

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	River Hamble Harbour Board
Date:	4 October 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 June and August 2024.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the River Hamble Harbour Board notes and supports the contents of this report.

Updates

3. Oil Spill Preparedness & Response

RHHA's Environment Manager & Harbour Master met with BP Hamble's new Marine Superintendent in July to discuss the operations and comprehensive risk management measures in place at BP Hamble and its jetty. These include numerous detection systems, cut of valves, bunds, containment and a standby response barge throughout all transfer operations. RHHA has been sent an updated copy of BP Hamble's Oil Spill Plan which has recently been approved by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA). Such meetings ensure RHHA remains aware of the management of risk of oil spills from nearby external sources that might have potential to reach Hamble waters.

The MCA's Regional Counter Pollution & Salvage Officer visited the Harbour Office to illustrate RHHA's good practice in oil spill preparedness to his new colleague. This included meeting RHHA staff and inspecting RHHA's Tier 1 equipment including the delivery of some new-style compact booms recently ordered to replace those used in a small refuelling incident the previous week.

4. **M27 Motorway Bridge**

Further to updates in previous reports, Nationals Highways' (NH) ongoing work to update several different aspects of the M27 bridge continues, including that to address the direct run off drainage into the estuary. A recent briefing from the Structures Engineering Manager to RHHA stated that;

“NH have completed the Inspection for Assessment of the bridge which has potentially identified strengthening requirements allowing the bridge to operate at its full intended design capacity. These findings are being fed into structural assessment model to confirm the load carrying capacity and need for strengthening. Based upon current assumptions, NH will be engaging with specialist steelwork and temporary works specialists in conjunction with NH's consultants to develop a working methodology on how to strengthen the structure whilst reduced impact upon road users and the river below. This will conclude the feasibility study report once buildability / cost estimates are firmed up. In addition to the above, NH has been progressing with preliminary / detailed design for all aspects of the bridge rehabilitation with its consultants. With respect to funding, NH has been provided with a provisional allocation in RIS 3 (a five-year investment period from March '25) which includes the works to the River Hamble Bridge. Currently this has funding allocated for construction from 2026 however subject to change based upon progress / prioritisations across all Highways Areas in the UK”.

5. **Water Quality**

Southern Water representatives gave a presentation following the close of the River Hamble Management Committee meeting on 20 September. A copy of the presentation slides will be appended to the Management Committee papers available online.

6. **Solent Seagrass - Mooring & Anchoring**

The Solent Boating Survey has been launched by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to gather valuable insights from boaters on mooring and anchoring practices in and around the Solent's seagrass meadows. Please encourage boaters to complete the anonymous survey before 31 Dec 2024, to help develop strategies that balance habitat conservation with community values. Prizes to be won. <https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/solent-boating-survey>

7. **Saltmarsh Restoration Trial**

RHHA continues to support efforts by the Solent Seascape Project and its partners to protect and restore marine ecosystems in the Hamble. Biodegradable sediment retention barriers have recently been positioned in locations of currently fragmented (but historically connected) saltmarsh at Hackett's Marsh. The barriers will be used in combination with biodegradable matrices and the planting of saltmarsh species to test the efficiency of sediment accretion and plant colonisation to drive saltmarsh habitat recovery. This newly consented and installed project builds on information gained from recent PhD trials and from RHHA's 2016 study ([River Hamble Soft Sediment Habitat Retention Study](#)) into saltmarsh loss and opportunities for management and restoration in the estuary.

See photos below.



Newly installed sediment retention barriers to encourage sediment accretion and plant colonisation to drive saltmarsh habitat recovery, Hamble Estuary (photos courtesy of Solent Seascape Project).



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.