



Stakeholder Engagement, Facilitation & Mediation

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R K Partnership Ltd  
Ellsdone  
Torbay Road  
Castle Cary  
Somerset, BA7 7DW  
Tel: 01963 351008

# **Irish Sea Conservation Zones: Regional Stakeholder Group Workshop 6**

## **REPORT**

**Meeting: 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011,  
Liverpool John Moores University**

Report: June 2011

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The Irish Sea Conservation Zones (ISCZ) Stakeholder Process has been designed and facilitated by Rob Angell of R K Partnership Ltd (RKP) since March 2011. Lynn Wetenhall supported the facilitation and process design. The facilitators hold no formal position on any of the substantive issues that have been, or might be, considered. It is for the participants to decide what issues are raised, how they might be addressed and how any observations, conclusions and recommendations might be recorded and communicated.

Meeting reports are produced by the ISCZ Project Team and RKP.

Details of the ISCZ Project, the Regional Stakeholder Group, and all meeting reports are available on the ISCZ website [www.irishseaconservation.org.uk](http://www.irishseaconservation.org.uk)

## Regional Stakeholder Group Attendees

Name	Interest
1. Andrew Finlay	Land owners
2. Andrew Gouldstone	NGO Natural Environment
3. Andy Reed	Devolved Administrations
4. Caroline Salthouse	Coastal Forum
5. Cheryl Nicholson	NGO Natural Environment
6. Chris Lumb	Statutory Nature Conservation
7. Andrew Bellamy (10 <sup>th</sup> May only)	Marine aggregates
8. Cristina Herbon	Statutory Nature Conservation
9. Cynthia Burek	Geodiversity
10. Dale Rodmell	Commercial Fishing
11. Dave Dobson	Commercial Fishing
12. Dave McAleavy	Local Government
13. Dick James	Producers Organisation
14. Geoff Meggitt	Recreational/Leisure Craft
15. Johan Hennaert	Commercial Fishing (international)
16. John Watson	Oil and Gas
17. Julie Drew	Marine Renewables
18. John Amery (10 <sup>th</sup> May only)	Recreational Angling
19. Jon Parr	MMO
20. Kay Foster	NGO Natural Environment
21. Kelsey Thompson	Commercial Fishing
22. Matthew Palmer	Marine Research
23. Ron Graham	Commercial Fishing
24. Sarah Peet	Environment Agency
25. Stuart Livesey	Marine Renewables
26. Sue Stallibrass	Heritage
27. Tom Bryan Brown	Commercial Fishing
28. Tom Craeynest	Commercial Fishing (international)
29. Tony Wyld	MOD

## Irish Seas Conservation Zones Project Team attendees

1. Greg Whitfield
2. Francesca Moore
3. Matthew Sutcliffe
4. Kieran Bell
5. Stephen Manning
6. Chris Egan

# Regional Stakeholder Group Meeting

Agenda: Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011

11.30	<b>Arrivals &amp; refreshments</b>
12.00	<b>Start</b> Review and agree the Agenda & Meeting Aims
	<p><b>Updates</b></p> <p><b>Irish Seas Conservation Zones Project</b> There will be a brief update on the project and the timetable by Greg Whitefield</p> <p><b>Focus meetings</b> You will be talked through what the meetings did and a summary of the progress made</p> <p><b>Progress towards meeting the ENG targets</b> The Project Team will give an update on how well the current Network performs against the ENG targets.</p> <p><b>SAP feedback</b> The Project Team will give you a headline summary of the feedback and their interpretation of what it means for you and the network</p> <p><b>Stakeholders feedback</b> The Project Team will give you a summary of the feedback and their guide to what it means for the network.</p> <p>You will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss these updates so that you understand them to enable you to do the work during the rest of the meeting.</p>
	<p><b>Improving the Network</b></p> <p>There will be an overview by the Project Team to show you and explain to you the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggested changes that have been made by the focus meetings</li> <li>• Suggested changes from the Project Team as a result of the SAP feedback</li> <li>• Suggested changes as a result of wider stakeholder feedback</li> </ul> <p>You will have an opportunity to discuss and share your thoughts on this</p> <p>You will then be working on which, if any, of these you can agree to incorporate in the network.</p> <p>You will have paper maps and interactive maps on laptops to work with if needed.</p> <p>Work will take place in a mixture of small group and / or plenary session.</p>
	<b>Break</b>
	<p><b>Conservation Objectives for sites &amp; Implications for stakeholders</b></p> <p>You will get an overview from the Project Team on the work done by them and JNCC and NE to develop conservation objectives for the sites. This will include an explanation of any activity restrictions that will need to be in place in the pMCZs.</p> <p>You will have the opportunity to discuss this and understand how the work was done.</p> <p>You will then have the task to ensure that any implications of these restrictions are properly documented.</p>
	<p><b>Reflection on the day</b> On how the meeting has gone</p>
18.30	<b>Finish</b>
20.00	<b>Dinner</b>

# Regional Stakeholder Group Meeting

Agenda: Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May

07.30	<b>Breakfast</b>
08.45	<b>Arrivals</b>
09.00	<p><b>Conservation Objectives for sites &amp; Implications for stakeholders (cont'd)</b>            You will have time to continue your work on the implications of sites.</p>
	<b>Break</b>
	<p><b>Reference Areas</b>            You will see the RAs suggested from the focus meetings and some further suggestions from the Project Team to make up the required RAs to the ENG target / guidance. Your task will be to see if you can recommend a set of RAs.</p> <p>You will be working in smaller groups to look at and discuss the draft proposals for reference areas.</p>
12.30	<b>Lunch</b>
	<p><b>Reference Areas (cont'd)</b>            You will work as a whole group to see which, if any RAs you can agree to.</p>
	<b>Break</b>
	<p><b>Progress Report</b>            There will be a reminder of the format for the report and the timetable. This will be followed by an opportunity for you to clarify anything.</p>
	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What to tell / feedback to your constituency and to the SG</li> <li>• Agree actions and review all decisions made</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Reflection and evaluation</b>            On how the meeting has gone</p>
16.00	<b>Finish</b>

## The Developing Network: An Update

An introductory presentation was given by Kieran Bell on the performance of the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration in satisfying the ENG criteria. The key points for the RSG were that:

The 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration meets all broad-scale habitat targets except for:

- Moderate energy infralittoral rock. The project team indicated that this is primarily due to a problem with the classification of rock in the Lune Deep SAC. If/when this is recalculated, there would not be a shortfall for this habitat
- Sublittoral macrophyte dominated sediment. There is no ENG numerical target for this feature but nevertheless none of the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration sites cover this feature

The 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration meets all FOCI targets except for:

- Horse mussel beds (2 examples)
- Sheltered muddy gravels (0 examples)
- Subtidal mixed muddy sediments (1 example)

Throughout the day, the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) were considering input/feedback from the local focus group meetings, wider stakeholders, the Science Advisory Panel, and the project team. Updates were provided by the Project Team on each of the above sources of input/feedback, which included the following key points.

1. Focus group input:
  - a. Boundary suggestions for pMCZ 4, 6, 2 (including BAI 2), 3, 13 and BAI 1, 10, 11
  - b. Analysis of exposure information (activities and pressures) which will inform the management implications
  - c. Suggestions for reference areas
  - d. Suggestions for estuarine sites to protect Smelt and European Eel
2. Wider stakeholder feedback on 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration:
  - a. Was provided on a site by site basis and reflected the comments that the Project Team had received from wider stakeholders (those who are not on the RSG or the focus groups) on our contacts database (c.2000 individuals)
3. Science Advisory Panel (SAP) feedback on 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration:
  - a. Boundary change suggestions for pMCZ 13, 14 and BAI 1 with ecological rationale
  - b. Suggested particular attention to be paid to horse mussel bed data
  - c. The need to identify reference areas
  - d. The need to consider highly mobile species FOCI
  - e. Clarification on how to include areas of additional ecological importance
4. Project Team suggestions to develop the network in line with the above sources of input/feedback, and implications for meeting the ENG targets
  - a. Digitised boundary suggestions based on an interpretation of the above input
  - b. Boundary changes to take into account new data collected by the marine scientist in the Project Team for sites pMCZ 2, 3 and 6

The RSG were given the opportunity to ask questions to the project team to clarify any issues arising from the update presentations.

