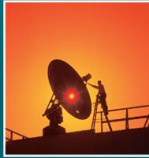
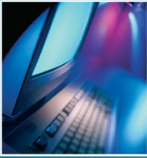


Environment Agency,
Natural England,
Countryside Council
for Wales and the
National Trust

Planning at the Coast

Summary

June 2009



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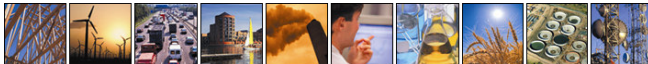
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Purpose of the Study

This study examines the current and future practice of planning at the coast in the context of marine planning introduced in the Marine and Coastal Access Bill. The integration of marine planning with the well-established system of land-use planning presents a unique opportunity to develop a holistic approach to managing coastal environments. The study identifies these opportunities and also the key obstacles to integration and sets out a series of recommendations which seek to maximise benefits in relation to the remits of the four project partners - the Environment Agency, the Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and the National Trust.

This document presents an overview of the study, its key findings and recommendations. A copy of the full report can be obtained by contacting the project partners who are listed at the start of this document. This report has been prepared by Entec UK Ltd.

What is Marine Planning?

The Marine and Coastal Access Bill makes provision for the preparation of a Marine Policy Statement by the UK Government. This will set out high level objectives for the marine environment to be translated into more localised policies through marine plans. Marine plans will be implemented through decisions of marine planning bodies, namely the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), on licences/consents for development, as well as through decisions of other public bodies in relation to their planning / regulatory roles.

How does Marine Planning Relate to Land-use Planning?

Marine planning overlaps with land-use planning at the coast. There already exists a plethora of management plans in coastal areas and it is therefore important that both systems integrate effectively to ensure that a holistic approach to management of coastal areas is achieved.



Findings

The study focused on identifying the key opportunities and challenges associated with marine planning and its interaction with land-use planning in relation to the key objectives of the project partners namely, **flood and coast erosion risk management, conservation of the natural environment, landscape and seascape and access and recreation.**

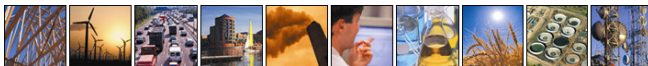
Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management

Under the existing land-use planning system, the coverage of flood and coastal erosion risk management varies despite there being a requirement for development plans to take into account coastal management plans such as Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs). This raises questions in relation to how well these documents will inform marine plans and what can be done to ensure that marine plans and land-use plans are fully integrated both with each other and SMPs in order to develop a holistic and strategic approach to flood and coastal erosion risk management.

Conservation of the Natural Environment

Marine planning represents an opportunity to strengthen protection of the marine environment at the coast especially if marine plans are fully integrated with land-use plans. The extent to which the opportunity is realised will depend on a number of factors including:

- defining appropriate marine plan boundaries that relate to ecosystem functioning, local planning authority boundaries and Water Framework Directive water body boundaries;
- ensuring that valuation of ecological interest features and management prescriptions are consistent across the two planning systems; and
- the extent to which marine plans integrate with land-use plans and other key management plans, particularly River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs).



Landscape and Seascape

In contrast to how landscape is considered as an issue in current planning decisions, seascape is considered to be outside the jurisdiction of local planning authorities although they are often consulted on offshore wind farms which has resulted in a reappraisal of the linkages between seascape and landscape. Through marine planning, it may be possible to define better the relationship between sea and land and ensure that spatial planning in the sea takes account of the views from, and the setting of, protected landscapes such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However, there are challenges to be overcome, specifically in relation to the need to define seascape character in the same way as landscapes currently are.

Access and Recreation

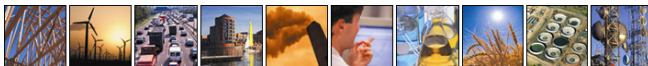
The coastal zone is the focus of much recreational activity. Marine plans will not be able to institute general controls on recreational navigation but they can include provision of shore facilities, moorings or dredging of associated channels and with land-use plans, there is an opportunity to achieve a coordinated approach to the siting of recreational, educational and social facilities and managing access to the coast.

Recommendations

Building on the key findings of the study, a series of recommendations has been identified to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the implementation of marine planning and its integration with land-use planning. These recommendations cover development planning / plan preparation, development control management, operation of marine planning bodies and partner resources. Based on discussions with stakeholders, five recommendations are considered to be a priority and these are summarised below.

Plan Making

Whilst there will be a requirement for marine plan authorities to ensure that marine plans are in general conformity with corresponding development plans (Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks in England and the Wales Spatial Plan and Local Development Plans in Wales), there is



currently no reciprocal requirement. This may have implications for the holistic planning of coastal areas and, therefore, delivery of the partners' objectives.

