Policy drafting template – NE-SOC-1

**HLMO**

Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society

**Sub bullet(s)**

There is equitable access for those who want to use and enjoy the coast, seas and their wide range of resources and assets and recognition that for some island and peripheral communities the sea plays a significant role in their community.

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**Policy**

**NE-SOC-1**

Proposals that enhance or promote social benefits should be supported. Proposals unable to enhance or promote social benefits should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: a) minimise, or b) mitigate adverse impacts which result in the displacement of other existing or authorised (but yet to be implemented) activities that generate social benefits.

**What are social benefits?**

1. Social benefits related to marine activities (and the natural and historic environment on which they are based) include, but are not limited to, improved health and well-being, enjoyment, cultural identity and a sense of place. In the first instance such benefits are gained directly by people in coastal communities immediately adjacent to the north east marine area (see Map X). This can be due to residing near the coast, with views of it, experiencing it in all weathers and seasons, and being able to regularly recreate in and adjacent to the marine area. Some of these benefits can be gained by visitors to the area. People who may never visit the north east marine area may also gain social benefits through virtual experiences or just having confidence in its sustainable management. Social benefits are also derived indirectly from people gaining marine area-related employment and skills. Benefits are generally contingent on the natural and historic environment on which they are based. They may also require sector industries for their realisation (see for example related policies on Access, Tourism and Recreation, Fishing, Employment, Seascape, Biodiversity, MPAs, Water Quality and Heritage Assets).

**What is displacement?**

2. Displacement is when an activity is moved (in time or geographical space) because of the introduction or impact of another activity. It can mean that the activity may no longer be able to take place. There is a recognised need to better understand the potential social impacts (positive and negative, direct and indirect, permanent and temporary, as well as those resulting from cumulative effects) of displacement.

**Where are social benefits in the North East marine plan areas?**

3. The coastal typology, developed as part of the MMO *Socio-economic study* provides an overview of the types of coastal communities and their social and economic
characteristics including current position and recent trends compared to the national average. It describes the diversity between communities within the north east (see Map X) and their levels of deprivation, employment, education and health. This provides an indication of where social benefits are most needed to address challenges faced by local communities.

4. The most common typologies are Striving Communities and Structural Shifters. Many communities on Tyneside, Wearside and Teeside (in and around Gateshead, South Shields, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Hartlepool) experience high levels of deprivation with particular social and economic challenges for significant numbers of people in these areas. Some towns, including those on the County Durham coast and remote seaside resorts such as Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, have lost their primary markets and are facing challenges in finding new ones. New Towns and Ports (in the South Tyneside and Wearside hinterland) face challenges relating to poor skills and high levels of worklessness, but counterbalanced by relatively strong economy and often located close to areas of economic growth. The North East also has significant numbers of Working Hard communities on the edge of towns such as Newcastle, Sunderland and Middlesbrough and their satellites. This indicates a strength in employment in industrial sectors and a stable population. While the proportion of people in Rural Chic and Working Countryside typologies in the North East is low, large areas of the North York Moors coastline and inland are covered by such communities.

When do social benefits take place in North East marine plan areas?

5. Many social benefits are derived all year round. Experiencing a sense of place, enjoyment of the seascape and health and well-being benefits are always available. Others such as personal satisfaction, indirectly obtained from employment and skills, may be seasonal if linked to patterns for fishing and the tourism sectors.

Why are social benefits important to the North East marine plan areas?

6. All residents of coastal communities and visitors gain social benefits from the North East marine plan area over time, but to various degrees. Displacement of activities which produce social benefits, particularly ones that are important to coastal communities experiencing deprivation or other social challenges, is a concern. It is important to manage negative impacts on activities with social benefits (Marine Policy Statement 3.11.2, NPPF Chapter 8 and Monitoring Engagement with the Natural Environment 2017-18). The need to encourage co-existence is essential in minimising or mitigating the negative impacts of displacement.

7. Sustainable development requires balanced assessment of environmental, social and economic cumulative impacts. Consideration of social impacts is especially necessary as they are particularly problematic to measure due to being more qualitative, indirect and diffuse.

8. As noted above many social benefits are derived indirectly from employment (in many industries, but including fishing), having skills, access to and within the marine area and recreation and tourism opportunities. Social benefits are also contingent on the natural and historic environment, the seascape, good water quality and reduced marine litter. Social benefits will be partly safeguarded as an indirect consequence of the effective implementation of relevant sector policies (see signposting below). However, as social benefits are derived from such a wide range of sources, and are
important to both residents and visitors who experience them in diverse ways, active intervention is required to ensure they continue to be provided.

