

# Natural England Standard Conservation Advice for Marine Protected Areas



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## 1:0 About this standard

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Natural England is improving the structure, content and provision of its conservation advice for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in England's inshore territorial waters. New advice will eventually replace all existing marine conservation advice packages, but in the interim, these should be used as a basis for informing our advice to Competent Authorities and in response to plans and projects.

## 1:1 What does this standard cover?

This standard explains how Natural England will produce its published conservation advice for MPAs. This standard does not cover the bespoke advice which Natural England provides on a case by case basis to regulators and developers.

Although there are legislative differences between the designations that collectively form the network of MPAs, the operational standard applies consistently to the following MPAs:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
- Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)
- Ramsar sites.

This standard applies only to sites within England's inshore territorial waters. Where sites cross country borders or the offshore area boundary (12 nautical miles) Natural England will work with the other Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) to develop conservation advice recognising any differences in approach and the need to be flexible. At present this standard will not be applied to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The designated MPAs that this Standard will be applied to are listed in Annex 1. Conservation Advice will only be applied to sites and features that have a legal status.

Conservation Advice is central to the management of MPAs as it informs:

- The development of management plans
- The monitoring and assessment of the condition of designated features
- The identification of conservation management measures
- The identification of management measures for on-going activities
- The assessment of the effects of plans, projects or acts

## 1:2 Who is this standard for?

This standard is written for Natural England staff, primarily the Lead advisers for each site who are responsible for advice production. However, this standard will also act as a reference for all stakeholders seeking clarity on how Conservation Advice for MPAs is developed. This standard should be read and applied in conjunction with Natural England's Strategic Standard on Conservation Objectives for European Sites in England<sup>1</sup> and the Evidence Strategic Standard<sup>2</sup> as well as any relevant detailed guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6734992977690624?category=3769710>

<sup>2</sup> Natural England Standard: Evidence Strategic Standard, 2013.

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/7699291?category=3769710>, Accessed: June 2013]

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## 2:0 The Standard

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### 2:1 Introduction

Natural England has a responsibility to provide Conservation Advice for all MPAs within England's inshore waters (out to 12 nautical miles) to support sites to achieve their conservation objectives and to guide effective management. It is primarily produced for management authorities and stakeholders and it is also used by Natural England to support casework, management advice and as the framework for site monitoring planning.

This standard sets out:

- The principles of Conservation Advice for Marine Protected Areas;
- The structure of Conservation Advice for Marine Protected Areas; and
- An eight stage approach to develop and review Conservation Advice.

#### 2:1:1 The principles of marine Conservation Advice

Building on and aiming to improve the structure and content of earlier advice packages (produced under Regulation 33 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994<sup>3</sup>, and latterly Regulation 35 of the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2010 (as amended<sup>4</sup>)), Natural England has developed the following principles for the new advice:

1. It must be easily accessible;
2. It will be consistent in approach and structure;
3. It must be clear and stakeholder-focused;
4. There will be clear guidance for its internal production and external use;
5. Stakeholders should be engaged in the production of advice and any additional guidance;
6. Information provided as advice (especially conservation objectives) will be quantified where there is sufficient supporting evidence to do so;
7. The activities that could impact a site's features will be clearly identified;
8. The best available evidence base will be utilized and the confidence limits of the advice clearly stipulated;
9. The best available evidence on the condition of features will be used, where relevant;
10. It will be updated to reflect improvements in the evidence base;
11. It will be used to inform and guide condition monitoring and research; and
12. Its effectiveness will be regularly assessed and ways to continuously improve it explored.

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<sup>3</sup> Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations, 1994. [<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1994/2716/contents/made>, Accessed: June 2013].

<sup>4</sup> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010. [<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/490/contents/made>, Accessed: June 2013].

## 2:1:2 Legal drivers

The following sets out the legal drivers for the provision of this advice.

For SACs and SPAs, regulation 37(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) states:

*'As soon as possible after a site becomes a European marine site, the appropriate nature conservation body must advise other relevant authorities as to —*

- (a) the conservation objectives for that site; and*
- (b) any operations which may cause deterioration of natural habitats or the habitats of species, or disturbance of species, for which the site has been designated.'*

For Marine Conservation Zones the Marine and Coastal Access Act states in Section 127 (1):

*'The appropriate statutory conservation body may give advice and guidance as to —*

- (a) the matters which are capable of damaging or otherwise affecting any protected feature or features;*
- (b) the matters which are capable of affecting any ecological or geomorphological process on which the conservation of any protected feature or features is (wholly or in part) dependent.<sup>5</sup>*

## Ramsar sites

The UK Government issued a Policy Statement on Ramsar sites in England in November 2000, to the effect that Ramsar sites were to be afforded the same consideration as European sites. Natural England therefore will provide advice on the internationally important features of Ramsar sites in the same way as for SACs and SPAs where this is appropriate.

The requirements of these legal drivers will be developed generically and applied to the relevant designated features for all MPAs. This will result in consistent approach to conservation advice across the MPA network.

## 2:2 Components of Marine Protected Area Conservation Advice

New conservation advice will be produced for each designated site and will have five components:

1. Site overview and feature descriptions – includes details of the designated features, sub-features and/or supporting habitats and a description of their importance;
2. Condition information – advice on the current condition of each feature and sub-feature where information is available;
3. Conservation Objectives – broad objectives to achieve for each site, supported by 'supplementary advice' setting targets against identified ecological attributes;

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<sup>5</sup> Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009. [<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>, Accessed: June 2013]

4. Advice on Operations – this identifies the sensitivity of a feature to pressures (e.g. abrasion) and provides clarity on which man-made activities may cause these pressures; and
5. Site maps – the site maps will provide detail on the site boundary and the location of features and sub-features or supporting habitats within the site (where available).

The conservation advice will not state how condition will be monitored – this will be set out in separate site monitoring documents. In addition, the advice will not provide information on the vulnerability of the features as is the case in existing conservation advice packages. Vulnerability is determined by a feature's sensitivity to an activity *and* its exposure to that activity. The most current information about levels of activity within a site is held by the relevant authorities responsible for management, rather than Natural England. In addition, activities are constantly changing, resulting in any vulnerability assessment being quickly out of date. The revised conservation advice will therefore provide information on the sensitivity of features in relation to different activities, which should be used by authorities in conjunction with current activity levels to inform the management of any activity impacting upon a site's features.

### **2:3 The provision and update of Conservation Advice**

Natural England aims to make all MPA Conservation Advice accessible and easy to use. To achieve this we will move away from paper documents to a new web-based format. The website will provide information on the five components of Conservation Advice for each site, as well as wider legal and policy information and generic guidance that applies to all conservation advice. It will be possible to print the advice if required.

Conservation advice will be produced through completing the eight stage process described in this standard. The local lead adviser is responsible for the co-ordination and production of the advice. The relevant Senior Adviser within each area team is accountable for the production of the advice and quality assurance (QA). National specialists will provide additional technical expertise to the Lead advisers during the production of the advice where required.

In future, Natural England intends to update conservation advice as and when the evidence base improves. This is a cyclical process that needs to integrate with monitoring and drive research to fill gaps in understanding to improve conservation objectives and advice on operations.

