

ANNUAL PLAN



FY 2026/2027

Version 1.0

26th March 2026



*Image: Drone
footage of the
Teign Estuary*

Devon and Severn

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Contents

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Version Control

Version 1.0: Key tasks agreed by Authority
Members on 19th March 2026

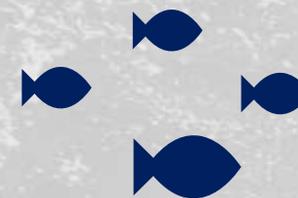
Vision

IFCAs' National Vision

- “To lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental, and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries, and a viable industry”.

D&S IFCA's Vision

- “We believe in shared responsibility for the health and benefits of the marine environment and uphold our duties, now and in the future. We will be proactive in our management to restore and recover marine ecosystems, habitats, and species. We envisage that the waters, under our authority, will support sustainable fishing practices serving local, national, and international communities. We will innovate, and champion the use of technology, the delivery of low impact fisheries and the UK Government’s 'Net Zero' by 2050 carbon target. We embrace co-management and will drive change in inshore recreational and commercial fisheries, recognising their social and economic benefits, and securing a future for sustainable fishing in the coastal belt”.



Introduction

This is D&S IFCA's 16th Annual Plan, and it sets out the known priorities for the forthcoming year.

D&S IFCA's ability to undertake work in pursuit of delivering its Statutory duties remain particularly challenging due to its limited financial resources. D&S IFCA's Budget for 2026/27 is the second lowest of the nine mainland IFCAs and is less than half that of the budget of the highest funded IFCA. D&S IFCA stands ready to support further work by Defra to look at restructuring the finances of D&S IFCA. The opportunity to review the contributions of each Local Authority to the Levy is likely to happen through the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's local devolution restructuring programme.

D&S IFCA continues to be supported financially by Defra through New Burdens Funding and Spending Review settlements (RDEL). The same level of RDEL money has been provided to all ten IFCAs to support delivery of three national workstreams. Devon and Severn IFCA already undertake many tasks that support these national workstreams in the course of delivering its own Statutory duties. This Annual Plan seeks to identify tasks in addition to what can be regarded as business usual to support delivery of the national workstreams.

D&S IFCA does not have its own research vessel and relies mainly on using commercial fishing vessels or remote monitoring to gather data to inform its management considerations. D&S IFCA recognises the important role that fishers have in providing data and that funding should be made available to support them delivering their role. Three planned research projects for 2026/2027 rely on fishers' support to deliver. All three projects also make a contribution towards delivering the national workstreams and the anticipated continuation of RDEL money will be used to fund these projects. D&S IFCA will look to support delivery of these projects by underwriting them through its General Reserves.

D&S IFCA's new Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw 2022 was confirmed on 4th March 2026. The new Byelaw provides the provision for the mandatory introduction of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) on mobile gear fishing vessels. D&S IFCA intends to build on the REM trials it has been undertaking since 2022 and consult on proposal to introduce REM as permit conditions. D&S IFCA will be looking to identify sources of funding for the purchase and installation of any required REM system. In addition, D&S IFCA will look to support the ongoing costs of the REM system by recognising the increased data that is generated and the reduced resources required compared to monitoring the fishery through IVMS and sea patrols.

D&S IFCA recognises that reviewing existing IFCA byelaws can take a long time, in many cases three to four years. Nationally a review of the IFCA byelaw making process is expected. Until the review has been concluded, D&S IFCA's strategy is to pause the review of its three other Permit Byelaws and rely on the flexibility of their respective permit conditions to manage the commercial and recreational potting, netting and diving activity. This year, it is proposed to consult on changes to the netting permit conditions to reduce the risks associated with the use of Non-Powered Vessels.

D&S IFCA has many different types of commercial and recreational and hand gathering fisheries. D&S IFCA shelved its previous plans to introduce a Hand Working Permit Byelaw due to resourcing issues. However, given the importance of these fisheries, D&S IFCA proposes to develop a Molluscan Shellfish Hand Gathering Permit Byelaw, one of potentially three separate byelaws to encompass hand working fishing methods. In this annual plan the focus will be on developing management for the bivalve molluscan fisheries.

Marine licensing and spatial prioritisation continue to be an important workstreams for D&S IFCA. In anticipation of further pressure to displace commercial fishing activity, D&S IFCA will continue to prepare a submission to Defra to consider the application of Measures of Equal Environmental Benefit to mobile fishing.

This plan highlights the main workstreams for 2026/2027, but it also records the many other areas of work necessary to support the organisation's governance and business as usual functions. It should also be noted that D&S IFCA will inevitably be asked to deliver work throughout the year that cannot be foreseen.

Within this plan, focussed workstreams have been marked with a colour and symbol system to depict whether the workstream is a Key Task workstream, a repeating "business as usual" workstream or whether the work is part funded by Defra :



- **New or continuing Key Task Workstream for 2026/2027**

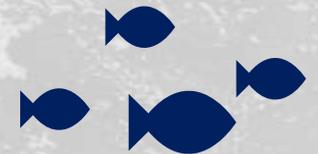


- **Repeating Task (Business as Usual)**

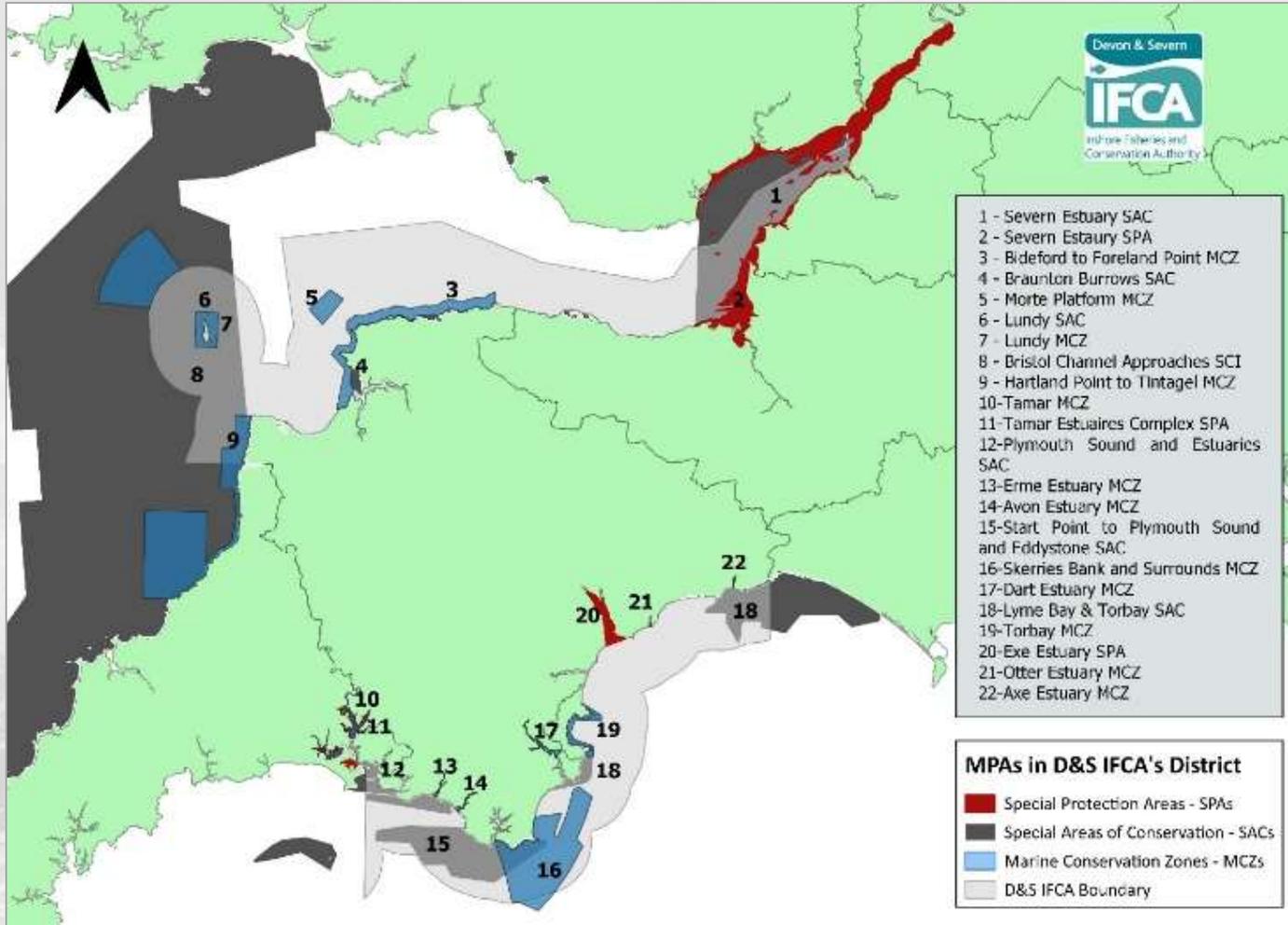
In addition, tasks that are designed to use additional, in year, national funding are shown as follows



- **Defra RDEL Funding**



Our District



Overview:

- 4,522 km² of sea
- 1,314 km² of coastline
- 22 MPAs
- Shared boundaries with CIFCA, SIFCA & Welsh Government

- 42.39% D&S IFCA District is covered by MPAs
- 27.39% D&S IFCA's District closed to demersal mobile gear
- Currently 89.43 % of the area within MPAs are closed to demersal Mobile gear (excl. Bristol Channel Approaches SAC)

More information about D&S IFCA:

To find out more about the work undertaken by the Authority and why it undertakes this work, please visit our website: **Who we are & our core work website page.**

<https://www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk/about-us-our-work/who-we-are-our-core-work/>

Four Permit Byelaws already introduced – Valid Permits 1st April 2026:

- Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw (2022): Mobile Gear Permits: 109 (Commercial)
- Potting Permit Byelaw (2015): Potting Permits: 168 (Commercial) 429 (Recreational)
- Diving Permit Byelaw (2015): Diving Permits: 17 (Commercial) 406 (Recreational)
- Netting Permit Byelaw (2018): Netting Permits: 125 (Commercial) 62 (Recreational)



Finance and Income

D&S IFCA's Revenue Budget for 2026/2027 has been set at £963,800. D&S IFCA's Budget for 2026/2027 is the second lowest of the nine mainland IFCAs and is less than half that of the budgets of the highest funded IFCA. D&S IFCA has revised its Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP26/27) and the budget summary below is based on increasing the Local Authorities' levies and using General Reserves to achieve a balanced budget by 2029/2030.

