

## **Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Authority held in the Belmont Suite, Thurrock Hotel, Aveley, Essex on Wednesday 18 June 2025 starting at 10.15am

Present: Mr J Lamb (MMO), Mr J Nichols (MMO), Mr P Wexham (MMO), Mr W East (MMO), Cllr G Coxshall (Thurrock Council), Mr R Turner (MMO), Mr J Rowley (MMO), Mr A Baker (NE), Cllr M Skeels (ECC), Cllr J Finch (KCC), Cllr M Lawes (KCC), Cllr J Henderson (KCC), Cllr C Mulroney (Southend Council)

Apologies: Mr C Collins (MMO), Mrs E Gilson (MMO), Ms L Faulkner (EA), Cllr J Fleming (ECC), Cllr A Goggin (ECC), Cllr S Curry (Medway Council), Ms T Ferry (MMO),

In Attendance: Mr J Cook (Clerk, KCC), Ms S Martin (KCC), Dr W Wright (Chief Fishery Officer), Mr D Bailey (Deputy Chief IFC Officer), Dr P Haupt (Principal Scientific & Conservation Officer), Miss K Stuart (IFCO/Scientific officer), Mrs K Woods (Admin Officer), Mrs D O'Shea (Office Manager)

By invitation: Mr A Oliver (Andrew Jackson Solicitors)

Mr Lamb informed Members that the following documents had been laid around the table:

- Revised agenda item B6
- Letters received in relation to Agenda item B1

Mr Lamb welcomed Cllr Mulroney from Southend City Council and Cllrs Henderson. Lawes and Finch from Kent County Council who were in attendance for the first time.

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN (A1)**

The Clerk to the Authority was in the Chair for this item.

Members were advised that they were required each year to nominate and select a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Mr Wexham nominated Mr John Lamb as Chairman seconded by Cllr Mulroney

No other candidates were proposed so Mr John Lamb was elected unopposed as Chairman.

Mr Lamb took the chair.

Mr Turner nominated Mr John Nichols as Vice Chairman seconded by Cllr Coxshall and Mr Wexham

No other candidates were proposed so Mr John Nichols was elected unopposed as Vice Chairman.

Mr Lamb and Mr Nichols thanked the Authority.

## **2. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS (A2)**

The Chairman requested Members to declare any interests on the Agenda item prior to it being dealt with and advised that those with a disclosable prejudicial interest may not vote on that Agenda item.

No declarations of interest were made

## **3. MINUTES OF 27 MARCH 2025 (A3)**

Members agreed that the minutes of the meetings held on 27 March 2025 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman. No matters were arising.

## **10:30 MOTION TO EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC EXEMPT ITEMS**

**That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

## **4. THAMES ESTUARY COCKLE FISHERY (NO.2) (VARIATION) ORDER 2025 (E1) – BRIEFING FOR MEMBERS**

Members received a briefing from officers and the solicitor for the IFCA on the outcome of how officers have addressed the concerns raised by the fishing industry with regards to the Licence Allocation Process as well as details of a pre-action protocol (PAP) letter from solicitors representing one of the TECFO 2024 licence applicants.

12:02 Exempt meeting ended

Break

12:15 Public meeting restarted

## **5. TECFO 2024 LICENCE ALLOCATION PROCESS (B1)**

The CFO reminded Members that at their last meeting they had agreed to pause the Licence Allocation Process (LAP) to allow officers to look at and address concerns raised

by the Industry following the publication of the recommended ranked list of licence applicants. It was also relevant to update the IFCA and the public regarding communication that had been recently received.

Members were advised that on 17 June 2025, KEIFCA and Defra had received a pre-action protocol (PAP) letter from solicitors representing one of the TECFO 2024 licence applicants. A pre-action protocol (PAP) letter was a formal communication sent before legal proceedings to a defendant who may be liable for a claim. It set out the proposed claim and what the applicant was seeking.

In respect of unpauseing the LAP and moving forward this agenda item was not recommending that the Authority made a decision regarding the offering or issuing of licences under the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024. Instead, it was making a recommendation regarding the process by which the Authority might resume the Licence Allocation Process and proceed forwards to making a decision on to whom to issue the 15 licences available for the 2025-2031 period. In light of the PAP received, the decision in this agenda item could still be taken. However, actioning of that decision, whichever option was agreed, would not now take place until a full consideration of the PAP and its claim could be undertaken and the possibility of Judicial Review resolved.

