

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Yarmouth to Cowes

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

January 2015

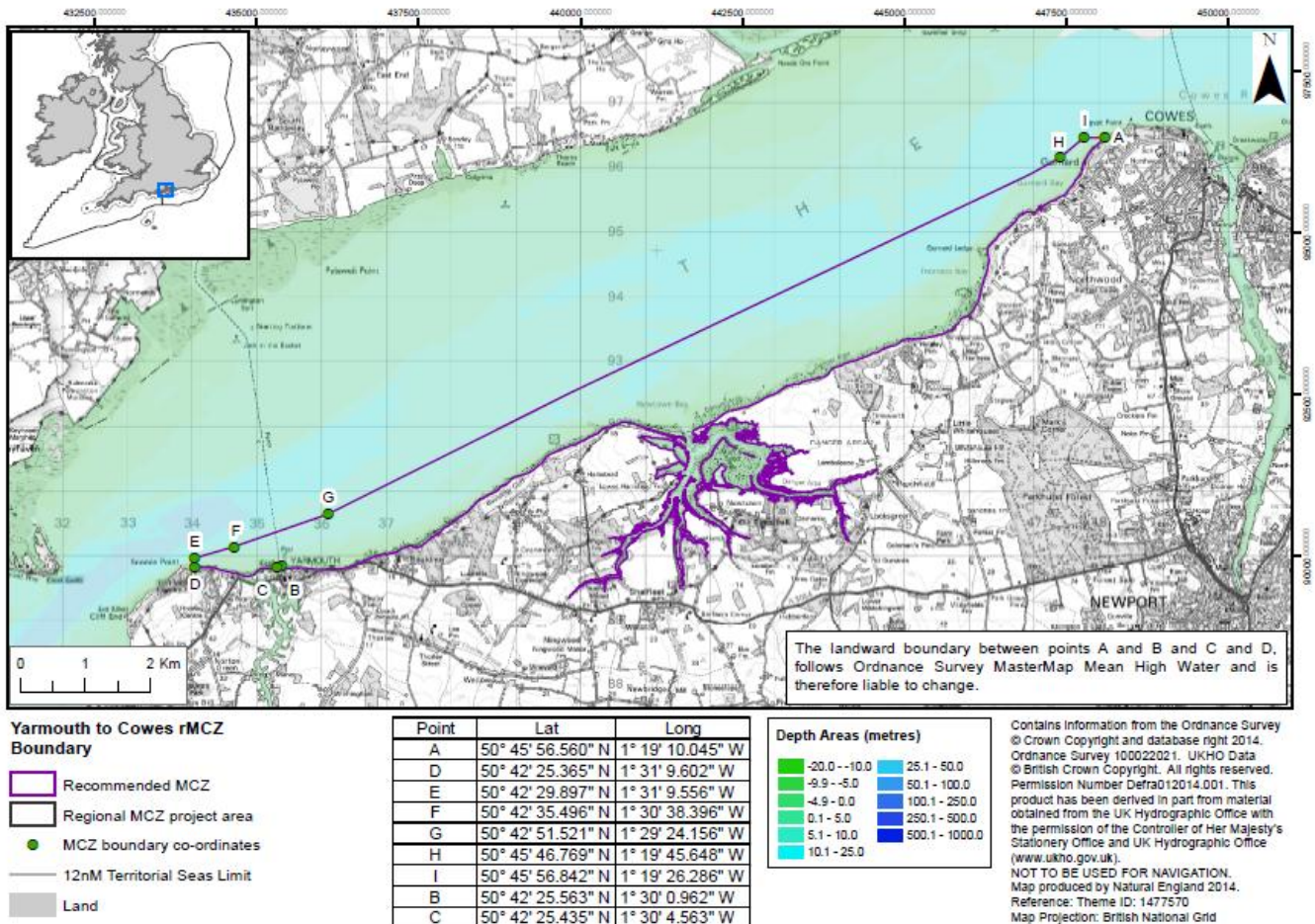
**Consultation on Sites Proposed for Designation in the Second Tranche
of Marine Conservation Zones**

Contents

Where the site is located.....	3
Why this site was identified as a candidate for the second tranche	3
Features considered for designation.....	4
Effects of designation.....	5
Activities that are unlikely to be affected.....	7
Why this candidate site is not being proposed for designation in the second tranche	7
Further consideration	7
Additional Information	8

Where the site is located

Yarmouth to Cowes candidate Marine Conservation Zones (cMCZ) is an inshore site measuring 17 km². This site runs along the northwest coast of the Isle of Wight, stretching from Sconce Point on the west of Yarmouth to the West Cowes headlands and includes Newtown Harbour.



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

The site was identified as a candidate because it contains a large number and variety of features, including some of the best examples of peat and clay exposures on the south coast as well as habitats such as intertidal underboulder communities. Many boulders on the intertidal foreshore host a variety of sponges, anemones, sea squirts and crustaceans together with numerous piddocks (a bivalve mollusc specially adapted for boring into rocks) which are present on the clay exposures. Some very good examples of seagrass beds occur along this coastline and, together with the other sites around the Isle of Wight, this is an important area for native oyster.