## Improving the Network

The RSG were tasked with improving the developing network configuration (DNC) in line with the targets set out in the Ecological Network Guidance. To do this they worked in sub-groups, involving 4-6 stakeholders per group.

Sub Groups were allocated one or two pMCZs to work on so participants were asked to sit in a sub-group according to the site/s that were most relevant for them. This resulted in sub-groups that were not equal in size, but allowed the participants to spend most time on the site that they were most interested in.

### Format of the sessions

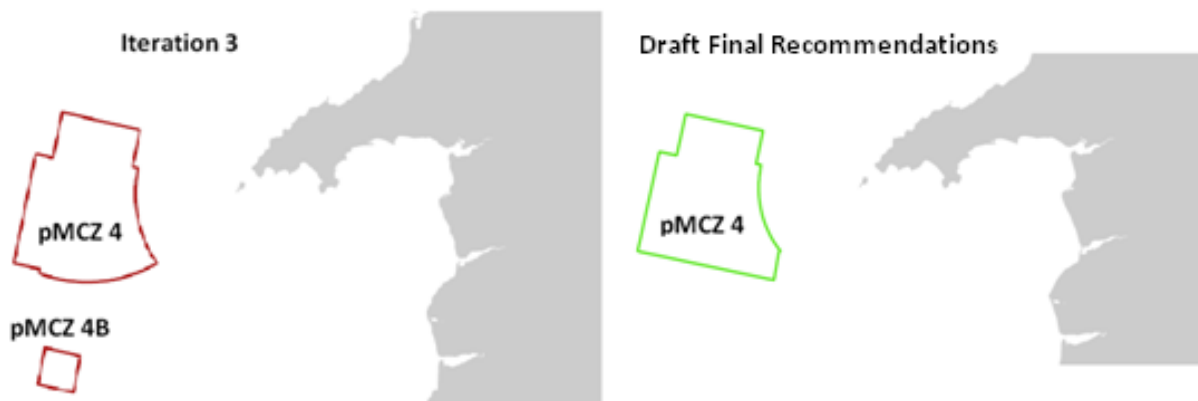
- Improving the network (1) – small group work
  - The sub groups worked with paper maps, supplemented by regional profile data which was displayed electronically using an interactive pdf. Their task was to improve the network (i.e. improve the site boundaries) in light of the feedback, suggestions and implications that had been put forward earlier in the day during the project team update session. When the sub-group came to an agreed conclusion on how to improve the network, this was captured on the paper map. The rationale and for the decisions taken was recorded.
- Improving the network (2) – small group work
  - Stakeholders remained in their sub-groups and rotated around the other tables to provide comments and suggestions on other pMCZs in the network, and to suggest any further boundary modifications. After moving around all tables (and thus sites), the sub-group returned to their original table and reviewed the options that the other sub-groups had suggested.
- Improving the network (3) – plenary session
  - The facilitator of each table (and therefore sites) presented a summary of the suggestions put forward by each sub-group, and the rationale behind the suggestions. These were presented to the whole RSG in plenary, so that everyone was aware of the suggestions that had been made by the different sub groups.
  - The suggestions put forward were discussed, in plenary, on a site-by-site basis, to see if the RSG could come to a conclusion on how to improve the boundary of a site. Live GIS was used to support this session and to update the group on any implications of the changes for the ENG targets and for any socio-economic interests.
  - If no decision was reached then the group agreed to use, the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration boundary for the site in question as the default. It is important to note that decision does not mean consensus where 100% of those in the room agreed. There were cases where the group were able to agree knowing that individuals did not feel totally satisfied with the conclusion. In these situations these stakeholders accepted that they needed to record the implications for their industry/sector/interest on pre-formatted sheets. These implications will be used when working on the Impact Assessment.

## Plenary discussion

Several suggestions to improve the network were agreed without the need for plenary discussion. These are captured below:

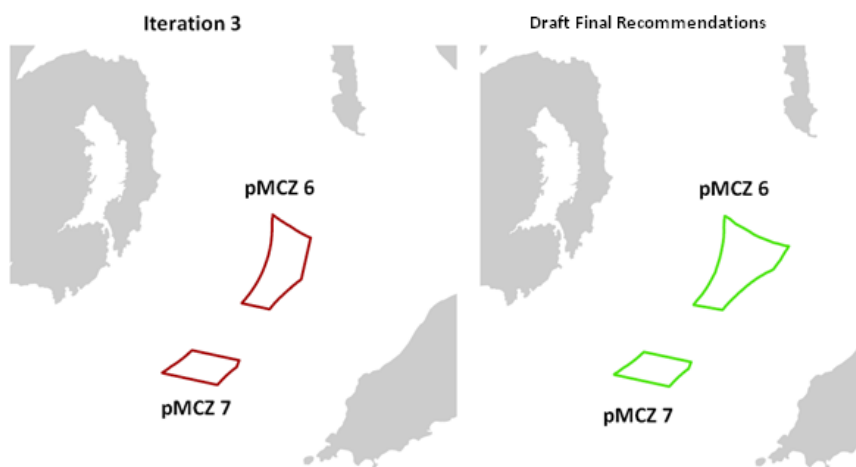
It was **AGREED** to remove **pMCZ 4B**

- Horse mussel data probably doesn't represent horse mussel *beds*
- The site overlaps with Belgian fishing activity



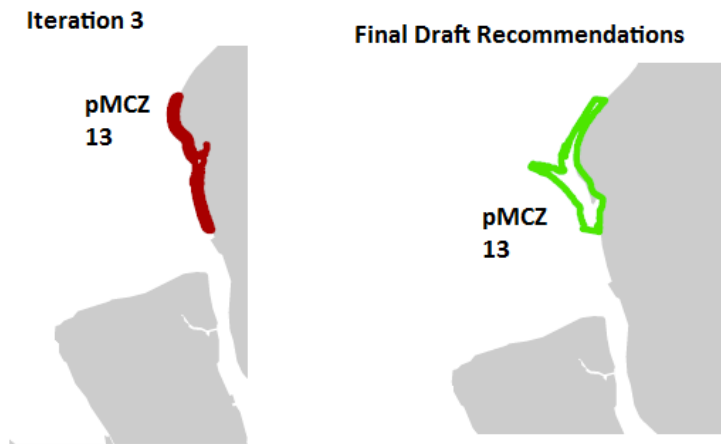
It was **AGREED** to accept the boundary extension to **pMCZ 6** to protect subtidal sand and Ocean Quahog

- Caveat that this addition of sand to the network should be accompanied by a deletion/s of sand elsewhere in the network
- MOD - caution with regard to submarine activity (landing on sea floor)



It was **AGREED** to change **pMCZ 13** in line with the boundary proposed by the focus group and it was further **AGREED** to extend the site boundary slightly seawards so that it is the same as the Sefton Coast SAC boundary

- Removal of overlap with recreational activities
- Ease of management if the MCZ and the SAC boundaries are the same

