

Shetland Islands' Marine Spatial Plan

Fourth Edition

*Strategic Environmental Assessment – Non-Technical Summary
Environmental Report*

Introduction

This Non-Technical Summary provides an overview of the findings presented in the Environmental Report undertaken as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Shetland Islands' Marine Spatial Plan (SMSP). The SEA aims to integrate environmental considerations into the decision making process for the plan. It assesses the environmental effects of the policies implemented as part of the SMSP and identifies opportunities to mitigate any adverse environmental effects.

Shetland Islands' Marine Spatial Plan

The SMSP, which is the subject of this report, brings together authoritative spatial data on the marine and coastal environment and its various uses. It establishes an overarching policy framework to guide the placement of activity, from marine renewable energy to aquaculture. The SMSP's marine planning guidance provides a firm basis for rational and consistent decision-making and allows users of the sea to make future decisions with greater knowledge. The SMSP reflects a process of ongoing consultation with marine planners, regulators, communities and developers. The SMSP will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance to the Shetland Islands Council's Local Development Plan (LDP).

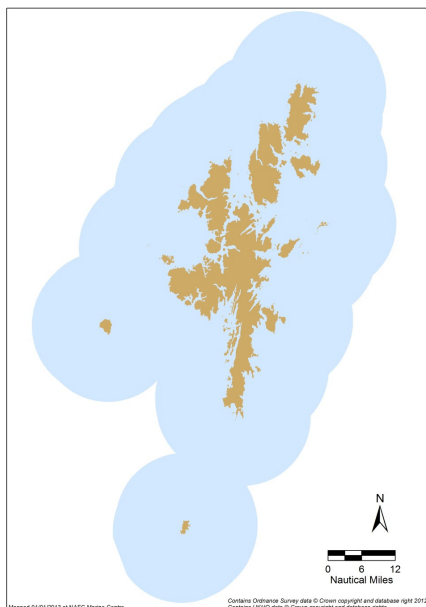
The SMSP has been developed having regard to many other national and local strategies and plans such as

the LDP as well as the Consultation Draft National Marine Plan and those of other organisations, including the Scotland River Basin Management Plan.

Study Area

The Shetland Islands are a group of islands located 160km from mainland Scotland and 360km from Norway. Most of the islands are north of 60° latitude, and the most northerly island, Unst, is as far north as Anchorage, Alaska. The coastline of the Islands is 2,702 km, including inlets, skerries and stacks, the equivalent of 10% of Scotland's coastline.

The SMSP area includes all territorial waters seaward of the Mean High Water Spring tide, out to 12 nautical miles but includes habitats / ecological processes that are clearly affected by marine use. Archaeological features within 500m of the coastline have also been included.



Shetland Islands' Marine Spatial Plan Area

Consultation Process ***Statutory Consultation***

Consultation with the statutory Consultation Authorities (SEPA, SNH and Historic Scotland) will run from 12 weeks following submission of the SMSP and the Environmental Report to the SEA Gateway.

Public Consultation

The public consultation period will run for 12 weeks.

Consideration of Responses

All responses received from the statutory consultees and the public will be recorded, analysed and considered by Shetland Islands Council in partnership with the SMSP team at the

NAFC Marine Centre¹. The SEA Statement produced for the adopted plan will set out how the SMSP has taken into account the comments received following the consultation period.

Purpose of the Environmental Report

SEA is required, under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, to assess the likely significance of the SMSP on the environment. The assessment indicates the environmental benefits and potential environmental impacts of implementing the plan.

The Environmental Report also provides information on how the plan has been amended to take into account any issues raised by statutory consultees during the scoping stage.

Environmental Baseline

The population of the Shetland Islands in 2011 was approximately 23,200 ([National Records of Scotland, 2013](#)), which represents an increase of 5.3% since the previous census in 2001. In 2011, there were approximately 2,946 persons employed in full time equivalent (FTE) marine-related jobs in Shetland.

¹ NAFC Marine Centre is the trading name of the Shetland Fisheries Centre Trust. The Trust is a Management Agent for the Shetland Islands Council.

The coastal waters around Shetland have been classified as being in 'good environmental status'. In 2009, Shetland became a UNESCO European Geopark based on its exceptional geological heritage.

Shetland's coasts and seas are an integral part of Shetland's cultural and historic heritage with many structures visible around the coast and many more submerged beneath the sea.

