

## **Annex 1**

### **Actions and communication plan for the netting pre-consultation**

Members of the D&SIFCA Byelaw sub-committee met on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and also on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2015. Careful review on the 2015 “Call for Evidence” pre-consultation material enabled the members to agree on early proposals for the management of nets within the district.

Members were aware that getting the commercial sector to engage fully would be challenging and also too much pre-consultation can reduce interest, however members also recognised that although a pre-cautionary stance could be taken, the D&S IFCA should continue with attempts to build its evidence base with quality of evidence being the key objective. The members recommended that officers prepare and instigate a second round of evidence collection and gap analysis. Evidence collected would ideally include detail relating to the whole district, but in particular the 0-1 mile coastal areas where the impact of netting restrictions was likely to be felt most. All stakeholders would be encouraged to participate but some questions may be more applicable to the commercial netting sector where significant evidence was lacking. The consultation should begin at the earliest opportunity and run for at least 28 days.

The group favoured the stance that the underlying theme of additional consultation publication material should build on highlighting current restrictions but requesting evidence to suggest why or why not additional control should be implemented via a permitting byelaw.

#### ***Key elements of the pre-consultation/evidence collection:***

- Managing estuary and coastal netting using existing and/or new boundaries
- Only issuing estuary permits for seine nets targeting sand eel
- Increasing the size of current fixed net control zones along the coast
- Increasing the 3m headline restriction to a 5m headline restriction
- Limiting or prohibiting recreational netting
- Introducing a bye catch for crab claws caught in nets

During January 2016 officers were able to plan and prepare the next phase of the extended pre-consultation using a similar range of communication platforms that were used in 2015, all of which promoted website visitation or interaction with officers. Communication tools utilised included:

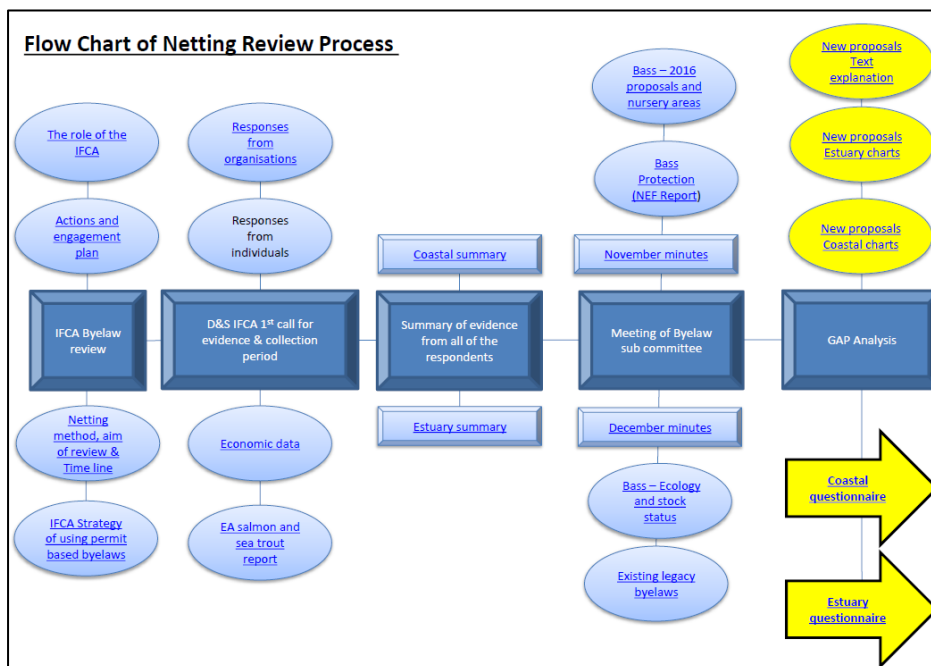
- Printed flyers
- e-mail signature with hyperlink and general circulation
- Twitter
- Correspondence with existing permit holders and other known interested parties
- Meetings and officer presentations
- Newsletters (general and individual estuary focussed)
- Press release
- Officer engagement/telephone calls/visitors to the office

- Drop in sessions involving members of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee<sup>1</sup>

The whole campaign was designed to encourage stakeholders to read and understand the background material and see how the early proposals had been derived upon and assess the potential impacts before completing the questionnaires. Following this it was hoped those interested or those that may have been impacted by these proposals would either complete the on-line questionnaire(s) or request hard copies to complete and submit. A relatively inexpensive subscription to the popular and professional questionnaire platform (Survey Monkey) was again initiated to aid the process.

