



NATIONAL MARINE PARKS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

This FAQ resource is designed to capture and address questions raised during National Marine Parks Alliance gatherings.

Find out more about the National Marine Parks Alliance and how to get involved [here](#).

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF NATIONAL MARINE PARKS

Lots of coastal areas have National Parks, National Landscapes, and Heritage coasts already, so how will National Marine Parks provide additional benefits?

We have no National Parks, National Landscapes, or Heritage coasts that exist beyond the coastal margin or extend into the sea. With our growing awareness of the importance of source to sea and the need to consider both our seascape and landscape as a combined entity, marine parks would offer greater connections for people to the marine space. We believe this would help to tackle some of our complex environmental issues and improve ocean literacy. A marine park would support and build on the importance of existing designations by providing an 'umbrella' designation across existing coastal and marine sites to help with branding, promotion and improved coordinated management.

Where are the main points of opposition to National Marine Parks, either anticipated or experienced already?

Initial engagement undertaken by Campaign for National Parks indicates that there are differing perceptions of what a National Marine Park should and shouldn't be. At this exploratory stage, questions have been raised in addition to potential benefits. Stakeholders quite rightly wish to understand how their interests might be impacted, either negatively or positively, and so questions at this early stage of vision development are to be expected. Questions raised relate to funding, resource capacity, potential impacts on maritime activity, planning implications, and benefits for nature recovery.

Would National Marine Parks support existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and thereby marine biodiversity conservation objectives?

The National Marine Parks vision is to support existing MPAs and coastal designations, of which there are 14 different types across the UK. They would have an important coastal and marine biodiversity conservation function which would include promoting the designations we already have, both supporting the protection of existing biodiversity, as well as recovery. Through the Alliance and targeted engagement efforts, we will be engaging with management bodies and networks such as the IFCA to explore and identify the potential benefits and opportunities of National Marine Parks for supporting their work.

Will National Marine Parks have any kind of environmental protection offered by designation or is the focus more on community appreciation and engagement?

National Marine Parks have five objectives, which are to;

- Facilitate sustainability through collaborative working;
- Promote public understanding and responsible enjoyment;
- Conserve, enhance and recover coastal and marine seascapes;
- Nurture the socio-economic health of coastal communities who depend upon their seascape, and;
- Build seascape and climate change resilience by leading nature recovery and a just transition to net zero.

National Marine Parks would involve building upon existing designations within a place to

improve ecological connectivity. They are not species or habitat-specific, but rather consider the seascape as a whole within a particular place. Any additional legal environmental protection offered would depend on the National Marine Park route pursued, however all routes would boost protection through raising community appreciation and engagement of the marine environment, resulting in greater place-based stewardship.

Will National Marine Parks be mainly coastal or also extend into offshore waters?

Initially, the vision for National Marine Parks considers the benefit of connecting people with the sea, with a particular focus on inshore waters. Through the NMP Alliance and further research, we hope to further explore how this vision might extend further seawards, and the criterion for which a boundary should be considered.

Will National Marine Parks aim to provide any additional protections for the areas and habitats they fall within?

Yes, building on existing protections within a place - as elaborated in responses to questions above. A National Marine Park is envisaged to provide an 'umbrella' over an area within which there are existing coastal and marine designations. The degree of additional protection will depend on the National Marine Park route pursued. The legislative route to a National Marine Park would build on existing legislation and may offer additional protections to undesignated areas. Passive, or indirect additional protections could also be achieved through a voluntary/self-declared National Marine Park where it would align with delivering on the key objective to conserve, enhance and recover coastal and marine seascapes.

Whilst I can understand the engagement benefits of 'designating' a National Marine Park (i.e. providing a greater sense of local 'ownership' of marine issues), how might designation enhance existing environmental protection, such as the EU Habitats Directive and Marine Protected Area (MPA) network?

