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PRESS RELEASE

To: News Editors

If embargoed state 'Embargoed until (time/date of release)', or state 'For Immediate Use'

TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE

Notes for Editors:

1. The North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NWIFCA) was formed on the 1st April 2011 from the merging of the North West and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee and Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee. It was formed as one of 10 IFCAs made around England's coast under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.
2. The NWIFCA district extends from the Welsh to the Scottish border and includes the boundaries of the Local Authorities that meet the sea, out to 6 Nautical miles from the coast (Figure 1).
3. The NWIFCA is responsible for fisheries and environmental management in the district's inshore waters and estuaries, aiming to "lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry"



Fig. 1. The NWIFCA District

NWIFCA Customer Charter and Service Standards

1. The NWIFCA is committed to being a transparent and accountable organisation. We want our customers, both partners and stakeholders, to know what to expect from us and the level of service we will provide.

Our undertakings:

- I. We will be polite and respectful in our dealings with you.
 - II. We will respond to you via the communication channel that you specify, whenever we can (in person, the telephone, by email or letter).
 - III. We will serve you in a timely manner.
 - IV. We will take responsibility for resolving your enquiry.
 - V. We will listen to your point of view.
 - VI. We will provide you with the best information we can make available.
2. **If you contact us by letter, by email or by leaving a voicemail message:** We will acknowledge receipt of your enquiry in writing as soon as possible, giving you a named contact point for the person dealing with your enquiry. We may request further information from you if necessary to deal with your communication. Answer-phones are generally available outside office hours. Answer-phone and voicemail messages will receive prompt attention and where possible calls will be returned by the next working day.
 3. If you contact us by telephone or in person, we cannot guarantee to resolve your communication by phone at first point of contact. We may transfer you to an appropriate colleague if one is available. If you leave contact details we will try and deal with your communication in writing as soon as possible.
 4. If we cannot transfer you, or the person you were transferred to can't resolve your query while you are on the line, we will endeavour to respond to you fully within 20 working days.
 5. **Application Forms:** We will usually process requests for application forms within 5 working days and issue permits and Licences before the date on which they become valid. We will maintain records of all communications and correspondence. Where necessary we will maintain accurate waiting lists and issue permits fairly
 6. **Compliments, Comments and Complaints:** The Authority welcomes compliments, comments and complaints, in order to help us review and improve our service. Records of this feedback will be published in the annual report. Detail of how to make a complaint and the NWIFCA complaints process can be found in the NWIFCA complaints procedure document.
 7. **How to contact us:** Call in to either the Carnforth or Whitehaven offices where a member of staff will be happy to assist. Or visit our website www.nw-ifca.gov.uk. Or write to the Clerk to the Authority at: 1 Preston Street, Carnforth, Lancashire LA5 9BY. Tel: 01524 727970, email office @nw-ifca.gov.uk
 8. **Data Protection** The information you provide when you make an enquiry will only be held for the purposes of processing and administration and will not be passed on to any other organisation.
 9. However, in order to resolve your enquiry fully we may need to divulge your information to other staff within the Authority. This will only be done when necessary.

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

10. Under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 everyone has the right to request information held by public sector organisations including the NWIFCA. The NWIFCA will abide by its obligations under the Act. Full details of our FOI Publication Scheme are on the NWIFCA website listing the information we routinely make available to the public. The scheme below shows the information that will be available.
11. In general no charges are made for reasonable amounts of information. For larger requests, charges may be made for copying and postage and officer time may be charged to supply a large order. Costs will be quoted before work is done. Information may be sent by post or email, or provided for inspection at committee offices. Information requested may be on the NWIFCA website at www.nw-ifca.gov.uk.
12. In some classes, information is excluded from publication. Where that is the case the reasons behind the decision to exclude are clearly stated. Excluded throughout the scheme is general correspondence sent or received by the Authority and all information relating to private individuals by virtue of it being personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998.
13. In certain classes a limitation on the age of some documents has also been stipulated. This does not necessarily mean that information outside that date cannot be obtained but it does indicate that it is not readily available as a matter of course within the scheme. If we know that original documents are more readily available from another source, details will be provided.
14. If you have an enquiry about a specific information source or have any comments or suggestions write or email the NWIFCA Carnforth Office: The Clerk, NWIFCA, 1 Preston Street, Carnforth LA5 9BY; Tel: 01524 727970; Email: office@nw-ifca.gov.uk.

NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (NWIFCA) COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints

Our aim is to give all members of the public a good service at all times, but if you do have a complaint we will try to deal with this.

Complaints should be made promptly, and we will not deal with complaints which fall outside a twelve-month time limit from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining.

Complaints can only be investigated if they are of a specific nature and properly documented with full details of the complaint including dates of the occurrence and names of any staff involved where possible. Anonymous complaints cannot be accepted, and you will need to supply your name, address and telephone number, so that we can contact you to conduct our investigation.

Complaints against other bodies or members of the public cannot be investigated by NWIFCA.

Initial Complaint

1. You may make a complaint by telephone or in writing. This should initially be to the Office Manager at either the Carnforth or Whitehaven offices.
2. They will initially discuss the issue with you by telephone and try to resolve the problem informally. You are asked to be polite, calm and brief when making a telephone complaint, or staff may have to terminate the call. If the matter is resolved to your satisfaction, they will

record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with the outcome and record that you are satisfied. You may also wish to make a note of the telephone discussion in writing.

3. If your complaint cannot be resolved by a telephone discussion, or if the Office Manager decides that it is best dealt with by a written complaint then they will request you to make it in writing within a week. Your complaint will normally be acknowledged in writing within 10 working days and you will be advised that the complaint is being investigated.
4. The Office Manager will investigate and consider all aspects of the complaint, obtaining further details from you and NWIFCA staff as necessary. The investigation will aim to understand what has led to the complaint being made and how this can be avoided in the future.
5. The outcome of the investigation will be recorded and you will receive a response in writing notifying you of the result, normally within 20 further working days of acknowledgment of the complaint in writing. You will be advised of any action to be taken by NWIFCA as a result of your complaint.
6. If this does not provide a resolution to the matter, then the complaint will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.

Written complaint to Chief Executive Officer

1. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you should notify the Chief Executive Officer in writing within 20 working days of the date you were notified of the outcome. The Chief Executive Officer will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days. Please include the following details:
 - Your name and address;
 - Any dates when the subject matter of the complaint occurred
 - The detail of the complaint and why you are not satisfied with the initial outcome; and
 - What you would like to be done about it.
2. Please address your letter to:
 - Chief Executive Officer, NWIFCA, 1 Preston Street, Carnforth LA5 9BY
3. If your complaint is against the Chief Executive, or for other reasons it is inappropriate for him to investigate the complaint, the Chairman of NWIFCA will investigate the complaint.
4. The Chief Executive Officer or Chairman of the NWIFCA will normally respond to your complaint in writing within 20 further working days of acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint in writing. They will set out
 - The nature and scope of the investigation
 - The conclusion on each complaint and the basis for that conclusion
 - If it is found that you are justified in your complaint, you will be notified of proposals for resolving the complaint

Help with complaints

If you need help to make a complaint you can ask a friend, relative or local Councillor to help you. Or you may wish to be assisted by someone from an organisation such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Anyone acting for you has the same rights as you have.

Notification of insurers

Any complaint that involves negligence or a potential claim against professional indemnity insurance is brought to the attention of the insurers as soon as possible by NWIFCA

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent that is necessary for the investigation or for legal or insurance purposes. The information you provide will only be held for the purposes of investigation, administration and processing and will not be passed on to third parties except where necessary for legal or insurance purposes.

NWIFCA Policy

As part of our commitment to public accountability we will make a written record of any complaint and retain all documents and correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six years.

If you are still not satisfied

If you are still unhappy with the outcome of your complaint then you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. You should do this within 12 months of when you first knew about the matter you are complaining about. Write to: Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH; Tel: 0845 602 1983, email: advice@lgo.org.uk

If your complaint relates to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 or the Data Protection Act 1998, please contact: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

NWIFCA Consultation Strategy

Introduction

The North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NWIFCA) has, along with all other IFCAs around England's coast, has adopted a national vision:

“To lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.”

Consultation is a vital aspect to achieving the balance of benefits across the sectors and the Authority is fully committed to ensuring that the full breadth of stakeholders and interest groups are represented and their opinions heard.

