

National Marine Parks

Report from NMP Alliance Roundtable

November 2025, Canopi, London



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Report produced by Dr Natsha Bradshaw on behalf of Campaign for National Parks,
January 2025.

1 Introduction

As the National Marine Parks movement continues to gain traction across sectors and geographies in the UK, it was an exciting time to welcome over 30 participants to Canopi, London for an in-person event to influence how Campaign for National Parks proceed to the next phase.

This Strategic Roundtable event convened a group of representative voices from Protected Landscapes, community groups, public bodies, industry, ports, fisheries and recreation, young people, funders and the environmental third sector to pursue the following objectives:

1. Strategically advise on the next phase of the National Marine Parks movement;
2. Bring together key individuals operating at national and local place-based scales to share experience and inform priorities;
3. Identify opportunities for and leadership of strategic policy and advocacy progression.

The event took place at a valuable time to engage directly with the evolving thinking around National Marine Parks (NMPs), raise challenges and opportunities, and help to shape what comes next.

2 Background

Campaign for National Parks (CNP), supported by the [Esmee Fairburn Foundation](#), established a National Marine Parks Alliance in 2025, which has brought together an increasingly diverse range of people interested in the [vision for National Marine Parks](#). CNP are promoting a movement for the [UK's first National Marine Parks](#), building on the work of the [Blue Marine Foundation](#) from 2019-2024. Together with input from independent advisors and research participants, background information available online includes:

- [National Parks and the Sea report](#) (Campaign for National Parks, 2025)
- [National Framework and Guiding principles](#) (NMP Strategic Working Group, 2023)
- [Guidance for National Marine Park Evolution](#) (Blue Marine Foundation, 2023)
- [A Coastal and Marine National Park in Your Area? A briefing for Scottish Communities](#) (Blue Marine Foundation, 2023)
- [A legal review of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act \(1949\)](#) (Cardiff University for Blue Marine Foundation, 2023)
- [National Marine Parks – Our Asks](#) (Blue Marine Foundation, 2023)
- [National Marine Parks Newsletter](#) (Blue Marine Foundation, 2023)
- [National Marine Parks: A Vision for British Seas](#) (Bradshaw & Crockett, 2021)
- [Plymouth Sound National Marine Park declaration](#) (2019)
- [Marine Parks: Bringing it all Back Home](#) (Blue Marine Foundation and Plymouth City Council, 2018).

This report provides a summary of the event held for invitees of CNP in November 2025.

3 Format of the event

The event took place during the afternoon of Tuesday 18th November from 12 noon to 4.30pm at Canopi, Arc House, Tanner Street, London. The agenda is available in Annex 1 to this report.

Rose O’Neill, Chief Executive Officer of CNP opened the event with a welcome and context setting. Ffion Mitchell-Langford, NMP lead for CNP described the role of the NMP Alliance and how it is building momentum. Natasha Bradshaw, independent researcher, shared findings from research with National Parks. A Q&A session was followed by presentations from locations with potentially new initiatives: Tegryn Jones, Chief Executive Officer of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority; and Abigail Crosby, Senior Marine Officer, Cornwall Council. Further Q&A were then followed by refreshments and networking.

The second half of the event involved break-out groups working to shape what comes next. Six table groups, each of between 4-8 participants, interrogated up to four routes to NMPs. Following round-table introductions, they brainstormed benefits and risks before identifying potential actions. Recommended actions agreed by the group were then taken forward for consideration of how to progress, who to involve and their priority.

Finally, at the end of the event, each of the six break-out groups provided feedback to all participants, from which six priority actions were recorded and voted on by all. Closing remarks and next steps were provided by Rose O’Neill.

4 Presentation insights

Five presentations were given to introduce the background, current position and insights into potential locations for NMPs. Slides from the PowerPoint presentations are provided in Annex 3.

4.1 Rose O’Neill: Introduction and Purpose

The Chief Executive Officer of CNP welcomed delegates and introduced CNP’s marine work and NMP campaign.

- National Parks (NPs) are for everyone and inclusivity is important, but they evolved without including the sea.
- CNP have 90 years of experience championing National Parks on land, including the coast and are increasingly involved in promoting them for the sea.
- National Marine Parks could have similar purposes to National Parks: to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities.

- NMPs could increase connectivity across land and sea for people and wildlife. There is historical interest, growing momentum, political opportunity and funder appetite.
- The purpose of the day was to explore the different routes to achieving NMPs: benefits, risks and inform priorities for the next phase.

90 years of experience championing National Parks on land, coast...and sea

- Founding of National Parks: story of the nation.
- South Downs campaign and Europarc manifesto.
- Blue Marine and Plymouth Sound National Marine Park.
- National Marine Parks Alliance and exploring National Parks at sea including legislative change.
- Where next?

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Historical Interest
The Europarc Atlantic Isles Manifesto for Coasts and Seascapes developed in 2011. Blue Marine Foundation and Plymouth Sound National Marine Park lay the groundwork.

Growing momentum
National Marine Parks Alliance established. Membership has grown by over 55% in 5 months. Interest from places e.g. Pembrokeshire and media outlets, e.g. BBC Cymru.

Political opportunity
National Marine Parks Political Champions Network established. New National Parks legislation in England. Manifestos in Wales with May 2026 elections approaching.

Funder appetite
Developing proposals for next phase: priorities, places and feasibility.

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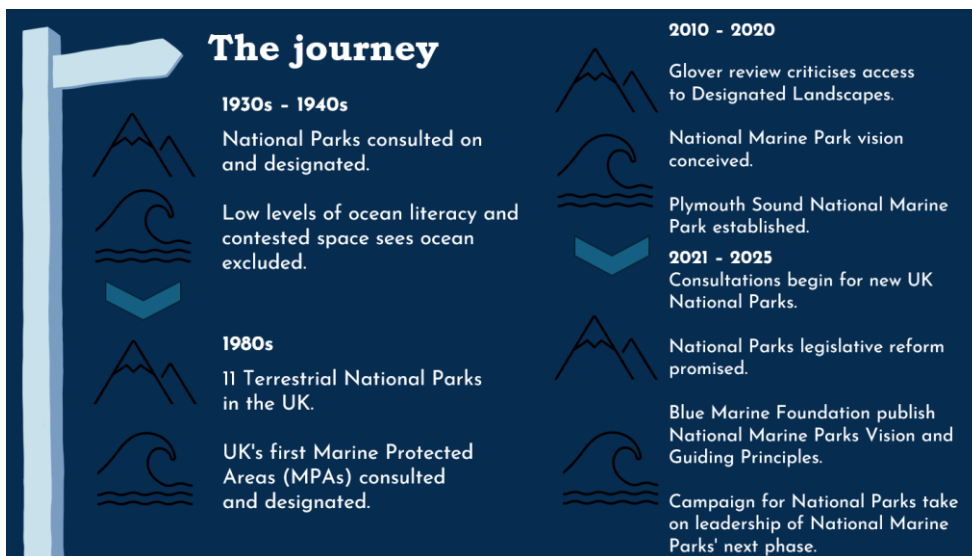
4.2 Ffion Mitchell-Langford: Building Momentum

The NMP lead for CNP described the role of the NMP Alliance and how it is building momentum.

- A National Marine Park has been defined as an expansive seascape of national importance, where the priority is to promote public awareness and understanding of coastal and marine heritage and seascape recovery; enable

recreational enjoyment; and realize environmental and socio-economic benefits for coastal communities"

- Guiding principles and five objectives have been established, with the overarching purpose of connecting people with their seascape to share in a sustainable future.
- The journey so far illustrates the growing interest in National Parks at land, coast and sea. In this phase CNP have increased political support and wider awareness, appetite and interest as well as understood more deeply how the vision could be implemented.



Awareness and interest

- 377 members across Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland
- 54% growth in 5 months
- An engaged community (77% intention to join again)
- Opening to new audiences (59% new to NMPs at Launch)
- Opening to underrepresented groups e.g. carers, people with disabilities

Over 50 stakeholders and 300 people met across eNGOs, Public Bodies, Ports & Harbours, National Park Authorities, National Landscapes, Local Authorities, Universities, Fisheries, young people, and more.

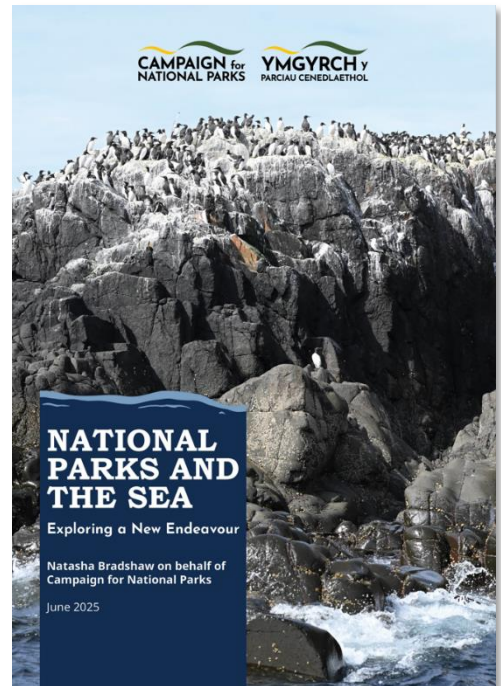
CAMPAIGN for NATIONAL PARKS **YMGYRCH y PARCIAU CENEDLAETHOL**

BBC **National England Marine Conference 2023** **SEASCAPE SYMPOSIUM II: RECONNECTING THE SEASCAPE** **Ocean Advocate Summit**

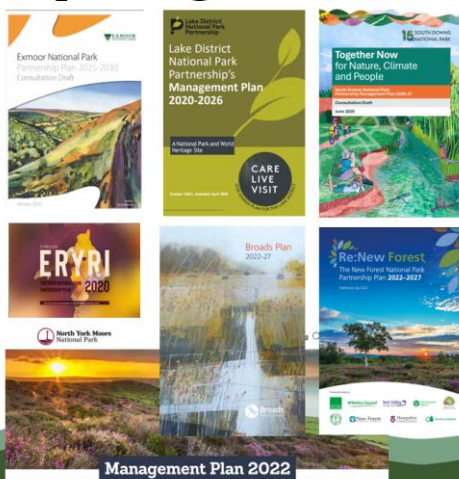
4.3 Natasha Bradshaw: National Parks and the Sea

Findings from research with National Parks about their existing relationships with the sea were shared by Natasha.

