

Wales Marine Strategic Advisory Group MINUTES March 2015

Title of Meeting	Marine Transition Programme (MTP) – Wales Marine Strategic Advisory Group (WMSAG)			Date	16.03.2015
Meeting Number	3	Start Time	10.30	End Time	15:45
Attendance	<p>Llandudno Junction PD (Chair), DMcD (One Voice Wales), RC (Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers), GB (Marine Conservation Society), TJ (Welsh Aquaculture), AM (Chair British Marine Federation Wales), DL (Welsh Ports Group), MP (Chair Pwllheli Partnership), PH (Craven Llyn a Mon), GC (RSPB Wales), NO'S (Wales Marine Fisheries Advisory Group), DR (Mariteam Associates), KD (Natural Resources Wales), ML (Natural Resources Wales), TS (Natural Resources Wales), CM (Natural Resources Wales), MM (Natural Resources Wales), PL (Natural Resources Wales), DG (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales), DH (BMAPA Trading Association), MH-E (Countryside Council for Wales), JE (Welsh Fishermen's Association), GR (Welsh Government), RG (Welsh Government), JB (Welsh Government), ZS (Welsh Government)</p> <p>Cathays Park, Cardiff NR (Welsh Local Government Association), NB (Dwr Cymru Welsh Water), CC (Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum), LT (Severn Estuary Partnership), ER (Dwr Cymru Welsh Water), GE (Visit Wales), SW (Visit Wales), IB (WWF and WEL), RF (Welsh Government), LG (Welsh Government), TB (Welsh Government), HE (Welsh Government), RL-J (Welsh Government)</p> <p>The Crown Estate, London DT (The Crown Estate), PB (Seabed Users), EB (Royal Yachting Association)</p>				
Apologies	AC-K (Natural Resources Wales), TR (British Association for Shooting and Conservation)				

#	Item
1.	Welcome, Introductions & Apologies
2.	Minutes and Outstanding actions from last meeting
3.	MTP Programme update
4.	MTP: MPA Management options paper discussion
5.	Possible new SPAs and SACs in Wales
5.	MSFD: feedback from the Programme of Measures consultation workshop
6.	NRW: Updated River Basin Management Plans
7.	WG: Visit Wales

8.	Questions and Key messages
9.	Any Other Business (AOB)

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

- 1.1 **PD** opened the meeting, welcomed group members and confirmed whether those attending through the video conference link were able to follow.

2. Minutes and Outstanding actions from last meeting

- 2.1 **PD** asked the group to confirm previous minutes had been read and accepted. No issues were raised.
- 2.2 **RG** informed the group that minutes could not be shared over the Welsh Government (WG) website, as they would require translating. Translation of minutes is not supported.
- 2.3 **PD** asked the group to consider travel arrangements for the next meeting in September, as some members travel from the same areas in separate vehicles and it would be useful to car share.

3. MTP Programme update

- 3.1 **GR** introduced himself, gave an update on the Marine Transition Programme (MTP). Informed group of change in scope due to budgetary changes. Delivery timelines have been affected, meaning that priority has been given to specific areas of the MTP.
- 3.2 **GR** thanked group members for engaging in the Marine Planning consultation, going on to say that the Marine Portal had been refreshed, containing new features that allow users to use it more effectively.
- 3.3 Due to the changes in the MTP, the Strategic Scoping Exercise (SSE) would be re-released later this month, and that the scope, vision and objectives had been changed through engagement with stakeholders.
- 3.4 **PD** asked the group to pose any questions to **GR** on the update. **IB** asked **GR** to give a detailed update on funding for the MTP. **GR** stated that sufficient funds would still be available and are sufficient to take a focused MTP forward. Other funds are being secured to support peripheral MTP objectives.
- 3.5 **DT** gave an update on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Progress had been made in evidence gathering to inform the landing obligation and an update of historic bylaws was currently underway. Legislation pertaining to crustaceans would be in place by the autumn. Other domestic legislation was under review; scallops were given as an example. Work has begun on aquaculture, with new future projects being identified. Inshore Fishery Groups (IFGs) are being used effectively, with a useful input from stakeholders. **DT** noted that group crossover in the WMSAG was valuable as a means to communicate with many key stakeholders. **JE** agreed with and supported the new direction taken within stakeholder meetings such as the IFGs and WMFAG; focusing on delivery. WMSAG allows identification of key objectives across the Marine sector.

