

Championing Coastal Coordination

Coastal Partnerships in the South: strengthening relationships to maximise socio-economic and environmental outcomes

Digital Handbook: March 2022



Portsmouth, photo courtesy of University of Portsmouth



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1 Executive Summary

On the south coast three coastal partnerships, Solent Forum, Dorset Coast Forum and Isle of Wight Estuaries Partnership, worked together to produce this Handbook for the Environment Agency funded Coordinating Coastal Communities Project (3Cs). It is a component of a larger project bid from the national Coastal Partnership Network (CPN). It aims to showcase the work of these coastal partnerships to government agencies and wider coastal stakeholders. It identifies areas for improvement and makes recommendations for improved coastal integration, funding, and governance. It includes a complete set of recommendations.

Coastal partnerships reflect the geographical and human aspects of the area in which they sit. Their core services promote and share multi-sector information to encourage collaboration, avoid duplication and provide an effective mechanism for improving access to evidence. They can host material on their independent websites to share information via hubs to stakeholders and can be commissioned to deliver projects. Where there are partnership gaps, they can help by using their knowledge and expertise to identify relevant people and organisations.

Examples of how the 3Cs south partnerships deliver improved outcomes are explored within the handbook under the following headings.

- Working with coastal communities
- Collaborative partnership working
- Working with fishing and aquaculture
- Improving water quality management
- Supporting catchment coordination
- Providing information hubs

There is no standard model for a coastal partnership, and this should be seen as a strength. Being flexible and politically independent allows open sharing of ideas and mutual support across a wide range of coastal stakeholders. Successful partnerships reflect a local need and can help their statutory members deliver their functions and duties.

The partnerships in 3Cs south are successful and they play a key role in facilitating the integration of coastal and marine management. They do this through their core services by transferring knowledge and bringing about opportunities for networking between coastal and marine sectors. Coastal Partnerships do need more engagement and support from national government; the 3Cs south already have good support from local government bodies. More support from the Marine Management Organisation would be welcome both in terms of funding provision and allowing local staff time to assist with coastal partnership work. Government should also formally recognise that coastal partnerships can provide an effective vehicle to bring stakeholders together to collaborate and deliver key policy, particularly environmental policy such as Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Coastal and marine management in England is characterised by complex statutory and non-statutory governance. It is well documented that there is a need for improved integration in England and across devolved administrations' borders. This is better achieved by partnership working and delivery rather than strategic aspiration. There are real opportunities for better integration of environmental governance and policy. A government framework and guidelines for an integrated ecosystems approach, based on natural capital understanding and the stacking of benefits, would be

welcome at the coast. The development of effective Nature Recovery Strategies is important, and it is hoped that the government will set ambitious strategic coast and marine net gain targets. There is also a need to solve the barrier of additionality at designated sites. Coastal partnerships can help bring together a range of stakeholders including the Defra family to support consensus building. It is hoped that we can build an improved system of streamlined consents as currently this is a significant barrier to restoration projects in terms of complexity and funding. Defra's 25 Year plan and the Marine Management Organisations high level objectives provide a direction of travel, but there are no detailed costed actions for delivery.

The national Coastal Partnership Network (CPN) already provides a valuable service to coastal partnerships in England, as well as cross border partnerships. Its annual Coastal Partnership Network meeting and its facilitation of colleague discussions is highly valued. The network has evolved over many years and is largely run voluntarily. Now is the time for it to be set on a more formal footing to deliver additional services and increase partnership working and collaboration.

To help the national CPN evolve, government funding is required for at least five years for paid staff to build a national framework for coastal integration and develop an improved service to support the numerous local coastal partnerships. The CPN could also administer a national funding pot that local coastal partnerships can access to support their work. Should a model like the Catchment Based Approach (CaBa) be considered for the coast, with an associated national funding stream, any monitoring and evaluation criteria should be kept simple and be based around current outputs of business plans, annual reports, and work programmes. Joint national evaluation would enable smaller partnerships to contribute their outputs without having to meet all the criteria.

For existing successful locally funded Coastal Partnerships the national CPN should work with them, supplementing their strengths and recognising that a centralised national model may not be the best approach for them given their strong independence and neutrality. The Solent Forum and Dorset Coast Forum should be recognised as separate regional hubs, although it may be of benefit for one to be a single point of contact for the region.

It would be of benefit to Coastal Partnerships if the government could recognise (and remedy) that the structure and hosting arrangements for existing local coastal partnerships can place barriers to them from bidding for national funding streams; and that national government funding should not preclude coastal partnerships from receiving funding from local offices and vice versa.

2 Introduction

This handbook has been prepared by the 3Cs south team to fulfil our element of the national Coastal Partnership Network's (CPN) bid for the Championing Coastal Coordination (3Cs) project. The south team is the Solent Forum, Dorset Coast Forum and the Isle of Wight Estuaries Project.

The 3Cs South team met several times to produce the handbook, this included workshops to evaluate what we want a national coastal partnership body to provide. Input was also sought from the Solent Forum steering group to gain a perspective from wider coastal stakeholders.

The handbook looks at how coastal partnerships work in the south and their relationship to other partnerships working at the coast. In section 4 we look at what the 3Cs south partnerships currently deliver to improve socio-economic and environmental outcomes.

We also review and show how partnership working can improve the integration of marine and coastal management. In section 6 we set out our recommendations for how to improve governance through partnership working.

The handbook can be used at both a local and national level. Locally to demonstrate to coastal partnership stakeholders the value of being part of a partnership, and nationally to show how local partnership working can help deliver improved coastal and marine management.

3 Coastal Partnerships

3.1 Coastal Partnerships

Voluntary coastal and estuary partnership initiatives have evolved at the local level for many areas around the UK coast. They co-ordinate stakeholder engagement and public participation in decision-making and create platforms for community activity. Most are informal, non-statutory and lack legal status with no specific driving legislation behind their work. Many have two or three decades of experience in bridging the links between coastal communities and decision-makers, hosting secretariat services, delivering projects, facilitating consultation and supporting collaborative governance. These partnerships tend to employ co-ordinators who have a 'neutral facilitation' role to increase the exchange of information, promote awareness of local coastal issues and engagement in consultations.

The national [Coastal Partnership Network](#) (CPN) supports the coastal partnerships around the UK. It is hosted by the Thames Estuary partnership and has a board of local coastal partnership officers who guide its work. The Isle of Wight estuaries officer is a member of this board.

The locations and details of coastal partnerships around the country can be seen on the [CPN map](#).

It is important to note that the 3Cs south partnerships are entirely independent of this national body, they have their own chairs, steering groups and funding partners.

3.2 Coastal Partnerships in the 3cs South

Across the south coast there are three well established coastal partnerships, two are regional and operate at a strategic level (Dorset Coast Forum and the Solent Forum) and one is smaller and operates at a more local level (Isle of Wight Estuaries). They cover the area from the Dorset/Devon border to Selsey Bill in Sussex and the Isle of Wight. These three partnerships also collaborate with

their neighbours; Dorset, Devon and Solent have worked together in the past on a MMO project on stakeholder engagement for marine plans and the Solent Forum is helping to support the establishment of the Sussex Marine Forum.

Figure 1. Map of the 3Cs South Location



Solent Forum

The [Solent Forum](#) was established in 1992, it has an independent chair, over fifty [members](#) and two staff who are hosted by Hampshire County Council. It is politically neutral. It supports its members' functions and facilitates their work but does not have direct involvement with their statutory duties or comment on individual member consultations, plans or proposals. All its members are professional organisations including local government, port and harbour authorities, government agencies, IFCA, user groups, academia and NGOs. All members pay to be part of the partnership and this income funds the core service. It takes on project work where this furthers the interests of its members, it does not use project work as an income generator. It does not receive any national funding for core work.

It supports the smaller partnerships in its area such as the Isle of Wight Estuaries, River Hamble Estuary Partnership and Manhood Peninsula Partnership by providing them access to its members services and staff time. For example, hosting quarterly partnership meetings for mutual support and discussion and promoting and sharing their work.

The Solent is a big busy place, 1.25 million people live around its shores, there are 10 harbours and estuaries, two major ports and a naval base. It is internationally important for sailing and is heavily used for both land and water based recreation by both residents and visitors. Tourism is an

important economic sector for the Isle of Wight. The Solent has recently been designated as a freeport and is one of the leading UK areas for the cruise industry. Nearly all the Solent's coastline and the waterbody itself is designated as a Marine Protected Area (MPA) and it is a UNESCO biosphere.

Dorset Coast Forum

[Dorset Coast Forum \(DCF\)](#) is a well-established strategic Coastal Partnership made up of over 260 cross sector organisations, groups, associations and businesses. Its overriding aim is to promote a sustainable approach to the management, use and development of Dorset's coast and inshore waters. It does this through encouraging collaborative working, innovative and future focused project work, sharing information and data and providing links at regional, national and European levels.

DCF covers the coastal area from Lyme Regis to Christchurch, incorporating the main towns of Weymouth, Bournemouth and Poole, several smaller traditional seaside towns and the world heritage site of the Jurassic Coast. The population of Dorset and the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area is around 722,000, with a large proportion of residents living along, or near to, the coast. In addition, Dorset's coast attracts millions of visitors through tourism every year.

DCF has 23 years of experience of working with different sectors and bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders, including local communities in a balanced and neutral setting to discuss all aspects relating to the management and use of the coast. It is core funded by key partners including local councils, the EA, Wessex Water and Dorset Wildlife Trust. Project work is funded through active fundraising by DCF and/or from members directly approaching DCF to support and add value to their core work. Example of DCF's current projects include:

- Development of the [Dorset Mariculture Strategy](#) – working across sectors to assess barriers and opportunities for development and create an action plan to grow a sustainable aquaculture industry in Dorset.
- In connection to the above, DCF secured funding from the Marine Management Organisation to further develop the concept of an [English Aquaculture Innovation Hub](#).
- The [Building Resilience in Flood Disadvantaged Communities \(BRIC\)](#) project, aimed developing support for people and communities in Weymouth likely to be affected by flooding, particularly vulnerable groups.
- Delivering community and engagement support for FCERM plans - creating a link between flood risk management team and communities; communicating complex data in accessible ways; gaining feedback on public realm improvement elements of flood defence works; and ensuring local communities have a voice in flood defence planning.
- Co-ordinating the regeneration of Weymouth Train Station forecourt and creation of nearby Pocket Park, including improved pedestrian access and cycle routes, increased planting and new interpretation showcasing local railway heritage.
- Sustainable Swanage – Working with local community groups, councils, businesses and volunteers to develop project that support the local environment and combat climate change.

Through its project work DCF raises significant funds each year. During the financial year 2021/22, DCF will have raised approx. £1.3 million to support project work. In 2018, in a single application, DCF successfully raised £5.6mn from the Coastal Community Fund which supported 18 community, well-being and infrastructure projects along Dorset's coast.

Isle of Wight Estuaries

The [Isle of Wight Estuaries Project](#) was established in the late 1990s after English Nature's Estuaries Initiative instigated the development of the Medina and the Western Yar Estuary Management Plans. The Estuaries Initiative was a response to the House of Commons Select Committee report that showed the need for better coordination at the coast. The Estuary Management Plans (EMPs) that resulted from the Initiative were the first stakeholder led, co-ordinated and integrated management tool created for delivery at a local level. They were developed using topic areas with key stakeholder groups.

It is based around the two EMPs developed for the Medina Estuary and the Western Yar Estuary. Both plans contained a set of actions required to resolve local issues, improve co-ordination and increase understanding. As the actions were gradually completed, many became a 'watching brief' and so the Guiding Principles of the EMPs were taken forward to ensure the key aspects and objectives of the plans were not lost.

The Project has adapted significantly over recent years to respond to the changes in the legislative framework, increased levels of consultation and stakeholder engagement elsewhere and a reduction in resources. It now provides information and facilitation for the partners and other organisations working on the Island and Solent coasts. It delivers marine and coastal projects on the Isle of Wight and has an input into the work of other relevant bodies using a wide network of contacts and experience derived over the past 20 years.

