

Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan **Consultation and Modifications Report**

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Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AISE	Adverse Impact on Site Integrity
BRIA	Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment
CCAP	Coastal Change Adaptation Plan
CO	Conservation Objective
CRWIA	Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EqIA	Equality Impact Assessment
EMEC	European Marine Energy Centre
EPS	European Protected Species
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GP	General Policy
HES	Historic Environment Scotland
HRA	Habitat Regulations Appraisal
ICIA	Island Communities Impact Assessment
IFMI	Inshore Fisheries Management Improvement
IROPI	Imperative reasons of overriding public interest
MCA	Maritime and Coastal Agency
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSPACE	Marine Spatial Planning Addressing Climate Effects
NMP	National Marine Plan
NMP2	National Marine Plan 2
NMPi	National Marine Plan interactive
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
OIC	Orkney Islands Council
OIRMP	Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan
OMPAG	Orkney Marine Planning Advisory Group
PMF	Priority Marine Feature
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SP	Sector Policy
SPA	Special Protection Area
UK	United Kingdom
UXO	Unexploded ordnance
WEGo	Wellbeing Economy Governments
WHS	World Heritage Sites

Executive Summary

The [Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan: Consultation Draft](#) (the Plan) was prepared by Orkney Islands Council (OIC) on behalf of the Scottish Ministers to guide decision making that will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, activities and use in the Orkney Islands marine region.

The Plan has been prepared through a process of stakeholder engagement and consultation as outlined in the Regional Marine Plan for the Orkney Islands: Statement of Public Participation. The Plan was deposited for consultation from 1 August 2024 and the consultation closed on 25 October 2024.

The consultation and stakeholder process included early engagement workshops, consultation events, school and SmartSTEM workshops as well as Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment interviews with relevant businesses. The consultation and engagement process provided valuable information and local knowledge that has informed the preparation of the final Plan and supporting assessments.

Since the consultation, the Plan and supporting assessments have been updated in response to comments received in response to the consultation. This report summarises this stakeholder feedback and comments received on the Plan and supporting assessments, and identifies the modifications made to the Plan.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The [Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan \(OIRMP\): Consultation Draft](#) (the Plan) was prepared by Orkney Islands Council (OIC) on behalf of the Scottish Ministers to guide decision making that will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, activities and use in the Orkney Islands marine region. The Plan provides a framework for decision making to help deliver the Plan's environmental, social, economic, marine ecosystem and community well-being objectives, including the provision of social and economic benefits for local communities and businesses. The Plan was developed through an inclusive process of partnership working and stakeholder participation.

The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 makes provision for the preparation and adoption of a national marine plan and regional marine plans. The United Kingdom (UK) Marine Policy Statement was adopted in 2011 and sets the framework for preparing marine plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment.

Scotland's National Marine Plan (NMP 2015) was adopted in 2015 and provides a comprehensive overarching framework for all marine activity in both Scottish inshore waters (out to 12 nautical miles) and offshore waters (12 to 200 nautical miles).

The Plan was drafted in accordance with NMP 2015, the UK Marine Policy Statement and has been prepared in accordance with the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. The Plan does not replace or remove existing regulatory regimes or legislative requirements. It provides an overarching framework to be used when reaching decisions about proposed development and activities in, or that affect, the Orkney Islands marine region.

The Plan policies aim to support the implementation of the NMP, address local priorities and relevant matters identified in the Orkney Islands Marine Region: State of the Environment Assessment (2020). The policies express intent and guide the delivery of sustainable development in Orkney.

The Plan is accompanied by the following supporting assessments:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Environmental Report.
- Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Record.
- Partial Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA).
- Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA).
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA).
- Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA).

1.2. The Purpose of the Consultation and Modifications Report

The Plan has been prepared through a process of stakeholder engagement and consultation as outlined in the Regional Marine Plan for the Orkney Islands: Statement of Public Participation¹.

This Consultation and Modifications Report sets out the process of consultation that took place in 2024 (Section 2), a consultation respondent profile (Section 3), a summary of the issues raised in response to the consultation (Section 4) and details of the modifications made to the Plan post consultation (Section 5).

The Consultation Response Form, which was used to invite comment on the consultation draft plan and supporting documents is presented in Appendix 1: Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan Consultation Response Form.

Orkney regional approach to Priority Marine Feature (PMF) policy, taken forward in response to Question 13a in the Consultation Response Form, is presented in Appendix 2: Orkney regional approach to Priority Marine Feature policy.

The feedback provided through the consultation, and summarised in this report, has informed the preparation of final Plan and supporting assessments.

¹[Orkney Islands Council \(2024\). Regional Marine Plan for the Orkney Islands: Statement of Public Participation.](#)

2. Overview of the Consultation

2.1. Consultation and engagement

The consultation draft Plan and supporting assessments were deposited for public consultation from 1 August to 25 October 2024.

In accordance with the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the consultation period for the Plan and SEA Environmental Report were advertised in relevant newspapers and submitted to the SEA Gateway for comment from the Consultation Authorities.

The aim of the consultation, and wider engagement process, was to engage a diverse audience as effectively as possible. This included targeting and designing engagement activities to each island community's circumstances to capture a diverse range of views and interests. This consultation and engagement process provided valuable information and local knowledge that has informed the preparation of the final Plan and supporting assessments.

OIC is committed to ensuring that local communities have the opportunity to engage directly with the plan-making process and have their voices heard.

Table 1 - Summary of consultation and engagement activities

Activity	Comments
Orkney Marine Planning Advisory Group (OMPAG)	Meetings have been held with the OMPAG during 2021-24 to guide the development of the Plan. In addition, general and sector specific policy sub-group meetings were held with environmental, community and industry interests to inform the preparation of all the Plan policies, the results of which were reported back to the main advisory group and subject to further discussion and refinement.
Early engagement workshops and school engagement sessions 2021	<p>A series of community engagement workshops were delivered across Orkney in 2021 to provide information and gather feedback to inform the preparation of the Plan. These workshops helped to raise awareness about Orkney's first regional marine plan and how to engage with the plan preparation process.</p> <p>Classroom engagement sessions were delivered in four schools across Orkney to supporting learning and engage</p>

Activity	Comments
	young people in the regional marine planning process.
Westray Development Trust Conference 2023	A presentation and engagement stand at the Westray Development Trust Conference 2023. This enabled OIC Marine Planners to raise awareness of regional marine planning in Orkney and the upcoming consultation on the Plan.
Community consultation and engagement events 2024	During August to October 2024, nine community drop-in sessions were delivered across Orkney running from 11:00 to 19:00. Locations included Stronsay, Rousay, St Margaret's Hope, Shapinsay, Hoy, Stromness, Kirkwall, Sanday and Westray.
Online community consultation and engagement sessions 2024	Two online information and engagement sessions were delivered in August to October 2024.
Sharing & recording spatial data 2024	Building on feedback captured during the engagement process for the Coastal and Marine Recreation Survey in 2023, marine spatial data was captured and 'ground truthed' as part of the consultation and engagement events in 2024 to help address data gaps and capture local knowledge.
Stromness Museum Marine Plan Information Panel	An information panel about the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan was displayed at the 'Nature in a changing Climate' exhibition at the Stromness Museum. This included information on how to engage with the plan making process.
Engagement at Orkney Snorkel Trail launch event September 2024	An engagement stand was set up at the launch of the Orkney Snorkel Trail to engage stakeholders with the Plan making process. Event was hosted by the Stromness Museum and Scottish Wildlife Trust at the Firth Community Centre.
Social media campaign 2021-24	Regular updates through OIC and Scottish Government channels, including links to participate and access documents.
Radio campaign 2024	Multiple rounds of interviews with BBC Radio Orkney before and during the Plan consultation.

Activity	Comments
SmartSTEM Schools Workshops 2024	<p>SmartSTEM Workshops were delivered by OIC Marine Planners with six student groups (P6 to S2) in June 2024 at Kirkwall Grammar School; an event aimed at raising awareness for careers in Science Technology Engineering and Maths.</p> <p>The workshops involved playing the Marine Spatial Planning Challenge Board Game with young people to explore marine planning scenarios and capturing the priorities of young people for marine management and planning in Orkney.</p>
School workshops	<p>Previous engagement with schools in 2021 demonstrated the desire for follow up sessions. OIC Marine Planners then ran subsequent sessions with four schools in 2024 during the draft Plan consultation period.</p>
Business Regulatory Impact Assessment – Interviews with businesses	<p>Six interviews were held with local businesses using a survey questionnaire to gather evidence about any potential positive and negative impacts on businesses as a result of implementing the Plan.</p>
Information leaflet on the marine plan	<p>A bespoke factsheet provided an overview of the key elements of the Plan and was distributed to across Orkney communities.</p>
Orcadian advert	<p>The Plan and Strategic Environment Assessment consultation was advertised in The Orcadian on the 25 July 2024. An information leaflet on the upcoming consultation events was distributed in the following week's newspaper.</p>
Posters	<p>Posters were put up in key areas around Mainland Orkney and the isles to raise awareness and display information and links to the relevant consultation documents. These activities were supported by the Island Development Trusts.</p>

2.2. Early engagement workshops and school workshops

OIC Marine Planning delivered community engagement workshops in Stronsay, Sanday, Westray and Hoy in Spring/Summer 2022. This helped to engage local communities in the plan making process and outline the scope and purpose of the forthcoming marine plan.

In addition to the engagement outlined in the Statement of Public Participation, workshops were delivered with the Stronsay, Sanday, Westray and Hoy Community Schools.

These workshops were extremely useful to inform community understanding of the plan making process. They also highlighted the need to go above and beyond the statutory engagement requirements to ensure island communities do not feel left out of the process and ensure Local Ecological Knowledge was (and will continue to be) gathered.

Community engagement events took place in Kirkwall, Stromness and St Margaret's Hope in Spring/Summer 2022 to engage local communities in the plan making process and outline the scope and purpose of the forthcoming marine plan. Again, these were additional events to those outlined in the Statement of Public Participation.

2.3. OIRMP community consultation and engagement events

As part of the public consultation from 1 August to 25 October 2024, ten in-person community consultation events were delivered which ran through the day and into the evening in multiple locations throughout the Orkney Islands, see Table 1.

A high turnout was experienced for the consultation events, six of which on the ferry-linked isles as well as Kirkwall, Stromness, Finstown and St Margaret's Hope. Each event was set up in a location where local people visit as part of their day-to-day activities including local cafés or development trust centres, or youth clubs in order to capture passing local people of all ages. Short presentations and films were used to showcase the Orkney marine environment and highlight the Plan's relevance within each the local area.

Two further online community consultation and engagement sessions were delivered to maximise participation opportunities.

These events were advertised online, via email and in the printed press. Consultation information was available from the OIC website and was sent out in email alerts to the 360+ Orkney marine planning stakeholders.

From these engagement sessions there was a total of 250 visitors attending, and many in-depth discussions held about the Plan and more general marine topics.

2.4. School and SmartSTEM Workshops

Several workshops were held with schools to ensure young people's views and voices were captured. During these workshops the OIC Marine Planning team

delivered presentations on how marine planning works in Orkney and how it contributes to the sustainable use of the marine environment. The workshops demonstrated how busy the Orkney Islands marine region is in simple terms and set up interactive marine planning scenarios using the Marine Spatial Planning Challenge Game. Young people's views were captured on what they believe are important aspects of the sea, and how they should be managed.

Ten local school class sessions were delivered by the OIC Marine Planning team to engage pupils on marine planning issues and to find out what they valued about the marine environment. This included four lessons delivered in 2022 as part of the early engagement process, three workshops delivered in conjunction with a Kirkwall Grammar School SmartSTEM event, and the remaining three sessions during the formal regional marine plan consultation in 2024. The ages of the children ranged from 7 to 15 years old.

These lessons/workshops included a 30-minute interactive presentation exploring the marine developments and activities around Orkney and the many ways in which local communities rely on the ocean, and a summary of what marine planning involves. This was followed by playing an adapted version of the Marine Spatial Planning Challenge boardgame, with a scenario set up resembling the marine planning challenges faced in Orkney, before finishing up by asking the young people to write down and discuss their answers to two questions.

- Question 1: What is the most important thing about the sea for you?
- Question 2: If you were asked to manage the sea, what would you do?

These questions were specifically chosen to identify what young people value the most about the marine environment, and what they would like to see being done in the future. This information has been used to assess and inform the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan aims and objectives, to ensure they reflect young voices and aspirations.

Over 150 answers to the two questions were captured, with many more noted following the discussions that took place. The most mentioned theme in relation to Question 1 (What is the most important thing about the sea for you?) was nature conservation, with a heavy focus in all workshops being on the need to protect wildlife. This was focused on general species and habitat preservation, but led to discussions on many related impacts, in particular issues around marine litter and other more general pollution concerns. The other reoccurring topics were the importance of fishing as a food source and income (and the need to protect fish so that fishing can continue), the scenic views, and the need to keep the sea clean for us to enjoy it. Many children talked about their enjoyment of swimming and playing in the sea.

The children's knowledge and comments about marine related jobs, fishing and marine habitats and species was remarkably well informed. A high percentage of the children stated that their parents and families worked in fishing, aquaculture, marine energy, oil and gas and marine transport.

When asked “If you were asked to manage the sea, what would you do?”, the responses received were very diverse. Again, conservation themes ran throughout with the two most raised topics being reducing litter and protecting fish and wildlife. Several more locally relevant topics came up in discussion, including the need to improve local piers, reduce power cuts on the smaller islands, the need for more modern ferries and more general comments on keeping the sea clean. The topic of salmon farms was raised on several occasions, with mixed opinions between children. There was a good understanding on the need to balance human wellbeing (e.g. ‘fish to eat’) and nature conservation.

