

Eleventh Annual Plan

1 April 2021 –
31 March 2022



Monitoring:

Q1 (April-June)

Q2 (July-Sept)

Q3 (October to December)

Q4 (January to March 2020)

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Background

1. **Remit:** NWIFCA is the lead regulator under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA) for the District. Duties are in MCAA s.153 to 184.
2. **Vision: (Defra 2009)** To lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries in the District by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.
3. The main fisheries of the District are listed in Table 1.
4. **Audience:** The main audience is Secretary of State Defra to satisfy MCAA s177 which requires each IFCA to publish before 1 April each year, a plan setting out the Authority's main objectives and priorities for the year.
5. **Plan format:** A non-statutory framework of success criteria and indicators was published in 2015. IFCA were asked to have regard to this framework in planning and reporting.
6. By resolution in 2012 agreed with Defra, the annual plan is maintained as a working document for development by members to meet changing priorities during the year.
7. Changes to the plan may be proposed by members at quarterly meetings and adopted by resolution. Officers will report progress at each meeting.

Resources

8. **Finance:** The core budget for 2021-22 will be increased by ?% from the 2020-21 budget as shown in Table 2. The 2021-22 budget was approved by the NWIFCA Finance committee on 10 December 2020.
9. This budget will not cover all the increasing costs already in the system such as salary increases and represents a cut in funding of approximately 2%. As at December 2020 the Authority can maintain the present staff complement because expected staff changes will slightly reduce costs and reductions will be applied to some spending budgets where practical.
10. As always, the budget is subject to continuation of Government support for IFCA of approximately one third of the NWIFCA budget. A Government spending review is expected in 2021. In the meantime all IFCA have been told to assume the current budget will continue. The Government funding is provided through support grants to funding Councils. Continuation at the current level implies that the share of IFCA funding borne by Council members increases.
11. **Personnel:** NWIFCA will maintain 21 full time equivalent posts with line management structure as shown in figure 1.

Monitoring

12. **Performance monitoring:** Table 3 shows summary aims for the Authority in 2020-21. Members are invited to comment on these to ensure they meet agreed priorities.
13. Table 4 shows success criteria and indicators set by Defra. Tasks in the right hand column are proposed by the Authority to achieve the indicators. Members are invited to comment on the tasks to ensure they meet agreed priorities.
14. **Risk Management:** The Authority's risk strategy is available from the Clerk. Auditors review risk registers related to finance each year. A review of the NWIFCA risk strategy was commissioned by the H&S consultant in April 2020. Work related to Covid has resulted in a delay to this review which will take place as soon as possible.
15. **Health and safety:** The Authority will continue to retain an external qualified H&S consultant to keep the H&S policy up to date and ensure it is compliant with changes

in regulations. The current policy is available from the Clerk. The policy and any incidents will continue to be reviewed for each quarterly meeting. Covid led to a wide ranging review of the Health and Safety policy and amendments to many operating procedures.

Training

16. The Authority will continue to operate an officer training programme for all new and experienced officers including:
 - I. Induction training on appointment.
 - II. IFCO training for enforcement officers with advanced training as required
 - III. Specialist courses to enable officers to achieve higher skills in specific areas
 - IV. Safety and use of equipment training as required to ensure officers can fully and safely deliver the requirements of their jobs.
17. The IFCA training coordinator in 2019-20 restructured the basic 1 week 'Torquay' IFCO training course into a more focussed 'Competent IFCO course' which concentrates on the core IFCO skills required to operate under an IFCO warrant. In addition the training co-ordinator set up an advanced officer course also last lasting 1 week for experienced officers and short 1-3 day courses on more specialised IFCO duties. In March 2020 all external training ceased to take account of Covid. In August the IFCA training co-ordinator resigned to take up the post of Chief Officer of Southern IFCA. At 13 November 2020 a replacement Training Co-ordinator is being appointed It is not yet clear how IFCA training will be delivered in 21-22
18. Officers can undertake tailored personal development training to meet organisation and personal objectives for each officer. All training is reviewed for each officer by line managers annually in job reviews and job plans.

