

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Offshore Brighton

Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

January 2015

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



High energy cirralittoral rock: Deeper water rock, exposed to very strong waves and currents © JNCC

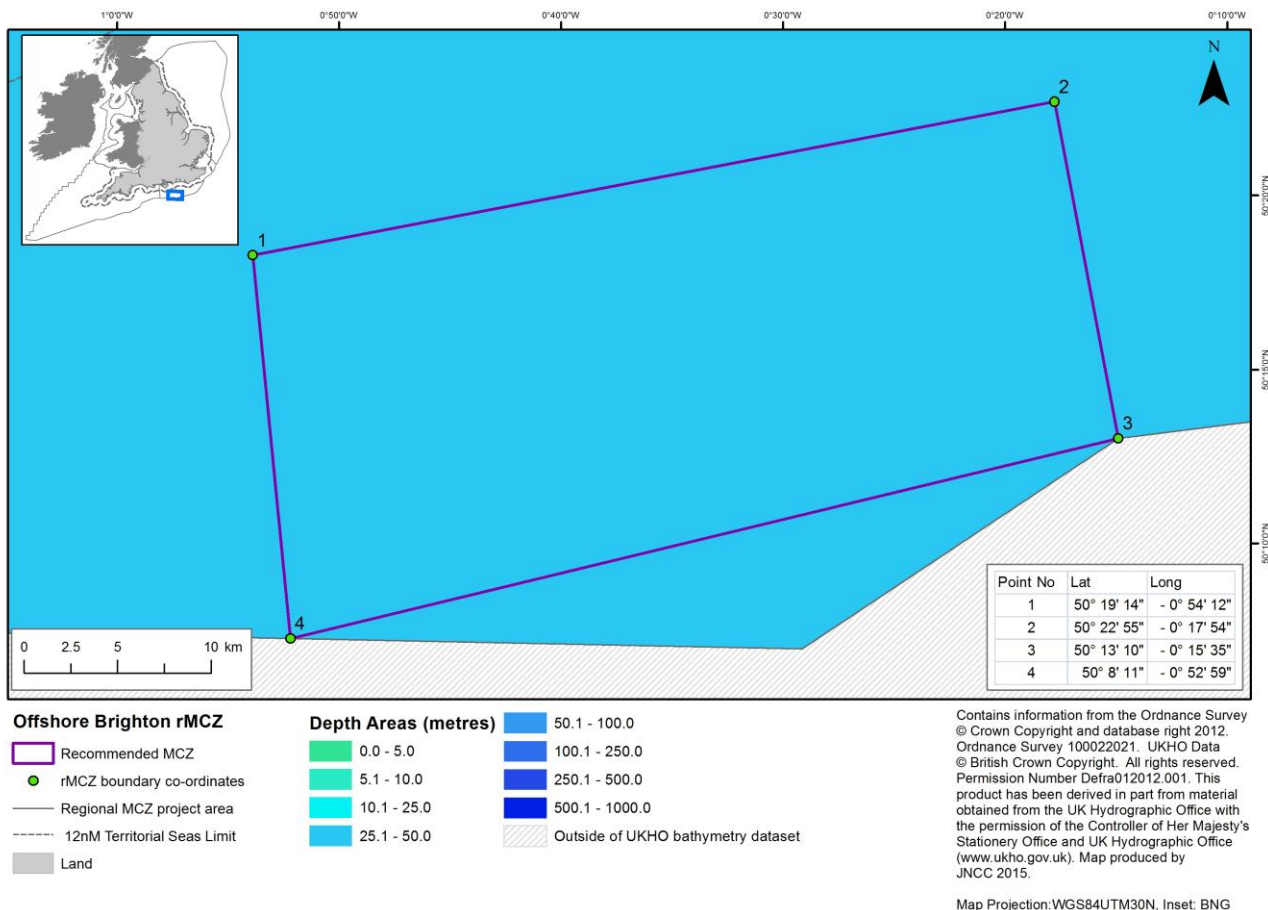
Contents

Where the site is located.....	3
How to comment on the consultation	3
Why the site is environmentally important.....	4
What this site would protect	4
Where the features are located.....	5
Features that are not proposed for designation	6
Activities that are likely to be affected	6
UK commercial fishing.....	7
Non-UK commercial fishing.....	7
Activities that are unlikely to be affected	8
Additional Information	8

Where the site is located

Offshore Brighton recommended Marine Conservation Zone (rMCZ) is an offshore site measuring 862 km².

