



Report to the Partnership for South Hampshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 11 October 2021
Report of: Paddy May, PfSH Coordinator
Subject: PFSH CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

SUMMARY

The Co-ordinator's report provides an opportunity for issues which are significant, but do not justify a full report in their own right, to be brought to the attention of the Joint Committee for decision or for information. The report is divided into Parts A and B accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

- a) NOTE the contents of the PfSH Co-ordinator's Report;
- b) NOTE that Joint Committee will be asked to agree the Statement of Common Ground between PfSH local authorities and Fareham Borough Council.
- c) NOTE that Joint Committee will be asked to approve an extension of the Strategic Environmental Planning Officer (SEPO) role for PfSH for no more than two years to the end of 2023.
- d) NOTE that Joint Committee will be asked to consider the continuation of funding provision for the Solent Design / Quality Place Awards.
- e) NOTE that Joint Committee will be asked to note the matters for information outlined in part B of this report; and
- f) pass any comments to the Joint Committee for consideration

PART A: MATTERS FOR DECISION

1. Statement of Common Ground

- 1.1 In order to support the Fareham Local Plan 2037, Fareham Borough Council has prepared a Statement of Common Ground between itself and PfSH as a collective, which will form part of the Local Plan evidence base. The Statement of Common Ground aims to be a jointly agreed statement between Fareham and the rest of the PfSH authorities. An initial version, based on the 2020 PfSH Statement of Common Ground, was agreed at officer level to meet the deadlines for submission of the evidence base at the same time as the Local Plan is submitted for examination. However, the text of the document made it clear that it would be updated to refer to the 2021 PfSH Statement of Common Ground and be considered by the PfSH Joint Committee before replacing the initial version.
- 1.2 The Statement of Common Ground sets out how the authorities in South Hampshire have successfully worked together on strategic planning matters, how they continue to do so and the common areas of strategic agreement. The statement represents the position of PfSH as a collective, and is without prejudice to the separate completion of Statements of Common Ground that individual PfSH authorities may have with Fareham. The Fareham Statement of Common Ground will be attached to the report as Appendix A. The Statement has been prepared in consultation with the PfSH Planning Officers' Group and has also been considered by the PfSH Chief Executives. Members of the Joint Committee will be asked to approve the Statement of Common Ground - as it has done so previously, most recently with Havant Borough Council.

2. Proposal to extend the Strategic Environmental Planning Officer role for PfSH

- 2.1 In September 2020 Joint Committee approved the recruitment of a temporary Strategic Environmental Planning Officer (SEPO) to oversee the implementation of an environmental and nutrient mitigation strategy across the sub region and facilitate new housing development.
- 2.2 In December the contract with the existing incumbent, Simon Kennedy, will come to an end. Simon has been seconded from Havant Borough Council for the period of 12 months. In anticipation, Planning Officer Group and PfSH chief executives have discussed the option of extending the role for a period of up to two years.
- 2.3 In light of the significant positive outcomes for PfSH member local authorities to date, and because of an immediate requirement beyond December 2021 to carry forward initiatives begun over the last 12 months, both Planning Officers Group and chief executives agree that the SEPO role of up to 2 years (to end December 2023) will be of benefit to member local authorities, and commensurate with their needs in terms of jointly implementing nutrient mitigation and environmental planning initiatives in the medium term..
- 2.4 Over the last 12 months the SEPO's achievements have been documented through reporting to Joint Committee and Planning Officer Group. Most notably however the SEPO has:
- Undertaken an assessment of the supply and demand of nutrient credits

- Collated a list of available land use change mitigation sites, together with detail of the volume credit availability flowing from those sites
- Established a much-needed evidence base
- Established the practice joint working among both internal and external stakeholders, and management of monitoring data through HBIC to provide a shared robust data source of committed mitigation schemes (to avoid double counting)
- Raised PfSH's profile on the issue among partners and stakeholders - in particular with DEFRA.
- Submitted recommendations to Joint Committee of the best nutrient mitigation options available

2.5 The SEPO has been instrumental in advising on and influencing mitigation activity and has become an important 'single point of contact' for planning officers, partners and stakeholders - a role that has saved time and facilitated much needed cohesion.

