

**Queen's Harbour Master Plymouth**

Longroom House  
RM Barracks  
Stonehouse  
Plymouth PL1 3RT

QHM/532/3

7 September 2018

**NOTES OF THE TAMAR ESTUARIES CONSULTATIVE FORUM MEETING**

**HELD AT 1015 ON THU 12 JULY 2018**

**WARSPITE ROOM, COUNCIL HOUSE, PLYMOUTH**

<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Representing</u></b>
Mr N Trathen	Deputy Queens Harbour Master (Chairman)
Mrs K Curry	PCC and TECF Coordinator
Mr A Jones	QHM Port Conservancy Officer
Mr E Crowe	Natural England
Ms A Gall	Natural England
Mr C May	MMO
Mr A Curd	MMO
Ms S Wordley	MMO
Ms K Stephenson	Devon & Severn IFCA
Mr R Allan	Cattewater Harbour Commissioners
Ms C Woodall	Tamar Valley AONB
Ms V Darwall	Tamar Valley AONB
Mr R English	South Devon AONB
Mr C Matthews	Duchy of Cornwall
Mr M Goble	PCC Piermaster
Ms P Buchan	Plymouth City Council
Mr G Wheeler	Plymouth City Council
Ms R Baker	Cornwall Council
Mr R Sekula	South Hams & West Devon Borough Council
Mr M Parry	National Marine Aquarium
Mr M Williams	University of Plymouth

Mr S Pittman	Seascope Research CIC & University of Plymouth
Dr S Otway	DIO

<u>Item</u>	<u>Discussion and Decisions</u>	<u>Action</u>
1. Welcome and Introductions	Chairman welcomed everyone to the TECF Meeting and gave all present an opportunity to introduce themselves.	
2. Apologies for Absence	Apologies for absence had been received from: C Necker (QHM), B Siddons (PCC), S Cadnam (CIFCA), P Bromley (Sutton Harbour), T Charlesworth (CHC).	
3. Agree Notes of the last meeting.	The notes of the last meeting held on 8 March 2018 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.	
4. Matters Arising.	<p>4.5. <u>Biosecurity Plan</u>. A final plan is to be published with a follow up meeting required with TECF members: The chairman notes that TECF fully support this work and will look to continue to assist with its progress; a further meeting should be held before the next TECF.</p> <p>UPDATE Nov 2017: See Agenda Item. 6</p> <p>UPDATE Mar 2018: Final draft to be reviewed at TOFF, 22 March 2018.</p> <p>NIO to circulate current Biosecurity plan to all TECF members. <u>Action</u> - complete</p> <p>UPDATE JUL 2018: Final draft agreed and signed off by TOFF, awaiting press release via PCC. A workshop will be held at the end of the year to discuss progress. DQHM raised the recent initiative by the Wildlife Trust looking to explore SW Biosecurity plans (workshop being held 14 Aug 2018) – PCO to attend, NE not yet involved. <u>Action</u></p>	PCO
	<p>4.6. <u>Marine Park</u>: NIO raised the recent proposal of a Marine Park designation for Plymouth. Mr Crowe (NE) felt this may have some potential, but should be seen more as an accolade rather than additional designation.</p> <p>QHM suggested inviting Luke Pollard MP to a future TECF meeting to provide an oversight of the current legislative and environmental designations and management structures already in place.</p> <p>UPDATE Nov 2017: Proposal to invite Martin Atrill to future TECF for and update.</p> <p>UPDATE Mar 2018: NIO to determine most appropriate representative from MarCoPol to present feedback and findings from NMP workshop.</p>	

	<p>Plymouth University's Marine and Coastal Policy (MarCoPol) research group will represent and advise from an academic stance. It is stressed that a National Marine Park should be seen as a "branding" exercise rather than any new designation; however wording will have to be carefully crafted.</p> <p>NE observed that the proposal needed to be refined and once more information was available NE may be able to present on the initiative later next year.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <p>UPDATE Jul 2018: Covered at Agenda Item 7 - Mike Williams and Simon Pittman presentation. QHM and NIO to remain involved.</p>	
	<p><u>4.8. TECF Information Boards:</u> It was highlighted that NE would be involved in the new iterations providing updated environmental information.</p> <p>UPDATE Nov 2017: 5 Pilot sites have been selected, NE in discussion with NIO concerning environmental information.</p> <p><u>Complete</u></p> <p>UPDATE Mar 2018: NIO (EMS) to share current draft of template to all TECF members for feedback.</p> <p>UPDATE Jul 2018: Initial phase complete, 4 panels have been installed. Further updates will be included in NIO's report.</p> <p>8i. <u>TECF Information Panels:</u> Action to look into refurbishment of Plymouth waterfront information panels.</p> <p>UPDATE Nov 2017: Contract for refurbishment of granite panels should be placed by Dec 17.</p> <p>UPDATE Mar 2018: Pending better weather for refurb to be completed. Expected end April 18.</p> <p><u>Complete</u></p>	
	<p>4. NE – <u>Designated Sites Website:</u> Various questions regarding NE designated site and conservation objectives:</p> <p>Question from QHM: Can there be some generic guidance that covers all the different designations &amp; related advice, rather than having to look at each individually.</p> <p>Can information about the Coastal Concordat be added to the Operational Advice page for the EMS?</p> <p><i>ANSWER: We are working towards producing 'How to use' guidance on utilising the Conservation Advice packages. There are, however, a series of explanatory videos available that provide guidance on each component of the CA packages. Please email <a href="mailto:MCAProject@naturalengland.org.uk">MCAProject@naturalengland.org.uk</a> to attain links to the videos. As we produce advice for each site individually and thus, conservation objectives and targets for each designated feature for each site, there is no 'one advice package fits all approach'. Users are therefore recommended to view each package. Within the advice package there is a</i></p>	

