



**63rd EIFCA
Statutory Meeting**

To Be Held at:
Council Chambers, King's Lynn Town Hall, Saturday Marketplace,
King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 5DQ

**Wednesday
11th March 2026**

1030 hours

Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.



Meeting: **63rd Eastern IFCA Meeting**

Date: 11 March 2026

Time: 1030hrs

Venue: Assembly Room, Kings Lynn Town Hall, Saturday Marketplace,
Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 5DQ

Agenda

- 1 Welcome - *Chair*
- 2 To accept apologies for absence - *Chair*
- 3 Declaration of Members' interests – *Chair*

Action items

- 4 To receive and approve as a true record, minutes of the 62nd Eastern IFCA Meeting, held on 10 December 2025 – *Chair. Pg4*
- 5 Matters arising (including actions from previous meeting) – *Clerk*
- 6 To receive a report to consider Health and Safety risks and mitigation – *ACO(DD). Pg18*
- 7 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest dispensations – *ACO pg22*
- 8 To receive a report on the meeting of the Finance and HR sub-committee held on 3 February 2026 - *ACO(DD) pg33*
- 9 Review of the Constitution and Standing Orders – *CEO pg39*
- 10 Wash Cockle Fishery 2026 - Delegation of Authority – *CEO pg51*
- 11 Strategic Assessment and Business Plan 2026-31 – *ACO pg54*
- 12 Interim management of Wash aquaculture – *PO pg61*
- 13 Quarterly review of annual priorities and risk register – *ACO pg67*

Information items

- 14 CEO update (verbal) – *CEO*
- 15 Operational update
 - a. Marine Protection Quarterly report – *ACO(DD) pg85*
 - b. Marine Science Quarterly report – *ACO pg87*

Any other business

- 16 To consider any other items, which the Chairman is of the opinion are matters of urgency due to special circumstances, which must be specified in advance.

J. Gregory
Chief Executive Officer
24 February 2026

Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.



62nd Eastern IFCA Meeting

A meeting of the Eastern IFCA took place on Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 1030 hours in the Council Chambers, King's Lynn Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn Norfolk, PE30 4DQ

Members Present:

Cllr T FitzPatrick	(Chair)	Norfolk County Council
Cllr E Back	(Vice Chair)	Suffolk County Council
Cllr T Adams		Norfolk County Council
Mr S Bagley		MMO Appointee
Cllr Chenery of Horsbrugh		Norfolk County Council
Mr J Davies		MMO Appointee
Mr L Doughty		MMO Appointee
Dr P Gilliland		MMO Appointee
Mr P Garnett		MMO Appointee
Mr T Goldson		MMO Appointee
Ms J Love		Natural England Representative
Ms B Lynam		MMO Appointee
Mr N Schiller		MMO Appointee
Ms I Smith		MMO Appointee
Cllr G Taylor		Lincolnshire County Council
Mr S Williamson		MMO Appointee

Eastern IFCA (EIFCA) Officers Present:

Julian Gregory	Chief Executive Officer (Clerk)
Jon Butler	Assistant Chief Officer (Designated Deputy),
Ella Constable	Marine Science Officer
Luke Godwin	Assistant Chief Officer
Samantha Hormbrey	Senior Marine Science Officer
Ron Jessop	Senior Marine Science Officer
Emily Parsons	Marine Science Officer

Minute Taker:

Jodi Hammond

EIFCA25/35 Item 1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed Members, and those from the public who were in attendance, to the meeting. At this point the Chair advised members that Ms Love was moving to another role within NE and would no longer be the representative on the

Authority. Mr Love was thanked for the contribution she had made whilst being part of the Authority

EIFCA25/36 Item 2: Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Robinson (SCC) & Whittaker (LCC), Mr Dyer (EA) and Ms Sams (Aston Shaw).

EIFCA25/37 Item 3: Declaration of Members Interests

The following dispensations were noted:

Agenda Item	Matters to be discussed	Members with related DPI	Members with relevant dispensation to discuss	Members with relevant dispensation to vote
9 – Wash Mussel Fishery	Management of the Wash Mussel Fishery	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley, Ms Bex Lynam	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley, Ms Bex Lynam	Ms Bex Lynam
10 – Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw Permit Fees	Management of Wash Mussel and Cockle Fisheries	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley	n/a
11 – Wash Several Order interim measures	Management of the Wash Mussel and Cockle Fishery	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley, Ms Bex Lynam	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley, Ms Bex Lynam	Ms Bex Lynam
12 – Wash Several Order Application Update	Management of the Wash Mussel and Cockle Fishery	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley, Ms Bex Lynam	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley, Ms Bex Lynam	Ms Bex Lynam
13 – Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023 Permit Conditions	Management measures for pot-based fishing within the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone	Mr John Davies, Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Ms Bex Lynam	Mr John Davies, Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Ms Bex Lynam	Ms Bex Lynam
14 – Whelk Permit Conditions Review	Management of the Whelk fishery	Mr John Davies, Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Ms Bex Lynam	Mr John Davies, Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Ms Bex Lynam	Ms Bex Lynam

15 – Shrimp Permit Conditions Review	Management of the Shrimp fishery	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley, Ms Bex Lynam	Mr Steven Williamson, Mr Paul Garnett, Me Lee Doughty, Mr Shane Bagley, Ms Bex Lynam	Ms Bex Lynam
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EIFCA25/38 Item 4: Minutes of the 61st Eastern IFCA Meeting held on Wednesday 10th September 2025

Members Resolved to approve the Minutes as a true record of proceedings.

Proposed: Mr Goldson

Seconded: Dr Gilliland

All Agreed

EIFCA25/39 Item 5: Matters arising.

EIFCA25/27: CLOSED AREA BYELAW: The formal consultation had closed and responses were be evaluated.

EIFCA25/28: WASH COCKLE FISHERY 2025: During the course of fishing an area of large cockle had been found off Hunstanton which had been beneficial for the industry, particularly as NE had agreed the catch would be in addition to the agreed TAC for the fishery. The area in question would form part of the surveyed sands in 2026.

EIFCA25/40 Item 6: Health & Safety Risks and Mitigation

ACO (DD) Butler reminded Members this was a standard item on the agenda as Health & Safety remained a priority across the organisation.

During the quarter there had been 4 reported incidents and 1 near miss. These were largely vessel related incidents which reflected there had been more time spent at sea.

C-Runner had sustained a small amount of damage as a result of a hydraulic lever releasing unexpectedly, swift action by the crew prevented any further damage. Members were advised steps were being taken to slightly modify the system to prevent the auto release.

Ice on deck had resulted in an officer slipping over – the deck on PIV has a non-slip coating but ice from water coverage will inevitably become slippery. Officers have been asked to be wary

when carrying kit on and off the vessel and generally moving around the deck area in very cold weather. Members queried whether it was possible to coat the deck to prevent slipping, it was noted the deck was already non-slip, but it was not possible to be completely slip proof when water and freezing conditions were combined.

A fire extinguisher discharging unexpectedly, had resulted in an officer inhaling dry power. The officer had no lasting effects and was able to continue with his duties. The fire extinguisher had since been replaced.

Working at height remained an ongoing risk, Officers had been advised not to use a quayside ladder if they did not feel safe and only to go down on a rising tide.

Members Agreed to Note the contents of the report.

EIFCA25/41 Item 7: Finance and HR Sub-Committee held on 5th August 2025

Draft Minutes of the meeting had been provided.

It was noted the Draft budget for 26/27 had been presented at the F&HR Meeting, as well as some amendments being made to the Financial Regulations to bring them in line with the auditor's requirements.

Members agreed to Note the decision made to amend the Financial Regulations and contents of the report in general.

EIFCA25/42 Item 8: Budget and levies 2026/27 and Budget Forecast to 2031

The CEO explained the process for agreeing the budget and levies. Initially the paper went to the Finance & HR Sub-committee for approval. He advised that Capital expenditure and Revenue expenditure had been separated to make the budget and subsequent reporting clearer. In addition to the budget for the following year estimates for the following 4 years were also provided. The current projections showed a potential decline in available funding.

The CEO advised members of the funding situation from the inception of IFCA's and explained the Defra New Burden fundings and subsequent workstream funding. Whilst the workstream funding was anticipated to be forthcoming in this financial year there was no decisions yet on what would be made available in the following years. There was only an

assumption that New Burden funding would continue after this financial year.

With the lack of certainty regarding funding the CEO had prepared options for future funding which he had provided to the Finance & HR sub-committee. It had been agreed that the option to be applied was for an increase in levies to address 50% of the projected shortfall. This would mean that the increase in levies for 2026-27 would be circa 12% with the potential for a similar increase in subsequent years if the Defra funding is not continued. The proposed increase in levies and the uncertainty of the future of workstream funding from Defra was discussed with the three funding authorities and it was agreed that the asset replacement element of the levy would be profiled in advance of next year's meeting so that the level of both the general levy and the contribution to asset replacement could be considered collectively.

When preparing the budget there had been varying views on the likely salary increase for 26/27 so a 4% increase had been used for the purpose of the budget. In the current financial year two posts had remained gapped. It had become apparent that whilst one of these posts could be deleted there was a need for the other post to be recruited to in order for vessels to get to sea. For the remainder of the budget a 4% increase or best judgement was applied.

A bid had been provided to the Spending Review by AIFCA which asked for a notable increase and support for specific projects, at this time there was no indication what the outcome of the request was likely to be.

Members worked through the Tables of figures used to establish the proposed Capital and Reserve budgets. The proposed increase for both 26/27 and 27/28 was 12.5%, after this the projection was for a 2% inflation increase in levies.

Members queried whether there were still consideration to move offices, it was noted all plans had been put on hold with the outbreak of the Covid Pandemic, which had brought about a swift change to working remotely. Lessons had been learnt and hybrid working models had been considered, there was a possibility it may be an option to downsize offices in the future.

Working from home arrangements were discussed. It was noted no additional payment was made for working from home, officers were contractually working from the office, with a concession to work from home. Members were also advised that DSE

Assessments had been completed by all officers related to their working from home arrangements.

Mr Schiller queried the expense relating to RIBs maintenance and repairs. The CEO advised the workboat 3 regulations had played a large part in the additional expense.

The effect that the reshuffle of Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils might have on funding streams was questioned but at this time there was no answer. It was suggested it might be worth preparing a presentation for Norfolk and Suffolk leaders to bring awareness of EIFCA, to ensure funding relationships continue.

For the benefit of new members the CEO gave a brief summary of the funding situation since the inception of IFCAs, it was also advised that EIFCA have an annual meeting with the Financial Directors who had intermated they were confident the finances were managed sensibly.

Members Resolved to:

- **Note the content of the report**
- **Approve the Budget for 2026-27**
- **Approve the Levies for 2026-27**
- **Approve the Forecast for the following 4 years to 2030-31**

Proposed: Mr Goldson

Seconded: Cllr Back

All Agreed

EIFCA25/43 Item 9: Wash Mussel Fishery 2025/26

ACO Godwin gave a presentation showing the results of the Wash Mussel Fishery Surveys. Results of the surveys indicated 24/25 stock biomass was the highest since the 1940s. Ordinarily the mussel fishery would have been closed during the cockle season, however, this year the process had been different. The mussel fishery remained open under existing management measures.

Members noted the beds which showed improving stock. Mr Garnett particularly noted the Gat Mussel Bed which had previously lost a lot of stock but had not regenerated, he believed the showed that mussel beds benefit from being cleared. ACO Godwin acknowledge that SMSO Jessop had given this some thought.

Ms Love questioned whether the increase in stock was considered a positive or were further declines anticipated. It was not possible to say at this point, but it was evident that whilst managing the fishery differently there was less mortality

than in previous years, which could be attributed to wetter weather, more sewage in the water but the answer was not known.

Members Resolved to:

- **Note the outputs of the 2025 mussel survey and the decision to maintain the fishery as open as agreed by Natural England.**
- **Agree in principle to maintain The Wash Harvestable and re-laying fisheries as open, subject to a Habitat Regulation Assessment and consultation with the fishing industry.**
- **Agree to delegate authority to the CEO in consultation with Chair and Vice-Chair to make a final decision relating to the status of the fisheries (opening and closures) on the mussel fisheries and to introduce, vary or revoke flexible management measures referred to in Schedule 4 of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021**
- **Agree to delegate authority to the CEO in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair to introduce, vary or revoke flexible management measures with less than 12 hours notice as may be required, in accordance with the provisions of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021**

Proposed: Cllr Chenery of Horsbrugh

Seconded: Cllr Adams

All Agreed

EIFCA25/44 Item 10: Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 permit fees

ACO Godwin provided members with the history of the current fees. It was noted in 2018 the decision was made to increase fees to achieve 50% cost recovery with the intention at that time being to limit cost recovery to that percentage. The increase was introduced in a staged approach, which had been delayed by the Covid pandemic.

The Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw had now been in place for a year, and the provisions of the byelaw included the ability to increase permit fees. It was noted that the Authority had expressed the intention to continue the limitation of cost recovery to 50% when the byelaw was being developed.

Members were provided with the real term costs associated with cockle and mussel permits. It was noted that an increase in permit fees would partially mitigate some of the budgetary deficit. It was also noted it was unlikely a full 50% cost recovery would ever be achieved as there were very few years when all permits were taken out.

Members were advised that the process for increasing permit fees required consultation with industry and this would be undertaken if members agreed in principle to the proposed increase. It was noted this was likely to be a 4-week consultation.

It was questioned whether the suggested 45% increase on the current price of a permit was in line with inflation. In response officers advised that this was the first increase since 2019, which was why it seemed like a large increase, and that it should be recognised the predicted costs may have previously been underestimated as they did not reflect additional unplanned work which was undertaken annually.

Members discussed the potential increase, and it was noted an annual increase would be preferable but would a big increase in any one year. It was also noted that there was a ceiling to any increase but there was a mechanism in place to trigger a review at any point in any year. Industry expressed concern that should they ask for additional surveys to be undertaken it would increase the cost of a permit, ACO Godwin advised they were not looking to make annual increased once the 50% recovery threshold had been reached, however, should the number of beds surveyed increase significantly it may be necessary to review the costs. It was noted that an additional survey partway through a season would likely be worked into 'business as usual' and therefore not incur an additional cost on the permits.

Members Agreed to Note the revised costs associated with managing the Wash cockle and mussel fisheries.

Members Resolved to:

- **Agree in principle to increase fees under the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 to reflect 50% cost recovery as set out in the paper**
- **Direct Officers to undertake a consultation and Impact Assessment in accordance with the provisions of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 and to present results at the next appropriate Authority meeting.**

Proposed: Cllr Back

Seconded: Mr Schiller

All Agreed

EIFCA25/45 Item 11: Wash Several Order Interim Measures

Project Officer Teasdale provided members with an overview of how EIFCA manage access to lays. It was noted that since 2009 there had been a moratorium on granting new lays, with the exception being for business continuity in the event of the death of a lay holder.

Management of lays since 2023 when the WFO expired had fallen under the Temporary Closure Byelaw to protect the lays and maintain the status quo.

The temporary closure route had been repeated in 2024 and 2025, but as time evolved using this byelaw was becoming increasingly difficult therefore the proposal is to use interim measures under the WCMB in 2026.

Members were also advised there had been a request regarding lay holder succession, it was not felt appropriate to share the details with the full Authority as it could contain commercially sensitive information, and it was therefore recommended the matter be referred to the Wash Fisheries sub-committee.

As part of the discussion around lays the question was raised whether oysters would ever be relevant in the Wash again. It was advised there was potentially a small stock of native oyster which may produce seed, but it was a case of wait and see. Although it was felt that most of the Wash was not salty enough for native oysters.

Members Agreed to note the contents of the report.

Members Resolved to :

- **Agree to delegate to the CEO the authority to issue exemptions from fishery closures issued under the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 to enable lay holders or their representatives to work their lays.**
- **Agree to the proposed revisions to the Scheme of Delegations for the Wash Fisheries sub-committee at Appendix 3**
- **Direct officers to develop and present proposals for lay management under the interim measures to address identified issues.**

Proposed: Cllr Taylor

Seconded: Dr Gilliland

Voted in favour, motion carried

EIFCA25/46 Item 12: Wash Several Order Application Update

Members were reminded that an application had been made in 2022 to replace the Several element of the Wash Fishery Order 1992. Defra had recently advised they were unlikely to have the capacity to look at the application until 2027/28, and even that date was optimistic. Advice received suggested the Authority should explore other options to manage aquaculture. As the

matter needed to be dealt with the suggestion was that the industry be consulted on alternatives to the Several Order.

It was questioned whether the Authority would still pursue the Several Order route if the option was taken to go with a Byelaw in the meantime. The CEO advised if a viable alternative to a Several Order could be found, such as a byelaw, there may be the benefit of longevity as an Order is time restricted.

