

# Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ

## Project Board

### Meeting 25



**Date:** 26 June 2025

**Time:** 1530hrs

**Venue:** Online via Teams video conferencing

#### **Agenda:**

1. Apologies
2. Notes of last meeting
3. Actions and Decisions
4. Progress against ARM plan (SH)
5. Risk review
  - a. Project Risks (SH)
  - b. MCZ Risks (SH)
6. ARM budgets and Funding (SH)
7. Stakeholder meeting proposal (EC)
8. Research Task & Finish Group update (RWJ)
9. Management Task & Finish Group update (LG)
10. Stakeholder Group update (EC)
11. Evidence subgroup (LG)
12. Communications update (EC)
13. Date of next meeting (SH)
14. AOB

## Item 4: Progress against ARM plan

Verbal update. Please see progress tracker below.

ARM Plan		RAG rating	2021				2022				2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Assess	Potting Assessment		v5.0																												
	Interim report																														
Management	Voluntary Code of Best Practice	Define the issues																													
		Develop and appraise																													
		Implement																													
		Monitor																													
		Evaluate and adapt																													
		Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023	Byelaw	Define the issues																											
	Develop and appraise																														
	Seek confirmation																														
	Implement																														
	Monitor																														
	Evaluate and adapt																														
	Permit conditions	Define the issues																													
Develop and appraise																															
Seek confirmation																															
Implement																															
Monitor																															
Evaluate and adapt																															
Research	Assessing impacts of potting																														
	Mapping sensitive features																														
	Mapping fishing activities																														
	Trialing alternative fishing practices																														
	Determining the value of rugged chalk																														

Q1: Jan - Mar  
Q2: Apr - Jun  
Q3: Jul - Sep  
Q4: Oct - Dec

**RAG rating:**

- On track/complete
- Delayed
- Not started/ significant delay
- Scheduled

**Key Milestones:**

### Item 5a: Project Risk Assessment Review (March 2025)

Verbal update. Please see risk review below.

### Project Risk Assessment Review (June 2025)

Identified Risk	Risk Score (last review)	Action taken	Current risk	Further action required to mitigate risk
Non-compliance with voluntary management measures	6	No action required.	6 Severity: high (3) - no change Likelihood: possible (2) - no change  Compliance has been high with no incursions detected over the last period.	No further action required.
The Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023 is not confirmed or is significantly delayed	4	No action required.	4 Severity: very high (4) – no change Likelihood: unlikely (1) – no change  Despite some delays in the Byelaw being confirmed no major issues have been identified throughout the QA process which increases the likelihood of the byelaw being significantly delayed or not confirmed.	No further action required
Failure to implement management measures which are proportionate to the risk posed and adequately precautionary	8	No action required.	8 Severity: very high (4) – no change Likelihood: possible (2) – no change	No further action required
Failure to evidence effectiveness of management measures	4	No action required.	4 Severity: very high (4) – no change Likelihood: unlikely (1) – no change	No further action required

Lack of stakeholder buy-in for management measures	6	No action required.	6	Severity: high (3) - no change Likelihood: possible (2) – no change A revision to the inshore vessel restriction permit condition was agreed at the 60 <sup>th</sup> Authority meeting and was generally supported by industry members. The change resulted from additional engagement with industry members who were not included in the original consultation.	No further action required
Change in Natural England advice (i.e. that a precautionary approach is required)	3	No action required.	4	Severity: high (3) - no change Likelihood: unlikely (1) – no change	No further action required
Inability to secure funding for the project	16	Inability to secure funding for the current financial year was raised at Finance and HR subcommittee meeting and members indicated that they would be supportive of utilising reserved if necessary.  Additionally, two funding sources have since been identified applications are ongoing.	8	Severity: very high (4) - no change Likelihood: possible (2) – decreased as applications for two new funding pots are ongoing and there is the option to utilise reserves if needed.	Continue identifying other sources of funding.
Inability to deliver research projects (particularly practical components including vessel breakdown, research equipment / contractors unavailable, poor weather, lack of internal resources)	6		6	Severity: high (3) - no change Likelihood: possible (2) – no change	Continued careful planning and project management.