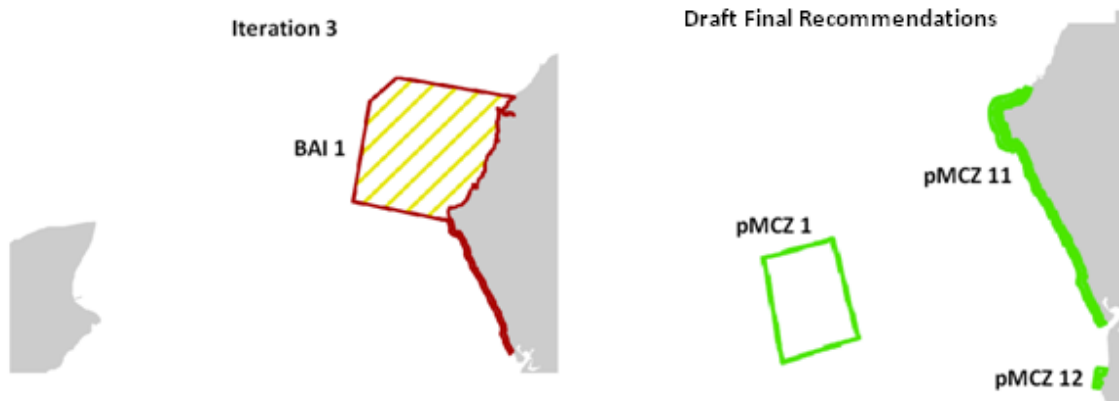


## pMCZ 11

It was **AGREED** that a 0.5 km extension (to 1 km from mean high water) around St Bees Head was appropriate to protect Black Guillemots

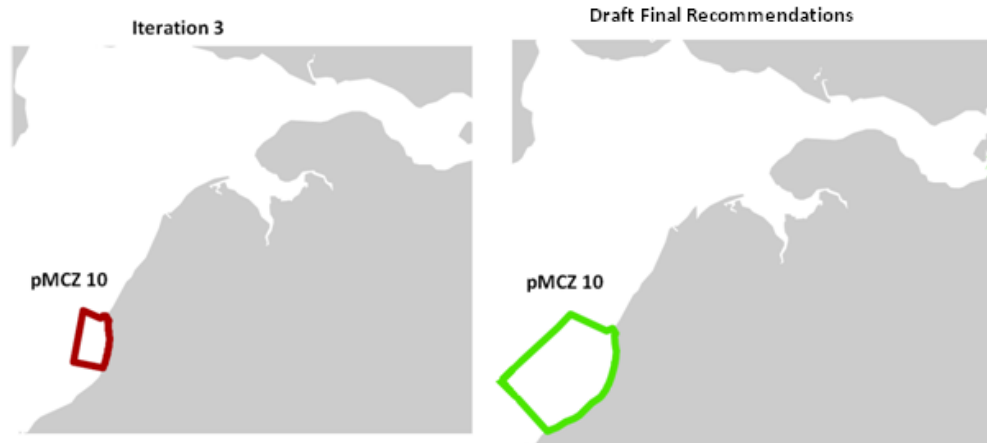
- Proposed conservation objective to maintain
- Proposed activity restrictions for gill netting and vessel speed only
- Agreed on the basis that the underlying broad-scale habitats and FOCI will not be proposed for designation

The RSG **AGREED** to a slight southern extension of the site to protect the submerged forest (peat and clay exposures)



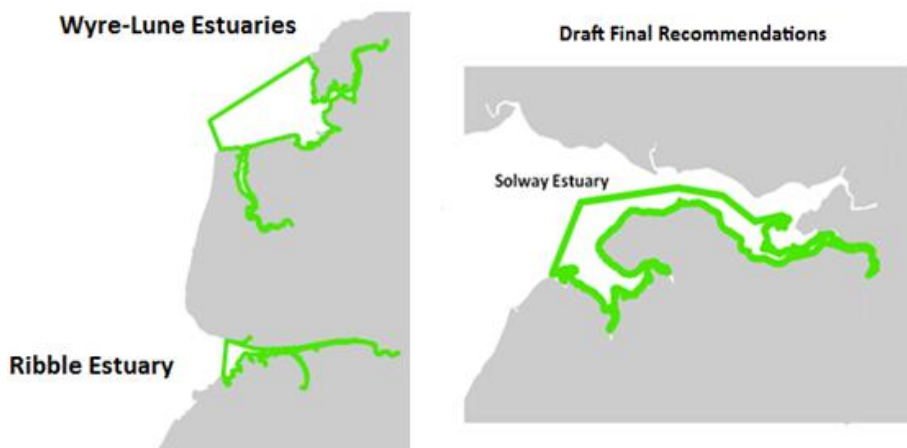
The RSG **AGREED** to the extension of **pMCZ 10** as suggested by the Cumbrian focus group

- Ecological value of this area – especially Maryport Roads
- Limited socio-economic implications



### Estuaries (Solway Firth, Wyre-Lune and Ribble)

The RSG **AGREED** with the boundaries put forward by the Smelt and Eel workshop, subject to appropriate management measures that allow existing and new cables infrastructure, and that appropriate consideration is given to wave/tidal devices. NB reluctance of some industry stakeholders (marine renewables) to agree this until they have assurances in writing from the appropriate regulators



## General points relating to individual pMCZs

### pMCZ 4

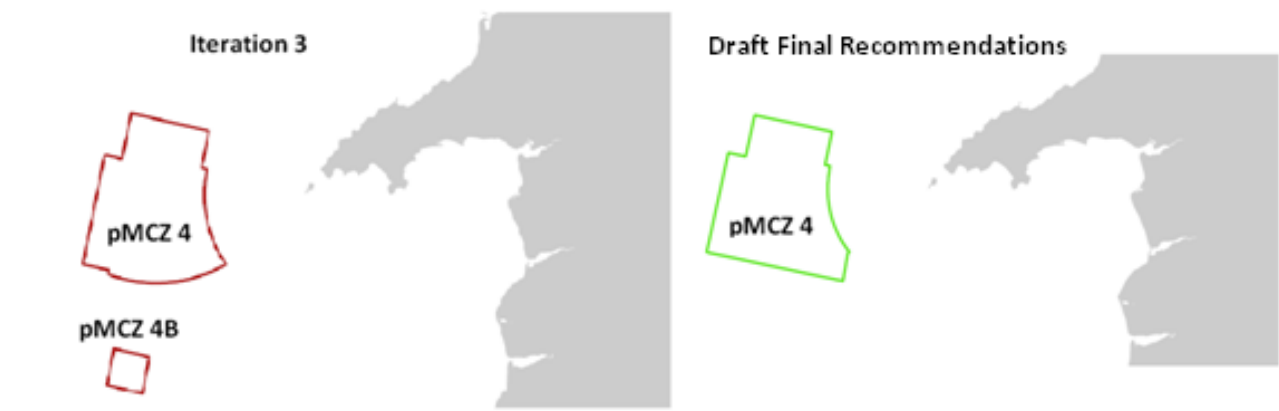
Options for RSG consideration from sub-group work:

- Removal of chunk of sand (SE corner of site) where Belgian VMS overlaps
  - Why? fishing impact reasons and the fact that we have 30% sand in the current network
- Keep boundary the same as iteration 3
  - Why? connectivity/coverage reasons and the fact that site pMCZ 4b was deleted to accommodate Belgian fishing interests)

In plenary, a compromise was put forward to cut a thin slice off the south part of the site which meant that the site didn't coincide with the most intensively used Belgian fishing grounds. This did not have support of the Belgian fishermen (or NFFO who cited that we have too much sand in the network – 30% - and it is unnecessary to implicate fishing grounds on this basis).

It was **AGREED** that:

The conclusion of the discussion was to go with the compromise (slight reduction in the size of the site) and that the NFFO & Belgians fill in their implications



## pMCZ 2

3 options put forward for the **north** part of site (inc BAI2)

- Co-location of MCZ with wind farms
  - With clear assumptions that state that wind farms will not be affected by MCZ designation)
- No co-location of MCZ with windfarms (1)
  - As a consequence there would be a shortfall of mud against the ENG minimum target (15%) and so it was suggested that this could be made up of an extension to pMCZ 1
- No co-location of MCZs with windfarms (2)
  - As a consequence there would be a small shortfall of mud against the minimum ENG target (15%) and that this should be accepted as part of the ISZ recommendations

The project team presented work done overnight to reclassify the mud broad-scale habitat in pMCZ 6. This showed a proposal to increase the size of pMCZ 1 to meet the shortfall of mud.

