

Seventh annual plan

April 2017 – April 2018

Draft 29-11-16



Contents

	Page
Background	2
Fishing in the District	4
Finance	4
Main priorities 2017-8	5
Meeting Defra criteria	6
Science	10

Background

1. **Plan format.** The Authority resolved in 2012 that the annual plan should be a live working document on the website where it can be adapted and amended according to changing priorities during the year. Natural England (NE), Environment Agency (EA) and Marine Management Organisation (MMO) are invited to contribute their objectives for the District so that this Authority works in partnership to deliver common priorities.
2. **Authority remit.** NWIFCA is the lead regulator under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA) for protection of the marine environment and sustainable use of inshore fisheries within its District. Its duties are defined in Sections 153 to 184. The main fisheries of the District are in Table 1.
3. **Audience.** MCAA s177 requires each IFCA to publish and send to the Secretary of State before 1 April each year, a plan setting out the Authority's main objectives and priorities for the year.
4. **Vision.** Defra defined an IFCA vision in 2009: to lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries in its District by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.
5. **Finance.** Table 2 shows the summary budget for 2017-18. As in 5 previous years, there is no increase in the levy for core costs so effectively the budget represents a cut of the annual rate of inflation. As resolved by the Authority in 2013, the levy is increased by 2% and will be similarly increased by 2% per year in future to provide funding for the replacement patrol vessel.
6. **Performance monitoring.** Table 3 shows the main local priorities for 2017-8. Defra provided new performance monitoring guidance in 2015 which was published in the 2016-7 plan. Table 4 shows the success criteria and indicators with the main tasks proposed by the Authority to achieve the criteria in 2017-8.
7. **Risk Management.** The Authority's risk strategy is available from the office. Risk registers are reviewed each year as part of the Audit most recently in July 2016.
8. **Health and safety.** The Authority maintains an H&S policy which is available from the Clerk. It is updated and maintained with support from an external qualified H&S advisor. The policy and any incidents are reviewed for each quarterly meeting.
9. **Working in Partnership.** Joint working with other agencies, NGO and stakeholders is a high government priority. Core elements of the NWIFCA work programme will continue to be set by Defra in 2017-8. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with MMO, EA, NE and Cefas are in place. NE, MMO and EA have reserved places on the Authority. Cumbria Wildlife Trust, RSPB, North West Coastal Forum and other NGO have members appointed by MMO. In addition, NWIFCA has objectives for good management in common with Gangmaster Licensing Authority (GLA); 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. The NWIFCA consults relevant conservation and fisheries NGO in its policy development and byelaw making processes.
10. **Membership and governance** The Authority has up to 30 members as defined in SI2200, 2010. Current Members are listed on the website. New Authority members receive an induction pack of information about the IFCA and the role of members. MMO provide training for new members and the Authority provides awareness days to inform members about its work.

11. The Authority will continue to meet quarterly in 2017-8. Meetings are open to the public. Standing Orders under review in 2016-7 are in the Constitution and on the website. . Whenever possible, meeting papers are posted on the website 7 days in advance.
12. Membership of committees is defined in standing orders. The Authority has 3 standing committees:
 - I. Technical Science and Byelaws (TSB) oversees the policies and work of the Authority. Meetings are open to the public. Dates and venues are on the website.
 - II. The Finance Committee is responsible for the budget. All Councils are members. Meetings are closed.
 - III. A Chairman's and Standards Committee meets as required to consider sensitive, urgent or confidential matters. Meetings are closed
13. **Enforcement** The Authority aims to be an efficient and fair regulator, using a range of measures and sanctions defined in an enforcement strategy which complies with the Regulators' Compliance Code, Hampton Principle's and other current legislative requirements.
14. **Equality Act 2010.** As a public sector body and as an employer the Authority will comply with the Equality Act and standards.
15. **Corporate monitoring policies.** The Authority is committed to being transparent and accountable. We want our partners and stakeholders to know what to expect from us and the level of service we will provide. Standing Orders, Financial regulations, Customer service standard, a Freedom of Information Act publication scheme and a complaints procedure are compiled into a NWIFC constitution available from the NWIFCA Office and on the website.
16. **Science and Research** (Table 5). The team of 3 scientists cover survey, development of fisheries management, impact assessment including Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA), byelaw and regulatory impact assessments (RIA), development consultation responses and a wide variety of research projects.

