

NWIFCA Annual Meeting

13 June 2014: 10.30 a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
15**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Purpose of Report

This report provides updates for the quarter and comment on various areas of work.

Recommendation:

1. The report be received

Contents

- I) Defra policy
- II) Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)
- III) EMS programme and Byelaw 6.
- IV) Health and safety policy
- V) Officer changes
- VI) Association of IFCA
- VII) Procurement of a replacement main patrol vessel
- VIII) Chairman's Sub-Committee meetings

I) Defra policy

1. IFCA Chief Officers met senior Defra officials on 16 April to review marine protected area (MPA) work including both European Marine sites and Marine Conservation Zones. A detailed presentation to Defra showed the scale of the work which is proposed to meet the Government's objective of a coherent network of MPA in place by 2016. The CEO subsequently wrote to Defra to set out the work which this Authority would expect to be able to deliver in the time available. It is clear that the full programme is not achievable with current resources and we expect to have further discussions with Defra to agree how the work should be tackled. The letter to Defra is attached at Annex A.
2. As reported last quarter, the first government report on IFCA conduct and operation (Marine Act section 183) due to be laid before parliament by the end of 2014. Defra have established a committee comprising representatives of Defra, MMO, NE and EA to prepare the report. Defra are attending this meeting to give a presentation about the report and how it will be compiled. They also intend to take evidence from members and officers and give opportunity for comments which the Authority would wish them to take into account.
3. There is an online call for evidence for this report which is currently open until the 1 August 2014. This includes a comprehensive questionnaire on the work of IFCAs. Anyone with an interest in IFCAs is invited to contribute. The call for evidence is attached to this report at Annex B but I expect that Defra would prefer if responses were submitted online. The call for evidence can be found at:
https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine/ifca-report/supporting_documents/IFCA%20Call%20for%20evidence%20pack.pdf

II) Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)

4. The Authority has not had any communications arising from the designation of the Flyde or Cumbria Coast MCZ last year. Plans are now underway to designate the second tranche of sites in 2015 including, for this District, Allonby Bay and a small part of the West of Walney site. Allonby Bay is a coastal site in the Solway Firth. West of Walney includes the large offshore wind farm of the same name but the great majority of this site is outside 6 miles and not the responsibility of this Authority. Management of this site will be led by MMO.
5. NWIFCA will assist with survey work to collect feature data for these sites to be undertaken this year. Conservation objectives will be set by Natural England as part of their conservation advice for these sites and management proposals will be developed. A full consultation on the sites by Defra is scheduled for early 2015 and (depending on the outcome), designation is planned by the end of that year.