With no-co-location, 14% mud is met. The target is 15%

- This was the preferred option for renewables and offshore wind stakeholders. They acknowledged that somebody else will make the decision on whether the other 1% is needed and, if so, where this would be located.
- Likely though that this additional 1% would implicate fishing grounds given the importance of all mud habitats for Nephrops fishing.
- The commercial fishing industry prefers co-location as mud habitats are very valuable.

Offshore wind and oil and gas representatives voiced concern that no reassurances/advice has been received from the regulators and/or the SNCBs since the last RSG. They found this very frustrating. This has blocked progress and leaves no option other than to put forward 2 options: co location and no co location - to be decided at a later stage.

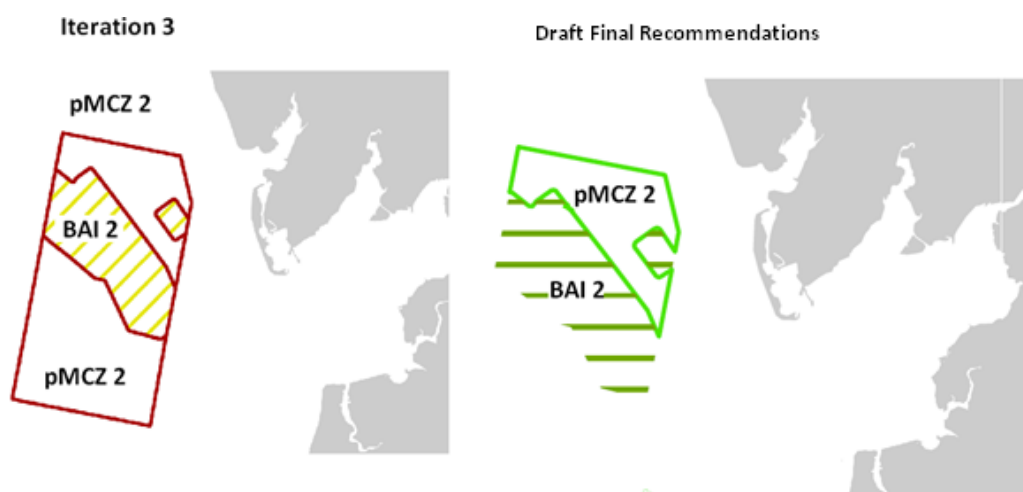
It was **AGREED** that:

The conclusion of the discussion was to revert back to the iteration 3 boundary (including the BAI) for the northern component of pMCZ2. This means that the pMCZ is **not** co-located with the offshore windfarms. The area overlapping the windfarms remains a BAI.

**Action:** NE/JNCC/MMO/DECC need to meet with developers to resolve issues before next meeting. The issues are:

- Whether or not the industry can accept co-location of MCZs with windfarms. This will depend on:
  - The advice that the SNCBs would provide for the Environmental Impact Assessment process, and how this would differ should a windfarm be co-located with an MCZ.
- If co-location is not accepted, the network will have a 1% shortfall of subtidal mud

**Action:** Project Team to explore options to make up the 1%, if necessary, following the above meeting (with developers).



For the **southern** part of the site (pMCZ2) two options were put forward for RSG consideration:

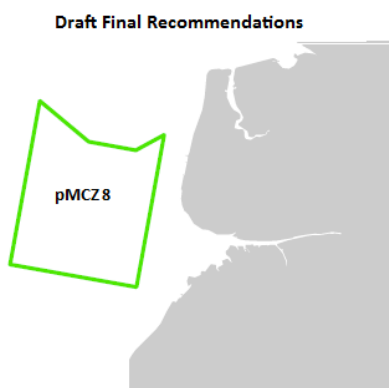
- Move site to the southeast to accommodate bivalve density (productivity) in line with SAP feedback, and as suggested at the focus meeting.
  - This option also removes overlap with Belgian fisheries and co-location with Morecambe Bay gas fields.
  - There may be implications give overlap with Fleetwood and Lytham fishing grounds
- Compromise to keep this area to a minimum in size – allowing the above objectives but reducing overlap with Fleetwood/Lytham fishing grounds. This was also put forward on the basis that the amount of subtidal sand in the network is well covered.

Discussions took place regarding the Kaiser *et al.* (2006) bivalve data and trying to get the maximum conservation benefit whilst minimising impacts on fishing.

It was **AGREED** that:

The conclusion of the discussion was to move forward with the proposed new southern boundary (to be called pMCZ 8) and remove the southern area from pMCZ2 of iteration 3 (i.e. below BAI2), **subject to the below action.**

**Action:** New southern site (pMCZ8) needs to be discussed / signed off at forthcoming focus meeting (June) following analysis of Fishermap data for vessels operating out of Fleetwood and Lytham.



### pMCZ 3

Options put forward for the RSG to consider site extensions to pMCZ3

- Extension of the mid-northern component of the site
- Extension of the northwestern component of the site to further include thermal front data and productive subtidal sand
- Extension of the northeastern component of the site to cover new horse mussel bed data and drumlin geomorphological features

It was **AGREED** that:

The middle part of the northern extension was agreed subject to the below caveat:

Cable work (installation, maintenance and decommissioning) would be allowed to continue in line with current legislation.

The extension of the site's north-western component to increase coverage of habitat that coincides with the thermal front was rejected. Default decision to keep 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration boundary for this component of the site.

- Even without this extension, the site boundary was contested by the Belgian fisheries representatives and NFFO on the basis that thermal fronts are secondary considerations (AAEI) and that the network is oversubscribed for subtidal sand (currently 30%). Implications of this were recorded on worksheets which will be used to support the Impact Assessment work.

The extension of the **northeastern** component of the site to cover horse mussels (modiolus beds; SEA 6 data from Ivor Rees, Bangor University) was discussed at length.

A suggestion was put forward to amend the boundary to capture the modiolus bed data and not to extend any further east for the drumlins.

- Queries were raised over whether there would be a need to designate a broad-scale habitat for these glacial features (i.e. can you designate just the drumlin feature), and also whether a conservation objective needs to be established for geomorphological features (reference was made to the Net Gain process).
- Concerns for future cables installation (probably associated with Round 3 windfarm) were voiced

It was **AGREED** that:

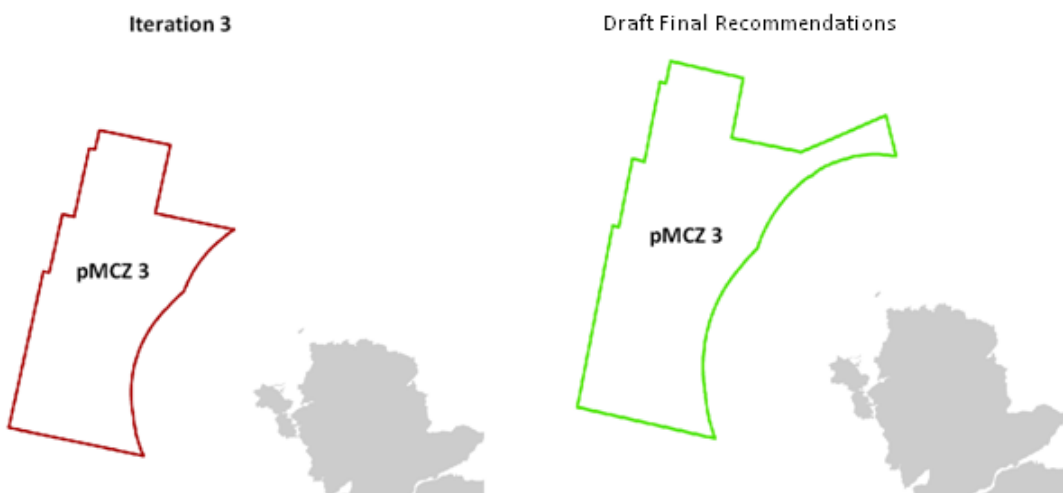
**Conclusion (1):** that the northeastwards extension is acceptable **but only as far as the extent of the modiolus data and not to cover the glacial features.**

Assumptions were recorded that:

- Cables would be allowed to be installed/maintained/decommissioned/removed in the extension (if the site is extended to include drumlins at a later date). Example of cables in European Marine Sites was put forward as a comparison, where there is some flexibility for the industry.
- This part of the site doesn't become a reference area as this would undo the above assumption.
- Scallop dredging would not be restricted if the drumlin extension was agreed at a future date.

