

Ms Rachel Muckle  
Deputy Director – Marine and Fisheries Programme  
Marine and Fisheries Directorate  
Defra  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021

Dear Rachel,

**Re: Devon & Severn IFCA (D&S IFCA)**

Thank you for your email of the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021 to Mat Mander in reply to my letter to the Minister, Ms. Victoria Prentis. I note your invitation to raise issues at the regular IFCA/Defra meetings but we feel that the funding crisis of D&S IFCA needs more focussed discussions. Other IFCAs, through the AIFCA, have continued to support D&S IFCA pursuing this issue directly with Defra. Moreover, I note that the Minister, Ms. Victoria Prentis, in her reply to me of the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021, suggested that you meet with myself and Mr. Mander to discuss the issues of funding raised in my letter of the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021 to the Secretary of State.

I am pleased to take up the Minister's invitation of a e-meeting between yourself, myself and Mr. Mander to discuss this issue, as I feel that such a meeting would be far more productive than raising the issue in a monthly meeting with all other IFCAs present. I would also request that such a meeting takes place prior to any meeting between you, your team and D&S IFCA's funding authorities. Accordingly, I would be grateful if you would facilitate a mutually convenient meeting with myself and Mr. Mander as soon as possible. I am enclosing a paper from the D&S IFCA's AGM on the 16<sup>th</sup> July (Agenda Item No.12), together with two accompanying Annexes. I also assume that all of the correspondence that Mr Mander and I have had with Defra over the last few years, including with Natalie Bown and Martina Di Fonzo are available to you.

While it is appreciated that you and your team have to consider the implications of any solution for all IFCAs, I would point out that D&S IFCA is an outlier in terms of resources compared to other IFCAs and has been since its inception in 2011. The much anticipated but yet unpublished 'Evaluation of IFCAs' report commissioned by Defra reinforces the position that D&S IFCA is a significant outlier on most metrics compared to other IFCAs.

Additionally, I note that the Minister, in her letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021, stated that "bespoke assistance options" for D&S IFCA were being explored by DEFRA.

Mr Mander and I would hope that any financial package that Defra is able to provide would not be taken from the New Burdens settlement and would be additional money and would not directly impact on other IFCAs. You will appreciate that any additional money intended for use by D&S IFCA through increasing the New Burdens money will not achieve the necessary increase in D&S IFCA's Revenue Budget due to funding structure of the

organisation. Any additional money from Defra needs to be direct to D&S IFCA and recorded on the Revenue Budget as 'income received'.

The paper presented and discussed at the Authority on 16th July 2021 places the funding Local Authorities and Defra on notice that it is the Chief Officer's judgement that unless a substantial increase in funding is forthcoming the level of risk to staff and D&S IFCA's inability to meet its statutory duties will be too great and he will not be able to present a Revenue Budget for FY 2022/23 that he and the Local Authorities will be able to agree in December 2021. Further papers to be presented at the Authority meeting in September will identify the resources required to mitigate these risks and will evidence and quantify the level of funding that is needed.

Consequently, DEFRA needs to resolve the funding issues created by the funding formula devised by it in 2010 and which is incontrovertibly not fit for purpose, something DEFRA has been aware of since 2011. The recent announcement that Somerset County Council and North Somerset District Council will become a Unitary Authority by 2023 provides such an opportunity as it will be necessary to amend The Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010. This will provide the opportunity to revisit the percentage of the D&S IFCA's expenses defrayed by each of the relevant councils. Notwithstanding this important development D&S IFCA still requires additional funding support in the interim period and the forthcoming discussions between Defra and the Local Authorities can inform both matters.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr Williams', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Prof. M. V. Williams  
Chair  
Devon & Severn IFCA

Cc. Ms. Victoria Prentis MP, DEFRA  
Tim Robbins, DEFRA  
Rob Clark AIFCA  
Luke Pollard MP  
Ms. Mary Davis, Devon County Council