

# Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Pia Bateman – Chief Executive Officer



Unit 3 Holes Bay Park  
Sterte Avenue West  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH15 2AA

5<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Member,

## **MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY**

A meeting of the Authority will be held at Best Western Wessex Royal Hotel Dorchester, 32 High West Street, Dorchester DT1 1UP on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at **14:00**, to discuss the business on the under mentioned Agenda.

There are two options for parking, there is parking at the “Top O’ Town” car park just off Bridport Road B3150 and The Colliton Car Park off Colliton Walk, both are about a 5-minute walk to the hotel.

Members of the public can request to attend the meeting through emailing [enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Maria Chaplin, Office Manager  
[maria.chaplin@southern-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:maria.chaplin@southern-ifca.gov.uk)

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence.

### **2. Declaration of Interest**

All Members are to declare any interests in line with paragraphs (16) and (17) of the Southern IFCA Code of Conduct for Non-Council Members.

### **3. Minutes**

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (Marked A)

### **4. Chairman’s Announcements**

To receive any updates from the Chairman.

### **5. Sub-Committees**

To receive the Minutes of the following Sub-Committees and to consider the adoption of the recommendations contained therein:

- a) **Executive Committee** held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (Marked B).
- b) **Technical Advisory Committee** held on the 2nd November 2023 (Marked C).

### **6. Progress Reports**

To consider the following:

- a. **Budget Control Statement.** To consider a report from the CEO/Accountant (Marked D).
- b. **Chief Executive Officer updates.** To receive a verbal report from the CEO.

- c. **Marine Asset Review.** To consider a verbal update from DCO Dell.
- d. **MPA Management Update.** To consider a verbal update from DCO Birchenough.

**ITEMS FOR DECISION**

**7. Annual Strategy 2023-2024**

To consider the report from the CEO (Marked E)

**8. Compliance and Enforcement Team Plan**

To consider the report from DCO Dell (Marked F)

**9. Research and Policy Team Plan**

To receive a report from DCO Birchenough (Marked G)

**10. 167 Agreement with Sussex IFCA – 2024 update**

To consider the report from DCO Dell (Marked H)

**GUEST SPEAKER**

**11. Lyme Bay Fisherman's Community Interest Company (CIC).**

To receive a presentation from Mandy Wolf, CEO, followed by a Q&A.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**12. Compliance and Enforcement Report**

To receive the report from DCO Dell (Marked I)

**13. Research and Policy Team: Behind the Scenes**

To receive a report from DCO Birchenough (Marked J)

**14. Date of Next Meeting**

To confirm the date of the next Authority meeting on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June at Winchester University, St Alphege Building, Room 002, Sparkford Road, Winchester, SO22 4NR

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Agenda Item 15 will involve the consideration of information which is exempt by virtue of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and therefore the public will be excluded during consideration of this item.

**15. Poole Harbour Several Order – Request to Amend Business Plan**

To consider a confidential report from Project Officer Meredith-Davies (Confidential, Marked K)

# Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Full Authority Meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023

A meeting of the Full Authority was held at 2pm on 7<sup>th</sup> December at the RNLI The RNLI College, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ

Marked A

## Present

Cllr. Mark Roberts	Dorset Council (Chairman)
Cllr. Paul Fuller	Isle of Wight Council (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. Rob Hughes	Dorset County Council
Cllr. Matthew Winnington	Portsmouth City Council
Cllr. John Savage	Southampton City Council
Cllr. Pete Miles	BCP Council
Dr Richard Morgan	Natural England
Dr Antony Jensen	MMO Appointee
Mr Richard Stride	MMO Appointee
Mr Neil Hornby	MMO Appointee
Ms Louise MacCallum	MMO Appointee
Mr Gary Wordsworth	MMO Appointee
Mr Colin Francis	MMO Appointee
Ms Rachel Irish	MMO Appointee
Dr Simon Cripps	MMO Appointee
Ms Elisabeth Bussey-Jones	MMO Appointee
Ms Pia Bateman	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Mr Sam Dell	Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)
Dr Sarah Birchenough	Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)
Ms Emily Condie	Senior IFCO
Ms Maria Chaplin	Office Manager

Mrs Gemma Roberts (Accountant) attended virtually.

## **363. Welcome**

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming Cllr. John Savage (Southampton Council), Cllr. Pete Miles (BCP Council). The Chairman welcomed those attending the meeting from the virtual public gallery, Georgina Roberts (FMP Evaluation Programme Cockles) from Howell Marine Consulting and Mr Tim Smith of the AIFCA.

## **Apologies**

**364.** Apologies for absence were received from Stuart Kingston-Turner (EA).

## **Declarations of Interest**

**365.** The following non-pecuniary interests were declared: Gary Wordsworth (9), Dr Richard Morgan (9).

## **Minutes**

**366.** Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

DCO Birchenough provided an update on Recommendation 350, which related to the graphics and relevant documents produced to accompany the Net Fishing Byelaw when it was ratified. Accordingly, an email with this information was sent out to Members on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September.

DCO Birchenough provided an update on Recommendation 352 regarding the BTFG Byelaw 2023, in that the byelaw has now been submitted to the MMO for Quality Assurance, with initial indications the first iteration of comments would be due on the 10<sup>th</sup> December.

## **Chairman's Announcements**

**367.** The Chairman informed Members that he met with the leader of Portsmouth Council, Cllr. Matthew Winnington, DCO Dell and a number of fishers at the Camber in Portsmouth in recent weeks, prior to a trip out to the Solent scallop grounds. The group also took the opportunity to tour the new retail fish premises at the Camber, which is still under construction.

The Chairman discussed his recent visit to Ribcraft alongside DCO Dell and Senior IFCO Parry, describing the opportunity to see the build progress of FPV Vigilant. Additionally, the Chairman discussed his attendance at the AIFCA Fisheries Management Plan Conference in Poole, where both Dr A Jensen and IFCO Mullen were in attendance on behalf of Southern IFCA.

## **Sub-Committees**

**368.** Members received the Minutes of the Executive Sub-Committee held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Members received the Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee held on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Ms E Bussey-Jones requested an amendment on page 4, from "catch per unit effort levels were lower in autumn 2022 than in 2023" to "catch per unit effort levels were lower in autumn 2023 than in 2022".

### **Resolved**

**369.** Cllr. P Fuller proposed that the Minutes of both meetings be confirmed and signed. All Members were in favour.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

### **Budget Control Statement to September 2023**

**370.** The CEO presented the BCS accurate to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 which shows a deficit of income against budget of 130k. The CEO explained that the main reason for this is due to a deficit in projected income of 252k, which relates to outstanding receipt of Defra grant money (£150k) for this financial year, in addition to the disposal of vehicles and anticipated disposal of FPV Stella Barbara following FPV Vigilant entering service later in financial year than originally planned).

The CEO confirmed that the expenditure under the Major Budget Headers all showed a positive variance. The positive variance captured under the Compliance & Enforcement Header (c.57k) is mainly due (c.33k) to a new approach to accounting (in accordance with best recognised practice), where monies to replenish the Patrol Vessel Reserve fund are to be transferred at the end of the financial year, rather than in-year. Marine Insurance was c.7k lower than anticipated, relating to FPV Vigilant and the point in which she will enter service and costs associated with prosecutions (c.11k) remain lower than budget. Berthing fees for FPV Vigilant entering service were budgeted from June 2023.

The CEO described the positive variance captured under the Research and Policy Header (c.9k) which reflected the monies ringfenced for byelaw adverts and money which is ringfenced for legal scrutiny of byelaws if required. Further, the positive variance captured under the Business Service Header (c.22k) is due to a reduction in staff salary and pension contributions as a result of in year staff movements, specifically due to vacancies earlier in the year for Office Manager, Finance Administration and Senior IFCO Research & Policy roles. Finally, the CEO explained that the positive variance under the Capital Equipment Header (c.33k) was due to budgeting for FPV Vigilant to enter service earlier than anticipated.

The CEO and Chairman thanked Mrs G Roberts for all her work in the Accountant role since she joined us in March, wishing her luck for her future endeavours.

### **Chief Executive Officer Updates**

**371.** The CEO provided an update on staffing matters, which included the departure of Accountant G Roberts at the end of December, in addition to IFCO I Griffith. The CEO discussed in brief the termination of an IFCO contract during a period of probation, due to a breach of behavioural codes.

The CEO welcomed Hester Churchouse, who joins the Research and Policy Team as an IFCO, and informed Members of the current recruitment campaign to recruit three Project Officers.

The CEO provided an update on General Memberships, confirming that Mr T Legg, after nearly a decade in post had recently stepped down from his position as a commercial fishing sector representative, due to an inability to attend meetings in person. Mr T Legg has requested the opportunity to continue to contribute his knowledge and expertise in a virtual capacity. The CEO confirmed that following discussions at the recent Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, that both Chairmans were supportive of this request.

The CEO said that following the resignation of Mr T Legg, the MMO had begun a recruitment campaign to find a commercial sector representative. As part of this campaign the MMO were trialling a rolling campaign, whereby gaps in Memberships can be avoided, with interviews being run quarterly in order to secure a merit list of sector expertise.

Dr S Cripps asked that the balance of the Membership be maintained, stating that if Mr T Legg continues to attend the meetings in a virtual capacity but not voting in addition to a new commercial sector representative joining the Authority, then there may be an imbalance in commercial fishing representation. The Chairman noted this point and agreed that it would be monitored.

The CEO informed members that Ms L MacCallum had recently extended her tenure as a General Member until March 2025. The CEO thanked Ms MacCallum, recognising the time commitment associated with the General Member role. The CEO thanked the Members more widely for all their commitment and dedication to Southern IFCA.

The CEO discussed a recent Chief Officer Group meeting held in York, where MMO representative Sean Douglas presented along with the AIFCA . In addition, a recent meeting with Defra and national IFCA's confirmed that Defra's priorities continue to focus on MPA 2024 delivery.

The CEO congratulated DCO Dell for his recent work with Ms R Irish of the MMO, where the two organisations had hosted a number of Saudi Arabia fisheries delegates for the purposes of understanding approaches to MPA enforcement.

The CEO closed on a recent item that was featured on the BBC's Countryfile. The CEO discussed the brilliant opportunity to discuss the importance of the Poole Harbour fishery, as supported by co-management initiatives which allow for well managed fisheries to thrive in MPAs. The Countryfile clip was played to the Members.

### **Marine Asset Review**

**372.** DCO Dell provided an update on the build progress of FPV Vigilant, which included receipt of the MECAL Surveyors report in October that supported the decision to proceed to third stage payment; the criteria of which being completion of positioning and fixing of cabin to hull.

Officers had since attended Ribcraft Ltd on the 31<sup>st</sup> October to review progress with a focus on technical fit out, this included review of the cabin lay out, electrical and instrument installation. DCO Dell updated Members on the delivery timeline with a delay anticipated due to new equipment being fitted, meaning sea trials were now likely to commence at the beginning of February 2024.

### **Compliance and Enforcement Quarterly Report**

**373.** DCO Dell updated members on the Compliance and Enforcement Quarterly Report which contains statistical data relating to Southern IFCA enforcement activity for the reporting period August to October 2023. DCO Dell informed Members that these figures are reported on an annual basis to Defra via the AIFCA as well as being published on our website.

DCO Dell briefed members on the Solent Scallop fishery, whereby the weather at the start of the season has been challenging for the inshore fleet. With regard to effort, the first month's catch returns are imminent which will provide information on areas of capture and quantity of scallops caught during the first month of the fishery. To date the Compliance & Enforcement Team have conducted 4x sea patrols, 11x boarding inspections, 18x vessel sightings, 3x shore patrols, 5x landing inspections and detected 1 Infringement re: compliance with minimum size.

## **ITEMS FOR DECISION**

### **374. Budget Forecast 2024-2025**

The CEO explained that the budget forecast was primarily designed to enable the delivery of the Authority priorities in accordance with the IFCA's statutory functions.

The CEO provided the headline in that the forecast shows that prior to inflationary projections and assuming a standstill in levy contributions, the budget forecast for the financial year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 anticipates a loss of c.161k. The projected loss is a direct result of necessary changes which have been made to the Southern IFCA business model to enable maintained delivery of statutory functions, the most obvious being the operational costs associated with supporting and maintaining FPV Vigilant's operational function, specifically costs associated with the creation of a Senior Marine Operations IFCO post, berthing & fuel costs. The CEO described that the combined costs associated with Vigilant amount to approx. 80k.

The CEO discussed improvements that had been made to business function to ensure continuity over the last year, which has included the creation of an additional part time Accounts Administrator role, as well as a full time Office Manager post. Additionally, payroll and pension functions are now sourced externally.

The CEO also explained that the budget forecast importantly recognises the rise in cost of living, most notably the costs associated with NJC pay awards, where a 5% provision has been made based on previous nationally agreed awards.

The CEO discussed 'Business as Usual' functions, inviting Members to view Annex 1 of the background paper, as well the budget setting components that have informed the budget forecast to ensure that Southern IFCA continue to deliver its duties under various legislations to include the MaCAA, Conservation Regs, WCA (SSSI) and Poole Harbour Fishery Order requirements.

In addition to what we are required to do to achieve delivery of our statutory functions, Annex 1 also highlights any new projects that Southern are planning on undertaking, to include three additional surveys, the costs of which were relevant will be met using ringfenced reserves set aside for such purposes, for example the Research Reserve, Poole Order Reserve and Fisheries Act Reserve respectively. The CEO explained that all costs associated with Fisheries Act work, which are referred to as 'additional functions' in the Annex, are met by the Defra funding provision. This includes a number of exciting new projects which are related to either FMP or MPA work, to include two projects where we will be working with D&S IFCA to explore the use of AI and REM (Remote Electronic Monitoring) in quantifying salmonid interactions as well as looking at effective solutions for managing pot limitations.

With regard to the R&P team, the CEO discussed the plan to undertake a pilot CPUE whelk study to contribute to data gaps in the whelk FMP as well as support our own understandings of the whelk fishery within our district. DCO Birchenough's team will also be exploring the use of drop-down cameras to aid management of the Solent scallop fishery, as well as contribute to wider FMP output and objectives.

The CEO invited Members to look at Annex 2, the unknown variables which must be taken into account when budget forecasting and include the rate of inflation, projected future pay awards, levy contributions and receipt of DEFRA funding.

Our Accountants financial modelling has allowed Southern to anticipate a likely surplus of approx. 75k at year end, sourced from savings associated with a smaller staff footprint than optimal, in addition to saving in capital equipment due to delayed depreciation of FPV Vigilant, who was budgeted to be operational from June 2023, now early 2024.

Addition the CEO described where in-year cost savings & incomes have been achieved, via chartering of FPVs to other government agencies, reduction in vehicle fleet from 4-6, unforeseen income associated with the oil spill and savings on staff training following a successful bid to FASS (Fisheries and Seafood Scheme) to support compliance training needs.

The CEO concluded that the projected loss of 161k for the 2024-2025 financial year, reflects the necessary changes to the Southern IFCA business model to enable maintained delivery of statutory functions and that the unforeseen savings and income during the current financial year (both realised and

anticipated) will allow Southern to achieve a balanced budget, drawing from the General and Ringfenced Reserves to match the anticipated deficit.

### **Resolved**

**375.** That Members approved the principles informing the budget forecast for the Financial Year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, as proposed by Dr S Cripps and seconded by Ms L MacCallum. All Members were in favour.

### **376. Levy Contributions 2024-2025**

The CEO discussed that Southern IFCA are seeking a 4% or 32k increase in levy contributions across our six LA for the forthcoming financial year in accordance with the Southern IFCA Order 2019, whereby expenses incurred by the Authority are to be defrayed by relevant councils.

The CEO explained that whilst Southern IFCA are able to achieve a balanced budget due to unforeseen savings during the current financial year, drawing from the reserves to match the anticipated deficit, around 33k of this deficit is related to anticipated nationally agreed pay awards across the core staff body. Southern have met this cost over the last three years, drawing from its reserves a figure totally around 90k.

The CEO recognised the extreme financial pressures that our Local Authorities are under, which sadly is a picture replicated nationally, however, noted that competent management of Southern IFCA finances over a number of years shouldn't negate consideration of an increase in levy contributions, which is less than the rate of inflation, and that this increase would be solely to recognise as a minimum the cost of nationally agreed pay awards.

The CEO discussed the situation across other IFCA, and that the proposal today is consistent with all other IFCAs and the AIFCA, who are seeking baseline increases which are directly related to the impact of the nationally agreed pay awards.

The CEO described what a 4% increase meant in monetary terms, whereby increases in levy contributions ranged from an additional contribution of £1,400 for Southampton and £13,000 for Hants, which combined across all six Local Authority's totals 32.5k, which projected across the financial year, per month this equated to an addition £116 for Southampton to just over 1k a month for Hampshire.

The CEO described that if a levy increase of 4% is agreed, then the projected budgetary shortfall will be reduced to 128k with Southern IFCA drawing this figure from its reserves to achieve a balanced budget.

The Chairman discussed with Members that since 2010 that the levy increase had been minimal, with some years achieving a 2% increase, and others a standstill 0%, none of which have aligned with inflationary rises.

Cllr. J Savage advised members that Southampton are in a challenging financial situation and as a result he hasn't had the chance to discuss the rise in contributions, and therefore will find it difficult to make a decision.

Cllr. Paul Fuller recognised that there is going to be budgetary pressure on increasing costs, and that in the IOW there have been major staff cuts, with the IOW cabinet indicating that they cannot afford a levy increase, however recognised the importance of this small rise and informed Members that he will be supporting the 4% increase.

Cllr. M Winnington (Portsmouth) has informed members that he will not be voting for the Levy and will be abstaining. Cllr. P Miles agreed to vote for the 4% increase.

Cllr. M Roberts proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Cllr. P Fuller. Cllr. P Miles and Cllr. R Hughes were in favour. Cllr. J Savage and Cllr. M Winnington abstained.

### **Resolved**

**377.** That Elected Members approved that Southern IFCA's six constituent Local Authorities are levied at a rate of 4% for the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, which equates to an increase of £32k.

### **378. Authorisation for Portland Seed Mussel Fishery 2024**

DCO Birchenough reminded Members that they had considered this item at a virtual meeting of the TAC in November 2023 (held virtually due to inclement weather), however were unable to cast a vote virtually.

DCO Birchenough provided background on the issuing of an authorisation for fishing for seed mussel at Portland under the Southern IFCA Mussels Byelaw and the assessment requirements in relation to the Studland to Portland SAC. DCO Birchenough described that areas of the SAC which contain reef habitat have been protected under management for bottom towed fishing gear (BTFG) since 2013, the current BTFG byelaw 2016 protects all mapped reef features, incorporating a buffer of at least 106m, and the prohibited areas are proposed to remain, unchanged, under the BTFG byelaw 2023.

DCO Birchenough described the historic issuing of authorisations for this activity and that conditions are applied to the authorisation which have included spatial restrictions, effort restrictions and reporting requirements. The Authority received a request for the authorisation to be granted for 2024 and, as part of this request, that the spatial restrictions applied under the authorisation previously be removed. This would enable access to two small areas of the Studland to Portland SACF which are not closed to BTFG.

On the basis of the request and consideration of the activity in relation to the Studland to Portland SAC, an appropriate assessment has been developed, which concludes that based on the conditions proposed under the draft 2024 authorisation, presented to Members as an annex to this item, the activity will not have an adverse effect on the SAC and will not hinder that site from achieving its Conservation Objectives, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. DCO Birchenough explained that the rationale for this is given in the conclusion section of the HRA and is based on the fact that the features of the SAC have been managed for all types of BTFG, which includes mussel dredging, through prohibited areas under the BTFG byelaw 2016 (and proposed BTFG byelaw 2023). It was also outlined that the mussel dredging operation is low level, with one vessel undertaking a maximum of 8 tows per day equating to approximately 40 minutes of towing time. The reef feature of the SAC has been assessed in 2020 as part of the BTFG review Phase 1 and, on the basis of best available evidence, the two areas which remain open contain no reef feature.

DCO Birchenough outlined that the reporting requirements under the authorisation will aid in ensuring compliance with the conditions and that a new requirement for detailed catch reporting will allow for improved spatial data on where the activity is taking place. Previous survey work on this specific fishery indicated that the mussel dredging was not having an adverse impact on areas both outside and within the SAC historically and that there had been more mussels present in areas which had been previously dredged than those which had not. The HRA has been submitted to NE for Formal Advice.

Dr S Cripps stated that he was uncomfortable with BTFG activity occurring within an MPA but recognised the importance of the mussel seed fishery in supporting aquaculture within Poole Harbour.

Ms L MacCallum stated that the request for an authorisation is different to general management of BTFG as the authorisation gives the ability to harvest mussels below the MCRS, therefore it is a separate activity which can be subject to further restrictions than other types of BTFG. The spatial restrictions that currently apply under the 2023 authorisation should be maintained; this activity should not be allowed to remove juvenile mussels from within an MPA.

Ms E Bussey-Jones commented that in the TAC discussion, Members had recognised that under Phase 2 of the BTFG Review, there could be consideration of further BTFG management and that whilst the detail of this is not yet established, it wouldn't be appropriate to grant access to the two areas of the SAC not currently closed to BTFG if those areas might be closed under further BTFG Reviews thus requiring any access granted to be removed again. It was also recognised that the TAC had discussed the issue of treating this particular type of BTFG differently to other types of BTFG.



Mr G Wordsworth reiterated that the dredging activity only took place over approximately 40 minutes per day and that the dredges filled up quickly. He outlined the importance of aquaculture activity in Poole Harbour and the ecosystem services provided by the mussels, the continuation of which is based on the ability to gather the seed mussel.

Cllr. R Hughes stated that he had reservations for any BTFG due to the seabed impacts and that it would be difficult to vote on allowing that activity to take place within an MPA.

Mr R Stride commented that there is risk of the Authority being inconsistent in rejecting the request for access to those two areas of the SAC but allowing access to other types of BTFG under the current BTFG management and that this could be perceived as discriminating between different types of BTFG. He indicated he would support the recommendation on this basis.

Dr A Jensen outlined that the Southern IFCA Mussels Byelaw was introduced to regulate collection of mussel populations which were known to be ephemeral, and thus the byelaw ensured that any removal from those ephemeral beds remained in the District. The reduced area available for relaying within the aquaculture beds put a natural cap on the extraction effort. Dr A Jensen outlined that the mussels are ephemeral because they are subject to wind and tide pressures, the mussels settle in shallower areas and then, at a size of 1-2cm they detach and settle in deeper waters on adult beds. It was stated that these areas do not contain as much biodiversity as possibly expected due to the water depth and nature of how the beds form. Dr A Jensen commented that the BTFG management by Southern IFCA creates a spatial restriction and that there is a concern that if the authorisation is not granted, there will be increased pressure to source mussels from elsewhere, likely outside the district, which comes with a risk of introducing pathogens or invasive species. It is more beneficial for the seed mussel to come from the district to be re-laid in the district. He outlined that the discussion of these areas could feature in Phase 2 of the BTFG Review, however the outcomes of Phase 1 provide confidence that designated features within the SAC are being protected. Dr A Jensen indicated he would support the recommendation.

Ms L MacCallum agreed that mussel seed should come from the district and that she would support the recommendation if access to the MPA was removed.

Dr R Morgan commented that he had discussed the proposed authorisation with relevant site leads. NE would prefer from a broader ecological perspective that there would be no dredging in MPAs, as the small open areas may be providing support to the reef communities. Dr R Morgan agreed that the current approach to management was feature based and that this was the approach taken in developing BTFG management, as a statutory advisor on the HRA for the authorisation, NE would agree with the conclusion drawn. Dr R Morgan indicated that as there are differing views within NE on this he would abstain from voting.

Dr A Jensen reiterated that currently the IFCA manage designated features rather than at a site level, and that the latter can be considered more under Phase 2. Dr A Jensen also raised that there are potential difficulties for Compliance and Enforcement Officers in outlining that mussel dredging may be subject to different restrictions in the same area where other BTFG can operate.

Dr S Cripps commented that allowing an authorisation which supports aquaculture activity is positive and the Authority should be encouraging aquaculture and the services it offers in relation to climate change and ecosystem services. However, there is concern that the same area is dredged on a yearly basis to obtain the mussels.

Ms E Bussey-Jones commented that the concern is with the two areas of the SAC rather than a concern over expanding the spatial area of the authorisation in general. She suggested that the consideration should be of those two areas specifically and that the fisher would already be gaining more ground even if access to those areas was restricted.

Mr N Hornby questioned how the mussel dredging activity related to any other BTFG occurring in terms of background levels of activity and how allow mussel dredging outside of the current spatial closures might add to additional activity levels.

The CEO commented that altering the spatial access under the authorisation will not result in a socio-economic impact to the fishing operation as the current spatial footprint is much smaller and, if the MPA were not included, there are large areas which would be accessible for fishing outside the MPA which are

not currently fished. The CEO asked Members whether they would be happy to consider the recommendation to grant an authorisation for the coming year but that there could be a change to the spatial element included in recommendation (1a) if Members felt this would address the discussion had and the expertise put forward by Members on this matter.

Dr S Cripps proposed an amendment to recommendation 1a, replacing ‘...outside of the BTFG Byelaw 2023 prohibited areas’ with ‘...outside of the Studland to Portland SAC or any other MPA. This was seconded by Ms L MacCallum.

Seven Members were in favour, five voted against (Mr N Hornby, Mr R Stride, Dr A Jensen, Cllr. R Hughes and Cllr. J Savage) and Cllr. M Roberts, Mr G Wordsworth, Dr R Morgan and Cllr. P Miles abstained.

Ms L MacCallum proposed recommendation 1b. Dr S Cripps seconded. All members were in favour with the exception of Cllr. R Hughes, Mr G Wordsworth, Mr N Hornby & Cllr. J Savage who abstained.

Cllr. M Winnington proposed recommendations 2 and 3, with Ms E Bussey-Jones seconding. All Members were in favour except Mr G Wordsworth who abstained.

### **379. Resolved**

- (1) That Authorisation shall be provided for the fishing vessel Nicola L (WY37) to continue to remove mussel seed for the purposes of aquaculture during 2024, provided that this activity is in line with the provisions outlined in the 2024 Authorisation, to include:
  - a. The removal of spatial restrictions outside of the Studland to Portland SAC or any other MPA.
  - b. The addition of a requirement to submit a catch return.
- (2) That Officers are delegated to make inconsequential changes to the Habitats Regulation Assessment following receipt of any Formal Advice from Natural England.
- (3) That the Authority consider the benefits of a long-term management plan for the mussel seed fishery under Phase 2 of the BTFG Review.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

### **Compliance and Enforcement Report**

**380.** DCO Dell provided an overview of work undertaken by Compliance and Enforcement Team for the period September to December 2023.

### **Research and Policy Team: Behind the Scenes**

**381.** DCO Birchenough provided a quarterly overview from the officers in the Research and Policy Team for the period September to December 2023.

### **AIFCA Cockle Presentation**

**382.** Tim Smith from AIFCA presented a PowerPoint presentation on the progress of the Cockle FMP.

### **The Sector Group Meetings**

**383.** Members received the minutes from recent meetings of The Fisherman’s Council.

### **Meeting Venues 2024**

**384.** Members received a paper from the Office Manager which listed to venues for the Authority meetings in 2024.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

**385.** To confirm the date of the next Authority meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at Wessex Royal Hotel, 32 High West Street, Dorchester, DT1 1UP

**The meeting concluded at 17:25**

# Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

## EXECUTIVE SUB-COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee (ESC) was held at **14:00 on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023** via video conferencing.

### Present

Cllr Mark Roberts	Dorset Council (Chairman)
Cllr Paul Fuller	Isle of Wight Council (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Rob Hughes	Dorset Council
Dr Antony Jensen	MMO Appointee
Richard Stride	MMO Appointee
Miss Pia Bateman	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) Mr S Dell, Accountant Mrs G Roberts and Office Manager Ms M Chaplin were also present.

### **352. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Sarah Birchenough (DCO).

### **353. Declarations of Interest**

There were no pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests declared.

### **354. Minutes**

The minutes from the previous meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were considered by Members.

The CEO provided an update on Recommendation 331, regarding the attendance of Elected Members to Sub-Committees. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and CEO have been unable to contact representatives from Hampshire and BCP, despite numerous avenues being explored. The CEO explained that we were fortunate to have regular attendance from the majority of our Elected members, and that this matter would likely remain unresolved.

The CEO provided an update on Recommendation 342, in that the Accountant would be preparing an Investment Plan/Policy for consideration by the ESC in March 2024.

### **355. Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman provided an overview of his trip with Cllr. Matthew Winnington and DCO Dell to Camber Docks in Portsmouth, where the Southern IFCA representatives met with members of the scallop fishery, representatives from Brighton and Newhaven Fish Sales and the leader of Portsmouth City Council, with the purpose to discuss the regeneration of Camber Docks.

