



# Annual Plan 2024-2025

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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 2024/5; 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
- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly

*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 IFCAs 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 workstreams and aims set out in this plan are undertaken with due regard given to the Environmental Principles Policy Statement which was released at the end of 2023. The environmental principles listed in the policy statement operate as a set of overarching principles to guide the development of all relevant policy, which includes byelaws and management by KEIFCA.

## ***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.

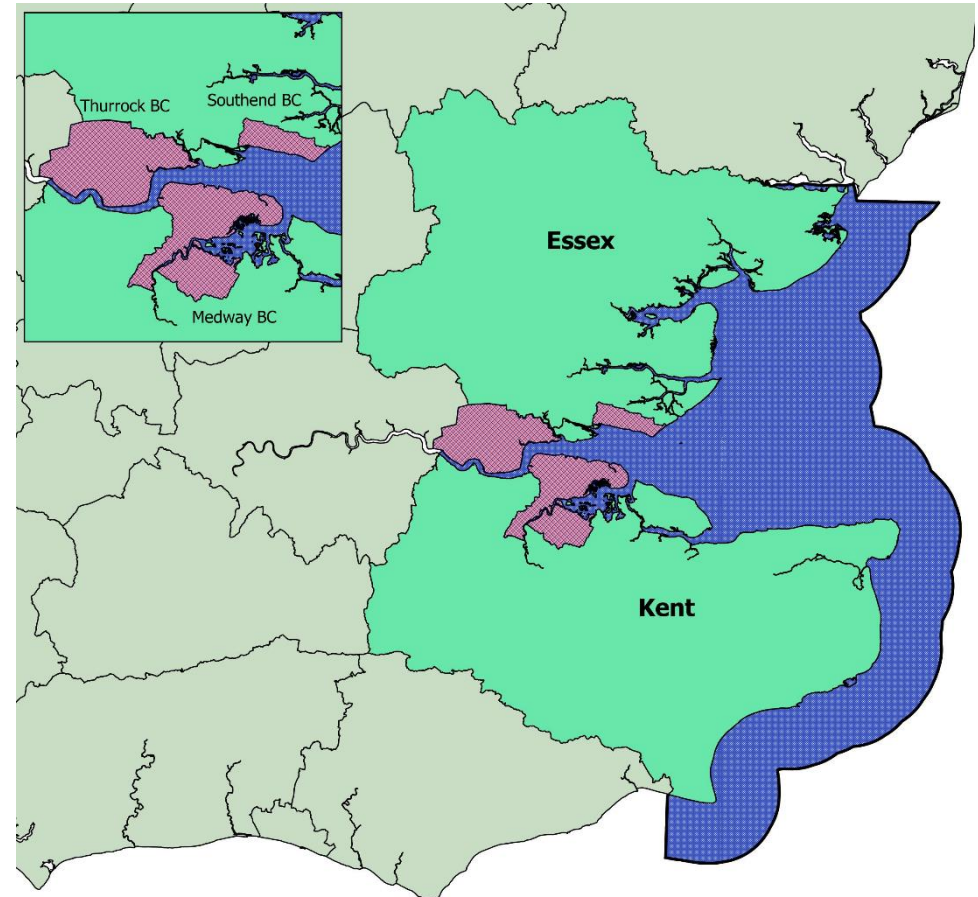
### ***Seaward district boundaries***

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 2024-2025***

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 KEIFCA's statutory duties.

With the agreement of the first wave of Fisheries Management Plans the UK fisheries architecture for the next decade or more is starting to take shape. The challenge now is to build on this new framework and create long-term sustainable fisheries that support our local industries and coastal communities. As the focus moves from agreeing plans to delivering tangible outcomes, there is a significant and ongoing workstream to ensure that the needs of KEIFCA fishers are embedded in the implementation of the plans. The priorities highlighted below outline some of the key workstreams for KEIFCA over the financial year 2024-2025, although it is important to recognise that the implementation of the new Thames Cockle Fishery Order 2024 is going to account for a significant proportion of KEIFCA officer work for the coming year.

### ***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, help deliver the English Environmental Improvement Plan and start the process of revitalising our fishing sector and coastal communities.

Each FMP specifies the stocks, type of fishing and the geographic area covered, as well as the authority or authorities responsible and indicators to be used for monitoring the effectiveness of the plan. From an IFCA perspective the creation of Fisheries Management Plans offers a new and exciting opportunity to manage our fisheries in a more coordinated, sustainable way across English waters and provides regional organisations like IFCAs with an overarching framework that we can deliver within.

To kick-off this process DEFRA started with a first tranche of six 'frontrunner' FMPs (Whelk FMP, Bass FMP, Scallop FMP, Crab & Lobster FMP, Channel Non-Quota Demersal FMP and Southern North Sea & Eastern Channel Mixed Flatfish FMP). The six FMPs purposefully took

different paths to creation, which helped DEFRA explore the ways in which FMPs should be structured and used. After a 12-week consultation over the summer, the first 5 FMPs were published in December 2023.

