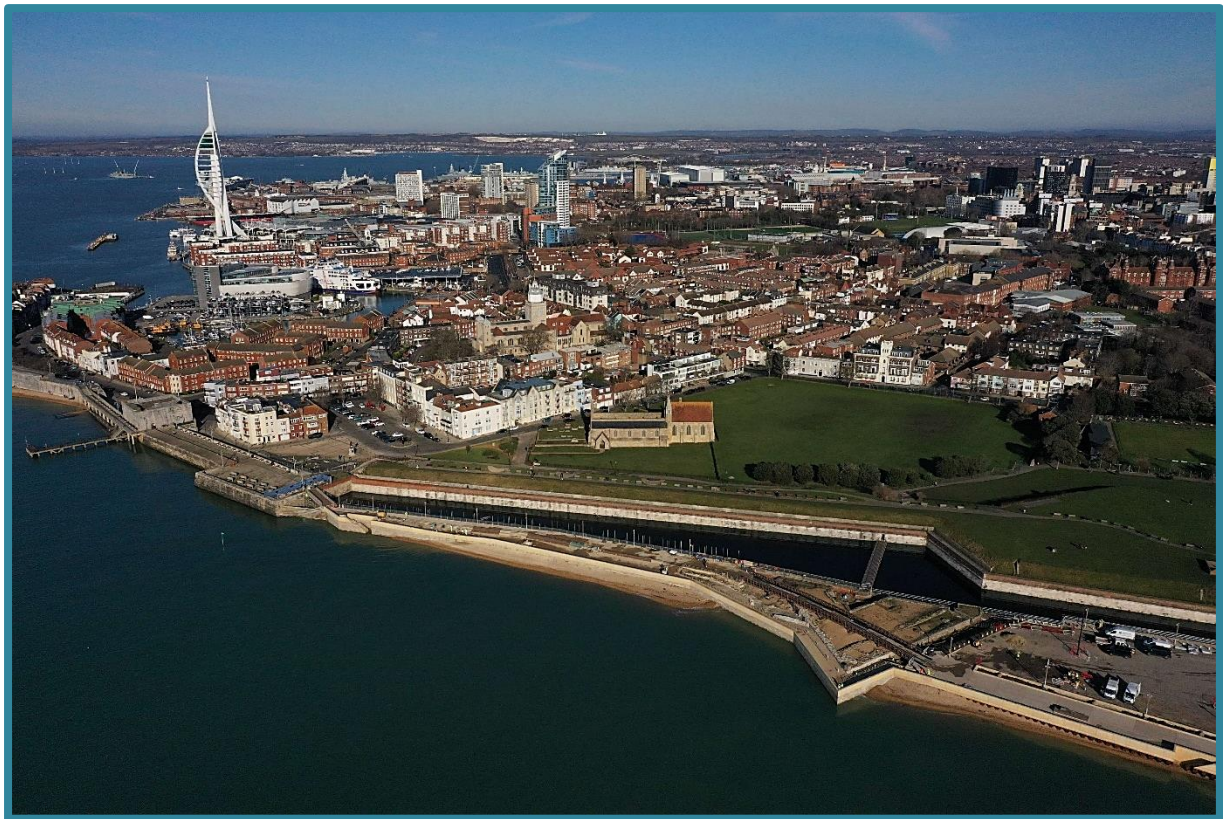


Business Planning 2025 – 2030

Review of Previous Business Plan



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1 Introduction

The Solent Forum publishes a business plan every 5 years; the plan is widely consulted with its members and approved by the Solent Forum Steering Group. As well as the Business Plan, the Forum agree an annual work programme each February with its Steering Group and undertakes annual Horizon Scanning in June to enable any adaptation in the work programme due to unforeseen events. The Forum publishes an Annual Report each March to show its work.

The 2025 to 2030 Business Plan is under development and as part of the business planning cycle a review is required of the previous (2020 – 2025) Business Plan.

Firstly, this review focuses on the Business Plan itself and examines the success of actions achieved. The plan set a timed programme of specific work which was relevant and achievable; this ensured the objectives were Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant and to a Timescale (SMART). The review findings are illustrated by a traffic light system where **green**, signifies fully achieved, **amber** signifies partially achieved and **red** signifies not yet achieved.