The Chairman visited Ribcraft with DCO Dell and Senior IFCO Parry, describing the valuable of the visit for all parties, which provided an opportunity for Ribcraft to understand the Authority process regarding approval of stage payments.

The Chairman also provided an overview of the Extraordinary Meeting, held in September for

# Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

the purposes of determining the opening and closure of the Solent scallop fishery, thanking all Members for their contributions, which lead to a productive and sensible compromise.

The Chair also discussed his invite by the AIFCA to open and close their conference in September, which he was please to do on behalf of Southern IFCA. The Chairman finished by thanking the CEO for the splendid piece about the Poole Harbour fisheries on BBC's Countryfile.

## **Progress Reports**

### **356. Budget Control Statement.**

The CEO discussed the Budget Control Statement providing a summary control position accurate to 30th September 2023, showing a deficit of income of £130k. The CEO explained that the main reason for this deficit is due to outstanding and anticipated receipt of Defra grant money for the current financial year. The CEO explained that she has been assured by Defra that the payment is imminent. The CEO also described the anticipated disposal of FPV Stella Barbara, once FPV Vigilant is introduced into service. Further, following the introduction of FPV Vigilant a further vehicle would be disposed, following recent disposal of two in recent months.

The CEO explained that the major budget headers, Compliance and Enforcement, Business Services, Research and Policy and Capital Equipment all show a positive variance.

### **Resolved**

**357.** That Member's received the report.

### **358. Chief Executive Officer Updates.**

The CEO discussed a number of changes in the staff body, to include sensitive information regarding a member of staff who had recently had their probation period terminated following outcomes of an internal investigation. The CEO also informed Members that IFCO Griffiths had recently resigned and would be leaving on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023. In addition, our Accountant Gemma Roberts will be leaving in December following the uptake of a full-time contract and promotion at her main place of work. The CEO expressed her thanks to Gemma Roberts for all the hard work over the last few months. The CEO explained that a number of recruitment campaigns were running in mid-December to recruit a Compliance and Enforcement Officer and 2 Project Officers.

The CEO confirmed that Ted Legg had recently resigned as a General Member, with the MMO looking to recruit imminently. Due to personal circumstances Mr Legg is unable to commit to in person attendance at Authority meetings moving forward, however would like to maintain an input where he is able. Dr A Jensen suggested that, if need be, he would be willing as the TAC Chairman to formally send Mr Legg an invite to virtually attend the TAC, as he feels his input is invaluable to ongoing matters. Additionally, on the subject of General Membership, the CEO informed the Members that Louise MacCallum has extended her membership until March 2025.

The CEO spoke about the BBC Countryfile segment and gave specific thanks to DCO Dell, for his central role to ensure that the day ran smoothly, from both a BBC and Southern IFCA perspective.

### **359. Marine Asset Review.**

DCO Dell provided a general update, which included notification that Mr J Mathys from the coding authority Mecal had recently been appointed as the surveyor overseeing the FPV Vigilant boat build, and that Mr Mathys had attended the factory at strategic points throughout the build to date.

# Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

DCO Dell drew Members attention to Annex One, which supports the recommendation that the third stage payment proceeds. DCO Dell confirmed that another meeting was booked at Ribcraft to manage progression and technical fit out, which will include the review of the cabin layout. DCO Dell informed Members that the sea trials are anticipated to commence in February 2024.

DCO Dell informed members that Southern IFCA have received a formal proposal from Poole Harbour Commissioners to purchase FPV Stella Barbara, with the proposal detailing terms of a contractual transfer of the vessel in exchange for a 5-year berthing agreement for FPV Vigilant at its intended base port of Poole Marina, where FPV Endeavour is currently located. This proposal recognises the market value of the vessel Stella Barbara at £50,000 and would require the vessel to be transferred this financial year.

DCO Dell provided a general overview of what this proposal meant in terms of berthing costs for Vigilant for one year: c.£9,700 pounds subject to inflation, and with brokerage charges (up to 10% excluding VAT and the sale price plus travel and subsistence). DCO Dell informed Members that such an agreement would be in accordance with paragraph (49a) of the Financial Regulations.

Cllr Mark Roberts discussed the guidelines for berthing charges for Weymouth and the other harbours in Dorset Council, which increase between 5% and 7.5 % annually and would therefore hypothesise that Poole Harbour would be looking at similar types of increases. Dr A Jensen expressed his concerns regarding the potential berthing deal.

Members discussed the financial logistics of such an agreement being approved, with the Accountant Mrs Roberts confirming to Members that the Authority re-charge rather than remove funds from the Marine Asset Reserve, with the movement of monies being a 'profit & loss' transaction.

## **Resolved**

**360.** That the progression of the boat build for FPV Vigilant is noted by members of the Executive Committee.

**361.** That the Executive Committee note the additional costings for FPV Vigilant.

**362.** That the Executive Committee members approve the disposal of FPV Stella Barbara to Poole Harbour Commissioner's (PHC) in accordance with paragraph (49) and (41) of the Southern IFCA Financial Regulations.

## **363. Draft Budget and Levy Contributions 2024-2025.**

The CEO advised Members that the two reports had been combined for this meeting, with them appearing as separate items at the Meeting of the Full Authority.

The CEO informed the Members of the headline story, that prior to any inflationary projections and assuming a standstill in levy contributions, the budget forecast for the following financial year anticipates a loss of just over 160k. She explained that the projected loss is a direct result of necessary changes which have been made to the Southern IFCA business model to enable the delivery of our statutory functions which includes the introduction of FPV Vigilant and associated operational costs, specifically via the creation of a Senior Marine Operations post, berthing and fuel costs, all of which amount to approximately 80k.

The CEO provided a recapped as to the changes that have taken place in the Business Services Team, with the Business Service Manager role split into two posts, namely and Office Manager

# Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

and part-time Accounts Administrator. In addition the CEO discussed the outsourcing of payroll and pension functions.

The CEO also mentioned that the budget forecast also recognises the rise in cost of living, most notably the costs associated with the National Joint Council (NJC) Pay award, an annually agreed pay rise which staff are contracted to receive, which is linked to Hampshire Local Authority. The CEO confirmed that a 5% provision had been made to account for these nationally agreed pay awards.

The CEO explained the continuation of Business as Usual in accordance with Southern's legal duties, which includes for the forthcoming financial year the review of the leases under the Poole Harbour Fishery Order. The CEO highlighted the plans for three additional surveys, (1) an extension of the current Solent Scallop survey, (2) a Drift Net project which we are committed to under the Net Fishing Byelaw and (3) the Solent Oyster survey.

The CEO explained the work we are required to do under the Fisheries Act, as funded by Defra for a three year period ending March 2025. As part of this, it is the intention for two pilot project to be undertaken looking Artificial Intelligence solutions in inshore fisheries to see how we can future proof the way we manage fisheries. In addition, further research will be undertaken in the Solent scallop fishery to help inform relevant FMP outputs as well a Southern IFCA management.

The CEO informed Members that at the end of the current financial year we are anticipating a surplus of c.£75k, a saving which in part is a result of the delayed arrival of FPV Vigilant. Further, the CEO discussed additional and unforeseen income relating to the work completed following the Poole Harbour oil spill, as well as that from chartering FPVs to other government bodies. The Accountant had been exploring investment opportunities which could generate c.20k pa.

The CEO explained that the main headline is that despite the forecasted loss of C.160k, a loss which reflects necessary changes to the business model to enable maintained delivery of statutory functions, the unforeseen savings and income (both realised and anticipated) will allow Southern IFCA to achieve a balanced budget, drawing from the General reserves to match the anticipated deficit.

The CEO invited Members to note the principles informing the Budget Forecast for the Financial Year 2024-2025.

With regard to the Levy contributions, the CEO advised that we would be seeking a 4% increase, equating to c.£32k. across the six Local Authority's in accordance with the prescribed formula. The CEO explained that whilst we were able to achieve a balanced budget due to unforeseen savings and income during the current financial year via the drawing upon reserves to match the anticipated deficit, c.£33k of the projected deficit relates to nationally agreed pay awards across the core staff body. Staff pay awards over the last three years have been met by the Authority's reserves, totalling c.£90k.

The CEO recognised the extreme financial pressures that the Local Authority's are under, however competent management of IFCA finances over a number of years shouldn't negate consideration of a levy rise, in order to recognise as a minimum the cost of nationally agreed pay awards. The CEO explained that the proposal is consistent with the AIFCA and other IFCA's who are also seeking as a baseline, increases which relate to the national pay awards.

The CEO summarised that if a 4% increase is achieved, then the projected budgetary shortfall would be c.£128k, with Southern IFCA drawing this figure from reserves to achieve a balanced budget.

# Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

The Chairman agreed that Southern IFCA are in a fortunate position as some other organisations haven't managed their funds as well. The Chairman agreed that he was very happy with the proposal, especially given that there wasn't an increase last year. Further, he discussed the levy contributions made since 2010, in that there has been a low level of increase of around 2% in some years; reflecting on the danger of maintaining such small margins which remains out of line with inflationary rises.

Cllr Paul Fuller informed the Members that he would go back to the Cabinet, as anything above 3% will need to be authorised, however, he anticipated that because of prudence in financial management at Southern IFCA, it is likely that the Isle of Wight Council will support the increase. Cllr Rob Hughes informed Members that he was happy to take 4% back to Dorset Council and support the proposal.

## **Resolved**

**364.** That Members note the two reports in preparation for the subsequent Meeting of The Authority on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

## **365. Accident, Incident and Near Miss Report**

DCO Dell informed the Members that there had been one accident and one incident during the previous reporting period. DCO Dell described the accident which had occurred when an IFCO wounded their head following self-inflicted contact with a metal gate in Portland. First Aid was applied at the time. The incident reported was a result of an IFCO speeding in an Authority vehicle. Relevant procedures, in accordance with the Staff Handbook and Vehicle Policy had been followed.

## **Resolved**

**366.** That Member's noted the update.

## **367. Date of Next Meeting**

Members considered the date of the next ESC, timetabled for the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

## **Resolved**

**368.** The date of the next virtual meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee is confirmed

The Meeting closed at 15:41.



**SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**  
**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023**

MARKED C

Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) held virtually via Microsoft Teams at  
**14:00 on 2nd November 2023**

**Present (Virtual)**

Dr Antony Jensen	Chairman, MMO Appointee
Mr Richard Stride	Vice Chairman, MMO Appointee
Mr Colin Francis	MMO Appointee
Ms Louise MacCallum	MMO Appointee
Mr Gary Wordsworth	MMO Appointee
Ms Elisabeth Bussey-Jones	MMO Appointee
Mr Tedd Legg	MMO Appointee
Mr Neil Hornby	MMO Appointee
Ms Rachel Irish	MMO Appointee
Dr Richard Morgan	Natural England
Ms Pia Bateman	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) Dr Sarah Birchenough, Office Manager Ms Maria Chaplin, Senior Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer (Snr IFCO) Ms Emily Condie and IFCOs Mr Dominic Parry, Ms Celie Mullen, Ms Hester Churchouse and Project Officer (PO) Ms Chelsea Perrins were also present.

**Chairman's Welcome**

21. Dr A Jensen opened the meeting, reminding Members that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of minute taking. Dr A Jensen thanked Members for their virtual attendance following the inclement weather conditions across the District arising from Storm Ciarán.

**Apologies**

22. Apologies for absence were received from Dr Simon Cripps (MMO Appointee), Mr Stuart Kingston-Turner (Environment Agency) and DCO Sam Dell.

**Declarations of interest**

23. The following non-pecuniary interests were declared: Mr R Stride (Agenda Item 5C), Mr G Wordsworth (Agenda Item 6), Mr T Legg (Agenda Items 5e, 7&8), Dr R Morgan (Agenda Item 6)

**Minutes**

24. Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Dr R Morgan requested the following correction to the previous minutes on page 4, where 'feature fabric' should be replaced with 'site fabric'.

The minutes were confirmed and signed.

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

**25a. Chief Executive Officer Updates**

The CEO welcomed Hester Churchouse to the Research and Policy Team and congratulated Emily Condie following her promotion to Senior IFCO in the Research and Policy Team.

The CEO discussed the newly formatted Executive Summary's which will now feature in Authority papers moving forward to provide readers with a concise overview of the main points and key findings in order to support and facilitate Members decision-making processes.

The CEO briefly discussed the MMO's inshore VMS roll out in the under 6m fleet and the funding processes that the MMO had put in place to support industry.

**25b. Byelaw Submission updates**

DCO Birchenough updated Members on the progress of the BTFG Byelaw 2023, which has now been submitted to the MMO for their consideration. The Pot Fishing Byelaw remains with the MMO for QA, with no updates received.

**25c. Net Fishing Byelaw Implementation**

In the absence of DCO Dell, the CEO provided an update on the NFB implementation, discussing that in his role as Fisheries Liaison Officer, DCO Dell was continuing to focus on community engagement with focus being in Permit Areas of Southampton Water, the River Hamble and Christchurch Harbour. To date approximately 10-12 permit applications have been received with the team continuing to work to ensure net fishing can continue within the permit areas for those that meet the eligibility criteria. The application window closes on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

The Compliance and Enforcement Team has detected 2 offences to date since the Byelaw was ratified at the end of August, which have been dealt with in accordance with The Compliance and Enforcement Framework. This area of work remains a priority for the team so that the stakeholders are in a position to understand the new requirements.

**25d. Solent Scallop Fishery**

DCO Birchenough provided an update on the Solent Scallop Fishery following an Extraordinary Meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023. DCO Birchenough confirmed that Members had agreed that for the 2022-2023 (current) season there would be no fishing for scallops in October 2023 and for the forthcoming permit (2023-2024) there would be no fishing at the weekend, with restrictions between 08:00 and 16:00 on the days when fishing is permitted and the season would run from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. DCO Birchenough described the engagement with the industry following the consultation.

**25e. Minimum Conservation Reference Size Review**

IFCO D Parry provided an update on the involvement of the working group to date and the current work being undertaken including consideration of prioritising species and defining principles for any proposed changes, drafting of evidence packages and a consultation document to support a potential informal consultation on the first set of species.

Mr T Legg (MMO) asked whether Southern were intending on aligning to FMP outcomes. The CEO discussed that the IFCA's are required to align with the Fisheries Act 2020 and therefore the outcomes of the FMP's which are routed in this legislation, confirming that IFCO D Parry had been prioritising the MCRS work to ensure alignment.

**25f. Black Bream Management Development**

DCO Birchenough reminded Members that as part of the Research and Policy Strategy for this year, Black Bream was one of the three workstreams under the MPA Management Review Horizon Goal that has been identified as requiring prioritisation in order to meet the Government's 2024 MPA deadline for having management measures in place.

DCO Birchenough updated Members on discussions that have subsequently been happening between Natural England and Southern IFCA with regard to Black Bream management, where

Natural England have resolved (as supported by Southern) to approach DEFRA to revisit 2024 timelines in order for additional data outcomes from a FISP project to be considered for inclusion in the evidence base, prior to management measures being developed.

Dr R Morgan discussed the strong case for postponing the development of management measures until the conclusion of the FISP project in spring 2025. Dr R Morgan thanked the CEO and DCO Birchenough who provided supporting text to aid with making the necessary enquiries with Defra.

### **ITEMS FOR DECISION**

#### **26. Authorisation for Mussel Fishing 2024**

DCO Birchenough provided Members with a background to the authorisation request, in that the relevant Skipper had approached Southern IFCA to ask if he could apply for an authorisation for 2024, having held an authorisation in previous years, and whether the spatial extent of that authorisation could be increased.

DCO Birchenough explained that under the current 2023 Authorisation, a quota is set, as well as requirements for prior reporting, in addition to defining a specific spatial area for mussel seed operations. Following consideration of relevant BTFG Byelaw prohibitions and the mitigation these provide against an adverse effect to designated features, DCO Birchenough explained that it is proposed that a spatial restriction on activity under the authorisation is not required under the 2024 Authorisation, subject to Members consideration. This would enable the vessel to access two small areas of the Studland to Portland SAC which have been identified as having no designated features or buffer zones present and therefore are not subject to wider BTFG prohibitions. DCO Birchenough also outlined that it is proposed to include stricter reporting requirements under the authorisation requiring the skipper to provide days fished, hours fished, coordinates of the start and end of the first and last tow of the day, time spent towing and quantity of mussels landed per tow.

Dr R Morgan discussed concerns held by Natural England of the activity occurring within an SAC, despite falling outside of the feature based BTFG boundary recognising that this position conflicts with previous NE BTFG advice under the BTFG review. Dr R Morgan spoke about a more holistic approach to site management being a preference for NE but recognised that the IFCA has statutory duties for a feature-based approach. Dr R Morgan suggested that an Appropriate Assessment be carried out for the activity occurring within the SAC to ensure that the specific activity is assessed separately to general BTFG.

Mr R Stride commented that his understanding is that spatial restrictions would not be required under the authorisation as they are provided by the prohibitions in place under the BTFG Byelaw which provides the feature-based protections. Mr T Legg asked whether there is a reason that the operator would like to fish in other areas, and whether this was an indication that the stocks were reducing in areas currently fished. Ms L McCallum and Ms E Bussey-Jones discussed the fact that the operator was seeking permissions to harvest undersize mussels and as such this activity was not directly comparable with activity of the wider BTFG fleet. Dr A Jensen queried whether the reporting requirement under the authorisation could be amended to require the skipper to record the start and end coordinates of each tow rather than just the first and last tow of the day to ensure the maximum amount of data in relation to fishing activity could be collected, particularly in relation to any potential fishing activity within the SAC. Members discussed whether it would be appropriate to consider management of areas of the SAC where designated features were not present but wider sensitivities may exist under the second phase of the BTFG review.

# **SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

## **TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023**

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Mr G Wordsworth explained to Members that the operator was seeking additional grounds due to spatial squeeze concerns as well as recognition of the often transient nature of the mussel seed in response to weather conditions. He discussed the fishing operations being around 20-25minutes a day.

The Chairman summarised discussions, reminding Members that due to the meeting being held virtually, consideration of the Recommendations would be postponed until the December Authority Meeting.

### **27.Recommendations**

That the following recommendations be considered at the forthcoming meeting of The Authority on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

- a) That, subject to Formal Advice from Natural England, written consent shall be provided for the fishing vessel WY37 Nicola L to remove mussel under 50mm between 1st January and 31st December 2024, provided that this activity is in line with the provisions outlined in the authorisation.
- b) That Officers are delegated to make any inconsequential changes to the Test of Likely Significant Effect (Annex I) following receipt of any Formal Advice from Natural England.

### **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

#### **28. Fisheries Management Plans Consultation Responses**

IFCO Mullen provided an update following the DEFRA consultation for the frontrunner FMP's which finished on 1st October 2023, referring to the annexes which document Southern IFCA's response, incorporating input from a Member Workshop held in September.

IFCO Mullen submitted these responses on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September with confirmation of receipt subsequently received from DEFRA.

#### **29. Fisheries Management Plans**

IFCO Mullen provided a status update on the FMP's, to include a summary of various online and in person events across the district, which included Gosport, Weymouth and Poole, in addition to attendance by Southern IFCA at two online events. IFCO Mullen provided a summary of the AIFCA Conference held in September, attended by the Chairman of the TAC and IFCO Mullen, which was held to discuss AIFCA responses to the Crab, Lobster & Whelk FMP's. This event was attended by IFCA representatives, Defra, the MMO and research bodies such as Cefas and SeaFish, along with representatives of the fishing industry.

IFCO Mullen advised that she has been participating in the working group for the Skates and Rays FMP, where she had managed to secure a district relevant engagement session for fishers on the 15th November in Lyme Regis running between 10:00 & 12:00.

#### **30. Marine Licencing Update**

IFCO D Parry provided an update on Marine Licensing, discussing the five applications requiring comment over the last quarter.

#### **31. Date of Next Meeting**

That the next meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> February

**SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023**

MARKED C

2024 at Southern IFCA, Unit 3 Holes Bay Park, Sterte Avenue West, Poole Dorset BH15 2AA.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:10

**Chairman:**

**Date:**

DRAFT

## Budget Control Statement

Report by The CEO and Chartered Accountant

### A. Purpose

To provide Members with a summary of the Authority's accounts for the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

### B. Recommendation

1. That the report be received.

### C. Annexes

Annex 1: Summary Budget Control Statement & Detailed Budget Control Statement

## 1.0 Budget Control Statement

- 1.1 The Summary Budget Control Statement to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 is shown at Annex 1, showing a **55k deficit of income against budget**.
- 1.2 The notes accompanying the Summary and Detailed Budget Control Statement (Annex 1) provide an overview of all positive and negative variance equal to or greater than 1k.

## 2.0 Summary of Major Budget Headers

- 2.1 The positive variance captured under the Compliance & Enforcement Header (c.80k) is due in part (c.50k) to a new approach to accounting (in accordance with best recognised practice), where monies to replenish the Patrol Vessel Reserve fund are to be transferred at the end of the financial year, rather than in year. Marine Insurance was c.7k lower than anticipated (relating to FPV Vigilant and the point in which she will enter service) and costs associated with prosecutions (c.14k) remain lower than budget. Berthing fees for FPV Vigilant entering service were budgeted from June 2023.
- 2.2 The positive variance captured under the Research and Policy Header (c.19k) reflects the monies ringfenced for byelaw advertisement process (c.6k) (in accordance with Defra guidance) and that which has been ringfenced for legal scrutiny of byelaws (c.5k) which has not been utilised to date. The fee (c.5k) associated with the annual MSC audit of the Poole Harbour Dredge fishery was paid in advance in the previous financial year (2022/2023).
- 2.3 The positive variance captured under the Business Service Header (c.18k) is due to a reduction in staff salary and pension contributions as a result of in year staff movements, specifically the of carrying vacancies for Office Manager, Finance Administration and Senior IFCO Research & Policy (c.17k) during the earlier part of the budget year. Associated to staff changes being the unforeseen costs of 10k to Office Angels following staff resignation.
- 2.4 The positive variance under the Capital Equipment Header (c.58k) is due to budgeting for FPV Vigilant to enter service earlier than anticipated.

## 3.0 Total Income

A deficit in projected income of c.230k reflects outstanding receipt of Defra grant for project work 2023-2024 (140k). The additional outstanding monies relate to the anticipated disposal of FPV Stella Barbara following FPV Vigilant coming into service, and the disposal of 3 x Authority vehicles (3/4 completed in Autumn).

**4.0 Payment of Amounts Exceeding £5,000**

4.1 Paragraph (11) of Southern IFCA’s Financial Regulations 2022 require that all ex. VAT payments over £5,000 (with the exception of salaries, PAYE, pension contributions and regular payments outside of the Financial Manager’s control) are to be reported to the Authority via a BCS.

4.2 Between the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, the following payments equal to or greater than the above-mentioned figure are as follows:

<b>Amount</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>What (why)</b>	<b>Who</b>
£43,602.60	01/11/2023	New Van – Silver Ford. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>purchase followed sale of 3/4 vehicles (c.28.5k) (the fourth - pending operational needs assessment following introduction of FPV Vigilant).</i></li> <li>• <i>new van to service FPV Vigilant – operationally suited to transport more IFCOs (6&amp;gear) compared with existing vans (2 seats).</i></li> </ul>	Foray Motor Group

SUMMARY RESULTS Major Budget Headers		Apr23-Mar24 12 mths Budget
<b>EXPENDITURE SUMMARY</b>		
Compliance and Enforcement	169,529	
Research and Policy	33,631	
Business Services	895,839	
Capital Equipment	126,055	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,225,054</b>	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,175,441</b>	
<b>INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(49,613)</b>	

YTD 1 Apr 23 - 31 Dec 23 (9 mths)				YTD Notes for positive & negative variance ≥£1k
Actual	Budget	Variance		
51,047	131,012	↓ (79,965)		£50k pending transfer to the Marine Renewal Reserve which despite being budgeted, will be transferred from the General Reserve at year end. Insurance £5.5k lower than budgeted. £3.5k lower FPV Fuel and £3k lower on FPV Maintenance. Prosecution costs £14k lower than budgeted.
7,148	26,368	↓ (19,220)		A no. of surveys outstanding (anticipated early 2024) c.£1.9k. £6.5k for byelaws adverts pending. Legal scrutiny £4.8k not utilised to date, MSC annual audit £4.8k incurred 2022/23.
663,418	681,314	↓ (17,896)		Majority related to salary & pension savings of £17k. £6.7k overspend on office expenditure is covered by ringfenced Dilapidations reserve. £10k unforeseen on Office Angels placement fee. These are offset by a £9.5k underspend to date on National training.
32,804	90,480	↓ (57,676)		£58k relates to depreciation on Stella Barbara replacement budgeted to be in service in June 2023.
754,416	929,174	↓ (174,758)		
<b>933,326</b>	<b>1,162,634</b>	<b>↓ (229,308)</b>		DEFRA grant (£165k) 2023/24 pending. Pending sale of FPV Stella Barbara (£55k). £25k of Poole Order Reserve to be transferred to General Reserves at year end. £16k Poole Order aquaculture leases anticipated Jan 2024, BCP Sampling anticipated Jan 2024 (c. £2k). Offset by £18k of bank interest.
<b>178,909</b>	<b>233,460</b>	<b>↓ (54,551)</b>		YTD there is a deficit in income of £54k against budget.