### ***Delivering the first 5 FMPs***

Although the different FMPs outlined in detail their objectives and key actions, the plans do not provide a clear outline of the resources allocated to deliver these actions, the process to deliver actions, or the role of specific regulators in enacting key actions in the plans. With 5 plans already published and over 30 English FMPs to be discussed and delivered in the future, there is going to be a significant challenge to prioritise the actions across all the plans as well as within in each plan.

As DEFRA's FMP focus turns to delivering the actions of the 'frontrunner' FMPs within the first 6-year review deadline, KEIFCA is working closely with the AIFCA and other IFCA's to help create new ways of working within and across organisations to deliver FMP actions. There are some actions which KEIFCA is already helping deliver and either require tweaking or adapting to feed into the FMP process, some which are clearly within our scope and capability, but we would need additional resource or a reprioritisation of our workstreams by DEFRA and some that would require significant project teams to progress delivery.

The most significant workstreams falling out from this work are outlined below, however the full list is both long and significant, and officers will update members, and if needed the annual plan as priorities start to emerge.

- Feed into the new bass management group(s) and the review of the current domestic bass authorisation system.
- Improve communication with stakeholders on bass management and enforcement and highlight joint working with the MMO.
- Take a led role in the introduction of a national whelk fishing permit scheme or entitlement and the potential introduction of regional minimum sizes for whelks.
- Feed into the collection of whelk data and development of stock estimates and models.
- Contribute to area-based closures/ area-based management discussions on scallop stocks.
- Work with other IFCA's and local stakeholders to feed into future crab and lobster management as it develops.
- To contribute to new cuttlefish and octopus management decisions.

### ***The next FMPs in development***

Defra is currently preparing the next 5 FMPs for English waters, which will be published by the end of 2024. Our delivery partners are leading on the preparation of these plans. We will use the lessons learnt from the first set of FMPs to inform their development.

<b>Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)</b>	<b>Importance to KEIFCA</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Lead organisation</b>
<b>Cockles</b>	Key fishery in district. KEIFCA main regulator for fishery.	English waters only	Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA)
<b>Southern North Sea and Channel skates and rays</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• blonde ray</li> <li>• small-eyed ray</li> <li>• thornback ray</li> <li>• cuckoo ray</li> <li>• spotted ray</li> <li>• undulate ray</li> <li>• starry ray</li> </ul>	Important regional fishery. KEIFCA has specific minimum size byelaws.	Southern North Sea and Channel (ICES divisions 4b, 4c, 7d and 7e)	FMP is being prepared by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
<b>Southern North Sea demersal non-quota species</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cuttlefish</li> <li>• grey gurnards</li> <li>• red gurnards</li> <li>• tub gurnards</li> <li>• John dory</li> <li>• lesser spotted dogfish</li> <li>• octopus</li> <li>• squid</li> <li>• surmullet</li> </ul>	Important future emerging fisheries.	English waters within ICES divisions 4b and 4c	FMP is being prepared by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
<b>North Sea and Channel sprat</b>	Historic fishery especially in the Thames.	UK waters of the North Sea and Channel	joint plan between Defra and the Scottish Government. FMP is being prepared by Cefas
<b>Queen scallop</b>	No real commercial fishery in the district.	English waters only	Defra's non-quota species fisheries policy team

### ***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.

Since the 17 September 2021 the Authority engaged in a detailed process to review and develop future cockle management with the aim of confirming new legislation before the current Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 1994 (TECFO 1994) ends on the 28 September 2024. On the 11 April 2023 KEIFCA started the formal process of applying for a new Regulating Order and if all goes to plan the application process for TECFO 2024 (T24) will start in late spring, with the new licences issued in November 2024.

Smoothly moving from a very established regulatory system in TECFO 1994, to a new regulatory system T24, will take significant officer time and resource to help support fishers in their transition and ensure that there is a transparent and fair Licence Allocation Process. Running this process whilst also running the annual cockle fishery, will be challenging and additional resource in the form of a specific

cockle officer is in the process of being recruited. Needless to say, this will be a key priority for senior officer and KEIFCA members throughout the year.

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

Developing MPA management measures: Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) were designated in three rounds, or “tranches”, in English waters, with the final tranche designated in 2019 (Goodwin Sands MCZ, Swanscombe MCZ, Dover to Deal MCZ - site designated in Tranche 2, additional features designated as part of Tranche 3). Since 2020 KEIFCA have been working with NE to survey the Goodwin Sands MCZ (the largest and most complex tranche 3 site) to build a clearer and more detailed picture of the distribution of some of the site’s key features; *Sabellaria*.

