



# Annual Plan 2023-2024

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# Introduction

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (KEIFCA), and the District for which it has responsibility, was established under sections 149 and 150 of Marine and Coastal Access Act in 2011. This annual plan outlines the key actions and workstreams for KEIFCA in 2023/24; how it will continue to shape inshore management and contribute towards the Government's Marine Policy Statement.

**THE IFCA VISION: "Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry"**

- Achieving a sustainable marine economy
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Using sound science responsibly
- Living within environmental limits
- Promoting good governance

*The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority has clearly defined duties under the Act (sections 153 and 154) to manage sustainable fisheries and conserve the wider marine environment within the coastal waters off Kent and Essex.*

## **153) Kent and Essex IFCA must manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district, in doing so it must:**

- a) seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way.*
- b) seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation.*
- c) take any other steps which in the Authority's opinion are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development.*
- d) seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district.*

## **154) Kent and Essex IFCA must also seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any MCZ in the district are furthered.**

The Fisheries Act 2020 provides the framework to manage our fisheries as an independent coastal state and under the Act Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) are being created to replace the EU Common Fisheries Policy. The ambition is that FMPs will set out the policies to inform future management actions, creating national a fisheries management framework that IFCA's will work within.

As a Competent and Relevant Authority' the Kent and Essex IFCA is also required to perform its duties regarding current and future iterations of the Habitats Directive, the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

## ***The Kent and Essex IFCA District***

The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010, section 3, defines the extent of both the landward and seaward elements of the Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District as summarised.

- the combined areas of the relevant councils (the “basic area” of the district); and
- the sea adjacent to the basic area of the district within the boundaries specified to a distance of 6 nautical miles from the 1983 baselines.

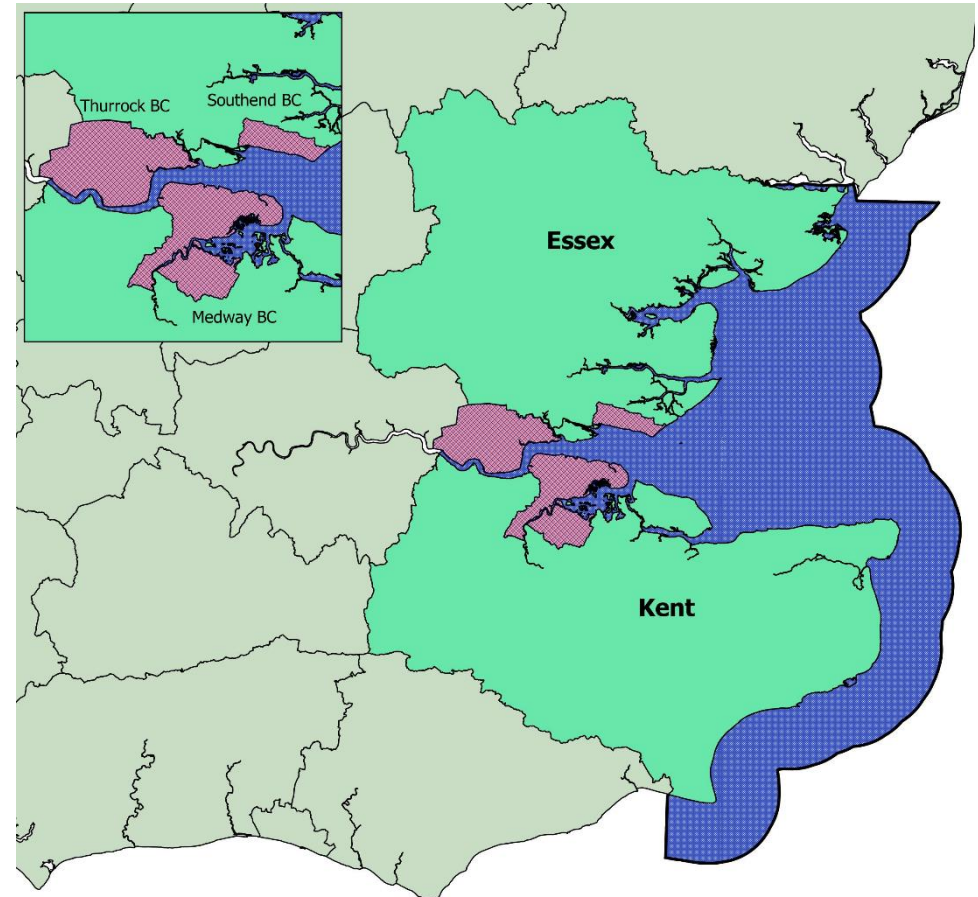
### ***Seaward district boundaries***

Kent & Essex IFCA district covers an area of over 3,412 km<sup>2</sup> and extends from the east end of Rye Bay in Kent to the northern boundary of Essex on the River Stour. The seaward boundary follows the 6-mile nautical limit measured from the 1983 baseline, which, due to drying sand banks, extends up to 15 miles offshore at its furthest point.

### ***Upstream district boundaries***

The up-river KEIFCA boundary in the Thames includes the waters adjacent to Kent County Council and Thurrock Council, with the district boundary running from Dartford Creek (River Darent) on the south shore to Mar Dyke on the North Shore.

The other district limits for the rest of the rivers located within the boundaries of Kent and Essex are to their tidal limit (including, the Medway, the Blackwater and the Colne).



## ***Focus and Priorities for KEIFCA 2023-2024***

The challenge for KEIFCA is to prioritise work within a wide range of competing demands, balancing our work between research and enforcement, between MPAs and fisheries management and between national and local priorities. The annual plan tries to outline and expand the key priorities for KEIFCA over the year, helping the Authority members, the officers, and the communities we serve, engage with the statutory duties of our IFCA. With high inflation, tight budgets and more limited resource, prioritisation of workstreams becomes ever more challenging. The priorities highlighted below outline the key workstreams for KEIFCA over the financial year 2023-2024.

### ***Adapting and reprofiling KEIFCA to work within new budgets***

In response to the current financial constraints on budgets combined with high inflation, a difficult decision has been reached to introduce a recruitment freeze for two officer positions within our organisation for the financial year 2023/24 KEIFCA. The hope is that this will balance the books in the 2023/24 financial year, and hopefully once inflation drops and funding pressures ease, these two positions can be funded from the KEIFCA base budget in 2024/25. The two positions that have been identified to be frozen are the Rib Cox/MPA Compliance Officer post and the Science and Conservation IFCO post.

As part of the last government spending review, DEFRA had identified and committed to additional funding for IFCAs to support the IFCA delivery of a range of key workstreams; Fisheries Management Plans, Marine Protected Areas and supporting marine planning. With the changes in the government, combined with a more difficult fiscal outlook, DEFRA has been slow to pass on this funding to IFCAs and is unable to confirm when the money would be transferred to IFCAs and on what terms. So far IFCAs have received a third of this annual funding (£50,000 - for FMP work). KEIFCA will continue to work with the Association of IFCAs to secure the rest of the funding allocated by DEFRA for the 2022/23 financial year. If we are successful in securing this funding, we would look to use this money to recruit the Science and Conservation IFCO post on a temporary contract.

After working through challenging times of Brexit and Covid, officers will work with our finance team and our funding Local Authorities to develop a 3–5-year financial plan to help ensure that KEIFCA is running on a secure long-term financial footing. Part of the review will look at our long-term capital renewal budgets for key equipment like boats and trucks as well as how we can make investments to help reach CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets. The review will also include a light touch review of the organisational structure, job descriptions and terms and conditions including terms and conditions and pay.

## ***Fisheries Management Plans***

The UK has internationally agreed responsibilities to manage our fisheries, so our fish stocks are harvested in a sustainable way. The Fisheries Act 2020 provides the framework to manage our fisheries as an independent coastal state. The act requires the UK fisheries policy authorities (Defra, and the devolved administrations) to publish Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) to help deliver the UK's ambition for sustainable fisheries. Sitting alongside the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS), FMPs will replace the EU Common Fisheries Policy, and are being developed with the goal of helping revitalise our fishing sector and coastal communities. The ambition is that FMPs will set out the policies to deliver a healthy marine environment with productive fish stocks that underpin a vibrant and profitable seafood sector. FMPs will help to inform future management actions, our negotiations with the EU, and drive the reform of retained EU law and create better regulation.

IFCAs, through the Association of IFCAs (AIFCA), have been working with other regulators and DEFRA to help inform and support this process and have been contributing to the Frontrunner FMP Projects (Whelk FMP, Bass FMP, Scallop FMP, Crab & Lobster FMP, Channel Non-Quota Demersal FMP and Southern North Sea & Eastern Channel Mixed Flatfish FMP). KEIFCA will continue to work with DEFRA through the AIFCA to make sure the needs of local fishermen from Kent and Essex are taken into consideration throughout the policy development process and into the subsequent implementation. Engagement and involvement at a local level is critical in making this new approach successful and creating long-term sustainable fisheries with management measures that fishermen can 'buy-into'.

## ***Review and development of future KEIFCA cockle fishery management***

The Thames cockle fisheries provide income and jobs for a large number of fishermen and, with coastal towns like Leigh-on-Sea and Whitstable, provide tourism, cultural and historic links between the cockle fisheries and wider society. The fisheries also take place within a complex mosaic of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the cockle stocks provide food for a wide range of bird and fish species, whilst also providing other wider environmental benefits such as filtering seawater and CO<sub>2</sub> capture. Balancing the needs of different stakeholders; be it local community needs, current CFFPB permit holders, current TECFO licence holders, other fishers working within the cockle industry, environmental NGOs, or other commercial fishermen from the Thames and beyond, is difficult and there has already been a wide range of views expressed throughout the process.

Building on the Listening Phase (Autumn 2021), KEIFCA have run a series of consultations, adding more detail as management decisions have been made. After agreeing a new management framework in Consultation 2, the Authority has started developing the detail required for a new regulating order. Agreeing both the detailed processes and the final legal wording will continue to be the main workstream for KEIFCA over the coming year and will require a huge amount of KEIFCA resource and officers time if we are to meet the deadline of mid-February 2024 for getting a new regulating order approved.

### ***Marine Protected Areas***

Since 2020 KEIFCA have been working with NE to survey the Goodwin Sands MCZ site to build a clearer and more detailed picture of the distribution of some of the site's key features (e.g. Ross worm (*Sabellaria*) reefs). Using this new data KEIFCA are looking to work with the local community to develop management measures for this site over the coming year. KEIFCA will also continue the process of assessing and developing management for Swanscombe MCZ and the Tranche 3 features added to Dover to Deal MCZ.

Over the past number of years KEIFCA have invested a significant amount of time and resources into developing management plans and bylaws to protect sensitive features within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). As with all enforcement the ultimate objective is compliance, and this is achieved by combining intelligence led risk-based enforcement with deterrent and disruption achieved by maintaining a visible presence within the MPAs. Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs) are the primary enforcement vessels for this workstream and are ideally suited for the creeks and rivers covered by the Essex Estuaries bottom trawling byelaw. Offshore areas will also be monitored by the larger patrol vessels, both during routine patrols and whilst traversing MPAs during surveys. The shore officers will also play a significant role in enforcing the byelaws by monitoring activity in ports and on the coast and by speaking to the general public to obtain information on activities which may potentially be in breach of the byelaws.

