APPENDIX 2

SCARBOROUGH HARBOUR FISHING TASK GROUP

NOTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING WITH AN EXPERT PANEL – 7 FEBRUARY 2018

Present:

Members of the Task Group:

Cllr Mark Vesey (Chair)

Cllr David Chance

Cllr Paul Cross

Cllr David Jeffels

Cllr Janet Jefferson

Cllr Steve Siddons

Expert Panel:

Tim Smith, Senior Environmental and Scientific Officer, North Eastern

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NEIFCA)

Andrew Newlands, Principal Marine Officer, Marine Management

Organisation (MMO)

Andrew Oliver, Partner, Andrew Jackson Solicitors (Marine Industry

Lawyer)

Professor Mike Elliott, Research Professor, Institute of Estuarine and

Coastal Studies, University of Hull

Also in attendance: Twelve members of the public and five other councillors, Harbour Master and Deputy.

1. Declarations of interest

Cllr Chance declared a personal interest in his capacity as the North Yorkshire County Council representative on NEIFCA.

2, Public Question Time

The Chair reported that none had been received.

3. Review of Fishing Sector in Scarborough Harbour

Question 1: Projections for the fishing industry to 2030?

- The value of shellfish landings at Scarborough has increased from £2.5m in 2013 to £4.2 million in 2017, scallops from £90k in 2013 to £1.6m in 2017, whilst the value of white fish landings has declined from £0.5m in 2013 to £250k in 2017. Unlikely that whitefish landings will increase in the short term.
- Stocks are reasonably healthy and sustainable but since shellfish landings are reaching saturation point then a cap will probably be introduced. It is the value of shellfish that has risen significantly, not the tonnage. Shellfish regulations may tighten reducing the number of pots operators can have, probably a cap of some 800 pots per vessel. Inshore fishing for shellfish will remain important along the Yorkshire coast.
- There is some conflict between shellfish (crustaceans) and scallops (molluscs), static and mobile, for fishing grounds which requires resolution
- Industry seems to be dividing into two: larger offshore vessels and inshore vessels. Fishing quotas increasingly in the hands of fewer larger companies. There seems to be growing co-operation between the two sectors. There will be more regulation and use of quota but the industry will self-regulate more with a lighter touch by Government. If the stock is properly managed, and measures need to be introduced for shellfish and scallops, then the stocks will remain sustainable, especially with diversification.
- We are losing skills as youngsters not interested and we rely on migrant labour.

Question 2: Brexit and regulation changes?

- Brexit impact is unknown; we may get control of our 200-mile limit so we could fish for species that the Dutch and Belgians catch now. If we do not catch them, then we are obliged to let them catch the fish eg Dover sole and plaice.
- Fish stocks move so we may want to fish in their grounds, Icelandic etc so would have to do a deal.
- New Fisheries Bill due soon. We may get more local control?
- Even with Brexit, the stock will still need to be managed to make it sustainable. Do not envisage a significant change to catching restrictions on whitefish. Quotas are not going away.
- The Common Fisheries Policy has taught us that policies which are industry-led and regionalised work the best. Brexit is an opportunity to make locally based decisions on how fisheries are run. Could end up with a tri-lateral agreement between the EU, UK and Norway which will require a lot of local management
- Likely to be a national cap on shellfish effort. New regulation requiring egg bearing lobsters to be returned to the sea. An example of the ongoing development of regulations to make fisheries sustainable.
- Enforcement will revert to the UK - will the UK have the capacity to enforce its fishing grounds?

- Better electronic recording and management of catches are happening, even for small boats, technology improving, but the data is already very good
- MMO and IFCA may merge.
- Marine Stewardship Council certification required to sell fish in increasing number of shops.
- A significant issue will be the Customs Union and trade since a large amount of UK landings are sold abroad. 90% of locally landed shellfish is exported. Border controls could slow down export of fresh fish and cause big problems for the quality and saleability of the product. However, the documentation and certification of catches from smaller vessels is improving.
- 'We export what we catch and import what we eat!' Fishers are far more sanguine about Brexit than the processers who fear these problems with tariffs and border controls.

Question 3: Any new sectors emerging?

- Climate change is offering new opportunities as new species arrive in our waters. British consumers not as adventurous as Europeans in eating other species: sea bass, velvet crabs, John Dory, Angler fish (monkfish) and squid
- Anchovies, American razor clams and non-native oysters fisheries are now caught in southern North sea
- Aquaculture: e.g. application for huge mussel farm in Lyme Bay, Dorset, but the Yorkshire coast is perhaps too exposed for this kind of industry, however technology is improving to create systems for the mussels to grow. Will require both courage and investment. New biotech and vitamin sources from sea algae are being developed. Algal kelp grown in sheltered coastal areas e.g. west coast of Scotland. Recent feasibility study in Whitby for algal culture. Will not be high volume but will be high value. Difficult to predict what will happen in the future e.g. huge Dogger Bank windfarm could not have been foreseen 20 years ago
- Fishing has to adapt to pressure on the sea from other users e.g. windfarms. However, this may help long line fishing and potting, since free from trawlers.
- Oil and gas decommissioning worth billions of pounds and growth in fishing vessels serving the offshore wind industry
- Seaweed farm products made into special local products, Scarborough soap, makeup etc
- Our coast has very high quality catches, we need to market it better, increasing profile and revenue c.f. the Holderness FLAG

Question 4: Any new infrastructure required for future?

- Collaboration along the coast so Filey, Bridlington, Scarborough and Whitby are not competing e.g. invest in common shellfish holding and processing facilities and in a joint marketing drive?
- Advances in technology mean that processing does not have to be on the quayside. Overcoming the physical limitations of the harbour and creating larger processing facilities offsite would increase efficiency and productivity

e.g. in Fleetwood a state of the art fish park – low local catches but a strong local processing industry
- Fishing, tourism and retail could work more closely together. Process and then sell landed shellfish and whitefish locally. Newer species e.g. Dover sole and plaice – market and consume locally rather than incur export tariffs post-Brexit
- Out of EU we would need efficient & fast certification of catches, no delays so stay fresh.
- Discards can be used as bait or animal feed but have to be handled separately.
- 90% of shellfish is transshipped away so we are losing out on processing it here and generating revenue for the local economy
- EFF grant funding for processing but not for retail because of competition laws
- Remains to be seen what UK Government funding will replace the EFF.
- Will see greater integration of catching and processing. Issue will be access for lorries to load and unload, the lorries' weight, and the logistics of moving fish about. Good port facilities and transport logistics are vital for a successful business.