



Four Year Plan 2024 to 2028

&

Annual Planning Objectives

Financial Year 2026 to 2027

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1	Authority Members 8 th February 2024
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Foreword

Delivery of the objectives highlighted in the Authorities previous, 2020 – 2024, Four-Year Plan was consistent with expectation, despite influencing factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic creating significant changes in ways of working through the early part of this planning cycle.

Delivery of objectives for both fisheries and marine environmental protection has been achieved as intended, with management measures developed utilising a co-management and evidence-based approach to ensure our stakeholders are engaged and informed.

The Authority has continued to review and develop regulations in line with our strategic plans and the core priorities and objectives identified through our Review of Management Measures.

For example, over the previous Four-Year Plan 2020-2024, extensive consultation and evidence gathering was conducted for the purpose of introducing appropriate and effective management for the last, Tranche 3, Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) to be designated within the district; Beachy Head East MCZ. Introduction of the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2021 will see protective management measures successfully applied to all the MPA's within the District. The Authority will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to gather evidence and review these measures as appropriate and within our strategic planning objectives, to ensure the designated sites within our district remain protected and meet their conservation objectives.

2021 saw the introduction of the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw, which introduced protection to essential nearshore habitats, protecting 300 square kilometres of seabed from bottom towed gear. Our conservation and research programme continues to gather evidence to assess impact of the introduction of this regulation, among numerous research work streams. Development of the Netting Permit Byelaw 2019, Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw 2021 and Hand Gathering Permit Byelaw 2021 was a primary objective through the 2020-2024 planning phase. All three of these Byelaws are at different stages of the quality assurance process, and introduction of the Byelaws early in our next four-year phase will mean focus turns to supporting their introduction through education, guidance and subsequent enforcement.

The Authority continues to support compliance of the regulations within the district, through a risk-based, intelligence-led compliance and enforcement regime. We will also continue to work with partners, including the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Environment Agency (EA), to ensure we realise multiple enforcement objectives across the district.

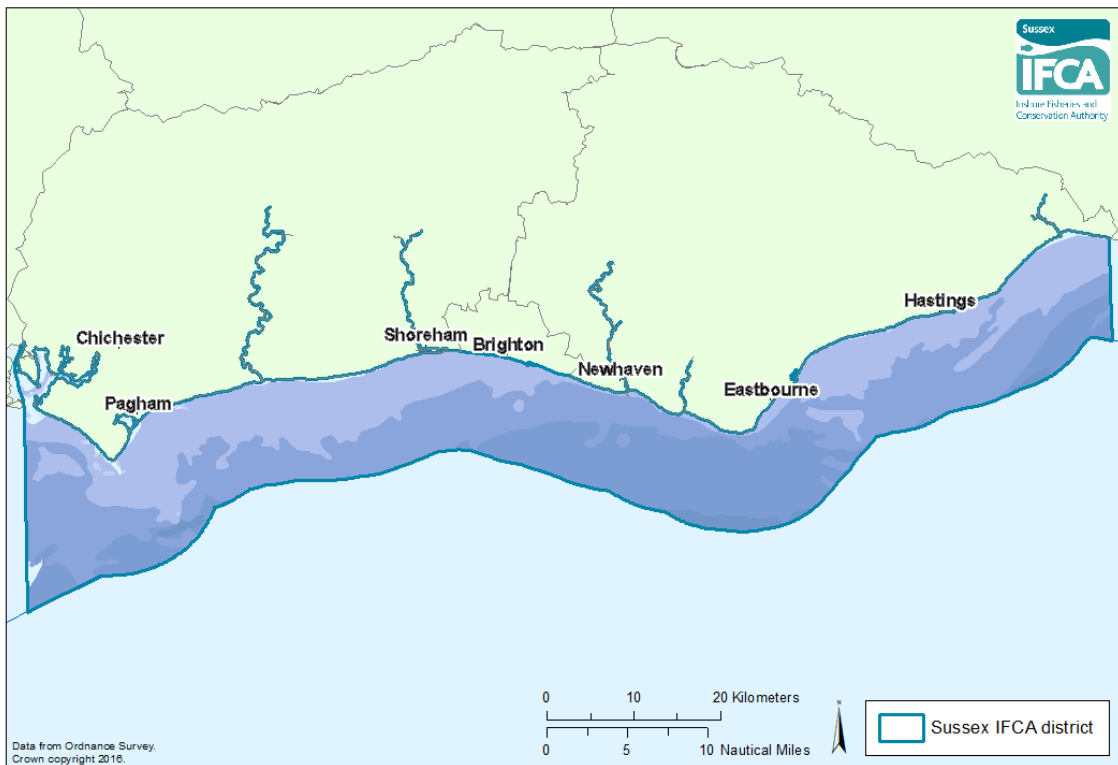
The introduction of the Fisheries Act 2020, in the wake of leaving the Common Fisheries Policy, led Defra to the development of Fishery Management Plans (FMP's) as a tool for outlining fishery management policy in England. Recognising the opportunity for developing a wider co-management approach, as well as influencing management outside of the District, the Authority has prioritised engagement with the development of the first and second tranche of FMP's, and worked to promote the value of engagement to industry and wider stakeholders.

The Authority has a clear strategic focus for the next four-year planning period, April 2024 to March 2028. We are confident that we will continue to work to a clear set of objectives, in respect to both development, review and management of Sussex Marine Protected Areas, alongside the review and introduction of sustainable management for commercial and recreational fisheries within the district.

The IFCA Vision

“Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.”

Sussex IFCA District



1. Introduction

This 2024-2028 plan highlights an ambitious range of fisheries and conservation management themes and activities, that will continue to build on the previous planning and reporting cycles since the Authorities establishment in 2010. The four-year planning cycle provides a medium-term strategic approach to our fisheries and conservation work programme. This reflects a period within which we may develop, introduce and implement management measures within the district. It aligns with the four-year reporting period within which Defra completes its review of the conduct and operation of IFCA's, prior to submitting to parliament.

Once approved by the Authority, the statutory annual planning and reporting process is drawn from the four-year plan. The 2024-2028 plan will thereby be supported in each constituent year by an annual plan, followed by the production of an annual report detailing how the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority has met the objectives set out within its strategic plans.

The Authority continues to review its management measures, according to the priorities and objectives identified from the public consultation exercise held in 2013 (Appendix 1). As we grow closer to completing many of the thematic tasks and work streams identified from this review, and understanding that priority themes will change and evolve over time, the Authority will consider repeating this exercise to refresh these priority themes and ensure relevance.

Statutory annual planning and reporting processes are embedded in, and flow from the four-year plan agreed by the Authority. The 2024 -2028 planning cycle and plan will be supported each year with an 'annual plan'. For the Sussex IFCA this will reflect the continuation of its defined pathway toward sustainable fisheries and a healthy marine environment. The Authority's duties remain unchanged and Government policy toward marine management is strongly supportive of the Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities (IFCAs), and their future role within coastal communities.

UK, European and international policy and legislation concerning fisheries and marine environmental management are striving toward defined targets for sustainability and these will be challenging to achieve over the next four years for all marine managers. Inshore, the IFCA has a key role

in supporting these goals. The national implementation of Fisheries Management Plans will see major changes for key fisheries on the Sussex coast. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive targets for fish and the marine environment may influence how marine management occurs and the way in which we evidence decisions at all levels. The IFCA has a significant role informing that process. The Water Framework Directive, and UK commitments to it, will also shape marine management to achieve its ecological quality standards.

This planning period will see us continue to champion the co-management approach, through significant stakeholder engagement and extensive partnership working. Ensuring that the reformation of fisheries management and designated site conservation management, through tools including byelaw regulations and voluntary measures, is supported by well-planned programmes of consultation and engagement. This is key to enhance support for proposed regulation and, in turn, compliance.

Development of relevant research and evidence to support appropriate management remain at the heart of the Sussex IFCA's activities and ensures we can meet our key objective of being an evidence-based organisation. We continue to strengthen our research capability through the provision of new equipment and by allocating appropriate resource to ensure the training and development of staff.

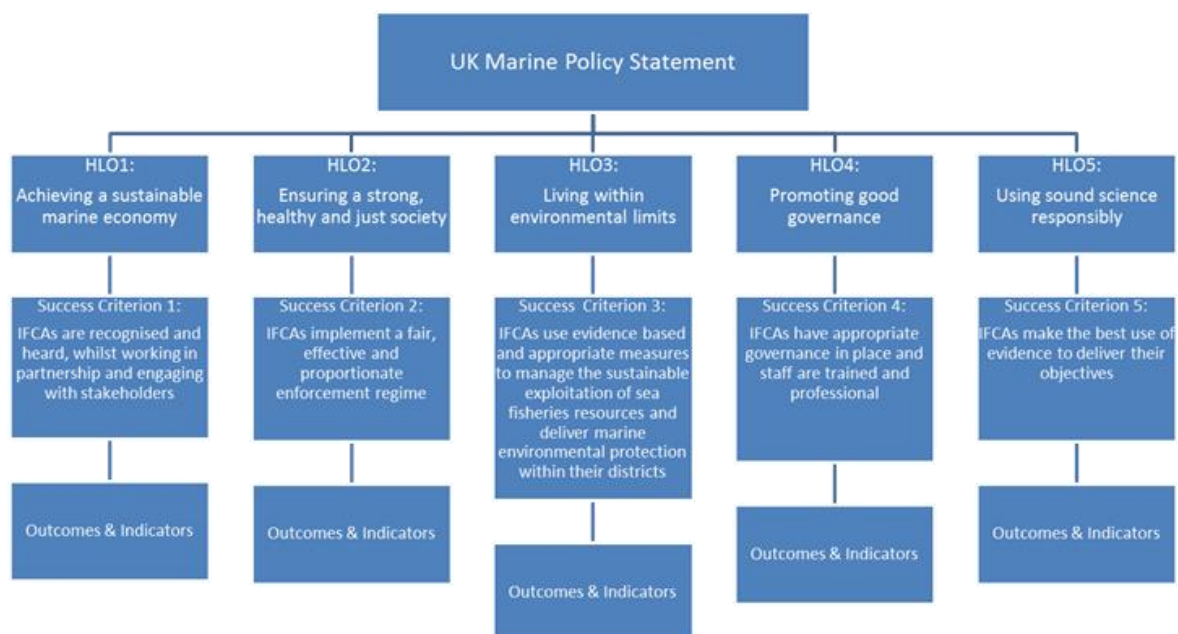
Marine Conservation Zone management priorities will continue to contribute a significant area of IFCA focus, to establish protection for the last tranche 3 site, designated in 2019. The level of public interest in these MPAs, particularly Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone, is expected to grow significantly as the management is finalised. The expected introduction of the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2021 in the forthcoming planning cycle will ensure continued protection of the features of interest in the Sussex MCZs as well as its Habitats Directive sites (Natura 2000 sites), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Ramsar sites.

Development of byelaw regulations concerning hand gathering and minimum sizes for fish, crustacea and mollusc were finalised within the previous planning cycle, after being identified from the byelaw review and management prioritisation process (Appendix 1). The introduction and associated compliance activities from these regulations will form a significant workstream in the forthcoming planning cycle.