National I-VMS requirement does not come into effect in a timely manner	<b>6</b>	No action required.	<b>0</b>	Severity: high (3) - no change Likelihood: no risk (0) – reduced  The National I-VMS requirement has now come into effect and so this risk can be terminated.	No further action required - Terminate risk
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## **Item 5b: MCZ Risk Review**

**Report by:** Samantha Hornbrey, SMSO

### **Purpose:**

To provide an update on the latest MCZ risk review.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the contents of the report

### **Report**

The MCZ risk review has been further delayed whilst we await for formal feedback from Natural England on the Rates of Damage Report which outlines the proposed approach to calculating a potting impact footprint. As a consequence, the development of phase 2 permit conditions has been further delayed and is now unlikely to commence ahead Q4 of 2025.

## **Item 6: ARM Budgets and Funding**

**Report by:** Samantha Hormbrey, SMSO

### **Purpose:**

To provide an update on project costs and secured funding for ARM related workstreams to inform members of the financial restraints and requirements and to ensure transparency.

### **Recommendations:**

**It is recommended that members:**

- **Note** the contents of the report

### **Report**

This report provides an update on the financial projections for each ARM workstream:

#### **Fishing Activity Mapping**

No external funding has been identified for this project for the 2025/2026 financial year. Interim measures were agreed at the 59<sup>th</sup> Authority Meeting (12 March 2025) to mandate the provision of vessel positional data from vessels fishing in the MCZ using Byelaw 11 (Development of Shellfish Fisheries). To facilitate compliance with interim measures the Authority have provided trackers to fishers who require them. The total cost of this to the Authority so far has been £1,416.44. The national requirement for IVMS has now come into force and so further subscription renewals will be reviewed on a case by case basis depending on the availability of IVMS data for individual fishers.

#### **Tagging Project**

No additional costs relating to the tagging project have been accrued over the last period.

#### **Adaptive Gear Trials**

No further funding has been secured or identified for this project. The project is being reviewed to determine what can be achieved within the Authority's annual budget revenue.

## Natural Disturbance Study

Whilst no external funding has yet been secured for this project for the 2025/2026 financial period, two funding pots have recently been identified. Two outline proposals have been submitted to MBIEG<sup>1</sup> for a £12,000 fund, one for multibeam data analysis and the other for multibeam data surveys. FASS<sup>2</sup> have also recently announced that they have reopened the scheme for funding applications for the current financial period. An application is currently being drafted for this fund. If successful, FASS funding can only be used to claim 75% of project costs with the remainder required to be match funded by the Authority. As the total estimated cost of the project is £130,000 (including officer time), this equates to a maximum cost to the Authority of £35,000 which could be offset against officer time. A breakdown of estimated costs for the project for the current financial period is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Breakdown of estimated costs for the 2025/2026 financial period for the Natural Disturbance Study.

<b>Project component</b>	<b>Estimated cost (Ex VAT)</b>
Multibeam surveys	£33,000.00
ROV data analysis	£16,000.00
Multibeam data analysis	£12,000.00
Marker buoys	£1,000.00
Accommodation	£1,000.00
Vessel fuel	£4,500.00
Travel	£2,500.00
Officer time	£60,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£130,000.00</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Marine Biodiversity Impact Evidence Group

<sup>2</sup> Fisheries and Seafood Scheme



## **Item 7: Stakeholder meeting proposal**

**Report by:** Ellie Collishaw, PPO

**Purpose:** To consider if there is scope for a November meeting and if so to agree a draft agenda for the meeting.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the contents of the report
- **Agree** to hold an online Stakeholder Group Meeting in November

### **Background**

The Stakeholder Group provides a direct channel of communication between the Project Board and community members affected by, or interested in, Adaptive Risk Management of Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds (CSCB) MCZ. The meeting provides an opportunity to share updates on research and management workstreams and report on progress against the ARM plan, whilst also allowing project board members to draw on wider sources of knowledge and information to inform decision making and connect with local perspectives.

Eastern IFCA's CSCB MCZ Engagement plan includes a commitment to at least one face-to-face Stakeholder Group meeting a year during the first quarter of the year, with an option for a second meeting around November if needed and resources allow. This report considers options for a meeting in November taking into account the costs, benefits, available resources and associated risks.