- Eight National Parks have coastline but the sea is outside of their formal designation (which varies between high or low water). Most are engaged with coastal issues through planning, seascape protection and coastal community initiatives, but to varying degrees. The National Park authorities are interested and feel it would be legitimate for them to be more involved with the marine area, but cite lack of resources, skills and funding as major constraints.
- Extending National Parks into the sea could bring multiple benefits such as improved democratic accountability in marine planning, stronger land-sea connections, biodiversity restoration, safeguarding public access and heritage, and better engagement between the National Park and its coastal communities.
- Uncertainties exist around whether the National Park purposes and legislation would need to be amended to formally include seascapes.
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is the only National Park specifically designated for its coastline. However, there are 18 National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) with coastline which reference the marine environment more extensively (than National Parks) in their Management Plans. This highlights a gap and an opportunity for NMPs to evolve from Protected Landscapes.



Expanding National Parks into the sea



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Most references to key words (108) "coast, coastal or coastline", "sea or seascape" and "marine"

Policy L1
 'Conserve and enhance National Park landscapes and seascapes'
 pg. 76



'Promoting ecosystem recovery at scale and improving the state of wildlife on land and in the marine environment' pg. 14

4.4 Tegryn Jones: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

The Chief Executive Officer of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority made the following key points:

- Designated features off the Pembrokeshire coast are in unfavourable or unknown condition, which has led to a pause in development. Coastal communities are very varied – some flourishing, others struggling with issues such as the affordability of housing and access to services. This raises the question of whether we could manage our designations better.
- The energy transition will put additional pressures on the sea with unknown impacts, challenging the balance between energy, agriculture and tourism. Pressures on the coast exist from climate change, coastal re-alignment, outdoor recreation management and social inclusion.
- Any NMP would need to be statutory to avoid undermining the terrestrial NP designation, therefore perhaps a Marine National Park (MNP) would need to have a different planning/legal framework. The two designations could be managed by the same authority. Planning decisions are currently made by the National Park Authority (NPA) at public meetings, contrasting to licence decisions made by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).
- Pembrokeshire stakeholders are ‘Marine National Park curious’ and have prepared a statement of intent to start the journey: how can we respond to the challenges; what role can a MNP have; can we prove it will be better; and if so, we will ‘go for it’.

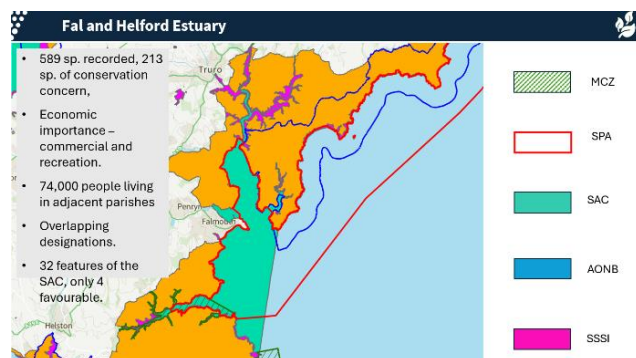


Tegryn Jones, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

4.5 Abigail Crosby: Cornwall

The Senior Marine Officer representing Cornwall Council (including the Isles of Scilly) made the following key points:

- Cornwall are keen to explore the idea of a NMP due to the outstanding marine environment. The Council is adopting England's first marine nature recovery framework which aligns with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Cornwall Council are progressive: declaring the Motion for the Ocean in 2023 and this August declaring healthy rivers and seas are one of its six priorities.
- Seascapes of national importance deserve greater recognition, increasing connection with people to encourage more local action. Cornwall has many organisations likely to be interested.
- Fal and Helford Estuary is a leading candidate for a pilot site due to a high level of overlapping designations (most of which are not in favourable condition), a high population, significant governance and strong delivery on the ground (e.g. engaged Parish Councils), but still a low level of ocean literacy.
- There is potential for a new voluntary marine park which could connect to the National Landscape and support delivery of Cornwall's Marine Recovery Framework.
- A NMP could stimulate grassroots action.



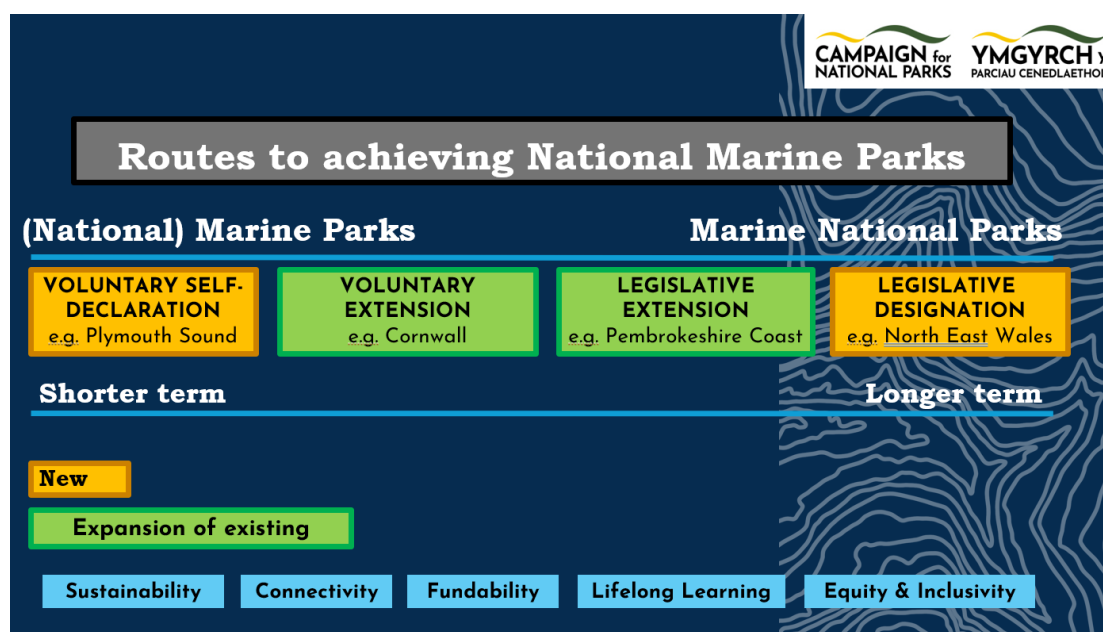
Abigail Crosby, Cornwall Council

5 Findings

5.1 Breakout groups

Six breakout groups worked together to interrogate four potential routes to achieving National Marine Parks:

- 1) Voluntary self-declaration (e.g. Plymouth Sound National Marine Park)
- 2) Voluntary extension (e.g. Fal & Helford, Cornwall National Landscape)
- 3) Legislative extension (e.g. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park)
- 4) Legislative designation (e.g. a new NE Wales National Park which could include the coast and sea).



Questions for discussion were focused on the benefits, risks and what actions emerge. Based on the actions identified, the groups considered how to progress, who needs to be involved and placed priorities on the action(s). Templates provided are shown in Annex 4 with the final results in Annex 5.

5.2 Benefits

Each breakout group spent time considering the benefits of National Marine Parks, with the option to focus on different routes to achieve them (as illustrated in Section 5.1 above).

Benefits of the **voluntary self-declaration** route were identified as:

- No limits to what, where and why
- Less bureaucracy (grassroots potential, community sense of ownership, inclusivity, pace)
- Already been done– there is a precedent
- Could be quicker to set up and to make changes once in place

- Agency and decision-making at a local scale including increased accountability
- Free of National Park restrictions and “needing a statutory agency to get around to it”
- The opportunity to capitalise on other voluntary designations, e.g., UNESCO biospheres
- More scope to define purpose
- More accessible
- Likely to build more support from a bottom up approach
- Better able to unlock different sources of funding e.g. Heritage Lottery.

A voluntary self-declaration route offers maximum flexibility, minimal bureaucracy, and rapid setup, enabling strong local ownership and accountability. Free from statutory constraints, it allows communities to define purpose, build bottom-up support, draw on existing voluntary designations, and access diverse funding sources, creating an accessible, adaptable, community-led (National) Marine Park.

Benefits of the **voluntary extension** route were identified as:

- Reputation, a known and respected brand
- Using existing partnerships and networks will assist with designation
- Ability to operate in an existing framework
- More holistic, joined up approach
- Possibility of statutory powers to deliver change (in being a stepping stone to route 3).

The voluntary extension route builds on a respected, recognisable brand and uses existing partnerships and networks to streamline designation. It supports a more holistic, joined-up approach and can act as a stepping stone toward future statutory powers, enabling stronger long-term change.

Benefits associated with either/both of the **voluntary routes**, whether through self-declaration or extending from an existing designation, were identified as:

- Communication
- Apolitical
- Wouldn't get held up in government
- More likely to be more inclusive
- More chance of it being owned
- Less threatening to industry
- More inclusive from the start
- Opportunities for co-design, including stakeholders from the start
- Could become what an area needs to be
- Quick – no delay with formal processes and fast opportunity for impact
- Sense of pride for local population
- May encourage greater public interest

- Can provide route to statutory designation
- Built on and sensitive to local; context, community, requirements, problems
- Could develop own principles, brand and vision
- Opens up alternative funding opportunities
- Greater freedom over governance model and practices; greater opportunity to be representative and people-led.