2.5. Business Regulatory Impact Assessment – Interviews with businesses

Six interviews with businesses of varying sizes were carried out as part of the BRIA process. This included two businesses from the aquaculture sector, two from the energy sector, one from fisheries and one from a local tourism operator. This helped to capture varied views on the Plans’ impacts on businesses from a variety of sectors and businesses of a range of sizes. This part of the consultation has helped to assess the likely costs, benefits and risks of implementing the Plan for businesses and employers. Consideration has been given to the potential for any disproportionate impacts or benefits for micro/small businesses in comparison to businesses of greater size.

Questions presented to businesses during these interviews included:

- Which of the policies in the Plan does the business feel might provide either benefits/opportunities or costs/risks?
- Will the Plan have an impact on the competitiveness of your business?
- Within your industry, will the Plan affect suppliers’ ability and/or incentive to introduce new technologies, products or business models?
- For small and micro businesses only, will the Plan create a disproportionate distribution of benefits/impacts towards businesses due to their size?

The BRIA interviews followed guidance and information provided within the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment: Toolkit². The findings from the consultation on the Plan and the BRIA interviews have informed the preparation of the BRIA and the final Plan.

² [Scottish Government \(2018\). Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment: Toolkit.](#)

3. Consultation Respondent Profile

3.1. Overview

In total across the consultation, 35 written consultation responses were received from 23 organisations and 12 individuals. Within these responses, over 450 individual comments were submitted, logged and analysed in detail.

3.2. Respondents profile

As part of the consultation analysis process, respondents were assigned to stakeholder groups. This enabled analysis of whether differences, or commonalities, appeared across the different types of organisation and/or individuals that responded. A break-down of the stakeholder groups is shown here and in Figure 1:

- Businesses (8)
- Individual/ Interested Persons (12)
- Industry bodies (2)
- Interest Groups (8)
- Public Bodies (4)
- Public Company (1)

The consultation respondents are categorised as local community members, conservation interests, academia and research interests, fisheries interests, aquaculture interests, energy interests, recreation, historic environment, utilities and engineering, see Figure 2.

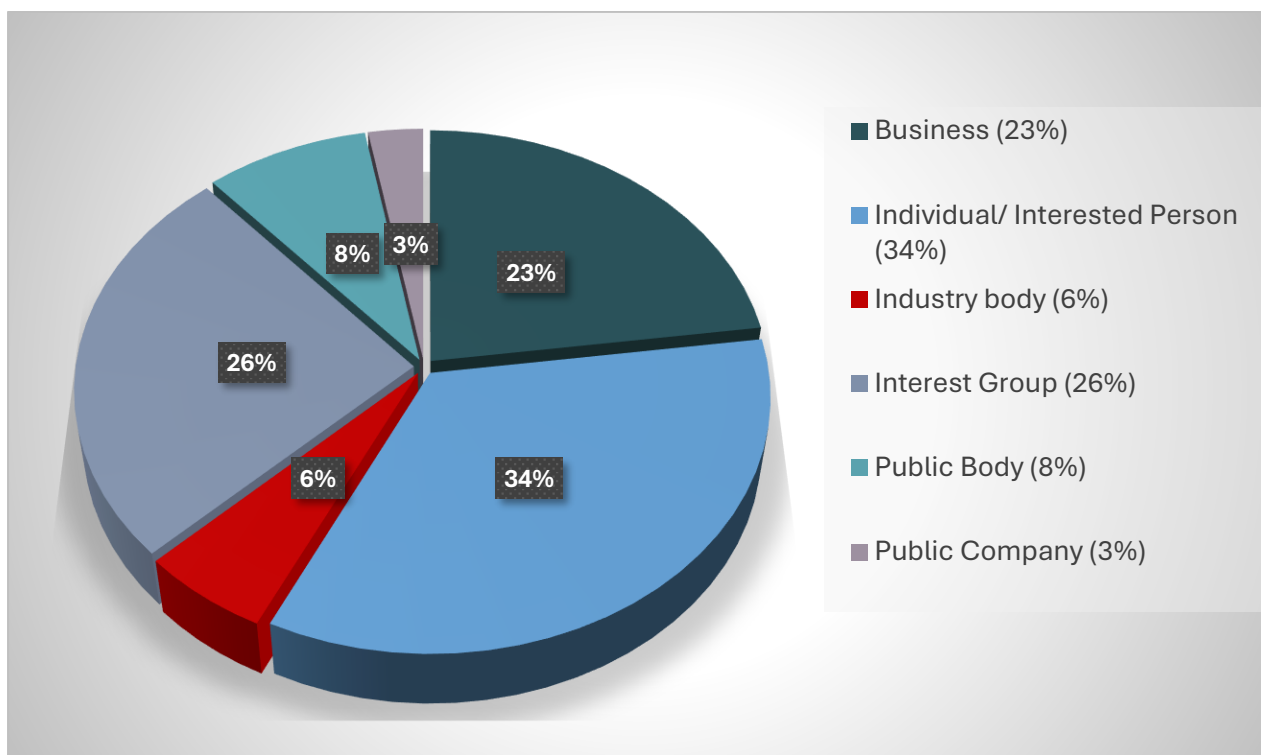


Figure 1 - Consultation Responses received for the Plan

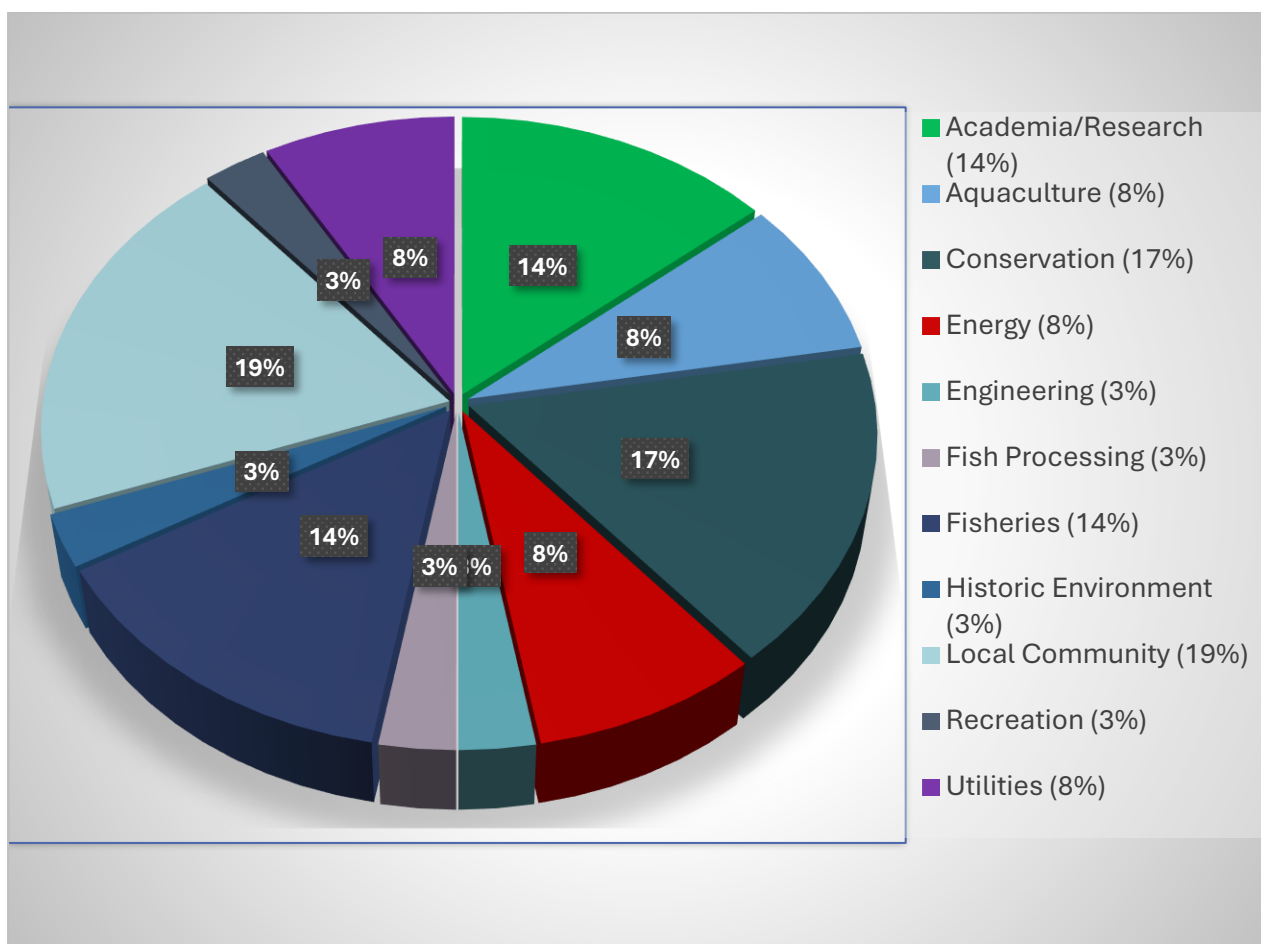


Figure 2 - Consultation response by Sector/Interest

4. Consultation Response Summary

4.1. Overview

This section of the report provides a summary of the issues raised in response to the consultation of the Plan and supporting questions, as detailed in Appendix 1: Consultation Response Form. The consultation questions relate to the Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Plan, and Plan appendices, in order of how they appear in the Plan. For clarity, references to Plan policies and paragraphs in this consultation response summary refer to those in the consultation draft Plan.

4.2. Section 1: Introduction

4.2.1. Purpose of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan (Q1)

Summary of consultation response issues

The plan vision would benefit from a clearly stated time period to help monitor the implementation of the plan e.g. 2045 or 2050.

The plan should meet the needs and aspirations of Islanders and islands within the Orkney archipelago. In this regard, it is important that where local considerations need to be factored into decision making, the local context of Orkney is considered.

It is unclear the extent to which OIC has the powers to implement the plan in decision making.

Clarification is required in the plan on the role of OIC (the delegate) as a consultee on marine licensing decisions.

Clarification is required in the plan on the role of OIC and other public authority decision makers to ensure that the plan's aim and objectives are addressed.

The plan should provide guidance on spatial and temporal allocation for different users, activities and developments.

The plan needs to be supported by clear guidance on enforcement and planning mechanisms to ensure policies lead to clear outcomes and decisions.

The plan should include spatial management to restrict development impacts on commercial fishing interests including fish breeding and nursery grounds.

4.2.2. Use of the Plan policy framework (Q2)

Summary of consultation response issues

It is welcomed that the plan policies include provisions to guide public authority decision makers to contribute towards the delivery of the plan objectives and that the policies should be applied proportionately.

The identification of key terms up-front in the plan is welcomed to ensure standardised and correct interpretation of policies.

It is unclear the extent to which OIC has the powers to implement the plan in decision making.

This section of the plan may need to make it clear where the 'power lies' in decision making, and the role of OIC, alongside the Marine Directorate, in implementing the policies.

It is important to ensure that the ecosystem approach is being used in plan implementation.

Clarification is needed on how the concept of 'proportionality' will be applied in practice to policy implementation.

It is unclear how upcoming plans will impact the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan, particularly National Marine Plan 2 (NMP2).

Consideration should be given to the inclusion of wording which more clearly states that the plan should be read and applied as whole, and that there may be conflicts between policies, that may need to be resolved.

There is some ambiguity over what/who falls within the definition of 'Marine and/or Coastal Users'.

4.2.3. Vision, Guiding Principles, Aim and Objectives (Q3)

Summary of consultation response issues

The interests of Orkney communities extend beyond the Orkney Islands marine region and this should be acknowledged via the implementation of the plan objectives and policies.

The plan objectives and policies need to support better engagement with local communities in decision making.

The plan currently reflects a strong emphasis on managing environmental impacts from development, with less focus on supporting sustainable economic development.

The vision, guiding principles, aim and objectives should refer to the twin climate and nature crisis and the plan's role in addressing this.

Greater clarity is needed on how a 'rapid transition' to net zero is defined within the plan objectives.

Food production and food security should be supported within the plan objectives.

Co-existence is vital for all sectors however, the fishing sector is often excluded from sites despite co-siting efforts; the plan needs to support a framework where co-existence is achieved.

The plan does not provide the level of guidance which would be expected in a regional marine plan as the objectives do not specify the particular steps that will be taken to meet the plan's aim.

Greater detail is required on the meaning of and compliance with environmental limits.

The identification of cumulative impacts within the plan objectives is welcomed.

Greater clarity on Objective 3 (just transition) would be useful, particularly given the multiple definitions and tensions within just transition policies and narratives.

It is important that this marine plan embeds an approach of genuine accountability via effective, meaningful public engagement across Orkney communities.

The ambition for a low carbon economy, and achieving net-zero commitments through just transition, should not come at the cost of food security.

An ecosystem-based approach should supersede the implementation of individual sector policies, as if viewed in isolation, these policies will not take cumulative impacts into consideration.

All policies should be reviewed with the intention of replacing the word 'should' with a stronger word such as 'shall' to support effective implementation.

Visitors to Orkney could be specifically referenced in the plan's aim, vision and objectives.

4.3. Section 2: General Policies

4.3.1. Introductory Information to the General Policies (GPs)(Q4)

Summary of consultation response issues

The plan currently reflects a strong emphasis on managing environmental impacts from development, with less focus on supporting sustainable development.

The plan should emphasise the need to optimise positive impacts and outcomes alongside the management of negative impacts.

The role of the plan in guiding the behaviour of applicants and developers, as well as public authorities, needs to be clearly stated.

Further clarity is required on the meaning of 'proportionately' in the implementation of the plan policies.

The inclusion of the mitigation hierarchy as an overarching principle that underpins the general and sector policies is welcomed.

