



Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

DAERA Public Consultation Document: Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) – synopsis of responses	21st December 2016
PLANNING COMMITTEE	

Linkage to Corporate Plan	
Strategic Priority	
Protecting and enhancing our environment	Our citizens will be given the maximum opportunity to enjoy our natural environments
Lead Officer	Principal Planning Officer/Local Development Plan Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

For Information

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) wrote to Council on 18th November 2016 (see Appendix 1) with a synopsis of responses received to its public consultation exercise.

2.0 Detail

- 2.1 The former DOE initiated a public consultation exercise from 14th December 2015 to 11th March 2016 outlining its proposals for Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). Two of the proposed four sites lie within this Borough. The responses on both MCZs are detailed below:

Rathlin MCZ – Deep-sea bed, Black guillemot and Geological/geomorphological features (Submerged lagoons and Sea arches);

- 2.2 The responses for Rathlin pMCZ were generally positive; of the 28 responses, 23 were supportive. Many consultees welcomed the proposed features, in particular the inclusion of Black guillemot, as only one other site in the UK has been designated for this species. The consultation document made reference to the possible presence of cold water coral reefs associated with Deep-sea bed. Though this is a potential location, currently the Department does not have any evidence to support this. Until survey work determines whether this is present, reference to cold water coral reefs will be removed from all documents. The

fishing industry was concerned that the proposed boundary overlapped key areas and provided indicative fishing grounds for Queen Scallop. When this was digitised and overlaid with the pMCZ, the fishing grounds were found to lie outside the boundary. A quantitative analysis of data from Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) from 2006-2014 shows that average fishing effort within the pMCZ is only 1.36% of the total effort within ICES rectangle 39E3. The average fishing effort is 50.85 hours per annum which equates to 0.55hrs/km². The Department acknowledge that this is only an indicative value because VMS is limited to larger vessels. However, it is widely accepted that smaller vessels do not fish with mobile gear in the area to the north of Rathlin Island due to excessive depths and strong tidal currents. Consequently, the proposed boundary for Rathlin pMCZ is unchanged.

Waterfoot MCZ – Subtidal (sublittoral) sand with subtidal seagrass beds (*Zosteramarina*);

- 2.3 The majority of responses indicated support for the pMCZ designation (25 responses in total with 16 supportive), particularly as this was a stakeholder nomination. One consultee raised concerns about the proposed boundary. Where consultees were not supportive of the proposal this was due to concerns about management; in particular the issue of anchoring and mooring in the wider Red Bay area was raised by several consultees.
- 2.4 DAERA has advised Council that, having considered the comments from stakeholders and further survey work undertaken, the boundary of Waterfoot has changed from 0.79km² to 0.81 km². This change does not impact on the management measures proposed for the site.
- 2.5 The Department will continue to work with stakeholders in the development of management measures for each MCZ and will develop programmes of surveillance monitoring and enforcement.
- 2.6 Given the generally positive responses to the consultation, the Department intends to formally designate the MCZs by December 2016.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 2.1 None.

3.0 Other Implications

- 3.1 None.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Elected Members note the contents of the report.

Environment Marine & Fisheries Group
Marine & Fisheries Division



By email:

Klondyke Building
Cromac Avenue
Belfast BT7 2JA
Telephone: 028 9056 9235
Email: Marine.InfoRequests@daera-ni.gov.uk

Date: 18 November 2016

Dear Consultee

SYNOPSIS OF RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR MARINE CONSERVATION ZONES IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND INSHORE REGION

Proposals for the designation of four Marine Conservation Zones were the subject of a public consultation between 14 December 2015 and 11 March 2016. The responses to the consultation have been considered, and a synopsis report has now been published on the Departmental website. <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/daera/Synopsis%20of%20responses%20to%20MCZ%20consultation.pdf>

Having considered comments from stakeholders and undertaken further survey work the boundaries of two of the pMCZs have been amended. Waterfoot has changed from 0.79km² to 0.81 km² and Outer Belfast Lough MCZ has been reduced from 5.76km² to 2.51km². These changes do not impact on the management measures proposed for the sites.

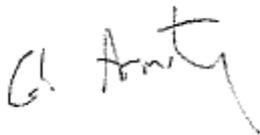
If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.



The Department will continue to work with stakeholders in the development of management measures for each MCZ and will develop programmes of surveillance monitoring and enforcement in line with the [Strategy for Marine Protected Areas in the Northern Ireland inshore region](#).

Given the generally positive responses to the consultation, the Department intends to formally designate the four MCZs by December 2016.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colin Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Colin Armstrong
Acting Deputy Director
Marine and Fisheries Division