

Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Cllr Paul Fuller, Chair
Pia Bateman, Chief Executive Officer



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Sterte Avenue West
Poole Dorset
BH15 2AA
Tel/Fax 01202 721373

4th March 2026

Dear Member,

MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY

A meeting of the Authority will be held at **Shire Hall Museum, High Street West, Dorchester, DT1 1UY** on **12th March 2026 at 14:00** to discuss the business on the under mentioned Agenda. Please note that a Committee Member Briefing will begin at 13:30 – Members are encouraged to attend.

There are two options for parking, there is parking at the 'Top O' Town' car park located just off Bridport Road (B3150) and The Colliton Car Park located off Colliton Walk, both are an approximate 5-minute walk to the meeting venue.

Members of the public can request to attend the meeting through emailing enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Pia Bateman, CEO

13:30 – 13:50

Committee Members Briefing (No.7).

To receive a 20-minute presentation from Simon Pengelly (Association of IFCAs) on IFCA Community Films

14:00

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 11th December 2025 (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 9th December 2025 (Marked B)

- b) **Technical Advisory Committee** held on 6th November 2025 (Marked C)
- c) **Extraordinary Technical Advisory Committee** held on 4th December 2025 (Marked D)

6. Progress Reports

To consider the following:

- a. **Chief Executive Officer updates.** To receive a verbal report from the CEO.
- b. **Budget Control Statement to January 2026.** To consider a report from the CEO/Accountant (Marked E)

ITEMS FOR DECISION

7. Southern IFCA Annual Strategy 2026-2027

To consider a report from the CEO (Marked F)

8. Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan 2026-2027

To consider a report from Principal DCO Dell (Marked G)

9. Research & Policy Team Plan 2026-2027

To consider a report from DCO Birchenough (Marked H)

EXTERNAL SPEAKER

10. Coasts in Mind: 100 Years of change in Poole Harbour

To receive a presentation Mr Oliver Hutchinson, Project Officer for Coasts in Mind Dorset.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

11. Compliance and Enforcement Report

To receive a report from PDCO Dell (Marked I)

12. Community Engagement – Black Sea Bream

To receive an update from DCO Birchenough.

13. Behind the Scenes

To receive staff reports from the Compliance & Enforcement, Research & Policy and Business Services Teams (Marked J)

14. Marine Licensing

To receive a quarterly update from IFCO Churchouse (Marked K)

15. Sector Group Meetings

To receive the minutes from recent meetings of The South Coast Fishermen's Council and the Recreational Angling Sector Group (Marked L-M)

16. AIFCA Draft Annual Delivery Plan 2026-2027

To receive the draft plan prepared by Rob Clark, Chief Officer, AIFCA (Marked N)

17. Date of Next Meeting

To confirm the date of the next Authority meeting on the 11th of June 2026 at the Winchester Hotel & Spa, Worthy Lane, SO23 7AB.

Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Full Authority Meeting – 11th December 2025

A meeting of the Full Authority was held at 2pm on 11th December 2025 at The RNLI College, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1NZ.

Present

Cllr. Paul Fuller	Isle of Wight Council (Chairman)
Cllr. Rob Hughes	Dorset Council (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. Kate Wheller	Dorset Council
Cllr. Crispin Goodall	BCP Council
Cllr. Peter Miles	BCP Council
Cllr. Lance Quantrill	Hampshire County Council
Cllr. Rod Cooper	Hampshire County Council
Cllr. Matthew Winnington	Portsmouth City Council
Dr Antony Jensen	MMO Appointee
Mr Richard Stride	MMO Appointee
Dr Heidi Guille	MMO Appointee
Dr Simon Cripss	MMO Appointee
Ms Elisabeth Bussey-Jones	MMO Appointee
Mr Gary Wordsworth	MMO Appointee
Dr Richard Morgan	Natural England
Mr Stuart Kingston-Turner	Environment Agency
Ms Rachel Irish	Marine Management Organisation
Ms Pia Bateman	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Mr Sam Dell	Principal Deputy Chief Officer (PDCO)
Dr Sarah Birchenough	Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)
Mrs Jennifer Carr	Chartered Accountant
Ms June Furlonger	Facilities & Administration Officer

Mr Rob Milton (incoming General Member) and Ms Louise MacCallum (Blue Marine Foundation) attended in the public gallery.

Apologies

30. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. John Savage (Southampton City Council), Mr Neil Hornby (MMO Appointee), Mr Mark Cornwell (MMO Appointee) and Mr Colin Francis (MMO Appointee).

Declarations of Interest

31. The following non-pecuniary interests were declared: Dr Richard Morgan (Agenda Item 6b). Mr R Stride declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6b.

Minutes

32. Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on the 18th September 2025.

The Executive Sub-Committee provided an update on Recommendation 15: that the Executive Sub-Committee had written to the AIFCA on behalf of the Authority requesting information on the use of Southern IFCA's subscriptions as well as clarity on the role and funding of the

Communications and Engagement Officer. It was outlined that further information on the AIFCA response was provided as Agenda Item K.

Members discussed the Local Authority Annual Reports and whether producing these provided benefit against resource requirements. The CEO outlined that the Local Authority Reports were created to provide a greater breakdown of Southern IFCA's delivery across the District to provide context to budgetary discussions and as a positive and helpful tool for coastal engagement by Officers. The CEO stated that the Local Authority Reports had been well received by the Local Authorities and were supporting community engagement. The Chairman stated that the reports were very useful for Local Authorities, particularly in a challenging financial climate and thanked the CEO and Officers for their work to provide information to the wider community.

Chairman's Announcements

33. The Chairman reflected on the Community Drop-In Surgeries held on the Isle of Wight and the positive opportunity provided to engage with the community and speak face to face with those working in local fisheries. The Chairman highlighted one of the issues raised being the costs associated with ferry travel to deliver catch to the mainland. The Chairman stated that the Community Drop-In Surgery initiative was providing great benefits for stakeholder engagement across the District.

The Chairman spoke on the appointment of Ms Emily Bulled as the new Communications and Engagement Officer at AIFCA, stating that it was hoped that this position would enable the profile of IFCAs to be raised nationally and that it was the intention to invite Ms E Bulled to a future meeting of the Full Authority.

Sub-Committees

34. Members received minutes of the Executive Sub-Committee held on 16th September 2025, the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee held on 21st August 2025 and an Extraordinary Meeting of the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee held on 20th October 2025.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Chief Executive Officer Updates

35. The CEO reflected that the last quarter had been a very busy time with two Extraordinary TAC Meetings to resolve workstreams for the Solent Scallop Fishery and the Black Seabream Review, noting that both these items would be covered in later Agenda Items. The CEO stated that both pressured timeframes for fisheries opening and the level of technical expertise required by the Team to deliver the work had increased pressures in delivery but that she was extremely proud of the Team for their delivery in recent weeks and across 2025 as a whole. The CEO also thanked the General Members for their flexibility in not just attending Extraordinary meetings but in preparing for these, reflecting that this work could not be achieved without their dedication and input.

The CEO informed Members that Southern IFCA have been recognised for a National Award, being awarded the MSC Ocean Leadership Award at the 2025 Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) UK Awards in November for Southern IFCA's innovative use of drones in the MSC Certified Poole Harbour Clam & Cockle Fishery. The CEO informed Members that the MSC had recognised that, by integrating drones into fisheries management back in 2022, Southern IFCA can ensure that Poole Harbour's Clam & Cockle Fishery continues to meet the highest sustainability standards set by the MSC. The CEO quoted the MSC '*The prestigious national award recognises Southern IFCA's commitment to sustainable fishing and leadership in advancing conservation and the future of our seas. It provides a blueprint for well-managed fisheries worldwide*', stating that the fishery and Authority should be proud of this achievement, building on years of governance in this fishery. The CEO stated that she and PDCO Dell had collected the award on behalf of Officers and Members at the ceremony in Edinburgh, reflecting in the acceptance speech on the hard work, collaboration and innovation shown by everyone

involved in the fishery, as represented by the Poole & District Fishermen's Association and how innovative and carefully considered fisheries management can support both conservation and communities alike. The CEO reflected that the decisions made by the Authority, both technical and budgetary, facilitate Southern IFCA's ongoing delivery of function and that this is recognition of this work at a national level.

The CEO informed Members that there had been recent confirmation of Southern IFCA receiving the remaining £80k of funding from Defra for the current Financial year, the first £50k having been received towards the beginning of the Financial Year. The CEO outlined that this is the last year that Defra have committed to provide funding for Fisheries Management Plan (FMP), Marine Protected Area (MPA) and Marine Consents work. The CEO stated that year on year, due to uncertainty in timing and lack of confidence in receipt that a buffer has been maintained in reserves to honour existing Project Officer contracts in the event that Defra funding during the agreed period had not been forthcoming. The CEO stated that this year there has been a reduction in this funding from £150k to £130k which is out of Southern IFCA's control.

The CEO continued in relation to Defra funding, outlining that in recent weeks, the Spending Review 2026-2029 submission, prepared jointly by the Chief Officers Group and the AIFCA, had been submitted, setting out the funding requirements for IFCAs to meet their statutory duties and deliver national fisheries and environmental policy effectively over the period 2026/27 to 2028/29. The CEO informed Members that the bid was annexed in Agenda Item K and makes a strong evidence-based case for restoring real-term funding levels, investing in digital systems, strengthening the capacity for FMP and MPA delivery, and modernising vessels and equipment. The CEO outlined that Defra will now consider this as part of its wider departmental Spending Review process and that decisions by HM Treasury are expected in late 2025, with allocations to be confirmed in early 2026. The CEO stated it was unlikely that the IFCAs would hear the outcomes of this process before autumn 2026. The CEO outlined key points from the submission and stated that whilst remaining optimistic, there is an awareness of government departments needing to find savings. Similar bids have been made in the past and there has not been a change to the IFCA funding model to date, noting that the AIFCA are doing an excellent job to maintain communication with Defra in relation to this work.

The CEO spoke on Members governance, noting that Mr Neil Hornby (MMO Appointee) would return at the February TAC meeting following a secondment to CEO of the Rural Payments Agency from Cefas. Mr N Hornby has extended his tenure as a General Member. The CEO reflected on the meeting being the last Authority meeting for General Member Mr Gary Wordsworth, and that Mr Rob Milton would be joining the Authority as a General Member in the New Year. Mr R Milton is the Farm Manager for Othniel Oysters, working alongside Mr G Wordsworth for many years. The CEO thanked Mr Wordsworth for his service to the Authority, this was echoed by the Members. The CEO outlined that Members Annual Appraisals forms would shortly be sent to the MMO and thanked all Members for considering and approving comments.

The CEO informed Members that the Community Drop-In Surgery held on the Isle of Wight had been very productive, with the CEO and PDCO joined by Dr A Jensen as Chairman of the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee and Cllr. P Fuller as Chairman of the Authority. Visits were made to Yarmouth, Freshwater, Ventnor and Bembridge and received an excellent turnout. Matters raised by industry included the Solent Scallop Fishery, with early indications appearing positive in relation to stock availability, the impact of recreational sea angling on bass fisheries in the Solent, transport challenges associated with getting fish to market, which is a particular challenge for fishers on the Isle of Wight, general concerns regarding lack of opportunity and diversification in what is perceived as a dying industry, fishers in Ventnor hoping to see changes in tuna fishery opportunities from Defra and the reality of climate change on fish stocks, particularly crab.

The CEO commented that Southern IFCA is now approaching the end of the first cycle of Community Drop-In Surgeries, with a penultimate session planned for Poole and Mudeford and

the final Surgeries taking place in Warsash and Portsmouth, both of which will be timetabled before the end of the Financial Year. The CEO encouraged Elected Members to get involved with the initiative, with Cllrs from the upcoming Surgery areas welcome to attend and get a sense of the work that is done amongst constituents. The CEO outlined that a report following the programme will subsequently be brought to the Authority.

The CEO expressed thanks to Cllr. C Goodall for an invite to attend a BCP Council meeting, specifically the Environment and Overview Scrutiny Board, to present on the IFCA function, focussing on work achieved in the BCP area on behalf of the Council. This builds on an initiative shared at the previous Authority meeting, routed in challenging levy discussions, to assist in providing Elected Members with more information on the IFCA's function within their respective remits, as a statutory service provider delivering on the Councils' behalf. The CEO stated that following the December 2024 meeting, methods of demonstrating clearly how Southern IFCA are delivering specific to each Local Authority had been explored, with a report on the outcome of this work and the resulting Local Authority Reports delivered at the September Authority meeting where the initiative was well received. Following this meeting the Local Authority Reports were sent to each of the relevant Council leads, Council Financial Officers and other relevant persons, with the CEO taking the opportunity to seek invites to each of the Councils or relevant committees to discuss the work of the IFCA further. The CEO outlined that copies of the relevant Local Authority Report had been made available for each Elected Members at this meeting.

The CEO informed Members that a revised Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) had recently been introduced by Government, noting that the 2023 revision had required a realignment of some work streams to ensure that Southern IFCA was delivery MPA management for the District in a timely fashion to support Government with 30x30 objectives. The CEO outlined that the EIP 2025 would be considered in terms of impact on strategic delivery in line with the drafting of the Annual Strategy for 2026-2027.

The CEO outlined that Defra are running several workshops focussing on the Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund, inviting input on how this fund couple be spent running up to the 2030 Financial Year. Anyone interested in attending can sign up via the Defra website. As outlined in the recent budget in Westminster, allocation of funding will not commence until 2026-2027 with an initial £25m spend from the fund. The overall fund is set at £360m with a purpose to support the UK fishing industry and coastal communities via investment in fleet modernisation, skills and training, community infrastructure and boosting seafood exports and trade. Defra are keen to get wider ranging stakeholder input into this process.

Cllr. R Hughes queried how many IFCAs are using drone technology, PDCO Dell outlined that 5 IFCAs are currently using drones with Southern IFCA the second to introduce the use of this technology. Members expressed that they were pleased Southern IFCA had been recognised for an award and thanked those involved in carrying out the work. Dr S Cripps raised that the Poole Harbour Clam & Cockle Fishery had been a very high scoring fishery under the MSC Standard which was very positive.

Mr R Stride informed Members that for engagement on the Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund there were meetings planned in Mudeford and Poole in the coming week.

Cllr. K Wheller commented that Southern IFCA and IFCA's in general are doing very good work, along with the relevant businesses along the coast but that this is not widely known and that any methods for further promoting this work would be very beneficial and enable a wider understanding by more elements of the community. The Chairman reflected that the appointment of Ms E Bulled at AIFCA should assist with this and support all the work that Southern IFCA is already doing to try and promote the good work being done in fisheries along the coast. Members discussed positive outputs from communications that were already being developed by AIFCA. The Chairman encouraged all Elected Members to promote the work of Southern IFCA.

Black Seabream Management Package

36. DCO Birchenough provided an update to Members on the development of the Black Seabream Management Package which collectively seeks to demonstrate how Southern IFCA are achieving two parallel Policy Objectives to fulfil legal duties in relation to three Dorset Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) to support sustainable fisheries for black seabream.

DCO Birchenough outlined that, in developing Southern IFCA's understanding of the brief to inform decision making for black seabream management in the three Dorset MCZs, encompassing the route of designation, the relevant Conservation Objectives (COs) and exploring early stages of policy development, founded upon the requirements under Section (154) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the Black Seabream review was split into two parallel streams of work, each having independent Policy Objectives and legislative underpinnings.

DCO Birchenough gave an overview of each Policy Objective and how each had been satisfied, the Primary Policy Objective through a combination of existing statutory measures and the Secondary Policy Objective through the Co-Developed Principles, which were co-developed with the Dorset Community, and underpinned by a series of Policy Drivers and Headline Objectives. DCO Birchenough outlined the Co-Developed Principles and how they would be applied and gave Members an overview of the policy and supporting documents which underpinned the development of the Black Seabream Management Package.

DCO Birchenough informed Members that the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee had considered recommendations relating to the delivery of the Primary and Secondary Policy Objectives at an Extraordinary Meeting on the TAC on 4th December 2025 and had resolved that Southern IFCA's duties under Section (154) of MaCAA to further the Conservation Objectives for black seabream in the three Dorset MCZs had been met through a combination of existing statutory measures and to introduce the Co-Developed Principles from 1st April 2026 to improve understandings of black seabream across the three Dorset MCZs and complement statutory measures.

DCO Birchenough stated that the year 1 delivery of the Co-Developed Principles would focus on engagement, raising awareness and seeking compliance. Southern IFCA recognises that BSB fisheries are data poor, as such an adaptive management approach, as facilitated under the Secondary Policy Objective, allows Southern IFCA to robustly respond to BAE in a timely way to ensure the future sustainability of the fisheries in Dorset. DCO Birchenough outlined that a defined review process is set out in the policy document; Process Document 3 – Management Tools, Application & Review and it is intended that the first annual review be commenced post 31st July 2026 in line with the defined process. The Policy and supporting documentation under the Black Seabream Management Package will be made available via the Southern IFCA website.

DCO Birchenough expressed thanks to the Dorset Community for their support and participation in the co-development of management under the Secondary Policy Objective noting the level of engagement and expertise provided across all sectors had been instrumental in shaping appropriate and proportionate management for sustainable black seabream fisheries.

Solent Scallop Fishery

37. PDCO Dell informed Members that following a review of management for the Solent Scallop Fishery under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw Category A Permits, the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee had resolved, at an Extraordinary Meeting of the TAC on 20th October 2025, to reduce the daily time period during which Permit Holders are permitted to fish for scallop by two hours, from 08:00-16:00 to 08:00-14:00.

PDCO Dell stated that Officers had been working hard operationally to ensure engage with Permit Holders and ensure compliance with the change in permit conditions and with other

regulations within that fishery. PDCO Dell outlined that, as of 7th December 2025, the Team had carried out 15 patrols with a low level of non-compliance being addressed.

PDCO Dell informed Members that since the opening of the fishery on 1st November 2025, Officers have observed good catches of scallops being caught and landed by Permit Holder, including one under 10m vessel observed landing just short of 1 tonne of scallop in the first week. PDCO Dell outlined that catch return data will be analysed for the first month of the season following the submission date on 14th December 2025.

PDCO Dell stated that the industry on the whole has been receptive to the changes made by the Authority in the management of this fishery. PDCO Dell commented that he had been out on FPV Vigilant and had engaged with five Permit Holders directly, discussing the economic importance of the fishery. He commented that it was very positive to see an active inshore fleet and busy local ports as a result of the fishery opening.

Dr S Cripps queried how the change in permit conditions had been received by permitted fishers. It was discussed that overall, the majority of permit holders had received the change well and understood the Authority's rationale for intervention. It was discussed that some permit holders have raised concerns but that this is not uncommon when changes to management are introduced but that there have been positive outputs seen at the start of the 2025/26 fishing season and coastal engagement in this fishery has been largely positive.

Cllr M Winnington stated that it was encouraging that the positive engagement seen through the consultation on changes to management was continuing as the fishing season opened and emphasised the importance of appropriate management to allow for sustainable fisheries. The Chairman echoed this, stating that consultation with the fishing industry and understanding how they wish to input into consultations is a key element of management development, and encouraged Councillors on the Authority to be involved with this process where possible.

Budget Control Statement to September 2025

38. The CEO confirmed that the BCS captured the period 1st April to 30th September 2025, and that the accompanying paperwork provided a summary of major budget headers as well as more detailed notes to provide an understanding of all positive and negative variance equal to or greater than 1k.

The CEO summarised that the BCS shows a deficit of c.56k, and the annex to the report summarises the narrative of positive or negative variance greater than 1k in addition to contextual notes. The CEO outlined that there is a positive variance in all Major Budget Headers, the deficit arising from awaiting provision of funding from Defra for delivering project works on their behalf.

The CEO provided a summary of the Major Budget Headers, outlining that the positive variance captured under the Compliance and Enforcement Header (c.20k) represents c.6k of savings on FPV fuel and c.2k maintenance costs, relating to operational prioritisation during the two quarters, seeing increased use of the drone and FPV Endeavour to align with the PHDP season. This is likely to even out over the course of the FY. The CEO outlined that PPE cost savings (c.3k) are also likely to even out during the FY. A c.2k payment to the MMO for access to a National Intelligence System (CLUE) is anticipated imminently. The CEO stated that at this stage of the FY, c.5k of savings are seen under the Prosecutions header, with these costs being unpredictable and likely to even out over the course of the FY.

The CEO outlined that the positive variance captured under the Research & Policy Header (c.14k) relates mainly to no costs being incurred to date for Byelaw advertisement or legal support (c.5.5k) and c.2k for the Drift Net Project, costs which may be incurred later in the FY, subject to community uptake. The CEO outlined that c.1k is being held prior to reserve transfer for monies received from PHDP holders for costs associated with the offset of MSC Certification

fees for the fishery (to reimburse monies that were paid upfront by Southern IFCA previously). The CEO stated that money (c.2k) ringfenced for Solent Scallop Research remains dependent on another IFCA providing training and that an invoice for works associated with the Solent Bivalve stock assessment are pending (c.2k).

The CEO discussed the positive variance captured under the Business Services Header (c.32k) being due to a reduction in staff salary and pension contributions (c.15k) as a result of one IFCO embarking on a sabbatical for the first four months of the FY, as well as the resignation of the Office Manager in June 2025 and Senior Research & Policy IFCO in August. The CEO stated that costs associated with staff training (c.16k) will be realised later in the year (Q4) and that increased and unforeseen costs associated with insurance premiums across the entirety of the business (c.4k) have been incurred as a reflection of increased costs for services.

The CEO outlined that the positive variance under the Capital Equipment Header (c.15k) is due to savings in depreciation on FPV Protector, with the FPV budgeted to be replaced in Q1 with a cost of £120k resulting in higher depreciation in the budget. The CEO stated that this replacement has been delayed, initially due to delays experienced in delivery of FPV Vigilant and the undertaking of an operational needs analysis, plus, more recently in order to await the outcomes of the 2026-2029 AIFCA Spending Review bid.

The CEO summarised that the deficit in projected income of c.137k reflects the outstanding payment of project funding from Defra, c.90k, in addition to c.50k which relates to the potential sale of FPV Protector, budgeted for prior to experiencing delays in procurement and delivery of FPV Vigilant. The CEO outlined that the sale may not be completed in the current FY. The CEO stated that an amount c.4.5k relates to the anticipated issuing of commercial and recreational permits under the Pot Fishing Byelaw, the Byelaw remaining with the MMO quality assurance team. The CEO stated that the delay is likely due to the national delivery of FMPs and Tranche 1 outcomes. In addition, the BCP Shellfish Sampling contract (c.3.5k) will be realised later in the FY.

Cllr. K Wheller thanked the CEO and Mrs Jennifer Carr for their efficient management of a small budget and that considering all the work delivered by Southern IFCA the deficit could be larger if the budget was not managed as well. Cllr. R Hughes seconded this and added his thanks.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

Budget Forecast 2026-2027

39. The CEO outlined that the budget forecast is designed to enable the delivery of Southern IFCA's statutory functions in accordance with relevant legislation including the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the Conservation Regulations, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and The Poole Harbour Fishery Order 2015 to manage aquaculture in Poole Harbour.

The CEO directed Members to Annex 1 to the report, the Background to Budget Forecasting 2026-2027 which details each of the budget setting components, the key areas of work that Southern IFCA are required to deliver in the coming year. In addition, unknown variables are detailed which have been considered when presenting the budget forecast, details of cost savings which are being taken into the next Financial Year and details of the Reserves and how these will be used in the coming Financial Year.

The CEO stated that a key point is that no new works or projects are proposed for the coming Financial Year. The budget presented considers costs associated with maintaining delivery of Southern IFCA's function only.

The CEO provided details of each of the primary elements that informed the budget setting, across Research & Policy functions, Compliance & Enforcement functions and Business Services functions.

For Research & Policy, the proposed budget enables the continued collection of data and undertaking of surveys under the annual monitoring programme to ensure that best available evidence continues to be used to inform the development of and review of management to ensure management remains fit for purpose. This function also includes the delivery of MPA management in accordance with Government targets, anticipating work in 2026-2027 on the annual review of Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles and annual reviews under relevant permit byelaws.

For Compliance & Enforcement there is a need to deliver ongoing compliance and enforcement functions across 24 byelaws and 7 codes of practice plus the addition of ensuring compliance with the Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles and the pending Shore Gathering Byelaw and Pot Fishing Byelaw at the point of ratification. This function also includes the delivery of a compliance and enforcement function of all other relevant legislation to ensure protection and enhancement of fisheries and the marine environment, supporting delivery partners such as the MMO where applicable. The function captures ongoing costs associated with operational assets, staff training and PPE as well as maintaining fiscal capacity to progress prosecutions of fisheries offences in accordance with the Compliance & Enforcement Framework and capability with national systems such as CLUE.

For Business Services, the function covers the maintaining of core permanent staffing levels in accordance with the 2025/26 footprint and providing pay increases to all employees in accordance with the NJC Pay Award, as set out in employee contracts. This function includes a need to maintain the office environment, ensuring adequate insurances are in place across the business, vehicle fleet management, ongoing scrutiny of public money via appropriate governance channels including accountant services and external financial auditing costs and annual subscription to the AIFCA, recognising the essential role it fulfils as an umbrella body to the 10 IFCA's in a national capacity. In addition, the function recognises the growing demands associated with responding to GDPR requests within recognised legislative timeframes.

The CEO emphasised that these primary elements represent the Southern IFCA's core functions and are tasks which simply allow Southern IFCA to provide its statutory delivery. The CEO outlined that if Southern IFCA are unable to fund any of these primary elements, then there would be an impact to the ability for Southern IFCA to deliver its legal functions.

The CEO outlined that the core functions had been split out from additional functions, the former being Local Authority funded, the latter being funded by Defra and that these additional functions do not have any impact or bearing on the Local Authority levy. The CEO stated that Local Authorities are legally required to fund the delivery of Southern IFCA's core functions and defray costs, with Southern IFCA being a service provider to the Local Authorities.

The CEO detailed unknown variables including the level of levy contributions and the outcomes of the Defra 2026-2029 Spending Review bid, which will not be known until autumn 2026, noting that the current IFCA funding model has been fixed since 2011 and has not recognised inflation or increasing demands on IFCA's during this time. The third unknown variable is the rate of inflation, expected to settle at around 2% towards the end of the 2026/27 Financial Year, noting that inflation has not been considered in the budget setting and the final figures presented in the forecast do not consider the rising costs of services.

The CEO outlined the funding pots that Southern IFCA can draw from, including the annual levies and the reserves, with the intended use of the reserves for 2026/27 mapped out. The CEO stated that the General Reserve, which is the reserve not linked to specific projects/works, is anticipated to reduce by nearly half when comparing year end 24/25 to anticipated year end 26/27. The CEO stated that the reserves are well managed through a robust Reserves Policy to ensure maintained viability but that the reserves are actively needing to be used to fund business as usual in addition to seeking levy increases from the Local Authorities.

The CEO outlined that, prior to inflationary projections, assuming a standstill (0%) in levy contributions, the budget forecast anticipates a loss of c.£323k for the Financial Year 2026-2027.

The CEO discussed the savings that are projected to be achieved, including through staff salaries and associated costs by holding the position of a Senior IFCO in the Research & Policy Team and a vacancy in the position for an Office Manager. Projected savings are also expected due to delaying the sale of FPV Protector and associated depreciation and also greater budget accuracy based on actuals rather than projections for FPV Vigilant. Combined savings equate to c.66k.

In order to meet the costs associated with operations, and to meet Southern IFCA's statutory duties, recognising the extreme financial pressures that the Local Authorities are under and anticipating a future position from Defra on potential changes to the IFCA funding model, to reduce the anticipated deficit, the CEO outlined that it is proposed that c.£277k of the deficit is met by the Southern IFCA reserves, the majority of which is sourced from the remaining Defra funding pot, a possibility due to responsible management of this funding over time.

The CEO outlined therefore that, prior to inflationary projections, assuming a standstill (0%) in levy contributions, and following the reserve adjustments, the budget forecast anticipates a loss of c.£45k for the Financial Year 2026-2027.

The CEO advised Members that the budget forecast was not extravagant, in the fact that Southern IFCA were not seeking to look at introducing new projects, nor to employ new members of staff and increase our footprint or procure new assets. Rather simply trying to ensure we can maintain delivery of our statutory function and in doing so trying to offset some of our growing costs associated with the fragile economic climate, making small financial gains where possible, recognising economies of scale.

Cllr. M Winnington thanked the CEO and Ms Jennifer Carr for putting the budget forecast together. Cllr. Winnington commented on the concern associated with needing to use reserves to support continued delivery on statutory function and that the Government were not recognising the need for increased funding to support this delivery. Cllr. Winnington stated that prudent management by Southern IFCA had enabled the proposed budget forecast and continued delivery of function but that this could not be maintained in the long term without increased funding support from Government, recognising the complexity of the marine environment in which Southern IFCA operates. Cllr. Winnington stated that the budget forecast should be endorsed by Members.

Cllr. R Cooper recognised the good work delivered by Southern IFCA. Cllr. Cooper stated that following discussion with the Executive Portfolio Holder and Council Officers, whether it was an appropriate time for the Southern IFCA to be subject to an external peer review to determine if there any changes that could be made to save further costs. Cllr. Cooper reflected on the difficult financial position for all councils and that Hampshire Council had undergone this process. The CEO stated that all IFCAs are independently reviewed by Defra every four years. Cllr. Cooper suggested that a commercial body may be able to offer additional advice in this regard.

Members discussed this point, noting that there would be a cost implication for such a service and also that in the determination that Southern IFCA was currently operating well and prudently in its delivery and financial management it would be difficult for an outside body to provide any further input. It was discussed that Southern IFCA also have built in peer review processes within the organisation in terms of technical output through partner organisations including the MMO, NE and the EA.

Cllr. K Wheller encouraged Elected Members to approach relevant coastal MPs and asking for support for Southern IFCA in lobbying the relevant department of Government to emphasise the need for appropriate funding.

Cllr. R Hughes commented on the use of the General Reserve to help meet the projected deficit and the concerns over whether the Southern IFCA could respond in an emerging situation, for example if a new patrol vessel was unexpectedly needed to support function, which may not be possible if the General Reserve is diluted too much.

Dr S Cripps commented on Southern IFCA's operational delivery being efficient and effective for fisheries which are important locally but also at regional and national scales such as bivalve production and raised concerns over limiting the ability to mitigate risk if reserves are reduced. Dr Cripps also reflected on the importance of the compliance and enforcement function and that effective enforcement in the marine environment is also intrinsically linked to the terrestrial environment. Dr Cripps further commented on the importance of food security and that this only comes from appropriate management within the marine sector and finally, detailed figures relating to rates increases for Hampshire Council and resulting budgets which suggested that financial support is available but that it comes down to whether councils support the delivery by Southern IFCA as a priority financially alongside all other priority services. Cllr R. Cooper provided further detail in relation to the rates increase and how this had to be spent within Hampshire Council, noting that Hampshire Council is needing to use reserves to ensure a balanced budget for 2026-2027 and that savings are being sought each year.

Ms E Bussey-Jones supported that the budget forecast showed prudent and responsible financial management which has already considered cost savings and how delivery can be maintained.

Cllr. P Fuller proposed the recommendation, seconded by Cllr. R Hughes. Fifteen Members voted in favour, Cllr. R Cooper and Cllr. L Quantrill abstained.

Resolved

40. That Members of the Authority approve the principles informing the Budget Forecast for the Financial Year 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027.

Levy Contributions 2026-2027

41. The CEO outlined that, in accordance with the Agenda Item report, a levy increase is being sought for the 2026-2027 Financial Year of 5.04%.

The CEO stated that the proposed increase is not an inflationary adjustment but a targeted and well-considered proposal which has been carefully considered over time and is put forward to address the operational deficit, namely the Southern IFCA's ability to deliver its statutory function across inshore fisheries and conservation for the constituent councils to which Southern IFCA provide a service on their behalf.

The CEO referenced the discussion under the previous Agenda Item, reminding Members that the budget forecast does not include inflationary adjustments and that, if it did, the deficit would be greater. The CEO outlined financial pressures that Southern IFCA are facing outside of inflation, including reduced revenue levels, specifically the loss of Defra project funding, and sustained service demands and that as a result Southern IFCA are operating with a deficit that cannot responsibly be carried forward.

The CEO reminded Members of the proposal to reduce the deficit using reserves, reducing the deficit by 86% to £45k which correlates with the recommendation to increase the levy contributions by 5.04%, representing the minimum amount necessary to restore a degree of balance to the budget. The CEO outlined the financial analysis had shown that anything less would impact the Southern IFCA's ability to deliver statutory obligations and would require reductions over time that would compromise service quality and long-term sustainability.

The CEO detailed that steps had been taken to control costs and increase efficiencies, a process which has been ongoing for several years as reported annually, and that for the Financial Year 2026-2027 combined savings across all major budget headers equated to c.£66k. These measures alone are not sufficient to address the deficit, and the proposed levy increase is about stabilising Southern IFCA's budget, not expanding it or adjusting for inflation, to ensure that the organisation can continue to operate sustainably.

