



BalancedSeas

Delivering Marine Conservation Zones in the South-East

Balanced Seas Essex/Thames/ North Kent Local Group Third Meeting



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Meeting Report

16 November 2010

Regent's College, London

Note:

This report is a summary report based on the laptop recordings undertaken during the meeting in full view of all participants.

We have added explanatory notes in boxed italics like this to describe what was happening during the meeting, so that the report makes more sense to readers who were not present.

Report prepared by Balanced Seas project team

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Summary

Objectives for the third meeting of the **Essex, Thames and North Kent Local Group (LG)** on 16 November 2010 were:

- To understand the developments in the Second Progress Report
- To prioritise any outstanding sources of data
- To develop an understanding of the activities/features matrix
- To provide information to the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) on the current network of Broad Areas of Interest (BAIs) in the context of the matrix information
- To define any additional BAIs where necessary

Hannah Thomas, Balanced Seas MPA Planner, presented the process used by the RSG to build on the First Progress Report to produce the Second Progress Report. She outlined the overall objectives, the working groups and data used and explained the progress made in refining previously identified BAIs. This was followed by a discussion of the MCZ process and the Second Progress Report.

Participants questioned whether ports can be excluded from BAIs as appeared to be the case with Dover Port. The project team explained that Dover Port had been excluded from a BAI in the Sussex area because there were no features that needed protection within the harbour or the harbour mouth. This process is feature driven and therefore through review of the features and subsequent discussion during the stakeholder meetings the stakeholder groups had decided to split the BAI around the port.

Participants were also concerned about whether the natural dynamics of the environment and those activities that positively shape the environment were being taken into account. The project team explained this was the case, and the importance of local knowledge in this context. Hannah explained that for the third iteration, smaller, more site specific meetings will be held in addition to the RSG and LGs, and Task Group meetings would also be held to look at inshore and offshore BAIs.

The LG was asked to review the data document included in their packs, and identify priority data still to be obtained.

The morning concluded with a presentation on the 'activities/features matrix', followed by discussion. The participants raised questions relating to the definitions of impact intensity levels and pressure benchmarks. The project team explained that the intensity level of an activity must be discussed further and will be largely informed by the stakeholder groups. The contribution of existing Marine Protected Areas to the UK MPA network, in cases where it was felt that management was not being implemented and therefore certain features habitats were not actually protected was also questioned. The project team explained that it is not the remit of the project to point out any management problems of existing sites as the habitats on the conservation objectives for

the Natura 2000 sites are considered protected by law and therefore will not be considered for MCZ protection.

The LG was divided into two working groups (Essex coastline, incorporating BAIs 1 – 5) and North Kent coastline, (incorporating BAIs 6-10) for the purpose of reviewing the BAIs and the Second Progress Report, and were asked to:

- 1) Develop an understanding of the activities/features matrix by testing its uses for a single BAI
- 2) Provide RSG with information on activities occurring in BAIs within the geographical area they were concerned with
- 3) Discuss any additional areas that should be suggested to the RSG

The LG concluded the meeting by summarising the outcomes from each working group and agreeing on the next steps.

1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives

Specific objectives for the day were:

- To understand the developments in the Second Progress Report
- To prioritise any outstanding sources of data
- To develop an understanding of the activities/features matrix
- To provide information to the RSG on the current network of BAIs in the context of the matrix information
- To define any additional BAIs where necessary

1.2 Agenda

Time	Item
10:30	Arrivals and Registration
11:00	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working agreements and purpose of the meeting• Introduce participants and team• Go over agenda
11:15	Iteration 2 (Second Progress Report) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of latest iteration to the Science Advisory Panel• Questions of clarity
11:45	RSG/local/sector liaison <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share feedback from RSG about Site Specific Groups and Task Groups
12:00	Interim Groups and other updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback on how information was used at RSG and refer to feedback notes distributed before the meeting
12:15	Data completion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share how data has been gathered and used – ecological and socio-economic.• Discuss any sources for data gaps
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Activities and Features <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation on the tool that is used by the RSG to assess socio-economic activities against features• Workshop session on socio-economic activities that exist in species and habitat FOCl areas
15:15	Tea/Coffee
15:35	Activities and Features 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In same groups identify patterns that emerged that indicate -

16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ low contention or activity levels ○ other areas that might need to be considered because of high activity levels ○ perspectives from wildlife groups about special nature of a FOCI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share output of this exercise with the other groups.
16:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate ● Next steps ● Action points
17:00	Close

1.3 Attendance

27 members of the LG attended, with nine members of the project team and Carl Reynolds, LG facilitator from 3KQ. Apologies were received from several representatives of the fisheries industry, the charter boat industry and the recreational sailing sector. See Appendix 1 for the full list of attendees.

1.4 Information Provided

Prior to the meeting, LG members had been provided with the following materials through an ftp website:

- 1) The October 2010 version of the Regional Profile
- 2) The Second Progress Report to the SAP

LG members were also sent a link to a private section of the Balanced Seas website where they could download a copy of the interactive PDF document. This is a tool devised to display all the information in the Regional Profile with the ability to turn each data layer on or off making it easier to access all the information during detailed BAI discussions.

In addition, LG members were sent a document detailing feedback from the interim LG meetings held in September 2010.

At the meeting, each participant received a folder containing the following:

- Agenda
- LG participant list
- Document released by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) compiling a list of questions and answers on the MMO bylaws based on queries received from the four regional projects and stakeholders
- Feedback from Balanced Seas to questions raised at the interim meetings of the Solent/IoW/Hants and the Essex/Thames/N. Kent LGs in September 2010
- Appendix 1 from the Second Progress Report detailing the BAI descriptions and conservation aims for all the BAIs in the LG area
- Essex/Thames/North Kent working group notes from the Balanced Seas RSG meeting held in October 2010

- Regional Profile Data Sources document detailing the status of national and regional data sets.

During the meeting, participants were given an evaluation form to provide the project team and facilitator with feedback about the meeting and the MCZ process.

1.5 Ground Rules

The following ground rules were agreed by the participants for efficient functioning of the LG during meetings:

- Mobiles off
- One person speaking at a time
- Punctuality
- Check with laptop recorder that your comment has been noted to your satisfaction

1.6 Project Manager Updates

The Project Manager gave a brief update on key issues:

- The data collection work by the liaison officers using the questionnaire and Fisherman/Stakmap methodology is now largely complete. LG members were thanked for their assistance with this. Some targeted data collection will continue for specific areas of interest, but the current focus is on analysis of the results and validation of the resulting aggregated maps.
- Good progress is now being made in engaging non-UK stakeholders and obtaining data on the use of the Balanced Seas project area by non-UK fishing fleets. A French representative has been identified for the RSG, as well as a French named consultative stakeholder. Staff of the Boulogne office of the French MPA Agency visited Balanced Seas in October for a constructive discussion and exchange of information and data.
- Information from the MMO about the planned bylaw process and marine spatial planning had been provided in the meeting packs. The marine planning process will be starting with two pilot areas in Eastern England, both of which slightly overlap with the Balanced Seas project in the area covered by the Essex/Thames/N. Kent LG. The project will keep in touch with the MMO to ensure that the marine planning and MCZ processes are co-ordinated.
- The report of RSG5, held in October, had been delayed and was not available for the meeting; however information relevant to each LG meeting had been extracted from the draft report and provided in the meeting packs.
- Two Interim LG meetings had been held in September. The project team thanked the Solent Forum for hosting the meeting for the Solent/IoW/Hants LG, and the Thames Estuary Partnership for hosting the meeting for the Essex/Thames/N.Kent LG. A number of queries had arisen as a result of these meetings, and the project team had compiled a response that was included in the packs.

2. Second Progress Report to the SAP

The Balanced Seas MPA Planner, Hannah Thomas, gave a presentation to LG members that outlined the work done by the RSG to produce the Second Progress Report. The presentation covered:

- *The objectives that the RSG aimed to meet during the second iteration meetings*
- *The new data sets that were incorporated into the planning work:*
 - *Areas of additional ecological importance (spawning and nursery grounds)*
 - *Additional (non-ENG) features of interest for the south-east region*
 - *RSPB bird foraging ranges*
- *The information used to support decisions (Marxan feature richness layers)*
- *A description of the second iteration BAIs, highlighting any changes made since the last LG meetings and noting their level of stakeholder support*
- *Progress towards ENG targets*

The slides from the presentations are attached in Appendix 7, with notes to help readers interpret them.

Questions and Discussion

There were many questions and, to make this section easier to read, it has been grouped by topic rather than chronologically.

Exclusion zones for ports

Representatives of the ports industry on the Essex/Thames/N. Kent LG requested that ports in this part of the project area should be excluded from future MCZs, in the same way that Dover Port appeared to have been excluded from BAI 11. The project team explained that designing the boundaries of MCZs is feature driven. During the discussion of the Dover BAI at the Sussex/South Kent LG meeting, it became clear that no features of importance occurred within the harbour or harbour mouth. There were likely to be major economic implications, however, if the port were to be included in an MCZ. The BAI was therefore split into two parts on either side of the port starting from the harbour walls.

The LG wanted to know if this was because Dover Port had submitted data to the project and, if this was the case, could other ports do the same with a view to being excluded from BAIs. The project team said that if any ports had ecological data they wanted to submit it would be incorporated where appropriate. However, the decision to exclude Dover Port was not made solely on the basis of the ports data, but on an assessment of all of the data the project had collected combined with local knowledge. If features of

importance occur within a port, the potential need for an MCZ will have to be assessed through the normal process.

The LG were concerned that some ports had not provided information or attended stakeholder group meetings. The project team explained that site meetings would be held for BAIs where this is necessary and relevant stakeholders outside the LG with local knowledge will be invited. The project team will be looking to the LGs and RSG to help get appropriate representation at the site meetings. The LG suggested that particular consideration should be given to ports that take their environmental responsibilities seriously.

