

# **RIVER HAMBLE HARBOUR AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2015**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This document forms the Strategic Plan for the River Hamble Harbour Authority. It has been developed by the Harbour Board, with advice from the Management Committee and officers of Hampshire County Council. It sets out the framework for what the Harbour Authority must do, and what it would like to do, over the next ten years or more. The Strategic Plan and its supporting documents, including the Harbour Board's Strategic Vision, will be used to inform decision-making by the Harbour Board. Detailed planning for each year will take the form of an annual Business Plan and forward budget. This will be based on the Strategic Plan but will need to be more flexible and responsive as unanticipated issues and problems arise. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually.

## **2. The River Hamble**

2.1 Situated at the heart of the Solent, the River Hamble is widely recognised as a major centre for recreational boating, important both regionally and nationally. Commercial activities on and around the River bring considerable benefits to the local economy and are a significant factor in the local employment market. The River is also a very important part of the local environment and supports many species of birds, plantlife, fish and invertebrates. The Hamble valley is covered by several national and international environmental designations in recognition of its importance as a rich and diverse habitat. The navigable part of the River extends over 6 nautical miles from Southampton Water as far upstream as Botley and Curbridge. It is home to over 3000 recreational craft berthed afloat and many more kept ashore. Leisure activities on and near the River include yachting and power-boating, dinghy sailing and windsurfing, rowing, kayaking and canoeing, swimming, fishing, bird-watching, rambling and sightseeing.

## **3. Mission Statement**

3.1 Hampshire County Council is the River Hamble Harbour Authority and delegates its executive decision-making function to the River Hamble Harbour Board. The Management Committee provides policy advice and scrutinises the Harbour Board's decisions.

3.2 The Mission of the Harbour Authority is:

*"To ensure that the harbour is operated safely and efficiently so as to safeguard the harbour, its users, the public and the environment, both now and in the future. It is committed within its powers to fulfilling all its duties and responsibilities in a safe and efficient manner, to the enhancement of access and facilities for river users, and to the enhancement of the well-being, enjoyment and economic benefit of the River for all."*

3.3 The Harbour Authority will:

- (i) Comply with all legal requirements.
- (ii) Aim to meet the national requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code.
- (iii) Heed the Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations, published by the Department for Transport (Ports Division).

3.4 The Harbour Authority's functions will be conducted openly and transparently in the overall long-term interests of the harbour's River users and other interested parties and beneficiaries.

#### **4. Port Status and Governance Arrangements**

4.1 Responsibility for the governance of the River Hamble was transferred to Hampshire County Council in 1970 and the harbour has been operated as a municipal port ever since. It is assumed that this arrangement will continue for the foreseeable future. Hampshire County Council is also a major riparian landowner. An on-line multi-layer map of the River, known as Hamble Riverview, is available on the harbour website and displays a wide variety of information about the harbour. The County Council and the representatives on the Harbour Board form a democratically accountable body responsible for overseeing the operation of the harbour and the impacts arising from it. The Management Committee (constituted in accordance with the River Hamble Harbour Revision Order 1969 (as subsequently amended) provides advice to the Harbour Board and is responsible for scrutinising its decisions.

#### **5. Planning Constraints**

5.1 Although Hampshire County Council is the statutory harbour authority for the River Hamble, it is not the local planning authority for the River. Planning for development on and around the Hamble is covered by the Local Development Framework produced by the riparian local district Councils; all structural development on the River which is attached to the land requires their planning permission. However, no structural works can take place on the River without the works consent of the Harbour Authority (Southampton Harbours Act 1949). Factors for consideration when determining applications for Harbour Authority works consent are contained in the Port Marine Safety Code and environmental legislation.

#### **6. The Harbour Board's Strategic Vision**

6.1 The Harbour Board has approved its Strategic Vision for the river, which has been published as a separate document.

#### **7. Strategic Objectives**

7.1 The Harbour Authority has the following strategic objectives for the coming years:

- (i) Governance: To govern the River Hamble in compliance with the Department for Transport's 'Municipal Ports Review'.
- (ii) Navigational safety: To make the Port Marine Safety Code the central pillar of everything which the Harbour Authority and its staff do to ensure the safety of all those who use and work in the harbour.
- (iii) Environment: To discharge its responsibilities under the Habitats Regulations and all other relevant environmental legislation through conserving the environment and maintaining approved pollution prevention and nature conservation measures.
- (iv) Public Relations and Communication: To enhance the public perception and understanding of the Harbour Authority through building and maintaining the confidence of River users and other interested parties by informing them of plans, progress and achievements, and by a commitment to seek to enhance public understanding of the governance arrangements.

