

Eleventh Annual Plan

1 April 2021 –
31 March 2022



Monitoring:

Q1 (April-June)

Monitoring 17 September 2021

Q2 (July-Sept)

Monitoring 9 December 2021

Q3 (October to December)

Monitoring 3 March 2022

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 NWIFCA annual plan is 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 2% from the 2020-21 budget as shown in Table 2. The proposed 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 2021-22. 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 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. Generally auditors review finance risk registers each year, however, independent audit has proved possible in 20-21 because of covid. 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 in 2021.

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 AIFCA training coordinators restructured the basic 1 week 'Torquay' IFCO training course in 2021 into a more focussed 'Competent IFCO course' which concentrates on the core IFCO skills required to operate under an IFCO warrant. In addition an advanced officer course also last lasting 1 week for experienced officers was set up together with short 1-3 day courses on more specialised IFCO duties. In March 2020 Covid restrictions forced all external training to cease. Work immediately commenced to move as much training as possible on line.
18. In August 2020 the IFCA training co-ordinator (ITC) resigned to take up the post of Chief Officer of Southern IFCA. A replacement ITC was appointed in November 2020. In August 2021 the ITC is now again delivering a comprehensive training programme through a combination of online and in person courses. Full details are available from the ITC or the AIFCA.
19. 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:

20. 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 joint working agreements are available from the Clerk.
21. 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.
22. 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.

23. 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

24. 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. Mr Jones was granted a further 6 month extension to work on the Review of policies procedures and governance.
25. 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.
26. 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. Agendas and papers will continue to be circulated to members and posted on the website 7 clear working days in advance of meetings.
27. **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.
28. The Authority will continue to use risk based enforcement directing resources at areas and fisheries according to known priorities and intelligence received.
29. **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.
30. **Equality Act 2010.** As a public sector body and as an employer the Authority will continue to comply with the Equality Act and standards.
31. **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.
32. **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 NWIFCA Finance resources

NWIFCA BUDGET 2021-22 including 2% LEVY INCREASE from 2020-21		
EXPENDITURE	2020-21	2021-22
Employees	£948,066	£1,008,530
Premises	£58,900	£56,800
Transport	£209,561	£178,639
Replace Patrol Vessel	£121,151	£121,151
Supplies & Services	£52,100	£52,600
Corporate	£28,800	£28,100
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£1,418,578	£1,445,820
INCOME		
7151 Levy 2% Increase	£1,337,078	£1,363,820
7251 Shellfish Sampling	£9,000	£9,000
7257 Permit Fees	£65,000	£65,000
7351 Interest	£7,500	£8,000
TOTAL INCOME	£1,418,578	£1,445,820
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	NIL	NIL