DETAILED RESULTS Minor Budget Headers		Apr23-Mar24 12 mths Budget
<b>Compliance &amp; Enforcement</b>		
Total Vehicle Fuel	4,835	
7150-100 Vehicle roadside assistance	210	
7160-100 Vehicle maintenance	3,222	
7170-100 Vehicle road tax	1,396	
7180-100 Vehicle Insurance	3,805	
6068-100 Drone Insurance	2,400	
6066-100 Drone running costs	644	
6000-100 3x FPV Fuel	12,709	
6005-100 FPV Berthing	10,352	
6006-100 FPV Maintenance	19,173	
6070-100 Marine Insurance	9,260	
4910-100 Patrol Vessel Reserve Fund	66,667	
5040-100 Protective clothing (PPE)	6,306	
5233-100 Enforcement Equipment	3,222	
5234-100 Industry compliance aids	3,847	
5090-100 Prosecution costs	21,480	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>169,529</b>	

YTD 1 Apr 23 - 31 Dec 23 (9 mths)				YTD Notes for positive & negative variance ≥£1k
Actual	Budget	Variance		
3,913	3,626	↑ 287		
0	158	↓ (158)		
4,115	2,417	↓ 1,698		Windscreens repairs x2, tyre replacement, tracker (new vehicle), tow bar (general wear & tear)
927	1,047	↓ (120)		
4,391	3,805	↑ 586		
0	2,400	↓ (2,400)		This cost has been captured under 6070 Marine Insurance.
535	483	↑ 52		
6,003	9,531	↓ (3,528)		Underspend in part reflects periods when 2 x FPV's were land based for maintenance purposes. Cost of fuel reduced since budget setting
5,178	7,764	↓ (2,586)		Budget includes cost to berth new vessel (Vigilant) anticipated to be operational at this point.
13,896	14,380	↓ (484)		
5,138	9,260	↓ (4,122)		Premium lower than expected based on previous years.
0	50,000	↓ (50,000)		Recognised accounting treatment requires the £66,667 to be transferred out of General Reserves and into the Marine Vessel Renewal Reserve at year end.
3,198	4,729	↓ (1,531)		Costs incurred in January following 3 x new starters
1,167	2,417	↓ (1,250)		Costs incurred in January following 3 x new starters
566	2,885	↓ (2,319)		Reflects seasonal requests for RSA strickers & shellfish gauges (handgathering)
2,020	16,110	↓ (14,090)		Budget is evenly phased by month. We are not accruing each month but will account for these costs as they hit.
51,047	131,012	↓ (79,965)		

5140-100 Adverts - Byelaws	10,842	
5096-100 Legal scrutiny (including byelaws)	6,444	
5099-100 Consultation costs	1,074	
5201-100 Poole Bivalve Survey	1,100	
5202-100 Solent Scallop Stock Survey	3,029	
5206-100 Solent Bivalve Stock Assessment	3,029	
5207-100 Whelk Survey	1,718	
5217-100 Survey Equipment & Maintenance	537	
5231-100 Poole Harbour MSC Re-certification	1,025	
5230-100 Poole Harbour MSC Annual Audit	4,833	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33,631</b>	

1,653	8,132	↓ (6,479)		Budgeted for 3 MPA byelaws - BTFG Autumn 2023 realised. SG & BB pending 2024...
0	4,833	↓ (4,833)		Budget is evenly phased by month. We are not accruing each month but will account for these costs as they hit.
0	806	↓ (806)		
168	1,100	↓ (932)		
2,830	3,029	↓ (199)		
2,360	1,514	↑ 846		Costs attributed to incorrect cost code - will be rectified end of year
136	1,718	↓ (1,582)		Work anticipated January - March 2024.
0	403	↓ (403)		
0	0	0		Transfer to Poole order from General Reserve at year end (PHDP payments increased over 5 years to payback upfront costs for re-certification).
0	4,833	↓ (4,833)		Paid prematurely in 2022/23 budget to align with payments for MSC Re-certification
7,148	26,368	↓ (19,220)		

Office expenditure	32,089	
5060-100 Communications	8,055	
5070-100 General Insurance	20,479	
5075-100 Rates	21,086	
5110-100 Misc	4,296	
5130-100 Financial Audit costs	3,866	
5065-100 New accounting software - Xero	541	
5680-100 Bank charges	930	
5160-100 AIFCA	15,000	
5080-100 General Subscriptions	4,854	
5056-100 Permit Database	1,257	
5105-100 Authority meetings	2,685	
4862-100 Meetings - NIMEG	0	
5150-100 Adverts - Recruitment	2,148	
5097-100 Legal support (HR)	1,611	
5010-100 Salaries and other labour costs	658,369	
5020-100 LGA Pension Scheme	87,892	
Training	22,307	
Staff Expenses	4,400	
7130-100 Chairman's fund	1,074	
7145-100 Members networking	752	
7140-100/7144-100 MMO appointee expenses	2,148	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>895,839</b>	

30,734	24,067	↓ 6,667		Overspend specific to Dilapidations Reserve funding infrastructure improvements outside budget. This amount to be deducted at year end.
6,814	6,041	↑ 773		
21,221	20,479	↑ 742		
16,564	15,814	↑ 750		
1,348	3,222	↓ (1,875)		Budget spread evenly across the year, spend is more ad-hoc. Legacy account to be removed at year end.
3,300	3,866	↓ (566)		
0	0	0		
723	698	↑ 25		Cost slightly less than budgeted.
13,585	15,000	↓ (1,415)		
2,690	3,641	↓ (951)		
1,820	942	↑ (2,762)		Refund from Sussex IFCA - more IFCA's utilising system so original development costs reduced.
1,013	2,014	↓ (1,001)		Cost of venue hire increased in year.
0	475	↓ 475		
12,623	1,611	↑ 11,012		£10k Office Angels placement fees following resignation in April. This was unforeseen.
490	1,208	↓ (718)		
477,115	493,777	↓ (16,662)		Represents in year staff vacancies that have since been filled.
65,432	65,919	↓ (487)		
7,184	16,730	↓ (9,546)		National Training costs (Competent Officer Course) anticipated Feb 2024
3,812	3,304	↑ 508		
62	806	↓ (744)		
224	564	↓ (340)		
(171)	1,611	↓ (1,782)		This is the release of 2022/23 accrual. No new accruals made.
663,418	681,314	↓ (17,896)		

9120-100 Premises	4,988	
9140-100 Equipment	4,039	
9180-100 Vehicles	12,376	
9160-100 FPV's	99,282	
9010-100 Small items of equip (<£500)	5,370	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>126,055</b>	

3,741	3,741	0		
3,601	3,029	↑ 572		New van purchased in Oct 2023 (less than budgeted) plus sale of 2 x vehicles. A further vehicle sale pending subject to operational need re: FPV Vigilant.
6,299	9,282	↓ (2,983)		Budget estimated Stella Barbara replacement (i.e. Vigilant) to be in use from Jun 2023.
17,810	70,400	↓ (52,590)		Phased evenly by month for the Budget. This is an estimate.
1,353	4,028	↓ (2,675)		
32,804	90,480	↓ (57,676)		

4210-100 Levy - Hants	328,489	
4220-100 Levy - IOW	116,678	
4230-100 Levy - Dorset	201,537	
4250-100 Levy - BCP	90,607	
4260-100 Levy - Southampton	34,963	
4270-100 Levy - Portsmouth	40,817	
4845-100 Poole Harbour Dredge Permits	27,000	
4846-100 Solent Dredge Permits Category A	7,740	
4850-100 Poole Order Aquaculture Leases	31,530	
4847-100 Net Fishing permits	2,890	
4851-100 Pot Fishing Permit - commercial	3,600	
4852-100 Pot Fishing Permit - recreational	1,050	
4895-100 Poole Council Shellfish Sample	2,835	
4190-100 Bank interest receivable	1,000	
4890-100 Misc income (including DEFRA refunds)	2,500	
4200-100 DEFRA Fisheries Act Fund (SR21)	165,000	
4897-100 Poole Harbour Fishery Reserve tfr	33,930	
5170-100 (Surplus)/deficit on equip sale	79,851	
4600-100 Court costs recovered	3,424	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,175,441</b>	

328,489	328,489	0		
116,678	116,678	0		
201,537	201,537	0		
90,607	90,607	0		
34,963	34,963	0		
40,817	40,817	0		
29,950	27,000	↑ 2,950		1 less permit than anticipated (€675), remaining surplus to transfer to Poole Reserve at year end (MSC upfront payments)
6,263	7,740	↓ (1,477)		35 permits anticipated based on previous year. 29 taken out.
14,729	31,530	↓ (16,801)		Income to be realised in July - budget all in July - when does this income come through? Last year was all in early Jan.
1,700	2,167	↓ (467)		
0	2,700	↓ (2,700)		PFB with Defra for QA prior to SoS consideration for ratification.
0	788	↓ (788)		
-	2,126	↓ (2,126)		Sum pending January 2024.
19,444	750	↑ 18,694		Budget set before interest rate increases.
2,877	1,875	↑ 1,002		Unforeseen chartering costs
0	165,000	↓ (165,000)		No update on DEFRA funding for 2023-24 - anticipate will receive this during the financial year. Expected to be £140k.
0	25,448	↓ (25,448)		Recognised accounting treatment requires transfer from the Poole Order Reserve to the General Reserve at year end to cover costs.
21,433	79,851	↓ (58,418)		Budget relates to sale of Stella Barbara (€55k); delayed until FPV Vigilant comes into services. 3 x vehicles (€28.5k profit) disposed in Nov 2023.
1,869	2,568	↓ (699)		
933,325.75	1,162,634.00	↓ (229,308.25)		



## Annual Strategic Plan: 2024-2025

Report by the CEO

### A. Purpose

To consider Southern IFCA's Annual Strategic Plan for April 2024 to March 2025.

### B. Recommendations

1. That Members consider the draft Annual Strategic Plan for the forthcoming year April 2024-March 2025.

2. That Members approve the Annual Strategic Plan for dissemination to the Secretary of State and publication on Southern IFCA's website prior to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

### C. Annex

Annex 1: Southern IFCA's Annual Strategic Plan: April 2024 to March 2025 (*draft*)

## 1.0 Background

1.1 Section (177) of The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 requires IFCAs to (1) make and publish a plan setting out the Authority's main objectives and priorities for the year, prior to the beginning of each financial year, (2) that IFCAs must send a copy of this plan to the Secretary of State.

1.2 In order to deliver a strategic plan and fulfil Southern IFCA's function as a competent inshore regulator for the marine environment, we recognise the need to align our work to a strategic direction. With many competing and evolving objectives, it is important that we maintain a considered overview in our delivery. This proactive way of working, with the recognition of the need to maintain a capacity for reactive and emerging work and oncoming challenges, will provide a template for Southern IFCA and our stakeholders moving forward through 2024 and beyond.

1.3 Strategic direction will enable Southern IFCA to be more transparent with our community, stakeholders and delivery partners, through anticipation of shared goals and objectives and seek to encourage joint working initiative and projects.

## 2.0 Strategic Plan Components

2.1 The Strategic Plan demonstrates how Southern IFCA will continue to shape inshore fisheries and conservation management in accordance with statutory functions.

2.2 With the overarching context provided by **legislative function** and **overarching policy principles**, Southern IFCA will continue to draw these components together to drive the collective delivery of the UK Government's vision, in addition to adherence with **regulatory best practice** when delivering a compliance and enforcement function.

2.3 Building upon the National IFCA Vision, **Southern IFCA's vision** for the forthcoming year is to '**champion prosperous inshore fisheries founded upon thriving marine environments**'.

2.4 The Southern IFCA vision recognises the symbiotic relationship which exists when well-managed inshore fisheries reap environmental and socioeconomic benefit. In championing these reciprocal relationships, Southern IFCA will continue to draw upon **two key themes** for 2024-2025 which will be embedded and threaded through all of our work which, which as captured

within and central to the wider IFCA model, are essential components to facilitate the delivery of the IFCA vision: **industry collaboration** and **partnership working**.

- 2.5 Three **Horizon Goals** have been identified for delivery by each team:
- **Business Services Team** (as part of the ongoing governance improvement programme): (1) HR solutions, (2) online permit platform, (3) a review of Staff Personal Work Plans
  - **Compliance & Enforcement Team**: (1) FPV Vigilant, (2) REM & AI pilot projects, (3) Pot Fishing Byelaw Implementation.
  - **Research & Policy Team**: (1) MPA Management, (2) Frontrunner FMPs (implementation), (3) BTFG Phase II.
- 2.6 The team specific Horizon Goals have been translated into clear, outcome-focused Delivery Priorities under the Research and Policy Plan 2024-2025 and the Compliance and Enforcement Plan 2024-2025 alongside other key areas of work.
- 2.7 The Horizon Goals demonstrate where Southern IFCA consider their work for the forthcoming year aligns with:
- Delivery of IFCA High Level Objectives via **IFCA Success Criteria**.
  - The eight **Fisheries Objectives** (Fisheries Act 2020).
  - Supporting **Defra** in the delivery of specific objectives under the **Fisheries Act 2020** and **Environment Act 2021**, to include:
    - Working to a Defra 2024 MPA deadline in accordance with the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP), requiring suitable management measures to be developed and implemented across all relevant MPAs within the District.
    - Consideration of the short-term outputs of the frontrunner FMPs to ensure compatibility of district work with nationally agreed directions in fisheries management, with wider directional awareness and alignment with medium to long-term objectives.
  - The **UK Net Zero Strategy**, via identification and instigation of changes in operations, in order to minimise and reduce emissions, in addition to work surrounding the harnessing of blue carbon habitats.
- 2.8 It is Southern IFCA's intention to report on the annual delivery of the 2024-2025 Strategic Plan in the context of the defined **Reporting Metrics** in accordance with requirements under the MaCAA.



# **Southern IFCA's Annual Strategic Plan**

## **April 2024 to March 2025**

# SECTION 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Strategic Planning

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority's (IFCAs) were created under Section 150 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009<sup>1</sup> (MaCAA), as designated statutory inshore regulators for the marine environment. Southern IFCA have clearly defined duties to **manage sustainable fisheries and conserve the wider marine environment** within the coastal waters of Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight.

Under Section (177) of the MaCAA, Southern IFCA are required to make and publish a plan setting out the Authority's main objectives and priorities for the year ahead.

In order to deliver a strategic plan and fulfill Southern IFCA's function as a competent inshore regulator for the marine environment, we recognise the need to align our work to a strategic direction. With many competing and evolving objectives, it is important that we maintain a considered overview in our delivery. This proactive way of working, with the recognition of the need to maintain a capacity for reactive and emerging work and oncoming challenges, will provide a template for Southern IFCA and our stakeholders moving forward through 2024 and beyond.

The strategic direction, as presented in this paper, will enable Southern IFCA to be more transparent with our community, stakeholders and delivery partners, through anticipation of shared goals and objectives and seek to encourage joint working initiative and projects.

This plan sets out Southern IFCA's strategic direction for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

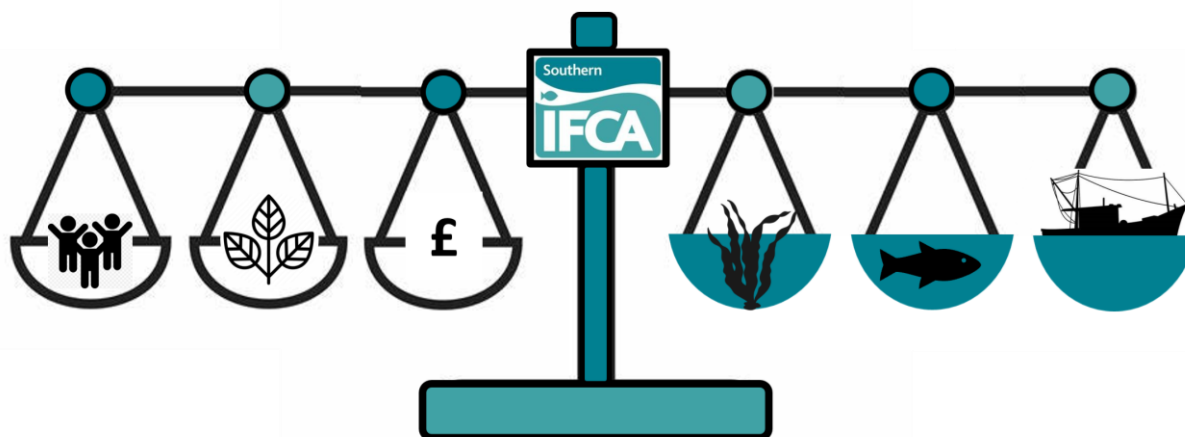
## 1.2 IFCA Core Values

### 1.2.1 The National IFCA Vision, High Level Objectives and Success Criteria

Together, the National IFCA Vision, High Level Objectives and Success Criteria set out the intentions of IFCA's to sustainably manage inshore fisheries and conservation.

***“ IFCAs will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment & inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental & economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries & a viable industry ”***

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>



IFCA High Level Objectives	IFCA Success Criteria
Achieving a sustainable marine economy	IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders.
Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society	IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime.
Using sound science responsibly	IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts.
Living within environmental limits	IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.
Promoting good governance	IFCAs make the use of evidence to deliver their objectives

### 1.3 Supporting Government Vision

The Strategic Plan demonstrates how **Southern IFCA will continue to shape inshore fisheries and conservation management** in accordance with our statutory functions, and in doing so support the UK’s Governments vision for ‘*clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas*’ in accordance with the **UK Marine Policy Statement**<sup>2</sup>.

Further, it will demonstrate how Southern IFCA’s work aligns with the Government’s shared ambition under the **Joint Fisheries Statement**<sup>3</sup> (JFS) ‘*...to continue delivering world class, sustainable management...*’ for **sea fisheries, recreational sea fishing and aquaculture**, in accordance with achieving, or contributing to the achievement of the **eight fisheries objectives**, set out in the **Fisheries Act 2020**<sup>4</sup>.

**The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010**<sup>5</sup> require fishery bodies in the UK to take action to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status (GES) in all UK waters. **The UK Marine Strategy**<sup>6</sup> is a key pillar of marine policy in the UK and the JFS is a cross cutting measure which will help to deliver GES for fisheries<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-marine-policy-statement>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-fisheries-statement-jfs>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/22/contents/enacted>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1627/contents/made>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-strategy-part-one-uk-updated-assessment-and-good-environmental-status>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-fisheries-statement-jfs> (page 11)

In accordance with the Government's **Environmental Improvement Plan 2023<sup>8</sup> (EIP)**, which builds upon the **25 Year Environment Plan<sup>9</sup> (25YEP)** and key legislative frameworks, to include the **Environment Act 2021<sup>10</sup>** and the Fisheries Act 2020, Southern IFCA will endeavour to evidence our role in the collective delivery of the Government's vision, to '*...help the natural world regain and retain good health...*', following the commitment to '*...leave the environment in a better state for future generations...*' and '*...halt the decline of nature by 2030...*'

**The Fisheries Act (2020)** was introduced to make provisions in relation to fisheries, fishing, aquaculture and marine conservation following the departure of the UK from Europe. The Act enshrines in law the UK's commitment to sustainable fishing, supporting future generations of fishers, while allowing the marine environment to thrive. It provides a legally binding structure to protect and recover stocks, support a sustainable fishing industry and safeguard the environment. In accordance with the JFS, **IFCAs are required to have regard to the Fisheries Act (2020)**, the **Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS)** and **Fisheries Management Plans (FMP)**, where required by guidance issued by the Secretary of State, or when undertaking a relevant function as delegated by the Marine Management Organisation.

**The Environment Act (2021)** sets clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, waste and water, and includes a target to reverse the decline in species abundance by 2030. The Act designated the 25YEP as the first statutory Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP), and IFCAs, as detached Arm's Length Bodies (ALB) to Defra, **play a crucial role in the delivery of the EIP.**

## 1.4 IFCA's Legislative Functions

### 1.4.1 Overview

IFCA's have clearly defined duties under Section (153) of the **Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009): to ensure that the marine environment within the district is conserved and maintained in a viable state.**

### 1.4.2 Legislative Functions Specific to Developing Management

When developing management interventions in inshore fisheries, the legislative framework which Southern IFCA must operate within is determined by the location of the fishery subject to management consideration, specifically whether the fishery occurs within, adjacent or outside of a Marine Protected Area (MPA).

#### 1.4.2.1 Legal duties relevant to different types of MPAs

- **Outside of an MCZ:** Under Section (153) of the MaCAA, Southern IFCA must **(a) ensure that fishing is carried out sustainably, (b) seek to balance the social and economic benefits of fishing with the protection and recovery of the marine environment, (c) contribute to sustainable development and (d) seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in fishing.**
- **Within a MCZ:** Under Section (154) of the MaCAA, Southern IFCA must ensure that we **further the Conservation Objectives of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)** within the District. Once the Authority are satisfied that this has been achieved, consideration can then be given to our wider duties under 153 of MaCAA.
- **Within or adjacent to an SAC or SPA:** Under the **Conservation of Habitats and Species**

<sup>8</sup> [Environmental Improvement Plan \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>9</sup> [25 Year Environment Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

<sup>10</sup> [Environment Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

**(Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019<sup>11</sup>**, Southern IFCA must ensure that **fishing activity does not damage, disturb or have an adverse effect on the wildlife or habitats for which a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA)** within the national site network is legally protected. Once the Authority are satisfied that this has been achieved, consideration can then be given to our wider duties under 153 of MaCAA.

- Within a SSSI: In accordance with **The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981<sup>12</sup>**, when carrying out our duties, Southern IFCA **must consider** any marine component of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which provides protection to species, and/or habitat of national importance. Once the Authority are satisfied that this has been achieved, consideration can then be given to our wider duties under 153 of MaCAA.

### **1.4.3 Legislative Functions Specific to Compliance & Enforcement functions**

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) are granted powers under Section 166 of the MaCAA to enforce:

- Any **Southern IFCA Byelaw**:
  - Southern IFCA have 24 byelaws in place, of which three manage permitted fisheries. Collectively the byelaws ensure relevant management is in place within Southern IFCA's MPAs. In addition, the byelaws introduce conservation measures such as MCRS, seasonal restrictions, species & gear specific measures in addition to spatial and temporal measures. Further details can be found [here](#)
- **UK Orders/Statutory Instruments**, to include:
  - Technical conservation regulations to include MCRS, method and gear restrictions and retention, as specified in Articles 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13 of Council Regulation 2019/1241 and Article 15 of 1380/2013 (landing obligations).
  - Bass Measures (Article 10, Council Regulation 2020/123).
  - The Bass (Specified Areas) (Prohibition of Fishing) Order 1990 and 1999 Variation.
  - The Scallop Fishing (England) Order 2012 (2283/2012)
  - The Lobsters and Crawfish (Prohibition of Fishing and Landing) Order 2000 (874/2000).
  - The Poole Harbour Fishery Order 2015.
  - The Solent European Marine Site (Prohibition of Method of Dredging) Order 2004.
- Any **Byelaw or Interim Byelaw** made by the Marine Management Organisation to protect MCZs.
- In addition, IFCOs are cross warranted with the Environment Agency to enforce limited powers under the **Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975**.
- Any **Southern IFCA Code of Practice**, of which there are currently six to include Netting, Fishing Around Piers, Cuttlefish, Bait Digging, Wrasse and Saltmarsh protections. Further details can be found [here](#)

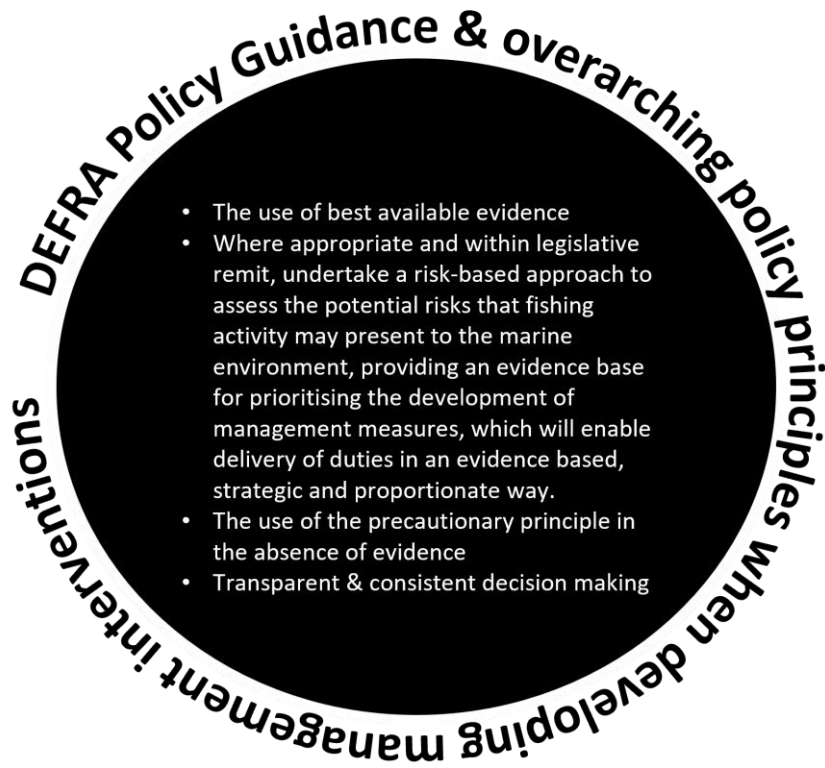
## **1.5 IFCA's Overarching Policy Principles**

With the overarching context provided by legislative function, Southern IFCA must also adhere to policy principles, which includes Defra's best practice guidance when developing, reviewing and implementing inshore management, drawing all the components together to drive the collective delivery of the UK Government's vision, in addition to adherence with regulatory best practice when delivering a compliance and enforcement function.

<sup>11</sup> [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Southern IFCA ensure a fair, effective and proportionate approach to Compliance & Enforcement work via adherence to the **Compliance and Enforcement Framework**, which ensures agreement to the **Police & Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984**, the **Criminal Investigations Act (CIPA) 1966**.





## 1.6 External Landscapes

As with previous years where our delivery timetables have been impacted by unforeseen external events, such as the COVID pandemic (2020-2022), the Poole Harbour Oil Spill (2023), and the delivery timescales associated with the UK Government's Environmental Improvement Plan (2023), we recognise and anticipate that our work over the forthcoming year will continue to be shaped by external policy landscapes and economies, in addition to unforeseen events. **During these times, Southern IFCA commit to maintain full transparency with its community and stakeholders in order to account for any variations in delivery and operation.** Southern IFCA appreciates the support that the community has provided over recent years and we will continue to strive to fulfill our legislative duties in the forthcoming year and beyond.

## SECTION 2: Southern IFCA

### 2.1 Our Vision & Key Themes

Building upon and with reference to the National IFCA Vision, Southern IFCA will:



This vision recognises the **sympiotic relationship which exists when well managed inshore fisheries reap environmental and socioeconomic benefit.**

In championing these reciprocal relationships, Southern will continue to draw upon **two key themes for 2024-2025** which will be embedded and threaded through all of our work which, as captured within and central to the wider IFCA model, are essential components to facilitate the delivery of the Southern IFA vision: **industry collaboration** and **partnership working.**

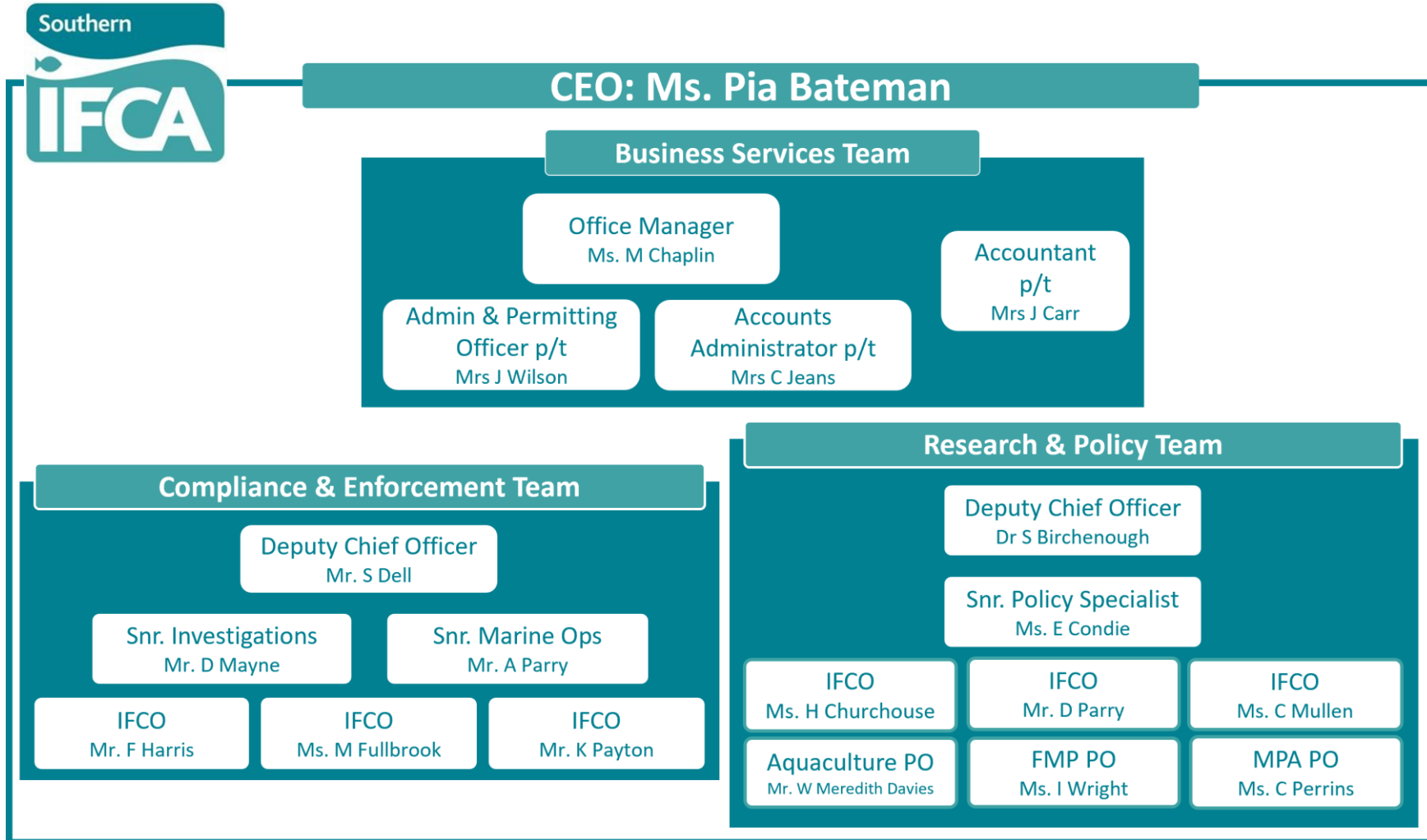


## 2.2 The Authority

<b>Elected Members from constituent Local Authority's</b>	
Cllr Mr. M Roberts (Chairman of Authority)	Dorset Council
Cllr Mr. P Fuller (Vice Chairman of Authority)	Isle of Wight Council
Cllr Mr. B Dunning	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Mr. C Goodall	BCP Council
Cllr Mr. R Hughes	Dorset Council
Cllr Mr. P Miles	BCP Council
Cllr Mr. J Savage	Southampton City Council
Cllr Mr. M Thierry	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Mr. M Winnington	Portsmouth City Council
<b>Representatives of Partner Organisations</b>	
Mr S Kingston-Turner	Environment Agency
Dr R Morgan	Natural England
Ms R Irish	Marine Management Organisation
<b>General Members (appointed by the Marine Management Organisation)</b>	
Dr. A Jensen (Chairman of the TAC)	Marine Environment/Academic
Mr. R Stride (Vice Chairman of the TAC)	Commercial Fishing
Ms E Bussey-Jones	Law/Marine Heritage
Dr. S Cripps	Marine Environment/Conservation
Mr. C Frances	Recreational Sea Angling
Mr. N Hornby	Fisheries Science/Policy
Ms. L MacCallum	Marine Environment/Conservation
Mr. G Wordsworth	Aquaculture
<i>Vacancy December 2023</i>	Commercial Fishing

If you would like to find out more about the Southern IFCA Members please see: [The Authority : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)

## 2.3 The IFCA Team



## 2.4 The Budget Forecast

The Southern IFCA (Amendment) Order 2010 states that the relevant Councils must defray the expenses incurred by Southern IFCA. Dorset Council, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council and the BCP Council receive a grant from central government (via the New Burdens Doctrine<sup>13</sup>) of £329,425.

