

**Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority
Full Authority Meeting
18th March 2021**

D&S IFCA's Mariculture Strategy 2021

Recommendation:

That Members agree to adopt the draft D&S IFCA's Mariculture Strategy 2021

This paper provides overview of the aims and content of D&S IFCA's Mariculture Strategy (Version 2), and outlines the next steps for implementation of the Strategy.

Background and Aims

This Mariculture Strategy has been developed to highlight core areas where D&S IFCA may have the opportunity to work with the mariculture sector to evaluate and advance mariculture opportunities and provide information to those interested in entering this sector.

This Strategy not only serves to guide the mariculture-relevant work of D&S IFCA, but may also be used by a range of stakeholders including mariculture producers, other legitimate users of the sea and their collective supply chain partners, regulators, researchers, strategic mariculture interests, NGOs, and developers whose activities may affect mariculture activities or the nearby waters.

In developing the Mariculture Strategy, D&S IFCA has consulted with key mariculture stakeholders within its District, attended multiple conferences and symposiums relevant to the current state of regional UK aquaculture, and conducted reviews of the relevant scientific, industry and policy literature.

Content

Following an introductory section, the high-level aims of the Strategy are set out in the 'Aims and Objectives' section (Section 2). Section 3 provides key information on the national and regional context in which this Strategy sits, and is followed by an outline of the current state of mariculture – in the District and more broadly (Section 4).

D&S IFCA has identified key actions to achieve the Aims and Objectives with associated realistic timeframes for delivery. These specific actions refer to the key challenges and factors influencing mariculture in D&S IFCA's District (Section 5), and are also included in full in Annex 1 to the Strategy. The final two sections outline the wider benefits (Section 6) and external costs/ impacts (Section 7) of mariculture. These sections introduce the evidence base that D&S IFCA can use when considering the implications of potential new mariculture developments within the District. Finally, Annex 2 outlines the Regulatory Framework in which mariculturists must operate in the District, and provides space for a subsequent Mariculture Resource Pack, to be developed as a key action from this Strategy.

Next Steps

D&S IFCA's Mariculture Strategy will be reviewed on a biennial basis, to ensure the most appropriate support for, and development of, the mariculture sector. The Mariculture Strategy highlights 23 specific actions for D&S IFCA, relevant to resource development, activity management, product safety and water quality, and engagement. These actions are associated with appropriate timeframes for completion.

A key action for D&S IFCA is to develop an online Mariculture Resource Pack that can be used alongside this Mariculture Strategy. D&S IFCA's aim is that this Mariculture Resource Pack will be a useful reference point for current and prospective mariculturists who would like to stay up to date with relevant industry, scientific and regulatory information. This Pack, which will include the Regulatory Framework, should also provide an appropriate set of resources for those seeking to establish or expand mariculture operations in D&S IFCA's District, including maps outlining spatial zones showing existing use of the sea space and potential for mariculture developments may exist. Fulfilment of this action will require the contracting of a GIS Officer based with D&S IFCA, who will map existing activities and other relevant information such as essential fish habitat including spawning and breeding grounds, in order to also identify areas where other forms of marine development would not be encouraged by D&S IFCA. This information will also be used in response to enquiries, Marine Licence Applications and consultations on mariculture and marine developments.

Annex 1: D&S IFCA Draft Mariculture Strategy 2021