

Solent Forum Annual Report: 2017 - 2018

The Solent Forum is an established partnership that promotes and delivers integrated coastal management around the Solent. Established in 1992, it considers and provides advice on strategic coastal matters and facilitates communication and information exchange amongst its membership. Its work is steered by a group of funding partners who guide the work of the Forum Officers.

This report sets out what the Forum has achieved in the 2017/18 financial year and what it will deliver in the 2018/19 year. The long term aims and objectives of the Forum are set out in its Business Plan. This can be downloaded from the Forum's website at www.solentforum.org/about/business_plan/.

The Forum has three categories of work that it undertakes; core service work that is ongoing each year, specific project work that runs for a defined time period and the servicing of subgroups.

The Forum hosts regular events as part of its core service, and organises other events, both alone and in partnership with others, to support project work and disseminate information on important Solent coastal issues.



Solent Forum Aims

The aims of the Solent Forum are:

- To promote, facilitate and support integrated planning and sustainable management of the Solent.
- To provide a broad based consultative forum.

The Solent Forum is currently working within its Business Plan 2015 to 2020. This annual report is published each March, and summarises the Forum's core service and project work over the past year and details work planned for the coming year. Copies can be downloaded from http://www.solentforum.org/about/business_plan/.

Solent Forum Members

The Forum has a wide ranging membership with organisations from all coastal sectors. Members include professional bodies such as local government, harbour authorities, industry, user groups, trade associations and NGOs. The Forum is not open to individuals, local residents associations or issue specific lobby groups. It is politically neutral.

Membership benefits include:

- Access to the Solent News service;
- Free attendance at the biannual Solent Forum meetings and reduced entry fee to other Forum events;
- Access to Forum reports, data and the Forum's Solent Information Database;
- Use of the Solent Forum network to communicate with other authorities, organisations and user groups;
- Opportunity to undertake partnership work and influence the direction of future Forum project work;
- Opportunity to join Forum Subgroups: Natural Environment, Water Quality and Solent European Marine Sites.



Photo courtesy of the Isle of Wight Council

Solent Forum Objectives

The Forum's Business Plan monitors its progress against an agreed set of five objectives; this Plan sets out in detail how the Forum will deliver them. Below is a summary of the relevant work that the Forum undertakes to deliver its objectives.

1. To raise awareness and understanding of members' roles and aspirations

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum website, Solent Forum meetings.

2. To improve sharing of the information base

Relevant Forum work: Professor Mike Clark Award, Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Water Quality Awards, Solent Information Database and topical information sheets.

3. To facilitate better communication, consultation and liaison

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings, topical workshops, Solent Information Database and Coastal Consents Guide.

4. To raise awareness and understanding of the human and natural changes likely to materially affect the Solent area and its interests

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings and Solent Forum serviced subgroups.

5. To promote the national and regional importance of the Solent in policy, development and plan making

Relevant Forum work: Solent Forum Meetings, Solent News Service, Forum websites, officer input into national and European coastal policy and plan making, Coastal Partnerships Working Group attendance and Strategic Opportunities Workshops.

Solent Forum Core Work

- Biannual Forum meetings.
- News service - biannual newsletter, (Solent News) monthly updates, Twitter and special alerts.
- Maintaining the Forum website - www.solentforum.org.
- Provision of the Solent Information Database (SID) - a metadatabase of Solent research and reports.
- Servicing of subgroups.
- Administering the Solent Water Quality Awards.
- Professor Mike Clark Award to support student research in the Solent.
- Maintaining a Coastal Consents Guide for those wishing to undertake development.
- Membership networking.
- General engagement on key issues and with Solent organisations.

Solent Forum Subgroups/Service Groups

- Solent European Marine Sites
- Solent Water Quality Group (to administer water quality awards)
- Natural Environment Group

Solent Forum Work Programme 2017/18

| Meetings and Events Held in 2017/18 | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| Meeting | Attendees | Date and Details |
| Solent Forum | All Solent Forum members | Spring 2017, autumn 2017 and spring 2018. |
| Solent Forum Steering Group | Steering Group Members | Three times throughout the year. |
| Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS) | SEMS Management Group | Annual monitoring and reporting took place in spring 2017; a new provider was sourced for the 2017 monitoring. The format of the Annual Management Report was updated to incorporate the delivery plan of actions to make a single document. |
| Natural Environment Group (NEG) | NEG members | Met in April and November 2017. Funding was allocated to develop the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy and for Blue Marine to monitor water quality at their oyster restoration sites. |
| 25th Anniversary Conference | Solent's coastal community | A series of events and a conference was held in May 2017 to celebrate the Forum's 25th anniversary. A members dinner was held on HMS Warrior. |

