

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme Action Plan 2008-2011

Morecambe Bay European marine site Management Scheme Action Plan 1st April 2008 - 31 March 2011

Morecambe Bay is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive. The intertidal and subtidal parts of these designations form the European marine site. The authorities around the Bay are required to exercise their functions so as to secure compliance with the Habitats Directive. They have worked together, with the Morecambe Bay Partnership, to develop a Management Scheme for the Morecambe Bay European marine site.

The Action Plan aims to identify what needs to be done differently, by whom and when, to achieve the necessary outcomes for wildlife, as well as optimising social and economic benefits. The revision of Action Plan has been informed by the 5-year review of the Management Scheme and a review of its effectiveness.

Authorities are required by law to take account of the Habitats Directive in their day to day activities, for example in considering planning applications or granting consents and licences. They may also be required by law to carry out other actions, for example the port authorities have to prepare and test oil pollution contingency plans, which will contribute to protecting the European marine site. The Action Plan does not include these.

The Action Plan focuses on the priority actions that will deliver the greatest benefits. It is a rolling 3 year plan which will be reviewed, revised and reported on annually.

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme
Action Plan 2008-2011

	Action	Outcome sought	Lead	Milestones & status
Conservation Advice				
CA1	Revise Natural England's Regulation 35 (formerly 33) conservation advice for Morecambe Bay (Note that following the revision of the Habitats Regulations this should advice should now be referred to as Regulation 35 advice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 35 advice revised to include conservation objectives and advice on operations which may cause deterioration or disturbance to the interest features added to the Special Area of Conservation since 2000 (reef & subtidal sandbanks are relevant to the European marine site) 	Natural England	<p>The Regulation 35 Advice for Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary European sites has been revised and combined into a single document (Morecambe Bay SAC includes the whole of the Duddon Estuary. The draft Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Reg 35 is available to LAs for use pending further national guidance. It should be noted that this is a working draft. Comments welcomed</p> <p>a) A revised consent for Fleetwood WwTW is imminent to reflect new BOD limit (relevant to impacts on Lune Deep (Sept 2009)</p>
CA2	To ensure that duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity is delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The profile and visibility of biodiversity is raised, biodiversity is conserved and enhanced and biodiversity is built into decision-making across the public and private sector. 	Natural England	<p>a) Additional training and guidance on biodiversity duties given to LPAs (June 2008)</p> <p>b) AONB Mgt Review includes marine biodiversity for first time (Apr 2009)</p>

Interpretation & Education				
IE1	European marine site website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on the European marine site is available on the Morecambe Bay Partnership's website. Ideally this should raise awareness and understanding of the conservation interests and management needs of the European marine site 	Morecambe Bay Partnership & Natural England	<p>a) New information added including Maps and Interest Features description (June & Sept 2009)</p> <p>b) New materials to be added: on-going</p>
IE2	Improve information available on key conservation interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps and details of key conservation features are available for planners, managers and users of Morecambe Bay 	Natural England	<p>a) Maps & supporting information available on website:- Done (October 2009)</p> <p>b) Map information on Mario and into Cumbria and Lancashire Records Centre (Autumn 2010)</p> <p>c) New mapping work in 2010</p>

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme Action Plan 2008-2011

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IE3	Review opportunities to deliver the Bay Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion and awareness of the Bay's wildlife and habitats to ensure they are safeguarded and enhanced, while delivering social and economic benefits. 	Morecambe Bay Partnership/ Natural England	a) Seeking to progress through a Landscape Partnership Scheme: ongoing aim to make application for first round in Nov. 2010
IE4	Increase stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders aware of, informing and supporting the work of the Morecambe Bay Partnership and the European marine site Management Group, including the delivery of the Action Plan. 	Morecambe Bay Partnership / Duddon Estuary Partnership / Natural England	b) New materials being developed by NE - ongoing c) Report to annual conference of Morecambe Bay Partnership (annual): Feb 2009; May 2010 d) Build opportunities into the Morecambe Bay Partnership's event programme (annual review) e) Duddon Estuary Partnership consider relevant issues at regular meetings: ongoing

Catchment Management				
CM1	Undertake Review of Consents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Agency consents reviewed as required by the Habitats Directive. 	Environment Agency, United Utilities & Natural England.	a) Review all Morecambe Bay consents, consistent with the National Environment Programme (NEP) - proposed delivery date is mid 2010. b) Align NW River Basin management plan with Water Framework Directive. - ongoing c) Extension of the Barrow WwTW outfall to discharge directly into the Walney Channel avoiding physical damage to intertidal habitats: Proposed in late 2014. UU to undertake early discussions with ABP Barrow to ensure that port access and dredging needs would not be adversely affected by proposals.

