



Minutes of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) Joint Committee

*Minutes of a meeting held on 14 October 2019
in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Fareham*

Members:

Councillors:

Seán Woodward (Chairman)
Gerald Vernon-Jackson
Judith Grajewski
Neil Cutler
Nick Adams-King
Stephen Philpott
Michael Wilson
Keith House
Christopher Hammond (Vice-Chairman)
Ken Moon

Officers:

Richard Jolley
Roger Tetstall
Laura Taylor
Stuart Jarvis
Claire Upton-Brown
David Hayward
Nick Tustian
David Williams
Steve Avery
Sandy Hopkins

Co-opted Members:

Paddy May
Stuart Baker
Catherine Fuller
Hannah Hyland
Joff Edevane
Chris Nelson

Authority Represented:

Fareham BC
Portsmouth CC
Hampshire CC
Winchester CC
Test Valley BC
Gosport BC
Havant BC
Eastleigh BC
Southampton CC
East Hampshire DC

Authority Represented:

Fareham BC
Test Valley BC
Winchester CC
Hampshire CC
New Forest DC
Havant BC
Eastleigh BC
Portsmouth CC & Gosport BC
New Forest NP
Southampton CC

Organisation represented:

PfSH
Solent LEP
Environment Agency
Environment Agency
Natural England
Natural England

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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND CHANGES IN JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Edward Heron (New Forest DC), Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre (New Forest National Park, Alison Barnes (New Forest National Park) with Steve Avery deputising, James Humphrys (Environment Agency). Peter Grimwood (Fareham BC) with Richard Jolley deputising, Gill Kneller (Havant & East Hants DC) with David Hayward deputising.

Changes to Joint Committee Membership:

The New Members from the New Forest National Park are - Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre and Patrick Heneghan as deputy. Alison Barnes is Chief Executive Officer.

The Chairman welcomed Steve Avery from the New Forest National Park to the authority's first meeting of the PfSH Joint Committee.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the PfSH Joint Committee meeting held on 31 July 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Nutrient Neutrality - Update from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The Chairman announced that a document had been circulated to Members which comprised a response from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) giving an update of progress of cross-Government discussions regarding nitrate neutrality and engagement with DEFRA. The Chairman asked Members to take this into account when they consider item 8 on the agenda.

Welborne - Outline Planning Permission

The Chairman announced that Fareham Borough Council's Planning Committee will decide the outline application from Buckland Developments Ltd on Wednesday 16th October which comprises outline consent for 6,000 new homes, one million square feet of employment floor space and a detailed consent for a new motorway junction at J10 of the M27. The Chairman advised the Committee that this was nitrate neutral and therefore would be able to progress.

No Deal Brexit – Transport Plans

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson addressed the Committee and gave an update in respect of Brexit planning for the Port at Portsmouth. Councillor Vernon-Jackson advised the Committee that officials from the office of the Secretary of State had visited Portsmouth to look at traffic modelling in readiness for HGV traffic holding, including the wider area outside of Portsmouth. Councillor Vernon-Jackson stated he was pleased to report a positive change from the Secretary of State in terms of engagement to plan for a no deal Brexit and how that might impact across the whole of south Hampshire.

The new area announced in terms of a holding area includes shutting part of the A303 near Basingstoke as a holding area for lorries. It was helpful that the Secretary of State acknowledged that the DfT modelling, which ignored local traffic, was not helpful for decision making.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations received at this meeting.

6. PfSH MANAGER'S REPORT

The Joint Committee received a report by the PfSH co-ordinator, Paddy May, that covered issues which are significant, but do not justify a full report to be brought to the attention of the Joint Committee for decision or for information.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee NOTES the matters for Information outlined in Part B of this report.

7. PFSH JOINT AGREEMENT

The Joint Committee received a report on the revisions to the PfSH Joint Committee Agreement which was tabled at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee: -

- a) APPROVES the proposed Joint Agreement attached as Appendix A; and
- b) AGREES that the Monitoring Officer is authorised to make minor drafting arrangements to the approved Agreement in consultation with the PfSH Chairman.

