



EUROPARC
Atlantic Isles

Conservation Without Frontiers

Marine Planning & Coastal Protected Landscapes

A report to the Marine Management Organisation
arising from a Webinar held on 20th January 2014

List of participants and contributors

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Apologies

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1. Executive Summary

Marine planning has brought both challenges and opportunities for coastal protected landscapes in the management of their areas. This EAI webinar enabled protected landscape managers in the East and South Marine Plan Areas, as well as Wales, to share experience primarily on the development of marine planning through a focus on the East Marine Plan and the consultation in the South. The value of seascape character assessment was stressed by a number of participants. Recommendations from the workshop highlighted the importance of further exchange between coastal protected landscapes, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and groups such as the Coastal Partnerships Network. EAI's role as a catalyst and broker in this field and on integration was emphasised, particularly as plans for the EU's Marine Spatial Planning Directive come to fruition.

2. Background to the Webinar

Europarc Atlantic Isles (EAI) is a network organisation that brings together organisations and individuals managing protected areas in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Republic of Ireland and Iceland. EAI's main objective is to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in particular by promoting best practice in protected area management and sustainable development in the Atlantic Isles region.

Over the past decade EAI Coast and Marine Working Group (EAICMWG) has championed an approach to protected area management at the coast that recognizes the connections between the coastal terrestrial and coastal marine environment through a programme titled linking [Land and Sea](#).

Since the advent of marine planning in England in 2010 EAI has worked alongside the Marine Management Organisation to assist in the development of thinking and practice in marine spatial planning and integrated coastal management. A report in 2010, [Coastal Protected Landscapes and the marine planning system](#), highlighted a range of actions that various actors from Government and its agencies through to local authorities and individual protected landscape managers could take to realize the benefits of a joined up approach to marine and coastal spatial planning and management.

Protected landscapes are in a good position to optimize the links between land and sea as a result of the integrative approach to their management plans and the way in which they bring stakeholders together in partnership as a matter of course. A particular emphasis for EAICMWG has been to promote an approach to policy development in support of the emerging discipline of marine spatial planning that delivers a sustainable future for the coastal and marine environment embracing coastal landscapes and seascapes and highlighting the role that those with an interest in protected area management can play. To this end EAICMWG in collaboration with a number of partners published an action plan in 2011 [‘a manifesto for coasts and seascapes’](#)

The intervening years have seen the rapid development of marine planning in England with the MMO publishing its draft East Marine Plan in the autumn of 2013 whilst in parallel beginning the process of developing South Marine Plan.

Early 2014 seemed an opportune time to reflect on and consider the experience of coastal protected landscapes in the development of marine planning to date and thus the idea of the webinar emerged.

3 Purpose of the Webinar

The webinar had three objectives:

- To share experience of protected landscape managers involved in the development of the East Marine Plan through a *‘critique of the experience to date’* with protected landscape managers in the South Marine Plan Area.
- To consider what good engagement with protected landscapes/seascapes looks like during the marine planning process
- To consider appropriate provisions in marine plans to have regard to the statutory purposes of protected landscapes and seascapes

4. Webinar Content and interactions

4.1 Update on marine planning in England

Mel Nicholls of the MMO gave a presentation on marine planning in the East and South Plan areas. He set out the plan making process, the parameters for marine spatial planning and reported on progress to date. This presentation can be found via the following [link](#). In particular, attention was drawn to a number of key issues that emerged from the responses to the recent consultation on the Draft East Marine Plan:

Consultation draft

- Seascape and Visual Resource Policy
- Governance Map
- Sector policies: ECO, BIO, MPA, Heritage Assets

Representations

- Dedicated protected landscape policy
- Seascape: value, capacity to absorb change
- Vision: not just wind
- Effects on adjoining landscape
- Clarity for the scope and timing of engagement
- Portal for professionals and certain information
- Level of community ownership of marine plans?

4.2 The East Marine Plan – ‘a chronology and critique of experience to date’

Tim Venes of the Norfolk Coast AONB Partnership (NCAONBP) gave a presentation outlining his experience of engagement with the development of the East Marine Plan drawing also on the experiences of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. This served as a catalyst for debate during the webinar. The presentation can be found via the following [link](#).

Tim’s presentation highlighted a number of issues:

- NCAONB Partnership chose to engage early on and proactively with the East Plan making process but sensed that there was a lost opportunity when coastal protected landscapes were not able to engage as part of the parallel East marine Plan Sustainability Appraisal Advisory Group (SAAG).
- There was confusion in the public mind about consultations on the East Marine Plan from those within coastal communities and how this process sat alongside Shoreline Management Plans and the Marine Conservation Zones Project ‘Net Gain.’
- The East plan making process felt more accessible to professionals than local communities.
- There was a lengthy gap in communications (in excess 12 months) from the development of the draft objectives to the publication of the draft plan leading to a sense of stakeholder disengagement and confusion.
- The Seascape Character Assessment work did not reflect the coastal character and sensitivity of the coast within the East Plan Area.

