



The North East Kent European marine sites Management Scheme 2007-2012

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Cover Image: Botany Bay / Tony Child

Introduction

The North East Kent European marine sites (NEKEMS) have been recognised as being of international importance for over a decade. In 2001 following a stakeholder consensus building process, the first Management Scheme for the North East Kent European marine sites was released. This scheme was highly successful in that it set in place a robust management structure for the marine sites, fostered good working relationships between all the relevant authorities in the area, engaged the community in the active management of the sites, created the highly successful Thanet Coast Project and generally increased awareness and appreciation of the valuable features on this part of the coast.

In April of 2006, the first Management Scheme expired; presenting the need to review and redraft a new scheme to run from 2007 to 2012. Through the review and updating of the scheme, the Management Group and the Science Advisory Group saw a fresh opportunity to take a more holistic approach to management of the European marine sites through the adoption of

the Ecosystems Approach. This essentially meant that the scope of the management scheme would go beyond the designated features of the site to include other habitats and species, ecosystem functions and also human interactions within the area.

To aid in the delivery of this Ecosystems Approach to management, it was once again decided that a stakeholder dialogue process would be used to produce the updated scheme. This process involved a series of facilitated workshops in which stakeholders were able to actively contribute to the creation of the new scheme.

Adopting the Ecosystems Approach has been a challenging process and has at times flagged up more questions than answers. Whilst much work is still required in terms of ecosystems thinking and its relationship to management of the North East Kent European marine sites, an important first step has been taken and opportunities have been created through the scheme to further advance thinking in this field.

Background to the Area

1.1 Description of the Area

The NEKEMS are situated along a stretch of coast running from Herne Bay to Deal, with an additional small area at Swalecliffe (Refer to supporting Documents - Map 1). When describing the marine sites and their importance it is useful to look at the wider environment in which they occur. On a regional level, the sites are situated within the southern North Sea. This means that they are influenced by coastal processes that are also responsible for shaping the coast of France. Looking towards the British coast, the marine sites occur within the influence of a highly developed urban coastline situated within the North Kent Plain; an area characterised by an open, low and gently undulating landscape. The River Stour provides a freshwater influence into the area, where it meets the sea at Pegwell Bay.

Key Environmental Features

The area covered by this Management Scheme is most well known for its chalk reefs, sea caves and Turnstone, Golden Plover and Little Tern bird populations (details of these designation features are given below). Additional to these are several other key environmental features. These include:

- Cliff top chalk grassland supporting rare plants and insects;
- Assemblages of waders and breeding birds;
- Seals;
- Sandbanks; and
- Important geological features.

Key Social and Economic Features

As mentioned above, the area covered by this scheme is highly urbanised. The tourist resorts of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate all occur within the coastal fringe of the marine sites. Further west the towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay lie within close proximity to the designated sites. The area falls within the boundaries of three local authorities: Canterbury City Council, Thanet District Council and Dover District Council.



Isle of Thanet / Thanet District Council

The European Marine Sites

The NEKEMS cover an area of the North East Kent shore from Herne Bay to Deal, with a small separate area at Swalecliffe. The sites extend out to sea up to 2km around Thanet. Specifically, the marine sites only include areas that are covered either some, or all of the time by the sea.

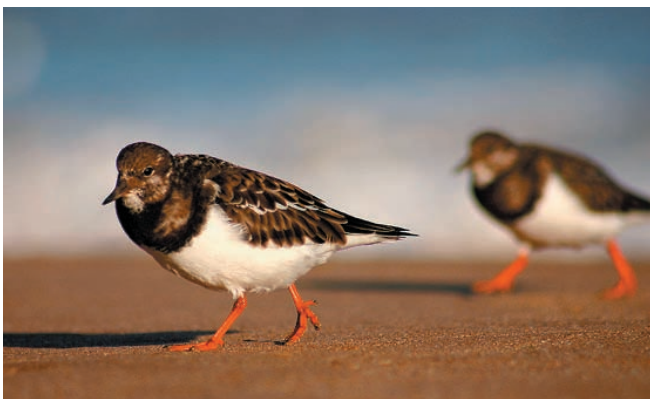
The marine sites comprise two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and one Special Protection Area (SPA). The Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA was the first of the marine sites to be designated. The site was designated an SPA in June 1992 and was subsequently classified in 1994. The Thanet Coast SAC and the Sandwich Bay SAC were identified as candidate Special Areas of Conservation in October 1996 and were then formalised as SAC's in 2005.