Subject to the approval of the Authority officers would work with Defra, to assess the PAP letter received and to formulate a legally acceptable and timely response. Officers would undertake a review of options available to it in the event that the Variation Order was not passed. This would include evaluating the option of running the whole TECFO 24 licence application process again from the start. Officers would also undertake this work as soon as possible and if necessary, produce draft options to aid the cockle industry business and contingency planning. If required, the Authority could hold an extraordinary Authority meeting to discuss these options.

With regard to feedback from the Industry Members were advised the issues had been separated into procedural issues and specific legal issues and wording of the Regulating Order. Members were provided with information on all the issues raised within these areas and the IFCA's response to them.

The CFO informed Members that the correct procedures had been followed, and the issues had been adequately addressed from a legal and procedural perspective. It was recognised that the implications of this might not be welcomed by all but the priority for this meeting was the confirmation of proper due process and evidencing appropriate decision-making arrangements. It was hoped that this procedure would help clarify the LAP and give the local community the reassurance that it had been applied fairly and consistently.

The DCFO informed Members that specific legal issues had been raised regarding the wording of the Regulating Order. Members had agreed to pause the licence process and had asked officers to work with Defra to resolve any issue. It had been established that there had been drafting issues with the new Order which meant that around half of the previous licence holders would be excluded from applying for a transitional licence in the new Order. This had not been the intention of Members when debating and agreeing the

cockle review process. Advice from Defra was that a Variation Order was required to resolve this issue and to deliver the policy intent the IFCA had already agreed. The CFO discussed the matter with the Chairman and Vice Chairman and on 8 April 2025 used delegated powers to apply for a new regulating order to amend the TECFO 2024. Members were provided with a briefing online on 29 April to update them. Defra drafted the Variation Order with a 30-day period allowed for any objection. This Variation Order was subsequently agreed by the Minister for Food, Security and Rural Affairs on 10 June 2025. This Order was due to be laid before Parliament in July and would come into force in early August.

Members were advised that it was now necessary for them to “un-pause” the Licence Application Process (LAP). If they agreed to “un-pause” then they had three options available to them:

1. Do nothing; “un-pause” the LAP and undertake no further considerations of applications received - the recommended ranked list as published prior to the 27 March meeting, would be republished and presented to the Authority.
2. Rather than ‘un-pausing’ the LAP, cancel the entire current process and start again - if the LAP was restarted, no applicant who had previously applied for a transitional licence would be able to do so again. This would make the application of the variation order irrelevant and the intention of the Authority to provide a transitional period would not be able to take effect. Timing issues would also need to be considered as a new LAP would take approximately 4 months and the IFCA would not be able to start the process until the Order had been laid. The cockle fishery normally began in June and ran until the end of September and the current plan was for it to run from August to October. Choosing this option would mean the fishery would not begin until December/January when the meat yield would drop.
3. Revisit transitional applications only - the variation order limited the impact on the LAP to those applicants that could have applied for a transitional period licence. All of those eligible to apply for a transitional licence would be given the opportunity to change their application from a transitional licence to an open one and vice versa. This would allow those applicants whose applications could be affected by the variation order the ability to consider their application in light of it, whilst not giving a second opportunity to anyone who could never have been affected by the variation order. Should this option be agreed there was a possibility that some of those who were ranked in positions 1-15 in the recommended ranked list, dropped down the list in favour of another who was ranked below position 16 in the recommended ranked list.

Members were informed that officers recommended option 3 was taken forward. If option 3 was chosen the intention had been to write to all applicants and ask them to

complete paperwork by 7 July. In light of the PAP being received, this would now not be possible to adhere to and officers had revised the recommendations

The Clerk to the IFCA advised Members that rather than the recommendations had been changed, this was more a case of they were clarified, and some additional context had been provided. It didn't represent a significant shift in direction in response to an activity, rather it was about making the recommendation clearer about the position the Authority was in at the moment and as they moved through this process was to help ensure that the decision they made at this stage was properly informed depending on the different legal processes that might be involved .

A Member asked with regard to option 3, whether this meant that the IFCA would not require a new application but was clarifying or querying under the revised wording if the applicant wished to change their licence – in response the DCFO stated that an application would be required if a transitional applicant wanted to change to an open licence.

The Chairman reminded Members that the list had not been adopted or approved and could be altered.

