

South West

Environment

Policy groupings:

- Air Quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- Cumulative Effects
- Disturbance
- Habitats
- Marine Litter
- Marine Protected Areas
- Non Native Invasive Species
- Underwater Noise
- Water Quality

HLMOs addressed by policies:

Living within environmental limits

- Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.
- Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
- Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.

Promoting good governance

- The use of the marine environment is spatially planned where appropriate and based on an ecosystems approach which takes account of climate change and recognises the protection and management needs of marine cultural heritage according to its significance

Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society

- The use of the marine environment is benefitting society as a whole, contributing to resilient and cohesive communities that we can adapt to coastal erosion and flood risk, as well as contributing to physical and mental wellbeing
- The marine environment plays an important role in mitigating climate change

See also individual policies linked in templates. This is summarised on the cover page of each group of policies

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Air Quality		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	<p>Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society The use of the environment is benefitting society as a whole, contributing to resilient and cohesive communities that we can adapt to coastal erosion and flood risk, as well as contributing to physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Living within environmental limits Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.</p>		
Other relevant policies	SW-PS-1 SW-PS-2 SW-PS-3 SW-PS-4 SW-CC-1		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW ✓	NE ✓	SE ✓

Policy drafting template SW-AIR-1

HLMO	Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society and Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	<p>The use of the marine environment is benefiting society as a whole, contributing to resilient and cohesive communities that we can adapt to coastal erosion and flood risk, as well as contributing to physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.</p>
Grouping	Air	Code	SW-AIR-1

Policy

SW-AIR-1

Proposals that support a reduction in air pollution will be supported.

Proposals must demonstrate consideration of their contribution to air pollution, both direct and cumulative.

Where proposals are likely to result in or facilitate increased air pollution, proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:

a) avoid b) minimise c) mitigate air pollution.

What is air pollution?

1. Air pollution is defined as a mixture of gases and particles that have been emitted into the atmosphere by man-made processes. Many substances can [pollute the air](#). Some of these are very harmful and their sale and use is strictly regulated. Others are not immediately harmful, but are released in thousands or millions of tonnes per year nationally as by-products of transport, energy production, chemicals manufacture, domestic combustion and farming. When released into the air these substances have gradual but significant impacts on [health](#) and the environment ([Clean Air Strategy 2018](#)).

[Air quality](#) is a measure of how polluted the air we breathe is. When air quality is poor, pollutants in the air may be hazardous to people, particularly those with lung or heart conditions.

Where does air pollution occur in the south west marine plan areas?

2. The major contributing industries to air pollution in the south west marine plan areas are ports and shipping. The main shipping routes in the south west plan areas are on the [Marine Information System](#), see shipping and navigation layer. The English Channel is one of the world's busiest shipping routes.
3. There are three major ports in the inshore marine plan area which may impact on air quality:
 - Plymouth – defence, fishing, ferry, general cargo
 - Falmouth – shipyards and maintenance
 - Avonmouth (and Bristol) – commercial and industrial
4. There are also numerous smaller ports servicing smaller vessels all along the inshore area. Future proposed expansion of the Port of Falmouth may also cause decline in air quality. None of the mentioned ports are currently in designated [Air Quality Management Areas](#).
5. Air quality is not routinely monitored at offshore sites, though regular air quality monitoring is carried out by local authorities at coastal areas. Road transport is a significant contribution of emissions to air pollution, so local authorities assess and review air quality in their area. If [national air quality objectives](#) will not be achieved local authorities must declare an [Air Quality Management Area](#) and put together a Local Air Quality Action Plan for the area.
6. Compared to the north west and south east plan areas the south west is not as highly populated or industrialised. This means air quality issues are not generally as significant here. However, Cornwall has a few Air Quality Management Areas, which may be a result of increased seasonal road traffic (up to 25% increase) and older and more diesel vehicles ([Clean air for Cornwall strategy](#)).
7. In the south west marine plan area [Air Quality Management Areas](#) are in place near the coast in:
 - Plymouth Mutely plain – 1059
 - Cornwall – Gunnislake – 1043
 - Cornwall – Tideford – 881
 - Cornwall – St. Austell – 1044
8. As a result of [MARPOL Annex VI](#) a number of Emission Control Areas have been established across the globe with stricter control measures on sulphur or other airborne emissions from ships. The south coast of the south west marine plan area is covered by the North Sea Sulphur Emission Control Area. Ships entering these areas must have a limited sulphur content to their fuel used and must use an approved exhaust cleaning system.

When does air pollution occur in south west marine plan areas?

9. Air pollution can generally occur all year round from a number of contributing factors. International and short sea shipping occurs throughout the year in the south west plan areas.

Why is air pollution important to the south west marine plan areas?

10. Clean air is a basic requirement of a healthy environment for us all to live in, work, and bring up families. Air quality has improved significantly in recent decades, but there are some parts of our country where there are unacceptable levels of air pollution.
11. Ports in the south west region handle approximately 3% of Englands imports and exports ([South west ports – driving the region](#)). There are passenger ferries from Plymouth to Roscoff, Plymouth to Santander and the Penzance to Isles of Scilly ferry service. Visiting Cruise ships are on the increase with the Isles of Scilly alone attracting over 70 per year.
12. The [Clean Air Strategy 2018](#) stated that major ports must have air quality strategies. The major ports in the south west inshore marine plan area with air quality strategies are:
- Plymouth
 - Falmouth
 - Avonmouth (and Bristol)
13. Ports should follow the [National Policy Statement for Ports](#) when considering air quality and emissions.
14. Air pollution has direct impacts on the natural environment, contributing to climate change, reducing crop yields and polluting oceans. Cleaner air will directly benefit animals and habitats as well as creating a better environment for everyone to live, work and thrive in ([Clean Air Strategy 2018](#)).

Who is this of interest to?

15. This policy is of interest to all those developing proposals in the south west marine plan areas.
16. It is also of interest to public authorities making decisions that affect the south west marine plan area directly or indirectly including local planning authorities and those authorities granting permits or licenses for activity in those areas such as:
- Distribution network operators (Western Power Distribution in the south west)
 - Port and harbour authorities
 - Public authorities with Air Quality Management Areas
 - Public authorities with strategic planning functions
 - Planning Inspectorate when approving local authority plans

How should this policy be applied?

17. SW-AIR-1 applies to both the south west inshore and offshore marine plan areas.

18. Decision-makers should support proposals that incorporate measures to reduce air pollution in the south west marine plan areas. This may include novel designs, smart technology, proposals or collaboration between developers, public authorities and distribution network operators. Proposals must comply with relevant legislation and other marine plan policies.
19. Proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate air pollution - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc. To achieve this, they should consider best available evidence and guidance to avoid or reduce air pollution. Where the proposal will result in or facilitate increased air pollution, the applicant should undertake an assessment of the impacts of the proposed project as part of the Environmental Statement.
20. Proposals must demonstrate that they have considered the interaction between sectors, particularly in relation to indirect and cumulative consequences on air pollution, such as:
- port developments to attract more vessels – see all SW-PS policies
 - developments to increase short sea shipping – see SW-PS-4
 - indirectly increasing road or vessel transit
 - greater travelling distances of vessels from placement of new marine infrastructure resulting in increased fuel consumption and in turn air pollution - see SW-CC-1.
21. There is no one solution to reducing air pollution. Mitigation could include but is not limited to, one or a combination of the following:
- providing improved grid facilities to support ports developments of shore-side facilities
 - ports encouraging vessels to reduce emissions through incentives
 - transport assessments and vehicle booking systems
 - providing shore-side electrical power to replace ships' generators while in port (cold-ironing)
 - liquefied natural gas (LNG) power barges
 - use renewable energy to charge vessels whilst in port
22. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans. If a proposal cannot meet these criteria it will only be authorised if there are relevant considerations in line with the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 \(Section 58\(1\)\)](#).
23. Public authorities should request relevant information before proceeding further if it is judged that a proposal has not provided the required information. For example, where inadequate information has been provided to make an informed assessment.

Signposting

24. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
- [Clean Air Strategy 2018](#)
 - [25 Year Environment Plan](#)

- [National Policy Statement for Ports](#)
- [The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)
- [Clean air for Cornwall strategy](#)
- [Clean air strategy for the South Hams and West Devon](#)
- [MARPOL Annex VI](#)
- [Prevention of air Pollution from Ships](#)

25. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Air quality: explaining air pollution – at a glance](#)
- [UK Air Information Resource](#)
- [World Port Sustainability Program](#)
- [Environmental ship index](#)

Iteration 3 draft

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Biodiversity		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	<p>Living within environmental limits</p> <p>Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.</p> <p>Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.</p> <p>Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.</p>		
Other relevant policies	SW-MPA-1 SW-MPA-2 SW-MPA-3 SW-MPA-4 SW-MPA-6 SW-HAB-1 SW-NIS-1 SW-NIS-2 SW-NIS-3		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW	NE	SE

Policy drafting template SW-BIO-1

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.
Grouping	Species	Code	SW-BIO-1

Policy

SW-BIO-1

Proposals that incorporate features that enhance or facilitate species adaptation or migration, natural native habitat connectivity or net environmental gain will be supported.

Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts on native habitat and species adaptation or connectivity, migration or net environmental gain must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:

- a) avoid
- b) minimise
- c) mitigate significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, natural native habitat connectivity or net environmental gain.

What is native habitat and species adaptation and connectivity?

1. Native habitats are those which occur within their natural range in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions. Adaptation is the ability of native habitats, species and populations to respond to changes in the environment. Adaptation includes the natural succession of habitats and range shifts in response to climatic and other environmental changes. The ability of habitats and species to adapt to climate change is also addressed by policies regarding climate change.
2. Species connectivity allows the movement of individuals, juveniles and groups preventing individual or group isolation. Habitat connectivity allows the movement of nutrients and supports species connectivity through the presence of continuous suitable habitat.

What is species migration?

3. Migration is the seasonal movement of populations of animals, for example for breeding or feeding purposes. Migration may occur over a small distance or over a much larger, international, distance. Species can migrate within, to and from the south west marine plan areas.

What is net environmental gain?

4. Marine environmental net gain is still an evolving concept. At present there is no working definition and the most applicable definition comes from the [National Planning Policy Framework](#), which extends to mean low water. It describes environmental net gain as contributing to the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low

carbon economy. One aim of the [25 Year Environment Plan](#), which also encompasses the marine environment, is to embed an environmental net gain principle for development.

Where are the native habitats and species in the south west marine plan areas?

5. The south west marine plan areas support a diverse range of habitats and species, some of which are designated as marine protected areas and some of which lie outside of the marine protected area network. In the south west marine plan areas various priority habitats have been identified, such as intertidal mudflats, fragile sponge communities and maerl beds as shown in figure xxx. Additionally, the south west offshore marine plan area is home to the only deep sea habitats in English waters, hosting *Madrepora oculata* and *Lophelia pertusa* reef forming cold water corals. Some priority species distribution also extend into the south west plan areas including the pink sea fan, fan mussel and stalked jellyfish as shown in figure XXX. Marine protected areas are a key tool for protecting marine biodiversity in the south west marine plan areas and are covered in this plan by policies SW-MPA-1, SW-MPA-2, SW-MPA-3, SW-MPA-4 and SW-MPA-6 **<HOLD> SW-MPA-6 name likely to change.**
6. See the [Marine Information System](#) for the location or distribution of broadscale habitats and features of conservation importance. Broadscale habitats and features of conservation importance are species and habitats have been identified as threatened, rare or declining. In addition the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act \(S41\)](#), requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list and features of conservation importance should be used to prioritise habitats and species.

When does migration occur in the south west marine plan areas?

7. Native habitats in the south west marine plan areas are present all year round and seasonality is restricted to mobile species. The south west marine plan areas are important for different reasons at different times of year, for example breeding seabirds in summer, migratory seabirds in winter and seasonal fish spawning and nursery grounds. Grey seals occur in the south west marine plan areas throughout the year including a [breeding population](#) on the Isles of Scilly and around the south west inshore marine plan area. Most pups are born between August and November in the south west inshore marine plan area.
8. Migratory routes are variable from year to year both temporally and spatially. Birds migrating to the UK for the breeding season typically arrive during spring and leave in autumn, for example puffins, kittiwakes and terns on the Isles of Scilly. Bird species which spend the winter in the UK start arriving in October and leave in March, such as the dunlin, pintail and redshank in the Severn Estuary.

Why are the native habitats and species important to the south west marine plan areas?

9. SW-BIO-1 ensures habitats and species have the ability to adapt to future change, and protects migration routes and connectivity between important areas for species.

SW-BIO-1 also encourages enhancement of the marine natural environment through net environmental gain.

10. The natural environment and associated species are important intrinsically and because of the wider benefits to society and economy. For example in the south west marine plan areas:
 - [Native oyster *Ostrea edulis* beds](#) such as those in Carrick Roads which comprise important habitats for other species including crabs and young fish
 - Intertidal mudflats, for example at Hayle, Newquay and the Bristol Channel are important feeding grounds for migrating and wintering birds.
 - Spending time outside in a healthy environment improves wellbeing and the [South West Coastal Path](#), for example, attracts a lot of people to enjoy the surrounding marine environment
 - Healthy coastal habitats and populations of charismatic species can support tourism which is also important to the local economy, for example wildlife watching trips to see basking sharks and seals
11. The ability of habitats to respond to and adapt to climatic and other environmental changes ensures resilience in the natural environment. Particular species may also need to adapt to changes in their habitats, predation or competition. The ability of habitats and species to adapt to change is important for biodiversity both within and outside of marine protected areas. For example [manx shearwater numbers](#) have increased on the Isles of Scilly following the removal of rats from the islands.
12. Migratory routes are essential to the success of key life stages of migratory species, such as breeding. Disruption to migratory pathways can negatively affect the success of a population, potentially threatening long term viability. The south west marine plan areas are important for the migration of basking sharks with Devon and Cornwall a [hotspot](#) for the species from May to August as they migrate north. European eels are an important species in the Severn Estuary. [Adult eels migrate](#) from their freshwater habitats in autumn, predominantly from October to December. Migratory seabirds are also prominent in the south west marine plan areas with breeding seabirds present in summer including [manx shearwater](#) and European [storm petrel](#) on the Isles of Scilly, migratory seabirds in winter including [greenshank](#), [common sandpiper](#) and [snipe](#) on the south west coast in winter.
13. Connectivity between species, habitats and populations (both within and outside of the south west marine plan areas) is important for maintaining genetic diversity and allowing species to undergo seasonal breeding and foraging migrations. Habitat fragmentation and loss as a result of development often has a negative impact such as on population numbers or on the movement of individuals between increasingly isolated populations. This threatens species long term viability.
14. Habitat and species connectivity is particularly relevant where rich marine habitats support fish, marine mammals and bird species in the south west marine plan areas. Telecommunication cable laying and increased renewable energy resources along with the predicted effects of climate change could potentially lead to habitat fragmentation. [Deep sea habitats](#) are particularly vulnerable due to slow rates of recovery as discussed further in SW-HAB-1.

15. Ensuring the connectivity of habitats and species within and outside of the south west marine plan areas is also important as it contributes to the maintenance and cohesion of the existing marine protected area network and surrounding seas.
16. Achieving net environmental gain is important for the south west marine plan areas to support resilient ecosystems which can facilitate native habitat and species adaptation and connectivity and species migration, aiding the maintenance of healthy habitats and populations. Environmental net gain associated with projects is already apparent in the south west marine plan areas, for example the [Walborough](#) project which aimed to improve flood protection in North Somerset and restored lagoon mudflat and saltmarsh habitats in the process.
17. SW-BIO-1 contributes to multiple UK policy areas and initiatives. The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 are part of a set of policies to help the UK meet our aim to achieve clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. The directive describes good environmental status in 11 main points which cover all of the important aspects of the marine ecosystem and all of the main human pressures on them. From this a programme of measures for achieving good environmental status was developed in three parts.
18. Marine planning was recognised in the [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK Programme of Measures as a measure of addressing habitat and species features specifically through descriptors 1, 4, 6 and 7.](#)
19. Through encouraging net environmental gain this policy supports the [25 year Environment Plan](#) aim to protect and grow natural capital and support environmental enhancement. This policy contributes to the sustainable development aims in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#), including: meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change; conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and facilitating the use of sustainable materials.

Who is this of interest to?

20. Developers when preparing proposals which may interact with native habitats and species in the south west marine plan areas.
21. Decision-making public authorities including:
 - Local planning authorities
 - Marine licensing authorities
 - The Planning Inspectorate
 - The Crown Estate
 - Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities
 - Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
 - Maritime and Coastguard Agency
 - Port and Harbour Authorities
22. Advisory public authorities including:
 - Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
 - Joint Nature Conservation Committee
 - Natural England

How should this policy be applied?

23. Decision-makers will support proposals that result in net environmental gain, incorporate measures that enhance or facilitate native habitat and species connectivity, adaptation and migration, enabling the environment to respond to climate change and development. This may include novel designs, and collaboration between developers and public authorities. Proposals must comply with relevant legislation and other marine plan policies.
24. SW-BIO-1 requires proposals to avoid negative effects which may not enable the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine and coastal ecosystems.
25. Public authorities should apply these policies proportionally on proposals that will interact with native habitat and species adaptation or connectivity, species migration or net environmental gain. Determination may be informed by a relevant assessment. An assessment to determine how a proposal can be beneficial to habitat and species adaptation, migration and connectivity should:
 - ensure understanding of habitat types within and adjacent to the area of proposal
 - ensure understanding of importance of these habitats to species – important species are migratory, breeding or roosting birds, spawning and migratory fish, and mobile species such as marine mammals
 - consider the ability for habitats to naturally migrate with changing climate and/or if the proposal could assist habitat and species migration
26. Proposals should incorporate measures that enhance or facilitate native habitat and species adaptation and connectivity, species migration and net environmental gain within the south west marine plan areas. Enhancement refers to measures taken which have a positive impact, for example coastal protection works that enhance fish habitat by creating additional saltmarsh. Where artificial structures are used to recreate habitat, these proposals must be in line with policy. Where positive impacts have been identified, proposals must also assess adverse impacts in line with relevant legislation. Enhancement is not a substitute for avoidance, minimisation or mitigation measures.
27. Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate any significant adverse impacts on native habitat and species adaptation or connectivity, species migration or net environmental gain within the south west marine plan areas - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc. Measures could include:
 - avoid - siting developments in a location which does not fragment habitats or create a barrier to habitat adaptation, seasonal migrations or species movements
 - minimise - avoiding operational work during seasonal migrations or the use of temporary or floating structures
 - mitigate - the use of soft infrastructure solutions, novel infrastructure design that allows for juvenile fish shelters and corridors for movement
28. Proposals are still required to be in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations including Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Marine

and Coastal Access Act, Environmental Impact Assessment also other national legislation such as The Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009, Salmon and Fresh Water Fisheries Act 1975 and National Policy Statements where they apply.

29. It is essential to identify potential for net environmental gain and the location of features and sites within the south west marine plan areas that are important for enabling native habitats to adapt and connect and species to adapt, connect and migrate as well as those important for wider biodiversity, including beyond marine protected areas.
30. Proposals must consider the available evidence and identify any significant adverse impacts on native habitat and species adaptation or connectivity, species migration or net environmental gain.
31. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.
32. Proposals having a significant adverse impact on native habitat and species adaptation or connectivity, species migration or net environmental gain must include evidence illustrating consideration of avoiding, minimising or mitigating impacts. This evidence will enable public authorities to make an informed assessment as to whether or not the proposal meets the policies. Evidence to demonstrate consideration could be drawn from sources including the South West Marine Plan and the Marine Information System.
33. It is important to note that where evidence is not available there may still be habitats and species that are sensitive or of conservation concern. Proposals may require additional and more specific evidence.
34. Where new evidence emerges that improves or changes the evidence provided here, this must be used in applying these policies. Both public authorities and proposals should consider this along with any other evidence gathered.

Signposting

35. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
 - [Marine Coastal and Access Act 2009](#)
 - [25 Year Environmental Plan](#)
 - [Climate Change Act 2009](#)
 - [Offshore Marine Conservation \(Natural Habitats &c.\) Regulations 2007](#)
 - [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
 - [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#)
 - [National Policy Planning Framework](#)
 - [Town and Country planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#)

36. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#)
- [Conservation Advice Packages](#)
- [Estuary Edges: Ecological Design Advice](#)
- [Features of Conservation Importance \(FOCI\) identified by JNCC](#)
- [S41 List](#)

37. MIS Data Layers

- European Marine Sites and Ramsars
 - o Special Areas of Conservation
 - o Special Protection Areas
 - o Ramsar Sites
- Marine Conservation Zones
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- Seabird Density
 - o Summer
 - o Winter
- Habitats and Species
 - o Species of Conservation Importance (FOCI)
 - o Habitats of Conservation Importance (HOI)
 - o Broadscale Habitats
 - o Important Bird Areas
- Seal Density
 - o Grey seals at sea (density)
 - o Harbour seals at sea (density)
- Fish habitat
 - o Herring spawning potential
 - o High intensity fish nursery grounds (No. species)
 - o High intensity fish spawning grounds (No. species)

Policy drafting template SW-BIO-3

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	<p>Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.</p> <p>Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.</p> <p>Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.</p>
Grouping	Ecosystem approach	Code	SW-BIO-3

Policy

SW-BIO-3

Proposals that enhance coastal habitats where important in their own right and/or for ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services will be supported.

Proposals must take account of the space required for coastal habitats where important in their own right and/or for ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services and demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:

- a) avoid
- b) minimise
- c) mitigate for net loss of coastal habitat.

What are coastal habitats and ecosystems?

1. Habitat is defined as the physical surroundings in which organisms live and interact. Coastal habitats occur where land meets sea. Coastal habitats in the south west inshore marine plan area comprise vegetated shingle, maritime cliffs and slopes, saltmarsh, sand dunes, sandflats, mudflats, seagrass beds, intertidal rocky reefs and intertidal sea caves. An ecosystem is the dynamic complex of plant and animal communities and the surrounding non-living environment that supports them in the south west inshore marine plan areas.

What is ecosystem functioning?

2. The functionality of an ecosystem depends on the relationship within, among and between species and the non-living environment as well as the physical and

chemical interactions within the environment. Effective ecosystem function is reliant upon solar energy flow, for example photosynthesis by phytoplankton, mineral and nutrient cycling such as the absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere such as by saltmarsh, and water cycling.

What are ecosystem services?

3. Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from the natural environment. The classification of ecosystem services adopted by the [UK National Ecosystem Approach](#) categorises services as follows: regulating, provisioning, cultural and supporting services.
 - regulating services such as flood defence and carbon sequestration services (the process of capturing carbon dioxide from the environment) for example sand dunes which act as natural flood defences
 - provisioning services comprise products obtained from the environment such as food and resources, for example fish stocks targeted by fisheries
 - cultural services are non-physical and connected to human behaviours and values, for example aesthetic values, cultural heritage values and tourism
 - supporting services are necessary for the function of all other ecosystem services. Impacts on humans from supporting services are likely to be indirect or occur over a long period of time. Examples include oxygen production through photosynthesis, soil formation and retention and habitat provision
4. Habitats such as saltmarshes, sand dunes, seagrass beds and mudflats provide a variety of ecosystem services. Saltmarshes and mudflats play an important natural role in protecting the coast from flood events, by reducing wave energy and buffering flood waters. Well-developed sand dune systems act to stabilise sediments, therefore reducing coastal erosion.
5. Saltmarshes and seagrass beds also provide a natural carbon sequestration service. Saltmarsh habitat is one of the most productive ecosystems in the world and as such can sequester a large amount of carbon. Importantly, due to the anoxic (without oxygen) nature of the habitat, the carbon is often shifted from the short term to the long term carbon cycle. This capability is a valuable asset of many of the world's ecosystems.

Where are coastal habitats in the south west inshore marine plan area?

6. Figure xxx shows the distribution of coastal habitats in the south west inshore marine plan area *<HOLD> dependent on data available from JNCC / evidence request*. In addition up-to-date maps of designated coastal sites and marine protected areas are available on the [Marine Information System](#). The [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act \(S41\)](#), requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list and features of conservation importance should be used to prioritise habitats that this policy applies to.

When are coastal habitats present in the south west inshore marine plan area?

7. Coastal habitats are present all year round in the south west inshore plan area and continuously support ecosystem functioning and the provision of ecosystem services.

Why are coastal habitats important to the south west inshore marine plan area?

8. The coastal landscape is variable within this marine plan area with expanses of estuarine habitats associated with the Severn Estuary which has the second highest tidal range in the world. This region supports mud flats and sand flats, reclaimed marshes and rocky intertidal areas as well as extensive wet grasslands. The habitat changes to high coastal cliffs and biogenic reefs, sand and gravel banks in the Bristol Channel, beyond which there are more estuarine habitats, biogenic reefs and sand and gravel banks as important areas of wetlands. Rocky coasts and cliffs become more prominent towards Lands End interspersed with some estuarine habitats including mudflats and saltmarsh as well as sandy bays.
9. There is a rugged coastline at Lands End including high sea cliffs, deep inlets and small coves as well as submerged reefs. The southern coast of the south west inshore marine plan area is rugged in nature, interspersed with south facing sandy bays and coves. There are estuarine habitats linked to sandbanks, mudflats and Atlantic salt meadows. The Isles of Scilly also boast a rugged, rocky coastline on the outer edges however there are shallow seas and sand beaches on the interior side.
10. The south west inshore marine plan area supports internationally significant populations of breeding and overwintering seabirds, wading birds and waterfowl. These, in addition to the recreation associated with the coast for example the beaches (some of which are detailed [here](#)), surfing and walking, make cultural ecosystem services a draw to the south west inshore marine plan area.
11. The change or loss of coastal habitats can impact the function of the local ecosystem and the provision of ecosystem services. Sandflats and mudflats and rocky reefs provide natural coastal protection in the south west inshore marine plan area whilst saltmarshes and seagrass beds absorb carbon from the atmosphere. Dunes, sandflats and mudflats offer natural coastal protection throughout the south west inshore marine plan area whilst saltmarsh habitat absorbs carbon from the atmosphere. The rich diversity of wildlife and natural beauty of marine protected areas in the south west inshore marine plan area offer inspiring places to live, work and visit. The [Joint Nature Conservation Committee](#) has explored the components and processes associated with marine and coastal ecosystem services.
12. Coastal habitats are vulnerable to human pressures including climate change. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has developed a [database](#) which aims to understand the relationship between human activities and their associated pressures on the marine and coastal environment. [Pressures](#) associated with coastal ecosystems include but are not limited to permanent or temporary physical loss or change in habitat.
13. Functional coastal ecosystems in the south west inshore marine plan area play a significant role in achieving the UK government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas and the [south west marine plans vision](#) for a conserved and enhanced marine and coastal environment. Coastal habitats comprise part of the [UK programme of measures](#) to achieve 'Good Environmental Status' in UK waters under the [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#). The main descriptor of 'Good Environmental Status' for coastal habitats is Descriptor

one: 'Biological diversity is maintained. The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions'. These commitments are reinforced through the in the [UK Marine Policy Statement](#) through a commitment to healthy marine and coastal habitats. Functional coastal ecosystems also contribute to the [UK Marine Policy Statement](#) objective, 'healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems'.

14. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) includes commitments to 'reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbating the impacts of physical changes to the coast' (para. 167). The [25 year Environment Plan](#) from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commits to reducing risks from flooding and coastal erosion and promotes environmental enhancement. This commitment is also supported by the [National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England](#).

Who is this of interest to?

15. This policy applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.
16. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).

How should this policy be applied?

17. This policy applies to coastal habitats throughout the south west inshore marine plan area.
18. Public authorities will support proposals that enhance coastal habitats in their own right and / or for ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services where it complies with other policies in this plan and other relevant legislation.
19. Public authorities will assess if the proposal affects coastal habitats in their own right and / or ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services on a case-by case basis. Public authorities should apply these policies proportionally on proposals that will interact with coastal habitats in their own right and / or ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services. Determination may be informed by a relevant assessment. An assessment to determine how a proposal can be beneficial to coastal habitats should:
- ensure understanding of habitat types within and adjacent to the area of proposal
 - ensure understanding of importance of these habitats to ecosystem functioning and ecosystem services
 - consider the space required for effective function of coastal habitats and/or if the proposal could assist coastal habitat enhancement

20. Proposals that enhance coastal habitats should include information demonstrating how this will be achieved. Enhancement refers to measures taken which have a positive impact, for example coastal protection works that enhance fish habitat by creating additional saltmarsh. Where artificial structures are used to recreate habitat, these proposals must be in line with policy, for example SW-NIS-1, SW-NIS-2 and SW-NIS-3. Where positive impacts have been identified, proposals must also assess adverse impacts in line with relevant legislation. Enhancement is not a substitute for avoidance, minimisation or mitigation measures.
21. Proposals must consider the available evidence and identify any significant adverse impacts on coastal habitats. Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate the net loss of coastal habitats within the south west inshore plan area – proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) and so on. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. Approval will also depend on other material considerations taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.
22. Proposals must still comply with requirements under relevant legislation including the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#), the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#), the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#), the [Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#), and other national legislation.
23. It is important to note that where evidence is not available there may still be habitats and species that are sensitive or of conservation concern. Proposals may require additional and more specific evidence.
24. Where new evidence emerges that improves or changes the evidence provided here, this must be used in applying these policies. Both public authorities and proposals should consider this along with any other evidence gathered.

Signposting

25. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
- [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Marine Coastal and Access Act 2009](#)
 - [National Policy Planning Framework](#)
 - [Town and Country planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#)
 - [25 Year Environmental Plan](#)
26. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
- [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#)
 - [Conservation Advice Packages](#)
 - [Estuary Edges: Ecological Design Advice](#)
 - [Features of Conservation Importance \(FOCI\) identified by JNCC](#)
 - [S41 List](#)
27. MIS data layers that may help implement this policy include:

- European Sites and Ramsars
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
 - Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
 - Ramsar Sites
- Marine Conservation Zones
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- Habitats and Species
 - Habitats of Conservation Importance (HOCI)
 - Broadscale Habitats
- Shoreline Management Plans
- Landscape Designation

Iteration 3 draft

Policy drafting template SW-BIO-4

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.
Grouping	Species	Code	SW-BIO-4

Policy

SW-BIO-4

Proposals that enhance the distribution and net extent of priority habitats and distribution of priority species in the south west marine plan areas will be supported. Proposals must avoid reducing the distribution and net extent of priority habitats and other habitats priority species rely on.

What are priority habitats and species?

1. Priority habitats and species are those recognised as being of 'principal importance' for the conservation of biological diversity in England under the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act \(2006\) \(Section 41\)](#). Priority habitats comprise coastal and offshore habitats including but not limited to intertidal mudflats, subtidal sands and gravels, *Sabellaria* reefs, sea grass beds and sheltered muddy gravels. Priority species include but are not limited to herring gull, common maerl, *Arctica islandica*, native oyster and stalked jellyfish.
2. Priority habitats and species have been identified through additional organisations and legislation. Features of Conservation Importance, including marine habitats, are identified by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and listed in the [Ecological Network Guidance](#). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations and the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations require protection for [Annex 1 habitats and Annex II species](#). The [Convention for the Protection of the North-East Atlantic](#) has developed a [list of threatened and / or declining species and habitats](#).

What is Enhancement?

3. Enhancement refers to measures taken which have a positive impact, for example the creation of saltmarsh habitat as part of a coastal realignment scheme which can provide natural flood and erosion defence while acting as important habitat for wading birds. Environmental enhancement aims to improve the condition of natural capital assets, a knock on effect of which is increased value to people through the benefits of the ecosystem services provided by that asset.

Where are priority habitats and species in the south west marine plan areas?

4. Maps of the known distribution of priority habitats and species are available on [Marine Information Systems](#).
5. The south west marine plan areas have a wide range of priority habitats, varying in abundance, extent and condition. Subtidal sands and gravels occur throughout the

south west marine plan areas, including in the Bristol Channel, around the Isles of Scilly and along the south Devon coast. Sheltered muddy gravels and *Sabellaria alveolata* reefs occur within the Bristol Channel. Intertidal mudflats occur in various estuaries including Turo and the estuaries around Plymouth. There are prominent seagrass beds in the Fal estuary.

6. The pink sea fan, a priority species, is present in the south west inshore marine plan area around the coasts of Cornwall and along the south coast of Devon, as well as throughout the Isles of Scilly. The stalked jellyfish occurs around the Isles of Scilly, Lundy Island and along the coast between Plymouth and Salcombe in Devon. The short snouted seahorse is found in the inshore marine plan area at Start Point in Devon. Blue fin tuna have been observed in the south west marine plan areas. [Herring gulls](#) occur throughout the south west marine plan area. [Balearic shearwaters](#) occur off the coast of Cornwall and Devon from July to September. Basking sharks occur off the coast of Cornwall from May to August as the region is a [global hotspot](#) for them. [Blue sharks](#) also occur in the south west marine plan areas.

When is this policy relevant in the south west marine plan areas?

7. Priority habitats are present in the south west marine plan areas all year round. The seasonal and temporal variations which exist are species and project dependent and individual projects will need to consider these temporal aspects of priority species. Decision-makers will need to apply the best available evidence and the precautionary principle on a case-by-case basis.

Why are priority habitats and species important to the south west marine plan areas?

8. Priority species are important in their own right for their contribution to biodiversity and can encourage eco-tourism which brings economic prosperity to the south west region.
9. [Basking sharks](#) are a large, charismatic priority species, typically present in the south west marine plan areas from May to August. The [short-snouted seahorse](#) is a priority species occurring along the south coast of the south west inshore marine plan area, often in association with [seagrass](#) beds which are a priority habitat.
10. Priority habitats which occur in the south west marine plan areas include but are not restricted to Maerl beds, sheltered muddy gravels, intertidal boulder communities, coastal saltmarsh, estuarine rocky habitats, seagrass beds and intertidal mudflats. There are deep water habitats in the south west offshore marine plan area, including [cold water coral reefs](#), namely *Lophelia pertusa* reefs, which are also on the [OSPAR List of threatened and / or declining habitats and species](#).
11. Not all priority habitats and species occur within designated sites. Some habitats and species that are recognised as internationally important are not always present to an internationally significant extent in the south west marine plan areas and are therefore not designated. These habitats and species may still be important at a local level but receive less protection compared to designated features. They are protected under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 \(for inshore areas\)](#) and for offshore areas, the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats](#)

[and Species Regulations 2017](#). This policy also protects non-designated habitats that are important for protected species.

12. The [UK Marine Policy Statement](#) states that marine plans will contribute to the achievement of the UK's high level marine objectives, which includes the following: 'Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems' (Marine Policy Statement box 1).
13. SW-BIO-4 contributes to multiple UK policy areas and initiatives. The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 are part of a set of policies to help the UK meet our aim to achieve clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. The directive describes good environmental status in 11 main points which cover all of the important aspects of the marine ecosystem and all of the main human pressures on them. From this a programme of measures for achieving good environmental status was developed in three parts. Marine planning was recognised in the [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK Programme of Measures](#) as a measure of addressing habitat and species features specifically through descriptors 1, 4, 6 and 7.
14. Through encouraging environmental enhancement this policy supports the [25 year Environment Plan](#) aim to protect and grow natural capital and support environmental net gain. This policy contributes to the sustainable development aims in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Who is this of interest to?