Dynamic nature of the marine environment

The LG wanted clarification on how dynamic aspects of the marine environment, such as shifting sand banks, were being taken into account. The project team explained that this aspect of a BAI will need to be informed by local knowledge. Through discussion the group must build up a package of working assumptions and recommended management that is meaningful for both the feature to be protected and the agencies that will ultimately manage the area.

The LG felt that MCZs should be able to protect ecosystems that can support re-colonisation of species that declined but that may recover in the future. The project team explained that if broad-scale habitats and their locations are picked wisely they should be able to ensure that.

The LG commented that some human activities can have a positive benefit to a habitat, such as oyster harvesting and cultivation, and wanted to know how this is being addressed as if such activities are stopped, this would have a negative impact. The project team explained that in case of oyster cultivation the Shellfish Association of Great Britain were discussing this issue with Natural England and JNCC and guidance will be made available. In the meantime, local knowledge and sound judgement should be used during the discussions on the BAIs.

Features of Conservation Interest (FOCI) targets

The LG questioned whether the targets for FOCI within the ENG were appropriate. Rather than two or three examples of a species and habitat FOCI to be protected within the project area (as required by the ENG), the LG suggested that a proportion of the each feature might be a better approach. The project team explained that if, through the discussions, it becomes clear that this might be better, we could perhaps try it but for now we must use the guidance.

The LG felt that it would be better to use an ecosystem approach and protect the habitat that supports those species of conservation interest. The project team explained that this approach was used in the first stages of the BAI planning: we looked at the broad-scale habitats first and then refined the resulting BAIs by considering the distribution of

FOCI. The project team clarified that the ENG is the basic guidance but the stakeholder groups have to make it meaningful through their local knowledge. If the ENG was to be applied without local knowledge, the MCZ network could be developed “behind closed doors” rather than through the stakeholder led process which is underway.

The LG wanted clarity on some of the FisherMap results. The LG were particularly concerned that high intensity of use by a sector in an area could be interpreted as high impact. The project team agreed that the data could be interpreted in this way, but pointed out that in the MCZ process, the results of the questionnaires are being used only to help inform decisions on a BAI, taking socio-economic uses into account.

3. Data Completion

Sarah Tetley and Hannah Thomas compiled a list of additional data sets that stakeholders had previously suggested might be useful to the project. At the Local Group meeting, stakeholders were presented with a table showing progress in securing these data sets and were asked to:

- Identify any gaps
- Suggest sources for the data, where these were not clear
- Advise on those items that were of greatest priority for action.

As a result of this exercise, several additional data items were identified which the project team are currently sourcing.

4. Activities/Features Matrix

The Balanced Seas MPA Planner gave a presentation to LG members to describe the activities/features matrix and its uses.

The presentation explained that the activities/features matrix is actually the combination of two separate matrices:

- *the activities/pressures matrix - showing which activities cause which pressures on the environment (e.g. surface abrasion)*
- *the features/pressures matrix ('sensitivity matrix') – showing the level of sensitivity (H, M, L) of ENG features to certain pressures.*

The activities/features matrix provides information that can be used to:

- a) assess the vulnerability of a feature – whether a feature is actually exposed to the pressure it is sensitive to*
- b) draft the Conservation Objectives – each feature listed in the conservation objectives must be accompanied by a list of activities that put pressure on that feature and therefore may need to be restricted*

The presentation concluded that the activities/features matrix is fairly complicated and may not answer all the questions that stakeholders have, but should be used to make sensible assumptions that are clearly documented.

Questions and Discussion

As above this section has been grouped into topics to make it easier to read.

Accuracy of data: LG members were concerned that some of the data used was old and showed species that may no longer be present, especially in the case of highly sensitive species that may have been exposed to a relevant pressure. The project team clarified that broad-scale habitat will always be there unless extracted. The datasets we are using show where features occur, but not whether they are in good health.

Pressure benchmarks: The LG felt that the pressure benchmarks were too broad in some cases and that the threshold changes, could also be reached by a combination of activities at a site. The project team clarified that this must be part of the discussions for each area and the recommendations must be developed using local knowledge about activities occurring and their intensity. The recommendations for management of any activity must be meaningful to the local area.

MPA gap analysis: The LG wanted clarification on exactly what broad-scale habitats and features had been clipped out of the datasets on the basis that there are being already protected in existing MPAs such as the Natura 2000 sites. The project team explained that any ENG listed habitat or species listed as a conservation objectives for an existing

MPA was deemed to have sufficient protection by law and had therefore been clipped out. Some LG members were concerned that not all existing MPAs were actively managed due to lack of funding and therefore the features they were originally designated for were just as vulnerable as those being sought for protection under MCZ legislation. The project team explained that it is not the remit of Balanced Seas to strengthen existing management measures. LG members wanting to discuss this further should approach NE directly. An LG member from the Stour and Orwell area expressed concern over anomalies in the data for the Stour and Orwell Special Protected Area (SPA), where features had been clipped out that are not on the conservation objectives. **Action:** project team to investigate these anomalies.

5. Working Groups: activities/features matrix exercise

LG members were divided up into two working groups, one looking at the BAIs along the Essex coastline (and incorporating BAIs 1 – 5) and the other looking at the BAIs along the North Kent coastline (incorporating BAIs 6-10).

Each group was given printed information about the potential compatibility of specific activities with each ENG feature or habitat. This information had been produced by using the matrix to extract those activities producing impacts to which features were highly or moderately sensitive (as advised by JNCC/NE as being the cases where activities would be most likely to require restriction/mitigation).

The groups looked at the distribution of each habitat or feature on screen, referred to the matrix sheets to understand which activities may not be compatible with that habitat or feature, and discussed which of those activities were actually overlapping those habitats/features and at what intensity, to get a clearer picture of what the potential protection measures might be in the BAI.

5.1. Plenary discussion after the Working Groups

The recorder for each division of the LG area outlined the main conclusions for each BAI discussed, and any general points that were raised. LG members were invited to comment. The key points made for each BAI are summarised below, and general points are listed. For full working group notes please see Appendix 2.

BAI 1 and 2 – Deben Estuary and the Rivers Stour and Orwell – was discussed briefly due to lack of time. A site meeting was requested as much more discussion is needed including review of Net Gain BAIs to the north of the project boundary. The need to review habitats and species distribution data was discussed and the Harwich Haven Authority identified as a new data source.

BAI 3 – Blackwater, Crouch and Roach Estuaries – some activities known to occur in the area were added to the list of identified activities. There was much discussion about the species and habitats occurring here, and the working group recommended that better definitions are needed for several of the broad-scale habitats and habitat FOCI as these are not clear to stakeholders which makes it difficult to comment on the distribution shown in the data layers.

BAI 5 – Thames Estuary – the ecological justification for the BAI was discussed and the group felt that this has the potential to be looked at further and should not be dismissed just because it is a heavily modified water body. It was recommended that the western boundary should be moved westwards to incorporate the main population of tentacle lagoon worm. Additional activities were added to the list of identified activities.

BAI 6 – The Medway Estuary – time constraints meant that this BAI was not discussed.

BAI 7 – Thanet Coast – recommendations from the last LG were reviewed. Broad scale habitats are no longer a priority for protection, given the information from the MPA Gap analysis, but there are many other features worthy of protection such as Sabellaria reef and possibly the only population of stalked jellyfish in the region. More discussion is needed, with greater fisheries representation present.

BAI 8 – Goodwin Sands – Boundary changes were recommended to incorporate protected wreck sites, seal haul out areas and Sabellaria reefs. RSA and diving activity is high especially around the wrecks and anchoring by the vessels involved in these activities is a major concern for this area, depending on the management recommendations. It is important to note that although some commercial fisheries activity was identified as occurring, there was no fisheries representation for this specific area.

BAI 9 – Offshore Foreland – This BAI was not discussed due to time constraints, but the project team informed the group that this BAI would be discussed at the Offshore Task Group meeting at the end of November, and the report from this would be made available.

BAI 10 – The Swale Estuary – the working group exercise was completed for this site. Several new activities and associated data sources were identified. Some broad-scale habitats were identified as low priority and some features were listed as high priorities. The need for more data about private oyster beds was identified.

6. The Way Forward and Actions

6.1 Next steps

These are as follows:

- Outputs from all LGs will be collated and provided to the RSG for its meeting on 26/27 January 2011
- Outputs from the LG meetings will also be made available for the offshore task group meeting on 30 November and the inshore task group meeting on 7 December
- Any prioritised outstanding or new datasets will be sourced, as recommended for the next Regional Profile;
- Project team will be getting in touch and organising site specific meetings between now and the third iteration
- The submission of the third iteration is 28 February 2011
- LGs next meet formally in March 2011

6.2 Project Calendar

We have tentatively planned for the next LG meetings to be:

- Solent/IoW/Hampshire 23 March
- Essex/Thames/North Kent 30 March
- Sussex/South Kent 5 March

Please note that, as the RSG work progresses at a very rapid pace, we will be reassessing whether these dates are appropriate and may alter them. Keep them in your diaries and we will inform you of any changes as soon as we can.

If you are unable to attend a meeting or send your named substitute please advise the project team as soon as possible. The project team will aim to book the same venue (Regents College, London). The provisional meeting dates for all four projects are given in Appendix 3.

6.3 Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete a short evaluation of the meeting. The outcome of this can be found in Appendix 4.