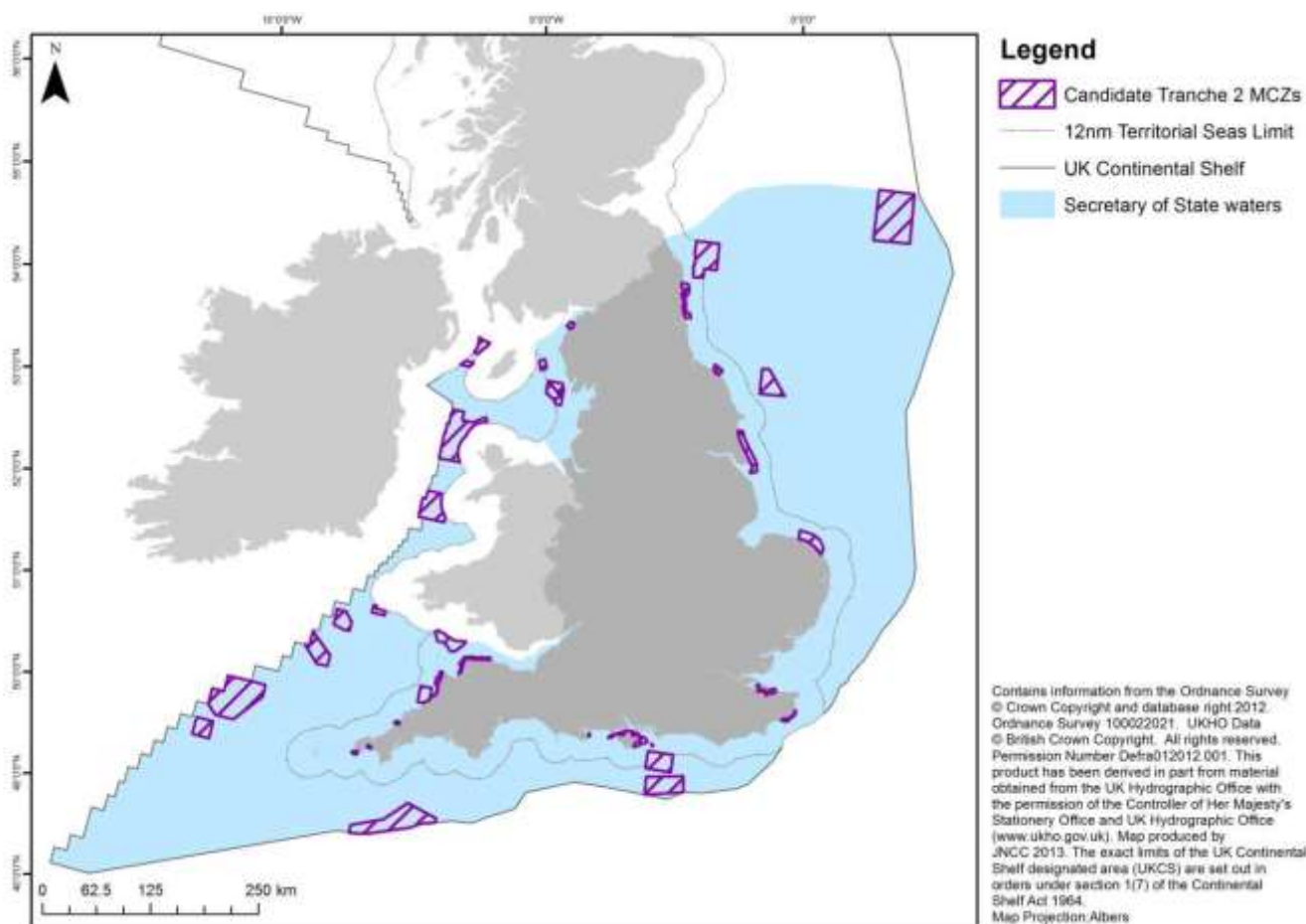


Fig 1 Potential tranche 2 MCZ for consultation in 2015 and designation in 2016.

III) The EMS programme and Byelaw 6

6. Byelaw 6: 'Protection for EMS' was signed by Defra in May 2014 and is therefore now in force. Fishing with bottom towed gear is prohibited in the areas stated in the byelaw and digging for bait is prohibited in the seagrass beds of Morecambe Bay. 4 applications to fish in the Lune Deep protected area under the sunset clause in the byelaw have been received and authorizations are in preparation.
7. The so called 'amber' work under the EMS programme is now underway. Over 1700 amber feature – fishing combinations have been identified in the NWIFCA District. All of these are subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment to determine if the activities require further management. We have established that the conservation objective for all the relevant features for which conservation advice is available is 'Maintain at current

conservation status' so we have not yet identified any high priority issues which require urgent attention. As explained to Defra in the letter at Annex A, this work is unlikely to be completed within the proposed deadline (end of 2016) with current resources.

IV) NWIFCA Health and Safety policy

8. The policy has been reviewed in May 2014. There have been no Health and Safety incidents in the past quarter. NWIFCA Officer training to enable them to carry out their duties in accordance with the H&S policy continues and a register of training is maintained.

V) Officer and Member changes

9. Mr. Erik Thinnesen is welcomed back to work since Easter after his extended sick leave period. He is now working back at full strength.
10. Mr. Jason Sparks has commenced work with NWIFCA based in Whitehaven. This restores our level of IFCO cover to establishment level in the north of the District.
11. The proposed application for an apprentice to be based in Whitehaven has now been submitted to the Cumbria FLAG for consideration. A copy of the application can be obtained from the Clerk if members are interested.
12. Councillor Pat Glasman (Wirral Council) was not re-elected at the May 2014 elections. We would like to thank Pat for her contribution to the NWIFCA over the past 2 years.

VI) Association of IFCA (AIFCA)

13. The AIFCA Members' Forum met on 11 March at Port of London offices. The Chairman and CEO attended. Ratified minutes of meetings are available from the Clerk or via the AIFCA website. Items considered included:
- I) Future IFCA funding although this is unlikely to be clarified before an election;
 - II) The Government's marine protected areas programme. A presentation from Defra was received setting out the priorities and timescales reported above
 - III) The development of an inshore vessel monitoring system (iVMS) which has been considerably delayed by an EU tendering process but is now in development.
 - IV) Project Inshore; A presentation by the project team was received after which the stage 3 reports were subject to extensive comment. New drafts of the reports will be sent out for comment as soon as possible.
14. A meeting of the AIFCA Directors was held at 15.00 on the same day which the CEO attended.

VII) Procurement of main patrol vessel replacement

15. A combined meeting of the Finance and Vessel sub-committees on 28 April considered a number of options for replacing 'Solway Protector' including second hand vessels. The purpose and need for a new vessel was examined in some detail. Members requested preparation of an options report so that a firm decision could be taken on the size and type of vessel needed. The presentation by the CEO is attached to this report at Annex C
16. Pending preparation and consideration of this options paper the procurement process in Lancashire County Council has been paused.

VIII) Meetings of the Chairman's Sub-Committee were held on 2nd and 27th May to consider matters relating to the Authority's Code of Conduct.

Chief Executive Officer
29th May 2014