

Marine Milestone for England's Marine Spatial Planning

England's first ever plans for the future of our seas have been published on 2 April 2014. The marine plans " which provide guidance for sustainable development in English waters " cover the coast and seas from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe. They have been developed by the Marine Management Organisation on behalf of the Secretary of State Owen Paterson, who has formally approved the plans.

An [interactive tool](#) called the Marine Information System, explaining how marine plans affect particular areas, has been presented. Marine plans will inform and guide decisions on development in marine and coastal areas, while conserving and enhancing the environment and recognising leisure uses too. It will highlight policies that apply to a chosen area to inform plan users, and mapping information makes searching for an area of interest easier.

This should reduce costs and increase certainty for developers, boosting economic and employment benefits for coastal communities and beyond.

The first two plans cover the East inshore and offshore areas, with a total of 11 plans covering all English waters anticipated by 2021. The seas have become increasingly busy, with industries such as oil and gas, wind farms, shipping, aggregates and fishing competing for space with each other and with nature. The marine economy is currently worth more than GBP49 billion a year and has the potential to grow significantly.

By 2021, marine plans will cover the entire English marine area, supporting an estimated GBP50 million of economic benefit each year and helping to promote sustainable development of the marine area.

The UK has one of the richest marine environments in the world, with more than 8,000 species recorded in our seas. Plans will take full account of marine protected areas, recognising the wealth of species and habitats in the seas.