The MTFP26/27 does not rely on additional RDEL money to balance the budget. However, as the budget summary below shows, Defra's long standing New Burdens Funding still represents 45.64% of the total funding of £896,722 raised through Local Authority levies. It should be noted that the budget is balanced on the basis that the recruitment freeze on 1.5 FTEs continues.

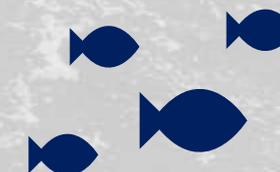
The budget summary below shows that, for the first time and after 16 years, the levy on Gloucestershire County Council, and Somerset Council will exceed the amount of New Burdens Funding these Local Authorities received.

Local Authority	2025/26 Levy £	Increase in Levy £	2026/27 Proposed Levy £	New Burdens Funding £	Variance to New Burdens £
Bristol City Council	47,350	3,314	50,664	50,851	(187)
Gloucestershire County Council	121,267	8,489	129,756	122,428	7,328
North Somerset Council	38,802	2,716	41,518	42,574	(1,056)
Somerset Council	133,167	9,322	142,489	133,952	8,537
South Gloucestershire Council	34,193	2,394	36,587	38,110	(1,523)
Sub Total Severn Authorities	374,779	26,235	401,014	387,915	13,099
Devon County Council	394,642	27,625	422,267	21,382	400,885
Plymouth City Council	39,389	2,757	42,146	-	42,146
Torbay Council	29,248	2,047	31,295	-	31,295
Sub Total Devon Authorities	463,279	32,429	495,708	21,382	474,326
Total Funding	838,058	58,664	896,722	409,297	487,425

It is D&S IFCA's understanding that the New Burdens Funding received by the Local Authorities of other IFCAs is forwarded to the IFCAs in addition to the base levy contribution.

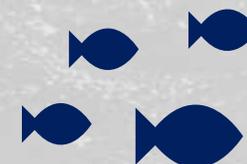
This is the fundamental reason why D&S IFCA is less well funded than most other mainland IFCAs.

It is hoped that this difference will be a key consideration when D&S IFCA's funding restructuring is undertaken by Defra.



The breakdown of the 2026/2027 Budget below shows that over 80% is spent on Employees' costs. Operational funding for delivering sea patrols and research totals £38,000, less than 4% of the total budget. This demonstrates the dependency that D&S IFCA has on remote monitoring and working with fishers to collect the data it needs to manage the fisheries in its District.

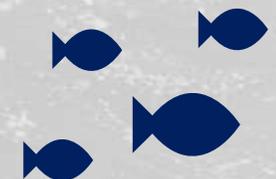
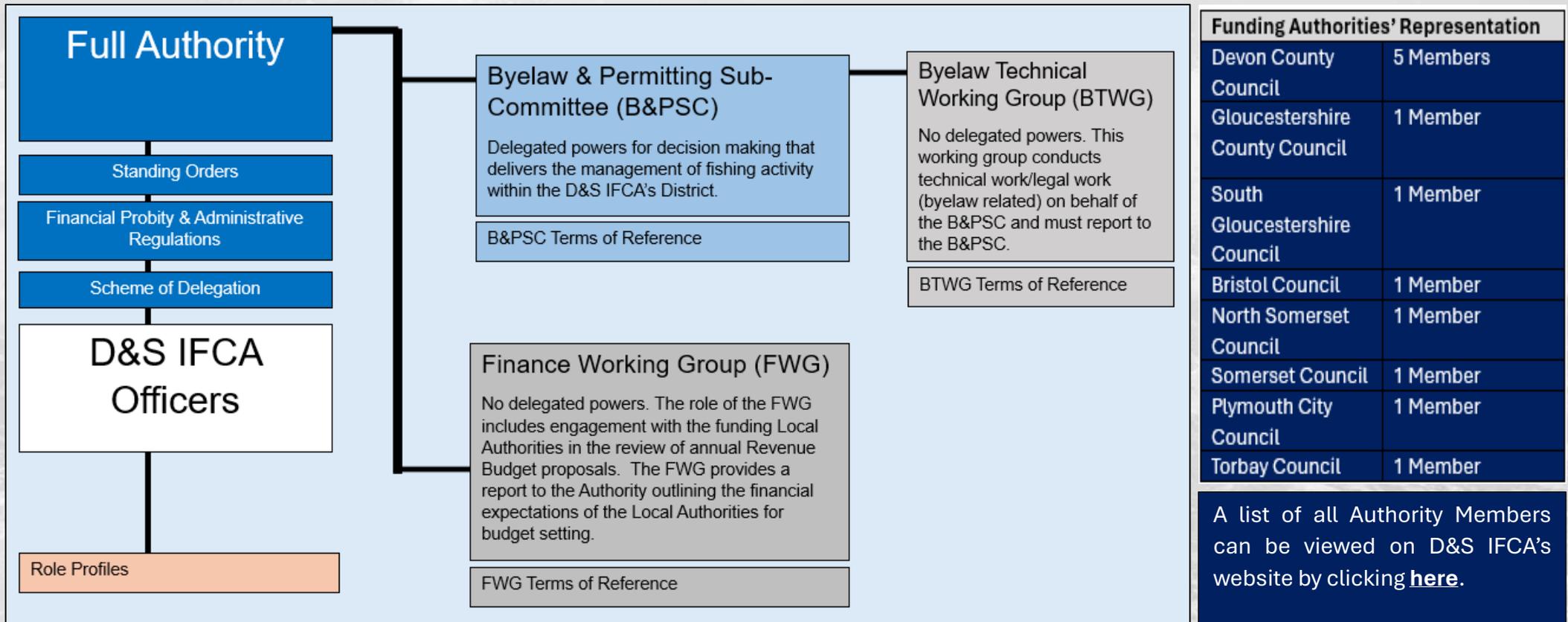
	2025/26 Base Budget	Base Budget Adjustments	Inflation	2026/27 Budget
	£	£	£	£
Employees	780,300	(26,700)	22,600	776,200
Premises	40,800	(2,200)	1,200	39,800
Transport	14,200	1,000	400	15,600
Supplies & Services	69,800	8,500	1,600	79,900
Boat Costs	34,900	(500)	1,100	35,500
Environmental Research	12,500	(400)	400	12,500
Support Services	46,700	(600)	1,400	47,500
Fees, charges, and interest	(43,100)	0	(100)	(43,200)
Revenue Budget	956,100	(20,900)	28,600	963,800
Budgeted use of Reserves	(118,042)	50,964	0	(67,078)
Funding from Levies	838,058	30,064	28,600	896,722



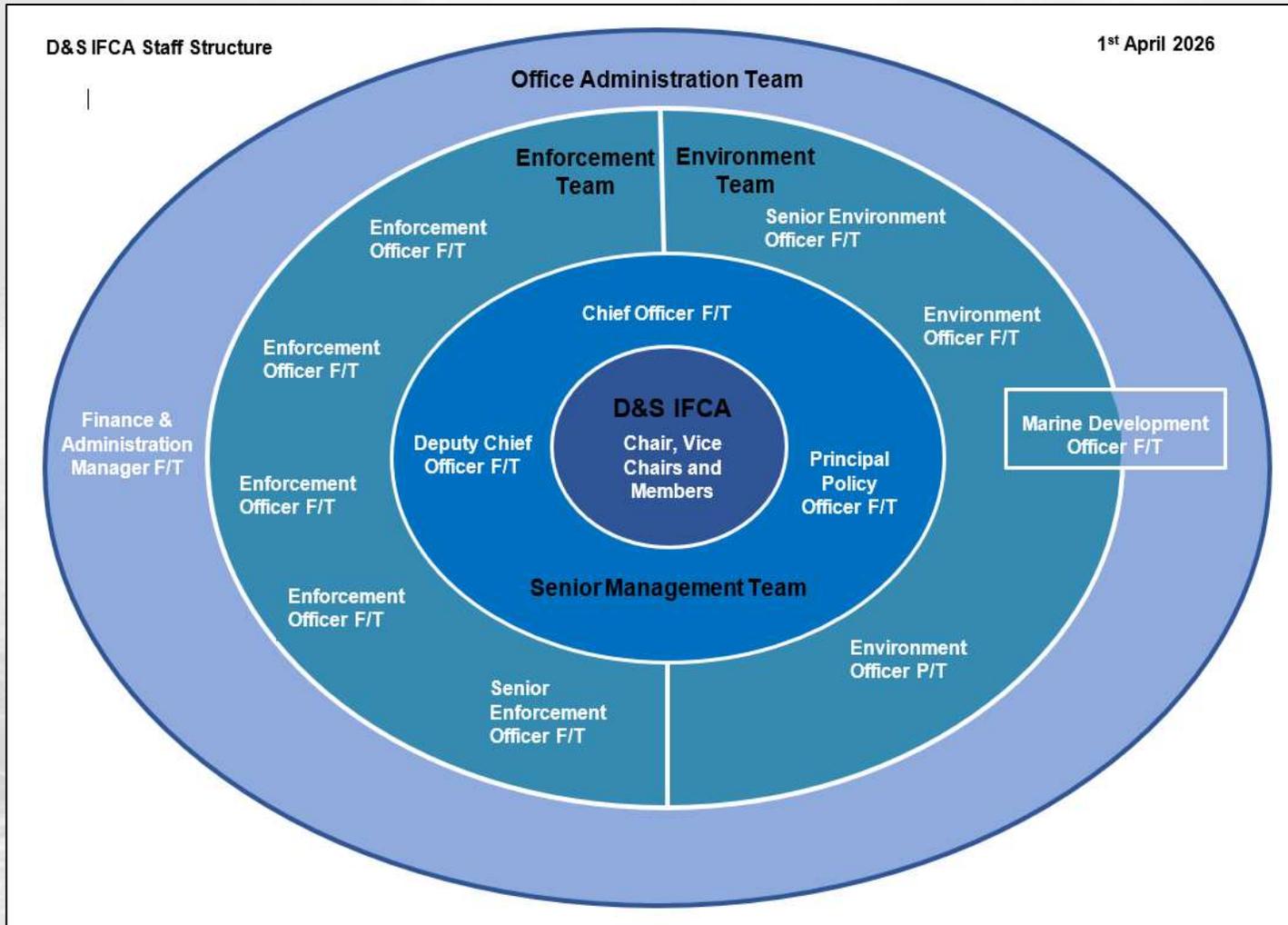
Delivery of the Annual Plan

This Annual Plan endeavours to fulfil the Statutory Duties of the relevant Funding Local Authorities relating to inshore fisheries and the marine environment and to recognise the additional funding provided by Defra for specific work. The combination of Officers and Members working together will progress the Annual Plan.

