

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Please identify the main area of interest you identify with:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Nature Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fisheries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Industry/Transport | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Aquaculture | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Recreation/tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic/scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local authority | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Community group | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Public sector/Regulatory body | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Coastal Partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (Please state)

Q1. Does the NMP appropriately guide management of Scotland's marine resources?

The preparation of a National Marine Plan is a welcome step in the co-ordination of offshore activity taking economic, social and environmental considerations into account.

The draft National Marine Plan is a reactive policy-based plan rather than a document which guides change in the marine environment over the next decade. Although the spatial extent of the plan is clear, its planning horizon is not.

While the draft is a significant improvement on the pre-consultation draft of 2011, in the same way that terrestrial planning has taken time to mature at the national level (even with the benefit of lower-level plans), it may be that marine planning will need to follow a similar path. Its sectoral focus and limited concern for the spatial interaction of the sectors is a significant weakness.

Q2. Does the NMP appropriately set out the requirement for integration between marine planning and land use planning systems?

While there is repeated recognition of the need for integration, the draft NMP does little to help facilitate this integration. Indeed, it does not link well to the National Planning Framework and this issue needs to be addressed prior to final publication. The most obvious example of this is the failure to highlight the proposed national development at Aberdeen harbour.

A range of changes could be introduced to enhance integration, some of which are set out below.

Q3. Does the NMP appropriately guide development of regional marine planning? What, if any, further guidance is required for regional marine planners in terms of implementation and how to interpret the NMP?

It would be appropriate for the NMP to identify the challenges faced by the marine regions in general or the particular issues faced by different marine regions. Areas of particular pressure could also be identified: for example, the areas around Peterhead and Aberdeen are subject to considerable cross-sectoral pressure at the current time.

Q4. The Marine Regional Boundaries Consultation proposed that in addition to regional marine planning, further integrated management of key marine areas would be achieved by designating the Pentland Firth; the Minches and the mouth of the Clyde as Strategic Sea Areas.

Should the NMP set out specific marine planning policies for Strategic Sea Areas?

No comments, as this does not affect Aberdeenshire.

Q5. Are the objectives and policies in the NMP appropriate to ensure they further the achievement of sustainable development, including protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of the health of the sea?

The objectives are reasonable however they are so broad and encompassing that although they are welcomed it is difficult to see how they can be realised.

Q6. Chapter 3 sets out strategic objectives for the National Marine Plan and Chapters 6 – 16 sets out sector specific marine objectives.

Is this the best approach to setting economic, social and marine ecosystem objectives and objectives relating to the mitigation of and, adaptation to climate change?

No Comment

Q7. Do you have any other comments on Chapters 1 – 3?

Page 8 highlights the fact that “Regional marine plans will not affect reserved functions unless a direction is made under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 (Consequential Provisions) Order 2010. It will be vital that regional marine plans are able to address the issues found in their area (whether reserved or not).

It is not clear what the purpose is of the red and blue squares next to identified settlements on Map 2 (p9).

General Planning Policies

Q8. Are the general policies in Chapter 4 appropriate to ensure an approach of sustainable development and use of the marine area? Are there alternative policies that you think should be included? Are the policies on integration with other planning systems appropriate? A draft circular on the integration with terrestrial planning has also been published - would further guidance be useful?

There needs to be a general policy in relation to decision-making, setting out how decisions will be made. There is a need for greater clarity around the issue of deemed planning permission for the onshore elements of offshore generation and the role of the terrestrial development plan in that process. Even if projects are being taken forward in such a way as to achieve deemed planning permission for their onshore elements, the level of engagement and information provided should be the same as if it had been a separate application. In this way the process can be seen to be transparent.

GEN9 – this engagement needs to take place in relation to both onshore and offshore elements of proposals at the same time and in a consistent way.

GEN10 – it would be useful if the data collected as part of the EIA process, and any subsequent monitoring, were to be held centrally in order to build up a better picture of what is in the marine environment. This is an issue that has also been highlighted in the terrestrial environment when trying to assess the cumulative impact of proposed developments e.g. wind farms.

GEN 12 – the wording of this policy implies that significant adverse effects on species that are not of conservation concern would be acceptable?