The CEO informed Members that due to the size of the organisation there is limited resilience and Southern IFCA are being as cost effective as possible. The CEO reflected that the current staff footprint is smaller than that required and that, in the absence of the key roles of an Office Manager and Senior IFCO for Research & Policy, there are pressures on the staff body to address additional tasks which is not sustainable. In addition, a legacy plumbing issue in the Office remains ongoing since the procurement of the office and impacts facilities availability for stakeholders and Members, noting that this was not included in the budget forecast but will be taken from reserves, demonstrating Southern IFCA is continuing to actively draw on reserves to maintain function. The CEO stated that operationally, two key asset replacements have been put on hold, the replacement of FPV Protector and the replacement of the drone, both of which will be maintained.

The CEO outlined that in-year, challenging decisions are needing to be made, communicated through a risk evaluation to the Executive Sub-Committee, to seek to minimise the cost of running the organisation and balancing that with the need to ensure delivery. This process is reducing the level of financial impact that Local Authorities are seeing through the levy setting. The CEO stated that the proposed levy increase has been carefully considered with all other options to reduce the figure exhausted, the 5.04% takes into account the financial health of the constituent Local Authorities and represents a fair and collectively responsible approach which is not excessive and, if not addressed, risks compounded effects and increased challenges in the coming years, that will impact service delivery and the communities Southern IFCA serve.

The CEO stated that as Southern IFCA are delivering a service on behalf of the Local Authorities, an inability to deliver that service means that the Local Authorities are also not delivering statutory functions. The CEO described the breakdown of £45k between the six Local Authorities, ranging from a £2k increase for Southampton Council to £18k for Hampshire Council, and provided further detail on the associated monthly and daily cost breakdowns, relating these to the relevant Local Authorities wider budgets. The CEO requested that Elected Members consider the proposed levy increase.

Cllr. C Goodall commented that the Authority should not allow for the situation to become worse as the ability to recover becomes harder. Cllr. Goodall also commented that the fishing industry, which brings revenue into the local Council areas, should not be impacted and on that basis would support the proposed increase.

Cllr. R Cooper stated that he would be unable to support an increase of 5.04%, stating that Hampshire Council is in a difficult financial situation and that the maximum that could be supported would be a 2% increase.

The Chairman asked what the implications would be on a 2% increase for delivery of function and the reserves. The CEO outlined that a 2% increase would be an additional £18k across the six Local Authorities, which would not cover the deficit and would require considerations related to the staff footprint and also a decrease in patrol capacity across the District. The Chairman commented that this would mean the Southern IFCA would struggle to fulfil its statutory duties.

Cllr. M Winnington stated that he supported a 5.04% increase on the basis that IFCA's are suffering from a lack of support in delivery of services from Government due to inadequate funding, and that this means alternative sources of funding are required to be used. In considering delivery of statutory functions on behalf of the Local Authorities, Cllr. Winnington

expressed that it was right that the Local Authorities support the IFCA and encouraged other Elected Members from Hampshire Council to support the proposed increase.

Cllr. R Hughes commented that Dorset Council would support the proposed increase of 5.04% due to the limited impact on a cost per day basis and the requirements to support the delivery of this statutory work, with Government providing funds to the Local Authorities for this purpose. Cllr. Hughes commented that a proposal for a larger increase should be on the table rather than using the reserves, which Dorset Council would also support.

Cllr. P Miles thanked the CEO and Ms Jennifer Carr for their prudent financial management and stated he would support the increase of 5.04% as the funds are being well spent.

Cllr P. Fuller invited Members to consider the first recommendation of a 5.04% increase on levy payments. Cllr. R Hughes proposed the increase, which was seconded by Cllr. P Miles. Cllr P. Fuller, Cllr. K Wheller, Cllr. Crispin Goodall and Cllr. M Winnington were in favour. Cllr. R Cooper and Cllr. L Quantrill voted against the proposal. As the majority voted for the increase, the proposal stood.

Resolved

42. That Elected Members of the Authority approve that Southern IFCA's six constituent Local Authorities are levied for the Financial Year 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027, at a rate of 5.04%, which equates to an increase of c.45k, split between the 6 x Local Authorities in accordance with a prescribed formula.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Solent Seascapes project Update

43. Ms Louise MacCallum, Solent Project Manager at Blue Marine Foundation, presented to Members on The Solent Seascapes Project, a collaborative long-term initiative working to restore multiple habitats across the Solent strait as a diverse estuarine system. Ms MacCallum presented on the five key aims of the Solent Seascape Project and how actions are being delivered under each, including seeking to actively restore four key habitats to revive a functioning, thriving and abundant Solent seascape: seagrass, saltmarsh, seabird nesting sites and oyster reefs. Ms MacCallum outlined how the community were playing a role in the delivery of this project and highlighted particular initiatives such as Songs from the Solent, which is the development of a new album by Grammy-nominated singer and songwriter Richard Walters as part of his Artist Residency with the project. Songs from the Solent is a unique musical celebration of the region's habitats, wildlife and communities, inspired by the environments the project is working to protect and will be available to download soon. Ms MacCallum reflected on the good work that the project has achieved to date and provided an overview of upcoming works.

More information on the Solent Seascapes Project can be found online here - <https://solentseascape.com/>.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Compliance and Enforcement Report

44. PDCO Dell provided an overview of the work undertaken by the Compliance and Enforcement Team for the reporting period August to October 2025. The data provided in the report is aligned to national IFCA metrics that are reported to the AIFCA and Defra on an annual basis, in addition to the provision of district specific metrics which capture how the CET's work is working to deliver the Southern IFCA Annual Strategy 2025-2026.

PDCO reflected on key activity during the period, including in the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit fishery, the Bass fishery, and recreational fishing and shellfish gathering.

Dr S Cripps commented that the service which had been provided to stakeholders to enable the uploading of spatial BTFG management areas onto vessel plotters was very good and requested that Members receive further information on this at a later stage. Ms E Bussey-Jones echoed this and stated it was similar to the initiative under development to introduce a Google maps tool for Southern IFCA spatial management. PDCO Dell commented that the two tools were different but delivered a similar approach, the work with stakeholders for BTFG has been tailored around the navigational equipment used on fishing vessels.

Behind the Scenes

45. A Behind the Scenes report was provided by all staff at Southern IFCA covering the period of September to November 2025.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their detailed reports.

AIFCA Annual Subscriptions

46. The Chairman stated to Members as per the recommendation at the previous Authority Meeting, the Executive Sub-Committee had written to the AIFCA on behalf of the Authority requesting information on the use of Southern IFCA's subscriptions as well as clarity on the role and funding of the Communications and Engagement Officer. The Chairman outlined that AIFCA had provided a comprehensive response which had been provided to Members as part of this Agenda Item.

Mr G Wordsworth stated that he was pleased with the response and that it was appropriate that the AIFCA be accountable to the IFCAs providing its funding. The Chairman agreed with this and emphasised the need for the work of the IFCAs being publicised at a national level.

Advertising an update to the delivery of the Fishing for Cockles (Amendment) Byelaw

47. DCO Birchenough provided Members with an update relating to the Fishing for Cockles (Amendment) Byelaw, one of the outputs of the Shore Gathering Review, specifically a change to the introductory mechanism for this Byelaw following an initial period of quality assurance with the MMO.

DCO Birchenough outlined that The Fishing for Cockles (Amendment) Byelaw will now, upon ratification by the Secretary of State, revoke the Southern IFCA Fishing for Cockles Byelaw rather than amend as previously proposed. This change relates to the mechanism by which the instrument is to be introduced, and as such there are no changes to the content or underlying intentions of The Fishing for Cockles (Amendment) Byelaw, which was formally consulted on between 17th October to 14th November 2024 as part of the wider Southern IFCA Shore Gathering Review.

DCO Birchenough informed Members that this notice had been published on the Southern IFCA website for stakeholder information and awareness and that the publication of the notice and a copy of this Authority report would be submitted to the MMO as part of the Southern IFCA QA response. Southern IFCA will continue to work with the MMO through the QA process prior to the submission of the Byelaw to the Secretary of State.

Marine Licencing

48. DCO Birchenough delivered an update report on marine licencing applications (MLAs) received by Southern IFCA during the last quarter. DCO Birchenough identified that 21 MLAs had been received between September to December 2025, 6 of which required a response, and 15 MLAs identified as not requiring a response. The number of MLAs requiring a response from

April 2025 to December 2025 represented a 12% decrease on the same period for the previous year. DCO Birchenough outlined that the report provided a summary of MLAs where a response was required for the last quarter.

Sector Group Meetings

49. The Chairman invited Members to receive the minutes from recent meetings of The South Coast Fishermen's Council, and The Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Marine Conservation Group, noting that the next meeting of The Recreational Angling Sector Group is due to take place in January 2026.

Meeting Venues 2026

50. The Facilities & Administration Officer provided Members with the dates and venues for all Authority meetings during 2026.

Cllr. R Cooper queried whether Hampshire Council had been asked if they could provide a venue. The CEO stated that all Local Authorities had been approached to ask if there were any suitable venues for holding an Authority meeting but to date there had been no responses. It was confirmed that all meeting venues had been booked for 2026, but Local Authorities will be approach again when considering venues for 2027.

Date of Next Meeting

51. Members considered the date of the next meeting to be held at 14:00 on Thursday 12th March 2026 at the Shire Hall Museum, High Street West, Dorchester, DT1 1UY.

Resolved

52. The date of the meeting was confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 16:52.

A meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee (ESC) was held at **14:00 on 9th December 2025** via video conferencing.

Present

Cllr. Paul Fuller	Isle of Wight Council (Chairman)
Cllr. Rob Hughes	Chair, Dorset Council
Cllr. Crispin Goodall	BCP Council
Cllr. Rod Cooper	Hampshire County Council
Dr Antony Jensen	MMO Appointee
Mr Richard Stride	MMO Appointee

Ms Pia Bateman Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Principal Deputy Chief Officer (PDCO), Mr Sam Dell, Deputy Chief Officer (DCO), Dr Sarah Birchenough, and Accountant Mrs Jen Carr were also present.

Apologies

1. There were no apologies, all Members were in attendance.

Declarations of Interest

2. There were no pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests declared.

Minutes

3. The Minutes from the previous meeting of the ESC held on the 16th September 2025 were considered by Members. The minutes were agreed on mutual consent.

Progress Reports

4. Chief Executive Officer Updates.

The CEO discussed the recent Extraordinary TAC Meetings which had been held, congratulating the team and Members alike for the work that had been achieved in both the arena of the Solent scallop (SCE) fishery and black seabream, noting the technical and complex nature of the latter, as well as the challenging timeframes with the former.

The CEO discussed some of the feedback that had since been received from industry regarding the management intervention in the Solent SCE fishery, which most recently included notification from the Warsash Estuary Group of a vote of No Confidence in Southern IFCA, pending consideration by the Group in January. The CEO confirmed that a holding reply had been sent to the Group, with the matter to be considered further in the early New Year.

The CEO informed Members that a SAR had been received from an ex-employee, requiring a turnaround in response, in accordance with recognised timeframes. The CEO discussed the details of this matter, the requirement for third party information and a brief overview of the feedback that had been received from lawyers.

The CEO concluded that the work that Southern IFCA were achieving was of a high standard and that it had been an exceptional year in both volume and complexity. The CEO noted that

the team were good at solving complex matters as a collective, and that she was extremely proud of the work achieved during 2025, noting the limited staff resource.

Chairman noted that the team were light on the ground and thanked the SMT for their work in fulfilling multiple roles and supporting the Southern IFCA.

5. Budget Control Statement to September 2025

The CEO described the Budget Control Statement, capturing the period from the 1st of April 2025 to 30th September 2025, which showed an overall deficit of c.56k, against budget, which was explained to be expected, given that the £90k of project money had yet to be received from Defra.

The CEO provided a summary of the four major budget headers in accordance with information presented on the Executive Summary provided with the agenda pack noting that all the major budget headers showed a positive variance at this stage of the FY.

The Chairman asked about the status of the Defra funding, and whether this had been discussed by the directors of AIFCA and/or the AIFCA. CEO responded that, from a local perspective she was aware that the initial letters from Defra have been sent to Dorset County Council, therefore the process is underway. She also confirmed that this matter remains at the forefront of the AIFCA work.

Mr R Stride queried the delay in income from PFB permits, asking whether there was an associated reduction in administration costs as a result. The CEO confirmed that this was cost neutral until the time that the Byelaw is ratified.

Mr R Stride asked whether there was anything he could do to encourage uptake for participation in the drift net survey. The CEO welcomed Mr Strides' offer and invited him to discuss this further with PDCO Dell and DCO Birchenough who had been jointly leading on this matter.

6. FPV Endeavour & Workboat Code 3 - Update

The PDCO stated to Members that, following the meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee in September regarding the on-going work in the implementation of Workboat Code 3, progress has been made in this regard, engaging with the Chief Surveyor at MECAL, the coding authority, in October. PDCO Dell outlined that the Chief Surveyor recommended that a Gap Analysis was carried out on FPV Endeavour for the transition to Workboat Code 3, this has been completed and the report provided to Members.

PDCO Dell summarised the outcomes of the report in that FPV Endeavour will meet the requirements of Workboat Code 3 with relevant clauses applied relating to vessel speed and operational protocols, including a Risk Assessment for Whole Body Vibration, and on this basis the surveyor's intention would be to not restrict the operation of FPV Endeavour under the certification.

PDCO outlined that this is guidance in relation to the relevant MGN notice rather than mandatory regulation, for example robust operational protocols in the form of Risk Assessments satisfies the guidance as a control measure. The Senior IFCO for Marine Operations will be developing the required Risk Assessments and preparing FPV Endeavour for the transitional survey which is booked for 8th January 2026.

Mr R Stride asked for more clarity on non-applicability of stability tests and simple stability towing (12A point 4). PDCO Dell commented that Workboat Code 3 was not designed around small vessels but a wider variety of vessels, and that FPV Endeavour does not do any towing, rather has lifting equipment. As such, given that there may be a requirement to continue to use this, stability testing would be required to ensure stability with regard to this onboard equipment.

PDCO Dell discussed that when the coding process is undertaken Southern IFCA will pick their way through the elements that are applicable to FPV Endeavour and confirmed that there will be a stability test on 8th January for the lifting device.

Dr A Jensen, thanked PDCO for work on this, which was recognised to be difficult and not well defined, noting the fiscal responsibility applied and the practical solutions suggested.

7. Budget Forecast and Levy Contributions 2026-2027

The CEO described that the budget forecast had primarily been designed to enable the delivery of Southern's legal duties under the Marine and Coastal Access Act, in addition to those under the Conservation Regulations and the Wildlife and Countryside Act, as well as functions under the Poole Harbour Fishery Order. The CEO pointed Members to Part 1 of the Annex, for further details on the Authority's statutory functions.

The CEO provided a summary of the primary elements which shaped the forecast across the three delivery teams, as detailed in the accompanying Annex, describing that the work required to be delivered by each team simply allows the organisation to fulfil its statutory functions. The CEO discussed several unknown variables, including levy contributions, Defra funding and inflationary increases.

The CEO described the funding pots that Southern IFCA draw from, to include both levy contributions from the LA as well as the Southern IFCA reserves, noting that since FY 2024/2025 the General Reserve had reduced by nearly 50% when forecast to March 2026. The CEO reiterated that drawing from the reserves was not a sustainable model, however with recognition of wider fiscal challenges, recognised the important role the reserves are playing in the short term.

The CEO discussed that prior to inflationary projections, assuming a standstill (0%) in levy contributions, the budget forecast anticipates a loss of c.323k for the financial year 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027. She discussed the realities of the negative variance when compared with the previous 2025-2026 FY, which reflected by majority, the reduction in income of Defra funding money and the decision to put on hold the sale of FPV Protector (£50k), pending greater understanding of operational requirement and potential for external funding support via the 2026-2029 SR Bid.

The CEO discussed that savings in the budget forecast for 2026-2027 were seen across three of the four major budget headers for 2026-2027. Of note, these savings were a result of a temporary reduction in salaries and other labour costs associated with a Senior IFCO post for 2026-2027, as well as a current hold on filling the Office Manager role. She discussed the decision to temporarily hold on procuring a replacement for FPV Protector has seen projected savings relating to depreciation costs of c.25k and she discussed that there was greater budgeting accuracy for PFV Vigilant relating to maintenance and fuel costs following the vessel entering service in October. The CEO informed Members that these combined savings equated to c.66k.

The CEO spoke around the need to meet the costs associated with day-to-day operations and thus to meet Southern IFCA's statutory duties and to importantly recognised the extreme finan-

cial pressure that the 6 LAs were under. With consideration of this, the CEO discussed the move to reduce the anticipated deficit of c.323k via a reserve transfer of c.277k from the Southern IFCA reserves, the majority of which is sourced from the remaining Defra funding pot, which enabled the following position, that prior to inflationary projections, assuming a standstill (0%) in levy contributions, and following reserve adjustments, the budget forecast anticipates a loss of c.45k for the financial year 1st April 2026 to 31 March 2027.

Regarding the proposal to increase levy contributions, the CEO explained that a 5.04% increase was a targeted and well considered proposal, required specifically to address the anticipated operational deficit, and therefore Southern IFCA's ability to deliver its statutory functions across inshore fisheries and conservation for our constituent councils, to whom Southern IFCA provide this service. She discussed that the operational deficit was independent of inflationary increases and that it was the minimum increase necessary to restore a degree of balance and avoid reductions in services overtime which would compromise service quality and long-term sustainability. The CEO discussed the 66k of savings, however recognised that these measures alone were not sufficient to eliminate the deficit. She discussed that the proposed levy increase is about stabilizing Southern IFCA's position, rather than expanding the budget and not adjusting for inflation. Concluding that it is simply the action required to ensure Southern IFCA can continue to operate responsibly.

The CEO discussed how lean the organisation is and the lack of resilience we carry as a result. She discussed that the team footprint was smaller than preferred, with the organisation currently functioning without an Office Manager and a Senior IFCO, both key roles in a small organisation. She discussed that this wasn't sustainable for a multitude of reasons. The CEO discussed a legacy estates matter whereby the ground floor plumbing was not fit for purpose and had been the case since the building was procured and as a result, we are currently unable to provide sufficient lavatory facilities. The CEO discussed that matters such as these had not been accounted for in the budget forecasting, as it is something that Southern IFCA will utilise their reserves for, but that these reserves were finite. The CEO invited Members to consider the reality of actively drawing upon reserves year on year.

The CEO described that Southern IFCA were overdue on delivery of the marine asset's replacement programme, with two key asset replacements being placed on hold, namely FPV Protector, which was due in 2024-2025 and replacing of the drone c.20k, due the next FY. The CEO described the realities and risks associated with maintain vs. replace.

The CEO described how on an almost daily basis challenging decisions were being made regarding finances, where she is seeking to minimise the costs of running the organisation and balancing this with our ability to maintain delivery. This engrained financial decision making has reduced the potential financial impact on each of the LAs when it comes to levy setting. Accordingly, the CEO described how the proposed levy increase at 5.04% could be far higher and that it had been carefully considered over a considerable amount of time, with all other options to reduce this figure exhausted and that it was in no way excessive. She described the need to address the deficit now, noting that the consequences of not doing so will compound over time, where Southern IFCA will face deeper financial challenges in the coming years, likely resulting in larger increases year on year or unavoidable cuts that would negatively impact the community we all serve.

Mr R Stride queried the end of the Defra funding cycle and asked whether Southern IFCA were expected to keep delivering under these work areas. The CEO confirmed the ongoing role in MPA, FMP and Marine Consents work, and how engrained this work was to the IFCA and the coastal community. The CEO discussed the 2026-2029 Spending Review Bid, and how this bid

had integrated these specific areas of work in the hope to provide more strategic fiscal planning around these work areas.

Cllr. C. Goodall said that BCP would likely be able to support the 5.04% increase, despite the known financial pressures on BCP Council and anticipated £8m needing to be found in the BCP 2026-27 budget. Cllr. C. Goodall committed to undertaking relevant discussions with BCP colleagues prior to the Thursday Meeting of the Authority.

Cllr. R. Cooper confirmed that he has referred the levy increase to an Executive Member at Hampshire, with the initial reaction being that Hampshire would not be supporting a 5.04% increase. Cllr. R. Cooper suggested an amendment to the motion on Thursday capping the increase to 3.6%, reflecting RPI.

Cllr. P. Fuller stated that Local Authorities need to be able to fulfil their statutory functions and through this need to enable the Southern IFCA to do so. Cllr P Fuller reiterated that the LAs' had a statutory duty to fund the IFCA.

Dr. A Jensen asked that if the IFCA is unable to meet statutory obligations, what would happen, reflecting that this was the toughest budget he had seen in a long time, commenting on the reality of drawing from the reserves. Dr Jensen discussed the political belief that if the required funding isn't met that the work would get done anyway, noting that this was not the case.

Cllr. R. Cooper suggested that this matter be taken up with Government and described that 88% of Hampshire's budget is spent on adult social care, children's services and schools, with costs going up exponentially. Cllr. R Cooper congratulated the CEO and Team on the fantastic job they are delivering, but the Hampshire money is simply not there. Cllr. P. Fuller explained that the reason that costs have gone up exponentially in the areas listed by Cllr R. Cooper, were as a direct result of the LAs statutory requirements to fund these, noting that the same statutory requirements exist in the LAs in relation to delivery of the IFCA function.

Resolved

8. That Members note the papers in advance of the Authority Meeting on the 11th of December 2025

Cllr C Goodall left the meeting at 3pm.

9. Members Discussion: AIFCA Response to ESC Letter

Members discussed how best to facilitate delivery of the AIFCA communications to the Full Authority, recognising that the ESC had been tasked on this matter by the wider membership.

The Chairman commented that the AIFCA are delivering in areas of importance nationally. The Vice Chair commented that the response from AIFCA was well received. Cllr P. Fuller indicated that he would be presenting this item to the Authority at the upcoming meeting.

10. Accident, Incident and Near Miss Report

PDCO Dell reported that there had been no accidents, incidents or near misses over the previous reporting period.

Resolved

11. That the accident and incident report is noted by Members of the Executive Committee.

Date of Next Meeting

12. Members considered the date of the next ESC.

Resolved

13. The date of the next virtual meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee was confirmed as the 10th of March 2026

The Meeting closed at 15:20.

DRAFT

SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 6th November 2025

Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), held virtually via Microsoft Teams at **14:00 on Thursday 6th November 2025.**

Present

Dr Antony Jensen	Chairman, MMO Appointee
Mr Richard Stride	Vice Chairman, MMO Appointee
Dr Simon Cripps	MMO Appointee
Ms Elisabeth Bussey-Jones	MMO Appointee
Dr Heidi Guille	MMO Appointee
Mr Colin Francis	MMO Appointee
Mr Stuart Kingston-Turner	Environment Agency
Dr Richard Morgan	Natural England

Principal Deputy Chief Officer (PDCO) Sam Dell, Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) Dr Sarah Birchenough, IFCO's Ms Hester Churchouse, Ms Celie Mullen, Ms Chelsea Perrins, Mr William Meredith-Davies and Project Officer Ms Imogen Wright were also present. Cllr Paul Fuller, Chairman of the Authority also attended.

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2025-2026

1. That Dr Jensen be elected as Chairman for the year 2025-2026. This motion was proposed by Dr S Cripps and seconded by Ms E Bussey-Jones. All Members were in favour.
2. That Mr R Stride be elected as Vice-Chairman for the year 2025-2026. This motion was proposed by Ms E Bussey-Jones and seconded by Dr S Cripps. All Members were in favour.

Apologies

3. Apologies for absence were received from CEO Pia Bateman, Mr Neil Hornby (MMO Appointee), Mr Mark Cornwell (MMO Appointee), Mr Gary Wordsworth (MMO Appointee) and Ms Rachel Irish (MMO).

Declarations of interest

4. The following non-pecuniary interests were declared: Dr Simon Cripps (Agenda Item 5b).

Minutes

5. Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st August 2025 (Marked A). DCO Birchenough provided an update on Recommendation 45, stating that the Working Group of interested TAC Members to discuss data gathering and analysis in the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery would be explored in 2026 after all the data had been gathered from the 2025-26 fishing season.

Dr A Jensen noted that under item 58, with reference to the Community Drop-In Surgery to be held on the Isle of Wight, that the date had been required to be changed and would now be held on 13th November 2025.

The minutes were approved by mutual consent.

6. Members considered the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee held on the 20th October 2025 (Marked B).

The minutes were approved by mutual consent.

SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 6th November 2025

PROGRESS REPORTS

7. Emergent Updates

DCO Birchenough updated Members that an Extraordinary TAC Meeting would take place on Thursday 4th December at 10:00 at the Southern IFCA Office to progress the Black Seabream workstream and that, following receipt of the agenda, any Members who are unable to attend are welcome to feed in with any comments or feedback that they wish to provide which will be read out at the meeting.

DCO Birchenough updated Members in relation to the Solent Scallop Fishery, specifically relating to an article published in that week's edition of the Fishing News, noting that Agenda Item 5c provided a specific update on the process undertaken with regard to a recent review of permit conditions. DCO Birchenough provided a copy of the article for Members to view and emphasised that, from the perspective of Southern IFCA, the review had been successful, being achieved in a short-time frame with significant engagement from permit holders and support for the approach taken, enabling a co-developed proposal to be agreed for additional management intervention in the Solent SCE Fishery ahead of the 2025/26 season to support a sustainable fishery. DCO Birchenough outlined that this process is however, not without its challenges, some of which are illustrated in the article by a minority of stakeholders.

PDCO Dell informed Members that Officers have been carrying out boarding and landing inspections in the fishery and noted that within the SCE fishery one vessel had landed approximately 1 tonne from a single fishing trip and inspected vessels had been landing up to 200kg of Manila clam from a day's fishing. PDCO Dell outlined that the majority of industry have been pleased with the fishery outputs so far and the team will continue to engage and monitor the fishery, including through the monitoring of landings data submitted by permit holders, as the season progresses.

Members discussed whether, in the face of high landings, permit holders would feel that the additional management was not required. PDCO Dell outlined that he did not think this would be the case and the reduced fishing hours had been well received, with no feedback to Officers along those lines to date. Dr S Cripps stated that if vessels are achieving the same catch per vessel as previous seasons but achieving this over a shorter time period then there is a benefit in having reduced hours. Mr R Stride agreed, stating that if catch rates over a shorter timeframe mean that the fishery sustains permit holders for a longer overall period and that there doesn't appear to be a socio-economic impact from the reduced hours then this is positive for the industry.

Members discussed the article, one query relating to whether there was feedback from industry regarding the alternative industry proposal put forward at the Extraordinary TAC Meeting, it was recognised that there was support by the majority of permit holders for the actions taken in the fishery and PDCO Dell reflected that there was also not feedback on this being received on the coast to date. Members discussed the review, supporting the level of consultation and the subsequent process which was undertaken.

PDCO Dell provided an update to Members that on 22nd October 2025, on behalf of Southern IFCA, he and Pia attended an award ceremony in Edinburgh where Southern IFCA were presented with the MSC Ocean Leadership Award, recognising Southern IFCA's outstanding commitment to sustainable fishing and exemplary leadership in advancing the future of our oceans.

PDCO Dell outlined that the select group of judges were particularly impressed by the innovative use of drone technology in Monitoring, Control and Surveillance activities, which has transformed enforcement across Poole Harbour's complex estuarine system and

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demonstrates how cutting-edge technology can be responsibly applied in small-scale fisheries to achieve world-class outcomes. By integrating drones into fisheries management, Southern IFCA has delivered a modern, innovative and highly effective approach that ensures the Poole Harbour Clam & Cockle Fishery continues to meet the highest sustainability standards. The judges said that this initiative is a model of leadership, a blueprint for fisheries worldwide, and well deserving of the MSC Ocean Leadership Award. PDCO Dell reflected that this was and continues to be a team effort including Officers and Members and thanked all for their ongoing support.

Members stated their appreciation for the award and thanked all those involved for their hard work.

8. Marine Stewardship Council, Audit of the Poole Clam & Cockle Fishery 2025

IFCO Celie Mullen informed Members that the annual audit of the Poole Clam & Cockle Fishery against the MSC Standard had taken place on 26th September 2025. IFCO Mullen outlined that, as part of the audit, data had been provided to the auditors on stock analysis, compliance & enforcement within the fishery and any updated documents relating to management. IFCO Mullen also outlined that this was the first audit to consider the new Monitoring & Control Plan for Manila clam in the fishery, implemented in 2025, which had given the potential for increased scores for the fishery under the relevant Principle. IFCO Mullen stated that the audit had gone well with no issues identified by the auditors which required further input, the draft report is currently being reviewed by Southern IFCA with the opportunity to provide any comment ahead of its publication.

Dr A Jensen thanked the Officers for their work in this fishery and the level of preparation which is put into the audit each year.

Dr H Guille queried whether the new MSC Standard v.3 was in place yet and whether the fishery would need to do any additional work to meet the new standard. Dr S Cripps commented that the Standard v.3 has been withdrawn at present with a reworked version currently in development, any new version will have a lead in period. DCO Birchenough informed Members that she attends working groups held by MSC on updates to the certifying standard and that it was likely that any new version of the Standard would be applied to the fishery at the point of its next certification in 2028. Dr S Cripps added that the introduction of a new standard would not undermine the current certification of the fishery.

9. Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw, 2025/26 Season

DCO Birchenough outlined to Members the process that had been followed regarding the introduction of additional effort management in the Solent Scallop Fishery ahead of the 2025/26 season to support sustainable fisheries, and that this was reflected in the agenda paperwork for the Extraordinary TAC Meeting on 20th October 2025. DCO Birchenough informed Members that, based on best available evidence, two initial proposals were developed by the Authority which were taken to public consultation, the public consultation receiving input from 80% of applicants for the 2025/26 season across individual responses, group responses and in-person engagement at consultation meetings. DCO Birchenough outlined that through this process there had been a lot of support from industry for the approach being taken by Southern IFCA to support a sustainable scallop fishery.

DCO Birchenough outlined that consultation feedback had been reviewed and summarised, with a lack of support for the two initial proposals and alternative proposals put forward. The consultation also provided information on applicants' intentions to fish during the 2025/26 season which helped inform understandings of potential levels of activity, and socio-economic

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information based on potential management options. DCO Birchenough stated that a staged process was subsequently carried out to; 1) identify alternative management options from the consultation, 2) review those options, resulting in the identification of 14 alternative proposals, 3) conduct an Officer feasibility exercise on the 14 alternative proposals, 4) develop co-developed proposals, combining Authority and stakeholder input as well as recognising unintended consequences, and 5) applying a series of material considerations to those options. It was identified that the two co-developed proposals achieved a greater number of material considerations than the original two proposals taken to consultation.

DCO Birchenough outlined that, at each stage, any alternative proposals or elements of proposals which were not taken forward to the next stage were highlighted with a rationale provided as to why these proposals could not be taken forward. DCO Birchenough also outlined that longer-term proposals, although not suitable for incorporation into the current review, were noted including further understandings of SCE populations, for example in relation to predation and larval transport, working with other fisheries including international fisheries to share expertise, and the separating out of SCE into a separate permit from the current Category A Permit.

DCO Birchenough outlined that the two co-developed proposals were taken to the Extraordinary Meeting of the TAC on 20th October 2025, where they were considered by the Authority in conjunction with all best available evidence. The Authority also received representation from an applicant in the SDPB fishery, who put forward an alternative proposal stated as being supported by the majority of applicants who intended to fish for SCE in the coming season. The Authority, on the basis of all available information, proposed a new co-developed proposal which proposed to reduce daily fishing hours in the Solent SCE fishery from 08:00-16:00 to 08:00-14:00, this was agreed by Members at the Extraordinary TAC Meeting.

Applicants for the 2025/26 season were notified of the outcome of the review following the Extraordinary TAC Meeting and the status of their applications. DCO Birchenough stated that the 2025/26 season had started on 1st November and that the majority of Category A Permits had been issued. DCO Birchenough informed Members that Southern IFCA would continue to engage in and monitor the fishery through the 2025/26 season and that a wider review looking at longer-term management of the Solent bivalve fisheries would take place in 2026.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

10. Whelk Population Survey Report 2025

IFCO Mullen presented to Members the outcomes of the 2025 Whelk Population Survey which took place from March-July 2025 involving local commercial fishing vessels operating within key whelk fishing areas in the District: Lyme Bay, Weymouth Bay, Poole Bay and The Solent. IFCO Mullen outlined the purpose of the survey is to identify potential whelk stocks across the District and develop a timeseries dataset to monitor trends in abundance and size frequency between different areas, aiming to establish a robust evidence base to inform and support future management both at a local and national scale.

IFCO Mullen presented the key findings from the 2025 survey, highlighting differences between areas for 2025 and also an analysis of the data against the previous two survey years (2023 and 2024). IFCO Mullen informed Members that there are notable differences observed between areas surveyed which suggesting the potential presence of sub-populations and highlights the complexity around whelk populations in the District, supporting the continued gathering of evidence by this survey to support the development of a timeseries dataset.

