

Notes of a Working Party meeting of the **Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority** held at the Environment & Education Centre, RSPB, Rainham Marshes on Monday 18 February 2013.

Present: Cllr J L Lamb (Southend BC), Mr PJE Nichols (MMO), Cllr M Harrison (Kent KCC), Mr B Smart (MMO)

In Attendance: Mr J Wiggins (CIFCO), Mr A Kennedy (Skipper/IFCO), Mr D Deverson (Mate/IFCO)

The meeting commenced at 11:00am

Declaration of interest

No Declaration of Interests were declared

The Chairman opened the meeting welcoming all attendees.

Key points considered by the meeting:

The budget for a new vessel

It was reported that the Authority's financial advisor had indicated the availability of a maximum budget of £900k plus funds arising from the sale of the 'Ken Green'. It was also reported that it may be possible to source extra equipment from other parts of the budget. Members advised that there might be grants available from EU/LEP for specialist equipment.

Justification for the new vessel

The Panel was asked to consider whether, in this financial climate, the spending of this sum of money could be justified. They were informed that by the time a new vessel is commissioned the Ken Green will have been in service for 14+ years, with the original 10 year service life extended by 4 or 5 years. Discussion took place regarding how urgent the need is for replacement of the vessel and it was concluded that because of previous engine failures, it would be reasonable to consider that the replacement vessel should be commissioned as soon as possible. Measures have been taken to reduce the risk of engine failure; however it is unknown how long the engines will continue to operate without the need for further repairs.

What type of vessel

Members discussed in depth what was needed from a new vessel with various designs and construction materials being considered.

What type of power units / efficiency of operation?

Members raised the issue of the reliability of the Ken Green's engines and wanted assurances that the next vessel's engines would be more reliable. Alternative power units were discussed with the possibility of researching Hydrogen cells. Consideration of efficiencies that could be gained from hull design, method of propulsion, and engine size were taken into account.

ACTION POINT - JL to supply contact details – AK to contact suppliers and obtain specifications

Ridged inflatable boat (RIB)

A replacement RIB was discussed. It was suggested that purchasing a RIB with the capacity to work as a separate entity and to be able to be trailered to different parts of the district would be a valuable tool. The panel was advised there was a possibility of EU funding for a new RIB

Consultant

The need for a consultant to oversee the building of a new vessel was raised.

Maximizing the potential of the New patrol Vessel

It was suggested that perhaps the new vessel would be able to be contracted to carry out work beyond its normal duties, bringing revenue to the Authority. A concern was expressed about manning the vessel and that if large amounts of additional work are contracted it may result in the need to employ additional crew and result in extra wear and tear on the vessel. The economic viability of contracting commitments would need to be considered.

Other options

It was brought to Members' attention that one supplier had suggested that they would be able to supply a vessel at less than their asking price if it could be used by them as a show boat. The panel discussed the proposal

The resale value of the Ken Green

Members enquired of the value of the Ken Green on the second hand market, they were advised that the market is very variable and is dependent upon market requirements at the time of sale.

Recommendations

New Patrol vessel

It is recommended that the new Patrol Vessel should be a 16-18m twin hulled vessel of GRP construction (further consideration of vessel hull options will be explored before the next meeting and a report made). It would be desirable to have a combination of an economical cruise and a high pursuit speed dependent on vessel design capabilities and engine specification. It was suggested that a pursuit speed of 30 knots and cruise speed of 25 knots may be preferred but it was recognised that the increased cost and possible reduced efficiency should be taken into account. Propulsion of the vessel would be via jet drives or conventional propellers. The greater efficiency of props would need to be compared with improved manoeuvrability etc. of jet drives. This would need to be given final consideration as vessel specification is finalised.

To be able to conduct inspections of fishing vessels a RIB would be carried. The launching of the RIB would be via a ramp off the stern to facilitate effective launch and recovery at sea. The RIB would also be fitted out for independent use via a trailer for transport around the district.

The vessel should be prioritised for enforcement duties and be fully equipped to carry out these tasks; the vessel should also have the capability to carry out other duties that are required of it. This would include survey and research work. The vessel should have the capability to carry 8 people, have basic overnight accommodation and be capable of working beyond the 12 mile limit if/when necessary.

The design and building of the vessel should incorporate the capacity for future improvement and the installation of additional equipment that may in future be required. This would include provision for the installation of items such as deck plates for winches, blocks and a marine crane and any other extras like pressure washer and sonars.

Consultant

It is recommended that a marine consultant should be contracted to oversee and advise on vessel design, specification and build.

Budget

Officers would research the possibilities of grants towards specialized equipment and report back.

Actions

- A consultant to be employed to oversee the vessel design, specification and building of a new patrol vessel

- Mr A Kennedy and Mr D Deverson to arrange a trip on a 17m catamaran to observe the capabilities of this type of hull design
- A report be prepared for the next Authority meeting detailing the working group's recommendations