

**MPA Management in Wales 2:**  
Evaluation of current MPA management  
in Wales.

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## **CONTENTS**

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2. METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>3. RESULTS FROM THE THREE ASSESSMENT EXERCISES</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4. EVALUATION OF MPA MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>A. Supporting information to underpin site management</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>B. Site management processes and partnerships</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>C. Awareness and understanding</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>E. Resources</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>5. VISION &amp; BEST PRACTICE</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>6. CONCLUSIONS, RISKS AND NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>ANNEXES</b>	<b>49</b>

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## GLOSSARY

AD	Actions Database
CA	Competent Authorities
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
Defra	Department for the Environment, Fisheries & Rural Affairs
FCS	Favourable Conservation Status
EMS	European Marine Site
EMSO	European Marine Site Officer
EU	European Union
N2K	Natura 2000 site (European Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas)
NE	Natural England
NEF	Natural Environment Framework
NCO	Nature Conservation Order
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
MA	Management Authority <sup>1</sup>
MAG	Management Authority Group
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MNR	Marine Nature Reserve
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MS	Management Scheme
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
OSPAR	Oslo and Paris Convention for the protection of the maritime environment of the north-east Atlantic
PLAS	Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau (SAC)
PMC	Pembrokeshire Marine Code
RA	Relevant Authorities
RAG	Relevant Authority Group
Ramsar	Wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (EU Habitats and Species Directive)
SNCB	Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (e.g. CCW or NE)
SPA	Special Protection Area (EU Birds Directive)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
WEL	Wales Environment Link
WG	Welsh Government

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<sup>1</sup> Within this document the term management authorities (MAs) is used to refer collectively to all organisations with statutory responsibilities in relation to any type of MPA, or who are significant seabed or coastal land owners. This includes: relevant and competent authorities under the Habitats Regulations 2010 and public authorities under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (CROW Act).

## CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn cyflwyno canfyddiadau gwerthusiad a wnaed gan Gyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru o'r trefniadau cyfredol i reoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig yng Nghymru.

Nod cyffredinol y gwerthusiad yw penderfynu sut i reoli holl Arda loedd Morol Gwarchoddedig Cymru yn ffafriol, a thrwy hynny sicrhau eu bod mewn cyflwr ffafriol a'u bod yn cyfrannu tuag at gadwraeth bioamrywiaeth ehangach, eu bod yn helpu i wella iechyd a gweithrediad ecosystemau morol, a'u bod yn cyfrannu at y gwasanaethau a'r manteision yr ydym yn eu cael o foroedd Cymru.

Islaw'r nod cyffredinol hwn, yr amcanion gwerthuso yw:

Adolygu a gwerthuso'r trefniadau cyfredol i reoli a llywodraethu Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig yng Nghymru,

Nodi'r materion allweddol sy'n codi yn sgil y trefniadau rheoli cyfredol,

Nodi ymarfer da yn yr arferion rheoli cyfredol ar Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig yng Nghymru,

Nodi egwyddorion ymarfer da i arwain y drefn o reoli'r Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig,

Cynnig ffyrdd ymlaen a fydd yn help i sicrhau rheoli mwy effeithiol, effeithlon, cost-effeithiol a chyson ar holl Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig Cymru, gan ystyried trefniadau llywodraethu morol ehangach sy'n berthnasol i'r gwaith o gynllunio a rheoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig Cymru i'r dyfodol.

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn adeiladu ar adroddiad "Overview of MPA Management in Wales" <sup>1</sup> sy'n darparu llawer o'r manylion am sut y caiff safleoedd Cymru eu rheoli ar hyn o bryd; nid ailadroddir y wybodaeth hon yn yr adroddiad hwn ac anogir y darllenydd i edrych ar yr adroddiad trosolwg i gael y wybodaeth gefndir.

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn cyflwyno gwerthusiad y Cyngor Cefn Gwlad o'r strwythurau a'r mecanweithiau priodol a allai hwyluso'r ffordd i sicrhau rheoli effeithiol ar Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig Cymru yn y dyfodol. Mae'r farn hon wedi'i seilio ar dri ymarferiad asesu gwahanol y bu gan staff y Cyngor Cefn Gwlad ran ynddynt ynghyd â sefydliadau eraill sydd â rôl neu fuddiant allweddol yn rheolaeth yr Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig.

Er bod rhai o Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig Cymru wedi cael eu rheoli'n gadarnhaol a bod hynny'n parhau (gan y Cyngor Cefn Gwlad, cyrff statudol eraill, grwpiau gwirfoddol ac unigolion), mae'n amlwg fod anghysondeb yn y dulliau gweithredu, y ffordd y dyrannir adnoddau ac yn ymwneud yr awdurdodau rheoli, a hefyd bod diffyg cyfeiriad strategol ar draws holl Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig Cymru. Mae'r materion hyn yn rhwystr rhag rheoli'r holl ardaloedd yng Nghymru yn effeithiol, a rhag cyflawni elfennau morol ymrwymadau'r rhwydwaith cenedlaethol a rhyngwladol o Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig a thargedau bioamrywiaeth.

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<sup>1</sup> Hatton-Ellis et al., (2012).

Drwyddi draw canfu'r gwerthusiad hwn nad yw Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig yng Nghymru yn llwyddo i sicrhau cyflwr/statws ffafriol oherwydd diffyg rheolaeth effeithiol. Credir mai'r prif faterion i'w hystyried o ran y ffordd y mae Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig Cymru yn cael eu rheoli ar hyn o bryd yw:

Anghysondeb yn y drefn reoli yng Nghymru o ran dull gweithredu, ymdrech a dyrannu adnoddau,

Yr angen am gyfeiriad cliriach, ar lefel uchel, gan Lywodraeth Cymru (LIC) ynglŷn â phwysigrwydd ein Hardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig,

Fod llawer o awdurdodau rheoli yn rhoi blaenoriaeth isel ar hyn o bryd i reoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig,

Nad oes adnoddau'n cael eu darparu'n effeithiol ar gyfer rheoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig yng Nghymru o safbwynt blaenoriaethu arian ar gyfer gwaith rheoli a chael digon o staff sydd wedi'u hyfforddi'n briodol yn yr awdurdodau rheoli.

Mae'r fframwaith rheoli sy'n cael ei awgrymu i Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig drwy'r gwerthusiad hwn yn dibynnu ar sefydlu a gweithredu Grŷp Llywio Rheoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig i Gymru gyfan ac ardaloedd rheoli o faint addas, lle caiff pob Ardal Forol Warchoddedig, o bob dynodiad, ei hystyried. Gallai'r fframwaith rheoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig, os darperir adnoddau priodol ac os caiff ei weithredu'n briodol, wireddu cyfres o allbynnau a chanlyniadau a fydd, gyda'i gilydd, yn help i sicrhau dyfodol mwy cynaliadwy i foroedd Cymru.

Yn ychwanegol at y cynigion allweddol ynglŷn â Grŷp Llywio Rheoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig, mae'r adroddiad hwn yn cynnwys cyfres o ffyrdd posibl ymlaen er mwyn ymdrin ag amryw o faterion y mae angen eu hystyried ar hyn o bryd o ran rheoli'r ardaloedd. Gallai'r ffyrdd hyn ymlaen, ynghyd â'r Egwyddorion Ymarfer Gorau, sicrhau'r canlyniadau canlynol:

Cyfres o Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig sy'n cael eu rheoli'n dda yng Nghymru, yn cyfrannu at ymrwymïadau rhwydwaith Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig y DU a'r ymrwymïadau Ewropeaidd a Rhyngwladol,

Gwella manteision a gwasanaethau amgylcheddol ac ecosystemol gan rwydwaith Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig Cymru, drwy well arferion rheoli,

Trefn reoli sy'n cael ei harwain gan gyfres o Egwyddorion Ymarfer Gorau,

Mwy o gyfleoedd i integreiddio'r rheoli ar Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig gyda chynlluniau strategol megis cynllunio morol, Cyfarwydddeb Fframwaith y Strategaeth Forol a dull gweithredu Cynnal Cymru Fyw,

Ffordd fwy cyson, cost-effeithiol ac effeithlon o ymdrin â rheoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig,

Rhoi'r trefniadau i reoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig ar waith yn effeithiol ar lefel genedlaethol a lefel leol (safle),

Gwell ymwybyddiaeth o ofynion rheoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig o fewn pob awdurdod rheoli,

Grwpiau rheoli lleol cryfach, mwy gwybodus, sy'n cael cefnogaeth dda,

Ymrwymiad clir ar lefel uchel gan y Lywodraeth a'r Awdurdodau Rheoli tuag at reoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig,

Gweithio'n well drwy bartneriaeth i roi rheolaeth effeithiol ar Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig ar waith,  
Gwell cyfathrebu o lefel leol i lefel genedlaethol ac i'r gwrthwyneb,  
Integreiddio Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig newydd megis Parthau Cadwraeth Morol i'r fframwaith rheoli presennol, gan leihau'r cymhlethdodau rheoli ychwanegol a'r angen am adnoddau ymysg Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig newydd,  
Ariannu diogel, tymor hir, er mwyn rhoi rheolaeth effeithiol ar Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig ar waith.

Mae'r adroddiad hefyd yn cael ei ysgrifennu ar adeg o newid sylweddol yn y drefn i lywodraethu amgylchedd morol Cymru, yn sgil creu sefydliad integredig newydd i Gymru ar gyfer yr amgylchedd, adnoddau naturiol a chadwraeth. Hefyd, mae agenda Cynnal Cymru Fyw y Llywodraeth yn cael ei rhoi ar waith. Mae'r cynlluniau hyn i gyd yn arddel dull mwy integredig a chyfannol ar lefel ecosystemau o reoli ein hamgylchedd. Caiff y dull hwn ei adlewyrchu hefyd yn y cynigion allweddol yn yr adroddiad hwn sy'n ceisio sefydlu trefniadau llywodraethu ac arferion rheoli ar gyfer yr ystod lawn o Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig yng Nghymru.

Y risg bennaf o fethu â gwella'r rheolaeth ar ein Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig, fel y nodwyd yn yr adroddiad hwn, yw y bydd cyflwr yr Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig a nodweddiion y safleoedd yn dirywio ac y bydd yr amgylchedd morol felly yn diraddio ymhellach. Bydd hynny'n golygu ei fod yn llai abl i ymdopi â phwysau a newid. Ynghlwm wrth hyn collir gwasanaethau cysylltiol y mae Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig yn eu cynnal ac y mae pobl yn gweld gwerth ynddynt, yn dibynnu arnynt ac yn eu mwynhau.

Rydym wedi nodi mai un flaenoriaeth allweddol i'r Cyngor Cefn Gwlad yw cynghori'r Llywodraeth a'r awdurdodau rheoli ynglŷn â'r angen am drefniadau llywodraethu newydd, gwell, yng nghyd-destun rheoli Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig a chwmpas y trefniadau hynny, a hefyd hwyluso'r ffordd i'w sefydlu. Yn dilyn y gwerthusiad hwn, bydd y Cyngor hefyd yn bwrw iddi i nodi camau gweithredu pellach sy'n flaenoriaeth, yn deillio o'r cynigion yn adran 4, ar gyfer y Cyngor Cefn Gwlad ac ar draws yr holl awdurdodau rheoli yng Nghymru.

Mae'r Cyngor Cefn Gwlad wedi ymrwymo i weithio gyda Llywodraeth Cymru a phartneriaid i wella'r rheolaeth ar ein Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig ac yn sgil hynny i gefnogi dyfodol mwy cynaliadwy i foroedd Cymru, gan helpu i ddiogelu'r llu o fanteision a gwasanaethau yr ydym yn eu mwynhau ac yn cael oddi wrth y moroedd o'n cwmpas.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of an evaluation undertaken by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) of the current arrangements for Marine Protected Area (MPA) management in Wales.

The overall aim of this evaluation is to determine how to deliver favourable management, and hence favourable condition, on all MPAs in Wales and in doing so secure the contribution MPAs can make to wider biodiversity conservation, the improved health and functioning of marine ecosystems, and the services and benefits we enjoy from Welsh seas.

Beneath this aim, the evaluation objectives are to:

- Review and evaluate current management and governance arrangements on MPAs in Wales.
- Identify key issues with current management arrangements.
- Identify good practice with current MPA management practices in Wales.
- Identify good practice principles to guide MPA management.
- Propose ways forward that will help deliver more effective, efficient, cost-effective and consistent management of all Welsh MPAs, taking into account wider marine governance arrangements relevant to future planning and management of Welsh MPAs.

This report builds on the “Overview of MPA Management in Wales” report<sup>2</sup> which provides much of the detail about how Welsh sites are currently being managed; this information is not repeated in this report and readers are encouraged to view the overview report for background information.

This report sets out CCW’s evaluation of the appropriate structures and mechanisms which could facilitate the future delivery of effective management of Welsh MPAs. These views are informed by three separate assessment exercises which involved CCW staff and other organisations with a role or key interest in the management of MPAs.

It is clear that while there has been, and continues to be positive management of some Welsh MPAs (by CCW, other statutory bodies, voluntary groups and individuals), there remains inconsistency in approach, resource allocation and involvement of management authorities as well as a lack of strategic steer across the suite of Welsh MPAs. These issues are hampering delivery of effective management across all MPAs in Wales and achievement of marine elements of national and international MPA network commitments and biodiversity targets.

Overall the evaluation identified that MPAs in Wales are failing to achieve favourable condition/status due to a lack of effective management. The main issues with the current management of Welsh MPAs are considered to be:

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<sup>2</sup> Hatton-Ellis et al., (2012).

- Inconsistency in MPA management in Wales in terms of approach, effort and resource allocation.
- The need for a clearer high-level steer from Welsh Government (WG) on the importance of our MPAs.
- Current low priority given to MPA management by many management authorities.
- MPA management in Wales is not effectively resourced in terms of prioritisation of funding for management action and sufficient appropriately training staff in management authorities.

The MPA management framework proposed through this evaluation depends on the setting up and operation of a Wales-wide MPA Management Steering Group and suitably sized management areas where all MPAs, of all designations, are considered. The MPA management framework, if properly resourced and implemented, could deliver a series of outputs and outcomes that together will help secure a more sustainable future for Welsh seas.

In addition to the key proposals of an MPA Management Steering Group, this report contains a series of possible ways forward to address the variety of current issues with MPA management. These ways forward, together with the Best Practice Principles, identified in this report, could secure the following outcomes:

- A well managed suit of MPAs in Wales contributing to UK, European and International MPA network commitments.
- Improved environmental and ecosystem benefits and services from the Welsh MPA network through improved management practices.
- MPA management that is guided by a series of Best Practice Principles.
- Increased opportunities for MPA management to be integrated with strategic initiatives such as marine planning, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Sustaining a Living Wales approach.
- A more consistent, cost-effective and efficient approach to MPA management.
- Effective delivery of MPA management at both a national and local (site) level.
- Improved awareness of MPA management requirements within all management authorities.
- Stronger, better informed and well supported local management groups.
- Clear high level commitment from government and management authorities for MPA management.
- Improved partnership working to deliver effective MPA management.
- Improved communication from a local to a national level and vice versa.
- Integration of new MPAs such as MCZs into an existing management framework, minimising additional management complexities and resource requirement from new MPAs.
- Long term secure funding to deliver effective MPA management.

The report is written at a time of significant change in the governance of the marine environment for Wales with the creation of a new integrated environment, natural resources and conservation organisation for Wales as well as the rolling out of the Welsh Government's Sustaining a Living Wales agenda. These initiatives embrace a more integrated and holistic ecosystem approach to

the management of our environment. This approach is also reflected in the key proposals within this report that seek to establish governance arrangements and management practices for the full suite of Welsh MPAs.

The primary risk associated with failure to improve the management of our MPAs as identified in this report, is the deterioration in condition of MPAs and site features and consequent further degradation of the marine environment and reduction in the ability of the marine environment to cope with pressures and change. Linked to this is loss of associated services that MPAs support and that people value, depend on and enjoy.

We have identified that a key priority for CCW is to advise government and management authorities on the need for and scope of new, improved governance arrangements for MPA management, and to assist in facilitating its establishment. Following this evaluation, CCW will also work to identify further priority action from the proposals in section 4, both for CCW and across all management authorities in Wales.

CCW is committed to working with Welsh Government and partners to improve the management of our MPAs and in turn support a more sustainable future for Welsh seas, helping to secure the many benefits and services we enjoy and receive from the seas around us.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Welsh Government has asked CCW for advice on what is required to ensure effective management of the suite of Welsh MPAs. To inform its advice to Welsh Government, CCW has undertaken an evaluation of current MPA management in Wales to examine the existing management approaches and assess their effectiveness. This report describes how the evaluation was informed and undertaken and presents the findings of that work.

## 1.1 Background and context for this report

The marine environment makes up over half of the area of Wales, and provides a vital environmental, social and economic resource. Welsh seas support a wide array of habitats that sustain a wealth of marine life, creating rich and varied marine ecosystems. Society is dependent upon a range of services provided by Welsh marine ecosystems and this dependence on the natural environment is being increasingly recognised and used to inform the management of the marine environment. Equally it is also recognised that the sea is not a limitless resource and whilst this has often not been recognised in the past, a greater understanding of what the marine environment can and cannot sustain has brought the realisation that it is in the interests of society as a whole to take responsibility to ensure that Welsh seas do not become impoverished and degraded.

Management of Welsh seas requires a variety of different approaches to be taken; within this suite of options Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have been shown to make a valuable contribution to ensure the long term sustainability and resilience of marine ecosystems.