6.4 Actions

ACTION	WHO	WHEN
Data sources and status document to be updated	Project team	
Outstanding priority datasets to be sourced or chased up	Project team	

Appendix 1: Attendees on 16 November

Local Group members

Suzie Hooper	Thanet Coast Project
Trazar Astley-Reid	Suffolk County Council
Allan Bird	Blackwater Oystermen
Bryony Chapman	Kent Wildlife Trust
Chris Drake	Kent County Council
Chris Edwards	RYA
Dominic Bailey	KESFC
Fay Bouri	RSPB
Geoff Meaden	North East Kent Scientific Coastal Advisory Group (NEKSCAG)
Ron Hodgson	Canoe Union
Leon Roskilly	Recreational Sea Angler
Mark Pearce	National Grid
Sophie des Clers	Academic
Steve McMellor	Colne Estuary Partnership
Jill Goddard	Thames Estuary Partnership
John Brien	Harwich Haven Harbour Authority
Lisa Jenner	Natural England
Nicky Spurr	Essex County Council
Richard Fifield	Britannia Aggregates
Tim Cook	West Mersea Fishermens Association
Roger Lankester	Tollesbury Mud Club
Roger Cooper	Fisherman, Under 10's
Stuart Belbin	Blackwater and Colne Professional Boatman's Association
Judith Stoutt	Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee
Ian Humphreyes	Environment Agency
Sarah Allison	Essex Wildlife Trust
Richard Titchenor	Association of Thames Bargemen

Apologies

Bob Marshall	Charter Skipper, Ramsgate
Peter NBurry	Cruising Association
Daryl Godbold	Leigh-on-Sea and Southend Fishermens Association
Tom Brown	Thanet Fishermens Association
John Gilson	Essex Shellfish Association

Balanced Seas Project team members

Sue Wells	Project Manager
Hannah Thomas	MPA Planner
Phil Darrell-Smith	Communications Coordinator
Bernard Morizet	Economist
Amy Pryor	Liaison Officer
Jules Martin	Liaison Officer
Kate Mills	Liaison Officer
Sarah Tetley	Data and Stakeholder Engagement Assistant
Andrew Eggett	GIS and Data Assistant

3KQ

Carl Reynolds	Facilitator
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Balanced Seas: Essex/Thames/North Kent LG Meeting 3

Appendix 2: Working Group notes from third Essex/Thames/N. Kent LG meeting, 16 November

Working Group – BAIs 1 (Deben Estuary), 2 (Stour and Orwell Estuaries), 3 (Blackwater, Crouch and Roach Estuaries) and 5 (Thames Estuary)

BAI 3 – Blackwater, Crouch and Roach Estuaries

Activities were reviewed and additions and removals noted on an excel spreadsheet (additions (orange)/removals (yellow)). Additional notes are given here. As at the Solent Local Group meeting, this working group had problems understanding the terminology used for activity description:

Social and Economic activities added to list		
Activity	Level	Comments
Aquaculture - shellfish	High	Oyster farming
Beach replenishment	Low	Has happened and likely to occur again - Jaywick area and eastwards; a lot of activity in relation to shoreline management
Energy production - on land (power stations, including nuclear)		added due to presence of Bradwell power station (see notes from previous meetings); potential future thermal pollution from water discharge; also potential construction of wind farms on land at Dengie peninsula and other locations – much discussion over whether these would actually have an impact on a future MCZ or whether the EIAs that would be required would pick up impacts and mitigation would be brought in anyway
Extraction – navigational dredging	High	Regular maintenance dredging
Fishing – shellfish harvesting	High	added as Pacific oysters are harvested (but method needs checking – are any oysters ‘hand gathered’ which is perhaps what this activity refers to?)
Infrastructure – coastal defence		Shoreline management work including changing habitat in lieu of management (i.e. letting seawalls go); this probably occurs in several places in this BAI

Sewerage disposal		Sewage discharge in several areas, its impact depending on weather and amount of rain and run-off; working group questioned term “sewerage” and wondered if it meant the same as “sewage”
Waste disposal – navigational dredging		Regular maintenance dredging
Moorings and anchorages		Need to be added but not clear where this should go – for recreational and fishing vessels

One activity was removed:

- Fishing – pelagic trawling

Distributions of features within the BAI were then reviewed:

Broad-scale habitats – major stumbling block was lack of clarity on what the different broad-scale habitats are actually referring to (we used the descriptions in the catalogue on the Natural England (NE) website but these were not very helpful for this BAI).

- A1.1. High Energy Intertidal Rock: working group was convinced this does not occur in this BAI (**Post meeting note from Sue** – this was a repeat of discussions at earlier LG meetings (see report of July LG meeting) – must get clarification of what this particular habitat type refers to, with better description than we have so far so that if it does occur LG members understand what it is)
- A1.2. Moderate Energy Intertidal Rock: discussion as for A1.1
- A1.3. Low Energy Intertidal Rock: as above, although some people suggested this could refer to boulders
- A2.6. Intertidal sediments and aquatic angiosperms: did not come up as a GIS layer for this BAI, so question over why it is in the table, although the group felt that this habitat type occurs throughout
- A2.7. Intertidal biogenic reefs – lack of understanding as to what this might refer to in the estuaries, but we then found the distribution overlaps with that for blue mussel beds – so in this BAI is the broad-scale habitat A2.7 the same thing as Habitat FOCI Blue mussel beds?

Habitat FOCI:

- Blue mussel beds/intertidal mussel beds – discussed together. For blue mussel beds, distribution according to GIS layers considered roughly correct but in some places it is shown as a solid ‘bed’ but distribution is actually scattered clumps of mussels, density and abundance varying across years; less confidence that southernmost mussel bed actually exists. Impacts of activities on blue mussel beds in these locations (analysis not complete, done mainly to illustrate how the table works):

Habitat FOCI: Blue mussel beds/intertidal mussel beds		
Activity	Level	Comments
Fisheries – pelagic trawling	None	
Fishing – unspecified	Medium level	Most people are part-timers in areas where blue mussel beds occur
Fisheries – potting/creeling	None	
Fisheries – set netting	Low	There is a little in northern part of BAI, probably does not occur on blue mussel beds
Fisheries – hydraulic dredging	Medium	Suction dredging – none on northern mussel beds, but some cockle dredging on southern patch
Fisheries – recreational	Medium	Recreational angling is seasonal (spring and summer) and only at high water on Dengie flats
Shellfish harvesting	High	Pacific oysters
Infrastructure - coastal (ports, marinas, leisure facilities)	High	Unlikely to have an impact as they have always been there
Crab tiling/bait digging	Low	May have an impact in some locations but 80% of bait digging occurs off blue mussel beds which are usually too hard to dig
Tourism and recreation	High	Incidental boat groundings and anchoring e.g. blue mussel bed off Brightlingsea, if it is confirmed as existing, might be subject to some anchoring

- **Peat and clay exposures:** much discussion as working group struggled to understand what these might be.
 - Shellfisheries representative described clay areas with holes which seem to fit the description to the south and east of where the GIS layer shows this habitat FOCI – along the edge of the contour on the navigational chart - exposed at low spring waters – will need some way of checking this.
 - No hydraulic dredging here but oysters are harvested
 - There could be an impact from the sewage outfall although this now receives tertiary treatment.
 - The peat and clay exposure shown to the west at Tollesbury probably does not exist as this is an area of Pacific oysters and gravel
 - There might be a peat and clay exposure more to the east near Jaywick – Allan Bird has seen it.

- **Sea grass beds:** GIS layer considered to be roughly correct, but seagrass probably does not occur as indicated at Stone (near the yacht club) as this area is too high energy. Essex and South Suffolk SMP could probably be used to confirm seagrass bed distributions. Impact of activities on seagrass beds in this BAI:
 - No: fishing, bait digging,
 - Possibly: anchoring – although Marconi Sailing Club has moorings rather than anchorages; and there is no anchoring on the north side of Osea I so the seagrass beds there will not be affected

Species FOCI

- Native oyster:
 - Not possible to discuss as GIS layer does not reflect reality
 - Working group felt that no activities impact them
 - Blackwater Oystermen will ensure that their recommendations are sent to the RSG (Amy to find original documentation sent to project)
- Lagoon sea slug:
 - Main impact on this species is Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) work
 - Distribution of this species changes a lot as populations boom and crash according to food availability
 - Project team to clarify if most recent EA surveys in this area have been used
 - Three of the point records are at Abbots Hall Farm where the realignment has almost certainly finished this population off
 - Working group does not know about current status of southern record
 - Some question as to whether this species is protected by the Ramsar designation

Additional comments:

- There had been a recent meeting/conference about the Blackwater in the future and how the appearance of this area is likely to change a lot in the future. **Action:** project team to contact Roger Lankester for details and outcomes of the meeting)
- Discussion demonstrated the clear need for a site meeting with all local expertise available to sort out a BAI like this

See additional information sent by Mick Sharp, angling rep unable to attend meeting, in e-mail of 15 November 2010 (not discussed at meeting due to lack of time, but copied here in blue):

Habitat/species

- River Crouch - Good opportunity to tie in marine conservation with planned future work by RSPB regarding Wallasea Island. The sea wall breaching and flooding will create good habitat for a variety of immature fish species.
- R. Roach system - Further sea wall breaches are planned by Anglia Water to Rashley island in Havengore creek.
- Shad have been captured in gill nets around North Fambridge.

- Eels are abundant in all three rivers and younger Eels find access to many dykes that straddle the sea walls via many sluices.

Socio-Economics

- Charter boats operating from Mersea, Brightlingsea, Bradwell, Burnham, Wallasea Island and North Fambridge rely on inner river marks to fish when it's too windy to make for the estuary mouths.
- High concentration of private sea angling boats at Wallasea, Burnham and Bradwell marinas.
- Bait digging off Mersea Island and the Dengie flats (Bradwell end) primarily for lugworm during autumn/winter months. Important supplying local charter boats, tackle shops and further up the east coast into Suffolk and Norfolk; late summer and autumn, bait digging for sand ragworm around saltmarsh creeks.
- Sea angling takes place on southern sea wall of river crouch for Whiting/Cod in Winter and Thornback Ray/Bass in Summer.
- Popular marks in Blackwater include sea wall near power station for species similar to Crouch.