### **2:4 Evidence requirements, standards and confidence assessments**

Natural England has published a suite of Evidence Standards that aim to ensure all advice provided and all decisions made by Natural England staff meet Natural England's Evidence Strategy<sup>6</sup> and the Government Chief Scientific Adviser's Guidelines on the Use of Scientific and Engineering Advice in Policy Making<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Evidence in Natural England: Our Evidence Strategy, 2012.  
[\[http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/2165645\]](http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/2165645), Accessed: June 2013]

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/goscience/docs/q/10-669-gcsa-guidelines-scientific-engineering-advice-policy-making.pdf>

This standard will implement the following Natural England Evidence Standards for all components of MPA advice:

- Evidence Strategic Standard<sup>8</sup>;
- Evidence Priorities and Research<sup>9</sup>;
- Analysis of Evidence Standard<sup>10</sup>; and
- Communicating and Publishing Evidence<sup>11</sup>.

Evidence used to underpin designated features ranges in quality and quantity. This variation in evidence can be due to when the site was designated or notified (earlier sites often having sparser evidence) or be dependent on the difficulty in surveying the features.

Natural England works with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and other marine organisations to improve the evidence base for protected areas and their associated features. However, it should be noted that there are gaps in the evidence base used to describe our feature condition and location. Conservation advice will be used to identify where evidence gaps exist and recommend priorities for future work.

Natural England will clarify the confidence in the evidence base used to develop the advice<sup>12</sup>. This should provide increased transparency in support of management decisions and also highlight where additional research may be required to improve the evidence base and confidence.

## **2:5 Structure of Conservation Advice**

There are five sections that will form the Conservation Advice for every MPA.

### **2:5:1 Section 1 – Site Maps**

Maps detailing the location and extent of features (and sub-features or supporting habitats) are an essential part of conservation advice for MPAs. These maps will support managers in their decision-making and help to inform advice on the effects of plans or projects.

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<sup>8</sup> Natural England Standard: Evidence Strategic Standard, 2013.

<http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/7699291?category=3769710>, Accessed: June 2012]

<sup>9</sup> Natural England Standard: Identifying our Evidence priorities and Initiating Research, 2013.

<http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/7692015?category=3769710>, Accessed: June 2013]

<sup>10</sup> Natural England Standard: Analysis of Evidence, 2013.

<http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/7850003?category=3769710>, Accessed: June 2013]

<sup>11</sup> Natural England Standard: Publishing and communicating evidence; 2013.

<http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/7698502?category=3769710>, Accessed: June 2013]

<sup>12</sup> Confidence assessment methodology is still being developed for feature location and extent data.

Natural England will produce maps at an appropriate level of detail for each MPA. The quality and scale of the maps will vary and will range from the very detailed, highlighting specific feature and sub-features; to broader maps that illustrate more widely-defined features. Natural England has a continuous programme to collate and improve feature maps for all MPAs. The overall aim is to produce maps detailing the extent of all MPAs features, relevant sub-features and supporting habitats. Conservation advice will be published using the best available spatial data, and iterative improvements made to the feature and sub-feature / supporting habitat maps as appropriate information becomes available.

All feature maps will be made freely available through the ['MAGiC' website](#). These will be updated as and when new evidence is produced.

Spatial data describing feature location and extent varies in quality across all MPA and between features. The data that Natural England is collating is the best available, but due to the range in quality it is important to provide an indication of the confidence we have in this evidence. This will be done for all spatial information relating to features, sub-features and supporting habitats, and may change as additional information on feature location and extent becomes available<sup>13</sup>.

## **2:5:2 Section 2 – Site Description**

This information provides the summary of the key information for each designated site and a description of its features and sub-features or supporting habitats. This will be split into three sub-sections:

1. Site overview;
2. Feature descriptions; and
3. Sub-feature / supporting habitat descriptions.

### **Site overview**

- Site name and type of designation;
- Date of designation;
- Location – map and description of the site's geographical location, including a description of individual areas if the site is geographically split;
- Map of the site boundary and national location;
- List of the designated features;
- Information on any changes to the site – for example, boundary extensions or moderated features;
- Site description – an easy-to-understand narrative about the site, including descriptions of key characterising and / or notable habitats and species. For SPAs this will describe how the site is used by the bird features. It may include other nature conservation interests within the site;
- List of additional features that have been highlighted in reviews for future consideration within the site but have not yet been formally designated (this will primarily apply to SPAs)

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<sup>13</sup> Guidance will be developed to steer this work. Natural England is currently developing the Confidence Assessment methodology for feature location and extent data.

- Description of overlapping and adjoining designations (both sites and features) where applicable; and
- Natural England contact details.

### Feature descriptions

- Feature description – the generic description for each feature, supplemented with relevant information at a site-specific level. For example, this may include evidence of key characterising and/or notable habitats and species of the feature/sub-feature at that site, as appropriate.
- A map and brief spatial description of the location of the features within the site;
- Description of importance – an overview of each feature’s importance in a national and international context, quantified where possible (e.g. 5% of national reef extent); and
- An overview of population and/or extent trends (where relevant and where evidence exists).

### Sub-features or supporting habitat descriptions

- As above for features for sub-features of SACs and supporting habitats of SPAs and Ramsar sites.

## 2:5:3 Section 3 – Condition Information

Condition assessments provide evidence on whether the feature-based Conservation Objectives are being achieved. Assessment of SACs and SPAs are undertaken using information from regular monitoring which feeds in to reporting to the Government on the favourable conservation status of features, usually every six years.

For MCZs the Government is required to produce a progress report on the achievement of Conservation Objectives every six years (the first will be due by end of 2018).

The status (or condition) of a feature (unfavourable or favourable) at a given point in time informs on progress towards achieving the Conservation Objective for the site and its qualifying features. If a feature **is not** considered to be meeting its objectives, then management action may be required to **recover** the condition to meet the objectives. If the feature **is** considered to be meeting its objectives then this condition should be **maintained** and management action is still likely to be required to keep this status. It should not be assumed that the features within a site at the time of designation were in Favourable Condition.

The reasons and evidence for a feature not being in a favourable condition will also be provided.

Following the publication of the revised conservation advice, monitoring plans will also be reviewed. These monitoring plans will set out how condition will be assessed for each feature.

### Defining Favourable Condition for Marine Conservation Zones

The target condition for Marine Conservation Zones is to achieve ‘Favourable Condition’ as set out in the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Favourable Condition is described in MCZ designation orders as:



- (a) *with respect to a broadscale marine habitat, or a marine habitat, within the Zone, means that:*
- (i) *its extent is stable or increasing; and*
  - (ii) *its structures and functions, its quality, and the composition of its characteristic biological communities are such as to ensure that it remains in a condition which is healthy and not deteriorating;*
- (b) *with respect to a species of marine fauna within the Zone, means that the quality and quantity of its habitat, and the composition of its population in terms of number, age and sex ratio are such as to ensure that the population is maintained in numbers which enable it to thrive.*

(3) *In paragraph (2)(a)(ii), the reference to the composition of the characteristic biological communities of a habitat includes a reference to the diversity and abundance of species forming part of or inhabiting that habitat<sup>14</sup>.*

Unless the condition of MCZs was assessed in the designation process using ecological evidence the condition will be listed as not being assessed. Condition was assessed using activity data and sensitivity evidence (known as a vulnerability assessment). However, as this process did not use direct ecological evidence, these assessments will be highlighted but not listed as the formal feature condition.

