

Marine Conservation Zones Time Line / Process

- November 2009** **Marine and Coastal Access Act receives Royal Assent** providing Ministers with powers to designate Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). The Act requires MCZs to contribute to achieving a UK network of Marine Protected Areas. It includes provision for social and economic impacts to be taken into account in designating MCZs.
- Natural England and JNCC establish the MCZ project to develop recommendations. The project consists of four regional projects, with Regional Stakeholder Groups that comprise a range of UK and international stakeholders working to consider options and recommend potential MCZs.
- Nov 2009 – Sep 2011** **Stakeholders are invited to provide information about which areas of the sea are important to them**, when they use them and what they use them for. This enables the four regional MCZ projects to make recommendations that are fully informed by knowledge of existing use of the sea.
- During this stage the four regional MCZ projects conducted over 2,500 interviews. Also 161 stakeholder meetings were held where discussions and negotiations about site recommendations took place. The regional MCZ projects start to develop material for an impact assessment¹ (with advice from Defra, JNCC and Natural England). Regional Stakeholder Group members and Named Consultative Stakeholders have an opportunity to provide quality assure the Impact Assessment
- September 2011 – July 2012** **Regional MCZ projects publish their final recommendations**
- The regional MCZ projects' make recommendations to Defra, Natural England and JNCC in September 2011.
- Natural England and JNCC undertake analysis of the recommendations from the regional MCZ projects and provide advice to Defra in July 2012. The advice from Natural England and JNCC is provided alongside the regional MCZ project recommendations and will not change any of the outputs from the stakeholder process. The statutory advice undergoes an Independent Expert Review prior to formal submission to Defra.
- Regional Stakeholder Group members and Named Consultative Stakeholders have an opportunity to provide feedback on drafts of material for the Impact Assessment. The regional MCZ projects use this feedback, as well as feedback from Defra, JNCC and Natural England to revise the drafts prior to their submission to Defra (in July).
- October 2011** **Science Advisory Panel** provided an independent assessment of the extent to which the final recommendations of the regional MCZ projects meet the requirements of the Ecological Network Guidance for an ecologically coherent network. Their report was published in October 2011 together with an accompanying report that provided an assessment of the evidence used to support the recommended MCZs and draft

¹ An Impact Assessment presents the anticipated negative and positive environmental, economic and social impacts of a proposed policy intervention, in this case, the designation and management of MCZs. The impacts of MCZs are assessed against a baseline scenario in which there are no MCZs. The Impact Assessment provides government and stakeholders with information on the anticipated effects of MCZs. It will be used to inform the decision to designate MCZs.

conservation objectives.

Addition survey work is commissioned to address gaps in evidence and gather more information on the recommendations made by the regional MCZ projects.

July 2012

The MCZ Advice Package is submitted to Government

JNCC and Natural England provide their statutory advice to the Government.

July –Dec 2012

Defra consider all MCZ advice

Once the regional MCZ project site recommendations and Impact Assessment; and Natural England and JNCC's advice has been received, Ministers will consider the supporting evidence and potential environmental, social and economic impacts of MCZs, before consultation and deciding which sites to take forward for designation. The factors considered in reaching the Government's decisions, will be made clear in the public consultation documentation.

December 2012

Formal public consultation by Defra on all recommended MCZs

The statutory three month public consultation will be an opportunity for stakeholders to review, comment and feedback to government on the proposed designation decisions before they are finalised.

2013

Phased designation of sites begins

Ministers decide which MCZs should be designated. Designated MCZs will contribute to the Government's commitment to create an ecologically-coherent and well managed UK network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) – enhancing and conserving our valuable marine wildlife and undersea habitats.

2013 onwards

Management measures developed and implemented by relevant public authority

For designated MCZs there will be public consultation on any regulatory management measures prior to measures being introduced.

Further MCZs may be designated in phases as more evidence becomes available.