Table 1: North East Kent European marine sites – Designated Features

Designated Site	Features
Thanet Coast SAC	Annex 1 habitats of the Habitats Directive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reefs ■ Submerged or partially submerged sea caves
Sandwich Bay SAC*	Annex 1 habitats of the Habitats Directive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) ■ Embryonic shifting dunes ■ Shifting dunes with marram grass (white dunes) ■ Dunes with creeping willow ■ Humid dune slacks
Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA	Annex 1 species of the Birds Directive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Little tern¹ in summer ■ Golden plover in winter Internationally important numbers of migratory species: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Turnstone

* These features do not occur within the boundaries of the European marine site as they occur above the Highest Astronomical Tide. The intertidal area associated with these features, however, is considered as it forms the feed sediments for the dunes

For detailed information on the designation and importance of these features, please refer to Supporting Documents - Section 2 of the First Management Scheme.



Turnstones / Brett Lewis

1.2 Values of the Coast

The North East Kent European marine sites and their surrounding coastal and marine environment are areas which are valued and appreciated on many different levels. When stakeholders at the workshops were asked to visualise and describe their aspirations for this part of coast, the majority of responses alluded to a coast with rich and thriving wildlife, clean beaches and seas, people enjoying themselves and sustainable development.

Feedback from the workshops indicated that although the marine sites are particularly

valued for their chalk reefs, sea caves and bird populations, there are many other different types of coastal and marine plants, animals and habitats that are also of great importance. Among those identified were:

- Shellfish and marine animals such as piddocks, lobsters and velvet swimming crabs;
- Seaweed;
- Seals;
- Chalk cliff-face plants; and
- Fish species such as Grey Mullet and Corkwing Wrasse.

Additionally, it was recognised that this part of the coast provides us with an array of goods, services and experiences, including those related to:

- Quality of life and natural beauty;
- Sport and Health;
- Tourism;
- Jobs;
- Flood Protection; and
- Outdoor Learning.

¹ It is envisaged that when the SPA review is released the Little Tern will no longer be recognised as a designation feature of the site.

2. How was this Management Scheme Developed?

2.1 Ecosystems Approach – a new approach to management

Six years ago when the first Management Scheme was written, the focus of the scheme was purely on the designated features of the sites: the chalk reefs and sea caves, the sand and mudflats feeding the dunes, and the three protected bird species; Turnstone, Golden Plover and Little Tern. Concentrating on these particular birds and habitats made sense from the point of view of the British and European laws that protect them, but it did not fit the way that nature works in reality. In order to take a more holistic approach to the management of the marine sites it was decided to implement the Ecosystems Approach to management for this updated scheme.

The Ecosystems Approach is defined as: “a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way” (Convention on Biodiversity 1992). Twelve guiding principles have been developed to help guide the use of the Ecosystems Approach:

Table 2: The 12 Principles of the Ecosystems Approach

Ecosystems Approach Principles
1. The objectives of management of land, water and living resources are a societal choice.
2. Management should be decentralised to the lowest appropriate level.
3. Ecosystem managers should consider the effects (actual or potential) of their activities on adjacent and other ecosystems.
4. There is a need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context.
5. Conservation of ecosystem structure and function to provide ecosystem services should be a priority.

6. Ecosystems must be managed within the limits of their functioning.
7. The approach should be taken at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales.
8. Process and objectives for ecosystem management should be set for the long term.
9. Management must recognise that change is inevitable.
10. Ecosystem managers should seek the appropriate balance between integration, conservation and use of biodiversity.
11. Decision-making should consider all forms of relevant information (scientific, indigenous and local).
12. Involve all relevant sectors of society and scientific disciplines.

2.2 How has the Ecosystems Approach been adopted for this Management Scheme?

The key areas of the process employed for the development of this Management Scheme that reflect the Ecosystems Approach are detailed below:

Stakeholder Dialogue

In keeping with the principles of the Ecosystems Approach, it was decided that a stakeholder dialogue process would be used to develop the revised scheme. This allowed for decision-making to involve all the relevant stakeholders with an interest in the marine sites. Through this process, information was gathered from individuals and organisations with an array of disciplines, interests and backgrounds, which has in turn led to agreed, shared management outcomes for the marine sites. (See Section 2.3 for further information on this process).