15. This policy applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.
16. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).
17. Public authorities must also have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Such functions include but are not limited to:
 - strategic planning
 - land and water management
 - waste management
 - access management
 - flood and erosion risk management
 - fisheries management

How should this policy be applied?

18. This policy applies to priority habitats and species, and habitats relied upon by priority species throughout the south west marine plan areas.
19. Public authorities will support proposals that enhance the distribution and net extent of priority habitats and species in the south west marine plan areas where it complies with other policies in this plan and relevant legislation.
20. Proposals that enhance the distribution and net extent of priority habitats and distribution of priority species should include information demonstrating how this will be achieved. Enhancement refers to measures taken which have a positive impact. An example of enhancement could include the removal of hard coastal defence structures in favour of soft engineering which enables habitat roll back.
21. All current available evidence relating to priority habitats, priority species and habitats relied upon by priority species must be taken into account for proposals in the south west marine plan areas.
22. Data and evidence on the location, distribution and extent of priority habitats and species throughout the south west marine plan areas is still developing. The absence of evidence does not mean that there are no priority habitats or species. Additional proposal-specific evidence may be required. It is essential for proposals to identify the location of priority habitats and potential distribution of priority species within the south west marine plan areas that may be affected by the proposal. Where new evidence emerges that improves or changes the evidence provided here, this must be taken account of in applying the policy. Public authorities and proposals should consider this along with any other evidence gathered. SW-BIO-4 relates to all priority habitats and species (including habitats relied upon by priority species) in the south west marine plan areas.
23. Where positive impacts have been identified, proposals must also assess adverse impacts in line with relevant legislation. Enhancement is not a substitute for avoidance, minimisation or mitigation measures.
24. Proposals must still comply with requirements under relevant legislation including the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#), the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#), the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#), the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#) and the [Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#), and other national legislation.
25. Proposals must demonstrate that they will avoid reductions in the distribution and net extent of priority habitats and species in the south west marine plan areas. This can be shown through the proposal demonstrating consideration of its location, for example, or of the location of any infrastructure and the effect of any change to habitats or species during construction or operation of the project.
26. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans. Public authorities should implement this policy proportionally on proposals that may reduce priority habitat and species distribution and extent.

Signposting

27. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations \(2017\)](#),
- [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
- [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(SSSI consenting\)](#)
- [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act \(2006\) \(Section 41\)](#)
- [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
- [The Infrastructure Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations \(2017\)](#),
- [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [National Policy Statements](#)

28. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)
- [Marine Works \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [UK Marine Policy Statement](#)
- [National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure](#)
- [Designated sites view](#)

Key data sets on MIS:

- Habitats Directive Annex 1 features
- Habitats and Species
 - Habitats of Conservation Importance
 - Features of Conservation Importance

Policy drafting template SW-BIO-5

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species. Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems. Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.
Grouping	Ecosystem approach	Code	SW-BIO-5

Policy

SW-BIO-5

Proposals must demonstrate that they will in order of preference:

- a) avoid
 - b) minimise
 - c) mitigate significant adverse effects on marine or coastal natural capital assets, or
 - d) if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse effects on marine or coastal natural capital assets proposals should state the case for proceeding.
- Proposals should seek to enhance marine or coastal natural capital assets where possible.

What is a marine natural capital asset?

1. In general, natural capital is the sum of our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, our air and our seas. [Natural assets](#) include soil, water, air and all living things and can be referred to as '[stocks](#)'. These are all elements of nature that either directly or indirectly bring value to people and the country at large. They do this in many ways chiefly by providing us with food, clean air and water, wildlife, energy, wood, recreation and protection from hazards.
2. Natural capital is an emerging concept. The approach to defining, identifying and considering marine natural capital assets in decision-making is in development with the current focus on building a common and shared knowledge base to enable understanding of [marine environments in the context of natural capital assets](#). Until the marine natural capital approach is agreed, the more established ecosystem services approach should be considered when applying this policy.

3. The [Ecosystem Approach](#) and [Ecosystem Services Approach](#) are important elements of sustainable development. Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from the natural environment. The classification of ecosystem services adopted by the [UK National Ecosystem Approach](#) categorises services as follows: regulating, provisioning cultural and supporting services.
 - regulating services such as flood defence and carbon sequestration services (the process of capturing carbon dioxide from the environment), for example sand dunes which act as natural flood defences
 - provisioning services comprise products obtained from the environment such as food and resources, for example fish stocks targeted by fisheries
 - cultural services are non-physical and connected to human behaviours and values, for example aesthetic values, cultural heritage values and tourism
 - supporting services are necessary for the function of all other ecosystem services. Impacts on humans from supporting services are likely to be indirect or occur over a long period of time. Examples include oxygen production through photosynthesis, soil formation and retention and habitat provision

What is enhancement?

4. Enhancement refers to measures taken which have a positive impact, for example the creation of saltmarsh habitat as part of a coastal realignment scheme which can provide natural flood and erosion defence while acting as important habitat for wading birds. Environmental enhancement aims to improve the condition of natural capital assets, a knock on effect of which is increased value to people through the benefits of the ecosystem services provided by that asset.

Where are marine natural capital assets in the south west marine plan areas?

5. Approaches to identify marine natural capital assets is in development. The ecosystem services present in the south west marine plan areas include but are not limited to:
 - large marine species including basking shark and dolphin which contribute to the function of the ecosystem and make the south west an attractive place to visit
 - large expanses of mudflats particularly on the north coast of the inshore marine plan area comprising a natural flood defence
 - fish spawning and nursery grounds support fish stocks in the area contributing to the provision of food
6. The known distribution and location of the habitats can be found in [Marine Information Systems](#).

When are marine natural capital assets present in the south west marine plan areas?

7. Ecosystem services, and therefore natural capital, are functional throughout the year. Natural capital associated with recreation the peak is during the spring and summer months when tourism and recreational activities are greatest.

Why are marine natural capital assets important to the south west marine plan areas?

8. Natural capital which supports recreation is particularly important to this region due to the tourist industry which peaks during the summer months. Recreation activities include but are not limited to wildlife watching, for example dolphins and basking sharks, surfing and walking.
9. Habitats such as sand dunes, seagrass beds and mudflats provide a variety of ecosystem services. Mudflats, for example in Plym and Tamar estuaries around Plymouth, play an important natural role in protecting the coast from flood events by reducing wave energy and buffering flood waters. Well-developed sand dune systems such as those at [Branton Burrows](#), act to stabilise sediments, therefore reducing coastal erosion. Seagrass beds, for example in the Isles of Scilly and in the Fal estuary, are considered to be an important carbon sink and sediment stabilising habitat within the marine environment.
10. Marine species such as fish and shellfish are an important component of provisioning services. In the south west marine plan areas commercially [targeted species](#) include but are not limited to crab and lobster, which are particularly important to fisheries around the [Isles of Scilly](#), sardines, scallops and monkfish. Cultural services in the south west marine plan areas contribute to health and wellbeing, for example the [south west coastal path](#), the longest national trail in the country, which encourages people to spend time outdoors and is dependent upon a healthy coastal environment to remain attractive.
11. Supporting services underpin all of the other services and occur throughout the south west marine plan area, these services include primary production by phytoplankton, seagrasses and seaweeds and nutrient cycling, aided by burrowing worms in seabed sediments. [Biodiversity](#) is an important component of healthy and resilient ecosystems and is considered fundamental to the success of enhancing natural capital assets.
12. Policy SW-BIO-6 will also aid the achievement of Good Environmental Status for Descriptor 1, 'Biological diversity is maintained. The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions' as detailed in the [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK Programme of Measures](#).
13. Policy SW-BIO-6 also contributes to the UK high level marine objectives for living within environmental limits and supports the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) aim to protect and grow natural capital and support environmental enhancement. This policy contributes to the sustainable development aims in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#).

Who is this of interest to?

14. This policy applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.

15. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).
16. Public authorities must also have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Such functions include but are not limited to:
- strategic planning
 - land and water management
 - waste management
 - access management
 - flood and erosion risk management
 - fisheries management

How should this policy be applied?

17. Public authorities should support proposals that enhance marine natural capital assets within the south west marine plan areas where they comply with other policies in this plan and relevant legislation.
18. Public authorities will assess if the proposal affects marine natural capital assets on a case-by-case basis. Decision-makers should seek advice on how to consider marine natural capital assets from the statutory nature conservation bodies. Where advice states that it is not possible to assess the impact there will be no further requirements for decision-makers to consider the marine natural capital assets beyond that which is required by the ecosystem services approach. The requirements on how to consider marine natural capital assets under policy SW-BIO-5 may change if guidance is issued. New and evolving advice will not be applied retrospectively to activities that have already been consented.
19. Proposals that enhance marine natural capital assets should include information demonstrating how this will be achieved. Where positive impacts are identified, proposals must also assess adverse impacts in line with relevant legislation. Enhancement is not a substitute for avoidance, protection or mitigation measures.
20. Proposals must still comply with requirements under relevant legislation including the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#), the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#), the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#), the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#), the [Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#), and other national legislation.
21. Proposals that have significant adverse impacts on the marine natural capital assets must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate any significant adverse impacts on marine natural capital assets within the south west marine plan areas - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) and so on. Actions that can be carried out to avoid, minimise or mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine natural capital

assets will be specific to the natural capital asset under consideration. Decision-makers will assess the use of the mitigation hierarchy on a case-by-case basis.

22. Where it is not possible to mitigate, proposals should demonstrate option (d) and state the case for proceeding including how the proposal supports the High Level Marine Objectives, south west plan vision and other south west plan policies.
23. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval for the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.
24. It is important to note that where evidence is not available there may still be habitats and species that are sensitive or of conservation concern. Proposals may require additional and more specific evidence.
25. Where new evidence emerges that improves or changes the evidence provided here, this must be used in applying these policies. Both public authorities and proposals should consider this along with any other evidence gathered.

Signposting

26. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
 - [Marine Coastal and Access Act 2009](#)
 - [25 Year Environment Plan](#)
 - [Delivering a Golden Legacy: a growth strategy for inbound tourism 2012-2020](#)
27. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
 - [Natural England Ecosystem Services Transfer Toolkit](#)
 - [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#)
 - [Conservation Advice Packages](#)
 - [Features of Conservation Importance \(FOCI\) identified by JNCC](#)
 - [S41 List](#)
 - [JNCC Ecosystem Approach](#)
28. Current MIS Data Layers which may help when applying this policy. This list may change as more evidence becomes available. This list provides the distribution of protected sites and some species and habitats in the absence of an ecosystem services or natural capital assets evidence base.
 - European Marine Sites and Ramsars
 - Special Areas of Conservation
 - Special Protection Areas
 - Ramsar Sites
 - Marine Conservation Zones
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
 - Habitats Directive Annex I features
 - Annex1 Sandbanks

- Annex 1 Reefs
- Seabird Density
 - Summer
 - Winter
- Habitats and Species
 - Species of Conservation Importance (FOCI)
 - Habitats of Conservation Importance (HOCl)
 - Broadscale Habitats
- Nature Reserves and Trusts
 - RSPB Reserves
 - National Nature Reserves
 - Important Bird Areas
- Seal Density
 - Grey seals at sea (density)
 - Harbour seals at sea (density)
- Fish habitat
 - Herring spawning potential
 - High intensity fish nursery grounds (No. species)
 - High intensity fish spawning grounds (No. species)
- Landscape Designations
 - Heritage Coast
 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Recreation Models (all data layers)
- RYA Recreational Boating (all data layers)

Policy drafting template SW-BIO-6

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	<p>Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.</p> <p>Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.</p> <p>Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.</p>
Grouping	Ecosystem approach	Code	SW-BIO-6

Policy

SW-BIO-6

Public authorities with functions capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas should take measures to:

- a.) avoid
- b.) minimise
- c.) mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine or coastal natural capital assets and should seek to enhance marine or coastal natural capital assets where possible.

What is a marine natural capital asset?

1. Natural capital, as defined in the [25 year environment plan](#), is the sum of our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, our air and our seas. [Natural capital assets](#) include but are not limited to soil, water, air and all living things and can be referred to as '[stocks](#)'. These are all elements of nature that either directly or indirectly bring value to people and the country at large. They do this in many ways chiefly by providing us with food, clean air and water, wildlife, energy, wood, recreation and protection from hazards.
2. Natural capital is an emerging concept. The approach to defining, identifying and considering marine natural capital assets in decision-making is in development with the current focus on building a common and shared knowledge base to enable understanding of [marine environments in the context of natural capital assets](#). Until the marine natural capital approach is agreed, the more established ecosystem services approach should be considered when applying this policy.

3. The [Ecosystem Approach](#) and [Ecosystem Services Approach](#) are important elements of sustainable development. Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems. The classification of ecosystem services adopted by the [UK National Ecosystem Approach](#) categorises services as follows: regulating, provisioning cultural and supporting services.
- regulating services for example flood defence and carbon sequestration services (the process of capturing carbon dioxide from the environment), such as sand dunes which act as natural flood defences
 - provisioning services comprise products obtained from the environment such as food and resources for example fish stocks targeted by fisheries
 - cultural services are non-physical and connected to human behaviours and values, for example aesthetic values, cultural heritage values and tourism
 - supporting services are necessary for the function of all other ecosystem services. Impacts on humans from supporting services are likely to be indirect or occur over a long period of time. Examples include oxygen production through photosynthesis, soil formation and retention and habitat provision such as by reefs

What is enhancement?

4. Enhancement refers to measures taken which have a positive impact, for example the creation of saltmarsh habitat as part of a coastal realignment scheme which can provide natural flood and erosion defence while acting as important habitat for wading birds. Environmental enhancement aims to improve the condition of natural capital assets, a knock on effect of which is increased value to people through the benefits of the ecosystem services provided by that asset.

Where are marine natural capital assets in the south west marine plan areas?

5. Approaches to identify marine natural capital assets is in development. The ecosystem services present in the south west marine plan area include but are not limited to:
- large marine species including basking shark and dolphin which contribute to the function of the ecosystem and make the south west an attractive place to visit
 - large expanses of mudflats particularly on the north coast of the north inshore marine plan area comprising a natural flood defence
 - fish spawning and nursery grounds support fish stocks in the area contributing to the provision of food
6. The known distribution and location of the habitats can be found in [Marine Information Systems](#).

When are marine natural capital assets present in the south west marine plan area?

7. Ecosystem services, and therefore natural capital, are functional throughout the year. Natural capital associated with recreation the peak is during the spring and summer months when tourism and recreational activities are greatest.

Why are natural capital assets important to the south west marine plan areas?

8. Natural capital which supports recreation is particularly important to this region due to the tourist industry which peaks during the summer months. Recreation activities include but are not limited to wildlife watching, for example dolphins and basking sharks, surfing and walking.
9. Habitats such as sand dunes, seagrass beds and mudflats provide a variety of ecosystem services. Mudflats, for example in Plym and Tamar estuaries around Plymouth, play an important natural role in protecting the coast from flood events by reducing wave energy and buffering flood waters. Well-developed sand dune systems such as those at [Branton Burrows](#), act to stabilise sediments, therefore reducing coastal erosion. Seagrass beds, for example in the Isles of Scilly and in the Fal estuary, are considered to be an important carbon sink and sediment stabilising habitat within the marine environment.
10. Marine species such as fish and shellfish are an important component of provisioning services. In the south west marine plan areas commercially [targeted species](#) include but are not limited to crab and lobster, which are particularly important to fisheries around the [Isles of Scilly](#), sardines, scallops and monkfish. Cultural services in the south west marine plan areas contribute to health and wellbeing, for example the [south west coastal path](#), the longest national trail in the country, which encourages people to spend time outdoors and is dependent upon a healthy coastal environment to remain attractive.
11. Supporting services underpin all of the other services and occur throughout the south west marine plan area, these services include primary production by phytoplankton, seagrasses and seaweeds and nutrient cycling, aided by burrowing worms in seabed sediments. [Biodiversity](#) is an important component of healthy and resilient ecosystems and is considered fundamental to the success of enhancing natural capital assets.
12. Policy SW-BIO-6 will also aid the achievement of Good Environmental Status for Descriptor 1, 'Biological diversity is maintained. The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions' as detailed in the [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK Programme of Measures](#).
13. Policy SW-BIO-6 also contributes to the UK high level marine objectives for living within environmental limits and supports the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) aim to protect and grow natural capital and support environmental enhancement. This policy contributes to the sustainable development aims in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#).

Who is this of interest to?

14. Public authorities must have regard for this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Decisions related to authorisations and enforcement and their potential to disturb natural capital assets are addressed through policy SW-BIO-5. Public authority functions relevant to SW-BIO-6 include but are not limited to:

- strategic planning, including strategies which promote natural capital enhancement in the south west marine plan areas
- shoreline manage
- flood and erosion risk management
- fisheries management

How should this policy be applied?

15. This policy should be applied by public authorities when carrying out any function capable of affecting natural capital assets. Where possible, public authorities should build in measures to enhance natural capital assets where possible. This could include innovative design for coastal protection works. Public authority functions should not result in significant adverse impacts on natural capital generation in the south west marine plan area. This could include measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate the impact of tourism through sustainable access management, or by developing tourism strategies that include measures to promote sustainable access.
16. Public authorities should seek advice on how to consider natural capital assets from the statutory nature conservation bodies. Where advice states that it is not possible to assess the impact there will be no further requirements for public authorities to consider the natural capital assets. There is no current guidance on how natural capital is considered in the decision-making process. The requirements on how to consider natural capital under policy SW-BIO-6 may change if guidance is issued.

Signposting

17. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
- [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
 - [Marine Coastal and Access Act 2009](#)
 - [25 Year Environment Plan](#)
 - [Delivering a Golden Legacy: a growth strategy for inbound tourism 2012-2020](#)
18. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
- [Natural England Ecosystem Services Transfer Toolkit](#)
 - [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#)
 - [Conservation Advice Packages](#)
 - [Features of Conservation Importance \(FOCI\) identified by JNCC](#)
 - [S41 List](#)
 - [JNCC Ecosystem Approach](#)
19. Current MIS Data Layers which may help when applying this policy. This list may change as more evidence becomes available. This list provides the distribution of protected sites and some species and habitats in the absence of an ecosystem services or natural capital assets evidence base.
- European Marine Sites and Ramsars
 - Special Areas of Conservation
 - Special Protection Areas
 - Ramsar Sites

- Marine Conservation Zones
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- Habitats Directive Annex I features
 - Annex 1 Sandbanks
 - Annex 1 Reefs
- Seabird Density
 - Summer
 - Winter
- Habitats and Species
 - Species of Conservation Importance (FOCI)
 - Habitats of Conservation Importance (HOCl)
 - Broadscale Habitats
- Nature Reserves and Trusts
 - RSPB Reserves
 - National Nature Reserves
 - Important Bird Areas
- Seal Density
 - Grey seals at sea (density)
 - Harbour seals at sea (density)
- Fish habitat
 - Herring spawning potential
 - High intensity fish nursery grounds (No. species)
 - High intensity fish spawning grounds (No. species)
- Landscape Designations
 - Heritage Coast
 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Recreation Models (all data layers)
- RYA Recreational Boating (all data layers)

Policy drafting template SW-BIO-9

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted. Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.
Grouping	Species	Code	SW-BIO-9

Policy

SW-BIO-9

Proposals affecting the Severn Estuary must a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate significant adverse impacts to the wide diversity of habitats and species in the Severn Estuary, including those which are not protected by designations. If significant adverse impacts cannot be mitigated, proposals must state their case for proceeding.

Proposals within the Severn Estuary that integrate measures to protect and support habitat diversity and associated species, including those not protected by designations, will be supported.

What is important about habitats and species in the Severn Estuary?

1. The Severn Estuary is host to a variety of habitats and species both designated and undesignated.
2. Protected sites include:
 - Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation
 - Severn Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Bridgewater Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Severn Estuary Ramsar
 - Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar
 - Severn Estuary Special Protection Area
3. Habitats and species not protected by designation include, but are not limited to: intertidal mud-flats, sand-flats, salt marsh, biogenic reef, mud, wildfowl, swans, ducks, waders, wintering waterbirds and fish nursery grounds.
4. The intent of this policy is to ensure that proposals consider the Severn Estuary as one ecosystem, including consideration of biodiversity that is not a feature of a current Natura 2000 site (this refers to either habitats or species not protected by the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) or the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) and those afforded protection but not a designated feature of a site). Therefore, impacts resulting from proposals should be considered across the estuary as a whole and not just on individual designations or features.

Where does this policy apply?

5. For the purposes of the South West Marine Plan, the Severn Estuary is defined as the whole area from its seaward extent (Brean Down to Lavernock Point in Wales through Flat Holm Island) to its furthest tidal extent. This policy applies to all proposals with the potential to effect the Severn Estuary, as defined.

When does this policy apply in the Severn Estuary?

6. Marine activity occurs throughout the Severn Estuary as do important habitats and species. Habitats are constant and effects on their function and extent should be considered at all times. Some species are transient and others are more sensitive at certain times of year. For example, significant populations of sea birds occur throughout the estuary both in breeding colonies (year-round), for migration passage (Spring and Autumn) and overwintering populations (November to February). Fish spawning (Spring) and nursery grounds are most sensitive throughout the larval stage. These factors should be considered when applying this policy and considering impacts to the ecosystem.

Why is the Severn Estuary important?

7. The unique shape of the Severn Estuary gives it the second largest tidal range in the world, creating one of the UK's largest intertidal zones. This habitat is home to significant populations of migratory and wintering birds and their prey. The estuary is characterised by large intertidal sand and mud-flats.
8. The estuary has a rich cultural heritage and is home to a large concentration of well-preserved coastal archaeological features arising from historical human settlement over thousands of years. The estuary maintains a human population of approximately one million people. Its banks are also extensively utilised for agriculture. Tourism in the estuary is significant and rising with approximately 50 million¹ visitors per year. Marine recreation in the estuary is significant, predominantly sailing, angling, ecotourism and surfing (The Severn Bore). The Severn Estuary is a busy area for marine development and activity including shipping, navigational dredging, disposal, construction, and fishing. The ports and shipping industry is a significant employer in the area with busy ports at Bristol, Cardiff and Newport. Severn Estuary ports handled a total of 14.03 million tonnes of cargo and were used by 3,587 vessels in 2015².
9. The Severn Estuary straddles the boundary between England and Wales. The lower half of the estuary falls within the south west marine plan areas of the English marine plans and the upper half falls within the spatial remit of the Welsh National Marine Plan. Decision-makers must have regard to both marine planning regimes when considering proposals in the Severn Estuary.

Who is this of interest to?

10. The following government departments have decision-making and regulatory functions that will apply this policy:

¹ <https://www.visitbritain.org/visitor-economy-facts/>

² www.dft.gov.uk

- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

11. The following authorities are responsible for decision-making in relation to this policy:

- Marine Management Organisation
- Natural Resources Wales
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Planning Inspectorate
- Port and Harbour Authorities
- local planning authorities

How should this policy be applied?

12. Statutory assessments assess effects on individual features of sites and not the effect on the ecosystem as a whole. This policy ensures that decision-makers consider the effect of proposals on the Severn Estuary as an ecosystem. This includes habitats and species that are not protected by designations in addition to those that are.

13. Proposals which seek to affect environmental gain within the Severn Estuary through voluntary measures and not that required by legislation should be supported as long as all other statutory requirements are met. The most effective measures will consider the connectivity between habitats and species in order to enhance or protect biodiversity.

Signposting

14. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
- [Planning Act 2008](#)
- [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [Energy Act 2016](#)
- [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)
- [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
- [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
- [Marine Works \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [UK Marine Policy Statement](#)
- [National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure](#)

15. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Severn Vision](#)
- [Severn Estuary Strategy](#)

- [Ecosystem Approach JNCC](#)
- [Severn Estuary Partnership](#)

Iteration 3 draft

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Climate Change		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	<p>Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society The marine environment plays an important role in mitigating climate change.</p> <p>Living within environmental limits Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.</p> <p>Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.</p>		
Other relevant policies	SW-OG-1 SW-REN-1 SW-REN-2 SW-WIND-2 SW-TIDE-1 SW-CO-1 SW-PS-1 SW-PS-2 SW-PS-3 SW-PS-4 SW-BIO-1		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW ✓	NE ✓	SE ✓

Policy drafting template SW-CC-1

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	The marine environment plays an important role in mitigating climate change. Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Climate change – infrastructure Climate change – environment Coastal Change	Code	SW-CC-1

Policy

SW-CC-1

Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate consequences on other activities from unintended greenhouse gas emissions.

What are consequences leading to unintended greenhouse gas emissions?

1. Consequences leading to unintended greenhouse gas emissions are when a proposal's activities unintentionally result in further greenhouse gas emissions from another activity. This can occur outside the proposal's direct footprint. For example, a proposal seeking to generate renewable energy might find a suitable location between the coast and fishing grounds. Construction may affect fishing activity causing vessels to navigate around the development, resulting in an increase in fuel consumption and associated emissions. This would negate some of the benefit of the proposal in terms of low carbon energy generation, as well as affecting the economic viability of the fishing operation.
2. This policy focuses on indirect contributions as the direct contributions are already managed through existing mechanisms and legislation (see signposting). As a result of these existing mechanisms, the South West Marine Plan can add the most value in managing the indirect contributions to climate change.

Where do unintended emissions occur in the south west marine plan areas?

3. In the south west marine plan areas there is a variety of activity in the plan areas with a focus on fisheries and recreational activities, as well as Ministry of Defence

requirements and some ferry routes to Europe. As an example, any development that would impact these activities should apply this policy to ensure no unintended emissions occur as a result of those proposals causing a diversion or extended route either permanently or during construction.

4. Applying these data layers (R3 zones, shipping routes, fishing activity alongside any relevant layers that may be presented in the future) on the [marine planning evidence base](#) will provide a more accurate picture of activity in the south west marine plan areas.

When do unintended emissions take place in the south west marine plan areas?

5. There are no temporal constraints on unintended emissions, as they would occur as and when there is an interaction between marine transport (including shipping and fishing vessels) and another constraint upon that transport.

Why are unintended emissions important to the south west marine plan areas?

6. The majority of evidence and scientific projections indicate that the climate will continue to change at pace, well into the 21st century and beyond¹. UK carbon budgets are set for four year periods as a means of ensuring progress towards the 2050 target. Carbon budgets have been set up to 2027 and require a 50% reduction below baseline by 2025. Carbon emissions have reduced by over 19% since 2012 and are reducing at about 5% year on year, however the majority of reductions are being made in the power sector². Areas which still need to make improvements are industry, building and transport including marine. Industry, buildings and transport have been addressing consumption intensity over a period of years in response to UK carbon budgets, and the trend is downward for this consumption.
7. The [25 Year Environment Plan](#) which sets out the UK government response to carbon emissions through targets including;
 - clean air
 - thriving plants and wildlife
 - mitigating and adapting to climate change
8. Alongside this the [Clean Growth Strategy](#) sets out a range of approaches to decarbonise the UK while growing the economy. The 25 Year Environment Plan and the Clean Growth Strategy work together to set out a framework for mitigating climate change and this policy is linked to both of those requirements by reducing emissions which will mitigate climate change and reduce carbon.
9. In addition the [Committee on Climate Change](#) sets out policy action to reduce emissions. The South West Marine Plan's contribution to mitigating climate change will be small relative to the scale of the problem. However it is important to address

¹ MCCIP (2017). Marine Climate Change Impacts: 10 years' experience of science to policy reporting. (Eds. Frost M, Baxter J, Buckley P, Dye S and Stoker B) Summary Report, MCCIP, Lowestoft, 12pp. doi: 10.14465/2017.arc10.000-arc <http://www.mccip.org.uk/impacts-report-cards/full-report-cards/>

² <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-Report-to-Parliament-Meeting-Carbon-Budgets-Closing-the-policy-gap.pdf>

specific issues including the avoidance of unintended consequences on other activities from unintended greenhouse gas emissions.

10. The variety of potential development across the south west coast of England has the ability to affect vessel transits across the south west marine plan areas. Without consideration of other users and existing activity, such as a variety of fishing grounds, important shipping and ferry routes and tourism and recreation activities. Proposals may increase unintended emissions, resulting in adverse impacts on climate change
11. This policy is in line with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.6.7) and the [National Planning Policy Framework](#), promoting efficient and effective use of marine space and reduction of conflicts arising from unintended consequences of proposals, such as through displacement, as well as being in line with specific climate change policies.

Who is this of interest to?

12. This policy is of interest to public authorities making decisions that affect south west marine plan areas directly, including local planning authorities and those authorities granting permits or licenses for activity in those areas. It is also of interest to those developing proposals in the south west marine plan areas.

How should this policy be applied?

13. Proposals must demonstrate that they will, avoid, minimise, mitigate unintended consequences on other activities. To achieve this, they should consider available evidence and identify interactions which may result in indirect greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to evidence on the location, sources could include but are not limited to the Marine [Planning Evidence Base](#).
14. Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the interaction between sectors, particularly in relation to indirect consequences on carbon emissions, such as greater travelling distances of vessels from placement of new marine infrastructure resulting in increased fuel consumption.
15. Proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate unintended consequences on other activities resulting in indirect emission increases - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc.
 - An example of avoidance would be to allow access to continue unimpeded through their development, not increasing any emissions.
 - An examples of minimisation would be to consider the access through the development but allow access at certain times on the same route.
 - An example of mitigation would be to offset the emissions through available methods or provide devices/technology to reduce emissions such as slow steaming, optimising hull design, propeller optimisation, waste heat recovery, energy storage using batteries or shoreside electrical provision or lower carbon fuels.³

³ [Charting a low carbon future for shipping: A UK perspective](#); Conor Walsh, Sarah Mander, Alice Larkin

16. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans. If a proposal cannot meet these criteria it will only be authorised if there are relevant considerations in line with the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009\(Section 58\(1\)\)](#).
17. Public authorities should apply this policy proportionally to proposals that have been identified as being likely to affect activities, interests or locations in ways that may increase greenhouse gas emissions. For example competition for space, economic impact, or environmental impacts.
18. Public authorities should not assume that applying this policy to a proposal of low cost or small footprint would always be disproportionate. There may be cases where such proposals have a relatively large effect, for example, in causing a deviation to a busy shipping lane. Public authorities should use the best available advice and evidence in decision-making. For example, local authorities should consult with coastal engineers to consider the interaction between activities and help identify where that may affect emissions.
19. Public authorities should determine on a case-by-case basis which proposals this policy should be applied to, considering the scope of activities and interests affected. The effects should be considered across the proposal's lifetime, so that greenhouse gas emissions are considered cumulatively across the commissioning, operational and decommissioning phases of the proposal rather than at a singular specific point in time. This approach is important as the south west marine plan areas have a variety of activity, which will expand over time.
20. Public authorities should request relevant information before proceeding further if it is judged that a proposal has not provided the required information. For example, where inadequate information has been provided to make an informed assessment.
21. Other related policies include:
- Energy (SW-OG-1, SW-REN-1, SW-REN-2, SW-WIND-2, SW-TIDE-1)
 - Coexistence (SW-CO-1)
 - Ports and Shipping (SW-PS-1, SW-PS-2, SW-PS-3, SW-PS-4, SW-PS-5, SW-PS-6)
 - Other CC policies (SW-CC-2, SW-CC-3, SW-CC-4, SW-CC-5, SW-CC-6)

Signposting

22. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
- [Climate Change Act 2008](#)
 - [Clean Growth Strategy](#)
 - [25 Year Environment Plan](#)
23. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
- [UK Climate Projections 09](#) (UKCP18 in due course)
 - [Committee on Climate Change](#)
 - [Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership](#)

- [Marine planning evidence base](#) data sets
 - Ports and shipping activity
 - Fisheries activity
 - Static infrastructure locations
 - Areas identified for future activity eg renewables, aggregates

Iteration 3 draft

Policy drafting template SW-CC-2

HLMO	Living within environmental limits Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society	Sub bullet(s)	The marine environment plays an important role in mitigating climate change.
Grouping	Climate change – infrastructure Climate change – species Coastal Change - Infrastructure Coastal Change - natural processes	Code	SW-CC-2

Policy

SW-CC-2

Proposals should demonstrate for the lifetime of the proposal that they:

- 1) are resilient to the effects of climate change and coastal change
- 2) will not have a significant adverse impact upon climate change adaptation measures elsewhere.

In respect of 2) proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:
a) avoid b) minimise c) mitigate the significant adverse impacts upon these climate change adaptation measures.

What is climate change adaptation and resilience?

1. Climate change adaptation measures help developments or activities to reduce or protect against the impact of climate change ([Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.6.7)). Terrestrial planning policy (NPPF) sets out how adaptation measures may be engineered or may allow a proposal to work with natural processes. Engineered options include relocation of a development, reinforcement of existing dune structures or building a storm surge barrier. All of these adaptation measures increase a proposal's ability to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change. The South West Marine Plan aims to support these measures and not impede terrestrial adaptation and flood defence measures. A range of suggested adaptation methods is set out by the [International Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#).
2. Resilience to climate change can be generally defined as the capacity for a system or development to absorb stresses and maintain function in the face of external stresses imposed upon it by climate change¹ and adapt, and evolve into more desirable configurations that improve the sustainability of the system, for future climate change impacts². Climate change projections should be considered to make sure the design and operation of a given marine activity and/or proposed management measure (such as a marine protected area designation) are resilient as possible to the effects of climate change, such as coastal change and flooding.

¹ [Resilience: The emergence of a perspective for social–ecological systems analyses](#) Carl Folke

² [Adaptation to Environmental Change: Contributions of a Resilience Framework](#) Donald R. Nelson, W. Neil Adger and Katrina Brown

Where do the effects of climate change occur in the south west marine plan areas?

3. Any development or proposal that is below or partially below high water mean springs is potentially at risk of flooding or other adverse impacts of climate change. To identify where these areas are more at risk, these have been mapped by the Environment Agency and are available through their [flood map for planning](#). This map also contains information showing existing flood defences which may inform the location of developments or proposals to benefit from those defences. Some of these areas are already protected by existing measures through terrestrial planning. The South West Marine Plan aims to support these existing measures and not impede existing adaptation and flood defence measures and ensure that new proposals fit effectively with the existing measures.

When does climate change adaptation and resilience take place in south west marine plan areas?

4. There are no temporal constraints on climate change adaptation and resilience, as they would occur as and when there is an interaction between a proposal in areas that would likely require an adaptation measure or some resilience to the effect of climate change.

Why is climate change adaptation and resilience important to the south west marine plan areas?

5. Climate change adaptation measures help to reduce proposals' vulnerability and that of other developments and activities to the adverse impacts of climate change within the south west marine plan areas. The links made above to terrestrial measures such as flood defence help to align new proposals to fit with existing measures that help local areas adapt to climate change.
6. This policy will improve the resilience of developments, activities and ecosystems within the south west marine plan areas to the effects of climate change. It will make sure proposals properly consider, and where required, build-in resilience to the effects of climate change. It will also make sure proposals do not compromise other developments, activities and ecosystems (also considered by SW-CC-4) in meeting the challenges of climate change. Given the recent flooding in the south west marine plan areas due to coastal inundation and also storm events³, this policy highlights how vulnerable this marine plan area is to the impacts of climate change.
7. This policy gives effect to the [Marine Policy Statement](#) and supports climate change adaptation measures put in place by public authorities adjoining the south west marine plan areas. It also responds to the requirements set out in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) which has a targets focussing on mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Who is this of interest to?