### ***Marine plans and marine spatial prioritisation programme***

As the marine planning system starts to become more established and the Southeast Marine Planning team start working towards the Southeast Marine Plans first report in mid-2024, KEIFCA will continue to assist the MMO in the filling of inshore data gaps (fisheries, aquaculture and MPAs) and where appropriate, help to engage with local stakeholders to help raise awareness. Specifically, DEFRA have asked IFCAs to feed into the Marine spatial prioritisation programme and help identify where key fishing grounds differ from MMO modelling as well as input into local level scenario testing (e.g helping to evaluate colocation options or identify where industries would be displaced if construction takes place offshore).

## Delivery of Priorities

The vision for IFCA's encapsulates the core role of the organisations; and the success criteria outline what is expected of IFCA's in achieving the vision. Five success criteria have been developed by all ten IFCA's through the Association of IFCA's. It is incumbent on KEIFCA to plan and report against these success criteria in a manner which it sees fit and it is the priorities which this guidance identifies that we have used as priorities in our annual plan.

In order to meet the outcomes of the success criteria, DEFRA's guidance recommends that working level objectives that should form the basis of each IFCA's annual plan and that the objectives should inform the work of individual IFCA staff. Making the monitoring staff performance much easier and outlining how each staff members can clearly see how they are contributing to the overall success of IFCA's.

The five tables that follow; one for each success criteria, provide a detailed description of the work plan for the year from April 2023. Also included under the relevant success criteria are the Annual Communications Plan, the Annual Enforcement Plan/Risk Register, and the Annual Science & Research Plan. A glossary is included at the end of this document.



**CIFCO** Chief IFCO

**EPVS** Essex-based Patrol Vessel Skipper

**KPVS** Kent-based Patrol Vessel Skipper

**LCO** Lead Compliance Officer

**ACIFCO** Assistant Chief IFCO

**EPVFM** Essex-based Patrol Vessel First Mate

**KPVFM** Kent-based Patrol Vessel First Mate  
(\*Angling)

**AA** Admin Assistant  
(\*Permit/Licence support)

**OM** Office Manager

**ERCM** Essex-based Rib Cox and  
MPA Compliance Officer

**KPVIFCO** Kent-based IFCO

**KSCIFCO** Kent-based Science  
and Conservation IFCO

**LSCO** Lead Scientific & Conservation Officer

**EIFCO** Essex-based IFCO

**KIFCO** Kent-based IFCO

The workstreams shown in the table below are categorised into two types of activities. The first, ongoing workstreams, are those which have already been existence and the second, new projects, are new workstreams.



## **Success Criterion 1: Communications and Engagement** - *IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders*

IFCAs will be visible, respected and trusted regulators within coastal communities and will maintain and deliver a strategy to communicate their vision and duties effectively. IFCAs will engage with policy makers, industry, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), recreational and commercial users; and other regulators. They will work jointly and collaboratively with partner organisations across boundaries; will participate and contribute to the development and implementation of regional and national marine policy, including the marine planning regime; will take long-term strategic decisions and manage risks effectively. IFCAs may maintain a national body to co-ordinate the activities of authorities that are party to arrangements.

### **Outcomes**

- 1.** The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy.
- 2.** The IFCA will maintain its website, ensuring public access to current fisheries and conservation information for the district, including management requirements and byelaws. Non-reserved IFCA Committee papers will be published.
- 3.** The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level.
- 4.** The IFCA and its principal partners will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas will be maintained. Opportunities for greater efficiencies, effective joint working and collaboration will be explored and implemented when feasible.

### **Indicators**

- SC1A** The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts that will have been reviewed and updated by 31 March each year.
- SC1B** The IFCA will have completed a review of its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year.
- SC1C** The IFCA will have reviewed its website by the last working day of each month.
- SC1D** The IFCA will have reviewed its website and ensured it meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March each year.
- SC1E** The IFCA will have reviewed all of its Memoranda of Understanding by 31 March each year. There will be a clear plan in place to update MoUs where necessary, to an agreed timescale.
- SC1F** By 31 March each year, the IFCA will have participated appropriately, proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional and national fisheries and conservation activity identified in the annual plan.

Actions	Outputs	Member of staff responsible for outputs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1A) Support the Association of IFCA's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually contribute to the funding and running of the AIFCAs</li> <li>• Attend AIFCA meetings and take forward action points from meetings</li> <li>• Feed into AIFCA annual plan and report</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1B) Support national IFCA working groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend and contribute to the Chief Officers Group (COG)</li> <li>• Attend and contribute to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)</li> <li>• Attend and contribute to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG)</li> </ul>	<b>ACIFCO</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1C) Attend and contribute to external meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend meetings with national partners (MMO, NE, CEFAS, EA, other IFCA's).</li> <li>• Help to inform and develop national policy.</li> <li>• Help information flow between organisations.</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings.</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> ACIFCO
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1D) Reply to Consultations/ Correspondence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replies to national partners e.g. MMO licences, policy consultation on legislation, information requests asking for KEIFCA stats for national purposes.</li> <li>• Input into national databases</li> <li>• Responses and engagement with national policy consultations</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO</b> KSCIFCO CIFCO
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 1E) Maintain website, quarterly e-bulletin, and stakeholder database</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and update website (monthly website content review)</li> <li>• Maintain an up-to-date list of addressed and email addresses of stakeholders, updated every 12 months</li> <li>• Design and distribute quarterly e-bulletin</li> </ul>	<b>OM</b>
<b>1F) Run consultations that help gather feedback and evidence on future cockle management legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An appropriate consultation document will be produced for each consultation</li> <li>• All consultation replies will be anonymised and kept on the website</li> <li>• Key information from the consultation replies will be summarised and used to inform the decision-making process.</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> ACIFCO OM/ AA
<b>1G) Support community engagement in Tranche 3 MCZ management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with partner organisations to communicate introduction of T3 MCZs.</li> <li>• Outreach to industry to explain each site and discuss and develop management options where required; notably for Goodwin Sands, Dover-Deal and Thames Estuary</li> <li>• Consult with industry and NGOs to inform management measures</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> ACIFCO LSCO KSCIFCO
<b>1H) Produce an Annual Communication Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication plan is produced each year and contained within the Annual Plan.</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b>

## ***Annual Communications Plan***

At a local level, our aim is to create a community that is well informed about the marine environment, the work of the KEIFCA and to engage them in helping make decisions about their local marine environment and resources. At the national level, our goal is to participate fully in promoting engagement with Fisheries Management Plans, the SE Marine plan, and the marine spatial prioritisation programme.

With the kick-off of the review and development of future KEIFCA cockle fishery management workstream, the 2023/24 communications plan is different from previous years as it is dominated by this key regional priority. As outlined in papers to the Authority a specific focused communications plan has been created for this workstream with actions, outputs and metrics reported at each of the 4 consultation phases (<https://www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk/website-content/agenda-item-b8-listening-phase-consultation-summary-1637314774.pdf>). Specific websites, questionnaires, consultation documents as well as filmed oral evidence sessions are planned to help facilitate engagement in this process.

Away from the issues of cockle management, the day-to-day work of KEIFCA staff, particularly the enforcement officers, represents one of the best forms of effective engagement with our stakeholders, and usually happens in an informal 'one-to-one' manner and involves KEIFCA officers fostering links, engendering trust and maintaining a presence in the district. KEIFCA members are also a vital conduit between the Authority and the local communities around our coast as well as with national networks and organisations. The KEIFCA website is a key component of our communication strategy and helps provide information about who we are, what we do, the current legislation as well as the development of new management measures. Overarching all these components, it is the promotion and running of the quarterly Authority meetings with easily accessible and promoted papers (e-bulletin), that helps communities engage with, and contribute to, effective decision making.

Nationally, the Association of IFCAs (AIFCA) and operational officer groups (COG, TAG and NIMEG) help IFCAs coordinate and promote key messages. At a regional level, KEIFCA officers sit on local groups such as the Essex Native Oyster Restoration Initiative (ENORI) and the North East Kent Marine Protected Area (NEKMPA) and support regional partnership projects like the Thames Estuary Partnership. Attendance and presenting at conferences and workshops, as well as working with bodies like the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB), also provide useful forums for KEIFCA to promote key messages.

In general, there are three main strands to our communication work and associated messaging;

- a) General promotion of who we are and what we do
- b) Promoting engagement in development of management measures that affect the exploited marine species or protected habitats in our district (e.g. byelaws, regulating orders, input into national legislation or policy, marine planning or licencing)
- c) Education of stakeholders to achieve high compliance with legislation.

These different strands tend to engage different types of stakeholders, so where our general promotion engages more with the general public or interested marine user, the development of management measures or enforcement education needs to reach the people that are working and fishing in the district. In addition the effective methods of primary communication vary between these groups with general information being best communicated through websites, social media, print media, harbour days and short videos; detailed management engagement focusing on tailored local meetings and specific communications (emails, letters, consultation documents); and enforcement legislation targeted specifically at users by face-to-face contact, notice boards, stickers and handouts and tide tables, as well as being supported by our website. With these different stakeholder needs there is inevitable tension and resourcing conflicts between focusing on the production of general information about how we work and what we do, against the production of very specific and detailed information concerning legislation or byelaw technical measures.

Although KEIFCA has a relatively small annual communications budget and limited staff resource with officers also involved in our core enforcement and conservation work, our overview of activities below identifies and prioritises the key topics, actions and communication techniques we intend to focus on over the coming year.

#### Overview of key communication activities 2023/2024

Topic/ Issue	Key target group	Key Action/message	Website	Brief Officers	Brief members	KEIFCA meeting	National meetings	Local meetings	Community event	Poster/ Notice board	Sticker	Tide table	Media launch	Twitter	e-bulletin	Newspaper	Consultation/ Handout
<b>Development of future cockle fishery management</b>	Fishing industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Specific communications plan for this workstream (updates produced at the end of each consultation phase).</i></li> <li>• Engage local communities in developing management options</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓		✓
<b>MPA byelaw development</b>	All local stakeholders near the MPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage local communities in developing management options</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓							✓	✓	✓
<b>MPA enforcement</b>	Fishing industry and wider public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the closed areas management measures in MPAs</li> </ul>	✓	✓							✓	✓					
<b>Fisheries Management Plans</b>	Fishing industry and recreational anglers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the draft FMP and help facilitate local engagement</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓		

## **Success Criterion 2: Compliance and Enforcement** - *IFCAs implement a fair, effective, and proportionate enforcement regime*

The IFCA enforcement regime is risk-based, makes appropriate use of intelligence, meets legislative standards and complies with the Regulators Code. It should make effective use of the resources available to regulators; complement and align, if possible, with the regimes in adjacent IFC Districts and management by other organisations including the MMO and Environment Agency. Consistency and fairness is important. Regulatory compliance is promoted. Enforcement action is carried out by trained, professional officers working to clear standards of conduct.