Subject Assessment Tables

The core of this revised Management Scheme

is the subject assessment tables, which include details of all the activities that occur in the area, their current management and future management needs. The subject assessment tables in this Management Scheme, which were completed through the stakeholder dialogue process, are more comprehensive than those in the previous scheme, taking into account possible impacts on wider ecosystems.

Action Plan

The Action Plan, which can be found attached to this document, details the specific management actions that are to be implemented to achieve effective management of the marine sites and surrounding areas. This plan is also reflective of an Ecosystems-based approach to management. In particular, the plan has a strong monitoring component, in recognition of the changing environment in the area. It also decentralises management down to the local level.

2.3 Stakeholder Involvement

Based on the success of the stakeholder dialogue process used to develop the first Management Scheme and the fresh Ecosystems Approach focus, it was decided to use a similar dialogue process for the review of the Management Scheme. Specialist practitioners Dialogue Matters designed the stakeholder dialogue process, which was based around three stakeholder workshops. People from an array of backgrounds were invited to the workshops and were asked to contribute their local and specialist knowledge to the process.

The focus of the dialogue was to find action that was achievable over the next six years and that would continue to foster the sustainable use of coast and sea. To achieve this, dialogue was based around the “subject assessment tables” and the information provided by the stakeholders was fed directly into the tables. A positive result of this process has been that the core of the Management Scheme evolved in tandem with the stakeholder process rather than being written separately afterwards.



Stakeholder Involvement / Thanet Coast Project

Workshop One

In a nutshell, the first workshop helped stakeholders to picture the future, identify what worked well from the previous scheme and also what needed to change. This included identifying any new activities occurring in the area that potentially needed to be considered in the Management Scheme.

It was at this first workshop that the concept of taking an Ecosystems Approach to management was formally introduced. Stakeholders were asked to start thinking about the different types of ecosystems which occur in the European marine sites area and just exactly what this means for management. This proved quite a difficult task and one of the key issues identified through these discussions was that there was a great uncertainty as to how the ecosystems in the area should actually be defined. The local system can be conceived as part of something much larger e.g. part of the English Channel or part of the southern North Sea, but from the point of view of management it needs to be defined at a scale that local management can do something about.

Amidst the difficulties of actually defining the ecosystems, there were some insightful discussions about changes that are occurring in the area. Some of the changes noted include the spread of new invasive species, such as the Chinese Mitten Crab, changes in coastal dynamics, in particular movement of the Stour Estuary north, and also general changes in the types of species being found in the area, e.g. the occurrence of Mediterranean fish species.

A significant proportion of the discussions focussed around the possible effects of locked-in changes such as sea level rise and climate change. Stakeholders at the workshops recognised that climate change poses a real challenge to management of the European marine sites and that some changes, such as the potential loss of chalk reef, may be unavoidable.

Workshop Two

The second workshop was structured to develop more understanding of management issues and to come up with ideas for action. Stakeholders were asked to consider specific areas around the coast and identify any problems or management issues associated with these. This approach was effective in that it allowed the stakeholders to input all their local knowledge into the subject assessment tables.

During this second workshop, stakeholders were also asked to think about different approaches to the management of recreation and harvesting activities within the European marine sites. Five key approaches were discussed – Education and Interpretation, Zoning in Space or Zoning in Time, Voluntary Codes of Conduct and Voluntary Agreements, Volunteer Wardening and Bylaws and Policing. Several benefits and challenges were identified for each of the approaches. In summary, the major points to come out of the discussions were that:

- A mixture of approaches is recommended
- Different approaches are effective for different audiences, i.e. education is often effective when aimed at children
- Voluntary mechanisms are usually easier to implement than more formal methods such as bylaws, but voluntary mechanisms often require some form of legal backup
- Policing of management is often very difficult and expensive

The outcomes of these discussions helped guide the choice of management measures required for certain activities.



Low Tide Day / Thanet District Council

Workshop Three

In between each of the workshops, the information that had been gathered from the stakeholders was fed into the subject assessment tables. By workshop three, the subject assessment tables had largely taken shape and so the final workshop was used to get stakeholders to indicate their levels of support for the revised scheme at that stage. Feedback was positive and generally stakeholders believed that all the important management issues in the area had been picked up and were being dealt with through the proposed management actions.

A large component of the final workshop was also used to examine the existing management structure for the marine sites and explore any emerging ideas for management and promotion of the area that could be further investigated through the updated management scheme. Key results from these sessions indicated that there was a degree of confusion surrounding the existing management structure of the European marine sites. Much of this confusion related to whom the Management Group was and how they related to the stakeholders and the Thanet Coast Project.