Recruitment and retention of competent, motivated staff equipped with the appropriate skills, experience and evidence will prepare the IFCA to meet the ambitious objectives within our plans. The specific objectives within the plan are allocated to relevant Officers. Links to the relevant community networks supports the numerous work streams. We have worked with the MMO governance team to improve the recruiting process to the Authority and hope to continue recruiting and retaining experienced Members with essential knowledge of key marine and fisheries issues.

Community engagement, participation and working with partners remain central to our way of working, helping us achieve an effective service with a limited resource.

Whilst focused on developing the management of coastal waters off Sussex, the Authority remains committed toward the Government’s Marine Policy Statement and the defined High Level Marine Objectives as detailed below.



2. The Legislative Framework

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority is created by The [Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010, No.2199](#).

A compliment of permanent staff carries out the day-to-day duties of the Authority. A committee of statutory organisations and stakeholders governs the direction and significant decisions of the Authority.

The duties for Sussex IFCA set out within the [Marine and Coastal Access Act](#), sections 153 and 154 details the overall purpose as follows:

1) Sussex IFCA must manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district, in doing so it must:

a) Seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way.

b) Seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation.

c) Take any other steps which in the authority's opinion are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development.

d) Seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district.

2) Sussex IFCA must also seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any MCZ in the district are furthered.

IFCA officers are appointed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to have full Marine Enforcement Officer (MEO) powers, restricted to enforcing the legislation within a specified schedule and can exercise MEO enforcement powers within the jurisdiction specified in the counterparts to their warrant: [Delegated Marine Enforcement powers for IFCOs](#).

As defined as a 'Competent and Relevant Authority' the Sussex IFCA is required to perform its duties in regard to:

The 'Habitats Directive' Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

The 'Water Framework Directive' Council Directive 2000/60/EC of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for community action in the field of water policy.

The 'Marine Strategy Framework Directive' Council Directive 2008/56/EC of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy.

The 'Fisheries Act 2020' was introduced to provide a framework to manage UK fisheries outside of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. It created a legal requirement for the UK national fisheries policy authorities to produce a Joint Fisheries Statement that sets out how the objectives of the act will be met. The Joint Fisheries Statement proposed 43 Fisheries Management Plans, the development and implementation of these plans is underway with the first five plans being published in late 2023.

3. Outcomes, Indicators and Actions for the Four-Year Plan

Key overarching elements of delivery over the coming four years include:

- Continued development and implementation of new byelaws to manage hand gathering, netting and to introduce minimum sizes for finfish, mollusc and crustacea
- Implementing new Marine Protected Areas Byelaw and Regulation for Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone
- Exploring the use of bags limits within recreational fisheries to improve the sustainability of specific species
- Reviewing Tranche 1 MCZ management
- Reviewing the Shellfish Permit regulations
- Contribute to the development and implementation of Defra's Fishery Management Plans (FMP's)
- Focussing on the ecosystem approach to sustainable fisheries
- Maintain an effective research regime focusing on collecting evidence to drive decision making
- Enforcing existing byelaws through a risk based and intelligence led compliance and enforcement regime
- Working in partnership to develop networks
- Support with partners, toward a greater understanding of marine archaeology and historic wreck protection within the IFCA's District.

The following tables detail the specific actions planned by Sussex IFCA in the context of the success criteria and indicators set out by Defra:

Success Criterion 1: IFCA's are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders.

Definition: IFCA's will be a visible, respected and trusted regulator within coastal communities and will maintain and deliver a strategy to communicate their vision and duties effectively. IFCA's will engage with policy makers, industry, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), recreational and commercial users, and other regulators. They will work jointly and collaboratively with partner organisations across boundaries; will participate and contribute to the development and implementation of

regional and national marine policy, including the marine planning regime; will take long-term strategic decisions and manage risks effectively. IFCA may maintain a national body to co-ordinate the activities of authorities that are party to arrangements.

Outcomes	Indicator	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy. • The IFCA will maintain its website, ensuring public access to current fisheries and conservation information for the District, including management requirements and byelaws. Non-reserved IFCA Committee papers will be published. 	<p>SC1A: The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts that will have been reviewed and updated by 31 March each year.</p>	<p>Create a database of stakeholders in the commercial fisheries, recreational sea angling, NGO and public sectors.</p> <p>Maintain a database of permit holders.</p> <p>Maintain list up to date and review data quality annually before 31 March.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level. • The IFCA and its principal partners will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas will be maintained at a national level. Opportunities for greater efficiencies, effective joint working and collaboration will be explored and implemented when feasible. 	<p>SC1B: The IFCA will have completed a review of its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year.</p>	<p>Continuously develop mechanisms and opportunities for educating communities about sustainable management of the marine environment.</p> <p>Development and displaying communication material through a range of media channels.</p> <p>Ensure enquiry responses meet the code of conduct and Service Plan.</p> <p>Log enquires and responses.</p> <p>Maintain use of brand in uniform and communication materials.</p> <p>Engage with community stakeholders in media and meetings to inform and consult with interested parties.</p> <p>Ensure accessibility of communications materials.</p> <p>Review plan by 31 March.</p>

	<p>SC1C: The IFCA will have reviewed its website by the last working day of each month.</p>	<p>Review website by the end of each month and update as required.</p> <p>Ensure all information is up to date, with particular reference to regulations and changes in regulations.</p>
	<p>SC1D: The IFCA will have reviewed its website and ensured it meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March each year.</p>	<p>Review website in the context of the communication strategy by the end of the year.</p>
	<p>SC1E: The IFCA will have reviewed all of its Memoranda of Understanding by 31 March each year. There will be a clear plan in place to update MoUs where necessary, to an agreed timescale.</p>	<p>Review MoU and partnership agreements by 31 March.</p> <p>Implement agreements with actions and meetings.</p>
	<p>SC1F: By 31 March each year, the IFCA will have participated appropriately, proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional and national fisheries and conservation activity identified in the annual plan.</p>	<p>Actively participate in external meeting group partnerships such as the Sussex Marine and Coastal Forum, Regional Fisheries Group, catchment partnerships and Biosphere meetings. This participation will influence decision makers with regard to prioritising sustainable fisheries and protection of the marine environment.</p> <p>Advise decision makers on blue growth agenda, marine recreation, sustainable tourism and aquaculture using our evidence.</p> <p>Engage with The MMO South Marine Plan meetings, review and implementation.</p> <p>Actively support Chief Officers Group and the association of IFCAs.</p>

		<p>Develop responses and respond to consultations on significant plans and licences, including Fisheries Management Plans.</p> <p>Implement Authority Service Plan in respect to defined objectives and targets</p>
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Success Criterion 2: IFCA implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime.

Definition: The IFCA enforcement regime is risk-based, makes appropriate use of intelligence, meets legislative standards and complies with the Regulators Code. It should make effective use of the resources available to regulators; complement and align, if possible, with the regimes in adjacent IFC Districts and management by other organisations including the MMO and Environment Agency. Consistency and fairness is important. Regulatory compliance is promoted. Enforcement action is carried out by trained, professional officers working to clear standards of conduct.

Outcomes	Indicator	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IFCA will publish its enforcement risk register and strategy, clearly setting out its approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences. The IFCA will have developed consistency in regulations (byelaws) with other organisations The IFCA will manage operational activity (e.g. through a Tasking & Co-ordination Group) and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner 	<p>SC2A: The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year.</p>	<p>Analyse enforcement information, producing and disseminating reports through committees and the annual report.</p> <p>Review and update the risk register as required.</p> <p>Include enforcement risk based approach information in the annual plan.</p>
	<p>SC2B: The IFCA will demonstrate in its Annual Report how it has worked with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures.</p>	<p>Work with and report on involvement with Regional Fisheries Enforcement Group, Tactical Agency meetings (with MMO, EA and Police), NIMEG, links to National Enforcement Agencies (Gangmasters Licencing Authority and Food Crime Unit).</p>

<p>organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) will be trained and accredited to nationally agreed standards. They will maintain professionalism and make appropriate interventions to deliver efficient, effective enforcement activity. 		<p>Participate in Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN)</p> <p>Build agreed regulations (i.e. byelaws) that enable fair and effective management of fisheries activities. Use voluntary codes where appropriate.</p> <p>Promote education and awareness of regulations and voluntary agreements.</p> <p>Collaborate with partners and report on intelligence sharing agreements.</p>
	<p>SC2C: The IFCA will compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and publish them on its website.</p>	<p>Maintain and develop improved standard formats.</p> <p>Report record of enforcement to NIMEG.</p> <p>Utilisation of MCSS to share compliance information with MMO and IFCA partners</p> <p>Collate and publish a record of enforcement on website.</p>
	<p>SC2D: The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 April.</p>	<p>Work with NIMEG to maintain a code of conduct and review.</p> <p>Publish the code on the website.</p>
	<p>SC2E: The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for all Warranted Officers.</p>	<p>Officer performance plans incorporate code of conduct objectives.</p> <p>Appraisals carried out accordingly.</p>
	<p>SC2F: Warranted Officers attain accreditation. All undertake Continuing Professional Development.</p>	<p>Officer performance plans incorporate agreed cross IFCA accreditation training objectives.</p> <p>Officer performance plans incorporate development targets.</p>

Success Criterion 3: IFCA's use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts.

Definition: The IFCA's were created as statutory inshore regulators by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. They are relevant authorities for implementing international environmental commitments including the Birds, Habitats, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives and make an important contribution to securing a network of well managed marine protected areas, including European Marine Sites and Marine Conservation Zones. Fisheries Management Plans identify local management measures which should be based on evidence; be timely; subject to appropriate consultation and in step with national initiatives and priorities. An IFCA should balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting sea fisheries resources with the need to protect the environment. It should contribute to sustainable development.

