

By: Assistant Chief Fishery Officer

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation
Authority – 12 September 2016

Subject: **HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE**

Classification Unrestricted

Summary:

This report will provide Members with information on an incident that took place during the summer cockle survey on Maplin Sands.

Recommendations:

This report is for comment and noting only.

Background:

KEFICA undertake cockle surveys four times a year on the cockle beds on an intertidal sand bank known as Maplin Sands, these sands also form the sea area of the Shoebury Firing Range operated by Qinetiq on behalf of MoD. This is an area that at low tide goes out to 5 km. The surveys take place during the ebb of the tide by two officers on quad bikes over three to four days and normally take five hours per day to complete.

1.1 On 4 June 2016 the quad bikes of two officers who were conducting a survey became stuck in mud and could not be dug out. With the tide coming in, and no safe way to return to shore, the officers called the coastguard for assistance and were rescued by the RNLI from Southend. Both officers were unharmed and had followed all relevant procedures in attempting to free the bikes and for declaring an emergency with the coastguard.

The quad bikes had been washed away by the time it was safe to go back to attempt to recover them, although one was washed ashore a few days later. KEIFCA's insurance company has agreed to the replacement of these quad bikes.

1.2 The risk assessments and procedures have been reviewed and talks have been held with Qinetiq regarding new equipment and procedures that will be put in place to allow officers to access the area. These will include the hire and then possible purchase of a 6 wheel "argo" vehicle which would be used to tow out a quad bike if it were to be stuck in the future, trauma 1st aid training (due to the

presence of potential unexploded ordnance on site) and joint training with Qinetiq on the recovery of a quad bike and officers in an emergency. The next set of surveys will be taking place in September with the training being undertaken prior to this.

1.3 **Financial Implications:**

- The summer survey could not be completed resulting in a loss to the Authority of the payment by DP World of £6,178 for the cockle samples that are collected on their behalf.
- The full cost for replacing the quad bikes were covered by insurance, however the cost of replacing the equipment used (GPS, radios, beacons, storage boxes) will be required to be covered from the budget.
- DP World have been spoken to regarding the requirement from Qinetiq to use an additional vehicle to recover any stuck quad bikes. They have been advised that the hire and possible purchase of the "argo" vehicle will result in the fee charged to them for the collection of cockle samples being increased to reflect this additional cost.

1.4 **Recommendations:**

Members of Kent & Essex IFCA are asked to **NOTE** this report and make **COMMENT** on them.