### **Outcomes**

- 1.** The IFCA will publish its enforcement risk register and strategy, clearly setting out its approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences.
- 2.** The IFCA will have developed consistency in regulations (byelaws) with other organisations
- 3.** The IFCA will manage operational activity (e.g. through a Tasking & Co-ordination Group) and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations.
- 4.** Warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) will be trained and accredited to nationally agreed standards. They will maintain professionalism and make appropriate interventions to deliver efficient, effective enforcement activity

### **Indicators**

- SC2A** The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year
- SC2B** The IFCA will demonstrate in its Annual Report how it has worked with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures
- SC2C** The IFCA will compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and publish them on its website.
- SC2D** The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 April.
- SC2E** The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for all Warranted Officers.
- SC2F** Warranted Officers attain accreditation. All undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Actions	Outputs	Member of staff responsible for outputs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2A) Coordinate KEIFCA enforcement effectively with national partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance and involvement in the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group to improve and develop enforcement processes and best practice.</li> <li>• Work with partner organisations to enhance sharing of relevant intelligence and improving effectiveness of information sharing.</li> <li>• Work with partners to standardise training and aid consistency.</li> </ul>	<b>LCO</b> ACIFCO
<b>ONGOIN ACTION: 2B) Maintain and run national enforcement systems and processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering and analysis of intelligence and other enforcement data to feed into KEIFCA databases and national systems (MCSS, national intel database)</li> <li>• Ensure intelligence collection, process and requirements are understood by all officers.</li> <li>• Prioritise rapid dissemination of information relating to officer safety or national issues.</li> </ul>	<b>LCO</b> <b>EIFCO</b> All IFCOs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2C) Plan effective enforcement operations and actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KEIFCA risk register, data/ information and enforcement processes are reviewed, updated and published annually.</li> <li>• Creation and implementation of strategic and operational plans for key enforcement risks.</li> <li>• Organisation and hosting of bi-weekly KEIFCA tasking and coordination (TCG) meetings.</li> <li>• Use GIS to display enforcement data on charts visually report activity (TCG charts)</li> <li>• Completion of annual enforcement plans and reports</li> </ul>	<b>LCO</b> <b>ACIFCO</b> ERCM
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2D) Compile case files and oversee prosecutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building prosecution case files to fair and proportionate outcomes in line with KEIFCA policy, applying evidential and public interest tests via legal advice.</li> <li>• Enhance front line enforcement skills, within IFCOs through formal and workplace training, particularly on gathering of evidence and building of case files.</li> <li>• Officers continue to use the national standardised case file management system.</li> </ul>	<b>LCO</b> All IFCOs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2E) Maintain and run sea-going enforcement assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision and maintenance of KEIFCA vessels for the purposes of enforcement activities.</li> <li>• Provision and maintenance of vessel-based equipment used for sea-based enforcement.</li> <li>• Explore best available equipment options.</li> <li>• Planning and reporting to the Authority of operation, maintenance, and refit of vessels</li> </ul>	<b>KPVS</b> <b>EPVS</b> KPVFM EPVFM ERCM
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2F) Enforcement activities – sea-based</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a visible patrol presence at sea to promote compliance, gather intelligence and detect offences.</li> <li>• Undertaking enforcement activities: boarding and gear with the aim of achieving full compliance with all local and national regulations.</li> <li>• Collection of information related to KEIFCA responsibilities and partner organisations.</li> <li>• Use body-worn video to promote with compliance and sound evidence gathering.</li> <li>• Support MMO/DEFRA in national taskings by providing charter patrols when required.</li> </ul>	<b>EPVS</b> <b>KPVS</b> EPVFM KPVFM ERCM All IFCOs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2G) Maintain and run land-based enforcement assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision and maintenance of vehicles for shore-based compliance and enforcement</li> <li>• Maintain shore-based equipment capable of carrying out surveillance and enforcement.</li> <li>• Introduce systematic checks for upkeep of shore-based enforcement equipment.</li> <li>• Planning/reporting to Authority of operation, maintenance, and refit of key equipment</li> <li>• Explore best available equipment options (including drones)</li> </ul>	<b>EPVFM</b> <b>KPVFM</b> LCO

<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2H) Enforcement activities – shore-based</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a visible patrol presence on shore to promote compliance, gather intelligence and detect offences.</li> <li>• Undertake enforcement activities, landings of vessels, inspections of vehicles and premises with the aim of achieving full compliance with local and national regulations.</li> <li>• Collection of information related to KEIFCA interests and those of partner organisations.</li> <li>• Use body-worn video to promote with compliance and sound evidence gathering.</li> </ul>	<b>IFCOs</b> KPVFM EPVFM ERCM
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 2I) Enforcement training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal and on-the job training and feedback given by senior officers where required.</li> <li>• Ensure updates to legislation and procedure are shared and processes updated.</li> <li>• Review, update and improve CRIB book for officer training and to maintain consistent enforcement.</li> <li>• Identify training requirements for individual officers (2 x officers on Competent Officer course, 2 x officers on Advanced Officer course)</li> <li>• Continue to support development and implementation of the accredited program (take 2 officers through course).</li> <li>• ACIFCO to complete QA training and provide support to other IFCAs.</li> </ul>	<b>ACIFCO</b> KPVS EPVS
<b>2J) Improve our use of enforcement information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take steps to modernise recording system for inspections (Enforcement Record System on SharePoint).</li> <li>• Work with other IFCAs to develop digital inspection recording system.</li> <li>• Explore the introduction catch data, intel gaps, and RAG VOI to TCG process</li> </ul>	
<b>2K) Integrate Marine Protected Area enforcement risks into KEIFCA enforcement activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation of MPA byelaws into risk register</li> <li>• Development of operational planning for MPAs in line with schedule of enforcement below.</li> <li>• Identify MPAs that require increased patrol effort via TCG process.</li> </ul>	<b>ERCM</b> LCO
<b>2L) Improve records of private ground boundaries and understanding of their fishing rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish clear spatial boundaries for all private grounds in the district and gather details on fishing rights and leases that apply.</li> <li>• Produce GIS maps of private grounds.</li> <li>• Advise on how regulations apply in private grounds to officers and stakeholders</li> </ul>	<b>LCO</b> <b>ACIFCO</b> <b>EPVS</b>

## ***Annual Enforcement Plan/Risk Register - 2023-2024***

In undertaking its regulatory responsibilities, KEIFCA starts from the position that the vast majority of the community of people, organisations and industries using the marine area are compliant with the regulations and controls that affects them. KEIFCA works to try to ensure that all parties understand both what rules apply to their industry and the rationale for the regulation being necessary. Full compliance with EU, UK and, in particular, local fisheries and environmental legislation is the overall aim of the Authority. This aim is best achieved through the adoption of an adaptive co-management approach to fisheries management.

KEIFCA have a wide variety of fishing activities that take place within the District, resulting from its inclusion of a broad range of habitats in the North Sea, Thames Estuary and Eastern Channel. As a result, different commercial species move through our waters throughout the year. At its inception, KEIFCA specified 18 key species which are the main focus of its work. These include finfish species of both recreational and commercial interest as well as various shellfish. As shellfish do not migrate to and from the district as much as finfish, KEIFCA actively manage key inshore shellfish stocks including crab, lobster, cockles, whelks, oysters and scallops. Furthermore, the main commercial finfish species we manage include sole, bass, thornback ray, smoothhound and to a lesser extent cod. These are added to other less commercially important species including tope and grey mullet. These species are at the heart of our enforcement action and receive intelligence led, targeted compliance checks throughout the year.

With budgets and staffing being a limiting factor in this period, we will aim to focus more than ever on prioritising higher risk targets, to implement an active, fair, and targeted enforcement regime for the next period. There will be a renewed focus on increasing the number of directed enforcement operations to address key seasonal compliance risks for key fisheries in the district and expanding on joint working with partner enforcement agencies to achieve shared goals.

### ***Planning and operation***

Ensuring that we get the right balance of compliance and enforcement alongside our other areas of work is a continual challenge, and one which requires a good level of base planning to achieve success. As a result, there is a structured approach to compliance activities which is best shown in Figure 1 below. This structure is designed to take into account the annual risks and proactive responses to those risks identified in this document and combine them with reactive responses to emerging risks throughout the year.

### ***Risk register***

KEIFCA officers carry out enforcement activity throughout the year, responding to the increase in certain fishing efforts at particular times of year. The table below indicates our schedule during the year when key enforcement risks of are targeted. Green highlighted months being periods in which specific operations/proactive approaches will be carried out on that issue and blue highlighted months being when that fishery will be enforced on a more reactive/routine basis. This approach and the specific times this happen are the result of a risk prioritised assessment of necessary enforcement activities. They are also the result of combining compliance monitoring and enforcement work with the other competing demands on staff resource and vessel time including research, surveys and officer health. Working in



partnership with statutory partners such as the MMO, Border Force and Police we will share intelligence and work collaboratively to enforce the law in a fair, effective and proportionate way. This collaborative approach brings value for the taxpayer and effective use of limited resources.

Key Fishery	Month											
	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Whelks	Blue	Blue						Blue	Blue	Blue	Green	Green
Bass	Green	Green	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue		Green				
Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery			Green	Green	Green	Blue	Blue					
Permit cockle fishery						Green	Green					
MPA management measures	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue

Key: **Blue** = routine compliance checks **Green** = targeted compliance operations

The compliance workstreams discussed below highlight the priority enforcement risks for the coming year. These risks will be addressed through strategic and operational planning with targeted outcomes.

### Key fisheries

#### Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order (TECFO) and Permitted Cockle Fishery compliance

Cockle enforcement is specific to the two fisheries that operate within the district: the “inside” TECFO fishery and the “outside” permit fishery. KEIFCA implement targeted operation orders to monitor compliance and ensure all regulations are adhered to. The TECFO operation will be implemented first in June, starting with pre-season biosecurity and gear inspections. Officers will be effectively communicating regulations to all fishermen involved throughout, ensuring that receipt and understanding is appropriately documented. Once fishing commences officers will carry out a phase of intensive boardings at sea to assess damage rates of the gear used by all vessels in the fleet. This seagoing effort will be complemented by teams on shore conducting landing inspections to ensure compliance with catch limits. Regular sea patrols will also be carried out by the standalone Essex RIB FPV Vigilant in closed areas and at times when

the fishery is closed during each week, responding to the best available intelligence. We will regularly review VMS tracks to detect risk of non-compliance with closed area restrictions and will be utilising body worn video to gather best evidence of any offences. Following breaches of gear regulations in the 2021 fishery, officers will also be conducting spot-checks to ensure gear is compliant throughout the season.

#### *Bass compliance*

IFCOs will continue to work closely with partners at the MMO to target non-compliance with bass regulations, focusing on high-risk areas of the district at peak seasonal times. Based on cumulative intelligence, we will run joint operations with teams at sea and on shore to target illegal activities such as drift netting and misreporting. FPV Vigilant proved to be an invaluable asset in preventing illegal bass fishing at sea last year, and as such our future operations will use the RIB to intercept vessels at sea while shore teams will focus on landing inspections at key ports. MMO will provide oversight of current vessel authorisations and data on which vessels are potentially exceeding catch limits for any of the permitted gear types. Recreational bass fishers will also be inspected routinely to ensure that current catch limits and minimum sizes are adhered to. Officers use of body worn video and other recording devices to gather best evidence of offences when carrying out inspections.