	<p><i>Site Information Table that lists overlapping sites so users can view any overlapping MPAs. Also, within MAGIC maps, please use the site information tool ('i' button) information is provided for any overlapping MPAs.</i></p> <p><i>Natural England is facing significant budgetary pressures and as such, we are working on producing CA packages for our publication timelines, September 2018 and March 2019. Unfortunately, we are unable to action any changes to the Designated Sites System.</i></p> <p>Questions from Mr Matthews (DoC): How long does it take from time of designation for advice/guidance to be available online?</p> <p><i>ANSWER: Conservation advice is produced to underpin management of MPAs and to support authorities with a statutory responsibility. With agreement from Defra there are sites that will have updated Conservation Advice packages by Sep 2019, such as European Marine Sites, T1 and T2 Marine Conservation Zones. There may be local factors at Area Team level such as staff resource, higher priorities etc that may impinge on advice package production. Due to evidence gathering and verification surveys, advice packages are produced 1-1.5 years following designation/classification of a site.</i></p> <p>NE – At time of change to status or designation, package guidance will be published online at time of next review cycle (usually March &amp; October) but NE can provide it manually via email request. <i>The advice packages are 'live documents' and to allow for accessibility for users, we have two publication cycles per year; March and September. NE are unable to provide it manually upon request, but can inform users upon email request when a package is forecast to be produced (e.g. draft package) or updated (i.e. update from draft to formal package or update to the formal package with new evidence).</i></p> <p>What is the new NE charging regime – at what point are charges incurred for advice to developers?</p> <p>NE – Statutory advice is not charged for; pre-consent advice is subject to charges.</p> <p><i>ANSWER: We are working on a linking tool that links the pressures stemming from activities in the Advice on Operations to the features and attributes within the Supplementary advice on conservation objectives section. This tool goes beyond our statutory role and provides a time saving/cost element to users. We have keep you updated, however, it will not be ready till April 2019 at the earliest.</i></p> <p>What is being done by NE with the mapping of recreational activities?</p> <p><i>ANSWER: Natural England do map recreational activities, where the information is available, for example, for vulnerability</i></p>	
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	<p><i>assessments for recommended Marine Conservation Zones. However, this information is not publicly available as NE do not hold the copyright for this data. If you require any further information, on mapping of recreational activities, please contact <a href="mailto:MCAProject@naturalengland.org.uk">MCAProject@naturalengland.org.uk</a></i></p> <p><u>Action</u> – Complete.</p>	
	<p>7. 2b. <u>TECF Management Plan</u>: Decision made to extend the current plan (for 2 years) whilst BREXIT negotiations are underway with unknown outcomes.</p> <p>Action on NIO to look into this option by next TECF. UPDATE Jul 2018: See Agenda Item. 6</p> <p>Action on NIO to add to TOFF agenda 22 March 2018 UPDATE Jul 2018: Complete - TOFFs report forwarded with minutes and calling notice.</p> <p>Action on all to review Management Plan by next TECF – NIO to request response from all members pre-July 2018 TECF UPDATE Jul 2018: Covered in NIO Report</p> <p>Action on NIO - Annual Survey for 2017 to be circulated before July TECF meeting UPDATE Jul 2018: Covered in NIO Report</p>	
	<p>8a. <u>Eco-mooring Trial</u>: Action on NIO to confirm if the Management report can be shared. UPDATE: Mr Parry has confirmed that the Report has not yet been published, so is not currently available to share.</p> <p>Action on NIO to requests Mark Parry presents Cawsand Eco-mooring Trial survey findings at July 18 TECF. UPDATE Jul 2018: Mark Perry gave a presentation on the CSB mooring trial – See Agenda Item. 5 - Complete</p>	
	<p>9a. <u>DEFRA 25 Year Plan</u>: Action on NIO to add update from NE regarding 25 year plan and how the actions will be delivered to the agenda for July 18 TECF. – See NE Report</p> <p>Action on NE to review how the TECF Management Plan aligns to the 25 Year Plan and make suggestions for additions. UPDATE Jul 2018: Will be completed as part of TECF Management plan review</p> <p>9b. <u>Wembury Reef Video</u>: Action on NIO - NE film of Wembury Reefs to be added to agenda for July TECF meeting. UPDATE Jul 2018: NE advised that the filming had been completed and the video was undergoing final edit. It was hoped to be able to show the film at the next meeting</p> <p><u>Ongoing</u></p>	<p>NE/NIO</p> <p>NE/NIO</p>