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme

Action Plan 2008-2011

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Shoreline Management				
SM1	Review of Shoreline Management Plan covering Morecambe Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) being developed for Morecambe Bay & the Duddon Estuary (2008-2010) adopts policies that will support the sustainable management of the shoreline over the next 20, 50 and 100 years, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - addressing the needs of climate change adaption including coastal habitat squeeze, - targets to halt and reverse biodiversity decline and - requirements of the Habitats Directive/European marine site. The Shoreline Management Plan (2010) policies been developed in participation with, and are owned by, key stakeholders 	Morecambe Bay & Duddon SMP Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Appropriate assessment of SMP policies completed as part of the SMP review process and signed off by Natural England (2010) b) Jo Marriner appointed as Environment Agency Coastal Change Liaison Officer (2009-2010) to support work with coastal communities c) Consultation on SMP ran over winter/spring 2009/10 - now closed. d) SMP approval expected from EA in Sept and will need to be signed off by District Authorities <p>See NW England & N Wales Coastal Group site: http://mycoastline.org</p>

Fisheries				
F1	To progress a shellfisheries Regulating Order for Morecambe Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All shellfisheries and shellfish cultivation in the Bay are managed sustainably. The Management Plan for the Regulating Order incorporates the measures to ensure that it makes an appropriate contribution to achieving the conservation objectives for Morecambe Bay 	NW Sea Fisheries Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reapplying for regulating order - expected mid 2010 b) Formal public Regulating Order consultation - end 2010 c) Enactment/effective implementation - April 2011

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme
Action Plan 2008-2011

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F2	Undertake shellfisheries/bird resource risk assessment study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential risk of the internationally important bird populations using Morecambe Bay being affected by the shellfisheries evaluated through a risk assessment study undertaken on the Bay. 	Natural England & NW Sea Fisheries Committee	<p>a) The NW SFC's Environmental Forum has agreed the need for shellfisheries/bird risk assessment studies - to be undertaken in partnership with the Forum members and the industry.</p> <p>b) Bird/shellfish modelling by Bournemouth University with inputs from SFC, WeBS counters, RSPB, WTs, NE and others suggests that oystercatcher may be more dependent on shellfish stocks than knot. Finalised report due end May 2010 with follow-on work expected.</p> <p>c) Research study proposed into status and breeding success of Morecambe Bay eider population. There are BTO Alerts in place. An initial data review carried out by SFC, WeBS counters, CWT and NE. Research proposal being developed - initial reporting expected 2011.</p>

Shipping & Navigation				
SN1	Review maintenance dredging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Port maintenance dredging programmes reviewed against the conservation objectives for the Morecambe Bay European site under the Habitats Regulations 	Morecambe Bay Port Authorities, Natural England	<p>a) Ports in Morecambe Bay to sign up to and implement Defra's Maintenance Dredging Protocol.. All ports have signed up to the protocol and consultants are now drawing up a Morecambe Bay Maintenance Dredging Baseline document expected Sept 2010, to be agreed with MMO and NE</p>

