



Agenda Item B5

By: Dominic Bailey, Assistant Chief Fishery Officer

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority – 30 November 2018

Subject: **Replacement of patrol vessel RIB 'Blue Jacket'**

Classification Unrestricted

Summary:

As part of medium/long term vessel renewal, it is recommended that the RIB 'Blue Jacket' be replaced.

Recommendations:

To **NOTE** the actions undertaken so far and to **APPROVE** in principle the replacement of Blue Jacket subject to a final decision being made at the next Authority meeting

In 2016, KEIFCA purchased a 7.8 m Ribcraft RIB, which was intended to be a short term gap filling exercise between the sale of our previous main patrol vessel 'Ken Green' and the new patrol vessel 'Nerissa'. The RIB, 'Blue Jacket', was purchased second hand and is a 2009 built vessel with a single 250hp Suzuki outboard engine.

'Blue Jacket' has proven to be extremely versatile, bringing a completely new way of carrying out compliance and enforcement patrols and inspections across the District. She has also found a niche in patrolling the Essex coastline, which is notable by its multitude of shallow, tidal estuaries and rivers which make both shore enforcement and patrols with large vessels more challenging. This has been brought into sharper relief with the making of KEIFCA byelaws including the Bottom Towed Gear prohibition in Essex Estuaries SAC and the newly made, Native Oyster Flexible Permit Byelaw for the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ.

The Authority expressed a wish to retain 'Blue Jacket' after 'Nerissa' was delivered and came into operational service and so, in order to take advantage of this new capability, KEIFCA employed a RIB Coxswain/MPA Compliance Officer in 2017.

'Blue Jacket' has proven itself to be an invaluable additional tool for KEIFCA enforcement work, being both quicker and cheaper to run than the large patrol vessels, albeit with obviously reduced rough weather capability and long distance capability. She has shown that a RIB is ideal for coastal and riverine work as well as having some capability to go further out to sea when necessary and conditions are suitable.

'Blue Jacket' is now 10 years old, complete with its original engine. It also has some significant limitations which impact upon Health and Safety and have to be taken into account both in risk assessment and in operational planning, the main one of these is that it only runs one single, large outboard which doesn't provide any resilience in the event of engine failure at sea.

Following the 14 September 2018 quarterly meeting where Members were informed of upcoming budgeting work on vessel renewal for the next several years, officers have taken the step of beginning the process of outlining replacement of 'Blue Jacket'. This has included approaching manufacturers to identify what sort of vessels are available and the likely costs.

It is recommended that the replacement of 'Blue Jacket' be undertaken, and that if the Authority is so minded, that officers would report to the next Authority meeting with complete costings and a preferred supplier. Subject to confirmation at that meeting, a vessel could be delivered by approximately November 2019.

Recommendations:

The Authority is asked to **NOTE** the actions undertaken so far and **APPROVE** in principle the replacement of 'Blue Jacket' subject to a final decision being made at the next Authority meeting.