- 3.6 **RC** asked WG for a clear stance on EU bass proposals; having been unable to attain one for over a year. **DT** responded to say that WG is in detailed discussion with Defra and that a UK position would be ironed out over the coming months. We will engage with stakeholders to understand the WG compliment. **JE** assured **RC** that information would start to flow through groups such as the IFGs and WMFAG.
- 3.7 **GC** asked WG to outline when the Minister will make a statement on historic access rights and whether it will appear as a paper presented to the Senedd. **GR** – Minister currently tied up with bass measures, once resolved a statement will be given in the form of a paper presented to the Senedd.
- 3.8 **TJ** noted that aquaculture was in a ‘good place’ and that WG and partners were working to ensure a vision to double aquaculture was realised.
- 3.9 **RG** gave brief update on WG website development and thanked stakeholders for attending the website design and stakeholder engagement task and finish group meeting on February 9th. The improved website structure, as discussed in the website design meeting, will be going live at the end of this month (March). **RG** explained to the group that an internal structure had been developed to support the delivery of communications
- 3.10 The group agreed that consideration should still be given to forms of information such as printable notices. Options such as this should be made available on the website.
- 3.11 **DR** – General public still not totally aware of actions carried out by WG. Information should be tailored in a certain way to make it more accessible to everyone. Members of WMSAG should also be disseminating information to sub-groups. Welsh press has not been effective and usually negative – needs working on. **MP** cited information presented as animations released by WG as very useful and engaging. This style should be utilised more often.
- 3.12 **IB** asked WG what resolutions are being developed for the loss of the effective evidence base due to MTP funding loss – needed assurance that projects such as the MSFD would still be supported. **GR** – each project currently has an evidence stream. These will be brought together to form an evidence base applicable to each project, minimising administration costs. **GB** asked whether evidence groups unique to MTP would be duplicating workload. **GR** – evidence project to be relevant to all projects, only perspective of management would change – no duplication.

Action: **RG** to develop information fact sheets.

Action: **RG** and Marine & Fisheries team to look at developing positive communications approach for activity.

4. MTP: MPA Management options paper discussion

- 4.1 **MHE** opened with a presentation on the future management of our MPA framework. Reminds group of last presentation in the October WMSAG. Details sections to presentation. Geographical distribution of MPAs shown (see slide 3 of Agenda item 4: *MPA Management in Wales*). Management of network and the

implementation plan outlined in four phases ([see slide 4](#)) – all ongoing work will not be lost in this approach.

MHE details objectives ([see slide 5](#)). MPA sites originally formed as site focused areas, without consideration of their place within a future overarching network. An option of 4 spatial approaches are outlined ([see slide 6](#)) to allow collective management of MPAs.

- 4.2 **MHE** thanked stakeholders for taking part in the MPA consultation. New MPA areas may be designated due to the responses received. **MHE** reminded group that the consultation may be extended until April 17th to allow further detailed responses.
- 4.3 **MHE** – boundaries, how will we set them? Existing divisions may prove useful in identifying new boundaries ([see slide 12](#)). Finalising regional divisions may prove time consuming as existing boundaries do not line up with each other.
- 4.4 **MHE** – we will produce a summary document of the consultation responses, as well as a detailed document containing large responses. Some will be kept anonymous. An MPA group meeting will be held in early May to discuss consultation results and moving forward with them.
- 4.5 **PB** asked **MHE** how does this fit with what a successful network would look like in Wales (ensuring site level objectives are not lost). **MHE** – High level network allows conservation objectives to remain at a feature level.
- 4.6 **DL** – engagement must be at a local level as larger areas would not effectively represent the inhabitants. **MHE** – local approach is available, however funding may restrict the size of administrative areas. **DL** – do not let funding restrict vision. Local Authorities will be more likely to invest in an area applicable to them.
- 4.7 Some members of the group noted that they had not been contacted through the Reg 35 review by Royal Haskoning. Members who *had* been contacted received the questions through different means.
- 4.8 **MHE** outlined next steps to Reg 35 review. Contract to deliver be the end of March. The summary of responses will be shared with WMSAG. This work will then be paused while other areas of the MTP are focused on.

Action: **MHE** to send consultation around group once again

Action: **MHE** to share summary of consultation document with group

Action: **MHE** to provide a further information on the Reg 35 with WMSAG and also the link to the questionnaire.

5. Possible new SPAs and SACs in Wales

- 5.1 **JB** detailed actions between WG, NRW and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), which met to exchange structures in which to consider possible new SPAs and SACs. **JB** informed the group that WG were taking a structured approach and examining gap analysis. WG and NRW have been working to get information out to stakeholders. Two drop in sessions were held, with positive feedback from each. 4 more drop in days are planned to take place in April – May. WG will circulate exact dates to group.
- 5.2 **CM** opened with presentation on Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for Harbour porpoise. It was noted to the group that the presentation was designated under an 'Official – Sensitive' setting, and those attending in London would not be able to view it. **CM** outlines existing SACs in the EU, including the 27 sites newly

designated in the UK. Data modelling was used to determine porpoise population density, based on sightings, water salinity and shipping density.

