



**North Western  
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority  
Annual Meeting: 17 May 2011  
Copeland Borough Council Offices, 10.30 a.m.**

**Agenda Item: 9**

**CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT MARCH - APRIL 2011**

**Purpose: To report activity since the February meeting of the Authority**

**Recommendations**

1. That the report is approved
2. That the Authority responds to the Defra consultation on modernisation of inshore fisheries (paragraph 6)
3. That the Authority responds to future consultations on proposed MCZ within the District and areas where the Authority may have an enforcement role (paragraph 15).
4. That the amendment to standing orders is approved (paragraph 20).

**Overview of the period**

1. The establishment of the NWIFCA was the main task during this period. All staff have been transferred to employment with the NWIFCA under new terms and conditions agreed earlier. The new website is operational although considerable development is still required. New email addresses are functional and integrated IT and phone systems will in due course improve communication between the Carnforth and Whitehaven Offices. New signs to buildings and vehicles are close to completion. New uniforms and paperwork have been deployed.
2. Despite this major reorganisation, delivery of fisheries protection and marine conservation duties has continued as is evident from the Enforcement Director's report. There are also a number of other issues for the Authority's attention outlined below which are not reported elsewhere in the papers for this meeting.

**Conclusion of the Defra project on IFCA implementation.**

3. The 3 year project led by Chris Preston was formally concluded at the end of March. The project produced the IFCA vision, objectives and performance indicators, together with a package of guidance for IFCA on matters such as byelaw making, sustainable development and marine protected areas. The project also won from Defra significant funding to assist the establishment of IFCA including the so-called transitional and new burdens funding. A full list of products and outcomes from the project is available from the Clerk or from the Defra website. The project team has now been disbanded and the IFCA contact in Defra is now Anne Freeman ([anne.freeman@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:anne.freeman@defra.gsi.gov.uk)).

**MCA consultation on the future of the coastguard service.**

4. Members were consulted on a draft response to the MCA consultation and indicated contentment with its contents so it has now been sent. The response is in line with extensive national concern about the proposals and MCA has undertaken to review the re-

organisation of the service. In response to concerns, the consultation was extended to July. Copies of the consultation are available from the Clerk or from the website: [http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home/shipsandcargoes/consultations/mcga-currentconsultations/hm\\_coastguard\\_proposals\\_for\\_modernisation\\_consultation\\_2010.htm](http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home/shipsandcargoes/consultations/mcga-currentconsultations/hm_coastguard_proposals_for_modernisation_consultation_2010.htm)

### **Installation of a cable from the Ormonde wind farm at Half Moon Bay, Heysham**

5. At the February 2011 meeting the Authority called for an investigation of the damage to the shore caused by cable laying at this site. The MMO has responded to the Authority's letter as attached (Annex A). IFCO Steve Waite has estimated the scale of the scar resulting from the development as 40m wide by 100m in length between high and low water. While the disturbance appears excessive in proportion to the scale of the cable laid, MMO consider that the development was properly consented and that mitigation has been undertaken in accordance with the FEPA consent. Further action from the Authority would be unlikely to achieve any redress.

### **Defra consultation: Reform of Domestic Fisheries Management Arrangements in England.**

6. Views are sought on Defra proposals for reform of inshore fisheries management in England. Key elements of the proposals are designed to establish of stronger locally based rights to fishing. Possible models proposed include quota held by communities to safeguard small scale fleets in certain areas, allocation of clearer and more stable entitlements to fish across the English fleet using fixed quota mechanisms and safeguards to help retain fisheries access rights in more sustainable fisheries and prevent fishing rights becoming concentrated in the large scale fleet.
7. The deadline for responses is 30 June 2011 but in the absence of further detail on how the proposals will be implemented it is not easy to comment. The consultation indicates that IFCA could be tasked with operating parts of any new scheme and IFCA Chief Officers have sought a meeting with Defra to explore the proposals further. A response from this Authority would be appropriate and material for inclusion should be sent to the office by 6 June. The full consultation is available from the Clerk or from the Defra website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/manage/saif/>