Presentations		
5. Cawsand Trial and Eco-moorings	<p>Mr Parry presented the results of the eco-mooring trial in Cawsand Bay</p> <p>Various surveys have been completed since deployment in Aug 16 with the most recent being carried out in Jun 18.</p> <p>Significant damage to both coverage and leaf length occurred following a failure of the mooring system – this is now recovering well.</p> <p>Report will be made available to TECF. <u>Action.</u></p> <p>Future: NMA and MCS partnership with sponsorship from Princess Yachts planning to install 5 more moorings for further trials.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Mr Matthews: What size of vessel is currently on the mooring and will it hold larger vessels?</p> <p>Answer: Currently a 22' fishing vessel. A trial is planned to assess the holding strength of a helical screw mooring which may be more suited to larger vessels.</p> <p>Mr Pittman: Maintenance is critical for this type of mooring, have wire coatings and different fixings been investigated?</p> <p>Answer: Yes, but certain fixings may affect insurance.</p> <p>DQHM clarified that licence conditions for personal moorings state that the mooring must be fit for purpose and is beholden on the licence holder/owner to adequately specify individual moorings for the vessel to be moored.</p> <p>Mr May: Is there enough funding?</p> <p>Answer: No. Mr May offered assistance in identifying funding opportunities. <u>Action.</u></p> <p>Dr Otway: Is it known how many moorings are in the seagrass beds and what is the additional cost of the mooring?</p> <p>Answer: Seagrass mapping is currently ongoing with NE. There is an £120 additional cost for the current mooring.</p>	<p>M Parry/NIO</p> <p>MMO</p>
Matters for Decision		
6.	<p>Delivery of Extension of TECF Management Plan</p> <p>Mrs Curry briefed the outline delivery plan clarifying that the aim was not a complete rewrite of the existing plan, rather producing an addendum to capture any significant changes or new objectives/projects to extend the plan to 2021.</p> <p>All members were requested to review the existing plan and feed back any changes/ additional objectives to NIO by the end of September. <u>Action.</u></p> <p>NIO to review and update Delivery Plan timeline. <u>Action.</u></p>	<p>All</p> <p>NIO</p>

<p>7. National marine Park – Update and report back</p>	<p>Mr Williams and Mr Pittman gave a presentation and outlined the themes emerging from the recent conference and workshop.</p> <p>Two streams of work, one a national approach (lead by Bluemarine) and a local approach (lead by Mr Pollard MP).</p> <p>Mr Williams outlined that there is no single proposal but the national approach is following on from the terrestrial National Parks review.</p> <p>Plymouth University (MarCoPol) have presented an option (forwarded seperately)</p> <p>Next stage is a meeting between the relevant local authorities to consider options for the scope and boundaries of any NMP. Action – Ms Buchan (PCC) to follow up</p>	<p>Ms Buchan</p>
<p>8. TECF officers report</p>	<p>NIO presented her report which is given in Annex A.</p> <p><u>5. Annual Survey</u></p> <p>The annual survey has been circulated to members request for all to complete by end July 2018.</p> <p>Action</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>9. Nature conservation</p>	<p>Mrs Gall presented Natural England's update which is given in Annex B.</p> <p>a. Seagrass LIFE bid and Preliminary work</p> <p>Replacement of moorings in Cawsand bay: DQHM raised concerns from PPMLC members regarding this, mooring licensee must be fully involved.</p> <p>Question from Mr Allen regarding the proposed 5 eco-moorings that were discussed at PPMLC (NMA project)?</p> <p>Answer – There has been confusion over the interface between eco-mooring project and helical screw trial. The co-ordination of the various projects is to be discussed out of committee. PCO requested to be included on all correspondence. <u>Action</u>.</p> <p>b. Plymouth EMS and Tamar Estuary Sites MCZ Monitoring</p> <p>Intertidal rocky shore monitoring 2016 report is available, contact Mrs Gall for a copy.</p> <p>c. Allis shad and Smelt survey</p> <p>Question from Dr Otway regarding timing of Smelt spawning?</p> <p>Answer: Smelt observed at beginning and end of February.</p>	<p>NMA/NE/PCO</p>
<p>10. MMO Update</p>	<p>Mr Curd and Ms Wordley introduced themselves and outlined their roles at MMO.</p> <p>Dr Otway gave an overview of the proposed work at Thanckes fueling jetty. Also discussed the recent changes to MMO policy regarding EC rules and HRA assessment (People vs Wind and</p>	

