

**ABERDEEN CITY & SHIRE**  
**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY**

**Date: 10 June 2011**

**Title: Pre-Consultation Draft National Marine Plan**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks homologation by the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) for the recent consultation response submitted to the Scottish Government on the pre-consultation Draft National Marine Plan.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Implementation of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 continues with the publication of the pre-consultation Draft National Marine Plan on 21 March 2011. This document sets out policies for the sustainable development of Scotland's seas and includes economic, social and marine ecosystems objectives. The plan also introduces key challenges for sectors operating in the marine environment.
- 2.2 The SDPA has previously discussed marine planning regions and approved a consultation response on this at the meeting of 25 March 2011.
- 2.3 The closing date for this current consultation passed on 7 June. Given that the consultation closed prior to this meeting, the SDPA resolved at its last meeting that a draft response would be circulated for comment and a provisional response agreed by the SDP Manager in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.
- 2.4 A draft response was circulated to all members and substitute members of the SDPA on 18 May 2011. There were no suggested changes and the provisional response (Appendix 1), was agreed and submitted prior to the consultation closing date.
- 2.5 A further opportunity to comment on the National Marine Plan will be available later in 2011, with the final marine plan expected in spring / summer 2012.

**3 National Marine Plan – pre-consultation draft**

- 3.1 The Scottish Government published the pre-consultation draft national marine plan (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/346796/0115349.pdf>) on 21 March 2011. This substantial document provides a thorough analysis of all aspects of marine planning, from the context and interaction with land use planning, key objectives (including climate change objectives) and nine individual sector reports, as shown in the table below.
- 3.2 For each of these, the key challenges, objectives, background, current situation, environmental impact, economic impact, spatial constraints and future in short,

medium and long terms is explored. These sector reports give a comprehensive coverage of the challenges and the linkages between them for the Scottish marine environment.

- 3.3 A range of onshore strategic planning issues have offshore impacts and vice versa. These include carbon capture and storage (CCS), oil and gas exploration, production and decommissioning, marine renewables and offshore electricity grid enhancements. Fishing and marine leisure activities also have strong relationships between onshore and offshore activity.
- 3.4 In parallel with the pre-consultation draft of the national marine plan, a Marine Atlas (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/16182005/0>) has been published. This provides a summary of the marine issues by region and an assessment of the condition of Scotland's seas.

#### 4 Proposed Response

- 4.1 Appendix 1 contains the provisional response submitted from the SDPA. Comments relate to the introductory sections and as the table below shows, responses to the food, energy, tourism and recreation, marine transport, telecoms and cables, marine environment and coastal / water sections.

	<b>Sector</b>	<b>SDPA comment</b>
1.	Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisheries</li> <li>• Wild salmon and freshwater fisheries</li> <li>• Aquaculture</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b></p>
2.	Energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oil &amp; gas</li> <li>• Carbon capture and storage</li> <li>• Renewables</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>
3.	Tourism and recreation	✓
4.	Marine transport	✓
5.	Telecommunications and cables	✓
6.	Military activities	<b>X</b>
7.	Marine environment	✓
8.	Coastal / water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal protection and flood defence</li> <li>• Water abstraction</li> <li>• Waste water</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b></p>
9.	Aggregates and disposal	<b>X</b>

- 4.2 As with the previous consultation, the SDPA's interest is in strategic matters as they relate to Aberdeen City and Shire and where linkages with terrestrial planning exist. Four key points are therefore raised in the provisional response:
- a) The preparation of a national marine plan is welcome, as is the statutory relationship between terrestrial and marine planning;

- b) At a number of points, the draft plan lacks clarity, compounded by a structure of objectives, targets and indicators, which is not clear;
- c) The plan would benefit from more of a spatial focus because the issues around the coast will differ markedly and the national marine plan needs to provide appropriate direction to the regional marine plans; and
- d) Projects of national importance, which are either marine in nature or impact on the marine environment, should be clearly set out so as to aid transparency and appropriate plan-making at the regional and local level. It is suggested that carbon capture and storage and offshore grid initiatives are two potential candidates for this category of development.

## 5 Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the SDPA note the contents of this report and homologate the response found in Appendix 1.

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