

Spatial Data Serving People Land Governance and the Environment

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SUMMARY

The Marine and Coastal Access Bill provides for a new system of marine planning that will be a key tool in helping the UK Government deliver its vision for the Marine Environment.

This Bill is set to steer a broad range of choice for decisions about the future of marine administration but central to reform is the adoption of a system of Marine Spatial Planning.

Coastal integration will need to rely upon best and appropriately available data to serve people. With increasing opportunities for coastal regulators and communities to have a say in the way the marine environment is managed, and conversely for marine management to give proper consideration to land planning, the knowledge and application of marine spatial data infrastructure is the foundation to balancing the competing policies in governance.

Focussing on the coastal zone, known as the white ribbon, this paper is concerned with how the Bill will improve planning and management upon the coastal zone, to deliver a range of benefits and resolve many of the current difficulties with marine decision-making.

The need for and the importance of planning for the future of the marine environment is reflected in the triple bottom line applied to Marine environments:

- achieving a sustainable marine economy
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- living within environmental limits

But also,

- using sound science responsibly
- promoting good governance
- facilitating political agreement on a nation and state wide basis

Spatial planning will be based on a framework that includes marine policy statements acting as a guide to decision making for the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and the development of Marine Plans that will apply policy in spatial detail to particular parts of the marine area. Both will guide and direct decisions in the marine environment but importantly the geographic coverage will be mapped to indicate the area of sea covered. Consequently, marine plans will be a source of information, which developers and other marine industries can use when considering where and how they might carry out activities.

Geo-spatial information and data will be one key to the success of the Bill and its constituent parts such as licensing and the delineation of marine conservation areas. Planning bodies must have access to best quality information managed and disseminated by expert data centres to ensure a coherent approach to marine planning can be taken across UK waters.

This places the surveying profession in a pivotal position, not just technically to undertake data collection for planning, but also on a strategic policy level; contributing to decision making and asset management.

This presentation will:

- Briefly explain the role of MSP in the Marine and Coastal Access Bill
- Examine the relationship between the respective land and marine objectives and the synergies (or not) over the coastal zone, and
- Discuss the potentially important opportunities for Surveyors to contribute, co-ordinate and effectively deliver land and marine governance objectives along the coast.

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