

# NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting

## 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019; 11.00 a.m.

# AGENDA ITEM 12

### NWIFCA REVIEW

**Purpose of Report:** To agree resolutions relating to the proposed review.

#### **Resolutions:**

1. Agree whether a review is desirable now, see risks below.  
If the above is agreed:
2. Agree maximum cost from 2020-21 budget e.g.5K. 10K, 15K.
3. Finance Committee to agree levy increase to cover cost.
4. RFO to draft a specification for the review to be approved by members;
5. RFO to seek at least 3 quotes.

#### **Background**

1. **18<sup>th</sup> June 2018 Quarterly:** A general review of NWIFCA was proposed by the Chairman in a tabled paper and agreed in principle. Chairman should investigate support for a review and possible financial assistance from the NWIFCA funding Authorities.
2. **6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 Quarterly.** Chairman considered the Authority should fund the review from its budget. He had a meeting with NW Employers on 7<sup>th</sup> December to explore their suitability to undertake the review took place.
3. **23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019** Chairman again met NW Employers to request review proposal.
4. **8<sup>th</sup> August** Chairman reviewed NW Employers proposal with other members.
5. **14<sup>th</sup> August** Proposal at Annex A sent to CEO.

#### **Next stages**

6. To progress further, a procurement process by the RFO in line with para 45 financial regulations is required.
7. RFO will draft a specification for the review to be approved by members before quotations are invited from suitable candidates.

#### **Assessment of NW Employers proposed organizational review for the Authority**

8. 4 elements:
  - I. **An online survey:** questions not yet specified;
  - II. **Analysis of Authority documents:** general list of possible examples;
  - III. **2-3 hour focus groups of up to 12 people;**
  - IV. **Outputs** including written report and presentation.

9. Quote is £15,000 for 17 days work including expenses (daily rate £882.35). Consultants were given the budget of £15,000 before quoting.
10. The text of the proposal contains excessive jargon. Otherwise, the format is similar in structure and content to other recent 'lite touch' organizational reviews e.g. Defra 4 year report to Parliament 2018; Review of the AIFCA 2019; Defra review of IFCA (not yet reported).
11. The time allocated is short for consultants with no background knowledge of NWIFCA to engage with detail. It may not provide adequate in depth analysis for member's purposes.
12. Focus groups and 1 to 1 interviews generate mostly 'soft' non-quantitative, anecdotal evidence. They risk giving undue weight to loudest and most critical voices. Groups of 12 are relatively large.

### **Timing risks**

13. IFCA are currently believed to be seen by Government positively. IFCA's have delivered Ministerial priorities over the last decade. For example IFCA's protected Ministers from attack over European Marine sites and more recently have supported Ministers by helping to establish and manage a large and complex suite of MPA in English inshore waters.
14. The two recent reviews of IFCA ('The 2018 statutory 4 year report to Parliament on the conduct and operation of IFCA' and the 'RPA review of IFCA' for Defra) will both likely reduce the national impact of another review of a single IFCA. It may be appropriate to see the Defra review and use it to inform the purpose and terms of a NWIFCA review.
15. Political uncertainty (Brexit, possible election, spending review, priorities of the new MMO CEO) could all lead to attempts at reorganizing fisheries management in England. A NWIFCA review could provide material seen as supportive of efforts to save money through integration and increase the likelihood of a reconfiguration of marine regulators. It could have a very short shelf life! The current political environment may indicate that there is sense in awaiting a more stable climate in an attempt to ensure the NWIFCA review is up to date and relevant for future policy in the longer term.
16. Whatever is the outcome of any or all of the above, a significant review of English inshore fisheries management is expected which is unlikely to be influenced by a review of NWIFCA. A critical review of NWIFCA could place the Authority in a weaker position from which to influence and negotiate into and out of whatever happens next.

**CEO**  
**29 August 2019**