BAI 5 - Thames Estuary

The working group considered the rationale for this BAI and there is adequate ecological justification to go forward as a potential MCZ. The group agreed that Thames Estuary has potential to be a good MCZ but anthropogenic factors could wipe it out completely if don't act fast. The working group felt that the estuary should not be considered as a heavily modified water body and proposed boundary should be extended west to encompass the main population of tentacle lagoon worm

- Seagrass: area to east of Two Tree Island is being impacted – but seagrass covers much larger area than shown over Chapman Sands
- Sabellaria:- some working group participants felt that many of the Sabellaria populations shown on the GIS layer would inevitably disappear due to port development and dredging; others thought that since only one population is right in the channel, dredging might or might not affect have an impact;
- Tentacled lagoon worm: the main Thames population, according to the GIS layer, lies outside the boundary of the BAI at Greenhythe and Graves. This is a very industrial area; Sarah Allinson has data for Green Hythe population. The record to the east, in deep water must be wrong as it would not occur in this habitat.
- Short snouted sea horses records around Tilbury – record is in middle of Thames. Sophie des Clers knows someone at SeaLife centre who says seahorses are more common in recent years. Zoo Soc London.
- This BAI is very important for eels; see EA report (as are all east coast estuaries)
- Nursery ground for sole high priority and whiting. Flounder nursery also? Spawning ground for sandeel is not incorrect. Sole spawning ground.
- Area in white (i.e. area with habitat blanked out because of SAC/SPA protection) is the most productive area spawning.

Social and Economic activities added to list		
Activity	Level	Comments
Extraction - navigational dredging (capital, maintenance)		Capital and maintenance
Infrastructure - coastal defence and land claim		Coastal defence
Infrastructure – cables and pipelines (installation)		Lower Thames Crossing
Extraction – navigational dredging	High	Regular maintenance dredging
Military activities		Munitions - includes the SS Montgomery
Waste disposal – no obvious category in table		From Tilbury Fort downwards – big rubbish dump eroding and chemicals leaching into the water – landfill site leaking with coastal erosion- west of Mucking Flats. Two Tree Island - Contaminated material in sea walls. These sites include reserve areas owned and managed by Essex WT. Proposal to divert Leigh Creek into Remnant Creek.
Sewerage disposal		Sewage discharge in several areas, it impact depending on weather and amount of rain and run-off; working group questioned term “sewerage” and wondered if it meant the same as “sewage”
Energy production on land		Power station at Tilbury and Northfleet; and there will be a gas-fired power station at DPWorld. Kingsnorth could also have an impact on this area
Infrastructure - coastal (ports, marinas, leisure facilities)		New projects will have an immense impact e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new sites to be created by DPWorld through re-alignment around Shellhaven and one opposite on the Kent side. • Thames estuary airport potentially also an impact. • Lot of development on land – would have impact in terms of permitting etc

- Additional extraction activity: White weed (hydrozoans) – harvested for floristry trade. Sarah working with fishermen plus EA that white weed, brown shrimp, eel grass etc might have gone because of dredging – or badly damaged.

See additional information sent by Mick Sharp, angling representative unable to attend meeting, in e-mail of 15 November 2010 (not discussed at meeting due to lack of time, but copied here in blue):

Habitat/species

- Good numbers of School Bass around Southend Pier head for whole summer. Large shoal which seems to return every year and feed (along with diving sea birds) at high tide.
- Blue mussel beds at Westcliff, Southchurch and Shoeburyness are heavily contaminated with non native oysters. These are expanding across a wider area and do not seem to have any predators. Is there a commercial opportunity for regulated harvesting?

Social Economics

- Private and professional bait digging takes place off Canvey Point and higher levels from between Chalkwell and Shoeburyness throughout the year. Professionals supply tackle shops and Charter Boats from Greater London to Coastal businesses in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk.
- Lugworms are dug from mud flats off Canvey point, Chalkwell, Thorpe Bay and Shoeburyness. This is an all year round activity but the main months are October, November, December, March and April.
- King Ragworm are dug mainly from the margins of Blue Mussel beds at Westcliff, Southchurch and Canvey Point. This is seasonal and normally takes place between May and September.
- Moulting shore crabs are collected from the north Thames shoreline in May and from the mussel beds between June and September.
- Note that bait digging along the Southend on Sea shoreline is prohibited within the moorings, an area where eel grasses are found.
- Charter boats operate from Holehaven creek and Leigh.
- Popular shore based sea-angling spots include Southend and Westcliff shorelines for flounders. Canvey sea wall where good catches of Whiting and Cod can be had during Winter months with Bass and Flounders during the summer.
- Southend Pier is an important mark for Sea Anglers with many having their first experiences at this location. The summer months see good numbers of Flounders and Bass along the stem with Mackerel and Garfish towards the end of the pier. In the winter month's anglers provide much needed income visiting to fish for Whiting, Cod, Dabs and Pouting.
- Further up river popular marks include Stanford le Hope, Tilbury, Grays and Gravesend sea walls to fish for Sole and Flounder in the summer, Whiting and Cod in winter.

BAIs 1 and 2 - Deben Estuary and Stour and Orwell

Very brief discussion due to lack of time:

- As for BAI 3 (Blackwater) estuarine rocky habitat needs to be understood better and distribution reviews for both the Deben and Stour and Orwell
- Sheltered muddy gravels – no particular knowledge within the working group

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- Deben has very degraded salt marsh, but as it comprises 40% of Suffolk salt marsh it is considered important locally
- No port on Deben but there is fish landing there – Felixstowe Ferry
- Commercial bait digging needs to be included in BAI2 plus recreation.

Site meeting requested for Stour and Orwell as much further discussion is needed. SPA excludes port areas, and port sector would like this approach for any potential MCZ.

Post Meeting Note: letter received from John Brien, Harwich Haven Authority, 17/11/2010, requesting site meeting and requesting that Harwich Haven data is fully used – he points out that all this information is provided to NE.

The BAIs/draft MCZs proposed by Net Gain were shown to the working group. Agreed that further discussion of potential link up is needed with relevant stakeholders from both sides.

Potential new BAIs

The working group questioned as to whether Gunfleet and Cork Sands should be considered as they were important spawning areas but now they are also wind farms. There was no time for further discussion.

Working Group discussion notes for BAIs 6 (Medway Estuary), 7 (Thanet Coast), 8 (Goodwin Sands), 9 (Offshore Foreland) and 10 (The Swale Estuary)

Two members of the other working group joined this group - Mark Pearce and Lisa Jenner, NE.

Whilst completing the exercise the group realised they needed further clarification on some descriptions of activities listed in the matrix:

- Recreational fishing should include potting, netting, spear-fishing etc and should be more specific.
- Tourism and recreation needs breaking down into many sub sectors.

BAI 10 – The Swale Estuary

The working group initially looked at the broad-scale habitat: A1.2 ‘moderate energy intertidal rock’ and attempted to identify activities impacting this habitat in BAI 10.

Broad-scale habitat: A1.2 Moderate energy intertidal rock		
Activity	Level	Comments
Crab tiling/bait digging	None	Bait digging occurs over sandy/muddy areas

Fisheries – Benthic trawling	Not ascertained	FisherMap indicates there is a trawling hotspot over this habitat but LG member states there is very little occurring there, although there may be an issue closer to the BAI boundary. Project team to investigate.
Fisheries – hydraulic dredging	High	Lots of oyster dredging with towed gear occurs on private grounds Towed dredging for mussels occurs around the Isle of Sheppey –NE has more data for blue mussel bed distribution. They occur right over broad scale habitat A1.2 occurring on the south east side of Isle of Sheppey that isn't shown in the data given to the project so far
Fisheries - pelagic trawling	No	None occurring
Fisheries- potting/creeling	Low	Not an issue
Fisheries – recreation	Low	Lots of illicit, non-commercial netting but generally low levels
Fisheries – set netting	Low	70-80% is surface and very low level, higher at certain times of the year
Shipping – anchoring	Low	Occurs on 'The Street' occasionally if vessels miss the tide into Whitstable Harbour – although it is not a recognised anchoring spot and therefore doesn't appear on the national contract data, we should be aware of it.
Tourism and recreation – anchoring	Low	Low level small ships anchoring spot

Broad-scale habitat: A1.3 Low energy intertidal rock		
Activity	Level	Comments
Bait digging	Low	Not an issue
Waste disposal – navigational	High	Maintenance dredging near Queenborough
Sewerage disposal	High	Queenborough sewage works
Fisheries - pelagic trawling	Low	None occurring
Fisheries – benthic trawling	Low	Very little trawling here
Fisheries – hydraulic	High	Lots of private grounds here
Fisheries – potting/creeling	Low	None occurring
Fisheries – recreational	Low	Very low levels
Fisheries – set netting	Low	Very low levels
Infrastructure – coastal	High	New marina development at Queenborough cutting a big basin into two of the habitat spots.

Tourism and recreation	Low	Potential anchoring here
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In addition to the quantified activities in the table above, other activities were discussed in the area:

- Canoeing – occurs over the high energy intertidal rocks (these were established not to be a priority for the site). The group would like to look at the Overfalls BAI as this has the same kind of broad-scale habitats and may have canoeing taking place there too which would help advise this group. The action of canoeing is not felt to have an effect except where entering/exiting the water
- Waste disposal
- Navigational dredging in Faversham Creek, berth being created in Ridham Dock – project team to source.
- Infrastructure cables and pipelines coming straight through the middle of the site. Thames Array cables will affect this BAI.
- Infrastructure - coastal defence – seawalls at Seasalter
- Sittingbourne creek – paper mills/brewery occur at Coveton, Faversham which are having an impact on freshwater extraction and would therefore have an impact on freshwater dependents
- Discharges from the paper mills in the Ridham Dock area will also have an effect
- Mussel dredging occurs on top of the seagrass beds
- Low levels of all fishing
- Marina at Queenborough – slipways/jetties occur
- Recreation boats hauled up over the intertidal area but there is no data
- Capital dredging occurs on approaches to and within Whitstable Harbour
- The site could be an issue for the private oyster grounds of Whitstable Oyster Company
- Cables and pipelines occur here

Boundaries

The group suggested that the boundary extend northwards on the eastern side to cover an area known locally as ‘The Street’ as per the Wildlife Trust’s suggestion where *Sabella pavanina* Peacock Worm beds and important algae occurs.