For the financial year April 2024 to March 2025 the constituent authorities were levied a sum of **£845,614** divided in accordance with a prescribed formula. Prior to inflationary projections, the budget forecast for financial year April 2024 to March 2025 anticipates a loss of c.129k. A 4% increase in levy contributions compared to the previous year, recognises the extreme financial pressures that Southern IFCA's Constituent Local Authorities are under, with Southern IFCA able to achieve a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year, drawing from the reserves to match the anticipated deficit of c.129k.

Constituent Council	Formula (%)	April 2024- March 2025		
		Levy (£)	Government Grant (£)	Total Contribution (£)
Hampshire County Council	40.40	124,845	203,644	341,628
Dorset Council	24.79	101,752	99,785	209,598
Isle of Wight Council	14.35	103,015	13,663	121,345
BCP Council	11.14	78,274	12,333	94,231
Portsmouth City Council	5.02	40,817	0	42,449
Southampton City Council	4.30	34,963	0	36,361
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>		<b>483,666</b>	<b>329,425</b>	<b>845,614</b>

Expenditure Summary	April 2024- March 2025
Business Services	£991,906
Compliance and Enforcement	£129,122
Research and Policy	£39,092
Capital Equipment	£101,804
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£1,261,202</b>

<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£1,132,170</b>
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<b>INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£-129,032</b>
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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-burdens-doctrine-guidance-for-government-departments>

## SECTION 3: 2024-2025 Horizon Planning

The Horizon Goals identified in this section will be translated into clear, outcome-focused **Delivery Priorities** under the [Research and Policy Plan 2023-2024](#) and the [Compliance and Enforcement Plan 2023-2024](#). These Delivery Priorities will be broken down into 3-month phases, where possible, in order to provide transparency in timelines.







In addition to business as usual (as captured in the team plans), Horizon Goals demonstrate where Southern IFCA consider their work for the forthcoming year aligns with:

- Delivery of IFCA High Level Objectives via **IFCA Success Criteria**
- the eight **Fisheries Objectives** (Fisheries Act 2020)
- supporting Defra’s in the delivery of specific objectives under the Fisheries Act 2020 & Environment Act 2021, to include:
  - a. Working to a Defra 2024 MPA deadline, in accordance with the Environment Improvement Plan 2023, to ensure suitable **management measures** are developed and implemented<sup>14</sup> across all **relevant MPAs within the district**.
  - b. consideration of the **short-term outputs of the frontrunner FMPs** to ensure compatibility of district work with nationally agreed directions, with wider directional awareness and alignment with medium to long-term objectives.
- The **UK Net Zero Strategy**, via identification and instigation of changes in operations, in order to minimise and reduce emissions, in addition to work surrounding the harnessing of blue carbon habitats (saltmarsh & seagrass).

The following graphics will be used to demonstrate this alignment both in this strategy and in the respective team plans:


IFCA Success Criteria		No.	Fisheries Objectives	
IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders.	1	Sustainability	1	
IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime.	2	Precautionary	2	
IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts.	3	Ecosystem	3	
IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.	4	Scientific Evidence	4	
IFCAs make the use of evidence to deliver their objectives	5	Bycatch	5	
		Equal Access	6	
		National Benefit	7	
		Climate Change	8	

Supporting Defra in delivery of Fisheries Act 2020 & Environment Act 2021 Objectives, encompassing the Environmental Improvement Plan EIP				Southern IFCA Key Themes	
FMPs 	MPAs 	Marine Consents 	Net Zero/ blue carbon 	Partnership Working 	Industry Collaboration 


<sup>14</sup> Implementation timelines will be subject to quality assurance timeframes at the MMO and Defra, prior to Secretary of State consideration.


### 3.1 Business Services Horizon Goals 2024-2025

<b>Ongoing Governance Improvement Programme</b>	What & Why	Benefits	Success Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building on the work completed in 2023-2024, a continuous review of process and policy to inform areas which require upgrade and attention.</li> <li>To analyse and interpret current performance against best practice to identify improvements</li> <li>To ensure compliance with relevant legislations and guiding policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify areas for improvement</li> <li>Maximise performance and efficiency</li> <li>Retention of staff</li> <li>Ability to deliver statutory functions</li> <li>Business resilience</li> <li>Reduction in administrative functions associated with manual handling of information</li> </ul>	<p>Continued BAU implementation of change which supports the work of The Authority via provision of cost-effective solutions and the championing of efficiency in ways of working.</p>
			Responsibility
			Office Manager
	Horizon Goals 2024-2025		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>HR Solutions</b> – rollout of pilot to all staff to streamline HR functions into one online programme.</li> <li>Continued rollout of <b>online permit platform</b> to support administration of Permitting function for Southern IFCA permitted fisheries.</li> <li>Consideration for improved system for <b>Personal Work Plans</b>, incorporating more regular and ongoing appraisal and direction setting during the year.</li> </ol>			
<b>Overarching Objectives</b>			
			




### 3.2 Compliance and Enforcement Horizon Goals 2024-2025

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Remote Electronic Monitoring &amp; Artificial Intelligence Pilot Projects</b></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What</b></p> <p>Building on the work undertaken by Devon &amp; Severn IFCA, Southern will pilot two small-scale Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) high resolution spatial management with the provisions to quantify salmonid interactions in MPA's. This project will be piloted in the net fisheries of Southampton Water and Christchurch Harbour.</li> <li>(2) a project which explores the capability of REM and AI solutions in managing pot restrictions.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Success Criteria</b></p> <p>Review of pilot project at 12 months to see if wider application of this technology could be used in inshore fisheries management.</p> <p>Relevant outputs to be considered as part of the annual review of the Southern IFCA Net Fishing Byelaw.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Why</b></p> <p>(1) The outcomes will jointly inform national discussions on MPA spatial management solutions in the inshore &lt;6m fleet, as well informing the annual reviews of the Southern IFCA Permit Conditions under the Net Fishing Byelaw.</p> <p>(2) The outcomes will inform national discussions on the implementation plans for frontrunner FMP's, specifically seeking novel and cost-effective solutions to managing pot limitations in crab, whelk and lobster fisheries.</p> <p>The outcomes will also inform management delivery under the Southern IFCA Pot Fishing Byelaw (currently with the MMO for QA).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Further Details</b></p> <p>Compliance &amp; Enforcement Team Plan 2024-2025</p>
		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key Assumption</b></p> <p>Industry uptake and receipt of Defra funding</p>
		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Responsibility</b></p> <p>DCO Compliance &amp; Enforcement</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Status</b></p> <p>Southern IFCA through working in partnership and collaborating with Devon and Severn IFCA and Industry have initiated the fitting of REM devices on two vessels within the district operating in Lyme Bay. To date cameras, GPS (Global Positioning System) and gear sensors have been installed with the view to enhance our confidence with the technology.</p>	
	<p><b>Overarching Objectives</b></p>	
		



<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">New ways of working: FPV Vigilant</p> 	What	Status	Success Criteria
	Transition to new ways of operational delivery with introduction of new marine asset.	Procurement process completed in December 2022, with subsequent boat building tender awarded to a UK company.	Successful delivery of duties during reporting period to include new package of operational guidance.
	Why		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To deliver functions in accordance with MaCAA, whilst ensuring capability to deliver work in accordance with the Fisheries Act to include implementation of management relating to FMPs.</li> <li>Increase compliance and enforcement capabilities within and outside MPAs.</li> <li>Provision of a platform for IFCOs that adheres to health and safety and wellbeing requirements.</li> <li>To introduce changes in operational delivery which minimise and reduce emissions.</li> <li>To provide a joint regulatory platform for partner organisations.</li> <li>To deliver any future contracts beyond current jurisdictional boundaries.</li> </ul>	Anticipated to be operational April 2024	<b>Further Details</b> Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan 2024-2025
		Responsibility	Key Assumption
	DCO Compliance & Enforcement and Senior IFCO Marine Ops.	Completion of boat build in accordance with T&Cs by April 2024.	

**Overarching Objectives**





<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Implementation of Pot Fishing Byelaw</p>	What	Status	Success Criteria
	A byelaw which introduces commercial and recreational potting permits, pot markings and prohibition of removal of berried crab.	Submitted to MMO Byelaw Team October 2022 for quality assurance prior to consideration of ratification by the Secretary of State	Delivery of implementation plans to include Communication Strategy, following ratification to support stakeholders
	Why		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To facilitate compliance with measures relevant to commercial and recreational pot fishers</li> <li>To support a change in pot fishing management in the District.</li> <li>To support outputs of Frontrunner Crab, Lobster and Whelk FMPs</li> <li>Working with industry and partners to identify tagging solutions.</li> </ul>		<b>Further Details</b> Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan 2024-2025
		Responsibility	Key Assumption
	DCO C&E	Ratification of Byelaw by Defra	

**Overarching Objectives**



### 3.3 Research and Policy Horizon Goals

<h2 style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">MPA Management 2024</h2> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="font-size: 8px; margin-right: 5px;">Southern R&amp;P</div>  </div>	What and Why	Status	Success Criteria	
	<p>To achieve Defra’s interim target that ‘all management measures are to be in place across all MPs by 2024’. This target contributes to the wider MPA targets set under the Government’s Environment Improvement Plan 2023.</p> <p>(1) To introduce management measures for T3 MCZs and additional features for T1&amp;T2 MCZs ensuring that the Conservation Objectives of any feature within an MCZ are furthered.</p> <p>(2) Incorporate an update to existing management within district-wide MPAs (SPAs, SACs) based on the best available spatial evidence of feature presence/extent, as provided by NE, to ensure that there is no damage, disturbance or adverse impact caused by fishing activity on the features subject to protection.</p> <p>(3) Incorporate a scheduled review of the existing Prohibition of Gathering (Sea Fisheries Resources) in Seagrass Beds Byelaw and the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016, as well as consideration of relevant legacy byelaws, where the existing management footprint falls within MPAs.</p>	<p><b>Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Review:</b> Phase 1: Byelaw with MMO since October 2023 for QA prior to SoS consideration.</p>	<p>To achieve by end of 2024, in line with Government targets:</p> <p>Stage 6: Ratification of Byelaw by SoS by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024</p>	
		<p><b>Shore Gathering Review:</b> Phase 1: Development of draft measures, aim for delivery to MMO and Defra for consideration by Secretary of State during 2024.</p>	Further Details	<p>Research and Policy Team Plan 2024-2025.</p>
		<p><b>Black Breem Review:</b> Development of draft measures, aim for delivery to MMO and Defra for consideration by SoS during 2024</p>	Key Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority approval at each stage of Byelaw development.</li> <li>• Timely provision of Conservation Advice from Natural England.</li> <li>• Timely QA of draft byelaws by MMO and Defra, prior to Secretary of State ratification.</li> </ul>
		Who		
		<p>DCO Research &amp; Policy, Senior Policy Specialist</p>		
	Overarching Objectives			
				

# Frontrunner Fisheries Management Plans

What	
To contribute to the consideration of the short-term outputs of the frontrunner FMPs to ensure compatibility of district work with nationally agreed directions in fisheries management, with wider directional awareness and alignment with medium to long-term objectives.	
Relevance to Southern IFCA	
Whelk FMP	
Short-term outputs: address evidence gaps	Undertake a pilot project looking at CPUE data in accordance with the outcomes of the Whelk FMP. Outcomes will inform Southern IFCA's understanding of the whelk fishery and management following the anticipated introduction of the Southern IFCA Pot Fishing Byelaw.
Medium-long term: permit schemes	To implement the Southern IFCA PFB, using it as a pilot for wider permit approaches to whelk fisheries.
Scallop FMP	
Address evidence gaps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Review existing tri-annual SCE Stock Assessment methodology seeking improvements and regional/national alignment with local industry and national partners.</li> <li>2) To undertake a feasibility study using drop down cameras, supported by Cornwall IFCA, as well as an extension of days on Southern IFCA's Solent scallop surveys to deploy cameras. Outcomes will help to inform evidence base requirements as set under the scallop FMP, as well as the annual management of the Solent scallop fishery under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw.</li> </ol>
Crab & Lobster FMP	
Regional (fine scale) management	To implement the Southern IFCA PFB, using it as a pilot for wider permit approaches to managing crab and lobster fisheries.

Success Criteria
Contribute to the national delivery of the Short Term (1-2) year frontrunner outcomes.
Further Details
Research and Policy Team Plan 2024-25
Who
DCO Research & Policy
Overarching Objectives

# BTFG Review: Phase 2



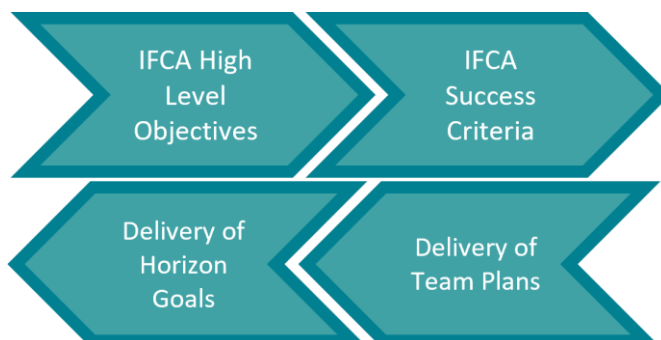
What and Why	Status
<p>To consider district wide management interventions for sensitive habitats in relation to BTFG in line with the Southern IFCA duties under S153 of the MaCAA. This target contributes to the delivery of the Government’s vision under the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 and the statutory targets under The Environment Act (2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider features which exist adjacent to MCZ boundaries (i.e., any part of a feature which extends across the boundary of an MCZ).</li> <li>• To consider any sensitive habitats and species (as defined under Phase II) across the District, both inside and outside of National Site Network Sites.</li> <li>• To consider features and sensitive habitats/species within Sites of Special Scientific Interest which are not also designated under overlapping MPAs.</li> <li>• To consider areas currently closed under the BTFG Byelaw 2016 which will remain closed under the BTFG Byelaw 2023 (in accordance with BTFG Phase I Principles) where no designated features occur, in order to determine if any spatial changes are needed based on socio-economic and environmental assessments to ensure all potential impacts of any changes are considered.</li> <li>• To consider social and economic factors/impacts alongside the need for protection of the marine environment.</li> <li>• To consider outcomes of ongoing research programs including those which are specifically focused on habitat restoration potential, ecosystem services, blue carbon habitats and Natural Capital benefits.</li> </ul>	<p>Stage 1: Evidence gathering.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria</b></p> <p>Progress workstream through 2024 to contribute to Government vision under EIP and The Environment Act (2021).</p> <p><b>Further Details</b></p> <p>Research and Policy Team Plan 2024-2025.</p> <p><b>Key Assumptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority approval of progression of workstream through each relevant stage.</li> <li>• Provision of evidence through consultation and other evidence gathering exercises.</li> </ul> <p><b>Who</b></p> <p>DCO Research &amp; Policy, Senior Policy Specialist</p>

## Overarching Objectives



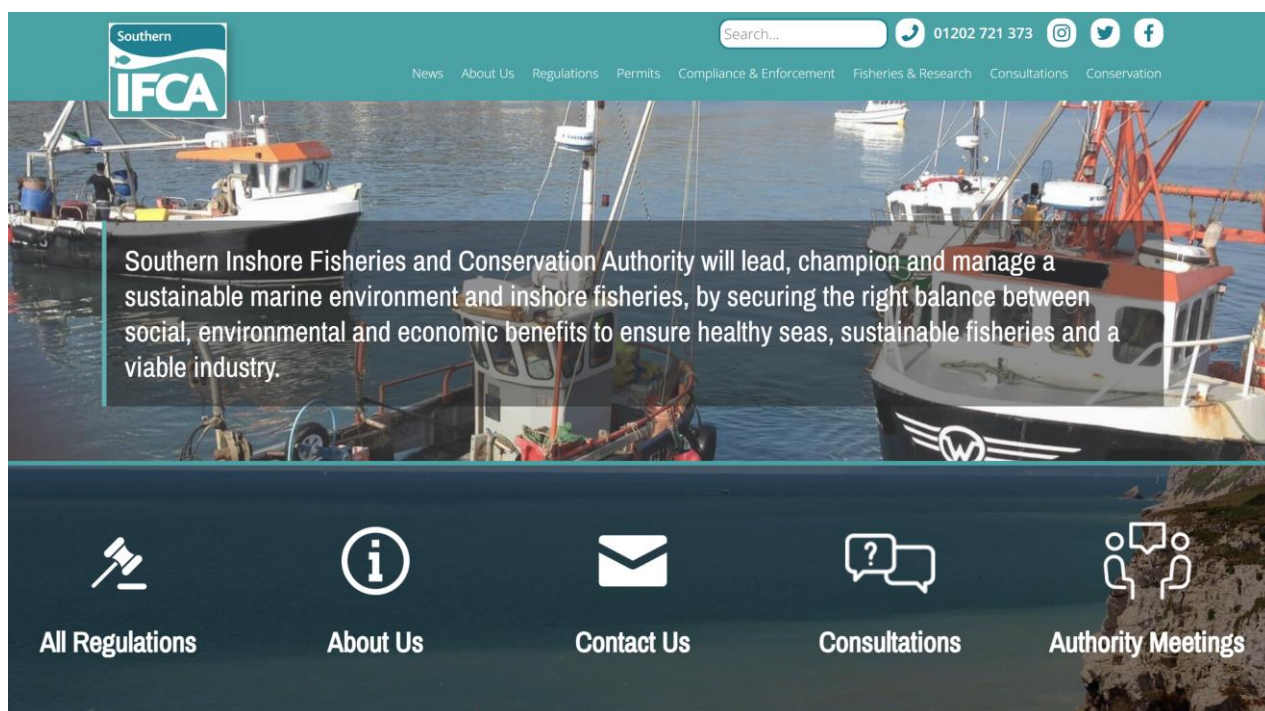
## SECTION 4: Reporting Metrics

Southern IFCA will report on the annual delivery of the 2024-2025 Annual Plan in the context of:



## SECTION 5: Further Information

If you would like to find out more about Southern IFCA, then please visit our website at [www.southern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)



**2023 – 2024 Compliance and Enforcement Team Strategy  
 Decision Paper**

*Report by DCO Sam Dell.*

**A. Purpose**

To consider the Compliance & Enforcement Team (CET) Strategy for the period April 2024 to March 2025 in line with the Annual Strategic Plan (covered under agenda item 7).

**B. Recommendation(s)**

That Members approve the Compliance & Enforcement Team (CET) Strategy, which feed directly from the Delivery Priorities identified in the Southern IFCA Annual Strategic Plan for April 2024 to March 2025.

**C. Supporting Documentation for Further Information**

Annex X Compliance & Enforcement Team (CET) Strategy

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Section 177 of The Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009 under the title Annual Plan requires (1) Before the beginning of each financial year every IFC authority must make and publish a plan setting out the authority's main objectives and priorities for the year. (2) The IFC authority must send a copy of its plan to the Secretary of State.
- 1.2 The Compliance & Enforcement Team Strategy sets out the priorities for the period April 2024 to March 2025, feeding directly from the Delivery Priorities identified in the Annual Strategic Plan. The strategy seeks to translate the Annual Plan Delivery Priorities into clear outcome focussed objectives for the team.

**2.0 Summary of Key Points**

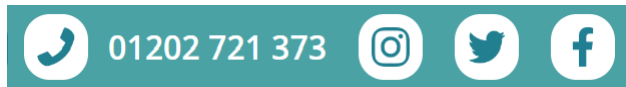
- The Compliance & Enforcement Team Strategy consists of 9 clear sections which are as set out in the following table;

s.1	Purpose	pp 3
s.2	Introduction	pp 3-5
s.3	Operational Assets	pp 5-6
s.4	Delivering IFCA Success Criteria 2 Via Business As Usual	pp 7-11
s.5	Byelaw Development & Implementing New Byelaws	pp 11
s.6	Monitoring, Control & Enforcement of Existing Measures	pp 12-16
s.7	Community & Stakeholder Engagement	pp 16-17
s.8	Working in Partnership	pp 18-20
s.9	Pilot Projects	pp 21



# Compliance & Enforcement Team Strategy

April 2024 – March 2025



Document Control

<b>Title</b>	<b>Compliance &amp; Enforcement Team Strategy 2024-2025</b>	
<b>Author</b>	Deputy Chief Officer Sam Dell	January 2024
<b>Approver</b>	The Southern IFCA Authority	March 2024
<b>Owner</b>	Southern IFCA	

s.1	Purpose	pp 3
s.2	Introduction	pp 3-5
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s.8	Working in Partnership	pp 18-20
s.9	Pilot Projects	pp 21

## Section 1.0 Purpose

The Authority is committed to a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime. A Compliance and Enforcement Framework (CEF) sets out the Authority's approach to achieving compliance and provides information about the general principles the Authority will follow and our enforcement actions available. The CEF establishes a framework from which risk-based enforcement plans may be developed in the form of a Compliance Risk Register (CRR). For access to these documents please follow the link to the Southern IFCA Website: [Compliance & Enforcement : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://southern-ifca.gov.uk)

*The Compliance & Enforcement Team (CET) Strategy sets out the priorities for the team for the period April 2024 to March 2025, feeding directly from the Delivery Priorities identified in Southern IFCA's Annual Strategic Plan for April 2024 to March 2025. In addition the Strategy captures the 'Business as Usual' which is delivered by the Compliance & Enforcement Team in its everyday working practice.*

## Section 2.0 Introduction to Compliance & Enforcement

Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) undertake compliance and enforcement activities throughout its District. Information and evidence are gathered to provide a sound base to underpin the decision-making processes of the Authority. This ensures that the Authority fulfils its functions as described under the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MaCAA) 2009, ensuring successful and sustainable governance of the inshore marine environment.

To deliver the Southern IFCA objectives and fulfil the Authorities functions as a competent management body, the Southern IFCA recognises the need to align its work to a strategic vision. With many competing objectives, it is important the Authority maintains a strategic overview in their delivery. This proactive way of working, with the recognition of the need to maintain a capacity for reactive and emerging work and incoming challenges, will provide a template for the Authority moving forward.

The Marine element of the Authorities District covers all tidal waters extending to six nautical miles from the 1983 baselines. The east and west seaward boundaries are established from a line drawn south from the point at which the limits of county boundaries of East Hampshire and West Dorset extend seaward; in Lyme Bay and Chichester Harbour respectively. The terrestrial and intertidal element of the District includes the entire counties of the constituent local authorities of Hampshire, Dorset, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils and Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council. In undertaking its regulatory responsibilities, the Authority starts from the position that the vast majority of the community, organisations and industries using the marine area are compliant with the regulations and controls that affects them. The Authority works to try to ensure that all parties understand what rules apply to their particular industry (or part thereof), and also the rationale for the regulation being necessary. Where stakeholders are not aware of the rules that apply to them, or require further information to ensure they are compliant, guidance is provided and/or assistance to raise awareness, where possible, this is a first step to achieving compliance.



Full compliance with fisheries and environmental legislation is the overall aim of the Authority. This aim is best achieved through the adoption of an adaptive co-management approach to fisheries management. The key to achieving high compliance is to ensure that those who are potentially affected have a real opportunity to engage with the Authority over the local management approach taken.

*The strategic delivery for April 2024 to March 2025, as presented in this strategy, will enable the Authority to be more transparent with delivery partners, stakeholders and the wider community through anticipation of shared goals, objectives, and encouragement to seek future collaborative opportunities.*

## 2.1 The Compliance & Enforcement Team

The Southern IFCA's CET have the responsibility for the compliance and enforcement throughout the District to ensure a viable industry whilst supporting local communities who are reliant upon sea fisheries resources is an important component for the protection of our fisheries. The IFCA has a duty to maintain a balance between socio-economics and environmental benefits seeking to ensure healthy and sustainable fisheries when developing regulations.

An effective Compliance Programme will include the development, implementation, and adherence to standardised operational policies and procedures. Through internal monitoring and auditing, Officer Code of Conduct for Inspections and safeguards outline the Authorities expectation of employees. The Code also explains the obligations of people being inspected. Officers are professionally trained in enforcement standards through an accredited training program and receive specific training **IFCA Success Criteria 4 "IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional"**. In addition, Officers are required to have a comprehensive knowledge of complex legislation that is set out in Southern IFCA Byelaws, National and EU regulations.

Officers from the CET engage with industry on a daily basis and carry out compliance inspections where necessary on all commercial and recreational fishing activities on shore and at sea which include commercial premises. These inspections are conducted through land and sea-based patrols throughout the District. The Authority has a fleet of three patrol vessels which are uniquely designed to suit the areas they are located in and are strategically based across the District. These can be taken to sea at any time of day or night, all three vessels have boarding capabilities. The CET also have access to a fleet of pool vehicles to carry out operations on the coast.

For the purpose of engagement, the District has been split into three areas and five when allocating resources for deployment and operational delivery, The west is from Kimmeridge to Lyme Regis (Dorset Devon border), the centre Kimmeridge to Mudeford and covers Poole Harbour and the East is from Mudeford to Chichester Harbour Emsworth Channel (Hampshire Sussex border) and includes the Isle of Wight. Each area has a lead and supporting officers.

Officers wear Body Worn Cameras (BWC), which can provide several benefits. These include enhanced contemporaneous evidence capture, that may be used to support the Authority and/or other enforcement agency prosecutions, resulting in early guilty pleas. The cameras may deter acts of aggression or verbal and physical abuse towards officers and can also inform more appropriate sentencing. An audio & visual recording of an incident can show exactly what happened and what was said, help to avoid disputes, reduce the time taken to establish important facts and clearly show the facts on many matters. The use of BWCs

supports transparency, trust, and confidence in the Southern IFCA and community. All evidence is stored in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

### 2.1.1 IFCO Powers

Under 166 of MaCAA Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) common enforcement powers are conferred by sections 245 to 261 and fisheries enforcement powers conferred by sections 264,268,269 and 289 of MaCAA.

IFCOs have these powers for the purposes of enforcing:

- Any byelaws made under section 155 or 157 of MaCAA for the district (or having effect as if so made); Sections 1 to 3, 5 and 6 of the Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967 (c.84) and any Orders made under any of those sections;
- Any provision made by or under an Order under section 1 of the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967 (c.83);
- Any provisions of, or any rights conferred by, section 7 of that Act;
- Any byelaws made under section 129 or 132 of MaCAA;
- Section 140 of MaCAA;
- The Sea Fishing (Enforcement) Regulations 2018 (SI 849/18) (The Sea Fishing (Enforcement) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

## 3.0 Operational Assets

### 3.1 Current Marine Assets

The Authority has three Fisheries Patrol Vessels (FPVs) which facilitate the compliance and enforcement of regulations throughout the District. When at sea these vessels conduct intelligence led operational patrols, support stakeholder engagement and conduct and support limited survey work.

The Southern IFCA FPV fleet currently consists of two purpose built patrol vessels, FPV Endeavour is 5.7m special build aluminium vessel with very shallow water capability and has a collapsing wind shield and 'A' frame to enable the vessel to manoeuvre under low bridges in Poole Harbour, currently based in Poole Harbour, FPV Protector is a RHIB (Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boat) and is currently stored on a trailer at Portland and deployable anywhere within the District, both FPVs have thermal imaging camera capability that can record for evidential purposes, both vessels have rapid response capabilities. Regular monthly maintenance ensures all marine assets are fully operational. The Senior IFCO for Marine Operations is responsible for the Safety Management Systems in place for the marine assets and compliance with coding requirements. There is a recent change to coding requirements which will affect current ways of working through the introduction of Work Boat Code Edition 3, in 2024 the CET will be implementing the code and aligning Southern IFCA operations and working with other IFCAs to ensure requirements of the new code are met.

### **3.1.2 C&E DELIVERY PRIORITY: Introduction of FPV Vigilant and associated new ways of working**

The procurement of the Cabin RHIB future proofs the Authority should there be a change in current jurisdiction which is 0-6nm. Now the UK is an independent coastal state there may be changes to the roles and responsibilities for the IFCAs post transitional period, both in terms of changes to District baselines and jurisdiction of territorial waters (0-12nm), as well as changes to fisheries management through delivery of the Fisheries Act 2020, Southern IFCA also has made a Potting Byelaw currently with the MMO Byelaw Team, equipment such as a Pot Hauler may be required to effectively enforce such regulations. The vessels do not currently have this capability and the procurement of a specifically designed vessel will be considered in the future as part of the comprehensive on-going review of Southern IFCAs marine assets which is informed by the Authorities duties, again this may be subject to change as a result of the UK becoming an Independent Coastal State, the review includes replacement programmes and disposals of assets, currently scheduled is a replacement of FPV Protector in 2024/25.