The project draws in funding for the delivery of specific projects from a wide variety of sources and sometimes works collaboratively with larger projects and partnerships to enable local delivery of national or regional priorities. The partnership employs one officer and is core funded by harbour authorities and the local authority. Initially a three-year project, it has been active on the Isle of Wight for over 20 years due to a continuing need for better coordination, increased awareness and facilitation of partnership working with other organisations. All partners in the Project are members of the Solent Forum and this relationship enables a much greater degree of collaboration for local delivery through networking and joint projects.

3.3 Other South Coast Partnerships

In addition to the coastal and estuary partnerships, there are many other partnerships across the south area that interact with the coast. These are set up by people as and when needed, some are long term and others are task and finish groups. Many have a specific focus or purpose. What a coastal partnership can do is ensure that knowledge transfer takes place across all these partnerships, so they all work collaboratively. In the Solent we do this by use of our news service, which includes twitter, a monthly e-newsletter, a biannual newsletter and Forum staff highlighting at the numerous meetings they attend what is happening due to their comprehensive knowledge of the area. We also facilitate introductions and pass on relevant information directly from the numerous information sources we access.

Below are examples of some of the partnerships that the south coast coastal partnerships coordinate with:

- [Coastal Partners](#)
- Sussex Coastal Forum (in development)

- [Jurassic Coast Trust](#)
- [Bird Aware Solent](#)
- [Southern Coastal Group](#)
- Catchment partnerships
- [Solent Marine Sites](#)
- [Solent Local Enterprise Partnership](#)
- [Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership](#)
- Local Nature Partnerships (Hants and IoW, Dorset)
- Isle of Wight AONB Forum

Case Studies: 3Cs south Partnerships working with other Partnerships

Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP)

The SRMP partnership is made up of [19 organisations](#), it is funded by contributions from all new residential dwellings within 5.6km of the Solent SPAs. It was implemented as evidence showed that new housing growth would bring about adverse pressure to important designated bird sites in the Solent. The Solent Forum's Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Strategy (SDMP) was the body that set out the evidence and the need for mitigation to enable housing development to continue. This partnership led to the establishment of Bird Aware Solent.

[Bird Aware Solent](#)

Bird Aware Solent is a partnership that works to mitigate the effects of recreational disturbance to birds from new housing development. The Solent Forum works closely with the partnership, helping to publicise and support its work and feed in relevant information. Bird Aware staff are invited to Solent Forum meetings to help spread their work more widely and make use of the Forum's news service. The Solent Forum uses Bird Aware knowledge and data in the Solent Marine Sites management plan which monitors and addresses the impacts of non-licensable activities.

Local Nature Partnerships

The Solent Forum has been in early conversations with the [Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership \(LNP\)](#). The LNP recognises the value that this coastal partnership can bring in including the coast in the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategies. The Solent Forum will continue to monitor this and provide coastal input as necessary.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Dorset Coast Forum works closely with [Dorset LEP](#) particularly in relation to its work on supporting and developing the aquaculture and fishing industry. The LEP highlight agritech and aquaculture as a high growth sector in Dorset's Local Industrial Strategy. In recognition of this, the LEP is supporting DCF's project to develop an Aquaculture Innovation Hub within Dorset, through the provision of match funding and sharing knowledge and expertise.

3.4 Solent Marine Sites Management Group

The [Solent Marine Sites \(SEMS\)](#) Management Group is an example of a statutory partnership being administered by a Coastal Partnership. The SEMS Management Group was established in 2000. It allows the relevant authorities in the Solent to discharge their duty to manage non-licensable

activities under the Habitats Regulations to a single management scheme delivered by the Solent Forum. Thirty one Relevant Authorities take part in this scheme and provide the funding to cover the secretariat costs. A relevant authority chairs the group, this is currently the River Hamble Harbour Master. Natural England are a member of the scheme and provide additional advice and support on potential activity impacts on MPAs. When strategic impacts are identified a working group (Natural Environment Group) meets twice a year with the relevant authorities and wider partners to address them. SEMS has been held up as an example of national best practice.

3.5 Evaluation

Coastal partnerships are grass roots bodies, they reflect both the geographical and human aspects of the area in which they sit. In 3Cs south we have an example of a regional partnership that mostly covers open coast aligning with a local authority boundary (Dorset/BCP) a second regional partnership (Solent) that covers multiple administrative boundaries, centred on its geographical place and a number of small partnerships (including the Isle of Wight) that intrinsically serves the more local needs and uniqueness of an island. They have all been formed and developed over numerous years to serve the needs of the people and place where they sit.

Due to their strong stakeholder networks they are also well placed to support other partnerships in an area. They help to promote and share information on workstreams to ensure collaboration and avoid duplication. Where there is a need for a partnership that doesn't exist, they can help to bridge that gap by using their knowledge and expertise to identify relevant people and organisations.

Coastal partnerships work with local communities and stakeholders to coordinate and deliver local projects for local people.

In specific cases they can also facilitate partnerships that deliver statutory functions such as the Solent Marine Sites Management Group.

3.6 Recommendations

There is no standard model for a coastal partnership, we recommend this be seen as a strength. Being flexible and politically independent allows open and honest conversations, the sharing of ideas and work and mutual support across coastal stakeholders.

Successful partnerships reflect a local need and help their members to deliver their functions and duties. We recommend that local people are best placed to decide what type of partnership would work for them.

4 Delivering Socio-economic and Environmental Outcomes

4.1 Introduction

The following section gives examples of how coastal partnerships work on a range of issues across the coast to deliver socio-economic and environmental outcomes. We look at how we work across the sustainability pillars with case studies covering coastal communities, collaborative partnership working, catchment coordination and the provision of information hubs. We also present two sector specific area examples of fishing and aquaculture and water quality management.

4.2 Coastal Communities

4.2.1 Introduction

In addition to working with stakeholders and supporting organisations who work along the coast, Coastal Partnerships also play a key role in creating a voice for coastal communities. We often act as a link between local authorities and regulatory bodies, and local communities, and do this through the following ways:

- Transforming information (including technical information) into accessible formats that encourage and enable coastal communities to gain an understanding of local plans, developments and/or environmental issues.
- Using a range of tools to reach out and engage with coastal communities, including workshops, events, walks and talks, drop-in centres, volunteer opportunities, appreciative enquiry, blogs, story mapping, surveys and more.
- Gaining feedback from communities on plans and developments planned for their local area, such as neighbourhood plans, harbour strategies, flood defence improvements and Marine Conservation Zones.
- Helping to reach solutions to local issues by bringing coastal communities, local businesses and local stakeholders together to find common ground, for example in relation to water safety issues and/or balancing recreation use with protecting coastal and marine habitats.

4.2.2 Building Resilience in Communities (BRIC)

[DCF's Building Resilience in Communities at risk of flooding project](#) brings together local flood risk management teams, local community organisations, the Environment Agency (EA) and local authorities to develop ways to support vulnerable communities in Weymouth at risk of flooding; the EA are using this project as a vehicle to help their work reach disadvantaged communities. Crucially this project also works directly with those local communities to hear and share their stories relating to flooding issues and how it impacts them as a community.

Key areas of focus for the project are the town centre, esplanade and harbour area that are most at risk of wave overtopping, tidal, fluvial, and surface water flooding. Some of these areas are also among the top ten percent most deprived in the country, where there are high rates of multi-occupancy households and rental properties combined with people living in poverty, unemployed and with complex health needs.

The Melcombe Regis area of Weymouth is at a unique risk of flooding from multiple sources. It is a low-lying coastal area bordering the river Wey. This means that it is at risk of fluvial, pluvial, tidal flooding and inundation from wave overtopping. If these events were to occur simultaneously, the drainage system in the area could not cope with the level of water.

Flooding events in Weymouth are only likely to increase due to rising sea levels, and an increasing number and intensity of storms due to climate change. Coastal partnerships can play a key role in working with coastal communities to create greater awareness of increasing risks and to find ways to adapt and plan for supporting those who are more vulnerable.

Work has previously been done with Wessex Water to ensure the drainage systems in the area are working to their full capacity. This will need to be a regular process to ensure that the drainage systems will still cope with the surface water flooding.

The main aims of DCF’s BRIC project are to:

- Create a community resilience network, including recruiting and training volunteer flood wardens.
- Create a community resilience flood plan.
- Develop and test new tools and techniques to engage communities in assessing and communicating risk.
- Engage and encourage participation in local flood risk management strategies and other plans such as the Local Plan.
- Encourage participation in flood reporting.

Timescale

The project runs from March 2021 until March 2023.

How it is funded:

DCF have been awarded £141,000 (69% of the project budget) from the European Regional Development Fund via the Interreg France (Channel) England programme, whilst match funding is being provided through expertise offered by Dorset Council.

See below details of how local stakeholders work closely with DCF to meet the wider aims of the BRIC project:

Stakeholder name	Key priorities	Role/actions
Weymouth Town Council	Ensure the best outcome for local residents. Build community resilience to flood events.	Steering group member of BRIC project. Work closely with BRIC coordinator with local project elements. Advice on a public ‘live’ flooding information screen and potentially take on responsibility afterwards. Manage Community Flood Action Plan once developed.

Dorset Council	<p>Ensure the best outcome for local residents.</p> <p>Communicate flood risk strategies to residents.</p> <p>Listen to residents' opinions and thoughts on the strategies.</p>	<p>FCERM team engage in consultations and advice public on technical flood risk aspects.</p> <p>FRM team support flood reporting tool and training for flood wardens.</p>
Local councillors	<p>Ensure the best outcome for local residents.</p> <p>Provide local knowledge and insight into community needs.</p> <p>Build local networks and community relationships.</p>	<p>Advise throughout process on local issues.</p> <p>Advise on particularly vulnerable residents/groups.</p> <p>Source of contacts within the community.</p>
Park Community Centre	<p>Provide local residents with information on the project.</p> <p>Increase resilience.</p>	<p>Act as a hub venue for project engagement sessions and information sharing.</p>
Local businesses	<p>Increase resilience.</p> <p>Provide local knowledge and insight into community needs.</p>	<p>Participate in drop-in sessions and focus groups.</p> <p>Advise on ways to increase resilience.</p>
Local charities	<p>Increase resilience.</p> <p>Provide advice on the most vulnerable areas/groups.</p> <p>Ensure the best outcome for clients.</p>	<p>Key network tool – access to most vulnerable and least resilient groups.</p> <p>Participate in drop-in sessions and focus groups.</p>
Local residents	<p>Increase resilience.</p> <p>Provide local knowledge and insight into individual household needs.</p>	<p>Participate in drop-in sessions and focus groups.</p> <p>Inform us of the key areas of vulnerability and ways to increase resilience.</p> <p>Volunteer to become flood wardens.</p>

Target Audience

The main target audience for this project is the communities who are at risk of flooding. Specifically, Melcombe Regis and the harbour area of Weymouth. These communities are the focus of this project, with the aims and outcomes built around them.

However, local stakeholders are also within the target audience. These groups will be able to continue to build community resilience once the BRIC project has officially come to an end. Therefore, it is vital that they are involved throughout the project to ensure the impact of BRIC is long lasting. This cross-sectoral involvement is an important aspect of the project as it ensures a

bottom-up approach which listens to the community and builds on existing networks which are already established in Weymouth.

The community in this area is transient which makes communication challenging. To advertise engagement events, we found maildrops to be one of the most effective methods, with a large proportion of the attendees stating this as the reason for attending.

Outputs/outcomes reached to date

- Recruitment of Flood Wardens and organising of associated training.
- Building of resilience network with relevant project partners such as Weymouth Town Council, local organisations, and residents.
- Agreement of the 'live' flooding information screen technical specifications and location.
- Development of a Community Flood Plan

Examples of Community Engagement Practices

DCF held engagement events in the local Community Centre. These were face-to-face events with the aim of gaining local knowledge, recruiting Flood Wardens, and building awareness of the project.

DCF are planning a site walk and talk of the key flood-risk areas and flood defences with the main target audience being local stakeholders and flood wardens.

