

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Cùisean Dùthchail, Biadh agus an Àrainneachd
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment

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Rob Gibson MSP

Convener, Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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25 March 2015

Dear Rob

NATIONAL MARINE PLAN

I refer to my letter of 17 February in which I set out my initial response to the Committee's report on the National Marine Plan. I would like to reiterate my thanks for the Committee's role in the scrutiny process, including the helpful contributions to the Parliamentary debate held on 19 February.

I have now taken the decision to publish and adopt the National Marine Plan and this will be laid before Parliament later this week. I will also lay a Statement setting out the changes which have been made as a result of the scrutiny process.

As well as the changes to the Plan itself which will aid readability and consistency, we are also making more streamlined information available online at www.gov.scot/MarinePlanOnline. This includes a two page topic sheet giving a very concise and clear overview of the Plan; and a separate summary which sets out only the objectives and policies contained within the Plan.

I have also indicated within the Plan that it will be reported on within three years of adoption.

A summary of the information which will be contained in the Statement is attached as an Annex to this letter.

I hope this is helpful and look forward to continue to engaging with the Committee during the course of implementation of the Plan and the roll out of regional marine planning.

Kind regards

RICHARD LOCHHEAD

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ANNEX

- Format changes:
 - Detail of strategic objectives and assessment formerly in Chapter 3 moved to an Annex
 - Sectoral chapters (Chapters 6 – 16) restructured so that the sector objectives and policies are presented together at the start of the Chapter for ease of reference.
 - Maps presented at the end of each Chapter
 - Headings and subheadings are as consistent as possible.
- Text in Chapter 3 explaining the relationship between the General and sectoral policies has been amended to emphasise the core nature of the General policies and their universal application and to highlight the proportionate approach that should be taken to applying policies.
- Coverage of climate change has been comprehensively reviewed by Marine Scotland Science and amended where necessary to achieve a better balance between mitigation and adaptation. The symbols have also been adjusted to differentiate between mitigation and adaptation.
- Key references within each sector Chapter have been reviewed and amended where necessary.
- Map in the renewables chapter has been changed to ensure that areas identified under previous processes have been incorporated.
- Text has been added to the Cables chapter regarding the exemptions process for emergency repairs.
- Current position in relation to the implementation of the Smith Commission's recommendations on the Crown Estate is reflected.
- Regional policies have been added to General Policy 7 Landscape/Seascape and to General Policy 9 Natural Heritage to provide guidance on safeguarding and enhancing elements of the natural environment for regional planners.