

THE ARCHAEOLOGY FORUM

a grouping of independent bodies concerned with archaeology

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APPAG Briefing Marine and Coastal Access Bill

The Archaeology Forum strongly supports the Marine and Coastal Access Bill which will provide a framework for the sustainable management of marine resources and integrated planning and conservation for the marine environment. It includes helpful general provisions for protection of the marine historic environment. Sustainable development principles underpinning the proposed Marine Policy Statement will include consideration of impact on cultural resources; 'environment' for the purpose of marine licensing is defined to include any site of historic or archaeological interest.

Members will recall that it was originally envisaged the Marine Bill would be complemented by new provisions for protecting marine heritage assets in the Heritage Protection Bill, adding a level of protection for individual sites through designation. Now there is no certainty that the Heritage Protection Bill will be taken forward, TAF believes it is essential to ensure there is stronger and more specific consideration of the marine heritage in the Marine and Coastal Access Bill.

There are several areas where APPAG Members could support amendments to strengthen the Bill:

- ❑ Marine heritage and archaeology should be included in the duties of the new Marine Management Organisation;
- ❑ The objectives of the Marine Policy Statement should include protection and management of the marine cultural heritage;
- ❑ Marine Conservation Zones will be subject to a statutory framework for Conservation Objectives and it is important that the scope of these includes the historic aspects of the marine environment, including designated sites such as wrecks;
- ❑ The new Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities should be advised by and work actively with conservation bodies such as English Heritage to coordinate management of marine and coastal heritage.

The Bill is currently being debated at the Committee Stage in the House of Lords. There was a first opportunity to consider amendments to the Bill on 12 January and at least two further debates are scheduled on Wednesday 21 and 28 January. APPAG Members will have an opportunity to strengthen the provisions for protection of heritage and marine archaeology.

Amendment 33 to Clause 2 of the Bill, which is scheduled to be debated on 21 January, will introduce a specific duty for the Marine Management Organisation to have regard for heritage and marine archaeology.

The Forum urges APPAG members to give their support for this amendment and to further amendments on protecting the marine historic environment as they are tabled.

There will be opportunities during later stages of the Bill to introduce other important changes for marine heritage protection and further briefings will follow when the parliamentary timetable is confirmed.

A presentation on the Marine and Coastal Access Bill is planned for the next meeting of APPAG on Tuesday 10 February.

For further information contact:

The Archaeology Forum's members are

*The Association of Local Government
Archaeological Officers UK*

The Council for British Archaeology

The Institute of Conservation

The Institute of Field Archaeologists

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation

The Institute of Conservation

The National Trust

The National Trust for Scotland

Rescue: the British Archaeological Trust

The Society of Antiquaries of London

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

The Standing Conference of Archaeological

Unit Managers

The Society of Museum Archaeologists