

Regional Marine Plan Advisory Group Meeting
15th March 2018 10.00am
NAFC Marine Centre

In attendance:

Acting Chair John Rosie (JR) – Shetland Islands Council (Marine Planner)

Vice Chair Rachel Shucksmith (RS) - NAFC Marine Centre

Greg Maitland (GM) – Ports and Harbours

Ryan Leask (RL) – Shetland Islands Council (Marine Planner)

Martin Schofield (MS) – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Austin Taylor (AT) – Shetland Islands Council (Heritage Officer)

Kevin Serginson (KS) – Shetland Islands Council (Access Officer)

Steve Mathieson (SM) – Visit Scotland

Val Turner (VT) – Shetland Amenity Trust

Jonathan Swale (JS) – Scottish Natural Heritage

Janet Davies (JD) – Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Toby Flint (TF) – Marine Scotland

Sheila Keith (SK) – Shetland Fisherman's Association

Carole Laignel (CL) – Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation

Karen Hall (KH) – Scottish Natural Heritage

Charlotte Slater (CS) - NAFC Marine Centre

Apologies:

Eilidh Johnston - Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Duncan MacGregor - Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Ruth Henderson – Seafood Shetland

Duncan Goudie - Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Paul Harvey- Shetland Amenity Trust

Rebecca Kinnear- Sullom Voe Oil Terminal Environmental Advisory Group

Simon Pallant- Shetland Islands Council (Development Planning)

David Sandison- Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation

Agenda

1. Minutes of Meeting held 3rd July 2017

Minutes were approved as a true record by SM and seconded by AT.

JD highlighted a minor spelling mistake.

2. Statement of Public Participation (SoPP)

JR Stated that the SoPP needs to be submitted to the government and asked the group whether there was any comments, acknowledging that the process had been going on for some time, started over a year ago.

RS outlined that MH began drafting the SoPP before his retirement similar to the SoPP for the LDP however, Marine Scotland requested a more detailed document, which is why it is still ongoing. JR added that SIC and NAFC would continue to work together to finalise the SoPP. RS added that there would be workshops for consultation on the plan as indicated in the SoPP.

KH asked whether the indicative timetable was still current. RS stated it was, and that the SoPP needs to go before the cabinet secretary, however it needs to be sent to the CS by Marine Scotland and the main point of contact, Wendy Geary, has moved jobs within the organisation so the process could take longer. It is hoped to have the first public consultation activity in April.

MS asked whether he has time to speak to colleagues about the SoPP before offering any final comments. RS offered a week if it would be sufficient, MS agreed

AT stated he liked the timeline but wondered whether to specify months rather than quarters and also a minor spelling mistake. He also suggested the inclusion of a short executive summary at the beginning of the document. JR stated SIC & NAFC would continue to work on the SoPP next week. RS added that Marine Scotland wanted a long and detailed document, whereas the public may not want to read a large document about how they will be consulted and welcomed AT suggestion for a summary.

Actions:

- AG to send any comments by 23rd of March 2018
- SIC & NAFC will continue to work on the final version and will be made available on the NAFC Marine Centre website.

3. Environmental Action Plan (EAP)

JR told the group the EAP has been drafted from RS who has used the SoEA and asked RS to speak in more detail.

RS explained the EAP was designed to reduce data gaps and provide action to issues identified in the SoEA. Actions would be focused on areas which could be addressed locally. For example, field surveys of blue mussel beds records from the 1980s would be more feasible than a Shetland wide Cetaceans survey was less feasible.

KH highlighted there were a number of areas in the EAP that she wasn't sure about as they contradicted concerns at a national level. RS replied saying that the data from the SoEA which the EAP is drawn from was done at a national level.

VT interjected that she would be happy to work with RS in regards to the actions related to archaeology and heritage. RS thanked VT for the offer.

MS highlighted that there were big data gaps across seabird species and wondered where the action for Eider ducks had come from as it was a minor issue compared to some species. RS clarified that Paul Harvey and Martin Heubeck had written this particular section in the SoEA which is where the action had come from. KH included that Eiders were an ongoing problem for local planning and suggested that more species could be included within the EAP.

MS highlighted in particular Puffins, Artic Terns, Artic Skuas and Red Throated Divers were of note and there were many other species as well. JS suggested that the declines with these species was a global issue whereas the Eider duck decline was on a local level, in part related to mussel farms. JS stated that the low levels for recreational fishing was because there is no board in Shetland to monitor activity and in fact there was plenty of trout fishing going on in Shetland JD added that fishermen using the loch close to her house had mentioned that salmon fishing had improved. JD stated there was a SEPA project aimed at the issues of recording fresh water recreational fishing which was collecting qualitative and quantitative data, and a similar project could be useful for filling data gaps in Shetland.

MS commented on the PMF action which included increasing knowledge and filling in data gaps, MS questioned whether it was possible to go further and overlay pressures and species locations. RS stated this had been done as part of the SoEA looking at spatial overlap on all the known PMFs. KH injected that the text should be changed to highlight it was for known PMFs. RS added that many of the PMFs are within SACs and have data whereas historical records were harder to pinpoint.

JR concluded the discussion asking if there were any more comments and what was the next move. RS asked MS to send over some species recommendations to be included in the plan.

KH stated there was a need for a meeting between MS, Ruth Henderson, and SNH about how aquaculture sites monitor the effectiveness of such recommendations. KH stated that as part of the accreditation process the long term impact on wild species has to be considered.