FPV Vigilant will have the ability to haul recreational pots as well as a suite of the latest electronic equipment to enforce the increased spatial restrictions proposed under the Bottom Towed Gear Byelaw 2023 and district wide measures for Gear Marking under the Net Fishing Byelaw, **in April 2024 the CETs main focus will be operationalising the asset as well as focussing on-going support, maintenance and training to ensure a efficient and effective introduction of FPV Vigilant.**

### **3.1.3 Pool Vehicles**

In addition to the marine assets Southern IFCA also owns a fleet of patrol vehicles which consist of two trucks (4x4) that have towing capability and two vans, all vehicles are operated in line with the Southern IFCA vehicle policy. In relation to the Authority vehicles the CET work closely with the Business Services Team (BST) to ensure effective management of these assets.

As part of the UK Governments commitment to be Net Zero by 2050 and paying particular attention to the reduction of vehicle emissions Southern IFCA will be looking to contribute to achieving the policy goals by reviewing the existing fleet of vehicles in conjunction with new ways of working through implementation of FPV Vigilant, this is already underway but will continue in April 2024, the Authority will consider Southern IFCAs commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

### **3.1.4 Drones**

To complement our operational activity, a drone was procured in early 2022. A drone is defined by the Civil Aviation Authority as an Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) or Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA). They are typically miniature aircraft controlled from the ground by a pilot and can have various camera attachments with recording capabilities.

The use of drones is now widely used across law enforcement agencies throughout the country for the detection of crimes and collating evidence for offences. They can be used in dynamic environments and can be deployed as a fast response to monitor, record and evidence illegal activity as well as being used for routine observations and checks. It has the ability to record positions using an onboard GPS and further features such as thermal imaging and zoom functions. This can aid in the proof of offences detected and used to support legal proceedings as evidence in courts.

The drone is operated by a trained remote pilot with additional officers to act as observers to avoid the risk of collisions, especially during the hours of darkness.

There is opportunities for the drone to carry out survey work with the Authorities Fisheries Research and Policy Team (RPT) who also gather evidence for fisheries management development. Further opportunities are being explored in working with other enforcement agencies and creating revenue which will help towards the running cost and officer time.

The drone aids compliance in gathering crucial evidence for the following activities throughout the District:

- Spatial closures
- MPAs
- Areas associated with previous non-compliance
- Illegal gear being deployed or discarded
- Locating discarded shellfish, fish and gear
- Provide additional evidence to support VMS data
- Monitoring of IFCA Codes of Practice

Officers will need to continue to familiarise and develop themselves with drone operations, further training will take place accruing flying time. In April 2024 the CET are upgrading some of the hardware to further its operations in more inclement whether giving the team a wider operating envelope. The CET will also explore and develop Southern IFCA's "at sea" drone operations collaborating with partners and increasing our drone capabilities in offshore operations.

## Section 4.0 Delivering IFCA Success Criteria 2 via Business As Usual

The Compliance and Enforcement Team have the following functions primarily support *IFCA Success Criteria 2 "IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime"* this is set out as a delivery priority in the Annual Strategic Plan 2024/2025, the Deputy Chief Officer of the CET will submit a quarterly Compliance Reports to the Authority meeting. This report contains information relating to our enforcement activity for the reporting period in statistical format for inspections, patrols and offences detected and a quarterly summary of key enforcement operations and activities.

### 4.1 Intelligence Led-Risk Based Enforcement (ILRBE)

#### 4.1.1 Intelligence

Intelligence reports (IRs) are the Authority's method of recording, storing, collating and the dissemination of intelligence that complement our risk-based approach. Additional intelligence together with access to the UK Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance System (MCSS) and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) is maximising the efficient use of resources and reflects the current issues on the ground and is being utilised in preparing weekly operational plans. Collating and storing of IRs is centralised through the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) Intelligence Team. IFCAs follow the National Intelligence Model and have incorporated a tasking and coordination process to inform tactical responses to priorities and emerging trends.

When collecting relevant information, Officers should record the following information before submitting to the Intelligence Officer:

- **Who** – the person(s) carrying out possible illegal activity or boat and any other connections i.e. person/name and address, date of birth, vessel PLN and name, who is master/owners name, vehicle being used etc.
- **What** – has happened/happening i.e. record what has been observed (Illegal activity or damage) or said, description of vessel or vehicle, what cloths are being worn etc.
- **Where** – place. Inside a Marine Protected Area (MPA) or prohibited area i.e. Lat/long, landing port other references if not known, record GPS etc.
- **Why** – purpose behind the illegal activity i.e. type of activity taking place, are they selling commercially and to who etc.
- **When** – did the activity happen? i.e. time, date, length of time spent fishing etc.
- **How** – did they carry out the illegal activity? How do you know? i.e. what is being used to carry out the illegal activity, net pot, hand gathering etc.

The reporting Officer will evaluate information received and complete the IR in line with the SOP and submit to the Intel Officer. The information is then risk assessed, and then sanitised (details are removed that explicitly or indirectly identifies the source of the information) to protect the origin of the information. The IR is then disseminated to the officers, MMO Intelligence Team and relevant agencies and recorded on an internal log.

#### **4.1.2 Tactical Coordination Group (TCG)**

The TCG process provides managers with a decision-making mechanism in which to manage their business both strategically and tactically. Decisions based on a full understanding of the problems faced enables the DCO to prioritise the deployment of resources at their disposal.

Southern IFCA's TCG meets every two weeks and is informed by the Tactical Assessment (the document which supports the meeting). The Lead intelligence Officer or Intelligence Officer shall be responsible for the preparation of the tactical assessment document. Southern IFCA is also represented at two regional TCGs with external agencies that is coordinated by the MMO.

The TCG reflects on the previous two weeks priorities and considers identified emerging issues or specific problems and proposes tactical activity for the next period. It ensures that the resources are aligned to the priorities. Additional priorities can be set, or specific intelligence requirements may be needed. The group decides when appropriate tactical action will be taken and by whom.

The tactical group can also commission intelligence products such as Problem and Subject Profiles that can add value to priorities and operational plans as and when required.

Several supporting documents are available to the TCG to assist with decision making.

- Problem profiles
- Compliance Directions
- Seasonal priorities
- Operational Orders

### 4.1.3 Risk Based Approach

Defra provided guidance to Southern IFCA on the establishment of a common enforcement framework and in particular, on applying risk-based enforcement principles and methods. Southern IFCA is committed to the adoption of a risk-based approach to enforcement and Members have agreed the process and principles to apply that method. Outcomes of risk assessments for specified areas within the District have been used to develop a Compliance Risk Register containing compliance and enforcement strategic priorities to inform operational plans developed through a Tactical Coordination Group.

The Register has been developed using an evidence-based approach. An analysis of risk from the perspective of the marine resource allows the process to be informed by the available scientific evidence. Where further information is required, this may be addressed through Southern IFCA's RPT Strategy.

Where high risks are identified through the Register, these will be considered and feed into the Tactical Co-ordination Group process which will support the objectives to manage those risks. These objectives will include enforcement and education and will be reported on at regular intervals. Where the risks are lower, there will be an increased focus upon awareness and engagement as described in the Southern IFCA CEF.

The development of the CRR allows the Officers to be clear about the Authority's compliance priorities, they are required to set objectives to reduce high and monitor medium risks in their daily work. The Register is a "live document" which will be reviewed regularly by Managers and Members and informed by information recorded in the Southern IFCA's intelligence systems. Updates will be applied to the Register when necessary throughout the year, this will be fully reviewed in 2024 to reflect recently introduced management measures.

### 4.1.4 Investigations

Southern IFCA is committed to achieving fair, effective and proportionate enforcement. The Compliance and Enforcement Framework (CEF) sets out the Authorities approach to compliance and enforcement and details the general principles the Authority will follow and the enforcement actions available.

Southern IFCA has a procedure that is consistent around all ten IFCAs regarding actions to be taken with breaches of legislation. This is covered in the CEF.

The Authority will attempt to use an adaptive co-management approach, where compliance is achieved through engagement, understanding and advice. Where compliance is not achieved by this approach, the Authority has a range of enforcement actions available to it that are listed below, these can be found in the CEF document:

- Verbal Warning
- Advisory Letter
- Official Written Warning
- Simple Caution
- Financial Administrative Penalty

- Prosecutions

#### **4.1.5 Investigation Process**

Statutory requirements are set out in the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984, the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 and the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) Codes of Practice regarding how investigations should be conducted, including how to record, retain and disclose evidence or material obtained during an offence or subsequent investigation. There are also requirements for specific roles and responsibilities including the Officer in Charge (OIC), exhibits and disclosure officers.

When offences are detected, Officers will gather the necessary evidence and contemporaneously record this in their official pocket notebooks. There is a requirement to securely download photographs or camera footage to be processed and formatted ready for exhibiting. The responsibility of preparing a case file rests with the OIC of the case. Statements will be included along with all the other relevant MG forms (MG forms are a set of standardised forms issued by the CPS so that all enforcement agencies work to the same standards). This also contains the case summary that is a concise summary of facts which should cover the evidentiary points to prove. When complete, the Senior IFCO Investigations will prepare a decision log and action plan with a recommendation for any enforcement sanction. The recommendation will be reviewed by the DCO CET and subsequently be signed off by the CEO and Chairman. If a prosecution is not required it could be dealt with by way of a Financial Administrative Penalty (FAP), Official Written Warning (OWW) or Advisory Letter (AL) as per the CEF. Officers are permitted to use discretion and may issue verbal warnings or advisory letters when dealing with minor infringements. Officers will consult with and seek the advice of the DCO CET accordingly.

Case file lists, actions and outcomes will be maintained by the Senior IFCO Investigations and statistics will be included in quarterly compliance reports. Press releases will be considered on a case-by-case basis and approved by the DCO and CEO.

## **5.0 Byelaw Development & Implementing New Byelaws**

It is important that Compliance officers have a good understanding of the work that is carried out by the RPT who seek to improve the sustainability of marine fisheries and environment. The CET & RPT work collaboratively with community engagement to provide accurate communication to stakeholders. The focus is on sustainability of Southern IFCA's fisheries activity in the commercial and recreational sectors and to support local communities. It is important that the DCO from the CET is in attendance at working groups and Authority meetings where management interventions are being developed in order to contribute to the practicalities of compliance and enforcement of that legislation. During 2024/ 2025 The DCO from the CET will attend all internal working groups as the management measures are progressed and are outlined in the Annual Strategic Plan 2024-2025 and referred to in the RPT Strategy.

### **5.1 C&E DELIVERY PRIORITY: Inshore Pot Fishing Byelaw (PFB) Implementation**

The Pot Fishing Byelaw has been submitted to the Marine Management Organisation for Quality Assurance. Only once the Byelaw has completed this stage and been signed off by the Secretary of State will it come into effect. A transition period is important to educate and advise stakeholders, recreational fishers

and the industry prior to the Inshore Potting Byelaw being enforced. Communication will be through social media, educational materials such as information leaflets and direct engage with those to which the legislation applies. The industry will also be provided with free metal gauges for measuring shellfish and crustacean species.

## 5.2 Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw (BTFGB) 2023 Implementation

The Bottom Towed Gear Fishing Byelaw has been submitted to the Marine Management Organisation for Quality Assurance. Only once the Byelaw has completed this stage and been signed off by the Secretary of State will it come into effect. The BTFGB is contributing to the Defra 2024 timeline for management within Marine Protected Areas, Once signed there will be targeted communication, patrol work within the new and amended closure areas with the Bottom Towed Gear Fleet to ensure compliance from when the Byelaw comes into effect, there will be no transition period for this Byelaw.

## 6.0 Monitoring, Control and Enforcement of Existing Measures

### 6.1 Byelaws

Under the MaCAA 2009 it is an offence to contravene Southern IFCA byelaws by all those who target sea fish within the Authority's District. These byelaws govern what sea fish may be taken, where and using which equipment. Failure to comply with these byelaws may lead to prosecution.

The byelaws have been written solely for the management, sustainability and protection of the marine environment for the District. The Authority has a suite of byelaws including legacy byelaws that were transferred under Section 6 of MaCAA 2009 (Transitional and Saving Provisions) Order 2011 made by Southern Sea Fisheries Committee (SFC) to the Southern IFCA for those parts of the District that were previously regulated by Southern SFC. Officers require a good knowledge and understanding of these byelaws and must be aware of points to prove when carrying out compliance inspections and detecting infringements. The Authority's byelaws can be found on the Authority website [All Regulations : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)

### 6.1.2 Permit Fisheries

#### *Compliance Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw*

The Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw (SDPB) is a single coherent management tool developed to govern fishing activities within the Solent bivalve fisheries, to allow for adaptive and flexible management, underpinned and directed by the best available evidence.

There has been an established scallop fishery in the Osborne Bay area, running east as far as No-Man's Fort of the Solent for number of years. However, since 2019 the fishing effort has increased. A Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw (BTFGB) protects a Marine Protected Area (MPA) to the South East of the Isle of Wight and running parallel to the shore in Osborne Bay and part of Ryde Spit, prohibiting BTFGB which includes scallop dredging.

The native oyster fishery which is currently closed means that no Category B permits have been issued under the scheme due to low levels of sustainable stock density. There is also a clam fishery in the Harbour areas during winter months. Most vessel's participating in the Solent fishery are on a smaller scale,



predominantly under 10m. CET will continue to work closely with the SDP holder facilitating engagement, ensuring compliance and assisting the RPT with an enhanced survey Programme.

### ***Compliance with Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Byelaw***

The clam and cockle dredge permit fishery in Poole Harbour is managed through PHDP Byelaw. Within the Byelaw the permit allows a flexible approach to management which can be reviewed in line with sustainability and nature conservation of the marine environment.

The season runs from 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024 to 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2025 both days inclusive. There are additional sensitive areas that have temporal and spatial closures at key times of the year. These are listed in the PHDP conditions.

There is a permit requirement for the PHDP holders to supply a catch return form on quantities of shellfish caught for each day of the month. The form requires the permit holders to record information including weight of catch, details of the area where the shellfish were caught and which Merchants purchased the catch and, when it was sold. In addition, any interactions with endangered, threatened and protected species have to be recorded. It is a compliance requirement as a permit condition to return this catch return form by the 14<sup>th</sup> of every month. Officers will liaise with the Permitting Officer to ensure that catch returns have been received and fully completed by this date and action any formal proceeding if the deadline are missed in line with the CEF.

Each year the PHD permit is issued to applicants providing they have met the criteria set out in the Access Policy. Officers will need to inspect dredge configuration at the beginning of the season for compliance with the permit conditions and to monitor and record any dredge modifications for the RPT.

### ***Compliance Net Fishing Byelaw***

The Southern IFCA Net Fishing Byelaw introduces various measures to regulate fishing with nets. The Byelaw was developed following the Authority's decision to review and develop regulations for the District's harbours and estuarine waters in order to support the use of these areas as essential fish habitats, to provide protection to migratory salmonids as they transit through these areas, to balance the social and economic benefits of net fishers and to further the Conservation Objectives of Designated Sites. One of the types of management introduced by the Byelaw are Net Permit Areas, within these Permit Areas conditions are set that the CET will ensure compliance with. The Net Fishing Byelaw also introduces a district wide gear marking requirement and a number of prohibited and restricted areas.

### **6.1.3 Permit Database**

Development of an online platform which will administer a permitting function for Southern IFCA for the permit fisheries, the aim is to reduce the administration functions with manual processing, provide a use friendly platform for fishermen working in permitted fisheries reducing the paperwork burden and provide data downloads for the fishermen. A review of this area of work is set to go ahead in April 2024.

## 6.1.4 Other Regulations

### ***National and EU Legislation***

In addition to Southern IFCA Byelaws, fishing activity is also regulated through National Legislation. The MMO provides information in the form of the “Blue Book” which contains all relevant fisheries legislation and can be found on the following website [Fishing regulations: The Blue Book - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) in particular Council Regulation EC 2019/1241 which can be found in the following link [Technical Conservation 2019 - Rules and regulations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) The enforcement of National legislation is conducted by Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCO’s), Marine Enforcement Officers (MEOs), Royal Navy personnel and other officials that have been warranted to conduct enforcement operations.

### ***Poole Harbour Several Order Lease Conditions***

There has been a Fishery Order in Poole Harbour since 1915, this gives the Authority the ability to manage aquaculture fishing activity in a defined area set out in the Poole Harbour Fishery Order 2015 (PHFO) and Management Plan (MP). The PHFO is severed from the public right to fish. This means nobody other than the leaseholders are allowed to remove shellfish of any kind from the defined leased beds. The MP is a requirement of the PHFO and stipulates that the Authority must manage the fishery area in accordance with the MP which outlines the extent of the Order and the management of activity within this defined area. Poole Harbour has one of the largest farmed Pacific oyster beds in the UK.

Lease conditions should be complied with by lease holders daily during their farming operations. Officers can check that lease holders are being compliant in line with their signed Business Plan and Summary Statements and with the conditions set out on the Southern IFCA Poole Fishery Order 2015 MP. A copy of the MP and PHFO can be found on the Authorities website and can be accessed by the links below: [Aquaculture : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](http://southern-ifca.gov.uk)

CET will ensure that the lease holders are compliant with their Summary Statements, Business Plans and MP when laying, harvesting and cleaning leased ground. Inspections will be carried out on the leased ground, to check that the shellfish stipulated in their Business Plans and Summary Statements, is the same as on their leased ground. To check the vessels being used are compliant with the lease agreement and Business Plans. To process dispensation applications that are issued on a yearly basis and that the rent for the beds are paid within the stipulated time set out in their leases.

### ***Compliance with Poole Harbour Several Order Biosecurity Measures Plan***

Under the Poole Fishery Order 2015 Southern IFCA is registered and authorised to operate an Aquaculture Production Business or (APB) under the Aquatic Animal Health (England and Wales) Regulations 2009.

The Biosecurity Measures Plan (BMP) is a live document which records the annual movement of shellfish seed coming onto the leased ground and monitors the shellfish leaving the aquaculture beds. When seed shellfish is imported from outside of the UK, CET Officers have a responsibility to ensure that the correct information to inform CEFAS (Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI), has been entered through the Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS). An Aquatic Animal Health notification form (AAH1) has to be submitted ahead of any import from Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of Man and Northern Ireland (i.e. within

UK but outside of GB) and AAH2 form notification on new sources of imported shellfish. These forms notify CEFAS, five days in advance of any planned import of molluscs that are susceptible to, or vectors of, the diseases that are covered in Council Directives and a schedule of the Aquatic Animal and Health (England & Wales) Regulations 2009. This also covers any unexplained or unusual mortalities. The notifiable diseases are divided into three categories (Exotic, Non-Exotic & Emerging) in the table below and are listed in the BMP. The BMP can be inspected at any time by CEFAS to ensure compliance with the APB by checking any imports, movement, and mortality of shellfish within the UK.

The Authority is notified once a year by CEFAS, who carry out a regulatory compliance inspection of the APB and BMP. CEFAS FHI cross check all the Shellfish movements in and out of the Poole APB and verify these have been recorded correctly.

### **6.1.5 Byelaw Dispensations**

The Authority's byelaws must be complied with by all those targeting sea fisheries resources. There may be occasions when someone or an organisation requires access to areas or carryout fishing activity for restocking or scientific research. In these circumstances and where the byelaw permits, applicants are required to submit a request to the Southern IFCA for a dispensation from a condition to comply with a particular byelaw.

Applicants are required to submit a dispensation request form, informing the Authority which byelaw they would wish to have an exemption from. The request for a derogation sets out the criteria and obligations (from which byelaw, location, supporting maps, time, vessel details, gear description, details of the activity and any mitigation to minimise impact) the applicant must complete as part of the process and must include sufficient information to enable Officers to make an informed decision before issuing any dispensation.

Each request is assessed individually on its merits in terms of the likely effect on the fishery and environment. In its assessment the Authority, having regard for its principal objective and its statutory duties, will consider, amongst other things, the impacts as set out in the application. If the Southern IFCA is satisfied that the information provided by the applicant meets the minimum requirements and considers the dispensation request is justified, then the Authority will issue a relief from the relevant byelaws applied for in the dispensation.

The applicant is required to justify the dispensation request in terms of both specific circumstances and exceptional duration. Applicants are advised to give as much notice as possible when making dispensation requests, as there may be a requirement for more information if there is not enough to satisfy the granting of a dispensation and any special conditions.

When applications are received the Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) will consider and process applications providing the applicant has demonstrated the following:

That there is NO:

- Significant risks associated with the non-compliance

- Avoidable adverse impacts (immediately or in the longer term)
- Additional measures that could be taken to further mitigate the impact
- Outstanding objections from other parties who are materially affected by the non-compliance
- Competitive advantages to the applicant arising from the dispensation

#### **6.1.6 Monitoring Codes of Practice**

The CET will monitor compliance with codes of practice that the Authority introduces in line with its risk-based intelligence led approach, where a breach of the code is detected this will be logged utilising the intelligence reporting system and will be shared with the RPT for consideration of management interventions. The CET will also continue to collect key monitoring data for example fishing vessel sightings and inspection reports which will support the successful monitoring of Codes of Practice. The CET will also look to engage and communicate codes of practice with the industry in key areas.

#### **6.1.7 Monitoring and Control Plans**

The Authority have introduced two Monitoring and Control Plans one as part of Netting Review to accompany the NFB and associated Net Fishing Permits. This plan considers sites within the District which have been found to have a low functional linkage to a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), where Atlantic salmon are either a primary or qualifying feature of the SAC, or a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) where Atlantic salmon and/or sea trout are a notified feature or component of the SSSI. These areas are subject to a permitted ring net fishery or a bottom set net fishery (in specified areas within the Net Permit Area only) under the provisions of the Net Fishing Byelaw. The annual management of the permitted net fishery will be informed by the plan, this will ensure that the Authority are using the best available evidence regarding understandings of interactions between net fishing practices and migratory salmonids within the District's harbours and estuaries. The Authority also has a Monitoring and Control Plan in place for the live Wrasse Fishery Guidance for any person commercially targeting this species, it is a voluntary management measure to monitor the fishery and protect the long-term sustainability of wrasse populations within the Southern IFCA District. There is a requirement for CET Officers to gather information to feed into both Monitoring and Control Plans in place by the RPT that inform future potential management.

## **7.0 Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

The delivery of the IFCA Vision is fundamental to successful compliance and co-operation of stakeholders from the recreational sea angling and commercial fishing sectors. CET Officers attend meetings with the local community including Angling and Commercial Associations and other community forums. In addition, Officers work with partner enforcement agencies such as the Police, Environment Agency, Environmental Health and MMO. The objectives for communicating with stakeholders from all sectors is to raise awareness, identify issues and to gather information that informs the development of inshore fisheries management measures. Collaboration and community participation are principles that are entrenched across the entire characteristics of the Southern IFCA model.

The Authorities Communication Plan sets out how Southern IFCA will approach communication and aspects of engagement with the community and stakeholders. It aims to ensure that people understand how as an organisation we plan to engage with others to help us make the right decisions for delivering

the vision. The CET have a responsibility to communicate up to date information on current legislation. There is a key message that runs through all the work areas regarding communication and engagement with all stakeholder sectors, which is evident through this strategy.

The Compliance and Enforcement Framework and Compliance Risk Register that supports this strategy, ensures a consistent and transparent approach across the CET work stream. This includes all stages of operational delivery and accountability, during any of the CETs decision-making. Part of the process of introducing new Byelaws is ensure adequate training is provided to the Officers. This will allow Officers to be fully aware of the legislation when communicating with stakeholders from the recreational and commercial sectors. Additional supporting documentation such as FAQs and posters will be utilised to inform industry (commercial and recreational) and stakeholders during implementation periods.

Southern IFCA Officers continually engage with stakeholders, local organisations and the general public through land and sea patrols, attending meetings, giving presentations, lectures and displaying educational information. It is vital for Officers to keep the fishing industry updated and advised of any changes. This also includes other stakeholders and members of the public on matters such as updates to management measures, current and relevant regulations relating to the District that includes Officers from the CET attending key stakeholder groups and events.

Stakeholder engagement is important for gaining trust from the commercial and recreational sectors in the work Southern IFCA carries out, communicating to all stakeholders and maximising better compliance whether it be voluntary or a legal requirement. Information is communicated through the following methods listed below:

- Land patrols
- Sea Patrols
- Attending Sea Angling and Commercial fishermen's Associations and public meetings
- Communication Packages
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Open days
- Information stands
- Website updates

### **7.1 Fishing Gear Restrictions & Seasonal Changes**

Southern IFCA will increase engagement with industry during seasonal changes through several methods, including stakeholder engagement, social media, and engagement with commercial and recreational fishers. Educational materials and information leaflets will be produced and circulated through industry prior to the date of the change where appropriate.

## 8.0 Working in Partnership

### 8.1 Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS)

Southern IFCA will need to have regard to the Fisheries Act 2020 and therefore the JFS [Joint Fisheries Statement \(JFS\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) in relation to Fisheries Monitoring and Enforcement, The JFS states that;

- Fisheries enforcement provides an assurance of compliance leading to a higher confidence level of the data for fisheries products removed from UK waters. Accurate data allows for robust analysis that supports the scientific evidence objective.
- The national fisheries authorities will work together to continue to deliver on the UK’s commitment to sustainable fishing by ensuring effective enforcement of fishing by all vessels in UK waters and UK vessels, wherever they may be fishing in the world. Where appropriate, the fisheries enforcement authorities will cooperate and collaborate to assure compliance with their respective regulations.
- Each national fisheries authority will regulate and enforce fisheries using methods that are appropriate and proportionate to their respective waters and fisheries. The introduction of any new monitoring or surveillance regime will be proportionate and based on the best available evidence.
- Fisheries enforcement authorities will work together where appropriate to ensure enforcement meets the requirements of the legislation in place and the legal framework under which they operate, ensuring where feasible, a consistency in approach and simplification of existing procedures.
- Fisheries enforcement authorities will carry out enforcement that is intelligence led, risk-based or is required by the UK’s international obligations. Enforcement of the respective regulations will be in line with applicable guidelines for regulators.
- Effective fisheries monitoring and enforcement is the key requirement to ensure we are aware of which vessels fish in UK waters, when they are in UK waters and how much catch is removed from UK waters. This supports all of the fisheries objectives, with particular emphasis on the sustainability and precautionary objectives.

#### 8.1.2 Working with other Fisheries Regulators

- Having knowledge of partnership regulations when carrying out compliance work is invaluable, as other infringements maybe detected during inspections and observations. Other regulators that Southern IFCA Officers work with can be seen in the table below, planned joint working for 2024/25 and priority areas are described in the right hand column:

Regulator	Background	Planned work for 2024-2025
Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	MMO is a non-departmental public body established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to ensure marine activities are carried out sustainably	Joint compliance patrols with a focus on engagement & compliance checks in key priority fisheries with a focus on catch data. National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) task and finish groups including delivery of JFS. <b>*NEW* The introduction of CLUE an integrated intelligence system.</b>
Environment Agency (EA)	A non-departmental public body responsible to the	Cross warranting arrangements in place. Particular focus on Netting activity within estuarine & Harbour areas within the IFCA District. Joint work utilising Drones for monitoring purposes.

	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). For rivers and out to 6 miles on migratory species	
Dorset and Hampshire Police	Marine Sections and Rural Crime Teams	Support Operation Seabird & Operation Seagoing.
Marine Coastguard Agency (MCA)	Marine Surveyors	Recording and reporting the wearing of PFDs.
Port Health Officers (PHO)	Environmental Health Officers from all constitute Authorities	Joint patrols and inspections of premises, information shared regarding non-compliance with shellfish classifications.
UK Border Force (UKBF)	Enforcement Officers	Joint patrols and reporting possible infringements detected. Engagement through NMIC/ JMOCC.
Gang Labour and Abuse Authority (GLAA)	Enforcement Officers	Joint patrols and reporting possible infringements detected particular focus on shore gathering.
National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)	Enforcement Team	Information sharing.
Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)	Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI)	Joint inspections of shellfish being stored and exported. Joint work on biosecurity in Poole Harbour.
UK Immigration	Enforcement Officers	Joint work on shore patrols with particular focus on shore gathering.

### 8.1.3 Marine Control and Surveillance System (MCSS)

Southern IFCA have joint access to upload records of physical inspections onto a national data base called MCSS. The system is facilitated by the MMO and CEFAS and uses International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) rectangular areas as a way of recording fishing effort. ICES is a leading multi-disciplinary scientific forum for the exchange of information and ideas on all aspects of marine data pertaining to the North Atlantic. Southern IFCA’s District covers ICES rectangular areas VIId and VIIe highlighted in blue on the map below. The information uploaded onto the system are sightings from FPVs, sightings from the Drone, physical inspections of vessels, vehicles, premises or person(s). All the data is stored on a secure system and protected under the DPA 1998 and GDPR. Infringement and prosecution outcomes are also uploaded on to the database. There is a guidance book provided by CEFAS on how to upload and search for data. This guidance stipulates what information can be accessed and used for in line with DPA and GDPR legislation.

### 8.1.4 CLUE

CLUE is an integrated intelligence and investigation management software system, procurement has been completed by the MMO, Southern IFCA will be working with others IFCAs, MMO, Global Marine and Welsh Government to develop and roll out the cross government system in 2024. The system will ensure compliance with GDPR requirements as well as delivery of ILRBE which includes alignment to the National Intelligence Model (NIM). The system, will also provide an electronic platform for investigation and incident management, all functionality is designed to remove duplication of effort as well as enhancing the information IFCOs and Government partners can access on the coast, ensuring that operational officers have the right information at the right time.

