Report to the Partnership for South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: **23 July 2024**

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 Joint Committee:-

a) AGREES a PfSH contribution of up to £4k, from unallocated reserves, to fund an 'Environment Act 2021: Implementation Workshop for Local Authorities' facilitated by the Local Nature Partnership;

b) AGREES to support a funding application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for initiatives that will help to increase the impact of the creative research network in South Hampshire; and

c) NOTES the matters for information outlined in part B of this report.

PART A: MATTERS FOR DECISION

1. Request for Financial Support for an 'Environment Act 2021: Implementation Workshop for Local Authorities'

1.1 The Environment Act 2021 includes a raft of new measures, duties and responsibilities for public authorities aimed at improving the health and resilience of the natural environment. Themes include water, waste, air quality and biodiversity.

1.2 The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership (LNP) seek a commitment for funding to enable the LNP (which has no budget) to deliver an event in Autumn 2024 for council leaders (or relevant portfolio holders), relevant officials and local planning authorities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Costs would include refreshments (including light lunch), expenses to retain a keynote speaker and, potentially, venue hire. We estimate costs at less than £4000.

1.3 The LNP presented the idea to PfSH Planning Officers Group and to PfSH Chief Executives Group, both of which were supportive of the idea and provided useful feedback and offers of potential venues for the event. Hampshire County Council, Havant Borough and Southampton City councils have each offered to host the workshop.

1.4 The LNP recognises that the nature of Environment Act changes, alongside growing business-as-usual pressures for public authorities, may make it challenging for local authorities to plan and implement the raft of biodiversity requirements. These requirements include biodiversity net gain (BNG), strengthened biodiversity duty and reporting, local nature recovery strategies, protected sites strategies, species conservation strategies, conservation covenants and duty to consult – Trees. The LNP is aware that initial thinking has taken place as part of PfSH's work to embed the Greenprint framework, but there is a need for further work on each priority.

1.5 The LNP proposes to hold a one-day workshop for members, senior leaders and officers to support and enable Hampshire and Isle of Wight local authorities to consider implementation of the Environment Act's biodiversity measures. The day would be designed to engage staff from multiple work areas – not just planning, but also senior leaders, highways, property services, parks, estates, corporate strategy, etc and build on the Greenprint thinking already undertaken. It is anticipated that this would cost up to £4k and this funding would be available from PfSH unallocated reserves.

1.6 Local Nature Partnership Members are willing to donate their time to planning, organising, presenting and facilitating the workshop.

1.7 More details are included in the presentation attached at **Annex A.**

2. Support for a bid for funding to the Arts and Humanities Research Council

2.1 Solent University hosted a successful symposium, focusing on creative networks of practice in January. Creative Network South has agreed to support a third

symposium which will focus on the importance of regional networks in January 2025.

2.2 Following the success of this series of symposiums, Creative Network South has been able to re-establish its network of academic researchers. This network met regularly prior to the pandemic, with the purpose of promoting knowledge between academic creative industry researchers and local cultural and creative organisations. The network currently includes academics from The University of Southampton, University of Portsmouth, Solent University, Bournemouth Arts University and Winchester University.

2.3 Solent University have agreed to support Roy Hanney (Associate Professor of Media Practice) in making an application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). This application will focus on further building this research network. The project value is approximately £100k. If successful, 90% of funding will come from AHRC the remainder from partner universities.

Priorities include :

- **Economic Development**: - aligning research with the creative sector's needs to spur economic growth, job creation, inclusion and resilience
- **Cultural Enrichment**: - enhancing the region's cultural vibrancy through diverse and inclusive experiences
- **Innovation and Collaboration**: - establishing a model for collaborative innovation that can serve as a precedent for other regions
- **Policy Impact**:- providing insights that could inform policy making and best practices, supporting a more favourable environment for creative industries.

2.4 PfSH has been invited to support this application. This will require no additional financial contributions. PfSH already supports the network in kind with Charles Freeman's time (PfSH's Culture Creative Industries and Built Environment Lead) and financially has committed £1.5k of the existing Creative Network South budget to the network and proposed symposium.