Concern was expressed about anything that was not a Several Order. The lays were really private fisheries and there was a reluctance for anything other than an Order, but it would be interesting to see what the alternatives were, providing proper legal advice was sought. The CEO assured members the matter would be taken back to the Authority for discussion if an alternative was considered a viable option.

Dr Gilliland expressed concern that time and effort might be wasted if it was known that a Several Order was what the Authority wanted. The CEO advised whilst the Authority had agreed to continue to pursue a Several Order, the level of aquaculture was low, and there was a contentious issue around the settlement of wild cockles in lays. In such circumstances, under a Several Order, the cockles become the property of the lay holder but under the interim management measures since the expiry of the Order, the lays don't actually exist. As such, something needed to be done and the CEO advised it was about pragmatism, and finding the most appropriate solution. However, if the Authority wanted a Several Order that is what would be pursued, but the key issue was to protect the ownership of lays.

Mr Doughty felt it was important to continue to pursue a Several Order, even if a Byelaw was an interim measure he would still like the Several Order process to be maintained.

Dr Gilliland enquired who would be approving any decisions. The CEO advised the officers would take legal advice and bring the matter back to a future Authority Meeting, possibly the 64th. In the meantime Members would be kept apprised via the Fisheries and Conservation Management Working Group.

Members Agreed to Note the contents of the report, including Defra's position on progressing the Several Order application and the potential for alternative approaches.

Members Resolved to Direct officers to explore alternative options for aquaculture management in The Wash including through dialogue with fishery stakeholders.

Proposed: Cllr Chenery of Horsbrugh

Seconded: Cllr Adams

Motion Carried.

EIFCA25/47 Item 13: Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023 permit conditions

Members were provided with a brief background of the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds, and an update on the Phase 2 permit conditions, damage rates and the potential impact on the fishing industry.

It was noted discussions with NE had highlighted there was a need for more data to increase confidence in the approach being taken by EIFCA. Inevitably it would require additional funding to cover costs of analysing additional ROV footage.

A Draft ARM Management Plan was being developed which would take account of the dynamic situation, provide timeframes for research outputs, which would likely influence risk and commit to regularly reviewing risk.

At this point Cllr Taylor left the meeting

Next Steps would include finalising the Management Plan, and continuing to prioritise the Rates of Damage Assessment, development of fishing activity data and dialogue on effort management.

Ms Lynam advised that EIFCA were looking at the assessment of existing evidence base rather than it being a dedicated piece of field work, i.e. it was a desk-based job. ACO Godwin felt the T&F Group needed to be consulted as there may be a piece of work to be done, but he felt there was a lot of existing information.

Dr Gilliland questioned alternative fishing practices and more analysis requiring more funding and questioned whether income sources had been looked for. ACO Godwin advised funding sources were being looked into, there was an application in for FaSS funds, officers will keep looking for alternatives. The CEO added this was an important piece of work, consequently the use of Reserves may be required as it was not part of the Revenue budget. He added that many funding streams had criteria that one could be forgiven for thinking had been designed to make their use to achieve the work intended almost unachievable.

Ms Love agreed in principle to the Next Steps, but suggested Officers should wait for more data before finally deciding on Next Steps to take, Ms Love felt there was more to be done with the Management Plan, she also questioned when the outcomes of more data would be available.

It was noted the Adaptive Gear Trial had been put on hold, but it could still be carried out in the future. It was also made clear that if there was no back-up plan it may be necessary to apply the precautionary approach.

Members Agreed to Note the update on development of the 'rates of damage' assessment and progress in the development of a new approach to delivering management within the MCZ.

Members Resolved to Agree in principle to the approach set out in the draft ARM Management Plan at Appendix 1.

Proposed: Mr Goldson

Seconded: Cllr Adams

Motion Carried.

EIFCA25/48 Item 14: Whelk Permit Byelaw 2019 Permit Conditions Review

Members were advised a requirement of the Whelk Permit Byelaw was that the permit conditions must be reviewed every four years as a minimum. During the previous review concerns had been raised around compliance and data accuracy which had the potential to affect the reliability of stock assessments.

Officers had carried out a consultation to get the view of whelk permit holders on a potential increase in VMS pings to every 3 minutes, and the separate reporting of whelk caught inside and outside the Eastern IFCA district, the outcome of which was presented to Members. It was felt the consultation responses indicated no significant impacts were highlighted and most stakeholders were in agreement with the proposed permit conditions or had no strong opinions about them.

It was questioned what the timescale was for the Cromer Shoal Chalk Bed Byelaw coming into force, to which ACO Godwin advised it was in the last stages of going back to the MMO.

Members Agreed to note the outcomes of the informal consultation on the two additional permit conditions.

Members Resolved to:

- **Agreed to adopt the permit condition which adds the requirement to separate whelk caught from inside and outside of the Eastern IFCA district and report catch separately on whelk return forms.**
- **Agree to introduce the requirement for vessels to report positional data at three-minute intervals as a whelk**

**permit condition once the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds
Byelaw 2023 comes into force.**

Proposed: Cllr Adams

Seconded: Dr Gilliland

All Agreed

**EIFCA25/49 Item 15: Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 Permit Conditions
Review**

In line with the requirements of the Shrimp Permit Byelaw the permit conditions must be reviewed every 4 years, with 2025 being a review year. Consultation with Permit holders had taken place, with the conclusion being the permit conditions should stay in place and there was a need for additional positional information.

Mr Doughty queried who at EIFCA monitored the level of compliance. ACO Godwin advised the conditions in place made it easier to monitor compliance; however, it was noted that issues with Succorfish had had an impact on the monitoring. Future management needed to protect the features going forward and pings could be used to address alleged fishing in closed areas.

Ms Smith expressed concern about inexperienced skippers fishing in a conservation area. Mr Garnett advised shrimp trawling used much smaller and lighter trawls with bottom rollers, it was much different to trawling in general.

Members Agreed to note the content of the paper.

Members Resolved to:

- **Agree to maintain existing permit conditions**
- **Agree to implement a new permit condition for Category 1 permits to require positional information at a minimum rate of one 'ping' every three minutes.**
- **Direct officers to explore options to alter the experience requirements associated with Category 1 permits.**

Proposed: Mr Davis

Seconded: Mr Goldson

All Agreed

EIFCA25/50 Item 16: Authority Meeting Dates 2026-27

**Members Resolved to approve the meeting dates for 2026-
27**

Proposed: Cllr Adams

Seconded: Mr Schiller

All Agreed

EIFCA25/51 Review of Annual Priorities and Risk Register

Members Agreed to note the content of the report.

EIFCA25/52 Item 17: CEO Update

AIFCA – the last meeting had been held on 2nd December – papers had been circulated to members. Outcomes from the meeting were that a 3.5% increase in annual subscription had been agreed, the newly appointed Communications and Engagement Manager was already having an impact and a national IFCA REM strategy had been approved.

DEFRA FUNDING – AIFCA had put in a bid for a New Burdens uplift and continuation of Workstream Funding – a decision was awaited.

EIFCA25/53 Item 19a: Marine Protection Quarterly Reports

Reports had been circulated to members.
Dr Gilliland enquired how many ports were referred to so the figures had context.

Members Agreed to note the contents of the report.

EIFCA25/54 Item 19b: Marine Science Quarterly Report

Members Agreed to note the contents of the report

EIFCA25/55 Item 15: Any Other Business

No items of Other Business had been provided to the Chair. However Members were advised True's Yard had a Scottish fishing exhibition, to mark 57 deaths. Sometimes it is easy to forget the sea can be cruel.

There being no other business the Chair thanked members for attending, wished everyone a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year, and closed the meeting at 1258 hours.

Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.



Action Item 6

63rd Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority meeting

11 March 2026

Health and Safety update

Report by: Jon Butler, Assistant Chief Officer (DD)

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to update members on health and safety activity and incidents, risks and associated mitigation over the last reporting period.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the contents of this report.

Background

H&S law requires employers to assess and manage risks and so far, as is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and others affected by workplace activities.

The Authority has a declared intent to promote and nurture an appropriate health and safety culture throughout the organisation.

Incidents

The table in *Appendix 1* summarises the incidents that have occurred since the last Authority meeting:

There have been **1** incident and **0** near miss since the last Authority meeting.

Risks/Mitigation

There has been 1 incident since the last Authority meeting, whilst carrying out survey work in an intertidal area an officer pulled there back whilst walking to collect samples in mud. Walking in challenging terrain is an ongoing risk for officers. A level of fitness is required, and officers are encouraged to declare any pre-existing injuries before undertaking survey work.

Appendix 1

Date	Nature of incident	Injury / damage occurred	Action Taken	RIDDOR MAIB Y/N	Investigation complete Y/N	Name of investigating Officer	Follow-up action required Y/N. If Y then what?
20/01/2026	Injury	Officer pulled back whilst walking in muddy intertidal area	Officer returned to tender and returned to Protector IV. Officer applied pain relief gel and undertook lighter duties for the rest of the day	No	Yes	Ron Jessop	Survey work discussed at the managers meeting. All Risk assessments were being followed.

Appendix 2

Eastern IFCA Organisational Health and Safety risks

Risk	Intervention	Residual Risk	Risk rating* (Current)	Risk rating* (Previous)	Date added
1. Whole Body Vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk awareness training to manage impacts. Health monitoring process to be developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal injury from boat movement owing to lower resilience as a result of individual physiology 	Tolerate	Treat	26/08/2025
2. Staff stress through exposure to unacceptable behaviour of stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Unacceptable Behaviour policy Stakeholder engagement plan and activity delivered in pursuit of corporate communications strategy. Dialogue with Stakeholders to ensure appropriate tone of communications. Conflict resolution training for “front line” Officers Introduction of Body worn Camera’s and Sky Guard Alarms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in behaviour of some stakeholders. Long term sickness caused by stakeholder hostility 	Tolerate	Treat	26/08/2025
3. Working at Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff briefing Scoping of all quayside ladders Risk Assessment Training to be provided if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure of quayside ladders Ownership of quayside ladders not clear 	Tolerate	Treat	26/08/2025
4. Building Fire Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Fire Risk Assessment Action identified risks/corrective actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Warden Training Share assessment with NCC H&S advisor 	Tolerate	Treat	28/08/2025

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Risk Rating
High
Medium
Low

Risk Treatment	
Treat	Take positive action to mitigate risk
Tolerate	Acknowledge and actively monitor risk
Terminate	Risk no longer considered to be material to Eastern IFCA business
Transfer	Risk is outside Eastern IFCA ability to treat and is transferred to higher/external level

Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry



Action Item 7

63rd Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority meeting

11 March 2026

Report by: Luke Godwin, ACO

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Purpose of report

To present proposals for dispensations under s.33 of the Localism Act 2011 (c.20) to enable participation in discussions where members have disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs).

Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- **Note** the updated Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) register (Appendix 1) and the assessment of DPI conflicts with Authority Business (Appendix 2).
- **Agree** to grant dispensations from s.31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 (c.20) to MMO Appointees, as set out in Appendix 2, to allow participation in discussions of matters for which they have a DPI for the period of four years or until their term of service is expired (whichever is first).

Background

Section 31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) requires that any members who have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in a matter at a meeting cannot participate in the associated discussion or vote on the matter. Section 33 of the Act enables the Authority to grant dispensations from this requirement to enable participation in discussions and/or voting on a matter.

Dispensations are granted for a period of up to four years or until their term ends. Where members are reappointed or the dispensation period ends, dispensations are reconsidered. In addition, where existing members DPIs change, these are considered in the context of potentially causing a conflict with matters arising.

Report

An updated DPI register is provided at Appendix 1. This sets out DPIs in accordance with the description prescribed in the Schedule of the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Several members were appointed during 2025 and as such, the potential for DPI conflicts with matters discussed at meetings and the need for re-issuing dispensations is required for the following members:

- Paul Garnett
- Shane Bagley
- Stephen Williamson
- John Davies
- Tony Goldson
- Kieran Coupland
- Inge Smith

The assessment is at Appendix 2 and a summary is provided below.

Summary of assessment of DPIs against matters considered at EIFCA meetings

DPIs are considered against the 'types' of matters which are considered at Authority meetings with as much specificity as possible to identify conflicts. Such conflicts include, for example, where a shrimp fisherman is present for the consideration of shrimp management measures. The potential for members to unfairly influence such discussions is mitigated by the Eastern IFCA Standing Orders and Code of Conduct which sets out that members must not seek to favour their own interests and that such instances may be subject to investigation.

With regards to Mr Tony Goldson and Mr Kieran Coupland, no conflicts were identified with regards to the different 'types' of matters. With regards to Ms Inge Smith and Mr Nick Schiller, there may be a conflict in relation to agreeing contracts for work on behalf of the Authority where Ms Smith has made application to carry out such work. This is only considered to be likely to result in a direct conflict where Ms Smith is considered for such a contract specifically. Where such is the case, no dispensation is recommended. General discussion around research contracts, including in relation to agreeing to contracts to other companies is not considered to represent a direct conflict and as such no dispensation would be required.

With regards to Mr Paul Garnett, Mr Shane Bagley, Mr Stephen Williamson and Mr John Davies, DPI conflicts with matters likely to arise at meetings are identified in relation to fisheries management measures pertaining to the fisheries each operate within. The assessment identifies that in all cases it is in the public interest to provide dispensation to discuss matters where there is a conflict. Fishing industry general members provide important insight into the potential consequences and effectiveness of fishery management measures which contribute to well-informed decision making.

It is well-established within the Authority's practices that those with a DPI in a matter do not vote in relation to that matter. This is still considered to be the case on the basis that there are sufficient voting rights on a full range of matters across Authority membership and the integrity of a vote is therefore not at risk

through a lack of voting members. As such, it is recommended that no such dispensation is granted to the fishing industry members for voting on matters relating to his DPIs.

Legal implications

Legal risk associated with DPIs is mitigated through the application of due process in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Eastern IFCA Constitution and Standing orders.

Financial implications

None identified.

Appendices

1. Updated Disclosable Pecuniary Interests for MMO appointees
2. Consideration of granting dispensations for members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011

Appendix 1 - Revised Disclosable Pecuniary Interests for MMO appointees (March 2026)

**Eastern IFCA - Register of Pecuniary Interests
Non-elected members (MMO appointees)**

**Eastern IFCA - Register of Pecuniary Interests
Non-elected members (MMO appointees)**

Register of Interests

Non-elected members (MMO appointees)

Date updated: 02/03/2026



Monitoring Officer: Julian Gregory (CEO)

Signed:

Date: 11/03/2026

Register of Pecuniary interests. Under section 30 of the Localism Act (2011) the following Disclosable Pecuniary Interests have been declared by non-elected members including those relating to a husband / wife / spouse or civil partner or person with whom the member is living as if they were civil partners.

Name of non-elected member	1. Employment	2. Sponsorship	3. Contracts	4. Land or licences	5. Corporate tenancies	6. Securities
Mr Shane Bagley	Fisherman (specifically cockles, mussels and brown shrimps)	None	None	Boston Quay	Wash Fishery Order Shellfish Lay	Ownership of shares in the fishing vessel LILI MAE (PLN: BN439) / Boston and Fosdyke Fishing Society Limited

Mr John Davies	Fisherman (specifically Crabs, Lobsters, whelk, bass, finfish) / Director and Secretary of JJ and CAS Davies Limited	None	None	None	None	JJ and CAS Davies Limited / ownership of shares in fishing vessel RICHARD WILLIAM (PLN: YH3)
Mr Paul Garnett	R. J Garnett and Sons Limited (Director) / Fisherman (specifically cockles, mussels, whelks, brown shrimps, crabs and lobsters), Exo Environmental Ltd	None	None	None	Wash Fishery Order Shellfish Lays	R. J. Garnett and Sons Limited / King's Lynn Fishing Industry Co-Operative Limited / ownership of shares in two fishing vessels: HARVESTER (PLN: LN84) and ELIZABETH MARY (PLN: LN84)
Mr Steven Williamson	Director of J and J Shellfish Ltd / Director of Lynn Shellfish Ltd / Director of Shrimp Producers Organisation Ltd / Owner of Donaldsons (specifically cockles, mussels, whelks, brown	None	None	Lynn Shellfish Ltd (processing factory)	Wash Fishery Order Shellfish Lays	J and J Shellfish Ltd / Lynn Shellfish Ltd / Donaldsons / Shrimp Producers Organisation Ltd / ownership of shares in the following vessels: PORTUNUS (LN91), SEAGULL (LN22), SEASWALLOW (LN20), LYNN PRINCESS (LN175), BOY NEIL (LN126), ABBIE JAYNE (LN454), WASH PRINCESS (LN161), JOHN

	shrimps, crabs and lobsters)					WILLY (LN465), MATTY JAY (LO541), GEORGIE FISHER (LN474), JALETO (MT105), SUNNY MORN (LN475), DOG FISH (LO119), MOLLY P (BN444), FIVE J's (BN435)
Ms Inge Smith	Freelance Marine Environmental Scientist / Polyframe Ltd (manufacture of double-glazed doors and windows), WWII Air Sea Rescue Trust (V)	None	None	None	None	None
Mr Kieran Coupland	National Health Service / Gaywood Primary School	None	None	None	None	None
Mr Tony Goldson	None	None	None	None	None	None
Mr Lee Doughty	Fisherman (specifically: Cockles, shrimps, and mussels)	None	None	None	Wash Fishery Order 1992 Shellfish Lay	None
Ms Bex Lynam	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (Marine	None	None	None	None	None

	Conservation NGO)					
Mr Nick Schiller	WWII Air Sea Rescue Trust (V), Freelance Marine Environmental Scientist / Polyframe Ltd (manufacture of double-glazed doors and windows)	None	None	None	None	None

Appendix 2 – Consideration of granting dispensations for members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011

Authority business is centred around Eastern IFCA’s main duties i.e. the management of fishing activity in relation to industry viability, fisheries sustainability and environmental protection. The main ‘types’ of matters for which a conflict is likely are summarised below.