## 9.0 Pilot Projects

### 9.1 C&E DELIVERY PRIORITY: Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

*Southern IFCA through working in partnership and collaborating with Devon and Severn IFCA and Industry* have initially implemented REM devices on two vessels within the district operating in Lyme Bay, where cameras, GPS (Global Positioning System) and gear sensors have been installed as an initial phase, this is with the view to enhance our confidence within the current spatial restrictions and further Southern IFCA's understanding of fishing vessels using Bottom Towed Gear within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

Post this phase anticipated April 2024 Southern IFCA will look at a small scale trial of REM systems across other vessels within the district predominantly within MPAs. CET are going to explore the use of REM for vessels in the Netting (Harbour and Estuarine areas of Southampton and Christchurch) and the Potting fleet, where the use of REM cameras incorporating AI could support Pot Limits proposed under the Pot Fishing Byelaw, and on Netting vessels where specific requirements of Salmonid management within MPAs are set out via the monitoring and control plan within the Net Fishing Byelaw the application AI and the camera systems has the potential to determine the identification of Salmonid species and where vessels interact (or not) with Salmonids within the MPAs. Southern IFCA will also consider deployment of REM on a trial basis in other fisheries such as the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit fishery.

Southern IFCA have set of aims for this project which is as follows: to evaluate how technologies can improve management interventions through enhanced monitoring of fishing activities within the inshore fleet (12m vessels), to demonstrate how technologies can improve access to fisheries by changing management measures, to demonstrate how much data can be generated from on board technologies, to demonstrate the cost and monitoring effectiveness of technologies compared to the current approach and to demonstrate opportunities for vessel owners when their vessels are at sea.

**Finally Southern IFCA's ambition through the REM and AI projects is to inform national discussions and further the outcomes and development of the Fisheries Management Plans seeking novel low cost initiative solutions to both evidence collation and control and enforcement, working with and collaborating with Defra and other partners including the Fishing Industry.**



**Sam Dell**  
**Deputy Chief Officer- Compliance and Enforcement Team**  
**Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority**  
**April 2024**



## Research And Policy Team Plan April 2024 to March 2025 Decision Paper

*Report by DCO Birchenough*

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### 1. **Purpose**

To consider Southern IFCA's Research and Policy Team Plan for April 2024 to March 2025 in line with the Annual Strategic Plan: 2024-2025 (covered under Agenda Item 7).

### 2. **Recommendation(s)**

That members approve the Research and Policy Team Plan for April 2024 to March 2025.

### 3. **Supporting Documentation for Further Information**

Annex 1: Research and Policy Team Plan for April 2024 to March 2025

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Section 177 of The Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009 under the title Annual Plan requires (1) Before the beginning of each financial year every IFC authority must make and publish a plan setting out the authority's main objectives and priorities for the year, (2) The IFC authority must send a copy of its plan to the Secretary of State.
- 1.2 The RPT Plan builds on the Annual Strategic Plan, translating Horizon Goals into clear, outcome-focused Delivery Priorities. Where possible, these Delivery Priorities have been broken down into 3-month phases to provide transparency in timelines. Across the Plan, it is demonstrated how each Delivery Priority aligns with the IFCA Success Criteria, The Fisheries Act 2020, The Environment Act 2021 and the UK Net Zero Strategy, as well as the two key themes for Southern IFCA for 2024-2025 as outlined in the Annual Strategic Plan.

## 2.0 Summary of Key Points

2.1 There are three Horizon Goals identified for the RPT in 2024-2025:

- MPA Management 2024
  - Defra have set an interim target that all management measures are to be in place across all MPAs by 2024 to contribute to wider MPA targets set under the Government's Environment Improvement Plan 2023
  - There are three Delivery Priorities identified for this Horizon Goal:
    - Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Review: Phase 1
    - Shore Gathering Review: Phase 1
    - Black Bream Review
- Frontrunner Fisheries Management Plans
  - In December 203 the first five frontrunner FMPs were published; Crab & Lobster, Whelk, King Scallop, Bass & Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species
  - The Horizon Goal aims to help Southern IFCA contribute to the consideration of

immediate and short-term outputs of these FMPs and ensure compatibility of district work with nationally agreed directions in fisheries management.

- Four Delivery Priorities are identified for this Horizon Goal:
  - Whelk CPUE Pilot Project
  - Solent Scallop Stock Survey
  - Pot Fishing Byelaw Implementation
  - Support Defra in post-publication Phase of FMPs

- BTFG Phase 2

- The aim of Phase 2 is to consider district wide management interventions for sensitive habitats in relation to BTFG in line with Southern IFCA's duties under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, aiming to contribute to the delivery of the Government's vision under the Environment Improvement Plan 2023 and statutory targets under The Environment Act (2021).
- The Delivery Priority for this Horizon Goal is to move through the Phase 2 review during the 2024-2025 year commencing with an evidence gathering phase.

2.2 Additional workstreams under Reviewing Management Interventions, Supporting Defra's Delivery of Fisheries Act Objectives, Monitoring Inshore Fisheries and Southern IFCA's participation in specific research projects are also detailed in the RPT Plan with timelines provided where applicable for the 2024-2025 year.



# Research and Policy Team Plan

## April 2024 to March 2025



## SECTION 1: Introduction

The Research and Policy Team Plan (RPT Plan) sets out the priorities for the team for the period April 2024 to March 2025, feeding directly from the Horizon Goals identified in the Southern IFCA Annual Strategic Plan for April 2024 to March 2025.

In order to deliver the RPT Plan and fulfil Southern IFCA's function as a competent regulator for the marine environment, we recognise the need to align our work to a strategic direction. With many competing and evolving objectives, it is important that we maintain a considered overview in our delivery. This proactive way of working, with the recognition of the need to maintain a capacity for reactive and emerging work and oncoming challenges, will provide a template for the RPT and our stakeholders moving through 2024 and beyond.

### 1.1 Research & Policy Team Function

The Southern IFCA Research and Policy Team (RPT) are tasked to facilitate the delivery of the IFCA's legislative functions and to support the Government Vision (as outlined in the Southern IFCA Annual Strategic Plan for April 2024 to March 2025), and in doing so, seek to improve the sustainability of marine fisheries and the marine environment, whilst supporting local communities who are reliant upon these resources. The RPT conduct research and gather evidence and information in order to provide a sound evidence base to underpin the decision-making processes of the Authority.

Working under the Chief Officer, the RPT is led by a Deputy Chief Officer who oversees the work of a Senior Policy Specialist, three Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers and three Project Officers for Marine Protected Areas, Fisheries Management Plans and Aquaculture. Details of the RPT structure are provided in the Southern IFCA Annual Strategic Plan for April 2024 to March 2025. The RPT are further supported by the Business Services Team and work closely with the Compliance and Enforcement Team.








**Further details regarding the RPT and their work can be found at**

<https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/district-fisheries-research>.

## 1.2 RPT Core Functions

There are 5 functions delivered by the RPT, three of which form the team’s core functions (shaded blue):

RPT Functions	
Developing Fisheries Management Interventions	
Reviewing Fisheries Management Interventions	
Monitoring Inshore Fisheries	
Projects and Emerging Work	
Engagement	



### 1.2.1 Developing Fisheries Management Interventions

Developing fisheries management interventions involves the identification of the requirement for intervention, which may arise as a result of working to meet the IFCA’s legislative functions, supporting the Government Vision, identification of an emerging issue, availability of new evidence or another factor. The IFCA has the ability to develop both statutory and non-statutory management interventions, operating in accordance with Statutory Guidance provided by Defra<sup>1</sup> which sets out best practice for IFCAs in making byelaws.

Section 155 of the MaCAA describes how IFCAs have the power to make byelaws:

- (1) *For the purposes of performing the duty imposed by section 153 or the duty imposed by section 154, the authority for an IFC District may make byelaws for that District.*
- (2) *Byelaws made under this section must be observed within the District for which they are made.*
- (3) *A byelaw made under this section does not have effect until it is confirmed by the Secretary of State.*
- (4) *The Secretary of State may confirm a byelaw without modification or with such modifications as are agreed to by the IFC authority that made the byelaw.*
- (5) *Before confirming a byelaw, the Secretary of State may cause a local inquiry to be held.*

IFCAs are responsible for producing byelaws within their Districts, which includes such part of the English inshore region lying six nautical miles from baselines. Byelaws must be compatible

<sup>1</sup> [Defra. IFCA Byelaw Making Guidance, 2011](#)

with and cannot be less stringent or inconsistent with National or Community legislation.

The Defra Guidance outlines best practice for the delivery and implementation of byelaws which must be based on sound evidence, follow particular decision-making routes and ensure undertaking of appropriate stakeholder consultations. Figure 1 outlines the stages of the process which are followed in working under this Guidance, noting that there may be additional elements dependent on the requirements of the management intervention being developed and the relevant legislative duties under which the IFCA is operating.

Southern IFCA seek to ensure consistency and transparency in the delivery of management interventions and to clarify the stages of complex fisheries management development. The Southern IFCA is increasingly looking to publish Management Intentions documents to support newly developed byelaws, to provide clarity of the intention and process which has underpinned a particular management decision.

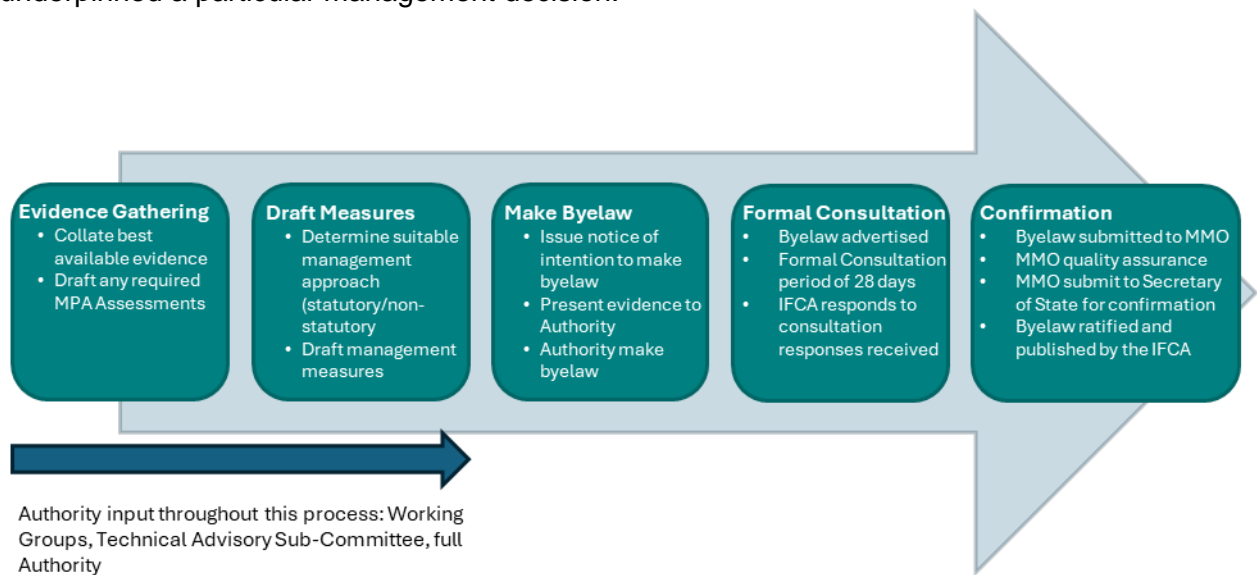


Figure 1: Development of Management process map, based Defra byelaw making guidance



## 1.2.2 Reviewing Fisheries Management Interventions

Following the implementation of a management intervention within the District, Southern IFCA are committed to reviewing the performance of statutory and non-statutory measures to ensure that inshore fisheries management continues to be effective and is underpinned by best available evidence.

The decision to review a particular management intervention may be based on a number of different factors, including but not limited to:

- Review periods stipulated in a byelaw, Management Intentions Document or Monitoring & Control Plan (M&CP)
- Trigger points or thresholds being reached under a M&CP
- Review of permit conditions
- Newly emerging evidence, new MPA designations, changes to legislative duties or Government targets
- Requirements under a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)

Supporting documents for a management intervention (including Monitoring and Control Plans and Management Intentions Documents) are designed to analyse the current situation within

a particular fishery and identify objectives to help that fishery develop sustainably. Timelines and milestones for monitoring the effectiveness of current management can be set within these documents, along with an outline of evidence sources that may feed into this monitoring and a system for the collation of best available evidence for the fishery to inform any reviews, including identifying where further evidence gathering may need to be undertaken. For more established fisheries, the plan may set out a framework for feedback and a process for the Authority to follow to ensure that the objectives of the fishery continue to be met.

**Permit Condition Reviews**

A Permit Byelaw provides a mechanism under which the introduction of specific measures can be introduced via permit conditions in accordance with the procedure set out in the Permit Byelaw and supporting documents. This offers a flexible approach to managing fishing activities, enabling the Authority to adapt more easily to new and improved evidence. Reviews of permit conditions are carried out in consultation with permit holders and any interested parties and considers the current best available evidence base. A guide process for undertaking a Permit Condition Review is outlined in Figure 2. This process map is not intended to be binding, rather it seeks to provide a useful guide upon which Permit Condition Reviews can be delivered, noting that specific byelaws may have detailed processes for reviewing management under Monitoring and Control Plans.

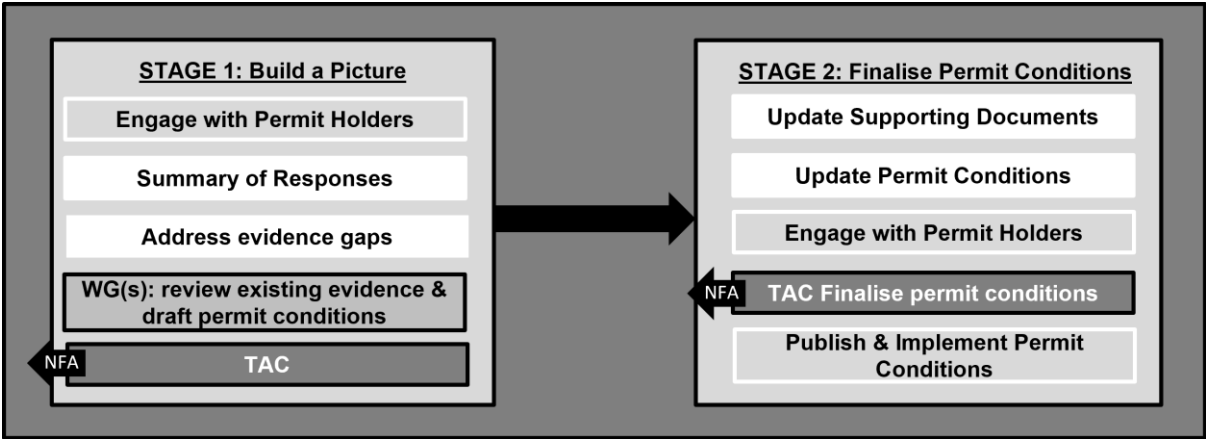


Figure 2: Permit Condition Review Process Map



**1.2.3 Monitoring Inshore Fisheries**

The RPT conduct stock assessments and surveys in order to contribute to the IFCA’s understanding of the marine environment and fisheries resources therein. This data is used to complement and provide a sound evidence base to aid the Authority in its decision-making process to achieve successful and sustainable management, whilst protecting the marine environment.

Surveys and stock assessments are either completed on an annual basis to support existing management within the District or may be undertaken on a more ad hoc basis in order to support a particular evidence need. As much as possible Southern IFCA seek to work with partners and collaborate with industry to help facilitate the undertaking of these surveys, for example the juvenile fish sampling program in defined harbours and estuaries across the District works with local fishers, conservation groups, harbour bodies, landowners and academic institutions.

### **Data Collection**

Where additional evidence needs are identified to support future management decisions or to work in alignment with nationally agreed directions in fisheries management through the publication of FMPs, the RPT will explore available opportunities for gathering this data, utilizing the ability to work with partners and collaborate with industry. The Authority continues to actively strengthen its relationship with local academic institutions to identify opportunities for integrated research and publication, particularly in assisting with providing additional technical expertise for example in improving understanding of shellfish and fish biology.

### **Marine Assets**

To facilitate the delivery of our monitoring program, Southern IFCA seek to work with local fishermen through the chartering of fishing vessels. This not only enables the Authority to utilise local industry knowledge but also provides an important opportunity for stakeholders to play a key part in the collection of evidence for their fisheries, aiming to improve understanding of related management.

The Authority also has access to a range of specialist survey equipment including fishing dredges, towed and remotely operated underwater video cameras, a side-scan sonar and sediment grabs. The Authority also has the ability to work with local and national research institutions to facilitate the use of additional survey equipment where necessary.

Southern IFCA has three Fisheries Protection Vessels located across the District. These vessels have a secondary role to assist in the delivery of the RPT monitoring programme with their main focus aligned with the role of the Compliance and Enforcement Team.



**Section 3.0 of the Compliance & Enforcement Team Strategy for April 2024 – March 2025 outlines more detail on the Authority’s operational assets.**



### **1.2.4 Projects and Emerging Work**

Periodically the Authority may be asked to be involved in external projects for example projects developed through national funding streams. A consideration of the Authority’s involvement in these types of projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis with proposals reviewed in line with the IFCA’s Vision, High Level Objectives and Success Criteria as well as Horizon Goals identified through the Annual Plan and resourcing requirements.



### **1.2.5 Engagement**

The Authority’s Communication Plan<sup>2</sup> sets out how Southern IFCA will approach communication and aspects of engagement with the community and stakeholders. It aims to ensure that people understand how, as an organisation, the IFCA plans to engage with others to help in making the right decisions for delivering the IFCA Vision.

Engagement through the RPT is crucial to the delivery of all other team functions. Engagement is delivered through attendance at local, regional and national meetings/open days/information events, participation in fisher led forums, consulting on management interventions and facilitating the communication of information from other regulatory bodies and government agencies. Engagement is also achieved through cross-team collaboration with the Compliance

<sup>2</sup> [Communication-Plan-2019-10-23-112412.pdf \(toolkitfiles.co.uk\)](https://www.toolkitfiles.co.uk/Communication-Plan-2019-10-23-112412.pdf)



& Enforcement team to utilise land and sea patrols as opportunities to engage with stakeholders. The Authority also has electronic assets which are utilised for engagement including the Southern IFCA website and social media feeds on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Appropriate, timely and informed engagement is vital to the delivery of all Southern IFCA workstreams and across the whole team opportunities for engagement are continually identified and explored.

The RPT has a presence at the following meetings:
Crab & Lobster and King Scallop Fisheries Improvement Projects
Dorset Catchment Partnership – Fisheries Sub-Group
Fleet Management Group
Fleet Study Group
Hamble Estuary Partnership
IFCA National Technical Advisory Group
Langstone Harbour Committee
Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve
Poole and District Sea Angling Association
Poole Harbour Steering Group
Poole Harbour Study Group
REACH Network
Southern IFCA Conservation Group
Southern IFCA Recreational Angling Sector Group
Regional Fisheries Groups VII d and VII e, f, g
SAGB Mollusc and Crustacean Committees
Solent Seascapes Project
Solent Forum
Solent Seagrass Network
SWAN Aquaculture Network
Whelk Working Group



## 1.2.6 Technical Expertise

Underpinning the work undertaken by the RPT is a data management and analysis capability and Geographic Information System (GIS) expertise. This enables the visualisation, analysis and interpretation of data in order to better understand trends and relationships. Both the data management and GIS expertise within the RPT provide a valuable resource to underpin fisheries management interventions, monitoring and engagement. Outputs help to facilitate both partnership working and industry collaboration through the sharing of information/data and the use of visual aids to aid understanding of management measures, fishing activity/effort, the location of designated sites, features and wider sensitive habitats. In addition, this expertise aids presenting outcomes of surveys in an accessible manner and allows sharing of outcomes with relevant partners, such as through the FMP process.

Building these skills within the RPT remains an ongoing focus through each of the RPT functions and staff development, to allow continued development of capabilities in undertaking and presenting research and apply these to both ongoing and new monitoring programs.

## 1.3 RPT Horizon Goals and Delivery Priorities

This section provides detail on the Horizon Goals identified for the RPT in Section 3 of the Southern IFCA Annual Strategic Plan April 2024 to March 2025, translating those Goals into clear, outcome-focused Delivery Priorities. Where possible, these Delivery Priorities have been broken down into 3-month phases to provide transparency in timelines. The graphic below is used to demonstrate how each Delivery Priority aligns with the following:

- Delivery of IFCA High Level Objectives via IFCA Success Criteria
- The eight Fisheries Objectives (Fisheries Act 2020)
- Supporting Defra in the delivery of specific objectives under the Fisheries Act 2020 & Environment Act 2021
- The UK Net Zero Strategy, via identification and instigation of changes in operations, in order to minimise and reduce emissions, in addition to work surrounding the harnessing of blue carbon habitats (saltmarsh and seagrass)

This graphic has been used across the Annual Strategic Plan, the RPT Plan and the Compliance & Enforcement Plan to demonstrate this alignment across all Authority workstreams.

IFCA Success Criteria	No.	Fisheries Objectives
IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders.	1	Sustainability 1
		Precautionary 2
IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime.	2	Ecosystem 3
		Scientific Evidence 4
IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts.	3	Bycatch 5
		Equal Access 6
IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.	4	National Benefit 7
		Climate Change 8
IFCAs make the use of evidence to deliver their objectives	5	

Supporting Defra in delivery of Fisheries Act 2020 & Environment Act 2021 Objectives, encompassing the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP)							
FMPs		MPAs		Marine Consents		Net Zero/blue carbon	

The Delivery Priorities will also show where there is alignment with the two key themes for Southern IFCA for 2024-2025 as essential components to facilitating the delivery of the Southern IFCA vision to **champion prosperous inshore fisheries founded upon thriving marine environment.**



## Horizon Goal: MPA Management 2024



Defra have set an interim target that ‘all management measures are to be in place across all MPAs by 2024’ to contribute to the wider MPA targets set under the Government’s Environment Improvement Plan 2023.

There are three elements to achieving this:

- 1) To introduce management measures for Tranche 3 MCZs and additional features designated under Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 MCZs ensuring that the Conservation Objectives of any feature within an MCZ are furthered.
- 2) To incorporate an update to existing management within district-wide MPAs (SACs, SPAs) based on the best available spatial evidence of feature presence/extent, as provided by Natural England, to ensure that there is no damage, disturbance or adverse impact caused by fishing activity on the features subject to protection.
- 3) To incorporate a scheduled review of the existing Prohibition of Gathering (Sea Fisheries Resources) in Seagrass Beds Byelaw and the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016, as well as consideration of relevant legacy byelaws, where the existing management footprint falls within MPAs.

To delivery this Horizon Goal, there are three Delivery Priorities identified:

Delivery Priorities	Current Status
<b>Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Review: Phase 1</b>	Byelaw submitted to MMO for QA prior to consideration by SoS
<b>Shore Gathering Review: Phase 1</b>	Development of draft measures
<b>Black Bream Review</b>	Development of draft measures

Both the BTFG Review and Shore Gathering Review require a phased approach in order to deliver management to meet the Defra 2024 interim target. Phase 1 of this approach relates to the delivery of work under this Horizon Goal.

**Phase 1:** *consideration of feature-based management interventions for MPAs: sites designated under the National Site Network (Special Areas of Conservation [SACs], Special Protection Areas [SPAs] and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs).*

The legislative framework under which Southern IFCA must operate is determined by the location of the fishery subject to management consideration, specifically whether the fishery occurs within, adjacent to or outside of an MPA<sup>3</sup>. The development of management for the three Delivery Priorities under this Horizon Goal is in accordance with the duties to:

- **further the Conservation Objectives within an MCZ**
- **to ensure that fishing activity does not damage, disturb or have an adverse effect on the wildlife or habitats for which an SAC or SPA is legally protected**

The specific detail of Phase 1 for each relevant Delivery Priority and any principles underpinning management development across all three Delivery Priorities will be identified through the development process and detailed in supporting documentation for resulting management.


Phase 2 of relevant management reviews will be explored by the Authority upon the completion of Phase 1. Phase 2 of the BTFG Review is outlined under a Horizon Goal in this Strategy.

<sup>3</sup> For detail on the IFCA’s Legislative Functions please refer to the Southern IFCA’s Annual Strategic Plan April 2024 to March 2025

## Delivery Priorities - Timelines


### BTFG Review: Phase 1

- District-wide
- Phase 1 of the BTFG Review resulted in the Authority making the BTFG Byelaw 2023 in June 2023, following Formal Consultation, the Byelaw was submitted to the MMO for consideration by the Secretary of State in October 2023.
- Details of the proposed management under the Byelaw and supporting documentation can be found on the Southern IFCA website under 'Ongoing Reviews' - [Ongoing Reviews : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://southern-ifca.gov.uk).

RPT Core Function	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Await outcomes from MMO QA process and consideration by the SoS.</li> <li>• Upon notification that the Byelaw has been signed, proceed with implementation phase across both the RPT and CET.</li> </ul>			


### Shore Gathering Review: Phase 1

- District-wide
- Reviewing management required to support the IFCA's legal duties in MCZs, SACs and SPAs in relation to activities which are hand-worked or using hand-held implements

RPT Core Function	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft measures</li> <li>• Quantify impacts of proposed measures</li> <li>• Draft supporting documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalise supporting documents</li> <li>• Make byelaw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal Consultation</li> <li>• Seek ratification of the byelaw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of byelaw dependent on MMO QA and SoS timelines</li> <li>• Consideration of Phase 2 to follow completion of Phase 1</li> </ul>

### Black Breem Review

- Three MCZs in Dorset; Purbeck Coast MCZ, Poole Rocks MCZ, Studland to Portland MCZ
- Developing management to support the IFCA's legal duties in MCZs to further Conservation Objectives related to black seabream as a designated species

RPT Core Function	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft measures</li> <li>• Quantify impacts of proposed measures</li> <li>• Draft supporting documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalise supporting documents</li> <li>• Make byelaw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal Consultation</li> <li>• Seek ratification of the byelaw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of byelaw dependent on MMO QA and SoS timelines</li> </ul>

For all three Delivery Priorities, reaching the stage of submitting resulting management to the MMO for QA and consideration by the SoS by the end of December 2024 allows the Southern IFCA to meet Defra's interim target for MPA management in line with the Government's Environment Improvement Plan 2023.

## Horizon Goal: Frontrunner Fisheries Management Plans



The Fisheries Act 2020 provides the framework for the UK to manage fisheries as an independent coastal state and requires the UK fisheries policy authorities (Defra in England) to publish Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) to help deliver the ambition for sustainable fisheries.

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) are evidence-based action plans, developed in collaboration with the fishing sector and other stakeholders with the purpose of delivering sustainable fisheries for current and future generations. The Fisheries Act 2020<sup>4</sup> sets out 8 fisheries objectives, the achievement of which is referenced in the FMPs. Each FMP specifies a stock, type of fishing and a geographic area covered, as well as the relevant responsible authorities and indicators for monitoring the effectiveness of the plan.

Once FMPs have been published, they will inform relevant fisheries management actions, with each FMP being designed according to the specific needs of the stock, fisheries and locations that it covers.

In December 2023, the first five of the frontrunner FMPs were published:

FMP	Geographic Coverage	Spatial Relevance to Southern IFCA District
<b>Crab &amp; Lobster</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Waters</li> </ul>	Whole district
<b>Whelk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Waters</li> <li>ICES areas 4 and 7</li> </ul>	Whole district
<b>King Scallop</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English and Welsh Waters</li> </ul>	Whole district
<b>Bass</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English and Welsh Waters</li> </ul>	Whole district
<b>Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eastern and Western English Channel</li> <li>ICES areas 7d and 7e</li> </ul>	Whole district

The remaining frontrunner FMP, Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel Mixed Flatfish is expected to be published during 2024.

This Horizon Goal aims to help Southern IFCA contribute to the consideration of immediate and short-term outputs of the frontrunner FMPs<sup>5</sup> and to ensure compatibility of district work with nationally agreed directions in fisheries management. This will also encompass wider directional awareness and alignment with medium to long-term objectives.

Defra has outlined that to support the post-publication phase of FMPs:

- IFCAs should continue to work collaboratively with the Arms Length Bodies (ALBs), FMP Working Groups, and Defra, to prioritise and address evidence gaps identified within T1 and T2 FMPs post implementation
- IFCAs should support the implementation of regional FMPs where they apply to IFCA districts
- IFCAs should support with evidence gathering, where practicable, to contribute to stock assessments for FMPs

<sup>4</sup> [Fisheries Act 2020 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>5</sup> Note that as FMPs are specific to the species, fisheries, locations that are covered in each plan, the plans will vary in content and format, not all published frontrunner FMPs have 'immediate' outputs in addition to 'short-term' outputs.