2.6 In addition to the ongoing work to implement nutrient mitigation measures, there are other emerging cross boundary issues that member local authorities agree can best be addressed jointly and most effectively by the SEPO. By way of example, some of these are listed below:

- Finalise standard legal agreements for local authorities to use to implement nutrient mitigation measures (land use change) with mitigation providers for the purposes of monitoring and enforcement
- Oversee and manage the introduction of new nutrient mitigation schemes as they emerge over time, both for nitrates which has been the focus of the role to date and increasingly for phosphates
- Advise and contribute to the successful roll-out of the pilot DEFRA online nitrate trading portal
- Influence and advise the DEFRA review of habitats regulations
- Assist in the implementation of mitigations designed to address recreational disturbance in the New Forest and the emergent issue of the impact of phosphate pollution on the ability of local planning authorities to consent to new housing development
- Respond to emerging 'green' legislation, consultations and other NDGB initiatives addressing biodiversity, and support local authorities to address demands stemming from the implementation of 'green' policy (Greenprint for South Hampshire, carbon neutral freeport etc.)

2.7 Funding for the SEPO role of £64k pa has been provided through additional local authority contributions, including three non-members (Basingstoke and Deane Council, Chichester Council and South Downs National Park Authority). Should the decision be made to agree an extension, additional requests for funding will need to be made.

2.8 In addition, a small annual budget (for example to cover legal costs/commissioning work of external partners such as Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre) would be helpful to the SEPO in order to effectively carry out

work. It has been suggested that an extra £1k contribution from each local authority would cover these costs.

3. Design in the Built Environment

- 3.1 Chief Executives have been considering proposals for the future working of the Culture, Creative Industries and Built Environment Panel. They have re-affirmed their commitment to the design in the built environment work stream and their support for the design practitioner group. Joint Committee will be invited to consider if it wishes to continue to support the Solent Design / Quality Place awards.
- 3.2 The awards celebrate good practice in urban design and placemaking. They have run since 2010 mostly on a bi-annual basis. Initially they received significant sponsorship from Warrings / Bouygues Construction, and latterly from Taylor Wimpey. However, in 2018 despite strenuous effort a new sponsor was not found. The 2019 awards were delivered in house by the officers from partner authorities and proved successful. The Overall Winner was West Quay Southampton and the People's Choice Winner was the Hotwalls Portsmouth. The Practitioner Group would be happy to deliver the awards again on similar basis in 2022 .
- 3.3 The budget required to continue to deliver the awards would be £5,000 to £10,000 - which is required to cover recharging of officer time, marketing and press liaison.

PART B: MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

4. Update on the Greenprint for South Hampshire Initiative

- 4.1 At the Joint Committee meeting on 27 July, the project lead explained that work is in hand to develop more detailed definitions for each of the five priorities, including specific outcomes and measures of progress.
- 4.2 These definitions are/have been discussed at a series of workshops run during October. Each priority is the subject of a separate workshop, attended by experts in the field ensure those definitions are robust. At the end of the series of workshops, the emerging definitions will be discussed with local authority colleagues to ensure they reflect shared priorities across the wider region and offer a basis for planning and delivery by councils and others.
- 4.3 The intention is to update Joint Committee at its meeting in February 2022 and present a proposed action plan which identifies areas where collaboration across the area can deliver maximum impact, as well as identifying any gaps where we should be planning to take action to achieve a green recovery.

5. Nutrient Mitigation

- 5.1 At its meeting on 27 July, Joint Committee agreed the recommendation that local authorities consider purchasing nutrient credits based on need, and on a combined catchment basis. However, since then most local authorities have made the decision not to for the time being. This is due to there being enough mitigation schemes currently in the pipeline to cover demand in the short term.

