



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Consultation on proposals for the third tranche of Marine Conservation Zones

Summary of responses

May 2019



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

MPA Team
Defra
Seacole Building, 1st floor
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

PB 14562

www.gov.uk/defra

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Part A – Introduction and overview

Introduction

1. The UK has a large marine area rich in marine life and natural resources. Our seas are home to some of the most diverse sea life in the world, with a wide variety of underwater ecosystems. They also provide us with a variety of important goods and services.
2. There are significant pressures on the marine environment from human activities that cause damage to marine ecosystems. Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), together with other types of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) provide vital protection for marine species and habitats. This third tranche of MCZs fulfils a government commitment to form a Blue Belt of protection around our coasts. These new sites are also a key element of an ambitious programme to protect and enhance the marine environment while supporting sustainable use of its resources, and will help to achieve the government's vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas.
3. This document provides a summary of the responses that relate to the 41 sites proposed for designation in the public consultation on the third tranche of MCZs, as well as to the additional features we proposed to add to 12 existing sites. The consultation ran from 8th June to 20th July 2018. There was a high level of interest in the consultation, with over 48,500 responses received, 98% of which were from 3 organised campaigns leaving 964 individual responses. The aim of this document is to provide a broad summary of these responses, respond to the main issues raised, and detail the decisions taken on each site.
4. The summaries of consultation responses that follow highlight the main issues raised but are not an exhaustive commentary on every response received. However, all responses were considered when making final decisions.
5. Of the 41 sites proposed, all 41 sites and additional features are being designated as of May 31st 2019. Figure 1 shows the location of these sites. Figure 2 shows the location of all MCZs designated to date.
6. To see a list of all sites and features designated in this tranche, please see Annexe A and B.

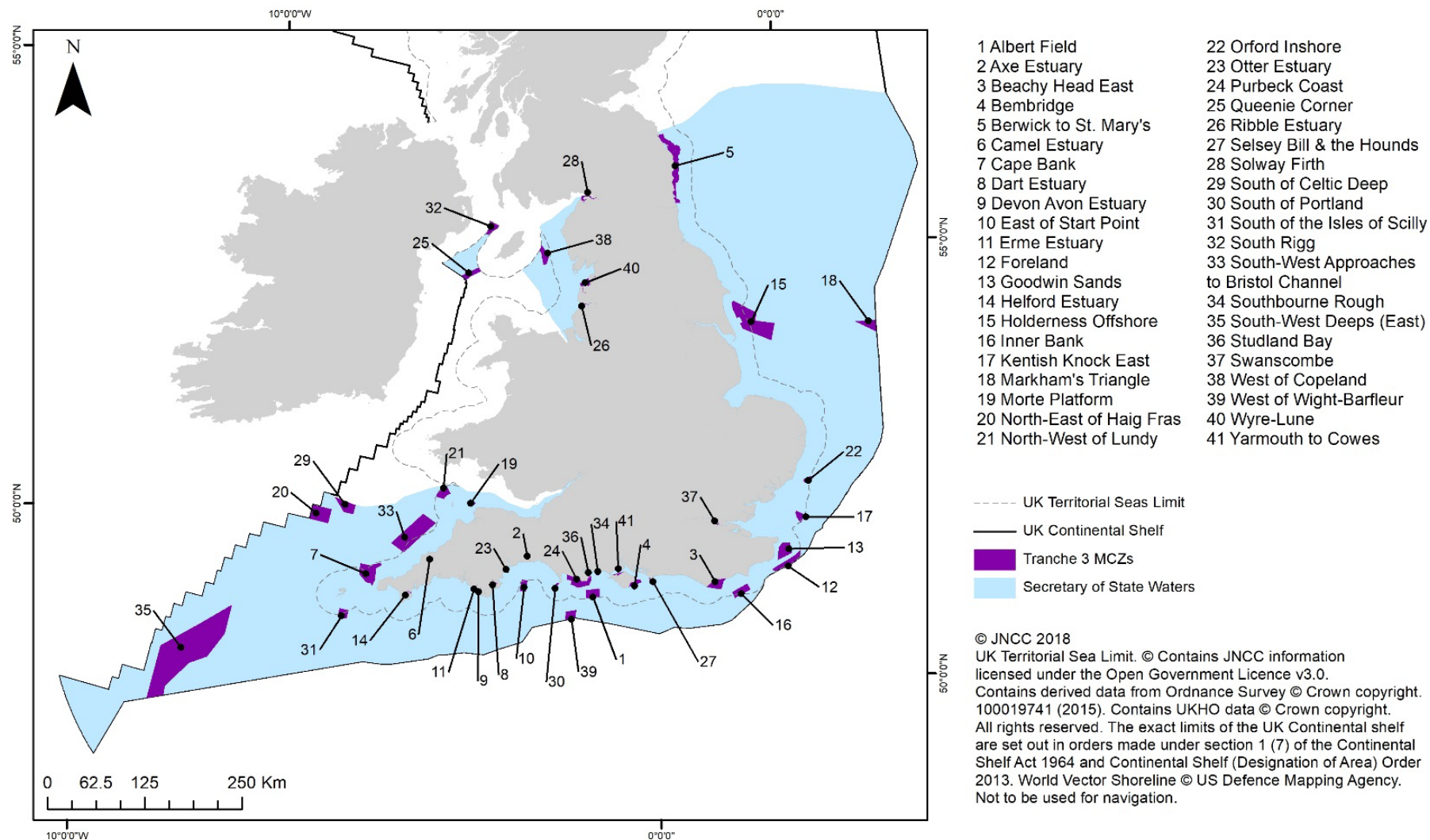


Figure 1 - MCZs being designated in the third tranche of MCZs

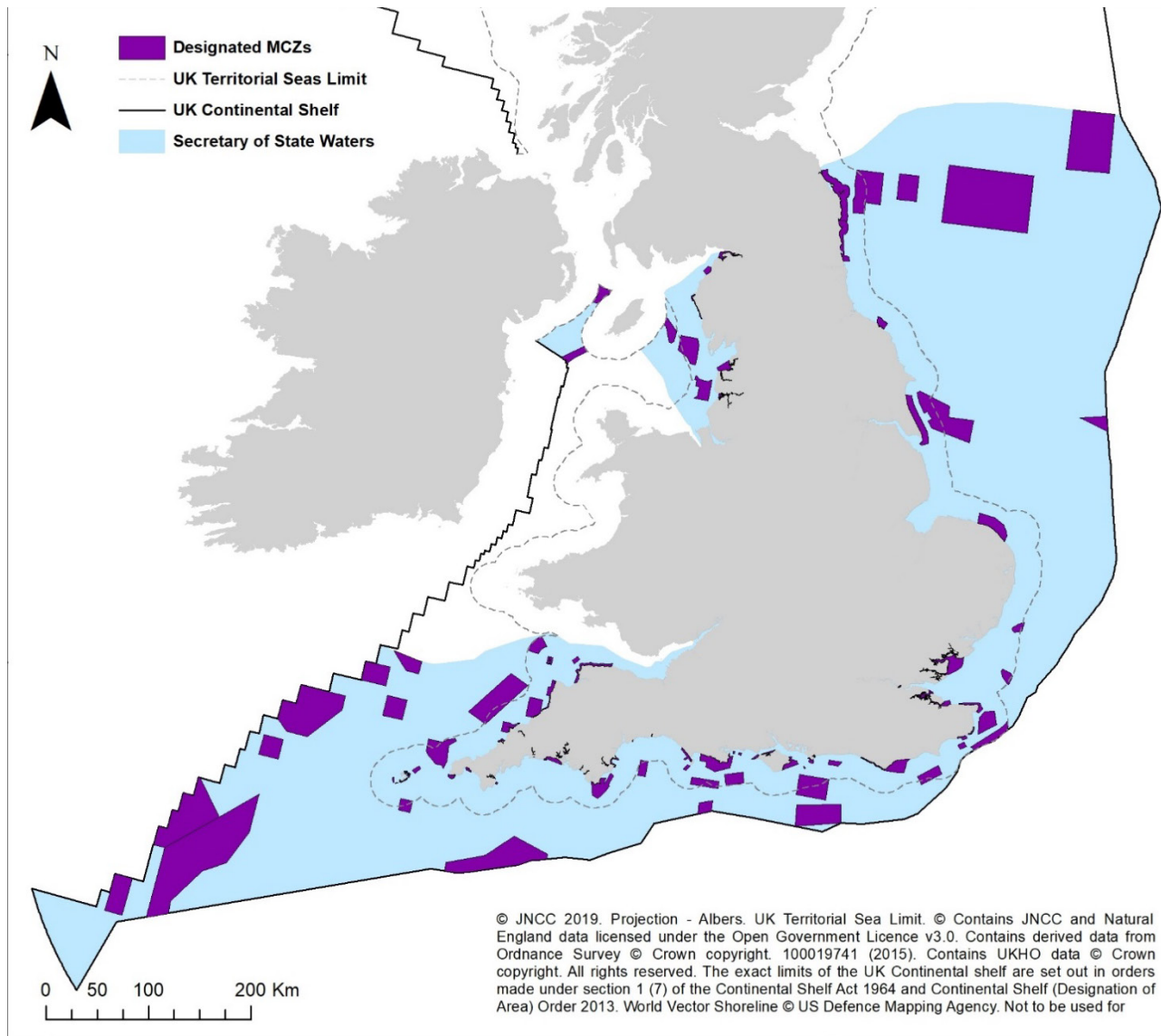


Figure 2 - MCZs designated in tranche 1, 2 and 3

Part B – Campaigns

Overview of main campaigns

1. The majority of responses received (98%) were from campaigns. The main campaigns were organised by the Wildlife Trusts, the Cumbria Wildlife Trust (separate from the main Wildlife Trusts campaign) and the Marine Conservation Society. One smaller campaign was organised in relation to Beachy Head East. Two petitions were also submitted. Further details are provided below.