## **2:5:4 Section 4 – Conservation Objectives for MPAs**

### **Conservation Objectives for European Marine Sites**

The Report of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directive Implementation Review published by Government in 2012 recommended that all Conservation Objectives should be “up-to-date, accessible and allow applicants to assess the impact of their proposed development against them.”<sup>15</sup> European Commission guidance on Conservation Objectives for Natura 2000 sites mirrored this report by stating that they “need to be as clear and straightforward as possible and operational in practice. They need to be specified in concrete terms and wherever possible be quantifiable in numbers and/or size.”<sup>16</sup>

To take forward this recommendation, Natural England has produced a Strategic Standard for all European Site Conservation Objectives on land and at sea out to 12 nautical miles. Site-specific Conservation Objectives for European Marine Sites will be produced in a clear, consistent and evidence-based manner in line with this Strategic Standard<sup>17</sup>. The Standard describes a new framework

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<sup>14</sup> Ministerial Order 2013 [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukmo/2013/13/pdfs/ukmo\\_20130013\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukmo/2013/13/pdfs/ukmo_20130013_en.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> HM Government. Report of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives Implementation Review, 2012 [[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69513/pb13724-habitats-review-report.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69513/pb13724-habitats-review-report.pdf), Accessed: May 2013].

<sup>16</sup> European Commission - Expert Group on the Management of Natura 2000. *Setting Conservation Objectives for Natura 2000 Sites*, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6734992977690624?category=3769710>

which will support the application of positive conservation measures to European Sites and improve the consistency with which regulators, advisory bodies and competent authorities apply Conservation Objectives to Habitats Regulations Assessments. Objectives expressed in this manner should help decision-makers to quickly process those proposals which are clearly not capable of having any negative effects on a site as well as help developers identify where avoidance or mitigation measures are needed to enable their proposals to proceed. The 10 principles to apply when developing conservation objectives have been incorporated into *this* MPA Operational Standard.

Conservation objectives will be written at the feature level. So for a site that has more than one feature / sub-feature, there will be a series of objectives. For each site there will be an overarching objective capturing the importance of the site's contribution to the national network (see the Strategic Standard for European Site Conservation Objectives), then supporting Supplementary Advice for each feature, sub-feature<sup>18</sup> and/or supporting habitat. This will describe the range of ecological attributes that contribute to describe the integrity of a site<sup>19</sup> (extent, distribution, structure, function and supporting physical, chemical or biological processes<sup>20</sup>) and detail specific targets. For species this may also include attributes of the feature's population and distribution. These attributes will be quantified in the targets where there is sufficient evidence and it is considered relevant. Where the evidence is insufficient to develop such quantified targets, the targets may be more qualitative.

### **Conservation Objectives for Marine Conservation Zones**

To reflect the requirements set by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, for each feature within the site the objective will be to achieve and maintain its 'Favourable Condition' ([see 2:5:3](#)).

The text for the over-arching MCZ Conservation Objectives will be taken from the final designation orders.

### **Supplementary Advice about the MCZ Conservation Objectives**

The Supplementary Advice for each feature and sub-feature will be guided by a 'Feature Framework' produced by national specialists. The Feature Frameworks will be feature / sub - feature specific and will be applied at a site level to produce Supplementary Advice including site specific targets whilst ensuring there is a consistency in approach to features across the national network. The frameworks are simply a tool that will identify the relevant attributes for each feature and sub-feature, and how they

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<sup>18</sup> Sub features are the components that make up the habitat or wider habitat complex. Sub features enable clearer descriptions and targets to be developed for conservation advice.

<sup>19</sup> Site integrity has been defined as being '*the coherence of its ecological structure and function across its whole area which enables it to sustain the habitats, complex of habitats and/or population levels of the species for which it was classified (designated)*'. Paragraph 20 of *ODPM Circular 06/2005 on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*.

<sup>20</sup> The structure and function of a habitat involves a number of inter-related factors. Structure can relate to a variety of biotic and abiotic features, including species composition, the physical architecture of vegetation, the ground morphology, the successional status of the vegetation, and species assemblages of plants, animals or both. Function relates to the way in which the biotic and abiotic features interact over time and may include bio-geochemical cycles, hydrology and other processes.

could be quantified at the site level. Targets will be developed for the attributes identified where sufficient evidence is available.

The feature frameworks for habitats are structured around three attribute groups:

1. Extent and distribution – the total area and range of the feature within the site;
2. Structure and function – description of the biological and physical structure of the features;
3. Supporting processes – the processes required to support the feature within the site.

The feature frameworks for species are structured around five attribute groups:

1. Extent and distribution – the total area and range of the supporting habitats of the feature within the site;
2. Structure and function – description of the biological and physical structure of the supporting habitats of the features;
3. Supporting processes – the processes required to support the supporting habitats of the feature within the site.
4. The population of the feature within the site;
5. The distribution of the feature within the site.

Attributes will vary depending on the feature and the level of evidence available. Attributes will provide a greater level of definition that will support management. This will allow for clearer objectives to be developed. Attributes will be identified by the national specialists. For example the 'supporting processes' grouping for all features will need to be described further by attributes in order to set meaningful targets; these could include salinity, temperature, hydrological parameters etc.

The national specialists will identify the appropriate indicators for targets of each attribute. Some targets will be able to be set generically for the feature within all sites, whilst others will be dependent on site based evidence. The Feature Frameworks will be reviewed before they are used in the development of Supplementary Advice.

The Supplementary Advice to the Conservation Objectives describes the wide range of ecological attributes that are most likely to contribute to a site's overall integrity. These will be used to inform and guide management, monitoring condition and assessing the impacts of plans or projects. Some but not all attributes and targets will be suitable in the application of the advice in assessing impacts and management and monitoring plans. How the Conservation Advice should be used will be further detailed in additional guidance.

### **The standardisation of sub-features**

Where sites require features to be described and mapped at a higher resolutions than feature level (e.g. Biogenic reef as part of Annex 1 reef (H1 170)) sub-features were created for SAC features and supporting habitats for SPA features. Historically, different names have been given to ecologically similar sub-features and supporting habitats in the previous documentation for sites. For consistency, Natural England has classified the sub-features and supporting habitats to produce a standardised list of terms used for all SAC features and SPA supporting habitats in English inshore waters.

## **The monitoring of Conservation Objectives**

The purpose of monitoring is to measure the condition of a feature within a designated site at a given point in time and enable reporting. Monitoring plans will use the Supplementary Advice tables as a framework for developing appropriate plans. However, to avoid any confusion between the Supplementary Advice and the monitoring targets they will be produced separately. Not all attributes and targets in the Supplementary Advice will be relevant to monitor in assessing condition. Monitoring plans will be developed following the publication of the new conservation advice; existing monitoring guidance will be used until new plans are developed.

