

# Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee

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**Venue: Committee Room 3, Senedd, Cardiff Bay**

**Title: Wales Coastal And Maritime Partnership (Wcmp) Paper To Enterprise, Innovation And Networks, And Environment, Planning And Countryside Committees On The European Commission's Green Paper Towards A Future Maritime Policy For The European Union.**

## **Introduction**

The WCMP was established in 2002 to provide co-ordinated advice to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) on sustainable development issues affecting the coast and seas of Wales, as well as facilitating the exchange of information and dissemination of good practice. One of the Partnership's roles is to advise the Assembly on the development and implementation of policies affecting the coastal and marine environment. A key strength of the partnership is our broad and varied membership. The Partnership is composed of representatives from 28 organisations within the public, private, and voluntary sectors and wherever possible seeks to provide integrated advice to the Assembly on behalf of its members (who may also to provide advice separately to the Assembly in their individual capacity).

The Partnership is pleased to have this opportunity to respond to EIN and EPC Committees on the European Commission's Green Paper on Maritime Policy, and to have been invited to the joint meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007. In facilitating consultation and responses on EU Maritime Policy WCMP has, in one of its recent meetings, hosted a presentation by Malcom Colling (EU Commission – DG FISH – Maritime Task Force) about the Green Paper. This presentation has encouraged individual WCMP members' responses and can be viewed at: [http://www.walescoastalpartnership.org.uk/images\\_client/resource/HS%20EN%20presentation%20061023.ppt](http://www.walescoastalpartnership.org.uk/images_client/resource/HS%20EN%20presentation%20061023.ppt)

WCMP would like to make the following initial comments in response to the Green Paper to help in your considerations:

## **1. General Comments**

1.1 The WCMP welcomes the European Union's consideration of the need for a Maritime Policy as a positive development. Such a Policy could establish a strategic framework for the integrated management of European seas and the of the numerous policies that apply to them. We feel it is vital that the maritime environment is given the priority it deserves for policy making and delivery, set in the context of sustainable development. We are keen to see the Commission use the opportunities presented by the introduction of an EU wide Maritime Policy to add value to existing Member States'

policies and measures. We also expect the Commission to elaborate on how this is to be achieved in realistic terms, keeping in mind issues of subsidiarity and national individuality. Wales has an important role in assisting the Commission with this task, and it should be a major consideration in WAG's response to the Green Paper. Furthermore, structural funds and regional competitiveness programmes should make provisions to embed EU Maritime Policy at all scales of implementation- including national grassroots level- and to ensure its actual implementation. Developing ways to support existing collaborative structures of partnership working, so as not to lose expertise and work that has evolved over the past decade or more, can contribute to achieving this.

1.2 It is vital that the Commission and WAG ensure the compatibility of the EU Maritime Policy with other existing and forthcoming pieces of European policy and regulation, particularly those linking to the environment, civil liability and participation. Examples of such directives include the Water Framework Directive; Habitats and Birds Directives; EIA and SEA Directives and Environmental Liability Directives, as well as forthcoming directives, future regulatory mechanisms and policies.

1.3 Finally, the EU needs to identify clearly where the proposed integrated Maritime Policy can add value to existing and planned measures, and help achieve the vision of integrated and sustainable management of the maritime environment. We suggest that the EU continues to lead on the development of supra-national policies and framing the development of operational instruments, and encourage the UK government and WAG to respond appropriately. We would like to draw attention to some of the operational instruments which can shape strategic marine policy at an EU and Member State level. These include the Marine Strategy Directive and Common Fisheries Policy at an EU level; and at a national level Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and proposed new Marine legislation providing for: spatial planning arrangements, environmental quality objectives, networks of marine protected areas and revised fisheries management arrangements. WCMP strongly supports a regional approach to management of the seas, particularly that based on marine ecosystems (the ecosystem approach).

## **2. The Value of the Welsh Marine Environment**

2.1 We would like to highlight the recent publication from the Valuing the Environment Group coordinated by the National Trust: 'Valuing our Marine and Coastal Environment'. This report was supported and facilitated by the WCMP. It identifies the economic importance of the marine and coastal environment to Wales, and highlights the value of a healthy coastal environment to a strong coastal economy.

2.2 The research shows that the coast and marine environment supports £6.8bn of output, £2.5bn of GDP and some 92,600 fte jobs in Wales. The North Wales marine and coastal economy is predominantly, though not exclusively, tourism based, and tourism also accounts for over half of coastal and marine sector direct jobs in South East Wales and over a third of direct jobs in West Wales. In Cardiff, Pembrokeshire and Neath Port Talbot the high number of coastal and marine sector direct jobs observed reflects the importance of local marine dependent industry and port facilities.

