

Success Criteria

By: Chief IFC Officer
To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority –
20 May 2014
Subject: **KEIFCA SUSTAINABILITY AND SPECIES REVIEW
WORKSHOP SUMMARY**
Classification Unrestricted

Summary: To provide an overview of the conclusions of the 2 day byelaw review and sustainability workshop

Introduction

Under DEFRA success criteria 2 all IFCAs are required to:
"By April 2015, all legacy byelaws have been reviewed and evaluated against current evidence base; redundant and duplicate byelaws have been removed and gaps covered."

As each IFCA has taken on a different number of byelaws there is no suggested system or evaluation criteria that KEIFCA should follow or work to, to deliver this work. As KEIFCA has inherited byelaws from Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee, Eastern Joint Sea Fisheries Committee, Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee and the Environment Agency. Unfortunately the review process is not straightforward as within each organisation the wording of byelaws changed overtime (Sea Fisheries Committees' were set up in the 1890's) and when this is combined with different organisations making different byelaws, a difficult process is made even more complicated.

In an effort to try and manage this process a 2 day byelaw review and sustainability workshop was run on the 19th – 20th February in Dover. The workshop aimed to help bring together members, officers, key partners and scientists to identify best practice in sustainable inshore fisheries. In creating a 2 day window it was hoped that members would be able to develop an understanding of some of the key issues involved in creating a byelaw review framework and help strike the correct balance between social, environmental and economic benefits.

The meeting covered 3 key areas:

- Create KEIFCA policy statements and criteria that help create a framework to develop future fisheries management options
- To help develop the concept of sustainable exploitation and to evaluate key KEIFCA fisheries against international sustainability criteria
- To evaluate KEIFCA species management plans for key species and to develop management principles/ priorities for these stocks.

It was hoped that by trying to take a strategic approach at the meeting rather than concentrate on developing specific policies, a framework of fisheries management principles could be created that would help KEIFCA to develop fisheries management options in a coordinated, systematic and transparent way.

Outline of the meeting

The meeting covered a number of key aspects of fisheries management and management principles.

- An outline of the current KEIFCA position in reviewing byelaws (The problem – the landscape).
- A review of key EU fisheries and marine environmental policy (Common Fisheries Policy update from Defra and the MMO and a quick run through of the implications of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive).
- Discussion on what is meant by sustainability (reviewing International UN FAO/MSF sustainable fishing principles and the conclusions from Project Inshore).
- An update and feedback session on KEIFCA Species Management Plans.
- A review of our current byelaws and a discussion on how byelaws could be reviewed and identify the next steps.

KEIFCAs definition of sustainability

Section 153 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 established IFCAs duties:
"seeking to ensure sustainable exploitation of fisheries;

balancing socio-economic benefits with the protection of, or the promotion of the recovery of, the marine environment from past and present exploitation;

taking steps to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and balancing the needs of all persons exploiting the district's fisheries."

Although the Marine and Coastal Access Act uses the term sustainability, the Act does not attempt to define it. In developing any review process being clear about what you are trying to achieve is vital. Sustainability is a very commonly used phrase and means many different things to many different people. One of the activities undertaken by the delegates at the workshop was to discuss what was meant by this term in the Act and to develop a sustainability statement that KEIFCA can use in developing its future policies. The workshop divided into different groups that each developed their own sustainability definitions (texts in italic have been taken from the meeting, texts in bold are summary comments):

"Maximising environmental and economic potential within the marine environment to enable the optimum exploitation of sea fisheries resources, for the long term benefit of Kent & Essex coastal communities."

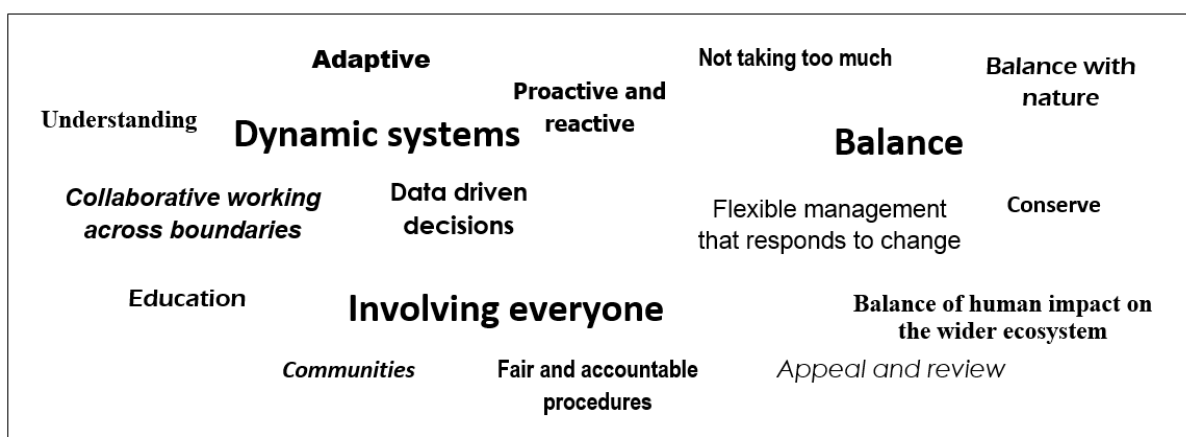
"Manage resources we can control, maximise product/resources without compromising ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

