

Marine Spatial Planning Stakeholder Advisory Group

Report of Sixth Meeting held 11th June 2019

Attendance List Attached

1. Welcome and Introduction

One new member has joined the group since the previous meeting. Seamus Bonner has been nominated by Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann / Irish Islands Federation to represent the islands sector.

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the NMPF

Following a competitive tendering process DHPLG appointed RPS Group earlier this year to carry out the SEA/AA of the NMPF. Dr Antonia Gaughran from RPS made a presentation on progress to date and steps to completion of the SEA/AA processes for the NMPF.

In the discussion that followed the following points arose:

- integration of SEA/AA into the NMPF process from an early stage ensures that environmental considerations are incorporated into the policy development process, and this will enhance the overall quality and sustainability of the NMPF – it will be an iterative and two-way process whereby environmental considerations will inform policy development and emerging policies will guide the approach to environmental assessment;
- a workshop for stakeholders will be held during the SEA/AA processes;
- all available sources of data will be used to inform the SEA/AA processes, drawing particularly on work being done on behalf of DHPLG by the Marine Institute on knowledge and evidence to support MSP;
- if data gaps are identified they could be addressed through plan-level mitigation;
- it is highly unlikely that the Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) process would have to be invoked for a strategic level plan such as the NMPF but it cannot be ruled out and will be considered as part of the AA process;

- the interests of traditional users should be factored into the SEA/AA considerations;
- the obligation under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) to take the necessary measures to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status (GES) in marine waters should form part of the criteria for the SEA/AA of the NMPF;
- emerging national policy in relation to climate disruption should be factored into the development of alternatives;
- processes and procedures need to be established to provide for ongoing monitoring of progress towards fulfilling recommendations made in the SEA Report;
- DHPLG will circulate web links to information on SEA/AA of marine plans in other jurisdictions (see links below).

[England – South Marine Plan Documents \(incl. Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Appraisal\)](#)

[Wales – National Marine Plan – Sustainability Appraisal Report](#)

[Wales – National Marine Plan – Habitats Regulations Assessment](#)

[Northern Ireland – Marine Plan Sustainability Appraisal](#)

[Scotland – National Marine Plan – Sustainability Appraisal](#)

[Scotland – National Marine Plan – Sustainability Appraisal Addendum](#)

[Scotland – National Marine Plan – Habitats Regulations Appraisal](#)

3. Marine Planning Policy Statement (MPPS)

Philip Nugent made a presentation (attached) on the MPPS which had been [published for consultation](#) the previous day at the Our Ocean Wealth Summit in Cork, following which there was an open discussion on the topic. Public consultation on the MPPS is open for 2 months until 9th August 2019.

4. Implementation Arrangements

Philip Nugent introduced the Discussion Paper on Implementation Arrangements which had been circulated in advance, following which there was an open discussion on the topic. In response to some of the questions posed in the paper, a number of members spoke in favour of the following points:

- Following adoption of the NMPF the Advisory Group should have a continuing role in its implementation and monitoring;
- There was support for the Office of the Planning Regulator having a role in oversight of NMPF implementation and monitoring;

- Decisions about future development of sub-national level plans at regional or local level should be based on sectoral or thematic requirements;
- Sub-national level plans will not be required to cover the full spatial extent of the national plan area, and instead should focus on spatial areas where a particular sectoral or thematic requirement is identified;
- Whether at national or sub-national level, forward planning and development of plans should take place centrally in the interest of consistency;
- Regional or local level bodies or structures may have a role in implementation and enforcement of the NMPF.

DHPLG will prepare a note for the group on the approach taken to sub-national planning in other jurisdictions.

5. Next Meetings

Dates for further meetings in 2019 are as follows:

- Tuesday 16th July 09:00 – 13:00 agenda to include:
 - Draft NMPF – presentation and discussion
 - Marine Strategy Framework Directive/Marine Protected Areas – presentation and discussion
- Tuesday 15th October 11:00 – 13:00.