Broad-scale habitats were discussed further to the exercise detailed above:

- A1.1 High energy intertidal rock - low priority as only one small point occurs
- A1.2 moderate energy intertidal rock - occurs here. Blue mussel bed overlaps this habitat off the Isle of Sheppey
- A1.3 Low energy intertidal rock – occurs here
- A2.1 Intertidal coarse sediment – none existent
- A2.2 intertidal sand/muddy sand - low priority as just one spot occurs

FOCI and additional ecological features:

- Native oyster beds – not common. These occur but are not worked beds.
 - Bait digging wouldn’t affect it
 - Ground is soft and shelly so not suitable for commercial oyster harvesting

- Thames Array has some oyster survey information – project team to check.
- Roger Cooper, commercial fisherman from Whitstable can give the project the latitudes and longitudes of all the private beds. Project team to chase up.
- Bird foraging areas – high priority
- Blue mussel and intertidal blue mussel beds – Good site for this feature and a high priority. These will be affected by the hydraulic dredging and potentially the personal water craft. Natural England have Blue Mussel bed data for this BAI – check with Lisa Jenner. Private grounds need to be mapped.
- Peat/clay - large patch and why the site was first identified – may be affected by licensed aquaculture areas, Whitstable port dredging, hydraulic dredging.
- Seagrass beds – protected by The Swale SPA? Project team to check this, if not it should be brought back in as an objective for this site as it is the biggest bed in Kent – biogeographically needs to be in here. More seagrass data to come from Bryony Chapman, Kent Wildlife Trust
- European Eels – Group did not know if this species occurred here. Chetney surveys by EA is a further source of information
 - The group couldn't see how this process will help protect eels as elver fisheries have already been prohibited
- Bass nursery area
- Rare shingle feature and interesting algal communities – Kent Wildlife Trust to submit more information
- All the nursery and spawning grounds were thought to be a low priority for this site.
- Sea squirt beds – high priority here.

BAI 8 – Goodwin Sands

Social and Economic activities		
Activity	Level	Comments
Fisheries – potting/creeling	Low	Lobster potting, but general low level. Around wrecks if anywhere.
Fisheries – benthic	Low	Hardly any over 15m vessels
Fisheries – recreational	Not ascertained	Recreational sea-anglers heavily fish the wrecks in the area and will anchor up current and drift the bait down current over the wreck or their vessel will drift over the wreck; they also catch undersize/juvenile mackerel for to use as bait for bass fishing
Infrastructure – cables and pipelines (operational)	High	Telecommunications cables occur within the site

Infrastructure – cables and pipelines (installation)	Not ascertained	Power cables across to Belgium through the northern part of the BAI being looked at as a possibility – will be going into the Pegwell Bay area (flag as potential issue)
Tourism and recreation – scuba diving	High	Occurs around the wrecks here
Tourism and recreation – charter boat operation	?	Diving and sea angling is intensive around the wrecks but not elsewhere
Tourism and recreation – yachting (anchoring)	None	

Broad-scale habitats

Further to these discussions the group decided that A5.1 subtidal coarse sediment was a low priority for this site, particularly with the suggestion of boundary revision.

Boundaries

The group suggested that the boundaries to the site should be changed to incorporate:

- Seal haul out areas which are already encompassed into the LG suggestion boundary but the eastern extent should be further moved to hug the slighter deeper water line along the sands as a slight buffer.
- Protected wrecks to the south and south-west - protection for wrecks is from disturbance and removal of artefacts but not fishing so there may be conflict there
 - There was no fishing representative for this area present so these suggestions need to be run by Tom Brown, Thanet Fishermens Association
 - Low level anchoring for diving vessels
- Sabellaria and mussel beds which are currently outside the existing boundary therefore extend to the south west by 3 degree mark.

FOCI and Additional Ecological Features

- *Sabellaria spinulosa* (Rossworm reef) a high priority
- European Eel and Smelt a low priority as thought not to occur here
- Undulate Ray could potentially occur here – project team to check with Tom Browne
- Sand banks are key thornback ray areas where a lot of mackerel, sprat and bass netting occurs
- Bass nursery occurs inshore at Pegwell Bay so could be a spawning ground – need better data to confirm this
 - Fisheries representative stated that bass need 90 degree centigrade to spawn and therefore thinks it is too shallow for spawning to occur here
- All nursery and spawning grounds were marked as having a low priority for the site (with the exception of Undulate Ray)
- Could be an important area for elasmobranchs

- Seals – this site is a high priority as it is the best haul out site in the region (Bryony Chapman has figures for this)
- Protected wrecks should be included

BAI 7 – Thanet Coast

Due to time constraints this area was discussed only briefly.

Boundaries

- The group suggested moving the boundary to the west to include the largest mat of Sabellaria
- The group thought this should be joined up to the BAI in Pegwell Bay as they felt there was no point having a gap between the two.

FOCI

- Exposed peat/clay habitat and intertidal mussel beds occur intertidally further along the coast just under Margate Hook
- Stalked jellyfish (*Halyclystus auricula*) (FOCI) which is possibly the only occurrence of this species in the region. Project team to check this with Bryony and get the relevant records.
- Stalked jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis campanulata*) – should be checked for its priority.
- Another species of stalked jellyfish was also recorded just outside the BAI (Kent Wildlife Trust)
- Native oysters – no harvesting of oysters occurs here but there are very few oyster records here
- Tide-swept channels do not now occur in the region (data description has been changed) so this is no longer a feature of the site.
- European Eel and Undulate Ray are not priorities here

Broad-scale habitats

- 1.2 Moderate energy intertidal rock - high priority
- 2.2 Intertidal sand/muddy sand – not a priority
- 4.2 Moderate energy circalittoral rock – high priority

Additional ecological features

- Bird foraging and nursery areas are a low priority
- Algae (Important Plant Areas), chalk caves, chalk stacks, chalk gullies, sabella beds – high priority but some of these chalk features may already be protected in the Thanet Coast SAC
- Sea anemone (*Diadumene*) Hard rock reefs, *Molgula* beds and Peacock worm (*Sabella pavonina*) are all low priorities.
- Bass nursery grounds here

Appendix 3: Working Group notes from RSG5 for Essex, Thames and North Kent area

BAI 2 'Stour & Orwell Estuaries'

- BAI has been extended, for the purpose of discussion, to include the entire estuary as it was felt the whole ecosystem should be protected (i.e. the ports currently lie within the BAI) with the important caveat that the port area and areas proposed/needed for expansion need reconsideration; the RSG suggested that the SAP might provide advice as to whether any future MCZ would need to cover the whole estuary for effective conservation.
- The group felt that the boundary should reflect the features to be protected
- In the main meeting, the representative of the port sector noted that it should be understood that all ports in the UK are private businesses and receive no funding from UK government and therefore payment for Environmental Impact Assessments for expansions within protected areas are paid for by the owner and cost significant amounts

BAI 3 'Blackwater Estuary' and BAI 4 'Crouch & Roach Estuaries'

- Working Group agreed to join up BAI 3 & 4 from Clacton Pier due south and then west to follow the line of Foulness Sand (PLA boundary) to coast and include the Roach (see pdf map)
- Data source for 'Rocky Estuarine Habitat' to be provided and checked - One stakeholder felt that it is to do with the glacial process running through the back of the site and that the habitat identified is rocky and not crumbling sea walls.
- Consolidated shingle and algae assemblage – as above, reference needed for source of data, as this may be connected with the Rocky Estuarine habitat. It is a key/unique feature near Maldon/Osea Island
- Lagoon sea slugs occur in the dikes behind the sea walls - information available in EA survey data

BAI 5 'Thames Estuary'

- Four super dredgers operating up the middle of the Thames capital dredging for the new port development at Shellhaven by DP World and the port expansion in the Medway, in areas that were traditionally the most productive for Dover sole:
 - Fisheries has seen a decline unusual for this time of year specifically Europeans eels and common smelt (Species FOCI) and local commercial fishermen feel this capital dredging is the cause
 - There will have been an Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) done by the ports before work started – obtain this document for further information
 - Commercial fishermen feel that capital dredging of this nature must be prevented in the future, although current activity cannot be rectified

BAI 6 'Medway'

- No consensus for this site

- The existing SPA excludes the northern bank and the estuary mouth because of the port, and the group considered whether the BAI should have the same exclusion area
- The Regional Profile indicates features of conservation importance (FOCI) on the northern shore, but it should be checked whether they also occur in less contentious areas
- Medway Ports developments in this area have to be assessed in line with SPA regulations, and there will be additional work of this nature if there is also an MCZ in this area. Port sector cannot support this BAI with any confidence until they know the management of any proposed site; they would like the BAI boundary to reflect the original proposed boundary as documented in the Balanced Seas Progress Report 1 or the boundaries of the existing SPA. They noted the national interest of this site.
- ENG states that areas substantially changed from natural state should not be included; this might apply to this BAI and should be checked
- Some working group members felt it important to protect the whole estuarine ecosystem
- One option would be protection for the entire ecosystem with stricter management upstream, and less restriction around the ports where disturbance has already occurred

General Points

- Group looked at potential for offshore sites but further data are needed
- Need to identify those examples within the project of FOCI that are particularly 'good' and prioritise these for inclusion in MCZs (**POST MEETING NOTE:** this can only be done using local knowledge and expertise from either Local Groups or Wildlife Trusts. The Project Team do not have additional information that is not already in the Regional Profile)

Action Points

- Request advice from SAP as to whether the estuarine boundaries need to cover the whole estuary for effective conservation (**POST MEETING NOTE:** this is a more socio-economic debate - what would be the effect of the port on any potential MCZ' – and is therefore not appropriate for a question to the SAP.)
- Project Team to clarify data source for Rocky Estuarine Habitats in BAI 3 and any more information - is this naturally occurring or crumbling sea wall?
- Project Team to follow up on data for consolidated shingle and algae assemblage with Bryony Chapman
- Project Team to follow up getting EA survey data for lagoon sea slug
- Project Team to facilitate Balanced Seas stakeholders input into discussions on any sites being considered as MCZs that occur on the boundary with Net Gain, and to ensure appropriate data exchange
- Project Team to update information as Common smelt; it is not partially protected under the Outer Thames SPA

- KESFC to provide PT with detailed charts identifying wild and cultivated native oyster and mussel beds
- PT to check and get clarification about the statement in the ENG stating that areas substantially changed from their natural state should not be included – does this apply to ports?