Outcomes	indicator	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IFCA will identify issues likely to affect sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFC District; undertake risk assessment and gap analysis; review appropriateness of existing measures; evaluate management options and develop and implement proportionate marine management solutions. • The IFCA will support implementation of a well-managed network of marine protected areas by: developing a range of criteria-based management options; implementing management measures to ensure that inshore fisheries activities comply with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the revised approach to managing commercial fisheries in European 	<p>SC3A: The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas and report progress to the Authority.</p>	<p>Work with partners to promote sustainable management and further the objectives of MPAs and MCZs.</p> <p>Utilise community engagement strategies to involve stakeholders.</p> <p>Work with Natural England to understand and meet conservation objectives and site conditions.</p> <p>Gather evidence to support engagement and management decisions. To include fishing activity and impacts, habitat information, species information and climate change information.</p> <p>Develop fair and effective management measures. Implement regulation.</p> <p>Adhere to reporting mechanisms for MPAs and</p>

<p>Marine Sites; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IFCA will develop Fisheries Management Plans for priority species where appropriate. Shared objectives will be developed with identified partners; actions identified and best practice reflected so that management makes a contribution to sustainable development. 		<p>MCZs, and report back to the Authority meetings.</p> <p>Support partnership initiatives to work towards a good marine environment and ecology for i.e. Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Fishery Management Plans, Habitats and Birds Directives and MACCA.</p>
	<p>SC3B: The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures, on its website.</p>	<p>Maintain a records system that demonstrates the best available, quality assured evidence is used in engagement and decision making.</p> <p>Publish consultation materials and Impact Assessments on the website.</p>
	<p>SC3C: Management information (e.g. sampling and/or survey results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to support analysis and reporting on the impact of the management intervention.</p>	<p>Maintain in house capability to collect, analyse and interpret evidence to inform management decisions and meet minimum standards set out in government guidance.</p> <p>Target evidence collection at extant management measures, and report on their effectiveness.</p>
	<p>SC3D: The IFCA will have developed a range of criteria-based management options that are explained to stakeholders through the IFCA website, these will be reviewed by 31 March each year.</p>	<p>Maintain updated information on the IFCA website.</p>
	<p>SC3E: New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales.</p>	<p>Set appropriate timescales for introducing management measures.</p> <p>Meet management measure timelines and targets.</p>

		Development of byelaws and non-regulatory management measures in accordance with the Authority's 'Review of Management Measures' and with public consultation to inform management priorities.
	SC3F: The IFCA will include shared, agreed objectives and actions from Fisheries Management Plans in its own Annual Plan, which will be published by 31 March each year.	Incorporate management objectives and actions in annual plans.
	SC3G: Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report.	Annual report will contain information on district fisheries management plans including reference to MSY for key species, and ecosystem metrics. IFCA will inform significant developments and marine licences with regard to sustainable fisheries management and the protection of the marine environment.

Success Criterion 4: IFCA's have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.

Definition: IFCA's are statutory authorities and sit within the local government family. Authority members may be either general members or local councillors. They comply with Codes of Conduct and the Standing Orders that apply to meetings of local government committees. General members are appointed on merit, through open competition and for a term. They are subject to an annual performance appraisal.

An IFCA is funded by levy, charged to its member councils. Funding originates in local taxation. An IFCA is accountable for its use of public resources and should ensure that a proper auditing regime provides confidence in its commitment and spend of public money. It should make effective use of its resources, including staff and assets. An IFCA has a

statutory obligation to prepare and publish Annual Plans and Annual Reports.

Outcomes	Indicator	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IFCA will demonstrate its long-term strategic approach to sustainable marine management by having appropriate plan-making, review, update and amendment procedures in place. The IFCA will record its performance against corporate outcomes and indicators as soon as practically possible following the end of the financial year. • Staff performance management systems will be in place that link to the IFCA success criteria. There will be an induction procedure for new joiners. Staff training and development needs will be identified. Performance will be managed and, where necessary, improvement procedures will be followed. 	<p>SC4A: The IFCA will publish a Plan on its website by 31 March, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.</p>	<p>Priorities and objectives are discussed and agreed by staff and the Authority.</p> <p>Priorities for the plan will use evidence and be risk based.</p> <p>Priorities will include provision for the operational assets that underpin IFCA activities.</p> <p>Actions will be value for money.</p> <p>Create and publish a plan for each financial year. This will be a four year plan with an annual review cycle.</p> <p>A copy of the plan will be sent to the Secretary of State.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IFCA Committee will be supported by an organised, efficient and effective secretariat. New members will receive an induction pack and briefing from the Authority. There will be a rolling twelve month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings. Notices of meetings and documentation will be made available in line with Standing Orders. 	<p>SC4B: After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish a Report on its website describing its activities, performance and a summary of audited financial information in that year, by 30 November. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.</p>	<p>Create and publish an annual report on the website by November.</p> <p>Report to include performance metrics.</p> <p>Report to include annual finance summary.</p> <p>Appropriate financial management controls and audits to be maintained.</p> <p>Administrative processes are in place to ensure control over expenses, procurement and time recording.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFCA Committee meetings will be held in public unless material is either confidential, or exempt within the meaning 	<p>SC4C: IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been</p>	<p>Individuals have performance plans that link to the IFCA annual plans.</p> <p>Objectives are discussed and set for individuals.</p>

<p>of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>	<p>completed by 31 May each year.</p>	<p>Managers objectives will include good internal communication to all staff.</p> <p>Personal development requirements for individuals are planned and completed.</p> <p>One to one meetings are held regularly and appraisals are carried out in the fourth quarter of the year.</p>
	<p>SC4D: An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders.</p>	<p>Authority meetings are supported with timely and appropriate agendas and paperwork.</p> <p>Minutes are recorded and issued.</p> <p>Standing orders and terms and conditions for members will be adhered to.</p>
	<p>SC4E: The IFCA will have demonstrated, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the Inshore Fisheries & Conservation District have worked responsively and effectively together.</p>	<p>Authority decision making will be informed and reflect marine management mechanisms including the MACCA obligations, the South Marine Plan, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategic Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive, enforcement risks and the blue growth agenda.</p> <p>Authority decision making will be informed and reflect other IFCAs, MMO, EA, NE, Cefas and local council priorities.</p> <p>Transparency will be ensured by publication of Committee meeting minutes and agendas on IFCA website.</p>

Success Criterion 5: IFCA's make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.

Definition: IFCA's are statutory regulators for their Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District. Decision-making should be based on evidence. All IFCA's are supported by officers who pool their expertise and share best practice as a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). A programme of research activity and monitoring is planned, developed and updated in consultation with partners. The programme informs management decisions and supports justification for additional research and evidence gathering.

Outcomes	Indicator	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic conservation and research plan that contributes to greater understanding of the marine environment and delivery of cost-effective management of sea fisheries resources. • Standard Operating Procedures describe how data is captured and shared with principal partners. • A list of research databases held by the IFCA and the frequency of their review. • Non-confidential meta-data collected through the IFCA research programme should be recorded in a database available to the marine research community. 	<p>SC5A: The IFCA will demonstrate progress that has made towards identifying its evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year – referred to as a 'conservation and research plan' within Sussex IFCA to reflect it acts as a team work plan.</p>	<p>Create and publish a strategic 4 year and annual conservation and research plan.</p> <p>IFCA evidence collection capability will be maintained.</p> <p>Ecosystem services evidence will be part of the evidence portfolio.</p> <p>Climate change trends and impacts will be part of the evidence portfolio.</p> <p>Fisheries activity, landing, economic values and impact will be part of the evidence portfolio.</p> <p>Species distribution, seasonality, life-cycle patterns, whole ecosystem and habitat information will be part of the evidence portfolio.</p>
	<p>SC5B: The IFCA will publish a conservation and research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making.</p>	<p>Create and publish an annual conservation and research report.</p> <p>Communicate evidence collection findings through accessible education and awareness strategies.</p> <p>Use evidence to inform IFCA decision making and</p>

		influence others decision making.
	SC5C: The IFCA's contribution to TAG and progress that has been made towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report.	Support the IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and its work streams. Describe in the annual report the contribution towards building a national evidence needs programme.

4. Resources and People

Funding

The Sussex IFCA is funded by three constituent Councils: West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council. Additional funding from Defra supports the work required to manage marine protected areas. Additional income is sought from projects and collaborations. The below tables are indicative of annual budgets (figures in £000's).

Income Source	Annual amount £k (based on 2024/2025 budget)	Percentage
West Sussex County Council	538	39.9
Brighton & Hove City Council	127	9.5
East Sussex County Council	485	35.9
Project Income and Other	181	13.4
Charter of Watchful	6	0.4
Permit Income	12	0.9
Total	1349	100

Expenditure Budget Head	2024/25 Budget £k	2025/26 Estimated £k	2026/27 Estimated £k	2027/28 Estimated £k
Direct Employee Costs	859	903	912	957
Indirect Employee Costs	30	30	31	32
Marine Operations	137	140	143	146
Vehicles	24	18	19	19
Compliance and Enforcement	29	29	30	31
Premises	75	76	77	85
Office	54	55	56	57
Depreciation	97	97	97	97
Other Costs	44	45	46	47
Total	1349	1393	1411	1471

Membership of the Authority

The Authority is to consist of 21 members as follows:

- 7 elected representatives of the constituent funding councils
- 11 individuals, appointed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), acquainted with the needs and opinions of the local fishing community, and those with knowledge of, or expertise in, marine environmental matters
- 1 representative of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
- 1 representative of the Environment Agency (EA)
- 1 representative of Natural England (NE)

The Principal Committee meets quarterly in order to receive reports from the Authority's officers and enable the members to direct officers to conduct work and discharge its functions. To aid governance, Sub-Committees have been established to oversee specific delegated elements of Authority work including finance, compliance and technical matters.

The List of Members (Jan 2026) is as follows:

Prof. Peter Jones (Chair) MMO Appointee

Cllr Noel Atkins (Vice Chair) West Sussex County Council

Cllr Deborah Urquhart West Sussex County Council

Cllr Emma Evans West Sussex County Council

Cllr Paul Redstone East Sussex County Council

Cllr Steve Murphy East Sussex County Council

Cllr Theresa Fowler Brighton and Hove City Council

Mr Gordon Chittenden MMO Representative

Ms Louise Hutchby NE Representative

Mr Mark Bennett EA Representative

Ms Sally Ashby MMO Appointee

Mr Shaun Brewer MMO Appointee

Dr Corina Ciocan MMO Appointee

Dr Paul Driver MMO Appointee

Mr Gary Edwards MMO Appointee

Mr Paul Johnson MMO Appointee

Prof. Paul Leonard MMO Appointee

Ms Yasmin Ornsby MMO Appointee

Mr Julian Seaman MMO Appointee

Mr Kim Matthews MMO Appointee

Membership of MMO appointees is liable to change over the four-year planning period.

Employees

The Authority employs a dedicated team of multi-disciplined individuals to undertake its work. Fisheries and conservation officers and managers have extensive skills, knowledge and experience in the marine fisheries or environmental sector. The team is composed of staff sitting within marine operations, compliance & enforcement, conservation & research, finance and administration functions. Compliance staff are warranted to carry out IFCA duties and are cross warranted by the MMO to enforce other specific UK marine duties. Staff are overseen by a senior management team (SMT), the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers, who in turn report to Authority members.

The Authority regularly reviews its employment policies in recognition of benefits to staff, conditions of service and performance. All staff are based at 'Riverside', a centrally located coastal office in Shoreham-by-Sea.

Sussex IFCA Staff

Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer: Mr. Robert Pearson M.Sc. B.Sc. MIFM

- Head of Service for Authority and lead within the Senior Management Team (SMT)
- Management of the IFCA and Reporting Officer to Committee

- National policy liaison role and media contact
- Chief Officer in respect to financial management
- Strategic development of policies and plans.

Deputy Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer: Ms Angharad Purcell B.Sc. MIFM. VR.

- Member of the Senior Management Team (SMT)
- Development of policies, plans and research and implementation of review of management measures
- Oversees sector/operational managers for marine and compliance
- Strategic lead on fisheries compliance and research.

Committee and Communications Manager: Ms Rebecca Belleni B.A.

- Provide a full secretarial and administrative service to SMT and administration support to Sector Managers
- Service the Principal Committee and other meetings by preparing, collating, and distributing agenda papers and minutes
- Support Members through the distribution of Authority guidance and direct liaison
- Responsible for establishing and maintaining office systems, records and processes
- Management of office space and its maintenance, including office H&S
- Maintain social media communications, acting as central support.

Finance Manager: Ms Ruth Harrison B.A.

- Manage, monitor and maintain budgetary and financial information
- Plan and monitor the financial position of the Authority as directed by SMT
- Responsible for implementation of Annual Audit and implementation of financial regulations
- Supplier payments and payroll.

Vessel Operations Manager (Senior Skipper): Mr. Chris Hubbard

- Manage all aspects of the Authority's vessels' operations
- Marine operations budget management

- Master on the Authority's vessels
- Manage crew during marine operations.

Marine Technician: Mr. Andrew McCallum

- Manage the Authority's workshop facilities
- Maintain the Authority's patrol vessels and ancillary equipment.

Conservation & Research Managers (Job Share): Dr Jen Lewis PhD. MRes. B.Sc. and Dr George Balchin PhD. M.Sc. B.Sc.

- Team lead into SMT on Conservation and Research activities
- Support the SMT/Authority with MPA responsibilities, including management development, associated evidence collection and community engagement
- Work with the Deputy Chief and Senior Research Officer to identify evidence needs and guide development of Conservation and Research Plans
- Participate in evidence collection in support of MPA management and wider marine management functions
- Work with SMT on IFCA policy development.

Senior Fisheries and Conservation Officer: Dr Alberto Kavadellas PhD. B.Sc.

- Lead on operational compliance activities & risk-based enforcement
- Operational support for vessel and research activities
- Lead on fisheries enforcement and compliance activity at sea and ashore
- Manage officers and support operational training and readiness

Senior Fisheries and Conservation Officer (Skipper): Mr James Tapley B.Sc.

- Support operation of the Authority's patrol vessels and marine operations
- Deputise for the Vessel Operations Manager (Senior Skipper)
- Conduct fisheries enforcement and compliance activity at sea and ashore
- Manage crew and support operational training and readiness

Senior Fisheries and Conservation Research Officer: Mr. Solomon Lucas MEng. BEng

- To support development of the Authority's Conservation and Research Plans and associated reports
- Design and inform the methodology of research projects undertaken by the Authority
- Implement the practical aspects of the Authority's research projects as identified in the Conservation and Research Plans
- Support the development of research partnerships with other organisations.

Fisheries and Conservation Officers: Mr Jamie Milling B.Sc., Ms Hannah Gibbs B.Sc. and Ms Martha Webb B.Sc.

- To conduct fisheries and conservation compliance activities in accordance with risk based enforcement process
- To carry out fisheries research activities in support of the conservation and research team
- As appropriate, to helm and crew Authority vessels
- To facilitate consultation and dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

Fisheries and Conservation Research Officers: Ms Vanessa Simons M.Sc. MRes. B.Sc., and Mx Em Denton-Smith MRes. B.Sc.

- To conduct fisheries and conservation research activities in accordance with conservation and research plan
- To carry out fisheries compliance activities in support of the compliance and enforcement team
- To facilitate consultation and dialogue with relevant stakeholders
- Operational support for vessel and research activities.

Authority Vessels

To conduct the Authority's duties for both marine compliance and fisheries research activities, the Sussex IFCA operates two independent craft built and equipped specifically for inshore requirements.

Fisheries Patrol Vessel **Watchful**

The Fisheries Patrol Vessel 'Watchful' is the primary patrol vessel of the IFCA and was designed and purpose built as a multi-use vessel for both compliance and research requirements. The 18-metre vessel is of an aluminium alloy construction and is powered by two low emission caterpillar 1400 horsepower engines, propelling the vessel up to a speed of 24 knots.

The vessel is certificated under the workboat code of practice and is able to conduct operations up to 60 nautical miles from safe haven. On a day-to-day basis 'Watchful' operates with a crew of four but can safely carry a further eleven passengers if required. The vessel has a four-berth cabin and is equipped with a galley and shower room, which enables the vessel to remain at sea for short passages.

Watchful's bridge has a modern navigation suite which includes a fully integrated chart plotter system, two radars and a vessel automatic identification system, as well as a range of other navigation and communication equipment expected on a modern vessel. To aid compliance operations, a vessel monitoring system receives and displays tracking information on certain fishing vessels. As of 2022 the Watchful was retrofitted with an iRAMS live telemetry system which allows users to remotely monitor live engine data as well as generate reports on engine hours and fuel consumption.

Contained on the aft of the vessel is a 5.5 m rigid inflatable boat (RIB). The vessel is used to transport officers from 'Watchful' to fishing vessels to conduct inspection or inspect shallow and inaccessible areas close inshore. For convenience and safety, the RIB launches from a stern ramp built into 'Watchful'. When conducting survey operations, the vessel's stern ramp area is covered by a temporary deck providing a large deck area for deployment of equipment including cameras and seabed grabs.

Fisheries Patrol Vessel **Merlin**

'Merlin' is the latest vessel acquisition built and delivered during 2012 to 2013. Built with support from the Environment Agency, the vessel is owned and operated by the IFCA, providing a compliance platform for both organisations.

'Merlin' is an 8 metre, fast, semi Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB). The vessel is fitted with a Volvo D4 turbocharged inboard diesel; this is in turn coupled to a ZF marine transmission and Hamilton water jet propulsion unit. 'Merlin' is used for routine patrol operations and fast interception work and is extremely effective in shallow water. The vessel has an estimated

speed in excess of 30 knots and an operational range of 200 nautical miles. 'Merlin' is fitted with the latest Garmin electronic communication and navigation systems and provides sea-going capability in all near shore and estuarine areas.

5. Compliance and Enforcement

The IFCA aims to achieve compliance with fisheries regulations designed to promote the sustainable exploitation of fisheries in the Sussex District. Our primary objective is to encourage fishers to voluntarily comply with fisheries laws, though we will operate enforcement activities as an effective deterrent against non-compliance. We work in partnership with other marine enforcement organisations including the Marine Management Organisation, the Environment Agency and the Police, in order to maximise compliance benefits across the district.

An effective way to ensure voluntary compliance is to increase the knowledge and understanding of the regulations and the overarching sustainability and conservation goals of the IFCA, within the community, industry and stakeholder groups. The Authority does this by providing:

- Education and advice delivered through our website, brochures and printed guidance as well as promotion through social/digital media channels
- Education and advice delivered in person through community liaison including local schools, fishing clubs and other organisations
- Land and sea based patrols engaging directly with industry and stakeholders
- Attendance at relevant partnership/stakeholder group meetings and events
- Developing a co-management approach by actively involving stakeholders in development of management
- Involving stakeholders in compliance planning and the development of new fisheries management measures.

Directly engaging stakeholders in the development of fisheries management regulation and delivery of services facilitates greater understanding, acceptance and compliance with the rules. Through our local management and funding structures, the Authority helps to give local authorities, local communities, local businesses and individual citizens a key role from the outset, when developing management measures, allowing them to play a bigger part in the protection and

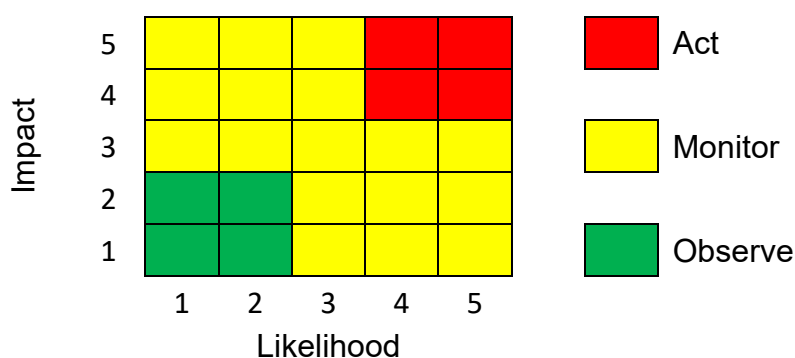
enhancement of their inshore marine environment. An effective way to provide incentives for compliance, for those who may intentionally flout the regulation, is to operate a clear and visible deterrent. The Authority does this by:

- Developing clear fisheries management regulations
- Effective monitoring and surveillance through land and sea-based patrols and targeted operations
- Penalising offenders with warnings, fines (Financial Administrative Penalties) and prosecution.

Compliance Risk Approach

The Compliance Risk Register provides our focus for enforcement activities and is a keystone document forming part of the Compliance and Enforcement Plan. The Register identifies priorities for enforcement response and assists in developing operational plans that make the best use of resources whilst providing the best possible protection for sea fisheries sustainability and the marine environment. This approach reflects the different fishing activity risks that occur throughout the year. Priorities can be set for enforcement activity during each quarter of the year commencing.

The overall risk level for each fishery is calculated as a product of the impact and likelihood levels (risk = impact x likelihood). From this product, which is called the Risk Value, each issue can be assigned a Risk Ranking, depending upon where a risk value falls within a number of predetermined categories. Colour coding denotes the overall risk level for each fishery and fishing method and gives guidance on whether the risk is low, medium or high as in the following figure. This makes it a simple procedure to highlight within the risk matrix how regulatory enforcement will be prioritised.



For example, for a risk where there is a major threat to the marine environment or stock and the likelihood is a common occurrence, a risk ranking of 20 is scored (impact 5 x likelihood 4) categorised as high risk and action would be necessary. Or, for a risk where there is no immediate threat to the marine environment or stock, but it could occur, a risk ranking of 3 is scored (impact 1 x likelihood 3) categorised as medium risk and therefore light touch approaches such as education, self-regulation or simply monitoring the situation could be considered.

The specific types of compliance issues the IFCA tackles include the following:

Removal of Undersized fish and shellfish - Removal of undersized fish can have a deleterious effect on the fish stocks by removing animals before they have had a chance to reproduce. A consequence of the removal of undersized fish may be growth overfishing. One type of growth overfishing occurs when animals are harvested at an average size that is smaller than the size that would produce the maximum yield per recruit. This can reduce the yield in fisheries and is associated with economic impacts.

Fishing within a Prohibited Area - Protected Areas may be used to manage ecosystem overfishing by prohibiting fishing activity within them. Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) are "Any area of the intertidal or sub tidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment." (IUCN). Examples of marine protected areas include Marine Conservation Zones, Special Protection Areas, and Special Areas of Protection (amongst others). Protected areas may also be used or be associated with fisheries stock management benefits e.g. where they protect resources from exploitation at particularly vulnerable periods in their life history, or where they protect essential fish habitats from degradation or recovery.

Fishing within a Prohibited Period - Restricting the time that fishing can occur is used to reduce fishing effort and therefore mortality. Limiting the amount of time when a fishery is exploited influences the economic potential of a fishery and in so doing alters the types of fisheries which may be undertaken.

Fishing within a Prohibited Season - Management measures which create prohibited season (temporal restrictions) are used to protect resources from overexploitation at times when a species is particularly

vulnerable to overexploitation or degradation. For example, to protect species at a vulnerable period in their life history, such as spawning aggregations or reproductive phases.

