



Report to the Partnership for South Hampshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 29 June 2022
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 PfSH Coordinator's Report;
- b) NOTE that Joint Committee will be asked to NOTE the matters for information outlined in part B of this report; and
- c) consider any comments to be passed to the Joint Committee for consideration.

PART A: MATTERS FOR DECISION

There are no matters for decision.

PART B: MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

1. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

- 1.1 In 2020, at the request of member local authorities, PfSH commissioned the preparation of an updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the PfSH region. This work is wholly funded by local authority contributions from all those wishing to be covered by the work (all PfSH member local authorities except East Hampshire District Council).
- 1.2 A SFRA is part of the evidence base for the local plan and collates information on all known sources of flooding that may affect existing or future development. Officials considered that a complete refresh of the existing SFRA is needed to assist in the review and preparation of local plans in compliance with Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021). The current SFRA for the PfSH area was completed in 2007, with subsequent interim updates and reviews in 2012 and 2016. As such, the document and mapping are now out of date, if taking account of legislation and policy changes, as well as updates to evidence, modelling and mapping of flood risk.
- 1.3 Following a full procurement process led by Portsmouth City Council, AECOM was awarded the contract to undertake the work and an inception meeting took place on 10 March 2021.
- 1.4 Since the inception meeting with members of the PfSH Steering Group that had been convened to maintain oversight of the work (local authority planning officials, coastal partners, PfSH and Environment Agency), AECOM is progressing the work well. Most of the modelling work has now been completed and is currently going through an internal quality assurance process, and once completed, will be shared with the PfSH SFRA Steering Group. The Steering Group also approved additional modelling scenarios to meet recently updated guidance on SFRA's issued by the Environment Agency.
- 1.5 Work is expected to complete on the SFRA, including modelling and mapping, in September 2022.

2. Options for Expanding Bird Aware Solent's Remit

- 2.1 There are several new areas of environmental policy coming up in the next few years as part of the government's ambition to deliver nature recovery and respond to the climate crisis. In September 2021 Natural England brought a discussion paper to the PfSH Planning Officers Group (POG) asking it to consider the challenges, opportunities, and appetite of members to deliver these policy objectives by taking a strategic approach delivered by building upon the Bird Aware Solent model.

- 2.2 The basic premise of Natural England's proposal is that expansion of the Bird Aware Solent model, to include several new policy areas, could have several advantages. Bird Aware Solent is already established, is cost effective, works well and is delivering its environmental objectives. By expanding its remit, it might be possible for it to do far more and get better results. An expanded partnership could bring together various sources of funding and use a greater range of policy levers to develop and secure a pipeline of new and improved sites across southern Hampshire. Having a partnership solely focussed on this remit could make it easier, simpler, and more cost-effective for developers and local planning authorities to deliver their environmental policy objectives. From an environmental perspective we believe this could deliver better quality, strategically located sites at a significant scale which make a significant contribution towards improving the environment for wildlife and people to enjoy.
- 2.3 Natural England considered that several areas of policy could be within scope, such as biodiversity net gain (BNG), climate change mitigation (relating to natural environment enhancement such as tree planting schemes and other habitat restoration proposals), nutrient pollution, natural flood management, Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy sites, bird disturbance, green Infrastructure, protected species district level licensing.
- 2.4 In addition, the Natural England proposals were considered within the Bird Aware Partnership in light of discussions around COP26, and at the meeting of PfSH Joint Committee in February this year, Cllr Woodward noted the similarity of some of the current work areas of both Bird Aware and the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy - and how closer working and governance may be beneficial.
- 2.5 PfSH POG has formed a task and finish steering group, formed of local authority planning policy officers, the Bird Aware Partnership manager, the PfSH Strategic Environmental Planner and representatives from Natural England and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The steering group met in early March and is charged with developing a recommendation for POG's consideration, and ultimately PfSH Joint Committee. The group agreed that significant environmental activity is already happening locally - both in terms of environmental mitigation projects relating to the habitats regulations (e.g. Brent Goose and Solent Waders Strategy, Solent and New Forest Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy, nutrient mitigation) which can be seen as reactive. However, there was also a proactive agenda in relation to strategic land-based solutions for biodiversity net gain, nature recovery strategies, which could be viewed as requiring a more proactive response. The idea of multi-functionality and benefit stacking was discussed, and reference made to the DEFRA Solent Nutrient Market pilot.
- 2.6 It was felt by the group that *before* the potential for an expanded role for Bird Aware, or an alternative approach, could be considered, a steer is required from POG as to the sorts of topics that could be covered. The discussion note prepared for the meeting included reference to many of these, but also recognised the direction of travel at the national level towards a greater consideration of environmental matters in planning. There are choices about how proactive PfSH might want to be; are we focussed on reacting to habitats regulations, the Environment Bill, or do we want to

go further bringing in strategic land-based solutions to climate change? It was considered that this was fundamental to the scope of any extended role of any organisation or group involved in environmental mitigation for development in the sub-region.