### **Report**

Whilst holding an online stakeholder group meeting in November would provide an opportunity to share updates on the research work completed over the summer months as well as progress of other ARM workstreams, organising and delivering stakeholder group meetings is resource intensive. Previously, the Marine Conservation Society Agents of Change Project supported with stakeholder engagement, organised meetings and provided a chair. As well as high resource demands the Stakeholder group in-person meetings also have financial outlays. Figure 1 outlines the estimated costs and staff resources required to hold an online or in person meeting (not including organisation and planning).

Three options are proposed and considered in detail below:

**No meeting** – The MCZ quarterly newsletter provides a summary of ARM progress, and upcoming priorities, with key quarterly updates and events. In October, a quarterly update is due to be shared, it is unlikely that there would be any additional updates to share at a November meeting that would not already be included in this quarterly update. Although this option will avoid duplicating updates that have already been shared elsewhere the newsletter is intended to include high level updates and will not allow for any opportunity for stakeholders to discuss or ask questions on the updates and future work. This option requires no additional cost or resource (Table 1).

**Online meeting** – this type of meeting would allow a verbal update to be given, complementing and building upon the updates included in the October newsletter and providing opportunity for questions and discussion amongst stakeholders. There are no direct costs associated with an online meeting but staff resource will be required to prepare for and attend the meeting. This option was taken forward last year and involved 7 officers to attend the 2 hour meeting. It is recommended that staffing and meeting duration would remain the same or similar depending on the final agenda. Member support for online meetings is split amongst the group with attendance from fishing community members previously being poor with them typically showing a strong preference for in person meetings. This was evident at the last online meeting with a small attendance of 15 members, two of which (13%) were from the local fishing community.

**In-person meeting** – whilst this option appears to be the most favoured amongst members and historically well attended it is also the most expensive and resource intensive. Costs include venue hire and catering as well as staff travel costs. Previously in person meetings have been three hours in length, with half an hour dinner break, however, for officers attending the travel, preparation, meeting and clearing up typically amounts to a full day. A significant amount of officer time is also required to organise such a meeting. Whilst the costs are higher, in person meetings bring stakeholders together encouraging discussion with and between stakeholders, increasing stakeholder participation and sense of community.

**Table 1:** Summary of cost, resource and benefit analysis of each style of meeting.

Option	Estimated Cost	Resource / Staffing requirements	Staff Time	Previous Attendance
No Meeting	£0	0 Staff	0	NA
Online Meeting	£0	Approx. 6-8 officers (CEO, ACO, SMSO, PO, 2-4 MSOs)	2 hours / officer	15
In-person Meeting	£60 - Village Hall Hire £400 – Catering (Approx.)	Approx. 10-11 officers (CEO, ACO, 1-2 SMSO, PO, 4 MSOs, 2 IFCOs)	1 day / officer	28

If a meeting were to go ahead it is proposed that the focus would be on research and management updates from the summer months. A suggested agenda is set out below:

## **Cromer Shoal Chalk Bed MCZ Stakeholder Group Draft Agenda**

### **Meeting 10: Research and Management Updates**

Location: online

#### Welcome

- Welcome and ground rules

#### Progress against ARM plan

#### Management update

- Byelaw update
- Permit conditions update
- Update on interim measures/ voluntary measures

#### Research

- Natural Disturbance Study
- Fishing Activity Mapping
- Adaptive Gear Trials
- Chalk Value Study
- Social Value Study

#### Round up

- Focus for the next 6 months (2026) & Q&A

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that an online stakeholder group meeting is held in November. As the proposed agenda includes mostly update items and an online meeting still allows for some discussion and comment the need for in person participation is reduced. Furthermore, no funding has been set aside for an in person meeting in November, and would need to be sourced, it is also anticipated that staff resource requirements can be kept low to avoid conflict with other high priority work. Whilst there is a risk that attendance from the fishing community will be low, efforts can be made to increase engagement beforehand to ensure ample opportunity is given to fishers to attend and for any questions or feedback to be answered before the meeting to increase accessibility. Whilst it is noted that limited resource availability and the general low attendance of online meeting could create an argument for no meeting in November, the quarterly update does not provide a space for questions and discussion amongst stakeholders and given that the last meeting that last allowed for this was some time ago, it is considered valuable to provide an opportunity for those who wish to participate.