



## CABINET

Tuesday 1 October 2019

### RENAISSANCE IN EAST ANGLIA FISHING (REAF) STRATEGY

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In June 2018 the then WDC, on behalf of the Renaissance of East Anglian Fisheries (REAF) group successfully applied for funding from the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) with 25% matched funding to commission a feasibility study into the future opportunities for the local fishing industry following the UK's anticipated withdrawal from the EU in March 2019.
2. The UK's withdrawal from the EU's Common Fisheries Policy as part of the BREXIT process could provide a major opportunity for the local, regional and national fishing industry to grow the domestic fishing sector. The attached draft strategy sets out the state of the current industry and makes a series of recommendations required for Lowestoft to take advantage of this potential opportunity and re-establish itself as a significant regional fishing hub.
3. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's endorsement of the strategy which has been developed on behalf of the REAF partnership and of which ESC is a founding partner. The report also seeks Cabinet approval to work in partnership with DEFRA to take forward the recommendations within the strategy.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All wards
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Economic Development

<b>Supporting Officers:</b>	<p>Paul Wood</p> <p>Economic Development and Regeneration Head of service</p> <p>01394 444249</p> <p><a href="mailto:paul.wood@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">paul.wood@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Jason Berry</p> <p>Economic Development Manager</p> <p>07769 364418</p> <p><a href="mailto:Jason.berry@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">Jason.berry@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>
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## 2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Following the 2016 referendum result on the UK's membership of the EU the Renaissance of East Anglian Fisheries (REAF) group was established. The aim of the group has been to develop a long-term strategy for the East Anglian fishing industry and explore the potential growth opportunities resulting from the UK's withdrawal from the EU and the EU's Common Fisheries Policy. The ultimate aim of the group is to re-establish Lowestoft as major regional fishing hub in the context of a significantly growing domestic fishing sector.

2.2 REAF consists of the following organisations:

- Peter Aldous MP (Chair)
- Lowestoft Fish Market Alliance
- Rodney Anderson (independent fisheries advisor and ex DEFRA director)
- ESC (Cllr Craig Rivett / Jason Berry, Economic Development Manager)
- Associated British Ports
- New Anglia LEP
- Suffolk CC
- Norfolk CC
- Seafish- an NGO established by the Fisheries Act 1981, to improve efficiency and raise standards across the seafood industry.

## 3 DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL FISHERIES STRATEGY

3.1 The REAF group's primary focus has been to carry out a strategic review of East Anglia's fishing industry and promote Lowestoft as the regional fisheries hub. In order to facilitate this research, the Council made a successful bid, on behalf of REAF for funding from the

EMFF resulting in £110k being secured, in June 2018. This award was subsequently matched with contributions from the following organisations:

- 3.2 Seafish (£30,000)
- 3.3 ESC £4,000
- 3.4 Norfolk CC (£1,000)
- 3.5 Suffolk CC (£900)
- 3.6 This funding was used to commission a specialist economic consultancy, Vivid Economics to produce a report which would provide the REAF group with a comprehensive understanding of the sector's current capacity, infrastructure and supply chain in order to determine the potential opportunities which may exist following the UK's withdrawal from the Common Fisheries Policy. Further, the report also explored what investment/policy changes would be required to realise and maximise these potential benefits.
- 3.7 This strategy builds on insights from numerous stakeholders and expert interviews across all fisheries sub-sectors, conversations with regulators and public bodies and a conference hosted by Peter Aldous in March 2018 with keynote speaker George Eustice MP, DEFRA minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Furthermore, Peter Aldous MP hosted a workshop in July 2019 with a broad range of stakeholders (including DEFRA, industry regulators and representatives from across the fisheries sector) the purpose of which was to analyse the findings of the draft strategy.
- 3.8 The strategy has been developed to be strongly evidence led and as such has relied heavily on the use of data sets and analysis from both Seafish and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), both nationally renowned sources of fishing sector data. Furthermore, the evidence supporting the recommendations has come from discussions with over 40 stakeholders in East Anglia across all fisheries sectors, including catching, angling, aquaculture, processing, infrastructure and training.
- 3.9 The key headline which emerges from the draft strategy is that: *"Upon leaving the EU Common Fisheries Policy, up to 11,500 additional tonnes per year of allowed catch become available to UK-registered vessels in the Southern North Sea, potentially being*

*landed and processed in the UK.”* In monetary terms the strategy states that this is an increase of c£32m in landed fish value to East Anglia.

3.10 In order to realise this potential growth opportunity, the report makes the following ten recommendations and in addition also identifies the actions required and by whom:

- I. Close the Pool and control the inshore fleet through gear and days at sea restrictions. Modify shellfish licences to include some finfish access
- II. Require the offshore fleet to land its catch in the UK and restrict it from fishing within 12 nautical miles of the UK.
- III. Invest in a regional fishing port.
- IV. Provide access to finance for the scaling up and automation of the processing sector.
- V. Upgrade the control regime for anglers.
- VI. Remove barriers to aquaculture expansion by de-risking development and improving access to finance.
- VII. Set up a fisheries sector apprenticeship scheme
- VIII. Combine the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) and MMO into a single East Anglia Regional Fisheries Authority.
- IX. Manage stocks as mixed fishery and change the behaviour of the regulator
- X. Make more use of data to manage potential conflicts between fishers and other marine activities

3.11 It is worthwhile noting that whilst many of these recommendations are not within the control of the REAF partner organisations, the actions to be taken and by whom are ours to influence. The REAF group have now met DEFRA officials three times and in these meetings, DEFRA have been receptive to using elements of the strategy as a potential trial along the East Anglian coast post BREXIT. Peter Aldous MP has also been consistently lobbying George Eustice in support of the EMFF funding bid as well as trialling elements of the strategy's recommendations in East Anglia. The minister has responded to Peter acknowledging his work and indicating he would like to visit Lowestoft.