	<p>Sweetman) – this change may required an update to the DPoP dredging baseline document.</p> <p>Mr May outlined a recent “Stop Notice” issued to works in Bovisand – Heavy plant installed without licence, work was stopped whilst application considered.</p>			
11. IFCA Update	Ms Stephenson outlined a new Netting Permit Byelaw introduced in March – further information can be obtained from D&S IFCA website.			
12. Matter brought forward from PPMLC	DQHM gave an overview of a presentation received from Environment Agency and also reported on recent RNLI safety initiatives.			
13. Water Events	<p>The 2018 Water Events Diary (WED) can be found on the QHM website (<a href="http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/qhm/plymouth/leisure-users/events-diary">www.royalnavy.mod.uk/qhm/plymouth/leisure-users/events-diary</a>)</p> <p>Forthcoming events were:</p> <p>8 &amp; 9 Aug – National Fireworks Competition.</p> <p>Question received from Ms Dan regarding environmental impact of fireworks?</p> <p>Answer from Mr Crowe: Research has been conducted regarding unplanned firework events re. wading birds but not specifically for the annual firework competition.</p>			
14. Items for future meetings	NIL			
15. Any other business	<p>1. Dr Otway requested information regarding the “Tamar Banks Project” and USAR commitment for dredge spoil.</p> <p>EA not present, Action placed to make contact with Dr Otway.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <p>2. Ms Woodall outlined the draft management plan for Tamar Valley AONB – currently lots of unknowns specifically UK exits from EU, possible supplement required.</p>	EA/DIO		
16. Dates of Next Meetings	<p>Dates of the forthcoming PPMLC and TECF meetings were published as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p><b>PPMLC</b></p> <p>1400 on 11 Oct 18</p> <p>1400 on 14 Feb 19</p> <p>1400 on 13 Jun 19</p> </td> <td> <p><b>TECF</b></p> <p><b>1015 on 8 Nov 18</b></p> <p><b>1015 on 14 Mar 19</b></p> <p><b>1015 on 11 Jul 19</b></p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>PPMLC</b></p> <p>1400 on 11 Oct 18</p> <p>1400 on 14 Feb 19</p> <p>1400 on 13 Jun 19</p>	<p><b>TECF</b></p> <p><b>1015 on 8 Nov 18</b></p> <p><b>1015 on 14 Mar 19</b></p> <p><b>1015 on 11 Jul 19</b></p>	
<p><b>PPMLC</b></p> <p>1400 on 11 Oct 18</p> <p>1400 on 14 Feb 19</p> <p>1400 on 13 Jun 19</p>	<p><b>TECF</b></p> <p><b>1015 on 8 Nov 18</b></p> <p><b>1015 on 14 Mar 19</b></p> <p><b>1015 on 11 Jul 19</b></p>			

Distribution: NBC, All Committee members

Annex A

Agenda Item 8  
Natural Infrastructure Officer's TECF Report  
Item for Information

***National Coordination & Marine Planning***

**a) National Steering Group**

No further meetings of the **National Steering Group** (NSG) for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) have taken place. The group is currently on pause and the MMO are currently working with Defra to review how each MPA group under the Defra family operates.

**b) Marine Planning**

Following the workshops held in March, the MMO is now analysing the responses and will be circulating a response very shortly.

They will then produce the third iteration which is expected in July or August. They are still on track to produce the third iteration in July – August of this year. The final Draft Plan is expected in Summer 2019.

Also, Alex Curd has replaced Neal Gray, as the MMO's Marine Officer for Marine Planning.

***Finance and Priorities***

***TECF Income 2018/19***

ORGANISATION	2018/19
<b>Harbour Authorities</b>	
Ministry of Defence, QHM	3,000
Associated British Ports	2,000
Cattewater Harbour Commission	9,000
Sutton Harbour Commission	2,000
<b>Harbour Authorities Subtotal</b>	<b>16,000</b>
<b>Local Authorities</b>	
Plymouth City Council	10,000
Devon County Council	2,000
Cornwall Council	2,000
West Devon Borough Council	4,500

South Hams District Council	4,500
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>23,000</b>
<b>Other</b>	
Natural England	1,000
Duchy of Cornwall	4,375
Environment Agency	
Devon & Severn IFCA	
Cornwall IFCA	
Marine Management Organisation	
English Heritage	
<b>Other total</b>	<b>5,375</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>44,375</b>

Invoice requests will be sent out in the next month or so.