2.5 The key benefits will be that PfSH support will demonstrate the commitment of a key local governance institution to this area of work - and that connectivity through Creative Network South will facilitate brokerage of partnership projects.

2.6 It is recommended that PfSH Joint Committee agree to officially be a listed partner in the Solent Creative Futures AHRC application being made on behalf of the Creative Network South Research Alliance by Solent University.

PART B: MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

3. Formal Resignation of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as a Co-opted Member of PfSH Joint Committee

3.1 Following the publication of government LEP integration guidance in 2023, a number of core LEP responsibilities have been transferred to the upper tier local

authorities in the Solent area. This includes the responsibility for strategic economic planning which was transferred to the authorities of Hampshire County Council, and a partnership of Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight Councils respectively on 1 April 2024. Therefore, the function that the Solent LEP performed as a co-opted member (to ensure that PfSH can deliver its strategic planning functions in support of growth in a collaborative working relationship with the Solent LEP) is no longer part of its remit.

3.2 On 26 June, Richard Jones (CEO Solent LEP) wrote to James Strachan as lead PfSH chief executive to advise that, given that this transfer of responsibilities has taken place, it is an appropriate time for the Solent LEP to resign its co-opted membership of the Partnership for South Hampshire.

3.3 A copy of Richard Jones' letter is attached to this report at **Annex B** for members' information.

4. Provision of Governance and Operational Services for PfSH

4.1 The meeting of PfSH Joint Committee 23 July is the first of this municipal year. For any new members and on the occasion of the election of a new Chair, it may be useful to clarify those that support PfSH operationally through the provision of, for example, legal, financial or administrative functions. Table 1 sets out the supporting roles employed to facilitate PfSH's continued operation. The value of the services provided are all covered through the annual subscription contributions made by all member local authorities.

Table 1

Role/Service	Officer(s)	Title	Local Authority
PfSH Lead Local Authority Chief Executive	James Strachan	Chief Executive	Eastleigh Borough Council
Monitoring Officer - Legal, Governance and Monitoring	Richard Ivory	Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer	Southampton, Fareham and Havant Legal Services Partnership
PfSH S151 Officer	Mel Creighton	Executive Director, Enabling Services	Southampton City Council
Finance Business Partner	Jonathan Evans	Accounting Technician	Southampton City Council
Democratic Services	Samantha Wightman and Astra Hughes	Committee Officers	Fareham Borough Council
PfSH Coordinator	Paddy May	PfSH Coordinator and Corporate Strategy Manager	Portsmouth City Council
PfSH Coordinator	Daniel Watts	PfSH Coordinator	Portsmouth City Council

5. Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy

5.1 The purpose of this report to Joint Committee is to update PfSH on the progress of the elements of the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (SW&BGS) funded by the PfSH local planning authorities' £14k annual contribution. The SW&BGS aims to identify, conserve and enhance sites that functionally support the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) of the Solent sub-region, and advise on mitigation for unavoidable impacts. This proposal is aligned to, and complements, the work of Bird Aware Solent, and seeks to benefit local planning authorities by monitoring the impact of development on SPAs.

The Strategy

5.2 The Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy (SW&BGS) aims to identify, conserve and enhance inland sites that form the ecological network used by overwintering wading birds and brent geese. These sites functionally support the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) of the Solent sub-region and any losses or impacts of development to these sites must therefore be mitigated. The SW&BGS has proven to be a useful tool for planners, developers, statutory consultees, and the NGO sector to support these aims.

5.3 The SW&BGS includes a strategy document which explains the conservation need, survey and analyses methodologies, and recommended conservation policies. This is supported by interactive mapping of SW&BGS sites and mitigation guidance which aims to inform mitigation and offsetting requirements where impacts cannot be avoided.

5.4 The Strategy is a vital tool for local planning authorities (LPA's), informing decision-making by providing key spatial information, as well as a mechanism for effective mitigation. This has been demonstrated recently in the cases of on-site provision, for example, developments at Forty Acres and Sinah Lane and off-site provision for Newlands Lane (mitigation project located at Gunner Point).

