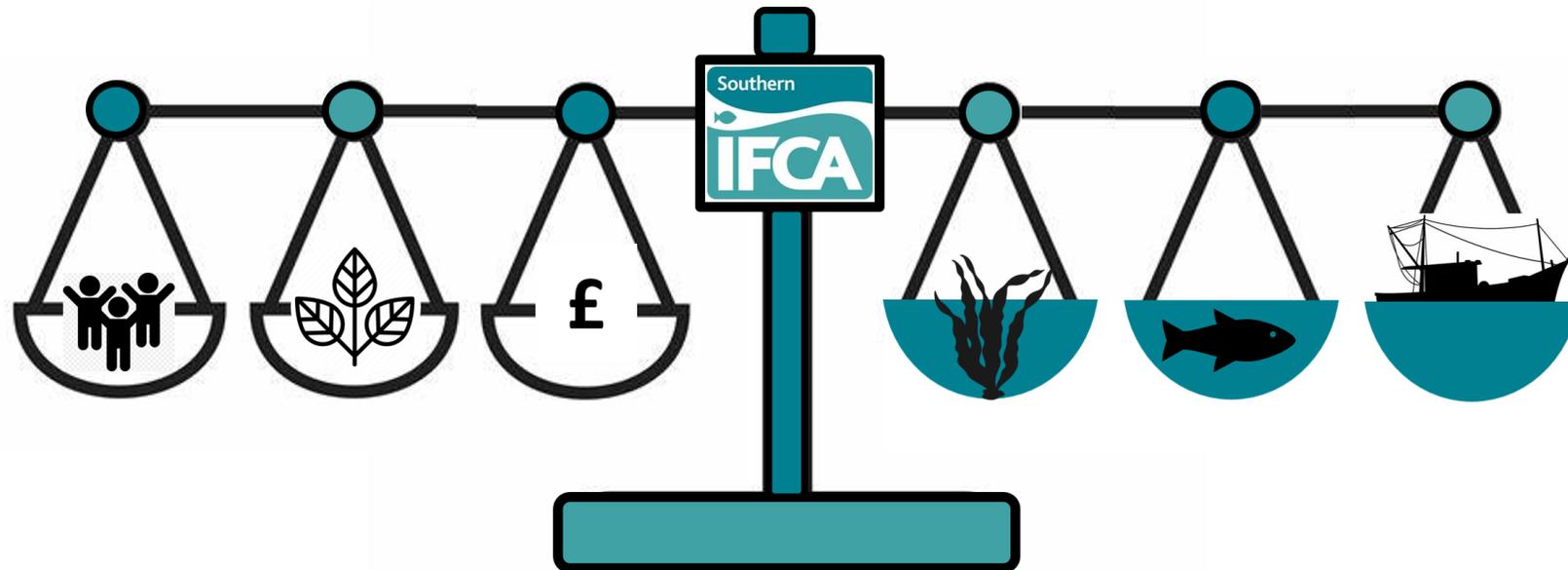


*“ IFCAs will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment & inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental & economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries & a viable industry ”*

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 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 2023 (EIP)**, 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...*'