- Agreeing annual priorities – Members agree annually the priority work-streams which often include the assessment of fisheries and development of associated management measures.
- Agreeing to fisheries management measures – where the Authority considers issuing, varying or revoking management measures there will likely be economic impacts on fishers including Authority members with related DPIs. This includes a range of fisheries (e.g. cockle fisheries, crab and lobsters etc.).
- Agreeing to contracts to undertake work on behalf of the Authority - Members have previously agreed to contract out works (specifically research work) to fishers. Where such matters are under consideration and discussed, Members may have related DPIs.

Section 31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 requires that any members who have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in a matter at a meeting cannot participate in the associated discussion or vote on the matter.

Conflicts between DPIs and Authority business

Table 1 below sets out where registered DPIs may be in conflict with the ‘main types of matters’ which arise at Authority meetings.

Table 1 – circumstances where Mr Williamson’s additional DPIs may come into conflict with matters arising at Authority meetings. DPIs identified include those relating to the spouse / civil partner of the non-elected member.		
MMO Appointee	DPIs which relate to Authority Business	Matters for which a DPI is relevant (in addition to existing DPIs)
Mr Paul Garnett	<p><u>Employment</u> - R. J Garnett and Sons Limited (Director) / Fisherman (specifically cockles, mussels, whelks, brown shrimps, crabs and lobsters), Exo Environmental Ltd, aquaculture in relation to what was a WFO lay.*</p> <p><u>Securities</u> - R. J. Garnett and Sons Limited / King’s Lynn Fishing Industry Co-Operative Limited / ownership of shares in two fishing vessels: HARVESTER (PLN: LN84) and ELIZABETH MARY (PLN: LN84)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing fisheries management measures • Agreeing to undertake work on behalf of the Authority
Mr Shane Bagley	<p><u>Employment</u> -Fisherman (specifically cockles, mussels and brown shrimps), aquaculture in relation to what was a WFO lay.*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing fisheries management measures • Agreeing to undertake work on

	<p><u>Land or licences</u> - Boston Quay</p> <p><u>Securities</u> - Ownership of shares in the fishing vessel LILI MAE (PLN: BN439) / Boston and Fosdyke Fishing Society Limited</p>	<p>behalf of the Authority</p>
Mr John Davies	<p><u>Employment</u> -Fisherman (specifically Crabs, Lobsters, whelk, bass, finfish) / Director and Secretary of JJ and CAS Davies Limited</p> <p><u>Securities</u> - JJ and CAS Davies Limited / ownership of shares in fishing vessel RICHARD WILLIAM (PLN: YH3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing fisheries management measures • Agreeing to undertake work on behalf of the Authority
Mr Steven Williamson	<p><u>Employment</u> - Director of J and J Shellfish Ltd / Director of Lynn Shellfish Ltd / Director of Shrimp Producers Organisation Ltd / Owner of Donaldsons (specifically cockles, mussels, whelks, brown shrimps, crabs and lobsters), aquaculture in relation to what was a WFO lay.*</p> <p><u>Securities</u> - J and J Shellfish Ltd / Lynn Shellfish Ltd / Donaldsons / Shrimp Producers Organisation Ltd / ownership of shares in the following vessels: PORTUNUS (LN91), SEAGULL (LN22), SEASWALLOW (LN20), LYNN PRINCESS (LN175), BOY NEIL (LN126), ABBIE JAYNE (LN454), WASH PRINCESS (LN161), JOHN WILLY (LN465), MATTY JAY (LO541), GEORGIE FISHER (LN474), JALETO (MT105), SUNNY MORN (LN475), DOG FISH (LO119), MOLLY P (BN444), FIVE J's (BN435)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing fisheries management measures • Agreeing to undertake work on behalf of the Authority
Ms Inge Smith	<p>Freelance Marine Environmental Scientist</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing to contracts to undertake work on behalf of the Authority (where Ms Smith is being considered for such a contract).
Mr Nick Schiller	<p>(Spouse) Freelance Marine Environmental Scientist</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing to contracts to undertake work on behalf of the Authority (where

		Ms Smith is being considered for such a contract).
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* WFO lays were previously listed under 'corporate tenancies' as per the description provided within the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. However, on the expiry of the WFO (Jan 2023) the tenancy ceased to exist. The areas previously known as lays are available for 'lay holders' to undertake aquaculture activity and as such are included as a sub-description of 'employment'.

Consideration of the benefits of granting dispensations

The MMO appoints Members to IFCA's in accordance with Defra guidance¹ and in particular to ensure that 'members appointed by the MMO are representative of and/or hold knowledge and experience relevant to the economic, social and environmental needs of that IFCA's district and will be selected for the relevant expertise that they will bring to the Committee'.

In doing so an Authority is able to meet the aim of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 in modernising the management of the entire marine environment by achieving an appropriate balance between commercial exploitation and stock and habitat protection.

MMO appointees are required to impart their local knowledge and expertise to provide insight into the potential outcomes of Authority decisions. Such decisions (and in particular those relating to the implementation of fisheries management) are likely to have much wider ranging effects than only directly on fishermen (for example fisheries related jobs such as factory workers, tourism and cultural impacts). Benefits in relation to each identified 'type' of matter are summarised below:

- Fishery management measures – Those employed within the fishing industry will have an insight into the potential impacts of recommended management measures and can use their experience and knowledge of the industry to 'sense-check' measures and associated Impact Assessments.
- Agreeing to contracts to undertake work on behalf of the Authority - Members employed within the fishing industry and who work in the field of marine scientific research will be able to provide insight into the practicality and logistical issues associated with new research projects to the benefit of decision making.

Recommended Dispensations

Dispensations under s.33(2) – participation in discussions for matters in which a member has a DPI

It is recommended that dispensation should be granted to participate in discussions in relation the conflicts identified in Table 1 with respect to:

- Mr Paul Garnett
- Mr Shane Bagley
- Mr John Davies
- Mr Steven Williamson

It is considered to be in the interest of persons living within the district and to ensure that the Authority has fully considered the potential impacts of decisions. Such benefits fall within

¹ Guidance to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on the appointment of committee members to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs), April 2010 - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/347493/ifca_appointments_guidance.pdf

the scope of s.33(2) of the Localism Act and as such dispensations are considered appropriate. It is also recommended that the dispensations are granted for the maximum period allowed within the Localism Act (2011) of four years or until their term of service is expired (whichever is first) so as to align MMO appointee full term appraisals with the consideration of granting dispensations.

It is further recommended that Ms Inge Smith and Mr Nick Schiller are not provided dispensation to discuss matters pertaining to agreeing contracts to undertake work on behalf of the Authority where such consideration includes a bid from Ms Smith. Where Ms Smith does not have a bid for a contract with the Authority, there is not considered to be a direct conflict and as such, no dispensation would be required.

Dispensations under s.33(2) – voting on matters in which a member has a DPI

It is recommended that, in relation to the DPI conflicts regarding those involved within the fishing industry and specific fisheries, dispensations to vote do not fulfil the requirements of s.33(2) of the Localism Act. This is primarily because there is sufficient representation from various parts of the fishing industry to mitigate the loss of a vote on a specific matter.

Where Ms Smith has a direct conflict pertaining to agreeing a contract, it is not considered appropriate to allow Ms Smith or Mr Schiller a vote on the matter as there would be a perception of bias.

Vision

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Action Item 8

63rd Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority meeting

11 March 2026

Report by: Jon Butler, ACO(DD)

Meeting of the Finance & HR Sub-committee held on 3 February 2026

Purpose of report

To inform members of the key outputs and decisions from the Finance & HR Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 February 2026.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Note** the content of the report.

Background

Chapter 4 of the Authority's Constitution and Standing Orders sets out the extent to which the Authority's functions are:

- the responsibility of the full Authority.
- the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer.
- the responsibility of Sub-Committees of the Authority.

Decision making powers for all strategic and operational financial matters are delegated to the Finance & HR sub-committee except for approving and adopting the Annual Budget and setting the levy to the County Councils, which is the responsibility of the full Authority. The full Authority also retains oversight of finance and HR matters by receiving and approving reports from the Finance and HR sub-committee.

Report

The Finance & HR sub-committee meets quarterly, and the last meeting was held on 3 February 2026. Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting can be found at Appendix A.

Appendices

Appendix A - Unconfirmed minutes of the Finance and HR sub-committee meeting held on the 3 February 2026.

Appendix A

Unconfirmed minutes of a meeting of the Finance & HR sub-committee held on 3 February 2026

Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.



Finance & HR Sub-Committee

A meeting of the Finance & HR Sub-Committee took place at the EIFCA Offices, King's Lynn on 3rd February 2026 at 1030 hours.

Members Present:

Cllr T FitzPatrick	Chair	Norfolk County Council
Cllr E Back	Vice Chair	Suffolk County Council
Cllr M Chenery of Horsbrugh		Norfolk County Council
Cllr K Robinson		Suffolk County Council
Ms I Smith		MMO Appointee
Cllr G Taylor		Lincolnshire County
Council		

Eastern IFCA Officers Present:

J Butler	Assistant Chief Officer (DD)
Joanne Sams	Aston Shaw Accountants

FHR25/39 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, he advised that in the absence of the CEO ACO (DD) Butler would take the role of Clerk.

FHR25/40 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Adams (NCC) and Whittaker (LCC), Mr Williamson (MMO Appointee) and the CEO.

FHR25/41 Declarations of Members Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

FHR25/42 Minutes of the Finance and Personnel Sub-committee meeting held on 4th November 2025

Members Agreed to accept the minutes as a true record of proceedings.

Members Agreed to accept the minutes as a true record of proceedings.

FHR25/43 Matters Arising

FHR25/32 PROVISIONAL BUDGET 2026-27 & BUDGET FORECAST TO 2030: Members were advised the proposed budget had been put to the full Authority at its meeting in December, at which time it was approved.

FHR25/44 Quarter 3 Payments and Receipts

Payments made and monies received during the period October – December were set out for members information. Members were provided with both a full breakdown and a summary of the transactions.

Queries were raised regarding medical costs, it was explained Officers undergo either an ML5 or ENG1 medical. Cllr Chenery also enquired whether all IFCA's adhere to the same Financial Regulations, it was explained the Financial Regs are specific to EIFCA, set by the Authority and based on NCC Financial Regs.

Members Agreed to Note the report.

FHR25/45 Quarter 3: Management Accounts

Members were advised the salary variance was attributable to delayed recruitment and recent resignations. Recruitment for outstanding IFCO posts were ongoing. Other variances relating to insurance, vessel operations, training, and vehicle operating costs were also explained.

Cllr Taylor queried the connection to Wisbech, as it fell in Cambridgeshire, ACO Butler advised the mooring for the Authority's vessel at Sutton Bridge fell under the Fenland District Council. It was noted the intention was for Protector IV to undergo refit at Wisbech port.

Ms Smith queried the difference in asset purchases between the payments and receipts and the management accounts. Ms Sams advised the payments and receipts reflected payments made in

the last quarter, the management accounts did not show asset purchases as these were put against reserves. Ms Sams advised as EIFCA were not concerned with profit, depreciation did not take place. Ms Sams felt it may be easier to understand if a balance sheet was provided each quarter. Members discussed the matter of depreciation, Cllr Back felt it should be brought back into the accounts. However, it was noted the auditors had advised depreciation was not required, but best value must be sought when selling assets. Cllr Robinson felt if the system was working there was no need to change it. Ms Sams still believed a balance sheet would show the assets better.

Members Agreed to note the Management Accounts

FHR25/46 Resolution

Members Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for item 9 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act; and Item 10 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information which was likely to reveal the identity of an individual which was exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Proposed: Chair

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

All Agreed

HR25/47 IT Provision

Summary in accordance with Section 100(C)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972

ACO Butler advised members the BCKLWN had given an ultimatum on the length of time they could continue to host the Authorities back up files and IT support. The timeframe was particularly short as it was 31st March 2026, with notice only being given in December.

During the process of investigating potential ways forward some concerns had been raised regarding updates of equipment, however, as the Local Government Review was underway there was no option but to push on with moving the storage of files to the 'cloud' and secure alternative IT support. Three quotes were being sought.

Members were being appraised of the situation as early indications were the cost to move file storage to the cloud might be high, there would also be the need for cyber security insurance and robust security protocols.

The Chair suggested NCC may be able to assist with the problem, he felt their system was pretty resilient.
ACO Butler advised he would update members at the next meeting.

Members discussed the impact of the Local Government Review in general, and the possibility that a move to unitary authorities might result in landlocked Authorities not wanting to contribute to EIFCA.

Members Agreed to note the content of the report

HR25/48 HR Update

Summary in accordance with Section 100(C)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972

- Since the previous meeting there had been one resignation of a Grade 6 MSO. The decision to leave was based on family matters.
Time was being taken to consider the best method of recruiting to the vacant post.
- Recruitment to outstanding IFCO posts was underway, 12 applicants had been shortlisted. Two had dropped out for initial interviews, following the practical interview two applicants had been given conditional offers of employment.
- Following the resignation of the Senior Skipper, options for replacement were being considered.
- Temporary cover for the Data/Admin post was being considered to help out until a permanent replacement was made.
- Under normal circumstances, with a full complement of staff the cockle surveys proved a very busy time, the depleted staffing levels would make it particularly difficult to meet the survey deadlines with staff being given TOIL for additional hours worked. All staff, including the execs would be required to take part in the surveys, which would be carried out in 3-day blocks, including weekends.
In order to prevent the build-up of TOIL, ACO Butler advised for this year, whilst there was a deficit in staff numbers, it might be an option to pay for additional hours worked, in order to prevent workstreams getting behind.
- Sickness levels appeared high, due to one staff member being on long term sick leave since October. The Officer had just returned to work on a phased return. Other sickness amounted to coughs & colds.

- Members were updated on the Women's Forum and the Code of Practice and Respectful Conduct at Work which had come about as a result of the Forum.

Members considered all the information provided. The Chair proposed honorarium payments were appropriate for additional hours during cockle surveys, he felt the figures involved would be relatively small and it would keep capacity up, particularly as there was capacity in the current budget up until the end of March.

Members Agreed to note the content of the Report.

FHR25/38 Any Other Business

There were no other matters for discussion.

The meeting closed at 1136 hours, the Chair thanked members for attending.

DRAFT

Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.



Action Item 9

63rd Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority meeting

11 March 2026

Review of Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Constitution and Standing Orders

Report by: J. Gregory, CEO

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to report the outcome of the annual review of the Eastern IFCA constitution and to seek approval for relatively minor changes.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Approve** the proposed changes to the Constitution and Standing Orders at Appendix A.

Background

Eastern IFCA adopted the current Constitution and Standing Orders on 31st October 2012 with a requirement for it to be reviewed annually. The Constitution and Standing Orders are the embodiment of the requirement for the Authority to ensure that it has sound governance.

A full review of the structure of the Authority and the Constitution and Standing Orders was undertaken during 2018-19, which resulted in a number of recommendations, which were all approved at the 39th meeting of the full Authority held in March 2019.

The overall objectives were to provide a more coherent approach to dealing with Authority business, to make best use of the skills, experience and accountabilities of members and to make meetings more meaningful and productive.

The changes included discontinuing three sub-committees and moving functions to the full Authority in order to engage the full Authority membership in the core business of the Authority, such as the strategic policy and planning framework and fisheries and conservation management decisions.

In order to remove duplication, the functions undertaken by the Finance and HR sub-committee were expanded to include all financial matters with the exception of approving the annual budget and levy, which remained the preserve of the full Authority on recommendation from the Finance and HR sub-committee. In recognition of the expanded remit of this sub-committee it was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority undertake the same functions on the sub-committee.