Project Governance

5.5 The strategy is overseen by a steering group consisting of representatives from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT), Coastal Partners, the RSPB, local authority planning ecologists and Natural England. The steering group meet quarterly to discuss survey updates, mitigation guidance, planning casework, local plans and mitigation projects.

5.6 Mapping and data analyses for the Strategy are carried out by HIWWT; all updates are shared electronically with the LPA's directly, and via Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) which also share the data with consultants and others making requests via their biological data request service.

5.7 The mitigation guidance, informed by the strategy and available data, is produced by Natural England with input from the Steering Group. In 2017, the LPAs were

consulted on offsetting and mitigation guidance and their comments included in the final published version. The guidance was then sent to Natural England's legal team, reviewed by a solicitor, and a Habitats Regulations Senior Specialist. The publication of the mitigation guidance was noted in PfSH meeting minutes in 2017. The update to the strategy document published in 2020 was disseminated to the LPAs in May 2020.

5.8 The Strategy has a website where the strategy document, mitigation guidance and a summary of the mapping are published. The website can be found here.

Update for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Annual drop-in sessions for LPA's

5.9 A number of "drop-in" sessions were organised this year to provide an opportunity for LPAs to discuss sites likely to be impacted by forthcoming development and to be informed of updates to the Strategy and network. All planning officers and district ecologists were contacted and offered SW&BGS officer time for any specific cases, as well being invited to attend the drop-in sessions. Drop-in sessions were held throughout October where advice was provided and led to renewed contact and collaboration with the LPAs which chose to attend.

5.10 Through this communication opportunity, the SW&BGS officer was able to prepare specific planning case information and advise the relevant LPA's officers in good time. Advice has also been provided for mitigation management plans in several LPA areas including Portsmouth, Havant and Fareham. Mitigation advice given includes unique and creative solutions to mitigation that would not have been possible without PfSH funding. Advice on managing the features of SW&BGS sites has been provided and incorporated into a large-scale natural capital scheme currently being developed on the New Forest coast.

Mapping Updates

5.11 Individual updates have been sent directly to LPA's and to HCC with bespoke and dated maps where SW&BGS sites have changed either classification or boundaries. The online mapping has been regularly updated and is hosted online on the website. Several sites' boundaries have been amended in order to be more accurate to the current use of the site(s), thereby increasing the fidelity of the mapping and improving the use of the Network as an effective tool for planning decisions. The network has now been migrated onto ArcGIS Pro and ArcGIS Online meaning that updates can be made faster, and layers can be shared in real time with LPAs. The SW&BGS site wide data and mapping update has begun, with bird records collated and currently being processed, this will be finalised this year, all changes will be shared with the LPAs directly, ahead of publication. Further drop-in sessions will be held with LPAs to maintain good communication.

Mitigation Projects

5.12 The SW&BGS officer has been working to identify potential mitigation projects. Guidance on site suitability, a scoring system and a call for sites application form have been approved and published on the SW&BGS website. The SW&BGS officer has met with the PfSH Strategic Environmental Planning Manager to discuss opportunities across the Solent for SW&BGS (alongside nutrient neutrality and BNG) This year, one mitigation project was approved, a further one has reached the application stage with more in the pipeline, we have been contacted by several landowners with the possibility of several more mitigation projects progressing.

Collation of information on site mitigation monitoring

5.13 The SW&BGS officer has begun collating information on existing mitigation projects across the Solent and this is now being reviewed by the Steering Group. This will be available in online map form and key projects will be written up as case studies. Information on bird refuge habitat creation and enhancement has been published by the SW&BGS officer on the SW&BGS website, this will enable case of officers and district ecologists to assess mitigation and management proposals against best practice.

Additional Work

5.14 The SW&BGS officer has updated the website with an online form to submit records of brent geese and wading birds. This is reviewed regularly by the SW&BGS officer and helps identify knowledge gaps in the network, as well as inform more accurate use of the sites in the network. A vetting system exists which tiers records according to several metrics in order to assign them weight in decision making.