- (v) The Crown Estate: To maintain a productive relationship with The Crown Estate and its agents.
- (vi) Moorings: To manage the mid-stream moorings efficiently and fairly, on behalf of The Crown Estate.
- (vii) Climate Change: To be pro-active in monitoring the River for the impact of climate change and identifying the implications.
- (viii) Enhancement: To encourage and facilitate the enhancement of access and facilities for river users, and the enhancement of the well-being, enjoyment and economic benefit of the River for all.
- (ix) Planning and Consents: To plan for the future of the River Hamble, providing a clear and effective works consent process as the primary decision-making authority on matters affecting safety and ease of navigation in the harbour, and having due regard to the Harbour Authority's responsibilities for environmental protection.
- (x) Consultation: To listen to ideas and suggestions put forward by River users and other interested parties and consult on proposed changes.
- (xi) Visitors: To promote the provision of appropriate facilities for visiting yachtsmen, both afloat and ashore, and manage them as efficiently as possible.
- (xii) Policy: To ensure whenever possible that its views are taken into account when future government policies on ports, harbours and the marine environment are under consideration.
- (xiii) Future Trends: To respond appropriately to new trends in recreational boating, for example: larger boats, Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs), Personal Water Craft (PWCs) and dry-sailing.
- (xiv) Financial: To maintain and manage the harbour cost-effectively, and within the available resources.
- (xv) Staff: To employ and retain a well-motivated, properly trained staff and provide regular training for Harbour Board and Management Committee Members.
- (xvi) Health and Safety: To ensure that staff and visitors to Harbour Authority facilities are made aware of health and safety policies and procedures and their own individual responsibilities.
- (xvii) Equalities and accessibility: To ensure that it complies with all equalities and accessibility legislation.

## **8. External Pressures**

8.1 The following external pressures have been identified:

- (i) the complex needs and conflicting interests of River users and other interested parties need to be understood and balanced against the statutory and business constraints within which the Harbour Authority operates;
- (ii) local Planning Authorities policies and controls which may constrain the scope for development and improvement of facilities and amenities;
- (iii) The Crown Estate, motivated in part by its requirement to maintain and enhance income from the River, creates an added pressure, outside the control of the Harbour Authority;
- (iv) Many River users are unaware of the different roles and responsibilities with respect to the River of Hampshire County Council, other local authorities, The Crown Estate, the Harbour Board and the Management Committee.

## **9. Internal Pressures**

9.1 The following internal pressures have been identified:

- (i) the Harbour Authority is funded almost entirely by River users and visitors and must be operated as economically and cost-effectively as possible;

(ii) the Harbour Board's statutory responsibility to ensure safe navigation dictates that the Harbour Office staff must be available to monitor and supervise activities on the River outside normal working hours.

(iii) the Harbour Authority has wide ranging environmental responsibilities, some of which are carried out on behalf of Hampshire County Council and The Crown Estate.

## **10. Finance**

10.1 The Harbour Authority operates as a business unit of Hampshire County Council. Annual income is ring-fenced and the Harbour Authority operates a separate reserve. An annual budget is produced and the accounts are audited by Hampshire County Council and, periodically, by The Crown Estate.

## **11. Equalities Impact Assessments**

11.1 The services and facilities of the River Hamble Harbour Authority are openly available to all, regardless of age, gender, disability, race or religion, in accordance with current equalities legislation. Equality Impact Assessments for the services and facilities provided by the Harbour Authority have been prepared and are held in the Harbour Office. These Assessments include a requirement to collect and analyse data about customers and their needs, so that appropriate measures can be taken where practical to ensure that everyone who wishes to use the services and facilities provided by the Harbour Authority can do so on equal terms. However, simply understanding who the Harbour Authority's customers are and identifying their needs is not sufficient; the Harbour Authority will actively promote equality of access for all. To that end, all decisions of the Harbour Board must be considered in terms of the impact which they might have on equality of access to its services and facilities, and identify actions which must be taken as a result. Every reasonable effort must be made to ensure that all users are treated equally and that appropriate information and facilities are provided to all.

## **12. Staff Training and Development - Investing In People**

12.1 Hampshire County Council is an accredited 'Investor in People', a significant element of which is to ensure that staff receive the training which they require to do their job, and such additional training as may be required to encourage their career development. Maintaining accreditation as an 'Investor in People' requires that all training undertaken is assessed in terms of its contribution towards the aims and effectiveness of the organisation. Development training will be provided for permanent staff as appropriate to their current role and future aspirations as officers of Hampshire County Council. The Harbour Authority will be pro-active in implementing the County Council's 'Valuing Performance' programme for staff appraisal.