A National Marine Park would enhance existing environmental protections through raising greater awareness of the value of designated sites, their habitats and species. Many people aren't familiar with our existing marine designated sites and their terminology, whereas National Marine Parks branding/designation offers a simpler route to engagement, generating place-based stewardship and better/stronger management through improved understanding and collaborative working across the land-sea interface. There are also opportunities to build stronger linkages (ecological coherence) between existing designated sites (the network) through embedding the core guiding National Marine Park principle of connectivity and enabling greater coverage towards a joined-up, wholescape (land, coast and sea) approach to environmental protection and management.

How are National Marine Parks to be communicated to communities that have historically been marginalised from these blue spaces?

This question highlights the origins of the National Marine Park vision (2021), which reflect the general public's greater understanding of National Parks, in comparison with our coastal/marine designations.

The purpose of a National Marine Park is to better connect people with their seascape to share in a sustainable future. Effectively communicating with all interested communities, particularly those who have historically been excluded from the conversation, is of critical

importance. This importance is recognised and embedded into National Marine Park objectives, the core guiding principles, and the 10-step guidance process of National Marine Park exploration and establishment. Equity and inclusivity is a core guiding principle – regardless of whatever route is pursued, any National Marine Park must undertake participatory processes that meaningfully include communities in the exploration and establishment process. The exact communication approach may differ, depending on the route pursued and the local place-based context. Plymouth Sound National Marine Park offers examples of where this has happened, and is happening, in practice.

How do you see National Marine Parks improving the current interface between land and marine planning?

A plan area contained within a National Marine Park should capture the planning needs of existing designations within the site and utilize the application of National Marine Park objectives – for example, improved collaborative working – to integrate place-based marine and land-sea planning in a joined-up way. The objectives of a designated site such as a SSSI, SPA or SAC would be encompassed within a National Marine Park plan and provide a 'gateway' to greater publicity and support through the positive branding and simplified language used.

What learnings can we draw from existing National Parks to ensure National Marine Parks are most effective for people and place?

National Parks have evolved strong relationships between people and place through their governance, engagement in management and planning function. They are well recognised by people in a way in which the marine environment is less well understood and recognised in decision-making, and often lacks democratic accountability and place-based stewardship. In

terms of the big barriers that may arise for this to “work” for people and place, it is well-understood that our coast and marine environment is a busy space, with competing needs, interests and priorities across a variety of users and stakeholders. Undertaking effective engagement and building consensus on win-win scenarios amongst stakeholders and communities for National Marine Parks will take investment of resource, capacity, and time; investments that we strongly believe will be worthwhile in achieving sustainable and just outcomes for people and nature.



CREATION OF NATIONAL MARINE PARKS

Does the legislative route towards National Marine Parks require existing or new legislation?

We already have a comprehensive network of legislation to build upon, through the various designations both on land and at sea. As part of Campaign for National Parks work, one of our key outcomes is to deepen our understanding of the role that National Marine Parks could play for people and delivering conservation outcomes. Research conducted by [Cardiff University for the Blue Marine Foundation](#), suggests that there are no barriers to utilising the National Parks Act (1949), however this requires further exploration, particularly in relation to extending existing National Parks or National Landscapes seawards. Campaign for National Parks are commissioning further legal research to explore where opportunities might lie in using existing legislation, and what might need to change in existing legislation. The outcomes of this research will deliver new knowledge to the NMP Alliance, government bodies, and will aid in our campaigning work going forwards.

What steps have been taken to develop a pilot program with existing National Parks?

Following the recent publication of the [National Parks and the Sea report](#), Campaign for National Parks will be working with the eight existing National Park Authorities with coastline to explore next steps. The initial focus is on Pembrokeshire Coast National Park as the UK's only National Park designated explicitly for its coastline, however, most of the coastal National Park Authorities have indicated interest in supporting further exploratory work. We look forward to updating the NMP Alliance on this work in future gatherings as conversations progress.

What is the current thinking on the creation of National Marine Parks through either self-declared voluntary status or legislative designation?

