

Marine Spatial Planning Stakeholder Advisory Group

Report of Fourth Meeting held 14th February 2019

Attendance List Attached

1. Welcome and Introduction

Minister English welcomed members and recalled that since the last meeting there had been a 3-month consultation process on the Baseline Report which included five regional events. The Minister thanked members for participating in the regional events and for their help in the overall effort of raising awareness around the plan-making process.

The Minister welcomed new members:

- Eamonn Mylotte, Rúnaí, Coiste Chearta Cladaí Chonamara was appointed since the last meeting and represents the Seaweed Harvesting sector.
- John T. O’Sullivan, CEO, BioAtlantis was also appointed since the last meeting and represents the Seaweed Processing sector.
- Rory Dunphy replaces Pat Shannon as representative of the Irish Offshore Operators Association.

The Irish Farmers Association has indicated that it is in the process of appointing a new Aquaculture Executive and will notify details to the group shortly.

2. Presentation on National Marine Planning Framework spatial data and evidence – Marine Institute

Jeff Fisher gave a presentation on work being done by the Marine Institute on spatial data and evidence in support of the MSP process (copy of presentation has been circulated).

In the discussion that followed the following points arose:

- The Marine Institute’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 includes a Strategic Focus Area devoted to Forecasting Ocean and Climate Change.
- An important aspect of the Marine Institute’s work on spatial data and evidence will be the development of decision support tools to underpin

and assist the full spectrum of marine planning processes, including MSP, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Marine Protected Areas, and marine consenting processes.

- Predictive modelling of complex natural systems is a difficult, speculative and hypothetical exercise. Publication of such models should be accompanied by a strong statement about the uncertainty involved in forecasting such processes.
- Accounting rules concerning carbon sequestration and how they may differ as between terrestrial and offshore are the responsibility of the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment.
- In May 2018 the OPW launched <http://www.floodinfo.ie/> providing access to Flood Plans, Flood Maps and information on flood risk management in Ireland.
- Coastal erosion was the most frequently cited concern of respondents to the recent Coastwatch Annual Survey.
- Retention of historical datasets should be factored into the data management plan where appropriate as they can be useful in showing trends over time.

3. Overview of Baseline Report Consultation

Philip Nugent gave an overview of the 173 submissions received during the Baseline Report consultation process, which had been recently published on the Department's website. Members were encouraged to examine the submissions to further inform their own views on development of the draft plan over the coming months. The MSP Team will on request assist members by providing lists of submissions relevant to their area of interest.

In the discussion that followed the following points arose:

- Receipt of a large number of identical submissions from different sources was not a feature of the consultation process.
- Members were concerned that subjective views expressed in public submissions should be treated with caution in the plan drafting process.
- Under the leadership of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment a number of High Level Interdepartmental Working Groups have been established in response to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and DHPLG participates in a number of these.
- DHPLG has examined how other jurisdictions have addressed Climate Change in their marine plans and incorporating climate change adaptation and mitigation measures into the various thematic and

sectoral areas of the NMPF suggests itself as the most appropriate approach to adopt.

4. Working arrangements for developing draft NMPF

Philip Nugent gave a short presentation on the procedural and working arrangements to be employed over the next period with a view to producing the first draft of the NMPF:

- Submissions received during public consultation on the Baseline Report will be taken into account in the drafting of the NMPF, and a more detailed report on the consultation process will be prepared for publication alongside the draft NMPF.
- DHPLG is holding workshops with all key Departments represented on the IDG following which Departments will be asked for inputs on suggested objectives and marine planning policies for their areas of responsibility, taking account of the relevant submissions made under the public consultation on the NMPF Baseline Report.
- Following initial sign-off by the IDG the draft NMPF will be brought to the Advisory Group for discussion before going to Government for approval to publish.
- It is intended to publish the draft NMPF and associated environmental report in July 2019 for 3 months of public consultation.

5. Next Meetings

Dates for further meetings in 2019 are as follows:

- Tuesday 9th April 09:00 – 13:00
- Tuesday 11th June 09:00 – 13:00
- Tuesday 16th July 11:00 – 13:00
- Tuesday 15th October 11:00 – 13:00

Members should note that 11th June is an additional meeting and, as anticipated by Minister English, in both April and June there will be extended meetings to allow for detailed discussion of content from the draft NMPF. These meetings will run from 9:00 – 13:00.