

Solent Forum Annual Report: 2009 - 2010

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 09/10 financial year and what it will deliver in the 2010/2011 year. The long term aims and objectives of the Forum are set out in its Business Planning document 2010 to 2015. This can be downloaded from the Forum's website at www.solentforum.org/publications/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 develops other events to support project work and disseminate information on important coastal issues.



Solent Forum Aims

The Aims of the Solent Forum are to:

- Facilitate more integrated planning and management of the Solent
- Assist the agencies and authorities in carrying out their functions
- To provide a broadly 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 and Meetings Calendar Services;
- Free attendance at the biannual Solent Forum meetings and reduced entry 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: Nature Conservation, Recreation, Water Quality, 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 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 websites, Solent Forum meetings.

2. To improve access to the information base

Relevant Forum work: Annual student bursary, Solent News Service, Forum websites, Strategic Opportunities Workshops, State of the Solent reports, Solent Disc, Recreation Audit, Wader Roost Strategy, Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project, coastal information sheets.

3. To facilitate better communication, consultation and liaison

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings, STAR Calendar Service, Strategic Opportunities Workshops, Coastal Directories.

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

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings, Solentpedia, Solent Forum subgroups and associated projects.

5. To promote the national and regional importance of the Solent

Relevant Forum work: Solent Forum Meetings, Solent News Service, Forum websites, input to national and European coastal policy making, Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP), Coastal Partnerships Working Group attendance, Strategic Opportunities Workshops, State of the Solent and indicators.

Solent Forum Core Work

- Biannual Forum meetings.
- News service - biannual newsletter, (Solent News) monthly updates and special alerts.
- Calendar of coastal events - Save Time and Resources (STAR) service.
- Maintaining two websites - solentforum.org and solentpedia.info.
- Provision of Solent Disc - a metadatabase of Solent research and reports.
- Servicing of subgroups - water quality, nature conservation, recreation and Solent European Marine Sites.
- Administering Solent Water Quality Awards.
- Annual student bursary to encourage Solent research.
- Maintaining a Solent indicator dataset and publishing State of the Solent reports.

Solent Forum Subgroups/Service Groups

- Solent European Marine Sites
- Solent Water Quality Group
- Recreation Group
- Nature Conservation Group

Solent Forum Project Work

Project Progress for 2009/10

The following projects have been progressed during the 09/10 financial year. Forum projects have differing timescales and many are scheduled to run into 2010/11.

Project	Objective	Status as of March 2010
Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP)	This project will prepare and scope the need for a Solent scale Marine Planning System with Solent stakeholders.	Ongoing. Communications Strategy, Marine Planning and Information Requirements Reports published. Stakeholder meetings convened.
Recreation Audit	A review of the recreational use of the Solent coast and levels of participation.	The phase 1 Recreation Audit by Solent Southampton University is complete. Detailed methodology for phase 2 established.
Wader Roost Strategy	The project will help inform the long-term availability of secure high-water feeding and roosting sites for Waders in the Solent, taking into account the likely human and natural changes.	Contract let for site characterisation work to Footprint Ecology. Phase 1, the spatial analysis, completed.
State of the Solent	The Forum maintains an indicator set to monitor aspects of the Solent. Data from this forms the State of the Solent reports.	Ongoing. Annual datasets are being updated and the whole dataset is being reviewed during 2010.
Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project	This project is led by the Nature Conservation subgroup and will assess the impact of activities and development on Solent European Habitats.	Phase 1, desk base study, completed. Phase 2, primary research is ongoing.

Project Development for 2010/2011

The following projects will be progressed by the Solent Forum during 010/11. Some commenced during 09/10 and are being carried forward.

Project	Objective	Timescale
Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP)	This project will prepare and scope the need for a Solent scale Marine Planning System with Solent stakeholders.	A major southern planning conference, organised by the Forum, will be held in September 2010, to report on the project findings. Stakeholder meetings are ongoing through 2010 until the conference.
Recreation Audit	A review of the recreational use of the Solent coast and levels of participation.	Phase 2 will not be progressed, but the Forum's chapter on Recreation and Tourism in its Strategic Guidance will be updated.
State of the Solent	To monitor trends on all aspects of the Solent.	Data sheets will be uploaded to the Forum's website during 2010, forming the new online version of State of the Solent. Data collection is ongoing.
Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project	This is led by the Nature Conservation subgroup and will assess the impact of activities and development on Solent European Habitats.	Phase 2, the second year of bird surveys and the visitor survey have commenced. Household surveys and modelling will be conducted over the summer of 2010. Phase 2 is expected to finish in 2011 then phase 3, Mitigation, will begin.
Wader Roost Strategy	The project will help inform the long-term availability of secure high-water feeding and roosting sites for Waders in the Solent, taking into account the likely human and natural changes.	Phase 2 aims to identify how the use of sites might change in the future. This will include running various scenarios and case studies.
AdaptSolent	A two year non-technical Community Engagement Campaign on Climate Change Adaptation.	Part of a European bid led by the Environment Agency (CC2150 Project), final decision if bid is successful is in September 2010.

Project Development for 2010/2011, continued...

Project	Objective	Timescale
Marine Industry Project	Project list to be confirmed after exploratory meeting with Solent Forum members. Outputs likely to include a range of business factsheets, updating of marine consents guide and responding to the SEEDA Waterfront Strategy.	Depending on funding the project will commence Autumn 2010.

Solent Forum Meetings and Events for 2009/10

Meeting	Attendees	Date
Solent Forum	All Solent Forum membership	Spring 09, Autumn 09 and spring 2010.
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	Quarterly throughout the year.
Solent European Marine Sites Management Group	Members of the Management Group	Summer 2009.
Subgroups - recreation, nature conservation and water quality	Invited members of the various groups	The groups decide their own schedule and will met 2-4 times per year. Details are on the Forum's website.

Delivering the Business Plan 2010 to 2015

Resources

As a voluntary initiative the Forum is reliant on contributions from its membership, in particular its steering group members, to fund its core work, prepare project work and deliver events. Ongoing core funding is critical to the long term future of the Forum. The Forum tries to ensure that events are self-funding and bids for appropriate funding streams for specific projects such as Towards Solent Marine Planning.

The Forum offers its skills and services to the Solent's coastal community for other specific coastal work, for example, it provides the secretariat for the Solent European Marine Sites Management Scheme and the Solent Water Quality Group.

Monitoring and Review

During the past year the Forum Officers have spent a significant amount of time writing a new Business Plan for the period 2010 to 2015. This work was guided by the Forum's steering group and was supplemented by an online members questionnaire and workshop. The new plan concentrates on the current issues and drivers on the coast and how the Forum will deliver services to help its members deal with this range of issues.

Further Information

For more details on any of the work undertaken by the Forum, please visit the Forum's website or contact the Solent Forum Office. More information on the Solent and coastal issues in general can be found on the Forum's Solentpedia website at www.solentpedia.info.

Solent Forum
c/o Spatial Strategy Group, Hampshire County Council, The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UD
Tel: 01962 846027, Email: info@solentforum.org, Web: www.solentforum.org.

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

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

