

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	River Hamble Harbour Board
Date:	12 April 2024
Title:	Environmental Update
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to summarise activities relating to the River Hamble Harbour Authority's (RHHA) environmental management of the Hamble Estuary between December 2023 and February 2024.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the River Hamble Harbour Board:
 - (i) notes and supports the remainder of this report.

Updates

3. Oil Spill Preparedness and Response

To enhance its Tier 1 oil spill response capability, RHHA has three new 15 metre Harbour booms. These are boxed, portable by hand, easy to deploy, can be connected together, and allow for an improved rapid response to either a slick that is afloat or to surround a sinking vessel.

4. Water Quality

The discharge of sewage into waterbodies remains a topic of national and multi-organisational interest. RHHA is directly involved in several initiatives relating to reducing boat-derived sewage input, but RHHA is also increasingly approached about land-derived sewage discharges - a matter in which RHHA has limited jurisdiction. RHHA continues to advise customers and members of the public as to the Environment Agency and Southern Water's appropriate reporting

mechanisms for incidents, and on where to obtain data sets relating to discharge points, duration events and external water quality monitoring data.

5. **Invasive Non-Native Marine Species (INNS)**

RHHA has input into the development of a Biosecurity Action Plan for Southampton Water/Hamble. The spread of INNS is an issue in both marine and inland waters around the UK. INNS have ecological, social and economic impacts because they compete with native species, introduce diseases, can disrupt boating by restricting navigation, blocking intakes/outlets and increase bio-fouling. In addition, by being caught in water sport's equipment they can unintentionally be transported to new areas. The purpose of these plans is to set out clear, achievable actions that operators and participants can use to help improve biosecurity management in the Solent and minimise the risk of marine invasive spread. RHHA and the Royal Yachting Association have collaborated to include some information in this year's publication of the River Hamble Handbook and Directory on species identification and reporting, and prevention measures including following the RYA's 'Check, Clean, Dry' approach.

More at http://www.solentforum.org/publications/solent_biosecurity_plans/

6. **Hamble Estuary Partnership**

RHHA hosted a meeting of the HEP on 27 February, with over 20 different organisations in attendance. Each partner gave individual short updates on their own work. Specific longer presentations were also given on the following topics:

- Clean Solent Shores and Seas – This project is a framework to 'collate and share' water quality resources and initiatives, to help improve awareness and influence best practice and behaviour in the Solent. http://solentforum.org/services/Information_Hubs/css/
- Solent Coast & Marine Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Biosecurity Planning - marine invasive non-native species.
- Update on Hamble's native oyster restoration reef and screening of the film.
- The Seagrass restoration project in the Solent's harbours and estuaries.

See <https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/hambleharbour/environment/projects-partnerships> for minutes and presentations.

7. **Solent Oyster Restoration Project**

The Solent Seascape Project/Blue Marine Foundation have now released short film about the creation of the Solent's new native oyster bed in the Hamble. The film features interviews with RHHA officers and beautifully shot footage of the estuary. Watch at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tx3B0iZTLo>

8. **Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**

RHHA attended the Solent Coast and Marine LNRS workshop on 16th January. It was coordinated and delivered by the Solent Forum in association with

Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, and the Solent Seascape project. 60 attendees represented the Solent's industry, government agencies, MOD, local authorities, harbour authorities, fisheries, charities, and NGOs. The findings of the workshop will now be taken forward for preparing the first draft LNRS.

Introduced by the Environment Act 2021, LNRS are a new system of plans for nature recovery covering the whole of England.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategies/local-nature-recovery-strategies>

Responsible Authorities have been appointed by Defra to develop LNRS, and this includes Hampshire County Council (responsible for Hampshire including Southampton and Portsmouth). The first LNRS will be produced during 2024. It will initially focus on land (including the intertidal) however the responsible authorities wish to include the whole Solent to ensure that marine nature recovery is embedded into the strategy.

The workshop report and future updates can be found at: [Solent Forum - Local Nature Recovery Strategies: A Focus on the Solent](#).

Members of the public are also being encouraged to have a say on the Hampshire LNRS via a survey at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/nature-recovery-hampshire/get-involved>

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

Climate Change Impact Assessment

1. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience impacts of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.

2. Climate Change Adaptation. A full assessment of climate change vulnerability was not completed as no decision is required in respect of this report.

3. Carbon Mitigation. A full assessment of carbon mitigation vulnerability was not completed as no decision is required in respect of this report.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

An EIA is not required as no negative impacts are anticipated.