

Marine Bill Newsletter



defra

Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs

Issue 6

October 2007



Picture by Steve Collins, Defra



Marine Bill News

Summary of responses to the Marine Bill White Paper and partial Regulatory Impact Assessment

We published 'A Sea Change', a Marine Bill White Paper, and a partial Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) on 16th March 2007. The three-month consultation period ended on 8th June 2007. We would like to thank all of those who took the time to send a response to the consultation.

We have now published a full Summary of the responses received; this can be found at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/marinebill-whitepaper07/index.htm>.

8519 responses were received. 8085 standard letters were received from supporters of environmental non-Governmental organisations expressing views or support for particular measures that those organisations wanted to see included in the Bill.

82% of all respondents explicitly expressed support for the Bill proposals set out in the White Paper. Many respondents commented on the geographic scope of the Bill. All of these respondents emphasised the need for a consistent and joined up approach across all the devolved administrations.

23 respondents referred to the estimated costs and benefits of the Bill proposals cited in both the partial RIA and the White Paper. Several welcomed the predicted benefits, in particular those associated with the Bill's overall aim of protecting the marine environment. There were some concerns expressed over the estimated costs and funding of the proposals. Defra is currently working to develop the partial RIA into a full Impact Assessment and any information on costs and benefits provided by respondents will be taken into account.



Some of the key points made in the responses received are outlined below:

Integration between land and sea

Several respondents were pleased that an integrated approach would be embedded within the Marine Bill proposals, but some felt strongly that integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) had not received enough prominence throughout the White Paper.

Environmental data and information

Many respondents supported the general approach to data and information as set out in the White Paper. There was strong support from respondents for the “collect once, use many times” approach to data stewardship.

Planning in the marine area

All respondents supported the creation of a UK marine policy statement, jointly prepared and agreed by the UK Government and devolved administrations. The majority of respondents supported marine plans that would consider all relevant activities and anticipate changing economic, commercial and social trends, in particular the impacts of climate change. Nearly all respondents commenting on delivery of planning supported the proposal for the MMO to be the planning body that delivers marine planning; about 50% of all respondents explicitly stated their support for delivery of planning by the MMO.

Licensing in the marine area

59% of all responses received supported the aims of the marine licensing proposals. Most respondents commented on the benefits to be gained from streamlining and simplifying the licensing regime. Many respondents supported the inclusion of all licensed marine activities within the reformed marine licensing regime. Many responses also expressed support for the proposed functions of the MMO in relation to licensing of marine activities.

Marine Nature Conservation

63% of all respondents supported the aim to introduce of new tools for the conservation of marine wildlife. 50% of all responses supported the proposal to introduce a new mechanism to designate and manage Marine Conservation Zones. 35% of all respondents explicitly stated support for the proposals for the introduction of new powers, including by-laws and interim measures, to control unlicensed activities that have the potential to negatively impact on and cause damage to marine biodiversity. The majority of respondents welcomed the proposed role for the MMO in enforcing nature conservation provisions.

Modernising marine fisheries management

39% of all responses stated support for the aim to conserve marine ecosystems and help achieve a sustainable and profitable fisheries sector. 50% of all respondents supported the modernisation of Sea Fisheries Committees. Mixed views were expressed to the proposals for a chargeable licensing scheme for recreational sea angling. Generally, environmental NGOs supported the proposals, whilst the majority of responses from individual sea anglers and angling clubs were in opposition. Most respondents supported the introduction of a system of administrative penalties for minor fisheries offences.

A Marine Management Organisation

46% of all responses explicitly stated support for setting up a new MMO. Many respondents supported the delivery of multiple marine functions by the MMO due to the advantages to be gained through delivery by a single organisation.

Ongoing projects

'Financial Benefit Assessment of Coastal Partnerships'

Defra, in partnership with the Local Government Association's Special Interest Group on Coastal Issues and the Coastal Partnerships Working Group, have commissioned ENTEC Ltd to undertake this project. The project will focus on the benefits to partners of working in partnership through local Coastal Partnerships. Entec Ltd are contacting more than 40 Coastal Partnerships around England in the next few weeks to request help with the project survey and possibly again later when they conduct interviews.

Defra has also commissioned the following projects to help assess various impacts of the Marine Bill proposals. Evidence gathered will be used to develop the Marine Bill Impact Assessment and to inform policy development.

'Survey to Assess the Impact of Marine Bill Proposals on Marine and Coastal Developers'

The deadline for completed questionnaires for this survey has now passed and Defra would like to thank all those developers that gave their time to fill in the detailed questionnaire. Frontline Consultants and Defra are now analysing the information received.

'Marine Bill – Valuing the benefits of Marine Nature Conservation Proposals'

SAC Ltd and Liverpool University have been commissioned for this project. Natural England and the JNCC are jointly managing the contract. Further research into valuing goods and services attributable to marine biodiversity will be carried out in the spring, again co-funded by Defra, NE and the JNCC.

'Marine Bill - Cost Impact of Marine Biodiversity Policies on Business'

ABPmer, supported by Risk & Policy Analysts and Jan Brooke, have been commissioned to complete an assessment of the cost to business resulting from the Marine Bill nature conservation proposals. The consultants are conducting workshops and interviews to collect key information from business.

What next?

On 11 July this year the Prime Minister made a statement setting out the Government's draft Legislative Programme. The draft programme is available at:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/reports/governance/governance.pdf.

The programme states that the Government will seek to ensure that as many Bills as possible are published for pre-legislative scrutiny and states that the Marine Bill is being considered for publication in draft. The Leader of the House of Commons will publish, in a Written Ministerial Statement, the Government's proposals for draft Bills at the beginning of the next session (Autumn 2007). Publication of the Marine Bill in draft could be expected in early 2008.

We have moved offices. Please note our new details should you require any further information on the Marine Bill:

Call us on: 0207 238 4399 / 4420

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You can also find up to date information on the Marine Bill on the Defra website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/marine/uk/policy/marine-bill/index.htm>

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