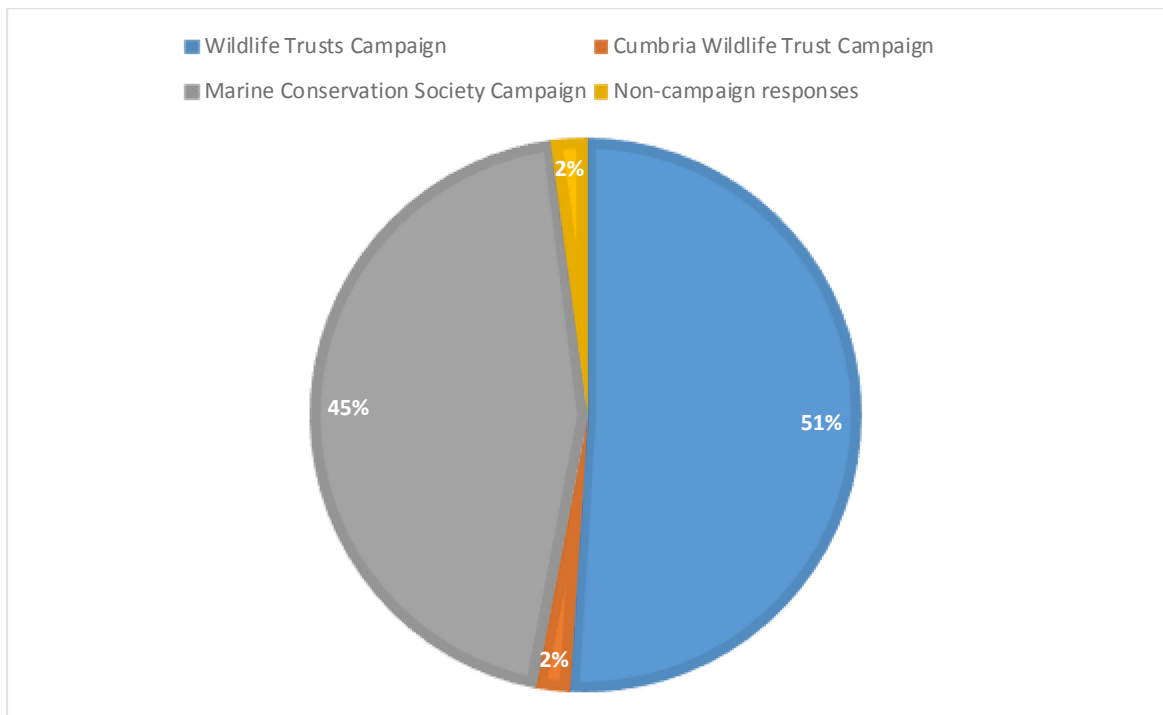


Figure 3 – Graph showing source of consultation responses received.

2. The Wildlife Trusts campaign (51% of all responses) consisted of responses from local members and was not site-specific. The responses sought to designate all 41 sites and have them managed effectively as soon as possible. Some responses included additional specific details, for example, expressing support for the designation of a local site. These responses were treated separately from Wildlife Trusts campaign responses.
3. The Cumbria Wildlife Trust campaign (2% of all responses) was supportive of designating all 41 sites, particularly sites in the Irish Sea. These responses registered disappointment that two sites in the Irish Sea had not been proposed and also that ocean quahog had not been proposed as a feature in the South Rigg site.

¹ The Beachy Head East campaign is not visible in this chart due to the low number.

4. The Marine Conservation Society campaign (45% of all responses) supported the designation of all 41 sites, highlighted the importance of excluding damaging activities from MCZs and managing the new sites effectively, and said that there should be sufficient funding for monitoring, enforcement and protection measures.
5. A local campaign, organised by the Marine Conservation Society, to protect Beachy Head East MCZ resulted in 55 postcards showing support for the designation of this site.
6. A petition received from 38 degrees was signed by 66,453 individuals and showed support for the designation of all 41 MCZs to protect nationally important marine species.
7. The Seahorse Trust re-submitted a petition signed by 153,000 signatories in support of designating Studland Bay as an MCZ. The petition had previously been organised in support of designating this site in 2016 and focused on the need to effectively protect seahorses and their seagrass habitat within the site.

Part C – Broad issues raised

8. A number of respondents commented on issues that relate to more than one site or were of a more overarching nature. We have provided a response to the main general issues below.

Number of proposed sites to be designated

9. **Issue:** Three campaigns, one petition and 148 individual responses called for all proposed MCZs to be designated in this tranche.
10. **Response:** To achieve the government's vision of cleaner, healthier, safer, more productive and more biologically diverse oceans and seas we have committed to designating an ecologically coherent network of MCZs to form a blue belt of protected areas around our coasts.
11. We have made good progress in achieving this vision. As well as the 27 sites designated in 2013 and the 23 sites designated 2016, we have now designated all 41 sites and additional features proposed in the third tranche consultation, substantially completing the UK's contribution to the international ecological coherent network of MPAs.
12. **Issue:** A number of respondents have questioned why certain sites or features originally proposed as part of the Regional MCZ Project recommendations were not proposed for the third tranche of MCZs.
13. **Response:** It is important that we have robust evidence to support proposals, as designated sites may have socioeconomic impacts on businesses and sea users and affect people's livelihoods and recreational opportunities, and result in enforcement and monitoring costs that fall on the tax payer. This proportionate approach ensures that the right areas are designated and can be managed appropriately, as opposed to simply designating large numbers of sites.

Conservation objectives

14. **Issue:** Some respondents, called for more ambitious conservation objectives for sites and suggested that the General Management Approach (GMA) for all protected features should be "recover".
15. **Response:** The conservation objective for all MCZ features is that they are in favourable condition. To achieve this, the GMA required will either be for the feature to be maintained in favourable condition (if it is currently in this state), or for it to be recovered to favourable condition (if it is currently in a damaged state) and then maintained in favourable condition. Natural England and JNCC assess the condition of features using marine surveys and other evidence sources and vulnerability assessments and by assessing whether recent or current activities are damaging site features.
16. Having a GMA of either maintain or recover helps sea users to identify activities that are considered damaging to the site and if those activities are likely to be managed.

Whilst a GMA of recover is likely to result in more stringent management measures, a GMA of maintain may also require management in instances where new pressures are identified or the intensity of an activity is increasing.

Management measures

17. **Issue:** A number of respondents raised concerns about the lack of specific details of management measures to be applied to each site following designation.
18. **Response:** The management approach depends on the conservation objective of the site, the sensitivity of the feature to the activities occurring in the site and its ability to recover. This will be specific to each site and its features.
19. Activities that are likely to damage site features and prevent a site meeting its conservation objectives will require management. For example, bottom trawling will usually need to be managed over a highly sensitive habitats, such as ross worm reefs. With regard to fisheries management measures, a risk-based approach to deliver effective fisheries management has been developed by Defra and regulatory authorities, the MMO and IFCAs. The IFCAs are responsible for assessing, managing and monitoring MPAs inside of 6 nautical miles and the MMO cover beyond 6 nautical miles.
20. We were not able to include specific management measures for each site in the consultation as they will be drawn up separately on a case by case basis and put in place by the relevant regulatory authorities after designation. The main regulatory authorities will discuss planned management measures with the relevant interested parties in detail to ensure that they are proportionate and will be effective before they are implemented.
21. **Issue:** Concerns were raised by the commercial fishing industry that there was no differentiation between the impacts of different fishing vessels, gears and activities, which have different level of impacts on proposed features.
22. **Response:** Where commercial fishing was considered, Defra have differentiated between fishing gears wherever possible, for example mobile and static fishing gears have been differentiated for all sites. Due to data limitations it has not been possible to differentiate between more similar gear types or between different types of fishing vessels. Following designation, management decisions are taken on a case by case basis by relevant regulators. Management measures will be implemented based on the specifics of each case and any restrictions will depend on the sensitivity of the features to the activity taking place.
23. **Issue:** Some respondents were concerned that management measures will restrict anchoring in sites that provide a safe haven in bad weather, which could result in a risk to safety.

24. **Response:** The protected right to anchor within any MCZ under emergency conditions will continue to be provided for within the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009)².

Estimation of costs

25. **Issue:** A concern raised across various sectors was that costs detailed within the consultation documents, particularly with regards to costs assigned to activities through the Impact Assessment process, significantly underestimates the real world economic impact of operating within or adjacent to a MCZ, partially due to increased licence fees and advice fees by statutory nature conservation bodies.
26. **Response:** Where respondents have provided comments and evidence relating to cost estimates, these have been considered in detail on a case by case basis. In some cases, this has resulted in changes, for example when new information was supplied on activities occurring in sites. These changes are described in the final Impact Assessment accompanying designation. A summary of baseline costs to private industry and public bodies can be found in the Impact Assessment accompanying designation (Paragraph 7.1; Table 2).
27. **Issue:** There were several responses from the fishing sector on the cost assumptions made on the impact to fishing, which they believed underestimated costs to this sector. Many responses commented that cost figures for commercial fisheries appeared lower than the value of fish caught at a site.
28. **Response:** Although many fisheries respondents considered that costs to their sector arising from the designation of MCZs had been underestimated in the Impact Assessment, few provided additional supporting evidence challenging this. Where respondents did provide anecdotal evidence of landings data, these were verified with IFCAs and MMO landings data where possible.
29. Fishing interests often refer to their landings value in their response i.e. the maximum value of landings which could be lost if the area was totally closed to a particular gear type. We focus on Gross Value Added (GVA) rather than value of landings. This is because part of the revenue earned through fishing will be taken up to pay for costs of fishing (e.g. fuel). The estimates of GVA account for the fact that vessels that no longer fish will no longer incur these costs. In addition, the Impact Assessment also accounted for the possibility that vessels may displace their activity from MCZs to other areas, thus reducing the costs to the fishing sector.
30. **Issue:** One respondent advocated for greater consideration of socioeconomic benefits of site designation in comparison with monetised costs.
31. **Response:** We recognise that there will be significant socioeconomic benefits associated with MCZ designation. These benefits are hard to quantify but we have expressed them qualitatively in the accompanying Impact Assessment and provided quantitative examples where possible. As with costs, where evidence has been provided during consultation it has been considered on a case by case basis. Whilst there has been an increase in the number of studies addressing the economic value of environmental protection, there is a lack of evidence on the socioeconomic

² Clause 141(1) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>

benefits of MCZs specifically. Further information can be found in the accompanying Impact Assessment (Paragraph 8.2).