To support the post-publication phase for the published frontrunner FMPs, Southern IFCA has identified four Delivery Priorities for 2024-2025:

Delivery Priorities	
<b>(1) Whelk CPUE Pilot Project</b>	Undertake a pilot project to collect whelk fishery CPUE data in accordance with outcomes of the Whelk FMP
<b>(2) Solent Scallop Stock Survey</b>	To review survey methods to address evidence gaps within the King Scallop FMP
<b>(3) Pot Fishing Byelaw Implementation</b>	To implement the Southern IFCA Pot Fishing Byelaw as a pilot for wider permit approaches in line with proposed outputs of the Crab & Lobster and Whelk FMPs
<b>Support Defra in post-publication Phase of FMPs</b>	
<b>(4)</b>	To work collaboratively with ALBs, Working Groups and Defra in the implementation of regional FMPs where they apply to the Southern IFCA District

## Delivery Priorities - Timelines

### (1) Whelk CPUE Pilot Project


- District-wide
- A pilot project will be developed which will work collaboratively with the fishing industry and, where appropriate, incorporate partnership working, to collect data on catch per unit effort from pot fishing for whelks that will improve understanding of the whelk fishery within the district and support understanding the effectiveness of management measures under the Southern IFCA Pot Fishing Byelaw (currently in the MMO QA process prior to consideration by the SoS).
- This work could provide data which would contribute to the following objectives identified in the Whelk FMP:

#### Main Objective from Whelk FMP:

- Assess catch per unit effort in the whelk fishery – *Improved understanding of fishing effort and catches will facilitate improved modelling and assessment of stock status. This will improve the ability to implement evidence-based fisheries management which is responsive to changes in fishing activity and stock status.*

#### Additional Relevant Objectives:

- Develop a data collection program
- Define stock boundaries for assessment and management
- Assess stock or exploitation status
- Develop a whelk harvest strategy with harvest control rules

RPT Core Function	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of project methodology in line with FMP research needs and PFB provisions</li> <li>• Collaborative working with industry</li> <li>• Implementation of data collection program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collation and analysis of data</li> <li>• Collaborative working with industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collation and analysis of data</li> <li>• Collaborative working with industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collation and analysis of data</li> <li>• Reporting on Year 1 data collection</li> </ul>

## (2) Solent Scallop Stock Survey


- Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw Fishery
- The existing methodology for the Southern IFCA’s tri-annual Solent Scallop Stock Survey will be reviewed, looking at where improvements can be made and there can be regional/national alignment, working collaboratively with local industry and national partners.
- Additionally, a feasibility study will be developed to use drop down cameras, supported by Cornwall IFCA, to determine whether the methodology is suitable in the Solent for obtaining additional data on King scallop stocks that can contribute to Southern IFCA’s understanding of the stocks and fishery to inform management under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw and support evidence requirements under the King Scallop FMP.
- This work could provide data which would contribute to the following objectives identified in the King Scallop FMP:

### Main Objective from the King Scallop FMP:

- Develop a science evidence base to inform the development of harvest strategies and harvest control rules for individual scallop stocks – *provision of better data allows for improved fisheries management as scientists, regulators, management community and industry have access to the information they need to make evidence-based decisions. Better data moves away from precautionary management. This supports the sustainability objective in the Fisheries Act 2020.*

### Additional Relevant Objectives:

- Develop harvest strategies and harvest control rules (HCRs) to ensuring fishing effort is responsive to the status of stocks by developing appropriate fisheries management measures


RPT Core Function	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of stock survey methodology</li> <li>• Collaborative working with industry</li> <li>• Work with Cornwall IFCA to undertake feasibility study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of any updated methodology for stock survey in Sept. survey</li> <li>• Inclusion of additional data collection based on outcomes of feasibility study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of data from use of any updated methodology</li> <li>• Review of implementation of any updated methodology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of any updated methodology for Jan. survey</li> </ul>

(\*) See section 1.3.1 for details of the Solent Scallop Stock Survey

## (3) Pot Fishing Byelaw Implementation


- District-wide
- The proposed Southern IFCA Pot Fishing Byelaw (PFB) is currently undergoing QA by the MMO prior to consideration by the SoS. One element of the PFB is the proposed introduction of a permit scheme for commercial and recreational pot fisheries with specific conditions proposed for fisheries targeting different species including whelk and crab & lobster.
- Through the implementation of the PFB, the permit scheme can be used as a pilot for exploring how such measures can be implemented within pot fisheries and provide useful information to inform wider permit approaches for both whelk and crab & lobster fisheries.
- This work could provide information which would contribute to the following management outputs identified through the Whelk and Crab & Lobster FMPs:
  - Whelk FMP
    - Short-term (1-2 years) measure: whelk fishing permit scheme or entitlement with conditions

- Crab & Lobster FMP
  - Long-term: managing recreational fishing effort
  - Long-term: embedding long-term management approaches focusing on the development of a harvest strategy with appropriate harvest control rules

RPT Core Function	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The timeline for delivery of the implementation of the PFB is dependent on timescales required for MMO QA and consideration by the SoS.</li> </ul>			

**(4) Support Defra in post-publication phase of FMPs**

- District-wide
- Southern IFCA will continue to work collaboratively with ALBs and Defra, participate where required in FMP working groups and engagement/information sharing mechanisms to support the post-publication phase of FMPs
- The above specific projects will help contribute to the addressing of evidence gaps identified within T1 and T2 FMPs following their implementation
- Southern IFCA will work to ensure a compatibility in our work with nationally agreed directions in fisheries management and will ensure that an understanding of the outputs of published FMPs is factored into our direction setting to ensure alignment with FMP objectives

RPT Core Function	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout the 2024-2025 year, Southern IFCA will attend Working Groups and meetings with Defra and ALBs to support the post-publication phase of FMPs</li> <li>• Through the delivery of all Southern IFCA workstreams, relevant published FMPs will be reviewed to ensure consistency and alignment with national direction</li> <li>• Southern IFCA will indicate how workstreams are aligned with FMP outputs in a clear and transparent manner for stakeholders</li> </ul>			



## Horizon Goal: BTFG Phase 2



Following the submission of the BTFG Byelaw 2023, as the output of the BTFG Review Phase 1, to the MMO for consideration by the SoS, the BTFG Review Phase 2 commenced in the 2023-2024 year.

The aim of Phase 2 is to consider district wide management interventions for sensitive habitats in relation to BTFG in line with Southern IFCA’s duties under the MaCAA (2009). Phase 2 aims to contribute to the delivery of the Government’s vision under the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 and the statutory targets under The Environment Act (2021). Operating under the Southern IFCA’s duties under the MaCAA, Phase 2 will involve extensive consultation with all interested parties including partner organisations and industry.

The general aims for Phase 2 are:

- To consider features which exist adjacent to MCZ boundaries (i.e., any part of a feature which extends across the boundary of an MCZ)
- To consider any sensitive habitats and species (as defined under Phase 2) across the district, both inside and outside of National Site Network Sites
- To consider features and sensitive habitats/species within Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are not also designated under overlapping MPAs
- To consider areas currently closed under the BTFG Byelaw 2016 which will remain closed under the BTFG Byelaw 2023 (in accordance with BTFG Phase 1 Principles) where no designated features occur, in order to determine if any spatial changes are needed based on socio-economic and environmental assessments to ensure all potential impacts of any changes are considered
- To consider social and economic factors/impacts alongside the need for protection of the marine environment
- To consider outcomes of ongoing research programs including those which are specifically focused on habitat restoration potential, ecosystem services, blue carbon habitats and Natural Capital benefits

The Delivery Priority for this Horizon Goal is to move through the Phase 2 review during the 2024-2025 year commencing with an evidence gathering phase.

### Delivery Priorities - Timelines

RPT Core Function	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence gathering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope of Phase 2 defined with consideration of specific objectives &amp; principles</li> <li>• Review of timeframe for delivery of workstream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing development of workstream looking to identify draft measures</li> <li>• Consultation with stakeholders at relevant stages</li> <li>• Development of supporting management documents as required</li> </ul>	

## Additional Workstreams

In addition to the Horizon Goals identified in the Annual Strategic Plan, there is ongoing work within the RPT relating to reviewing management interventions, supporting Defra’s delivery of Fisheries Act Objectives, monitoring and external projects which will be delivered during the 2024-2025 year. Details of workstreams are provided under relevant headings in this section, for work under Reviewing Management Interventions and Supporting Defra’s Delivery of Fisheries Act Objectives, timelines are given at the end of each section for all relevant workstreams.

### Reviewing Management Interventions

#### The Poole Fishery Order 2015



Southern IFCA manage aquaculture activity within a defined area of Poole Harbour under The Poole Harbour Fishery Order 2015 ('the Order'). This is the largest Several Order in the UK. In accordance with Section (1) of the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967, the Order confers on Southern IFCA the right of a several fishery for the cultivation of shellfish of any kind for a period of twenty years from the 1st July 2015.

Under Section (3) of the Order, the Authority must manage the aquaculture in Poole Harbour in line with the Management Plan entitled Poole Harbour Several Order 2015 Management Plan ('Management Plan'). Under Section (4) of the Order, the Authority are required to undertake an annual review of the Management Plan. If, during this review any significant changes are made to the Management Plan, then the Authority must notify, in writing, any interested parties of any proposed changes at least four weeks before the date of its annual publication (1<sup>st</sup> July). The Authority must, prior to publication of the updated Management Plan, take account of any representations it receives in writing from any interested party on the proposed changes. It is not anticipated that there will be any significant changes required to the Management Plan for 2024-25.

The Southern IFCA issues leases under the Order which are valid for a period of five years. The current leases are for 2020-2025 with the next lease period being 2025-2030. In order to ensure that the issuing of the 2025-2030 leases can be delivered in line with the expiry of the existing leases on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025 and thus help ensure business security and continuity, the process of developing the new leases will be running through the 2024-2025 year. This will include a review of the Management Plan, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Biosecurity Plan and documentation required from leaseholders. A Project Officer has been employed by Southern IFCA to undertake the delivery of this workstream.

#### Permit Byelaws



The Southern IFCA currently has three fishery specific permits under the following byelaws:

- The Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Byelaw
- The Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw
- The Net Fishing Byelaw

During each year, there may be a requirement for reviews of permit conditions under permit byelaws on the basis of factors which may include the availability of new evidence, changes in the fishery, changes in target species stock levels, submission of evidence from permit holders, triggers being reached under a Monitoring and Control Plan. Reviews which occur outside of scheduled periods cannot be predicted, however within the 2024-2025 year the following reviews will be required:

Review	Requirement
<b>Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Byelaw</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodic review of permit conditions required every 3 years</li> <li>• Review procedure outlined in the byelaw</li> <li>• Any outcomes of the review to be implemented prior to the commencement of the 2025 fishing season (25<sup>th</sup> May 2025)</li> </ul>
<b>Net Fishing Byelaw</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First annual review on suitability of flexible permit conditions, permit fees and limitations on the number of permits</li> <li>• Review procedure outlined in the byelaw</li> <li>• Any outcomes of the review to be implemented prior to the start of the second permit period</li> </ul>

## Marine Conservation Reference Size Review




Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) is a management tool used at a national and regional level to help achieve sustainable fisheries. The measure prevents sea fisheries resources below a certain size from being removed from the fishery to promote sustainable stocks.

During the 2023–2024 year, information was collated to update evidence packages for key species in the district and ensure that the best available evidence had been identified as part of the review. In order to align any outcomes of the review with national direction and incorporate outputs from relevant FMPs, there is a need for Southern IFCA to engage in the post-publication phase for published FMPs (as outlined under the Horizon Goals) and determine how outputs from FMPs for relevant species relate to current Southern IFCA management and suggested management approaches from the district-specific MCRS review. As this understanding develops through the 2024-2025 year, Southern IFCA will review the scope and requirements under the MCRS review, progressing the workstream alongside the development of the national direction in fisheries management.

## Timelines

Workstream	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – Mar
<b>Poole Fishery Order 2015</b> 🔍	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review &amp; implementation of 2024-25 Management Plan</li> <li>• Development of timeline and process for 2025-2030 lease program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of requirements for Management Plan, HRA, Biosecurity Plan to accompany issuing of leases</li> <li>• Development of these documents for 2025-2030 lease program</li> <li>• Engagement with lease holders and relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority approval of Management Plan, HRA, Biosecurity Plan &amp; associated lease documents for issuing of 2025-2030 lease program</li> </ul>
<b>Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Review</b> 🔍		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify any permit conditions requiring review</li> <li>• Begin evidence gathering to inform a review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence review in Nov 2024</li> <li>• Undertake permit holder consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present review outcomes to the Authority</li> <li>• Any agreed changes communicated to stakeholders</li> </ul>

<p><b>Net Fishing Byelaw</b> </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing collation of available evidence through first permit season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing collation of available evidence</li> <li>• Determination of timelines for consultation with stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determination of any changes to permit conditions, permit fees or limitations on the number of permits</li> <li>• Outcome of review notified by the Authority to permit holders in writing</li> </ul>
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**Supporting Defra's Delivery of Fisheries Act Objectives**



The Fisheries Act 2020 was introduced to make provisions relating to fisheries, fishing, aquaculture and marine conservation following the departure of the UK from Europe. The Act creates a legal commitment to sustainable fishing and supporting future generations of fishers whilst allowing the marine environment to thrive. The Act sets out the eight Fisheries Objectives, developed to underpin this commitment, and sets down the requirement for a Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) and Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs). Under the JFS, IFCAs are required to have regard to the Fisheries Act 2020, the JFS and FMPs when undertaking relevant functions.

There are three programs of work under this Horizon Goal which will support the delivery of the Fisheries Act Objectives by Defra. Southern IFCA has employed a dedicated Project Officer for FMPs who will be primarily delivering these workstreams.

**Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) – Planning/Preparation and Publication Phases**

T3 FMPs are currently in development including the Cockle FMP, Queen Scallop FMP and the Skates and Rays FMP with T4 FMPs coming online during 2024. Southern IFCA have a requirement to support the FMP process in the following ways during the planning/preparation and publication phases:

**Planning/Preparation**

- To provide representation and contributions to FMP Working Group meetings as appropriate
- To contribute expert sectoral and inshore fisheries management advice to FMP projects
- To contribute evidence and data as requested by delivery partners
- To evaluate draft FMP content
- To provide links between delivery partners and local IFCA representatives to help coordinate engagement with the inshore fishing sector
- To support AIFCA in their role as Delivery Partner for the Cockles FMP to contribute as needed and enable the Cockles FMP to be published in 2024
- To support stakeholder engagement during public consultation

**Publication Phase**

- To support the pre and post consultation review and evaluation of draft/final FMPs
- Contribute to relevant assessments

This work will be ongoing throughout the 2024-2025 year and therefore does not have specific quarterly timelines. The Southern IFCA continues to provide representation at Working Group meetings for relevant FMPs, attendance at engagement events and meetings both virtual and in person at a district,

regional and national level and maintains the dedicated webpage on the Southern IFCA website to provide a resource for stakeholders to find information for specific FMPs including engagement events and contact details for Delivery Partners. Southern IFCA has a dedicated Project Officer for FMPs to facilitate and coordinate this workstream. Southern IFCA is committed to providing expert sectoral and inshore fisheries management advice to the FMP process and engages closely with Delivery Partners on relevant FMPs to provide such advice, any evidence/data held by the IFCA and to review draft/final FMP outputs. The DCO RPT has been involved in the development of the Cackle FMP supporting AIFCA in their role as Delivery Partner.

## Marine Consents

This workstream relates to the Southern IFCA's contributions to marine planning and marine licencing.

### Marine Spatial Prioritisation Programme

Defra have established a cross-government Marine Spatial Prioritisation (MSPri) programme focused on future use of English seas, to enable an assessment of how future targets and ambitions on Net Zero, shipping, energy security, the Fisheries Act and the environment can be best delivered. The MSPri programme aims to build understanding of future demands, optimise use of the seas, maximise colocation between all sea users and, where colocation isn't possible, to prioritise use of marine space. The development of the second generation of marine plans (Southern IFCA district falling within the South Marine Plan) will also fall under this program.

Southern IFCA are asked to engage with this program through:

- The provision of data and evidence
- Stakeholder engagement
- Assisting with scenario testing at local levels

### Marine Licencing

Marine licensing covers a diverse range of activities from sea wall repairs through to large scale infrastructure developments. The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is responsible for issuing marine licences in English waters and applicants must go through a formal application process if the proposed activity requires a marine licence. IFCAs are a statutory consultee in this process. Defra will be working with IFCAs on developing policies including through a review of marine licensing cost recovery, exempted and 'self-service' activities and reforms to environmental assessments.

Detailed timelines for Defra's policy development work are not yet established, however input from Southern IFCA, as required, will be delivered over the course of the 2024-2025 year. Southern IFCA continue to act in their capacity as a statutory consultee for marine licences reviewing relevant licence applications provided through the MMO system and providing comment, data and information on relevant fishing activities as required as well as encouraging applicants to engage directly with the fishing industry. Summaries of our engagement in this process are provided quarterly to the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee.

### Marine Protected Areas/Good Environmental Status

The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 have a high-level objective of achieving good environmental status (GES) in UK waters. GES is consistent with the 25 Year Environment Plan vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas and supports the wider environmental objectives of the Environment Improvement Plan.

The Environmental Improvement Plan published in 2023 sets out how Defra will deliver biodiversity targets and commitments by restoring our Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) through strengthened protections by 2024. This resulted in the requirement for IFCAs to ensure all fishing activity in inshore MPAs has been assessed and, where necessary, to aim to put in place fisheries management measures, by the end of 2024. This is primarily achieved by the work under the **Horizon Goal: MPA Management 2024**, however there are additional elements under this workstream which relate to the work carried out by the IFCA generally in relation to management of fisheries within MPAs.

There is no timescale given for this work as it relates to specific workstreams for MPAs which, both singularly and cumulatively contribute to the achievement of these elements. The IFCA are required to report on their progress in this workstream. The Southern IFCA has employed a dedicated Project Officer for Marine Protected Areas since 2023 to help facilitate this work.

### **Marine Protected Areas**

- Ensure all fishing activity in inshore MPAs has been assessed and, where necessary, fisheries management measures put in place, by the end of 2024.
- Collaborating with partners to deliver management where necessary to achieve MPA conservation objectives.

### **Good Environmental Status**

- Work with Defra, MMO and SNCBs on a workplan of measures required to prevent damaging impacts on Marine Protected Areas, to support the achievement of Good Environment Status under the Marine Strategy.
- To support the development and coordination of management within MPAs in accordance with the new statutory MPA target and with the Good Environment Status targets.
- Enable co-ordination and reporting on the MPA network, both locally and nationally so as to demonstrate the contribution of the MPA network to the statutory MPA target, GES and the 25 Year Environment Plan targets.
- Contribute to the 25 Year Environment Plan and targets relevant to the inshore marine environment as laid out in England's Environmental Improvement Plan.



### 1.3.1 Monitoring Inshore Fisheries

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This section details the monitoring program for 2024-25. In addition to helping to meet IFCA Success Criteria, certain surveys which the Southern IFCA undertakes will also provide evidence that could be used to help inform the development of Fisheries Management Plans and help contribute to data collection under any Research and Evidence Plans developed for those FMPs, this is indicated using the relevant symbol. Monitoring work which is carried out within or in relation to MPAs is also noted with the relevant symbol. Opportunities for engagement are explored through all monitoring activities. Monitoring which is proposed within the 2024-2025 year under Horizon Goal: Frontrunner Fisheries Management Plans are not included here, following the initial year of implementation any programs carried through to future years will be detailed in this section in subsequent years.

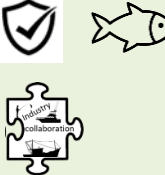



Symbol denotes industry collaboration



Symbol denotes partnership working with academic institutions, partner organisations

Survey	Time of Year	Species	Area	Aim	Time Series Data	Outcomes
<b>Whelk Population Survey</b>  	Spring	Common whelk	Solent, Poole Bay, Weymouth Bay, Lyme Bay	To obtain whelk samples from fishers and collect data on size frequency and Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE)	2023 2024	1) To improve evidence base for whelk data specific to SIFCA District 2) To inform management under the anticipated Pot Fishing Byelaw 3) Data to be made available for use by Whelk FMP

<b>Poole Bivalve Survey</b> 	Apr	Manila clam, Common cockle, American Hard-Shell clam, other bivalves	Poole Harbour	To obtain bivalve samples from 27 shellfish beds in Poole Harbour and collect data on size frequency and CPUE which can be related to fishery catch and effort data	2016 2017 2018 2019 <del>2020</del> <sup>6</sup> 2021 2022 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To contribute to time-series dataset</li> <li>2) To inform management under the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit fishery</li> <li>3) To support the MSC certification</li> <li>4) Data to be made available for Cockle FMP</li> </ol>
<b>Solent Bivalve Survey</b> 	Mar Oct	Manila clam, Common cockle, American Hard-Shell clam, other bivalves	Solent Dredge Permit Management Areas 4-6	To obtain bivalve samples from three management areas (Southampton Water, Portsmouth Harbour, Langstone Harbour) and collect data on size frequency and CPUE which can be related to fishery catch and effort data	2017 <sup>7</sup> 2018 2019 2020 – spring only <sup>8</sup> 2021 – autumn only <sup>9</sup> 2022 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To build an initial 5-year baseline of CPUE data</li> <li>2) To contribute to time-series dataset</li> <li>3) To inform management under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw – Cat A Permit Conditions</li> <li>4) Data to be made available for Cockle FMP</li> </ol>
<b>Solent Scallop Survey</b> 	Jan (2024 onwards) Apr Sept	King scallop	Solent Dredge Permit Management Areas	To obtain samples of King scallops to improve understanding of the population in the Solent through collecting data on size frequency and CPUE	2021 – July survey <sup>10</sup> 2022 2023 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To inform management under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw – Cat A Permit Conditions</li> <li>2) Data to be made available for use by the King Scallop FMP</li> </ol>
<b>Solent Oyster Survey</b> 	Aug – every other year	Native oyster	Solent Dredge Permit Management Areas	To obtain samples of native oysters and collect data on size frequency and CPUE	2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2021 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To inform management under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw – Cat B Permit Conditions</li> <li>2) To inform understandings of native oyster stocks in the Solent</li> </ol>

<sup>6</sup> Note that dates with a strikethrough indicate where surveying could not take place due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

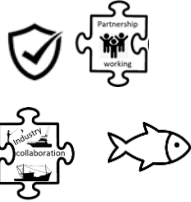
<sup>7</sup> 2017 survey was for autumn in Southampton water only.

<sup>8</sup> Autumn 2020 survey could not take place due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

<sup>9</sup> Spring 2021 survey could not take place due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

<sup>10</sup> The first Solent Scallop Survey was carried out in the summer of 2021 as a trial and to test the methodology, twice yearly sampling commenced from 2022










<p><b>Juvenile Fish Surveys</b></p> 	<p>Jun Oct</p>	<p>Estuarine fish species</p>	<p>The Fleet, Christchurch Harbour, Yarmouth, River Hamble</p>	<p>To obtain samples of juvenile fish from estuaries across the District identified as having Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)<sup>11</sup> present and collect data on species presence, abundance and size frequency</p>	<p>2016 2017 2018 2019 2020<sup>12</sup> 2021 2022 2023</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To inform management under the anticipated Net Fishing Byelaw, specific to EFH</li> <li>2) To promote engagement with the wider stakeholder community</li> <li>3) To explore opportunities for partnership working and understand potential contribution of data to support partner projects such as those exploring co-management approaches, marine natural capital &amp; ecosystem services</li> <li>4) To contribute to a time-series dataset to highlight the importance of estuaries to certain species</li> <li>5) Data to be made available for use by relevant FMPs</li> </ol>
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<sup>11</sup> In this case, the use of the term 'Essential Fish Habitat' refers to the term as used in the Net Fishing Byelaw package

<sup>12</sup> Spring survey unable to take place and autumn survey partially achieved due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The following table outlines additional monitoring activities undertaken by the RPT which are separate from the survey program of work.


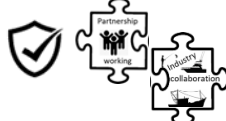
Analysis of data under these activities is carried out by the RPT, however these monitoring activities sit across all teams within the Southern IFCA for the obtaining and collation of the data (Business Services Team) and ensuring compliance with data submission as required by related management measures (Compliance & Enforcement Team).

Monitoring Activity	Time of Year	Species	Area	Aim	Time Series Data	Outcomes
<b>Wrasse Fishery Data Collection</b>  	Jul – Dec	Wrasse species	West of District	To obtain catch data from fishers on a voluntary basis on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count data of wrasse landed</li> <li>Fishing location</li> <li>Fishing effort</li> </ul>	2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023	1) To inform management of the live wrasse fishery 2) To inform monitoring under the M&C Plan 3) Report compiled annually for delivery to TAC Meeting following fishery closure
<b>Permit Data Collection</b>   	Throughout relevant permit seasons	Poole Harbour Dredge Permit – bivalves  Solent Dredge Permit – bivalves  Net Fishing Byelaw – salmonid interactions	Dependent on specific permit	To analyse data provided by permit holders in respective permitted fisheries and to build time-series datasets which can be used to relate fisher-dependent data to stock survey data.	<u>Poole</u> 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023  <u>Solent</u> 2021 2022 2023	1) To inform management under respective permit byelaws 2) To help inform evidence gaps on CPUE in relevant FMPs
<b>Net Fishing Observer Program</b>  	Jun – Sept  <i>To commence in 2024</i>	Species caught using net fishing	Southampton Water and Christchurch Harbour	To carry out observer trips for 5% of total estimated net fishing trips with 50% of these trips able to be achieved by Southern IFCA with assistance from the Environment Agency (EA) required to achieve 100% of the target	Program to be implemented in 2024	1) To inform management of net fishing under the NFB

## 1.3.2 Projects and Emerging Work



This section details any additional Projects which the Southern IFCA is involved with working with external partners or to be delivered to support workstreams in addition to evidence gathered through the Monitoring Programme.

Project	Time of Year	Species	Area	Aim	Southern IFCA Role	Anticipated Outcomes
<p><b>Angling for Sustainability</b></p> <p><b>Lead:</b> University of Plymouth</p> <p><b>Funded:</b> Fisheries Industry Science Partnership (FISP) scheme</p> 	Two-year project, Jan 23 - 25	Black Bream Elasmobranchs	Dorset coast Solent	For researchers to work with fishing communities in Dorset and the Solent to assess the habitats and movement of species including sharks, skates, rays and black bream through establishing a network of acoustic receivers and tagging target species	<p>In-kind contribution of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 days to help with tagging work</li> <li>• To provide advice and input as fisheries managers</li> <li>• To facilitate liaison between the project and stakeholders through established Stakeholder Groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide data on seasonal and daily movement for black bream and elasmobranchs</li> <li>• To inform conservation advice for these species</li> <li>• To inform relevant FMPs</li> <li>• To inform future management of EFH<sup>13</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>University of Plymouth FISP Bid</b></p> <p><b>Partners:</b> IFM, AIFCA, AT, BASS and NMC</p> 	Awaiting results of funding bid	Fish species	Juvenile fish survey sites  (and other sites outside the SIFCA District)	To apply novel camera technology to support public participation in approaches to gather critical data on how fishes use coastal and estuarine habitats at their earliest juvenile stage	<p>In-kind contribution providing access to Juvenile Fish Surveys and providing advice and input as fisheries managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide data to fill important knowledge gaps about the essential habitats required by populations of fished species</li> <li>• To support policy decisions and management action</li> <li>• To be a vehicle for the fishing industry,</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> The term EFH (Essential Fish Habitat) in this case is aligned with the text provided directly by the project lead

						scientists and managers to work together
<b>Drift Net Fishery Research Project</b>	<i>To be implemented in 2024</i>	Observing drift net methodologies and catches	Permit areas under the NFB	In the Process, Tools and Intentions Document which accompanies the anticipated NFB, Southern IFCA are committed to undertaking a Research Project in order to improve understandings of potential interactions between the use of drift nets and salmonids in a non-targeted fishery	Project owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To inform management of net fishing under the NFB</li> </ul>



Sarah Birchenough  
**Deputy Chief Officer – Research and Policy Team**  
 Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority  
 April 2024

## Renewal of s167 Agreement with Sussex IFCA Chichester Harbour Decision Paper

*Report by DCO Sam Dell.*

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### **A. Purpose**

To consider renewal of the s.167 Agreement, under Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009 to continue to delegate IFCA byelaw making powers under the MaCAA to Sussex IFCA for that area of Chichester Harbour that is within the County of Hampshire.

The 167 Agreement has been in place since 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014. The current Section 167 agreement between Southern IFCA and Sussex IFCA expires on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024

### **B. Recommendation(s)**

That Members enter into a renewed agreement with Sussex IFCA (under s.167 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009) so as to delegate byelaw making powers to Sussex IFCA for that area of Chichester Harbour that is within the County of Hampshire.