Table 1. Fishing in the District

Species	Gear	Area	Season
Cockle	Hand gathering, occasional dredge	Solway, Morecambe Bay, Ribble, Wirral, Dee Estuary	All year round
Mussel	Hand gathering of seed and size mussel. Seed dredging in Morecambe Bay	Solway, Morecambe Bay, Ribble, Wirral, Dee Estuary	Size all year round 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 mainly outside the District. Landed in Whitehaven	
Queen Scallops	Dredge	North, outer Solway, mostly outside District. Landed in Whitehaven	
Whelk	pots	North mostly 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. Budget 2017-8

As in previous years budget includes 2% levy increase to finance patrol vessel

EXPENDITURE	2016-17	2017-18
Employees	£892,417	£888,227
Premises	£55,150	£56,800
Transport	£276,587	£301,232
Supplies & Services	£57,800	£61,400
Corporate	£30,300	£30,800
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£1,312,254	£1,338,459

INCOME

7151 Levy 2% Increase	£1,235,254	£1,259,959
7251 Shellfish Sampling	£15,000	£7,000
7257 Permit Fees	£58,000	£64,000
7351 Interest	£4,000	£7,500
TOTAL INCOME	£1,312,254	£1,338,459

SURPLUS/DEFICIT	NIL	NIL
------------------------	------------	------------

Table 3. The main priorities and objectives for 2017 –18

1.	To 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, operation of meetings.	
2.	To 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.	To 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.	
4.	To further conservation of the marine environment by developing MCZ designation and management, continuing to apply habitats regulations assessments to fisheries on all MPA and implementing management measures agreed with other regulators in line with Government policy.	
5.	To manage shellfish beds (mainly cockle and mussel), in compliance with habitats regulations in partnership with other regulators and advisors, undertaking stock surveys as required, consulting with stakeholders and developing plans as appropriate. To use cross sectoral committees to develop local management arrangements and regulations and to use industry committees such as the Bivalve Working Group to develop shellfish management plans providing documented rationales for management decisions.	
6.	To continue byelaw development in priority order as follows. Nb: priorities may change according to risk. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete District wide Restrictions on dredging byelaw 2017 2. Complete Prohibition of foul hooking byelaw 2017; 3. Develop and complete West of Walney MCZ (Tranche 2) Management measures byelaw 4. Review Cockle and mussel permit scheme byelaw 3; 5. Complete District wide lobster protection byelaw; 6. Complete hobby potting byelaw; 7. Review vessel size limit byelaws 	
7.	To progress procurement of a new main patrol vessel.	
8.	To develop implementation of the new website and use of social media	
9.	To further develop and implement the intelligence management system in collaboration with other IFCA and regulator bodies	
10.	To deliver a flexible science programme which supports fisheries and conservation management in the District and byelaw development according to short term priorities.	

