

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING 05 DECEMBER 2024

Present:

Prof Mike Elliott
Councillor Ceri Cawley
Councillor David Chance
Councillor Neil Swannick
Councillor Tracy Henry (teams)
Councillor Johnathan Owen (teams)
Mr Michael Montgomerie
Miss Rebecca Lynam
Mr Graham Collins
Prof Clare Fitzsimmons
Dr Stephen Axford (teams)
Kevin Woodcock (teams)
Mr Will Jenkinson (teams)
Mr Andrew Faichney (teams)
Miss Rachel Hanbury (teams)
Mr Andrew Earle
Miss Lynsey Marsden

Representing:

Chair
Redcar & Cleveland Council
North Yorkshire County Council
North Yorkshire County Council
Hull City Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
MMO appointee
MMO appointee
MMO appointee
MMO appointee
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MMO appointee
MMO appointee
MMO representative
MMO representative

Mr Darren Stevens, Clerk, Mr David McCandless, Chief Officer, Mr Stephen Chandler, Treasurer, Dr Ralf Bubltz, Senior Environmental Officer and Mr Dean Grason, IFC officer also attended the meeting.

The Committee met at North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Racecourse Lane. The hybrid meeting started at 10:30am.

23.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
	Apologies of absence were received from MMO member Terry Pearson, Council Members Tim Norman and Rachel Creevy, MMO representative Christian Proud and Natural England Representative Claire Argent.
24.	DECLARATION OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS
	Resolved –The Clerk asked Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in items on the Agenda and the nature of such interests. Council Members Ceri Cawley and David Chance declared their interest as members of the Crustacean Death Working Group.
25.	PRESENTATION ON WORK OF THE SHORE OPERATIONS TEAM – DEAN GRASON
	Dean Grason, IFC Officer, gave an informative presentation on the work of the NEIFCA shore operations team. Members requested the presentation be sent around via email to all members. Discussions held between members on the points raised in the presentation.

26.	TO CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 06 JUNE 2024
	Resolved – That the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 06 June 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
27.	TO TAKE THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2024
	Resolved – That the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 05 November 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
28.	BUDGET MONITORING 2024/2025
	<p>The Treasurer presented a report to advise Members of the budget position at the end of month 07 (October) in 2024/25.</p> <p>At the end of October 2024, the Authority has net expenditure of £686,088 against an expected £826,560 underspending by £140,472. The forecast outturn underspend is £263,224. The majority of the underspend is as a consequence of the patrol vessel replacement project, planned delays in recruitment to vacant posts in the offshore team and temporarily increased bank interest receipts.</p> <p>The underspend includes £90,000 additional Defra 'grant in aid', relating to 2023/24 financial year and received in 2024/25, made up of £50,000 allocated to support the Marine Protected Area and delivery towards 'good environmental status' and £40,000 towards Marine Sustainable Development.</p> <p>Discussions held between members on the logistics of the DEFRA grant funds, with the monies available for delivering key DEFRA objectives. However, this money is paid in arrears, for work completed in 2023/2024 with the money already paid out from the NEIFCA budget.</p>
	<p>Resolved – a) The budget monitoring position is noted.</p> <p>b) The £90,000 underspend relating to Defra 'grant in aid' is transferred to the Renewals Fund</p> <p>c) The forecast underspend at outturn is transferred to Renewals Fund.</p>
29.	LEVY 2025/2026
	<p>The Treasurer presented a report to determine the levy on member local authorities for 2025/26 and to highlight the issues relating to the setting of the levy for 2026/27 and 2027/28. At its meeting on 8 December 2023, the Authority agreed to increase the levy for the 2024/25 financial year by 11.5% to a total of £1,535,873. The increase was required to phase in the additional cost of the annual finance lease repayment for the build and commission of a new 24.5m Fisheries Patrol/Research vessel due to be operational in 2025. The forecast annual finance lease repayment has been revised and reduced to £201,100 from £240,590 based on the latest build costs, the forecast balance in the Renewals Fund and estimated funds from sale of the North-East Guardian III. The reduction in the annual finance lease repayment means that the</p>

