

Case study	Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast EMS/ Northumberland Coast AONB joint plan		
Location	Northumberland, England		
	<i>Development planning example</i>	X	<i>Development control example</i>
A	Summary of the issues		
<p>A plan has been produced for the future joined up management of what currently exist as two separate plans from the coastal Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and European Marine Site (EMS) Management Scheme (hereon named the 'Joint Plan' or 'Plan'). This will be the first of its kind in the UK covering both land and marine adjoining / overlapping areas. The draft plan was published in January 2009, with a consultation period till March 2009. Accompanying the plan there is a Sustainability Appraisal and Action Plan which both refer to the policies stated in seven thematic areas of the draft plan: natural environment, historic environment, environmental quality, enjoying the AONB / EMS, living and working, and land use and planning. The latter is the primary subject of this case study (though not considered alone).</p>			
B	Description of the plan or development		
<p>Combined EMS / AONB Plan (case study plan)</p> <p>The Joint Plan is based on the latest AONB plan, with new policies and ensuring application to both the EMS and AONB areas. The EMS covers the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC and the Northumbria Coast SPA (also designated as a Ramsar site). The Plan has a 20 year vision (to 2029) that aims to ensure all planning development is sustainable and fits within land use and marine planning frameworks. The Plan has been compiled to provide guidance, advice and support to land and marine authorities to promote sustainable management policies and actions in the area. The authors therefore can assist these authorities to interpret and apply Management Plan policy, thereby ensuring conservation and enhancement of the protected areas and fulfilling their (AONB / EMS) duties.</p> <p>One of the primary joint concerns is that the area has attracted an increased local population and second / holiday visitors as a result of greater mobility. Therefore the Plan primarily focuses on guidance to ensure appropriate development with housing, facilities, infrastructure and settlement characteristics. However one of the three long term management aims is to use regional and local planning documents to increase conservation and protection measures.</p>			
C	Description of the baseline environment and constraints		
<p>The draft Joint Plan covers an area from Fast Castle Head in the Scottish Borders to the Coquet Estuary at Amble, a predominantly open coast with small estuaries and islands. There are long windswept beaches, high rock cliffs, rocky reefs, and high wild bird populations. This popular 'wild' area is populated by clustered settlements and has a number of 'imposing' castles.</p> <p>The area outlined includes the AONB coastal land area of ~138 km² and 64km in length along the coastline (Berwick to Coquet), the inland border never extending further than 2.5km inshore; and the marine EMS area of 635 km² and 115 km in length (Fast Castle Head to Alnmouth). Whilst the AONB is valued for its coastline of sandy beaches, dunes, high rocky cliffs and islands (and designated to conserve and enhance these in terms of natural beauty); the EMS is of importance to its bird populations and habitats, resulting in designation in: the i) Farne Islands and ii) Lindisfarne SPAs; iii) Northumbria Coast SAC; and iv) Berwickshire and Northumberland Coast SAC and v) North Northumberland Dunes (candidate) cSPAs.</p> <p>In addition to plans outlined below in Section D, the area is also importantly a Heritage Coast, a non-statutory designation: from Scottish Borders to Druridge Bay in the south.</p>			

