

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

East of Celtic Deep

**Candidate Marine Conservation Zone not
proposed for designation in the second tranche**

January 2015

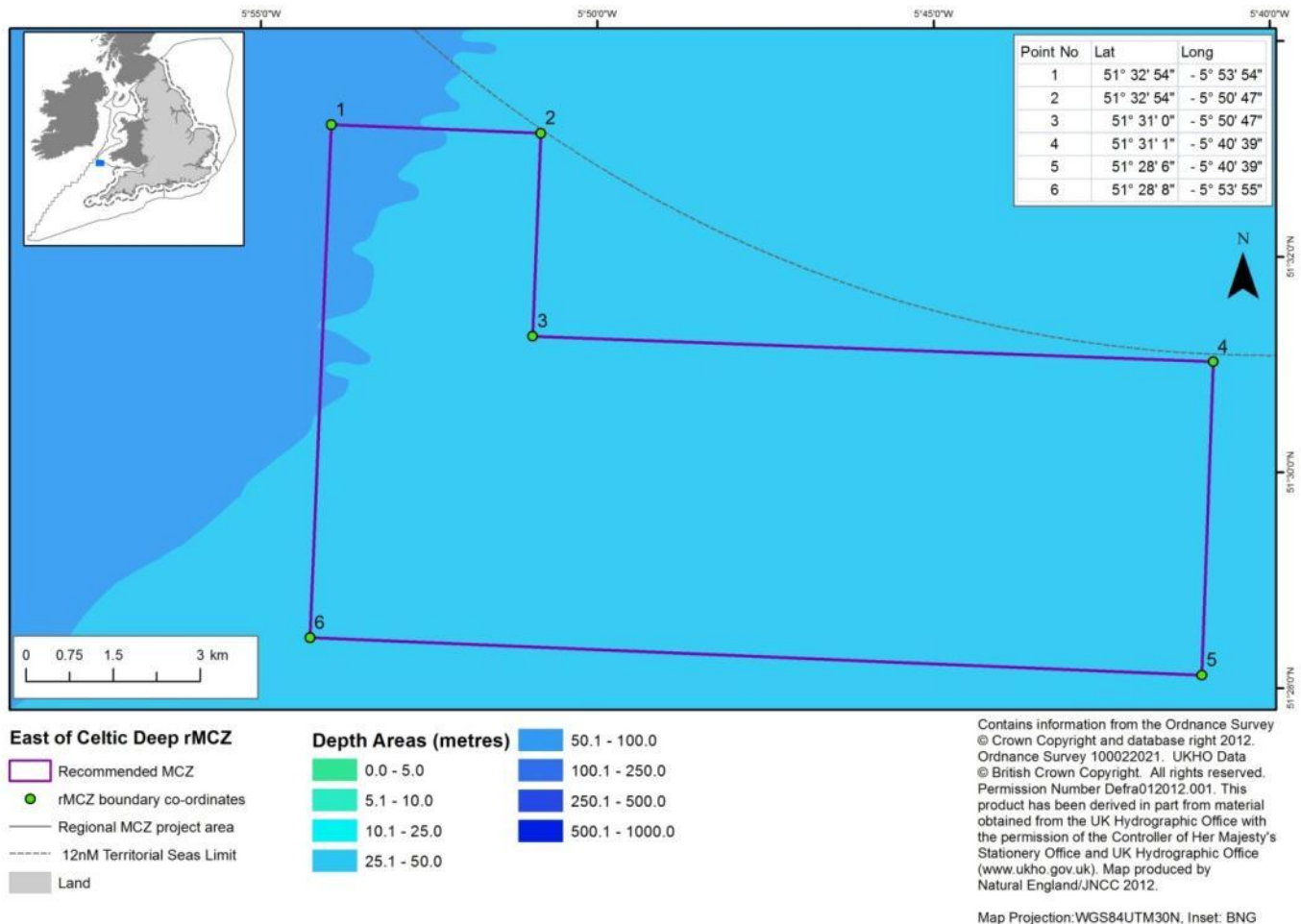
**Consultation on Sites Proposed for Designation in the Second Tranche
of Marine Conservation Zones**

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Where the site is located

East of Celtic Deep candidate Marine Conservation Zone (cMCZ) is a relatively small offshore site which covers an area of 94 km². The depth range is 50–100 metres, with the western edge dipping below 100 metres.



Why this site was identified as a candidate site for the second tranche

East of Celtic Deep cMCZ contains subtidal sand, subtidal mixed sediments and subtidal mud habitats which would provide an important contribution to the marine protected area (MPA) network by protecting additional areas of habitat within the region. The site also improves connectivity between sediment habitats in MPAs in the region. The site has added ecological importance because it is in an area where frontal systems occur during the summer months, which are strong water currents that can cause aggregations of plankton and feeding animals. The site is also an important spawning ground for several fish species, including cod, sole and haddock.

Features considered for designation

The features considered for designation in this site were:

- subtidal sand,
- subtidal mud,
- subtidal mixed sediment,
- mud habitats in deep water.

Effects of designation

If the cMCZ was to be designated in its current form, the following activities would likely be affected by management. This information will be updated if a revised site proposal is recommended for designation at a later date.

Sector	Best Cost Estimate (£) per year	Details
UK commercial fishing	100	The site is located on the eastern edge of a nephrops fishery targeted by UK fishing vessels, mostly from Northern Ireland, using bottom towed gear. There is no evidence of fishing activity with other gear types by UK vessels and the level of fishing effort inside the site is relatively low.
Non-UK fishing	Unquantified	Non-UK fishing vessels (mostly from the Republic of Ireland, France and Belgium) using static gears, bottom trawls/dredges and mid-water trawls fish within the site.
Best estimate total cost	100	

Activities that are unlikely to be affected

These activities are known to take place at this site but are not likely to be damaging to the features identified at their current levels of intensity:

- cables (existing interconnectors and two active telecom cables) occur within the site,
- transit of ships.

Why this site is not being proposed for designation in the second tranche

Defra is responsible for designating cMCZs in the offshore waters adjacent to Wales. Five sites which were proposed as candidates for the second tranche are in these waters. This includes East of Celtic Deep.

Since this site was identified by the regional projects as a cMCZ, the Silk Commission, which was an independent commission established to review what powers should be devolved to the Welsh government, recommended that offshore waters adjacent to Wales should be the responsibility of the Welsh government. The UK government has not yet responded to these recommendations but, given this is currently under consideration, we do not consider it appropriate to take forward sites in offshore waters adjacent to Wales at this time.

Further consideration

The UK government response to the Silk Commission's second report will confirm if responsibility for these waters will transfer to the Welsh government. Following this response, sites will either be considered by the Welsh government, which has an ongoing programme to designate MCZs, or will remain with the UK government for consideration as part of the third tranche.

Additional information

To read the full consultation document, or respond to the consultation, please visit

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine/tranche2mczs>

To read the advice provided by JNCC, please visit

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6658>

For further information, please contact Defra on

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