



REPORT TO FISHERIES WORKING GROUP - 15 MAY 2019

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FUTURE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION PAPER

1 Recommendations

It is recommended that members consider whether a response should be made to the Discussion Paper and what form a response could take.

2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 In March 2019, Scottish Government launched a discussion paper setting out proposals for Future Fisheries management in Scotland. The deadline for responses is 7 June 2019 and the paper can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-discussion-paper-future-fisheries-management-scotland/>
- 2.2 The Discussion Paper proposes a new approach to fisheries management in Scotland and will be followed by a consultation comprising a firm set of proposals in 'Winter 2019'. The Paper reflects at a high level the input gathered by Scottish Government since it commenced dialogue in November 2017 with industry and stakeholder on future fisheries policy. No questions are asked in the Paper; respondents are invited to forward any views they may have.
- 2.3 The Paper starts by setting out a vision for an environmentally conscious and sustainable Scottish fishing industry and a world class marine environment in line with Scotland's National Marine Plan. Chapter 2 covers Governance, Engagement and Accountability and commits to securing a Scottish seafood levy – it is not clear whether this commitment constitutes a new levy or a share of the existing Seafish levy. That Scottish fisheries are a national asset is stated throughout the document – as is a desire for more effective local management of resources, largely through strengthened Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups.
- 2.4 Within the international context (Chapter 3), an expectation is expressed that Scottish ministers will be allowed to lead the UK delegation during Coastal State negotiations on fish stocks 'predominantly present' in Scottish waters, and that the Scottish fishing industry will have the opportunity to engage with ministers. The importance of maintaining positive and constructive relations with Coastal State nations (eg Norway, Iceland, Faroe Islands) and the EU post Brexit is also highlighted to enable favourable reciprocal access.
- 2.5 The Discussion Paper goes on to describe the importance of marine science in setting sustainable fishing opportunities. There is however a divergence from current EU policy in that the timeframe to achieve MSY (Maximum Sustainable Yield) for the main stocks moves away from a defined ('arbitrary') date. Reference is made to difficulties arising from 'data-limited' stocks and a commitment is offered to addressing gaps in knowledge and data, in part by

utilising new technology. The Paper commits to using Total Allowable Catch (TAC) limits as the primary method of managing stocks in future (as opposed to 'effort' control) and the issue of future quota and its distribution is also addressed. The 'Fixed Quota Allocation (FQA) system will continue but the Paper declares that the 'speculative' use of Scottish quota will end and that any post-Brexit increase in fishing opportunities is likely to be utilised – to some degree – to create opportunities for new entrants and those for whom quota access is currently prohibitively expensive.

- 2.6 The Paper confirms that 'zonal attachment' will take precedence over 'relative stability' in future fisheries management (echoing the UK Government White Paper on Fishing). The 'Economic Link' for the pelagic sector is also to be revisited to try to secure a higher share of landings in Scotland from Scottish quota (or obtain quota 'gifting' for re-distribution). A commitment is given to a practical, workable discards ban and to effective Technical and Spatial Conservation Measures. Chapter 5 addresses fishing licences and capacity and considers how and in what way access to fishing could be distributed more fairly. Steps are proposed to better define and manage inshore fishing opportunities, evidenced by pilot projects currently underway and significant investment in data gathering. A new permit system for fishing exclusively within the twelve-mile limit is proposed to bring Scotland into line with England. The paper concludes with an exploration of a possible successor scheme to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, to how the sector's future labour requirements can be met, and the potential use of new, cost-effective technology in fisheries management.
- 2.7 The Paper is generally consistent with policy positions previously adopted by Fisheries Working Group and it is suggested that the Group considers whether a response is necessary and if so, what form it might take.
- 2.8 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

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