"Managing fishing activity and exploitation of sea fisheries resources, with consideration to a balance between the community needs of today & tomorrow, and the maintenance of the stocks & habitats for the future."

"Balancing the competing demands of users to ensure the long term opportunities by understanding."

Summary definition: Maximising environmental and economic potential within the marine ecosystem to enable the optimum exploitation of sea fisheries resources, with consideration to balancing the competing demands of the present without compromising the future coastal community and ecosystem needs.

The groups also identified key words, phrases and concepts that they felt summed up the kind of management they wanted to achieve.



KEIFCAs principles of sustainability

Following on from developing a sustainability statement the groups then worked to develop a set of more detailed principles that outlined the key factors and issues that would shape KEIFCAs approach in trying to develop sustainable fisheries management solutions. The individual principles identified by different groups at the workshop were then aggregated around specific topics and summarised for this paper. The principles can then be used as criteria to judge KEIFCA byelaws against in the review process (text in italic was taken from the meeting, text in bold are summary comments).

- *Avoidance of overfishing*
- *Protect local/regional stock*
- *Maintain sustainability of wider stocks*

Summary definition: KEIFCA recognises its responsibility to protect local and regional fish stocks and to develop management measures that reduce overfishing of these stocks. KEIFCA also recognises its wider responsibility to work in partnership with others to promote the sustainable exploitation of trans-boundary stocks that have significant parts of their lifecycle outside the KEIFCA district.

- *Environmentally responsible fishing gears and methods are promoted*
- *Responsibility to wider environment – nursery areas, MPAs*
- *Maintenance/recovery of a functional ecosystem that supports a sustainable fishery*

Summary definition: KEIFCA will consider the impact that proposed management measures will have on the functioning and health of the whole ecosystem and recognises the role the wider ecosystem plays in supporting sustainable fisheries. KEIFCA will promote management measures that will help maintain or if needed recover the key ecosystem functions.

- *Try to encourage responsible, economically acceptable practises*
- *Economic viability*

Summary definition: KEIFCA will try to encourage responsible, economically viable fishing practises.

- *Precautionary but proportional and fair management*
- *Adaptive management based on best available evidence*
- *The use of best available information and traditional knowledge is used in decision making*

Summary definition: The development of management will be fair and seek to balance different needs and principles. In developing management options the

best available information as well as traditional knowledge will be used to help create where possible adaptive solutions that respond to changes.

- *Ensure the full engagement of our local communities*
- *Open communication*
- *Needs and responsibilities of all stakeholders recognised and considered*

Summary definition: KEIFCA will promote clear and open communication with stakeholders and will endeavour to fully engage with our local communities and recognise their needs and responsibilities when considering fisheries management measures.

- *Right to fish carries responsibility*
- *Compliance with laws*
- *Fishery conducted in a social manner*

Summary definition: KEIFCA regards the right to fish also brings with it a social responsibility to undertake this activity in a responsible manner that complies with the law and the spirit of environmental stewardship.

KEIFCA Species Management Plans

The role of species management plans in the byelaw review process is critical as they not only help audit the work, research and issues that are known about a specific stock, but they also help to highlight and then prioritise the gaps in our knowledge. Each management plan is not designed to be a definitive document, but instead to be an easy to read, summary which KEIFCA can share with local communities to start to help inform and capture the debate about sustainable fisheries management.

Working in groups the delegates at the workshop worked through 9 different species management plans and gave feedback:

- *More layperson, less acronyms*
- *Phylum species box not necessary*
- *Species sensitivity graphic*
- *Hyperlinks to evidence and acronyms*
- *Ensure angling interests are represented*
- *Numbers, ticks & crosses and 'happy fish' / 'sad fish' to replace high, medium, low graphic*
- *Key points: Legal information*
- *Picture identification*
- *Key features*
- *Basic biology*
- *Non priority species*

All the comments made are very useful and will be used to develop further drafts of the species management plans.

Gaps and next steps identified from reviewing draft species management plans

Using the species management plans as a starting point each group then discussed the key evidence gaps in the plans as well as KEIFCAs role in developing possible management measures. Each group discussed at least one shellfish and one finfish species.