Working in Partnership:

19. Joint working with other agencies is a government priority. NE, MMO and EA each have an officer on the Authority by statute. National Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) are in place with MMO (2014, reviewed in 2017), EA (2011), NE (2011) and Cefas (2011). A local GLA (now GLAA) - NWIFCA MOU was agreed in 2011. NWIFCA has a formal data and information sharing agreement with Lancashire and Cumbria Constabulary as well as Welsh Government. A joint vessel use charter agreement with MMO was agreed in January 2020 to provide for the expected increase in requirements for joint working after UK leaves EU. Copies of all joint working agreements are available from the Clerk.
20. NWIFCA will continue regular liaison to promote good environmental management with Natural England, Gangmaster Licensing and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA); Councils, Environmental Health Services (EHS), Food Standards Agency (FSA), Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Marine Scotland and other organisations as the need arises.
21. The Authority will continue to consult partners and stakeholders on policy development and byelaw proposals through Authority meetings, stakeholder meetings and discussions, multi-agency fisheries planning committees, Bivalve Mollusc Working Group and published written reports.
22. Operational Enforcement will continue to be co-ordinated with MMO, EA, Police, Welsh Government, GLAA and Mersey Port Health Authority by sharing weekly tasking priorities allowing focused enforcement of in key areas.

Membership and governance

23. The Authority has 30 members as defined in SI2200, 2010. Names and brief biographical information are on the website. At 13 November 2020, the Authority has one vacancy, however 3 members reached the 10 year limit on appointments in 2020. They were given 6 month extensions because of covid but it is not yet clear if MMO will permit their terms of office to be extended. If they are not granted extensions the Authority could have at least 4 vacancies by end April 2021,
24. New members will continue to receive induction information about the Authority and the role of members. Subject to covid restrictions and resource availability, the Authority still intends to hold training and awareness days for new members in 2021.
25. Meeting dates of the Authority and its Technical, Science and Byelaw (TSB) Committee in 2021-22 were agreed at the December 2020 quarterly meeting and are on the website in the reports for that meeting. Agendas and papers will continue to be circulated to members and posted on the website 7 days in advance of meetings. At present there are no plans to return to meetings in person. Online meetings will continue until further notice.
26. **Compliance:** The Authority will continue to be an efficient and fair regulator, using a range of measures and sanctions defined in the compliance and enforcement strategy available from the Clerk or website.
27. The Authority will continue to use risk based enforcement directing resources at areas and fisheries according to known priorities and intelligence received.
28. **Data Protection Act 2018:** The Authority will continue to ensure that it meets its obligations under the Data protection Act and work to follow the guidance available from the Information Commissioner's Office.
29. **Equality Act 2010.** As a public sector body and as an employer the Authority will continue to comply with the Equality Act and standards.
30. **Corporate monitoring policies.** The Authority is committed to being transparent and accountable. We want partners and stakeholders to know the level of service we will aim to provide. Standing Orders, Financial regulations, Scheme of delegations Customer service standard, a Freedom of Information Act publication scheme and a complaints procedure are in the Constitution available from the Office and on the website.
31. **Science and Research** (Table 5) in 2021-22 will focus on:
 - I. survey and impact assessment of potential new fisheries;
 - II. development of fisheries management plans,
 - III. the ongoing byelaw review and development of new byelaws,
 - IV. supporting Government's marine protected area priorities including MCZ designation and management,
 - V. development consultation responses,
 - VI. new and ongoing research projects.

Table 1 Regulation of Fisheries in the District

Species	Gear	Area	Season	
Cockle	Hand gathering, occasional dredge if Authority permits	Solway, Morecambe Bay, Ribble, Wirral, Dee Estuary	Closed season 1 May to 31 August	
Mussel	Hand gathering size and permitted seed mussel.	Solway, Morecambe Bay, Ribble, Wirral, Dee Estuary	Size mussel anytime. Seed usually summer, autumn	
Clams (Razor various species)	Hand gathering	Wirral on large tides	Big tides anytime	
Shrimp	Nets operated by hand/ tractors/ boats	Solway, Morecambe Bay, Ribble, Dee	Spring to Autumn	
Prawn (Nephrops)	Trawl	Cumbria fished inside and outside the District. Landed in Whitehaven	Spring to Autumn	
Queen Scallops	Dredge	Outside District - north, outer Solway, Some landed in Whitehaven.		
Whelk	Pots	Outer Solway, Liverpool Bay & outside District		
Sole, Brill, turbot, cod, roker (thornback Ray), dab, fluke, mullet	Trawls; Set nets, Angling	All areas.	All year round	
Crab, lobster	Pots	Mainly north of Morecambe Bay	Spring to Autumn	
Bass	Nets, Angling	All areas	Summer	
Sprat, whitebait,	Nets	Estuaries	Spring to Autumn	
Winkles	Hand gathering	Cumbria Coast. Occasionally Morecambe Bay	Summer Autumn	
Bait collection	Hand gathering, worm digging, crab tiling	All areas	All year	

