

MARINE DIRECTORATE

Fisheries Management and Conservation (FMAC) – Inshore Subgroup – Meeting #6

NOTE OF MEETING

04-JUL-2024 10:00-12:00 - via Microsoft Teams

Attended	
Jim Watson	Marine Directorate (MD) (policy) - Chair
Stuart Bell	MD (policy)
Ellen Huis	MD (policy)
Helen Downie	MD (policy)
Chloe Aird	MD (policy)
Lily Braid	MD (policy)
Lynda Blackadder	MD (science)
Jo Holbrook	MD (operations)
Jennifer Mouat	North and East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group (RIFG)
Mark Griffin	Southwest RIFG
Alastair Hamilton	Northwest RIFG
Hilary Burgess	Shetland RIFG
Phil Bennett	Orkney RIFG
David Donnan	Naturescot
Hannah Fennell	Orkney Fisheries Association
Andrew Brown	Macduff Shellfish
Duncan MacInnes	Western Isles Fisherman's Association
Phil Taylor	Open Seas
David Gilchrist	Anglo Scottish Fishermen's Association
Lewis Tattershall	Seafish
Clive Fox	Scottish Association for Marine Science
Elsbeth MacDonald	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Kenny Coull	Scottish Whitefish Producers' Association
Rufus Danby	Scottish Whitefish Producers' Association
John Robertson	Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation
Lucy Kay	Community of Arran Seabed Trust
Michele de Noia	NatureScot
Kevin MacDonnell	Orkney and West of Scotland PO
Sheila Keith	Shetland Fisherman's Association
Caitlin Turner	Scottish Inshore Fisheries Trust

Apologies	
Carlos Mesquita	MD
Alex Watson-Crook	Scottish Inshore Fisheries Trust
Calum Duncan	Marine Conservation Society
Alasdair Macleod	Outer Hebrides RIFG
Elaine Whyte	Community Inshore Fisheries Alliance

Agenda

1. Welcome, introduction and general update from the Marine Directorate
2. The inshore roadmap - a look back and a look ahead at a wider suite of measures
3. Any other business
4. Closing remarks

1. Welcome, introduction and general update from the Marine Directorate

Main points:

- The Chair welcomed everyone, and reminded members that all papers and materials, as usual, will be on the RIFG website in meetings section.
- This is a single item meeting. We will recap progress and look ahead to the development of a framework for inshore fisheries improvement in Scotland.
- The Chair provided a short update on several other matters:
- As discussed at the main FMAC group, the forum in general and all of its subgroups will be reviewed. A survey will be coming out shortly.
- There have been a couple of recent enquiries regarding our Fisheries Management Strategy. An update on progress against the delivery plan will be provided shortly.
- The RIFG review is progressing well. All interview and analysis are complete. Themes and a report are now being pulled together and will be shared in due course, probably in the autumn.
- Marine Fund Scotland has been heavily oversubscribed. Applications will soon be reviewed and assessed. It is likely there may only be one round this year.
- In late 2023, the Scottish Government consulted on proposals to put trackers on our *circa* 1,700 <12M inshore vessels plus inshore REM solutions on a select number of vessels for scientific and enforcement benefits. We received 99 valid responses. Analysis of the responses is being undertaken externally and the Marine Directorate are currently considering options with a view to putting advice to Ministers. Subject to Ministerial decisions and the proposals taken forward, we anticipate developments in 2024 with peak activity in 2025.

- There was a call for AoB points. None received.
- There were no action points from the last meeting.

2. The inshore roadmap - a look back and a look ahead at a wider suite of measures

A presentation was given by officials. Slides will be available on the RIFG website.

Main themes of presentation:

- Recap of development and deployment of nationwide interim measures.
- Following discussions earlier in the year and review of mechanisms for delivering fisheries management, we are now considering a transition to a strategic and agile model for inshore fisheries management and how this would enable us to deliver locally relevant and responsive fisheries management.
- Three possible key inshore themes for consultation in 2024.
 - Developing a strategic framework, that takes account of regional variation.
 - Nationwide measures.
 - A call for evidence to help build understanding of how further measures could be developed and implemented.
- Stakeholder input to our direction of travel this year is important and we are keen to work together to help inform policy development.
- Discussion question posed of what a strategic framework should look like, highlighting that we are open to all ideas and thoughts on this theme, including around governance, boundaries, permitting arrangements etc.
- A short discussion paper will follow and be available on the RIFG website.
- Next meeting planned for late August at which time we would like to reflect on the main themes and issues presented by attendees at this meeting.