GEN13 – the recognition of both the designated and undesignated historic environment is welcomed, with the need for appropriate protection and mitigation.

Is there value in the identification of ‘areas for co-ordinated action’ in the same way as the National Planning Framework does? This would provide a focus for the regional marine plans as well as the interaction between marine and terrestrial planning. The Main Issues Report for National Planning Framework 3 tries to do this for the onshore implications of offshore development but this is not taken up in the draft National Marine Plan.

Q9. Is the marine planning policy for landscape and seascape an appropriate approach?

No Comment

Q10. Are there alternative general policies that you think should be included in Chapter 4?

No Comment

Guide to Sector Chapters

Q11. Do you have any comments on Chapter 5?

Are there other sectors which you think should be covered by the National Marine Plan?

While there is some value in taking a sectoral focus, it is the interactions between the sectors which gets lost (to varying extents) in this approach. While some interactions are captured, many are not. The fact that the plan has a weak spatial focus is one of the reasons for this.

Sea Fisheries

Q12. Do you have any comments on Sea Fisheries, Chapter 6?

On ‘objectives’ the Council supports the Plan’s alignment with the emerging principles of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy, specifically:

- decentralised (sea basin) fisheries management (as opposed to current centralised control)
- fish stock management to be based on removals rather than landings
- a presumption in favour of catch limits based on Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY),
- decision-making to be based on sound evidence (currently, due to a lack of data on a number of commercial species a ‘precautionary’ approach is adopted which can lead to dramatic swings in catch allocations over a short period). This commitment will need to be

matched with increased investment in marine research. Recent efforts to engage with skippers to gather statistically valid data is very welcome.

The Council welcomes the policy requiring offshore developers to engage with fisheries industry interests when preparing their plans and to provide comprehensive fisheries impact assessments so that consequent implications can be understood and ‘trade off’ arrangements fully evaluated. It is assumed that marine sector developers will be obliged to offer reparation or compensation to adversely affected fisheries interests.

It would have been useful for the Plan to have included the map/graphic which identifies the main ports, their location and the scale and type of fish landings they handle – both from a regional marine plan and a terrestrial planning perspective.

Q13. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

See comments above

Aquaculture

Q14. Does Chapter 7 appropriately set out the relationship between terrestrial and marine planning for Aquaculture? Are there any planning changes which might be included to optimise the future sustainable development of aquaculture?

Aquaculture is not, at present, an issue for Scotland’s east coast and so the presumption against marine fish farms in this area is generally appropriate.

However the relative isolation of an east coast shellfish hatchery could be attractive to producers in future for reasons of biosecurity (given the spread of Herpes virus in Pacific Oyster hatcheries). Given the relative scarcity of adequately sheltered sites, opportunities for aquaculture on the east coast are likely to be very limited. However the Plan should take due account of the need to secure high health status hatcheries, both onshore and offshore, to underpin sustainable growth in the sector.

Q15. Do you have any comments on Aquaculture, Chapter 7?

No further comment

Q16. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No further comment

Wild Salmon and Migratory Fish

Q17. Do you have any comments on Wild Salmon and Migratory Fish, Chapter 8?

There are several important salmon and sea trout rivers within the Aberdeenshire Council area including, but not limited to, the Rivers Dee, Don and Deveron. As such, angling is an important activity contributing to the local economy.

The objectives proposed for salmon and migratory fish are largely acceptable. However, the wording of the second objective implies that only where there are already healthy salmon and migratory fish stocks would these be maintained or improved where possible. As migratory fish are an indication of the quality of the water environment then this should be reworded or a new objective added to ensure that where stocks are declining that these should be improved.

There is only one, very general, policy contained within this chapter that is unlikely to achieve the objectives identified at the start of the chapter. It advises that, where evidence of impacts on salmon and other migratory species is inconclusive, mitigation should be adopted, where possible, however there is no indication that if an adverse impact is identified that the proposed development or use will not be acceptable. As it stands this will not ensure healthy and sustainable migratory fish stocks.

The whole chapter requires to be tightened up in terms of providing direction as a lot of it is vague: the objectives and policy are qualified by “where possible”, and “should”, which provide opt outs without necessarily providing justification for doing so.

