

Case study	Tamar Estuary		
Location	Plymouth area, South West England		
	Development planning example	X	Development control example
A	Summary of the issues		
<p>This is mainly a planning policy example showing how an estuary management plan drawn up by the Tamar Estuary Consultative Forum (TECF) comprising several local authorities, harbour authorities and organisations such as Natural England and the Environment Agency ties in with planning policy. It illustrates how marine issues are being translated into a (LDF) Supplementary Planning Document which is specifically designed to consider planning issues in a marine environment (estuary). Project partners Natural England and the Environment Agency are involved in the TECF attending the meetings and helping to fund research studies etc. The question is raised about how that may change with the inclusion of the MMO's involvement in such forums.</p>			
B	Description of the plan or development		
<p>The Tamar Estuaries Management Plan (TEMP) 2006 to 2012 seeks to promote the sustainable use of a living, working estuary and coastal environment, and provides guidance for the work of the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum in the delivery of integrated management of the Tamar Estuaries and coastal areas.</p> <p>The TEMP has been developed by TECF, representing all organisations with statutory responsibility for managing the Tamar Estuaries, and with advice from the Port of Plymouth Marine Liaison Committee (PPMLC), and the Wembury Advisory Group (WAG), representing other stakeholders/user groups. The TECF is a broad based partnership consisting of: Plymouth City Council, MoD, Devon County Council, Cornwall County Council, West Devon Borough Council, South Hams District Council, Natural England, South West Water Ltd., ABP, Cattewater Harbour Commission, Sutton Harbour Commission, Sutton Harbour Company, Devon Sea Fisheries Committee and the Marine & Fisheries Agency and the Environment Agency.</p>			
C	Description of the baseline environment and constraints		
<p>Plymouth Sound and Estuaries is the largest estuarine system in the south west England and includes the Tamar, Tavy, Lynher, Plym, and Yealm Estuaries. It supports some 400,000 people within the catchment, plus it has large numbers of tourists and visiting recreational users. It covers some 8,500ha with a long convoluted shoreline and is a European Marine Site.</p> <p>The estuaries contains a series of nature conservation designations which are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plymouth Sound & estuaries SAC • Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA • Tamar –Tavy estuary SSSI • Plymouth Sound Shore &Cliffs SSSI, Western King SSSI, St John's Lake SSSI, Rame Head & Whitsand Bay SSSI Wembury Point, Yealm Estuary SSSI • Wembury Voluntary Marine Conservation Area (VMCA) • Warleigh Point Devon Wildlife Trust Reserve • Church Farm Cornwall Wildlife Trust Reserve <p>The following issues which have been identified as environmentally threatening to these sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical loss of habitat e.g. through land claim • Physical damage through anchoring and trawling • Toxic contamination from industry located on the banks of the estuary • Non toxic contamination from nutrient levels from agricultural run off • Low dissolved oxygen e.g. in the upper Tamar from natural low river flows • Biological disturbance e.g. bait collection 			

D	Description of the planning baseline
	<p>The Tamar Estuaries Management Plan (TEMP) 2006 to 2012 sets out an agreed 'sustainable management agenda' to be delivered through partnership action, integrating the different policies and actions that have an effect on the coast, and bringing together stakeholders to inform, support and implement these policies and actions in a coordinated and transparent way. The plan also explains the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum's (TECF) role in achieving statutory compliance with respect to delivering the conservation objectives for the European Marine Site (EMS).</p> <p>The estuary management plan helps inform strategies being developed in the Local Development Framework core strategies and documents by the various county, district and city local authorities who sit on the TECF including that of Plymouth City Council who are themselves relatively advanced in developing a Supplementary Planning Document which relates specifically to the estuary and coastline around Plymouth City. Plymouth City Council are waiting to see what is contained in the draft of PPS20 (due to be issued in Spring/summer 2009) before they progress fully with their SPD.</p>
E	Description of the plan development process (for development planning cases) or the authorisation process (development control cases) – under the existing system
	<p>South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)</p> <p>The RSS is expected to be finally adopted some time in 2009. It contains a wide range of policies that are relevant to the Tamar estuary including several which specifically relate to the coastal areas of the region which include:</p> <p>Policy CO1 – Defining the Coastal Zone – This policy advocates the definition of the coastal zone by local authorities as being 'developed' and 'undeveloped' coast. Within the undeveloped coast a presumption against development is specified unless a number of criteria are satisfied e.g. <i>'the development does not detract from the unspoilt character and appearance of the coast'</i></p> <p>Policy CO2 - Coastal Planning</p> <p>This policy advocates the principle of cross border planning to protect resources in the coastal strip, which is intended to secure sustainable management of the coastal zone.</p> <p>The RSS also contains policies relating to the future development of the cities and town located on the Tamar estuary including the designation of Plymouth as a Strategically Significant City which will result in it having a significant amount of growth e.g. housing and economic growth.</p> <p>The RSS policies provide a strategic basis for local authorities around the estuary to formulate their LDF policies and strategies as is discussed below.</p> <p>Integrating with the LDF Process –Coastal Supplementary Planning Document</p> <p>Plymouth City Council is generally recognised amongst government departments (including the CLG) and other local authorities with coastlines to be at the forefront of the Local Development Framework process nationally with regard to how coastal issues are being incorporated in the and policy formulated within it. In April 2007, Plymouth was the first city to have an adopted Core Strategy and as of May 2008 the Council had eight LDF documents declared sound. Plymouth C.C. is committed to developing a Coastal Supplementary Planning Document as part of its LDF and will be completing it in the summer of 2009 after the draft PPS 20 has been published for consultation in the Spring 2009. This will support the Council's vision statement which is to conserve 'and enhance Plymouth's unique coastal and waterfront setting, promoting an integrated management approach to its sustainable development which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers the conservation objectives for Plymouth Sound and Estuaries European Marine Site; • Delivers opportunities for improved water transport linkages along the waterfront; • Acknowledges the port's fundamental importance to the economy of the area, and the need to accommodate a wide range of use/activities including its role as a primary naval port and dockyard, its use by commercial shipping & fishing, tourism, recreation and leisure' (Plymouth C.C., 2007. Core Strategy 2006-2021) <p>As stated in the Core Strategy , the Coastal Planning Supplementary Planning Document will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplify the policies in the Core Strategy relating to coastal planning matters, explaining how they can be implemented within the context of ensuring the sustainable development of Plymouth's waterfront . • Address the impacts of additional recreational use in the area. In particular ensuring that development is delivered in a way that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site. • Set out costal planning application considerations

