



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

Agenda Item 11

PROPOSED MORECAMBE BAY HYBRID FISHERY ORDER

Recommendations:

1. That members endorse the actions of officers to progress the application to Defra for the Morecambe Bay Hybrid Fishery Order.
2. That the report be received.

1. Background

- 1.1 The North Western IFCA intends to apply for a Hybrid Fishery Order (made under the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967 [as amended by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009]) to govern shellfishing in Morecambe Bay and the Duddon Estuary.
- 1.2 Due to changing economics over recent years, managing mussel and cockle fisheries through byelaws alone has become increasingly difficult, costly and burdensome in terms of enforcement and administration.
- 1.3 The Order will enable the Authority to control fishing intensity and better balance the interests of stakeholders. The objective is to develop a modern, professional and sustainable molluscan bivalve fishery, with provision for the development of cultivation and aquaculture.
- 1.4 Progress on consultation with stakeholders has been reported to the Committee previously. Changes have been made to the management proposals as a result of that consultation and the Management Plan has been re-drafted.
- 1.5 A summary of the management proposals is attached as Annex A. The full Management Plan, Annexes and Appendices are available from the Carnforth office on request.
- 1.6 The Order will allow a suite of adaptive management measures that are flexible to stock levels and environmental considerations, including restricting numbers of licences, setting fees, implementing permanent and temporary spatial and temporal closures, designating access and landing points, enforcing TACs and restricting fishing hours.

2. Financial Implications for the NWIFCA

- 2.1 The annual variability in settlement and seasonal mortalities of shellfish results in major difficulties in predicting stock levels and fishing effort. In Morecambe Bay this proves to be more of an issue with cockles than for mussels.

In devising the proposals for the management of the Morecambe Bay shellfishery it has become evident that *adaptive* management that can change according to stocks and other economic and environmental pressures will potentially be the most successful in the long-term.

However, one major drawback of this approach is the ability to predict precisely what resourcing and financing will be necessary for fisheries management, and setting a budget has proved problematic. Budgets also need to be flexible as does the charging structure for licences for all sectors falling within the Order.

All monies generated from the Order will be used for the management, development and improvement of the fisheries within the Order area. However, it is realistic to state that income from the Order in many years may not match expenditure and that the NWIFCA will subsequently have to subsidise the running of the Order from its general budget.

3. Next Step

- 3.1 The next step will be to submit the application to Defra as soon after this meeting as possible. Defra will then produce a Draft Order, which will be subject to formal consultation. Should there be no significant objections, it will be approved by the Fisheries Minister and laid before Parliament to become law. However if significant objections are raised, the Minister can order a Public Inquiry.

Scientific Officer
4th May 2011