

APPENDIX A

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY GROUP

COMMITTEE ROOM 5, WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN

WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE, 2015

- Present:** **Aberdeenshire Council** – Councillors C Buchan, A Norrie, L Pirie and D Stewart
Aberdeen City Council – Councillor J Corall
Angus Council – Councillors L Devine and B Myles
Brodies for Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce – Mr C Phillips
Forestry Commission Scotland – Mr J Nott
James Hutton Institute / University of Aberdeen – Dr L-A Sutherland
Press and Journal – Gemma Mackenzie
RPID – Ms J Kinnaird
RSPB – Mr H Maggs
SAC Consulting - Mr A Laing
Scottish Enterprise – Ms G Ford
Two Mennie Cooks – Mr P Cook (NESAAG Vice Chair)
- Attending:** Mr Roderic Bruce, Quality Pork Ltd; Ms Chantal Fenton, Angus Council; and Ms Elspeth Macdonald, Food Standards Scotland.
- Apologies:** Councillor W Howatson, NESAAG Chair; Councillors A Duncan and K Farquhar, Aberdeenshire Council; Councillor G Alexander, Moray Council; Kyrsten Black, SRUC; Jim Dewar, Forestry Commission; Brian Pack, OBE; Kevin Patrick, LANTRA; David Smart, RICS Representative; Strutt and Parker; and Philip Smith, Visit Scotland.
- Officers:** Derek McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime); James Davidson, Project Officer - Land Use Strategy Pilot; and Victoria McCaskill, Committee Officer.

CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Howatson, the Vice Chair, Peter Cook, chaired the meeting.

1. NOTE OF MEETING OF 28 JANUARY 2015

The Note of Meeting of 28 January, 2015, was circulated and **approved** as a correct record.

2. PRESENTATION - THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCOTTISH QUALITY PORK LTD

The Chair welcomed Roderic Bruce, Chairman of Quality Pork Ltd, to the meeting. Mr Bruce gave a presentation to the Group on the development of Scottish Quality Pork Ltd. The presentation covered:

- background information on the Scottish pig industry;
- the reasons behind the concentration of the Scottish pig industry in North East Scotland;
- how manure and slurry was being used;
- the options available in light of the Broxburn closure;
- background information of the Board, funding and operations at Quality Pork Ltd;
- details of who was responsible for slaughter, cutting and packing;
- an update on construction work at the Brechin abattoir site;

- the schedule for the work running up to the plant becoming fully operational; and
- plans for the future.

During discussion, members asked questions on the working relationship with Tulip; information provision for local residents in Brechin; and where butchering would take place.

Thereafter, the Group **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the information provided in the presentation, and
- (2) to request that a presentation, to provide further information on developments at the Brechin site, be facilitated for the local community in Brechin.

The Chair thanked Mr Bruce for his informative presentation.

3. PRESENTATION - FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND: TRANSITION TO THE FUTURE

The Chair welcomed Elspeth Macdonald, Deputy Chief Executive of Food Standards Scotland, to the meeting. Ms Macdonald gave a presentation to the Group on Food Standards Scotland's transition to the future. The presentation covered:

- background information on the Food Standards Agency and, now, Food Standards Scotland;
- details on the new organisation, including information on the Chair, the Board; and the structure of the organisation;
- the broad objectives for Foods Standards Scotland;
- the values and way for working for Foods Standards Scotland;
- the vision, strategy and future focus for the organisation;
- opportunities going forward;
- contributing to the Scottish Government's priorities;
- working together to deliver better outcomes for consumers and businesses; and
- next steps and priorities for the organisation.

During discussion, members asked questions on the future for genetically modified food; how the organisation can work to promote healthy eating; and enforcement powers.

Thereafter, the Group **agreed** to note the information provided within the presentation.

The Chair thanked Ms Macdonald for her interesting presentation.

4. UPDATE ON COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Jenni Kinnaird, Principal Agricultural Officer for RPID at Thainstone provided the Group with a brief oral update on the processing of payments under Pillars one and two of the Common Agricultural Policy. A new IT system had been launched for rural payments and services. Everyone who had previously been registered was required to register again. The process was almost complete but there had been a number of issues with the system which required ongoing improvements. It was advised that some Pillar two schemes were not available for online applications.

After consideration, the Group **agreed** to note the information provided in the update.

5. BULLETIN REPORT – LAND-BASED STUDY FOR NORTH EAST SCOTLAND

There was circulated a bulletin report dated 25 May 2015, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which advised that the contract for the new study of the land-based sector in North East Scotland had been awarded. The new study was to cover Aberdeenshire, Moray and

Angus. A key part of the study would be to assess the implications of subsidy change and to examine how the sector could become more efficient, market-orientated and embrace change.

Following an Invitation to Quote through the Public Contracts Scotland system, two bids were received. The bid led by Two Mennie Cooks Ltd was accepted. Outputs from the study will include a detailed current assessment of the wider land-based industry; the medium term future (five years); the longer term future; and a list of recommendations for industry, support agencies and local authorities.

It was advised that a meeting would be scheduled for September to present interim findings and that all members of the Group would be welcome to attend.

After consideration, the Group **agreed** to note the information provided within the report.

6. BULLETIN REPORT – PROGRESS UPDATE ON RURAL INTERNSHIP PROJECT

There was circulated a bulletin report dated 25 May 2015, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided information on the background to the Rural Internship Project. It was advised that twelve internship places were available in 2015. The programme was due to start on 8 June and ten candidates had been offered places at the time of writing the report. A small number of candidates were scheduled to be interviewed to fill the remaining places.

Aberdeenshire Council funding was limited to ‘pump priming’ in years one and two of the project. However, following the success of the programme in 2013 and 2014, Ringlink had succeeded in generating sufficient financial support from a number of sources to enable the project to proceed in 2015.

After consideration, the Group **agreed** to note the information provided within the report.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Derek McDonald noted that Bruce Mackie had spoken at the last meeting of the Group on the subject of the dairy sector. Specific questions had been raised about the Council's procurement of dairy products. Mr McDonald advised that Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils' joint procurement service had a proven track record in sourcing local produce for local schools and care homes and operated the Positive Procurement Programme to encourage and support local companies interested in becoming public sector suppliers and help them through the procurement process.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Group was due to take place on Wednesday 18 November, 2015, at 10:00am. However, concerns were raised that this date would clash with an AgriScot meeting. The Group **agreed** that officers would investigate this clash of dates and look at the possibility of rescheduling the next meeting of the Group if required.