

## REPORT TO FISHERIES WORKING GROUP - 15 MAY 2019

### REVIEW OF FISHERIES WORKING GROUP

#### 1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

##### 1.1 Consider and make recommendations on the following future options for Fisheries Working Group:

- a) Integrate Fisheries Working Group into NE Scotland Fisheries Development Partnership;
- b) Reduce the frequency of FWG meetings;
- c) Make alternative proposals;
- d) No change.

#### 2 Background / Discussion

2.1 On 1 June 2017 Infrastructure Services Committee (Item 7) agreed on the membership, and re-appointment, of Member Officer Working Groups (MOWGs) including five such groups which are managed by Economic Development officers along with the chairs of these groups. These MOWGs are as follows:

European Member Officer Working Group (EMOWG)  
Fisheries Working Group (FWG)  
North East Scotland Fisheries Development Partnership (NESFDP)  
North East Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group (NESAAG)  
Rural Affairs Working Group (RAWG)

Martin Brebner manages EMOWG; the rest are organised by Derek McDonald.

2.2 All of the above groups have been in existence for over 15 years. **Appendix 1** gives a brief description of the membership and remit of the five Working Groups. Owing to an increase in the commitments of Committee Services elsewhere in the council, the general level of Committee Officer support offered to MOWGs has been reduced in recent months, creating additional work for organising officers from Economic Development.

2.3 NESFDP and NESAAG are influential bodies hosted by Aberdeenshire Council comprising representatives from outside organisations and neighbouring councils and they have been subject to periodic review. No change is proposed to how NESFDP and NESAAG operate or to the level of Committee Officer support provided.

2.4 In contrast to NESFDP and NESAAG, there has been no corresponding review in recent years of the other Working Groups. A review of Fisheries Working Group at this time, in consultation with FWG members, is therefore

considered appropriate. It is anticipated a report on the future arrangements for FWG and RAWG will be presented to Infrastructure Services Committee towards the end of the year once an informed view has been formed.

- 2.5 There is therefore a requirement to establish the additionality of FWG over and above the work of NESFDP in order to secure resources for its continuation. FWG has actively lobbied Scottish Government and UK Government on various issues over the years and has also generated numerous consultation responses, albeit that they have been submitted by Infrastructure Services Committee. In some cases, NESFDP was unable to arrive at a collective view on certain issues (most recently on the matter of the Pelagic Landing Obligation consultation in 2017). Members have also commented that FWG has been a useful channel for communicating industry issues to members and has helped to explain how the council is interacting with the wider fisheries sector. However a clear justification will be required for FWG to continue in its current form.
- 2.6 NESFDP currently comprises five Elected Members from Aberdeenshire Council (with five each from Aberdeen City Council and The Moray Council). Should it be concluded that Fisheries Working Group is to be subsumed into North East Scotland Fisheries Development Partnership, consideration could be given to increasing the number of places for Aberdeenshire Council members.
- 2.7 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**

- 4.1 There are no equality impact implications arising from this report
- 4.2 There are staffing implications in that, if approved, this change will mean that certain officers will have more time to spend on policy and project work.
- 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

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

Report prepared 7 May 2019 by Derek McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime),

## **Appendix 1**

### **European Member/ Officer Working Group**

Membership comprises the Provost, the Chair and Vice Chair of Infrastructure Services Committee, the six Area Chairs, the Leader of the Council, three other Members with a specific European interest and all four representatives on the North Sea Commission Thematic Groups.

Remit – To co-ordinate the channelling of information on EU matters and to represent the interests of Aberdeenshire Council in Europe.

Number of meetings – quarterly.

### **Fisheries Working Group**

Membership comprises eight Elected Members from Aberdeenshire Council and officers.

Remit – To advise the Council on issues affecting the industry and fishing dependent communities.

Number of meetings – three times per year.

### **North East Scotland Fisheries Development Partnership (NESFDP)**

Membership comprises five Elected Members from Aberdeenshire Council, five from Aberdeen City Council, and five from Moray Council, MPs, MSPs and MEPs, representatives from the fisheries industry (fishing and processing), ports, enterprise agencies (e.g. Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise), Seafish, and Marine Scotland.

Remit – To act as an advisory body to the Councils and industry, and provide support to fishing dependent communities and a communication channel between the wider industry and its political representatives at all levels.

Number of Meetings – three times per year

### **North East Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group (NESAAG)**

Membership comprises seven Elected Members from Aberdeenshire Council, five from Aberdeen City Council, and five from Moray Council, officers, and farming communities and industry.

Remit – To act as an advisory body to the Councils, encompassing all rural affairs, with particular interest in agriculture and rural employment; farm incomes; farming policy; conservation; diversification of farming including forestry, tourism and farm industries; the implications of changes in farming practice and land use; and the provision of infrastructure, services, and facilities in rural areas. NESAAG lobbies on behalf of the sector as well as providing support and advice both to the agricultural sector and the wider rural economy of the North East.

Number of Meetings – three times per year

### **Rural Affairs Working Group**

Membership comprises eight Elected Members from Aberdeenshire Council and officers.

Remit – To provide an Aberdeenshire focus and enable local agriculture, as well as other rural issues and concerns, to be considered.

Number of meetings – three times per year.