D	<i>Description of the planning baseline</i>
	<p>National Policy – The most relevant policies to the Joint Plan are stated to be PPS7 sustainable Development in Rural Areas; PPF20 Coastal Planning; and Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological conservation</p> <p>Regional Spatial Strategy - The North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (published 2008 for up to 2021, incorporating Regional Transport Strategy). Also of relevance, the North East Climate Change Strategy.</p> <p>Local Development Frameworks - Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick district councils both have LDFs: Berwick-upon-Tweed LDF is in progress and Alnwick has adopted its LDF Core Strategy. As all councils in Northumberland county will merge to form a unitary authority in April 2009, LDFs are generally on hold awaiting to be merged. The AONB is primarily controlled by the LDFs (i.e. through the Town and Country Planning system). There are a number of policies relating the LDFs to the AONB, e.g. Alnwick District Council’s Policy S13: “All proposals for development and change will be considered against the need to protect and enhance the landscape character of the District”. Note that LPAs will all become part of one unitary authority from 1/4/09</p> <p>AONB Plan - The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act) states a requirement for local authorities to “Prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy or the management of the AONB and for carrying out their functions in relation to it”, thereby making it a statutory obligation to have AONB policies and actions. These policies are intended to feed into land planning policies (e.g. LDFs). The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 – ensures AONB objectives become duty of public bodies and statutory undertakers. The AONB Management Plan was published in 2004.</p> <p>EMS Plan – There is a statutory duty for relevant and competent authorities to have a Plan to fulfil their duties with respect to the Habitats Regulations. (The policies themselves are non-statutory but enable delivery of statutory duties.) The EMS Management Plan was published in 2001.</p> <p>Minerals Local Plan (2000) and Waste Plan (2001)- currently in review under the Minerals and Waste Development Framework</p> <p>Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan</p> <p>St. Abbs to River Tyne Shoreline Management Plan - currently under review.</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Guidance, Supplementary Planning Documents, Parish Plans, Village Design Statements</p> <p>Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative (SSMEI), Berwickshire</p> <p>Biodiversity Action Plan - Working for Wildlife: the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan; and Northumbrian Water Biodiversity Action Plan</p> <p>Local Authority Coastal Strategies</p> <p>River Basin Management Plans - Northumberland; and Solway-Tweed</p> <p>Tweed Estuary Management Plan</p>
E	<i>Description of the plan development process (for development planning cases) or the authorisation process (development control cases) – under the existing system</i>
	<p>Whilst the AONB was designated over 50 years ago (1958), the EMS site is relatively recent (1992 -2000). Again in contrast, there is a statutory duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB by local authorities; whereas the statutory EMS site requires the ‘competent and relevant authorities’ to manage conservation. Both project officers do however work within a local authority (Northumberland County Council) and management of both is contributed to by partnerships. The EMS comprises of a larger number of organisations though owing i) partly to its coverage in Scottish territory but also ii) its requirement for ‘competent and relevant authorities’ (e.g. Defra) and iii) added marine focus (e.g. Maritime and Coastguard Agency).</p> <p>Some of the additional controls on development introduced by including the EMS are those that may require consent to discharge, port and harbour development, coastal defence schemes and windfarms, all of which are consented through the land planning system or Food and Protection Act (FEPA). Inputting into this process, the Habitats Regulations require all plans, projects and consents are assessed against “likely significant effect” on EMS features and if found to be a likely significant effect then require an Appropriate Assessment to assess if consent can be granted. This decision must take into account Natural England’s views and can only be overridden by the Secretary of State and must then have compensation measures in place.</p>

Joint Plan Policies in Land Use and Marine Planning

The Joint Plan policies are developed using the baseline existing AONB Management Plan. Of the 23 policies in the Joint plan, we have found that there are six completely new policies: two relating to the EMS, and four to both the AONB and EMS; and the remainder have been adjusted to incorporate the EMS accordingly. The 23 policies relate to the following areas though for full details the reader should consult the Joint Plan from which this has been summarised. The Joint Plan policies have been drawn up to:

- i. *Provide guidance / assessment criteria as appropriate to AONB / EMS objectives* - for development (housing, harbours, visitor facilities), design and assessment; infrastructure and appropriate consideration of development; renewable energy, telecommunications masts, and undergrounding of overhead network utilities; reducing biofuels and biomass crops impacts;
- ii. *Declare they will respond to consultations on planning* – AONB will respond to planning applications in both their own area and the National Heritage coast; assess sustainability of new plans (e.g. transport);
- iii. *State that they will contribute as appropriate to AONB / EMS objectives* - to improve development design through guidance; to maximise input to sustainable green infrastructure projects; to improve highways visual aspects and implementation Northumberland BAP Transport Corridors Habitat action Plan; minimise impacts (visual / environmental) coastal defence work; discussions with NE to review AONB boundary; and
- iv. *State they will support as appropriate to AONB / EMS objectives* - affordable housing; development visitor facilities and accommodation; undergrounding of overhead network utilities; community / local services; managed re-alignment.

Joint Plan Actions in Land Use and Marine Planning

There are a set of actions outlined according to each policy in the Joint Plan, with organisations responsible on each action. These are summarised below (Section G) according to each project partner.

Joint Plan Opportunities and Threats

A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been carried out on the Joint Plan which provides an outline of the strengths / opportunities and weaknesses / threats of the Plan. As the Joint Plan is not yet in place, this is a primary source of understanding how the plan will impact on partners and the general management system. There will also be an Appropriate Assessment (under Regulation 48 of the Habitats regulations) and these results will be combined with those of the SEA into the final Joint Plan.

The sustainability appraisal assessed 86 Management Policies under 7 thematic topics, each then assessed against 8 SEA objectives, totalling 688 assessments. 16% of these were found to be strongly supportive, 42 supportive (overall 58% supportive).