Shetland's natural environment is rich in diversity with the landscape spread over more than a hundred islands and 2,702 km of coastline. As a result of this diversity of habitats, wildlife and landscape/ seascape significant areas are protected by international and national environmental designations. Additionally, these assets and the actual marine environment represent an important recreational amenity for the local community.

Shetland's marine resources support a number of local industries in the provision of goods and services such as food, oil and gas, renewable energy, tourism and leisure, transport and shipping, coastal infrastructure, marine aggregates and dredging and disposal.

A suite of maps has been incorporated into the SMSP which provides a comprehensive review of the environmental baseline for the SMSP plan area. Further baseline information

is provided in Chapter 3 of the Environmental Report.

Assessment of the SMSP

The assessment of the SMSP is presented in full in Chapter 4 of the Environmental Report.

The assessment concludes that overall the SMSP with new and revised policies will have a positive impact, particularly in relation to factors such as benefits to biodiversity, population and health, water quality, geology, cultural heritage and seascape and landscape. The plan policies seek to reinforce environmental safeguarding as an important consideration in the development process.

There is potential for small scale local negative impacts on the marine environment. In particular, our climate may be impacted upon from individual developments however the SMSP favours development where these impacts can be avoided or mitigated. Management measures and mitigation have been described where required in Chapter 5 of Environmental Report and the SMSP.

Alternatives Considered

As the SMSP does not include any specific strategic actions or measurable activities, the focus of the SEA is to assess the main objectives and policies as set out in the SMSP and incorporate policy revisions or alternatives upon which the final SMSP will be based. In terms of

alternatives to the SMSP, its strategic nature suggests a number of scenarios including:

- Assessment against the 'do-nothing' scenario, i.e. continue under the current voluntary SMSP (3rd Ed.);
- Likely impact of development without any plan setting out framework for marine protection and planning; and
- The preferred option – adoption of a final SMSP (4th Ed.) i.e. the plan incorporating the recommendations of the SEA process and further consultation with key stakeholders

Mitigation

Schedule 3 (8) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that mitigation measures are integrated into the plan making process. Two main tiers of mitigation have been considered as part of the SEA process:

- Modifications to the SMSP – the SMSP incorporates a number of revisions to the previous edition of the plan which are a clear form of mitigation measures in themselves. Additionally mitigation is an integral part of the SEA process and avoiding impacts of the SMSP through changes to components of the plan e.g. policy revisions have been a key component of the process.
- General mitigation and best practice.

Specific external mitigation and monitoring relevant to individual policies is described in Chapter 6 of the Environmental Report.

Monitoring

Following adoption and implementation of the SMSP, the effects on the environment will need to be monitored. This will ensure that any unforeseen negative environmental impacts are identified and appropriate remedial action is taken. It is envisaged that a similar formal review to the one carried out prior to the preparation of this SMSP will be conducted within 5 years of adoption. The SMSP team in liaison with the Statutory Consultees will agree the monitoring framework including suitable indicators. (See Chapter 6 of Environmental Report for proposed monitoring framework and indicators).

Next Steps

- A review of the consultation responses received on the SMSP and Environmental report will be undertaken
- Modifications to the SMSP and Environmental Report will be incorporated if required.
- The final SMSP and final Environmental Report will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for adoption.
- The SMSP will be adopted.
- SEA Post Adoption Statement will be issued and environmental monitoring will be agreed and implemented.

OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

The publication of the Environmental Report will be followed by a 12 week consultation period.

Statutory responses (Scottish Ministers/ Historic Scotland/ SEPA and SNH) will be submitted via the SEA Gateway:

SEA Gateway Officer
SEA Gateway
Scottish Executive
Area 1 H Bridge
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ
Email:
SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Martin Holmes
Coastal Zone Management Service,
Grantfield,
Lerwick,
Shetland
ZE1 0NT
Email:
marine.planning@shetland.gov.uk
Telephone: 01595 744805

Public Consultation

The public consultation period will also run for 12 weeks. The consultation exercise commences on 17th January and will end on 11th April 2014.

Electronic copies of the Shetland Islands' Marine Spatial Plan and Environmental Report are available online at the following addresses:

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/planning/LocalDevelopmentPlan.asp>

<http://www.nafc.ac.uk/SMSP.aspx>

Hard copies are also available to view at the Shetland Islands Council's office at the following address.

Any person who wishes to make representations about the Environmental Report should make them in writing within the 12 week period to the Shetland Islands Council's Coastal Zone Manager: