

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Report**

Committee	River Hamble Harbour Board
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Title:	Environmental Update
Reference:	4540
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. Summary

- 1.1. This report summarises activities relating to the River Hamble Harbour Authority's (RHHA) environmental management of the Hamble Estuary since July 2012.

2. Contextual Information

2.1. Marine Licensing

Defra undertook a consultation during September and October on proposed changes to Marine Licence requirements for navigational dredging and proposed exemptions for small, low risk marine related projects. The latter has been of considerable interest to the RHHA since the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 came into law, particularly relating to expensive and onerous requirements for a Marine Licence for simple mid-stream pontoons, including replacements, which have acted as a deterrent to their installation and maintenance. The Environment & Development Manager was asked to attend a national workshop where Defra and the Marine Management Organisation sought the views of professionals in the ports & harbours sector on proposed changes to the Marine Licence requirements for maintenance dredging. The Harbour Master attended a separate national workshop to discuss proposed changes to exemptions. Both were a rare but excellent opportunity to influence decision making right at the core of policy making. Defra are now considering all feedback from the above workshops and consultation.

Another consultation is due soon on proposed amendments to fees and charges associated with Marine Licences, and RHHA will again feedback a clear message that fees for low risk, small scale projects must be

proportionate and not act as a deterrent to maintenance, replacement and ultimately risks to navigational safety.

2.2. Marine Planning

The South Inshore and South Offshore areas are the third and fourth areas in England to be selected for marine planning. The South Inshore area includes a coastline that stretches from Dover to the River Dart. The Marine Management Organisation officially begin planning in early 2013.

The South of England was selected due to:

- Fishing, with significant shell fisheries (including dredge fishers for oysters and clams in the Solent and Poole harbour)
- Ports and shipping, with a significant number of major ports in the area, and a high level of shipping density in the English Channel
- A high proportion of marine protected areas
- Tourism and recreation, including a high number of marinas and boat-based activities.

Marine planning is a new approach to the management of our seas. It will follow a similar approach to terrestrial planning i.e. setting the direction for decision making at a local level to ensure a sustainable future for our coastal and offshore waters through managing and balancing the many activities.

Marine planning will:

- guide marine users to the most suitable locations for different activities,
- manage the use of marine resources to ensure sustainable levels,
- work with all marine users to ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute to marine plans,
- take a holistic approach to decision making and consider all the benefits and impacts of all the current and future activities that occur in our marine environment.

The Harbour Authority will be consulted during the plan development. More information is available at:

<http://www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning/index.htm>

2.3. Maintenance dredging

Routine maintenance dredging is planned to take place this winter at Port Hamble Marina and Mercury Yacht Harbour. An application for a small maintenance dredge has also been received from Swanwick Marina.

2.4. Lymington saltmarsh restoration visit

The Environment & Development Manager attended a site visit hosted by Lymington Harbour Authority to see the progress of a project using dredging

arisings to try to help reduce the loss of areas of the saltmarsh on the west bank of the river.

2.5. Solent Meetings

The Environment & Development Manager attended meetings of the Solent Forum Coastal Partnership Members, the Solent Forum Natural Environment Group, and the Solent European Sites Management Group. These meetings provide an opportunity to give and receive updates on topical issues, and to work with other bodies to ensure that the environmental legal obligations of the RHHA continue to be met.

2.6. Coastal Oil & Chemical Pollution Officers Meeting

The Environment & Development Manager attended this meeting along with representatives from the local authorities, Environment Agency, Natural England and other ports/harbours that cover the Hampshire coastline. The group has been resurrected by the Emergency Planning team at Hampshire County Council to bring together all those with statutory roles and responsibilities relating to a major pollution incident along the Hampshire Coast.

2.7. Oil Spill Response Exercise

Oil Spill Response Limited undertook a 5 day internal training exercise on the River Hamble during the first week of December. The estuary boom was laid across the River downstream of the Harbour Office with certain sections remaining in place overnight, as would be the case in a real oil spill. RHHA staff observed parts of the training exercise to increase awareness of operational issues likely to be encountered in an incident. RHHA will undertake its own 3 yearly oil spill exercise in autumn 2013 in the vicinity of the M27 bridge.

2.8. Arch-Manche Project

The Hants & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology have recently started a large European project called Arch-Manche; archaeology, art and coastal heritage - tools to support coastal management and climate change planning across the Channel Regional Sea. The project aims to demonstrate how archaeology, art and maritime coastal heritage can be used to show long-term patterns of coastal change and the impact on human settlement. They are planning to look at some archaeological sites on the Hamble as part of the project. Further information and newsletter can be found at <http://archmanche.hwtma.org.uk/downloads>

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that this report be noted.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

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

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. A full Equalities Impact Assessment for the River Hamble Harbour Authority's compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code (including environmental responsibilities) has been carried out and this report does not raise any issues not previously covered by that Assessment.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. This report does not deal with any issues relating to crime and disorder.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? The contents of this report have no impact on carbon footprint or energy consumption
- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? Not applicable to this report.