Of the sustainability appraisal, none were found to be strongly against SEA objectives but one potentially working against (0.3%); 2% were uncertain.

F	<i>Implication of planning proposals under the Marine and Coastal Access Bill</i>
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Partners and AONB / EMS consultees have expressed expectations that the Joint Plan will hopefully feed into a new marine plan for the region. They expect the new marine plan to benefit from this existing Joint Plan with its capacity to join up land use types and objectives at the coast.

G				
Inputs of project partners and lessons learnt				
	EA	NE	CCW	NT
Involvement	✓	✓		✓
Inputs	Steering Group of EMS Sit on AONB management group	Steering Group of EMS Sit on AONB management group Required to report on the condition of the EMS site on a 6 year cycle Covers all aspects of NE's remit (access, conservation, landscape and recreation)	N/A	Steering Group of EMS Sit on AONB management group NT land ownership at 7 sites in AONB / EMS areas

Natural England role

Comment on Appropriate Assessment to statutory authority assessing plans / consents.

Single largest funder of EMS and AONB (most and 75% funding respectively).

Significant involvement pre-draft of Joint Plan including writing introduction sections. Specific Actions:

- i. Provide AONB / EMS response to all major developments within and adjacent to area
- ii. Promote AONB Design Guide (development)
- iii. Apply NE guidance on bats and swifts relating to development
- iv. Produce a sensitivity map to guide development
- v. Identify where parking requires landscape improvement
- vi. Identify signage overuse and develop program to address
- vii. Raise awareness infrastructure layout in relation to biodiversity
- viii. Develop advice on seascape character assessments for commercial and individual wind farms
- ix. Maintain AONB and EMS staff representation on Green Infrastructure working group

Expectations / strengths of Joint Plan in relation to partner remit:

- Support joining up.
- Has required additional time on plans to set up new Joint Plan but expect to ultimately reduce resource needed.
- However resourcing is not the main concern and NE primarily welcome the Joint Plan to allow greater capacity to address remit to enhance and protect areas, fulfilling its remit.
- Welcome opportunity to increase awareness of EMS policies through statutory policies AONB (i.e. which are defined together with EMS policies).
- Hoped that the two staff at NE with focus on AONB and the EMS separately, will gain greater knowledge of other protected area's management, enabling better joining up.

Experience to date

NE has not always received planning applications from LAs to date and it is hoped this more enforced route will aid this.

Environment Agency role

As a consultee for the EMS.

Significant involvement pre-draft of combined plan. Specific Actions:

- i. Provide AONB / EMS response to all major developments within and adjacent to area (joint with NE)

- ii. Identify where parking requires landscape improvement (joint with NE)

Expectations / strengths of Joint Plan in relation to partner remit:

- Helps extend boundaries of coverage

NT role

Seven coastal properties / land in the coastal area of the Joint Plan from Lindisfarne to Druridge Bay.

Experience to date:

National Trust own several properties on the mainland all within ~500m of the coastline / mean high water and also on the Farne Islands. They manage land containing two of the key features of the EMS: sea cliffs and breeding seal populations on the Farne Islands. This has resulted in a strong interest in the EMS management and they therefore sit on the Steering Group since it started in 2001. In relation to the AONB, National Trust have also sat on this Management Group since 2004 and input as required, with a clear interest in landscape. They also request information from both the AONB and EMS as required to guide their operations, extending to Natural England as necessary (and Environment Agency for particular issues, e.g. fly tipping). And also AONB have contributed funding to the National Trust's initiatives such as the "Berwick Young Rangers" children's awards for conservation. In terms of responding to consultation, the National Trust has just completed a response to the SMP review and further responses are made by their regional land planner. To date, National Trust have dealt with the EMS and AONB separately as each property falls on either one of the other's areas; and had no clear need to combine this approach for their own management issues. In reference to the partner remits, National Trust carry out all the activities except for those relating to dredging and consents. Also the only consultation responses they expect to give

The National trust has had no involvement in writing the combined plan. Specific Actions (in the Joint Plan):

- i. Identify signage overuse and develop program to address (joint with NE)

Expectations / strengths of Joint Plan in relation to partner remit:

It is expected that the Joint Plan may allow them one point of contact with the EMS / AONB officers which they would welcome. Whilst it is considered that the Joint Plan will have positive impacts on National Trust, these are expected to be mostly in the area of marine planning generally and the partner remains unsure of how this will impact them.

H

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

To be added after workshop