4.3.2. General Policy 1: Sustainable development, activities and use (Q5)

Summary of consultation response issues

The plan needs to make stronger links to the delivery of Scotland's Blue Economy Vision.

General Policy 1 should place a more significant emphasis on support for sustainable development to reflect the current National Marine Plan (NMP 2015) and emerging draft proposals for NMP2.

General Policy 1 should highlight the importance of using local knowledge in decision making.

Reference to the precautionary principle in General Policy 1 is welcomed.

Greater clarity is required on the application of the precautionary principle in decision making.

The plan needs to be careful not to take the precautionary principle too far, making it difficult for developments or activities to go ahead.

General Policy 1 should make further reference to the importance of adhering to the mitigation hierarchy.

"Appropriate mitigation" must only be used when all other options have been explored fully and the adverse impacts have been agreed to be "unavoidable".

The plan needs to include spatial management to prioritise sustainable development in appropriate locations.

The plan should implement ecosystem-based management in recognition of the integrated nature of human and non-human activities.

4.3.3. General Policy 2: Safety (Q6)

Summary of consultation response issues

General Policy 2 should apply other areas of safety in addition to harbour areas and shipping.

Developments, such as aquaculture and offshore renewable energy, must ensure their design, layout and maintenance will not pose risks to the safety of fishers.

4.3.4. General Policy 3: Climate change (Q7)

Summary of consultation response issues

The prominence given to tackling the global climate crisis and supporting the displacement of fossil-fuel use is welcomed.

From a place-based perspective, General Policy 3c is exciting and ambitious.

The implementation of General Policy 3c will be key to ensuring the long-term sustainability of marine developments, and the health and wellbeing of communities and ecosystems alike.

The Orkney Partnership's 2030 net zero target should be referenced in the contextual information to this policy.

There is no reference to the role of marine food production in the transition to more climate friendly sources of human protein.

The plan should recognise the potential contribution of e-fuels to decarbonisation.

The supporting text to this policy should refer to greenhouse gas emissions as opposed to carbon emissions.

The vision, guiding principles, aim and objectives should refer to the twin climate and nature crisis and the plan's role in addressing this.

The supporting text to this policy should refer to Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029.

Additional guidance is required to help decision-makers and applicants understand what is meant by 'significant weight' to climate and nature crises and how this will be applied in practice.

There should be a requirement that proposals for developments or activities must demonstrate how they will help to meet net zero targets.

Emphasising the climate crisis is welcomed, however, to ensure that developments deliver on the ambitions of this plan, certain criteria should be incorporated to avoid potential greenwashing or bypassing of effects.

The identification of habitat restoration as a way to help adapt to a changing climate is welcomed.

This section should also reference underlying processes influencing climate change e.g. Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation.

4.3.5. General Policy 4: Supporting sustainable social and economic benefits (Q8)

Summary of consultation response issues

The plan needs to emphasise the importance of securing socio-economic benefits as well as addressing environmental impacts.

Supporting community wealth building principles is welcomed by many stakeholders.

The plan needs to be more specific about how community wealth building will be delivered.

The plan needs to address appropriate early engagement between fishers and developers to ensure sustainable use of the marine area.

The plan narrative and terminology should move away from the term 'sustainable economic growth' as there are increasing concerns regarding whether growth and sustainability are compatible in all cases. It would better align with the aim and objectives of the plan to focus on sustainable development including prosperous and sustainable economies.

There should be standardised community benefit packages across developments.

Further guidance is required on how 'net' economic benefit will be assessed and determined in decision making.

This policy should aim to facilitate marine developments which support the local economy, where appropriate, and the creation of skilled and well-paid jobs.

The supporting text to this policy should reference jobs created indirectly/downstream jobs, e.g. seafood processors.

The safeguarding of nature will provide social and economic benefits for Orkney through creating jobs in the tourism industry e.g. wildlife watching.

4.3.6. General Policy 5: Safeguarding natural capital and ecosystem services (Q9)

Summary of consultation response issues

Safeguarding natural capital for future generations should not deprive the current generation benefiting from it in a sustainable way.

The plan should enforce stricter protections in areas providing critical ecosystem services (e.g. breeding and nursery grounds).

Potential pressures from fish farming can be exaggerated, often unintentionally, with regulation disproportionate to impacts.

There are data gaps that will affect the delivery of natural capital and ecosystem service assessments.

The word 'should' in this policy should be replaced with the word 'must' or 'shall' to strengthen policy implementation by decision makers.

Bottom trawling damages ecosystem services in many instances, and we don't know what may recover from historic damage unless bottom trawling is banned and the ecosystem is given a chance to recover.

4.3.7. General Policy 6: Water environment (Q10)

Summary of consultation response issues

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) should advise on current River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) monitoring as it may affect the approach of this chapter.

This policy is an opportunity to highlight responsibilities of public authorities with terrestrial jurisdictions to have regard to downstream consequences on the coastal and marine environment.

This section focusses too heavily on the RBMP and should cover wider management priorities relating to water quality and benthic impacts.

This policy could include further spatial planning to protect water quality.

This policy stating that proposals should be accompanied by 'sufficient information' for an assessment on impacts on water quality and the benthic environment is welcome.

The intended outcome and wording of General Policy 6ii needs to be clearer.

4.3.8. General Policy 7: Coastal development and coastal change (Q11)

Summary of consultation response issues

It is welcomed that this policy recognises the importance of coastal and marine habitats and species in coastal protection, applying nature-based solutions and permitting managed future coastal change, wherever practicable.

It would be beneficial to highlight potential cross linkages with this policy area and the role of the Coastal Change Adaptation Plan for Orkney.

The management of coastal impacts (e.g. coastal flooding in settlements) should be more specifically addressed within the plan.

This policy will need to be applied proportionately so that implementation does not result in disproportionately expensive requirements on developers.

The plan should not prohibit the development of hard defence measures required for the safety of coastal communities.

It is necessary to protect assets from the impacts of climate change, particularly in coastal environments, to ensure that the integrity of wastewater and water assets can remain fully operational.

The linkages between this section and GP3 Climate Change should be acknowledged.

4.3.9. General Policy 8: Historic environment (Q12)

Summary of consultation response issues

The inclusion of a specific and detailed policy on the historic environment and the inclusion of a reference to the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland is welcomed.

A specific policy section on undesignated assets should be considered to ensure that these types of assets are given the same level of focus as designated assets and ensure that they are not undervalued by potential developers and wider stakeholders.

Suggested that the wording for General Policy 8c on World Heritage Sites (WHS) could be adapted to directly incorporate the wording from the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) WHS policy to better reflect and align with national policy.

This policy should mention living heritage such as building and maintaining historic boats and the importance of historic piers.

This plan could consider embedding marine-based socio-cultural heritage within policy e.g. the embodied knowledge, skill and tradition of fishing.

The context for General Policy 8 focusses almost entirely on physical archaeology and does not address maritime history, culture, people, etc.

Recommended that the wording for General Policy 8d on Historic Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) should directly incorporate the wording from NPF4.

4.3.10. General Policy 9: Nature (Q13)

Summary of consultation response issues

The alignment of this policy with NPF4 and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is welcomed.

This policy should highlight the importance of local knowledge in decision making.

The context for the policy focuses on global issues when it should address local issues.

In the absence of a biodiversity metric, General Policy 9 should refer to the need to utilise best practice methods.

The plan should directly address the gaps in the NPF4 Policy 3 concerning the exemptions for aquaculture regarding biodiversity enhancement actions.

Further guidance required on how significant weight will be applied to nature in decision making.

Need to update reference to and support to the delivery of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

The plan should address how development and activities impact on existing restoration and enhancement projects and how these impacts should be addressed in decision-making.

The plan should include spatial management for fisheries, especially for fisheries such as dredging that have significant adverse impacts on the environment.

Care is needed for any restoration and enhancement approaches to ensure it isn't a waste of effort and resources, and these efforts need to be mindful of national policy process already ongoing.

There is a lack of guidance available for the provision of biodiversity enhancement in the marine environment and it is important that the application of this policy is consistent and proportionate given this current limitation.

Any future guidance on marine restoration and enhancement should be consulted on with members of OMPAG and other relevant stakeholders before being adopted.

Further monitoring is necessary for initial baseline data in Orkney's marine environment to inform the policies in the plan; how can developments be deemed sustainable if the local environment baseline data is lacking?

General Policy 9: Nature should sit alongside General Policy 3: Climate change in the plan to acknowledge the connected nature of these policy issues.

Support stated for a departure from the National Marine Plan 2015 by giving significant weight to the global nature crisis, bringing the plan into line with NPF4 and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

Policy 9da) is helpful as it specifically applies the mitigation hierarchy to decision making on PMF impacts and may add additional weight to these considerations.

4.3.11. General Policy 9d: Specific policy provisions on how lower magnitude impacts on PMFs should be considered in decision making (Q13a)

Summary of consultation response issues

The protection of PMFs is a priority, not only for the conservation of biodiversity but for the ecosystem services they provide to local communities.

A new policy on lower magnitude impacts on PMFs would require significant additional assessment effort in Orkney when compared to other regions, and that this could be a deterrent to development and investment in Orkney.

The inclusion of specific policy provisions for lower magnitude impacts on PMFs would foster a more comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to marine conservation in Orkney.

Some policy provisions should be developed to protect PMFs in keeping with the consideration of cumulative impacts.

The loss of a small amount of a particular PMF should not stop high value projects from proceeding where these are in the general economic or social development interest of Orkney as a whole. However, PMFs should be protected from developments which are for the convenience of an individual or small group of people, for example, installing a waste water to sea outfall rather than building a suitable on shore treatment works for waste water.

While the intention to include specific policy provisions for lower magnitude impacts on PMFs is commendable, it is crucial to consider the practical implications for marine development.

Clear evidence-based thresholds would be required to assess the potential impacts of individual developments, without such thresholds a policy could pose significant challenges to developers and decision-makers.

Statutory agencies welcomed further discussion on a potential policy that will consider how lower magnitude impacts on PMFs (i.e. those impacts that do not constitute an impact on the national status) should be considered in decision making. These discussions could also be tied in with discussion on possible changes to the NMP policy and/or associated guidance.

The risk could be that if no policy addresses lower magnitude impacts on PMFs, there will be a clear gap that could result in long-term, unpredicted consequences.

Tools, metrics and science are needed to assess lower magnitude impacts on PMFs.

Lower magnitude impacts on PMFs should be addressed in regional policy as disregarding them would have an extremely detrimental impact on Orkney's local biodiversity, with significant knock on effects.

Detailed coverage of regional protection of PMFs would provide much better policy guidance for both the environment and meaningful sustainable development.

Focusing solely on the national status of PMFs may overlook significant lower magnitude impacts that, while not immediately affecting national populations, could still have considerable consequences at the regional level.

There should be a presumption against all developments and activities which adversely impact any PMFs.

Existing measures are in place to ensure that anchorages do not adversely impact vulnerable PMFs; maerl beds are the most important feature in this context in Orkney.

Orkney regional approach to Priority Marine Feature policy

The Orkney regional approach to PMF policy, taken forward in response to Question 13a, is presented in Appendix 2: Orkney regional approach to Priority Marine Feature policy.

4.3.12. General Policy 10: Seascape and landscape (Q14)

Summary of consultation response issues

The impact of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects to seascape and landscape should be identified in the contextual information to General Policy 10.

Any strategies to minimise or mitigate significant adverse effects on landscape, townscape and seascape should be practical and proportionate to the type of development.

This policy should not be used to prevent the construction of appropriate sea defences.

It is important to recognise that there may be conflicts between minimising the visibility of developments, such as seaweed farms and wave farms, and ensuring that they are adequately marked for the safety of mariners, particularly in adverse conditions.

4.3.13. General Policy 11 Surface and underwater noise, and vibration (Q15)

Summary of consultation response issues

The application of the mitigation hierarchy in relation to noise sensitive species is welcomed.

Further research should be undertaken to address data gaps on baseline noise levels in Orkney waters and noise related impacts.

The information on noise needs to be about Orkney and reflect the varying severity of noise impacts.

It is recommended that the plan includes a requirement for activities that create noise pollution to use proven mitigation measures.

The plan should refer to acoustic devices as opposed to acoustic deterrent devices (ADDs) as there are novel acoustic devices being trialled in aquaculture for medicinal bath treatments. Removing 'deterrent' would permit both ADDs and novel technology to be encompassed.

ADDs should not be identified as a noise related pressure specifically in relation to aquaculture.

As there is policy provision for PMFs in General Policy 9, there isn't a need for a specific policy strand on PMFs in General Policy 11.

A requirement for the assessment and consideration of electromagnetic field effect should be included in this policy.

The supporting text to this policy refers to the joint UK Protocol for In-Situ Underwater Measurement of Explosive Ordnance Disposal for unexploded ordnance (UXO), however it does not state that this protocol must be used.

There should be a requirement for activities that create noise pollution to use proven mitigation measures.

4.3.14. General Policy 12: Marine litter and waste (Q16)

Summary of consultation response issues

'Bag the Bruck' data should be considered in the context to this policy.

This policy should address lost, discarded or abandoned fishing gear.

'Bag the Bruck' is a very positive initiative though there is a need to consider how collected litter can be disposed of during the rest of the year.

4.3.15. General Policy 13: Non-native and invasive non-native species (Q17)

Summary of consultation response issues

The updated Great Britain Invasive Non-native Species Strategy should be referenced in the supporting information to this policy.

Relevant aspects of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan should be considered for inclusion in the plan.

Developments or activities that pose a risk of introducing non-native species must be required to produce a comprehensive Bio-Security Plan.

This plan should ensure that the biosecurity impacts from any marine and terrestrial invasive non-native species are effectively managed.