The revised recommendations would be as follows:

- 1) The Authority to **NOTE** the decision made by the Chief Officer to apply for a regulating order.
- 2) The Authority to **CONSIDER** the options available to continue with the Licence Allocation Process and, subject to the variation order being passed and no legal impediment, **AGREE** the process under option (3) outlined in the paper whereby all of those eligible to apply for a transitional licence are given the opportunity to consider the type of licence they wish to apply for to cover the first 7 years of TECFO 2024.
- 3) The Authority to **CONSIDER** the comments from, and issues raised by, stakeholders at the last meeting along with the corresponding KEIFCA officer responses and;
  - (a) if variation order is passed and there is no legal impediment, **AGREE** to un-pause and continue with the Licence Allocation Process, or;
  - (b) If the variation order is not passed or there is a legal impediment, **AGREE** that officers undertake a review of options available to it including evaluation of the option of running the whole TECFO 24 licence application process again from the start.

A Member requested clarification on the following matters:

- If we went with option 1, the Order was approved and there was no JR could we operate the fishery given that it would be against the Variation Order – in

response the DCFO stated that option 1 would still be in line with the Variation Order.

- If option 3 was approved, the Variation Order was passed and the JR withdrawn, you would be able to go ahead in accordance with option 3 which would mean changes in the licences.– the CFO confirmed this would be the case
- If the Variation Order was not passed or the JR continued would the IFCA review the processes which might include the rerunning of the process again as per option 2 – the CFO confirmed this would be the case
- no option could be implemented until the JR was no longer in existence and the IFCA with Defra would need to review the options including running the whole process again – the CFO advised that a decision to rerun the process was primarily a decision for the IFCA however under the Shellfish Act there was a component for a decision by the Minister.
- Whichever of those happened, if the JR was not withdrawn or dismissed the fishery could not open when we wanted it to open – the DCFO confirmed this was the case

The Clerk to the IFCA advised Members that the DCFO had outlined the position of the IFCA from a procedural and operational perspective. As Clerk he wished to confirm the status of this decision where it fitted in with the decision-making process and to put a little context with the Parliamentary process and any legal challenge. It was worth bearing in mind that any choice that was made, whether the IFCA had pending legal action or not, choosing an alternative choice of path could equally lead to alternative legal challenges because no decision was immune from legal challenge. This decision was part of an iterative arrangement that the IFCA had undertaken running back over many years to develop and implement the TECFO; it having been approved in its previous format last year. In respect of the licence application process, it was important for Members to know that anything they did now would not change the fact that for the moment the LAP was paused as the pause would remain in effect until such time as the Order came into force following the Parliamentary process. The important element of the decision Members were making today was to ensure that as soon as any possible impediments, be that a legal challenge or the Parliamentary process not resulting in the Order being made, as soon as those were concluded officers would be in a position to press go on the plan that you agreed today so that when you had your next meeting you would be in a position to make the required decision. If Members didn't make a decision today they would need to reinvestigate and reconsider all that was talked about today and then request officers to go away, build the plan and then bring it back to a later meeting. Noting there is an element of time pressure as part of this decision because of the fishery implications that is why it was important to bear in mind this context that the decision before you today was about facilitating the next steps being taken so that you could take the crucial licence allocation decision in a timely and reasonable way as long as there were no outstanding legal issues. The Clerk wished to confirm that from a

procedural point of view, matters had been progressed in the correct way and that by taking a decision today that would give officers the authority and confidence to know that the actions they were taking were implementing the desires of the Authority as a whole.

The CFO informed Members that officers would begin to develop options and contingency plans, engage with Defra, look at timelines and see how the PAP process might work. At the same time they would look at all options available to them as quickly as possible and if necessary would publish any draft options to give people ideas to be able to plan their businesses around them.

The Clerk confirmed the procedural options for voting on the recommendations

Cllr Mulroney proposed that option 1 be substituted for option 3 on the recommendation, seconded by Cllr Lawes. Members voted as follows:

In favour of substituting option 1 for option 3:–	2
Against the proposal to substitute option 1 for option 3:	9
Abstentions:–	1

No other proposals were offered.

