

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Please identify the main area of interest you identify with :

- Nature Conservation
- Fisheries
- Industry/Transport
- Energy
- Aquaculture
- Recreation/tourism
- Academic/scientific
- Local authority
- Community group
- Public sector/Regulatory body
- Local Coastal Partnership

Other (Please state)

Comments

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

We support the majority of objectives outlined in the Plan. In previous Marine Scotland meetings and consultations we have drawn attention to the role that ports can play in fostering terms of regeneration, employment and growth in their regions and local communities. Ports can also help achieve Scotland's GDP growth and environmental targets and the NMP recognises their value. With this in mind we strongly support the sentiment behind the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It is important, however, that all types and sizes of ports are recognised by the Plan as important local and regional economic contributors and drivers, and not just those classified as being of national significance.

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

The NMP sets out positive and clear aspirations for marine planning policies and we support the legislation requiring terrestrial planning bodies to have regard to these policies. An aspiration which could be reinforced in the NMP is that integration should lead to much needed improved linkage between port developments and the landside transport network. Ports rely heavily on the efficiency of their connections to the network, something which can easily be overlooked by planning bodies.

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?

Given the diverse and geographical spread of our port members we also have a strong interest in the future development of Regional Marine Plans. It is important that these Plans do not deviate greatly from the National Marine Plan and the positive economic and maritime objectives included within it. For example, the Marine Regions and Marine Planning Partnerships strategy introduces a new statutory consultee for marine licence applications. This new consultee is likely to be a diverse body with different interests and levels of marine experience. This could threaten the efficiency and outcomes of marine licence applications for dredging and over port activities. If indeed there were to be any delay in turning round licence applications as a result of this arrangement, it could only undermine what we believe is one of the main purposes of the NMP, which is to provide a more efficient and speedier planning process. It is also important that the NMP reflects the UK Marine Policy Statement whose high level marine objectives include the promotion of “profitable and efficient marine businesses” and that the marine environment and its resources should be used “to maximise sustainable activity, prosperity and opportunities for all”. These are important objectives applicable to the whole of the UK which the NMP is required to share.

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?

If such policies reflected the NMP’s presumption in favour of sustainable development we would be in favour; integration should be used to support sustainable development in those areas.

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?

Yes, there are strong protection features in the NMP which balance the needs of developers.

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?

Yes, by covering each sector the MNP has ensured that important industries and activities are highlighted. We are encouraged that the Transport chapter has a strong and positive focus on ports and harbours.

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

No.

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?

We feel that the general policies included in Chapter 4 of the NMP are appropriate and we strongly support the sentiment behind the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' approach. With this in mind, consenting bodies should be made aware that their decisions are required to be made within a framework which covers environmental concerns as well as growth and economic development.

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

Yes, as with our response to Q2, we support a joint approach to ensure joined up and strategic planning which can support sustainable development and port growth.

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

As an aspiration we would like a safeguard to ensure that in the future no Marine Protected Areas will be proposed in or within close proximity to statutory port and harbour areas.

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?

No.

Sea Fisheries

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

Ports are responsible for providing facilities and markets for the catching sector and so ports and fishing are inextricably linked. This is one example, from many, of an industry which is dependent on a successful ports industry. This Chapter is generally supportive of the notion that commercial fishing should be allowed to remain viable in Scotland for years to come. It is therefore vital that the NMP ensures that initiatives such as the MPA project do not disproportionately impact the fishing industry for years to come

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

No.

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?

No comment.

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

No comment.

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

No comment.

Wild Salmon and Migratory Fish

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

No comment.

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

No comment.

Oil & Gas

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

Offshore oil and gas remains a vibrant and important sector, and many ports are interlinked with the industry either through facilitating cargo transfers or by providing important supply and maintenance support. The Chapter is generally supportive of the sector and we welcome this.