8. This policy is of interest to public authorities making decisions that affect the south west marine plan areas directly, including local planning authorities and those

³ <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/interesting/2014-janwind>

authorities granting permits or licenses for activity in those areas. It is also of interest to those developing proposals in the south west marine plan areas.

How should this policy be applied?

9. Proposals should demonstrate that they are resilient to the effects of climate change for the lifetime of the proposal. Proposals that are likely to be at risk from climate change and do not include appropriate adaptation measures to make them resilient, should identify existing measures such as flood defences, providing resilience to any adverse impacts of climate change.
10. Proposals should demonstrate that they have consulted with public authorities⁴ on matters identified in this policy at the earliest opportunity, particularly in relation to considering how proposals avoid adverse impacts upon existing adaptation measures.
11. Proposals that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on existing climate change adaptation measures, such as those highlighted in reports through the [National Adaptation Programme](#), must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate significant adverse impacts upon these climate change adaptation measures - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc.
12. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans. If a proposal cannot meet these criteria it will only be authorised if there are relevant considerations in line with the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#) (Section 58(1)).
13. Proposals by risk management authorities that relate to the requirements of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management strategies are likely to meet the requirements of this policy through their obligations under [The Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#).
14. Public authorities should request relevant information before proceeding further, if it is judged that a proposal has not provided the required information. For example where inadequate information has been provided to make an informed assessment.
15. Other related policies include:
 - Coexistence (SW-CO-1)
 - Other CC policies (SW-CC-1, SW-CC-3, SW-CC-4, SW-CC-5, SW-CC-6)

Signposting

16. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [The Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#)
 - [Climate Change Act 2008](#)
 - [National Adaptation Programme](#)

⁴ Public authorities are likely to include but not limited to; The Environment Agency, local authorities, Regional Flood and Coastal Committees

- [25 Year Environment Plan](#)

17. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Committee on Climate Change](#)
- [UK Climate Projections 09](#) (UKCP18 in due course)

Iteration 3 draft

Policy drafting template SW-CC-3

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Coastal change	Code	SW-CC-3

Policy

SW-CC-3

Proposals in the south west marine plan areas and adjacent marine plan areas that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on coastal change should not be supported.

What is coastal change?

1. Coastal change is defined as ‘physical changes to the shoreline for example erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation and coastal accretion’¹. The effects of these climate change processes will be most prevalent in coastal areas of the south west inshore plan area due to changes in waves, wind and tide which alter dominant coastal processes influencing landforms. Changes may pose a risk to coastal areas and activities identified as vulnerable to this change² as set out below.
2. Coastal narrowing (or coastal squeeze) is one manageable aspect of coastal change that can be influenced.³ Areas at risk of coastal erosion have been identified in the south west inshore marine plan area⁴. MMO 1168 (which is in progress) sets out what is defined by ‘coastal squeeze’.

Where does coastal change occur in the south west marine plan areas?

3. Coastal change is happening in more vulnerable areas across the south west inshore marine plan area.. These are identified by the [Environment Agency](#) across the plan areas. There are several locations⁵ that have been identified along the south west coast. The shoreline management plan areas cover Durlston Head to Rame Head, Rame Head to Hartland Point, Hartland Point to Anchor Head and Anchor Head to Lavernock Point.⁶

¹ HM Government, [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2011) (2.6.8.1)

² *ibid*

³ Coastal narrowing can be defined as: “A reduction in the coastal zone width caused by human and/or natural process” Doody, J.P 2013

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/check-plans-to-stop-coastal-erosion-in-your-area>

⁵ <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shoreline-management-plans-smmps/shoreline-management-plans-smmps>

When does coastal change occur in the south west marine plan areas?

4. Coastal change can happen at any time in the south west marine plan areas. Coastal change is triggered by a range of natural weather events, storms or man-made occurrences such as activity affecting the integrity of cliffs/other developments. In the winter there is a higher risk of coastal change occurring due to increased storminess and the natural tendency for more rainfall. However this does not exclude other times as sudden weather events such as drought, storms or flash flooding could also have adverse impacts.

Why is coastal change important to the south west marine plan areas?

5. Coastal change is a particularly important issue in the south west marine plan areas because a large proportion of the coastline is subject to or vulnerable to change. Coastal change can impact on the people, assets and resources (including natural flood defences such as saltmarsh (see also SW-BIO policies)) in, or dependent on, the marine plan areas as outlined in the relevant [Shoreline management plans](#). [Shoreline management plans](#) identify commerce, people, heritage and culture, transport, ports, and nature conservation as being at risk of coastal change and flooding. This identification of areas of risk applies widely across the south west inshore plan area. Preventing the risks involved to these areas, and dealing with impacts when they occur, requires significant resource. A range of existing measures as set out in the shoreline management plans are in place to achieve successful management in the face of coastal change. Marine plans play an important part in this management of coastal change, including ensuring decisions in the marine area avoid exacerbating detrimental coastal change and do not compromise, and preferably complement, existing measures.
6. This policy will complement other measures to manage coastal change and also support the need for resilience and adaptation along the coastline of the south west inshore plan area to benefit all users, in line with the Marine Policy Statement (2.6.7 and 2.6.8) and the [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report](#)⁷. Adaptation measures are covered explicitly through policy **SW-CC-2**. This policy also gives effect to the Marine Policy Statement (2.6.8.5).
7. A range of existing plans including local plans contain assessments and measures to address coastal change. There is four [shoreline management plans](#), that are relevant to the south west inshore marine plan area and include projections of coastal change over three epochs (20, 50 and 100 years) and how management can respond to these impacts. This policy complements these plans, particularly for locations identified as coastal change management areas. This policy ensures that marine based proposals do not have a significant adverse impact on coastal change on land. Also it coordinates related cross-boundary issues from marine plan area to marine plan area or from the sea to land, ensuring that cross boundary proposals are properly planned. Collaborative working within catchment partnership or flood risk management groups will help to provide this coordination.

Who is this of interest to?

⁷ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/tackling-climate-change/preparing-for-climate-change/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017/> recommends potential adaptation measures to take forward to reduce the impact of climate change on the coast.

8. Public authorities with an interest in coastal protection or flood risk management as well as those developing proposals that may have an effect on coastal change.

How should this policy be applied?

9. This policy recognises changes to the coastline (for example managed realignment) can be beneficial for flood risk management, communities and biodiversity. It does not therefore look to restrain coastal defence or flood risk management proposals that will stabilise, reinforce or purposefully alter the coastline with the express aim of reducing vulnerability to coastal change.
10. Proposals should demonstrate they have consulted with relevant public authorities^{8 9 10}. Specifically the Environment Agency, Catchment Partnerships, relevant Coast Protection Authorities, coastal groups and/or lead local flood authorities. Consultation should be carried out at the earliest opportunity, particularly in relation to considering how proposals might help support existing coastal adaptation policies.
11. Proposals should demonstrate they have taken into account existing plans, such as shoreline management plans, estuary management plans and other local level plans such as local flood risk management plans and strategies as well as beach management plans where applicable. Proposals by risk management authorities that relate to the requirements of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management strategies are likely to meet the requirements of this policy through their obligations under The Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Indeed, wider improvements to resilience could be considered mitigating factors to demonstrate that certain coastal management schemes will not have an overall significant adverse impact on coastal change.
12. Proposals should consider relevant shoreline management plan policies to make sure that any impact does not cause unintended consequences further along the coast.
13. Public authorities should always consider this policy when assessing proposals that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on coastal change. This may include large proposals such as those requiring an environmental impact assessment or a strategic environmental assessment. This includes when a proposal affects the vulnerability of other users, or if change is on a scale of, or above, that of shoreline management plan units (where a coastal management decision has been taken).
14. Public authorities should not give consent for proposals which adversely affect areas at risk, or those of high probability of coastal change.¹¹

⁸ Coastal groups comprise all key partners in coastal management, principally those from the Environment Agency, maritime local authorities and port authorities. The South West Marine Plan is covered by the [South and South West Coastal Group](#).

⁹ In two tier local government the district council remains responsible for coast protection, while flooding is managed by the county

¹⁰ Management of Coastal change and flood risk management is the responsibility of the Environment Agency, lead local authorities and others as indicated by relevant Shoreline, Estuary or River Basin Management plans.

¹¹ Areas at risk include Coastal Change Management Areas in addition to other locations that may be identified in relevant local plans or by relevant local authority and/or Environment Agency coastal managers

15. Public authorities should also apply this policy to proposals in adjacent terrestrial areas due to the interconnected nature of terrestrial and marine processes.
16. Public authorities and proposals should consider, where appropriate, the wider benefits of soft coastal defence strategies¹² and managed realignment schemes in place of hard defences. Future proposals in the adjacent offshore marine plan areas may have potential significant adverse impacts on coastal change and consideration should be given on a case-by-case basis whether they should be supported.
17. In applying this policy the term adjacent is taken as to be close by, by the side of, or bordering on the marine plan area.

Signposting

18. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - Shoreline Management Plan ([Durlston Head to Rame Head](#))
 - Shoreline Management Plan ([Rame Head to Hartland Point](#)) (Cornwall & Isles of Scilly)
 - Shoreline Management Plan ([Hartland Point to Anchor Head](#)) (North Devon & Somerset)
 - Shortline Management Plan ([Anchor Head to Lavernock Point](#)) (Severn Estuary)
 - [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report](#)
19. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
 - [South Devon and Dorset Coastal Advisory Group](#)
 - [Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly](#)
 - [North Devon and Somerset Coastal Advisory Group](#)
 - [Severn Estuary Coastal Group](#)

¹² Soft defences: coastal defence, actions and strategies that work with natural processes

Policy drafting template SW-CC-4

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Climate change Coastal change	Code	SW-CC-4

Policy

SW-CC-4

Proposals that enhance habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration will be supported.

Proposals that may have a significant adverse impact on habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration ecosystem service must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:

- a) avoid
- b) minimise
- c) mitigate significant adverse impacts

What are ecosystem services?

1. Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems.¹ The classification of ecosystem services adopted by the [Millennium Ecosystem Assessment](#) categorises services as follows: provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services.² Flood defence and carbon sequestration services (the process of capturing carbon dioxide from the environment) are regulating services.
2. Habitats such as saltmarshes, sand dunes, seagrass beds and mudflats, provide a variety of ecosystem services. Saltmarshes and mudflats play an important natural role in protecting the coast from flood events, by reducing wave energy and buffering flood waters. Well-developed sand dune systems act to stabilise sediments, therefore reducing coastal erosion.
3. The habitats that provide these ecosystem services also provide a natural carbon sequestration service. Salt marsh habitat is one of the most productive ecosystems in the world and as such can sequester a large amount of carbon. Importantly due to the anoxic (without oxygen) nature of this habitat, the carbon is often shifted from the short term to the long term carbon cycle. This capability is a valuable asset of many

¹ [UK National Ecosystem Assessment](#) (2011) Chapter 12 Marine

² [UN millennium Ecosystem Assessment](#) (2005) Consequences of Responses for Poverty Reduction, Ecosystem Services and Human Well-being

of the world's ecosystems.³ Seagrass beds are also considered to be an important carbon sink and sediment stabilising habitat within the marine environment⁴.

Where are ecosystem services in the south west marine plan areas?

4. There is a significant amount of saltmarsh areas, sand dunes, seagrass beds and mudflats in the south west marine plan areas. Please see the habitats and species layers on the [Marine Information System](#) for their distribution.

When do ecosystem services occur south west marine plan areas?

5. These ecosystem services operate all year round. Seagrass⁵ has little variation in capacity or effectiveness throughout the seasons, however salt marsh⁶ in UK waters does vary in extent and capacity for carbon sequestration.

Why are ecosystem services important to the south west marine plan areas?

6. Healthy marine ecosystems ensure their own resilience to the effects of climate change, and provide natural resilience for coastal communities. Carbon sequestration by natural habitats is important for the natural carbon cycle and provides a natural carbon sink. Potential future residential and industrial development within and adjacent to the south west inshore plan areas could conflict with habitats and species important for these two regulatory ecosystem services. Some of the south west marine plan areas' mudflat and saltmarsh habitats in particular are considered in poor condition and declining⁷. Set in the context of the south west marine plan areas being so busy for a wide variety of activities, these areas are particularly important because of the flood risk to new development in the area alongside natural defences being preferred over man-made.
7. Effective management of marine ecosystems can be considered a climate change adaptation measure necessary to deal with the potential impacts of climate change.⁸ Preventing adverse impacts of proposals on habitats that provide natural flood defences can also reduce the need for additional artificial and costly flood defences.⁹
8. Implementing this policy will also complement plan policies and national duties relating to biodiversity such as those outlined in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) evidence report and the [Marine Policy Statement](#).
9. This policy will also aid in the achievement of Good Environmental Status for descriptor 1 of [Marine strategy part one: UK initial assessment and good](#)

³ Nalini S. Rao, et al (2015) [Global values of coastal ecosystem services: A spatial economic analysis of shoreline protection values](#) and Barbier, E.B. et al (2011) [The value of estuarine and coastal ecosystem services](#). *Ecological Monographs* 81: 169 – 193

⁴ James W. Fourqurean, et al (2012) [Seagrass ecosystems as a globally significant carbon stock](#) Nature Geoscience volume 5, pages 505–509 (2012) and Barbier, E.B. et al (2011) [The value of estuarine and coastal ecosystem services](#). *Ecological Monographs* 81: 169 – 193

⁵ Potouroglou, M [Assessing the role of intertidal seagrasses as coastal carbon sinks](#) (2017)

⁶ Saad, A S and Wade C M [Seasonal and Spatial Variations of Saltmarsh Benthic Foraminiferal Communities from North Norfolk, England](#) (2016)

⁷ MMO (2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-planning-issues-and-evidence-database>

⁸ HM Government, [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2011), (2.6.7.3)

⁹ [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report](#)

[environmental status](#) and contribute to the UK's high level marine objectives for living within environmental limits.

10. Alongside this the [Clean Growth Strategy](#) sets out a range of approaches to decarbonise the UK while growing the economy. The 25 Year Environment Plan and the Clean Growth Strategy work together to set out a framework for mitigating climate change and this policy is linked to both of those requirements.

Who is this of interest to?

11. The broad nature of this policy and the many activities and resources it covers means it relates to a range of national policy areas for which different government departments are responsible. Departments with specific responsibilities include:
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – climate change adaptation, flood and coastal risk management, ecosystem services
 - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – energy demand reduction in industry, business and the public sector, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change mitigation
 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – overlap at the coast with the land-use planning system
 - Department for Transport – relevant to harbour authorities and the Transport and works Act (1992)
12. This policy is also relevant to public authorities making decisions relating to the sectors and resources mentioned above. For example the Environment Agency sets direction for flood and coastal risk management in England. In doing so they work in association with local authorities including through the development and implementation of shoreline management plans.

How should this policy be applied?

13. Proposals must demonstrate that they have considered available evidence and identified any significant adverse impacts on habitats that provide flood defence and/or carbon sequestration ecosystem services. For example, evidence on the location could include the South west Marine Plan and associated documents and the [Marine Information System](#)
14. Proposals should identify and describe habitats within the immediate vicinity and determine whether those habitats provide carbon sequestration or flood defence ecosystem services.
15. Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate significant adverse impact on habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration ecosystem service. For example:
- avoid – through alternative locations
 - minimise – minimising the size of structures (see also policies **SW-CO-1** and **SW-BIO-1**) or the amount of timework is undertaken to make sure natural processes can continue
 - mitigate – innovative engineering design, sediment bypassing to avoid sediment loss or reductions to the overall size and scope of a project

16. Proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc.
17. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans. If these criteria cannot be met, proposals will only be authorised if there are relevant considerations in line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009)(Section 58(1)).
18. Where proposals enhance the size and/or extent of functioning habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration service they should be supported.
19. Proposals and public authorities must take into account where relevant, all current publically available evidence relating to habitats providing relevant ecosystem services. The [Marine Information System](#) contains information showing habitats of conservation importance and species and habitats that are particularly threatened, rare, or declining. The information also indicates the location of several habitats highlighted within this policy - coastal salt marsh and seagrass bed habitats. The absence of evidence does not mean absence of habitats that provide flood defence and carbon sequestration ecosystem services.
20. Additional proposal specific evidence may be required. Where new evidence emerges that improves or changes the evidence provided here, this must be taken into account in applying the policy.
21. Proposals within Natura 2000 sites will require additional assessment measures. The definitions of avoidance, mitigation and compensation are defined under The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (paragraph 118).
22. Proposals are required to be in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations including [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations \(2017\)](#), [The Infrastructure Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations \(2017\)](#), [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) and [National Policy Statements](#) where they apply.
23. Public authorities must apply this policy where the best available evidence indicates that it is appropriate to do so.
24. Public authorities must apply this policy proportionally for proposals that will interact with habitats that provide the listed ecosystem services (flood defence and carbon sequestration).
25. Public authorities must request required information where it is judged that this policy has not been sufficiently addressed before proceeding. For example, inadequate information has been provided to make an informed assessment.

Signposting

26. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations \(2017\)](#),

- [The Infrastructure Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations \(2017\)](#),
- [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [National Policy Statements](#)
- Shoreline Management Plan ([Durlston Head to Rame Head](#))
- Shoreline Management Plan ([Rame Head to Hartland Point](#) (Cornwall & Isles of Scilly))
- Shoreline Management Plan [Hartland Point to Anchor Head](#) (North Devon & Somerset)
- Shortline Management Plan [Anchor Head to Lavernock Point](#) (Severn Estuary)

27. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- Key data sets on MIS include:
 - European Marine Sites and RAMSAR sites
 - Marine Conservation Zones
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Habitats Directive Annex 1 features
 - Habitats and Species

Policy drafting template SW-CC-5

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.
Grouping	Climate Change - Species	Code	SW-CC-5

Policy

SW-CC-5

Public authorities with functions capable of affecting the marine area should:

1. consider long-term climate change projections and associated effects, including, but not limited to, the space required for the redistribution of priority habitats and species
2. consider support for people, infrastructure and components of the marine ecosystem that generate natural capital in adapting to change during their lifetime
3. not result in greenhouse gas emissions caused by unintended consequences on other activities
4. not lead to unnecessary increased demand for coastal protection in the future

What are long term climate change projections?

1. Climate change is the process of the planet warming. The Earth has warmed by an average of 1°C during the 20th century. Whilst the overall change is small it has significant impacts for the environment and people everywhere. Rising temperatures and changing climate make the weather more extreme and unpredictable. As temperatures rise, many species will need to find ways to adapt to the changing climate.
2. The main causes are:
 - burning of fossil fuels,
 - farming and methane release from animal farming, and
 - deforestation
3. The impacts of these causes on the climate are:
 - increased storminess (rainfall)
 - changing seasons
 - shrinking sea ice
 - rising sea levels
4. The main considerations in the south west marine plan areas are rising sea level and increased storminess. The [UK climate change projections have forecast a range of effects](#). The projections were last published in 2009 and are currently being revised for publication in 2018.

What is natural capital and adaptation?

5. Natural capital is the sum of our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, our air and our seas. These are all elements of nature that either directly or indirectly bring value to people and the country at large. They do this in many ways

chiefly by providing us with food, clean air and water, wildlife, energy, wood, recreation and protection from hazards.

6. Adaptation is the ability of habitats, species and populations to respond to changes in the environment. Adaptation includes the natural succession of habitats and range shifts in response to climatic and other environmental changes. The ability of habitats and species to adapt to climate change is also addressed by policies SW-BIO-01, SW-CC-XX, SW-CC-1.

What are unintended greenhouse gas emissions? (see also SW-CC-1)

7. Unintended emissions are when any proposal's activities unintentionally result in further greenhouse gas emissions from another activity. This can occur outside any proposal's direct footprint. For example, any proposal seeking to generate renewable energy might find a suitable location between the coast and fishing grounds. Construction may affect fishing activity causing vessels to navigate around the development, resulting in an increase in fuel consumption and associated emissions. This would negate some of the benefit of any proposal in terms of low carbon energy generation, as well as affecting the economic viability of the fishing operation.

What is coastal protection? (see also SW-CC-3)

8. Coastal protection measures address coastal change, which is defined as 'physical changes to the shoreline for example erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation and coastal accretion'¹. The effects of climate change will be most prevalent in coastal areas of the south west inshore plan area due to changes in waves, wind and tide which alter dominant coastal processes influencing landforms. Changes may pose a risk to coastal areas and activities identified as vulnerable to this change².
9. Coastal narrowing (or coastal squeeze) is one manageable aspect of coastal change that can be influenced.³ Areas at risk of coastal erosion have been identified in the south east inshore marine plan area⁴. MMO 1168 (which is in progress) sets out what is defined by 'coastal squeeze'.

Where does climate change occur in the south west marine plan areas?

10. Climate change is a global issue and affects the south west marine plan areas as a whole. Small incremental steps considering the effects of climate change will help to mitigate this world-wide problem. The effects of increased storminess will be felt in areas where coastal change is occurring as shown in the [XXX] layer on the [Marine Information System](#).

When does climate change occur in south west marine plan areas?

11. Climate change is happening now and will continue to affect the south west marine plan areas over the long-term. Due to the time lag in the climate system, even with

¹ HM Government, [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2011) (2.6.8.1)

² ibid

³ Coastal narrowing can be defined as: "A reduction in the coastal zone width caused by human and/or natural process" Doody, J.P 2013

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/check-plans-to-stop-coastal-erosion-in-your-area>

the most ambitious mitigation efforts, we are likely to experience a further amount of climate change over the coming decades. There are seasonal impacts for example warmer wetter summer causing localised flooding or increased storm outflows into the marine area.

Why is consideration of the climate change projections important to the south west marine plan areas?

12. Consideration of these projections is vital to ensuring that future developments and approaches to terrestrial activities that could be at risk of the effects of climate change are protected. If these projections are considered effectively, people, infrastructure and components of the marine ecosystem that generate natural capital in adapting to change during their lifetime are protected.

Who is this of interest to?

13. Public authorities with land management or strategic planning functions which allow activities to:
- affect space required for the redistribution of priority habitats and species,
 - cause unintended emissions
 - affect natural capital
 - require additional coastal protection
- Planning Inspectorate when approving strategic plans that could lead to impacts upon space for priority habitats and species, cause unintended emissions or affect natural capital
 - Public authorities that develop River Basin Management Plans and other land management plans capable of affecting the marine area
 - Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities – management of commercial fisheries for the purposes of environmental protection

How should this policy be applied?

14. SW-CC-5 applies to the whole of the south west marine plan areas and extends to functions that are carried out in adjacent marine plan areas which are capable of affecting the marine area, including east and Scottish waters across the coast and in estuarine areas.
15. Policy SW-CC-5 aligns with the [Marine Policy Statement](#), the [National Planning Policy Framework \(2018\)](#) and the [Marine and Coastal Access Act](#) (section 58 (3)). It also complements the actions of the [Marine Strategy](#).
16. This policy should be considered when developing strategic plans and programmes which may have an impact on priority habitats and species, be a cause of unintended emissions, require additional coastal protections or affect natural capital.
17. Public authorities should consider impacts on priority habitats and species, causes of unintended emissions, or impacts on natural capital when authorising land-based infrastructure. Examples of land-based infrastructure that should be considered include waste water, sewage treatment, housing developments close to coastal or

estuarine areas. Infrastructure to support recreational, residential and commercial boating and shipping activities is included. See also SW-INF-1.

18. The South West Marine Plans build on existing measures, consistent with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.5.6, 2.6.7 and 3.3.2) and [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2018) (Chapter 14 – climate change, Chapter 15 – natural capital) through ensuring public authorities consider impacts climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as opportunities to support natural capital.

Signposting

19. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [Climate Change Act 2008](#)
- [UKCPC09 Climate change projections](#)(UKCPC18 available in due course)
- [National Planning Policy Framework \(Ch 14 and 15\)](#)
- [Shoreline management plans](#)

20. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [RTPI seven commitments on climate change](#)
- [RTPI guide on planning for climate change](#)

Policy drafting template SW-CC-6

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted. Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Climate Change – Species Coastal Change - natural processes	Code	SW-CC-6

Policy

SW-CC-6

Proposals that reduce or buffer carbon dioxide concentrations in seawater should be supported.

What is reduction or buffering of carbon dioxide?

1. Buffering capacity is the ocean's capacity to soak up acid or alkali. Carbon dioxide concentrations are naturally 'buffered' or reduced by the salts in the seawater. Dissolved carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is balanced with bicarbonate and carbonic acid. Increased emissions from human activity, mainly from burning of fossil fuels, farming and methane release from animal farming have increased carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. In turn causing an increase in dissolved carbon dioxide in the world's oceans and as a result of this increase, a change in pH level of oceans. As the concentration of dissolved carbon dioxide increases, the rate of the forward reaction of the buffering system increases until the system reaches a new natural level. This means that an increase in dissolved carbon dioxide causes a slight decrease in pH. The ocean's buffering capacity is very large, but changes to the oceans' pH level - acidification - can have wide ranging impacts habitats and species.
2. Measurements and models indicate that this carbon dioxide uptake has resulted in a global mean pH decrease of 0.1 units in surface waters since pre-industrial times. On current trends, the total mean decrease is projected to reach 0.4 units (an increase of H⁺ of around 170%) by 2100, with potentially serious consequences for many marine ecosystems.¹

Where does ocean acidification occur in the south west marine plan areas?

¹ http://www.oceanacidification.org.uk/Oarp/media/images/PDF/UKOA-Variability_Trends.pdf

3. Across the plan areas seawater has a variation in pH depending on its location and how much freshwater enters the system, creating areas of brackish water. The UK Ocean Acidification project states “Seawater pH around the UK is highly variable, both spatially (in three dimensions) and temporally (year-to-year, seasonally and on shorter time-scales); there is now in place a national ocean acidification observing system which needs to be continued on a long-term basis”.² As a result the carbon dioxide buffering opportunities exist all over the marine plan areas.

When does ocean acidification take place in south west marine plan areas?

4. According to the UK Ocean Acidification project, “acidification is not occurring uniformly everywhere; evidence from the scattered measurements available suggests that surface pH varies substantially. Variations can be on a local and regional space scales; also on daily, seasonal, annual and decadal time-scales, and with water depth. These natural variations form the (changing) ‘baseline’ against which further human-caused changes may be measured. Acidification that moves the natural system beyond its existing variations is likely to be more damaging than changes that remain within natural bounds.”³ In the south west marine plan areas there is some variation in salinity but as there is limited data it is difficult to identify where these variations occur. There is some broad scale analysis from satellite mapping completed by the UK Ocean Acidification project which helps to identify some of these variations.⁴

Why is reducing ocean acidification important to the south west marine plan areas?

5. Reducing the impact of ocean acidification is important to the south west marine plan areas because of the reliance of many habitats and species and associated industries on sea water with a ‘normal’ pH level.
6. Species which create shells, skeletons or structures from calcium carbonate are at risk. Species that use aragonite (corals, mussels) or high-magnesium calcite (sea urchins) are especially sensitive to variation in ocean pH. If they are unable to build shells, it may make these organisms more vulnerable to predators. Cold-water corals and shell-forming organisms are thought to be especially vulnerable. Changes in ocean pH also may have other more indirect impacts like changes in metabolism on a variety of habitats and species.⁵ Industries that rely on good quality shellfish are most at risk, such as fishing, potting, aquaculture and any related processing of the catch.

Who is this of interest to?

7. Developers when preparing proposals which may affect the carbon buffering cycle in the south west marine plan areas.
8. Decision-making public authorities including:
 - Local planning authorities

² http://www.oceanacidification.org.uk/Oarp/media/images/PDF/UKOA-Variability_Trends.pdf

³ ibid

⁴ <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/jpdf/10.1021/es504849s> Environmental Science and Technology ‘Salinity from Space unlocks Satellite-based assessment of Ocean Acidification’.

⁵ Fabry et al., ICES Journal of Marine Science 65, 2008.

- Marine licensing authorities
- The Planning Inspectorate
- The Crown Estate
- Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities
- Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

9. Advisory public authorities including:

- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Natural England

How should this policy be applied?

10. Decision-makers should support proposals that incorporate measures that result in a reduction or buffering of carbon dioxide concentrations in the south west marine plan areas' seawater. This may include novel designs of proposals or, and collaboration between developers and public authorities. Proposals must comply with relevant legislation and other marine plan policies.
11. SW-CC-6 requires decision makers to consider supporting proposals that manage any adverse impacts that may affect the pH of seawater in the local area which in turn affect the functioning of marine habitats and species. Policy SW-CC-4 is also relevant here.
12. Determination may be informed by a relevant assessment. An assessment to determine how a proposal can be beneficial to a reduction in carbon dioxide concentrations in seawater
13. Proposals are still required to be in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations including Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Marine and Coastal Access Act, Environmental Impact Assessment also other national legislation such as The Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009, Salmon and Fresh Water Fisheries Act 1975 and National Policy Statements where they apply.
14. It is helpful to identify the location of features and sites within the south west marine plan areas that are most affected by an increase in seawater pH as well as those important for wider biodiversity, including beyond marine protected areas.
15. Proposals should consider the available evidence and identify any significant adverse impacts on habitat and species.
16. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.

Signposting

17. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations \(2017\)](#),
- [The Infrastructure Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations \(2017\)](#),
- [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [National Policy Statements](#)

18. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- Key data sets on MIS include:
 - European Marine Sites and RAMSAR sites
 - Marine Conservation Zones
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Habitats Directive Annex 1 features
 - Habitats and Species
 - Ocean pH level distribution

Iteration 3 draft

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Cumulative Effects		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	<p>Promoting good governance</p> <p>The use of the marine environment is spatially planned where appropriate and based on an ecosystems approach which takes account of climate change and recognises the protection and management needs of marine cultural heritage according to its significance.</p>		
Other relevant policies	<p>SW-CO-1 SW-GOV-1 SW-UWN-1 SW-UWN-2 SW-DIST-1 SW-DIST-3</p>		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW ✓	NE ✓	SE ✓

Policy drafting template SW-CE-1

HLMO	Promoting good governance	Sub bullet(s)	The use of the marine environment is spatially planned where appropriate and based on an ecosystems approach which takes account of climate change and recognises the protection and management needs of marine cultural heritage according to its significance
Grouping	Cumulative effects	Code	SW-CE-1

Policy

SW-CE-1

Proposals which may have cumulative or in-combination effects with other existing or authorised developments or activities must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate significant cumulative or in-combination effects.

What are cumulative and in-combination effects?

1. Cumulative effects are the combined, similar environmental effects that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the current proposal. Cumulative effects may extend beyond the geographical site boundaries of proposals. Cumulative effects are made up of additive effects (the magnitude of the combined effects equal the sum of the individual effects) and synergistic effects (combined effects lead to an increased effect, greater than the individual effects).
2. In-combination effects refer to different, additive or synergistic effects from multiple projects or activities on a single receptor or ecosystem. In-combination assessment ensures holistic protection for biodiversity by preventing many different projects or activities causing minor adverse impacts alone, but having a significant overall adverse impact to a habitat or species.
3. The terms “cumulative”, “in combination” and “collective” are effectively intended to achieve the same objective (i.e. describe the overall impact on single or multiple receptors from single or multiple pressures). In legislation these terms are used in the following way:
4. 1. [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) and the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) refer to ‘in-combination effects’ which is commonly understood to mean the same environmental receptor being affected in different ways from one or more schemes.

For example, an infrastructure project and a dredging scheme may occur on or around a biogenic reef. The infrastructure project may remove parts of the reef whilst the dredge projects may increase suspended sediments which have the potential to smother the reef. These effects individually may not adversely affect the feature but together they affect the overall condition of the reef.

5. [2. The Marine Works \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#) describes 'cumulative effects' as similar impacts from multiple schemes on the same environmental receptor. For example, multiple offshore wind farms piling at the same time could cause significant disturbance or injury to marine mammals. One or two piling events happening at the same time may not breach the animals' hearing thresholds but many events occurring simultaneously may disturb or injure individuals.
6. Cumulative effects can arise from a range of pressures, such as (but not limited to) disturbance or damage to the seabed, increases in underwater noise, pollution and increases in marine litter. Cumulative effects can occur both spatially and temporally. The effect of such pressures and whether or not they have an impact will depend on the sensitivity of the components of the ecosystem that are affected and the level of exposure to those pressures.

Where do cumulative and in-combination effects occur in the south west marine plan areas?

7. Cumulative effects can occur anywhere throughout the south west marine plan areas but may be more pronounced in areas of high marine activity. The [Marine Information System](#) should be consulted to identify local habitats and species in areas that could be at risk to cumulative effects.

When do cumulative and in-combination effects occur in the south west marine plan areas?

8. During the lifetime of the south west marine plan negative effects caused by proposals can accumulate and be amplified. Cumulative effects can intensify at any time of the year depending on when projects are implemented. The intensity of effects may vary seasonally depending on conditions such as local currents and weather amongst other biotic or abiotic factors.
9. The species and habitats that are impacted, and the extent to which they are impacted, may vary on a temporal scale. For example, a nationally significant site, the Tamar Estuary is a uniquely important location for seasonal smelt within the south west and is used as a nursery for a range of other fish species that occur seasonally. Increasing cumulative effects may have delayed impacts on seasonal species on their arrival.

Why are cumulative and in-combination effects significant in the south west marine plan areas?

10. The south west marine areas have a rich and varied maritime cultural heritage of fishing, trade, industry and communications which has contributed to the regions sense of local distinctiveness, place and cultural identity. The local environment is particularly at risk to cumulative effects due to the intensity of marine activity within

some regions of the south west marine plan areas which can be identified with use of the [Marine Information System](#). Deep water habitats, which are unique to the south west offshore plan area, are arguably one of the habitats most susceptible to cumulative effects due to their slow recovery rates. In accordance with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) and the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) it is vital that biodiversity is maintained in order to ensure that resources are sustained in a productive state for use in future as well as achieving protection of nature for its intrinsic value.

11. Singular activities analysed in isolation may have little to no impact upon marine areas. However, the cumulative pressure of multiple activities within or adjacent to marine areas can threaten the maintenance and restoration of favourable conservation status. This policy intends to ensure that cumulative effects are considered in the application and decision making process. It does not matter how small the proposal is, it may induce a tipping point where cumulative effects become critically detrimental.
12. Compared to the terrestrial environment, cumulative effects are exaggerated in the marine area due to the lack of physical boundaries. Therefore, it is important for any marine proposal to proactively avoid, minimise or mitigate significant negative cumulative effects to prevent wide ranging negative impacts to the environment both within and adjacent to the south west marine plan areas.
13. As the south west marine plan areas shares a border with the [South Marine Plan areas](#), [Welsh Marine Plan](#) (draft) area, French marine area and Irish marine area it is vital to consider cumulative effects at boundary limits and encourage cross border planning.
14. As set out in the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.3.1.6 and 2.3.2.1), marine plans should contribute to considering cumulative impacts, for example 'Marine plans should ... identify how the potential impacts of activities will be managed, including cumulative effects' and 'when considering the potential benefits and adverse effects, decision-makers should also take into account any multiple and cumulative impacts of proposals, in the light of other projects and activities'.

Who is this of interest to?

