

GLA 10/7.2 Marine Bill Consultation

26 April 2006

BOARD PAPER REFERENCE – GLA 10/7.2 – MARINE BILL CONSULTATION

Issue

1. To consider a possible response from the GLA Board to the Defra consultation document on the Marine Bill published on 29 March.

Recommendations

2. The Board to note that it has been invited to respond to consultation on the Marine Bill.
3. Board members are asked to provide comments to the GLA by Friday 2 June, as the basis for a formal response to the consultation. A draft response will be presented for approval at the June Board meeting.

Background

4. Defra published a consultation paper on 29 March on a proposed Marine Bill. The document focuses on sustainable development and protecting the marine environment.
5. There are also proposals to improve marine management. It has been suggested by Lord Bach that the Bill could be used to strengthen weaknesses identified by the Morecambe Bay tragedy. The GLA executive believes the Bill might be used to standardise the various regional fisheries permits schemes.
6. The GLA will propose that one of the licence conditions for shellfish gathering should be compliance with the terms of a fisheries permit or licence. The nature of fisheries permits and licences vary from area to area, depending on the local circumstances.
7. A standard national template would allow a practical, consistent approach to compliance. It would provide a national framework with a consistent set of mandatory requirements. This would dovetail with the GLA Licensing Standards, perhaps with the addition of local conditions, to ensure that the regulatory mechanisms for fisheries and gangmasters in shellfish gathering are complementary.
8. A formal response from the GLA Board to the Marine Bill could urge Defra to consider the introduction of such a system. Board Members are invited to contribute additional views to be incorporated into a GLA response. They will appreciate that in addition to contributing to a GLA Board response, members are also able to respond separately to the consultation with the views of their parent bodies.
9. The Marine Bill consultation document is available on the Defra website: www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/marinebill/index.htm.