As indicated by the National Marine Park spectrum model, there are multiple potential pathways towards achieving a National Marine Park – either via voluntary or legislative routes, depending upon the place-based context. Plymouth Sound National Marine Park provides a voluntary status example, whereby in Plymouth, it was considered that the designation process could extend 10+ years, and there was no time to wait. Campaign for National Parks' National Marine Parks work has focussed on building the evidence base for the legislative route, to complement the work conducted by Plymouth Sound National Marine Park to-date on the voluntary route. In the early stages of National Marine Park development, it is important we consider all potential pathways. The [ten-step guidance to establishing a National Marine Park](#) recommends that the bottom-up approach is taken to formation, regardless of whether a voluntary or legislative route is pursued. This collaborative approach would seek to identify the appropriate route for a specific place, and address any barriers to uptake.

How does the self-declared designation route sit alongside and support official landscape designations?

Effectively adopting the 10-step guidance process towards exploring and establishing a National Marine Park is designed to tackle the risk of 'paper park' status, and instead, drive credibility and robustness in the National Marine Park route pursued to deliver National Marine Park objectives. There may be a risk in the short term of confusing the designation landscape if not communicated correctly, however the intention is that National Marine Parks would simplify communication around existing multiple designations in the medium to longer term.

In light of government budgets cuts in both England and Wales, would there be plans to source additional funding for National Park Authorities (NPAs) to cover additional areas of management?

We recognise that National Park Authorities (NPAs) are working within the context of Defra and Welsh Government budget cuts. All coastal NPAs agree that they would not be able to take on a seaward extension of their National Park boundaries within their existing financial capacity. There are innovative options for raising funds to support National Marine Parks from local pay-in schemes to philanthropic opportunities, as well as possibilities for private investment and improved central government support linked to the statutory delivery of existing and potentially new policy/legislation. Fundability is a core guiding principle for National Marine Park development, and therefore suitable sustainable funding models should be investigated and identified during the place-based exploration of a National Marine Park.

Why has WW2 history been highlighted, when marine heritage usually starts far before that at the Bronze age, with shipwrecks starting in the 1400-1500s, and metal wrecks starting in mid 1800s?

During the presentation delivered by Campaign for National Parks, the starting point of the timeline discussed was the post-war era, to align with when the Council for National Parks was established and when the National Parks journey within the UK began. The era chosen by Plymouth Sound National Marine Park was one that people in the city expressed interest and engagement with. National Marine Parks have the potential to help celebrate our maritime heritage that pre-dates these moments in history, which is not often well recognised through existing designations or in current management and governance in coastal communities.

WORKING WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Has the National Marine Park project engaged with the Ports and maritime industry sector?

Yes, Campaign for National Parks have engaged with the Ports and maritime industry, for example meeting with the British Ports Association and some specific Ports and Harbours. We recognise concerns raised around the potential impacts on port and maritime operations, and we are actively interested in holding further discussions around these concerns, as well as identifying opportunities that national marine parks may afford the port and maritime industry. Plymouth Sound National Marine Park offers an example of where the port and maritime industry have been successfully integrated into a National Marine Park.

Is the Crown Estate involved in your thinking for National Marine Parks?

The Crown Estate and other foreshore/seabed owners are an important part of the conversation. We will continue to engage with organisations that hold stewardship duties of our natural resources, including the Crown Estate, as conversations continue and progress.

Will National Marine Parks be able to support community restoration projects?

It is not envisaged that a National Marine Park would create additional burdens for those working in restoration. We hope that, on the contrary, National Marine Park status could help through increased branding and awareness, additional engagement and learning opportunities, support income generation for restoration efforts, and aid in the permissions and licensing process. Through the NMP Alliance,

we intend to engage with the marine restoration practitioner community on how National Marine Parks could produce value added in scaling up restoration efforts and tackling barriers faced by restoration projects.

Does the National Marine Park project have a view on Coastal partnerships and the role that they play in the marine environment?

It is well-recognised that Coastal, Estuary and Marine Partnerships represent excellent foundations on which a National Marine Park could emerge. These voluntary partnerships, some over three decades in existence, bring together local stakeholders to promote the value of their area and support sustainable management. They have unrivalled place-based knowledge and networks. Many are also supporting the management of existing designated areas, enable coastal / marine restoration projects, and convene a collective of place-based sea-bed users and stewards.

In Plymouth, the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum played a key role in the emergence of the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park and continues to support the management and governance of Plymouth Sound and the SAC. We look forward to engaging further with the Coastal Partnerships Network on National Marine Parks going forwards.

