

Devon and Severn IFCA News

D&S IFCA's Annual Plan 2026/2027

Read about the work to be undertaken by D&S IFCA in its Annual Plan 2026/2027.

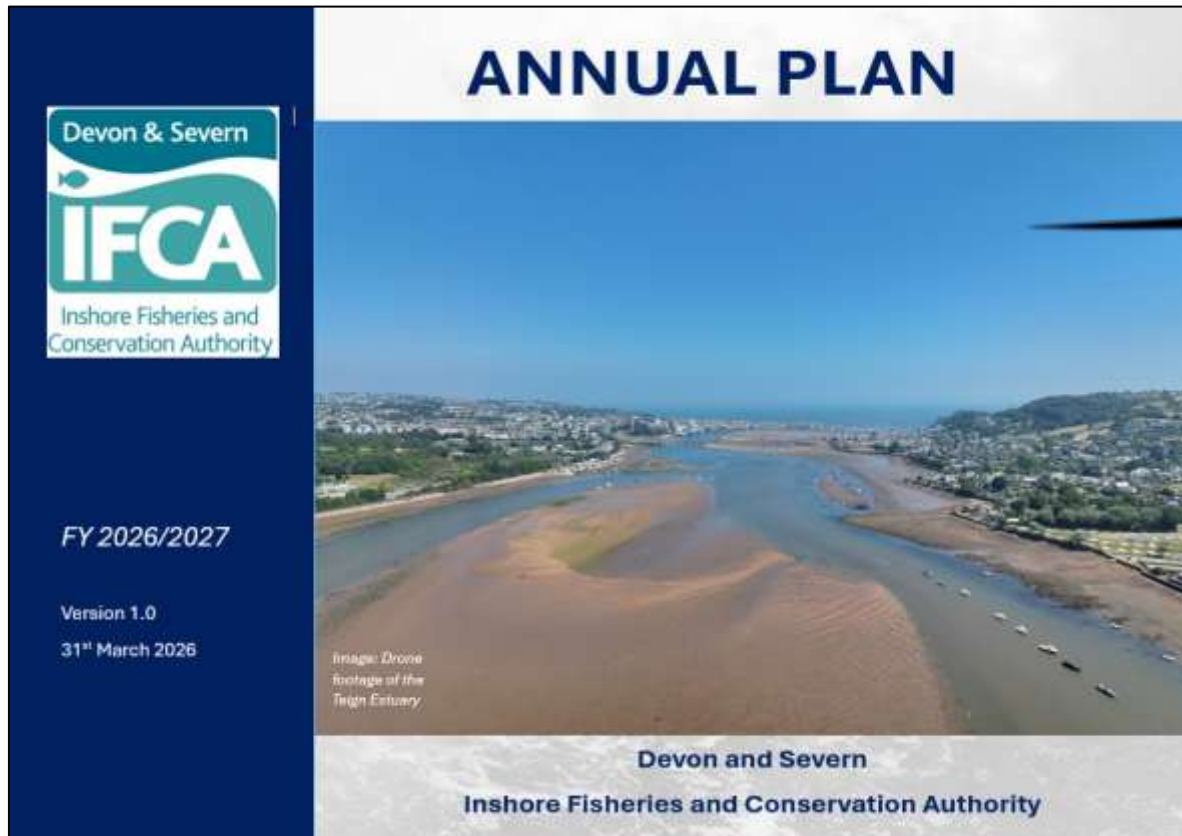
Background

D&S IFCA has the largest of the ten IFCAs' districts and has two separate coastlines. D&S IFCA's District includes the areas of Devon and Gloucestershire County Councils; Bristol and Plymouth City Councils; North Somerset District Council; Torbay, Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils and all adjacent waters out to six nautical miles offshore or the median line in the Bristol Channel with Wales.

D&S IFCA's core work is divided into enforcement work, research work and byelaw work (including engagement). The Full Authority is comprised of 30 Members drawn from relevant Local Authorities (Councillors), General Members (appointed to the Authority by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)) and Statutory Appointees representing the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE). A list of our Authority Members can be viewed [here](#). D&S IFCA is funded primarily from Central Government, with additional contributions from the eight relevant funding Local Authorities.

Annual Plan 2026/2027

As specified in the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, D&S IFCA must publish an Annual Plan. The Annual Plan can be read [here](#).



D&S IFCA's 16th Annual Plan sets out the known priorities for the forthcoming year and sets out many other areas of work necessary to support the organisations governance and business as usual functions.

Funding

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 budget of the highest funded IFCA. There is a recruitment freeze and the delivery of the work set out in the Annual Plan is expected to be achieved by the existing compliment of Officers, 12.6 FTEs.

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.

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.

Key Workstreams for 2026/2027

The Annual Plan sets out the Key Workstreams in more detail; however, in summary they consist of the following:

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.

Marine Protected Areas 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.

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.

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.

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.

Structure of the Annual Plan

The Annual Plan is divided into two main sections. The opening pages highlight key tasks for 2026/2027. The latter part of the Annual Plan sets out task tables that incorporate "business as usual" tasks and how these relate to national IFCA success criteria.

More Information

A website page has been developed to display all recent Annual Plans and Annual Reports. The website page "Annual Business Plans & Reports" can be viewed [here](#).