



FISHERIES WORKING GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2021 at 10.00am

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the FISHERIES WORKING GROUP to be held by Microsoft TEAMS on Wednesday 22 September 2021 at 10.00

14 September 2021

Director of Business Services

To: Councillors I Sutherland (Chair), A Allan, C Buchan, M Findlater, P Johnston, D Beagrie, M Roy and D Mair

Contact Person:-

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B U S I N E S S

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest
2. Statement on Equalities:
Consider, and if so decided, adopt: "In line with the Council's legal duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 the Committee, in making decisions on the attached reports, shall have due regard to the need to":-
 - (i) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (ii) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (iii) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
3. Minute of Meeting of 26 May 2021 **(Pages 4-7)**
4. Matters Arising
5. Presentation: An overview of fishing opportunities in 2021 for the Scottish demersal fleet by David Anderson, Chief Executive, Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation
6. Presentation: The post-Brexit reality for the Scottish seafood processing sector by Jimmy Buchan, Chief Executive, Scottish Seafood Association
7. Bulletin: Public Funds for Fishing and Seafood sectors **(Pages 8-11)**
8. Bulletin: Evaluations of Community Led Local Development programmes **(Pages 12-20)**
9. Bulletin: Seaweed Project **(Pages 21-22)**
10. Verbal updates:
 - Scottish Seafood Centre of Excellence project
 - Opportunity North East Seafood Transformation Project
11. Any Other Business
12. Next meeting (to be arranged): December 2021 or January 2022?

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY – GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS

What is the duty?

In making decisions on the attached reports, Members are reminded of their legal duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:-

- (i) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- (ii) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (iii) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The “protected characteristics” under the legislation are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; and (in relation to point (i) above only) marriage and civil partnership.

How can Members discharge the duty?

To ‘have due regard’ means that in making decisions, Members must consciously consider the need to do the three things set out above. This requires a conscious approach and state of mind. The duty must influence the final decision.

However, it is not a duty to achieve a particular result (e.g. to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination or to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups). It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve these goals.

How much regard is ‘due’ will depend upon the circumstances and in particular on the relevance of the needs to the decision in question. The greater the relevance and potential impact that a decision may have on people with protected characteristics, the higher the regard required by the duty.

What does this mean for Committee/Full Council decisions?

Members are directed to the section in reports headed ‘Council Priorities, Implications and Risk’. This will indicate whether or not an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals and, if so, what the outcome of that assessment is.

An IIA will be appended to a report where it is likely, amongst other things, that the action recommended in the report could have a differential impact (either positive or negative) upon people from different protected groups. The report author will have assessed whether or not an IIA is required. If one is not required, the report author will explain why that is.

Where an IIA is provided, Members should consider its contents and take those into account when reaching their decision. Members should also be satisfied that the assessment is sufficiently robust and that they have enough of an understanding of the issues to be able to discharge their legal duty satisfactorily.

For more detailed guidance please refer to the following link:-

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/psed_technical_guidance_scotland.doc

FISHERIES WORKING GROUP

MICROSOFT TEAMS MEETING

WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 2021

Present: Councillors I Sutherland (Chair), A Allan, C C Buchan, M Findlater, D Beagrie, P Johnston, M Roy and D Mair

Apologies: None

Officers: Derek McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural and Maritime); John Grant, Team Manager (Public Health), Catriona Arthur, Healthy Lifestyle Advisor, Alistair Reid, Team Manager, Economic Development & Protective Services; June Burnett and Suzanne Robertson, Business Development Executives, Jamie Wilkinson, NESFLAG Programme Co-ordinator

In attendance: Kenny Coull, Fisheries Policy Officer, SWFPA and Sandy Garvock, Peterhead Mission Port Officer

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest in relation to the Councillors' Code of Conduct,

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 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

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

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were four action points from the last meeting, all of which were covered in the agenda.