**Conclusion (2):** that the extension for glacial features (drumlins) would not be included in the draft final recommendations, but that their inclusion could be considered at the next RSG meeting following the below action.

**Action:** Project Team to explore the implications of designating part of a site for a drumlin only. Is this even possible (i.e. not including a broad-scale habitat or FOCI)? To report back at the next RSG meeting.



## BAI 1

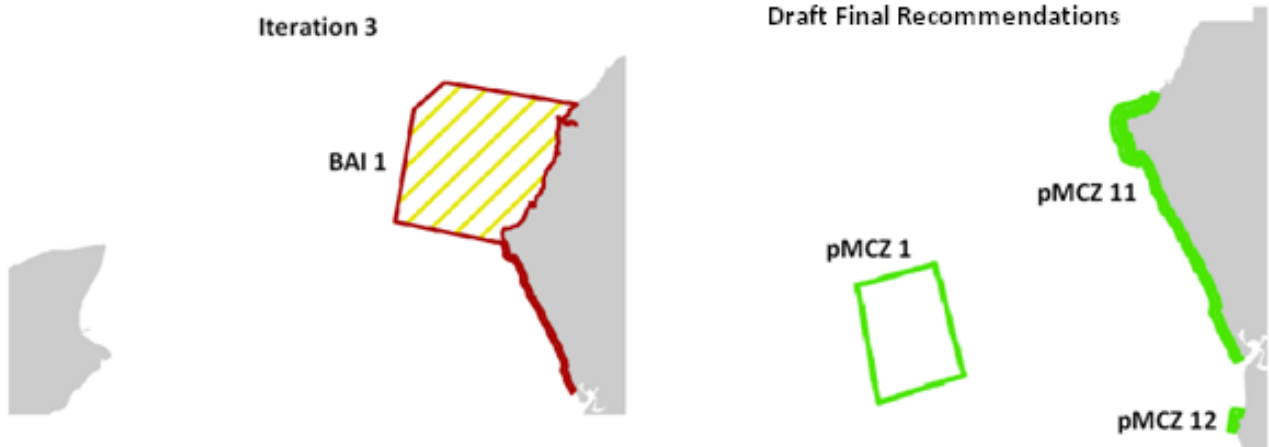
Proposals put forward to the RSG for a northwards or eastwards shift of the site **pMCZ1** – previously agreed in the Whitehaven focus group meeting.

- Conservation interests indicated that it is not a simple case of moving this site elsewhere given the need to meet FOCl targets.
- Northern Irish fishing interests indicated that **pMCZ 1** is a highly productive fishing ground.
- Proposal for a westwards shift of **pMCZ 1** towards the Isle of Man 12 nm limit.

Cumbrian fishing interests and conservation interests explained the development/rationale of why this site has ended up where it is, following the focus group meeting. In summary, it is not the first choice for conservation or fishing interests, but is a compromise following months of discussion between various stakeholder interests.

It was **AGREED** that:

**Conclusion:** acknowledgement that the new site [pMCZ1] is not ideal, but it is as far as the group can go. The socio-economic implications need to be recorded. Indication that various RSG members trusted the advice/recommendations of the focus group.



## pMCZ 5

Two proposals were put forward by the RSG to delete the southern part of the site in order to remove overlap with Belgian and French fisheries (both benthic trawling).

- Why? The network is oversubscribed for subtidal coarse sediment (27% currently, when minimum target is 17%).
- This was contested by conservationists as this is an important ecological area (biodiversity and pelagic fronts). Also noted the geomorphological importance of this site (St George's channel glacial trough).

It was **AGREED** that:

**Conclusion (1):** Northernmost of the two deletion suggestions (to remove overlap with French bottom gear fishing) was **not accepted**.

**Conclusion (2):** Southernmost of the two deletion suggestions (to 51 degrees 55 minutes), to remove overlap with Belgian fisheries, was **accepted** given that this removed a relatively small proportion of the site. It was noted that there was reluctance from the conservationists to accept this deletion, but it was agreed and noted that this is in the spirit of collaboration across interests.



## pMCZ 6

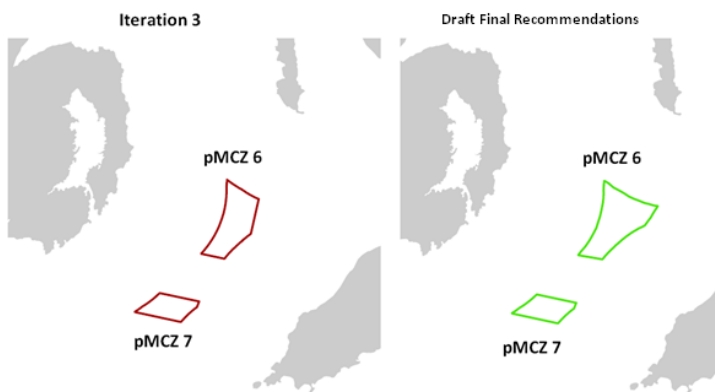
Northeast extension of site to accommodate high confidence Ocean Quahog data was agreed on day 1. However, it was noted by one stakeholder that they didn't agree with the addition as it overlapped with a scalloping ground. The implications of this were recorded.

Main discussions centred on shifting the southern boundary of the site further north (thus reducing the area of the site) in light of a reclassification of mud broad-scale habitat data (based on stakeholder knowledge).

It was **AGREED** that:

**Conclusion:** to consider looking at moving this boundary further north **if** the co-location option in BAI2 is accepted (as there would be an oversubscription of subtidal mud i.e. greater than 15%). For the draft final recommendations, the site boundary is to remain the same as the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration boundary.

**Action:** Project Team to check on the accuracy of the BSH reclassification with the SNCBs as this affects the calculations.



## pMCZ 14

Proposal put forward to extend the site to cover West Hoyle Bank (in English waters).

- Based on ecological reasons which centred on bivalves (suggested by the SAP) and to introduce protection to the local grey seal population.
- Acknowledgement that there was very little local fishing knowledge in the room (RSG) today, but that this is critical when discussing such an extension.

Concerns were raised by RSG members and from the project team that the SAP suggestion to cover the bivalve populations was actually addressed in pMCZ8 and that it didn't need to be addressed again.

Concerns were also raised that the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration site is 'too small' – although it is of a viable size to meet the ENG principles for the features that it is intended to protect (FOCI habitats).

An assumption was made that although the proposed extension (to the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration site) is quite significant in size, there would be not need to be any restrictions on commercial fishing. However, it was questioned why there should be an MCZ there in the first place if this is the case – given that fishing in this area is not actually causing much damage at present.

It was **AGREED** that:

The conclusion of the discussion was that there was no agreement to extend the site. The 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration boundary for pMCZ 14 will be submitted for the draft final recommendations. Propose site extension to focus group, where local fishing interests will be represented.

### Draft Final Recommendation



## Reference Areas

A presentation was given by the project team that explained the requirement for reference areas, their aims, and what they mean in practise for various coastal/marine interests

The project team then presented 19 separate reference areas (labelled A to S) to the RSG that, if accepted, would be sufficient to meet the ENG criteria for reference areas (in the sense that they were of a viable size and would capture every feature present in the project area). These 19 sites were a combination of proposals from the focus group meetings and suggestions solely from the project team's GIS-based analysis.

### Reference Areas – sub-group stakeholder discussions

The RSG were split into five sub-groups (these were mixed by sector / interest as best as possible so that each group had multiple perspectives). Each sub group was asked to consider each of the 19 different reference areas to see whether they could accept it as a reference area, reject it, or accept the site with a qualification.