8. PFSH NITRATE NEUTRALITY UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed, Catherine Fuller and Hannah Hyland from Natural England, Joff Edevane and Chris Nelson from Southern Water and Andrew Smith and John Stobart from the Environment Agency who were attending to provide updates to the Committee in respect of nitrate neutrality and to take part in discussions.

The Joint Committee received a report from David Bibby, Principal Planning Officer at Test Valley Borough Council, updating the Committee on the work that PfSH is undertaking to address the impact of nitrate neutrality on housing developments across the Region.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Andrew Smith from Natural England gave an update to the Committee. Andrew stated that Natural England were working with some urgency to try and progress the issue for all parties concerned and it had been hoped that Natural England would have a joint statement between

themselves and the Environment Agency to try and explain their remits and roles. Andrew stated that whilst there is no conflict, there is a difference in each Agency's role and how assessments are made is different and as a consequence, views will differ. He acknowledged that it would be helpful to have a clear statement to express this difference, so it could be seen what information was being worked with. Andrew stated that the methodology that had been provided as a tool was there to be used, interpreted and adapted in different ways. Natural England are working locally on a number of projects and developments on practical solutions and there are examples of progress being made. As an organisation Natural England are doing their best to give this the urgency and support that it needs to work with developers and local authorities as much as possible to try and help make progress, as well as working with their colleagues in the Environment Agency. Natural England hope to have the position statement within the next few days with some clarifications.

John Stobart from Natural England confirmed that when developers approach them, they discuss the issue, but they cannot make the issue go away so developers have no options but to wait until Local Authorities have their strategic solution in place. John explained there are a number of schemes coming forward, driven by development sector and land owners. Farmers have expressed interest in using their land for nitrate off-setting. The biggest scheme is the 100+ hectare scheme which is very significant woodland planting. This scheme is significant on a national scale and the Forestry Commission are very interested. This is a type of solution which will remove nitrates from the system and allow development to happen and potentially this is very close.

The schemes are considering three or four wetlands linked to Waste Water Treatment Works, the idea being that sewage treatment works carry out their function and the water that is discharged into the environment is discharged into a wetland environment. Estimates are that you get an equivalent effect to an approximate 30% reduction of nutrient coming out of that treatment works. John explained this is efficient land use and you get a lot of reduction for the amount of land used. Natural England hopes this can be progressed and it's now about establishing a link between the development sector to fund this work with the land owners. Natural England offer advice via their discretionary advice scheme and a number of meetings with developers have taken place. John stated that it is not a case of stopping all development until a solution is found for the whole area as there are options out there which Natural England want to continue to explore and expand. It is hoped that Local Planning Authorities work out which is the best solution for each Authority as each one is different.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Catherine Fuller from the Environment Agency gave an update to the Committee. Catherine confirmed that the Environment Agency have been engaging with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), various departments across DEFRA and Local Authorities. A lot of the work that they have been advising on is in relation to the permitting process. There is also ongoing work with Natural England to understand how the Environment Agency can take this forward and provide advice to Local Planning Authorities to facilitate sustainable growth.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Chris Nelson from Southern Water gave an update to the Committee on the work being undertaken by Southern Water. The short-term work is giving assistance to Local Planning Authorities, supplying

information to Natural England and visits to treatment works. In the future, there will also be meetings with the Environment Agency in respect of innovative solutions and Southern Water are looking towards longer term and what can be done to help. Chris indicated a recent initiative with regards to tree planting which is set out in a Woodlands Trust document. This basically refers to carbon reduction and the potential benefits to nitrate reduction. Southern Water has set up an internal working group and their Estates department is looking at opportunities for land which could be used for tree planting. Chris advised the meeting that the CEO is very keen on being innovative and one area he would like to explore is the potential use of waste water and treating it to a higher standard to recycle it which has the potential benefit of reducing the flows. The first meeting of the group has taken place and it needs to ensure that they move towards Southern Water working with developers where they wish to be innovative. Chris stated that Southern Water already have one Memorandum of Understanding with one developer and will soon be meeting with District Councils to address this issue. Chris stated that Southern Water's main aim is to try and have a region-wide solution rather than promote individual developments.