5. PRESENTATION: 2021 TACs by KENNY COULL, FISHERIES POLICY OFFICER, SCOTTISH WHITEFISH PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Mr Coull opened his presentation with an overview of SWFPA membership and services, followed by slides showing tonnage and value of landings since 2010 for pelagic, demersal and shellfish vessels in Scotland, current draft advice from ICES for main species in 2021 and

the annual cycle which underpins the process of setting Total Allowable Catches (TACs). The UK's departure from the EU has resulted in new processes for shared stocks. No agreement was reached between UK/Norway and UK/Faroe, meaning fishing vessels will be denied reciprocal access to waters in 2021. Negotiations continue between UK/EU although broad agreement has already been reached. Quota constraints seem inevitable during 2021 for several species of importance to the Scottish demersal fleet. Mr Coull concluded with a nature conservation update, summarising SWFPA's support for the creation of new Marine Protected Areas and Special Protected Areas and reserves, in consultation with the fishing industry, and the importance of investment in fisheries science and analysis to ensure TACs accurately reflect the actual abundance and (more northerly) distribution of commercial species. Mr Coull then fielded questions from members on the impact of non-agreement upon Norwegian and Faroese vessels, on pelagic TACs, quota/access swaps, the influence of NGOs, MPAs and on the science underpinning catching opportunities and how it is interpreted. The Chair then expressed members' thanks for his highly detailed and insightful presentation.

6. VERBAL UPDATE: UPDATE ON EXPORT HEALTH CERTIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS IN ABERDEENSHIRE by JOHN GRANT, TEAM MANAGER, PUBLIC HEALTH AND ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE, ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

Further to previous presentations to the Group, Mr Grant advised that the council's Environmental Health (EH) Service had experienced very strong demand for Export Health Certificates (EHCs) since the introduction in January of the new arrangements for EU seafood exports (844 EHCs to date) with a further 203 to 'third countries' and 90 to China and Australia, making Aberdeenshire the busiest local authority for seafood exports by far. Pelagic exports figured strongly. Most demand arises from larger companies exporting full lorryloads, with the value of individual consignments often exceeding £100,000. EH staff resources – 5 certifying officers, 5 certifying support officers and 3 in administrative support - were fully stretched. The new EH office at Peterhead Port Authority was working very well. Mr Grant explained the process by which exporters obtain EHCs and noted inconsistencies were still being experienced at the EU border, though no loads certified by the council had been rejected. Mr Grant concluded by indicating that documentary checks would commence at UK Border Control Points on seafood imports from the EU in October 2021, with physical checks from 1 January 2022. Mr Grant then answered questions from members, following which the Chair expressed the group's thanks for his helpful update.

7. JOINT PRESENTATION: THE WORK OF THE FISHERMENS MISSION IN ABERDEENSHIRE BY SUPERINTENDENT SANDY GARVOCK, PETERHEAD MISSION PORT OFFICER AND THE SEAFIT PROGRAMME BY CATRIONA ARTHUR, HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ADVISOR, ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

Mr Garvock opened the joint presentation by advising that the Fishermen's Mission, which was established 140 years ago, currently operates out of 37 offices around the UK, of which 15 are in Scotland. Its role is to provide financial, physical, medical and pastoral support to fishermen. The Mission works closely with other charities to achieve its aims. Based at the Peterhead office of the Mission, which has functioned in the town for 100 years, Mr Garvock described the range and extent of demand for the services of the Mission, currently at high levels due largely to financial worries arising from the quota-related reduction in fishing opportunities. Mr Garvock, a former fisherman himself, noted and welcomed the recent increase in the number of fishermen willing to acknowledge and discuss mental health concerns at an early stage,

which provides an opportunity to intervene positively. This is in contrast to earlier times when issues went unspoken and alcohol and substance abuse often ensued. Examples were given on the types of tangible support provided (eg grants for white goods) and also the extent to which the Mission had facilitated the vaccination of over 300 fishermen whose irregular working patterns made it difficult to fit with the usual appointment system, many of whom were international fishermen. The latter group was also adversely affected by CV-19 related travel restrictions, with their transit visas expiring but no way of returning home. Mr Garvock's presentation drew many questions and offers of help from members, along with unanimous appreciation of the vital service it provides.