*Sabellaria* reef within the Goodwin Sands MCZ and the Dover to Deal MCZ has a Conservation Objective of “Recover”, meaning that management must be implemented to return the feature to a favourable condition. *Sabellaria* reef is recognized as sensitive to bottom towed fishing gear, and therefore the MMO has implemented bottom-towed fishing gear bans across parts of the offshore portion of the Goodwin Sands MCZ. KEIFCA is considering a similar approach and adding any bottom-towed fishing gear restrictions to an updated bottom-towed gear byelaw. As we have a site with shared management, we are trying to coordinate our timelines with the MMO for engagement and consultation, so that stakeholders are informed of the complete management of the Goodwin Sands MCZ, however, formal consultation for all three Tranche 3 MCZ sites will need to move at a speed that allows KEIFCA to meet the government’s ambition to have MPA management in place by the end of 2024.

MPA enforcement: KEIFCA will continue to enforce management measures that 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. Working under the national vessel procurement strategy, KEIFCA is accessing DEFRA’s capital funds to help purchase a new cabin RIB to strengthen our MPA enforcement capability. Offshore areas will primarily 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.



### ***Delivering national DEFRA priorities***

As part of the Government's spending review settlement, DEFRA agreed to fund IFCAs an additional £150K a year over the length of the Parliament to help further a series of national priority workstreams (FMP engagement and development, bringing in Tranche 3 MPA management measures, additional regional input and expertise into marine planning and licencing as well as contributing to DEFRA's angling and aquaculture strategies). KEIFCA has used this funding to run a national FMP engagement exercise for the Crab & Lobster FMP and the Whelk FMP, and to fund a 2-year post to develop and deliver the final set of Tranche 3 MCZ management measures in our district. The intention is to use subsequent spending review money to fund or part fund 2 new officer posts which will directly help KEIFCA deliver the national priorities. The first is a cockle officer post that will help KEIFCA input into the Cockle FMP, undertake and continue to develop the annual cockle MPA assessments and support our enforcement of the cockle fishery. The second is a part-time Fisheries Liaison Officer post that will disseminate progress and foster engagement with the FMPs that are important to for both recreational and commercial fishermen (Bass, Skates and Rays etc) and feedback issues and ideas from these groups to the Authority.

## Delivery of Priorities

The vision for IFCAs encapsulates the core role of the organisations; and the success criteria outline what is expected of IFCAs in achieving the vision. Five success criteria have been developed by all ten IFCAs through the Association of IFCAs. 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 IFCAs annual plan and that the objectives should inform the work of individual IFCAs 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 IFCAs.

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.



<b>CIFCO</b> Chief IFCO	<b>LCO</b> Lead Compliance Officer	<b>KPVFM</b> Kent-based Patrol Vessel First Mate	<b>EPVFM</b> Essex-based Patrol Vessel First Mate
<b>ACIFCO</b> Assistant Chief IFCO	<b>LSCO</b> Lead Scientific & Conservation Officer	<b>KPVIFCO(L)</b> Kent-based IFCO (*Licence & marine planning support)	<b>CO</b> Cockle Officer
<b>OM</b> Office Manager	<b>SCIFCO</b> Science and Conservation IFCO	<b>KPVIFCO</b> Kent-based IFCO	<b>LO</b> Liaison Officer – Angling & Commercial
<b>AA</b> Admin Assistant (*Permit/Licence support)	<b>KPVS</b> Kent-based Patrol Vessel Skipper	<b>EPVS</b> Essex-based Patrol Vessel Skipper	

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 IFCAs</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> OM
<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>CIFCO</b> <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 IFCAs).</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> * Supported by DEFRA funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using DEFRA funding KEIFCA has developed a new position in the organisation that will lead on marine licencing and planning matters*.</li> <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> KPVIFCO(L) SCIFCO
<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> AA
<b>1F) Promote new cockle management system (T24)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertise new Regulating Order (T24)</li> <li>• Engage with members of the cockle industry that want to apply for a new T24 licence.</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>• 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> <li>• Coordinate with partner organisations to communicate introduction of T3 MCZ byelaw update.</li> </ul>	<b>SCIFCO</b> LSCO CIFCO
<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 introduction of new cockle fishery management, the 2024/25 communications plan is different from previous years as it is dominated by this key regional priority. 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 IFCA's (AIFCA) and operational officer groups (COG, TAG and NIMEG) help IFCA's 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 2024/2025

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>Introduction of new cockle fishery management</b>	Fishing industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage local communities in understanding and working within the new management system</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓		✓
<b>MPA byelaw development/ implementation</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 new FMPs and help facilitate local engagement for draft FMPs.</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>
<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
<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 All IFCOs