The voluntary route avoids political delays, enabling quick, flexible action shaped by local needs. It fosters inclusivity, co-design, and community ownership, is less threatening to industry, builds pride and public interest, allows bespoke principles and governance, and opens wider funding opportunities while offering a pathway toward future statutory designation.

Benefits of the **legislative extension** route were identified as:

- Set way of governance
- Easy to do– could sit within existing governance structures and management systems
- Easier to communicate to local people than route 2
- Ease of site selection
- Legitimation to/for local communities
- Connect land and sea
- Framework already in place may help in the designation
- Engaging communities more broadly would enhance local identity and ocean literacy
- Will/could bring coherence between coast and sea
- Designation framework is already in place with existing governance structure
- Will highlight impact of land management on the sea
- Current orgs managing seas would become ‘relevant authorities’ with duty and further NP purposes
- Potential to simplify governance (not guaranteed)
- National status is reinforced legally (both legislative routes)
- Improved local planning control of marine environment with consideration of community impact (both legislative routes)
- Has existing structures and support
- More capacity to develop and build from (felt this was critical)
- Already know the ropes so ‘should’ be easier to add extensions via legislation
- Experience embedded
- Likely to be more support / easier to get buy-in
- The sea as a truly important space and not just a terrestrial extension
- Multi-use site planning
- Legislation can be a way to create governance, a framework for protection

- Flexibility of site selection -> include all coastal communities

A legislative extension route provides a clear, established governance framework that fits easily into existing systems and is simple to communicate locally. It offers legal legitimacy, easier site selection, and stronger planning control, while connecting land and sea management. Building on existing structures and experience, it can broaden community engagement, enhance ocean literacy, and support coherent, multi-use planning across all coastal communities.

Benefits of the **legislative designation** route were identified as:

- Might have access to core funding
- National status is reinforced legally (both legislative routes)
- Improved local planning control of marine environment with consideration of community impact (both legislative routes)
- Dedicated funding from government for marine park purposes and nature restoration
- Clarity of purpose and also clearly based on evidence of the 'best' marine environment
- If an 'umbrella' designation it could communicate benefits easier to the public and communities
- Include seascape / marine features in designation
- Opportunity to widen full community asset mapping for real co-creation as part of consultation / designation process (requires change to legal process)

A legislative designation route could access core government funding and provide a clear, evidence-based purpose focused on the most important seascape environments. As an umbrella designation, it improves public communication, protects key seascape features, and enables broader community asset mapping and co-creation through a more structured consultation/designation process.

Benefits associated with either/both **legislative routes**, whether through legislative extension or a new designation, were identified as:

- Likely needs new legislation – but that can ensure bespoke, co-creation written in, plus potential new bespoke powers
- Funding and recognition from Government
- Governance body and management bespoke
- In perpetuity – takes a long term – but that allows consultation, etc. and it lasts a lot, lot longer (70+ years)
- Add value to existing marine regulation and terrestrial and marine planning regimes
- Clearer democratic accountability
- 'Whole scape' approach to regulation including marine regulation
- Clarity

- Enforcement powers
- More likely to have long term funding / central government core funding = long term stability
- Could set out legislative basis that directly speaks to need
- Enforceable and clear parameters of responsibility
- Firmer footing and attract long term funding from government and others
- Can help government achieve its targets by bringing people into the heart of the equation
- Can help deliver source-to-sea approach and measure natural capital assets – including difficult ones to measure
- Legislative routes to National Marine Parks offer longterm stability, with bespoke governance, clear responsibilities, and enforceable powers embedded in law. They can secure sustained government funding and recognition, strengthen democratic accountability, and enhance existing marine and terrestrial planning regimes. This approach enables a wholescape, sourcetosea framework, supports cocreation through community asset mapping, and provides a firm foundation for delivering national environmental goals while attracting longterm investment.
- -term stability, with bespoke governance, clear responsibilities, and enforceable powers embedded in law. They can secure sustained government funding and recognition, strengthen democratic accountability, and enhance existing marine and terrestrial planning regimes. This approach enables a whole-scape, source-to-sea framework, supports co-creation through community asset mapping, and provides a firm foundation for delivering national environmental goals while attracting long-term investment.

The above points illustrate the detailed level of consideration the participants were able to give to considering benefits and comparing the different potential routes to achieve a NMP. A summary of the benefits of the voluntary and legislative routes is provided in Table 1 below.

Overall, the findings indicated that National Marine Parks offer a powerful way to strengthen the relationship between people and the sea by boosting ocean literacy at a local level and celebrating the deep connections between nature, heritage and community. Whether created through voluntary action or formal legislation, they provide a placebased framework that supports naturebased solutions, ecological recovery, and progress toward goals such as 30x30 and Good Environmental Status. These routes can unlock new funding and resources, enhance climate resilience, and integrate mitigation and adaptation across land and sea. By raising the national profile of coastal and marine areas, they encourage better stewardship, improve health and wellbeing, and inspire widespread engagement—helping more people to understand, value, and care for the marine environment.-based framework that supports

nature-based solutions, ecological recovery, and progress toward goals such as 30x30 and Good Environmental Status. These routes can unlock new funding and resources, enhance climate resilience, and integrate mitigation and adaptation across land and sea. By raising the national profile of coastal and marine areas, they encourage better stewardship, improve health and wellbeing, and inspire widespread engagement—helping more people to understand, value, and care for the marine environment.

Table 1: Benefits of the voluntary or legal routes to achieve National Marine Parks

	Voluntary Routes (Self-Declaration or Voluntary Extension)	Legislative Routes (Extend Existing or Create New Designation)
Speed of Establishment	Fast to establish; not dependent on government processes; avoids political delays.	Slow due to legislative processes, consultation requirements, and statutory scrutiny.
Flexibility & Adaptability	Highly flexible; can evolve over time; no statutory constraints; bespoke to local needs.	Less flexible; bound by statutory frameworks; changes require formal processes.
Community Ownership & Engagement	Strong grassroots leadership; bottom-up legitimacy; inclusive and accessible; co-design from the outset.	Community involvement can be embedded, but processes are more formal and structured.
Governance Requirements	Governance models can be informal, innovative, and locally tailored.	Governance is formal, statutory, and clearly defined with enforceable responsibilities.
Funding Opportunities	Access to diverse funding streams (e.g., Heritage Lottery, philanthropy); not reliant on government budgets.	More likely to secure long-term core government funding; stronger financial stability.
Credibility & Recognition	Builds legitimacy through community leadership; voluntary extensions gain credibility from existing brands.	High national recognition; legal status reinforces authority and public trust.
Regulatory Powers	No statutory powers; relies on influence, partnerships, and voluntary compliance.	Clear enforcement powers; statutory duties for relevant authorities; regulatory clarity.
Integration with Planning & Regulation	Can align with existing frameworks but has no formal influence over planning decisions.	Adds value to marine and terrestrial planning regimes; supports whole-scape regulation.
Strategic Contribution to National Goals	Supports local priorities and innovation; can build momentum for future statutory designation.	Directly supports national environmental targets, source-to-sea approaches, and natural capital assessment.
Long-Term Security	Dependent on local commitment and funding; can change or dissolve over time.	High durability (often 70+ years); statutory permanence ensures long-term continuity.
Public Communication & Identity	Apolitical, community-centred messaging; easier to communicate locally; can build strong place identity.	Clear national identity; easier to communicate at scale; benefits from statutory clarity.
Pathway to Future Designation	Can act as a stepping stone toward statutory designation; builds capacity and partnerships.	Represents the final, formalised model; provides the highest level of protection and recognition.

5.3 Risks

Each breakout group spent time considering the risks associated with National Marine Parks, with the option to focus on different routes to achieve them (as illustrated in Section 5.1 above).

Risks of the **voluntary self-declaration** route (1) were identified as:

- What is the difference over the/our borders?
- Confusion/dilution of identity
- Time and resource heavy
- Lack of clear local leadership if divorced from councils
- Not recognised by key agencies
- Not enough status nationally and not enforceable.
- Those privileged enough to volunteer – may result in homogeneous view
- Is it just branding?
- Did the lottery money come just because it was the first? How likely is it that funding from lottery available beyond Plymouth?
- Fighting for same funding pots as marine conservation projects and ocean literacy
- Boom and bust – long term funding likely to be a problem
- Could undermine legislative designations

The voluntary selfdeclaration route risks creating confusion over identity and inconsistency across borders, while demanding significant time and resources without guaranteed leadership or recognition from key agencies. Its nonstatutory status limits enforceability and national influence, and reliance on volunteers may narrow perspectives. Funding is uncertain, potentially competitive with existing marine initiatives, raising concerns about longterm stability and whether the model offers substance beyond branding and the undermining of designated sites/features. -declaration-statutory status limits enforceability and national influence, and reliance on volunteers may narrow perspectives. Funding is uncertain, potentially competitive with existing marine initiatives, raising concerns about long-term stability and whether the model offers substance beyond branding

Risks of the **voluntary extension** route (2) were identified as:

- No teeth. No power to change anything
- Voluntary endeavours can be perceived as ‘privileged’
- No legal or statutory powers. No government support
- Initial public interest may fade leading to failing in delivery and/or initial partners may lose interest or fall out
- No integration into existing network of Protected Landscapes, no shared principles, branding, recognition and lack of join up on National issues
- Risk of scope creep in search of funding

-
- May not be taken as seriously by public bodies, the public
- Risk of inappropriate governance, lack of transparency due to having more freedom
- Hard to integrate, manage and fund
- Legislative and voluntary not on same footing– could lead to marine being sidelined. Management plans wouldn't legally apply
- “Not greater than the sum of its parts”

The voluntary extension route risks lacking real influence, with no statutory powers, government backing, or integration into the wider Protected Landscapes network. Public interest and partner commitment may fade, while perceptions of privilege and weak governance could undermine credibility. Without legal footing, marine priorities may be sidelined, funding pressures may drive scope creep, and the model may struggle to deliver meaningful, coordinated impact.