The Chair then invited Catriona Arthur, Healthy Lifestyle Advisor with Live Life Aberdeenshire to present an overview of the Seafit Programme, a joint initiative involving the Seafarers Hospital Society and the Fishermen's Mission to deliver improved health and wellbeing amongst fishermen and their families following a report by the Seafarers charity in 2018. The report noted that fishing is the UK's most dangerous occupation, that work can be irregular, unpredictable and financially insecure and that fishing communities often experience high levels of deprivation but are reticent to ask for help. Ms Arthur gave examples of poor lifestyle and dietary choices often found amongst fishermen and their families. Seafit aims to strengthen communication links with fishermen and offers a wide range of accessible support and advice to help improve physical and mental wellbeing. Ms Arthur's presentation also resonated strongly with members who expressed their support and offered their assistance.

Action point 1: Contact to be maintained with Mr Garvock and Ms Arthur and assistance offered as required

8. BULLETIN: MARINE FUND SCOTLAND (MFS)

Members were advised of MFS, the first phase of the replacement fund for EMFF, which was launched on 20 March 2021 with a budget allocation of £14M for financial year 2021/22. The bulletin summarised the main criteria for MFS funded project which applicants will require to address. Further updates will follow as the programme progresses.

Action Point 2: Future updates on MFS to be provided to members

9. BULLETIN: EFRA REPORT: SEAFOOD AND MEAT EXPORTS TO THE EU

Members were provided with a bulletin summarising the main findings of the Westminster Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee following a 'call for evidence' and investigation into the new procedures under which UK food is exported to the EU post-Brexit. The Committee was sharply critical of the asymmetrical trading arrangements between the UK and EU and vice versa (strongly favouring EU suppliers for 12 months) and on the inadequate testing of the UK's new IT export systems prior to 'going live' on 1 January 2021.

10. VERBAL UPDATES

Brief verbal updates were then provided on representations to government in relation to structural funds for fisheries, the Scottish Seafood Centre of Excellence project, the ONE Seafood Transformation Project, the forthcoming meeting of NESFDP and the review of Fisheries Working Group, under which a minimum of two virtual meetings per annum will be held until further notice.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Virtual meeting to be arranged

FISHERIES WORKING GROUP ACTION POINTS 26 MAY 2021

- 1: Contact to be maintained with Mr Garvock and Ms Arthur and assistance offered as required**
- 2: Future updates on Marine Fund Scotland to be provided to members**
- 3: Date of next meeting to be arranged**

FISHERIES WORKING GROUP – 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

BULLETIN: PUBLIC FUNDS FOR THE FISHING AND SEAFOOD SECTORS

1 Recommendation

1.1 It is recommended that members note this report

2 Discussion

2.1 At the prior meeting of Fisheries Working Group on 26 May, a bulletin was presented setting out details of the **Marine Fund Scotland** (MFS) which was launched in March 2021 with a £14M budget for 2021/22 for the first phase in Scotland of the replacement programme for EMFF, the EU scheme which committed over £96M to fisheries and maritime interests in Scotland since opening in 2016. £14M is broadly consistent with the average annual EMFF spend for the period 2014-2020. All MFS phase 1 projects must be completed by 31 March 2022, leaving little time for applicants to prepare applications, deliver outcomes and draw down grant support in full by the deadline. Key priorities of MFS are as follows:

- Delivering a low carbon blue economy which contributes to our climate change targets and helps sustain and enhance the natural capital in Scotland's seas.
- Contributing to an innovative, globally competitive, sustainable blue economy with quality jobs and fair work for its participants.
- Fair and inclusive growth that maximises opportunities for people and communities in Scotland.

