

**ABERDEEN CITY & SHIRE  
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY**

**Date: 25 March 2011**

**Title: Marine Region Boundaries Consultation**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks homologation for the recent consultation response submitted to the Scottish Government on Scottish marine regions on behalf of the SDPA.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 The creation of marine regions was discussed at the SDPA meeting of 3 December 2010, where it was decided that a response from the SDPA should be submitted. Given that the consultation closed on 18 February, it was resolved that a draft response would be circulated for comment prior to the provisional response being agreed by the SDP Manager in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.
- 2.2 A draft response was circulated to all members and substitute members of the SDPA on 3 February. There were no suggested changes and the provisional response (Appendix 1), was agreed and submitted prior to the consultation closing date.

**3 Scottish Marine Regions, Defining their Boundaries – a consultation**

- 3.1 The Scottish Government published the consultation on Scottish marine regions [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/seamanagement/regional/Consultation](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/seamanagement/regional/Consultation) on 23 November 2010. Below the Scottish national marine plan, smaller marine regions will be needed and the purpose of the consultation was to seek views on how the Government should create these regions - either on the basis of physical characteristic e.g. firths and islands, or based on existing administrative boundaries?
- 3.2 The setting of marine regions is significant to the SDPA as the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 requires strategic development plans (SDPs) to take account of the regional marine plans (RMPs) and RMPs to take account of terrestrial land use plans, i.e. strategic and local development plans. It is therefore important that the SDPA have an awareness of the emerging marine planning regime and an opportunity to influence it at these critical early stages.
- 3.3 Officers from the SDPA attended two workshops organised by the East Grampian Coastal Partnership in association with Marine Scotland; these were held in Fraserburgh and Aberdeen on 26 January 2011. This allowed officers to discuss the key questions and importantly, listen to the comments and concerns of other stakeholders. It was clear that a number of issues relevant to the west coast or Scotland / England border were not relevant to us in the north-east and

as a result, not all consultation questions have been addressed in the provisional response.

- 3.4 The first question relevant to the SDPA was the principle of establishing boundaries (Q.1); which was accepted. However, it was highlighted that the absence of the National Marine Plan was unfortunate as it was difficult to predict what the priorities for individual marine regions might be.
- 3.5 The other issue of most significance was the potential boundaries of the marine regions themselves. Various suggestions were proposed in the consultation document, based on physical characteristics, coastal partnerships, area advisory groups, inshore fisheries groups (IFGs), local authorities etc. From the perspective of the SDPA, limiting the number of marine regions the SDP is required to engage with is an important factor, along with ensuring the boundaries result in manageable plans which are appropriate for the issues to be addressed. Keeping Fraserburgh and Peterhead within the same region is seen as important.
- 3.6 The balance of these considerations would appear to suggest a Moray Firth region extending along north Aberdeenshire to a point west of Fraserburgh and an east coast region extending from there to the Aberdeenshire / Angus border (see Appendix 2).
- 3.7 The remaining points made in the provisional SDPA response relate to the landward and offshore limits. There was a strong preference at the consultation events for a 12nm (nautical miles) offshore limit and the SDPA agrees with this. Such a limit would ensure significant offshore operations were included within the statutory marine plan jurisdiction. The response also sought clarity on the landward limit of the plans and the potential overlap with terrestrial planning (both SDPs and LDPs).

#### **4. Recommendation**

4.1 It is recommended that the SDPA::

- note the contents of this report and homologate the response found in Appendix 1.

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