The Fisheries and Conservation Working Group was established to enable greater participation of members in the development of management measures. This enables issues to be identified and more discussion before formal proposals are prepared for consideration by the full Authority.

In 2022 a Wash Fisheries Transition sub-committee was established to address the transition to a new management regime following the expiry of the Wash Fishery Order 1992.

In 2023 some relatively minor amendments were approved. The most notable of these are revisions to provisions in the scheme of delegations to enable business continuity and changes in the name and functions of the Wash Fisheries Transition sub-committee to the Wash Fisheries sub-committee and the creation of the Wash Appeals sub-committee.

Report

The Constitution and Standing Orders have been reviewed, and some amendments are proposed as set out at Appendix A. The proposed changes have been reviewed by the Authority's legal advisors, nPlaw, who have also advised that there have not been any legal or procedural changes that require further changes to be made.

A revision to the Financial Regulations (Chapter 5, Section 13 Assets) was made by the CEO, Chair and Vice-Chair at the November meeting of the Finance & HR sub-committee and subsequently reported to the full Authority at the 62nd meeting held in December 2025. This section has further proposed revisions following the quality assurance provided by nPlaw.

A further revision to the Scheme of Delegations for the Wash Fisheries sub-committee was agreed at the 62nd meeting of the full Authority in December 2025 and that change is included in Appendix A.

Other grammatical changes have been made but are not included in Appendix A because they are of no significance and do not represent substantive change.

Financial implications

The only financial implications are charges for the assistance and advice drawn from nplaw.

Legal implications

It is a legal requirement for the Authority to keep abreast of revised legislation for the operation and conduct of public business. Nplaw have advised on the current status of the Constitution and Standing Orders.

Conclusion

The Constitution and Standing Orders as adopted remains fit for purpose does not require any amendments at this time. The Clerk will continue to hold them under review and will bring any futures changes to the Authority meeting in March annually unless there is a pressing need to make changes more urgently.

Appendices

Appendix A - Proposed Revisions to the Constitution and Standing Orders

Background documents

Papers and minutes of the 39th meeting of the full Authority held on 11 March 2019.

Papers and minutes of the 47th meeting of the full Authority held on 9 March 2022

Papers and minutes of the 49th meeting of the full Authority held on 14 September 2022.

Papers and minutes of the 51st meeting of the full Authority held on 8 March 2023.

Papers and minutes of the meeting of the Finance & HR sub-committee held on 11 November 2025.

Papers and minuets of the 62nd meting of the full Authority held on 10 December 2025.

Eastern IFCA Constitution and Standing Orders (revised March 2025)

[2025 11 20 EIFCA Constitution 2025 UPDATED FINAL.pdf](#)

Appendix A

Proposed Revisions to the Constitution and Standing Orders			
Ref	Original Text	Revised Text	Rationale
<p>CHAPTER 1: Standing Orders Section 12: Appointment of working groups</p>	<p>12.4 A permanent Fisheries and Conservation Management working group will provide a forum for Authority members to engage with the development of management measures before they reach the point of presentation to the full Authority for consideration.</p> <p>12.5 The Fisheries and Conservation Management Group will comprise all non- elected members and Council appointed members may also attend at their own discretion. Officers will attend meetings as required by the CEO. The Terms of Reference for the group are set out below.</p> <p>Title in Terms of Reference: FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP</p>	<p>12.4 A permanent Management Working Group will provide an informal forum for Authority members to engage in the development of fisheries and conservation management measures before they reach the point of presentation to the full Authority for consideration.</p> <p>12.5 The membership of the Management Working Group will comprise all members of the Authority albeit Council appointed members may attend at their own discretion. Eastern IFCA officers will attend meetings as required by the CEO. The Terms of Reference for the group are set out below.</p> <p>Title in Terms of Reference: MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP</p>	<p>Simplify the name of the working group and clarify membership.</p>

<p>CHAPTER 4: Scheme of Delegations MATTERS THAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FINANCE & HR SUB-COMMITTEE TO DISCHARGE</p>	<p>5. Approving and reviewing annually the Members' expenses scheme.</p>	<p>5. Approving and reviewing annually the Members' expenses scheme as part of the annual budget setting process.</p>	<p>To reflect practice adopted in recent years.</p>
<p>CHAPTER 4: Scheme of Delegations MATTERS THAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WASH FISHERIES SUB-COMMITTEE TO DISCHARGE</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p><i>Decision making on all matters associated with the allocation, retention and transfer of aquaculture 'lays' in the Wash that previously existed under the several order elements of the Wash Fishery Order 1992. To include such matters as managed under 'interim' management of the lays following the expiry of the WFO and any subsequent permanent replacement for the several order elements of the WFO.</i></p>	<p>To provide clarity on the nature of fixed assets and to support improvements to the process of recording and managing such assets. NB This revision was agreed at the 62nd meeting of the full Authority in December 2025.</p>
<p>CHAPTER 4: Scheme of Delegations MATTERS THAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO DISCHARGE</p>	<p>27. In the event of unplanned absence of the CEO, the Assistant Chief Officer (Designated Deputy) shall deputise and assume the functions and responsibilities of the CEO.</p>	<p>27. In the event of unplanned absence of the CEO, the Assistant Chief Officer (Designated Deputy) shall deputise and assume the functions and responsibilities of the CEO. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority shall be informed of the</p>	<p>27 and 28 – align with established practice and to mandate the requirement to advise the Chair and Vice-Chair in the interests of sound governance.</p>

	<p>28. In the event of unplanned absence of the CEO and the Assistant Chief Officer (Designated Deputy), the Assistant Chief Officer shall deputise and assume the functions and responsibilities of the CEO.</p> <p>30. Where, in the opinion of the CEO (or their nominated deputy in their absence) a decision which is within the powers of the Authority or a Sub-Committee, but is not within the CEO's delegated powers, is urgently required by the Eastern IFCA, and cannot be delayed until the next scheduled meeting of the Authority or relevant Sub-Committee, the CEO (or their nominated deputy in their absence) may take the decision, having first consulted the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Authority or the relevant Sub-</p>	<p>arrangement and notified when it ends.</p> <p>28. In the event of unplanned absence of the CEO and the Assistant Chief Officer (Designated Deputy), the Assistant Chief Officer shall deputise and assume the functions and responsibilities of the CEO The Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority shall be informed of the arrangement and notified when it ends.</p> <p>30. Where, in the opinion of the CEO (or their nominated deputy in their absence) a decision which is within the powers of the Authority or a Sub-Committee, but is not within the CEO's delegated powers, is urgently for reasons of urgency or business continuity required by the Eastern IFCA, and cannot be delayed until the next scheduled meeting of the Authority or relevant Sub-Committee, the CEO (or their nominated deputy in their absence) may take the decision, having first consulted the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Authority or the relevant Sub-Committee. All such decisions must</p>	<p>30 and 31 – to clarify that such decisions can be taken for reason of urgency AND business continuity.</p>
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	<p>Committee. All such decisions must be reported to the next meeting of the Authority or the relevant Sub- Committee.</p> <p>31. Where a scheduled meeting of the Authority or a Sub-Committee is not quorate and in the opinion of the CEO (or their nominated deputy in their absence) a decision which is within the powers of the Authority or a Sub- Committee, but is not within the CEO's delegated powers, is required to enable business continuity the CEO (or their nominated deputy in their absence) may take the decision, having first consulted the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Authority or the relevant Sub-Committee. All such decisions must be reported to the next meeting of the Authority or the relevant Sub- Committee.</p>	<p>be reported to the next meeting of the Authority or the relevant Sub-Committee.</p> <p>31. Where a scheduled meeting of the Authority or a Sub-Committee is not quorate and in the opinion of the CEO (or their nominated deputy in their absence) a decision which is within the powers of the Authority or a Sub- Committee, but is not within the CEO's delegated powers, is for reasons of urgency or business continuity required to enable business[MH8.1][JG8.2] continuity the CEO (or their nominated deputy in their absence) may take the decision, having first consulted the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Authority or the relevant Sub-Committee. All such decisions must be reported to the next meeting of the Authority or the relevant Sub-Committee.</p>	
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<p>CHAPTER 5: Financial Regulations Section 11: Contracts</p>	<p>11.1 Procedures as to contracts are as follows:</p> <p>(a) Every contract whether made by the Authority or by a Sub-Committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated shall comply with these procedures, and no exception from any of the following provisions of these procedures shall be made otherwise than by direction of the Finance & HR sub-committee provided that these procedures shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (v) below:</p> <p>(i) for the supply, of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services</p> <p>(ii) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants.</p> <p>(iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or</p>	<p>11.1 Procedures as to contracts are as follows:</p> <p>(a) Every contract whether made by the Authority or by a Sub-Committee to which the power of making contracts has been delegated shall comply with these procedures, and no exception from any of the following provisions of these procedures shall be made otherwise than by direction of the Finance & HR sub-committee provided that these procedures shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (v) below:</p> <p>(i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage, telephone and internet services</p> <p>(ii) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants.</p> <p>(iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing vessels, machinery, equipment or plant.</p>	<p>(i) To add internet services.</p> <p>(iii) To clarify that vessels are included.</p> <p>(iv) To cater for circumstances where it is appropriate to continue with a previous supplier for the purposes of business continuity in circumstances where a previous contract has expired.</p> <p>(v) To add 'work to be executed' to goods or materials.</p>
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	<p>equipment or plant.</p> <p>(iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Authority.</p> <p>(v) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or which are sold only at fixed price, or for which there is only one source of supply.</p>	<p>(iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Authority or, where there is not an existing contract because it has expired, the RFO considers it to be appropriate for the purposes of business continuity that they are provided by an existing or previous supplier.</p> <p>(v) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or which are sold only at fixed price, or for which there is only one source of supply.</p>	
<p>CHAPTER 5: Financial Regulations Section 13: Assets</p>	<p>13 Assets</p> <p>13.1.1 The RFO will maintain an asset register for 'fixed assets' to ensure that they are appropriately safeguarded and ultimately disposed of appropriately.</p> <p>13.1.2 The term 'fixed assets' refers to physical items of a capital nature where values exceed the £10,000 de minimis level for</p>	<p>13 Assets</p> <p>13.1 The RFO will maintain an asset register for 'fixed assets' to ensure that they are appropriately safeguarded and ultimately disposed of appropriately.</p> <p>13.2 The term 'fixed assets' refers to physical items of a capital nature where values exceed the £10,000 de minimis level for capitalisation</p>	<p>To provide clarity on the nature of fixed assets and to support improvements to the process of recording and managing such assets.</p> <p>NB Revision previously approved by the CEO, Chair and Vice-Chair at the</p>

	<p>capitalisation recommended by District Audit and which have a useful life of more than one year.</p> <p>13.1.3 The value of fixed assets will be the value at the point of purchase (excluding VAT) and the value will not be depreciated. Where it is not possible to trace the purchase price other sources such as the insurance valuation or formal valuation by suitably qualified persons should be used where available. As a last resort an estimated value at the point of purchase or nominal value of £1 may be applied.</p> <p>13.1.4 The asset register will include, as so far as is possible, the date of purchase, the value (including the source of the valuation) and the usual location of the asset.</p> <p>13.1.5 The asset register will be updated annually alongside the year-end accounts to reflect additions and disposals.</p> <p>13.1.6 No asset exceeding the £10,000 de-minimis level recommended by District Audit shall be sold, leased or otherwise</p>	<p>recommended by District Audit and which have a useful life of more than one year.</p> <p>13.3 The value of fixed assets will be the value at the point of purchase (excluding VAT) and the value will not be depreciated.</p> <p>13.4 Where it is not possible to trace the purchase price other sources such as the insurance valuation or formal valuation by suitably qualified persons should be used where available. As a last resort an estimated value at the point of purchase or nominal value of £1 may be applied.</p> <p>13.5 Where an item is considered to have notable value to the Authority but has a value applied under the provisions of para 13.4, the RBO will determine whether or not the item should be included in the Asset Register considering such factors as whether it represented a significant investment at the time of procurement or if to replace it would involve expense in excess of £10,000. In such cases the Asset Register will be noted to show why the item is so included.</p>	<p>November 2025 meeting of the Finance & HR sub-committee. Further revisions have now been made following quality assurance by the Authority's legal advisers. Revisions include clarifying the inclusion of assets where an estimated value is applied and the introduction of a general policy for asset disposal by the CEO.</p>
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	<p>disposed of without the authority of the Finance & HR sub-committee. The disposal should be based upon the market value for each item, with the price taking account of the age and condition of the item and, where practicable, using external reputable sources for a valuation. The market value at the time of disposal will be the value applied to the asset for the purposes of this paragraph.</p>	<p>13.6 The asset register will include, as far as is possible, the date of purchase, the value (including the source of the valuation) and the usual location of the asset.</p> <p>13.7 The asset register will be updated annually alongside the year-end accounts to reflect additions and disposals.</p> <p>13.8 No asset exceeding the £10,000 de-minimis level recommended by District Audit shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Finance & HR sub-committee. The disposal should be based upon the market value for each item, with the price taking account of the age and condition of the item and, where practicable, using external reputable sources for a valuation. The market value at the time of disposal will be the value applied to the asset for the purposes of this paragraph.</p> <p>13.9 The disposal of items not included in the Asset Register or items that are included in the Asset Register but valued at less than £10,000 at the point of disposal shall be a matter of policy implemented by the CEO (and in</p>	
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		place subject to points 2 and 3 of table “MATTERS THAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO DISCHARGE” in Chapter 4 (Scheme of Delegations) of this document.	
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Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry



Action Item 10

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

11 March 2026

Wash Cockle Fishery 2026 - Delegation of Authority

Report by: J. Gregory, CEO

Purpose of Report

To propose that delegated authority is given to the CEO to determine management measures for the 2026 Wash cockle fishery, including opening the fishery, if it is necessary to do so in advance of the revised date of the June 2026 Authority meeting.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the content of the report.
- **Note** the change of date for the June 2026 meeting of the full Authority from Wednesday 10 to Wednesday 24 June 2026.
- **Agree** in principle to open a cockle fishery for 2026 under the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 subject to satisfactory surveys and Habitats Regulations Assessment with a maximum Total Allowable Catch as determined by the established Cockle Fishery Management Plan.
- **Agree** to delegate authority to the CEO to open the fishery and to introduce, vary or revoke flexible management measures referred to in Schedule 4 of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 if it is necessary to do so in advance of the delayed June 2026 full Authority meeting.
- **Agree** to delegate authority to the CEO to introduce, vary or revoke flexible management measures with less than 12-hours' notice as may be required, in accordance with the provisions of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 if it is necessary to do so in advance of the delayed June 2026 full Authority meeting.
- **Direct** the CEO to:
 - Advise members if it is necessary to open the cockle fishery under the delegated powers and the planned management measures in advance of the opening date; and
 - To provide a full report on the annual surveys and management measures at the next available meeting of the full Authority.

Background

The Authority has seven elected members from the three funding authorities, with two from Lincolnshire CC, three from Norfolk CC and two from Suffolk CC. Authority meeting.

Ongoing work on local government structures and devolution, originally published in the English Devolution White Paper², has affected local authority elections in Norfolk and Suffolk, with elections in 2025 being postponed for a year.

The Government subsequently announced that 29 local elections in May 2026 would be further delayed for another year, including those planned in Norfolk and Suffolk. In February 2026, following legal challenge, this decision was reversed which means that elections for both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils will take place on 7 May 2026.

Elections in Lincolnshire have not been impacted and elections in the county went ahead in May 2025 alongside an election to elect an inaugural mayor of Greater Lincolnshire. The County Council elections saw significant changes in the membership of the Council.

Of the seven County Council appointed members of the Authority the two from Lincolnshire were appointed within the last year (one in May 2025 and one in September 2025). The remaining five from Norfolk and Suffolk, including the Chair and Vice-Chair, will now conclude their current appointments to the Authority in May 2026.

The appointment of County Councillors to Eastern IFCA is confirmed at the first meeting of the relevant county council following an election. It is understood that such meetings will be held on 25 May 2026 in Norfolk and 21 May 2026 in Suffolk. Over the years this has resulted in tight timescales in terms of new members knowing of their appointment, being provided with relevant information and confirming availability for the June Authority meeting at relatively short notice.

With this in mind and noting the potential for change in membership of the Authority and the fact that elections for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority are due in June 2026, the CEO and Chair of the Authority decided that it would be prudent to put the scheduled meeting of the full Authority on 10 June 2026 back to 24 June 2026. This will allow an additional two weeks to deal with the potential appointment and induction of new members of the Authority.

The Authority manages cockle fisheries in The Wash, and such management is in accordance with the associated Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) as agreed by the Authority at the 37th Eastern IFCA meeting. The FMP sets out

² [English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK](#)

how the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the fishery is calculated (as subsequently updated) along with other policy and principles for management required to ensure a sustainable fishery which operates within acceptable environmental parameters.