Dr S Cripps commented that the report was very good and clearly set out. Dr Cripps raised a

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question in relation to length frequency data and whether the data for Weymouth Bay, showing a greater number of larger individuals was indicative of a difference in fishing pressure compared to other areas or whether it was a function of the fishery removing the peak of individuals between 50-65mm which is seen in other areas. It was discussed that as the timeseries dataset develops, patterns and any changes between years will become more evident. DCO Birchenough commented that, at present, there is not enough understanding of variations in fishing effort within the whelk fishery to attribute patterns in effort to the survey outputs but that there are multiple data sources for fishing effort in these fisheries that could be interrogated in the future to help develop this understanding. Members also discussed whether slight differences in fishing gear may be contributing to variations between different areas.

Mr R Stride asked whether any observations had been made of differing results from differences in soak time and whether this had been accounted for. IFCO Mullen outlined that differences in soak times are being seen within the fishery and that the CPUE aims to counteract the soak time by including a time standardisation. It was noted that different soak times may affect the quantity of whelk caught due to changes in the tide, availability of bait and the capacity of the pot.

Dr H Guille commented that differences in results are likely to be related to differences in gear type and operation, noting that this was reflected in the report, but that there needed to be caution in attributing results to influencing factors rather than bias in the data. DCO Birchenough outlined that the survey was based on fishers collecting samples as part of normal fishing practice and that there will be variation in operations, which is recognised, but it is determined that this is partially offset by fishers using pots which are adapted to the conditions of each site and optimised to maximise catch potential in line with specific environmental conditions. The repeatability of the methodology allows for comparisons to be made over time recognising the caveats that exist within that methodology.

Members also discussed other related whelk survey work including genetic surveys from other areas which showed differences over small spatial scales and size at sexual maturity research from the District, which showed a larger SOM in Weymouth Bay than The Solent and potential implications for management. Dr A Jensen queried whether the survey work could be expanded to look at SOM, IFCO Mullen responded that engagement was taking place with academic institutions to explore beneficial further uses for the samples following the Southern IFCA analysis.

11. Fisheries Management Plans

Project Officer Wright provided an overview of the matters captured in the Executive Summary, outlining newly published documents and Defra blog posts which provide further detail to the updates provided.

Dr A Jensen commented that the Crab and Lobster Implementation Group were starting to think about publishing potential management options for crab and lobster under the relevant FMPs. Dr Jensen stated that the Crab and Lobster Science Group had expressed their wish to see any potential options ahead of publication so they could be reviewed with respect to available scientific evidence. Members discussed that Defra were exploring implementation of an increase in Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) for lobster and a prohibition on soft-shell crab either during late 2025 or early 2026 with discussion on the mechanism which may be used for this including licence variations or a Statutory Instrument. Members discussed that communication and engagement will be key for any new measures proposed to be introduced at a national level.

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12. Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Byelaw Pilot Mid-Season Stock Observer Program

IFCO Mullen provided an overview of the outcomes of the pilot Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery Mid-Season Stock Observer Programme, introduced in 2025 under the In-Season Monitoring Programme of the Monitoring & Control Plan for Manila clam in the Poole Harbour dredge fishery.

IFCO Mullen outlined that 36 tows were completed across 12 permitted vessels which had enabled the collection of samples to provide CPUE and length frequency data. The data from the survey indicated that the increase in the availability of over MCRS Manila clam in the fishery, potentially driven by warmer waters and increased growth during the summer, does not appear to be being impacted by fishing activity to a point where the increase in the proportion of the population cannot be seen, even in the area showing the highest levels of fishing activity. It was noted that it may be that additional growth has resulted in individuals reaching a size where they are more likely to be captured by a dredge but remain below the MCRS, with further data collection required to explore this further. Overall, the levels of Manila clam seen in the pilot mid-season survey showed a positive picture and indicated that, at current levels of fishing, the population seems sustainable by the midway point of the season.

IFCO Mullen noted that the Mid-Season Observer Programme provided a valuable opportunity for collaboration between Southern IFCA and permit holders of the PHDPB Fishery and thanked all those who participated in and supported the data collection efforts.

Dr A Jensen commented that the report was very good and clearly articulated the outcomes of the Pilot Program. Dr Jensen queried how fishers had responded to the Program, IFCO Mullen stated that fishers had been happy to be involved and had voiced their support for being able to contribute to data collection for the fishery to support a wider evidence base.

Dr S Cripps asked what the resource requirement was for carrying out the Program. DCO Birchenough outlined that the Program was delivered over 2 days using FPV Endeavour and that other deliverables were completed at the same time, for example monitoring of compliance within the fishery. Members discussed whether the resource input from Officers had been offset by the benefits of conducting the Program. It was outlined that the resource input had been beneficial, with the ability to collect data that complemented the annual data from the Poole Harbour Bivalve Survey, allowing for comparisons between the pre-season and mid-season point, and data which indicated differences in the fishery both spatially and between vessels. In addition, the additional engagement opportunity created with permit holders in the fishery and the ability to share expertise in fishing practice and data collection was very positive. It was outlined that it is Southern IFCA's intention to continue the Program in subsequent years.

13. Date of Next Meeting

To confirm the date of the next meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee on the 5th February 2026 at Southern IFCA, Unit 3 Holes Bay Park, Sterte Avenue West, Poole Dorset BH15 2AA.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15:40.

Chairman:

Date:

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TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 4th December 2025

Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), held in the meeting room at the Southern IFCA office in Poole at **14:00 on Thursday 4th December 2025**.

Present

Dr Antony Jensen	Chairman, MMO Appointee
Mr Richard Stride	Vice Chairman, MMO Appointee
Mr Gary Wordsworth	MMO Appointee
Dr Heidi Guille	MMO Appointee
Mr Colin Francis	MMO Appointee
Mr Stuart Kingston-Turner	Environment Agency
Dr Richard Morgan	Natural England
Mr Gordon Chittenden	Marine Management Organisation
Ms Pia Bateman	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Principal Deputy Chief Officer (PDCO) Sam Dell, Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) Dr Sarah Birchenough, IFCA's Ms Hester Churchouse, Ms Celie Mullen, Ms Chelsea Perrins, Mr William Meredith-Davies and Project Officer Ms Imogen Wright were also present.

Ms Hannah Rudd (Angling Trust) attended virtually in the public gallery.

Apologies

1. Apologies for absence were received from Ms E Bussey-Jones (MMO Appointee), Dr S Cripps (MMO Appointee), Mr N Hornby (MMO Appointee), Mr M Cornwell (MMO Appointee) and Mr Stuart Kingston-Turner (Environment Agency).

Declarations of interest

2. The following non-pecuniary interests were declared: Mr R Stride (Agenda Items 4 & 5), Mr G Wordsworth (Agenda Items 4 & 5), Dr Richard Morgan (Agenda Items 4 & 5).

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

4. The BSB Management Package: Policy & Supporting Documents

DCO Birchenough informed Members that the Policy and Supporting Documents provided were intended to be read together, providing transparency and clarity of process to deliver and implement the management intentions for black seabream (BSB) within three Dorset MCZs. DCO Birchenough outlined that the documents reflected a holistic delivery of two parallel policy objectives which allows for the achievement of Southern IFCA's legal duties under section 154 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 ('MaCAA') and to work with the Dorset community to facilitate improved understandings of BSB across the three MCZs.

DCO Birchenough provided a brief summary of each of the three policy documents and outlined that the supporting documents, the Black Seabream Literature Review and the Black Seabream Site Specific Evidence Packages, also formed part of the management package, underpinning the conservation assessments. DCO Birchenough outlined that the policy and supporting documents would be made available as part of the BSB management package and that Southern IFCA would deliver management for fisheries across the three Dorset MCZs in line with the outlined intention of process and delivery.

The CEO thanked Members for attending the meeting and emphasised the importance of the work on BSB within Dorset MCZs, highlighting its complexity and uniqueness. The CEO reflected on how the workstream had be re-routed based on improved understandings of the

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fishery, the species, risk and gear/feature interactions, the route of designation of the species, the Conservation Objectives and the Southern IFCA's legal duties. The CEO outlined the need to resolve a large amount of work over several years into concise policy documents which are more accessible to a wider audience.

Reflecting on the uniqueness of the workstream, the CEO detailed that this stemmed from the need to consider management for a designated feature within an MCZ where the designation has been through a less familiar route, namely that BSB are neither rare nor threatened by the presence of fishing activity but that they are of ecological significance. In addition, the designation of the species in 2019 for the three Dorset MCZs was not based on a condition assessment and both the species and relevant fisheries remain data poor, with no metrics available to aid understandings of the health of BSB fisheries across those MCZs, both before designation and to date. The CEO also noted that predominantly, to date, Southern IFCA's management within MPAs has considered the commercial sector, and that, for this workstream there was a need to consider a wider range of sectors, with less familiarity in the application of management to the recreational sea angling and charter sectors. The CEO reflected that in learning more about these sectors through this work, the intrinsic importance of BSB beyond their designated status had become apparent, stretching into the community as a whole across Dorset and beyond, as well as being nationally important socioeconomically alongside designated status.

The CEO stated that the development of management presented at the meeting is a success story, aligned with the national IFCA Vision and the Southern IFCA Vision as well as being aligned with other legal duties. The CEO reflected that the Authority are working hard in the co-development of management in fisheries across the District, part of the BSB workstream being a good example of turning this from theory into practice and providing a blueprint for future work in other fisheries across the organisation.

The CEO stated that the workstream applies a dual legal approach with two legal functions applied in parallel. The resulting management solutions, with the support of the Dorset community, champions proportionate, holistic management which collectively seeks to improve understandings of BSB populations and meets two defined objectives while remaining true to the IFCA function. The CEO highlighted that there is a consensus across all sectors as a unified collective to protect BSB for the common good with the proposed management providing a solution to beginning this process.

Dr A Jensen thanked Officers for the coherence and conciseness of the documentation included in the agenda. Mr G Wordsworth commented on the quality of the workstream outputs and the development of a coherent solution which achieved community support whilst meeting all the relevant objectives.

Dr Richard Morgan set out the current position from Natural England (NE). Dr Morgan stated that NE had reviewed earlier drafts of the relevant conservation assessments and supporting documents and felt that there were some areas where further clarity and rationale was required, which was subsequently provided by Southern IFCA. Dr Morgan reflected on the uniqueness and complexity of the workstream and that Southern IFCA had done as much as possible in providing documentation to support the management proposed. NE aims to be consistent in their provision of advice, considering that advice has been provided on BSB elsewhere, for example for Kingmere MCZ. Dr Morgan commented specifically on the defined breeding season for BSB and that, notwithstanding agreements made previously by the Authority, NE's advice is that March to July should be used as the breeding season to account for the early aggregation stage, which would be consistent with NE Advice on Operations for the three MCZs. NE support that the management for bottom towed fishing gear (BTFG) will further Conservation Objectives with respect to protecting the supporting habitat from damage

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and avoiding disturbance, but feel that for recreational sea angling seasonal spatial closures should be included to address the impact of disturbance from this gear type due to the data gaps which exist on the effort levels and the potential impact at a level 'likely significantly' to affect BSB. Dr Morgan stated that the word 'significantly' in the Conservation Objectives is important as it acknowledges that there can be a level of disturbance but when that becomes significant there can be impacts, however this is complex as NE are not able to state at what level impacts would be considered significant and it may not be possible to reach a point where this is known. On this basis NE advise that there needs to be precaution applied through the application of seasonal spatial closures, consistent with advice provided to other authorities. Dr Morgan stated that the IFCA's need to balance environmental protection with the socioeconomics of the industry is understood by NE and that it is recognised why, following the consultation and the impact assessment, the use of seasonal spatial closures is not a preferred approach by the Authority. Dr Morgan stated that in terms of the relevant conservation assessments, NE are not able to agree that the measures in place for recreational sea angling are sufficient to further the Conservation Objectives but, because of existing evidence gaps, support the commitment to further the evidence base and recognise that the additional measures proposed or already in place do contribute to furthering the Conservation Objectives. NE also recognise the commitment to evidence gathering which they would welcome being part of, and the commitment to review management with the ability to be adaptive if required. Dr Morgan stated that NE would abstain in voting but noted that NE are not objecting.

Dr A Jensen thanked Dr Morgan for NE's considered and positive input.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

5. Primary Policy Objective: Satisfying Section 154 of the MaCAA

DCO Birchenough outlined the Primary Policy Objective, namely to satisfy section 154 of the MaCAA by furthering the Conservation Objectives within each of the three Dorset MCZs. DCO Birchenough stated that the furthering of the Conservation Objectives was from a baseline position of no management and in this case related to a quantification of existing management measures in place in the Southern IFCA District.

DCO Birchenough informed Members that the recommendation is supported by the Black Seabream Marine Conservation Zone Assessment Package, which goes through a staged process from screening through to Part A and Part B assessments with the addition of a gear risk assessment, determined as appropriate for determining the level of risk posed by different gear types to designated features. The conclusion of the Assessment Package is that appropriate mitigation measures are in place through existing management under the BTFG Byelaw 2023, the Southern IFCA Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) Byelaw and external spatial restrictions in place for the Lulworth Ranges, providing a range of spatial and technical tools which are collectively furthering the Conservation Objectives for the MCZs.

DCO Birchenough provided specifics on the existing management measures outlining that the highest risk gear type, BTFG, had been eliminated from 100% of two of the MCZs, Poole Rocks and Southbourne Rough, and across 93% of the Purbeck Coast MCZ, noting that the remaining area does not contain habitat relevant to the BSB designated feature, which is supported by NE. This is complemented by the enforcement of the MCRS for BSB of 23cm, applicable to all commercial and recreational fishers across all gear types and the entirety of the supply chain. The external spatial closures in place periodically for the Lulworth ranges equates to 32% of the relevant breeding season across 33% of the footprint largest MCZ, Purbeck Coast, this can be extended to 54% when the outer ranges area is also closed. These closures apply to all sea users encompassing all commercial and recreational fishing activity.

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DCO Birchenough outlined that these measures are providing protections to BSB over and above the breeding season as all measures apply year-round and also, for the MCRS regulation, more widely than the footprint of the MCZs, applying District-wide. Therefore, this combination of management tools allows the Conservation Objectives for the three MCZs to be furthered and accordingly there is no risk to hindering the achievement of the Conservation Objectives, thus satisfying the Primary Policy Objective.

DCO Birchenough informed Members that Formal Advice had been sought from NE on the Conservation Assessment Package and that further information had been sent by Southern IFCA on two matters raised by NE relating to the breeding season and recreational sea angling. DCO Birchenough outlined that the NE Formal Advice letter and the Southern IFCA response had been provided to Members as part of the agenda item. DCO Birchenough informed Members that a subsequent meeting had been held with NE where these points were discussed in more detail and NE then provided a summary position which Dr Morgan has set out verbally at this meeting. DCO Birchenough outlined that the Conservation Assessment Package had been updated to reflect additional clarity around the two points raised by NE, relating to the District-specific best available evidence on BSB breeding season which had informed the decision to proceed with April to July, and newly emerging evidence from tagging work in the Sussex IFCA District which also supported this as being an appropriate seasonal window. DCO Birchenough also referenced recreational sea angling, and that more context and clarity had been added to the Conservation Assessment Package on how the gear risk assessment was carried out.

Mr G Wordsworth discussed that the statutory MCRS of 23cm under the Southern IFCA MCRS Byelaw is small and queried when Southern IFCA may be in a position to review the regulated MCRS applied within the District. The CEO outlined that the Southern IFCA can take action to review a regulation at any point, if underpinned by the appropriate evidence, and that the direction of management for BSB will provide evidence to help guide that process. The CEO outlined that the current development and implementation of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) will also inform this process and that further understandings of national direction on MCRS will help support appropriate resource allocation within Southern IFCA to District-specific reviews.

Dr H Guille discussed the potential uncertainty over the spawning season and asked Dr Morgan for clarity on the evidence supporting the inclusion of March. Dr Morgan responded that there is some published evidence that includes reference to March, including that relevant to the District, and that it is related to the aggregation of the species not necessarily observations of direct breeding. Dr Guille asked what the rationale had been for the Authority not to include March on a precautionary basis. DCO Birchenough responded that the Authority had considered March to July as an option alongside April to July in conjunction with the best available evidence and had resolved to take forward April to July based on that evidence. The CEO added that, in making this determination Members had considered the evidence alongside considering proportion and precaution in the context of furthering the Conservation Objectives.

Dr Guille queried whether the evidence gathering through the Co-Developed Principles would facilitate an evidence base on which any future determinations to consider including March could be made. DCO Birchenough outlined that the data collection programme, as one of the Co-Developed Principles, is designed to run year-round allowing for data collection both within and outside of the breeding season to facilitate comprehensive understandings of BSB within the MCZs underpinning an adaptive management approach. Dr A Jensen commented that there was also still evidence to come from the Angling for Sustainability Fishing Industry Science Partnership (FISP) Project which will also aid understandings of BSB movements in and around the MCZs. Dr Guille suggested that wording could be made clearer in the

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documentation as to the intention for year-round data collection to support an evidence base and an adaptive management approach.

Dr A Jensen read out a comment which had been provided by Member Mr S Kingston-Turner, who was unable to attend the meeting. Mr Kingston-Turner discussed that he was supportive of the Policy Objectives but sought further clarity on how recreational sea angling was assessed as a medium risk over commercial net and rod & line fishing which was assessed as low risk under the gear risk assessment. Mr Kingston-Turner referenced the management measures already employed by the charter sector in relation to bag limits and increased MCRS, and ongoing studies indicating that released rod & line caught fish have the potential to return to their nests. It was queried whether retention of BSB by the recreational angling sector, currently reported in supporting documentation by number, could be reported by weight to compare to the commercial rod & line fishery. Mr Kingston-Turner stated that showing a heightened risk by recreational rod & line fishing may lead to increased management of the sector over commercial fishing activities and may influence NE opposition to this activity occurring within the MCZs.

DCO Birchenough responded that the classification of recreational rod & line as medium risk and commercial rod & line as low risk is related to observed levels of activity which currently take place within the MCZs. Levels of commercial rod & line activity are very low in both observations of the activity and catch levels for BSB as a target species based on best available evidence. The levels of activity observed for recreational activity, across both private and charter operators, are at a higher level and this forms the basis for the increased risk level from low to medium. It is recognised and captured in the Conservation Assessment Package, that there are mitigative measures already employed by the recreational sector and it is recognised that the overall impact, including the understanding of newer best available evidence on potential resumption of nesting activity following catch and release, is applicable to rod & line across all sectors and has been considered as such. The risk exercise is aimed to consider all relevant elements; however, the outcome is based on levels of activity rather than there being a greater impact. The development of management under the secondary policy objective does not seek to impact the recreational sector over the commercial sector with all measures, excepting the recreational bag limit, applying to all sectors. DCO Birchenough also outlined that weight data for recreational fisheries may be possible to collect through the proposed data collection programme, at present it is difficult for recreational fishers to record data in this way as it is not a standard reporting metric.

The recommendation was proposed by Dr H Guille, seconded by Mr G Wordsworth. 5 Members voted in favour, Mr R Stride and Dr R Morgan abstained.

Resolved

6. That, in combination, existing statutory spatial and technical measures applicable across the 3 Dorset MCZs are collectively 'furthering' the Conservation Objectives of the sites.

7. Secondary Policy Objective: Co-Developed Principles

DCO Birchenough outlined that through this process Members had considered whether there were additional management opportunities relevant to the BSB fishery which could both complement the protections afforded by the existing management as well as support increased understandings of BSB fisheries over time. DCO Birchenough stated that in the absence of a condition assessment for the three Dorset MCZs at the point of designation and to the present day, and the concurrent development of a Seabreams FMP, Members

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committed to the development of a shared principles model with the Dorset Community to explore additional opportunities.

DCO Birchenough outlined that, as duties under section 154 have been deemed to be met through existing management, the consideration of any additional management is underpinned by the Southern IFCA's duties under section 153 of the MaCAA. The process and development of the shared principles model is underpinned by Policy Drivers and Headline Objectives, to ensure clarity and transparency in the rationale for the Secondary Policy Objective. DCO Birchenough detailed the five-stage process undertaken to develop the Co-Developed Principles and the multiple opportunities provided during this process for engagement and consultation with the Dorset Community, including a large-scale informal consultation which saw the greatest level of participation by stakeholders in any informal consultation run by Southern IFCA to date. DCO Birchenough thanked the community both in Dorset and more widely for their engagement, responses and constructive inputs through the process and reflected on the benefits and positive dialogue that had come from this.

DCO Birchenough outlined that, considering the outputs of the informal consultation, Members of the TAC resolved at the meeting in August 2025 to take forward the Co-Developed Principles with no amendments. DCO Birchenough outlined the Co-Developed Principles and their application as being voluntary, applying during the period 1st April to 31st July and applying within the three Dorset MCZs, with the introduction of an MCRS of 28cm a Maximum Conservation Reference Size (MaxCRS) of 38cm, a 6 fish per person per day recreational bag limit, fishing and handling guidance and a data collection programme which would extend to being run year-round and apply to all sectors as well as including elements of fisher-independent data.

DCO Birchenough outlined that the implementation of the Co-Developed Principles across all three MCZs is a suitable management mechanism to both satisfy and facilitate progress towards achieve the Secondary Policy Objective, to advance understandings of BSB fisheries over time, satisfying both the Policy Drivers and the Headline Objectives.

DCO Birchenough detailed that the intention for the year 1 implementation of the Co-Developed Principles is to focus on engagement and awareness, seeking compliance with the Principles. DCO Birchenough referenced the suite of engagement tools that can be used in this regard, including engaging with partner organisations such as the Angling Trust. It is proposed that the first annual review takes place following the conclusion of the breeding season in 2026, seeking to incorporate community feedback on the application of the principles and the overall health of the fishery, analysis of data collected through the data collection programme, compliance & enforcement metrics, data from external sources, outputs from the FMP process and any emerging scientific evidence. DCO Birchenough outlined that an annual review would be carried out each year up to 2029 and a wider review would be carried out in 2030 which would incorporate any necessary revisions to the Conservation Assessment Package, including any updated NE Formal Advice or Condition Assessments which may have been completed for those sites. DCO Birchenough stated that the Authority could act to review management in response to any of the annual reviews if appropriate under defined processes.

Mr R Stride queried whether compliance with the voluntary measures would be considered through the annual reviews, stating views expressed through the consultation on a preference for statutory rather than voluntary measures. DCO Birchenough provided context on the consultation, that only a low number of respondents referenced the need for statutory measures over voluntary measures and explained that the ability is there for the Authority to explore statutory measures if it was felt the evidence supported this, compliance & enforcement outcomes being one source of evidence feeding into annual reviews. Mr C

SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 4th December 2025

Francis commented that recreational sea anglers would prefer measures to be statutory to support enforcement and embedding of measures for example in charter vessels enforcing measures on their vessels. Mr Gordon Chittenden commented that, having been involved in the development of the Seabreams FMP, the guidance from Defra is that they are keen to see the exploration of voluntary measures first to allow for the development of an evidence base to support any further intervention. The CEO reflected that through the co-development approach there is a sense of ownership provided to the community which can help facilitate the achievement of shared goals.

Dr R Morgan asked for clarity on whether the review process could include consideration of the addition of March to the breeding season. DCO Birchenough outlined that best available evidence from all relevant sources would feed into the review process and that it could be explored in the event that the evidence supports that consideration.

Dr A Jensen read out a comment provided by Mr S Kingston-Turner who stated that he was supportive of the proposed fishery and handling guidance which is very comprehensive.

Mr G Wordsworth discussed the resource requirements of annually reviewing the Co-Developed Principles and options for funding. The CEO outlined that management of MPAs falls within the Southern IFCA's duties and therefore funding couldn't be explored in that respect. The CEO recognised the resource requirement and also the extended input from fishers which is hoped to come through data collection in particular, outlining Southern IFCA's intention to work in partnership with other agencies and bodies to achieve collective benefit.

Mr Gordon Chittenden commented on the level of detail which had gone into the process and development of the Co-Developed Principles and that this provided an excellent base on which to build continued understandings of BSB fisheries.

Dr H Guille recommended that reference to the data collection programme being year-round should be added to the data collection forms and queried whether further engagement materials would be available to reflect the wider Co-Developed Principles in addition to the leaflet specific to the fishing and handling guidance. DCO Birchenough outlined that the guidance leaflet reflects one of the Co-Developed Principles and that the wider engagement materials detailed in Policy Document 3 would be utilised to provide information on the Co-Developed Principles as a whole.

Dr Guille discussed the proposed data collection forms, referencing the inclusion of the number of BSB caught under the MCRS and above the MaxCRS which might be retained. This will be added into the reporting form for fisher-dependent data as well as being part of fisher-independent data collection. PDCO Dell discussed the positive abilities for Officers to collect fisher-independent data and the range of mechanisms available to collect information on the relevant fisheries. PDCO Dell also reflected that stakeholders have been positive in working with Officers to collect data and facilitate observations. The CEO emphasised that this work would form a priority workstream into the new financial year.

The recommendation was proposed by Mr G Wordsworth, seconded by Mr Colin Francis. 6 Members voted in favour, Mr R Stride abstained.

Resolved

8. That the Co-Developed Principles are approved for application across the three Dorset MCZs in 2026.

**SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 4th December 2025**

9. Date of Next Meeting

To confirm the date of the next meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee on the 5th February 2026 at Southern IFCA, Unit 3 Holes Bay Park, Sterte Avenue West, Poole Dorset BH15 2AA.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:27.

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 period 1st April 2025 to 31st January 2026.

B. Recommendation

That the report be received.

C. Annex

Annex 1: Detailed Budget Control Statement with contextual narrative.

1.0 Budget Control Statement

1.1 The Summary Budget Control Statement to 31st January 2026 as shown below, shows a **deficit against budget of c.29k.**

SUMMARY RESULTS Major Budget Headers	Apr25-Mar26 12 mths Budget incl. inflation	YTD 1 Apr 25 - 31 Jan 2026		
		Actual	Budget	Variances
EXPENDITURE SUMMARY				
Compliance and Enforcement	124,317	73,312	105,392	(32,080)
Research and Policy	34,259	11,076	28,926	(17,850)
Business Services	1,129,589	857,486	952,650	(95,164)
Capital Equipment	127,635	81,233	106,364	(25,131)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,415,800	1,023,107	1,193,332	(170,225)
TOTAL INCOME	1,211,658	1,065,574	1,207,024	(141,450)
INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	(204,142)	42,467	13,692	28,775

1.2 The Detailed Budget Control Statement (Annex 1) provide a narrative of all positive and negative variance equal to or greater than 1k., in addition to contextual notes where necessary.

2.0 Summary of Major Budget Headers

2.1 The positive variance captured under the **Compliance & Enforcement** Header (**c.32k**) represents c.12k of savings to date on FPV fuel for FPV Vigilant and FPV Protector (combined), relating to operational prioritisation during the first three quarters, seeing increased use of the drone in the Solent fisheries and FPV Endeavour centrally to align with the PHDP season (which closed on the 24th December). PPE cost savings (c.5k) reflect both team stability and outcomes of an internal recruitment campaign where 2xProject Officers were successful in securing IFCO roles). An underspend of c.£1.5k for access to a National Intelligence System (CLUE) reflects budgeting of licences beyond that which have been taken out to date. At this stage of the FY, c.£6k of savings are seen under the Prosecutions header, these costs are unpredictable and likely to even out over the course of the FY.

- 2.2 The positive variance captured under the **Research and Policy** Header (**c.18k**) relates mainly to no costs being incurred to date for Byelaw advertisement or legal support (c.9k) and c.£2k saving for the Drift Net Project, costs which may be incurred later in the FY, subject to community uptake. c.£1k is being held prior to reserve transfer for monies received from PHDP holders for costs associated with the offset of MSC Certification fees for the fishery (to reimburse monies that were paid upfront by Southern IFCA previously). Money (c.£2k) ringfenced for Solent Scallop Research remains dependant on another IFCA providing training.
- 2.3 The positive variance captured under the **Business Services** Header (**c.95k**) is due to a reduction in staff salary and pension contributions (c.72k); as a combined result of one IFCO embarking on a sabbatical for the first 4 months of the FY, as well as the resignation of the Office Manager in June 2025 and a Senior Research & Policy IFCO in August 2025 and these vacancies being carried through. There has been a saving to date of c.3k for HR legal support. Costs associated with staff training (c.10k) will be realised later in the year, noting the provision made in the budget for new starter training has not been required to date. c.5k for MMO National Training Contributions may not materialise this FY. This matter is currently being discussed nationally. Increased and unforeseen costs associated with insurance premiums across the entirety of the business of c.4.5k have been incurred and reflects increased costs for services. Costs are yet to be incurred in the majority, from General Member expense claims, these are anticipated to level out towards the end of the FY.
- 2.4 The positive variance under the **Capital Equipment** Header (**c.25k**) is due to savings in depreciation on FPV Protector. This FPV was budgeted to be replaced in Q1 with a cost of £120k resulting in higher depreciation in the budget. This replacement has been delayed- initially due to delays experienced in delivery of FPV Vigilant and the undertaking of an operational needs analysis, plus, more recently in order to await the outcomes of the 2026-2029 AIFCA SR Bid and consideration of operational need.

3.0 **Total Income**

A deficit in projected income of **c.141k** reflects the outstanding payment of project funding from Defra c.90k, in addition to c.50k, which relates to the potential sale of FPV Protector, which was budgeted for prior to experiencing the delays in procurement and delivery of FPV Vigilant. An amount c.4.5k relates to the anticipated issuing of commercial and recreational permits under the Pot Fishing Byelaw. This Byelaw remains with the MMO quality assurance team. It is likely that this delay is due to the national delivery of FMPs and Tranche 1 outcomes. BCP Shellfish Sampling contract (c.£3.5k will be realised later in the FY).

