



**64th EIFCA
Statutory Meeting**

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

**Wednesday
24th June 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: **64th Eastern IFCA Meeting**

Date: 24 June 2026

Time: 1030hrs

Venue: Council Chambers, Kings Lynn Town Hall, Saturday Marketplace,
Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 5DQ

Agenda

- 1 Election of the Chair of the Authority – *Clerk*
- 2 Welcome - *Chair*
- 3 To accept apologies for absence – *Chair*
- 4 Election of the Vice-Chair of the Authority – *Chair*
- 5 Declaration of Members' interests – *Chair*

Action items

- 6 To receive and approve as a true record, minutes of the 63rd Eastern IFCA Meeting, held on 11th March 2026 – *Chair Pg 4*
- 7 Matters arising (including actions from previous meeting) – *Clerk*
- 8 To receive a report to consider Health and Safety risks and mitigation – *ACO(DD) pg13*
- 9 To receive a report on the meeting of the Finance and HR sub-committee held on 5th May 2026 – *CEO pg18*
- 10 Sub-committee appointments - *CEO pg25*
- 11 Wash Cockle Fishery 2026 – *ACO / Senior Marine Science Officer (Research) pg28*
- 12 Wash aquaculture management – *ACO pg62*
- 13 Quarterly review of annual priorities and Risk Register - *CEO pg72*

Information items

- 14 CEO update (verbal) – *CEO*
- 15 Marine Protection Quarterly report – *ACO(DD) pg93*
- 16 Marine Science Quarterly report – *ACO pg99*

Any other business

- 17 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
9 June 2026

Vision

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63rd Eastern IFCA Meeting

A meeting of Eastern IFCA took place on Wednesday 11th March 2026 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 Chenery of Horsbrugh		Norfolk County Council
Mr J Davies		MMO Appointee
Mr L Doughty		MMO Appointee
Mr R Dyer		EA Representative
Mr P Garnett		MMO Appointee
Mr T Goldson		MMO Appointee
Ms C Moffat		NE Representative
Cllr Robinson		Suffolk County Council
Mr J Rowley		MMO Representative
Cllr Whittaker		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),
Ellie Collishaw	Project Officer
Luke Godwin	Assistant Chief Officer
James Taylor	Project Officer

Minute Taker:

Jodi Hammond

EIFCA25/56 Item 1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting, and particularly welcomed Ms Moffat back to the Authority as the Natural England appointee.

EIFCA25/57 Item 2: Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Taylor (LCC) & General Members Bagley, Gilliland, Lynam, Schiller and Smith.

EIFCA25/58 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
10 – Wash Cockle Fishery 2026 – Delegation of Authority	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
12 – Interim management of Wash aquaculture	Management of the Wash Mussel and Cockle Fisheries	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

EIFCA25/59 Item 4: Minutes of the 62nd Eastern IFCA Meeting held on Wednesday 10th December 2025

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

EIFCA25/60 Item 5: Matters arising.

EIFCA25/43: Wash Mussel Fishery 2025/26: Habitat Regulation Assessment remained an ongoing piece of work.

EIFCA25/44: WCMB 2021 Permit Fees: This matter had not yet gone to consultation, it was hoped it would soon be possible to organise a Wash Forum to make some progress

EIFCA25/49: Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 Permit Conditions – This workload was scheduled to be addressed in priority workstreams during the forthcoming financial year.

EIFCA25/61 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 1 reported incident which took place during survey work, when an officer pulled their back whilst walking in a muddy intertidal area.

Members Agreed to Note the contents of the report.

EIFCA25/62 Item 7: Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Dispensations

ACO Godwin reminded Members the Localism Act required the Authority to hold DPIs for Agenda Items to avoid decisions being made where there was a potential for a perception of bias. As there were several commercial fishermen on the Authority the Localism Act allowed the Authority to grant a dispensation to speak in order to assist the decision-making process. There was an obligation to review the dispensation every 4 years.

Members were provided with information for those members who were eligible for dispensations to contribute to discussion but not take part in voting.

Members Resolved to:

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

Proposed: Cllr Robinson

Seconded: Cllr Chenery

All Agreed

EIFCA25/63 Item 8: Report on the meeting of the Finance and HR sub-Committee held on 3rd February 2026

Draft Minutes of the meeting had been provided.

ACO Butler advised Members discussions were ongoing to replace the IT provision as BCKLWN were no longer able to provide the service.

Initially the Data would be moved from the Borough Council servers to the 'Cloud'. Following this a new SLA would be agreed with another company.

Recruitment : Following a relatively high turnover of staff within the Authority some posts remained vacant. Since the previous meeting two posts had been filled. Vacancies remained in Senior Skipper, MSO and Project Officer posts. It was hoped recruitment would be addressed in the coming weeks.

Members agreed to Note the report.

EIFCA25/64 Item 9: Review of the Constitution and Standing Orders

The CEO advised Members the Annual Review of the Constitution and Standing Orders had been carried out with support from NPLaw, who provided advice on any legal changes.

Suggested changes were set out in the papers, none of which were significant.

Changes were made to the scheme of delegations relating to the Wash Sub-Committee in order to ensure business continuity.

Members Resolved to Approve the proposed changes to the Constitution and Standing Orders as set out in Appendix A (of the supporting paper).

Proposed: Mr Goldson

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

All Agreed.

EIFCA25/65 Item 10: Wash Cockle Fishery 2026 – Delegation of Authority

The CEO advised Members that due to local elections taking place in May it was a possibility there would be new Elected Members on the Authority. It was therefore felt appropriate to postpone the date of the June meeting by two weeks. With this in mind there was a likelihood the cockle fishery management measures and opening date may need deciding prior to the revised meeting date. With this in mind Members discussed the option of delegating such responsibility to the CEO following conversation with remaining Members. Any decision would be reported to the next Authority meeting at which any changes to decisions made could be implemented, for the 2026 Wash cockle fishery.

Members Resolved to:

- **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 was 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 was 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.**

Proposed: Cllr Back

Seconded: Mr Davies

All Agreed

EIFCA25/66 Item 11: Strategic Assessment 2025 & Business Plan 2026-31

ACO Godwin reminded members the Strategic Assessment was produced annually to inform the priority workstreams for the coming year, and the Business Plan was a five-year plan, refreshed on an annual basis.

ACO Godwin provided members with a presentation on the process undertaken to establish forthcoming priorities, including Business critical workstreams and future priorities.

Members took time to consider future priorities, including Fishing into the Future, Bass FMP and issues with birds & seals and their interactions with fisheries.

There followed discussion on the Bird Food Model and the possibility that the demise of bird populations may also be due to weather conditions not just food availability.

Officers drew members attention to the proposed priority to undertake a scientific trial of drift netting for bass.

Members Resolved to:

- **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.**

Proposed: Mr Goldson

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

All Agreed

EIFCA25/67 Item 12: Interim Management of Wash Aquaculture

Project officer Teasdale gave Members a brief history of the process of aquaculture in the Wash, previously through the use of 'lays'. Ongoing problems associated with existing interim measures, as set out in the supporting paper, were also explained.

New proposals were put forward for members consideration. Such proposals included rather than removing lays making them all dormant, in most cases closures would be removed and public access restored, however the lay areas would not be deleted and could be re-closed to enable aquaculture when planned activity arose.

Members discussed the issues encountered with wild stock settling on private lays, it was felt allowing fishing of cockles from private lays created a two-tier system. If lays were covered with mussels, it was felt there would not be cockle settlement.

There was also some debate over whether lays still exist under the Landlord & Tenant Act. ACO Godwin advised the lease was issued under the Several Order, so when the Several Order Expired the lease also expired. EIFCA held a lease from Crown Estate which enabled the Aquaculture. Even those lays over 10ha fell into the same category, despite consent for them having been given by the Minister, it was the Authority who sought permission for the large lays, not individuals.

Mr Doughty advised the industry wanted the Several Order replaced with another Several Order as they felt a byelaw was too open to changing advice from NE. ACO Godwin advised Defra's current approach was to recommend proceeding with byelaws as they were not currently considering Several Orders. Mr Doughty questioned whether the industry could apply for a Several Order and bypass the Authority. The advice was that

the industry could apply but it was assumed they would get the same response.

The CEO reminded members that the option of not applying for a new Several Order had previously been put to the Authority, and they had opted to apply for a new Several Order.

The CEO advised members that the intention was to work in partnership with the industry on this matter.

Mr Williamson enquired whether prospecting for seed mussel was permitted. ACO Godwin advised dredging was not permitted but it was possible to apply to Defra for a dispensation to go prospecting.

In the event of seed mussel being found the CEO advised the aim would be to turn around a request to open the relaying fishery in a matter of days.

Members Resolved to:

- **Note the contents of the report**
- **Agree to the proposed interim policies regarding management of aquaculture within The Wash, and direct officer 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.**

Proposed: Mr Goldson

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

All Agreed.

EIFCA25/68 Item 13: Quarterly Review of Annual Priorities and Risk Register

ACO Godwin advised members it had been a turbulent quarter in terms of staff leaving which had affected workstreams but despite this, Priorities remained on track.

IT migration to the cloud and an alternative maintenance provider had to be added to the Risk Register.

Mr Garnett queried how much more there was to be done on the Amber/Green fisheries assessments as they had been ongoing for years. Members were advised the initial process was set up but the lack of a team member to QA such a vast number of assessments had created a bottle neck. Some were recently back from NE, others were still being considered. The largest ones had been left until last, as some of the other assessments informed the larger ones. It was not possible to give a definitive number of how many were outstanding. Mr Garnett felt they needed to be completed. The CEO acknowledged this but

advised they have gone on so long because there was more to do than the officers have capacity for but they remained a high priority.

Part of the issue was that NE scrutiny was proving to be more stringent than anticipated.

Members Agreed to note the content of the report.

EIFCA25/69 Item 14: CEO Update

The CEO updated members on matters which had taken place during the last Association of IFCAs meeting, papers for which had been circulated around members.

A meeting with the Fisheries minister had been attended, which the CEO believed went well, AIFCA had explained how IFCA's could achieve a balance between fisheries and environmental issues, clear support was expressed for inshore fisheries.

An event was planned to be held in Northumberland to mark 15 years since the inception of IFCAs, it was anticipated invitations would be sent to Chairs and Chief Officers.

A Fisheries Resource Education Programme conference had been attended by Eastern IFCA Officers, the event was well represented by all sectors, it was felt the conference was very productive and positive.

EIFCA25/70 Item 15a: Marine Protection Quarterly Reports

It was noted the shortage of staff meant priority had been given to areas with most activity, Lincolnshire, the Wash and areas of the North Norfolk coast

Requests were beginning to come in for permit renewal and activity at Wells was starting to pick up.

Marker Buoys had been deployed around the Closed Area of Cromer Chalk Beds, and a multibeam side scan survey had been completed.

Vessel maintenance included the refit of Protector IV at the port of Wisbech for the first time

One FAP had been issued for non-compliance in the cockle fishery.

Members Agreed to note the contents of the report.

EIFCA25/54 Item 15b: Marine Science Quarterly Report

Members Agreed to note the contents of the report

EIFCA25/55 Item 16: Any Other Business

Urgent AOB: The CEO advised Members following the resignation of Cllr Findlay, there was a need to elect a member to the Wash Fisheries Sub-Committee, which had to be a member with no pecuniary interests. Rules for replacing members were provided in the Constitution & Standing Orders “11.12 The Wash Fisheries sub-committee will comprise seven members, none of whom will have a Declared Pecuniary Interest or connection with the cockle and mussel fisheries in the Wash.”

Members Resolved to appoint Cllr Whittaker to the Wash Fisheries sub-committee.

Proposed: Cllr Back

Seconded: Cllr Chenery of Horsbrugh

All Agreed.

As local elections would take place prior to the next meeting it was noted some Members may not be returning all were thanked for their input and support.

There being no other business the Chair thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 1237 hours.

Vision

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Action Item 8

64th Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority meeting

24 June 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 **5** incidents and **0** near miss since the last Authority meeting.

Risks/Mitigation

There have been 5 incidents since the last Authority meeting involving two officers. The incidents have all occurred during a period during the cockle surveys where officers have been engaged in survey work. One incident involved the officer's attendance at A&E due to a leg injury sustained whilst walking on intertidal sandbanks over the low water period.

The risk identified in Appendix 2 point 4 relating to fire risk assessments has now been completed and all actions taken, the risk can therefore be discharged. A new risk has been added following the incidents reported during the surveys whilst working in the intertidal areas, the risk assessment will now be reviewed and officers made aware of any changes.

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?
16/03/26	Person	Cut to leg following fall onto foreign object	Considered RNLI extraction, officer stated they felt able to await vessel return to mooring. Arranged for officer to attend Kings Lynn A&E for medical treatment. Duties modified in agreement with officer who returned to work the following day	No	Ongoing, officer did not complete full report and has since left the Authority	Simon Lee	Ongoing
18/03/26	Person	Injury to eye, caused potentially through mud splash whilst sorting samples	Eye washed with water	No	Yes	Ron Jessop	Eye protection provided for officer to wear at sorting table
31/03/26	Person	Injury to eye cause by splash/wiping face	Eye washed with water	No	Yes	Ron Jessop	Eye protection available if officers wish to wear whilst walking on sands.

31/03/26	Person	Officer felt dizzy whilst walking on the sands whilst collecting samples	Officer returned to vessel after completing survey, officers progressed monitored by others on survey	No	Yes	Ron Jessop	<p>Officers should eat and drink adequate fluids prior to conducting foot surveys</p> <p>Officers should carry a drink and snacks with them when conducting foot surveys</p> <p>A second form of communication (in addition to the VHF radios) should be carried on foot surveys if in poor signal areas</p>
31/03/26	Person	Officer banged knee on fixed deck crane whilst walking on deck	Ice pack applied, carried on with duties	No	Yes	Ron Jessop	<p>Non required. Officers reminded to slow down at cockle debrief session.</p>

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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Warden Training 	Terminate	Treat	28/08/2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action identified risks/corrective actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share assessment with NCC H&S advisor 			
5. Intertidal working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review working in intertidal area risk assessment to review if any changes need making following incident in recent surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share assessment with NCC H&S advisor Make team aware of any changes 	Treat	Treat	24/06/2026

*

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

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Action Item 9

64th Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority meeting

24 June 2026

Report by: Julian Gregory, CEO

Meeting of the Finance & HR Sub-committee held on 5 May 2026

Purpose of report

To inform members of the key outputs and decisions from the Finance & HR Sub-Committee meeting held on 5 May 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 5 May 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 5 May 2026.

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Finance & HR Sub-Committee

A meeting of the Finance & HR Sub-Committee took place at the EIFCA Offices, King's Lynn on 5th May 2026 at 1000 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

Eastern IFCA Officers Present:

J Butler	Assistant Chief Officer (DD)
Julian Gregory	CEO

Joanne Sams Aston Shaw Accountants

FHR26/01 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

FHR26/02 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Adams (NCC), Taylor (LCC) and Whittaker (LCC), and Ms Smith (MMO Appointee).

FHR26/03 Declarations of Members Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

FHR26/04 Minutes of the Finance and Personnel Sub-committee meeting held on 3rd February 2026

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

FHR26/05 Matters Arising

FHR25/45 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS: The CEO advised there were no matters arising, but he had been advised, in his absence at the last meeting, there had been discussion around the inclusion of a Balance Sheet on a

quarterly basis. Members were reminded that from the next quarter there would be separate accounts for Revenue Accounts and Capital & Reserve Accounts rather than the current process of putting them all together. The intention being to make expenditure from Reserves clearer, with all Asset purchases being shown through the Asset & Reserve accounts.

FHR26/06 Quarter 4 Payments and Receipts

There were no notable highlights or exceptions in these accounts.

Members Agreed to Note the report.

FHR26/07 Quarter 4: Management Accounts

These figures showed the final quarter of the financial year indicating a notable underspend overall.

The majority of the underspend was attributable to savings in salaries due to gapped posts and several unexpected resignations.

Service charges were also showing an underspend as payment had been withheld whilst the expected level of service was provided.

Subscriptions for the year had included payment towards a national training officer which had not come to fruition. This was being addressed and it is anticipated that this will be in place during the current financial year.

Vessel costs were slightly over budget, in part due to a new trailer having been purchased to accommodate *FPV C-Runner* making her usable throughout the whole of the District. Vessel Fuel was below budget, again an indication of the reduced staff numbers making it difficult to get vessels to sea.

Additional income had been received from the Marine Debris Awareness Campaign and the sale of a vehicle.

Members Agreed to note the Management Accounts

FHR26/08 Annual Statement of Account for the year ending March 2026

Ms Sams provided Members with a brief summary of the Balance Sheet.

The CEO then advised Members of the proposed movement of surplus funds into reserves. The Vessel Replacement Fund had been increased by the Asset Replacement payment made by the funding authorities, funds from a FAP were put into the FAP Reserve, £50k of the underspend was put into the IT Reserve to cover the cost of moving the Authority's IT to a 'cloud' based system with a new provider, the remainder of the underspend was put into the Operational Fund Reserve which was a general fund that could be drawn on for exceptional matters.

During the course of the year the operational fund had been reduced by £150k which was the sum outstanding towards the upgrade of the moorings at Sutton Bridge, which provided EIFCA with long terms cost free moorings, whilst the lease agreement had taken several years to finalise it was now reaching a conclusion.

Money held in the National IFCA fund was not money which belonged to Eastern IFCA but funds from Defra held on behalf of all IFCA's. Additional funds would be placed in this fund in the near future, which would then be paid over to AIFCA for various workstreams when invoiced.

Members considered and discussed the accounts in general. Having noted the surplus was higher than anticipated the CEO advised that whilst the agreement had been to increase levies by 12.5 % for 2026-27 and potentially for 2027-28, it now appeared more likely that the increase for 2027/28 would be in line with inflation.

Members Resolved to:

- **Approve the Statement of Accounts for submission for external examination**
- **Authorise the Chairman and Chief Executive to sign the Annual Return before submission to the auditors for review.**
- **Authorise in accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulation 3.4, transfers of funds to and from 'ear-marked' reserves as outlined in the Statement of movement in reserves.**

Proposed: Cllr Back

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

All Agreed

FHR26/09 Post Grade Change

Members were advised the purpose of the paper was to note the changing of the title of Senior Skipper to Senior IFCO (Marine) and to create a new grade 7 IFCO post.

ACO (DD) Butler provided members with the rationale for the proposed suggestions, particularly the need for a skipper whose main responsibility would be the operation of PIV as it took additional knowledge and experience to skipper it.

The role of Senior IFCO (Marine) would oversee all the vessels with particular attention on maintenance and coding of vessels which was very time consuming, as well as being a warranted officer and capable of skippering PIV.

The suggested new Grade 7 role would bridge the gap between Grade 6 and SO, which in the first instance would be offered to the two current Grade 6 IFCOs to apply for. Members noted this was an uplift in grade to an existing post as opposed to an entirely new post and would be a slight increase in salary that could be accommodated.

Members Resolved to:

- **Note the change in title of the previous Senior Skipper post to Senior IFCO (Marine)**
- **Agree to create a new grade 7 IFO post as set out in the paper.**

Proposed: Cllr Chenery

Seconded: Cllr Back

All Agreed

F&HR26/10 Resolution

Members Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for items 11 & 12 on the grounds they involved the likely disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) which is exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act and Item 14 on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual which is exempt information as defined in paragraph 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Proposed: Cllr Back

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

All Agreed

F&HR26/11 Asset Disposal

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

Members were advised that it was judged that *FPV Seaspray*, a 4-person open RIB bought in 2018, was now surplus to requirements, particularly as the purchase of a trailer for *FPV C-Runner* enabled that vessel to be used around the district. In addition, with the discontinuance of shared use of *FPV Seaspray* with Norfolk Police we were no longer getting assistance with the maintenance costs and with the need to transition to Workboat Code 3 those costs had the potential to increase.