The Authority consists of 12 representatives from the funding Authorities, 16 MMO Appointed Members, and two representatives of each of the Statutory Agencies - Natural England and the Environment Agency.



Delivery of the Annual Plan – Officers and Staff Structure

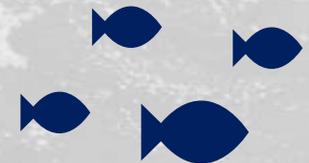


- Chief Officer: Mat Mander**
- Deputy Chief Officer: Sarah Clark**
- Principal Policy Officer: Neil Townsend**
- Finance and Administration Manager: Olga Pepper**
- Senior Enforcement Officer: Gavin Mayhew**
- Enforcement Officer: Jon Norman**
- Enforcement Officer: Callum Bedford**
- Enforcement Officer: Ben Mitson**
- Enforcement Officer: Bradly Harris**
- Senior Environment Officer: Dr James Stewart**
- Environment Officer: Lauren Parkhouse**
- Environment Officer: Sarah Curtin**
- Marine Development Officer: Nadine Hanlon**

Contacting Officers:

D&S IFCA’s website includes a “Contact Us” page.

<https://www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk/about-us-our-work/contact-us/>



Key Workstreams for 2026/2027

The work of D&S IFCA consists of key workstreams as well as the 'business as usual' workstreams that are undertaken to fulfil Defra's High Level Objectives. The key workstreams for 2026/2027 are summarised below:

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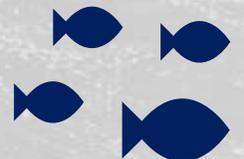
Management of Fisheries Work:

- Molluscan Shellfish Hand Gathering Permit Byelaw: To begin the planning and development of this byelaw.
- Razor Clam Fishery: Subject to the fishery being permitted, to develop and introduce a Monitoring and Control Plan including the use of Remote Electronic Monitoring.
- Molluscan Surveys (Taw Torridge): To undertake a mussel stock assessment.
- Molluscan Surveys (Exe and Teign Estuaries): To undertake mussel and cockle stock assessments.

KT

MPA Work:

- Measures of Equal Environment Benefit (MEEB): Finalising a submission to Defra on evidence and information relating to the possible use of MEEB within MPAs in the District.
- Waddeton Site Restoration: To agree and undertake appropriate works, if necessary, to return the site to a more natural state, including the potential removal of artificial infrastructure and farmed stock.
- Remote Electronic Monitoring: D&S IFCA will look to consider introducing REM on mobile gear fishing vessels.
- Torbay MCZ – Code of Conduct Monitoring: To undertake research to assess impacts of pots and traps on seagrass and to effectively monitor adherence to the Code of Conduct.



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Fisheries Management Plans:

- Providing Evidence and Development of Management Measures: To participate in the implementation of management measures for relevant FMPs and specifically to gather data on crab, lobster and octopus catches.

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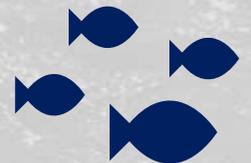
Governance Work:

- Strengthening D&S IFCA's Access to Information and Increasing Transparency: To undertake a range of tasks to expand D&S IFCA's publishing of information, including the outputs of Monitoring and Control Plans, responses to Marine Licence Applications, MPA Assessments and enforcement outcomes from investigations.

KT

Enforcement Team Priorities:

- Spatial Monitoring: To monitor mobile fishing gear vessels using Vessel Monitoring Systems to lower the risks to Marine Protected Areas and gear conflict between fishing sectors.
- Bass Regulations: To recognise the recommendations in the Bass FMP and to undertake patrols focussing on the Bass Nursery Areas and recreational bag limits.
- Escape Gaps: To undertake targeted patrols to ensure that compliance with the crab and lobster Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes remains high.
- Berried Lobster: To work with Cornwall IFCA to standardise the collection of evidence relating to berried lobsters that have had their eggs removed by fishers through scrubbing and other means.



Additional Defra Funding

All IFCA's have received additional funding from Defra to undertake work to:

- **Support the development and implementation of 2 Fisheries Management Plans;**
- **To assist with work relating to Marine Protected Areas;**
- **To assist with work relating to Marine Spatial Prioritisation.**



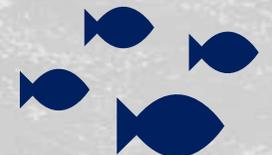
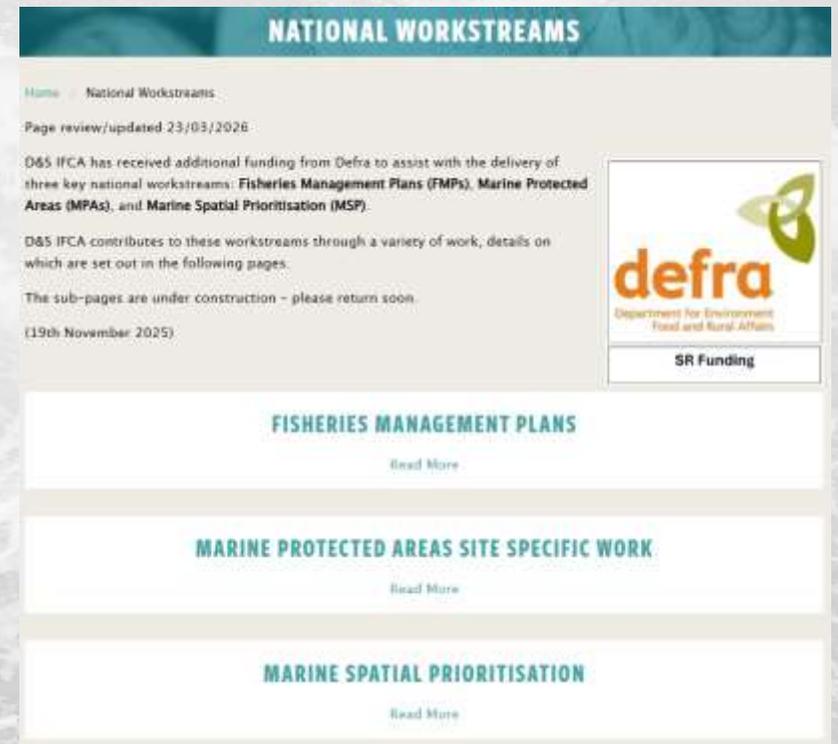
Two of the national workstreams, MPAs and Marine Spatial Prioritisation have been core workstreams for D&S IFCA for many years and recognised by Defra through New Burdens Funding before additional Defra funding support through Spending Review (SR) settlements was available. D&S IFCA also recognises that IFCA's have an important role in supporting the development and increasingly the implementation of management identified in the FMPs

In previous years the additional Defra funding has been used to reduce the levy burden placed on the funding Local Authorities. However, this approach means that the gap between the operational revenue budget and the income raised through the levy on Local Authorities continued to widen.

In 2026/2027, D&S IFCA will use the additional funding to support specific additional projects that align with the additional SR funding provided. The level of SR funding available is not known before the new planning period commences and this means that some of the projects that must start immediately are done so on the basis that D&S IFCA's General Reserves will be used if SR funding is not received or the amount received is less than anticipated.

Reporting via D&S IFCA's Website

Officers will develop three new website pages under the heading of National Workstreams. The three sub-pages (**Fisheries Management Plans, Marine Protected Areas Site Specific Work, and Marine Spatial Prioritisation**) will be updated during the year as work related to these workstreams progresses.



Focus on Marine Protected Areas

Torbay MCZ – Code of Conduct Monitoring:

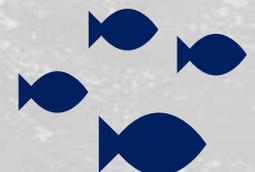
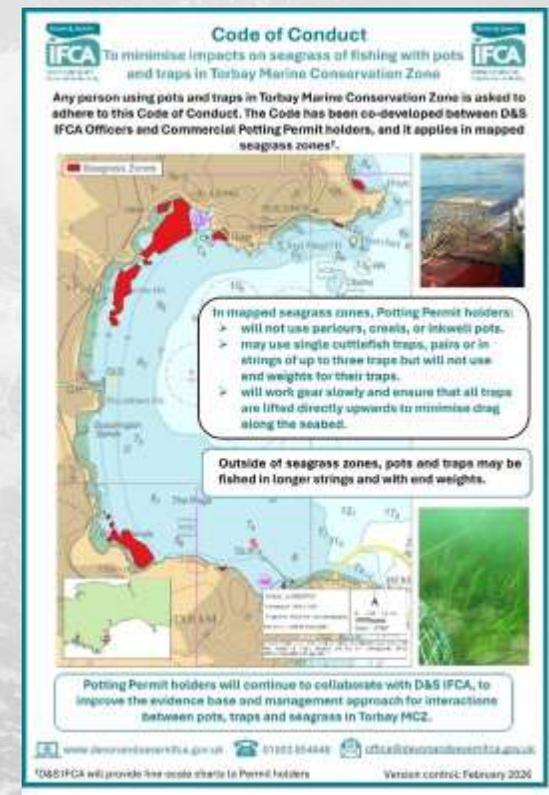
D&S IFCA Officers worked in collaboration with local fishers, who currently set cuttlefish traps in Torbay MCZ, to co-develop a Code of Conduct which was introduced in March 2026. The Code of Conduct aims to reduce the impact of fishing on protected features within the Torbay Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), including sensitive seagrass beds. The Code of Conduct will help to fulfil D&S IFCA's duty to protect the features of the MCZ, but in a way that balances environmental protection with the social and economic benefits of the local fishing activities, recognising the value of co-developing an informal management approach.