Members **APPROVED** the following recommendations:

1. The Authority voted unanimously to **NOTE** the decision made by the Chief Officer to apply for a regulating order.
2. The Authority **CONSIDERED** the options available to continue with the Licence Allocation Process and, subject to the variation order being passed and no legal impediment, **AGREED** the process under option (3) outlined in the paper whereby all of those eligible to apply for a transitional licence are given the opportunity to consider the type of licence they wish to apply for to cover the first 7 years of TECFO 2024.

In respect of Recommendation 2, Members voted as follows:

In favour of the recommendation:	9
Abstentions:	2

3. The Authority **CONSIDERED** the comments from, and issues raised by, stakeholders at the last meeting along with the corresponding KEIFCA officer responses and;

(a)if variation order is passed and there is no legal impediment, **AGREE** to un-pause and continue with the Licence Allocation Process, or;

(b)If the variation order is not passed or there is a legal impediment, **AGREE** that officers undertake a review of options available to it including evaluation of the option of running the whole TECFO 24 licence application process again from the start.

In respect of recommendation 3, Members voted as follows:

In favour of the recommendation: 9

Abstentions: 2

## **6. 2024/25 FINAL BUDGET MONITORING OUTTURN REPORT, ANNUAL RETURN AND INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (B2)**

Members were presented with details of the final position for 2024/2025 which included income and expenditure as well as reserve balances for the year. For the first time the IFCA were required to include right of use assets which required leased assets over £10,000 to be recognised in the balance sheet as a depreciating asset. For KEIFCA this was for the building leases for the Kent and Essex offices only.

Within the year, the IFCA had purchased new vehicles and two quad bikes, the cost of which had been offset by part exchange of the vehicles replaced. The additional cost was met from the Renewals reserve.

In the 2024/25 budget setting process, the legal budget had been increased as a one-off to £50,000 in case of any legal implications with the incoming T24 Regulatory Order. At the end of the financial year this had been under-utilised and the surplus set aside for any costs that might arise in 2025/26. The interest paid for balances that KCC held on behalf of KEIFCA was in excess of that forecast. It was proposed that the surplus value should be ringfenced for the same purpose as the legal budget, to mitigate any costs that arose in 2025/26 due to the T24 Regulatory Order.

Members were advised that Defra had continued to provide grant funding for additional costs associated with the development of Fishery Management Plans and work in Marine Protected Areas. £88,600 had been spent in 2024/25 with the balance ringfenced.

The Financial Advisor informed Members that £748,436 was held in renewals reserves and £1,176,194 in general reserves.

Members were advised that in 2015 a change in legislation meant that the IFCA was not legally required to submit an Annual Governance & Accountability Statement (AGAR). At the time the IFCA felt it prudent to continue with this on a voluntary basis. PKF Littlejohn who had provided this service to the IFCA had advised they would no longer be able to carry this out. As it had been too late to find an alternative company KCC's Chief Accountant had formally checked the accounts and accounting processes. Members received details of two internal audit visits undertaken and the results of these.

The Chairman thanked the Financial Advisor for the work that she had undertaken for the IFCA.



Members **RESOLVED** that:

1. the final outturn for the year together with the associated financial statements be approved; and
2. the internal audit report for 2025-2026 be noted.

## **7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025/26 (B3)**

The Financial Advisor informed Members that the funds held by KCC on behalf of KEIFCA were currently invested on their behalf based on the advice of their Treasury Advisors. This allowed KEIFCA to take advantage of favourable interest rates as their money was invested with that of KCC. Interest was calculated at year end and paid to the IFCA.

Members **RESOLVED** that Kent & Essex IFCA monies would continue to remain on deposit with Kent County Council

## **8. TECFO STOCK SURVEYS (B4)**

Members were provided with a summary of the spring cockle assessment surveys that had been carried out over four days in April 2025. Analysis of the results had suggested there remained a stable number of cockles on the major harvesting areas and that spatfall in 2024 had been good. Surveys had also been carried out on additional cockle grounds beyond these areas. All areas had been considered when setting the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the year.

Members **NOTED** this report

13:20 Ms Martin left the meeting

## **9. THAMES ESTUARY COCKLE FISHERY ORDER 2024- MANAGEMENT FOR THE 2025 FISHERY (B5)**

The DCFO advised Members that the recommendations within this paper were caveated by agenda item B1 and relied on the Variation Order being passed and that there were no legal impediments.

The DCFO informed Members that analysis of the data provided to them in the previous report indicated that the TAC should be 5,940 tonnes which equated to 36 trips per vessel.