There is an underappreciated risk of invasive non-native species being introduced from work vessels which are difficult to clean, such as dredgers and jack-up platforms.

4.3.16. General Policy 14: Amenity, wellbeing and quality of life of local communities (Q18)

Summary of consultation response issues

This policy is hugely welcomed and necessary, though as recognised in the plan, the associated values are often intangible or difficult to measure, and even unquantifiable. This however does not make them any less relevant, these values are often more important than short term production of a given good or short term economic investment.

Developers across all marine activities will need guidance to help implement this policy, there is a learning curve to thinking about this and embedding it in core considerations for any marine development project.

This policy should identify provision for an Orkney Islands Marine Region: Amenity, wellbeing and quality of life guidance.

Sustainable marine developments, not just activities such as recreation, positively contribute to wellbeing and quality of life.

Sustainable economic development in island communities delivers many socio-economic benefits including improvements to wellbeing and quality of life.

Protecting communities from consultation fatigue and tickbox engagement is essential.

This policy has no mention of the direct effects that marine developments have in contributing towards improving quality of life of rural and coastal communities through improvement of infrastructure and amenities within the places they operate.

Strong and inclusive community and stakeholder engagement is essential for the successful implementation of any management plan, particularly in this case, as the local community will be directly impacted by the plan.

Fishing activities in island communities deliver significant socio-economic benefits both directly and indirectly.

Policy 14 aii regarding the co-creation of mitigation to address impacts on amenity, wellbeing and quality of life of local communities should be reworded to make the meaning clearer.

This policy forms an important part of the plan, therefore it should not be listed as the last general policy.

Sailing and rowing make a particular contribution to wellbeing and social cohesion, and developments which improve the facilities and activities of clubs and other local groups should be encouraged.

4.4. Section 3: Sector Policies

4.4.1. Introductory information to the Sector Policies (3.1 – 3.16) (Q19)

Summary of consultation response issues

The sector policies should be as Orkney specific as possible and address local priorities.

It is important to consider cumulative impacts on other developments, activities and infrastructure not just cumulative impacts on nature.

All sector policies should be considered together to assist decision makers in making difficult decisions about the use of the marine environment.

“Appropriate mitigation” must only be used when all other options have been explored fully and the adverse impacts agreed to be “unavoidable”.

4.4.2. Sector Policy 1: Commercial fishing (Q20)

Summary of consultation response issues

This policy should be designed to support and enable the fishing industry to flourish.

Fishing is significantly at risk from marine economy developments that are planned into the future.

The plan should include spatial management measures for commercial fishing to address environmental impacts from scallop dredging and bottom trawling on seabed habitats and the ecosystem services they provide.

There is no justification for continuing to dredge for clams within the Orkney Marine area, which are already fished by divers without damage to the sea.

The policy is inconsistent with other sector policies and does not include avoidance of negative impacts caused by fishing activities on all other receptors and does not reference where fishing should be avoided or restricted.

Policy provisions that address significant adverse impacts from commercial fishing activities on other developments, and other economic sectors, should be included in this policy.

Additional guidance could be provided on nursery, spawning and feeding areas for commercially fished species.

The current text underplays upstream and downstream jobs created by fishing such as shoreside processors.

The policy wording could be stronger to protect fishing interests, such as using 'must' rather than 'should' or 'have regard to'.

If fishing is a part of Orkney which we wish to preserve, greater connection of future generations in relation to sustainable fishing may be an opportunity stemming from this plan.

The recognition of the importance of nursery, spawning and feeding areas for commercially fished species, and associated habitats and species, as well as the recognition of the potential impacts of developments and activities on the wider marine environment is welcomed.

It would be helpful if this policy set out how the plan can contribute to sustainable management of commercial fisheries in Orkney and address the impact of fishing on habitats and species.

Areas previously damaged by dredging should be allowed to recover, with dredging and bottom trawling stopped, allowing other more sustainable fishing methods.

Reference to the Orkney Inshore Fisheries Management Plan is out of date.

Commercial fishing plays an important role in the Orkney economy and recreational boaters benefit from it through, for example, harbour maintenance and boatyards.

Best practice use of creel buoys should be promoted as these can pose a hazard to navigation.

4.4.3. Sector Policy 2: Aquaculture (Q21)

Summary of consultation response issues

Concerns raised about the sustainability of aquaculture including effects on biodiversity, the water environment (chemical pressures) and wild salmonids.

There is an opportunity for this policy section to mention how salmon farming is a global leader on producing high quality, low carbon protein, and link this to objectives and goals outlined in the Blue Economy Vision, Aquaculture Vision, and National Food Strategy.

It is welcomed that this policy recognises the importance of nature conservation considerations, the application of the mitigation hierarchy and considering cumulative impacts from development and activities.

This marine plan should address the effects of specific fish farms in Orkney.

There is a disproportionate and unjustified focus on potential negative impacts from fish farming.

The wording in this policy section exaggerates potential cumulative impacts from finfish expansion and does not consider the work done by the sector and regulators in ensuring scale, siting, operations, and design of fish farm developments are appropriately managed to limit cumulative impacts on the marine environment and other users.

The plan should include policy for decommissioning schemes to be put in place for aquaculture developments.

The contextual text to this policy should acknowledge that the degree of environmental impact from fish farming depends on the type, scale, location and mitigation associated with a specific fish farming development or activity.

There are provisions in this policy to safeguard and protect other marine users and infrastructure from aquaculture activities; this policy also needs to include adequate provision to protect of aquaculture assets.

This policy should specifically detail the mitigation hierarchy.

It is important that new aquaculture technologies are only implemented at scale where they have demonstrated they adhere to all relevant policies.

There is a presumption that the "baseline" for "sustainable" is the status quo. But what if there are current unsustainable aquaculture farms? It would be interesting to see if this plan can leave scope for potential reassessments of past-approved uses of the marine environment.

The plan states that fishing has widespread impacts on the environment however this is then heavily caveated by stating "however, the degree of impact depends on the amount of fishing taking place, the efficiency and selectivity of gear, the approach taken to targeting species, and the nature and sensitivity of species and habitats affected." Similar caveats are not provided for other marine sectors. This should be consistent between sectors, particularly recognising the highly regulated nature of fish farming which takes a highly precautionary approach.

Concerns were raised about proposed increases in the size and biomass of fish farms not resulting in economic benefits within local communities e.g. increases in the number of jobs.

There is a need for independent modelling of fish farm impacts.

4.4.4. Sector Policy 3: Shipping, ports, harbours and ferries (Q22)

Summary of consultation response issues

The plan policies should address the onshore impacts of port and harbour development e.g. on harbours, housing provision and the local economy.

Sector Policy 3 i. g should include reference to fallow but consented aquaculture sites.

This policy does not contain any requirement to consider the Local Development Plan or National Planning Framework unlike aquaculture and pipeline, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure; this needs to be consistent across the sectoral policies.

It is important that the potential environmental impacts and risks from port and harbour developments are carefully managed to safeguard the marine environment in Orkney.

The Scapa Flow North and East Coast Safeguarded Area should be more limited in extent and should not include the coastline within the National Scenic Area.

The recreational anchorages shown on Map 21 should also be included in Sector Policy 3a.

Map 16 should include the recreational anchorages on Map 21.

4.4.5. Sector Policy 4: Pipeline, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure (Q23)

Summary of consultation response issues

The marine plan spatial data should include future cable route planning.

Cables running from Eday to the European Marine Energy Centre test site should be identified in Map 18.

Sector Policy 4a iii. g should include reference to fallow but consented aquaculture sites.

A requirement for the assessment and consideration of electromagnetic field effect should be included in this policy.

Provisions for decommissioning cables and pipelines should be a key consideration in decision making.

4.4.6. Sector Policy 5: Offshore wind, wave and tidal renewable energy generation (Q24)

Summary of consultation response issues

This policy needs to have localism at its heart to maximise the local social, economic and environmental benefits from hosting renewable energy developments in Orkney waters.

Local socio-economic benefit policies in the plan should span beyond employment and supply chain opportunities.

Framing 'just transition' in terms of jobs and economic activity falls short, and risks forgoing opportunities for actual just outcomes which could come from renewable energy deployments.

The plan should include future scenario planning for offshore wind development.

Concerns were raised that fishers will not be adequately protected through Sectoral Policy 5 a ii and b ii.

The plan should acknowledge that European Marine Energy Centre are investigating and examining options for a national floating wind test centre in Orkney.

This policy should reference the need to have regard to impacts on nature, including cumulative impacts, and the need for compensation, where adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised, or mitigated.

Biodiversity enhancement projects should be considered as part of offshore renewable energy developments to maximise biodiversity benefits.

There is no specific approved methodology or guidance for offshore renewable energy installation impact assessment on commercial fisheries, which can lead to impacts on fishing vessels not being adequately addressed.

There should be an inclusion for Marine Net Gain in the plan following the UK Strategy for Marine Net Gain.

This policy focuses on the potential socio-economic benefits and contributions to emissions reduction from renewable energy developments; there are significant benefits to local communities from fish farming development, and in the context of the climate emergency, this should be taken into account in decision making.

Sectoral Policy 5a ii. g should include reference to fallow but consented aquaculture sites.

This policy does not contain any requirement to consider the Local Development Plan or National Planning Framework unlike aquaculture and pipeline, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure; this needs to be consistent across the sectoral policies.

4.4.7. Sector Policy 6: Zero carbon fuels, and oil and gas transition (Q25)

Summary of consultation response issues

Concerns were raised about the phrasing within Sector Policy 6 where it states "Zero carbon fuel"; it should instead state "zero fossil carbon fuels" as the use of e-fuels could be prevented without this correction, leading to delays/obstructions in viable options for net-zero delivery.

The 'just transition' focus throughout the plan is primarily on jobs and skills; this is an important but restrictive approach to the 'just transition'.

4.4.8. Sector Policy 7: Tourism, recreation, leisure and sport (Q26)

Summary of consultation response issues

The plan should set out a strategy for the future development of marine tourism.

Does this marine plan have a say on cruise liners coming to Orkney, either the ones that already come or about more coming in the future?

Sector Policy 7a ii of this policy should include reference to fallow but consented aquaculture sites.

There is a role for place plans to identify recreational and sporting facilities to enable marine recreational activities and tourism.

Map 21 should include Orkney's three marinas.

Sector Policy 7a iii could make it challenging to develop a new private marina if it is not applied in a sensible and proportionate manner.

4.5. Section 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Plan

4.5.1. Overall Section 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Plan (Q27)

Summary of consultation response issues

Effective monitoring is crucial to the success of the plan.

A review of the plan every five years is an acceptable timeframe.

Integration guidance should be prepared during the plan's lifetime.

There should be opportunities for the review and amendment of plan policies in response to changes to wider policy, improvements in the evidence base for Orkney's marine environment and understanding of the impacts of development.

The effects of the plan on businesses should be monitored and evaluated.

There should be an earlier first review of this plan to take account of the adoption and publication of National Marine Plan 2.

To keep the plan up to date, the maps in the plan should be available online and updates provided as new data becomes available.

4.6. Appendices

4.6.1. Appendix 1: Licensing and Consenting Decisions (Q28)

Summary of consultation response issues

Section 36 applications should include reference to the Energy Consents Unit where relevant.

4.6.2. Appendix 2: Relevant Legislation, Plans, Strategies and Policies (Q29)

Summary of consultation response issues

The Bute House Agreement is no longer in operation and should not be referred to in the plan.

Include reference to the Planning Acts, Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture, Scotland's National Food Strategy and associated legislation, Scotland's Economic Strategy and the National Islands Plan.

Marine Tourism: Giant Strides 2020-25 should be included in Appendix 2.

4.6.3. Appendix 3: National Marine Plan interactive (Q30)

Summary of consultation response issues

New data in National Marine Plan interactive (NMPi) needs to be updated more promptly.

There should be a requirement for industries to upload relevant data into the NMPi.

Data on NMPi should inform the identification of indicators as part of a monitoring and evaluation process for the plan.

4.6.4. Appendix 4: Natural Capital and Marine Ecosystem Services (Q31)

Summary of consultation response issues

Appendix 4 needs to be more specific in terms of ecosystem services that are provided by Orkney's habitats in order to make it more accessible for developers/users of the plan to know precisely which services are likely to be impacted by certain developments/activities and it would also be useful to signpost to examples of appropriate mitigation.

There would be merit in detailing and quantifying the ecosystem services in the Orkney marine region.

4.6.5. Appendix 5: Priority Marine Features (Q32)

Summary of consultation response issues

It would be very useful to include mapping of these habitats and species (where it is available) and if there are gaps in knowledge these should be addressed.

4.6.6. Appendix 6: Seaweed Harvesting (Q33)

Summary of consultation response issues

Hand harvested seaweed is a completely different operation from seaweed aquaculture which is mentioned in Sector Policy 2; this Appendix 6 should be consistent with the wording of Sector Policy 2.

Seaweed harvesting should not be undertaken to the detriment of bird species that forage and use these ecosystems.

The assessment for future hand-harvesting and related activities need to be undertaken on a site-specific basis.

4.6.7. Appendix 7: Definition of Key Concepts, Acronyms and Glossary (Q34)

Summary of consultation response issues

Improved and more targeted definitions of just transitions and sustainable development would support the plan's action and implementation.

In the definition of the mitigation hierarchy, the term "offset unavoidable adverse impacts" needs to have further explanation with an emphasis that offsetting is a very last resort.

4.7. Supporting assessments

4.7.1. Strategic Environment Assessment (Q35)

Summary of consultation response issues

The SEA: Draft Environmental Report is well laid out however would benefit from going into more detail in some areas, as in its current form, it is quite high level and lacks some detail.

Some of the SEA objectives could be expanded on, reworded, or additional objectives added to better cover certain topics (e.g. benthic environment).