There is currently a great deal of work underway in Wales, the UK and beyond to secure an ecologically coherent network of **well-managed** MPAs. In Wales, over 35% of waters are already designated as MPAs. The suite of MPAs in Wales is currently made up of 125 separate MPAs comprising differing numbers of sites under the following designations:

- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Ramsar (Wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention)
- Marine Nature Reserve (MNR)

In autumn 2009, the Welsh Government published a draft MPA Strategy<sup>3</sup> that aims to “contribute to the development of an ecologically coherent UK network of well managed MPAs. The network will conserve rare, threatened, and representative species and habitats to enhance biodiversity and ecosystems.” The strategy acknowledges the importance of MPA management as well as the need to improve management:

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Protecting Welsh Seas: A draft Strategy for Marine Protected Areas in Wales’. Welsh Assembly Government (2009).

“In order to develop a coherent and well managed network of MPAs in Wales that contributes to the wider UK network, we consider that the following are required:

- Improved coordination of management of MPAs to deliver site-level and network-level objectives as well as broader biodiversity targets.
- Better use of existing and new tools to deliver effective management of MPAs.”

CCW’s assessment of current MPA management seeks to help address these aims in Welsh Government’s draft MPA strategy as well as help deliver wider commitments to secure a well managed network of MPAs.

## 1.2 Purpose and scope of this report

The overall aim of this evaluation is to determine how to deliver favourable management, and hence favourable condition, on all MPAs in Wales and in doing so secure the contribution MPAs can make to wider biodiversity conservation, the improved health and functioning of marine ecosystems, and the services and benefits we enjoy from Welsh seas.

Beneath this aim, the evaluation objectives are to:

- Review and evaluate current management and governance arrangements on MPAs in Wales.
- Identify key issues with current management arrangements.
- Identify good practice with current MPA management practices in Wales.
- Identify good practice principles to guide MPA management.
- Propose ways forward that will help deliver more effective, efficient, cost-effective and consistent management of all Welsh MPAs, taking into account wider marine governance arrangements relevant to future planning and management of Welsh MPAs.

The existing management structures and processes for Welsh MPAs have evolved in response to the requirement to designate and manage new sites and this is the first time such an assessment of the management approaches for the full suite of Welsh MPAs has been undertaken. This report builds on the CCW “Overview of MPA Management” report<sup>4</sup> which provides much of the detail about how existing sites are currently being managed, as well as information about new management tools recently available or which will be available in the near future; this information is not repeated in this report and readers are encouraged to view the overview report for background information.

This report sets out CCW’s evaluation of the appropriate structures and mechanisms which could facilitate the future delivery of effective management of Welsh MPAs. These views are informed by three separate assessment exercises that involved CCW staff and other organisations with a role or key interest in the management of MPAs.

The report takes account of current MPA management practices; it does not evaluate potential future arrangements for any new MPAs such as Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). However,

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<sup>4</sup> Hatton-Ellis *et al.*, (2012).

the proposals for more integrated governance arrangements for MPA management in Wales contained within this report should apply equally to any new MPA and, in doing so, could reduce the complexity and resource requirements involved in delivering favourable management for new MPAs.

The report was written at a time of significant change in the governance of the marine environment for Wales with the creation of a new integrated environment, natural resources and conservation organisation for Wales as well as the rolling out of Government's Sustaining a Living Wales<sup>5</sup> agenda. These initiatives all embrace a more integrated and holistic ecosystem approach to the management of our environment. This approach is also reflected in the key proposals within this report that seek to establish governance arrangements and management practices for the full suite of Welsh MPAs.

The report contains:

- A description of the assessment and evaluation methods (Section 2).
- A brief description of the result of the three assessment exercises (Section 3).
- CCW's evaluation of MPA management, key issues and possible ways forward and Best Practice Principles (Section 4).
- A summary of Best Practice Principles (Section 5).
- Conclusions including risks associated with not improving MPA management, and an indication of priority action (Section 6).

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<sup>5</sup> WAG (2010).

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Three assessment exercises were carried out to inform CCW's evaluation of current MPA management arrangements in Wales, these were:

- an on-line questionnaire
- an external assessment for groups involved in MPA management
- an internal CCW qualitative assessment

These assessments were used to:

- (a) collate general information on the current management of MPAs in Wales
- (b) collate opinions on the management of Welsh MPAs, including strengths and weaknesses of current approaches

CCW staff, management authorities (MAs), European Marine Site (EMS) officers, liaison/advisory groups and a number of universities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in MPA management in Wales inputted to this process. The assessments focussed on issues relating to the management of individual sites.

The findings of the assessments were used to inform CCW's internal evaluation of MPA management in Wales.

### 2.1 On-line questionnaire

The on-line questionnaire consisted of a set of ten questions comprising a mixture of multi choice and more open questions. The questions and a short summary of the responses can be found in Annex 1.1. A more complete collation of responses (including specific individual responses) can be found in Annex 1.2. A total of 158 questionnaires were distributed to a number of different organisations (see Annex 1.3 for a full list of organisations that responded).

### 2.2 Assessment involving management authorities<sup>6</sup> and liaison/advisory groups (External Assessment)

Management authorities, liaison/advisory groups and EMS officers for four large EMS in Wales were asked to respond to a series of questions (Annex 2.1) to assess their views regarding management of their sites and whether they considered there were any barriers to achievement of good management.

Three Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Relevant Authority Groups (RAGs), the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC liaison group and Wales Environment Link (WEL) responded to the structured questionnaire. The individual and group responses to this assessment have been collated and can be seen at Annex 2.2 & 2.3. Responses to the assessment from external partners are summarised

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<sup>6</sup> Within this document the term management authorities (MAs) is used to refer collectively to all organisations with statutory responsibilities in relation to any type of MPA, or who are significant seabed or coastal land owners. This includes: relevant and competent authorities under the Habitats Regulations 2010 and public authorities under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (CROW Act).

in such a way as to reflect the majority opinion. Where two conflicting opinions were given both points of views have been noted.

### **2.3 Assessments undertaken by CCW staff (Internal Assessments)**

The general approach used was to separately examine (a) what was working on existing sites (SACs, SPAs and SSSIs) to achieve Favourable Conservation Status (FCS)<sup>7</sup> and recommendations for positive measures that should be maintained; and (b) what has hindered achievement of or caused deterioration in conservation status and recommendations on what could address these issues. A standardised tabular format for data collation was developed to capture this information on a site by site basis (see Annex 3). This approach was undertaken by CCW regional staff although not all sites were assessed due to time and staff restraints.

For many SSSIs, it was not clear whether responses that suggested there were no management issues were the result of lack of information, rather than evidence to show there was no issue. To make best use of the results, the assessments for all SSSIs that are contained within EMSs were analysed with the EMS results. There was very little data supplied for any management issues for SSSIs outwith EMSs so these data were not analysed further.

This was a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach and the findings from this internal assessment were used to inform CCW's views on the issues highlighted in this report. This assessment also supplied good practice examples that helped to inform the best way forward and best practice principles for MPA management.

### **2.4 CCW internal evaluation of MPA management in Wales**

The three assessment exercises detailed above were used to inform CCW's evaluation of MPA management in Wales. The evaluation was carried out by a working group of relevant staff from across the organisation and involved discussion and consensus building on key issues to do with current MPA management practices and identifying possible ways forward. The results of the evaluation are encompassed by the issues, potential ways forward and Best Practice Principles presented in section 4 of this report.

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<sup>7</sup> For a full description of FCS see Hatton-Ellis *et. al.*, (2012)

### 3. RESULTS FROM THE THREE ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

This section presents a summary of the results from the three assessment exercises. The results of the subsequent CCW evaluation process, which was informed by these assessments are presented in section 4.

#### 3.1 On-line questionnaire

A summary of responses to the on-line questionnaire can be found in Annex 1.1 and a more complete collation of responses in Annex 1.2. A total of 158 people were emailed and asked to fill in the questionnaire<sup>8</sup>, 46 (29%) responded with 34 of these (21.5%) completing the questionnaire. In total, 24 different organisations responded (see annex 1.3 for a full list). Key points that emerged from this assessment were:

- Management groups do deliver benefits for the sites, in particular joint working, but have limited powers currently.
- Site officers are beneficial to delivery/coordination of management.
- Current enforcement and management tools are not being used effectively.
- A single lead body and high level steer and commitment would improve consistency of approach and delivery of good management.

#### 3.2 Assessments involving management authorities and liaison/advisory groups (External Assessments)

A summary of all the responses from RAGs, advisory/liaison groups and EMS officers that took part in the external assessment process can be found in Annexes 2.2 & 2.3. The key findings from these responses were that:

- There was not enough supporting information for site management. In particular there is a need for information on the condition and conservation status of site features.
- Local management groups are important for partnership working, raising awareness and resolving local issues.
- A local management officer is needed to facilitate groups such as a RAG and any advisory/liaison groups, and to help development of a management scheme and to be the “public face” of the MPA.
- Management plans provide a valuable information resource, provide a rationale for management action and highlight actions needed to improve management on MPAs.
- A clear strategic steer from Welsh Government on MPA management is required to enable management authorities to prioritise MPA management in their work programmes.
- Long term secure funding for MPA management officers to support the carrying out of actions from management schemes is vital for successful long term management of MPAs.

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<sup>8</sup> This may be an underestimate as it may have been forwarded to people without our knowledge.

### 3.3 Assessments undertaken by CCW staff (Internal Assessments)

Internal assessments were designed and sent out to site officers for all 129 MPAs in Wales. Responses were received and analysed from three EMS (Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau, Menai Straits & Conwy Bay & Severn) and 48 SSSIs. Of these 48 SSSIs, 37 were deemed to have no management issues. The 11 SSSIs in need of management were all within EMS and were considered in conjunction with the responses for the EMS.

The factors considered by CCW staff to be of greatest importance for achieving Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) are:

- having effective site management processes and partnerships in place
- having sufficient secure resources in place (staff, skills and money)
- having the right legislative and policy framework in place and implemented

Maintaining site management structures, processes and partnerships together with maintaining or improving resources were identified as needing to be continued to support measures that were already contributing to achieving FCS.

The following factors are considered to be of greatest importance in terms of a site **not** achieving FCS:

- not having the right political and legislative structures in place and implemented
- not having the right management processes and partnerships in place

Improving partnership working/site management processes, improving resources and improving political and legislative structure were identified as being required to help address issues that were working against achieving FCS.

## 4. EVALUATION OF MPA MANAGEMENT

The responses to the assessments provide useful insight into the views of a variety of groups and individuals involved in MPA management in Wales about the current arrangements to deliver MPA management. These views have informed CCW's evaluation of MPA management which is set out in this section of the report under the five work area headings A-E listed below (not in any order of priority):

- A supporting information to underpin site management
- B site management processes & partnerships
- C awareness & understanding
- D legislative and policy framework
- E resources

These five headings provide a useful framework under which issues relating to MPA management and the findings of CCW's evaluation can be summarised.

The information under each heading is set out as follows:

- the context for the work area
- an evaluation of the work area broken down into relevant sections
- issues identified under each heading/work area and possible ways forward
- best practice principles that emerge as a result of the evaluation associated with the work area (green boxes)

It is recognised that there may be many ways forward to address any one issue but those presented in this report are considered by CCW to be the most appropriate at the time of writing.

The Best Practice Principles provide an over-arching set of principles that CCW considers encompass what is required to improve delivery of MPA management in each work area both at the individual site level and across the suite of Welsh sites. They have been derived in part from best practice already in place at sites in Wales and are also informed by the MPA management evaluation. The full set of Best Practice Principles are also presented at the end of the report in section 5.

## **A. Supporting information to underpin site management**

### **A.1 Context**

A very wide variety of information is required to support the management of MPAs from the first stages of site selection and designation to providing appropriate and effective evidence for ongoing management. This information varies in scope from, for example, the ten year CCW intertidal survey<sup>9</sup> of the whole of the Welsh coast, to information relating to individual site visits collected by a range of MAs. It is beyond the scope of this document to provide a comprehensive list of all the supporting information that is required for MPA management, but the following list summarises the scope and nature of the type of information that is required (examples for each type are given in Annex 4):

- advice / guidance for management authorities
- data/information about the biological, physical and chemical aspects of MPAs and their features
- information on activities and impacts
- supporting background information on MPAs

This information is held in a number of different formats or storage systems (e.g. databases) and by different MAs, creating access problems between authorities. There is currently no inventory of the data and information that is held by MAs that could be used to help deliver MPA management. Not all the information (e.g. raw survey data arising from conditions on consents or collected for EIAs) is publicly available and some of it can be very difficult to obtain.

There is work underway through the UK Marine Monitoring Assessment Strategy to identify data that is available generally for the marine environment in the UK, where it is held and who has copyright to that data.

### **A.2 Evaluation, issues and possible ways forward**

The evaluation of supporting information to underpin site management is divided into two sections:

- availability and use of supporting information
- information gaps

#### **Availability and use of supporting information**

Although there is reasonable awareness of some of the general information available about individual sites, for example, Regulation 35 documents, individual MPA websites etc., not all useful and relevant information is either known about or easily accessible.

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<sup>9</sup> Brazier *et al.*, (2007).

More could be done by CCW and other MAs to raise awareness of reports and information that would be useful in support of site management. The Wales Environmental Data Sharing Charter<sup>10</sup> aims to share data as widely and quickly as possible and is underpinned by the “collect once use many times” principle supported by Welsh Government. This work is in progress under the Sustaining a Living Wales Programme.

Existing management structures and partnerships such as Relevant Authority Groups (RAGs), advisory/liaison Groups and EMS officers, together with knowledgeable MA staff can also play an important role in helping provide and disseminate information about EMSs.

**Issue 1:** There is a lack of clarity as to what information is available to aid MPA management.

**Possible way forward:** Identify what information is currently held that is of relevance to MPA management.

**Possible way forward:** An inventory of relevant reports and information portals should be created which can then be kept up to date with new information. This work should be linked into existing information and data sharing initiatives such as the Wales Environmental Data Sharing Charter in order to improve access to this information. This information should be updated annually by MAs, where there is anything to update, and made accessible to stakeholders<sup>11</sup>.

**Issue 2:** The most relevant and up to date supporting information is not being used by MAs and others involved in MPA management

**Possible way forward:** MAs, EMS officers and others involved with MPA management to promote awareness about existing information and encourage its use.

### **Information gaps**

Although it is acknowledged that certain baseline information exists, there is a relative lack of data compared to terrestrial conservation sites and there is an ongoing need to gather additional information about the site habitats and species and to make this available in a readily accessible format. It was also felt that prioritisation of information gaps is vital. There are opportunities for joint working and sharing of resources for data collection, collation, analysis and dissemination.

More readily available information is needed on site and feature condition and status. Although there is a good awareness about certain aspects of individual sites, the details of the feature condition and status assessments and the rationale behind these is not always available. Regular reports on status of MPAs and features on EMS and updated information on condition of features are needed.

Updated information about feature condition and status needs to be reflected within the conservation objectives for each site. There is a need to ensure that these are kept up to date and adequately reflect the requirements of the site. Views have been expressed that some of the EMS conservation objectives are too unspecific, making it difficult to gauge the implications for a site of a plan or project in view of the site’s conservation objectives.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/nef/currentwork/partnerships/datasharing/?lang=en>

<sup>11</sup> Subject to any legal, commercial or data protection confidentiality requirements.

It was also felt that there is a lack of information about the social and economic characteristics of a site, including information about activities and potential impact of these. There is some uncertainty as to who collects and holds information about activities and compliance with licence conditions and what activity monitoring is currently undertaken.

**Issue 3:** Continued collection of information and evidence to support management decisions is essential.

**Possible way forward:** Identify and prioritise existing surveys and monitoring undertaken by MAs and others that is relevant to site management. Identify gaps and initiate work to address these gaps.

**Possible way forward:** Ensure that suitable survey and monitoring arrangements are in place to improve the evidence base to underpin site management.

**Possible way forward:** MAs to identify opportunities for joint working and sharing of resources for data collection, collation, analysis and dissemination.

**Issue 4:** More up to date information is needed on current condition and status of site features to aid in assessing plans and projects and other site management work.

**Possible way forward:** Reports on condition and conservation status of MPAs together with the rationale for these assessments should be made available to MAs and relevant stakeholders; to be updated as new information becomes available.

**Possible way forward:** MAs to ensure that monitoring reports of relevance to MPA reporting are made available on their websites as soon as practically possible, with links to be shared widely.

**Issue 5:** Conservation objectives for EMS lack specificity.

**Possible way forward:** Keep EMS conservation objectives under review to ensure that they are fit for purpose, that is, up to date, consistent, and clear in terms of enabling assessment of plans and projects.

**Issue 6:** A lack of information about activities and compliance with licence conditions was identified as well as uncertainty as to who collects and holds this information.

**Possible way forward:** Activity and compliance monitoring needs to be carried out on sites by the most suitable MA. Activity and compliance data needs to be collated regularly and held in an accessible format. This includes data on past activities and developments.

### A.3 Best Practice Principles

**Principles for supporting information to underpin site management:**

- The evidence base to inform management needs to be fit for purpose and focussed on achieving favourable management and favourable condition for all sites and features.
- Data underpinning site management needs to be accessible to all management authorities and stakeholders.

## **B. Site management processes and partnerships**

### **B.1 Context**

Welsh MPAs have been established under various pieces of legislation both domestic and European. This legislation has set in place the legal and policy framework under which MPAs are managed and the legal duties and responsibilities of statutory bodies and, in the case of SSSIs, of landowners/occupiers in relation to MPAs<sup>12</sup>.