To inform the bespoke management measures required for each fishery an annual stock survey is undertaken during spring each year.

The Wash cockle fisheries are managed under the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021.

Report

The Wash cockle fishery usually opens in late June each year, with decisions on management measures being taken at the June meeting of the full Authority.

In light of the date of the June 2026 meeting of the full Authority being put back it is proposed that delegated authority is given to the CEO to open the fishery and to determine appropriate management measures in accordance with standard practice if it is necessary to do so in advance of the delayed date of the meeting.

It is relevant to note that delegating such matters to the CEO is not unusual albeit it is normally in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair. However, in the circumstances that will exist this year, there will not be a Chair or Vice-Chair of the Authority in place, so this is not possible. However, it is also relevant to note that the recommendations include a requirement for the CEO to advise members of the necessity to open a fishery and the proposed management measures and to report such at the 64th meeting of the full Authority.

Financial Implications

None identified.

Legal Implications

None identified. Under the Constitution and Standing Orders changes in the dates of Authority meeting fall to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair in and the Authority may delegate any of its powers to an individual member of the Authority or to the CEO except where the power falls to be discharged by a panel

Background Documents

Cockle Fishery Management Plan 2019

Vision

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Action Item 11

63rd Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

11 March 2026

Strategic Assessment 2025 & Business Plan 2026-31

Report by: Luke Godwin, ACO

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to present the Strategic Assessment for 2026 and the 5-year Business Plan for 2026-31 for consideration and approval.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the content of the 2026 Strategic Assessment, including the priorities for 2026/27.
- **Approve** the 5-year Business Plan, including the priorities and plans for 2026/31.

Background

Each year, Eastern IFCA has undertaken a strategic assessment of all fisheries in the district to identify fisheries-related risks to stocks, the environment and industry viability. The assessment uses best available evidence to identify fisheries, environmental features and areas within the district which may require management and regulation to be implemented or reviewed to maintain an effective regulatory framework capable of ensuring sustainable fisheries, healthy seas, and a viable industry. This is used to identify priority workstreams for the forthcoming financial year and to inform the rolling five-year Business Plan.

Report

The Strategic Assessment

Since 2016, an annual assessment has been undertaken to identify risks and prioritise workstreams which provide appropriate mitigation in relation to fisheries within the district.

The assessment includes analysis of available fisheries data, including data from the Marine Management Organisation, the Authority's catch return data, and consideration of the strategic context including legislative and policy changes, external mitigative workstreams and the views of the Authority's stakeholders. The assessment outputs three categories of workstream based on risk as follows:

- 'high priority workstreams', which represent new or still to be completed mitigation against high risks;
- 'business critical' workstreams, which represent well-established, business-as-usual workstreams which are crucial to mitigating risk; and
- 'future priorities' which represent workstreams which mitigate lesser risks or risks which may become 'high' in the future.

In summary, risk is considered in relation to key internal and external factors based on the PESTLE analysis model (i.e. Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Ecological) and analysis of relevant data is incorporated into the general assessment of risk.

The key outputs of the 2026 Strategic assessment are as follows:

- Risk associated with key cockle and mussel fisheries are mitigated by the existing 'business critical workstreams' (annual surveys, fisheries management) and current high priority workstreams which requires completion (i.e. replacement of the Several Order element of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 for aquaculture activity and contribution to the 'coastal health project'). The risk relating to replacement of a legal mechanism to manage public Wash cockle and mussel fisheries is discharged following completion of the associated workstream, but risk associated with managing aquaculture activity has increased as a consequence of further (external) delays to implementing a replacement management framework.
- Risks remains high in relation to fisheries outside of the Wash where management is less well established, including the Humber Estuary. A high priority workstream was added within the 2024-29 5-year Business Plan which will mitigate associated risk, and which is carried over into the 2026-31 Business Plan.
- Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) represent both an emerging risk and the key mitigation against established risks in relation to bass, crab and lobster and whelk fisheries – collaboration with partner organisations on the development and implementation of the plans is identified as a high priority again this year as it was in previous assessments. An associated opportunity is identified in relation to a potential scientific trial for bass drift net fisheries has been identified as a new high priority.
- The development of the second generation East Marine Plan also presents both a risk and an opportunity to seek to mitigate the spatial squeeze known to be impacting inshore fishers and the associated high priority workstream is maintained within the Business Plan which ensures the Authority contributes to and influences the new East Marine Plan.
- Risks associated with impact to Marine Protected Areas, including delivery of Adaptive Risk Management in the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ, represents a key risk across all fisheries and this has been well reflected in previous assessments for which a similarly well-established high priority workstream has been identified.
- The roll-out and national requirements for Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems (I-VMS) were identified as important mitigants within the Strategic Assessment (and have been for several years). However, further delays to the full roll-out (as a consequence of one of the suppliers not providing data

to the UK Data Hub) has resulted in the associated risk remaining high and justifying the continued inclusion of a priority workstream to consider implementation of vessel tracking via other means.

Overall, the work undertaken in the 2025-26 financial year continued to mitigate risks but where workstreams still need completion, risk remains, and this is particularly true in relation to the roll-out of vessel tracking systems and protection of Marine Protected Areas. A summary of the Strategic Assessment 2026 is at Appendix 2, and the full document is available on the Eastern IFCA website (Appendix 2 – link below).

The Business Plan

The Business Plan provides the strategic framework within which Eastern IFCA operates and describes our ability to deliver against our vision and priorities. This is demonstrated by setting out factors such as effective leadership arrangements; the strength of the team in terms of experience, qualifications, and skills; and being appropriately equipped; operating effectively and effective financial management. An important element of this approach is to demonstrate that the work of Eastern IFCA is an investment in the local marine environment and inshore fisheries and to develop a narrative that would lead contributing authorities to view funding in that context rather than simply being another demand on hard pressed finances.

The draft Business Plan 2026-31 is available on the Eastern IFCA website (Appendix 3 – link below). The plan shows a clear linkage to Defra's vision and strategy, including in relation to the 25-Year Environment Plan, the Environment Act 2021, the Fisheries Act 2020 (including via development and implementation of Fisheries Management Plans), Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 and the continued commitment to sustainable development highlighted by development of the second-generation Marine Plans (under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009).

The draft Business Plan also refers to two key reports which were published in February of 2025, namely the IFCA Conduct and Operations report (2018-2022) and the 'conversations with IFCA' study, both of which provide findings on the IFCA's performance and recommendations for enhanced delivery. The plan highlights how the findings of these reports have generated new workstreams, particularly in relation to strengthening the Authority's approach to engagement on matters including byelaw development.

The plan identifies that the coming financial year is a continuation of a period of change as Government seeks to deliver its ambitious goals post EU-Exit, including in relation to ambitious environmental targets set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025, and the opportunity this represents for the Authority to ensure that the inshore fisheries are recognised for their contribution to coastal communities and beyond.

In addition, the risk matrix has been updated to reflect changes in risk during the last financial year, in particular, the progress in relation to the introduction of a management mechanism for private aquaculture fisheries in The Wash and

a new risk relating to the migration to a new IT system following the current providers decision to end the Authority's Service Level Agreement.

Financial implications

None

Legal implications

Before the beginning of each financial year, IFCA's are required to make and publish a plan setting out the Authority's main objectives and priorities the year (s.177 Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009). The proposed plan is developed in accordance with guidance provided by Defra³ including via the annual Strategic Assessment to provide an 'evidence-based marine management cycle'.

Agreement and subsequent publication of the draft 5-Year Business Plan is considered sufficient to meet the legislative requirements on the Authority.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of Strategic Assessment 2026

Appendix 2 - Strategic Assessment 2026 available online at [2026 03 11 Item 11 Appendix 2 Strategic Assessment.pdf](#)

Appendix 3 - Draft Eastern IFCA 5-year Business Plan 2026-2031 available online at [2026 03 11 Item 11 Appendix 2 Strategic Assessment.pdf](#)

Background documents

IFCA Conduct and Operations Report 2018-22 [Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities: conduct and operations 2018 to 2022 - GOV.UK](#)

Conversations with the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority project report available at [Report out on IFCA's performance - AIFCA](#)

³ [Corporate cover and copyright page for consultations](#)

Appendix 1

Strategic Assessment 2026



Summary of Key Fisheries, Risks, and Mitigants

Fishery	Key Risk Factors	Key Mitigants
General	Fisheries Management Plans: measures which do not take into account inshore fisheries business models.	Contribution to development of FMPs to ensure regional and local context of inshore fisheries accounted for.
	Review of the East Marine Plan: changes could result in special squeeze.	Contribution to review of East Marine Plan to ensure inshore fisheries are recognised.
	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regs: risk of unassessed interactions damaging MPAs.	Completion of Habitat Regulation Assessments for all fishing / feature interactions. Implementation of measures to protect 'red-risk' features via confirmation of the Closed Areas Byelaw 2021.
	IVMS: significant delay and uncertainty regarding exact measures and interaction with IFCA powers.	Consider implementing alternative vessel tracking measures in lieu of national requirement coming into effect.
Cockle & Mussel	WFO Replacement (Several Order element): necessary to manage Wash Aquaculture.	Continue delivery of management mechanisms to implement a management regime for Wash-based aquaculture including in the context of Defra advice to consider use of a byelaw.
	Wash die-off: threat to sustainability.	Investigation and monitoring of cockle & mussel die-off (including through contribution to the Coastal Health Initiative).
	Wash bird and seal species: evidence of population decline.	Contribution to the Coastal Health initiative.
	Management outside the Wash: inherited byelaws must remain appropriate.	Review of inherited byelaws to provide management framework for fisheries throughout the district.
Whelk	High risk associated with whelk stocks in The Wash and impacts on industry viability within Suffolk-based fisheries due to increased minimum landing size.	Continue to monitor the fishery and develop measures to address the sustainability of whelk stocks as needed.
Crab & Lobster	Management of fishing activity within the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ: potential need for a precautionary approach with significant impacts on fishery viability.	Continue Adaptive Risk Management (ARM) workstream to protect the MCZ while enabling fishing.
Shrimp	Permit conditions review: potential for the 'experience requirement' to impact business continuity for some business models.	Review of the 'experience requirement' including in consultation with fishing industry.
Key Finfish	Key risks relate to marginalisation or lack of consideration of small-scale fisheries and Recreational Sea Angling activity. Potential opportunity in relation to a bass drift netting scientific trial.	Contribution to FMPs & completion of gear interaction work to inform and highlight local fisheries in general. Consideration of a bass drift netting scientific trial.

This document is intended to summarise the key outputs from the 2026 Strategic assessment.

High Priority Workstreams

These workstreams must be completed to eliminate high risks identified in relation to fisheries. These workstreams are the key focus of the Authority's work over the 2026-27 financial year and represent continuation of existing high priorities identified in previous years, revised priorities to reflect progress made and new priorities to mitigate emerging risks.

These workstreams are in addition to 'business critical' workstreams, which represent established 'business-as-usual' workstreams required to prevent risk increasing in relevant fisheries and 'future priorities' which relate to lesser risks, potential future risks or added value workstreams.

1. **To ensure that the conservation objectives of Marine Protected Areas in the district are furthered through:**
 - a. Implementation of management measures for 'red risk' gear/feature interactions (**carried over**).
 - b. Continued implementation of Adaptive Risk Management of fishing activity within the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (**carried over**).
 - c. Completion of 'amber/green' gear/fishing interaction assessments and development and implementation of management measures as required (**carried over**).
 - d. Participation in the 'Coastal Health' pilot of The Wash (**carried over**).
 - e. Habitat mapping in relation to *sabellaria* reef within MPAs outside of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast (**carried over**).

2. **Management of cockle and mussel fisheries (wild capture and private) through:**
 - a. Develop appropriate management of private shellfish aquaculture within The Wash (**carried over**).
 - b. A review of relevant byelaws inherited from Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee (**carried over**).

3. **Obtaining better fisheries data through:**
 - a. Facilitating and contributing to the roll-out of I-VMS by the Marine Management organisation (**carried over**).
 - b. Development of measures (through byelaws and / or permit conditions) to implement standardised reporting rates across of VMS units (**carried over**).
 - c. Consider gathering vessel tracking data through alternative means (in lieu of I-VMS) (**carried over**).

4. **Contribute to the development and implementation of Fisheries Management Plans though:**
 - a. Supporting the planning / preparation phase (**carried over**).
 - b. Supporting the publication phase including by reviewing and evaluation plans (**carried over**).
 - c. Supporting post-publication phase including implementation (**carried over**).

- d. Consider the development of a bass drift net scientific trial (**new priority**).
5. **Contribute to the development of second-generation Marine Plans through:**
- a. Collaboration with the Marine Management Organisation to seek opportunities to improve data and evidence for inshore fishing activities (**carried over**).
 - b. Stakeholder engagement to raise awareness of marine planning and identify key issues (**carried over**).
 - c. Contributing to policy development by providing expert advice and relaying information from our stakeholders (**carried over**).

Vision

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Action Item 12

63rd Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

11 March 2026

Interim Management of Wash Aquaculture

Report by: James Teasdale (Policy and Project Officer)

Purpose of Report

To present to members a proposed new approach for the management of aquaculture areas, historically referred to as “lays”, within the Wash in the continued absence of a Several Order and the problems associated with existing interim measures.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the contents of the report
- **Agree** to the proposed interim policies regarding management of aquaculture within the Wash, and direct officers to implement these
- **Agree** to delegate authority to the CEO to implement, alter or revoke closures within the Wash in accordance with the proposed interim policies, and to enable aquaculture as approved by the Wash Fisheries Sub-committee

Background

Within the Wash, the relaying and cultivation of shellfish, on defined plots historically referred to as “lays”, has operated under the Wash Fishery Order 1992 (WFO). The WFO was a hybrid order that combined provisions for managing the public (wild) fishery under a regulating order with managing aquaculture under a Several Order that enabled exclusive access to specified areas to enable cultivation of shellfish through time-limited leases.

The WFO expired in January 2023. Upon expiry, the former leased areas reverted to the public fishery in law, and the lease structure that had conferred exclusive cultivation rights ceased to exist. In the period since expiry, aquaculture has been enabled under interim measures, pending confirming a permanent management system. These measures have amounted to a freezing of the *status quo* under the WFO using Byelaw 8 (Temporary Closure of Shellfish Fisheries), so that access, restrictions, and protections have been maintained as under WFO, with the intention that successor legislation would then pick up from this status quo position. During this time, aquaculture activity in the Wash has been minimal, driven by limited availability of suitable mussel seed and poor market conditions. Nevertheless, some stakeholders have continued the cultivation of shellfish, while others have expressed an interest in

doing so when conditions allow, such as if significant external seed becomes available for relaying.

At the 62nd Eastern IFCA meeting in December 2025, members were advised of further unanticipated delays in Defra being able to consider the Authority's application for a new Several Order and the suggestion that alternative means of managing aquaculture should be explored. At the meeting members agreed a change to the Constitution and Standing Orders to delegate decision making on applications regarding aquaculture within the Wash to the Wash Fisheries sub-committee, and directed officers to develop and present proposals for lay management to address identified issues with the interim management approach. Specifically, as time has passed, the use of broad closures to mirror the former lease areas has become increasingly difficult to justify where there is little or no active cultivation. This is particularly apparent in light of the *status quo* approach effectively maintaining private fisheries as enabled by a Several Order, without any such legislation to underpin them. It has also led to perceptions of inequality where wild shellfish naturally settle on areas that are closed to the public fishery despite legally being part of the public fishery.

Report

As directed by the Authority, a review has been undertaken regarding lay management. Initially this is formed of a legal analysis of Eastern IFCA's duties and powers and how this informs current and potential management and is followed by proposals as to how Eastern IFCA can support aquaculture in a manner that is fair, effective, and legal.

Legal Analysis

While a Several Order has been the historic basis for aquaculture within the Wash, it is appropriate for Eastern IFCA to enable and manage aquaculture outside of the framework of a Several Order under its wider powers and duties. Specifically, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA) provides both a duty to manage aquaculture as a form of "exploitation" of sea fisheries resources, and a discretionary power to take steps for the development of fisheries.

First, the general management duty in section 153 extends expressly to aquaculture:

153 Management of inshore fisheries

(1) The authority for an IFC district must manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in that district.

...

(12) Any reference in this Chapter to the "exploitation" of sea fisheries resources is a reference to any activity relating to the exploitation of such resources, whether carried out for commercial purposes or otherwise, including—

- (a) fishing for, taking, retaining on board, trans-shipping, landing, transporting or storing such resources,*
- (b) selling, displaying, exposing or offering for sale or possessing such resources, and*
- (c) introducing such resources to the sea or cultivating such resources.*

By defining “exploitation” to include introducing resources to the sea and cultivating those resources, section 153 confirms that aquaculture falls squarely within IFCA management responsibilities. In short, managing cultivation alongside the public fishery is not exceptional: it is a core statutory function.