Additional/updated information for various annexes was provided, for example reference to new legislation and strategy documents for Appendix A and an updated Scheduled Monument data for Appendix B.5.

More detail could be given on mitigation measures in Appendix C3.

Lack of clarity over how the plan policies will be monitored against the objectives, however it is noted that a separate Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is currently under development.

4.7.2. Children's Rights and Wellbeing Screening Sheet and Impact Assessment (CRWIA) (Q36)

There were no consultation responses requesting updates or changes on the CRWIA within the consultation responses.

4.7.3. Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) (Q37)

Summary of consultation response issues

The assessment notes that there are five areas in Orkney which are classified as being "fragile"; the areas identified have fish farming activity taking place which is critical in combating these issues and thus sustainable growth of the sector should be supported.

It was welcomed that the assessment highlights the importance of aquaculture for the island communities.

The assessment summaries the demographic/economic composition of Orkney generally well. However, to aid in the implementation of General Policy 5, there should be some reviewal of potential inaccuracies within the stated assessment summaries.

In Table 3b all but employment in wave and tidal is increasing, and not highlighting this paints wave and tidal subsets of marine energy in an inaccurate negative light.

It would be useful to understand the methodology for producing Table 3b, from the State of the Environment Assessment, as it's unclear how the conclusions have been drawn.

The inclusion of the ICIA is welcomed, but is lacking in detail in terms of specific feedback from communities and identification of specific issues relevant to Orkney.

The recognition of the importance of the energy sector to island communities is welcome but perhaps the importance of the subsea cable network to provide energy requirements for the many island communities on Orkney and supporting potential for renewable energy generation (onshore and marine) could be made clearer.

4.7.4. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (Q38)

There were no consultation responses requesting updates or changes on the EqIA within the consultation responses.

4.7.5. Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) (Q39)

Summary of consultation response issues

The conclusion in 5.1 of the HRA 'that it has been ascertained through this Habitats Regulations Appraisal that the adoption of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan, alone or in combination, would have no adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites site' is welcomed.

Coordination with parts of Scottish Government responsible for the offshore wind sectoral plan, National Marine Plan 2, NPF4, and any other process relating to planning for ports and harbours is recommended.

For this specific Marine Plan, due to the potential changes ahead led by energy transition, we may see adverse impacts occurring from some marine sectors that cannot be mitigated. At this present time, it is difficult to see where these issues may occur, as each development and/or change in use, will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

For new large-scale port developments and expansion of existing ports/harbours, changes and/or new proposals/vessel routes have potential to alter the existing distribution of Special Protection Area (SPA) waterbirds, which may be outweighed by any mitigation solution and/or alternative option, and thus result in Adverse Impact on Site Integrity (AISE). Therefore, it may not be possible to arrive at an outcome conclusion of 'no further action needed', as noted within the summarised Appropriate Assessment (AA). Each development/proposal/port and harbour development will be assessed on a case-by case basis, supported either by existing data and/or new ecological survey work to help gauge level of impacts to European Sites.

At this present time, it is understood that anchor berths and Ship-to-ship anchor berths, as depicted on map 15 (p104) of the Plan are changes to baseline operational processes that have yet to be assessed through HRA on Protected Areas of European importance.

Floating turbine technology is developing rapidly. This may involve turbine construction and testing at quayside, as well as turbine towing to wet storage locations. It is too early yet to gauge the likely impacts of this development, until more information is forthcoming. It is possible that change to operational processes at port-side, may be so significant to SPA waterbirds, that it has potential to result in adverse effect on the integrity of a European site (AISE). It is recommended that the potential for this level of impact should be reflected within this HRA.

The Conservation Objectives (COs) listed for Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are likely to be out of date. New COs for SAC features have been identified which are site/feature specific, with some of these requiring restoration objectives subject to the condition of the SAC feature. As COs are being tailored to specific qualifying interests and their condition, this makes listing COs in a generic fashion quite problematical, and they therefore may need to be reviewed.

The HRA should reflect the issues of AISE and acknowledge derogation (Imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI)), as these factors are quickly becoming an acknowledged part of large-scale coastal development.

There are some missing qualifying features for Scapa Flow SPA and North Orkney SPA in Appendix 1.

4.7.6. Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (Q40)

Summary of consultation response issues

It was welcomed that interviews will be held with business to inform the preparation of final BRIA.

It was stated in relation to General Policy 1a that development could still be sustainable for various reasons even if it does not conform to the plan and that the policy wording could be overly restrictive. Views were expressed that there needs to be flexibility to consider changing circumstances and other relevant material considerations in decision making.

There is currently a lack of guidance to support the implementation of General Policy 3 and General Policy 9 which could create uncertainty and additional costs.

The requirement to take into account the Aquaculture Spatial Guidance may create additional costs for applicants in justifying developments.

Views were expressed that the plan is skewed towards the protection of some types of existing marine developments and their future expansion such as ports and harbours.

The summary of potential impacts identified in the BRIA in Table 1 does not include any statement on General Policy 9b which could have significant additional costs in relation to biodiversity enhancement requirements. It should therefore be recognised in this document that there will be costs here but that there is uncertainty as to the extent of measures and therefore costs.

4.7.7. Any other comments or feedback (Q41)

Summary of consultation response issues

Overall, it is an ambitious and great plan, with substantial work and targeted, comprehensive policies.

The plan raises issues that a lot of policy and legislation lacks, which is hugely important, and creates great scope to be ambitious, leading and to have genuine positive impact.

The plan refers to achieving a balance between environmental, social and economic issues, however, in the content presented there is a strong volume of material and sentiment focused upon ecology and archaeology compared to social and economic issues.

Support expressed for the OIC's role as a delegated authority for delivering a Regional Marine Plan for Orkney, in line with the Marine (Scotland) and Islands (Scotland) Acts; the local authority provides a democratically accountable governance structure to deliver effective marine planning, which is different to the Regional Marine Planning Partnerships.

Further work is required on spatial planning and the OIRMP should be a first step to create an action plan for further work in the marine environment to protect and enhance habitats and address the biodiversity and climate crises.

Across all policies, understanding to what extent these are recommendations, or to what extent these can be mandated and ensured will be crucial for local transparency and to understand the impacts of future projects more broadly.

The draft plan overall is balanced and proportionate and aligns well with the requirements of NPF4.

The plan is comprehensive and well written, however, the many associated supporting assessments should be screened out as unnecessary, as the associated issues have been assessed under the National Marine Plan.

There is a lack of recognition of the benefits of fish farming when compared to other sectors such as fishing and renewable energy throughout the draft plan.

Filling in the consultation response form was quite difficult, and it would be better if oral evidence at a consultation event could have been treated as an adequate and valid response to the consultation.

5. Modifications

5.1. Overview

This section of the report sets out statements of modifications that have been made to the proposals as published in the consultation draft of the Plan. A summary of the key modifications is provided at 5.1.2 and the modifications made to the Plan are identified 5.1.3.

5.2. Summary of modifications

Summary of key modifications to the consultation draft Plan following the public consultation:

- A greater emphasis has been placed on promoting and supporting sustainable development.
- The Plan has been updated to clarify that the Plan does not include policies that directly aim to address the management of fisheries.
- A vision period has been included to 2045.
- The aim of the Plan has been updated to include reference to the twin climate and nature crises.
- Further detail has been provided to help deliver sustainable development including using sound science responsibly, effective community engagement and valuing local knowledge.
- The Plan has been updated to clarify how the policies should be used by public authority decision makers.
- A new objective has been added; Objective 10: Local communities are effectively engaged in decisions affecting the Orkney Islands marine region.

The Plan has been updated to better align with relevant policies and strategies including:

- Scotland's Blue Economy Vision
- The National Plan for Scotland's Islands.
- Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation.
- Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029.
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 and supporting Delivery Plan 2024 to 2030.
- Just transition policy actions.

- Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo).
- Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture.
- Marine Tourism: Giant Strides 2020-25.
- Marine environment: unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance Joint Position Statement.

Further guidance has been identified to support the implementation of specific policies:

- Orkney Islands Marine Region: Supporting sustainable social and economic benefits guidance (to support General Policy 4).
- Orkney Islands Marine Region: Amenity, wellbeing and quality of life guidance (to support General Policy 14).

General Policy 1: Sustainable development, activities and use has been modified to promote effective engagement with local communities and to make provision for local knowledge to inform the design and assessment of development proposals.

The Plan has been modified to align with Orkney Partnership's target outcomes for sustainable development including support for community wealth building.

The Plan has been modified to align with the Orkney Partnership's net zero vision.

The Plan has been modified to include reference to the Marine Spatial Planning Addressing Climate Effects (MSPACE) programme. The Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan is a case study within this programme which is designed to drive forward the implementation of climate-smart marine spatial planning in the UK.

Reference to the OIC Coastal Change Adaptation Plan has been added to the Plan to support integration between the marine planning and coastal adaptation processes.

A policy provision to support the assessment of potential impacts on non-designated historic environment assets has been included in General Policy 8: Historic Environment.

The Plan has been modified to acknowledge the transformative social and economic benefits offshore renewable energy and harbour developments can deliver for island communities, as well as the need to manage potential adverse onshore impacts on infrastructure and services.

General Policy 1b: Sustainable development principles has been modified to state that impacts on existing infrastructure and services should be addressed as opposed to resolved as part of the consenting process.

General Policy 4: Supporting sustainable social and economic benefits amended to state that opportunities have been considered to maximise the identified socio-economic benefits in the policy.

General Policy 5: Safeguarding natural capital and ecosystem services has been modified to remove reference to 'disturbance and degradation' and these terms have been replaced with 'avoid, minimise and/or mitigate' in relation to the consideration of impacts on natural capital and ecosystem services.

General Policy 5: Safeguarding natural capital and ecosystem services has been modified to state that it will be implemented by decision makers, 'where appropriate'.

General Policy 9b modified to replace 'biodiversity enhancement' with 'marine enhancement' to create scope for broader environmental enhancement to be delivered.

General Policy 9 has been modified to specify the use of best practice methods for proposals to enhance and/or restore the coastal and/or marine environment.

General Policy 9d has been modified to align with the National Marine Plan and to state that proposals for development and/or activities should have regard to the relevant policy provisions in the National Marine Plan regarding Priority Marine Features.

General Policy 11 modified to replace policy provision for Priority Marine Features with policy provisions for European Protected Species.

Policy context to Sector Policy 1: Commercial Fishing modified to acknowledge the contribution of commercial fishing to food security and quality of life for fishers, and that fishing is culturally and historically significant to Orkney communities.

Policy context to Sector Policy 1: Commercial Fishing modified to reflect the up-to-date position with fisheries management in Scotland.

Sector Policy 1: Commercial Fishing modified to provide a standalone policy strand on the consideration of impacts on the cultural importance of fishing in local communities.

Policy context to Sector Policy 2: Aquaculture modified to acknowledge that finfish and shellfish farming make an important contribution towards food production and food security.

Sector Policy 2 modified to state that proposals for development and/or activities should avoid, minimise and/or appropriately mitigate significant adverse impacts on active aquaculture sites.

Additional supporting text has been added to Sector Policy 5: Offshore wind, wave and tidal energy generation stating that the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) is investigating and examining options for a national floating wind test centre located to the west of Orkney.

The Plan has been modified to clarify that the OIC Islands Archaeologist can advise on matters affecting Orkney's historic environment assets and places.

The plan has been modified to state that General Policy 14: Amenity, wellbeing and quality of life of local communities supports a place-based approach to planning, development and community engagement.

Text added to context section to Sector Policy 1: Commercial fishing on the National Fisheries Management Strategy 2020, alongside reference to Inshore Fisheries Management Improvement (IFMI) Programme.

Text added to context section to Sector Policy 3: Shipping, ports, harbours and ferries to improve alignment with National Transport Strategy 2.

Policy context to Sector Policy 3: Shipping, ports, harbours and ferries modified to acknowledge that the Orkney Harbour Masterplan Phase 1 identifies development proposals for a new pier infrastructure at Hatston and a new deep water quay facility at Deepdale, Scapa Flow, which are national developments identified in NPF4.

Sector Policy 4: Pipeline, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure and Sector Policy 6: Zero fossil carbon fuels, and oil and gas transition have been modified to clarify that these policies only apply to public authority decision making that falls under devolved competencies.

Marine cables and pipelines added as a consideration under 'other marine users' in Sector Policy 3: Shipping, ports, harbours and ferries and Sector Policy 7: Safeguarding tourism, recreation, leisure and sport uses.

Sector Policy 7b: Safeguarding tourism, recreation, leisure and sport uses modified to state that proposals for development and/or activities should consider options to avoid, minimise or appropriately mitigate significant adverse impacts on tourism, recreation, leisure and sport uses.

5.3. Modifications to the consultation draft plan

Modifications made to the consultation draft Plan are identified in Table 2. The Plan paragraph references have been updated through the Plan modification process. The paragraph numbers identified in Table 2 are those in the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan (finalised Plan). Where these paragraph references are different to those in the consultation draft Plan, reference to the relevant section or paragraph in the consultation draft Plan is provided.