2.7 It is clear that there are several groups and organisations operating in the Solent sub-region on the topic of environmental mitigation/enhancement. These include;

- Biodiversity Net Gain Group (chaired currently by PfSH SEPO)
- Local Nature Partnership (attended by PfSH SEPO)
- PfSH itself through the spatial strategy and green belt/green infrastructure work
- The Greenprint for South Hampshire initiative
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

2.8 A strong understanding of the organisations/groups involved in the topic sub-regionally is required to inform further discussion and avoid duplication of effort. PfSH also needs to develop a strong vision for this work - so that it can determine how best to implement what it wants to achieve. The work will also need to consider how to align with the proposed local nature recovery strategy work which is being looked at on a Hampshire and Isle of Wight geography with Hampshire County Council as the lead body.

2.9 At the time of writing, members of the steering group plan to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise, to provide clarity around existing activity, and propose a 'vision' for consideration by POG at its meeting on 8 July. Further update reports will come back to the Joint Committee on this policy area.

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

The below covers the period 1 January to the end of May 2022.

The Rangers delivered:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| • Site Visits | 321 |
| • People interacted with on-site | 4657 |
| • Events | 37 |
| • People interacted with at events | 1067 |

Additional input has also been given to communications work which is led by the campaigns and engagement officer. Together the team has achieved the following:

Facebook

- Number of fans 2,466 (up by 581, +30.8%)
- Number of followers 2,872 (up by 417, +17%)
- Accounts reached 147,093 (+67.8% compared to preceding 5 months)

- Engagement – engagement excluding clicks 8,715 (6,467 reactions, 645 comments, 566 shares, 1,037 other engagements)

Twitter

- Number of followers 2,703 (up by 129, +6.33%)
- 123,200 impressions
- Engagement: 2,384 total engagement (1,818 likes, 340 retweets)

Instagram

- Number of followers 2,063 (up by 246, +13.5%)
- Accounts reached: 31,907 (+131.4% compared to preceding 5 months)
- Engagement: 8,018 likes, 97 comments

Other Campaigns and Engagement highlights include:

- Launch of the first in the series of codes of conduct: wildlife-aware beach cleans
- First newsletter issued to around 350 subscribers in March (93% opening rate, 43% click rate). Currently at 775 subscribers with next edition due in June
- 12 blog posts, five press releases, monthly radio interviews with Express FM
- Rolling campaign to promote winter season events calendar achieved over 2,000 clicks and reach of 32K
- Promotion of individual spring events achieved 375 clicks and a reach of 23K

4. Update on the Green Print for South Hampshire Initiative

4.1 The Greenprint project is now focusing on developing a plan of action to help realise the priorities and related outcomes agreed by the Joint Committee on 14 February.

4.2 Members will recall that the project has been supported by the University of Southampton through the secondment of postgraduate students. A third student, Karolina Zarzyczny, joined the Team at the beginning of May for three months. She will be meeting with a wide range of people over the next few weeks to identify possible actions.

4.3 The Communities of Practice – the groups of experts in each priority area drawn from across sectors – will be re-convened in late June and early July to review the ‘long-list’ of possible actions with a view to determining what recommendations will be brought to the Joint Committee in the autumn. Before that report comes to Members it will be further reviewed by officers from across PfSH Member councils and other project partners to ensure those emerging recommendations are consistent with the broader policy direction and priorities of local councils and others.

- 4.4 The Joint Committee will have the opportunity to consider those recommended actions at its meeting on 27 September.
- 4.5 Members may also have noticed that the Greenprint project was represented at the Solent Summit in early June, where a small stand helped to introduce attendees to the project's and PfSH's aspirations for a green recovery. The project fits well with the objectives of the Solent Freeport and Solent Strategy, both launched at that event. This was an excellent opportunity to introduce a wider range of organisations to Greenprint.

5. Culture, Creative Industries and the Built Environment Themed Panel

Southern Policy Centre, Culture and Creative Economy Workshops

- 5.1 Following Joint Committee agreement at its meeting on 14 February, the PfSH has commissioned The Southern Policy Centre to run two workshops to review opportunities for partnership working to support the development of the culture and creative economy in South Hampshire. The first workshop on the 10 June focussed on vision, the second on the 15 July will focus on the mechanics of the operation of future working.
- 5.2 Invitations have been sent to partner local authorities, universities, further education colleges, business support organisations, creative industry networks, and other cultural organisations. The event will provide an opportunity for linking key initiatives (including the Arts Council England priority places - Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Gosport, New Forest Rushmoor - with business led initiatives such as Tech Solent and Digital South.
- 5.3 Joint committee will be updated on the outcome of the workshops at its meeting in September.

Solent Quality Place Awards. <https://solentqualityplaceawards.org.uk/>

- 5.4 Nominations for the Solent Design Awards 2022 opened on 9 May and closed on 27 May. The focus of the awards is on excellent placemaking. The judges are looking for examples of development which enhance the sense of place and belonging within a locality.
- 5.5 In addition to highlighting architectural and engineering excellence, the awards seek to recognise developments that contribute to improving the economic, social, cultural and environmental life of those who live, work, learn and relax within the Solent region. The Solent Quality Place Awards have been run by the Partnership for South

Hampshire since 2010, with previous winners including the West Quay South complex in Southampton and the Hot Walls area in Portsmouth.

5.6 The judges determined a shortlist of entries June. The public vote for the People's Choice Award will take place in July/August. The award winners will be announced in September.

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Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: None

Enquiries: For further information on this report please contact:

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