Secondly, the review provides a discussion on how to shape the 2025 – 2030 Business plan, looking at the sections headings and identifying priorities for this business plan period, to start to shape it.

2 Summary

The Solent Forum enjoyed a successful period between 2020 and 2025 during which it achieved all its core aims and an unprecedented number of projects.

The Forum increased its membership base from 51 to 58 members and members' meetings have been increasingly popular and well attended.

The Forum introduced annual Horizon Scanning, and this has been a useful tool to identify how members can work together in a fast-changing environment.

The Solent Forum works closely with the Solent Seascape Project and chairs the Seascape Recovery Plan Working Group. This plan aligns closely with the work of the Solent Forum's Natural Environment Group, and it is anticipated that the Forum will focus on this work over the next 5 years.

The Members' Survey will help the Forum shape the 2025 – 2030 Business Plan. It is anticipated that it will be similar to the previous plan but will be written in a style which further helps market the Forum and will include case studies of the benefits of the Forum. It will include some new headings, a sustainability forecast and horizon scanning.

2.1 Solent Forum Aims and Objectives

The Solent Forum aims and objectives are as follows:

Aims

1. To promote, facilitate & support integrated planning & sustainable management of the Solent
2. To provide a broad-based consultative forum

Objectives

1. To raise awareness and understanding of the members' roles and aspirations

2. To improve sharing of the information base
3. To facilitate better communication, consultation, and liaison
4. To raise awareness and understanding of the human and natural changes likely to materially affect the Solent area and its interests.
5. To promote the national and regional importance of the Solent in policy, development and plan making
6. To raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of Climate Change on the Solent and appropriate mitigation, resilience, and adaptation measures.

3 Review of Achievements of Previous Business Plan

3.1 Core Work Programme

The core work programme is specifically tailored to each of the Forum’s six objectives. These objectives in turn meet the two broad aims.

The Forum structures its work as follows (priorities are shown as previously set by members):

Solent Forum Core Services	Ranking of Importance to Members
Groups such as Solent European Marine Sites scheme of management and the Natural Environment Group	1
Members Meetings	2
Steering Group meetings	2
Running workshops and events	3
E News	4
Forum website and database	5
Biannual issues of Solent News	6
Professor Mike Clark Awards	6
Solent Information Database	7
Solent Water Quality Awards	unranked
Membership Services	unranked
Business Planning	unranked

Source: Solent Forum Business Plan 2020 – 2025

Table 1. Business Plan Review 2020 – 2025 – Work Programme

This table shows the Solent Forum Core Work Programme set in the previous business plan, column three indicates what has been achieved over the past 5 years.

Category	How to measure	Progress during plan period (2020 to 2025)
Overarching The Solent Forum needs to remain fit for purpose and to ensure that its business develops to ensure its long-term viability.		
Monitor and Review Work Programme, Business Plan, Annual Report, Finances and Terms of Reference.	Bi-annual Steering Group Meetings. Horizon Scanning and Annual survey to obtain feedback from members.	Achieved in each year
Review and update membership mailing lists to ensure all details are correct.	Lists kept up to date.	Achieved in each year
Provide for professional development and training of staff.	Professional training and development provided.	Achieved in each year
Objective 1 - Raise awareness and understanding of the members' roles and aspirations		
Hold regular SF meeting to bring to members' attention coastal issues.	Two Steering Group meetings and two members meetings per annum. Views of members sought and followed.	Achieved in each year
Organise seminars, conferences and other events to bring interested parties up to date on factors influencing the Solent.	Organise conferences as and when appropriate.	Achieved Events Include: Solent water quality and boating workshop Solent biosecurity planning – six workshops Solent Nature Recovery workshop to support Hampshire and Isle of Wight LNRS'
Publish biannual Solent News and maintain the news service.	Solent News published twice per annum, monthly e-mail newsletter.	Achieved in each year
Maintain and develop the Solent Forum website.	Web-site maintenance work.	Achieved in each year
Member services.	Consultation events.	Achieved by the setting up of website hubs: Habitat restoration Natural capital Biodiversity and net gain Blue carbon

