

# Towards Marine Planning in the Solent



**Final Project Report  
-Evaluation and Recommendations -**

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Project Aims and Work Programme

The Solent Forum managed this partnership project to help prepare the Solent for future marine planning. The project started in February 2009 and will finished in December 2010. The results were disseminated to Solent stakeholders at the Southern Marine Planning Conference in September 2010. The Solent Forum established and worked with Steering Group and Data Group to guide the project. The Solent Forum Officers worked closely with Southampton City Council who provided in-kind officer support for the project, and in particular managed whole packages of work including reporting on national progress on marine spatial planning and the role of stakeholders in the marine planning process. Full details of the project and project resources can be found on the Solent Forum website at [www.solentforum.org/forum/SoMaP/](http://www.solentforum.org/forum/SoMaP/).

The aim of the project was to achieve the first steps in the process of establishing a Solent marine planning system (SoMaP), by starting to build a Solent-wide coastal and marine policy framework including a spatial database of plans, policies and activities by sector. The two main strands to the project included:

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

The project was guided by a work programme consisting of seven work packages agreed by its Steering Group. The following table shows each work package and summarises the output of each.

**Table 1**  
**SoMaP Work Programme and Outputs**

<b>SoMaP Work Packages</b>	<b>Summary of Findings</b>
Establish a communications strategy.	Communications Strategy version 7 (final) produced
Reiterate national progress on Marine Spatial Planning by the Defra implementation team back to stakeholders.	Marine planning report produced
Scope with stakeholders the case for a marine plan at a Solent scale.	Report – SoMaP Stakeholder Meetings Report – Vol 1 and 2 Role of Stakeholder in the Marine Planning Process
Understand the information requirements for a Solent Marine Planning System.	Report – Information Requirements
Agree pilot case study sectors, to represent pressing Solent issues and land and marine interactions, and use these to test the data and information.	Case studies agreed by SG and included Hamble Estuary, Coastal Squeeze and Shipping Movements. See Information Requirements Report for implications
Obtain and map all sectoral policies within the Solent; obtain further data as agreed in work package.	Internet web portal built by Geodata. Portal allows easy access to Policy Database built by project team. The underlying database demonstrates the methodology of searching for policies by sector
Evaluate project findings and make recommendations to stakeholders. 1. 2.	This report

## **1.2 Objectives of this report**

This report has been provided to evaluate the project findings and make recommendations.

More specifically it aims to:

- Provide a summary of project experience and lessons learnt. Make recommendations on how the process could have been improved. In particular recommend the best way to engage with stakeholders. Use Communications Strategy as evidence base.
- Scope Review Solent Forum Strategic Guidance document – in particular the chapter on “Review of systems for regulating development”
- Recommend future stakeholder and community engagement processes
- Recommend the next phase of developing a Solent or other regional scale Marine Planning System.

## **2.0 Evaluation of Project Experience and Lessons Learnt**

### **2.1 Working closely with stakeholders**

The value of this project was as much about the process itself than the outputs. A key objective was to prepare Solent stakeholders for a new marine planning system in England. The project was launched prior to the introduction of the Marine and Coastal Access Act and the formation of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and was completed 18 months later when the Act, the MMO and the Marine Plan area boundaries were set-up (South Inshore Area to encompass the Solent). In setting up a Steering Group to cover Local Authorities and representatives of a range of socio-economic and environmental sectors in the Solent it was ensured that the project was guided in a fair and representative manner. From the outset, a Communications Strategy was produced and this was carefully adhered to make sure that every organisation in the Solent had the opportunity to help shape marine planning in the Solent at an early stage.

Once of the principle methods of reaching stakeholders was via a series of 10 workshops held throughout the project. The 10 workshops were held to provide a geographical and sectoral coverage of the Solent and 200 invites were extended to representatives of stakeholder organisations. 105 stakeholder representatives attended a workshop. These workshops were successful at imparting knowledge to stakeholders about the new marine planning system as well as scoping their views on the system and what policies they would like to see in a marine plan.

The following Table 2 summarises the agenda for the workshop meetings. A full report was produced on the SoMaP Stakeholder Meetings and shared with the MMO.

**Table 2**

## Agenda for Stakeholder Meetings

### **Agenda**

#### **Introduction to SoMaP project**

Presentation on project objectives, timing and progress. Include a list of all planned stakeholder meetings

#### **Marine Planning Presentation**

Presentation on how the new Marine Planning System is being implemented and over which plan areas and questions

#### **Stakeholder involvement in Marine Planning**

Discussion on how stakeholders would like to be involved in the marine planning process. Introduction to questionnaire and ask all to fill in.