Table 2 NWIFCA Finance resources

NWIFCA BUDGET 2021-22 including 2% LEVY INCREASE from 2020-21		
EXPENDITURE	2020-21	2021-22
Employees	£948,066	
Premises	£58,900	
Transport	£209,561	
Replace Patrol Vessel	£121,151	
Supplies & Services	£52,100	
Corporate	£28,800	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£1,418,578	
INCOME		
7151 Levy 2% Increase	£1,337,078	
7251 Shellfish Sampling	£9,000	
7257 Permit Fees	£65,000	
7351 Interest	£7,500	
TOTAL INCOME	£1,418,578	
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	NIL	

Fig 1. NWIFCA Officers and line management as at January November 2020.

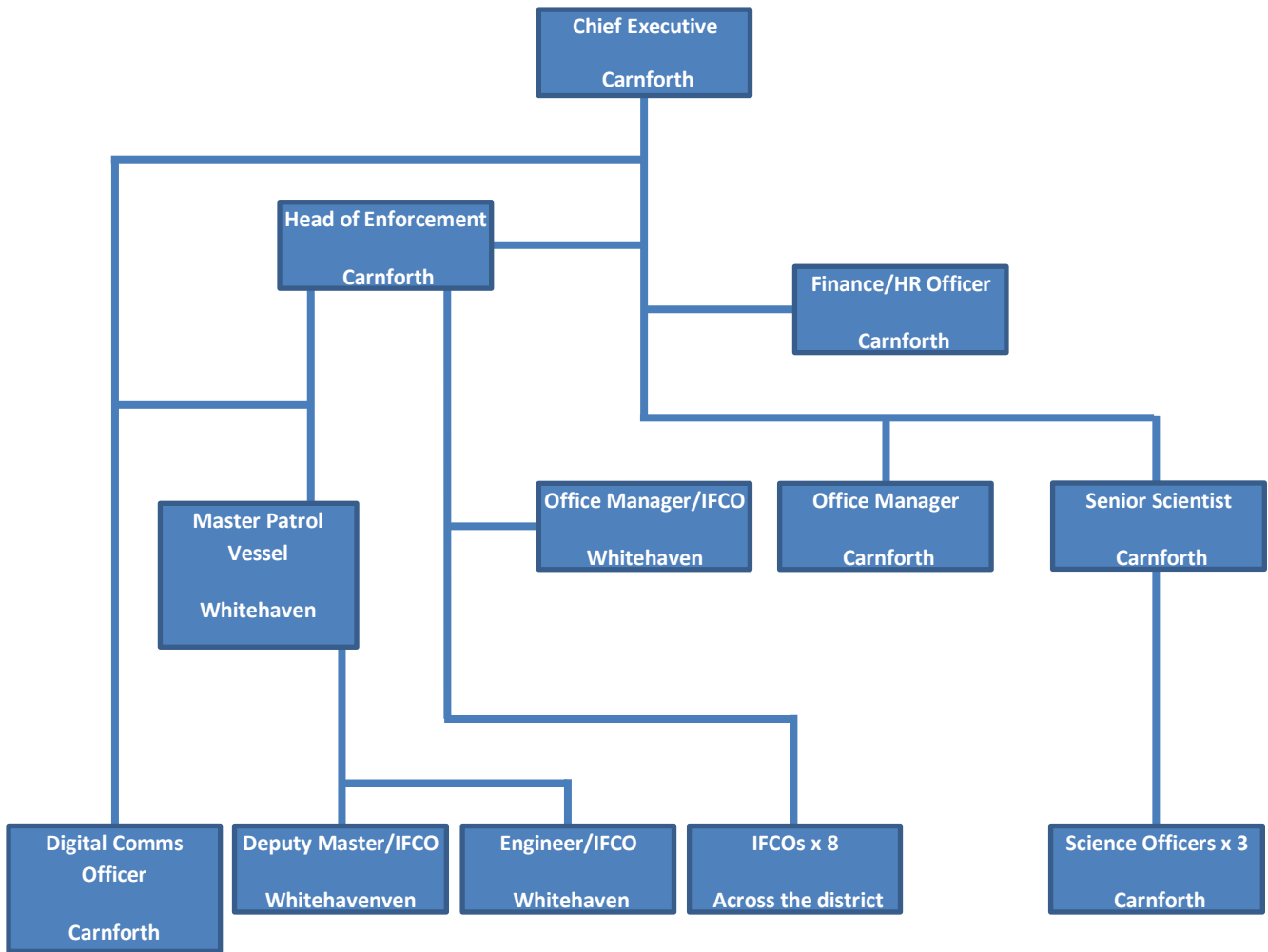


	Table 3. Summary of main priorities aims and monitoring for 2021 –22.	update
1.	Operate the Authority to highest standards of probity and in compliance with the Authority’s constitution, standing orders, public sector regulations and policies on health and safety, financial auditing, risk assessment, transparency, freedom of information, data protection, and operation of meetings.	
2.	Properly manage and care for officers and members by providing training, job reviews, information and consultation on all relevant matters and delegating responsibility appropriately.	
3.	Contribute to delivery of Defra requirements for an orderly Brexit and any structural changes in agencies responsible for marine and fisheries management.	
4.	Require compliance by fishers with EU, UK and NWIFCA regulations covering exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the District (table 1) by planning, patrolling and inspecting all parts of the District according to risk, making use of available resources. To collect and record data on fishing and fishing vessels in line with agreed protocols and apply sanctions fairly when offences are detected following the Authority’s enforcement strategy.	
5	Further conservation and sustainable management of sea fisheries resources by developing individual fisheries management plans, and by continuing to apply Habitats Regulations and MCZ assessments to fisheries in all MPAs and implementing management measures as required agreed with other regulators.	
6	Manage shellfish beds (mainly cockle and mussel), so that stocks are exploited sustainably and in compliance with Habitats Regulations, in partnership with other regulators, advisors and the Bivalve Mollusc Working Group by means of stock surveys, stakeholder consultations, multi-agency management plans and permit conditions..	
7	Byelaw development: Continue, priorities as follows. NB: priorities may change according to risk. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete Byelaw 3 Cockle and mussel permit scheme. 2. Complete Byelaw 4 District wide potting permit scheme. 3. Complete Byelaw 1 Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes 4. Complete Byelaw 2 Prohibition of shellfish gathering at Leasowe Wirral. 5. Continue Byelaw review and make recommendations to the Authority 	
8	Continue to develop use of main patrol vessel for research and survey.	
9	Develop Communications and stakeholder engagement	