#### Group 1 (MS):

**pRef S: Accept** suggestion based on the data assuming that the data is accurate. Also it should be the minimum size to protect the horse mussel beds, with the appropriate buffer based on the ENG.

**pRef B: Accept** the location but move the western boundary to make it smaller, this would reduce the impact on Belgian fisheries

**pRef O: Reject** suggestion for a small pRef at Roa Island and or Head scar for intertidal and infralittoral rock as this is close to highly used areas and areas that are dredged.

**pRef H: Accept** as long as it does not include the oyster farm, it covers boulders high value sediment, plus local fishing impacts should not be included

**pRef F: Accept** for quahog - also benefit for the broadscale habitats and for scallops. Little scalloping activity here, but potential to benefit spat settlement elsewhere.

**pRef G: Accept** on the assumption that the western and southern boundaries are reduced to allow a buffer area between the boundaries of the pMCZ and the pRef using ENG guidance.

**pRef E: Reject.** Suggest moving the pRef north /northeast to cover the small yellow (Subtidal Sand) area but keeping no bigger than the existing pRef, possibly smaller.

**pRef M: Reject.** Not accepted due to it being within a proposed SAC in which there will/should therefore be a high level of protection anyway.

**pRef R: Reject.** Not Accepted as the area is too heavily used. There are saballia reefs in the area but there probably better places to have a pRef for them elsewhere.

**pRef O: Reject.** Area as shown not accepted. For seagrass beds there is a suggestion look for a smaller pRef area, as long as it does not conflict with the recreational activity in the area.

## Group 2 (KB)

**pRef A: Accept** if focus group can solve this site.

**pRef K: Accept** Ideal site with low human activity.

**pRef J: Accept** ideal has low human activity.

**pRef I. Reject.** Need more information regarding user activity i.e. caravan sites before considering protection.

**pRef S: Possible.** Minimum size to allow cables to go around.

**pRef R Possible.** Not sure about data

**pRef F Possible.** Change boundaries

## Group 3 (CE)

**pRef Q:** Busy waterway, large boats churning up river, some trawling and angling in areas. Not Practical. **Reject**

**pRef P:** Concern over horse riding and bottom dredging more local knowledge needed to make decisions. **No Decision**

**pRef N:** Hand picking ground more local knowledge needed, cockles in areas. Saltmarsh should be protected. Should be access for cockle pickers and vehicles. **Accept** subject to above.

**pRef C and D:** MOD firing range, no explosive but missile fragments going to seabed. **Accept**

**pRef E:** E no problems with renewable, may be French fishing area. **Accept**

**pRef H:** doesn't affect boating offshore so doesn't affect beach users. **Accept**

**pRef R:** off the port already dredged, smelt in area to much commercial activity. Potential intertidal shell fishing. **Reject**

## Group 4 (FM)

**pRef F: Accept.** Recognise birds as additional ecological rationale

**pRef G- Accept.**

**pRef O: Reject** based on industry activity in this site: shipping, cables, port, submarine. Not considered possible to find 500m<sup>2</sup>. This site is necessary to cover: seagrass beds, tide swept

communities, can't see 500m<sup>2</sup> being possible. So need new suggested pRef areas for tide swept communities in project areas.

**pRef R: Reject** Based on activities. Possible further north FOCI/BSH largely occur elsewhere

**pRef E: pMCZ 5 Reject** other site elsewhere-Ocean Quahog Data?

**pRef C +pRef D Accept**, additional benefits for seabirds, possible impact on Belgian beam trawling.

**pRef A: Accept.** pMCZ 1 endorsed by focus group, important for nephrop fisheries. Increase in area from 22km<sup>2</sup> to 25 km<sup>2</sup> which is minimum requirements

**pRef K: Who is land owner? Maybe Muncaster Estate Accept.**

**pRef Q: Reject.** Saline Lagoons no data reference in SSSI Only, any other reference are suggestions, no- man made and modified area to difficulty.

**pRef N: Ribble estuary- Accept**

**pRef B: Accept.** Top of pMCZ 3

#### **Group 5 (GW)**

**pRef C: Reject.** Haff netting, centre of activity, other estuaries better for smelt and eels (Level, Dee)

**pRef H: Accept.** -Strong Research History, Acceptable to Local Fishermen

**pRef J: Accept.** good are for boulder communities, limited access

**pRef I: Reject.** Huge recreational area, would be very inconvenient for beach users, set up as a public access area

**pRef N Possible-** Smelt/eels/salt marsh main channel is clear but angling takes place here-need to check activities

**pRef C: Accept.** Agree with location

**pRef D: Reject** - other areas of sand, Belgian fishing interests

**pRef F: Accept.** Quahogs and sand subject to moving boundary to using the sand boundary, no mud

**pRef G: Reject.** Irish fishing interests, better options elsewhere

**pRef R: Reject.** Power station and recreational area-very difficult to remove all human activity and dredging for port.

**pRef M: Accept.**

**pRef P: Reject.** Huge recreational pressures would not be appropriate to restrict.

**pRef Q: Reject.** Huge industry presence.

**pRef B: Accept.** Features are unique.

**pRef S: Accept.** Features are unique.

**pRef K: Accept.** Limited access to public apart from angling access

**pRef A: Accept** on basis that if is moved to NW corner as far north as possible. Captured mud BSH and two FOCI

**pRef O: Reject** would never be able to restrict all activities or restore to reference condition.

### Plenary discussion

Each sub group wrote up its conclusions on reference areas in a matrix (see below).

A handwritten matrix with 5 rows (labeled 1-5) and 19 columns (labeled B-S). The cells contain checkmarks (✓), crosses (✗), or question marks (?). Red boxes highlight columns C, H, J, K, and S. A small note 'pRef A' is written near column M.

Table/ Sites	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
1		?	✓		X	✓	?	✓		✓	✓		X		X		X	X	?
2	?		✓		?	?			X	✓	✓				X		X		?
3			✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓			✓	X	?	X	X	
4	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	X	X	X	X	✓
5	?	✓	✓	X	✓	?	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	?	X	X	X	X	✓

This showed each sub-group’s decision decided on each individual reference area with a tick for accept, a cross for reject and a question mark for possible. Blanks meant the sub group had not had time to consider it.

Plenary discussions were initially focused on those sites where the matrix showed the sub groups had a lot of common ground, either because they had all rejected a site or accepted it. The discussion was next focused on where there were some ticks but one cross or a blank.

The result was that five sites were agreed and accepted as reference areas for the draft final recommendations.

It was **AGREED** that the following reference areas were submitted as part of the draft final recommendations:

Reference Areas C, H, J, K and S

Discussions then turned to the sites where all or most of the sub-groups rejected the options.

This resulted in a group agreement to reject three of the options

It was **AGREED** that the following reference areas were rejected and therefore not submitted as part of the draft final recommendations:

Reference Areas O, Q and R

There was some exploration as to the rationale put forward for these rejections (which largely centred on the importance of an area for one or more human activities that are generally considered not to be compatible with Reference Areas). The project team were tasked with analysing the implications of the rejection of these sites in terms of the ability to fully meet the ENG targets for reference areas. It was acknowledged that some of the sites that were rejected included the only examples of certain features in the project area, and that this will have to be noted in the final submission of the reference area set.

The remaining eleven sites were not discussed in plenary at this RSG workshop as there wasn't enough time.

It was **AGREED** that:

The RSG agreed to hold an additional one-day reference areas workshop to finalise the agreed reference area set.

There was an action for the project team to arrange this workshop.

The project team were also tasked with producing some additional reference area options for the RSG to consider at this forthcoming workshop – especially in light of those suggestions that were rejected (above).

*The additional workshop will take place on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011. This date was set following the RSG meeting, but is included in this report as the date is now known.*

## Site specific discussions (in plenary)

### REF AREA H

- An assumption was made that the existing outfall discharge is compatible with the RA. This was logged and the Project Team will clarify the issue.

