

Natural England Commissioned Report NECR106

# Seascape Characterisation around the English Coast (Marine Plan Areas 3 and 4 and Part of Area 6 Pilot Study)

Annex 1 - Limitations and Scope for Further Work

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**URS**

Scott  
Wilson

## Seascape Characterisation around the English Coast (Marine Plan Areas 3 and 4 and Part of Area 6 Pilot Study) – Limitations and Scope for Further Work



Prepared for  
**Natural England**



## Revision Schedule

### Limitations and Scope for Further Work

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
01	12-04-11	Draft	<b>Robin Meade</b> Landscape Architect	<b>Simon Dowse</b> Technical Director	<b>Simon Dowse</b> Technical Director
02	18-04-11	Final	<b>Robin Meade</b> Landscape Architect	<b>Simon Dowse</b> Technical Director	<b>Simon Dowse</b> Technical Director

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**URS/Scott Wilson**  
Brunel House  
54 Princess Street  
Manchester  
M1 6HS

Tel 0161 907 3500  
Fax 0161 907 3501

**[www.urs-scottwilson.com](http://www.urs-scottwilson.com)**



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# 1 Introduction

The following report identifies the potential for additional work beyond the scope of the strategic seascape characterisation exercise undertaken for Marine Plan Areas 3, 4 and the western limits of Area 6. This comprises identification of limitations of the current work followed by consideration of the scope for further work.

## 2 Limitations of the Current Study

The following constraints to the extent of current study are noted:

- The assessment is a strategic assessment and as such a large amount of detail has had to be filtered out of the analysis process.
- The study has been limited to Marine Plan Areas 3 and 4 and part of Area 6 and as such does not benefit from the moderating influence of assessing the whole extent of coastline as part of a single process. As such there is a risk that the approach may be inconsistent with relative judgements of significance in determining individual character areas.
- The extent of seaward boundaries of character areas are also untested in terms of limits without further assessment of a wider study area. In the instance of the extent of seascape character area at Bridlington it was anticipated that the proposed character area boundary would be exactly coincident with the Marine Management Organisation boundary. This was not however defined within the scope of the study without the benefit of more extensive study further along the coast.
- The undertaking of a strategic seascape assessment with limited contextual precedent meant that the focus of approach was not clear from the outset. As a consequence the outputs of the pilot study are not as focussed or as comprehensive as they may otherwise be compared to future iterations of the approach.
- Seascape areas were not comprehensively assessed at a site level due to the limitations on time and practicality of physically covering the area by boat.
- Weather conditions constrained the ability to undertake sea based field work and resulted in abortive time being spent travelling between the office and boat embarkation point when sailings weren't possible.
- In the instance of sea based survey of The Wash, access to parts of The Wash were limited due to the nature of the shallow waters. Less ground was covered because of navigation through the network of narrow navigable channels. Weather conditions at the time of surveying precluded views which may otherwise have been available and which may have affected the character or perception of the seascape. Access to this general stretch of coastline was more problematic than other parts due to fewer skippers who would or could operate here at this time of the year. Wells-next-the-Sea was chosen because of boat availability, however as it is a natural tidal harbour with increasing sediment accumulation, survey timings were wholly determined by tidal state and harbour access.
- Cultural and local sources of data are notably under represented in the study as a consequence of lack of time to engage stakeholders and to proportionately interrogate less readily available data sources.
- The format and content of character area descriptions was prepared with an understanding that the land based National Character Areas are in the process of update. Whilst drafts of these documents were made available at the time of preparation of outputs, it was understood that these were not complete and had not been substantiated by fieldwork so moderation of content may be necessary to ensure the two are consistent.
- It was noted that Historic Landscape Characterisation assessments are in the process of being carried out by English Heritage for the English coastline with potential for



notable contribution to understanding of the marine environment. At the time of undertaking the seascape characterisation study these were not comprehensively available as a reference source for the study areas.

