

## NORTH EAST SCOTLAND FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 10<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 2017

**Present:**

- Aberdeenshire Council** – Councillors A S Buchan, C C Buchan, P K Johnston, F McRae (substitute for Cllr A Allan) and C Nelson (substitute for Cllr Argyle)
- Aberdeen City Council** – Councillors J Corall and A Finlayson
- Moray Council** – Councillors M Howe and G McDonald.
- Members of the Scottish Parliament** – P Chapman
- Members of the European Parliament** – I Hudghton
- Fraserburgh Harbour Commissioners** – T Boyle
- HIE Moray** – Michael Foley
- North East Scotland Fishermen's Training Association** – J Buchan
- Peterhead Port Authority** – S Paterson
- Scottish Enterprise** – G Ford
- Scottish Fishermen's Federation** – B Armstrong
- Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association** – I Gatt
- Scottish Pelagic Producers Association** – I McFadden
- Scottish Seafood Association** – M Bates
- Seafish Industry Authority** – I Land
- Seafood Scotland** – P Hughes

**Apologies:**

Councillors A M Allan and P Argyle - Aberdeenshire Council; Councillors B Crockett and A Malone - Aberdeen City Council; B Bowman MSP; A Burnett MSP; G Dey MSP; M Evans MSP; J Fitzpatrick MSP; L Kerr, L Macdonald MSP; M McDonald MSP; J Marra MSP; G Martin MSP; S Robison MSP; M Rumbles MSP; K Stewart MSP; S Stevenson MSP; R Thomson MSP and M Watt MSP; D Martin MEP; A Smith MEP and C Stihler MEP; A Salmond MP; S Donaldson MP and E Whiteford MP. D Anderson - Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation; W Farquhar – British Boatbuilders Association; M Holmes - HIE Moray; R Stevenson, Lunar Fish Producers Organisation; N Bailey – Marine Scotland Science; L Duguid - North Sea Advisory Council; A Birnie - North East of Scotland Fishermen's Organisation; I Maddox - North & East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group; I Laidlaw - Peterhead Port Authority; D Fordyce - Scottish Enterprise; F Lord and M Morrison - Scottish Fishermen's Federation; J Anderson - Scottish Fishermen's Organisation; L Hope - Scottish Maritime Academy NESCOL; A Wiseman - Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association; D Leiper - Scottish Seafood Association; J Mouat and M Park - Scottish White Fish Producers' Association Ltd; T Pickerell and J Sparks - Scottish Industry Authority;

**Officers:**

D McDonald - Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime);  
Anna Ziarkowska – Assistant Committee Officer.

**In Attendance:**

J Russell – Anderson Solutions (Consulting) Ltd; G Humphries – KIMO UK and K Findlay, Press and Journal.

## **1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In the absence of the Chair, Vice Chair - Ian Gatt welcomed all present to the meeting.

Members were asked if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and no declarations were intimated.

## **2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

In taking decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Partnership agreed, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
  - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - (b) advance equality and opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
  - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (2) to consider, where an equality impact assessment had been provided, its contents and to take those into consideration when reaching a decision.

## **3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 4<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2016**

There had been circulated and was **approved** the Minute of Meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.

## **4. MATTERS ARISING**

Derek McDonald confirmed that the presentations from the previous meeting were available online and that Dr Angus Garrett would attend the future meeting of the Group after the summer to provide update on Brexit implications for fishing industry.

Thereafter, the Vice Chair advised Members about two positive actions since the last meeting: the establishment of the Cross Party Fisheries Working Group at the Scottish Parliament and call for debate on fisheries in the Scottish Parliament.

**Action point 1: Brexit and the UK Fisheries Industry - update to Members at future meeting.**

## **5. PRESENTATION: BREXIT UPDATE BY BERTIE ARMSTRONG, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AT SCOTTISH FISHERMEN'S FEDERATION**

The Group heard a presentation from Bertie Armstrong, CEO of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation on the implications from Brexit for the fishing industry. Mr Armstrong explained that the default position under international law would be the return of control of fishing in the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which he stated would allow control of access for the benefit of the nation. Reference was made to

management change; the need for a co-ordinated approach by the UK governments; that more than half of catches in the UK EEZ were currently by non-UK fishing boats; the UK's strong negotiating position on fisheries; that the UK would become a 'coastal state' in its own right; benefits for local industry and the economy; the continuing need for effective quota allocation, for continuing investment in fisheries infrastructure, sustainability and environmental management; challenges in relation to the need for resources and commitment from UK government, a period of market change, and the need for sufficient access to manpower resources. Brexit was described as a 'sea of opportunity' for the fishing industry with the opportunities strongly outweighing the challenges.

Discussion then followed in relation to the implications of Brexit for fishing and the wider fisheries industry with reference made to control of access, benefits for coastal communities, Brexit negotiations, commitments from the Governments at Holyrood and Westminster, investment in marine research, access to labour; and new infrastructure required to express the economic potential of the opportunity throughout the seafood supply chain.

Mr Gatt thanked Mr Armstrong and the Group **agreed** to note the content of the presentation.