The site lies offshore in the deep waters of the mid English Channel, its south-eastern and south-western corners meeting the median line with French waters, due south of Brighton.



How to comment on the consultation

You can comment on this proposal by responding to the [consultation](#) taking place between 30th January and 24th April 2015.

Why the site is environmentally important

This site fills a gap for high and moderate energy circalittoral rocks. These deep water rocks are dominated by animal communities as there is insufficient sunlight for plant growth. The types of animals that thrive here include colourful sponges clinging to the rock and a dense 'carpet' of sea fans. The soft coral (dead men's fingers) is often present on rocky outcrops.

The site also includes subtidal coarse sediment where most of the life remains beneath the surface buried in the seabed. Animals found here include small shrimp-like creatures, burrowing anemones, carpet shell clams and venus cockles. The site also partially contains the Northern Paleovalley, a submerged ancient river system.

What this site would protect

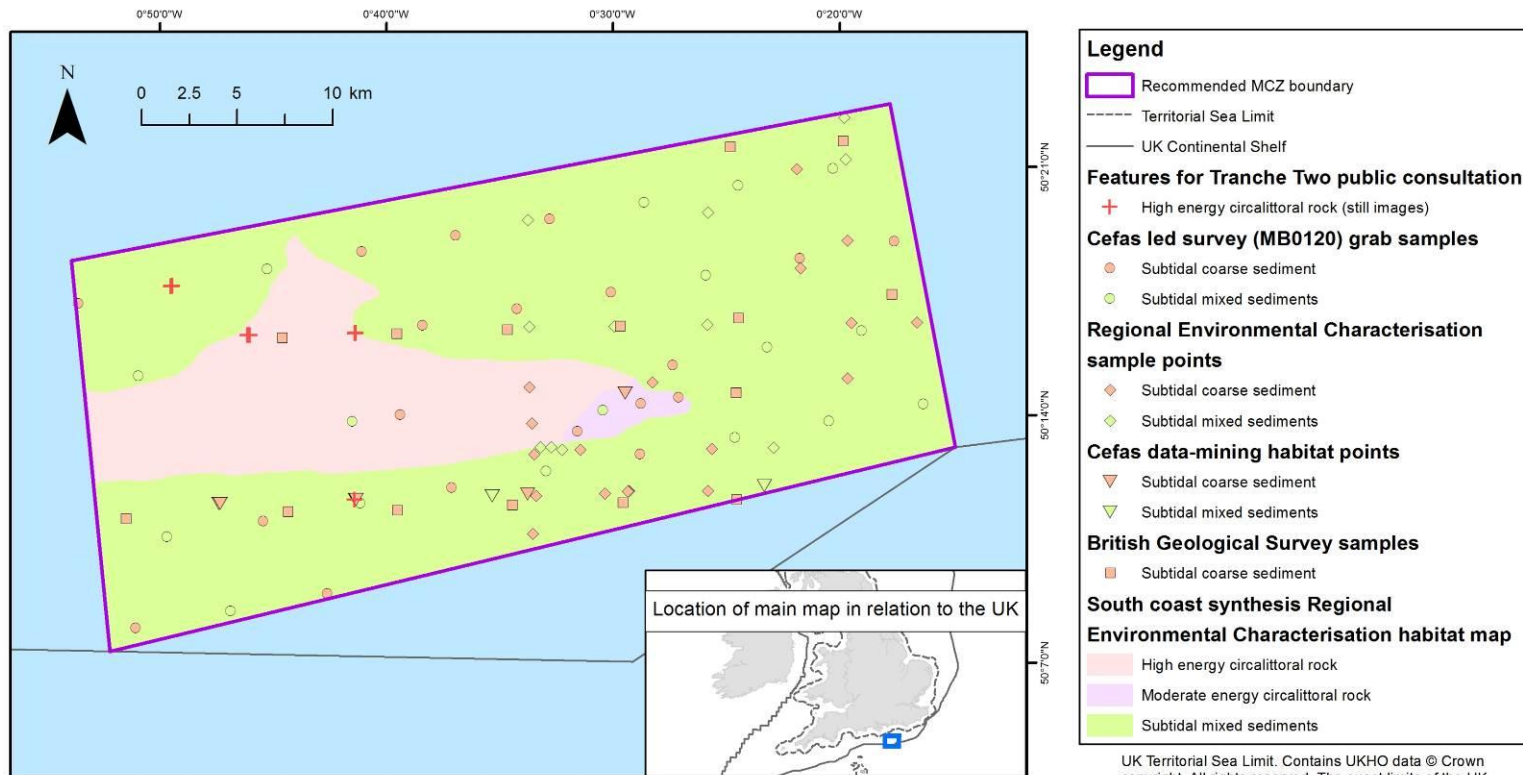
Designation would protect the following features. You can read more about the features this site protects and why they are important [here](#).