6 Support for the Creative and Cultural Industries

Film Agency Feasibility Study

6.1 At time of writing, a final draft of the film agency feasibility study is to be discussed at the project steering group meeting on the 3 June. The report proposes procuring services to run a film agency on a cost covering basis - however initial seed funding will be required to set up the agency. The steering group will be asked to gain support from partners to cover this funding. The report will also propose collaborative approach to film sector skills and training activity, City Eye is acting as a pivot for this work in partnership with Portsmouth Creates, Ventnor Exchange and other organisations. A similar approach will be adopted in relationship to film exhibition and festivals.

6.2 To compliment the work with the film sector, Creative Network South is hosting a workshop to explore opportunities to develop pathways to employment within the games sector. The games industry falls within the British Film Institute definition of the screen sector.

Local Skills Improvement Plan

6.3 A steering group has been established in partnership with Hampshire Chamber of Commerce to explore how the ambitions and Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

relating to the creative industries can be realised. An LSIP deep dive exercise identified three priorities:

- Building awareness of career pathways
- Brokerage of opportunities in the sector including, T-level placements, apprenticeships, formal work base learning, safe entrepreneurship/portfolio working and provision / development of access to technology e.g. software and equipment
- The development of affordable bite sized continued professional development opportunities and business support for freelancers.

The next step will be to explore how existing funding streams can be woven together to support this work.

Studio Providers Network

6.4 In partnership with Aspace Arts, PfSH established a network of artists studio providers in 2010. Between 2017 and 2023 this network was facilitated by Portsmouth City Council through the Hot walls Team. 'Making Space' in Havant (a charity organisation that makes space for people and organisations involved in craft, through a programme of workshops led by community partners) has agreed to become the host organisation and held the first meeting of the network this year on 23 May. The purpose of the network is enable the area's studio providers to work together, share good practice, share knowledge of events workshops and activities. The network also discusses support for artists and advertise vacancies across the network.

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

7.1 The below covers the period 1 February 2024 to end of March 2024.

The Rangers delivered:

- Site visits 152
- People interacted with on-site 2,061
- Events 20
- People interacted with at events 559

7.2 The below covers the period 1 April to the end of April 2024.

The Rangers do not conduct site visits during this period, they use this time to develop other workstreams such as codes of conduct, signage and educational resources. They continue to conduct events and have delivered:

- Events: 3
- People interacted with at events 287

During the three-month period February to April 2024, our communications lead continued to encourage traffic to the website, run promotional campaigns and to grow our social media presence as follows:

- From the start of January to the end of April, Bird Aware Solent website achieved 31k pageviews. This compares with 14K pageviews in the same period in the previous year, showing a significant increase of 121%. This is unusually fast growth and is partly the result of an exponential increase in engagement in our blog posts particularly one on the corvid bird family.
- After blog posts, which had a cumulative total of around 18K, our events page and our vacancy pages were the second most popular individual pages, both with 2k visits.
- Our social media accounts grew as follows, with the resulting engagement:

  Instagram: followers 3,429 (up by 131), accounts reached: 13k, engagement: 6.8k

  Facebook: followers 3,800 (up by 257), accounts reached 158k, engagement: 5.9k

  X: number of followers 2,936 (up by 20), analytics currently unavailable

- Online promotional campaigns included an advertising campaign for the Bird Aware Art Fest - a new annual event during the month of February, which was seen by 60k people within our target region and which encouraged over 13k people to click on the link to our website to find out more. Another campaign was run to advertise the ranger vacancy - it achieved over 2k clicks to the website's vacancy pages and reached over 41k people within our target region.
- The eighth Bird Aware e-newsletter was sent to 1.7K subscribers in April. It had an opening rate of 63% and a click-to-open rate of 46%. Both opening rates and click rates are substantially higher than typical industry standards.
- During this period we published seven blog posts and one press release (media relations paused during pre-election period).

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee:-

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b) AGREES to support a funding application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for initiatives that will help to increase the impact of the creative research network in South Hampshire; and

c) NOTES the matters for information outlined in part B of this report.