## **6. PRESENTATION: SEAFISH REPORT ON UTILISATION OF 2015 EU FAROE BILATERAL AGREEMENT BY JENNIFER RUSSELL, ANDERSON SOLUTIONS (CONSULTING) LTD**

The Chair introduced Jennifer Russell from Anderson Solutions (Consulting) and invited her to deliver her presentation on the Seafish Report on Utilisation of 2015 EU-Faroe Bilateral Agreement. It was reported that the Seafish Pelagic Industry Issues Group had asked Seafish to undertake an independent analysis of the utilisations by the UK and rest of EU of the 2015 EU-Faroe bilateral agreement and the utilisation of the agreement by Faroe. Ms Russell provided the Group with an overview of the bilateral access arrangements set up in 2015 between EU and Faroe Islands which allowed the latter to catch UK fishing stocks. The Group was given detailed information in respect of the exchange of quota between the two parties and access entitlements under the agreed framework which enables each party to fish for some of their own pelagic quota in the other party's waters. Ms Russell advised that the agreement had disadvantaged the UK economy as – for biological reasons - fish caught in EU waters were of superior quality to that around Faroe; accordingly the Faroese fleet had fully exploited the opportunity and was offering a higher quality product from EU waters than it could offer from its own to markets long- established by EU processors.

Ms Russell indicated that the industry representatives have strong concerns about a perceived lack of fairness and the knock-on impacts of the agreement on Scottish and UK businesses, particularly the processing sector. The report concluded that Faroese vessels' freedom under the bilateral agreement to catch higher quality mackerel from EU waters, when combined by a Faroese Government requirement to sell all Faroese landings to Faroese processors, potentially at below market price, generates an unfair advantage for the Faroese seafood sector. Indeed the value of landings in 2015 under the agreement by Faroese vessels was estimated to be worth £30.5M whereas the value to the EU fleet (from Faroese waters) was £4.8M, with the UK share at £1.9M.

During discussion, Members recommended communicating the research findings to the Governments at Holyrood and Westminster to seek an end to the bilateral agreement, as it has no value for UK.

**Action point 2: NESFDP to lobby Holyrood and Westminster to urge the EU to end the Bilateral Agreement.**

Thereafter, the Group thanked Ms Russell for her interesting presentation and **agreed** to note the content of the presentation.

**7. PRESENTATION: FUNDING PRACTICAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS AFTER EMFF BY GRAHAM HUMPHRIES, NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR AT KIMO UK**

The Group heard a presentation from Mr Graham Humphries – National Co-ordinator at KIMO UK on Funding Practical Environmental Projects after EMFF. Mr Humphries advised that KIMO is the Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation whose primary goal is the elimination of pollution from the Northern Seas. Reference was made to the KIMO objectives and priorities; current action areas including Marine Litter, Nuclear Emissions & Transportation, Pollution from Oil and Gas Industry, Maritime Safety, Dumping at Sea and Hazardous Substance; KIMO UK ongoing projects, programmes and future aims.

Thereafter, Mr Humphries outlined the potential problems with securing project funding beyond 2020 following Brexit. It was reported that local authorities' decreasing budgets in combination with a fall in multi-annual private sector support put significant pressure on KIMO funds. Mr Humphries presented a summary of EMFF funding opportunities currently available, advising that KIMO UK has benefitted greatly from EU support but this will come to an end after Brexit, with little clarity currently on what a future UK maritime support programme might look like. Good forward visibility would be required to avoid a hiatus in work and loss of capacity in the voluntary sector and research.

Following discussion, the Group **agreed** to note the information provided and the Vice Chair thanked Mr Humphries for his presentation.

**8. BULLETIN REPORT ON DEFRA PROPOSALS TO BAN THE USE OF MICROBEADS IN COSMETICS**

There had been circulated a report dated 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 by the Head of Economic Development which provided Members with an overview of the DEFRA proposals to ban the use of plastic microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products in the UK and also to gather evidence on the extent of the environmental impacts of microbeads found in other products to inform future actions to protect the marine environment. Members were informed that consultation closes on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and were invited to provide comments and suggestions to the proposed response by NESFDP which was attached to the report.

After consideration, it was **agreed** that any comments or feedback as to the consultation should be forwarded to Derek McDonald by 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2017.

## **9. BULLETIN REPORT: SCOTTISH SEAFOOD CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE PROJECT**

Derek McDonald provided the Group with a verbal update on the Scottish Seafood Centre of Excellence Project. Project partners include Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, North East Scotland College, Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Seafish, the Scottish Seafood Association, Scottish Fishermen's Federation, Fraserburgh harbour and local seafood businesses, all of whom are committed to delivering the Centre of Excellence. Mr McDonald reported that discussions had been held with various parties, including fishing producer organizations, seafood industry representatives, public agencies and Marine Scotland, to define the scope of the project and how to resource it. Bids to the European Union Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and the Coastal Community Fund had been unsuccessful. Aberdeenshire Council had agreed to fund a business case assessment and procurement exercise was ongoing.

During discussion, the Group agreed that the creation of a Centre of Excellence for the seafood industry in the North East would be beneficial for the sector as a whole – fostering growth in existing businesses and encouraging new enterprises into the area. Mr McDonald advised that Members will be kept informed about the progress at the next meeting of NESFDP.

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

**Action point 3: Scottish Seafood Centre of Excellence Project progress update to Members at next meeting.**

**Action point 4: presentations to be posted on NESFDP webpage and members to be advised accordingly**

## **10. INDUSTRY REPORTS AND ROUND TABLE ROUND-UP**

The Partnership **noted** updates from the industry representatives in respect of their areas of responsibility and interest.

## **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor members noted that it was the last meeting of NESFDP before the local elections in May 2017 which may affect the Group's composition and attendance at future meetings. Elected Members expressed their gratitude to the Group for the many informative presentations over the years and the opportunity to contribute to the work of NESFDP on behalf of the local fisheries sector.

## **12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was **agreed** that the next meeting of the Partnership would take place on a Friday afternoon in September, 2017, with the date to be confirmed.