Having sought advice, based on the vessel's age and an approximate value had been obtained.

As the vessel features in the Asset Register due to it initially costing in excess of £10,000 there was a requirement for the sub-committee to approve the sale, however as having to bring any offer back to a meeting may jeopardize the sale due to timeframes it was hoped a dispensation could be given for the CEO to consider any offer made for the vessel.

Members Resolved to:

- **Note the contents of the report**
- **Authorise the sale of FPV Sea Spray at the best achievable price in the current market.**

- **Agree to delegate decision making regarding the sale of FPV Sea Spray to the CEO.**

Proposed: Cllr Back

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

All Agreed

F&HR25/12 IT Services Provision

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

This item was a matter of an update on progress, having discussed it at the previous meeting.

Having sought three tenders the company that appeared to be the best fit had been identified and the contract awarded.

Initial cost of moving the IT to the cloud was not in the planned revenue budget but would come from the Capital & Reserve accounts. It was anticipated once the SLA had been signed the annual cost would be slightly less than the previous agreement. It was also anticipated in the future there may be a need to review the licensing system which would have a cost implication from the IT Reserve.

Members Agreed to note the content of the report

F&HR26/13 HR Update

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

- During the quarter there had been one resignation of the Grade 6 Project Officer, who had gone on to a Civil Service Role.
- Of the two IFCO posts which had previously been interviewed for, one was now in post, and the other offer had been withdrawn. A third-place candidate had subsequently been offered the post and accepted, subject to employment checks being completed a start date towards the end of May was anticipated.
- Recruitment for a Lowestoft based IFCO was in process with interviews expected during the month.
- The vacant G6 MSO post had been filled on a temporary basis with a G5 MSO.
- Recruitment for a Business Support Officer was underway.
- As previously mentioned, the Senior IFCO (Marine) post would be progressed during the month.
- The CEO advised members he intended to retire at the end of the financial year, the Chair was grateful for the long notice as it would allow for recruitment and a handover. Recruitment of a CEO was permanently delegated to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance & HR sub-committee who had approved a succession plan. It was anticipated the recruitment process would begin during the summer.
- Sickness during the last quarter was reduced following the end of long-term sickness.

- The Drug and Alcohol policy had been reviewed; it was intended testing would be more proactive going forward as it was a legislative requirement.

Members Agreed to note the content of the Report.

FHR26/14 Any Other Business

The CEO advised members the generator on PIV had experienced water ingress, a replacement generator was expected to cost circa £18k plus fitting costs and current investigation suggested there was only one such generator available in Europe. This cost could not be met from the annual revenue budget, and it was suggested that it should be accounted for in the new capital and revenue account.

It was questioned whether the replacement generator would suffer the same fate, to which ACO Butler advised there would be a modification in the way the generator was secured which would hopefully prevent future water ingress. The vessel manufacturer would also be contacted to see if there had been a design fault.

Members Resolved to Agree to the purchase of a replacement generator for Protector IV with the related expense being taken from the Reserve Account.

Proposed: Cllr Back

Seconded: Cllr FitzPatrick

All Agreed

There were no other matters for discussion.

The meeting closed at 1045 hours, the Chair thanked members for attending.

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

64th Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority meeting

24 June 2026

Sub-committee Membership

Report by: J. Gregory, CEO

Purpose of Report

To seek approval for revisions to sub-committee membership following changes to membership of the Authority following the local elections in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

Note the automatic appointment of the newly appointed councillors from Norfolk and Suffolk to the Finance & HR sub-committee

Agree to appoint Mr Nick Schiller to the Finance & HR sub-committee in place of Ms. Inge Smith.

Agree to the appointments to the Wash Fisheries and Wash Appeals, sub-committees proposed by the CEO following the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority during the meeting.

Background

The Authority currently has three sub-committees, Finance & HR, Wash Fisheries and Wash Appeals. Membership of the sub-committees is set out in Chapter 1, Section 11 of the Constitution and Standing Orders.

Finance & HR sub-committee

This sub-committee meets quarterly and comprise all elected members and two general members of the Authority, with the Chair and Vice-Chair being the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority.

Wash Fisheries sub-committee

This sub-committee meets when required and comprises seven members (elected or general members), none of whom have a Declared Pecuniary Interest or other connection with the Wash cockle and mussel fisheries.

Wash Appeals sub-committee

This sub-committee meets when required and comprises the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority plus one other elected member.

Report

Following local elections in Norfolk and Suffolk there have been changes in the Councillors appointed to the Authority, with four new appointees from those two counties and one member being re-appointed from Norfolk. The County Council appointed members from Norfolk are now Cllrs Adams, Costley and Lawrence and at the time of writing details of the County Council appointed members from Suffolk have not yet been provided.

Finance & HR sub-committee

All five of the newly appointed and re-appointed Councillors will automatically be members of the Finance & HR sub-committee.

In addition, Mr Nick Schiller has expressed an interest in serving on this sub-committee and Ms. Inge Smith, who is currently a member, has indicated that she would like to step down from this role. It is, therefore, suggested that Mr Schiler be appointed to the sub-committee in place of Ms. Smith.

Wash Fisheries and Wash Appeals sub-committees

It is suggested that vacancies on these sub-committees caused by the local elections are filled by council appointed members.

Noting that membership of the Wash Appeals sub-committee comprises the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority plus one other council appointed member, and that election to those two roles is on the agenda for this meeting, it is not possible to include nominations in this paper for either of these two sub-committees. It is, therefore, suggested that the CEO presents nominations during the course of this Authority meeting following the election of the new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority.

An updated version of the Authority sub-committee membership document can be found at Appendix A, and a final version will be shared with members subsequent to the meeting.

Financial Implications

None identified.

Legal Implications

None identified.

Appendices

Appendix A - Authority Sub-committee Membership as at 16 June 2026

Background Documents

Papers and minutes of the 60th meeting of the full Authority held on 11 June 2025.

Appendix A

Authority Sub-committee Membership as of 16 June 2026

Finance & HR	
Membership: All elected members and two general members	
Chair: Chair of the Authority Vice-chair: Vice-Chair of the Authority	
Members	Date appointed
Cllr Timothy Adams	24/06/2026
Cllr Julie Costley	24/06/2026
Cllr Peter Lawrence	24/06/2026
Cllr Suffolk CC tbc	24/06/2026
Cllr Suffolk CC tbc	24/06/2026
Cllr Ray Whitaker	22/09/2025
Cllr Gary Taylor	11/06/2025
Mr Stephen Williamson	
Ms. Nick Schiller	24/06/2026

Wash Fisheries	
Membership: Seven members, none with a DPI or connection with the Wash cockle and mussel fisheries	
Chair: Vacant Vice-chair: Vacant	
Members	Date appointed
Cllr Vacant	
Cllr Vacant	
Mr Kieran Copeland	09/03/2022
Cllr Gary Taylor	11/06/2025
Cllr Ray Whitaker	11/03/2026
Mr Nick Schiller	11/06/2025
Ms Inge Smith	11/06/2025

Wash Appeals	
Membership: Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority plus one other elected member	
Chair: Vacant Vice-chair: Vacant	
Members	Date appointed
Cllr Vacant	
Cllr Vacant	
Cllr Vacant	

Vision

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Action Item 11

64th Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

24 June 2026

Wash Cockle Fishery 2026

Report by: Luke Godwin (ACO)

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on decisions made regarding the 2026 Wash Cockle Fishery under authority delegated to the CEO at the 63rd Eastern IFCA meeting.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the contents of the report.
- **Agree** to endorse and continue the management of the 2026 Wash cockle fishery as set out in this report.
- **Agree** to delegate authority to the CEO in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair 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.
- **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.

Background

Wash cockle fisheries are managed by the Authority under the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 including through issuing permits and setting bespoke management measures through permit conditions.

Annual management of Wash cockle fisheries is informed by an annual stock assessment and a Habitat Regulation Assessment which is submitted to Natural England for consideration and such that they can provide formal advice. Under the byelaw, setting annual management measure must include consultation with potentially impacted stakeholders and consideration of impacts.

In anticipation of a delay to the June Authority meeting, and the potential for changes in Authority membership following local elections, members agreed at the 63rd Eastern IFCA meeting to delegate Authority to the CEO to open a cockle fishery and introduce, vary or revoke associated permit conditions for the management of the fishery.

Members also directed the CEO to advise members of the need to open the cockle fishery under the delegated authority and to provide a full report on the annual surveys and management measures at the next available Authority meeting.

Report

The results of the annual cockle stock survey were considered in the context of the Wash Cockle Fisheries Management Plan¹ and it was identified that there is sufficient stock to enable a cockle fishery with a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 4,992 tonnes (Appendix 1 refers).

The survey report (Appendix 1) also identifies the need for closures for the protection of high-density juvenile cockles. This year, the report also identified benefit in closing broader areas to provide additional protection primarily with the intention of safeguarding stock for future fisheries.

A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) was also undertaken, which identified that additional closures were required to rule out adverse effects to the declining harbour seal populations protected under the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (Appendix 2). It is noteworthy that the HRA ruled out adverse effects to over-wintering bird populations this year on the basis that the fishery was unlikely to take place within important bird feeding areas. The HRA was submitted to Natural England who provided favourable advice and confirmed that, with the mitigation set out in the HRA, the fishery would not adversely affect site integrity of Wash Marine Protected Areas (including Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest).

Consultation with Wash fishery stakeholders included an industry meeting (held on 19 May 2026) during which proposals for management measures were developed. The key outputs of the meeting were:

- To open the fishery from 15 June 2026;
- That the industry was content with less than 7-days' notice of the opening of a fishery to facilitate this opening date;
- That in the view of industry members the Hunstanton cockle bed did not require additional management measures to protect from the impacts of prop-washing or for 'Health and Safety' reasons, which were acknowledged to be the responsibility of vessel owners and skippers;
- That the 'daily quota' (which is 2 tonnes per vessel per day by default) should be kept under review for the duration of the fishery to ensure that the full TAC is available to the fishery.
- That the establishment of a Wash Forum comprising of representatives of the Wash fishing industry would be beneficial to Authority and industry engagement regarding management of the fisheries.

Following the industry meeting and the completion of the HRA, final proposals were the subject of a consultation with fishing industry between 29 May and 11 June 2026. The consultation identified broad agreement with the proposed management measures (Appendix 3). Consideration of stakeholder views included consideration of discussions

¹ [WFO-Cockle-Fishery-Management-Plan-2019.pdf](#)

and outputs from the industry meeting and a position provided from the Boston Fishing Association which was submitted prior to the consultation.

The outputs from the consultation are summarised as follows:

- The main area of contention within the consultation was the intention of the Authority to keep the daily quota under review for the duration of the fishery. In particular, some responses identified that increasing the daily quota could impact their business models, could result in a reduction in the price-per-kilo paid for cockle catch and could lead to poor prop-washing practices.

On consideration, whilst these risks are acknowledged, it is considered appropriate to maintain the daily catch restriction under review for the duration of the cockle fishery to ensure that the fishery has the opportunity to exhaust the TAC and that the concerns raised by stakeholders will feature in any such consideration.

- There was general support for the opening date and for a shorter notice period of the opening to enable the preferred opening date.
- Whilst the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposed operating times, there was a significant proportion of responses that felt the fishery was open for too many days, particularly in August, and that the fishery open dates included days tides in winter which would require in hours of darkness. It is considered appropriate to maintain the proposed operating times and consider the matter further during the fishery, potentially via the proposed Wash Forum, rather than revise the operating times now to enable further consideration.
- There was broad acceptance of the proposed closed areas for high-density juvenile cockles but it was also asked that the Authority commits to monitoring the condition of the cockles in closed areas to ensure that they can be opened in the event that die-off is detected.

Further consideration of the Hunstanton cockle bed

During the 2025 cockle fishery a previously un-surveyed bed of good quality cockles was located just off Hunstanton. Parts of this bed are sub-tidal and required, at times, fishing in waist-deep water.

Concerns were raised by a stakeholder prior to the consultation regarding the potential health and safety risks associated with hand-work fishing activity within the 'new' Hunstanton bed and in particular working in water. In particular, the stakeholder held the view that the Authority had a duty to ensure that it was 'safe' to fish in this location and should undertake a risk assessment.

It is important to note that not all of the bed is 'subtidal' and several other beds in the Wash do not completely dry out on smaller tides. In any case, it was understood that the safety of fishing operations was a matter for the vessel owner and master rather than the Authority. This view was confirmed by legal advice to the effect that the Authority is not responsible for health and safety issues associated with fishing industry operations. Notwithstanding this, consideration will be given to including a reminder about such responsibilities in communication to industry members when the Hunstanton cockle bed is opened to the fishery

Concern was also raised regarding the potential to damage beds. Two mechanisms were identified as being i) prop-washing without having identified suitable areas because parts

of the bed are sub-tidal and ii) through an inability to spread piled cockles evenly and thinly back over the beds in sub-tidal conditions.

Dialogue with industry identified that special shovel-like tools were created to attempt to spread back heaped cockles and a view that cockles submersed by water are more likely to resettle and be moved by water movement. In addition, the cockle survey identified significant biomass of cockles on the bed and an absence of shells which indicates that the fishery which occurred in 2025 is unlikely to have caused adverse impacts.

On balance, it is thought that the risk associated with prop-washing on this bed are low given these factors.

The Wash cockle stocks also suffer from 'atypical mortality' which is thought to be caused by a combination of three diseases; a parasite called *Martelia*, a virus and a disorder called disseminated neoplasia. Samples were collected from the 'new' Hunstanton bed in February and provided to Cefas to test for the presence of these diseases. Initial results identify that low levels of disseminated neoplasia and the virus are present, but the *Martelia* parasite has not been identified in the samples. It is important to note that this does not rule out presence of the disease because pathogen loading is typically lower in colder months (pers. Coms. Cefas) and because analysis has yet to conclude (importantly, histological assays have not yet been completed which may identify the effects of *Maertelia* parasites).

It is unlikely that the disease is not present within the bed because the parasite life stages include use of plankton secondary hosts which are transported by water flows and a fishery occurred on this bed last year (fishing gear including rakes and tonne bags are likely vectors for transmitting diseases). However, at this stage, there is no conclusive evidence as to whether the bed is infected with *Martelia*. On balance, it is not considered appropriate to allow fishing activity on the bed in the absence of biosecurity measures which will require further time to develop including through dialogue with other experts and fishery stakeholders. As such, an initial temporary closure of the bed is considered appropriate to provide time to develop such and or for sample analysis to be completed. It is intended that further samples are collected in June and July, the timing of which are more conducive to identifying whether the diseases are present at levels which can cause die-offs.

The potential biosecurity risk to the bed was not a feature of the consultation, and as such the decision carries a greater risk of challenge. However, the impacts of the decision are considered to be small in scale (*post*) and it is intended that fishing will be enabled either through implementation of effective biosecurity measures and / or completion of Cefas analysis confirming the presence of the disease already.

Assessment of impacts

An assessment of impacts is required under the WCMB. A *De Minimis Assessment* (DMA) has been undertaken in relation to the proposed management measures (Appendix 4). In summary, the proposed impacts of the measures are considered to be small in scale, and the benefits of the measures are considered likely to outweigh the potential costs.

Proposed closure date of the fishery

Representation was also received during the consultation from Wash-based cockle processors who have sought an agreed closing date of the fishery. In short, the proposal is to agree a closure date of mid-November to mid-December to prevent the continued removal cockles with reduced yield during the winter months and which are less profitable. In support of the proposal, the processors also highlighted the potential reduction in carbon footprint and reduced disturbance to wildlife during winter. The

request also refers to increasing the daily quota in order to enable the removal of more cockles when they are of a greater yield and have greater value.

The fishery ordinarily closes either to prevent the TAC from being exhausted or to enable the annual cockle survey. However, the Authority has discretion to set 'the conditions which would cause the closure of the fishery' as part of its annual management.

The request is considered to be primarily commercial in nature and with potential impacts on fair and open markets and competition. In particular, it would ordinarily be expected for market conditions to effectively close a fishery where the profitability is limited rather than a regulator enforcing a closure. It could also be argued that doing so would unfairly favour local processors who may lose out to other national processors if they refuse cockles of lower yield during winter.

It is important to note however that given the higher TAC this year (1500 tonnes more than 2024 and 1000 tonnes more than 2025), it has been agreed that the uptake of the TAC will be monitored and the daily quota adjusted if considered necessary to enable the removal of the TAC which would include prioritising removal during the more productive summer months.

On balance, it is not considered appropriate to implement a closing date based on commercial interests without the broad support across the different business models operating in the fishery.

Management measures and conclusions

Schedule 4 of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw (Appendix 5 refers) provides the process for issuing, varying and revoking flexible management of the Wash cockle and mussel fisheries. This includes opening and closure of the fishery, flexible permit conditions and operating times.

Management measures for the 2026 Wash cockle fishery were developed in consultation with stakeholders who are likely to be impacted and informed by an assessment of impacts, a HRA and advice received by Natural England. The management measures (permit conditions) for the fishery are set out in Appendix 6. These enabled the opening of a cockle fishery on Monday 15 June 2026 in accordance with the Authority's main duties² and legal obligations to protect Marine Protected Areas from adverse effects on site integrity.

The permit conditions include a minor revision to previous years in relation to vessel monitoring device / tracker provisions to reflect that IFCA trackers will be made available to vessels under 12m (in addition to those over 12m) which are affected by the MMO's recall and replacement of SuccorFish IVMS devices which is planned to take place over the next three months.

Whilst initial decision making on management of the fishery was delegated solely to the CEO due to circumstances that existed this year, it is normal practice for such delegated authority to be given to the CEO, in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair and it is suggested that this approach is adopted for ongoing management of the 2026 cockle fishery.

Financial Implications

There is likely to be a minor cost associated with the provision of vessel trackers to vessels without operating Vessel Monitoring Units (circa £70 per unit). The cost is not considered to pose a budgetary risk and the associated subscription costs ('airtime' costs for the device sending positional information) is recouped from fishing industry.

² S.153 Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

Legal Implications

Risk of legal challenge has been mitigated by having completed a HRA and consultation with industry. The risk of challenge is higher in relation to the decision not to open the Hunstanton bed initially, pending development of appropriate biosecurity measures, because this was not included in the consultation. However, it mitigates a risk of challenge on the basis that the Authority enabled a fishery without due regard to biosecurity risks and / or potential impacts on future fisheries due to the spread of the disease.

In addition, legal risk associated with health and safety concerns of fishing at Hunstanton are mitigated having sought legal advice on the matter.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – 2026 Wash Cockle Survey Report ([available online](#))

Appendix 2 – 2026 Wash Cockle Fishery Habitats Regulation Assessment ([available online](#))

Appendix 3 – Consultation Outcome Document ([available online](#))

Appendix 4 – 2026 Wash Cockle Fishery *De Minimis* Assessment ([available online](#))

Appendix 5 - Schedule 4 of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021

Appendix 6 – 2026 Wash Cockle Fishery Permit Conditions

Background Documents

Minutes and Papers for Action Item 10 of the 63rd Eastern IFCA meeting held on 11 March 2026.

APPENDIX 5 – Schedule 4 of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2024

From the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 made by the Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority on 10 March 2021.

