

The Leigh Port Partnership Ltd Thames Estuary Fishermans Association

We are responding to the request of the Chairman's letter dated 20th October 2022 for input in to the New Jamaica option. We are reserving our position, as we do not fully accept the legitimacy of the cockle review process so far has been fair to all those affected by the scheme due to the decisions made in previous consultations. We refer to the statements made on behalf of TEFA at the meeting on 19th October 2022 We do not wish to be excluded from the cockle review process, therefore wish to preserve our right to challenge the findings of the cockle review process in due course if considered necessary, as we have serious concerns regarding the initial allocation of licences. In our opinion, it is absurd to consider issuing more than 14 licences in a smaller area than the 1994 TECFO, that will also have a reduced TAC.

The TEFA Proposal for access to the New Jamaica Fishery.

Deal Bros Ltd wish to express that they do not agree to this proposal

This proposal is a basic framework, we would welcome a full discussion with the Chief Officer and management to progress it further. 18 days to try and formulate a very technical response is virtually impossible, as has been the case throughout the consultation process, not only for the Industry but for the Authority members as well. Allowing for the papers to be published pre the meeting of the 19th October, 7 days including the day of the meeting, this effectively only gives 4 working days to digest and prepare a response to the meeting.

It needs to be clear and concise within the questionnaire that this part of the consultation is only for the Regulated fishery New Jamaica (the 7 year review for further discussion within setting the parameters of consultation 3). A separate questionnaire needs to be sent to all other fishers that have requested to work in the small scale fishery CFFPB, to avoid the confusion that has occurred in the previous parts of the consultation, and any questionnaire with regards the 2023 CFFPB fishery being clearly marked as to what it is for, to avoid the total confusion from consultation 2.

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TEFA has consulted with many of the other sector fishers and business within the district who support our proposal, and would ask the authority to take this into account.

The MSC certification should be a main priority and all licence holders within the fishery would have to sign up for it to be effective and fair.

Consideration of priority should be given to the 14 licences held by the 12 companies that have existed during the life of the previous regulating order, those that have been operating under the TECFO licences to date have a legitimate expectation that they will continue to do so in the New Jamaica Fishery.

Thus far there has been no assurance or indication that this will be the case. Our Understanding that throughout the Wash Consultation was the entitlement holders will be given priority.

At the start of the 7 year review period, those that have held the first 14 licences will have a legitimate expectation to continue to do so in each consecutive 7 year period for the life of the regulating order unless there have been serious breaches of the licence conditions.

The Socio economics of this fishery is of equal importance to the Local District as well as the National Economics of the UK. When looking at the Seafish Data, the demise of the UK shellfish Industry over the past 7 years is devastating, we need to protect our cockle fishery from this trend to ensure its survival. The processing sectors locally are of great importance, as equally are the catching sector, as they help the local economy in the tourist and hospitality sectors to thrive in the local port areas, The public like nothing better than to see active fishing boats in the local ports, whilst talking to local fisherman and getting a better understanding of where the fish and seafood comes from. Another main concern should be the health and well being of the fishers working within the fishery ie: longevity of their employment and income and not being under a constant threat of possibly no income after the first 7 year stream. This not only affects the fishers and their families but the wider coastal community and support industries, potentially preventing them from being able to invest in the business to ensure its longevity and

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compliance with all relevant legislation. The impact of poor investment will prevent the Industry investing in lower carbon emissions and wider environmental responsibilities.

TEFA and its members strongly agree that no consideration should be given to applications for licences by Individuals or Company Directors that have sold their companies in the past.

With regards to the issuing of licences to individuals or companies, there will always be mixed views. A company structure is always the safest route, as many people within that structure are corporately and personally liable for any actions they or their employees take.

Issuing a licence to an Individual is not without its restraints, like obtaining finance and the possibility of no one in a line of succession, if a family member has no interest in the fishery, which can happen. It is possible for the licence to then end up in the hands of an inexperienced person through desperation to try and operate in the family name.

Conformity of conditions to the entitlement of licences; a perfect match for this is probably the Road Transport industry, when the operator's licence scheme was introduced in 1936 and is still very much in use today, as it has been able to adapt with modern times and interventions. This is a perfect opportunity for a traffic light or points based system to be introduced for the licence holders. It would be used for the life of the company, basically if the operator of the company or its employees infringes the rules and doesn't redress them in a given period of time and keeps re-offending the licence is either suspended, or at the review period taken away from them and the Company Director's banned from taking another position within the transport industry, as they are deemed unfit to operate a licence.