3.12 The completion of this strategy has been timed in order to maximise the influence on emerging government policy on fisheries in anticipation of the UK's withdrawal from the Common Fisheries Policy. The REAF strategy or at least parts of it could provide government with a blue print for fisheries policy post BREXIT and is due to be launched in Westminster on 14<sup>th</sup> October with an audience of regional coastal MP's Councils Leaders, DEFRA officials and NGOs to raise the profile of this project and gain further political support to implement the recommendations.

3.13 The development of the REAF strategy has been high profile for ESC as we are now viewed as the most proactive local authority within the country on the issue of the growth opportunities for the UK fishing industry post Brexit. No other Council has progressed work in this area to the extent ESC has. Peter Aldous MP has taken part in a parliamentary debate citing the work that REAF are undertaking and the strategy has high visibility with both DEFRA and the fisheries minister George Eustice. Furthermore, there have been comments from DEFRA that they wish to trial a new system in the wake

of the UK's withdrawal from the CFP and this strategy or at least elements of it could provide them with a readymade solution.

- 3.14 In order to progress the recommendations within the strategy it is suggested that East Suffolk Council convene a REAF strategy group with a small secretariat and fisheries manager. This group will be accountable for devising and carrying out a first-year programme of work to take forward the strategy in line with the recommended actions. This proposal, however, would be dependent on REAF securing further external funding to cover the costs of this recommendation.

#### **4 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?**

- 4.1 The ultimate aim of this strategy is to determine how we can enable the local fishing industry to take advantage of any growth opportunities provided by BREXIT. In doing this it supports one of the three strategic pillars of the Business Plan i.e. Economic Growth. The strategy and subsequent activity will also support the delivery of the following business plan action: Provide more effective business support to facilitate the growth of Small & Medium-sized Enterprises
- 4.2 The strategy also aligns strongly with the three priorities of ESC's Economic Growth plan namely):
- i. Supporting entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in East Suffolk
  - ii. Encouraging established businesses to invest and grow
  - iii. Attracting inward investment to East Suffolk, focused around existing and emerging sectors and supply chains
- 4.3 The REAF strategy also has the potential to contribute to ESC's health and wellbeing objectives since being in work is important for everyone's general health and well-being: it gives us a purpose (and an income), promotes independence, allows us to develop social contacts, and is a factor in preventing both physical and mental health problems.  
[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

#### **5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The financial implications for ESC of this project to date have been officer time and seed funding of £4k to progress this project. Any further funding requirements will be the subject of a further report within the constitutional guidelines however, it is also anticipated that further external funding bids will be made to progress the strategy's recommendations
- 5.2 The governance of this project has taken place through a steering group of the REAF partnership and the membership of the group is listed at section 2.2. The project's terms of reference state that the steering group shall have oversight of the project through all stages of development. This includes providing guidance and steering to the project, engaging with stakeholders outside of the steering group such as the fishing industry,

providing a coordinated approach to the project and championing the project to external stakeholders.

## **6 OTHER KEY ISSUES**

- 6.1 Equality Impact Assessment shows no negative impact in relation to any of the Protected Characteristic groups, there may be positive benefits in terms of employment arising from the Strategy

## **7 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Comprehensive consultation has taken place on this project with a wide range of marine and fisheries sector stakeholders. These have included the MMO, DEFRA, IFCA, Seafish and the wider local and regional fishing community through a conference that was held in March 2018 and a workshop in July 2019.

## **8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 The other option would be to not endorse this strategy. To do so could mean that the local fishing industry, the district and wider region may miss out on significant business and employment growth and Lowestoft may lose the opportunity to re-establish itself as a major regional fishing hub.

## **9 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 The UK's withdrawal from the CFP presents a potential opportunity for future significant growth in the UK fishing industry. More locally there is an opportunity for Lowestoft to reposition itself as a regional hub for all aspects of the fisheries supply chain and by endorsing this strategy and the recommendations within it ESC and the REAF partnership can begin to influence government policy so that such opportunities can be realised. This will then further complement the ambitious growth and development plans ESC have for the port based around the offshore energy and marine sectors

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That Cabinet endorses the draft REAF strategy.
2. That Cabinet delegates responsibility for any subsequent minor changes to the strategy to the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development.
3. That Cabinet, subject to DEFRA's agreement to work in partnership with REAF to progress the Strategy's recommendations, supports the creation of the new REAF group in line with the Strategy and also supports the Group's efforts to secure external funding to progress implementation of the strategy.

### **APPENDICES (List the title of each separate Appendix below)**

<b>Appendix A</b>	Draft REAF Regional Strategy
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<b>Appendix B</b>	Technical appendix
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Available From</b>
	Equality Impact Assessment	Jason Berry