Q18. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

There is reference within this chapter to the fact that Chapter 7 (Aquaculture) sets out planning policy to safeguard migratory fish, however those policies are set within the context of aquaculture development rather than specifically relating to migratory fish. The aquaculture policies are more directly relevant to the west coast rather than east coast salmonid fisheries therefore it is not logical, if looking for policies relating to migratory fish on the east coast, to look at the chapter on aquaculture for these. Policies relating to migratory fish should be contained within the chapter on migratory fish.

A definite policy steer is required on what happens if a proposed development or use will clearly have an adverse impact on migratory fish and whether that development or use will be permitted. At present

mitigation is only required if evidence of impacts is inconclusive.

Oil & Gas

Q19. Do you have any comments on Oil and Gas, Chapter 9?

The second objective is extremely unclear and sets no clear framework for action. Three vague statements are included - “where practical”, “where international agreements allow” and “as is necessary”. The phrase “as the resource declines” is misleading because infrastructure redundancy will take place on a variety of different timescales in different areas. Priority should be given to re-use.

Page 73 (para 3) – “...Aberdeen as a world wide energy hub, securing...”. The phrase ‘supply chain’ is potentially misleading and does not fully express the roll that the area already plays. Aberdeen is not the only location for oil and gas suppliers. Companies based in Aberdeenshire also make a significant contribution, particularly in Westhill, which is the global centre of subsea engineering excellence.

As technology develops, how oil and gas is recovered is likely to change. This is likely to result in additional sub sea infrastructure e.g. tie backs to existing pipelines and platforms. This may limit the areas other users can operate in.

Q20. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No comment.

Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS)

Q21. Do you have any comments on Carbon Capture and Storage, Chapter 10?

Map 13 does not identify the Goldeneye field, which is the one being proposed for the Peterhead project.

CCS, electricity transmission, fishing, oil and gas, nature conservation and recreation are all sectors which have complex relationships around Peterhead. Unfortunately, the NMP does not provide sufficient context for taking these issues forward in a marine context, even though the Main Issues Report for National Planning Framework 3 recognises the scale of activity taking place. Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Enterprise and the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority are taking forward a development framework for the onshore implications of

this, but the offshore environment is not being adequately addressed at the current time.

There is a need for a positive steer to be given in relation to the creation of a hub for CCS transportation. This is not currently provided by the NMP, even though some of the maps hint at the issue.

Future CCS development may require new pipelines from point of capture to point of storage e.g. Peterhead Power Station to redundant Goldeneye field. This may impact on possible landing points of transmission cables for power generated by offshore renewables.

Q22. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

CCS1 (p83) is far too narrow. CCS needs policy support beyond just re-using redundant infrastructure.

There is a need to consider both offshore and onshore elements together rather than in isolation. Planning authorities will need to be involved in discussions because it is the onshore elements which will be of most interest to people.

Offshore Renewable Energy

Q23. Should the NMP incorporate spatial information for Sectoral Marine Plans?

The Sectoral Marine Plans should be seen as background information to the NMP and not stand-alone documents. If a spatial focus for offshore renewables is to be provided it should be contained within the NMP.

Grid provision is vital for offshore renewables. However, there is a need to consider both offshore and onshore elements together rather than in isolation. Page 87 indicates that the Scottish Government will work with developers to ensure an integrated strategy but planning authorities also need to be involved in these discussions because it is the onshore elements which will be of most interest to people given the scale of infrastructure required. This has been a significant omission to date and needs to be rectified because it is an example of a lack of integration between terrestrial and marine planning. The 'rational' network needs to take account of both onshore and offshore issues.

Q24. Do you have any comments on Offshore Renewable Energy, Chapter 11?

Onshore locations which have good existing connections to the national grid e.g. Peterhead due the Peterhead Power Station, are likely to be chosen as connection points for power generated by offshore renewables. The onshore infrastructure required for connection to the national grid is very large and the impact of these buildings may be considerable.

Due to geography, geology and economic factors, the landing points for transmission cables of power generated by offshore renewables are likely to be in demand e.g Sandford Bay near Peterhead Power Station. Care must taken to allow landing points for all developers.