Schedule 4

Procedure for flexible management measures: limiting the number of permits issued, permit conditions, opening and closing fisheries and operating times

1. The procedure referred to in paragraphs 10, 21, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 31 of the byelaw (in this Schedule, ‘the proposed changes’) must include the following steps:
 - a) acquisition of relevant available evidence including:
 - i. scientific and survey data, and scientific advice provided by the Authority, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences or such other persons as the Authority thinks fit;
 - ii. advice given by Natural England or other external authorities, organisations, persons or bodies as the Authority thinks fit; and
 - iii. information from any other relevant source including that which is relevant to effective enforcement;
 - b) consultation by such methods as the Authority considers appropriate with such stakeholders, organisations and persons as appear to the Authority to be representative of the interests likely to be substantially affected by the proposed changes; and
 - c) undertaking an impact assessment relating to the proposed changes.

1. The Authority must review a flexible permit condition or any restrictions on the issuing of permits at least once every six years from the date on which a flexible permit condition or restriction on the issuing of permits has taken effect.

2. The review of flexible permit conditions or restrictions on the issuing of permits must be in accordance with a formal operational procedure agreed by the Authority and include the steps set out in paragraph 1 of this schedule. The formal operating procedure will be held by the Authority’s office and published on the Authority’s website.

3. The Authority must notify all permit holders when restrictions on the issuing of permits or flexible permit conditions are issued, maintained, varied or revoked. The details of any fishery opened or closed in accordance with paragraphs 26-28 of the byelaw will be held by the Authority’s office and details will be published on the Authority’s website accordingly.

APPENDIX 6

Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021: Hand-Work cockle Fishery Permit Conditions

2026 Wash Cockle Fishery

Persons operating under the Authority of a **Hand-work Cockle Permit** for the purpose of fishing within the **cockle** fishery, issued under paragraph 8 of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 must fish in accordance with the following conditions.



These Permit Conditions apply should be read in conjunction with the Wash cockle and mussel byelaw including the restrictions set out in Schedule 2 of the byelaw which also apply. These restrictions are appended to the permit conditions for ease of reference.

Interpretation

1. In these permit conditions:
 - a. “UK VMS Hub” means the UK’s secure interface platform which is maintained by the Marine Management Organisation and the fisheries policy authorities to collect, store and manage fishing boat monitoring data for use by the MMO and fisheries policy authorities.

Opening of the fishery

2. The fishery will open from 0500hrs on 15 June 2026.
3. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery any cockles prior to the open date and time in paragraph 2.

Open / closed areas

4. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery and cockles from any area specified as closed to the fishery in Schedule 1 of these permit conditions.
5. Areas designated as open or closed may be subject to change and Eastern IFCA will provide a minimum of 12 hours’ notice of such via text or e-mail to Permit Holders and Nominated Deputies.

Operating times

6. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery any cockles outside of the Operating times specified in Schedule 2 of these permit conditions.

Fishing methods

7. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery any cockles using bottom-towed-gear.

Vessel Monitoring Devices

8. Subject to condition 10, vessels with an overall length of less than 12m must at all times whilst at sea:
 - a. Have a Nemo I-VMS MMO type-approved I-VMS device installed onboard and operations;
 - b. Have the I-VMS unit switched on and transmitting data to the device supplier hub for onward transmission to the UK VMS Hub at least once in every 3 minutes; and
 - c. Ensure that the device has not been manually overridden, has not been tampered with or damaged and is not obstructed or interfered with so as to compromise or prevent the effective transmission of data to the UK VMS Hub.
9. Subject to condition 10, vessels with an overall length of 12m or more must at all times whilst at sea:
 - a. Have onboard a VMS or VMS+ unit;
 - b. Have the VMS or VMS+ unit switched on and transmitting data to the device supplier hub for onward transmission to the UK VMS Hub at least once in every 3 minutes; and
 - c. Ensure that the device has not been manually overridden, has not been tampered with or damaged and is not obstructed or interfered with so as to compromise or prevent the effective transmission of data to the UK VMS Hub.
10. Where a vessel is not able to meet condition 8(b) or 9(b), condition 8 or 9 shall not apply if:
 - a. the vessel has onboard a tracker provided by the Authority; and
 - b. the permit holder or nominated deputy remunerate the Authority for the associated subscription cost.

Measures for the protection of small cockles

11. A person must not remove from the fishery or retain cockles unless cockle catch has been sorted for size in such a manner so as to comply with permit condition 12 and any catch rejected through such sorting must be returned immediately to the sea as close to the area it was taken from and spread evenly and thinly over the cockle bed.
12. It is prohibited to remove from the fishery or land cockle catch which contains more than 30%, by weight, cockles which would pass through a riddle with bar spacing of 10mm.

Confirmation

The Permit Conditions come into effect at 0500hrs on 15 June 2026.

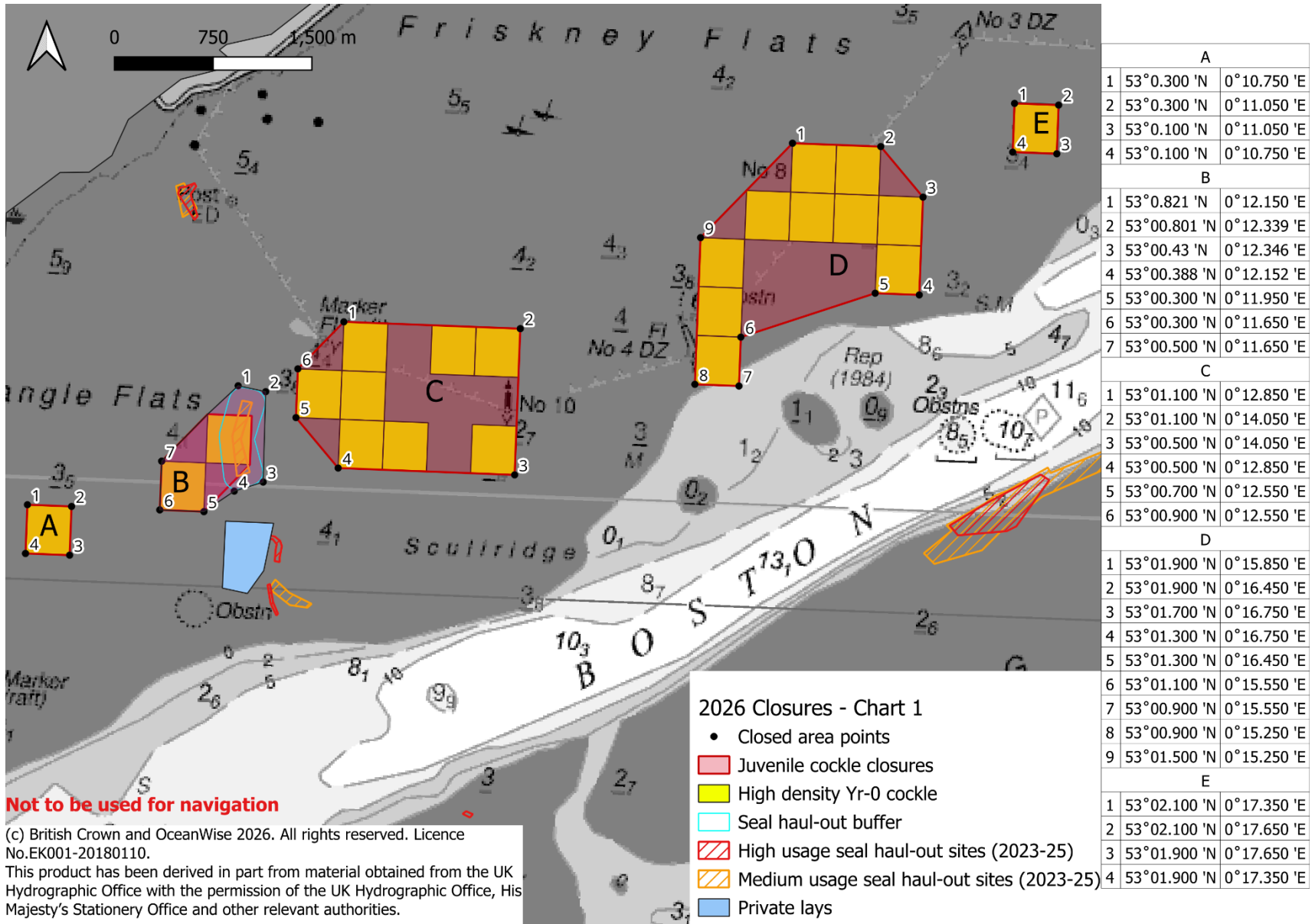
Signed: 

J. Gregory, CEO

Failure to comply with an exemption condition is an offence under section 163(2) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. The master, owner and charterer (if any) of a vessel used in the commission of an offence shall each be guilty of any such offence and liable to a fine on summary conviction.

Permit conditions are subject to change and fishers will be notified of any amendments to the conditions.

Schedule 1 Closed Areas



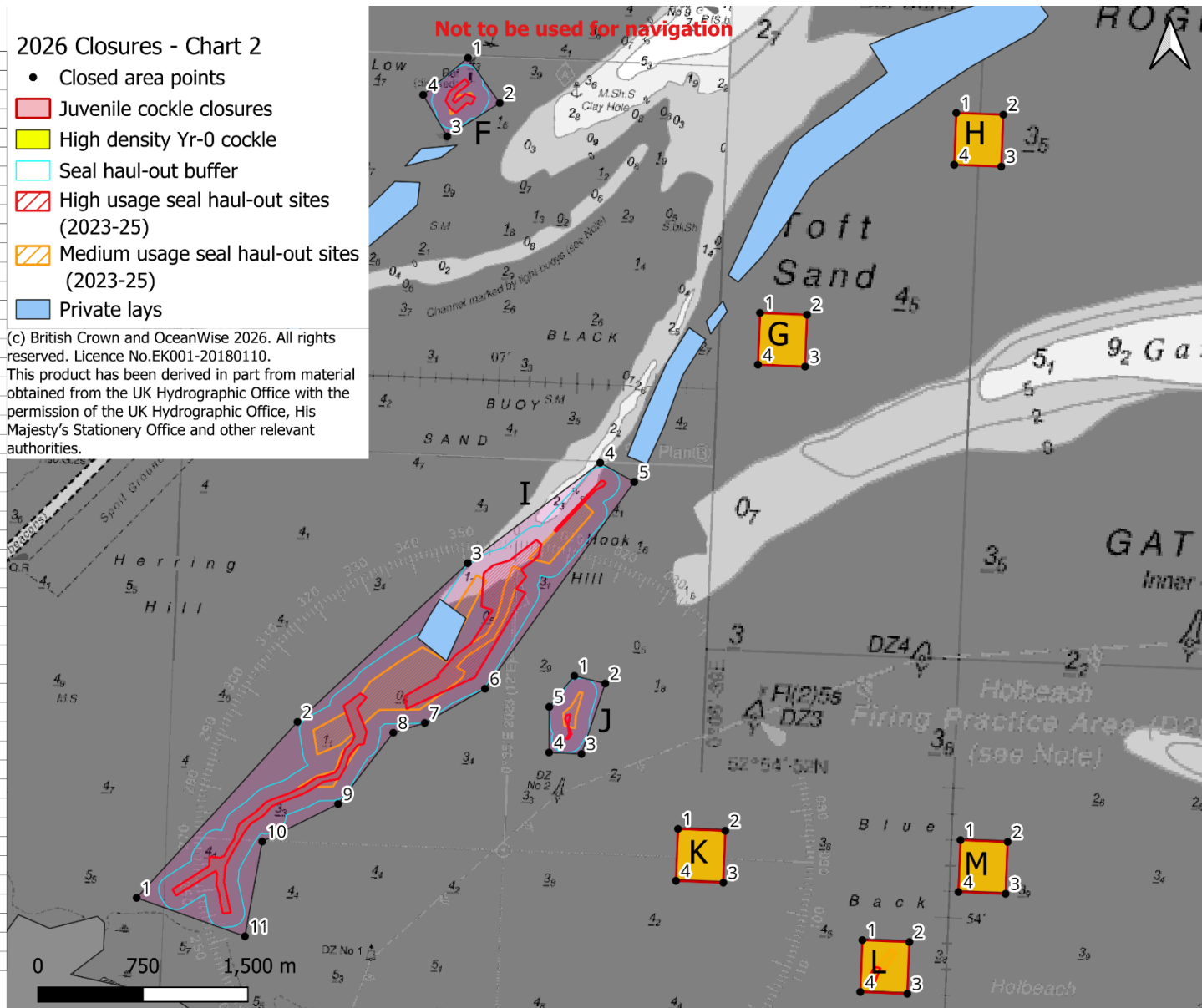
Schedule 1 Closed Areas

F		
1	52°57.237' N	0°06.724' E
2	52°57.068' N	0°06.938' E
3	52°56.931' N	0°06.611' E
4	52°57.087' N	0°06.448' E
G		
1	52°56.300' N	0°08.65' E
2	52°56.300' N	0°08.950' E
3	52°56.100' N	0°08.950' E
4	52°56.100' N	0°08.650' E
H		
1	52°57.100' N	0°09.850' E
2	52°57.100' N	0°10.150' E
3	52°56.900' N	0°10.150' E
4	52°56.900' N	0°09.850' E
I		
1	52°53.951' N	0°04.830' E
2	52°54.653' N	0°05.808' E
3	52°55.291' N	0°06.852' E
4	52°55.698' N	0°07.670' E
5	52°55.629' N	0°07.891' E
6	52°54.810' N	0°06.994' E
7	52°54.669' N	0°06.619' E
8	52°54.626' N	0°06.421' E
9	52°54.343' N	0°06.089' E
10	52°54.187' N	0°05.615' E
11	52°53.820' N	0°05.529' E
J		
1	52°54.874' N	0°07.559' E
2	52°54.848' N	0°07.758' E
3	52°54.574' N	0°07.625' E
4	52°54.574' N	0°07.418' E
5	52°54.750' N	0°07.408' E
K		
1	52°54.300' N	0°08.260' E
2	52°54.300' N	0°08.560' E
3	52°54.100' N	0°08.560' E
4	52°54.100' N	0°08.260' E
L		
1	52°53.900' N	0°09.460' E
2	52°53.900' N	0°09.760' E
3	52°53.700' N	0°09.760' E
4	52°53.700' N	0°09.460' E
M		
1	52°54.300' N	0°10.060' E
2	52°54.300' N	0°10.360' E
3	52°54.100' N	0°10.360' E
4	52°54.100' N	0°10.060' E

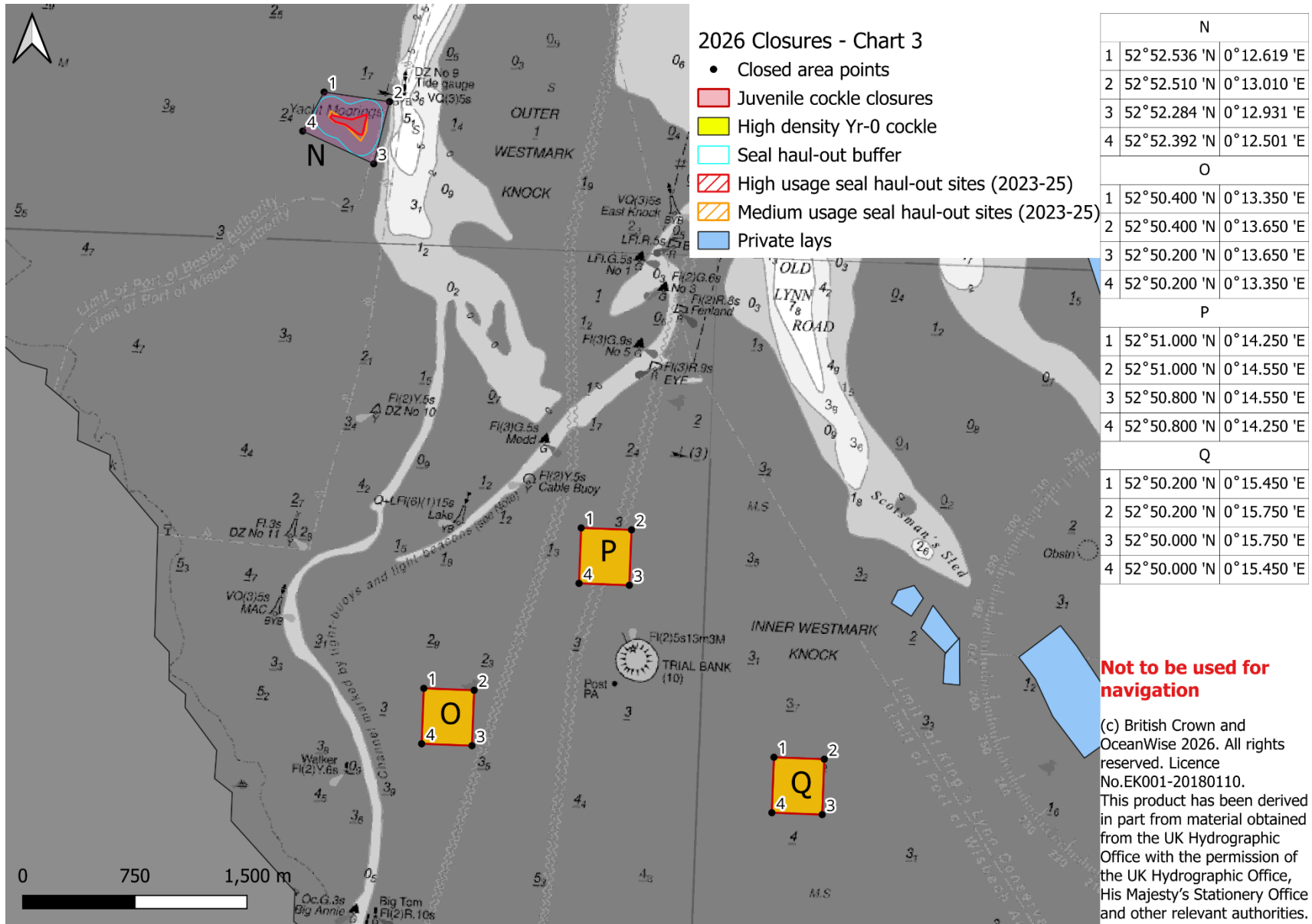
2026 Closures - Chart 2

- Closed area points
- Juvenile cockle closures
- High density Yr-0 cockle
- Seal haul-out buffer
- ▨ High usage seal haul-out sites (2023-25)
- ▨ Medium usage seal haul-out sites (2023-25)
- Private lays

