

Seafood Industry Leadership Group Meeting Minutes – 25 November 2021

In Attendance

Dr Neil Auchterlonie, Chair	Dr Mark Berry, SEP Chair
Kim Cullen, Secretary	Juliette Hatchman, SW Fish Producer's Organisation
Nathan de Rozarieux, Falfish	Sarah Phillips, M & J Seafood
Cameron Moffat, Youngs and Young Seafood Leader's Network	

Guests

Aoife Martin, Seafish	Georgina Karlsson, Defra
Tom Moore, Defra	Isabelle Rogerson, Defra
Kate Smithers, Defra	Robbie Fisher, Defra
Beshlie Poole, South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen	Jane Sandell, UK AFPO

Apologies

Nigel Edwards, Hilton Food Group	James Fox Davies, Fowey Shellfish
Stuart Price, Nomad	Nicola Robinson, Defra
Lynn Gilmore, Seafish	Lydia Osborne, Defra
Chloe Rogers, UKAFPO	

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome

- Dr Neil Auchterlonie, SF0240 Chair, welcomed SILG members and guests to the meeting and listed the apologies
- Neil welcomed the latest SILG member, Juliette Hatchman (South West Fish Producer's Organisation)
- The September 2021 minutes were accepted via email

2. Seafish Update

Aoife Martin provided the update. Highlights include:

- Seafish is undergoing a Strategic Review to set out the future direction (focus/priorities and funding). Input received from the DAs, Defra, Seafish sector panels and industry. Seafish Board has agreed to a package of measures shaped on the feedback received to enable the organization to continue to support the industry and be financially stable. The next phase is to meet with the four DA sponsors / Ministers with the package of recommendations. The Review will be complete by spring / summer 2022.
- Key initiatives:
 - Kingfisher: there is a new tool that maps the fishing restrictions (e.g. MPAs, closures, etc.)
 - Animal welfare: Octopuses, crabs, and lobsters to be recognized as sentient beings under UK law following LSE report findings. Seafish working with Shellfish Association of GB to

develop best practice guidance. Most businesses already follow good practice because it makes economic sense to keep animals in good condition.

- COP26: Seafish produced a climate change in seafood campaign to align with COP26 to explain why this is important to seafood and those in the industry to think about what it means for them.
- [Carbon Emissions tool](#): Aquaculture will be added.
- Live bivalve molluscs (LBMs) and water quality for UK shellfish: Seafish is actively working with Defra, Cefas, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and industry to resolve these two longstanding issues. Seafish facilitates the [Shellfish Stakeholder Working Group](#) and the EMFF funded project: [Aquaculture water quality and classification for shellfish — Seafish](#)

Discussion

- LBMs: Industry is feeling a lot of pain. Is there a timescale on the possible changes around regulation that could occur?
 - Seafish and regulators are progressing. The UK is still following EU regulations on water classification. The proposals identified are already allowed under legislation. It's about enabling the adoption of the approach in the UK systems (e.g. a more flexible testing method). It's not clear to industry and local authorities how to make use of the flexibility. In other cases, FSA will need to amend the guidance so there is some permission still required within the UK system. Hopefully there will be some changes in early 2022.

Actions

1. Seafish will come back to a future SF2040 SILG meeting to present on the results of the Strategic Review.
2. Kim to email the new fishing restrictions tool to SILG members.

3. Defra Update

Robbie Fisher and Georgina Karlsson, Defra Marine & Fisheries division, provided the update. Highlights include:

- COP26: Defra will look more closely at the blue carbon agenda particularly where evidence is uncertain. Defra wants to work further in the adaptation and resilience space to work with industry to understand where climate change is impacting.
- UK Seafood Fund: Training & Skills pillar is next on the list to announce further details of funding opportunities. The Science pillar has closed for applications but there will be another call approximately in March.
- Licensing: 1700 vessels are now licensed to fish in UK water. Defra continues to work with French authorities.
- Quota: Finalising consultations and will be engaging with industry in the near future. Looking closely at the potential to trial community quota management in 2023.
- Non-quota: In conversation with EU to improve data exchanges and long-term management plans and priorities. Will be engaging with UK fishing sector regarding the key priorities and are building capacity to move more quickly in that space.