Features considered for designation

The features considered for designation in this site were:

- moderate energy intertidal rock,
- low energy intertidal rock,
- high energy infralittoral rock,
- moderate energy infralittoral rock.
- high energy circalittoral rock,
- moderate energy circalittoral rock,
- subtidal mixed sediments,
- subtidal coarse sediment,
- subtidal mud,
- subtidal sand,
- subtidal macrophyte-dominated sediment,
- estuarine rocky habitats,
- fragile sponge & anthozoan communities on subtidal rocky habitats,
- intertidal underboulder communities,
- littoral chalk communities,
- peat and clay exposures,
- sheltered muddy gravels,
- rosworm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) reef,
- seagrass beds,
- subtidal chalk,
- sheltered muddy gravel,
- subtidal biogenic reefs,
- black seabream (*Spondyliosoma cantharus*),
- lagoon sand shrimp (*Gammurus insensibilis*),
- native oyster beds,
- native oysters (*Ostrea edulis*),
- tentacled lagoon worm (*Alkmaria romijni*)
- Bouldnor cliff (geological feature).

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
Recreational activities	40,000	<p>There is a high concentration of boating activities and anchoring of recreational vessels within the site.</p> <p>Management may be required over areas of ross worm reefs, seagrass beds, moderate-energy infralittoral rock and intertidal underboulder communities.</p>
UK commercial fishing	1,300	<p>Vessels that fish in the area are based in Cowes, Lymington, Keyhaven and Portsmouth/Gosport. Pots, traps, nets and lines are known to be used within the site.</p> <p>Certain commercial fishing restrictions are already in existence. The Southern IFCA has introduced a towed gear byelaw which restricts the use of bottom trawls and dredges around the Isle of Wight. This will partially deliver the management that is required for this site. Fishing is also limited within the Harbour/Creek area, which is privately owned by the National Trust.</p>
Ports, harbours and shipping	24,900	<p>The site is located near the St Meads commercial anchorage, Yarmouth Harbour and the Ports of Southampton and Lymington.</p> <p>St Meads commercial anchorage has an average of 323 vessels anchoring annual – costs of mitigation of this anchorage are unquantified</p> <p>There is one site (Hurst Fort) within 5 km of the site which is licensed for disposal of channel dredge material.</p> <p>There is licensed maintenance and navigational dredging within 1 km of this site associated with the Yarmouth Harbour Commission and with the main shipping channel associated with Southampton Port.</p> <p>Within 5 km of this site, maintenance and navigational dredging is carried out by the Yarmouth Harbour Commission, Southampton Port and the Port of Lymington.</p> <p>All future licence applications made in relation to port, harbour and commercial shipping activities would need to consider the possible effects of their activities on the features designated within the site. It is likely that there would be additional costs incurred when carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).</p>

Renewable energy (tidal)	700	<p>The cMCZ is adjacent to the Solent Energy near shore deployment site, which is scheduled for development by 2015. It is part of the tidal energy project that is being implemented by the Solent Ocean Energy Centre.</p> <p>Any application would need to consider the possible effects of development on the features designated within the site. This would increase the costs of the application.</p>
Oil and gas	Unquantified at a site specific level	<p>This cMCZ overlaps with an area that has potential for future oil and gas exploration and production. If the site were developed for oil and gas extraction, developers would need to take into account the impact of the development on the features in the site. This would increase the cost of the licence application. As a result of uncertainty about whether any development will take place, costs for the oil and gas sector have not been quantified at site level.</p>
Archaeological heritage	Unquantified at a site specific level	<p>A World War II bombing decoy area, Roman and Neolithic artefacts and wrecked vessels of British, Spanish, German, French and Dutch origin have been recorded within the site. One of the vessels is protected by the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 (the <i>Yarmouth Roads</i>) with a 50 metre exclusion zone. Yarmouth Pier is also a designated monument. A bronze-age burial site, a late iron-age cremation cemetery and several cup marks have been recorded within the site. Bouldnor cliff underwater Mesolithic site has been subject to archaeological investigation since the late 1990s.</p> <p>There is likely to be an increase in the cost for carrying out EIAs for future licence applications within this site. Following designation, these would need to consider the effect of the activity on the features designated at this site.</p>
Best estimate total cost	66,200	

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:

- UK commercial fishing - mid water trawls,
- flood and coastal defence management,
- transit of ships,
- water abstraction,
- water pollution from activities on land (as this is managed under the Water Framework Directive).

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

This site would affect several sectors, with the greatest costs to recreational boating (fixed club and private moorings throughout the site) and ports and harbours, as Yarmouth harbour is within the boundary. This site includes the Salt Mead Commercial anchorage, which provides safe anchorage for vessels heading into port (average of 323 vessels per year).

We consider that further work is needed to explore the scope for developing local solutions on this site before it can be proposed for designation.

Further consideration

Defra will undertake further discussions regarding boundary alterations and additional information will be gathered ahead of consideration in 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 Natural England, please visit

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5803843768025088?category=6742552893980672>

For further information, please contact Defra on

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