

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Question 1: Capacity Penalties

Do you agree that capacity penalties on licence aggregations bring unnecessary costs to industry and should therefore be removed?

Comments: Given the indicated potential headroom between the UK fleet ceiling and the actual fleet level on tonnage and engine power, capacity penalties on licence aggregations seem unnecessary and should be removed.

Question 2: Licence categories

A) In light of the forthcoming landing obligation, do you agree that there is a need to change the current licensing structure?

B) Do you agree with a proposal to have only one 10m & Under Licence and one Over 10m Licence?

C) Do you agree that the lowest common denominator (see section 3.2.3) should apply when transferring or aggregating a licence within Scotland?

Comments: A) Given the forthcoming landing obligation the Comhairle agrees that there is a need to simplify the licensing structure.

B) The Comhairle agrees with the proposal to have only one 10m and under Licence and one over 10m Licence.

C) With local industry concerns on latent shellfish and scallop entitlements, the Comhairle agrees that the lowest common denominator principle should apply to licence transfers or aggregations.

Question 3: Mismatches

A) Do you agree to the removal of the mis-match provisions on transactions involving the use of dis-aggregated entitlements?

B) Do you agree to the proposed change in the way mis-match provisions will be recorded on the licence?

Comments: A) The Comhairle agrees with the proposal for removal of the mis-match provisions on dis-aggregated entitlements.

B) The Comhairle agrees with the proposed change in the way mis-match provisions will be recorded on the licence.

Question 4: The validity period for unattached licence entitlements (shelf life)

Do you believe the entitlement validity period should be extended to a 10 year period?

Comments: The entitlement validity period should be extended to a 10 year period for both over 10m vessels and 10m and under vessels.

Question 5: Scallop and Shellfish Entitlements

Do you agree with the Scottish Government's proposal for the removal of scallop entitlements that have not been used within the last seven years i.e. entitlements that have not been placed on board a vessel that is rigged and operational within the fishery?

Comments: With industry expressing concern on latent entitlements in the scallop sector, the Comhairle agrees with the removal of scallop entitlements that have not been used in the last seven years with the proviso that the proposed six months' notice is given regarding the removal of the entitlement.

Question 6: New Entrants

Do you agree with the concept of licensing incentives to support and promote a new entrants scheme to the Scottish fishing industry?

Comments: As highlighted in Question 1 there appears to be scope, given the potential headroom between the UK fleet ceiling and actual fleet activity in terms of licensed tonnage and engine power, to consider innovative licensing incentives aimed at new entrants. The Comhairle agrees with the concept of licensing incentives to support and promote new entrants. The Comhairle has specifically funded and initiated two schemes to support new entrants into the fishing industry – Outer Hebrides Fisheries Support Scheme (aimed at first time vessel owners under the age of 40 purchasing a vessel for the first time) and a Community Quota Scheme (investment in nephrops quota available to lease), securing long term fishing opportunities in the area.

Question 7: Days at Sea/Effort Eligibility

A) Do you agree with the removal of CRZ eligibility completely?

Or

B) Do you agree that CRZ eligibility should be kept, with an updated reference period that will roll forward annually?

Comments: It is essential that whatever proposals are adopted, prudent management is implemented which takes into consideration protecting and sustaining the fragile coastal communities of the West Coast of Scotland that depend on traditional vessels having all-year access to important fisheries. With no alternative fishing opportunities traditional vessels also sustain an important processing sector and employment opportunities in fragile, rural areas.

Under Option 1 with the abolishment of Cod Recovery Zone eligibility criteria, any prospect of licence aggregation irrespective of TR1 or TR2 eligibility is viewed by the Comhairle to have significant risk. Year-round fishing opportunities are essential to communities of the Outer Hebrides and the wider West Coast. The risk of a sudden and unplanned early closure of the fishery is not acceptable to the Comhairle unless significant safeguards are incorporated.

Under Option 2 with the continuation of CRZ eligibility and the reference period being updated to 2006 to 2012 with an annual roll forward, this proposal has the potential of eroding traditional West Coast fishing opportunities especially given the recent redirection of fishing effort from the East Coast. Again prudent management safeguards would have to be implemented alongside this proposal.