#### *Whelk compliance*

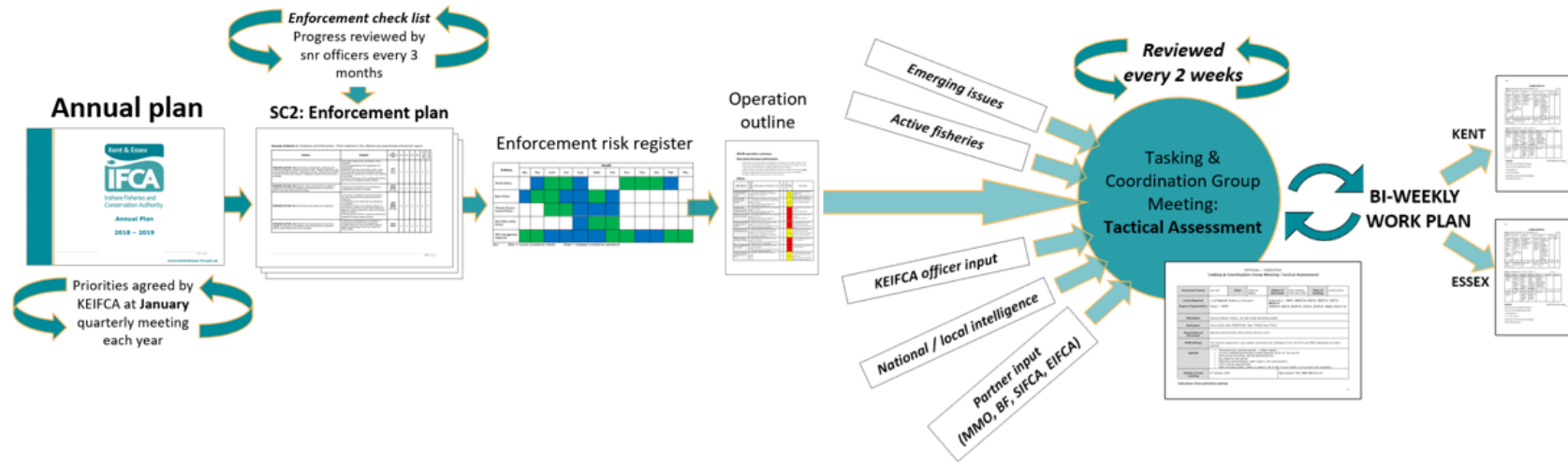
KEIFCA will be maintaining an effective enforcement presence on land and at sea focusing on sustainability of fishery in the medium/long term by carrying out inspections to check gear and vessels are compliant with permit requirements, and that catches are compliant with the whelk fishery flexible permit byelaw. Gear inspections will be a high priority to ensure that extra pots are not being used by fishers operating inside the permit area, and that the correct configuration of escape holes are present to maximise survivability of juvenile whelks. Officers will also be looking to intensively target catch inspections with a dedicated operational order the 2023-2024 period. We will continue to communicate with all permit holders to encourage catch returns to be submitted accurately to improve the reliability of data used for fishery management. Officers will continue to work with industry to explore methods of reducing undersize whelks in catches, chiefly via developments in riddle technology.

#### *Angling education and compliance*

Engagement with the recreational angling sector will remain a core priority for the compliance team during the upcoming year. We will seek to expand on educational initiatives focused on minimum size and bass regulations by installing signage at key angling hotspots such as piers and popular beaches. We will also publish information in local tide tables and make regular visits to angling shops to distribute free minimum size stickers. Targeted inspections of individuals and recreational vessels that pose a high risk to compliance objectives will be tasked through the TCG process as current intelligence emerges.

*Marine Protected Area (MPA) compliance*

Officers will proactively gather intelligence on activity within designated as MPAs, focusing on those with management measures implemented already. We will seek to improve data analysis of patrol activity in MPAs with management measures by developing a new section in the TCG which will review MPA monitoring on a monthly basis. The Essex RIB FPV Vigilant will provide the mainstay of compliance patrol effort within Essex rivers and the Medway, while FPV Nerissa will focus on the Eastern and Southern Kent areas including Folkestone Pomerania. IFCA's now have access to live Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems (IVMS) data which has been rolled out for all fishing vessels in 2022-2023 (including those under 10m). The statutory instrument making transmission of I-VMS a legal requirement is anticipated in Autumn 2023, and once in place our ability to monitor protected areas will be revolutionised, with live spatial data becoming available for the entire fleet. As such, we eagerly anticipate being able to monitor compliance and gatherer intelligence relating to protected areas in the Kent and Essex district more effectively than ever before.



*Structure of enforcement planning and operation.*

### **Success Criterion 3: Management measures** - *IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts*

The IFCAs were created as statutory inshore regulators by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. They are relevant authorities for implementing international environmental commitments including the Birds, Habitats, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives and make an important contribution to securing a network of well managed marine protected areas, including European Marine Sites and Marine Conservation Zones. Fisheries Management Plans identify local management measures which should be based on evidence; be timely; subject to appropriate consultation and in step with national initiatives and priorities. An IFCA should balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting sea fisheries resources with the need to protect the environment. It should make a contribution to sustainable development.

#### **Outcomes**

- 1.** The IFCA will identify issues likely to affect sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFC District; undertake risk assessment and gap analysis; review appropriateness of existing measures; evaluate management options and develop and implement proportionate marine management solutions.
- 2.** The IFCA will support implementation of a well-managed network of marine protected areas by: developing a range of criteria based management options; implementing management measures to ensure that inshore fisheries activities comply with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the revised approach to managing commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans.
- 3.** The IFCA will develop Fisheries Management Plans for priority species where appropriate. Shared objectives will be developed with identified partners; actions identified, and best practice reflected so that management makes a contribution to sustainable development.

#### **Indicators**

- SC3A** The IFCA will record site specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas and report progress to the Authority
- SC3B** The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures on its website.
- SC3C** Management information (e.g. sampling and/or survey results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to demonstrate the extent of the effectiveness of the intervention.
- SC3D** The IFCA will have developed a range of criteria-based management options that are explained to stakeholders through the IFCA website and reviewed by 31 March each year.
- SC3E** New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales.
- SC3F** The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from Fisheries Management Plans in its own Annual Plan, which will be published by 31 March each year.
- SC3G** Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report.

Actions	Outputs	Member of staff responsible for outputs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 3A) Administration of KEIFCA licences and permits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issuing of cockle licences/permits and update letters.</li> <li>• Hold cockle industry meetings and KEIFCA cockle management meetings.</li> <li>• Collecting and collating cockle catch returns.</li> <li>• Issuing of whelk permits, whelk tags and update letters.</li> <li>• Collecting and collating whelk catch returns.</li> </ul>	<b>AA</b> OM ACIFCO
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 3B) Administration of new KEIFCA legislation (e.g. Byelaws and Regulating Orders)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports to Authority meetings</li> <li>• When required seeking legal opinion and compiling legal papers.</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings and decisions</li> <li>• Advertising new legislation and providing admin support for consultations.</li> <li>• Sending documents to the MMO or DEFRA</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> OM AA
<b>3C) Progress the development of future Cockle fishery management and legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the process of engaging with stakeholders to work through the detail of developing a new regulating order for the Thames cockle fishery.</li> <li>• Apply to DEFRA for a new regulating order, and work with DEFRA to help facilitate the statutory consultation process.</li> <li>• Engage with fishing industry to help develop the 'small-scale' cockle permit fishery</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> ACIFCO OM AA
<b>3D) Provide input into the development of Fisheries Management Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participate in the Whelk Management Plan subgroup focussing on the Research component.</li> <li>• Collaborative working with AFICA, DEFRA, SeaFish and other IFCAs to develop FMPs</li> <li>• Contribute review of existing management and byelaws, with respect to new FMPs for selected species</li> <li>• Contribute research, analysis, and interpretation to assist development of FMPs with a focus on whelks and other species as needed.</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> LSCO ACIFCO
<b>3E) Complete tranche 3 MPA assessments and when required develop appropriate management measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare MCZ fisheries assessments and evidence for Goodwin Sands, Dover-Deal and Swanscombe MCZs</li> <li>• Delineate spatial management options and discuss with stakeholders and Government bodies</li> <li>• Make management recommendations regarding byelaw development as appropriate</li> <li>• Training new staff in KEIFCAs role in MPA management</li> <li>• Where appropriate develop byelaws to protect key features.</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO</b> <b>CIFCO</b> KPVS KPVFM
<b>3F) Further measures and management to aid the recovery of native oysters in in the BCRC MCZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following of specified process to discuss fishery opening with stakeholders including industry, Natural England, NGO's and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Continued membership of ENORI</li> </ul>	<b>ACIFCO</b> CIFCO LSCO IFCO/SC
<b>3G) Contribute and support the Fish Local project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with Thames Estuary Partnership, London Gateway and the local fishing industry develop the Fish Local project and build a stronger local market for Herring.</li> <li>• Use funding streams available (e.g. Seafood and Fisheries Fund, Seafarers Fund) to help support and grow the new species focused project.</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> OM AA IFCO/SC
<b>3H) Provide support for process of SE Marine Plan review and update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support DEFRA and AFICA in role to develop and update Marine Spatial Plans for southeast</li> <li>• Support Natural Capital Projects to provide relevant KEIFCA data and into project</li> </ul>	<b>KSIFCO</b> LSCO

## **Success Criterion 4: Governance and Training** - *IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional*

IFCAs are statutory authorities and sit within the local government family. Authority members may be either general members or local Councillors. They comply with Codes of Conduct and the Standing Orders that apply to meetings of local government committees. General members are appointed on merit, through open competition and for a term. They are subject to an annual performance appraisal. An IFCA is funded by levy, charged to its member councils. Funding originates in local taxation. An IFCA is accountable for its use of public resources and should ensure that a proper auditing regime provides confidence in its commitment and spend of public money. It should make effective use of its resources, including staff and assets. An IFCA has a statutory obligation to prepare and publish Annual Plans and Annual Reports. IFCA Committee meetings will be held in public unless material is either confidential, or exempt within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **Outcomes**

- 1.** The IFCA will demonstrate its long-term strategic approach to sustainable marine management by having appropriate plan making, review, update and amendment procedures in place. The IFCA will record its performance against corporate outcomes and indicators as soon as practically possible following the end of the financial year.
- 2.** Staff performance management systems will be in place that link to the IFCA success criteria. There will be an induction procedure for new joiners. Staff training and development needs will be identified. Performance will be managed and, where necessary, improvement procedures will be followed.
- 3.** The IFCA Committee will be supported by an organised, efficient and effective secretariat. New members will receive an induction pack and briefing from the Authority. There will be a rolling twelve-month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings. Notices of meetings and documentation will be made available in line with Standing Orders

### **Indicators**

- SC4A** The IFCA will publish a plan on its website by 31 March, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.
- SC4B** After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish a report on its website describing its activities, performance and a summary of audited financial information in that year, by 30 November. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.
- SC4C** IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 May each year.
- SC4D** An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders.
- SC4E** The IFCA will have demonstrated, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the Inshore Fisheries & Conservation District have worked responsively and effectively together.

