

Business Planning 2020 – 2025 Members' Workshop Summary

Contents

Introduction

Summary

Workshop transcripts

Participation in Business Planning Workshop

Introduction

A Business Planning workshop was held on 25th September 2019 in Eastleigh amongst Solent Forum Members. A series of prompting questions were asked of attendees under different section headings. This report provides a brief summary, the transcripts of the workshop and a list of attendees.

Summary

Eleven Solent Forum members attended the Business Planning workshop. This followed a Solent Forum Steering Group meeting where the Steering Group were asked to provide an overall steer as to what direction the Forum should take for the next 5 year period namely: 1/ Maintain/Improve or 2/Grow.

In summary the views of attendees were as follows:

- The general steer for the Business Plan is to maintain and Improve current core services
- To be adaptive annually following Horizon Planning to build on opportunities
- To reference the importance of valuing the Solent and climate change resilience
- To focus on retention of members and bringing in new organisations
- To emphasise working with our members as partners
- To continue and improve links with tap into the student network in the Solent
- To explore how the Solent Forum can be “Business Ready”

Workshop Transcripts

Overriding Comment – we need to identify and prioritise issues that are important to the Solent and then cross map them to existing Forum work and projects. We can then identify gaps where we can look to offer additional member services and put together a required project list. This should form the basis of the work programme of the BP. The issues as they stand (in our BP documents) e.g. development pressure

are too broad brush and strategic to be meaningful - we need to define the pressure and why/how the Solent Forum should be involved in this matter.

Bit like NEG/SEMS model – individual authorities should address issues under their own jurisdiction, SF should focus on cross cutting strategic issues like climate change and water quality. SF should also promote and share best practice undertaken by members.

Aims and Objectives

Sustainable “use” of Solent rather than “management”. IFCA has an aim about sustainable use

To have a theme or vision for next 5 years. The City Marine Parks for the Solent (this could enable all funding), Understanding the value of the Solent coast and marine area (Socio, economic and environment), the Solent, Climate Change resilience, working with partners and students. Focus more on leisure bit. Backdrop is Environment Plan and net gain

Should the Forum to be more ambitious and work more actively with its members (being more responsive to them) to develop environmental, economic and social benefits of the Solent. If so how might the Aims and Objectives change

This is a two way process, members also have to work and support Forum staff. The ‘Forum’ is both staff and its members.

The strength of the Forum is to provide checks and balances and consensus for what happens in the Solent, we need to guide the work of organisations so beneficial for all.

The Forum should not be taking on the statutory duties of its members or small localised issues.

What are the goals, how do you measure success?

Does BP address the top priorities?

Keep brief, broad themes – visible under objectives so others can see what we are most interested in eg: Climate change, biodiversity net loss, Water Quality, net gain

Should the Forum make explicit reference to climate change in the objectives.

No already covered in existing.

Resilience of the Solent – climate change adaptation

Should the Forum add an objective to promote research and intelligence gathering; To provide a strategic approach to flood and coastal erosion risk management; and to work with community based groups to achieve local objectives

Could include the term 'research' in objective 2.

No to flood and coastal erosion risk – responsibility of the Environment Agency.

Not clear on what you mean by community based group work – need to be more specific and include an example. More about promoting and sharing the work of such groups.

Operational Structure

Discuss ways in which the Forum can attract new members – Including Business Members'; Solent LEP; Marinas; Marine Conservation Bodies; Other

Existing members are the best advocates to bring in new members. Need to set a member recruitment target.

Suggestions - could target big coastal landowners such as Fawley Waterside, Solent LEP, Portsmouth Water, Hampshire Association of Local Councils

As Forum is run at an organisational level it is not ideally suited to have small individual members. i.e. RYA are a member but not sailing clubs, there is a 'chain of command', take care not to step on toes of other user groups and professional bodies.

If you bring in individuals or smaller groups you need to have clear ToR about what they can expect to get from the Forum, so they don't dominate the Agenda with a local specific issue. But may be cost prohibitive if charge a fee due to staff time taken to process.

Use a customer services management system to track dealings with members both existing and potential.

Bring in new members: Clarity of benefits, get better at selling the Forum, more outreach, a campaign. Need a comms strategy. Build on social media. ID organisations not well represented – Blue Marine

Sustainable finances – adaptive mgt, be flexible, attract funding where appropriate
Attract appropriate members and benefits: Use newsletter, wider dissemination using former members, use events, raise visibility
Meetings

Are there any improvements to the Solent Forum Groups?

SEMS

NEG

Water Quality Awards Group

Any other groups to set up

None of Group A sat on sub groups, but thought they need a specific purpose with a clear ToR that shows how they contribute to overall SF services.

None of them had any idea what the subgroups really do and the work they cover – we need to communicate this better to the wider Solent Forum membership.

Suggestion for a new coastal access group – engagement on the England Coast Path and link to coastal tourism businesses. Could also incl. City Marine Park idea.

Clarity on how groups operate and their focus. Events such as climate change resilience. No more groups – use existing groups. Explore webex communication ideas.

Water Quality and other big issues: Nitrate neutrality, SF coordinate groups, enhance actions of others, disseminate
Assist reactive task and finish groups

All of respondents to Members' Survey happy with frequency and content of Forum meetings. Any suggestions on this?

All enjoy Solent Forum meetings, could explore a longer format to cover a whole day, comments that for the current Agenda the meetings are 'passive' that's fine but we could consider a more 'active' element, for example greater networking opportunities after the meetings. Could help with Horizon Planning – mini workshop after a SF meeting.

If we have multiple people from one organisation we could consider a quota system to keep numbers manageable.