Appendices: Annex A – Environment Act An Implementation Workshop Proposal

Annex B – Solent LEP letter to James Strachan

Background Papers: None
Reference Papers: None
Enquiries: For further information on this report please contact:

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Annex A

ALLISON POTTS, LNP CHAIR

MAY 2024

Environment Act: An Implementation Workshop Proposal for LPAs

LNP Overview

- Formed in 2012
- An active partnership which meets monthly
- Currently unfunded
- Shared focus of “working together for Nature’s Recovery”
- More information on our website and in our Declaration
- Current work majors on supporting Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council in their roles as Responsible Authorities for producing Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

- Board Members include representatives from:
  - Basingstoke & Deane Council
  - Country, Land and Business Association
  - Environment Agency
  - Forestry Commission
  - Forestry England
  - Hampshire County Council
  - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
  - Isle of Wight Council
  - IoW National Landscape
  - National Health Service, Hampshire and Isle of Wight
  - Natural England
  - North Wessex Downs National Landscape
  - New Forest National Park
  - Partnership for South Hampshire
  - Southampton City Council
  - South Downs National Park
  - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
  - Rushmoor Council
  - Southern Water

Climate and Biodiversity Crises

Terrestrial and freshwater

The abundance of 753 terrestrial and freshwater species has on average fallen by 19% across the UK since 1970.

Within this average figure, 290 species have declined in abundance (38%) and 205 species have increased (27%).

The UK distributions of 4,979 invertebrate species have on average decreased by 13% since 1970.

Stronger declines were seen in some insect groups which provide key ecosystem functions such as pollination (average 18% decrease in species' distributions) and pest control (34% decrease). By contrast, insect groups providing freshwater nutrient cycling initially declined before recovering to above the 1970 value (average 64% increase in species' distributions).

Since 1970, the distributions of 54% of flowering plant species and 59% of bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) have decreased across Great Britain.

By comparison, only 15% and 26% of flowering plants and bryophytes, respectively, have increased. In Northern Ireland, since 1970, 42% of flowering plant species and 62% of bryophytes have decreased in distribution, compared to 43% and 34%, respectively, that have increased.

10,008 species were assessed using Red List criteria.

2% (151 species) are extinct in Great Britain and a further 16% (almost 1,500 species) are now threatened with extinction here. In Northern Ireland, 281 (12%) of 2,508 species assessed are threatened with extinction from the island of Ireland.

Marine

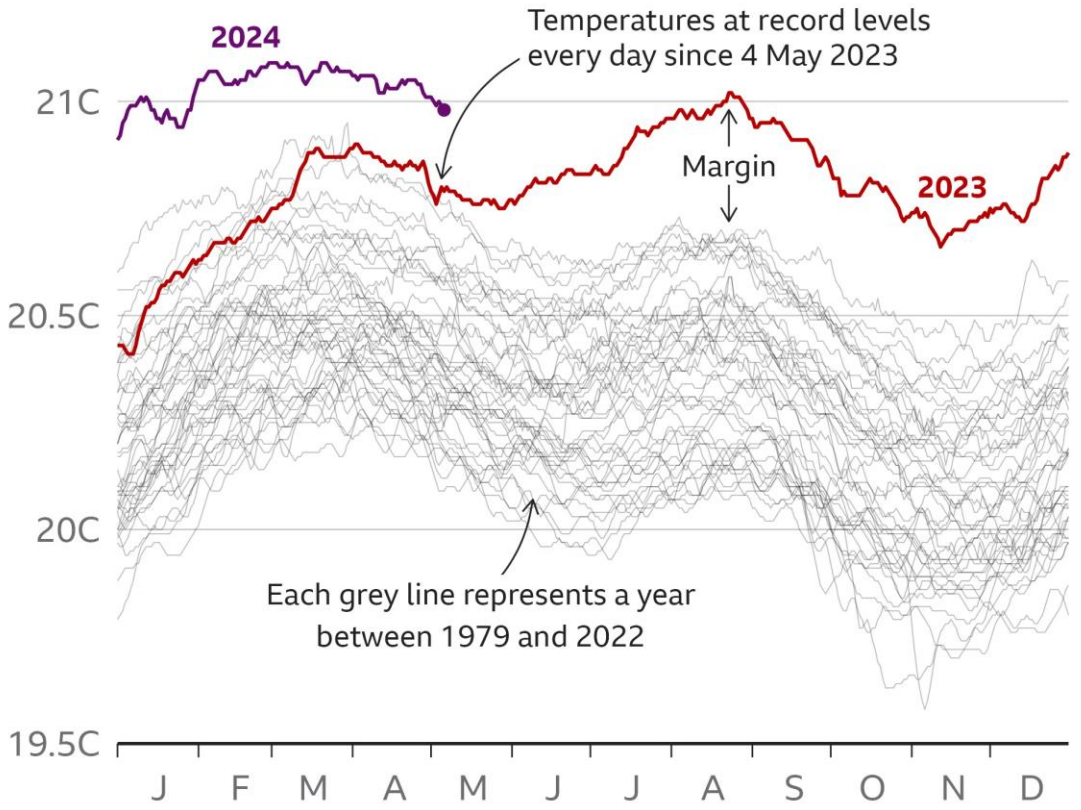
The abundance of 13 species of seabird has fallen by an average of 24% since 1986.