- Provide guidance on coastal and marine consents and consultation procedures

The Core Strategy goes onto identify that in the longer term Plymouth C.C. will work with TECF partners towards developing a marine Spatial Planning approach for the Port of Plymouth area which integrates with the current LDF process, providing a comprehensive management approach to the area. In light of the forthcoming publication of the Marine Bill, Plymouth C.C. and any other authorities who subsequently adopt the Coastal Planning Supplementary Planning Document will need to review and update the document as new guidance issued.

Plymouth C.C. and TECF is therefore already well on the way to building on the adopted management plan for Plymouth Sound and delivering a Coastal Supplementary Planning Document for the whole of the Estuary. TECF will therefore be very keen to work with DEFRA and the Marine Management Organisation to go the next step in developing and delivering the estuary element of the nested marine spatial plan for the area, ensuring that is fully integrated with the LDF system and vice versa.

Both Natural England and the Environment Agency are statutory consultees for the SW RSS and the local authority's LDFs.

F *Implication of planning proposals under the Marine and Coastal Access Bill*

Once the Marine Bill comes into being together with the commitment to deliver marine spatial plans, one of the key challenges will be planning in the complex coastal strip and busy estuary areas. It is in these areas where the terrestrial systems meet the marine systems that integration will be crucial and multiple organisations will have to work together effectively in a constructive and structured manner. Forums such as the TECF may well be the way forward for delivering a nested estuary component of a Marine Plan bringing the key agencies and local authorities together to deliver against agreed targets whilst contributing to the local Sustainable Communities Strategy(ies). They can also be the clear path through which the stakeholder engagement can be managed, thereby putting the estuary partnerships onto a more stable foundation whilst also delivering for the Local Strategic Partnerships. The MMO could take an active role in the existing forums such as the TECF or even establish new forums elsewhere in England where such partnerships don't exist and pool their knowledge, expertise and funds to ensure that strategies and policies in LDF documents that are based on knowledge and expertise drawn from the attendees who come from a variety of backgrounds.

G *Inputs of project partners and lessons learnt*

	EA	NE	CCW	NT
Involvement	✓	✓		
Inputs	Attend TECF meetings. Help finance various informative studies relating to activities on the estuary	Attend TECF meetings. Help finance various informative studies relating to activities on the estuary		

Lessons learnt

The Tamar Estuary Consultative Forum (TECF) is considered by the partner's staff who attend the meetings to be a successful forum for informing them of issues relating to the estuary which are relevant to them such as new developments with the potential for impacting upon nature designations and increasing flood risk. The TECF meetings are attended by a wide variety of organisations all of whom feed information into the forum which has helped inform the management plan which in turn helps inform planning policy within the individual LDFs of the member local authorities. The TECF is therefore considered to be a very good example of coastal partnerships where knowledge is shared between terrestrial planners and other specialists including marine which can have an important role to play in coastal areas and will be useful partnerships for the MMO/WAG to work with in the future.

One of the main strengths of such partnerships as the TECF is that they bring together individuals with knowledge and expertise of local areas. The MMO when established will need to tap into this expertise and knowledge built up over many years by different organisations and their staff who participate in such partnerships. MMO with its regional/local offices around England will require staff with local knowledge and expertise and may look to recruit from organisations such as Natural England and the Environment Agency to fulfil any skills gap.

Plymouth City Council's planning team have worked closely with the Council's marine officer in developing the SPD relating to the estuary who is also one of the TECF's leading participants.

H	<i>The effect the marine planning system may have on the way partners get involved, to their effectiveness in the process and to the staff resources required</i>
	<p>MMO could be involved in or even take a leading role in partnerships such as the TECF and its representatives (from regional/local offices) and will presumably attend the TECF meetings. Its staff will learn about local/regional issues from the existing TECF partners by attending the meetings.</p> <p>Natural England and the Environment Agency's role with the TECF has included: attending the meetings held three times a year, informing the forum with information relating to biodiversity and flooding. The partners' roles on the forum probably won't change post the Marine Act but the possible participation of the MMO will be a factor on how the forum is structured e.g. possibly more frequent meetings being held (currently 3 per annum).</p> <p>The MMO may well seek to recruit staff that may be from the TECF partners including Natural England and the Environment Agency to gain local/regional knowledge and expertise quickly.</p>