### ***Delivery of Priorities 2018-19***

Priorities are proposed as follows:

#### **1. Stabilise funding for the future.**

There are opportunities linked to delivering the mitigation plan for the Local Plans and these will be explored through the year.

#### **2. Tamar Estuaries Management Plan**

Creation of a new Tamar Estuaries Management Plan and adoption by all Relevant Authorities.

#### **3. Support the exploration of feasibility of creating a National Marine Park.**

Explore the opportunities post-Brexit and in particular the feasibility of creating a National Marine Park and how this could support the objectives of TECF.

#### **4. Continue to host TECF, PPMLC and TOFF meetings.**

#### **5. Complete the Recreation Mitigation Plan and secure funding through an adopted Supplementary Planning Document.**

The increased recreational pressures arising from the development brought forward through the Joint Local Plan and Cornwall Local Plan will need to have a mitigation plan agreed with a funding stream secured to deliver the actions.

#### **6. Deliver the CIL EMS Project for 2016-2019**

Work will continue delivering the Business Plan relating to the first phase of this project with the support of Beth Siddons. This includes monitoring, information provision, research and infrastructure.

#### **7. Implement the Biosecurity Plan for the Tamar Estuaries.**

The Plan has now been produced and will be implemented through training and workshops.

#### **8. Carry out an Annual Survey of Relevant Authorities and use the findings to inform management practices and develop an annual boat survey of users.**

## **10. Raise the profile of the work of TECF and the importance of the waters of Plymouth Sound and the Tamar Estuaries.**

Ensure that there is a high profile for the waters, not just through our own channels of website and Twitter, but also supporting others to include marine messages.

### ***MCZ Consultation***

The third tranche of Marine Conservation Zones are now out for consultation. These will contribute to the Government's ecologically coherent network of sites around the coast. The first tranche of 27 MCZs was announced in 2013 and included the Tamar Estuaries and Looe and Whitsand Bays. A further 23 sites were added in 2016 and DEFRA are now consulting on 41 new sites and the addition of new features to 12 existing sites of which one is Looe and Whitsand Bay MCZ (the new features are moderate energy circalittoral rock, Giant goby and two species of Stalked jellyfish).

The nearest sites to us are the three south Devon Estuaries of the Dart Estuary, Devon Avon Estuary and Erme Estuary.

The consultation is open until 20 July 2018 and further information is available from <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine/consultation-on-the-thirdtranche-of-marine-conser/>

### ***Joint Local Plan & EMS Recreational Mitigation***

The Inspector has finished the examination of the Joint Local Plan and their findings are awaited.

Further limited consultation will be required of any modifications to the Plan as submitted, and these will take place later in the year.

Updates are available on the website

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouthandsouthwestdevonjointlocalplanexamination>

### **EMS Recreational Mitigation**

The work being undertaken to review the mitigation plan for the European Marine Site in order to inform the tariff that will be levied against new development is progressing. Ultimately this will need to be levied against all development within an identified 'zone of influence' of the Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area boundaries.

Actions are in the process of being agreed with Natural England under the following three themes;

- Projects and capital works
- Monitoring
- Wardening and Project Management

The evidence showed that mitigation should be required from all dwellings built within 12.3km of the boundaries of the EMS. This is a precautionary approach and is the zone from which 75% of coastal visitors live who visit the SAC. The zone for the SPA is slightly less, but in order to take a precautionary approach and to simplify the approach, a 12.3km zone of influence will be adopted for the EMS as a whole.

The package of mitigation measures comprise the following:

### **Projects and capital works**

- Voluntary codes of conduct
- Provision of adequate litter receptacles
- Funding of marine litter clean ups.
- Awareness raising of sensitive habitats including the development of user-scale maps.
- 'Check, Clean, Dry' signage, leaflets, stickers.
- Educational workshops and roadshows.
- Implementation of Pollution Prevention Guidelines.
- Creation or screening of footpaths / boardwalks around sensitive areas.
- Reconfiguration of existing moorings if it would remove them from sensitive areas; Installation of eco-moorings or trot moorings.
- Provision of safe, designated launching points in less sensitive areas.

### **Monitoring**

- Licensing and maintenance of GIS system for monitoring purposes.
- Recreational boat activity surveys.
- Recreational usage, activity and impacts survey

### **Wardening and Project Management**

- Project Coordinator
- Estuary warden
- Project running costs

The approach now needs to be agreed with all four local authorities as well as the collection mechanisms. Further information will be provided once this has been done.