#### **Scoping Marine Planning - Workshop 1**

Marine Plan Boundaries  
Scale of marine planning  
Timing and order of plans  
Enforcement  
Content of a Marine Plan  
Channels of Communication

#### **Building a policy database – Workshop 2**

Using spreadsheet collect top policies by sector and understand hierarchy

#### **Administering a Stakeholder Engagement Questionnaire**

Request to physically complete a Stakeholder Engagement Questionnaire

At the end of each workshop meeting, each respondent was asked to complete a Stakeholder Engagement Questionnaire. 80 of these were completed altogether and the results were brought together with a desk research study on lessons learned in Stakeholder Engagement into a 2 volume Report on the Role of Stakeholders in the Marine Planning Process.

The Communications Strategy demonstrates all other methods the project used to involve stakeholder in the process including the use of two project briefing notes, monthly e-mail alerts, regular use of the Solent Forum website, articles in Solent News and presentations at Solent Forum conferences. The final SoMaP conference held at the end of September brought all of the project findings together and using 14 presentations from key speakers, imparted the results to 82 delegates.

In summary, the project was very successful in working with stakeholders and preparing them for a marine planning system. Feedback from the conference showed that on average delegates found the conference including the SoMaP project results very useful. The lessons learnt by the project team regarding working closely with stakeholders to prepare them for marine planning included:

- Be clear from the outset, how if at all stakeholders could have really influenced the emerging marine planning structure in England
- To have correctly estimated the time and cost of achieving the level of stakeholder engagement that was achieved, rather than underestimate it

## 2.2 Strategically assess plans and policies

The project examined the different sectoral planning policies within the Solent to help inform the new MMO and those with an interest in the potential development of a marine plan. The project team searched and collated over 400 plans and policies over the whole range of sectors operating in the coastal and marine environment. From this dataset, key plans and policies were then selected and examined in more detail, with a series of metadata for each policy obtained. This policy matrix can be searched from the Solent Forum website via a web portal designed by Geodata.

Table 3 provides more detail on how plans and policies in the Solent were assessed.

**Table 3**  
**Method of strategically assessing plans and policies in the Solent**

Methods of Assessment	Description
SoMaP Project Proposals	Natural England and Defra from the outset requested the project devise a sound methodology, which in turn could be used by the MMO for marine planning
Information Requirements Report	Report produced which showed in detail the information requirements for the project. The report was guided by a Data Group formed for this purpose. In particular this report agreed the metadata required for the policy database
Building the policy database	By July 2010, policies by sector in the Solent were collected into the Excel policy database, and metadata was collected for each policy where possible. The policy database was never intended to be complete due to the size of the task and for this reason the project team concentrated on collecting policies for case study areas.
Web based GIS portal	Geodata were commissioned to build a web-based GIS portal. This has been built and can be accessed by anyone, allowing them to search the policy database either by drawing a polygon on a map or by searching by sector/policy name. This system was demonstrated at the SoMaP conference.

In summary, the project completed this task successfully as planned. The web-based portal works well and feedback from the MMO has been very positive. A meeting with Geodata and the MMO was held in September 2010 to explore how the MMO could take forward the work that SoMaP had completed.

The lessons learnt by the project team regarding strategically assessing plans and policies in the Solent include:

- To have correctly estimated the time and cost of achieving building the policy database, rather than underestimate it
- To have costed into the project a method of completing the policy database
- To have costed into the project a method of maintaining the policy database

## 3.0 Scope a Review of Solent Forum Strategic Guidance

Strategic Guidance for the Solent was published in 1997. It acted as a catalyst to bring together the various sectors and stakeholders with an interest in the Solent to strategically discuss the future management needs of the area. The Guidance is now over 10 years old and the Solent Forum Steering Group is considering how best to update it in line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

The original strategic guidance document, provided guidance for 15 sectors. SoMaP considered each of these sectors when designing the policy database. It also considered the Solent Forum State of the Solent Indicators which are regularly collected. The following Table 4 shows the SoMaP database sectors, the State of the Solent Indicators that are collected against each, and how the Solent Forum Strategic Guidance categories could be aligned with SoMaP.