A key tool DCF have been using is 'Appreciative Inquiry' (AI). The AI approach follows a four-stage process:

1. Explore what is working in the community
2. Ask them to imagine an improved version
3. Design processes and systems to achieve this vision
4. Deliver and empower the new processes in a way that is sustainable within that community.

This involves taking interviews with the community before reading these interviews out in first-person to policymakers, flood risk management professionals and stakeholders. This then gives these groups a chance to develop processes and systems of flood management with the local communities' priorities in mind. This has also allowed us to directly communicate face-to-face with residents and businesses, building the awareness and profile of the BRIC project while collecting valuable insights into the community.

Examples of Reaching Wider Audiences

The BRIC project has set up Twitter and LinkedIn pages to ensure the project has a wide reach and connects with communities who are not specifically involved in the pilot projects.

Evaluation

This project is still ongoing, and so the final evaluation is yet to come. However, there have already been some successes in the project. One of the key best practices which can be taken from the project so far is the 'bottom-up' partnership working. The participatory approach of the BRIC project involves all groups within the community, including residents, local groups, organisations, councillors, policymakers, and experts. There have been two main benefits of this: ensuring inclusion of marginalised groups, and the collection of invaluable local knowledge.

Empowering these communities can help them in the long-term, providing them with the tools to protect themselves in future events. This then creates opportunities for socio-economic development as the negative impacts of flooding are minimised.

4.2.3 Stakeholder Engagement Techniques

Stakeholder engagement is fundamental to the work of coastal partnerships, particularly as the purpose of CPs is to bring partners together to realise concepts that would not be achieved through working alone. Over the last 30 years, CPs have developed a range of tools that help to open up discussion with stakeholders (often with different agendas or opposing views) and to reach a common consensus and agree a way forward. Hence CPs have a well-established reputation of having the necessary skills and experience to act as an independent body and deliver effective stakeholder engagement on behalf of statutory and regulatory agencies.

Examples of Face to Face Stakeholder Engagement Tools:

Facilitated workshops – CPs set agendas, arrange workshops at appropriate venues, and lead discussions based on local issues, wants, needs and concerns of those involved. Maintaining focus on the aims of the workshops, CPs open up discussion to find common ground and agree a way forward.

Drop-in's – CPs pull together often technical and complex information to share in accessible formats to help inform, and gain feedback from, local communities and stakeholders. This can include design plans, water quality data, flood plans, strategies, designations and more.

Events – CPs are experienced at leading and participating in a range of events of activities, from community awareness events to stakeholder conferences.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) – The aim of AI is to gain first-hand views from the community and to then share that information directly, by reading statements in the first person, back to policy makers. Statements from the community are based on a limited number of questions that focus on what residents feel works well in their community, and how that could be further improved.

AI can be a powerful tool in helping policy makers to gain an understanding of how local communities feel about the strengths and opportunities in their area, as well as identify how those opportunities can be supported.

Leaflets, postcards and householder guides – CPs are well experienced in working with stakeholders and designers to create engagement materials to distribute to local communities. Examples includes leaflets on community resilience, postcards on avoiding polluting drains that lead to local water bodies and householder guides that explain flooding issues and associated defences.

Online Stakeholder Engagement Tools:

Social media, films and podcast – The use of imagery and podcasts on websites and social media is a very effective way of sharing information with stakeholders and communities. CPs have created films on behalf of partners as part of planned campaigns or to help ensure messages reach a wider audience. Examples of this in the south include [Secrets of Solent](#), [Sea's The Day](#), [MMO south marine planning animation](#) and [Dorset Coastal Stories](#).

Have Your Say Website – the DCF 'Have Your Say' website provides an opportunity for members and partnerships to develop a webpage independently of any one organisation. The webpage can include a range of content according to need, for example:

- Written content
- Photos
- Videos
- Blogs
- Surveys
- Interactive maps

The interactive maps can be used for stakeholder and community engagement, whereby anyone can drop post-it notes (including comments, feedback and ideas), and/or photos, onto particular locations for others to view and also comment on. This is particularly useful for town or neighbourhood planning.

DCF also uses 'Have Your Say' to create and set up online surveys, working with partners to help develop content. DCF then collate, analyse and feedback the results.

Online workshops

Like many other organisations CPs have had to adapt during the pandemic to use newly available technologies for running online workshops, meetings and webinars. As such Teams, Zoom and Hybrid meetings are used regularly and can be beneficial in terms of reaching wider audiences.

Case Study: Studland MCZ Partnership Project

DCF's work at Studland is a good example of where coastal partnerships can use their independence and facilitation skills to support a group of stakeholders representing different agendas with opposing wants and needs. Stakeholders include boat club representatives, the RYA, The Seahorse Trust, The National Trust, Studland Parish Council, Southampton University researchers, Natural England and Oceans to Earth.

The aim of the project is to reach a consensus on how to help protect seagrass habitat, whilst allowing continuing recreational boat use in a sustainable way using eco-moorings. It is a complex project, with a range of different wants and technical and legislation issues, but if resolved, could provide an excellent example of how similar issues could be addressed across the UK. Due to these issues and the varying agendas of the partners involved, without the independence of DCF the project would struggle to progress.

4.2.4 Evaluation

By being independent and representing a number of different partners, CPs are able to pull together information from a variety of different sources to identify opportunities that reach environmental and socio-economic outcomes. CPs can then use a whole range of tools to engage with stakeholders and communities to decide which options to take forward that provide the most benefit.

The feedback from stakeholders also adds strength to decision making, giving confidence to funders and policy makers.

Effective stakeholder engagement can help to avoid duplication and target limited resources and available funding, to maximise outcomes to suit local communities, businesses and the environment.

4.2.5 Recommendations

Firstly, it is crucial that CPs work to remain as independent as possible. In each coastal area, there are many stakeholders involved in coastal management each with different remits, aims and objectives. Likewise, coastal communities and business are impacted by ever-changing social economic or environmental factors including deprivation, Brexit and climate change. CPs play a vital role within this maze by acting as a neutral body, facilitating discussion between different stakeholders as well as building trust with communities, to help reach common goals and identifying appropriate ways forward that benefit local communities, economies and environments.

Secondly, there is an opportunity for CPs to share skills and experiences related to stakeholder and community engagement. This can include training, learning best practice, experiences of how CPs addressed difficult situations, what didn't work well, etc. This can be achieved through CP workshops that address the practical element of what CPs deliver on the ground and providing a space for CPs to share and discuss their experiences.

4.3 Collaborative Partnership Working

4.3.1 Introduction

As widely discussed throughout the handbook, the complexities of the interactions between the socio-economic and environmental considerations at the coast require an integrated approach to management, conflict resolution and proactive project working.

Collaborative working can take many forms and it is often described using a scale, increasing in level from basic networking through to co-operation, increased co-ordination and full collaboration. Many projects will regularly use a mixture of the first three in their partnership work with the full collaboration often the aim of larger scale projects and jointly funded initiatives.

As discussed in Section 3, within the Dorset and Solent areas there are many smaller local or issue specific partnerships and projects that benefit from collaborative working. Using examples from the area this section draws out some of the mutual benefits of collaborative working and identifies opportunities for improvement.

4.3.2 Collaborative Working in Practice

Working in partnership provides perspective from the socio-economic and environmental aspects of the project, which is key to effective and sustainable outcomes. It introduces a broader set of issues and facilitates conversations.

All the projects, hubs and engagement work contained in this handbook, as well as work carried out across the country by partnerships, are available to learn from and collaborate with. This might be information provided in publications, on websites or social media or through conversations between coastal officers. In whatever form the information is obtained, it is a huge regional and national resource that would not exist without effective coastal partnership working.

Small local partnerships and projects often evolve and develop from a local need whether spatial or issue based. This is particularly the case at a small-scale and local level and presents one of the challenges when trying to define a coastal partnership. New projects are often instigated by one organisation or individuals seeking positive change and may have very limited resources. Identifying opportunities to work as part of a wider regional or even national project could help connect them

with other organisations and groups that may be able to assist with knowledge, experience and resources.

Case study: Swanage and Studland Water Safety Partnership

Swanage and Studland Water Safety Partnership was set up due to concerns about watercraft (especially personal watercraft/jet skis) at Studland and Swanage Bay and clashes with an increasing number of boat users, sea swimmers, paddle boarders and kayakers. Water safety is an ongoing issue that requires a collaborative approach across a range of different organisations, facilitated by Dorset Council and DCF. Working collectively has enabled there to be a proactive approach, including educational patrols, zoning, enforcement, speed markers, leafleting and comms, resulting in a reduction of water safety issues at both Swanage and Studland Bay.

One of the ways that small projects and partnerships can maximise their effectiveness is to publicise their work through the networks formed by larger, more established partnerships. The latter can provide a wider audience for local information, initiatives, requests for assistance or information and to disseminate examples of good practice. In turn smaller local and grass roots projects can ensure that information from regional or national initiatives reaches key stakeholders and local communities. The Isle of Wight Estuaries Project regularly works in this way and describes it as a key benefit to working with a regional, strategic partnership like the Solent Forum and a national group like the CPN.

Case Study: Sharing local knowledge and building relationships in seagrass restoration

Several national organisations recently began to work on seagrass restoration projects in the Solent. As Natural England carried out and commissioned field work and mapping the different projects, it became clear that greater coordination was needed and officers from each initiative set up regular calls to discuss their projects, locations and issues. The Isle of Wight coast was a key area of discussion between organisations, so the Isle of Wight Estuaries Project offered to assist the group as it developed its collaborative working.

The Estuaries Project was able to provide in depth local knowledge of suitable locations, constraints, stakeholder issues, access to equipment and vessels, local volunteers and engagement specialists that know the local area and communities. It has regular input into the restoration group which meets online to co-ordinate activities. This involvement enables an up-to-date response to local information requests, point of contact for individuals, support from the harbour authority partner organisations and ensures the technical aspects of the work are well communicated. Local sensitivities have mainly been avoided and an increased focus on co-ordinating the messaging will reduce the levels of confusion within local communities. Working in partnership has reduced difficulties and helped to move the project along more quickly. It also ensures that vital seagrass habitat restoration work is being carried out for the Isle of Wight which does not have the resources to do it alone.

Solent seagrass video - [Solent Seagrass Restoration Project - YouTube](#).

Smaller local partnerships can also provide a direct and trusted route to local communities and individuals for the national and regional organisations and initiatives. They can provide local volunteers where needed and help co-ordinate activities in their area. They are also often a point of contact for individuals and organisations that require local information or would like to volunteer.

Small scale projects often have limited resources and might employ one officer, full or part time. In these roles it is often difficult to access training or discuss issues, solutions or situations with others.

Support from the wider coastal partnership community is essential. It can offer moral support as well as encouragement, up to date information through news services, and presentations at meetings as well as opportunities to network locally, regionally and nationally. Exchange of knowledge through a network like this brings benefits at all levels.

Case Study: New beginnings

Isle of Wight Coastal Biosphere

In 2019, the [Isle of Wight became a UNESCO Biosphere](#), which was designated in recognition of the years of work to preserve the Island's unique and diverse ecosystems and celebrate the local community's endeavours to live harmoniously within them. Despite the hard work of those involved in attaining the designation, there was a lot of uncertainty about the designation and how it might affect activities and livelihoods. This need for further communication was hindered by the limitations on community and stakeholder engagement brought about by the global pandemic and a lack of time and resources.

One key area of the Biosphere is the marine and coastal environment. The designation boundary includes the coastal waters surrounding the Isle of Wight, including the Solent, which results in around two thirds of it being under water. The challenge for the small team is that in some areas the data is limited and there is a general lack of understanding about marine and coastal habitats and species within the community. This is largely based on the lack of visibility and understanding of the interactions and association with their impact on the health and quality of coastal waters, the role in sequestration of carbon, importance to various aspects of the Island economy and social well-being for Island communities.

