

## **NE SCOTLAND FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHP – 13 MAY 2016**

### **INTRODUCTION TO COMMERCIAL FISHING PROJECT UPDATE**

#### **1 Recommendation**

**1.1 It is recommended that the Partnership notes the contents of this report**

#### **2 Discussion**

- 2.1 Supported by Scottish Maritime Academy (SMA), the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF), Seafish and Aberdeenshire Council, the Introduction to Commercial Fishing Project was launched on Friday 30 January, 2015, as two-year pilot to provide local school leavers with a career interest in fishing with a structured introduction to the industry with a view to some of the trainees progressing to undertake a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in Seafishing.
- 2.2 The project comprises a Seafish-approved three-week training course at SMA followed by paid work experience on board a commercial fishing vessel for 6-8 weeks. The costs of training at SMA are borne by Aberdeenshire Council and Seafish. Peterhead Port Authority and Sunderland Marine provide personal protective equipment for the trainees while vessel owners cover trainees' wages and in-kind on-board training costs. SFF engaged with the fishing industry to recruit 'mentor' skippers.
- 2.3 There were fifteen applicants for the twelve trainee places which were allocated after interviews. Successful candidates came from Peterhead, Cruden Bay, Fraserburgh, Sandhaven, Maud, Stuartfield, Drummur, Forres and Edinburgh. Several came from non-fishing families - fulfilling one of the objectives of the project. All trainees completed the SMA training course.
- 2.4 Trainees were then paired up with skippers/vessels for the start of work experience – primarily on whitefish and prawn vessels. Frank Donn, an experienced fisherman and SMA staff member, took responsibility for pastoral care of trainees whilst at sea and maintaining contact with skippers.
- 2.5 The reality of life at sea presented a stiff challenge to all the trainees but for the most part the placements have been a success – with some trainees acquitting themselves extremely well. There have, however, been some disappointments with a small number of trainees losing their berths for basic employability failings such as timekeeping and making themselves available for work or further training. Five trainees – a much higher figure than expected – expressed an interest in undertaking the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in Seafishing after their work placement while one secured a place on a marine engineering course at SMA.
- 2.6 Progress was reviewed with the SFF Marine Safety and Training Officer on 29 April, 2016. The number of trainees undertaking the MA is now three.

However, at least seven trainees are still actively working as fishermen. Keeping up to date on the status of former trainees is challenging given their mobility within and outwith the fleet.

2.7 When the project was being scoped out, a second intake of trainees was planned in June 2016. However, the second intake has been deferred. SMA carried out an evaluation of the three-week safety training and work placement and, although the report concluded that the first phase of the project had exceeded expectations, project partners have agreed a further review is necessary before committing further resources.

2.8 The project has demonstrated:

- a) that there are indeed school leavers/young people, from a non-fishing background, with a career interest in the sector;
- b) the model of structured training and work placement has worked well; and
- c) there are skippers willing to mentor young and inexperienced trainees .

2.9 Project partners are willing to commit further resources to the project. Members will be kept informed of progress

### **3 Financial Equalities and Staffing Implications**

3.1 There are no current staffing or equalities implications. All trainee applications have been/will be considered on their own merits. Financial support from Aberdeenshire Council for the the project was approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 20 September, 2012, as part of the 6 Key Areas project.

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