There was much positive discussion about emerging ideas that could be explored in the area. Discussions were focussed around the ideas of:

- An Arts Project incorporating the environmental values of the area
- A Thanet Coastal Park
- Developing a “Natural Zone” within the European marine sites
- Research into Ecosystems Thinking
- Development of an Integrated Management Approach for the Sandwich Bay area

2.4 What management is currently working and where is there room for improvement?

What is working well?

Throughout the early workshops stakeholders were asked to reflect upon the positive management that has resulted within the area since the commencement of the original Management Scheme, six years ago. Many of the responses highlighted the good work that is being done by the Thanet Coast Project (a project stemming from the first Management Scheme). Much of their work relates to:

- Increasing awareness of coastal nature conservation;
- Creating greater accessibility to coastal education opportunities; and
- Initiating better links to the arts.

In terms of management of wildlife within the marine sites there was a general feeling that the designated wildlife features seem to be faring well. This was attributed to the successful implementation of the Thanet Coastal Codes and the role they have played in minimising disturbance to key wildlife features such as the Turnstone.

The local authorities were also praised for their role in the maintenance of the beaches and improving transport links, including cycle paths.

Overall, stakeholders believed that the coast

was now valued more and there was less apathy in people’s attitudes towards managing the European marine sites and surrounds.



Sand Art / Thanet Coast Project

What isn't working well?

Additional to identifying the positive management in the area, stakeholders were also asked to generally comment on what they thought had changed for the worse over the past 6 years since the Management Scheme came into effect. Some of the main issues identified are grouped below.

Table 3: Concerns highlighted by the Stakeholders

Environmental concerns	
Litter and Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A general increase in litter ■ An increase in discarded fishing nets ■ Poor management of litter, e.g. bins not being emptied
Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A reduction in some marine wildlife ■ Concerns over gathering of shellfish
Shoreline Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Erosion of cliffs ■ Global warming
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tivoli Brook outfall management still not resolved
Social concerns	
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A gradual disintegration of coastal recreational facilities
Illegal and Anti-social Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Greater vehicular activity on beaches ■ Increase in anti-social behaviour on beaches
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Less low cost activities available for young people to do
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Incompatible development - high rise buildings on the cliffs ■ Hotels being turned into flats
Publicity and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tourism is still seen to be a low priority in the area ■ There remains a local attitude of “doom and gloom”
Economic concerns	
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Not enough financial resources available in the area

3. Management

This section sets out the path for management of the European marine sites and their surrounding coastal and marine environments over the next 5 years. Each section provides a brief overview of the management issues related to the particular topic and highlights the priority areas for action.

For ease of interpretation and to provide an overall snapshot of management, this section has been kept fairly brief. The detailed information relating to the management of individual activities can be found in the Subject Assessment Tables. Links to specific tables are provided in each Management Section discussed below.

See Supporting Documents - Subject Assessment Tables.

Additionally, the specific “management actions” that are to be implemented by the Relevant Authorities have been carried forward into an Action Plan. The role of the Action Plan is to provide an easy way of tracking the progress of implementation of the Management Scheme.

Table 4: Relevant Authorities for the North East Kent European marine sites

Relevant Authority	Responsibilities relevant to the European marine sites	Area covered
Natural England	Advises government and implements statutory nature conservation duties including European duties on behalf of the government	England out to 12 mile territorial limit.
Kent County Council	County Planning Authority.	County of Kent (excluding the area of the Medway Unitary Authority) down to mean low water.
Thanet District Council	Local Planning Authority (includes planning, recreation, and coastal protection).	Thanet District down to mean low water and extending below low water around Margate Harbour
Dover District Council	Local Planning Authority (includes planning, recreation, and coastal protection).	Dover District down to mean low water.

See Supporting Documents - Action Plan.

3.1 Introduction

The overall management system for the European marine sites and surrounding area is fairly complex, involving a Management Group, the Thanet Coast Project, the North East Kent Scientific Coastal Advisory Group (NEKSCAG) and local stakeholders.

A diagram showing the relationships between these groups can be found in Annex A.