Table 2 - Modifications to the consultation draft plan

Modification	Reason for Modification
Foreword	
Updated Foreword in the finalised Plan.	Updated post consultation to reflect the up-to-date position.
Executive Summary	
Updated Executive Summary in the finalised Regional Marine Plan.	Updated post consultation to reflect the content of the finalised Plan.
Introduction	
Cross reference to Map 1 added to paragraph 1.1.	For clarity.
Paragraph 1.4 modified to remove unnecessary detail on governance and to remove repetition.	For clarity and conciseness.
Paragraph 1.6, 1.7, 1.8 and 1.10 modified to clarify how the plan and its policies should be used in decision making. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 1.15, 1.16, 1.17 and 1.18).	For clarity and to support plan implementation.
A new paragraph added at 1.8 to clarify that the Plan has been prepared without policies that directly aim to address further management of fisheries.	For clarity.
1.29 & appendix 23 – NMPi stuff	
Paragraph 1.11 amended to clarify the role of Orkney Islands Council, as the delegate, as a consultee on marine licensing. (Consultation Draft reference: text added after paragraph 1.8).	For clarity and to support plan implementation.
Paragraph 1.11 added regarding the provisions of the Marine Licensing (Consultees) (Scotland) Order 2011.	To acknowledge the statutory role of OIC.
Reference to devolved competencies added to Table 1.	To clarify that the plan only applies to developed competencies.
'Impacts or effects from development and activities' section removed from Section 2 and 3 and added to Section 1, paragraph 1.18 to 1.23. (Consultation	To removed repetition of text.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Draft reference: paragraphs 2.11 to 2.16 and 3.11 to 3.16).	
Paragraph 1.18 modified to remove the term 'long distances'. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.11).	For greater accuracy.
Paragraph 1.18 word 'deposited' replaced with 'settling'. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.11).	Deposit is a specific term used in marine licencing. Replaced with a word of equivalent meaning to avoid misinterpretation.
Paragraph 1.19: Plan modified to include 'economic receptors and infrastructure'. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.12).	To highlight the potential for economic and infrastructure related cumulative impacts.
Paragraph 1.22 has been updated to provide further detail on avoiding sites with potential to have adverse impacts. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.15).	For clarity and to support appropriate implementation of the plan policies.
Paragraph 1.26 amended to include vision period to 2045. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 1.17).	To align with the vision period for NPF4 and wider relevant plans and strategies.
'Human activities' replaced with 'the marine environment' in Table 2, B.	To ensure the consistent application of the definitions in Table 1.
'and/or activities' inserted in Table 2, E.	For clarity and consistency.
Paragraph 1.28 amended to identify that Orkney Islands Marine Region: State of the Environment Assessment includes the identification of relevant data gaps. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 1.19).	For clarity and accuracy.
Text inserted at Paragraph 1.29 to refer plan users to National Marine Plan interactive hyperlinks/smart URL in the maps and direct to Appendix 3 to access hyperlinks directly. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 1.20).	To improve access to the finalised Plan's online spatial information.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Paragraph 1.31 reworded to include reference to all relevant available data alongside the NMPI. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 1.22).	To include reference to wider relevant data.
Text stating that 'Information on how to use NMPI is provided in Appendix 3' moved from paragraph 1.31 to paragraph 1.29. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 1.22 and 1.20).	For clarity.
Aim of the Plan in Table 2 updated to refer to tackling the twin climate and nature crises.	To better align the aim of the plan with the policy provisions, and wider relevant plans and strategies.
Reference to 'environmental limits' removed from Guiding Principle A and replace with 'protecting the environment'.	To enable unambiguous interpretation and implementation of the finalised Plan.
Guiding Principle B and the aim of the Plan updated to refer to the climate and nature crises.	For clarity and to set the appropriate context for the more detailed objectives and policies.
Objective 1 updated to refer to sustainable development, activities and use.	To better align with the aim of the plan and policy term definitions.
A new objective has been added; Objective 10: Local communities are effectively engaged in decisions affecting the Orkney Islands marine region.	To better reflect the priorities of local communities identified via the Plan consultation.
Section 2: General Policies	
Paragraphs 2.3 and 3.4 added to clarify the role of the general policies in supporting applicants preparing proposals for development and activities.	For clarity.
Paragraphs 2.3 and 3.4 from the consultation draft Plan have been removed and included in Section 1.	To remove duplicated text from the Plan.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Paragraph 2.8 amended to state see Section 1 for details on the use of spatial information and data.	For clarity.
Paragraph 2.9 and 3.10 amended to remove unnecessary detail. (Consultation Draft reference: Paragraph 2.9 and 3.9).	For clarity and brevity.
Reference to 'environmental limits' removed from paragraph 2.11. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.17).	To enable unambiguous interpretation and implementation of the Plan.
Paragraph 2.11 and 2.12 updated to emphasise support for sustainable development including a thriving Orkney economy. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.17 and text added after paragraph 2.17).	To emphasise support for sustainable development.
Paragraph 2.14 added to align with the Scottish Government Blue Economy Approach. (Consultation Draft reference: text added after paragraph 2.18).	To align with Scotland's Blue Economy Approach.
Paragraph 2.13 amended to include reference and supporting weblinks to Scottish Government policy on a just transition, community wealth building and a wellbeing economy. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.18).	To include the relevant policy context for General Policy 1 and wider related policies.
Paragraph 2.15 added to explain that offshore developments can have significant impacts on adjacent island communities including infrastructure, community services and facilities. (Consultation Draft reference: text added after 2.18).	To provide relevant context to General Policy 1.
Paragraph 2.16 added stating that using sound science responsibly, effective community engagement and valuing local knowledge are principles that	To provide clear context for the approach to sustainable development in the Plan and General Policy 1.

Modification	Reason for Modification
underpin the approach to sustainable development in the Plan. (Consultation Draft reference: text added after 2.18).	
General Policy 1b ii. added to include policy provision on effective engagement with local communities.	To better reflect the priorities of local communities identified via the Plan consultation.
<p>The following headings added to General Policy 1b to aid policy understanding by plan users:</p> <p>‘Maximising benefits.</p> <p>Effective community engagement.</p> <p>Addressing direct/indirect impacts.</p> <p>Addressing cumulative impacts.</p> <p>Effective and efficient use of existing infrastructure and services.</p> <p>Addressing impacts on existing development and marine users.</p> <p>Using sound science and local knowledge’.</p>	To assist plan users to identify the purpose of each policy strand in General Policy 1b.
‘and’ replaced with ‘and/or’ in General Policy 1b v. (Consultation Draft reference: GP 1b iv.).	For accuracy, and consistency with General Policy 1b vi.
‘resolved’ replaced with ‘addressed’ in General Policy 1b vi. (Consultation Draft reference: GP 1b v.).	To acknowledge that it may not be possible to fully resolve all issues regarding impacts on existing infrastructure and services as part of the consenting process i.e. prior to a decision notice being issued. Some issues may need to be resolved post consent.

Modification	Reason for Modification
'alongside relevant local knowledge' added to General Policy 1b viii. (Consultation Draft reference: GP 1b vii.).	To recognise the importance and value of local knowledge in decision making.
Table 3 amended to identify additional indirect contributions towards the plan objectives and alignment with National Marine Plan policies GEN 2, GEN 3, GEN 18, GEN 19 and GEN 21.	To support plan implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation of the plan.
NPF4 'Policy 12b' edited to state 'Policy 12bi' in Table 3.	For greater accuracy.
Reference to the owner and operator of the Flotta Oil Terminal removed from paragraph 2.22. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.24).	To future proof the accuracy of the finalised Plan.
'Policy intent' for General Policy 3 modified to refer to greenhouse gas emissions.	For clarity, and consistency with relevant legal and policy frameworks.
Paragraph 2.25, data and reference updated. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.27).	To use UK specific climate data.
Additional text inserted at 2.26 to reflect Orkney Partnership vision for a climate resilient and net zero future. (Consultation Draft reference: text added after paragraph 2.27).	To reflect the updated local policy context that has emerged since the consultation draft plan was published.
Paragraph 2.28 added after paragraph 2.27 to provide further information on just transition.	To align with the Orkney Partnership's vision on net zero and a just transition where the economy, communities and natural environment all prosper and benefit, building their resilience, and adapting to the changing climate.
Paragraph 2.27 amended to refer to zero fossil carbon fuels. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.28)..	To recognise the potential contribution of e-fuels to decarbonisation.
Paragraph 2.30 amended to refer to e-fuels.	To recognise the potential contribution of e-fuels to decarbonisation.

Modification	Reason for Modification
(Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.31).	
Paragraph 2.27 amended to refer to greenhouse gas reduction measures and the Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.28).	To better align with General Policy 3 and to reflect the up-to-date policy context.
Paragraph 2.28 updated regarding alignment with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and National Marine Plan (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.29).	To provide the relevant national policy context to General Policy 3a Climate Crisis.
Paragraph 2.29 amended regarding reference to blue carbon. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.30).	To ensure that the potential contribution of blue carbon to climate mitigation is not over emphasised in the finalised Plan when compared to other examples of mitigation.
General Policy 3c iii. amended to refer to 'nature-based solutions'.	To align with terminology in NPF4.
'adequate' and 'including appropriate nature-based measures' deleted from General Policy 3c ii.	To remove ambiguity and improve clarity.
Reference to Marine Spatial Planning Addressing Climate Effects (MSPACE) programme added at paragraph 2.36. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph added after 2.36).	To acknowledge the role of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan as a case study within the MSPACE project.
Paragraph 2.37 text amended to state social as well as economic opportunities and to refer to sustainable economic development and the role of marine planning in delivering this.	To better reflect the approach to sustainable development that underpins the plan aim and objectives.
Text amended at paragraph 2.38 to provide appropriate context for General Policy 4.	To improve description of the purpose and context for General Policy 4.
Paragraph 2.38 amended to include reference to upstream and downstream businesses.	For clarity.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Text inserted at paragraph 2.39 on community wealth building and the Orkney Partnership's target outcomes for sustainable development include supporting community wealth building. And updated to include the principles of community wealth building in the Orkney context.	To improve alignment with NPF4 and Orkney Partnership targets.
General Policy 4a (i. ii. and iii.) modified to state that 'opportunities have been considered'.	To align with the current Scottish Government policy position.
General Policy 4a ii. amended to refer to skills development.	To acknowledge the importance of addressing skills development to enable local people to access new job opportunities, and where relevant, assist in the delivery of a just transition to net zero.
General Policy 4a iii. amended to better align with the definition of key policy terms in Table 1.	To improve clarity for decision makers when implementing this policy.
General Policy 4a iv. amended to remove the term 'net'.	To support clearer policy interpretation.
General Policy 4c added to make provision for guidance to support the implementation of General Policy 4.	Consultation highlighted that guidance would be beneficial to support the implementation of General Policy 4. Supporting guidance will be developed post adoption of the Plan.
Paragraph 2.40 updated to refer to current as well as future generations.	To acknowledge the importance of considering current generations.
Locally relevant habitats added to paragraph 2.42.	For clarity, accuracy and local relevance.
General Policy 5 modified to remove reference to disturbance and degradation and these terms have been replaced with 'avoid, minimise and/or mitigate' in relation to the consideration of impacts on natural capital and ecosystem services.	There is no clear definition for disturbance or thresholds available to be implemented in this context.

Modification	Reason for Modification
General Policy 5 i. modified to add 'where appropriate'.	To make clear that there is discretion to the decision maker to decide when it is appropriate to apply this policy.
General Policy 5 ii. 'coastal and/or marine' added.	For clarity and accuracy.
Table 7 amended to identify additional indirect contributions towards the plan objectives.	To support plan implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation of the plan.
Paragraph 2.47 amended to include the Scotland River Basin District (Status) Directions 2024.	To include reference to up-to-date regulations.
Paragraph 2.48 updated to all water environment types covered by the Directions.	For clarity.
General Policy 6 ii. wording amended to aid understanding and interpretation.	For clarity.
Table 8 amended to identify additional contributions towards the plan objectives.	To support plan implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation of the plan.
Date added to Map 3.	For clarity.
Text added to paragraph 2.54 to acknowledge that a changing climate affects the rate of coastal change. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.53).	For clarity.
Text added at paragraph 2.56 on the emerging Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Plan.	To reflect the up-to-date planning/policy context.
General Policy 7b ii. amended to improve clarity of interpretation.	For clarity.
Proposed Scapa Flow Historic Marine Protected Area replaced with Scapa Flow Historic Marine Protected Area in paragraph 2.58. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.56).	To acknowledge site designation in August 2025.