Secondly, section 172 supplies a complementary development power that enables practical steps to support aquaculture without relying on a Several Order. The section provides in full:

172 Development, etc of fisheries

(1) An IFC authority may take such steps as it considers necessary or expedient for or in connection with the development of any fishery for any sea fisheries resources.

(2) Subject to any provision made by or under any Act, the power conferred by subsection (1) includes power to stock or restock a public fishery for any sea fisheries resources.

(3) Nothing in this Chapter is to be taken as preventing an IFC authority from making an application for, or being the grantee of, an order under section 1 of the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967 (c. 83) (orders as to fisheries for shellfish).

Section 172(1)–(2) enables steps “necessary or expedient” for fishery development, including enabling stocking or restocking a public fishery, which with the expiry of the WFO includes all previous lays. Section 172(3) clarifies that while a Several Order remains an available tool, it is not a prerequisite for IFCA action. Accordingly, a Several Order may be pursued in future if advantageous, but the Authority is not constrained from managing aquaculture now through existing byelaw powers, targeted closures, and exemptions.

Taken together, sections 153 and 172 provide a coherent statutory basis for the management of aquaculture within the Wash. However, they do not support the current management structure, as the maintenance of closed areas in a public fishery simply because the area had been reserved as an aquaculture space by an expired piece of legislation does not constitute introducing nor cultivating sea resources, and therefore would likely fall outside of Eastern IFCA’s powers.

As such, the interim measures in place over aquaculture within the Wash, whilst considered to be justifiable for a temporary maintenance of the status quo pending a new Several Order are untenable in the longer term. This is because the interim measures seek to effectively maintain a Several Order, which establishes private fisheries, without any such Order in place. In particular, the justification of maintaining the status quo cannot apply to any succession decisions, and so with a changing population within industry, the interim measures are no longer tenable as they stand.

Ideally, any solution needs to continue to enable aquaculture within the Wash within the powers currently available to Eastern IFCA, and to provide a degree of protection to anyone doing so, but to do so in a way that is fair to industry, particularly as regards closing areas of a public fishery to enable private activity, and addressing the settlement of wild stocks within any such areas. While a long-term solution will need a

new mechanism for management, be that a Several Order or dedicated byelaw, it is possible to deliver a functional arrangement under existing powers and legislation.

Proposal

The proposed approach aims to establish a clear, fair and legally robust means of managing aquaculture in the Wash in the absence of a Several Order or alternative legislation, while enabling cultivation activity to continue or re-emerge where appropriate.

In summary, the approach moves from a situation where closed aquaculture areas are treated as if they are still lays under a Several Order, to one where individuals currently associated with the closed areas retain the opportunity to undertake aquaculture, but where closures are not maintained by default, with those areas instead being treated as 'dormant', and opened to the public fishery unless the Wash Fisheries Sub-committee approves a reinstatement of the closure, which will only occur by application and supported by a reasonable and deliverable plan.

To achieve this, firstly closures over former lay areas shall not be maintained by default. This reflects their legal status as part of the public fishery and addresses concerns that longstanding closures over largely inactive areas create unnecessary restrictions, perceptions of inequality or unfairness, and difficulties in enforcement. This measure acknowledges the current low levels of aquaculture activity and recognises that exclusive access cannot be justified where areas are not being actively used for cultivation.

To ensure anyone actively undertaking aquaculture is not disadvantaged, at the discretion of the Wash Fisheries Sub-committee, closures may be maintained where there is demonstrable evidence of active aquaculture within the last five years. This ensures that businesses that have genuinely invested time, labour and resources in cultivation can continue to operate without undue disruption. Such a criterion establishes proportionate continuity while also ensuring that closures are not maintained indefinitely in the absence of activity.

In addition, to offer those associated with closures an opportunity to begin aquaculture, their closures may be maintained on the basis of them submitting credible, time-bound development plans. This provides a route for cultivation to resume in areas that have been inactive, but where fishers can set out realistic and accountable proposals for activity. Ensuring that such plans contain clear milestones and demonstrate the capacity to undertake cultivation helps provide confidence that closures granted under this route will be used constructively. Conversely, areas that do not demonstrate progress against agreed plans may be reopened to the public fishery, ensuring that protections remain conditional and accountable.

Finally, as the closures are being made 'dormant' rather than removed entirely, they may be reinstated where changes in market conditions or seed availability occur, and where there is industry capacity and intent to undertake aquaculture. Historically, the availability of mussel seed has been the key limiting factor for aquaculture in the Wash, and an adaptive mechanism is therefore required so that cultivation can be supported in years where the resource becomes accessible. Reintroducing closures under such

circumstances would enable the effective protection of re-laid stock while ensuring closures are tied directly to genuine activity.

Where closures are maintained or re-instated, during the new interim measures this will only occur on application from individuals who had previously directly held the relevant lays or exemptions, or who were directly associated with the business models attached to those lays or exemptions. While any permanent management structure regarding aquaculture, whether that be through a Several Order or alternative system, will need to enable new entrants to aquaculture, it is not currently appropriate to be facilitating this under the interim management, as the introduction of new applications is notably more complex than enabling the continuation of existing business models, and at this stage no legislative mechanism nor appropriate policies exist to handle new applications.

Taken together, these measures seek to create a transparent and responsive management framework that aligns with statutory duties to manage and develop sea fisheries resources, supports aquaculture where there is genuine intent or evidence of activity, and balances the needs of the wider industry by preventing unnecessary restrictions on the public fishery. The approach provides clearer expectations for all parties, reduces the risks associated with maintaining the current interim arrangements indefinitely, and ensures that the management of aquaculture in the Wash remains fair, proportionate, and environmentally responsible.

Consideration was also given as to the most appropriate manner of implementing the new policy including whether consultation with industry was required. Noting that maintaining interim measures in their current form is not tenable and is inconsistent with the Authorities duties, and that the proposal includes an opportunity for those enjoying protection under the current measures to maintain such by way of successful application, it is concluded that consultation will not provide any benefit on this occasion.

Implementation of the policy, if agreed, would include reasonable timeframes for applications during which time closures would remain in place. Ultimately, any person who benefits from the interim measures at present and is at risk of losing cultivated shellfish stock would be protected under the policy and / or be able to cultivate shellfish should conditions change in the future. In summary, there will not be impacts on legitimate aquaculture business models as a consequence of the proposed policy. The only impact identified relates to the loss of exclusive access to wild cockles which settle in areas which had previously been 'lays' which was not the intention of the WFO or interim policies, the maintenance of which is not considered to be tenable.

It is also noteworthy also that at the last meeting of the Fisheries and Conservation Management Working Group, there appeared to be a consensus from members, including those working in the Wash fisheries present, for addressing the non-use of lays in particular by opening to the public fishery.

Conclusion

The review concludes that continuing to maintain former lay closures exactly as they stood despite the expiry of the Wash Fishery Order is legally and practically

untenable, as it effectively preserves private fisheries without the statutory framework to support them. The current interim measures are not considered to be consistent with the Authority's duties and of particular concern where exclusive access to areas has been maintained under the status quo, and these areas are not used to cultivate shellfish but contain wild cockle stocks which cannot be accessed by the public fishery.

At the same time, Eastern IFCA clearly has sufficient powers under s.153 and s.172 of MaCAA. These powers, which can be delivered through the use of closures under the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021, potentially supported by closures under Byelaw 8 should aquaculture of shellfish species other than cockles or mussels be proposed, and providing access through the Applications and Exemptions Byelaw 2016, would enable a more appropriate and legally sustainable approach to supporting and managing aquaculture in the short to medium term pending the introduction of a new Several Order or an alternative such as a bespoke byelaw.

The proposed shift to treating former lays as "dormant, i.e. open to the public fishery unless there is evidence of recent activity or a credible, time-bound development plan, does not remove the opportunity for cultivation but ensures that exclusive access is only granted where justified, creating a fair, proportionate and legally robust interim framework.

Financial Implications

No financial implications identified

Legal Implications

Legal advice has been sought from Andrew Jackson Solicitors which, in summary, supports the identified legal risk associated with the continuation of interim policies as described. Legal advice was also sought as to whether a consultation was necessary which in summary confirmed that a consultation is not required in these circumstances.

Challenge could arise from those who held or were associated with lays and closed areas. However, the proposed approach and legal advice reduces the risks associated with continued reliance on interim measures and re-aligns management with explicit statutory powers.

Appendices

n/a

Background Documents

- Papers and minutes for Action Item 11 of the 62nd Meeting of Eastern IFCA held on 10 December 2025
- Papers and minutes for Action Item 10 of the 50th meeting of Eastern IFCA held on December 2022.
- Papers and minutes for Action Item 17 of the 30th meeting of Eastern IFCA held on 25 October 2017.

Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry



Action Item 13

63rd Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

11 March 2026

Review of Annual Priorities and Risk Register

Report by: L. Godwin, ACO

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on progress against 2025-26 priorities and to review the Risk Register.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the content of this report

Background

The Authority is mandated to produce an annual plan each year to lay out the expected business outputs for the year ahead.

The Authority has a rolling five-year Business Plan that incorporates annual priorities informed by the annual Strategic Assessment. The plan also includes the high-level objectives agreed with Defra.

The rolling five-year business plan reflects the need to engage in longer term planning in the context of high levels of demand and the requirement to be flexible with priorities to reflect the dynamic nature of inshore fisheries, the marine environment and the policy landscape.

The Risk Register is contained within the Business Plan, and it captures key issues that are judged to pose potential risks to the organisation. The matrix sets out the magnitude of the risk to Eastern IFCA from an organisational viewpoint, incorporating amongst others reputational and financial risks. It also sets out the likelihood of an identified risk occurring.

Report

This update encompasses the period December 2025 to end of February 2025.

The tables at Appendix 1 detail the progress against the key priorities for 2025-26, as set in the Business plan for 2025-30.

The Risk Register is set out at Appendix 2 and the current status of each risk area is shown at Appendix 3.

It is noteworthy that during this period, the Marine Protection and support teams operated at reduced capacity following the departure of four officers (three IFCOs and one Support Officer), including the senior skipper, in addition to the IFCO position which was being gapped. Recruitment has resulted in two IFCOs being appointed, with an additional recruitment being required to fill the remaining posts.

In addition, the Grade 6 Marine Science Officer has resigned to take a post in a private consultancy (February) and the Grade 6 Policies and Project Officer will depart during March.

The departures represent a significant proportion within the teams and a potential risk to operational capacity. Overall, the departures are compounded by the resource required to recruit and induct new members to the team. Within the Marine Science Team specifically, abstraction of both Grade 6 posts may have a significant impact on outputs. As such work is ongoing to prioritise the 'high priority' and 'business critical workstreams' outlined in the 5-Year Business Plan to ensure delivery of core duties.

An additional risk has been added at Appendix 3 as the current IT provider provided notice in December 2025 that it was to end the Service Level Agreement with the Authority from 31 March 2026. On advice from the current supplier, migration to a cloud-based system is being explored. The tight time constraints and relative complexity of the matter represent a risk given that Access to data and IT applications are fundamental to delivery of the IFCA's work streams.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Update on priorities set for 2025-26

Appendix 2 – Risk Register

Appendix 3 – Update on Risk Register

Background Documents

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Business Plan 2025-30.

APPENDIX 1 - Progress against Annual Priorities – December 2025 to end of February 2026 (inclusive)

Five key priorities are established for 2025-26.

Financial Year 2025-26		
Priorities	Progress	Comment
1. To ensure that the conservation objectives of Marine Protected Areas in the district are furthered through:		
a) Implementation of management measures for 'red risk' gear/feature interactions (carried over).	On Track	The Closed Areas Byelaw 2021 has been the subject of a formal consultation which closed on 17 November 2025. Further dialogue with stakeholders took place during the reporting period to finalise analysis of responses. The Byelaw package (which includes the associated Impact Assessment) is now being finalised before submission to the MMO for formal QA.
b) Continued implementation of Adaptive Risk Management of fishing activity within the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (carried over).	On Track	<p>Overall, delivery of the project plan is on track with the ARM plan, however, some components remain delayed. A quarterly update is provided on the Authority's website⁴ setting out progress against the plans workstreams and these are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cromer Shoal Chalk Bed Byelaw QA process is ongoing. The byelaw was re-submitted to the MMO who have responded with a further round of comments which are being considered. • The Natural Disturbance Study is ongoing, with multibeam surveys having been undertaken within the study areas during February. The application for funding under the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) was successful, with notification being provided during January. • Interim measures which include mandatory positional reporting via trackers and mandatory closures to support the NDS are still in place. The former requirement is still in place and required because of issues with one IVMS supplier has stopped providing positional data to the UK data hub and

⁴ [CSCB MCZ ARM Newsletter - Eastern IFCA](#)

		<p>which is yet to be resolved. Work is ongoing to retrieve the IVMS data from the supplier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of compliance with the mandatory NDS closures is ongoing. It is noteworthy that this monitoring requires a significant resource which includes daily checks of fishing vessel tracker data. • Development of the 'rates of damage' assessment is ongoing. Work includes seeking external expertise to analyse ROV data collected by the Authority and analysis of data gathered by local divers to enhance the data set used to inform the assessment. • A management plan has been developed which was agreed in principle at the last Authority meeting and is to be the subject of further consideration by the Management Task and Finish Group. • The study concerning the value of chalk is underway including a consultation with local fishermen to gather social and economic data to inform the study.
<p>c) Completion of 'amber/green' gear/fishing interaction assessments and development and implementation of management measures as required (carried over).</p>	<p>Delayed</p>	<p>Significant progress has been made during the reporting period in relation to the development of HRAs and the processes and frameworks which facilitate the delivery of such. This is considered to be a positive consequence of having appointed a new Grade 6 MSO whose role includes coordination of this priority workstream, but who has now resigned.</p> <p>During the reporting period, a further HRA was completed and two further HRAs were provided to Natural England for a final submission before sign-off. It is noteworthy that Natural England have reduced capacity at this time and have warned of potential delays in providing feedback on HRAs.</p> <p>It remains the case that every effort is being made to progress the workstream, including re-prioritisation of other workstreams, most notably the delivery of 'red-risk interactions management'.</p>

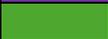
d) Participation in the national 'Coastal Health' project and the pilot in The Wash (carried over).	In Progress	Contribution to this workstream is ongoing and has included facilitating an evidence gathering exercise with Wash-based fishermen regarding observed changes in the environment.
e) Habitat mapping in relation to <i>sabellaria</i> reef within MPAs outside of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast (new priority).	In progress	Following the review of the Closed Areas Byelaw 2021, <i>Sabellaria</i> reef evidence gathering within Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC is considered the priority and surveys will be programmed in during the remainder of the financial year. <i>Sabellaria</i> reef surveys have been undertaken by Natural England within Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge during 2024 and it is anticipated that data will become available for use in a review of the Closed Areas Byelaw 2021 during the 2026/27 financial year. The need for the additional surveys will be reconsidered once the results of the 2024 surveys have been released.
2. Management of Wash cockle and mussel fisheries (wild capture and private)		
a) Confirmation of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 to enable management of wild capture fisheries (carried over).	Complete	The byelaw was confirmed by Defra at the end of February, and the byelaw has now been fully implemented (including in relation to fishing within the Wash mussel fishery).
b) Implementation of Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw access policies (transition) (carried over).	Complete	This workstream was completed during the reporting period and included production and distribution of relevant admin and educational materials, completion of the 'Wash Training Course' for all fishermen named on a permit and the administration of permits under the Eligibility Policy for the mussel fishery. Both the Byelaw and the policies are now fully implemented.

c) Develop appropriate management of private shellfish aquaculture within The Wash (carried over).	Delayed	Defra have provided advice that the application for a new Several Order will not progress until 2027/28 and have strongly encouraged the Authority to consider alternative means of managing Wash Aquaculture. During the reporting period, exploratory work has progressed including development of draft interim management measures which may provide a suitable model on which to base a permanent, byelaw-based management solution.
d) A review of relevant byelaws inherited from Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee (carried over).	Delayed	Work to review the inherited byelaw is delayed due to focus on other priority workstreams including the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw and Closed Area Byelaw 2021.
3. Obtaining better fisheries data		
a) Facilitating and contributing to the roll-out of I-VMS by the Marine Management organisation (revised priority).	Complete	I-VMS requirements came into effect via MMO licence conditions in May 2025 and resource has been allocated to facilitating the launch of this measure including through promulgation of MMO messages via IFCOs and the Authority's website.
b) Development of measures (through byelaws and / or permit conditions) to implement standardised reporting rates across of VMS units (revised priority).	In Progress	Measures to standardise reporting rates have been agreed in relation to two fisheries, and will be implemented in due course. Consideration of the need to standardise reporting rates in other fisheries, particularly in relation to use of bottom-towed-gear is subject to the completion of associated Habitat Regulation Assessments.
c) Consider gathering vessel tracking data through alternative means (in lieu of I-VMS) (new priority).	In Progress	Interim measures have been implemented to gather I-VMS analogous data from vessels operating within the Cromer Shoal MCZ (and more specifically the rugged chalk areas) and similar measures are in place within the cockle fishery (with an

		<p>alternative tracker option being considered in relation to vessels 12m and over in length).</p> <p>These arrangement remain in place whilst the I-VMS roll-out remains in its early stages and prior to the confirmation of a Statutory Instrument (to replace the existing MMO licence conditions). It is noteworthy that there are a number of issues which are impacting the availability of I-VMS data including device faults and one of the two approved suppliers having stopped reporting data to the UK VMS hub. As such consideration is being given to further deployment of alternative devices.</p>
4. Fisheries Management Plans		
a) Supporting the planning / carried over).	In progress	No relevant FMPs were at this stage during the reporting period.
b) Supporting the publication phase including by reviewing and evaluation plans (carried over).	In progress	No relevant FMPs were published during the reporting period.
c) Supporting post-publication phase including implementation (carried over).	In progress	Dialogue regarding the implementation of FMPs is ongoing including through attendance and contribution to associated meetings.
5. Contribute to the development of second-generation Marine Plans through		
a) Collaboration with the Marine Management Organisation to seek opportunities to improve data and evidence for inshore fishing activities (carried over).	In Progress	Engagement with the publicised consultations has continued including an ongoing consultation regarding policy objectives for the second-generation plan.

b) Stakeholder engagement to raise awareness of marine planning and identify key issues (carried over).	In Progress	Promulgation of relevant stakeholder events has been undertaken in relation to publicised engagement events.
c) Contributing to policy development by providing expert advice and relaying information from our stakeholders (carried over).	In Progress	Input has been provided as requested via the publicised consultations.

