

FISHERIES WORKING GROUP

BUCHAN HOUSE, PETERHEAD

WEDNESDAY, 15 MAY 2019

- Present:** Councillors I Sutherland (Chair), C C Buchan, M Findlater, S W Smith, D Mair (sub for A Kille); A Allan; Cllr Beagrie (sub for M Roy); P Johnston
- Apologies:** Cllr M Roy (Cllr D Beagrie deputising); Cllr A Kille (Cllr D Mair deputising)
- Officer:** Derek McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural and Maritime);

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. Interests were intimated by Cllr Beagrie (NESFLAG support for Peterhead Seafood Festival), Cllr Iain Sutherland (Peterhead Business Improvement District) and Cllr Doreen Mair (Fraserburgh Harbour Commissioner in respect of NESFLAG support for Harbour projects)

2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In making decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Working Group **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 of 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.
- (2) where an Equality Impact Assessment was provided, to consider its contents and take those into account when reaching their decision.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 23rd January 2019

The Minute was **agreed** as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were four action points from the last meeting. Derek McDonald provided a progress update on each point. There were no further matters arising.

The meeting was preceded by a visit to view the Kings Cross pelagic vessel. Members voiced their appreciation to Alex Wiseman for making time available to conduct the tour and answer their questions.

Action point 1: Derek McDonald to contact Alex Wiseman to offer members' thanks.

5. REPORT: REVIEW OF FISHERIES WORKING GROUP

There had been circulated a report dated 7 May 2019 by the Head of Economic Development which advised Members that five council Working Groups managed by Economic Development Officers (including Fisheries Working Group) were under review, in part due to a reduced level of Committee Officer support due to an increase in other commitments and which had led to additional work for Economic Development officers. Furthermore a review of Fisheries Working Group (and Rural Affairs Working Group) had not been undertaken for some time (whereas there are regular reviews of NE Scotland Fisheries Development Partnership (NESFDP) and NE Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group (NESAAG), all of which are managed by Derek McDonald.

The report invited members to consider the following future options for FWG:

- a) Integrate FWG into NESFDP**
- b) Reduce the frequency of FWG meetings (currently 3 per annum)**
- c) Make alternative proposals**
- d) No change**

Members commented that stopping FWG would send the wrong message to coastal communities at this particular time; that the group provides a useful two-way communication channel with industry and coastal communities; that NESFDP is a wider and very different body to FWG and that NESFDP's view (eg in consultation responses such as the Economic Link to Fishing) does not always reflect the view of the council; that subsuming FWG into NESFDP could dilute the views of the council and that there was a definite need for FWG to inform Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC) on fisheries matters. Other members noted that FWG needed to be proactive and could play a useful role in devising a strategy to cover the whole seafood supply chain.

In conclusion, there was a clear and unanimous wish on the part of members for FWG to continue in its current form and with the same number of meetings per year. All agreed a recommendation should go forward to ISC for the group to be maintained and for Committee Officer support to be provided.

Action point 2: Derek McDonald to advise the Head of Economic Development and the Principal Committee Services Officer of members' views

6. BULLETIN: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FUTURE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION PAPER

There had been circulated a Bulletin report dated 7 May 2019 by the Head of Economic Development which summarised the discussion paper issued by Scottish Government on the high-level principles on future fisheries management in Scotland, following on from the input gathered from industry and stakeholders since November 2017. The discussion paper covered a broad range of issues including seafood levy raised in Scotland, Regional inshore fisheries groups, Scottish representation in international negotiations, marine science and its role in setting sustainable catch quotas, the merits of applying zonal attachment, fairer access to fishing opportunities, and the use of technology in fisheries management.

There was general agreement that the discussion document aligned broadly with the view of FWG and members suggested a letter should be sent to Scottish Government reaffirming its

support. Members also commented on the need for science and industry to work more closely together to reach consensus on fish stocks and catch quotas in order to reduce the need for political influence and intervention in decision-making and for the voice of the industry in NE Scotland to be heard at UK and Scottish level.

Action point 3: Derek McDonald to write to Scottish Government to convey FWG comments in response to Future Fisheries Management Discussion Paper

7. NESFLAG UPDATE

There had been circulated a NESFLAG Programme Update by Jamie Wilkinson, NESFLAG Coordinator, which provided a useful summary (as of May 2019) of all approved projects, their value and a brief description. The report also set out programme's overall priorities, budget and funds remaining.

Members were appreciative of the geographic and sectoral range of projects supported by NESFLAG. Several individual projects were described and discussed and their value in building community assets and capacity noted. Members commented that as the programme was entering its closing phase, plans were required for a successor programme to maintain momentum. Members were advised of the work currently underway by Marine Scotland to evaluate the current EMFF and FLAG programmes and learn lessons to improve the effectiveness of any future programme. It was agreed that a letter be prepared in consultation with the NESFLAG Coordinator in support of a similar programme post-Brexit.

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

Action point 4: Derek McDonald to liaise with NESFLAG Coordinator on letter of support

8. BULLETIN: VERBAL UPDATES

Verbal updates were provided on the proposed Southern Trench Marine Protected Area, on the Future-proofing Fisheries Study, on the forthcoming Scottish Skipper Expo (17-18 May 2019), on the Scottish Seafood Centre of Excellence project and on 'Changing Tides', the new Seafood Scotland Strategy and the Future-proofing fisheries study.

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

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members were invited to consider options for the next meeting of the group in September. A visit to Macduff was suggested to view the new ice machine at Macduff Harbour and also the renovations at the Macduff Marine Aquarium. A tour of NESFLAG-funded projects was also proposed for a future meeting.

Action point 5: Derek McDonald to arrange next meeting/site visits

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 10am on 11 September 2019 in Banff/Macduff (tbc)