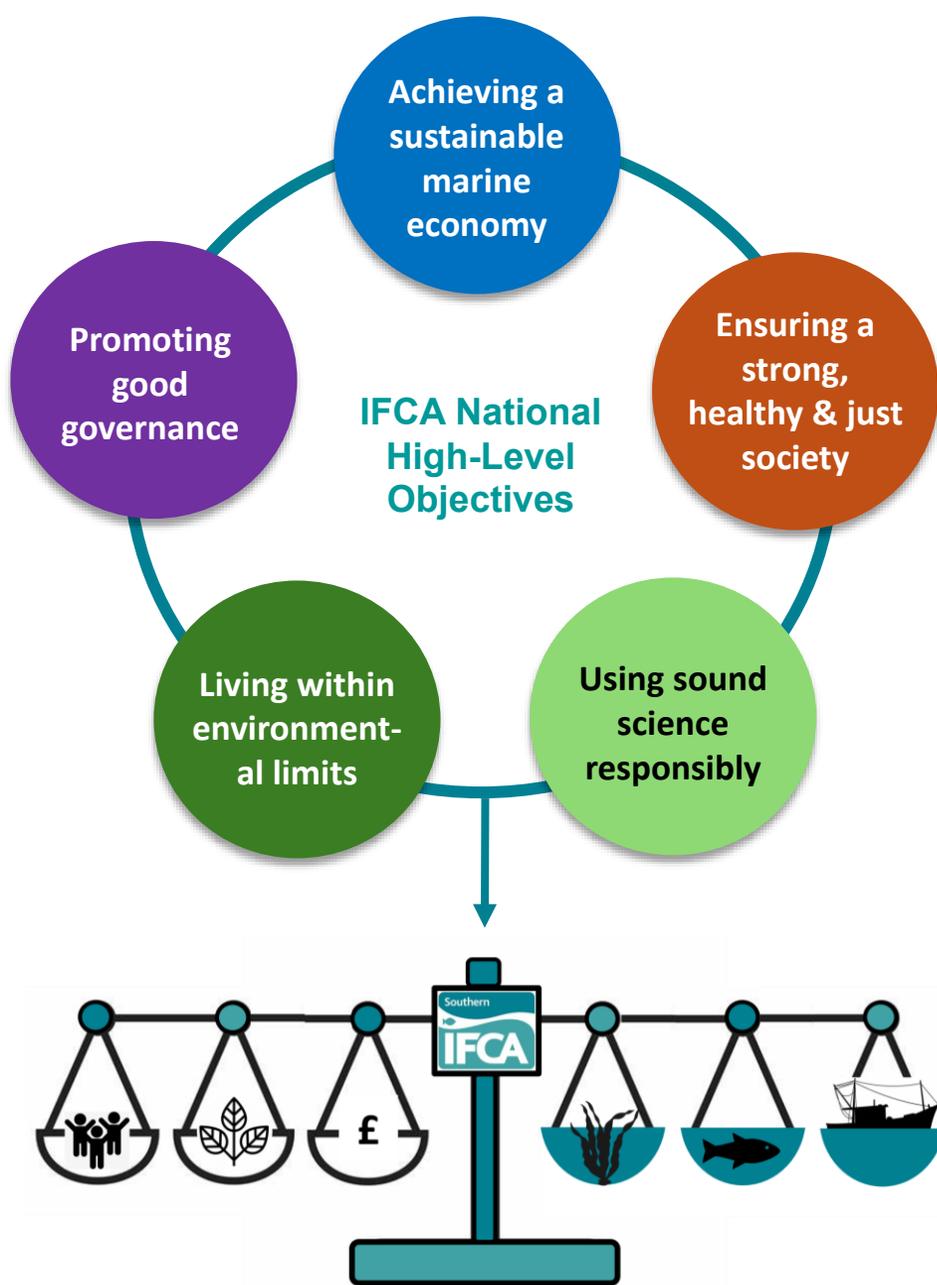
**The Fisheries Act (2020)** was introduced to make provisions in relation to **fisheries, fishing, aquaculture** and **marine conservation** following the departure of the UK from Europe. The Act enshrines in law the UK's commitment to sustainable fishing, supporting future generations of fishers, while 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.