<p><b>ONGOING ACTION: 2G) Maintain and run land-based enforcement assets</b></p>	<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>	<p><b>EPVFM</b> <b>KPVFM</b> <b>LCO</b></p>
<p><b>ONGOING ACTION: 2H) Enforcement activities – shore-based</b></p>	<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>	<p><b>IFCOs</b> <b>KPVFM</b> <b>EPVFM</b></p>
<p><b>ONGOING ACTION: 2I) Enforcement training</b></p>	<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 IFCA's.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACIFCO</b> <b>KPVS</b> <b>EPVS</b></p>
<p><b>2J) Improve our use of enforcement information and integrate ivms into enforcement process</b></p>	<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 IFCA's to develop digital inspection recording system.</li> <li>• Explore the introduction of ivms to TCG process</li> </ul>	<p><b>LCO</b></p>
<p><b>2K) Integrate Marine Protected Area enforcement risks into KEIFCA enforcement activities</b></p>	<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>	<p><b>LCO</b></p>
<p><b>2L) Improve records of private ground boundaries and understanding of their fishing rights</b></p>	<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>	<p><b>LCO</b> <b>ACIFCO</b> <b>EPVS</b></p>
<p><b>2M) Improve communication with stakeholders on bass management and enforcement and highlight joint working with the MMO.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further Bass FMP short-term goals by working with NIMEG and MMO at local level</li> <li>• Working with NIMEG outline how collaboration currently works including enforcement stats and enforcement case studies and comms strategies.</li> <li>• Identify areas for improvement.</li> <li>• Deliver outcomes of project to management group and agree plan and resource to improve collaboration and communications.</li> <li>• Review compliance and enforcement strategy to incorporate current best practice.</li> </ul>	<p><b>LCO</b> <b>ACIFCO</b></p>

## Annual Enforcement Plan/Schedule of planned compliance activity for 2024-2025

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 national and local fisheries and marine conservation legislation is the overall aim of the Authority's enforcement regime.

### 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.

With warranted officer availability being the key limiting factor this year, 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 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. We will also seek to align compliance objectives with those set out in newly published FMPs, particularly with bass regulation enforcement and compliance communications.

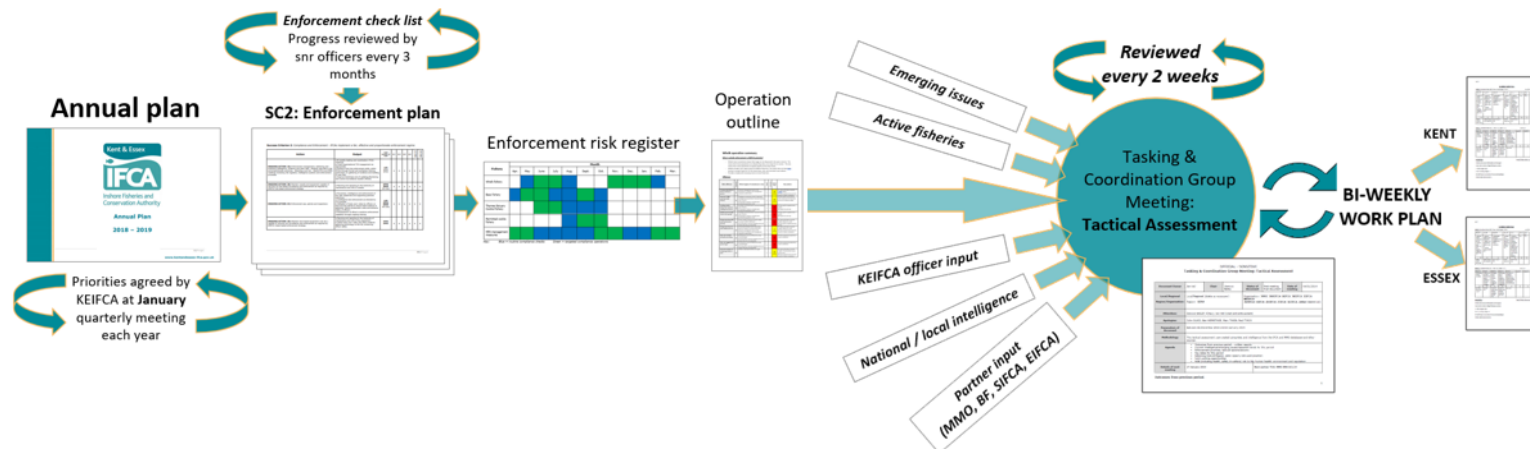


Figure 1. Diagram showing the structure of enforcement planning and operation.

### Enforcement Schedule

KEIFCA officers carry out enforcement patrols throughout the year, responding to the changes in fishing effort for a range of key species subject to seasonal opportunities. The table below indicates our typical schedule for focusing on key enforcement risks in relation to local species of commercial (and recreational in some cases such as bass) significance. Green highlighted months show peaks in fishing effort for a fishery and therefore increased compliance risk, necessitating specific operations and proactive tasking of enforcement assets to monitor compliance and detect illegal activity. Blue highlighted months show times when a fishery is still likely to be actively exploited but compliance risk is lower, and therefore enforcement effort will be on a routine basis or in response to specific intelligence. This approach provides a basis for a seasonal, risk-prioritised enforcement regime throughout the year. It should be noted that in addition to compliance and enforcement work, this schedule balances with the other competing demands on staff and vessel time, particularly annual survey programmes. KEIFCA works in partnership with other enforcement agencies such as the MMO, Environment Agency, Border Force and Police work to enforce the law in an efficient, effective, and proportionate way. This collaborative approach brings value for the taxpayer and makes best use of limited budgets and 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	Green				
Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order			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 workstreams discussed below highlight the main fishery compliance risks for the coming year. These risks will be addressed through strategic and operational planning with targeted outcomes.