As was the case for EMFF, large businesses (non-SMEs) are not eligible to apply for MFS support in phase 1. Further details are available at <https://www.gov.scot/policies/marine-and-fisheries-grants/>

2.2 At the time of writing, eleven projects have so far been approved for MFS support, with grant awards totalling £2.83M to date towards eligible project costs of £3.35M. The range of supported projects includes fishing stocks data gathering, support for new entrants to fishing, on-board safety, seafood processing investments and sectoral marketing activity undertaken by Seafood Scotland. Further details are attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. It is to be hoped that future phases of MFS will be multi-year programmes to facilitate strategic investments and that UK State Aid rules will allow larger businesses/major employers to apply. The Chancellor's statement in November 2021 is likely to have a strong bearing on the next phase of MFS.

2.3 The UK Fisheries Bill received Royal Assent on 24 November 2020 and empowers UK Government to fund a wide range of fisheries projects. On 24 December 2020 details of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement were published, accompanied by a statement from the Prime Minister that £100M would be made available by the UK Government to invest in the industry. On September 11, 2021, details of the **UK Seafood Fund** were announced, specifically **Pillar 1: Science and Innovation**, which is intended to foster

Selected EU Member States	EMFF share	€M total 2021-27	€ M per annum 2021-27
Spain	19.6%	1307.32	186.8
France	10.3%	687.01	98.1
Italy	9.5%	633.65	90.5
Poland	9.3%	620.31	88.6
Total		6670	952.9

Members will be updated as further details emerge of fisheries industry funding schemes from both UK and Scottish governments.

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		x	
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability		x	
Children & Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

Paul Macari
Head of Service: Planning and Economy

Report by Derek McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime), 13 September 2021

Appendix 1: Marine Fund Scotland

Project funding awarded to date 2021/22

Ref. no.	Applicant	Project title	Total cost	Grant awarded
SCOMFF1114	Solway firth Partnership	Solway Marine Litter Project	£41,060.56	£ 38,260.56
SCOMFF1128	Private individual	New entrant	£100,000.00	£50,000.00
SCOMFF1132	Private individual	New entrant	£100,000.00	£50,000.00
SCOMFF1135	Tranquility Fishing Company Limited	Skirt Net	£28,900.00	£14,450.00
SCOMFF1136	Seafish	Fisher Training	£280,000.00	£140,000.00
SCOMFF1159	Davlin Fishing Company Limited	Upgrade of on-board facilities to enhance quality and reduce carbon footprint	£111,489.00	£55,744.50
SCOMFF1160	MEF	Independent Fisheries Science Support Scheme	£357,466.98	£357,466.98
SCOMFF1197	Private individual	New entrant	£40,000.00	£30,000.00
SCOMFF1212	SWFPA	Defibrillators for SWFPA members	£80,200.00	£80,200.00
SCOMFF1110	Messrs George Downie	Construction of dry goods store and installation of Freezer	£412,078.00	£206,039.00
SCOMFF1104	Seafood Scotland	Market Recovery 2021-22	£1,806,474.96	£1,806,474.96

Total MFS award value to date:£2.83M

Total value of projects supported to date:£3.35M

FISHERIES WORKING GROUP – 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

BULLETIN: EVALUATIONS OF COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (CLLD) PROGRAMMES

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to update the Group on the evaluation of the Aberdeenshire CLLD programmes, principally NESFLAG.

2 Recommendations

The Group is recommended to:

2.1 Note the findings of the evaluations of the North and South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategies

3 Purpose and Decision-Making Route

- 3.1 CLLD programmes such as Leader and NESFLAG aim to provide ‘bottom up’ support in rural communities by providing funding to partnerships of community, private and public representatives known as Local Action Groups (LAGs/FLAGs) to deliver a place-based Local Development Strategy (LDS).
- 3.2 Aberdeenshire Council acts as ‘Accountable Body’ for two LDS programmes – one for North Aberdeenshire and one for South Aberdeenshire. It also acts as ‘Lead Partner’ for the North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG) which received an allocation of funds from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).
- 3.5 Two separate evaluations were carried out – one for the [North Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy](#) and one for the [South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy](#). The geography of the former covers approximately the Banff and Buchan, Buchan and Formartine Administrative Areas and the latter the Garioch, Kincardine and Mearns and Marr Administrative Areas, excluding the Cairngorms National Park.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 Following a procurement exercise by the Council, EKOS Ltd was appointed by the Council to carry out an external evaluation of the North and South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategies. **The main findings of the evaluation are set out below.**
- 4.1.1 **Programme commitment and spend took longer than anticipated**, with a hiatus in new grant allocations following the EU referendum in 2016 and the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 having impacts, respectively. Overall, the majority of programme budgets have been committed and spent.