## **2:5:5 Section 5 – Advice on Operations**

The Advice on Operations section of the advice package forms an essential part of Natural England's Conservation Advice, and is a statutory requirement. The advice is designed to identify the sensitivity of a feature to a variety of pressures (e.g. abrasion) and provide clarity on which man-made activities may cause these pressures. This advice should be used in conjunction with the Conservation Objectives and other evidence to undertake assessments of plans and projects and to identify management measures. Additional Natural England guidance on how stakeholders should use this conservation advice should be referenced.

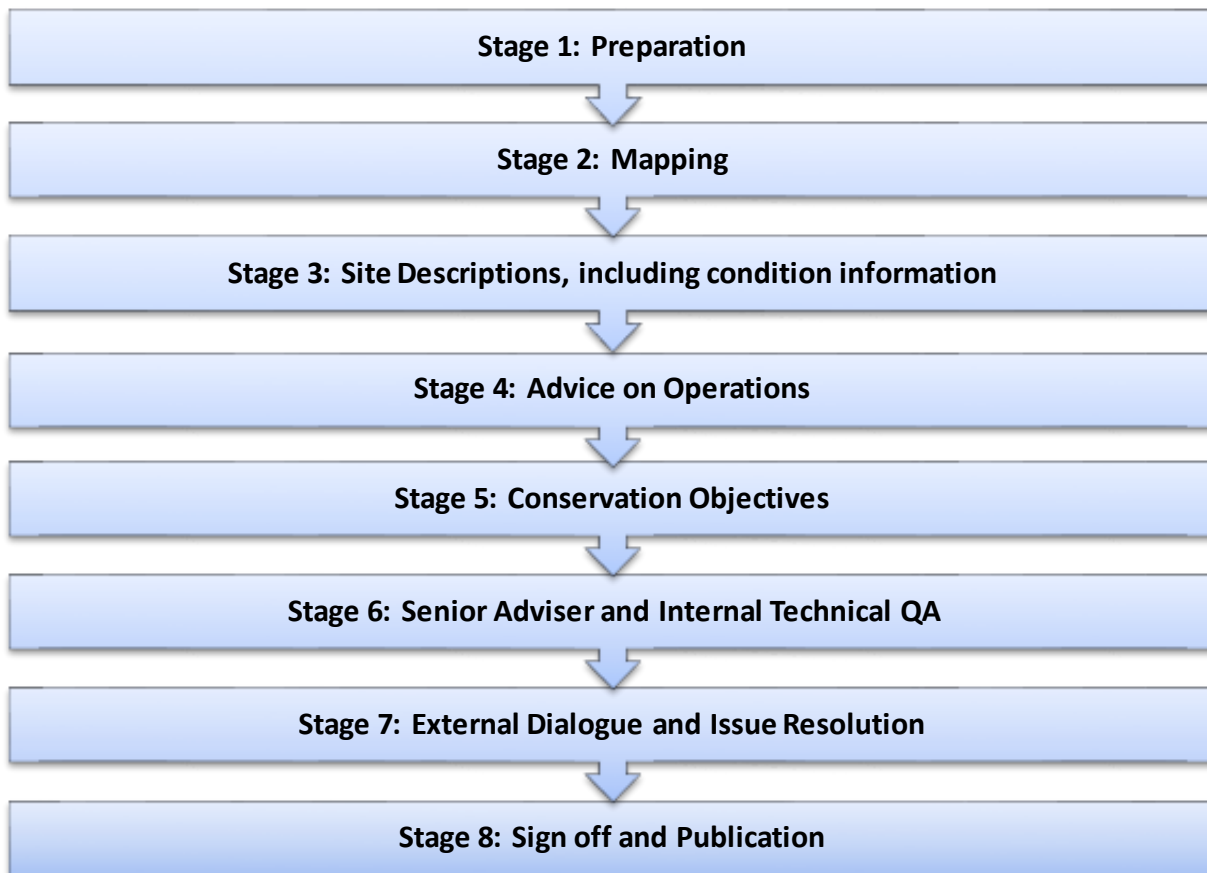
Natural England will compile evidence on the sensitivity of features to pressures and associated activities into one central database. This database will form the basis of the advice and will be searchable by Natural England staff and available for external use. This approach will ensure consistency of advice across the MPA network and enable Advice on Operations to be updated when new evidence is available.

Our knowledge and understanding of the sensitivity of features to pressures and the associated activities that are likely to cause them varies. In addition to the assessment of sensitivity, we aim to identify the confidence associated with the data that underpins the sensitivity assessment. This information can be used by managers in supporting their decision making.

## **2:6 The Staged Approach to Producing MPA Conservation Advice**

The following are the eight stages required to produce conservation advice for each MPA. All stages need to be completed in full by the local Lead Adviser. The time estimated to complete the stages varies depending on the complexity of the site and the quality and quantity of the evidence underpinning the features within the site. At the end of each stage a check list sets out the key actions that the Lead Adviser has to complete. It is essential that the Action Log is used and updated at each stage (a template is provided in Annex 3).

Stage 1 can be completed in advance of the timetabled start to produce the site's Conservation Advice.



### **2:6:1 Stage 1 – Preparation**

It is estimated that this will take an average of 4 weeks depending on the complexity of the site, existing Adviser local knowledge and the condition of the evidence.

This first stage can be completed in advance of the scheduled advice production if Natural England staff resources allow. However, the subsequent stages should not be progressed until the site is scheduled (and agreed with the Project Manager) to be completed.

It is essential that there is an identified lead for the production of Conservation Advice for each site. This lead is not necessarily the local Lead Adviser, but this standard will assume this is the case. This individual is responsible for the overall co-ordination and production of the Conservation Advice.

The lead adviser should identify if the conservation advice is for a new designation or a review of existing advice. For some sites with post-moderated features the Lead Adviser will be required to provide a combination of new advice for such features as well as revising the existing advice.

## Software

Ensure that the following software is installed on the laptops of all advisers working on Conservation Advice. If the programs are not already installed they can be requested from IBM through Buy4NE.

- EndNote
- Microsoft Access
- Microsoft Project

## Natural England Standards

This Operational Standard sets out the process to produce marine Conservation Advice. However, it is important to read and understand the other Natural England Standards which are relevant in the production of the advice. These include:

1. Strategic Standard on Conservation Objectives for European Sites in England<sup>21</sup>;
2. Strategic Evidence Standard<sup>22</sup>; and
3. Records Management Standard<sup>23</sup>.

## Production Planning

It is essential that the production of new or revised conservation advice for a site is planned. The eight stages will provide a framework that should be used to produce a simple timetable with key milestones to ensure that the advice will be delivered on time.

The lead adviser is responsible for the design and implementation of this production plan and ensuring it is shared with the Conservation Advice Team, Team Leaders, Senior Advisers and any other relevant staff for comment. It may be helpful to populate the plan using Microsoft Project.

The production plan should identify any input required from others (such as the local Lead Adviser, Senior Advisers, Specialists, Land Management and Land Use colleagues, etc) and the Lead should inform those individuals of the contribution required and provide approximate timings as soon as possible. Where sites have marine and terrestrial features it is essential that the Lead Advisor engages with land management and land use colleagues to plan out advice production.

The production plan should also identify relevant stakeholders and the stages at which they will be engaged in the production of the Advice.

