

Aquaculture Leadership Group Meeting Minutes – 10 June 2020

In Attendance

James Fox Davies, Fowey Shellfish Co, ALG Chair (JFD)	Roger Covey, Natural England (RC)
Kim Cullen, SF2040 (KC)	Ruth Allin, Defra (RA)
Sara Catahan, Defra (SC)	Kelsey Thompson, Morecambe Bay Oysters (KT)
Dr Lewis Le Vay, Bangor University (LLV)	Oliver Robinson, British Trout Association (OR)
David Jarrad, Shellfish Association of GB (DJ)	Dr Stuart McLanaghan, Seafish (SMcL)
Dr Christopher Sweeting, MMO (CS)	Rob Whiteley, Natural England (RW)
Martin Syvret, AquaSolutions (MS)	John Holmyard, Offshore Shellfish (JH)

Guests

Tim Huntington, Poseidon (TH)	Rod Cappell, Poseidon (RC)
Aoife Martin, Seafish (AM)	

Apologies

Neil Auchterlonie, SF2040	Michael Gubbins, Cefas
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Meeting Minutes

Agenda #1

Welcome & Introductions

Agenda #2

12 Feb Oct 2020 Minutes

- ALG accepted the 12 Feb 2020 Minutes

For future meetings, the process to approve the minutes will change to permit review and comment by ALG members prior to uploading the minutes onto the SF2040 webpage:

- Minutes will be emailed to ALG with the agenda and papers in advance of the following meeting
- ALG will be asked to approve or comment on the minutes at the next meeting
- Upon approval, the minutes will be released on the SF2040 ALG webpage on the Seafish website
- When ALG resumes physical meetings at reduced frequency, minutes will be approved via email

Agenda #3

'Size of the Prize' Report

AM discussed the draft - the key points are as follows:

- Members were thanked for submitting written comments
- Seafish has commenced a detailed review of both the front-end and technical (back-end) reports
- Seafish will work with the appointed consultants, to address the key content and quality issues

- Seafish will keep ALG updated on next steps
- KC informed ALG that all emails with comments on the draft had been forwarded to Seafish for collation and consideration.

General Comments from ALG

- Concern that there is a basic lack of understanding what the implications of the findings might mean for the sector
- Report should also look carefully at inshore siting; as it stands there is no real consideration here, other than reference to ongoing water quality issues

ACTION:

- Seafish (SMCL) will keep ALG updated on progress

Agenda #4

English Aquaculture Strategy (EAS)

TH presented the Project Method Statement

1. Current status of English Aquaculture
2. Scoping
3. Ongoing methodology
 - a. Growth Targets
 - b. Stakeholder Engagement
4. The Strategy
 - a. Fundamentals
 - b. Logical Framework Approach
 - c. Content
 - d. Format
5. Timeline

Scoping

TH presented the scope

Discussion on the inclusion or exclusion of microalgae

- Microalgae was not included in the original ITT whereas macroalgae was
- EAS is to focus on aquaculture as food and for consumption
- Microalgae (unless as a component for aquaculture feed) is out of scope

ALG agreed to the scoping proposals and requested that the Strategy also include the hatchery stage in ranching / restocking.

Growth Targets

TH presented 3 growth target options for discussion:

1. The growth targets are calculated 'behind the scene' and are used to generate some limited and cautiously quoted highlights e.g. total value of the industry in 2040

2. Again the growth targets are not explicit in the Strategy but are used to summarise the broad character of the ambitions involved e.g. x mt of finfish, y mt of shellfish & z mt of seaweeds
3. Growth targets are explicit in the Strategy and are calculated for all the key species / production system combinations. These would be generated over the 20 year Strategy timeline, with short, medium and long term intervals

General Comments from ALG

- Option 3 is realistic and achievable; this is where the 'Size of the Prize' would feed in
- EAS needs to be ambitious – would like aspirational targets. Don't limit growth targets to production and first sale value; they could also include:
 - The aspiration to improve overall English aquaculture export/import ratio
 - The aspiration to achieve 2 portions per person per week in line with SF2040 ambitions
 - Employment
 - Economic value
 - Vision and aspirations of tonnage using modern technology
- Growth targets could exclude unsustainable seafood production
- Growth targets could be small increase year on year up to 2040

ALG agreed that the Strategy should generate detailed growth targets / ambitions in the detail document and use highlights for the summary document. The Strategy should be ambitious yet realistic.

