

REGENERATION CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 AUGUST 2016

PRESENTATION BY THE KENT AND ESSEX INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Report from: Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services

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Summary

Will Wright, Chief Officer and Tom Clegg, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer from the Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will be in attendance to undertake a brief presentation to the Committee on consultations concerning closure of an area of the estuary to all fishing activities so as to protect juvenile fish that are reliant on habitats

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 This matter falls within the remit of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee as being the Committee with responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management functions.
- 1.2 The presentation is for information

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council holds the historic charter rights to permit fishing in the River Medway. The Council effectively operates this through the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery (ROFF) which is the organisation of fishermen permitted to fish on the River (the Freeman of the river).
- 2.2 More recently the ROFF and the Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (KEIFCA) have drafted a memorandum of understanding to enable the “policing” of a number of Byelaws. This Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed in conjunction with the River Medway Nursery Area (Prohibition of Fishing) Byelaw 2015 and ROFF’s byelaw. The memorandum of understanding is due to be formally approved by KEIFCA at its next quarterly meeting on 12 September 2016.

- 2.3 The Council recently received a request from KEIFCA to attend the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and undertake a presentation on a project involving the River Medway.
- 2.4 KEIFCA is responsible for managing the marine environment and inshore fisheries in the Thames Estuary area and is currently creating a no-take zone in the River Medway that will close an area of the estuary to all fishing activities to protect juvenile fish that rely heavily on the habitats there. The River Medway Nursery Area will be the largest no-take zone in the UK, almost tripling the area closed to fishing in UK waters. The project is in partnership with the ROFF (who hold fishing rights in the river)
- 2.5 KEIFCA is working with the local angling community to ensure sustainability of both the project and the environment it is protecting.
- 2.6 KEIFCA is funded by Medway Council and has pointed out that the River Medway Nursery Area addresses many of the priorities of Medway Council surrounding a safe, clean and green Medway and everyone benefiting from regeneration.
- 2.7 Further information about the project is available on a short video at: <https://youtu.be/57t2Z30-MZI> or on KEIFCA's website: <http://www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk/im-interested-in/mpas/medway-nursery-area/>

3. Advice and Analysis

- 3.1 The presentation is for information and will appraise Members of the no-take zone in the River Medway.

4. Risk management

- 4.1 There are no risks to the Council arising from this presentation as it is for information

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Committee is requested to note the presentation from the Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None