Appendix 4: Feedback from Interim LG Meetings (September 2010)

Feedback from Balanced Seas to questions raised at the September interim meetings of the Solent/IoW/Hants and the Essex/Thames/N. Kent Local Groups

1 November 2010

A number of questions and comments were raised at these two meetings and below we have provided responses, as requested by participants at the Essex/Thames/N. Kent meeting. In return, we request the LG members to recognise their roles and responsibilities in the process. Users of the sea have been given a unique opportunity to take part in the identification of new protected areas. In the past, these were selected by the statutory agencies. Many people are welcoming the new approach which is part of the global recognition that all those who use and have an interest in an area have both the right and the knowledge to take part in planning how it should be used. With that right, however, comes a responsibility to respect the process that is being used to develop recommendations. This means a willingness to understand the methods being used and to read guidance that is provided.

Many of the questions posed below have already been answered at Balanced Seas meetings, are documented in meeting reports, and are explained in both national and project guidance. Every time that the project team has to prepare a further separate briefing note, means that time is taken out of core project activities creating delays in preparation of materials for the meetings and in writing up meeting reports. We would urge LGs to take note of the information that has been provided.

Responses to questions and comments

QUESTION	RESPONSE
<p>Q1. The LG want more details of how and when management plans for specific areas might be integrated. i.e. With reference to many of the BAI/potential MCZ areas already identified as protected areas with a management plan in place for a particular species – how and when will management plans become integrated?</p> <p>Q from Solent Group: Why the high current level of SPA/SAC/SSSI/Ramsar does not already protect the richness of the Solent’s habitats. Beth Henshall</p>	<p>The first question concerns management of MCZs, which will not take place until after the projects are over, the recommendations made, and sites designated (end of 2012). It is not something that the Balanced Seas team or RSG can address. It is indeed possible that some MCZs will overlap with existing MPAs such as SACs and SAPs. This will be beneficial to stakeholders as it will reduce the overall area of sea that is under protection. The Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies assure us that in such cases, management plans will be integrated. The relevant agencies will develop a process for this when the time comes.</p>

<p>explained that these designations were often international. She stated that they had a Gap Analysis of what is not currently covered, and that has been identified in each BAI. Some members of the group felt that BAIs should coincide with areas that are currently not designated and some disagreed.</p>	<p>In relation to the second question, as the Group noted, there are different views on how to take this forward. The results of the analysis that is being undertaken to determine the extent to which existing MPAs contribute to the ecological coherence of the MPA network will help us resolve questions like this.</p>
<p>Q2. How will management information about the MCZ areas be communicated to all sectors and users? The group were concerned that the Hydrographic Office is not on the RSG and would like to know why, given that they may be the key body responsible for disseminating information on charts.</p>	<p><i>Balanced Seas has a remit only for developing the recommendations for MCZs; the project does not have a mandate to address implementation, which is why the Hydrographic Office is not on the RSG. We have been assured that implementation arrangements will be discussed and adequate measures taken. If you have further questions on this, we recommend you contact the relevant agencies directly.</i></p>
<p>Q3. Will MCZs result in the rights of navigation being taken away in any part of the area (and under what circumstances)?</p>	<p><i>Rights of navigation will be fully addressed in the course of development of the MCZ recommendations. Relevant agencies such as the MMO, MCA and Trinity House will all be involved. MCZs will not compromise any issues relating to safety at sea.</i></p>
<p>Q4. Is it possible for LG members to have copies of the interactive PDF maps. Without this it is difficult to feed-back to associates and their own groups to gather information to bring to the local group meetings</p>	<p><i>The interactive pdf is being provided to all LG members this week, in advance of the forthcoming meetings. Please remember that the information is also in the Regional Profile, which in many cases will be much easier to use. The interactive pdf was developed as a tool for use in the RSG and LG meetings for the planning process.</i></p>
<p>Q5. There is on-going and real concern that there will not be enough time to feed-back and discuss each of the BAI areas in enough detail and fear that the suggested BAIs will become MCZs as a result of lack of time. In this response it is to be noted that the LGs do not support the existing BAIs.</p>	<p><i>The project team recognises the length of time required for developing the MCZ recommendations and is designing a revised process to provide more discussion time. Additional meetings will be factored into the process, including small meetings on individual sites. We will be explaining this at the forthcoming LG meetings.</i></p>
<p>Q6a. The LG were concerned the species and habitat data on the interactive maps were wrong (especially in finding that it was difficult for the Balanced Seas</p>	<p><i>All the habitat and species data being used in the project are from scientific surveys. Some records may be out of date or only partially represent a situation; for example they may not represent the full distribution of a species or</i></p>

<p>representatives to clearly note where the data came from and could be up to 30 years old). The LG wish the maps to be updated (e.g. Steve Mc Mellor has provided Balanced Seas with up to date Oyster Areas).</p>	<p><i>habitat. But this does not mean that they are wrong. We are working on a list of data that still needs to be incorporated or followed-up – we will present this at the forthcoming meetings and LG members will be able to identify any remaining actions.</i></p> <p><i>In relation to the age of data records, the SAP has advised us not to throw any out. Balanced Seas is developing a commonsense approach to this and we will discuss this at the forthcoming meetings.</i></p>
<p>Q6b. Can the maps be updated and to also include the socio-economic data as without this the group were wasting their time discussing out of date maps.</p>	<p><i>New socio-economic maps from the liaison officer’s interview work will be available at the LG meetings for comment. We hope that LG participants will help us identify any outstanding gaps.</i></p>
<p>Q7. Emphasis should be on the habitat rather than species data (although the two need to be linked) as species move from place to place more quickly than can be of benefit in locating MCZs.</p>	<p><i>The MCZ recommendations must be developed using the ENG, which identifies species and habitats that need protection (the FOCl) and also requires that certain proportions of each broad-scale habitat are protected within MCZs to ensure the principle of representativity. The ENG therefore dictates where the emphasis is placed. The RSG will be following the ENG as required by Defra. In relation to mobile species, only three species are listed and for these the primary focus is on the protection of spawning and nursery areas. The other species listed are all of low mobility and, although their distributions will change over time (this is the case for all wildlife – not only marine), this will be on a relatively slow time scale.</i></p>
<p>Q8. The group noted the importance of man’s activity as a benefit on the Blackwater Estuary. Without man’s activity the habitat for the Oysters would not exist. In designating MCZs and limiting man’s activity it may result in the loss of the Oyster habitat.</p>	<p><i>This is well understood and will be addressed by all those involved in the discussion of the Blackwater Estuary, as noted in previous LG and RSG meeting minutes.</i></p>
<p>Q9. It is key for the LG members to know how the proposed measures will affect the fishermen and other sector users in the MCZ areas. It was</p>	<p><i>There are no predetermined management measures for MCZs. It is up to the RSG, with input from the LGs, to develop suggestions for which activities are compatible or not with the</i></p>

<p>felt this was a key gap in the process of coming to meetings. The compatibility matrices will be needed to better understand this and the results are awaited.</p> <p>Q from Solent Group: More information is needed on the protection levels of MCZs. What activities will be allowed under the different levels? BH stated that Hannah Thomas is working on a compatibility matrix. It was advised that there could be different levels of protection within one MCZ rather than a blanket enforcement. Concern was expressed about how people will know what applies where.</p>	<p><i>features protected in any proposed MCZ. The compatibility matrix, now more appropriately referred to as the activities/features matrix, was developed by the national MCZ team (not Hannah Thomas) as a tool to help with this task. Recommendations that will ultimately inform future management measures, will be developed site by site, and will be based on the features to be protected and the guidance provided by the activities feature matrix.</i></p>
<p>Q10a. There was concern that the relevant project documents were not being received by the LG (or named by date for clarification purposes).</p>	<p><i>At the July meetings of the LGs we discussed dissemination of project documents and a number of recommendations were made. Since those meetings documents, such as the reports of the LG meeting and the newsletter have been circulated, in the formats agreed.</i></p> <p><i>Some people contacted us to request printed copies and we have provided these (in one case there was a request for a map of a specific area with BAIs; we requested the stakeholder to use the map that the project produced for the First Progress Report as the project does not have the resources to produce maps specifically for individual stakeholders). LGs were requested to contact the project team when they have a specific problem receiving materials and this invitation still stands.</i></p>
<p>Q10b. It was noted that individuals cannot open the electronic documents that are circulated (Can they be posted or sent in other formats?)</p>	<p><i>This problem was discussed at the July meetings of the LGs. As explained in the Meeting Report, documents are being sent as pdfs wherever possible, and the project team explains how to download Adobe Acrobat each time documents are sent out. Where Word documents have to be sent, these are being sent as the more user friendly version. Where people are having problems receiving electronic documents they were requested to inform the project team and hard copies will be sent – we have a list of such</i></p>