2.3 We welcome the recent launch of the Coastal Tourism Strategy by WAG. This reflects the

growing importance of the marine and coastal environment in the development of this sector. Spending on coastal and marine associated tourism is 25% of total tourism spend in Wales, and amounts to approximately £850 million a year. WCMP will be responding to the Coastal Tourism Strategy consultation, and hope that it will set an effective framework for the development of the Welsh coast's full economic potential, whilst respecting its environmental quality and recognising its importance to the cultural and social life of Wales. Importantly, the successful development of coastal tourism in Wales will depend on the good environmental status of the coastal and maritime environment and support provided to Welsh coastal towns and resorts, as well as the development of appropriate skills.

2.4 Fisheries activity is also of recreational significance, in addition to its cultural and economic importance. At the moment fisheries management structures are overstretched and are faced with the task of reconciling European Common Fisheries Policy and international customary rights with national fisheries and conservation management priorities. Fisheries policy needs to be better integrated with environmental and economic counterparts to complete strategic thinking on the Welsh maritime environment. Revised fisheries management arrangements on an EU and national level may help better integration with other economic activities and other policies.

2.5 WCMP recognises the importance of maintaining and developing a competitive and viable maritime sector whilst ensuring integration of social and environmental elements in its development. Historic Welsh ports and their current activities are a testament to the high quality of the Welsh maritime sector. These activities need to be safeguarded and supported to ensure that our maritime economy remains competitive and to enable Wales to reclaim its maritime heritage and maritime identity, whilst ensuring protection and maintenance of the health of the marine environment.

2.6 It is also important to recognise the intrinsic value of the Welsh marine and maritime environment to Wales and the people of Wales, outwith consideration of its economic value.

### **3. Achieving protection, conservation and enhancement of the Welsh Maritime environment.**

3.1 Consideration of economic and social aspects of the marine environment is vital for the accurate assessment of its value. We nonetheless feel that the health of the environment must be at the heart of European and Welsh Maritime Policy. The development of the EU Maritime Policy is a unique opportunity not only to ensure compatibility with other EU environmental directives but also to integrate it properly with its environmental pillar, the EU Marine Strategy. Sustainable development in the coastal and maritime environment should not be a cost-benefit analysis exercise but should aim to ensure that environmental considerations are fully integrated into all areas of maritime policy.

3.2 The natural (intrinsic) and aesthetic value of the maritime environment cannot be overlooked. This is reflected by the range and number of designations of local, national and international importance which cover more than half of the Welsh seas and coastal and maritime environment. Current tools and measures are proving inadequate to sufficiently protect and enhance the maritime environment despite the effort of all those involved. Wales should seek to have the high quality of the Welsh maritime environment and resources acknowledged within Europe, with appropriate

mechanisms to protect and safeguard its natural and economic competitiveness.

3.3 The overarching tool through which we believe that sustainable development and use of marine resources can be achieved, and which is discussed in its own merit below, is Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). This is an effective way to ensure that various strands of maritime policy including fisheries, conservation, ports, tourism, energy, coastal defence, etc. are integrated with each other in practice. MSP together with marine ecosystem objectives and networks of Marine Protected Areas – including some Highly Protected Marine Reserves - are some of the measures which we think could effectively support the ecosystem approach. The ecosystem approach has been acknowledged by the Commission as the way to enhance the resource upon which maritime activities are based. We believe that in considering how to best apply the ecosystem approach, account should be taken of the UK Regional Seas proposed in the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's (JNCC) response to DEFRA's review of marine nature conservation, as bio-geographical areas relevant to MSP.

#### **4. Introducing a comprehensive Marine Spatial Planning system**

4.1 We believe that one of the most important aspects of the Green Paper is the recognition of the necessity to set up spatial planning systems to guide economic activities; these planning systems adopting an ecosystem approach and on the basis of appropriate data collected on an EU level (Chapter 4). WCMP is currently compiling an advisory document to the Welsh Assembly Government on the development of a Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) system for Wales, in response to the development of the UK Marine Bill. Some of the practical issues being considered in our advisory document can be summarised as follows:

- i. Areas over which MSP could take place in Wales

Environmental considerations identify the Regional Seas approach as the preferred and most appropriate planning scale. However a plan for the Wales Territorial Waters area is identified as a realistic option, ensuring it takes into consideration the wider perspective. It will be important to consider the range of responsibilities of the different sectors in the marine environment in order to effectively determine MSP areas. For example, UK government does not have sole jurisdiction for fisheries management beyond the 6 nm limit. Hence it will be important to consider practical realities and sectoral spatial activities in order to define planning areas.

- ii. Subdivision of Welsh MSP area

It is best to avoid creating further spatial boundaries. There is general consensus on taking a holistic approach to MSP and ensuring that the Welsh MS Plan provides for integration between terrestrial and marine planning activity. If some division of the plan area is required any boundaries proposed should be flexible and adaptable.