Fishing with a Prohibited Method/Technique - By restricting certain fishing methods and techniques it is possible to reduce fishing effort to avoid growth, recruitment, or ecosystem overfishing. This may be achieved by restricting larger, more efficient and/or damaging methods or by restricting certain gear configurations i.e. net mesh sizes to control the type of size of fish caught.

Fishing with Prohibited Gear Configuration/Quantity - By restricting certain fishing methods and techniques it is possible to reduce fishing effort to avoid growth, recruitment, or ecosystem overfishing. For example, this may be achieved by restricting the length of fishing net which may be used.

Removal from the fishery - Restrictions on the removal of fish from the fishery may be because of a harvest control rule i.e. to avoid recruitment overfishing. Examples include the establishment of Total Allowable Catches (and their associated quotas), or to close fisheries in the advent of disadvantageous economic or resource conditions. They may also be used to ensure complete prohibition where species are unable to support economic harvest; this may be due to the animals' life history or prior overfishing.

6. Partnership Working

The Sussex IFCA has a culture of cooperation and partnership to achieve good outcomes, value for money and a high standard of service. Through the Association of IFCAs the Authority seeks to maintain agreed national and local memoranda of understanding (MoU's) with key organisations including the Marine Management Organisation, the Environment Agency and Natural England. These MoUs are supported by a series of national and local partnership groups that meet regularly throughout the year.

The Authority has a range of service level agreements with local authorities and higher education institutes that offer mutual benefits in respect to each organisation's work. Close cooperation with local organisations such as the Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Services and Brighton University offer unique benefits for the IFCA and the community, and support situations that require a multiple agency approach.

Nationally, the Sussex IFCA supports the Association of Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities to develop national communications and provide a collective voice for all IFCAs. Where possible, the Association's Chief Executive represents the needs of IFCAs as a single voice in respect to the development and interpretation of government policy concerning marine fisheries and conservation.

Through professional structures including the IFCA Technical Advisory Group, Chief Officers Group and the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group, the Authority promote and develop best practice, shares knowledge, data and expertise to contribute toward sustainable marine management, both within its District and the wider marine environment.

In Sussex the IFCA is a member of various community structures that bring greater coherence to marine management including the Local Nature Partnership, Chichester Harbour Conservancy Advisory Board, Catchment Partnerships, Sussex Marine & Coastal Forum, Sussex Kelp Recovery Project, The Living Coast UN Biosphere reserve, The Heritage Coast, Solent Forum, Solent European Marine Sites Management Group, Crustaceans Habitat and Sediment Movement, and Hastings Fisheries Local Action Group.

7. Communication

At the national level our goal is to participate fully in marine communications initiatives that protect the inshore marine environment and demonstrate how IFCA's support and enable activity. At a local level our aim is to establish a stakeholder community that is well informed about the marine environment and the work of the Sussex IFCA. Our aim is for stakeholders to be confident that we represent value for money in delivering our core values of healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.

Our Challenge is to engage people and break down any barriers to communication that may still exist, connecting people to Sussex IFCA and informing them about the marine environment, its fisheries and conservation. Sussex IFCA has developed a number of key messages to reflect our vision and approach to this challenge.

We work in partnership with many organisations	We balance the protection of the marine environment and the use of it to support businesses and livelihoods	We manage and regulate sustainable fisheries as part of a wider eco-system
We deliver sustainable fishing and conservation management out to 6 nautical miles	We lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment	We operate at a local level to deliver solutions that fit local traditions and culture
We are funded by West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove councils	We use evidenced based decision making and have a strong research team	We make best use of taxpayers' money to deliver our objectives

These messages are the framework for communications by media release, presentations, website and social media. We also take the opportunity to communicate our messages through our day to day, face to face contact with our stakeholders.

8. Performance Standards

We are committed to the development and publication of performance standards. To promote increasing standards and a high level of customer satisfaction the Authority has adopted a 'Service Plan'. The Service Plan enables stakeholders, customers and the wider public to easily understand the level of service they should expect.

The Customer Charter:

Our Promise

- We will be polite and respectful in all our dealings with you
- We will respond to you via the communication channel that you specify whenever we can (in person, the telephone, by email or letter)
- We will serve you in a timely manner
- We will own your enquiry by taking responsibility for resolving it
- We will listen to your point of view
- We will provide you with accurate information that you can rely on.

Our service plan describes practical ways of working to maintain our service level, these commitments include:

Employees:

We define staff standards in terms of terms of behaviour, dress and suitable equipment to conduct work.

The extent of our operations on sea and land:

The Authority will maintain a strong sea-going capability and ashore we will ensure we maintain a regular presence in those communities in which commercial and recreational fishing vessels are based.

Communications options:

Provision of email, telephone and face to face communications will always be available from the service.

Visitor facilities, business hours and out of hours services:

Accessible visitor facilities with local public transport access and parking are provided. Normal business hours are 09:00 -17:00 in place, and we will endeavour to answer incoming call outside these times. An out of hours messaging service is maintained with emergency numbers.

Complaints:

Through our Service Plan, Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority aim to deliver a high quality and efficient service. If things go wrong, we want to put them right as fairly and as quickly as possible and learn how we need to improve our services. We record complaints, comments and compliments so that we can manage them efficiently and effectively and monitor them. The Authority has a structured complaints process in place.

Feedback:

We aim to constantly improve what we do, and examples of things we do well are important to us. If people want to pay us a compliment or make a comment or suggestion about our services or our staff they can email, write or telephone us.

Access to Information:

We are committed to promoting and actively developing a culture of openness, transparency and accountability. This refers to the general right of access that the public have to the information held by us and other public authorities. Rights of access to environmental information exist under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Requests for other types of information are dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We aim to respond to all such requests in line with the guidance provided by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, individuals may also request a copy of any personal data that we hold about them. These requests should be sent in writing to the Data Protection Officer at our office address, or by email to admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk.

9. Risk Management

The Sussex IFCA risk register only records the identified main threats to the organisation, and it is by no means exhaustive. At Sussex IFCA the risks are assessed internally by Senior Officers in reference to guidance as appropriate.

Risks to the Authority's activities are dynamic and therefore any plans and strategies can be subject to change. Risk identification and mitigation is a key activity for all Authority personnel and our officers recognise the value of risk management, given the nature of the marine environment as a workplace. The document is informed by the Authority's planning process and associated procedures which are constantly under review.

Description (owner)	Risk High 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 Low				Mitigation	Residual Risk
	Impact	Likelihood	Financial	Reputation		
Failure to meet Sussex IFCA Duties & high level objectives (Senior Management Team)	4 Change to organisation structure and work plan.	1 Sussex IFCA officers have defined an ambitious but achievable planning process to meet Vision and HLOs. Communications with Defra is maintained through single point contact or IFCA groups or the AIFCA.	4 New burdens money funded via Defra and the local authorities aims to cover the increased costs from the new IFCA duties. If Sussex fails to meet new objectives funding could be reduced. Local Government funding element not associated with new burdens is subject to performance and alternative spending demands.	4 Potential loss of faith in Sussex IFCA's governance and organisational structure by Defra and other key organisations.	Review and reflect Sussex IFCA objectives clearly in annual plans and reports. Establish organisational structure staffed with individuals who have the capacity to deliver the planning process. Communicate the requirements and duties of Sussex IFCA to all authority members and staff. Integrate objectives and tasks into staff structure and job descriptions. Make sure IFCA priorities are discussed at staff meetings and staff appraisals. Staff take ownership of the solution. Introduce management systems to set up agreed tasks for each member of staff. Actions through plans designated to individual staff.	3 Possibility that although progress will have been made Sussex IFCA could fail to fully meet all its objectives. That defined objectives are impacted upon by external factors beyond management control. Unforeseen demands in respect to MPA management deadlines.

<p>Injury to staff due to unsafe working practices</p> <p>(All staff)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Death or injury of staff.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Well trained staff.</p> <p>Provision of high standard safety equipment.</p> <p>Well maintained vessels.</p> <p>Well maintained vehicles.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Injury claims, tribunals.</p> <p>HSE / MCA investigations.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Poor morale of staff leading to problems with retention.</p>	<p>Mandatory safety training register maintained.</p> <p>Adequate training budget to cover all training requirements.</p> <p>HSW Committee conducted with reviewing near misses and accidents and cascading lessons learnt to staff.</p> <p>Well trained staff.</p> <p>HSW awareness developed through regular discussion at weekly staff meetings.</p> <p>Risk assessments available and regularly reviewed for each task.</p> <p>High quality PPE issued to all staff.</p> <p>Safety drills conducted on vessels.</p> <p>Boarding Standing Order developed.</p> <p>Lone Working Policy developed.</p> <p>Conflict Resolution Policy developed and training provided.</p> <p>Occupational Healthcare.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Regularly working in hazardous environments.</p> <p>Difficult to mitigate for unforeseen circumstances.</p>
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<p>Failure to maintain effective financial management and control.</p> <p>(Senior Management Team and Finance Manager)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Fraudulent activity leading to misuse and / or misappropriation of funds.</p> <p>Unforeseen expenditure, major mechanical failure or loss of large vessel assets.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Limited staff access to financial information and authority to spend money.</p> <p>Adequate resources for vessels retained.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Lack of financial resources to carry out statutory obligations.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>The Authority is funded through local taxpayer money, expectation to provide a best value for money service.</p>	<p>Sussex IFCA Financial Regulations.</p> <p>Internal audit and annual examination of accounts by independent auditor.</p> <p>Restricted authority to make bank transactions, with dual authorisation.</p> <p>Restricted use for purchase cards.</p> <p>Development and review of appropriate expenses policy.</p> <p>Annual Plan and Report.</p> <p>Production of detailed accounts and budget forecasts.</p> <p>Maintenance of reserve funds.</p> <p>High quality marine asset, property and liability insurance.</p> <p>Risk-averse approach to investment of surplus funds.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Limited scope for large scale fraud or corruption.</p> <p>Accidental vessel damage, human error in operations.</p>
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<p>Failure to secure data</p> <p>(Senior Management Team)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Non-compliance with Data Protection Act.</p> <p>Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations.</p> <p>Prosecution case files compromised.</p> <p>Loss of data in the event of fire or theft.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Limited staff access to both electronic and paper files.</p> <p>Office secure alarm.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Sussex IFCA open to both civil and criminal action regarding inability to secure personal information.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Stakeholders no longer believe that confidential information they have supplied is secure.</p> <p>Personnel issues arise over inability to secure.</p>	<p>All computers are password protected.</p> <p>MCSS accessed by unique identifier.</p> <p>Secure wireless internet.</p> <p>Access to electronic files is restricted based on an individual's role.</p> <p>Up to date virus software installed on all computers.</p> <p>Important documents secured under lock key/safes.</p> <p>Dedicated secure server room</p> <p>Offsite data storage secure.</p> <p>Staff training on data safety and GDPR.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Limited ability for personnel to access files.</p>
<p>Failure of vessel assets</p> <p>(Senior Management Team and Marine Operations Manager)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Limits enforcement and research capabilities.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Committee has two main vessel assets to cover breakdowns.</p> <p>Access arrangements to other organisations vessels.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Hiring of other vessels expensive.</p> <p>Significant mechanical failures are time consuming and expensive to rectify.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Expectation that the Authority has an effective sea going presence.</p> <p>Significant funding provided to commission vessels.</p> <p>High expectation that the vessels provide value for money.</p>	<p>Highly maintained vessels.</p> <p>Extensive annual refits of vessels.</p> <p>Annual Workboat Code survey.</p> <p>Highly trained staff.</p> <p>Appropriate planning and budgeting for vessel replacement as required.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Unforeseen events may still cause disruption to activities.</p> <p>Multiple simultaneous failure of available vessels.</p> <p>Human error in vessel operations action of 3rd party.</p> <p>Delays in procurement process for replacement of vessels.</p>