- Marine Protected Areas: This is about ensuring effective marine conservation management practices – not curtailing fishing.
- Research & development: Defra research includes fisheries management and traceability work and some monitoring. Looking at net zero carbon fisheries as well. In the coming months, there is a govt spending review so Defra are waiting for what the funding areas and amounts will look like. Fisheries Management Plans are a strategic priority. Defra are developing a more holistic approach to R&D and to also build evidence strategies to identify research areas of need (e.g. data gaps) in order to influence the external landscape to fill the data gaps more quickly.

Discussion

- Is the farming of seaweed on Defra's R&D radar as it will help meet food production and carbon net zero expectations?
 - Macroalgae is on Defra's radar for R&D opportunities and equally encourages industry to look at what funding opportunities are available.
- The Economic link consultation is complete, but the report is still underway.
- Isabelle Rogerson, Defra Seafood Trade Policy, introduced herself. She is working on the National Food Strategy, seafood labour landscape and policy issues and would like to loop in with SF2040 SILG and make the most of the forum and ensure conversations and actions are joined up.

Actions

1. Georgina Karlsson to email Kim a summary of the fisheries research at Defra to forward on to SILG.
2. Georgina willing to return to a future SILG meeting to discuss R&D at Defra further.

4. SF2040 ALG and Secretariat updates

Kim Cullen provided an update on the SF2040 ALG and Secretariat. Highlights include:

- SF2040 Aquaculture Leadership Group
 - Previous ALG meeting 6 Oct 2021: Seafish and Defra presented their updates. Dorset Coast Forum has received funding for the development of an English Aquaculture Innovation Hub model. This work is a critical action in the English Aquaculture Strategy and the SF2040 Chair is on the Project Steering Group.
 - Next ALG meeting: 8 Dec 2021 (online): The theme is climate change adaptation & mitigation. There will be presentations from Green Alliance & Seafish
 - November meeting with the Fisheries Minister: The SF2040 Secretariat, the ALG Chair and the British Trout Association CE met with Minister Prentis to discuss concerns of the ALG, primarily government aquaculture resource and LBMs. They also discussed the 'key asks' of the English aquaculture industry to spur investment and growth.
- SF2040 Secretariat
 - SILG membership: Juliette Hatchman, South West Fish Producer's Organisation is a new member. Sadly, SILG says goodbye to Nigel Edwards of Hilton Food Group.
 - APPG-Fisheries aquaculture webinar: This one-off was organized and funded by the SF2040 programme as an opportunity for the 4 nations to get together to discuss aquaculture. It was one of the highest registered and attended webinars for the APPG-Fisheries.

- Recommendation 5 workshop: SILG and ALG are invited to an online workshop on 15 December to discuss Rec 5 (environmental performance of the fishing, aquaculture and processing sectors).
- Recommendation 6 research (Phase 1): The research is now [published](#) and Neil's blog on the research can be found [here](#). The Executive Summary is on a new Seafish webpage: [Health benefits of seafood | Seafish](#). Finally, [The Nutritional Profiles](#) of 42 species (a joint Seafish / SF2040 programme project) are also available through this page.
- Annual Report for Year 3 now [published](#).

5. Fisheries Management at Defra (*slides emailed to SILG*)

Robbie Fisher presented

- Defra ambition set out in White Paper – ‘sustainable fisheries for future generations’
- Joint Fisheries Statement
 - Developed by the 4 UK Fisheries Policy Authorities
 - Cornerstone of the legislative element of our post exit fisheries management framework.
 - Requirement of the Fisheries Act (2020) – legal deadline for publication November 2022
 - Sets out the legally binding policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the 8 fisheries objectives
- Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)
 - The Fisheries Act provides new power to develop Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) to achieve our ambition for sustainable stocks, a thriving fishing industry, and a healthy marine environment
 - Powerful new policy tool to enable a shift to a plan lead approach to fisheries management.
 - Transparent and collaborative – Government and regulators, fishing interests and wider stakeholders working together to develop evidence-based plans
 - Once an FMP is published by Secretary of State and/or the Devolved Administrations, FMPs place a duty on the relevant national fisheries authorities to exercise their functions in accordance with the policies set out in FMPs
 - Each FMP will be reviewed at least every six years to ensure that they remain effective
- FMP Key Messages
 - Considerable long-term commitment – 5,10, 20 years
 - Change the nature of the way we work together for the better – collaboration is key.
 - Lots of expectations (social, economic and environmental) – we won't be able to fix them all right away
 - Working together with the EU on shared stocks via the Trade and Cooperation Agreement will be key
- English Frontrunners
 - Projects – A range of species, areas and delivery models.
 - Aims are to: i) help build momentum and learning, ii) address key policy questions and iii) deliver the first plans e.g.
 - How to best manage a fishery to provide high quality, sustainable catches in the future?