- 4.1.2 **The programmes have funded a good mix of projects aligned to their five strategic priorities.** Where there were limited ‘challenge fund’ bids received in certain priority areas, the Local Action Groups filled these gaps by directly commissioning projects.
- 4.1.3 **The blended approach between a competitive challenge fund and commissioning of project to address gaps in delivery was viewed a sensible approach.** Appendix 1 to this report provides an overview of the projects ultimately supported by the NESFLAG programme. Commissioned projects were generally administered by Aberdeenshire Council as the Accountable Body on behalf of the Local Action Groups.
- 4.1.4 **There are well-established processes and systems in place that support the administration of the Programmes,** including a systematic and robust application process involving assessment against appropriate criteria. The two-stage process involves an initial Expression of Interest (EOI) followed by a project application. This was assessed as a sensible approach so as to filter out unsuitable projects before significant resources are spent on developing full applications.
- 4.1.5 **However, challenges were identified with the efficacy of the application process,** namely that:
- **the application process was considered to be too onerous and complex** (particularly for Leader)
 - **a one-size-fits-all approach lacks proportion** (i.e., single application process for projects seeking funding regardless of amount of funding sought)
 - the application process was considered **more suitable for larger organisations** or those with paid staff and acted as a barrier for smaller organisations;
 - **significant hand-holding support was required** for many (smaller) applicants – for example by the Programme team, by local support agencies, and/or by external consultants.
- 4.1.6 **The evaluation also noted that other parts of the process were viewed as complex,** such as procurement, claims, changes requests and audit (and the online system used for applications/claims).
- 4.1.7 **The Programme team were said to be committed, effective and efficient** – both in terms of their role in supporting the Local Action Groups, but also in terms of the support provided to applicants for project funding (“critical friend”) and to project sponsors once projects have been approved. There was positive feedback provided by Local Action Groups, members, and applicants regarding the support funding applicants received at different stages in the process.

4.1.8 **The evaluation found that there are well-established processes and systems for governance, decision-making, finance and administration.** Aberdeenshire Council was felt to be an appropriate Lead Partner, with a long track record of fulfilling this function, and considerable expertise of managing and delivering EU-funded programmes (and managing the associated risks that this funding can bring). The evaluation concluded that the Council has fulfilled its administrative and financial duties and obligations efficiently and effectively.

4.1.9 **The Local Action Groups were also considered to operate effectively.** Here, there was particularly positive feedback regarding:

- the commitment and engagement of members;
- the diversity of sectors, skills, perspectives and experience round the table; and
- the spirit of goodwill and openness.

4.1.10 **Performance against targets was assessed as good**, with the caveat that project sponsors will have likely interpreted Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in different ways. As such, there is likely to be a lack of consistency in terms of what and how data is collected. Furthermore, many of the projects were still “live” at the time of evaluation, and in many cases, impacts are not expected to be achieved until a few years down the line.

4.1.11 Primary research, carried out by the consultants with grant recipients, found **further evidence of impact and legacy**, including:

- **Internal organisational benefits**
 - improved financial planning;
 - increased knowledge of funding sources;
 - developed new partnerships;
 - strengthened existing partnerships, and
 - improved project planning skills.
- **Economic benefits/impacts**
 - increased visits to facilities/attractions;
 - creation of new products or services; and
 - development or enhancement of community facilities;
- **Social, cultural or environmental benefits/impacts**
 - enhanced cultural heritage, tourism and leisure activities; and

- local residents and businesses having access to improved services and infrastructure.
- Very **high levels of additionality** associated with the project funding from LEADER/ European Maritime and Fisheries Fund; and
- All grant recipients reported that their project would have **a lasting legacy** for the development of rural and/or coastal communities within Aberdeenshire.