### ***Annual Survey***

The Annual Survey has been circulated to stakeholders for feedback. To date, we have received 6 responses out of the eleven requested. We would ask all members approached to complete the survey and have not responded yet, to do so before the end of July. The information helps us identify changes in activity levels, monitor the implementation of the TECF Management Plan and to collect headline indicator data that will help us monitor any long or short-term changes.

### ***Water quality***

The Bathing Water Quality warning emails from the Environment Agency started on 1<sup>st</sup> May and will run until 30<sup>th</sup> September. So far this season there has been one risk warning issued, at Plymouth Hoe East - Bathing was not advised, due to pollution from sewage. The incident started 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 13:41, and ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 at 08:33. Warnings are tweeted when received by @TamarEstuaries.

## ***National Marine Park***

On 6 June the Blue Marine Foundation, a national charity dedicated to creating marine reserves and establishing sustainable models of fishing, held a conference in Plymouth to explore the potential of creating Marine Parks and what these might look like. 130 people attended to hear presentations and to discuss how they might add additional benefits over and above the existing system of marine designations in England.

The new Labour administration for Plymouth has also pledged to support the campaign for Plymouth Sound to be designated the country's first National Marine Park.

A workshop is due to be held at the end of June hosted by Luke Pollard to discuss this further. A verbal update will be provided in the meeting.

## ***Plastic Free Plymouth***

Plymouth has launched a major new plan to tackle single use plastics and plastic pollution in Plymouth. The 'Plan for Plastics' was launched on Friday 8 June at the Dome, follows a week of action and is focussed on reducing the amount of plastic that ends up in the sea.

The Plan for Plastic focuses on a citywide drive to significantly reduce the use of single use plastics by 2020 and coupled with this will be a drive to encourage people to use the City's green and blue spaces.

The Plan will be driven, monitored and supported by Plymouth Britain's Ocean City Task Force and will include representatives from public bodies, environmental sector, voluntary sector, academia, industry and business.

The Plan is framed around four fundamental principles:

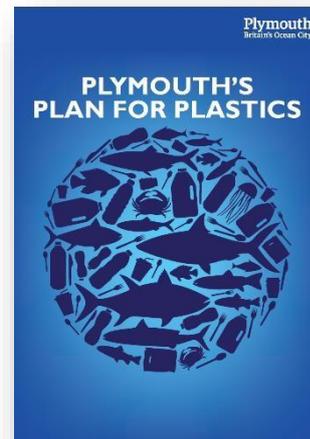
- Avoid – encouraging residents to avoid single use plastics, and to find alternatives such as reusable coffee cups;
- Recycle- continue to work to increase recycling rates in Plymouth;
- Innovate – support academic and industry led research into plastic free alternatives;
- Connect – developing an education programme to encourage people to visit and connect with the natural environment.

A detailed and fully costed Action Plan that sets out how each of the four principles will be taken forward is expected later in the year and will be produced by Plymouth Britain's Ocean City Task Force.

Also, Plymouth Waterfront has become the first UK city district to win accreditation with 'Plastic Free Communities' status issued by the charity 'Surfers Against Sewage'.

Further information is available from

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/environmentandpollution/plastics>



## ***Water Users Leaflet***

The Water Users Leaflet has once again provide very popular, with 2,000 copies already having been distributed. A short print run will take place to get sufficient for the rest of the season. Please let us know if any more of needed.

## ***Biosecurity Plan***

The Tamar Estuaries Biosecurity Plan has been agreed and is available on the website - <http://web.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/environmentandplanning/natureconservation/natureprojects/tecf/tecfactivities.htm>.

A briefing note will be sent out to all marinas, clubs and boatyards during the next month to explain what it means to them and the Water Users Guide will need to be updated.

## ***EMS CIL Managing Recreational Impacts Programme***

Progress has been made with the following immediate deliverables;

- New website – [www.plymouth-mpa.uk](http://www.plymouth-mpa.uk) - due to launch by end of July.
- Quarterly newsletter – will launch shortly after website.
- Information Panels: 5 pilot panels – design completed, installation date TBC.
- The Plymouth Sound & Tamar Estuaries MPA video is being developed in partnership with Natural England. The video will be made available to partners once it is complete (due end July).
- The MBA have provided an initial Little Egret study, which brings together existing WeBS data with the results of the Recreation Study to identify potential hotspots for recreational impacts on the Little egret population in the Tamar SPA. A project brief is being developed to continue this work and survey the birds' activity and usage around the area.
- Fishing tackle bins have been sourced and the collection process is under discussion with PCC Street Scene and Waste department. The aim is to have these installed at key angling marks around Plymouth once collection can be agreed and signed created.

## ***Developments***

Current planning and marine planning matters include the following.

