

PENTLAND FIRTH AND ORKNEY WATERS MARINE SPATIAL PLAN: PLANNING ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER

Consultation Response: SportsScotland

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Section 4 - Legal and policy context

Question 1: Are there other legislation, policies or plans not identified in Table 4.1 and Annex 3 that should be considered in the development of the Pilot Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan?

Please see link to our policy document on sport and recreation in the outdoors. While not written specifically for the marine environment a number of generic policy areas are relevant.

http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/resources/Out_There

Section 5 - Knowledge and evidence to underpin the plan

Question 2: Is there other information that you think should be used to inform the development of the marine spatial plan for Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters?

We are working with RYAs on the development of their Facilities Strategy. Part of this work has involved an audit of all sailing facilities in Scotland, including for the Pentland Firth. RYAs would be happy to share this information with you to inform work in this area.

Section 6 - The purpose, users, status and spatial extent of the pilot plan

Question 3: Considering paragraph 6.5, are there other stakeholder engagement and governance related issues that should be investigated through the pilot marine planning process?

Important to recognise that recreational stakeholders will not be limited to those local to the area and that there is national (international) recreational interest in the area and that these interests should be engaged with.

Question 4: Do you agree with the identified purposes and users of the marine spatial plan set out in Section 6? Are there additional or alternative purposes or users of the plan that should be considered?

Comments

Question 5: Should the existing Pilot Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan boundary be realigned with the boundaries of the proposed Scottish Marine Regions or do you think the existing 'strategic area' boundary is appropriate? (Refer to Figures 5 and 6)

Comments

Question 6: How should the pilot plan and/or marine planning process facilitate and support integration between the terrestrial and marine planning systems? (See paragraphs 6.16 – 6.17).

It is important to recognise that in addition to the physical infrastructure required for off shore development, there are other terrestrial impacts of off shore development. This will include impacts on the landscape and potential impacts on coastal processes or on sediment shift that could have terrestrial implications. Changing wave and current regimes that might result from marine development could impact on coastal erosion which from a sport perspective could impact on e.g. coastal path networks of links golf courses. It is important that policy takes account of these relationships between the land and the sea and the implications that development might have.

Question 7: How should the adjoining terrestrial areas be mapped in the pilot marine spatial plan? Do you agree with the proposed key principles set out at paragraph 6.18?

Comments

Section 7 The guiding principles and themes that will inform the development of the marine spatial plan

Question 8: Are the guiding principles and themes identified in Section 7 appropriate? Are there other guiding principles and themes that should inform the development of the pilot marine spatial plan?

In relation to partnership working and stakeholder involvement, it is important to work with more than *local* organisations and communities. Please see our answer to question 3.

Section 8 Strategic Vision, Aims and Objectives

Question 9: What is your vision for the future of the Pentland Firth and Orkney waters area? What would you like the area to be like in 20 years time?

We would like to see a fair and sustainable balance between different sectors. A full understanding of the recreational sector, and clarity that this includes sport. We would like to see the recreation sector promoted and supported and opportunities for its sustainable growth supported and facilitated. We want to see the sector involved and consulted on the decision making processes. It is important that the special qualities of the area for sport and recreation are protected and enhanced.

Question 10: Are there existing marine activities that you think should be safeguarded now and into the future? For example, commercial fisheries, ferry services and recreational activities.

We agree that recreational activities should be safeguarded and promoted.

Question 11a: How should the protection and/or enhancement of the natural environment be considered in the marine spatial plan?

It is important that an evidence based approach is taken. Decisions should not be based indefinitely on a precautionary approach and concerted efforts to remove uncertainty should be made. Assumptions should not be made on impacts and a full understanding of different sectors and their relationship with the natural environment should be developed. In addition it is important to realise that not the entire natural environment is necessarily important and some impacts can be allowed without any particular impact on overall quality. This said a high quality natural environment is integral to enjoyment of it and we support the need for positive protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Question 11b: Is the protection of the natural environment important? How important is it?

Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 (1 = Not important at all, 5 = The highest importance)

1 2 3 4x 5

Question 12a: How should the protection and/or enhancement of historic and culture resources (e.g. Scapa Flow wrecks) be considered in the marine spatial plan?

See answer to 11a. Scapa flow wrecks are internationally important for sport diving and recognition of this particular importance should be recognised in policy.

It would be useful to clarify what is included as part of culture. It could be argued that sport and recreation forms an integral component of the culture of the area and that as such will be included in the protection of cultural resources. We are

not necessarily arguing for this (although there could be advantages to the recreational sector) but clarity is needed on what comprises a cultural resource.

