with a policy. There is no guarantee that if a case is stated, it will be successful. This is because the high-strength policies require a greater level of consideration of other policies than medium and low-strength policies do. This means that greater weight may be attached to any impacts identified. This should lead to a relatively greater degree of certainty that the intent of the policy and its desired outcome will be realised in most, but not all, cases.
2. Option 2 – Flexible Option: An option that looks to find the middle ground across objectives (and therefore contains primarily medium strength policies). This option most closely resembles the East Inshore and Offshore Marine plans, in terms of phrasing and strength of policies and in terms of the likelihood of the outcomes gained from the policies. As the strength of requirements in the policies are less than those in option 1, there is more chance that a case can be made to proceed with a proposal or activity even if it is not in line with a policy. Therefore, outcomes from the policies are less certain and there may be more scope for variation in how they are applied. This is also likely to give rise to greater uncertainty to any potential impacts and may make avoidance and mitigation more difficult.
3. 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. These primarily relate to:

- a. the protection of the environment (both for its intrinsic value, the ecosystem services it provides and to help sectors reliant upon it for some of their appeal, such as tourism and recreation),
- b. a number of sectors of very high economic or social importance, namely:
  - i. Tourism and recreation
  - ii. Ports
  - iii. Shipping
  - iv. Fishing
  - v. Aggregates

Policies under this option provide the highest degree of certainty of outcome for the sectors and topics above, by removing the opportunity to state the case for proceeding when not in line with the policy. In so doing, it means that other sectors and topics can only be compatible with the above sectors and topics through use of a lower-strength policy that places fewer requirements on the decision maker and/or applicant in its implementation. This option is therefore a mix of strengths of policy and involves a degree of trade-offs between sectors and topics.

### **2.3. The reasons for selecting the alternatives**

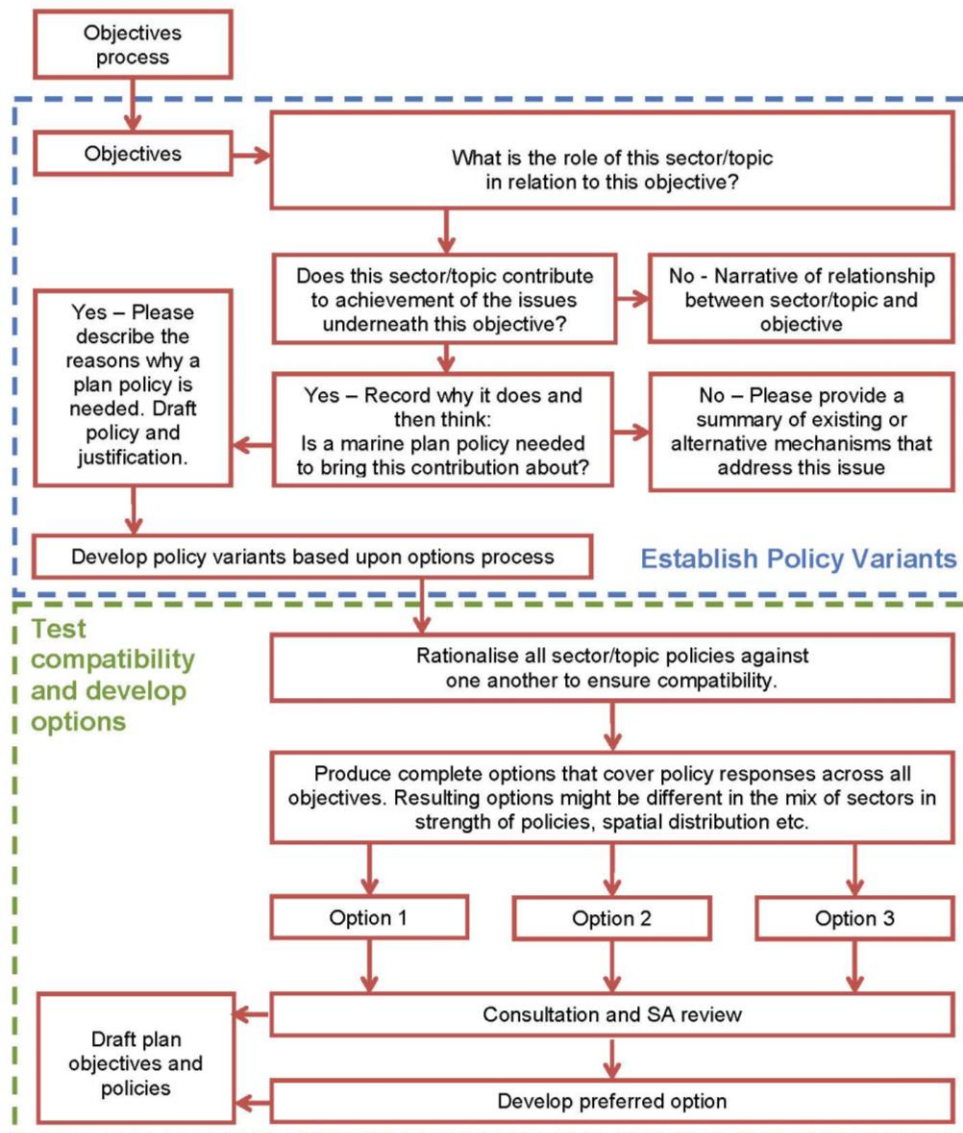
The options paper produced by the MMO<sup>1</sup> discusses the evolution of the alternative options and the reason for selecting the alternative options tested. Annex 2 of the MMO options report goes into detail regarding the different approaches to options development that have been considered by the 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 2.1. 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> Marine Management Organisation (February 2015): South Marine Plan Areas Options Report.