In addition Tim highlighted a number of concerns associated with the plan making process overall:

- There remains a sense that the relevance of coastal protected landscapes is not being understood by marine planners.
- The specific policies emerging in the plans do not give sufficient 'guidance' to be of real value to decision makers.

Tim concluded by sharing his view that in spite of the above observations, the development of marine planning remains a good thing and is supported by coastal protected landscapes. He also noted that the MMO had made genuine efforts to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the development of the East Marine Plans. He also stressed the complexity, difficulty and tight timescales of the plan. Additionally he commented that the plan making process provides a useful framework to bring together the interests of marine and terrestrial planners in relation to the management of coastal protected landscapes and that there is much value in learning from experiences to date and applying this learning as existing plans are reviewed in the future and new plans for the remaining plan areas are developed.

His observations were taken up as recommendations by EAI members.

5. Perspectives from others attending the webinar in response to the two presentations:

- Jonathan Mullard (Defra) highlighted the work that the MMO had undertaken on both marine character and the visual element and underlined the value in sharing thinking with interested bodies, including the devolved administrations, as the approach evolved.
- Sian Derbyshire (National Trust) described the value in revising/revisiting the SCA work for the East Plan Area in the light of the significant advances that have been made by the MMO in the recent South plan work. A sense that the approach to SCA is maturing and evolving and that it would yield benefits for marine planning and coastal protected landscapes if it could be revisited in the East. Sian also expressed a concern that marine planning in the east did not feel very joined up or attentive to the principles of ICZM.
- Chris Woodruff (East Devon AONB) reported on the value to AONBs in Devon of the Devon Landscape Policy Group and its joined up approach to developing guidance – for example coastal protection, which included specific reference to seascape. The consultation document is [here](#).
- Sue Goodfellow (Devon LNP and EAI Board member) raised the issue of how marine planning embraces an ecosystem services approach, and how engagement on this issue has worked. A number of comments in response that it

does, at least in as much as the duty MMO has to apply MSP according to the principles of sustainable development.

- Edward Holdaway (Wales Landscape Partnership and Friends of PCNP) drew attention to the intention for the National Park to adopt the SCA work recently completed in Pembrokeshire as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Coastal protected landscapes need to undertake a Seascape Characterisation of their bit of sea at a scale that is appropriate [SCA for marine planning tends to be too large for local needs] i.e. linked with the scale of their landscape characterisation. By doing this they will be well placed to engage with the marine planning system, especially when dealing with specific developments and, of course, in defining what is special about their bit of sea. He also flagged the value of the work on recreation and tourism activity mapping that had recently been completed in South West Wales. This work was led by the [Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum](#) and gives valuable insights into the economic benefits that are derived from leisure activities in coastal and inshore marine areas and the significant contributions they make in turn to local communities

6. The South Plan Area and two key questions

The final session of the webinar focused in on the two key questions posed by the MMO to inform the development of the South Plan:

- What does good engagement with protected landscape/seascapes look like during the marine planning process
- and what are the appropriate provisions in marine plans to have regard to the statutory purposes of protected landscapes and seascapes

Taking these two questions together participants in the webinar made the following observations:

- Widespread support for the contributions coastal protected landscape managers could bring to the marine plan making process if this cohort had representation on the SAAG.
- Nick Johannsen (Kent AONB) stressed the value of MMO officers engaging bilaterally with individual PL managers to understand the special qualities of each AONB/NP, the way that their management plans (as statutory documents) could inform the development of marine planning and reciprocally the way marine plans could inform the development of protected landscape management plans at review. This would be useful also for the evidence base.
- A view was expressed that there was more work required and greater focus on the benefits of coastal and inshore marine recreation and tourism which is a key

factor within the South Plan Area. This activity has the high quality of the environment, the majority of which is AONB or National Park as a backdrop (53% of the coast between Folkestone and Dartmouth is protected landscape). It was noted that more qualitative evidence is needed here, not just quantitative.

- Significant opportunities exist in the south plan area to work smartly and add value to the marine plan making process by good joint working with coastal partnerships, LGA Coastal SIG, EAI and others.
- Getting Integrated Coastal Management right in relation to the South Plan Area is a significant challenge for all. Protected landscape managers as well as MMO, government agencies and local authorities all have a part to play in this and it was acknowledged that this will require specific attention and revisiting as the plan develops.

7. Outcomes and further recommendations

As a consequence of the work undertaken by participants in this webinar, and in addition to those points listed above in Point 4.2, Europarc Atlantic Isles Coast and Marine Working group would like to make the following recommendations for the MMO to consider:

- That a member of the protected landscape family in the South Plan area should be invited to join the SAAG.
- An opportunity should be sought to deploy the significant advances in the use of seascape character assessment made by the MMO in relation to the South Plan Area back to the East Plan Area at the earliest opportunity. This could be via a collaborative project.
- MMO officers and protected landscape managers in the South Plan area should meet on a bilateral basis to exchange information and identify mutual benefits that each can bring to each other's spatial planning and management plan making processes.
- A mechanism needs to be found within the South Marine Plan making process to identify what good integrated coastal management looks like in the south plan areas; identifying what current good practice looks like and where there is room to improve integration.