15. The following government departments have decision-making and regulatory functions that will apply this policy:
 - Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
 - Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
 - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
16. The following authorities are responsible for decision-making in relation to this policy:
 - Port and Harbour Authorities
 - Marine Management Organisation
 - Natural England
 - Environment Agency
 - Planning Inspectorate
 - Local Planning Authorities
 - Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning

- Oil and Gas Authority

How should this policy be applied?

17. Proposals must demonstrate that they have considered the cumulative and in-combination impacts that they may have on the south west marine areas. Proposals that are likely to have significant cumulative or in combination impacts on the marine areas must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate any significant cumulative or in-combination effects - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc.
18. This policy intends to ensure that proposals consider the cumulative and in-combination effects of past and future projects and takes the steps needed to restrict or prevent the accumulation or intensification of significant adverse impacts to the environment and sensitive species. The policy is also intended to ensure that all proposals provide consideration of their impact in combination with other projects on all habitats and species whether they are designated or not.
19. When considering such effects, proposals should consider other projects or activities likely to negatively affect habitats and species. Proposers must therefore provide adequate assessment of their impacts in order for decision-makers to make their decision. Proposals must clearly illustrate the negative and/or positive cumulative effects that the project will have.
20. Public authorities should look to make sure that current and future guidance as it becomes available is clearly highlighted, applied and reviewed (where required), working with, for example, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Natural England, The Crown Estate and industry.
21. Proposals must consider the natural pressures upon the environment where possible in addition to the proposed activity and any current and forecasted future use of the area and consider the short and long term cumulative and/or in-combination effects of these activities upon marine species and habitats.
22. Proposals should consider how cumulative effects, as a result of the proposed project, have impacts on the [South Marine Plan](#) areas, [Welsh National Marine Plan](#) area, French marine area and the Irish marine area.
23. Decision makers should fully assess current and forecasted future use of the marine plan area and consider the short and long term cumulative and/or in-combination effects of these activities upon marine species and habitats.
24. In examining and determining applications for nationally significant infrastructure projects, examining authorities and the secretary of state for The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government must have regard to this policy for nationally significant infrastructure projects that may have cumulative or in-combination effects with other existing or authorised developments or activities.

Signposting

25. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
- [Planning Act 2008](#)
- [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [Energy Act 2016](#)
- [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)
- [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
- [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
- [Marine Works \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [The UK Marine Policy Statement](#)
- [National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure](#)

26. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Marine Information System](#)

Iteration 3 draft

Policy drafting template SW-CE-2

HLMO	Promoting good governance	Sub bullet(s)	The use of the marine environment is spatially planned where appropriate and based on an ecosystems approach which takes account of climate change and recognises the protection and management needs of marine cultural heritage according to its significance
Grouping	Cumulative effects	Code	SW-CE-2

Policy

SW-CE-2

Proposals should provide information to address the cumulative effects arising from the proposed project upon the environment within and adjacent to the marine plan area.

What are cumulative effects?

1. Cumulative effects are the combined environmental effects that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the current proposal. Cumulative effects may extend beyond the geographical site boundaries of proposals. Cumulative effects are made up of additive effects (the magnitude of the combined effects equal the sum of the individual effects) and synergistic effects (combined effects lead to an increased effect, greater than the individual effects).
2. [The Marine Works \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#) describes 'cumulative effects' as similar impacts from multiple schemes on the same environmental receptor. For example, multiple offshore wind farms piling at the same time could cause significant disturbance or injury to marine mammals. One or two piling events happening at the same time may not breach the animals' hearing thresholds but together they may disturb or injure individuals.
3. Cumulative effects can arise from a range of pressures, such as (but not limited to) disturbance or damage to the seabed, increases in underwater noise, pollution and increases in marine litter. Cumulative effects can occur both spatially and temporally. The effect of such pressures and whether or not they have an impact will depend on the sensitivity of the components of the ecosystem that are affected and the level of exposure to those pressures.

Where do cumulative effects occur in the south west marine plan area?

4. Cumulative effects can occur anywhere throughout the south west marine plan area but may be more pronounced in areas of high marine activity. The [Marine Information System](#) should be consulted to identify local habitats and species in areas that could be at risk to cumulative effects.

When do cumulative effects occur in the south west marine plan area?

5. During the lifetime of the south west marine plan negative effects caused by proposals can accumulate and become amplified. Cumulative effects can intensify at any time of the year depending on when the project is implemented. The intensity of effects may vary seasonally depending on local currents and weather amongst other biotic or abiotic factors.
6. The species and habitats that are impacted, and the extent to which they are impacted, may vary on a temporal scale. For example, a nationally significant site, the Tamar Estuary is a uniquely important location for seasonal smelt within the south west and is used as a nursery for a range of other fish species that occur seasonally. Worsening cumulative effects may have delayed impacts on seasonal species on their arrival.

Why is information on cumulative effects important in the south west marine plan area?

7. The south west marine areas have a rich and varied maritime cultural heritage of fishing, trade, industry and communications which has contributed to the regions sense of local distinctiveness, place and cultural identity. The local environment is particularly at risk to cumulative effects due to the intensity of marine activity within some regions of the south west marine plan areas which can be identified with use of the [Marine Information System](#). Deep water habitats, which are unique to the south west offshore plan area, are arguably one of the habitats most susceptible to cumulative effects due to their slow recovery rates. In accordance with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) and the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) it is vital that biodiversity is maintained in order to ensure that resources are sustained in a productive state for use in future as well as achieving protection of nature for its intrinsic value
8. There is limited knowledge and data on cumulative effects so it is important to actively collect information to establish baseline data on the subject.
9. Cumulative effects are important to address as it is difficult to demonstrate that while each single proposal may result in a negligible impact, the accumulation of these individual proposals over time may constitute a major impact. Therefore, there is a need for proposals to provide information on cumulative effects in order to start producing data and sufficient evidence that may be used in an attempt to address them.
10. Singular activities analysed in isolation may have little to no impact upon marine areas. However, the cumulative pressure of multiple activities can threaten the maintenance and restoration of favourable conservation status, even if each activity is analysed on its own does not. It does not matter how small the proposal is, it may have induce a tipping point where cumulative effects become critically detrimental.

11. Compared to terrestrial environments, cumulative effects are exaggerated in the marine area due to the lack of physical boundaries.
12. As set out in the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.3.1.6 and 2.3.2.1), marine plans should contribute to considering cumulative impacts, for example 'Marine plans should ... identify how the potential impacts of activities will be managed, including cumulative effects' and 'when considering the potential benefits and adverse effects, decision-makers should also take into account any multiple and cumulative impacts of proposals, in the light of other projects and activities'.

Who is this of interest to?

13. The following government departments have decision-making and regulatory functions that will apply this policy:
- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
 - Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
 - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
14. The following authorities are responsible for decision-making in relation to this policy:
- Port and Harbour Authorities
 - Marine Management Organisation
 - Natural England
 - Environment Agency
 - Planning Inspectorate
 - Local Planning Authorities
 - Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning
 - Oil and Gas Authority

How should this policy be applied?

15. Proposals should identify how the potential impacts of activities upon the environment will be managed, including cumulative effects. Close working across plan boundaries will enable the marine plan authority to take account of the cumulative effects of activities at plan boundaries. The consideration of cumulative effects alongside other evidence may enable limits or targets for the area to be determined in the plan areas, if it is appropriate to do so.
16. Currently projects that meet a certain criteria or threshold for potential impact are assessed under the [Marine Works \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#) and proposals that are likely to have a significant effect on a designated site are assessed under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) and the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#). These statutory assessments are therefore only required for certain proposals and only assess certain habitats and species.
17. Proposals should identify and provide information on how cumulative effects, as a result of the proposed project, have impacts on neighbouring plan areas such as the [Welsh National Marine Plan](#) (draft), the [South Marine Plans and the French marine area](#).

18. As proposals provide information on cumulative effects, issues may be mapped on the [Marine Information System](#) providing baseline data on cumulative effects that can be considered in future proposals.
19. Proposals that provide information on cumulative effects or attempt to address them will be supported.
20. In examining and determining applications for nationally significant infrastructure projects, examining authorities and the secretary of state for The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government must have regard to this policy for nationally significant infrastructure projects that may cause cumulative effects upon the environment within and adjacent to the marine plan area.

Signposting

21. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
 - [Planning Act 2008](#)
 - [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
 - [Energy Act 2016](#)
 - [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
 - [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
 - [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)
 - [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Marine Works \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#)
 - [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
 - [The UK Marine Policy Statement](#)
 - [National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure](#)
 - [Welsh National Marine Plan](#)
 - [South Marine Plans](#)
22. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
 - [Marine Information System](#) – habitats and species.

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Disturbance		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	<p>Living within environmental limits Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.</p> <p>Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.</p>		
Other relevant policies	SW-CE-1 SW-CE-2 SW-UWN-1 SW-UWN-2 SW-MPA-1 SW-MPA-2 SW-MPA-3 SW-MPA-4 SW-MPA-6		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW ✓	NE ✓	SE ✓

Policy drafting template SW-DIST-1

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems. Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.
Grouping	Disturbance	Code	SW-DIST-1

Policy

SW-DIST-1

Proposals within the south west marine plan areas and adjacent plan areas must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate significant disturbance to, or displacement of, highly mobile species.

What are highly mobile species?

1. Highly mobile species are those that range over large distances and include fish, birds, marine mammals and turtles. Individuals are often part of more widespread international populations and may only be present in the south west marine plan areas on a seasonal basis or for part of their life cycle.
2. Highly mobile species occurring in the south west marine plan areas include seabirds, fish, marine mammals and turtles. The [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act \(S41\)](#), requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list and features of conservation importance should be used to prioritise species when applying this policy.

What is disturbance and displacement?

3. Disturbance is when species spends extra time or energy to avoid a human activity or output. The expenditure of extra energy affects the ability of a species to survive, breed, rear or nurture young or it affects the local distribution or abundance of the species. Displacement is when the number of highly mobile species in an area is suppressed due to a human activity. Highly mobile species are displaced such that they cannot access habitats essential to their success, such as foraging areas or breeding grounds.

4. Sources of displacement and disturbance include but are not limited to the physical presence of vessels or offshore structures, lighting on offshore structures and underwater noise for example during construction activities.

Where are highly mobile species in the south west marine plan areas?

5. This policy applies to the inshore and offshore marine plan areas. Maps of the distribution of some highly mobile species are available on the [Marine Information System](#).
6. The south west marine plan areas are seasonally home to breeding, migrating and over wintering seabirds, waders and waterfowl. Grey seals occur in the marine and coastal areas of the south west marine plan areas particularly around Lands End and the [Isles of Scilly](#). The east coast of the Isles of Scilly is a breeding site for grey seal. There is a resident population of [bottlenose dolphins](#) on the south coast of the south west marine plan areas which are present throughout the year. Other [cetaceans](#) that occur in the south west marine plan areas include but are not limited to minke whale, short-beaked common dolphin, long-finned pilot whale and harbour porpoise.
7. The south west inshore marine plan area is a global hotspot for [basking sharks](#) which occur in British waters between May and October. They are most likely to occur in the south west marine plan areas at the beginning of this period. [Leatherback turtles](#) are the only turtle species adapted to occur in UK waters and are most likely to be sighted at low numbers during the summer months. There are high intensity fish spawning and nursery grounds in the south west marine plan areas for highly mobile fish species.

When is disturbance a consideration in the south west marine plan areas?

8. When considering mobile species there are seasonal considerations due to migration, spawning and foraging behaviour, for example, basking sharks numbers will be greatest in May and June, and leatherback turtles are unlikely to occur in the south west marine plan areas in winter. Grey seal pupping occurs between October and December on the Isles of Scilly.
9. Human activity in the south west marine plan areas occurs year-round. Tourism and recreation at the coast reaches its peak in the summer months. Shipping lanes are utilised throughout the year and will therefore need to consider their impact to mobile species.
10. The seasonal and temporal variations which exist are species and project dependent and individual projects will need to consider these temporal aspects of highly mobile species. Decision-makers will need to apply the best available evidence and the precautionary principle on a case-by-case basis.

Why are highly mobile species important to the south west marine plan areas?

11. Highly mobile species are resident or regular visitors to waters of the south west marine plan areas. Many highly mobile species are charismatic and bring value for tourism and recreation through wildlife watching and employment at reserves, while appropriate recreation and tourism may bring opportunities for protection of species through increased public awareness and additional funding. [Grey seals](#) are present

on the Isles of Scilly throughout the year and there is a resident population of [bottlenose dolphins](#) which primarily occur around Cornwall and Devon. The southwest coast of England is a [hotspot](#) for migrating basking sharks during the summer months as they migrate north.

12. Tourism and recreation is important to the economy in the south west marine plan areas and are highlighted in this policy because they can exert significant disturbance, as noted in the [Marine Policy Statement](#). Tourism and recreational activities are often not subject to the same statutory regulation compared to other types of proposals as many activities can take place without having to apply for an authorisation or consent. Tourism that could interact with highly mobile species occurs throughout the south west marine plan area, including but not limited to [snorkelling with seals](#) on the Isles of Scilly, [water sports](#) in Cornwall and [snorkelling](#) in Devon. Disturbance from tourism and recreation can be particularly problematic for water birds and marine mammals. In localised areas there are also issues of collision with recreational sea users.
13. The [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) and the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) prohibit the deliberate disturbance of birds and cetaceans, particularly during periods of breeding, rearing, hibernation and migration. However, disturbance induced from tourism and recreation activities is rarely deliberate in the UK and other mechanisms are required to manage these impacts.
14. Disturbance can affect the viability of a population or habitat and continued disturbance can result in a loss of habitat or population resilience. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has developed [advice](#) for offshore industries most likely to disturb to highly mobile species. The Oslo Paris Convention has developed a [pressure matrix](#) which details the risk to cetaceans associated with different types of pressure including but not limited to barriers to movement and underwater noise.
15. Highly mobile species in the south west marine plan areas play an important role in achieving the government's vision clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. Highly mobile species comprise part of the [UK programme of measures](#) to achieve 'Good Environmental Status' in UK waters under the [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#). The main descriptor of 'Good Environmental Status' for highly mobile species is Descriptor one: 'Biological diversity is maintained. The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions'. These commitments are reinforced through the in the [UK Marine Policy Statement](#) through a commitment to 'support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable and valued species'.
16. The [25 year Environment Plan](#) from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commits to achieving good environmental status in our seas while allowing marine industries to thrive.
17. The following policies in the south west marine plan areas seek to reduce disturbance: SW-DIST-3, SW-DIST-4. Cumulative and in-combination effects are considered in policies SW-CE-1 and SW-CE-2. Disturbance associated with underwater noise is discussed further in SW-UWN-1 and SW-UWN-2.

Who is this of interest to?

18. This policy applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.
19. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).
20. Public authorities must also have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Such functions include but are not limited to:
 - strategic planning, including strategies which may increase disturbance of highly mobile species
 - access management, including access to habitats for important life stages
 - flood and erosion risk management
 - fisheries management including bycatch management and reporting

How should this policy be applied?

21. Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts of physical disturbance and include supporting information that is proportionate to the proposal. Proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) and so on.
22. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.
23. If these criteria cannot be met by a proposal, where it requires an authorisation decision, it will only be authorised if there are relevant considerations in line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act (Section 58(2)).
24. Public authorities should manage activities that require authorisation, such as energy development or aggregates dredging, through existing assessments that are required under national legislation, including but not limited to Habitats Regulations Assessments, Marine Conservation Zone Assessments and Environmental Impact Assessments. These will identify conditions that need to be placed on a licence or permit.

Signposting

25. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)

- [Harbours Act 1964](#)
- [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)
- [Planning Act 2008](#)
- [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [UK Marine Policy Statement](#)
- [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#)

26. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [The deliberate disturbance of marine European Protected Species](#)
- [Joint Nature Conservation Committee guidelines for minimising the risk of injury to marine mammals from geophysical surveys](#)
- [Joint Nature Conservation Committee Guidelines for minimising the risk of injury to marine mammals from using explosives](#)

MIS Data Layers:

- Seabird Density
 - Seabird Density - summer
 - Seabird Density - winter
- Fish Habitat
 - High intensity fish nursery grounds (no. species)
 - High intensity fish spawning grounds (No. species)
- Seal Density

Policy drafting template SW-DIST-3

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Disturbance	Code	SW-DIST-3

Policy

SW-DIST-3

Proposals, including those that increase access to the south west marine plan areas, must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:

- a) avoid
- b) minimise
- c) mitigate adverse impacts on priority habitats.

What are priority habitats?

1. Priority habitats are those recognised as being of 'principal importance' for the conservation of biological diversity in England. To deliver commitments under the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and Section 41 of the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act](#) the UK has developed a [list of habitats and species of principle importance](#) for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list includes [marine habitats](#) such as intertidal seagrass beds, rocky reefs, sandflats, mudflats and saltmarsh. Further offshore, habitats include estuarine rocks, *Saballera* reefs and sheltered muddy gravels.
2. Priority habitats have been identified through additional organisations and legislation. Features of Conservation Importance, including marine habitats, are identified by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and listed in the [Ecological Network Guidance](#). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations and the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations require protection for [Annex 1 habitats](#). The [Convention for the Protection of the North-East Atlantic](#) has developed a [list of threatened and / or declining species and habitats](#).
3. The best examples of these habitats are often protected by statutory designations and are addressed by policies SW-MPA-1, SW-MPA-2, SW-MPA-3, SW-MPA-4 and SW-MPA-5. Many of these habitats, however, are not protected. This policy applies to priority habitats that are not a designated feature of a marine protected area.

Where are priority habitats in the south west marine plan areas?

4. This policy concentrates on priority habitats that are not a designated feature of a marine protected area. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#) is an interactive resource containing information on the marine

protected areas designated in UK waters. The network of marine protected areas is likely to change over the period of this plan and the most up to date information should be used when applying this policy.

5. The potential features to consider when applying policy SW-DIST-3 are restricted to Features of Conservation Importance identified by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee listed in the [Ecological Network Guidance, Annex 1 habitats](#), habitats and species included in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act [Section 41 list](#), and the Oslo/Paris Convention [List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats](#). The best available evidence with advice from the statutory nature conservation bodies for the location of these features within the south west marine plan areas should be used when applying this policy.

When should this policy be applied?

6. Habitats in the south west marine plan areas are present year round with limited to no seasonality. Human activity in the south west marine plan areas occur all year round although tourism and recreation, and associated access, peak in the summer months.
7. The seasonal and temporal variations which exist are habitat, project and activity dependent and individual projects will need to consider these. Decision-makers will need to apply the best available evidence and the precautionary principle on a case-by-case basis.

Why are priority habitats important to the south west marine plan areas?

8. Priority habitats play a significant role in achieving the UK government's vision clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. They are vital to functioning of ecosystems in the south west marine plan areas. The change or loss of priority habitats can impact the local ecosystem and the services it provides. Dunes, sandflats and mudflats offer natural coastal protection throughout the south west inshore marine plan area whilst saltmarsh habitat absorbs carbon from the atmosphere. The rich diversity of wildlife and natural beauty of priority habitats in the south west inshore marine plan area offer inspiring places to live, work and visit. Coastal habitats are particularly vulnerable to increased human access as coastal areas can be busier than offshore areas. Habitat damage or loss can have a direct impact on protected species that rely on these areas.
9. The south west marine plan areas have a wide range of priority habitats, varying in abundance, extent and condition. Subtidal sands and gravels occur throughout the south west marine plan areas, including in the Bristol Channel, around the Isles of Scilly and along the south Devon coast. Sheltered muddy gravels and *Sabellaria alveolata* reefs occur within the Bristol Channel. Intertidal mudflats occur in various estuaries including Turo and the estuaries around Plymouth. There are prominent seagrass beds in the Fal estuary. There are deep water habitats in the south west offshore marine plan area, including [cold water coral reefs](#), namely *Lophelia pertusa* reefs, which are also on the [OSPAR List of threatened and / or declining habitats and species](#).

10. Habitat protection comprises part of the [UK programme of measures](#) to achieve 'Good Environmental Status' in UK waters under the [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#). The main descriptor of 'Good Environmental Status' for priority habitats is Descriptor one: 'Biological diversity is maintained. The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions'. These commitments are reinforced through the in the [UK Marine Policy Statement](#) through the objective, 'healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems'. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) includes commitments to 'conserving and enhancing the natural environment', including 'maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate' (para. 170 (c)).
11. Coastal and marine habitats are vulnerable to human pressures including increased access, particularly from tourism and recreation. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has developed a [database](#) which aims to understand the relationship between human activities and their associated pressures on the marine and coastal environment. [Pressures](#) associated with coastal and marine ecosystems include but are not limited to permanent or temporary physical loss or change in habitat.

Who is this of interest to?

12. This policy applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.
13. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).
14. Public authorities must also have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Such functions include but are not limited to:
- strategic planning
 - land and water management
 - waste management
 - access management
 - flood and erosion risk management
 - fisheries management

How should this policy be applied?

15. Proposals that have adverse impacts on priority habitats must demonstrate that they have, in order of preference, avoided, minimised or mitigated adverse impacts. Proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a), and so on.

16. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. Approval will also depend on other material considerations taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.
17. If these criteria cannot be met by a proposal, where it requires an authorisation decision, it will only be authorised if there are relevant considerations in line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act (Section 58(2)).
18. When assessing proposals, decision makers should consider Features of Conservation Importance listed in the [Ecological Network Guidance, Annex 1 habitats](#), habitats and species included in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act [Section 41 list](#), and the Oslo/Paris Convention [List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats](#).
19. Public authorities should have regard to this policy when carrying out functions capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas. The Section 41 list should be used to guide public authorities in implementing their duty under the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act](#) (Section 41), to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their functions.

Signposting

20. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
- [Ecological Network Guidance](#)
 - [Annex 1 habitats](#)
 - [Section 41 list](#)
 - [OSPAR list of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats](#)
 - [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#)
 - [UK Marine Strategy Part Three: UK programme of measures National Planning Policy Framework](#)
21. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#)

MIS Layers:

- European Marine Sites & Ramsars
- Marine Conservation Zones
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Habitats Directive Annex 1 features
- Species of Conservation Importance (FOCI)
- Habitats of Conservation Importance (HOCl)
- Broadscale Habitats

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Habitats		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	Living within environmental limits Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.		
Other relevant policies	SW-CO-1 SW-GOV-1		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW	NE	SE

Policy drafting template SW-HAB-1

HLMO	Living Within Environmental Limits	Sub bullet(s)	Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.
Grouping	Deep Sea Habitats 'Combination'	Code	SW-HAB-1

Policy

SW-HAB-1

Proposals which incorporate measures to support the resilience of deep sea habitats will be supported.

Proposals which may have significant adverse impacts on deep sea habitats must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:

- a) avoid
- b) minimise
- c) mitigate significant adverse impacts on deep sea habitats.

What are deep sea habitats?

1. Deep sea habitats are those which occur beyond the continental shelf break, typically starting at depths of 200 metres. Several deep sea habitats are listed in the [OSPAR List of Threatened and / or Declining Species and Habitats](#) including coral gardens, deep-sea sponge aggregations, seapen and burrowing megafauna communities and *Lophelia pertusa* reefs. In the south west offshore marine plan area there is a known area of *Lophelia pertusa* reef on the northern most wall of the Explorer Canyon. This canyon comprises part of [The Canyons Marine Conservation Zone](#). There are also areas of subtidal coarse sediment, subtidal sand, deep-sea bed and Celtic Sea Relict Sandbanks, all features of the [recommended Marine Conservation Zone South West Deeps \(East\)](#). These broadscale habitats are home to a range of species, typically supporting communities different to those found in similar habitats in shallower waters. Deep sea habitats are difficult to study due to their inherent inaccessibility. There is therefore an element of uncertainty about where particular deep sea habitats occur in the south west offshore marine plan area.
2. Cold water coral reefs support a diverse range of species due to the three-dimensional range of the structure offering shelter and an attachment surface, for example for filter feeding species. These corals are long lived but very slow growing and are therefore vulnerable to damage. The Canyons MCZ also supports *Madrepora oculata*, another reef forming cold water coral.
3. In the south west offshore marine plan area there are multiple deep-sea biotopes that occur across a range of biological zones. These zones include:
 - Atlantic upper bathyal (depth range 200 m – 600 m)
 - Atlantic mid bathyal (depth range 600 m – 1300 m)
 - Atlantic lower bathyal (depth range 1300 m – 2100 m)
 - Atlantic upper abyssal (depth range 2100 m – 3100 m)

- Atlantic mid abyssal (depth range 3100 m – 4100 m)
- Atlantic lower abyssal (depth range >4100 m)

What is resilience?

4. The resilience of deep sea habitats refers to their capacity to recover from severe disturbance and ability to return to a pre-disturbed state with no alteration to ecosystem function. Resilient deep sea habitats are able to maintain biodiversity, food web structure and ecosystem process rates. Reduced resilience can lead to uncertainty about future ecosystem condition.

Where are deep sea habitats in the south west marine plan area?

5. Depth in the south west offshore marine plan area ranges from 100 metres below sea level to 2,000 metres below sea level on the deep seabed. Due to the difficulty in studying deep sea habitats their distribution is not fully understood in the south west offshore marine plan area. A precautionary approach should therefore be adopted when considering developments or activities that could affect them.

When does this policy apply in the south west offshore marine plan area?

6. Little is known about the temporal variation of deep sea habitats in the south west offshore marine plan area and therefore this policy applies all year round. Many habitats in the area have formed slowly over a period of many years, and will have low tolerance to damage with long recovery times. Evidence for deep-sea species and habitat growth rates and recovery time is lacking so a precautionary approach should be adopted due to the vulnerability of deep sea habitats associated with their slow growing nature.

Why are deep sea habitats important to the south west marine plan areas?

7. Deep waters in the south west offshore marine plan area comprise diverse sediments which create mixed habitats for species such as molluscs, crustaceans and burrowing megafauna. These species support diverse food webs including fish, cetaceans and seabirds which also benefit from Atlantic upwelling of deep nutrient rich waters. Cold water coral reefs are slow growing habitats and are highly sensitive to physical damage. For example, the growth rate of *Lophelia pertusa* has been shown to vary from [~2 – 25 mm per year](#) depending on location. The potential for *Lophelia pertusa* to recover after physical damage is uncertain but is likely dependant on the extent of the damage and size of remaining fragments. [Lophelia pertusa](#) habitats are highly sensitive to various pressures, including but not limited to disturbance or penetration of the surface of the seabed, suspended particles in the water column and smothering.
8. Policy HAB-1 will aid the achievement of Good Environmental Status for Descriptor 1 of the [UK's Marine Strategy Part One](#) and also contribute to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Descriptor 6 as detailed in the [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK Programme of Measures](#): Descriptor 6: seafloor integrity is at a level that ensures that the structure and functions of the ecosystems are safeguarded and benthic ecosystems, in particular, are not adversely affected.

9. Policy SW-HAB-1 also contributes to the UK's high level of marine objectives for living within environmental limits. Through encouraging the consideration of vulnerable deep sea habitats this policy also supports the [25 year Environment Plan](#) aim to achieve good environmental status of our seas. This policy also contributes to the sustainable development aim 'conserving and enhancing the natural environment' in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#).

Who is this of interest to?

10. Developers when preparing proposals which may interact with deep sea habitats in the south west marine plan areas.
11. Decision-making public authorities such as:
- Marine licensing authorities
 - The Planning Inspectorate
 - The Crown Estate
 - Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
 - Maritime and Coastguard Agency
12. Advisory public authorities such as:
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
 - Joint Nature Conservation Committee
 - Natural England

How should this policy be applied?

13. Decision-makers will support proposals that incorporate measures that support the resilience of deep sea habitats, enabling the environment to respond to climate change and development. This may include novel designs, and collaboration between developers and public authorities. SW-HAB-1 requires proposals to avoid negative effects which may not enable the functioning deep sea habitats.
14. Public authorities should apply these policies proportionally on proposals that will interact with deep sea habitats. Determination may be informed by a relevant assessment. An assessment to determine how a proposal can be beneficial to deep sea habitats should:
- ensure understanding of habitat types within and adjacent to the area of proposal
 - ensure understanding of importance of these habitats to species – including rare and vulnerable species
 - consider the resilience of habitats changing climate and/or if the proposal could assist habitat resilience
15. Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate any significant adverse impacts on deep deep sea habitats within the south west offshore marine plan area - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) and so on.
16. Proposals must consider the available evidence and identify any significant adverse impacts on deep sea habitats. It is important to note that where evidence is not available there may still be deep sea habitats that are sensitive or of conservation

concern and a baseline may need to be established using site specific surveys. Proposals may require additional and more specific evidence.

17. Where new evidence emerges that improves or changes the evidence provided here, this must be used in applying these policies. Both public authorities and proposals should consider this along with any other evidence gathered.
18. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.

Signposting

19. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Town and Country planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
 - [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#)
 - [25 Year Environmental Plan](#)
20. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
 - [OSPAR List of Threatened and / or Declining Species and Habitats](#)
 - [Features of Conservation Importance \(FOCI\) identified by JNCC](#)
 - [S41 List](#)
 - [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#)
 - [Conservation Advice Packages](#)

MIS Data Layers

- Marine Conservation Zones
- Habitats and Species
 - Species of conservation importance (FOCI)
 - Habitats of conservation importance (HOICI)
 - Broadscale Habitats
- Fish Habitats
 - High intensity fish nursery grounds (No. species)
 - High intensity fish spawning grounds (No. species)

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Marine Litter		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	Living within environmental limits Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.		
Other relevant policies	SW-INF-1 SW-TR-1 SW-EMP-1 SW-EMP-2 SW-ACC-2 SW-WQ-3		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW ✓	NE ✓	SE ✓

Policy drafting template SW-ML-1

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.
Grouping	Litter	Code	SW-ML-1

Policy

SW-ML-1

Public authorities with functions capable of releasing litter into the marine area must provide adequate provision and waste management for the prevention, re-use, recycling, recovery and disposal of waste.

What is waste?

1. [Waste](#) is defined as "...any substance or object which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard...". To dispose of waste correctly to avoid it becoming litter the [waste hierarchy](#) should be applied. Solid waste in the marine environment is commonly referred to as marine litter.
2. An increase in waste created by human use, the growing dependence upon plastics and poor waste management has led to a rise in litter in the marine environment. Supported by recent research and evidence the issue of marine litter has risen on the global platform and is being debated at many levels. Marine plans can contribute towards addressing the sources of marine litter and encouraging the removal of marine litter through collaborative efforts.

What is marine litter?

3. Marine litter is any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment. Marine litter consists of items that have been made or used by people and deliberately discarded into the sea or rivers or on beaches; brought indirectly to the sea with rivers, sewage, storm water or winds; accidentally lost, including material lost at sea in bad weather (fishing gear, cargo); or deliberately left by people on beaches and shores ([United Nations Environment Programme 'Marine Litter an Analytical overview'](#)).
4. Marine litter includes processed food items and excludes seaweed, twigs or other biological debris which contribute to maintaining the local ecosystem.
5. Evidence shows that the majority of marine litter found on beaches comes from land, specifically public littering^{1,6}. Plastic is the main material of marine litter^{1,6}.

Where does marine litter occur in the south west marine plan areas?

6. In general, marine litter can be found on the seabed, drifting within the water column and on coastline and beaches. Marine litter originates from both land and sea based sources, including fisheries, sewerage outflows, fly-tipping, industry, and litter^{1,2}.
7. Specific data about the distribution and sources of marine litter is improving, however is not currently sufficient to give detailed spatial information about where marine litter occurs in the south west marine plan areas³.
8. Limited data for the south west inshore marine plan area indicates the coast of the Western English Channel and Celtic Sea had the highest relative beach litter levels of the UK coast. The south west marine plan area beaches have the highest concentration of marine litter in the form of fishing gear and food and drink packaging compared to other marine plan areas^{1,6}.
9. The reasons for the high levels and types of predominate beach litter in the south west marine plan area could be due to a combination of factors including:
 - marine litter brought in from the Atlantic ocean
 - large river catchments and urban settlements around the Severn and Torridge estuaries
 - three major fishing ports and busy fishing grounds in the marine plan areas
 - the English Channel being one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world
 - the south west being a popular tourist destination

When are the south west marine plan areas impacted by marine litter?

10. A recent analysis of beach clean data revealed that compared to other marine plan areas the south west inshore marine plan area has consistently higher than average levels of marine litter all year round⁶.
11. The natural landscapes and wildlife of the south west inshore plan areas attract many visitors, making it a popular tourist destination with the south west region receiving the highest number of tourists in England ([The regional value of tourism in the UK](#)). The [Marine Conservation Society Great British Beach Clean report](#) demonstrates that litter resulting from people eating and drinking outdoors makes up 20% of all the rubbish found on our beaches, indicating that there is an increase in beach litter from beach users. There is regular cleaning of amenity beaches during the traditional bathing season between May and September. However, during the months outside of the main season litter levels can remain high.

Why is reducing marine litter important to the south west marine plan areas?

12. There are a number of negative impacts caused by marine litter in the south west marine plan area including:

¹ Nelms et al (2017) ['Marine anthropogenic litter on British beaches: A 10-year nationwide assessment using citizen science data',

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969716325918>]

² Hastings & Potts (2013) [title, reference, and URL]

³ Marine Strategy Part 3: Programme of Measures [URL]

⁶ Jordi Blanch Molina (2016) Analysis of spatial and temporal trends of marine litter in England beaches and the potential influencing factors [http://teamsites/sites/MMOTeams2/ev/RefLib/planning-team-references/2016_IMEC_Blanch_J_Report.pdf]

- public safety
- the appearance of our coast and beaches
- cost to tourism
- damage to vessels and structures
- lost catch
- impact on wildlife through entanglement and ingestion including mortality
- transportation of invasive non-native species
- transferring toxic chemicals through the food chain
- clean up costs

13. Marine litter is unsightly and can cause harm to marine wildlife through entanglement and ingestion, and through smothering of the seabed. Litter also causes economic effects through clean-up costs to local communities, lost tourism and costs to fishermen through lost catch and damaged gear. It can also pose a hazard to seafarers through fouling of ship propellers and it can provide a pathway for non-native species to spread to new areas. Reducing litter in rivers, estuaries and at the coast will aid in the overall reduction of marine litter.

14. Plastics are the main type of litter found both on beaches and offshore, including increasing quantities of microscopic pieces of plastics resulting from degradation of larger plastic products in the sea. These may act as a vector for transferring toxic chemicals to the food chain. There is, therefore, widespread recognition that current and future measures to reduce marine and coastal litter will bring ecological, economic and social benefits ([Marine strategy part one: UK initial assessment and good environmental status](#)).

15. The [25 Year Environment Plan](#) states that 'The UK is committed to leading efforts to protect the marine environment. To tackle marine pollution, we will pursue a sustainable, international and transboundary approach that prioritises reducing global reliance on plastics, increases economically viable recycling processes, and promotes maritime practices that prevent harmful matter entering the seas'.

16. This policy supports the intent of the Litter Strategy for England. The Litter Strategy makes particular reference to marine litter and the need to work together to 'reduce the amount of litter entering the marine environment and remove litter that is already there.'

17. [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) are part of a set of policies to help the UK meet our aim to achieve clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. The directive describes good environmental status in 11 main points which cover all the important aspects of the marine ecosystem and all the main human pressures on them. From this a programme of measures for achieving good environmental status was developed in three parts. Marine planning was recognised in the [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#) as a measure of addressing marine litter.

