



Report on the Management Scheme consultation

1. The draft Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries European Marine Site Management Scheme (MS) was open to public consultation from August to October 2011. Following previous informal consultation with statutory management authorities, it was also open to these authorities for formal response during the same period; this deadline was subsequently extended to January 2012 to accommodate management authority committee timetables and other internal consultations.
2. The relevant authorities responded through their representatives at the Relevant Authorities Group meeting held on 23 February 2012 or in writing. Written responses were also received (including just three submitted *via* the website), from:
 - 2.1. Competent authorities: Maritime & Coastguard Agency; MoD; National Trust; Llanelli Town Council; Rhossili Community Council; Llanstephan CC;
 - 2.2. NGOs: Marine Conservation Society; Wildlife Trust S&W Wales; Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers;
 - 2.3. Two private individuals.
3. A brief internet search was undertaken for unsubmitted comments. The only comments located were in Llanelli Rural Council minutes (which indicated that a response should have been submitted, though it was not received) and at World Sea Fishing Forums (a recreational angling discussion forum).
4. All the relevant and competent authorities that responded were broadly supportive of the draft MS. Key comments made by respondents included:
 - 4.1. The likely need to revisit and re-evaluate the MS following dissolution of the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and the Environment Agency Wales (EAW) and the establishment of a new single environment body (now identified as Natural Resources Wales).
 - 4.2. The possible need to revise the MS to accommodate Welsh Government (WG) implementation of all or some of CCW's recommendations for a strategic Marine Protected Area (MPA) management framework for Wales.
 - 4.3. The need to integrate EMS management with wider marine planning and management requirements such as the Marine and Coastal Access Act and the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
 - 4.4. Recognition that the MS is an aspirational document that needs to be continuously integrated with the Special Sites Database managed by CCW.
 - 4.5. Two local authorities requested advice on how they could best meet their obligations and for support from the EMS Officer.

- 4.6. Several respondents (including the unsubmitted comments from Llanelli Rural Council) expressed concern over water quality in the Burry Inlet and considered that the MS should address the issue as a matter of urgency to prevent further long term harm.
- 4.7. The MoD considered that the MS is likely to mesh with their management plans for coastal sites and sea danger areas.
- 4.8. The Marine and Coastguard Agency were content that overriding safety operations such as life-saving at sea are recognised and respected by the MS.
- 4.9. Llanstephan Community Council warmly welcomed and supported intertidal fisheries management actions;
- 4.10. Rhossili Community Council expressed concerned about the effects of the proposed Atlantic Array offshore wind farm;
- 4.11. The National Trust specific welcomed actions to better manage grazing regimes and coastal development and engineering;
- 4.12. Nature conservation NGOs welcomed the strategic and holistic approach for improved management as a contribution to a well-managed network of MPAs. They welcomed the proposed actions, particularly for management of fisheries resources, bait digging, disruptive recreational activity, water quality, coastal development and defence, and managed retreat, though were concerned that many were not more detailed. They stressed the need to ensure that the MS becomes a living document to improve and guide delivery of EMS management. They recommended that long-term resources were made available to deliver the positive aspirations of the MS and that resources and staff time be focussed on outreach work with stakeholders .
- 4.13. Angling interests were concerned that the lesser environmental pressure from recreational sea angling compared with commercial fishing needed to be clearer.
- 4.14. Welsh Government advised that improved integration between RAG and WG responsibilities for EMS management is needed.
5. The aspiration and intent of the MS is broadly supported by the relevant authorities and the wider community, though further work on parts of the MS is required. However, recognising that the MS will always be dynamic and need to develop and evolve, and taking account of the significant changes occurring at the present time – particularly the establishment of Natural Resources Wales, the recommendations in CCW's MPA management review, such initiatives as marine spatial planning and the requirements of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive – the RAG has agreed to put further development or amendment of the MS document on hold until the governance framework within which EMS management will operate becomes clearer.
6. The RAG and its constituent relevant authorities have therefore agreed to use the current MS document as a working draft to provide the necessary interim framework to progress integrated working for delivery of their EMS management obligations.