**SSMEI Clyde Pilot Steering Group** **Discussion Paper: 1**

**Meeting No 1: 24th August 2006**

## Producing a Local Marine Spatial Planning for the Firth of Clyde

### Introduction

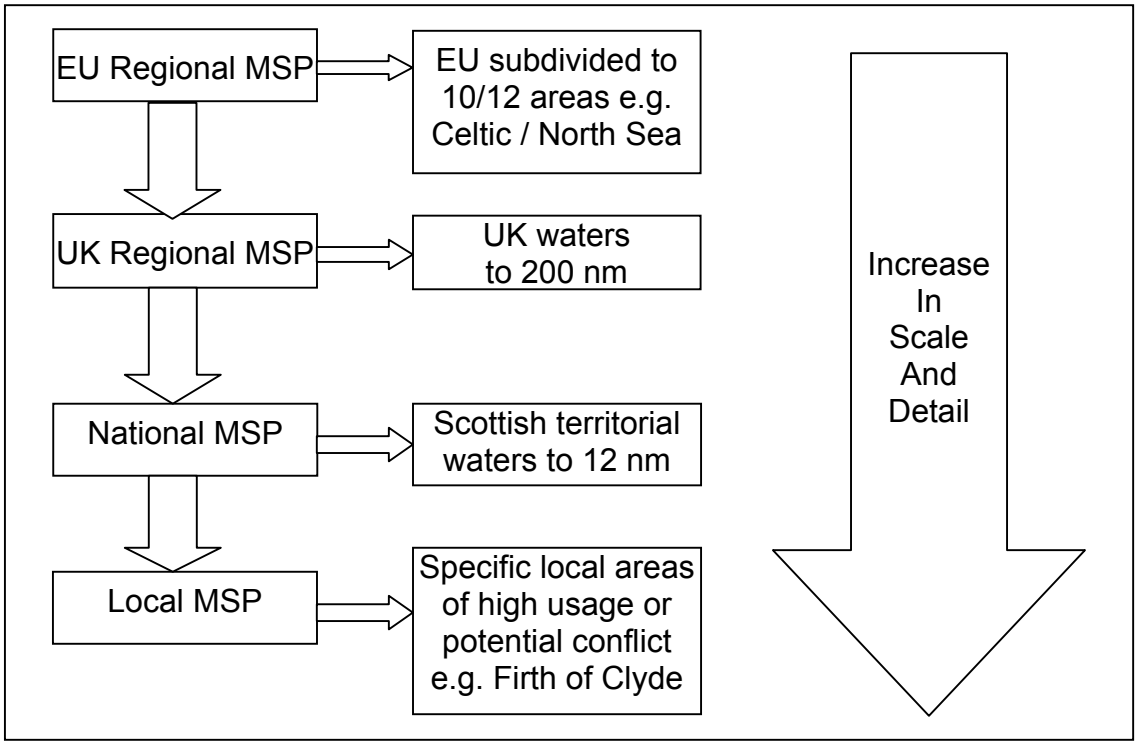
The SSMEI Clyde Pilot has been tasked to develop and implement a Marine Spatial Plan for the Firth of Clyde. This plan must bring together all the existing sectoral plans, frameworks, Structure and Local Plans that impact the marine and costal environments. The purpose of this paper is to initiate discussion amongst the Steering Group members as to the direction and shape of the Firth of Clyde Local Marine Spatial Plan.

### Spatial Planning

Regulators, analysts, researchers, and policy-makers have come to recognise that consideration of place is valuable for understanding environmental interactions and measuring sustainable development. Data that identify the geographical location and characteristics of natural or man-made features and boundaries are invaluable for most planning and decision-making activities. The terrestrial system of spatial planning is well developed with a suite of plans produced from Structure Plans to Local Plans.

### Marine Spatial Planning

A Marine Spatial Plan is a document with maps and supporting text, which provides the basis for future management and a framework for consistent decision making, within a specific area of the marine environment. The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the different scales of MSP, from EU to Local level.




**Relationship between the different scales of Marine Spatial Plans**

**Local Marine Spatial Management Plan**
The Local MSP is much more detailed than a Regional or National MSP. When such wider plans exist the overarching policies would be fed into the local plan. For this pilot study International and National strategies and frameworks will give the plan its direction. However, by its very nature the local plan will be shaped and policies formed, around this strategic direction, by those that work, live and use the marine environment in the Firth of Clyde.

**Aims**
The key aim is to balance the competing demands for the finite quantity of marine resource within the Firth of Clyde by:

1. Providing economic, social and environmental benefits through efficient use of the marine resource and
2. Providing a more effective connection between the marine management systems, the coastal environment and the terrestrial planning system.

**Objectives of the Plan**
The objectives of the plan have been identified as:

1. Providing a tool that will enable intelligent decision making to ensure sustainable and equitable development within the Firth of Clyde
2. Developing a suite of forward looking management policies by regulators that integrate with each other and the existing terrestrial planning system.
3. Contributing to Strategic Environmental Assessments undertaken within the Firth of Clyde
4. Integrating with existing and future sectoral planning
5. Contributing to local authority planning that impacts on the marine environment
6. Contributing to delivering Water Framework Directive requirements in the Marine Environment

**Policies**
Existing policies, frameworks, Structure Plans and Local Plans, as well as sectoral plans, will guide the development of the Local Marine Spatial Plan. Where required, new policies will be written that will join up the related policies and programmes between the regulators and stakeholders, thereby contributing more effectively to sustainable development.