Actions	Outputs	Member of staff responsible for outputs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4A) Create and manage KEIFCA annual budget and reserves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General admin - Inputting invoices, travel &amp; expenses, purchase card etc.</li> <li>• Annual budget with quarterly updates - Compile budget, budget meetings etc.</li> <li>• Two meetings per annum with internal audit</li> <li>• Manage and coordinate funding applications</li> </ul>	<b>OM</b> AA
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4B) Produce an agreed KEIFCA annual plan and an accompanying annual report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and publish 2023-2024 annual plan and 2022-2023 annual report</li> <li>• Document and present to Authority (display on website).</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> ACIFCO OM
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4D) Run and record IFCA meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run and provide support for quarterly IFCA meetings and technical panel meetings.</li> <li>• Letters/actions from meeting.</li> <li>• Handbook for members</li> </ul>	<b>OM</b> AA
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4C) Address any HR staff matters and run the staff monitoring and assessment systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility for day-to-day HR matters – contracts, payroll, pensions, timesheets etc.</li> <li>• Run current staff performance monitoring system and compile staff performance documentation.</li> <li>• Recruiting new staff.</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> OM AA
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4E) Facilitate appropriate training for all staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sea tickets/training</li> <li>• Survey training (ATV training) etc.</li> <li>• Compile official documentation proving training has been completed.</li> </ul>	<b>ACIFCO</b> OM
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 4G) Run the KEIFCA health and safety systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual reporting of H&amp;S issues to Authority</li> <li>• Regular meeting of H&amp;S committee</li> </ul>	<b>OM</b> ACIFCO
<b>4H) Complete a review of KEIFCA health and safety policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review KEIFCA Health and Safety Policy, including all risk assessments and standalone policies e.g. lone working and lifejackets, taking into account other similar organisations and learning from best practice.</li> <li>• Work with KCC auditors to review the reviewed Risk Assessments, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define the matrix used within the risk assessment to explain what additional controls measures (if any) need to put in place</li> <li>- Consider training requirements for new staff to allow them to safely carry out dynamic risk assessments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>OM</b> ACIFCO

## **Success Criterion 5: Evidence and Science** - *IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.*

Definition: IFCAs are statutory regulators for their Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District. Decision making should be based on evidence. All IFCAs are supported by officers who pool their expertise and share best practice as a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). A programme of research activity and monitoring is planned, developed, and updated in consultation with partners. The programme informs management decisions and supports justification for additional research and evidence gathering.

### **Outcomes**

- 1.** A strategic research plan that contributes to greater understanding of the marine environment and delivery of cost-effective management of sea fisheries resources.
- 2.** Standard Operating Procedures describe how data is captured and shared with principal partners.
- 3.** A list of research databases held by the IFCA and the frequency of their review.
- 4.** Non-confidential meta-data collected through the IFCA research programme should be recorded in a database available to the marine research community.

### **Indicators**

- SC5A** The IFCA will demonstrate progress that has been made towards identifying its evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year.
- SC5B** The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making.
- SC5C** The IFCA's contribution to TAG and progress that has been made towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report.



Actions	Outputs	Member of staff responsible for outputs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5A) Produce an annual Research Plan accompanying annual report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and publish 2023-2024 annual research plan and 2022-2023 annual research report</li> <li>• Document and present to Authority (display on website).</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5B) Attend and contribute to TAG meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively contribute to IFCA TAG meetings, providing KEIFCA updates &amp; reporting back</li> <li>• Increasing KEIFCA role in 2022</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5C) Maintain scientific survey equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision and maintenance of KEIFCA vessels and equipment for the purposes of scientific surveys and data collection</li> <li>• Provision and maintenance of vehicles for shore based scientific surveys and data collection</li> <li>• Planning and reporting to the Authority of operation, maintenance, and refit of key equipment</li> </ul>	<b>KPVS EPVFM EPVS KPVFM</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5D) Engagement with major marine developments in the district and reply to consultations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate consultations and provide evidence and written feedback when there is a potential impact on local fisheries, MPAs or byelaws to developers, Natural England MMO and the Planning Inspectorate, as appropriate</li> </ul>	<b>KSIFCO LSCO ACIFCO</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5E) Evidence gathering and reporting for the licenced and permitted cockle fisheries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and carry out annual cockle stock assessment surveys (inc. cockle samples for MESL)</li> <li>• Delivery of recommendations relating to stock management (inc. data entry and analysis).</li> <li>• Organisation and delivery of pre-fishery stakeholder meeting (License holders):</li> <li>• Production of Habitat Regulations Assessment, including consultation with NE</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO ACIFCO All IFCOs</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5F) Evidence gathering and reporting for the whelk permit fishery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse data and prepare annual whelk landings report</li> <li>• Liaise with whelk fishers to install scientific pots, data loggers and collect whelk samples from fishers</li> <li>• Liaise with CEFAS, University of Essex and EA to assess water temperature and carry out disease screenings</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO AA CIFCO</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5G) Evidence gathering for a potential clam fishery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey planning &amp; delivery of stock assessment (part of cockle surveys)</li> <li>• Species ID, Measurements, data recording, analysis and reporting</li> <li>• Engage with fishermen to communicate results and recommendations</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO EPVFM EPVS EIFCO</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5H) Evidence gathering and reporting on the potential native oyster fishery in the BCRC MCZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and deliver the annual native oyster survey</li> <li>• Statistical analysis, map preparation and report writing.</li> <li>• Delivery of recommendations relating to stock management to Authority</li> <li>• Engage with oyster fishermen and plan to carry out a collaborative industry led fishing survey</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO EPVS ACIFCO</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5I) Provide support for small fish surveys</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate in EA and Essex University small fish surveys (River Stour, Kent)</li> <li>• Provide survey capability and crew</li> <li>• Attend steering committee meetings for the Livings River's small fish surveys in the River Medway</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO EPVS EPVFM</b>
<b>5J) Undertake a <i>Sabellaria</i> validation survey in Goodwin Sands MCZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process and analyse side-scan survey data</li> <li>• Grab sample collection</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO KPVS</b>

## ***Annual Research Plan - 2023-2024***

The Annual Research Plan helps identify and share with partners KEIFCAs key evidence needs, as well as outlining in greater detail how KEIFCA will deliver key outcomes in:

**Success Criterion 3:**                    - *IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts*  
**Management measures**

**Success Criterion 5:**                    - *IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.*  
**Evidence and Science**

The annual research plan links the KEIFCA research strategy, that outlines KEIFCAs long-term approach to prioritising, resourcing, and delivering evidence gathering and research to the KEIFCA annual plan that identifies and prioritises the key actions for the whole organisation over the upcoming year. The KEIFCA research strategy groups the research and evidence gathering into three overarching themes:

***Theme 1: Marine Protected Areas*** - Develop and implement robust management measures for MCZs in KEIFCA's district.

Developing management for Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) is a high priority workstream in 2023-2024 for KEIFCA. Management will be developed for Goodwin Sands, Swanscombe, Dover to Deal MCZs. As part of developing management for the Goodwin Sands MCZ, KEIFCA will complete the MCZ fisheries assessment for the site working with Natural England. KEIFCA has already held several meetings with the MMO and Natural England regarding the co-management of Goodwin Sands MCZ, which is required because the MCZ straddles the 6 nm inshore-offshore management boundary. Liaison with the fishing industry, Goodwin Sands Conservation Trust and other stakeholders will be increased this year in runup to the development of a new byelaw preventing bottom towed gear in areas where *Sabellaria* reefs were found in 2021 and 2022. The main body of this work is the development of spatial management options for Goodwin Sands MCZ. A similar assessment and consultation process will be required for the Swanscombe and Dover to Deal MCZs, but no field work will be carried out for these. The update to MCZ management is planned to start in June 2023. Developing the management, such as the byelaw, is led by the CIFCO and ACIFCO, while evidence gathering and data analysis is led by the LSCO with support from the prospective KSIFCO (a position that we hope to fill this year).

In 2023-2024 KEIFCA will commit resource to help update and develop existing Marine Plans, e.g. South East Marine Plan, to ensure IFCA responsibilities towards fisheries are considered when used for planning decisions, and will be led by the prospective KSIFCO.

**Theme 2: Sustainable Fisheries** - Provide evidence to support sustainable fisheries management for key shellfish stocks.

Sustainable fisheries work is presented under three components: namely, shellfish, finfish and fisheries management plans. The majority of KEIFCA resource set aside for carrying out surveys will focus on the commercially valuable shellfish species that largely fall under local management. Work around finfish is largely to support and enable Government bodies (EA, CEFAS), NGOs and academic bodies to carry out research and collect data valuable for informing national species management strategies.

### Shellfish

- Cockles

Stock assessments of cockles are critical to inform the catch limits (quotas) that ensures sustainable and responsible management of the two cockle fisheries in the district, namely TECFO and Permit fishery, which target this key shellfish stock between June and October.

Annual cockle surveys are a high-priority ongoing activity, with a high resource requirement and dominates the research agenda preceding the opening of the fishery between April and May, and again in early September to inform the annual spatfall. Following stock declines during the late summer coupled with a very low spatfall in 2022, the surveys will be critical to inform fishery management decisions in 2023. These surveys collect information on the spatial distribution, abundance, biomass and age structure of cockles. From this data stock size, health and abundance, mortality and recruitment trends can be estimated and is used to set annual catch quotas. Sea going surveys take place from FPV Tamesis and land-based surveys are carried out using customised quad bikes used to access the nearshore subtidal habitats. A Habitat Regulation Assessments is already in place for the TECFO fishery but may be required for the permit fishery if there are sufficient stocks in 2023-2024.

- Oysters

*Oyster surveys:* Annual assessments of native oyster stocks are carried out inside the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne MCZ to inform the status of the fishery in the MCZ, which has been closed since 2015 over concerns for the depleted stock. Sea-based surveys will be carried out during the autumn and record the spatial distribution, abundance, size structure and biomass of native and Pacific oysters. Every five years the survey is to cover all sites in the survey grid, while annual surveys in years in between take place at sites where presence of native oysters was recorded during the previous quintennial survey. A time series analysis of the biomass provides essential information about the recovery of the stock, which is used alongside a minimum threshold to inform the status of the stock, which underpins opening the fishery.

*Oyster outreach work:* KEIFCA plans to work with local oystermen is to better understand techniques used by fishers to adjust their dredging efficiency (a key parameter used in stock estimates) and explore native oyster population abundance based on local and historical fisher's knowledge. These surveys are planned for autumn 2023. This project hopes to foster trust and collaboration between KEIFCA and oystermen.

KEIFCA will continue to actively contribute to the native oyster restoration work carried out by the ENORI initiative. KEIFCA will participate in meetings and assist the project where feasible.

- **Whelks**

KEIFCA will develop a research plan aimed at working with industry to enhance data collecting to better inform potential causes of mortality observed in 2022. KEIFCA will record catches alongside *in situ* environmental variables like water temperature and collect whelk samples for biotoxin assays and histology screening which will be carried out in partnership with CEFAS.