Risks associated with the **voluntary route** (1&2), whether through self-declaration or extending from an existing designation, were identified as:

- Lack of interest and losing action
- Could be exclusionary
- Risk of not incorporating all groups of society
- Lack of awareness of guidelines
- Does it reflect national interest?
- Does it include everything it needs to?
- No legal or statutory powers. No government support
- Initial public interest may fade leading to failing in delivery and/or initial partners may lose interest or fall out
- No integration into existing network of Protected Landscapes, no shared principles, branding, recognition and lack of join up on National issues
- Risk of scope creep in search of funding
- May not be taken as seriously by public bodies, the public
- Risk of inappropriate governance, lack of transparency due to having more freedom
- Funding model? Who will pay?
- Will it do anything for Marine Nature Reserves?
- How do we monitor it and connect to VNMP?
- Tracking social impact becomes more complex?
- Stakeholder fatigue

Voluntary routes to National Marine Parks risk limited impact due to weak national recognition, no statutory powers, and uncertain funding. Public and partner interest may fade, while exclusion, inconsistent governance, and lack of shared standards could undermine credibility. Without integration into the wider Protected Landscapes

network, efforts may become fragmented, harder to monitor, and vulnerable to scope creep, stakeholder fatigue, and questions over long-term purpose and accountability.

Risks of the **legislative extension** route (3) were identified as:

- Being imposed
- State funded
- May take a long time and aims get diluted
- Disconnect from communities, lack of community buy-in/support
- May hinder the new designation as designed for land not sea– more would need adding
- Unclear how powers and levers NP would have would be different to marine management orgs
- New legal designation distracts time/money/energy from existing designations (routes 3 and 4)
- Will need legislative time to make it happen. Long process (routes 3 and 4)
- Would need necessary mechanisms to do better than current situation (routes 3&4)
- If not wanted locally there will be a lack of enthusiasm to use any new powers (routes 3&4)
- If the NPA doesn't have new powers relative to marine environment they will struggle to effect change
- Poor governance and undemocratic practices can derail the ethos of Marine National Parks
- Lack of awareness of new marine element leads to lack of engagement
- May have limited impact
- It could take too many resources away from the terrestrial land management
- Maybe harder to implement new pathways / initiatives (culture)
- Reluctance to change

A legislative extension route risks feeling imposed, taking years to develop, and diluting its original aims. Without strong local support, community buy-in may weaken, especially if powers differ little from existing marine bodies. Because the framework was designed for land, significant adaptation is needed, potentially diverting resources from current designations. Slow legislative processes, unclear added value, governance challenges, and limited awareness of the marine element could all reduce impact, while cultural resistance and reluctance to change may hinder effective implementation.

Risks of the **legislative designation** route (4) were identified as:

- People could be excluded
- Might focus too much on the specific area
- Defra is a growth department and focused on 'build baby build'

- Legislative is too top down
- Disconnect from communities, lack of community buy-in/support
- How are local communities going to be involved if it is UK wide legislation?
Community voice is so important
- What does this actually mean in terms of legislation compared to all other designations?
- Appropriate resourcing
- Could detract from existing National Parks
- Marine NP designation could increase pressure on existing sensitive marine environment
- A totally new MNP needs to be led by evidence and designated for its natural seascape quality. How is this defined?

A legislative designation route risks being too topdown, creating exclusion and weakening community buyin—especially if local voices feel overshadowed by UKwide legislation. It may divert resources from existing National Parks, add pressure to sensitive marine areas, and struggle to define evidencebased seascape criteria. Unclear distinctions from other designations, limited resourcing, and Defra’s development priorities could further dilute impact and undermine confidence in the model.-down, creating exclusion and weakening community buy-in—especially if local voices feel overshadowed by UK-wide legislation. It may divert resources from existing National Parks, add pressure to sensitive marine areas, and struggle to define evidence-based seascape criteria. Unclear distinctions from other designations, limited resourcing, and

Risks associated with the **legislative route**, whether through legislative extension or a new designation, were identified as:

- Money / government attention better spent in existing MPA network
- Might not add value to existing planning / marine regulation regime
- Designation of some areas automatically excludes other places – would wider approaches be more appropriate?
- There are already multiple designations at sea – is another REALLY going to simplify things?
- Top down approach does not support democratic accountability / justice – can be very divisive at community level
- How will we overcome ‘ocean blindness’ / get people interested in what they can’t see?
- Seen as another designation that would likely fail – more complex and overlapping areas to consider
- Can we really do co-creation via designation? The process and limited funding has meant that this has not happened e.g. Glyndŵr National Park

- Engagement can be exclusive as stakeholders may not be diverse in make-up given ocean/env space
- Is highly political
- Top down process can alienate
- Takes time to do and also will need change in law which also takes time
- Complexity and time and resources needed to pursue legislative reform
- Is this the right solution to better engagement with marine / coastal spaces and issues?
- If our primary goal is improving ocean literacy, are marine parks really the focus?
What about the role of coastal partnerships?

There is a perception that legislative routes risk diverting resources away from existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), with no guarantee that they will add value to existing planning and management or simplify governance. A topdown, highly political process may alienate communities, limit diverse engagement, and struggle to overcome “ocean blindness.” Slow, complex legal reform could deliver little added value, exclude some areas by default, and fail to achieve genuine cocreation. With questions over whether this approach improves ocean literacy or supports coastal partnerships, some fear it may not be the most effective route to meaningful marine stewardship.-down, highly political process may alienate communities, limit diverse engagement, and struggle to overcome-creation. With questions over whether this approach improves ocean literacy or supports coastal partnerships, some fear it may not be the most effective route to meaningful marine stewardship.

Risks associated with **all routes** (1, 2,3, 4) include:

- Funding
- Another confusing designation layer + player in space
- Able to involve all relevant groups across different areas – e.g. nature, culture, heritage
- Needs to have bottom up engagement with local fishing communities that are part of cultural heritage and coastal communities
- Opposition and conflict from current economic activities and users
- Need to think about challenges that need to be addressed first before deciding if a NMP is the appropriate mechanism
- Risk of not having buy in from coastal communities

Risks associated with all routes include limited funding, added designation complexity, difficulty involving diverse sectors, weak bottom-up engagement with fishing and coastal communities, potential conflict with existing economic activities, unresolved challenges that may undermine the suitability of NMPs, and the possibility of poor community buy-in.

The above points illustrate the detailed level of consideration the participants were able to give to considering risks and comparing the different potential routes to achieve a NMP. A summary of the **risks** associated with the voluntary and legislative routes is provided in Table 2 below.

Mitigation

Post-workshop analysis of the benefits and risks identified by participants suggests the following mitigations, to present the optimal route to evolve NMPs:

- Recognition that there are different routes towards similar objectives/purposes in the NMP vision
- Voluntary or legislative routes have their pros and cons and could be complimentary i.e. start voluntarily and consider legislative routes later
- Different locations are likely to pursue different routes depending on local/regional specificity; this could lead to:
 - ‘Marine Parks’ focused on voluntary status; and
 - ‘Marine National Parks’ where the legal route is foreseen as the end point. This could build on National Landscapes, National Parks, or be an entirely new designation
- Recognition that the NMP vision is to provide an umbrella status over existing designated sites, whether or not the NMP is voluntary/legislated, should support existing MPAs
- Continue use of the generic term ‘National Marine Parks’ to avoid confusion between different routes pursued in different locations

Weighing up the benefits (Section 5.2) and risks (above) led to each breakout group identifying recommended actions (Section 5.4). The following actions are therefore informed by an assessment of the benefits and risks to pursue routes to implementation.

5.4 Recommended actions

Each breakout group identified actions focused on either the voluntary or legislative route, or both. An overview of the actions is provided, followed by a table showing the individual actions listed in priority order, with recommendations on how to progress and who to involve.

Voluntary National Marine Park designation depends on creating clear national guidance, raising awareness of existing resources, and helping communities understand the legislative routes available. It requires participatory co-design, strong partnerships, and a well-structured, cross-sector steering group that can articulate the motivations and problems the designation aims to address. The process should actively include underrepresented voices, connect with national programmes, and develop both a clear definition of what an impactful voluntary NMP looks like and a social-impact

framework to measure progress. Alongside this, a route map and accreditation scheme for voluntary self-declaration are needed, as well as a model for transitioning from voluntary to legislative status—drawing on examples like the Broads, where bespoke legislation was introduced once voluntary arrangements reached their limits.

A legislative route toward National Marine Parks would involve extending coastal National Parks and National Landscapes seaward through a single piece of legislation, supported by tailored feasibility studies and consultations to determine appropriate offshore boundaries for each area. It would also require clear mapping of existing marine protections, governance bodies, and oversight mechanisms, alongside a robust case for change that demonstrates the specific problems the legislation aims to address and whether current arrangements could be improved or need replacing.

The focus of table group discussions, in summary, was:

- 1) **Guidelines or a toolkit** to support bottom-up community engagement in the sea and increasing ocean literacy, engaging multiple interests at the national and local levels including politicians. Sussex Bay provides a useful example.
- 2) Developing a **theory of change and proof of concept** which is realistic, learns from Plymouth Sound NMP and is tested with other communities.
- 3) Develop a **framework and route map** for voluntary self-declaration and potential routes that could lead to legislated designation, learning from existing designations and including guidelines for a representative governance model.
- 4) Build on work being undertaken by the MMO/NE to explore how the **marine planning** process can be used to progress NMPs. Identify and support **network of marine champions** in local communities who can promote NMPs locally and enlist them to develop a **Toolkit/Principles/Checklist** to enable a place-based approach i.e. setting out all the different **criteria necessary for a designation** to be successful, whilst campaigning to secure strong political support for NMPs.
- 5) Demonstrate the problem we are trying to solve and explore whether what already exists could work better or needs to be replaced. Clear objectives need to be set, based on demonstration of success through voluntary status and pilots. Explore whether **Local Nature Recovery Strategies at sea** could be a mechanism to achieve the objectives.
- 6) A **pilot feasibility study** is needed to bring evidence of special qualities, community asset mapping and testing appetite, and ocean literacy objectives together, whilst continuing to build a political champions network to illustrate bottom-up support for legislative change.