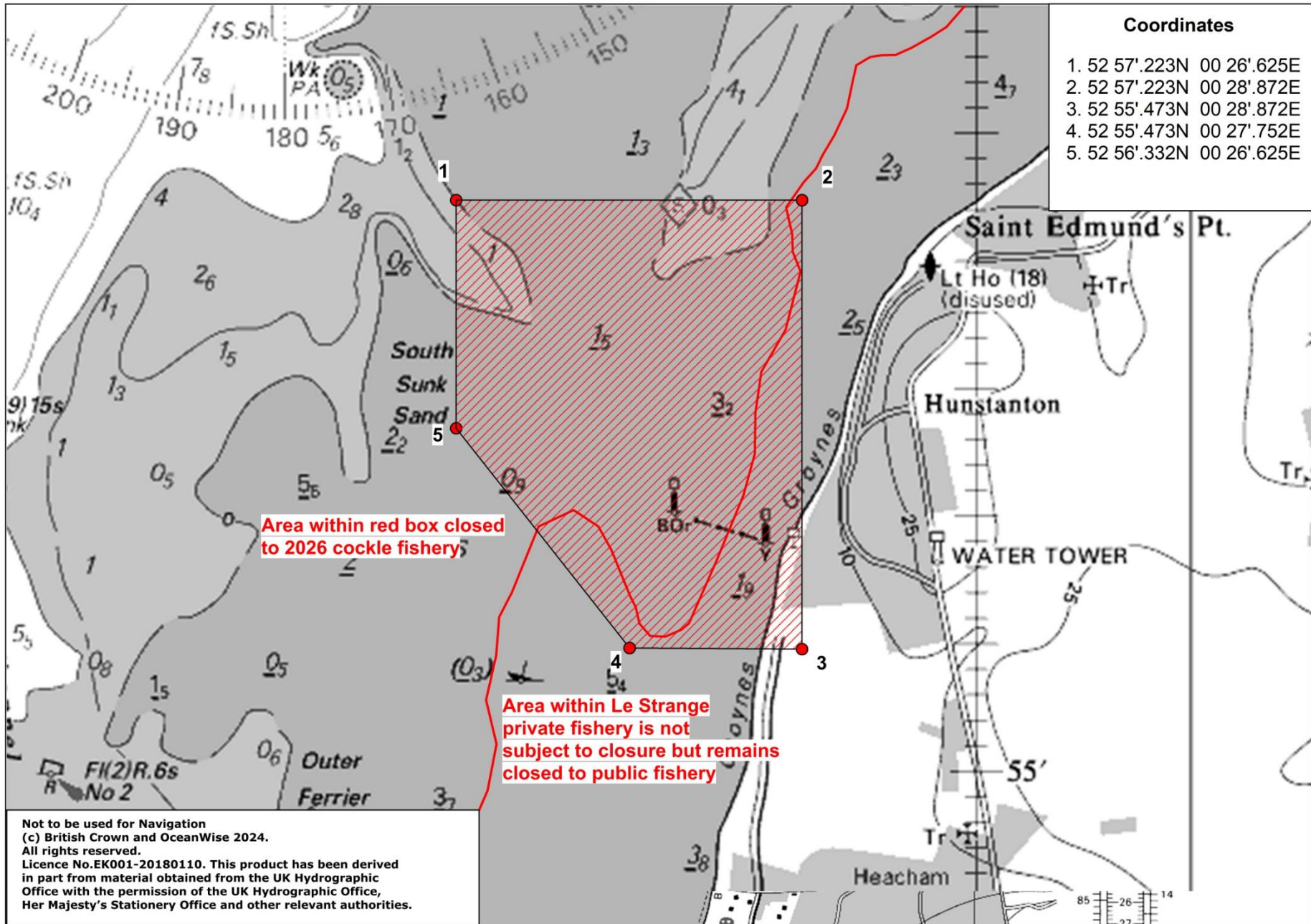
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Schedule 1 Closed Areas



Schedule 1 Closed Areas



Schedule 1 Closed Areas

Closures over Shellfish Lays

Clay Hole

Lay	Latitude	Longitude
CH1	52° 56.540'N	0° 05.980'E
	52° 56.540'N	0° 06.180'E
	52° 56.630'N	0° 06.300'E
	52° 56.640'N	0° 06.120'E
CH1a	52° 56.630'N	00° 06.300'E
	52° 56.629'N	00° 06.383'E
	52° 56.540'N	00° 06.180'E
	52° 56.540'N	00° 05.980'E
	52° 56.463'N	00° 06.081'E
CH2	52° 56.640'N	00° 06.120'E
	52° 56.630'N	00° 06.300'E
	52° 56.750'N	00° 06.450'E
	52° 56.750'N	00° 06.290'E
CH2a	52° 56.750'N	00° 06.450'E
	52° 56.630'N	00° 06.300'E
	52° 56.630'N	00° 06.383'E
	52° 56.663'N	00° 06.439'E
CH4	52° 56.850'N	0° 06.580'E
	52° 56.810'N	0° 06.350'E
	52° 56.880'N	0° 06.450'E
	52° 56.900'N	0° 06.680'E
CH6	52° 56.155'N	0° 05.629'E
	52° 56.135'N	0° 05.461'E
	52° 56.077'N	0° 05.462'E
	52° 56.103'N	0° 05.631'E
	52° 56.165'N	0° 05.725'E
CH7	52° 56.210'N	0° 05.724'E
	52° 56.493'N	0° 05.815'E
	52° 56.448'N	0° 05.879'E
	52° 56.454'N	0° 05.660'E
CH8	52° 56.406'N	0° 05.700'E
	52° 56.540'N	0° 05.980'E
	52° 56.463'N	0° 06.081'E
	52° 56.493'N	0° 05.815'E
	52° 56.448'N	0° 05.879'E

Pandora

Lay	Latitude	Longitude
P6	52° 51.860'N	0° 21.573'E
	52° 51.808'N	0° 21.651'E
	52° 51.724'N	0° 21.557'E
	52° 51.576'N	0° 21.481'E
	52° 51.600'N	0° 21.385'E
	52° 51.726'N	0° 21.473'E
P7	52° 51.476'N	0° 21.377'E
	52° 51.471'N	0° 21.460'E
	52° 51.576'N	0° 21.481'E
	52° 51.600'N	0° 21.385'E

Black Buoy

BB1	52° 56.340'N	0° 08.410'E
	52° 56.300'N	0° 08.440'E
	52° 56.260'N	0° 08.310'E
	52° 56.210'N	0° 08.340'E
BB2	52° 56.232'N	0° 08.202'E
	52° 56.190'N	0° 08.310'E
	52° 56.094'N	0° 08.070'E
	52° 56.046'N	0° 08.172'E
BB3	52° 56.094'N	0° 08.070'E
	52° 56.046'N	0° 08.172'E
	52° 55.847'N	0° 08.067'E
	52° 55.886'N	0° 07.932'E
BB4	52° 55.699'N	0° 07.967'E
	52° 55.728'N	0° 07.841'E
	52° 55.847'N	0° 08.067'E
	52° 55.886'N	0° 07.932'E

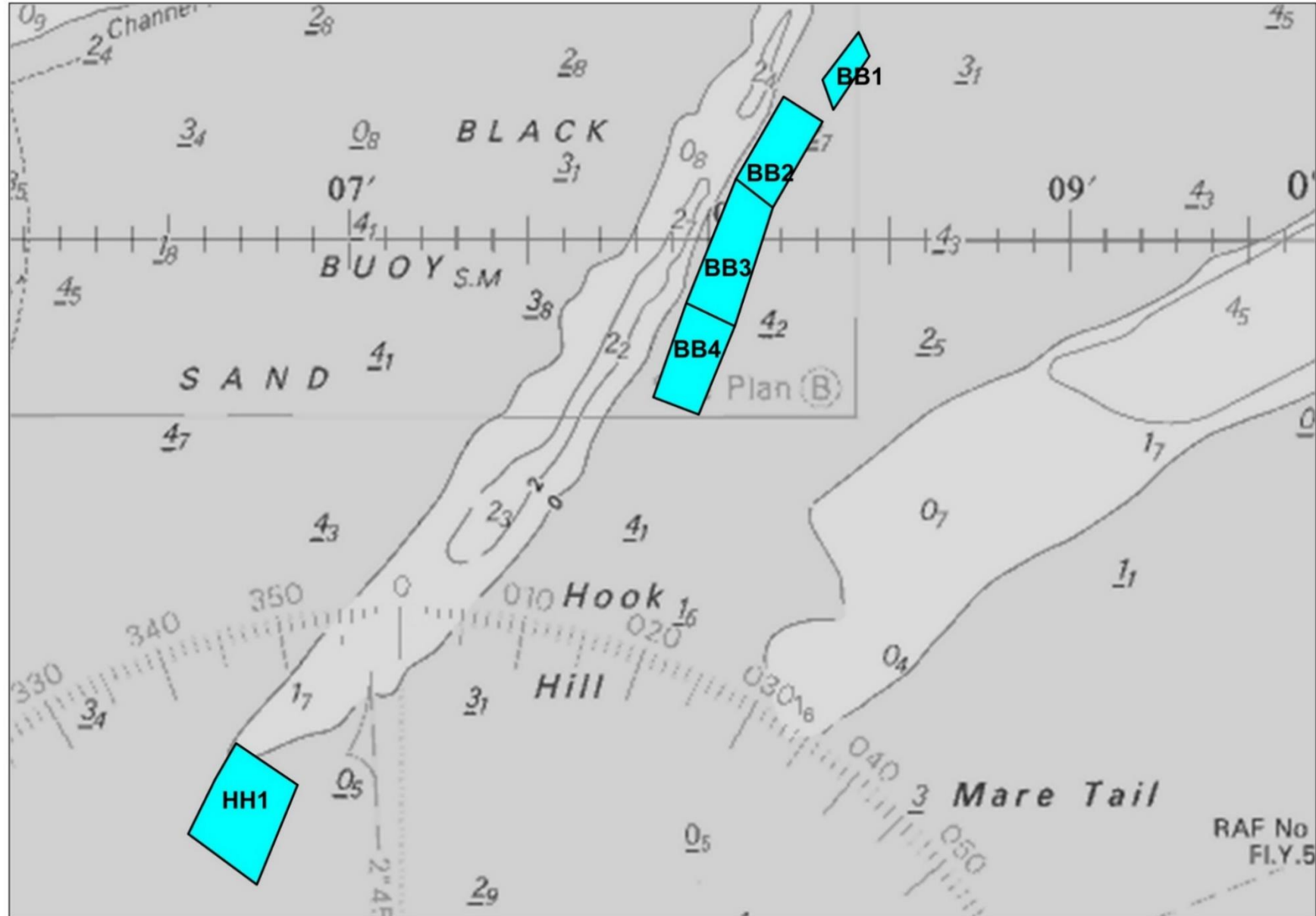
Schedule 1 Closed Areas

Tofts	Latitude	Longitude			
Lay			TO5	52° 57.030'N	0° 09.327'E
TOA	52° 57.487'N	0° 10.412'E		52° 57.154'N	0° 09.214'E
	52° 57.600'N	0° 10.269'E		52° 57.110'N	0° 09.558'E
	52° 57.423'N	0° 10.320'E		52° 57.244'N	0° 09.400'E
	52° 57.566'N	0° 10.135'E	TO6	52° 56.950'N	0° 09.221'E
TOB	52° 57.600'N	0° 10.269'E		52° 57.086'N	0° 09.086'E
	52° 57.667'N	0° 10.386'E		52° 57.030'N	0° 09.372'E
	52° 57.560'N	0° 10.319'E		52° 57.154'N	0° 09.214'E
	52° 57.612'N	0° 10.422'E	TO7	52° 56.950'N	0° 09.221'E
TO1	52° 57.423'N	0° 10.320'E		52° 57.086'N	0° 09.086'E
	52° 57.566'N	0° 10.135'E		52° 56.882'N	0° 09.083'E
	52° 57.352'N	0° 10.126'E		52° 57.021'N	0° 08.940'E
	52° 57.518'N	0° 09.940'E	TO8	52° 56.810'N	0° 08.951'E
TO2	52° 57.352'N	0° 10.126'E		52° 56.949'N	0° 08.809'E
	52° 57.518'N	0° 09.940'E		52° 56.882'N	0° 09.083'E
	52° 57.469'N	0° 09.741'E		52° 57.021'N	0° 08.940'E
	52° 57.282'N	0° 09.938'E	TO9	52° 56.810'N	0° 08.951'E
TO3a	52° 57.324'N	0° 09.578'E		52° 56.949'N	0° 08.809'E
	52° 57.399'N	0° 09.808'E		52° 56.663'N	0° 08.810'E
	52° 57.187'N	0° 09.716'E		52° 56.757'N	0° 08.657'E
	52° 57.282'N	0° 09.938'E	TO10	52° 56.567'N	0° 08.529'E
TO3b	52° 57.324'N	0° 09.578'E		52° 56.519'N	0° 08.652'E
	52° 57.409'N	0° 09.490'E		52° 56.663'N	0° 08.810'E
	52° 57.469'N	0° 09.741'E		52° 56.757'N	0° 08.657'E
	52° 57.399'N	0° 09.808'E	TO11	52° 56.567'N	0° 08.529'E
TO4a	52° 57.110'N	0° 09.558'E		52° 56.519'N	0° 08.652'E
	52° 57.244'N	0° 09.400'E		52° 56.440'N	0° 08.438'E
	52° 57.324'N	0° 09.578'E		52° 56.415'N	0° 08.503'E
	52° 57.187'N	0° 09.716'E	Herring Hill		
TO4b	52° 57.244'N	0° 09.400'E	HH1	52° 54.996'N	0° 06.552'E
	52° 57.289'N	0° 09.470'E		52° 55.088'N	0° 06.627'E
	52° 57.377'N	0° 09.378'E		52° 55.148'N	0° 06.684'E
	52° 57.349'N	0° 09.278'E		52° 54.911'N	0° 06.742'E
				52° 55.078'N	0° 06.855'E
TO4c	52° 57.324'N	0° 09.578'E			
	52° 57.289'N	0° 09.470'E			
	52° 57.377'N	0° 09.378'E			
	52° 57.409'N	0° 09.490'E			

Schedule 1 Closed Areas

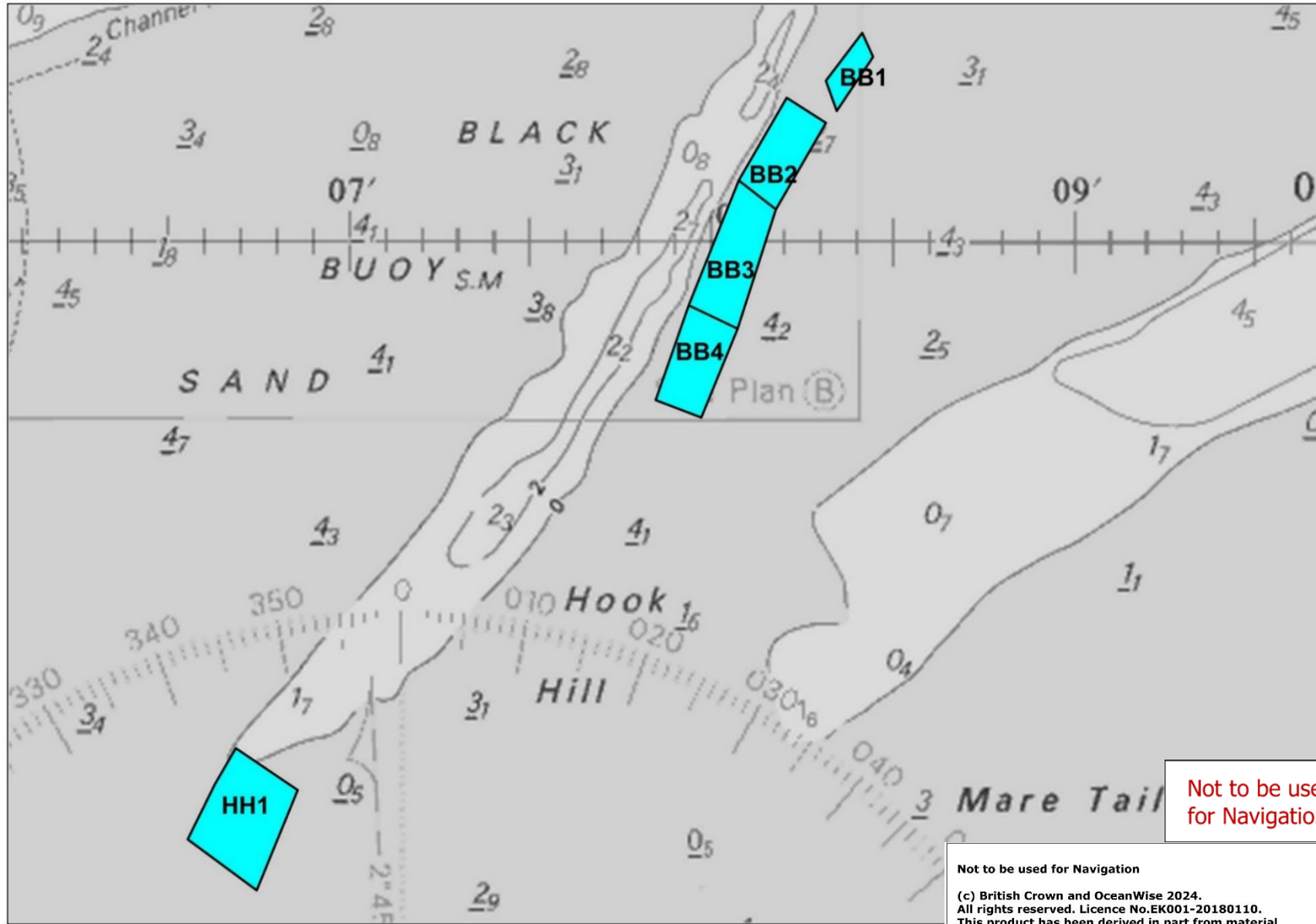
Scotman's Sled			Thief		
Lay	Latitude	Longitude	Lay	Latitude	Longitude
SS1	52° 50.386'N	0° 17.100'E	TH2	52° 51.200'N	0° 17.760'E
	52° 50.240'N	0° 17.298'E		52° 51.580'N	0° 17.480'E
	52° 50.330'N	0° 17.489'E		52° 51.220'N	0° 17.850'E
	52° 50.430'N	0° 17.340'E		52° 51.600'N	0° 17.550'E
SS2	52° 50.652'N	0° 16.523'E	TH4	52° 51.712'N	0° 17.788'E
	52° 50.600'N	0° 16.447'E		52° 51.575'N	0° 17.819'E
	52° 50.686'N	0° 16.296'E		52° 51.511'N	0° 17.853'E
	52° 50.770'N	0° 16.362'E		52° 51.435'N	0° 17.886'E
SS4	52° 50.819'N	0° 16.150'E	TH5	52° 51.340'N	0° 17.926'E
	52° 50.772'N	0° 16.114'E		52° 51.351'N	0° 17.987'E
	52° 50.728'N	0° 16.236'E		52° 51.717'N	0° 17.846'E
	52° 50.794'N	0° 16.303'E		52° 51.844'N	0° 17.781'E
SS5	52° 50.839'N	0° 16.246'E	TH6	52° 51.719'N	0° 17.789'E
	52° 50.658'N	0° 16.527'E		52° 51.724'N	0° 17.838'E
	52° 50.595'N	0° 16.444'E		52° 51.837'N	0° 17.839'E
	52° 50.490'N	0° 16.440'E		52° 51.922'N	0° 17.536'E
SS7	52° 50.486'N	0° 16.540'E	TH7	52° 52.045'N	0° 17.208'E
	52° 50.386'N	0° 17.100'E		52° 52.060'N	0° 17.475'E
	52° 50.614'N	0° 17.153'E		52° 51.908'N	0° 17.292'E
	52° 50.518'N	0° 16.988'E		52° 51.897'N	0° 17.784'E
SS8	52° 50.430'N	0° 17.340'E	TH8	52° 51.897'N	0° 17.861'E
	52° 50.330'N	0° 17.489'E		52° 51.837'N	0° 17.839'E
	52° 50.364'N	0° 17.558'E		52° 51.845'N	0° 17.781'E
	52° 50.644'N	0° 17.226'E		52° 51.897'N	0° 17.784'E
Wrangle	52° 50.714'N	0° 17.126'E	RG1	52° 51.897'N	0° 17.861'E
	52° 50.595'N	0° 16.884'E		52° 52.162'N	0° 17.861'E
	53° 00.264'N	0° 12.100'E		52° 52.148'N	0° 17.948'E
	53° 00.262'N	0° 12.266'E		52° 56.973'N	0° 12.732'E
W1	53° 00.262'N	0° 12.266'E	RG2	52° 57.029'N	0° 12.330'E
	52° 59.989'N	0° 12.097'E		52° 57.414'N	0° 12.914'E
	52° 59.979'N	0° 12.194'E		52° 57.413'N	0° 12.664'E
	52° 59.979'N	0° 12.194'E		52° 57.960'N	0° 11.213'E
W2	53° 00.262'N	0° 12.266'E	RG3	52° 57.877'N	0° 11.310'E
	53° 00.263'N	0° 12.427'E		52° 57.827'N	0° 11.200'E
	53° 00.067'N	0° 12.373'E		52° 57.919'N	0° 11.103'E
	52° 59.971'N	0° 12.268'E		52° 57.884'N	0° 10.873'E
	52° 59.979'N	0° 12.194'E		52° 57.741'N	0° 10.971'E
				52° 57.710'N	0° 10.862'E
				52° 57.790'N	0° 10.689'E