Some management decisions the Authority takes are mandated to include public consultation as part of the decision making process. At other times it is important to be able to target specific parts of the community that are affected by an activity and gather their opinions. Sometimes it is important to provide information in order to raise awareness and gain understanding. In all of these a properly planned, holistic approach to consultation ensures that no groups or individuals are marginalised, and that the right balance across all interests can be secured.

In order to achieve this in a fair manner, the Authority is committed to conducting consultations in such a way that:

- The purposes of the consultation are clear, open, timely and transparent
- The consultation process is flexible and designed to take into account the number and type of persons and/or sector groups to be consulted, and their ability to contribute to the process.
- The consultation process ensures no parties are marginalised or ignored.

This requires a coherent strategy to be in place, which should be followed as consultations are planned and conducted. This document is intended to form the framework for that strategy and form a guide for the Authority when conducting consultations.

Consultation Process

- 1 Complete the pre-consultation template
- 2 Conduct the consultation
- 3 Collate responses and analyse the results
- 4 If necessary, publish and disseminate.

Considerations

Before embarking on a consultation, there are several questions that need to be answered. A template for answering these is included.

1. What is the Purpose of the Consultation?

Why is a consultation being undertaken? What is the policy, plan or strategy being consulted upon, and what matters need to be decided about it? What outcomes are hoped to be achieved? Before beginning any consultation, there should be a clear idea of what the uthority wants to know at the end of the exercise.

2. Who will lead the consultation?

It is extremely important to know from the outset who will lead and provide a focal point for the consultation. Having a pre-determined project leader means that there is clarity and consistency throughout the consultation, ensuring that consultees how receive a consistent line of approach from the Authority, and that ultimately all outputs are easily collated in the same place, not lost in a variety of inboxes and voicemails

3. Who should be consulted?

Who needs to be consulted to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute in a representative manner? Which stakeholders will directly be affected by the issue? Which stakeholders are not directly affected, but will be interested? It is also important to consider which stakeholders might be difficult to access and how the consultation will ensure that they have the opportunity to make a representative contribution.

4. How will the consultation be conducted?

What methods of consultation are best to achieve the results the Authority is looking for? A variety of methods exist, ranging from focus groups and advisory committees to web surveys and mail-outs with written responses. Techniques will vary depending on the sort of results that are required, as well as who is being consulted, so this question can be answered once the purpose and audience have been determined. Most consultations will use a mix of methods.

5. What timescales will the consultation work on?

What deadlines are to be employed? How long will stakeholders be given to respond or participate? It is important to ensure that stakeholders have enough time to properly absorb the information before responding or participating. This question is linked to the 'purpose of the consultation' question, and should be answered with a clear idea of the consultation's objectives in mind.

6. How will the results of the consultation be documented and implemented?

It's important to consider at the beginning of the process how the outcomes of the consultation will be documented. In many cases there will also be a requirement to publish the results and inform the stakeholders who contributed and/or the public. Before the consultation has begun, the Authority should have a good idea about how the consultation results will be implemented.

Pre-consultation Template

Before a consultation is begun, an audit which will answer these questions should be conducted. A template is given below.

1. Purpose	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is this consultation being conducted?• What is the policy/plan/strategy you are consulting about?• What matters need to be decided?	

2.	Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an expected outcome? • What is the preferred outcome? • What outcomes does the NWIFCA aim to achieve by conducting the consultation? 	
3.	Lead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will lead the consultation and be responsible for providing a focus? 	
4.	Who? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which stakeholders need to be consulted? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is affected? - Who is interested? - Who is important? • How will representation across all target groups will be ensured? • Are there any stakeholder groups that are difficult to access? If so, how will the process allow for their input/feedback? 	
5.	How? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What techniques are most suited to this consultation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter to key body/bodies - Face to face meetings - Mail-out feedback forms - Public forums - Website feedback - Advisory committees - Anonymous survey - Discussion/focus groups 	
6.	When <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target start date for the consultation? • Target end date for the consultation? 	
7.	Outputs (documentation & implementation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the results of the consultation be documented? • How will the results be implemented? • Do the results need to be disseminated? If so, to who, and how? 	