Modification	Reason for Modification
'Canmore' replaced with 'Trove.scot' in paragraph 2.60. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.58).	Canmore has been replaced with Trove.scot .
Historic environment assets' replaced with 'Historic assets and places' in paragraph 2.60. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.58).	For compatibility with NPF4.
'Many historic environment assets' replaced with 'Many historic assets and places' in paragraph 2.61. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.59).	For compatibility with NPF4.
Reference to Historic Environment Scotland (HES) practical guidance on conserving underwater heritage added to paragraph 2.61. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.59).	To include up to date relevant guidance in the Plan.
Reference to early engagement with HES and the Orkney Islands Council Islands Archaeologist included in paragraph 2.62. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.60).	To support policy implementation and assist applicants.
Modification made to paragraph 2.62 to state that the OIC Islands Archaeologist can advise on matters affecting Orkney's historic environment assets. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.60).	HES has changed their procedures to only comment on matters affecting the historic environment assets of national significance. The Islands Archaeologist can advise on other relevant matters.
The title of General Policy 8a changed to 'Historic assets and places'	For compatibility with NPF4.
'place' replaced with 'places' in General Policy 8a(i).	For compatibility with NPF4.
Modification made to General Policy 8a i., '*Where relevant, for EIA development and/or activities refer to: HES, Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook'.	For clarity

Modification	Reason for Modification
Reference in General Policy 8a iii. updated to 'The Crown Estate: Archaeological Written Schemes of Investigation for Offshore Wind Farm Projects '.	To include reference to the up-to-date guidance.
General Policy 8j added to include policy provisions for non-designated historic environment assets.	To provide clarity on how non-designated historic environment assets are assessed and considered in decision making.
Reference to Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Delivery Plan amended at paragraph 2.67. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.65).	To bring the plan up to date with the latest Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Delivery Plan.
Paragraph 2.68 modified. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.67)	To provide the relevant national policy context to General Policy 9a: Climate Crisis.
Paragraph 2.69 amended to remove site hierarchy and to reference SiteLink. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.67)	To provide access to the most up to date information.
Table 11 title amended to remove the term hierarchy.	For accuracy.
Paragraph 2.74 updated to state that Priority Marine Features are protected under relevant legislation. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.72).	For clarity.
Text added to General Policy 9b i. on the use of best practice assessment and implementation methods.	For clarity and consistency with NPF4.
General Policy 9b i. modified to replace biodiversity enhancement with the enhancement and/or restoration of the coastal and/or marine environment.	To create scope for broader environmental enhancement to be delivered.
General Policy 9d ii. modified to state that proposals for development and/or activities should demonstrate that they have considered, where possible, how any significant adverse impacts on	For clarity and to aid alignment and conformity with the National Marine Plan.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Priority Marine Features have been avoided, minimised and/or appropriately mitigated.	
General Policy 9d ii. amended to state that proposals for development and/or activities should have regard to the relevant policy provisions in the National Marine Plan.	For clarity and to aid alignment and conformity with the National Marine Plan.
Paragraph 2.76 modified to remove the phrase 'world class'. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.74)	The term world class has no clear definition.
Paragraph 2.79 added regarding the potential impacts of development on landscape and seascape. (Consultation Draft reference: text added after paragraph 2.76).	To provide appropriate context to General Policy 10.
The title of General Policy 10a changed to 'Seascape and landscape'.	To align with the relevant terminology in National Marine Plan.
Map 10 title updated.	For accuracy.
Reference to Planning Advice Note 1/2011 included at paragraph 2.81. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.78).	To include reference to relevant planning advice.
The noise related pressures identified at paragraph 2.82 have been reordered. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.79).	For clarity.
Paragraph 2.82 has been amended to refer to pressures as opposed to sectoral activities. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.79).	To refer to pressures as opposed to sectoral activities.
The word 'deterrent' has been removed from paragraph 2.82. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.79).	For accuracy.
Reference to under water noise modelling removed from paragraph 2.84. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.81).	Reference not specifically relevant to the policy context.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Reference to Marine environment: unexploded ordnance (UxO) clearance Joint Position Statement added to paragraph 2.85. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.82).	To provide reference to the relevant policy statement on UxO clearance.
General Policy 11b ii. amended to remove reference to Priority Marine Features (PMFs).	A separate policy provision on PMFs is not needed in addition to General Policy 11b i and General Policy 9d.
General Policy 11b ii. amended to address European Protected Species (EPS).	To make approach provisions for EPS regarding noise impacts.
Text added to reference Fishing for Litter project at paragraph 2.88. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.85).	To include reference to this relevant local project.
Paragraph 2.92 updated to include up to date reference to the Great Britain Invasive Non-native Species Strategy. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.89).	To reflect the up-to-date policy context.
Reference to Orkney Native Wildlife Project added to paragraph 2.95. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.92).	To provide web link to relevant supporting information.
Added appropriate reference to the NatureScot Marine Biosecurity Planning Guidance into GP 13 i.	To reflect the up-to-date policy context.
General Policy 13 iii. amended to refer to the Marine Directorate.	To include updated terms.
Paragraph 2.96 amended to refer to Orkney Islands Marine Region: Amenity, wellbeing and quality of life guidance.	To support implementation of General Policy 14.
Paragraph 2.97 amended to state that The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, identifies outcomes for planning including improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Scotland.	To set out the relevant statutory context.

Modification	Reason for Modification
(Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.94).	
Paragraph 2.96 and 2.100 amended to state the beneficial effects of sustainable economic development on wellbeing and quality of life. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraphs 2.93 and 2.96).	For clarity.
New paragraph added at 2.98 provide further detail on the place-based approach to planning, development and community engagement. Consultation Draft reference: text added after paragraph 2.94).	For compatibility with NPF4 and to provide appropriate context to General Policy 14.
General Policy 14a ii. wording amended to assist with clearer interpretation.	For clarity.
General Policy 14c title changed to 'Delivering benefits for places and local communities'.	For compatibility with NPF4.
Consultation Draft General Policy 14c ii. removed. To remove duplication of 14c i. and the ambiguity of policy requirements	For clarity and to remove duplication.
'where appropriate' replaced with 'where applicable' in General Policy 14b ii. (Consultation Draft reference: GP 14c iii.	For greater clarity and accuracy.
Consultation Draft General Policy 14c iii. moved to General Policy 14b ii in the finalised Plan.	To improve the structure and layout of the policy to aid implementation.
General Policy 14d added to identify provision for Orkney Islands Marine Region: Amenity, wellbeing and quality of life guidance, where available.	To support policy implementation.
Table 17 amended to identify a direct contribution to objective 10 and an indirect contribution to objective 4.	For clarity and accuracy.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Section 3: Sector Policies	
Paragraph 3.2 amended to refer to sustainable economic development.	To better reflect the approach to sustainable development that underpins the plan aim and objectives.
Paragraph 3.5 modified to cross reference to section 1 and remove duplication of text from section 1. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.4).	To remove duplication of text.
Paragraph 3.10 modified to provide updated context to Appendix 1. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.9).	For clarity.
Paragraphs 3.11 to 3.16 in the consultation draft Plan (1.17 to 1.22 in the finalised Plan) moved to section 1.	To remove duplication of text.
Paragraph 3.12 amended to acknowledge the contribution of commercial fishing to food security. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.17).	To acknowledge the contribution of commercial fishing to food security.
Paragraph 3.12 amended to include reference to quality of life. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.17).	To acknowledge the relationship between fishing and quality of life in Orkney communities.
Paragraph 3.12 amended to acknowledge that fishing is culturally and historically significant to Orkney communities. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.17).	To acknowledge that fishing is culturally and historically significant to Orkney communities in response to consultation feedback.
Paragraph 3.13 amended to acknowledge the role of shoreside processing. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.17).	For clarity.
Paragraph 3.15 amended to include reference to the National Fisheries Management Strategy 2020, alongside reference to the Inshore Fisheries Management Improvement (IFMI)	To provide the relevant national policy context to Sector Policy 1.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Programme. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.19).	
Paragraph 3.15 to 3.17 updated to reflect the up-to-date position with fisheries management in Scotland. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.19 and 3.20).	For clarity.
The word 'currently' added to paragraph 3.17. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.20).	For clarity.
Paragraph 3.22 text modified to provide appropriate context to Sector Policy 1iii. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.25).	To improve clarity and support appropriate plan implementation.
Sector Policy 1 amended to provide a standalone policy (Sector Policy 1 ii.) for the consideration of the cultural importance of fishing, and amended to remove reference to cultural importance in Sector Policy 1 i. e..	To acknowledge the requirement for specific assessment considerations in relation to cultural importance.
Paragraph 3.23 added to refer to finfish and shellfish farming making an important contribution towards food production and food security. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.26).	To acknowledge these wider benefits of sustainable fish farming.
Paragraph 3.23 amended to provide an appropriate reference to the Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.26).	To provide reference to the relevant strategic context.
Paragraph 3.25 amended to explain that the degree of environmental impact depends on the type, scale, location and mitigation associated with a specific fish farming development or activity. This amendment has also been made to Paragraph 3.37, 3.49 and 3.61 for consistency across the relevant Sector Policies. (Consultation Draft reference:	For clarity and consistency.

Modification	Reason for Modification
paragraph 3.27 and also 3.39, 3.50 and 3.62).	
'Marine fish farms also require a marine licence' replaced with 'Marine fish farms may also require a marine licence' in paragraph 3.26. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.28).	For greater accuracy.
Paragraph 3.26 modified to state 'an environmental licence (for farm discharges into the water environment)'. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.28).	To reflect the up-to-date regulatory position.
Paragraph 3.28 text amended removing reference to the Orkney Islands Marine Region: Finfish Farming Spatial Guidance consultation. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.30).	This consultation has ended.
Paragraph 3.28 amended to state 'potential' sensitivity. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.30).	For accuracy, and consistency with the terminology in the Orkney Islands Marine Region: Finfish Farming Spatial Guidance.
Paragraph 3.28 amended to remove 'and activities'. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.30)	To remove ambiguity over the application of the Spatial Guidance to activities, as defined in the plan in Table 1.
Sector Policy 2 vi and vii updated to remove 'and/or activities'.	To remove ambiguity over the application of the Spatial Guidance to activities, as defined in the plan in Table 1.
Paragraph 3.33 text amended to state that Appendix 6 provides information on wild seaweed harvesting and reference to the Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture moved to paragraph 3.23. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.35).	For clarity.
Sector Policy 2a added to state that proposals for development and/or activities should avoid, minimise and/or appropriately mitigate significant	To provide clarity on how impacts on active aquaculture sites will be addressed in decision making.

Modification	Reason for Modification
adverse impacts on active aquaculture sites.	
Sector Policy 2b ii. b., Sector Policy 3d ii. b., Sector Policy 4a iii. b., Sector Policy 5a ii. b., Sector Policy 5b ii. b. and Sector Policy 7a ii. b. modified to state the national status of Priority Marine Features.	For conformity with National Marine Plan.
Sector Policy 2b ii. g. and 2c ii. f. amended to refer to active aquaculture sites. (Consultation Draft reference: SP 2a ii.g. and SP 2b ii.f.).	For clarity and consistency.
'planning' inserted to Sector Policy 2b v. (Consultation Draft reference: Sector Policy 2a v.	To clarify that this policy may be implemented via a condition on a planning permission.
Additional text inserted in paragraph 3.38 and 3.61 to provide information on potential for significant onshore impacts and benefits from harbour and renewable energy developments. (Consultation Draft reference: Text added after paragraphs 3.39 and 3.62).	To identify the potential for harbour and renewable energy developments to have significant onshore impacts and benefits for adjacent communities.
Paragraph 3.42 modified to include reference to National Transport Strategy 2. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.43).	To improve alignment with National Transport Strategy 2.
Paragraph 3.42 updated to remove reference to the John O'Groats to Burwick ferry service. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.43).	Service not currently operational.
Paragraph 3.43 amended to state that the Orkney Harbour Masterplan identifies development proposals for new pier infrastructure at Hatston and a new deep water quay facility at Deepdale, Scapa Flow, which are national developments identified in NPF4. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.44).	To state the current position with these developments and their status within NPF4.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Sector Policy 3d i. added to refer to the Orkney Local Development Plan, National Marine Plan and National Planning Framework.	For clarity and consistency across relevant policies.
'Marine cables and pipelines' added as an 'other coastal and marine user' consideration at Sector Policy 3d ii. g., Sector Policy 5a ii. g., Sector Policy 5b ii. h. and Sector Policy 7a ii. g.. (Consultation Draft reference: SP 3d i. g.).	Marine cables and pipelines added as they are a relevant sensitivity/constraint and for consistency across the sector policies.
Sector Policy 3d ii. g. amended to refer to 'active' aquaculture sites. (Consultation Draft reference: SP 3d i. g.).	For clarity.
Annex B added to Table 20.	To recognise the alignment of Sector Policy 3 with the NPF4 Annex B – National Developments Statements of Need.
Cables running from Eday to the EMEC test site added to Map 18.	For completeness.
Text added at paragraph 3.46 clarifies that Sector Policy 4 only applies to public authority decisions where proposals fall within devolved competencies and that offshore oil and gas licensing is reserved to the UK Government including the construction and decommissioning of hydrocarbons pipelines.	To ensure conformity with the relevant legal requirements.
Paragraph 3.52 modified to state 'Submarine cables should be appropriately protected, whilst achieving successful seabed user coexistence, in accordance with the National Marine Plan'. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.51).	To provide appropriate alignment with National Marine Plan on cable protection matters.
Reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 removed from Paragraph 3.53.	The reference was not directly relevant to the context of Sector Policy 4.

