

# The North Sea Advisory Council



## Protocol for the Development and Presentation of NSAC Advice

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In order to ensure that the NSAC operates a fair and transparent system, a formal approach to the proposal, presentation and approval of papers has been adopted. This sets out how members can propose papers, defines the stages of the approval process, and sets out how approved advice is presented. This process was approved by the Executive Committee 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.

### **2.0 Proposing Advice**

- 2.1 All members of the General Assembly and Executive Committee can propose a paper for consideration via the most appropriate Working Group. Members must inform the secretariat of their intention to present a paper no later than 2 weeks prior to a meeting. Papers will be discussed if time permits, if the agenda is full they will be deferred to the next meeting.
- 2.2 Papers will be presented to the NSAC meeting on blank paper or with the submitting organisation's letterhead. It must clearly state details of the author(s) and presenting organisation(s).
- 2.3 Papers will be discussed at the appropriate meeting and members will either reject or accept the proposal for further development. In the latter case, a plan to develop the advice will then be agreed. The paper will be labelled as "Advice in Development". It will subsequently be presented to Focus Groups, Working Groups and the Executive Committee on NSAC headed paper and will carry a clearly marked notice, which highlights to the reader that it is advice in development and not approved advice. See appendix 1.
- 2.4 NSAC advice in development will then be discussed at subsequent meetings and circulated for comment. All comments regarding the advice must be returned within the deadline given. Changes to a paper must be made using the tracked changes function. Any changes requested must offer an alternative text where appropriate. If a comment simply states that the contributor does not like a section but no alternative text is offered the text will not be changed.

2.5 NSAC aims to allow plenty of time for discussion and debate of advice papers and this should allow for initial presentation at a meeting, circulation of the paper for comment and final discussion at a meeting prior to being presented for final approval at an Ex Com meeting. However on occasion we are required to meet very tight timescales. In order to meet deadlines this process can be set aside and a fast track approach adopted by the group chairman when required. This process can only be followed where the Chairman and both Vice Chairs of the Executive Committee agree that a fast track process is essential. Members of the Executive Committee must be given a minimum of 48 hours to consider an advice paper. If these conditions are not met then the NSAC will not publish advice on the subject in question.

### **3.0 Approval of Advice**

3.1 Once an advice paper has been fully discussed and members' comments have been integrated into the document it will be presented for NSAC approval by the Executive Committee. It will be presented using the NSAC paper template. (Appendix 2)

3.2 We should always aim to approve NSAC advice at Ex Com meetings. However this is not always possible. Where we cannot meet, or approval cannot be reached at an Ex Com, advice can be approved by a written procedure. On these occasions advice for approval will be sent to the named members of the Executive Committee. If members wish the advice to be reviewed by others it is their responsibility to pass the document to their colleagues.

3.3 Members of the Executive Committee will be given 10 - 20 working days to approve advice (changes notified up to and including day 10 will be accepted). If members wish to propose text edits they should be minimal. If changes are requested Ex Com members must submit their request early in the process and should not leave it until the deadline. Early comment gives enough time for further negotiation and discussion with other parties. Leaving comments until the last minute does not provide sufficient time for other members to approve any changes, and it is less likely that the proposed changes will be accepted. Comments received after the deadline will not be accepted. If any edits are requested during the approval period and time allows, the secretariat will send the document back to the Ex Com for approval with the alternative text highlighted.

3.4 NSAC Advice is approved by the named Ex Com members. General Assembly members must submit comments via an Ex Com member who is willing to speak on their behalf.

### **4.0 Presentation of Approved Advice**

4.1 The NSAC aims to reach a consensus on all advice papers. However it is recognised that this is not always possible. It is proposed that the following formatting will be applied for majority papers.

- i. Where a minority position is presented by more than one organisation the minority position will be mentioned within the text of the document. Where that minority position requires explanation at greater length it may be attached to the paper as an annex. The annex will not be more than one page in length.

- ii. Where a minority position is presented by only one organisation the point will be presented in a footnote referenced within the main text.
  - iii. Where an organisation has disagreed with a point at a meeting but has offered no alternative text their objection will simply be noted in the minutes of the meeting.
- 4.2 Once approved, papers will be formatted as detailed in Appendix 3. Papers will be submitted to its target audience and will be placed on the NSAC website; <http://www.nsrac.org/category/advice/approved/>

## Appendix 1

### The North Sea Advisory Council



#### NSAC Advice in Development

**This is paper is NOT approved NSAC advice.**

This paper will be discussed at the \*\*\*\*\* meeting on the \*\*\*\*\*  
OR

This paper is being circulated on \*\*\*\*\* for consideration. Comments must be returned  
to \*\*\*\*\* (the author) no later than \*\*\*\*\*.

Author  
Date 2015

For Discussion/comment  
Version ( )

Title

Title

For Discussion / Comment

## Appendix 2

### The North Sea Advisory Council



#### NSAC Advice For Approval

**This is paper is NOT approved NSAC advice.**

This paper will be considered for approval at the \*\*\*\* meeting on the \*\*\*\*\*

OR

This paper is being circulated on \*\*\*\* for Executive Committee Approval by written procedure. Your approval or comments must be returned to the secretariat no later than \*\*\*\*\*.

Date 2015

Advice for Approval

Title

Title

For Approval

## Appendix 3

### The North Sea Advisory Council



**NSAC Advice Ref.**

**Title**

This paper was approved by the NSAC Executive Committee on the \*\*\*\*\*

Title

Ref.