

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

21 SEPTEMBER 2022

Present

Dr Stephen Axford
Prof Mike Elliott
Cllr Ron Allcock
Mr Graham Collins

Representing

Chairman
MMO appointee
North Lincolnshire Council
MMO appointee

Clerk Caroline Lacey, East Riding of Yorkshire, Stephen Chandler, Treasurer, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and David McCandless, Chief Officer also attended the meeting.

The meeting took place at County Hall, Beverley, members also had the option to dial into the meeting via zoom, the meeting commenced at 10.30am.

32. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Randerson and Mr Gary Redshaw

33. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

Resolved – The Clerk asked Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests with respect to items on the Agenda and the nature of such interests. No such interests were declared.

34. TO TAKE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 MARCH 2022 AS A CORRECT RECORD

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35. BUDGET MONITORING

The Treasurer presented a report to advise Members of the budget position at the end of month 04 (July) 2022/2023. At the end of July 2022, the Authority has net expenditure of £425,921 against an expected £438,838 underspending by £12,918. The forecast outturn underspend is £33,254 mainly due to recharge income from NEIFCA employees working on the European Lobster Settlement Index project. It was anticipated that the outturn position will be an underspend of £33,254 in addition to the planned transfer of £102,900 plus accrued interest into the Renewals Fund and £10,000 into the Vehicle Replacement Reserve. In August 2022 the Authority's patrol vessel, the North-East Guardian III experienced mechanical engine failure in the main engine. Following an initial in-situ inspection by engineers the main engine and second engine were removed and transferred to NEIFCA's storage facility in Whitby. A further inspection recommended repairs to the main engine along with an overhaul of the second engine as well as the gearboxes. Quotes were obtained from the manufacturer, Finning/CAT, and a decision to award the contract and commence a detailed inspection has been taken under the 'For urgent repairs to plant or machinery' and 'Repairs to plant or machinery which can only be carried out by the manufacturer' exemptions in the Standing Orders. The total cost of the work was uncertain but was currently estimated to be up to £300,000. NEIFCA's vessel insurers had been informed. The cost to be funded by NEIFCA

could be in the range of £180,000 to £300,000 depending on the assessment made by the insurers. Once the work is undertaken, this will significantly increase the value of the vessel when sold. Due to the additional financial pressure on NEIFCA it was proposed that the planned £30,000 expenditure on replacing the Electronic Charting Display and Information System (ECDIS) funded from the Patrol Vessel Maintenance Reserve and approved by the Executive on 10 March 2022 is no longer progressed. It is proposed that a supplementary budget is approved in principle to allow the cost of the engine repair and overhaul to be funded by a combination of in-year underspends, the Patrol Vessel Maintenance Reserve, and any insurance settlement, with the remaining balance to be funded from the Renewals Fund.

Resolved – (a) That the budget monitoring position is noted.

(b) That a supplementary budget to fund the cost of the repair of the main engine on the patrol vessel, North-East Guardian III and associated refurbishment of the second engine, currently estimated to cost £300,000 is approved in principle, funded by a combination of in-year underspends, vessel insurance, the Patrol Vessel Maintenance Reserve and Renewals Fund.

(c) That the planned £30,000 expenditure on replacing the Electronic Charting Display and Information System (ECDIS) funded by the Patrol Vessel Maintenance Reserve and approved by the Executive on 10 March 2022 is no longer progressed.

36. STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER REVIEW

The Clerk presented a report to inform members that in accordance with the Authority's Risk Management Strategy, a six monthly review of the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers has been undertaken and is reported for information.

Considerations surrounding the current vacancy for the Senior Environmental Officer were discussed with the position being a key leadership role. Recruitment is ongoing with Environmental Officer Ralf Bublitz taking an interim role.

Current standing orders to be reviewed regarding 'in person' meeting attendance and hybrid decision making.

Resolved – That the revised Strategic and Operational Risk Register be reviewed in six months' time.

37. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

That the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item (Minutes 38) on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information defined in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Resolved – that the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item (minutes 38).

39. CHIEF OFFICERS OPERATIONAL UPDATE

The chief officer presented a report to provide an operational update covering the period June to August 2022.