### REF AREA S

- Need to ensure that these are mussel *beds*.
- Concerns about the boundary of this RA especially for the implications for installation/maintenance and decommissioning of future cables. Needs to be clarity on the buffer required for the RA and for the implications for cables.
- Horse mussel beds in pMCZ 5 are not accurate records of *beds* (they are specimens). Hence it is not applicable to look for a RA for this feature elsewhere in the project area

### REF AREA C

- Overlaps with an MOD missile range, but this is not in 24 hour use
- Size of site could be made smaller. Currently it has multiple features and is much larger than the 5 km by 5 km minimum viable size.
- **Action:** Project team to work on reducing size. If so, and taking into account MOD firing range and Belgian fisheries, all groups would support. JNCC confirmed that if the RA is to cover multiple features then they would all have to be of a viable size to be considered a reference area for all features present.

### REF AREA K

- Query over existing outfalls and their compatibility with RAs. NE confirmed that this shouldn't be a problem.

### REF AREA J

- Wouldn't impact on local fishing grounds, aside from some winkle gathering
- Not accessible to public. Query over angling access (for shore angling)
- Whitehaven Licensed disposal site just offshore from the RA. Could there be sedimentation issues? This shouldn't be the case given that this is a high energy environment.

### REF AREA O

- Pipelines, dredging, shipping and other Barrow industrial activities mean that this is not an acceptable RA

## Meeting Close

- The facilitator provided an overview of the work that the RSG had done over the course of the two day workshop, and the progress made since they last met as a group in January 2011.
- The facilitator commented that there had not been time during the workshop for the group to properly consider conservation objectives or management implications, but indicated that the project team will send this information to them via email.
- The facilitator updated the RSG with the future plan of meetings, which will broadly comprise:

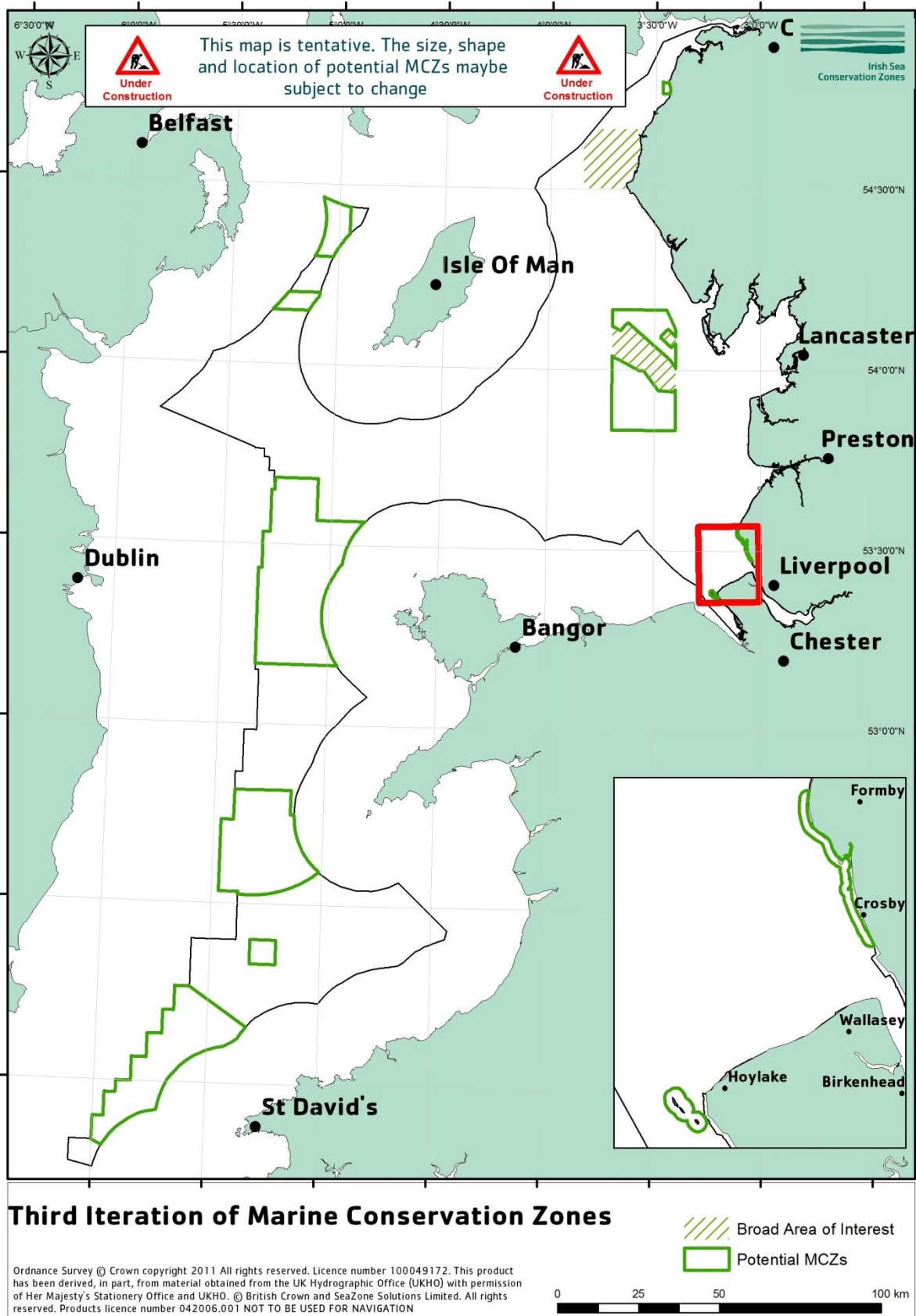
- A dedicated reference area RSG workshop (now confirmed to be 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011). This will be the seventh RSG meeting.
- A selection of focus group meetings – the number and timing of which to be decided on reflection of the outputs of this RSG meeting
- The final (eighth) RSG meeting, which will take place over two days on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011