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 1st April 2025 and the 31st January 2026, the following payments equal to or greater than the above-mentioned figure were made:

Amount	Date	What	Who
£43,311.58	01/04/2025	Annual insurance premiums (vehicles, marine assets and estate)	Brunel Insurance Brokers
£14,342.42	17/06/2025	AIFCA Subscriptions 2025-2026	AIFCA
£5,040.00	15/12/2025	Annual audit of the Poole Harbour Clam & Cockle Fishery against the MSC standard	Control Union (UK) Limited
£6,443.00	15/01/2026	Quarterly CLUE licences charge	MMO

DETAILED RESULTS		Apr25-Mar26	YTD			YTD Notes for positive & negative variance ≥£1k	
Minor Budget Headers		12 mths Budget	1 April 2025	31 January 2026			
			Actual	Budget	Variances		
Income	Levy	Levy - Hants	364,586	364,586	0		
		Levy - IOW	129,499	129,499	0		
		Levy - Dorset	223,684	223,684	0		
		Levy - BCP	100,563	100,563	0		
		Levy - Southampton	38,806	38,806	0		
		Levy - Portsmouth	45,302	45,302	0		
	Permits & Leases	Poole Harbour Dredge Permits	27,000	30,375	27,000	3,375	This is the extra £75 per permit referred to below for Poole Harbour Recertification
		Solent Dredge Permits Category A	11,180	10,535	11,180	(645)	
		Poole Order Aquaculture Leases	32,803	32,804	32,803	1	
		Net Fishing Permit	1,870	0	1,870	(1,870)	Not anticipated until later in the FY
		Pot Fishing Permit: Commercial	3,600	0	3,600	(3,600)	Byelaw currently undergoing MMO Quality Assurance
	Other	Pot Fishing Permit: Recreational	1,050	0	1,050	(1,050)	Byelaw currently undergoing MMO Quality Assurance
		BCP Council Shellfish Sampling	3,765	0	3,765	(3,765)	Not anticipated until later in the year
		Bank interest receivable	25,000	32,275	20,833	11,442	Levies received as lump sums so more in Reserve Bank Account in early months so more interest earned than pro rata split
		Unforseen income (including chartering)	2,800	2,931	2,333	598	
Defra Spending Review 2025-2026 (SR25: part 1)		140,000	50,000	140,000	(90,000)	Not all money yet received from DEFRA	
Income		1,211,658	1,065,574	1,207,024	(141,450)		
Compliance and Enforcement	Drone	Maintenance	3,000	715	2,500	(1,785)	Limited expenditure to date, anticipated to increase following battery replacement
		Fuel	2,400	1,664	2,000	(336)	
	Fisheries Protection Vessels	FPV Endeavour	12,000	1,922	10,000	(8,078)	FPV Protector based in West of District - operational priorities to date have been central and East.
		FPV Protector	24,000	15,476	20,000	(4,524)	A combination of operational priorities seeing use of FPV Endeavour centrally (PHDP) and an increase in drone work.
		FPV Vigilant	15,000	13,303	12,500	803	
	Projects	REM AI NFB Project (with D&S IFCA) Phase 1	5,000	4,425	5,000	(575)	
		REM AI PFB Project (with D&S IFCA) Phase 2	5,000	2,448	5,000	(2,553)	2.5k received from D&S IFCA as contribution for REM installation on vessel working across IFCA boundaries
	Other	Personal Protective Clothing	8,348	1,406	6,957	(5,551)	Expenditure has been relatively low this FY to date due to stability of team/ no new starters
		Enforcement Equipment	3,000	2,005	2,500	(495)	
		Industry Compliance Aids	1,800	619	1,500	(881)	
		MCSS	750	0	750	(750)	
		CLUe Intelligence System (annual rolling costs)	8,152	5,369	6,794	(1,425)	The MoU states 3x professional licences and 4x essential. Budgeted for 4 of each category.
		Legal Services - Prosecutions	20,000	10,708	16,667	(5,959)	By its nature this expenditure is not spread evenly across the year and is unpredictable
	Expenditure		124,317	73,312	105,392	(32,080)	
	Research & Policy	Developing Management	Byelaws - Adverts	9,099	0	7,580	(7,580)
Legal Services - Byelaws			2,000	0	1,667	(1,667)	No byelaws made this FY to date
Community Engagement			1,250	320	1,040	(720)	
Monitoring Programme		Poole Bivalve Survey	960	960	960	0	
		Solent Scallop Survey	4,320	1,920	2,880	(960)	
		Solent Bivalve Stock Assessment	2,880	1,440	1,440	0	
		Wheik Sampling	600	174	600	(426)	
Subscriptions & Memberships		Wheik Monitoring Programme Pilot CPUE	500	0	500	(500)	
		NFB Drift Net Project	2,000	0	2,000	(2,000)	Uncertain whether this will happen this FY
		Survey Equipment and Maintenance	800	599	667	(68)	
Other	Shellfish Association of GB	750	460	625	(165)		
	GIS Annual Licence	800	164	667	(503)		
Expenditure		34,259	11,076	28,926	(17,850)		
Business Services	Estate	Office - General	14,100	8,327	11,751	(3,424)	These variances more or less offset one another
		Contractors & Services	26,058	24,570	21,715	2,855	
		Office Rates	30,000	26,151	25,000	1,151	A number of service costs higher than (budgeted): Trade Recycling £882 (£400), water £728 (£600), Energy £10,280 (£9,000)
		Equipment (<£500)	2,000	0	1,667	(1,667)	No expenditure YTD
		Miscellaneous	2,000	364	1,667	(1,303)	Lower than anticipated YTD
	Finance	Financial Audit costs	3,600	250	0	250	
		Xero Software	396	350	330	20	
		Paycircle	2,367	3,011	1,973	1,038	Includes costs for last 3 months of 2024-25 FY invoiced late and annual charge for Annual Pension Return
	Insurances	Bank charges	600	610	500	110	
		Personnel	11,324	14,087	11,324	2,763	General increase in insurance premiums more than anticipated
	Vehicle Fleet Management	Vehicles	4,234	5,165	4,235	930	
		Marine Assets	22,457	23,467	22,457	1,010	General increase in insurance premiums more than anticipated
		Vehicle fuel	4,510	2,879	3,760	(881)	
		Maintenance	4,328	1,434	3,607	(2,173)	Costs YTD are MOT & Tyres for HF17 YXS, new battery for HG69 KVH, 20 days' cancelled tracking with Teletrac & Services for all 3 vehicles
		Roadside Assistance	105	124	105	19	
	Subscriptions	Vehicle Tracking (Verizon)	672	504	560	(56)	
		All Star Network Service Charge	48	139	40	99	
		Road Tax (combined)	1,310	945	1,090	(145)	
		General	1,900	1,290	1,583	(293)	
	Meetings	AlFCA Annual Membership	14,343	14,342	14,343	(1)	
		Authority Meetings	2,500	1,273	1,875	(602)	
		COG	250	0	188	(188)	
		AlFCA Annual Forum	250	0	188	(188)	
		NIMEG	250	153	188	(35)	
	HR	TAG	250	395	188	207	
Community Drop In Surgery		250	698	188	510		
Staff Costs	Employment costs	Recruitment	3,000	4,139	2,250	1,889	Recruitment of Facilities & Administration Officer
		Legal Services	5,500	1,458	4,583	(3,126)	Less needed YTD than budgeted but these costs are not evenly spread across the year
	Training & other	Salaries and Other Labour Costs	830,453	624,553	698,493	(73,940)	Savings reflect 1x IFCO sabbatical (4mo. of FY), Office Manager & Snr IFCO resignations in year (other savings offset by NJC increases)
		LGA Pension Scheme	103,255	88,268	86,045	2,223	
		National: MMO Trainer Contributions	4,980	0	4,980	(4,980)	Matter under discussion nationally between IFCAs and MMO (MMO recruitment freeze)
		National: Torquay Course (Operational)	3,900	0	3,900	(3,900)	Costst o be incurred in Feb 2026
		National: Torquay Course (Environment)	1,300	0	1,300	(1,300)	No course attendees this year - was budgeted for Snr IFCO to attend (since resigned)
		Boarding & Pacing	1,720	1,060	1,720	(660)	
		Mandatory: Operational Certificates & Training	4,328	1,214	3,607	(2,393)	Training costs not evenly spread across the year
		Mandatory Training (non-operational)	4,600	746	3,450	(2,704)	Training costs not evenly spread across the year
		Professional Development	3,200	957	2,667	(1,710)	Training costs not evenly spread across the year
		Wellbeing & Retention Initiatives	700	477	700	(223)	
Members Expenses	Expenses	4,250	2,062	3,200	(1,138)	Lower than anticipated YTD, costs not spread evenly across the year	
	Chairman's Fund	1,000	408	833	(425)		
Expenditure		1,129,589	857,486	952,650	(95,164)		
Capital Equipment	Premises Depreciation	5,195	4,375	4,330	45		
	Equipment Depreciation	3,488	3,523	2,907	616		
	Vehicles Depreciation	8,856	6,773	7,380	(607)		
	FPV's Depreciation	110,096	66,563	91,747	(25,184)	Budget higher than has proved necessary due to budgeted for depreciation on Protector replacement	
	Expenditure		127,635	81,233	106,364	(25,131)	

Southern IFCA Annual Strategy: 2026-2027

Report by the CEO

A. Purpose

To consider the Southern IFCA Annual Strategy for April 2026 to March 2027.

B. Recommendations

That Members approve the Annual Strategy for dissemination to the Secretary of State and publication on Southern IFCA's website prior to 31st March 2026.

C. Annex

Annex 1: Southern IFCA Annual Strategy: April 2026 to March 2027 (*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 2026 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 initiatives and projects.
- 1.4 The Annual Strategy is a high-level document which sits above and is embedded within the Compliance & Enforcement and Research & Policy Team Plans.

2.0 Annual Strategy 2026-2027

- 2.1 The Annual Strategy describes how Southern IFCA will continue to shape inshore fisheries and conservation management in accordance with statutory functions, whilst demonstrating how Southern's work aligns with the **UK Government's** ambitions and the **National IFCA Vision & High-Level Objectives**.
- 2.2 Building upon the National IFCA Vision, **Southern IFCA's vision** is to '*champion prosperous inshore fisheries founded upon thriving marine environments*'. The Southern IFCA vision recognises the symbiotic relationship which exists when well-managed inshore fisheries reap environmental and socioeconomic benefits. In championing these reciprocal relationships, Southern IFCA will continue to draw upon **three key themes** for 2026-2027 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 IFCA vision: **industry collaboration, co-development and partnership working**.

- 2.4 The 10 **Strategic Anchors**, as developed in the 2025-2026 Strategy will continue to ensure that Southern IFCAs work at a local level maintains alignment to wider contexts and directions at a national and international level.
- 2.5 An **Organsitional Anchor** continues to recognise that our ability to deliver our statutory functions is directly related to the skills and expertise that we develop and maintain across the team.
- 2.6 *New for 2026-2027* is the **Southern IFCA Mission**:



This mission has been translated into **specific measurable actions** in order to drive outcomes from intent (page 7, Annex 1).

- 2.7 In combination, **Delivery Metrics** draw together all the components of the Annual Strategy, and will, where relevant, demonstrate where these underpin Southern IFCAs work for 2026-2027, The graphics will also provide a golden thread drawing from the Annual Strategy into the Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan and the Research and Policy Team Plan.

3.0 Measuring Success & Impact

Southern IFCA will provide an account of performance in our delivery of the Annual Strategy in **The Southern IFCA Annual Report 2026-2027**, via demonstration of the achievement of and contribution to: the National IFCA Vision & High-Level Objectives, the Southern IFCA Vision, and relevant Delivery Metrics [10 x Strategic Anchors, 1 x Organsitional Anchor, 3 x Key Themes, Mission Statement & in Supporting Defra & delivering the Fisheries Objectives].

An example of how this is reported can be seen in the [2024-2025 Annual Report](#), where metric symbols denote where contributions or achievements relevant to the delivery metrics are achieved across all work areas:

2.1.1 Co-Designing Black Sea Bream Management

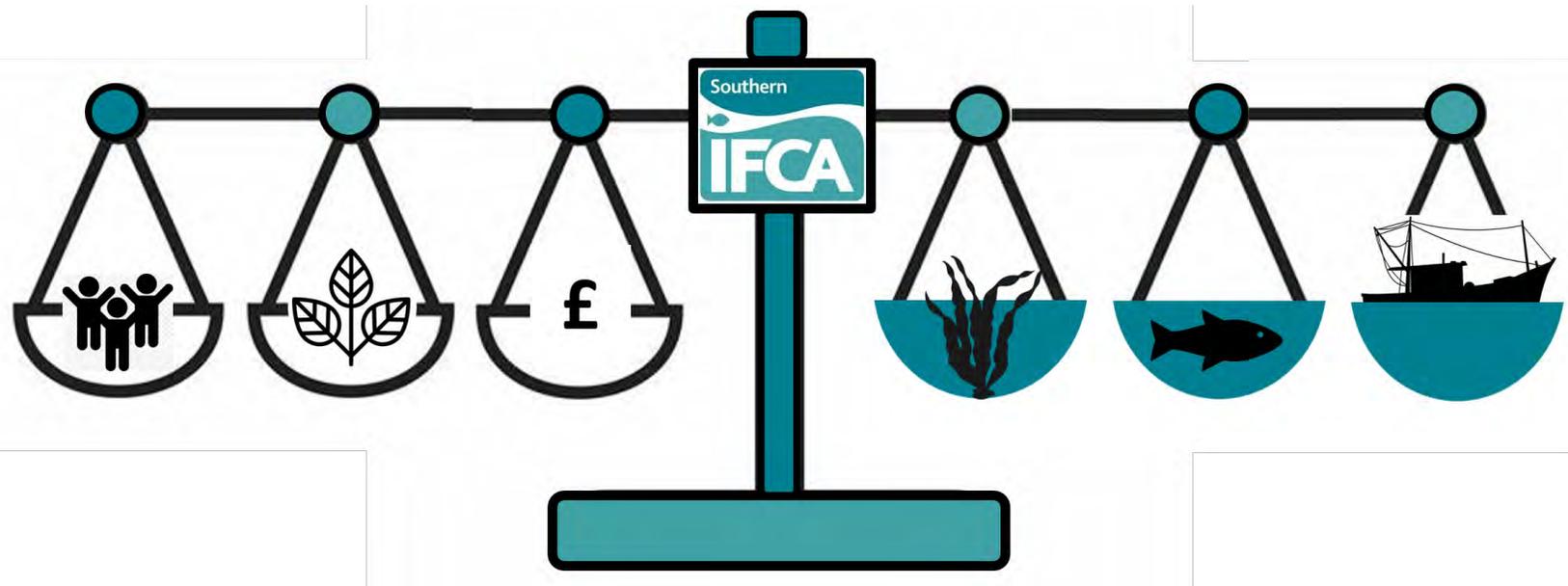


In our delivery we remain accountable to **Defra** (Central Government), our **six constituent Local Authorities** (Local Government), namely Dorset Council, BCP Council, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council, as well as the **stakeholder community** that we serve. The Annual Report will demonstrate the vital role that Southern IFCA deliver as a joint committee public service provider in the inshore marine environment.

In the Annual Reporting process, we will endeavor to evidence how our delivery impacts fisheries and conservation at varying levels, recognising the diversity of audience and stakeholder needs across the district.

“ 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 ”

IFCA National Vision



This Annual Strategy demonstrates how **Southern IFCA will continue to shape inshore fisheries and conservation management** in accordance with our statutory core functions under the **Marine & Coastal Access Act, 2009**, in addition to our duties under the **Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017** (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019), **The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981** and the **Poole Harbour Fishery Order 2015** 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**.

Further, it will demonstrate how Southern IFCA's work aligns with the Government's shared ambition under the **Joint Fisheries Statement (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**.

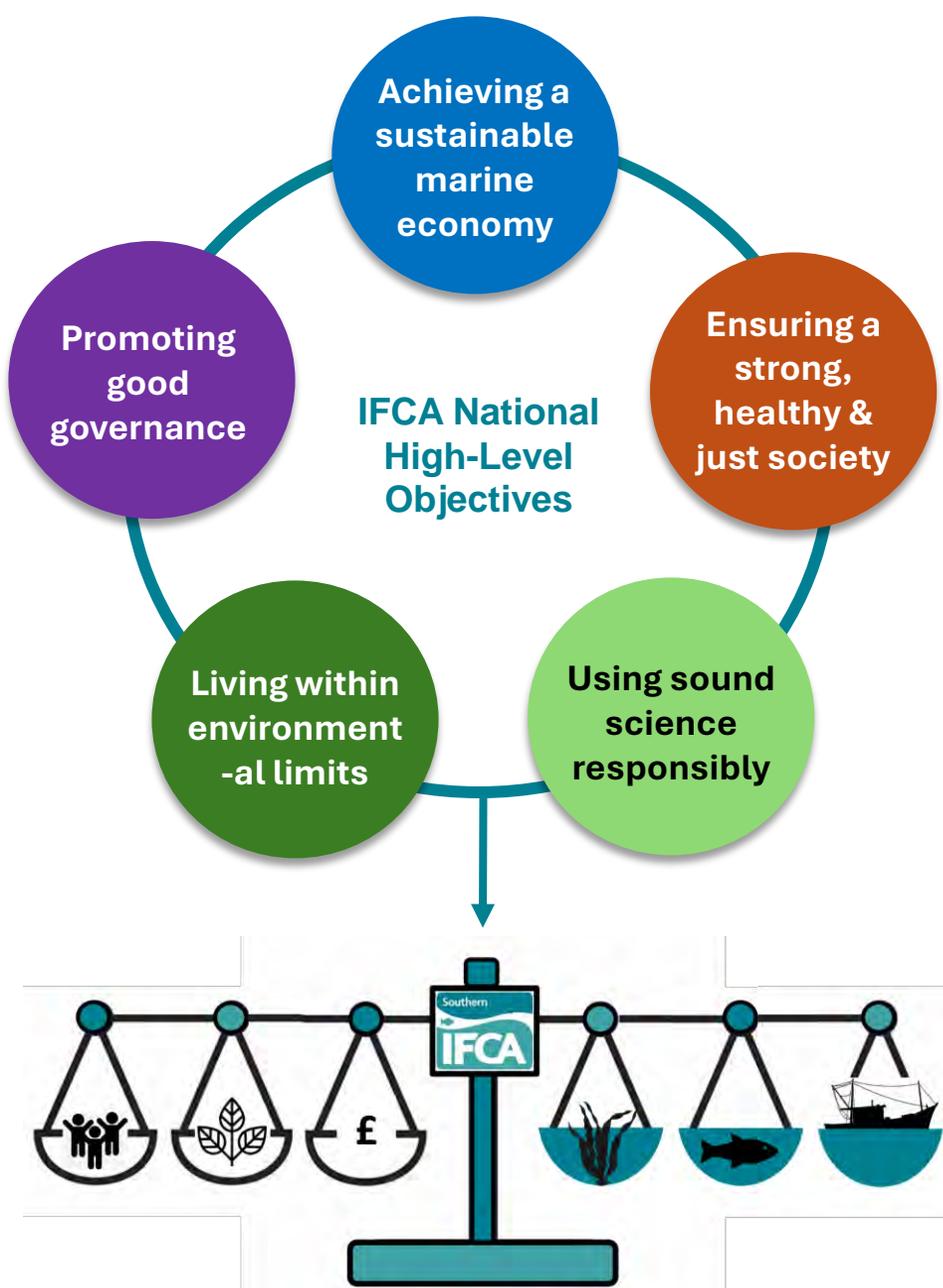
The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 require fishery bodies in the UK to take action to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status (GES) in all UK waters. **The UK Marine Strategy** is a key pillar of marine policy in the UK and the JFS is a cross-cutting measure which will help to deliver GES for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

In accordance with the Government's **Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2025** which builds upon the **25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP)** and key legislative frameworks to include the **Environment Act 2021** 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**, 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**. Additionally, The Act places a requirement upon all public authorities to consider what they can do to conserve & enhance biodiversity. This **Biodiversity Duty** is intrinsically entwined into the work that Southern deliver and we will continue to align our work with the commitments captured in the **National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (NBSAP)**.

In accordance with the **UK Net Zero Strategy** and with relation to ongoing works focusing on the harnessing of blue carbon habitats, Southern IFCA will endeavour to both identify and instigate operational changes to minimise emissions, as well as seek to support & champion blue carbon initiatives.



Ten **Strategic Anchors** will ensure that Southern IFCA's work at a local level, maintains alignment to wider contexts & directions at national and international level:



Economic growth: Supporting the UK Government's vision via development and maintenance of effective & adaptive novel fisheries management spanning wild (fish & shellfish) and farmed stocks (shellfish).



Food security: Facilitating thriving inshore fisheries & aquaculture via sound & informed governance for local, national & international gain.

Supporting **thriving & resilient communities:** Recognising how we can make a difference to our fishing communities, supporting opportunity, diversification and new ways of working.



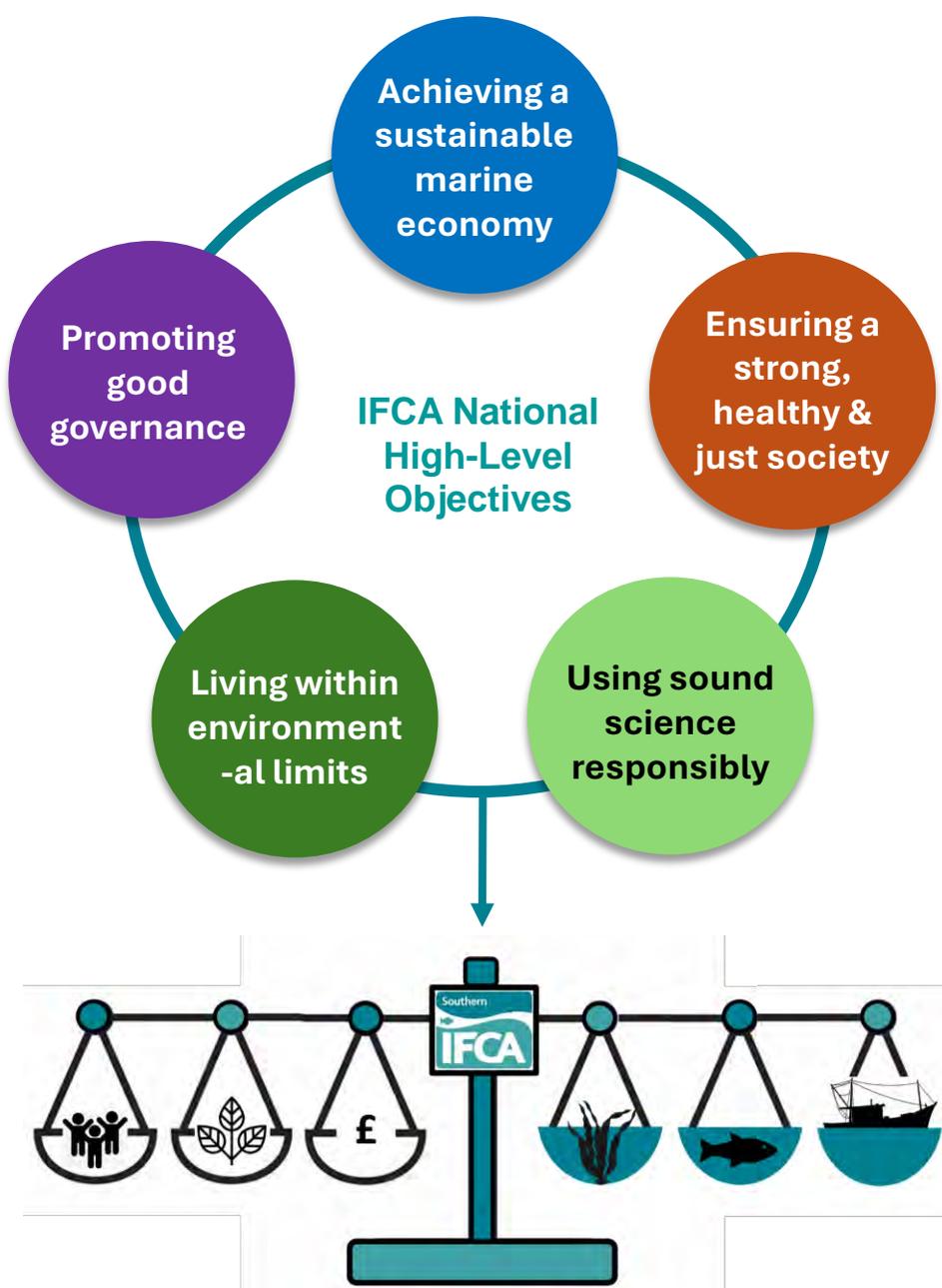
Championing the positive role that inshore fishers have as **custodians of a sustainable inshore marine environment.**



Evolving research methodologies in line with recognised standards to inform local objectives & national considerations.



Develop, implement & review local management interventions with **proportionality when employing best available evidence.**



Supporting Nature's Recovery: To continue to support the Government target of achieving 30% protections in the marine environment by 2030.

Build awareness of the implications of **Climate Change at a District level**, drawing from & informing national objectives.

Deliver well managed inshore **fisheries which co-exist & thrive alongside achievement of conservation protections.**

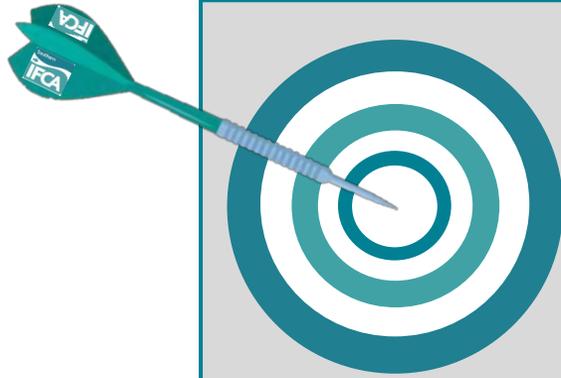
Inform national discussions on robust inshore fisheries management & conservation governance.



An **Organisational Anchor** recognises that our ability to deliver our statutory functions is directly related to the skills & expertise that we develop, nurture and maintain across the team:

Enable & resource a high performing team, investing in staff & their professional attainment, the work environment & the provision of suitable tools to **create an enabling and flourishing work culture.**





To foster empowered engagement that gives **[stakeholders]** a voice, builds confidence, drives meaningful actions & creates ownership

[Commercial Fisherman]

[Aquaculture Operators]

[Recreational Fishers]

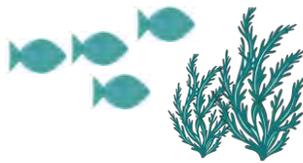
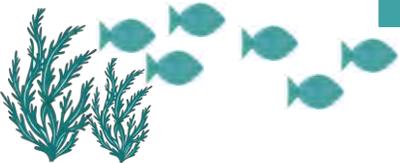
[Charter Boat Operators]

[Conservationists]

[Recreational Anglers]

[Merchants & Processors]

[Local Communities across Dorset, Hampshire & the IOW]



Give a voice



- To evolve the format of Community Drop-In Surgeries beyond fixed locations, **meeting stakeholders in their everyday environments** - from the shore to the sea.
- To **rejuvenate sector group meetings** and formats to increase stakeholder opportunities to raise community interests with the IFCA and other relevant regulators.

Build confidence



- To **address common themes** raised during 2025-2026 Community Drop-In Surgeries.
- To pilot an **Inshore Regulators Forum** relevant to the Southern IFCA District to increase stakeholders understanding of regulator functions in inshore waters.

Drive meaningful action



- To review relevant process documents to improve accessibility for stakeholders in both their understanding of decision-making processes and **where they can input into the process**, identifying clear pathways from problem profile → intervention.
- To improve **feedback loops** following changes in fisheries or conservation management.

Create ownership



- To demonstrate where **stakeholder engagement has shaped management decisions** and explain where this has not been reflected and why.
- Demonstrate how fishers are collectively **driving stewardship via shared accountability**.



- % attendance
- % active participation
- % of stakeholders contributing ideas or feedback
- no. stakeholder engaged
- diversity of contributors (varying sectors)
- % of decisions that reference stakeholder input
- no. of stakeholder led initiatives active in district
- % compliance with existing measures

2026-27: Delivery Metrics

In combination, the **delivery metrics** drawn together in this table will, where relevant, underpin Southern’s work for 2026-2027. The graphics will provide a golden thread drawing from this strategy into the [Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan](#) & the [Research & Policy Team Plan](#) with outcomes being reported in the 2026-2027 Annual Report.

<h2>Strategic Anchors</h2>		<h2>Key Themes</h2>		<h2>2026-27 Mission</h2>	
Economic Growth		Employing proportionality when considering best available evidence		Industry Collaboration	
Food Security		Supporting Nature’s Recovery		Co-development	
Resilient Communities		Building awareness of Climate Change implications		Working in partnership	
Fishers as Custodians		Managing fisheries which co-exist & thrive alongside conservation protections			
Evolving Research Methodologies		Inform national discussions on robust inshore fisheries & conservation management			
		<h2>Organisational Anchor</h2>			
		Facilitating a flourishing culture			
				<h2>Supporting Defra</h2>	
				Fisheries Management Plans*	
				Marine Protected Areas*	
				Marine Consents*	
				Net Zero/Blue Carbon*	

Fisheries Objectives	Sustainability	Ecosystem	Bycatch	National Benefit
	Precautionary	Scientific Evidence	Equal Access	Climate Change

*Ongoing support of Defra’s delivery of Fisheries Act objectives subject to 2026-2029 Spending Review outcomes.



The **Southern IFCA Annual Report 2026-27**, due for publication in Summer 2027, will provide an account of how Southern IFCA have preformed in their delivery of this Annual Strategy, via achievement of and contribution to, the **National IFCA Vision & High-Level Objectives**, the **Southern IFCA Vision, Strategic Anchors** & the **2026-2027 Mission Statement**. In our delivery we remain accountable to **Defra** (Central Government), our **six constituent Local Authorities** (Local Government), namely Dorset Council, BCP Council, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council, as well as the **stakeholder community** that we serve. **The Annual Report will demonstrate the vital role that Southern IFCA deliver as a joint committee public service provider in the inshore marine environment.**

Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan: April 2026 to March 2027 Decision Paper

Report by PDCO Dell

1. Purpose

To consider Southern IFCA's Compliance & Enforcement Team (CET) Plan for April 2026 to March 2027, in line with the Southern IFCA Annual Strategy 2026-2027.

2. Recommendation(s)

- That Members approve the Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan for April 2026 to March 2027.

3. Supporting Documentation for Further Information

- **Annex 1:** Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan April 2026 to March 2027
-

1.0 Introduction

- 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.
- The **Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan April 2026 to March 2027** (CET Plan) sets out the priorities for the CET for the period April 2026 to March 2027, in line with the Southern IFCA **Annual Strategy (Plan) for 2026-2027** to deliver against the National IFCA Vision, Southern IFCA Vision & Key Themes, Strategic Anchors and 2026-2027 Mission, shaping inshore fisheries and conservation management in line with statutory duties and in support of the Government's Vision. In addition, the CET Plan captures 'Business as Usual' which is underpinned by the Success Criteria under the High-Level Objectives.

2.0 Summary of Key Points

- This year the CET will be focusing on **Driving Operational Effectiveness** across all areas of the team's work, **identifying and introducing operational efficiencies**. In addition, the CET will **continue to explore the use of REM and AI solutions** via implementation of small- scale inshore pilot projects as well supporting the **Southern IFCA 2026/27 Mission** which is already embedded in section 7.0 Community and Stakeholder Engagement, this year CET will aim **to foster empowered engagement that gives stakeholders a voice, build confidence, driving meaningful actions and creates ownership**. Another CET focus for this year is the **Implementation of the Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles in 3 of Dorset Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)**.

3.0 Next Steps

- Once approved, the CET Plan will be published on the Southern IFCA website.
- The Southern IFCA Annual Report 2026-27, due for publication in summer 2027, will provide an account of how the CET have performed in the delivery of the plan.



Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan

April 2026 – March 2027



Section 1.0 Purpose

The Compliance & Enforcement Team (CET) Plan sets out the priorities for the team for the period April 2026 to March 2027, feeding directly from and encompassing the Key Themes, Strategic Anchors, the Mission and Delivery Metrics identified in Southern IFCA’s Annual Strategy. In addition, the CET Plan captures ‘**Business as Usual**’ which is underpinned by the Success Criteria under the High-Level Objectives.

This year the CET will be focussing **on Driving Operational Effectiveness** across all areas of the team’s work **identifying and introducing operational efficiencies**. In addition, the CET will continue to explore the use of **REM and AI solutions** via implementation of small- scale inshore pilot projects as well **supporting the Southern IFCA 2026/27 Mission to foster empowered engagement that gives stakeholders a voice, build confidence, driving meaningful actions and creates ownership**. Another CET focus for this year is the **Implementation of the Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles** in 3 of Dorset Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs).

Section 2.0 Introduction to Compliance & Enforcement

Southern 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 Authority’s 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 its 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 Southern IFCA’s 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 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-development 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.

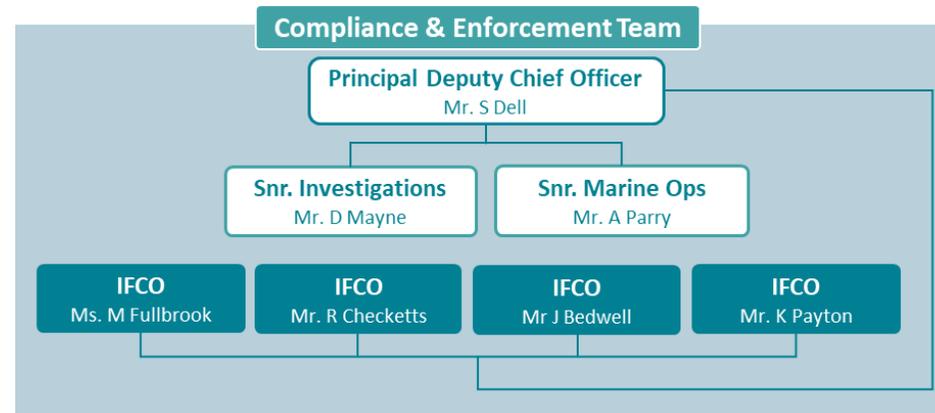
2.1 The Compliance & Enforcement Team

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.

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 Patrol Vessels

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 support limited survey work.

The Southern IFCA FPV fleet currently consists of three 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, our third vessel is FPV Vigilant which entered service in 2024, Vigilant is 10.5m Cabin RHIB that is based in Poole, the Cabin RHIB has future proofed 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), all FPVs have thermal imaging camera capability that can record for evidential purposes, all 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 change to **coding requirements which will affect current ways of working through the introduction of Work Boat Code Edition 3, in 2026/27 the CET will continue to implement the code and aligning Southern IFCA operations and working with other IFCAs to ensure requirements of the new code are met** including the introduction of training pathways within Marine Operations and implementation of Seaflux a cloud based vessel management system.

3.2 Drones

To complement our operational activity, 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 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 are opportunities for the drone to carry out survey work with the Authorities Research and Policy Team (RPT) who also gather evidence for fisheries management development.

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 in 2026/27.

Section 4.0 Delivering IFCA Success Criteria 2 via Business As Usual

The Compliance and Enforcement Team have the following functions primarily delivering **IFCA Success Criteria 2 “IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime”**, the Principal Deputy Chief Officer of the CET will submit a quarterly Compliance Report 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 feeding to the reporting mechanisms for Southern IFCAs delivery metrics.

4.1 Compliance & Enforcement Framework

The Authority is committed to a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime. The 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)

4.2 Intelligence Led-Risk Based Enforcement (ILRBE)

4.2.1 Intelligence

Intelligence reports (IRs) are the Authority’s method of recording, storing, collating and the dissemination of intelligence that complement our risk-based approach. CLUE is an integrated intelligence and investigation management software system, which is shared with the MMO, 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. IFCAs 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 illegal activity, net pot, hand gathering etc.

The reporting Officer will evaluate information received and complete the IR in line with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). 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.

4.2.2 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 PDCO to prioritise the deployment of resources at their disposal.

Southern IFCA's TCG meets every four weeks and is informed by 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 the previous four weeks priorities and considers 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

4.2.3 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 Plan.

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. Updates will be applied to the Register when necessary throughout the year, this will be fully reviewed in 2026/27 in line with newly introduced management measures.

