

The Leigh Port Partnership Ltd
Thames Estuary Fishermans Association

16th September 2022

Attention Of:
The Chairman & Authority Members
Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Paragon House
Albert Street
Ramsgate
Kent
CT11 9HD

Via email

Response to Consultation 2

Dear Chairman and Authority Members

This response also covers the request from the Chief Fishery officer in his letter to the Association Dated the 14th September 2022

In response to consultation 2 of the Thames Estuary Cockerle Fishery Reviews, we would like to point out the following.

At the meeting of the 14th June 2022 held in Chelmsford 3 options were voted forward and the final option of the Bermuda having the full support of the Cockerle Industry with a follow up letter as requested by the Vice Chairman to the Chairman of the Authority Dated 4th July 2022 that if this option was taken forward in its entirety the 14 named vessels would not apply for permits on any of the new permit fishery areas. Mr Rattley in his Oral evidence did state that he was shocked that no provision in the Bermuda 28 had been made for additional licences, as in our letter of the 4th July the industry had stated if the New Haiti option was chosen then

The 14 would commit to abstain in the following area's **7. 10. 14. 17. 18. 19. 20.** if the proposed extra licences were only granted one at a time once the TAC has sustained **8624 tons** for 5 consecutive years For any further licences to be issued the Tac would again need to be stable for 5 consecutive years ie: 2nd licence The TAC would need to be **9270 ton** 3rd **9500 ton** 4th **9965 ton** 5th **10712 ton** 6th **11515 ton.**

Mr Rattley was referring that he thought this should have been included in the Bermuda 28 option instead of the stark 14 licences only and the comment that there would be no flexibility in licences issued.

Clearly the Current TECFO fleet understand that they are seen as being fortunate, and yes have invested heavily in the vessels and gear to ensure that the fishery is sustainable and are able to meet their environmental impact, hence the gaining of the MSC certification for the TECFO cockle area.

The second Phase consultation was then released after a private meeting of the Authority on the 6th and 7th July with a further option added.

The procedural unfairness is the back drop to some of our comments.

The decision taken on the 6/7th July special meeting did not require total exclusion of the public, only on matters that were of a financial or legal matter. All other technical meetings discussing the making of bylaws etc have been held in public and industry invited for its input. It seems to go against the procedures of the Authority on such a major issue that this was not the case

New Jamaica .15 licences for first 7 year cycle (Range 14-20)

To exclude areas 15 and area 13 This option will further impact on the fishable areas as it is reducing the area currently available in the existing TECFO area and increasing the licences whilst reducing the viability of the current 14 licences this is incomparable to your background report on the effects of increased suction dredging, As is currently being seen this season the fleet is struggling within the TECFO area, Therefore if this option was moved forward and the season was as this season the fleet would be down to possibly 25 days fishing totally unviable for anyone and with 7 yearly reviews of the licence impossible to invest or secure employment, and total destruction of the fishing grounds. The MSC verification would be lost on Areas 15 and 13 as it is designated to the 14 vessels of the 1994 TECFO order

New Haiti 15 licences for first 7 year cycle (Range 14-20)

To exclude areas 15, 13 and 11, again this option will further impact on the fishable areas as it is reducing the area currently available in the existing TECFO area even more and increasing the licences whilst reducing the viability of the current 14 licences this is incomparable to your background report on the effects of increased suction dredging, As is currently being seen this season the fleet is struggling within the TECFO area, Therefore if this option was moved forward and the season was as this season the fleet would be down to possibly 20 days fishing totally unviable for anyone and with 7 yearly reviews of the licence impossible to invest or secure employment and the highly likely scenario of business going in to liquidation, let alone the total destruction of the fishing grounds, again this goes totally against your own reports. The MSC verification would be lost on Areas 15, 13 and 11 as it is designated to the 14 vessels of the 1994 TECFO order

New Bermuda 7. Fixed 14 licences for the 28 year duration.

Although this option covers the same ground as the current TECFO the 7 year licence review is not viable for any business to continually invest in the vessels equipment or staff as there is no guarantee of the licence being renewed after this period, should a new vessel be required at any point you are looking at a cost of approximately 1.5 million pounds, if any business were to approach a financial institution for this type of funding for a specialised vessel with only a guarantee of 7 years and no guarantee of license or Quota year on year it would be impossible to gain any sort of funding.

New Bermuda 28 14 Fixed Licences

Clearly this option is the ideal situation however it is felt that under the 1994 TECFO Cockle Fishery order that it gave the Authority the ability to increase the licences if the Quota was there and sustainable, this current option does not give that option surely this should be considered as it protects an Industry, complies with all the standards expected of sustainability and environmental impacts, At the risk of repeating our selves please

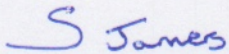
consider the following, IF the proposed extra licences were only granted one at a time once the TAC has sustained **8624 tons** for 5 consecutive years For any further licences to be issued the Tac would again need to be stable for 5 consecutive years ie: 2nd licence The TAC would need to be **9270 ton** 3rd **9500 ton** 4th **9965 ton** 5th **10712 ton** 6th **11515 ton**.

Another scenario to this would be to legislate within the new order for temporary licences to be issued if the bio mass is far beyond normal ranges and then rescinded once it falls back to a baseline This has been achieved in the Dee Fishery order.

In all cases if the 7 year licence cycle is considered further knowing that this could cause severe financial hardships to any one who has invested for the first period if they are fortunate enough to be granted one, what if any means of appeal will be allowed to justify the non issuing of a further licence.

With regards to question 10. The licensed vessels all land their catch within the KEIFCA district supporting the Local economies, it is up to the individual business to decide what happens to the catch from there on in, it certainly is not for the KEIFCA to base decisions on what happens to the catch from that point onwards.

Kind Regards



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