18. To achieve Good Environmental Status for marine litter under [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#), descriptor 10 states that 'The amount of litter, and its degradation products, on coastlines and in the marine environment are reducing over time and levels do not pose a significant risk to the coastal and marine environment, either as a result of direct mortality such as through entanglement, or

by way of indirect impacts such as reduced fecundity or bioaccumulation of contaminants within food chains'. Three targets have been identified to achieve this; the most relevant is an overall reduction in the number of visible litter items within specific categories/types on coastlines ([Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#)).

19. [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) do not include transitional waters (estuaries, rias and rivers) and [the Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) 2017](#) does not address the issue of marine litter. Therefore marine plans are a tool to apply a consistent approach towards addressing marine litter issues across all of the English marine plan areas.
20. Analysis of local plans in the south west indicates there will be an increase in housing development adjacent to the south west marine plan area of over 180,000 houses over the next 20 years which along with other coastal developments, tourism and recreational use will likely result in corresponding increases in waste and potentially litter levels in the south west marine plan areas.
21. A number of policies in the South West Marine Plan support activities that could also indirectly increase the amount of litter generated (SW-INF-1, SW-TR-1, SW-EMP-1, SW-EMP-2, SW-ACC-2).

Who is this of interest to?

- Public authorities with waste or land management functions
- Public authorities with strategic planning functions which enable activities that generate waste that could become coastal or marine litter

- Port and harbour waste management functions including waste reception facilities
- Planning Inspectorate when approving local authority waste management plans and other strategic plans that could lead to increased waste generation
- Maritime Coastguard Agency Pollution Prevention from Ships and Port Receptions Facilities Regulations functions
- Public authorities that develop River Basin Management Plans and other land management plans capable of affecting the marine area
- Water companies with waste water management functions
- Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities – management of commercial fisheries for the purposes of environmental protection

How should this policy be applied?

22. SW-ML-1 applies to the whole of the south west marine plan areas and extends to functions that are carried out in adjacent marine plan areas which are capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas.
23. Policy SW-ML-1 aligns with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.5.10 - 2.5.14) and the [Marine and Coastal Access Act](#). Public authorities must have regard for this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)).

24. Reducing waste at source in accordance with [the Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2011](#) would contribute towards reducing marine litter. Measures to facilitate the re-use and recycling of waste before it becomes marine litter must be implemented. [Guidance on applying the Waste Hierarchy](#) must be applied to ensure public authority functions capable of affecting the marine area include measures to avoid the introduction of litter to the marine environment. [Guidance on applying the Waste Hierarchy](#) ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment. It gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. When waste is created it gives priority to preparing it for re-use, then recycling, then recovery, and last of all disposal (eg landfill). This guidance is produced under regulation 15(1) of [the Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2011](#) and any person subject to the regulation 12 duty must have regard to it.
25. Avoiding littering and inappropriate disposal of waste is the best way to reduce the amount of debris getting into the environment³. Public authorities ([as defined in Section 89 \(1\) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)) have a role in keeping their land free from litter which includes beaches, waterside land and public open spaces as described in the [Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse](#) under the [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#). This includes the provision of waste bins and other infrastructure (for example signage and information boards) and provides local authorities with powers to take enforcement action against littering. Public authorities must focus their efforts to support the aims of the [Litter Strategy](#) for England, by improving education, enforcement and infrastructure to reduce littering.
26. Public authorities, including local authorities and port and harbour authorities, should have regard to SW-ML-1 and SW-ML-2 when developing waste management plans or any plan which enables activities that generate waste or litter in the south west marine plan areas. Such activities include development, regeneration and tourism.
27. Public authorities responsible for approving waste management plans and strategic plans that could result in an increase of marine litter or litter at the coast should also have regard to SW-ML-1 and SW-ML-2. This includes the Planning Inspectorate when approving local authority plans, and the Maritime Coastguard Agency when approving waste management plans for ports, harbours and vessels.
28. The discharge of litter into the sea is prohibited by the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships ([MARPOL Annex V](#)) and the [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#). Ports and Harbour authorities must provide waste reception facilities adequate to meet the needs of ships normally using the harbour or terminal in question in accordance with the most up to date [Port Waste Reception Facilities Regulations](#). Ports and harbours working with local authorities and the voluntary sector could improve their waste management processes and cut costs by applying SW-ML-1 and SW-ML-2 through collaborative working.
29. Public authorities developing River Basin Management Plans, and land or waste water management plans (including water companies) that are capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas must also have regard to SW-ML-1 and build in measures to avoid the introduction of litter to the marine area. Also see SW-WQ-3.
30. Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities have duties under the [Marine and Coastal Access Act \(S153\)](#) to protect the marine environment from the effects of sea fisheries and seek to ensure the conservation objectives of any Marine Conservation

Zones are furthered in their district and should therefore have regard to SW-ML-1 when carrying out these functions.

Signposting

31. Existing measures which relate to and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [25 Year Environment Plan](#)
- [The Litter Strategy for England 2017](#)
- [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#)
- [OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter 2014](#)
- [G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [The Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2011](#)
- Port Reception facilities Regulations
- [Fishing for Litter](#)
- The Isles of Scilly [Smart Islands Programme](#)

32. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [River Basin Management Plans](#) covering the south west inshore marine plan areas
- [Guidance on applying the waste hierarchy](#)
- [Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme](#)
- [WRAP the UK plastics pact](#)
- [National planning policy for waste](#)
- [Operation Clean Sweep](#) – reducing plastic pellet loss to the environment

Policy drafting template SW-ML-2

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.
Grouping	Litter	Code	SW-ML-2

Policy

SW-ML-2

Public authorities with waste management functions capable of affecting the marine area must provide adequate provision for the prevention and removal of marine litter.

What is waste?

1. [Waste](#) is defined as "...any substance or object which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard...". To dispose of waste correctly to avoid it becoming litter the [waste hierarchy](#) should be applied. Solid waste in the marine environment is commonly referred to as marine litter.
2. An increase in waste created by human use, the growing dependence upon plastics and poor waste management has led to a rise in litter in the marine environment. Supported by recent research and evidence the issue of marine litter has risen on the global platform and is being debated at many levels. Marine plans can contribute towards addressing the sources of marine litter and encouraging the removal of marine litter through collaborative efforts.

What is marine litter?

3. Marine litter is any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment. Marine litter consists of items that have been made or used by people and deliberately discarded into the sea or rivers or on beaches; brought indirectly to the sea with rivers, sewage, storm water or winds; accidentally lost, including material lost at sea in bad weather (fishing gear, cargo); or deliberately left by people on beaches and shores ([United Nations Environment Programme 'Marine Litter an Analytical overview'](#)).
4. Marine litter includes processed food items and excludes seaweed, twigs or other biological debris which contribute to maintaining the local ecosystem.
5. Evidence shows that the majority of marine litter found on beaches comes from land, specifically public littering^{1,6}. Plastic is the main material of beach litter items^{1,6}.

Where does marine litter occur in the south west marine plan areas?

6. In general, marine litter can be found on the seabed, drifting within the water column and on coastline and beaches. Marine litter originates from both land and sea based sources, including fisheries, sewerage outflows, fly-tipping, industry, and litter^{1,2}.
7. Specific data about the distribution and sources of marine litter is improving, however is not currently sufficient to give detailed spatial information about where marine litter occurs in the south west inshore marine plan area³.
8. Limited data for the south west inshore marine plan area indicates the coast of the Western English Channel and Celtic Sea had the highest relative litter levels of the UK coast. The south west marine plan area beaches had the highest concentration of marine litter in the form of fishing gear and food and drink packaging compared to other marine plan areas^{1,6}.
9. The reasons for the high levels and types of predominate beach litter in the south west marine plan area could be due to a combination of factors including:
 - marine litter brought in from the Atlantic ocean
 - large river catchments and urban settlements around the Severn and Torridge estuaries
 - three major fishing ports and busy fishing grounds in the marine plan areas
 - the English Channel being one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world
 - the south west being a popular tourist destination

When are the south west marine plan areas impacted by marine litter?

10. A recent analysis of beach clean data revealed that the south west inshore marine plan area has consistently higher than average levels of marine litter all year round⁷.⁶ The natural landscapes and wildlife of the south west inshore plan areas attract many visitors, making it a popular tourist destination with the south west region receiving the highest number of tourists in England ([The regional value of tourism in the UK](#)).
11. The [Marine Conservation Society Great British Beach Clean report](#) demonstrates that litter resulting from people eating and drinking outdoors makes up 20% of all the rubbish found on our beaches, indicating that there is an increase in beach litter from beach users. There is regular cleaning of amenity beaches during the traditional bathing season between May and September. However, during the months outside of the main season litter levels can remain high.

Why is reducing marine litter important to the south west marine plan areas?

12. In the south west marine plan area there are a number of negative impacts caused by marine litter including:

¹ Nelms et al (2017) ['Marine anthropogenic litter on British beaches: A 10-year nationwide assessment using citizen science data',

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969716325918>]

² Hastings & Potts (2013) [title, reference, and URL]

³ Marine Strategy Part 3: Programme of Measures [URL]

⁶ Jordi Blanch Molina (2016) Analysis of spatial and temporal trends of marine litter in England beaches and the potential influencing factors [http://teamsites/sites/MMOTeams2/ev/RefLib/planning-team-references/2016_IMEC_Blanch_J_Report.pdf]

- public safety
- the appearance of our coast and beaches
- cost to tourism
- damage to vessels and structures
- lost catch
- impact on wildlife through entanglement and ingestion including mortality
- transportation of invasive non-native species
- transferring toxic chemicals through the food chain
- clean up costs

13. Marine litter is unsightly and can cause harm to marine wildlife through entanglement and ingestion, and through smothering of the seabed. Litter also causes economic effects through clean-up costs to local communities, lost tourism and costs to fishermen through lost catch and damaged gear. It can also pose a hazard to seafarers through fouling of ship propellers and it can provide a pathway for non-native species to spread to new areas. Reducing litter in rivers, estuaries and at the coast will aid in the overall reduction of marine litter.

14. Plastics are the main type of litter found both on beaches and offshore, including increasing quantities of microscopic pieces of plastics resulting from degradation of larger plastic products in the sea. These may act as a vector for transferring toxic chemicals to the food chain. There is, therefore, widespread recognition that current and future measures to reduce marine and coastal litter will bring ecological, economic and social benefits ([Marine strategy part one: UK initial assessment and good environmental status](#)).

15. The [25 Year Environment Plan](#) states that 'The UK is committed to leading efforts to protect the marine environment. To tackle marine pollution, we will pursue a sustainable, international and transboundary approach that prioritises reducing global reliance on plastics, increases economically viable recycling processes, and promotes maritime practices that prevent harmful matter entering the seas'.

16. This policy supports the intent of the [Litter Strategy](#) for England. The Litter Strategy makes particular reference to marine litter and the need to work together to 'reduce the amount of litter entering the marine environment and remove litter that is already there.'

17. [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) are part of a set of policies to help the UK meet our aim to achieve clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. The directive describes good environmental status in 11 main points which cover all the important aspects of the marine ecosystem and all the main human pressures on them. From this a programme of measures for achieving good environmental status was developed in three parts. Marine planning was recognised in the [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#) as a measure of addressing marine litter. To achieve Good Environmental Status for marine litter under [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#), descriptor 10 states that 'The amount of litter, and its degradation products, on coastlines and in the marine environment are reducing over time and levels do not pose a significant risk to the coastal and marine environment, either as a result of direct mortality such as through entanglement, or by way of indirect impacts such as reduced fecundity or bioaccumulation of contaminants within food chains'. Three

targets have been identified to achieve this; the most relevant is an overall reduction in the number of visible litter items within specific categories/types on coastlines ([Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#)).

18. [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) do not include transitional waters (estuaries, rias and rivers) and [the Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) 2017](#) does not address the issue of marine litter. Therefore marine plans are a tool to apply a consistent approach towards addressing marine litter issues across the whole of the plan areas.
19. Analysis of local plans in the south west indicates there will be an increase in housing development adjacent to the south west marine plan area of over 180,000 houses over the next 20 years which along with other coastal developments, tourism and recreational use will likely result in corresponding increases in litter levels in the south west marine plan areas.
20. A number of policies in the South West Marine Plan support activities that could indirectly increase the amount of litter generated (SW-INF-1, SW-TR-1, SW-EMP-1, SW-EMP-2, SW-ACC-2).

Who is this of interest to?

- Public authorities with land management functions ([as defined in Section 89 \(1\) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990](#))
- Public authorities with waste management functions
- Port and harbour waste management functions including waste reception facilities
- Planning Inspectorate when approving local authority waste management plans and other strategic plans that could lead to increased waste generation
- Maritime Coastguard Agency Pollution Prevention from Ships and Port Receptions Facilities Regulations functions
- Public authorities that develop River Basin Management Plans and other land management plans capable of affecting the marine area
- Water companies with waste water management functions
- Marine Management Organisation – Issues licences for the removal of abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear
- Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities – management of commercial fisheries for the purposes of environmental protection

How should this policy be applied?

21. SW-ML-2 applies to the whole of the south west marine plan areas and extends to functions that are carried out in adjacent marine plan areas which are capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas.
22. Policy SW-ML-2 aligns with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.5.10 - 2.5.14) and the [Marine and Coastal Access Act](#). Public authorities must have regard for this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)).

23. Avoiding littering and inappropriate disposal of waste is the best way to reduce the amount of debris getting into the environment³ - see SW-ML-1. Removal of marine litter requires a collaborative approach between responsible public authorities and the voluntary sector.
24. Public authorities ([as defined in Section 89 \(1\) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)) have a role in keeping their land free from litter which includes beaches, waterside land and public open spaces as described in the [Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse](#). This includes the provision of waste bins and other infrastructure (for example signage and information boards) and provides local authorities with powers to take enforcement action against littering. Public authorities must focus their efforts to support the aims of the [Litter Strategy](#) for England, by improving education, enforcement and infrastructure to reduce littering.
25. A minimum requirement of the [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) states that amenity beaches identified by local authorities should be kept clear of all types of litter and refuse between 1 May and 30 September inclusive. Due to the warming climate beaches are increasingly being used outside of the traditional bathing season between May and September. It is recommended as good practice that authorities are aware of the different nature of beaches within their area that they carry out a regular monitoring programme of those beaches and develop an appropriate cleansing regime. Through collaborative working with the voluntary sector, public authorities should aim to increase the litter removal provision for non-amenity beaches as required.
26. Collaborative working covers a variety of ways that two or more organisations can work together. Collaborative working between charities, local organisations and public authorities can play an important role in helping to encourage reduction, re-use and recycling initiatives and to remove marine litter. Groups such as [Fishing for Litter](#) and [Dive Against Debris](#) remove litter underwater and schemes such as [Odyssey Innovation](#) in the south west re-use and recycle marine litter once collected. Public authorities play a key role in facilitating collaboration at a local level and advising other groups on best practice.
27. In accordance with the most recent [Port Waste Reception Facilities Regulations](#), Ports and Harbour authorities must provide waste reception facilities adequate to meet the needs of ships normally using the harbour or terminal in question. Ports and harbour authorities should also support efforts where appropriate to remove marine litter from within their defined harbour limit. Through applying SW-ML-2 by working collaboratively with local authorities and the voluntary sector Port and Harbour Authorities could improve their waste management processes and cut costs.
28. Other Public Authorities capable of affecting the marine area must demonstrate collaborative working to address the issue of marine litter either but not exclusively through:
- providing infrastructure to reduce marine litter
 - supporting efforts to remove marine litter
 - improving education on marine litter
 - support enforcement action against littering
 - supporting the re-use or recycling of marine litter

Signposting

29. Existing measures which relate to and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [25 Year Environment Plan](#)
- [The Litter Strategy for England 2017](#)
- [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#)
- [OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter 2014](#)
- [G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [The Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [The Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [Port Reception facilities Regulations](#)
- [Fishing for Litter](#)
- The Isles of Scilly [Smart Islands Programme](#)

30. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [River Basin Management Plans](#) covering the south west inshore marine plan areas
- [Guidance on applying the waste hierarchy](#)
- [Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme](#)
- [WRAP the UK plastics pact](#)
- [National planning policy for waste](#)
- [Operation Clean Sweep](#) – reducing plastic pellet loss to the environment

Policy drafting template SW-ML-3

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.
Grouping	Litter	Code	SW-ML-3

Policy

SW-ML-3

Proposals that facilitate waste re-use or recycling, or that reduce marine and coastal litter will be supported.

Proposals that could potentially increase the amount of marine litter that is discharged into the marine area, either intentionally or accidentally, must include measures to:

- a) avoid
- b) minimise or
- c) mitigate the discharges

What is waste?

1. [Waste](#) is defined as "...any substance or object which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard...". To dispose of waste correctly to avoid it becoming litter the [waste hierarchy](#) should be applied.
2. An increase in waste created by human use, the growing dependence upon plastics and poor waste management has led to a rise in litter in the marine environment. Supported by recent research and evidence the issue of marine litter has risen on the global platform and is being debated at many levels. Marine plans can contribute towards addressing the sources of marine litter and encouraging the removal of marine litter through collaborative efforts.

What is marine litter?

3. Marine litter is any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment. Marine litter consists of items that have been made or used by people and deliberately discarded into the sea or rivers or on beaches; brought indirectly to the sea with rivers, sewage, storm water or winds; accidentally lost, including material lost at sea in bad weather (fishing gear, cargo); or deliberately left by people on beaches and shores ([United Nations Environment Programme 'Marine Litter an Analytical overview'](#)).
4. Marine litter includes processed food items and excludes seaweed, twigs or other biological debris which contribute to maintaining the local ecosystem.
5. Evidence shows that the majority of marine litter found on beaches comes from land, specifically public littering^{1,6}. Plastic is the main material of beach litter items^{1,6}.

Where does marine litter occur in the south west marine plan areas?

6. In general, marine litter can be found on the seabed, drifting within the water column and on coastline and beaches. Marine litter originates from both land and sea based sources, including fisheries, sewerage outflows, fly-tipping, industry, and litter^{1,2}.
7. Specific data about the distribution and sources of marine litter is improving, however is not currently sufficient to give detailed spatial information about where marine litter occurs in the south west inshore marine plan area³.
8. Limited data for the south west inshore marine plan area indicates the coast of the Western English Channel and Celtic Sea had the highest relative litter levels of the UK coast. The south west marine plan area had the highest concentration of marine litter in the form of fishing gear and food and drink packaging compared to other marine plan areas^{1,6}.
9. The reasons for the high levels and types of predominate marine litter in the south west marine plan area could be due to a combination of factors including:
 - marine litter brought in from the Atlantic ocean
 - large river catchments and urban settlements around the Severn and Torridge estuaries
 - three major fishing ports and busy fishing grounds in the marine plan and surrounding areas
 - the English Channel being one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world
 - the south west being a popular tourist destination

When are the south west marine plan areas impacted by marine litter?

10. A recent analysis of beach clean data revealed that the south west inshore marine plan area has consistently higher than average levels of marine litter all year round⁷.⁶ The natural landscapes and wildlife of the south west inshore plan areas attract many visitors, making it a popular tourist destination with the south west region receiving the highest number of tourists in England ([The regional value of tourism in the UK](#)).
11. The [Marine Conservation Society Great British Beach Clean report](#) demonstrates that litter resulting from people eating and drinking outdoors makes up 20% of all the rubbish found on our beaches, indicating that there is an increase in beach litter from beach users. There is regular cleaning of amenity beaches during the traditional

¹ Nelms et al (2017) ['Marine anthropogenic litter on British beaches: A 10-year nationwide assessment using citizen science data', <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969716325918>]

² Hastings & Potts (2013) [title, reference, and URL]

³ Marine Strategy Part 3: Programme of Measures [URL]

⁶ Jordi Blanch Molina (2016) Analysis of spatial and temporal trends of marine litter in England beaches and the potential influencing factors [http://teamsites/sites/MMOTeams2/ev/RefLib/planning-team-references/2016_IMEC_Blanch_J_Report.pdf]

⁷ Luke Howard (2018) An investigation into marine litter levels across local authorities in England [Not sure of location with evidence team]

bathing season between May and September. However, during the months outside of the main season litter levels can remain high.

12. Coastal developments can also create marine litter. A number of policies in the South West Marine Plan support activities that could indirectly increase the amount of litter generated (SW-INF-1, SW-TR-1, SW-EMP-1, SW-EMP-2, SW-ACC-2).

Why is reducing marine litter important to the south west marine plan areas?

13. In the south west marine plan area there are a number of negative impacts caused by marine litter including:
- public safety
 - the appearance of our coast and beaches
 - cost to tourism
 - damage to vessels and structures
 - lost catch
 - impact on wildlife through entanglement and ingestion including mortality
 - transportation of invasive non-native species
 - transferring toxic chemicals through the food chain
 - clean up costs
14. Marine litter is unsightly and can cause harm to marine wildlife through entanglement and ingestion, and through smothering of the seabed. Litter also causes economic effects through clean-up costs to local communities, lost tourism and costs to fishermen through lost catch and damaged gear. It can also pose a hazard to seafarers through fouling of ship propellers and it can provide a pathway for non-native species to spread to new areas. Reducing litter in rivers, estuaries and at the coast will aid in the overall reduction of marine litter.
15. Plastics are the main type of litter found both on beaches and offshore, including increasing quantities of microscopic pieces of plastics resulting from degradation of larger plastic products in the sea. These may act as a vector for transferring toxic chemicals to the food chain. There is, therefore, widespread recognition that current and future measures to reduce marine and coastal litter will bring ecological, economic and social benefits ([Marine strategy part one: UK initial assessment and good environmental status](#)).
16. The 25 Year Environment Plan states that ‘The UK is committed to leading efforts to protect the marine environment. To tackle marine pollution, we will pursue a sustainable, international and transboundary approach that prioritises reducing global reliance on plastics, increases economically viable recycling processes, and promotes maritime practices that prevent harmful matter entering the seas’.
17. This policy supports the intent of the [Litter Strategy](#) for England. The Litter Strategy makes particular reference to marine litter and the need to work together to ‘reduce the amount of litter entering the marine environment and remove litter that is already there.’
18. [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) are part of a set of policies to help the UK meet our aim to achieve clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. The directive describes good environmental status in 11 main

points which cover all the important aspects of the marine ecosystem and all the main human pressures on them. From this a programme of measures for achieving good environmental status was developed in three parts. Marine planning was recognised in the [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#) as a measure of addressing marine litter.

19. To achieve Good Environmental Status for marine litter under [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#), descriptor 10 states that 'The amount of litter, and its degradation products, on coastlines and in the marine environment are reducing over time and levels do not pose a significant risk to the coastal and marine environment, either as a result of direct mortality such as through entanglement, or by way of indirect impacts such as reduced fecundity or bioaccumulation of contaminants within food chains'. Three targets have been identified to achieve this; the most relevant is an overall reduction in the number of visible litter items within specific categories/types on coastlines ([Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#)).
20. [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) do not include transitional waters (estuaries, rias and rivers) and [the Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) 2017](#) does not address the issue of marine litter. Therefore marine plans are a tool to apply a consistent approach towards addressing marine litter issues across the whole of the plan areas.
21. Analysis of local plans in the south west indicates there will be an increase in housing development adjacent to the south west marine plan area of over 180,000 houses over the next 20 years which along with other coastal developments, tourism and recreational use will likely result in corresponding increases in litter levels in the south west marine plan areas.

Who is this of interest to?

22. Anyone making a proposal that could potentially increase the amount of marine litter that enters the south west marine plan areas.
23. Public authorities making any authorisation for proposals that are capable of introducing, managing or preventing the introduction of litter into the south west marine plan areas must make their decision in accordance with SW-ML-3.
24. Including decision-making public authorities such as:
 - Local planning authorities
 - Marine licensing authorities
 - Ports and Harbour authorities
 - The Planning Inspectorate
 - The Crown Estate
 - Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities
 - Maritime and Coastguard Agency

How should this policy be applied?

25. SW-ML-3 applies to the south west inshore and offshore marine plan areas.

26. Decision-makers should support proposals that seek to reduce marine litter through preventative or litter removal measures, where they comply with other policies in the South West Marine Plan.
27. Proposals should demonstrate they have considered the potential for the introduction of litter. Proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate marine litter - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc. Proposals should demonstrate how they will avoid, minimise, or where this is not possible, mitigate introductions of litter to the marine area during both the construction period and throughout the lifetime of the proposal.
28. The current regulatory regime includes provisions for reducing and removing litter including:
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
 - [Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse](#)
 - [The Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2011](#)
 - [National Planning Policy for Waste](#)
 - [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
 - [National Waste Management Plan for England](#)
29. In addition, licensing requirements for marine related activities are required, where relevant, to put in place a waste management plan, which includes measures to minimise the risk of litter escape.
30. Measures could include:
- avoid – avoiding the discharge of any items of marine litter during development and once operational via methods outlined in a thorough waste management plan
 - minimise – developers will monitor and remove any items of marine litter from the development and other sources in the area surrounding the development, during development and once operational outlined in a thorough waste management plan
 - mitigate - developers will monitor and remove any items of marine litter from the development or other sources in the area surrounding the development as well as; once operational support a re-use or recycling scheme for marine litter or extend their clean-up operation further into the surrounding area to leave the marine area cleaner than before their development eg adopt sea bins or financially support coastal clean-up operations – all of which can be outlined in a thorough waste management plan
31. Proposals should include an explanation or evidence of a plan to manage waste during construction and once operational. Licensed marine activities will need to demonstrate consideration of the [The Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2011](#) and its [Waste Hierarchy](#).
32. [Guidance on applying the Waste Hierarchy](#) must be applied to ensure developments capable of affecting the marine area include measures to avoid the introduction of marine litter. [Guidance on applying the Waste Hierarchy](#) ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment. It gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. When waste is created it gives priority to

preparing it for re-use, then recycling, then recovery, and last of all disposal (eg landfill). Measures to facilitate the re-use and recycling of waste before it becomes marine and coastal litter and also once removed from the marine and coastal area should be implemented where appropriate.

Signposting

33. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [25 Year Environment Plan](#)
- [The Litter Strategy for England](#)
- [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#)
- [OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter](#)
- [G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [The Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2011](#)

34. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Waste management links](#)
- [River Basin Management Plans](#) covering the south west marine plan areas
- [Guidance on applying the waste hierarchy](#)
- [National planning policy for waste](#)

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Marine Protected Areas		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	<p>Living within environmental limits Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.</p> <p>Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.</p>		
Other relevant policies	SW-CC-3 SW-BIO-1 SW-CO-1 SW-GOV-1		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW ✓	NE ✓	SE ✓

Policy drafting template SW-MPA-1

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.
Grouping	Species	Code	SW-MPA-1

Policy

SW-MPA-1

Proposals that support the objectives of marine protected areas and the ecological coherence of the marine protected area network will be supported.

Proposals that may have adverse impacts on the objectives of marine protected areas must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:

- a) avoid,
- b) minimise,
- c) mitigate adverse impacts, with due regard given to statutory advice on an ecologically coherent network.

What are marine protected areas?

1. Marine protected areas are areas of the sea protected by law for nature conservation purposes. They protect geological features and habitats and species on the sea bed, in the water column, on the sea surface or in the air above.
2. Marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas include:
 - Ramsar Sites – wetlands of international importance
 - Special Protection Areas (including proposed sites) – rare, vulnerable or threatened birds
 - Special Areas of Conservation (including candidate sites and Sites of Community Importance) – habitats and species in need of conservation
 - Marine Conservation Zones (including recommended sites) – geological features, habitats and species typical of UK waters
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest – geological features, flora and fauna of special interest
3. Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation are designated and protected under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) and the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#). Marine Conservation Zones are designated and protected under the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#). Sites of Special Scientific Interest are designated and protected under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) and the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#).
4. For Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, areas outside the designated area that are important to features for which a site has been designated are also protected.

What is an ecologically coherent network?

5. The designations listed above form the English contribution towards a wider ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas in the North East Atlantic. They form the government's contribution to commitments under the [Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic](#). The UK principles of ecological coherence are laid out in the [Joint Administration Statement](#) and are based on [guidance](#) produced by the Commission for the [Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic](#). An ecologically coherent network includes well managed, resilient, and adequately sized marine protected areas that are ecologically connected and which represent a range of replicated marine habitats and species.

Where are the marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas?

6. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#) is an interactive resource containing information on the marine protected areas designated in UK waters. The network of marine protected areas is likely to change over the period of this plan and the most up to date information should be used when applying this policy.
7. The south west marine plan areas contain a relatively high number of marine protected areas compared to other English marine plan areas. Marine Conservation Zones protect a variety of habitats including rocky reefs, soft sediments, and intertidal and estuarine habitats. The Canyon Marine Conservation Zone protects the only deep sea habitats in England, including important areas of deep sea coral reef.

HOLDING PLACE - Tranche 3 MCZs will also need to be acknowledged when we have more certainty about which sites to include. Awaiting designation outcome in June 2019.

8. The south west marine plan areas also support internationally significant populations of seabirds, with many areas designated as Special Protection Areas. The coastal Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay Special Protection Area is designated for supporting significant numbers of great northern diver and black-throated diver. On the north coast the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area is designated for its waterfowl assemblage including England's smallest swan, the Bewick swan. Throughout the south west marine plan areas there are also several Special Areas of Conservation including Lundy, Severn Estuary, Isles of Scilly, and Haig Fras. These sites are designated for a wide variety of internationally significant habitats and species. Habitats include estuaries, reefs, sandbanks and mudflats. Species include sea lamprey, river lamprey and grey seal.
9. The Bristol Channel Approaches Special Area of Conservation, the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation, and the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area all extend into the Welsh marine plan area.
10. Mobile species designated as a feature of special protection areas and special areas of conservation are also protected when they are outside the boundary of their site. Seabird and seal density maps are available on the [Marine Information System](#).

Ongoing research and [data on seal usage](#) is provided by the [Sea Mammal Research Unit](#). The evidence base for mobile marine species is continuously developing. The most up to date information and conservation advice should be used when applying this policy.

11. The boundaries of marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas may change in the future in response to natural range shifts caused by climate change, and additional marine protected areas may be designated. Policy SW-MPA-1 will apply to new and amended areas as they develop.

When should this policy be applied?

12. SW-MPA-1 applies year round and throughout the lifetime of the South West Marine Plan. Marine protected areas are a static designation but the features of an individual site may be more sensitive to pressures at specific times. Geological features and habitats are generally present year round with limited to no seasonality. Mobile species, such as birds, seals and cetaceans, follow predictable seasonal patterns.
13. The most up to date information and conservation advice should be used when applying this policy to determine temporal considerations. Natural England produces conservation advice packages for inshore marine protected areas within 12nm through the [Designated Sites View](#). The Joint Nature Conservation Committee produces conservation advice packages for marine protected areas between 12-200nm through the [Site Information Centres](#). The packages include statutory advice on the qualifying features of a site and their conservation objectives, including advice on the seasonality of mobile features. They advise how to further the conservation objectives, and they identify activities that are capable of affecting the qualifying features and the processes they depend upon.

Why are marine protected areas important to the south west marine plan areas?

14. Marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas are an important tool for protecting biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural capital assets, and to prevent habitat loss. They benefit rare, vulnerable and threatened habitats and species, as well as those typical to UK waters. They support the local economy, provide opportunities for research, health and well-being, and provide inspirational places to live, work and visit.
15. As stated in the [Joint Administration Statement](#), linking the marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas 'together in an ecologically coherent network, supported by wider environmental management measures will achieve benefits more effectively than individual marine protected areas can alone.'
16. The marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas play a significant role in achieving the UK government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. They contribute to targets in the [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity](#) to protect 10% of the world's coastal and marine areas by 2020, and are part of the [UK programme of measures](#) to achieve Good Environmental Status in UK waters under the [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#). These commitments are reinforced in the [UK Marine Policy Statement](#) through a commitment to 'complete an ecologically coherent network as part of a broad

based approach to nature conservation' (3.1.2). The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) includes commitments to enhance the natural environment by 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures' (para.170(d)). The [25 Year Environment Plan](#) from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commits to increasing the proportion of protected and well-managed seas, and better management of existing protected sites.

Who is this of interest to?

17. This policy applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.
18. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).
19. Public authorities must also have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Such functions include but are not limited to:
 - strategic planning
 - land and water management
 - waste management
 - access management
 - flood and erosion risk management
 - fisheries management

How should this policy be applied?

20. This policy applies to individual marine protected areas throughout the south west marine plan areas, and areas outside marine protected areas that are important to features for which a marine protected area has been designated.
21. Public authorities will support proposals that support the conservation objectives of a marine protected areas and the ecological coherence of the network where it complies with other policies in this plan and other relevant legislation.
22. Public authorities will assess if the proposal affects the ecological coherence of the network on a case-by-case basis. Decision-makers should seek advice on how to consider the ecological coherence of the marine protected area network in decision-making from the statutory nature conservation bodies. Where advice states that it is not possible to assess the impact there will be no further requirements for decision-makers to consider the network. Current guidance provides advice on how marine protected areas are considered in the decision-making process. The requirements on how to consider impacts on the ecological coherence of the marine protected network under policy SW-MPA-1 may change if new guidance is issued. New and

evolving advice will not be applied retrospectively to activities that have already been consented.

23. Proposals that support the objectives of marine protected areas should include information demonstrating how this will be achieved. The conservation objectives for individual sites are provided by the statutory nature conservation bodies through the [Designated Sites View](#) for sites within 12nm and through the [Site Information Centres](#) for sites between 12-200nm. The conservation objectives describe whether the condition of features for which the site is designated should be maintained or restored. Where positive impacts are identified, proposals must also assess adverse impacts in line with relevant legislation. Enhancement is not a substitute for avoidance, protection or mitigation measures.
24. Proposals must still comply with requirements under relevant legislation including the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#), the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#), the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#), the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#), the [Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#), and other national legislation.
25. Proposals that have adverse impacts on the objectives of marine protected areas must demonstrate that they have, in order of preference, avoided, minimised or mitigated adverse impacts on individual sites in accordance with statutory monitoring requirements, such as [Habitats Regulations Assessment](#), [Marine Conservation Zone Assessment](#), [Sites of Special Scientific Interest Assessment](#), and the conservation objectives set out by the statutory nature conservation bodies. Proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a), and so on.
26. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. Approval will also depend on other material considerations taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.
27. Where proposals cannot avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impact but are in the public interest, they must state the case for proceeding with details of how measures of equal environmental benefit will be achieved. Guidance on mitigating impacts, what to consider in decisions on whether the public benefit of a proposal outweighs damage to the environment, and applying a risk-based approach to measures of equivalent environmental benefit is available in [Guidance on the duties on public authorities in relation to Marine Conservation Zones \(Note 2\)](#) and [Marine conservation zones and marine licensing](#).
28. Where proposals provide 'like for like' compensation to address residual impacts, compensation should be provided in the affected marine protected areas as the preferred option. The requirements of SW-MPA-1 may also be satisfied where 'like for like' compensation is provided outside of the affected marine protected areas.
29. Where 'like for like' compensation is not achievable, or if compensation can only be offered in an area not currently designated as part of the marine protected area network, the proposed compensation measures may result in an impact on the ecological coherence of the network. The statutory nature conservation bodies will advise on the effect of residual impacts, after compensation, on the ecological

coherence of the network. Where the statutory nature conservation bodies advise that it is not possible to assess the impact, there will be no further requirements for proposals or decision-makers to consider the network.