Displacement of fishing activity

32. **Issue:** Some responses from the fishing sector questioned the assumption that fishing (both commercial and recreational) could be displaced to other areas, and noted that there are associated implications for health and safety and increased costs associated with longer journeys to alternative fishing grounds, especially in relation to smaller vessels being displaced from local fishing grounds.
33. **Response:** Although many fisheries respondents questioned the displacement assumptions, no evidence was provided to indicate the assumption is unsound. Further information regarding the displacement assumption can be found in the Impact Assessment accompanying designation (Paragraph 7.32).
34. We appreciate that smaller vessels may have less capacity to adapt to the introduction of an MCZ in their area and we have taken this into account when considering designations.

Marine licensing and consenting in MCZs

35. **Issue:** Concerns were raised that marine licences will not be granted for works inside MCZs, where it cannot be evidenced that there will not be an adverse impact on the designated features of that site. This was of particular concern to energy companies who are concerned that existing assets within MCZs that are required to be maintained to ensure energy production, will have additional restrictions on activities to undertake maintenance, and prevent future development.
36. **Response:** All activities, including maintenance, will only be managed where there is evidence that the features being protected could be damaged by an activity.
37. Only those activities which currently require a licence will need to be licenced within an MCZ; there is no new requirement for licences. However, some additional assessment may be needed as part of licence applications to assess the impact of activities on the MCZ features. Where activities may impact an MCZ feature there will need to be consideration of what alternatives or mitigation would be possible to avoid or minimise the impact. If this is not possible, the activity may still be permitted if there is evidence to demonstrate that there is an overriding public interest in allowing the activity to occur, despite the damage it will cause; in these cases measures of equivalent environmental benefit will need to be undertaken to compensate for the damage.
38. **Issue:** There were concerns raised that there may be restrictions on archaeological investigations in MCZs.
39. **Response:** Only those activities which currently require a licence will need to be licenced within an MCZ; there is no new requirement for licences. However, some additional assessment may be needed as part of licence applications to assess the impact of activities on the MCZ features. Where investigations may impact an MCZ feature there will need to be evidence of consideration of what alternatives or

mitigation would be possible to avoid or minimise the impact. If this is not possible, the excavations may still be permitted if there is evidence to demonstrate that there is an overriding public interest in allowing the activity to occur, despite the damage it will cause; in these cases measures of equivalent environmental benefit will need to be undertaken to compensate for the damage.

40. **Issue:** Some respondents commented stating that the public right of navigation should be protected.

41. **Response:** It is not anticipated that these MCZs will restrict normal navigation by vessels.

Highly Mobile Species

42. **Issue:** Responses largely welcomed the inclusion of highly mobile species black sea bream, common eider, razorbill and smelt to MCZ sites. Concerns were raised that not enough highly mobile species were recommended for inclusion in this tranche.

43. **Response:** We recognise the importance of highly mobile species as key components of the marine ecosystem and good indicators of the overall state of the marine environment. We consider that in most cases sectoral measures are likely to be the most effective tools in conserving widely dispersed and highly mobile species – such as fisheries management, by-catch mitigation measures and protected species licensing.

44. MCZs for such species have been considered where there is clear evidence that their conservation would benefit from site-based protection measures. Four highly mobile species are being protected in this tranche, either in existing or new MCZs: black sea bream, common eider, razorbill and smelt. MCZs are just one type of MPA. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) protect areas identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable bird species found within Europe, we currently have 47 marine SPAs protecting seabirds in English waters. Highly mobile species are also already protected in some Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), such as the 7 sites protecting harbour porpoises.

Consultation

45. **Issue:** Some respondents commented on the shorter time period given to respond to the consultation compared to previous tranches, particularly industry bodies who wanted to consult their members.

46. **Response:** The consultation for the third tranche of MCZs ran for six weeks, which we recognise is shorter than the previous MCZ consultations. This length of time is quite usual for Defra consultations and was felt to be sufficient given the level of engagement with stakeholders before the formal consultation, including the process through which stakeholders worked together in the Regional Projects to produce most of the original recommendations.

47. The third tranche of MCZs was highly publicised to ensure all interested parties were made aware of the consultation, including emailing almost 2000 stakeholders, a televised interview with Defra's Secretary of State, Michael Gove MP, a press announcement that many national and local newspapers published, several national and local radio station announcements and extensive media coverage.
48. **Issue:** A number of respondents were unhappy with the questions asked in the consultation survey, stating that they were too complex and favoured people with a more scientific background.
49. **Response:** The purpose of the consultation was to seek the public's views on the designation of proposed sites and additional features, and to provide the opportunity for the public to submit any evidence held to support those views. Using the government consultation principles³ we produced a survey that was able to capture views on specific sites, allowing for the provision of more general comments and giving the public the means to submit any evidence. We also made it clear in the consultation document that for those who did not want to use the Citizen Space tool could send in their views by email or by post.
50. **Issue:** Sea anglers raised the concern that the public consultation was undertaken during a time of the year that is most busy for sea anglers.
51. **Response:** Whilst it is acknowledged that this period is busy for recreational sea anglers, there is no period of the year that is not busy for one or more sectors of sea users. As such, the consultation was run over a period of time, 6 weeks between 8th June 2018 and 20th July 2018, that is considered a long enough duration for representations to be made.
52. **Issue:** Some respondents suggested that we designate features that were additional to those proposed in the consultation.
53. **Response:** The sites and features being designated will substantially complete our contribution to the ecologically-coherent network. The Marine and Coastal Access Act requires that we consult on proposed MCZs, and so we cannot add in extra features not covered in the consultation. Where evidence has been provided this may be used to inform future decisions.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

Part D – Overview of site specific responses

54. The summaries of non-campaign consultation responses that follow highlight the main issues raised about specific sites. They are not an exhaustive commentary on every response received. However, all responses were considered in making final decisions. Where Natural England's and JNCC's final evidence reports are mentioned below, these can be found using the below links:

Natural

England: <http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/5703660445368320>

JNCC:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-7119>

Albert Field

Protected features	General Management Approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One respondent was against the designation of the site on the basis of potential impacts on fishermen. This respondent also proposed changing the boundary of the site to reduce the overall site area.
- Two boundary amendments were proposed to extend the site to join up with neighbouring MCZs (South Dorset MCZ and Poole Rocks MCZ).

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- The request for the site area to be reduced was considered. After assessing the evidence received, it was determined that this would have a significant impact on the ecological value of the site and would reduce the ability to meet feature targets for the region.

- The two requests to extend the site to join up with neighbouring MCZs were considered. After assessing evidence received, it was decided that the socioeconomic costs of these extensions would outweigh the ecological benefits.
- After careful consideration of the consultation responses received, scientific advice from Natural England and assessment of the proposed boundary amendments, the site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Axe Estuary

Protected features	General Management Approach
Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds	Maintain in favourable condition
Estuarine rocky habitats	
Intertidal coarse sediment	
Intertidal mixed sediment	
Intertidal mud	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, all were in support of this site.
- Several consultation responses raised concerns around ongoing activities within the harbour, the area downstream of Axmouth Bridge. A request was received to amend the site boundary to remove this area of the site.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- The request to amend the site boundary was considered but not taken forward due to the impact this change would have on the ecological value of the site, in particular with regard to subtidal coarse sediment. Additionally, it is not anticipated that current activities, at their current levels, will be subject to management measures.
- After careful consideration of the consultation responses received, scientific advice from Natural England and assessment of the proposed boundary amendments, the site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Beachy Head East

Protected features	General Management Approach
Littoral chalk communities	Maintain in favourable condition
Short-snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i>)	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal sand	
High energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Peat and clay exposures	
Ross worm reefs (<i>Saballeria spinulosa</i>)	
Subtidal chalk	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Reasons given for supporting designation of the site included potential economic benefits to the area and improvements to local angling.
- Concerns were raised by the local fishing industry, and by the local MP, regarding continued access by small trawlers to grounds within the boundaries of the site.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys and databases of marine evidence as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- The concerns raised regarding local small trawlers being able to access current fishing grounds have been considered. The subtidal sand and subtidal coarse sediment features that these vessels tend to fish over are considered to currently be in a favourable condition; as such, current fishing activities are unlikely to require management should this area be included in the site.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses received and scientific advice from Natural England this site has been designated.

Bembridge

Protected features	General Management Approach
Sheltered muddy gravels	Maintain in favourable condition
Short-snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i>)	
Stalked jellyfish (<i>Calvadosia campanulata</i>)	
Stalked jellyfish (<i>Haliclystus</i> species)	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal sand	
Maerl beds	Recover to favourable condition
Native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>)	
Peacock's tail (<i>Padina pavonica</i>)	
Sea-pens and burrowing megafauna	
Seagrass beds	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Subtidal mud	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Respondents from two environmental organisations expressed disappointment that the St Helens anchorage has been excluded from the site.
- Some recreational stakeholders raised concerns about any potential anchoring restrictions within Priory Bay, they said that seagrass beds there are not as large as currently mapped and that bans on anchoring would adversely impact recreational boat users.
- Concerns were also raised by the shipping industry regarding the close proximity of the site to the deep water channel approach into the eastern Solent leading to the ports of Southampton and Portsmouth.
- Concerns were raised by the commercial fishing sector regarding management measures that would be required after designation.
- One respondent stated that designation should not preclude routine dredging within Bembridge harbour for continued navigational purposes.
- The local MP advocated the importance of the area on behalf of those with angling and yachting interests.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- St Helens anchorage was removed from the site prior to consultation due to concerns from the shipping sector and because this change could be made without significantly affecting the ecological value of the site.
- With regard to the concern raised about potential anchoring restrictions, this could be necessary in places but we anticipate that only small areas would be affected.
- The close proximity of Bembridge MCZ to the deep water channel approach into the eastern Solent is not anticipated to adversely impact industrial shipping activity. The exclusion of the St Helen's anchorage from the site has mitigated industrial anchoring issues that had previously been identified.
- With regard to the concerns raised by the commercial fishing sector, we appreciate that designation of this site could impact on their activities. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- Due to the concerns raised regarding future navigational dredging, the site boundary has been adjusted to exclude Bembridge harbour. This change removes any possibility of navigational dredging being restricted. Given the extent of the protected feature (subtidal mixed sediment) in the harbour is so small, relative to its extent across the whole site, this will not detract from meeting the regional target for this feature.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses, and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated.