Question 12b: *Is the protection of the historic and culture environment important? How important is it?*

Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 (1 = Not important at all, 5 = The highest importance)

1 2 3 4 5

Question 13a: *How should the promotion and support of economic growth be considered in the marine spatial plan? If any, which economic activities would you like to see grow and develop?*

Sustainably. Policy should make clear that economic development shouldn't be allowed at all costs but should be promoted in a sustainable way that doesn't destroy the particular qualities of the area.

In relation to recreation there is a need to recognise that for some forms of development there will be a particular locations need – e.g. changing facilities next to the resource used. Policy should provide for such locational requirements.

Question 13b: *Is promoting and supporting economic growth important?*

Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 (1 = Not important at all, 5 = The highest importance)

1 2 3 4 5

Section 9 Identifying strategic issues and interactions

Question 14: *Having considered Table 9.1, do you have any views on the identified aspirations for growth, strategic issues and opportunities to address the strategic issues in the pilot marine spatial plan?*

We recognise the aspiration for marine renewables. It is crucial that this sector is developed in a sustainable way.

On tourism and recreation (in relation to the table but also generally) reference should be made to sport development needs and aspirations in the area. This will relate to club development, training and competition needs in the area as well as

more general participation requirements. Join up with LA sport development and facilities strategies will be important in this regard as will reference to core paths plans and access strategies. It will also be important to engage with Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport and the Highlands and Islands Regional Sporting Partnership to gauge any locational proposals, plans, policies (e.g facilities strategies, Active Schools engagement) that might exist in the area and be relevant to the plan. sportscotland can help in this process.

Question 15: Having considered Table 9.2, do you have any views on the identified potential for interaction between the various sectors, what these interactions might be and how these interactions should be addressed in the pilot marine spatial plan?

Comments

Section 10 Spatial strategy and information

Question 16: Do you think it is important to have an overarching spatial strategy? If so, what should the strategy include and why?

Yes this is important. See other comments on sport and recreation – these should form part of the strategy.

Section 11 Crosscutting or overarching marine planning policies

This section of the Consultation Questionnaire seeks your views on the proposed policy options set out in Section 11 of the Planning Issues and Options Paper. Please indicate in the proposed policy option response boxes below which proposed policy you are commenting on and provide any comments on the preferred option and/or alternative approach, as appropriate. The proposed policies are:

Proposed Policy 1a: Sustainable Development

Proposed Policy 2a: Integrating marine and coastal development

Proposed Policy 3a: Nature conservation designations

Proposed Policy 3b: Protected species

Proposed Policy 3c: Wider biodiversity and geodiversity interests

Proposed Policy 3d: Non-native species

Proposed Policy 3e: Landscape and seascape

Proposed Policy 4a: Cultural and Historic Environment

Proposed Policy 5a: Water environment

Proposed Policy 6a: Coastal erosion and flooding

Proposed Policy 7a: Waste management and marine litter

Proposed Policy 8a: Safeguarding existing pipelines, electricity and telecommunications cables

Proposed Policy 9a: Hazardous development and Health and Safety Executive consultation zones

Proposed Policy 10a: Defence

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 1

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

PP 2a Integrating marine and coastal development

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

It would be useful to understand whether the plan has a locus outwith the statutory planning, licencing and consenting regime to look at areas such as positive management of the marine zone. So this would include policy that relates to areas such as byelaw development or codes of conduct or positive management through eg zoning, management agreements, guidance, signposting, communication, information etc. These are mechanisms relevant to positive ICZM and it would be useful to know how this will be taken forward under marine planning.

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 2

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

PP 3a,b,c,d – Natural heritage.

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

We hope that such a comprehensive approach is taken to the protection and consideration of sport and recreation interests.

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 3

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

PP 3e Landscape

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

It will be important to take cognisance of SNH's core wild land area mapping which is being used by NPF3 to protect wild land areas. The marine development impact on these core areas should be considered.

In considering landscape it is important, in addition to considering aesthetic components, to also be aware of the physical qualities of the landscape that are used for a range of recreational activities. This needs thought on how it relates to the marine environment but if the intention is for policy to extend to the land then consideration should be given to whether landscape policy intends to provide protection to landscape qualities such as gradient, bedrock, water table etc. which all determine what activities take place where and at what level. From a seascape perspective this could include impacts on wave pattern and height, sediment shift, current patterns etc that are integral to seascape and to recreational use of the seascape.

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 4

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

PP5a – water environment

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

Water quality is fundamental to participation in immersion sports. We fully support the need to maintain and improve water quality.

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Comments

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 5

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

PP 6a – erosion and flooding

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

We support the need to assess the impact development could have on flooding and erosion. Please see answer to question 6.

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Comments

Should you wish to respond to further proposed policy options please provide your response on an addition page(s) and submit with your completed Consultation Questionnaire.