## *Key fisheries*

### ***Cockle fishery compliance***

The KEIFCA district, and particularly the Thames Estuary, is one of the most productive regions for cockles production both nationally and internationally. KEIFCA closely manages these key cockle stocks to achieve maximum economic benefit to fishers balanced with safeguarding stock sustainability and the protection of marine habitats. Cockle management encompasses two distinct fisheries management regimes that operate within the district: the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order (TECFO) fishery which covers the central Thames Estuary, and the Cockle Fishery Flexible Permit Byelaw which manages cockle harvesting across the remainder of the district. Cockles are a lucrative commodity and therefore regulations are strict, meaning targeted operation orders to monitor compliance and ensure all regulations are adhered to is paramount to the continued success and future sustainability of these fisheries.

The TECFO operation will be implemented first in June, starting with biosecurity inspections and pre-emptive gear compliance checks. Officers will effectively communicate with licenced fishermen throughout, promoting understanding and positive working relationships with vessel operators. Once fishing commences officers will carry out a phase of intensive boarding inspections 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. Later in the season regular sea patrols will also be carried out by fishery patrol vessels in high-risk closed areas and at times of temporary closure, which will be tailored to the best available intelligence. Remotely, our officers will review Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) tracks to monitor potential non-compliance within closed area restrictions. If and when offences are detected during physical inspections, officers will utilise body worn video cameras to gather best evidence. Following offences involving fishing closed areas during the 2023 fishery, officers will also maintaining a more comprehensive presence at sea, particularly in boundaries between open and closed harvesting areas.

### ***Bass regulation compliance/ Bass FMP***

Since 2015 the UK and EU have implemented a joint management approach to bass fisheries following a sharp decline in stocks across European waters. Since these measures were introduced, there has been increases in adult stock biomass, but recruitment of juvenile bass remains low. As a result, regulations which restrict bass fishing in both the commercial and recreational sector continue to apply and remain a high compliance priority in the KEIFCA district. 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 continue to implement joint operations with neighbouring IFCA's and the MMO to target illegal activities such as drift netting and misreporting. Recreational bass fishers will also be inspected routinely to ensure that current catch limits and minimum sizes are adhered to. The Bass FMP proposes a wide range of improvements to bass fishery management, which also incorporate a number of targets that are relevant to KEIFCA bass compliance plans, including:

- The establishment of **bass management groups** to facilitate stakeholder participation in management decisions.

- **Improving collaboration** between regulators on **targeted enforcement**, including the powers necessary to ensure consistency.
- **Improving communication** and **understanding of bass regulations**, including for registered buyers and sellers.

KEIFCA will aim to play a role in furthering these targets locally and nationally, by engaging with other regulators (chiefly other IFCA's and MMO, via the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group) on targeted enforcement and clarity of approach to ensure consistency in how regulators enforce bass regulations. We will also seek to work with the bass management group (when established) to provide information to the commercial and recreational fishing community through various media promotions and investigating how to improve signage of existing regulations at popular fishing destinations.

### ***Whelk compliance***

KEIFCA will be maintaining an effective enforcement presence on land and at sea focusing on sustainability of fishery 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 2024-25 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 support 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 bass regulations in particular, in line with FMP objectives, by developing engagement tools and promotional materials on a national scale with partner agencies. 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. Increasing effort to inspect recreational charter boat trips will feature in the coming year.

### ***Marine Protected Area (MPA) compliance***

Officers will proactively gather intelligence on activity within designated MPAs, focusing on those with management measures implemented already. 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 under 10m. The statutory instrument making transmission of I-VMS a legal requirement is anticipated in 2024, 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.

### **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) Implement new Cockle fishery legislation and management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with DEFRA to implement the new T24 regulating order and run the licence application process.</li> <li>• Engage with fishing industry to help develop the 'small-scale' cockle permit fishery</li> <li>• Work with fishers to understand the potential for a long-term sustainable manila calm fishery</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> ACIFCO OM AA
<b>3D) Help DEFRA implement the short-term management measures from the first 5 Fisheries Management Plans.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feed into the new bass management group(s) and the review of the current domestic bass authorisation system.</li> <li>• Improve communication with stakeholders on bass management and enforcement and highlight joint MMO working</li> <li>• Take a led role in the introduction of a national whelk fishing permit scheme or entitlement and the potential introduction of regional minimum sizes for whelks.</li> <li>• Feed into the collection of whelk data and development of stock estimates and models.</li> <li>• Contribute to area-based closures/ area-based management discussions on scallop stocks.</li> <li>• Work with other IFCA's and local stakeholders to feed into future crab and lobster management as it develops.</li> <li>• To contribute to new cuttlefish and octopus management decisions.</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> ACIFCO
<b>3D) Provide input into the development of Fisheries Management Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participate in the Cockle FMP development working with the AIFCA</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.</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>• Finish MCZ fisheries assessments and evidence for Goodwin Sands, Dover-Deal and Swanscombe MCZs</li> <li>• Progress byelaw to protect key features.</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO</b> <b>CIFCO</b> KPVF KPVFM
<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
<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