- 5.3 **IB** asked NRW when a formal consultation on SACs would be released. **CM** – Consultation to run during summer 2015. **ML** – Subject to Ministerial agreement, NRW will work closely with the JNCC and Natural England between July and September to coordinate a consultation in the summer of 2015.
- 5.4 **GB** – language in future consultations must be definitive. Previously, they have been difficult to commit answers to. **JB** notified group that he and **GB** had been in conversation over this matter.
- 5.5 **MM** presented information on marine SPAs in Welsh waters including ornithological data and the formation of SPAs as a result of data modelling ([see slide 6 of Agenda item 5: Marine SPAs in Welsh waters](#)). Slide presented showing increase in seabird population after designation had been made ([see slide 14](#)).
- 5.6 **ML** explained NRW's next steps: consultation to be released in summer on SAC and SPA designation methods. This would include a short turnaround time (September – November) after which a summary of the consultation would be released in this work.
- 5.7 **PD** noted the importance of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and its role. **GC** asked WG to clarify how the consultation would work in Wales, considering that most fishing vessels were below 12 metres in length. **GR** to take away and provide a response. **JB** informed the group that any further questions on the matter could be posed to him via email.
- 5.8 **DG** informed group that the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales had not been involved in the SAC/SPA process, considering that many of the designated areas also contain wrecks. **DG** felt that it would be helpful to join up at this stage.
- 5.9 **PD** asked DT if in his role as Crown Estates rep was he able to represent the views of the renewable energies sector. DT – could not speak on behalf of the sector. PD to contact Renewable Wales with regards to attendance of WMSAG.
- 5.10 **ML** asked the group to suggest any additions to SAC/SPA FAQ paper (found in delegate packs) by 17th April.
- 5.11 **PD** asked the group to consider engagement with ecological communities across the coastline. **DR** – this process is currently occurring, but could be improved. Staff from NRW agreed to take this engagement forward following the consultation.

Action: WMSAG to provide suggestions, if any, to **ML** regarding FAQ paper by 17th April.

Action: **GR** to respond to **GC** on process of JNCC consultation in Wales.

Action: **PD** and **PB** to follow up request for Renewables UK attendance at WMSAG.

Action: **WMSAG** to consider engagement with ecological communities in schools following the consultation.

6. MSFD: feedback from the Programme of Measures consultation workshop

- 6.1 **LG** presented a summary of the MSFD Programme of Measures consultation workshop. (See attached report) The Marine Planning Portal was cited as a useful tool during the event. Stakeholders wished for more time to discuss each of the descriptors in the breakout sessions.

- 6.2 **RG** asked those who were present at the workshop if sectorial representation was broad enough. **GC** confirmed that the event was 'well attended' by individuals across many sectors. **LG** – feedback from the event suggested that wide representation had occurred.
- 6.3 **LG** informed group that the consultation ends on 24th April.
- 6.4 **GB** notified group of a press release coming out on Thursday 19th March indicating that Wales had higher than average marine litter than the rest of the UK. **GB** was disappointed with the fact that some measures outlined in the MSFD are not universal as previously set out. **LG** – WG will work collaboratively with UK government to carry these measures forward.

Action: **PD** to liaise with **GB** outside of the meeting on the marine litter issue.

7. NRW: Updated River Basin Management Plans

- 7.1 **MC** presented information on the updated river basin management plan consultation. **MC** outlined how the estuarine and coastal environment would be managed over the next 6 years ([see slide 15 of Agenda item 7: updated River Basin Management Plans](#)). The main components of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) are water bodies. In order to ascertain the health of these bodies, human uses are taken into consideration, as well as the quality of plant and animal life in the vicinity. Some water bodies are not consistently monitored, with different agencies with different catchment areas. **MC** – objectives and ambition, where should we be focusing our effort with the resources we have? 4 scenarios outlined showing their effectiveness in improving water quality ([see slide 13](#)).
- 7.2 **MC** emphasised that pressures on water bodies (such as those explored in the presentation) begin on land. It is only until land use is properly managed, that pressure will alleviate on water bodies. Diffuse pollution from rural areas was cited as a large pressure on the health of water bodies.
- 7.3 **ER** thanked NRW for their engagement with stakeholders and encouraged the group to support a strategy of primary water body focus – ensuring that each water body receives enough individual support in order to improve its environmental status.
- 7.4 **PD** – how do we tackle the problem of diffuse pollution more broadly? **MC** – NRW has been engaging with farmers unions and held an event focusing on the Water Framework Directive recently. The focus needs to move from 'easy fixes' to rural pollution.
- 7.5 **MC** said that all sectors, terrestrial and marine, must pull their weight equally and contribute towards the Good Environmental Status (GES) of water bodies over the next 6 years. **PD** notified group of further funding for farmers in upland areas, where larger areas of river basins can be affected. WG relationship with farming community is very important.

