

The Maritime Economy in Tor Bay Workshop

Chair: Kevin Mowat, Director, Marine Services, Harbour Master, Torbay Development Agency

Key Messages

- General consensus was that the Marine Bill will be beneficial and will assist sustainable development, however, it should also include impacts other than environmental e.g. socio-economic.
- More questions need to be asked as part of consensus to provide more accurate information
- MSP should also promote development where it will work as well as to restrict it where it shouldn't happen
- Existing land based trades are not suitable but trade associations can influence

Key Messages from transcript of summing up

1 The consent process will be beneficial and will assist with sustainable development, however the right questions need to be asked and we have to have the the right information to answer them. Questions need to reflect all inputs e.g. socio-economic impacts as well as environmental concerns

2 Need to both restrict and promote development with respect to MSPs where appropriate. The Planning process should set out this template.

3 How should business interests be included. The existing land based chambers of commerce were not appropriate to representative the interests of the marine businesses but suitable alternatives might be trade associations. All interests need to be represented.

Questions

Question 1.

Will the streamlining of marine consents in the Marine Bill have a beneficial effect on sustainable development in the near shore?

- Streamlining of consents is of benefit
- Recently applying for consents related to seagrass- a central unity would be a good idea to gather information quickly
- Unit (licensing) needs large input to give consents
- Can be complicated to gain consent-defra tried to streamline before, perhaps not the right skills to make this possible
- Reducing consent process important but they don't take socio-economic issues into consideration – will help sustainable development if they do
- Attempts to redress balance through streamlining consents
- River Hamble a case study – consent streamlining led by Harbour Authority

- Quality of information is central for evidence-based decision making re:-consents
- Also needs to be socio-economic information
- To be of benefit, process needs to ask the right questions in order to prioritise uses
- Need data to answer the right questions, needs to address all the issues
- How are we going to weight the different strands of information being fed in to the decision making process
- Questions need to reflect the balance of socio-economic, environmental, developmental needs
- Need sufficient data to inform the process
- Do consultees have their own agendas and objections?
- Weighting can be subjective due to these agendas

Question 2.

Marine Spatial Planning could have the effect of restricting development – how can this be avoided?

- Should restriction of development be avoided?
- Marine spatial planning will restrict development but how does this ensure the right restrictions are put in place
- Concept is to avoid inappropriate development
- Proper planning should also be for development and allow it
- Where there are conflicts of use, how do we plan for the future development of these uses?
- If you have a local MSP, it would evolve similar to terrestrial plans – needs to be congruent
- Councillors and developers may be collaborating together
- MSPs much of society not interested in the coast and prefer a terrestrial perspective with no consideration for maritime environment e.g. Plymouth putting forward plans that are encouraging engagement in process by the community
- Not about avoiding development but setting out spatially what can happen where
- Working environment represents an appeal to visitors e.g. working harbours
- Shouldn't be sterile, some funders want this
- Mixed use is a draw for visitors it makes it a living environment
- If population of Torbay is ignorant of importance of marine environment then they won't be able to contribute to process
- Need to govern and plan where different activities need to be
- Need employment –diversity is important for the long term
- Some decisions on MSP need to be regional/national then accepted locally when implemented
- Ports don't like idea of national/regional policy
- Big leap for Torbay to dissociate with shipping

Question 3.

How can we ensure that business interests are properly included in the Marine Plans?

- Need to be at the table
- How do we get consensus – built decisions including stakeholders?
They need to be at the table
- Nested plans will be needed for Torbay, a good solution to planning
- Managing at local level is easy, wider environment requires voluntary agreement
- New plans wont be voluntary though once adopted they will be stronger but still need to be enforced
- As you go further off-shore this becomes more difficult and statutes are required to ensure compliance
- Also requires education of users
- Need experienced people to comment on planning proposals in order for them to be balanced decisions. These people are hard to find.
- MMDs need these people to be credible e.g. Plymouth – not sure how to represent stakeholders and maintain quality of input
- Local coastal forums – deal with local coastal issues – stakeholders there can represent them at higher level meetings having agreed local views
- Can tap in to local forums but how do you ensure quality
- Very difficult to engage local businesses in the decision making process
- Adds difficulty to the representation issues
- Stakeholders need access to groups and some business need greater representation at the table
- Small clusters are growing
- A lot of work to consider all plans

Question 4.

Will local steering groups work as a mechanism for ensuring business interests are recognised?

- Money is an important aspect. Where funding exists, networks are well established and work well
- Funding might reflect different agendas of each steering groups
- Need to pay someone to do the work of running the steering group. Subscriptions aren't enough to do this effectively
- Who else needs to be represented on steering groups
- No longer need 'chambers of trades'