Supported by Defra funding, Officers will begin research work in Spring 2026 to further assess impacts of pots and traps on seagrass; this will be assisted by fishers as per their commitments in the Code of Conduct. Fishers that assist in boat-based research work will receive payment from D&S IFCA.

The research work will include attaching GoPro cameras to cuttlefish traps and pots to observe them underwater and when they are hauled to assess the impact of hauling different number of pots per string on seagrass and potentially use a remotely operated underwater vehicle to film the gear and end weights on the seabed.

D&S IFCA will engage regularly with fishers to improve collective knowledge and understanding of the cuttlefish fishery and hold an annual meeting with fishers to review evidence gathered.

D&S IFCA's Environment Team will undertake this work with support from the Enforcement Team. Monitoring will include use of IVMS, direct observation and intelligence reports submitted by stakeholders. The findings of the research and monitoring adherence to the Code of Conduct will be reported to B&PSC Members later in 2026.



Waddeton Site Restoration:

The Waddeton Regulating Order in the Dart Estuary has been held by D&S IFCA since 2001 and expires in April 2026 and has supported mussel and Pacific oyster cultivation by shellfishermen over that time. D&S IFCA leased the Waddeton Order area from the Duchy of Cornwall who owns the fundus of the Dart Estuary, and this lease also expires in 2026. D&S IFCA Officers have previously been in discussions with the Duchy, regarding their decision to no longer support Pacific oyster cultivation in the Duchy owned estuaries in the Southwest. In order to try and maintain sustainable shellfisheries in the Dart and Devon Avon Estuaries, D&S IFCA Officers will re-engage with the Duchy on this matter to see if this is still their position on Pacific oyster cultivation, or whether they have reconsidered this stance to allow the shellfisheries to continue which will aid maintenance of the foreshore through commercial removal of wild Pacific oysters.

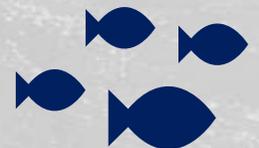
Officers will engage with the Duchy of Cornwall, Natural England and Waddeton plot holders (shellfishermen) to agree and undertake appropriate works, if necessary, to return the site to a more natural state, including the potential removal of artificial infrastructure and farmed stock. The Dart Estuary is an MCZ and any activity on the features of the MCZ would need to consider the conservation objectives of the site.

D&S IFCA will also be looking at the outputs of the proposed project on the Exe Estuary to remove Pacific oysters through a trial of different removal methodologies. It is hoped that the outputs from the project will highlight the best method that could be roll out to remove wild Pacific oysters from estuarine MPAs in the District, including the Dart Estuary MCZ, without significantly impacting the features and conservation objectives of these MPAs. The project on the Exe Estuary was initially developed in 2025 when shellfishermen on the Exe Estuary and a consultant, with the support of D&S IFCA, developed a funding bid which was submitted to the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FASS). In 2025, unfortunately, minor changes were needed and the fund closed before the proposal could be resubmitted. In 2026 it is the intention to resubmit the updated proposal to the FASS once the scheme is opened. The project will trial the different techniques and will involve a Before-After-Control-Impact study for each technique trialled. The level of impact of each method will be assessed so that its applicability for the removal of wild Pacific oysters in other estuaries, which are also MPAs, can be determined. The outputs from the project will be key to look at how estuaries can benefit from using these oyster removal techniques without damaging protected features. D&S IFCA Officers will support the project and may help with the trials if required.

Measures of Equal Environment Benefit (MEEB):

In 2024/2025 D&S IFCA began discussions with Natural England and Defra relating to the use of on MEEB which D&S IFCA is looking to apply in the Skerries Bank and Surrounds MCZ and Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SAC. The Annual Plan for 2025/2026 highlighted the importance of continuing with this workstream and it became a Key Task, divided into five sub-tasks. Although discussions have continued with Natural England, the workstream is not complete. To retain momentum and to highlight the importance of completing this workstream, it has been continued as a key task for 2026/2027.

Officers will finalise a submission to Defra on evidence and information relating to the possible use of MEEB within MPAs in the District. Further consideration on how the information gathered to date can feed into the MEEB process and whether more is required before the submission will form part of this workstream. The importance and consideration of MEEB will be partly dependent on the outcome of the MMO's Stage 3 MPA Consultation and future management of areas open to demersal fishing vessels.



Monitoring of MPAs using REM:

The New Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw 2022 has the scope for REM to be introduced as a permit condition. Subject to the decision making of D&S IFCA's Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee, REM could be introduced formally in 2026/2027 as part of a new razor clam fishery. This will assist monitoring and enforcement of this potential new fishery.

More broadly, D&S IFCA will consider formally consulting on the mandatory introduction of REM onboard the mobile fishing fleet in the District. It is likely that any introduction of REM will be through a staggered approach, starting with the scallop dredging fleet.

It is likely that any introduction of REM will be through a staggered approach, starting with the scallop dredging fleet. It will be necessary to identify funding for the purchase, and the installation of the hardware. In addition, D&S IFCA will look to identify additional funding sources to cover the costs associated with maintenance of the hardware, data transfer and data management.

D&S IFCA has been trialling REM since 2022 on nine different mobile gear vessels. The trials have shown that there is an alternative, low cost, more efficient and effective way to monitor fishing activity at sea. Officers believe that the use of REM to automatically and remotely monitor all the mobile fishing vessels provides the public purse with much better value compared with the cost of at sea patrols and delivers much greater protection to the MPA network. The annual costs for a REM system are approximately £700 per vessel.

Currently up to 52 mobile gear vessels are recorded to use scallop dredges exclusively or as an alternative to trawling. To automatically and fully monitor these vessels for a year would cost approximately £36,400. The primary purpose of the REM system trialled by D&S to date is to introduce an effective means to monitor the activity of mobile gear vessels in respect of MPAs. However, the introduction of REM has potential to improve access for mobile gear vessels, reduce the amount of necessary management measures, protect the static gear vessels from gear losses and gather environmental and fisheries data to better inform management decisions.

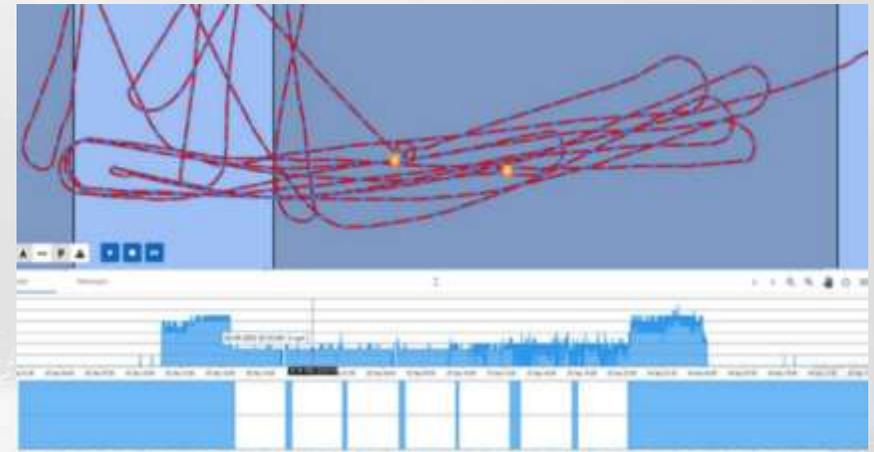
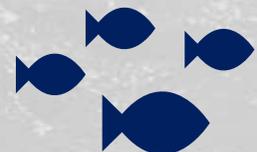


Image above: Vessel tracking and gear sensor information



Image above: Video footage provided from the automatic alert notification



Focus on Fisheries Management Plans

The Joint Fisheries Statement sets out the proposal to develop 43 Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs). To date eleven Fisheries Management Plans have been published, and four FMPs have recently gone out to public consultation which closes in May 2026. D&S IFCA Officers have been involved in the development of 10 of these plans to date. For those FMPs already published the implementation stage is being discussed which includes the development of management measures and how and when these will be implemented. D&S IFCA receives funding from Defra to undertake work associated with the FMPs.

D&S IFCA Officers will continue to aid the development and Implementation of FMP management measures. This will entail attending relevant management groups, science groups and implementation groups for those published FMPs and provide evidence and information to help inform the development of management measures. Officers will also respond to consultations on draft FMPs that are relevant to the District and the IFCA's duties. Some of the work will focus on the Crab and Lobster FMP, in particular supporting the development of effort management in crab and lobster fisheries and the assessing the impact of the octopus influx on these stocks. D&S IFCA Officers analysed data in 2025/2026 to identify the impact of the octopus influx on the landings and value of landing of crab, and lobster on 18 of D&S IFCA's Potting Permit Holders. Officers will conduct further analysis work in 2026/2027 of permit holders landings and sales data, and IVMS data will be interrogated where available to identify the spatial impact and distribution of the octopus influx.

Additional work is planned for 2026/2027 to gather data from individual permit holders impacted by the octopus bloom. Utilising Defra's contribution to this workstream, D&S IFCA is looking to fund permit holders gather data on crab, lobster and octopus catches; and compare new information with catch data collected during surveys in 2023/2024 to potentially provide a comparison of size distributions and catches of crab and lobster pre- and post- octopus influx.

D&S IFCA will commit to using data collection protocols that align with the first objective of the Brown Crab Fisheries Management Objectives of the Crab and Lobster FMP. This will involve liaising with FMP Science Group to ensure that the data collected fill critical data requirements and gaps, and help build a long-term time series of data to support evidence-based fisheries management. Data collected will include information on the whole catch and will involve collaboration between officers and fishers to ensure the data collection is consistent, helps fill the research gaps identified in the Crab and Lobster FMP and can be shared with other organisations to fulfil the FMP objective. The research will provide evidence as to whether the octopus are breeding and spawning in the District, help inform whether octopus levels are being maintained and what management of the fishery might be required.