<p>High turnover of staff</p> <p>(Senior Management Team)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Reduced efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>Decrease in morale and increased workload for experienced staff.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>The present position over IFCA funding has given staff a better long term view of their role in Sussex IFCA over the next 2 years.</p> <p>Sussex IFCA has experienced high turnover in previous 4yr planning cycle.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Financial investment required to recruit, train and provide PPE to new replacement staff.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Authority no longer considered a good employer; staff look for alternative employment.</p> <p>Better opportunities in organisations with similar function.</p>	<p>High level of training provided to staff.</p> <p>Induction programme for new recruits.</p> <p>Managers supporting and motivating staff.</p> <p>Staff appraisals.</p> <p>Competitive salaries (benchmarking).</p> <p>Provide safe and professional working environment.</p> <p>Flexible working arrangements.</p> <p>Modern employment terms and conditions that maintain effective service delivery.</p> <p>HR support available to assist in prompt recruitment process.</p> <p>Delegation of Authority to recruit below senior grades passed to SMT.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Natural movements of staff due to alternative external opportunities.</p> <p>Internal progression very limited.</p> <p>Salaries perceived as uncompetitive with larger organisations or private sector.</p> <p>Cost of living factors, locally high housing costs in SE England.</p>
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<p>Failure to effectively monitor and enforce legislation</p> <p>(Senior Management Team)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Unregulated fishery.</p> <p>Increased non-compliance with legislation.</p> <p>Reduced Fish Stocks.</p> <p>Impact on Environment.</p> <p>Damage to Marine Protected Areas.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Monitoring of fishing activity is high but complete coverage is not achievable.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Unregulated and overexploited fisheries become unprofitable.</p> <p>Illegal landings reduce demand and price.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Committee's performance is judged on its ability to effectively monitor fishing activity and prevent illegal activity from occurring.</p>	<p>Adaptive co-management approach to fisheries improves understanding and compliance with management measures.</p> <p>Warranted Fishery Officers regularly monitoring landings and fishing activity throughout the District.</p> <p>Intelligence led / risk based enforcement planning.</p> <p>Cooperation with other agencies</p> <p>Patrol Assets.</p> <p>MCSS and intelligence tools.</p> <p>Sound legal advice.</p> <p>Introduction of FAPs.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Full District coverage is not possible to achieve.</p> <p>Small minority of fishermen will continue to breach legislation due to short term gain.</p> <p>Lack of financial deterrent.</p> <p>Some legislation difficult to enforce effectively.</p>
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<p>Enforcement activities conducted in an unprofessional and uncoordinated manner</p> <p>(Senior Management Team and Senior Fisheries and Conservation Officer)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Inconsistent approach to fisheries enforcement.</p> <p>Enforcement problems and non-compliance with legislation.</p> <p>Poor morale amongst other IFCOs.</p> <p>Potential adverse impacts on fish stocks and environment</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Misinformation may be given by IFCOs, or information may be misinterpreted by fishermen.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Wrong interpretation of legislation may lead to loss of earnings of fishermen or gain from breaches in legislation going unnoticed.</p> <p>Resources required to re-advise and rectify the situation</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Reflects negatively upon the Authority leading to potential loss of respect and willingness to support management system.</p>	<p>Regular staff meetings combined with enforcement training.</p> <p>Active monitoring by senior staff.</p> <p>Staff appraisals.</p> <p>All IFCOs receive comprehensive in house and external PACE training.</p> <p>Clear procedures and accompanying administrative paperwork.</p> <p>Officers typically not working alone and able to contact other officers for support/advice.</p> <p>Issue of warrants undertaken when the IFCO is assessed as capable of carrying out the enforcement role.</p> <p>Code of Conduct for inspections at sea and ashore developed.</p> <p>Developed Risk Based Approach to Enforcement.</p> <p>Provision of appropriate training in PACE etc.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Developed Compliance management structure with cascade from SMT. High collective experience in practical enforcement activities.</p> <p>Considerable resources are directed towards IFCO enforcement training but frequent changes to legislation and human error may lead to mistakes being made.</p> <p>A complex legislative landscape can lead to mistakes or misinformation, or legislation can be interpreted differently by different parties.</p>
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<p>Degradation of environmentally sensitive / designated areas due to fishing activity.</p> <p>(Senior Management Team)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Loss of important habitat and species.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives for areas within EMS's or MCZ's not fully met.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Authority's fisheries management takes into consideration environmental issues.</p> <p>Research Plan in part aims to address evidence issues.</p> <p>District MPA management anticipated to be introduced by Defra's target of 2024.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Fisheries directly responsible closed.</p> <p>Increased pressure by conservation bodies to stop other fishing activity.</p> <p>Potential management costs including emergency byelaws or legal challenges.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Committee not meeting statutory duties under EU & UK conservation legislation.</p> <p>Negative impact on relationship with Defra and SNCBs.</p>	<p>Agreed policies and byelaws.</p> <p>Proposed fishing activity requires Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>Effective compliance.</p> <p>Appropriate use of codes of conduct.</p> <p>Use, as a last resort, of emergency byelaw powers.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Fishing can have a negative impact on features of conservation interest.</p> <p>Rapid increases in damaging fishing activities.</p>
<p>Fish stocks collapse.</p> <p>(Senior Management Team)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Collapse of fishing industry and loss of recreational resource.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Stocks are subject to natural variation.</p> <p>Stocks migrate outside District and local management regime.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Local economy reliant on direct and indirect employment associated with commercial and recreational fisheries.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Loss in confidence of the Authority's ability to manage fisheries.</p>	<p>Development of fisheries management plans.</p> <p>Ability to allocate sufficient resources to monitoring of landings and effective enforcement.</p> <p>Consultation with industry on possible review of management measures.</p> <p>Supporting where practicable wider measures to manage fish stocks outside the district.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Stocks will naturally fluctuate.</p> <p>Fisheries impacts may occur outside the control of the Authority, including climate change and over exploitation of stocks outside the district.</p>

<p>Failure to maintain survey / sampling programme</p> <p>(Senior Management Team)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Absence or lack of accurate data leading to poor management of fisheries.</p> <p>Decline in status of fish populations.</p> <p>Decline in bird numbers.</p> <p>Degradation of marine habitats and wider environment.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Dedicated Research Officer.</p> <p>Well trained and qualified staff.</p> <p>Patrol assets equipped with survey tools.</p> <p>Development of relationships with research institutions.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Closure of fishery due to over exploitation of stock or loss of shellfish water classification.</p> <p>Shellfish fisheries not opened to fishing as insufficient information available to gain consent through Appropriate Assessment procedure.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>High expectation that fisheries are well managed by Authority using best evidence.</p> <p>High expectation that research work will be completed as planned.</p>	<p>Full participation in IFCA Technical Advisory Group to share best practice and evidence.</p> <p>Research assets (e.g. WASSP).</p> <p>Fisheries management plan established.</p> <p>Work plans developed for research staff and vessel.</p> <p>Research staff well qualified and experienced with local fisheries.</p> <p>Good communication with fishermen and other relevant organisations.</p> <p>Contingency plans developed.</p> <p>Engagement in strategic research orientated projects</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Planned surveys lost due to poor weather or vessel breakdown.</p> <p>Research programmes continue to expand year on year.</p> <p>Additional unanticipated requirements for surveys.</p> <p>Resource implications of adopting new sampling technologies.</p>
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<p>Fisheries in the District impacted by the activities of developers / industry</p> <p>Insufficient time to fully consider environmental impact assessments for inshore developments</p> <p>(Senior Management Team)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Fisheries impacted due to contamination or loss.</p> <p>Temporary or permanent loss of, or damage to, fish stocks, fishery habitats or fishing grounds.</p> <p>Loss of recreational resources.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Lack of fishing activity data.</p> <p>Lack of baseline data.</p> <p>Limited understanding of impacts of developments on the marine environment.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Reduced catches and income for fishermen, anglers and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Displacement of fishing effort, reduction in tourism.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Expectation that Authority will represent stakeholders interests even though activities may be occurring outside of the district or not within Sussex IFCA's control.</p>	<p>Consultations responded to by officers with local expertise and overseen by managers.</p> <p>Liaison with consenting agencies.</p> <p>Developer meetings attended by Sussex IFCA representatives.</p> <p>Maintain Geographic Information Systems on habitats and activities.</p> <p>Development proposals scrutinised by Defra and Natural England.</p> <p>Consents required for developments.</p> <p>Use of developed IFCA planning and licencing policy.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Increased wind farm development, dredging.</p> <p>Reliance on modelling to determine impact of developments.</p> <p>Inadequate methodologies to assess impact.</p> <p>Lack of baseline data, Marine Plans outdated.</p>
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<p>Failure to fully engage with stakeholders</p> <p>(Senior Management Team)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Conflict between differing stakeholders.</p> <p>Non-compliance with fisheries and environmental legislation.</p> <p>Inability to develop management with wide support.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Difficult to identify and consult with all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Level of resources required to consult.</p> <p>Willingness and resource of stakeholder groups to engage.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Stakeholder requirements are not adequately considered in the management of fisheries.</p> <p>Differing stakeholder interests are not equally or fairly represented.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Lack of trust in the Committee's management processes and decision making.</p> <p>Misunderstanding of the Committee's role.</p>	<p>Development of an engagement strategy.</p> <p>Regular contact with fishermen.</p> <p>MoU's with key partners.</p> <p>Respond to relevant Government / developer consultations / proposals.</p> <p>Improve website and provide interactive services.</p> <p>Regular / structured liaison with other enforcement bodies.</p> <p>Annual & research reports published.</p> <p>Publication of Annual Plans & Reports.</p> <p>Opportunities for stakeholder feedback questionnaire and analysis.</p> <p>Communities integrated into the Fisheries and Conservation Management Plan process.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Further improvement to contact with NGOs and other stakeholders needs to be achieved.</p> <p>Stakeholders overwhelmed by level of engagement required in sector, leading to 'consultation fatigue'.</p>
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Appendix 1: Management Measures Review (Updated April 2026)

In 2013 the Authority established the approach to reviewing its existing management measures. As part of the process the Authority conducted a comprehensive public consultation exercise. The community engagement process invited comments and feedback on a number of proposed objectives and priorities. Subsequent to the public consultation process the Authority considered all the responses and adopted the Review of Management Measures Strategy. This strategy identifies future Priorities and Objectives. Five core priorities and objectives were identified as follows:

1. Implement measures to manage the MPA network in Sussex
2. Apply appropriate minimum sizes to fish and shellfish
3. Manage effort on key stocks (inc. gear identification) and establish objectives to manage shellfish
4. Effectively manage fishing close inshore
5. Reduce unwanted bycatch

To translate the priorities and objectives into suitable work packages and prioritise activities against available resources the Authority identified common themes to progress a strategy for the Review of management measures. It was agreed that the process for reviewing management measures under common themes should be conducted in parallel with and inform the byelaw review process. It would broadly consist of; identify themes and potential management options, review with legacy byelaws, identify gaps and develop management options. Importantly during the progress and prioritisation of individual themes, additional influences were considered i.e. community expectations, scientific evidence, economic value and the need for a developmental assessment. The common themes agreed were:

1. EMS Management and MCZ development
2. Shellfish
3. Netting (static and mobile)
4. Trawling
5. Bait digging/hand gathering

The agreed strategy then identified and described a sequence of stages that could flow from the identification of each theme. The prioritisation process applied a matrix approach to score each common theme management measures against a range of eight agreed 'considerations' based on evidence and member knowledge and input. For the purpose of the combining the byelaw review needs and defining appropriate packages of work the themes were split out into fishery/metier and byelaw related component elements within the matrix. A copy of the matrix and the agreed scoring outcomes is provided below. The table also includes a progress description and RAG indicator to illustrate progression toward implementing the strategic review of management achieved by March 31st 2026.