Comments on fish stocks

Sole

- *Gaps in knowledge/science around district.*
- *Possible management measure - Closed areas on temporary basis to protect spawning*

Cod

- *KEIFCA can only have an indirect influence on this stock*
- *Enforce EU regulations key role*

Thornback Ray

- *Could be a manageable fishery with Eastern IFCA & MMO.*
- *Need to work with other organisations including the EU to formulate consistent management plan.*

Herring

- *Current management confusing*
- *Is KEIFCA byelaw necessary?*
- *Research around Thames and Blackwater herring needed to inform stock levels and key parameters that can inform the annual quota allowance (TAC).*

All the groups reflected on the relationship between the area of the district and the relative area that is required to effectively manage the whole life-cycle of a species. The groups also reflected on the ability of KEIFCA to effectively manage mobile fin-fish stocks, and saw the need for KEIFCA to work well with partner organisations to develop effective management measures. Delegates discussed the need for KEIFCA to clearly identify strategic goals for these stocks and then to look to represent these views in key decision making forums and when key policy is being developed (e.g North sea RAC meetings).

The groups also discussed the role and responsibility that the EU and the Common Fisheries Policy played in managing these stocks especially those managed by quota. With these stocks the KEIFCAs enforcement role rather than the research or management role was identified as key.

The group also reflected on what should be KEIFCAs role for stocks like flounder, mullet and bass, which are non-quota stocks and have more adhoc research and management. Whilst there are some steps KEIFCA can take to manage these stocks some delegates felt that effective management would require a more coordinated response. Sharing and discussing species management plans as well as identifying a lead regulator for these stocks was seen as a useful first step.

Comments on shellfish stocks

Whelk

- *Next step is to develop clearer understanding of the stocks and the stock dynamics in the district. This will help develop a stock model and help inform the whelk permit.*

Native Oyster

- *All the groups identified oysters as a stock that can be best managed at the KEIFCA district level.*
- *Developing methods of effectively managing cultch was seen as a key research objective.*

Lobster

- *Although data is being collected for lobster catches making sure the data is correct and quality assured is key if this data is going to be used in future management.*
- *The level of current exploitation was discussed as was the possibility that the stock is currently being exploited at a level higher than the Maximum Sustainable Yield and management might need to be required.*
- *Management measures including minimum sizes, V notching and effort limitation via a permit scheme were discussed.*

Brown Crab

- *As the distribution of the stocks are trans-boundary, the groups felt that KEIFCA could work with adjacent IFCAS to formulate consistent management plan.*
- *Discussions and joint management with France?*
- *A permit byelaw could be a useful management measure.*

As the groups worked through different shellfish stocks the same types of issues arose where the spatial distribution of the stock relative to the boundaries of KEIFCA came to the fore. To effectively manage widely distributed shellfish stocks like brown crab and scallops KEIFCA needed to work with other partner organisations, with other shellfish (cockles, oysters, whelks and lobsters) the distribution of these stocks meant that KEIFCA could progress with developing effective management.

Reviewing Byelaws

After reading through the species management plans delegates then worked through all the byelaws within KEIFCA district (KESFC, ESFJC, SSFC and EA byelaws) and studied each piece of legislation to try and assess the different stocks each byelaw affected. After reviewing all the byelaws there was then a joint discussion concentrating on key aspects the Authority should consider when reviewing byelaws.

- *Build in recreational users to process*
- *Terminology sometimes confusing*
- *Consultation is key*
- *Rationalise and condense legislation*

- *Findings from SMPs – byelaws by priority*
- *Interpretation – how is it enforced?*
- *RAC – influence at level above*
- *Inter-IFCA – joined up working for byelaw process and species specific (MMO)*
- *Need to consider some byelaws affect others*
- *Who is lead regulator?*
- *History behind why byelaws were introduced*
- *Need data – byelaw to require data to inform future byelaws*

Delegates then discussed the process of developing a byelaw review process and concluded that developing flexible management that responded where possible to changes was key to developing new effective legislation.

A starting point for the process was also outlined with distinct byelaw review work streams identified

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vessel requirements</i> • <i>Trawling</i> • <i>Netting</i> • <i>Potting (lobster, crab)</i> • <i>Finfish</i> | Byelaws with a wider scope covering a range of issues |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cockles</i> • <i>Oysters</i> • <i>Whelks</i> • <i>Mussels</i> • <i>Scallops</i> • <i>Clams</i> | More specific byelaws covering individual distinct shellfish fisheries |

The meeting also suggested that the next step in this process should be KEIFCA officers developing a more detailed process and a prioritised plan for byelaw review delivery using the points made in the meeting as guidance. Delegates also stressed the need to share and review these plans with the local community and to take into account changes to the Common Fisheries Policy.

The Authority are asked to discuss the issues raised and APPROVE suggestions form the workshop.