The situation is worse in Scotland, where the abundance of 11 seabird species has fallen by an average of 49% since 1986. These results pre-date the potentially major impact of the ongoing outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

Turtle dove, Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com); Forester moth, Mike Read (rspb-images.com); Heath Spotted-Orchid, Andy Hay (rspb-images.com); Ladybird Spider, Ian Hughes (rspb-images.com); Kittiwake, Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com); Grey Seal, Ben Hall (rspb-images.com); Atlantic Yellow Nosed Albatross, Steffen Oppel (rspb-images.com)

A year of record-breaking ocean temperatures

Daily average sea surface temperature, 1979-2024



Temperatures measured between latitudes 60° North and 60° South

Source: ERA5, C3S/ECMWF

BBC

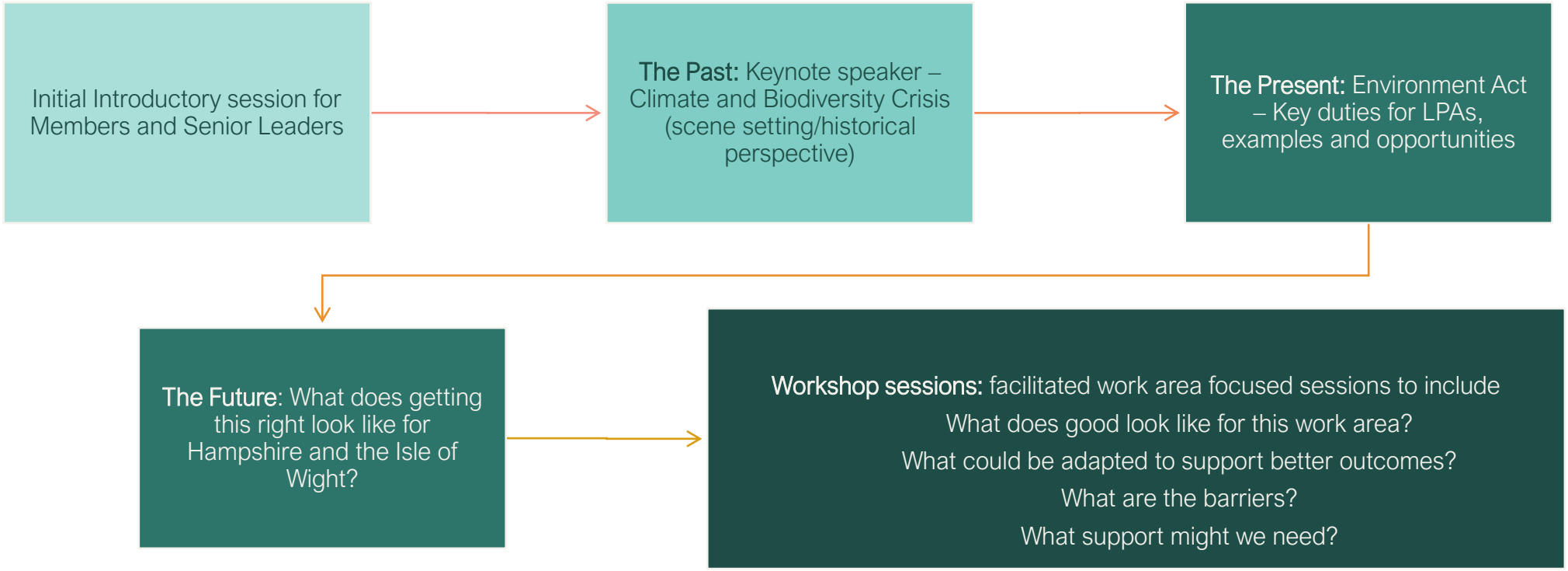
Environment Act 2021

- A raft of measures, new duties and responsibilities for Public Authorities
- Aimed at improving the health and resilience of the natural environment
- Themes include water, waste, air quality and biodiversity
- Biodiversity includes:
  - Biodiversity Net Gain
  - Strengthened Biodiversity Duty and reporting
  - Local Nature Recovery Strategies
  - Species Conservation Strategies
  - Protected Sites Strategies
  - Duty to consult – Trees, and
  - Conservation Covenants

Our Offer: Implementation Workshop

- LNP host a 1-day workshop
- For officers, senior leaders and members of Hampshire and IoW LPAs
- Focused on implementation of Environment Act
- Designed to engage staff from multiple work areas – not just planning, but also Highways, Property Services, Parks, Estates, Corporate Strategy, etc
- LNP members willing to donate their time to planning, organising, presenting and facilitating

Content


Initial Introductory session for Members and Senior Leaders
The Past: Keynote speaker – Climate and Biodiversity Crisis (scene setting/historical perspective)
The Present: Environment Act – Key duties for LPAs, examples and opportunities
The Future: What does getting this right look like for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight?
Workshop sessions: facilitated work area focused sessions to include
What does good look like for this work area?
What could be adapted to support better outcomes?
What are the barriers?