These issues have become the focus for a group of individuals working on different aspects of the Island's coast who initially met to discuss an opportunity for funding that had arisen through contacts with Portsmouth University. Although that initial application for funding has yet to be agreed, it has already led to increased collaboration on other funding requests and a clearer idea of the initial areas of focus to increase understanding of the coastal biosphere. Through initial discussions it is clear that there are many initiatives already working on habitat restoration in the Solent and although these were increasing the levels of coordination and collaboration there were significant gaps in understanding in other areas. This has led to a working group that will take forward the need for data collection about the kelp beds and thresher shark nursery initially but look more generally at how that will link into the proposed engagement and education programme.

4.3.3 Evaluation

Collaborative working at the coast is the only effective way to ensure long term beneficial change. It brings together different perspectives from all sectors and helps to find positive ways forward that have lasting socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Benefits of collaboration at the coast include:

- Sharing information, knowledge and experience.
- Combining expertise and resources to work on joint projects.
- Publicising research and current activities (flow of information both ways).
- Making introductions and benefitting from relationships that have been built over time.
- Helping funders deliver effective outcomes at a local level.
- Sharing good practice.
- Providing support and training to new projects and staff members.

- When working on similar issues, identifying mutual benefits and needs.
- Access to funding and to be part of larger funding bids.
- Helps funders deliver effective outcomes locally.
- Ensures important work is carried out where needed.

In the south region most of these benefits are already acknowledged and form an important part of the success of project work. There are however many parts of the coast that do not have a coastal partnership or access to the benefits of collaboration.

4.3.4 Recommendations

We recommend having key partners or hubs that have allocated resources to assist new, small partnership projects to become established. This could involve facilitation of meetings, small amounts of funding to enable individuals attend meetings (time and/or travel), understand the objectives of new projects to link them to other similar initiatives and joint funding opportunities.

The coastal partnership community encourages open and positive conversation and communication to support and inspire new officers and projects. The national CPN has a key role to play in developing this mentoring and training.

Collaborative working enables smaller partnerships and communities to have a voice, both regionally and nationally. This is particularly important to ensure local needs, issues and impacts are considered in strategic decisions and policy. Working together as part of a national coastal network ensures that the work of smaller partnerships and projects is considered and so it is recommended that resources are available to encourage and enable them to be involved in a national coastal network.

CPs should be encouraged to identify opportunities to work with local businesses and industry. There are many examples of where this is working well, and these can be shared and discussed to assist others.

4.4 Fishing and Aquaculture

4.4.1 Introduction

The fisheries and aquaculture sectors across Dorset and Lyme Bay are small scale industries but provide vital jobs and incomes to the small towns and villages of the area; not only through direct employment in the sector but complimentary activities such as tourism and hospitality. Throughout the UK the average age of workers in the wild-capture sector is over 60 and attracting younger workers remains an issue. Additionally, many workers have limited IT and communication training or skills impacting their ability to access funding opportunities from government. Funding is often made available to these sectors but tends to be wide ranging and lacks cohesion across an area or region.

4.4.2 Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG)

Dorset Coast Forum applied for funding to set up the Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) project which ran from March 2017 to March 2020. FLAG was funded through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and although this fund is no longer available, there are similar funding mechanisms available administered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) grants team.

It was a successful seafood focused programme aimed at supporting the fisheries and aquaculture sectors of the region. The programme focused on the delivery of projects outlined in a Community Led Local Development Strategy (CLLD). The CLLD was developed through extensive consultation with key stakeholders in the area and had five themes:

1. Encourage and enable effective collaborative working across and within sectors.
2. Strengthen the aquaculture sector in Dorset.
3. Improve infrastructure and equipment to enable safe, sustainable working ports and harbours.
4. Enable innovation to increase the value of catch and products.
5. Support the industry by enabling diversification, up-skilling and training and increase the knowledge and understanding of the sector to attract a younger work force.

Project development was undertaken by two full-time officers, working closely with the communities across the FLAG area. Funding decisions were made by a Board comprised of fifty percent sector stakeholders, based on meeting the requirements set out in the CLLD. Key stakeholders included:

- Southern Inshore and Fisheries Conservation Authority
- Dorset Wildlife Trust
- Dorset Council
- Cefas
- Natural England
- Aquaculture stakeholders
- Fisheries stakeholders
- Marine Management Organisation

The FLAG funded 37 different projects across the five themes and delivered £1million of investment across seven ports, from Beer in the west to Swanage in the east, creating 15FTE jobs. See infographic below.



FLAG funding has provided a long-lasting legacy in the area and, through the ongoing role of a dedicated Aquaculture and Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Coordinator (AFDC), funded through the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme, continues to give the seafood sectors vital support in accessing funding opportunities. The AFDC also enhances the regional visibility of the industry in Dorset, provides a key point of contact for stakeholders and utilises wide ranging professional networks for the benefit of the seafood sector.

Through enabling collaborative projects, FLAG significantly increased the health and safety on-board all fishing vessels in the region as every Fisherman's Association in the region was able to access funding for their members to purchase safety at sea equipment. These projects distributed over 100 individual items of life saving equipment to fishermen. Significant infrastructure improvements have also enabled key ports, such as Axmouth, to increase the number of fishing vessels able to use the port.

The FLAG CLLD's focus on the aquaculture sector of Dorset has ensured that the sector has been raised significantly across many strategic documents in the area. The Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership holds the ambition for the County to be UK lead in One Health Aquaculture by 2030, while Dorset Council's Economic Plan highlights the sector as a key sector for growth.

The key that ensured the success of the programme was understanding the needs of local stakeholders, including regulatory and policy making bodies, and translation of those needs into clearly defined strategic documents. Identifying projects that fit with the needs of local stakeholders while meeting KPI's of funding programmes is critical. Thorough stakeholder consultation provides insight into this.

4.4.3 Dorset Mariculture Strategy

Dorset Coast Forum worked with a range of stakeholders and local fishermen, to develop [The Dorset Mariculture Strategy](#) which was released in August 2020; an exemplar strategy for regional sustainable development. DCF are working to deliver key action points in the strategy including the concepts of a National Aquaculture Centre of Excellence in Dorset and Aquaculture Innovation Parks, where businesses can develop new, novel technologies and techniques to advance aquaculture production across England.

In addition, Dorset Coast Forum:

- Works to increase direct foreign investment through the High Potential Opportunity (HPO) for Sustainable Aquaculture from the Department of International Trade (DIT), working with the LEP and other key stakeholders.
- Is supporting the design and development of a Marine Aquaculture course with Kingston Mauward college to ensure that the future skills are there to support the expanding industry.
- Leads on and maintains the [Dorset Aquaculture Hub](#). This online resource brings together relevant information for the aquaculture sector to help develop sustainable business, provide information on regulations and licensing and permissions processes. The Hub also hosts Cefas's Aquaculture Spatial Map which shows where aquaculture development is most likely to suit different species and cultivation methods.

4.4.4 Evaluation

DCF's fishing and aquaculture projects are an excellent example of how CPs can use their independence to bring different stakeholders together and build trust with coastal businesses to

develop processes that benefit the economy, communities and the environment. The work that DCF are undertaking on fisheries and aquaculture is widely recognised and is highlighted in national and regional economic strategy documents.

4.4.5 Recommendations

CPs link with the fisheries and aquaculture sector on a local and regional scale, this is something that statutory bodies often fail to achieve and hence they help to fill this gap. CPs can create a framework in which statutory bodies can reach out to those in the industry, supporting monitoring, research and economic growth. This is particularly important as the fisheries and aquaculture sector adapts to new trade patterns and regulations following Brexit. There are also new opportunities in promoting and selling sustainably sourced fish and seafood locally (as consumers look for more environmentally friendly sources of protein), as well as developing the farming of seaweed which has been proven to have both environmental and health benefits.

4.5 Water Quality Management

4.5.1 Introduction

Water quality is one of the most important issues affecting coastal areas, it impacts directly on the environment and people's recreational use of the water space. It also has significant economic effects dictating in some cases whether development can proceed, environmental permits can be secured and whether shellfish can be harvested. Some water quality impacts have direct obvious inputs such as CSOs and can be addressed by the relevant organisation, but many are 'diffuse pollution' and are multi-faceted, in such cases it requires partnership working to successfully address them. We look further at how coastal partnerships work with catchment partnerships in section 4.6.

4.5.2 Water Quality Partnership Working in the Solent

The Solent Forum is involved with a range of work around the Solent to help improve water quality. In some of this work we lead, in other areas we work in partnership and for other aspects we help publicise and promote other organisations' work across the Solent. Below we set out some examples.

[Clean Solent Shores and Seas \(CSSS\)](#)

The Solent Forum is building a web hub that looks at the impacts of different sectors and themes on the Solent's water quality. CSSS pages provide an overview of each topic, highlights Solent initiatives and collates and shares both local and national information. This is part of the core Solent Forum service hence it is kept live and updated into the long term.

[Solent Plastic Pollution Hub](#)

The Solent Forum is working in partnership with the [Environment Agency's PPP Interegg funded project](#) to build a community of volunteers in the Solent to address litter and plastics. We have put together a [web page](#) and [Facebook site](#) and we will provide the ongoing legacy facility for this project when it finishes in 2023.

[Solent Nutrient Marketing Pilot](#)

Defra are undertaking a Solent Nutrient Marketing Pilot to address the issue of housing development being delayed around the Solent due to excess nutrient loading. The Solent Forum is

helping people to understand this work via its news service and meetings, a speaker spoke on the topic to coastal stakeholders at a Solent Forum meeting. It also helps the wider coastal community identify possible opportunities to help mitigate nutrient loading.

Langstone, Chichester and Pagham Harbours Technical Summit

Southern Water are running a series of technical workshops to address poor water quality in Chichester, Langstone and Pagham harbours. The Solent Forum was invited to sit on this high level group (Southern Water are Forum members) with a range of other partners. We input our knowledge on the wider Solent, the issues and other work already ongoing and helped to populate the resources section of the project's [webmapper](#).

Solent Oyster Restoration

The Blue Marine Foundation have been undertaking oyster restoration work in the Solent; part of the reason for doing this is that oysters help to filter and clean water. The Solent Forum has helped to facilitate and promote this via its news service and meetings. The Blue Marine Foundation is a Solent Forum member.

Solent Boating Water Quality

The Environment Agency and Natural England have been running a project to look at the black and greywater discharge of boats and the provision of pump out facilities in the Solent. The Solent Forum was asked to help facilitate a series of workshops on this matter, including hosting an online workshop. We also provide a platform for the project information and documents on our [website](#).

Solent Bathing Water Quality Awards

The Solent Forum administers the Solent Bathing Water Quality Awards. The Award Scheme was launched in 1992 to provide a simple indicator of satisfactory long term water quality at bathing beaches in the previous year and, where feasible, in recreational waters around the Solent. Twenty three bathing beaches around the Solent apply for the award annually. It is seen as important by beach managers to inform both land and water based recreational coastal users of the long term water quality standard.

4.5.3 Litter Free Dorset - land, coast and sea

Litter Free Coast and Sea was initially established by the Dorset Coast Forum to tackle water quality issues in partnership with Wessex Water. Due to the success of the project, Litter Free expanded to incorporate the whole area of Dorset (including inland) and subsequently in April 2021 become a partnership in its own right. The two partnerships of DCF and Litter Free Dorset still work closely, sharing knowledge and expertise, delivering joint events and linking communications and engagement.

[Litter Free Dorset – land, coast and sea](#) (LFD) is committed to tackling the problem of litter and water quality in Dorset and along the Dorset coast. Its purpose is to add value to existing efforts by taking a strategic, preventative approach to the countywide problem; working collaboratively with a local focus to create, implement and review tailored solutions to each community's issues around litter, waste and water quality.

It is currently hosted by Dorset Council. LFD's forum is made up of a diverse group of organisations, charities and businesses who come together quarterly to discuss current litter issues and behaviour change insights. The working group is a smaller group of partners including local community groups

which co-produces projects and campaigns. Members of the group are expected to share ideas and put forward suggestions that will enable implementation of the project's objectives, moving forward by consensus.

Current core funders are Dorset Council and Wessex Water. Individual projects have also received grant funding from external funders such as the National Lottery (Green Recovery Challenge Fund). LFD receives support from other Dorset Council hosted partnerships such as Dorset Coast Forum, Urban Heath Partnership and Dorset AONB team.