Management Group

Presently, 10 Relevant Authorities comprise the Management Group for the NEKEMS. These organisations are all equal members of the Management Group and are involved in ongoing management of the marine sites. The role of these authorities in regard to the management of the sites is detailed in the table below:

Relevant Authority	Responsibilities relevant to the European marine sites	Area covered
Canterbury City Council	Local Planning Authority (includes planning, recreation, and coastal protection).	Canterbury District down to mean low water.
Environment Agency	Environmental Protection: Regulatory Authority for discharge and other consents.	England and Wales out to 3 miles.
Southern Water Services	Sewage undertaker.	South east region including Kent.
Thanet District Council Harbour Authority	Harbour Authority.	Ramsgate Port and Harbour and approach channel, Broadstairs Harbour and approach channel and Margate Harbour and approach channel.
Sandwich Port and Haven Commission	Harbour Authority.	Sandwich Port and approach channel.
Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee	Harbour Authority.	Seaward to 6 miles from the low water mark from Dungeness in Kent to the Northern boundary of Essex.

North East Kent Scientific Coastal Advisory Group (NEKSCAG)

NEKSCAG comprises a group of academics and scientists who have an interest in the coast and sea within and around the European marine sites. They are actively involved in informing the direction of research within the marine sites.

Thanet Coast Project

During the original stakeholder workshops in the late 1990s, it was realised that there were no local organisations working specifically for the benefit of the wildlife and habitats associated with the North East Kent coast. As a result of this gap in management, the Thanet Coast Project was set up in 2001 to take forward the wildlife-related actions that had been identified through the workshops.

The Project's main aims are to:

- raise awareness of the area's important marine and bird life
- work with people to safeguard coastal wildlife
- be a one-stop shop for coastal information
- promote wildlife events or activities

Over the past 5 years, the Project has become a fundamental component in the delivery of many aspects of the Management Scheme for the marine sites.

Local Stakeholders

Local stakeholders play a pivotal role in the management of the European marine sites. This role extends from being involved in the development of the Management Scheme to on the ground monitoring of the sites through wardening schemes.

Legislative Requirements

Alongside the day to day management of the sites, there are several other commitments, which must be fulfilled in order to secure compliance with the requirements of the legislation that governs the European marine sites.

Conservation Objectives

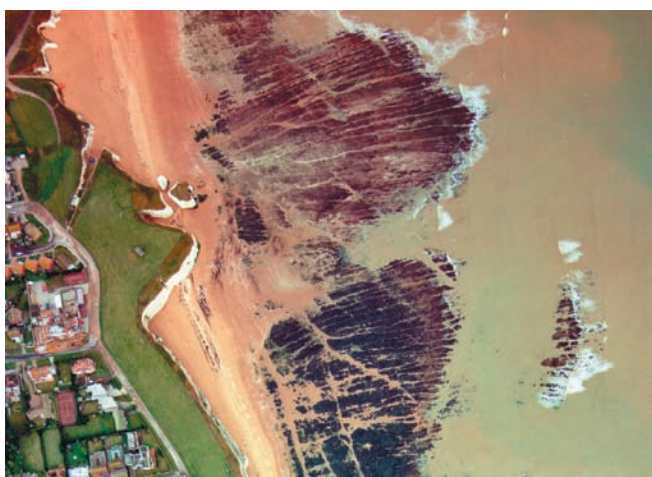
Perhaps the most important of these requirements is meeting the Conservation Objectives for the site. The role of the Conservation Objectives is to express what needs to be achieved in order to maintain the favourable condition of the sites, including both the habitats and species it contains. The Conservation Objectives and further supporting material can be found within the "Regulation 33 Package" for the North East Kent European marine sites.

See Supporting Documents - Regulation 33 Package.

Monitoring

There is a requirement for this Management Scheme to have a framework for monitoring the designated features of the sites as well as the implementation of the Management Scheme. Natural England holds the responsibility for monitoring the site in order to establish whether its Conservation Objectives are being met, whilst all Relevant Authorities are responsible for monitoring the enforcement of those measures under the Management Scheme that fall within their functions.

Further detailed information on the management set-up and requirements for the European marine sites (including the management of Plans and Projects) can be found in Supporting Documents - Section One of the first Management Scheme.



Chalk Reef / Thanet District Council

3.2 Management Issues

Management Structure and Remit of Management Scheme

It became apparent throughout the course of the workshops that there was a degree of confusion surrounding the way in which the European

marine sites are actually managed and more specifically, what the role of the Management Group is and how stakeholders have input into the ongoing process of management.

One of the concerns was that some stakeholder groups may not actually be getting their views fed back to the Management Group and hence are unable to have a say in how the sites are being managed. It was widely acknowledged that the Thanet Coast Project has been very effective at engaging stakeholders within the Thanet region and that it has worked as a good conduit for feeding stakeholder views back to the Management Group. There was, however, concern that this input was only coming from Thanet stakeholders and that views from stakeholders in the Dover and Canterbury areas were not necessarily being heard.

