

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

30 MARCH 2023

Present	Representing
Dr Stephen Axford	Chairman
Mr Graham Collins	MMO appointee
Prof Mike Elliott	MMO appointee
Mr Gary Redshaw	MMO appointee
Mr Andrew Wheeler	MMO appointee
Councillor David Chance	North Yorkshire County Council
Councillor Ron Allcock	North Lincolnshire County Council
Councillor Tony Randerson	North Yorkshire County Council

Clerk Caroline Lacey, East Riding of Yorkshire, Stephen Chandler 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 13:30.

48. APOLOGIES

None Recorded

49. 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.

50. TO TAKE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2022 AS A CORRECT RECORD

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51. TO TAKE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2023 AS A CORRECT RECORD

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

52. NEIFCA ANNUAL PLAN

The Chief Officer, David McCandless presented a report for members to review the Annual Plan for the year 2023/2024. The Chief Officer discussed with members the ambitious local plans for the year ahead but cautioned that priorities could change in the event of any unforeseen occurrences arising such as the shellfish mortality event.

The Clerk of the authority, Caroline Lacey, proposed some additional minor amendments to the plan which were accepted.

Resolved - (a) The annual plan for 2023/2024 was reviewed.

53.

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/2024

The Treasurer presented a report to provide Members with a detailed operational budget for 2023/2024.

Members were informed the 3% levy increase approved at the Authority Meeting in December 2022 had been incorporated into the budget along with increases to reflect the impact of a 2023/24 pay award on employee budgets. In addition, a review of individual budget lines had been undertaken to ensure they were set at an appropriate level within the existing budget. Supplementary budgets for 2023/24 include external funding for the ELSI project and Fisheries Management Plans, along with funding from the renewals fund to supplement the Patrol Vessel Replacement Project.

Resolved – (a) The draft budget for 2023/24 is approved

(b) The level of general reserves is maintained at £228,450 (17%) of the annual levy

54.

BUDGET REPORT 2022/2023

The Treasurer presented a report to advise Members of the budget position at the end of month 09 (December) 2022/2023.

At the end of December 2022, the Authority had realised net expenditure of £1,090,319 against an expected £949,427 overspending by £140,892. The forecast outturn overspend of £179,108 was due to the £240,000 estimated cost of patrol vessel repairs offset by savings from additional one-off recharge income from NEIFCA employees working on the European Lobster Settlement Index project.

It was anticipated that the projected outturn position would realise an overspend of £179,108 to be funded from the Patrol Vessel Maintenance Reserve and Renewals Fund, which could be reduced if the insurance settlement for the Patrol Vessel major repair was finalised prior to the financial year-end. The forecast included the planned transfer of £102,900 plus accrued interest into the Renewals Fund and £10,000 into the Vehicle Replacement Reserve.

Resolved – (a) The revenue budget monitoring position is noted.

55.

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & 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.

Currently, primary identified risk areas are financial, relating to cost recovery associated with the major engine failure onboard North Eastern Guardian III (NEG III) during July 2022 and the potential costs and funding pressures associated with the replacement of NEG III.

Elevated reputational risk, surrounding the Authority's ongoing response to the shellfish mortality event which occurred in October 2021 was also identified and noted.

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

56.

NEIFCA HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY & SAFE WORKING PRACTICES 2023/2024

The Chief Officer presented a report to inform members of the completion of the Annual review of the Authority's Health & Safety provisions.

Since the last review in September 2022 the Chief Officer was pleased to advise that there had been no notable incidents or accidents to report whilst staff have been working and all are currently fit and well.

All current and longstanding safe working practices have been maintained including revised provisions implemented during 2022 to support potting survey work conducted from North Eastern Guardian III. The most notable change related to the mandatory wearing of 'stab vests' by NEIFCA staff. Recent intelligence combined with a more active enforcement regime has increased the potential risk of a stabbing occurring at Sunderland. The risk level was now considered possible (previously remote). In order to ensure the continuation of safe operations at Sunderland 'stab vests' would now be required to be worn at all times. Elsewhere within the NEIFCA district the risk of a stabbing occurring is still considered remote.

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.

57. TEES AND NORTH YORKSHIRE SHELLFISH MORTALITY - UPDATE

The Chief Officer presented a report to update members on the ongoing issues surrounding shellfish mortality in waters surrounding the Tees and North Yorkshire.

Since the NEIFCA stock assessment report was published in September 2022, the Environmental and Scientific team had been working very hard on a follow up report in consultation with the Marine Management Organisation and further guidance had been sought from the Science Advisory Group which had provided further direction on the report.

Environmental & Scientific Manager Ralf Bublitz presented the findings of the report and gave members an overview of the challenges faced by the team with regards to the data received from the MMO.

Members also discussed the role of NEIFCA going forward in the investigation and how best to present the updated report, once concluded, to the industry.

Resolved – Members noted the report

58. CHIEF OFFICERS OPERATIONAL UPDATE

The Chief Officer, David McCandless provided members with an operational report covering the period December 2022 to February 2023. The main points on a local level, having already been covered within this meeting, included the vessel replacement project and the shellfish mortality incident.

On a national level, the Chief Officer gave an update on operations, with the implementation of FMP's being a significant part of workstreams going forward. The review of all IFCA's is currently underway with a slight delay, with the report due in early Autumn.

Resolved – Members noted the report

59. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Member Graham Collins raised the issue of remuneration for MMO members who attend meetings requesting that it fell into line with payments Councillors received from their authorities. The Clerk advised that local authority members received no additional payments for attending meetings other than expenses related to travel. This position was also supported by Councillor Chance.

The Chief Officer advised that he would look into the status of other IFCA's and their payment structures and provide additional information to support a report to the next Authority meeting.

The meeting closed at 15:27