

From: Assistant Chief IFCO

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority –
21 November 2023

Subject: Procurement of new cabin RIB

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: Members are asked to discuss and approve a new vessel build tender process to procure a cabin RIB.

Recommendations:

To **APPROVE** an application for funding for a new cabin RIB to replace Vigilant as the primary Essex-based enforcement vessel as recommended by the Technical Panel.

To **APPROVE** the Technical Specification of the vessel to be tendered against as recommended by the Technical Panel.

To **APPROVE** the undertaking of a tender process with assistance from Kent County Council.

New Build funding availability

IFCAs are created by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the impact assessment which accompanied MaCAA identified a requirement for funding for capital asset replacement. Prior to the UK leaving the EU, the European Marine and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) provided this under an enforcement provision, which enabled bids to the fund for the purposes of enforcement. A component of that enforcement provision was for replacement and maintenance of fixed assets, specifically related to the surface patrol fleet (patrol vessels).

Following the repatriation of funding after Brexit, the Association of IFCAs approached Defra regarding the requirement for funding for the capital replacement of vessels across IFCA's. Following negotiations between the AIFCA and Defra funding was made available by Defra to IFCAs as a domestic funding stream for the duration of the SR21 period for capital replacement of vessels. This takes place through the National Shipbuilding Strategy which oversees the government spend on new vessels.

As part of the AIFCA negotiations all IFCA's put forward, at extremely short notice, indicative costings and types of vessels which may be required in the future. Kent and Essex IFCA submitted a proposal for a £300,000 contribution towards the purchase of a cabin RIB.

Replacing Vigilant in Essex

The purpose of the vessel would be to replace Vigilant as the primary enforcement vessel in Brightlingsea. Vigilant is an open 7.8m Ribcraft RIB which came into service in 2020 and has proven extremely efficient both in terms of the budget required for the operation of the vessel, especially fuel burn, as well as staff resource required to operate the vessel at its full capability. The vessel acts as the primary enforcement vessel on the Essex coastline, whilst also providing fast response enforcement capability across the Thames Estuary, having been used in the Medway and on the Margate Sands this summer alone.

However, the vessel does have its limitations, which are especially noticeable as the vessel is the only asset capable of conducting boardings within Essex, and so has to be used for all of those patrols. Being an open decked vessel means that the officers are exposed to the elements at all times during a patrol, where both extremes of heat and cold can have a significant restrictive effect on the capabilities of the officers at sea. The vessel also has very few facilities, with no means to heat food or water and no toilet facilities for officers. This restricts the length of patrols that the vessel can undertake and the amount of time the vessel can spend at sea. Therefore, officers have explored options to replace Vigilant with a cabin RIB.

It is then proposed that Vigilant be moved to Kent and be moored in Ramsgate. Whilst Nerissa is an extremely capable, multipurpose enforcement vessel, with the ability to work in more extreme weather and over a much greater geographic area than any other vessel in the KEIFCA fleet, this does come with some consequences such as the fuel budget required, the carbon footprint of vessel operations in Kent and the minimum operational crewing requirement of 4 officers, which is the whole warranted officer compliment in Ramsgate.

As a result, placing Vigilant in Ramsgate, initially on a trial basis, would allow officers to conduct more resource efficient and lower fuel usage patrols, when staff availability is restricted or when the patrol allows for it. This would cut costs on fuel budget for Nerissa and also reduce the carbon footprint of vessel operations in Kent.

Technical Panel

On 3rd November 2023, a KEIFCA Technical Panel was convened to discuss the funding available for the vessel, the current fleet and the potential useful working life of each vessel and to make a recommendation to the Authority on whether to submit a bid to the available Defra fund to build a new cabin RIB. The paper as presented to the Technical Panel (B1) is presented in Appendix 1, this sets out the rationale behind redistributing the current vessel assets and replacing Vigilant in Essex with a cabin RIB.

The Technical Panel then discussed a technical specification against which tender proposals could be submitted. The technical specification recommended by the Technical Panel is presented in Appendix 2. In summary, this specification invites tender proposals for a 9.5-11m cabin RIB with seating for 4-6 officers. The

technical specification also identifies outboard engines as a preferred propulsion method but also invites tenderers to suggest alternative means of propulsion which could be assessed by KEIFCA.

The notes of the Technical Panel meeting are provided in Appendix 3 which details the discussions which were had by Members. The recommendation of the Technical Panel was to replace Vigilant as the primary enforcement asset in Essex, to proceed with applying for funding to aid in the procurement of a new cabin RIB and for a full tender package for a Cabin RIB to be provided at the November Quarterly meeting for approval by the full Authority.

Tender Process

A vessel build at this value is required to go through a tender process and also have a business plan submitted to the funding scheme, both of these things have very similar requirements and can be undertaken in tandem. The tender process needs to have been completed and awarded to the successful bidder by the end of the 2023/24 financial year in order for KEIFCA to claim against the domestic funds. The business case has been drafted and is presented in Appendix 4.

Officers have been in liaison with the KCC procurement team and, if the Authority is minded to proceed with procurement of a vessel as described, will proceed to tender starting 22nd November 2023. A Technical Panel will then be held following the closure of the tender process, in order to make a recommendation as to which tender to proceed with to the full Authority meeting on 31st January 2024.

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