

**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****Report**

<b>Committee</b>	River Hamble Harbour Board
<b>Date:</b>	16 July 2010
<b>Title:</b>	Environmental Update
<b>Reference:</b>	1826
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of issues relevant to the environment management of the Harbour since March 2010

## 2. Contextual information

### 2.1. Oil Spill exercise planning meeting

The Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness Response and CO-Operation Convention) Regulations 1998 require that the Harbour Authority holds a major oil spill response exercise every 3 years. On 25 May the Marine Director and Assistant Harbour Master (Environment) (AHME) held a planning meeting with the Harbour Authority's oil spill contractor, Adler & Allan. The proposal is to base the practical exercise on the scenario of a road traffic accident on the M27 bridge involving a truck transporting a heavy fuel oil. Local boat yards, harbour office staff and officers from authorities including the Highways Agency, Environment Agency and emergency services will also be invited to take part to highlight the risks and identify the mitigation required for such an incident. The exercise is planned for early September 2010.

### 2.2. Associated British Ports' (ABP) proposed Southampton Water capital dredge

Negotiations are continuing between River Hamble Harbour Authority (RHHA) and ABP to safeguard the interests of the estuary should any significant siltation impacts from the proposed Southampton Water capital dredge be seen within the Hamble estuary. Documentation is now with legal teams from both parties. Recent updates were provided to clubs and commercial operators highlighting once again the need to ensure that their sites have sufficient background hydrographic survey data prior to the dredge taking place. ABP have advised us that the earliest their dredge can commence is 2011.

### 2.3. Minor consents, permits and maintenance work.

The following permissions have been granted under powers delegated to the Harbour Master by the Harbour Board for minor consents, permits and maintenance work:

- Repainting of the railway bridge from overhead scaffolding from mid-June 2010 for up to 18 weeks.
- A single mid-stream pontoon on 'A-run' is currently being considered, and awaiting a decision by The Crown Estate.
- Permission for netting of mullet by Hamble based commercial fishermen (this is not permission for the activity of fishing, which is licensed externally, but is in relation to the navigational safety of using nets within appropriate areas of the estuary).

### 2.4. Hamble Estuary Partnership (HEP) meeting

A meeting of the HEP was held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010. The partnership identified projects it can deliver to meet the needs of members over the next few years. The new website was launched and project information will be uploaded following sign-off of the minutes <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hambleestuarypartnership.htm>

The HEP provides a consultative role to the Harbour Board, and as such discussed the shortlist of ideas put forward by the Asset Enhancement Reserve working group. A summary of the range of feedback is provided in the appendix to the Asset Enhancement Reserve paper.

### 2.5. Solent Forum meeting

The AMHE attended the biannual meeting in March, at which members were given various presentations including:

*'Beneficial use of dredging - its not as easy as it sounds'* A joint presentation between the Environment Agency and Associated British Ports to explore the potential beneficial use of dredge material and the problems linked with this. See Solent Forum website

<http://www.solentforum.org/resources/pdf/meetings/solent%20forum/Beneficial%20Use%20of%20dredgings.pdf>

*'Maintenance Dredge Protocol and the Water Framework Directive'* by Associated British Ports Marine Environmental Research (ABPmer).

The Maintenance Dredge Protocol is intended to provide dredge operators (and regulators) with assistance in gaining approval to carry out maintenance dredging where this may affect Natura 2000 European sites. Preparation and completion of the Baseline Document is the responsibility of the Statutory Harbour, Port or Navigation authority, with active assistance from other dredge operators.

River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) which are a key step in delivering the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) were published in December 2009; the RBMPs detail how target water status will be achieved for estuary and coastal water in England and Wales. The presentation explores the intrinsic links between the already established Protocol and the WFD which introduces various assessment

requirements that may not previously have been routinely applied to dredging.

See Solent Forum website

<http://www.solentforum.org/resources/pdf/meetings/solent%20forum/Maintenance%20dredge%20protocol.pdf>

## 2.6. Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP)

Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 a marine planning system will be introduced. Responsibility for the marine plans will sit with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for English inshore and offshore marine regions. It is anticipated the planning process for development of the first marine plans will commence April 2011. The Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP) project aims to achieve only the first steps of the marine planning process, where it seeks to examine different sectoral planning policies within the Solent to help inform the MMO and those with an interest in the development of a marine plan. The project, initiated by the Solent Forum, is being taken forward through collaborative working between various organisations with an interest in the Solent marine environment. The Towards SoMaP project is one of the three key stakeholder projects being developed throughout England at present from which the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) hope to gain valuable experience to contribute towards future guidance which they will produce for the MMO on the development of marine plans.

A number of organisations are involved with managing the Solent including Local Authorities, Harbour Authorities, Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, Sea Fisheries Committees, non-governmental organisations and recreational and user groups. In addition, many statutory and non statutory plans and initiatives exist. The marine plans will provide integration in management on a number of levels such as between the existing management of marine sectors/interests and between the land and sea. Any organisation with planning and regulatory responsibilities in relation to the marine and coastal environment will need to have regard to the marine planning system when it is developed so their input to the development of a marine plan(s) for the area will be important to ensure consistency between marine planning and existing management processes. All marine and coastal users will have an opportunity to get involved with the marine planning process.

Staff from the Solent Forum gave a presentation on this project at the Management Committee's River Hamble Annual Forum in March, and the Marine Director and AHME have been involved at various stages to provide advice to the project. This is still in the very early stages, but more information can be found at <http://www.solentforum.org/forum/SoMaP/>

## 2.7. Sustainability Grant

AHME has successfully bid for a small grant from the Hampshire County Council Department Sustainability Fund to buy solar panels for the new patrol boats. This will keep the engine start batteries fully charged, preventing the need for periodic charging from mains power. Keeping the batteries topped up in this way will also extend battery life so less should be used.

## 2.8. Water Quality

AHME attended the Solent Forum Water Quality Conference on 28 April 2010 to keep abreast of the latest legislation and policy that has potential to impact on the management of coastal and estuarine waters. The audience included other harbour authorities, local authorities, Royal Yachting Association and various policy-making bodies. A key topic of interest in the Hamble, as in other Solent Harbours, is the presence of large algal mats which can be seen covering slipways and saltmarshes. Environment Agency investigations have found particularly high levels of nutrients in these harbours which, together with sheltered mudflats and sunshine, provide perfect growing conditions for algae. Requirements of European Directives for water quality have now led to Southern Water improving sewage treatment to reduce nutrient input, and further improvements are planned that will take into account the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the impact of population growth in the south east. Agricultural practices are also being targeted to reduce nutrient inputs into harbours. It is predicted that sufficient reduction in nutrient levels may take ten years to achieve. In the meantime the harbour authority is working with owners of public slipways to encourage regular clearance of algae, however clearing saltmarsh areas is not undertaken as this creates yet further damage to designated sites.

## 3. Recommendation

### 3.1 It is recommended that this report be noted.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

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

DocumentLocation

None