Figure 2.1: Methodology for devising policy options



Each policy then underwent a process of compatibility checking as part of phase 2 of this process in order to answer two questions:

- Would it be possible to make a decision in line with my policy variant as well as other policy variants developed for other sectors within the objective?
- Could a decision be made using this policy alongside others in the option?

The MMO options report sets out the results of this compatibility check – please see Annex 2. The outcome of this process was a simple indication of which policy variants:

- Could be used together for development of an option;

- Could be used providing conditions were in place (these were considered compatible on the assumption that conditions would be described in more detail in any final plan);
- Could not be used in the same option.

All the different policy variants under each objective were reviewed to ensure they responded to the core issues identified in the South Plan Analytical Report<sup>2</sup> and therefore were appropriate in terms of delivering the objective. Any gaps identified were filled at this point with development of new policy variants as necessary.

With policy variants confirmed and compatibility checked against each of the other sectors or topics under an objective, development of the constituent parts of options was complete. Three options were then designed, each delivering the objectives as a whole but distinct from one another in terms of how the different combinations of policies achieve this.

In identifying distinct options; the MMO applied the following characteristics in each case when selecting combinations of policy variants:

1. A high strength option, one that includes the highest possible number of high-strength policies but in so doing includes clauses in some policies, allowing an applicant to state the case for proceeding with a proposal even when it does not conform with a policy. There is no guarantee that if a case is stated, it will be successful, particularly as the high-strength policies require a greater level of consideration across all policies than for medium and low-strength policies, which means that greater weight may be attached to any impacts identified. This leads to a greater degree of certainty that the intent of the policy and its desired outcome are more likely to be realised in most, but not all, cases.
2. An option that looks to find the middle ground across objectives (and therefore contains primarily medium strength policies). This option most closely resembles the East Inshore and Offshore Marine plans, in terms of phrasing and strength of policies and in terms of the likelihood of the outcomes gained from the policies. Because the requirements in the policies are less strong, there is more chance that a case can be made to proceed with a proposal or activity even if it is not in line with a policy, therefore outcomes from the policies are less certain and there may be more scope for variation in how they are applied.
3. An option that seeks to be more prescriptive and looks to achieve more certain outcomes for issues that have been highlighted as particularly important for the South Marine Plan areas. These primarily relate to:
  - a. the protection of the environment (both for its intrinsic value, the ecosystem services it provides and to help sectors reliant upon it for some of their appeal, such as tourism and recreation),
  - b. a number of sectors of very high economic or social importance, namely:
    - i. Tourism and recreation
    - ii. Ports

---

<sup>2</sup> Marine Management Organisation (June 2014): South Inshore and South Offshore Marine Plan Areas: South Plan Area Analytical Report

- iii. Shipping
- iv. Fishing
- v. Aggregates

This option provides more certainty by removing in the policies for the sectors and topics above, the room for cases to be stated to go against a policy. This provides the highest degree of certainty that an outcome for a policy will be achieved for these sectors or topics. In so doing, it means that for other sectors and topics, they can only be compatible with the above sectors and topics through a lower-strength policy that allows for room for the policy to be discounted in a decision. This option is therefore a mix of strengths of policy and involves a degree of trade-offs between sectors and topics.

These options were developed using experience from engagement with stakeholders and knowledge of the issues relevant to the South Marine Plan areas. To illustrate this, option 3 takes those sectors and issues which are of primary importance to the future of the plan areas. This is based on evidence of economic and social value presented in the South Plan Analytical Report, plus assessment of the state of the environment of the plan areas and the importance of a healthy environment that is apparent in national and local policy as well as in the views of stakeholders. Option 2 represents a plan which is similar to the East Marine Plans and reflects the need for flexibility that is a response to the uncertainty attached to the predicted development of sectors and topics shown in the South Marine Plan areas futures analysis<sup>3</sup>. Option 1 represents the desire raised by some stakeholders to have a plan that required a greater level of consideration of the needs of other sectors and topics in decision-making that results in a greater level of certainty of outcome with a consequent loss of flexibility in decision-making.

The options were then built, policy by policy, from Objective 1 through to Objective 15, according to the three rationales above.

It is felt that this process is the most comprehensive one that could have been chosen and it has led to the identification of three options packages which could reasonably deliver the objectives.

## 2.4. 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 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

---

<sup>3</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140108121958/http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/evidence/1039.htm>

presented which have not already been considered so no further testing of alternatives has been undertaken.

## 2.5. The reason for choosing the final plan

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 – 3 the preferred option was a combination of the above. Therefore, summarised in Table 2.1 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.

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.

**Table 2.1: The reason for selecting the preferred approach**

Objective subject	Preferred Option	Justification
Climate Change	3	A stronger policy was preferred by attendees at the options workshops as well as being supported by the SA of options.
Marine Protected Areas	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.
Good Environmental and Good Ecological Status	3	The majority of respondents supported more prescriptive policies and welcomed the focus on MSFD and WFD.
Ecology and Ecosystem services	3	Respondents supported greater prescription in policies.
Disturbance	1	Favoured by respondents as a high strength policy.
Water Quality	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.
Displacement of Marine Activities and Access	1	Chosen as being a balance between too flexible and too prescriptive and was favoured by respondents in the options consultation.
Heritage Assets	3	Selected as the preferred option due to receiving the most positive responses from stakeholders and being supported by the SA.

Objective subject	Preferred Option	Justification
Seascape	1	Slightly more popular among respondents although this was only marginal.
Co-location	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.
Infrastructure	1	The most popular among respondents and was therefore selected. There were no further comments from respondents.
Regeneration and diversification of activities that improve socio-economic conditions	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.