The European Habitats Directive (1992) was the driver for the establishment of a large proportion, by size, of the current suite of Welsh (and UK) MPAs. In the mid 1990's when marine SACs were first selected, the UK had relatively little experience in managing MPAs. As a consequence, programmes of work were initiated throughout the UK in order to establish appropriate management of these new protected areas. Much of the focus of MPA management in Wales has been directed towards the small number of large marine EMSs in order to establish management structures and processes to deliver effective management of these sites. Whilst work has been ongoing on all MPAs, other designations such as SPAs and SSSIs (out with the large EMS) have, in general, had less specific focus on their management other than responding to issues as they arise (although for some sites this has been an appropriate and sufficient approach). There is more detail about site management processes and partnerships in Hatton-Ellis *et. al.*, (2012).

There is variability in management structures and processes across the Welsh MPA site series. This lack of consistency across the suite of MPAs needs to be taken into consideration when designing a framework for better managing both individual MPAs as well as the site series as a whole. Specific consideration also needs to be given to cross border sites (such as the Dee, Severn & Liverpool Bay EMSs) and the added requirement to co-ordinate management with partners in England under increasingly divergent country legislative, policy and priority frameworks.

Partnership working on MPAs is key to their management. Summarised below are some of the groups and partnerships currently in place to deliver Welsh MPA management together with relevant issues associated with these groups.

#### ***Relevant Authority Groups***

The management of the EMS is the joint responsibility of all relevant authorities (RAs) - there is no onus on any one authority to take a lead role. It is not a statutory requirement for RAs to participate in a management scheme, although in practice in Wales the RAs for a site have become involved where Relevant Authority Groups (RAGs) have been formed and management schemes developed. A major problem identified is the lack of a statutory basis for RAGs, since under the Habitats Regulations<sup>13</sup> the establishment of a Management Scheme is optional (Regulation 36 uses the term '*may*' as opposed to '*will*' in relation to establishing Management

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<sup>12</sup> For more information see Hatton-Ellis *et. al.*, (2012)

<sup>13</sup> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2010

Schemes). This dilutes corporate support for certain authorities to get involved in RAGs and any subsequent work that the RAG undertakes.

It is also acknowledged that although RAs are brought together by the group there are still sectoral issues that sometimes impede effective partnership working and site management. There is also an issue of communication and dissemination of information from officers attending RAG meetings within their organisations and vice versa. One significant problem identified is the lack of engagement with RAGs by some competent authorities (CAs) that have responsibility for managing activities of direct relevance to MPA management, e.g. fisheries.

### ***MPA Liaison Groups***

There are currently specific liaison groups in place for three of the Welsh EMS. Liaison groups are seen as important for bringing people together and raising awareness about a site in general, but also to enable discussion about relevant issues to do with a site and its management. These groups provide a way in which stakeholders can become involved in site management and have helped improve communication between stakeholders, including developing a wider understanding of different groups' concerns. Many liaison group members provide local and specialist knowledge on a wide range of issues and topics and have contributed to the development and implementation of management schemes. Although the groups themselves are not delivering management actions, the involvement of individual group members and the local contacts that they can provide have helped to deliver specific projects addressing site issues.

The existing advisory/liason group structures vary from site to site and have developed in response to local site management requirements. The liaison groups are not specifically funded and people attend because they are interested and willing to give their time to bring views and comments into the discussion about management of the site.

While many liaison group members represent specific interests or groups, the degree to which they communicate back to a wider group of people is highly variable. It is acknowledged that establishing effective representation of all interests on a liaison group is difficult and that even where these groups are in place, other mechanisms need to be in place to disseminate information to other groups and individuals with an interest in the site.

### ***Skomer Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Committee***

An important part of the management structure for the MNR is the Skomer MNR Advisory Committee which has been in place since the designation of the MNR in 1990. The members of the Committee are drawn from 29 different marine organisations, RAs, CAs, wildlife trusts, yachting organisations, the Crown Estate and universities. The role of the Advisory Committee is<sup>14</sup>:

- To provide CCW with advice and information on all aspects of the MNR.
- To discuss with CCW, and advise on, the management of the MNR.
- To provide a forum whereby any concerns, anxieties or opinions about the MNR may be brought to the attention of the CCW.

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<sup>14</sup> CCW (1993).

### ***Other liaison groups***

A number of other liaison groups exist (e.g. Local Biodiversity Action Plan forums, coastal cell groups) that have been established to meet legislative or non-legislative requirements other than for MPAs but which nonetheless are addressing certain issues of relevance to MPA management. Some of these groups are long standing and operate effectively to address the issues under their remit. Processes and structures for MPA management need to link with these groups to avoid duplication of effort and to make use of their expertise.

### ***Partnerships in relation to SSSIs***

SSSIs, although the most numerous MPA designation, are not collectively considered through current MPA partnerships. In general SSSIs are managed through the statutory responsibilities of CCW and other MAs and the requirement on landowners and occupiers to seek consent before carrying out potentially damaging operations. CCW designates the sites and plays the lead role in relation to their management but other statutory authorities often have a role to play in delivering successful management of these MPAs. In the coastal/maritime environment MAs are landowners / occupiers and therefore have responsibilities in this capacity as well as through their role as statutory authorities (e.g. Crown Estate as landowner and local authorities who often lease the foreshore). The current MPA partnerships in Wales do not specifically encompass SSSIs and, as a result, opportunities to promote improved management of these sites are not being fully realised.

## **B.2 Evaluation, issues and possible ways forward**

The evaluation of site management processes and partnerships is divided into four sections:

- management processes
- partnership working
- local site management
- local management plans

The key issues in terms of the current MPA management processes and partnerships are:

- Lack of coordinated national direction and drive for MPA management.
- Lack of direction to MAs and insufficient national support for local MPA partnerships,
- Insufficient or unequally distributed resources.
- Lack of national MPA management framework that encompasses all MPAs.

These issues are expanded upon in subsequent sections.

### **Management processes**

To date management of Welsh MPAs has developed on an individual site-by-site basis and consequently there has been no coordinated strategy to deal with them as a network. As a result issues have been dealt with as they have arisen on individual sites rather than being addressed within coordinated long-term strategies for the suite of MPAs as a whole. Many of the issues on sites arise due to plans or projects under EU legislation and have to be dealt with at the site level. However, other issues such as fisheries, litter and pollution could be addressed across a suite of MPAs and would benefit from a coordinated national response.

Lack of a properly coordinated strategic management framework for MPAs in Wales, coupled with the large volume of reactive work that the statutory authorities undertake on a day-to-day basis, limits the ability to pre-empt and address issues before they become an acute, reactive situation. There are national issues where a coordinated management framework could provide a coherent and consistent approach for these to be dealt with throughout Wales, but there remain site specific issues that need site specific solutions.

Improvements in site processes, structures and, in particular, partnerships are key to addressing many MPA management issues. Management processes need to support delivery of MPA management at both the individual site level as well as at the national level.

**Issue 1:** MPA management is not being given a sufficiently high priority within many of the MAs. This is considered to be due primarily to the lack of a strong national strategic steer for MPA management in Wales.

**Possible way forward:** Clear direction at a national level is needed to encourage MAs to fully engage in site management processes, delivery of management actions and achievement of site objectives. This could be achieved through an MPA Management Steering Group (see Box 2).

**Issue 2:** The lack of a coordinated or coherent approach to Wales-wide issues on MPAs is hindering effective action to address national and common issues.

**Possible way forward:** Issues common across Welsh MPAs would be more effectively addressed through a coordinated approach agreed at a national level. Priorities for actions on Wales-wide issues could be identified and communicated to the proposed MPA Management Steering Group to determine appropriate action.

**Issue 3:** The current arrangements for MPA management are variable across Wales and across the different MPA designations. Some MPAs receive far more attention than others and opportunities to build on existing MPA management are not being realised.

**Possible way forward:** In order to establish a clearer framework for MPA management, Welsh waters could be sub-divided into a series of MPA management areas of an appropriate size. All MPAs within each of these spatially defined areas could be considered and managed in a more coordinated way. This spatial approach has the potential to provide a number of benefits including improved coordination between MAs, improved sharing of resources, improved coverage of MPA requirements and a framework that can readily link into future arrangements for Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and ecosystem-based management. The approach to establishing MPA management areas could be progressed by the MPA Management Steering Group.

**Box 2. Wales-wide MPA Management Steering Group:**

Responsibility for delivery of MPA management is spread across a number of management authorities with responsibility in the marine area. Welsh Government, however, have overall responsibility for governance of marine management and shares in various UK Government commitments to secure a coherent well-managed network of MPAs. As a result, Welsh Government has a strategic role in ensuring the effective management of the suite of MPAs in Wales. It is therefore proposed that a high level, cross-Wales steering group of all MAs is established to facilitate effective management of the MPA network in Wales, led by Welsh Government.

**Role and purpose**

The purpose of the group would be to support one of Government's key aims, as set out in the Marine Policy Statement and draft WG MPA Strategy, to deliver healthy and biologically diverse seas. It will do this by enabling and facilitating the delivery of a well-managed network of MPAs, specifically by:

- Fostering and maintaining a high profile for MPA management and securing commitment to delivering effective management.
- Establishing a better understanding of the management requirements of Welsh MPAs amongst Management Authorities.
- Steering action by MAs to achieve management actions across Welsh MPAs.
- Facilitating the achievement of a more consistent approach to key issues across MPAs.

**Functions**

- To meet regularly to provide a steer and support for management of Welsh MPAs.
- To oversee the delivery of regular reporting on Welsh MPAs, in line with the requirements of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009).
- To help identify, advise on, and support, significant funding applications for MPA management across the suite of sites in Wales, including fostering opportunities for cross-sectoral projects.
- To disseminate relevant information within the organisations on the Steering Group.
- To oversee and help prioritise common management issues across Welsh MPAs.
- To maintain an overview of management needs across Welsh MPAs, and to assist and steer the implementation of strategic management actions across sites.
- To steer action by MAs, where necessary, in order to achieve effective management of Welsh MPAs.
- To assist in resolving constraints to effective MPA management.
- To contribute advice on the development of the CCW Special Sites Database to facilitate its use supporting effective management of Welsh MPAs.

**Partnership Working**

Partnership working is one of the key elements associated with good practice for MPA management in Wales and has been shown to contribute to positive management of sites. Currently in Wales, most partnership working on MPAs is carried out through RAGs, SAC liaison groups and other advisory groups e.g. the Skomer Advisory Group and/or through other groups such as coastal cell groups. There is a need to strengthen and improve existing partnership groups and develop appropriate partnerships for those areas of Wales not covered by the current MPA partnership arrangements.

**Issue 4:** Locally based partnerships are important to help deliver site management. Such groups assist information sharing, increasing awareness of the importance of MPAs, identifying and

delivering management actions, and identifying opportunities for funding and sharing of resources. Currently not all MPAs benefit from effective partnership working.

**Possible way forward:** Local management groups should be established at a suitable spatial scale. Where a RAG already exists, the management group could be based on that RAG. If no RAG exists and a need is identified locally or by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group, a local management group could be established. These locally based groups should include RAs but should also be able to include others with management responsibilities or expertise for other MPAs in the area, as appropriate. The functioning of any locally based management group is dependent on having sufficient support staff (i.e. some kind of support officer) in place.

**Possible way forward:** Local management groups need to have strong links with the overarching MPA Management Steering Group. Clear transparent two-way lines of communication need to be established to allow issues to feed up to the Wales wide group and recommendations and priorities to inform local groups. Local representatives could attend the Wales wide group meetings for discussions of specific issues, if required.

**Possible way forward:** Both the local and Wales-level MPA groups should establish links with MPA projects in other devolved countries of the UK and wider to keep up to date with and learn from current work and management initiatives in these other areas e.g. Finding Sanctuary in England is working with other groups from across Europe on an EU funded project (MAIA<sup>15</sup>) to improve MPA Management in Europe.

**Issue 5:** Liaison groups were identified as having an important role in terms of engaging other stakeholders and involving them in the site management process. Members of liaison groups bring local knowledge and expertise that has helped in the identification and delivery of management actions. There is a need to retain such groups and encourage stakeholder involvement in MPA management.

**Possible way forward:** Where liaison groups are already established and are considered to be working well these should continue. The role of such groups (including membership and terms of reference (ToR)) should be kept under regular review to ensure that there is appropriate representation on the group. For areas where no liaison group exists, if a local management group is put in place this group should consider whether there is a need for a liaison group. It is important that there is flexibility with regards to the liaison arrangements that already exist, for example liaison groups or specific topic groups could be established to address specific MPA management requirements. Whatever liaison group structure is established, it is important that effective mechanisms are put in place by the local management group to allow stakeholders to feed in their opinions to the MPA management process. The functioning of liaison groups is dependent on having sufficient support staff in place.

### **Local site management**

Implementation of positive MPA management has been shown to be more effective when facilitated by a dedicated site officer. In the case of current RAGs, EMS officers<sup>16</sup> are considered essential to the development of management schemes (the main function of the RAG)

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<sup>15</sup> The European Marine Protected Areas in the Atlantic Arc (MAIA) project gathers partners from the Atlantic arc involved in MPA designation and management. <http://atlanticprojects.ccdr-n.pt/project-area/maia>

<sup>16</sup> For more information on the role of the EMS officers see Hatton-Ellis *et al.*, (2012).

and to coordinate delivery of management actions. Experience has shown that no individual RA has the resources to coordinate MPA partnerships nor the programme of work encompassed by a management scheme; the absence of a local MPA management officer means that many aspects of MPA management and the benefits of partnership working cannot be realised. To ensure that the work of dedicated site officers is targeted and well understood by MAs, there needs to be clear guidance on the scope of the site officer role.

**Issue 6:** The lack of locally based site management officers seriously undermines the effectiveness of any locally based management group and achievement of many aspects of positive MPA management.

**Possible way forward:** Any spatial management area should have at least one dedicated MPA management officer. Although the day to day work of such an officer would be set locally, these management officers should also have a role in addressing cross-Wales management issues as part of an overall MPA management programme. This programme could be set by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group and agreed by local management groups.

**Possible way forward:** The MPA Management Steering Group could produce guidance on the role of local MPA management officers to provide more consistency and clearer understanding for officers and MAs and MPA management groups.

**Possible way forward:** It will take a period of time to establish a MPA Management Steering Group. In the meantime, funding needs to be secured to retain existing local management staff in post to ensure continuity in the delivery of MPA management until any new structures, processes and partnerships are established.

### **Local management plans**

The most common form of local management plan produced for MPAs in Wales are EMS management schemes. These are schemes of work necessary to effectively manage an EMS, with the programme of work generally documented in a management scheme document or plan. The management scheme process and the production of management scheme documents or plans, in some form, are important as they bring RAs together to discuss in detail and to prioritise the actions needed to bring a site into FCS. These documents should provide a clear rationale for the management actions that are identified as well as providing an important record or baseline for future assessment of management success.

However, the EMS management scheme documents that have been produced to date have tended to be very long and unwieldy which has undermined their accessibility to MAs and others involved in site management. There is a need for appropriate documentation to support MPA management and there is considerable scope to make MPA management plans more effective through:

- Increased consistency in scope and content.
- Formal recognition of the value of such plans and the role they should have in guiding site management.
- Prioritisation of actions within the plan and development of a rolling programme of management on the ground to deliver the actions.
- Identification of overlapping drivers and targets from other policies and initiatives that could be delivered through a single approach.

- Securing funding for delivery of priority actions.
- Making management plans/management scheme documents more easily updatable.
- Improved feedback from site monitoring to report on and influence site management.

Barriers to implementing actions in management plans include: (i) lack of resources (both funding and time) to implement actions, and (ii) lack of buy-in or engagement from RAs corporately (rather than the officers sitting on the RAG) to undertake the actions identified and (iii) lack of consensus on what management action is actually required to improve the condition of sites. It is important that the process of production of management plans is inclusive, working with all MAs, to ensure support and understanding of the final product.

**Issue 7:** There is a need for some form of local management plan detailing the specific work that needs to be undertaken on individual MPAs . The structure of current MPA management plans needs to be improved and made more consistent across MPAs in Wales. There is a need to improve the status of MPA management plans in terms of their role in setting the necessary programme of work to deliver effective MPA management.

**Possible way forward:** A minimum standard for scope and content of MPA management plans, and an inclusive production process, should be set by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group.

**Possible way forward:** The MPA Management Steering Group could provide guidance to MAs on the role of MPA management plans and encourage integrated planning and delivery of MPA management with other policies and initiatives where appropriate.

### B.3 Best Practice Principles

#### Principles for site management processes and partnerships:

- Management processes on Welsh MPAs need to be fit for purpose, effective and adaptable.
- Structures, processes and management delivery needs to be appropriate to address MPA management at both the network and individual site level.
- Long-term commitment to effective MPA management requires a high level steer and a lead body to provide both direction and example to other management authorities

## **C. Awareness and understanding**

### **C.1 Context**

Numerous studies have shown that positive conservation management of a protected area (marine or terrestrial) can be assisted by creating both a greater awareness and an improved understanding about the area and its requirements. Developing awareness and understanding of an MPA requires information to be supplied to a very broad audience that may well encompass casually interested parties at one end of the scale, to those involved in delivering site management who require highly detailed technical information at the other. Information about what wildlife lives within the area will be useful for the former, whilst the latter will need a more detailed understanding of the site together with a working knowledge of the relevant legislation and its implementation.

The key to achieving positive conservation through awareness and understanding depends on having the appropriate information and being able to deliver it effectively to those who need it. MPAs are unlike their terrestrial counterparts in that their extensive underwater areas are neither readily viewed nor visited by most of the Welsh population. This creates a unique challenge requiring ongoing and innovative approaches in order to maintain a constructive level of awareness and understanding.