Schedule 1 Closed Areas



Wash Lays Chart 1 – showing the area of Black Buoy and Herring Hill sands and private lays

Schedule 1 Closed Areas



Wash Lays Chart 1 – showing the area of Black Buoy and Herring Hill sands and
lays

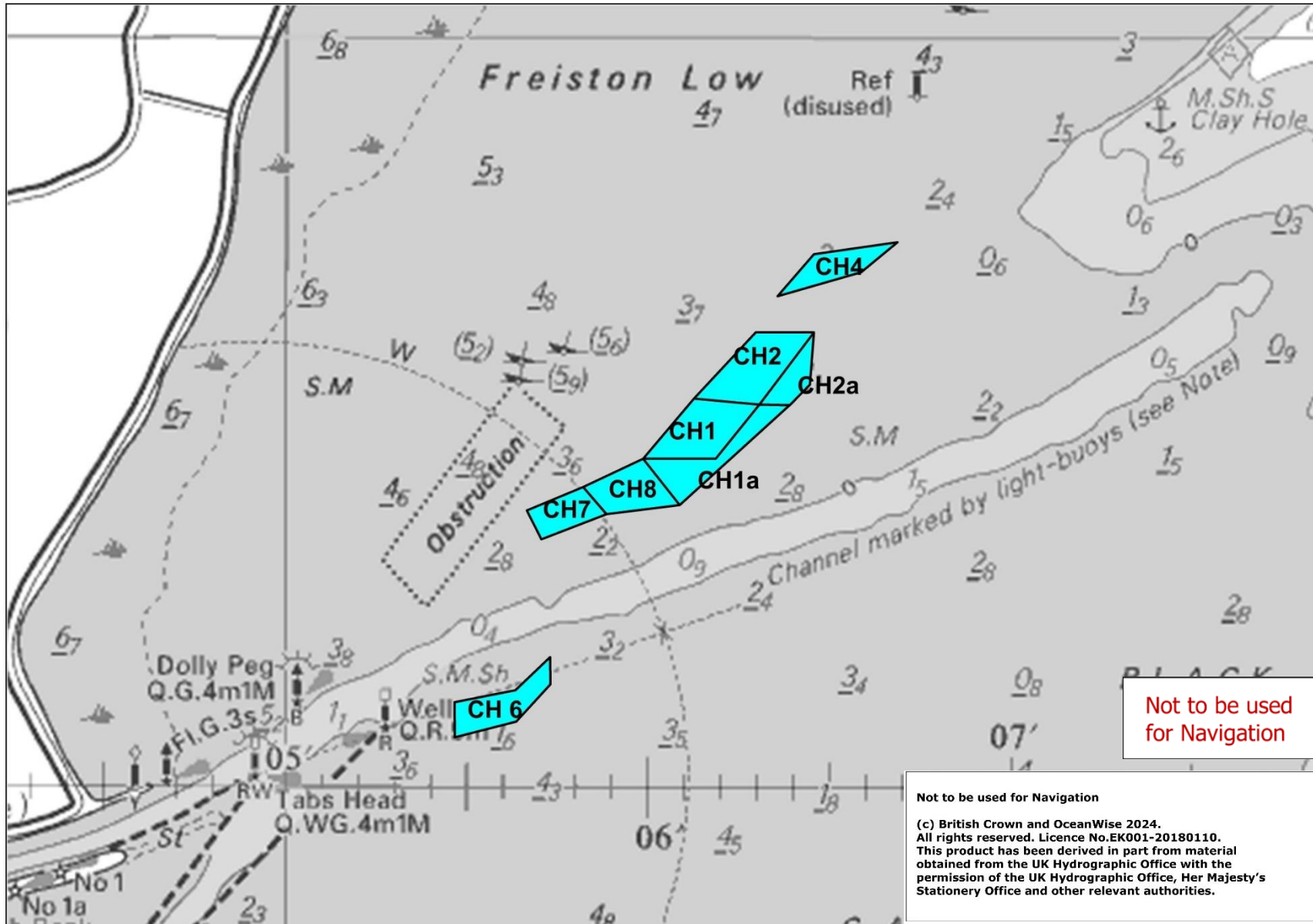
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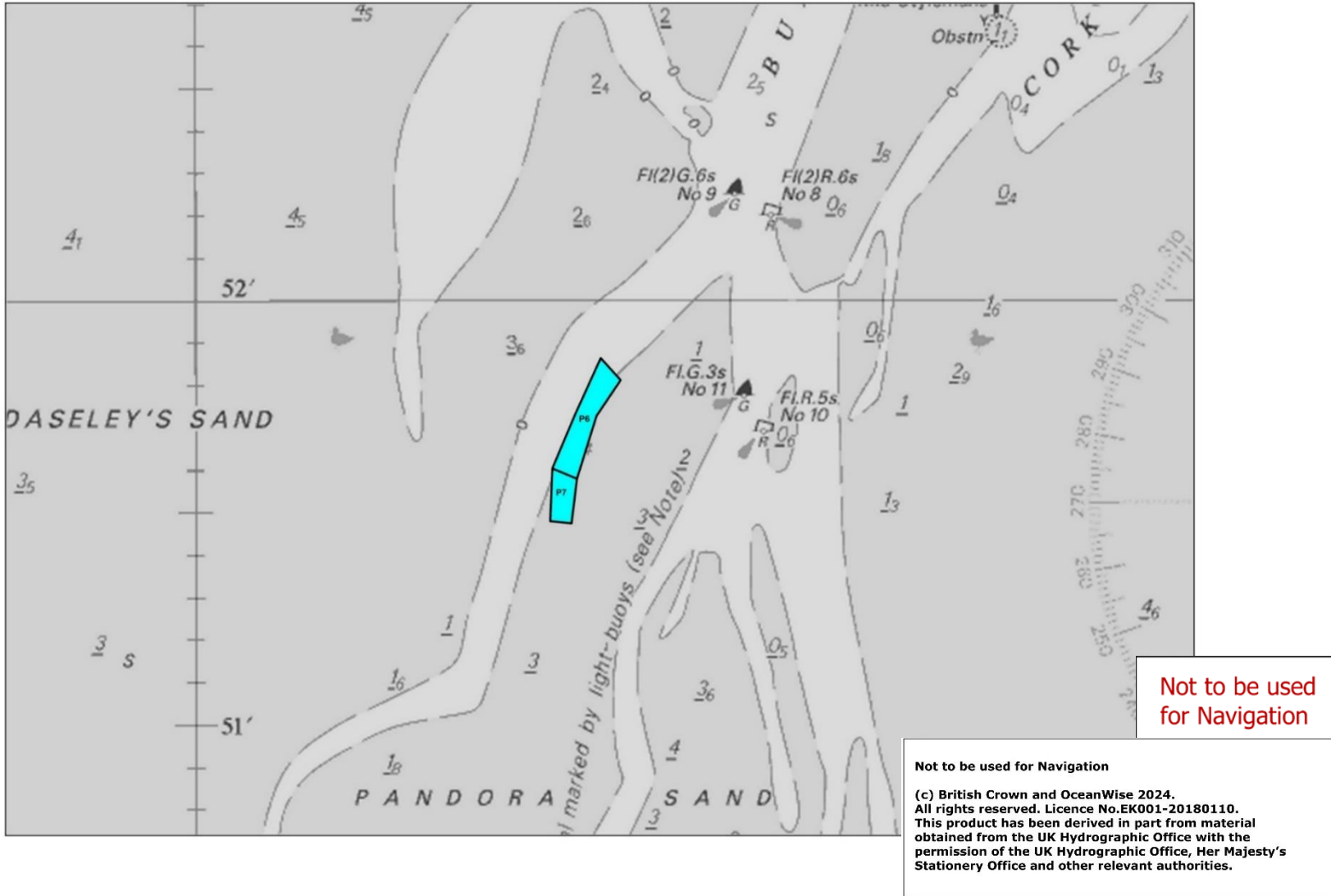
private

Schedule 1 Closed Areas



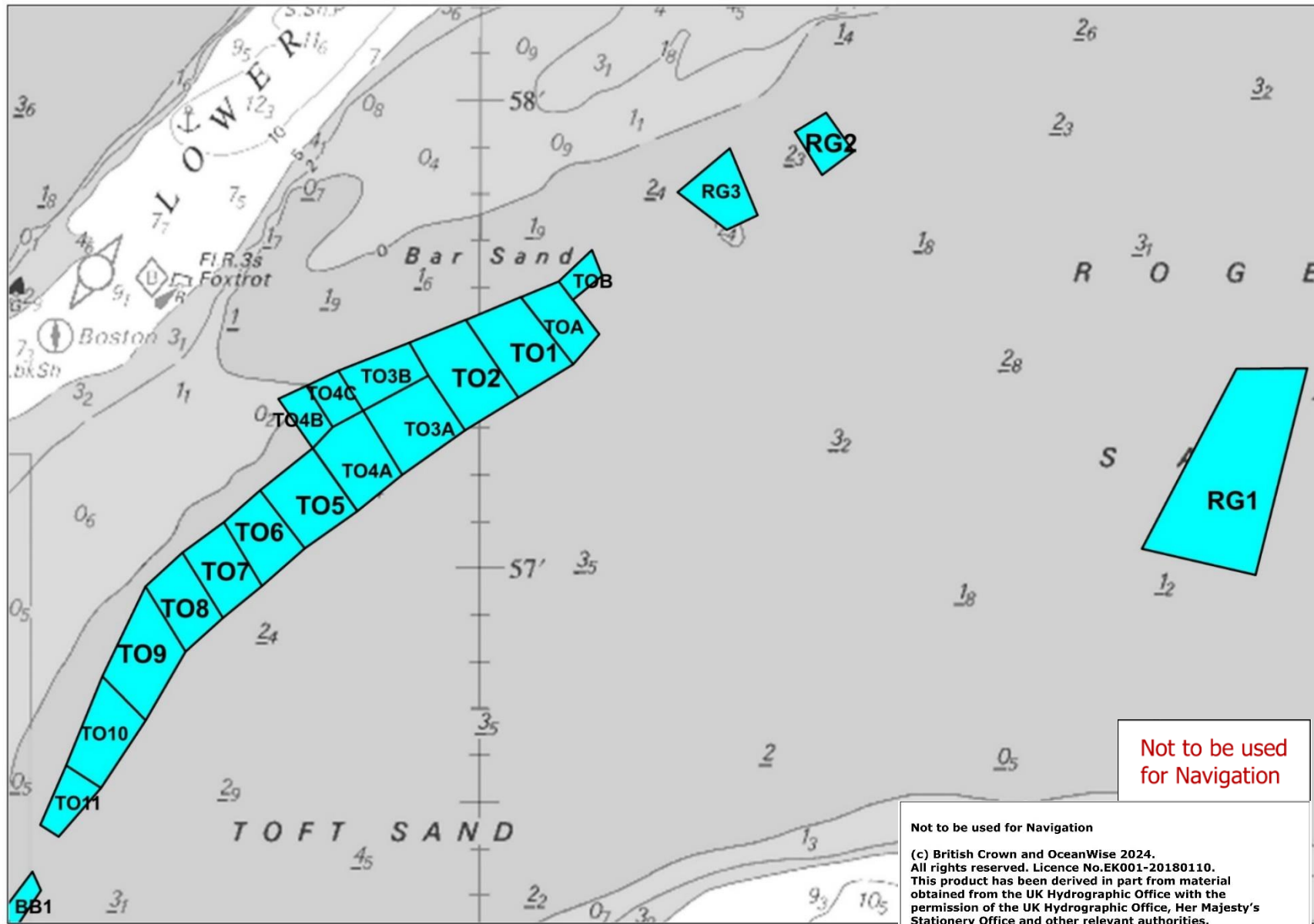
Wash Lays Chart 2 – showing the area of Clay Hole and private lays

Schedule 1 Closed Areas



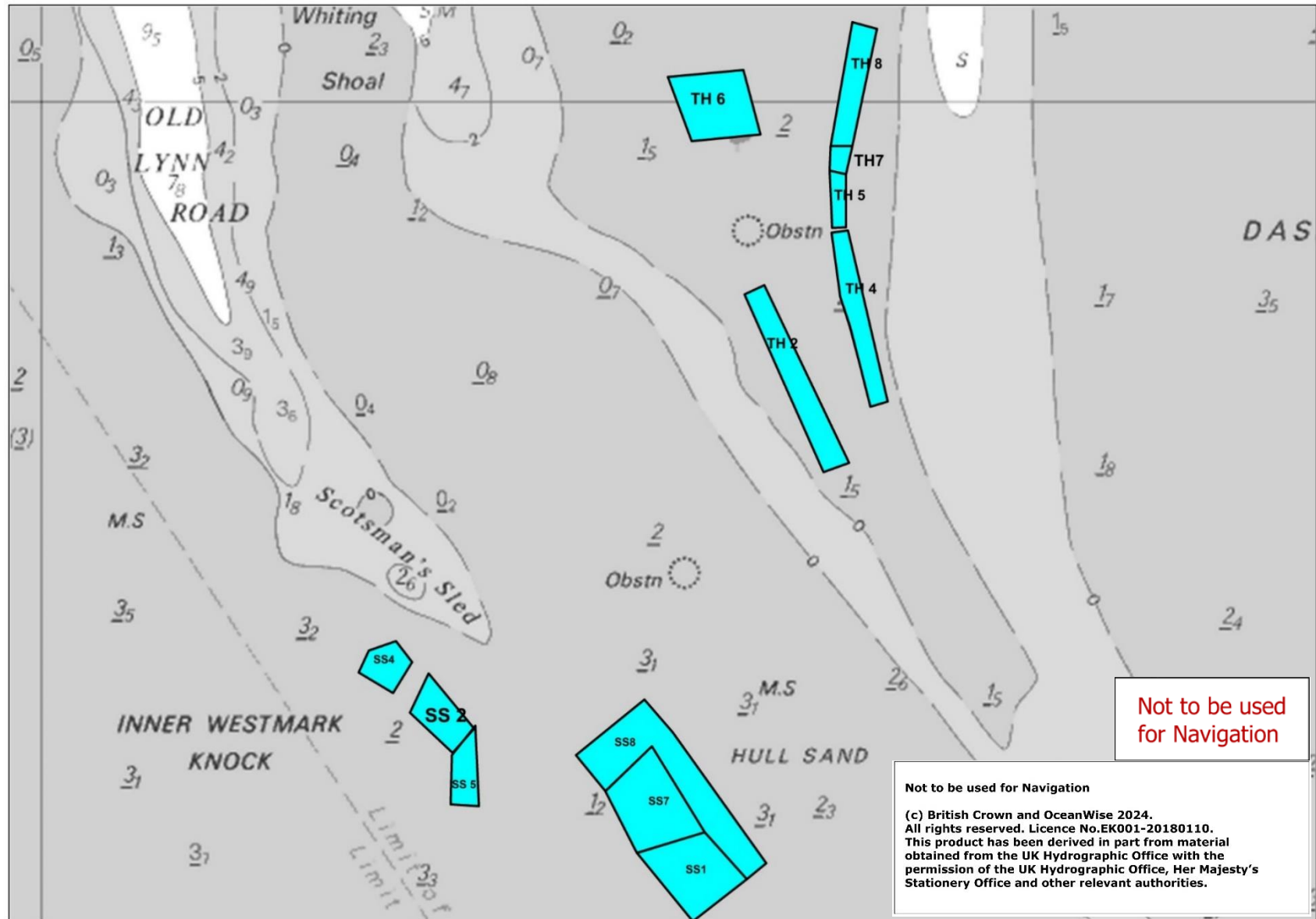
Wash Lays Chart 3 – showing the area of Pandora sands and private lays

Schedule 1 – Closed Areas



Wash Lays Chart 4 – showing the area of Toft and Roger sands and private lays

Schedule 1 – Closed Areas



Wash Lays Chart 5 – showing the area of Scotsman Sled and Thief sands and private lays

Schedule 2 – Operating Times

In accordance with permit condition 6, it is prohibited to fish outside of the periods specified as open in this schedule.

	White rows are open periods
	Blue rows are closed periods

June

Date	Day	High Water	Height	High Water	Height	Open/close
1	Mon	07:46	6.91	20:12	6.63	
2	Tue	08:19	6.93	20:48	6.52	
3	Wed	08:52	6.88	21:24	6.38	
4	Thu	09:25	6.77	22:00	6.2	
5	Fri	10:01	6.62	22:39	6.01	
6	Sat	10:40	6.43	23:23	5.81	
7	Sun	11:24	6.24	****	****	
8	Mon	00:14	5.64	12:15	6.1	
9	Tue	01:15	5.58	13:15	6.06	
10	Wed	02:23	5.67	14:23	6.16	
11	Thu	03:27	5.91	15:28	6.41	
12	Fri	04:25	6.24	16:30	6.71	
13	Sat	05:21	6.58	17:30	7	
14	Sun	06:13	6.9	18:30	7.25	
15	Mon	07:03	7.17	19:28	7.43	Open 0500hrs
16	Tue	07:51	7.38	20:24	7.49	
17	Wed	08:37	7.48	21:17	7.4	
18	Thu	09:23	7.47	22:09	7.17	
19	Fri	10:09	7.34	23:03	6.84	
20	Sat	10:56	7.12	23:57	6.47	Close 0100hrs
21	Sun	11:45	6.82	****	****	
22	Mon	00:54	6.12	12:40	6.48	
23	Tue	01:53	5.86	13:44	6.17	
24	Wed	02:51	5.73	14:53	5.96	
25	Thu	03:49	5.74	16:00	5.9	
26	Fri	04:43	5.9	17:02	5.97	
27	Sat	05:31	6.13	17:54	6.12	
28	Sun	06:14	6.4	18:41	6.28	Open 0400hrs
29	Mon	06:52	6.64	19:22	6.41	
30	Tue	07:29	6.82	20:00	6.5	

July

Date	Day	High Water	Height	High Water	Height	Open/close
1	Wed	08:03	6.94	20:36	6.54	
2	Thu	08:37	7.02	21:10	6.55	
3	Fri	09:12	7.06	21:45	6.52	Close 2345hrs
4	Sat	09:47	7.03	22:21	6.43	
5	Sun	10:22	6.94	23:00	6.28	Open 0830hrs
6	Mon	11:00	6.8	23:41	6.1	
7	Tue	11:42	6.64	****	****	Close 0130hrs
8	Wed	00:28	5.92	12:32	6.47	
9	Thu	01:27	5.8	13:35	6.31	
10	Fri	02:37	5.8	14:49	6.27	
11	Sat	03:49	5.98	16:06	6.39	
12	Sun	04:58	6.31	17:21	6.66	
13	Mon	06:00	6.72	18:30	7.01	Open 0400hrs
14	Tue	06:54	7.13	19:29	7.31	
15	Wed	07:41	7.47	20:21	7.47	
16	Thu	08:26	7.7	21:09	7.48	
17	Fri	09:09	7.8	21:55	7.31	Close 2359hrs
18	Sat	09:51	7.73	22:38	7.02	
19	Sun	10:32	7.5	23:18	6.64	Open 0830hrs
20	Mon	11:12	7.13	23:59	6.24	
21	Tue	11:57	6.65	****	****	Close 0200hrs
22	Wed	00:44	5.87	12:48	6.12	
23	Thu	01:39	5.56	13:56	5.65	
24	Fri	02:47	5.42	15:19	5.41	
25	Sat	03:59	5.52	16:39	5.51	
26	Sun	05:03	5.82	17:41	5.81	
27	Mon	05:53	6.21	18:29	6.13	Open 0400hrs
28	Tue	06:34	6.57	19:09	6.4	
29	Wed	07:11	6.87	19:45	6.6	
30	Thu	07:45	7.11	20:18	6.75	
31	Fri	08:18	7.3	20:51	6.87	Close 2300hrs