- 5.2 The SEPO is now focussing on finalising the standardisation of the legal frameworks required to monitor and enforce mitigation schemes being agreed between local authorities and developers with providers of land for mitigation.
- 5.3 For the purposes of coordinating the roll out of available land change use mitigation schemes, mapping is being undertaken by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and should be available shortly. In the meantime, available schemes have been posted on the PfSH website, alongside information about the up-coming DEFRA pilot nitrate trading platform. DEFRA officials met with representatives of local authorities within the Test and Itchen catchments in September to discuss the roll out of a trial of its trading platform.
- 5.4 In addition, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) is rolling out its most recent land change use mitigation scheme covering the lower Test Valley area, making 550 new credits available - and a further HIWWT scheme near Nunwell on the Isle of Wight, funded via loan from DEFRA, will be coming forward in coming months will make about 3,000 credits available.
- 5.5 In May, the Environment Agency confirmed that it would be undertaking a review of Waste-water Treatment Works (WwTWs) in the Solent area without a nitrate (N) permit. This decision came as welcome news to PfSH planning officers and member local authorities as it will help to more accurately determine the level of nutrients discharged via WwTWs and help to inform nutrient mitigation measures into the future. The PfSH Water Quality Working Group made representations to the Environment Agency on 12 May and 31 August requesting detail on its scope and progress - stressing the importance of the review taking place in time for the next five year investment programme for Southern Water (2025-2030) to be agreed by Environment Agency and Ofwat. Following further representation made by Cllr Woodward in his capacity as Chair of PfSH on 7 September, the Environment Agency has confirmed that it anticipates that the review will be completed in time for the investment programme process - which also comes as welcome news.

6. Bird Aware Solent

- 5.1 The Bird Aware Partnership is committed to undertaking a financial review every two years. The first of these was undertaken in late 2019 and formed an important part of the Strategy Review which was performed in 2020. The full findings of this review (including the financial element, which found the model to still be fit for purpose) were reported to PfSH Joint Committee in January 2021.
- 5.2 However, as the results of the initial five years of monitoring are expected to be available in 2022, the decision has been taken to perform the next financial review at that time - to allow for the two pieces of information to be available, and current, together. It is hoped that this will provide the greatest insight to the Partnership for Joint Committee's consideration.

7. Strategic Recreation and Mitigation Partnership (Bird Aware) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs

Events (1 June – 31 August)

- Number of events attended: 5

- Number of attendees: 150

Other key outreach activities the rangers achieved are:

- 3 radio interviews with Express FM, having secured a monthly time slot
- Organising events for winter season
- Overhauling the website for launch with a new provider in October
- Continued work with England Coastal Path and signage planning generally
- Codes of Conduct work
- Articles published in local newsletters/magazines
- Ongoing stakeholder liaison

Additional input has also been given to communications work and together with the campaigns and engagement lead, the team has achieved the following:

Facebook:

- Total number of followers 2,245 (up by 39, 1.74% growth)
- 29.4k impressions (number of times seen)
- Engagement: 289 link clicks, 330 comments, 206 shares, 2554 reactions

Twitter

- Total number of followers 2397 (up by 59, 2.46% growth)
- 151.1k impressions
- Engagement: 27.7K profile visits, 259 mentions

Instagram

- Total number of followers 1,686 (up by 55, +3.26% growth)
- Impressions: 13k
- Engagement: 4,303 reach, 3718 interactions

Five Ranger articles added to the section 'Blog'

8. Culture, Creative Industries and the Built Environment

Business Support

8.1 Creative Network South (CNS) has agreed with Southampton City Council that Creative Growth South will continue to operate until the end of the financial year. Discussions are underway with Southampton City Council, Solent University, Portsmouth City Council and University of Portsmouth about possible successor initiatives for 2024.

8.2 The Solent Growth Hub is intending to establish [a peer to peer network](#) designed to help creative businesses bounce back following the pandemic.

Venturefest South

8.3 [Venturefest South](#) (festival of innovation) went ahead on the 21 October, and included programme celebrating the creative economy in the area.

Data

8.4 At the start of the year CNS refreshed its industry data set. The new data covers the period from the end of 2019 to the start of 2020 (before the start of the pandemic). A further set of data covering the period from the end of 2020 to the start of 2021 will be commissioned when the data is available with the intention of exposing the impact of the pandemic.

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Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: None

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