Several statutory and non-statutory organisations and groups are involved in awareness raising in relation to the marine environment in Wales in a general, but also specifically in relation to MPAs. This can be at a national level, e.g. Wales-wide campaigns or at a very local level, e.g. rock pooling events run by local authorities in relation to a specific MPA. In addition, individual MPAs are often involved in awareness raising as part of a regional or national corporate interpretation programme. The focus of this is often quite generic and not necessarily focussed on addressing understanding of specific MPA issues. Awareness and understanding is also promoted through some marine-related industries, such as wildlife watching trips and tours, and other sea-based activities.

While any communication between parties involved with MPAs provides an ongoing opportunity for raising awareness and understanding, the majority of more organised activity has focussed mostly on the larger EMS. The RAGs, advisory/liason groups and work of the EMSOs provide particular opportunities for raising awareness and understanding about individual MPAs and wider issues relating to the Welsh marine environment. Where EMSOs are in place there has generally been some proportion of their work focussed on raising awareness and understanding about all aspects of MPA management such as the wildlife of the site, the role and statutory responsibilities of different organisations and the impact of different activities on the site.

The main focus of the MPA awareness raising and understanding work to date has tended to be raising awareness with the general public, user groups and others about the marine wildlife that exists and is protected by the EMS and, to some extent, about the value of this wildlife and the marine environment to Wales, Welsh businesses and society in general. The experience of management authority staff, Advisory/liason groups, EMSOs, and others involved in EMS management has been that most people have very little understanding of Welsh marine wildlife

and are often astonished to learn that there is something there that is interesting, colourful and worth looking after. Whilst the hidden nature of the marine environment can act as a barrier to raising awareness and understanding, it is also one of the things that can engage people – the lure of the hidden undersea and the secrets therein. A European report on public perceptions of Europe’s seas found that there needs to be a wider social engagement beyond the limited “stakeholder” approach. It also found a big difference between the perceived threats on the seas by the general public and the actual threats as highlighted by scientists<sup>17</sup>. This shows that there need to be stronger focussed campaigns highlighting the main threats to the marine environment.

Currently, there is no strategic programme for raising awareness and understanding about MPAs in Wales, and no general consensus on the importance of this work in delivering effective site management at all levels. Nevertheless, a number of successful projects aimed at raising awareness and understanding amongst different groups have been undertaken on specific MPAs (Box 3).

**Box 3 Good practice examples of awareness raising:**

- The Code of Conduct for Recreational Boating produced for Cardigan Bay EMS (supported with funding through the Crown Estate’s Marine Stewardship Programme).
- The Pen Llŷn a’r Sarnau ‘Living Coasts - Living Seas Project’, funded through Interreg IIIa which implemented a variety of awareness raising projects and investigated the effectiveness of the different approaches used.
- Biodiversity training day within Gwynedd Council to raise awareness about environmental legislation and responsibilities of management authorities such as the Council for, amongst other things, EMSs and SSSIs.
- The Pen Llŷn a’r Sarnau SAC’s ‘Turning Tide’ project aimed at raising awareness about the impact of litter in the marine environment and on SAC features and encouraging positive action by local groups. Project run in conjunction with Keep Wales Tidy, Tidy Towns initiative, Marine Conservation Society and local action groups.
- Marine education framework project: initiated by the Group of European Marine Sites (GEMS) to establish a central resource of marine-related educational material for teachers. Initial engagement with teachers is complete. Work is ongoing to establish an easily accessible web-based repository for curriculum-linked marine educational resources.

## **C.2 Evaluation, issues and possible ways forward**

Awareness and understanding is divided into two sections:

- awareness and understanding at a strategic level
- awareness and understanding at a site level

### **Awareness and understanding at a strategic level**

The level of awareness and understanding of existing MPAs, their wildlife and the issues that may affect them is extremely variable, even amongst MAs that have specific duties and

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<sup>17</sup> Potts *et al.*, (2011)

responsibilities in relation to site management. This includes a view amongst some stakeholders of MPAs as barriers to development and economic regeneration rather than as an asset for present and future generations, underpinning essential ecosystem services that support local and national socio-economic interests. These considerations may be some of the factors contributing to the lack of success in achieving effective site management in some sites. It is important that this lack of understanding is addressed at a strategic Wales-wide level. There needs to be clear messages communicated about Welsh MPAs including about their importance and value to Wales, not just for biodiversity conservation but also for the socio-economic benefits that a well managed suite of MPAs can deliver for the whole of Wales and Welsh society.

**Issue 1:** Awareness and understanding about MPAs has been identified as lacking at various levels and amongst various stakeholders from school level through to decisions makers. There is currently no overall coherent strategy to guide this work on Welsh MPAs, nor any clear strategic messages about the value of MPAs and of an ecologically coherent and well managed network of MPAs.

**Possible way forward:** Clear messages about the current and future importance and value of Welsh MPAs and an MPA network need to be developed and disseminated to relevant stakeholders. These messages need to consider the wider marine management context as well as the benefits of MPAs to the environment and society. This work could be promoted by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group and through local management groups.

**Possible way forward:** A strategic communication plan should be developed for the suite of Welsh MPAs that identifies clear outcomes for awareness and understanding for the different groups and individuals involved with MPAs. This work could be overseen by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group with input from local management groups and individuals with experience in awareness raising in relation to MPAs. A strategic communication plan would need to:

- Consider both network level and site level communication requirements.
- Identify options for awareness raising initiatives at these different levels as well as appropriate delivery mechanisms through a rolling programme of work.
- Identify approaches to improve sharing of information and resources for awareness raising.
- Build on successful awareness raising initiatives that have already been carried out on MPAs.
- Identify appropriate funding mechanisms, including the potential availability of external funds to support delivery of awareness raising initiatives.

### **Awareness and understanding at a site delivery level**

Awareness raising is also important at a site level, particularly where specific local issues need to be addressed. Where awareness raising is related to addressing specific management issues, it should be linked to clear initiatives that people can contribute to e.g. raising awareness about sea level rise with local residents is more beneficial if there is something they can then contribute to e.g. a Shoreline Management Plan or local flood defence scheme. It should be noted on Welsh MPAs where there has been a concerted effort to raise awareness the benefits and value of the site are recognised by many of the people involved.

**Issue 2:** Preparing and implementing a strategic communications plan as suggested above may take some time. In the meantime there is a risk that work to raise awareness and understanding of MPAs will be neglected.

**Possible way forward:** MAs need to continue work to raise understanding and awareness about MPAs and their management and their role in delivering wider ecosystem benefits.

**Possible way forward:** In relation to MAs, awareness raising needs to include identification of any training needs and provision of appropriate training in relation to delivering their roles, responsibilities and duties.

**Possible way forward:** The Marine Education Framework project to establish easily accessible web-based repository for curriculum-linked marine educational resources should be completed and this facility should be implemented and widely publicised throughout Wales. A strategic communications plan for MPAs would also encompass this work area.

### C.3 Best Practice Principles

**Principles for awareness and understanding:**

- Awareness and understanding are fundamental to achieving the objectives of MPAs. Different approaches to raising awareness and understanding are required depending on the target audience as many different groups have a potential role in ensuring sites achieve favourable condition.
- The wider effects of favourable MPA management on marine ecosystems and services need to be communicated to ensure the benefits and value of a healthy suite of MPAs and a healthy marine environment are understood by policy makers, decision makers and sea users.

## **D. Legislative and policy framework**

### **D.1 Context**

The statutory framework for the designation and management of MPAs is complex. Most types of MPA in Welsh waters are governed by different legislation with different authorities or groups of authorities responsible for management. For example, CCW is the lead authority for the management of SSSIs whereas responsibility for securing favourable management of SACs falls to all relevant and competent authorities identified in the Habitats Regulations<sup>18</sup>. There are also different management mechanisms and tools, some of which are designation-specific (e.g. Section 15 management agreements on SSSIs) and others that can be applied to any relevant MPA as well as elsewhere in Welsh seas (e.g. Fisheries Orders). Hatton-Ellis *et al.* (2012) provides further details on existing legislation and the way in which this is currently implemented in Wales.

Although the statutory framework is complex it is largely comprehensive in terms of the management options and tools available. Securing favourable management of MPAs is also dependent on a supportive policy framework for delivery of both legislative requirements and appropriate non-legislative action.

The evaluation raises a number of issues pertaining to both the existing legislative basis for MPA management and also the political and policy framework under which management decisions are made and carried out.

### **D.2 Evaluation, issues and possible ways forward**

Legislative and policy framework is divided into two sections:

- legislative and policy framework at a strategic level
- legislative and policy framework impacts at a site delivery level

#### **Legislative and policy framework: strategic level**

The existing legislative structure is fit for purpose, but it is not always being implemented in order to deliver the objectives of MPAs, or supported by clear policy priorities across MAs to secure favourable management of MPAs. Improving awareness and understanding amongst MAs would help in overcoming the issue of inadequate implementation of legislation, together with a clear high level steer on the value and importance of effectively managed MPAs.

A particular issue in relation to inadequate implementation of legislation is that whilst relevant regulatory procedures are usually followed decisions are still made which cause, or could cause, damage to an MPA. Some specific examples of these include:

- Limited control of fishing effort.
- Multiple consents not always being dealt with in combination.

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<sup>18</sup> Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulation 2010.

- Exemptions under the new Marine License (e.g. deposition of shellfish; aquaculture structures; some forms of dredging in certain circumstances e.g. within Harbour Authority Areas) giving rise to the potential for damaging activities to go ahead without due consideration of potential impacts on sites.
- Difficulty in enforcing regulations in the marine environment.
- Gaps in strategic planning at the land /sea interface and devolution issues such as ports.

A further concern is the perception amongst authorities that biodiversity policy is at times at variance with other policy drivers creating apparent conflicting legislative obligations for some MAs. For example, the relationship between Government Renewable Energy policy and obligations to protect and manage Habitats Directive sites is sometimes seen as creating conflicting priorities. Apparent conflicts may relate to a need for greater clarity over the relationship between statutory and policy drivers, rather than to real conflicts of interest and this needs to be investigated.

One gap in the legislation has been identified; that some damaging or potentially damaging activities escape regulation or assessment (e.g. some activities not considered a plan or project are not subject to assessment under Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive e.g. General Fisheries Licence). If the wider value of favourable management of MPAs was better understood and supported by all MAs it is possible that a legislative gap such as this would be less significant due to more favourable policy towards the proactive use of both legislative and non legislative tools to secure effective management.

**Issue 1:** Even though there is a general awareness of relevant legislation, conflicting priorities and requirements on MAs often means that other drivers take precedence over MPA requirements, leading to difficulties in achieving MPA objectives.

**Possible ways forward:** Clear and consistent messages need to be developed about the positive value of a well managed suite of MPAs, not only to the environment, but more widely to society in terms of the services and social benefits they help secure. These need to be supported at a high level ideally by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group. This links to communication issues raised in Section C.

**Possible way forward:** To prevent further apparent inconsistencies in policy drivers and legislative requirements, and to ensure MPA management is integrated with other marine priorities, any new legislation and policy should take into consideration the strategic purpose, objectives and requirements of the suite of Welsh MPAs.

**Possible way forward:** MAs require clear direction on their obligations towards MPAs and what they are expected to deliver, ideally provided by Welsh Government. This would, preferably, be underpinned by integrated guidance for MAs, overseen by the MPA Management Steering group, on the management of MPAs. The guidance should provide:

- Clarity on the purpose of MPAs and what the suite of MPAs is intended to deliver.
- Clarity on roles and responsibilities in relation to management of MPAs.
- A clear steer on Wales' interpretation and understanding of MPA legislation, and means of compliance and enforcement.
- Mechanisms to increase the efficiency in the way activities requiring multiple consents are dealt with, including identifying lead authorities, so that the cumulative effects of multiple activities and developments are properly assessed.

- The way other environmental regulations (e.g. Water Framework Directive, Environmental Liability Directive) can be used to maximum effect in MPAs.

In addition we suggest that:

- The advice is clearly integrated with, and does not duplicate, existing designation-specific guidance (e.g. CCW guidance on HRA projects),
- Consistent and regular training should be given to MAs to ensure awareness and understanding of obligations (see also Section C – Awareness and Understanding),
- Information should be collected on the extent to which statutory advice is followed and, where not followed, the rationale for not doing so.

### **Legislative and policy framework impacts: site delivery level**

At the site delivery level shortcomings in site management can often be linked back to the strategic issues identified above. However, there are also a number of more specific issues identified through this evaluation that have a direct impact on management and hence condition of existing MPAs. These specific issues relate to: (i) the management of fishing impacts, (ii) enforcement, (iii) management of unregulated activities and (iv) licence exemptions.

**Issue 2:** The level of fishing effort in most fisheries is not subject to effective control, yet the level of effort is, for many MPAs, fundamental to meeting their conservation objectives.

**Possible way forward:** All avenues to control fishing effort to achieve conservation objectives should be explored and used as appropriate. Mechanisms are also needed to ensure recording and reporting of fisheries activity to inform site management. Welsh Government is now the MA for fisheries in Welsh waters. Welsh Government fisheries division is currently undertaking a review of fisheries legislation in Wales, which is an opportunity to take proper account of MPAs and their management requirements.

**Issue 3:** Enforcement of existing regulations is not sufficient to deter infringements. This relates to the likelihood of infringements being identified, the difficulties in bringing successful prosecutions to court and the size of fines likely to be given in court.

**Possible way forward:** Clarity is required regarding who is responsible for enforcement of different activities in different MPAs, with clear guidance developed by Welsh Government for what this entails. (This could be integrated with guidance recommended under issue 1). In addition, sufficient resourcing is needed to secure effective enforcement. The Welsh Government review of fisheries legislation is also an opportunity to address enforcement issues for fisheries.

**Issue 4:** Unregulated activities such as many recreational activities remain a problem in securing favourable site management.

**Possible way forward:** New powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act provide Welsh Government with the ability to put in place Nature Conservation Orders (NCOs) (in MCZs and EMS) and should be used proactively to manage otherwise unregulated activities that pose a threat to achieving MPA objectives. Where unregulated activities are causing similar issues on a number of MPAs, it will be more efficient to take a coordinated approach to the application of NCOs across a number of sites.

**Issue 5:** Exemptions from specific licensing processes, in particular Marine Act Licensing<sup>19</sup>, mean certain activities can take place without any process being followed to assess impacts on conservation objectives of MPAs. Examples include ‘shellfish propagation and cultivation’, ‘deposit of moorings and piles’ and ‘maintenance of harbours’.

**Possible way forward:** For some exempted activities, such as ‘use of vehicles to remove litter or seaweed from beaches’ and ‘scientific instruments’ the exemption does not apply where the activity is likely to have an effect on a European Site or Ramsar Site. We recommend that all exempted activities that may impact on any type of MPA be subject to this condition with a derogation for activities that must be carried out urgently for reasons of emergency/public health and safety.

### D.3 Best Practice Principles

**Principles for legislative and policy framework:**

- Legislative structures need to be fit for purpose to enable effective MPA management.
- The policy and political framework needs to enable, as opposed to constrain, decision making that delivers conservation objectives and should also reflect the vision, and strategic objectives of the MPA management framework.

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<sup>19</sup> The Marine Licensing (Exempted Activities) (Wales) Order 2011. No. 559 (W. 81).

## E. Resources

### E.1 Context

Resources for MPA management need to cover the breadth of work that MPA management entails including, but not limited to:

- Provision of supporting information to underpin site management, including survey, monitoring and research.
- Delivery by appropriately skilled staff in MAs of day-to-day duties that help to deliver effective MPA management (e.g. provision of consents, licences for activities that may have potential to have a negative impact on an MPA).
- Development of a management plan.
- Implementation of management actions.
- Coordination and facilitation of partnership groups and liaison that help deliver site management.
- Specific initiatives to address management issues (on sites and/or nationally).
- Raising awareness and understanding about MPAs and their management requirements.
- Enforcement and compliance monitoring.

Currently, the resources available for managing different types of MPA in Wales are highly variable. Whilst resources have been made available to establish and operate management processes and partnerships on some of the larger EMS, in most cases these are not secure in the long term. Some aspects of MPA management are resourced primarily through the running costs of MAs and, in a few cases elements of MPA management are delivered through other bodies such as Wildlife Trusts. For example in the Menai Strait, the North Wales Wildlife Trust marine officer has carried out general awareness activities, some of which related directly to the Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC.

Funding for the implementation of management schemes (including EMS officers) on EMS is currently provided through contributions from one or more of the RAs for a site, sometimes with additional external funding (e.g. Objective 1 funding was secured for an initial period of development of the Pembrokeshire Marine management scheme). The relative contributions by different RAs is highly variable depending on their resourcing constraints and the significance of the EMS to their statutory role; e.g. some RAs have only a very small (spatial or statutory) area of responsibility in relation to a particular EMS and may only be corresponding members of a RAG, and therefore may not contribute to the management scheme, or just contribute a nominal amount of funding. As the statutory conservation body in Wales, CCW has contributed to the funding of all the management scheme processes in Wales, with the relative proportion varying between sites depending on the contributions from other RAs (for more information see Hatton-Ellis *et al.*, 2012).

Advisory/liason groups such as the Skomer Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group and the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC Liaison Group are voluntary and no expenses are paid to members attending group meetings. The cost of facilities for meeting venues is generally covered by one or more of the MAs and EMS officers have a crucial role in facilitating the meetings and acting as a first point of contact for advisory/liason group members. These groups can play an important

role in helping identify external funding opportunities for projects and work to help deliver management action.

The existence of partnerships such as the RAGs and advisory/liason groups can be very beneficial in terms of securing external funding where involvement of stakeholders can be a key requirement (e.g. The Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau 'Living Coasts - Living Seas Project', funded through Interreg IIIa).