There is a need to consider both offshore and onshore elements together rather than in isolation. Page 87 indicates that the Scottish Government will work with developers to ensure an integrated strategy but planning authorities also need to be involved in these discussions because it is the onshore elements which will be of most interest to people given the scale of infrastructure required. This has been a significant omission to date and needs to be rectified because it is an example of a lack of integration between terrestrial and marine planning. The 'rational' network needs to take account of both onshore and offshore issues.

Further research is required to determine the effects of the electro magnetic fields surrounding transmission cables on nearby marine life. Other users of the sea e.g. fishermen, may see a drop in number and size of fish. Fewer fish being caught may then have a knock on effect on on-shore businesses e.g. fish markets, fish processors and transport companies, many of whom are economically fragile communities.

Q25. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

There is a need to consider both offshore and onshore elements together rather than in isolation. Page 87 indicates that the Scottish Government will work with developers to ensure an integrated strategy but planning authorities also need to be involved in these discussions because it is the onshore elements which will be of most interest to people given the scale of infrastructure required. This has been a significant omission to date and needs to be rectified because it is an example of a lack of integration between terrestrial and marine planning. The 'rational' network needs to take account of both onshore and offshore issues.

Recreation and Tourism

Q26. Do you have any comments on Recreation and Tourism, Chapter 12?

Although there are policies that refer to the need for recreation and tourism activities not to adversely impact upon sensitive or important habitats and species, there are no objectives relating to the marine ecosystem. Visitors are attracted to Scotland's coastal and marine areas because of the quality of the natural environment. The economic benefits of encouraging tourism and recreation require to be balanced against the need to protect habitats and species.

REC & TOURISM 7 – this is a policy based upon guidance documents and the use of “should” makes it very vague. A plan such as this should be seeking to guide development and activities rather than influencing behaviour. While the aims are to be supported perhaps the policy should be reworked to incorporate elements of the guidance, or for the guidance to be included within justification for the policies.

Q27. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

REC & TOURISM 7 should be removed, the idea behind it should perhaps be incorporated within REC & TOURISM 4, which seeks to protect the natural environment.

Transport (Shipping, Ports, Harbours & Ferries)

Q28. Should the NMP specifically designate national significant ports/harbours as described in Chapter 13: Marine Planning Policy Transport 2?

There is no objection to the designation of nationally significant ports and harbours although, because of its fishing importance, there may be a case for including Fraserburgh. However, it is important not to lose sight of the many other harbours throughout the country, e.g. Macduff, which perform very necessary functions, have potential to play a part in servicing the renewable energy industry in the future and which, in many cases, help to sustain their very fragile communities. Support for development of infrastructure and future maintenance of these harbours must not be neglected.

Any draft list of nationally or regionally significant ports would need to be subject to consultation.

Q29. Do you have any comments on Transport, Chapter 13?

Our response to the Main Issues Report for National Planning Framework 3 identified a number of omissions in relation to offshore infrastructure which have been carried forward into Map 19 – offshore grid infrastructure enhancements off Peterhead (see Map 14) and onshore infrastructure for

offshore renewable energy' along the north Aberdeenshire coast.

Map 19 is rather hidden on page 110 and should perhaps be at the start of the plan because it relates to carbon capture, renewable energy, electricity transmission and port activity.

While Map 20 is of interest, maps should also be included which relate to cargo and possibly fish landings to get a better impression of port activity.

Q30. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No Comment

Telecommunication Cables

Q31. Do you have any comments on telecommunications, Chapter 14?

No Comment

Q32. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No Comment

Defence

Q33. Do you have any comments on Defence, Chapter 15?

No Comment

Q34. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No Comment

Aggregates

Q35. Do you have any comments on Aggregates, Chapter 16?

No Comment

Q36. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

No Comment

Business and Regulatory

Q37. Please tell us about any potential economic or regulatory impacts, either positive or negative, that you think any or all of the proposals in this consultation may have.

Consideration should be given to introducing a community/business benefit scheme to mitigate negative effects of proposals.

Equality

Q38. Do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan discriminates disproportionately between persons defined by age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, race and religion and belief?

Yes No

Q39. If you answered yes to question 23 in what way do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan is discriminatory?

N/A

Sustainability Appraisal

Q40. Do have any views/comments on the Sustainability Appraisal carried out for the NMP?

No Comment