Do you have any suggestions as to whether the Forum should offer a different model of membership such as : Project Based Consultancy; Facilitation Services for Members; Community Based Model. Please indicate for any, how the model can be funded

Happy generally with the current model, what's important is that it meets the needs of its members rather than using a specific model.

Benefit of membership. How help fellow members. Cross working between members. Need to help members understand how to use the network, how

members can learn from SF, make more attractive, LAs would benefit from more facilitation on LA issues so they can network with key contacts. Universities already benefit well in this way.

Members should be organisations

Organisations to promote other events

Use priority issues such as CC, do awareness raising

Are there any further Membership Benefits that can be offered such as Dedicated member area; site visits; reduced rates for events etc

Please see overall comment at the start, you can't know this until you have cross mapped the Forum's work to issues in the Solent.

Have to be a member to access meetings anyway so rates for events not really applicable unless we open events up to non members. Free meetings good as don't have to justify attendance costs, part of membership package.

How might the Solent Forum set itself up as a legal entity? The advantage of this would be: a) The Forum could bid for projects b) easy payments for conferences etc could be made via a system such as Eventbrite

Community interest group agreed to be the most suitable and flexible.

Don't just need to use HCC for event payments, can use other SF partners to do this.

Can't see why using Eventbrite should be a prohibitive issue for HCC payment systems.

Any SF members that are legal entities can front bids, just need to make a business case to them.

What would the cost of this be. Auditing costs could be high. Even charities have costs. Need to weigh up with benefits. Could we look at sub-contracting events?

Legal entity – could claim VAT back if a charity, evaluate business case of different models

Planning the work programme

MAINTAIN/IMPROVE (Option A – Previously endorsed by Solent Forum SG)

Core Service - Do you endorse these services?

Yes all endorsed, particularly the news service.

Endorse this

Endorse this – but refer to options about groups

Additional Member Services – Do you endorse these additional services?

They wanted a clear list of issues affecting the Solent that all can access. Forum staff could poll members on what these should be. Would be helpful to prioritise but not essential, could review annually in horizon planning, I got the feeling they think HP too national focused and we need to refine it far more for what is an issue for the Solent.

Regional habitat creation – this needs to be owned locally and worked on by local partners.

Student placements could seek funding for additional services

Yes - where benefits to members and financially viable. Partners could lead on this and make bids.

Can you suggest Improvements –Members benefits? Membership Retention and recruitment?; Legal Basis of Solent Forum?

Be clear and consistent with terminology regarding what is a project and what is a member service.

Have a published ToR for each member service that sets out clearly what it does and what the benefits are for members.

Make a report of members that have been lost and the reasons why – prevent future losses. Regular feedback of opportunities

GROW FORUM (Option B)

How do you suggest that the Forum plan and fund any additional projects/events (as it does not currently have the resources to run anything but a handful of small projects and events closely aligned to its core objectives?)

Do not really see much difference between option A and B, option B is just delivering extras.

Forum staff do not need to necessarily run new projects and events, member organisations also have to take on this responsibility. Members should use the Forum staff and its network to help guide the work/project development and

disseminate it on completion. Forum members should raise new ideas and work with Forum staff at the inception stage to enable people to have their say before work commences. Otherwise work may lose its focus or not maximise the long term value of partnership working.

Can use the Forum staff as project facilitators rather than deliverers. If want SF staff to deliver this has to be paid for or additional resources brought in – could use existing members and contacts e.g. second people or student placements.

If Government mandates net gain, LAs will not have skills to take this on. SF could help. Cross working opportunities for LAs. SF could offer facilitation services.

Look at Horizon Planning and make members aware. Key issues local and global, climate change emergency, becoming carbon neutral and how to offset, funding mechanisms. Could develop a coastal pick list for ENG that is achievable.

Report on media/comms successes

Horizon Planning – when SG get opportunity to discuss this

Timing of groups and meetings (now less regular)

Need flexibility to meet future opportunities

Resources

Any suggestions that you would like to make about Solent Forum staffing and resources. All respondents in the Members' Survey indicated they were felt the Forum offered value for money, and there were no suggestions to change resources.

See comment above, use staff flexibility and existing members and students.

Brag more, get out more, sell more. 6 months targeting new members. Free invite to next meeting and follow-up. Use social media and retweeting and linked in

Keep a flexible resource

Staff resilience and succession planning (next 5 years)

Coastal Partnership host funding

Consider any additional sources

Financial resilience of the forum and how much in reserve to be healthy

Visibility and signposting to partners of funding opportunities

OVERALL

What further suggestions can you make to help the Forum plan for the next 5 years?

We need clarity on what the coastal issues are in the Solent and prioritise them. Currently not clear enough in the business plan documents.

Once we have clarity on issues we can look to develop and deliver projects and see if they fit in with funding streams – funding is available, but you need to agree what you want to do first. Advice to only bid for work you want to do, not work that fits a funding stream, as will have limited value.

Need clear definition of who doing what. How does it all fit together. Value for money.

A marketing tool could be developing a CV for the Solent Forum. Use other organisations to champion the Forum

Follow up with members about this feedback

Need to recognise that funding opportunities exist

Participation in Business Planning Workshop

Environment Agency
Hampshire County Council
HM Naval Base
Isle of Wight Council
Natural England
New Forest National Park Authority
Portsmouth City Council
Solent Protection Society
University of Portsmouth (Associate)
Fareham Borough Council
ABPmer

Apologies

Wightlink
Bembridge Harbour Improvements Co.
BP Oil U.K. Ltd
Boskalis Westminster
HIWWT
Isle of Wight Estuaries River
Hamble Harbour Authority
Southern Water