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Arrangements need to be in place to review the conditions on which a licence could be suspended or withdrawn and specific time frames for these to be reviewed.

We have prepared a basic set of questions which we believe are simple and easy to answer for anyone within the industry, and given the opportunity would work for officers, to explain and strengthen these suggestions for a suitable outcome that satisfies both the management and the Industry.

An Appeal process needs to be put in place if a licence is not granted, There needs to be a sufficient time scale for the appeal to be heard, therefore, a mechanism to appeal a decision to an independent body is essential to ensure a fair and transparent system.

TEFA is the association representing members who all have different needs. 11 of the companies are united in our response to the Chairman, we can not comment in such a short period of time on the weighted criteria that is being suggested in the following table. A thorough, robust Questionnaire needs to be compiled that takes each of the members' views in to account, before any further consultation can take place on this matter. The criteria that has to have the highest weighting should be for the local suction dredge cockle vessels in the Local Ports of the KEIFCA.

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Category

Criteria

Relevant experience of cockle fishing in the Thames (TECFO - track record)

TEFA believes this should have the highest rating

Relevant experience of cockle fishing in the Thames (Permit fishery - track record)

TEFA believes this is irrelevant to the New Jamaica fishery as the criteria should be weighted highly against the KEIFCA district vessels

Experience

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Relevant experience of fishing in the Thames. (General fisheries track record) **TEFA believes this is irrelevant to Cockle Fishing**

Relevant experience cockle fishing outside the KEIFCA district but with the UK **TEFA questions the relevance of this, as our understanding the fishery was to be for the local vessels**

Compliance track record **Unable to comment**

Evidence of cooking/processing cockles caught in the Thames in factories with the KEIFCA district **Oou Members have different needs**

Evidence showing company supporting skilled local employment, apprenticeships or equivalent **unable to comment this is for individual companies to comment on**

Socio-economics Evidence showing company supporting local supply chains **unable to comment this is for individual companies to comment on**

Examples of the steps the company adding value to landings **MSC Certification**

Examples of company taking steps to support the wider community **unable to comment this is for individual companies to comment on**

Examples of company taking steps to reducing impact of gear on both the cockle stocks and on the seabed **All companies have been investing in this for the past 30 years**

Environmental Impact

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Environmental impact

Examples of company taking steps
to reduce
CO2 emissions

**unable to comment this is for
individual companies to comment
on**

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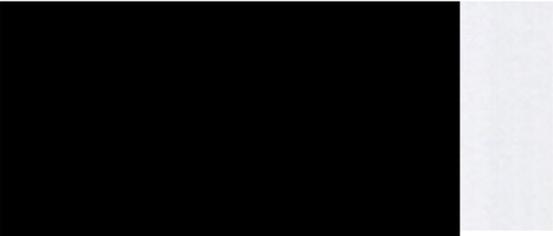
Relevant experience of cockle fishing in the Thames (TECFO - track record)	Vessel Name PLN No	Amount of years Cockling in the Thames TECFO	Is The Vessel owned by a Company
Relevant experience of cockle fishing in the Thames (CFFPB track record)	Vessel Name PLN No	Amount of years Cockling in the CFFPB	Is The Vessel owned by a Company
Are Your Skippers and Crew From a Local Port In the KEIFCA District	Port Operating From	Port of Landing	Can you provide evidence that your skippers and crew are from a local port in the KEIFCA district
Is Your Vessel Currently Fitted as a cockle hydraulic suction Dredger	Does Your Vessel Have VMS tracking	Is your Vessel a purpose built cockle dredger	Is your Cockle catch in Bags or loose load

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Can you supply Evidence that you use local supporting/Service companies within the KEIFCA district	Do you wish for the Fishery to have MSC certification to enhance the value of the catch	Are you currently supporting new job creation within your company via apprenticeships or other means within the KEIFCA district
Would you support a traffic light points system for compliance within the New Jamaica fishery	Do you support The Licence being issued to a company for the life of a company	Should the 7 year allocation of the Licence be automatic to the holder from the previous 7 year period providing they have not exceeded the traffic light points system
Should the 14 previous TECFO licence holders be granted automatic access to the New Jamaica Fishery	If you were granted a licence how much notice would you need	If you were refused a licence what timescale do you think is fair for an appeal process to take place

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Signed



Andrew Rattley
Chairman
Thames Estuary Fishermans Association