- iii. Local planning overlap with broader scale planning

We emphasise need to consider the way that local scale planning links with national

scale guidance and policies. Overall, recommending that areas of detailed planning sit within a single large-scale plan seems least complicated. An alternative view notes that allowing for locally focused plans to ‘nest’ within a large scale plan can better support local ownership and community involvement. Integrated Coastal Zone Management policy and existing voluntary local coastal partnerships may have an important role in developing that option.

- iv. Consideration of existing consultation models

Existing consultation models such as River Basin Management Plans and Boards and Wales Spatial Plan consultation are discussed in the MSP draft advisory document, and it is suggested that best practice and current successful models are followed.

- v. Preferred Governance Option

A decision on governance arrangements is considered premature at this stage. Whilst a cross-departmental group seems a simple and attractive option, there are examples where such an approach has failed. Despite current Assembly policy it is believed that a Marine Management Organisation (MMO) responsible for MSP should be considered.

4.2 Whilst we recognise the need for trans-regional and trans-national coordination on spatial planning and governance, we welcome the recognition in the Green Paper that national realities and diversities will need to be taken into account. Our view is that emphasis needs to be put on the practical implications of adopting a MSP system in Welsh, UK and European waters. This includes careful consideration of implementation and resourcing issues. The Welsh Assembly Government will have the opportunity to shape and formulate MSP in Wales. In doing that one of its priorities should be to make arrangement for effective overlap and linkage between the marine and terrestrial spatial planning strategies and systems.

4.3 MSP alone cannot deliver the integration of sectoral policies and marine and terrestrial spatial planning issues. Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and its successful implementation are acknowledged in the Green Paper as important components of integrated European maritime policy. In developing the maritime policy, Europe should seek to raise the profile and strengthen ICZM, encourage the engagement of various stakeholders in local initiatives and influence the provision of funds to support action and implementation in Member States. The forthcoming launch of the Welsh ICZM Strategy is welcome and represents an important step in developing the ICZM process in Wales. Wales should seek to support and acknowledge the value of ICZM in the development of the maritime policy.

4.4 We also feel that there is a real need to allow Welsh devolved administration priorities to be reflected, not only in the MSP system and forthcoming plan(s) but also in marine and maritime policy overall.

## **5. Addressing cause and effects of Climate Change**

5.1 Climate change, coastal erosion and defence are issues inextricably linked to the development of maritime policy. We would highlight the recently produced report by the National Trust: 'Shifting Shores' focusing on the different ways in which our society and coastal communities can deal with the risk of sea level rise. Reality dictates that, after careful assessment of coastal defence and shoreline management options, decisions must be made on where and when not to defend coastal sites. WCMP believes that making use of existing strategic approaches to coastal defence such as Shoreline Management Plans is an essential starting point.

5.2 To mitigate for climate change we believe that a comprehensive Maritime Policy should elaborate on energy production and its development. The maritime environment offers great opportunities for energy production, particularly renewable energy. A careful assessment of the type of energy production, and how and where they be promoted to mitigate for the energy crisis and exacerbation of climate change should be conducted. We support the WAG targets for renewable energy and believe that renewable energy production should be promoted (even beyond those targets), where it does not pose a risk to the environment or jeopardise its value. The EU should support collaboration amongst Member States developing new and appropriate technologies, enabling advances in this area to be made quickly.

5.3 We welcome the recent launch of the climate change adaptation plan for Wales, 'Responding to our Changing Climate'. Many themes already discussed in this brief are brought together within this document. We should emphasise that the changing climate reality will impact on the different themes of the Maritime Policy and must be an ever-present consideration in its development, particularly in allowing flexibility within a marine planning system.

## **6. Other Issues**

6.1 We would like to emphasise the need for the European and Welsh Maritime Policy to be based on good science, research and technology. A European Marine Related Research Strategy must successfully incorporate, identify and resource good research, science and technology. A key feature of the Strategy must be the sharing and dissemination of current and future knowledge and data across Europe, and across sectors. In Wales, maritime and coastal environment focused research is developing in academic centres of excellence, technological research institutions, government departments and agencies and many marine industries. It is vital that existing work on governance, environmental management, research management, paleo-oceanography, geo-technics, engineering, aquaculture, zoology, ecology and oceanography, etc. is further developed, supported and promoted to provide the data and evidence required for effective decision making. In addition, social & political science, environmental education and psychology research that focuses on the marine environment needs to be enhanced and promoted. The importance of local knowledge and experience, and stakeholder input to the collection and dissemination of relevant data and advice must also be recognised and captured.

6.2 As is clear, the information base is still far from complete and it would be useful for the European Policy to give guidance on the basis of decision making in the absence of data and knowledge in some areas. It is suggested that this should take a precautionary approach, lead by risk based assessment.

## **Conclusion**

Finally, we are pleased that the Commission is undertaking such extensive and open consultation on the Green Paper and we believe that involvement of all stakeholders is crucial to this being successful. We support extensive participation and consultation on the development, implementation and review of Maritime Policy in Wales through appropriate consultative structures, and believe WCMP has much to contribute to this processes in the future.