Modification	Reason for Modification
(Consultation Draft reference: Paragraph 3.52).	
Paragraph 3.54 amended regarding the identification of new cables on UK Hydrographic Office charts.	For clarity.
Sector Policy 4a updated to specify water pipelines.	To refer to pipeline development and/activities that are authorised under devolved competences.
'protection' added to Sector Policy 4a i.	To provide appropriate alignment with National Marine Plan on cable protection matters.
Information on National Marine Plan in Sector Policy 4a i. moved to Context at paragraph 3.47.	To provide appropriate context to Sector Policy 4.
Sector Policy 4a iii. g. modified to refer to active aquaculture sites.	For clarity.
Sector Policy 4 modified to state that Sector Policy 4 is to be applied to relevant proposals for development and/or activities that require authorisation from a public authority under devolved competencies.	To ensure conformity with the relevant legal requirements.
Paragraph 3.61 amended to refer to inclusive economic development. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.60).	To better reflect the approach to sustainable development that underpins the plan aim and objectives.
Paragraph 3.61 amended to remove reference to the development of skills and supply chain bolstering. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.60).	To ensure that a broader view is taken to a just transition in addition to the considerations of skills and supply chain bolstering.
Paragraph 3.70 added to acknowledge that EMEC are investigating and examining options for a national floating wind test centre.	To ensure the plan is up to date with local strategic projects.
Added reference to Map 10 to 3.71.	For clarity.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Sector Policy 5a ii. g. and 5b ii. h. amended to refer to 'active' aquaculture sites and 'marine cable routes and pipelines'.	For clarity and consistency.
Paragraph 3.77 modified to acknowledge the relevance of Sector Policy 6 to devolved competencies only.	To ensure conformity with the relevant legal requirements.
3.80 updated to refer to renewable energy generation exceeding demand as well as curtailment. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.76).	For accuracy.
Reference to the Flotta Hydrogen Hub removed in paragraph 3.83 and the reference to information about Flotta on the North Sea Transition Authority added to paragraph 3.82 (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.79).	To provide up to date information.
Sector Policy 6 modified to state zero 'fossil' carbon fuels in the policy title and policies at i. ii. and iii.	To recognise the potential contribution of e-fuels to decarbonisation.
Paragraph 3.85 updated to state that ship-to-ship transfer operations are licenced by the Maritime and Coastal Agency (MCA). (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.81).	For clarity.
Sector Policy 6 amended to specify that it is to be applied to relevant proposals for development and/or activities that require authorisation from a public authority under devolved competencies.	To ensure conformity with the relevant legal requirements.
Map 21 updated to be titled Recreational Anchorages and Visiting Yacht Moorings.	For clarity.
Sector Policy 7a i. included to refer to the Orkney Local Development Plan, National Marine Plan and National Planning Framework.	For clarity and consistency.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Sector Policy 7a ii. g. amended to refer to active aquaculture sites (Consultation Draft reference: SP 7 a ii. g.).	For clarity.
'Marine' removed from Sector Policy 7a ii., 7a iii. and 7a iv. (Consultation Draft reference: Sector Policy 7a i., 7a ii. and 7 a iii.).	To reflect that some relevant developments may be coastal and/or intertidal.
Should 'avoid' replaced with should 'consider options to avoid' in Sector Policy 7b i.	To remove a potentially significant restriction on sustainable development.
Reference to NPF4 'Policy 20' replaced with 'Policy 30'.	For accuracy.
Section 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Plan	
Paragraph 4.1 updated to reflect the statutory requirements for plan review.	To ensure conformity with the relevant legal requirements.
Appendix 2: Relevant Legislation, Plans Strategies and Policies	
Additional legislation added to Table 2A: Delegation of Functions (Regional Marine Plan for the Scottish Marine Region for the Orkney Islands) Direction 2020. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Invasive Alien Species Regulation 1143/2014. The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.	To provide the relevant legislative context.
Additional plans, strategies and policies added to Table 2A:	To provide the relevant policy context.

Modification	Reason for Modification
<p>The National Plan for Scotland's Islands</p> <p>Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation</p> <p>Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029</p> <p>Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture</p> <p>Marine Tourism: Giant Strides 2020-25</p>	
Reference to Bute House Agreement and Orkney Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-22 removed from Table A2.	To reflect the current policy context.
Appendix 3: National Marine Plan interactive	
Paragraph A3.3 added to state that maps within this Plan contain hyperlinks to display the specific map data within NMPi where available, and map hyperlinks (smart URLs) added again here.	To provide appropriate reference to relevant data on NMPi.
Appendix 4: Natural Capital and Marine Ecosystem Services	
Reference provided to the Nature Capital Assessment for the Orkney Marine Region Area at paragraph 2.42 and A4.6. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 2.42 and A4.6).	For clarity.
Appendix 6: Seaweed Harvesting	
Appendix 6 title updated to refer to wild seaweed harvesting.	For clarity.
Paragraph 3.33 updated to include cross reference to Appendix 6. (Consultation Draft reference: paragraph 3.35).	For clarity.
Appendix 7: Definition of Key Concepts, Acronyms and Glossary	
Glossary and Key concepts tables merged into Table 4A.	For clarity, and to support plan implementation.
Co-existence definition updated in Table A4 to align with National Marine Plan 2 Planning Position Statement definition.	For consistency with the national approach.

Modification	Reason for Modification
Just transition definition amended in Table A4.	To align with the Scottish Government definition.
Quality of life definition updated in Table 4A.	To support policy implementation.
Reference to 'maerl beds' replaced with 'seagrass beds' TableA4.	To reflect the current Scottish Government position on blue carbon.
Devolved Competence definition added to Table 4A.	To support plan implementation.
Orkney Islands marine region definition added to Table 4A.	To support plan implementation.
Additional modifications	
All footnote references updated and added where necessary.	To include up to date references.
Symbology and colours updated in all maps.	To improve accessibility.
All map data reviewed and updated to ensure that the most recent data sets are used. Map 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 16, 18, 19, 21 updated with new data.	To ensure the plan is up to date at the point of publication.
New text added to each map annotation including NMPi smartURL hyperlink.	To enable plan users to access map specific data online.
Paragraph numbers updated.	For accuracy.
Table of contents numbering updated.	For accuracy.
Tables and Figures tables of content have been updated with the correct page numbers.	For accuracy.

Appendix 1: Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan Consultation Response Form

Section 1: Introduction

Q1 Do you have any comments on the purpose of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan (1.1 - 1.4)?

Q2 Do you have any comments on how to use the Plan policy framework (1.5 to 1.14)?

Q3 Do you have any comments on vision, guiding principles, aim and objectives (1.15, 1.16 and Table 2)?

Section 2: General Policies

Q4 Do you have any comments on the introductory information to the General Policies (2.1 – 2.16)?

Q5 Do you have any comments on General Policy 1: Sustainable development, activities, and use?

Q6 Do you have any comments on General Policy 2: Safety?

Q7 Do you have any comments on General Policy 3: Climate change?

Q8 Do you have any comments on General Policy 4: Supporting sustainable social and economic benefits?

Q9 Do you have any comments on General Policy 5: Safeguarding natural capital and ecosystem services?

Q10 Do you have any comments on General Policy 6: Water environment?

Q11 Do you have any comments on General Policy 7: Coastal development and coastal change?

Q12 Do you have any comments on General Policy 8: Historic environment?

Q13 Do you have any comments on General Policy 9: Nature?

Priority Marine Features

Priority Marine Features (PMFs) are species and habitats which have been identified as being of conservation importance to Scotland. PMFs range from flame shell beds in coastal waters to the cold- water coral reefs in deeper seas and mobile species such as minke whale and basking shark. Appendix 5 of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan identifies the PMFs recorded within the Orkney Islands marine region.

General Policy 9d aims to provide greater clarity on how impacts on PMFs should be assessed and considered in decision making. This includes policy provisions on how impacts on the national status of Priority Marine Features should be considered. The policy does not include specific policy provisions on how lower magnitude impacts on Priority Marine Features, that do not constitute an impact on the national status, should be considered in decision making.

Q13a Do you think General Policy 9d should include specific policy provisions on how lower magnitude impacts on Priority Marine Features (i.e. those impacts that do not constitute an impact on the national status) should be considered in decision making?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Please provide any further information to support your response to Q13a:

Q14 Do you have any comments on General Policy 10: Seascape and landscape?

Q15 Do you have any comments on General Policy 11: Surface and underwater noise, and vibration?

Q16 Do you have any comments on General Policy 12: Marine litter and waste?

Q17 Do you have any comments on General Policy 13: Non-native and invasive non-native species?

Q18 Do you have any comments on General Policy 14: Amenity, wellbeing and quality of life of local communities?

Section 3: Sector Policies

Q19 Do you have any comments on the introductory information to the Sector Policies (3.1 – 3.16)?

Q20 Do you have any comments on Sector Policy 1: Commercial fishing?

Q21 Do you have any comments on Sector Policy 2: Aquaculture?

Q22 Do you have any comments on Sector Policy 3: Shipping, ports, harbours and ferries?

Q23 Do you have any comments on Sector Policy 4: Pipeline, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure?

Q24 Do you have any comments on Sector Policy 5: Offshore wind, wave and tidal renewable energy generation?

Q25 Do you have any comments on Sector Policy 6: Zero carbon fuels, and oil and gas transition?

Q26 Do you have any comments on Sector Policy 7: Tourism, recreation, leisure and sport?

Section 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Plan

Q27 Do you have any comments on Section 4: Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the Plan?

Appendices

Q28 Do you have any comments on Appendix 1: Licensing and Consenting Decisions?

Q29 Do you have any comments on Appendix 2: Relevant Legislation, Plans, Strategies and Policies?

Q30: Do you have any comments on Appendix 3: National Marine Plan interactive?

Q31: Do you have any comments on Appendix 4: Natural Capital and Marine Ecosystem Services?

Q32 Do you have any comments on Appendix 5: Priority Marine Features?

Q33 Do you have any comments on Appendix 6: Seaweed Harvesting?

Q34 Do you have any comments on Appendix 7: Definition of Key Concepts, Acronyms and Glossary?

Supporting Documents

Q35 Do you have any comments on the Strategic Environment Assessment?

Q36 Do you have any comments on the Children's Rights and Wellbeing Screening Sheet and Impact Assessment (CRWIA)?

Q37 Do you have any comments on the Island Communities

Impact Assessment (ICIA)?

Q38 Do you have any comments on the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)?

Q39 Do you have any comments on the Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA)?

Q40 Do you have any comments on the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA)?

Other Comments

Q41 Do you have any other comments or feedback you would like to provide?

Respondent Information

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

☐

Individual

☐

Organisation

Your name

Organisation (if
applicable)

Email address

Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will still take account of your views in our analysis but we will not publish your response, quote anything that you have said or list your name. We will regard your response as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy. By submitting your consultation response, you agree to our privacy policy.

Orkney Islands Council would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference. Your email address will never be published.

Publish response with name ☐

Publish response only (without name) ☐

Do not publish response ☐

Information for organisations only:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' refers only to your name, not your organisation's name. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation.

Do you consent to Orkney Islands Council contacting you again in relation to this consultation exercise?
(Required)

Yes ☐

No ☐

Appendix 2: Orkney regional approach to Priority Marine Feature policy

Introduction

A2.1 A specific question (Q13a) in the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan consultation was include on the potential to take forward a regional approach to Priority Marine Feature (PMF) policy in Orkney.

A2.2 Question 13a:

Do you think General Policy 9d should include specific policy provisions on how lower magnitude impacts on Priority Marine Features (i.e. those impacts that do not constitute an impact on the national status) should be considered in decision making?

A2.3 A total of 24 consultees responded to Question 13a. The responses to are provided in Figure 3.

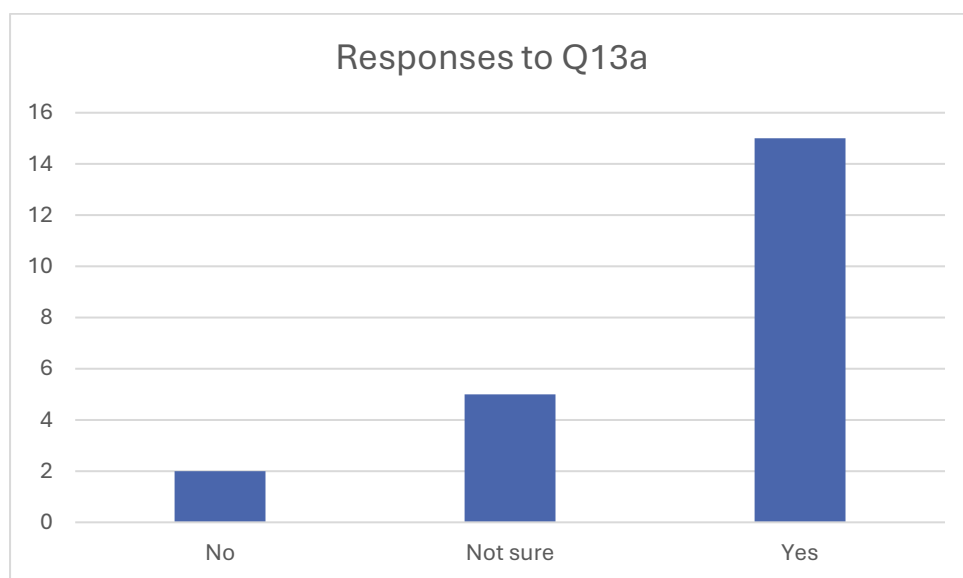


Figure 3 - Responses to Question 13a

Overview and analysis of stakeholder views captured in response to Q13a

A2.4 Summary of views captured:

- Significant support was expressed for taking forward a policy to address lower magnitude impacts on PMFs i.e. impacts that are significant at a regional scale.
- Whilst there were a significant number of stakeholders that supported a policy on lower magnitude impacts on PMFs, there were also significant

concerns that such a policy could slow decision making and significantly increase costs for developers in Orkney.

- Concerns were raised that additional assessment effort would be required in Orkney when compared to other regions, and that this could become a deterrent to development and investment.
- Views were expressed that it would not be appropriate to include a specific policy on lower magnitude impacts on PMFs in a regional marine plan, prior to the current national policy framework for PMFs being reviewed and consulted on as part of National Marine Plan 2.
- Many stakeholders expressed views that if this policy went ahead, it would need to be supported by guidance and tools to enable effective decision making.
- Views were expressed that any new policy on PMFs would need to be supported by an extensive and robust evidence base on habitat/species-specific sensitivity and potential effects from development and activities.

Orkney regional approach to Priority Marine Feature policy

A2.5 Significant consideration has been given to the broad spectrum of views capture in response to Question 13a and the wider policy context. In light of this, it is considered appropriate that General Policy 9d within the consultation draft plan is retained, with a minor modification (see Table 2), and that a policy on lower magnitude/regionally significant impacts on PMFs should not be taken forward at this stage due to the following considerations:

- There is a need for clarity on PMF protections in NMP2 and the potential role of regional marine plans for establishing policy on these matters;
- An Orkney regional PMF policy could create regional disparities in environmental protection which could become a deterrent for investment and development in Orkney and incur significant associated costs for innovation projects and wider development.

A2.6 It is recognised that the consultation demonstrated significant support from stakeholders to take forward a policy to address lower magnitude impacts on PMFs. However, as significant adverse economic and development related impacts have been identified through the consultation, it is not considered appropriate to take forward a regional PMF policy in Orkney at this stage.

A2.7 OIC Marine Planning will continue to engage with the preparation of NMP2 and will consider the implications for PMF policy in Orkney following the adoption of NMP2.



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