What support might we need?

Our Ask: Implementation Workshop

We seek your in-principle support for the workshop and funding to enable it to run.

Questions or comments welcome

Solent LEP
C/o Paris Smith
1 London Road
Southampton
SO15 2AE

26th June 2024

James Strachan
Lead Chief Executive
Partnership for South Hampshire

Sent via email

Dear James,

Re: Solent LEP Partnership for South Hampshire Membership

As you will be aware, further to the publication of the Government's LEP Integration Guidance, HM Government have transferred a number of core LEP responsibilities to the Upper Tier Local Authorities in the Solent area. This includes the responsibility for Strategic Economic Planning and I can confirm that this responsibility was transferred to the authorities of Hampshire County Council, and a partnership between Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight Councils respectively for their relevant areas from 1st April 2024.

In relation to this transfer of responsibilities, I am mindful that the Solent LEP is a co-opted member of the Partnership for South Hampshire and this has been agreed to ensure that the partnership can deliver its strategic planning functions in support of growth in a collaborative working relationship with the Solent LEP, recognising the LEPs role in Strategic Economic Planning. Given that this responsibility has now transferred from the Solent LEP to the Upper Tier Local Authorities within the partnership, we believe that it is an appropriate time for the Solent LEP to resign its co-opted membership of the Partnership for South Hampshire. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require anything further in relation to formalising this.

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my thanks on behalf of the LEP Board for the contribution of the Partnership for South Hampshire to the work of the LEP; both in relation to our long-standing collaboration with the partnership and its individual members, and of course also for the important role played by the partnership in the original establishment of the Solent LEP at its outset. We wish the Partnership for South Hampshire all the best moving forward in your work for the benefit of the Solent region.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Jones
Chief Executive
Solent Local Enterprise Partnership