

FISHERIES WORKING GROUP – 16 MAY 2018

BULLETIN REPORT: SCOTTISH SEAFOOD PROCESSORS FEDERATION

1 Recommendation

1.1 It is recommended that the Group notes the content of this bulletin.

2 Discussion

- 2.1 On 23rd April 2018, on the eve of the Brussels Seafood Expo, the news was announced that the Scottish Seafood Association, Scottish Pelagic Processors Association and several large independent seafood processors had agreed unanimously to form an overarching Federation to represent the sector and to foster unity, strength and common interests.
- 2.2 The Scottish Seafood Processors Federation (SSPF) will represent approximately 100 businesses of all sizes, employing thousands of people across Scotland, many in rural locations. The news release cited recent Scottish seafood sector statistics including sales of £1.207 billion and approximately 5,000 onshore employees. Several seafood processing companies in NE Scotland each employ many hundreds of staff.
- 2.3 High operating costs are a major concern for the industry and are impacting adversely upon profitability, even amongst the largest and most efficient companies. One of the main drivers for the creation of the Federation is understood to be impact of the recent non-domestic rates revaluation (business rates) but increasing staff costs (living wage, pensions) are clearly also a factor. The new Federation plans to engage more effectively with and challenge Government to provide legislation, policies and support to create a business environment more conducive to growth. SSPF also commits to engaging with young people and new entrants to promote seafood industry careers.
- 2.4 Despite current challenges, the SSPF news release commented that - with the support of Government - a more competitive business platform could be created to help the wider Scottish seafood processing industry grow locally, nationally and internationally and play its part in delivering Ambition 2030, Scottish Government's ambitious targets to grow the value of the country's food and drinks industry to £30Bn by 2030.
- 2.5 A measure of the significance of this development could be inferred from the statements of support from major players such as Macduff Shellfish, Thistle Seafoods, Joseph Robertson (Aberdeen) Ltd., as well as from the Scottish Seafood Association (SSA) and the Scottish Pelagic Processors' Association. Jimmy Buchan, SSA CEO, will extend his role to head up the SSPF as interim CEO and will attend a future meeting of Fisheries Working Group to provide further information.

3 Scheme of Governance

Fisheries Working Group is able to consider this item in terms of its remit to provide a focus to enable issues and concerns across the wider fisheries sector in Aberdeenshire to be addressed.

4 Implications and Risk

- 4.1 There are no equality impact implications arising from this report
- 4.2 There are no staffing and financial implications for the council arising from this report.
- 4.3 No risks arising from this report have been identified for the council at Corporate Level
- 4.4 No issues have been identified in relation to the Town Centre First Principle

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