Has there been engagement with the local Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs)?

National Park Authorities have strong relationships with landowners, and it would be an aspiration that National Marine Parks have equally strong relationships with seabed owners and users. This would include fishers and other marine users. Plymouth Sound National Marine Park is already engaging with the local IFCAs

and the national association. A National Marine Park should build on and support the work of the IFCAs. We look forward to continuing discussions with IFCAs to explore how National Marine Parks might support them in the delivery of their conservation objectives.

A new stakeholder in the room are Combined Authorities, with devolution offers more opportunities for local decision making and strategic partnerships, particularly through Combined Authorities. Is the National Marine Parks project considering these opportunities, particularly around economic development?

It has been identified that devolution may offer new opportunities for place-based governance across land, coast and sea, which could directly benefit the exploration and emergence of National Marine Parks.

On the topic of economic development, this is an important element of the Sustainability core guiding principle of a National Marine Park. The Plymouth Sound National Marine Park Vision uses a sustainability model, with economic success being one of their place-based workstreams in balance with local environmental and social needs. In Plymouth, it is too early to be confident on how Plymouth Sound National Marine Park can ensure strong engagement with the Combined Authority as the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is yet to be fully embedded, however Plymouth Sound National Marine Park and the wider National Marine Park partnership will certainly be watching closely and engaging with Combined Authorities to explore the opportunities that the LGR may afford the National Marine Parks movement.

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE NATIONAL MARINE PARK ALLIANCE

Will the NMP Alliance have a role in supporting and providing guidelines for governance of National Marine Parks?

Absolutely. Whilst the appropriate governance of National Marine Parks will largely be dependent on the route pursued, the [guiding principles](#) and [process of achieving a National Marine Park](#) universally apply to all National Marine Parks. For instance, all National Marine Parks should embody inclusive and representative governance, no matter which route is pursued. The Alliance will hold a role in promoting best practice and key learnings from place-based pursuits of National Marine Parks.

As part of the Alliance's commitment to inclusion what plans are there for reaching those with disabilities who have historically been excluded from academic and marine areas?

Campaign for National Parks and the wider partnership are committed to enacting social justice through all of our National Marine Parks work. The purpose of the NMP Alliance is to form an inclusive network. For us in practice, this means offering a variety of engagement pathways or opportunities that enable engagement, including online and in-person gatherings; securing additional funding to tackle barriers to participation, particularly for in-person gatherings; and monitoring the diversity of NMP Alliance attendees, so that we are able to take well-informed action to improve inclusion and representation across the Alliance. Our door is always open to receive suggestions on how we can improve equity, diversity and inclusion, including any specific groups you feel we should be engaging with.

PLYMOUTH SOUND NATIONAL MARINE PARK

What is the current challenge with governance in the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park?

The biggest challenge was deciding what the right structure and entity would be for Plymouth, and this has taken some time to uncover, as there has been no pre-existing guidance. Plymouth Sound National Marine Park now have this in place and are building a financial model and a handbook.

How has the Plymouth Park worked with their local statutory authorities?

Plymouth Sound National Marine Park was driven by political appetite and Plymouth City Council. We work closely with all our local authorities and statutory agencies. Plymouth Sound National Marine Park isn't perfect – time and resources are limited on all sides, but we are working positively to engage.

How many staff work on the Plymouth NMP, and will those posts remain after the lottery bid ends?

The Plymouth Sound National Marine Park has been recently registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which currently has no staff. Lottery project staff are hosted by Plymouth City Council, and the CEO is hosted by Destination Plymouth.

Staff numbers vary a great deal, but currently Plymouth Sound National Marine Park has a core team working on lottery delivery of around 20 people. We are working with the lottery and

partners to look at the legacy, and how we fund this.

I was wondering how engagement with fishing communities in Plymouth has gone since NMP establishment?

Plymouth Sound National Marine Park are working with the Plymouth Fishing and Seafood Association (PFSA) who look after our local fishing fleet. Talking occurs regularly and, both parties are collaborating on projects.