Photographs of octopus predation in pots © South Devon and Channel

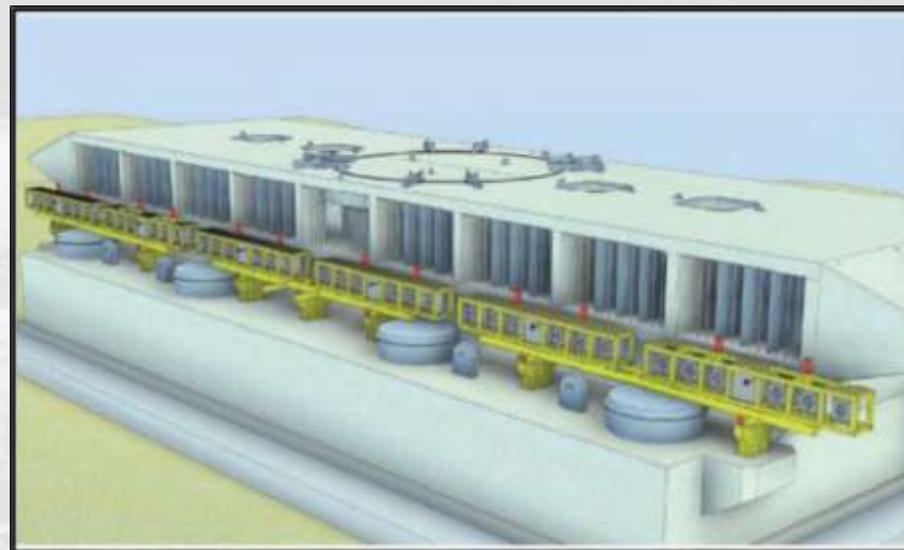
Focus on Marine Spatial Prioritisation Programme

Officers will review and triage Marine Licence Applications depending on the potential impacts to the marine environment, social and economic factors and effect on marine users within the D&S IFCA's District to inform sustainable development in the D&S IFCA District. Officers receive a range of Marine Licence Applications and Consultations of various developments including mariculture (such as seaweed farms), tidal, wind and nuclear developments.

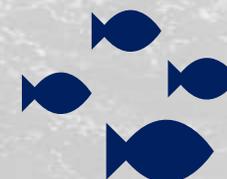
The South West of England has significant potential for tidal and offshore wind energy, including floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea and tidal generation in the Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel. D&S IFCA has been and will continue to review and respond to relevant consultations for these developments. This work will also relate to proposals within ports which trial and/or support these renewable energy development. The Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary are increasingly being considered for tidal range energy projects, and D&S IFCA Officers will keep abreast of any applications and developments that are proposed in relation to tidal range energy and respond accordingly in relation to D&S IFCA's duties.

This increasing interest from developers in these opportunities is likely to increase work for Officers, who will seek to ensure that developers avoid, minimise and mitigate the impacts of such developments on the fishing industry, fish and fish habitats which support sustainable fisheries. This will include direct engagement with developers, facilitating engagement channels between developers and the fishing industry, contributing to marine spatial planning and responding to consultations on marine licences and development consents.

As construction of Hinkley Point C continues, a clearer picture will be gained of how the developer intends to mitigate and compensate for harm to fish and habitats that are protected in the Severn Estuary. It is anticipated that Officers will continue to respond to relevant consultations and engage with a range of organisations as the developer outlines its plans to discharge key requirements of its Development Consent in relation to fish protection.



Drawing of initial design of water intakes including Acoustic Fish deterrents (yellow)



Focus on Byelaw Work

Byelaw development and reviews of permit conditions are the remit of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee (B&PSC). In 2026/2027 it is expected that there will be four meetings of the B&PSC.

As well as identified tasks, the B&PSC will monitor and consider external developments that may influence management considerations for 2026/2027. The Byelaw Technical Working Group (BTWG), which includes Officers and D&S IFCA's prosecuting solicitor, will support the B&PSC to undertake drafting work.



Development of a Molluscan Shellfish Hand Gathering Permit Byelaw:

For several years there has been an expectation by many stakeholders that D&S IFCA will seek to develop a Hand Working Permit Byelaw. This long-term aim is highlighted in many D&S IFCA MPA Assessments, and the implementation of a Hand Working Permit Byelaw has been supported by Natural England. A Molluscan Shellfish Hand Gathering Permit Byelaw can be developed and can focus on removal from a fishery of a limited range of molluscan species, for example cockles, mussels, winkles, and clams. The Byelaw can be the framework for the issuing of a commercial permit with conditions; however, it is envisaged that recreational collection for personal use will be restricted (bag limit per calendar day) by provisions within the Byelaw, rather than a recreational permit. This management approach will reduce administration burden. It may be possible to incorporate a provision for the temporary closure of shellfish beds, within the Byelaw to replace the current Temporary Closure of Shellfish Beds Byelaw. Officers have the view that it is possible during 2026/2027 to develop the Byelaw to a stage where it could be “made” by the B&PSC, triggering formal consultation. Key phases for its development include planning; potential pre-consultation; drafting work; and creation of an Impact Assessment.

Mobile Fishing Consultation Work

In March 2026, formal consultation on potential changes to the Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions began. This includes the potential opening of a razor clam fishery and also a proposal relating to the protection of two mariculture sites. The B&PSC will consider the findings of the formal consultation and Officers' papers during 2026 before potential changes are made to the Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions. The management of the razor clam fishery could see REM used formally for the first time by D&S IFCA to monitor a fishery.

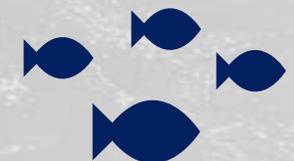
Netting Consultation Work

In March 2026, formal consultation on potential changes to the Netting Permit Conditions began. This includes a series of changes to strengthen the regulation of non-powered fishing vessels used for commercial netting in the District. The B&PSC will consider the findings of the formal consultation and Officers' papers during 2026 before potential changes are made to the Netting Permit Conditions.

Publishing/Reports:
All Officer papers and reports provided to the B&PSC are published on the D&S IFCA website (links below):

[Resource Library \(Section B\)](#)

[Authority & B&PSC Meetings website page.](#)



Focus on Enforcement

D&S IFCA operates an intelligence led and risk-based approach to enforcement. The approach meets recommendations set out in the Hampton Review and makes best use of D&S IFCA's limited resources.

This is in line with the National Intelligence Model followed by other enforcement agencies and improves the sharing of intelligence throughout the organisations giving a better overview of potential illegal activities. This intelligence feeds into regular Tasking and Control Group meetings from which officers are expected to develop enforcement plans that reflect the predicted risk and also reports of suspicious activity.

Bass Regulations:

Following the recommendations and outputs from the Bass FMP, Officers will undertake patrols across the District. These will focus on the high-risk Bass Nursery Areas using D&S IFCA's patrol vessel and drone. Officers will undertake inspections of high-risk shore sites and recreational vessels to monitor compliance with recreational bag limits and Minimum Conservation Reference Size.

Escape Gaps:

Whilst targeting octopus, fishers are not required to use escape gaps in parlour pots or creels, that have a netted entrance, normally used to catch crab and lobster. Survey work carried out by Officers last year reinforced the benefits of using escape gaps in crustacea fisheries.

Parlour pots with escape gaps were found to have very few undersize lobster present when hauled. However, many more undersize lobsters were present in pots without escape gaps.

The reduced stocks of lobsters due to octopus predation, and the increased retention of undersize lobster, increases the risk that juvenile lobster will be retained and landed by some fishers to the detriment of others and impact recovery of the stock. Officers will undertake targeted patrols to ensure that compliance with the Minimum Conservation Reference Size remains high.

D&S IFCA has a Reporting Illegal Fishing website page.

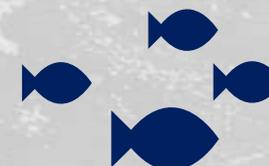
<https://www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk/reporting-illegal-fishing/>

The Incident Line is:

07740 175479



Image above: Correctly fitted escape to a parlour pot



Spatial Monitoring:

The damaging interaction of demersal towed gears with the designated features, within D&S IFCA's Marine Protected Areas, represents the greatest environmental risk that D&S IFCA has a responsibility to manage. Illegal incursions reduce the natural capital value derived from these important habitats and can significantly impact static gear fishers through the loss of pots and nets towed away by illegal fishing. In order to provide as much protection as its resources will allow, D&S IFCA plans to continue to monitor, as closely as possible, the activity of the mobile fishing fleet in its District and, when required, will take the necessary enforcement action against vessels fishing illegally. D&S IFCA will continue to use spatial data from the various sources (IVMS, VMS, AIS) as a component of the evidence used in its investigations.

Berried Lobster:

The national prohibition of the landing of berried lobsters supported enforcement of D&S IFCA's existing permit condition. Due to the current pressure on the stock, both through increased effort and octopus predation, the risk of more berried lobster being landed is increased.

In addition to an increase in inspections, Officers will work with Cornwall IFCA to standardise the collection of evidence relating to lobsters that have had their eggs removed by fishers through scrubbing and other means.

Use of Drones

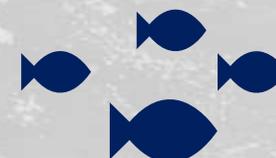
D&S IFCA's drone is used primarily to support delivery of its monitoring and enforcement work. The drone can also be used for environmental mapping applications.

Officers have completed their training on the use of the drone and are qualified to fly the drone in an enforcement capacity. Standard Operating Procedures have been created for the use of the drone.

In 2026/2027 Officers plan to use the drone for Bass Nursery Area surveillance and monitoring of illegal netting activity in estuaries.



Image above: presence of eggs meeting the legal definition of a berried lobster



Stock Assessments

Exe and Teign Estuaries: To undertake mussel and cockle stock assessments:

The surveys are undertaken on a biennial basis and these beds will be surveyed on the spring tides in 2026. The assessments may inform potential management of these intertidal resources. The Exe and Teign Estuaries currently have temporary closures in place, prohibiting the removal of mussels from public beds in both estuaries.

Taw Torridge Estuary: To undertake a mussel stock assessment:

The Taw Torridge Estuary is an SSSI and its intertidal mussel beds are important for the overwintering birds that frequent the estuary. Annual stock assessments are used alongside a bird food availability model to establish the amount of mussel that may be commercially harvested without impinging on bird survival and the health of the mussel beds. The bird food model was updated in 2024/2025. Access to the mussel beds on Sprat Ridge and Pulleys in the mid-channel is challenging; however, D&S IFCA Officers will endeavour to survey these beds in 2026/2027 with the results informing the bird food model with more accurate information.