Our society needs to move into an effective circular economy by reducing waste and reusing and recycling materials. A lot of this change is systemic and ultimately led by legislation from the government, however there is still a lot that can be done by communities and individuals alike. Tackling behaviour relating to litter and water quality not only benefits human wellbeing but also protects wildlife from litter and pollutants. Through LFD campaigns, whether reducing heathland fires by reducing BBQ litter or working with a seaside business to reduce single use plastic, each behaviour changed will have a ripple effect on Dorset.

LFD are working with a range of different communities, landowners and stakeholders at a variety of bathing waters. Collaborative working is at the core of what it does and its connection to both organisations and the community puts it in a unique position to create a partnership with impact, legacy, and sustainability. It has approximately 40 community groups across Dorset that link in to create further reach and impact with its campaigns.

Different communities across Dorset require different approaches based on the specific needs identified in their locality. In each community, LFD works with its partners to target appropriate audiences by using new approaches to target litter at source. It focuses on behaviour change and prevention using a holistic approach by:

- Using systems thinking (looking at the whole picture rather than specific events).
- Prioritising efforts on reducing litter and pollution at source rather than on reactive measures to clean up pollution/litter issues.
- Working locally, acknowledging that each community faces different challenges in terms of litter.
- Using a two-pronged approach to changing behaviour:
 - Use those already engaged in LFD to act as ambassadors and spread messages.
 - Target those who are not engaged and seek ways to engage with them directly.

When designing communications, LFD refers to the behavioural change principles below:

- Emphasise that LFD is not an environmental campaign as this will help Litter Free Dorset reach and influence new audiences.
- Construct positive solutions with focused and empowering messages throughout the project.
- Tailor messages and delivery mechanism to each specific target audience.
- Use the appropriate messenger – people respond better to peers or perceived experts. In addition, it is better practice to work with the target audience to empower them to be the solution rather than campaigning at them.
- Use local examples not global ones.
- Use praise, reward and competition.

- Stick to one message/call to action at a time in project campaigns and keep the number of messages/calls to action at a minimum in wider LFD project outputs such as leaflets and website.
- Ensure communications are never preaching or “worthy” and ensure that messages/calls to action are always realistic not idealistic (e.g. promote using a reusable cup 80% of the time rather all the time)
- It’s important to step out of the ‘echo chamber’ and speak to new audiences. LFD engages with positive stories and things that interest an audience rather than focusing on the issue.

4.5.4 Evaluation

The work of CPs initiatives such as Litter Free Dorset and the Solent Forum’s Clean Solent Shores and Seas, delivers the following outcomes:

- Involvement of volunteers through litter picking, events, monitoring litter and water quality and supporting communications.
- Sharing knowledge and expertise with communities on how they can reduce waste and prevent pollution, as well as making the general public aware of the link between their behaviour and local environments.
- Reduced littering in areas where LFD have targeted their campaigns.
- A reduction in BBQ related fires as a result of LFD campaigns and their work with local businesses to limit the sale of disposable BBQ’s.
- Addressing water quality and drainage issues through ‘Only Rain Down the Drain’, FOG (Fats, Oils and Grease) and ‘What not to Flush’ campaigns.

Partnership working is critical to addressing diffuse water pollution, which can have multiple sources and impacts. People need to understand the sources, impacts and potential solutions. They also need to be informed of potential opportunities in a timely manner.

Coastal partnerships can act to filter and translate scientific data on water quality to a wider audience and facilitate its access. The Solent Forum’s [Information Database](#) contains a category on water quality where we link research and reports. Accessing this information is important for people who participate in water based recreation so they can protect their health and for people who work around the coast like fishermen.

Coastal partnerships are also an excellent vehicle to facilitate community engagement of topics such as litter and plastics and bridge the gap between the community and managing organisations.

4.5.5 Recommendations

To address diffuse water pollution partnership working is key, source apportionment work shows that there is a myriad of causes from source to sea and it is important for people to realise that all sources of water pollution however small can impact. Coastal partnerships are well placed to help coordinate water quality work and directly deliver improvements as seen by Litter Free Dorset and the Solent Plastics Pollution hub. We recommend that government bodies and agencies use the reach and experience of coastal partnerships to help in their delivery of water quality improvements.

4.6 Catchment and Coast Coordination

4.6.1 Introduction

Coasts and rivers are intrinsically linked as part of the overall water environment, to ensure water issues are looked at holistically there is a need for coastal and catchment partnerships to work together. This section explores how coastal partnerships in the south work with their local river catchment partners.

4.6.2 Overview

The Solent Forum and Dorset Coast Forum have developed a positive working relationship with their relevant river catchment partners. This supports knowledge transfer between the constituent river and coastal partnerships and strengthen linkages between the issues affecting rivers and transitional and coastal waters.

The Isle of Wight Estuaries project is fully integrated with the Island Rivers Catchment Partnership at a local scale. The partnership officer is an active member of the Island Rivers group.

Solent Forum officers attend meetings of the relevant catchment partnerships and a reciprocal invite is made to catchment colleagues to attend Solent Forum meetings. We make the Forum's news service free to our catchment partnership colleagues and they use it for stakeholder engagement such as the River Basin Management Plan consultations.

At the regional level, as the Solent Forum attends all four catchment partnership meetings, it provides an opportunity for us to promote best practice and share work across all four catchment partnerships. It facilitates evidence sharing and the identification of evidence gaps.

4.6.3 Location

Catchments that the coastal partnerships work with in the south are:

- Test and Itchen
- New Forest
- East Hampshire
- Island Rivers
- Stour Valley
- Poole Harbour
- West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams

The Solent Forum has been educating its members that the RBMP boundary goes out to one nautical mile; there is a tendency for coastal stakeholders to view RBMPs as only applying to rivers and estuary mouths.

4.6.4 Delivery and Funding

Building relationships and networks between coastal and catchment partners requires longevity and commitment, this needs to be undertaken by an organisation that are established with no finite timescale, who can build up the support and networks of local stakeholders over time. Coastal and catchment partnerships can do this delivery.

This work is funded as a core service by the Solent Forum. Building relationships is a long term ongoing task and it needs to have continual stable funding.

Case Study: Assisting RBMP and FRMP consultations

When organisations, such as the Environment Agency, are members of a coastal partnership, they can make use of member services at no extra cost; the Solent Forum took part in a transitional and coastal waters RBMP and FRMP consultation focus group held by the EA. We also used our news service to widely publicise these consultations.

4.6.5 Project Partners and Target Audience

The partners for this hub are the coastal and catchment partnerships. Through their knowledge transfer networks this will also include the members of those partnerships. These members include professional organisations, land owners, representatives of local user groups, such as riparian owners, and NGOs.

Dorset Coast Forum are regularly brought in to support statutory consultations, including FCERM strategies. Acting as an independent body, DCF use a wide range of communication and engagement tools to collect and collate feedback from stakeholder and communities so that this can be passed directly back to policy makers. DCF also transfer technical information from statutory bodies into accessible formats that can be shared with local communities, including videos, images, presentations, leaflets and householder guides.

4.6.6 Evaluation

By sharing knowledge across catchments we can ensure that we adopt best practice, identify key contacts and that measures benefit the whole water environment. For example, Natural England are soon to publish a Solent wide study on non-natives and their impacts at coastal sites, we will share this with rivers colleagues. At a New Forest partnership meeting the Solent Forum heard interesting evidence on issues surrounding water quality and campsites; many of these campers will visit the coast and there is an opportunity for joint messaging on issues such as litter and boat greywater.

Case study: Coastal and Catchment Partnership Water Quality Knowledge Transfer

A Solent Forum officer identified an interesting pilot being undertaken in Poole on the real time monitoring of water quality using artificial intelligence. Our neighbouring partner, the Dorset Coast Forum, facilitated an introduction for us with the relevant local authority. The Solent Forum Officer invited the Test and Itchen Catchment Partnership officer to attend a meeting with the local authority running the pilot as this is an issue they are reviewing on their rivers. One of the meeting outputs was that the local authority officer managing the study agreed to run a webinar on the work to share information more widely; the coastal and catchment partnerships will use their networks to publicise.

4.6.7 Recommendations

Coastal and catchment partnerships should seek to work together to take a wholesale approach to the water environment. The 3Cs south currently work well with catchment colleagues with no need for an additional formal structure, this is very cost effective. Building these relationships helps to collate and share information on the water environment throughout. We recommend that coastal and catchment partnership officers have reciprocal agreements to attend each other's meetings to gain a whole water environment perspective on issues and share knowledge.

4.7 Information Hubs

4.7.1 Introduction

The purpose of information hubs is to collate and share information in a concise and easily accessible manner. As coastal partnerships are independent and based on collaborative working, they have the flexibility to host, link and catalogue a wide range of information. Through their comprehensive networking and discussions with stakeholders, CPs are well versed in topical coastal issues and will set up hubs where they see a need or are requested; these can be maintained in perpetuity by the partnership.

Hubs currently hosted by the 3Cs south include:

- [Habitat Restoration](#) (SF)
- [Solent Plastics Pollution](#) (SF)
- [Clean Solent Shores and Seas](#) (SF)
- [Building Biodiversity](#) (SF)
- [Coastal Consents](#) (SF)
- [Litter Free Dorset](#) (DCF)
- [Aquacultural](#) (DCF)
- Building Resilience (DCF) (currently being built – not yet live)

Case study: [Habitat restoration hub](#)

Habitat restoration is an increasing topic of importance throughout the coastal and marine environment. Still in its early days there is lots of new research, pilot projects and policies being undertaken and published. To help coastal stakeholders follow national and local policy making, access research and partner in pilots, the Solent Forum set up a habitat restoration hub. Content includes information on:

- Natural Capital
- Net Gain
- Blue Carbon
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- REACH (Restoring Estuarine and Coastal Habitats) and Restoring [seagrass] Meadows, [salt] Marsh and [oyster] Reef (ReMeMaRe) project
- Solent Seagrass Restoration

4.7.2 Delivery and Funding

The hubs are delivered and maintained by partnership staff. Sourcing information compliments CPs news services. We receive lots of information sent to us direct and we monitor partnership websites, local and national media and social media feeds.

Case study: Coastal partnerships news services and hub content

The Solent Forum and Dorset Coast Forum provide a coastal news service for their members that is highly valued. In the Solent we produce a monthly e-newsletter (c. 300) and a biannual sixteen page full newsletter. Both are free to access. Coastal partnership staff monitor news feeds daily and share

this information including linking to their hubs and the use of Twitter. The Solent Forum also manages a [Solent Information Database](#) to record reports.

Solent Forum hubs are funded from core service member subscriptions. Our annual horizon planning exercise rates our hubs and news service as one of our most valuable member benefits.

DCF hubs are only funded through funding projects with limited timescales. This can impact on the sustainability of those hubs. For example, the Dorset Aquaculture Hub was funded through the FLAG project which has now come to an end. It is currently being maintained for free but may be impacted by a lack of capacity in the future.

Case Study: DCF Have Your Say

The DCF [Have Your Say](#) website costs around £7k per year but is vital to its work, including interactive mapping, online surveys, blogs and the ability for partnerships to set up independent project webpages for sharing information with stakeholders and communities. The cost is partly funded through core grants, but contributions are also included in funded projects.

4.7.3 Project Partners and Target Audience

The hubs are set up and maintained by the coastal partnership officers, but the content is widespread and comes from local and national partners who both provide and access material. The partners provide the detail, and the CPs collate, promote and share it.

The target audience is coastal partnership members and all coastal stakeholders, including interested members of the public. The information is free to access for all. We also publicise content to our catchment partnership colleagues and national coastal working groups such as CPN and the Marine Protected Areas Officer Working Group. Where relevant, we link to catchment partnership material.

4.7.4 Evaluation

Publishing and linking material to a hub enables collaborative working and more efficient use of resources. People can find existing material on a topic easily, identify groups for future working and avoid duplication.