## 3. Summary of Assessment Results

### 3.1. Introduction

Table 3.1 below presents a summary of the assessment results of each SA topic (results of the South Marine Plan objectives, results of the options assessment, results of the draft and the final South Marine Plan assessment).

The headline results of the assessment are:

- The final plan is not likely to have significant negative effects or uncertain effects on the SA objectives. This is because the South Marine Plan is a regional scale strategic plan which does not seek to address site or project-specific details. The large majority of the policies in the plan are generic or criteria-based policies without a clear spatial dimension and therefore the plan cannot directly result in the development of new projects;
- There are significant positive effects recorded in relation to the economy and the sectors that are represented in the south marine plan area. The plan performs positively providing support to a broad range of sectors. The plan in particular will have a significant positive effect in relation to the following sectors: aggregates, ports and shipping, oil and gas, fisheries and marine manufacturing and defence;
- With regard to social and environmental effects, the plan performs less strongly and generally records a score of minor positive against most of the SA sub topics (with some additional minor negative effects in relation to ecology and landscape);
- The plan has been strengthened from the draft plan in relation to the environment as the uncertain effect that was found in the draft plan assessment in relation to the policies supporting certain types of infrastructure development, has now been removed. 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;
- The uncertain effect on heritage has now also been removed. The policy now applies to all forms of heritage assets and also centres on the effect of proposals on the significance of heritage assets; and
- With regard to social effects, one significant positive effect was found in relation to the plan's effect on fishing communities. This was related to the fact that the plan included several policies aimed at protecting the fishing industry and recreational fishing activities including strong policies aimed at protecting feeding grounds, migration routes and spawning areas, protecting fishing activity.

**Table 3.1: Summary of the assessment**

<b>SA Topic</b>	<b>Results of the draft South Marine Plan assessment</b>	<b>Results of the final South Marine Plan assessment</b>
Communities, health and wellbeing	<p>No major / significant negative effects or uncertain effects recorded.</p> <p>In general, the plan recorded a score of minor positive against most SA sub topics including health, coastal communities and tourism focused communities.</p> <p>One major/significant positive effect was found in relation to the plan's effect on fishing communities. This was related to the fact that the plan included several policies aimed at protecting the fishing industry and recreational fishing activities including strong policies aimed at protecting feeding grounds, migration routes and spawning areas, protecting fishing activity.</p>	<p>No major / significant negative effects or uncertain effects recorded.</p> <p>In general, the plan recorded a score of minor positive against most SA sub topics including health, coastal communities and tourism focused communities.</p> <p>One major/significant positive effect was found in relation to the plan's effect on fishing communities. This was related to the fact that the plan included several policies aimed at protecting the fishing industry and recreational fishing activities including strong policies aimed at protecting feeding grounds, migration routes and spawning areas, protecting fishing activity.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>No major / significant negative effects or major /significant positive effects.</p> <p>The Draft South Marine Plan recorded an uncertain score against both of the sub topics. This was related to the fact that 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'. In addition, the draft plan appears not to offer equivalent provision for identifying and conserving heritage assets relative to current practice.</p> <p>Several policies are likely to have a negative effect on proposals for licensable archaeological activities, conversely there are a number of policies that could have a positive effect on marine heritage assets resulting in an overall uncertain score.</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 from heritage assets.</p>



SA Topic	Results of the draft South Marine Plan assessment	Results of the final South Marine Plan assessment
Marine ecology	<p>The assessment found no major / significant negative effects or major / significant positive effects.</p> <p>One uncertain effect was found related to seabed habitats / benthos. 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>In general, the plan recorded mixed scores of minor positive and minor negative against SA sub topics.</p>	<p>The assessment found no major / significant negative effects or major / significant positive effects.</p> <p>The uncertain effect that was found in the draft plan assessment in relation to the policies supporting certain types of infrastructure development, has now been removed. There remains an emphasis on priority for certain types of development (specifically S-OG-1). However, clarity has been provided and 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. There is also 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.</p> <p>A small change has been made to Policy S-MPA3. The policy previously stated that “Where statutory advice states that a marine protected area site condition is deteriorating, or that features are moving or changing due to climate change, a suitable boundary change will be supported to ensure continued protection of the site and coherence of the overall network.” The policy has been changed from “will be supported” to “should be considered”. It is not felt that this small change in emphasis changes the overall effect of the plan on conservation sites as the policy aim remains the same in that it aims to enable adaptive management to help mitigate the loss of features within sites, and promote adaptation to climate change.</p> <p>In general, the plan recorded mixed scores of minor positive and minor negative against SA sub topics.</p>