30. Public authorities should apply this policy when carrying out any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, including strategic planning and enforcement decisions, and should refer to site conservation objectives and advice from the statutory nature conservation bodies. Public authorities must also consider cumulative, combined or synergistic effects which their functions, authorisations and enforcement may have, with regards to any advice issued by the statutory nature conservation bodies.
31. Consideration of impacts at the network level should also be undertaken at a strategic level, addressed through mechanisms such as:
 - Environmental Impact Assessments
 - [Regional environmental assessments](#), eg marine aggregate regional environmental assessments
 - [Strategic Environmental Assessments](#)
 - Assessments and measures to achieve Good Environmental Status with regard to support of the [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)

Signposting

32. Existing measures which relate to and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
 - [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
 - [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#)
 - [Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority byelaws](#)
33. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
 - Statutory [conservation advice packages](#) for marine protected areas 0-12nm (Natural England)
 - Statutory [conservation advice packages](#) for marine protected areas 12-200nm (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)
 - Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#)

MIS layers:

- European Marine Sites & Ramsars
- Marine Conservation Zones
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Habitats Directive Annex 1 features
- Seabird density

Policy drafting template SW-MPA-2

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted. Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.
Grouping	Species	Code	SW-MPA-2

Policy

SW-MPA-2

Proposals that enhance a marine protected area's ability to adapt to climate change, enhancing the resilience of the marine protected area network will be supported. Proposals that may have adverse impacts on an individual marine protected area's ability to adapt to the effects of climate change and so reduce the resilience of the marine protected area network, must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate adverse impacts.

What are marine protected areas?

1. Marine protected areas are areas of the sea protected by law for nature conservation purposes. They protect geological features and habitats and species on the sea bed, in the water column, on the sea surface or in the air above.
2. Marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas include:
 - Ramsar Sites – wetlands of international importance
 - Special Protection Areas (including proposed sites) – rare, vulnerable or threatened birds
 - Special Areas of Conservation (including candidate sites and Sites of Community Importance) – habitats and species in need of conservation
 - Marine Conservation Zones (including recommended sites) – geological features, habitats and species typical of UK waters
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest – geological features, flora and fauna of special interest
3. Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation are designated and protected under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) and the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#). Marine Conservation Zones are designated and protected under the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#). Sites of Special Scientific Interest are designated and protected under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) and the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#).

4. For Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, areas outside the designated area that are important to features for which a site has been designated are also protected, for example birds that are protected by a Special Protection Area are also protected when they are outside the boundary of the site.

What is resilience and the ability to adapt to climate change?

5. Resilience is defined in guidance by the [Oslo/Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic](#) as “the ability of an ecosystem to recover from disturbances within a reasonable timeframe”. A resilient ecosystem can absorb, resist or recover from damage and disturbance caused by human activities and natural change, including climate change, and continues to provide ecosystem services. They are more likely to recover from or withstand environmental fluctuations and unexpected events, and can potentially replenish other damaged populations.
6. Responding to the effects of climate change requires global action. This policy highlights the importance of adaptive management for the protection of habitats and species, and protects the integrity of the marine protected area network design principles. The design principles of the marine protected area network as laid out in the [Joint Administration Statement](#) promote the resilience of marine ecosystems through:
 - inclusion of replicates of representative habitats within the network
 - connectivity between sites
 - ensuring sites are of a viable size
 - effective protection of features
7. It is too early to determine if the network in its current state is sufficient to achieve full resilience, for example sites may be too far apart for some species depending on their dispersal strategies. Adaptive management is essential to help mitigate the effects of climate change and to maintain the coherence of the marine protected area network in the south west marine plan areas.

Where in the south west marine plan areas are marine protected areas affected by climate change?

8. Up to date information on the location of marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas can be found on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#) which is an interactive resource containing information on the marine protected areas designated in UK waters. The network of marine protected areas is likely to change over the period of this plan and the most up to date information should be used when applying this policy.
9. Conservation advice packages and Information on the condition of marine protected areas, including those affected by climate change, is provided by Natural England for inshore marine protected areas within 12nm through the [Designated Sites View](#). The Joint Nature Conservation Committee provides conservation advice and condition information for marine protected areas between 12-200nm through the [Site Information Centres](#). Conservation advice packages include statutory advice on the qualifying features of a site and their conservation objectives, including advice on seasonality of mobile features. They advise how to further the conservation

objectives, and they identify activities that are capable of affecting the qualifying features and the processes they depend upon.

10. Coastal habitats including sand dunes, saltmarsh, sandflats, mudflats, shingle beaches and maritime cliffs are particularly sensitive to the effects of climate change and can be found throughout the south west inshore marine plan area. They experience changes in rainfall, temperature, storminess and wave energy, but also habitat loss due to erosion and sea-level rise. These habitats support a rich assemblage of marine species and rely on natural sediment supply and transport to maintain their natural, dynamic state.
11. The [Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership](#) reports that natural sea defence provided by sand dunes, saltmarsh and shingle in the inshore south west marine area may face increasing erosional pressure due to sea level rise and an increase in storm events.
12. Coastal habitats can, and do, adapt to change, but an increase in coastal flood and erosion events in the inshore south west marine plan area has led to a reliance on coastal protection assets. Where fixed landward assets prevent habitat migration or 'roll back', habitat loss is likely to occur due to coastal squeeze. Fixed structures within the marine area can also create barriers to species movement.
13. The south west marine plan areas support internationally significant populations of breeding and overwintering seabirds. The [Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership 2017 Report Card](#) states that the breeding success of seabirds are strongly linked to temperature rises and changes in fish prey populations such as sandeels. Short term weather events such as severe summer storms are also having a severe negative effect on the breeding performance of some species. It is predicted that there will be a continuing shift northwards in habitat suitability and prey availability for many species over the coming century.
14. Evidence of long-term shifts in the distribution and abundance of marine species due to higher temperatures is now discernible ([UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017](#)). These shifts are expected to continue and become more widespread, with some species potentially benefiting, but others losing suitable space.

When should this policy be applied?

15. SW-MPA-2 applies year round and throughout the lifetime of the South West Marine Plan.
16. Marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas are already being affected by climate change ([Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the South West Marine Plans](#)). Seabird breeding populations increased in the UK over the last century, but breeding success has declined over the same period. The [Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership](#) considers climate change to be the main driver of this decline. Coastal erosion is already effecting much of the shoreline throughout the inshore south west marine plan area, while much of the shoreline remains protected with defence work or artificial beaches ([Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership](#)). Climate change will continue to affect marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas over the long-term. Due to the time lag in the climate

system, even with the most ambitious mitigation efforts, we are likely to experience further climate change over the coming decades.

Why are resilient marine protected areas important to the south west marine plan areas?

17. The loss of coastal habitats can impact the integrity of an individual marine protected area and the local ecosystem, but it can also impact the ecological coherence of the wider network, especially if the design principles of the network are compromised. This is particularly relevant for sensitive habitats that are not formally protected but which may need to be designated in the future to maintain the coherence of the network. Habitat loss could also have a direct impact on the species that rely on the habitat.
18. In addition to protecting internationally significant marine biodiversity, marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas provide natural capital assets and ecosystem services that offer social and economic benefits. Seagrass and saltmarsh habitat absorbs carbon from the atmosphere, dunes, rocky reefs and sand and mudflats offer natural coastal protection, while the rich diversity of wildlife and natural beauty of marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas offer inspiring places to live, work and visit.
19. As stated in the [Joint Administration Statement](#), linking the marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas 'together in an ecologically coherent network, supported by wider environmental management measures will achieve benefits more effectively than individual marine protected areas can alone.'
20. Marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas play a significant role in achieving the UK government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. They contribute to targets in the [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity](#) to protect 10% of the world's coastal and marine areas by 2020, and are part of the [UK programme of measures](#) to achieve 'Good Environmental Status' in UK waters under the [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#). These commitments are reinforced in the [UK Marine Policy Statement](#) through a commitment to 'complete an ecologically coherent network as part of a broad based approach to nature conservation' (3.1.2). Marine plans should build in sufficient flexibility to take account of climate change impacts, for example by 'changing or moving current uses/spatial allocations, or safeguarding areas for future uses' (2.6.7.8).
21. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) includes commitments to enhance the natural environment by 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures' (para.170(d)). The [25 Year Environment Plan](#) from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commits to increasing the proportion of protected and well-managed seas, and better management of existing protected sites.
22. Adapting to the effects of climate change is promoted through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England](#) and the [Climate Change Act 2008](#).

Who is this of interest to?

23. This policy applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.
24. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).
25. Public authorities must also have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Such functions include but are not limited to:
 - strategic planning
 - land and water management
 - waste management
 - access management
 - flood and erosion risk management
 - fisheries management

How should this policy be applied?

26. This policy applies to marine protected areas throughout the south west marine plan areas and any areas required to support the adaptation of marine protected areas to the effects of climate change.
27. Public authorities will support proposals that enhance the ability of a marine protected area to adapt to the effects of climate change where it complies with other policies in this plan and relevant legislation.
28. Proposals that enhance the ability of a marine protected area to adapt to the effects of climate change should include information demonstrating how this will be achieved. Enhancement refers to measures taken which have a positive impact. An example of enhancement could include the removal of hard coastal defence structures in favour of soft engineering which enables habitat roll back.
29. Where positive impacts have been identified, proposals must also assess adverse impacts in line with relevant legislation. Enhancement is not a substitute for avoidance, minimisation or mitigation measures.
30. Proposals must still comply with requirements under relevant legislation including the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#), the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#), the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#), [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#), the [Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#), and other national legislation.

31. Proposals that may have adverse impacts on the ability of a marine protected area to adapt to the effects of climate change must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate these impacts. Proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a), and so on. If these criteria cannot be met it will only be authorised if there are relevant considerations in line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act Section 58(2)).
32. Adaptation could be recovery (where impact has occurred), opportunity for habitat migration if necessary (for example due to sea level rise) or amendment to site boundaries in response to climate driven range shifts which is enabled through policy SW-MPA-3.
33. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.
34. Where proposals cannot avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impact but are in the public interest, they must state the case for proceeding with details of how compensation of equal environmental benefit will be achieved.
35. Public authorities must consider and account for adaptation in the face of potential impacts from climate change. Public authorities must also take into account other relevant projects, programmes and plans, and matters including those outlined in the Marine Policy Statement 2.6.8.
36. The Marine Policy Statement (2.6.7.5) sets out that decisions on and proposals for marine and coastal developments should take account of climate change projections. There are a number of sources of advice available, including the [Climate Change Risk Assessment](#), [UK Climate Projections](#) and [Marine Climate Change Impact Partnership](#) reports.
37. For Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas the impact can be considered in the determination of 'likely significant effect' and subsequent appropriate assessment if required.

Signposting

38. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
 - [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
 - [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#)
 - [Coastal Change Management Areas](#)
 - [National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England](#)
 - [Climate Change Act 2008](#)
39. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
 - Statutory [conservation advice packages](#) for marine protected areas 0-12nm (Natural England)

- Statutory [conservation advice packages](#) for marine protected areas 12-200nm (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#)
- [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment](#)
- [UK Climate Projections \(UKCP18\)](#)
- [Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership](#)
- [Shoreline Management Plans](#)

MIS layers:

- European Marine Sites & Ramsars
- Marine Conservation Zones
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Habitats Directive Annex 1 features

Iteration 3 draft

Policy drafting template SW-MPA-3

HLMO	Living Within Environmental Limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.
Grouping	Marine Protected Areas 'B'	Code	SW-MPA-3

Policy

SW-MPA-3

Where statutory advice states that a marine protected area site condition is deteriorating or that features are moving or changing due to climate change, a suitable boundary change to ensure continued protection of the site and coherence of the overall network should be considered.

What are marine protected areas?

1. Marine protected areas are areas of the sea protected by law for nature conservation purposes. They protect geological features and habitats and species on the sea bed, in the water column, on the sea surface or in the air above.
2. Marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas include:
 - Ramsar Sites – wetlands of international importance
 - Special Protection Areas (including proposed sites) – rare, vulnerable or threatened birds
 - Special Areas of Conservation (including candidate sites and Sites of Community Importance) – habitats and species in need of conservation
 - Marine Conservation Zones (including recommended sites) – geological features, habitats and species typical of UK waters
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest – geological features, flora and fauna of special interest
3. Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation are designated and protected under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) and the [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#). Marine Conservation Zones are designated and protected under the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#). Sites of Special Scientific Interest are designated and protected under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) and the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#).
4. For Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, areas outside the designated area that are important to features for which a site has been designated are also protected.

What is site condition?

5. Site condition is the condition of the qualifying features of a marine protected area. Condition may be reported as favourable (maintained or recovered), unfavourable (recovering, no change or declining), or destroyed (partially or completely). Site

condition is monitored by statutory nature conservation bodies who provide advice to government and other public authorities in relation to marine protected areas. The most up-to-date information on site condition for marine protected areas in the south west inshore marine plan area can be found on the [Designated Sites View](#). Condition for sites in the south west offshore marine plan area can be found through the [Site Information Centres](#).

6. Climate change can affect and impact the condition of site features, particularly if the ability of habitats and species to shift their ranges in response to climate change is limited by human activities. The loss or movement of features from a site, or a decline in their condition due to climate change, may result in unfavourable condition. Boundary changes are an important consideration for adaptive management to maintain the integrity of the site.

Where in the south west marine plan areas is site condition affected by climate change?

7. Up to date information on the location of marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas can be found on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#) which is an interactive resource containing information on the marine protected areas designated in UK waters. The network of marine protected areas is likely to change over the period of this plan and the most up to date information should be used when applying this policy.
8. Conservation advice packages and Information on the condition of marine protected areas, including those affected by climate change, is provided by Natural England for inshore marine protected areas within 12nm through the [Designated Sites View](#). The Joint Nature Conservation Committee provides conservation advice and condition information for marine protected areas between 12-200nm through the [Site Information Centres](#). Conservation advice packages include statutory advice on the qualifying features of a site and their conservation objectives, including advice on seasonality of mobile features. They advise how to further the conservation objectives, and they identify activities that are capable of affecting the qualifying features and the processes they depend upon.

When should this policy be applied?

9. SW-MPA-3 applies throughout the entire south west marine plan areas. The policy applies when the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs accepts statutory advice (based on condition assessments) from the statutory nature conservation bodies that a boundary change is required to ensure the continued protection of site features if they have altered as a result of climate change. Advice may include deselection of an existing site and selection of a replacement site.
10. Climate change will continue to affect marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas over the long-term. Due to the time lag in the climate system, even with the most ambitious mitigation efforts, we are likely to experience further climate change over the coming decades. Evidence of long-term shifts in the distribution and abundance of marine species due to higher temperatures is now discernible ([UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017](#)). These shifts are expected to continue and become more widespread, with some species potentially benefiting, but others losing suitable space.

Why is a flexible management approach for marine protected area boundaries in response to climate change important to the south west marine plan areas?

11. There is a high number of overlapping marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas. A change in the natural range of habitats and species will likely result in the displacement of another habitat or species which may also be a protected feature. The number of overlapping sites, many of which are large with extensive boundaries, means marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas are particularly susceptible to feature migration or loss caused by climate change.
12. Coastal habitats are particularly vulnerable. Coastal squeeze resulting in loss of intertidal habitats and species, including birds, may affect the extent or quality of protected sites and/or the features for which they have been designated. This may require new compensatory habitat to be created and/or designated in coastal areas.
13. Site condition monitoring is important to understand how the condition of a marine protected area and its qualifying features are changing over time and to inform adaptive management.
14. The [UK Marine Policy Statement](#) states that marine plans should build in “sufficient flexibility to take account of climate change impacts, for example by introducing appropriate criteria for selection or de-selection of protected marine areas, seeking the advice of statutory advisors, changing or moving current uses/spatial allocations, or safeguarding areas for future uses” (2.6.7.8). Marine plans will endeavour to achieve this but will not seek to duplicate existing regimes, for example, the role of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs in designating marine protected areas.

Who is this of interest to?

15. The statutory nature conservation bodies monitor and assess the condition of marine protected areas and they should clearly state when the condition of a feature is changing or deteriorating due to climate change. This policy should also be considered when recommending and designating new marine protected areas to ensure that boundaries allow for adaptive management if necessary.
16. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs should consider this policy when designating, amending or de-selecting marine protected areas.
17. Public authorities who manage and regulate the placement of hard constraints (for example coastal defences) in the marine area may also need to consider the future need for adaptive management in line with policy SW-MPA-2.

How should this policy be applied?

18. This policy applies to marine protected areas throughout the south west marine plan areas and any areas required to support the adaptation of marine protected areas to the effects of climate change.
19. One aspect of managing a marine protected area is enabling the features for which a site is designated to adapt to climate change, for example through a boundary

change or even a new site location. It is important to raise the potential for such changes as the process of identifying, designating and providing conservation advice for sites is still underway.

20. The statutory nature conservation bodies will flag condition assessments which show that a protected feature has changed its location due to a shift in range, or an increase or decrease in its extent, abundance or assemblage. If climate change is found to be the causing factor, a suitable boundary change should be considered. A boundary change will not be supported where the condition of a site has deteriorated due to pressures from human activities, as this should be addressed through revised site management measures.
21. Where it is not possible to alter a site boundary due to hard constraints (for example a sea wall), public authorities should consider actions to remove barriers where possible to enable the features of the site to adapt. It will be necessary to consult relevant Shoreline Management Plans.
22. In certain cases the removal of barriers will not be possible due to their usage as flood and coastal erosion protection. This policy supports use of soft defences in preference to hard defences where coastal defence is necessary. Soft defences enable boundary changes should the need occur through condition assessments. Further consideration regarding the removal of barriers to enable range shifts and boundary changes to occur should be applied in light of policy SW-CC-3.
23. This policy focuses on deterioration of site condition and the potential future requirement for suitable boundary changes. This should be considered alongside policy SW-MPA-2 which details the consideration required to ensure individual marine protected areas have the ability to adapt to climate change.

Signposting

24. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
 - [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
 - [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
 - [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
 - [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#)
25. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
 - Statutory [conservation advice packages](#) for marine protected areas 0-12nm (Natural England)
 - Statutory [conservation advice packages](#) for marine protected areas 12-200nm (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)
 - Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#)
 - [Cell 1 Shoreline Management Plans](#)

MIS layers:

- European Marine Sites & Ramsars

- Marine Conservation Zones
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Habitats Directive Annex 1 features

26. Potential monitoring indicators:

27. Number of site condition reports that state features are changing due to climate change, together with the number of recommendations made to DEFRA for a boundary change.

28. The number of boundary changes actually made in response to the change in features caused by climate change.

Iteration 3 draft

Policy drafting template SW-MPA-4

HLMO	Living Within Environmental Limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.
Grouping	Marine Protected Areas 'B'	Code	SW-MPA-4

Policy

SW-MPA-4

Until the ecological coherence of the marine protected area network is confirmed, proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate adverse impacts on features that may be required to complete the network, d) if it is not possible to mitigate adverse impacts, proposals should state the case for proceeding.

What is a marine protected area network features?

1. Marine protected area network features are those habitats, species, ecological processes, geological or geomorphological features listed as requiring protection and enhancement through the designation of a marine protected area.
2. The government is committed to completing an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas to contribute towards commitments under the [Oslo/Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic](#) and requirements of the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (3.1.2). This aim is supported by targets in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [25 Year Environment Plan](#) to increase the proportion of protected and well-managed seas, and better manage existing protected sites.
3. To support the development of the marine protected area network as described in the [Marine and Coastal Access Act \(Section 123\(2\)\)](#) it is important to protect potential locations for further marine protected areas which may be needed to complete the network in the future. Potential features should remain in sufficient condition to merit designation.
4. Ecological coherence of the UK marine protected area network is currently assessed at a bio-geographical, regional sea scale. Coherence within UK Secretary of State covered waters has been assessed by the statutory nature conservation bodies and potential gaps in the network have been identified in advice to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Where are potential marine protected area network features in the south west marine plan areas?

5. This policy concentrates on areas beyond protected sites that may need to be designated in the future. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#) is an interactive resource containing information on the marine protected areas designated in UK waters. The network of marine protected areas is likely to change over the period of this plan and the most up to date information should be used when applying this policy.
6. The potential features to consider when applying policy SW-MPA-4 are restricted to Features of Conservation Importance identified by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee listed in the [Ecological Network Guidance, Annex 1 habitats](#), habitats and species included in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act [Section 41 list](#), and the Oslo/Paris Convention [List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats](#). The best available evidence with advice from the statutory nature conservation bodies for the location of these features within the south west marine plan areas should be used when applying this policy.
7. The south west marine plan areas are recognised for supporting internationally significant habitats and populations of marine life. While much of the plan areas are protected with marine protected areas, large areas remain undesignated. Coastal habitats are particularly vulnerable to habitat loss due to coastal squeeze and other effects of climate change which could have a direct impact on protected species that rely on these areas. This is particularly relevant for sensitive habitats that are not formally protected but important to the coherence of the network, and/or may be needed to fill gaps in the network in the future.

When should this policy be applied?

8. SW-MPA-4 applies year round and throughout the lifetime of the South West Marine Plan, or until the network as described in the [Marine and Coastal Access Act \(Section 123\(2\)\)](#) is complete, thereby completing the government's contribution towards an ecologically coherent network.
9. There are limited temporal considerations when considering the location of potential marine protected area network features in the south west marine plan areas. Geological features and habitats are generally present year round with limited to no seasonality. Mobile species, such as birds, seals and cetaceans, follow predictable seasonal patterns.

Why are potential marine protected area network features important to the south west marine plan areas?

10. Marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas are an important tool for protecting biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural capital assets, and to prevent habitat loss. They benefit rare, vulnerable and threatened habitats and species, as well as those typical to UK waters. They support the local economy, provide

opportunities for research, health and well-being, and provide inspirational places to live, work and visit.

11. As stated in the [Joint Administration Statement](#), linking the marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas ‘together in an ecologically coherent network, supported by wider environmental management measures will achieve benefits more effectively than individual marine protected areas can alone.’
12. Protecting a representative range of features that are connected and replicated in more than one site are principles of an ecologically coherent network. The marine protected areas in the south west marine plan areas play a significant role in achieving the UK government’s vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. They contribute to targets in the [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity](#) to protect 10% of the world’s coastal and marine areas by 2020, and are part of the [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK programme of measures](#) to achieve Good Environmental Status in UK waters under the [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#), particularly for Descriptor 1 – biodiversity and Descriptor 6 – seafloor integrity. These commitments are reinforced in the [Marine Policy Statement](#) through a commitment to ‘complete an ecologically coherent network as part of a broad based approach to nature conservation’ (3.1.2). The [Marine Policy Statement](#) (3.1.7) also highlights the aim to halt biodiversity loss and the potential to identify additional areas for future designation to complete the network as described in the [Marine and Coastal Access Act \(Section 123\(2\)\)](#). The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) includes commitments to promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species (174(b)). The [25 Year Environment Plan](#) from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commits to increasing the proportion of protected and well-managed seas, and better management of existing protected sites.

Who is this of interest to?

13. This policy applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.
14. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).
15. Public authorities must also have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Such functions include but are not limited to:

- strategic planning
- land and water management
- waste management
- access management
- flood and erosion risk management
- fisheries management

How should this policy be applied?

16. This policy applies throughout the south west marine plan areas.
17. As highlighted in policy SW-MPA-1, considering an ecologically coherent network in decision-making is yet to be agreed. Until such time, characteristics of a marine protected area network have been set out in the marine conservation zone consultation document. It highlights the need to consider wider network coherence in addition to considering the objectives of individual sites. This is based on principles agreed by the UK.
18. Until the network as described in the [Marine and Coastal Access Act \(Section 123\(2\)\)](#) is complete, thereby completing the government's contribution towards an ecologically coherent network, proposals should demonstrate, in order of preference, that they will avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts on features that may need to be included in the future - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc. This aligns with requirements set out in the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.3.1.2). When the network is complete, proposals will no longer be required to demonstrate compliance with S-MPA-4, but should be aware of broader biodiversity requirements under SW-BIO-1. Proposals should take note of the following paragraphs to understand what public authorities will consider when assessing proposals.
19. Until the network is complete, when assessing proposals public authorities should apply precaution within an overall risk-based approach, taking account of the best available evidence and with regard to advice from the statutory nature conservation bodies. Decision-making should be reasonable and proportionate, with a focus on features that are more sensitive to pressures (for example affects from climate change). Concentrating on these will allow easier assessment of where more immediate action is needed to complete the network.
20. When assessing proposals, public authorities should consider Features of Conservation Importance listed in the [Ecological Network Guidance, Annex 1 habitats](#), habitats and species included in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act [Section 41 list](#), and the Oslo/Paris Convention [List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats](#) The [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act](#) (Section 41), requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of

habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

21. Public authorities should also use the [Section 41 list](#) to identify which habitats and species should be given priority when applying SW-BIO-1, and the requirements of section 15 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) to create, protect, enhance and manage networks of biodiversity.

Public authorities should consider cumulative impacts arising from multiple proposals on the potential future inclusion of features within the marine protected area network. Where it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should state the case for proceeding, including how the proposal supports the South West Marine Plan vision and plan policies. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decisionmaker which may include, for example, other plans.

22. Public authorities should have regard to this policy when carrying out functions capable of effecting the south west marine plan areas. The Section 41 list should be used to guide public authorities in implementing their duty under the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act](#) (Section 40), to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their functions.

Signposting

23. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [Ecological Network Guidance](#)
- [Annex 1 habitats](#)
- [Section 41 list](#)
- [OSPAR list of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats](#)
- [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#)
- [Offshore Marine Conservation Regulations \(amendment\) 2007](#)
- [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
- [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#)
- [UK Marine Strategy Part Three: UK programme of measures](#)
- [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [The Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

24. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Marine Protected Area mapper](#)

MIS Layers:

- European Marine Sites & Ramsars
- Marine Conservation Zones

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Habitats Directive Annex 1 features
- Species of Conservation Importance (FOCI)
- Habitats of Conservation Importance (HOCl)
- Broadscale Habitats

Iteration 3 draft

Policy drafting template SW-MPA-6

HLMO	Living Within Environmental Limits	Sub bullet(s)	Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted.
Grouping	Marine Protected Areas 'D'	Code	SW-MPA-6

Policy

SW-MPA-6

Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:

- a) avoid
- b) minimise
- c) mitigate significant adverse impacts on designated geodiversity

What is designated geodiversity?

1. Geodiversity is the term used to describe the variety of landforms, rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and natural processes that underlie and determine the character of our landscape and seascape. The UK's rich geodiversity tells the story of Earth's complicated past, providing evidence of past life and environmental conditions stretching back over 2,800 million years. The UK's changing coastline provides an unparalleled slice through our geodiversity as the action of the sea and waves continuously exposes new rocks and sediments.
2. There is an intimate relationship between geodiversity and biodiversity. Geodiversity and the way it influences landscapes, sediments and climate is fundamental to the distribution of habitats and species, for example, intertidal rocky shores and subtidal sands and gravels each support their own unique assemblages of marine plants and animals.
3. Geodiversity receives statutory protection in the English marine area through the designation and protection of:
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) and the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#)
 - Marine Conservation Zones under the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
 - National Parks under the [National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949](#) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty under the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#).
4. Non-statutory conservation of geodiversity is provided through the designation and protection of [Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites](#). These sites are designated through local site selection procedures and are considered the most important places in the UK for Earth science outside of the statutory sites. [Heritage Coast](#) designations are another non-statutory landscape designation that may include important geodiversity.

Where are designated geodiversity sites in the south west marine plan areas?

5. The [Cornish Geoconservation Group](#) and the [Cornwall Wildlife Trust](#) provides information on local sites of geological importance. Further information is also contained in the [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Geodiversity Action Plan](#).
6. The [Geological Conservation Review Series](#) is a public record of over 3,000 Sites of Special Scientific Interest that represent the range of geomorphological features in Britain. The [Geological Conservation Database](#) is an inventory of each site and contains basic information and some full site reports. The information is administered by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee who also provide a [UK map of Geological Conservation Review Sites](#).
7. The [Designated Sites View](#) provides information, including conservation objectives, on Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Marine Conservation Zones and the activities that are likely to cause damage. The [Site of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zone and Marine Conservation Zone data](#) provides information to carry out an initial assessment of potential risks posed by a proposal.

When should this policy be applied?

8. SW-MPA-6 applies year round and throughout the lifetime of the South West Marine Plan. Geodiversity in the south west marine plan areas has formed over millions of years and natural change happens slowly over long timescales. There are no specific seasonality or temporal considerations that need to be considered for geological features throughout the south west marine plan areas.

Why is geodiversity important to the south west marine plan areas?

9. For its size, the UK is regarded as one of the most geodiverse places in the world. The practice of Earth science was developed in the UK and many periods of geological time were first defined and named here. One of the significant geological formations in the south west marine plan areas is known as the Serpentine, on the Lizard Peninsula. These rocks, part of the earth's mantle pushed up by the movement of continent, is the largest such formation on the British mainland.
10. Geodiversity is finite and sensitive to change. Understanding and valuing geodiversity is critical to understanding the planet and how the decisions made influence the future of our environment. Geodiversity has an important role to play in ensuring that the natural environment continues to provide important ecosystem services.
11. Geodiversity supports our economy and influences where we live. Its sustainable use is critical to the future well-being of our environment and for the ecosystem services that it provides. Our geological past can be used to predict changes in our environment, offering insights into climate change and how it might affect our lives. Minerals and aggregates are a major economic resource. Protected landscapes are valued for tourism, while coastal processes influenced by geodiversity can provide natural protection from flood and coastal erosion, such as coastal cliffs in the south west inshore marine plan area. Geodiversity provides a wide range of habitats that in turn support a rich assemblage of marine life, including coastal cliffs which support thousands of seabirds throughout the south west inshore marine plan areas.

12. The [Marine Policy Statement](#) states “development should aim to avoid harm to marine ecology, biodiversity and geological conservation interests (including geological and morphological features), including through location, mitigation and consideration of reasonable alternatives” (2.6.1.3). Also, that “development proposals may provide, where appropriate, opportunities for building-in beneficial features for marine ecology, biodiversity and geodiversity as part of good design” (2.6.1.4).
13. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) states that “Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils” (170).
14. The [UK Geodiversity Action Plan](#) provides an agreed framework for geodiversity action across the UK. Objective 6 seeks “to conserve and manage our geodiversity through appropriate recognition at international, national and local levels.” Objective 7 seeks “to maintain and enhance our geodiversity through the management of sites, areas and wider landscapes.”

Who is this of interest to?

15. This policy applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.
16. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).
17. Public authorities must also have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Such functions include but are not limited to:
 - strategic planning, including aggregate and minerals planning
 - flood and erosion risk management
 - access management
 - fisheries management
 - byelaw development for Sites of Special Scientific Interest - National Parks and authorities that manage National Nature Reserves have powers to develop byelaws to protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest within their jurisdiction under [Section 28R of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)

How should this policy be applied?

18. This policy applies to all statutory and non-statutory designated geodiversity sites throughout the south west marine plan areas.
19. Proposals that have significant adverse impacts on geological features of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Marine Conservation Zones or Regionally Important

Geological Sites must demonstrate that they have, in order of preference, avoided, minimised or mitigated such impacts in accordance with statutory monitoring requirements, such as [Marine Conservation Zone Assessment](#), [Sites of Special Scientific Interest Assessment](#), and the conservation objectives set out by the statutory nature conservation bodies. Proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a), and so on.

20. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. Approval will also depend on other material considerations taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.

21. Consideration of impacts to geodiversity sites should also be undertaken at a strategic level, addressed through mechanisms such as:

- [Environmental Impact Assessments](#)
- [Regional environmental assessments](#), eg marine aggregate regional environmental assessments
- [Strategic Environmental Assessments](#)

Signposting

22. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest byelaws
- [UK Geodiversity Action Plan](#)
- [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Geodiversity Action Plan](#)
- [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
- [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#)
- [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
- [National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949](#)

23. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [UK map of Geological Conservation Review Sites](#)
- [Geological Conservation Review Series](#)
- [Geological Conservation Database](#)
- [British Geological Society Geology of Britain Maps](#)
- [Marine Protected Area Mapper](#)
- [Designated Sites View](#)
- [SSSI Impact Risk Zone and Marine Conservation Zone data](#)

Possible monitoring indicators

24. Number of proposal consents that have conditions attached to protect geological features, especially non-designated

25. Number of strategic plans that include measures or policies to protect geodiversity

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Invasive Non-Native Species		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	Living within environmental limits Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.		
Other relevant policies	SW-BIO-1 SW-CO-1 SW-GOV-1		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW ✓	NE ✓	SE ✓

Policy drafting template SW-NIS-1

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.
Grouping	Invasive non-native species	Code	SW-NIS-1

Policy

SW-NIS-1

Proposals that reduce the risk of spread and/or introduction of non-native invasive species within the south west marine plan areas and adjacent plan areas should be supported.

Proposals must put in place appropriate measures to avoid or minimise significant adverse impacts that would arise through the introduction and transport of non-native invasive species, particularly when: 1) moving equipment, boats or livestock (for example fish or shellfish) from one water body to another 2) introducing structures suitable for settlement of non-native invasive species, or the spread of non-native invasive species known to exist in the area.

What are non-native and non-native invasive species?

1. Non-native (sometimes referred to as non-indigenous) species are those introduced outside of their natural past or present distribution which might survive and subsequently reproduce. In many cases non-native species do not cause harm to the local environment or economy. The [Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat](#) describes non-native invasive species as any non-native species that has the ability to spread, causing damage to the environment, economy, human health or the way we live. Non-native species can become 'invasive' when they cause significant adverse impacts. For example, the Leathery sea squirt (*Styela clava*) is established from the Clyde in Scotland around the coast of England as far as the Humber on the east coast. It attaches to solid surfaces in shallow water, especially in harbours and marinas, but also on wrecks and natural rock. It can smother oysters and mussels and compete for food, and it can foul boat hulls, buoys, moorings, ropes and harbour and marina infrastructure. Highly invasive species often reproduce quickly, can adapt quickly to a broad range of situations (such as water quality or food availability), have a diverse gene pool, and/or are associated with human activities.
2. Due to its proximity to the coast of mainland Europe, the south west coast has a diverse range of non-native species. The Tamar Estuaries area is a hot-spot for non-native species due to its long history as a naval and commercial port. [The Tamar Estuaries Marine Biosecurity Plan](#) reports the following marine non-native invasive

species with a significant presence on the south coast of the south west marine plan areas:

- Slipper limpet *Crepidula fornicata*
- Compass sea squirt *Asterocarpa humilis*
- Leathery sea squirt *Styela clava*
- Orange tipped sea-squirt *Corella eumyota*
- Darwin's barnacle *Austrominius modestus*
- Orange sheath sea squirt *Botrylloides violaceus*
- *Aplidium cf. glabrum*
- Tufty-buff bryozoan *Tricellaria inopinata*
- Ruby bryozoan *Bugula neritina*
- Red ripple bryozoan *Watersipora subatra*
- Orange ripple bryozoan *Schizoporella japonica*
- Pacific oyster *Crassostrea gigas*
- Wakame *Undaria pinnatifida*
- Wireweed *Sargassum muticum*
- Devil's tongue weed *Grateloupia turuturu*
- Pom-pom weed *Caulacanthus okamurae*

3. There may be different assemblages of species present in other parts of the south west marine plan areas, or species yet to be discovered and recorded. The assemblage and geographical range of species may change over the period covered by this plan. Looking at areas beyond the south west marine plan areas can provide an idea of the species that may become a problem in the future. The most up to date evidence should be used when applying this policy. The [National Biodiversity Network Atlas](#) aggregates data from multiple sources and shows where species have been recorded in the UK.
4. [The Tamar Estuaries Marine Biosecurity Plan](#) states that due to the high levels of maritime traffic including international and cross-channel traffic the area is extremely vulnerable to the arrival of a number of non-native invasive species. Those that present a particularly high risk of arrival and impact are:
 - Carpet sea squirt *Didemnum vexillum*
 - Chinese mitten crab *Eriocheir sinensis*
 - Asian shore crabs *Hemigrapsus spp.*
 - American lobster *Homarus americanus*

Where in the south west marine plan areas are non-native invasive species likely to establish?

