

Solent Forum Annual Report: 2018 - 2019

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 2018/19 financial year and what it will deliver in the 2019/20 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 to advise 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 2018/19

Meetings and Events Held in 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 Management Group	Annual monitoring and reporting took place in spring 2018. 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 2018, to discuss and take forward actions arising from the Solent European Sites Management Scheme.
Strategic Opportunities Workshop on Coastal Funding	Solent Forum members	A workshop was held in November 2018 to publicise and discuss coastal funding streams with Solent Forum members.

Project Progress/Consultancy Services in 2018/19		
Project/Service	Objective	Status as of March 2019
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. One task is complete and the second is underway.
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. Phase 2 has secured funding and is being managed by the Solent Forum and delivered by ABPmer and the Solent Forum.
Clean Solent Shores and Seas (CSSS)	CSSS is a framework to address water quality issues, such as marine litter, by improving awareness and influencing behaviour in the Solent.	A project proposal was put together to take this work forward and funding sought, unfortunately this was unsuccessful. The project will now be scaled back to begin by recording all the existing projects and initiatives in the Solent.
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 directed by the Water Framework Directive.	Forum staff continued to attend and input into key Seaview meetings.
Opportunity Mapping Project	The Forum has been contracted by the Environment Agency, to run an opportunity mapping project for Southampton Water, to evaluate how its ecological status can be improved by enhancing coastal infrastructure.	This work will be completed by the end of March 2019. A report will be sent to the Environment Agency and, in due course, Solent Forum members to disseminate the findings.

Solent Forum Work Programme 2019/20

Meetings and Events Scheduled for 2019/20

Meeting	Attendees	Date and Details
Solent Forum	All Solent Forum members	Spring 2019, autumn 2019 and spring 2020.
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	Two to three times throughout the year.
Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS)	SEMS Relevant Authorities	Annual monitoring will be repeated online in spring 2019; actions identified will be discussed and taken forward at the SEMS annual meeting in September 2019.
Natural Environment Group (NEG)	NEG members	NEG will meet April 2019 and October 2019. The project focus during this period will be on marine litter and drones.
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) workshop	SEMS Relevant Authorities and other stakeholders	Once the third tranche of MCZs are published, the Forum will look to work with Natural England to run a workshop on the implications of these designations. The current date for publication of this tranche is summer 2019.

Project Development/Consultancy Services for 2019/20

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. All three of the main tasks set will be completed by December 2019.
Building Biodiversity in the Solent Hub	The Forum will work with Forum member, Artecology, and other members to develop a resource hub on building biodiversity, including ecological enhancement.	Government policy is pushing forward the concept of net environmental gain and it is important for Forum members to understand the implications. This project will help to facilitate awareness by building a knowledge base.
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 be completed and funding will be sought for phase 3.
Catchment Management	To work with Seaview to improve water quality in the Solent under the Water Framework Directive.	The Forum will continue to attend key meetings and to partner, and if appropriate lead, on new actions.
Clean Solent Shores and Seas (CSSS)	CSSS is a framework to address water quality issues, by improving awareness and influencing behaviour in the Solent.	A signposting and resource hub will be developed on the Forum's website to collate all the numerous existing projects and initiatives on water quality and litter in the Solent.

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, RYA, the University of Portsmouth and the Solent Protection Society.