8. WG: Visit Wales

- 8.1 **GE** presented information on Visit Wales, including figures on tourist spending, growth in numbers and future projects. After years of investment, the sector is now flourishing. Recently, there has been a focus on international visitors; with a German language website dedicated to Welsh tourism being developed for the German market. Other sectors of tourism that are being developed include cruises, with new infrastructure being created in Fishguard.
- 8.2 **GE** suggests that the Marine Planning team should meet with and present to the Tourism Advisory Board. WG is encouraging partnerships with other organisations such as Dwr Cymru and Keep Wales Tidy. Working with others will ensure that the tourism industry remains strong; safeguarding jobs and creating opportunities.
- 8.3 The 'Year of...' campaigns will be supported with a large amount of marketing including product development. Each year focuses on a different aspect of Welsh tourism (**see slide 37 of Agenda item 8: Marine Coastal Presentation – Visit Wales**). **PH** – no mention of Welsh sports angling in presentation, although a main contributor to Welsh economy through tourism. **GE** – Visit Wales is aware of the existing market and would like to work with groups in the recreational fishing industry. **RC** informed group of the popularity of sea bass tourism in Ireland, with the fisheries sectors and tourism sectors working closely together.
- 8.4 **GE** asked group to consider any sporting activities/possibilities that would encourage tourism. Visit Wales works with the Wales Activity Tourism Organisation (WATO) to fund activity providers. Funding will be made available based on the sport's popularity as visitor numbers are a priority. **DG** asked **GE** whether wrecks were included in any sports diving activities. **CC** suggested that she liaises with **DG** on the matter of sports diving.
- 8.5 **PD** draws together points on marine litter and water quality from earlier in the meeting. These factors affect tourism in Wales. Providing that they are focused upon, the tourism industry will have room to grow.
- 8.6 **MP** suggested that **GE** and Visit Wales permanently join the WMSAG group. The group agreed that Visit Wales' attendance was very valuable and the organisation should be given membership.

Action: **RG** to link **DG** and **CC** regarding sports diving opportunities.

Action: **RC** to contact **GB** regarding sea bass conservation.

Action: **RG** to link **GE** and **GB** regarding the Marine Litter press release to be issued by MCS

Action: Marine Planning team to meet with and present to the Tourism Advisory Board.

9. Questions and Key messages

- 9.1 **PD** asked if there were any other points anyone wished to discuss, the group concluded that the points made and questions posed to the group had been addressed within the wider discussion against the agenda items. The group was also asked to give feedback on the process of attending the meeting via a video conference (VC) running. The group agreed that the VC was helpful, enabling a greater attendance. The decided to continue with the use of VC in WMSAG meetings.

- 9.2 PD notified the group that a summary of the meeting would shortly be released outlining the key messages gathered. This would include pressures on the environment, and the role we all have to safeguard its future as an integral factor in defining Wales.

10. Any Other Business (AOB)

- 10.1 CC asked WMSAG to fill out the coastal directory questionnaire.

Action: WMSAG to notify RG of further questionnaires, she will forward them on.

Action: ZS to add WFSA to acronym document.

Action: DT to ask IFGs and WMFAG for responses to coastal directory questionnaire.

Number	Description	Owner	Status
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (1)	Welsh Government to develop information fact sheets for MTP		On going
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (2):	RG and Marine & Fisheries team to look at developing positive communications approach for activity.	RG	On going
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (3)	MHE to send consultation around group once again	RG	pending
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (4)	MHE to share summary of consultation document with group.	RG	pending
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (5)	Action: MHE to provide a further information on the Reg 35 with WMSAG and also the link to the questionnaire.	MHE	Complete
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (6)	Group to provide suggestions, if any, to ML regarding FAQ paper by 17 th April.	PCF & SEP	Complete
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (7)	GR to respond to GC on process of JNCC consultation in Wales.	GR	pending

WMSAG: 16/03/15 (8)	PD and PB to follow up request for Renewables UK attendance at WMSAG.	GR/PD	complete
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (9)	PD to liaise with GB outside of the meeting on the marine litter issue.	PD	pending
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (10)	RG to link DG and CC regarding sports diving opportunities.	RG	pending
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (11)	Action: RG to link GE and GB regarding the Marine Litter press release to be issued by MCS	RG	Complete
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (12)	Marine Planning team to meet with and present to the Tourism Advisory Board.		pending
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (13)	WMSAG to notify RG of further questionnaires responses, she will forward them on.	RG	Complete
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (14)	ZS to add WFSA to acronym document.	ZS	Complete
WMSAG: 16/03/15 (15)	DT to ask IFGs and WMFAG for responses to coastal directory questionnaire.	DT	Complete