

# Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP) - Briefing Papers

## Briefing Paper 1 - September 2009

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### What is SoMaP?

The Solent Forum are managing this partnership project to help prepare the Solent for a marine planning project. The project is officially starting on 23rd September and will run until August 2010. A Solent Forum Officer is assigned to the project for two days a week. Please direct any queries to Karen McHugh on 01962 846027.

The project has an established Steering Group and Data Group. Full details of the project and the minutes of meetings can be found on the Solent Forum website at [www.solentforum.org/forum/SoMaP/](http://www.solentforum.org/forum/SoMaP/).

### Background

The aim of the project is to achieve the first steps only in the process of setting up a Solent Planning System by starting to build a Solent-wide coastal and marine policy framework including a spatial database of plans, policies and activities by sector. Two strands to the project include:

1. Understanding what data is required at this initial stage to strategically assess different sectors plans and policies in the Solent; and
2. Work closely with a range of stakeholders represented in all sectors and governance of the Solent to obtain this information and explore their views towards a Solent scale marine plan.

The project is working to a work programme agreed by the Steering Group and this includes the following seven work packages:

1. Establish a communications strategy.
2. Reiterate national progress on Marine Spatial Planning by the Defra implementation team back to stakeholders.
3. Scope with stakeholders the case for a marine plan at a Solent scale.
4. Understand the information requirements for a Solent Marine Planning System.
5. Agree pilot case study sectors, to represent pressing Solent issues and land and marine interactions, and use these to test the data and information.
6. Obtain and map all sectoral policies within the Solent; obtain further data as agreed in work package.
7. Evaluate project findings and make recommendations to stakeholders.

### Stakeholder Engagement

A large number of organisations are currently involved with managing the Solent including Local Authorities, Harbour Authorities, Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, Sea Fisheries Committees, NGOs and recreational and user groups. In addition many statutory and non statutory plans and initiatives exist. A new marine planning system will bring about changes to this management structure, although it is not clear at present at what regional scale such a planning system will operate. The Solent may benefit from planning at a Solent scale rather than at the southeastern scale, and there is a need for local stakeholders to assess the implications of planning at a Solent scale.

Stakeholder engagement and consultation is at the heart of the project. A Communications Strategy has been designed to show how the project team will contact all stakeholders that operate in the Solent.

SoMaP will examine the different sectoral planning policies within the Solent to help inform the new Marine Management Organisation and those with an interest in the potential development of a marine plan. A programme is currently being devised to collate all plans and policies for each sector operating in the coastal and marine environment.



## Case Studies

The project will examine three case studies in more detail to help determine the best way of collecting policy data, and identify further data of relevance. The three case studies selected include:

- Hamble Estuary – this provides a complete estuary case study of a geomorphologically typical Solent estuary with many land and sea planning interactions.
- Boating Movements – this theme was selected as the Solent is very densely used by ships and boats. This will test how marine planning will relate to navigation, safety and recreational water use.
- Coastal Squeeze – this is a big issue for the Solent as the low lying coastline is particularly affected by sea level rise. Habitats and coastal livelihoods will be displaced over the next 100 years by sea level rise.

## National Progress on the Marine and Coastal Access Bill

The Marine and Coastal Access Bill is planned to be enacted into UK legislation this year or early 2010. This Bill will create a strategic Marine Planning System (MPS) based upon a set of agreed marine objectives. The first stage of this system will be the creation of a UK-wide marine policy statement to create a more integrated approach to marine management and setting both our short and longer-term objectives for sustainable use of the marine environment. It is then intended that the second stage will be the creation of a series of marine plans, which will implement the policy statement in specific areas, using information about spatial uses and needs in those areas.

The government has set up a new Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to deliver objectives for the marine area. In order to establish a MPS, the MMO will need to provide a gap analysis between current plans and policies and a spatially mapped framework for spatial planning and management of the marine environment. The subsequent MPS will be an evolution of the current planning system and current marine management arrangements. The government have already set up four regional projects including the Eastern Channel Marine Conservation Zone Project (Balanced Seas) to establish an ecologically coherent network of effectively managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by 2012.

## SoMaP Steering Group

The project is steered by the following organisations: Hampshire County Council, West Sussex County Council, Southampton City Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council, Defra, SEEDA, GOSE, Crown Estate, Environment Agency and Natural England.

A key challenge for the project will be spatially representing the data it collects. There is an aspiration to provide an interactive web-based GIS which will allow Solent stakeholders to search for coastal and marine policy data, thus providing the rudiments of a planning tool. The project officers have also formed a Data Group to guide this element of the work; this group includes the Crown Estate, Seazone Hydrosatial, Channel Coastal Observatory, ABPMer and Geodata.

## Further Information

For more information on this and other Solent Forum projects you can visit our website at [www.solentforum.org/SoMaP/](http://www.solentforum.org/SoMaP/). Karen McHugh, the Solent Forum Manager, leads on this project and can be contacted on 01962 846027 or email [info@solentforum.org](mailto:info@solentforum.org).

Minutes and papers from the project can be downloaded from [www.solentforum.org/forum/SoMaP/Resources/](http://www.solentforum.org/forum/SoMaP/Resources/).

Solent Forum  
c/o Spatial Strategy Group  
Hampshire County Council  
The Castle  
Winchester  
SO23 8UE  
Tel: 01962 846027  
Email: [info@solentforum.org](mailto:info@solentforum.org).