Hosting material on an independent website with direct management by coastal partnership staff enables information to be updated quickly and flexibly; we can create new pages and links easily and can host material that may not be easy to publish on websites with stricter criteria such as government hosted sites.

We can tailor the content to a local audience and if necessary create content for different user groups on different pages. Our member organisations tell us that being able to refer the public and students to these pages is very helpful as it reduces the time they spend on dealing with enquiries.

4.7.5 Recommendations

Coastal Partnership information hubs and the associated new service are highly rated by 3Cs south partnership members when we survey the value of services we provide. They are a long-term core service delivered by permanent staff. We recommend that long term core funding is allocated to coastal partnerships to allow them to provide this service.

5 Integrating Coastal and Marine Management through Partnerships

5.1 Introduction

It is well documented that there is a greater need for improved integration of coastal management in England between sectors and government departments, and across devolved administrations' borders.

Coastal and marine management in England has complex statutory and non-statutory governance at national, regional and local scales. There are strong requirements to protect environmental and landscape designations, and to integrate land based and marine planning systems. High levels of recreational use leads to challenges in managing non-licensable activities across the coast and marine space.

The 3Cs south have a membership base of stakeholders that represent many of the coastal and marine managers; their core service for these organisations is to transfer knowledge and provide networking and collaborative opportunities. This is an area in which the partnerships within 3Cs south are extremely effective.

5.2 Integrating Management

Integrated coastal management aims to coordinate the application of different policies affecting the coastal zone on activities or sectors such as nature protection, aquaculture, fisheries, industry, offshore wind energy, shipping, tourism, the development of infrastructure and climate change mitigation and adaptation. It should contribute to sustainable coastal development by the application of an approach that respects the limits of natural resources and ecosystems, the so-called 'ecosystem-based approach'.

It covers the full cycle of information collection, planning, decision-making, management and monitoring. It is important to involve all sector stakeholders to ensure broad support for the implementation of any management measures.

A four-point scale of integration has been defined by the national Coastal Partnership Network (CPN) to explore how coastal partnerships can deliver integration:

1. Knowledge transfer
2. Coordination
3. Cooperation
4. Cooperation and delivery

The Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009 and the creation of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has fulfilled some integration aspirations. A UK Marine policy statement with high level objectives reflects the principles of sustainable development and government overall position. England's marine planning system has high-level marine objectives and an overall long-term vision for each plan area; the marine licensing system supports the implementation of plan policies. The 3Cs south is covered by the South Inshore and Offshore Marine Plans. Marine plans extend to mean high water to overlap with the land planning system which deliver to mean low water; integration between the land based and marine based systems is now developing. The MMO work with LAs on integrating marine and land based policies - [Local council guide; marine planning \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).

Case Study: Coastal Designations Explained

Dorset Coast Forum has a webpage '[Coastal Designations Explained](#)'. This provides simple definitions and examples for the international and national designations that apply to the Dorset coast.

We believe that the full integration of coastal and marine policy and decision making, across all socio-economic and environmental sectors including delivery, would require a highly centralised top-down governmental approach. Integrating environmental policy and delivery is more achievable and we suggest this is where concerted government effort is required.

We would support a government framework and guidance for an integrating ecosystems approach based on natural capital understanding at the coast; the 25 Year Environment Plan sets policy and now detail is required to enact it. This would help to deliver Nature Recovery Strategies, Marine Plans, RBMPs and Natural England/Environment Agency priorities which are all important areas of work where CPs can facilitate integration.

Examples of existing local scale integration in the south include:

- Estuary management plans (after actions completed many have been turned into guiding principles which still support local integration)
- Catchment Based Approach
- Ecosystems integration on sub-coastal scale (Chichester and Langstone Harbours Summit, Green Halo, Solent habitat restoration plans promoted by Blue Marine Foundation)

Case Study: Solent Forum Coastal Consents Guide

The Solent Forum has developed a free online [coastal consents guide](#) to help advise those wishing to undertake coastal or marine development on the factors that they may need to consider. It enables applicants to get a better understanding of the complex nature of consenting and licensing at the coast before they proceed. Solent Forum members highlight this as a valuable service. The Guide covers different types of works and development, consents and licences, assessments and permits, designations and the marine and land use planning systems.

Table 1 shows how the four different types of integration identified by the CPN could be applied to the example of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM). In the associated case study after the table, we give an example of an existing partnership in the 3Cs south area assisting with integrating FCERM work across wider coastal sectors.

Table 1. Example of FCERM integrating with other sectors

Sectors																		
	Arch	Env	Boat	CC	Proce's	Commt'y	Dredge	Fish	Flood	Indus	Litter	Milit	Plann	Ports	Recr	Renew	Univ	
Archaeology, Culture & Heritage																		
Environment, Biodiversity & Conservation																		
Boating & Watersports																		
Coastal & Climate Change																		
Coastal Processes, Monitoring, Research & Mapping																		
Coastal Communities & Regeneration																		
Dredging																		
Fishing																		
FCERM (case study)	Green	Green	Light Blue	Green	Green	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Green	Green	Light Blue	Grey	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Light Blue	Blue	Blue	
Industry & Business																		
Litter & Plastics																		
Military & Defence																		
Planning & Consents																		
Ports, Harbours & Shipping																		
Recreation, Coastal Access & Tourism																		
Renewable Energy																		
Universities																		

Key: Four areas of integration identified by the CPN:

Cooperation and Delivery	Cooperation	Coordination	Knowledge Transfer	Unknown
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Case Study: Flood and Erosion Risk Management Sectoral Integration

Flood and Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) is a good case study to use to discuss integration as:

- It affects a dynamic space between land and sea encompassing the intertidal zone and the land based and marine based planning systems
- It occurs across local authority boundaries
- It affects the public sector and private sectors
- Its lead authorities can be either Local Authorities or the Environment Agency
- The system for managing flood risk inland is different to coastal flooding
- It is subject to coastal change, in particular sea level rise, which is significantly threatening intertidal habitats

Partnership working is the key to helping to deliver integration; for FCERM the 3Cs south partnerships do not lead on this but are members of, and network closely with, existing partnerships. This includes [Coastal Partners](#) who lead on FCERM in the Eastern Solent and the [Southern Coastal Group](#) who advise and influence on this topic. The Solent Forum is a partner in the Environment Agency's Lymington to Keyhaven Strategy.

3Cs south partnerships already perform an important role in knowledge transfer of FCERM work using their core service which includes news services, meetings and websites. Important data and mapping are signposted within coastal partnerships' websites.

3Cs south partnerships can be commissioned to take on additional work to help facilitate closer cooperation, and coordination on FCERM. An example of this might be using them to bring together a range of stakeholders, including community groups, to workshop cross cutting themes and activities. CPs can respond quickly to deliver these requests.

5.3 Marine Non-Licensable Activities

Marine non-licensable activities are those that do not require a marine licence under section 66 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. The MMO is responsible for the management of marine non-licensable activities which take place within its jurisdiction (0 to 12 nautical miles). Marine non-licensable activities include activities like sailing, powerboating and diving. Coastal Partnerships can provide a very effective way to help relevant authorities to address these activities as they require widespread stakeholder engagement and partnership working. Dorset Coast Forum is working with the MMO on the voluntary no anchor zone at Studland Bay.

Case Study: Identifying Duties and Responsibilities for Non-Licensable Activities

Under the Habitats Regulations, there is a statutory duty for individual relevant authorities to monitor the effect of coastal and marine non-licensable activities on the condition of designated sites. Table 2 was designed by the Solent Forum to assist those in the Solent to identify what non-licensable activities they have a duty and responsibility for as part of the Solent Marine Sites Management Scheme. The Relevant Authorities have found this very helpful.

Table 2. Relevant Authority Duties and Responsibilities for Non-Licensable Activities in the Solent

	Harbour A	D Council	NE	EA	Port A	IFCA	Borough C	County C	Unitary Authority	MMO	Water Co	Ferry Co	NFNPA
Non-Licensable Activity													
1. Accidental vessel discharges/emissions including oil spill and clean-up													
2. Boat repair and maintenance													
3. Fishing (including shellfisheries)													
4. Fishing (shore based activities)													
5. General Beach Recreation													
6. Grazing and foraging (intertidal)													
7. Land recreation – Dog walking													
8. Land recreation – Walking (other than dog walking)													
9. Littering and removal of litter													
10. Mooring and anchoring													
11. Operation of coastal flood and erosion risk management schemes													
12. Operation of ports and harbours (maintenance of infrastructure)													
13. Recreation – light aircraft													
14. Recreation – non-motorised watercraft													
15. Recreation – powerboating or sailing with an engine													
16. Slipway and jetty cleaning and maintenance													
17. Wildfowling													
Key: Activity is duty/responsibility Activity likely to be duty/responsibility in certain circumstances, e.g. as landowner, regulator, access control													

5.4 Data and Mapping

One very important aspect of the role of a coastal partnership is to improve access to evidence. The Solent Forum monitors the evidence registers of the MMO and Natural England for example and highlights to its members new research and reports. We also publicise calls for evidence so people can input their data and knowledge into work such as SPA condition assessments.

The 3Cs south partnerships perform an important role in knowledge transfer via their regular news services, meetings and websites. Important data and mapping are signposted within these coastal partnerships' websites.

Examples of datasets which cross sectors include:

- The Defra APP Gallery [Defra Data Services Platform](#)
- Natural Capital Plans – example for Solent Harbours [Map Series \(arcgis.com\)](#)
- The Coastal Data Explorer - [Coastal Data Explorer | Catchment Based Approach](#)
- SMP Explorer Portal
- Solent Information Database (SID) - [Solent Forum - Solent Information Database](#)
- MMO and NE evidence sites - [Evidence projects register - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Natural England Access to Evidence](#)

Case Study: [Solent Information Database \(SID\)](#)

The Solent Forum hosts a metadatabase of coastal reports, online resources and datasets across a wide range of coastal topics. The information is sourced directly from its members or as part of its ongoing news service. When it surveys its members this consistently comes out as one of the most valued services; it allows people to have a comprehensive quick overview of the data and information that is available on topics.

5.5 Coastal Partnerships Facilitating Integration

The 3Cs south team believe there are real benefits in knowledge transfer both locally and nationally and that coastal partnerships have a key role in providing this within their core services. Coastal partnerships can also be commissioned to help coordination and cooperation through project work. The neutral role of coastal partnerships brings about strong benefits to enable successful coordination. Examples include:

- Helping efficiencies in how regulatory bodies achieve management with often small budgets e.g. MMO no anchor zone in Studland being supported by the Dorset Coast Forum.
- Different government organisations have different remits underpinned by statutory responsibilities. CPs have a role in identifying gaps, transferring knowledge and coordinating people.
- Governance by its very nature is complex. The focus needs to be on people cooperating to achieve outcomes.
- The Solent Marine Sites Scheme of management (SEMS) is a very good example of how the statutory responsibilities of individual Relevant Authorities are brought together to coordinate and deliver (see section 3.4).
- The 3Cs south work well with their local catchment partnership and larger CPs, such as the Solent Forum, improve links across many different catchments as they sit on multiple ones.
- CPs can play a key role in the future for ecosystem services, coordinating and providing a 'coastal voice' for work areas such as net gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

5.6 Funding of Coastal Partnerships

The governance and funding of coastal partnerships varies depending on their mandate. The two large coastal partnerships within the 3Cs south team are funded by local partners. Each have a network of members; Solent Forum members pay subscriptions for a core service (membership is free with Dorset Coast Forum). The Isle of Wight Estuaries Project is a smaller partnership, currently funded by two harbour authorities, the local authority and specific project income.

The 3Cs south partnerships also have specific self-funded groups and projects each with their own steering group and partnership agreements, for example the Solent Marine Sites Management Group.

The Solent Forum and Dorset Coast Forum are each Unincorporated Associations, respectively hosted by Hampshire County Council and Dorset Council. This is an organisation set up through an agreement between a group of people who come together for a reason other than to make a profit. Investigations have taken place as to the value of transforming to a legal company or charity, however disbenefits include cost, tax complications and the criteria of the host body.