AT brought up marine litter, stating he was unhappy with the current concern level. AT stated that although the AG would have little influence on a global scale, there was more that could be done locally. He suggested a change to the text and a recommendation for actions, suggesting local

marine industries will be targeted if found to be littering. KH wondered if something could be pulled from the National marine litter document. RS responded stating that it was a very high level document. KH suggested looking into local litter sinks. RS highlighted that she believed that Sita at the Shetland Amenity Trust was working to map all the beaches that are cleaned as part of the Voar Redd Up. KH injected that this could mean there could be targeted areas. RS reminded the group that the SRMP Advisory group were unable to enforce. KH suggested it would be a learning process, with AT adding that areas of bad marine litter are known informally would need to firm these up. SM suggested consulting with the Shetland Environmental Group as they receive the data from the SAT after each Redd Up. JS suggested identifying areas that are worse for litter and clean more regularly, extracting the problem. RS replied stating this was what Sita's plan. RS continued asking whether it was an issue for the Environmental Health department within SIC or SEPA. JD stated that SEPA can force someone to clean up if they have dumped waste however, it is nearly impossible to prove where marine litter has come from. AT added that SIC have duties they must adhere to regarding the problem and he would check what they were. RS asked for an Environmental Health contact at SIC, AT responded.

KH highlighted that more could be done for the cetacean's action such as recording sightings from headlands and that groups were already using the Northlink ferry as a way to do surveys, potential data available. KH suggested modelling hotspots however there is not a good baseline for Shetland. KH would have a think about it and come back with ideas.

SM asked whether the data from the Shetland Orca sightings page on Facebook would be useful. KH stated that they already look at the page but have to spend time working out what is real and what is not. Also there is a lack of data for the west coast of Shetland due to the lack of roads along the coast for people to follow the pods. KH continued to say that national surveys happen every 10 years however it can be a low resolution. RS stated that although she has seen Harbour Porpoises within South Nesting Bay, there is no evidence within the national surveys. KH identified that this could be because the surveys are carried out in the summer, so don't reflect winter aggregations. KH continued saying that the Fair Isle D+R MPA were hoping to acquire sea pods to record year round and in particular the clicks made by certain cetaceans. JD asked whether a form existed for cetacean sightings and RS stated there was possibly one on the SAT website. JD suggested advertising it especially for visitors and SM said that there could be ones put in Tourist office. AT suggested having a download as well. KH added that Orca Watch would be running from late May- June and National Whale and Dolphin Week would link in with the Nature Festival (28th July-5th August). RS asked whether there was a Shetland Field Survey group that could get involved, however the main consensus from the group was the field survey group are a walking group and do not collect data. RS asked whether Harbour and grey seals should be covered generally or have specific action and KH responded that they do could have an action similar to the Eider duck action.

Actions

- MS to give a list of specific bird species to include within the EAP
- VT & RS to schedule meeting to discuss historic environment and cultural heritage action
- Any other suggested actions to be submitted by the end of March 2018

4. Marine Plan development timeline

JR stated this had already been touched upon during discussions of the SoPP but asked RS to continue.

RS stated that the partnership were obliged by ministers to create the RMP within 3 years, if it is not possible to complete the work in the timeframe, a letter needed to be written to ministers explaining why. The ministers could potentially take the partnerships right away so the deadline is to be kept to as much as possible. The SoEA was published last year and the SoPP was nearly completed as discussed. Initial consultation on policies had been done by Abi Cowing while RS was on maternity leave. JR asked what the timescale for the public consultation was. RS responded stating that it would be April.

The Scope of the plan was similar to the 4th edition with some updates and new policies. Consultation will be carried out on the draft policies through newsletters, email groups and public meetings in Lerwick, Scalloway and North Shetland. This will be followed by an advisory group meeting in July to discuss the feedback from the public consultation. The formal public consultation will run from late July until October 2018 with the deadline date for publication the 22 March 2019, essentially a year. There must also be a letter written to ministers asking to go ahead with the consultation which can take around 6 weeks.

The feedback on the proposed policy amendments and new policies were discussed in detail. This included discussion on increasing consistency between development restricted areas of Whiteness, Weisdale and Busta Voe and also the SSMO closed area. RS continued stating there had been some confusion over closed areas during the workshops and reiterated that it was not intended to have an over-arching policy to restrict development in Sullom Voe. There was some confusion in relation to the specific historical reasons for aquaculture development restriction in Whiteness, Weisdale and Busta. JR said he would look through historical documents and provide clarity on the issue.

RS suggested a new policy relating to harbour areas (SIC and LPA) ensuring developments must adhere to any policies and plans set by harbour authorities for these areas. GM suggested adding the bylaws as this is where the Harbour Authority have their powers.

RS asked for any final comments to be completed by the end of the month. JR reiterated this.

Actions

- Any final comments on the draft policies will be submitted by the end of March
- Public consultation on draft policies will begin in late April
- Next advisory group meeting will be scheduled for July 2018 followed by 3 month formal consultation period

5. Maritime heritage project update

CS offered a brief overview of the project and the workshop that had been held on gaining heritage skills which had been a success before mentioning the next events and the final outcome expected.

Actions

- Ongoing project work

6. AOB

KH asked for an update on the current recruitment for another marine spatial planning officer. RS stated that the recruitment had closed last week and there had been a number of applicants. The interviewing process will begin next few weeks.

JR Thanked everyone for attending the meeting and gave a final reminder to have any feedback in by the end of the month, updated policies will be circulated at the end of the month and the next meeting should be in July.