

Solent Forum Annual Report: 2016 - 2017

The Solent Forum is an established coastal partnership that promotes and delivers integrated coastal zone management around the Solent coast. 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 2016/17 financial year and what it will deliver in the 2017/18 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 http://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 topic groups.

The Forum also hosts regular events as part of its core service, and hosts other events 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

These aims are supported by five objectives that show how the Forum will deliver integrated coastal zone management in the Solent.

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:

- Up to date information on coastal management issues;
- Access to the Solent News service;
- Free attendance at the biannual Solent Forum meetings and reduced entry fee to other Forum events;
- An increased understanding of how to manage the Solent's resources and set priorities;
- Use of the Solent Forum network to communicate to other authorities, organisations and user groups;
- Opportunity to undertake partnership work and influence the direction of future Forum work;
- Opportunity to join 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, State of the Solent reports, 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, Coastal Directories and a 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 making, Coastal Partnerships Working Group attendance, Strategic Opportunities Workshops, State of the Solent reports.

Solent Forum Core Work

- Biannual Forum meetings.
- News service - biannual newsletter, (Solent News) monthly updates, Twitter and special alerts.
- Maintaining the Forum website - 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 Solent indicator dataset and publishing State of the Solent reports.
- 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 2016/17

Meetings and Events Held in 2016/17		
Meeting	Attendees	Date
Solent Forum	All Solent Forum members	Spring 2016, autumn 2016 and spring 2017.
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	Three times throughout the year.
Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS)	SEMS Relevant Authorities	Annual monitoring and reporting took place in spring 2016; a new provider has been sourced for the 2017 monitoring. The SEMS officer has been working to match the activities monitored with Natural England's new conservation advice activity categories.
Natural Environment Group	NEG members	Met in April and November 2016. A recreation focus group was set up and published Solent-wide guidelines on paddlesports and bird disturbance.

Project Progress in 2016/17		
Project	Objective	Status as of March 2017
South Marine Plans	The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has consulted on the marine plans for the south inshore and offshore areas.	The Forum assisted the MMO and Solent Forum Members by signposting the draft South Marine Plan consultation, and began identifying ways in which it can help with plan implementation.
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.	A scoping meeting of interested parties was held, a project brief was agreed and a contract let to undertake phase 1 of the project work.
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 Blue Economy work identified at a scoping meeting held to explore issues facing maritime businesses.



Solent Forum Work Programme 2017/18

Meetings and Events Scheduled for 2017/18		
Meeting	Attendees	Date
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 Relevant Authorities	Annual monitoring will be repeated online in spring 2017; actions identified will be discussed and taken forward at the SEMS annual meeting in September 2017.
Natural Environment Group (NEG)	NEG members	NEG will meet April 2017 and October 2017. Funding for projects that address SEMS issues will be allocated at the April meeting.
SEMS Workshops	SEMS Members	In March 2017 the Forum and Natural England (NE) ran a successful workshop looking at the new NE Conservation Advice packages. A further workshop on condition assessments is planned for the Autumn.
Solent Forum 25th Anniversary Celebration	Solent coastal community	The Solent Forum will be 25 years old in 2017. A week of events will be held in May which will include a conference on 10th May and an anniversary dinner onboard HMS Warrior on 11th May.

Project Development for 2017/18		
Project	Objective	Work Plan
South Marine Plans	The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is finalising the marine plans for the south inshore and offshore areas.	The MMO have expressed an interest in Coastal Partnerships like the Solent Forum facilitating marine plan implementation during 2017.
The Blue Economy	To set up a working group to discuss and address the issues facing the Solent's maritime businesses.	Take forward the Blue Economy project ideas from the 2016 business scoping meeting, prioritising the BUDS project (see below).
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 will commence in spring 2017 and last for five months. On completion further work streams will be identified. Further details at http://www.solentforum.org/services/buds/ .
Coastal Consents Guide	The Guide introduces and summarises the licences and consents needed to undertake work and development around the coast.	This online Guide will be updated over summer 2017 and launched at the October Solent Forum meeting.

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.