August

Date	Day	High Water	Height	High Water	Height	Open/close
1	Sat	08:51	7.43	21:24	6.91	
2	Sun	09:25	7.47	21:57	6.85	Open 0730hrs
3	Mon	09:58	7.4	22:32	6.7	
4	Tue	10:33	7.24	23:07	6.46	
5	Wed	11:12	6.99	23:49	6.18	
6	Thu	11:59	6.64	****	****	Close 0200hrs
7	Fri	00:42	5.88	13:03	6.23	
8	Sat	01:57	5.66	14:29	5.96	
9	Sun	03:26	5.74	16:06	6.06	
10	Mon	04:49	6.15	17:30	6.51	Open 0230hrs
11	Tue	05:53	6.72	18:33	7	
12	Wed	06:44	7.26	19:25	7.36	
13	Thu	07:28	7.68	20:10	7.54	
14	Fri	08:09	7.96	20:51	7.55	Close 2300hrs
15	Sat	08:48	8.05	21:28	7.41	
16	Sun	09:25	7.95	22:03	7.15	Open 0730hrs
17	Mon	10:02	7.66	22:35	6.81	
18	Tue	10:39	7.21	23:07	6.43	
19	Wed	11:16	6.64	23:43	6.03	
20	Thu	****	****	12:00	5.99	Close 0200hrs
21	Fri	00:29	5.6	13:02	5.36	
22	Sat	01:37	5.26	14:40	5.02	
23	Sun	03:10	5.23	16:18	5.2	
24	Mon	04:32	5.58	17:24	5.67	
25	Tue	05:27	6.1	18:10	6.14	Open 0300hrs
26	Wed	06:10	6.59	18:48	6.52	
27	Thu	06:47	7	19:21	6.81	
28	Fri	07:20	7.32	19:53	7.03	Close 2200hrs
29	Sat	07:53	7.58	20:24	7.18	
30	Sun	08:26	7.75	20:57	7.25	Open 0630hrs
31	Mon	08:59	7.8	21:29	7.2	

September

Date	Day	High Water	Height	High Water	Height	Open/close
1	Tue	09:33	7.71	22:02	7.01	
2	Wed	10:08	7.46	22:37	6.72	
3	Thu	10:48	7.07	23:18	6.34	
4	Fri	11:39	6.52	****	****	Close 0100hrs
5	Sat	00:12	5.91	12:51	5.95	
6	Sun	01:33	5.58	14:36	5.69	
7	Mon	03:18	5.68	16:20	6.03	
8	Tue	04:42	6.23	17:33	6.63	Open 0300hrs
9	Wed	05:42	6.89	18:27	7.13	
10	Thu	06:28	7.43	19:11	7.42	
11	Fri	07:08	7.82	19:48	7.54	Close 2200hrs
12	Sat	07:45	8.04	20:22	7.54	
13	Sun	08:21	8.08	20:54	7.44	Open 0630hrs
14	Mon	08:57	7.92	21:25	7.25	
15	Tue	09:33	7.58	21:54	6.98	
16	Wed	10:06	7.08	22:24	6.64	
17	Thu	10:41	6.49	22:57	6.23	
18	Fri	11:21	5.83	23:37	5.76	Close 0100hrs
19	Sat	****	****	12:18	5.2	
20	Sun	00:38	5.3	14:00	4.84	
21	Mon	02:15	5.11	15:45	5.06	
22	Tue	03:48	5.43	16:52	5.6	
23	Wed	04:51	6	17:39	6.15	Open 0300hrs
24	Thu	05:36	6.57	18:16	6.61	
25	Fri	06:14	7.05	18:50	6.96	Close 2100hrs
26	Sat	06:48	7.44	19:22	7.22	
27	Sun	07:22	7.72	19:54	7.4	Open 0530hrs
28	Mon	07:56	7.91	20:27	7.48	
29	Tue	08:32	7.95	21:00	7.43	
30	Wed	09:09	7.81	21:36	7.23	

October

Date	Day	High Water	Height	High Water	Height	Open/close
1	Thu	09:50	7.46	22:14	6.89	
2	Fri	10:37	6.94	22:59	6.46	
3	Sat	11:36	6.32	23:58	5.99	Close 0100hrs
4	Sun	****	****	13:00	5.79	
5	Mon	01:22	5.68	14:51	5.76	
6	Tue	03:06	5.86	16:16	6.21	
7	Wed	04:25	6.41	17:19	6.73	Open 0230hrs
8	Thu	05:21	6.99	18:07	7.11	
9	Fri	06:05	7.43	18:46	7.31	Close 2100hrs
10	Sat	06:43	7.7	19:19	7.4	
11	Sun	07:19	7.83	19:50	7.44	Open 0500hrs
12	Mon	07:55	7.81	20:21	7.42	
13	Tue	08:31	7.63	20:51	7.3	
14	Wed	09:06	7.29	21:20	7.09	
15	Thu	09:40	6.83	21:49	6.79	
16	Fri	10:15	6.31	22:21	6.41	
17	Sat	10:54	5.77	23:00	5.97	Close 0030hrs
18	Sun	11:47	5.26	23:55	5.53	
19	Mon	****	****	13:12	4.93	
20	Tue	01:16	5.26	14:49	5.05	
21	Wed	02:48	5.41	16:00	5.5	
22	Thu	03:57	5.89	16:52	6.04	
23	Fri	04:49	6.45	17:35	6.53	
24	Sat	05:32	6.95	18:12	6.94	
25	Sun	05:11	7.37	17:48	7.24	Open 0300hrs
26	Mon	05:49	7.68	18:23	7.45	
27	Tue	06:28	7.87	18:59	7.56	
28	Wed	07:10	7.9	19:36	7.53	
29	Thu	07:54	7.73	20:16	7.36	
30	Fri	08:43	7.36	21:00	7.05	Close 2300hrs
31	Sat	09:37	6.85	21:50	6.65	

November

Date	Day	High Water	Height	High Water	Height	Open/close
1	Sun	10:42	6.31	22:50	6.27	
2	Mon	****	****	12:09	5.95	
3	Tue	00:06	6.03	13:39	5.97	
4	Wed	01:39	6.12	14:51	6.25	Open 0001hrs
5	Thu	02:53	6.48	15:50	6.57	
6	Fri	03:50	6.85	16:37	6.82	Close 1830hrs
7	Sat	04:36	7.12	17:15	6.99	
8	Sun	05:17	7.29	17:48	7.12	Open 0300hrs
9	Mon	05:55	7.36	18:20	7.23	
10	Tue	06:33	7.33	18:51	7.28	
11	Wed	07:11	7.19	19:23	7.24	
12	Thu	07:48	6.94	19:54	7.1	
13	Fri	08:22	6.61	20:25	6.88	Close 2230hrs
14	Sat	08:57	6.26	20:58	6.6	
15	Sun	09:36	5.89	21:37	6.27	
16	Mon	10:23	5.54	22:25	5.93	
17	Tue	11:23	5.27	23:26	5.68	
18	Wed	****	****	12:40	5.21	
19	Thu	00:39	5.64	13:54	5.44	
20	Fri	01:52	5.87	14:54	5.84	
21	Sat	02:52	6.28	15:45	6.29	
22	Sun	03:44	6.73	16:32	6.71	Open 0200hrs
23	Mon	04:33	7.13	17:15	7.07	
24	Tue	05:21	7.45	17:56	7.33	
25	Wed	06:09	7.66	18:38	7.51	
26	Thu	06:59	7.72	19:21	7.56	
27	Fri	07:51	7.61	20:06	7.49	Close 2200hrs
28	Sat	08:43	7.34	20:52	7.31	
29	Sun	09:39	6.95	21:42	7.04	Open 0730hrs
30	Mon	10:39	6.52	22:36	6.74	

December

Date	Day	High Water	Height	High Water	Height	Open/close
1	Tue	11:52	6.19	23:39	6.47	
2	Wed	****	****	13:05	6.03	
3	Thu	00:54	6.32	14:10	6.03	
4	Fri	02:09	6.32	15:09	6.15	Close 1700hrs
5	Sat	03:12	6.42	16:00	6.33	
6	Sun	04:07	6.55	16:42	6.53	Open 0200hrs
7	Mon	04:54	6.67	17:21	6.74	
8	Tue	5:39	6.76	17:56	6.93	
9	Wed	06:19	6.81	18:30	7.06	
10	Thu	06:58	6.78	19:04	7.11	
11	Fri	07:35	6.69	19:37	7.09	Close 2130hrs
12	Sat	08:09	6.55	20:10	7.01	
13	Sun	08:44	6.38	20:44	6.87	
14	Mon	09:20	6.18	21:20	6.68	
15	Tue	09:59	5.95	22:00	6.45	
16	Wed	10:43	5.72	22:45	6.23	
17	Thu	11:36	5.55	23:38	6.06	
18	Fri	****	****	12:40	5.5	Close 0200hrs
19	Sat	00:43	6.01	13.5	5.65	
20	Sun	01:54	6.14	14:54	5.95	
21	Mon	03:00	6.42	15:53	6.34	
22	Tue	04:03	6.76	16:48	6.74	
23	Wed	05:04	7.1	17:39	7.11	
24	Thu	06:03	7.38	18:26	7.42	
25	Fri	06:57	7.56	19:12	7.64	Close 2100hrs
26	Sat	07:49	7.59	19:57	7.74	
27	Sun	08:39	7.45	20:42	7.7	Open 0630hrs
28	Mon	9.29	7.16	21:27	7.52	
29	Tue	10:19	6.77	22:13	7.22	
30	Wed	11:12	6.35	23:03	6.83	
31	Thu	****	****	12.09	5.98	Close 0100hrs

Schedule 2 of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021

The following restrictions apply to fishing in The Wash and should be read in conjunction with relevant permit conditions.



Restrictions in The Wash

The following restrictions apply in relation to fishing for, taking or removing from the fishery, cockles or mussels from within The Wash in accordance with paragraph 4(c) of this byelaw.

Vessel length restrictions

1. Subject to paragraph 2 of this schedule, a person must not use a vessel which is more than 14 metres in overall length to fish for, take or remove, from a fishery cockles or mussels.
2. Paragraph 1 of this schedule does not apply where an exemption existed immediately preceding this byelaw under Regulation 5 (vessel length restrictions) of the Wash Fishery Order and only to the effect and extent that that exemption applied.
3. Any change in beneficial or legal ownership of a vessel exempt under paragraph 2 of this schedule shall cause the exemption to end unless ownership is transferred within the same business and with the agreement of the Authority.

Daily catch restrictions (cockles)

4. A person must not, unless otherwise specified in a flexible permit condition, in any one calendar day, fish for, take (save for doing so with the intention of riddling or otherwise sorting catch in accordance with paragraph 12 of this schedule) or remove from the fishery more than 2000 kilograms or the maximum weight or volume of cockles specified in a permit condition, by hand.
5. For the purpose of determining the weight of catch, no allowance will be given for the weight of any containers or sand or other material.

Daily catch restrictions (mussels)

6. A person must not, unless otherwise specified in a flexible permit condition, in any one calendar day, fish for, take (save for doing so with the intention of riddling or otherwise sorting catch in accordance with paragraph 12 of this schedule) or remove from the fishery:
 - a) more than 4000 kilograms of mussels from a harvestable mussel fishery; or
 - b) more than 8000 kilograms of mussels from a re-laying mussel fishery.
7. For the purpose of determining the weight of catch no allowance will be given for the weight of any containers or sand or other material.

8. A person must not fish for, take or remove any mussels from a harvestable mussel fishery if, during the same calendar day, that person has fished for, taken or removed any mussels from a re-laying mussel fishery.
9. A person must not fish for, take or remove any mussels from a re-laying mussel fishery if, during the same calendar day, that person has fished for, taken or removed any mussels from a harvestable mussel fishery.

Mussel dredge restrictions

10. A person must not use a mussel dredge with an inside opening of more than one metre to fish for, take or remove from a fishery, mussels unless otherwise specified in a permit condition.
11. A person must not use more than two mussel dredges at any one time to fish for, take or remove mussels from a fishery unless otherwise specified in a permit condition.

Sorting of catch

12. A person must immediately return to the sea or seabed any material rejected through the sorting of catch of any bivalve mollusc, as near as possible to the place from which it was taken and must spread it thinly and evenly over that area.

Transshipping prohibition

13. A person must not tranship or otherwise relocate any cockles or mussels, or containers of any description containing any cockles or mussels, caught from the fishery from one vessel to another.

Requirement to land (cockles)

14. Subject to paragraph 15 of this schedule, a person fishing for cockles must:
 - a) take any cockles caught straight to port;
 - b) land such cockles immediately; and
 - c) not leave cockles on the sand or deposited in the water in bags or any other container for later collection.
15. Paragraph 14 of this schedule does not apply where a person has written authorisation from the Authority to re-lay cockles onto private shellfish aquaculture areas prior to them being landed.
16. A person must not land cockles on more than one occasion during one calendar day.

Dual fishing prohibition

17. A person must not fish for, take, or remove, from a fishery any cockles or mussels under the authority of a permit if, on the same calendar day that person fishes for, takes or removes cockles or mussels from:
- a) within The Wash under the authority of a separate permit issued under this byelaw; or
 - b) within the Wash or the le Strange Estate other than under the authority of a permit.
18. A person must not have on board any bottom towed gear which could be used to fish for, take or remove from the fishery within The Wash any cockles or mussels when fishing for, taking or removing from a fishery any cockles or mussels from a hand-work fishery within The Wash.

Standard bags

19. A person must not land mussels or cockles unless the species caught is contained in a bag which must:
- a) be of the following dimensions:
 - i. 60 centimetres or 120 centimetres in height;
 - ii. 97 centimetres in depth;
 - iii. 97 centimetres in width; and
 - b) have the words 'Wash Fishery' written on at least two sides with lettering which is at least ten centimetres tall.

Prop-washing

20. A person fishing for cockles must not use an anchor which affixes the vessel to the bottom of the seabed during the practice of prop-washing;
21. A person must spread any cockles dislodged by prop-washing thinly and evenly over the ground, as near as possible to the area from which they were dislodged before leaving the area fished.

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 12

64th Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

24 June 2026

Wash Aquaculture Management

Report by: Luke Godwin (ACO)

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present to members potential solutions for managing aquaculture in The Wash in the context of the advice from Defra that the associated Several Order application will be significantly delayed, and to seek agreement on a direction of travel.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the contents of the report, including the consideration given to potential industry concerns regarding the use of a byelaw rather than a Several Order to manage Wash-based aquaculture;
- **Agree:**
 - in principle to pursue the development of a byelaw to manage aquaculture in The Wash
 - to develop a draft Aquaculture policy statement and
 - to develop a draft Aquaculture management policy
- **Direct** officers to:
 - undertake an informal consultation to inform the development of a byelaw approach to managing aquaculture in The Wash
 - present a draft byelaw and draft policies to members at the next appropriate Authority meeting

Background

The Authority previously managed aquaculture in The Wash via the Wash Fishery Order 1992 (WFO); a hybrid Order issued under the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967. Under the WFO, the Authority had discretion to issue private rights to shellfish within 'lays' such that 'lay holders' could carry out aquaculture operations.

The Authority submitted a formal application to become grantees of a new Several Order (which provides the right of a private (Several) fishery) in April 2022 following extensive informal consultation and the development of an associated Fisheries Management Plan.

The WFO expired in January 2023 at which point the Authority implemented interim measures to manage aquaculture in anticipation of the new Order being confirmed. However, after significant delays, in November 2025 Defra advised that consideration for the application would be delayed until the financial year 2027/28 and ‘strongly encouraged’ the Authority to consider a byelaw alternative to managing aquaculture.

At the 62nd Eastern IFCA meeting, members received Defra’s advice and considered the legal risks of maintaining the interim measures for a prolonged period. In particular, there was a risk of challenge where ‘lays’ were not being used for aquaculture, but instead to secure exclusive access to wild cockle stocks that had coincidentally settled within them. The lack of a legal mechanism to effectively manage aquaculture (e.g. issuing of aquaculture areas or recover costs via fees) was also considered to be a risk.

Consequently, members directed officers to explore alternative options for aquaculture management in The Wash including through dialogue with fishery stakeholders. The CEO advised that officers would take legal advice and bring the matter back to a future Authority meeting.

Report

Wash aquaculture management has been the main agenda item at the last two Management Working Groups which included dialogue with Wash fishery Authority Members (including via a supplementary meeting) and a discussion with wider industry at the Wash Industry Meeting (19 May 2026). The discussions have focussed on establishing general principles for aquaculture management, the likely concerns from fishing industry and potential solutions for addressing such, and the legality of using a byelaw to manage aquaculture.

Consideration, including seeking legal advice, has also been given to potential byelaw-based alternatives in addition to a ‘do nothing’ option. Further legal advice is pending.

This report sets out the following:

- Legality of using a byelaw to manage aquaculture in The Wash;
- Potential byelaw mechanisms;
- Byelaw limitations compared to a Several Order;
- The key concerns from industry and potential resolutions;
- Consideration of all alternative options;
- Proposed direction of travel.

Legality of using a byelaw to manage aquaculture

The Authority’s relevant byelaw making powers are set out in sections 155 and 156 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA). In summary, the Authority has powers to make byelaws, the provisions of which include the ability to prohibit fishing without a permit, for the purpose of performing its duties.

The Authority’s main duties are set out in section 153 MaCAA which includes that the Authority must ‘manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources’ (my emphasis).

The definition for ‘exploitation’ relevant to the Authority’s duties includes ‘cultivating such resources’ (s.153(12)(c)). In addition, the relevant definition for ‘sea fisheries resources includes ‘any animals... that habitually live in the sea, including those that are cultivated’.

In addition, s.153 MaCAA also includes a duty to ‘take any other steps which, in the authority’s opinion are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development’. Defra guidance to IFCA’s on contributing to sustainable development³ makes specific reference to IFCA’s operating in accordance with The Marine Policy Statement and Marine Plans in fulfilling this duty. The Marine Policy Statement also makes specific reference to aquaculture (section 3.9) as economically important and potentially contributing to the resilience of the marine environment to adapt to climate change.

In the case of The Wash specifically, the Authority has a strong case to continue to manage aquaculture because the area is a highly sensitive Marine Protected Area (MPA), supporting several different and overlapping conservation designations, in addition to the most economically important fisheries in the district (cockle and shrimp fisheries). The risk posed by aquaculture, particularly with regard to biosecurity concerns which could affect the MPA and wild fisheries, add further weight to the argument that management of aquaculture sits well within the Authority’s duties (e.g. seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation; s.153(2)(b)).

As such, there appears to be a strong case that byelaw making powers conferred by MaCAA include the potential to manage aquaculture and it is therefore considered that a byelaw may lawfully be used to manage aquaculture.