Observations reported back by the table facilitators included:

“The tone of the group seemed to be that they all believed there was substantial interest in creating MNPs but just didn’t know how, which is why the ‘toolkit’ idea came up as the top action” (Linn Wiberg, T1).

“It was hard to decouple the legislative route options (3&4) as the table became very supportive of the voluntary model but recognised the challenges of longevity of funding/legal status etc.” (Gareth Ludkin, T5).

“Beaches are “egalitarian” i.e., lots of people from lots of background use them. Kids play in the sea, throw rocks at driftwood, etc, etc. For a lot of people, spending time at the coast and having a connection with coastal areas is easier than terrestrial landscapes. The coast and by extension the sea may be a first step in creating broader nature connection” (Lily Whitmarsh, T3)

“Ocean literacy -> enhanced engagement -> enabled access ->National Marine Park -> ocean literacy: should be in a circle to show that it is a continuum” (Ruth Bradshaw, T4).

“The legislative approach is a long term thing – may take 5 years+ but there is huge value in coming together and doing the work in short term towards this...has value as an end in themselves (benefits akin to a voluntary approach)”. (Rose O’Neill, T6)

Table 2: Actions recommended per table group illustrating how to progress and who to involve.

ACTION	HOW TO PROGRESS	WHO TO INVOLVE	PRIORITY H/M/L	DELIVERY AREA Section 5.7
Create a national toolkit of guidelines for each stage to reach designation (for community and council). Possibly a follow on from ‘self-assessment’	Create a steering group with a clear focus including different sectors. Identify stakeholders (wider than the original steering group) to support co-design. Test the toolkit on a local scale for feedback	Multiple authors Local group to test it with stakeholders	H	1
Increasing awareness of existing guidelines that have been created	Increasing awareness of marine consenting Campaign for awareness Money for people’s time Long term support		M	1
Motion for the Ocean implemented in more councils	Bring in ocean literacy through engagement. National Park’s management plans to evaluate Motion. Government to set tone on remit of National Parks.	Government Local councils National Park Authorities	M	1
A ‘Clarkson’ for the marine environment ‘Superheroes for the sea’.	Tackle 1 mile barrier Install a coastal minister Reach out to Sussex Bay to find out how they did it Using local representatives/	Influencers Apolitical figures A coastal minister	L	6
Theory of Change. Reframe a NMP on one page (voluntary is critical path for legislative)	Define purpose, make a decision on what is realistic now and why we need it (elevator pitch). Critique and evaluate from Plymouth Sound NMP. Review objectives, purpose and names. Revisit model with impartial learnings Create plan on a page and test with community.	Funders, NPs, statutory bodies, conservation bodies, alliance members, local gov association, academics, grassroots EDI organisations	H	1
Create a proof of concept and a set of guiding principles of what is good/best (M+E framework)	Look for golden threads to delivering impact. Explore thematic outcomes. Fundability, lifelong learning, equality and inclusivity = enablers		-	4
Framework and route map for voluntary self-declaration. Supporting the different needs of different seascapes with different route options. Including potential routes that lead to legislated designation — linked in England to the government’s commitment to reform governance and purposes.	Establish network of exemplars and trial sites like Plymouth Sound Scoping research to build guidance for prospective self-declarations (i.e., to help choose which route is appropriate) Guidelines for a governance model that is more representative Accreditation scheme for voluntary self-declarations based on UNESCO biospheres and others (leading to a network/ cohesive brand identity).		M Scoping and research first	4

Build on work being undertaken by an MMO/NE working group to learn how the marine planning process can be used to progress NMPs	Use existing NMP Alliance members to get CNP and NPAs on to the working group. Investigate marine planning system as an alternative route to designating an extension and/or new NMP.	AIFCA (Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities)	H	4
Identify and support network of marine champions in local communities who can promote NMPs locally, help raise awareness of the benefits of the sea and ensure strong support in future consultations on NMPs.	Make connections with community engagement organisations. Learn from existing community-led co-created approaches in some of the areas adopting voluntary route e.g Sussex Bay, Plymouth, Cornwall. Provide the evidence and examples of good practice that local marine champions need. Create mechanism for champions from different areas to connect with each other.	Community engagement organisations People co-ordinating other existing networks in relevant areas/topics	H	2
Toolkit/Principles/Checklist to enable a place-based approach i.e. setting out all the different criteria necessary for a designation to be successful.	Use learnings from Actions 1 and 2 above to create toolkit plus learnings from other similar networks e.g. Rewilding Britain.	Marine champions	M	4
Campaign to secure strong political support for NMPs	Use marine champions and network to advocate for NMPs Highlight nature, social and economic benefits	APPG for Protected Landscapes	M	6
Map the existing marine protection measures/bodies/oversight that exists. Demonstrate the problem we are trying to solve and explore whether what already exists could work better or needs to be replaced.	Audit either on a national basis or take a more local place-based approach with a few chosen example sites which best demonstrate challenges and opportunities.	<i>MMO, IFCAS, LNRS, Natural England/NRW, eNGOs, NPAs, other national marine orgs, business, biosphere, local councils, authorities, local communities and public fisheries.</i>	H	3
Set clear objectives for NMP (through consultation) and establish clear communication messages for different groups to frame NMPs for the national conversation.	Build a movement! Establish a clear theory of change Celebrate the existing voluntary approach Benefits analysis Legislative route needs national buy in and political buy in. Learn from what works (such as the legal rights for rivers).	Public, communities, MPs	H	4
Demonstrate the success of voluntary designation (and what it has achieved) to drive legislative route.	-	-	-	4
Suggest Marine place-based delivery pilots to test out these ideas. One linked to an existing NP and one not.	-	-	-	5
Explore measures set by coastal LNRS for coastal and marine environments.	-	-	-	3
Join up between NMP and Ocean literacy - community to understand integration and mitigate	Ocean literacy focus: understand existing activity and connect with NMP vision (e.g. Wales: Tir A Mor as a key strategic hook).	Welsh authors. NMP Alliance could be a forum to facilitate	1: Felt like a first next /	2

for 'threat' / 'competitiveness'. Understand what integration 'unlocks'. Understand additionality.	Build connections / coalitions between NMP work and those leading ocean literacy; increase inclusivity through joint approach.		easy step following the workshop	
Evidence gathering of where we think a NMP would make the biggest difference. Mapping of existing designations, regulations, problems and showing how development of a designated NMP could play in.	Draw up priority areas based on appetite so far. Redefine the definition of NMP to contain more specific nature outcomes. Priority places to act as exemplars/pilots to make evidence gathering 'real' and specific to a place. Include evidence review of problems and issues and clear suggestions/recommendations on how a NMP could add value	Key lead in the priority places inc local authorities, NPAs, NLS. NRW/NE Coastal Partnerships Network, SUDG. Public / coastal users/ minority groups	2	4
Community asset mapping and testing in each pilot area, building on feasibility research above	Map communities in each pilot area using a tool like this: <u>Building for Belonging - Plastic Free Schools - Surfers Against Sewage</u> . Test appetite, need, demand etc with communities in workshops etc Mapping could be built into a commission / feasibility study. Testing could be useful part of the Ocean Literacy bid (above)	NPAs and NLS NRW and NE	This could come earlier in the sequence above or run parallel	5
Warm up Government (in Wales, and in England) to change legislation so it enables, supports 30x30 targets, etc	Continue to use and build political champions network, particularly in Wales. Sharing pilot sites / findings important to show demand / how there is bottom up support for legislative change. Conclusions of the above is necessary to make the case for legislative change. Civil service focused evidence building and influencing. Political advocacy. Public campaign piece.	David Attenburgh/ high profile champions/ ambassadors. Public Clear role CNP Welsh Gov / NRW Parliamentarians	5 (alongside above)	6
Pilot feasibility (bringing scientific evidence, special qualities, community mapping, join up with ocean literacy) in a small number of exemplar pilot sites.	Pilot sites e.g. Pembrokeshire, Cornwall, Yorkshire Coast. Important to keep voluntary/legislative routes open and include cross UK sites.			4

5.5 A Pathway to Delivery

Breakout groups tended to focus on either the voluntary (T1, T2, T3) or legislative route (T3, T4, T5). However, most of the recommended actions were relevant to any route to achieve NMP status. Combining the recommended actions (shown in Table 2 above) presents the following pathway.

1 *Pilots and Place-Based Testing*

- Select a small number of priority places across the UK as exemplar or pilot sites (mix of NPA/NL/urban/rural).
- Suggest marine place-based delivery pilots, including one linked to an existing National Park and one independent of an existing National Park (e.g. a National Landscape).
- Map communities in each pilot area using tools such as *Building for Belonging*.
- Test appetite, need, and demand through community workshops and engagement.

2 *A Toolkit of Guidelines*

- Frame the National Marine Park concept on a single page, showing the Theory of Change and how voluntary action forms a critical path toward legislative designation.
- Create a national toolkit of guidelines for each stage of progressing toward declaration/designation, for use by communities and councils.
- Develop a framework and route map for voluntary self-declaration.
- Expand the *Motion for the Ocean* initiative so it is implemented in more councils.
- Provide support tailored to the differing needs of different seascapes, recognising that different areas may require different route options.
- Create a proof of concept and a set of guiding principles defining what “good” looks like, including a monitoring and evaluation framework.