10	Deliver a flexible science programme which supports fisheries and conservation management in the District and byelaw development according to short, medium and longer term priorities.	

NB:

1. This summary is not part of the Defra performance monitoring guidance.
2. Members are invited to comment on and propose changes to this list to meet changing priorities.
3. All work programmes are subject to Covid 19 restrictions.

Table 4. 2020-21 Meeting Defra success criteria.

Defra Success Criteria and indicators (revised 2015)	Tasks	Monitoring				Lead Officer
		Q1 Ap - Jun	Q2 July-Sept			
Success Criterion 1: IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders						
SC1A: The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts reviewed and updated by 31 March each year.	NWIFCA will maintain an up to date stakeholder database from which permit schemes will be operated to be reviewed by 31 March 2021.					AG
SC1B: The IFCA will review its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year.	Review communications strategy by 31 March 2021.					AG
SC1C: The IFCA will review website by the last working day of each month.	Content will be developed and the website monitored.					AG
SC1D: The IFCA will ensure website meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March.	New website will be assessed against the Communications strategy by 31 March 2021.					AG
SC1E: The IFCA will review all Memoranda of Understanding by 31 March each year. Will be plans in place to update MoUs to agreed timescales	National MOU are in place with NE, EA, Cefas, MMO. Reviews of MOU are national tasks led by the AIFCA working with appointed reps of NE, EA, Cefas and MMO. National MOU are outside scope of each IFCA.					SA
SC1F: By 31 March each year IFCA will participate proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional and national fisheries and conservation activity identified in the annual plan.	NWIFCA will contribute to relevant activity as required and within available resources. Bodies active in 2020: IFCA Chief Officers Group (COG), Association of IFCA, National Intelligence & Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG), IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Defra policy meetings (from 2020 MAFCO), Regional coastal fora (e.g. Solway Firth Partnership, North West Coastal Forum, Celtic Seas Partnership, Irish Sea Forum, Dee Estuary Committees, Morecambe Bay Partnership.					SA
Success Criterion 2:IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Lead
SC2A: The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year.	Review Enforcement strategy by 1 April 2021. Financial risk registers reviewed by the Authority in December and by external auditors at annual audit. Risk based enforcement will continue.					JM
SC2B: The IFCA will demonstrate in Annual Reports work with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures.	Annual report 2019-20 to be published Autumn 2020 and sent to Minister. Joint working to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures will be reported.					SA/JM