Officers will continue to liaise with North Western IFCA who have been trialling drone surveys using multispectral imaging cameras that can distinguish live mussel from dead mussel on the foreshore, as this was the limiting factor in previous D&S IFCA's drone surveys. Access to the beds via boat will also be investigated and D&S IFCA will liaise with the Environment Agency to help facilitate this.

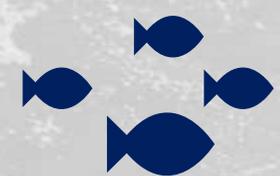
Razor Clam Fishery (Preliminary Stock Assessment):

If this fishery becomes established, the Monitoring and Control Plan will include monitoring of footage and data from REM and IVMS to ensure the fishery takes place on sandy ground and to monitor the location of the fishery. Landings data will be gathered and linked to IVMS data to develop a preliminary stock assessment forming a baseline against which Officers will be able to assess spatial and seasonal changes in landings per unit effort.

D&S IFCA Officers will undertake a limited number of onboard catch monitoring surveys to assess the catch, the proportion of juveniles and record the damage rates of catch and bycatch.



Images: D&S IFCA Officers taking part in molluscan shellfish surveys



Focus on Governance Workstreams

There will be a rolling twelve-month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings. Officers will organise and prepare relevant information for these and other meetings, including the Byelaw & Permitting Sub-Committee and the working groups that have been established by the Authority, to assist with different workstreams. The Standing Orders of the Authority and the Terms of Reference for the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee and working groups will be reviewed annually.

Officers will continue to provide the secretariat to the Authority and working groups. D&S IFCA's Policies and Procedures will be reviewed where appropriate to ensure that they meet legal requirements and ensuring officers remain compliant with these policies. D&S IFCA's Publication Scheme will be updated with more information during 2026/2027.

The IFCA Conduct and Operations Report (2018-2022) published by the Government highlights several areas where IFCAs, as a collective, can improve including being more transparent with information. D&S IFCA is already committed to being transparent with information and utilises its website, including a large Resource Library, to display a large range of information.

Officers have identified that more can be achieved by increasing the level and frequency of publishing of D&S IFCA produced information and documentation and that assessing past work for publication, potential redaction of personal data for publishing, and developing alternative approaches for the display of information is therefore a key task for 2026/2027.

H&S Audit: An external audit of D&S IFCA's Health and Safety procedures and policies will be undertaken. Officers will update D&S IFCA's risk assessments and safe systems of work along with Health and Safety policies where appropriate and necessary. Officers will report back to the Authority on the work undertaken and findings of the audit.

Data Protection Audit: Officers will undertake the annual unannounced data protection audit, examining Officer's personal computers and the filing systems to insure compliance with D&S IFCA's Data Protection Register and retention periods relating to personal data. Any significant breaches of the D&S IFCA's Data Protection Policies will be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Transparency with Information:

D&S IFCA publishes all Officers' papers and reports presented at Authority and B&PSC meetings at least seven days prior to the meetings on the D&S IFCA website:

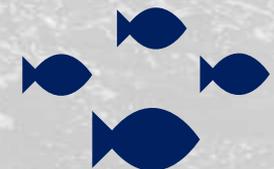
[Resource Library \(Section B\)](#)

[Authority & B&PSC Meetings website page.](#)

Freedom of Information:

D&S IFCA is committed to publishing of information associated with the range of work it undertakes.

All Freedom of Information requests are addressed by Officers within 20 working days after receiving the request.



Focus on Communication Outputs

Communications underpin a range of D&S IFCA’s work including publications; attendance at local, regional, and national meetings; personal engagement with stakeholders; consulting and responding to consultations; and information dissemination through D&S IFCA’s website.

D&S IFCA’s Current Approach to Communications:

D&S IFCA must recognise its limited resources with its approach to communications. The Authority’s website and social media, such as Facebook, remains a key component of D&S IFCA’s Communication Strategy. Due to limited capacity for one-to one engagement, broad communication and engagement is undertaken electronically to reach a wider audience.

D&S IFCA will continue creating news items that can inform a wide audience about different topics, and be used to support communications developed by partner organisations. News items are typically posted on Facebook to reach a wider demographic.

Data Base of Contact and Communication Options:

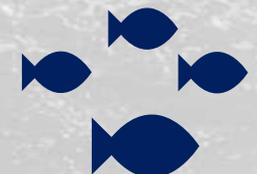
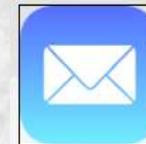
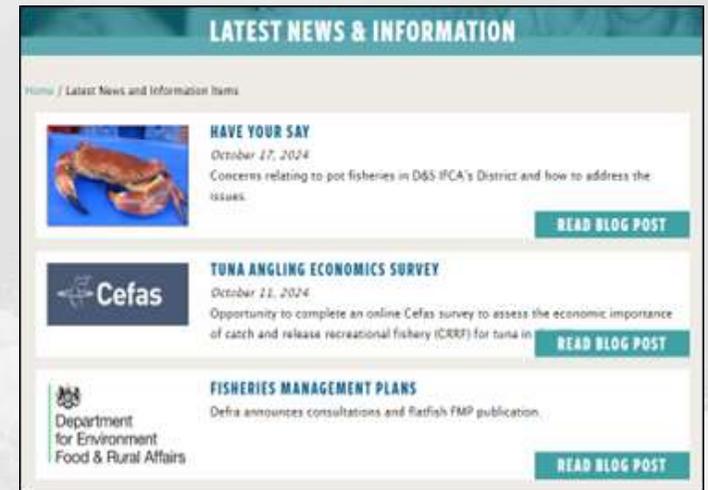
D&S IFCA will continue to maintain a data base of contacts that includes a wide range of stakeholders, and targeted messaging will be undertaken where possible and when required. Mailchimp will be used to reach all D&S IFCA stakeholders for formal consultation. Emails to permit holders are commonly used to update fishers operating in the District on changes to legislation and other relevant information. Hard copies of information are sent in the post for those with no access to emails.

Planned Communication Work:

Officers will create packages of information, accompanied by news items, for pre-consultations and formal consultations actioned by the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee. D&S IFCA will look to contribute to the quarterly AIFCA Newsletter ‘IFCA Insights’.

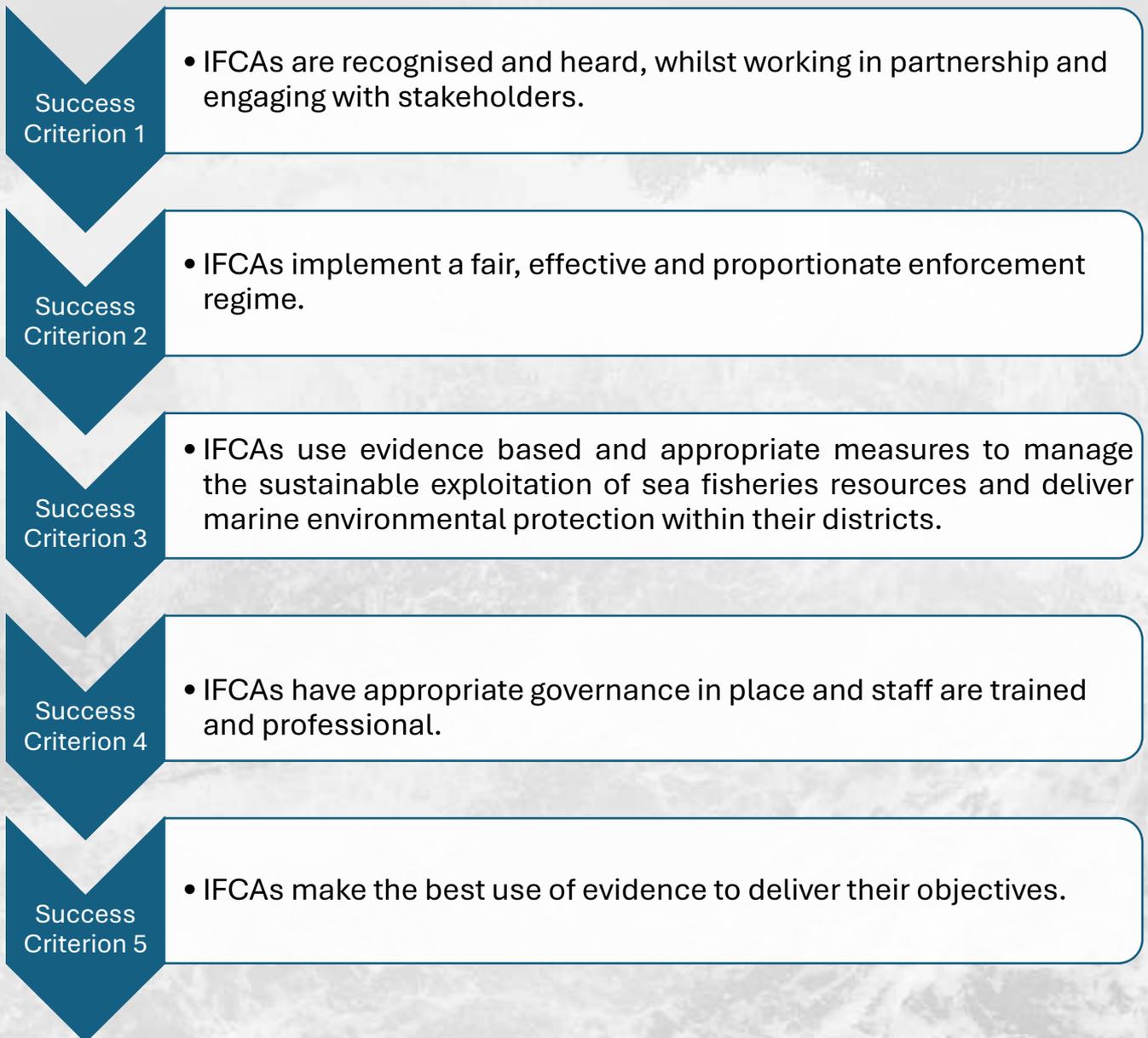
Potential re-design of D&S IFCA’s website:

D&S IFCA will continue discussion with AIFCA with a view to re-designing the D&S IFCA website, to promote consistency across all IFCA websites.