Berwick to St. Mary's

Protected feature	General Management Approach
Common eider (<i>Somateria mollissima</i>)	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One respondent raised concerns with regards to the designation of the site as an MCZ as they felt that designation as an SPA would be more appropriate. They also cautioned that more evidence was required to assess the potential impacts of recreation and other activities on common eider, and they were not convinced that a code of conduct would be effective.
- Some concerns were raised in terms of the potential impact of designation on recreational activities (specifically kayaking), port operations, and cultural heritage activities.
- One respondent noted that recreational angling posed a direct threat to common eider as a potential bycatch species, and felt that designation would be beneficial in tackling this issue.
- Whilst no boundary changes were suggested, a concern was raised over the omission of local estuaries within the MCZ.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for common eider.

Government response

- In relation to the concern raised about designating this site as an MCZ, this type of designation provides the best available tool to protect common eider in this area. The SPA selection criteria (available at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1405>) are not applicable to protect common eider within an SPA on the Northumberland coast. With regard to the concern raised by the same respondent about the effectiveness of a code of conduct, this type of measure has been shown to be effective in certain situations, e.g. for recreational coasteering activity in the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (<http://www.northumberlandcoastaonb.org/coasteering/>). There are a number of codes of conduct in place within the area of the MCZ and their effectiveness is monitored. If a voluntary code of conduct is found to be ineffective, other options will be considered.

- With regard to the concerns raised about the impact that designation might have on current activities, we anticipate that some management of kayaking will be needed to ensure that it does not impact on common eider. At their current levels, it is not anticipated that port operations or cultural heritage activities will be subject to management measures.
- In terms of the concern raised regarding the threat of bycatch, advice from management bodies suggests that this is not currently a concern in this area for this species. Following designation of an MCZ, regulators will work with relevant stakeholders and other marine interests to make sure that appropriate measures are applied to enable sites to meet their conservation objectives. Any impact due to bycatch will be considered further at this point.
- In response to the concern regarding the omission of the estuaries, inclusion has been considered but was not taken forward due to the potential for increased socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Cape Bank

Protected features	General Management Approach
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- The French fishing industry raised concerns about the impact of designation on their Normandy and Brittany fishing fleets, which target high value species in this area. They also repeated a request for a boundary change that they had previously proposed before consultation.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised by the French fishing industry, we appreciate that designation of this site will impact on their activities. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- The request from the French fishing industry for the boundary to be changed has not been taken forward. This proposal had already been considered prior to consultation but had not been agreed due to the potential significant socioeconomic impact on other sea users.
- After careful consideration of the points above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Camel Estuary

Protected features	General Management Approach
Coastal saltmarshes and saline reed beds	Maintain in favourable condition
Estuarine rocky habitats	
Intertidal coarse sediment	
Intertidal mud	
Low energy intertidal rock	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One respondent recommended an extension of the boundary to include the lower reaches of the estuary on the basis of improved ecological connectivity.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- The request to extend the boundary of this site was considered, but not taken forward. The expected ecological benefits of extending the site are minimal and the boundary change could potentially increase the impact on the port.
- After careful consideration of the consultation responses received, scientific advice from Natural England and assessment of the proposed boundary amendments, the site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Dart Estuary

Protected features	General Management Approach
Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds	Maintain in favourable condition
Tentacled lagoon-worm (<i>Alkmaria romijni</i>)	
Estuarine rocky habitats	Recover to favourable condition
Intertidal mud	
Low energy intertidal rock	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Dart Harbour and a local yachting representative emphasised the necessity for continued dredging activity within the site to facilitate navigational safety.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised about impacts on dredging activity, we do not anticipate dredging of navigational channels to be impacted by the designation of this site.
- After careful consideration of the point above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, the site has been designated.

Devon Avon Estuary

Protected features	General Management Approach
Coastal saltmarshes and saline reed beds	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal mud	
Intertidal sand and muddy sand	
Moderate energy intertidal rock	
Tentacled lagoon worm (<i>Alkmaria romijni</i>)	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, all were in support of this site.
- There was support for Bantham Bay in particular due to concerns over possible damage caused by recreational activities and planned developments that could risk overexploitation of the area.
- Two responses asked that the boundary of the proposed site be extended to include the South Efford nature reserve and the sea bass nursery area.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- The request for the site to be extended to cover the South Efford nature reserve and a sea bass nursery area was considered but has not been taken forward. The South Efford Marsh is a Local Nature Reserve, with different designation criteria to that of MCZs. As such, for MCZ designation, the pioneer saltmarsh is not currently considered sufficiently developed to be classed as the feature 'Coastal Saltmarshes & Saline Reedbeds' included within this site. With regard to the sea bass nursery area, site based protection is not considered to be the most effective tool for conserving highly mobile species such as sea bass.
- After careful consideration of the consultation responses received, scientific advice from Natural England and assessment of the proposed boundary amendments, the site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Erme Estuary

Protected features	General Management Approach
Estuarine rocky habitats	Maintain in favourable condition
High energy intertidal rock	
Intertidal mixed sediments	
Low energy intertidal rock	
Moderate energy intertidal rock	
Sheltered muddy gravels	
Tentacled lagoon-worm (<i>Alkmaria romijni</i>)	
Intertidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, all were supportive of this site.
- One environmental organisation recommended an extension of the boundary to include the entire tidal estuary and link the site with the neighbouring SAC. They also recommended that further features, proposed by the original Regional MCZ Project, should have been included for consideration.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site

Government response

- The proposed boundary extension was considered but not taken forward. The features proposed for inclusion within the extension are already sufficiently represented within the region, and the scale of the extension could have potential socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- The features proposed by the Regional MCZ Project were considered but were not taken forward where there was insufficient evidence to underpin their designation and/or where features were already sufficiently represented within the region.
- After careful consideration of the proposed boundary extension, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

East of Start Point

Protected feature	General Management Approach
Subtidal sand	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Concerns were raised by the commercial fishing sector over the location of this site over fishing grounds.
- The GMA of recover was questioned by two respondents as they were not aware of any evidence that subtidal sand has been damaged.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- Concerns raised by the fishing sector over the location of this site were discussed during pre-consultation stakeholder engagement. The original boundary proposed for this site by the Regional MCZ Projects was amended to reduce the socioeconomic impact on the fishing industry whilst still meeting the regional target for protecting subtidal sand.
- With regard to the concerns raised about the GMA, these were determined by JNCC based on their assessment of the current condition of the feature using a comprehensive range of evidence.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses, and scientific advice from the JNCC, this site has been designated.

Foreland

Protected features	General Management Approach
English Channel outburst flood feature	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal sand	
High energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Subtidal coarse sediment	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Concerns were raised by the commercial fishing sector regarding management measures that would be required after designation.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised by the commercial fishing sector, we appreciate that designation of this site will impact on their activities. Our estimates suggest that the impact is likely to be low. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses received and scientific advice from JNCC, this site has been designated.

Goodwin Sands

Protected features	General Management Approach
English Channel outburst flood features	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal sand	
Blue mussel beds	Recover to favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Ross worm (<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>) reefs	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site. There has been significant interest in the site due to the Port of Dover's application to dredge construction sand from the site and the local Save Our Sands campaign.
- Many respondents supported the site under the premise that the designation would limit aggregate extraction operations, but other reasons for support included to protect ecologically important habitats and species, and for cultural heritage and to aid flood defence and coastal erosion.
- The French fishing industry raised concerns that the designation of this site would impact on their fishing activities.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including surveys and databases of marine evidence as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments resulted in a change in GMA for blue mussel beds, from maintain to recover. This is because new sensitivity evidence indicated that the blue mussel beds are more sensitive to fisheries activities such as dredging and trawling than when previously assessed. This change is unlikely to affect potential management measures because this feature is located alongside another feature (ross worm reefs) with a recover GMA.
- There were no significant changes for data certainty, sufficiency or GMA for the remaining features in this site.

Government response

- In terms of aggregate extraction operations within the site, the MMO have now issued a licence for extraction. The MMO have undertaken a full MCZ assessment and have concluded, on advice from Natural England, that, with certain licence conditions, the dredging of aggregates will not hinder the conservation objectives of the Goodwin Sands MCZ.

- With regard to the concerns raised by the French fishing industry, we appreciate that designation of this site will impact on their activities. Our estimates suggest that the impact is likely to be low. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses, and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated.

Helford Estuary

Protected feature	General Management Approach
Native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>)	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Some concerns were raised about designation of this site: one on the basis that it was felt to be unnecessary since human influence in the area is minimal, and another on the basis that it might negatively impact future activities in the nearby Falmouth Harbour.
- One respondent suggested an expansion of the site so that the boundary runs between the two most prominent headlands at the opening of the estuary to reduce ambiguity during navigation and to provide further buffering of the oyster beds.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for this feature.

Government response

- The concern expressed that designation is unnecessary due to minimal human impact is not supported by the most recent scientific evidence that demonstrates that native oyster within the site are currently in an unfavourable condition.
- The concern expressed about potential future negative impacts on Falmouth Harbour's activities was considered. Due to its distance from the site, we do not anticipate any impacts on activities associated with the harbour.
- The proposal to expand the site has been considered but has not been taken forward. The current boundary is aligned to Toll Point on the northern side of the Helford and was selected as it is easily identifiable from a boat. This point is closest to the native oyster records and has an appropriate buffer set. Expanding the site is unlikely to provide any further benefit to the native oyster species in the Helford.
- After careful consideration of the points above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Holderness Offshore

Protected features	General Management Approach
North Sea glacial tunnel valleys	Maintain in favourable condition
Ocean quahog (<i>Arctica islandica</i>)	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Subtidal sand	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Concerns were raised by the commercial fishing sector over the location of this site over fishing grounds, especially over the North Sea glacial tunnel valleys.
- One respondent requested the boundary of the site be extended to cover the area between the existing Holderness Inshore MCZ and the proposed Holderness Offshore MCZ.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised by the commercial fishing sector, we appreciate that designation of this site will impact on their activities. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- The request for the site to be extended to cover the area between Holderness Inshore MCZ and Holderness Offshore proposed MCZ was considered, but not taken forward. The evidence provided in support of the ecological benefits of this proposal was limited, and the benefits would be outweighed by the potential socioeconomic costs of an extension of this size.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above consultation responses received, scientific advice from JNCC and assessment of the proposed boundary amendments, the site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Inner Bank

Protected features	General Management Approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Subtidal sand	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Commercial fishing organisations raised concerns about the impact of designation on their fishing activities.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised by fishing organisations, we appreciate that designation of this site will impact on their activities. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- After careful consideration of the point above, consultation responses received, and scientific advice from JNCC, this site has been designated.