5. The distribution of many non-native invasive species is currently limited by water temperature ([Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership: Science Review](#)), but species are spreading and becoming established through a combination of climate

change, migration and human introduction.

6. Non-native invasive species are most likely to establish in areas where activities known to spread and/or introduce invasive species occur. Such activities are referred to as pathways of spread and introduction. High risk pathways in the south west marine plan areas include:
 - Naval and commercial freight shipping (through hull fouling)
 - Commercial and recreational boating (through hull fouling)
 - Trans-shipment through ship ballast water discharge
 - Aquaculture (unintentional escape of species, of conditions become favourable for species establishment)
 - Port, harbour and marina infrastructure (species can colonise structures and equipment)
 - Coastal protection infrastructure (species can colonise structures)
 - Offshore installations and equipment (species can colonise structures)
 - Commercial and recreational fishing (fouling of gear and equipment)
 - Recreational water activities (fouling of equipment)
 - Relocation of structures and equipment
 - Marine litter and debris (species attached to floating material)
 - Aquariums (escape of plants and animals)
 - 'Hitchhiking' of species with goods transported for trade
7. The south west inshore marine plan area is a key area for recreation activities in England, which are widely distributed along the full length of coast. There are notable differences in sea, wind and surf conditions between the north Atlantic coast and the south coasts of Devon and Cornwall. As a result, boating activities are more likely to occur on the more sheltered south coast. Sea angling from boat and shore are also popular in the south west. Boat angling is popular along the south Cornwall and Devon coasts with significant numbers of charter fishing boats in Looe, Mevagissey, Plymouth and Dartmouth, and the north Cornwall, Devon and Somerset coasts, particularly Padstow, Newquay, Ilfracombe, Watchet, Minehead and Portishead.
8. Registered aquaculture businesses in the south west inshore marine plan area are located primarily on the south coast at Dartmouth, Salcombe, Bigbury-on-Sea, Newton Ferrers, Fowey, and a large area between the Lizard and Portloe. An area adjacent to Padstow on the north coast is also registered. The businesses are registered to produce Pacific oyster, native oyster, mussels and scallops.
9. Bristol is the largest port in the south west inshore marine area. Plymouth and Fowey ports are also major ports in the south west. There are a further 20 smaller ports in the south west that support shipping activities, and several small harbours and marinas support recreational boating.

10. An international passenger route runs out of Plymouth with a large number of vessels transiting to and from UK and European ports. The majority of the shipping in this area follows these well-defined routes, and vessels engaged in other activities, such as fishing and leisure, tend to navigate more freely within the area.
11. Aquaculture sites, together with the locations of ports, harbours, marinas and slipways in the south west inshore marine plan areas can be found on the [Marine Information System](#). Maps showing recreational and commercial vessel activity are also available.

When should this policy be applied?

12. SW-NIS-1 applies year round and throughout the lifetime of the South West Marine Plan. Non-native invasive species are already present in the south west marine plan areas. Due to increasing temperatures associated with climate change and an expected increase in marine activities that are potential pathways for introduction ([Futures Analysis for the South West Marine Plan Area](#)) there is a high risk of other invasive species moving into the south west during the twenty year lifetime of the South West Marine Plan. The way in which the policy is applied may therefore change over the lifetime of the plan dependant on the species present.

Why is management of non-native invasive species important in the south west marine plan areas?

13. There is a high risk of non-native invasive species being introduced and spread within the south west marine plan areas over the period covered by the plan due to climate change and an expected increase in high risk pathways. The warmer waters of the Gulf Stream provide opportunities for an increasing number of warm water species in the south west. The [Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain](#) encourages a stronger sense of shared responsibility across government, key stakeholder organisations, land managers and the general public for actions and behaviours that will reduce the threats posed by non-native invasive species and the impacts they cause.
14. The significant levels of recreational boating in the south west represent a high risk of spread and introduction of non-native invasive species. Twenty-eight coastal marinas provide 13% of marina berths in England (British Marine Federation Tourism, 2014)¹, and charter boats for sea fishing represent 30% of the total across England (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2012)².
15. The major ports of Bristol, Plymouth and Fowey ports, together with the smaller ports and harbours, support a high level of shipping activity in the south west marine plan

¹ British Marine Federation Tourism (2014). Economic Benefits of UK Boating Tourism

² Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2012). Sea Angling 2012 – a survey of recreational sea angling activity and economic value in England.

areas. The South West Approaches to the English Channel is one of the busiest shipping routes in the world. In 2015 there were approximately 6,200 ship arrivals at south west ports (Department for Transport, 2016)³. The number of cruise passenger vessels visiting south west ports is relatively low compared to other marine plan areas due to constraints in terms of the availability of the port infrastructure required to accommodate cruise ships.

16. The [Futures Analysis for the South West Marine Plan Area](#) predicts a modest growth in aquaculture of mussels and oysters (mainly Pacific but also native oysters) during the period covered by the south west marine plans. Due to the warm waters of the south west compared to other plan areas the potential risk of Pacific oysters spreading and becoming established in new locations is high.
17. While the activities above provide high risk pathways for the spread and/or introduction of non-native invasive species, they are also important economic activities for the south west and are promoted through this plan. The risk associated with these activities also makes them particularly vulnerable to the impacts caused by non-native invasive species and highlights the importance of management. Invasive species can have an adverse impact on or outcompete commercially valuable species. They can affect fish and shellfish directly through competition, predation or by bringing disease and parasites, or indirectly by affecting food sources or the availability of habitat. They can also smother vessels and equipment associated with intakes and out falls, marinas, ports, harbours and aquaculture. Control methods, where applied to nuisance species, are fairly ineffective, can be costly, and no non-native marine species has yet been successfully eradicated from British waters.
18. Invasive species can also cause significant adverse impacts on local biodiversity, making ecosystems less resilient to change. Through lack of natural predators, competition for space, food or other factors, non-native species can impact local food webs, replace or prey on native species in the area, or introduce diseases to a local system, to which native species are not resistant. The south west marine plan areas support a diverse range of internationally significant habitats and species which are recognised through a high number of marine protected areas. The local ecosystem is potentially vulnerable to the introduction of non-native invasive species. For example, the [Tamar Estuaries Marine Biosecurity Plan](#) states that the condition of the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation is unfavourable due to the increasing amount of non-native invasive species, particularly the Pacific oyster and slipper limpet.
19. The [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) acknowledges non-native invasive species as one of the most significant threats to marine biodiversity, especially in light of climate

³ Department for Transport (2016). Final sea passenger statistics: 2015
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/final-sea-passenger-statistics-2015>

change and increasing global trade, transport and tourism. This threat is recognised by a wide range of international and UK legislation.

20. Due to the difficulties in managing non-native invasive species once they establish in the marine area, the [Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain](#) promotes the importance of early prevention. The [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) details prevention, detection/surveillance and control/eradication as the three main ways of dealing with invasive species, with prevention given the highest priority. These aims are supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [25 Year Environment Plan](#) which highlights the importance of early pre-emptive action, and the development of action plans for all high-priority pathways of introduction. The [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) also includes measures to prevent the spread of non-native species.
21. The [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK programme of measures](#) recognises that marine planning will make a positive contribution towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status and has the potential to contribute to all descriptors, including Descriptor 2 – non-indigenous species. Due to the expected increased risk and impacts caused by non-native invasive species policies SW-NIS-1 and SW-NIS-2 will contribute towards the prevention of further introduction and spread caused by human activities.

Who is this of interest to?

22. SW-NIS-1 is of interest to a wide range of public authorities and organisations to ensure shared responsibility and a co-ordinated approach to the management of non-native invasive species⁴.
23. SW-NIS-1 applies to any organisation or individual putting forward a proposal including, but not restricted to, those applying for an authorisation or consent. A proposal can be for a new activity or a change to an existing activity that is subject to management by public authorities.
24. Proposals that could potentially reduce the risk of spread and/or introduction of non-native species include, but are not limited to:
- diversification of aquaculture businesses who decide to cultivate native species rather than non-native species
 - removal or management of non-native invasive species
 - monitoring and surveillance of non-native invasive species
 - installation of facilities to help manage the risk of spread and/or introduction of non-native invasive species, such as cleaning facilities to wash down vessels and water equipment

⁴ Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain (2008)

25. Proposals that could potentially provide high risk pathways for the introduction or spread of non-native invasive species in the south west marine plan areas may be associated with, but are not limited to:

- recreational boating and watersports
- angling
- aquaculture, particularly of species that are not native to the south west marine plan areas and are known to be invasive
- placement of hard structures that can create 'stepping stones'

26. This policy does not apply to ballast water management which is regulated through the International Maritime Organization [International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments](#). The convention provides a framework to address the issues of ballast water and the spread of non-native species.

27. Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this policy. Authorisation and enforcement decisions are defined under Section 58(4) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#).

28. Public authorities must also have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Public authority functions and the prevention of non-native invasive species are addressed by policy SW-NIS-2.

How should this policy be applied?

29. This policy applies throughout the south west marine plan areas. In applying this policy the term adjacent is taken as to be close by, by the side of, or bordering on the marine plan area.

30. Public authorities should support proposals that reduce the risk of spread and/or introduction of non-native species within the south west marine plan areas and adjacent plan areas where they comply with other policies in this plan and other relevant legislation.

31. Proposals that reduce the risk of spread and/or introduction of non-native species should include information demonstrating how this will be achieved. Proposals related to high risk pathways must demonstrate how they will avoid or minimise significant adverse impacts on the marine area from the introduction and transport of non-native species, or the spread of non-native invasive species known to exist in the area. This should be achieved through improved management of high risk pathways and the development of action plans.

32. Examples of how to avoid or minimise the risk of introduction, transportation and/or spread of non-native invasive species include, but are not limited to:
- biosecurity action planning, implementation and monitoring during the operational stages of a proposal
 - providing freshwater wash-down facilities in new marinas, clubs and training centres with appropriate training facilities
 - maintaining boat hulls clear of fouling organisms, particularly when moving to and from different areas
 - cleaning boats and equipment (for example. aquaculture cages, fouled buoys and lines) before transporting them from one water body to another
 - cleaning and drying recreational gear (for example dive and fishing gear) after use minimising the amount of vessel traffic to offshore platforms
 - using power wash or brush systems for in-water cleaning if boats are not regularly moved. In-water cleaning that results in a deposit will require a separate [Marine Licence](#)
33. The [UK Marine Pathways Project](#) has developed guidance and best practice to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of non-native invasive species, and a number of [training tools](#) on biosecurity planning. [Marine Biosecurity Planning Guidance for Wales and England](#) (Natural England and Natural Resources Wales 2015) also provides guidance for writing of biosecurity plans.
34. Proposals are required to be in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations including the [Aquatic Animal Health \(England and Wales\) Regulations](#), [Marine and Coastal Access Act](#), [Water Environment Regulations Assessment](#), [Habitats Regulations Assessment](#), [Environmental Impact Assessment](#), the [Ballast Water Management Convention](#) and National Policy Statements where they apply.
35. Public authorities must assess new proposals for measures to avoid or minimise significant adverse impacts on the marine area from the introduction and transport of non-native species, or the spread of non-native invasive species known to exist in the area.
36. Monitoring and management of non-native invasive species in the south west marine plan areas poses significant challenges due to the length of the coastline and the different ways in which species are introduced and spread. Public authorities should use the best available evidence and apply the precautionary principle as a way of approaching decision-making in the absence of full scientific certainty in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity [Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species](#).
37. Proposals considered under SW-BIO-1 which incorporate features that enhance or facilitate natural habitat and species adaptation, migration and connectivity must comply with policy SW-NIS-1.

Signposting

38. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments](#)
- [Aquatic Animal Health \(England and Wales\) Regulations](#)
- [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain](#)
- [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK programme of measures](#)
- [Tamar Estuaries Marine Biosecurity Plan](#)
- [Check, Clean Dry campaign](#)

39. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Marine Biosecurity Planning guidance and tools](#)
- [Clearing the Waters for All](#)
- [Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species](#)
- [Biosecurity guidance for ribs, sports boats and outboard engines](#)
- [Biosecurity for boat and kayak users](#)

Potential monitoring indicators:

40. Number of biosecurity plans in place at ports, harbours, marinas

41. Number of biosecurity related policies in strategic plans

42. Number of coastal defence schemes where biosecurity has been demonstrated

Policy drafting template SW-NIS-2

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.
Grouping	Invasive non-native species	Code	SW-NIS-2

Policy

SW-NIS-2

Public authorities with functions to manage activities that could potentially introduce, transport or spread non-native invasive species in the south west marine plan areas should implement adequate biosecurity measures to avoid or minimise the risk of introducing, transporting or spreading non-native invasive species.

What are non-native and non-native invasive species?

1. Non-native (sometimes referred to as non-indigenous) species are those introduced outside of their natural past or present distribution which might survive and subsequently reproduce. In many cases non-native species do not cause harm to the local environment or economy. The [Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat](#) describes non-native invasive species as any non-native species that has the ability to spread, causing damage to the environment, economy, human health or the way we live. Non-native species can become 'invasive' when they cause significant adverse impacts. For example, the Leathery sea squirt (*Styela clava*) is established from the Clyde in Scotland around the coast of England as far as the Humber on the east coast. It attaches to solid surfaces in shallow water, especially in harbours and marinas, but also on wrecks and natural rock. It can smother oysters and mussels and compete for food, and it can foul boat hulls, buoys, moorings, ropes and harbour and marina infrastructure. Highly invasive species often reproduce quickly, can adapt quickly to a broad range of situations (such as water quality or food availability), have a diverse gene pool, and/or are associated with human activities.
2. Due to its proximity to the coast of mainland Europe, the south west coast has a diverse range of non-native species. The Tamar Estuaries area is a hot-spot for non-native species due to its long history as a naval and commercial port. [The Tamar Estuaries Marine Biosecurity Plan](#) reports the following marine non-native invasive species with a significant presence on the south coast of the south west marine plan areas:
 - Slipper limpet *Crepidula fornicata*
 - Compass sea squirt *Asterocarpa humilis*
 - Leathery sea squirt *Styela clava*
 - Orange tipped sea-squirt *Corella eumyota*
 - Darwin's barnacle *Austrominius modestus*

- Orange sheath sea squirt *Botrylloides violaceus*
 - *Aplidium cf. glabrum*
 - Tufty-buff bryozoan *Tricellaria inopinata*
 - Ruby bryozoan *Bugula neritina*
 - Red ripple bryozoan *Watersipora subatra*
 - Orange ripple bryozoan *Schizoporella japonica*
 - Pacific oyster *Crassostrea gigas*
 - Wakame *Undaria pinnatifida*
 - Wireweed *Sargassum muticum*
 - Devil's tongue weed *Grateloupia turuturu*
 - Pom-pom weed *Caulacanthus okamurae*
3. There may be different assemblages of species present in other parts of the south west marine plan areas, or species yet to be discovered and recorded. The assemblage and geographical range of species may change over the period covered by this plan. Looking at areas beyond the south west marine plan areas can provide an idea of the species that may become a problem in the future. The most up to date evidence should be used when applying this policy. The [National Biodiversity Network Atlas](#) aggregates data from multiple sources and shows where species have been recorded in the UK.
4. [The Tamar Estuaries Marine Biosecurity Plan](#) states that due to the high levels of maritime traffic including international and cross-channel traffic the area is extremely vulnerable to the arrival of a number of non-native invasive species. Those that present a particularly high risk of arrival and impact are:
- Carpet sea squirt *Didemnum vexillum*
 - Chinese mitten crab *Eriocheir sinensis*
 - Asian shore crabs *Hemigrapsus spp.*
 - American lobster *Homarus americanus*

Where in the south west marine plan areas are non-native invasive species likely to establish?

5. The distribution of many non-native invasive species is currently limited by water temperature ([Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership: Science Review](#)), but species are spreading and becoming established through a combination of climate change, migration and human introduction.
6. Non-native invasive species are most likely to establish in areas where activities known to spread and/or introduce invasive species occur. Such activities are referred to as pathways of spread and introduction. High risk pathways in the south west marine plan areas include:
- Naval and commercial freight shipping (through hull fouling)
 - Commercial and recreational boating (through hull fouling)

- Trans-shipment through ship ballast water discharge
- Aquaculture (unintentional escape of species, of conditions become favourable for species establishment)
- Port, harbour and marina infrastructure (species can colonise structures and equipment)
- Coastal protection infrastructure (species can colonise structures)
- Offshore installations and equipment (species can colonise structures)
- Commercial and recreational fishing (fouling of gear and equipment)
- Recreational water activities (fouling of equipment)
- Relocation of structures and equipment
- Marine litter and debris (species attached to floating material)
- Aquariums (escape of plants and animals)
- 'Hitchhiking' of species with goods transported for trade

7. The south west inshore marine plan area is a key area for recreation activities in England, which are widely distributed along the full length of coast. There are notable differences in sea, wind and surf conditions between the north Atlantic coast and the south coasts of Devon and Cornwall. As a result, boating activities are more likely to occur on the more sheltered south coast. Sea angling from boat and shore are also popular in the south west. Boat angling is popular along the south Cornwall and Devon coasts with significant numbers of charter fishing boats in Looe, Mevagissey, Plymouth and Dartmouth, and the north Cornwall, Devon and Somerset coasts, particularly Padstow, Newquay, Ilfracombe, Watchet, Minehead and Portishead.
8. Registered aquaculture businesses in the south west inshore marine plan area are located primarily on the south coast at Dartmouth, Salcombe, Bigbury-on-Sea, Newton Ferrers, Fowey, and a large area between the Lizard and Portloe. An area adjacent to Padstow on the north coast is also registered. The businesses are registered to produce Pacific oyster, native oyster, mussels and scallops.
9. Bristol is the largest port in the south west inshore marine area. Plymouth and Fowey ports are also major ports in the south west. There are a further 20 smaller ports in the south west that support shipping activities, and several small harbours and marinas support recreational boating.
10. An international passenger route runs out of Plymouth with a large number of vessels transiting to and from UK and European ports. The majority of the shipping in this area follows these well-defined routes, and vessels engaged in other activities, such as fishing and leisure, tend to navigate more freely within the area.
11. Aquaculture sites, together with the locations of ports, harbours, marinas and slipways in the south west inshore marine plan areas can be found on the [Marine Information System](#). Maps showing recreational and commercial vessel activity are

also available, along with areas of current and potential offshore renewable energy activities.

When should this policy be applied?

12. SW-NIS-2 applies year round and throughout the lifetime of the South West Marine Plan. Non-native invasive species are already present in the south west marine plan areas. Due to increasing temperatures associated with climate change and an expected increase in marine activities that are potential pathways for introduction ([Futures Analysis for the North East Marine Plan Area](#)) there is a high risk of other invasive species moving into the south west during the twenty year lifetime of the South West Marine Plan. The way in which the policy is applied may therefore change over the lifetime of the plan dependant on the species present.

Why is management of non-native invasive species important in the south west marine plan areas?

13. There is a high risk of non-native invasive species being introduced and spread within the south west marine plan areas over the period covered by the plan due to climate change and an expected increase in high risk pathways. The warmer waters of the Gulf Stream provide opportunities for an increasing number of warm water species in the south west. The [Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain](#) encourages a stronger sense of shared responsibility across government, key stakeholder organisations, land managers and the general public for actions and behaviours that will reduce the threats posed by non-native invasive species and the impacts they cause.
14. The significant levels of recreational boating in the south west represent a high risk of spread and introduction of non-native invasive species. Twenty-eight coastal marinas provide 13% of marina berths in England (British Marine Federation Tourism, 2014)¹, and charter boats for sea fishing represent 30% of the total across England (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2012)².
15. The major ports of Bristol, Plymouth and Fowey ports, together with the smaller ports and harbours, support a high level of shipping activity in the south west marine plan areas. The South West Approaches to the English Channel is one of the busiest shipping routes in the world. In 2015 there were approximately 6,200 ship arrivals at south west ports (Department for Transport, 2016)³ The number of cruise passenger vessels visiting south west ports is relatively low compared to other marine plan areas due to constraints in terms of the availability of the port infrastructure required to accommodate cruise ships.

¹ British Marine Federation Tourism (2014). Economic Benefits of UK Boating Tourism

² Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2012). Sea Angling 2012 – a survey of recreational sea angling activity and economic value in England.

³ Department for Transport (2016). Final sea passenger statistics: 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/final-sea-passenger-statistics-2015>

16. The [Futures Analysis for the South West Marine Plan Area](#) predicts a modest growth in aquaculture of mussels and oysters (mainly Pacific but also native oysters) during the period covered by the south west marine plans. Due to the warm waters of the south west compared to other plan areas the potential risk of Pacific oysters spreading and becoming established in new locations is high.
17. While the activities above provide high risk pathways for the spread and/or introduction of non-native invasive species, they are also important economic activities for the south west and are promoted through this plan. The risk associated with these activities also makes them particularly vulnerable to the impacts caused by non-native invasive species and highlights the importance of management. Invasive species can have an adverse impact on or outcompete commercially valuable species. They can affect fish and shellfish directly through competition, predation or by bringing disease and parasites, or indirectly by affecting food sources or the availability of habitat. They can also smother vessels and equipment associated with intakes and out falls, marinas, ports, harbours and aquaculture. Control methods, where applied to nuisance species, are fairly ineffective, can be costly, and no non-native marine species has yet been successfully eradicated from British waters.
18. Invasive species can also cause significant adverse impacts on local biodiversity, making ecosystems less resilient to change. Through lack of natural predators, competition for space, food or other factors, non-native species can impact local food webs, replace or prey on native species in the area, or introduce diseases to a local system, to which native species are not resistant. The south west marine plan areas support a diverse range of internationally significant habitats and species which are recognised through a high number of marine protected areas. The local ecosystem is potentially vulnerable to the introduction of non-native invasive species. For example, the [Tamar Estuaries Marine Biosecurity Plan](#) states that the condition of the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation is unfavourable due to the increasing amount of non-native invasive species, particularly the Pacific oyster and slipper limpet.
19. The [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) acknowledges non-native invasive species as one of the most significant threats to marine biodiversity, especially in light of climate change and increasing global trade, transport and tourism. This threat is recognised by a wide range of international and UK legislation.
20. Due to the difficulties in managing non-native invasive species once they establish in the marine area, the [Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain](#) promotes the importance of early prevention. The [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) details prevention, detection/surveillance and control/eradication as the three main ways of dealing with invasive species, with prevention given the highest priority. These aims are supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [25 Year Environment Plan](#) which highlights the importance of early pre-

emptive action, and the development of action plans for all high-priority pathways of introduction. The [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) also includes measures to prevent the spread of non-native species.

21. The [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK programme of measures](#) recognises that marine planning will make a positive contribution towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status and has the potential to contribute to all descriptors, including Descriptor 2 – non-indigenous species. Due to the expected increased risk and impacts caused by non-native invasive species policies SW-NIS-1 and SW-NIS-2 will contribute towards the prevention of further introduction and spread caused by human activities.

Who is this of interest to?

22. SW-NIS-2 is of interest to a wide range of public authorities and organisations to ensure shared responsibility and a co-ordinated approach to the management of non-native invasive species⁴.

23. Public authorities must have regard to this policy when exercising any function capable of affecting the south west marine plan areas, but which are separate from authorisation and enforcement decisions (Section 58(3) of the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)). Decisions related to authorisations and enforcement and non-native invasive species are addressed by policy SW-NIS-1.

24. Public authority functions related to the management of activities that could potentially introduce and/or spread non-native species include but are not limited to:

- strategic planning
- land management
- aquaculture regulation and monitoring
- coastal protection
- access management
- provision and management of commercial and recreational boating infrastructure and equipment, including for watersports and angling
- ballast water transfer

25. This policy does not apply to ballast water management which is regulated through the International Maritime Organization [International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments](#). The convention provides a framework to address the issues of ballast water and the spread of non-native species.

How should this policy be applied?

⁴ Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain (2008)

26. This policy applies throughout the south west marine plan area to public authorities that manage activities known to spread and/or introduce non-native invasive species but which are not managed through formal authorisations or consents.
27. Public authorities with access management functions, particularly ports, harbours and those responsible for marinas, are encouraged to raise awareness of non-native invasive species prevention amongst users. This should include awareness of the potential for artificial structures to become platforms or 'stepping stones' that can facilitate the settlement or spread of non-native species, and the potential risks from moving equipment between water bodies. Measures can also include the promotion of codes of conduct such as the [Check, Clean Dry campaign](#) for recreational anglers and boat users, or the development of biosecurity management plans and monitoring.
28. Authorities responsible for shoreline management should also be aware of the risks posed by the placement of hard structures on the coastline and build in adequate biosecurity measures during strategic planning. Biosecurity measures associated with individual coastal protection schemes are addressed by policy SW-NIS-1.
29. The [UK Marine Pathways Project](#) has developed guidance and best practice to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of non-native invasive species, and a number of [training tools](#) on biosecurity planning. [Marine Biosecurity Planning Guidance for Wales and England](#) (Natural England and Natural Resources Wales 2015) has been produced to guide the writing of biosecurity plans.
30. Monitoring and management of non-native invasive species in the south west marine plan areas poses significant challenges due to the length of the coastline and the different ways in which species are introduced and spread. The Convention on Biological Diversity [Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species](#) discuss the precautionary principle as a way of approaching decision-making in the absence of full scientific certainty.
31. Public authorities should apply this policy to functions that are capable of effecting adjacent marine plan areas due to the transboundary nature of non-native invasive species.

Signposting

32. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
- [International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments](#)
 - [Aquatic Animal Health \(England and Wales\) Regulations](#)
 - [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)

- [Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain](#)
- [Marine Strategy Part Three: UK programme of measures](#)
- [Check, Clean Dry campaign](#)
- [Tamar Estuaries Marine Biosecurity Plan](#)

33. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Marine Biosecurity Planning guidance and tools](#)
- [Clearing the Waters for All](#)
- [Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species](#)
- [Biosecurity guidance for ribs, sports boats and outboard engines](#)
- [Biosecurity for boat and kayak users](#)

Potential monitoring indicators:

34. Number of biosecurity plans in place at ports, harbours, marinas

35. Number of biosecurity related policies in strategic plans

36. Number of coastal defence schemes where biosecurity has been demonstrated

Iteration 3 draft

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Underwater Noise		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	Living within environmental limits Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.		
Other relevant policies	SW-DIST-1 SW-DIST-3 SW-CO-1		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW ✓	NE ✓	SE ✓

Policy drafting template SW-UWN-1

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Disturbance	Code	SW-UWN-1

Policy

SW-UWN-1

Proposals generating impulsive sound must contribute data to the UK Marine Noise Registry as per any currently agreed requirements. Public authorities must take account of any currently agreed targets under the UK Marine Strategy part one descriptor 11.

What is impulsive sound?

1. All marine activities introduce sound into the marine environment to a greater or lesser extent during construction, operation or decommissioning. Underwater noise occurs either as non-impulsive noise (including shipping propulsion, operational vibrational noise, induced turbulence) or as impulsive noise (discrete impulsive sounds including explosives, seismic surveys or construction piling).
2. There are natural sources of impulsive and non-impulsive sound in the marine environment, such as communication by marine fauna, lightning and wave action, but growing human use has increased background, non-impulsive noise levels over the last 50 years. While impulsive sound has also increased, less is known about its temporal and spatial distribution and the magnitude of trends.
3. Noise is often used to describe unwanted anthropogenic sound, however, for the purposes of this plan, sound and noise are deemed to have the same meaning and therefore are used interchangeably.

Where does underwater noise occur in the south west marine plan areas?

4. The offshore south west marine plan area is not currently utilised for energy production and as a result has little infrastructure development. However, the south west inshore area is home to some of the UK's busiest ports and harbours¹ for fishing activity. Port and harbour development and expansion is a source of underwater noise, some of which is likely to be impulsive. There is also offshore wind resource in the north of the inshore area indicating the possibility of future development of this sector. (see SW-WIND-1)

¹ Chat 3.7 [UK Sea Fisheries Statistics \(2016\)](#)

5. The far west English Channel has some of the busiest shipping traffic worldwide alongside noise caused by other activities such as significant recreational and fishing activity.

When does underwater noise take place in south west marine plan areas?

6. Much of the development is along the coastline and there is little seasonality to impulsive noise from construction. Offshore construction is often restricted by sea state and sensitive periods for over wintering birds, therefore, construction occurs mainly in summer months. This policy applies for any impulsive noise occurring year-round within the south west marine plan areas.

Why is contributing to the underwater noise registry important in the south west marine plan areas?

7. Underwater noise resulting from activities and developments can have adverse impacts on marine life and is a growing concern. Chronic noise disturbance has the potential to result in long-term negative impacts particularly for highly mobile species including fish, birds, marine mammals and turtles.² Ambient noise impacts may include masking communication, disruption of navigational ability, impaired hunting ability and disorientation. At higher levels, noise may change behaviour resulting in avoidance of areas including important feeding and breeding areas or present chronic stress. Impulsive sounds may also cause temporary or permanent hearing damage to individuals and at high intensities can result in death.
8. The noise registry aims to monitor man-made impulsive noise to quantify the pressure on the environment by making available an overview of relevant impulsive sound sources, throughout the year. This in turn will aid in the definition of a baseline level for impulsive noise in UK waters and ensure pressures are managed effectively.
9. Marine noise has the potential to mask biologically relevant signals; it can lead to a variety of behavioural reactions, affect hearing organs and injure or even kill marine life ([Marine Policy Statement](#) 2.6.3).. Management of noise and its sources can bring additional benefits, for example making the human working environment less dangerous and improving the efficiency, integrity and life of vessels and structures.³
10. In UK law the Marine Strategy Regulations (2010) set out the requirements for Good Environmental Status in UK waters. The management of underwater noise is a key component of this. The Government has published a UK Marine Strategy that sets how this will achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status in UK waters. Part 3 of the Marine Strategy (Programme of Measures) recognises that marine planning will make a positive contribution towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status including underwater noise. Regulations to begin to address underwater noise in this way, represents a growing concern over the addition of noise in the marine environment from human activity. Considerable uncertainty exists around the spatial and temporal elements of noise as well as the magnitude of it and resulting impacts.

² As set out in the [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#)

³ *ibid*

11. Implementation of this policy will help make sure these collective pressures are considered in line with the UK Marine Strategy and the Marine Strategy Regulations(2010).

Who is this of interest to?

12. Government with specific responsibilities include:

- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – local authorities
- Department for Transport – harbour authorities
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – oil and gas installations, offshore renewables over 100MW

13. This policy will be of interest to public authorities. This includes authorities that make decisions relating to the sectors and resources mentioned above and decisions on activities that interact with those sectors and resources. This policy also applies to those with a wider interest, for example in taking account of the marine plans in their own planning. Examples include but is not restricted to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee that leads the [Marine Noise Registry](#) which supports the UK's implementation of descriptor 11 of the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010.

How should this policy be applied?

14. The UK Marine Strategy outlines the measures that contribute to the achievement and maintenance of good environmental status in UK seas by 2020. It sets a target 'to establish a noise registry' to 'record, assess, and manage the distribution and timing of anthropogenic sound sources'. The contribution of data to the [Marine Noise Registry](#) on impulsive noise will help determine current baseline levels of impulsive noise, including providing the spatial and temporal distribution of impulsive noise generating activities.

15. Proposals must provide information to the Marine Noise Registry on the projected noise generated from the proposed activity prior to it taking place. Following the completion of the activity, the actual noise generated, in line with the requirements of the consenting regime under which the proposals are approved, or on a voluntary basis where no consenting process is currently in place. The [Marine Noise Registry](#) sets out a simple process for how to do this. For example, it is a condition of the consent issued by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for any geological survey undertaken by the oil, gas and carbon capture and storage sectors that, following completion of the survey, survey logs and a close out report must be submitted and this data informs the Noise Registry.

16. Proposals must define expected noise types, levels and dates, considering all stages of the development.

17. Public authorities must take account of any currently agreed targets under the UK Marine Strategy part one descriptor 11 and ensure any proposals being consented are in line with these targets before providing any authorisation.

Signposting

18. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
- [Planning Act 2008](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [UK Marine Policy Statement](#)
- [Marine Strategy Part 3: UK programme of measures](#)

19. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Marine Noise Registry](#)
- [Managing underwater noise in European waters \(JNCC\)](#)

Iteration 3 draft

Policy drafting template SW-UWN-2

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Disturbance	Code	SW-UWN-2

Policy

SW-UWN-2

Proposals that generate impulsive or non-impulsive noise must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate significant adverse impacts on highly mobile species, d) if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals must state the case for proceeding.

What is underwater noise?

1. All marine activities introduce sound into the marine environment to a greater or lesser extent during construction, operation or decommissioning. Noise generally refers to anthropogenic sound. Underwater noise occurs either as non-impulsive noise (including ambient noise, shipping propulsion, operational vibrational noise,) or as discrete impulsive sounds (including detonation of explosives, seismic surveys or construction piling).
2. There are natural sources of sound in the marine environment, such as communication between marine fauna, wave action and lightening, but growing human use has increased background non-impulsive noise levels over the last 50 years. While impulsive sound has also increased, less is known about its temporal and spatial distribution and the magnitude of trends.

Where does underwater noise occur in the south west marine plan area?

3. The south west marine plan areas are home to several ports and harbours which have the potential for maintenance and expansion and therefore increased noise inputs. Coastal construction is likely to involve production of impulsive underwater noise in the inshore area. Such projects often involve geophysical surveys, piling and detonation of unexploded ordnance which emit impulsive noise.

When does underwater noise occur in the south west marine plan area?

4. When considering noise in relation to those affected by it, there are seasonal considerations due to migration, spawning and foraging behaviour.
5. Human activity in the south west marine plan area occurs year-round. Tourism and recreation at the coast reaches its peak in the summer months. Marine development

both on and offshore occur year-round and will therefore need to consider their impact to mobile species.

Why are noise impacts on highly mobile species important to the south west marine plan areas?