4.2.4 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 IFCA's 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

4.2.5 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 PDCO 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 PDCO 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 PDCO 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 assist inshore fishers. The focus on the sustainability of Southern IFCAs fisheries activity in the commercial and recreational sectors and to support its local communities.** It is important that the PDCO 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 2026/27 The PDCO from the CET will attend all internal working groups as the management measures are progressed and are outlined in the Annual Strategy 2026/27 and referred to in the RPT Plan.

6.0 Legislative Functions Specific to Compliance and Enforcement

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 for the management, sustainability and protection of the marine environment and fisheries within the District. **The Authority has a suite of 24 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 Southeast 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 vessels participating in the Solent fishery are on a smaller scale, predominantly under 10m. CET will continue to work closely with the SDP holders 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 25th May to 23rd of December 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 14th 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 inspect dredge configuration during the season for compliance with the permit conditions and to monitor and record any dredge or fishing equipment 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.

6.1.4 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

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 PDCO 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 7 codes of practice that the Authority has introduced 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. For more information on the Southern IFCA codes of practice: [All Regulations : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)

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 continued delivery of the Southern IFCA Mission in 2026/27 is fundamental to successful compliance and co-operation of stakeholders from the recreational sea angling, commercial fishing sectors and wider stakeholders. 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 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 in this year's overarching Mission!**

Part of the process of introducing new Byelaws and translating of Authority decisions is ensure adequate training and operational briefings are provided to the Officers. This will allow Officers to be fully aware of the legislation and empowered when communicating with stakeholders from the industry and wider stakeholder in the local community.

Southern IFCA Officers are continually engaging when carrying out 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.

Stakeholder engagement is important for gaining trust that gives stakeholders a voice, builds confidence, drives meaningful actions and creates ownership 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 is the focus for 2026/27.

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 SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT VISION: 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 fishery's 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 2026/267 and priority areas are described in the right-hand column:

Regulator	Background	Planned work for 2026-2027
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) FPV Vigilant taskings under the agreement for the provision of services in respect of marine conservation, wildlife, marine licensing and fisheries at sea. Mobile Working App FMP Implementation
Environment Agency (EA)	A non-departmental public body responsible to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). For rivers and out to 6 miles on migratory species	Renewing of cross warranting arrangements. Focus on Netting activity within estuarine & Harbour areas within the IFCA District. Joint work utilising Drones for monitoring purposes.
Dorset and Hampshire Police	Marine Sections and Rural Crime Teams	Support Operation Seabird through the Marine PAW group & 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 activities.
Harbour Authorities	Harbour Masters & Staff	Joint work where fishing regulations overlap including the marking of fishing gear.

9.0 TEAM FOCUS AREAS

9.1 Implementation of Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles

The **focus for 2026/27 will be the Implementation of the Black Seabream Co-Developed (CoD) Principles, CET will focus on Engagement, delivery of information and monitoring compliance with the measures** that apply within the 3 Dorset MCZs, which include a MCRS of 28cm, MaxCRS of 38cm, Recreational Bag Limit of 6 fish per day per person, Guidance on fish handling and a data collection programme, in season 1 which is the 1st April to 31st July this will be carried out using the following methods;



At sea patrols



Port visits



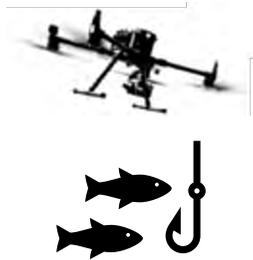
Inspections at sea



Landing/in port inspections



Inspections of merchant/processing premises



Drone flights

Gear inspections

The Authority recognises that the greatest way to ensure compliance is to increase knowledge and understanding of the measures in place, CET will focus on engagement with all relevant sectors and raising awareness of the CoD Principles through multiple engagement methods to achieve a collaborative delivery which seeks to maximise compliance.

In addition to data gathered by Southern IFCA relating to monitoring compliance with CoD Principles, external monitoring tools such as VMS, MMO catch data and the provision of information by other regulators through the TCG process will also be collated, where available, to support monitoring and the provision of data related to BSB fisheries.

Data will be recorded by the CET as part of targeted and non-targeted patrol and inspections which will be used to develop compliance and enforcement metrics **which will feed into analysis following the end of season 1.**

9.2 Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The Joint Fisheries Statement provides detail about how the UK authorities including IFCA will deliver on the eight objectives set out in the Fisheries Act 2020. This includes exploring the use of technologies such as remote electronic monitoring for scientific purposes and to aid the sustainable management and control of fisheries. It also commits the fisheries policy authorities to working with the fishing industry and interested organisations to develop and implement effective fisheries management. Technological monitoring solutions for scientific research and fisheries management are also the international direction of travel and are part of a wider trend towards digital transformation. **Southern IFCA intends to contribute to this work, leading and shaping how remote electronic monitoring and artificial intelligence is deployed and utilised in our inshore waters.**

Southern IFCA's ambition is for the REM and AI project 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.**

In 2026/27 Southern IFCA will continue the project focussing on two priority fisheries which are as follows.

- Pot fishing (vessels under 12m). The under-proposal Pot Fishing Byelaw could introduce pot limits to this fishery. AI could count strings of pots as they are hauled onto the vessel, in which the AI analyses video of the haul and simply identifies and counts the pots one after another. This system could also be used in conjunction with sensors to help determine the start and end of a string. This process would allow for the pot limits to be enforced.
- Towed gear that operate within MPAs (Scallop and Clam Dredging & Trawling).

Southern IFCA will not mandate the use of REM for vessels for the purpose of this project. Instead, the project will rely on volunteers from the fishing industry to install REM on their vessels. We will work with the industry to demonstrate the benefits to them of using this technology and be transparent about what data is collected and how it will be used to try and encourage participation in the project.

All information relating to this horizon priority can be found in the **Exploration of the use of REM and AI in inshore fisheries management in the Southern IFCA District report.**

9.3 Driving Operational Effectiveness

This year the CET will also be focussing **on Driving Operational Effectiveness** across all areas of the team's work **identifying and introducing operational efficiencies. Southern IFCA will be looking to work collaboratively with key partners on the development of Control and Enforcement Systems that support operational delivery**, one of the initiative is the Mobile Working, part of its vision is support enforcement team with digital technology to increase enforcement and compliance activities by allowing officers to conduct more efficient and frequent inspections reducing administrative burden on operational teams. It allows and enables remote access to data and the ability to enter inspection finding on a mobile device. It will allow for more standardised inspections across partner agencies.

CET will also be continuing its work using Clue, Clue is an electronic platform for investigation and incident management, all functionality is designed to remove duplication of effort as well as **enhancing the information Operational Officers can access on the coast**, ensuring that operational officers have the right information at the right time.

We will continue to **review and improve our delivery of marine operations through the continuing use of FPV Vigilant taking into account our obligations under Workboat Code 3 and implementing Seaflux, a cloud based vessel management system, in order to** maximise our efficiency in Marine Operations, Southern IFCA intends to work closely with government partners maximising existing agreements for the provision of services in respect of marine conservation, wildlife, marine licensing and fisheries at sea with the MMO.

Finally, the CET will work to gain trust that gives stakeholders a voice, builds confidence, drives meaningful actions and creates ownership from the commercial and recreational sectors, communicating to all stakeholders and maximising better compliance whether it be a voluntary or a legal requirement in 2026/27.



Sam Dell
Principal Deputy Chief Officer- Compliance and Enforcement Team
Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
April 2026

Research & Policy Team Plan: April 2026 to March 2027 Decision Paper

Report by DCO Birchenough

1. Purpose

To consider Southern IFCA's Research & Policy Team Plan for April 2026 to March 2027, setting out the priorities for the RPT and creating a golden thread from the Southern IFCA Annual Strategy 2026-2027.

2. Recommendation(s)

- That Members approve the Research & Policy Team Plan for April 2026 to March 2027.

3. Supporting Documentation for Further Information

- **Annex 1: Research & Policy Team Plan April 2026 to March 2027**

1.0 Introduction

- The Research & Policy Team Plan April 2026 to March 2027 (RPT Plan) sets out the priorities for the RPT for the period April 2026 to March 2027, creating a golden thread from the Southern IFCA Annual Strategy 2026-2027 to deliver against the National IFCA Vision, Southern IFCA Vision & Key Themes, Strategic Anchors and 2026-2027 Mission, shaping inshore fisheries and conservation management in line with statutory duties and in support of the Government's Vision.
- The RPT delivers five main functions, **3 of which** form the RPT's core functions:
 - Developing Fisheries Management Interventions
 - Monitoring Inshore Fisheries Projects & Emerging Work
 - Reviewing Fisheries Management Interventions
 - Engagement

2.0 Summary of Key Points

- In addition to the delivery of business as usual, the following two **RPT Focus Areas** have been identified (*RPT Plan, Section 3, p.10*):

Review of management of dredge fisheries in The Solent

To undertake a wider review of the management for dredge fishing in The Solent, regulated under The Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw (SDPB), taking account of changes in species composition and the development of the fishery since the introduction of the SDPB in 2021. Utilising best available evidence, including from monitoring and stakeholder engagement, the review will inform & deliver a long-term management plan to achieve sustainable management of the fishery alongside the marine environment.

Permit Condition Review for the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery

To ensure the continued delivery of sustainable management for the dredge fishery in Poole Harbour, a review of permit conditions will be undertaken in line with the process in the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Byelaw, taking particular account of fishing gear management & application within the fishery in the context of Poole Harbour as an MPA, and seeking to further develop the Monitoring & Control Plan to support sustainable stock management for key commercial species.

- The RPT Plan also details ongoing work within the RPT (*RPT Plan, Section 5, p.14*) relating to:
 - **Supporting Defra delivery of Fisheries Act objectives** - encompassing work on Fisheries Management Plans, Marine Sustainable Development and Marine Protected Areas & Good Environmental Status
 - **Reviews of management interventions** – which includes reviews for the Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles for Year 1, Net Permits under the Net Fishing Byelaw for Year 3, an initial exploration of Legacy Byelaws and a watching brief for the Minimum Conservation Reference Size

- **Monitoring inshore fisheries** – detailing the Southern IFCA monitoring program through survey work and data collation/analysis
- The RPT will also seek to develop communications and engagement to support the Southern IFCA: 2026-2027 Mission (*RPT Plan, Section 4, p.13*). Specific opportunities to contribute to this Mission which will be implemented in 2026-2027 are:

Technical Advisory Sub-Committee Reports	To explore integration of public-facing summary sections for each technical report cover sheet to provide an overview of the report contents and key points utilising non-technical language.
Community Engagement Outputs	To develop factsheet style, public-facing documents reflecting outputs of community engagement events led by Southern IFCA, providing detail on feedback provided and, where relevant, how this is reflected or how it couldn't be reflected in any resulting management development or reviews. These can then be made available by Southern IFCA and support ongoing coastal engagement.
Survey Outputs	To develop summary documents for survey reports in an easily accessible format, providing a concise overview of the key findings from the survey and how the data is used by Southern IFCA to inform management. This would provide an additional opportunity to outline where monitoring work feeds into wider workstreams like the FMP programme and encourage engagement with stakeholders on the coast both as part of surveys and more widely to facilitate discussion on data collection & how the community can get involved.

2.2 Member Working Groups

- Throughout the delivery of the RPT Plan, there will be a need to hold Working Groups of Authority Technical Members to discuss and progress workstreams.
- In order to take a proactive approach to this process and maximise potential for input from the Authority, Working Groups will be timetabled initially on the following dates for the 2026-2027 year, during a time period between 13:00-17:00.
 - Thursday 10th April 2026
 - Thursday 23rd July 2026
 - Thursday 15th October 2026
 - Tuesday 12th January 2027
- This will provide a marker for orientating workstream delivery but still remains a flexible process, with any changes or additional dates determined as required.

3.0 Next Steps

- Once approved, the RPT Plan will be published on the Southern IFCA website.
- The Southern IFCA Annual Report 2026-27, due for publication in summer 2027, will provide an account of how the RPT have performed in the delivery of the RPT Plan.



Research & Policy Team Plan

April 2026 to March 2027



Section 1: Introduction

The Research & Policy Team Plan (RPT Plan) sets out the priorities for the RPT for the period April 2026 to March 2027, creating a golden thread from the Southern IFCA Annual Strategy 2026-2027 to deliver against the **National IFCA Vision, Southern IFCA Vision & Key Themes, Strategic Anchors** and **2026-2027 Mission**, shaping inshore fisheries and conservation management in line with statutory duties and in support of the Government's Vision.



In order to deliver the RPT Plan and fulfil Southern IFCA's function as a competent regulator, the need to align work to a strategic direction is recognised. With many competing and evolving objectives, it is important that a considered overview is maintained in this 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 District stakeholders moving through 2026 and beyond.



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

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



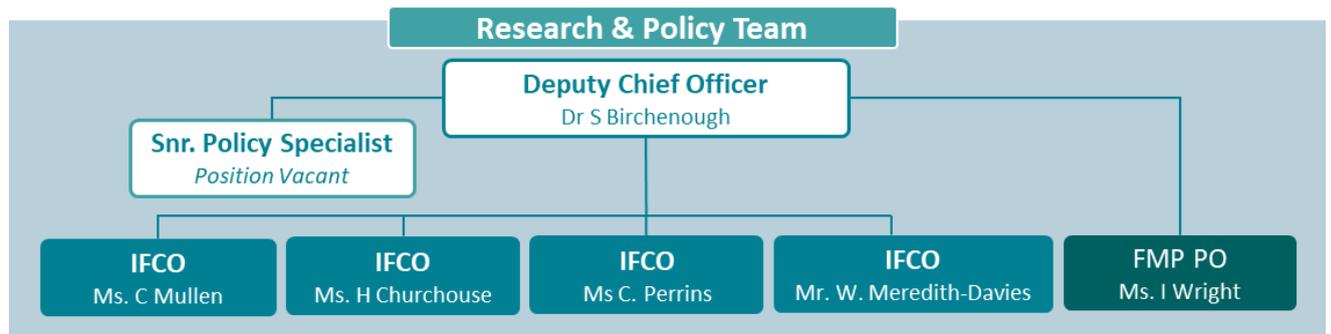
1.1 Research & Policy Team Function

The Southern IFCA Research and Policy Team (RPT) delivers 5 main functions, 3 of which form the RPT'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 The Research & Policy Team

Working under the Chief Officer, the RPT is led by a Deputy Chief Officer who oversees the work of the RPT. The RPT are further supported by the Business Services Team (BST) and work closely with the Compliance & Enforcement Team (CET).



1.3 RPT Core Functions



1.3.1 Developing and Reviewing Fisheries Management Interventions

Legislative Functions Specific to Developing Management

When developing or reviewing 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 considerations, specifically whether the fishery occurs within, adjacent or outside of a Marine Protected Area (MPA).

Legal duties relevant to different types of MPA

- **Outside of an MPA:** 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 an MCZ:** Under Section (154) of the MaCAA, Southern IFCA must ensure that the Conservation Objectives of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) within the District are furthered. 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 Regulations 2017, as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, 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, 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. Consideration of SSSI marine components is often encompassed under overlapping SAC, SPA or MCZ designations, consideration of SSSI marine components without an overlapping SAC, SPA or MCZ is in line with wider duties under 153 of MaCAA.

Overarching R&P Policy Principles

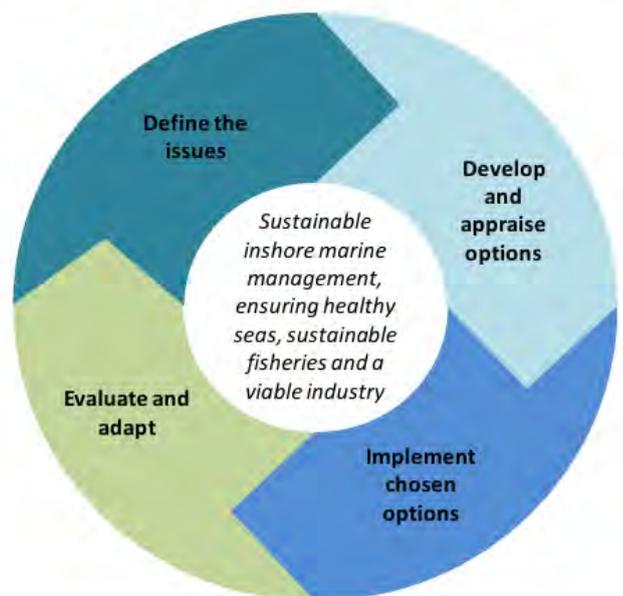
With the overarching context provided by legislative function, Southern IFCA must also adhere to policy principles, which includes Defra’s best practice guidance when developing, reviewing and implementing inshore management.

- **The use of best available evidence**
- **Where appropriate and within legislative remit, undertake a risk-based approach to assess the potential risks that fishing activity may present to the marine environment, providing an evidence base for prioritising the development of management measures, which will enable delivery of duties in an evidence based, strategic and proportionate way**
- **The use of the precautionary principle in the absence of evidence**
- **Transparent & consistent decision making**

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 Defra¹ which sets out best practice for IFCAs in making byelaws.

Operating under this guidance, the Evidence Based Marine Management Cycle is used to inform the management process with the ability for management to be **evaluated and adaptive** recognised as a key element to ensure that management remains appropriate and proportionate in relation to overarching objectives and goals.

Evidence Based Marine Management Cycle



¹ [Defra. IFCA Byelaw Making Guidance, 2011](#)

Management Development Process

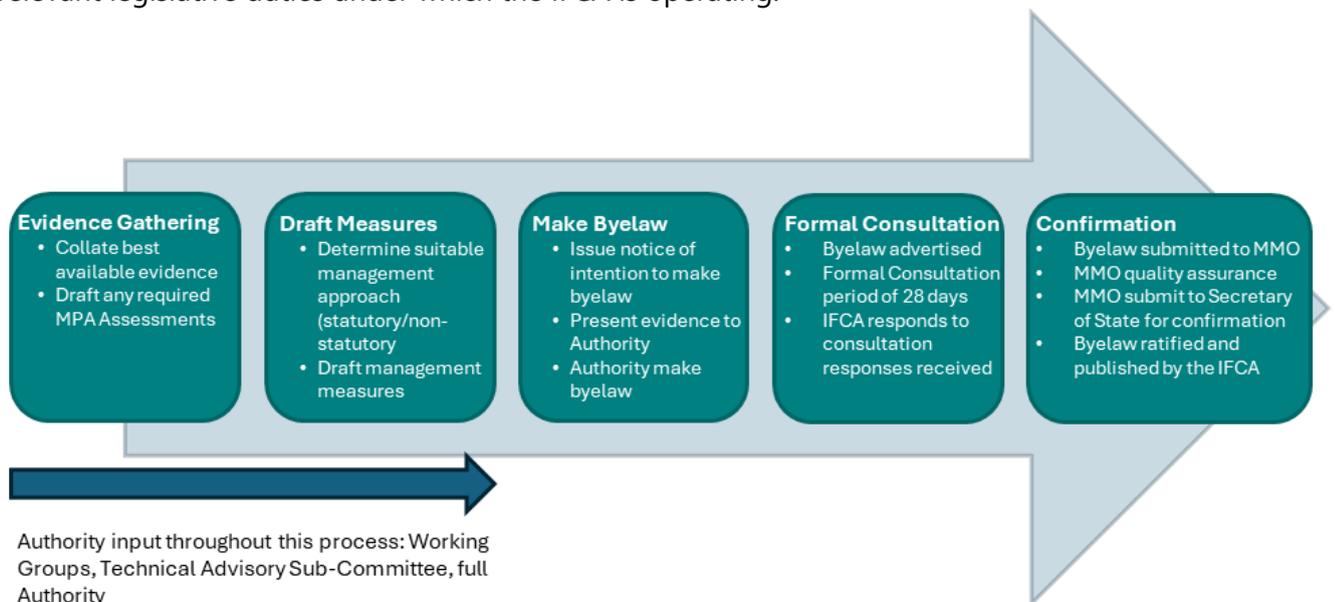
In developing management interventions, IFCAs can explore both statutory and non-statutory interventions. Statutory interventions commonly are in the form of byelaws, non-statutory interventions may be codes of conduct or practice or fishery guidance measures.

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.*

Byelaws must be compatible 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. The stages of the process which are followed in working under this Guidance are outlined below, 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.



Development of Management process map, based on Defra byelaw making guidance

Management Review Process

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:

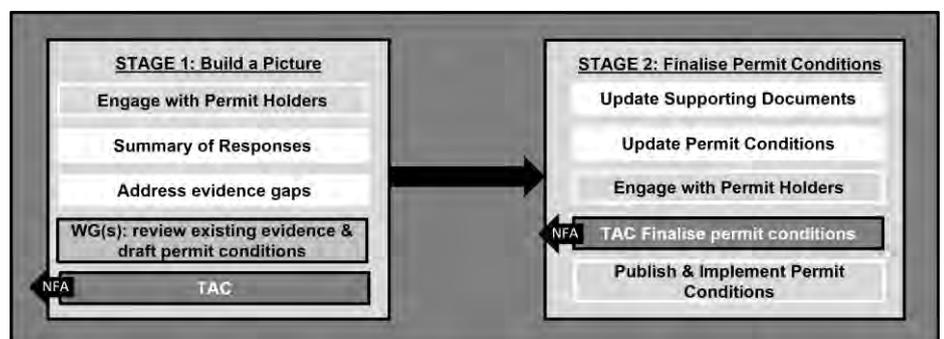
- Review periods stipulated in a byelaw, Management Intentions Document or Monitoring & Control Plan (M&CP)
- Trigger points or thresholds being reached under a M&CP
- Review of permit conditions
- Newly emerging evidence, new MPA designations, changes to legislative duties or Government targets
- Requirements under a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)
- Input from the stakeholder community identifying common themes and through community engagement, e.g. Community Drop-In Surgeries, Permit Byelaw Community Forums

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 below.

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.



Permit Condition Review Process Map



1.3.2 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. This data is used to 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 **partnership working** and **industry collaboration** to help facilitate the undertaking of the Monitoring Programme.

Data Collection

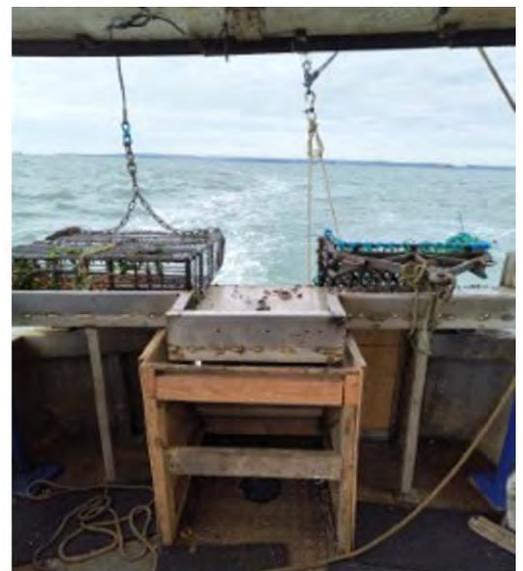
Where additional evidence needs are identified to support future management decisions, or to work in alignment with nationally agreed directions in fisheries management through the publication of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs), the RPT will explore available opportunities for gathering this data, utilising 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 understandings of shellfish and fish biology.

Marine Assets

To facilitate the delivery of the RPT monitoring program, Southern IFCA seek to work with local fishers 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 understandings 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 the main focus aligned with the role of the Compliance and Enforcement Team.



Permitted vessel in the Solent Dredge Permit Fishery sampling for the Solent Scallop Survey



The Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan for 2026-2027 outlines more detail on the Authority's operational assets.



1.3.3 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 on a case-by-case basis with proposals reviewed in line with the RPT Plan 2026-2027 and the Annual Strategy 2026-2027.



1.3.4 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 delivery through the sharing of information/data and the use of visual aids to support understanding of management measures, fishing activity/effort, the location of designated sites, features and wider sensitive habitats. In addition, this expertise benefits the presentation of survey and research outcomes 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 under the Southern IFCA **Organisation Anchor**, to allow continued development of capabilities.



1.3.5 Engagement

Engagement through the RPT is instrumental to the delivery of all other functions. The RPT attend local, regional and national meetings/open days/information events, participate in fisher led forums, consult & engage on management interventions and facilitate the communication of information from other regulatory bodies and government agencies.

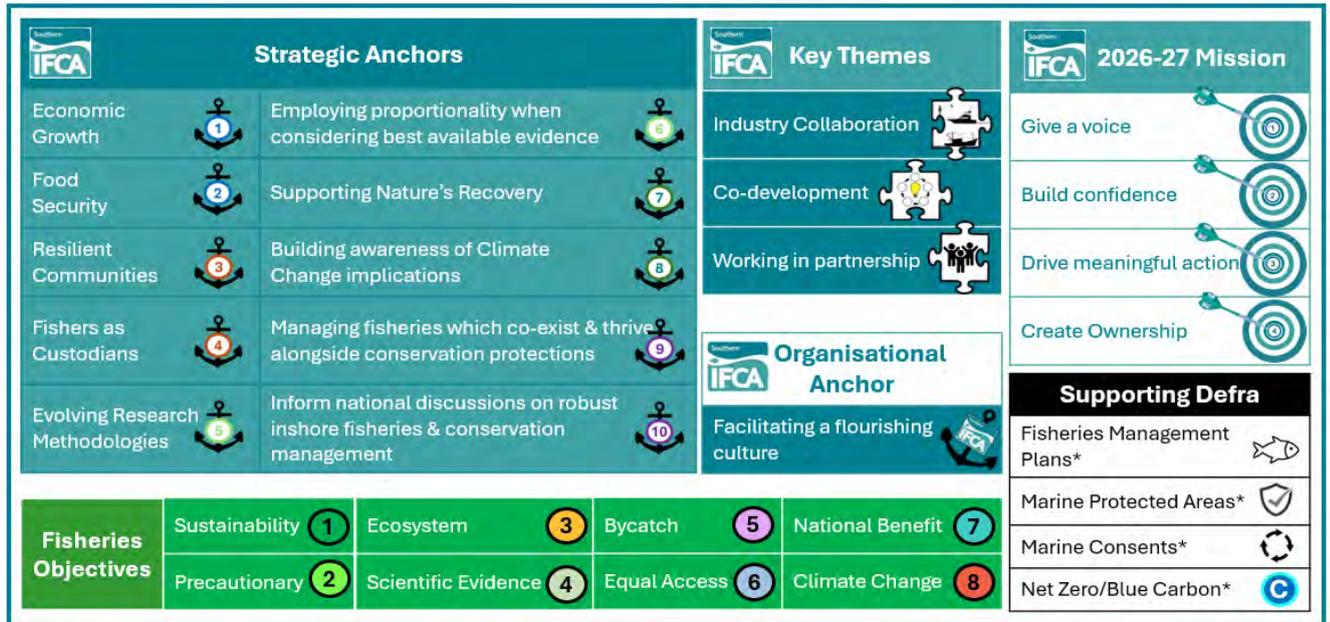
Engagement is also achieved through cross-team collaboration with the Compliance & Enforcement Team to utilise land and sea patrols as opportunities to engage with stakeholders. The Authority also has electronic assets which are utilised for engagement including the Southern IFCA website and social media feeds on X (formally Twitter), Facebook and Instagram.



For 2026-2027, the RPT will actively seek to deliver against the **Southern IFCA: 2026-2027 Mission** as set out in the Annual Strategy 2026-2027, identifying opportunities relevant to the **Specific Actions** for the Mission through engagement related to all RPT functions.

Section 2: Delivery Metrics

Delivery metrics as identified in the Annual Strategy 2026-2027 will appear throughout this Team Plan in order to demonstrate where they underpin the work of the RPT. The graphics will provide a golden thread drawing from the Annual Strategy.



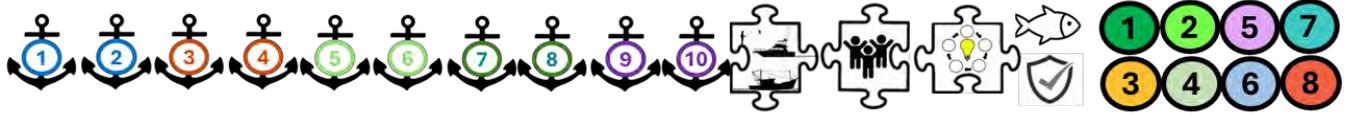
Section 3: RPT Focus Areas

In addition to the delivery of business as usual, the following two **RPT Focus Areas** have been identified for the RPT.



Review of Management of Dredge Fisheries in The Solent

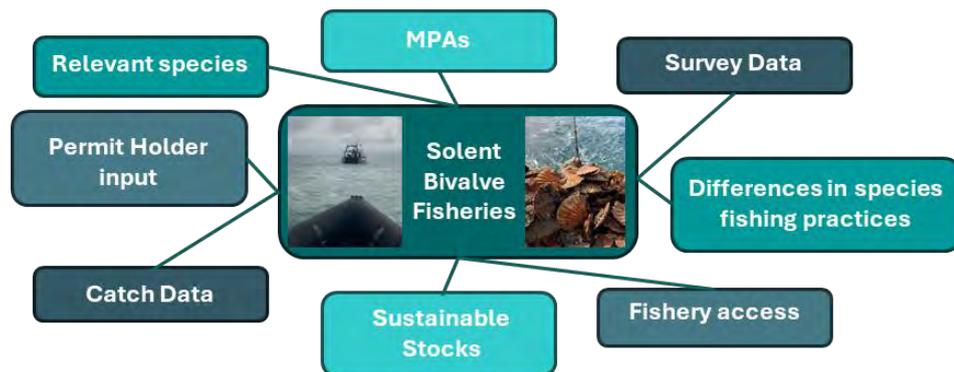
Delivery Metrics:



The [Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw](#) (SDPB) regulates fishing with dredges for shellfish species within The Solent through the annual allocation of permits.

Following reviews during 2023 and 2025 specific to management of the fishery for King scallop under a Category A Solent Dredge Permit, a wider review of the management for dredge fishing in The Solent will be undertaken, taking account of changes in species composition within the fishery, such as the emergence of the King scallop fishery in 2021, and the development of the fishery and fishing methods since the introduction of the SDPB.

The review will seek to utilise best available evidence including that from monitoring and scientific data collection within the fishery, compliance & enforcement data and from stakeholder engagement both carried out to date and carried out as part of this review. The aim of this process will be to deliver a long-term management plan to achieve sustainable management of the fishery alongside the marine environment. Elements which will need to be considered as part of the review include:



Dependent on the determined scope and scale of the review, it is likely that delivery of outcomes may be **phased between the 2026-2027 fishing season** which is due to commence on 1st November 2026 **and the 2027-2028 fishing season**.

Through the delivery of this RPT Focus Area there are opportunities to contribute to the specific actions identified for the Southern IFCA: 2026-2027 Mission:



Give a voice – meeting permit holders in their everyday environment through related monitoring & survey work, and during compliance patrols will help to inform the shape and progress of the review.



Build confidence – incorporating views through the local 2025-2026 Community Drop-In Surgeries into the review, to understand common themes raised around the SDPB fishery.



Drive meaningful action – through the process, ensuring that permit holders understand the decision-making process relevant to their fishery and where they can input through consultation and wider engagement. Ensure that feedback loops are in place through the review and afterwards to facilitate continued discussion.



Create ownership – provide clear feedback on where engagement and input from permit holders has been used to inform the review and defined where outcomes have reflected or not reflected that input. Through the process encourage stewardship of the fishery by permit holders and increase levels of co-development to support accountability and ownership.

Permit Condition Review for the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery

Delivery Metrics:



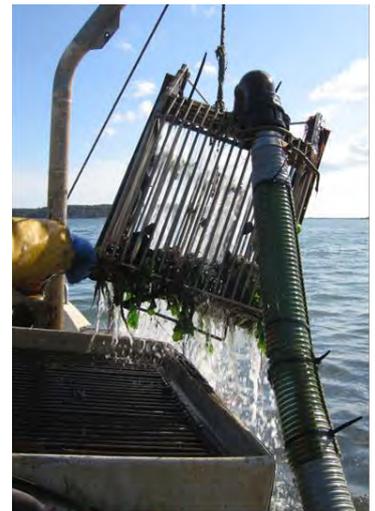
The **Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery** is regulated under the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Byelaw (PHDBP), with the allocation of a limited number of permits on an annual basis for dredge fishing for bivalve species within Poole Harbour.

Under the Byelaw, the Authority has the ability to review the suitability of permit conditions, permit fees, and limitations on the number of permits every three years or sooner in accordance with a set process. The last review was carried out in 2024. Permit conditions can be used to manage:

- Catch restrictions and reporting
- Gear types
- Gear construction and restrictions
- Spatial and temporal restrictions
- The fitting of specified equipment to vessels

In order to ensure the continued delivery of sustainable management for the dredge fishery in Poole Harbour, a review of permit conditions will be undertaken, taking particular account of fishing gear management & application within the fishery in the context of Poole Harbour as an MPA. The review may also encompass other considerations related to permit conditions; the full scope of the review will be based on best available evidence as defined in Paragraph 11 of the PHDPB.