Kentish Knock East

Protected features	General Management Approach
Subtidal sand	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- The French Ministry and French and Belgian fishing organisations raised concerns that the designation of this site would impact on their fishing activities.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- The concerns raised by the French and Belgian fishing groups were examined. While we anticipate an impact on the fishing activities of both countries due to designation of this site, this is unlikely to be significant as only a small number of vessels will be affected overall.
- After careful consideration of the points above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated.

Markham's Triangle

Protected features	General Management Approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Subtidal mud	
Subtidal sand	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Concerns were raised by the UK fishing sector and by French, Belgian and Dutch fishing organisations about the impact of the site on their fishing activities.
- The UK fishing sector proposed a boundary amendment to reduce the impact on *Nephrops* (Norway lobster) fishing activity in the north of the site.
- Two environmental organisations proposed boundary amendments that would significantly increase the size of the site.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised by the UK, French, Belgian and Dutch fishing groups, we appreciate that designation of this site will impact on their activities. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- The UK fishing sector's proposed boundary amendment has been considered but not taken forward. The proposed change would greatly reduce the ecological value of the site, particularly with respect to the protection of subtidal mixed sediments. Additionally, fishing activity data collected between January 2015 and August 2018 demonstrated no targeted *Nephrops* fishing activity within the site itself, suggesting that the boundary change would not benefit the *Nephrops* fishing sector.
- The proposals from environmental organisations to increase the size of the site have been considered but not taken forward. Both proposals would result in additional and potentially significant socioeconomic impacts on the fishing and renewable energy sectors.

- After careful consideration of the points above, consultation responses and scientific advice from JNCC, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Morte Platform

Protected features	General Management Approach
High energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Subtidal coarse sediment	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One respondent questioned the need for a recover GMA for all features, suggesting a maintain GMA would be more appropriate.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concern raised about the GMA of recover, the GMAs for all features in this site were determined by Natural England based on their assessment of the current condition of the feature using a comprehensive range of evidence.
- After careful consideration of consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated.

North-East of Haig Fras

Protected features	General Management Approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mud	
Subtidal sand	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- A French fishing organisation proposed a boundary change to the site, reducing it in the east and enlarging it in the west.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- The proposal to change the boundary of the site has been considered but has not been taken forward. The proposed change would greatly reduce the ecological value of the site, particularly with respect to the protection of subtidal coarse sediments. Additionally, this change would have a greater socioeconomic impact on the UK fishing sector.
- After careful consideration of the proposed boundary amendment, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

North West of Lundy

Protected feature	General Management Approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Reasons cited by respondents in favour of designating the site include: benefits to shark species; protecting crucial habitat for burrowing communities that are a food source for local commercially important fish; preserving the unique ecology of the area; protecting established seal haul-out areas; and supporting large, connected protection areas.
- One respondent did not support designation and suggested a GMA of maintain for subtidal coarse sediment would be more appropriate.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concern raised about the GMA of recover, this GMA was determined by Natural England based on their assessment of the current condition of the feature using a comprehensive range of evidence.
- After careful consideration of the points above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated.

Orford Inshore

Protected feature	General Management Approach
Subtidal mixed sediments	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, all were in support of this site.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- After careful consideration of consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated.

Otter Estuary

Protected features	General Management Approach
Coastal saltmarshes and saline reed beds	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal coarse sediment	
Intertidal mud	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One environmental organisation recommended an extension of the boundary to include the entire tidal estuary and link the site with the neighbouring SAC. They also recommended that three further features, proposed by the original Regional MCZ Project, should have been included for consideration.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site

Government response

- The proposed boundary extension was considered but not taken forward. The features proposed for inclusion within the extension are already sufficiently represented within the region, and the scale of the extension could have potential socioeconomic impacts on sea users. The features proposed by the Regional MCZ Project were considered but were not taken forward where there was insufficient evidence to underpin their designation and/or where features were already sufficiently represented within the region.
- After careful consideration of the proposed boundary extension, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Purbeck Coast

Consultation responses in relation to black seabream are covered on page 65.

Protected features	General Management Approach
High energy intertidal rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal coarse sediment	
Moderate energy intertidal rock	
Peacock's tail (<i>Padina pavonica</i>)	
Stalked jellyfish (<i>Haliclystus</i> species)	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Black seabream (<i>Spondyliosoma cantharus</i>)	Recover to favourable condition
Maerl beds	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority raised concerns over the inclusion of black seabream as a feature of this site. As the issues relating to black seabream were specific and also relate to the inclusion of the feature at Southbourne Rough and Poole Rocks, these have been covered separately on page 65.
- In consultation responses where black seabream were not mentioned the majority were in support of this site.
- Of the responses not relating to black seabream, two raised concerns about the impact of designation on coastal protection and flood and erosion risk management activities.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised about potential impacts on coastal protection and flood and erosion risk management activities, potential impacts were considered prior to consulting on this site. For this sector it is likely that additional

assessments will need to be carried out for future marine licence applications associated with new projects.

- After careful consideration of the point raised above, consultation responses and advice from Natural England, this site has been designated.

Queenie Corner and South Rigg

Queenie Corner and South Rigg are sites located in the western Irish Sea. During public consultation, similar issues were raised for these two sites, such as the potential impact on Total Allowable Catch (TAC). As such, they have been considered together for the purpose of the government response.

Queenie Corner

Protected features	General management approach
Sea-pen & burrowing megafauna communities	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mud	

South Rigg

Protected features	General management approach
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Sea-pen & burrowing megafauna communities	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal mud	
Subtidal sand	

Summary of main consultation responses

- For both sites, of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were supportive.
- There was strong support for the designation of both sites from environmental organisations, individual respondents and from the Isle of Man Government.
- Concerns were raised by the commercial fishing sector with regard to fisheries cost estimates for both sites on the basis that they felt the TAC for *Nephrops* (Norway lobster) could be affected by the designation. They suggested that designation of these sites may be considered to reduce the total area of seabed mud available to fishing, and the stock estimate and TAC may be reduced as a result. This would lead to higher costs to the industry than currently estimated.
- For South Rigg, some respondents raised concerns over the GMA and potential management measures. They felt that a GMA of recover would be more appropriate and that management measures (such as closing the site to bottom-towed gears) were needed immediately.
- Another respondent for South Rigg felt that a GMA of maintain would be more appropriate for all sediment features, on the basis that they considered natural disturbance to have a greater impact on sediment habitats than human activity.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- For Queenie Corner, the updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.
- For South Rigg, the updated evidence assessments resulted in a change in the GMA for two features: a change from recover to maintain for subtidal mixed sediments, and a change from maintain to recover for subtidal coarse sediment. There were no significant changes in terms of data certainty or sufficiency for these two features, or for the remaining features in this site.

Government response

- With regard to the concern about designation impacting on the TAC for *Nephrops* species, we acknowledge that this is a legitimate concern given how TACs are calculated. However, despite 9.3% of the region's mud already being incorporated into MPAs, the TAC calculation has not yet been adapted in this way. Any future loss of TAC as a result of the designation of these two sites would also only be in proportion to the 2.8% of the region's mud that they protect⁴. Additionally, fisheries data show that only 74% of the original TAC for this *Nephrops* fishery has been utilised by the average annual catch during 2013-2017. As such, even if in future the calculation of the TAC were to take into account areas of MPAs closed to fishing, any reduction to the TAC is unlikely to have an impact on the amount of *Nephrops* caught, unless fishing patterns change significantly. Cefas also advise that any future stock assessment that took into account areas of mud within MPAs should also consider spill-over effects, where *Nephrops sp.* spawn from the protected areas help restock the rest of the area, so any change in the TAC should be less than the proportionate change in mud area available for fishing.
- With regard to the concerns raised about the GMA approach for features within Queenie Corner and South Rigg, these were determined by JNCC based on their assessment of the current condition of the features using a comprehensive range of evidence. The change in the GMA for subtidal coarse sediment in South Rigg, from maintain to recover, is not expected to result in a significant increase in management requirements, as this feature covers only 1% of the site.

⁴ Please note, the actual percentages will be slightly different. These figures relate to the area of mud in the Charting Progress 2 biogeographical region we have been using to assess MPA network completeness, whereas the TAC is determined on the basis of a slightly different area, for which we do not have the percentages of mud coverage within MPAs.

- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses and scientific advice from JNCC, both Queenie Corner and South Rigg have been designated.

Ribble Estuary

Protected feature	General Management Approach
Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One response called for the extension of an existing byelaw to offer protection to estuarine fish species. In addition, the response called for restrictions on capital dredging to mitigate any impact on the migration of smelt.
- Two consultation responses requested that the site and management boundaries are extended above the weir at Samlesbury to enable smelt to access historical spawning habitat.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the points raised about extending an existing byelaw and restricting dredging, following designation of an MCZ management decisions are taken on a case by case basis by the relevant regulator. The regulator will work with relevant stakeholders and other marine interests to make sure that the measures applied are proportionate and enable sites to meet their conservation objectives. The suitability or otherwise of extending existing byelaws and restricting specific activities will be considered at that point.
- The request to extend the site and management above the weir in Samlesbury has been considered, but not been taken forward. The ecological benefits of this proposal are limited and best available evidence suggests that smelt are currently spawning below the weir rather than above it.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses, and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Selsey Bill and the Hounds

Protected features	General Management Approach
Bracklesham Bay geological feature	Maintain in favourable condition
Short-snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i>)	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Subtidal sand	
High energy infralittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
Low energy infralittoral rock	
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Moderate energy infralittoral rock	
Peat and clay exposures	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One respondent proposed a boundary change to extend the site to include the area of the old Selsey Lifeboat Station now that the station structure has been removed.
- One respondent proposed a boundary change to avoid the area near the location of the existing coastal protection scheme to reduce any potential impact on future development or activities.
- Some concerns were raised that designation might impact on recreational anchoring.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- The request for the site to be extended to include the area of the old Selsey Lifeboat Station has been considered but not taken forward. The landward boundary of the site is set at the mean low water level to align with the existing SSSI boundary and already includes the area of the former lifeboat station up to this mean low water level.
- The request for the site boundary to be amended to avoid the area near the existing coastal protection scheme has been considered but not taken forward. Potential impacts on coastal protection and flood and erosion risk management

activities were examined prior to consultation and we do not anticipate any impact on these activities.

