

Fish and Fisheries Advisory Group Meeting

22 May 2015, 10:15 – 14:15
Strathearn House, Perth

Minutes

Present

Richard Fyfe (RF) (Chair)	SEPA
David Harley (DH)	SEPA
Eilidh Johnston (EJ)	SEPA
Carla Ward (CW)	SEPA
Kjersti Birkeland (KB)	SEPA
David Summers (DS)	Tay DSFB
Colin Bean (CB)	SNH
Rob Mitchell (RM)	RAFTS
Ross Gardiner (RG)	Scottish Government Marine Scotland Freshwater
Chris Bromley (CBr)	SEPA
Roy Richardson (RR)	SEPA
Chris Horrill (CH)	RAFTS

Apologies:

Joyce Carr	Scottish Government
Colin Adams	Glasgow University
Brian Davidson	ASFB
Alistair Duguid	SEPA

No.	Item	Action by
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>RF welcomed everyone to the meeting and made round table introductions. He introduced Roy who is new RBMP unit manager (previously worked on flooding) and Chris from the hydromorphology team. It was noted that EJ is now co-ordinator for the group.</p>	
2	<p>Update on second river basin plans development (DH/EJ)</p> <p>DH described current position re consultation on draft RBMPs: Scotland plan consultation is now closed, Solway Tweed closes 9 June 2015. SEPA is currently working on many aspects of data and plan development. This is on track and on time, and is currently a high priority area of work.</p> <p>EJ presented an initial summary of consultation responses for the Scotland draft RBMP consultation, noting that these require further analysis and discussion. A full digest of responses will be published in September, with final plans due out in December 2015. RBMP unit been engaging with local authorities to gather information on morphology and fish barrier partnership working.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">RM expressed surprise at the high level of support for 'baseline scenario' on fish barriers. CW explained that this response was usually driven by the need to set realistic targets.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CB noted the support for removal of barriers rather than installing passes. He raised a current project looking at installing Marine Scotland fish counters on passes, and suggested this could be an opportunity for joined up working. <p>Action: AD to raise this issue with the national counter network group. SEPA to provide fish barrier data as appropriate.</p>	AD
3	<p>Physical condition workshop (CBr / RR) CBr explained that he is current custodian of MImAS tool, RR was involved in its initial development.</p> <p>He gave a presentation (attached) covering the use and application of MImAS, examples of assessments, and future development work. He asked for feedback on better ways to assess status.</p> <p>Key discussion points were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which fish habitat assessment is covered by MImAS. CBr noted that this tool does not aim to replace fish classification tools, but that it includes some relevant scoring. It was noted that the tool was peer reviewed by a group of ecologists. CB suggested that this validation should be re-run for the Scottish sites, as the tool is now only used in Scotland. Future review of the tool. It was noted that changes can be made, and that we are interested in improving the tool through external consultation. In particular, CBr asked for views on fish ecology, invertebrates and macro-invertebrates. Monitoring of restoration sites. CBr noted that a comprehensive monitoring programme is being proposed for pilot catchment sites, subject to funding. Improving ecological assessment of lost habitat areas. It was suggested that monitoring could involve electrofishing and habitat survey during periods of change, or use of existing fish data (e.g. SFCC) to carry out regression analysis on interventions. Role of MImAS in setting priorities for restoration. It was noted that MImAS doesn't identify areas for restoration, but can help to identify catchments where partnership work will be needed to develop restoration projects at a catchment scale. It was noted that a healthy, functioning river corridor will bring a range of benefits. <p>It was agreed that this topic was of continued interest to the group, and that members should look at the SNIFFER reports on the tool. http://www.sniffer.org.uk/files/5513/5151/1693/WFD49_MImAS_report_Final_Aug06.pdf http://www.sniffer.org.uk/files/3613/4183/8001/WFD49c.pdf</p> <p>A workshop session with examples, plus further work on monitoring, would be helpful.</p> <p>Action: SEPA to list the ecologists who were involved in developing MImAS Module 3 sensitivity (ecological)</p>	CBr/RR
4	<p>Fish barrier app/ Obstacles app (KB) KB explained that SEPA is working with RAFTS, EA and technical partners to develop a mobile app and a website which will allow recording of fish barriers. It will be ready for launch within next month. Go to http://naturelocator.org to see similar apps. Action: KB to notify the group when the barrier app becomes available.</p> <p>KB reported that the app has been well received, and has been undergoing testing by the steering group. Further feedback will be welcomed once it is launched, and FFAG members can help by encouraging its use.</p>	KB