		Clean Solent Shores and Seas Solent Catchment Partnerships
Objective 2 - Improve sharing of the information base		
Maintain databases of information as directed by members.	Web-site maintenance work. Solent Information Database (SID)	Achieved in each year particularly using Solent Information Database
Publish and share information/reports from our members	News Service Solent Forum Website	Achieved in each year
Objective 3 - To facilitate better communication, consultation and liaison amongst members		
Continue to offer and provide a mechanism for networking, communicating to and consulting with Solent Forum members.	Two Steering Group meetings and two members meetings per annum. Views sought and followed on. Solent News service	Achieved in each year
Objective 4 - To raise awareness and understanding of the human and natural changes likely to materially affect the Solent area and its interests		
Bring to members' attention the potential changes that may affect the Solent.	Raised at Steering Group meetings. Members Meeting presentations and hot topics. Consultancy services.	Achieved in each year This has been achieved through the Solent Forum website hubs listed under member services
Objective 5 - To promote the national and regional importance of the Solent		
Continue to provide a structure for discussion and coordinated action to ensure sustainable development and integrated coastal management in the Solent.	Solent Forum meetings, presentations and projects as directed by the Steering group. Provide responses to relevant consultations e.g. national Plans etc.	Achieved in each year
Solent Forum officers to maintain relationships with Solent and relevant regional and national organisations to foster understanding of coastal management issues.	Officers to continue networking with local, national and regional organisations. To offer consultancy services. Membership of the CPN and the EMS Officers Working Group.	Achieved in each year Attend SCOPAC/SCG; Coastal Partnership Network; Hamble Estuary Partnership (HEP); 4 Catchment Partnerships in the Solent
Objective 6 - To raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of Climate Change on the Solent and appropriate mitigation, resilience and adaptation measures		
Bring to members' attention the impacts of climate change that may affect the Solent.	Raised at Steering Group meetings. Members Meeting presentations and hot topics. Consultancy services.	Achieved in each year

3.2 Serviced Sub-Groups

The Solent Forum services two groups which are set up by the discretion of its steering group. Solent Marine Sites (SEMS) has its own management group and is financially independent.

- Solent Marine Sites scheme of management
- Natural Environment Group

The Solent Forum continue to run the Solent Marine Site scheme of management providing the secretariat and its associated Natural Environment Group. These two proactive groups have led to many projects that the Forum has been involved in, many of which has enable the Forum to take in income to cover its costs. All of projects and events that derived from these groups are listed in table 3 on projects.

Table 2 Business Plan Review 2020 – 2025 - Solent Forum Groups

Groups	Objective	Progress During plan period
Solent Marine Sites (SEMS)	<p>The Solent’s relevant authorities sign up to a management scheme for the Solent Marine Sites (SEMS), this includes an annual survey, meeting and management report.</p> <p>The management scheme guides the way in which relevant authorities exercise their functions so as to secure compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. The Solent Forum provides the secretariat for SEMS.</p>	<p>An annual survey elicits the views of relevant authorities, an annual management report is drafted from the findings and agreed at the management group meeting every September</p>
Natural Environment Group (NEG)	<p>NEG is a subgroup of SEMS and works primarily to improve the information base and recommend improved management measures to enable the European Marine sites to achieve favourable condition. It provides a cost-effective mechanism to direct, coordinate, and facilitate the delivery of cross cutting actions.</p>	<p>NEG met each year twice. It tracks projects in the Solent and launches key projects to improve the evidence base for SEMS. Projects: Impacts of Paddlesports; Solent Bird Sensitivity Mapping; Solent Seascape Recovery Plan inc. SF contribution.</p>

3.3 Projects and Events

Events

The Solent Forum managed several specific events (as well as its core meetings and events) in the 5 year period and the following table shows what was achieved against the original business plan.

Table 3. Business Plan Review 2020 – 2025 – Solent Forum Events

Solent Forum hosted events	Progress during the plan period
Solent Water Quality and Boating workshop	Held in partnership with the Environment Agency and Natural England in Autumn 2020.
Solent Nature Recovery	Coast and marine LNRS workshop held in January 2024. See project information below.
Biosecurity Planning in the Solent	Six workshops held from Jan to July 2023.

Projects and Services

The Solent Forum managed or has been highly involved in an unprecedented number of projects over the last 5 years totaling 14 projects compared to six projects in the previous 5 year plan period. The following table shows what was achieved against the original business plan. The BUDS project has been the largest project and phase 3 of the project is overdue, mainly as it is proving very difficult to cost and obtain MMO consents.