Key:

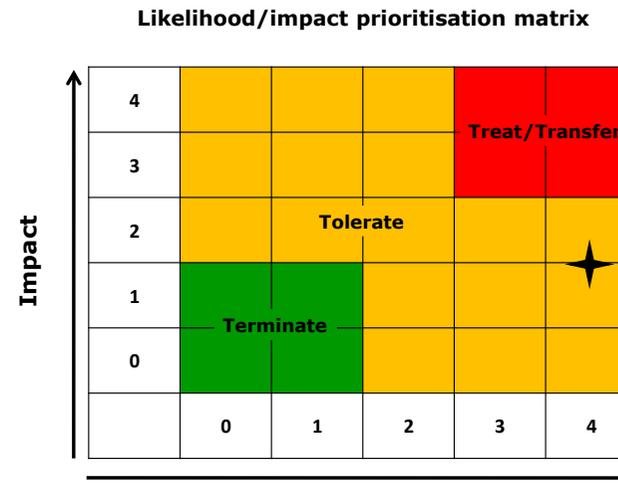
	Complete		Progress stalled / delayed
	In progress		Not started

Appendix 1: Risk Management

The risk matrix sets out the magnitude of the risk to Eastern IFCA from an organisational viewpoint incorporating amongst others reputational and financial risks. The matrix also sets out the likelihood of an identified risk occurring. Mitigation which is in place or to be introduced is identified. Risk is ranked on an arbitrary scale from 0 (low risk – coloured green) to 4 (high risk – coloured red). The average of the combined financial and reputational risk is taken and plotted on to the matrix below, the likelihood of that risk occurring is also plotted. Mitigation action is noted. It should be noted that in most cases there are already many actions being undertaken as part of routine working practices to reduce the risks to the Eastern IFCA.

The four actions that can be applied are:

Treat	Take positive action to mitigate risk
Tolerate	Acknowledge and actively monitor risk
Terminate	Risk no longer considered to be material to Eastern IFCA business
Transfer	Risk is out with Eastern IFCA's ability to treat and is transferred to higher level.



Risk matrix with worked example.

Risk A poses a financial threat (2) to the organisation and a reputation threat (1) generating a combined impact level of 1.5. The likelihood of the threat occurring is determined as 4. The resultant risk to Eastern IFCA is therefore plotted using the matrix and is identified as a risk that should be tolerated (i.e. acknowledged and actively monitored)

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Eastern IFCA fails to secure funding to replace assets	CEO	Substantial reduction in Eastern IFCA mobility particularly seaborne activities with consequential inability to fulfil full range of duties	4		2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2024-25 three new / replacement vessels entered service and a fourth underwent a life extending refit. Alternative sources of funding sought where appropriate e.g. EMFF & Defra CDEL funding supported the purchase of FPV Seaspray, FPV Thunderstruck and C-Runner. Promote Eastern IFCA output and effectiveness to funding authorities through engagement with Council leaders and Financial Directors. Agreement in place with funding authorities for capital funding contributions each year. Assets managed and maintained to reduce the likelihood of early retirement or unexpected depreciation. Scheduled asset replacement takes into account expected lifespan of assets which is reviewed regularly to account for unexpected depreciation and alignment of capital funding contributions. 	
			Reputation	Financial				
			4	4	<p>Drive for savings may impact County Councils' decisions regarding Eastern IFCA funding. Visible presence reduced, enforcement and survey activities compromised.</p> <p>Inability to generate sufficient reserves to meet asset replacement schedule would threaten Eastern IFCA's ability to function. Closure costs could result.</p>			

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Eastern IFCA fails to maintain relevance amongst partners.	CEO	If Eastern IFCA fails to maintain relevance amongst partners Eastern IFCA's utility will come under scrutiny potentially resulting in re-allocation of duties	4		2	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a leadership function. Be proactive and identify issues early. Engage with all partners routinely Operate transparently and utilise effective communications approaches. Use Business Plan to prioritise and communicate outputs, Measure progress/deliver outputs. Represent community issues to, and support their engagement with, higher authorities. Recent revisions undertaken to the ARM project for the MCZ to address wider stakeholders concerns about engagement. Effective business planning process in place. Leading role where appropriate e.g. Op Blake. Proactive approach to raising issues with Defra. Identify opportunities to facilitate delivery of Government objectives through outputs and contribute to Government fisheries and environmental targets by embedding into work plans. Careful consideration of findings and recommendations from the 2018-2022 quadrennial report and incorporation into delivery of duties as appropriate including via CORRIS. 	Tolerate
			Reputation	Financial	Possible – Whilst positive relationships have been established the existence of disparate partner aspirations introduces complexities which may drive perceptions of bias or inefficiency.			
			4	4	<p>Loss of confidence in the organisation</p> <p>Failure of the organisation to perform in accordance with the standards and practices of a statutory public body</p> <p>Withdrawal of LA and Defra funding for the organisation</p>			

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Negative media comment	CEO	Negative perceptions of Eastern IFCA utility and effectiveness created at MMO/Defra Loss of Partner confidence Media scrutiny of individual Authority members	3		2	Possible – disenfranchised partners seek to introduce doubt as to Eastern IFCA professionalism, utility, and effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively and regularly engage with all partners including media outlets. Review use of social media and web-based information noting its unavoidable use to misinterpret and spread misinformation. Embed professional standards and practices. Deliver change efficiently and effectively. Promulgate successful outcomes. Assure recognition and understanding through clear and concise publications and effective promulgation of such as appropriate. Routine updating of news items on website. Monitor media presence and engage where appropriate. Targeted and meaningful dialogue with stakeholders which caters for intended audiences to reduce likelihood of misinterpretation or misrepresentation. 	Tolerate
			Reputation	Financial				
			4	2				
			Eastern IFCA perceived to be under performing. Eastern IFCA considered poor value for money. Eastern IFCA perceived as irrelevant.	Negative perceptions introduce risk to continued funding				

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Degradation of MPAs due to fishing activity	CEO	Loss or damage of important habitats and species within environmentally designated areas.	3.5		2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishing activities authorised by Eastern IFCA are assessed per Habitats Regulations and MaCAA; management routinely includes mitigation to prevent adverse effects on MPA integrity. Eastern IFCA is fully engaged in national fisheries/MPA project, prioritising management of highest risk fisheries in MPAs and implementing new management measures. Effective monitoring of fishing activity and enforcement of measures Adaptive approach to fisheries management – i.e. engagement with fishing and conservation interests in the development of management measures, and appropriate review of measures to respond to changing environmental and socio-economic factors. Ongoing, close liaison with Natural England regarding conservation matters, Review of management in accordance with Defra guidance, Utilising I-VMS as a management tool by the Authority. Continue to progress research into the impact of fishing activities on MPA features to ensure the Authority has an up-to-date evidence base to inform its management decisions. MPA management is a high priority with substantial progress made. Current workstreams (e.g. Cromer Shoal MCZ, remaining 'red risk' and 'amber and green' sites are a high priority and are being progressed. 	Tolerate
			Reputation	Financial	Possible – Eastern IFCA's approach to managing sea fisheries resources actively addresses our environmental obligations.			
			4	3				
			Eastern IFCA is not meeting statutory duties under conservation legislation. Eastern IFCA not achieving vision as champion of sustainable marine environment. Degradation of marine habitats which lead to economic, social or cultural impacts.	Legal challenge brought against Eastern IFCA for failing to meet obligations under environmental legislation (including MaCAA).				

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Shellfish and fish stocks collapse	CEO	Risk of significant negative impact upon industry viability with associated social and economic problems	3		3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual stock assessments of bivalve stocks in The Wash Annual review of the level of threat via the Strategic Assessment Ability to allocate sufficient resources to monitoring and effective enforcement. Consultation with industry on possible management measures. Review of management measures in accordance with Defra guidance. Develop stock conservation measures as required for crab, lobster and whelk fisheries through engagement with the FMP programme and fishing industry and continue support for industry led Fisheries Improvement Plan SWEEP research into primary productivity levels within the Wash. Regular engagement with the industry to discuss specific matters. Continued research into the cockle and mussel mortality events. Whelk research is ongoing to identify level of risk posed and potential mitigation for sustainability concerns. Annual surveys of Wash cockle and mussel stocks alongside innovative approach to management of the cockle fishery. Consideration given to an engagement plan to educate and inform about small cockles, including engagement with processors for officers to better understand the market context. General engagement with FMP programme. 	Treat
			Reputation	Financial	Possible - Bivalve stocks have high natural variation; "atypical mortality" affecting stocks despite application of stringent fishery control measures Crustacean stocks not currently subject to effort control Bass stocks nationally and internationally under severe pressure Regional whelk and shrimp fisheries effort becoming unsustainable. Regional crab and lobster stocks being exploited beyond maximum sustainable yield. Active monitoring of 2021 cockle fishery identified small cockles being landed with potential impact on stock sustainability.			
			3	3				
			Loss in confidence of the Eastern IFCA ability to manage the sea fisheries resources within its district	Resources directed at protecting alternative stocks from displaced effort. Additional resources applied to research into the cause of collapsed stocks and increased engagement and discussion with partners.				

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action	
Failure to secure data	CEO	Non-compliance with UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).	4		2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All computers are password protected. Individuals only have access to the server through their own computer. Secure wireless internet Remote back up of electronic files Access to electronic files is restricted. Up to date virus software installed on all computers. Important documents secured in safes. ICT equipment and policies provided by public sector provider – including encrypted laptops/secure governmental email system. All Eastern IFCA personnel undergo DPA training. Electronic backup of all Eastern IFCA documents held by ICT provider offsite. Policies and processes developed to ensure data security and compliance with data protection legislation. 	Tolerate	
		Prosecution casefiles compromised.	Reputation	Financial					Possible - Limited staff access to both electronic and paper files.
		Loss of data in the event of fire or theft	4	4					Office secure with CCTV, keypad entry system and alarm.
		Breakdown in dissemination of sensitive information between key delivery partners.	Partners no longer believe that confidential information they have supplied is secure. Personnel issues arise over inability to secure information.	Eastern IFCA open to both civil and criminal action regarding inability to secure personal information.					
New Burdens Funding discontinued.	CEO	Substantial reduction in Eastern IFCA capability with consequential inability to fulfil full range of duties or additional burden on funding authorities.	4		2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIFCA engagement with Defra regards spending review. AIFCA bid for continuation in the 2024 government spending review (outcome awaited at the time of writing). County Council Finance Directors representatives have been kept appraised of the situation and the potential for increased levies in the event that funding from Defra is discontinued. 	Tolerate	
			Reputation	Financial					Defra have continued to roll over new Burdens funding in recognition of the value that IFCA's provide in meeting national policy objectives.
			4	4					
			Inability to meet all obligations would have a significant impact upon reputation.	Circa 25% of the annual budget is provided by Defra under the New Burdens doctrine so its loss would have a significant impact.					

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
The new Several Order to replace that element of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 is substantially delayed.	CEO	Continuing uncertainty for industry members with consequential impact upon industry viability and associated social and economic issues.	4		4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of a replacement to the WFO as a high priority within the 2026-27 5-year Business Plan. The fisheries are being managed under interim management measures with the status quo being maintained in terms of access to the fisheries. Dialogue will be maintained with Defra teams and officers will priorities responses to information requests from Defra. Industry dialogue will be prioritised as required to make progress. 	Treat
			Reputation	Financial				
			4	4	<p>The effective management of 'lays' in the Wash is important for aquaculture in the Wash is important in terms of industry viability and managing the impact of aquaculture activity in a heavily designated MPA. Loss of confidence in operating lays is likely to be significant if the new Several Order is not replaced in a timely way</p>			

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action	
<p>Failure to secure an IT supplier and successfully migrate IT services following King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council's decision to end contract on 31 March</p>	CEO	<p>Potential for current supplier to stop providing service prior to securing new supplier.</p>	3.5		3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking multiple potential suppliers to seek best value and most appropriate migration and support packages • Careful consideration of proposals provided by perspective suppliers • Adequate provision within reserves to address migration costs. • Dialogue with current supplier ongoing to ensure continued provision of service and assistance during migration 	Treat	
		<p>System downtime and disruption without effective project management.</p>	Reputation	Financial					<p>Current supplier provided little notice of end of contract and is not providing full service at present.</p>
		<p>Loss of access to data files and applications to carry out work.</p>	4	3	<p>The migration of services is considered to be moderately to highly complex and is likely to result in some disruption, the likelihood of which is dependant in part on the level of assistance provided by the current supplier.</p>				
		<p>Failure to identify and select supplier who provides best value and service which meets the needs of the organisation.</p>	<p>Loss or significant disruption to IT services could lead to inability to deliver work or communicate with stakeholders and a risk to delivering priority and business critical workstreams.</p>	<p>The current suppliers decision to end service contract was provided at short notice and as such is not budgeted within 2025/26 Business Plan.</p>					

Appendix 3 – Risk Register Update September 2025 to end of November 2025

Risk Description	Change in risk-rating / update
Eastern IFCA fails to secure funding to replace assets	No Change in risk rating or mitigation since last publication of 5-year Business Plan.
Eastern IFCA fails to maintain relevance amongst partners	No change in risk rating or mitigation since last update.
Negative media comment	No change in risk rating or mitigation since last update.
Degradation of MPAs due to fishing activity	No change in risk rating or mitigation since last publication of 5-year Business Plan. However, it is noteworthy that progression of the Closed Area Byelaw 2021 workstream leading to confirmation of the byelaw will potentially change (reduce) the associated risk for this factor.
Shellfish and fish stocks collapse	No change in risk rating or mitigation since last update.
Failure to secure data	No change in risk rating or mitigation since last publication of 5-year Business Plan.
New Burdens funding discontinued	No change in risk rating or mitigation since last publication of 5-year Business Plan.
The new Several Order to replace that element of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 is substantially delayed.	No change in risk rating or mitigation since last update.
Failure to secure an IT supplier and successfully migrate IT services following King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council's decision to end contract on 31 March	New risk added – The current IT provider provided notice in December 2025 that it was to end the Service Level Agreement with the Authority from 31 March 2026. On advice from the current supplier, migration to a cloud-based system is being explored. The tight time constraints and relative complexity of the matter represent a risk given that Access to data and IT applications are fundamental to delivery of the IFCA's work streams.

Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.



Information Item 15a

63rd Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

11 March 2026

Marine Protection Quarterly Report

Report by: Jon Butler, Assistant Chief Officer

Purpose of Report

To provide members with an overview of the work carried out by the Marine Protection team during the period of December 2025 to February 2026 inclusive.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the content of the reports.

Background

Quarterly reports on the activities of the Marine Protection Team are provided to Authority members at quarterly meetings of the full Authority. Monthly updates have been sent to members.

Report

Unfortunately, due to current staff vacancies within the team it has not been possible to provide the monthly reports. Conditional offers have now been made to fill two of the IFCA vacancies in Kings Lynn, a further recruitment round will be held for the remaining vacancy in Lowestoft.