### **UK Marine Policy Statement**

8. This is a broad statement of UK policy towards the marine environment. SFC and many other bodies were consulted on its contents. The 11 page statement was published by Defra in March and is available from the Clerk or from the Defra website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2011/03/18/marine-policy-statement/>

### **SI 2011 No 603**

9. This SI came into force on 1 April and effectively establishes all the IFCA in England. It repeals all the Orders which created SFC Districts and provides for the transfer of all employees, property, rights and liabilities from SFC to IFCA. Copies of the Order are available from the Clerk or from the Defra website: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/603/made>

### **Halite Energy Group. Consultation on an application for a Development Consent Order to construct and operate an underground Natural Gas Facility at Preesall, Lancashire.**

10. The Authority has been consulted in respect of land ownership issues in preparation for this development proposal. Having no interests of that nature no response will be required.
11. The Authority may have concerns about the proposal. It is not the first time that gas storage caverns in the salt layers of the area have been proposed. Previously CANATAXX attempted to gain consents but were unsuccessful.

12. Excavation of the caverns involves discharge of hyper saline water to the shallow inshore marine environment. The NWSFC was primarily concerned about the as yet unknown effects of the proposed brine discharge upon the marine and coastal environment and objected to the proposal.
13. The area for the proposed discharge is close to the proposed Lune Deep and Shell Flat SAC's and the Liverpool Bay SPA. The proposed discharge site holds an emerging lobster fishery, is a well-known nursery ground for cod and flat fish and is of significant interest to both the commercial and leisure angling community. It is therefore of vital importance that this marine area is not negatively impacted by a development of this nature.
14. The deadline for responses to this consultation is given as 27 May but this is as yet only an informal consultation and the Authority may prefer to await any formal consultation when and if a full application is launched.

### **Marine Conservation Zones**

15. The third progress report of the ISCZ project was published in March 2011 and is available from the MCZ website: <http://www.irishseaconservation.org.uk/node/92> or from the Clerk. The report presents another iteration of possible MCZ. The Science Advisory Panel response to this report is also available from the same webpage.
16. The project appears to have responded positively to comments made by the NWSFC (and probably others) on earlier iterations that the number and area of inshore and coastal sites was unbalanced compared with offshore sites and that these sites would have a disproportionately large socio-economic impact. The SFC propose that the number and area of coastal sites should be reduced and that sites which are already designated under EU or UK legislation should be double badged as MCZ to reduce the impact on human use of the sea.
17. Thus there are now only 3 small proposed MCZ with in the NWIFCA District. These are pmcz 10 which adjoins the Solway Firth SAC, pmcz 13 which appears to be part of the Sefton coast SAC and pmcz 14 located in the outer part of the Dee Estuary SAC and SPA. There is also a large coastal Broad area of Interest (BAI1) at St Bees Head within which restrictions on beam trawling could have socio-economic impacts. This site is the most likely to be contentious but it is not clear from the report what is the status of a BAI so the impacts on human uses are as yet unpredictable.
18. One possible area of concern may be proposals for further reference sites within the ISCZ area. Reference sites have been proposed recently in other MCZ areas with considerable attendant controversy. It may now be rather late to introduce significant areas of reference sites as time for consultation will be limited before firm proposals must be submitted to Government in autumn 2011.
19. The MCZ Regional Stakeholder Group meets again on 9-10 May 2011 when proposed MCZ boundaries may be further revised. If significant changes are made a report will be tabled to the NWIFCA on 17 May.

### **Standing Orders**

20. Standing orders paragraph 30(d): *Constitution of the Technical, Science and Byelaws Sub-Committee* requires amendment to take account of the decision to allow all members to attend meetings. The section may be amended to read as follows:

*The Technical, Scientific and Byelaws Sub-Committee shall have 13 members made up of Environment Agency, Natural England and Marine Management Organisation representatives and Marine Management Organisation appointees and shall consider all matters of a scientific nature and the making and revision of byelaws.*

*Any other NWIFCA member may attend this sub-committee but must inform the Clerk 1 week before the meeting. They may receive papers on request and may speak and vote at the meetings.*

**Chief Executive  
North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority  
4 May 2011**