Table 4. 2017-18 Meeting Defra success criteria

Defra Success Criteria and indicators	Tasks
Success Criterion 1: IFCA's 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 maintains an up to date stakeholder database rebuilt in 2016. In 2017 all permit schemes will be operated from the new database. These include NWIFCA Byelaw 3; NWSFC byelaws 9, 26, 27, 30; Cumbria SFC byelaw 26. A new database of fishing contacts and their interests including angling and bait collecting is planned for development in 2017.
SC1B: The IFCA will review its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year.	Communications strategy is reviewed and developed by 31 March each year. With a new Communications officer in post in 2016, a more extensive refresh of the strategy is planned for 2017.
SC1C: The IFCA will review website by the last working day of each month.	Content will be developed and the website monitored monthly.
SC1D: The IFCA will ensure website meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March.	New website will be assessed against the developing Communications strategy.
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. MMO MOU is under review in 2016-7.
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 continue to contribute to such activity as required and within available resources. Bodies active in 2016 include: Chief Officers Group (COG), Association of IFCA, National Intelligence & Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG), IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Defra marine protected area committees and ad hoc policy meetings, Regional coastal for a (e.g.Solway Firth Forum, North West Coastal Forum, Celtic Seas Forum, Irish Sea Forum, Dee Estuary Committees, Regional IFCA committees.
Success Criterion 2:IFCA's implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime	
SC2A: The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year.	Enforcement strategy will be reviewed by 1 April each year. Risk registers are reviewed by the Authority in December each year and by external auditors in May June each year. Risk based enforcement will continue
SC2B: The IFCA will demonstrate in Annual Reports work with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures.	The Annual report for 2015-6 was published September 2016 and sent to the Minister. Joint working to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures was reported. The annual report for 2016-7 will be published by December 2017.
SC2C: Record enforcement activity in a standard format, provide to NIMEG and publish on its website.	Enforcement activity is reported to the Authority in quarterly reports, made public via the website. Data is stored on the Authority's intelligence management system and available to NIMEG and other IFCA.
SC2D: The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed	Code adopted by NWIFCA in 2012; incorporated in Enforcement strategy and will be kept under review. Annual review is a national task.

annually and published on its website by 1 April each year.	
SC2E: The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for <u>all</u> Warranted Officers.	IFCOs are trained to comply with the code. Performance is assessed, continually monitored by the Head of Enforcement, discussed in annual appraisals. Training is kept up to date.
SC2F: Warranted Officers attain accreditation. (Not yet available. Aims to provide national common training and skills for enforcement officers in a range of regulatory agencies. Development of accreditation will continue in 2017. Previous progress was slower than expected due to resource constraints. In future all NWIFCOs should be accredited.) <u>All</u> undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD).	The Authority will contribute fully to development of IFCO accreditation. The Head of Enforcement is training to be a local assessor. Mandatory training of all field officers is kept up to date to nationally agreed standards. All IFCOs are given CPD to meet needs. A Training register is maintained. Training is reviewed each year to identify areas where officers' skills require development. Training may take place in-house, jointly with partner agencies or purchased from external providers. The training objectives of each officer are identified in staff reviews. Training includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mandatory training required to safely and competently deliver each role such as Health and safety, use of equipment such as power boats, first aid, sea survival, . 2. Training leading to qualifications in specified roles such as warranted IFCO provided by IFCA, MMO, Defra or outside providers; New IFCOs attend a standard 1 week residential training course to receive the IFCO warrant with refresher courses at 5 year intervals. 3. Tailored personal development training to meet organisation and personal objectives for each officer; 4. Assessment of the Authority's existing and future skills and needs. An inventory of training undertaken and a renewal schedule is maintained and will be updated in 2017-8 to provide an Authority capability assessment. 5. External training available to bridge identified capacity gaps; 6. Monitoring and evaluation of training to achieve added value and effectiveness. 7. Assessments appraisals, job reviews and job plans monitoring training completed and training requirements

Success Criterion 3: IFCA's use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection.	
SC3A: IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for MPA and report progress to the Authority	New EMS policy was fully implemented in 2016. Management of MPA is kept under review in collaboration with other regulators. In 2017 management of Tranche 2 site West of Walney MCZ should be agreed by Defra, MMO, NE and NWIFCA. This is a complex site extending from a small area inside 6 miles (NWIFCA District) to a small area outside 12 miles (EU District) A NWIFCA byelaw may be needed to prohibit use of bottom towed gear in the District. Tranche 3 MCZ may be designated. NWIFCA will assist planning of management measures.
SC3B: IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures, on its website.	All new measures are subject to regulatory impact assessment (RIA) before introduction and consultation with stakeholders. Impacts of new measures are assessed from inspection and enforcement data. Results are reported to quarterly meetings and put on website.
SC3C: Management information (e.g. sampling and/or survey	Scientific survey is done to inform fisheries management. Data is collected to complete HRA and inform decisions about opening