	<p>requested levy increase for 2025/26 could be reduced from the 11.5% proposed at the Authority Meeting on 8 December 2023 to 10.5%.</p> <p>Members discussed upcoming financial risks which include the unknown final costing of the new vessel project with 5 months still to go in the build. Members were informed that an offer of £850,000 has been accepted for the sale of NEG III. This is £50,000 less than originally anticipated. Interest rates have increased on borrowing and National Insurance changes also mean an increase to outgoings. The treasurer stated that the 1% difference in the levy would equate to roughly £15,000 in total, which would then be split between the local authorities. Members discussed, in detail, the pros and cons of the difference in the levy and unanimously agreed to leave the levy at 11.5% as previously approved in order to future proof the risks.</p>
	<p>Resolved – a) The proposed 11.5% levy increase for 2025/26 is approved by the Authority and the Clerk is authorised to issue demands on the relevant local authorities</p> <p>b) The Authority acknowledges the issues affecting NEIFCA and their effect upon the levy for 2026/27 and 2027/28.</p> <p>c) A detailed budget for 2025/26 be brought to the Authority for approval at the Executive meeting in March 2025.</p>
30.	NEIFCA BYELAWS UPDATE
	<p>The Chief Officer presented a report to inform members on progress with the following byelaws:</p> <p>XXVIII Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2022 Made on 1 December 2022. Currently in MMO Quality Assurance stage 3 as of 27 September 2024. Projected to be confirmed April 2025.</p> <p>XXIX Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw 2022 Made on 1 December 2022. Currently in MMO Quality Assurance stage 4 as of 15 November 2024. Projected to be confirmed January 2025.</p> <p>XXXIII Beam Trawling Byelaw 2024 Made on 6 June 2024. Currently in MMO Quality Assurance stage 2 as of 15 November 2024. Projected to be confirmed January 2025.</p> <p>Members discussed the beam trawling byelaw, with Chief Officer David McCandless explaining that objections have been raised from hobby fishermen, which has led to a change in the byelaw. A future gear byelaw will better manage the recreational fishery and the increasing number of gathering groups.</p>
	Resolved – The report is noted.
31.	CHIEF OFFICERS OPERATIONAL REPORT
	<p>The Chief Officer presented a report to provide members with a comprehensive and detailed operational summary covering the period May 2024 to November 2024. Members discussed the build of the new vessel, and the Chief Officer updated members on the sale of NEG III. Having accepted the offer, exchange of contracts is imminent.</p>

	<p>Cllr Ceri Cawley gave members an update from meetings of the Crustacean Death Working Group, with issues to do with Brown Crab being discussed.</p> <p>Senior Environmental Officer Ralf Bublitz discussed on going issues surrounding shore gathering, with Natural England being aware and gathering data on the impact of this activity on the bird population. Unfortunately, the activity doesn't meet the criteria for an emergency byelaw as it would not be classed as an unforeseen activity.</p> <p>The Chief Officer also updated members on the recruitment of 2 new officers to the Environmental team which has proved a success so far.</p>
	Resolved - The report is noted.
32.	SCIENCE ADVISORY GROUP UPDATE
	<p>The Senior Environmental Officer presented a report to update members on the most recent proceedings of the Science Advisory Group (SAG) following the meeting held on the 08 September 2023.</p> <p>Projects include the conclusion of the ELSI project, the compilation of the annual stock monitoring report, working on FMP's and looking into the data to make decisions for the scallop fishery.</p>
	Resolved - The report is noted.
33.	FISHERIES STATUTES AND REGULATIONS
	<p>The Clerk submitted a report on the fisheries enforcement activities taken by the Authority for the period 1 June 2024 to 30 November 2024.</p> <p>Members discussed the appeals process and the frustration of the courts having no experience of the fishing industry and ways this could be addressed.</p>
	Resolved - The report is noted.
34.	NEIFCA ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024
	<p>The Chief Officer provided members with a copy of the Annual Report covering the period, 2023/2024, summarising the Authority's outputs and activities during the year.</p>
	Resolved - The report is noted.
35.	REPORTS FROM PARTNER AGENCIES AND BODIES
	<p>The MMO presented an operation report to members.</p> <p>Briefing papers from the Environment Agency and Natural England were unavailable at the time of printing.</p>

36.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	The Chair extended his thanks and best wishes to outgoing treasurer Stephen Chandler for his work and support of NEIFCA and its operations during his tenure.
	The meeting closed at 13:20

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