<p>Please circulate the Interim Management Measures document again</p> <p>Can feedback from the scientific panel be circulated before the next meeting</p>	<p><i>people for each LG and are willing to add others.</i></p> <p><i>We will not be circulating this document again since, as indicated by its name, it was purely an interim tool. It has now been superseded by more detailed guidance (the activities/features matrix referred to above) that the project team will be introducing at the LG meetings</i></p> <p><i>The feedback from the SAP on the First Progress Report is available on the Balanced Seas website. If anyone needs a hard copy of this report, please contact the project office.</i></p> <p><i>The Second Progress Report was submitted to the Scientific Advisory Panel on 29 October and the project team will present it in person as a power point at a meeting with the SAP on third November. We are expecting the SAP feedback to be provided within 4 weeks and this will be made available to RSG and LG members as soon as possible after that.</i></p>
<p>Q11. There was a suggestion that existing codes of conduct and wildlife information being used now should be incorporated somehow</p>	<p><i>DEFRA has confirmed that codes of conduct and other forms of providing protection to wildlife could be used in MCZs. They are expecting the impact assessment and thus final recommendations to address both regulations, such as bylaws, and alternative forms of management such as codes of conduct.</i></p>
<p>Q12. Can feedback on all of these issues (highlighted at the meeting of the 27 September) be sent to the LG before 29 October 2010</p>	<p><i>This feedback was largely ready to be sent on 29 October; the small delay is due to the fact that the deadline for submission of the Second Progress Report was also 29 October, the project team is preparing for the forthcoming Local Group meetings; and there have been an extensive round of planning meetings to respond to concerns of many stakeholders about the lack of time available for the process.</i></p>
<p>Q13. Can the report from the RSG meeting (5 October) be sent around with the agenda/invitation for the next local group meeting</p>	<p><i>Invitations for the next LG meetings were sent on 15 October with the objectives of the meeting. The agenda and some of the meeting papers were sent on Friday 29 October. The report of</i></p>

	<i>RSG 5 will be sent with any remaining materials by the end of this week.</i>
Q14. As the maps were not complete for discussion at the meeting, maps for BAI 1 to 10 and A to K must be complete and available by 29 October	<i>The revised BAIs submitted with the Second Report have now been made available to all three LGs. These revisions were made by the RSG which is responsible for the recommendations that go into the progress reports. Because of time constraints, not all BAIs have been revised. The length of time required for the discussions and collation of relevant data for sites that might become draft MCZs is now better understood and as mentioned earlier the project team is developing a revised plan for meetings which will allow for this.</i>
Q15. The LG feels confidence levels that are attributed to each BAI will be the only way to attach belief in the data. Could this be undertaken on scales of 1-5 or 1-10 for example?	<i>Three confidence levels have been applied to the BAIs and this is explained in the Second Progress Report.</i>
Q16. BAI 11 that was suggested for discussion at the meeting is outside the Thames, N. Kent and Essex area. Please can the right maps be provided that also include industry and the socio-economic data provided by all the group members who were interviewed. The maps also need to include background navigation charts for ease of locating specific points as this is what fishermen use. Q from Solent Group: Generally difficult to understand the BAIs without bathymetry information. Need for better base mapping to show depth contours and in particular Mean Low water. This will help the group advise on better BAI boundaries, and understand Seagrass extent and main channels.	<i>We can only apologise that BAI 11 was presented for discussion at the Essex/Thames meeting.</i> <i>The project team is sourcing digital hydrographic navigational charts that will be used in future meetings as a background layer to improve familiarity of stakeholders with the areas and data being discussed.</i>
Q17. What GIS methodology is going to be used (noted that there are points and polygons and how will these work together to designate MCZs)?	<i>We have been given species and habitats data to include in MCZs. By the nature of survey data collection, these data may exist in either point and polygon format, but this doesn't change the fact that we have to include replicates of habitats /species with minimum patch sizes as outlined in the ENG. We are identifying where</i>

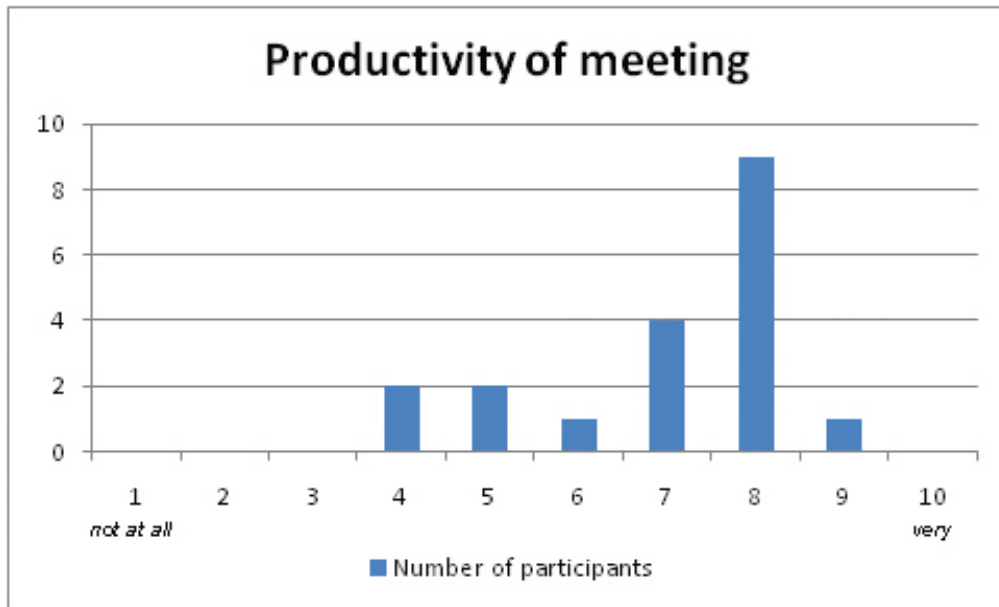
	<i>the features occur and they will be included in MCZs where appropriate. Point data indicate the centre of an area, not the total area of a species/habitat distribution, and thus will need particularly careful consideration.</i>
Q18. It is important for there to be a LG area on the Balanced Seas website. Can the group be told when this exists?	<i>The website is undergoing a major revision at the moment, and a page for LGs is being included: www.balancedseas.co.uk/page/localgroups.html</i>
Q19. Bird information is required as this may play a part in the recommendations made by the LG.	<i>The RSPB has provided regionally and nationally important seabird foraging data which is included in the regional profile and is being used in the planning meetings. JNCC has also provided data from the European Sea Birds at Sea project which is also in the regional profile and is being used in planning meetings.</i>
Q20. Can the RSG questions to the LG be more site specific (i.e. the feedback the LG were given included issues in areas outside their boundary (BAI11, areas L, M, N) otherwise it is a waste of the local knowledge of the group.	<i>We are encouraging the RSG to be as specific as possible in their questions.</i>
Q21. There is a caveat that the BAI do not consider the Thames Estuary system as a whole unit. It is important this is not forgotten – how will this be addressed?	<i>This comment should be passed to the LG meeting in November and recorded in the meeting report, with appropriate details and justification, so that it can go forward to the RSG. This is the kind of comment that the LGs should make, but the advice to the RSG needs to be clearly stated and, where possible, the LGs should provide constructive suggestions as to how to deal with an issue.</i>
Q22. AREA E: Maplin Sands – in addition to the comments made at the last LG meeting (document entitled LG feedback – July meetings) the LG are awaiting an updated map and Bird data before any further recommendations.	<i>This can be discussed further at the relevant LG meeting.</i>
Q23. AREA 4: Should be moved north to join BAI 3 on the eastern boundary as a straight line. The whole system should be included for consideration (to include Colne, Byfleet, Salcott and Ray).	<i>At RSG 5, BAI 3 and 4 were combined as a single BAI as a result of this recommendation by the LG which the RSG felt were appropriate. But remember that the RSG is responsible for making the recommendations.</i>

<p>Q24a. There was some concern and confusion about what is actually going to be potentially protected in the individual BAI areas as much of the data shown on the maps is out of date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a native oyster data gap in the new area 4 (refer to Alan Bird and Kent and Essex SFC) • The group were not confident about the Blue Mussel data at Coccum Hill • No confidence was given to the Estuarine Rocky habitats (is this not just concrete fallen from sea walls) <p>Sub-tidal sands and tide swept channels were also questioned for their relevance</p>	<p><i>These three comments need clarifying at the relevant LG meeting</i></p> <p><i>These are included because they are in the ENG which the MCZ process is following; it is not the role of the LGs or project teams, at this stage, to question the ENG</i></p>
<p>Q24b. The group suggested they may have a role to play in the validation of the maps and suggested this is best undertaken by use of attributing weights based on confidence (as earlier noted in this document).</p>	<p><i>There will be a session to review remaining data requirements at the forthcoming LG meetings. It must be understood that a key function of the LGs is to provide information and review work that has been done</i></p>
<p>Q25 from Solent Group: The group wish to understand how Socio-Economics is being taken into account and weighted. They need to see that this is being done fairly and robustly</p>	<p><i>Stakeholders from all sectors are present in the meetings. No weighting has been done this far.</i></p>
<p>Q26 from Solent Group: Decisions should be made on good science not just opinions and what people believe could be there.</p>	<p><i>The project team agree with this, and the ENG requires this approach.</i></p>

Appendix 5: Evaluation Results

1. How productive do you think this meeting was?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	0	0	2	2	1	4	9	1	0



Comments:

- Needs more time, but it may be me (late entrant)
- Good to see maps and detail of pressures
- Not enough time spent on Areas and Impacts. Some data still not available – private fishing beds, Overfalls, paleo-fluvial channels in Thames Estuary Area Rectangular Channels. Even the Outwash to the Channel very vague.
- Time could perhaps have been better spent if the group were fully updated before the meeting and had done relevant background reading so that most of the day could have been spent focussing on BAI workshops.
- The afternoon session was very useful to see how activities and features sit together. The morning session was a bit confusing as some data gaps suggested are present on the regional profile (not on the handout data list)
- Individuals continue to question principles and ideas which are confirmed which slows proceedings
- Rushed discussion on specific BAIs especially towards end of meeting.
- Lack of local expertise to give qualified comment on some FOCI habitats and species – need specific local meetings for specific sites.
- Some of the material was rather complex

- Depends how much of it is taken on board by the RSG who appear not to have had adequate time to consider LG recommendations in the past. But more LG meetings like this required to enable adequate input.
- Useful – clarification at features/pressures BAI
- Comments made at previous meetings were not taken forward so a lot of time was wasted re-iterating that