**Who is this of interest to?**

9. Public authorities such as:
- Local Planning Authorities
- The Planning Inspectorate
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Marine Management Organisation licensing
- Trinity House
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Local recreational groups

**How should this policy be applied?**

10. NE-SOC-1 ensures social benefits are explicitly addressed in proposals for new developments or activities and in the authorisations of decision-makers when assessing them. It encourages proposals that enhance or promote social benefits. If proposals are unable to demonstrate how they enhance or promote social benefits then they should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, minimise or mitigate impacts which result in the displacement of other existing or authorised (but yet to be implemented) activities that generate social benefits. Minimise requires impacts that displace activities to be reduced in size, frequency and extent. Whereas mitigation means steps are taken at the same site of the proposal, or at a different site within or adjoining the north west marine area, to provide new social benefits that offset the loss of those displaced. Proposals cannot proceed to (b) unless they have first demonstrated why they cannot meet (a) etc. Proposals should include supporting information demonstrating how they will enhance or promote social benefits. Adverse impacts must be addressed in addition to describing any positive impacts. Evidence in support of social benefits is not a substitute for avoiding, mitigating or minimising adverse impacts.

11. This policy will be implemented by public authorities assessing proposals. It clarifies the provisions of the Marine Policy Statement, and complements policy NE-CO-1.

12. Proposals should identify and evidence where possible:
- The activities already taking place in the area, and the resources on which they are based, that provide social benefits. Such activities and resources include, but are not limited to:
  - Access to and within the marine area;
  - Recreation opportunities;
  - Tourism opportunities and businesses;
  - MPAs, Biodiversity and Geological features that support recreation, tourism and general awareness and appreciation;
  - Heritage assets;
  - Seascape character;
  - Fishing businesses and historical associations through past activity.
- The social benefits, that are derived from these activities, including, but not limited to:
  - Health and well-being;
• Enjoyment;
• cultural identity;
• a sense of place.

• The displacement of the above activities that would ensue from implementation/operation of the proposal.

• Mechanisms to minimise and mitigate the reduction on social benefits due to the displacement of activities. These may include:
  o Alternative access;
  o New recreation and tourism opportunities (eg interpretation);
  o Alternative businesses that can provide additional social benefits.

13. Proposals must include a description of potential displacement impacts, including on authorised, but yet to be implemented activities. Some existing activities can be identified via the Marine Information System (and the public register), local plans, shoreline management plans, and heritage coast and coastal partnership plans. This may include consultation (with public authorities, coastal partnerships, industry groups including those representing the recreation and tourism sector) to identify displacement issues at the pre-planning stage and suggested measures to minimise or mitigate them. If these criteria cannot be met by a proposal, where it requires an authorisation decision, it will only be authorised if there are relevant considerations in line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009)(Section 58(1)).

14. Proposals should identify adverse impacts in terms of both space (physical exclusion or removal from an area) and/or in time (preventing an activity taking place at certain times of day or year).

15. Proposals should include all adverse impacts which may be direct and/or indirect. Direct adverse impacts, for example, could include preventing the existing use of an area by recreational boating. Indirect impacts could include increased competition in another area, created by fishing activity displaced from the proposal area, with consequential impacts on local ports, tourism, the environment, and recreational users obliged to use an area that was previously only used by shipping.

16. To reduce conflict and enhance compatibility, proposals should show they will, in order of preference: minimise or mitigate adverse social impacts of displacement. For example, impacts could be minimised through adjusting the:
  • area used; or
  • the times of the day or year when activities are operating.

17. Mitigation may include identification of alternative areas for the existing activity or support for new activities that generate similar social benefits to those displaced.

18. Public authorities should consider compliance with legislation and regulations including environmental impact assessments and social impact assessments where already required. Enhancement is not a substitute for avoidance, minimisation or mitigation measures.

19. In examining and determining applications for nationally significant infrastructure projects, examining authorities and the secretary of state for The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government must have regard to this policy for nationally significant infrastructure projects that may have significant adverse impacts on social benefits.
20. Inclusion of supporting information does not indicate that approval of the proposal will follow by default. That will also depend on other material considerations to be taken into account by the decision-maker which may include, for example, other plans.

**Signposting**

21. Existing measures which relate to, and may contribute to the achievement of this policy include:
   - Marine Policy Statement (2.5.2 and 2.5.3)
   - European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
   - Coastal Communities Fund

22. Further information and guidance that may help in implementing the policy include:
   - Maximising the socio-economic benefits of marine planning for English coastal communities (MMO)
   - Social Impacts of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Recreation, Tourism and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Marine Plan Areas in England (MMO 1035)
   - Social Impacts and Interactions between Marine Sectors (MMO 1060)

23. See also related policies: NE-ACC-1, NE-ACC-2, NE-TR-1, NE-TR-2, NE-EMP-1, NE-EMP-2, NE-FISH-1, NE-FISH-2, NE-FISH-4, NE-SOC-3, NE-BIO-1, NE-BIO-3, NE-BIO-4, NE-MPA-1, NE-MPA-6, NE-WQ-1, NE-ML-2, NE-SCP-1, NE-HER-1, NE-CO-1.