

ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 2 June 2004
(Morning)

Session 2

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ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

14th Meeting 2004, Session 2

CONVENER

*Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Eleanor Scott (Highlands and Islands) (Green)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP)

*Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

*Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab)

*Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con)

*Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

*Mr Alasdair Morrison (Western Isles) (Lab)

Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)

Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)

Jim Mather (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

Jeremy Purvis (Tweeddale, Etrick and Lauderdale) (LD)

Mr Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Tracey Hawe

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Mark Brough

ASSISTANT CLERK

Chris Berry

Catherine Johnstone

LOCATION

Committee Room 4

Scottish Parliament

Environment and Rural Development Committee

Wednesday 2 June 2004

(Morning)

[THE CONVENER opened the meeting at 11:07]

Subordinate Legislation

Sea Fishing (Enforcement of Community Quota and Third Country Fishing Measures) (Scotland) Order 2004 (SSI 2004/209)

Pesticides (Maximum Residue Levels in Crops, Food and Feeding Stuff) (Scotland) Amendment (No 2) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/220)

The Convener (Sarah Boyack): I welcome everyone to the 14th meeting in 2004 of the Environment and Rural Development Committee. We have received apologies from Nora Radcliffe, who is not with us this week because her mother died. The committee will want to send an expression of its condolences to Nora.

The first item on the agenda is consideration of the Sea Fishing (Enforcement of Community Quota and Third Country Fishing Measures) (Scotland) Order 2004 (SSI 2004/209) and the Pesticides (Maximum Residue Levels in Crops, Food and Feeding Stuff) (Scotland) Amendment (No 2) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/220). The Subordinate Legislation Committee considered both instruments but commented only on the sea fishing order. Members have a copy of that committee's report. As members have no comments on either of the instruments, is the committee content with them and happy to make no recommendation to the Parliament?

Members indicated agreement.

Strategic Framework for Scottish Aquaculture

11:09

The Convener: Agenda item 2 is consideration of the strategic framework for Scottish aquaculture. The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development, Allan Wilson, would like to have a representative on the working group, which will meet on 16 June. Members have a copy of the minister's letter to Maureen Macmillan and of Maureen's letter to the committee. The point of the working group is to monitor the progress that is being made under the strategic framework for Scottish aquaculture, which, as members will recall, has been debated in committee.

Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): The ministerial working group developed a strategic framework for aquaculture when a lot of heat was being generated by various bodies that had a stake in what happened in the aquaculture industry. The group comprised representatives of every stakeholder imaginable, including the banks and the retail side of the business, the fish farms, wild fish interests, environmental non-governmental organisations, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Highland Council. As the group was very large, it split into various sub-committees. I chaired the environmental sub-committee.

The group considered the economic, environmental and social principles that should underlie the aquaculture industry. There was an overarching vision of good stewardship. The group met for two years—or perhaps it met for just a year, although it seemed much longer than that—and produced the strategic framework, which has been in operation for the past year and is now being assessed.

I was quite happy to be on the working group again but, since I wrote my letter to the committee, I have been approached by Alasdair Morrison, who is extremely interested in participating in the review group, because of the aquaculture interests in his constituency, where he feels that a lot of innovative work is being done. He would like to be able to input his knowledge of that work to the review group. I would be happy not to put myself forward as the committee's representative on the group if Alasdair Morrison wishes to fulfil that role.

I am happy to fall on my sword. I enjoyed being on the group, but what is happening in the Western Isles is extremely interesting and innovative and I appreciate that the group would benefit from having a member who is in direct contact with that work. Therefore, I throw myself at the mercy of the committee.

The Convener: I do not think that we will ask you to go quite that far.

Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP): Who is on the review group? What is its make-up?

Maureen Macmillan: I have a summary with me, but the strategic framework contains a list of everyone who is on the review group. You will find the list on the website. There are about 20 or more people, representing all the different stakeholder interests.

The Convener: How often do we get reports? Tracey Hawe said that she had received such reports. It would be useful to receive reports on the work of the group as it goes along. Is there anything else that you want to add?

Maureen Macmillan: The meetings do not take place all that frequently. In his letter, the minister indicated that they take place once a year or once every 15 months or so. Their purpose is to ensure that the strategy is on course and to change things that are not working.

The Convener: Thanks very much. Maureen Macmillan has passed on the mantle to Alasdair Morrison. Would he like to add anything?

Mr Alasdair Morrison (Western Isles) (Lab): I want only to answer Roseanna Cunningham's question. The second paragraph of Allan Wilson's letter to Maureen Macmillan indicates that the review group is basically a reconvening of the group that originally drew up the strategic framework document.

An area of friction that has existed for too long is the failure of the companies to work together. That internal industry friction has translated into other areas, such as those involving the statutory agencies and the wild fish interests. In the islands, we now have a blueprint that has been working well for the past four months. I know that Allan Wilson's officials, who have been back and forth for months, are impressed. I want to ensure that that success is spread throughout the country for the industry's benefit.

The Convener: If everyone is happy with that, we should thank Maureen Macmillan for the work that was done by her and all the other original members of the working group, which got us to the aquaculture strategy. We agree to nominate Alasdair Morrison as our representative. Will you keep us informed?

Mr Morrison: I will be happy to report back.

The Convener: I think that the first meeting is on 16 June. You can look forward to that.

We now move into private session, as we agreed to do at our meeting on 21 April, to consider a draft report. I invite the official report,

broadcasting staff and any visiting members of the public to leave the room.

11:15

Meeting continued in private until 11:34.

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