

SEA FISH INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

Minutes of the

Seafish Marine Environmental Legislation Expert Group Meeting

Held at Defra, London on 7th February 2012

Present:

Peter Wilson	Chairman, Seafish
Jerry Percy	NUTFA
Jim Evans	WFA
David Jarrard	Shellfish Association of Great Britain
Claire Tibbott	Shellfish Association of Great Britain
Helen Stevens	Natural England
Sandy Cruickshank	Defra
Angus Cragg	Defra
Chris Leftwich	Fishmongers Company
Marytn Youell	MMO
Sarah Horsfall	Seafish

1. Welcome by the Chairman and apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Defra for hosting the meeting. Apologies were received from James Wilson, Colin Warwick, Neil Wellum, Patrick Stewart, Walter Speirs and Phil MacMullen.

2. Minutes and Action Points of the meeting held on 21st September 2012

The minutes were accepted as a true record. All the papers were circulated. With regard to the Terms of Reference no further comments were received so the new ones were adopted.

Jim Evans asked for a copy of the TOR's and the previous minutes.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Sarah informed that group that the public consultation on the implementation of the MSFD will commence sometime in February. There are supporting documents which are currently being cleared by ministers and will be available publically along with the consultation.

3.2 Future management of fisheries orders in Wales

There has been no progress in this area since the last meeting.

3.3 The future of Seafish

Peter Wilson told the group that a formal outcome was still awaited following the Government led 'discussion with Industry' process last Autumn. Defra had advertised for new Board Members although several posts were due for replacement anyhow. It was commented that a new Board was to be appointed with some concern expressed with the advertised remuneration rate which had had reduced significantly. Peter added that a new structure is currently awaiting ministerial sign-off from Defra and the devolved assemblies. Seafish will then conduct a series of further meetings with industry representatives to outline the proposed future direction and structure of the organisation.

3.4 Any Other Matters Arising

There were no other matters arising.

4. Red Tape Challenge – Sandy Cruickshank, Defra

Sandy explained that in keeping with the government initiative to challenge existing legislation in order to make sure it is fit for purpose Defra are putting sections of their legislation up for comment on the red tape challenge web-site. This doesn't apply to legislation from the EU, or to that which is devolved to the regional assemblies. The list of marine legislation had been circulated before the meeting and is due to be under the spotlight on the web-site very soon. There is a separate section which applies to water quality.

There are groups of industry people who have been involved in consulting on these, but anyone can comment on the legislation on the web-site. Sandy confirmed that there are no specific targets with regard to how much legislation needs to be updated.

5.Common Fisheries Policy – Angus Cragg, Defra

Angus gave the group a detailed breakdown of the process in Europe being followed during the reform along with the possible points of influence over that. He was asked to provide a timeline for circulation to the group. Currently working groups are preparing for the council meetings which will be held over the next three to four months.

With regard to some of the major policy areas Angus was able to provide insight as to their predicted acceptance at this point. The proposals for regionalisation have broad support from the larger member states, but the smaller ones have concerns over the additional burdens this will place on them. The external agreements are more and more being scrutinised for their sustainability, with the standards imposed by the EU gradually being applied externally as well. The requirement for mandatory TFC's is likely to be scrapped and become a voluntary system instead. With regard to discards there is no consensus as yet but Defra feel it is likely that a ban will be phased in over an agreed period.

6.Marine Protected Areas

Helen Stevens gave the group an update on the progress of the marine conservation zones, the next proposed SAC in Portland Bay and the likely proposed new SPAs. The process for the MCZs has been delayed as more evidence is being gathered. Some of the sites are expected to go forward for designation later this year, but some are expected to be held back. Seafish are holding a meeting of economists to try to establish a methodology for assessing socio-economic impact of MPAs more accurately and there was some discussion as to whether this would be in time for the first tranche of MCZs. As they have now been delayed though it should be possible to feed into the process as Defra will be considering NE's recommendations during the summer.

With regard to MPAC, Defra will respond to their proposals by the 10th April.

In Wales the situation and process has been very different. They already have a large amount of protected sites and so therefore only expect to designate 3-4 highly protected marine areas. The process has been top down and they are currently preparing the first consultation on proposed sites which will contain up to 18 options. The average expected size of the sites is 5 square kilometres.

7.Marine Planning

Martyn gave a presentation progress at the MMO on marine planning in the eastern inshore and offshore areas. He highlighted that there are still data gaps, particularly with regard to inshore fishing and aquaculture production. He suggested that it may be possible for a project on data gathering to be supported by MMO and David will

investigate this.

Marine planning in Wales is still at the early stages. Welsh government has not yet decided whether to plan their area as one or to divide it into sub-national plans. It will probably be later in 2012 before the process there become clearer.

8.Shellfish Waters Directive

After four years there has now been some significant progress in this area. England and Scotland are currently transposing the microbial standards contained within SWD to the water framework directive. This is very good news for the industry, although it does still leave the problem of what happens to shellfish waters beyond the limit of WFD. There is no mechanism on MSFD to protect shellfish waters. Defra have recently indicated that they are considering other options for protection outside the limit of WFD. Sarah will follow this up with them. It is less of an issue in Scotland because WFD there extends out to 3 nautical miles.

Defra have now also confirmed that the action they are taking will not have effect in Wales, so Sarah will need to progress this there and keep the group informed.

9.Current and Recent Consultations

Jim Evans updated the group on the progress with the boundary issues on the horse mussel reef protected areas in North Wales.

9.Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting to take place in London in May. A list of proposed dates will be circulated for comment on availability.

10.Any Other Business

There was no other business.