Potential byelaw mechanisms

Whilst there appears to be a legal basis for managing aquaculture, the Authority is also restricted in provisions which can be included within a byelaw by s.156 MaCAA. In summary, there are two main options for constructing a byelaw to enable management of aquaculture in The Wash:

- **Prohibit and exempt** – in line with the ‘interim measures’ a byelaw could be used to effectively close areas to fishing activity (to protect aquaculture stock) with aquaculture operators then being provided an exemption to use the area for cultivation. The key limitation to this approach is that the Authority would not have a means of recouping costs associated with managing aquaculture (as it has under an Order) because under MaCAA, the ability to charge fees relates only to the issuing of permits.
- **Permitted aquaculture activity** – permitting provisions within MaCAA have become the mainstay of inshore fisheries management because they provide a flexible mechanism (through issuing, varying or revoking permit conditions). In

³ [Guidance for IFCA’s on their contribution to achieving sustainable development](#)

addition, permit fees can be charged which would enable the Authority to cost recover. Further, aquaculture management will include an element of administration (for example, consideration of who to issue an aquaculture area to) – MaCAA includes explicit reference to byelaw including provisions for limiting the number of permits issued and associated policy (e.g. the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw Eligibility Policy) to achieve such is well established.

On balance, permitting provisions appear to be the most appropriate mechanism for enabling aquaculture management, particularly in The Wash where a permit scheme for access and prosecution of the wild harvest fisheries is already in place and which can be amended to include aquaculture management.

Byelaw limitations compared to a Several Order

There are several key areas where managing aquaculture under a byelaw would differ compared to that under a Several Order which are set out and considered below:

- **Property rights** – A several Order provides the grantee, or by way of leasing, the lease holder, with property rights over any shellfish deposited within a Several fishery. This is important in the context that aquaculture in The Wash typically involves depositing shellfish on the seabed instead of using structures. Structures (such as ropes or tables) would typically reduce shellfish into possession making unauthorised removal subject to the Theft Act 1968. Without a Several Order, any deposited stock is not ‘reduced into possession’.

Under a byelaw, protection from Theft would be provided by way of a closure to the area, making removal of aquaculture stock unlawful and subject to enforcement action by the IFCA.

However, the lack of property rights under a byelaw was raised as a concern from the perspective that it may hinder the aquaculture operator from obtaining investments on the basis that the aquaculture stock would not be considered as collateral against a loan because it is not reduced into possession.

This is considered a potential risk to larger business models which rely on purchasing seed from other areas, but less likely to be an issue with regards to smaller business models which typically rely on taking shellfish (primarily mussel) seed from wild fisheries and as such do not require capital to purchase seed. The Authority’s protection of aquaculture stock would prevent its removal such that a bank or other investor could potentially still consider it as collateral against a loan in any case which would potentially mitigate the perceived risk.

- **Protections against fishing disturbance of stock** – The Sea Fishing (Shellfish) Act 1967 (hereafter ‘*the Shellfish Act*’) includes a provision which makes it an offence to use any fishing gear that would ‘interfere’ with shellfish stock within a Several Fishery.

The main fisheries which are likely to interact with aquaculture stock are cockle, mussel and shrimp fisheries. Eastern IFCA manages all such fisheries using its byelaws and can prohibit activity over lays using these. Whilst other fishing

activity is technically possible within the Wash (e.g. beam trawling for fish) it is considered unlikely and of low risk. It is noteworthy that other forms of 'bottom towed gear' fishing that could pose a risk to aquaculture are the subject of a Habitat Regulation Assessment which has initially identified that there is no such fishing activity (except shrimp fishing) and in the event that there was, management measures may be required in any case to protect the Wash MPAs.

- **Protection against other forms of disturbance** – The Shellfish Act also makes it an offence to disturb aquaculture stock in other ways, including dredging for ballast, depositing ballast, rubbish or any other substance, placing anything on the seabed which would interfere with fishing or disturbs or injures the shellfish in any other way.

The Authority's byelaw making powers are limited exclusively to managing fishing activity. As such there is no way to replicate this provision. However, those undertaking aquaculture operations may be able to make a civil case against such impacts (*post*) which may deter such from occurring. In addition, the associated risk could be further mitigated by the Authority publishing the location of aquaculture areas on its website and with other relevant bodies (e.g. the Marine and Coastguard Agency).

- **Protection against 'other developments'** – The Shellfish Act also includes provisions regarding 'other developments' which would include, for example, windfarms and cable routes. The provisions enable the Minister to revise a Several Order to change the area of the private fishery to enable the 'other development' and provisions relating to compensation to be paid from 'landowners' as a consequence of lost aquaculture opportunity.

Without a Several Order, there is no such statutory provision for compensation in the event of 'other developments'. However, where developments will impact upon fishing opportunities there is a well established Marine Licensing or development consenting process which includes consideration of impacts and often payment of compensation (although the Authority does not typically involve itself in such). Any such developments must also consider any relevant Marine Plan policies which, in the case of the East Inshore Marine Plan, include consideration of impacts on fishing operations, with aquaculture specifically referred to in the Marine Policy Statement.

In addition, the right of public fishery is well established in case law including in *Isle of Anglesey County Council and Another V Welsh Ministers and Others [2008] AER60* which established that public fisheries in tidal waters cannot be excluded or substantially interfered with by any person, including the Crown, safeguarding navigational exceptions.

Further, the risk is considered to be reduced if the Authority renewed the Crown lease which would specifically grant the right to use the seabed for the purpose of aquaculture.

Overall, whilst a byelaw cannot provide the same level of protection from impacts from 'other developments', more modern marine planning requirements mean

that impacts on fishing activity must be considered and often results in compensation, and relatively recent (compared to the Shellfish Act) case law establishes the public right of fishery in tidal waters. Therefore, the associated risk is considered relatively low.

- **Compensation provisions** – In addition to compensatory provisions established in relation to ‘other developments’ the Shellfish Act also includes provision that, where a person has removed, injured or disturbed cultivated shellfish, that person is liable to pay compensation to the grantee or by virtue of a lease, the lease holder.

A byelaw cannot replicate this provision. However, it is potentially open to people undertaking aquaculture to take a civil case against a person who has removed etc. shellfish from an area within which they are cultivating shellfish. Such a claim would potentially be on the grounds of trespass (if a Crown estate lease was in effect) and ‘business interference’. Such would be facilitated by publication of lay areas on the Authority’s website in addition to closures being issued to protect stock under a byelaw. It is important to note that this consideration is subject to further legal advice.

- **Expiry of a Several Order** – Several Orders can be issued for a maximum of 60 years, and the Authority was advised during its most recent application that the maximum which would be considered would be for 20 years. Application for a replacement Order has proved difficult, with significant unexpected delays having impacted the application process. In addition, Defra will now issue a fee for Several Order applications which is currently circa £35,000.

By contrast, a byelaw will not expire and there is no application fee. Such could potentially provide a longer-term assurance of continued access and management of aquaculture compared to a Several Order.

It is relevant to note that aquaculture operations are active within the Authority’s district but outside of The Wash and that of these, two include analogous aquaculture activity (whereby seed is deposited onto the seabed) and for which there is no Several Order in place and as such are operating without the protections provided by a Several Order or a Byelaw.

Key concerns from Industry

Much of the analysis above was undertaken following dialogue with Wash industry Authority members, and as such resolves some of the ‘key concerns’ (in particular, in relation to protection against developments and ‘property rights’). However, further dialogue, including at the Wash Industry meeting, highlighted some additional areas for consideration, which are set out below:

- **A byelaw does not provide the same guarantees for maintaining aquaculture areas** – If the Authority successfully applied to become the grantee of a Several Order, all leases issued to enable aquaculture would be so issued at the complete discretion of the Authority, as was the case under the WFO. Under the Order, leases contained a provision that lease could be cancelled with 3-months notice (by either party). As with a lease issued under an Order, the

Authority would have complete discretion as to the issuing or cancelling of permits and as such, the situation would in theory be no different. However, it would also be the case that the issuing and cancellation of leases would be subject to policy which would be agreed by the Authority and consulted on with stakeholders and contain appropriate assurances of continued access.

- **A byelaw will not ‘protect’ aquaculture industry from changes in advice from Natural England, who could effectively stop aquaculture to protect the Wash MPAs** - The Authority’s legal obligations with respect to conservation legislation are unaffected by it managing aquaculture via a Several Order or a Byelaw. The legal obligations are contained within separate legislation to the Shellfish Act (most notably the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1987 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) and the Shellfish Act has no provisions for protecting or compensation with regards to the impacts of changing Natural England advice. In either case, the Authority works constructively with Natural England to seek to protect site integrity of MPAs whilst enabling fishing activity as is the case in wild cockle, mussel and shrimp fisheries within The Wash and was the case in managing aquaculture under the WFO. The development of a Wash Aquaculture Policy statement, which could be developed in partnership or in agreement with Natural England and fishing industry, was also suggested as potentially allaying concerns in this regard.
- **A byelaw will enable the Authority to charge fees** – The Authority would have the ability to charge fees in the case of managing aquaculture under a Several Order or a Byelaw. Under the WFO, the vast majority of the nominal fee paid by ‘lay holders’ (circa £10 per ha of lay ground) was transferred directly to the Crown Estate in service of the Crown Estate lease held by the Authority. The need to cost recover in relation to managing aquaculture was a feature of the consultations held in relation to the development of the now stalled Several Order application in line with other fisheries. The management of Wash Aquaculture requires significant resource including in relation to the application for an aquaculture area (e.g. Habitat Regulation Assessments, site visits to carry out biotope surveys etc.) and monitoring (including compliance with lease / permit conditions and monthly monitoring of ‘food availability’). There is clearly a stronger case for cost recovery for management of aquaculture activity noting that it pertains to enabling an individual (or individual business) as opposed to the management of public fisheries which is to the benefit of all. Permit fees associated with pursuing a byelaw or Several Order would be subject to consultation and a decision by the Authority.

Consideration of all alternative options

The following consideration is given to the full range of ‘alternative’ options for managing aquaculture in The Wash;

- **Do nothing** – Whilst there is significant potential for aquaculture to support efficient, productive and sustainable inshore fisheries in The Wash, current market conditions and a lack of available seed (including in relation to construction of the Race Bank windfarm within an areas which had historically been reported to be an important source of seed mussel) has led to very low levels of aquaculture activity within The Wash. It is likely that low economic

outputs in relation to Wash aquaculture are a factor in the de-prioritisation of the Wash Several Order application and it could be argued that resource allocated to management of such is not effective use of public resource. Where there is an economic case for aquaculture to continue, it is an option for the fishing industry to apply for a Several Order in their own right without the Authority facilitating such as grantees and carrying the associated risks and costs (including in relation to carrying out Habitat Regulation Assessments, monitoring, compliance checks etc.).

However, the Marine Policy Statement sets out clearly that there is a case for supporting efficient, productive and sustainable aquaculture activity and the English Aquaculture Strategy 2040⁴ sets out potential economic benefits. In addition, EU-Exit related restrictions on export of live shellfish which have hindered the economic potential of Wash-based aquaculture may change which would potentially re-open market opportunities. Further, it is unlikely that industry, particularly small-scale industry, would be able to meet the requirements (including the cost) of a Several Order application.

- **Maintain the status quo pending the confirmation of The Wash Several Order** – As outlined in Action Item 12 of the 63rd Eastern IFCA meeting (held on 11 March 2026), continued use of the interim measures is legally untenable in the long-term. Whilst the associated legal risk has been mitigated to an extent by revisions to the interim measures (63rd Eastern IFCA Meeting), the interim measures cannot provide the framework for effective management of Wash Aquaculture. Furthermore, the current interim measures do not provide long-term assurances of continued access to aquaculture businesses, nor do they provide robust mechanisms to enable new entrants.

Whilst Defra have outlined a timeframe for considering the application as of the financial year of 2027/28, given the consistent delays since the formal application was submitted, there is a risk that the Several Order application would be delayed further, increasing risk of legal challenge and maintaining the situation where those wishing to invest in aquaculture do not have assurances that could be provided by a bespoke management mechanism.

- **Implement a Byelaw to manage Wash Aquaculture** – Byelaws typically take in the region of two-years to be confirmed, and as such do not represent a ‘quick’ option and could potentially not be confirmed until after a Several Order (noting Defra’s advice that such could be considered in financial year 2027/28). In addition, use of an IFCA byelaw to manage aquaculture to this extent would be entirely novel and likely to be subject to additional scrutiny from Defra.

However, it currently appears more likely (noting that Defra have ‘strongly encouraged’ consideration of a byelaw) that a byelaw is preferable to Defra in this instance. In addition, more of the process for drafting a byelaw lies with the Authority than in the case of an Order and as such, progress towards confirmation can be prioritised as considered necessary.

⁴ [English Aquaculture Strategy from Seafood 2040 | Seafish](#)

It also appears that in the long-term, use of a byelaw will reduce costs to the Authority and ultimately industry, noting that any future application for a replacement Order will generate a fee from Defra in addition to the work associated with a new application.

Proposed direction of travel

Having considered the factors outlined in this paper and initial industry views, it is suggested that a byelaw is drafted which will enable aquaculture management in The Wash in lieu of the Several Order being confirmed.

The most appropriate byelaw option would be to amend the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 to include provisions for managing aquaculture via a permit, including to additional species (notably oysters). The byelaw would also contain provisions which enable permit fees to be issued and flexible permit conditions which can be issued, varied or revoked by the Authority. If members agree, the next step would be to undertake an informal consultation on the matter to support the development of a draft byelaw and associated impact assessment to inform an Authority decision.

However, the decision to continue to pursue a byelaw does not necessitate that the Authority withdraws its application for a Several Order. It is considered appropriate that, given Defra have instigated a 'pause' on the consideration of the application, the application remains in place whilst the Authority fully considers its options. Noting that a byelaw for managing aquaculture is novel, it would be appropriate to maintain such a position until such time as a byelaw is confirmed, if the Authority ultimately agrees to make such.

In addition, a management plan for the fishery could be drafted and considered alongside the byelaw during informal consultation which would address concerns about administration of permits for aquaculture including in relation to maintaining a permit and new entrants. Maintaining aquaculture permits in the long-term to support business planning and investment is likely to be a key concern of industry going forward and as such, it is considered appropriate to develop associated policy in parallel with the development of the byelaw. Further, the Aquaculture Management Plan would address matters such as what areas of the Wash are considered to be appropriate aquaculture grounds and processes for 'moving' areas where environmental conditions change (such as accretion on the beds or continued settlement of cockle spat).

An informal consultation would also enable the development of a Wash Aquaculture Policy Statement as suggested by industry.

It would also be necessary to draft and implement new shrimp permit conditions to close aquaculture areas to shrimp fishing, however, it is proposed that this is undertaken once the byelaw is at a more advanced stage.

In summary, the proposed direction of travel is to develop a byelaw including the following steps:

- Undertake informal consultation regarding making the above byelaw;

- Draft the wording of the byelaw and associated impact assessment to be presented to the Authority for a decision on whether to make the byelaw;
- Draft a Wash Aquaculture Policy Statement setting out the benefits of sustainable, productive and efficient aquaculture to the wild fisheries, industry viability and protection of the Wash MPAs;
- Draft a Wash Aquaculture Management Plan which addresses access management and administration in addition to wider management issues including addressing the wild settlement of cockles on lays.

Financial Implications

The byelaw making process includes resource costs (for consultation and byelaw developments) in addition to costs associated with legal advice and ultimately notification for the purpose of formal consultation. These costs are not considered to be of risk to the Authority and will fit within the agreed 2026/27 budget.

Legal Implications

At this stage, continuing to consider a byelaw has no legal implications. Undertaking an informal consultation should also reduce the risk of a successful legal challenge, as this approach is recommended in Defra guidance on IFCA byelaw-making¹.

The legal risk associated with maintaining the interim measures until such time as a permanent replacement is confirmed remains a legal risk. However, recent revisions to the interim measures have significantly reduced that risk in the short-term.

Appendices

Not applicable

Background Documents

Papers and Minutes for Action Item 10 of the 39th Eastern IFCA meeting held on 11 March 2020

Papers and Minutes for Action Item 12 of the 62nd Eastern IFCA meeting held on 10 December 2025

Papers and minutes for Action Item 12 of the 63rd Eastern IFCA Meeting held on 11 March 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



Action Item 13

64th Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

24 June 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 2026-27 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 Plan⁵ 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 March 2026 to end of May 2026.

The tables at Appendix 1 detail the progress against the key priorities for 2026-27, as set in the Business plan for 2026-31.

⁵ [Business Plans - Eastern IFCA](#)

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 continued to operate 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 and who have now begun inductions. A further IFCO vacancy has been filled (end of May 2026) with the post holder yet to start and recruitment to a Support Officer role was unsuccessful and is once again at advertisement.

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 departed during March. A grade 5 MSO was recruited on a temporary basis (6 months) which has provided immediate capacity to facilitate key workstreams whilst recruitment is ongoing.

The departures represent a significant proportion of resource 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 has detrimentally impacted on outputs particularly in relation to the 'Amber and Greens' and Cromer Shoal MCZ workstreams. Work is ongoing to prioritise the workstreams' outlined in the 5-Year Business Plan to ensure delivery across core duties.

It is noteworthy that the Senior MSO (Research) has also provided advanced notice of retirement (to be after Christmas 2026). Given the importance of the role, recruitment to the post is intended to take place prior to the officer's retirement to enable a degree of handover between the incumbent and new post holder.

An additional risk has been added at Appendix 3 relating to recruitment and staff retention in the context of recent difficulties recruiting to vacancies.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Update on priorities set for 2026-27

Appendix 2 – Risk Register

Appendix 3 – Update on Risk Register

Background Documents

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Business Plan 2026-31.

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

Five key priorities are established for 2026-27.

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).	Delayed	Submission of the Closed Areas Byelaw 2021 to MMO was planned for Q1 of 2026/2027 but was delayed primarily as a consequence of a lack of capacity in the context of recent staff turnover, particularly in relation to the Grade 6 Project Officer. Progress has been made however, and the byelaw is ready for 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	Overall, delivery of the project plan is on track with the ARM plan, however, some components are delayed. A quarterly update is provided on the Authority's website ⁶ setting out progress against the plans workstreams and these are summarised below: <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 (NDS) is ongoing and two key outputs were delivered during the reporting period; the independent review of the NDS methodology⁷ and Interim analysis of initial data⁸ undertaken by Cefas. An application to the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme is in development to seek funding for the remainder of the project, which will include further at sea surveys and analysis towards making a conclusion.

