

# Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee

## 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Wednesday, 23 March

### Joint fisheries statement

#### Introduction

1. The Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) forms part of the UK Fisheries Management and Support Framework (the fisheries framework). The framework consists of the Fisheries Act 2020 (the Act) and associated statutory instruments, retained EU law, the JFS, Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) and the Fisheries Management and Support Framework Memorandum of Understanding (the Fisheries Framework Memorandum of Understanding or FFMoU).
2. [The Fisheries Act 2020](#) sets out the fisheries objectives, which set the strategic direction for future fisheries management across the UK. The Act also provides that the UK's four national fisheries policy authorities (Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Scottish Ministers, Welsh Ministers, and the Northern Ireland department) (FPAs) should prepare a JFS containing the policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, these objectives and containing a statement on how authorities intend to make use of FMPs in order to achieve or contribute to the achievement of the objectives.
3. Under Schedule 1 of the Fisheries Act 2020, there is a requirement to lay a consultation draft of the JFS before the appropriate legislature. If, during this scrutiny period, an appropriate legislature passes a resolution or makes a recommendation with regard to the consultation draft the fisheries policy authority must lay before the appropriate legislature a statement setting out its response to the resolution or recommendation.
4. The UK administrations have specified a parliamentary scrutiny period and public consultation on the JFS between 17 January and 12 April 2022.
5. The consultation draft of the Joint Fisheries Statement is available [here](#).
6. As further background briefing, members' attention is drawn to Professor James Harrison's [SPICe briefing](#) which explains—
  - how fisheries are governed in Scotland, the UK and in cooperation with international neighbours following the UK's withdrawal from the EU;
  - the duties and obligations imposed by international fisheries law and policy and how regional cooperation is facilitated through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and formal negotiations between coastal states; and

- the frameworks for the governance and management of fisheries within the UK and sets out how fisheries are regulated and governed in Scotland.

### **Committee consideration to date**

7. The Cabinet Secretary wrote to inform the Committee that the draft JFS had been laid on [17 January 2022](#). In this letter, the Cabinet Secretary set out the specified scrutiny period for the four legislatures was to run between 17 January to 25 February 2022. The public consultation on the draft JFS is running between 17 January to 12 April 2022.
8. The Committee considered this letter at its meeting on 2 February 2022 and responded to the Cabinet Secretary to set out the challenges in meeting this scrutiny timetable. The Cabinet Secretary subsequently confirmed on [10 February 2022](#) that the scrutiny period for the four UK legislatures had been extended to 12 April 2022.
9. The Cabinet Secretary wrote again on [17 February 2022](#) to share the text of the provisional fisheries management and support framework. The Cabinet Secretary stated the “fisheries framework is formed of the framework outline agreement (FOA) and memorandum of understanding (MoU), which sit alongside the joint fisheries statement (JFS) and will help manage the cross-UK governance of fisheries where that is required”.
10. The Committee launched a call for views on the draft joint fisheries statement on 3 February 2022. The Committee received 10 submissions, which are available [here](#).

### **For decision**

#### **11. The Committee is invited to—**

- **take evidence from stakeholders, the Cabinet Secretary and Scottish Government officials on the JFS and UK Fisheries Framework (agenda item 2); and**
- **discuss the evidence heard (agenda item 4).**

**Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee clerks  
March 2022**