For Dorset Coast Forum, core funding is received from BCP and Dorset Councils, the EA, Wessex Water and to a lesser degree, Dorset Wildlife Trust. The income does not cover all core costs, which DCF considers to be salary costs of the Co-ordinator and Support Officer, plus website, travel and general running costs. Hence a proportion of these costs are inputted into funded projects. This can lead to the Co-ordinator taking time out of their role to deliver projects, resulting in less time being allocated to the delivery of core services such as business planning, networking activities and annual forums.

Similarly, the Isle of Wight Estuaries Project has one officer that supports the work of the funding partners, but project income is also required to meet the core costs. The limited resource leads to a reduced capacity for coastal collaboration and delivery. Greater understanding and support of local coastal partnerships would recognise and enable the development of collaborative projects that deliver what is needed locally, regionally and nationally.

Dorset Coast Forum and the Isle of Wight Estuaries Project are keen to explore opportunities for drawing down core funding from central government, however this needs to take the following into account:

- If funding is reliant on delivery of outcomes/outputs, is this additional to what is currently being delivered. If so, would this lead to double funding of outcomes if those outcomes are already funded through projects?
- Would the delivery and/or reporting of outcomes for central government funding require additional resources, administrative or otherwise?
- Would drawing down of central government funding impact on CPs autonomy in how we report locally, our strategic goals and plans, the way we are represented, etc.

If the disbenefits of drawing down central government income are considered to outweigh the benefits for individual partnerships, then each one should have the choice to turn down the opportunity without compromising their membership of the CPN. Centralised funding would need to be flexible enough to fulfil local needs without compromising neutrality and local delivery. Any centralised core funding should also be available to local authority hosted coastal partnerships.

Funding for officer time is often limited in CPs but it is essential for the collaborative planning and development of projects and activities.

5.7 Recommendations

The 3Cs south make the following recommendations on how to improve coastal and marine integration through partnership working.

- The Marine Management Organisation should consider becoming a member of local coastal partnerships and engage fully with them to help improve coastal and marine governance.
- Coastal partnerships should develop their understanding on how to support individual sectors through their business planning and annual horizon scanning with their members.
- Full integration of coastal and marine policy and decision making across all socio-economic and environmental sectors including delivery would require a highly centralised top-down governmental approach. It would require serious thought to how this would work with local bodies such as coastal partnerships.
- We support the four-point model for integration (knowledge transfer, coordination, cooperation, cooperation and delivery) proposed by the national Coastal Partnership Network as a sound way to measure delivery and progress.
- There is a requirement for a government framework and guidelines to use an integrating ecosystems approach based on natural capital understanding. The government should prioritise the integration of environmental policy and use coastal partnerships to help deliver this both at the coast and in the marine environment, for example Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- CPs are an effective vehicle for transferring evidence knowledge and promoting and sharing, especially through their website information hubs, news service and meetings. They also provide an effective mechanism for improving access to evidence. This should be acknowledged and used by data and mapping producing bodies such as the Environment Agency and MMO.
- Increased recognition of coastal partnerships ability to provide one stop shops on coastal matters, for example the Solent Forum's coastal consents guide. This is of high value to coastal stakeholders.
- CPs are an effective neutral vehicle to bring coastal stakeholders together for discussions on politically sensitive issues such as the introduction of new management measures. They have a good overview of all the sectors at the coast and are a very effective way to facilitate introductions to avoid duplication and coordinate work. Long term support and recognition of CPs will help provide the continuity to build the trust required to achieve this important aspect of coastal collaboration.
- CPs can deliver statutory duty partnerships such as the management scheme for the Solent Marine Sites and examples like this should be shared as good practice and replicated elsewhere if appropriate.
- The provision of centralised funding streams needs to recognise the limitations of accessing it by some CPs due to their status and hosting arrangements. It should supplement existing work and avoid creating complex monitoring and evaluation requirements. Funding by a national body should not preclude receiving funding from a local office and vice versa.

6 Improving National Coastal and Marine Governance

6.1 Introduction

The 3Cs south team explored how national marine and coastal governance could be improved by coastal partnerships. In section 6.2 we review how the national Coastal Partnership Network (CPN) can develop in the future to become a sustainable well recognised body that provides a national coastal voice, and secondly how it can further support local CPs. In section 6.3 we specifically look at the CPN proposals to develop a national framework for the coast.

To shape our views we carried out the following:

- Two workshops with the 3Cs south team
- Workshop with Solent Forum Steering Group
- Meetings to discuss CPN questions on a national coastal framework
- Active engagement in the CPN led working group tasked with developing a national coastal framework

6.2 The Coastal Partnership Network

Coastal Partnerships in England, as well as cross border partnerships, are informally part of the national [Coastal Partnership Network \(CPN\)](#). The CPN has evolved over many years and is largely run as a volunteer network, drawing in a committee of representatives from different coastal partnerships as well as the Environment Agency. It currently has one paid administration post funded by a third sector organisation. The current host is the Thames Estuary Partnership. The CPN successfully won the 3Cs bid, of which the 3Cs south regional bid is part.

It organises an annual coastal partnership network meeting, publishes a newsletter and has successfully hosted a Coastal Summit. The annual meeting is well attended and is a great opportunity for coastal partnerships to get together and benefit from each other's experience. It has also been successful in bidding for and delivering coastal projects. The Solent Forum has assisted the CPN from time to time, and the Isle of Wight Estuaries Project is actively involved in its committee.

6.2.1 Developing the Coastal Partnership Network

The 3Cs south wish to support the CPN to deliver an effective national coastal partnership and we offer our knowledge from our successful local partnerships to assist. In this section we propose how we see the CPN developing and what services we would like the CPN to offer us.

The 3Cs south would support a CPN that addresses gaps in coastal partnership coverage around the coast, seeks solutions to common issues, serves the needs of existing local partnerships, provides a national voice and a conduit for information exchange.

We suggest the CPN should operate within a five year business plan to agreed aims and objectives with an annual horizon scanning, overseen by a steering group, producing an annual work programme. The steering group could be key coastal partnership representatives and relevant government agencies who provide core funding. The annual horizon scanning exercise and work programme could be consulted with local CPs and an advisory group of wider government agencies

such as Natural England, Environment Agency, MMO, IFCA, and the LGA Coastal Special Interest Group.

We suggest two main core services that the CPN could provide:

1. Strategic shaping (providing a national voice for the coast)
2. Supporting local coastal partnerships

1. Strategic Shaping (providing a national voice for the coast)

We would like CPN to provide a national voice for the coast and promote the knowledge and experience of local CP officers. It could ensure knowledge transfer of new policies and initiatives to local coastal communities and identify and help resource effective engagement and delivery. It could help to coordinate work on common themes and issues that many local coastal partnerships deal with to deliver efficiencies of scale.

We would like to see a national coastal website developed to influence policy and help local delivery, this website could:

- Signpost multiple benefits/stacked services
- Identify issue and governance gaps around the coast
- Help to address concerns/issues relating to national governance
- Provide examples of how delivery mechanisms could work
- Demonstrate effective coastal knowledge transfer
- Provide an overview of key policy and how coastal partnerships can facilitate delivery, for example the coastal aspects of Local National Recovery Strategies
- Promote and share relevant research being done by academia
- Improve access to evidence
- Provide a national one stop shop of coastal information

2. Supporting Local Coastal Partnerships

Its second key aspect would be to support the core services of existing coastal partnerships, 3Cs south would like to see the following services provided:

- Knowledge transfer of national policy to local coastal partnerships
- New coastal partnership officer induction
- Facilitation services from stakeholder engagement to delivery
- Building relationships with catchment partnerships
- Collaboration on 'grey' coastal and marine issues such as diffuse water pollution
- Provide training and CPD
- Raise national profile of local CPs
- Mentoring of local CP staff
- Identify champions amongst local CPs for key issues, e.g. offshore wind
- Provide skills register of local CP staff so people can access support from colleagues

Examples of where CPN could collaborate with local partnerships on coastal issues include:

- Habitat restoration at area scale
- Strategic marine nature recovery and net gain
- MPA management

- Streamlining the regulatory framework and consenting for marine and coast
- Wholescape water management
- Evidence and access to evidence
- Climate change resilience

CPN Funding

The current CPN bids for project money for income as it does not have a stable core income stream. We strongly believe that core income is necessary to enable the CPN to offer the services listed above, and that government bodies with a coastal remit should contribute.

We believe that government should fund:

- Core salary and on-costs of a national coastal network
- Website, including the setting up and maintenance of a central information hub
- Other core running costs
- Training for staff members (and potentially volunteers)
- National networking/knowledge sharing events
- Staff time of national government agencies to work in partnership with the network
- An allocation for local coastal partnerships that struggle with core funding. This could be administered to them directly or through the CPN

We would prefer it if any additional network fundraising would be limited to agreement with its wider aims and objectives; projects should be justifiable, relevant and supported by local coastal partnerships. Local CP's need to have a choice in being part of national funded projects, so that they can review whether those projects meet their local needs.

Regional Coastal Partnership Working

The 3Cs south team have successfully come together to produce this report, currently we do not see any additional benefit to continue as a formal regional unit. We already support each other successfully in an informal manner. However we understand that regional clusters may work well in some other English coastal areas.

6.2.2 Requirement for a Coastal Strategy

One area that the national CPN is considering is the need for a national coastal strategy and the benefits and viability of producing one. A key question is how this can be delivered by coastal partnerships at a local or national scale. Marine Plans now provide much of the policy framework that in the past local strategies sought to drive forward.

Defra's 25 Year plan and the MMO High Level objectives could arguably provide the basis for a national coastal strategy, but they are not a costed action plan. Having a fully integrated coastal strategy would be difficult to achieve due to different legislative drivers, and in some sectors lack of legislative drivers, and the different needs and timescales of statutory authority work.

The 3Cs south partnerships currently do not have a specific coastal or estuary strategy. We believe that there are other more effective ways to improve governance, such as through the provision of information hubs and guiding principles, and the CPN should evaluate these routes.

6.3 Developing a National Framework for the Coast

The CPN is exploring how to provide a national framework for the coast as part of their 3Cs bid. As part of this exploration it consulted with local coastal partnerships including the 3Cs south.

A key question posed was: 'What can a National Network of Coastal Partnerships do to enhance and progress coordination for coastal sustainability and resilience in the UK.' The objectives set out under this question are to:

- Enable coastal leadership and a collaborative culture in each sector, nationally UK wide and locally.
- Streamline communications across the complex myriad coastal messages and across sectors.
- Enable shared understanding and coordinated delivery across multiple socio-economic and environmental policy areas.
- Improve sectoral understanding across framework delivery partners and wider sectors to enable multi-level governance and inclusive decision making.
- Improve evaluation of partnership working to attract blended investment and grow partnership working across sectors.
- Enable long term systemic change through providing evidence to shape future coastal policy.

We believe that the CPN could play an important role in facilitating the integration of environmental policy at a national level. It could be guided by an advisory group of local and national organisations, supporting the role of local coastal partnerships in delivering work on issues such as Nature Recovery Strategies, Marine Plans, RBMPs, and Natural England/Environment Agency priorities.

Each local coastal partnership will have different views and needs, and we understand that there are areas of England that have poor local coastal governance and partnership funding. In the 3Cs south the Solent Forum and Dorset Coast Forum have their own successful funding models and do not need to be part of a more structured and centralised approach. We would have concerns should any approach compromise our political neutrality or ability for local stakeholder delivery.

Finally, the CPN can help to improve evaluation of partnership working, but this should not be prescriptive for every partnership or linked to a single funding stream, as this could compromise local delivery. Combining collective outputs would result in a useful summary report to national bodies. By reporting outputs from the CPN as a whole network it also allows smaller partnerships to contribute where resources allow and does not compromise the ongoing work of existing partnerships and projects. A set of national outputs could include the number of volunteers actively engaged in coastal work, area of coastal habitat undergoing restoration, or number of businesses engaged in local partnerships.

6.4 Recommendations

To improve national coastal and marine governance, we make the following recommendations based on our evaluation of the existing position.

