

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Planning Committee

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Local Development Plan – DOE Public Consultation Document: Proposed Marine Conservation Zones (pMCZs)

To: Planning Committee

Date: 27th January 2016

For Decision

Linkage to Corporate Plan	
Strategic Priority	Accelerating Our Economy & Contributing to Prosperity; Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities; and Protecting and Enhancing our Environments and Assets
Lead Officer	Sharon Mulhern
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 and the UK Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 contain new powers to designate Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), in the Northern Ireland inshore and offshore regions respectively, as part of measures to manage and protect our seas for current and future generations.
- 1.2 Since that time, the Department of the Environment's (DOE) Marine Division has been developing potential sites for MCZ designation. These are based on sound scientific evidence and the involvement of stakeholders from all marine sectors including angling, fishing, renewable energy, ports and harbours, and environmental groups.

2.0 Detail

- 2.1 DOE initiated a public consultation exercise on 14th December 2015 outlining its proposals for Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in the Northern Ireland *inshore region* (out to 12 nautical miles). The four proposed sites and their identified features are as follows:
- **Rathlin** – Deep-sea bed, Black guillemot and Geological/geomorphological features (Submerged lagoons and Sea arches);
 - **Waterfoot** – Subtidal (sublittoral) sand with subtidal seagrass beds (*Zosteramarina*);

- **Outer Belfast Lough** – Ocean quahog (*Arctica islandica*) and associated habitat Subtidal (sublittoral) sand;
- **Carlingford Lough** – Subtidal (sublittoral) mud containing Sea-pen and white sea slug communities.

2.2 Two of the proposed MCZs lie within this Borough; namely Rathlin and Waterfoot.

2.3 The consultation document, which is aimed at organisations, groups, and people who undertake activities, or have a general interest in the marine area, can be viewed at www.doeni.gov.uk/consultations/marine-conservation-zones-consultation

2.4 As part of the site selection process DOE is seeking views on the proposals and in particular the following specific aspects;

- The pMCZ protected features.
- The pMCZ boundaries.
- The potential management options for each pMCZ.
- The Draft Regulatory Impact Assessment.

2.5 The consultation exercise will close on 11th March 2016.

3.0 Financial Implications

2.1 None.

3.0 Other Implications

3.1 None.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Elected Members agree to the Head of Planning drafting a response on behalf of Council. This response will be brought to the February Committee for Members clearance before sending to DOE in time for the 11th March 2016 closing date for receipt of comments.