Table 4. Business Plan Review 2020 – 2025 – Solent Forum Projects

Solent Forum projects	Progress during the plan period (green equals progress as expected)
Building Biodiversity in the Solent Hub	Resource hub on building biodiversity into marine infrastructure. The Forum continues to collate and share further knowledge on this topic.
Beneficial Use of Dredgings (BUDS)	Phase 3, bottom placement dredging at Lymington, including preparation of the MMO Marine License. The Disposal Site Characterisation Assessment is now complete and the MMO Marine License was submitted in June 2024. The final reporting will be undertaken once the license application is determined.
Coastal Consents Guide	We continue to update this Guide when new relevant material is published.
Clean Solent Shores and Seas	The CSSS hub collates and shares information on a range of topics on Solent water quality.
Habitat Restoration hub	Collation and sharing of information on habitat restoration.

<p>Solent Plastics Pollution hub (SPP) Website and facebook page.</p>	<p>SPP collates and publicises work on reducing litter and preventing plastic pollution in the Solent. We are now in the legacy phase of this project and we will continue to update the project website and Facebook page until 2026.</p>
<p>Coastal Partnership Network (CPN) Theory of Change Project</p>	<p>Assisted the CPN in its aim to support Coastal Partnerships in their work and development and achieve recognition as the 'go to network' for coastal collaboration. Completed 2020.</p>
<p>Championing Coastal Coordination (3Cs)</p>	<p>Led by the national Coastal Partnership network to review the future direction of coastal partnerships. The Solent Forum was part of a south coast consortium inc. The Dorset Coast Forum and Isle of Wight Estuaries Partnership. Completed March 2022.</p>
<p>Solent Biosecurity Planning</p>	<p>To raise awareness of marine invasive species amongst Solent stakeholders and help them to adopt biosecurity measures. Workshops were held throughout the Solent and a biosecurity web hub launched in October 2023.</p>
<p>Solent to Sussex Bay Seascape Restoration Inventory</p>	<p>Working with University of Portsmouth to raise awareness and encourage partnership working on habitat restoration. Project completed 2023.</p>
<p>Solent Seascape Project</p>	<p>A Blue Marine Foundation project to restore and reconnect seagrass meadows, oyster reefs, saltmarsh and seabird nesting habitat over five years (2023 to 2028). Solent Forum is a member of the project Steering Group and chair of the Recovery Plan Working Group.</p>
<p>Preventing Plastic Pollution in the River Itchen Estuary</p>	<p>First phase of the project reported all uncontrolled plastics which have the potential for entering the river Itchen, as well as setting up a Steering Group to manage the report recommendations. Solent Forum are part of the steering group.</p>
<p>Solent Nature Recovery</p>	<p>To ensure that coast and marine are embedded in the developing Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) for Hampshire, Isle of Wight and West Sussex. The first iteration of LNRS' are expected to be submitted to Defra at the end of 2024. The Forum is leading the coast and marine elements with the Responsible Authorities. A stakeholder workshop was held in January 2024.</p>
<p>Sea the Value</p>	<p>Communities and organisations engaged in mapping values and trade-offs, and co-developing green investments for marine biodiversity. The Solent is one of two project field sites and we will be supporting the project team until 2025.</p>

3.4 Solent Forum Improvements

In addition to the Solent Forum’s work programme, actions were proposed by members to improve what the Forum does.

The following table 5 shows progress on these actions.

Table 5. Business Plan Review 2020 – 2025 – Solent Forum Specific Plan Actions

What	Detail	Progress during plan period
Membership and recruitment strategy	Seek new membership and work at retaining membership.	In the last 5 years membership has increased from 51 to 58 members. Core income has increased over last 5 years by approx. 10% and so has expenditure (despite drop in FTE of 12%); wage Inflation over the period has been approximately 11%). This shows that increased membership numbers have not increased income overall as an average member is paying less. Reserve has only increased by 7% from 71k to 76k (note that 30k contribution given to Solent Seascape Project). Type of organisation as a % of the total has not changed over the period.
Annual survey of priority work areas	This poll will develop a list of potential partnership work areas.	This will follow Horizon Scanning each June.
Annually publish the opportunities for partnership work	The list generated above, will be published for the benefit of members. The Forum will pursue whichever projects they can or disseminate via its core service.	Late summer annually.
Membership Benefits Project	This project looked at how to offer Solent Forum members exclusive benefits.	A discussion paper concluded that the value of the Forum was its wide network of marine and coastal interests and that firewalling/restricting use of its website would be difficult to achieve and counter-productive. The use of SharePoint for the Steering Group for closer collaboration is being explored.
Explore opportunities of using the student network	To work with University of Portsmouth to maximise the benefits of working with the student network to meet	A website page has been set up to explore partnership working with universities and this identifies research gaps. A project tracker is updated annually. A discussion