Members **APPROVED** the following management measures:

(a) The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) should be set initially at 5,940 tonnes and that information related to the stocks will be continually reviewed throughout the season to ensure future sustainability.

(b) There will be no allocation of additional TAC.

(c) Reduction in TAC, and therefore a reduction in the number of trips, may be made in the event of very poor growth in the size of cockles.

(d) That the Chief IFCO be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to implement changes to fishing controls to ensure future sustainability including for the purposes of (b). These will be communicated to Members following decisions being made.

(e) That the fishery will commence at 1800 hrs on 17 August 2025 subject to the Variation Order being passed and no legal impediments.

(f) Provisional fishing allocations will be as follows, this will also be subject to further amendment;

The fishing season will be divided into weekly specified fishing periods which will run from 1800 hrs on Sunday to 1900 hrs on Friday and during these periods licence holders will be permitted to make the following specified numbers of landings. This will maximise production when meat yields and quality are at their best.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Number of weeks</b>	<b>Number of landings per week</b>
17 August – 5 September	3 weeks	3 landings per week – no more than 1 per week from Area 7,8,9
7 September – 26 September	3 weeks	4 landings per week– no more than 2 per week from Area 7,8,9
28 September – 31 October	5 weeks	3 landings per week– no more than 1 per week from Area 7,8,9

(g) The maximum quantity of cockles that may be landed or carried on board will remain at 13.6m<sup>3</sup>/500 baskets per fishing trip (approx. equivalent 11 tonnes).

(h) All areas of the fishery will remain open.

(i) It is recommended that sections of Areas 1, 2 and 3 should be closed at all times during the period June - September inclusive. These areas are defined as inshore sections of Areas 1, 2 and 3 from Two Tree Island at Leigh-on-Sea in the West to The Coastguard Station at Shoeburyness in the East and also within the area of Shoeburyness East Beach. (This closure applies only to the area inside the moorings and where there are no moorings closer to the shore than a distance of 300 metres measured from mean high water mark.)

The DCFO reminded Members that under the new Regulating Order the IFCA had the power to create reserves within the area of the new Order for experimental, management or scientific purposes. It was intended to set aside an area within area 6 to allow it to be fished for manila clams only as part of the manila clam trial.

Members **APPROVED** that a section of area 6 of the regulated fishery be closed under the reserves provision of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery (No2) Order 2024, for the purposes of conducting manila clam trials later this year.

## **10. PERMIT BYELAW COCKLE FISHERY (B6)**

The DCFO advised Members that as the 2025 TECFO fishery would be delayed it was proposed to start the permit fishery earlier to allow cockle fishing in the Thames to start and to begin a supply to market. Boundaries to the permit cockle fishery had been altered following the introduction of the new TECFO24 with beds now available to permit holders on Scrapsgate, the Spile and Margate Sands. Surveys had been carried out on all the main production beds outside of the TECFO and as a result the TAC had been set at 612 tonnes. Thirty-four applications had been made for a permit which equated to six landings of three tonnes per trip. Four landings would take place in the south of the district and two landings in the north. The fishery would be open for longer this year, from 13 July 2025 to 8 August 2025. As a result, it was proposed that all vessels would be expected to be fitted with a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) as required within the TECFO fishery.

Members **APPROVED** the following management measures:

- (i) The Management Plan requirement that any open areas shall contain a minimum of 350 tonnes of cockles shall be waived for the 2025 season, subject to continual review throughout the fishery.
- (ii) The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) should be set initially at 612 tonnes and that information related to the stocks will be continually reviewed throughout the season to ensure sustainability.
- (iii) Reallocation of TAC, and therefore extension of the fishing season, may be made in the event of any remaining TAC and taking onboard feedback from industry and officers regarding the fishing opportunity in Area 17

- (iv) That the Chief IFCO be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to implement changes to fishing controls to ensure future sustainability including for the purposes of (c). These will be communicated to Members following decisions being made.
- (v) That the described zonal management of Area 20 be undertaken in order to provide for a manila clam fishery trial.
- (vi) That all areas south of the TECFO 2024 shall be opened to fishing subject to the spatial restrictions in area 20 for manila clam trials, and that information related to fishing activity, catch rates and vessel density will be continually reviewed throughout the season to ensure sustainability.
- (vii) That the Chief IFCO be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to implement changes to fishing controls to ensure future sustainability including for the purposes of (b). These will be communicated to Members following decisions being made.
- (viii) That the fishery will commence at 1800 hrs on Sunday 13 July 2025.
- (ix) Provisional fishing allocations will be as follows, this will also be subject to further amendment;
- (x) The fishing season will be divided into weekly specified fishing periods which will run from 1800 hrs on Sunday to 1200 hrs on Friday and during these periods permit holders will be permitted to make the following specified numbers of landings.