ALG agreed on the overall approach to generating the growth targets which will include sub-group meetings to agree the factors / weighting / scoring e.g. for shellfish, trout and marine finfish.

ALG agreed to combine Options 2 and 3.

Stakeholder Engagement

TH presented the Stakeholder Engagement plan

ALG agreed to limit public consultation to sector participants only. Others will be reached by direct communication from TH.

Strategy design

TH discussed 3 delivery plan options

1. Strategy and Delivery Plan are produced as a single 'Word' style document
2. Strategy and Delivery Plan delivered together in a short (c. 20 pp), glossy publication-ready document
3. Standalone Strategy with a detailed report, including the Delivery Plan, provided separately

Discussion

- There needs to be an effective plan delivery
 - Process needs to be joined up across the delivery actors
 - Are there examples of where this has been done?

- Plan will need to identify who delivers what
- Who should monitor the delivery of the EAS?
 - There should be a co-management approach (i.e. partnership/collaboration) with clarity on who should lead what and who are the participants
- Dorset Coast Forum has delivered a series of plans and used various styles. May be worth a discussion with them

General Comments from ALG

- Government economists are asking departments what's the value of spending tax payer money on sectors and projects? Why should we invest that money?
 - Aquaculture needs to be able to answer those questions

ALG agreed on the structure and contents of the Strategy.

ALG agreed to Option 3 format e.g. a short / snappy public facing document and a detailed report.

ACTION:

- SF2040 will seek external funds to pay for the design of a short/snappy public facing document as there currently aren't any funds in-house.
- KC to follow up with Dorset Coast Forum re: their series of plans and dissemination approach.

Agenda #5

Salmon Land-Based Farms in England

KC informed ALG there was not enough time for this discussion

Agenda #6

Q&A on Seafish Update

No questions or comments were raised

Agenda #7

Defra Update

RA updated ALG

- Aquaculture COVID-19 Scheme
 - £1 million set aside for aquaculture scheme
 - £10k ceiling in England
- Pacific oyster policy work is progressing. Defra brought industry into the frame
- Regulatory framework project is on hold during COVID-19 crisis

General Comments from ALG

- Scotland's ceiling was £27k. It is unfortunate that England's ceiling was lower. This had a negative impact on the larger aquaculture farms in England

Agenda #8

SF2040 Update

KC provided the SF2040 Secretariat update

- The new SF2040 Chair is Neil Auchterlonie and he will attend the next ALG meeting
- Related SF2040 activities
 - Recommendation 6 - *The socioeconomic impact of increased seafood consumption on Government budgets and population health*
 - Research is complete. SILG is reviewing the report and determining what to do with the key findings. ALG will be emailed those findings and full report when it is publicly available
 - Recommendation 13 – *Development of an English Aquaculture Strategy*
 - Please see minutes above for the EAS update
 - Recommendation 16 – *The challenges facing England’s seafood industry in skills, training, recruitment and retention*
 - Research is complete. The report will be available in July. ALG will be emailed the findings and full report when it is publicly available
 - The key findings specific to aquaculture will be highlighted at the next ALG meeting
- SF2040 recommendation refresh
 - The rec refresh was halted during COVID-19 and will begin again in June. ALG has a role to play

Agenda #9

AOB/Finish

ALG agreed to meet in July for no more than two hours via Zoom in order to continue momentum and discussion of EAS, ‘Size of the Prize’, and any COVID-19 and Brexit matters as well as any other business.

ACTION:

- KC will email ALG members a Doodle poll to determine July meeting date and time