

**NWIFCA Authority Meeting**  
**10<sup>th</sup> December 2020; 10.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA**  
**ITEM NO.**  
**11**

**REPLACEMENT OF FPV PROTECTOR BRAVO**

**Purpose of Report:**

**To provide members with brief background to FPV Protector Bravo (PB) and the requirement to replace the vessel**

**Recommendations:**

- I. The report is received**
- II. Officers are instructed to investigate further the replacement of PB with a new purpose built vessel, firming up the specification required and seeking tenders from boat yards.**

**PB background**

1. FPV Protector Bravo was commissioned in the late 1990s. A key requirement at the time, was a pot & line hauler to lift and inspect the increasing number of lobster and crab pots used in the Cumbria SFC district.
2. PB was designed and built by Northern Diver Ltd. She is a 7m Osprey Viper rigid inflatable RIB vessel, mono hulled, with twin propellers and twin 100hp Yamaha engines. She can reach a maximum speed of 25 knots.
3. PB is coded under the Small Vessel Coding at category 3R allowing work up to 20nm from a safe haven with a maximum number of 6 persons on board.
4. PB has served the Cumbria SFC and the Authority well for over 20 years. However, fishing techniques, patterns of fishing and fishing gear size has advanced. Fishers now use much larger pots, longer nets and many operate very close in shore.
5. The limited deck space on PB now means that only 5 - 6 pots can be brought on board at a time. Holding more pots on deck at a time is now unsafe. Officers find themselves having to climb over pots to move around the deck. The potential for slips increases the more pots hauled. In the past it was regular practice to lift and inspect a full string of pots of up to 20 pots at a time. This is no longer possible.
6. When lifting nets, the length and size of nets that can be hauled at any one time is similarly limited. The hauler is unable to lift safely many of the size and length of nets used in modern-day fisheries.
7. On two occasions, the inflatable sponsons of PB have been punctured by the anchors on the ends of pot strings while trying to lift gear on board. This is a serious hazard made worse by the larger anchors used for the larger heavier pots and is a main reason for proposing that the replacement vessel should be a fibreglass twin hulled vessel in place of the inflatable. Such a vessel would provide much larger deck space.

8. PB has only two seats side by side. Additional personnel on board must sit in the vessel on the deck. This creates additional potential for accident and discomfort on long patrols.
9. Officers are now of the opinion that PB is no longer fit for purpose and have been investigating the possibility of replacing this vessel with a more suitable vessel, which would have its base in Whitehaven marina.

### **North Western Protector**

10. North Western Protector is highly effective for inspection of long strings of pots offshore but cannot work safely in the shallow waters where many strings of pots and nets are now being set. The introduction of the new potting byelaw with pot marking and tagging will make pot inspections a higher priority and create an increased burden of work for officers particularly in the North of the District. A replacement vessel designed and equipped to carry out this work will enable the Authority to inspect gear and catches more efficiently and effectively.

### **Specification and enforcement requirements of a new vessel**

11. The function of a replacement vessel would primarily be inshore enforcement. Additional requirements could be incorporated into the design of the vessel. GRP twin hulls would give safety and fitted with heavy duty steel keel bands would enable the vessel to dry out on sands at low tide for survey and enforcement purposes.
12. The vessel should have wheel house and shelter accommodation with small bathroom and galley for spending long days aboard. A vessel length of around 10m would allow for these facilities. To meet modern inspection and safety requirements and standards and pursue the objectives of working with partner agencies, accommodation and seating for up to 6 Officers would be ideal. (Protector Bravo is coded to carry 6).
13. Speed and engine power should be appropriate to cover the inshore area of the District. A speed of 35 - 40 knots could be achieved with twin 250 – 300hp engines, 4 stroke modern petrol Yamaha or Honda engines. This is an economical option, with the vessel having appropriate size fuel tanks fitted.
14. Research has found that a possible replacement vessel would be a catamaran, with ample deck space for equipment and the capability of hauling up to 60+ whelk pots at a time. Designed to take the safety of the crew in mind, this would be a suitable replacement with the following features:
15. A larger and safer hauler would be included with deck space to lift up to 20 modern pots. A stern ramp between the outboard engines so that officers are clear of pots or nets, when placing them back into the water once inspected would provide a safe working system. Coding would be similar to PB.
16. Replacing PB with a catamaran type of vessel, would provide the Authority with a suitable replacement with a lifespan of at least 15 years, which could be expanded to 25 years with a midlife refurbishment.

### **Estimate of costs of a replacement vessel, and how this could be funded**

17. Any proceeds of the sale of PB would offset the cost of a new vessel.
18. Cost estimates received for a vessel as specified are:
  - Cheetah Marine International Limited, length 10.2m £215,000 ex VAT
  - Audacious Marine Boats & Mouldings Limited, length 10m £195,000 ex VAT
  - Blyth Catamarans would also be willing to tender for the supply of a similar sized vessel
19. NWIFCA have sufficient saved in current Reserves to cover the cost of the proposed vessel without depleting either the saved amount for replacement of main patrol vessel, or the requirement to keep 3 months running costs in Reserve.
20. If Members are minded to support the proposal to replace PB a more detailed specification will be prepared and competitive tenders invited.

NWIFCA officers  
23 November 2020