

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

08 MARCH 2018

Present

Councillor Ron Allcock
Dr Stephen Axford
Kirsten Carter
Councillor Chris Matthews
Councillor Tony Randerson
Mr Gary Redshaw

Representing

North Lincolnshire Council
MMO appointee
MMO appointee
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
North Yorkshire County Council
MMO appointee

Chief Officer Mr David McCandless, Deputy Chief Officer Ian Davies, Clerk Caroline Lacey, Treasurer Neal Beckett and MMO Appointee Mike Montgomerie also attended the meeting.

The Committee met at the Authority's Offices in the Green Lane Centre, Whitby. The meeting started at 12:45.

44.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Council Member Mr Edward Bell, MMO Appointees Mr Nigel Proctor and Environment Agency Representative Mr Paul Slater.

DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND 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. No such interests were declared.

45.

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 07 SEPTEMBER 2017

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 07 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

46.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PRESENTATION & UPDATE WHEATCROFT & WHITBURN CONSENTS

Following written communication sent by the Clerk to the Environment Agency on 15 January 2018 requesting an update on the current situation surrounding the Wheatcroft and Whitburn consents and a presentation to the Executive Committee, members expressed their extreme disappointment over the lack of attendance from the Environment Agency and any response to the Clerk's original letter. Members requested that a further letter be sent to the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency re-iterating their concerns and seeking an urgent update on the matter. Members also requested that a special meeting of the Science Advisory Group be set up sometime during May 2018 to further consider the ongoing issues associated with the Wheatcroft outfall.

Resolved – (a) That the Clerk write a letter to the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency expressing members ongoing concerns relating to the Wheatcroft and Whitburn discharge consents and request an urgent update on both.

(b) That a special meeting of the Science Advisory Group be convened sometime during May 2018 to consider the ongoing issues related to the Wheatcroft and

Whitburn outfalls with an option for all interested Authority members to attend.

47. REVENUE BUDGET 2018/2019

The Treasurer provided members with a detailed budget for new 2018/19 financial year which had been produced in line with the draft 2018 Annual Plan, Strategic Risk Register and local priorities and in consultation with senior operational staff. Members had previously agreed a total levy of £1,200,310 at the Authority meeting held on 7 December 2017 which represented an increase, across the respective Local Authorities, of £38,000 compared to 2017/2018. Members discussed the level and allocation of reserves held by the Authority which were considered prudent for mitigating against the potential risks associated with the Authority's operational activities including meeting inflationary pressures, dealing with significant mechanical breakdowns and replacing the Authority's main patrol vessel.

Resolved – That the draft budget presented for the 2018/2019 financial year be approved.

48. NEIFCA ANNUAL PLAN 2018/2019

The Chief Officer submitted a report providing detailing the draft Annual Plan for 2018/2019. Central to the plan remained the shared national IFCA vision, national IFCA Success Criteria and high level objectives linked to the Authority's annual work programme for the forthcoming year. The Chief Officer advised that members could provide further comment up to the end of March when the final draft would be submitted to Defra to meet statutory requirements. Councillor Randerson queried whether NEIFCA could be more actively involved in the monitoring of discharge consents such as Wheatcroft. The Chief Officer advised that the Authority's funding levels would only support delivery of its statutory remit to ensure the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources but officers would always provide as much support as practically possible to the Environment Agency which carried the statutory duty for monitoring such consents. Members endorsed the draft plan and agreed to submit further comment before the end of the month.

Resolved – Members endorsed the format of the draft plan and agreed to provide any additional comments for inclusion in the final draft before the 31 March 2018.

49. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER REVIEWS

In accordance with the Risk Management Strategy an annual review had been undertaken. The Clerk and Chief Officer presented the revised Strategy to Members for their consideration and approval.

The Chief Officer highlighted some changing risks associated with NEIFCA staffing vacancies. Two senior management vacancies relating to the Scientific and land-based enforcement leads had been filled on a temporary basis by existing staff leaving two standing vacancies. The Chief Officer expected that this position would be resolved before the summer.

The Clerk provided an update on the risks associated with the replacement of the Authority's main patrol vessel including ongoing discussions with Hull University over co-financing the project.

Dr Stephen Axford highlighted Environment Agency proposals to implement a new set of licensing restrictions on seasonal salmon fishermen operating within the Authority's district. Dr Axford sought views on how the proposals might impact the fishermen and

potentially place additional pressure on other stocks, increasing risk. The Chief Officer acknowledged the concerns and offered to draft and circulate a response to the proposals on behalf of members.