4.1.12 Feedback from grant recipients and stakeholders was that **the funding has made a real difference**, and that it has stimulated the development of rural, coastal and fishing communities, specifically:

- the **enhancement of community facilities** (e.g., new, renovation, expansion);
- **ensuring buildings have a productive use(s)** and future-proofing community assets;
- local people (and visitors) having access to **improved (or new) cultural heritage, tourism and leisure provision**, stimulating the local economy;
- **business and social enterprise development** that leads to a vibrant local economy, improved infrastructure, job creation and volunteer engagement; and
- increased **income generation opportunities** that help enhance financial sustainability, resulting from:
 - delivering more and better products/services;
 - reconfiguring buildings to improve use of space, increasing capacity and/or improving overall flexibility, versatility and functionality of buildings/spaces;
 - attracting more customers/users;
 - catering for wider uses;
 - business expansion;
 - creation of retail outlets;
 - business diversification, entering new markets; and
 - building networks and partnerships for the long-term.

4.1.13 With regards to any **future Community Led Local Development programmes**, strong support was expressed for the underpinning principles of a Community Led Local Development bottom-up approach, the Local Action Group model, and flexible and responsive area-based Local Development Strategies . A decentralised approach was favoured, recognising the importance of local democracy and decision-making and clear divisions of roles and responsibilities between key national and local actors. There was also support for long-term multi-annual funding (more than the current seven years) for stability, continuity, security and for lasting change and impact to be achieved. Such an approach was viewed to also support better planning and programming.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 The following Council priorities are relevant to this report:

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Education Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Infrastructure Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economy & Enterprise

The LEADER and EMFF programmes have helped to deliver a wide range of projects which support the above Council priorities and it is anticipated that any replacement funding will continue to do so.

5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed:

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	

5.3 An integrated impact assessment is not required because the evaluation of the LEADER programme does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.

5.4 The staffing and financial implications of this report are that the Council presently employs 2 FTE Co-ordinators and 1 FTE Claims Officer to support the

work of the (F)LAGs. The Scottish Government has indicated that funding will be made available for LEADER-related work until at least 31 March 2021. Until such time as the work is quantified, staff are working part-time on the LEADER programme and part-time on other funding programmes for which administration/capacity funding has been secured (e.g. Aberdeenshire Coastal Communities Challenge Fund; Levelling Up Fund).

5.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a [Corporate Level](#):

- ACORP001 - Budget Pressures
- ACORP005 - Working with other organisations (e.g. supply chains, outsourcing and partnership working)

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a [Strategic Level](#):

- BSSR003 - We live within our means and use public money to maximise outcomes for our communities

6 Scheme of Governance

6.1 The Group is able to consider this item in terms of Section F7.4. of part 2A of the Council's Scheme of Governance 'to form working groups or other groups and hold meetings as necessary in order to fulfil its remit' as the programmes in question are managed by Economic Development and Protective Services.

Paul Macari, Head of Service – Planning & Environment

Report prepared by Martin Brebner, Team Manager – Economic Strategy & Policy
14 September 2021

List of Appendices –

Appendix 1 – Projects Supported (EMFF only)

APPENDIX 1 – PROJECTS SUPPORTED (EMFF)