6. Underwater noise resulting from activities and developments can have adverse impacts on marine life and is a growing concern. Chronic noise disturbance has the potential to result in long-term negative impacts particularly for highly mobile species including fish, birds, marine mammals and turtles.¹ Ambient noise impacts may include masking communication, disruption of navigational ability, impaired hunting ability and disorientation. At higher levels, noise may change behaviour resulting in avoidance of areas including important feeding and breeding areas or present chronic stress. Impulsive sounds may also cause temporary or permanent hearing damage to individuals and at high intensities can result in death.
7. Marine noise has the potential to mask biologically relevant signals; it can lead to a variety of behavioural reactions, affect hearing organs and injure or even kill marine life ([Marine Policy Statement](#) 2.6.3). Management of noise and its sources can bring additional benefits, for example making the human working environment less dangerous and improving the efficiency, integrity and life of vessels and structures.
8. In UK law the [Marine Strategy Regulations \(2010\)](#) set out the requirements for Good Environmental Status in UK waters. The management of underwater noise is a key component of this. The Government has published a UK Marine Strategy that sets how this will achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status in UK waters. Part 3 of the [Marine Strategy \(Programme of Measures\)](#) recognises that marine planning will make a positive contribution towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status including underwater noise. The addressing of underwater noise in this way, represents a growing concern over the addition of noise in the marine environment from human activity. Considerable uncertainty exists around the spatial and temporal elements of noise as well as the magnitude of it and resulting impacts. The south west marine plan area is home to busy areas for shipping, fishing, coastal and marine development and dredging and disposal

Who is this of interest to?

9. Government with specific responsibilities include:
 - Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – local authorities
 - Department for Transport – harbour authorities
 - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – oil and gas installations, offshore renewables over 100MW
10. This policy will be of interest to public authorities. This includes authorities that make decisions relating to the sectors and resources mentioned above and decisions on activities that interact with those sectors and resources. This policy also applies to those with a wider interest, for example in taking account of the marine plans in their own planning. Examples include but are not restricted to the Environment Agency that leads on the Water quality management; and the Joint Nature Conservation

¹ As set out in the [Marine strategy part three: UK programme of measures](#)

Committee that leads the Marine Noise Registry which supports the UK's implementation of Good Environmental Status in relation to underwater noise.

How should this policy be applied?

11. Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate significant adverse impacts of underwater noise on highly mobile species - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) throughout the hierarchy.
12. Where it is not possible to mitigate, proposals must state the case for proceeding including how the proposal supports the south west marine plan vision, objectives and other plan policies. Inclusion of this information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.
13. For impulsive noise, measures could include:
 - avoid – marine mammal observers or passive acoustic monitoring that can stop noise generation while sensitive species are present. Not generating impulsive noise generating during sensitive periods (such as breeding, rearing, hibernation, migration)
 - minimise – eliminating or controlling noise at source, for example using alternative quieter approaches like drilling foundations instead of piling
 - mitigate – soft start piling allowing sensitive species to avoid the area or attenuation measures, for example bubble curtains or pile collars
14. For non-impulsive noise, these measures could include:
 - avoid – change vessel routing away from sensitive species or areas
 - minimise – design specifications to reduce operational vibration (for example, in vessels or infrastructure) or imposing speed restrictions in sites of sensitivity that reduce noise generated
 - mitigation – use attenuation measures, for example acoustic baffles
15. Proposals and public authorities should use best available evidence and, where knowledge gaps exist, expert judgement.
16. In determining the proposal, public authorities will take account of a range of relevant considerations including compliance with legislation and regulations and potential impacts highlighted in project level assessments. Public authorities should be aware that in some cases noise is used as a mitigation measure for other pressures, for example the use of pingers in in some fisheries to reduce bycatch.
17. Responsibility for regulation of noise resides with the licensing authority. For example the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy regulate noise associated with oil and gas activities and carbon capture and storage. The Marine Management Organisation regulates noise for marine licences and deemed marine licences including renewable energy.

Signposting

18. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#)
- [Planning Act 2008](#)
- [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- [UK Marine Policy Statement](#)

19. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [JNCC piling guidelines](#)
- [JNCC seismic guidelines](#)
- [Managing underwater noise in European waters \(JNCC\)](#)
- [Marine noise registry](#)

20. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy includes datasets on the [Marine Information System](#), including, but not limited to:

- seal density
- habitats and species
- seabird density
- fish habitat

Plan area	South West		
Grouping	Water Quality		
Related High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO).	Living within environmental limits Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.		
Other relevant policies	SW-INF-1 SW-CAB-3 SW-AGG-4 SW-DD-2 SW-CC-4 SW-ML-1 SW-ML-2 SW-CO-1		
Are these policies consistent across other plan areas?	NW ✓	NE ✓	SE ✓

Policy drafting template SW-WQ-1

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Water quality	Code	SW-WQ-1

Policy

SW-WQ-1

Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts upon water quality, including upon habitats and species beneficial to water quality, must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:

- a) avoid
- b) minimise
- c) mitigate significant adverse impacts

What is water quality?

1. Water quality is a measure of the condition of water and its suitability to sustain a range of uses for both biotic and human benefits. Good water quality is important in meeting the UK government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans ([Marine Policy Statement](#)). Water quality in respect of the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) is defined by specific biological, physico-chemical and hydromorphological criteria. The objectives of the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) to protect and improve water quality, set ambitious environmental goals and actions which are implemented by [River Basin Management Plans](#). This policy seeks to complement these objectives and River Basin Management Plan implementation.

What causes poor water quality in the south west marine plan areas?

2. Poor water quality refers to the presence of pollutants in water. These pollutants may include oil, sedimentation, sewage, nutrients, heavy metals, and thermal pollution. Water pollution can come from either diffuse (unlicensed sources) or point sources (regulated sources). In the south west inshore marine plan area there are issues for water pollution from abandoned mines, storm overflows and agricultural run-off.
3. Water quality is also affected by:
 - physical modifications to water ways
 - changes to the natural flow and level of water
 - negative effects of invasive non-native species
 - resuspension of sediment
 - extreme weather such as drought followed by intense rainfall
 - seasonal population variation

4. Developments within the marine area can cause poor water quality. A number of policies in the South West Marine Plan support activities that could have adverse impacts upon water quality including (SW-INF-1, SW-CAB-1, SW-AGG-4, SW-DD-2).
5. The following aspects of any proposal needs to be considered:
 - water body (or bodies) potentially affected, including adjacent water bodies
 - duration of the activity
 - location
 - physical footprint with respect to the water body size
 - scale of impact
 - mitigation measures that could reduce any potentially adverse impact
 - presence of sensitive habitats
 - presence of contaminated sediments
6. The expected increase in the number and diversity of developments and marine users within the south west inshore marine plan area poses additional risk towards meeting Good status for ecological and chemical objectives in accordance with the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) and Good Environmental Status in accordance with [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#).

Where is water quality important in the south west marine plan areas?

7. Water quality in the south west marine plan area is important in rivers, estuaries and coastal waters. These areas play a vital role in the areas economy through providing essential fish habitats and supporting commercial shell fisheries, whilst providing safe and attractive bathing waters for residents and tourists alike.
8. Water quality faces challenges in many areas of the south west marine plan, notably; the increased and rapid run off from agricultural land down the steep embankments of south Devon's unique rias (flooded valleys); the discharges of heavy metals and other pollutants from abandoned mines in Cornwall and south Wales and the diffuse pollution and management of waste water from the large catchment areas surrounding the Severn and Tamar. All the above can be exacerbated by periods of heavy rainfall.
9. There are five areas of eutrophication in the south west inshore marine plan area; Truro, Tresillian and Fal Estuaries, Taw Estuary and Lower Fal Estuary. The south west inshore plan area is more affected by poor water quality than the offshore area due to the proximity to population centres, farmland, unused mines and storm overflows.

Why is good water quality important to the south west marine plan areas?

10. Good water quality is required for shellfish and fish, to protect nutrient sensitive areas and maintain bathing waters. The south west marine plan areas rely on good water quality to support a number of sectors. The south west marine plan areas support a large fishing fleet which land into Newlyn, Plymouth and Brixham (south marine plan) as well as smaller ports along the coast. The important commercial shellfish beds are located in:

- Salcombe estuary
- Dart estuary
- Fowey estuary
- Yealm estuary
- Bigbury and Avon estuary
- Tresillian and Fal estuary

11. As well as fishing and aquaculture the south west inshore marine plan area has a high reliance on tourism and recreation activities which have a focus on the coast including surfing, kayaking and recreational boating.

12. There are two River Basin Management Plan areas within the inshore south west marine plan area; [Severn River Basin district](#) and [South West River Basin district](#). Through these river basin management plans the Environment Agency maintain, review and keep an up to date register of the protected areas of water lying within each district. These include:

- drinking water protected areas
- shellfish waters (commercial shellfish harvesting)
- bodies of water designated as recreational waters
- nutrient sensitive areas
- areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where water quality is an important factor in their protection

13. The Severn river basin district has a particularly rich diversity of wildlife and habitats, supporting many species of global and national importance. For example, the Severn Estuary and its surrounding area is protected for their bird populations, habitats and migratory fish species such as Atlantic salmon, shad, lamprey and eel ([Severn River Basin district](#)).

14. The south west river basin district has a rich diversity of wildlife and habitats, supporting many species of global and national importance. Freshwater habitats within the river basin district are very important for wintering wildfowl, and reservoirs, rivers, estuaries and coastal water bodies support fisheries and shellfish waters. Coastal waters are also very important in this district as it has over half of the country's designated bathing waters ([South West River Basin district](#)).

15. Water quality at areas recognised as bathing waters is important to human health. The [Environment Agency](#) classifies [designated bathing waters](#) to help people to decide where is safe to swim. Using the Environment Agency classification [The Blue Flag and Seaside awards](#) by Keep Britain Tidy also inform the public about well managed beaches with good water quality. There are approximately 126 beaches in the south west plan area that have 'designated bathing waters', 91% are achieving good or excellent. There are also 10 blue flag beaches and a high level of surfing and water sports which are dependent upon good water quality ([Bathing water statistics](#)).

Who is this of interest to?

16. Any applicants preparing proposals that may have significant adverse impacts upon water quality, including upon habitats and species beneficial to water quality, in the south west marine plan areas.

17. The environmental objectives summarised within River Basin Management Plans are legally binding under the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#). All public bodies must have regard to these objectives when making decisions that could affect the quality of the water environment.

18. Including decision-making public authorities such as:

- Marine Management Organisation
- Environment Agency
- Local planning authorities
- Marine licensing authorities
- Ports and Harbour authorities
- The Planning Inspectorate
- The Crown Estate
- Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

How should this policy be applied?

19. All water bodies, including estuarine (transitional waters) up to 1 nautical mile from shore are protected under the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) which requires that the licensed project or activity does not 'cause or contribute to deterioration in water body status' or 'jeopardise the water body achieving good status'.

20. Application of the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) is enacted through [River Basin Management Plans](#) and the [catchment based approach](#) through catchment partnerships, as well as current water company controls and regulations. Other regulations should be taken into consideration, when appropriate, such as [Nitrate Vulnerable Zones](#).

21. Proposals should demonstrate they have considered any effects the proposal may have upon water quality or habitats and species beneficial to water quality in the catchment area. The [Catchment data explorer](#) can be used to identify which water body your activity is in and any linked water bodies it could affect. See also SW-WQ-2 for habitats and species beneficial to water quality.

22. Using guidance called [Clearing the Waters for All](#) applicants can assess the impact of the proposal on estuarine (transitional) and coastal waters for the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#). This assessment helps applicants and regulators to understand:

- the impact your activity may have on the immediate water body and any linked water bodies
- whether your activity complies with the [river basin management plan \(RBMP\)](#)

23. Proposals may be required to undertake any relevant assessments as required by [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) as part of obtaining regulatory consent for their activity. Being exempt from the need to undertake an assessment does not exempt proposals from policy SW-WQ-1.

24. Similarly, although a (Water Framework Directive) Assessment can contribute to demonstrating compliance with these policies, there may be impacts outside of the requirements of [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) that still need to be addressed to demonstrate compliance with policies SW-WQ-1.
25. Proposals should demonstrate how they will avoid, minimise, or mitigate significant adverse impacts upon water quality, or habitats and species beneficial to water quality during the construction period and throughout the lifetime of the proposal. Proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc.
26. The South West Marine Plan builds on existing measures, consistent with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.5.13) and addresses water quality issues through ensuring proposals and public authorities consider impacts on water quality, including habitats and species that provide water filtration, nutrient assimilation and hazardous chemical sequestration services, and look for opportunities to improve water quality. The plan policies are not restricted to the inshore marine plan area as there is the potential for offshore sources to affect inshore water quality.
27. Examples of how to avoid, minimise or mitigate significant adverse impacts include but are not limited to:
- avoid – identify and avoid siting proposals at locations where adverse impacts might occur, ensuring outputs of proposal do not indirectly impact these locations
 - minimise - limiting the overall development footprint or the amount of time activities that disturb sediments occurs
 - mitigation - using bioremediation around infrastructure (such as mussel ropes or microalga mats) or creating compensatory habitat
28. Proposals and activities, such as recreation, not covered by the [Clearing the Waters for all](#) guidance have the potential to adversely impact water quality. Other guidance for such activities includes The Maritime and Coastguard Agency's [Pleasure Vessels – UK Regulations](#), and the Royal Yachting Association's '[The Green Blue' guidance on sewage and waste](#). Such impacts may be managed locally by byelaws.

Signposting

29. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
- [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)
 - [River Basin Management Plans](#)
 - [Clearing the Waters for All](#) guidance on how to assess the impact of your activity in estuarine (transitional) and coastal waters for Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017
 - [Catchment data explorer](#) to identify which water body your activity is in and any linked water bodies it could affect
30. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Marine Management Organisation's Environmental Remediation to Improve Water Quality report](#)
- [Nitrate Vulnerable Zones](#)
- [Catchment based approach](#)
- Diffuse pollution - [The unseen threat to water quality](#)
- SWEEP - [The South West Partnership for Environment & Economic Prosperity](#)

Iteration 3 draft

Policy drafting template SW-WQ-2

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Water quality	Code	SW-WQ-2

Policy

SW-WQ-2

Proposals delivering improvements to water quality, or enhancing habitats and species which can be of benefit to water quality should be supported.

What is water quality?

1. Water quality is a measure of the condition of water and its suitability to sustain a range of uses for both biotic and human benefits. Good water quality is important in meeting the UK government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans ([Marine Policy Statement](#)). Water quality in respect of the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) is defined by specific biological, physico-chemical and hydromorphological criteria. The objectives of the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) to protect and improve water quality, and set ambitious environmental goals and actions are implemented by [River Basin Management Plans](#). This policy seeks to complement these objectives and River Basin Management Plan implementation.

What causes poor water quality in the south west marine plan areas?

2. Poor water quality refers to the presence of pollutants in water. These pollutants may include oil, sedimentation, sewage, nutrients, heavy metals. Water pollution can come from either diffuse (unlicensed sources) or point sources (regulated sources). In the south west inshore marine plan area there are issues for water pollution from abandoned mines, storm overflows and agricultural run-off.
3. Water quality is also affected by:
 - physical modifications to water ways
 - changes to the natural flow and level of water
 - negative effects of invasive non-native species
 - resuspension of sediment
 - extreme weather such as drought followed by intense rainfall
 - seasonal population variation

4. Developments within the marine area can contribute towards poor water quality. A number of policies in the South West Marine Plan support activities that could have adverse impacts upon water quality including (SW-INF-1, SW-CAB-1, SW-AGG-4, SW-DD-1).
5. The following aspects of any proposal needs to be considered:
 - water body (or bodies) potentially affected, including adjacent water bodies
 - duration of the activity
 - location
 - physical footprint with respect to the water body size
 - scale of impact
 - mitigation measures that could reduce any potentially adverse impact
 - presence of sensitive habitats
 - presence of contaminated sediments
6. The expected increase in the number and diversity of developments and marine users within the south west inshore marine plan area poses additional risk towards meeting Good status for ecological and chemical objectives in accordance with the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) and Good Environmental Status in accordance with [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#).

Where is water quality important in the south west marine plan areas?

7. Water quality faces challenges in many areas of the south west marine plan, notably; the increased and rapid run off from agricultural land down the steep embankments of south Devon's unique rias (flooded valleys); the discharges of heavy metals and other pollutants from abandoned mines in Cornwall and south Wales and the diffuse pollution and management of waste water from the large catchment areas surrounding the Severn and Tamar. All the above can be exacerbated by periods of heavy rainfall.
8. The estuaries and rias within the south west marine plan area are each important marine ecosystems in their own right. They host a range of nature conservation and land scape designations as well as industry, fisheries, anchorage and settlements attracting increasing tourism and recreation. Good water quality underpins these ecosystem services.
9. Vitally for tourism in the south west water quality needs to be monitored at coastal locations popular for swimming to ensure that beach users are protected from pollution in 'designated bathing waters'.

Why is water quality important to the south west marine plan areas?

10. Good water quality is required for shellfish and fish, to protect nutrient sensitive areas and maintain bathing waters. The south west marine plan areas rely on good water quality to support a number of sectors. The south west marine plan areas support a large fishing fleet which land into Newlyn, Plymouth and Brixham (south marine plan) as well as smaller ports along the coast. The important commercial shellfish beds are located in:
 - Salcombe estuary

- Dart estuary
- Fowey estuary
- Yealm estuary
- Bigbury and Avon estuary
- Tresillian and Fal estuary

11. As well as fishing and aquaculture the south west inshore marine plan area has a high reliance on tourism and recreation activities which have a focus on the coast including surfing, kayaking and recreational boating.

What improves water quality in the south west marine plan areas?

12. Water filtration, nutrient assimilation and hazardous chemical sequestration are ecosystem services essential to achieving and maintaining a long term improvement in water quality. Ecosystem services can be defined as 'the benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living' ([UK National Ecosystem Assessment](#)).

13. Coastal saltmarsh habitats, reed beds and intertidal mudflats aid in reducing turbidity and sedimentation and in the longer term can remove through isolation hazardous chemicals and nutrients. Seagrass beds play a role in the removal of nitrogen and can reduce turbidity. There is also evidence that seagrasses are effective in the removal of hazardous chemicals from the water column. Filter feeding shellfish, such as blue mussels, filter water and absorb nutrients (particularly nitrogen) from the water column thereby improving water quality.

14. Ecosystem services fall into one of four sub categories depending on their contributions: provisioning, regulatory, cultural or supporting services. [Marine ecosystem services paper \(NECR088\)](#) identifies the types of habitats and species that can be of benefit to water quality by providing regulatory ecosystem services such as:

- water filtration is the physical process of removing contaminants from water flowing through a system
- nutrient assimilation is the result of actions to enhance and accelerate the ability of the ambient environment to accept nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) and still meet water quality standards
- hazardous chemical sequestration is the capture and long-term storage of chemicals that might degrade water quality standards in line with reporting for the Water Framework Directive objectives

15. See also policy SW-CC-4.

Who is this of interest to?

16. Any applicants when preparing proposals which may benefit water quality, including enhancing habitats and species beneficial to water quality, in the south west marine plan areas.

17. A [catchment based approach](#) to water quality encourages a stronger sense of shared responsibility across government, key stakeholder organisations, land managers, developers and the general public for actions and behaviours that will

improve water quality. This policy is therefore also of interest to a wide range of public authorities and organisations.

18. The environmental objectives summarised within River Basin Management Plans are legally binding under the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#). All public bodies must have regard to these objectives when making decisions that could affect the quality of the water environment.

Including decision-making public authorities such as:

- Marine Management Organisation
- Environment Agency
- Local planning authorities
- Marine licensing authorities
- Ports and Harbour authorities
- The Planning Inspectorate
- The Crown Estate
- Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

How should this policy be applied?

19. SW-WQ-2 aligns with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.6.4.1). It complements actions of the [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) and the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#).

20. The South West Marine Plan builds on existing measures, consistent with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.5.13) and addresses water quality issues through ensuring proposals consider impacts on water quality, including habitats and species that provide water filtration, nutrient assimilation and hazardous chemical sequestration services, and look for opportunities to improve water quality.

21. Proposals should demonstrate they have considered any effects the proposal may have upon water quality or habitats and species beneficial to water quality in accordance with SW-WQ-1.

22. Proposals can use the [Marine Information System](#) in scoping locations and habitats with the potential to provide relevant ecosystem services which benefit water quality. Several examples of these habitats are found in protected areas within the north west marine plan areas and may require additional consideration. Relevant issues and threats for each habitat and species assemblage can be accessed via the statutory nature conservation bodies ([Marine Protected Areas in the UK](#)).

23. Proposals delivering improvements to water quality, will benefit water quality, or enhance habitats and species which can be of benefit to water quality, should be supported, when in alignment with other plan policies.

24. SW-WQ-2 aims to support activities that will improve water quality, or enhance habitats and species which benefit water quality. Activities, that may be achieved through steps such as voluntary measures, may include but are not limited to:

- activities undertaken by water authorities such as waste water treatment and water infrastructure provision
- habitat restoration works

- provision of natural sediment settling areas
 - building in beneficial features as part of good design, for example that enhance habitat and species assemblages that provide regulatory services
 - development of bioremediation sites such as those suggested by the [Marine Management Organisation's Environmental Remediation to Improve Water Quality report](#)
25. Proposals should note that identifying positive impacts or enhancement of an ecosystem service is not a substitute for avoidance, minimisation or mitigation of significant adverse impacts.
26. Early discussion with public authorities and [catchment partnerships](#) is advised when implementing SW-WQ-2 as it may help identify where best to direct resource to achieve the greatest benefit. Public authorities should assess proposals compliance with other relevant policy and legislation.
27. The Catchment Partnerships in the south west marine plan area are:
- Seven Vale
 - Bristol Avon
 - South and West Somerset
 - North Devon
 - Tamar
 - North and East Cornwall
 - West Cornwall
 - South Devon

Signposting

28. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
- [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)
 - [River Basin Management Plans](#)
 - [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
29. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
- [Clearing the Waters for All](#) guidance on How to assess the impact of your activity in estuarine (transitional) and coastal waters for Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.
 - [Marine Management Organisation's Environmental Remediation to Improve Water Quality report](#)
 - [Catchment based approach](#)
 - [Catchment data explorer](#) to identify which water body your activity is in and any linked water bodies it could affect
 - [Marine ecosystem services paper \(NECR088\)](#)
 - [Coastal Blue Carbon in Practise](#)
 - [Capturing and conserving natural coastal carbon](#)

Policy drafting template SW-WQ-3

HLMO	Living within environmental limits	Sub bullet(s)	Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems.
Grouping	Water quality	Code	SW-WQ-3

Policy

SW-WQ-3

Public authorities with functions capable of affecting water quality in the marine area should seek to enhance water quality where possible.

Public authorities with functions capable of affecting water quality in the marine area (including river catchments) must build in measures to, in order of preference: a) avoid b) minimise or c) mitigate significant adverse impacts to water quality in the marine area.

What is water quality?

1. Water quality is a measure of the condition of water and its suitability to sustain a range of uses for both biotic and human benefits. Good water quality is important in meeting the UK government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans ([Marine Policy Statement](#)). Water quality in respect of the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) is defined by specific biological, physico-chemical and hydromorphological criteria. Poor water quality refers to the presence of pollutants in water. These pollutants may include oil, sedimentation, sewage, nutrients and heavy metals.
2. Pollution can come from either diffuse (unlicensed sources) or point sources (regulated sources).

Point source water pollution	Diffuse water pollution
developments within the marine area	contaminated run-off from roads
waste water	drainage from housing estates
sewage treatment	accidental chemical and oil spills
storm overflows	agricultural run-off
industrial waste	pollution from abandoned mines
discharge from vessels (licensed)	discharge from vessels (unlicensed)
aggregate extraction	Micro plastics

Where is water quality important in the south west marine plan areas?

3. Water quality faces challenges in many areas of the south west marine plan, notably; the increased and rapid run off from agricultural land down the steep embankments of south Devon's unique rias (flooded valleys); the discharges of heavy metals and other pollutants from abandoned mines in Cornwall and south Wales and the diffuse pollution and management of waste water from the large catchment areas surrounding the Severn and Tamar. All the above can be exacerbated by periods of heavy rainfall.
4. The estuaries and rias within the south west marine plan area are each important marine ecosystems in their own right. They host a range of nature conservation and land scape designations as well as industry, fisheries, anchorage and settlements attracting increasing tourism and recreation. Good water quality underpins these ecosystem services.
5. Water quality needs to be monitored at coastal locations popular for swimming to ensure that beach users are protected from pollution in 'designated bathing waters'.

What causes poor water quality in the south west marine plan areas?

6. In the south west inshore marine plan area there are issues for water pollution from abandoned mines, storm overflows and agricultural run-off.
7. *Abandoned mines*
Abandoned mines are a pollution threat to the water quality in the south west marine plan area. Both abandoned coal mines in the Severn and western Wales river basin districts (effect 35 water bodies) and non-coal mines (metals and minerals) (effect 271 water bodies) will all have an impact affecting water courses with heavy metals and other pollutants. ([Abandoned mines and the water environment](#)).
8. *Storm overflows*
Storm overflows or combined sewer overflows play an important role in preventing flooding. During periods of heavy rainfall particularly following long dry spells, the sewer system can become full and back up. Permitted by the [Environment Agency](#) water companies can use storm overflows to allow a mixture of dilute untreated sewage and rain water to be re-directed into the sea. The [Environment Agency](#) encourages an urban pollution management and partnership approach to managing surface water in wet weather to limit pollution from storm overflows.
9. *Diffuse pollution*
Diffuse sources of pollution are pollutants from many small scale sources carried into water bodies by rainwater run-off from urban and rural land. The Environment Agency consider that diffuse pollution is now a bigger threat to river water quality than point source pollution ([the unseen threat to water quality](#)).
Diffuse water pollution includes:
 - agricultural run-off (covered in more detail below)
 - contaminated run-off from roads
 - drainage from urban areas
 - leaks from septic tanks
 - accidental chemical and oil spills that find their way into drainage systems

10. Taking a [catchment based approach](#) and education are key to addressing diffuse pollution.

11. *Agricultural run-off*

Agriculture is still a major source of water pollution in the UK. ([25 Year Environment Plan](#)). The leading pollutants from agriculture and wastewater are sediment, chemicals, nitrate and phosphorus. Pollution from rural areas affects approximately 44% of water bodies in the [South West River Basin district](#) and 40% of water bodies in the [Severn River Basin district](#). Agriculture is currently the largest sector responsible for significant pollution events to water ([The state of the environment: water quality](#)). The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs along with the Environment Agency introduced [Rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) to prevent manure, fertiliser and soil getting into watercourses.

12. Water quality is also affected by:

- physical modifications to water ways
- changes to the natural flow and level of water
- negative effects of invasive non-native species
- resuspension of sediment
- extreme weather such as drought followed by intense rainfall
- seasonal population variation

13. The expected increase in the number and diversity of developments and marine users within the south west marine plan area poses additional risk towards meeting Good status for ecological and chemical objectives in accordance with the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) and Good Environmental Status in accordance with [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#).

Why is water quality important to the south west marine plan areas?

14. Good water quality is required for shellfish and fish, to protect nutrient sensitive areas and maintain bathing waters. The south west marine plan areas rely on good water quality to support a number of sectors. The south west marine plan areas support a large fishing fleet which land into Newlyn, Plymouth and Brixham (south marine plan) as well as smaller ports along the coast. The important commercial shellfish beds are located in:

- Salcombe estuary
- Dart estuary
- Fowey estuary
- Yealm estuary
- Bigbury and Avon estuary
- Tresillian and Fal estuary

15. As well as fishing and aquaculture the south west inshore marine plan area has a high reliance on tourism and recreation activities which have a focus on the coast including surfing, kayaking and recreational boating.

16. There are two River Basin Management Plan areas within the inshore south west marine plan area; [Severn River Basin district](#) (which is also under Welsh jurisdiction) and [South West River Basin district](#). Through these river basin management plans

the Environment Agency maintain, review and keep an up to date register of the protected areas of water lying within each district. These include;

- drinking water protected areas
- shellfish waters (commercial shellfish harvesting)
- bodies of water designated as recreational waters
- nutrient sensitive areas
- areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where water quality is an important factor in their protection

17. The Severn river basin district has a particularly rich diversity of wildlife and habitats, supporting many species of global and national importance. For example, the Severn Estuary and its surrounding area are protected for their bird populations, habitats and migratory fish species such as Atlantic salmon, shad, lamprey and eel ([Severn River Basin district](#)).

18. The south west river basin district has a rich diversity of wildlife and habitats, supporting many species of global and national importance. Freshwater habitats within the river basin district are very important for wintering wildfowl, and reservoirs, rivers, estuaries and coastal water bodies support fisheries and shellfish waters. Coastal waters are also very important and the river basin district has over half of the country's designated bathing waters ([South West River Basin district](#)).

19. Water quality at areas recognised as bathing waters is important to human health. The [Environment Agency](#) classifies [designated bathing waters](#) help people to decide where is safe to swim. Using the Environment Agency classification [The Blue Flag and Seaside awards](#) by Keep Britain Tidy also inform the public about well managed beaches with good water quality. There are approximately 126 beaches in the south west plan area that have 'designated bathing waters', 91% are achieving good or excellent. There are also 10 blue flag beaches and a high level of surfing and water sports which are dependent upon good water quality ([Bathing water statistics](#)).

What improves water quality in the south west marine plan areas?

20. There are natural and man-made ways to improve water quality. For example natural coastal habitats such as saltmarshes, reed beds, seagrass and intertidal mudflats all aid in the reduction of turbidity by increasing sedimentation and can remove hazardous chemicals and nutrients. Filter feeding shellfish, such as blue mussels, filter water and absorb nutrients (particularly nitrogen) from the water column in turn improving water quality.

21. Water filtration, nutrient assimilation and hazardous chemical sequestration are ecosystem services essential to achieving and maintaining a long term improvement in water quality. Ecosystem services can be defined as 'the benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living' ([UK National Ecosystem Assessment](#)).

22. Other activities, that support improvements to water quality, may include but are not limited to:

- activities undertaken by water authorities such as waste water treatment and water infrastructure provision
- habitat restoration works

- provision of natural sediment settling areas
- building in beneficial features as part of good design, for example that enhance habitat and species assemblages that provide regulatory services
- development of bioremediation sites

23. All strategies and developments are best considered through a [catchment based approach](#). The Catchment Partnerships in the south west marine plan area are:

- Seven Vale
- Bristol Avon
- South and West Somerset
- North Devon
- Tamar
- North and East Cornwall
- West Cornwall
- South Devon

Who is this of interest to?

24. The following government departments have decision making and regulatory functions that will apply this policy:

- Environment Agency – Environmental permits and exemptions, River Basin Management Plans,
- Natural England – catchment sensitive farming
- Natural Resources Wales – River Basin Management Plans
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – town and country planning
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – energy developments and associated development
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport – tourism and recreation
- Ministry of Defence

25. The environmental objectives summarised within River Basin Management Plans are legally binding under the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#). All public bodies must have regard to these objectives when making decisions that could affect the quality of the water environment.

26. Public authorities including:

- public authorities with waste, waste water or land management functions including but not limited to local authorities
- public authorities with strategic planning functions which enable activities that generate pollution that could impact upon water quality
- water companies with waste water management functions
- lead local flood authorities
- flood and coastal erosion risk management groups (FCERM)
- Port and harbour waste management functions – pollution from vessels
- Public authorities that develop River Basin Management Plans and other land management plans capable of affecting the marine area

How should this policy be applied?

27. SW-WQ-3 applies to both the inshore and offshore south west marine plan areas and extends to functions that are carried out in adjacent marine plan areas which are capable of affecting water quality in the south west marine plan areas.
28. Policy SW-WQ-3 aligns with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.6.4.1 - 2.6.4.4) and the [Marine and Coastal Access Act](#) (section 58 (3)). It complements the actions of [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) and the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#).
29. Application of the [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) is enacted through [River Basin Management Plans](#) and the [catchment based approach](#) through catchment partnerships, as well as current water company controls and regulations.
30. This policy should be considered when developing strategic plans and programmes which may have an impact on water quality in the marine environment. This policy will also apply when making consent decisions for proposals which may have an impact on water quality in the marine environment. Collaborative working through catchment partnerships is the most effective way to apply this policy. The [Catchment data explorer](#) can be used to identify which water body your activity is in and any linked water bodies it could affect. Other regulations should be taken into consideration, when appropriate, such as [Nitrate Vulnerable Zones](#).
31. Examples of land-based infrastructure that should be considered include land-based handling and disposal facilities for refuse, waste water and sewage treatment. Also infrastructure to support recreational, residential, commercial boating and shipping activities is included. See also SW-INF-1, SW-ML-1 and SW-ML-2.
32. Public authorities must build in measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate any adverse impacts to the marine area caused by but not limited to:
 1. increased inputs of nutrients, especially to nitrate vulnerable zones
 2. pollution
 3. agricultural run off
 4. plastics, including micro plastics (See SW-ML-1 and SW-ML-2)
33. Public authority functions should seek to avoid, minimise or mitigate these inputs where possible. Proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts to water quality - proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc. Examples of how to avoid, minimise or mitigate significant adverse impacts include but are not limited to:
 - avoid – avoid supporting functions which may lead to adverse impacts on water quality
 - minimise – consider and plan for the impacts of all future developments upon water quality and include mitigation such as sustainable drainage systems, natural waste water treatments, best available technology or collaborative working such as catchment sensitive farming
 - mitigation - creating or enhancing compensatory habitat that provides an ecosystem service to improve water quality

34. Developments or activities which could be of benefit to water quality may include:

- sustainable drainage systems (SUDs)
- improvements to sewage treatment works
- Moving from Septic tank to mains [sewerage](#) connection
- natural flood management
- minimising diffuse water pollution through applying [Rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#)
- creating or enhancing compensatory habitats that improve water quality
- collaborative working such as catchment sensitive farming or raising awareness such as [‘The Drip a watery tale’](#)

35. The South West Marine Plan builds on existing measures, consistent with the [Marine Policy Statement](#) (2.5.13) and addresses water quality issues through ensuring public authorities consider impacts on water quality, including habitats and species that provide water filtration, nutrient assimilation and hazardous chemical sequestration services, and look for opportunities to improve water quality. The plan policies are not restricted to the inshore marine plan area as there is the potential for offshore sources to affect inshore water quality.

Signposting

36. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:

- [Water Environment \(Water Framework Directive\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [The Bathing Water Regulations 2013](#)
- [River Basin Management Plans](#)
- [The state of the environment: water quality](#)
- [Urban Waste Water Treatment \(England and Wales\) Regulations 1994](#)
- [The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#)
- [Rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#)
- [Nitrate Vulnerable Zones](#)
- The drainage and waste water management strategies
- [The Water Industry National Environment Programme](#) – updated every 5 years
- [The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2015](#)
- [International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships \(MARPOL\)](#)
- Port Reception Facilities Directive
- The Isles of Scilly [Smart Islands Programme](#)

37. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:

- [Clearing the Waters for All](#) guidance on How to assess the impact of your activity in estuarine (transitional) and coastal waters for Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.
- [Marine Management Organisation’s Environmental Remediation to Improve Water Quality report](#)
- [Catchment data explorer](#) to identify which water body your activity is in and any linked water bodies it could affect

- [Catchment based approach](#)
- [Waste water treatment in the UK](#)
- Sweep Project
- North Devon Marine Pioneer
- [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#)
- [Operation Clean Sweep](#) – Reducing plastic pellet loss to the marine environment
- [Septic tank permits](#)
- [Guidance notes for making a first time sewerage application](#)

Iteration 3 draft