- There were some licence and data availability limitations; notably in respect of illustrating shipping lanes (which were traced from the Marine Natural Area reference maps) and of identifying the extent of coastal flood zones (which could not included in this assessment).
- The consideration of trends and forces for change has not been included within the scope of the assessment.
- Field work was based on a snap shot visit of a location at one moment in time (which was during the tail end of winter conditions in March 2011). As the seascape environment is such a variable environment (both seasonal and weather related) the field work could not necessarily be considered definitive. Sea based fieldwork was, by virtue of only going to sea when weather conditions were favourable, only indicative of the sea environment in fair weather conditions.
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility modelling was not undertaken to inform judgement of potential land to sea inter-visibility (this was instead based on broad interpolation of the main landform influences from OS map data). As such the division between coastal and offshore character areas (which draws reference from land inter-visibility) has not been informed and validated by modelling.
- The period in which to undertake the complete process from appointment to deliverables was 9 weeks, which although supported by input from a multi-disciplinary team, was ultimately a limitation on the scope of work which could physically be covered.

### 3 Scope for Further Work

The scope for further work is broadly summarised as potential for additional review of published data in the form of GIS and document sources, direct consultation with stakeholders and additional field work. Overall, the current interpretation of an approach to strategic seascape characterisation would benefit from validation of further sea areas to determine whether relative judgements are proportionate to the whole of the UK coastline.

#### 3.1 Topics With Potential For Further Analysis at a Strategic Scale of Assessment

Whilst the assessment has considered as much data as possible within the time constraints there remain a number of topics which may appropriately be subjected to further review to inform and validate the strategic level of assessment. Potential reference sources may already have been considered within the scope of study but haven't necessarily been fully reviewed (by virtue of detail or availability of data) to ensure robust consideration.

<b>GIS/MAP DATA</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Landscape types	To identify any key landscape associations (not considered in this assessment due to non-availability of data)
Fishing	To identify any locally distinctive working associations with the sea
Coastal Flood Zones	To identify scope for change in future sea level rise scenarios (not considered in this assessment due to non-availability of data)
Lidar or similar topographic data	To undertake computer modelling of land/sea inter-visibility to refine the boundary extent between the coastal influenced and wider sea area influenced extent of character areas
<b>DOCUMENTS</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Historic Seascape Characterisation	Once Historic Seascape Characterisation Studies have been published comprehensively there is potential to elaborate on the detail relating to heritage/cultural seascape considerations

General cultural reference sources	There is a potentially diverse range of documented reference sources to inform cultural understanding e.g. Batsford Books, Shell Guides, etc.
New National Character Areas	Once revised NCAs are published there is potential to review heritage/cultural seascape overlaps
Air and Climate	Influence on seasonal perceptual aspects and influence of marine erosion processes etc
Water surface	To develop a greater understanding of wave exposure, sea states, tidal ranges etc and their influence on outer seascape character areas where visual interrelationships with land are lost
Paleolandscapes	Potential for more focussed review of underwater terrain, glacial influences, etc
Political administration	Potential to provide a commentary on the Political nature of the waters and the jurisdictions both British and European covering the waters.

### 3.2 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder participation and consultation is acknowledged as a fundamental part of the process. As such, it would be advised that stakeholder consultation should follow on from the current work scope to inform, validate and iterate the subsequent progression of information into more detailed character study work. The parties consulted will vary depending on the scale and focus of the study being undertaken but may range from strategic administrative organisations down to local forum groups or individual community bodies.

Within the time constraints of the contract stakeholder involvement has been limited to steering group input during the assessment process. There is therefore capacity for cultural elements and sense of place perceptions in particular to take on a greater significance than that which has been reported here.

### 3.3 Additional Field Work

It would be appropriate to undertake additional repeat visits to the same land and sea field survey locations that were used in the current assessment to inform and validate different seasonal and temporal influences.

### 3.4 Presentation

Field survey notes have only been formally typed up to provide reference to one representational location per character area (as this was all that was proportionately achievable within the time allowances). The remaining field notes are only available as hand written site

records and may therefore merit further attention in typing these up as more formal records and therefore provide a more thorough description reference for each character area.

The mapped output has been presented as a GIS data layer for the character boundaries with representational field survey points included for future hyper-linking. The remainder of the graphics have been presented in a flat pdf format. Text data has been presented in a word document format. There is capacity for future publication intentions to incorporate hyper-linking to cross reference to specific text or illustration. Data has not been presented in a GIS map compatible data base format, however data could be transferred from the source document to populate such a data base in the future.