### **C. Supporting Documentation for Further Information**

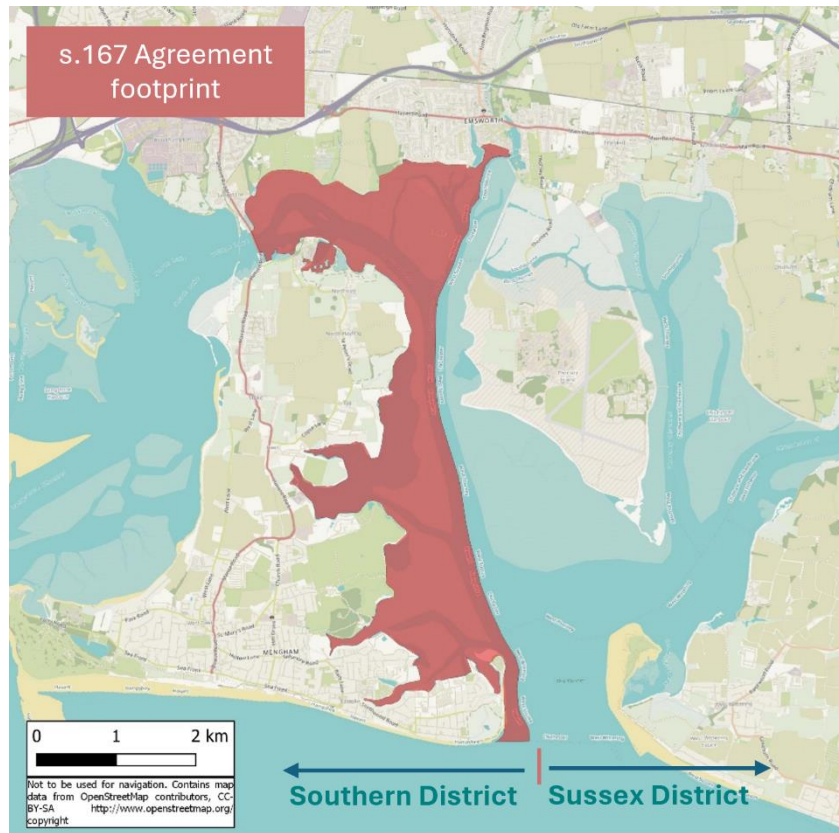
**Annex 1:** draft s167 Agreement Sussex IFCA

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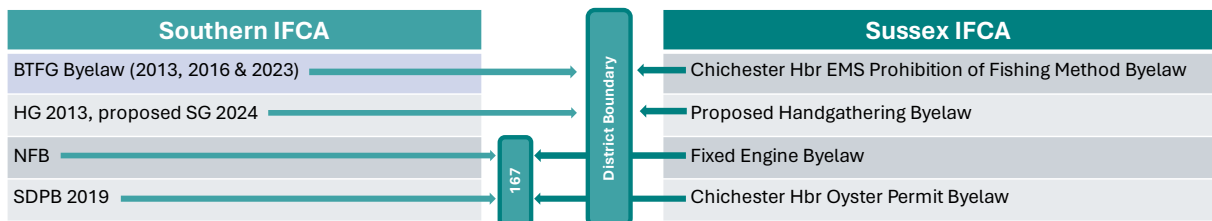
## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 In 2011 the District of the Southern IFCA was created, and the District boundary was aligned to the County Boundaries. In Hampshire this boundary falls down the centre of a channel in Chichester Harbour. Previously (prior to 2011) the whole of Chichester Harbour had been managed by Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee, without a precept on Hampshire County Council for the provision of those services.
- 1.2 The commitment by IFCAs to review management measures, demonstrates the need to development consistent and coherent management across the whole of Chichester Harbour. It is considered that this is best achieved this is by delegating byelaw making powers to Sussex IFCA, for the Hampshire part of Chichester harbour and to do so by entering into an agreement with Sussex IFCA who already managed the majority of Chichester.
- 1.3 The scope of the agreement is limited to byelaw making powers whereas the other management activities (evidence, engagement, compliance & enforcement) may be delivered jointly and through collaborative ways of working.
- 1.4 Section 167 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009 states The authority for an IFC district may, with the approval of the Secretary of State, enter into an agreement with an eligible body authorising the eligible body to perform any function of the IFC authority (a) either in relation to the district or in relation to specified parts of that district; (b) subject to paragraph (a), either generally or in specified cases. Where "Specified" means specified in the agreement.

## 2.0 Relevant Area



## 3.0 Current Relevant Management Arrangements



3.1 Where management was under development by Southern or Sussex IFCA pre 167 agreement the District boundary has been maintained.

3.2 If the 167 Agreement were discontinued then both Southern IFCA and Sussex IFCA would need to revisit the spatial provisions under a number of existing byelaws.

## 4.0 Next Steps

3.1 Should the Authority agree the recommendation to renew the 167 Agreement, Southern IFCA and Sussex IFCA will seek Secretary of State approval for a 10 year period commencing the 30th July 2024.

|

**Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority**

**Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority**

## **Agreement**

between

**The Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (“the Southern Authority”) and the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (“the Sussex Authority”) providing for the Sussex Authority to carry out certain functions of the Southern Authority**

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Unsigned Draft



THIS AGREEMENT IS DATED (INSERT DAY & MONTH) 2024

The Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority as defined in article 4 and the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District, as defined in article 3 of the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 (SI 2010/2198), as amended by The Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation (Amendment Order 2019 (2019/1233))(**Southern Authority**)

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority as defined in articles 2 and 4 of the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 (SI 2010/2199) (**Sussex Authority**)

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Southern Authority and the Sussex Authority are both Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities within the meaning of section 150 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

The Southern Authority is the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority for the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District, as defined in articles 3 and 4 of the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 (SI 2010/2198), as amended by The Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation (Amendment Order 2019 (2019/1233)) (**Southern District**).

The Sussex Authority is the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority for the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District, as defined in articles 2 and 3 of the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 (SI 2010/2199) (**Sussex District**).

Chichester Harbour lies partly within the Southern District and partly within the Sussex District.

Section 153 of the Act imposes a duty on an Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority to manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its District and Section 154 of the Act imposes a duty on an Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority to seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any Marine Conservation Zone in the District are furthered.

The Southern Authority and the Sussex Authority wish to practise consistent and coherent management of the exploitation of sea fisheries resources and furtherance of the conservation objectives of any Marine Conservation Zone across the whole of Chichester Harbour and in so doing to avoid the duplication both of administrative effort and cost on themselves and of regulatory burden on those who wish to exploit sea fisheries resources within Chichester Harbour.

Section 167 of the Act gives power to an Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority to enter into an agreement with an eligible body authorising the eligible body to perform any function of the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority within any part of the Authority's district as is specified in the agreement.

By virtue of section 168(1)(a) of the Act, the Sussex Authority is an eligible body within the meaning of section 167 of the Act.

The Secretary of State has given approval for the Southern Authority and the Sussex Authority to enter into this agreement.

#### **AGREED TERMS**

#### **INTERPRETATION**

The definitions in this clause apply in this agreement:

**the Act:** the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

**Authorised Functions:** The functions of the Southern Authority listed in column 1 of the Table in Schedule 1, but subject to the limitations contained column 2 of the table.

**Specified Part:** that part of the Southern District in Chichester Harbour as lies below Mean High Water Springs and:

north of a line drawn due west from a position 50°46.62N : 0°55.92W

east of a line drawn along the western side of the road-bridge leading from Langstone to Hayling Island in Hampshire.

- 1.1 Clause, schedule and paragraph headings shall not affect the interpretation of this agreement.
- 1.2 The schedule forms part of this agreement and shall have effect as if set out in full in the body of this agreement and any reference to this agreement includes the schedule.
- 1.3 Words in the singular shall include the plural and vice versa.

A reference to a particular statute, statutory provision or any subordinate legislation made under a statute is to such statute, provision or subordinate legislation as amended or re-enacted from time to time whether before or after the date of this agreement and includes any subordinate legislation made under a relevant statute whether before or after the date of this agreement.

#### **AUTHORISATION**

The Southern Authority authorises the Sussex Authority to perform the Authorised Functions.

The Sussex Authority agrees to perform the Authorised Functions.

#### **EXTENT**

The Sussex Authority shall perform the Authorised Functions solely for the Specified Part.

#### **DURATION**

Subject to earlier cancellation by the Secretary of State under section 168(1)(b) of the Act, this agreement shall terminate at the end of the period of 10 years beginning with the date on which it was entered into.

This agreement has been entered into on the date stated at the beginning of it.

**Schedule 1**

No	Function	Limitation
1	The power to make byelaws under section 155 of the Act and emergency byelaws under section 157	Authorised Functions are limited to the Specified Part of the Southern IFCA District
2	All functions ancillary to Item 1 above	Authorised Functions are not permitted unless a similar byelaw is in force or is proposed for the whole of or part of that part of the Sussex IFCA District as lies within Chichester Harbour.

Signed by a Senior Civil Servant on behalf of the Secretary of State  
DEFRA

.....

Date .....

Signed by **MARK ROBERTS** on behalf of **SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY:**

} .....  
Chair

Signed by **PETER JONES** on behalf of **SUSSEX INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY:**

} .....  
Chair

## COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT Paper For Information

*Report by DCO Sam Dell.*

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### A. Purpose

To report to Members on the compliance and enforcement activities for the quarter November 2023 to January 2024.

### B. Annex

- I. Compliance and Enforcement Quarterly Report
- 

## 1.0 Introduction

- This report contains an executive summary relating to our enforcement activity for this reporting period in statistical format for inspections, patrols and offences detected and a quarterly summary of key enforcement operations and activities.

## 2.0 Summary of Key Points

- **Background**
  - 2.1 Risk Based Enforcement
  - 2.2 Intelligence Led Approach
  - 2.3 Tactical Coordination Group
  - 2.4 Fisheries Patrol
- **Enforcement Activity**
  - 3.1 Intelligence reports
  - 3.2 Enforcement Activity Table
  - 3.3 Offence reports
  - 3.4 Offence Outcomes
- **Summary of key Enforcement Operations and Activities**



# Compliance & Enforcement Quarterly Report

November 2023 – January 2024



## Contents

1. **Purpose**
2. **Background**
  - 2.1 Risk Based Enforcement
  - 2.2 Intelligence Led Approach
  - 2.3 Tactical Coordination Group
  - 2.4 Fisheries Patrol
3. **Enforcement Activity**
  - 3.1 Intelligence reports
  - 3.2 Enforcement Activity Table
  - 3.3 Offence reports
  - 3.4 Offence Outcomes
4. **Summary of key Enforcement Operations and Activities**
5. **Compliance and Enforcement Team**

## 1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of the Southern IFCA risk-based approach to compliance and enforcement, the report also highlights key operational activities and statistical information for the previous quarter November 2023 to January 2024. The statistical data included in this report is aligned to national IFCA metrics that are reported to Association IFCAs (AIFCA) and Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) on an annual basis.

## 2. **Background**

### 2.1 **Risk Based Enforcement**

Southern IFCA is committed to achieving fair, effective and proportionate enforcement. The Compliance and Enforcement Framework sets out the Authority's approach and details the general principles the Authority will follow and the enforcement actions available. The Risk Register forms part of that Framework, providing focus and priorities for Southern IFCA's compliance and enforcement activities. The Risk Register identifies priorities in specific areas at different times of the year.

### 2.2 **Intelligence Led Approach**

Intelligence Reports (IRs) are the Authority's method of recording, storing, collating and the dissemination of intelligence that complement our risk-based approach. Additional intelligence together with access to the UK Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance System<sup>1</sup> (MCSS) and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) maximizes the efficient use and deployment of resources on the ground. Southern IFCA uses the National Intelligence Model which incorporates a tasking and coordination process.

### 2.3 **Tactical Coordination Group (TCG)**

The TCG meeting is chaired by the DCO who makes decisions in relation to resourcing and enforcement priorities for the upcoming period (2 weeks). The aim of this meeting is to make decisions around resource allocation in order to make best use of resources and provide the best possible protection for fisheries and the marine environment within the Southern IFCA District, the TCG also decides what operational tactics will be deployed.

### 2.4 **Fisheries Patrols**

Southern IFCA officers conduct both land and sea-based patrols across the district. Southern IFCA operates three patrol vessels, patrols on board these vessels may take place at any time of day or night, and are used to observe fishing activity, engage with industry, carry out boarding inspections and to target reported illegal activity. On shore, Officers conduct land patrols to engage with industry, carry out inspections, observe activity at sea and in ports, visiting a number of locations across the district including commercial premises, recreational angling hotspots, piers, ports, beaches and quaysides. The Authority has also developed a drone capability and has procured two drones to support operational activity. This has enhanced our operational delivery and is used to record evidence of possible offences using the onboard camera from perspectives not previously possible, it has improved the prevention (deterrent) and detection of offending.

[Compliance & Enforcement : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> The UK reporting database of sightings, boarding, positions of vessels, prosecutions and other actions against infringements of UK and EU Fisheries. This system is managed by CEFAS on behalf of the MMO (also see RNSS). This also contains access to VMS data.

### 3. Enforcement Activity

#### 3.1 Intelligence Reports

The following table demonstrates the information reports submitted for this reporting quarter.

<b>Intelligence Reports</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>Total</b>
IFCOs	11	17	4	32

#### 3.2 Enforcement Activity Table

The following table demonstrates the enforcement activity and offences detected for this reporting quarter, these reporting metrics are aligned nationally to those requested by Defra. Fluctuations that occur in statistical figures can be as a result of a number contributing factors i.e. number of land based as opposed to sea-based patrols in any given month, staff resources, weather, other duties and the objectives of the patrols recognising the Authorities commitment to risk based intelligence led enforcement.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Inspections at sea</b>	Vessel patrols	8	6	4	18
	Boardings/inspections	19	17	11	47
<b>Inspections ashore or in a port</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Shore patrols	10	7	5	22
	Port visits	22	17	15	54
	Premises inspections	2	3	1	6
	Landing inspections	15	7	5	27
	Vehicle inspections	2	4	2	6
	Gear Inspections	1	0	0	1
	Person Inspection	1	0	0	1
<b>Offences Detected</b>	<b>Per report</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>Total</b>
Verbal warnings		3	5	0	8
Written warnings		0	0	0	0
Advisory letter		1	0	0	1
FAP		0	0	0	0
Offence Reports		1	0	0	1

#### 3.3 Offence reports

The following table demonstrates the offence reports & actions submitted by officers for this reporting quarter.

<b>Date of Offence</b>	<b>Offence</b>	<b>Action</b>
13.11.23	Breach of SIFCA Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016 & SIFCA Fishing for Sale Byelaw	Advisory letter sent to owner/master 21.11.23.

#### 3.4 Offence Outcomes

The following table demonstrates offence outcomes for this reporting quarter.

<b>Date of offence</b>	<b>Offence</b>	<b>Action taken and date</b>
24.08.23	PHDP byelaw. Breach of Seagull Island Closed Area.	FAP issued to owner on 13.11.23.



24.10.23	Breach of Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw & associated permit conditions (Pre-season scalloping)	2x advisory letters issued to permit holder and nominated representative 3.11.23
13.11.23	Breach of SIFCA Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016 & SIFCA Fishing for Sale Byelaw	Advisory letter sent to owner/master 21.11.23

**4. Summary of key enforcement operations and activities**

**November**

**4.1 REM (Remote Electronic Monitoring) fitting at West Bay**

Southern IFCA officers attended West Bay and have worked in partnership with Devon and Severn IFCA, the fishing industry and engineers to install REM devices on two bottom towed gear vessels that operate both within the Southern IFCA and Devon and Severn IFCA districts. Cameras, GPS and Gear Sensors have been installed onto the vessels. The aims are to demonstrate how much data can be generated from on board technologies to support Fisheries Management Plans as well as demonstrating effectiveness of low cost but robust technologies for monitoring and control in and surrounding Marine Protected Areas.

**4.2 Court Outcome - Poole Fishermen Plead Guilty**

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at Poole Magistrates Court, Poole fishermen, pleaded guilty to taking a quantity of undersized cockles from Poole Harbour, contrary to prohibition (4) of the Fishing for Cockles Byelaw of the Southern IFCA and section 163 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Charges were laid by the Southern IFCA and both fishermen were ordered to pay costs and fines totalling £6,456.00.

The court heard how during the morning of Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the fishermen was inspected by officers at Fisherman’s Dock, Poole Quay. The fisherman was in possession of 7 bags of cockles and 7 bags of manila clams, which he confirmed had been caught using the licensed registered fishing vessel in Poole Harbour. The vessel was jointly owned father and son.

An inspection of the catch followed. Officers found that the manila clams landed were mainly compliant with the minimum conservation reference size of 35mm. However, based on samples removed for measuring, 33.86% of the cockles were undersized; passing through a gauge having a square opening measuring 23.8mm along each side. The total weight of all shellfish landed by was approximately 390kg.

As joint owners of the vessel both owners were liable for the breach of regulations. Each were fined £1200.00 and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £1,548.00 and a surcharge of £480.00.

**December**

**4.3 MMO VNAZ Drone Survey**

Officers from the Southern IFCA have continued to support the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) in the Studland Bay Voluntary No Anchor Zone (VNAZ), The Voluntary No Anchor Zone was introduced to protect the seagrass beds and the species they support. The seagrass beds have a number of beneficial functions including providing habitat for species such as the long-snouted seahorse and acting as a carbon sink by removing atmospheric carbon. Officers from the Compliance and Enforcement Team provided a Drone to carry out an arial survey of the existing moorings in Studland Bay. This activity is carried out on a cost recovery basis with the MMO.

**January**

**4.4 IFCA Enforcement Course 2024**

Three Officers from Southern IFCA attended the IFCA Enforcement Course, the course aims to provide officers with a good understanding of fisheries legislation, basic fish identification and fishing methods, dealing with conflict, contemporaneous interviewing, investigation procedures and the rules of evidence and disclosure.

## Behind the Scenes with the Research and Policy Team Paper For Information

*Report by DCO Birchenough and the RPT*

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### **A. Purpose**

To provide Members with an update on aspects of work that the Research and Policy Team is delivering behind the scenes.

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### **1.0 Introduction**

- This report from the Research and Policy Team (RPT) Officers captures aspects of work that they are delivering behind the scenes. This may include standalone projects or supplementary work which complements and supports the workstreams presented at meetings of the Authority, or sub-committees.

### **2.0 Summary of Key Points**

- A report from DCO Birchenough covers the winter quarter which has involved priority work on MPA workstream delivery, developing our understanding of the post-publication phase of published frontrunner FMPs and strategic planning for the year ahead.
- The RPT welcomes two new Project Officers for Aquaculture and FMPs both of whom bring a great set of skills and enthusiasm to their new roles, helping the RPT to deliver its role and expand in key areas.
- Senior Policy Lead Emily Condie details her participation in a recent external training course on the integration between the programs R (coding) and QGIS (mapping software) which has helped her develop new skills in data analysis and presentation around species mapping and behaviours that can be used going forward in RPT workstreams.
- IFCO Celie Mullen covers a recent workshop run by the MMO on cuttlefish management which took place as a result of the published Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species FMP, joining fishers groups, suppliers, researchers and Defra to discuss objectives outlined in the FMP and how these may be taken forward. She outlines the interesting issue of distinguishing between the common and elegant cuttlefish and how the MMO are aiming to increase education on species identification.
- A report from IFCO Hester Churchouse covers the newly implemented mid-season Solent Scallop Survey, which was completed in early February. Despite weather related challenges, IFCO Churchouse outlines how the RPT worked with a local scallop fisher to complete the survey and build on the IFCA's dataset for this species to help inform management. Given IFCO Churchouse's work at University on the spawning season for our Solent scallop population, she was pleased to work with this species again in her role as an IFCO.
- Our PO for MPAs, Chelsea Perrins outlines work that she has been doing across MPA workstreams, contributing to the black seabream & shore gathering work as well as building her GIS skills in the development of maps to accompany the Net Fishing Byelaw restrictions in Poole, addressing a request from stakeholders for an easy to understand visual resource. PO Perrins is documenting her GIS learning in how to guides for use by the rest of the team.

### **3.0 Next Steps**

- That Members receive the report.



with DCO Birchenough

## Updates from the RPT Deputy Chief Officer:

### Winter Quarter

The winter quarter for the RPT has involved working on the delivery of our MPA workstreams, understanding the post-publication phase for published frontrunner FMPs and the undertaking of strategic planning for the year ahead including our survey calendar for the year which is exciting.

I am very pleased to welcome two new members of staff to my team who introduce themselves below, both bringing great skills and enthusiasm to our expanding group of Project Officers.

### Welcome to PO William Meredith-Davies

The RPT welcomes PO for Aquaculture William Meredith Davies. Will graduated with a Masters in Aquaculture and Marine Resource Management from Wageningen University in the Netherlands. For his thesis, he investigated mussel mortalities and emerging shellfish diseases. He has also undertaken an aquaculture internship to investigate oyster settlement preferences and worked as an oyster hatchery technician in Scotland. His experiences with the aquaculture sector and its many ecosystem and community benefits have given him a keen interest in the marine environment.

### Welcome to PO Imogen Wright

The RPT also welcomes PO for Fisheries Management Plans Imogen Wright who is taking over the role from Celie Mullen who has become an IFCA.

Imogen joins us after graduating from the University of Exeter where she undertook an integrated Masters in Marine Biology, which involved investigating the impacts of noise pollution on bottlenose dolphins. This interest in human wildlife interactions has led to her interest in the SIFCA PO FMP role and she is excited to expand her work at Southern IFCA.



With Senior IFCO Condie

GIS or 'Geographical Information Systems' creates and manages maps, analyses spatial information and allows the production of engaging and easily understandable outputs.

GIS is an essential tool for our day-to-day work as fisheries regulators, whether that be mapping byelaw relevant areas, the intensity of fishing effort across the district or the location of designated species or habitats.

In February I joined an online course to build on my current GIS skills and learn to use the programme 'R' for spatial analysis. 'R' is a command driven program which differs to my favoured programme 'Q' which is menu driven. Command driven programmes require you to explicitly tell the programme what you want it to do, whereas menu driven provides you with a variety of options to choose from. There are benefits to both and the course allowed plenty of time to experiment with different methods of analysis.

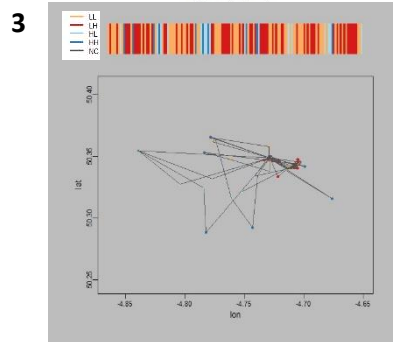
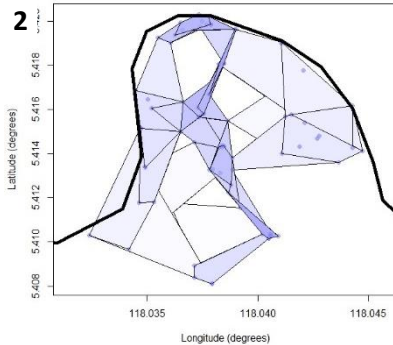
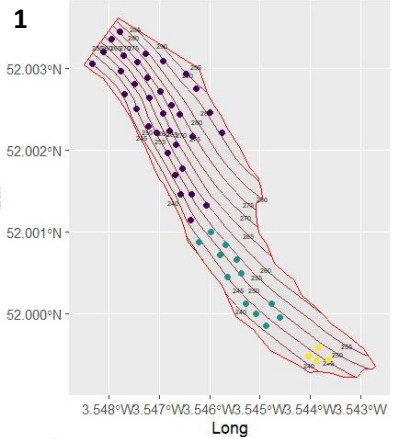
Tasks covered a range of disciplines and included:

1. Visualizing the differences in tree species at elevation and location.
2. Plotting the home range of a species
3. Inferring animal behaviour from GPS tracks

And a variety of others, all of which are applicable to aspects of IFCA work.

Throughout the course there were opportunities to discuss with the providers and other participants how these techniques could be applied to our own work.

The course was incredibly beneficial to growing my skill set and I am looking forward to applying these to new work streams.





Since the publication of the FMPs in December 2023, post-publication discussions have started. Since moving to my IFCO role, Southern IFCA's new PO FMPs, Imogen Wright will act as our representative moving forward to liaise with Defra. However, I am still able to participate in some of the action! I recently attended the MMO's Cuttlefish Management Workshop which was held in Portsmouth on the 15<sup>th</sup> February. A range of representatives from ICES 7d and 7e attended online and in person. This included fishermen from the Lyme Bay CIC, Portsmouth suppliers, local fishermen, researchers, and Defra personnel.

The aim of the round table workshop was to discuss potential management interventions moving forward in the establishment of a Channel management group by June 2024. Various themes were raised including the use of accurate Catch Per Unit Effort data, recruitment success, management of local issues, increases in evidence and the impact of environmental changes such as the increase in electromagnetic frequencies in developing wind farms.

A highlight was the identification of characteristics between both species of cuttlefish, much to everyone's surprise.



*Top photo: the common cuttlefish (Sepia officinalis)*  
*Bottom photo: the elegant cuttlefish (Sepia elegans)*

It was highlighted that the elegant cuttlefish and common cuttlefish species look incredibly similar, and both are often landed under the common cuttlefish code. Therefore, in the next 6 months, the MMO aim to increase education of key differences between the two species. This will allow more accurate landings data to be obtained and this to be reflected in accurate management.

Voluntary guidelines, similar to the Southern IFCA cuttlefish code of practice, are also being considered to protect recruitment of stocks in the inshore.



with IFCO Churchouse

To my delight, the new year has seen me reunited with the Solent scallops, which now fall under my workstream. Following the results of the pre-season Solent Scallop survey in September, we attempted to undertake a mid-season survey to reassess the fishery in late January. However, the weather proved particularly uncooperative for several weeks, preventing the survey from taking place as intended on not one but two occasions. It was with great excitement then that I set out from Camber docks aboard a vessel from the scallop fleet over three days in mid-February.

Given the weather we have experienced so far this year, we were graced with several spells of sun over the survey period, showcasing the Solent at its wintery best. At sites, the team quickly found a sampling rhythm that allowed both fast processing of the scallops and enough time to admire the condition of the occasional scallop or the fauna found attached to it. With both effort from the officers involved and the skipper I am pleased to say we have managed to collect data from all 19 of our sampling sites, which I will be looking to analyse in order to determine current condition of the fishery over the next few weeks.



Purely from visual analysis of the dredges that came up, I would suggest that those sites with previous low CPUE remain in a similar condition, but that across the fishery there is good spread of sizes, with scallops of a width >90mm, 100 – 115mm, and >115mm frequently present in tows.

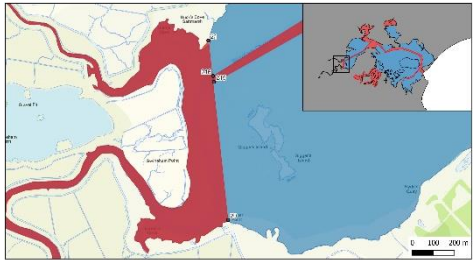
Alongside the preparation and undertaking of this midseason survey, I have also been working to present the data collected in 2023 for the Solent scallop and bivalve surveys in reports, and I am looking forward to our next round of surveys when the dredge fisheries close.



I have been working on multiple workstreams continuing from last year. This includes Black Seabream and Shore Gathering, as well as workstreams from my personal work plan. Alongside these I have also been attending engagement meetings with the Solent Seagrass Network every month.

Continuing on from the literature review for the black seabream review, I have been assisting IFCO Condie with creating maps of spatial data within three MCZs (Purbeck Coast, Poole Rocks, Southbourne Rough). These were presented as visual support to proposed principles at the relevant working group and TAC meetings.

The research and policy team have also been conducting Part A and TLSE assessments for shore gathering. This involves assessing the pressure on each feature within MPAs from shore-based activities. As part of these assessments I have also been working with Senior IFCO Condie summarising this information by listing the features at risk, identifying which MPAs have records for which



Net Fishing Byelaw - River Frome and River Piddle  
Coordinates point on from Net fishing byelaw schedules  
Net Prohibited Area  
Net Restriction Area

*Example GIS map with identifiable landmarks/features for the Net Fishing byelaw boundaries.*

I have also been expanding on my QGIS skills by creating detailed maps featuring identifiable landmarks for the Net Fishing byelaw boundaries (prohibition and restriction areas) in Poole Harbour. These maps, alongside the given coordinates in the byelaw, are to assist users to adhere to regulations by providing a visual reference and were requested by Members of the Poole & District Fishermen’s Association.

I am also working on creating a guide for IFCOs and POs to refer to for GIS projects.