Further crosscutting / overarching policy areas

Question 17: [Are there other crosscutting / overarching policy areas that should be addressed in the marine spatial plan?](#)

12 Sectoral policies

This section of the Consultation Questionnaire seeks your views on the proposed policy options set out in Section 12 of the Planning Issues and Options Paper. Please indicate in the proposed policy option response boxes below which proposed policy you are commenting on and provide any comments on the preferred option and/or alternative approach, as appropriate. The proposed policies are:

- Proposed Policy 11: Marine renewable energy
- Proposed Policy 12: Electricity infrastructure to support marine renewable energy projects
- Proposed Policy 13: Shipping, Navigation and Marine Safety
- Proposed Policy 14: Ports and harbours
- Proposed Policy 15: Oil and Gas
- Proposed Policy 16: Marine aggregates and dredging
- Proposed Policy 17: Development of coastal protection and flood defence infrastructure
- Proposed Policy 18: Development of new telecommunication cables
- Proposed Policy 19: Commercial fisheries
- Proposed Policy 20: Aquaculture
- Proposed Policy 21: Tourism and recreation

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 6

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

PP21 tourism and recreation

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

We are pleased to note the reference to the health and social benefits of recreation as well as their economic.

In addition to identifying important sites and areas for recreation it will be important to understand the qualities that are integral to participation and are valued by participants. This will include things like the type and quality of waves, the lack of noise pollution, clean unpolluted water, the quality of the landscape etc. Impacts on recreation are about impacts that physically prevent the activity taking place but are also about impacts that negatively affect the quality of the experience. Both should be protected by policy.

It would be useful as part of the work that is being carried out to assess the recreational resource of the area to determine how important a site is for an activity. Thurso East or the Scapa Flow wrecks for example are internationally important and perhaps merit stronger policy protection than other resources in the area.

We strongly support the positive approach advocated to land based facility development supporting recreational use of the marine environment.

It will be important for policy in this sector to draw out the qualities that are important from a tourism perspective and those which are important from a sport and recreation perspective. We recognise that the two sectors are linked but they are also different and policy needs to be clear what a resource is being protected for. Thurso East for example is fundamentally important because of the quality, reliability and accessibility of the wave. It is also important because it attracts national and international events and brings people from all over the world to surf it, contributing significantly to the local economy. These are two distinct values that it is important to distinguish between in policy. As an additional example, there may be some remote and challenging coastal rock climbs in the area which are only used by a small number of people. These may be strategically important for the sport but of little value as a tourism resource. Policy needs to be clear what it is that is being protected.

We would like to see tourism and recreation policy put at the start rather than the end of the plan. There is always a concern that this sector is not taken as seriously as other sectors and for it to appear at the end of the list of sectors only serves to augment these fears. Putting this policy area up front in the plan sends a clear message that the sector is key.

In terms of identifying the key sites and areas, sportscotland requests to be involved in this process. It would be very useful to know what criteria are being

used to identify and quantify what sites are important and whether a hierarchy of sites is being developed.

We are concerned by the use of the term *due regard* in para 1 of the preferred option. While we appreciate this is not the policy wording we would be concerned if a term like *due regard* was used in the final policy. *Due regard* is ambiguous and potentially weak and we would look for much stronger wording stating development etc will be refused where etc.

As well as existing facilities and areas and routes important for recreation, it will be important for policy to protect opportunities for expansion and future development in the sector.

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Comments

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 7

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

PP11 – Marine renewables

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

We note that this sections talks of mitigation and avoidance and minimisation of impacts. It is important for policy to be clear that there may be impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated against and that in some circumstances renewable development should just not be allowed.

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 8

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

PP13 - safety

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

Safety is a key concern for recreation interests and the safety of recreational users should be integral to policy in this area. Safety may be about more than impacts on navigation and could include e.g. impacts of water pollution on the safety of other users or that development could force recreational users into less safe areas to do their activity, or that development impacts on coastal processes to make participation in an activity more dangerous.

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Comments

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 9

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

PP14 – Ports and Harbours

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

It is important to add sport and recreation to the list of sectors that the development of this resource will be important to and that recreation is fully taken into account in the integration of different users of this resource.

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Comments

Proposed Policy Options - Response Box 10

Please indicate which proposed policy you are commenting on:

Comments

Please provide your comments on the proposed preferred option and/or alternative approach:

Comments

Would you suggest an alternative approach?

Comments

Should you wish to respond to further proposed policy options please provide your response on an addition page(s) and submit with your completed Consultation Questionnaire.

Further sectoral policies

Question 18: [Are there other sectoral policies that should be developed in the marine spatial plan?](#)

Comments

Further comments or opinions

Question 19: [Do you have any further comments or opinions in relation to the preparation of the Draft Pilot Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan?](#)

Comments