## **E.2 Evaluation, issues and possible ways forward**

Resources is divided into two sections:

- resource needs at a strategic Wales wide level
- resource needs at a site delivery level

### **Resource needs at a strategic Wales wide level**

It should be recognised that delivery of better management of MPAs is very dependent on resources and appropriate targeting and prioritisation of those resources. The possible ways forward suggested in sections A-D have significant resource implications and it is acknowledged that not all may be affordable at this time. This lack of resources should not hinder the identification of what the best approach to management of MPAs in Wales is, and how better management can lead to improved conservation status. One option could be to consider a phased introduction of the possible ways forward from this report on a prioritised basis as determined by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group.

**Issue 1:** There is no statutory basis for the engagement of RAs in RAGs, development of management schemes (MSs) or financial support for MS development and implementation.

**Possible way forward:** Clear high-level direction should be given through the MPA Management Steering Group, led by WG, that all MAs should give MPA management sufficient priority. This needs to include incentives to ensure provision of adequate funding for MPA management. One option could be to include MPA management in Welsh Government's remit letters, or equivalent, to MAs.

**Issue 2:** We need to collect information about MPAs to improve the evidence base and to increase the collation of existing data on sites and to make this data more accessible. We also need to collect information on the need and efficacy of enforcement.

**Possible way forward:** Ensure that adequate survey, monitoring, compliance and enforcement is fully resourced and supported for our suite of MPAs, including new needs identified in the future, e.g. for MCZs.

**Possible way forward:** Each MA to make funding available that would enable their relevant MPA data to be readily accessible.

**Issue 3:** One of the possible ways forward for awareness raising and understanding on MPAs (Section C) was to prepare and implement a strategic communications plan that identifies clear outcomes for awareness and understanding for the different groups and individuals involved in MPAs. This undertaking, especially the implementation, will have resource implications although

there is a lot of scope for creating a communications plan that also had added benefits for other ongoing areas of work e.g. Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) or the Sustaining a Living Wales programme.

**Possible way forward:** Ensure, through clear direction provided by the MPA Management Steering Group and WG, that the relevant MAs commit resources to develop and implement a prioritised communication strategy for Welsh MPAs.

### **Resource needs at a site delivery level**

Having the right resources, both in terms of experienced staff in MAs and sufficient financial resources to develop and take forward site management is essential to achieve effective long-term management of MPAs; this includes MAs being sufficiently resourced to be able to undertake their day-to-day responsibilities (including responding to reactive work) on MPAs. Lack of resources and uncertainty about longer term funding is a serious obstacle to achieving the aims of the Welsh MPA strategy. Although funding has been obtained for a range of MPA management activity over the past 15 years, in general there has not been a secure, long-term basis for this. As a result, some MPA management has been blighted by intermittent stop-start bouts of activity that only serve to undermine commitment to partnerships and delivery of agreed outcomes, whilst on other sites there has been no management over and above responding to issues as they arise.

The lack of resources for the development and implementation of management plans, including the recruitment and retention of local management staff is a major barrier to effective management of these sites. The current arrangements for local management officers are temporary and precarious and are not supported by a clear over-arching framework for MPA management. This situation is undermining MPA management in the long-term and the ability to establish an effective and coordinated approach to management delivery.

**Issue 4:** Lack of secure funding is a major barrier to better management of MPAs in Wales.

**Possible way forward:** The suitability of core or ring-fenced funding, from Welsh Government, to support local management plan development and implementation, including funding of local MPA management officers should be examined, perhaps using a similar model to that used for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) officers. This funding could be linked to delivery of prioritised management actions identified by the MPA Management Steering Group.

**Issue 5:** Lack of coordinated management of Welsh MPAs may have led to missed opportunities to secure European and other funding streams to deliver MPA management priorities where possible/appropriate.

**Possible way forward:** The MPA Management Steering Group could identify opportunities and support bids for external funded projects to address management issues across the suite of Welsh MPAs. The presence of existing partnership groups for MPAs is likely to contribute positively to securing external funding. It should be noted that achieving this is dependent on core funding and is not a substitute for a long-term funding arrangement for MPA management.

### E.3 Best Practice Principles

**Principle for best practice for resourcing MPAs:**

- Secure and targeted resources need to be made available to deliver appropriate management and monitoring to achieve favourable condition on Welsh MPAs.

## 5. VISION & BEST PRACTICE

### 5.1 A vision for Wales' MPAs

There is currently no vision or associated objectives for the suite of Welsh MPAs. It is appropriate and beneficial for this to be done in the context of developing marine spatial plans for Welsh waters. CCW proposes the following vision for management of Welsh MPAs:

*Welsh MPAs are under effective, consistent management that safeguards the marine wildlife and habitats of those sites and delivers wider ecosystem and socio-economic benefits including the delivery of clean, safe, healthy, productive and biologically diverse Welsh seas. MPAs are valued for the benefit they provide to the people of Wales through the protection of their rich natural and cultural heritage, and their role in helping to ensure that the marine environment continues to provide a range of benefits to society for the long term.*

This vision reflects the high level marine objectives laid out by Defra in 2009 and agreed to by each of the devolved administrations<sup>20</sup>, as well as the wider benefits that may be delivered through MPAs.

### 5.2 Best Practice Principles for MPA management in Wales

Each of the previous sections has explored the assessments, the evaluation and other wider research on each subject area. These have informed the development of the series of best practice principles found at the end of each section which, if followed in Wales should lead to improved MPA management, keep sites either in or moving towards FCS and lead to better integration both between sites and with wider marine issues. These best practice principles are brought together here.

- The evidence base to inform management needs to be fit for purpose and focussed on achieving favourable management and favourable condition for all sites and features,
- Data underpinning site management needs to be accessible to all management authorities and stakeholders.
- Management processes on Welsh MPAs need to be fit for purpose, effective and adaptable.
- Structures, processes and management delivery needs to be appropriate to address MPA management at both the network and individual site level.
- Long-term commitment to effective MPA management requires a high level steer and a lead body to provide both direction and example to other management authorities.
- Awareness and understanding are fundamental to achieving the objectives of MPAs. Different approaches to raising awareness and understanding are required depending on the target audience as many different groups have a potential role in ensuring sites achieve favourable condition.

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<sup>20</sup> Defra (2009).

- The wider effects of favourable MPA management on marine ecosystems and services need to be communicated to ensure the benefits and value of a healthy suite of MPAs and a healthy marine environment are understood by policy makers, decision makers and sea users.
- Legislative structures need to be fit for purpose to enable effective MPA management.
- The policy and political framework needs to enable, as opposed to constrain, decision making that delivers conservation objectives and should also reflect the vision, and strategic objectives of the MPA management framework.
- Secure and targeted resources need to be made available to deliver appropriate management and achieve favourable condition on Welsh MPAs.

These Best Practice Principles are by their very definition aspirational. Some of these principles are being put into practice on Welsh MPAs already. These Best Practice Principles needs to underpin all MPA management activity across the full suite of sites in Wales as well as inform other policy and operational activity that may affect MPA management and condition.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS, RISKS AND NEXT STEPS

This evaluation has identified the main issues with current MPA management practices in Wales and presents possible ways forward to address these issues.

The key conclusion of CCW's evaluation of the current arrangements for MPA management is that they are not fit to achieve Welsh Government's stated aims for the suite of Welsh MPAs, that is to "contribute to the development of an ecologically coherent UK network of well managed MPAs" and that "The network will conserve rare, threatened, and representative species and habitats to enhance biodiversity and ecosystems<sup>21</sup>."

The main issues with the current management of Welsh MPAs are considered to be:

- Inconsistency in MPA management in Wales in terms of approach, effort and resource allocation.
- The need for a clearer high-level steer from Welsh Government (WG) on the importance of our MPAs.
- Current low priority given to MPA management by many management authorities.
- MPA management in Wales is not effectively resourced in terms of prioritisation of funding for management action and sufficient appropriately training staff in management authorities.

Many issues concerning MPA management in Wales were raised in this report and a number of possible ways forward have been presented (summarised in Annex 5). Some of these suggestions are far ranging with the potential to have a significant impact on how Welsh MPAs are managed, others are more site specific. In summary the evaluation has concluded that a more integrated approach to management of Welsh MPAs is needed in order to address issues across the suite of sites in a prioritised, appropriate and consistent manner. This approach needs to be underpinned by better informed MAs with policies that actively support securing favourable management of MPAs, together with adequate resourcing of priority management activity.

A more integrated, holistic approach to the management of all Welsh MPAs is also consistent with Welsh Government's Sustaining a Living Wales approach<sup>22</sup> which seeks to take an ecosystem-based approach to management of the environment and natural resources, integrating environmental objectives with the delivery of economic and social objectives. Establishing a strategic governance structure that brings together all MPAs at the local, regional and national scale enables the delivery of a strategic vision, objectives, management priorities and consistent management approaches. This in turn allows MPA management to be more meaningfully incorporated into a system of marine planning so that it contributes more effectively to delivery of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and reflects the key principles of the Sustaining a Living Wales approach.

The MPA management framework proposed through this evaluation depends on the setting up and operation of a Wales-wide MPA Management Steering Group and suitably sized management areas where all MPAs, of all designations, are considered. The MPA management

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<sup>21</sup> WAG (2009).

<sup>22</sup> WAG (2010)

framework, if properly resourced and implemented, could deliver a series of outputs and outcomes that together will help secure a more sustainable future for Welsh seas. These include:

### Outputs:

- A clear steer on MPA management from a Wales-wide MPA Management Steering Group.
- Prioritised management action across the suite of Welsh MPAs.
- Adoption of a series of MPA management Best Practice Principles by all management authorities.
- Regional/local management authority groups addressing all MPAs in an area.
- Prioritisation of national and local resources for MPA management.
- A management plan for individual management areas, including prioritised action across all site designations.
- Local MPA management officers who could act as a single point of contact and improve partnership working across management authority groups.
- A Wales-wide communication strategy covering all management areas.
- A properly resourced favourable condition assessment framework covering all MPAs.

### Outcomes:

- A well managed suite of MPAs in Wales contributing to UK, European and International MPA network commitments.
- Improved environmental and ecosystem benefits and services from the suite of Welsh MPAs through improved management practices.
- MPA management that is guided by a series of Best Practice Principles.
- Increased opportunities for MPA management to be integrated with strategic initiatives such as marine planning, the MSFD and the Sustaining a Living Wales programme.
- A more consistent, cost-effective and efficient approach to MPA management.
- Effective delivery of MPA management at both a national and local (site) level.
- Improved awareness of MPA management requirements within all management authorities.
- Stronger, better informed and well supported local management groups.
- Clear high level commitment from government and management authorities for MPA management.
- Improved partnership working to deliver effective MPA management.
- Improved communication from a local to a national level and vice versa.
- Integration of new MPAs such as MCZs into an existing management framework, minimising additional management complexities and resource requirement from new MPAs.
- Long term secure funding to deliver effective MPA management.

## 6.1 Risks

The **primary risk** associated with failure to improve the management of our MPAs as identified in this report, is the deterioration in condition of MPAs and site features and consequent further degradation of the marine environment and reduction in the ability of the marine environment to cope with pressures and change. Linked to this is loss of associated services that MPAs support and that people value, depend on and enjoy.

Some of the issues identified pose greater risks for securing effective MPA management than others and hence the relative priority of some of these issues and possible ways forward is greater than others. A series of risks have been identified associated with failure to address the issues in this report.

Risks of not implementing a more strategic approach to securing effective management of MPAs include:

- Failure to deliver favourable condition on our MPAs.
- Inability to target diminishing resources effectively to deal with site management issues.
- Inability to replicate current effort consistently across the suite of MPAs (including Dee and Menai Strait & Conwy Bay SACs, Liverpool Bay SPA, SSSIs and any new MCZ's).
- Lack of consistency in approach to dealing with cross-Wales issues.
- Lack of ability to advise Welsh Government effectively on the MPA network to support Marine Act reporting.
- CCW are less able to influence and use the marine planning system to support effective management of MPAs.
- Loss of opportunities to improve partnership working and sharing of resources to deliver better MPA management in Wales.
- Loss of existing public buy-in, awareness and appreciation.
- Failure to integrate MPA management and (compliance) monitoring with wider marine planning initiatives.
- Failure to achieve WG's stated aims for MPAs.
- Failure to realise the contribution of MPAs to providing ecosystem services.

Site/local level risks:

- Damage to sites due to lack of appropriate management action by management authorities.
- Loss of current local staff due to funding cuts could have the effect of:
  - loss of momentum in EMS management
  - disruption of current site level projects
  - reducing momentum of current action on individual sites
  - disruption of RAG meetings
  - loss of local knowledge and skills
  - possible break down of good stakeholder relationships
  - reduction in public engagement

### **6.3 Next Steps**

Across Wales for all management activity and all management authorities a clear priority has emerged from the evaluation; this is the establishment of a Government-led Wales-wide MPA Management Steering Group. This group has been identified as a preferred solution to a wide ranging set of issues from securing management authority commitment to prioritising management action across the network delivering greater effectiveness and efficiency in management and conservation outcomes. It is therefore a first priority for CCW to advise Government and management authorities on the need for and scope of this group and to assist in facilitating its establishment.

A further immediate step for CCW is to identify additional priority action from the proposals in section 4, both for CCW and across all management authorities in Wales. The prioritisation needs to be made on the basis of level of risks to deterioration in site management and site condition, as well as on the basis of best use of resources. All action identified will also need to be assessed against the suite of Best Practice Principles identified in this report.

CCW is committed to working with Welsh Government and partners to improve the management of our MPAs and in turn support a more sustainable future for Welsh seas, helping to secure the many benefits and services we enjoy and receive from the seas around us.

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## ANNEXES

**Annex 1.1:** Summary of responses from on-line MPA Management questionnaire relating to current management on marine sites.

	Question	Response
<b>3a</b>	Do you think that a dedicated management Group (i.e. a Relevant Authority Group and/or Site Advisory Panel) is important for MPA Management?	Yes – 100% No – 0%
<b>3b</b>	Please indicate if your organisation is involved in such a group and any benefits.	A Management Group is seen as having an important role in improving delivery of management outputs and developing more cost-effective joint working, as well as being important for the preparation of a Management Plan. However, it is clear that Management Groups have limitations because they are chiefly advisory and do not actually manage the site directly, and they have no powers to ensure appropriate management activity is being delivered.
<b>4a</b>	How important, on a scale of 1 to 5, (5 being the most important), is the presence of dedicated local site management staff (e.g. SAC Officer) for effective management of MPAs?	1 – 9.4%    2 – 6.3%    3 – 6.3%    4 – 18.8%    5 – 59.4%
<b>4b</b>	What are the main benefits of on-site staff (e.g. SAC Officer)?	Key benefits of having a site officer are identified as the co-ordinating role they play in ensuring action is taken, delivery of education and awareness-raising and a source of local and detailed knowledge. Other views were expressed that the work could be re-packaged and delivered by partner organisations, and that officers frequently lack the 'clout' to really influence key decisions of partners (this also relates to funding issues).
<b>5a</b>	Are statutory tools (such as byelaws, orders etc) being applied and enforced successfully on MPAs?	Yes – 40%    No – 60%
<b>5b</b>	Please give details to support your response.	There is considered to be a lack of enforcement, and related to this, a lack of resources and / or the right tools for enforcement and a lack of willingness to put in place measures that will require enforcement
<b>6</b>	What, in your opinion, is needed to improve current MPA Management?	A wide variety of activity was suggested to improve current management. The most common themes related to (1) increased political and relevant authority will and commitment and (2) improved enforcement and regulatory protection. Other common themes were: (3) an improved management framework; (4) better survey, monitoring and surveillance; (5) better resourcing of management action, enforcement and survey etc, and (6) improved understanding (at all levels, political to wider public) of the importance of MPAs and the marine environment.
<b>7a</b>	In your opinion, does a high level of public	Yes – 40%    No – 60%

	awareness of MPAs lead to improved site management?	
<b>7b</b>	Please provide reasons for your response.	There is a general view that where the public are in a position to directly affect site management (e.g. by altering their own behaviour such as recreation activities or products they purchase) then public awareness-raising has a direct benefit. More widely, public awareness is seen as important to help understanding of the value of sites, and potentially encourage indirect benefits such as public pressure on management bodies. However, the main way site management is improved remains through the activities of relevant authorities.
<b>8a</b>	The Marine & Coastal Act is moving us towards management of MPAs as a network, rather than a collection of individual sites. Do you think this will significantly change the way MPAs are currently managed?	Yes – 59.3%      No – 40.7%
<b>8b</b>	Please explain the reason for your response	Network management is expected to change the way MPAs are currently managed, primarily by providing a coordinated approach across all sites that allows more effective use of resources and enables strategic ecosystem-scale issues to be tackled across Wales. However, the need for an identified lead agency was highlighted by some
<b>9a</b>	At the moment do you know of any common management issues being tackled across a suite of MPAs (SSSIs, SPAs, SACs, MCZs, RAMSARs)?	Yes – 70.4%      No – 29.6%
<b>9b</b>	If yes, please provide examples.	A wide variety of common management issues were cited, although few were illustrated with specific examples. The most commonly cited example of management issues being tackled across a number of sites was fisheries management, with shellfisheries and scallop dredging being the key specific examples identified.
<b>10a</b>	In Wales all Relevant Authorities have the same rights and responsibilities for European Marine Sites (i.e. SACs & SPAs), in other countries (e.g. France) one organisation takes the lead in marine management. Which approach do you think would lead to better marine site management?	Multi-agency – 38.5%      Lead organisation – 61.5%
<b>10b</b>	Please explain your choice	There was a strong preference for a single lead agency, predominantly on the grounds that that single body would have the necessary expertise, the focus to priorities MPA management, and would provide consistency of approach and co-ordination between other organisations. A multi-agency approach was cited as preference in complex large estuaries, such as the Severn estuary.