National IFCA Success Criteria

To support the positive delivery of the national vision, IFCAs have agreed a set of national success criteria matched with corresponding working-level objectives. The vision, success criteria and national working objectives are designed to assist in the creation of a shared understanding of the aims and objectives of all IFCAs nationally and focus positive service delivery towards achievement of the national vision. These national IFCA performance criteria also link directly to the UK Marine Policy Statement.



Success Criterion 1:

IFCAs are recognised and heard, whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders

RT

Task 01 Stakeholder Database

To maintain a database of stakeholder contacts which will be reviewed and updated by 31st March each year. This will facilitate engagement with stakeholders. Also, to maintain the database of D&S IFCA Permit Holders.

RT

Task 02 Website Review & Communications and Information Sharing

To review the website by the last day of each working month, and by 31st March each year to ensure it meets the objectives of D&S IFCA's Communication Strategy. Producing and uploading news items on the work of D&S IFCA and other relevant information to the website. In 2026/2027 Officers will launch three new website pages under the main National Workstreams heading.

KT

In 2026/2027 Officers will:

- a) Prepare information and launch a new Fisheries Management Plans website page by 30th June 2026
- b) Review and, where required, update this website page each quarter.
- c) Prepare information and launch a new Marine Protected Areas website page by 30th June 2026.
- d) Review and, where required, update this website page each quarter.
- e) Prepare information and launch a new Marine Spatial Prioritisation website page by 30th June 2026
- f) Review and, where required, update this website page each quarter.

RT

Task 03 Support Sustainable Development

Review and respond to Marine Licence Applications (MLAs) and Consultations. This is an on-going task which involves several Officers. Depending on the licence applications and consultations this can be time consuming and will be documented in the officers' time recording. This work supports the Marine Spatial Prioritisation Programme, directly funded by Defra, and fulfils D&S IFCA's duties to support sustainable development.



RT

Task 04 Considerations of Nuclear and Renewable Energy Developments

Officers will continue to review and respond to Marine Licence Applications in relation to nuclear power and Tidal and Wind Energy. This workstream may require direct engagement with developers, facilitating engagement channels between developers and the fishing industry



RT

Task 05 Participation in National and Regional Fisheries and Conservation Activities

By 31st March each year, the IFCA will have participated appropriately, proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional and national fisheries and conservation activity including attendance at meetings e.g., NIMEG, RFG, TAG.

Success Criterion 2:

IFCAs implement a fair, effective, and proportionate enforcement regime

KT

Task 06 Spatial Monitoring of Towed Gear Vessels

Spatial monitoring of mobile gear vessels remains the priority for the Enforcement team. The damage to the environment and to static gear caused by incursions by demersal towed gear means that this type of illegal activity must be prioritised. In the absence of REM, Officers rely on the data available from IVMS, VMS and AIS to support investigations following reported incursions into MPAs. Where there is sufficient evidence, in approximately 50% of the cases, investigations will be pursued. The complexities of these types of cases and the evidence that is required to support them means that considerable amount of Officers' time is allocated to this work.

RT

Task 07 Monitoring of Illegal Netting in Estuaries

Illegal coastal and estuarine netting continues to pose a high risk to the environment and species of fish that are known to use these areas of D&S IFCA's District. It poses particular challenges to the Enforcement Team, as the netting is normally undertaken by small, less than six metre vessels that operate at night, with no lights, and manoeuvre at high speeds. It is hoped that the expected completion of the national roll out of IVMS to all licensed commercial fishing vessels will provide improved intelligence on this activity and improve detection rates.

Officers will undertake intelligence led enforcement to monitor netting in estuaries. The use of a drone may assist with the detection of this activity as it is expected that the licensed vessels netting illegally will not have functioning IVMS devices.

RT

Task 08 Tasking & Co-ordination Group

- a) To hold regular internal Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TCG) meetings in line with the National Intelligence Model (NIM).
- b) Officers will continue to prepare intel reports and submit them to the national intelligence database (CLUE).
- c) Outcomes of TCG and intel reports will be disseminated among other regulators (NIMEG) in line with the NIM.
- d) Officers will also attend the MMO's Southwest TCG meetings and SIFCA's TCG meetings.

RT

Task 09 Code of Conduct

The national Code of Conduct for IFCOs is published on the D&S IFCA's website.

Any amendments to the Code will be approved by NIMEG and published on the website.

Task 10 Creation of Case Files

RT

- a) Officers will prepare a case file for each reported illegal fishing activity. The preparation of case files is an essential part of the Enforcement Officer role.
- b) Each casefile will be shared with the D&S IFCA Legal advisor as part of the determination on whether the evidential and public interest tests, as set out in the Code of Crown Prosecutors, have been met.
- c) A decision making record of the disposal is produced for each investigation.
- d) A case file summary will be prepared for each investigation within one month of the case being closed.

Task 011 Investigation Tables

RT

- a) To compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and publish them on D&S IFCA's website.
- b) D&S IFCA's website investigation tables will be updated at least once each quarter.

The Enforcement team will further develop access to information relating to investigations by:

KT

- a) Expanding the investigations table displayed on the Enforcement Outcomes website page with additional fields of information and links to case summaries by 30th June 2026.
- b) To review and update the tables/website display each quarter.

Task 012 Accreditation and Training

RT

D&S IFCA will support the development of the national enforcement training programme.

All Officers undertake Continuing Professional Development. Further training of Enforcement Officers will be identified through the Personal Development Plans. Internal training will continue to ensure all warranted officers are effective in their enforcement roles and records will be kept of training undertaken.

Internal training will include:

- a) Scenario training,
- b) Patrol debriefing,
- c) Review of body worn camera footage.

Task 013 Collaborate with other Regulators

RT

To work with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application, and enforcement of management measures. D&S IFCA will collaborate with other regulators to maximise resources.

D&S IFCA intends to engage with other IFCA's and Defra on support delivery of the national REM and AI Strategy.

Task 014 Bass Regulations

A recommendation emerging from the Bass FMP is that the various management measures that underpin the regulation of the bass fishery needs to be enforced more robustly. Officers will:

KT

- a) Undertake patrols focussing on the high-risk Bass Nursery Areas
- b) Undertake inspections of high-risk shore sites and recreational vessels to monitor compliance with recreational bag limits and Minimum Conservation Reference Size

Task 015 Escape Gaps

Officers will undertake focussed patrols to monitor the use of escape gaps in crustacea pots and to ensure that compliance with crab and lobster Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes remains high.

KT

Task 016 Research Support

Enforcement Officers will support the Environment Team in undertaking some research tasks of the Annual Plan. Enforcement Officers will:

KT

- a) Crew the Authority's patrol vessel as a survey platform whilst the Environment Team undertake their survey work in the Torbay MCZ.
- b) If required, support the Environment Team on the intertidal shellfish survey work within the District.

Task 017 Berried Lobster

Due to the current pressure of stock, both through increased effort and octopus predation, the risk of more berried lobster being landed is increased. Officers will:

KT

- a) Increase inspections of lobsters at sea and on the quayside
- b) Work with Cornwall IFCA to standardise the collection of evidence relating to lobsters that have had their eggs removed by fishers through scrubbing and other means.

Success Criterion 3:

IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within its district.

KT



Task 018 FMPs: Providing Evidence and Development of Management Measures

D&S IFCA Officers have been involved in the development of 10 of these plans to date. For those FMPs already published the implementation stage is being discussed which includes the development of management measures and how and when these will be implemented. D&S IFCA receives funding from Defra to undertake work associated with the FMPs.

Officers will:

- a) Respond to the consultation on the four FMPs more recently produced.
- b) Continue to sit on management groups and implementation groups for those published FMPs and provide evidence and information to help inform the development of management measures.

Some of the work will focus on the Crab and Lobster FMP, in particular crab and lobster effort management and the impact of the octopus influx on these stocks. D&S IFCA Officers analysed data in 2025/2026 to identify the impact of the octopus influx on the landings and value of landing of crab, and lobster on D&S IFCA's Potting Permit Holders. Officers will:

- c) Conduct further analysis work in 2026/2027 of permit holders landings and sale data, and IVMS data will be interrogated where available to identify the spatial impact and distribution of the octopus influx.
- d) Fund selected permit holders on a monthly basis to gather data on crab, lobster and octopus catches which will include the whole catch of adults and juveniles.
- e) D&S IFCA Officers will compare catch data collected during surveys in 2023/2024 with data collected in 2026 to potentially provide a comparison of size distributions and catches of crab and lobster pre- and post- octopus influx.

Task 019 Development of a Molluscan Shellfish Hand Gathering Permit Byelaw

A Molluscan Shellfish Hand Gathering Permit Byelaw will be developed focussing on removal from a fishery of a range of species including cockles, mussels, winkles, and clams. It may be possible to incorporate a provision for the temporary closure of shellfish beds, within the Byelaw to replace the current Temporary Closure of Shellfish Beds Byelaw.

Officers will:

- a) Provide planning reports to the B&PSC
- b) Draft the byelaw and permit conditions (for consultation)
- c) Develop an Impact Assessment (for consultation)

KT

KT

Task 020 Waddeton Site Restoration (MPA Work)

The Waddeton Regulating Order in the Dart Estuary has been held by D&S IFCA since 2001 and expires in April 2026 and has supported mussel and Pacific oyster cultivation by shellfishermen over that time. D&S IFCA Officers have previously been in discussions with the Duchy, regarding their decision to no longer support Pacific oyster cultivation in the Duchy owned estuaries in the Southwest.

Officers will:

- a) Re-engage with the Duchy on this matter to see if this is still their position on Pacific oyster cultivation, or whether they have reconsidered this stance to allow the shellfisheries to continue
- b) Engage with the Duchy of Cornwall, Natural England and Waddeton plot holders (shellfishermen) to agree and undertake appropriate works, if necessary, to return the site to a more natural state, including the potential removal of artificial infrastructure and farmed stock.