Feature	General management approach
High energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal mixed sediments	



Where the features are located

The following map shows the location of the features to be protected. A range of different types of surveys have been used to create this map. More detailed information on the techniques used and the features themselves can be found [here](#).



The still image samples of high energy circalittoral rock were taken during a Cefas survey in 2006 and the Cefas led survey in 2012. The Cefas led survey grab samples were taken during the Cefas survey in 2012. The Regional Environmental Characterisation (REC) sample points were taken by the Eastern English Channel REC surveys. Cefas data-mining habitat points were taken on Cefas surveys in 2005 and 2006. British Geological Survey samples were taken in 1983. The South coast synthesis REC habitat map is derived from the REC sample points. More detailed advice available from the JNCC advice documents found here: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6658>

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Version: 2.1 Plotted: 20/11/14 by AB

Features that are not proposed for designation

The following features are not proposed for designation as there is currently insufficient supporting evidence. Inclusion of these features may be considered if scientific evidence becomes available:

- ross worm (*Saberllaria spionulosa*) reefs,
- undulate ray (*Raja undulata*).

Activities that are likely to be affected

Management decisions are taken on a case by case basis by relevant regulators. Management will not automatically mean that economic and recreational activities will be restricted, decisions will be based on the specifics of each case. Restrictions on an activity will depend on the sensitivity of species, habitats and geological/geomorphological features (for which a site is designated) to the activities taking place in that area. More detail is available in the [Impact Assessment](#).

Sectors or activities likely affected by designation		
Sector	Activity Affected	Best Cost Estimate (£) per year
UK commercial fishing	Bottom trawls, dredges, nets, pots and traps.	3,000
Non–UK commercial fishing	Vessels from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands	Unquantified
Best estimate total cost		3,000

UK commercial fishing

The north-eastern part of the site is mainly fished by UK scallop dredgers. Both over and under 15 metre UK vessels use the following gears within the site:

- bottom trawls,
- scallop dredging,
- nets and set netting,
- pots and traps,
- rod and line,
- mid-water trawls.

Management of static and towed gear may be required due to the sensitivity of the features recommended for protection. It has been suggested that a zonal management approach could be employed. This means that not all gears will be affected by management in all parts of the site and some gears may not be subject to any management, as they do not negatively affect the features the site protects (for example, mid-water trawls).

Non-UK commercial fishing

The boundary of the site was adjusted during the Regional Project phase to avoid the most important French scalloping grounds and areas used by Belgian fishing vessels. The following gears are known to be used within the site:

- Belgium - seasonal fishing (February to April) using bottom trawls and seine nets,
- France - bottom trawls, dredges and static gears,
- Netherlands - range of gear types including beam trawls,
- Germany - mid-water otter trawls,
- Denmark - pelagic trawls.

Management of static and towed gear may be required due to the sensitivity of the features recommended for protection. It is unlikely that any management will be required for mid-water and pelagic gear fisheries.

Although impacts outside the UK are not quantified as part of the impact assessment, the implications of designation on non-UK commercial fishing vessels are considered in deciding which sites to designate.

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 proposed for designation at their current levels of intensity:

- cables (interconnectors and telecom cables) - one active telecommunication cables intersect the site,
- potential overlap with National Grid France – England Electricity Interconnector,
- transit of ships.

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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