- National government bodies should appreciate that the national CPN already operates an important service for local CPs (many with limited resources); we value the annual Coastal Partnership Network meeting. We believe that stable government funding is required for at least five years to enable paid staff to continue and improve this important service.
- Government bodies and agencies should support their staff by allowing them time to attend local CP meetings and participate in partnership working. They should also recognise the

cost saving already being made by CPs coordinating and facilitating the delivery of work at the coast.

- National government bodies with a coastal remit could provide core funding to the national Coastal Partnership Network to ensure it can deliver both a national framework for coastal integration and support the numerous local coastal partnerships around our coast. We recommend that the CPN be funded to deliver 1/ Strategic shaping and 2/ Supporting local coastal partnerships.
- We cannot see the benefit to our partnerships for the development of coastal or estuary strategy/plans at local or national scale. So many different organisations are involved in plan and strategy making that delivering a costed plans with tangible actions is very difficult, we think that there are better ways to deliver outcomes.
- A key priority of the national CPN should be meeting the training needs of local CPs and providing support and mentoring.
- CPN should develop national information hubs building on and reflecting local information hubs developed by coastal partnerships.
- The Solent Forum and Dorset Coast Forum should be recognised as separate regional hubs, although it may be of benefit for one to be a single point of contact for the region.
- There is a strong requirement for a government led framework and guidelines to use an integrating ecosystems approach based on natural capital understanding and the stacking of benefits at a coastal system level.
- The development of Nature Recovery Strategies is key to integrating ecosystems services, and it is recommended that the government supports ambitious strategies for the coast and marine space that sets strategic net gain targets and solve the barriers of additionality to improving designated sites.
- Coastal Partnerships locally and nationally are ready to support stakeholders coming together to deliver nature recovery strategies; getting the agreement of Defra family partners should enable an improved system of streamlined consents as currently this is a significant barrier to restoration projects in terms of complexity and funding.
- Coastal Partnerships do need more engagement and support from national government; the 3Cs south already have good support from local government bodies. More support from the Marine Management Organisation would be welcomed both in terms of funding provision and allowing local staff time to assist with coastal partnership work.
- For existing successful locally funded CPs (such as Solent Forum and Dorset Coast Forum) the national CPN should look to work with them and supplement their strengths and recognise that a centralised national model may not be the best approach for them and that their independence and neutrality is an asset.
- Should a model like Catchment Based Approach (CaBa) be implemented for coast, we recommend that any monitoring and evaluation criteria be kept simple and/or be based on current work of business plans, annual reports and work programmes. Joint national evaluation by the CPN would enable smaller partnerships to contribute their outputs without having to meet all the criteria. We also recommend that the government recognise (and remedy) that the structure and hosting arrangements for existing CPs can sometimes preclude them from accessing funding.

7 Overall Recommendations

In this section we present our overall recommendations made throughout the whole report drafted using our knowledge and experience of delivering both coastal partnerships and coastal projects across the 3Cs south. We also recommend what we would like to see for future improvements and what role coastal partnerships could play. Please refer to the individual sections for the evaluation and context of the recommendations.

Section 3 - Coastal Partnerships

We recommend:

- There is no standard model for a coastal partnership, we recommend this be seen as a strength. Being flexible and politically independent allows open and honest conversations, the sharing of ideas and work and mutual support across coastal stakeholders.
- Successful partnerships reflect a local need and help their members to deliver their functions and duties. We recommend that local people are best placed to decide what type of partnership would work for them.

Section 4 – Delivering, Social, Economic and Environmental Outcomes

Coastal Communities

We recommend:

- That CPs work to remain as independent as possible. In each coastal area, there are many stakeholders involved in coastal management each with different remits, aims and objectives. Likewise, coastal communities and business are impacted by ever-changing social economic or environmental factors including deprivation, Brexit and climate change. CP's play a vital role within this maze by acting as a neutral body, facilitating discussion between different stakeholders as well as building trust with communities, to help reach common goals and identifying appropriate ways forward that benefit local communities, economies and environments.
- There is an opportunity for CPs to share skills and experiences related to stakeholder and community engagement. This can include training, learning best practice, experiences of how CPs addressed difficult situations, what didn't work well, etc. This can be achieved through CP workshops that address the practical element of what CPs deliver on the ground and providing a space for CPs to share and discuss their experiences.

Collaborative Partnership working

We recommend:

- Having key partners or hubs that have allocated resources to assist new, small partnership projects to become established. This could include facilitation of meetings, small amounts of funding to enable individuals to attend meetings (time and/or travel), introducing new projects to similar initiatives and identifying joint funding opportunities.
- The coastal partnership community encourages open and positive conversation and communication to support and inspire new officers and projects. The national CPN has a key role to play in developing this mentoring and training.
- Collaborative working enables smaller partnerships and communities to have a voice, both regionally and nationally. This is particularly important to ensure local needs, issues and

impacts are considered in strategic decisions and policy. Working together as part of a national coastal network ensures that the work of smaller partnerships and projects is considered and so it is recommended that resources are available to encourage and enable them to be involved in a national coastal network.

- CPs should be encouraged to identify opportunities to work with local businesses and industry. There are many examples of where this is working well, and these can be shared and discussed to assist others.

Fishing and Aquaculture

We recommend:

- CPs links with the fisheries and aquaculture sector on a local and regional scale, this is something that statutory bodies often fail to achieve and hence CPs help to fill this gap. CPs can create a framework in which statutory bodies can reach out to those in the industry, supporting monitoring, research and economic growth. This is particularly important as the fisheries and aquaculture sector adapts to new trade patterns and regulations following Brexit. There are also new opportunities in promoting and selling sustainably sourced fish and seafood locally (as consumers look for more environmentally friendly sources of protein), as well as developing the farming of seaweed which has been proven to have both environmental and health benefits.

Water Quality Management

We recommend:

- To address diffuse water pollution partnership working is key, source apportionment work shows that there is a myriad of causes from source to sea and it is important for people to realise that all sources of water pollution however small can impact. Coastal partnerships are well placed to help coordinate water quality work and directly deliver improvements as seen by Litter Free Dorset and the Solent Plastics Pollution hub. We recommend that government bodies and agencies use the reach and experience of coastal partnerships to help in their delivery of water quality improvements.

Catchment and Coast Coordination

We recommend:

- Coastal and catchment partnerships seek to work together to take a wholesale approach to the water environment. The 3Cs south currently work well with catchment colleagues with no need for an additional formal structure, this is very cost effective. Building these relationships helps to collate and share information on the water environment throughout. We recommend that coastal and catchment partnership officers have reciprocal agreements to attend each other's meetings to gain a whole water environment perspective on issues and share knowledge.

Information Hubs

We recommend:

- Coastal Partnership information hubs and the associated new service are highly rated by 3Cs south partnership members when we survey the value of services we provide. They are a long-term core service delivered by permanent staff. We recommend that long term core funding is allocated to coastal partnerships to allow them to provide this service.

Section 5: Integrating Coastal and Marine Management through Partnerships

We recommend:

- The Marine Management Organisation consider becoming a member of local coastal partnerships and engage fully with them to help improve coastal and marine governance.
- Coastal partnerships should develop their understanding on how to support individual sectors through their business planning and annual horizon scanning with their members.
- Full integration of coastal and marine policy and decision making across all socio-economic and environmental sectors including delivery would require a highly centralised top-down governmental approach. It would require serious thought to how this would work with local bodies such as coastal partnerships.
- We support the four-point model for integration (knowledge transfer, coordination, cooperation, cooperation and delivery) proposed by the national Coastal Partnership Network as a sound way to measure delivery and progress.
- There is a requirement for a government framework and guidelines to use an integrating ecosystems approach based on natural capital understanding. The government should prioritise the integration of environmental policy and use coastal partnerships to help deliver this both at the coast and in the marine environment, for example Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- CPs are an effective vehicle for transferring evidence knowledge and promoting and sharing, especially through their website information hubs, news service and meetings. They also provide an effective mechanism for improving access to evidence. This should be acknowledged and used by data and mapping producing bodies such as the Environment Agency and MMO.
- Increased recognition of Coastal Partnerships ability to provide one stop shops on coastal matters, for example the Solent Forum's coastal consents guide. This is of high value to coastal stakeholders.
- CPs are an effective neutral vehicle to bring coastal stakeholders together for discussions on politically sensitive issues such as the introduction of new management measures. They have a good overview of all the sectors at the coast and are a very effective way to facilitate introductions to avoid duplication and coordinate work. Long term support and recognition of CPs will help provide the continuity to build the trust required to achieve this important aspect of coastal collaboration.
- CPs can deliver statutory duty partnerships such as the management scheme for the Solent Marine Sites and examples like this should be shared as good practice and replicated elsewhere if appropriate.
- The provision of centralised funding streams needs to recognise the limitations of accessing it by some CPs due to their status and hosting arrangements. It should supplement existing work and avoid creating complex monitoring and evaluation requirements. Funding by a national body should not preclude receiving funding from a local office and vice versa.

Section 6: Improving National Coastal and Marine Governance

We recommend:

- National government bodies should appreciate that the national CPN already operates an important service for local CPs (many with limited resources); we value the annual Coastal Partnership Network meeting. We believe that stable government funding is required for at least five years to enable paid staff to continue and improve this important service.
- Government bodies and agencies should support their staff by allowing them time to attend CP meetings and participate in partnership working. They should also recognise the cost saving already being made by CPs coordinating and facilitating the delivery of work at the coast.
- National government bodies with a coastal remit could provide core funding to the national Coastal Partnership Network to ensure it can deliver both a national framework for coastal integration and support the numerous local coastal partnerships around our coast. We recommend that the CPN be funded to deliver 1/ Strategic shaping and 2/ Supporting local coastal partnerships.
- A key priority of the national CPN should be meeting the training needs of local CPs and providing support and mentoring.
- CPN should develop national information hubs building on and reflecting local information hubs developed by coastal partnerships.
- We cannot see the benefit to our partnerships for the development of coastal or estuary strategy/plans at local or national scale. So many different organisations are involved in plan and strategy making that delivering a costed plans with tangible actions is very difficult, we think that there are better ways to deliver outcomes.
- The Solent Forum and Dorset Coast Forum should be recognised as separate regional hubs, although it may be of benefit for one to be a single point of contact for the region.
- There is a strong requirement for a government led framework and guidelines to use an integrating ecosystems approach based on natural capital understanding and the stacking of benefits at a coastal system level.
- The development of Nature Recovery Strategies is key to integrating ecosystems services, and it is recommended that the government supports ambitious strategies for the coast and marine space that sets strategic net gain targets and solve the barriers of additionality to improving designated sites.
- Coastal Partnerships locally and nationally are ready to support stakeholders coming together to deliver nature recovery strategies; getting the agreement of Defra family partners should enable an improved system of streamlined consents as currently this is a significant barrier to restoration projects in terms of complexity and funding.
- Coastal Partnerships do need more engagement and support from national government; the 3Cs south already have good support from local government bodies. More support from the Marine Management Organisation would be welcomed both in terms of funding provision and allowing local staff time to assist with coastal partnership work.
- For existing successful locally funded CPs (such as Solent Forum and Dorset Coast Forum) the national CPN should look to work with them and supplement their strengths and recognise that a centralised national model may not be the best approach for them and that their independence and neutrality is an asset.
- Should a model like Catchment Based Approach (CaBa) be implemented for coast, we recommend that any monitoring and evaluation criteria be kept simple and/or be based on current work of business plans, annual reports and work programmes. Joint national evaluation by the CPN would enable smaller partnerships to contribute their outputs without having to meet all the criteria. We also recommend that the government recognise

(and remedy) that the structure and hosting arrangements for existing CPs can sometimes preclude them from accessing funding.

8 Further Information

This handbook was produced to inform the Championing Coastal Coordination (3Cs) bid delivered by the Coastal Partnership Network. The project ran from November 2021 to March 2022.

For further information about coastal partnerships in the south, please contact:

Dorset Coast Forum - [Dorset Coast Forum](#)

Solent Forum - [Solent Forum](#)