D&S IFCA will be looking at outputs of the proposed project on the Exe Estuary to remove Pacific oysters through a trial of different removal methodologies. It is hoped that the outputs from the project will highlight the best method that could be rolled out to remove wild Pacific oysters from estuarine MPAs in the District, including the Dart Estuary MCZ, without significantly impacting the features and conservation objectives of these MPAs.

Officers will:

- c) Support, where necessary, the collection of data during the Before-After-Control-Impact study for each technique trialled
- d) Consider how other estuaries within the D&S IFCA's District can benefit from using these oyster removal techniques without damaging protected features.

Task 021 Introduction of REM on Mobile Fishing Vessels

KT

One of the key new provisions in the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw 2022 is the power to introduce mandatory requirements for Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) on mobile gear vessels.

Officers will:

- a) Engage with the mobile gear vessel sector to provide further information on the REM trials to date.
- b) Look to identify funding sources to purchase and install the REM system onboard vessels and also determine whether it can fund the annual maintenance, data transmission and data management costs.

Task 022 Review of the Previously Completed MPAs Assessments

RT

Officers will continue to review assessments as and when required, such as when new information is gathered on impact, new features are added to the MPA conservation advice or when new or reviewed condition assessments are produced by Natural England. Officers will continue to meet regularly with the Natural England area team to discuss MPA assessment reviews.

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Task 023 Torbay MCZ – Code of Conduct Monitoring – MPA Work

A Code of Conduct, co-developed between Officers and fishers, was introduced in March 2026. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to minimise the impacts of fishing with traps for cuttlefish on protected features of the MCZ, specifically seagrass and the long snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*).

In 2026/2027 Officers will:

- a) Develop a research plan to assess impacts of pots and traps on seagrass.
- b) Undertake boat-based research work using underwater camera equipment from April 2026.
- c) Engage regularly with fishers to improve collective knowledge and understanding of the cuttlefish fishery and hold an annual meeting with fishers to review evidence gathered.
- d) Monitor adherence to the Code of Conduct, including using IVMS data where possible, direct observation by Officers and intelligence reports submitted by stakeholders.
- e) Finalise a report on the research outputs and the monitoring of the Code of Conduct no later than 2 months after the fishery closes

Task 024 Exe Estuary Mussel and Cockle Stock Assessments

Mussel and cockle stock assessments on the Exe Estuary are undertaken on a biennial basis. The public mussel beds in the Exe Estuary have been closed since 2019 (Temporary Closure of Shellfish Beds Byelaw).

Officers will:

- a) Conduct surveys of mussel beds, in particular on Bull Hill.
- b) Conduct cockle surveys on Cockle Sands
- c) Finalise a report on the Exe mussel surveys by no later than 2 months after the survey is completed.
- d) Finalise a report on the Exe cockle survey by no later than 2 months after the survey is completed.

Task 025 Teign Estuary Mussel and Cockle Stock Assessments

Mussel and cockle stock assessments on the Teign Estuary are undertaken on a biennial basis. The surveys and assessments may inform potential management of these intertidal resources. The public mussel beds in the Teign Estuary have been closed since 2019 (Temporary Closure of Shellfish Beds Byelaw).

Officers will:

- a) Conduct surveys of mussel beds below the Shaldon Bridge
- b) Conduct cockle surveys on the Salty below the Shaldon Bridge
- e) Finalise a report on the Teign mussel survey by no later than 2 months after the survey is completed.
- f) Finalise a report on the Teign cockle survey by no later than 2 months after the survey is completed.

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Task 026 Taw Torridge Estuary Mussel Stock Assessment

The Taw Torridge Estuary is an SSSI, and its intertidal mussel are important for the overwintering birds that frequent the estuary. Annual stock assessments of these shellfish are used alongside a bird food availability model to establish the amount of mussel that may be commercially harvested without impinging on bird survival and the health of the mussel beds.

Officers will:

- a) Liaise with North Western IFCA to determine whether their multispectral imaging drone surveys can differentiate between live and dead mussel
- b) Survey the beds on foot, if access via boat is possible.
- c) Finalise a report, if survey work takes place, no later than 2 months after the survey is completed.

Task 027 Measures of Equal Environment Benefit (MEEB)

In 2024/2025 D&S IFCA began discussions with Natural England and Defra relating to the use of on MEEB which D&S IFCA is looking to apply in the Skerries Bank and Surrounds MCZ and Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SAC. The importance and consideration of MEEB will be partly dependent on the outcome of the MMO's Stage 3 MPA Consultation and future management of areas open to demersal fishing vessels.

Officers will:

- a) Give further consideration on how the information gathered to date can feed into the MEEB process.
- b) Gather additional information for the submission if required.
- c) Finalise and send the submission to Defra. by 1st September 2026.

Task 028 Razor Clam Fishery (Monitoring and Control Plan)

In February 2026 , D&S IFCA's Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee (B&PSC) agreed to support a new fishery for razor clams in the specific areas of Lyme Bay in the South of the D&S IFCA's District. Depending on the outcome of a formal consultation on the fishery, Officers will:

- a) Develop and introduce a Monitoring and Control Plan (M&CP).
- b) Monitor footage and data from REM to ensure the fishery takes place on sandy ground and to monitor the location of the fishery.
- c) Gather landings data (linked to IVMS data) to develop a preliminary stock assessment forming a baseline against which Officers will be able to assess spatial and seasonal changes in landings per unit effort.
- d) Undertake a limited number of onboard catch monitoring to assess the catch, the proportion of juveniles seen and the damage rates of catch and bycatch.
- e) Prepare an interim report on the fishery and research outputs by 1st October 2026 and a full report by 1st February 2027.

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Task 029 MPA Monitoring and Control Plans

Officers will collect data and evidence regarding fishing activity within relevant MPAs in the D&S IFCA's District to inform the reviews of the Monitoring and Control Plans that D&S IFCA has in place. Officers will use Monitoring and Control Plan (M&CP) findings to review MPA assessments as appropriate.

Officers will:

- a) Review M&CPs frequently to inform whether additional management is required.
- b) Report the findings of these reviews and publish them on the D&S IFCA's website by 31st March 2027.

RT

Task 030 Exemption Authorisations

Officers will review all Exemption Authorisation applications under D&S IFCA Byelaws and determine them within 60 days of receipt.

RT

Task 031 Inshore Potting Agreement Areas

D&S IFCA, MMO and fishers from the potting and mobile gear sectors discuss co-management options for the IPA each year. This fisheries conflict resolution management system has been in place for decades and allows for fishing opportunities for both sectors through a combination of D&S IFCA's Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw Permit Conditions and MMO Licence Variation.

Officers will:

- a) Organise and chair the South Devon Inshore Potting Agreement (IPA) Committee meeting
- b) Produce minutes of the meeting
- c) Produce an annual chart of the IPA area
- d) Disseminate any changes in management of the IPA to permit holders and to the MMO for licence variation purposes.

Success Criterion 4:

IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.

RT

Task 032 Annual Plan

To publish a Plan on its website by 31st March, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.

RT

Task 033 Annual Report

To publish a Report after the end of the financial year, on its website describing its activities, performance and a summary of audited financial information in that year (2025/2026), by 30th November 2026. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.

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Task 034 Strengthening D&S IFCA's Access to Information and Increasing Transparency

The IFCA Conduct and Operations Report (2018-2022) published by the Government highlights several areas where IFCAs, as a collective can improve, including being more transparent with information.

Officers will:

- a) Review (using a staged approach) completed MPA Assessments to assess their suitability for publishing and make potential amendments to allow them to be published.
- b) Publish on the website a summary report for each Monitoring and Control Plans (M&CPs) by 31st March 2027.
- c) Review previously completed M&CPs and publish them on the website by 1st November 2026.
- d) Expand the publishing and availability of D&S IFCA's responses to Marine Licence Applications.
- e) Produce and regularly update a more detailed Enforcement Outcomes website display. (This workstream coincides with the key task 011 for Investigation Tables).
- f) Report regularly on the work D&S IFCA undertakes to support the delivery of the three Defra funded National Workstreams (MPAs, FMPs, and Marine Spatial Prioritisation) via the website. (This workstream coincides with the key task 002 Website Review)

RT

Task 035 Workstream Reporting

To record time spent by Officers in different areas of work to inform the Annual Report, to assist with the Annual Plan and to establish to accumulation of TOIL and un-social working hours.

Task 036 Staff Performance Planning

RT

Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31st May each year. Following the appraisals, annual performance management plans will be developed and implemented for all staff members.

Task 037 Authority Secretariat

RT

To provide an efficient secretariat of D&S IFCA staff to support Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders. To hold Committee meetings in public unless material is either confidential or exempt within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972.

Task 038 Health and Safety Audit

RT

To undertake an annual Health and Safety Audit and report the findings to the Authority.

Task 039 Standard Operating Procedures

RT

To review and develop Standard Operating procedures (SOPs) as required and share with other IFCA's and partner organisations.

Task 040 Data Protection Audit

RT

To undertake an annual Data Protection Audit and report the findings to the Authority.

Success Criterion 5:

IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.

RT

Task 041 Research Planning

- a) To include within D&S IFCA's Annual Plan areas of research that will be undertaken.
- b) To develop individual plans for survey work and research workstreams.

RT

Task 042 Research Reporting

The IFCA will publish research reports annually that demonstrate how evidence has supported decision making.

RT

Task 043 TAG & National Evidence Need

D&S IFCA officers will attend TAG meetings and contribute to the progress of national evidence programme requirements. Officers will give presentations on relevant workstreams to TAG members. Work undertaken will be reported in D&S IFCA's Annual Report.

RT

Task 044 MEDIN

To collect research/ survey meta data and upload it to the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN) using nationally agreed formats.

RT

Task 045 Respond to Research Enquiries and Information Provision

To engage with academic institutions, Cefas and other research programmes, respond to enquiries and share information and data, where appropriate, to further marine research and evidence gathering.

RT

Task 046 Research Databases and Literature Review

D&S IFCA Officers gather and use a wide range of literature to undertake and inform D&S IFCA research work. This is maintained in the internal filing system within the relevant topic specific folders. Officers will continue to catalogue all the literature used in a portal called Zotero, which is a data repository for science outputs, allowing researchers to preserve and share their science research. Where appropriate databases of research and stakeholders inputting into the research are kept and maintained.