3 *Community Engagement and Ocean Literacy*

- Identify and support a network of marine champions in local communities to promote NMPs and strengthen future consultation support.
- Develop and embed an ocean literacy continuum (ocean literacy → engagement → access → NMP → ocean literacy). Incorporate established ocean literacy approaches (e.g., 10 dimensions, schools frameworks, survey data) into NMP development.
- In Wales, use *Tir A Mor* as a strategic anchor for ocean literacy and NMP work.
- Consider a joint funding bid (e.g., to a major funder) to support ocean literacy and NMP pilots as part of a wider programme.

4 *Strategic and Governance-Focused Actions*

- Map existing marine protection measures, bodies, and oversight, and assess whether current arrangements could be improved or replaced.

- Engage with the MMO/NE to understand how marine planning processes can support National Marine Parks.
- Explore whether coastal Local Nature Recovery Strategies measures can apply to coastal and marine environments and whether LNRS could operate as a mechanism at sea.
- Include potential routes that lead to legislated designation, aligned with government commitments to reform governance and purposes.
- Bring together scientific evidence, community mapping, and ocean literacy to support feasibility assessments in pilot sites.
- Share findings from pilot sites to demonstrate bottom-up support for legislative reform.
- Continue to use and expand the network of political champions to build momentum for legislative change.

5 *Evidence-Building towards a Framework for NMPs*

- Set clear objectives for NMPs and develop tailored communication messages for different audiences.
- Demonstrate the success of voluntary designations to strengthen the case for legislative action.
- Provide clear recommendations on how a NMP could add value in each area, including the soft or hard powers required to address issues such as water quality.
- Baseline special qualities, seascape assessments, and marine character areas to inform designation.
- Understand the potential for National Landscapes to pursue NMP status
- Explore how the “setting” of existing National Parks (beyond their boundaries) could be used to influence marine management.
- Learn from inland water management in NPAs (e.g., recreation pressures in the Broads and Lakes) to inform marine approaches.

6 *Campaigning and Advocacy*

- Run a campaign to secure strong political support for National Marine Parks.
- Identify and secure influencers who are popular publicly and politically, including supporting the LGA case for a Coastal Minister.
- Frame NMPs effectively for national conversations through clear, audience-specific messaging.

6 **Summary of priorities**

The event concluded with feedback from each group identifying their top priority action. These were then voted on by the participants ($n=$) before departure with the following overall recommendations (Annex 4):

- Pilot/feasibility studies: mapping evidence, special qualities, connecting ocean literacy to answer the ‘what’ question ($n=15$)
- Establish a framework and route map: accreditation scheme for voluntary NMPs ($n=10$)
- Map what already exists: designations, governance, gap analysis ($n=10$)
- Place-based toolkit: greater input to marine plans and more champions ($n=8$)
- Toolkit of guidelines: clarity of journey prepared by a steering group for communities and councils ($n=7$)
- Re-framing NMPs on a page: purpose ($n=5$).

7 Participants post-event feedback

Participants widely praised the workshop’s organisation, facilitation, and inclusive mix of attendees. Many valued the opportunity for in-person discussion, noting strong engagement, productive conversations, and clear momentum behind exploring National Marine Parks (NMPs). Several highlighted the need for clearer, more consistent language around terms, improved stakeholder literacy, and a simple “one-pager” outlining the purpose, impact, and pathways for NMPs.

There was broad support for piloting voluntary NMP approaches—particularly in Cornwall and Pembrokeshire—while continuing to learn from Plymouth’s experience, which participants felt should be more openly shared. Some emphasised the importance of understanding how NMPs complement existing marine designations such as MPAs, and recommended involving regulators (MMO, IFCA, Defra, NE) more directly.

Feedback also suggested refining workshop formats to allow more time for questions, cross-table interaction, and quieter voices to contribute, with some proposing tools like Miro or structured table-mixing. Several contributors stressed the importance of community engagement, especially with inner-city and marginalised communities, highlighting opportunities for outreach, education, and inclusive cultural events.

Overall, the event was considered insightful, energising, and a valuable step forward, with strong appetite for clearer next steps and visible progress.

“I travel a lot for my role and go to lots of different workshops/conferences etc. and this was one of the best for organisation, flow, purpose and passion.” (Kate Jury, Coastal Wildbelt)

“I honestly have nothing but positive feedback – it was the right balance between the talk and the workshops. There was a good array of people involved. I really valued the opinions of those with fresh eyes. You did, as always, a superb job and I was grateful to be in the room as someone who thinks that NMP, if done in the right way, could have hugely positive impacts” (Abigail Crosby, Cornwall Council).

“I feel the event went really well, felt inclusive and there was a lot of openness to discussion and challenge. I also felt there was a great mix of people in the room with the right expertise.” (Morven Roberston, Esmee Fairburn Foundation)

“As we flagged on the day, we are really keen to support a pilot in Cornwall – I think if Pembrokeshire is another pilot area that is looking at a NMP relationship with the boarding National Park, Cornwall would be a voluntary marine site that considers its surround seascape of designations however its key aim would be to be an autonomous designation to improve ocean literacy, stewardship, and advocacy within the wider community for the conservation and recovery of the marine area.” (Abigail Crosby, Cornwall Council).

“It was worth attending and making a contribution... It has inspired the Lake District National Park Partnership to review its approach to how the coast and marine environment features in our management plan strategies and upcoming landscape character assessment.” (Tim Duckmanton, Lake District National Park Authority).

“It felt like there was strong support for the principles of having a continuum from landscape-coast-seascape, the challenge is in the detail of how best to make that happen! Resourcing and capacity felt like the biggest concern”. (Claire Kerr, South Downs National Park Authority)

“I really enjoyed the day, I found it a great opportunity to catch up with people, network with new people and a great opportunity for discussing the marine parks movement, it was very valuable”. (Victoria O’Bryen,)

“...having come from an inner city region far removed from the coastal area, I found the event very interesting, especially as the communities we work with often go away to the seaside to enjoy the beach. They are fully aware of National Parks but not Marine National Parks! (Maxwell Ayamba, Sheffield Environment Movement)

“I would still like clarity in terms of how Marine National Parks fit in with existing Government marine protection work, especially MPAs. I really like the idea of them increasing public engagement with MPAs and so encouraging pro-environment behaviours and acting as a conduit for further pressure on the Government. However, I’m not sure I understand how this would exactly work so that Marine Parks add rather than being a distraction from formal designations.” (Tom Ash, Wildlife and Countryside Link).

“From what I saw, there was a real mix of people with different levels of knowledge about the pathways to the marine parks, which made it a great opportunity to bring everyone along together. The presentations sparked thoughtful questions and reflections, and it felt like people were genuinely considering what it might take to bring this vision to life.” (Linn Wiberg, Coastal Partnerships Network).

“I think the CNP team and your facilitators all demonstrated great knowledge as well as skills in how the event was organised and delivered, good ‘customer journey’ from start to finish. You’d obviously assembled a range of different voices to be involved which was effective... I came away with a better understanding of different perspectives and lots of enthusiasm to engage with colleagues and partners here”(Ian Barker, New Forest National Park Authority).

“Our group felt that voluntary opportunities was a critical path towards getting an NMP off the ground, over the time it takes to explore the potential for a designation. Unlike what Lin fed back from their table, our table didn't necessarily discuss if that voluntary becomes designated on that journey, but the agility and opportunity is here now and ready for voluntary and therefore will build momentum and consensus with better understanding and learning as the background work keeps exploring designated options” (Kate Jury, Coastal Wildbelt).

8 Next Steps

The findings from this event present a large range of ideas and ambitions to progress the NMP movement. Many recommendations have been included in this report and were prioritised to help identify next steps. A key finding of high importance was the consensus that voluntary opportunities to get a NMP off the ground are critical for all locations, even if the legislative route is an aspiration, as it will take time to explore the potential for a designation and communities should be engaged in the process.

There are simple steps that can be taken to keep progressing the movement. A ‘one-pager’ with key information around the what, why, how and expected impact of NMPs would help advocacy work and build greater understanding across stakeholders to support momentum moving forward. Existing experience from Plymouth Sound and promoting the existing ‘ten steps’ guidelines for the establishment of NMPs is recommended.

Enough momentum was apparent to focus on pilot/feasibility studies to map what already exists (e.g. governance, MPA condition), elaborate on the problems and present the evidence: special qualities, and what impact the new status could have on improving seascape planning, management, governance and engagement.

In parallel to piloting, it would be helpful for other locations to establish a framework and route map which will offer an accreditation scheme for voluntary NMPs. A place-based toolkit of guidelines would be valuable to clarify the journey, support greater input to marine plans and mobilise more marine champions. To support this, it will be important to engage with a steering group for councils, communities, eNGOs and government bodies with roles in marine management.

9 Conclusion

The NMP roundtable offered presentations of previous research and advocacy work around NMPs, followed by insights of what this could mean for places such as Pembrokeshire and Cornwall. For the first time, detailed discussions were facilitated amongst a diverse group of marine and terrestrial interests, into the potential routes to achieve National Marine Parks (NMPs) in different locations across England and Wales. Options include extending an existing National Park such as Pembrokeshire into the sea, or creating a new Marine National Park designation that connected to it, perhaps with the same governing body. However, bottom-up voluntary momentum towards a NMP is strongly advised whether or not a legislative designation is desirable as it is seen as fundamental to success. A suite of specific actions were recommended for CNP and the NMP Alliance to consider. Overall, the roundtable workshop demonstrated a high level of interest and ability to engage in strategic thinking about the actions to take forward the vision for NMPs.

Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda



National Marine Parks Roundtable

12:00 – 16:30pm, Tuesday 18th November

Canopi, Arc House, 82 Tanner Street, London, SE1 3GN

12:00 – 12:30: Arrival and lunch (30 minutes)

Context and progress (60 minutes)

12:30 – 12:50: Welcome and context setting – Rose O'Neill, Chief Executive Officer, Campaign for National Parks

12:50 – 13:00: National Marine Parks; Building momentum – Ffion Mitchell-Langford, National Marine Parks Lead, Campaign for National Parks

13:00 – 13:10: National Parks and the Sea findings – Natasha Bradshaw, Independent Researcher

13:10 – 13:30: Q&A on progress

Location scoping and new initiatives (30 minutes)

13:30 – 13:40: Exploring a seaward extension of a National Park – Tegryn Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

13:40 – 13:50: Exploring a new voluntary National Marine Park – Abby Crosby, Senior Marine Officer, Cornwall Council

13:50 – 14:00: Q&A

14:00 – 14:45: Food, refreshments and networking (45 minutes)

Shaping what comes next (90 minutes)

14:45 – 15:45: Interrogating the four routes to National Marine Parks

15:45 – 16:15: Feedback and priority setting

16:15 – 16:30: Closing Remarks and Next Steps

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Annex 2: Delegate List



National Marine Parks Roundtable Delegate List

Abigail Crosby, Cornwall Council

Alex Pepper, UK Major Ports

Beccy McDonald-Lofts, Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group

Claire Kerr, South Downs National Park

Clare Reid, Exmoor National Park

Cllr Derek Bastiman, Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group

Dr Maxwell A. Ayamba BEM, Sheffield Environmental Movement

Elaine Hayes, Plymouth Sound National Marine Park

Emily Bulled, Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities

Eve Leegwater, Environment Agency

Ffion Mitchell-Langford, Campaign for National Parks

Gareth Ludkin, Campaign for National Parks

Gurpreet Padda, Black Ocean Citizens

Hazel McDowall, Natural England

Jacques Villemot, Rewilding Britain

Jane Pettitt, Historic England

John Watkins, National Landscapes Association

Kate Jury, National Trails UK

Kirsty Lindenbaum, Natural Resources Wales

Lewis White, Sussex Bay

Lily Whitmarsh, Campaign for National Parks

Linn Wiberg, Coastal Partnership Network

Lucy Elmes, Take A Part

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CAMPAIGN for
NATIONAL PARKS

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PARCIAU CENEDLAETHOL



Mark Simmonds, British Ports Association

Martin Atrill, Plymouth University

Mike Hawtin, North York Moors National Park

Morven Robertson, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

Natasha Bradshaw, Independent Researcher

Ian Barker, New Forest National Park

Robson Peisley, Campaign for National Parks Ambassador

Rose O'Neill, Campaign for National Parks

Ruth Bradshaw, Campaign for National Parks

John Dow, Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Tegryn Jones, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Tim Duckmanton, Lake District National Park / Europarc Atlantic Isles

Tom Ash, Wildlife & Countryside Link

Tony Richardson, Isles of Scilly National Landscape Partnership

Victoria O'Bryen, University of Plymouth

Yvette Cave, Wave Wahines CIC

Annex 3: Presentation slides

Annex 4: Breakout group templates

ACTIVITY 1: Interrogating the four routes to National Marine Parks

Individual brainstorm 'benefits' and 'risks' on blue and orange post-it notes. Around the table put post-its in the relevant box in the large table

Table group discuss main issues to feedback.

Plenary feedback: 1 top benefit + 1 top risk + 1 main issue/action to take forward.

Exploring benefits and risks: WHY and WHAT

	Route to National Marine Park				
	Voluntary		Legislative		ALL routes
	1 Voluntary Self-Declaration	2 Voluntary extension of an existing National Landscape or National Park	3 Legislative extension of an existing National Park or National Landscape	4 Legislative designation of a new Marine National Park	
Benefits	<i>Blue post-its</i>	<i>Blue post-its</i>	<i>Blue post-its</i>	<i>Blue post-its</i>	
Risks	<i>Orange post-its</i>	<i>Orange post-its</i>	<i>Orange post-its</i>	<i>Orange post-its</i>	
Recommended Action (WHAT)	<i>Write on paper / White post-its</i>	<i>Write on paper</i>	<i>Write on paper</i>	<i>Write on paper</i>	

Provided on each table: AO pre-populated table (below), A3 colour spectrum, A3 ten steps 'menu' for action.

ACTIVITY 2

Table group carry through recommended actions from table 1 to start discussion of routes to action.

Discuss priorities and one action to feedback to plenary.

Plenary feedback.

Next Steps and Priority Setting: HOW, WHO (and WHEN)

Route (s) Either Voluntary (1 or 2) OR Designated routes (3 or 4)	Action (what?)	How to progress	Who needs to be involved?	When / Priority
<i>Write on paper / White post-its from previous table</i>	<i>Write on paper</i>	<i>Write on paper</i>	<i>Write on paper</i>	

Annex 5: Recommended Actions

ACTIVITY 2 TABLE 1	Next Steps			
Route (s) Specify either: Voluntary (1 or 2) OR Designated (3 or 4)	Recommended Action (s) from Activity 1	How to progress	Who needs to be involved?	When / Priority
1/2	Create a national toolkit of guidelines for each stage to reach designation (for community and council) Possibly a follow on from 'self-assessment'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a steering group with a clear focus • Identify stakeholders (wider than the original steering group) • Test the toolkit on a local scale for feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple authors • Local group to test it with • Stakeholders • Ffion to lead development 	High priority 3 dots placed on here
1/2	Motion in the Ocean implemented in more councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring in ocean literacy through engagement • National Park's management plans to evaluate Motion in the Ocean • Government to set tone on remit of National Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Local councils • National Park Authorities 	Medium priority 1 dot placed on here
1/2/3/4	A 'Clarkson' for the marine environment 'Superheroes for the sea'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle 1 mile barrier • Install a coastal minister • Reach out to Sussex Bay to find out how they did it • Using local representatives e.g. Ben Saleef? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencers • Apolitical figures • Government for a coastal minister 	Low priority 3 dots placed on here
1/2	Increasing awareness of existing guidelines that have been created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing awareness of marine consenting • Campaign for awareness • Money for people's time • Long term support 		Medium priority 1 dot placed on here

Notes:

- Other actions such as putting together a steering group including different sectors for voluntary MNPs and participatory co-design were discussed however, these were deemed to be part of the toolkit creation
- The example of Sussex Bay as something that started as a rewilding project that turned into a larger project with celebrity endorsements and private funding was used as something that could be useful to model voluntary MNPs off and as how to find areas that might want to establish an MNP
- In general, the tone of the group seemed to be that they were all keen on the idea of MNP but didn't know lots about them except for the woman who was the one who brought up Sussex Bay
- The tone felt like they all believed there was substantial interest in creating MNPs but people just didn't know how which is why the 'toolkit' came up as the top action to take so that people everywhere could create MNPs

ACTIVITY 2 TABLE 2	Next Steps			
Route (s) Specify either: Voluntary (1 or 2) OR Designated (3 or 4)	Recommended Action (s) from Activity 1	How to progress	Who needs to be involved?	When / Priority
1&2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is it? Why do we need it? How will we get there. Theory of Change. - Reframe a NMP on one page (theory of change, voluntary is critical path for legislative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define purpose - Define Theory of Change - Make a decision on what is realistic now and why we need it (elevator pitch) <p>Critique and evaluate from PSMNP Review objectives, purpose and x 2 names Revisit model with impartial learnings Create plan on a page and test with community.</p>	Funders, NPs, statutory bodies, conservation bodies, alliance members, local gov association, academics, grassroots edi organisations	<i>High priority</i>
1&2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a proof of concept and a set of guiding principles of what is good/best (M+E framework) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look for golden threads to delivering impact. Explore thematic outcomes. - Fundability, lifelong learning, equality and inclusivity = enablers 		

Notes: Hard to decouple options 3 and 4. Table became very supportive of voluntary model but recognised challenges of longevity of funding/legal status etc.

ACTIVITY 2 TABLE 3	Next Steps			
Route (s) <i>Specify either:</i> Voluntary (1 or 2) OR Designated (3 or 4)	Recommended Action (s) from Activity 1	How to progress	Who needs to be involved?	When / Priority
Voluntary (+ a little bit of 3)	<p>Framework and route map for voluntary self-declaration.</p> <p>Supporting the different needs of different seascapes with different route options. Including potential routes that lead to legislated designation — linked in England to the government’s commitment to reform governance and purposes (linked to route 3)</p>	<p>Establish network of exemplars and trial sites like Plymouth Sound</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping research to build guidance for prospective self-declarations (i.e., to help choose which route is appropriate) • Guidelines for a governance model that is more representative • Accreditation scheme for voluntary self-declarations based on UNESCO biospheres and others (leading to a network/ cohesive brand identity) <p>On incorporating route 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-sector learning across different designations including sharing from successful voluntary declarations to inform any legislative change • Provisional clauses in new National Park legislation in England to allow trial extension of existing PL as a pilot scheme. Natural England and Defra given scope to support a marine model that is different to existing terrestrial designations 	This wasn’t discussed	<p><i>Voting dots here</i></p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Needs to come before a lot of other actions but scoping and research would need to be done before this can be put in place</p>

Notes: Commentary on dynamics of the group or useful discussion points not recorded in the table