Themes	Resource/method	Status (RAG)	Prioritisation								Total Score based on 1-5 (low to high) priority
			1. Statutory requirement (time limitation)	2. Progress of development for management	3. Public perception	4. Economic value of fishery	5. Social/cultural significance	6. Conservation objectives/protection	7. Evidence (scientific/already agreed outcomes)	8. Sustainability/viability of fishery	
Dredging in mSAC (existing byelaw replaced)	Oyster/Dredge	Complete (Oyster Permit Byelaw)	3	5	4	3	5	4	4	5	33
Shellfish (existing byelaw replaced)	Whelk/Potting	Complete (Shellfish Permit Byelaw)	3	4	4	5	5	2	4	5	32
Shellfish (existing byelaw replaced)	Oyster/Dredge	Complete (Oyster Permit Byelaw)	3	5	4	2	5	4	4	5	32
MCZ (Tranche 1 & 2 sites)	Conservation Features/All methods	Complete (Tranche 1 & 2 sites, MPA Byelaw)	5	4	4	1	3	5	4	3	30
MCZ (Tranche 3 sites)	Conservation Features/All methods	Partial (Tranche 3 Selsey Bill & Hounds complete Nearshore Trawling Byelaw complete, Beachy Head East MCZ submitted to Defra)	5	4	4	1	3	5	4	3	30
Nearshore Trawling	Habitats, Demersal & Semi pelagic species/Trawling	Complete (Nearshore Trawling Byelaw)	3	3	5	3	3	5	3	3	28
Shellfish (existing byelaw replaced)	Lobster/Potting	Complete (Shellfish Permit Byelaw)	3	3	3	4	4	2	4	4	27
Trawling/towed gear	Bass & Black Bream/Pair Trawling	Complete (Nearshore Trawling Byelaw)	3	2	5	3	3	4	3	4	27
MPA (Chichester Harbour mSAC)	Zostera (eelgrass)	Complete (MPA mSAC Byelaw)	5	5	1	1	3	5	4	3	27
Developmental fisheries		Policy adopted	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	27
Fishing Instrument (existing byelaw amended)		Partial (amendments through new provisions)	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	27
Trawling/towed gear outside MPAs (existing byelaw replaced)	Demersal Species/Beam Trawling	Complete (Nearshore Trawling Byelaw)	3	2	4	3	3	4	3	3	25
Dredging/towed gear in MPAs (existing byelaw)	Dredge/Scallop	Partial (complete Tranche 1 MCZ site, MPA Byelaw, Beachy Head East MCZ submitted to Defra)	3	4	2	3	4	4	3	2	25
Shellfish (existing byelaw)	Dredge/Scallop	Complete no change	3	4	2	3	3	4	3	2	24
Netting (existing byelaw)	Static	Finalising (Netting Permit Byelaw, awaiting confirmation)	3	2	3	4	4	2	3	3	24
Netting (existing byelaw)	Mobile (Drift)	Finalising (Netting Permit Byelaw, awaiting confirmation)	3	2	4	3	4	2	3	3	24
Trawling/towed gear	Otter	Partial (Tranche 1 & 2 MCZ sites, MPA Byelaw, Nearshore Trawling Byelaw complete)	3	2	4	3	4	3	3	2	24
Bait digging/hand gathering		Complete (Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting Byelaw)	5	2	4	2	2	5	2	2	24
Vessel length (existing byelaw)	All vessels	Partial (Review and removal of grandfather clauses low priority)	3	1	3	3	3	4	4	3	24
Shellfish (existing byelaw)	Crab	Complete (Shellfish Permit Byelaw)	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	22
Application to fish for scientific purposes		Partial (provision in new byelaws)	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	22
Shellfish (existing byelaw)	Winkle	Complete (revoked)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8

Appendix 2

Annual Planning Objectives

Financial Year commencing 1st April 2026

Introduction

The planned work objectives for the financial year 2026 to 2027 remain focussed upon two core Authority work streams. Firstly, continuing to action the outcomes of the Authority's Review of Management Measures (RoMM) that relate to its duties towards the management of commercial and recreational inshore fisheries under S153 of MaCAA 2009. Over the forthcoming year this will primarily focus on implementing the Netting Permit Byelaw 2019, currently pending confirmation by the Secretary of State. The introduction of this byelaw will require a significant period of engagement and education, as well as further development of our permitting database to incorporate the new permitting system. Our objectives under S153 will also include appropriate review of existing byelaw fishery management measures, previously identified and committed to through the RoMM workstream. Most notably, we anticipate the continuation of the review process for the Authority's Shellfish Permit Byelaw, as well as reviews for legacy byelaws, including our Fishing Instruments Byelaw, Scallop Closed Season and Vessel Length Byelaws.

Secondly, we will continue to undertake the Authority's RoMM commitments to the delivery of conservation duties under S154 of MaCAA 2009; notably the continuing development, monitoring and review of management within Marine Conservation Zones that lie within the Sussex IFCA's District. Primarily, this includes the introduction of appropriate fisheries management measures for Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), the final Marine Protected Area within the District requiring intervention. The Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2023 introduces the fisheries management provisions specific to Beachy Head East MCZ under a fifth Schedule, and this byelaw is currently pending confirmation by the Secretary of State. Once confirmed, a period of education and promotion will be implemented for stakeholder awareness. Further work towards our duties under S154 will include the review of existing management measures, including the Chichester Harbour European Marine Site (EMS), as well as ongoing monitoring programmes to support conservation focussed work streams.

Alongside these priorities will be a multitude of other activities, objectives and intended outcomes. Delivery of these will encompass the Authority's prioritised ways of working, including taking an evidence-based approach, adopting co-management through continued stakeholder engagement in development of management measures, and working in partnership to maximise opportunities and ensure we can achieve more, for less.

The Authority hopes that additional priority workstreams will continue to be supported through further Resource Delivery funding from Defra in 2026-27. The Association of IFCAs has led a bid to support all ten IFCAs in functions relating to delivery of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs), MPA management and supporting Good Ecological Status (GES).

This additional support will be very welcome. The transition of FMPs from the planning stages to delivery and implementation represents a considerable resource burden to the IFCAs, Sussex IFCA's experience to date showing that significant input is required to represent inshore fishery interests within the FMP processes and to try to maximise benefits from the plans. The Authority has had to consider carefully where it can dedicate officer time through the 2025-2026 period to support calls for evidence, attend working groups, evidence groups, and review and comment on emerging plans and supporting documents, in order to maximise benefits with the resource that we have available. In particular Sussex IFCA officers are heavily involved in the Bass and Whelk FMP working groups. The Authority also recognises the potential for additional work supporting MPA management relating to the governments Compensatory Marine Protected Areas programme, currently being developed to deliver strategic compensation for renewable energy infrastructure impacts.

The achievements of the Authority are dependent on the support of its membership and the work of professionally qualified and experienced officers. 2025 saw a more settled period with no further staff turnover after the appointment of some key roles in early 2025, including our new Vessel Operations Manager (Senior Skipper), as well as our new compliance and enforcement officers. Focus has been on training and development of new and existing officers and staff, ensuring appropriate time and resource is available for professional development. As a result, as we move into a new planning year, we can be satisfied that we have made some excellent appointments, with officers integrating and developing well. We also have two officers returning from maternity leave in early 2026, placing us in a strong and well-resourced position to deliver against our annual objectives through 2026.

In regard to the condition and service of the Authority's major assets, our new Fisheries Patrol Vessel Osprey was delivered and successfully put into service in summer 2025. The vessel engages well with FPV Watchful, and together they continue to make an effective platform for our compliance and enforcement operations going into the new planning year. FPV Merlin, the authorities 8m Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boat (RHIB) is currently out of service having a replacement engine fitted but is expected to be back into service before the start of the next year, giving us a fully operational fleet.

The use of Sussex Yacht Club as a larger venue for quarterly meetings continues to fulfil the requirements of the Authority, providing modern facilities at a convenient location close to the Sussex IFCA office and centrally located within the District. However, we are committed to periodic reviews of available facilities and their associated costs, to ensure we maintain value for money.

Inshore Fisheries Management Priorities

At the commencement of the 2024-2028 planning cycle, the Authority had three fisheries management byelaws under development; the Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc Byelaw 2021, the Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw 2021 and the Netting Permit Byelaw 2019. As we enter the final quarter of the third year of the plan, both the Minimum Size and Hand Gathering Byelaws have been confirmed and implemented. Significant resource was dedicated to informing and educating stakeholders on the newly introduced management measures, through a range of activities and communication channels. Both byelaws will be subject to future review as appropriate, with the intention

that this will be conducted in the following planning period (2028-2032). For the Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw there is scope to include further species or sizes according to examination of additional data and evidence. The Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw introduces an adaptive management approach through the use of flexible permit conditions, allowing changes to conditions based on catch, gear, spatial or time restrictions.

Confirmation of the Netting Permit Byelaw 2019 remains pending. Anticipation of confirmation of the Netting Permit Byelaw means that, again, the 2026-27 plan resources considerable work in terms of both administration and compliance activities to support introduction of the byelaw. We will introduce management arrangements in a timely way and ensure the fishing community has adequate notice and information to obtain permits before any compliance activities commence. As with any new management measures, there will be an educational period with comprehensive guidance and support made available.