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

We believe that ports will be required to play an important part in the future in terms of de-commissioning some oil and gas equipment; this could represent a significant new business opportunity for ports and the Scottish economy. Greater recognition in the MNP could be made of this to support future developments in the area.

Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS)

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

This could be another growth activity and represent a new area of business for Scottish ports. We support the sector's recognition in the NMP. It is important that the NMP and Marine Scotland do not limit its growth potentially resulting in business moving to ports outside Scotland.

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

No.

Offshore Renewable Energy

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

If this would help to provide greater certainty for developers moving forward this could be a sensible approach.

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

Renewable energy represents hugely significant opportunities not only for ports and the Scottish economy, but also for achieving national carbon emission targets. Ports will be essential in supporting offshore renewables as locations for manufacturing and maintenance work. We support the presumption in favour, although ensuring renewable schemes do not disrupt exiting port and shipping functions and activities could be highlighted in the NMP.

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

No.

Recreation and Tourism

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

This offers a good summary of the contribution of tourism and recreation, and we are glad to see some references to the cruise industry which has become increasingly important not only to ports, but to local communities who can benefit significantly from cruise calls.

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

No comment.

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?

We are unconvinced of the value of making any distinction between ports which are “nationally or regionally” significant. Our view is that any activity which could restrict access to ports of any type should not be permitted. There is an element in the suggested approach of making market judgements and this contradicts the main basis of ports policy in Scotland with its market led industry, responsive to the needs of users and developers, requiring flexibility within the planning system to be able to respond accordingly. The growth of the offshore renewables market in particular is driven by developers who will take decisions based on location, available facilities, and so forth.

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

This Chapter demonstrates the importance of marine transport to the Scottish and UK economies and we support most of the Objectives wholeheartedly. The vast majority of coastal activity can be traced back, one way or another, to a dependence on ports and the MNP does a good job in highlighting this. There is however a slight tendency to focus on new sectors and less on the existing more conventional freight and cargo sectors which underpin the Scottish economy.

We also feel that greater recognition of the statutory functions and responsibilities should be included in the Plan to ensure that in the future consenting bodies do not ignore this when overseeing planning and licence applications.

Under the “Objectives” we would also highlight that the target of shore based electricity may not be commercially viable or even practical for the majority of ports in Scotland. Some may wish to have this as an aspiration however it is unlikely to be a realistic aim for all ports.

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

The current proposals for MPAs are focussed, for the most part, away from ports. As mentioned earlier, ports are vital regional and economic drivers and port developments can stimulate local and national growth. Notwithstanding their environmental benefits, conservation initiatives can delay, limit, or even prevent port developments. We would therefore support an insertion into the NMP, that any new MPAs which may be proposed in the future should not be sited within or in close proximity to port areas to

avoid any planning conflicts which may arise.

Planner development and investments are often put at risk by complicated or long planning processes. The experience of our members is that often consenting bodies are unaware of the implications delays and objections can have in terms of securing investment and providing long term investment stability. The Chapter could include a short reference to this to highlight the issue and improve understanding.

Finally when we met with Marine Scotland at a special ports workshop on 27 September 2013 we discussed some (slightly) more suitable text amendments and we would support their insertion in the final Plan.

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 include in this Chapter?

No comment.

Aggregates

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

While the marine aggregate industry in Scotland is not yet fully developed it should be noted that the landside aggregate industry, which relies heavily on the role that port and shipping activity plays, is of vital importance to the Scottish economy. Each year the Port of Glensanda ships out over 7 million tonnes of quarried aggregates. This is a substantial amount by UK and European standards and is of real economic importance to Scotland.

We do agree that the NMP is right to highlight that while there are no current marine aggregate extraction licences, such activities may become more viable in the future and should be supported by the relevant consenting bodies.

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

No comments.

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.

No comment.

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?

No comment.

Sustainability Appraisal

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

The Report appears to highlight some real positives both in terms of environmental measures and socio-economics. Many of the negative environmental changes are attributed to international issues such as global warming, and not caused by sectors and activities in Scotland.