	<p>The group were positive about the app, but warned that a safety clause should be inserted to prevent users attempting to measure barrier heights directly. They also stressed the importance of giving feedback on changes resulting from the new information. To partially address this, it was recommended that the final screen on the app should link users to the SE Web map of fish barriers, which will allow people to see when new fish barriers are recorded, or barriers removed.</p> <p>Action: Explore possibility for linking the final page of the app to SE Web fish barrier page.</p>	KB
5	<p>Update on fish barriers - objective setting (CW)</p> <p>CW gave an update on the fish barrier objective setting process and GIS informatics tool which is helping to support it. The presentation has been sent out with these minutes.</p> <p>The group discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of licensing in addressing fish barriers. RM raised the issue of whether we could license 'un-used' structures. • The risk (to intermediary organisations) of the 'clawback' of funding if a hydro scheme was developed on a barrier which had previously been made passable. Also the risk of owners delaying fish passability projects by raising the possibility of a hydro scheme. • The addition of gradient considerations to the fish barrier classification and objective setting process. There was some discussion of the use of DTM data in this analysis. <p>DH responded that SEPA is aware of the complexity surrounding licensing and hydro issues. This was recommended as a discussion topic for a future meeting.</p>	
6	<p>Actions, AOB, Close of meeting</p> <p>The action log from previous meetings was reviewed, and updates were given as follows:</p> <p>Action 2: Complete. Action 7: Ongoing Action 20: CW advised that licensed sites are not being consulted on, but that she can provide details on these pressures if contacted directly. Action 22: KB noted that AD had examined this, and there is no environmental standard for suspended solids / turbidity. Assessment is on a site by site basis, and with evidence of environmental damage. Action 23: Complete Action 24: Complete. [Please see updated action log appended to these minutes, incorporating new actions]</p> <p>Under AOCB, there was a brief discussion about EU response if Scotland fails to meet its RBMP first cycle targets.</p> <p>RF thanked the group for their input to a very useful meeting. RG welcomed the update paper provided, and the group asked for access to the meeting presentations (ideally on website).</p> <p>The provisional date of next meeting was set as Thursday 17 September, in</p>	

Perth. Note: this meeting subsequently deferred until 1 December 2015.

Fish & Fisheries Advisory Group – Action log

Action number	Action	Owner	Date to be completed	Update
1	SEPA to circulate links to document(s) on cost-benefit analysis	RF/CW	End Oct	Complete
2	SEPA to build in better surrogates for habitat suitability including gradient and area as technically feasible	CW/ AD/KB	For final plan	Complete
3	SEPA to provide a summary of the technical methodology for prioritisation process	CW	End Nov	Complete
4	Any comments on prioritisation lists to be sent by email to CW at earliest opportunity.	All	End Oct	Complete
5	RAFTS to update when strategy is available	RM		Complete
6	SEPA and RAFTS to meet/ discuss how to incorporate additional RAFTS data to the process	CW/RM	End Nov	Complete
7	SEPA/ Scottish government to have discussion on visibility of funding strategies	DH/JC		On-going
8	SEPA to make annexes to WEF report available on website	CW	End Oct	Complete
9	SEPA to circulate link to Directions on updated Standards	RF/CW	End Oct	Complete
10	Detail on ecological surveys and indicators to be provided at a future meeting (added to future agenda items)	MW/CW	End Oct	Complete
11	Detail on a specific site to be checked by MW for DS	MW	End Oct	Complete
12	Include the x and y axis info on environmental benefit chart and circulate	MW/CW	End Oct	Complete
13	Invite national lead Pilot catchment co-ordinator (Shona McConnell) to come to this group at a future stage	CW	End Nov	Complete
14	FFAG to feedback on the delivery mechanisms for physical condition consultation work	All	In line with consultation dates	Complete
15	Provide case studies and show what was learned	RF/AD/CW	Jan	Complete
16	May get SEPA hydromorphology experts to present at a future meeting (added to future agenda items)	RF/AD/CW		Complete
17	As work on review of Mimas tool is carried out consider how best to get input of this group	RF/AD/CW		Complete
18	Morphology critique on the first paper to be circulated	RF/CW	End Nov	Complete
19	Consider how best for FFAG to input to SEPA monitoring advice	RF/AD/CW		Complete
20	The group should receive an explanatory note of why large licensed barriers are not shown on the tool, and how this information can be accessed.	CW		Complete
21	Ask a hydromorphologist to present	CW / RF		Complete

	information at next meeting on how they assess morphological impact, and the assumptions which underpin this approach			
22	Give a formal answer on how suspended solids / turbidity are considered as part of environmental standards.	CW / AD		Complete
23	Email correct Scottish Government department titles to CW.	RG		Complete
24	Review wording re 'surrogate habitat' in previous minutes with CW.	AD		Complete
25	Raise issue of installing fish counters in fish passes with the national counter network group. SEPA to provide fish barrier data as appropriate.	AD		
26	List the ecologists who were involved in developing MImAS Module 3 sensitivity (ecological)	CBr/RR	June 2015	
27	Notify the group when the fish barrier app becomes available for use / testing	KB	When available	
28	Link the final page of the fish barrier app to SE Web fish barrier page.	KB	asap	