**Annex 1.2:** More complete answers to the on-line questionnaire showing individual responses.

<p><b>1. Please enter your name, organisation &amp; role within your organisation:</b></p>
<p><b>2. Does your organisation have roles and/or responsibilities in MPA Management?</b>  Yes – 94.1%  No – 5.9%</p> <p><i>Please detail these responsibilities and any constraints to your organisation fulfilling these responsibilities:</i></p>
<p><b>3a. Do you think that a dedicated management Group (i.e. a Relevant Authority Group and/or Site Advisory Panel) is important for MPA Management?</b></p> <p>Yes – 100%  No – 0%</p> <p><b>3b. Please indicate if your organisation is involved in such a group and any benefits.</b>  <b>Multiple responses (most frequently cited first)</b></p> <p>a. Key benefits of a Management Group include: improved management outputs / added value / more proactive management; cost effectiveness; adopting a co-operative, integrated approach and a collective voice on management and policy; developing visible commitment from partners, and improved communication and building relationships (10)</p> <p>b. A Management Group does not actually manage a site itself, it cannot itself enforce anything or force anything to be done, the key role is advice and guidance and focussed discussion of management issues (5)</p> <p>c. A Management Group is needed to ensure preparation of the Management Plan (3)</p> <p>d. The Group works best if facilitated by a SAC (EMS) officer (2)</p> <p>e. A Management Group is needed for wider awareness raising and liaison (CCW cannot resource this work on its own) (2)</p> <p><b>Single responses</b></p> <p>f. A Management Groups is particularly needed at the start of the process (1)</p> <p>g. Relevant Authorities should take the responsibility to deliver their own parts of the Management Plan (1)</p> <p>h. The Management Group remit should focus on joint areas of working (1)</p> <p>i. It is best if group represents all site stakeholders, not just statutory bodies (1)</p> <p>j. The Groups would be unable to function without CCW involvement (1)</p>
<p><b>4a. How important, on a scale of 1 to 5, (5 being the most important), is the presence of dedicated local site management staff (e.g. SAC Officer) for effective management of MPAs?</b></p> <p>1 – 9.4%  2 – 6.3%  3 – 6.3%  4 – 18.8%  5 – 59.4%</p> <p><b>4b. What are the main benefits of on-site staff (e.g. SAC Officer)?</b>  <b>Multiple responses (most frequently cited first)</b></p> <p>a. Key benefits include: co-ordinate and encourage work and maintain momentum, provide liaison between partners and plus act as single point of contact (15)</p> <p>b. An officer is necessary to undertake education and wider support and awareness raising activities (6)</p> <p>c. Officers (should) have local knowledge of the site and activities occurring (6)</p> <p>d. Officers could help with site survey and site monitoring (3)</p> <p>e. Site officers are needed to facilitate the production of a management plan (2)</p> <p>f. The role could probably be delivered by an existing member of staff in a Relevant Authority, or split into specific projects delivered by existing staff across the RAs based in their skills rather than employing a separate officer CCW (2) ?</p> <p>g. Short term and funding creates uncertainty about the future and can lead to employing staff with</p>

<p>limited experience / expertise (2)</p> <p>h. Officer's have insufficient clout/status to really influence Group members to deliver key tasks. (2)</p> <p><b>Single response</b></p> <p>i. An officer could help co-ordinate activities for more than one site at a time. (1)</p> <p>j. The many funding streams makes for complicated funding of officers and some funding partners may not feel they get the 'service' they pay for (1)</p> <p>k. Delegating resources to a project officer could tempt some authorities to deliver less themselves (1)</p> <p>l. Without an officer there may be a lot of discussion but little by way of action from a Management Group. (1)</p> <p>m. Officer provides an 'early warning system regarding any proposed or current activities that could compromise the health of the site</p> <p>n. Officers could act as NNR wardens do. (1)</p> <p>o. Most key management is done via the advising/ authorising / implementation role of statutory organisations eg CCW owner/occupier role re grazing of saltmarsh, e.g. EA role re fishery licensing rather than the site officer (1)</p> <p>p. Officers save CCW time (1)</p> <p>q. Can help encourage feedback on the ground to help fill the gap in on the ground enforcement (1)</p>
<p><b>5a. Are statutory tools (such as byelaws, orders etc) being applied and enforced successfully on MPAs?</b></p> <p>Yes – 40%</p> <p>No – 60%</p> <p><b>5b. Please give details to support your response.</b></p> <p><b>Multiple responses (most frequently cited first)</b></p> <p>a. There is often a lack of resources for enforcement where byelaws and orders are in place. Lack of resources can also deter authorities from enacting bylaws and other measures in the first place. (3)</p> <p>b. Fisheries order enforcement is insufficient (2)</p> <p>c. Enforcement of fisheries orders should improve with tracking devices installed, and WAG looking at opportunities for more effective enforcement (2)</p> <p><b>Single responses</b></p> <p>d. Statutory tools are not being used adequately for SSSI protection (e.g. lack of application of Section 28 of the CRoW Act) (1)</p> <p>e. Often, bylaws are out of date and hence ineffective for management. (e.g. for recreational boating) (1)</p> <p>f. Lack of use of byelaws also relates to a lack of interest at senior levels (1)</p>
<p><b>6. What, in your opinion, is needed to improve current MPA Management?</b></p> <p><b>Political and relevant authority commitment</b></p> <p>a. Political will and clear direction at all levels (5)</p> <p>b. Dedicated and adequate resources (2)</p> <p>c. Greater emphasis put on prioritising activities in MPAs in remit letters etc (1)</p> <p>d. Genuinely integrated, open and willing working between relevant authorities (1)</p> <p>e. Commitment to genuine biodiversity gain (1)</p> <p>f. Matching of action by WAG executive to Assembly commitments (1)</p> <p>g. RAs, CAs and government accepting the reality that some necessary management decisions to advance MPA management to secure environmental gain will be tough, unpopular, difficult to achieve but necessary (1)</p> <p>h. Overarching responsibility and power to ensure that competent authorities are fulfilling their roles (1)</p> <p>i. There is a sea change occurring within the inshore fishing industry with an increasing realisation and acceptance of their environmental responsibilities (1)</p> <p><b>Regulation, enforcement and deterrents</b></p>

- j. More resources for enforcement (e.g. MPA officers with ability to patrol areas, and with some enforcement capacity) (4)
- k. Much better regulatory protection for MPAs (specific example, greater regulation of exploitative activities) (2)
- l. More effective and better administered enforcement of regulation to control exploitative activities (3)
- m. Clear deterrents to damaging or allowing damage to MPAs (one example given: more significant offences, fines and imprisonment) (2)

#### **MPA management framework**

- n. Long-term, clear and prioritised programme of MPA management for each site and for the network of MPAs, with clear targets for action, particularly for delivery of work to reduce / negative impact on the sites and improve how the sites are managed. Within CCW this needs to engage science, monitoring, policy and operations. (2)
- o. Standardised and consistent framework for MPA management we should have a clear framework detailing the minimum requirements of work to be undertaken on a site to deliver MPA management. This should be national across the series of MPAs (1)
- p. Proposals for work of relevant to MPA management should have a specific section in the project description that explains what that project will deliver in relation to MPA management (1)
- q. Regular reviews of how MPA management is progressing using a meaningful and consistent approach across all sites that can feed into reporting on the network of sites. For SACs, this should fit in with reporting on site condition and conservation status to reduce duplication of process.
- r. Need clearer identification of where conservation management needs to change from the current situation (1)

#### **Management actions**

- s. More resources to implement management actions (4)
- t. Tackle the issue of 3rd party damage to intertidal SSSIs (1)
- u. finding ways to address the impact of fisheries, chronic water quality problems and disturbance to species interests from recreational and commercial vessels (1)

#### **Survey, monitoring and information dissemination**

- v. Increased survey, monitoring and surveillance and adequate resourcing for these (3)
- w. Better understanding of what is going-on on sites. Could consider setting up voluntary warden scheme as we have for NNRs to improve understanding of what is going-on on sites (1)
- x. A consistent approach to the collation and dissemination of data and information about MPAs (1)
- y. Specifically in relation to CCW's contracted science, monitoring and policy research work of relevance to MPA management, each contract should include a specific section that identifies the learning for CCW from that piece of work in relation to MPA management (1)

#### **Awareness and understanding**

- z. Far greater public, political and senior RA, CA and WAG officer awareness of importance and value of the marine ecosystem, MPAs and biodiversity (3)

#### **Ways of working**

- aa. Better joined up / partnership working (2)
- bb. Better communication between stakeholders / management authorities / CCW (1)
- cc. Follow the precautionary principle (1)

#### **Guidance, advice and co-ordination**

- dd. A set of high level guidance for RAs that is applicable across a range of MPAs. This would help towards a consistent approach to managing MPAs (1)
- ee. An information pack for non-statutory organisations/public/users on the overall importance of MPAs (1)

#### **Licensing / permitting and planning of activities in MPAs**

- ff. protection of nationally important species and habitats. Wildlife protection is not just about

<p>protected sites it should be considered as part of marine licensing and planning (1)</p> <p>gg. Understanding that indirect, in-combination and cumulative effects on site favourable conservation status need to be considered before rather than after licensing is allowed (1)</p> <p>hh. Tap marine renewables projects and companies for income and 'planning gain' to benefit MPA management (1)</p> <p><b>Types of MPAs</b></p> <p>ii. Establishment of highly protected MPA's where no extractive activities are allowed (1)</p> <p><b>MPA Staff</b></p> <p>jj. Need more, dedicated, staff (1)</p>
<p><b>7a. In your opinion, does a high level of public awareness of MPAs lead to improved site management?</b></p> <p>Yes – 92.9%</p> <p>No – 7.1%</p> <p><b>7b. Please provide reasons for your response.</b></p> <p><b>Multiple responses (most frequently cited first)</b></p> <p>a. Yes if the public reached can affect site management through their activities and choices (e.g. the manner in which they choose to carry out certain types of recreation (such as reducing disturbance to sea mammals), or making purchasing decisions such as buying local sustainably sourced fish) (8)</p> <p>b. Indirect benefits may include peer/political pressure to affect management activities of others (4)</p> <p>c. Public appreciation affects the perceived value of and pride in sites, and creates 'ownership' (4)</p> <p>d. It is important to ensure people understand the importance of the site (3)</p> <p><b>Single responses</b></p> <p>e. The value of public awareness is not clear, as there are no resources to monitor the impact of public awareness-raising (1)</p> <p>f. MPA management is largely about regulating the impact of consented developments, arguably public awareness is considerably less important than awareness among regulatory bodies (1)</p> <p>g. Television programmes have helped raise awareness about the marine environment.</p> <p>h. A lot of marine-related data is collected by volunteers (e.g. Seasearch, cetacean records).</p>
<p><b>8a. The Marine &amp; Coastal Act is moving us towards management of MPAs as a network, rather than a collection of individual sites. Do you think this will significantly change the way MPAs are currently managed?</b></p> <p>Yes – 59.3%</p> <p>No – 40.7%</p> <p><b>8b. Please explain the reason for your response.</b></p> <p><b>Multiple responses (most frequently cited first)</b></p> <p>a. More coordinated, integrated, consistent and directed approach across the range of sites with clear shared goals, enabling more effective and efficient use of resources (8)</p> <p>b. Enable issues to be tackled at an ecosystem and strategic Wales-wide level – and tackle bigger issues, such as climate change (4)</p> <p>c. Need to provide a clear lead agency (2)</p> <p><b>Single response</b></p> <p>d. Enables a more holistic view of the overall status for protected sites (1)</p> <p>e. MPA health is heavily dependent on conditions outside its boundaries and management of the wider marine environment need to avoid creating isolated 'islands' of protection with no connectivity between. (1)</p> <p>f. Some issues will always be site specific (1)</p> <p>g. There is the potential for displacement effects (1)</p> <p>h. We need a network of highly protected areas, which will need stronger management and policing for the start-up period (1)</p>

- i. Helps raise awareness and attracts more resources for bigger projects (1)
- j. Can help strengthen legislation (1)
- k. Should provide minimum standard level of management for all sites (1)
- l. Network management should provide greater connectivity in the marine environment so that we can tell whether the sites we already have form a network that is of some benefit to marine biodiversity (1)
- m. Site management plans will need to address the roles of individual sites within the network, so aims and objectives may change (1)
- n. The Marine Act brings some new tools that will enable management to change to a degree (1)
- o. Assessment of plans and projects under Habs Directive is site-focussed and there is no indication that this will change. (1)
- p. Assessing plans and projects on sites designated for mobile features (eg marine mammals, birds) already considers wider impacts, so maybe there are "network management" elements being implemented already. (1)

**9a. At the moment do you know of any common management issues being tackled across a suite of MPAs (SSSIs, SPAs, SACs, MCZs, RAMSARs)?**

Yes – 70.4%

No – 29.6%

**9b. If yes, please provide examples.**

**Multiple responses (most frequently cited first)**

- a. Some fisheries management issues (specific examples cited included Cockle mortality/harvesting/byelaws - Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries EMS and Dee Estuary; several orders; scallop dredging) (10)
- b. Non-native Invasive Species, (specific example given (NNIS) via the Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP) NNIS group and the Wales/Uk Strategy), also mention that a 'Wales-wide approach to management of non natives is necessary (3)
- c. SMPs- although strategic these have management implications (2)
- d. Wildfowling (2)
- e. Recreation management (specific example, sailing) (2)
- f. Some water quality issues (2)
- g. Education and awareness-raising (2)

**Single responses**

- h. port management (for SACs in SW Wales) (1)
- i. Coastal flooding is currently being tackled on a Wales wide basis with WAG, CCW and the EA inputting to a plan of coastal defence and setback (1)
- j. CCW Special Sites Project (1)
- k. Habs Regs implementation/monitoring/reporting (1)
- l. grazing (1)
- m. angling (1)
- n. access (1)
- o. LDPs (1)
- p. SEAs - although strategic these have management implications (1)
- q. offshore renewables (1)

**10a. In Wales all Relevant Authorities have the same rights and responsibilities for European Marine Sites (i.e. SACs & SPAs), in other countries (e.g. France) one organisation takes the lead in marine management. Which approach do you think would lead to better marine site management?**

Multi-agency – 38.5%

Lead organisation – 61.5%

**10b. Please explain your choice.**

**Preference for single lead agency**

- a. An (adequately resourced) lead organisation is preferable because it: has the expertise and knowledge in field of nature conservation to lead management, and deal with the complexity of management issues (5)
- b. provides a clear focus and priority for site management, as well as consistency in approach and rigour (especially compared to multi-agency approach) (5)
- c. provides co-ordination of management issues, and action by others (4)
- d. provide a single driver for action (1)
- e. prevents single-issue representatives manipulating issues (1)
- f. Simplifies funding (1)
- g. Forces engagement in delivery (1)
- h. EMS officers can provide the driving force as a single lead (1)

**Preference for multi agency approach**

- i. Multi-agency is the only practical alternative in an estuary the size of the Severn and with the host of relevant authorities in the public and private sector involved (2)

**Advantages to both**

- j. Each relevant authority's rights and responsibilities toward EMS are defined by their existing remit and functions. There are probably all sorts of advantages and disadvantages to both. And the two are obviously not mutually exclusive (1)

**Annex 1.3: Organisations that responded to the questionnaire**

<p>Carmarthen Bay &amp; Estuaries Special Area of Conservation RAG  Carmarthenshire County Council  CCW  City &amp; County of Swansea  Dwr Cymru -Welsh Water  EAW  Marine Biological Association of the UK and the Marine Institute, University of Plymouth  Marine Conservation Society  Monmouthshire County Council  National Trust  Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership  Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p>	<p>Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum  Pembrokeshire County Council  Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation RAG  Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation RAG  Salacia-Marine  Snowdonia National Park Authority  Swansea University  Trinity House  Welsh Federation of Fishermen's Associations Ltd  Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust  WWF Cymru</p>
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## Annex 2: External Assessments

### 2.1: MPA Questionnaire for external stakeholders.

#### 1. Supporting information about the site

1. What information do you have about the site that is useful to you in your work?  
What other information would be useful?
2. Are the Conservation Objectives for your site sufficiently clear? Are they easy to use?
3. How often do you use the Reg 35 document to help you in your work, e.g. for information, for assessment of likely impact of activities / operations?

#### 2. Site management processes

1. Do you feel there is sufficient information available regarding the status of site features?  
If not, how could we improve this?
2. RAGs were set up to improve communication between RAs with responsibilities on the site.  
Please list:
  - 3 areas where the RAG is effective
  - 3 areas where you think the RAG is not effective
  - 3 things you would do to improve the RAG
3. Liaison / Advisory groups were set up to enable input and involvement from user groups and wider stakeholders in management of the site. Please list:
  - 3 areas where the Liaison Group is helpful / effective
  - 3 areas where you think the Liaison Group is not effective
  - 3 things you would do to improve the Liaison Group
4. Management schemes (the process and document) are meant to come up with an action plan to improve management on the site. Please list:
  - 3 ways that the MS is helpful / effective
  - 3 ways that the MS is not effective
  - 3 things you would do to improve the MS
5. What are the main barriers to achieving/implementing actions in the Management Plan?
6. Are there any specific issues you want to raise regarding existing policing/enforcement to safeguard the site?
7. SAC/EMS Officers coordinate the RAG and the MS. Please list: (it must be stressed that these questions concern the role of the SAC/EMS officer not the current holder of the post)
  - 3 ways the role of the EMS officer is helpful / effective
  - 3 ways that the role of the EMS officer is not effective
  - 3 things you would do to improve the role of the EMS officer.
8. What benefits, if any, would you see arising from dealing with common management issues on Welsh MPAs at a more strategic level (e.g. across Wales)?

