

## **BULLETIN: FISHERIES WORKING GROUP – 29 JANUARY 2020**

### **FUNDING OF VOLUNTARY TRAINING FOR FISHERMEN**

#### **1 Recommendation**

##### **1.1 It is recommended that the Group notes this bulletin**

#### **2 Background / Discussion**

- 2.1 Safety training for the Scottish fishing industry has been funded since 2014 by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), co-financed by Scottish Government. Coordinated at UK level by Seafish (the project funding applicant) safety training has been delivered north of the border by a range of Scottish providers. Seafish reimbursed providers' costs and covered administrative oncosts from EMFF grant payments. The final application from Seafish under the EMFF programme (in 2018) for such funding in Scotland was reduced as it was unaffordable within the remaining EMFF allocation for such measures. However when EMFF funding ran out in June 2019, a further £200,000 was provided by Scottish Government funding to deliver additional training until December 2019, by which time it was hoped that new long-term arrangements would be in place.
- 2.2 Concerns were raised as 2019 drew to a close with little visibility of how fishermen's training could continue in Scotland in the absence of a state aid-compliant funding mechanism. In September the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy approved further funding to support the work of the newly formed Scottish Fisheries Safety Group (SFSG) which was actively involved in discussions with Seafish and others to identify the best approach to continue to deliver fishing industry safety training in Scotland. Aberdeenshire Council maintained close contact with Marine Scotland, Seafish, the Scottish Maritime Academy and SFSG at this time and was advised that the political will to sustain safety training was not in doubt, but that finding a legal basis which complied with state aid rules was a challenge. Marine Scotland advised at that time that Scottish Government had provided some £1.5m since 2016 to fund safety training as project co-finance.
- 2.3 On 3 December 2019 Simon Potten, Head of Safety and Training at Seafish advised that their request for £250,000 stop-gap funding from the Department for Transport Trust Fund had been approved. This would enable Seafish to continue to fund fishermen's training in England and Scotland after 31 December 2019 for three months while a longer-term solution could be found under the new Maritime & Fisheries Funds in the UK. Mr Potten advised that the £250,000 would be split equally between Scotland and England initially but that progress would be reviewed in early March 2020 to assess whether a re-allocation would be necessary. Mr Potten went on to advise that new conditions would be imposed to ensure prudent financial management and value for money:

- a) a requirement that all new entrants must first complete the 3-day Introduction to Commercial Fishing course and then gain practical fishing experience before the release of funding for trainees to progress on to the remainder of the 3-week ICF course. This is intended to minimise money wasted on training new entrants who then decide fishing is not for them.
- b) The introduction of a cap on the funding total that any one trainee can draw down during this period (Set at around £2,000)

2.4 Members will be kept apprised of progress.

2.5 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

### 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

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities		x	
Fairer Scotland Duty		x	
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability		x	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

**Belinda Miller**  
**Head of Economic Development and Protective Services**

Report by Derek McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime)  
21 January 2020