## **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 2025-2026 annual plan and 2023-2024 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 an organisational review focusing on staff structure, roles and responsibilities and terms and conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light touch review of the organisational structure, to reflect and include new responsibilities and actions for KEIFCA, flowing from Fishery Management Plans</li> <li>• Review job descriptions including terms and conditions and pay</li> </ul>	<b>ACIFCO</b> CIFCO OM
<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) Annual Research Plan &amp; Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare the annual research plan: Assess annual research priorities, plan time and resource.</li> <li>• Prepare the Annual Research Report: Report on achievement of objectives set in Annual Research Plan and demonstrating use of evidence for decision making</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO</b>
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5B) Participate in TAG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively contribute to IFCA TAG meetings, providing KEIFCA updates &amp; reporting back (Increasing KEIFCA role)</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</b> KPVFM <b>EPVS</b> EPVFM
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5D) MPA management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare evidence and spatial management options for Goodwin Sands, Swanscombe and Dover-Deal MCZs</li> <li>• Host stakeholder consultation meeting</li> <li>• Prepare byelaw Impact Assessment</li> <li>• Present management recommendations to Authority &amp; make byelaw</li> </ul>	<b>SCIFCO</b> LSCO CIFCO ACIFCO
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5E) Engagement with major marine developments in the district and reply to consultations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate overview of all marine developments in the district of relevance</li> <li>• Evaluate and Prioritise projects to engage with</li> <li>• Provide verbal and written feedback when there is a potential impact on local fisheries, MPAs or byelaws.</li> </ul>	<b>KPVIFCO(L)</b> KSIFCO LSCO ACIFCO
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5F) 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</b> <b>ACIFCO</b> All IFCOs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5G) Evidence gathering and reporting for the whelk permit fishery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate, analyse and prepare whelk landings report and improve alignment with FMP objectives</li> <li>• Monitor development of post 2022-whelk-mortality event whelk population &amp; water temperature.</li> <li>• Engage with fishers, Fish Health Inspectorate and EA to assess water quality and disease.</li> <li>• Develop mortality response plan as part of Coastal Health Livelihoods Project with AIFCAs</li> <li>• Expand collaborative research with academic partners (University of Essex, Bangor University, Herriot-Watt) to better understand whelk environmental envelope through MSc/PhD studies.</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO</b> AA
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5H) 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</b> <b>ACIFCO</b> All IFCOs
<b>ONGOING ACTION: 5I) Native oyster fishery management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and deliver the annual native oyster survey (statistical analysis, map preparation and report writing)</li> <li>• Delivery of recommendations relating to stock management to Authority</li> <li>• Continued membership of ENORI &amp; oyster fishermen and plan to carry out a collaborative industry led projects</li> </ul>	<b>LSCO</b> EPVS EPVFM

<b>5J) Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participate in delivering the FMP research with a research focus on the whelk FMP in 2024-2025.</li> <li>• Continue to contribute to Whelk Management Group (WMG) and Whelk Working Group (WWG)</li> <li>• Contribute review of existing management and byelaws, with respect to new FMPs for selected species</li> </ul>	<b>CIFCO</b> LSCO ACIFCO
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## ***Annual Research Plan - 2024-2025***

The Annual Research Plan serves to communicate KEIFCA's primary evidence needs both to partners and the wider public and provide detailed insights into how KEIFCA aims to achieve key outcomes in Success Criterion 3 (Management measures) and Success Criterion 5 (Evidence and Science). This plan links with the KEIFCA research strategy, which outlines the long-term approach to prioritise, resource, and conduct evidence gathering and research. The annual plan specifies the short-term actions identified and prioritised for the upcoming year for the whole organisation. In 2024 as an over-arching theme, KEIFCA will evaluate, adapt and implement its research strategies to fit with the key research and management objectives arising from fisheries management plans (FMPs). This evaluation and re-prioritisation of the research programme will be of immediate relevance to cockles and whelks, which have recently been published and are priority research and management stocks for KEIFCA. The KEIFCA research strategy categorizes research and evidence gathering into three 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 2024-2025 for KEIFCA. Management will be developed for Goodwin Sands, Swanscombe, Dover to Deal MCZs. Stakeholder consultation meetings are planned for early 2024, where management options will be discussed with stakeholders. Thereafter management decisions will be presented to KEIFCA's Authority members for approval and submitted to the MMO for QA, along with the impact assessment of a new byelaw between April and end of May 2024. We hope to bring new management in force by end of 2024.