The review will be carried out during the 2026-2027 year, with a final determination of any outcomes made **prior to the start of the 2027-2028 season on 25th May 2027**. The process will utilise Authority Member Working Groups and the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee with opportunities for consultation and stakeholder input identified and communicated to Permit Holders and any other relevant stakeholders throughout the process.



Permitted dredge fishing vessel operating within the PHDPB fishery.

Through the delivery of this RPT Focus Area there are opportunities to contribute to the specific actions identified for the Southern IFCA: 2026-2027 Mission:



Give a voice – encouraging discussions with permit holders at pre-season meetings and during the 2026-27 fishing season. Provision of engagement materials to support understanding and therefore facilitate discussion will also enable permit holders to engage with Southern IFCA in their everyday environment to help inform the review.



Build confidence – incorporating views from the 2025-2026 Poole Community Drop-In Surgery on fishing gear use and application, and the populations of key target species, into the review, to understand common themes raised around this element of the PHDP fishery.



Drive meaningful action – through the process, ensuring that permit holders understand the decision-making process relevant to their fishery and where they can input through consultation and wider engagement. Ensure that feedback loops are in place through the review and afterwards to facilitate continued discussion.



Create ownership – provide clear feedback on where engagement and input from permit holders has been used to inform the review and define where outcomes have reflected or not reflected that input. Through the process further promote stewardship of the fishery by permit holders and increase levels of co-development to support accountability and ownership.

Section 4: Delivering the Southern IFCA: 2026-2027 Mission

Through 2026-2027, the RPT will seek to develop communications and engagement to support the **Southern IFCA: 2026-2027 Mission**.

Seeking new and improved methods of communication and engagement, and tailoring this to the needs of the community, ensures that Southern IFCA remain committed to maintaining transparency and accessibility in management development, monitoring and review, and the integration of stakeholder feedback into policy and workstreams.



Southern IFCA are continually evolving methods of engagement and communication with stakeholders, seeking new and improved ways of working with the community. Southern IFCA remain committed to maintaining transparency and accessibility in delivering RPT functions and will continue to work to provide opportunities for communication and collaboration across all stakeholders.

Specific opportunities to contribute to the Southern IFCA: 2026-2027 Mission, which will be implemented by the RPT during 2026-2027 are:

<p>Technical Advisory Sub-Committee Reports</p>	<p>To explore integration of public-facing summary sections for each technical report cover sheet to provide an overview of the report contents and key points utilising non-technical language.</p> 
<p>Community Engagement Outputs</p>	<p>To develop factsheet style, public-facing documents reflecting outputs of community engagement events led by Southern IFCA, providing detail on feedback provided and, where relevant, how this is reflected or how it couldn't be reflected in any resulting management development or reviews. These can then be made available by Southern IFCA and support ongoing coastal engagement.</p> 
<p>Survey Outputs</p>	<p>To develop summary documents for survey reports in an easily accessible format, providing a concise overview of the key findings from the survey and how the data is used by Southern IFCA to inform management. This would provide an additional opportunity to outline where monitoring work feeds into wider workstreams like the FMP programme and encourage engagement with stakeholders on the coast both as part of surveys and more widely to facilitate discussion on data collection & how the community can get involved.</p> 

Section 5: Workstream Delivery

In addition to the RPT Focus Areas, there is ongoing work within the RPT relating to reviewing management interventions, supporting Defra's delivery of Fisheries Act Objectives, and monitoring which will be delivered during the 2026-2027 year. Details of workstreams are provided under relevant headings in this section.

5.1 Supporting Defra 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 support the delivery of the Fisheries Act Objectives by Defra.

Fisheries Management Plans



The Fisheries Act 2020 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 in line with the Fisheries Act Objectives. 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 are 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.

The Southern IFCA District is covered by the following FMPs (all FMPs cover the whole District unless otherwise specified):

Tranche 1 & 2 – Published December 2023

- Crab & Lobster FMP
- Whelk FMP
- King Scallop FMP
- Bass FMP
- Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species FMP
- Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel Mixed Flatfish FMP (*ICES area 7d only, published October 2024*)

Tranch 3 – Published December 2025

- Southern North Sea and Channel Skates and Rays FMP
- Cockles FMP

- Queen Scallop FMP
- North Sea and Channel Sprat FMP

Tranche 4 – Publication Phase

- Seabream FMP
- Wrasses Complex FMP
- Celtic Seas and Western Channel Pelagic FMP (*ICES area 7e only*)
- Celtic Seas and Western Channel Demersal FMP (*ICES area 7d only*)

Southern IFCA is involved at all phases of FMP development, working to support Defra in the preparation, publication and implementation of FMPs, to drive forward the improvement in the sustainable management of fish stocks and fisheries and shift towards an ecosystem-based approach to management taking account of climate change.

This work will be ongoing throughout the 2026-2027 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 a 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 Southern IFCA FMP webpage can be viewed here**
<https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/fisheries-management-plans>

Southern IFCA supports the post-publication phase of FMPs through identifying opportunities for feeding research and monitoring outputs into national datasets and in order to contribute to identified evidence gaps. Whilst all Southern IFCA monitoring outputs provide data that can be fed into this process, there are three specific areas of research that have direct links to identified evidence gaps within the relevant FMPs.

(1) Whelk LPUE Project



- **District Applicability:** District-wide
- Following the delivery of this as a pilot project in 2025/26, the project will continue for a second year, seeking to work collaboratively with the fishing industry to collect data on landings 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).

- The outputs from year 1 have identified that data collection can provide LPUE at temporal and spatial scales which is able to help identify fishing patterns, potential stock delineations and differences in fishing practice across the District.
- This work could provide data which would contribute to the following objectives identified in the Whelk FMP:

Main Objective from Whelk FMP:

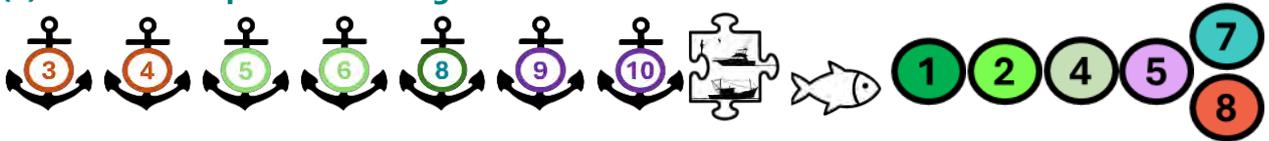
- Assess catch per unit effort in the whelk fishery – *Improved understanding of fishing effort and catches will facilitate improved modelling and assessment of stock status. This will improve the ability to implement evidence-based fisheries management which is responsive to changes in fishing activity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

Whelk LPUE Project – Year 2				
RPT Core Function	Quarter 1 Apr - Jun	Quarter 2 Jul - Sept	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	Quarter 4 Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of data collection program • Collation and analysis of data • Engagement with the whelk fishing sector 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collation and analysis of data • Reporting on Year 2 data collection

(2) Solent Scallop Research Programme



- **District Applicability:** Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw Fishery
- The aim of the programme is to bring together current research; the Solent Scallop Survey and catch data from the SDPB fishery, with three new research projects to deliver a holistic programme that aims to answer key questions and facilitate improved understandings of the fishery. The aim of the project is to collect data, working with fishers, that can inform sustainable management at a local level and feed into discussions on scallop management at a national level by complementing research such as that carried out by the Environmental Assessment of Scallop Innovation Gear (EASIG) project and supporting the implementation and addressing of evidence gaps for the King Scallop FMP and the UK King Scallop Fishery Improvement Project (FIP).



- The following tables detail the new research elements under this project, and the relevance to both local and national management.

Additions to current Solent Scallop Survey
To increase survey data collection by including analysis of occurrence of empty scallop shell, occurrence of defined bycatch species and condition scoring of live scallop.
<p>Data use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional understanding of impacts of the SCE fishery and gear on SCE condition and levels of bycatch within the fishery. • Monitoring trends in SCE which could indicate environmental or other influencing factors (i.e., presence of disease).
<p>Links to management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to quantify additional elements of SCE fishery which could inform future adaptive management approaches. • Provision of data specific to SIFCA District to understand potential implications of management options proposed at a national level.
<p>National Relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to 4x evidence gaps identified in the King Scallop FMP
Identification of key fishing areas in the Solent
To explore the feasibility of mapping fishing activity using existing datasets to identify areas of importance and relationship to other fisheries/elements of the marine environment.
<p>Data use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying areas of overlap between the Solent SCE fishery and other fisheries, for example pot & trap fisheries to help identify hot spots of fishing activity. • To help inform future monitoring work and spatial distribution of survey sites.
<p>Links to management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring monitoring data is capturing appropriate the scope and scale of the fishery. • Potential to inform marine spatial planning in future reviews of South Marine Plan. • Understanding of fishery distribution in relation to other fisheries within the Solent.
<p>National Relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to 2x evidence gaps identified in the King Scallop FMP
Gear Trial Research
To compare dredge types within the Solent fishery to explore influence of ground type, water depth and other influencing factors on CPUE, condition, bycatch and collection of detritus. Methodology based on those used by EASIG project to allow for similar data collection specific to the Solent SCE fishery.
<p>Data use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform understandings of differences between dredge types to complement national research. • Providing an indication as to differences in gear type for a small-scale, inshore SCE fishery.
<p>Links to management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to inform national discussions on management for SCE gear sustainability. • Complement research being carried out/proposed for larger SCE fisheries by providing a perspective on small-scale fisheries. • Support use of N-Viro dredges within the Solent. • Potential to provide information to support any future review of The Scallop Fishing (England) Order 2012.
<p>National Relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to 3x evidence gaps identified in the King Scallop FMP

(3) Pot Fishing Byelaw Implementation



- **District Applicability:** 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



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

Marine Sustainable Development

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

Marine Licencing

Marine licencing 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. IFCA's are a statutory consultee in this process. 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 Authority.

Marine Protected Areas and 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 Plans 2023 & 2025 set out how Defra will delivery biodiversity targets and commitments by restoring Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) through strengthened protections. This requires IFCAs to ensure all fishing activity in inshore MPAs has been assessed, and where necessary, management put in place. The management development phase of this work has been completed with the ratification of the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2023, the drafting of the Shore Gathering Byelaw (with the MMO for quality assurance) and the implementation of Co-Developed Principles for black seabream. Through 2026-2027 these management measures will be monitored.

Deliverables for Southern IFCA, defined by Defra for this workstream are as follows:

Marine Protected Areas

- Ensure all fishing activity in inshore MPAs has been assessed and, where necessary, fisheries management measures put in place.
- 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 Plans.

5.2 Reviews of Management Interventions

Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles

Delivery Metrics:



Southern IFCA recognise that black seabream (BSB) fisheries are data poor and the adaptive approach under the [Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles](#) allows Southern IFCA to robustly respond in a timely way to ensure the future sustainability of the fisheries. To facilitate an adaptive approach,

Southern IFCA are committed to reviewing the Co-Developed Principles under an Annual Review pathway. The first annual review will follow the conclusion of the recognised breeding season in year 1 (1st April to 31st July 2026).

The Annual Review, will consider:

- **community feedback** following on the application of the Co-Developed Principles & overall health of BSB fishery.
- analysis of **data collected** during the applicable season,
- additional data collected (running all year-round)
- IFCA **compliance & enforcement metrics**,
- **data from external sources** (other relevant authorities),
- any updated **Conservation Advice** from Natural England,
- **BSB FMP** outcomes (goals, actions and data gaps),
- **emerging evidence on BSB populations or fisheries** (for example published outputs from the Angling for Sustainability Project).

Following the Annual Review in any given year, if changes to the Co-Developed Principles are identified to be required, any proposals will be considered with the community prior to consideration by the Authority. Any changes will be implemented prior to the subsequent season.



Following Annual Review in any given year, if singular or multiple Co-Developed Principles are deemed to be not achieving the Policy Objectives, then consideration may be given to the development of fisheries relevant triggers and/or statutory management mechanisms for one or more Co-Developed Principles in accordance with recognised practice. In this instance, Southern IFCA would follow the established byelaw making process with associated opportunities for consultation with stakeholders.

Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles – Year 1 Review				
RPT Core Function	Quarter 1 Apr - Jun	Quarter 2 Jul - Sept	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	Quarter 4 Jan – Mar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection & monitoring under Co-Developed Principles 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any proposed updates considered at Nov TAC Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final recommendations to Feb TAC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of data & all BAE following 31st July • Engagement with the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further engagement with community following Nov TAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of information to community on review outcomes post Feb TAC

Net Fishing Byelaw – Year 3 Review

Delivery Metrics:



Under the [Net Fishing Byelaw](#), Southern IFCA carries out an annual review of flexible permit conditions, permit fees and limitations on the number of permits for **Net Permit Areas**. A review of the Monitoring & Control Plan (M&CP) for Net Permit Areas is also carried out, including updating Threshold Trigger Levels for salmonid interactions in line with the defined process in the M&CP.

The review takes place in accordance with the process set out in the Net Fishing Byelaw incorporating engagement with Permit Holders, providing opportunities to give feedback on net fisheries in the Net Permit Areas and any comment or evidence Permit Holders wish to provide to inform the review process. Outputs from consultation form one source of best available evidence considered by the Authority for the review.



The review commences in **Quarter 3**, with a decision on any outcomes made at the **February TAC Meeting** ahead of the start of the new permit period on 1st April.

Legacy Byelaws

Delivery Metrics:



During the 2026-2027 year, the RPT will commence an initial exploration of Southern IFCA legacy byelaws, identifying relevant byelaws and undertaking an initial exercise to determine relevance and suitability of each byelaw as well as what best available evidence exists relevant to each identified byelaw. This initial exploration will be used to scope a full review of legacy byelaws and associated timelines.

Minimum Conservation Reference Size Review

Delivery Metrics:



[Minimum Conservation Reference Size](#) (MCRS) is a management tool used at a national and regional level to help achieve sustainable fisheries. 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, 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 continues to develop through the 2026-2027 year, Southern IFCA will review the scope and requirements under the MCRS review, progressing the workstream as needed alongside the development of the national direction in fisheries management.

BTFG Review: Phase II

Delivery Metrics:



The aim of Phase II of the BTFG Review is to consider district-wide management interventions for sensitive habitats. During 2025-2026, it has become evident that not all evidential elements are in place to allow a full consideration of the delivery of Phase II in an appropriate and proportionate way in line with Southern IFCA's Section 153 MaCAA duties, noting that Phase II will need to balance socioeconomics with the marine environment and the needs of all persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources. At present, compounding factors include limited data on the spatial distribution of fisheries, such as that provided by iVMS, a need to understand appropriate methodologies for quantifying RSA usage of different areas of the District, limited mapped feature data for sensitive features outside of MPAs, a need to develop methodologies for appropriately capturing and quantifying social, cultural and community impacts of management, and discussion on appropriate management for BTFG. During the 2026-2027 year, Southern IFCA will maintain a watching brief on relevant factors including; the implementation of FMPs, many of which include furthering understandings of BTFG impacts and the geographic scope of different fisheries, gathering of evidence through the RPT Monitoring Programme on relevant stocks, and stakeholder engagement, committed to through the 2026-2027 Mission, to more fully understand the best methods of defining the scope and overlap of different activities spatially and potential social, cultural and community impacts to inform an appropriate understanding of the scope and delivery of BTFG Phase II.

5.3 Monitoring Inshore Fisheries



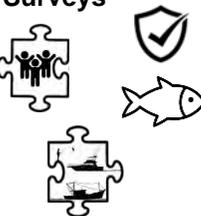
This section details the standard monitoring program for the RPT for 2026-27. Opportunities for engagement are explored through all monitoring activities. The Delivery Metrics achieved by the overarching monitoring programme are detailed above, for each survey the Delivery Metrics of **Industry Collaboration, Co-development, Working in partnership, Fisheries Management Plans** and **Marine Protected Areas** are detailed as relevant.

Survey	Time of Year	Species	Area	Aim	Time Series Data		Outcomes
Whelk Population Survey 	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 2025		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
Poole Bivalve Survey 	Apr	Manila clam, Common cockle, American Hard-Shelled 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 2020 ² 2021 2022	2023 2024 2025	1) To contribute to time-series dataset 2) To inform management under the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit fishery through M&CP 3) To support the MSC certification 4) Data to be made available for Cockle FMP
Solent Bivalve Survey 	Mar Oct	Manila clam, Common cockle, American Hard-Shelled	Solent Dredge Permit Management Areas 4-6	To obtain bivalve samples from three management areas (Southampton Water, Portsmouth Harbour,	2017 ³ 2018 2019 2020 – spring only ⁴	2023 2024 2025 2026	1) To build a baseline of CPUE data 2) To contribute to a time-series dataset 3) To inform management under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw – Cat A Permit Conditions

² Note that dates with a strikethrough indicate where surveying could not take place due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

³ 2017 survey was for autumn in Southampton water only.

⁴ Autumn 2020 survey could not take place due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

		clam, other bivalves		Langstone Harbour) and collect data on size frequency and CPUE which can be related to fishery catch and effort data.	2021 – autumn only ⁵ 2022		4) Data to be made available for Cockle FMP
Solent Scallop Survey 	Jan 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 ⁶ 2022 2023 2024	2025 2026	1) To inform management under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw – Cat A Permit Conditions 2) Data to be made available for use by the King Scallop FMP
Solent Oyster Survey 	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 2024	1) To inform management under the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw – Cat B Permit Conditions 2) To inform understandings of native oyster stocks in the Solent
Juvenile Fish Surveys 	Jun Oct	Estuarine fish species	The Fleet, Christchurch Harbour, Yarmouth, River Hamble	To obtain samples of juvenile fish from estuaries across the District identified as having Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) ⁷ present and collect data on species presence, abundance and size frequency	2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 ⁸ 2021	2022 2023 2024 2025	1) To inform management under the Net Fishing Byelaw, specific to EFH 2) To promote engagement with the wider stakeholder community 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 & ecosystem services 4) To contribute to a time-series dataset to highlight the importance of estuaries to certain species 5) Data to be made available for use by relevant FMPs

⁵ Spring 2021 survey could not take place due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

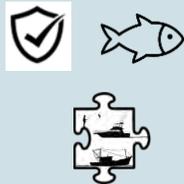
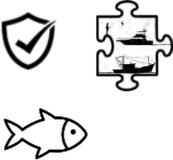
⁶ The first Solent Scallop Survey was carried out in the summer of 2021 as a trial and to test the methodology, twice yearly sampling commenced from 2022

⁷ In this case, the use of the term 'Essential Fish Habitat' refers to the term as used in the Net Fishing Byelaw package

⁸ Spring survey unable to take place and autumn survey partially achieved due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

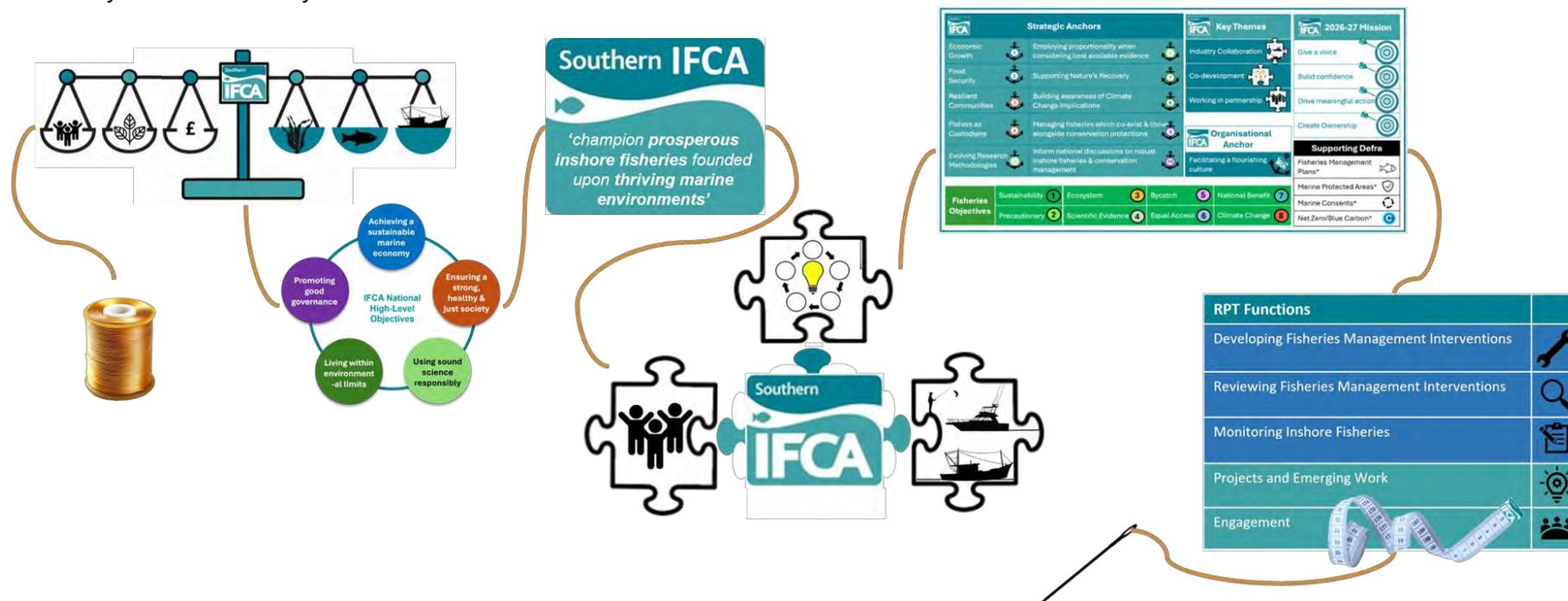
The following table outlines additional monitoring activities undertaken by the RPT which are separate from the survey program of work.

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																								
Wrasse Fishery Data Collection 	Jul – Dec	Wrasse species	West of District	To obtain catch data from fishers on a voluntary basis on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Count data of wrasse landed Fishing location Fishing effort 	2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 <i>*no live fishery in 2025</i>	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 4) Data to be made available for informing Wrasses Complex FMP																								
Permit Data Collection 	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.	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><u>Poole</u></td> <td><u>Solent</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017</td> <td>2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018</td> <td>2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>2025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td><u>NFB</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023</td> <td>2025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2025</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<u>Poole</u>	<u>Solent</u>	2015	2021	2016	2022	2017	2023	2018	2024	2019	2025	2020		2021	<u>NFB</u>	2022	2024	2023	2025	2024		2025		1) To inform management under respective permit byelaws 2) To help inform evidence gaps on CPUE in relevant FMPs
<u>Poole</u>	<u>Solent</u>																													
2015	2021																													
2016	2022																													
2017	2023																													
2018	2024																													
2019	2025																													
2020																														
2021	<u>NFB</u>																													
2022	2024																													
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Section 6: Reporting

The Southern IFCA Annual Report 2026-27, due for publication in summer 2027, will provide an account of how the RPT have performed in their delivery of this Team Plan, demonstrating achievement of and contribution to, the National IFCA Vision & High-Level Objectives, the Southern IFCA Vision & Key Themes, Delivery Metrics, 2026-2027 Mission and RPT Focus Areas.



Sarah Birchenough
Deputy Chief Officer – Research and Policy Team
Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
April 2026

Compliance & Enforcement Report Paper For Information

Report by Principal Deputy Chief Officer Sam Dell

A. Purpose

To provide Members with an overview of the Southern IFCA risk-based approach to compliance and enforcement (C&E) for the period November 2025 to January 2026.

B. Supporting Information

Further details of the C&E functions, to include the 2025-2026 Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan can be found here: [Compliance & Enforcement : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://southern-ifca.gov.uk).

1.0 Background

The statistical data presented is aligned to national IFCA metrics that are reported to the AIFCA and Defra on an annual basis, in addition to provision of district specific metrics which capture how the CETs work is working to deliver the [Southern IFCA Annual Strategy 2025-2026](#).

2.0 Overview of key active fisheries during reporting period

The key active fisheries for this period have been the **Poole Harbour Dredge fishery** for clams and cockles which closed on the 24th December, 45 permits are issued each year, all vessels in the fishery are less than 9m in length and are small open vessels which carry out day fishing trips during periods of high water, officers have been **ensuring compliance** with the associated permit conditions focussing on compliance with temporal and **spatial restrictions**.

Another priority fishery during this period is the **Solent Dredge fisheries** for Scallops and Clams in which 40 Category "A" permits were issued, officers have been **ensuring compliance** with the associated permit conditions focussing on compliance with newly adjusted temporal reduction in the daily fishing hours from 08:00-1600 to **08:00-14:00 in the Scallop fishery**.

Another key fishery within the district is the **Bass** fishery, **commercial vessels** may fish for, retain and land bass with authorised fishing gear within the specified limits. **Recreational fishers** using rod and line may retain two bass per person, per day.

The CET continue to enforce the **Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw** which protects features of MPAs across the district and the **Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) Byelaw** across all fisheries.

3.0 Intelligence Reporting

The majority of Intelligence Reports submitted in the reporting quarter relate to the **Poole Harbour Dredge Fishery and dredging in closed areas**, other key themes identified are **breaches of the Bass recreational limit including retention of undersize and breaches of the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw**.

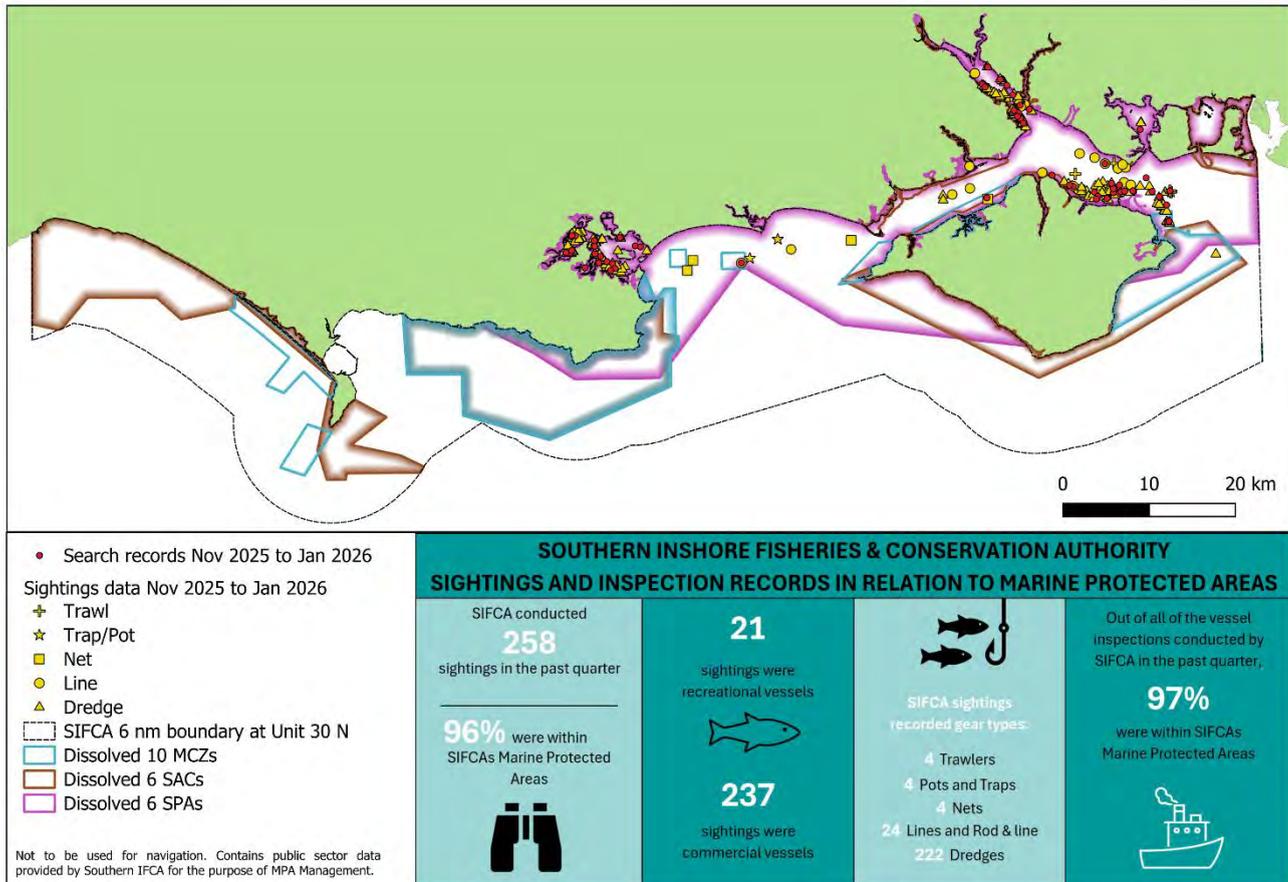
November	December	January	Total
15	16	16	47

4.0 Compliance Patrols

Category	Metric	November	December	January	Total
Inspections at sea	Vessel patrols	9	8	5	22
	Boardings/inspections	36	18	9	69
Inspections ashore or	Shore patrols	17	12	10	39

in a port	Port visits	35	18	23	76
	Premises inspections	1	0	1	2
	Landing inspections	23	6	11	40
	Vehicle inspections	2	0	0	2
	Gear inspections	6	1	1	8
	Person inspection	0	0	0	0

5.0 Sightings & Inspections relating to MPAs



6.0 Enforcement Actions Arising

The following tables demonstrate the **offence reports submitted by officers for which cases have been generated**, these predominantly relate to breaches of the **Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw associated with the Solent Dredge fisheries**

Offences Detected	November	December	January	Total
Verbal Warnings	2	2	0	4
Written Warnings	1	1	0	2
Advisory Letter	0	0	2	2
FAP	0	2	0	2
Offence Reports	1	5	4	10

Date of Offence	Offence	Action
26/11/2025	Breach of MCRS regulations – u/s ray, spider crabs, edible crab and whelks	OWL issued 30/12/25
03/12/2025	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 28)	£1000 FAP issued 19/01/26

11/12/2025	Breach of SDPB curfew	£1000 FAP issued 12/01/26
17/12/2025 & 14/01/2026	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 28), u/s Scallops & breach of SDPB curfew	Ongoing – preparing file for prosecution
29/12/2025 & 30/12/2025	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 16)	Prosecution – case management hearing 25/02/26
30/12/2025	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 16)	OWL issued 06/01/26
29/01/2026	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 16)	Advisory letter issued 10/02/26
31/01/2026	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 16)	Ongoing
31/01/2026	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 16)	Ongoing
30/01/2026 & 02/02/2026	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 16)	Advisory letter issued 10/02/26

The following table demonstrates the **offence outcome for this reporting quarter**:

Date of offence	Offence	Action taken and date
19/08/2025	PHDP breach of Green Island closed area	FAP issued 12/01/26
23/10/2025	Breach of SIFCA MCRS byelaw – u/s clams	2x OWLs issued 11/11/25
26/11/2025	Breach of MCRS regulations – u/s ray, spider crabs, edible crab and whelks	OWL issued 30/12/25
03/12/2025	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 28)	£1000 FAP issued 19/01/26
11/12/2025	Breach of SDPB curfew	£1000 FAP issued 12/01/26
30/12/2025	Breach of BTFG 2023 byelaw (area 16)	OWL issued 06/01/26

7.0 Next Steps

That Members receive the report.

Behind the Scenes Paper For Information

Report by the RPT, CET and BST

A. Purpose

To provide Members with an update on aspects of work that the Research and Policy Team (RPT), Compliance and Enforcement Team (CET) and Business Services Team (BST) is delivering behind the scenes.

1.0 Introduction

- This report from the staff across the three teams in the IFCA, RPT, CET and BST captures aspects of work being delivered behind the scenes. This may include standalone projects or supplementary work which complements and supports the Annual Plan and RPT & CET Plans.

2.0 Summary of Key Points

- Reports from the RPT:
 - This quarter the RPT has attended a Cefas run workshop on King scallop, encompassing training on scallop aging and a discussion on inshore survey methods to support greater data sharing opportunities and to facilitate a sharing of ideas to further develop methodologies and consider alignment with the national survey. Work has been ongoing in developing stakeholder facing materials for social media, looking at where engagement can be enhanced through this medium, which is already supporting discussion and development, for example in analysis of bass data from Juvenile Fish Surveys. RPT IFCOs have also been working under their compliance & enforcement function assisting with C&E work in the Solent dredge fishery and, for newly appointed IFCOs, attending the IFCO Enforcement Training Course to develop their knowledge and skills in this area of work. The FMP Tranche 4 public consultations have also commenced during this quarter, with our PO FMPs undertaking a review of all the relevant documentation and participating in the series of engagement events proposed to take place within the District.
- Reports from the CET:
 - The CET have been working in the Solent Scallop Fishery, utilising multiple assets and maintaining detailed compliance and intelligence logs to ensure compliance with relevant regulations, as well as acting on identified incidents of non-compliance. Two of the CET IFCOs have achieved Warranted Status, increasing capabilities, and are already leading on patrol work within the District. It has been a busy period for investigations with a number of ongoing investigations and trials listed for prosecutions. In addition, there have been robust enforcement outcomes for identified offences in line with the Compliance & Enforcement Framework. Officers have also been busy under the REM project, working with a local pot fisher to install new equipment and attending a national event to discuss the application of REM with different organisations, providing a useful insight to help inform current and future REM work. Marine operations work has also been ongoing, with operational capability maintained through a transition to Workboat Code 3, a refit on FPV Protector and the use of a new system to manage all the patrol vessels' lifesaving apparatus and drills.
- Reports from the BST:
 - The BST have been ensuring that meeting venues are booked for 2026, exploring the use of new venues for Authority meetings and ensuring that the IT systems at Southern

IFCA are aligned with Windows updates to maintain security and efficiency. Office improvements are being explored to provide new materials for the team to use, and the General Expenses Form has been revised to ensure it is up to date and suitable for electronic completion. Just over 96% of Fish for Sale Permits are now migrated onto the Southern IFCA Online Permitting System through the review process for this permit which has provided an opportunity for fishers in the District to familiarise themselves with the new system. Catch return data has been processed for the last month of the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit fishery and continues to be processed each month for the Solent Dredge Permit fishery. Work has also been ongoing to explore the provision of gauges to fishers in the District to help support the health of lobster stocks over time in line with the new MCRS increase to 88m from 01/03/26 introduced by the MMO and Defra.

