

The North Sea Regional Advisory Council



NSRAC

Spatial Planning Working Group Report

Euan Dunn, Chair Spatial Planning Working Group, Edinburgh, March 14, 2011

There have not been any meetings of the SPWG since ExCom in Aberdeen in Oct 21-22, 2010. This update reports on activities by the chair and other SPWG members since then and current/forthcoming issues for the SPWG to address.

1. Follow-up to Actions from Edinburgh ExCom, 21-22 Oct 2010

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9. A letter will be sent to the UK Minister, with an input from Euan Dunn, expressing concern at the consultation process and the speed of development for MPAs within the UK EEZ (6.8).	Secretariat Euan Dunn
10. A meeting of the Spatial Planning WG will take place in early January to discuss engagement with Forewind on the Dogger Bank wind-farm proposals and other topics (6.9).	Chair of SPWG Secretariat
14. Ton IJlstra will arrange for the FIMPAS project to consult the NSRAC before submission of a report to ICES (10.10).	Ton IJlstra Secretariat
15. The NSRAC will prepare comments for the JNCC on the UK proposal for a SAC on the Dogger Bank before the deadline of November 12 th . Comments required by November 5 th (12.1; 12.3).	Euan Dunn Members

9. Letter to the UK on MPAs:

This was not auctioned due to a misunderstanding about who was to lead. While Euan Dunn was to have 'input' on his understanding of the process (etc), he judged that the initiative to write the letter should be taken by the sector, for whom the process causes more concern than for the NGOs. These concerns were, in any case, conveyed to the UK Minister by a letter from the MPA Coalition which captures the key NSRAC fishing sector interests. Recent discussion of this point between ED and Pim Visser came to the conclusion that there is no value in the NSRAC expressing its concern now as the 'moment' has passed.

10. Meeting on Forewind proposals for Dogger Bank

ED contacted Sharn Ward (Forewind Offshore Consent Stakeholder Manager) in January who gave him this update on Forewind's development activities:

"Last year we completed the first part of our Zone Appraisal and Planning (ZAP) phase which enabled us to identify Tranche A, the area within which we will begin our Environmental Impact Assessment works and continue our consultation activities around in order to identify the location of our first three projects.

Tranche A is 2000km² and is located in the south west corner of the Zone. The Zone Characterisation (ZoC) and the identification of Tranche A reports are available on our website should you wish to see further details of either the process or the area which we have selected - <http://www.forewind.co.uk/dogger-bank/tranche-a-project-one-documents/>.

The website also includes the scoping report for Dogger Bank Project One, an offshore wind farm of up to 1.4GW in capacity. The report makes proposals for our approach to survey work and the methodologies that we will use to assess any impacts associated with delivery of the project. This was submitted to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) (the regulator for offshore wind farm developments) in support of a request for a formal scoping opinion which was made in October and the IPC consulted with the relevant statutory consultees before providing their formal scoping opinion which has now been published on their website. We do recognise that not all of our stakeholders were invited by the IPC to comment on the report and so did send notification to our full list of stakeholders, including the members of the NSRAC, advising that the report was available should you wish to review it and feedback any comments or questions that you may have.

Our zone wide and Tranche A geophysics surveys were completed last year and we began to undertake a series of shallow boreholes and CPTs across the Zone, the majority of these being focused in the south west region with the aim of characterising the shallow/foundation depth geology. Our environmental survey work will continue across the Zone this year with aerial and boat based bird and marine mammal surveys still being conducted on a monthly basis. We hope to start a number of other environmental surveys in the coming months including benthic and fish ecology surveys.

The next phase of ZAP which will aim to identify Tranche B will be undertaken over the next couple of months and we are seeking to meet with key stakeholders, including yourselves, in the coming weeks in order to inform that work and to provide you with more detailed information on our past and ongoing activities.”

ED has since discussed this with Nigel Proctor who is engaged in assessment work for offshore renewables. Nigel agreed to facilitate setting up a Spatial Planning WG meeting on Forewind Tranche A in early May 2011, venue to be decided but probably UK – original date mooted for this was Tues 3 May, to run back to back with a Demersal WG on Wed 4 May. However, a request has been made by Pim Visser to move these two meetings to 4-5 May.

Action: Make final decision on dates and venue for these meetings

14. Consultation with NSRAC on FIMPAS proposals for Dutch Natura 2000 sites

To address this, a meeting of the Spatial Planning Working Group has been arranged for Wednesday 23rd March at Scotland House, Scotland House, Rond-Point Schuman 6, B-1040 Brussels, 10.00am

The purpose of this meeting is to consult the NSRAC on the management measures proposed for the Dutch offshore Natura 2000 sites at the third FIMPAS Workshop (Den Helder, Jan 24-26) with the aim of developing these measures further, and as appropriate. The FIMPAS background and outcomes will be led by Ton Ijlstra (Project Leader, Fisheries measures in MPAs, Fisheries Dept, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality) and Hans Nieuwenhuis (same Dept).

For its part, the fishing sector will present their proposal for Cleaver Bank, and their developing proposal for Dogger Bank. For Dogger Bank, the aim is to agree a procedure whereby the sector develops an initial proposal to put on the table at an internal inter-governmental workshop in the Netherlands, foreseen to take place in May, for Member States with an interest in the Dogger Bank. This will, in turn, feed into the ‘FIMPAS 4’ stakeholders workshop on the Dogger in September 2011.

Action: Anyone else wishing to attend this meeting to give their name/email address to Euan Dunn and Martin Brebner as soon as possible, and not later than March 18

15. NSRAC response to JNCC consultation on Dogger Bank SAC

ED consulted NSRAC members and submitted a response by deadline Nov 12, 2010. The UK intends to submit its final proposal on this site to the Commission in summer 2011. This timing is related to the intention to hold a FIMPAS 4 workshop on the Dogger Bank, including all stakeholders, in Sep 2011 (see above), to facilitate achieving coherent trans-boundary management of the respective national Natura 2000 sites in Dogger Bank.