SC2C: Record enforcement activity in a standard format, provide to NIMEG and publish on its website.	Enforcement activity reported in quarterly reports and on website. Data to be stored on NWIFCA intelligence management system and reported to NIMEG.						JM
SC2D: The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 April each year.	National code adopted by NWIFCA in 2012 and applied consistently; (see Enforcement strategy). Annual review of the code is a role of NIMEG.						JM
SC2E: The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for <u>all</u> Warranted Officers.	New IFCOs trained to comply with code. Performance assessed and monitored by the Head of Enforcement and discussed in annual appraisals. Training to be kept up to date.						JM
SC2F: Warranted Officers attain accreditation. <u>All</u> undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD).	The Authority will contribute to development of national IFCA Training programme. Mandatory training of all IFCOs to be maintained to nationally agreed standards. All IFCOs to receive CPD to meet needs. Training register to be maintained. Training in-house following national scheme, jointly with partner agencies or purchased from external providers to be reviewed. Training objectives to be identified in job reviews.						JM
Success Criterion 3: IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection.		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Lead	
SC3A: IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and report progress to the Authority	Government MPA policy will be implemented subject to resources. The NWIFCA MPA Monitoring and Control Plan continues to be implemented. Management of MPAs will be reviewed in collaboration with other regulators. MCZ management will be developed in line with government policy with decisions based on best available evidence.						
SC3B: IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures on its website.	Data and evidence will be compiled in Impact Assessments for new measures posted on website. Stakeholders will be consulted before introduction. Impacts of new measures will be assessed from survey and enforcement data and reported at quarterly meetings and on website.						SA, JM,
SC3C: Management information (e.g. sampling and/or survey results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to demonstrate their effectiveness.	Post implementation survey jointly with partners will inform ongoing fisheries management and effectiveness of new measures. Results will be reported to Authority and on website. Inspection and enforcement data will inform the Authority of the effectiveness of measures.						
SC3D: IFCA will develop criteria-based management options, explained to	New management measures will be developed after assessment of options against criteria defining objectives.						JM

stakeholders through the website, and reviewed annually by 31 March.						
SC3E: New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales	The byelaw review follows agreed priorities (Table 3). Priorities may change according to risk. Byelaw development will follow Defra guidance.					SA / JM
SC3F: The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from Fisheries Management Plans in its Annual Plan, published by 31 March each year.	Objectives from plans such as cockle and mussel plans agreed with Bivalve Mollusc Working Group will be included in the Annual Plan.	Ongoing	Ongoing			
SC3G: Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report	Cockle and mussel management plans and priority byelaws to be further developed in 2020-21. Science team will develop species management plans within available resources	Ongoing	Ongoing			
Success Criterion 4: IFCAs have appropriate governance in place; staff trained and professional						
SC4A: The IFCA will publish a Plan on its website by 31 March each year, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.	Annual plan 2020-2021 is scheduled for publication by end March 2020 and sent to Secretary of State. Plans include objectives and priorities under criteria in this table set by Defra and local priorities.	done	Plan 21-22 in prep			SA
SC4B: After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish a Report on its website describing its activities, performance and a summary of audited financial information in that year, by 30 November. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.	Annual report 2019-20 to be published by 30 November 2020. Activity in the year and audited financial information will be included.	Ongoing	2019-20 report in prep			SA
SC4C: IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 May each year	Job plans for 2020-21 to be issued by 31 March 2020. Job Reviews for 2019 -20 to be completed by 31 May 2020.	Ongoing	Ongoing some e delayed			SA, JM
SC4D: An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders.	An efficient secretariat is in place. Documentation will be produced and meetings will continue to be run in line with Standing Orders.	Ongoing	Ongoing			SA
SC4E: The IFCA will show, in Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the District have worked responsively and effectively together.	Targets for Marine Strategy and Water Framework Directives will be delivered as directed by EA.	Ongoing	Ongoing			

Success Criterion 5: IFCA's make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives						
SC5A: The IFCA will show progress towards identifying evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year.	Research plan 2020-21 (Table 5) shows current projects, future proposals subject to resources and outline survey programme to be adjusted as required. Collaboration with universities, other agencies, NGOs and industry to be developed.	Ongoing	Ongoing			
SC5B: The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making.	All science work to be reported at quarterly meetings showing how evidence is used to support decision making. A summary to be included in Annual Report.	Ongoing	Ongoing			
SC5C: The IFCA's contribution to Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and progress towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report.	NWIFCA will continue contributions to national programmes and report to the Authority.	Ongoing	Ongoing			