**Table 4**  
**SoMaP Database Sectors**

<b>SoMaP Categories</b>	<b>Solent Forum Strategic Guidance Categories</b>	<b>State of the Solent Indicators</b>
<b>Protection and Conservation</b>		
Coastal Risk Management	Coastal Protection and Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Length of defended coastline</li> <li>- Rate of Sea Level rise and no. of stormy days</li> <li>- Natural, human &amp; economic assets at risk of coastal flooding</li> </ul>
Water Quality/Resources	Environmental Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compliance EC Shellfish Hygiene Directive</li> <li>- Compliance EC Bathing Water Directive</li> <li>- Beach litter</li> <li>- Dangerous Substances in Water</li> <li>- High ests of Nitrates &amp; Orthophosphate point sources in Solent</li> <li>- Volume of oil spills and discharges</li> <li>- Mean surface sea temperature</li> </ul>
Emergency Planning and Safety	Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health and safety incidents in the Solent</li> </ul>
Nature Conservation	Nature Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wildfowl and wader counts</li> <li>- Change in extent of coastal habitats</li> <li>- Condition of sites designated for nature conservation</li> </ul>
Heritage and Archaeology	Historic Heritage and Maritime Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building and monuments at risk of decay</li> <li>- Number of sites recorded on the sites and monuments record</li> <li>- Area &amp; no. of design conserve. areas for heritage and archaeology</li> </ul>
Access to Coast and Countryside	<a href="#">(include in Recreation)</a>	
Landscape/seascape	Landscape and Seascape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change to the seascape of the Solent</li> <li>- Number/percentage of landscape features lost, degraded or enhanced</li> <li>- Changes in landscape assessments carried out by local authorities</li> <li>- No, extent, quality and degree of landscape &amp; seascape impr. schemes</li> <li>- Perceived quality of the coastal landscape</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Development</b>		
Ports and Shipping	Ports and Shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of dredge licences issued in the Solent area &amp; volume dredged</li> <li>- Total Volume of freight handled by Soton Ports</li> <li>- Economic importance of the ports industry in the Solent</li> <li>- Employment reliant on the ports industry</li> </ul>

		- Number of shipping movements
Land use planning	Systems for Regulating development	- Change in the area and type of developed land in the coastal zone - Use of brownfield as opposed to greenfield sites for coastal develop.
Ferrys	(include in Ports and Shipping)	- Number of ferry passengers to the Isle of Wight
Marinas/moorings/access to land	(include in Ports and Shipping)	- Number of berths and moorings for recreational boats in the Solent
Land based recreation	Recreation and Tourism	- Proportion of attractions with implemented environ'l quality managnt plans - Visitor numbers to key attractions - Number of overnight stays in tourist accommodation - Intensity of land based recreational activity
Water based recreation		- Level of participation in coastal based recreation facilities in the Solent - Intensity of water based recreational activity
Transportation to shore	Transportation	- Volume of traffic on major coastal roads - Proportion of journeys taken by public transport
Wildfowling	(Include in Marine Industries)	
Agriculture	Not included	
Fish and Fishing/Aquaculture	Fisheries	- Number of salmon returning to the rivers Test and Itchen - State of the main fish stock in the Solent (Oyster Stock) - Registered fishing vessels in the Solent
Marine industries	Marine Industries Marine aggregates	- Economic importance of the marine industry (excl. ports) in the Solent - Employment reliant on marine industries - Diversity of the marine industry base in the Solent - Tonnage of aggregates landed in the Solent - Levels of aggregates from secondary & recycled
Renewable energy	(Include in Marine Industries)	
Carbon capture and storage	(Include in Marine Industries)	
Service infrastructure	(Include in Marine Industries)	
Oil and gas exploration	Oil and Gas	
Disposal	(Include in Marine Industries)	
Military/Naval	Naval Base and Defence Interests	
Coastal Land Management	(inc. in Recreation & Nat. Cons)	

The Solent Forum now need to produce proposals on how to update each of the sectoral chapters in the Strategic Guidance document. It has made progress as it is currently updating the Recreation and Tourism Chapter; this work is being led by the Solent Forum Recreation Group.

The chapter on Systems for Regulating development, will require updating in the light of the Marine and Coastal Access Act and the formation of the MMO as a key regulatory body. It is recommended that this is the next chapter that is reviewed. This will time well with Solent Review of its Marine Consents Guide currently on-going.

## **4.0 Future stakeholder and community engagement processes**

The Solent Forum are well placed to facilitate community engagement, especially where a neutral organisation is required to help balance socio-economic and environmental factors. The Solent Forum have been working with the national Coastal Partnerships Network, who in turn have been working with the MMO to agree how the services of coastal partnerships can be engaged.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

During the project, the suite of English Marine Plan Areas were agreed, including the South Inshore Area in which the Solent will fall. SoMaP has demonstrated that the Solent represents a complex and diverse geographical area with a highly evolved non statutory integrated coastal management, particularly led and facilitated by the Solent Forum a dedicated neutral coastal partnership. It would be highly desirable for Solent to be considered as a nested plan area within the South Inshore Area.

It is as yet unknown when planning for the South Inshore Area will begin, although it is known that it is unlikely to be before April 2013. The current economic situation threatens the existence of coastal partnerships such as the Solent Forum, or at least their ability to continue to maintain the valuable evidence base that they have developed over the years. The Solent have developed a great deal of evidence since 1992, including State of the Solent Indicators, Solent Forum Guidance, the Marine Consents Guide, and Solentpedia. The SoMaP database itself is not complete and it is estimated that it would cost £500 to complete and £800 per annum to keep it fully maintained. It is recommended that the MMO, local authorities, harbour authorities, other regulators, as well as marine industries support coastal partnerships to enable to continue their work.