Fund	Project	Recipient	Grant (North)	Grant (South)	Area(s)
EMFF	Buchanhaven Boat Shed	Buchanhaven Harbour	£28,568.89	£0	B
EMFF	Coatings Removal UHP Multi-Worker	Davidsons Marine and Industrial Painters	£67,488.60	£0	B
EMFF	Leisure-Commercial Pontoons at Port Henry Marina, Peterhead	Peterhead Port Authority	£44,176.19	£0	B
EMFF	Peterhead Seafood Festival 2019*	Rediscover Peterhead Ltd	£31,173.50	£0	B
EMFF	Seafood Training Centre	Scottish Seafood Association	£60,147.36	£0	B
EMFF	Aquarium Touch Pool and Interpretation Upgrade	Aberdeenshire Council	£32,315.58	£0	BB
EMFF	Banff Harbour Improvements	Aberdeenshire Council	£65,713.80	£0	BB
EMFF	Enabling Works to Enhance Access for Vessels at Pennan Harbour	Pennan Harbour Trust	£20,938.00	£0	BB
EMFF	Fish Landing & Catch Quality facilities improvements.	Rosehearty Harbour and Inshore Fisherman's Association	£69,576.64	£0	BB
EMFF	Fish Market Ice and Chill	Whitehills Inshore Fishermen's Association	£41,354.40	£0	BB
EMFF	Insulated Mackerel Bins	North East Creel & Line Association	£9,970.20	£0	BB

Fund	Project	Recipient	Grant (North)	Grant (South)	Area(s)
EMFF	Modular Access Towers for Vessels at Shiplift	Fraserburgh Harbour	£55,500.00	£0	BB
EMFF	New Corrosion Protection Equipment for the Fishing Industry	PBP Services	£36,346.76	£0	BB
EMFF	New Materials Handler for Inshore Fleet	Fraserburgh Harbour	£41,210.50	£0	BB
EMFF	Peartree Coffee House & Bistro	Peartree Fraserburgh Ltd	£29,073.30	£0	BB
EMFF	Portsoy Traditional Boatbuilder*	Portsoy Community Enterprise	£43,168.00	£0	BB
EMFF	Purchase and installation of Crane and create a changing facility at the Harbour	Gardenstown Harbour Commissioners	£17,273.92	£0	BB
EMFF	Reflective Tracer Buoys	North East Creel & Line Association	£13,525.20	£0	BB
EMFF	Rosehearty Community Boat Club - New Rosehearty Clubhouse	Rosehearty Community Boat Club	£63,048.51	£0	BB
EMFF	Sandhaven & Pitullie Harbour Redevelopment	Sandhaven & Pitullie Harbour Trust	£23,650.00	£0	BB
EMFF	The Captain's Table	The Captain's Table	£2,160.00	£0	BB
EMFF	The first accredited gluten free fish diner in North East Scotland	Findlay's Fish Bar and Diner	£17,299.94	£0	BB
EMFF	Waste Management & Environmental Impact Reduction	Fraserburgh Harbour	£29,189.16	£0	BB
EMFF	Whitehills Harbour Heritage Project*	Whitehills Harbour Commissioners	£79,983.78	£0	BB
EMFF	McBay's Shellfish Shop	Murray McBay & Co.	£0	£40,786.48	KM

Fund	Project	Recipient	Grant (North)	Grant (South)	Area(s)
EMFF	Mearns Coastal Maritime Heritage Trail*	Tangleha Artists Collective Ltd	£0	£19,061.00	KM
EMFF	MERCHAT: Extra Support for the Red Rocks Restoration*	Tangleha Artists Collective Limited	£0	£13,918.30	KM
EMFF	Seafood Bothy Trailer*	Maria Lewis T/A Seafood Bothy	£0	£12,496.71	KM
EMFF	South Harbours Improvement Actions*	Aberdeenshire Council	£0	£51,447.22	KM
EMFF	South Harbours Improvement Plan	Aberdeenshire Council	£0	£19,600.00	KM
EMFF	Stonehaven Boardwalk Fishing Heritage Project*	Aberdeenshire Council	£0	£44,858.68	KM
EMFF	Stonehaven Paddleboarding	Stonehaven Paddleboarding	£0	£7,402.50	KM
EMFF	Stonehaven Sea Safari	Stonehaven Sea Safari Ltd.	£0	£52,410.81	KM
EMFF	Stonehaven Tolbooth Museum - Development Phase	Stonehaven Tollbooth Association	£0	£12,375.14	KM
EMFF	EGCP Beach Litter Campaign	EGCP Ltd.	£26,628.37	£15,977.02	Multiple: B, BB, F, KM
EMFF	EGCP 'Discovering the Aberdeenshire Coast'*	EGCP Ltd.	£23,670.25	£14,108.35	Multiple: B, BB, F, KM
EMFF	Strategic Analysis of the North East Scotland Seafood Industry	Aberdeenshire Council	£25,633.13	£8,544.38	Multiple: BB, B, F, KM