KEIFCA will be actively contributing to the Whelk Working Group and Whelk Management Group (science subgroup) meetings to feed the Kent and Essex perspective into fisheries management plans, national strategies, and stay abreast of new research on whelks and contribute to the development of FMPs.

- **Clams**

KEIFCA will continue ongoing survey and research commitment into the spatial and abundance and biomass distribution of Manilla clams, a lucrative species co-occurring on some of the cockle beds in the district. Clams' samples collected during cockle surveys will be retained for morphometric analysis to improve our understanding of size and biomass of Manilla clams in cockle beds.

### *Finfish*

*Small fish surveys:* KEIFCA plans to support the Environment Agency (EA) in surveying small fish in the River Stour (Kent), fostering multi-agency partnership delivering against the Water Framework Directive, but furthermore to assist with a related University project, carrying chemical signature analysis of juvenile fish to establish the relative importance of estuaries to the adult stocks. KEIFCA will support other small fish survey projects through provision of dispensations for research, contributing to steering group meetings and facilitating partnership working between the EA, NE, NGOs (Living Rivers Foundation).

### *Fisheries management plans*

The development of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) is a high priority workstream for the KEIFCAs in 2023-2024. KEIFCA will support the development and preparation of FMPs focussing on whelks which has been identified by DEFRA and SeaFish as the forerunner species. KEIFCA will also feed into other relevant FMPs, such as cockles, crab and lobster and scallop -FMPs, and provide support to other IFCA's and Government bodies when appropriate in the process.

**Theme 3: Access to Evidence-** Streamline the infrastructure and process to provide more efficient access to evidence to support sustainable fisheries and MCZ management.

Access to evidence is primarily concerned with providing information and development of evidence on request, but also to facilitate KEIFCA’s internal analysis and reporting. In 2021 a project was started to develop a centralised database, which currently houses clam and oyster data along with numerous GIS (geographic) datasets. In 2023-2024, KEIFCA will continue to update its database and analytical routines to improve our efficiency and data capabilities. In 2023-2024 most of the work will be focussed on cleaning and standardising more of the oyster data from previous years to feed into this database, but then start migrating whelk data across into the database. We will plan out, in consultation with database engineers, the design for the new cockle database to start with the new regulation order after September 2024.

### Priority actions for 2023/24

Ongoing workstreams include the high priority surveys which are repeated annually at set times of the year while new projects tend to be one off projects that fit within a specific time frame. Surveys of ongoing workstreams take place at specific times of the year to inform stock assessments and management decisions. Most surveys are scheduled to take place between spring and autumn due to weather limitations of conducting fieldwork during winter. New projects that satisfy the project evaluation criteria are planned into the timetable depending on the needs of the project (e.g., to target a seasonal fishery) and the resources available (e.g., vessel and staff time) after ongoing survey and enforcement activities have been accounted for.

Priority	Action in annual plan	Task
1	5E, 5G	Carry out stock assessment surveys for cockles and clams to set TAC and quotas.
2	5F	Monitor whelk returns and work with industry to have a research plan in place to detect potential causes of mass mortality on whelk population.
3	5H	Carry out native oyster survey to assess the status of oyster population.
4	3E	Develop management for the Goodwin Sands, Swanscombe and Dover-to-Deal MCZs.
5	3D	Provide support to assist in the development of fisheries management plans
6		Recruit a new KSIFCO to support KEIFCA in delivering MCZ management, FMPs, and Marine Spatial Plan updates. <i>(Dependent on DEFRA funding)</i>

Research schedule

The following table illustrates the schedule for time bound research activities in 2023-2024 and will go ahead subject to resource, enforcement and weather considerations. Activities coloured dark blue are ongoing actions and those coloured yellow are limited-time projects. The estimated number of days considers the time required to conduct the surveys and does not include time required for project planning, equipment maintenance or report writing. Some new projects are dependent on partnerships or collaborative working arrangements.

<b>WORKSTREAMS WITH TIMEBOUND SURVEY ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>No. Days (No. Officer Days)</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>
5F & 5G: Annual cockle & clam stock assessment surveys from sea	20 (80)													
5F & 5G: Cockle & clam stock assessment surveys from land	20 (80)													
5H: Native oyster stock assessment surveys	20 (80)													
5H: Oyster fishermen joint survey project	2 (6)													
5I: Small fish surveys	2 (6)													
5J: Sabellaria validation survey in Goodwin Sands	2(8)													

**ONGOING WORKSTREAMS/ NEW PROJECTS**

Research report publication schedule for 2023-2024

<b>Publication theme</b>	<b>Anticipated date</b>	<b>Authors</b>
<b>Annual cockle survey report</b>	May 2023	ACIFCO, LSCO
<b>Goodwin Sands Sabellaria project report</b>	July 2023	LSCO
<b>Annual Research Report</b>	September 2023	LSCO
<b>Annual native oyster survey report</b>	November 2023	LSCO
<b>Whelk annual landings report</b>	January 2024	AA, LSCO

### Research meetings schedule

Regular meetings that are planned for 2023-2024 which include or are exclusively focussed on Research are listed in the table below. Several non-listed meetings will also be held, primarily providing feedback to consultations. In 2023-2024 KEIFCA will have the opportunity to feed into the cable routing process for the extension of windfarms under the Five Estuaries and North Falls projects. KEIFCA will have regular meetings with stakeholders, e.g., Goodwin Sands Conservation Trust, Natural England and the Marine Maritime Organisation, regarding the development of management for the Goodwin Sands MCZ. KEIFCA will also be reporting back on the Sabellaria survey project to project partners and have meetings with NE and the MMO about strategic approach taken to develop byelaws for the Goodwin Sands MCZ and how lessons can be applied elsewhere.

**Table of regular meetings which include or are exclusively focused on KEIFCA research.**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Frequency/dates</b>	<b>Topics/Purpose</b>
<b>Authority Committee meetings</b>	<i>Quarterly (Feb, May, Sep, Nov)</i>	<i>Progress report on core fisheries and new research projects</i>
<b>TAG (Technical Advisory Group)</b>	<i>Quarterly (Feb, May, Sep, Nov)</i>	<i>IFCA scientific/research lead's meeting regarding fisheries and management issues.</i>
<b>Whelk Working Group</b>	<i>Quarterly (Jan, May, Sep, Nov)</i>	<i>Science and stock management issues</i>
<b>Whelk Management Group</b>	<i>Quarterly (Jan, May, Sep, Nov)</i>	<i>SeaFish led industry liaison and development of a Fisheries Management Plan.</i>
<b>ENORI</b>	<i>Monthly &amp; Quarterly</i>	<i>Oyster restoration work in restoration box in the BCRC MCZ.</i>
<b>Natural England</b>	<i>Quarterly (Feb, May, Sep, Nov)</i>	<i>Strategic 3 monthly calls with CIFCO and LSCO to discuss strategic work</i>
<b>Natural England</b>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>NE meet with LSCO to discuss research development</i>

# Structure and governance of the Authority

## Structure

The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 makes provision for the establishment of the Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District and for the Authority for that district. The Order lays out the membership and proceedings of the Authority and makes provision in relation to the expenses of the Authority and to the reimbursement of members' expenses.

The Order states that the Authority is to consist of 21 members, comprised of nine councillors, ten "general members" or MMO appointees (of which one must be an employee of the MMO, and two additional members from the EA and NE. The Order also lays out how the expenses of the Authority should be divided between the councils.

## Governance

Good governance is at the heart of sound decision-making, and it is because of this that KEIFCA have already adopted key working documents that will aid the smooth and transparent working of the Authority (i.e. Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, register of members' interests and a policy on Members' Allowances/Expenses). KEIFCA utilise Kent County Council for legal, constitutional, financial and HR support, as well as one-off support on procurement and other key activities.

## Members

IFCA members are a vital component of helping KEIFCA deliver many of the key concepts expressed in the IFCA vision, but especially in helping to "secure the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry".

IFCA members attend the quarterly IFCA meetings, with some members also attending specialist Technical Panel meetings where specific issues are discussed in greater detail; recommendations from these meetings are then taken forward to the next full meeting of the Authority. The member's role within the organisation is to decide and comment on the strategy and direction of the organisation and to make key strategic decisions (e.g. agree on budget, staffing levels, stock management measures, etc.).

Relevant Council	Number of members	Percentage payment of KEIFCA levy
Essex County Council	3	43.12%
Kent County Council	3	43.12%
Medway Council	1	7.55%
Southend on Sea Borough Council	1	2.42%
Thurrock Council	1	3.79%

<b>List of Members</b> (**Chairman, *Vice-Chairman)	
<b>**Cllr J L Lamb</b>	Southend BC
<b>Cllr M Dendor</b>	Kent CC
<b>Cllr T Hills</b>	Kent CC
<b>Cllr N Baker</b>	Kent CC
<b>Cllr J Fleming</b>	Essex CC
<b>Cllr A Goggin</b>	Essex CC
<b>Cllr M Skeels</b>	Essex CC
<b>Cllr G Coxshall</b>	Thurrock BC
<b>Cllr H Tejan</b>	Medway BC
<b>A Baker</b>	NE Representative
<b>L Faulkner</b>	EA Representative
<b>J Rowley</b>	MMO Representative
<b>*P J Nichols</b>	MMO Appointee
<b>E Gilson</b>	MMO Appointee
<b>P Wexham</b>	MMO Appointee
<b>E Hannam</b>	MMO Appointee
<b>T Ferry</b>	MMO Appointee
<b>R Turner</b>	MMO Appointee
<b>vacant</b>	MMO Appointee
<b>vacant</b>	MMO Appointee
<b>vacant</b>	MMO Appointee



## ***Staff***

The officers and administration staff implement the strategic decisions that the Authority (i.e. members) have agreed. The IFCA staff, led by the Chief IFC Officer (Diagram 4), are responsible for the ongoing operations of KEIFCA (e.g. appointing staff, setting and managing staff performance, implementing the agreed stock management measures and enforcement etc.) and report back to the members on key issues and matters for discussion each quarter.

At present KEIFCA employs 13 full time staff, 1 part-time staff, a part time Clerk and a part time financial advisor. In addition to this the Authority also contributes to the services of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The structure and key roles of each member of staff are laid out in Fig.4. Officers across the organisation continue to be trained to undertake various tasks as this approach gives KEIFCA a huge amount of flexibility in being able to deliver all of KEIFCA's duties and react to events.

### ***Staff performance and assessment***

KEIFCA currently use a process similar to Kent County Council's (KCC) staff performance monitoring system. The system is based on a yearly review of an employee's performance using a series of objectives that are agreed between the employee's line manager and the employee. The objectives and the outputs of the employee relate back to the overall objectives in the annual plan. Depending upon how well an employee meets, or exceeds, the targets set during this process an employee may move up the incremental scale, this is dependant upon budgetary constraints and pay scale.

### ***Training***

There exists within KEIFCA a core understanding, level of experience and knowledge related to the range of work of the IFCA. Important training areas include; developing IFC officer enforcement and seamanship skills, building on survey skills within the organisation and developing officers' ability to undertake a range of surveys and helping staff expand their IT skills (including using GIS and website maintenance).