- How best to achieve inclusive and equitable participation in fisheries management?
- How to balance social, economic and environmental interests in fisheries management?
- How best to tackle wider environmental and social issues when setting goals for fisheries.

Discussion

- Defra have the following questions for SILG for future discussion:
 1. How can we use the UK framework and FMPs to secure better join up? How could we use them to link sustainable catching to a sustainable supply chain?
 2. Is there a role for Fishery Accreditation?
 3. What type of Governance do we need to facilitate more effective collaboration?
 4. We need your advice/input – how does the SILG want to be involved?
- What is the reason for the decision to review the FMPs every 6 years because the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) reviews every 3 and there is a regular review process already in place. Also, currently govt participation is not as engaged as industry would like and FIPs (and eventually FMPs) are very resource intensive. Government input is required, and it is increasing difficult to get a hold of people.
 - The review period is the legal minimum. At some point there needs to be a discussion
 - Defra recognises that FMPs are a resource intensive activity and that their staff are currently stretched. However, Defra is looking at how they direct their teams on FMPs. FIPs should be used within the FMP platform – this is a positive link between the two to build in the policy. Defra (Robbie) is interested in ideas where best to start to test that connection.
- Does Defra have any idea going forward how to deal with devolution because some fisheries cross borders.
 - There's no perfect way to cut this. There are likely to be UK-wide FMPs, and some will be country only. There will be a collaborative process.

Actions

1. Robbie keen to return to SILG to discuss the Joint Fisheries Statement once it is open to consultation. The SF2040 Secretariat will follow-up for a possible 1-hour online meeting in February.

6. Fisheries Management at Seafish *(slides emailed to SILG)*

Aoife Martin presented

- The Seafish Fisheries Management work programme is broad in scope and about working to improve the status of UK's key fisheries for the benefit of the seafood supply chain
 - Five work streams under our Responsible Sourcing Challenge:
 - Future of Our Inshore Fisheries
 - Shellfish Co-management
 - Project UK
 - Ecological Risk Assessment
 - North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group.

- These are not 'Seafish' projects; they convene, facilitate, provide secretariat and project support.
- Shellfish co-management: Emerged from the FOIF - industry driven but Seafish facilitates
 - A two-tiered approach: Shellfish Industry Advisory Group (SIAG) – strategic in focus covering issues that affect all shellfish species and Species Management groups; addressing stock specific issues and environmental impacts of fishing; Whelk Management Group (WMG), Crab Management Group (CMG but covers lobsters too)
 - Priorities include: SIAG - Developing a National Shellfish Fisheries Plan, Trade issues; Species Management Groups - Stocktake of regulatory measures and review of purpose/effectiveness, Species FMPs and a Forum to discuss NQS changes post EU Exit
- Ecological Risk Assessment of Mixed Fisheries in the South West
 - Approach for non-assessed data limited fisheries
 - Focuses on the exploited (the commercial fish species targeted) and the non-exploited components (seabirds, marine mammals, and benthic habitats).
 - Objectives include: Define the potential impact of fisheries in terms of risks to parts of the ecosystem.
- North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy
 - NAPA aims to secure: An agreement on total allowable catches for Northeast Atlantic mackerel, Norwegian Spring Spawning (Atlanto-scandian) herring, and Northeast Atlantic blue whiting in line with scientific advice and a long-term science-based management agreement.

Discussion

- Does the Ecological Risk Assessment apply to the foodservice sector as well?
 - It is early days yet but yes the model should be useful to foodservice as well.

7. Next Steps/AOB/Finish

- Next meeting: 27 January 2022, online 12:30 – 2:30 pm. The Fisheries Minister will be in attendance from 1:30 pm.
- SF2040 Programme Manager, Kim Cullen, has resigned from Seafish. The Chair thanked her for her hard work and efforts managing the SF2040 programme.