

# TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

5 OCTOBER 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>SHELLFISH COLLECTION ON THE TEIGN AND EXE ESTUARIES – UPDATE REPORT</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To update Members regarding shellfish collection and to offer support to the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority in the management of the resource.
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to:</b>  <b>(1) Note the report; and</b> <b>(2) Support the Devon and Severn IFCA in efforts to manage the shellfisheries in the Teign and Exe Estuaries.</b> <b>(3) Recommend the Devon and Severn IFCA adopt either a sectoral or geographical approach to prioritise the early adoption of an appropriate Byelaw</b>
<b>Financial Implications, Legal Implications, Risk Assessment, Environmental/ Climate Change Implications</b>	None – No change from November 2020 position Graeme Smith – Coastal Officer Tel: 01626 215748 Email: Graeme.smith@teignbridge.gov.uk None – see 2.4
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<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Cllr Jackie Hook
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Background Papers</b>	Shellfish Collection on the Teign and Exe Estuaries – Executive Report and resolutions – 3 November 2020  <a href="#">(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Executive, 03/11/2020 10:00 (teignbridge.gov.uk)</a>

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Following a previous report to, and resolutions of, the Executive Committee (Shellfish Collection on the Teign and Exe Estuaries – 3 November 2020) the purpose of this report is to:

- Update Members regarding continuing concerns raised by the public regarding informal and largely unregulated public collection of shellfish from the Teign and Exe estuaries,
- Offer research and engagement support where practicable to the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (D&S IFCA) as the lead Agency in the management of the resource,
- Recommend either a sectoral or geographical priority be instigated to progress a Byelaw applicable to the Teign and Exe Estuaries.

## **2. REPORT DETAIL**

### **2.1 Background**

As outlined in previous report, 3 November 2020, the D&S IFCA were aware of the issue and local concerns, and as the relevant authority with the Byelaw powers to manage the activity were expecting to progress a Hand Gathering Byelaw by the end of calendar year 2021. The Hand Gathering Byelaw was envisaged to cover a multitude of target species and activities, potentially including, clams, cockles, mussels and oysters alongside bait digging, crab tiling and lobster hooking. The Byelaw was also expected to be capable of applying in all suitable inter-tidal areas of the D&S IFCA area which covers both coasts of the county of Devon, as well as areas in Somerset and Gloucestershire.

### **2.2 Progress**

It is now understood that due to resourcing and staff constraints D&S IFCA have not been able to significantly progress the research, consultation and legal processes to deliver an over-arching Byelaw within the original timeframe (December 2021), and are unable to confirm that they would be in a position to do so by the end of next year (December 2022).

### **2.3 Continued local concerns**

There currently remains no legally enforceable limit to the amount of shellfish, particularly cockles, together with mussels and oysters (those not in Regulated or Several fisheries areas), that can be collected by a member of the public.

There is a pragmatic working assumption that collecting up to a maximum of 5kg (approximately a bucket full) could be considered as appropriate for 'personal consumption' and that volumes above this figure raise concerns about whether this is being undertaken as part of a commercial activity or that unregulated/untested stock is entering the wider food chain.

Concerns from members of the public around both the Teign and Exe continue to be reported to D&S IFCA as well as to this Council, the two local Harbour Authorities, the Police, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and the local offices of the Environment Agency.

#### **2.4 Financial**

None – No change from November 2020 report

#### **2.5 Legal**

None – No change from November 2020 report

#### **2.6 Risks**

None – No change from November 2020 report

#### **2.7 Environmental/Climate Change Impact**

None – No change from November 2020 report

### **3. OPTIONS**

D&S IFCA as the responsible agency for fisheries regulation are understood to be unable due to resourcing and staff constraints to progress an over-arching Hand Gathering Byelaw, which would potentially cover large and disparate areas, and a wide variety of species and activities.

D&S IFCA could therefore be recommended to instigate a targeted approach either being sectoral (i.e. pertaining to named species – particularly cockles and mussels), or geographic (specifically relating to the Teign and Exe Estuaries).

Following an adoption of a Byelaw for individual species/areas, it may conceivably be easier for the D&S IFCA to subsequently to roll out this targeted approach to other activities or locations, and demonstrate the resources required to bring the benefit of appropriate management to the wider fisheries sector.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The Committee is recommended to note that concerns continue to be raised by the public regarding the position of hand gathering and to continue to offer support where appropriate or practicable to the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority in the management of this issue.

The Committee is further recommended to encourage that the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority instigate a targeted approach to directly address local concerns regarding shellfish collection activities on the Teign and Exe estuaries.