3.0 Next Steps

- That Members receive the report.

Behind the Scenes with the RPT



with IFCO Churchouse

In January, myself and DCO Birchenough headed to the Cornwall IFCA office in Hayle to join our IFCA colleagues for a CEFAS run scallop aging and survey methodology workshop. The first half day was spent learning CEFAS' technique for gaining an accurate reading of a scallop's age using their growth rings, looking at a number of shells collected by Cornwall IFCA along the south coast. This section of the workshop was incredibly informative for all involved and a valuable opportunity to learn the aging technique from CEFAS employees who work on the national King scallop surveys. In the interest of comparing the age:size of the scallop found within the Solent fishery to those seen further west along the south coast, I have collected a number of shells from Solent survey beds in February 2026 with the intention of aging them under a microscope this Spring.

The second section of the workshop focused on comparing survey



Figure 1: basket of scallop sampled during the Mid-Season 2026 survey.

methodology for King scallop stocks between the various IFCA's in attendance and CEFAS. This provided us with an opportunity to understand what data is being collected across scallop stocks in English waters and how all data collection programmes could be aligned. Again, this was a highly valuable day for understanding how the King scallop survey run in the Solent can be most useful at regional and national levels. We are very grateful to the team at CEFAS and Cornwall IFCA for organising and running the workshop!



with IFCO C. Mullen

Under our responsibilities as Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers within the Research and Policy Team, we support not only our respective workstreams and managed fisheries, but also the wider compliance activity led by the Compliance and Enforcement Team across the District. This involvement provides valuable and practical insight into fisheries management application on the ground. It also strengthens our working relationships with fishermen, deepens our understanding of the District and our appreciation of the environment we help to oversee.

More recently, throughout the winter period, compliance efforts have focused on the Solent Dredge Permit Fishery. This has provided Research and Policy Team officers with opportunities to assist with drone operations, as well as land- and sea-based patrols.

In addition to patrol support, we contribute to case file development where offences are identified during patrols. This includes assisting with the preparation and of exhibits, such as personal pocket notebook entries, and producing MG11 witness statements.



Image of the DJI Matrice 300 used in compliance patrols.

This involvement enables RPT fisheries officers to participate in the entire fisheries management process, from the initial development of management measures, stakeholder engagement, and data gathering through surveys, through to implementation within the fishery and, where necessary, the associated legal processes arising from any breaches.



As an Officer on the Research & Policy team, my role includes working with colleagues to create Social Media posts, and attending training to understand IFCO duties and responsibilities.

The purpose of our social media posts are to improve public awareness and encourage engagement on SIFCA relevant events and duties. I work on creating posts for Marine Protected Areas, National and International ocean awareness days (shared amongst colleagues), and Juvenile Fish Surveys. The post I created to summarise the 2025 Juvenile Fish Surveys received a query about Bass which led to further

SIFCA created icon showing a seagrass meadow ecosystem containing seahorses and stalked jellyfish.



Screenshot and last image of the social media post: Juvenile Fish Survey 2025.

groups of Bass which can be used towards an FMP knowledge gap. The creation of these social media posts has also allowed me to create new icons that SIFCA can use freely in future workstreams.

I attended the IFCO Enforcement training course in February. An information-dense but very engaging and informative week in Brixham. It was great meeting IFCOs from the other districts, including an IFCO from the Isles of Scilly. I worked with IFCOs from Northumberland and Northeastern during the Practical mock-inspections. It was interesting seeing the different methods used to initiate an inspection of a fisher. We also managed to visit the local fish market where I was able to test my fish ID skills which have previously been used for



The new year marked an important milestone for my growing responsibilities towards compliance and enforcement duties since becoming an IFCO.

At the beginning of February, I participated in a weeklong IFCA Enforcement Course in Brixham, where I had the opportunity to meet and work alongside IFCOs from across the country. The course gave a comprehensive overview of an IFCA's duties and responsibilities, ranging from the legislative backing of IFCO powers and the importance of MPAs, to quayside health and safety and enforcement theory.

I particularly enjoyed the early morning visit to the Brixham fish market where we had the opportunity to look at docked vessels of various sizes and gear types. It gave me the opportunity to view in practice the different fishing methods and logistics of running a fishing operation and follow up on our crash course on different gear types and fishing methods.

It also gave me the opportunity to engage and learn about the make-up of the UK fleet from other IFCAs.



Photo from visit to Brixham fish market where IFCOs were shown how to identify key commercial species.

The visit to Brixham fish markets also involved visiting the MMO fish storage where myself and fellow IFCAs were shown the logistics of fish storage and hands on training in how to identify various commercial fish species.

I found the evidence collection and notebook management aspects of the course very valuable. Especially when I carried out mock Notebook and Audio recorded interviews which gave me the opportunity to engage with and learn from senior enforcement officers about how to approach potential fisheries offences.

Overall, I found that having the opportunity to get to know and discuss workstreams with IFCOs from other IFCAs was invaluable.



Tranche 4 FMPs Public Consultation has begun. These run until the 5th May, giving time for digesting the information provided and attending virtual and potentially in-person engagement meetings. The aim of this work is to provide consultation responses for each FMP that capture all relevant information for the District.

Each of the T4 FMPs are relevant to the District. Seabream and Wrasses Complex cover the whole District, while the Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic and Demersal include ICES Area 7e. Each of the FMPs multiple species.

I am currently making my way through the very large stack of files, at a rough count over a thousand pages. However, the draft FMPs themselves are reduced in size from previous tranches, taking into account stakeholder feedback through previous consultations to maximise the ability for stakeholders to engage and understand the FMP content.

There are also a series of engagement events online and potentially in-person which are open to the public, I will be attending as many of them as possible over the next couple of months.

[Consultations open for final four Defra-led FMPs](#)

FMP policy team, Defra and FMP communications team, 10 February 2026 - [Defra led FMPs, Public consultation](#)



Consultations are now live. Find out what's proposed, share your views and get involved at upcoming events

All the information on the FMPs is available on the FMP page on the Southern IFCA website, including links to all the consultation documents and events that are occurring - [Fisheries Management Plans : Southern IFCA](#).

Along with this I've been working on a number of other FMP tasks, since December. The final versions of the T3 FMPs have been approved by Defra and released. A report on the Bass Authorisation Review has been released along with one on the Cuttlefish Action Plan, tracking the progress of both projects.

Behind the Scenes with the CET



with Senior IFCO A Parry

Over the last few months, I have been exceptionally busy across several workstreams, including complex investigations that required detailed evidence gathering.

One of workstreams I have been working on is to ensure that the authorities patrol vessels maintain operational capability. Part of this was to ensure that FPV Endeavour transitioned onto the new Maritime Coastguard Agencies workboat code. I have also overseen a refit on FPV Protector, ensure that vital equipment is up to date and meets the operational demands that is required.

I have also been using a new system which manages all the patrol vessels Life Saving Apparatus and drills. This ensures we stay on top of our legal responsibilities.



I have also maintained my operational currency through our UAV (drone) and developed new Take off and landing sites (TOLS) to expand our ability to detect offences such as bottom towed gear incursions.

Our UAV—our remotely piloted unmanned aircraft—has been deployed on several occasions to support and strengthen our monitoring and control plan. We have conducted multiple flights targeting areas with sensitive habitats to ensure compliance with current legislation.

BEHIND
THE SCENES

Southern IFCA investigations, by Senior IFCO David Mayne



It's been another busy period in terms of investigations. The Southern IFCA now has two court trials listed. The 1st, involving one defendant, is scheduled for the 23rd of April 2026 at Poole Magistrate's Court, for a matter occurring during August of 2024. The 2nd, involving three defendants, is scheduled for the 18th and 19th of May 2027 at Southampton Magistrate's Court, for matters occurring during March and April 2025 (a pre-trial case review for this matter will take place on the 17th of March 2027).

In addition, two separate cases involving 4 defendants, for matters occurring during June and August of 2025, are to be heard for the first time at Poole Magistrate's Court on the 15th of April 2025. One other prosecution is pending, but this figure may change, as five investigations into other matters are ongoing.

During the period between the 1st of November 2025 and the 31st of January 2026, the IFCA issued five FAPs (Fixed Administrative Penalty Notices) as follows:

- £1000 penalty issued to a master and owner for a spatial breach of the IFCA's Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Byelaw
- £1000 penalty issued to a master and five owners for a curfew breach of the IFCA's Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw
- £1000 penalty issued to a master and owner for a spatial breach of the IFCA's Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw
- £1000 penalty issued to a master and two owners for a Bass Nursey Area offence in Poole Harbour
- £500 penalty issued to a recreational angler for a breach of the recreational bass bag limit

The above penalties were all paid in full.

My role in relation to all the above remains the same. I manage and oversee the investigation process. After which, the case material is reviewed by the Principal Deputy Chief Officer, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman, when a final decision is made.

Six other matters were dealt with by way of Official Warning Letters to five individuals and Advisory Letters to two other fishers.



REM work and warranting

One of the major events in the last quarter was receiving my warrant. Since this, I have conducted multiple inspections as the lead officer. Not having to operate under s260, gives me and the enforcement team more flexibility when being aided by the Research & Policy team and allows us to carry out more patrols and inspections.

Due to the poor weather of late, we have made the most of having one of our vessels alongside. Following Three Boys withdrawal from the REM trial, we got in contact with the skipper of Sarah Louise to see if they'd be willing to assist us in our trial. The vessel is a potting vessel that operates out of West Bay, Dorset.

Working with the skipper and the installation company, we got the equipment installed and set up on this vessel. There are two cameras onboard, with the main one watching where the pots are hauled. At the request of the skipper, we also put one in the engine room to increase the safety onboard. A live stream

skipper can monitor the foredeck and engine room while manoeuvring the vessel.

The aim for having this equipment onboard is to see whether REM and AI could be used to count the number of pots being hauled. When the SIFCA Pot Fishing Byelaw comes into force, this could help officers enforce the pot limits set out in the legislation.





Since the Solent dredge fishery opened in November, the workload for the Compliance Enforcement Team has increased significantly. Alongside ongoing investigations and case file work, we've also taken on more patrols and boarding inspections across the scallop and clam fisheries in the Solent. With only two fully warranted boarding officers in the team, it's been a particularly busy time, and the pressure has been considerable.



Because of this, I was keen to continue progressing through my Level 3 Certificate in Fisheries and Marine Enforcement via the online LMS. In January, I was pleased to achieve warranted officer status, which has increased my capability within the team and helped ease some of the pressure. It's now enabled me to lead boardings in one of my favourite fisheries in our district, engage directly with fishers in the Solent, and take the lead on investigations.





As part of our Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) work me and IFCO Bedwell had the opportunity to attend the Fisheries Management and Innovation Group: REM in Practice- Helping to secure a sustainable future for UK Fisheries event in London run by Seafish. This event included presentations from a wide range of sectors within fisheries and the opportunity to discuss the application of REM with different organisations.

I was particularly interested in hearing from the Danish Fishers Producer Organisation and how the use of REM had gone for them, considering they have been using REM for multiple years. They had reduced conflict with the fishers over privacy by reducing how much the cameras could see onboard to just where fish are sorted and obscured the rest of the vessel. They also gave the fishers the option of being subject to enforcement by REM or just aid in science research. The use of REM for science was a common theme across many speakers calling for REM to be used for science first and enforcement second, to help build trust and demonstrate benefits from the system.

There was a lot of useful insights to take away from this event that we can think about implying into our current work and future work. We have also hopefully made some useful connection which may also aid enhancing our work especially as we get into the potential use of AI which for many is new territory.



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs





with IFCO Fullbrook

Patrol work in the Solent Dredge

Fishery

Over the past three months, operational officers patrol work has focused on the Solent Dredge Fishery, covering Southampton Water, this season’s main area for clam activity and the northern and north-eastern coastline of the Isle of Wight, where scallop vessels have been operating. These patrols have combined both sea-based and shoreline presence to maintain visibility and deter non-compliance.

Alongside sea patrols, we have carried out regular port visits at Camber Docks, Warsash and Hamble Point. These visits have included premises inspections, landing checks and direct engagement with fishers to reinforce regulatory expectations and maintain constructive working relationships.

We have undertaken a number of drone patrols, with flights conducted over BTFG closures such as Calshot Bay, Hythe and Osbourne Bay, locations which have seen significant dredge vessel activity this year.



Enforcement work has focused on ensuring compliance with the legislation which underpins this fishery. These checks have been essential in safeguarding stock health, protecting sensitive areas, and ensure sustainable fishing practices.

Since the start of the season, I have also been maintaining a detailed compliance and intelligence log. This includes tracking the number and type of intel reports received – as well as recording all detected infringements. This information is fed back to management and can be used

Land patrols	27
Landing/shore inspections	24
Sea patrols	17
Boarding inspections	48
Drone flights	21

Behind the Scenes with the BST



*with Facilities & Administration
Officer, June Furlonger*

A lot goes on behind the scenes regarding administrative and facilities tasks.

Meeting venues have been booked for 2026. Two are venues new to us offering competitive rates. One other has offered us an upgraded meeting room with no additional costs.

All Officers had the Windows updates at the end of 2025, to ensure that their devices remain secure and efficient.

I have some continuing projects that should reduce monthly costs, others for improved efficiencies.

Currently I am engaging with suppliers to produce an interactive map for our Officers along with some signs for in the office.





with Administration & Permitting Officer Jo Wilson

Just over 96% of Fish for Sale Permits have now been renewed via the online Permitting System with the plan for the last few to be renewed before the end of March. It is important that the Fishers renew through the Permitting System rather than being automatically transferred, this allows them to familiarise themselves with the application process and their user portal, making the process easier if they apply for other permits when they become available on the system.



The due date for the submission of the last catch returns for the Poole Harbour 2025/26 Dredge Permit was 14th January. I have been ensuring that all the data has been inputted and catch return compliance logs have been updated. The number of months that each of the 45 Fishers dredged during the 2025/26 season determines their eligibility for a Poole Harbour Dredge Permit in the 2026/27 season.



The Solent Dredge Cat A Permit is in its 4th month of the 2025/26 season. I have been inputting the catch return data for both clams and scallops and updating the compliance log for the 40 permit holders.

In preparation for the change in the new national MCRS for lobsters due to come into force on 01/03/26, I have been obtaining quotes from metal fabricators for either adaptation of our existing stainless steel lobster, crab & whelk gauges or manufacture of new gauges to cover the 1mm per year increase over the next 3 years.





with Accounts Administrator
Paul Savage

The General Expenses Form used by staff has been revised to ensure it is up to date and suitable for electronic completion, rather than being submitted as a hard copy. This is part of a move over the last year towards electronic record-keeping and reduction in printing and paper costs. Following approval from the CEO, a demo of the new form was part of the January whole team meeting.

Day-to-day processing of financial transactions has continued to be kept as up-to-date as possible, including recording of approvals in line with the Financial Regulations, along with monthly and quarterly reporting to the Chief Executive Officer.

Southern		Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Expenses Claim Form					
		In accordance with the Staff Handbook, all reasonable expenses will be considered for reimbursement but only if your Line Manager has authorised prior to the expense being incurred					
		Member of Staff					
		Line Manager					
DATE Pre-Approved	DATE of expense	RECEIPT No	DESCRIPTION	MILES	CURRENCY	STERLING AMOUNT	
					£	50.00	
					£	45.00	

Marine Licencing Update Paper For Information

Report by IFCO H. Churchouse

A. **Purpose**

To provide a quarterly update on Southern IFCA's input into the marine licencing process between Jan 2026 to Mar 2026

1.0 Introduction

- Marine licencing is one of the principal responsibilities of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to facilitate the sustainable use of the UK marine environment whilst minimising negative environmental effects and avoiding interference with navigation.
- Southern IFCA is a consultee on Marine Licence Applications (MLAs). For MLAs relevant to the Southern IFCA District, the IFCA is given 21 days to review the application and determine if a response is required to aid the MMO in its decision making and to further inform the applicant of any relevant fisheries information or considerations.
- The South Marine Plan introduces a strategic approach to planning within the inshore and offshore waters between Folkestone in Kent and the River Dart in Devon. The aim is to provide a clear, evidence-based approach, to inform marine users and regulators on where activities might take place within the Marine Plan area, allowing for national policies to be applied in a local context.
- In responding to MLAs, the IFCA must consider any advice relevant to its remit as a fisheries regulator and with regard to the South Marine Plan, taking account of the objectives and policies listed which are related to that remit. The objectives and policies of the South Marine Plan can be viewed in the plan document online - [South Marine Plan 2018.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682123/South_Marine_Plan_2018.pdf).

2.0 Summary of Key Points

- A summary table is provided indicating the detail of any MLAs which required a response during the last quarter, outlining the nature of the MLA and the points included in the Southern IFCA response.
- There were 4 MLAs requiring a response between January 2026 and March 2026.
- There were 6 additional MLAs received by Southern IFCA where it was determined that no comment was required.

3.0 Review of Marine Consents Work: Apr 2023 to date

- Southern IFCA's work under Marine Consents focuses on the marine licencing system and the role of the IFCA as a consultee for relevant MLAs.
- Work on marine consents has increased over the past 3 years and is observed to have remained elevated in 2025/26 in comparison to 2023/24 in terms of the number of relevant MLAs which Southern IFCA receive and the number requiring comment.
- This report provides an update on the MLA work for the 2025/26 financial year and how this compares to the previous year.

Marine Licence application timeseries:

Time Period	Comment Required	No Comment Required	% Requiring Comment	% change on MLAs requiring comment to previous year
Apr 2023 – Mar 2024	13	18	42	+86
Apr 2024 – Mar 2025	40	45	47	+208
Apr 2025 – Mar 2026	26	35	43	-35

- For the number of MLAs received per month which require a response, this equates to 1.1 per month for 2023-2024, 3.3 per month for 2024-2025, and 2.2 per month for 2025-2026.
- Where an MLA is identified as requiring a response, the time taken to review documentation associated with the MLA, compile any required data to inform the response, which may include engagement with industry and/or other bodies, and draft the response can be up to approximately 2 days of Officer time per response dependent on the complexity of the application and the level of detail required for the response.

4.0 Next Steps

- That Members receive the report.

Summary of MLA consultation requests submitted to Southern IFCA where a response was issued					
Project Name	Application No.	Application Type	Applicant	Summary of MLA	Response Points
Marine aggregate south coast regional supporting studies – scoping study – topic chapter consultation	ENQ/2023/00227	ENQ	Tarmac Marine Dredging Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up consultation on the scoping studies contained within specific topic chapters of the overall scoping report. Main scoping report consulted on in October 2025, reported to the December Authority meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestion that no further assessments beyond those already listed in the chapters (Fish and Shellfish, Commercial and Recreational Fisheries, Cumulative In-combination) were required. Information provided on the location and nature of the Solent Scallop Fishery, which was not listed amongst information on fishing activity within the Solent.
Area 137 (marine aggregate dredging)	EIA/2025/00037	EIA	CEMEX UK Marine Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping report for a 20-year aggregate extraction licence in Area 137, located west of the Isle of Wight, approx. 7km south of the Needles. Licence seeking a maximum total extraction volume of 20Mt and a maximum annual extraction volume of 2Mt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limitations of using iVMS data as an indicator of inshore vessel movements highlighted to the applicant. Further consultation offered as the licence application progresses to later stages.
Southern Water Outfall Extension – Solent Landings, Bembridge	MLA/2025/00478	MLA	Cappagh Browne Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for the extension of an outfall to reduce internal flooding within a chamber of the Solent Landings works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarification sought on the length that the pipe is to be extended to enable consideration of potential interactions with fishing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Marked K

<p>Gosport Oil Fuel Jetty Independent Lighter Pontoon</p>	<p>MLA/2025/00481</p>	<p>MLA</p>	<p>Defence Infrastructure Organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for the upgrading of the Gosport Oil Fuel Jetty by installation of an independent lighter pontoon to remove pressure on the North Jetty. • While works are occurring, fuel loading will occur at the South Jetty which will require some minor refurbishment works. • Works at the North and South jetty to include removal of existing fender systems, installation of replacement fender systems, plus localised reinforcement and concrete repairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query raised as to whether further information was available for the destination of sediment mobilised by works at the South Jetty and modelled to move out onto Portsmouth Spit, in relation to concerns over impact of increased suspended sediment concentration over scallop beds outside of Portsmouth Harbour. • Consultation with key stakeholders was suggested, and facilitation offered.
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Note that references to recommendations for engagement with local fishers in responses includes both commercial and recreational sectors as required dependent on the specifics of the proposed works.

Stakeholder Groups Paper For Information

Report by DCO Birchenough

A. Purpose

To inform Members of the activity undertaken by stakeholder groups; The South Coast Fishermen's Council, The Recreational Angling Sector Group and The Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Marine Conservation Group where minutes from these meetings are available.

B. Papers

- Marked L – The South Coast Fishermen's Council Minutes – 29th October 2025
 - Marked M – The Recreational Angling Sector Group Minutes – 4th February 2026
-

1.0 Introduction

- The Authority currently provides a secretariat role for the Recreational Angling Sector Group and also the Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Marine Conservation Group.
- The Authority has given a grant of £300 to the Fishermen's Council in this financial year.
- All three groups are offered free use of a room, at the Committee's office, for meetings. Meetings are held both virtually and in person as required.
- The South Coast Fishermen's Council meets eight times per year, from 2024 the Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Marine Conservation Group meet twice per year in Spring and Autumn and the Recreational Angling Sector Group meet three times per year.

2.0 Summary of Key Points

- The following minutes are presented to the Authority for Members' consideration and to appraise them of the groups' business:
 - The minutes of The South Coast Fishermen's Council dated 29th October 2025, Marked L.
 - The minutes of The Recreational Angling Sector Group dated 4th February 2026, Marked M.
- The next meeting of The Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Marine Conservation Group is due to take place in April 2026. Minutes from this meeting will be provided to the Authority at the June 2026 meeting.

3.0 Next Steps

- That Members note the report.

SOUTH COAST FISHERMEN'S COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE 385th MEETING held via Teams at 1900 on
WEDNESDAY 29th OCTOBER 2025

PRESENT: P. Dadds - Mudeford and District FMA (Chairman)
R. Stride - Mudeford & District FMA (Secretary)
S Postles - Lyme Regis FMA
J Miller - Swanage FMA

IN ATTENDANCE:

Kyle Payton - IFCO Southern IFCA
Gordon Chittenden - Principal Fisheries Officer, MMO

I APOLOGIES: B. Pool, A. Bamfield, T Russell, M Cornwell, R. Irish (MMO), H Hamlett (FishMish), Paul Fuller (Chairman, SIFCA)

The Chairman welcomed G Chittenden and K Payton to the meeting.

The minutes of the 384th meeting, held via Teams on 17th September 2025, were taken as read and it was agreed that they be signed as a true record.

II REGIONAL FISHERIES GROUPS

There had been a meeting of the South West RFG on 23rd September but none of the members present had attended. The RFG teams were sending out regular newsletters by email, which R Stride had been forwarding to members. The recent South RFG newsletter included information from the MCA, detailing the issues that were to be addressed in the review of the Small Fishing Vessel Code of Practice. These would be the subject of a consultation in Spring 2026. It also contained details of a harbour porpoise bycatch engagement being held in the SE by the MMO. G Chittenden clarified that these were intended to collate any experience fishermen had with the interaction of porpoises and static gear in the region. Members were not aware of any incidents in this area.

G Chittenden offered to arrange for Johnny Brooks (MMO South RFG) to attend a future meeting of the Fishermen's Council

III FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLANS

Bass

R Stride reported on the work of the Management Measures sub-group of the BMG:

- The points raised by members regarding the reporting of discards had been put to the group.
- A poster had been presented at a recent meeting of the group for comment. R Stride had been unable to attend and T Russell, acting as deputy had been denied access to the meeting.
- When available, the poster would be shared with members for comment. Members agreed that supporting the process would be worthwhile if it led to the science being based on real data rather than assumptions.

(S Postles joined the meeting at 1935)

R Stride sought the views of members on a hypothetical removal of the closed season. J Miller stated that the closed season was a valuable measure and should be maintained but that any new fishing opportunities should be allocated to small vessels that are currently excluded from the fishery. It was also suggested that a seasonal slot size and the existing catch limits would provide sufficient protection during the spawning season. P Dadds observed that, prior to the closures, the local small scale directed fishery for bass in the winter months had provided a vital income at a time when few other species are available. Members discussed the implications of the ICES recommendation to increase the bass take. It was felt that the BMG would have to revisit some of the issues in the light of this development.

IV MMO/ DEFRA MATTERS

G Chittenden said that he was pleased to be back in the area. His responsibilities extended as far west as Lymington, with Rachel Irish responsible for points west.

iVMS Implementation

There were no developments to report, with negotiations ongoing. R Stride reported that his Succorfish iVMS device had stopped sending data in February but had resumed working in late September.

The shortcomings of the CatchApp were discussed. G Chittenden acknowledged that the cost of resolving the problems would be high and advised not to expect a quick fix. In the meantime, whilst recognising the frustration of users, he recommended using the work around method of logging out and then in again to get the app to submit the returns, or making use of the website and helpline.

V SOUTHERN IFCA MATTERS

K Payton updated members:

- The pre-season Solent scallop survey had indicated that further management of the permitted fishery was needed. Following consultation with permit holders, the daily fishing hours had been reduced from 0800 to 1600 to 0800 to 1400. Approximately 80% of the permit holders had engaged with the co-design process. The fishery would open on Monday 3rd November.
- The Solent clam fishery was due to open on Saturday 1st November
- The Pot Fishing Byelaw is still waiting to be confirmed.

VI MARINE PLANNING

BCP dredging and beach replenishment

There had been no developments since the last meeting.

VII SOUTH COAST SEA FISHERIES TRAINING ASSOCIATION

Five applications for a new entrant training grants had been received.

- 2 new entrants from Pevensey Bay for Sea Survival.
- A new entrant from Bridport to do Sea Survival, First Aid, Fire Fighting and Health & Safety.

- A new entrant from Charmouth to do Sea Survival, First Aid and Fire Fighting.
- A new entrant from Dorchester to do First Aid and Fire Fighting.

That the grants, to the total value of £1675, be approved was proposed by J Miller, seconded by R Stride. All in favour, except for one abstention.

VIII NATIONAL REPRESENTATION OF INSHORE FISHERIES

A website had been set up that allows fishermen, and others connected to the inshore industry, to indicate their interest in joining a national body. Once people had come together in the network, their first task would be to jointly determine what its structure would be, constitution, etc. R Stride had already shared the link to the website with members. In this way it was hoped to come up with a body that everyone would be happy with and to dispel any notion that it was the work of a sub-group that sought to pursue its own agenda.

IX OTHER BUSINESS

Training Update

S Postles explained that Seafish funding had been approved but was to cover a period of just 5 months. He outlined some of the conditions set by Seafish which were discouraging fishermen from undertaking training. Boats were leaving the industry due to the shortage of crew and the restrictions on training were not helping the situation. A limited program of the basic training courses and some 16.5 m skippers certificate courses would be going ahead. Anyone requiring training should try to get it done before the end of April.

Conflict with RSA

R Stride sought members' views on the incidence of gear conflict with recreational sea anglers and how it might be resolved. The issue had arisen along Chesil Beach where the complaint was that nets were being set very close to the shore. RSA representatives were interested in a voluntary code of practice to keep fishing gear at least 300m from the shore. In the discussion there was some sympathy expressed for the anglers but it was recognised that Chesil Beach is steep to, with deep water close to the beach. Such conflict was not a general problem throughout the district, where for most part the recreational and commercial fishermen get along well. There was some concern that RSA representatives might be seeking to achieve their ambition of a much larger exclusion zone as a long term aim.

X ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETINGS IN 2025. .

4 December.

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and G. Chittenden and K Payton for giving up their valuable time. The meeting closed at 20:44

Chairman

Recreational Angling Sector Group Meeting Minutes – 04/02/2026 18:00

Virtual Meeting – MS Teams

Attendees

Chris Holloway (Chair)

Alan Green

Sam Cumming

Mal Thomas

Peter Morgan (Angling Trust)

Sarah Birchenough (SIFCA, DCO)

Megan Fullbrook (SIFCA, IFCO)

Celie Mullen (SIFCA, IFCO)

Jonathan Brooks (MMO)

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (21st July 2025)

Minutes of last meeting were accepted by Members.

2. Introductions

CM introduced new Southern IFCA representatives for the group, and guest attendees including Dr Sarah Birchenough, Deputy Chief Officer at Southern IFCA, Mr Jonathan Brooks, Fisheries Manager, South Regional Fisheries Group, Marine Management Organisation and Mr Peter Morgan, Sea Angling Engagement Officer, Angling Trust.

3. Updates to Terms of Reference 2026

Members agreed to the updated 2026 terms of reference.

- References to the group name updated throughout to be 'Recreational Angling Sector Group' instead of 'Recreational Sector Working Group'
- Addition of reference to informal and formal consultation processes in the 'desired outcomes' section to provide transparency in how the group can contribute to local fisheries management
- That the secretariat role, with defined duties, is attributed to Southern IFCA
- Update to the frequency of meetings to three per year and the anticipated yearly timings
- Removal of specific meeting time and day (5pm on a Wednesday), changed to evening meetings with availability sought from members to determine suitable date/time
- Resources – Southern IFCA contribution as secretariat, an update related to finance to provide a defined process related to the seeking of financial support by the group and how this would be considered by the Authority

4. Overview of Southern IFCA Legislative Function

SB delivered an overview of Southern IFCA's legislative duties, including with respect to MPAs, and how Southern IFCA works with partner organisations, covering the general remit of other authorities including the Marine Management Organisation, Natural England, Defra and the Environment Agency.

Members commented that this overview had been useful to aid understandings of the function of different authorities and requested that a summary be made available with the minutes of this meeting.

ACTION: For a summary of the overview of Southern IFCA legislative function to be circulated to Members with the minutes.

5. Southern IFCA Updates/Ongoing items

Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2023

CM provided an overview of the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw (BTFG) 2023.

- The BTFG Byelaw 2023 was ratified by the Secretary of State on 7th July 2025, and was developed following the Authority's decision to review, and where necessary, develop updated feature-based management for BTFG in National Site Network MPAs (Special Areas of Conservation [SACs], Special Protection Areas [SPAs], Marine Conservation Zones [MCZs]). The review considered changes in this network through the addition of new MCZs in 2019 (Tranche 3) and updates to the best-available evidence on designated feature extent and location in MCZs, SACs and SPAs provided by Natural England.
- The Byelaw extends some existing BTFG prohibition areas, in place under the previous management measure, the BTFG Byelaw 2016, and introduces some new prohibition areas, as well as maintaining the requirement for BTFG to be inboard and above the sea whilst a vessel carrying BTFG is transiting through a prohibited area.
- Management is feature-based and considers sensitive designated features based on best available evidence and in line with a series of Management Principles.
- Supporting documentation, (<https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/district-bottom-towed-fisheries>) provides clarity of intention and process which has underpinned management decisions concerning BTFG in the Southern IFCA District.

Shore Gathering Byelaw

CM provided an update on the proposed Shore Gathering Byelaw.

- The Shore Gathering Byelaw, along with the Fishing for Cockles (Amendment) Byelaw, is being reviewed by the MMO through a period of quality assurance prior to being submitted to the Secretary of State. Only once the Byelaws have been ratified by the Secretary of State will they come into force.
- The Shore Gathering Byelaw is an output of a review of management for shore gathering activities in the District and considers where management may be required for Tranche 3 MCZs (2019). The review also considered an update to the evidence base provided by Natural England, on the location and extent of designated features within MCZs, SACs and SPA, and encompassed consideration of existing legislation which relates to shore gathering activities.
- The Byelaw seeks to introduce; year-round prohibited areas, seasonal winter closure areas (1st Nov to 31st March) and seasonal summer closure areas (1st March to 31st August). Within the closure areas, all forms of shore gathering will be prohibited, along with a person having with them in those areas any hand

held equipment for use in shore gathering activities and a person will be prohibited from putting down any artificial structures for the gathering of crab. The activities covered include shellfish gathering, bait digging/collection, shrimp push-netting, crab tiling/collection, mechanical harvesting (by hand) and the harvesting of seaweed by hand from the shore.