# 2025-26: 10 Strategic Anchors



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.**

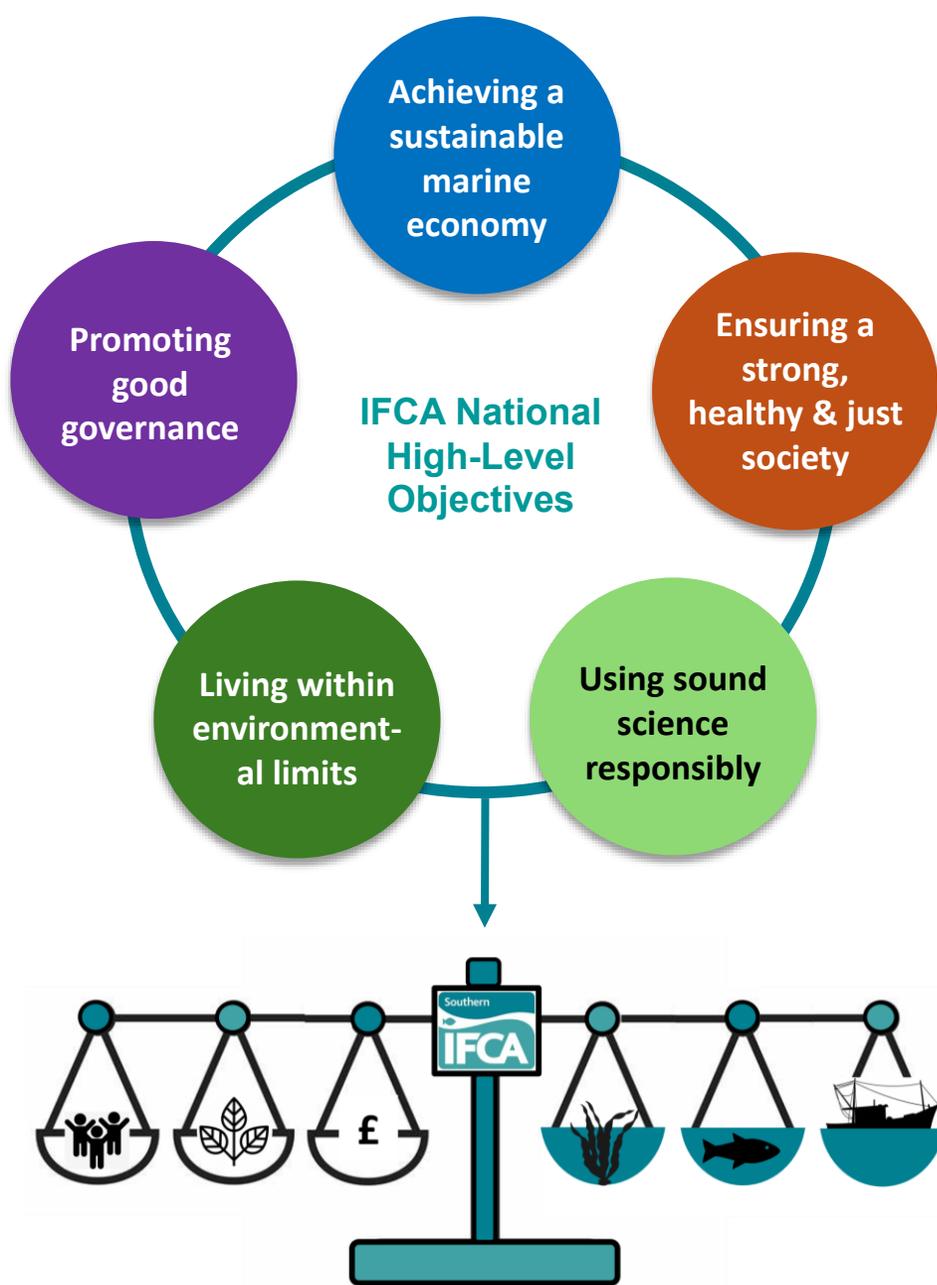


**Evolving research methodologies** in line with recognised standards to inform local objectives & national considerations.



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

# 2025-26: 10 Strategic Anchors



**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.**



# 2025-26: Delivery Metrics

In combination, the **delivery metrics** drawn together in this section will, where relevant, underpin Southern’s work for 2025-2026. The graphics will provide a golden thread drawing from this strategy into the [Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan](#) & the [Research & Policy Team Plan](#).

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

\*Supporting Defra’s delivery of Fisheries Act objectives in accordance with a 3-year funding programme.

# 2025-26: Horizon Priorities

In addition to the delivery of business as usual, as described in the team plans, two **Horizon Priorities** have been identified for each operational team, which will be translated into clear, outcome-focused workstreams under the [Compliance & Enforcement Team Plan](#) & the [Research & Policy Team Plan](#). The Business Services Team priority ‘*Investing in Communications*’ will facilitate overall improved business function. Where this has specific team relevance it will be captured in the respective team plans.