results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to demonstrate their effectiveness.	<p>fisheries and catch limits. Results are reported to Authority as soon as possible. They are publicly available and on website. Inspection and enforcement data informs the Authority of the effectiveness of measures.</p> <p>Records of registered and licensed fishing vessels are maintained by Marine Management Organisation (MMO). Data for February 2016 shows 51 over 10m and 63 under 10m length vessels registered to Ports in the District. In addition there can be up to 40 over 10m and 10 under 10m vessels visiting the District.</p> <p>Unlicensed unregistered fishing vessels including hobby fishing boats and charter angling vessels are recorded. There are thought to be approximately 300 such boats in the District.</p>
SC3D: IFCA will develop criteria-based management options, explained to stakeholders through the website, and reviewed annually by 31 March.	New measures are selected and assessed according to criteria agreed with members and stakeholders. Options and criteria are considered in RIA and by consultation with stakeholders and other regulators
SC3E: New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales	<p>The byelaw review follows agreed priorities and timescales for development of new management measures which may change according to risk. November 2016 priorities for 2017 are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete District wide Restrictions on dredging byelaw 2017 Complete Prohibition of foul hooking byelaw 2017; Develop and complete West of Walney MCZ (Tranche 2) Management measures byelaw Review Cockle and mussel permit scheme byelaw 3; Complete District wide lobster protection byelaw; Complete hobby potting byelaw; Review vessel size limit byelaws.
SC3F: The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from Fisheries Management Plans in its own Annual Plan, which will be published by 31 March each year.	<p>This Annual plan 2017-8 to be published by 31 March 2017.</p> <p>Annual plan 2018-9 to be published by 31 March 2018.</p> <p>Objectives from cockle and mussel plans under discussion at Bivalve Mollusc Working Group are considered.</p> <p>Objectives from Natural England, MMO and Environment Agency can be included.</p>
SC3G: Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report	Plans for cockle and mussels in the District to be agreed with BMWG. Cross sectoral industry and regulator working groups agree management of cockles and mussel fisheries before opening. The Authority is not currently able to assess MSY for any species.
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 are scheduled for publication by end March each year and sent to SoS. Plans include objectives and priorities under criteria set by Defra and local priorities.
SC4B: After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish a Report on its website describing its activities,	An annual report for the previous FY is scheduled to be published by end November each year. The reports describe activity in the year and audited financial information. The 2015-6 report was published September 2016 and sent to SoS..

performance and a summary of audited financial information in that year, by 30 November. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.	
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	Appraisals for 2015-16- were completed by end October 2016.
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. Meetings will continue to be run in line with standing Orders.
SC4E: The IFCA will show, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the District have worked responsively and effectively together.	Flooding and water quality continue to be a problem in NW England leading to temporary or permanent downgrading of shellfish water classifications.
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.	A research plan is published in this annual plan. Table 5 shows current projects, future proposals subject to resources and an outline survey programme. The plan must be flexible to meet short term priorities arising from fisheries which may become active at short notice. Therefore the survey programme is also subject to change. Collaboration opportunities with Universities and other agencies to carry out research which will improve MPA and fisheries management will be sought and used wherever possible.
SC5B: The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making.	All research work is reported to the Authority at quarterly meetings. Reports show how evidence is used to support decision making
SC5C: The IFCA's contribution to 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 as in annual reports and report outcomes in annual reports.

Table 5. Science plan 2017-8

A. The main active ongoing projects:	
1	National Grid Developments: Morecambe Bay tunnel and North West Coast Connections
2	NuGen nuclear power station, Moorside; impacts on marine and coastal environments
3	Water Framework Directive (WFD) environmental assessments incorporated in Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) to allow fisheries on European Marine Sites (EMS)
4	Marine Strategy Framework Directive responses to consultation and requests for data
5	Coastal fora: Irish Sea Forum, NW Coastal Forum, Morecambe Bay Partnership, Solway Firth Partnership, Dee Estuary Conservation Group, Tidal Dee Catchment Partnership. Attend meetings, provide advice and data.
6	Advice to Dee Estuary Liaison Group and management of Dee cockle fishery
7	Convene and run multi-agency planning committees as required to develop and agree collaborative management of shell fisheries
8	Attend meetings and advise Shellfish Liaison Groups to promote compliance with shellfish waters classifications.
9	Run Bivalve Mollusc Working Group to develop cockle and mussel management plans in the District
10	MPA management and monitoring – carrying out HRA, and MCZ assessments
11	Advise IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on national projects e.g. iVMS implementation, a proposed new Marine and Coastal Surveillance system (MCSS) to be developed by MMO, bass management
12	Advise the development of training and accreditation of officers
13	Fracking light touch now but may need involvement if projects go ahead
14	Preesall Gas Storage: liaison and issuing necessary authorisations
15	Developing in house underwater survey skills and capacity
16	MMO Marine Licence consultations average approximately 50 per year

