

By: Assistant Chief IFCO

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017

Subject: **Annual Plan 2017-2018**

Classification Unrestricted

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**Summary:**

To present to the Authority, for discussion, the Draft Annual Plan 2017-2018

**Recommendations:**

The Authority are asked to **DISCUSS** the report and provide **COMMENTS**

Kent & Essex IFCA are required by the Marine and Coastal Act to publish an annual plan that sets out the Authority's main objectives and priorities for the year. A final draft of the plan would normally be submitted to the Secretary of State by 31st March each year.

In writing the 2017/18 Annual Plan officers have been aware of the challenge of using the staff and asset resources of the Authority in the most effective way. This has meant balancing the evidence and survey needs of the scientific work undertaken by officers with the enforcement and compliance work carried out, and using vessels and sea time accordingly. Taking on feedback from the Authority members, additional information has been added to the 2017/18 plan to highlight key priorities and times of year for officers and equipment.

There are a number of survey activities proposed within the Annual Plan, of which some are ongoing surveys, such as the cockle surveys, and provide key information for fisheries management purposes. Others however are research projects taken on by the Authority to address specific needs and research questions. These are taken on in a prioritised manner whilst taking into account the limitations in terms of staff numbers and asset availability. Where additional external funding can be acquired, or projects are run jointly, then more projects can be taken on as these limitations can be mitigated (by additional staff or assets) for those specific projects.

Primarily as a result of increased enforcement and other survey work this coming year, the draft Annual Plan proposes to not continue with the oyster harrowing project for a third year. This is due to a combination of reasons including the aforementioned resource availability as well as how this project fits

into the conservation advice and management structure being proposed for restoration works within the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach, Colne MCZ.

The Draft Annual Plan enclosed with these papers is presented for discussion by Members.

**Recommendations:**

The Authority are asked to **DISCUSS** the report and provide **COMMENTS**