

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE      Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure

DATE            24 May 2011

DIRECTOR        Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT      Scotland's National Marine Plan Consultation

REPORT NUMBER:      EPI/11/135

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### 1.      PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present the response on behalf of the Council for the consultation 'Scotland's National Marine Plan PRE-CONSULTATION DRAFT'.

### 2.      RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the committee: -

A) Approves the view of the Council to the consultation.

### 3.      FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no identified financial implications at this present time. The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 states that marine planning functions will be delegated to a regional level via Marine Planning Partnerships (MPP). The MPP should consist of appropriate stakeholders including local authorities. At this level, the National Marine Plan will be implemented locally through a regional marine plan. It is anticipated that it may take up to five years to establish appropriate regions and MPPs. By this time, there will be a better understanding of potential financial implications to the Council associated with this function.

### 4.      OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The development of a National Marine Plan is a statutory requirement of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. Part 3 of the Act places a duty on Scottish Ministers to prepare and adopt a National Marine Plan, followed by regional marine plans. This consultation is the first step in the process of meeting this requirement.

### 5.      BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

The recently approved Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 allows for the management of the competing demands on marine resources more effectively. A National Marine Plan sets up the strategic objectives for the Scottish marine area including important marine activities such as renewable energy, aquaculture, conservation, recreation and tourism, ports, harbours and shipping etc. The National Marine Plan will be implemented at a regional level via regional marine plans. Scottish Marine Regions will each have a Marine Planning Partnership to develop and implement a regional marine plan.

This pre-consultation Draft National Marine Plan starts the process of agreeing the policies and objectives required to ensure Scotland has a healthy and sustainable marine environment, delivering sustainable economic growth.

Officers agree with the way the plan has been set out and that it clearly aims to compliment terrestrial planning, addresses the key challenges for the different sectors, and identifies the pressures. Officers also agree mostly with the detail presented for each of the sectors (food, energy, tourism & recreation, marine transport, telecommunications & cables, military, marine environment, coastal/water, plus, aggregates & disposal).

The plan has outlined the following for each sector: -

- Key challenges;
- Objectives;
- Background;
- Current Situation;
- Environmental Impacts;
- Economic impacts;
- Spatial Constraints; and
- Future – short, medium and long term goals.

Officers feel that for each sector, the plan mainly captures the required detail for each of the points noted above. For example, officers believe that the detail for food and fisheries captures the current position and reflects the different policy developments of the Government and the broad agreements with the different fishing bodies. Officers also welcome the importance given to the development of marine renewables which will be relevant for the future of Aberdeen City. Officers have also identified some gaps for some of the sectors. For example, the medium and long term plans for Tourism and Recreation do not consider the need to explore emerging marine related sports, plus, there are no details on disposal in terms of Aggregates and Disposal. Concerns have been raised over the suggestion for shore based electricity under Marine Transport. There is no on shore electrical supply facilities available at Aberdeen Harbour, plus, the nature of vessel movement at Aberdeen could make it inappropriate and costly.

The full series of questions along with the Council's response are detailed in Appendix 1 of the committee paper.

## 6. IMPACT

The creation of a National Marine Plan and the role of local authorities will assist the Council in delivering a number of Single Outcome Agreement Outcomes including: -

1 - 'We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe'.

2 - 'We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people'.

11 - 'We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others'.

12 - 'We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and enhance it for future generations'.

14 - 'We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production'.

This report does not have an effect on people's equality and human rights, therefore, an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has not been conducted.

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

APPENDIX 1 – Scotland's National Marine Plan PRE-CONSULTATION DRAFT – Aberdeen City Council Response Paper.

## 8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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APPENDIX 1 – Scotland's National Marine Plan PRE-CONSULTATION DRAFT – Aberdeen City Council Response Paper.

### **Q1. Do you have any comments on Chapters 1-6?**

These chapters clearly set out the purpose of the National Marine Plan; how it will compliment terrestrial planning; the key challenges for the different sectors; how the Scottish Marine Area has been assessed and pressures identified; and provide brief details on the main related European Directives.

**Q2. Do you have any comments on Chapter 7 – National Marine Plan – Key Objectives?**

Aberdeen City Council (the Council) welcomes the key objectives from the National Marine Plan. Some of the High Level Marine Objectives (HLMO) are, however, not very clear and many appear to overlap or are similar with others. For example, in the paragraph 'Healthy and Biologically Diverse Seas' HLMO 1, HLMO12, HLMO14, and GES 1 all appear to have a similar aim for biodiversity. Similarly, in the paragraph 'Productive Seas, contributing to the needs of people' there are a number of objectives covering both responsible use of the marine environment, plus, ones that deal with economic growth/wealth/rewards etc. All objectives need to be made clearer and distinct from one another.

**Q3. Do you have any comments on Chapter 8 – Climate Change objectives?**

The Council does not have any comments to make on this chapter.

**Q4. Do you have any comments on Chapter 9 – Scottish Government approach to development in the Marine Area?**

The Council does not have any comments to make on this chapter.

**Q5. Do you have any comments on Chapter 10 – Interactions Matrix?**

The Interactions Matrix appears simple to use and it can be seen at a glance the different interactions between the different sectors.

**Q6. Do you have any comments on Section 1 FOOD – Introduction?**

The Council does not have any comments to make at this on this section.

**Q7. Do you have any comments on Section 1.1 FOOD – Fisheries?**

The Council agrees that this section captures the current position reflecting the different policy developments of the Government and the broad agreements with the various fishing bodies such as the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) and the Scottish White Fish Producers Association Limited (SWFP).