It is useful at this stage to look at other examples of Conservation Advice that have been produced following completion of the pilot.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/6734992977690624?category=3769710>.

<sup>22</sup> Natural England Standard: Evidence Strategic Standard, 2013.  
<http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/7699291?category=3769710>, Accessed: June 2012]

<sup>23</sup> Natural England Standard: Records Management Standard, 2013.  
<http://publications.naturengland.org.uk/publication/5926312>, Accessed: June 2012]

## Gather evidence

Collate all relevant existing data and evidence for each site and the designated features. Evidence should be gathered from Natural England sources as well as any relevant external sources. Partner organisations should be contacted to discuss sharing any relevant evidence that they may hold.

Natural England sources include the Selection Assessment Document (new sites), previous Regulation 33 / 35 Conservation Advice packages, designation documents (Departmental Briefs, Designation Orders), site review documentation, high level conservation objective documents, condition assessments and any relevant surveys or research undertaken.

## Review evidence

Lead advisers will need to review the evidence against the key sections of conservation advice (as described in [section 2.5](#) of this standard) and the eight stages of production (as described in [section 2.6](#) of this standard) in order to assess the type of information required.

This will include:

1. Mapping – Sections [2:5:1](#) and [2:6:2](#) provide a description of the mapping process. Review any mapping already undertaken for the site and the surveys that it came from. When conducting the evidence review search for any additional data that is not already held on the geo-database. Any data identified should be sourced and provided to the Conservation Advice mapping lead at least **3 months** prior to publication of the maps (if funding is required to source data please contact the Conservation Advice Team);
2. Site descriptions – Sections [2:5:2](#) and [2:6:3](#) provide further detail of what is required in the site overview and feature / sub-feature / supporting habitat descriptions. Read these sections and review evidence to identify the necessary information required to populate this section. In addition, [Annex 2](#) provides the template that will need to be completed. At this stage it is also useful to identify the location of any useful photographs and/or videos for the site;
3. Condition – Sections [2:5:3](#) and [2:6:3](#) provide a description of the required condition evidence. Condition data should be referenced (if available);
4. Conservation Objectives – Sections [2:5:4](#) and [2:6:5](#) provides a description of the new Conservation Objective framework. It is important to read these sections and then collate the relevant Feature Frameworks for your features and identified sub-features (where applicable). Review the attributes and identify the relevant evidence required to populate the Supplementary Advice (there may well not be any evidence for some attributes); and
5. Advice on Operations – no preparatory work required.

All evidence must be referenced using Endnote detailed guidance on how to do this is available.

## Action Log

An Action Log is required for the production of Conservation Advice for every site. This is where you record all key actions undertaken and the evidence for decisions in the production or revision of the advice (for example version update etc). It is the responsibility of the Lead Adviser to ensure that the log is kept up to date. A copy of the Action Log template and a completed example can be found in [Annex 3](#).

## **Version control, Referencing and Filing**

Version control – once signed off each template should be uploaded into the Conservation Advice database using Microsoft Access. Draft versions should be saved as Word documents or Excel spreadsheets in TRIM in the agreed filing format with the version number clearly stated in the title. The version change should be logged in the Action Log.

Referencing – all evidence needs to be referenced in EndNote using the detailed referencing guidance.

Filing – all filing should be done in accordance with the TRIM Marine file plan using standard file codes and names.

## **Identifying and engaging stakeholders**

In the preparation stage it is useful to identify which stakeholders should be consulted in the production of the advice. Relevant stakeholders must be consulted as described in [Stage 7](#) but Lead advisers are recommended to engage relevant stakeholders earlier on in the process and throughout the development of the Conservation Advice. It will depend on the site as to which stakeholders are relevant to engage with and at what level (Senior Advisers and local Lead advisers should be able to help with this).

It is recommended to review evidence to be used in the production of the advice with key stakeholders at this stage. This should aim to identify if there is any additional evidence that could be used in the advice production. This will avoid evidence being highlighted in the consultation period which should have been considered.

The key stakeholders and the stages at which they will be engaged should be identified in the production plan. It may be helpful to share this plan with key stakeholders to highlight when and how they will be engaged in the development of the Conservation Advice for the site.

## **Check list**

- Identify key stakeholders;
- Secure any specialist / technical input required;
- Produce, review and update production plan;
- Inform the Marine Evidence Team of any spatial data not in the geo-database;
- Ensure EndNote is up to date;
- Record all actions and decisions in the action log;
- Review evidence against the information required for mapping, the site description template, and the feature frameworks.

## **2:6:2 Stage 2 – Mapping**

It is estimated that this will take an average of 2-3 days (this is the time for area team to review maps produced not the time to produce the maps) depending on the complexity of the site and the condition of the evidence.



This essentially is when you start to produce or revise the Conservation Advice.

### **Development of maps**

Local Lead advisers are responsible for ensuring that all known spatial evidence for features, sub-features and supporting habitats is provided to Natural England's mapping team for inclusion on the central geo-database. In addition, Lead advisers should identify if there are any spatial data from external organisations that could support feature and sub-feature / supporting habitat mapping and arrange for this to be shared if possible. Once collated onto the central database the lead adviser is responsible for checking the mapping to ensure it is accurate.

It is important to note that the mapping team require any new spatial data to be submitted at least 3 months before the draft map is required in line with their publication cycles.

The lead adviser will need to quality assure the feature and sub-feature / supporting habitat maps produced by the national team using the geo-database. Any additional data identified in the evidence review should have been analysed and uploaded if identified in Stage 1.

The lead adviser will also need to quality assure the site boundary and overlapping / adjoining designations map produced by the national team using the geo-database.

### **Using spatial data to inform the Conservation Objectives**

Spatial information is essential to inform Conservation Objectives – it is important for Lead advisers to understand what data is available for features / sub-features / supporting habitats as these inform some of the key targets. If there are any issues with spatial data please report to the Conservation Advice mapping lead.

here spatial data does not exist then the default I objective (*i.e. maintain subject to natural change*) will have to be used in the Supplementary Advice. Any such gaps in the evidence base should be highlighted in the supporting notes of the Supplementary Advice Table for the feature (under the extent / distribution attribute).

### **Check list**

- Review the feature and sub-feature / supporting habitat maps produced by the national team;
- Review the site boundary and overlapping / adjoining designations map produced by the national team;
- Update the action log;

### **2:6:3 Stage 3 – Site Descriptions, including Condition Information**

It is estimated this stage will take 1 day to complete for each site overview, feature, sub-feature and supporting habitat description. Additional detailed desk note guidance is available which sets out the step by step guidance to complete the site and feature descriptions.

## Site overview

The site overview will need to be completed in the Site Description template provided. This includes the following information:

- Site name and ID number;
- Designation;
- Date of designation;
- Location – description of the site location in a national and regional context, including distinct areas if geographically split;
- Site description – this is an easy to understand narrative overview of the site, including descriptions of key characterising habitats and species and any of notable interest. For SPAs this should describe how the site is used by the bird features. This should be a brief overview that takes the highlights from generic feature descriptions. It may be appropriate to add in a brief description of any other habitats or species of nature conservation interest within the site (e.g. BAP, OSPAR, etc.);
- List of features – reason for designation;
- Description of importance – provide a description (quantify if possible, e.g. 5% of national reef extent) of each feature importance on a national and international scale;
- Spatial description of the features – provide a description of the spatial location, extent and distribution of the features within the site;
- Describe overlapping designations (provide links) (both designations and features);
- Provide the appropriate Natural England contact for the site; and

Each designated site will require a Site Description template to be completed, with additional fields completed for each feature and sub-feature / supporting habitat.