ACTIVITY 2 TABLE 4	Next Steps			
Route (s) Specify either: Voluntary (1 or 2) OR Designated (3 or 4)	Recommended Action (s) from Activity 1	How to progress	Who needs to be involved?	When / Priority
3&4	1. Build on work being undertaken by an MMO/NE working group to learn how marine planning process can be used to progress NMPs	Use existing NMP Alliance members to get CNP and NPAs on to the working group Investigate marine planning system as an alternative route to designating an extension and/or new NMP	AIFCA (Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities)	H
4	2. Identify and support network of marine champions in local communities who can promote NMPs locally, help raise awareness of the benefits of the sea and ensure strong support in future consultations on NMPs.	Make connections with community engagement organisations Learn from existing community-led co-created approaches in some of the areas adopting voluntary route e.g Sussex Bay, Plymouth, Cornwall Provide the evidence and examples of good practice that local marine champions need Create mechanism for champions from different areas to connect with each other	Community engagement organisations People co-ordinating other existing networks in relevant areas/topics	H
3&4	3. Toolkit/Principles/Checklist to enable a place-based approach i.e. setting out all the different criteria necessary for a designation to be successful.	Use learnings from Actions 1 and 2 above to create toolkit plus learnings from other similar networks e.g. Rewilding Britain	Marine champions	M
3&4	4. Campaign to secure strong political support for NMPs	Use marine champions and network to advocate for NMPs Highlight nature, social and economic benefits	APPG for Protected Landscapes	M
3&4	Ocean literacy -> enhanced engagement -> enabled access -> national marine park -> ocean literacy (should be in a circle to show that it is a continuum)			

Notes: Commentary on dynamics of the group or useful discussion points not recorded in the table

ACTIVITY 2 TABLE 5	Next Steps			
Route (s) Specify either: Voluntary (1 or 2) OR Designated (3 or 4)	Recommended Action (s) from Activity 1	How to progress	Who needs to be involved?	When / Priority
3 & 4	Map the existing marine protection measures/bodies/oversight that exists. Demonstrate the problem we are trying to solve and explore whether what already exists could work better or needs to be replaced.	<i>Gap analysis</i> Audit either on a national basis or take a more local place-based approach with a few chosen example sites which best demonstrate challenges and opportunities.	<i>MMO, IFCAS, LNRS, Natural England/NRW, eNGOs, NPAs, other national marine orgs, business, biosphere, local councils, authorities, local communities and public fisheries.</i> For example...	<i>High priority</i>
3 & 4	Set clear objectives for NMP (through consultation) and establish clear communication messages for different groups to frame NMPs for the national conversation.	Build a movement! Establish a clear theory of change Celebrate the existing voluntary approach Benefits analysis Legislative route needs national buy in and political buy in. Learn from what works (such as the legal rights for rivers)	Public, communities, MPs	<i>High priority</i>
3&4	Demonstrate the success of voluntary designation (and what it has achieved) to drive legislative route.			
3&4	Suggest Marine place-based delivery pilots to test out these ideas. One linked to an existing NP and one not.			
	Explore measures set by coastal LNRS for coastal and marine environments. Are LNRS a mechanism at sea			

ACTIVITY 2 TABLE 6	Next Steps			
Route (s) Specify either: Voluntary (1 or 2) OR Designated (3 or 4)	Recommended Action (s) from Activity 1	How to progress	Who needs to be involved?	When (when = 1 is first, 5 last) Priority (low, med, high)
Join up between NMP and Ocean literacy community to understand integration and mitigate for 'threat' / "competitiveness". Understand what integration 'unlocks'. Understand additionality.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Understand who is already involved in ocean literacy, who are the major players, where are respected governments at with strategies. Incorporate Ocean Literacy approaches (10 dimensions; schools framework, ocean literacy survey data etc) into NMP work. In Wales, ensure use Tir A Mor as a key strategic hook. <p>Key action: can we do a joint funding bid (e.g. to a big funder like lottery) rather than set this up as something competes? E.g. NMP pilot could be one way of delivering ocean literacy as part of a wider bid. [Rose note: getting NMP embedded here would be a major win!]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Build connections / coalitions between NMP work and those leading ocean literacy in England, Wales and Scotland. Articulate commonality/benefits/opportunities of NMP approach for Ocean Literacy (and highlight where NMP is different). Awareness that many groups are missing from ocean literacy conversations (minoritised communities, sports groups etc). Approach those who are missing. 	First point of call: approach Wales' Ocean literacy coordinator. (Further conversations with and facilitated by Kirsty). Emma Mckinley. Strategic leads in gov / NRW/NE Understand how this can connect with NMP/NPA works – could Alliance be a forum to discuss once initial work done.	Felt like a first next / easy step following the workshop 1
Exploration / evidence gathering of where we think a NMP would make the biggest difference. Mapping of existing designations, regulations, problems and showing how development of a designated NMP could play in.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Decide a small number of priority places to act as exemplars/pilots to make evidence gathering 'real' and specific to a place. Should include all UK countries/ mix or NPA/NL/urban/ rural etc. e.g. Pems and Cornwall plus.. Desk study / evidence review of problems and issues in a place (bringing local evidence, mapping, data, NE/NRW/NPA info, water quality data etc). Important that this then includes clear suggestions/recommendations on how a NMP could add value (i.e. what would it actually need to do, what soft/hard powers would be needed to address issues highlighted like water quality). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Draw up priority areas based on appetite so far (maybe also have a national call for one or two slots also). Felt crucial first step is to redefine the definition of NMP as felt Blue Marine one not specific enough re nature outcomes. Perhaps 2 purposes like NPs (e.g. nature AND community/ ocean literacy) Then this is a consultancy type commission to bring together evidence. [Rose – at this point someone said – we need to do a basic feasibility study in each place]. Compliment with some national survey / research include public to bring in public appetite / city / underserved communities. 	Key lead in the priority places inc local authorities, NPAs, NLS. NRW/NE Coastal Partnership Network (will have a lot of this data, new coastal hub, seabed user development group). Public / coastal users/ minority groups	2

<p>Community asset mapping and testing</p> <p>In each pilot area, building on feasibility research above</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Map communities in each pilot area using a tool like this: Building for Belonging - Plastic Free Schools - Surfers Against Sewage 2. Test appetite, need, demand etc with communities in workshops etc 	<p>Part 1 could be built into a commission / feasibility study.</p> <p>Part 2 could be useful part of the Ocean Literacy bid (suggestion from Kirsty that gaining funding to do the testing / engagement with communities would be a good fit for ocean literacy bid).</p>	<p>Yvette Cave – Community Asset Tool kit</p> <p>Ocean literacy / NRW</p> <p>Local leads e.g. NPAs, council</p> <p>Local ngos – env and social, sports clubs, facebook groups, etc</p>	<p>3</p> <p>4</p>
<p>National Parks and National Landscapes – analysis of special qualities, and more. How far can the current system take us (i.e. what’s best practice?)</p>	<p>Extension of Tash’s work on NP/NLs...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baseline special qualities, seascape assessment, marine character areas, etc. 2. Understand why NL > NPs – is this Howards guidance from 10 years ago? Gower includes the sea? 3. How can we use the “setting” of the NP (i.e. beyond the boundary) as a lever to do more in the sea? (Rose – do NPAs have more power than they think)? What can we learn from management of inland waters through NPAs (e.g. recreation pressures in Broads and Lakes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community mapping and engagement with coastal communities / sea users informs new special qualities. - Activities to understand best practice and then roll out best practice. - This work (along with feasibility study and community mapping) informs revised / proposed NPA purposes and special qualities / designation criteria (what looks like in marine context, what needs to change). This can then feed into ocean literacy strategy. 	<p>Tash!</p> <p>NPAs and NLs</p> <p>NRW and NE</p>	<p>This could come earlier in the sequence above or run parallel</p>
<p>Warm up Government (in Wales, and in England) to change legislation so it enables, supports 30x30 targets, etc</p>	<p>In Wales, this work should focus primarily at first with civil servants (given emphasis / hook of ocean literacy in Wales). Continue to use and build political champions network. Sharing pilot sites / findings important to show demand / how there is bottom up support for legislative change. Conclusion all of the above is necessary to make the case for legislative change.</p>	<p>Civil service focused evidence building and influencing.</p> <p>Political advocacy.</p> <p>Public campaign piece.</p>	<p>David Attenburgh! Or high profile champions / Ambassadors.</p> <p>Public</p> <p>Clear role CNP</p> <p>Welsh Gov / NRW</p> <p>Parliamentarians</p>	<p>5 (appreciation that have to do some of this along the way but also that the above would really help strengthen case for change)</p>
<p>Top priority [to feedback we summarised the above into one action!]</p>	<p>Pilot feasibility (bringing scientific evidence, special qualities, community mapping, join up with ocean literacy) in a small number of exemplar pilot sites.</p>	<p>Pilot sites e.g. Pembs [John Dow asked Tegryn direct if he supports it there and T said yes but may be too complex, may be other simpler places but ‘curious’ to explore], Cornwall, Yorkshire Coast [this was suggested by EA]. Felt was important to keep vol/legislative routes open and include cross UK sites.</p>		

Top action outcomes

ACTIVITY 3

Combined results from all table groups provided in feedback session and voted on individually.

ACTIVITY 3		Top Actions in order of highest votes at the end of the workshop				
Table no.	Facilitator	Route (s) Initial focus of table group	Recommended Action	How to progress	Who needs to be involved?	No. of votes (dots)
6	Rose	Legislative	Pilot – feasibility: mapping evidence, special qualities, communities and ocean literacy to answer the ‘what’ question	Pembs / Cornwall		15
3	Lily	Voluntary	Establish a framework and route map with an accreditation scheme for voluntary route			10
4	Ruth	Legislative	Place-based toolkit: for greater input to marine plans and more champions	Defra pilots		8
1	Tristan/Linn	Voluntary	Toolkit of Guidelines: clarity of journey towards voluntary/legal route, prepared by a Steering Group for communities and councils.	Create a steering group with a clear focus Identify stakeholders (wider than the original steering group) Test the toolkit on a local scale for feedback	Multiple authors Local group to test it with Stakeholders Ffion to lead development	7
5	Gareth	Legislative	Map what already exists: audit, place-based, gap analysis, including designations and governance to define the problem			6
2	Ffion/Kate	Voluntary	Re-framing NMP on a page	Build on comms examples such as the Rights for Rivers webinars		5