During discussion on this item, Councillor Vernon-Jackson suggested that additional recommendations could include asking that Southern Water and the Environment Agency attend the next Joint Committee meeting in December with a description of the technical fix which can sort this out with a timescale for doing this and a rough budget of how much it's going to cost and whether consideration should be given to prepare for any future judicial review in the event of non-delivery of housing targets.

The Chairman sought the view of the Solicitor to PfSH in respect of the suggestion of preparatory work for any potential Judicial Review and the Solicitor's view was that it was not appropriate at this stage and that PfSH should explore every option together and with partners to seek a solution.

During discussions, potential funding for possible solutions was discussed as a recommendation along the same lines as the Bird Aware Mitigation Strategy.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee: -

- a) REQUESTS to MHCLG that the period for the end of the transitional arrangement for the Housing Delivery Test (as specified in the National Planning Policy Framework) be extended beyond 2020, so that completions in 2022/23 can be counted;
- b) CONTINUES to work closely with MHCLG to find both short and medium/long term mitigation solutions and to SEEK support to assist us in achieving these;
- c) CONTINUES to work closely with Natural England and the Environment Agency, including focusing on efforts to SEEK a resolution of the difference in approach to the nutrient issue with within DEFRA achieve an agreed position;
- d) CONTINUES to ENGAGE with Ofwat as opportunities arise through consultations on their regulatory functions, with regard to Southern Water's future infrastructure investment, including the potential for

wastewater treatment upgrades to order to reduce nutrient discharges and increase capacity to accommodate development;

- e) AUTHORISES that a PfSH wide assessment of nitrate budgets and a package of potential mitigation measures be undertaken;
- f) AUTHORISES that the Integrated Water Management Study be updated in the form of an addendum, including a review of Appendix E Main Water Quality baseline and modelled data;
- g) CONTINUES to SEEK potential options for funding to support potential mitigation measures;
- h) AUTHORISES the continued investigation of potential medium/long term mitigation solutions to provide a strategic PfSH wide approach, including with wider local authority partners beyond PfSH members;
- i) REQUESTS the Secretary of State for DEFRA and MHCLG to initiate and review the consents of nutrients at WWTW; and
- j) EXPLORES the possibility of funding via a mitigation scheme for the region along the same lines as the Bird Aware Mitigation Strategy.

9. STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

The Joint Committee received a report from Claire Upton-Brown and Mike Allgrove on the progress of work drafting the joint Statement of Common Ground (SoCG).

During discussion on this item, Councillor Hammond stated that most Government Strategies and Strategies such as the Local Enterprise Partnership and Maritime look at a long-term view to 2050 and asked whether there was value in the PfSH Statement of Common Ground looking to the mirror the same timeline. Claire Upton-Brown advised Councillor Hammond that the timeline to 2036 was running to a date 15 years from the adoption of Local Plans, however aspects of the work were looking to tie in with the longer term visioning work that is underway in the area.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee: -

- a) APPROVES the draft framework for the Statement of Common Ground, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, that will lead to the production of a PfSH Joint Strategy; and
- b) AGREES the additional workstream: Green Infrastructure Needs and Consideration of Mechanisms on how to achieve Green Belt Designation.

10. SOLENT LEP: LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The Joint Committee received a presentation from Anne-Marie Mountifield outlining the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership's work on developing a Local

Industrial Strategy.

RESOLVED that the Joint Committee NOTES the Solent LEP's progress towards developing a Local Industrial Strategy.

(The meeting started at 6:04pm and ended at 8:06pm)

(NB: The next meeting of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) Joint Committee will be held on 03 December 2019).