Southern’s 2025-26 Horizon Priorities		
Business Services Team	Alignment with the Employments Rights Bill 2024	This Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 10 October 2024. Further detail on many policies in the Bill will be provided through regulations following Royal Assent. The Government have begun consulting on many of these reforms, with some changes introduced in late 2024, whilst others will be consulted on during 2025. The Government anticipate that most reforms will take effect no earlier than 2026. As a small Organisation we need to ensure that <b>all our HR Policy &amp; Procedures, workplace health &amp; safety</b> and ways of working align with all relevant Employment Laws.
	Investing in Communications	To refresh & tailor our <b>Communications Strategy</b> ensuring delivery of service that recognises Southern IFCA’s diverse audiences & stakeholders, targeting the needs of the communities we serve.
Compliance & Enforcement Team	Driving Operational Effectiveness	Refocusing the delivery of the marine operations function to align with evolving landscapes (FPV Vigilant, Catch App, Workboat Code 3) culminating in <b>identification &amp; introduction of operational efficiencies</b> . <b>Assisting inshore fishers in their adaptation to a changing world</b> (Catch App, online permitting, supporting the anticipated introductions of the BTFG Byelaw 2023, Shore Gathering Byelaw, Pot Fishing Byelaw and BSB management)
	Piloting Remote Electronic Monitoring	Building on the foundational planning work undertaken in 2024, Southern will implement the pilot of a small-scale REM and AI solution focusing on high resolution spatial management and the provisions to <b>quantify salmonid interactions in MPAs</b> . The outcomes will continue to inform national discussions on both MPA spatial management solutions and REM & AI application in inshore fisheries, as well as local net fishing management. Following the implementation of REM & AI technologies on a Dorset vessel in 2024, Southern will continue to explore the technologies capability in <b>management of pot restrictions</b> . The outcomes will inform national discussions on the implementation plans for FMP’s, specifically seeking novel and cost-effective solutions to managing pot limitations in crab, whelk and lobster fisheries, which will have relevance in inshore fisheries and beyond, as well as continuing to inform national discussion son REM & AI application in inshore fisheries.
Research & Policy Team	MCZ Management: Black Sea Bream	To continue to progress the development of a <b>Shared Principles Model</b> to supplement existing spatial protections in place within three Dorset MCZs, where black seabream is a designated species due to its ecological significance.
	BTFG: Phase 2	To explore <b>district wide management interventions for sensitive habitats</b> , in addition to reviewing existing closures where designated features may not be present; and in doing so identifying further opportunities to contribute to the delivery of the Government’s vision under the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, in accordance with duties under the MaCAA.

# 2025-26: Measuring Success



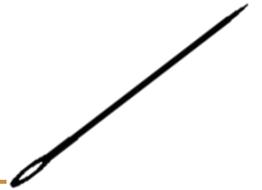
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**Southern IFCA**  
*‘champion prosperous inshore fisheries founded upon thriving marine environments’*



Strategic Anchors		Key Themes	Fisheries Objectives
Economic Growth 1	Employing proportionality when considering best available evidence 6	Industry Collaboration & Co-development	Sustainability 1
Food Security 2	Supporting Nature's Recovery 7	Working in partnership	Precautionary 2
Resilient Communities 3	Building awareness of Climate Change implications 8	<b>Supporting Defra</b>	Ecosystem 3
Fishers as Custodians 4	Managing fisheries which co-exist & thrive alongside conservation protections 9	Fisheries Management Plans	Scientific Evidence 4
Evolving Research Methodologies 5	Inform national discussions on robust inshore fisheries & conservation management 10	Marine Protected Areas	Bycatch 5
<b>Organisational Anchor</b>		Marine Consents	Equal Access 6
Facilitating a flourishing culture		Net Zero/Blue Carbon C	National Benefit 7
			Climate Change 8

Southern's 2025-26 Horizon Priorities	
<b>Business Services Team</b>	Alignment with Employments Rights Bill 2024
	Investing in Communications
<b>Compliance &amp; Enforcement Team</b>	Driving Operational Effectiveness
	Piloting Remote Electronic Monitoring
<b>Research &amp; Policy Team</b>	MCZ Management: Black Sea Bream
	BTFG: Phase 2



The **Southern IFCA Annual Report 2025-26**, due for publication in Summer 2026, 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, Delivery Metrics & Horizon Priorities**. 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 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.**

To find out more about Southern IFCA then please visit our website at:

[www.southern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)