	research gaps.	paper showed that the universities need to lead on bringing these opportunities to the student network and the Solent Forum is ready to work with students funded to explore key topics.
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4 Shaping the 2025 – 2030 Business Plan

The Solent Forum team have opened a discussion on how to shape the 2025 – 2030 Business plan.

To underpin this, the Solent Forum have produced a sustainability forecast to identify forecast income and expenditure in the medium term. This will show what financial and staffing resources the Forum will have throughout the business plan period.

This section shows the previous business plan section headings and explores priorities for this business plan period.

4.1 Previous Business Plan Headings (2020 to 2025)

Our Contribution

- What We Do
- Geographical Area
- Our Membership
- Services, Groups and Projects

Measuring Success and Planning for the Future

- Overview
- Review of Previous Business Plan (2020 to 2025)
- Members' Participation in the Business Plan
- Annual Horizon Scanning
- Responding to Topics of Importance to Members
- Membership Models
- Membership Benefits
- Membership Recruitment and Retention
- Legal and Financial Basis to the Solent Forum

The Business Plan 2020 - 2025

- Overview
- Core Work Programme
- Solent Forum Subgroups
- Solent Forum Events
- Solent Forum Project Work
- Proposed Improvements to Solent Forum Work

Managing Our Resources

- Table detailing Solent Forum income and expenditure breakdowns.

4.2 Revised Business Plan Headings for 2025 to 2030

The new plan will follow the wording and headings of the previous plan but these will be reviewed to enable the document to also market the Forum. It will include case studies which show the benefit of the Forum to members.

Our Contribution

- What We Do
- Geographical Area
- [Legal basis of forum](#)
- Our Membership.
- Services, Groups and Projects

Measuring Success and Planning for the Future

- Overview
- Review of Previous Business Plan (2020 to 2025)
- Members' participation in the Business Plan
- Annual Horizon Scanning
- [Sustainability forecast](#)
- Responding to topics of importance to members
- ~~Membership Models~~
- ~~Membership~~ Benefits of the Solent Forum. [Case study of what average member gets & cost. Key metrics such as website usage stats](#)
- [Income model. Inc subs, how we charge \(CPI\) and what we offer, how we charge for projects](#)
- Membership Recruitment and Retention
- ~~Legal and Financial Basis to the Solent Forum~~

The Business Plan 2025 - 2030

- Overview
- Core Work Programme
- Solent Forum Subgroups
- Solent Forum Events
- Solent Forum Project Work
- Proposed Improvements to Solent Forum Work

Managing Our Resources

- Table detailing Solent Forum income and expenditure breakdowns.

4.3 Methodology for Business Plan 2025 to 2030

Action	Detail	Date	Status
Scope Business Plan (BP) 2025 -2030	Agree methodology and content at Steering Group meeting.	21 st February 2024	Done
Advertise preparation of new Business Plan	Members Meeting	13 March 2024	Done
Review of 2020-2025 Business Plan	Review achievement of previous business plan	July 2024	Published
Members questionnaire (incorporate annual horizon scanning)	What they value, and their priorities over next 5 years.	July 2024	Survey finalised
Survey analysis of members' questionnaire	Evaluate responses and prepare report.	August 2024	
Business Planning presentation at SF Oct 2024 meeting.	Workshop for Solent Forum members.	16 th October 24 in Portsmouth	
Agree draft of Business Plan	Circulate to SFSG for comment.	Winter 2024	
Draft Business Plan for consultation	Send to all members for comment.	January 2025	
Advertise in Solent News issue 56	Advertise and ask for comment on the draft business plan from the wider coastal community.	January 2025	
Final Business Plan	Send to all members and advertise	February 2025	
Present Business Plan 2025 to 2030	Members meeting	March 2025	