Recommendation: Legislation

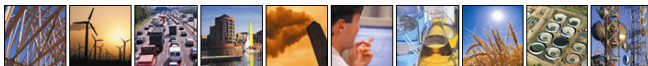
CLG and WAG should seek to amend the Planning Acts to include an explicit requirement that land-use plans must be compatible with marine plans.

In support of the legislative changes described above, it is also necessary to look to national policy to steer integration. The emerging Planning Policy Statement 20 (PPS20), which will set out national planning policy in relation to the coast, in particular provides an immediate opportunity for partners to not only ensure that conformity between land-use and marine plans is required but to also seek amendments to national policy to better address marine issues and deliver their objectives. In Wales, Technical Advice Note 14: Coastal Planning should be reviewed at the earliest opportunity to be consistent with PPS20.

Recommendation: Planning Policy

The forthcoming PPS20 and any future review of TAN14 in Wales should stipulate that development plans are required to be compatible with marine plans covering the plan area. National coastal planning policy should also strengthen the role of SMPs and RBMPs by raising their profile as a key constituent of the evidence base of terrestrial plans and provide guidance in relation to the preparation of coastal planning policy through partnership.

To ensure that reviews of national policy fully take into account marine planning, it will be necessary for both CLG and WAG's planning division to have a thorough understanding of the marine planning process. However, it was noted from stakeholders during the course of the study that there is a need for CLG in particular to be more actively engaged in coastal matters and interface with marine planning.



Recommendation: CLG and WAG

CLG should become more actively involved in coastal issues and marine planning and seek to be represented on the MMO board. WAG should explore options for integrating its marine planning and land-use planning functions.

Guidance

Guidance prepared jointly by CLG, WAG and Defra is required to support both the legislative and policy recommended amendments outlined previously and provide clarity in relation to the functioning and relationships between both planning systems. This would also have several significant benefits in relation to facilitating the integration of both marine and land-use planning systems including:

- raising awareness of land-use planning issues within the MMO/WAG and of marine planning within local planning authorities;
- encouraging the integration of marine and land-use plans; and
- setting out guidance for the development of joint marine and land-use policy documents (for example, coastal Supplementary Planning Documents).

Recommendation: Integrated Guidance

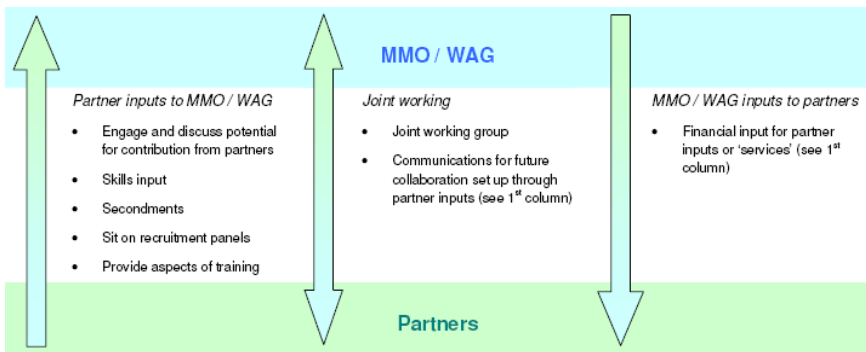
Defra, CLG and WAG should prepare a guidance manual on coastal planning, targeted at both marine planning authorities and local planning authorities.

MMO and WAG

The marine planning authorities are expected initially to lack sufficient expertise, local knowledge and resources to deliver their functions in the first instance. This may present a resource issue for the partners as firstly, their staff may be recruited by the MMO/WAG and secondly, staff remaining may be relied on heavily by the marine planning bodies and this could cause financial strain to the partners if



funds are not sufficiently allocated from MMO / WAG to the partners for these services. However, it also presents an opportunity for partners to improve communication routes with MMO / WAG and trade services in their skills, recruitment and training. This would take place through three mechanisms: input to MMO / WAG, joint initiatives between WAG / MMO and partners and input from MMO / WAG to partners.



Mechanisms of how partners may work with MMO and WAG

Recommendation: Working with the MMO and WAG

The partners should approach MMO / WAG to discuss the potential contribution they may usefully input to the marine planning process which could initially take the form a joint liaison group. Once this is established, partners should put forward proposals of the types of input that MMO / WAG and invite further ideas from MMO / WAG.

The input of skills may take the form of secondments to MMO / WAG and less formal formats for particular tasks and skills development of MMO/WAG staff through partners' provision of (aspects of) training in marine planning and their position on recruitment panels.

