



Aim

The project reviewed the past trends and made projections for the next 6 and 20 years in the East Marine Plan Areas for each sector in the Marine Policy Statement. It provides an evidence base to support the development of the second iteration of East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plans by considering recent and potential key future changes in activity and policy directions and it assesses the confidence underlying the projections for each sector.

Introduction and methodology

The East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plans were the first marine plans to be adopted in England in 2014. The 2020 and 2023 review of the East Marine Plans recommended the Plan should be amended in part reflecting the increased activity since Plan publication and expected in future, in activity. Driving these increases is the roll out of offshore wind farms to meet the British Energy Security Strategy, the subsequent spatial squeeze on other marine activities, climate change (net zero) and environmental policies (Highly Protected Marine Areas).

A [futures analysis](#) was produced for the original East Marine Plans that largely focused on the economic impacts of the East Marine Plans against a baseline in which no such plans are developed. This latest futures analysis expands to include socio-economic factors driving change. The report applies a PESTLE analysis and covers the marine sectors from the Marine Policy Statement and additional emerging sectors.

Trends over the last 10 years, current activity and likely trajectory for each sector were assessed through existing data and literature. Where relevant and available, information on the spatial footprint and trends of activities was included in the report. A Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (PESTLE) analysis was carried out for each sector to understand the factors driving change, either positive or negative, in the sectors over a period of 6 and 20 years.

Results and conclusions

The project provides a high-level assessment of each sector. The assessment covers the current activity as well as looking forward 6 and 20 years into the future to predict the level of change for each sector during each of the timeframes (with a confidence level associated with the predictions, based on the evidence available). It also considers the socio-economic impacts of future changes of each sector.

The report recognises the significant growth likely in the plan area, driven by the renewable energy sector and its associated cabling, and the potential growth of carbon capture, use, and storage (high confidence) and hydrogen energy (moderate to high confidence) in the East Plan Area. It also highlights the high diversity of species and habitats in the plan areas, as well as the many designated nature conservation areas (i.e. the Wash and Humber). An increasing number of byelaws (high confidence) are to be introduced to implement protected area management to improve the environmental status and support recovery of features in the East Marine Plan area.



The emerging desalination sector is more likely to be focused on environmental assessments and consultations in the next 6 years; activity. The two desalination plants proposed at Mablethorpe and Bacton could be realised within the 20-year timeframe but will be dependent on public support and funding.

Net zero is having a significant impact, driving development in some sectors, and mitigation actions, both of which may transform existing sectors. Climate pressures are predicted to increase with sea level rise, increased storminess and flooding and run-off impacting water quality and coastal erosion.

Overall, the East Marine Plan area is very busy, and so marine planning needs to support appropriate management to ensure the environment and industrial sectors have sufficient space to maintain their activities and have space to adapt to climate change.

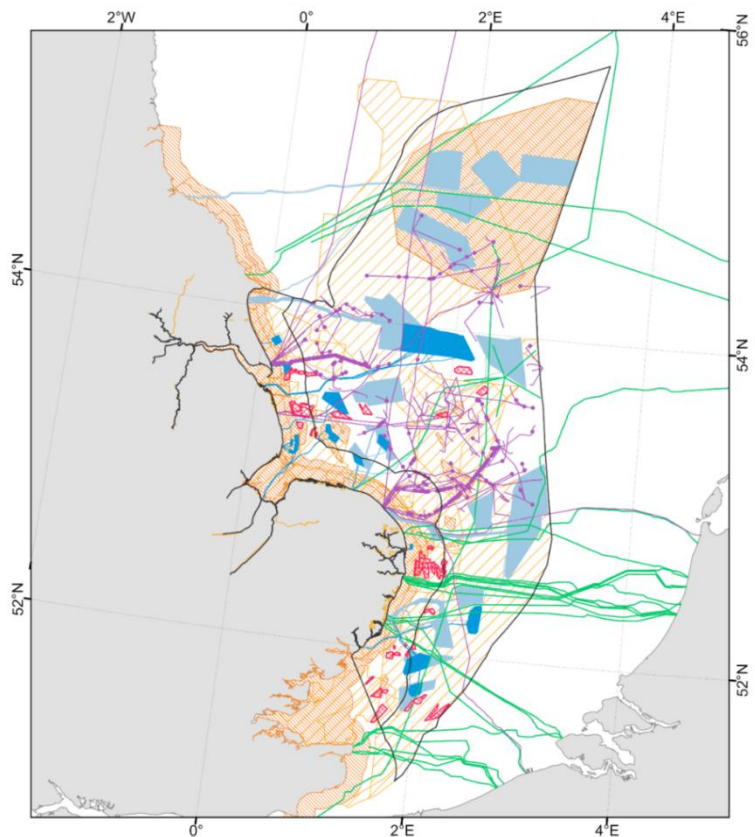


Figure 1: Overlay of selected marine sector distributions illustrating current and future spatial squeeze

MMO comments

This futures analysis for the East Marine Plan area provides a comprehensive assessment of the current and potential future activity of all the sector and activities occurring in the area. The information will be used to inform the development of the replacement East Marine Plan and inform discussions on opportunities and challenges for sectors with stakeholders throughout the plan-making process.

Further information

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