## Feature identification

All sites have one or more designated features that are listed in the original designation document. Some sites may also have features that have been added through a moderation exercise, so ensure that all relevant features are identified for the site.

## Sub-feature identification

Features are described through the component sub-features (where relevant, some features do not have sub-features). Natural England has standardised all sub-features and identified the supporting habitats for all SPA features. Each feature has a list of sub-features / supporting habitats that could be present. Lead advisers need to select the sub-feature / supporting habitat relevant to the features within the site.

Lead advisers need to ensure that the sub-features are present on the site and meet their description. If there are any further questions over defining sub-features, ensure that this is discussed with the Conservation Advice Team. Where there is evidence that the designated feature has changed considerably or is no longer present, contact the Conservation Advice Team to discuss specific site issues.

## **Feature, sub-feature and supporting habitat descriptions**

Standard text has been produced to describe features, sub-features and supporting habitats at a generic level. The Lead Adviser needs to ensure that the generic description is relevant for the site. If required, additional site specific information should be entered in the Site Description template for each feature, sub-feature and supporting habitat. At a sub-feature level this is especially important. The feature and sub-feature text should describe the species, biotopes and habitats of conservation importance. This could include key characteristics and any species and habitats of notable interest.

## **Spatial descriptions for sub-features**

Where relevant, describe the location of sub-features and supporting habitats within each feature, e.g. where a sub-feature or supporting habitat characterises an identifiable area(s) of the feature. These should be identified using the geo-database and illustrated on the relevant maps (the site overview will contain a spatial description of the features within the site).

## **Trends descriptions**

Where appropriate it is important to include information on population and extent trends in the relevant descriptions. This should include the relevant evidence, where the evidence is good. This may apply at feature, sub-feature or supporting habitat levels. Spatial data from external organisations may help.

## **Condition Assessment**

For the majority of sites (unless they are recently designated European sites) there will be an assessment of condition for each feature. This evidence will be drawn from the condition database for these sites.

In addition to feature condition, an assessment of the Favourable Conservation Status of SAC features has been undertaken by JNCC in 2013. For SAC features, the assessment of Favourable Conservation Status at the UK level should be added alongside the feature condition at site level.

The relevant section in the template must be completed. For features without an assessment the words 'not assessed' should be used. For MCZs without an assessment of condition using ecological evidence they should be entered into the database as 'not assessed'.

## **Check list**

- Complete and save draft version of site description templates in Word;
- Update action log; and
- Review EndNote.
- The Senior Adviser could QA the draft Site Description template at this point.

## **2:6:4 Stage 4 – Advice on Operations**

It is estimated that this will take 1.5 days to complete for each feature, sub-feature and supporting habitat.

## Advice on Operations

Advice on Operations through sensitivity analysis (see section [2:5:4](#)) will be developed generically for all features and sub-features. This will be based on feature specific sensitivity assessments conducted by external contractors. Outputs of these assessments will summarise evidence on the sensitivity of features to activities via particular pressures, with the emphasis on highlighting the particular pressures that cause the impacts. The aim of this section is therefore to present information which is useful for management of operations in order to further the conservation of the feature(s). Site leads will therefore need to select the activities and associated advice to ensure that they may occur within or adjacent<sup>24</sup> to the site. Activities that could never be undertaken within a site should not be included in the advice. Leads should also review the sensitivity analysis to ensure that it reflects any local site sensitivities, and the generic advice reflects any site-level evidence on sensitivity of the interest feature to particular pressures or associated activities. Any changes to the generic analysis need to be quality assured by Senior Advisers and the evidence used must be referenced.

## Check list

- Complete and save first draft of advice on operations;
- Update action log; and
- Review EndNote.

## 2:6:5 Stage 5 – Conservation Objectives

It is estimated that this will take 2 days to complete for each feature and sub-feature.

Conservation Objectives are the most complex area in the advice. Natural England has developed a new structure that must be used to develop the objectives. Section [2:5:4](#) details how the Conservation Objectives are to be structured. Additional detailed desk note guidance is available which sets out the step by step guidance to complete the objectives and Supplementary Advice.

## Conservation Objectives

The first task is to select correct objective text for the designated site (see section [2:5:4](#)). This text is generic and should not be changed. The objectives should list the feature(s).

## Supplementary Advice

Specialists have produced Feature Frameworks to be used as a guide to produce the Supplementary Advice tables for all features. Supplementary Advice has to be completed for all features and sub-features (but not supporting habitats). The first step is to collate the Feature Frameworks relevant for your site and understand the evidence requirements (these will be identified in the frameworks) to develop the Supplementary Advice.

## Target setting

Using the evidence collated in previous stages the lead adviser will need to identify against the relevant attributes which targets can be quantified. In order to develop some of the key targets, analysis and

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<sup>24</sup> If such activities are likely to cause any pressures that may impact upon the features.

assessment of spatial data will be required. It is important that specialist time is secured in advance of this stage to ensure the analysis can be undertaken. The evidence used to set quantified targets should be referenced in the supplementary advice tables and included in EndNote.

Where there is no evidence the default qualitative target should be used (as specified in the Feature Framework). The lead adviser should highlight if additional evidence is required to develop and quantify or improve the evidence base for the target.

here may be rare cases where attributes are not relevant; these cases should be discussed with the feature specialist to confirm the approach.

### Structure of Supplementary Advice tables

All supplementary advice tables will follow the same structure the generic information and evidence will be drawn from the relevant Feature Framework and be applied at the feature/ sub-feature level in this table structure.

Attributes	Targets	Supporting and/or explanatory notes
<p>List the relevant attributes and sub attributes.</p> <p>These will be structured around the key attributes of integrity including - Extent, Distribution, Structure, Function and Supporting Processes and drawn from the Feature Framework.</p>	<p>Describes the target for specified attribute.</p> <p>Most attributes will have a quantified or qualitative option; evidence available will dictate which target to use.</p>	<p>Should set out why the target was chosen and any relevant site based supporting information.</p> <p>The Feature Framework provides the generic description for use of the target.</p> <p>All evidence should be referenced and hyperlinked to the supporting notes.</p>

### Confidence in evidence

The strategic standard sets out the confidence level to use in the quantification and completion of the conservation objectives.

### Check list

- Complete and save first draft of the site specific supplementary advice tables;
- Review production plan - confirm quality assurance and specialist input schedules to ensure time is secured;
- Update action log; and
- Review EndNote.

### 2:6:7 Stage 6 – Senior Adviser and Internal Technical Quality Assurance (QA)

It is estimated that this will take an average of 5 days (depending on complexity of issues).

The relevant Senior Adviser is responsible for the first quality assurance of the Site Description template, maps, the Supplementary Advice and the site specific Advice on Operations. This is in relation to technical content as well as consistency with the relevant Natural England standards.