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme
Action Plan 2008-2011

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	Access & Recreation			
AR1	Improve coastal access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better quality access to and around the coast in ways which safeguard and enhance the natural environment, its enjoyment and its contributions to the natural economy. Marine Bill/Act Coastal Access provisions implemented around Morecambe Bay. 	Morecambe Bay Partnership, Natural England, Local Authorities Bay Programme partners	a) Kent Viaduct opportunity for footpath/bridleway access across - Ongoing - to be progressed in context of the Bay Programme. b) Cumbria Local Access Forum has set up coastal access working groups and started review work to pilot roll-out ahead of coastal access in Marine Bill.
AR2	Promote recovery of the biodiversity and amenity value of damaged shingle habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetated shingle interests at North Walney/Earnse Bay and Foulney Island are protected from vehicular damage to enable them to recover and contribute to the amenity value of the area 	Natural England & Barrow Borough Council	a) Interpretation panels erected May 2008 b) Vehicular barrier installed in 2009 c) NE has appointed a Barrow Community Outreach Officer (Gemma Blackburn) and has a North Walney NNR Reserve Warden (Steve Benn)
AR3	Improve amenity quality of environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less non-natural litter on shoreline Less litter entering the site 	Morecambe Bay Partnership	a) Beach Care Programme continues to expand with 5 locality based teams with sets of equipment and a programme of ~ 15-20 events/year.
AR4	Engage with recreational stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised awareness of wildlife habitats in Bay Raised awareness of recreational users needs Conflict avoidance and resolution 	Morecambe Bay Partnership	a) Hold twice yearly meetings of Sport & Recreation User Group (ongoing): On target b) Duddon Estuary Partnership holds 3 meetings a year bringing all interests together (including recreational interests).

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme
Action Plan 2008-2011

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	Monitoring and evaluation			
ME1	Monitor and review Action Plan implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This document summaries the key actions needed to achieve the conservation objectives for the Morecambe Bay EMS. It is kept up to date and is widely available. This Action Plan is informed by, and will inform, the condition monitoring undertaken by Natural England 	Management Group supported by MBP	a) Report to Morecambe Bay Partnership (Nov 2007, Feb 2009; May 2010): On target b) Roll-forward and review of Action Plan to cover period 2011-2014 to be undertaken in November 2010.
ME2	Revise Management Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management scheme meets national and local needs, is up-to-date, takes account of the revised Regulation 35 Advice and is in a form which can be easily accessed and understood by relevant authorities and the public. 	Management Group supported by MBP	a) Natural England undertaking a national review of best practise management in 2010-11 and will feedback to Mgt Scheme groups in 2011. b)
ME3	Regional Coastal Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding, better data and better sharing of data on marine physical environment - to enhance the ability of coastal engineers to manage shoreline works and encourage all authorities to share data. 	Cell Eleven Regional Monitoring Strategy (CERMS): Co-ordinating Authority Paul Wisse, Coastal Defence, Sefton	a) The Coastal Cell Eleven Regional Monitoring Strategy and partnership is coordinating work to inform the NW's Shoreline Management Plan and planning. Relevant authorities around Morecambe Bay are actively engaged. Data will be made available online at www.channelcoast.org - Ongoing
ME4	Monitoring of sea grass beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-to-date information on the extent and quality of sea grass (<i>Zostera</i>) beds and a better understanding of potential threats to these beds, for example from wastewater discharges, pipe-laying activities and habitat modification by cord grass (<i>Spartina</i>). 	Natural England	a) Need to do a review overall of the status of eel grass bed using information from all sources - UU & pipeline studies - Ongoing.

Morecambe Bay Management Scheme
Action Plan 2008-2011

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ME5	Monitoring of honeycomb worm reefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in the distribution and quality of honeycomb worm reefs known and used to inform management of shellfisheries and other activities 	Natural England & NW Sea Fisheries Committee	a) Survey as part of mussel stock assessments and agree monitoring requirements - work to be done by end 2010.
ME6	Monitoring of saltmarsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A baseline map of saltmarshes in Morecambe Bay produced to inform the Shoreline Management Plan review and monitoring under the Habitats and Water Framework Directives 	Lancaster City Council, Environment Agency & Natural England	a) Satellite methodology evaluated: Lancaster City Council is continuing to work with UK Space Agency (UKSA) and other agencies to investigate the use of satellite data for monitoring salt marshes b) Air photographic survey of NW saltmarshes undertaken by the Environment Agency (now complete); analysis expected Spring 2010
ME7	Monitor distribution of the alien species wire weed (<i>Sargassum muticum</i>) and other alien species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain watching brief on the alien species wire weed <i>Sargassum muticum</i> and other alien species eg Chinese mitten crab, Japanese Sea squirt. 	Natural England (with Morecambe Bay Partnership and Cumbria Wildlife Trust)	a) Natural England to liaise with MBP and Wildlife Trusts to raise public awareness identify current situation and establish watching brief - ongoing b)