



January 2009

Parliamentary Briefing

Marine and Coastal Access Bill Amendment

Timetables for the adoption and publication of the MPS and Marine Plans

The organisations listed above are all members of Wildlife and Countryside Link's Marine Task Force¹, which has been campaigning for several years for improvements in marine conservation and better management of the marine area. We have been closely engaged in the Marine & Coastal Access Bill process for a number of years.

Time limits on the adoption and publication of the MPS and Marine Plans

As currently drafted, there are no time limits put on the relevant policy authorities and the marine plan authorities regarding the period between adoption and publication of the marine policy documents. Instead, the terms "reasonable period" and "as soon as reasonably practicable" are used. But these time periods are not defined anywhere in the Bill.

We are concerned that if no time limits are included in the Marine & Coastal Access Bill, there is the risk that documents could become stuck between adoption and publication and therefore never actually come into effect. Therefore, we believe that Schedules 5 and 6 need to be amended to include time limits for agreement by and between the various authorities. We also believe that any relevant authority that chooses not to adopt the final text should publish their reasons for not doing so.

¹ Wildlife and Countryside Link is a coalition of the UK's major environmental organisations working together for the conservation and protection of wildlife, the countryside and the marine environment.

Annex – Amendments

Marine & Coastal Access Bill House of Lords Committee Stage, January 2009

(i) Time limits for adoption and publication of the MPS

Clause	Schedule 5, paragraph 11 Adoption and publication of the relevant document
Amendment	Page 229, line 20 after “as soon as reasonably practicable” insert “, but not longer than 3 months,”
Amendment	Page 229, line 24: after “reasonable period” insert “, but not longer than 6 months,”
Amendment	Page 229, line 25: at end insert new sub-clause “(3A) should a relevant authority not adopt the final text under subsection 3, that authority must publish their reasons for not doing so.”

(ii) Time limits for adoption and publication of Marine Plans

Clause	Schedule 6, paragraph 15 Adoption and publication of a marine plan
Amendment	Page 236, line 6 after “as soon as reasonably practicable” insert “, but not longer than 3 months,”