### **PLYMOUTH**

- **17/02074/FUL Bostons Boat Yard Baylys Road Plymouth PL9 7NQ** - Redevelop site by erection of 15 dwellings and associated roads, footways, garages, parking and landscaping (demolition of existing boatyard buildings) and works to rebuild existing slipway. Further information awaited. This will also require a Marine License.
- **17/02323/FUL Harbour Arch Quay Sutton Harbour Plymouth PL4 0HN** - Erection of nine-storey building comprising 14 residential units and ground floor commercial unit for use as a shop (Class A1), or financial and professional services (Class A2), or a

restaurant or cafe (Class A3), or a crèche/day nursery (Class D1), cycle and refuse storage facilities and associated works. Information awaited

- **17/02068/S73 Drakes Island Plymouth** - Removal of condition 8 (long term Egret monitoring) from application 17/00336/FUL. Further information awaited.
- **18/00054/FUL Devonport Dockyard Saltash Road Keyham Plymouth PL1 4SG** - Temporary use of Table Top Mountain as a car park. **Decision made to grant conditionally.**
- **17/02324/FUL Land At Harbour Arch Quay Sutton Harbour Plymouth PL4 0HN** - Resurfacing of existing hard surface area. **Application withdrawn.**
- **17/02306/S73 Drakes Island Hoe Road Plymouth** - Remove condition 8 (long term Egret monitoring) and amend wording for conditions 7 (operational environmental management plan), 9 (design details), 10 (lighting details), 11 (external materials), 12 (landscape design and management plan), 14 (glazed acoustic screen), 18 (MOD explosives safeguarding), 19 (contaminated land), 23 (coastal erosion impacts) & 28 (Alderman Miller Memorial Garden) from application 17/00336/FUL
- **Vauxhall Quay Boardwalk with commercial units, Sutton Harbour:** This planning application was originally granted in 2015, but it has now lapsed resulting in this resubmission. The MMO license for the marine element was finally granted in December 2017.

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Mar 2018

## Annex B

### Agenda Item 9 Natural England Update TECF Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018

#### Changes to Condition Assessment for subtidal seagrass

We are in the process of changing the recorded condition of subtidal seagrass in the SAC from favourable to unfavourable. This information was sent out by email in April:

We would like to inform you of a change we are making in our assessment of the condition of seagrass beds within Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC. Subtidal seagrass beds are now considered to be in 'unfavourable condition'.

Subtidal seagrass beds are a sub-feature of 'Large Shallow Inlets and Bays', 'Estuaries' and 'Sandbanks which are slightly covered with water at all times' within the SAC. The subtidal seagrass beds within this site were last surveyed in 2012, when the condition of this feature was described by the contractor as 'favourable'. In our 2016 condition assessment, the subtidal seagrass condition was subsequently assessed as 'favourable'. The 2012 survey was the first full assessment of the subtidal seagrass feature and can be considered a baseline survey. Due to survey limitations it was not possible to assess potential impacts from anchoring and mooring. Our 2016 condition assessment did not use proxy data, and therefore we did not do a vulnerability assessment as part of the assessment process.

Recently, particularly with our experience of undertaking vulnerability assessments for Marine Conservation Zones (sites for which little condition evidence was available and therefore assessments had to be made using activity data and habitat sensitivity), our approach to condition assessments has developed. We would now include a vulnerability assessment to address the lack of available evidence on potential anchoring and mooring impacts. Seagrass is known to be sensitive to physical disturbance and abrasion and anchoring and mooring has a medium to high risk of inducing this pressure (see our [Advice on Operations for the site](#)) and in some subtidal seagrass beds within the SAC anchoring and mooring is known to be of a high intensity. In a vulnerability assessment, a feature that is sensitive to a pressure (to which it is known to be exposed) would indicate a moderate to high vulnerability and a subsequent General Management Approach of 'recover' or 'restore' is applied.

Although the subtidal seagrass feature was previously assessed as being in favourable condition, there were some inherent uncertainties in the 2016 assessment and the contractor's assessment in 2012. Confidence in these assessments was low for the attribute 'number of plants per m<sup>2</sup>'. There was a decline in number of plants per m<sup>2</sup> between 2009 results and 2012 results but it was difficult to make comparisons and the assessment was made assuming an absence of anthropogenic impacts.

#### Relevant recent research

There have been some relevant recent studies that have investigated the effects of anchoring and mooring pressures on seagrass habitats. Unsworth *et al.* (2017) studied a range of sites in England where mooring occurs on seagrass (*Zostera marina*) and quantified the area of damage to seagrass caused by chain scour from swinging moorings. The authors found that the average area affected was 122 m<sup>2</sup> per individual swinging mooring. This study has also shown that loss of UK seagrass beds from boat moorings is 'small but significant at a local scale' and that this loss fragments existing meadows, 'ultimately reducing their resilience to other stressors'. We are aware of other stressors that may be impacting this feature; namely sediment surface contaminants, aqueous contaminants and invasive, non-native species, as well as significant disturbance from anchoring.

