

Funding of Devon and Severn IFCA

Officers' Recommendations

To note the Officers' report

1. Background

D&S IFCA has faced financial difficulties since its inception in 2011. In March 2021, the Chair wrote to the Secretary of State setting out the urgency of the financial crisis that D&S IFCA faced. Enclosed in the letter to the Secretary of State was a comprehensive report (Financial and Operational Assessment of D&S IFCA – March 2021) setting out the origins to the financial difficulties and the operational challenges that had been presented.

Following the Authority's correspondence with Fisheries Minister in 2021, the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Officer have been meeting with Defra officials to discuss and address the funding crisis D&S IFCA faces.

In 2022, D&S IFCA organised a meeting of the eight Local Authorities to consider options (Financial Restructuring Options Report – September 2022) to alleviate the immediate funding issues and make best use of Defra's New Burdens Money¹. Although there was no consensus in a way forward from this meeting, Defra officials have been engaging with the Local Authorities directly to address D&S IFCA's funding structure.

For the last three years, in addition to New Burdens Funding, D&S IFCA and the other IFCA's have received further funding (Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL) from Defra to deliver additional national workstreams through the Government Spending Review settlement with Defra. This further funding was initially £150,000 in 2022/23 and then dropped to £140,000 in the next two years.

D&S IFCA used this RDEL funding to bridge the gap between the levy received from the Local Authorities and the required Revenue Budget for the last three years. The Medium-Term Financial Plan (2025/2026 to 2028/2029) presented to Members in December 2024 identified the degree to which the gap had grown between the levy received and the Revenue Budget. For 2025/26, in anticipation of not receiving additional Defra funding support, Members agreed to increase the Levies by 6.75% and use £118,042 of General Reserves.

2. Latest Funding Developments

Since August 2024, the Chair and the Chief Officer have been meeting regularly with Defra officials to support their engagement work with the eight Local Authorities. Defra officials had planned to arrange further meetings with Local Authorities in early 2025 with the intention to present alternative funding options to the Minister before Parliament's summer recess.

Defra has recently notified all IFCA's that there is a proposal that is being led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to rationalise all central

¹ New Burden Money has been provided to all IFCA's since 2010

government grants to local government. This is likely to include the IFCA's New Burdens Funding.

The review of D&S IFCA's funding structure is therefore paused until Defra can ascertain from MHCLG how the proposals to rationalise central government grants impacts on the work it is conducting.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers (links)

- [D&S IFCA Chair's letter to SOS dated 19th March 2021](#)
- [Financial and Operational Assessment of Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, March 2021](#)
- [Agenda item 13, Structural review of D&S IFCA's Funding, June 2022](#)
- [Financial Restructuring Options for Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, September 2022](#)
- [Agenda Item 7 Medium Term Financial Plan, December 2024](#)
- [Agenda Item 8 Revenue Budget, December 2024](#)

End.