

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	River Hamble Harbour Board
Date:	8 January 2021
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 mid-August and mid-November 2020.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the River Hamble Harbour Board:
 - (i) writes in the strongest terms to Highways England, and also to the Members of Parliament for Eastleigh, for Fareham and for Meon Valley strongly urging for their support in bringing about improvements to the M27 bridge drainage, and;
 - (ii) notes and supports the remainder of this report.

Updates

Port Waste Management Plan:

3. The River Hamble Port Waste Management Plan has been approved by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency under the Merchant Shipping (Port Waste Reception Facilities) Regulations 2003 (as amended). The Plan had been reviewed and updated by the Environment & Development Manager (EDM) with input from the River's marinas, yards and sailing/yacht clubs, as is required every 3 years.

Harbour Office - sea wall repair:

4. Further to previous updates, planning permission for the repair of the sea wall around the Harbour Master's Office has been granted by Fareham Borough Council. The environmental features proposed for biodiversity gain have been particularly welcomed. Applications for other approvals are in progress with the Marine Management Organisation and the Environment Agency. Tender documents are now being prepared. The work will likely be conducted in two phases, with phase 1 repair (from the slipway seaward to the harbour office steps) aimed for Spring 2021. Phase 2 (office steps to Lobster Quay) is aimed to take place in 2 or 3 years' time subject to budget.

Sea Wall research project:

5. Bournemouth University and Artecology have now installed artificial rockpools, 'Vertipools', in sea wall at Warsash as part of a European Interreg fully funded project. The pools will be in place for at least 2 years, and it is proposed that they are reinstated after phase 2 of the harbour office wall repair to increase the wall's biodiversity value. With the UK planning legislation set to change, whereby future planning applications will require developers to produce a 'net gain' in biodiversity, along with increasing pressure to create enhancements within maintenance projects as well, this is a good opportunity for RHHA to support research into improving the biodiversity value of coastal assets.



'Vertipools'. Photo: Bournemouth University

Unpermitted Developments

6. Two separate occurrences of unpermitted private development have taken place on the River within the RHHA's jurisdiction namely (i) a small slipway at the head of a creek and (ii) the deposit of rocks along an embankment in an area heavily designated for nature conservation. Action is underway by RHHA and by the other relevant authorities whose consent should also have been sought.

Solent European Marine Sites Management (SEMS)

7. The EDM represented RHHA at the Solent European Marine Sites Management Group (SEMS MG) meeting in September, and the associated Natural Environment Group (NEG) in November. The annual process ensures that relevant authorities such as RHHA are fulfilling duties with regards to monitoring and managing the impacts that activities (as opposed to plans or developments) may be having on the protected SEMS. The annual monitoring survey results are used to produce the Annual Management Report (AMR), and then actions to be taken forward are agreed, with many of these being passed to NEG. The SEMS MG is chaired by the RHHA HM. The NEG meeting focussed on the disturbance of habitats and species, and on water quality. Updates on management measures relevant to RHHA included achieving intertidal net gain, black and grey water discharges, and the 'Rapid reduction of Nutrients in Transitional waters' (RaNTrans) Project. Minutes at http://www.solentems.org.uk/sems/Annual_Meeting/ and http://www.solentems.org.uk/natural_environment_group/NEG_Meetings/

Boating and Water Quality

8. Nearly 50 organisations have signed up to a campaign to reduce the impact of recreational boating on water quality within the Solent, Sussex and Poole harbours by working together to improve boating behaviours and improve on-board/shore facilities for sewage disposal. Members include the Environment Agency, Port/Harbour Authorities, Marina's, Natural England, Water Companies, Coastal Forums, NGO's, Sailing Clubs, and British Marine. RHHA's Harbour Master was invited to chair a workshop, held in October. The top priorities are:

- Promoting good practice through communication and engagement
- Improve waste disposal facilities
- Collecting data and share information
- Influence national and local regulation and policy

Improvement will reduce the risk of contamination of shellfisheries, of bathing waters, reduce nutrients inputs and associated impacts on wildlife, and improve the health of the natural environment.

RHHA is working with the support of Southern Water on plans to replace the sewage pump out facility at Warsash Jetty. Southern Water has also undertaken recent work to seal and secure its manhole in the RHHA yard.

M27 motorway bridge drainage update

9. Highways England (HE) wrote to RHHA in 2019 confirming that that the work to divert the bridge deck drainage outlets will be delivered as part of the M27 'Smart Motorway Works' by March 2021. Highways England has recently contacted RHHA explaining that its plan to deliver the works within the wider scheme by March 2021 can no longer go ahead at this time. The cost estimate of the contractor for the Smart Motorway was significantly more than Highways England had anticipated and had secured via a fund. HE assures RHHA that there is still opportunity to have the drainage addressed but this will involve new rounds of bids for funding, and it remains

HE's intention to deliver improvements to the drainage in the area and to continue to work with RHHA, the Environment Agency (EA) and others to find the right solution.

The case remains that there are two aspects to the drainage solutions. Firstly, to amend the outfalls so that they do not run directly from underneath the bridge into the river. This is the element that was planned for 2021. Secondly, to see if a form of pollution control system can be fitted to the new outfalls to contain any large spillages that might occur in the event of an accident on the bridge.

Highways England has now entered into its new five-year funding period, and further environmental funding is available to bid for. HE has also been given new targets for improving water quality. HE would like to take this proposal forward again and wishes to work with RHHA and the EA to put together a simple strategic outline business case (SOBC) to bid for further feasibility funding. The fact that funding has previously been approved will help. If this funding bid is successful then the next stage would be the full business case to bid for detailed design and delivery funding. Whilst external financial assistance is most helpful, HE assures RHHA this should not be seen as the only assistance required. Technical assistance to make the business case is most important to show the benefits to be gained by the proposed scheme and why it should have a higher priority than other funding bids.

RHHA will continue to work with Highways England to provide technical assistance to support its bids. Communications from the Harbour Board and local Members of Parliament are requested help drive forward the next steps, see Recommendation at 2(i).

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

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.