Griffiths *et al.* (2017) conducted a risk assessment of 173 sites in England and Wales and highlighted Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC as one of the SACs most at risk from anchoring and mooring pressures. They ranked the site 9<sup>th</sup> out of 173 for exposure to anchoring. The site was considered to be at risk, with designated habitats (namely seagrass beds) considered 'at high risk based on the worst case abrasion/disturbance pressure'.

In summary, the condition of subtidal seagrass beds within the site is now considered to be 'unfavourable' and therefore a conservation objective of 'restore to favourable condition' should be applied. **This instigates the requirement for management and we will be working with the relevant authorities to address what measures might be put in place to allow recovery of this feature.** It may also be necessary to subsequently revisit the condition assessments for the supporting habitat features.

## Seagrass LIFE bid and preliminary work

Natural England has coordinated the submission of a concept note for EU LIFE funding for a 4 year project to work on restoration of seagrass habitats in 5 SACs including Plymouth Sound and Estuaries.

The project aims to protect seagrass from and reduce recreational pressures on seagrass beds; demonstrate large scale restoration and management techniques; promote awareness and inspire stakeholders to take better care of seagrass beds. There is a focus on resolving conflicts between marine conservation and marine users through face to face engagement work.

In this site we are proposing seagrass monitoring, the replacement of all legal moorings in Cawsand Bay with eco-friendly moorings, the addition of 10 visitor moorings to relieve anchoring pressure, an underwater clean up of old mooring blocks and a large amount of public awareness and engagement work.

There are a number of partners identified in the concept note including TECF, the National Marine Aquarium, the Royal Yachting Association and several academic institutions.

If the concept note is successful we will be asked to develop a full bid and will need to come back to TECF with more details. The concept note is available to any TECF member on request.

Separately but related work is our trialling of the 'helical screw' anchoring system for moorings in Cawsand Bay – these anchoring systems have a smaller 'footprint' than conventional mooring blocks and the trial will look at how effectively they work in a relatively open coast location.

## Priority issues in the European Marine Site

Our work in this area has been prioritised largely based on our Condition Assessment of the Special Area of Conservation. With partners we have recently been working on some of the issues that are causing parts of the site to be considered in 'unfavourable condition':

- We have secured funding from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for a 2 year project working with South Devon AoNB and Cornwall Wildlife Trust to engage and train volunteers to manage and monitor the spread of Pacific oysters. This a particular issue in the Yealm estuary, but is likely to also start affecting other parts of the site. The project is just getting up and running and volunteer recruitment has started.
- Tamar biosecurity plan: last year this plan was developed with stakeholder input and has now been finalised. It is relevant to all water users in the Sound and estuaries and delivery is

ongoing and is being monitored through TECF. All NE marine monitoring has a specific target of recording invasive non-native species.

- Awareness raising about the marine environment is one of the key aims of our Tamar and Plymouth Focus Area. Last year we produced a film about the reefs of Wembury <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91RXaQ3NZug> and would appreciate your help to share it. We are working jointly with TECF on a longer film about all the Marine Protected Areas around Plymouth.
- Working with the local authorities on the new local plans and in particular on developing mitigation lists for potential increases in disturbance from recreation within Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation and the Tamar Complex Special Protection Area.

## Plymouth EMS and Tamar Estuary Sites MCZ Monitoring

**Intertidal rocky shore monitoring 2016** – A report is available, please email for a copy.

**Intertidal habitat mapping** – This ‘biotope survey’ of all the intertidal areas of the SAC was carried out by Ecospan Environmental Ltd in September. This will update our existing habitat maps and the data will be available through the MAGIC mapping website <http://www.magic.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>. The report has not yet been produced but is due later this year.

**Subtidal reef survey** – This survey focused on the deeper (circalittoral) areas of reef within the SAC and was carried out by Natural England’s monitoring team last year and has just been repeated this year with a view to comparing results and validating the methodology.

**Allis shad and smelt surveys** – Due to ongoing difficulties with access to survey sites we have been unable to monitor Allis shad spawning this year but we have had two reports of adult shad being seen in the upper Tamar. In February the Environment Agency carried out smelt spawning surveys on our behalf in the Tamar, smelt eggs were recorded over a larger area than previously. At that time we were also able to get high quality footage and photographs of smelt in the wild which will be useful for our awareness work.

**Subtidal seagrass** – The subtidal seagrass in the SAC I being monitored this summer by a combination of diving and drop down video (this aspect led by the Environment Agency). It will revisit the sites monitored in 2012 to allow comparisons.

Once published, reports can be accessed here <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/> but they will be available on request prior to that.

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