In 2024-2025 KEIFCA will commit resource to help update and develop existing Marine Plans, e.g. Southeast 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 because these tend to be regulated under KEIFCA management, and as such stock assessments for these species. Finfish tends to be regulated under national or international legislature and consequently KEIFCA's research into finfish populations tends to be more in a supporting capacity, such as

assisting or enabling Government bodies (EA, CEFAS), NGOs and academic bodies to carry out research and collect data valuable for informing national species management strategies and tends to be secondary priorities.

**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. 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 from fished beds in the district. 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 3-year Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRA) is in place covering the TECFO fishery during June to end of September 2024, and a new HRA may be required for the Permit fishery if there are sufficient stocks in 2024-2025 to allow opening the fishery.

This will be the last year of the current cockle fishery regulated under the TECFO 1994. KEIFCA are building research partnerships with universities to facilitate a PhD student to research the impact of fishery equipment of the seabed, and better understand the feedback loops on the fishery and benthic community structure in the Thames. KEIFCA will also be developing SOPs to allow a smooth transition to the new Regulating Order starting in 2025.

This year KEIFCA will also be collecting cockle samples to facilitate the classification of two specific cockle beds by the Food Standards Association (FSA) for the first time, during bi-weekly sampling on the North Kent Coast.

**Oysters:** 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. The fishery in the MCZ is currently closed, and recent survey results from 2023 and 2024 confirms that stocks are too low for a fishery to be opened. Sea-based surveys will be carried out during the spring or 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. 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.

**Whelks:** In 2024, KEIFCA will start prioritising research and management following the objectives set out by the whelk fisheries management plan (FMP). The top objective is to develop a data collection programme. The challenge herein is that some key characteristics of whelk stocks need better understanding, such as stock boundaries, and other spatial catch and biological data, some of which KEIFCA are already doing like Catch-Per-Unit-Effort. In 2024 we aim to further develop our data collection programme to make more strategic, such as connecting our CPUE data with our more recent mark-and-recapture data to better understand the how well fisheries dependent data are reflecting stock status. KEIFCA have agreed to develop a response framework as part of the Defra funded Coastal Health Livelihoods Project and further develop its case study of the whelk mortality event on the Kent North Coast in 2022.

In 2024, KEIFCA will continue a research partnership with industry to better inform potential causes of substantial mortality observed in late summer of 2022. Under the current workplan is supplemented by a mark-and-recapture study alongside *in situ* water temperature to monitor the population status of the whelks off the North Kent Coast. KEIFCA will carry out an empirical study of whelk stress response (oxygen consumption, mortality) to water temperature under laboratory conditions at the University of Essex as part of a study project. KEIFCA have arrangements in place to obtain and provide CEFAS Fish Health Inspectorate with whelk samples for biotoxin assays and histology analysis should a signs of a similar mortality event happen again. KEIFCA is developing its research partnerships to support a MSc or PhD study that will look to examine the potential causes of mortality in 2024/2025, population recovery and better understand the outlook of the fishery under climate change scenarios.

KEIFCA will also be work with Heriot-Watt University to better understand trap selectivity and survival from rotary riddles and flatbed riddles.

**Clams:** With the continued increase in size and abundance of Manila clams along the Essex and Kent coast, KEIFCA will continue ongoing survey and research commitment into its spatial and abundance and biomass distribution. This lucrative species co-occurring on some of the cockle beds in the district requires further investigation to understand the future fishery potential of this growing stock. KEIFCA will also give advice and help on the potentially emerging razor clam fishery.

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

KEIFCA will continue to provide data, evidence and information as required or requested. KIEFCA is also committed to improving its own data infrastructure. 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 2024-2025, KEIFCA will continue to update its database and analytical routines to improve our efficiency and data capabilities. In 2024-2025 most of the work will be focussed on developing a new database for the prospective cockle fishery operating under a new regulating order and adapt current data collection schemes to FMP requirements as appropriate. 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.



## Research schedule

The following table illustrates the schedule for time bound research activities in 2024-2025. Ongoing high priority surveys are repeated annually at specific set times of the year to help inform stock assessments and management decisions. Most surveys are scheduled to take place between spring and autumn due to weather limitations of conducting fieldwork in during the winter. New projects that satisfy the project evaluation criteria are planned into the timetable 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. 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 & H: Annual cockle & clam stock assessment surveys from sea	20 (80)													
5F & H: Cockle & clam stock assessment surveys from land	20 (80)													
5I: Native oyster stock assessment surveys	20 (80)													
5G: Whelk research – mark and recapture	10 (20)													
5D: Developing MCZ management	15 (45)													

## 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.

<b>Relevant Council</b>	<b>Number of members</b>	<b>Percentage payment of KEIFCA levy</b>
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 (**Chairman, *Vice-Chairman)</b>	
<b>**Cllr J L Lamb</b>	Southend BC
<b>Cllr C Broadley</b>	Kent CC
<b>Cllr T Hills</b>	Kent CC
<b>Cllr D Crow-Brown</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 S Curry</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>C Collins</b>	MMO Appointee
<b>W East</b>	MMO Appointee

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.

<i>vacant</i>
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MMO Appointee
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### **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.).