Resolved – (a) That the revised Risk Management Strategy be approved and reviewed within twelve months’ time.

(b) That the revised Strategic and Operational Risk Registers be approved and reviewed in six months’ time.

(c) That the Chief Officer drafts and circulates a response to the new licensing proposals for submission to the Environment Agency.

50. **NEIFCA HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY & SAFE WORKING PRACTICES 2018/2019**

The Chief Officer provided a report to inform members of the completion of the annual review of the Authority’s Health & Safety provisions; a revised policy was included within the report. The Chief Officer reported that policy and provisions were reviewed continuously throughout the year at NEIFCA staffing and Senior Management Team meetings and the guidance documents represented the most current version at the time the report was written. The Chief Officer also advised that since the last review no notable incidents had occurred and that the Officer, injured on the patrol vessel, reported at the last review, had now made a full recovery to substantive duties. The Chief Officer highlighted the findings of an independent expert who had fully reviewed working practices and the supporting Health and Safety framework. The independent expert had been very complementary in his findings and made some minor recommendations which had been incorporated into the revised 2018/2019 safe working practices document.

Resolved - Members endorsed the revised policy and safe working practices and noted the findings and assurances of the independent expert.

51. **NEIFCA BYELAWS UPDATE**

The Chief Officer provided a comprehensive update on all current byelaw work including the following four byelaws which had been submitted to Defra for final consideration:

XVIII Method and Area of Fishing (Netting) Byelaw 2016

XXIX Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw 2016

XXX Automatic Identification System (AIS) Byelaw 2016

XXXI Catch Returns Byelaw 2016

Internally Officers had been considering changes to the Authority’s Crustacea Conservation Byelaw regulation to include new provisions protecting egg bearing lobsters, a maximum pot frame size and incorporating existing measures contained within a separate byelaw regulation protecting ‘V’ notched lobsters.

Significant consideration had also been given to the development of a ‘capped’ commercial shellfish permit scheme and a potting effort management scheme to be drafted into a comprehensive revision of the Authority’s current Shellfish Permit byelaw. The Chief Officer expected to commence informal consultation with the industry on these proposals sometime during the next two to three months.

Members discussed the work and MMO appointee Mr Redshaw queried whether permits could be issued regionally throughout the Authority’s district with regional restrictions. The Chief Officer felt that this wouldn’t be a realistic options given the size of the Authority’s district. Dr Axford supported the need for effective effort management particularly if the new salmon management proposals led to increases in the number of pots worked.

Resolved – Members noted the report and requested further updates on the work.

52.

BUDGET REPORT 2017/2018

The Treasurer of the Authority presented a report detailing the budget position at the end of month 10 (January) in 2017/18. At the end of January 2018, the Authority had net expenditure of £725,640 against an expected £822,340, under-spending by £96,700. The projected outturn showed an underspend of £74,905 consisting primarily of £74,055 of employee expenses, reflecting vacancies throughout the year and superannuation costs.

As previously agreed, the budgeted contribution from reserves of £20,620 would not now be required and the remaining balance of £40,000 would be placed in the External Projects Reserve and the additional projected underspend of £14,285 transferred to the Renewals Fund to provide future funding for the replacement of the patrol vessel.

Resolved – Members noted the report and agreed the actions.

53.

CHIEF OFFICERS OPERATIONAL REPORT

The Chief Officer presented an detailed overview of all operational activity covering the period December 2017 to February 2018 including an update on extreme Easterly weather conditions which had caused large quantities of lobster, crab and other species to be washed up on beaches along the North East coast of England. The worst affected areas were along the Holderness Coast of East Yorkshire where officers had assisted the fishing industry and other agencies and bodies in the recovery of large quantities of live lobster from the foreshore between the 3 and 7 March. In total over 5 tonnes were recovered and returned back to the sea. Despite the mass ‘wash up’ of lobster levels of non-compliance with legislation remained relatively low throughout with the majority of the public supporting the efforts.

Resolved – Members noted the report and commended all the officers involved in the recovery of lobsters for their collective efforts.

54.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair advised members that the Science Advisory Group, which had met prior to the Executive Committee, had considered the content of the Authority’s website and the fact that some information appeared to be dated. The Chair highlighted the importance of the website in terms of first impressions, organisational credibility and reputation. The Chief Officer agreed to review the current website in consultation with his senior operational management team and report back to members.

Resolved – That the Chief Officer review the current website and report back to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

The meeting closed at 2pm