If any risks arise from significant revision of existing Conservation Advice or the writing of new Conservation Advice then these risks should also be shared with the Area Manager).

If, at this stage, the Senior Adviser identifies any significant technical or specialist issues it is their responsibility to raise these with the relevant national Feature Lead or any other relevant Natural England specialists. If required the Senior Adviser should raise the issue with the Principal Specialist Conservation Advice and keep the Lead Adviser informed of all dialogue and decision making. The Lead Adviser should ensure any decisions are recorded appropriately in the Action Log and explain how this advice was used.

The Senior Adviser is responsible for escalating any technical issues to the Principal Specialist if necessary, and ensuring the Lead Adviser is informed of any decision making for record in the Action Log.

### **Check list**

- Update action log;
- Update EndNote if new evidence is identified; and
- Senior Adviser needs to be content with the quality of the advice in order to share this with key external stakeholders.

### **2:6:8 Stage 7 – External Dialogue and Issue Resolution**

A minimum of 20 days should be allowed to complete this stage.

This stage aims to share and discuss the draft advice with relevant authorities and other relevant stakeholders). There is regional flexibility on how this stage is undertaken and how much time is made available to engage stakeholders as it is recognised that more time will be required for more complex sites.

It may be useful to organise a joint meeting with all relevant authorities present. During this meeting the Lead Adviser will need to present all parts of the advice. It is important to have someone else to record actions and notes (ideally the Senior Adviser should support this meeting).

If the key relevant authorities and other relevant stakeholders are unable to attend, site leads should allow a minimum of two weeks for a written response and follow up any questions asked. This process may identify evidence not considered in the production of the advice. Depending on the evidence the Lead advisers may need to review / update appropriate sections. Any significant changes to the advice should be discussed with the Senior Adviser, who will escalate as required. This update can be made between the draft and formal stages of the published packages.

If there are any significant technical or specialist issues these should be identified through the Senior Adviser review with the relevant national Feature Lead and other relevant specialists, and escalated to the Principal Specialist if necessary. Ensure any actions are recorded appropriately in the Action Log and explain how this advice was used.

The stakeholder feedback log needs to be updated with key issues identified by relevant authorities. Lead advisers should state how these were addressed in the same log. Any complex issues should be addressed with the relevant Senior Adviser. At the end of this stage the advice should be ready to go to final stage sign off.

### **Check list**

- Update action log;
- Update EndNote if new evidence is identified; and
- The Senior Adviser has reviewed the advice.

### **2:6:9 Stage 8 – Sign Off and Publication**

It is estimated that this stage will take 4 days.

### **Sign off**

The Area Manager (AM) is responsible for the sign off of the advice. The local Lead Adviser is responsible for securing their time for this. The AM may choose to delegate the sign off to another responsible officer within Natural England.

They will require the following for the sign off:

1. Completed site description template;
2. Maps;
3. Completed Supplementary Advice for all features and sub-features;
4. Advice on operations;
5. Action log; and
6. EndNote.

Time should be allowed to address any issues identified and the Action Log should be updated to record how these have been addressed.

### **Publication**

Following the sign off the national Conservation Advice team is responsible for ensuring that the advice is uploaded on to the Designated Sites System. Once the advice has been signed off then it will become Natural England's formal advice under the relevant legislation for the designation. On the day of publication the Lead Adviser is responsible for contacting all relevant stakeholders to inform them that the new / revised conservation advice is available.

### **Check list**

- Finalise action log.

## **2:7 Independent External Review and Amendments to Conservation Advice**

### **2:7:1 Amending advice following publication**

Following sign off of advice it will be necessary to amend sections of the advice if the evidence base changes significantly. This will be essential to ensure that advice is kept up to date and the objectives reflect the best available evidence.

If any of the changes are considered significant then stakeholders should be informed and changes discussed. If the changes are minor it will be at the discretion of the Senior Adviser in the area team to decide if the amendments need to be externally discussed. Stakeholders should be informed of any amendments to conservation advice following its publication.



### Annex 1: List of Sites

#### Special Areas of Conservation:

1. Alde, Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC
2. Orfordness – Shingle Street SAC
3. Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC
4. Chesil and the Fleet SAC
5. Dee Estuary / Aber Dyfrdwy SAC
6. Drigg Coast SAC
7. Dungeness SAC
8. Essex Estuaries SAC
9. Fal and Helford SAC
10. Flamborough Head SAC
11. Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton cSAC
12. Humber Estuary SAC
13. Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge cSAC
14. Isles of Scilly Complex SAC
15. Lands End and Cape Bank cSAC
16. Lizard Point cSAC
17. Lundy SAC
18. Lyme Bay and Torbay cSAC
19. Margate and Long Sands cSAC
20. Minsmere-Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SAC
21. Morecambe Bay SAC
22. Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC
23. Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren SAC
24. Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC
25. Solent Maritime SAC
26. Solway Firth SAC
27. South Wight Maritime SAC
28. Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone cSAC
29. Studland to Portland cSAC
30. Thanet Coast SAC
31. The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC
32. North Norfolk Coast SAC
33. Solent and Tweed Estuary SAC
34. Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC

## Special Protection Areas:

1. Alde, Ore Estuary SPA
2. Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA
3. Farne Islands SPA
4. Lindisfarne SPA
5. Breydon Water SPA
6. Chesil Beach and the Fleet SPA
7. Deben Estuary SPA
8. Dee Estuary / Aber Dyfrdwy SPA
9. Duddon Estuary SPA
10. Dungeness to Pett Level SPA
11. Dengie SPA
12. Colne Estuary SPA
13. Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA
14. Blackwater Estuary SPA
15. Falness SPA
16. Exe Estuary SPA
17. Hamford Water SPA
18. Humber Estuary SPA
19. Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA
20. Mersey Estuary SPA
21. Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA
22. Minsmere-Walberswick SPA
23. Morecambe Bay SPA
24. Northumbria Coast SPA
25. Outer Thames Estuary SPA
26. Pagham Harbour SPA
27. Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA
28. Poole Harbour SPA
29. Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA
30. Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren SPA
31. Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA
32. Portsmouth Harbour SPA
33. Solent and Southampton Water SPA
34. Upper Solway Flats and Marshes SPA
35. Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA
36. The Swale SPA
37. Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA
38. Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA
39. Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA
40. Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA
41. The Wash SPA
42. North Norfolk Coast SPA
43. Gibraltar Point SPA

## **Marine Conservation Zones:**

1. AIn Estuary
2. Beachy Head West
3. Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuary
4. Chesil Beach and Stennis Ledges
5. Cumbria Coast
6. Folkestone Pomerania
7. Fylde Offshore
8. Isles of Scilly
9. Kingmere
10. Lundy
11. Medway Estuary
12. Padstow Bay and Surrounds
13. Pagham Harbour
14. Poole Rocks
15. Skerries Bank and Surrounds
16. South Dorset
17. Tamar Estuary Sites
18. Thanet Coast
19. The Manacles
20. Torbay
21. Upper Fowey and Pont Pill
22. Whitsand and Looe Bay

