

Meeting Minutes
Meeting Title: Meeting Minutes – Moray Firth Commercial Fisheries Working Group
Date / Venue: 24.09.15, Mercure Hotel, Inverness
Attendees: Sarah Pirie (MORL), Peter Moore (MORL), Peter Lumsden (MORL), Jonathan Wilson (BOWL), Malcolm Morrison (SFF), Jay Mackay (FIR), John Alexander (Fraserburgh static gear), Peter Smith (Buckie static gear), James Reid (Nephrops rep), Roger May (Marine Scotland), Bruce Buchanan (Marine Scotland),
Minutes taken by: BMM
Apologies: John Watt Jnr (FIR)

1.0	Welcome, introduction and apologies.
2.0	<p>Peter Moore gave a project update (see attached presentation) summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MORL development will comprise of up to 186 turbines in total over the three consented sites with spacing between the turbines being in excess of 1km (1,200 m downwind and 1,050 m crosswind). • Marine Licence has been issued for the modified offshore export cable route (see chart in MORL presentation). • Construction will be over two phases with the first commencing in 2019 and the second construction phase following at a later date. Each phase is dependent upon winning the Government's "Contract for Difference" auction, the next round of which is yet to be announced. • There would be safety exclusion zones around construction activities during Phase 1 and MORL would endeavour as far as is practically possible to minimise interference to fishing activities.
3.0	Jay Mackay enquired as to the combined length of the interarray cables. Peter Lumsden stated that it would be approximately 100 km, although the turbine layout and interarray cable layout are not yet finalised.
4.0	Malcolm Morrison asked if the construction of Phases 1 & 2 were dependent on a contract for difference award. Sarah Pirie responded that essentially they were.
5.0	With regards to cable burial depths, Peter Moore stated that the target burial depth for the interarray and the export cables was 1.0m.
6.0	Malcolm Morrison requested that once the inter-array cable layout had been finalised it would be sent to members of the CFWG.
7.0	James Reid asked about the results of the geophysical surveys conducted to date. Peter Lumsden replied that the surveys had shown the presence of boulders in certain areas and that some of these over 300mm diameter might require some relocating. The fisheries representatives present stated that the coordinates of any relocated significant boulders would need to be communicated to fishermen in order to avoid them becoming snagging risks to towed gears.
8.0	Peter Moore stated that the draft MORL Commercial Fisheries Mitigation Strategy was agreed pre-consent but that it had yet to be finalised, but would include the following components:

- Progressing the proposed scallop gear trials
- Continued membership of the CFWG meetings
- A commitment to undertaking over-trawling trials post construction.
- Employment of FLOs and FIRs as appropriate
- Inviting commercial fishing vessels to tender for guard and survey work as appropriate.
- Continuing to maintain a productive dialogue with the fishing industry.

9.0

In response to questions regarding cable protection, Peter Lumsden stated that MORL's preferred option was total burial to depths of at least 1.0m and that additional protection measures such as rock placement would be a last resort and would be minimised as far as was practically possible. Malcolm Morrison stated that the option of bagged rock was not a method to which the SFF approved of as it has high potential for damaging towed fishing gears. It was also considered that concrete mattresses would not be appropriate in areas where scallop dredging occurred, although this was not, although a preference for these was expressed from some representatives present and it was agreed that the form of protection needs to be specific to the location. Malcolm Morrison asked if MORL was considering using the Ecosse Scar Plough for the installation works. Peter Lumsden responded that he did not consider it appropriate for this work.

10.0

It was stated that the MORL export cable will cross the SHE-T Caithnes to Moray HVDC Link approximately 20km offshore and that the MORL cable is likely to be surface laid at this point with the requirement for protection. At present the type and extent of protection is not known and will be dependent upon agreement between MORL and SHE-T. Standard guidance states that any digging equipment should be raised 250 m either side from the marked location of the existing cable and new cables should be surface laid from this point. MORL is keen to negotiate this distance down.

11.0

Malcolm Morrison requested that the SFF be consulted on the selection of cable protection measures.

Nick Brockie stated that the BOWL cable plan would be finalised by November 2015.

12.0

Nick Brockie gave a presentation (attached) summarising:

- The project status
- Offshore activities to take place in 2015
- Key project details
- Post consent design reduction
- Windfarm layout
- Cable corridor boundary
- Outline construction programme
- Construction methods and OTM illustration

- Key consent conditions relating to commercial fisheries
- A summary of the Commercial fisheries mitigation strategy

13.0

Malcolm Morrison stated that the SFF opposed the BOWL consent application but had not formally objected to it and that whilst technically the ES has assessed that the impacts of the construction of the wind farm would not be significant to commercial fishing as a whole, impacts on individual vessels could not be ignored.

14.0

Nick Brockie reiterated BOWL's commitment to maintaining dialogue and coexistence with the fishing industry and acknowledged that construction activities could have some disruption effects on fishing activities.

15.0

Stephen Appleby stated that it was difficult to accurately quantify the economic impact of the construction of offshore developments such as OWF's due to the number of unrelated variables affecting fishing incomes such as changes in quotas, the unpredictability of the implementation legislation and conservation measures, market forces and the condition of the stocks of commercially exploited species.

16.0

Malcolm Morrison stated that he believed that evidence was emerging of reduced fish stocks and fishing effort where OWF's had been built. Stephen Appleby stated that there was also evidence to the contrary at certain operational sites and for some others it was inconclusive.

17.0

Roger May stated that Marine Scotland Science was undertaking a study of potential changes in fishing patterns during OWF's construction and operation in order to develop an industry wide evidence base and that some research issues may be questions to take to SpoRRAn. Roger May referred to an example of a floating OWF where total exclusion for the life of the project would occur, in which case a community benefit fund could be appropriate.

18.0

Malcolm Morrison stated that the SFF was seeking a commitment from developers for community funding to benefit the commercial fisheries sector as a last resort for impacts that could not be mitigated by other means and made reference to the Fishermen's Legacy Trust Fund financed by the UK offshore oil and gas industry. (Note: The Fishermen's Legacy Trust Fund has been established to compensate the UK fishing industry for the leaving of decommissioned oil and gas infrastructure in-situ.)

19.0

Stephen Appleby requested that Malcolm Morrison circulate to CFWG members the SFF's position and suggestions in respect of community funding options.

20.0

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Actions:

- Malcolm Morrison to circulate the SFF's position and suggestions for community funding.
- Roger May to circulate further information in respect of the MSS research into changing fishing patterns in OWF's and relevant references.