SA Topic	Results of the draft South Marine Plan assessment	Results of the final South Marine Plan assessment
Economy	<p>No major / significant negative effects recorded.</p> <p>In general, the plan recorded a score of minor or major positive against most SA sub topics.</p> <p>Significant positive effects were recorded against sub topics of aggregates, ports and shipping, oil and gas, fisheries and marine manufacturing and defence.</p> <p>The sub topics of Nuclear and Carbon Capture and storage were not scored against as the draft South Marine Plan do not include any policies which specifically support this sector.</p>	<p><b><u>The assessment of the final plan is unchanged from the draft plan stage.</u></b></p> <p>No major / significant negative effects recorded.</p> <p>In general, the plan recorded a score of minor or major positive against most SA sub topics.</p> <p>Significant positive effects were recorded against sub topics of aggregates, ports and shipping, oil and gas, fisheries and marine manufacturing and defence.</p> <p>The sub topics of Nuclear and Carbon Capture and storage were not scored against as the draft South Marine Plan do not include any policies which specifically support this sector.</p>
Geology, geomorphology and coastal processes	<p>The assessment found no major / significant negative effects, major / significant positive effects or uncertain effects.</p> <p>The Draft South Marine Plan recorded a minor positive against both SA subtopics: seabed substrates and topography and coastal features and processes. This related to the provision of policies in the draft plan which will provide a number of mechanisms to protect and enhance the seabed and coastal features and processes.</p>	<p><b><u>The assessment of the final plan is unchanged from the draft plan stage.</u></b></p> <p>The assessment found no major / significant negative effects, major / significant positive effects or uncertain effects.</p> <p>The final South Marine Plan recorded a minor positive against both SA subtopics: seabed substrates and topography and coastal features and processes. This related to the provision of policies in the draft plan which will provide a number of mechanisms to protect and enhance the seabed and coastal features and processes. In addition, the final plan has included stronger wording under High Level Objective 12 (space for nature) which clarifies the role seabed features play in relation to habitats.</p>

SA Topic	Results of the draft South Marine Plan assessment	Results of the final South Marine Plan assessment
Landscape and seascape	<p>No major / significant negative effects or major / significant positive effects recorded.</p> <p>In general, the plan recorded mixed scores of minor positive and minor negative against SA sub topics. One uncertain effect was recorded against the statutory and non-statutory landscape designation sub topic due to lack of clarity between the policy and the supporting text.</p>	<p>No major / significant negative effects or major / significant positive effects recorded.</p> <p>In general, the plan recorded mixed scores of minor positive and minor negative against SA sub topics. A neutral effect was recorded against the statutory and non-statutory landscape designation sub topic. It is considered that authorities will ensure that landscapes are protected through land use plans and environmental impact assessment. Clarity has been provided in Box 3 within the Technical Annex.</p>

SA Topic	Results of the draft South Marine Plan assessment	Results of the final South Marine Plan assessment
Water environment	<p>No major / significant negative effects recorded.</p> <p>In general, the plan recorded a score of minor positive against SA topics, including tides and currents, water temperature and salinity and eutrophication.</p> <p>One uncertain effect was recorded against the pollution and water quality sub topic due to lack of clarity regarding the policies supporting certain types of development.</p> <p>One major/significant positive effect was recorded for the marine litter sub topic.</p>	<p>No major / significant negative effects recorded.</p> <p>In general, the plan recorded a score of minor positive against SA topics, including tides and currents, water temperature and salinity and eutrophication.</p> <p>The uncertain effect that was found in the draft plan assessment in relation to the policies supporting certain types of infrastructure development, has now been removed. There remains an emphasis on priority for certain types of development (specifically S-OG-1). However, clarity has been provided and 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. There is also 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.</p> <p>The assessment with regard to marine litter 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>

## **4. Results of the Assessment – Communities, Health and Wellbeing**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This section of the report addresses the performance of the South Marine Plan in relation to communities, health and well-being. It outlines:

- The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives;
- The results of the options assessment;
- Results of the draft and final South Marine Plan assessment, the mitigation measures suggested and the response of the MMO.

### **4.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives**

The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives is shown in Annex A. The assessment found that on the whole the South Marine Plan objectives were consistent with the SA objectives. There were no recommendations made in relation to the communities, health and wellbeing topic.

Please see the assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan for more details of how the South Marine Plan effect on communities, health and wellbeing has been addressed.

### **4.3. Results of the options assessment**

The assessment of the alternative options is shown in Annex C (Table C.1). Annex D shows the recommendations that were made at the options stage and the MMO's response to this.

The SA consultants assessed the three options against the following sub topics:

- Health and wider determinants of health;
- Coastal communities;
- Fishing communities; and
- Tourism focused communities.

The assessment found no major / significant negative effects or uncertain effects. In general, the options had a score of minor positive against most of the SA sub topics.

The options performed most positively against the fishing communities sub topic as option 1 and 3 were found likely to have a major / significant positive effect on fishing communities. The options included several policies aimed at protecting the fishing industry and recreational fishing activities including strong policies aimed at protecting feeding grounds, migration routes and spawning areas, reducing the effects of spoil disposal, protecting fishing activity.

#### 4.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessments

The detailed assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan is shown in Annex C (Table C.1). For each sustainability issue, a row is included to record the effects of the options, the draft plan, the final plan and suggested mitigation measures. These are measures outlined to prevent, reduce or offset negative effects. In addition, any uncertain effects should have mitigation suggested in order to reduce uncertainty and the potential for this to give rise to a significant negative effect.

The purpose of the assessment at the final plan stage is two-fold:

- To check that mitigation measures suggested at the draft plan assessment stage have been taken on board<sup>4</sup>; and
- To identify if any changes to the final plan will have negative / uncertain effects.

Therefore, the assessment has been presented in two different ways:

- Table 4.1 presents a summary of the significant and uncertain effects identified at the draft plan stage, the mitigation measures recommended at the draft plan stage, any changes made to the final plan that will help to mitigate these effects and finally, clarifies the residual effects of the final South Marine Plan; and
- Table 4.2 identifies if changes to the final plan will have significant or uncertain effects.

---

<sup>4</sup> Please note that enhancement measures suggested for other effects can be found in the assessment matrices.