*Project is still live or final claim to be paid – final grant amount to be determined

B – Buchan
BB – Banff & Buchan
F – Formartine
G – Garioch
KM – Kincardine & Mearns
M - Marr

FISHERIES WORKING GROUP – 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

BULLETIN: SEAWEED PROJECT

1 Recommendation

1.1 It is recommended that members note this report

2 Discussion

2.1 On 12 March 2021 Northern Light Consulting Ltd (NLC) was commissioned by the council to carry out a Coastal Industries Diversification study on the feasibility of commercial seaweed cultivation and harvesting along the north coast of Aberdeenshire. The appointment of NLC followed a public procurement process (Public Contracts Scotland) with the budget for the work met by regeneration funds for Banff and Buchan. The project inception meeting between NLC staff and a small team of council officers (steering group) took place on 18 March 2021. Regular meetings ensued thereafter to ensure the project stayed on track.

2.2 Seaweed has been harvested from wild sources in Scotland for many years, eg as a fertiliser and as a pharmaceutical feedstock, but not at scale. Naturally occurring seaweed around the Scottish coast is increasingly highly valued for supporting marine biodiversity, sequestering carbon and buffering land-based pollutants entering the marine environment. So while seaweed as a commercial resource is projected to have considerable growth potential (eg for energy, food and animal feed production), the emphasis in Scotland lies firmly upon cultivated marine algae to serve larger scale markets, with wild harvesting, mainly derived from west coast sources, confined to small scale, niche market demand. The global seaweed market is projected to reach \$9Bn by 2024 (2017: \$4Bn), supplied mainly by countries in South East Asia.

2.3 The North Aberdeenshire coast is a very different proposition to the sheltered waters of the west coast of Scotland but while the natural environment is very challenging, Aberdeenshire's onshore infrastructure, highly diversified economy, skills, knowledge and research base offer considerable added value potential for a sustainable primary product like seaweed. Accordingly the purpose of the study was to assess seaweed markets, identify species suitable for cultivation and potential 'farm' sites, the production cycle, equipment and facilities required, regulatory issues, potential markets and routes to market (eg utilising pre-existing food processing capacity), investment costs/benefits, and the strategic fit of seaweed cultivation in what is an intensively utilised stretch of coastline (eg fishing, leisure, energy) which also happens to have been designated a Marine Protected Area ('Southern Trench') in December 2020. Effective engagement with commercial and community stakeholders was recognised as a key component of the study. Officer steering group members helped to facilitate NLC contact with industry, community and other representatives.

2.4 NLC worked diligently through their brief in accordance with the milestones set out in the commission and presented interim and draft reports to the

officer steering group on schedule and to the desired standard. In late May 2021, plans were laid for a public (virtual) presentation of the provisional findings. Chaired by Cllr Peter Argyle and held on the evening of 24 June, c.70 individuals tuned in to the presentation by NLC and helpful feedback was obtained, including comments on the desirability or otherwise of some of the potential seaweed farm sites (eg concerns from squid and inshore fishermen). Other comments related to the unforgiving sea conditions for offshore infrastructure, whether any adverse seaweed quality impacts would arise due to several wastewater outfalls along the coastline and the regulatory process. Coverage of the event was published in the Press and Journal. Further one-to-one engagement with key stakeholders then took place over the summer and the final report is due to be published shortly.

- 2.5 At all times the role of the council in this project has been made clear – that it is acting only to explore the practical feasibility of seaweed production, harvesting and marketing along the north coast of Aberdeenshire. The council will *not* be taking ownership as a developer – that will be a matter for a commercial operator, ideally in partnership with community and local business interests.

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		x	
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability		x	
Children & Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

Paul Macari
Head of Service: Planning and Economy

Report by Derek McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime), 14 September 2021