⁶ [CSCB MCZ ARM Newsletter - Eastern IFCA](#)

⁷ [Natural Disturbance Study - Eastern IFCA](#)

⁸ [Natural Disturbance Study: Interim Analysis - Eastern IFCA](#)





		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 which is yet to be resolved. Work is ongoing to retrieve the historic IVMS data from the supplier. • 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 but delayed due to limited capacity. Work via an external contract is underway to analyse ROV data collected by the Authority to contribute to 'rates of damage' estimates, however the work is taking the external contractor more time than anticipated. Analysis of data gathered by local divers to enhance the data set used to inform the assessment is yet to start. • A management plan has been developed which was agreed in principle at the last Authority meeting, however, final agreement with the Research Task and Finish Group and Project board has been delayed as a consequence of limited capacity. • The study concerning the value of chalk is underway including a consultation with local fishermen to gather social and economic data however response rates are low at present. Further dialogue with fishing industry is ongoing to increase response rates.
c) Completion of 'amber/green' gear/fishing interaction assessments and development and implementation of management measures as required (carried over).	Delayed	<p>Further progress has been made during the reporting period but was hindered due to abstraction of the team to contribute to the annual cockle surveys.</p> <p>It is noteworthy that Natural England have reduced capacity at this time and have warned of potential delays in providing feedback on HRAs.</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'.
d) Participation in the national 'Coastal Health' project and the pilot in The Wash (carried over).	In Progress	As part of a bi-monthly sampling regime, additional cockle samples were collected and provided to Cefas including in relation to determination of the presence of atypical mortality within cockles at the 'new' cockle bed off Hunstanton. Further work is anticipated in this area once results of disease prevalence is available.
e) Habitat mapping in relation to <i>sabellaria</i> reef within MPAs outside of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast (new priority).	In progress	Development of a survey plan will be undertaken in the next quarter with a view to potentially undertake surveys in Q3.
2. Management of Wash cockle and mussel fisheries (wild capture and private) through:		
a) Develop appropriate management of private shellfish aquaculture within The Wash including consideration of using MaCAA byelaws (revised priority).	On track	Following revised advice from Defra regarding the Authority's Several Order application, the Authority has sought to consider alternative means of managing Wash aquaculture. Work towards developing a new approach has included consideration by the Management Working Group and initial dialogue with fishing industry at an industry meeting held on 19 May 2026. A proposed direction of travel is the subject of Action Item 12 at this Authority meeting.
b) A review of relevant byelaws inherited from Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee (carried over).	Not Started	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 through:		
a) Facilitating and contributing to the roll-out of	On track	This workstream had been considered complete following the national roll-out of IVMS and associated MMO licence conditions coming into effect. However, one

I-VMS by the Marine Management Organisation (carried over).		IVMS supplier ceased providing data to the UK data hub and as a consequence, this workstream was re-established in the context that support for further roll-outs may be required. The MMO have recently announced a solution and are in the process of arranging the distribution of new IVMS devices.
b) Development of measures (through byelaws and / or permit conditions) to implement standardised reporting rates across of VMS units (carried over).	Delayed	Standardised reporting rates for the two key fisheries involving over 12m vessels (which has standard, rather than inshore VMS) were agreed by the Authority in the last financial year. However, implementation of the measures have been delayed due to delays in amending the Whelk Permit Byelaw (via the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023) and due to limited resources within the Marine Protection Team.
c) Consider gathering vessel tracking data through alternative means (in lieu of I-VMS) (carried over).	In Progress	Trackers have remained available for Cromer Shoal MCZ fisheries and work is underway to ensure that trackers are available for use in the cockle fishery. Further consideration is being given to provision of shrimp and whelk fishing vessels.
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	In progress	Dialogue regarding the implementation of FMPs is ongoing including through attendance and contribution to associated meetings.

implementation (carried over).		
d) Consider the development of a bass drift net scientific trial (new priority)	In progress	Initial project proposals are in development which is also supported by a desk-based literature review which is currently in draft. A FaSS funding bid is also in development.
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:

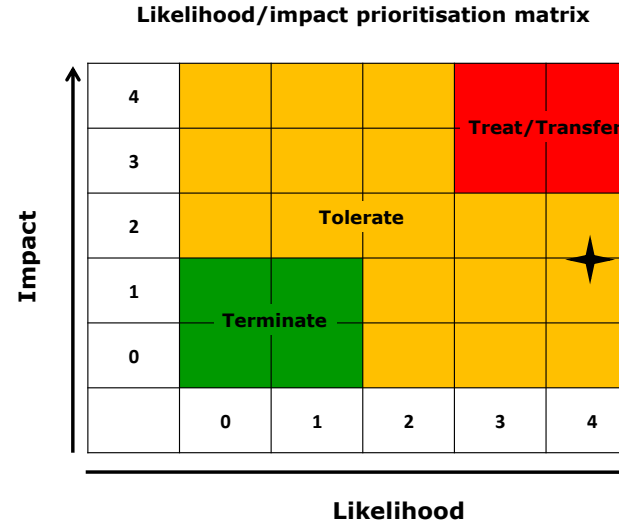
	Complete		Progress stalled / delayed
	In progress		Not started

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 1.5⁵⁰. 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	Finance Directors agreed to annual capital contributions from 2019-20 onwards to cater for the cost of asset replacement as an alternative to requests for a lump sum amounts as assets are replaced. No guarantees were given or implied. Eastern IFCA will explore all avenues for funding.				
			Drive for savings may impact County Councils' decisions regarding Eastern IFCA funding. Visible presence reduced, enforcement and survey activities compromised.	Inability to generate sufficient reserves to meet asset replacement schedule would threaten Eastern IFCA's ability to function. Closure costs could result.					

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	Possible – Whilst positive relationships have been established the existence of disparate partner aspirations introduces complexities which may drive perceptions of bias or inefficiency.	<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	Loss of confidence in the organisation Failure of the organisation to perform in accordance with the standards and practices of a statutory public body				Withdrawal of LA and Defra funding for the organisation
			4	4					

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			
			3	3	Crustacean stocks not currently subject to effort control			
			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.	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.			

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Failure to secure data	CEO	<p>Non-compliance with UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).</p> <p>Prosecution casefiles compromised.</p> <p>Loss of data in the event of fire or theft</p> <p>Breakdown in dissemination of sensitive information between key delivery partners.</p>	4		3		<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 remains in place while transition is ongoing– 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 remains in place while transition is ongoing Policies and processes developed to ensure data security and compliance with data protection legislation. Careful project planning underway with new provider to ensure careful and secure data management 	Treat
			Reputation	Financial	Possible - Limited staff access to both electronic and paper files.			
			4	4	Office secure with CCTV, keypad entry system and alarm.			
			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.	Likelihood of data loss has increased as a consequence of IT migrations			
New Burdens Funding discontinued.	CEO	Substantial reduction in Eastern IFCA capability with consequential inability to fulfil full range of duties	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). 	Tolerate
			Reputation	Financial	Defra have continued to roll over new Burdens funding in recognition of the value that IFCA's			
			4	4				

		or additional burden on funding authorities.	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.	provide in meeting national policy objectives.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Council Finance Directors representatives have been kept apprised of the situation and the potential for increased levies in the event that funding from Defra is discontinued. 	
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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	<p>Continuing uncertainty for industry members with consequential impact upon industry viability and associated social and economic issues.</p> <p>Potential legal challenge against the Authority in relation to lay management under interim measures – specifically where areas are closed to the public fishery but are not being used for active aquaculture.</p>	3.5		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. Recent revisions to interim measures reduce legal risk. Priority workstream includes consideration of alternative mechanisms for managing Wash aquaculture 	
			Reputation	Financial				
			4	3	<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>	<p>CEO</p>	<p>Potential for current supplier to stop providing service prior to securing new supplier.</p>	<p>3.5</p>		<p>2</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplier secured after careful consideration of proposals provided by perspective suppliers 	<p>Tolerate</p>
		<p>System downtime and disruption without effective project management.</p>	<p>Reputation</p>	<p>Financial</p>				
		<p>Loss of access to data files and applications to carry out work.</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>	<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>Data losses or breaches could lead to non-compliance with Data Protection legislation.</p>	<p>Complex migration will potentially lead to additional costs.</p>				

Description	Owner	Implications	Organisational impact (Reputation + Financial/2)		Likelihood	Risk	Mitigation	Action
Failure to fill staff vacancies and/ or retain current staff	CEO	<p>Reduced operational capacity; Reduced ability to meet deadlines and complete work on time. Decline in enforcement presence.</p> <p>Resignation of senior roles such as Grade 6 and managers results in loss of knowledge and leadership capacity.</p>	3		3	Risk	<p><u>Existing mitigation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern IFCA offer a competitive salary • All the Eastern IFCA team are remunerated by an established salary structure with a set number of annual increments based upon length of service. • Established a 'Grade 6' position within Marine Science and Marine Protection teams to provide progression opportunities. • Providing staff training and personal development plans supports employee development. • Regular supervisions and support provided to teams through established process • Providing leadership and management training to supervisors • Ongoing planning to prioritise the 'high priority' and 'business critical workstreams' outlined in the 5-Year Business Plan to ensure delivery of core duties • Exit interviews undertaken and reviewed by leadership team with actions taken as required • Staff work-related stress risk assessment and mitigation in place including provision of Norfolk Wellbeing services • HR support provided by external professional • Implementation of hand-overs to ensure no loss of business critical knowledge 	
			Reputation	Financial	<p>Three recruitment rounds (in relation to separate posts) failed to appoint an appropriate candidate.</p> <p>In a small organisation opportunity to progress can be limited which discourages long-term commitment and increases the likelihood employees seeking development elsewhere. Some roles (particularly MSOs) attract mostly graduates who often leave to pursue career progression.</p> <p>Fewer staff mean that existing staff face a higher workload, potentially increasing workplace stress leading to further turnover.</p> <p>Requirement to work near Kings Lynn for most of the roles limits the pool of applicants as there may not be the appeal for younger relocating professionals.</p>			
			4	2				
			<p>Eastern IFCA perceived by partners to be under-performing and not meeting duties</p> <p>Eastern IFCA perceived to lack enforcement presence and therefore could increase non-compliance.</p> <p>Negative perception of Eastern IFCA both externally from partners and internally from staff if workload increases.</p> <p>Perceptions of negative workplace environment with further negative impacts on recruitment.</p>	<p>Failure to meet core duties, achieve priorities and / or negative perceptions from partners introduces risk to continued funding</p> <p>Recruitment costs including induction and training costs.</p>				

							<p>Additional mitigation</p> <p>Prioritise recruitment to vacancies in a timely manner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review vacancy advertising platforms• Continue to review workplace engagement through one-to-ones and bespoke engagement exercises (e.g. staff wellbeing surveys)• Continue to review policies in accordance with best practice	
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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	Change in risk – Although organisation impact remains the same, the likelihood has increased, increasing the over risk as the Authority move through an IT migration. Previous mitigation still remains in place, and new mitigation is being developed for the new system to ensure secure data management.
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	Change in risk – Decrease in risk as a new IT provider has now been secured. Mitigation includes strong project planning. The risk still remains fairly high throughout the migration as Access to data and IT applications are fundamental to delivery of the IFCA's work streams.

decision to end contract on 31 March	
Failure to fill staff vacancies and/ or retain current staff	New risk added – Eastern IFCA do not currently have a full complement of staff and have not been able to fill two positions. With more departures planned this is considered a risk based on Eastern IFCA's ability to carry out its duties.

Vision

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Information Item 15

64th Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

24 June 2026

Marine Protection Quarterly Report

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

Purpose of Report

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

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

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

Background

Nationally agreed Marine Protection statistics are reported in the Authority's Annual Report and quarterly reports are provided to the full Authority to update on activity for the quarter.

Report

Officer vacancies have remained a challenge during the last quarter, there continues to be a vacancy for a Senior IFCO (Marine), Kings Lynn and Grade 5 IFCO to be based in Lowestoft. Recruitment has proved challenging with low levels of applications. We are currently advertising for the Grade 5 IFCO in Lowestoft and the recruitment campaign for the Senior IFCO (Marine) has been extended due to only two applications being received. We have welcomed two new IFCO's to the team and a conditional offer has been made to a further candidate.

March and April saw the team heavily involved in the annual cockle survey's alongside the Marine Science officers. Due to the nature of this work, there was limited capacity to carry out any other enforcement activity during this time. A presence is maintained on the coast, but this is at a lower level, although priority was given to the Cromer area to monitor activity and compliance within Cromer MCZ

Shrimp activity has continued over the spring, with enforcement activity focusing on following up on missing returns from fishermen.

The new permit year began within the whelk fishery and officers made appointments with fisherman across the district to carry out riddle and gear inspections prior to 2026/27 permits and tags being issued

Crab and Lobster activity on the North Norfolk Coast showed signs of increasing in the spring but this was followed by a decrease in landing reported by fishermen, there has

been a recent increase in landing of Lobster, which is welcomed. Vessel activity has increased along with deployment of gear as a result. Officers ensured the deployment of the marker buoys around the closed areas and will continue to monitor if they are on station and ensure there are no incursions into the closed areas.

Officers have continued with our ongoing commitment to the EHO surveys and collected additional samples as part of the ongoing Coastal Health Project in conjunction with CEFAS.

A Financial Administrative Penalty (FAP) was paid during this period for non-compliance within Cromer MCZ.

Financial Implications

None

Legal Implications

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Marine Protection Quarterly Report

Background Documents

Not Applicable

MARINE PROTECTION MONTHLY REPORT

February to May 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)

The northern part of the District has seen very little activity in the way of either Commercial or RSA Fishing.

Patrols to the area have included inspections of whelk fishing gear to ensure compliance for a whelk permit to be issued, inspection of landings have also taken place. Of note there has been a suggestion a new cockle bed may have been found which will require a additional survey.

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

Another quite period. Shore based patrols took place during the quarter, with inspections of whelk gear and landings. All were compliant. Shrimp fishing was monitored in May with both landing and gear inspections being compliant. One new vessel entered the fleet.

Area 3 (Brancaster to Great Yarmouth)

The majority of enforcement activity took place in this area with attention being focused on the Natural Disturbance Study Closures.

Whilst monitoring the closures patrols were carried out in local ports, with 108 crab and lobster landings being inspected. It was noted the crab catch was average, whilst lobsters remained elusive, albeit recent reports have indicated this has improved.

RSA observations found there were still very few anglers taking part. Although some targeting bass were reported.

Area 4 (Great Yarmouth to Harwich)

Despite the staff shortages 10 patrols had taken place along this stretch of the coast. Like the rest of the District RSA activity remained low.

27 landed catch inspections were carried out, all were found to be compliant

Primary Ports - Aim to visit twice / month

	Feb	March	April	May
Grimsby **	1		2	1
Boston **			1	2
Kings Lynn **	2	2	3	2
Wells **	3	7	2	5
Cromer **	4	9	9	5
Sea Palling**	2	1	2	
Lowestoft**	2	2	3	
Southwold**/ Walberswick	2	1	3	
Felixstowe Ferry**				

Secondary Ports - Aim to visit once / month

	Feb	March	April	May
HsPt				
Gibraltar Point				
Saltfleet				
Mablethorpe			1	
Trusthorpe			1	
Chapel St Leonards			1	
Ingoldmells			1	
Skegness			1	
Surfleet			1	1
Fosdyke	1		1	1
Sutton Bridge				
Hunstanton	1			
Brancaster		1	1	2
Morston			2	
Blakeney				
Cley	3	3	2	2
Salthouse				
Weybourne	3	3	4	3
Sheringham	3	4		3
West Runton	3	3	2	3
East Runton	3	4	3	3
Overstrand	1	1		
Trimmingham				
Mundesley				
Bacton	1	1		
Walcott	1			
Cart Gap	1	1		
Happisburgh				
Winterton				
Caister	2		1	
Great Yarmouth	3	1	3	
Corton	1			
Gorleston	2			
Pakefield	1			
Kessingland	1			
Dunwich			1	
Sizewell			1	
Aldeburgh		1	1	
Orford	1		1	
Shingle St				
Felixstowe		1	1	
Felixstowe Ferry			1	
Levington				
Shotley				
Woolverstone				
Ipswich				

Sea Patrols

	Feb	March	April	May
Primary Enforcement (Aim 50+/year) <i>dedicated patrols</i>	0	0	1	0
Secondary Enforcement (Aim 40+/year) <i>monitoring during Research activities at sea</i>	4	10	5	1

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
February	1 monitoring occasion (areas , 8/9/10)	1 monitoring occasion (areas 24/25/26/27/28/29)	No monitoring occasions	No monitoring occasions
March	7 monitoring occasions (areas 1/2/5/6/7/8/9/10/11)	1 monitoring occasions (areas 24/25)	No monitoring occasions	No monitoring occasions
April	3 monitoring occasions (areas 2/8/9/10//13)	1 monitoring occasions (areas24/25/28)	No monitoring occasions	No monitoring occasions
May	1 monitoring occasion (areas , 1/8/9/13)	1 monitoring occasion (areas , 24/25/26/27/28)	No monitoring occasions	No monitoring occasions

Vision

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Information Item 16

64th Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Meeting

24 June 2026

Marine Science Quarterly Update

Report by: Luke Godwin (ACO)

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on progress made by the Marine Science Team in its delivery of the 2026-27 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

This report describes progress against 'business critical workstreams' during March, April and May.

The key workstream for the period was delivery of the Wash Cockle Fishery management which includes at sea surveys, an assessment of the fishery within a Habitat Regulation Assessment, drafting of associated management measures and administration of permits. It is noteworthy that delivery of the workstream in the context of the current vacancy within the Marine Science Team (of the grade 6 Policy and Project Officer) required resource allocation away from other workstreams. However, the impact was mitigated to an extent following the temporary appointment of an MSO / Policy & Projects Officer who supported delivery across the workstream.

Shrimp Management

Shrimp fishing effort is monitored on a monthly basis to ensure activity does not exceed levels which would risk impacts to site integrity of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast. Fishing effort is well within threshold limits, primarily as a consequence of fishing activity having focussed on the Lincolnshire coast as opposed to the sensitive Wash grounds.

The review of shrimp permit experience requirements is yet to take place and is programmed for Q2 of the 2026/27 financial year.

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

All SWEEP and EHO samples were collected during the reporting period with the exception of SWEEP samples for the Thief during April. Sample collection has not been completed at this site on 3 separate occasions since July 2025. However, SWEEP primarily serves to monitor 'food availability' (in relation to plankton which serves as a food resource for bivalves and not to be confused with the 'Bird Food Availability' model) within the Wash to ensure Wash Aquaculture does not exceed the carrying capacity of The Wash. Given the very low level of aquaculture activity in The Wash, and the successful collection of all other SWEEP samples from other areas, the risk associated with having failed to collect Thief samples is considered to be low.

No samples have exceeded limits for Category B waters during the reporting period.

Wash Cockle and Mussel Management

The annual Wash cockle surveys were successfully completed during the reporting period and are the subject of Action Item 12 of this meeting. It is noteworthy that the completion of the survey was challenging in the context of several vacancies within the Marine Protection Team and that the effective planning and commitment from those involved contributed to the success of the survey. Following completion of the survey, the results were rapidly analysed in the context of the Wash Cockle Fisheries Management Plan to develop initial proposals which were discussed at a Wash industry meeting on 19 May. An associated Habitat Regulation Assessment was also completed and submitted to Natural England whilst a consultation was launched (on 29 May) to inform a final decision on management measures. It is intended that the fishery will open as of 15 June using delegated Authority provided to the CEO at the industry's preference.

The slightly earlier opening time was possible because of the efficiency of the Marine Science Team to complete the HRA in particular, in addition to the quick turnaround from Natural England, who must statutorily provide advice on the matter, in providing formal advice to confirm that adverse effect on site integrity (of Wash MPAs) could be ruled out.

The Wash mussel fishery remained open during this time, and the associated Habitat Regulation Assessment for the 2026 fishery was agreed with Natural England. A consultation on revisions to the management measures is planned to take place during Q2.

Management of Whelk Fisheries

Monthly monitoring of the whelk fishery identified that the Landings per Unit Effort have remained stable the reporting period, indicating that the fishery remains sustainable.

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 and this was implemented during the reporting period.

Assessment of unplanned fisheries

Reports of a potential sublittoral cockle fishery within the district will require at sea surveys which are in development following the completion of the Wash cockle survey. This may necessitate a Habitat Regulation Assessment in order to determine if a fishery can take place.

Advice in relation to sustainable development

23 requests for responses to marine works, the vast majority relating to Marine License Applications, were received during the reporting period, of which 18 were responded to.

One of the main developments of note relates to the deployment of monitoring buoys in The Wash including within areas thought to be fishing grounds. Officered facilitated fishery stakeholders' involvement in consideration of the deployment and the developer received constructive feedback from fishing industry on the matter, prior to the application for a marine licence.

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

Eastern IFCA 5-Year Business Plan 2026-2031