- With regard to the concerns raised about impacts on recreational anchoring, potential impacts were examined prior to consultation and at their current levels we do not anticipate that recreational anchoring will be impacted.
- After careful consideration of the consultation responses received, scientific advice from Natural England and assessment of the proposed boundary amendments, the site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Solway Firth

Protected feature	General Management Approach
Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One response called for the extension of an existing byelaw to offer protection to estuarine fish species from seine netting and fishing from fixed engine vessels. In addition the response called for restrictions on capital dredging to mitigate any impact on the migration of smelt.
- Another response supported designation but warned that restrictions on navigational dredging and disposal activities may impact on recreational boaters.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys and databases of marine evidence as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the points raised about extending an existing byelaw and restricting dredging, following designation of an MCZ management decisions are taken on a case by case basis by the relevant regulator. The regulator will work with relevant stakeholders and other marine interests to make sure that the measures applied are proportionate and enable sites to meet their conservation objectives. The suitability or otherwise of extending existing byelaws and restricting specific activities will be considered at that point.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses, and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated.

South of Celtic Deep

Protected features	General Management Approach
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediment	
Subtidal sand	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- The UK and French commercial fishing sectors raised concerns about this site on the grounds that it would adversely impact their fishing activities.
- The French fishing industry resubmitted a request for a boundary change to the site, removing an area of the proposed site and extending into an area not previously included.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessment for this site resulted in a change in the GMA for moderate energy circalittoral rock, from recover to maintain, on the basis of new information on fishing activity. Given the small area of this feature within the site, we do not anticipate any significant impacts on likely management as a result of this change. There were no significant changes in terms of data certainty or sufficiency for this feature, and no significant changes in data certainty, sufficiency or GMA for the remaining features in this site.

Government response

- The concerns raised by UK and French fishing sectors were examined. While we anticipate an impact on the fishing activities of both countries due to the designation of this site, our estimates suggest that the impact is likely to be low. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- The boundary change requested by the French fishing industry has not been taken forward. This proposal had already been considered prior to consultation but had not been agreed because it would reduce the overall ecological value of the site, and, in particular, would increase the gap in terms of meeting the regional target for subtidal coarse sediment.

- After careful consideration of the points above, consultation responses and scientific advice from JNCC, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

South of Portland

Protected features	General Management Approach
Portland Deep geological feature	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal sand	
High energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal mixed sediments	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Some concerns were raised about potential impacts on charter boats, angling and knock-on effects on recreational sector industries.
- One respondent proposed a boundary amendment to decrease the total site area to reduce the impact on charter boat and angling businesses.
- One respondent proposed a boundary amendment to extend the site to include the paleo-spits, submerged terraces, cliff-lines and platforms that extend from Portland Bill and are currently outside of the site boundary.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised about impacts on charter boats and angling, potential impacts were examined prior to consultation and at their current levels we do not anticipate that these activities will be impacted.
- The request to decrease the site area to reduce the impact on charter boat and angling businesses has been considered but not taken forward. This change would have a significant impact on the ecological value of the site and, as confirmed above, impacts on charter boats and angling at this site are not anticipated.
- The request to enlarge the site to include the paleo-spits, submerged terraces, cliff-lines and platforms that extend from Portland Bill has been considered but not taken forward. After assessing evidence received it was decided that, given the scale of the proposed extension, this could have potentially significant

socioeconomic impacts on sea users which outweigh the anticipated additional ecological benefits.

- After careful consideration of the consultation responses received, scientific advice from Natural England and assessment of the proposed boundary amendments, the site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

South of the Isles of Scilly

Protected features	General Management Approach
Fan mussel (<i>Atrina fragilis</i>)	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment / subtidal mixed sediments mosaic habitat	
Subtidal sand	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Concerns were raised by the commercial fishing sector regarding management measures that would be required after designation.
- A request to move the boundary of the site to reduce the impact of bottom towed fishing activities was received from the UK and French fishing sectors.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised by the commercial fishing sector, we appreciate that designation of this site will impact on their activities. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- The request from the fishing industry for the boundary to be changed has not been taken forward. The proposed change would greatly reduce the ecological value of the site, particularly with respect to the protection of fan mussel.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above consultation responses received, scientific advice from Natural England and assessment of the proposed boundary amendments, the site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

South West Approaches to the Bristol Channel

Protected features	General Management Approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to a favourable condition
Subtidal sand	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, just over half raised concerns about this site.
- Concerns were raised by the UK, French and Belgian commercial fishing sectors about the location of this site over fishing grounds, especially scallop grounds, and the impact that this would have on fishing activity. Some of these respondents were of the view that natural disturbances far outweigh any impacts of fishing.
- The French fishing industry resubmitted a request for a significant boundary change to the site, removing a large proportion of the proposed site and extending into a large area not previously included.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised by the commercial fishing sector, we appreciate that designation of this site will impact on their activities. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- The specific point raised about natural disturbances outweighing the impacts of fishing activity has been considered. Whilst we acknowledge that natural disturbances can impact habitats and species, this does not change the necessity of protecting features from damaging human activities.
- The boundary change requested by the French fishing industry has not been taken forward. This proposal had already been considered prior to consultation but had not been agreed because it would significantly reduce the ecological value of the site and potentially impact on the activities of other sea users.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses and advice from JNCC, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

South West Deeps (East)

Protected features	General Management Approach
Celtic Sea relict sandbanks	Maintain in favourable condition
Deep-sea bed	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal sand	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, just over half raised concerns about this site.
- The UK and French fishing sectors raised concerns about the impact of the site on their fishing activities.
- Before consultation, the boundary of this site had been amended from that originally recommended by the Regional MCZ Projects in 2011 to reduce the significant impact of the site on commercial fishing. Several responses commented on this change:
 - Some environmental organisations commented that they did not agree with the boundary change, primarily on the basis that the fishing sector's concerns had already been taken into account in developing the original recommendation.
 - The UK fishing sector asked for the boundary change to be reconsidered, primarily on the basis that another site, South West Approaches to the Bristol Channel, has a greater impact on fishing activity and that they thought that the boundary change may have impacted on the development of the South West Approaches to the Bristol Channel site.
 - The French fishing sector noted that they appreciated the boundary change. They also proposed an additional boundary amendment to further reduce the impact on French fishing fleets.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Due to the amendment to this site's boundary, JNCC undertook a full assessment of data for features within this site following consultation. The assessment took account of all updated data sources as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. The findings confirmed that sufficient evidence was available to support designation of the four features to be protected in this site and determined the GMAs shown above. Full details of the evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised by the UK and French fishing groups, we appreciate that designation of this site will impact on their activities. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network,

and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.

- Requests from environmental organisations and the UK fishing sector to revert to the original Regional MCZ Projects boundary for this site have been considered but not taken forward. The aim of the boundary amendment was to reduce the significant impact of the original site on fishing fleets in particular. Estimated costs suggest that the impact on the UK fishing sector is broadly similar regardless of which boundary is taken forward. Additionally, this site's boundary change has not impacted on the development of the South West Approaches to the Bristol Channel site.
- The request from the French fishing industry for a further boundary amendment has not been taken forward as it would significantly reduce the ecological value of the site.
- After careful consideration of the points above, consultation responses and scientific advice from JNCC, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Studland Bay

Protected features	General Management Approach
Intertidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Long-snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus guttulatus</i>)	
Subtidal sand	
Seagrass beds	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- In their response to this consultation the Seahorse Trust requested that the petition they had organised previously, in support of designating this site in 2016, with 153,000 signatures, be taken into consideration. Support focused upon the need to effectively protect seahorses and their seagrass habitat within the site.
- Concerns were raised by the recreational boating sector with regard to impacts on recreational anchoring within the site. Some, but not all, yachting respondents asserted that anchoring does not damage seagrass and questioned scientific advice regarding the condition and extent of seagrass habitat within the site.
- Recreational boaters also raised concerns that Studland Bay might be lost as an emergency anchoring refuge if designated.
- The local MP advocated the concerns raised by yachting representatives regarding the impact designation could have on recreational anchoring.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments resulted in a decrease in data confidence for subtidal coarse sediment. On this basis, subtidal coarse sediment has been removed as a proposed feature within the site. There were no significant changes in terms of data certainty or sufficiency for the remaining features, and no changes in GMA for any feature.

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised about impacts on recreational anchoring, site management options exist that will enable recreational boats to continue to use and moor within the site while protecting sensitive seagrass beds from anchoring damage. Potential management options could include the prohibition of anchoring

in some areas and/or requirements to use fixed eco-moorings. Eco-moorings provide a viable, safe solution for continued mooring within Studland Bay.

- Expert scientific advice confirms the vulnerability of Studland Bay seagrass beds to anchoring activity. Seagrass beds at this site are underrepresented across the ecological network and provide important habitat for a longstanding population of seahorses.
- The protected right to anchor within any MCZ under emergency conditions is provided for within the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009).
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses, and scientific advice from Natural England, this site has been designated for all features proposed at consultation with the exception of subtidal coarse sediment.

Swanscombe

Protected features	General Management Approach
Intertidal mud	Maintain in favourable condition
Tentacled lagoon worm (<i>Alkmaria romijni</i>)	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One response was against the designation of the site on the grounds that it would interfere with recreational activities.
- Concerns were raised over potential impacts on the operation of existing businesses in the area which use the river for shipping, and also about potential impacts on riverside development, recreational use of the River Thames and impacts on flood risk management.
- Five responses suggested that the boundary of the site should be changed. Proposed changes included reducing the area of the site to reduce socioeconomic impacts and increasing the area to provide greater protection.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including surveys and databases of marine evidence as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the concern raised about the impact of designation on recreational activities, potential impacts on this sector were considered prior to consulting on this site. At current levels, the best available evidence indicates that recreational activities are not likely to be damaging the features to be protected and are therefore unlikely to require management.
- In relation to the concerns raised about potential impacts on other activities, at current levels of intensity, we do not anticipate impacts on sectors other than ports and harbours. For this sector it is likely that additional assessments will need to be carried out for future licence applications associated with new developments, navigational dredging and disposal.
- The requests for boundary changes have been considered but not taken forward. Any reduction in the area of the site would reduce its ecological value, removing areas of intertidal habitat and populations of tentacled lagoon worm, and the ability

to meet ecological network targets in the region. Whilst increases in the area of the site would protect more of the designated features, this would potentially increase the socioeconomic impact of the site and could adversely affect other sea users.

- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses and advice from Natural England, this site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

West of Copeland

Protected features	General Management Approach
Subtidal sand	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One respondent noted that while they support the designation of the site they feel that all features should have a 'recover' GMA.
- One respondent noted that while they supported designation, they had concerns about the overlap of aggregates activity within the site. The same respondent had concerns regarding the routes of supply vessels for offshore wind farms passing through the site.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments resulted in a change in GMA for subtidal sand, from recover to maintain. This was because updated fisheries information and an improved understanding of the level of fishing activity within the site showed that activity levels are not enough to trigger a recover GMA. This change is unlikely to affect potential management measures.
- Aside from the changed GMA for subtidal sand, the updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- The GMA for features is calculated by JNCC and based on evidence gathered through site surveys and other sources, including evidence submitted during the consultation process. Since consultation, the GMA for subtidal sand has changed due to more recent data providing a new understanding that there is a reduced risk to the feature from fishing activities. Whilst it is acknowledged that some stakeholders wish to see a GMA of recover, Defra must make decisions based on the best available evidence. Based on most recent advice, the GMA for subtidal sand has been amended from recover to maintain.
- Aggregate extraction is subject to the marine licensing regime. Where damage to the designated features of a site cannot be avoided and the benefit to the public can be proved to outweigh the risk of damage to the environment, derogations exist whereby licence applications can be approved if appropriate. Further, we do not

anticipate the designation of this site to have an impact on navigation. The location of the site is unlikely to restrict navigational dredges, and vessels are unlikely to impact the features during the course of normal activities.

- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses, and scientific advice from JNCC, this site has been designated.

West of Wight Barfleur

Protected features	General Management Approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- The French fishing industry raised concerns about the location of this site in relation to previously designated MPAs.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by JNCC were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in JNCC's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised by the French fishing industry, we appreciate that designation of this site, amongst other MPAs, will impact on their activities. The features to be protected in this site make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- After careful consideration of the point raised above, consultation responses and scientific advice received from JNCC, the site has been designated.

Wyre Lune

Protected feature	General Management Approach
Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- One response called for the extension of an existing byelaw and for restrictions on dredging to mitigate impact on the migration of smelt.
- One respondent commented that if repairs were needed to the West of Duddon Sand offshore wind farm export cable, as they were in 2014, and could not be made during the smelt spawning period then costs would be significantly higher than those reported in the Impact Assessment.
- One respondent opposed designation on the basis that they felt it was unnecessary given that smelt are present under the existing port operational regime at Lancaster and they feel there are no barriers to migration, and the additional suspended sediment caused by dredge and disposal operations was minimal in comparison to suspended sediment loads naturally occurring. They felt it was unreasonable for the port to absorb the costs estimated in the Impact Assessment and had concerns about restrictions on the port operators or future operations.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site.

Government response

- With regard to the points raised about extending an existing byelaw and restricting dredging, following designation of an MCZ management decisions are taken on a case by case basis by the relevant regulator. The regulator will work with relevant stakeholders and other marine interests to make sure that the measures applied are proportionate and enable sites to meet their conservation objectives. The suitability or otherwise of extending existing byelaws and restricting specific activities will be considered at that point.
- Should maintenance to cables be required during the smelt spawning period then evidence would be needed to show that the work would not hinder the conservation objective of the site. If that is not possible, then maintenance activities may still be permitted if there is evidence to demonstrate that there is an overriding public interest in allowing the activity to occur, in these cases measures

of equivalent environmental benefit will need to be undertaken to compensate for any damage.

- The Port Authority or the MMO will assess the impacts of port operations on smelt and consider whether best available evidence indicates if the activity will hinder the conservation objectives of the site from being met. If an activity will have no impact on the smelt then no management will be required; where the activity may impact on smelt management may be required, which could incur additional costs to those wishing to undertake the activity.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, the site has been designated.

Yarmouth to Cowes

Protected features	General Management Approach
Bouldnor Cliff geological feature	Maintain in favourable condition
Estuarine rocky habitats	
Intertidal coarse sediment	
Intertidal under boulder communities	
Littoral chalk communities	
Low energy intertidal rock	
Moderate energy intertidal rock	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
High energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
High energy infralittoral rock	
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Moderate energy infralittoral rock	
Native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>)	
Peat and clay exposures	
Sheltered muddy gravels	
Subtidal chalk	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Subtidal mud	

Summary of main consultation responses

- Of the non-campaign responses received, the majority were in support of this site.
- Some local organisations and residents with recreational boating interests raised concerns that use of the site might be curtailed by management restrictions following designation. Specific concerns were raised regarding potential impacts on anchoring and on temporary and permanent mooring activities adjacent to waterside properties.
- Multiple requests to move the boundary of the site further east away from the pier (to exclude Bouldnor Bay) were received from local boating interests. These requests aimed to minimise the impact of possible management restrictions on anchoring in the area.
- Concerns were raised by the commercial fishing sector regarding management measures that would be required after designation.
- Recreational boaters also raised concerns that the Yarmouth to Cowes site might be lost as an emergency anchoring refuge if designated.
- The local MP advocated the importance of the area and the concerns raised about the impact management measures could have to recreational boat users.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England's final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for features within the site

Government response

- With regard to the concerns raised about impacts on anchoring and mooring, the feature that is vulnerable to anchoring damage in the Bouldnor Bay area (peat and clay exposures) does not appear to overlap with current anchoring or mooring activity within the site. It is therefore unlikely that restrictions on anchoring and mooring activities will be required within this site.
- The request for the boundary to be amended has been considered but not taken forward. This change was proposed with the intention of minimising presumed restrictions on anchoring and mooring, but, as explained above, we do not anticipate that anchoring will be affected by designation. The proposed boundary change would reduce the ecological value of the site.
- With regard to the concerns raised by the commercial fishing sector, we appreciate that designation of this site could impact on their activities. The features to be protected make an important contribution to our ecologically coherent network, and we believe that this site is the best option for protecting these features within the region whilst minimising socioeconomic impacts on sea users.
- The protected right to anchor within any MCZ under emergency conditions is provided for within the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009).
- After careful consideration of the points above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, the site has been designated. The boundary proposed at consultation has been retained.

Black seabream sites (Purbeck Coast, Southbourne Rough and Poole Rocks)

During consultation, similar issues were raised regarding the designation of black seabream in these three sites. As such, responses relating specifically to the designation of this feature have been considered together below.

During public consultation we proposed to designate black seabream as a protected feature in three sites:

- Purbeck Coast – a new tranche 3 site proposed for black seabream as well as eight other features (consultation responses relating to these eight features are outlined above).
- Southbourne Rough - a new tranche 3 site proposed for black seabream only.
- Poole Rocks – an existing MCZ.

Protected feature	General Management Approach
Black seabream (<i>Spondyliosoma cantharus</i>)	Recover to favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- A large number of non-campaign responses were received in relation to designating black seabream as a feature of these three sites.
- Just over half of the responses received did not support designation of this feature. Concerns were expressed about potential restrictions to angling, with the majority of concerns relating to the Purbeck Coast site.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England were updated using a broad range of sources including new surveys as well as evidence submitted during the consultation. Full details of evidence used can be found in Natural England’s final report.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for black seabream within these three sites.
- For the consultation we identified that designation would impact on recreational angling and charter boat activities that target black seabream when they are nesting and breeding, but we were not able to quantify the socioeconomic impact at that time. Following discussion with stakeholders and information received during the public consultation, socioeconomic impacts on charter boat angling activities have now been quantified for these three sites. Best estimate costs for these sites are approximately £97,000 per year for Purbeck Coast, £46,000 per year for Southbourne Rough and £45,000 per year for Poole Rocks. These estimates are for

charter boats only. They are based upon the best available studies and rely heavily on self-reporting from skippers.

Government response

- The concerns raised about the impact of designating black seabream on recreational angling and charter boat activities have been carefully reviewed. We anticipate that any restrictions on angling will be seasonal (April to July) as the protection required is specifically during the nesting and breeding season, a time when male black seabream build and guard nests and are highly vulnerable to angling pressures. Removing a male from its nest at this time not only results in the loss of that one adult but also in the loss of the eggs that are left unprotected.
- Although many responses did not support the designation of black seabream in these three sites and we recognise that designation will impact on charter boat activities, on balance, protecting this species during its critical nesting and breeding life stage must be given priority. After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England, this feature has been designated in all three sites.
- We recognise that further evidence is required to establish the status of the black seabream population in the area in order to help inform management measures. For this reason, Defra is commissioning research to improve an understanding of the status of black seabream and to examine links with recreational angling and charter boat activities.

Additional Features to be added to existing MCZs

55. In addition to proposing 41 new MCZs, during the public consultation we also proposed to fill some of the gaps in the MPA network by designating additional features in existing sites. These are features that were not supported by sufficient scientific evidence during previous tranches, but for which subsequent survey data have become available to support their inclusion.

56. Following consultation, the designation of these features has been considered in the same way as for the new tranche 3 sites: taking into account consultation responses, updated evidence assessments by JNCC and Natural England and, where relevant, updated costings.

57. The table below lists the additional features and the sites for which they were proposed. The addition of black seabream to the Poole Rocks MCZ has been discussed in detail previously in the Black seabream sites overview.

Existing MCZ	Additional features	General Management Approach
Chesil Beach and Stennis Ledges	High energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
	Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal sand	Maintain in favourable condition
Cumbria Coast	Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>)	Recover to favourable condition
Dover to Deal	Blue mussel beds High energy circalittoral rock Moderate energy circalittoral rock Ross worm reefs (<i>Saballeria spinulosa</i>)	Recover to favourable condition
East of Haig Fras	Fan mussel (<i>Atrina fragilis</i>) High energy circalittoral rock Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna	Recover to favourable condition
Isles of Scilly – Bristows to the Stones	Moderate energy circalittoral rock Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Isles of Scilly – Higher Town	Stalked jellyfish (<i>Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis</i>)	Maintain in favourable condition

Isles of Scilly – Men a Vaur to White Island	Giant goby (<i>Gobius cobitis</i>)	Maintain in favourable condition
Isles of Scilly – Peninnis to Dry Ledge	Stalked jellyfish (<i>Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis</i>)	Maintain in favourable condition
Medway Estuary	Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)	Recover to favourable condition
Poole Rocks	Black seabream (<i>Spondylisoma cantharus</i>)	Recover to favourable condition
South Dorset	High energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
Thanet Coast	Stalked jellyfish (<i>Haliclystus</i> species)	Maintain in favourable condition
The Canyons	Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna	Maintain in favourable condition
	Coral gardens	Recover to favourable condition
Torbay	Peacock's tail (<i>Padina pavonica</i>)	Maintain in favourable condition
	Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Whitsand and Looe Bay	Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
	Giant goby (<i>Gobius cobitis</i>) Stalked jellyfish (<i>Lucernariopsis campanulata</i>) Stalked jellyfish (<i>Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis</i>)	Maintain in favourable condition

Summary of main consultation responses

- A very low number of non-campaign responses were received in relation to the addition of features to existing sites.
- Several respondents were supportive of the idea of adding features to existing sites on the basis that they felt this would provide additional protection to existing MCZs.
- One response was unsupportive of the addition of four features to the Chesil Beach and Stennis Ledges MCZ on the premise that they thought this would result in extra management measures.