## ***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, 2 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).

DEFRA funded positions

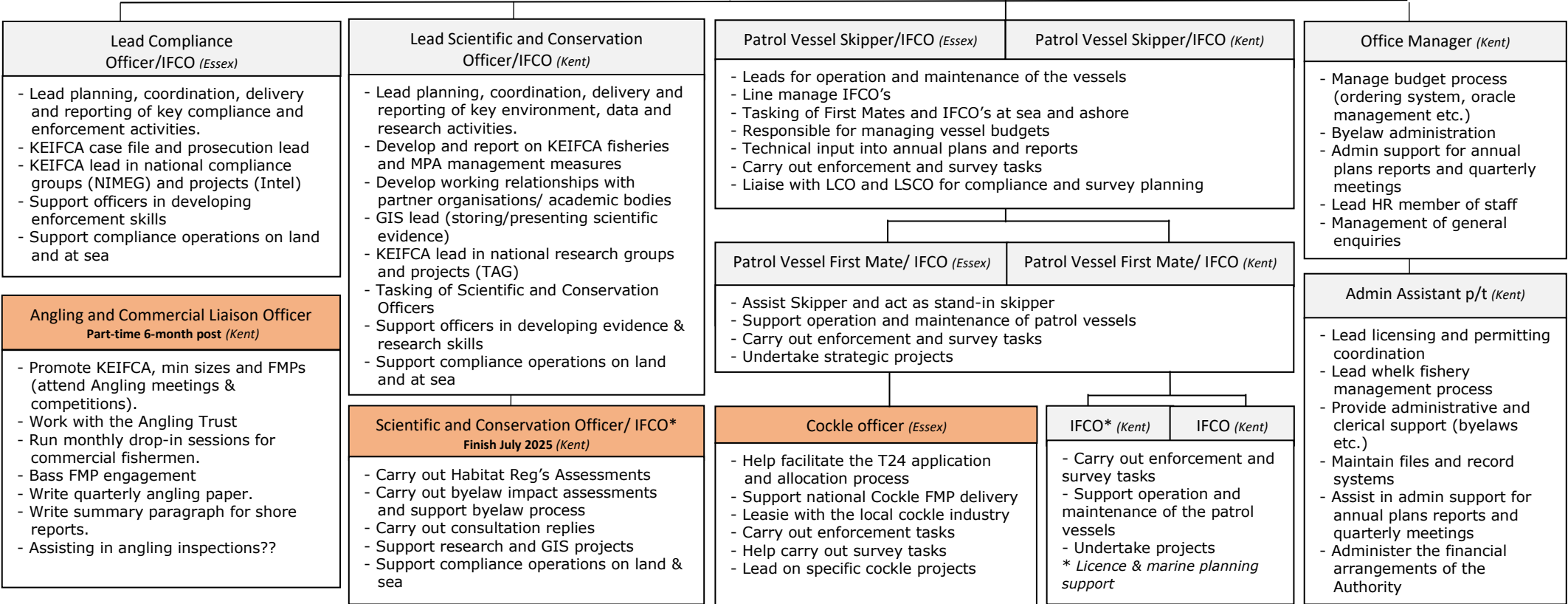
# Staff Structure

**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

**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



# **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 three 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.

'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 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 KEIFCAs governance and organisational structure by Defra and other key organisations	<p>Reflect Kent &amp; Essex IFCA objectives clearly in annual plans and reports</p> <p>Communicate the requirements and duties of KEIFCA to all Authority members and staff</p> <p>Integrate objectives and tasks into staff structure and job descriptions. Make sure 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.



<p>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 (<i>CIFCO &amp; Clerk</i>)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p>KEIFCA might have to review decision making procedures. KEIFCA might need to review previous decisions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p>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)</p> <p>KEIFCA staff ensure that the reports to and minutes of IFCA meetings properly record the reasons for decisions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p>KEIFCA could face financial loss if such a case was lost</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p>Potential loss of faith in KEIFCA's governance and organisational structure by Defra and other key organisations</p>	<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>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p>Limited potential for such a challenge due to extensive best practice mitigation measures.</p>
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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. Cybersecurity attacks targeting payments	<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.  All staff undertake cybersecurity training  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> Non compliance with Data Protection Act. Prosecution case Cyber security attacks could result in 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. Two factor authentication is set up for all staff  Secure wireless internet.  Access to electronic files is restricted based on an individual's role.  Up to date virus software installed on all computers.  All staff undertake GDPR and cybersecurity training  Important documents secured in safes.  Business continuity plan devised	<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 three vessels. If one vessel fails, the other vessels 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  Insurance covers cost of initial purchase of vessel + 10% if beyond repair/salvage	<b>2</b> Unforeseen events may still cause disruption to activities.
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	<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).	<b>2</b> Whilst 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.

		years.			Provide safe and professional working environment. Flexible working arrangements.	
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<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>Bi weekly tasking meetings with enforcement officers to report intelligence and direct activities</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.	<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 Science 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 has been 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		