As mentioned above, many stakeholders were uncertain about the role that the Management Group has in the overarching and day-to-day management of the European marine sites. Stakeholders were unsure of who sat on the Management Group and how what they say influences the Management Group's decisions.

Many stakeholders felt that there was a lack of clarity about what is or is not within the remit of the Management Scheme and furthermore, the role of the Relevant Authorities. People questioned whether or not social and economic issues should be picked up in the scheme and if so, who would be the correct authority to deal with them.

There was also confusion about the difference between ongoing activities that are managed via the Management Scheme and plans and projects, which are managed by consenting procedures.

Table 5: Management Structure and Remit of Management Scheme - Priority Areas for Action

Issue	Priority Areas for Action	Action Plan
Stakeholder Involvement	■ Evaluate how representative the attendance is at the regular stakeholder workshops.	15.1
	■ Investigate whether or not an Advisory Group is needed.	15.1
Decision Making Structures for the European marine sites	■ Provide clarity on the role of the Management Group, the remit of the Management Scheme and Stakeholder involvement.	15.1

Activity Management

Disturbance caused to the European marine sites by human activities was flagged up as one of the greatest concerns in the first Management Scheme. Recreational activities, in particular, were identified as the main cause of much of the disturbance. Discussions held during this first process concluded, however, that exclusion of these activities from the marine sites was not an option. It was therefore decided that the purpose of the scheme was not to exclude human

activities from the sites, but rather to ensure that they are undertaken in ways that do not threaten the nature conservation interest, and wherever possible, in ways that support it.

This philosophy and approach has once again been adopted in this updated version of the scheme. Activities have been evaluated in subject assessment tables and grouped into the following sections indicated in Table 6.

Table 6: Subject Assessment Tables

Activity Area	Relevant Subject Assessment Tables
Shoreline Management	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6
Fishing and Harvesting	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7
Shore Based Recreation	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7
Water Based Recreation	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Air Based Activities	5.1, 5.2
Ports and Harbours	6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5
Research, Education and Wildlife Tourism	7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6
Water Quality	8.1, 8.2, 8.3
Species Management	9.1, 9.2
Extraction of Materials	10.1, 10.2, 10.3

See Supporting Documents – Subject Assessment Tables

Feedback received from the recent stakeholder dialogue process indicated that many stakeholders felt that the majority of activities were now being adequately managed through actions detailed in the old Management Scheme and consequently minimal changes to the revised scheme were required. Particularly successful management measures identified included the implementation of the Thanet Coastal Codes, awareness-raising work carried out by the Thanet Coast Project and effective working relationships between all the Relevant Authorities.

Of the additions made to the subject assessment tables for the revised scheme, the most significant relate to assessing the impact of activities on other features of the ecosystem. Following these assessments, many of the existing management measures were found to be effectively limiting disturbance to the wider ecosystem.

Within the individual subject assessment tables, specific management issues for each activity that need to be addressed in this Management Scheme can be found. From these, priority areas for action have been identified opposite:

Table 7: Activity Management - Priority Areas for Action

Activity Subject Area	Priority Areas for Action	Action Plan
Shoreline Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implementation of the Shoreline Management Plan on the local level. ■ Awareness-raising of the impacts associated with unauthorised private cliff protection. 	2 2.6
Fishing and Harvesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Research into the impacts of shell fish harvesting on reefs. ■ Exploring the feasibility of introducing Lobster V-notching as a mechanism for management. 	3.6 3
Shore based Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Extension of Coastal Codes of Conduct into other areas covered by the Management Scheme (additional to Thanet). ■ Motorbike, quad bike, go-kart and mini-moto management. 	4 4.4
Water based Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implementing integrated water-based recreation management for Sandwich Bay, Pegwell Bay and the River Stour. ■ Research into the impacts of water based power craft on the chalk reef. 	5 5.4
Air based Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Management of kite propelled activities. 	6.2
Research and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Research into the possible impacts from increased visitor usage in the area, in particular those associated with rock-pooling. 	8.4
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Completion of the upgrade of the Waste Water Treatment Works at Foreness Point. 	9.1
Species Management and Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exploring methods of control of non-native invasive species. 	10
Extraction of Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collaborative management of fossil extraction. 	11.2

Additional management actions for Activity Management can be found in the Action Plan in Sections 1 – 11.

Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

When stakeholders were asked what the possible effects of locked-in changes such as sea level rise and climate change would be, there was uncertainty over what changes may actually occur e.g. will it get warmer with global warming or colder as the Gulf Stream shifts direction or switches off?

Assuming warmer conditions, it was identified that there would be a gradual change in

community structure and composition with more alien species likely to colonise the shore from ballast water and an increase in southern European and Mediterranean species occurring naturally. This will in turn affect the food chain and perhaps fewer waders may use the shore as they will not have to travel so far south to reach feeding grounds.

Sea level rise will also bring significant changes in coastal processes with loss of intertidal habitat in front of fixed sea walls, different rates and patterns of erosion and deposition, and the possibility of Thanet eventually returning to being an island. It was acknowledged that changes in

physical processes will affect species distribution. One particular concern was whether or not the offshore sandbanks would still be exposed at low tide and provide seal haul-outs.

Table 8: Climate Change and Sea Level Rise – Priority Areas for Action

Issue	Priority Areas for Action	Action Plan
Climate Change and Sea Level Rise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Determining the predicted changes to the shoreline within the European marine sites. 	12.1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Analyse the impacts of possible climate-induced changes to tourism and other human uses of the shore. 	12.1

The Ecosystems Approach

Discussions on the Ecosystems Approach highlighted the level of uncertainty that surrounds this topic. In particular it became apparent that there was great ambiguity as to what the ecosystems approach may mean for science and research. The main outcome of discussions was that there needs to be a significant amount of research conducted in order to better inform ecosystems management. Particular areas of research identified were:

- Defining the ecosystem(s)
- Understanding the physical processes
- Understanding ecological processes across space and time
- Identifying keystone species
- Top predator research
- Greater understanding of the human interactions with the system e.g. fisheries and shellfish harvesting
- Understanding of how to influence markets through human behaviour e.g. harvesting practice and public awareness resulting in sustainable use

Table 9: The Ecosystems Approach – Priority Areas for Action

Issue	Priority Areas for Action	Action Plan
Ecosystem Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pioneering research into ecosystem function in the coastal context 	8.3

Management Gaps

Through ecosystem discussions at the stakeholder workshops it became apparent that the role of fisheries within the natural system encompassing the European marine sites was largely unknown. Specifically, little is known about the wider ecosystem impacts of fishing. It was recognised that in the past, many fishing practices within the European marine sites area have been largely considered beyond the remit of the Management Scheme. Having adopted the Ecosystems Approach for this scheme, however, many thought it would be necessary to try and establish and better understand the role of fisheries within the European marine sites and surrounding waters.

Responses gained through the consultation process also highlighted the relative uncertainty surrounding the impacts of off shore wind farm development in the area. It was acknowledged that there were both potential positive and negative impacts arising from such development.

Table 10: Management Gaps – Priority Areas for Action

Issue	Priority Areas for Action	Action Plan
Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Find out more about the role of fishing within the natural system and the reef (SAC) feature in particular. 	12.1
Off shore Wind Farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote investigation into whether the Thanet Offshore Wind Farm could act as a beneficial marine protection area 	12.1

New Projects

The three workshops provided an opportunity for new ideas and potential projects for the area surrounding the European marine sites to be discussed. Whilst the emphasis of these projects is to aid in the promotion of the European marine sites, it became apparent that the projects could also help enhance the socio economic value of the area. Three main initiatives were discussed – A Coastal Park, an Arts Project and creation of a Natural Zone.

The Coastal Park

During the stakeholder process held 8 years ago for the development of the first Management Scheme, everyone agreed that a good new project for the area would be to set up a Coastal Park. It was agreed that this would integrate detailed decision-making and co-ordinate all the coastal activities in a similar way to a national park, but on a local and voluntary basis. It would integrate initiatives and management including: wildlife, arts, recreation, events, interpretation and regeneration. A policy promoting the idea was written into the local plan but due to changing staff, the idea has not been actively taken forward.

At the most recent stakeholder dialogue process, the idea of the Coastal Park was revisited to see if people were still interested in the idea and whether actions should be created to progress the Initiative. Overall, stakeholders were still quite interested in the project, however, many felt confused over the actual vision or role of the Coastal Park and how it relates to the East Kent Natural Park. There was further confusion as to who would lead and promote the project.

Taking these concerns into consideration, several ideas were formulated for how the initiative could be given fresh momentum and these have been passed onto the relevant authorities and people.