**Existing Data**
The project team are currently collating all the existing information regarding the marine resource. This is primarily data that is already in a format that can easily be input to a Geographical Information System (GIS). Data has so far been supplied by SNH and SEPA, with additional information coming from Clydeport, Crown Estate and Seazone. This data will provide a “snap shot” of what is taking place within the Firth of Clyde at this point in time.

**Seabed Habitat Map**
It is the intention of the project to deliver a first draft habitat map of the seabed within the Firth of Clyde. It is likely that this will be delivered by an external contract. This will provide the underlying data upon which decisions can be made in relation to an ecosystem approach to sustainable development.

**Sectoral Planning**
An important aspect of the Local MSP is the integrated management of future sectoral developments. In order to inform the development of the Local MSP forward planning and the production of Sectoral Plans, where none currently exist, should be undertaken by key sectors such as:

- Tourism & Recreation
- Nature Conservation & Biodiversity
- Fisheries
- Aquaculture
- Offshore Energy
- Defence
- Shipping
- Commerce
- Transport

**Consultation**
Through out the development of the Local MSP a consultation process will take place with not only the stakeholders represented by the Firth of Clyde Forum, but also with the wider community.

It is proposed to hold two large scale workshops, the first of which will take place in November as part of a joint conference organised by the Clyde Pilot and the FoCF. This first workshop will enable people to input into the development of the MSP at a very early stage in the planning process. The second will take place in September 2007. The intention of this workshop will be to test the initial Local MSP in a number of development scenarios with stakeholders, regulators and developers. Smaller workshops/sessions will also be held with each sector and other stakeholders throughout the intervening time.

To enable wider consultation the Local MSP will be displayed in libraries, schools and possibly even supermarkets to enable the engagement of individuals and communities in the planning process.

**Water Framework Directive**
The Water Framework Directive has introduced new objectives for surface waters in Scotland. These objectives include the achievement of at least good status in all transitional and coastal waters by 2015. The SSMEI Clyde Pilot is key to helping deliver these objectives in an efficient and effective manner. The main aspects in which this project will aid are:

- To improve knowledge of the extent and intensity of human activities across the Firth of Clyde
- To present an overview of the distribution of marine habitats across the Firth of Clyde
- To promote effective interaction between Firth of Clyde stakeholders and the WFD Area Advisory Groups
- To promote a better understanding of the ecological status of water bodies across the Firth of Clyde through stakeholder discussion and data gathering

**Interaction with Clyde Inshore Fishery Group**

The Framework for inshore fisheries in Scotland was launched in 2005 and is currently being implemented. One of the main outcomes will be the establishment of inshore fishery groups (IFGs) around the coast. There will be an IFG for the Clyde, which is required to develop a Fishery Management Plan for the area.

It is anticipated that there will be mutual benefit arising between the development of the MSP and the Fishery Management Plan within the Firth of Clyde. The Fishery Management Plan, which is highly likely to have a spatial element to it, will inform the development of the MSP. Conversely, the information within the MSP, especially that on other activities, will help to inform the development and future implementation of the fishery management plan.

Both the MSP and the Fishery Management Plan should take account of important and/or sensitive habitats, some of which are of great importance to commercially exploited species. This will therefore provide benefits for both the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainability of the fisheries.

**Composition of the Marine Spatial Plan**

The Marine spatial plan will comprise three elements

1. Base Map – A snap shot of the Firth of Clyde at the present time. It will consist of all the current activities within the Firth of Clyde and how they interact at present.
2. Spatial Plan – A visual representation of the strategic vision and indication of the future management of the Firth of Clyde. It is anticipated that some degree of zonation will take place; though more than one activity may be zoned within the same area of sea.
3. Supporting text and policy documents.

**Formats**

It is envisaged that the MSP will be issued in three formats:

1. A GIS based plan.
   This may be a web-based system that would enable both regulators and developers to access the information, such as South Ayrshire's Local Plan or Glasgow City Council's City Plan. This would also overcome the possible issue of compatibility of the data between different GIS software.
2. A paper based plan
   This would be similar to that produced for the Structure Plans and Local Plans.
3. A promotional booklet.
   As this is a pilot project it is important to disseminate the plan and how it was developed to as wide a range of people as possible. This booklet would be written in simple non technical language to enable policy makers, councillors, politicians and interested members of the public to understand the process and the outcomes of Marine Spatial Planning in the Firth of Clyde.

Both the paper based plan and the booklet will also be available in an electronic format such as pdf.

**Implementation**
Once developed, to effect real change, the plan must be implemented. The SSMEI Clyde Pilot Project has been tasked with producing the MSP within an 18 month time frame. This tight timeframe is to enable the project team to focus upon coordinating the implementation of the plan and encouraging adoption by the members of the Steering Group. A review and evaluation of the implementation of the plan will also be carried out before the project completes in July 2009.

**Discussion Points**
The steering group is asked to consider the following questions in relation to the development and implementation of the Local Marine Spatial Plan for the Firth of Clyde:

1. The level of detail within the Firth of Clyde Local MSP is to be guided by regulators and be dependant upon the information available. At what scale should the plan be developed? Should it be similar in scale to a Structure Plan, Local Plan or both?

2. What do the Steering Group see as the key sectors?

3. How will the MSP interface with the current structure and local plans?

4. Should the MSP go through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Process?