B. Possible future projects subject to resources	
1	St Bees head MCZ and management of netting in relation to breeding bird ensnarement
2	Small fish surveys - EA joint working – for purposes of data gathering for T3 MCZ sites (smelt), identification of potential bass nursery areas, and overall management of sustainable sea fisheries resource (MACAA core duty)
3	Development and implementation of a 5 year Recreational Angling Strategy
4	Advise 3 possible PhDs starting Jan 2017 at Bangor University supported by the seed mussel industry: i development of a Morecambe Bay bird model; ii A study of mussel larvae transport and dispersion in North Wales and Morecambe Bay iii Study of the ecosystem services provided by mussels stocks in Morecambe Bay
5	A national bass tagging and distribution study with Cefas and other IFCA's. A project proposal requires funding
6	Shrimp stock assessments and by-catch in the Morecambe Bay, Solway, Ribble and Dee Estuary tractor and boat fisheries.
7	Cockle movements and sediment changes using tagging experiments when fisheries are closed. A proposed joint project with Lancaster University
8	Crab and lobster stock assessments in Cumbria area
9	Whelk populations and Minimum Landing Size - Cumbria Coast
10	Development of skills and techniques of the use of side-scan sonar and sonar camera to survey sub-tidal mussels in the Solway, and potential for use with sub-tidal conservation

	features District-wide
11	Sonar camera use to survey Solway cobble and boulder reef and seabed sand movements
12	Understanding the stock fluctuations and industry diversification from trawls into potting in the Cumbria Nephrops fishery
13	Impact of windfarms on fish species and potential for new fisheries in windfarms
14	Assisting lobster hatchery and stock enhancement programme by Maryport aquarium

C. Proposed survey programme 2017-18 subject to changing priorities			
Project Title	Location	Method	Timing
Solway Cockle survey	Solway Firth	Suction dredge (with industry)/ grab	Apr, Aug/Sep
Silloth Mussel survey	Solway Firth	Dredge, grab, Sonar Camera	Mar-Apr, Sep-Oct
<i>Sabellaria alveolata</i> and mussels	Morecambe Bay - Heysham Flat	Quadrat survey / Dutch Wand	May-Jun
Drigg Winkles	Drigg Coast SAC	Quadrat survey	Sep-Oct
Seed Mussels	Morecambe Bay -South America	Aerial, RIB, drone, industry AGDS	Apr-Aug
Seed Mussels	Morecambe Bay - Heysham Flat	Dutch Wand, drone	Apr - Aug
Morecambe Bay Mussels	Morecambe Bay - Foulney	Dutch Wand, drone	Jul,Nov,Feb
Morecambe Bay Mussels	Morecambe Bay North	Dutch Wand, drone	Sep, Jan
Duddon Mussels	Duddon Estuary	Dutch Wand, drone	May, Oct
Fleetwood Mussels	Fleetwood and Wyre End	Dutch Wand, drone	May, Aug
Cumbria Mussels	Solway Firth MCZ	Dutch Wand	Jun-Sep
Mersey Mussels	Mersey Estuary	Dutch Wand	May
NWIFCA Cockles	NWIFCA District	Quadrat survey	All year
Various	NWIFCA District	IFCO sightings	All year
Un-regulated bivalves	Leasowe	IFCO sightings	May-Sep
Un-regulated bivalves	Duddon Estuary	IFCO sightings	May-Sep
Small Fish Surveys	NWIFCA District	EA WFD compliant SOP	Spring + Autumn