#### 3. Partnerships

1. Do you think that within the existing management framework there is adequate liaison between the management authorities? (Management authority = RA, Competent Authority & Welsh Govt)
2. If not, what improvements would you suggest?

**4. Awareness & understanding**

1. What has been most useful in helping you understand the conservation value of the site?
2. Is there sufficient understanding of the management requirements of the site within your authority?

If not, what is required to improve this?

If so, what has been most beneficial in achieving this?

3. How would you score the value of raising awareness in helping deliver effective site management? (1=low, 5=high)

Please list:

The things you think that raising awareness work on the site has helped to deliver

What you think have been the most effective awareness raising approaches / techniques?

How the effectiveness of awareness raising could be improved

**5. Legislative structure and implementation**

1. Do you think the existing legislative framework is sufficient to deliver management of this site?
  - If not, what are the gaps?
2. Do you have adequate powers to apply appropriate conditions to consents in order to mitigate or avoid impacts on the site?
3. What do you find useful about CCW advice in relation to Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA - Test of Likely Significant Effect & Appropriate Assessment) and how could it be improved?
4. What are the barriers to co-operative working during the HRA process for multiple consent projects.

**6. Political and policy framework**

1. Do you think there are any conflicts between policies driving your work and achieving management of the site? Please give examples
2. Do you feel you have support from within your authority to implement management actions on the site?
3. Does the current political and policy framework hinder your organisations ability to deliver management actions and if so, how? What could be done to address this?
4. Do you feel there is sufficient political support and buy in at the national level to achieve site management?
5. What do you think are the implications if the site's features continue to be in unfavourable condition / conservation status?

**7. Resources**

1. What are the resource constraints to delivering site management, both within your authority and wider?

**8. Wider considerations?**

1. What would you like to have seen being achieved in 5 years time in relation to
  - a) The management of the site
  - b) The condition of the site / features?
2. In your opinion what is the greatest challenge to achieving effective management of the site?
3. What would you recommend (general & specific) to maintain / improve management of the site, i.e. what would you keep / change, what sort of management structure would you like to see?

**Annex 2.2: Overview of external responses to MPA Assessments.**

This table is a summary of responses from external parties (including EMS officers, relevant authorities, liaison group members and NGOs).

Question	Response
<b>Supporting information about the site</b>	
What information do you have about the site that is useful to you in your work? What other information would be useful?	Reasonable awareness of available info, less so for CCW reports that may be relevant to RAs.  Requests for more info on socio-economic impacts and on impacts of activities generally. Guidance on how to use Cos requested.
Are the Conservation Objectives for your site sufficiently clear? Are they easy to use?	Slightly mixed views on COs but mainly negative – too vague, current not an improvement on previous, difficult to use in practise.
How often do you use the Reg 35 document to help you in your work, e.g. for information, for assessment of likely impact of activities / operations?	V variable levels of use of Reg 35, some used a lot others hardly ever.
<b>Site management processes</b>	
Do you feel there is sufficient information available regarding the status of site features? If not, how could we improve this?	Generally considered there is insufficient info available on the status of site features. Regular updates (from CCW) requested – with confidence assessment.
RAGs were set up to improve communication between RAs with responsibilities on the site. Please list:	RAGs generally considered effective esp in bringing stakeholders together and raising understanding – not just a ‘talking shop’. One comment that RAGs could input to marine planning.
3 areas where the RAG is effective	Nearly all who responded to this question highlighted the benefits of bringing relevant parties together to discuss site management and encourage positive liaison.
3 areas where you think the RAG is not effective	RAGs cannot overcome political inertia or ensure actions in the MS are delivered.
3 things you would do to improve the RAG	Concern that not all interests necessarily represented on RAGs (eg CBS intertidal fisheries) – could be more holistic and would then be more effective. To improve, make it statutory for RAs to get involved/contribute.
Liaison / Advisory groups were set up to	

enable input and involvement from user groups and wider stakeholders in management of the site. Please list:	
3 areas where the Liaison Group is helpful / effective	Useful in engaging with/seeking views/ disseminating information to a wider range of interested parties in relation to MPA management.
3 areas where you think the Liaison Group is not effective	Not effective in delivery of management action. Not possible for all interests to be represented.
3 things you would do to improve the Liaison Group	Ensure information given at meetings is disseminated widely via membership of the liaison group.
Management schemes (the process and document) are meant to come up with an action plan to improve management on the site. Please list:	Production of MS generally considered positive, but note some respondents don't have one or produced so recently difficult to say anything.
3 ways that the MS is helpful / effective	Brings people together to focus on an action plan
3 ways that the MS is not effective	Concern that MS can be a big doc that no-one looks at, or considered a threat, or not sufficiently ambitious.
3 things you would do to improve the MS	Several respondents suggested it's legal status should be strengthened to ensure that actions are delivered.
What are the main barriers to achieving/implementing actions in the Management Plan?	Those who responded to this questions suggested the barriers were mainly time and resources, and also lack of buy-in from management authorities.
Are there any specific issues you want to raise regarding existing policing/enforcement to safeguard the site?	
SAC/EMS Officers coordinate the RAG and the MS. Please list: (it must be stressed that these questions concern the role of the SAC/EMS officer not the current holder of the post)	
3 ways the role of the EMS officer is helpful / effective	EMS officers needed to get work done and keep up momentum – general view seems to be that if you have a RAG then you need an officer to run it.

3 ways that the role of the EMS officer is not effective	Some suggested that EMSOs spend too much time chasing money with not enough left for MPAS management tasks.
3 things you would do to improve the role of the EMS officer.	Most common response was top secure long term funding for officers.
What benefits, if any, would you see arising from dealing with common management issues on Welsh MPAs at a more strategic level (e.g. across Wales)?	Some, e.g. consistency, but recognition that sites are different and a one size fits all approach unlikely to work.
<b>Partnerships</b>	
Do you think that within the existing management framework there is adequate liaison between the management authorities? (Management authority = RA, Competent Authority & Welsh Govt)	Many respondents raised concerns about lack of WG engagement at RAG level. Overall view was that there is not enough engagement between MAs.
If not, what improvements would you suggest?	Not many improvements suggested, but a few did suggest a pan-Wales steering gp of some sort.
<b>Awareness &amp; understanding</b>	
What has been most useful in helping you understand the conservation value of the site?	RAG meetings/EMS officer plus Reg35 etc useful in providing info.
Is there sufficient understanding of the management requirements of the site within your authority? If not, what is required to improve this? If so, what has been most beneficial in achieving this?	Generally it was not considered by respondents that there is sufficient understanding of management requirements within authorities. Various suggestions to improve, including making adoption and implementation of MS statutory, decent reporting on site status and time /resources to communicate.
How would you score the value of raising awareness in helping deliver effective site management? (1=low, 5=high) Please list:	Wide range of views (from ½-5) on value of raising awareness of sites delivering effective site management. Main responses to Qs in this section from PLAS – very pro raising awareness here across RAG.
The things you think that raising awareness work on the site has helped to deliver	Better understanding and awareness of sites
What you think have been the most effective awareness raising approaches /	Primarily PLAS respondents - school visits and theatre production. Also biodiversity training within

techniques?	Gwynedd Council highlighted as positive.
How the effectiveness of awareness raising could be improved	Again, mainly PLAS response. Better funding, a more strategic approach across Wales suggested.
<b>Legislative structure and implementation</b>	
Do you think the existing legislative framework is sufficient to deliver management of this site? If not, what are the gaps?	Variety of responses. General feeling that structure was there but implementation may be lacking.  Legislation aimed at protection not management – more focus needed on management.
Do you have adequate powers to apply appropriate conditions to consents in order to mitigate or avoid impacts on the site?	Issues raised included lack of ability to influence diffuse pollution and large scale planning, and also general lack of management/management legislation.
What do you find useful about CCW advice in relation to Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA - Test of Likely Significant Effect & Appropriate Assessment) and how could it be improved?	Some respondent's stated that CCW tended to 'overreact' or advice is too precautionary at times.
What are the barriers to co-operative working during the HRA process for multiple consent projects.	Issue of multiple consents process recognised – improved communication needed or a single consents body.
<b>Political and policy framework</b>	
Do you think there are any conflicts between policies driving your work and achieving management of the site? Please give examples	Most respondents recognised there are conflicts between environment and other interests that can be difficult to resolve
Do you feel you have support from within your authority to implement management actions on the site?	Variety of views on whether there is political support for sites – some felt there was, others that there wasn't.
Does the current political and policy framework hinder your organisations ability to deliver management actions and if so, how? What could be done to address this?	No, but acceptance there are always competing drivers for work.
Do you feel there is sufficient political support and buy in at the national level to achieve site management?	Mixture of yes and no

What do you think are the implications if the site's features continue to be in unfavourable condition / conservation status?	Fines on WG. A few said loss to biodiversity and one said wider losses (e.g. tourism, fisheries)
<b>Resources</b>	
What are the resource constraints to delivering site management, both within your authority and wider?	There were a variety of views on this issue but most respondents felt there was not sufficient funding to deliver management effectively (money and staffing)
<b>Wider considerations?</b>	
What would you like to have seen being achieved in 5 years time in relation to a) The management of the site	Variety of responses including maintain status quo and improved management planning (e.g., some kind of statutory basis for Management Schemes)
b) The condition of the site / features?	Most respondents suggested they would like to see site condition improved, or that all features were in favourable condition.
In your opinion what is the greatest challenge to achieving effective management of the site?	Wide range of views but money and lack of buy in from WG suggested several times. Climate Change also mentioned.
What would you recommend (general & specific) to maintain / improve management of the site, i.e. what would you keep / change, what sort of management structure would you like to see?	Variety of responses from maintain status quo to simplification of existing structures, and regular feedback on site status.

**Annex 2.3: External Assessments:** Comments from WWF Cymru; Wildlife Trusts Wales; RSPB Cymru (through WEL)

### **Overarching**

The coordination and management of the Welsh MPA network needs to be strengthened with robust management measures and political will essential for both EMS and national level sites to deliver both site and network level objectives, as well as broader biodiversity targets.

The formation of a single environmental body may present an opportunity to create greater unity on MPA management across Wales, but it is essential that any process of reform respects those existing structures that currently deliver, and ensure flexibility around local structures. Success of the Welsh network must be founded on sustained and effective management, and careful consideration of the interaction of new hpMCZs within the existing network is key. The limited size and number of highly protected MCZs reduces reliance on these sites to deliver conservation objectives for wider EMS, and reemphasises the need to question wider MPA management.

Inaction by Relevant Authorities must be challenged, and failures in existing regulations and EMS management need to be examined to reverse the trend of deteriorating conservation status of many MPA features.

### **Supporting information about the site**

- It is challenging for external organisations (e.g. NGOs) to access information on feature condition monitoring. Greater emphasis should be placed on improving access to monitoring results and reporting of site features should be made responsively and in a timely fashion to inform what management measures are needed in order to deliver conservation objectives.
- Reg 35 documents are an essential tool to staff involved in planning casework, and although lengthy, can be useful to explain the sensitivity of activities within MPAs. Variation in the format of these documents most likely reflect the differences between EMS management structures, particularly for cross border sites. Where conservation objectives could be improved is in the provision of more quantitative detail on thresholds for habitat range and population size (where this information is available). This would create a more effective reference for developers, and non-SNCB staff responding to casework.
- The single environment body process may allow for an improved reporting structure, where information on site features and WFD monitoring can be more effectively utilised for conservation status reporting.

## Site management processes

- It would be challenging to achieve ‘standardisation’ of MPA management across Wales, as it may be the case that individual site management must place precedence on local issues and management structures. Where benefits to a more unified approach to MPA management could be found, is in drawing relevant authorities together to educate on the importance of local action to deliver international commitments. Often EMS are viewed in isolation of other protected sites in Wales, and relevant authorities do not value the contribution their own EMS has towards Wales’ international commitments to marine health.
- RAGs are a good model of local engagement of multi-sectoral and multi-agency partnerships, however their voluntary status, including financial sensitivities/vulnerability and the lack of duty to implement management schemes, where existing, appear to make them unaccountable for implementation/delivery of management of the site.
- There is great need for more effective site management, particularly in the delivery of statutory measures to control regulated and unregulated activities that threaten to damage site features. If voluntary measures are to be proposed, then the reliance on local partnerships delivered by visible project leaders will be essential. An existing RAG with effective EMS officer leadership may be a potential delivery mechanism, but evidence shows that voluntary measures are not successful in delivering management of activities on large or complex MPAs. This should only be employed on sites where there is a clear ‘single issue’ threat, or where strong community engagement and support exists to enable effective monitoring.
- There is a need to recognise the wealth of local knowledge and expertise held by EMS officers, and the importance of having a public face for the EMS to build relationships with key stakeholders, and to have a presence within the site. Where a commitment to EMS officers is made, then long term funding of posts should be made available to enable the development of more sustainable work plans.

## Awareness & understanding

- Again, the value of an effective EMS officer is particularly noticeable where education and awareness raising projects have been a success. There is a need to recognise the value of promoting MPAs in communities/districts directly associated with management of these sites, and as part of the NEF process, reassess the need to fund work that seeks to further understanding of the management requirements of sites.
- Improved engagement of those involved in fisheries management with the EMS and RAGs, for example, WG fisheries branch attendance/engagement at meetings. The developing role of IFGs should be considered in the development of any new MPA management structure, to ensure inclusion of marine users groups and WG fisheries branch.

### Annex 3: Tables used for internal assessments

**Table 3.1:** Issues which have caused the site to not achieve FCS (or lead to declining FCS)

(Headings only included not actual results)

*Please enter as many issues as you feel are appropriate for your site*

Site name (if SSSI)	Cause of FCS failure	Level of impact (H, M, L, negligible)	Feature name	Why did this happen (site specific)?	Management authority responsible if relevant	Generic reason/s for this? <i>Choose one or more options from 'Generic issues -ve' tab and expand if necessary</i>	Give further details as to why you think/know this happened (make it clear whether you think or know this)	What do you think needs to be done to address the management problem and how can this be achieved? <i>Choose one or more options from 'Recommendations' tab with one item per row with most important first. Expand if necessary</i>

#### Wider Issues:

Please make bullet points of any other issues relevant to not achieving FCS for the features of this sites and/or issues that you consider contribute to poor management/management problems on this site, giving an idea of the level of importance of the issue (H,M,L).

Please describe each issue on a new row.

e.g. High - lack of regular and timely feedback from monitoring into the site management process; High - lack of compliance monitoring for fishing activities / other activities ; Med - failure to achieve and maintain a level of awareness amongst users etc.

#### Also please respond to the following questions:

What would you be disappointed not to have achieved in 5 years time in relation to:

- a) The management of the site
- b) The condition of the site?

**Table 3.2:** Issues which have caused the site to achieve improved FCS

(Headings only included not actual results)

*Please enter as many issues as you feel are appropriate for your site*

<b>Site name</b> <i>(if SSSI)</i>	<b>Cause of FCS achievement/maintenance</b>	<b>Feature name</b>	<b>Why did this happen</b> <i>(site specific)?</i>	<b>Management authority responsible if relevant</b>	<b>Generic reason/s for this?</b> <i>Choose one or more options from 'Generic issues +ve' tab and expand if necessary</i>	<b>Give further details as to why you think/know this happened</b> <i>(make it clear whether you think or know this)</i>	<b>What are lessons learned and how can this be applied elsewhere?</b> <i>Select one or more from 'Recommendations' tab and expand if necessary. List one recommendation per row with most important first</i>	<b>Management structure/processes that have helped in this case</b>
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**Wider Issues:**

Please make bullet points of any other issues relevant to achieving FCS for the features of this sites and/or issues that you consider contribute to good management of this site, giving an idea of the level of importance of the issue (H,M,L). Please describe each issue on a new row.

e.g. High - regular feature monitoring and timely feedback into management process; High - good awareness of the site and legislative requirements amongst competent authorities; Med - a good level of awareness amongst users which is retained by ongoing communication programme, etc.

**Also please consider:**

What would you like to have achieved in 5 years time in relation to:

- a) The management of the site
- b) The condition of the site?

#### **Annex 4: Examples of supporting information to underpin site management.**

Advice / guidance for MAs, such as:

- regulation 35 advice documents (EMS conservation objectives and advice on operations and activities that may affect EMS features)
- site management statements (SMS) for SSSIs
- best practice guidance for MPA management (e.g. UK Marine SACs Project reports)
- management scheme documents / management plans (identifying management actions required on an MPA)
- assessments of condition and conservation status of protected habitats and species
- CCW Actions Database (identified issues on all protected sites)
- monitoring guidance, e.g. Common Standards Monitoring protocols
- marine policy documents

Data/information about the biological, physical and chemical aspects of MPAs and their features, such as:

- Biological data collected by CCW and other organisations by a variety of different sampling methods (e.g. diver, video, grab). At a UK level the majority of marine biodiversity data is held in the Marine Recorder database and includes:
  - inter-tidal and sub-tidal habitats and species data (presence, distribution, abundance etc)
  - point data on priority habitats
  - details of biological surveys that have been undertaken on MPAs
  - seabed data (e.g. type of seabed substrate, sediment type)
- Intertidal mapping data, e.g. CCW Intertidal Phase 1 Habitats survey, LIDAR, aerial photographs
- Monitoring reports (i.e. analysed original data with an assessment of trends, changes, etc).
- Subtidal seabed mapping data, e.g. multi-beam, side scan, admiralty charts.
- Modelled habitat data e.g. subtidal HabMap layer (polygon data).
- Information on the spread and predicted spread of Marine Invasive Non Native Species (INNS).
- Species distribution maps e.g. Marine Mammal Atlas.
- Sea bird distribution data e.g. JNCC European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS) database.
- Survey data collected for plans and project, including strategic assessments, e.g. SEA 6 for offshore oil and gas.
- Research papers in peer-reviewed science journals.
- Student theses and dissertations.
- Data on water quality (e.g. salinity, oxygen levels, turbidity (levels of suspended solids), contaminants).
- Data on sediment contaminants.
- Information on physical processes (e.g. sediment transports patters, rates and patterns of erosion and accretion, tidal currents, wave exposure collected for example as part of the production of Shoreline Management Plans).

