

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

We would welcome your views on the *Statement of Public Participation for the National Marine Plan for Wales*. Responses should be provided in writing.

Responses can be e-mailed to marineplanning@wales.gsi.gov.uk or sent to:

Marine Policy Branch
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

The closing date for responses is 28 March 2014

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/public-participation-statement-for-marine-plan/?lang=en>

Your Details

Name	Kirsty Lindenbaum			
Organisation	Natural Resources Wales			
Address	Maes y Ffynnon Penrhos Rd Penrhosgarnedd Bangor LL57 2DW			
E-mail address	Kirsty.lindenbaum@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk			
Type (please select one from the following)	Local Authority			
	Government Agency / Other Public Sector		X	
	Higher Education / Further Education / School			
	Industry			
	Professional Body			
	Other Interest Group			
	Individual			
Are you happy for your details to be published in the summary of responses?	Y	x	N	

Responses to consultations may be made public - on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to be kept confidential, please tick here:

1	Do you agree with the approach to public participation as set out in this Statement of Public Participation? If not why not?	Y	N
		X	

Comments

The purpose of Natural Resources Wales is to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, enhanced and used, now and in the future.

Natural Resources Wales welcomes the publication of this Statement of Public Participation (SPP), and the commencement of marine planning in Wales.

The marine environment makes up almost half of Wales' territorial area and delivers important benefits to society, including jobs, food and a resource for recreation and relaxation. However, human activity in the marine environment is increasing. Marine resources are under pressure from activities such as port development, aggregate extraction and fisheries, as well as from newer industries such as marine renewables. The coast is an important area for tourism and recreational activity, but also a focus for the protection of people and property with this area under growing pressure from the implications of climate change. It is therefore becoming increasingly important to take a plan-led approach to the management of the marine area to enable Wales to optimise the economic, social, and environmental benefits that can be accrued through the sustainable use and management of marine resources.

Natural Resources Wales supports the Welsh Government's proposed approach to public participation as set out in the SPP. The approach clearly recognises the importance of engaging stakeholders in the development of the marine plan, which is in line with the recommendations regarding citizen engagement, collaboration and co-production which have come from the recent report from the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery in Wales. We also welcome the intention to develop the Sustainability Appraisal in tandem with the Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP), since this will maximise the potential for the SA process to influence and improve the content of the plan to reflect the potential environmental, social and economic impacts and benefits it may have.

The timeframe available for the development of the first WNMP will make effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement a challenge. We agree that WG should make best use of existing stakeholder mechanisms wherever possible to achieve this. A key objective for marine planning will be to optimise the social, environmental and economic benefits that can be gained from the marine environment. This will require a multi-sectoral approach and we therefore

emphasise the importance of the marine planning process enabling meaningful cross-sectoral dialogue to inform the development of effective marine plan policies and their delivery.

We anticipate that the first WNMP will be fairly strategic and high level. There is a risk that stakeholders, particularly those who may have specific, and potentially spatially discrete/local concerns may engage with the process, but then feel that their needs are not fully reflected in the final marine plan. This appears to be one early criticism of marine planning processes underway elsewhere in the UK. Stakeholder engagement is most effective where there is a clear understanding by those inputting as to the required scope and potential influence of their comments. It will therefore be important to manage stakeholder expectations regarding the scope and level of detail of this first plan in Wales, emphasising the importance of the process of planning (as distinct from the plan itself) and the extent to which Government aspires to develop further spatial detail in future cycles of the planning process.

The SPP sets out the range of key activities and environmental, social and economic considerations that need to be taken into account in marine plans. Natural Resources Wales considers these to broadly reflect the range of issues and interests that will be relevant to marine planning for Welsh waters. We look forward to working closely with Government to ensure that the development of the marine plan reflects both the development of individual sectors, and, more importantly, the interaction between them so that the marine plan can add value to the current management framework in the marine environment.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document