- In addition, to support statutory measures, The Seaweed Harvesting Code of Conduct has been drafted which seeks to provide additional voluntary provisions relating to the gathering of seaweed within MPAs.
- Feature-based management for sensitive designated features has been developed considering best available evidence and in accordance with a series of Management Principles. All information on the review and proposed regulations can be found on the Southern IFCA website. (<https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/ongoing-reviews>).

Black Seabream Workstream

SB provided an overview of the Black Seabream management workstream.

- Black Seabream are a designated feature of three MCZs in Dorset; Purbeck Coast, Poole Rocks and Southbourne Rough.
- In developing Southern IFCA's understanding of the brief to inform decision making for BSB management in the three Dorset MCZs, encompassing understanding the route of designation, the relevant Conservation Objectives (COs) and exploring early stages of policy development, founded upon the requirements under the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MaCAA) 2009 Section (154), the BSB review was split into two parallel streams of work, each having independent policy objectives and legislative underpinnings.
- The Primary Policy Objective, to satisfy legal duties for the furthering of Conservation Objectives within the MCZs, under Southern IFCA's legal duties under Section (154) of MaCAA was achieved through existing statutory measures, including the prohibition of bottom towed fishing gear under the BTFG Byelaw 2023, district-wide enforcement of a minimum conservation reference size across all sectors under the Minimum Conservation Reference Size Byelaw and seasonal spatial exclusion zones enforced by the Ministry of Defence, which cumulatively protect black seabream as a designated feature and at spatial and temporal scales exceeding those required by the Conservation Objectives.
- The Secondary Policy Objective, to further understandings of BSB populations across the three Dorset MCZs, considered additional management measures for lower risk fishing activities, underpinned by Southern IFCA's wider legal duties under Section (153) of MaCAA. In delivering this Objective, Southern IFCA worked with the Dorset Community to create the Co-Developed Principles, drawing on expert views and contextual information on these fisheries and their cultural, community and socio-economic importance through a staged engagement and feedback process, to ensure that a proportionate and adaptive approach could be taken which improves understandings of this data-poor species whilst supporting sustainable fishing opportunities, complementing statutory protections, and continuing to strengthen partnership working with the community.
- The Co-Developed Principles are:
 - Voluntary, applying within the three MCZs, applying from 1st April – 31st July
 - A Minimum Conservation Reference Size = 28cm
 - A Maximum Conservation Reference Size = 38cm
 - 6 fish per person per day recreational bag limit

- Guidance
- Data collection Programme
- DCO Birchenough expressed thanks on behalf of the Authority to the community, including representatives from the commercial, recreational and charter fishing sectors, for their engagement and dedication to the co-development process. The expert knowledge provided at various stages was instrumental in the development of the final BSB Management Package, particularly in shaping the Co-Developed Principles. DCO Birchenough outlined that Southern IFCA look forward to continuing to work with the community through 2026 and beyond to support and promote sustainable BSB fisheries in Dorset.
- DCO Birchenough outlined the intention for the year 1 implementation of the Co-Developed Principles, being to focus on engagement and awareness, seeking compliance with the Co-Developed Principles. DCO Birchenough outlined that a suite of engagement tools can be used in this regard, including engaging with partner organisations such as the Angling Trust.
- DCO Birchenough informed Member that it is proposed that the first annual review of the Co-Developed Principles takes place following the conclusion of the breeding season in 2026, seeking to incorporate community feedback on the application of the principles and the overall health of the fishery, analysis of data collected through the data collection programme, compliance & enforcement metrics, data from external sources, outputs from the FMP process and any emerging scientific evidence.

Member Discussion:

Members discussed the current preparation of documents for the BSB data collection programme and the need for clear information outlining that the data collection is set for inside the three Dorset MCZs only. Members raised concern over understanding the boundary areas for the three MCZs and lack of plotters for some recreational vessels. SB acknowledged this concern and outlined that the difficulties such as those suggested are currently being assessed to explore how information can best be provided to stakeholders ahead of the implementation of the Co-Developed Principles.

Members also discussed the Sea Angling Diary Project and queried what level of access Southern IFCA have to this data. SB outlined that discussions were ongoing with Cefas regarding the project and the potential for sharing of data. Members expressed concerns over the reliability of the data and that the Sea Angling Diary is currently used by only a limited number of anglers in the local area.

Members discussed the application of the recreational bag limit under the Co-Developed Principles being limited to within the MCZs. SB reiterated Southern IFCA's duties in relation to BSB as a designated feature of the three Dorset MCZs and outlined the statutory measure under the MCRS Byelaw which applied to BSB across the District both within and outside of the MCZs. SB also outlined that the Seabream FMP will apply to all English waters and will consider BSB populations across the wider area outside of MCZs. Members discussed compliance and enforcement of the Co-Developed Principles, SB outlined the ability to utilise multiple assets to assist with monitoring in these fisheries, including Fisheries Protection Vessels and the drone, and reiterated the intention of year 1, to promote education and awareness through engagement to encourage compliance with the Co-Developed Principles.

Members queried the route of designation for BSB within the three MCZs and the purpose/ goal of management. It was discussed that the rationale for designation had been considered at length during the management development process with further detail provided in supporting documentation for the review which will be made available on the Southern IFCA website as part of the implementation of the Co-Developed Principles. It was reiterated that management had been considered under parallel Policy Objectives, each having a defined aim, with fishing activities considered through a gear risk assessment in relation to delivery under each Policy Objective.

One Member raised that the recreational sea angling community had been potentially misled surrounding the goal of the black seabream management, which was believed to be due to the species being endangered. SB outlined that the series of engagement events and ongoing provision of information to the community, that had taken place since the beginning of the workstream, had clearly outlined the rationale for management intervention and that the Process Documents accompanying management development, which had been provided to all stakeholders through the agenda for the Southern IFCA Extraordinary Technical Advisory Sub-Committee meeting in December, had provided further clarity and transparency on the intention and process followed for this workstream.

SB outlined that information on the Co-Developed Principles will be disseminated ahead of 1st April 2026 through various outlets, and using various formats to ensure that information is accessible and widely available to all stakeholders. Officers are currently in contact with Angling Trust representatives to discuss how AT may be able to support Southern IFCA with the dissemination of information.

PM emphasised the importance of promoting responsible angling within clubs and the sharing of information with club members.

Compliance Updates

MF provided an update report surrounding Southern IFCA compliance & enforcement:

- The recreational bass limit is due to increase to 3 per person per day based on international negotiations. At present, in line with the Bass Fishery Guidance 2026 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bass-industry-guidance-2025/bass-fishing-guidance-2025#recreational-bass-fishing>), outside of the period 1st February to 31st March, recreational fishers remain limited to two fish per day bag limits until legislation is in place to enact the increase for 2026 to three fish per day bag limits agreed in annual negotiations with the EU.
- CET offence update since last meeting:
 - Enforcement outcomes include a £100 Fixed Administrative Penalty (FAP) issued for bass offences including a breach of the Poole Bass Nursery Area under the national bass measures and the Southern IFCA Net Fishing Byelaw, and a breach of the recreational bass limit measures in the Solent.
 - The Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery is now in its closed season (from 24th December- 24th May). During the last season (2025), 3 Official Written Warning Letters were issued and one case detected by the MMO is still ongoing relating to undersized shellfish. A Fixed Administrative Penalty (FAP) was also issued for a closed area offence under the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Byelaw.

- The Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw Fishery is currently open, with the Scallop season running from November to March, and the Clam season running from November to February. The team have utilised SIFCAs assets, including Fisheries Patrol Vessel Vigilant and the use of the drone, to regularly monitor the fishery. Relating to the BTFG Byelaw 2023, two FAPs and one Written Warning have been issued to vessels operating within the fishery. Additional investigations still ongoing in relation to BTFG incursions.

Member Discussion:

Members noted that recreational sea anglers are happy with the current daily recreational bass limit of 2 and that it would be beneficial to further understand the rationale behind the proposed increased to 3 fish. Members discussed the effect of an increase in bass tonnage and bycatch for commercials which could arise due to the changes in regulations for 2026 for commercial fishers. JB (MMO) provided additional information on the rationale behind changes to both recreational and commercial bass regulation changes, stemming from the EU annual negotiation, outcomes of which have been published in a report in December 2025.

FMP Update

SB provided an FMP update report.

• **Bass FMP:**

- The Bass Authorisation Review Report for commercial fisheries was published in December following a period of engagement – a copy of this report is available online.
- There are 24 recommendations based on the consultation which will now be further considered by Defra and the Bass Management Group, there may be further public consultation.
- The main points of the review are consideration of:
 - The number of authorisations available to land bass
 - A scheme providing access for young people wishing to enter the fishery
 - Allowing fishers the option to switch from fixed gillnet authorization to hooks and lines
 - Gear trials – including an inshore drift net scientific trial
 - Establishing a working group to review demersal trawls and seines
 - A bycatch allowance trial for non-authorized fixed gillnet fishers
 - Development of an accredited hook-to-plate bass fishery
 - Adjustments to engine power and vessel size restrictions

• **Tranche 3 FMPs:**

- The T3 FMPs were published on 16th December 2025, four of the five FMPs apply to the Southern IFCA District:
 - Cockle
 - North Sea and Channel Sprat
 - Queen Scallop
 - Southern North Sea and Channel Skates and Rays (covering blond ray, cuckoo ray, small-eyed ray, spotted ray, starry ray, thornback ray, undulate ray)

- Southern IFCA are currently reviewing the FMPs to understand how goals and actions within each FMP may relate to the relevant fisheries within the District.

- **Tranche 4 FMPs:**

- There are four Tranche 4 FMPs currently under development:
 - Seabream FMP (black seabream and gilthead seabream)
 - Wrasses Complex FMP (ballan wrasse, corkwing wrasse, rock cook wrasse, goldsinny wrasse and cuckoo wrasse)
 - Celtic Seas and Western Channel Pelagic (area 7e, west of St Albans head only) (herring, pilchards, greater silver smelt, horse mackerel, anchovy)
 - Celtic Seas and Western Channel Demersal (area 7e) (monkfish/anglerfish, cod, haddock, plaice, thornback ray, sole, blue ling, deep water sharks, saithe, round nose grenadier, red seabream, skates and rays, megrim, four spotted megrim, pollack, nephrops, whiting)
- The next stage for these FMPs will be public consultation on the draft documents, Southern IFCA will disseminate information on any consultation once it is available but no dates have been announced at present.

Since the meeting was held, the Formal Consultation on T4 FMPs was announced and will run until 5th May 2026 - [Consultations open for final four Defra-led FMPs – Fisheries Management Plans](#).

- **Scottish Led FMPs:**

- There are 11 Scottish led demersal FMPs currently subject to public consultation, running until Wednesday 11th March 2026.
- Three of these FMPs have a geographical overlap with the District:
 - North Sea and Eastern Channel Whiting (area 7d, east of St Albans head only)
 - Northern Shelf Cod (area 7d)
 - Northern Shelf Hake (whole District)
- Each relevant FMP is currently being reviewed to understand how any proposed goals and actions may relate to relevant fisheries within the District. Southern IFCA is engaging with IFCA colleagues and the AIFCA to understand other perspectives on the Scottish Led FMPs. Any stakeholders are welcome to engage directly with the public consultation.

Member Discussion:

Members asked if the coverage of the Seabream FMP would include the MCZ areas. SB explained the FMP covers all English waters and makes reference to management within the MCZS as being overseen by the relevant IFCAs. SB outlined that the intended main focus of the FMP is likely to be more widely on the populations of BSB rather than a focus on MCZ management. SB outlined that Members will be able to feed in directly to the public consultation on this FMP once it is announced and are encouraged to do so to put forward any specific points that they wish Defra to be aware of. Members questioned management arising from the FMP, SB explained that the FMP will define goals and actions for relevant species but will not introduce management, management needs based on those goals and actions will be considered and, where required, delivered by relevant authorities through the implementation phase of the FMP.

Feedback from Community Drop-In Surgeries & Matter Discussed

SB provided an overview of the Southern IFCA Community Drop-In Surgeries which have been run across the District to date.

- Community Drop-In Surgeries have been held in Lyme Regis, Weymouth, Swanage and Poole. The most recent surgery in Poole was very well attended and the Authority appreciates the time taken by all attendees to come and chat with Southern IFCA to share knowledge and experience of Poole and Christchurch Bay fisheries and to help facilitate a greater and real understanding of the challenges that the community face which will help tailor Southern IFCA's work moving forward. The Community Drop-In Surgeries are a new initiative and Southern IFCA will be continuing to deliver these across the District.
- SB outlined that Southern IFCA are listening and are committed to working with fishers across the District to address common themes which are raised. Southern IFCA will keep stakeholders informed as ideas and potential solutions are considered which will seek to have a positive impact on day to day fishing.
- SB outlined that there were a number of topics discussed at the Poole Surgery, including trawling activity in Poole Bay, black seabream and MCZs, declining fish stocks across a number of species and many other important topics. SB stated that these matters will be captured in Southern IFCA's outputs from the Community Drop-In Surgery Programme, looking to identify common themes across the District.
- Southern IFCA are holding the next Community Drop-In Surgeries on Tuesday 10th February in Lymington at Fisherman's Quay between 11:00-12:30 and in Mudeford on Mudeford Quay between 14:00-15:30, all are welcome to attend, and Members were encouraged to share this information with members of fishing clubs and fishing colleagues.

Member Discussion:

Members discussed the outputs of the Community Drop-In Surgeries as a positive initiative and appreciated that stakeholders will continue to be informed as Southern IFCA generate ideas from the outputs of the Surgeries once the programme has concluded.

6. MMO Updates (Jonathan Brooks)

JB provided an MMO update on ongoing matters with reference to the increase in recreational bass limits as previously discussed and the recreational maximum of 3 pollack per person per day. Members discussed a lack of pollack and cod in the area, difficulties of catch and release for some recreational species and a potential displacement of species due to charter and commercial sectors. Members discussed the potential for resting wrecks where fishing activity commonly occurs to allow populations to recover.

JB provided an update on the bluefin tuna fishery and the issuing of licences. During the EU negotiations, an increase from 63t to 230t for bluefin tuna has been allocated per year from 2026-2028. Decisions on how that allocation will be used are still being made. Applications will likely be open in the spring for relevant licences. Members discussed the financial difficulty of entering the tuna fishery as a recreational angler.

JB directed those interested in the ICES advice and quotas for certain species toward an online meeting being held on 12th Feb 2026 from 3-5pm by Cefas on data collection and evidence which is available to all stakeholders to attend.

7. RSA Update- coastal inputs

Members discussed trawling activity within Poole and Christchurch Bays and concern over fish populations available for RSA activity within the area and declining catch rates. JB provided an overview from the MMO on the EU negotiations for commercial trawling fleets.

SB read out points which had been requested to be raised under this agenda item by Members ahead of the meeting.

- **A query was raised on MPAs and whether a review was taking place, and whether as part of this any new MPAs would be created.**

- UK MPA Review – a review is currently being undertaken at a national level on the MPA network, with the aim of future-proofing the network, for example in terms of climate change adaption and mitigation, and to work with the cross-government Marine Spatial Prioritisation Programme to aim to better understand demands and pressures on the marine environment to enable sustainable economic development alongside environmental recovery.
- The full network covers 40% of English waters (Southern IFCA District has 21 MPAs covering 51% of the District) with targets under the Environmental Improvement Plan (2025) for 70% of designated features in MPAs to be in favourable condition by 2042 with the remainder in recovering condition and an interim target for 48% by 31st January 2028. The delivery of this is supported through strengthened protections in MPAs by 2026, Southern IFCA's delivery of the BTFG Byelaw 2023, management for Black Seabream in Dorset MCZs and the development of the Shore Gathering Byelaw all contribute to these targets.
- The Marine Recovery Fund is also now in place, allowing offshore wind developers to pool resources into a government-managed fund dedicated to addressing the environmental impacts from offshore wind. Rather than each developer working in isolation to offset potential impacts to MPAs, a strategic, landscape-scale approach will be used to deliver more effective outcomes. This may involve extending existing MPAs and designating new ones as compensatory habitat, however, there is no timescale for this nor any suggestion as to where this may be implemented at present.
- Currently there are no plans to introduce new MPAs within the Southern IFCA District.

- **A query was raised on discarded commercial fishing gear and whether there are any rules or guidelines for this.**

- Fishing gear which has been abandoned, discarded or lost at sea is often referred to as ghost fishing gear. There are requirements at a national level for the marking of gear and what to do if gear is lost, this is overseen at a national level and guidance is available on the gov.uk website. There is also the ability for stakeholders to report ghost fishing gear, there is a link to on the relevant information on this on the FAQs page of the Southern IFCA website (<http://southern-ifca.gov.uk/faqs>).

8. Any Other Business

Members discussed that they feel the benefit of external organisations attending meetings to clarify additional fisheries matters that are not within Southern IFCA jurisdiction and requested that this is continued going forward. Members also raised that they would like the AT to routinely attend the RASG meetings.

End of meeting 20:03.

Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA)

Annual Delivery Plan 2026–2027



1. Introduction

The AIFCA is the national voice of IFCAs. We work with the ten Authorities to support, promote and improve inshore fisheries and conservation management, ensuring that coastal communities prosper and coastal waters are effectively protected. This Annual Delivery Plan sets out the priorities, activities and outcomes for the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA) for the 2026–2027 financial year. The Plan builds on the established structure of the 2025–2026 Annual Delivery Plan and reflects continuity of purpose while incorporating updated objectives for the Senior Policy Officer, Senior Technical Officer, Communication & Engagement Manager, and the Chief Officer.

The AIFCA will support the IFCAs to engage in national policy to implement the Joint Fisheries Statement and the Fisheries Act 2020, contributing to the delivery of the eight fisheries objectives and to Good Environmental Status under the UK Marine Strategy. In line with the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, the Environment Act 2021 and the commitment to halt nature's decline by 2030, AIFCA will champion consistent, evidence-based approaches to biodiversity recovery, sustainable fisheries and climate resilience, including supporting IFCAs in reducing emissions and protecting blue carbon habitats.

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IFCA Success Criteria

To support the delivery of the national IFCA vision, IFCAs work to a set of success criteria matched with corresponding high-level objectives. The vision, success criteria and high-level objectives are designed to assist in the creation of a shared understanding of the collective aims and objectives of IFCAs, and focus service delivery towards achievement of the national vision.

These national IFCA performance criteria also link directly to the UK Marine Policy Statement.

The following Success Criteria have been agreed and adopted nationally

1. IFCAs are recognised and heard, whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders.
2. IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime.
3. IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts.
4. IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.
5. IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives

The Fisheries Objectives are

1. Sustainability
2. Precautionary
3. Ecosystem
4. Scientific Evidence
5. Bycatch
6. Equal Access
7. National Benefit
8. Climate Change

IFCA National High-Level Objectives

1. Achieving a sustainable marine economy
2. Ensuring a strong, healthy & just society
3. Using sound science responsibly
4. Living within environmental limits
5. Promoting good governance

In 2026 we will work with the IFCAs and Defra to review the IFCAs Success Criteria and High Level Objectives to ensure that they are up to date and relevant to support the work of the IFCAs.

2. Our Priorities

The AIFCA's work in 2026–2027 will continue to focus on two priorities:

- Representing and promoting IFCA's at a national level
- Promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of the work of the IFCA's

These priorities are delivered through:

- Supporting IFCA membership and leadership
- Providing an effective forum for the ten IFCA's
- Delivering an effective and efficient service

In doing so, the AIFCA will continue to support the implementation of the IFCA Conduct and Operations (C&O) Report.

2.1 AIFCA Organisational Structure

Members Forum

Sets the strategic direction of the AIFCA

- **Chair:** Tony Tomlinson MBE
- **Vice Chair:** Professor Mike Williams

Directors

Undertake essential governance, assurance and oversight roles on behalf of the Members Forum

Chief Officer

Responsible for operational leadership and delivery

- **Robert Clark BSc MSc MBA FMBA**

AIFCA Staff Team

Supporting delivery of AIFCA objectives and national coordination of IFCA's

- **Senior Policy Officer** – Tim Smith
- **Senior Technical Officer** – Simon Pengelly
- **Communication and Engagement Manager** – Emily Bulled
- **Finance Officer** – Paul Williams

In 2026/7 we will review the structure of the organisation to ensure adequacy and sustainability of staff resources.

3. Representing and Promoting IFCA's at a National Level

3.1 Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Management

Outcome: IFCA's have a strong, credible and coordinated national voice in fisheries policy and management.

Delivery Strand	Key Activities 2026–2027	Lead Role(s)
Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)	Coordinate IFCA engagement in FMP delivery; support IFCA leads; oversee evidence reporting and engagement with the FMP evidence programme	Senior Policy Officer
National fisheries representation	Represent IFCA's on national fisheries fora; support coordinated IFCA input	Senior Policy Officer
Mollusc and emerging fisheries	National review of mollusc fisheries; emerging fisheries strategy; coordination of national cockle forum	Senior Policy Officer / Senior Technical Officer

Governance

- Chief Officer to provide strategic oversight of FMP engagement; represent IFCA's in senior-level discussions with Defra and ALBs; ensure IFCA contributions are recognised nationally
- Chief Officer to lead senior representation where required; maintain relationships with Ministers, Defra Directors and ALB leadership and champion outcomes with Defra and stakeholders; support resource allocation and prioritisation

Project: Fisheries in a changing climate

Project Officer: Senior Policy Officer.

AIFCA will support national policy objectives by promoting adaptive, climate-responsive fisheries management that recognise the increasing impacts of climate change on inshore waters. As species distributions shift and extreme environmental events become more frequent, AIFCA will work with IFCA's, Defra and delivery partners to ensure management frameworks remain flexible, evidence-led and proportionate. This will include supporting the use of improved environmental data, monitoring and local knowledge to inform timely regulatory responses. AIFCA will champion approaches that strengthen the resilience of fishing communities by enabling them to adapt to ecological change while maintaining sustainable access to fisheries, safeguarding livelihoods and supporting long-term social, economic and environmental resilience in coastal areas

3.2 Evidence, MPAs and Technical Assurance

Outcome: National fisheries and conservation policy is informed by robust, high-quality IFCA evidence.

Delivery Strand	Key Activities 2026–2027	Lead Role(s)
Defra MPA Network Review	Lead IFCA delivery of Defra-commissioned regulators' technical report	Senior Technical Officer

Delivery Strand	Key Activities 2026–2027	Lead Role(s)
Ecological evidence assurance	Coordinate IFCA review of Natural England ecological evidence and advice	Senior Technical Officer
Measuring Balance Tool	Further testing and application of the tool in real-time management scenarios	Senior Technical Officer

Governance

- Chief Officer to act as senior responsible officer; manage Defra relationship and contractual expectations
- Chief Officer to escalate strategic risks and issues; ensure alignment with AIFCA priorities
- Members Forum to seek support adoption across IFCAs; promote tool at senior and policy levels

Programme. Marine Protected Areas.

Programme Owner: Senior Technical Officer.

The Senior Technical Officer’s leadership on marine protected areas will directly support the delivery of English national policy and statutory duties for MPAs, including those duties under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the Environment Act 2021 and the UK Marine Strategy. By leading IFCA input into Defra’s MPA Network Review and providing technical assurance of ecological evidence from Natural England, this role will help ensure that MPA management is evidence-led, proportionate and consistently applied across England. Further development of the Measuring Balance Tool will support balanced decision-making that integrates conservation, fisheries and socio-economic considerations, aligning with national objectives for sustainable use of MPAs. Coordinating implementation of the recommendations arising from the IFCA Conduct and Operations Report will strengthen governance, transparency and regulatory effectiveness. Together, these activities will enhance local delivery of MPA objectives, support nature recovery at site level, and ensure inshore fisheries management contributes positively to resilient, well-managed marine ecosystems and thriving coastal communities.

Project. Kingfisher Fishing Restriction Update

Project Owner: Senior Technical Officer.

The Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA) will actively support the ongoing update and development of the *Kingfisher Fishing Restrictions* service, managed by Seafish, which provides a consolidated, gear-focused view of commercial fishing restrictions across UK waters to improve compliance and safety for fishers. This support will include close collaboration with Seafish to ensure that Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) data — including local byelaws and inshore restriction areas — is integrated into future updates and the planned system redesign, ensuring accuracy and relevance at the inshore scale. AIFCA will facilitate data sharing arrangements, contribute expert local knowledge during the system redesign process, and encourage IFCAs to engage with Seafish’s stakeholder consultations. By enhancing IFCA data inclusion within *Kingfisher*, the service will better reflect the full suite of inshore management measures, thereby supporting both regulatory transparency and sustainable fisheries management.

Project. Implementation of the national Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy.

Project Owner: Senior Policy Officer.

In 2025–26 the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA) will drive the implementation of the national Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy to enhance evidence-based inshore fisheries management. This will include coordinating and expanding REM and AI trials across key fisheries to evaluate technologies suited to inshore vessels and data needs. AIFCA will work with IFCA and the fishing industry to ensure REM/AI deployment is collaborative, proportionate and transparent, fostering industry engagement and demonstrating benefits for sustainable management and compliance. Efforts will focus on integrating REM/AI outputs into byelaw frameworks and regulatory decision-making, supported by development of data governance protocols, robust back-office systems, and secure data sharing. AIFCA will also establish an IFCA REM Advisory Group, promote knowledge exchange and training across authorities, and pursue sustainable funding and interoperability with national monitoring solutions—all to embed REM/AI into routine fisheries management.

4. Promoting Greater Understanding and Appreciation of IFCA Work

4.1 Visibility, Profile and Communications

Outcome: The role, value and impact of IFCAs is clearly understood by Defra, Ministers and stakeholders, partners and the public.

Delivery Strand	Key Activities 2026–2027	Lead Role(s)
National communications	Annual Report; Annual Impact Report; quarterly newsletters; social media and website updates	Comms & Engagement Manager
Media engagement	Proactive media relations; amplification of IFCA success stories	Comms & Engagement Manager
Internal communications	Establish internal and external IFCA communications group	Comms & Engagement Manager

Governance

- Chief Officer to provide editorial oversight; act as spokesperson where appropriate; approve key messages.
- Chief Officer to lead on high-profile or sensitive media engagement
- Chair or sponsor senior-level communications coordination

Programme. Communication and Engagement

Programme owner: Communication and Engagement Manager.

The Communication and Engagement Manager will play a central role in supporting IFCAs during 2026–27 by strengthening their collective profile, influence and capacity to engage

effectively with stakeholders. Through coordinated national communications, including annual reporting, newsletters, digital channels and media engagement, the role will increase visibility of IFCA achievements and ensure consistent, clear messaging across England. The Manager will support IFCA's engagement with Defra, MMO and delivery partners, helping to align local activity with national programmes such as Fisheries Management Plans, while ensuring IFCA expertise informs policy development. By convening communications networks, supporting national conferences and facilitating sector engagement through the Inshore and Small-Scale Fisheries Consortium, the role will strengthen relationships with industry, communities and partners. Capacity-building through training, knowledge exchange and international collaboration will further enhance IFCA capability. Together, these activities will help IFCA demonstrate impact, share best practice, respond to emerging challenges and deliver effective, trusted inshore fisheries management.

4.2 Engagement and Relationships

Outcome: Strong, trusted relationships support effective fisheries management and decision making.

Delivery Strand	Key Activities 2026–2027	Lead Role(s)
Stakeholder engagement	Regular meetings with key stakeholders; national conference planning	Comms & Engagement Manager
National groups and fora	Support and coordination of Technical Advisory Group (TAG), National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG), Chief Officers Group (COG) and Law Group	Senior Policy Officer / Senior Technical Officer / Comms & Engagement Manager
Inshore fishing sector engagement	Support Inshore Small Scale Fisheries Consortium (ISSF) and sector engagement activities	Comms & Engagement Manager

Governance

- Chief Officer Tasking: lead senior stakeholder relationships; open and close major events
- Chief Officer Tasking: provide leadership and direction to national groups; resolve cross-IFCA issues
- Chief Officer Tasking: act as senior sponsor of ISSF programme; support funding and governance

Project. Inshore and Small-Scale Fisheries Consortium

Project Owner: Communications and Engagement Manager.

The ISSF Consortium is a new collaboration of fishermen's organisations, government regulators, NGOs, and scientists with a focus on securing Inshore and Small-Scale Fisheries (ISSF). The group is working to understand the drivers of the decline in the inshore fleet and how to mitigate it, highlighting the importance of viable livelihoods as a cornerstone to developing sustainable fisheries. Ultimately, delivering the UK Fisheries Act objective of a 'national benefit' from sustainable fisheries that is truly national in scope, and accessible across our coastline, depends upon securing the contributions of a viable inshore and small-scale fishing sector.

The AIFCA is plays a pivotal role in supporting the ISSF work, both in setting strategic direction and practical support. In 2026, building on the success of the Whitby and Poole workshops and the Newcastle national Symposium, we will act as secretariat to the group, produce policy briefings on the work of the group and how inshore fisheries management can support inshore fisheries, continue to support the development of platforms to enable inshore fishers to be heard at a regional and national level and work to secure funding to support the ongoing development of the network.

Programme. Coastal Health Programme

Programme Owner: Senior Technical Officer.

The Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA) will actively support the continuation of the Coastal Health Programme led by Cefas by promoting collaboration between IFCAs, government partners, and local stakeholders. AIFCA will advocate for sustained funding, facilitate data sharing to strengthen evidence-based fisheries management, and champion the programme’s role in improving marine resilience. By aligning regional enforcement, research, and community engagement, AIFCA will help ensure the programme continues to deliver meaningful environmental, social, and economic benefits to coastal communities.

5. Supporting IFCA Membership and Leadership

Outcome: IFCA members and officers are supported, informed and connected.

Delivery Strand	Key Activities 2026–2027	Lead Role(s)
Member briefings and forums	Quarterly member forums; policy briefings and updates	Senior Policy Officer
Capacity building and training	Development and delivery of officer training modules; national/international exchanges	Comms & Engagement Manager
Member support and induction	Support Defra/MMO engagement on appointments and inductions	Senior Policy Officer

Governance

- Members Forum provide strategic updates
- Chief Officer support partnerships; promote IFCA expertise nationally and internationally
- Chief Officer maintain senior-level engagement with Defra/MMO

15 years of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) and a celebration of the contribution of the inshore fishing sector to coastal communities and sustainable fisheries management.

Project Owner. Chief Officer

Governance

Hosted in Northumberland, the event will bring together fishermen, policymakers, and partner organisations to highlight the achievements of IFCA and the importance of collaborative working between regulators and the fishing industry. A small delegation of fishermen from across the UK, alongside local representatives, will attend to represent the inshore fleet and share insights from the February symposium. Their participation will ensure that the voices and experience of working fishermen remain central to the discussion. The event will also provide an opportunity to engage ministers, Defra officials, and key stakeholders, strengthening relationships and raising awareness of the value of well-managed inshore fisheries to the environment, local economies, and coastal heritage.

Project. Fisheries Management Exchange Programme

Project Owner: Communications and Engagement Manager.

During 2025/26 AIFCA supported the development of the Scotland–England Inshore Fisheries Management Exchange, creating a constructive forum for dialogue between IFCA, RIFGs and key partners. The Exchange has strengthened professional relationships, enabled sharing of best practice on effort management, compliance and governance, and improved mutual understanding of cross-border challenges. In 2026/27 this work will continue through biannual meetings, thematic discussions on pot limits and MCRS/MLS alignment, shared case studies, and reciprocal observation visits to committee meetings and districts, further embedding collaboration and supporting effective, evidence-led inshore fisheries management. The AIFCA will also seek to expand the exchange to other nations.

6. Providing an Effective Forum for the Ten IFCAs

Outcome: IFCA collaborate effectively, respecting local diversity while acting collectively where appropriate.

Key activities include:

- Quarterly members' Forums and Directors' meetings
- Support to working groups (COG, TAG, NIMEG, Law Group)
- Development of joint position statements on priority issues
- Establishing and support administration group.

Governance

- Set agendas and strategic direction
- Ensure effective governance and decision-making across forums

7. Delivering an Effective and Efficient Service

Outcome: The AIFCA operates as a well-governed, efficient and accountable organisation.

Key activities:

- Governance policy review and risk management
- Financial planning, budget control and annual accounts
- Annual planning, reporting and performance monitoring

Governance

- Chief Officer acts as Accounting Officer
 - Chief Officer lead risk management and governance assurance
 - Chief Officer report performance to members and Directors
-

8. Implementing the IFCA Conduct and Operations Report

The AIFCA will continue to coordinate and support delivery of the C&O Report recommendations, including:

- Data sharing and IT infrastructure
- Member and officer awareness and transparency materials
- Inshore fisheries engagement initiatives
- Communications and governance best practice

Governance

Senior Responsible Owner for the C&O implementation programme

Ensure delivery is resourced, monitored and reported

9. Performance, Monitoring and Reporting

Progress against this Plan will be monitored through:

- Quarterly progress reports
- Regular updates to members and Directors
- Annual Delivery Report 2026–2027

Governance

The Chief Officer will ensure that performance, risks and emerging issues are reported transparently and that the Plan remains responsive to changing priorities.