### The website display

Background information was prepared by officers and the D&S IFCA website was used to display all the material in a bubble flow chart with active links.



The active blue “bubbles” provided access to a selection of important background material for stakeholders such as:

- The need for a review and the mandatory responsibilities and remit of the IFCA
- Explanations of netting methods used in the district
- Details of existing management and control (legacy Byelaws)
- The potential use of permitting byelaws to provide flexible management
- A time line of events
- Summaries of existing evidence/2015 pre-consultation
- Minutes from the byelaw sub-committee meetings

The active yellow “bubbles” provided detailed explanations of the proposals in both text and chart format.

<sup>1</sup> Added following drop in session conducted during May 2016.

## **The Initial Questionnaires**

These were designed to capture relevant information with the expectation that economic and social data of reasonable quality would be provided by those completing them. To allow maximum flexibility in responses the questions were very open in their nature in regards to capturing impact information on finances, fishing patterns, tradition and the wider community. Each questionnaire was area specific to allow stakeholders to comment on the whole or smaller parts of the district. To assist completion of the lengthy questionnaires miniature charts were inserted next to the questions to act as guidance but not to replace the more detailed descriptions of the proposals as set out in separate documentation and charts.

The on-line display and questionnaires were activated firstly on the D&S IFCA “members only” area of the website for a short trial period to assess suitability and gain feedback prior to going live on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

The questionnaires returned during the 1<sup>st</sup> week were collated and examined. There was a high response but the content was not of the quality desired. During this period officers also engaged with several stakeholders via telephone calls, e-mail and one to one meetings. It became apparent that many people found elements of the presentation and proposals confusing and poorly understood. It was recognised that in an effort to simplify the initial questionnaires with imbedded charts, these were potentially misleading to some people. The open nature of all the questions was also not capturing the specific information to be of most benefit to this process and therefore alterations were needed.

## **Modified approach**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 both the questionnaires for estuaries and coastal/at sea were modified. During this interim 2 day period a few questionnaires were captured and were used for summary in either the week 1 or week 2 to 4 section of this document. A few “IFCA testing” questionnaires were also captured but obviously not used. The modified questionnaires were still suitable for all users even if some questions were targeted at commercial operators. New questions were added to better highlight the economic and gap analysis questions. Multi-choice selections were added to some sections in an attempt to narrow and capture the key information. The order of questions were re-arranged to promote the capture of some information even if the questionnaire/s was not completed in their entirety.

## **Clarification Points**

- The various Voluntary Angling Zones within the District do not form part of these proposals.
- Within the coastal zone restricted areas (red zones on the charts) fixed surface net/s (permitted by a tag/s) can have a maximum mesh size of 70mm all year, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> fixed surface net of 90mm to 93mm permitted between Oct 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December only.
- The issue of surface net tags will continue, but the proposals (5, 6 & 7) would have a bearing on this current management measure

A large volume of known contacts were alerted via e-mail to the modified questionnaires. This included all existing IFCA permit holders with a useable e-mail address. Within the “alert e-mail” officers were able to clarify key points of confusion (shown above) and encourage all stakeholders to re-submit their views. Detailed text proposals were attached to the e-mail.

Along with electronic notification, hard copies of the information and questionnaires were prepared by the officers. These postal packs were then circulated to over 130 permit existing holders with no supplied e-mail.

Officers recorded those stakeholders and groups who had been re-contacted via either method of correspondence. In addition to this, a record of relevant netting review queries from individual e-mails and telephone calls has been instigated.