Information on activities and impacts, such as:

- Activity data collected by MAs. Guidance on likely impacts from different activities and operations and how these may affect SAC features, e.g. UK Marine SACs Project review documents, impact assessments undertaken for specific activities, research on impacts.
- Local knowledge.

Supporting background information on MPAs, such as:

- site Boundary maps
- descriptions of sites and the wildlife habitats and species they support
- maps showing location and extent of wildlife habitats and species within MPAs
- photographs and video footage showing marine habitats and species
- EMS websites
- other organisations survey info e.g. EAW water quality data

## Annex 5: Summary of issues and possible ways forward by section

Sub Heading	Issues	Possible ways forward
<b>A. Supporting information to underpin site management</b>	<b>Issue A1:</b> There is a lack of clarity as to what information is available to aid MPA management.	<b>Possible way forward:</b> Identify what information is currently held that is of relevance to MPA management. <b>Possible way forward:</b> An inventory of relevant reports and information portals should be created which can then be kept up to date with new information. This work should be linked into existing information and data sharing initiatives such as the Wales Environmental Data Sharing Charter in order to improve access to this information. This information should be updated annually by MAs, where there is anything to update, and made accessible to stakeholders <sup>23</sup> .
	<b>Issue A2:</b> The most relevant and up to date supporting information is not being used by MAs and others involved in MPA management.	<b>Possible way forward:</b> MAs, EMS officers and others involved with MPA management to promote awareness about existing information and encourage its use.
	<b>Issue A3:</b> Continued collection of information and evidence to support management decisions is essential.	<b>Possible way forward:</b> Identify and prioritise existing surveys and monitoring undertaken by MAs and others that is relevant to site management. Identify gaps and initiate work to address these gaps. <b>Possible way forward:</b> Ensure that suitable survey and monitoring arrangements are in place to improve the evidence base to underpin site management. <b>Possible way forward:</b> MAs to identify opportunities for joint working and sharing of resources for data collection, collation, analysis and dissemination.
	<b>Issue A4:</b> More up to date information is needed on current condition and status of site features to aid in assessing plans and projects and other site management work.	<b>Possible way forward:</b> Reports on condition and conservation status of MPAs together with the rationale for these assessments should be made available to MAs and relevant stakeholders; to be updated as new information becomes available. <b>Possible way forward:</b> MAs to ensure that monitoring reports of relevance to MPA reporting are made available on their websites as soon as practically possible, with links to be shared widely.

<sup>23</sup> Subject to any legal, commercial or data protection confidentiality requirements.

	<b>Issue A5:</b> Conservation objectives for EMS lack specificity.	<b>Possible way forward:</b> Keep EMS conservation objectives under review to ensure that they are fit for purpose, that is, up to date, consistent, and clear in terms of enabling assessment of plans and projects.
	<b>Issue A6:</b> A lack of information about activities and compliance with licence conditions was identified as well as uncertainty as to who collects and holds this information.	<b>Possible way forward:</b> Activity and compliance monitoring needs to be carried out on sites by the most suitable MA. Activity and compliance data needs to collated regularly and held in an accessible format. This includes data on past activities and developments.
<b>B. Site management processes and partnerships</b>	<b>Issue B1:</b> MPA management is not being given a sufficiently high priority within many of the MAs. This is considered to be due primarily to the lack of a strong national strategic steer for MPA management in Wales.	<b>Possible way forward:</b> Clear direction at a national level is needed to encourage MAs to fully engage in site management processes, delivery of management actions and achievement of site objectives. This could be achieved through an MPA Management Steering Group (see Box 2).
	<b>Issue B2:</b> The lack of a coordinated or coherent approach to Wales-wide issues on MPAs is hindering effective action to address national and common issues.	<b>Possible way forward:</b> Issues common across Welsh MPAs would be more effectively addressed through a coordinated approach agreed at a national level. Priorities for actions on Wales-wide issues could be identified and communicated to the proposed MPA Management Steering Group to determine appropriate action.
	<b>Issue B3:</b> The current arrangements for MPA management are variable across Wales and across the different MPA designations. Some MPAs receive far more attention than others and opportunities to build on existing MPA management are not being realised.	<b>Possible way forward:</b> In order to establish a clearer framework for MPA management, Welsh waters could be sub-divided into a series of MPA management areas of an appropriate size. All MPAs within each of these spatially defined areas could be considered and managed in a more coordinated way. This spatial approach has the potential to provide a number of benefits including improved coordination between MAs, improved sharing of resources, improved coverage of MPA requirements and a framework that can readily link into future arrangements for Marine Spatial Planning and ecosystem-based management. The approach to establishing MPA management areas could be progressed by the MPA Management Steering Group.
	<b>Issue B4:</b> Locally based partnerships are	<b>Possible way forward:</b> Local management groups should be established at

	<p>important to help deliver site management. Such groups assist information sharing, increasing awareness of the importance of MPAs, identifying and delivering management actions, and identifying opportunities for funding and sharing of resources. Currently not all MPAs benefit from effective partnership working.</p>	<p>a suitable spatial scale. Where a RAG already exists, the management group could be based on that RAG. If no RAG exists and a need is identified locally or by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group, a local management group could be established. These locally based groups should include RAs but should also be able to include others with management responsibilities or expertise for other MPAs in the area, as appropriate. The functioning of any locally based management group is dependent on having sufficient support staff (i.e. some kind of support officer) in place.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> Local management groups need to have strong links with the over-arching MPA Management Steering Group. Clear transparent two-way lines of communication need to be established to allow issues to feed up to the Wales wide group and recommendations and priorities to inform local groups. Local representatives could attend the Wales wide group meetings for discussions of specific issues, if required.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> Both the local and Wales-level MPA groups should establish links with MPA projects in other devolved countries of the UK and wider to keep up to date with and learn from current work and management initiatives in these other areas e.g. Finding Sanctuary in England is working with other groups from across Europe on an EU funded project (MAIA<sup>24</sup>) to improve MPA Management in Europe.</p>
	<p><b>Issue B5:</b> Liaison groups were identified as having an important role in terms of engaging other stakeholders and involving them in the site management process. Members of liaison groups bring local knowledge and expertise that has helped in the identification and delivery of management actions. There is a need to retain such groups and encourage stakeholder involvement in MPA management.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> Where liaison groups are already established and are considered to be working well these should continue. The role of such groups (including membership and terms of reference (ToR)) should be kept under regular review to ensure that there is appropriate representation on the group. For areas where no liaison group exists, if a local management group is put in place this group should consider whether there is a need for a liaison group. It is important that there is flexibility with regards to the liaison arrangements that already exist, for example liaison groups or specific topic groups could be established to address specific MPA management requirements. Whatever liaison group structure is established, it is important that effective mechanisms are put in place by the local management group to allow stakeholders to feed in their opinions</p>

<sup>24</sup> The European Marine Protected Areas in the Atlantic Arc (MAIA) project gathers partners from the Atlantic arc involved in MPA designation and management. <http://atlanticprojects.ccdr-n.pt/project-area/maia>

		to the MPA management process. The functioning of liaison groups is dependent on having sufficient support staff in place.
	<b>Issue B6:</b> The lack of locally based site management officers seriously undermines the effectiveness of any locally based management group and achievement of many aspects of positive MPA management.	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> Any spatial management area should have at least one dedicated MPA management officer. Although the day to day work of such an officer would be set locally, these management officers should also have a role in addressing cross-Wales management issues as part of an overall MPA management programme. This programme could be set by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group and agreed by local management groups.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> The MPA Management Steering Group could produce guidance on the role of local MPA management officers to provide more consistency and clearer understanding for officers and MAs and MPA management groups.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> It will take a period of time to establish a MPA Management Steering Group. In the meantime, funding needs to be secured to retain existing local management staff in post to ensure continuity in the delivery of MPA management until any new structures, processes and partnerships are established.</p>
	<b>Issue B7:</b> There is a need for some form of local management plan detailing the specific work that needs to be undertaken on individual MPAs . The structure of current MPA management plans needs to be improved and made more consistent across MPAs in Wales. There is a need to improve the status of MPA management plans in terms of their role in setting the necessary programme of work to deliver effective MPA management.	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> A minimum standard for scope and content of MPA management plans, and an inclusive production process, should be set by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> The MPA Management Steering Group could provide guidance to MAs on the role of MPA management plans and encourage integrated planning and delivery of MPA management with other policies and initiatives where appropriate.</p>
<b>C. Awareness and understanding</b>	<b>Issue C1:</b> Awareness and understanding about MPAs has been identified as lacking at various levels and amongst various stakeholders from school level through to	<b>Possible way forward:</b> Clear messages about the current and future importance and value of Welsh MPAs and an MPA network need to be developed and disseminated to relevant stakeholders. These messages need to consider the wider marine management context as well as the benefits of

	<p>decisions makers. There is currently no overall coherent strategy to guide this work on Welsh MPAs, nor any clear strategic messages about the value of MPAs and of an ecologically coherent and well managed network of MPAs.</p>	<p>MPAs to the environment and society. This work could be promoted by the Wales MPA Management Steering Group and through local management groups.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> A strategic communication plan should be developed for the suite of Welsh MPAs that identifies clear outcomes for awareness and understanding for the different groups and individuals involved with MPAs. This work could be overseen by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group with input from local management groups and individuals with experience in awareness raising in relation to MPAs. A strategic communication plan would need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider both network level and site level communication requirements.</li> <li>• Identify options for awareness raising initiatives at these different levels as well as appropriate delivery mechanisms through a rolling programme of work.</li> <li>• Identify approaches to improve sharing of information and resources for awareness raising.</li> <li>• Build on successful awareness raising initiatives that have already been carried out on MPAs.</li> <li>• Identify appropriate funding mechanisms, including the potential availability of external funds to support delivery of awareness raising initiatives.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Issue C2:</b> Preparing and implementing a strategic communications plan as suggested above may take some time. In the meantime there is a risk that work to raise awareness and understanding of MPAs will be neglected.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> Management authorities need to continue work to raise understanding and awareness about MPAs, their management and their role in delivering wider ecosystem benefits.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> In relation to MAs, awareness raising needs to include identification of any training needs and provision of appropriate training in relation to delivering their roles, responsibilities and duties.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> The Marine Education Framework project to establish easily accessible web-based repository for curriculum-linked marine educational resources should be completed and this facility should be implemented and widely publicised throughout Wales. A strategic communications plan for MPAs would also encompass this work area.</p>

<p><b>D. Legislative and policy framework</b></p>	<p><b>Issue D1:</b> Even though there is a general awareness of relevant legislation, conflicting priorities and requirements on MAs often means that other drivers take precedence over MPA requirements, leading to difficulties in achieving MPA objectives.</p>	<p><b>Possible ways forward:</b> Clear and consistent messages need to be developed about the positive value of a well managed suite of MPAs, not only to the environment, but more widely to society in terms of the services and social benefits they help secure. These need to be supported at a high level ideally by the proposed MPA Management Steering Group. This links to communication issues raised in Section C.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> To prevent further apparent inconsistencies in policy drivers and legislative requirements, and to ensure MPA management is integrated with other marine priorities, any new legislation and policy should take into consideration the strategic purpose, objectives and requirements of the suite of Welsh MPAs.</p> <p><b>Possible way forward:</b> MAs require clear direction on their obligations towards MPAs and what they are expected to deliver, ideally provided by Welsh Government. This would, preferably, be underpinned by integrated guidance for MAs, overseen by the MPA Management Steering group, on the management of MPAs. The guidance should provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity on the purpose of MPAs and what the suite of MPAs is intended to deliver.</li> <li>• Clarity on roles and responsibilities in relation to management of MPAs.</li> <li>• A clear steer on Wales’ interpretation and understanding of MPA legislation, and means of compliance and enforcement.</li> <li>• Mechanisms to increase the efficiency in the way activities requiring multiple consents are dealt with, including identifying lead authorities, so that the cumulative effects of multiple activities and developments are properly assessed.</li> <li>• The way other environmental regulations (e.g. Water Framework Directive, Environmental Liability Directive) can be used to maximum effect in MPAs.</li> </ul> <p>In addition we suggest that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The advice is clearly integrated with, and does not duplicate, existing designation-specific guidance (e.g. CCW guidance on HRA projects).</li> <li>• Consistent and regular training should be given to MAs to ensure awareness and understanding of obligations (see also Section C –</li> </ul>
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		<p>Awareness and Understanding).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information should be collected on the extent to which statutory advice is followed and, where not followed, the rationale for not doing so.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Issue D2:</b> The level of fishing effort in most fisheries is not subject to effective control, yet the level of effort is, for many MPAs, fundamental to meeting their conservation objectives.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> All avenues to control fishing effort to achieve conservation objectives should be explored and used as appropriate. Mechanisms are also needed to ensure recording and reporting of fisheries activity to inform site management. Welsh Government is now the MA for fisheries in Welsh waters. Welsh Government fisheries division is currently undertaking a review of fisheries legislation in Wales, which is an opportunity to take proper account of MPAs and their management requirements.</p>
	<p><b>Issue D3:</b> Enforcement of existing regulations is not sufficient to deter infringements. This relates to the likelihood of infringements being identified, the difficulties in bringing successful prosecutions to court and the size of fines likely to be given in court.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> Clarity is required regarding who is responsible for enforcement of different activities in different MPAs, with clear guidance developed by Welsh Government for what this entails. (This could be integrated with guidance recommended under issue 1). In addition, sufficient resourcing is needed to secure effective enforcement. The Welsh Government review of fisheries legislation is also an opportunity to address enforcement issues for fisheries.</p>
	<p><b>Issue D4:</b> Unregulated activities such as many recreational activities remain a problem in securing favourable site management.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> New powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act provide Welsh Government with the ability to put in place Nature Conservation Orders (NCOs) (in MCZs and EMS) and should be used proactively to manage otherwise unregulated activities that pose a threat to achieving MPA objectives. Where unregulated activities are causing similar issues on a number of MPAs, it will be more efficient to take a coordinated approach to the application of NCOs across a number of sites.</p>
	<p><b>Issue D5:</b> Exemptions from specific licensing processes, in particular Marine Act Licensing<sup>25</sup>, mean certain activities can take place without any process being followed to</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> For some exempted activities, such as ‘use of vehicles to remove litter or seaweed from beaches’ and ‘scientific instruments’ the exemption does not apply where the activity is likely to have an effect on a European Site or Ramsar Site. We recommend that <u>all</u></p>

<sup>25</sup> The Marine Licensing (Exempted Activities) (Wales) Order 2011. No. 559 (W. 81).

	<p>assess impacts on conservation objectives of MPAs. Examples include ‘shellfish propagation and cultivation’, ‘deposit of moorings and piles’ and ‘maintenance of harbours’.</p>	<p>exempted activities that may impact on any type of MPA be subject to this condition with a derogation for activities that must be carried out urgently for reasons of emergency/public health and safety.</p>
<b>E. Resources</b>	<p><b>Issue E1:</b> There is no statutory basis for the engagement of RAs in RAGs, development of management schemes (MSs) or financial support for MS development and implementation.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> Clear high-level direction should be given through the MPA Management Steering Group, led by WG, that all MAs should give MPA management sufficient priority. This needs to include incentives to ensure provision of adequate funding for MPA management. One option could be to include MPA management in Welsh Government’s remit letters, or equivalent, to MAs.</p>
	<p><b>Issue E2:</b> We need to collect information about MPAs to improve the evidence base and to increase the collation of existing data on sites and to make this data more accessible. We also need to collect information on the need and efficacy of enforcement.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> Ensure that adequate survey, monitoring, compliance and enforcement is fully resourced and supported for our suite of MPAs, including new needs identified in the future, e.g. for MCZs. <b>Possible way forward:</b> Each MA to make funding available that would enable their relevant MPA data to be readily accessible.</p>
	<p><b>Issue E3:</b> One of the possible ways forward for awareness raising and understanding on MPAs (Section C) was to prepare and implement a strategic communications plan that identifies clear outcomes for awareness and understanding for the different groups and individuals involved in MPAs. This undertaking, especially the implementation, will have resource implications although there is a lot of scope for creating a communications plan that also had added benefits for other ongoing areas of work e.g. Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) or the Sustaining a Living Wales programme.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> Ensure, through clear direction provided by the MPA Management Steering Group and WG, that the relevant MAs commit resources to develop and implement a prioritised communication strategy for Welsh MPAs.</p>

	<p><b>Issue E4:</b> Lack of secure funding is a major barrier to better management of MPAs in Wales.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> The suitability of core or ring-fenced funding, from Welsh Government, to support local management plan development and implementation, including funding of local MPA management officers should be examined, perhaps using a similar model to that used for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) officers. This funding could be linked to delivery of prioritised management actions identified by the MPA Management Steering Group.</p>
	<p><b>Issue E5:</b> Lack of coordinated management of Welsh MPAs may have led to missed opportunities to secure European and other funding streams to deliver MPA management priorities where possible/appropriate.</p>	<p><b>Possible way forward:</b> The MPA Management Steering Group could identify opportunities and support bids for external funded projects to address management issues across the suite of Welsh MPAs. The presence of existing partnership groups for MPAs is likely to contribute positively to securing external funding. It should be noted that achieving this is dependent on core funding and is not a substitute for a long-term funding arrangement for MPA management.</p>