December and January are historical quiet months for fishing activity. The south of the district sees very little commercial activity with a decrease in recreational angling. As the level of risk is seen to be low, priority has been given to Areas 1, 2 and 3.

Shrimp activity has continued over the winter period with a small number of vessels continuing to fish for cockles from the remaining TAC (300t remaining as of 26/02/26) Whelk fishing has started to pick up and fisherman and being reminded to get applications in for the new permit year. Officers will be booking gear inspections over the next month and any gear found at sea after the 1st April without new permit tags maybe committing an offence.

Crab and Lobster activity on the North Norfolk Coast has decreased over the winter with only a small number of vessels going to sea. It is expected that this fishery will

increase in the coming months and officers will be deploying the marker buoys around the closed areas in the next few weeks.

Officers have continued with our ongoing commitment to the EHO surveys and due to a calm period of weather have been able to carry out both multibeam and sidescan surveys within Cromer MCZ.

This period has also seen maintenance being carried out on all our vessels which are now operational for the spring.

A Financial Administrative Penalty (FAP) was paid during this period for non-compliance within the cockle fishery.

Financial Implications

None

Legal Implications

None

Appendices

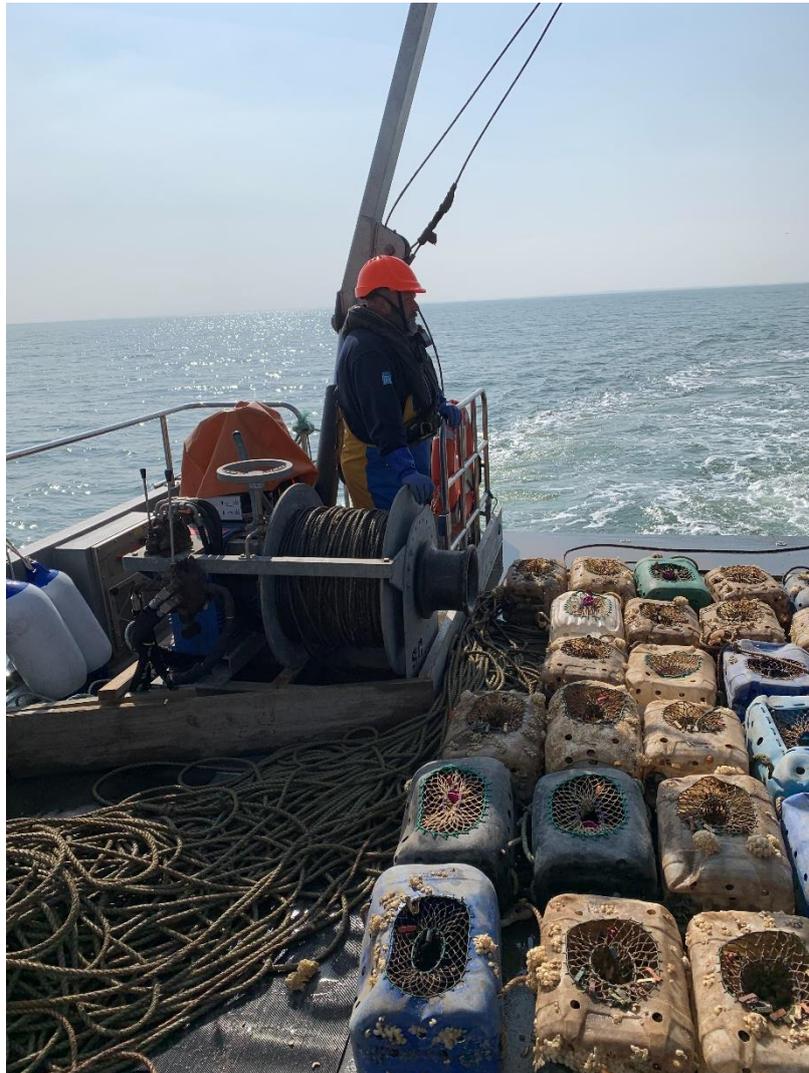
Appendix 1 – Marine Protection Quarterly Report

Background Documents

Not Applicable

MARINE PROTECTION MONTHLY REPORT

NOVEMBER 2025 TO JANUARY 2026



An overview of the work conducted by the Marine Protection Team.
Report by: Assistant Chief Officer (Designated Deputy)

Enforcement and engagement priorities throughout the district as agreed through the Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG)

Area 1 (Hail Sand Fort to Gibraltar Point)

NOVEMBER: Re-engagement both face to face and phone calls with fishers re crab fishing activity. Vessel patrol to Donna Nook over low water to gather fishing activity intel. Monitoring of burnt marine debris from Soong/Immaculata

DECEMBER: Priorities remained as November, with particular need to engage with fishers, and a vessel patrol over low water to gather intel of fishing activity.

JANUARY: Priority remained engagement, education, sea patrol to haul pots and inspections of commercial fishing vessels to ensure compliance.

Area 2 (The Wash and North Norfolk Coast to Brancaster)

NOVEMBER: Following up on Intel reports, Whelk compliance inspections. Cockle activity at sea to be monitored and landings inspected, prioritising vessels not already weighted to ensure compliance.

DECEMBER: Priority for December was monitoring cockle activity both ashore and at sea.

JANUARY: Compliance assurance inspections of whelk and cockle activity, with priority for those not previously inspected.

Area 3 (Brancaster to Great Yarmouth)

NOVEMBER: Prioritise RSA shore patrols offering engagement and education. Areas to be particularly targeted, Sea Palling, Wells to Overstrand, Trimmingham to Great Yarmouth, especially on Friday evenings and weekends.

Crab and Lobster landings and premises inspections to be undertaken throughout the area to ensure compliance.

Engagement priorities – oversight of closed areas, formal closure of the NDS areas and monitoring fishing activity in closed areas.

DECEMBER: RSA patrols to be completed throughout the area, again particular attention to be paid between Trimmingham and Great Yarmouth over weekends.

Crab and Lobster inspections to be made both at the point of landing and premises inspections.

JANUARY: Priority to be given to crab, lobsters and RSA inspections, with emphasis on Friday nights and weekends.

Area 4 (Great Yarmouth to Harwich)

NOVEMBER: *Landing inspections of RSA activity in inland waters and the Southern coast in general. Monitor Bass fishing by Charter vessels and RSA in Lowestoft and Inland water.*

DECEMBER: Shore patrols, engagement and education, landing inspections along coast and inland waters of RSA Activity and commercial landings.

JANUARY: Shore patrols, engagement and education, landing inspections along coast and inland waters of RSA Activity and commercial landings.

Enforcement Outcomes

Enforcement planning and actions are risk-based and intelligence led and informed by organisational priorities as set out in the 5-Year Business Plan. The areas reported are sea patrols, Marine Protected Area monitoring, port visits, new vessel engagement and partnership working.

Area 1 (Hail Sand Fort to Gibraltar Point)

NOVEMBER: Current staff levels prevented a vessel patrol over low water taking place. The shorebased patrol which took place resulted in no activity in the form of Commercial landings or RSA activity being witnessed.

DECEMBER: Whilst it had not been possible to get a vessel patrol of the area, two shore based patrols had taken place, which highlighted the low level of activity in the area, both in terms of RSA and commercial fishing.

JANUARY: Intel received of one newly qualified skipper in Grimsby. Two shore patrols found little activity other than RSA inspections

Area 2 (The Wash and North Norfolk Coast to Brancaster)

NOVEMBER: Patrols of the area found 2 incidents of cockle non-compliance, all MCS shrimp gear compliance inspections were completed. Five patrols, at sea and ashore were completed.

DECEMBER: Patrols and engagement with fishers identified a new vessel in the port of Boston and no infringements from 19 inspections of shrimps, cockles and whelks.

JANUARY: One new vessel in Boston. Two patrols were completed with in infringements detected from three landings

Area 3 (Brancaster to Great Yarmouth)

NOVEMBER: Intel gathered included vessel movements and RSA netting activity. During the course of 12 shore patrols, very little RSA activity was observed, 19 inspections of catch were made, which indicated poor crab landings.

DECEMBER: 8 Shore based patrols revealed very little RSA activity. Nine inspections were undertaken revealing poor crab landings, most vessels were merely turning their gear over.

JANUARY: Intel was received regarding large volumes of dead shore crabs washing up on beaches.

Seven shore patrols were completed during which very little RSA activity was observed. Crab fishers continued to experience poor landings.

Area 4 (Great Yarmouth to Harwich):

NOVEMBER: Due to staff vacancies no patrols were undertaken

DECEMBER: Due to staff vacancies no patrols were undertaken

JANUARY: Due to staff vacancies no patrols were undertaken:

Enforcement metric	Number completed			
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4
<i>Shore Patrols</i>				
November	0	3	3	0
December	2	3	8	0
January	2	2	7	2
<i>Port visits - (1 per month)</i>				
November	0	3	16	0
December	8	3	27	0
January	10	4	27	7
<i>Catch inspections</i> (landings observed)				
November	0	1	1	0
December	1	11	9	0
January r	1	3	3	0
<i>Catch Inspections</i> (Landings not observed)				
November	0	2	0	0
December	0	0	2	0
January	0	0	0	0
<i>Premises inspections</i>				
November	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0
January	0	0	0	0
<i>Enforcement actions/Offences</i>				
November	0	2	0	0
December	0	0	0	0
January	0	2	0	0
<i>Intelligence reports submitted</i>				
November	0	2	3	0
December	1	1	1	0
January	1	2	3	7
<i>Fishers engaged</i>				
November	0	2	11	0
December	1	17	51	0
January	2	7	27	9
<i>Vessel Patrols</i> target of 90 per year (April -March)				
November	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0
January	0	0	0	0
Achieved to date: 78				
<i>Boardings</i>				
November	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0
January	0	0	0	0
<i>Gear Inspections</i>				
November	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0
January	0	0	0	0

Marine Protected Area monitoring

Monitoring of 'restricted areas' under the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2018 were conducted throughout the reporting period via direct observation on a risk-based approach. The following monitoring occurred:

Protected Feature	<i>Intertidal biogenic reef</i>	<i>Subtidal biogenic reef: Sabellaria spp. (Ross worm), subtidal stony reef, subtidal mixed sediments, subtidal mud.</i>	<i>Intertidal seagrass beds, subtidal mixed sediments, subtidal mud.</i>	<i>Eelgrass beds (Humber)</i>
Protected Areas	1-13	14-29	30-35	36
November	4 monitoring occasions (areas 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11)	1 monitoring occasion (areas 24, 25 & 26)	No monitoring occasions	No monitoring occasions
December	1 monitoring occasion (areas 8, 9 & 10)	No monitoring occasions	No monitoring occasions	No monitoring occasions
January	3 monitoring occasions (areas 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, & 13)	3 monitoring occasions (areas 22, 24, 25, 26. 27, & 29)	No monitoring occasions	No monitoring occasions

Enforcement messages received November to January

Area 1 (Hail Sand Fort to Gibraltar Point)

- none.

Area 2 (Wash and North Norfolk Coast to Brancaster)

- Patches of dead / dying cockles reported off Hunstanton, thought to have been left in heaps by vessels fishing the area.
- Dead seal reported on Heacham North beach, concern expressed of potential health risks.
- Debris left on the beach by cockle fishing vessels reported to be a risk to conservation and a danger to kite skiers, jet skis, dinghy's, kayakers etc.

- New vessel bought, to be used from the King's Lynn area, initially targeting whelk and shrimp.

Area 3 (Brancaster to Great Yarmouth)

- Information received a vessel has changed hands, along with the pots associated with that vessel, it will remain in the district
- Bait digging increased during the winter – generally from the intertidal area accessed by walking through the saltmarsh in the vicinity of Wells-Next-the-Sea.
- Recreational netting near Wells has more or less stopped following the death of local resident.
- Angling – 4-5 charter vessels go out every day, taking up to 12 people. These vessels either remain close inshore or go out 20-40miles
-

Area 4 (Great Yarmouth to Harwich)

- Increased numbers of bass have been noted in rivers around the Aldeburgh area. Recreational rod and line fishing from a couple of boats taking place on a daily basis.
- Regular recreational fishing activity on the beach at Dunwich, concern expressed about the amount of tackle and hooks being left on the beach.
- Report of dead porpoise washed up on Dunwich beach, cause of death unknown.

Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry



Information Item 15b

63rd Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

11 March 2026

Marine Science Quarterly Report

Report by: Luke Godwin (ACO)

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to make members aware of progress made by the Marine Science Team in its delivery of the 2025-26 5-Year Business Plan.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the contents of the report

Background

Key Marine Science updates are reported within the Quarterly Progress against annual priorities paper taken to each Authority meeting. To avoid duplication, the Marine Science Quarterly Reports outline progress against business as usual / business critical workstreams (as per the 5-Year Business Plan).

Report

Overview

This report describes progress against 'business critical workstreams' during December, January and February.

Each of the business critical workstreams set out in the 5-year Business Plan are considered below.

Shrimp management

Shrimp effort is monitored to ensure that it remains within agreed thresholds in accordance with the Shrimp Effort Limitation Scheme Policy. Shrimp fishing effort updates are provided on the Authority's website⁵.

Shrimp fishing effort within the Wash and North Norfolk Coast has been very low since the beginning of the Shrimp Permit Year (August), with fishermen favouring grounds outside of the Wash. As a consequence, risk of impacting the Wash and North Norfolk Coast MPAs is currently very low.

⁵ [Shrimp Effort Updates - Eastern IFCA](#)

At the 62nd Eastern IFCA meeting, members agreed to implement enhanced vessel tracking reporting (at a rate of once in every three minutes) for vessels of 12m and above to align reporting rates with smaller vessels. It is intended that this permit conditions will be put into effect during the next financial year.

The Authority also agreed to undertake a review of the 'experience requirement' for skippering a vessel within the shrimp fishery following concerns that the measure is having unintended consequences and hindering some business models. Initial discussions with the Shrimp Working Group have identified that there is a polarisation of views amongst the shrimp fishing industry regarding the experience requirement. Further consultation is planned for the next financial year.

Study of the Wash Embayment, Environment and Productivity (SWEEP) and Environmental Health Monitoring (EHO)

During December and February, operational constraints resulted in failure to collect two sets of SWEEP samples (from the Thief and the Wreck). Both samples serve to monitor food availability as part of the aquaculture management of The Wash. Given that aquaculture activity is minimal, the associated risk is considered low.

During the reporting period, one EHO collection of cockles failed to be delivered to Cefas on time due to the currier not collecting the sample as arranged and one water sample was rejected by Cefas because of excessive sediment in the sample. All other samples were successfully collected during the reporting period.

During December, the Food Standard Agency concluded that the time-limited prohibition on Stubborn Sand (inner) would be extended to include the month of January. As a consequence, the prohibition (which includes only the private le Strange Estate fishery) will have effect from 1 July 2026 until such time a two consecutive, compliant samples are taken in September.

The Welland and Withem zone has been upgraded to a Class B (from a Class C) area following a period of low *E.Coli* results. However, an investigation state was declared in the Welland following higher *E.Coli* levels detected during February.

During the period, investigation states were also declared for the Dills and Frieston and Wainfleet sites.

Higher *E.Coli* levels are often recorded during periods of higher rainfall. The investigations have not identified any other particular cause for the higher levels at this stage.

Wash Cockle and Mussel management

The Wash cockle fishery continued to be prosecuted during the reporting period albeit at low levels. The fishery will close, likely prior to the exhaustion of the Total Allowable Catch (TAC), to enable the cockle survey to be undertaken in March. It is noteworthy that the TAC was effectively increased as a consequence of the discovery of a new bed (off Hunstanton) which was not included in the 2025 stock survey which has contributed to the TAC not being fully taken.

The mussel fisheries remain open under the previous years management measures whilst new measures are developed. Work to complete the associated Habitat Regulation Assessment is progressing and it is intended that new management measures will be developed and consulted on with fishing industry in Spring.

Management of Whelk Fisheries

Monthly monitoring of the whelk fishery has indicated that the Landings per Unit Effort in The Wash continued to increase over the reporting period.

The Authority agreed new permit conditions at the 62nd Authority meeting which will require catch from inside and outside of the IFCA district to be kept separate and reported separately. It is intended that this will come into effect from 1 April 2026 to coincide with the begging of the new whelk permit year.

Assessments of unplanned fisheries

There were no 'unplanned fisheries' during the period.

Advice in relation to sustainable development

28 'consultations' were received during the period including Marine Licence Applications, and pre and post-application examinations. Of these 18 have been completed with advice provided.

Monitoring district-wide Biosecurity risk

No new biosecurity risks were identified during the reporting period.

Financial Implications

None identified

Legal Implications

None identified

Appendices

Not applicable

Background Documents

5-Year business Plan 2025-30