Shellfish management will remain a core element of the Authority's work. The Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2015 is our primary management measure for shellfish fisheries within the District. Trends derived from shellfish catch returns for the Shellfish Permit Byelaw indicate district stocks following the national trend of continuing decline in brown crab in particular, although lobster LPUE has increased year-on-year 2021-24 in the district. Continuing declines in lobster and edible crab catches (despite the IFCA's proactive management conservation measures over the past planning cycles) increasingly points toward non-fishing anthropogenic impacts. The Authority recognises and supports the action, as an outcome of the Crab and Lobster FMP, to move the Lobster MCRS from 87 to 90mm over three years, with the first 1mm increase applied from the 1st March 2026 as an MMO licence condition. Sussex IFCA will continue our in-house, crab and lobster monitoring across the District, working with local fishers to gain further information on the status of stocks. This monitoring will continue across the 2024-2028 four-year planning cycle, providing important data to influence shellfish fishery management and helping to address data gaps identified in the Crab and Lobster FMP, as well as potentially monitoring impacts of the new Lobster Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) measure.

A review of the Shellfish Permit Byelaw will continue into 2026-2027. Collation and gathering of evidence to support the review process is underway and has included extensive engagement with permit holders, to ensure stakeholder views are considered from the outset of the review process. The review will consider any updated evidence, fishery information and stakeholder views and will be conducted in line with the review procedure outlined within the Byelaw. The Authority will need to consider whether any amendments to the flexible permit conditions or byelaw itself should be considered in light of updated information, and if so, further engagement with permit holders and wider stakeholders will be required.

In 2026-2027, the Authority will continue to support national projects supporting shellfish health, including the Cefas 'One Health' project and the 'Coastal Health' (CHLE) project, which aims to establish the foundations for a comprehensive ongoing coastal monitoring framework that can operate routinely and country-wide to improve our understanding of the health of the coastal ecosystem. It will contribute to ensuring government responds

quickly, effectively, and robustly to adverse marine events, such as the shellfish mortality events observed in recent years.

Sussex IFCA will continue to respond appropriately to marine licence applications throughout the forthcoming year. We will also continue to support partnership research projects such as CHaSM (Crustaceans, Habitat and Sediment Movement), and SKRP (Sussex Kelp Recovery Project) that work towards the monitoring and understanding of these impacts, so that we may take an evidence-based approach in our management. Continuation of significant projects in 2026-2027 include working with the Channel Coastal Observatory (CCO) to develop an updated and enhanced district wide habitat map. This information will allow Sussex IFCA to develop habitat mapping resources that are required for the continued improvement of fisheries management in Sussex, allowing the identification and consideration of red risk interactions between fishing gears and habitats, as well as the specific conservation features of MPAs.

The Authority will also expand its inhouse monitoring capability, with a robust survey programme including the use of our towed flying video array and Baited Remote Underwater Video Stations (BRUVS) to gather ecological data to monitor impacts of management measures, including the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw and Marine Protected Areas Byelaw.

In accordance with the Authority's compliance risk register and enforcement policies we will work to ensure good compliance with regulations across the District, including those new fishery management measures being introduced within the planning year. We intend to use the risk-based and intelligence led enforcement plan to direct our resource across our relevant enforcement activities, including shore-based patrols incorporating premise inspections, landing inspections and observations, and drone patrols, as well as marine patrols incorporating vessel boarding and inspections at sea. The 2025-2026 planning year saw the introduction of a new reporting page on the Authority's website (<https://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/report-illegal-fishing>) allowing stakeholders to directly and easily report potential illegal fishing concerns. Promoting the submission of good intelligence will continue to be a priority to ensure we can best direct our enforcement resource to maximise effect.

We will continue to work with our key partners, locally and nationally, informally and through formal groups including Tactical Coordination Groups (TCGs) and the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG). Partnership work over the past year has included joint patrols with the MMO, Environment Agency and Angling Trust and we intend to build on these relationships throughout 2026-2027, with our new compliance and enforcement officers taking the opportunity to build networks with key colleagues in partner organisations. Our shared intelligence system, CLUE, is now fully operational and IFCA compliance officers are familiar in its use, allowing us to use it as an effective mechanism to report and share intelligence with partner enforcement agencies.

Compliance planning will take into account the implementation of new fisheries management measures. Over the past year attention was given to our two newly introduced byelaws, the Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw 2021 and Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw 2021, with officers happy to report that compliance has been generally very good. Uptake of the Hand Gathering permits has slightly

exceeded expectation with approaching 70 permits now active. Provision for both byelaws will be made in the forthcoming year, including focus on key times and locations, including recreational fishing hotspots. For the forthcoming year, provision has been made for the introduction of our two pending byelaws, the Netting Permit Byelaw 2019 and Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2023.

Marine Protected Area Management

Throughout 2025-2026 Sussex IFCA continued to liaise with the MMO and Defra as the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2023 passed through the quality assurance process, after submission by the Authority in late 2024. Whilst disappointed by the delay experienced through the quality assurance process, IFCA officers and staff were notified in the final quarter of the year that the byelaw had completed the process and was being prepared to submit for confirmation. Once this Byelaw has been confirmed, appropriate fisheries management measures will be in place across all of the District's Marine Conservation Zones. This will protect sites from potentially damaging activities, support the achievement of their conservation objectives, and contribute to the Government's environmental policy commitments; to protect 30% of land and sea by 2030 ("30 by 30"), and achieving favourable condition for 70% of designated features with MPAs by 2042. Resource within the forthcoming planning year has been allocated towards education and guidance, and compliance and enforcement activities in turn, in preparation for confirmation of the byelaw.

Looking ahead, Marine Protected Area work for the remainder of the 2024-2028 planning cycle will focus on continued monitoring and on the review of existing management measures. The review for Kingmere MCZ was completed last year. It brought together relevant data to support members in understanding and assessing the effectiveness of management measures introduced through the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2017. The review concluded that the conservation objectives for the site are being achieved and no amendments to the existing management were required. Significant commitments for the 2026-2027 year include the scheduled review of the Chichester Harbour European Marine Site Byelaw. This review will assess current fisheries management measures against the site's conservation objectives.

Sussex IFCA will continue to work in partnership with relevant organisations, particularly Natural England, to monitor activity within protected sites and to improve understanding of impacts on designated features. This approach ensures that management decisions are informed by the best available evidence. At present, conservation and research officers are undertaking new Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRA's) for three key Marine Protected Areas within the district: Chichester Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA), Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SPA, and the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA. Sussex IFCA is liaising closely with Natural England to ensure that any significant effects of fishing activity are identified and addressed. These assessments are anticipated to be concluded during the 2026-2027 period.

Wider initiatives, policy and partnership work

Prioritisation of wider work is directed by our objectives set out in the Authority's four-year plan and is aligned with its core principles, including:

- Being an evidence-based organisation;
- Operating a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime;
- Supporting the principles of sustainable natural capital and deriving the most beneficial ecosystem services;
- Working in partnership, ensuring the IFCA is recognised and heard.

The Authority continues to embed the principles of the marine Natural Capital Ecosystem Approach (mNCEA) within its management considerations. While Defra's three-year NCEA-funded programme concluded in 2025, Sussex IFCA will continue to apply the key considerations of the approach, ensuring ongoing alignment with wider Government policy.

The Authority will continue to make significant contributions to the development of UK Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) through both local IFCA engagement and national communications via the AIFCA senior officer lead. Increased engagement with the FMP workstream has, to date, been supported by additional funding from Defra, which has partially enabled the establishment of an additional strategic officer role with a core focus on delivering the Authority's FMP objectives. Sussex IFCA anticipates that this additional support will continue into 2026-2027 and is currently awaiting confirmation of the outcome of the latest AIFCA-led bid for Defra Resource Delivery funding.

The Authority will continue to maintain and develop relationships with both the commercial and recreational fishing communities through a range of communication and engagement activities. Sussex IFCA retains representation on the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Advisory Committee, and IFCA officers continue to attend regular fishers' and port meetings at Newhaven, Rye Harbour, and Worthing. The Authority also considers how best to target stakeholder groups through appropriate and effective communications and will continue to develop and refine its digital communication strategy across a range of platforms during the forthcoming year. In addition, Authority officers and staff will continue to maintain the professional standards of communication set out in the published Service Plan and Performance Standards, including responding to stakeholder enquiries via email, telephone, social media, and in person.

At a national level, senior officers continue to work closely with the AIFCA including engagement with the newly appointed AIFCA Communications Officer. Officers will maintain representation within the IFCA Chief Officers Group (COG), the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG), and the IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The Deputy Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer will continue to support national training initiatives alongside senior officer colleagues from other IFCAs. Sussex IFCA will also continue to work collaboratively with national partners, including Defra, the MMO, and the Environment Agency, providing support where appropriate, including joint and 'on-the-ground' enforcement and compliance activity.

Partnership working is embedded within the culture of Sussex IFCA's operations, and 2026-2027 is expected to be a busy year of collaborative activity with partner organisations to deliver shared positive outcomes for fisheries, the environment, and the Sussex community. Key partnerships include the Sussex Kelp Recovery Project (SKRP) research group, Sussex Bay, the Sussex Marine and Coastal Forum, the Sussex Local Nature Partnership, and the Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership (also known as The Living Coast).

The Authority has considered how best to manage its resources to ensure it can respond strategically to significant external projects as demand arises throughout the year. Engagement is anticipated with a number of key infrastructure projects, including Rampion 2, the Pevensy Bay Coastal Management Scheme, and the Selsey Coastal Scheme. Resources are also allocated, supported by Defra funding, to respond to marine licencing applications submitted through the MMO's Marine Case Management System (MCMS). Significant applications responded to by the Authority in the previous year included the Brighton Marina dredge disposal.

The Authority will continue to identify opportunities to work in partnership where shared objectives enable greater efficiency while remaining aligned with its principles and higher-level objectives. One opportunity currently under consideration for the forthcoming year is a potential collaboration with Queen Mary University and Zoological Society London to support a PhD project focussed on the application of artificial intelligence to the analysis of underwater video footage collected in Sussex waters. This approach has the potential to significantly reduce the resources required to analyse video data obtained through methods such as BRUVS, delivering efficiencies and added value for the Authority's monitoring programmes.

New survey equipment was successfully trialled during 2025-2026, including a flying video array that enables the continuation of towed video seabed surveys while reducing the potential impacts of survey activity on seabed habitats. In addition, two Baited Remote Underwater Video Stations (BRUVS) rigs were procured and successfully trialled and will support the Authority's in-house ecological monitoring programme. The Authority also continues to work in partnership with other organisations to facilitate small fish surveys within estuarine and inshore areas across the District and remains committed to collaborative monitoring to assess the impacts and effectiveness of current management measures. A key example of this approach is the ongoing monitoring of impacts following the introduction of the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw, supported through partnership working with the Sussex Kelp Recovery Project research group.

Compliance management continues to be planned and delivered through the Authority's risk-based management system, supported by shared intelligence platforms, including the recently introduced CLUE system. The Authority remains open to the benefits of emerging technologies, such as the use of its drone, which has proven highly effective in supporting shore-based patrols and observation activity. Ongoing delays in the national roll-out of inshore vessel monitoring systems, alongside updates to national IT and vessel inspection record systems, continue to present challenges for IFCA officers. However, there remains a clear strategic intention to improve alignment between IFCA and MMO through the development of shared reporting systems. Sussex IFCA continues to input compliance data

onto national records and financially support access to the systems and will support continued development of the CLUE intelligence system with our partner agencies.



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