# Staff Structure

**Chief IFCO (Kent)**

- Strategic direction for IFCA
- National representation
- Oversee KEIFCA operations and reporting to KEIFCA members
- Management implementation & evaluation of byelaws
- In charge of PR – strategy & implementation

Posts 'frozen' in the 23/24 KEIFCA budget

**Assistant Chief IFCO (Essex)**

- Oversee implementation of IFCA strategy (day to day management)
- Coordinate planning and delivery with science and compliance leads & vessel skippers
- Lead technical input into annual plans and reports
- Lead Training Officer
- Lead officer for byelaw review

**Lead Compliance Officer/IFCO (Essex)**

- Lead planning, coordination, delivery and reporting of key compliance and enforcement activities.
- KEIFCA case file and prosecution lead
- KEIFCA lead in national compliance groups (NIMEG) and projects (Intel)
- Support officers in developing enforcement skills
- Support compliance operations on land and at sea

**Lead Scientific and Conservation Officer/IFCO (Kent)**

- Lead planning, coordination, delivery and reporting of key environment, data and research activities.
- Develop and report on KEIFCA fisheries and MPA management measures
- Develop working relationships with partner organisations/ academic bodies
- GIS lead (storing/presenting scientific evidence)
- KEIFCA lead in national research groups and projects (TAG)
- Tasking of Scientific and Conservation Officers
- Support officers in developing evidence & research skills
- Support compliance operations on land and at sea

**Patrol Vessel Skipper/IFCO (Kent)**

- Leads for operation and maintenance of the vessels
- Line manage IFCO's
- Tasking of First Mates and IFCO's at sea and ashore
- Responsible for managing vessel budgets
- Technical input into annual plans and reports
- Carry out enforcement and survey tasks
- Liaise with LCO and LSCO for compliance and survey planning

**Patrol Vessel Skipper/IFCO (Essex)**

**Office Manager (Kent)**

- Manage budget process (ordering system, oracle management etc.)
- Byelaw administration
- Admin support for annual plans reports and quarterly meetings
- Lead HR member of staff
- Management of general enquiries

**Patrol Vessel First Mate/ IFCO (Kent)**

- Assist Skipper and act as stand-in skipper
- Support operation and maintenance of patrol vessels
- Carry out enforcement and survey tasks
- Undertake strategic projects

**Patrol Vessel First Mate/ IFCO (Essex)**

**RIB Coxswain & MPA Compliance Officer/IFCO (Essex)**

- Carry out RIB coxswain duties
- Carry out duties as lead MPA compliance officer
- Support operation and maintenance of patrol vessels
- Carry out enforcement and survey tasks
- Support intel workstream

**Admin Assistant p/t (Kent)**

- Lead licensing and permitting coordination
- Lead whelk fishery management process
- Provide administrative and clerical support (byelaws etc.)
- Maintain files and record systems
- Assist in admin support for annual plans reports and quarterly meetings
- Administer the financial arrangements of the Authority

**Scientific and Conservation Officer/ IFCO\* (Kent)**

- Carry out Habitat Reg's Assessments
- Carry out byelaw impact assessments and support byelaw process
- Carry out consultation replies
- Support research and GIS projects
- Support compliance operations on land & sea

**IFCO (Kent)**

- Carry out enforcement and survey tasks
- Support operation and maintenance of the patrol vessels
- Undertake strategic projects

**IFCO (Kent)**

**IFCO (Essex)**

*\*If KEIFCA receives additional DEFRA funding (as agreed in the latest spending review) the additional income will be used to recruit the Scientific and Conservation Officer post on a temporary basis.*

# **Resources**

## **Offices**

KEIFCA currently rents 2 offices; a main office in Ramsgate in Kent and a satellite office in Brightlingsea in Essex. The location of the two offices allows the organisation to efficiently undertake all its duties and helps KEIFCA build and maintain strong links with all its stakeholders either side of the Thames Estuary. The remit of the offices revolves primarily around the spatial distribution of work, with the Brightlingsea office specialising in Essex based issues relating to enforcement, consultations and surveys; the Ramsgate office also undertaking the equivalent tasks on the Kent coast but is in addition the centre for core overarching organisational activities (e.g. administration support, legal support, HR work etc).

## **Vehicles**

KEIFCA owns two Toyota Hilux pickup trucks and two VW Caddy vans, with one truck and one van based at each office. The vehicles are used to transport officers on enforcement duties and key equipment around the district. The Authority also owns four Honda All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) that are based at Shoeburyness which are used for cockle surveys and other intertidal work.

## **Boats**

KEIFCA has four fishery patrol vessels. The 'Nerissa' is based in Ramsgate and has a crew of four, is a 17m catamaran, and carries a RIB which can be launched from its ramp in various sea conditions to undertake boardings at sea. The RIB carried by Nerissa is a standalone vessel called 'Nereus', which is a 5.4m SeaRider which can take a crew of up to 3 officers to undertake boarding operations either from 'Nerissa' or independently.

'Tamesis' is a 12m catamaran which came into service in 2011 and which was partially EU grant funded. This vessel is based at Brightlingsea and has a crew of three which is supplemented by the Essex shore officer post to make a mustered crew of four, and can undertake enforcement, monitoring and survey duties. The vessel also carries a RIB for boarding and a hydraulic hauler which is used for hauling pots and nets to check for compliance with byelaws etc.

'FPV Vigilant' is a 2020 7.8m Ribcraft RIB which operates completely independently of the larger vessels. Purchased new with EMFF partial funding in January 2020, it is used as a fast response enforcement vessel. Operating with twin outboard engines, it is an improvement in capability and with regards to officer safety compared to the vessel it replaces. Capable of in excess of 40 knots it provides effective coverage of all of the rivers and estuaries within the District and can be transported by road to launch sites close to where it is required.

# **Appendix 1 - Risk Management Strategy**

## **Introduction**

The management of risk is considered in all activities conducted by KEIFCA officers. All employees are familiar with the management of risk through developing risk assessments covering safe working practices through to scrutinising invoices and purchase orders to identify financial risks. Risk assessments are reviewed on an annual basis as a minimum. The risk matrix below is reviewed on a regular basis by the senior management team comprising the Chief IFC Officer (CIFCO), Assistant Chief IFC Officer (ACIFCO) and the Office Manager (OM). The matrix below highlights those risks identified for the financial years 2023/24.

### *KEIFCA Management and Governance risks*

- Failure to meet Kent & Essex IFCA objectives. (CIFCO)
- IFCA decision challenged and overturned in court on the basis that the IFCA has not considered all of the relevant evidence or that one or more Members had a conflict of interest when taking part in making a decision. (CIFCO & Clerk)
- Injury to staff due to unsafe working practices. (CIFCO)
- Failure to maintain effective financial management and control. (CIFCO, Financial Advisor & OM)
- Failure to secure data. (CIFCO & OM)
- Failure of vessel assets. (CIFCO & ACIFCO)
- High turnover of staff. (CIFCO)

### *KEIFCA Operational risks – Failure to implement IFCA duties*

- Failure to effectively monitor and enforce legislation. (CIFCO)
- Enforcement activities conducted in an unprofessional and uncoordinated manner. (CIFCO)
- Failure to maintain survey/sampling programme. (CIFCO)
- Degradation of environmentally sensitive/designated areas due to fishing activity. (CIFCO & ACIFCO)
- Shellfish stocks collapse. (CIFCO)
- Fisheries in the District impacted by the activities of developers/industry. (CIFCO)
- Insufficient time to fully consider environmental impact assessments for inshore developments. (CIFCO)
- Failure to fully engage with stakeholders. (CIFCO)

<b>Description</b> (owner)	<b>Risk</b> High 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 Low				<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>
	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Financial</b>	<b>Reputation</b>		
Failure to meet new Kent & Essex IFCA objectives (CIFCO)	<b>4</b> Change to organisation structure and duties.	<b>1</b> KEIFCA officers have worked with the Defra implementation team to set objectives that whilst aspirational are hopefully realistic. Defra have also indicated that the objectives can be reviewed.	<b>4</b> New burdens money funded via Defra and the local authorities aims to cover the increased costs from the new IFCA duties. If additional funding is not passed to KEIFCA or funding from LAs is reduced, capacity to meet new duties would be limited. If KEIFCA fails to meet new objectives funding could be reduced.	<b>4</b> Potential loss of faith in KEIFCA's governance and organisational structure by Defra and other key organisations	<p>Reflect new Kent &amp; Essex IFCA objectives clearly in annual plans and reports</p> <p>Communicate the new requirements and duties of KEIFCA to all Authority members and staff</p> <p>Integrate new objectives and tasks into staff structure and job descriptions. Make sure new IFCA priorities are discussed at staff meetings and staff appraisals</p> <p>Introduce management systems to set up agreed tasks for each member of staff per quarter. Set up systems to monitor staff time spent on each success criteria.</p>	<b>2</b> Possibility that although progress will have been made KEIFCA could fail to fully meet all its new objectives.
IFCA decision challenged and overturned in court on the basis that the IFCA has not considered all of the relevant evidence or that one or more Members had a conflict of interest when taking part in making a decision (CIFCO & Clerk)	<b>4</b> KEIFCA might have to review decision making procedures. KEIFCA might need to review previous decisions.	<b>1</b> The Clerk will advise on conflict of interest matters (and the Code of Conduct adopted by the IFCA requires all members to complete a register of interests)  KEIFCA staff ensure that the reports to and minutes of IFCA meetings properly record the reasons for decisions.	<b>4</b> KEIFCA could face financial loss if such a case was lost	<b>4</b> Potential loss of faith in KEIFCA's governance and organisational structure by Defra and other key organisations	<p>All of reports to the IFCA will contain all of the evidence and information needed for the IFCA to make an informed decision</p> <p>The Financial Advisor and Clerk attend all IFCA meetings;</p> <p>Every decision must have a proper audit trail and be in writing, even if it is made and ratified afterwards by the IFCA;</p> <p>Consultation with affected individuals/industries will be carried out and the results of the consultations reported to the IFCA when they make decisions;</p> <p>KEIFCA have adopted procedures in our Standing Orders whereby members of the public and industries not represented on the IFCA can address meetings</p>	<b>1</b> Limited potential for such a challenge due to extensive best practice mitigation measures.

Injury to staff due to unsafe working practices (CIFCO)	<b>4</b> Death or injury of staff.	<b>2</b> Well trained staff. Provision of high standard safety equipment. Well maintained vessels. Well maintained vehicles.	<b>4</b> Injury claims, tribunals.  HSE/MCA investigations.	<b>3</b> Poor morale of staff leading to problems with retention.	Mandatory safety training register maintained.  Adequate training budget to cover all training requirements.  Well trained staff.  Risk assessments available and regularly reviewed for each task.  High quality PPE issued to all staff.  Safety drills conducted on vessels.  Boarding procedure developed and implemented.  Lone Working Policy developed and implemented.  Conflict Resolution Policy developed and training provided.	<b>3</b> Regularly working in hazardous environments. Difficult to mitigate for unforeseen circumstances.
Failure to maintain effective financial management and control. (CIFCO & OM)	<b>4</b> Fraudulent activity leading to misuse and/or misappropriation of funds. Unforeseen expenditure, major mechanical failure or loss of large vessel assets.	<b>2</b> Limited staff access to financial information and authority to spend money. Vessel reserve funds maintained.	<b>4</b> Lack of financial resources to carry out statutory obligations.	<b>4</b> The Authority is funded through local taxpayer money, expectation to provide a best value for money service.	External audit of accounts by Audit Commission.  Internal Audit conducted by Kent County Council.  Restricted use for purchase cards. Kent & Essex IFCA Financial Regulations.  Restricted authority to sign cheques.  Annual Plan and Report.  Yearly reviews of inventories.  Production of detailed accounts.  Maintenance of reserve funds.	<b>1</b> Very limited potential for large scale fraud or corruption. Small scale misuse of consumable items is still possible. Well maintained vessels.