Group discussion

Discussion focussed largely on the concept of a new strategic framework and what that could look like and deliver. The main themes arising from discussion were:

- **Concept** - There was recognition that our tools for delivering nuanced management are limited and that a nationwide approach to fisheries management is often not appropriate. There was support for developing a strategic framework to enable delivery of more agile, regional management that reflects pressures and fisheries priorities in different areas. It was recognised that this offers an opportunity to future proof our fisheries to ensure sustainability whilst concurrently responding to wider marine issues such as climate change.
- **Timeframe** – Concerns were raised about our ability to develop proposals sufficiently to consult on later this year, given the complexity of the proposal

and wide ranging considerations surrounding its delivery. Some felt stakeholders would be unable to effectively feed into the development of proposals in order to deliver a true co-management approach.

- **Outcomes** – It was recognised that we must be clear when defining measures of success to evaluate both the framework and regional management, with agreement that socio-economic and islands impacts must be considered alongside environmental impacts. We must be clear what successful outcomes will look like for different fisheries/ regions.
- **Objectives** – We must be clear about the objectives of this policy alongside our fisheries priorities, which should include wider objectives such as those outlined in [The Fisheries Act 2020](#), our Fisheries Management Strategy 2020-2030 [12 point action plan](#), and [Scotland's National Marine Plan](#).

In addition to these main themes, the following points were raised by members:

- **Spatial management** – Member highlighted that framework would exist in the context of the spatial squeeze on fishing, which may affect implementation of subsequent management. One member believed that group had previously supported spatial, not regional, management.
- **Regional management** – Ideally boundaries should follow pre-defined areas and not create stark boundaries with significant management variations. Access for nomadic fishers should be considered.
- **Implementation** – Some suggested a fishery by fishery approach is needed (instead of a regional approach) to achieve a coherent approach to sea areas in their entirety. MD will consider implementation and also our available legal mechanisms for delivery of a strategic framework.
- **Scope & outcomes** - Discussion about whether framework should cover key fisheries or sea area as a whole, flagging consideration of how this interacts with regional marine planning. We need to be clear what effective fisheries management looks like to properly assess outcomes against objectives. There was strong feeling from the group that any model must take account of socio-economic impacts and island community impacts.
- **Accountability** – Discussion about how a framework can include accountability to achieving sustainable fisheries and delivery of objectives, along with a clear hierarchy of authority.
- **Learning from others** – MD noted the complexity in achieving effective management and agreed we should consider successful examples of inshore fisheries management. Suggestion that Seafish holds good evidence on socio-economic impacts which could inform assessments. SFA suggested that their [Rebuilding Scotland's Inshore Fisheries](#) document would be helpful as we develop this framework.
- **ACTION** – SFA to share [Rebuilding Scotland's Fisheries Paper](#) – Complete.

3. Any other business

- MD highlighted that we have discussed the importance of science and getting plans in motion to improve our sampling at the last few meetings. However, staff have reported problems with accessing sampling locations in recent weeks. MD reiterated the importance of facilitating access;
- **ACTION – Fisheries members to encourage stakeholder groups to facilitate access to sampling locations.**

4. Closing remarks

- MD thanked members for the thoughtful discussion in order to support early development of this policy ahead of consultation. There was strong agreement that at present, the concept we wish to consult on is complex and the current proposals did not come into focus during this initial discussion. There was agreement that we need to be clear what we are trying to accomplish, what defines good fisheries management, and what is our benchmark for success will be.
- Confirmed that we will reflect on the points raised and bring the subgroup together again in late August to update and discuss further.
- Confirmed we will circulate a meeting note along with a discussion paper to support engagement with stakeholders over the summer period.

DRAFT