**Table 4.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (communities, health and well-being)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	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>	NA	NA. Mitigation measures were not required	Major / significant positive effect on fishing communities

**Table 4.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (communities, health and well-being)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the final plan stage	Mitigation measures identified
None	NA



## **5. Results of the Assessment – Cultural Heritage**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This section of the report addresses the performance of the South Marine Plan in relation to cultural heritage. It outlines:

- The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives;
- The results of the options assessment;
- Results of the draft and final South Marine Plan assessment, the mitigation measures suggested and the response of the MMO.

### **5.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives**

The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives is shown in Annex A. The assessment found that on the whole the South Marine Plan objectives were consistent with the SA objectives. There were no recommendations made in relation to the cultural heritage topic.

Please see the assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan for more details of how the South Marine Plan effect on cultural heritage has been addressed.

### **5.3. Results of the options assessment**

The assessment of the alternative options is shown in Annex C (Table C.2). Annex D shows the recommendations that were made at the options stage and the MMO's response to this.

The SA team assessed the three options against the following sub topics:

- Coastal assets
- Marine assets

The assessment found no major / significant negative effects or major / significant positive effects. All of the options recorded an uncertain score against both of the sub topics.

With regard to both coastal and marine heritage assets, the effect was uncertain because of a lack of clarity at the options stage regarding whether draft South Marine Plan have influence over the effects on designated assets.

### **5.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessments**

The detailed assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan is shown in Annex C (Table C.2). For each sustainability issue, a row is included to record the effects of the options, the draft plan, the final plan and suggested mitigation measures. These are measures outlined to prevent, reduce or offset negative effects. In addition, any

uncertain effects should have mitigation suggested in order to reduce uncertainty and the potential for this to give rise to a significant negative effect.

The purpose of the assessment at the final plan stage is two-fold:

- To check that mitigation measures suggested at the draft plan assessment stage have been taken on board<sup>5</sup>; and
- To identify if any changes to the final plan will have negative / uncertain effects.

Therefore, the assessment has been presented in two different ways:

- Table 5.1 presents a summary of the significant and uncertain effects identified at the draft plan stage, the mitigation measures recommended at the draft plan stage, any changes made to the final plan that will help to mitigate these effects and finally, clarifies the residual effects of the final South Marine Plan; and
- Table 5.2 identifies if changes to the final plan will have significant or uncertain effects.

---

<sup>5</sup> Please note that enhancement measures suggested for other effects can be found in the assessment matrices.

**Table 5.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (cultural heritage)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Changes made to the final plan	Residual effect
<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 Options 1-3 considered previously and the way that other receptors are treated in the draft South Marine Plan</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>The policy has been reworded so that it applies to all heritage assets, not just ‘newly-discovered heritage assets’ and ‘non-designated assets that are yet to be assessed for designation’.</p> <p>The policy has been reworded to refer to proposals that ‘may compromise or harm elements contributing to the significance of heritage assets’.</p> <p>The policy has been reworded to include a presumption against harm to heritage assets unless the harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.</p>	<p>Neutral effect on cultural heritage</p>

**Table 5.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (cultural heritage)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the final plan stage	Mitigation measures identified
None identified	NA

## **6. Results of the Assessment – Marine Ecology**

### **6.1. Introduction**

This section of the report addresses the performance of the South Marine Plan in relation to marine ecology. It outlines:

- The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives;
- The results of the options assessment;
- Results of the draft and final South Marine Plan assessment, the mitigation measures suggested and the response of the MMO.

### **6.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives**

The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives is shown in Annex A. The assessment found that on the whole the South Marine Plan objectives were consistent with the SA objectives. There were no recommendations made in relation to this topic.

Please see the assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan for more details of how the South Marine Plan effect on marine ecology has been addressed.

### **6.3. Results of the options assessment**

The assessment of the alternative options is shown in Annex C (Table C.3). Annex D shows the recommendations that were made at the options stage and the MMO's response to this.

The SA team assessed the three options against the following sub topics:

- Plankton
- Seabed habitats/Benthos
- Fish and Shellfish
- Cephalopods
- Birds
- Marine mammals
- Conservation sites

The assessment found no major / significant negative effects, major / significant positive effects or uncertain effects. All of the options were found to have a score of minor positive against all of the SA sub topics.

## 6.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment

The detailed assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan is shown in Annex C (Table C.3). For each sustainability issue, a row is included to record the effects of the options, the draft plan, the final plan and suggested mitigation measures. These are measures outlined to prevent, reduce or offset negative effects. In addition, any uncertain effects should have mitigation suggested in order to reduce uncertainty and the potential for this to give rise to a significant negative effect.

The purpose of the assessment at the final plan stage is two-fold:

- To check that mitigation measures suggested at the draft plan assessment stage have been taken on board<sup>6</sup>; and
- To identify if any changes to the final plan will have negative / uncertain effects.

Therefore, the assessment has been presented in two different ways:

- Table 6.1 presents a summary of the significant and uncertain effects identified at the draft plan stage, the mitigation measures recommended at the draft plan stage, any changes made to the final plan that will help to mitigate these effects and finally, clarifies the residual effects of the final South Marine Plan; and
- Table 6.2 identifies if changes to the final plan will have significant or uncertain effects.

---

<sup>6</sup> Please note that enhancement measures suggested for other effects can be found in the assessment matrices.

**Table 6.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (marine ecology)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Changes made to the final plan	Residual effect
<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>	<p>Neutral effect on marine ecology</p>

**Table 6.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (marine ecology)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the final plan stage	Mitigation measures identified

<b>Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the final plan stage</b>	<b>Mitigation measures identified</b>
None identified	NA



## 7. Results of the Assessment – Economy

### 7.1. Introduction

This section of the report addresses the performance of the South Marine Plan in relation to the economy. It outlines:

- The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives;
- The results of the options assessment;
- Results of the draft and final South Marine Plan assessment, the mitigation measures suggested and the response of the MMO.