| Project Progress/Consultancy Services in 2017/18 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Project/Service | Objective | Status as of March 2018 |
| Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement (ESE) in the South Marine Plans | The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has contracted the Forum to assist it with its ESE Project, funded by the EMFF. | The Forum has been identifying hard to reach stakeholders to help the MMO ensure wider stakeholder involvement in marine planning. This work will run from 2017 to 2019. |
| Beneficial Use of Dredgings (BUDS) | To explore how material from dredging that takes place in the Solent can be used in coastal defence and habitat replenishment schemes. | Phase 1 of the project is complete. This phase costed and scoped potential sites for the beneficial use of dredgings in the Solent. |
| The Blue Economy | To set up a working group to discuss and address the issues facing the Solent's maritime businesses. | A paper has been agreed with the Solent Forum Steering Group to take forward the Blue Economy work to explore issues facing maritime businesses. |
| Coastal Consents Guide | This online Guide gives an overall view of what consents and considerations developers need to apply for before and during the application process. | The Guide was updated during 2017 and launched at the Autumn 2017 Solent Forum meeting. See http://www.solentforum.org/publications/key_publications/coastal_consents_guide/ . |
| Catchment Management | To work with the Defra Umbrella Group (Seaview) as a lead for actions on the Solent Transitional and Coastal Waterbody to improve water quality as part of the Water Framework Directive. | Forum staff continued to attend and input into key Seaview meetings. |
| Ecological Enhancement of Hard Coastal Defences | The Forum has been contracted by the Environment Agency to help it to publicise and promote the use of ecological enhancements in hard coastal defences. | This work will be completed by the end of March 2018. It will include an online resource bank of knowledge on the Forum's website, and additional information added to the Solent Information Database and Coastal Consents guide. Forum members will be contacted for their input to promote this concept. |

Solent Forum Work Programme 2018/19

Meetings and Events Scheduled for 2018/19

| Meeting | Attendees | Date and Details |
|--|--|--|
| Solent Forum | All Solent Forum members | Spring 2018, autumn 2018 and spring 2019. |
| Solent Forum Steering Group | Steering Group Members | Three times throughout the year. |
| Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS) | SEMS Relevant Authorities | Annual monitoring will be repeated online in spring 2018; actions identified will be discussed and taken forward at the SEMS annual meeting in September 2018. |
| Natural Environment Group (NEG) | NEG members | NEG will meet April 2018 and October 2018. The project focus during this period will be looking at the issues of marine litter and water quality. |
| Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) workshop | SEMS Relevant Authorities and other stakeholders | Once tranche 3 MCZs are published, the Forum will look to work with Natural England to organise a workshop to look at the implications for these designations. |

Project Development/Consultancy Services for 2018/19

| Project/Service | Objective | Details |
|---|--|--|
| Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement (ESE) in the South Marine Plans | The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has contracted the Forum to assist it with its ESE Project, funded by the EMFF. | From 2017 to 2019 the Forum will be working with the MMO to help publicise the South Marine Plans and engage the Solent's coastal community with their implementation. This will include working with stakeholders who are new to the Plans. |
| Project Development | The Forum will continue to develop new projects, especially those linked to the blue economy. | Projects will include a Coastal Communities Fund bid, European Marine Sites activities risk categorisation for the SEMS Management Scheme and taking forward a Solent littering project. |
| Beneficial Use of Dredgings (BUDS) | To explore how material from dredging that takes place in the Solent can be used in coastal defence and habitat replenishment schemes. | BUDS Phase 2 will progress the Phase 1 outcomes with stakeholders, including developing strategic guidance and a protocol. This will be led by the Solent Forum via workshops and stakeholder meetings. |
| Catchment Management | To work with the Defra Umbrella Group (Seaview) as a lead for actions on the Solent Transitional and Coastal Waterbody to improve water quality under the Water Framework Directive. | The Forum will continue to attend key meetings and to partner, and if appropriate lead, on new actions, such as littering, to improve the Solent's Transitional and Coastal Waters. |

Further Information

For more details of work undertaken by the Forum, please visit the Forum's website at www.solentforum.org or contact the Solent Forum Office at info@solentforum.org.

The following organisations fund and steer the work of the Solent Forum:

Associated British Ports, Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Natural England, New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park Authority, Portsmouth City Council, QHM Portsmouth, Solent Protection Society and Southampton City Council.