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

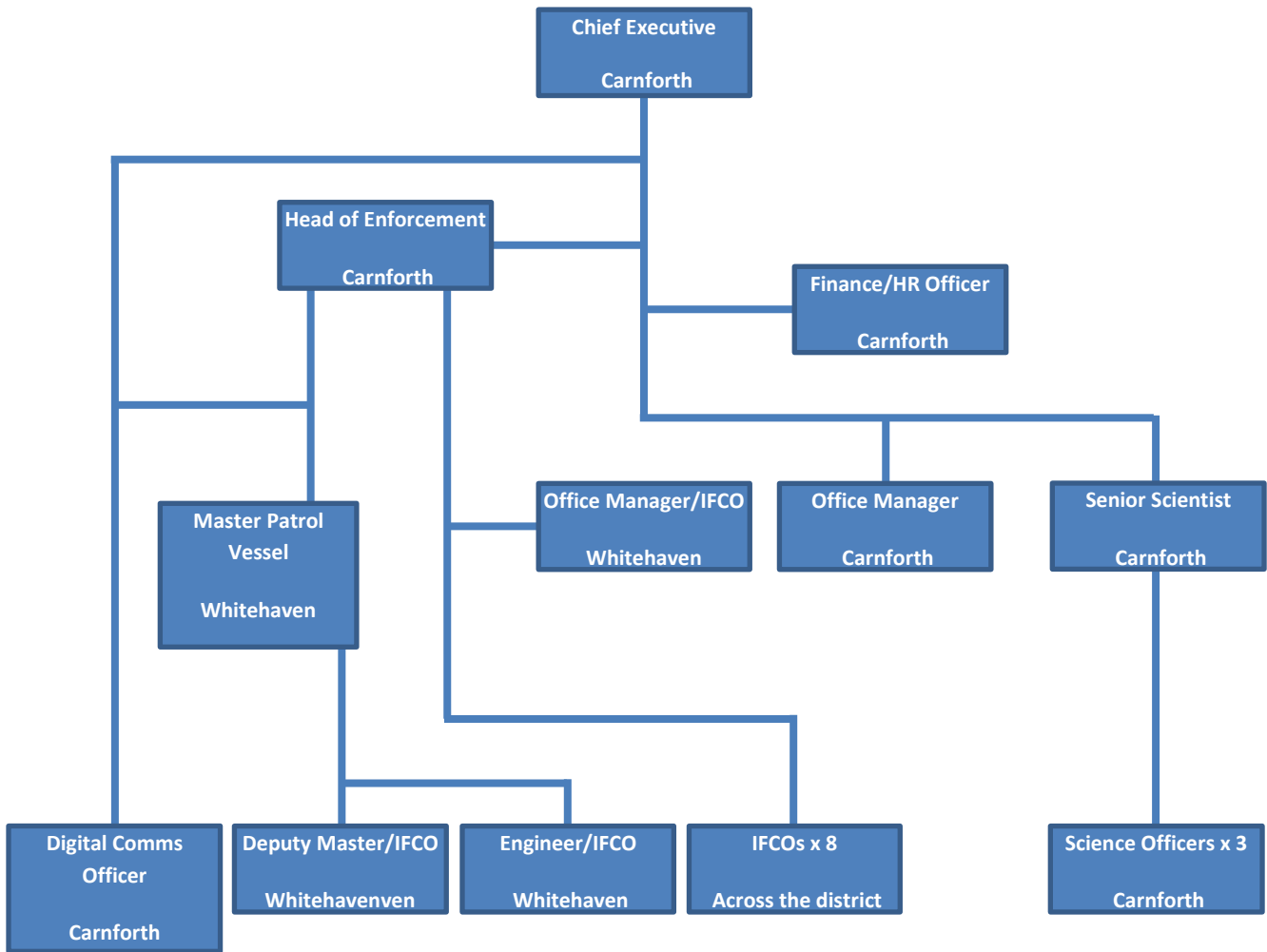


	Table 2. Summary of main priorities aims and monitoring for 2021 –22. See quarterly reports for more detail	Update for March 22
1.	Operate the Authority to highest standards of probity and in compliance with the Authority's constitution, standing orders, public sector regulations and policies on health and safety, financial auditing, risk assessment, transparency, freedom of information, data protection, and operation of meetings.	Policies updated. Audit by 31 March 22.
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.	Training up to date. Job reviews 21-22 In progress
3.	Contribute to delivery of Defra requirements for an orderly Brexit and any structural changes in agencies responsible for marine and fisheries management.	Defra lead on Brexit. Significant unresolved issues.
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.	Ongoing. See enforcement report
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.	Ongoing. See Science report
6	Manage shellfish beds (mainly cockle and mussel), so that stocks are exploited sustainably and in compliance with Habitats Regulations. Work in partnership with other regulators, advisors and the industry by means of stock surveys, stakeholder consultations, multi-agency management plans and permit conditions..	Ongoing. See survey and inspection report
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. Netting Byelaw 6. Continue Byelaw review and make recommendations to the Authority 	Ongoing. Next stage: <p>Signoff by Defra Signoff by Defra Defra Q/A in progress</p> <p>Signoff by Defra Drafting Member working Group lead See report</p>
8	Continue to develop use of main patrol vessel for research and survey.	Ongoing See reports
9	Develop Communications and stakeholder engagement	Ongoing See reports
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.	Ongoing See reports

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.

Table 3. 2021-22 Meeting Defra success criteria.

Defra Success Criteria and indicators (revised 2015)	Tasks	Monitoring	Lead
Success Criterion 1: IFCA's are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders		Q3 October-December	
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 2022.	Ongoing	AG/AN
SC1B: The IFCA will review its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year.	Review communications strategy by 31 March 2022.	Ongoing	AG
SC1C: The IFCA will review website by the last working day of each month.	Content will be developed and the website monitored.	Ongoing	AG
SC1D: The IFCA will ensure website meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March.	Website will be assessed against the Communications strategy by 31 March 2022.	Ongoing	AG
SC1E: The IFCA will review all Memoranda of Understanding by 31 March each year. There will be plans in place to update MoUs to agreed timescales	National MOU are in place with NE, EA, Cefas, MMO. They are reviewed as required by the AIFCA working with appointed reps of NE, EA, Cefas and MMO..	No action required National tasks led by AIFCA 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.	Ongoing	SA
Success Criterion 2:IFCA's implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime		Q3	Q4
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 2022. Financial risk registers reviewed by the Authority in December and by external auditors at annual audit. Risk based enforcement will continue.	Ongoing	JM/FO
SC2B: The IFCA will demonstrate in Annual Reports work with other regulators to achieve	Annual report 2020/21 to be published Autumn 2021 and sent to Minister. Joint working to achieve consistent quality,	Annual report 20/21 in prep	SA/JM

consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures.	application and enforcement of management measures will be reported.				
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.	Ongoing			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.	To be done by 31 March 22			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.	Ongoing			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.	Training up to date and ongoing			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.		Q3			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.	Ongoing.			
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.	Ongoing.			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.	Ongoing.			

SC3D: IFCA will develop criteria-based management options, explained to stakeholders through the website, and reviewed annually by 31 March.	New management measures will be developed after assessment of options against criteria defining objectives.	Ongoing.				JM
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.	Ongoing				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.	22/23 plan published December 2021.	21/22 and 22/23 plan monitoring ongoing.				SA / JM
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 2021/22. Science team will develop species management plans within available resources	Ongoing				
Success Criterion 4: IFCA's 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 2022-2023 published by end March 2022 and sent to Secretary of State. Plans include objectives and priorities under criteria in this table set by Defra and local priorities.	22/23 plan published December 2021				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 20/21 to be published by 30 December 2021. Activity in the year and audited financial information will be included.	Ann Report 20/21 in prep				SA
SC4C: IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for <u>all</u> staff will have been completed by 31 May each year	Job plans 22/23 in prep. Job Reviews 22/23 not yet commenced.	Ongoing.				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 See reports				SA
SC4E: The IFCA will show, in Annual Report, how marine, land and water management	Targets for Marine Strategy and Water Framework Directives will be delivered as directed by EA.	No outstanding actions identified				

mechanisms in the District have worked responsively and effectively together.						
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 2022-23 in prep 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				
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.				
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				

Table 4 Science plan 2021-22

A. Research Programme 2021-22		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 2021-22 subject to changing priorities. Survey programmes were adjusted in Q1 to bring forward cockle and mussel surveys to increase flexibility in the timing of fisheries. See 2021 June and September science reports for updated survey dates			
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