### 7.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives

The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives is shown in Annex A. The assessment found that on the whole the South Marine Plan objectives were consistent with the SA objectives. There were no recommendations made in relation to this topic.

Please see the assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan for more details of how the South Marine Plan effect on economy has been addressed.

### 7.3. Results of the options assessment

The assessment of the alternative options is shown in Annex C (Table C.4). Annex D shows the recommendations that were made at the options stage and the MMO's response to this.

The SA consultants assessed the three options against the following sub topics:

#### Economy activity and GVA

- Ports and shipping
- Fisheries
- Leisure (please note this includes recreation)
- Tourism
- Marine manufacturing and defence<sup>7</sup>

#### Other marine activities

- Aggregates
- Oil and gas
- Renewables
- Carbon capture and storage
- Nuclear
- Subsea cabling<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> This sub-topic has been altered from 'Marine industry' more accurately describe the coverage of this sub-topic.

## Coastal typologies

No major / significant negative effects were recorded. The options were strongly positive in most regards. The assessment found:

- Options 1 and 3 have potential major / significant positive effects for ports and shipping due to strong policies which protect shipping routes, ports and harbours and support development of skills;
- Options 1 and 3 have potential major / significant positive effects for fisheries due to strong policies which support the diversification of the fishing industry and enhance fishing industry resilience and support development of skills.
- Options 1 and 3 have potential major / significant positive effects for leisure due to strong policies which protect recreational boating routes, policies supporting tourism and recreation proposals and protection of recreation activities during development.
- Option 3 has potential major / significant positive effects for tourism due to strong policies which protect passenger vessel routes, provide protection for the environment and policies directly supporting tourism
- Options 1 and 3 have potential major / significant positive effects for marine manufacturing and defence 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
- All of the options have potential major / significant positive effects for aggregates 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.
- All of the options have a potential uncertain impact on oil and gas as the options did not include any reference to oil and gas.
- Option 1 has potential major / significant positive effects for renewables due to strong policies which aim to increase social benefits of wind and tidal developments, protect the tidal stream resource and support the development of the skills base in local communities.
- Option 1 has potential major / significant positive effects for carbon capture and storage due to a strong policy which offers protection for areas of potential use for Carbon Capture and Storage, requiring compatibility and the minimisation and mitigation of potential effects.
- All of the options have an uncertain impact on the nuclear industry as the options did not include any reference to the nuclear industry.
- Option 3 has potential major / significant positive effects for subsea cabling due to strong policies which require the avoidance of landfall sites and support the development of the skills base.
- All of the options have a potential uncertain impact on coastal typologies as the options did not include any reference to coastal typologies.

Apart from those effects listed above the majority of the effects recorded were minor positive. There was one instance of a minor negative effect recorded.

---

<sup>8</sup> This sub-topic has been altered from 'Subsea communications' to reflect the fact that not all sub-sea cables relate to communications e.g. energy infrastructure.

## 7.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment

The detailed assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan is shown in Annex C (Table C.4). For each sustainability issue, a row is included to record the effects of the options, the draft plan, the final plan and suggested mitigation measures. These are measures outlined to prevent, reduce or offset negative effects. In addition, any uncertain effects should have mitigation suggested in order to reduce uncertainty and the potential for this to give rise to a significant negative effect.

The purpose of the assessment at the final plan stage is two-fold:

- To check that mitigation measures suggested at the draft plan assessment stage have been taken on board<sup>9</sup>; and
- To identify if any changes to the final plan will have negative / uncertain effects.

Therefore, the assessment has been presented in two different ways:

- Table 7.1 presents a summary of the significant and uncertain effects identified at the draft plan stage, the mitigation measures recommended at the draft plan stage, any changes made to the final plan that will help to mitigate these effects and finally, clarifies the residual effects of the final South Marine Plan; and
- Table 7.2 identifies if changes to the final plan will have significant or uncertain effects.

---

<sup>9</sup> Please note that enhancement measures suggested for other effects can be found in the assessment matrices.

**Table 7.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (economy)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Changes made to the final plan	Residual effect
<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. Mitigation measures were not required	Major / significant positive effect on ports
<p>Major / significant positive effect on fisheries industry</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. Mitigation measures were not required	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. Mitigation measures were not required	Major / significant positive effect on marine manufacturing and defence
<p>Major / significant positive effect on aggregates</p>	NA	NA. Mitigation measures were not required	Major / significant positive effect on aggregates

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Changes made to the final plan	Residual effect
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>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. Mitigation measures were not required	Major / significant positive effect on oil and gas

**Table 7.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (economy)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the final plan stage	Mitigation measures identified
None	NA

## **8. Results of the Assessment – Geology, Geomorphology and Coastal Processes**

### **8.1. Introduction**

This section of the report addresses the performance of the South Marine Plan in relation to geology, geomorphology and coastal processes. It outlines:

- The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives;
- The results of the options assessment;
- Results of the draft and final South Marine Plan assessment, the mitigation measures suggested and the response of the MMO.

### **8.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives**

The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives is shown in Annex A. The assessment found that on the whole the South Marine Plan objectives were consistent with the SA objectives. There were no recommendations made in relation to this topic.

Please see the assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan for more details of how the South Marine Plan effect on geology, geomorphology and coastal processes has been addressed.

### **8.3. Results of the options assessment**

The assessment of the alternative options is shown in Annex C (Table C.5). Annex D shows the recommendations that were made at the options stage and the MMO's response to this.