Failure to secure data. (CIFCO & OM)	<b>4</b> None compliance with Data Protection Act. Prosecution case files compromised Loss of data in the event of fire or theft.	<b>2</b> Limited staff access to both electronic and paper files. Offices secure and alarmed.	<b>4</b> KEIFCA open to both civil and criminal action regarding inability to secure personal information.	<b>4</b> Stakeholders no longer believe that confidential information they have supplied is secure. Personnel issues arise over inability to secure data.	All computers are password protected. Individuals only have access to their own computer.  Secure wireless internet.  Access to electronic files is restricted based on an individual's role.  Up to date virus software installed on all computers.  Important documents secured in safes.	<b>2</b> Limited ability for personnel to access files.
Failure of vessel assets (CIFCO & ACIFCO)	<b>3</b> Limits enforcement and research capabilities	<b>2</b> Authority has two vessels. If one vessel fails, the other vessel can undertake its duties	<b>3</b> Hiring of other vessels expensive. Significant mechanical failures time consuming and expensive to rectify.	<b>2</b> Significant funding provided to commission vessels. High expectation that the vessels provide value for money.	Highly maintained vessels.  Extensive annual refits of vessels.  Annual Workboat Code survey.  Highly trained staff.  Replacement vessel reserves in place	<b>2</b> Unforeseen events may still cause disruption to activities.  Main patrol vessel is currently operating beyond initial service life.
High turnover of staff (CIFCO)	<b>3</b> Reduced efficiency and effectiveness Decrease in morale and increased workload for experienced staff	<b>2</b> The clarity over IFCA funding has given staff a better long term view of their role in KEIFCA over the next 4 years.	<b>3</b> Financial investment required to recruit, train and provide PPE to new replacement staff.	<b>2</b> Authority no longer considered a good employer staff seek alternative employment.	High level of training provided to staff.  Induction programme for new recruits.  Staff appraisals.  Competitive salaries (benchmarking).  Provide safe and professional working environment.  Flexible working arrangements.	<b>2</b> Whist staff leaving is always a possibility, quarterly meetings with each member of staff as well as an increased training budget have been identified as ways of reducing this risk.

<p>Failure to effectively monitor and enforce legislation (CIFCO)</p>	<p><b>4</b> Unregulated fishery. Increased non-compliance with legislation. Reduced Fish Stocks. Impact on Environment.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Monitoring of fishing activity is high but complete coverage is not achievable.</p>	<p><b>4</b> Unregulated fisheries are unsuitable and unprofitable. Illegal landings reduce demand and price.</p>	<p><b>4</b> Authority's performance is judged on its ability to effectively monitor fishing activity and prevent illegal activity from occurring.</p>	<p>Adaptive co-management approach to fisheries improves understanding and compliance with management measures.</p> <p>Warranted Officers regularly monitoring landings and fishing activity throughout the District.</p> <p>Intelligence led / risk based enforcement planning.</p> <p>16m Patrol vessel &amp; 12m replacement enforcement and fisheries monitoring vessel.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Large district means that full coverage is not possible to achieve. Small minority of fishermen will continue to breach legislation due to short term gain. Limited financial deterrent at present. Some legislation difficult to enforce effectively.</p>
<p>Enforcement activities conducted in an unprofessional and uncoordinated manner (CIFCO)</p>	<p><b>4</b> Inconsistent approach to fisheries enforcement. Enforcement problems and non-compliance with legislation. Poor morale amongst other IFCOs.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Misinformation may be given by IFCOs or information may be misinterpreted by fishermen.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Wrong interpretation of legislation may lead to loss of earnings of fishermen or gain from breaches in legislation going unnoticed.</p>	<p><b>4</b> Failure to carry out enforcement efficiently and effectively reflects poorly on the Authority.</p>	<p>Regular staff meetings combined with enforcement training.</p> <p>Staff appraisals.</p> <p>All IFOs receive comprehensive in house and external PACE training.</p> <p>Issue of Warrants delayed (normally six months) until Senior Enforcement Officers are convinced the IFCO is capable of carrying out the enforcement role.</p> <p>Code of Conduct for inspections at sea and ashore developed.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Considerable resources are directed towards IFCO enforcement training but frequent changes to legislation and human error may lead to mistakes being made.</p>



Failure to maintain survey/sampling programme (CIFCO)	<b>4</b> Lack of accurate data leading to poor management of shellfisheries. Collapse of stocks. Decline in bird numbers. Degradation of wider environment.	<b>2</b> Well trained and qualified staff. 12m new patrol/ research vessel.	<b>4</b> Closure of fishery due to over exploitation of stock or loss of shellfish water classification. Shellfish fisheries not opened to fishing as insufficient information available to gain consent through Appropriate Assessment procedure.	<b>4</b> High expectation that shellfisheries are well managed by Authority. High expectation that additional research work will be completed.	Monitoring and research vessel.  Work plans developed for research staff and vessel.  Research staff well qualified and experienced with local fisheries.  Good communication with fishermen and other relevant organisations.  Snr. Conservation/ Research Officer assigned to co-ordinate bio-toxin and bacteriological sampling routines when required.  Contingency plans developed.  Introduction of new patrol/vessel and to employ and Snr. Conservation/Research Officer from new funding.	<b>2</b> Planned surveys lost due to poor weather or vessel breakdown. Research programme continue to expand year on year.
Degradation of environmentally sensitive/ designated areas due to fishing activity. (CIFCO & ACIFCO)	<b>4</b> Loss of important habitat and species. Conservation Objectives for areas within EMS's not fully met.	<b>2</b> Authority's fisheries management takes into consideration environmental issue.	<b>3</b> Fisheries directly responsible closed. Increased pressure by conservation groups to stop other fishing activity.	<b>4</b> Authority not meeting statutory duties under EU & UK conservation legislation.	Agreed cockle policies.  Proposed fishing activity requires Appropriate Assessment.  Effective enforcement.	<b>2</b> Illegal fishing can damage habitat and stocks.
Shellfish stocks collapse. (CIFCO)	<b>4</b> Collapse of fishing industry.	<b>4</b> Bivalve stocks have high natural variation. Crustacean stocks not subject to effort control.	<b>4</b> Local economy reliant on direct and indirect employment associated with shellfisheries.	<b>4</b> Loss in confidence of the Authority's ability to manage fisheries.	Annual stock assessments of bivalve stocks in the Estuary.  Fisheries management policies agreed for cockle stocks in the Estuary.  Ability to allocate sufficient resources to monitoring of landings and effective enforcement.  Consultation with industry on possible management measures.	<b>2</b> Stocks will naturally fluctuate. Fisheries impacts may occur outside the control of the Authority, including climate change and over exploitation of stocks outside the district.

<p>Fisheries in the District impacted by the activities of developers / industry.</p> <p>Insufficient time to fully consider environmental impact assessments for inshore developments. (CIFCO)</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Shellfish fisheries impacted due to contamination or loss.</p> <p>Temporary or permanent loss of, or damage to, fish stocks, fishery habitats or fishing grounds.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Lack of fishing activity data. Lack of baseline data. Limited understanding of impacts of developments on the marine environment.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Reduced catches and income for fishermen, anglers and other stakeholders. Displacement of fishing effort, reduction in tourism.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Expectation that Authority will represent stakeholders interests even though activities may be occurring outside of the district or not within KEIFCA's control.</p>	<p>Consultations responded to by IFCOs with local expertise and seen by CIFCO.</p> <p>Liaison with consenting agencies.</p> <p>Developer meetings attended by KEIFCA representatives.</p> <p>Database to be created holding information on current and historical fishing activities within the Authority's district (Work with MCZ project).</p> <p>Development proposals scrutinized by Defra and Natural England.</p> <p>Consents required for developments.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Increased wind farm development and dredging. High reliance on modelling to determine impact of developments. Limited baseline data.</p>
<p>Failure to fully engage with stakeholders. (CIFCO)</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Conflict between differing stakeholders Non-compliance with fisheries and environmental legislation.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Difficult to identify and consult with all relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Stakeholder requirements are not adequately considered in the management of fisheries.</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Lack of trust in the Authority's management processes. Misunderstanding of the Authority's role.</p>	<p>Regular contact with fishermen and Natural England.</p> <p>Dissemination of all survey data and management proposals.</p> <p>Respond to all relevant Government/developer consultations or proposals.</p> <p>Improve website and provide interactive services.</p> <p>Regular/structured liaison with other enforcement bodies.</p> <p>Annual &amp; research reports published. Publication of business plan.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback questionnaire and analysis.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Further improvement to contact with NGOs and other stakeholders needs to be achieved.</p>

## **Appendix 2 – Abbreviations**

<b>ACIFCO</b>	Assistant Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	<b>MCSS</b>	Monitoring and Control Surveillance System
<b>AIFCA</b>	Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities	<b>MCZ</b>	Marine Conservation Zones
<b>ASFC</b>	Association of Sea Fisheries Committees	<b>MMO</b>	Marine Management Organisation
<b>Cefas</b>	Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science	<b>MoU</b>	Memoranda of Understanding
<b>CFO</b>	Chief Fishery Officer	<b>MPA</b>	Marine Protected Area
<b>CFP</b>	Common Fisheries Policy	<b>MSC</b>	Marine Stewardship Council
<b>CIFCO</b>	Chief Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	<b>MSP</b>	Marine Spatial Plans
<b>Defra</b>	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	<b>NE</b>	Natural England
<b>EA</b>	Environment Agency	<b>nm</b>	Nautical Miles
<b>ECC</b>	Essex County Council	<b>RSA</b>	Recreational Sea Angling
<b>EFF</b>	European Fisheries Fund	<b>RIB</b>	Rigid Inflatable Boat
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment	<b>SAC</b>	Special Area of Conservation
<b>EIFCA</b>	Eastern Inshore Fishing and Conservation Authority	<b>SBC</b>	Southend Borough Council
<b>EMS</b>	European Marine Site	<b>SFC</b>	Sea Fisheries Committee
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System	<b>SxIFCA</b>	Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
<b>IFCO</b>	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	<b>SSSI</b>	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<b>IFCA</b>	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority	<b>SPA</b>	Special Protection Area
<b>KCC</b>	Kent County Council	<b>TAG</b>	Technical Advisory Group
<b>MC</b>	Medway Council	<b>TBC</b>	Thurrock Borough Council
<b>MCA</b>	Marine Coastguard Agency		
<b>MCAA 2009</b>	Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009		