Arts Project
The possibility of developing an Arts Project in the area adjacent to the European marine sites was widely supported by the stakeholders at the workshops. Stakeholders expressed interest in the idea from the point of view that it could provide greater interpretation of wildlife in the area.

Additional benefits of such a project that were raised were a fostering of community ownership, increased visitors to the region and the provision of something 'exciting and colourful'.

Several challenges associated with the creation of such a project were identified:

- Securing funds;
- The management of such a project;
- Ensuring any public art is robust and can withstand the weather;
- Dealing with potential vandalism; and
- Finding an appropriate theme that could be used across each town in the area, whilst still maintaining local distinctiveness.

It was concluded that the idea of developing an Arts Project in the area was a good one and warranted further investigation.

Natural Zone

Through the discussions at the workshops, several different stakeholder groups raised the possibility of setting aside a part of the intertidal reef to be left undisturbed by all human activities – this effectively creating an intertidal no-take "Natural Zone".

The benefits of the idea are to provide a refuge where natural processes occur undisturbed by human activities. It would also provide an area that could help advance scientific understanding by providing a comparison with areas where activities take place. The challenges surrounding such a proposal include:

- Identifying an area representative of key habitats and species;
- Determining whether or not a Natural Zone could work on such an accessible coast;
- Factoring in a potential increase in additional pressure on adjacent areas; and
- Deciding whether to have one big zone or several smaller zones.

Table 11: New Projects – Priority Areas for Action

Issue	Priority Areas for Action	Action Plan
Arts Project	■ Explore the possibility of a public art project that promotes the wildlife features of the European marine sites.	12.1
Natural Zone	■ Conduct a feasibility study into the possible development of a Natural Zone.	12.1



Beach Clean / Thanet Coast Project

Thanet Coast Project

The Thanet Coast Project was recognised throughout the workshops as being valuable in terms of its contribution to raising awareness amongst the public and specific coastal user groups, and in particular increasing accessibility to education and wildlife through both public and community-based event programmes.

Workshops highlighted that since the creation of the Thanet Coast Project there is much greater management activity and a better flow of information between managers and stakeholders within the Thanet region.

The Thanet Coast Project's main voluntary initiatives received much positive comment. The Thanet Coastal Codes and the Thanet Coastal

Warden Scheme were highlighted as effective management tools, building links and engaging with the different local community groups and increasing public awareness. It was recognised that the Warden Scheme is still at an early stage and continues to develop. It was with this in mind that ideas for developing the scheme further came about.

There was some contradiction in observations about the success of the Project's communication, with many comments praising the website, newsletters and level of publicity informing people on wildlife and activities, but also further suggestions under 'room for improvement'. The suggestions included more regular features in the local press, paid advertising, corporate sponsorship, and even a dedicated PR person working as part of the Project team. Other ideas included more work with young people at secondary level (post 16's), a Youth Warden Scheme, more education and training for all, and better and more interactive interpretation around the whole of the North East Kent coast.

During a further workshop held at the Coastal Advisory Group's research conference on 9 November 2006, the Project's remit (see Section 3.1) received a resounding endorsement especially in its work to engage with local people. Specific aspects of the Project's work that were highlighted included the ability to make links with the arts and other projects, and the Project's newsletter and website. General endorsement was received for the suggested future outcomes.

The importance of volunteers or local 'champions' to the area was reiterated. Green tourism and art opportunities were highlighted as providing good media opportunities, whilst education was seen the key way forward. However, it was noted that 'bylaws' might be needed to back up actions, if the voluntary measures or approach were not working. The group also endorsed approaches to get a diversity of community groups involved, especially through children and schools.

Table 12: Thanet Coast Project – Priority Areas for Action

Proposed Project Outcomes	Priority Areas for Action	Action Plan
Trained Local coastal volunteers, or 'coastal champions'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Involvement in looking after the local natural environment. 	13.1
Raised public awareness and concern about coastal and marine wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Using green tourism. ■ Linking to the coastscape and the arts. 	13.1 13.1
Reduced unintentional harm to coastal wildlife and increased responsible use of the coast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working with local people. ■ Working with interest groups. 	13.1 13.1
Diverse community groups engaged in coastal awareness raising and action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create partnership links. ■ Hold community events and activities. 	13.1 13.1

This document has been produced by Natural England on behalf of the North East Kent European marine sites Management Group.



Natural England will work for people, places and nature, to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed now and by future generations.

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