Evidence changes since consultation

- Evidence assessments undertaken by Natural England and JNCC were updated using evidence from a broad range of sources, including new surveys. Full details of the evidence used can be found in Natural England's and JNCC's final reports.
- The updated evidence assessments did not result in any significant changes in terms of data certainty and sufficiency or the GMA for any features within these sites.

Government response

- With regard to the concern raised about the addition of four new features to Chesil Beach and Stennis Ledges MCZ, we do not anticipate that any new management measures will be needed, beyond those required to protect the features already designated in this site.
- After careful consideration of the points raised above, consultation responses and scientific advice from Natural England and JNCC, all of the additional features listed above have been designated.

Part E - Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs)

58. Our current approach to MPAs, in this and previous tranches, focuses on maintaining species and habitats at, or recovering them to, a favourable condition. This allows some sustainable activities to occur, as long as these do not damage the designated features in any significant way. In HPMAs, all human activities with the potential to damage the site's designated species, habitats and geological features would be prevented. As part of this consultation, we asked for new evidence to help establish whether the added ecological benefits of HPMAs, beyond those of other MPAs, would outweigh the added costs to sea users and for enforcement.

Summary of main consultation responses:

59. Consultation responses received from environmental organisations and academics are supportive of HPMAs as they believe they play an important role in species and habitat recovery, and provide an opportunity to understand what recovery of the marine environment would mean in practice. Some cited recent research papers that add to the evidence for HPMAs providing additional ecological benefits.

60. Consultation responses received primarily from marine industry were opposed to HPMAs and cite the need for a clear understanding of extra economic costs if HPMAs are to be justified.

61. Some consultation responses expressed the view that any decisions on HPMAs would need to be made within a suitable timeframe. They suggested that: government needs to take the time to get it right; use a robust and transparent evidence-led process; which needs to be properly resourced both in terms of designation and monitoring.

62. There were a few suggestions of specific locations, and locations to avoid, and a suggestion that all offshore sites should be HPMAs.

Government response:

63. These questions on HPMAs in the consultation were with a view to informing possible future designation of HPMAs.

Part F – Next steps

64. We thank the individuals, groups and organisations for providing us with evidence, data and information to enable us to make decisions on which MCZ sites to designate in 2019. We are also grateful for all the views expressed on the merits of these MCZs. These have all been given careful consideration in making final decisions on designations.
65. Now sites are designated, regulatory authorities are considering the management needs for each site and will be engaging with relevant stakeholders as appropriate in taking these forward. Management measures will be implemented based on the specifics of each case and any restrictions will depend on the sensitivity of the species, habitats or geomorphological features to the activity taking place.
66. We will continue to consider any residual gaps and further designations of new sites and features remain possible. As new scientific evidence emerges, there may also be a need to make future changes by expanding or adapting existing sites.

Annex A: List of designated sites and features

Site	Features designated
Albert Field	Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments
Axe Estuary	Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds Estuarine rocky habitats Intertidal coarse sediment Intertidal mixed sediments Intertidal mud
Beachy Head East	High to moderate energy circalittoral Rock Littoral chalk communities Peat and clay exposures Subtidal chalk Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal sand Ross worm reefs (<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>) Short snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i>)
Bembridge	Maerl beds Sea pens and burrowing megafauna Seagrass beds Sheltered muddy gravels Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal mud Subtidal sand Native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>) Peacock's tail (<i>Padina pavonica</i>) Short snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i>) Stalked jellyfish (<i>Haliclystus</i> species) Stalked jellyfish (<i>Calvadosia campanulata</i>)
Berwick to St Mary's	Common eider (<i>Somateria mollissima</i>)
Camel Estuary	Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds Estuarine rocky habitats Intertidal coarse sediment Intertidal mud Low energy intertidal rock
Cape Bank	Moderate energy circalittoral rock Subtidal coarse sediment
Dart Estuary	Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds Estuarine rocky habitats

	Intertidal mud Low energy intertidal rock Tentacled lagoon-worm (<i>Alkmaria romijni</i>)
Devon Avon Estuary	Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds Intertidal mud Intertidal sand and muddy sand Moderate energy intertidal rock Tentacled lagoon-worm (<i>Alkmaria romijni</i>)
East of Start Point	Subtidal sand
Erme Estuary	Estuarine rocky habitats High energy intertidal rock Intertidal coarse sediment Intertidal mixed sediments Low energy intertidal rock Moderate energy intertidal rock Sheltered muddy gravels Tentacled lagoon-worm (<i>Alkmaria romijni</i>)
Foreland	English Channel outburst flood feature ⁵ High energy circalittoral rock Moderate energy circalittoral rock Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal sand
Goodwin Sands	Blue mussel beds English Channel outburst flood feature ¹ Moderate energy circalittoral rock Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal sand Ross worm reefs (<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>)
Helford Estuary	Native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>)
Holderness Offshore	North Sea glacial tunnel valleys ¹ Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal sand Ocean quahog (<i>Arctica islandica</i>)
Inner Bank	Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal sand
Kentish Knock East	Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal sand
Markham's Triangle	Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal mud Subtidal sand

⁵ Geological feature

Morte Platform	High energy circalittoral rock Moderate energy circalittoral rock Subtidal coarse sediment
North East of Haig Fras	Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mud Subtidal sand
North West of Lundy	Subtidal coarse sediment
Orford Inshore	Subtidal mixed sediments
Otter Estuary	Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds Intertidal coarse sediment Intertidal mud
Purbeck Coast	High energy intertidal rock Intertidal coarse sediment Maerl beds Moderate energy intertidal rock Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Black seabream (<i>Spondyliosoma cantharus</i>) Peacock's tail (<i>Padina pavonica</i>) Stalked jellyfish (<i>Haliclystus</i> species)
Queenie Corner	Sea pens and burrowing megafauna Subtidal mud
Ribble Estuary	Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)
Selsey Bill and the Hounds	Bracklesham Bay ¹ High energy infralittoral rock Low energy infralittoral rock Moderate energy circalittoral rock Moderate energy infralittoral rock Peat and clay exposures Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal sand Short snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i>)
Solway Firth	Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)
South of Celtic Deep	Moderate energy circalittoral rock Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal sand
South of Portland	High energy circalittoral rock Moderate energy circalittoral rock Portland Deep ¹ Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal sand
South of the Isles of Scilly	Subtidal coarse sediment / subtidal mixed sediments mosaic habitat Subtidal sand Fan mussel (<i>Atrina fragilis</i>)
South Rigg	Moderate energy circalittoral rock

	<p>Sea pens and burrowing megafauna Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal mud Subtidal sand</p>
South West Approaches to the Bristol Channel	<p>Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal sand</p>
Southbourne Rough	<p>Black seabream (<i>Spondyllosoma cantharus</i>)</p>
South West Deeps (East)	<p>Celtic Sea relict sandbanks¹ Deep sea bed Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal sand</p>
Studland Bay	<p>Intertidal coarse sediment Long snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus guttulatus</i>) Seagrass beds Subtidal sand</p>
Swanscombe	<p>Intertidal mud Long snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus guttulatus</i>) Tentacled lagoon-worm (<i>Alkmaria romijni</i>)</p>
West of Copeland	<p>Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal sand</p>
West of Wight-Barfleur	<p>Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments</p>
Wyre-Lune	<p>Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)</p>
Yarmouth to Cowes	<p>Bouldnor Cliff¹ Estuarine rocky habitats High energy circalittoral rock High energy infralittoral rock Intertidal coarse sediment Intertidal under boulder communities Littoral chalk communities Low energy intertidal rock Moderate energy circalittoral rock Moderate energy infralittoral rock Moderate energy intertidal rock Peat and clay exposures Sheltered muddy gravels Subtidal chalk Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal mud Native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>)</p>

Annex B: Features being added to existing MCZs

Site	Features recommended for designation
Chesil Beach and Stennis Ledges	High energy circalittoral rock Subtidal coarse sediment Subtidal mixed sediments Subtidal sand
Cumbria Coast	Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>)
Dover to Deal	Blue mussel beds High energy circalittoral rock Moderate energy circalittoral rock Ross worm reefs (<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>)
East of Haig Fras	Fan mussel (<i>Atrina fragilis</i>) High energy circalittoral rock Sea pens and burrowing megafauna
Isles of Scilly: Bristows to the Stones	Moderate energy circalittoral rock Subtidal coarse sediment
Isles of Scilly: Higher Town	Stalked jellyfish (<i>Calvadosia cruxmelitensis</i>)
Isles of Scilly: Men a Vaur to White Island	Giant goby (<i>Gobius cobitis</i>)
Isles of Scilly: Peninnis to Dry Ledge	Stalked jellyfish (<i>Calvadosia cruxmelitensis</i>)
Medway Estuary	Smelt (<i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>)
Poole Rocks	Black seabream (<i>Spondylisoma cantharus</i>)
South Dorset	High energy circalittoral rock
Thanet Coast	Stalked jellyfish (<i>Haliclystus</i> species)
The Canyons	Coral gardens Sea pens and burrowing megafauna
Torbay	Peacock's tail (<i>Padina pavonica</i>) Subtidal coarse sediment
Whitsand and Looe Bay	Moderate energy circalittoral rock Giant goby (<i>Gobius cobitis</i>) Stalked jellyfish (<i>Calvadosia campanulata</i>) Stalked jellyfish (<i>Calvadosia cruxmelitensis</i>)