The SA consultants assessed the three options against the following sub topics:

- Seabed substrates and topography
- Coastal features and processes

The assessment found no major / significant negative effects or uncertain effects. Options 1 and 3 have a potential minor positive impact against both of the SA sub topics and Option 2 scored minor negative. This was because Option 2 provided less protection for Marine Protected Areas and does not provide general protection from development proposals in relation to geomorphology so is weaker than Option 1 and Option 3 in this regard.

### **8.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment**

The detailed assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan is shown in Annex C (Table C.5). For each sustainability issue, a row is included to record the effects of the options, the draft plan, the final plan and suggested mitigation measures. These

are measures outlined to prevent, reduce or offset negative effects. In addition, any uncertain effects should have mitigation suggested in order to reduce uncertainty and the potential for this to give rise to a significant negative effect.

The purpose of the assessment at the final plan stage is two-fold:

- To check that mitigation measures suggested at the draft plan assessment stage have been taken on board<sup>10</sup>; and
- To identify if any changes to the final plan will have negative / uncertain effects.

Therefore, the assessment has been presented in two different ways:

- Table 8.1 presents a summary of the significant and uncertain effects identified at the draft plan stage, the mitigation measures recommended at the draft plan stage, any changes made to the final plan that will help to mitigate these effects and finally, clarifies the residual effects of the final South Marine Plan; and
- Table 8.2 identifies if changes to the final plan will have significant or uncertain effects.

---

<sup>10</sup> Please note that enhancement measures suggested for other effects can be found in the assessment matrices.



**Table 8.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (geology, geomorphology and coastal processes)**

<b>Table 8.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (geology, geomorphology and coastal processes)</b>			
<b>Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage</b>	<b>Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage</b>	<b>Changes made to the final plan</b>	<b>Residual effect</b>
None	NA	Some strengthening of wording under High Level Objective 12 (space for nature) clarifies the role seabed features play in relation to habitats. However, no relevant changes to policy wording has been made that directly or significantly affects geology, geomorphology or coastal processes.	None

**Table 8.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (geology, geomorphology and coastal processes)**

<b>Table 8.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (geology, geomorphology and coastal processes)</b>	
<b>Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the final plan stage</b>	<b>Mitigation measures identified</b>
None.  Geology, geomorphology and coastal processes are predominantly considered under high level objective 12 (Space for nature). Whilst some additional reference to habitats (e.g. rocky reefs, peat and clay exposures, chalk beds etc.) is made in the final plan that directly references geodiversity, and its ability to regulate biodiversity, no potential significant or uncertain effects have been	No further mitigation has been identified.

**Table 8.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (geology, geomorphology and coastal processes)**

<b>Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the final plan stage</b>	<b>Mitigation measures identified</b>
identified through changes to policies.	

## **9. Results of the Assessment – Landscape and Seascape**

### **9.1. Introduction**

This section of the report addresses the performance of the South Marine Plan in relation to landscape and seascape. It outlines:

- The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives;
- The results of the options assessment;
- Results of the draft and final South Marine Plan assessment, the mitigation measures suggested and the response of the MMO.

### **9.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives**

The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives is shown in Annex A. The assessment found that on the whole the South Marine Plan objectives were consistent with the SA objectives. However, the analysis found that aspects of landscape are not addressed in any of the objectives or policies.

Please see the assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan for more details of how the South Marine Plan effect on landscape and seascape has been addressed.

### **9.3. Results of the options assessment**

The assessment of the alternative options is shown in Annex C (Table C.6). Annex D shows the recommendations that were made at the options stage and the MMO's response to this.

The SA consultants assessed the three options against the following sub topics:

- Statutory and non-statutory landscape designations
- Wider landscape and seascape character

The assessment found no major / significant negative effects or uncertain effects. All of the options will have a neutral effect against statutory and non-statutory landscape designations and all of the options could potentially have some minor negative and some minor positive effects on wider landscape and seascape character.

### **9.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment**

The detailed assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan is shown in Annex C (Table C.6). For each sustainability issue, a row is included to record the effects of the options, the draft plan, the final plan and suggested mitigation measures. These are measures outlined to prevent, reduce or offset negative effects. In addition, any uncertain effects should have mitigation suggested in order to reduce uncertainty and the potential for this to give rise to a significant negative effect.

The purpose of the assessment at the final plan stage is two-fold:

- To check that mitigation measures suggested at the draft plan assessment stage have been taken on board<sup>11</sup>; and
- To identify if any changes to the final plan will have negative / uncertain effects.

Therefore, the assessment has been presented in two different ways:

- Table 9.1 presents a summary of the significant and uncertain effects identified at the draft plan stage, the mitigation measures recommended at the draft plan stage, any changes made to the final plan that will help to mitigate these effects and finally, clarifies the residual effects of the final South Marine Plan; and
- Table 9.2 identifies if changes to the final plan will have significant or uncertain effects.

---

<sup>11</sup> Please note that enhancement measures suggested for other effects can be found in the assessment matrices.

**Table 9.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (landscape and seascape)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	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 landscape and seascape</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, clarity has been provided and 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</p>	<p>Neutral effect on landscape and seascape</p>

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Changes made to the final plan	Residual effect
		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.	

**Table 9.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (landscape and seascape)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the final plan stage	Mitigation measures identified
None	N/A

## **10. Results of the Assessment – Water**

### **10.1. Introduction**

This section of the report addresses the performance of the South Marine Plan in relation to water. It outlines:

- The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives;
- The results of the options assessment;
- Results of the draft and final South Marine Plan assessment, the mitigation measures suggested and the response of the MMO.