The report focused on the serious engine failure of North Eastern Guardian III. Having the main vessel out of commission for a period will undoubtedly impact on service delivery in terms of offshore enforcement and compliance work and the planned offshore survey programme including the European Lobster Settlement Index (ELSI) project. A proportion of offshore enforcement and compliance work can be covered by the Authority's stand-alone rigid inflatable boats (RIBS) but this is highly dependent on favourable weather with operations restricted to more central areas of the IFCA district.

Members discussed the considerations of a prolonged period of time without the main patrol vessel and the long-term impact on the annual plan. Northumberland IFCA and HFIG can provide short term support for imminent projects and enforcement.

Members also discussed the upcoming vessel replacement project under a finance arrangement managed by East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) with oversight delegated to the Executive Committee. Officers are now working up a project plan incorporating key milestones and timelines. This initial work also included the identification of potential manufacturers and the development of and circulation of an outline specification to gauge interest. Once the project plan has been set and the early preparatory work has advanced, a programme of Executive Committee meetings will be scheduled to support key decision making.

An update was given on current Shellfish Management Proposals with a new byelaw discussed. Officers are currently collating responses from the informal consultation and preparation for formal consultation will be underway shortly.

Members discussed the ongoing situation with the Tees and North Yorkshire Shellfish Mortality incident. Lobster landings have increased throughout the district in line or above mean seasonal trends. Landings of edible crab, however, have remained low particularly at Redcar and Whitby alongside growing concern about the potential impacts of the larger, offshore fishery on associated stocks. Officers are continuing to work actively with the potting sector through regular meetings, closely monitoring landings and trends in catches and carrying out observer and monitoring trips to sea. Continuing collaborative work had also been maintained with partner agencies including the Environment Agency (EA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and the Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS). Officers have also actively engaged in the independent collaborative research commissioned directly by the Whitby fishing industry group through the Authority's Science Advisory Group. Some key concerns remain over the long-term impacts of the shellfish mortality event particularly on crab stocks and the wider marine environment, but these can only be fully assessed through the extent of a full fishing season.

Covid-19 remained a consideration but operational activity had now moved to 'business as usual'. In terms of ensuring the continuing protection of staff from the effects of the Covid-19 virus, the focus had shifted to maintaining sensible precautionary measures with staff receiving free testing kits.

The Chief Officer updated on National workstreams focusing on the report into the Conduct and Operation of IFCA's carried out every 4 years and due in 2022. The first stage would involve the submission of a self-assessment from each IFCA Chief Officer, which members requested be circulated amongst the authority. Members would also be asked to take part in the review electronically.

Resolved - (a) Members noted the report

**40. NEIFCA HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY & SAFE WORKING PRACTICES
2022/2023**

The Chief Officer presented a report to inform members of the completion of the Annual review of the Authority's Health & Safety provisions. The Chief Officer was pleased to advise that there had been no notable incidents or accidents to report. The Chief also reassured members that all staff are correctly trained in all aspects of their role and will continue to monitor this on a regular basis.

Resolved – Members noted the report.

41. NEIFCA PERMITTED INTERTIDAL FIXED NET FISHERY

The Chief Officer presented a report to update members on revised arrangements for administering the Holderness Coast permitted intertidal fishery during the period 1 October 2022 to 30 April 2023. At the Authority meeting held on 8 June 2022 members received a report outlining proposed arrangements for assessing applications and issuing permits for the 2022/2023 fixed net fisheries. Members were advised that if there were to be any unforeseen

changes in the legislative framework officers would consult again prior to taking any further action. Whilst the supporting national legislative framework has remained unchanged the Authority's legal advisors have been managing a sustained external challenge directed at the permitted intertidal fixed net fishery. That challenge continued to focus on the extent of sea bass catches taken within the fishery and the number of nets permitted to be set. Although officers consider that the current byelaw provisions do not technically breach national legislation, following extensive consideration, independent legal guidance and consultation with Defra, it now intended to apply an additional voluntary code on the five intertidal permit holders. This voluntary code would require each permit holder to set just one section or length of net up to a maximum length of 250m which must carry a unique tag issued by NEIFCA. Permit holders would also be required to take what steps they can to minimise the take of sea bass within the associated fishery. This voluntary arrangement would apply between 1 October 2022 and the 30 April 2023 inclusive. Members unanimously agreed to endorse the arrangements.

Resolved – (a) Members note the report.

(b) Members endorse the arrangements.

42.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nothing to report.

The meeting closed at 12:03