## Ramsar sites<sup>25</sup>:

1. Alde-Ore Estuary
2. Avon Valley
3. Benfleet and Southend Marshes
4. Blackwater Estuary
5. Breydon Water
6. Chesil beach and the Fleet
7. Chichester and Langstone Harbours
8. Colne Estuary
9. Crouch and Roach Estuaries
10. Deben Estuary
11. Dengie
12. Duddon Estuary
13. Exe Estuary
14. Foulness
15. Gibraltar Point
16. Hamford Water
17. Humber Estuary
18. Isles of Scilly
19. Lindisfarne
20. Medway Estuary and Marshes
21. Mersey Estuary
22. Mersey Narrows & North Wirral foreshore
23. Minsmere - Walberswick
24. Morecambe Bay
25. Nene Washes
26. North Norfolk Coast
27. Ouse Washes
28. Pagham Harbour
29. Poole Harbour
30. Portsmouth Harbour
31. Ribble and Alt Estuaries
32. Severn Estuary
33. Solent and Southampton Water
34. Thames Estuary and Marshes
35. Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay
36. The Dee Estuary
37. The Swale
38. The Wash
39. Upper Solway Flats and Marshes

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<sup>25</sup> Further work is required to identify internationally important features of Ramsar sites which are not included in coincident SPA conservation advice. Ramsar features that are not SPA features will have additional advice produced.

## Annex 2: Site Description Template

Add Site Specific Info Table Form	
Overarching Site:	<input type="text"/> <small>Type any combination of numbers and letters up to 255 characters.</small>
Site Name:	<input type="text" value="Select..."/> <small>Select an item from the drop-down list.</small>
Designation Type:	<input type="text" value="Select..."/> <small>Select an item from the drop-down list.</small>
Site ID:	<input type="text"/> <small>Type any combination of numbers and letters up to 255 characters.</small>
Designation Date:	<input type="text"/> <small>Use the Date control to enter a date.</small>
Moderations/Boundary Changes:	<input type="text"/> <small>Type any combination of numbers and letters.</small>
Name of Component SSSIs:	<input type="text"/> <small>Type any combination of numbers and letters.</small>
Relationship with other European Site Designations:	<input type="text"/> <small>Type any combination of numbers and letters.</small>
Site Overview:	<input type="text"/> <small>Type any combination of numbers and letters.</small>
Additional Species/Habitats/Communities of interest:	<input type="text"/> <small>Type any combination of numbers and letters.</small>
Additional Features (Not formally designated):	<input type="text" value="Select..."/> <small>Select an item from the drop-down list.</small>
Feature/Sub-Feature 1:	<input type="text" value="Select..."/> <small>Select an item from the drop-down list.</small>
Description 1:	<input type="text"/> <small>Type any combination of numbers and letters.</small>
Condition Assessment 1:	<input type="text" value="Select..."/> <small>Select an item from the drop-down list.</small>
Comment 1:	<input type="text"/> <small>Type any combination of numbers and letters up to 255 characters.</small>

### Annex 3 – Action Log Template

Table 4: Action Log template

Link to Previous Version	Action	Specialist/ Senior Adviser Input	Outcome / Decision	Link to Version Incorporating Outcome / Decision	Link to Supporting Documents	Completed By	Time Taken

Table 5: Action Log Guidance and Example

Link to Previous Version	Action	Specialist Input	Outcome / Decision	Link to Version Incorporating Outcome / Decision	Link to Supporting Documents	Completed By
Insert <a href="#">hyperlink</a> to the previous version of the template you are amending.	Briefly explain the key issues / actions / changes that are required.	Enter the name and role (or organisation) of any specialist, internal or external, who input into key decisions and changes.	Briefly explain the outcome of any decision / key changes made to the template.	Insert <a href="#">hyperlink</a> to the version that incorporates the outcome of any decisions / changes made.	Insert <a href="#">hyperlinks</a> to any supporting documents (eg A more detailed description of the issues raised, the resulting discussions and decisions; emails; minutes of meetings; notes of telecalls)	Name of NE Adviser responsible for implementing the changes and date these were carried out.

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**3:0 Sign off**

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The standard

The compliance monitoring plan

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Implementation plan

The Equality Impact Assessment

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**Director**

Signature\*

Print name

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**Director**

Signature\*

Print name

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**Director**

Signature\*

Print name

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\*Can be electronic

## Quick reference

<b>Type of Standard</b>	Operational/ Standard.
<b>Purpose:</b>	Natural England's approach to developing Conservation Advice for Marine Protected Areas.
<b>Owner(s):</b>	Caroline Cotterell (Director, Strategy Implementation)
<b>Sign-off:</b>	Samantha Somers (Manager, Strategy to Delivery Team) Christina Cork (Principle Specialist)
<b>Publication:</b>	Standards Library – external version
<b>Review date:</b>	April 2020

## Document Amendment Record

Issue	Amendment detail	Author	Date
1.0	First draft for comment by Conservation Advice Project Board. Comments received by Nina Schroeder and Fiona McNie	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	13.04.13
1.0	Draft of the Stages presented to marine workshops in Birmingham and Peterborough.	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	13.05.13
1.2	Editorial and layout changes by Mark Duffy, Nina Schroeder and Rebecca Atkins	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	24.05.13
1.2	Second draft for comment by Conservation Advice Advisory Group and Wider Core Group	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	24.05.13
1.3	Comments received from Advisory Group, Wider Core Group and Fiona McNie	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	30.05.13
1.4	Editorial and layout changes by Nina Schroeder	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	10.06.13
1.5	Comments received from Advisory Group, Legal, Standards and Wider CA Team	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	11.06.13
1.6	Comments from Stephanie Ashman and above incorporated	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	14.06.13
1.7	Commented upon by Caroline Cotterell	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	14.06.13
1.8	Comments from Caroline Cotterell incorporated by Stephanie Ashman	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	18.06.13
1.9	Formatting and editorial changes undertaken by Nina Schroeder	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	19.06.13
1.10	Changes undertaken by Mark Duffy	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	20.06.13
1.11	Changes undertaken by Jen Ashworth and Ken Roy	Chris Davis	18.07.13
1.12	Incorporation of editorial amendments by Rebecca Atkins and additional amendments following feedback workshop	Chris Davis and Stephanie Ashman	30.07.13



1.13	Final draft for publication final comments from Ruth Cantrell and Eddy Mayhew	Chris Davis	09.08.13
1.14	Final draft for publication comments by Defra on terrestrial pilot advice incorporated in Conservation Objective section	Chris Davis	20.09.13
1.15	Introductory section and questions for stakeholders added	Nina Schroeder	11.10.2013
1.16	Update following piloting and changes to Strategic Standard	Chris Davis, Ginny Swaile, Jamie Davies	24.01.2014
1.17	Update following pilot	Stephanie Ashman	30.01.2014
1.18	Final update before publication	Chris Davis	24.02.2014
1.19	Sign Off	Ken Roy and Jonathan Burney	18.03.2014
2.0 Final	Standard published	KH	20.03.2014
2.1	Minor amendments to reflect operability updates to the Habitats Regulations	Steve Clifton and Lisa Jenner	21.11.2018
2.2	Sign Off	Samantha Somers Christina Cork	19.03.2019
2.3	Reformatting of text, and update of the Quick Reference and Document Amendment Record	Richard Leishman	02.04.2019