## Actions

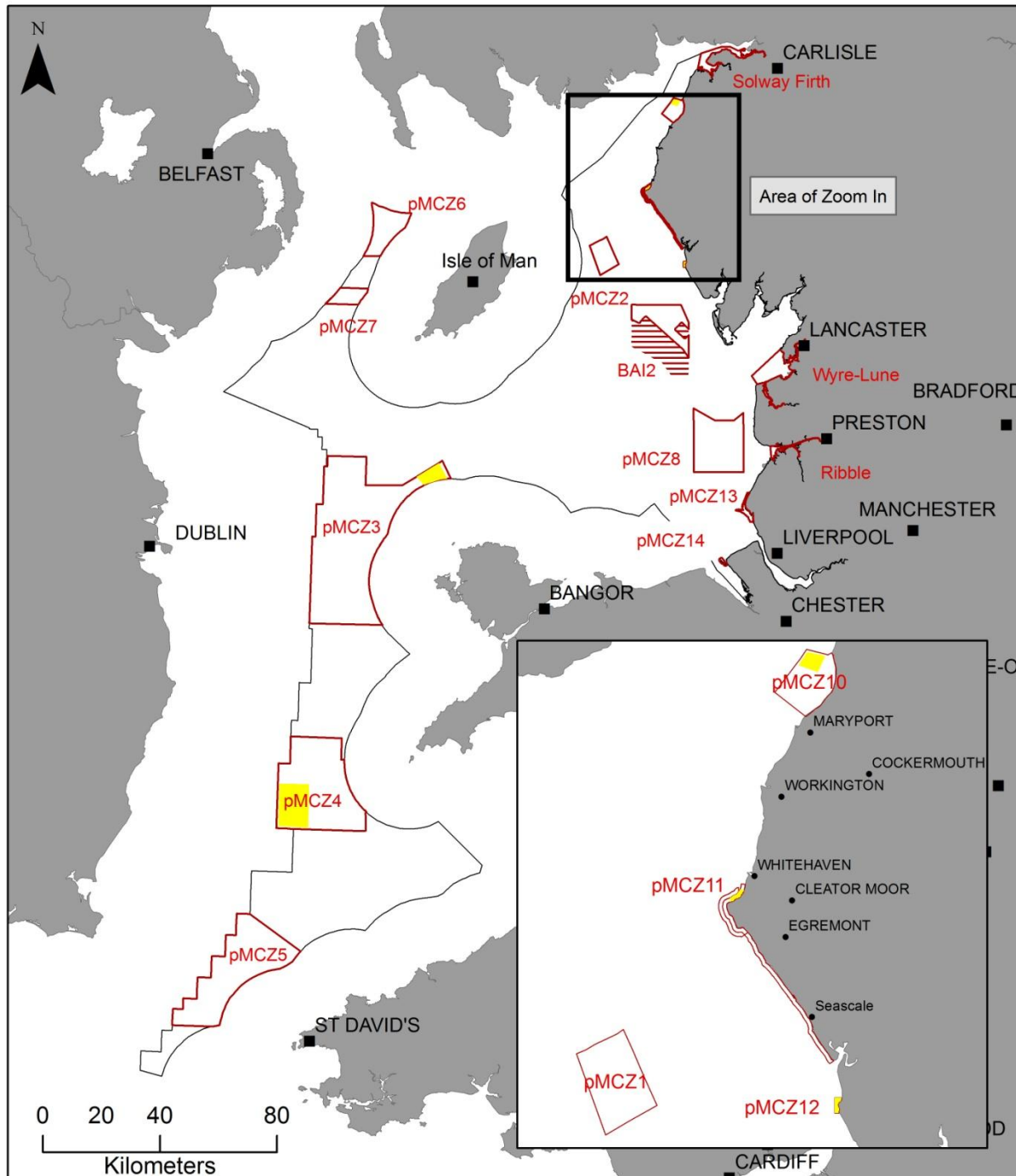
Action	Who	By when
Developers, NE, MMO, DECC, JNCC. Meet to resolve uncertainties regarding collocation and inform RSG of conclusions	Julie Drew to Lead	July RSG
Project Team to explore options to make up the 1% shortfall of subtidal mud, if necessary, following the above meeting (with developers).	Project Team	July RSG
Come up with options regarding mud if no co-location	Project Team	May 24 <sup>th</sup> - Before focus group meetings
New site 8 boundary to be checked at focus meeting	Project Team	
pMCZ 14: focus group meeting asked to consider further make proposals back to July RSG.	Project Team	July RSG
Send implications sheets to all stakeholders so they can fill it in and send back.	Project Team	May 13
Hold additional RSG meeting to finish discussion on Reference areas if time move into conservation objective. Project team to be proactive in representing view of members who cannot attend	Project team	May 24 <sup>th</sup> (date and venue set)
Decide which focus group meetings need to go ahead in light of today	Project team RKP	
New southern site (pMCZ8) needs to be discussed / signed off at forthcoming focus meeting (June) following analysis of Fishermap data for vessels operating out of Fleetwood and Lytham.	Project Team	June 15 <sup>th</sup> (date and venue set)
Project Team to explore the implications of designating part of a site for a drumlin only. Is this even possible (i.e. not including a broad-scale habitat or FOCI)? To report back at the next RSG meeting.	Project Team	July RSG
Project Team to check on the accuracy of the BSH reclassification of subtidal mud with the SNCBs as this affects the calculations.	Project Team	July RSG
The project team were also tasked with producing some additional reference area options for the RSG to consider at this forthcoming workshop – especially in light of those suggestions that were rejected (above).	Project Team	June RSG

# Appendix 1: The Developing Network Configuration

3<sup>rd</sup> iteration – Pre-workshop 6. February 2011.



# ISCZ Draft Final Recommendation Network



Site map displayed in WGS 1984

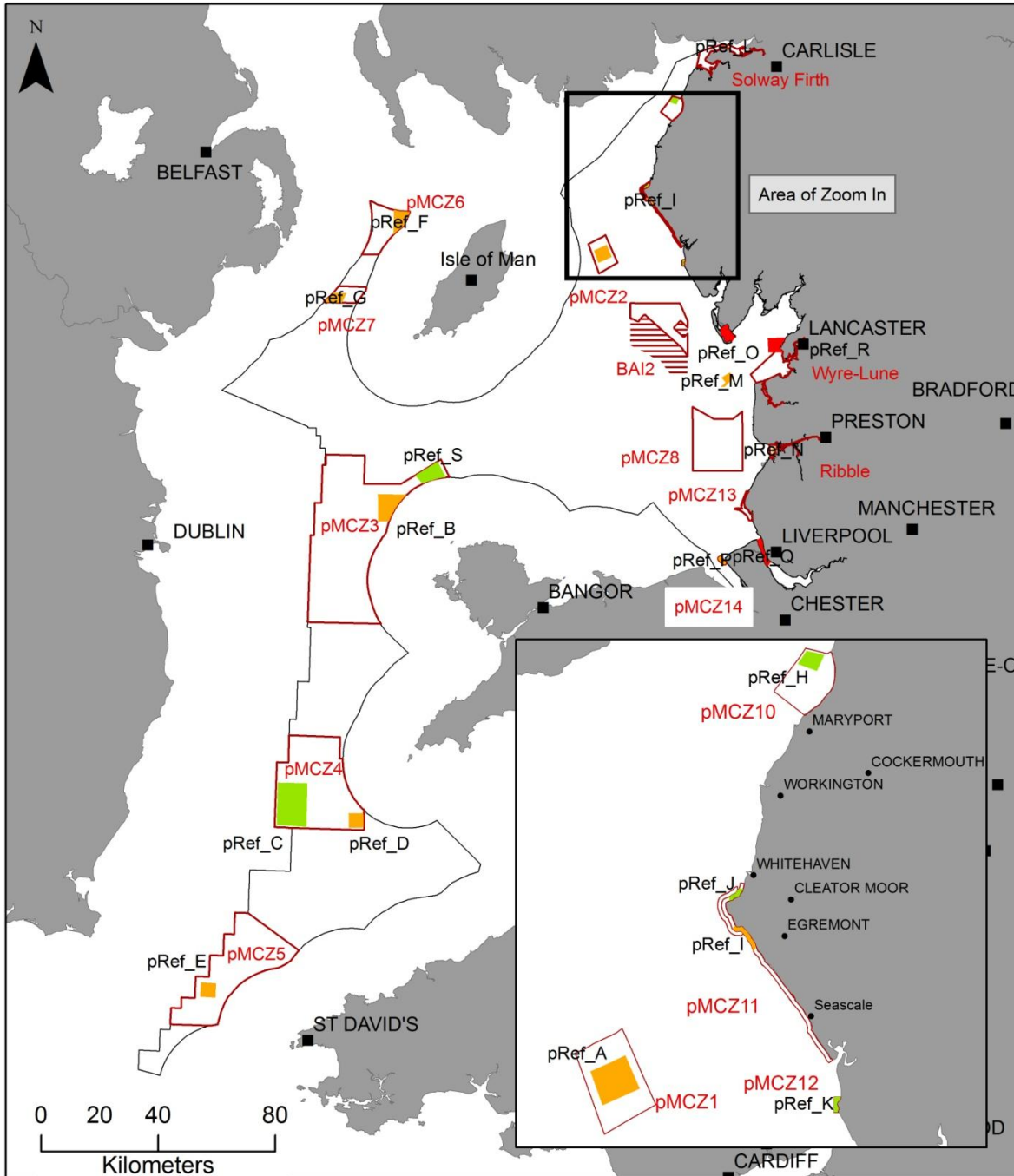
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- Proposed Reference Areas
- pMCZ boundary**
- BAI
- pMCZ
- ISCZ Project Boundary
- UK

## Appendix 2: Suggested Locations for Reference Areas

### pMCZ Network including Potential Reference Areas



Site map displayed in WGS 1984

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#### pMCZ boundary Reference Areas

pMCZ boundary		Reference Areas	
	BAI		Accepted
	pMCZ		To be discussed
			Rejected