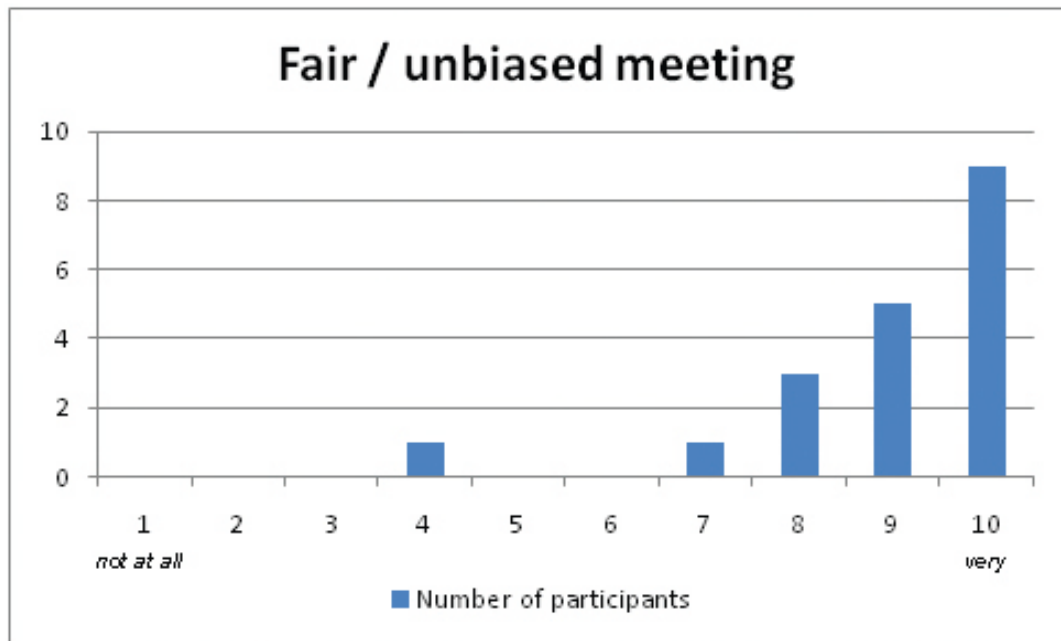
2. Where would you have liked to spend any more or less time?

Comments:

- Individual site discussions, but that will come later
- No time limit on local detail – i.e. a longer day
- On the BAIs
- Looking at Specific Areas
- Workshop
- Understanding of key data layers used
- Understanding of compatibility matrix
- I think we had good discussions within the time, looking at each BAI is time consuming. Need to also consider new BAIs as well as suggestion – this will all come with time!
- More
- Always time is short
- Rushed discussions on all subjects
- More time on feature data validation and more time on management (using compatibility matrix) would have been useful. More time on Suffolk (as this is my area of interest)
- Going through 4 BAIs was not possible, so 1 BAI was missed and 1 very rushed. This seemed to be a very useful/productive exercise
- Looking at the BAI areas (i.e. the main afternoon activity)
- BA2 – when will this be addressed and how will it be ensured there is adequate time and input for stakeholder / LG input into this? Less time could have been spent on looking at data included /being sought which could have happened by email.
- Medway BAI – time shortage
- More time in workshops

3. To what extent was the meeting run in a fair and unbiased way?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	5	9

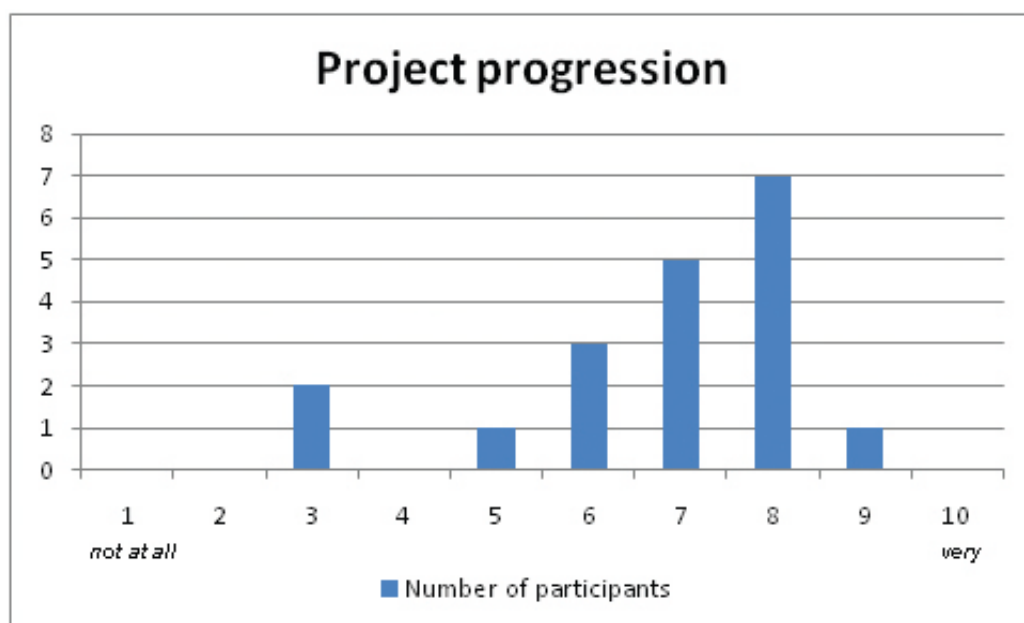


Comments:

- Given divergent opinions and quantity of data I am amazed at how far you got.
- Facilitation and planning worked well
- All who wanted to comment had adequate opportunity
- Great organisation
- Well done, all opinions voiced and noted. I think people may have struggled to fully understand the sensitivity/features matrix although a higher level of understanding may not be required by local groups
- Very good
- A bit rushed but facilitator did try to ensure everyone had a fair opportunity to speak
- There was continuous opportunities given for feedback and questioning

4. Looking ahead, how confident are you in the projects ability to make progress?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	0	2	0	1	3	5	7	1	0



Comments:

- Given existing (often unmanaged) protection, the justification for MCZs seems worryingly patchy whereas I thought they would simplify matters
- Not the staff but lack of time is a concern to get real detail
- RSG has not considered all the proposals. Even the summer meetings – how is this to be progressed to avoid the pinch points in the process
- Still need to spend a lot of time identifying additional BAIs, as well as refining existing BAIs
- Amazing work done, still a huge challenge given the data situation when the project began
- Of course you can make progress – time is the limiting factor. I think plugging things into Marxan and using Prism are key behind the scenes. However I would anticipate a lot of discussion when this is presented.
- Project taking on board new information all the time to improve understanding but real progress depends on engagement with stakeholders, validation of FOCI data, open discussion on levels of activities (not just round-up around the table)
- Timescales are a problem
- But I am concerned that all the new data still coming in (or being processed) will be able to be incorporated into final decisions
- Inadequate time in process to do a thorough job – concern that MCZs will purely be designated for those areas where there has been sufficient discussion to date insufficient input
- Progress must be made, but how useful it is, is yet to be seen

5. Is there anything you would like to request or suggest that would help you make your contributions to the project work?

Comments:

- EA Fisheries report (Steve Colclough). Background info for compatibility matrices. Access to compatibility matrices so we can browse!
- Linguistics are getting ambiguous. Needs tightening up.
- Prioritise website updates, especially following meetings
- Yes – the project team could come to Essex County Council to give presentations to officers from different teams – could highlight additional available data sets and input into activities including in relation to the newly announced Local Economic Partnership for Kent/Essex and E. Sussex
- Communications have been good and all documents are available for people to read
- Please email the background to compatibility matrix including possibly the Access files for features x activities (Sophie des Clers sdesclers@googlemail.com)
- Update of interactive map when available
- Understanding of how the different protection formats will be clarified to the end users
- Electronic map of BAIs to explain to others

6. Are there any improvements you would like to see with Balanced Seas communications, be it email interaction, file sharing, website, use of new tools such as Facebook and Twitter, or any other aspect? (Please specify)

Comments:

- It would be useful to have the latest/definitive list for resources that require a 'drop' and password as these are buried in old emails and it's difficult to remember where the links are!
- It would be useful to have everybody's email and affiliation.
- Facebook for Local Groups is a great idea.
- Feedback from Suffolk stakeholders (commercial and recreational fishermen, recreational boating sector) suggests they are detached from Balanced Seas, despite good efforts of liaison officers. Local (Suffolk) meeting might help.
- The interactive pdf and all documents sent prior to meeting were very useful and informative, especially as this was my first meeting
- Need more media reach to inform affected non-participants
- Need to address IFCA's (new people on board)

- Announcements by email once additional info has been uploaded onto the website etc
- No, well communicated

7. Is there anything else you would like to say about the meeting?

Comments:

- Well run and facilitated
- Very informative
- I tend to think that the formal methodology being pursued is very complex i.e. relative to the adequacy of the data , the fact that the marine areas are always changing, and the fact that the areas will need to be reassessed within a decade
- Must see the basis for pressure in the compatibility matrix. Not happy with this process
- Well done Balanced Seas, appreciate the preparation that you have done and the challenge of getting solid outputs from this type of meeting!
- Maybe we need to talk about Shellness (Sheppey) mussel bed. I will look into official position on NE discussions with SAGB. Amy, I can give you a map of private grounds at Whitstable – but not coordinates. The old map that Roger was talking about might be helpful. (Lisa NE)
- I would be happy to sit in on site group meeting (Sophie des Clers)
- Excellent facilitation
- No, well done!
- Well done!

Appendix 6: Acronyms

Name/abbreviation	Definition
BAI	Broad Area of Interest
Defra	Department of Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENG	Ecological Network Guidance
FOCI	Feature of Conservation Importance
GIS	Geographical Information System
IFCA	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LG	Local Group
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MPA	Marine Protected Area
mSCNI	Marine Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
NE	Natural England
RSG	Regional Stakeholder Group
SAP	Science Advisory Panel
SFC	Sea Fisheries Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference

Appendix 7: Presentations

Due to the size of the pdf, the presentations will be made available as a separate document.