**Q8. Do you have any comments on Section 1.2 FOOD – Wild Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries?**

The Council does not have any comments to make at this time on this section.

**Q9. Do you have any comments on Section 1.3 FOOD – Aquaculture?**

The Council does not deal with aquaculture and, therefore, has no comments to make on this section.

**Q10. Do you have any comments on Section 2 ENERGY – Introduction?**

The Council does not have any comments to make at this time on this section.

**Q11. Do you have any comments on Section 2.1 ENERGY – Oil & Gas?**

The Council does not have any comments to make at this time on this section.

**Q12.Do you have any comments on Section 2.2 ENERGY – Carbon Capture & Storage?**

The Council does not have any comments to make at this time on this section. We are supportive of the profile given in the document to ensure that such developments do not adversely affect the natural environment.

**Q13.Do you have any comments on Section 2.3 ENERGY – Renewables?**

The Council welcomes the importance given to the development of marine renewables in the draft NMP. The successful exploitation of Scotland's offshore wind, wave and tidal resources are crucially important for the future of Aberdeen.

**Q14.Do you have any comments on Section 3 TOURISM & RECREATION?**

The Council feels that this section in general captures many of the important aspects for tourism and recreation, but feels that there are a number of activities that have not been considered. For example, kite surfing is a popular sport in the North East (Balmedie, Queens Links and Fraserburgh). There doesn't appear to be a clear rationale for the activities considered within the short, medium and long term plans and that there does not appear to be any plan to explore emerging sports in areas not discussed in the plan.

It is also unclear why under 'Impact of development' within Tourism and Recreation that reference is made to the need to consider potential significant effects of developments as per the EU Habitats Directive. This is a consideration that needs to be taken in any development and not just those associated with Tourism and Recreation.

**Q15.Do you have any comments on Section 4 MARINE TRANSPORT?**

The proposals for Marine Transport are welcomed. However, in terms of 'Environmental Impacts' and the suggested improvements, there are concerns over the suggestion of on shore based electricity generation, as in the case of Aberdeen Harbour, there is no on shore electrical supply facilities and currently no proposals for installation. While the initiative to introduce a supply would be welcome, the varied nature of vessel movements in Aberdeen would make the task extremely difficult. For example, vessels would require to be adapted at large costs, the electrical power required would overload the City's demand and upgrade would be a massive infrastructure requirement; demand loads would be very variable. Additionally, under current regimes, this proposal would be more expensive for shipping companies than burning diesel as the use of on shore electricity is more carbon intensive, therefore, there would be no incentive. On shore facilities are more appropriate for regular routes or regular vessels docking at the same position. This type of method would be more appropriate for the Orkney and Shetland ferries for example or regular larger container vessels making the same trips.

The medium to long term plans do not include any environmental aims such as new fleet technologies and fuel efficiencies. The Scottish Government has influence over the lifeline services and could use these as an exemplar.

**Q16.Do you have any comments on Section 5 TELECOMS & CABLES?**

The Council does not have any comments to make at this time on this section.

**Q17.Do you have any comments on Section 6 MILITARY ACTIVITIES?**

The Council does not have any comments to make at this time on this section.

**Q18.Do you have any comments on Section 7 MARINE ENVIRONMENT?**

The Council agrees with points made in the section Marine Nature Conservation. It does, however, wish to note that there is no mention of the Precautionary Principle within the plan which should be adopted when there is a lack of data in a marine area. This does not mean an ultimate ban on activity in an area, but more of a requirement to proceed with caution during decision making. There should also be some reference to the need for mitigation measures where damaging impacts to the marine environment cannot be avoided.

Within the Marine Historic Environment section, there is reference to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) as playing a role in delivering the objectives and challenges for the Historic Environment. ICZM should be a cross cutting theme of the whole plan and not just certain sectors. ICZM is about the sustainable development of the coastal environment, balancing economic, social and environmental aspects, solving conflicts in terms of the uses of the coastal environment and so on.

**Q19.Do you have any comments on Section 8.1 COASTAL/WATER – Coastal Protection & Flood Defences?**

This section needs to state that flooding and coastal changes are actually a natural process. This could be included in the sub section 'Environmental Impact'? Coastal changes and flooding are regarded in a negative way due to the impact that it has on settlements situated in the coastal area. The information in this sub section could also do with being expanded stating exactly why risk management projects can have negative impacts to the environment, particularly hard engineering. Soft engineering details could also be expanded within this section stating how such interventions can reduce negative impacts to the coastal environment.

**Q20.Do you have any comments on Section 8.2 COASTAL/WATER – Water Abstraction?**

The Council does not have any comments to make at this time on this section.

**Q21.Do you have any comments on Section 8.3 COASTAL/WATER – Waste Water?**

The Council believes that the impacts of sewage discharge are not discussed in any real depth. There is a brief mention with the Environmental Impacts

sub section although the impacts are not detailed enough and appear vague. Medium to long term plans should include expanded use of Anaerobic Digestion (AD) for treatment of waste water and should be pursued in light of Government plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to climate change and ensuring sustainable use of resources.

**Q22. Do you have any comments on Section 9 AGGREGATES & DISPOSAL?**

The Council feels that this section fails to address the subject of disposal even though the title of this section is AGGREGATES & DISPOSAL.

**Q23. Do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan discriminates disproportionately between persons defined by age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, race and religion and belief?**

No

**Q24. If you answered yes to question 23 in what way do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan is discriminatory?**

Not Applicable.