### **10.2. Results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives**

The results of the assessment of the South Marine Plan objectives is shown in Annex A. The assessment found that on the whole the South Marine Plan objectives were consistent with the SA objectives.

Please see the assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan for more details of how the South Marine Plan effect on water has been addressed.

### **10.3. Results of the options assessment**

The assessment of the alternative options is shown in Annex C (Table C.7). Annex D shows the recommendations that were made at the options stage and the MMO's response to this.

The SA consultants assessed the three options against the following sub topics:

- Tides and currents
- Water temperature and salinity
- Pollution and water quality
- Eutrophication
- Contaminants
- Marine litter

The assessment found no major / significant negative effects or uncertain effects.

Option 1 and 3 have potential major / significant positive effects for contamination due to strong policies which aim to improve estuarine water quality and turbidity.

Option 1 and 3 have potential major / significant positive effects for marine litter due to strong policies in relation to the removal of marine litter.

## 10.4. Results of the Draft and Final South Marine Plan assessment

The detailed assessment of the draft and final South Marine Plan is shown in Annex C (Table C.7). For each sustainability issue, a row is included to record the effects of the options, the draft plan, the final plan and suggested mitigation measures. These are measures outlined to prevent, reduce or offset negative effects. In addition, any uncertain effects should have mitigation suggested in order to reduce uncertainty and the potential for this to give rise to a significant negative effect.

The purpose of the assessment at the final plan stage is two-fold:

- To check that mitigation measures suggested at the draft plan assessment stage have been taken on board<sup>12</sup>; and
- To identify if any changes to the final plan will have negative / uncertain effects.

Therefore, the assessment has been presented in two different ways:

- Table 10.1 presents a summary of the significant and uncertain effects identified at the draft plan stage, the mitigation measures recommended at the draft plan stage, any changes made to the final plan that will help to mitigate these effects and finally, clarifies the residual effects of the final South Marine Plan; and
- Table 10.2 identifies if changes to the final plan will have significant or uncertain effects.

---

<sup>12</sup> Please note that enhancement measures suggested for other effects can be found in the assessment matrices.



**Table 10.1: Significant and uncertain effects of the draft plan and residual effects at the final plan stage (water environment)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	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</p>	<p>Minor positive effects on marine litter</p>

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the draft plan stage	Mitigation measures identified at the draft plan stage	Changes made to the final plan	Residual effect
		influence marine litter (as the majority of litter originates on land).	

**Table 10.2: Significant and uncertain effects of other changes to the final plan (water environment)**

Potential significant / uncertain effect identified at the final plan stage	Mitigation measures identified
None	NA

## 11. Cumulative Effects Assessment

### 11.1. Introduction

The SEA Regulations require an assessment of cumulative effects. Cumulative effects arise where the effects of different elements of the draft South Marine Plan will have a combined significant effect or the draft South Marine Plan will have a cumulative effect on a receptor in combination with other plans and programmes. A cumulative effects assessment typically includes:

- Consideration of how different aspects of the draft South Marine Plan interact to cause cumulative effects; and
- How the draft South Marine Plan can cause cumulative effects in association with other programmes, plans, policies and projects.

The SA of the South Marine Plan considers the effects of the plan as a whole against each SA issue rather than individual policies assessed and therefore it is considered that this approach picks up the total (or cumulative effect) of the South Marine Plan as far as it is possible to do so for a plan that is not spatially detailed.

For the second aspect – cumulative effects in association with other programmes, plans, policies and projects, the SA scoping report (Section 2 of this SA report) outlines in full the plans, programmes and projects that are relevant to the South Marine Plan areas and Section 11.2 some conclusions are drawn based on broad consideration of these plans and programmes. Please note that because of the high level strategic nature of the plan a quantitative cumulative effects assessment is not possible, and this is explained in Section 11.2 below.

### 11.2. Cumulative effects – conclusions

The significance of cumulative effects resulting from a range of activities, or multiple incidences of one activity, may vary based on factors such as the nature of the projects proposed and the sensitivity of the receiving communities and environment. The large majority of the policies in the South Marine Plan are generic or criteria-based policies without a clear spatial dimension. It is therefore difficult to assess the extent to which the implementation of these policies might conflict with other existing economic, social or environmental policies other than at a high level as this will substantially be determined by the spatial locations where the marine policies are given effect. The policies in the South Marine Plan do not create a presumption in favour of development or allocate space for activities in the way that land-use plans can, instead they highlight key resource areas and support certain activities and co-location or co-existence where possible. In view of the above, and as these are amongst the first marine plans to ever be produced, it is unclear as to the extent of influence they will have on the implementation of marine activities compared to the situation without them. This is why monitoring of the implementation is vital so that information can be gathered to benefit future plans and their ongoing reviews. It is also, therefore, important to recognise these positive interactions and synergies with the existing framework of plans, policies and laws for the marine area.

The South Marine Plan is very clear that the acceptability of any development needs to be considered against the policies as a whole and application for development within the marine area will need to consider the cumulative effects of a proposed project in association with other proposed projects. This information is considered by a regulatory authority when reaching a consenting decision. The policies in the plan provide a wide range of community and environmental considerations which should, to an extent, serve to limit the impacts of individual projects.

It is not predicted that the policies could potentially create conflict with existing UK environmental and community policies and generate adverse effects, as they reflect the existing policy and legislation and Marine Plans are additional to existing legislation. In terms of effects on adjacent state territories due to activities within the South Marine Plan areas, these are likely to be less than those within UK waters. Given the existing range of control mechanisms it is not anticipated that potential transboundary effects would be significant.

## 12. 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.