Dates	Number of weeks	Number of landings per week
13 July – 25 July	2 weeks	2 landings per week – no more than 1 per week from Area 12-18 (South of TECFO)
27 July – 8 August	2 weeks	1 landing per week from Area 12-18 (South of TECFO) (All other areas closed)

- (xi) The maximum quantity of cockles that may be landed or carried on board will be 3.39m<sup>3</sup>/125 baskets per fishing trip (approx. equivalent 3 tonnes).

## 11. MANILA CLAM TRIAL OVERVIEW (B7)

The CFO reminded Members that they had approved a consultation with interested stakeholders to develop an outline for a two-year trial to understand how the fishery worked and its impact at a fleet level.

Members were provided with details of the outcome of the trial which had received ten responses, seven of which were from previous participants in the 2024 trial. Feedback

had been used to create a suggested trial structure. Two prospecting trips had been added to the trial to allow vessels to explore new clam grounds within the Thames Estuary and the structure of the trips and catch limits had been changed to fortnightly rather than weekly. Stock survey assessments had shown that the number of clams had declined and as a result the number of triallists would remain at eight with only one application per business allowed. The trial would begin on 4 November 2025 and end on 12 December 2025. Final catch limits would be determined from surveys that would take place in September 2025, however at present it was projected that each trip per vessel would allow 300kg to be landed.

In respect of choosing who should take part in the trial, it was proposed that the panel that made the decision should be composed of four people; two KEIFCA members, the CEO of the AIFCA and Professor John Humphries who was the ex-chair of SIFCA and an expert on manila clams. It was anticipated that applicants would be notified if they had been accepted onto the trial by 14 July 2025.

Members **RESOLVED** that:

1. The proposed Manila clam fishery vision be **APPROVED**; and
2. The 2-year trial outline including the principle of one application per business and 8 trial places, and the application process as described (including the Application form and the Allocation Process for KEIFCA for 2025-2026 Manila Clam Trial and the draft Code of Conduct) be **APPROVED**.

13:50 Mr Baker left the meeting

## **12. HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REVIEW 2024/25 (B8)**

Members were advised that there had been one notable incident since the last report in which a crew member had hit their head while on Nerissa and had developed severe concussion as a result. The matter had been investigated and the outcomes acted on. Members were provided with details of training that staff had undertaken since May 2024.

Members **NOTED** the report

## **13. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND STANDING ORDERS (B9)**

Members were reminded that they were required to review the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders on an annual basis. At their visit in November 2024 internal audit had recommended that a cost threshold should be specified when utilising KCC procurement team for tendering processes. As a result, the CFO in consultation with the Chairman and

Vice Chairman had amended the Financial Regulations to specify the amount at £100,000. No other changes were recommended.

Members **RATIIFED** the amendment to the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders

#### **14. IFCAS' CONDUCT AND OPERATIONS REPORT (B10)**

The CFO informed Members that a report on the conduct and operation of the IFCAs that covered the period 2018 to 2022 had been laid before Parliament by Defra. The report contained thirteen conclusions, details of which were provided within the agenda paper. Members were advised that the report had been discussed at the Chief Officers' Group (COG) in March 2025 where it was agreed that the Chairman of COG would work with the AIFCAs to establish a steering group with Defra and other parties to implement the recommendations of the report.

Members **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** to support and work with the AIFCAs to address the recommendations of the IFCAs Conduct and Operations report and work collaboratively with Defra in doing so.

#### **15. MATTERS FOR REPORT (C1-6)**

Members received:

- Quarterly Report of the Kent IFCO (C1)
- Quarterly Report of the Essex IFCO (C2)
- Quarterly Report of the Patrol Vessel 'Tamesis' and 'Vigilant'(C3)
- Quarterly Report of the Patrol Vessel 'Nerissa' (C4)
- Sea Angling Report (C5)
- Enforcement Report (C6)

14:15 meeting ended