Table 5 Science plan 2020-21

A. Research Programme 2020-21		NWIFCA Role
1a	Continued development of capacity for subtidal survey on NWIFCA vessel – using side-scan sonar, underwater camera and video, grab sampling, trawls and scientific dredges.	Regulator
1b	Develop capacity for joint / partnership work with other agencies for subtidal survey, to provide data for monitoring of impacts of fishing activities in MPAs.	Regulator / Partner
2	Continuing whelk Age / Size at Maturity study to inform management approach. Samples obtained by industry. On-going participation in national Whelk Working Group.	Regulator
3	Continue joint project with Cefas bass tagging and distribution study working with other IFCA's, commercial and recreational fishers.	Regulator / Partner
4	Continued development and implementation of NWIFCA Recreational Angling Strategy to improve understanding of importance of RA, fill data gaps, develop work with stakeholders.	Regulator / Lead
5	Conducting collaborative razor clam research project with industry and Bangor University	Regulator
6	Supervision of BSc project on plastics in mussels with Cumbria University	Partner
7	Initiate individual species management plans as resources allow.	Regulator

B. Proposed survey programme 2020-21 subject to changing priorities			
Project Title	Location	Method	Timing
Silloth sub-tidal Mussels	Solway Firth	Dredge, grab, side scan sonar	Mar-Apr, Sep-Oct
Seed Mussels	Morecambe Bay -South America	Aerial, RIB, AGDS	Apr-Aug
Seed Mussels	Morecambe Bay - Heysham Flat	Dutch Wand	Apr – Aug
Morecambe Bay Mussels	Morecambe Bay - Foulney	Dutch Wand	Jul, Nov, Feb
Morecambe Bay Mussels	Morecambe Bay North	Dutch Wand	Sep, Jan
Fleetwood Mussels	Fleetwood and Wyre End	Dutch Wand	May, Aug
Cumbria Mussels (intertidal)	Solway Firth	Dutch Wand	Jun-Sep
Dee Mussels	Dee Estuary	Visual assessment and sampling	All year potential
Solway Cockle survey	Solway Firth	Grab / quadrat survey	Apr, Aug/Sep
Morecambe Bay Cockles	Morecambe Bay – 7 beds	Quadrat survey	All year

Ribble Cockles	Ribble Estuary – 5 beds	Quadrat survey	March – October
Wirral Cockles	Leasowe	Quadrat survey	Feb and August
INNS screening - Chinese Mitten Crab	Morecambe Bay mussel beds	Woolmer protocol	Quarterly

C. Other on-going priorities		NWIFCA Role
1	MPA management and monitoring – review effectiveness of existing management through Monitoring and Control Plan. Carrying out HRA and MCZ assessments.	Regulator
2	Habitats Regulations Assessment of Bait Collection across all NWIFCA MPAs	Regulator
3	Implementation of NWIFCA Potting Byelaw and analysis of fisheries data through returns	Regulator
4	Cumbria Coast MCZ and management of netting in relation to breeding bird entanglement around St Bees Head. Implement Vol Code of Conduct. Monitoring of compliance and appropriate seasonality of closure.	
5	North West Marine Plan – contribute to final stages with MMO	Consultee
6	Coastal fora: NW Coastal Forum, Morecambe Bay Partnership, Solway Firth Partnership, Dee Estuary Conservation Group, Tidal Dee Catchment Partnership, Mersey Estuary Conservation Group. Attend meetings, provide advice and data.	Participant / Partner
7	Advice / liaison with Dee Estuary Liaison Group and management of Dee cockle fishery	Partner
8	Convene and run multi-agency planning committees as required to develop and agree collaborative management of shell fisheries	Regulator
9	Attend meetings and advise Shellfish Liaison Groups to promote compliance with shellfish waters classifications.	Regulator
10	Facilitate Bivalve Mollusc Working Group to consult on cockle and mussel management in the District	Regulator
11	Collaborative work with IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on national projects - continue role of Vice Chair of TAG	Partner
12	Preesall Gas Storage: partner in Marine Monitoring Group	Partner
13	MMO Marine Licence and marine developments consultations average approximately 50 per year	Consultee