



Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan



Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan

The Plan provides a framework for the effective, co-ordinated management of the Harbour and the Poole Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) and serves as a Management Scheme for the European Marine Site as set out in Regulation 34 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994. It also covers the present and future needs of nature conservation, recreation and commercial use and other legitimate interests of the Harbour. The focus of the plan is the Harbour's aquatic environment, however in following the principles of a more integrated approach to coastal management, it takes a holistic view, which considers the impact of shore based activities and those of the surrounding areas. It therefore supports the Government's vision for the marine environment, which is for clean healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. The Government is looking to deliver this by preparing a Marine Bill which aims to put in place a better system for delivering sustainable development of the marine and coastal environment by addressing both the use and protection of our marine resources. It will look to introduce a better system for managing marine resources, so that the process by which developers obtain consents is made simpler, while ensuring that potential conflicts between uses of the sea are managed and objectives of sustainability are delivered.

The Plan looks at ways of delivering the aims of the Marine Bill at a local level, in allowing sustainable levels of economic and social activity within the Harbour and its hinterland, while protecting the coastal environment. It considers the activities of all those involved in the development, management and use of the Harbour within a framework that facilitates the integration of their interests and responsibilities.

The Plan contains guidelines, policies and principles designed to inform, advise and guide current and future management. It is not a statutory plan for the Harbour and adjoining area, and is not designed to dictate detailed management actions or set complex new working arrangements. It does however draw its principles from many of the statutory and non-statutory policies applying to the Harbour. It aims to build on established partnerships and be a vehicle for communication, providing a framework within which decisions can be made and appropriate action taken.

1.2 Mission Statement

Strategic Aim

To promote the safe and sustainable use of Poole Harbour, balancing the demands on its natural resources, minimising risk and resolving conflicts of interest.

Objectives

To provide a framework for the co-ordinated management of the Harbour and continue to improve communications between Harbour users and regulators.

To promote the safe use of the Harbour for all.

To fulfil the requirements of a Management Scheme for the European Marine Site.

To promote the sustainable and wise use of the Harbour for commerce, recreation and amenity.

To protect and maintain the special natural features of the Harbour.

To create a culture of openness and communication and an awareness of other users.

Chapter 2 Background

The expansion of the Port of Poole during the 1980s drew attention to the number of different interest groups that use the Harbour and highlighted the need for an overall management strategy. In 1988 a steering group of officers from the County and relevant District Councils, the Poole Harbour Commissioners, English Nature and other statutory bodies produced the Poole Harbour Management Policies (PHMP).

This series of agreed guidelines for the Harbour and its environs recognised, and as far as possible, protected local interests by providing advice for the planning and management of the area. The document set out policies to be implemented through local plans and other statutory mechanisms and was last amended in 1998, following the need for integrated management of the whole harbour, including the water body and the areas below the low water mark.

The first Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan was published in 1994. It was designed to be a strategy for the water area itself and was an attempt to provide uniformity of approach to the entire Harbour, including the regulation of activities on and in the water column. It provided a framework for the coordinated management of the Harbour, having regard to the present and future needs of nature conservation, recreation, commercial use and other legitimate interests.

This revised Plan consolidates the work of the Aquatic Management Plan and the Harbour Policies to provide a new vehicle to guide the management of operational matters on the water and planning matters on the shore.



Chapter 3 Management Framework

The Aquatic Management Plan is a non-statutory document. There are no legal powers to ensure that all the guidance in the Plan is implemented or adhered to. However when appropriate the Plan highlights relevant legislation such as national directives and the existence of byelaws. This document can itself give no permission for any development or activity to be carried out. Where permission, licence or permits are required they must be sought from the appropriate authority who will deal with them in the normal way. As members of the Poole Harbour Steering Group, these authorities in reaching their decisions will do so against the background of the guidance, principles and policies contained in this document.

3.1 Management Structure for the Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan

Poole Harbour Steering Group

The Poole Harbour Steering Group is a voluntary partnership that provides a framework for coordination between statutory bodies with responsibilities in the Harbour. Its members work together to review, prepare and implement common plans and policies, with a view to promoting the sustainable use of Poole Harbour, securing the long-term conservation of its internationally important wildlife and natural habitats.

Its main roles are:

- To co-operate and consult in the exercising of statutory powers and functions.
- To oversee and facilitate the implementation of this management plan.
- To improve co-ordination between users and information flow between users with different interests in the Harbour.
- To ensure that users' points of view on issues that arise and solutions raised, are circulated.
- To act as an advisory group for the Poole Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA).
- To improve access to high quality, up to date and relevant data for decision making.

The Poole Harbour Steering Group members, listed below, have all signed up to a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) (Appendix 1). It acknowledges the importance of working together for the management of the Poole Harbour SPA and implementing best practice through the implementation of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations, 1994. It also demonstrates their support to the principles laid out in this Aquatic Management Plan. Appendix 2 outlines the responsibilities of the Steering Group members as well as some other local and national bodies involved in the management of the Harbour and who were involved in the consultation for this plan.

- **Borough of Poole**
- **Dorset County Council**
- **Environment Agency**
- **Natural England (English Nature)**
- **Poole Harbour Commissioners**
- **Purbeck District Council**
- **Southern Sea Fisheries District Committee**
- **Wessex Water Services Ltd**

3.2 Background Documents & Plans

This Plan updates and consolidates the relevant information and policies contained within the 1994 Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan and the 1998 Poole Harbour Management Policies, as well as drawing from current planning and guidance documents. All these documents are relevant to the management of Poole Harbour and apply the principles of sustainable development and focus on their particular areas of interest. A list of some of the more significant background documents can be found in Appendix 3.

3.3 Plan Revision / Review

In order to verify the validity and relevance of this plan the Steering Group recognises the need for current data on which to base a management strategy for Poole Harbour. There is also a need to:

- Introduce effective monitoring.
- Re-assess management as external factors change.
- Address long-term issues of planning and landscape.

The Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan addresses a variety of issues, but recognises that the level of control and policies required will probably need to change in the face of changing recreational and commercial demands and as our understanding of the environmental resource becomes clearer.

The European Marine Site Monitoring Review

To comply with the monitoring requirements for the European Marine Site, the Poole Harbour Steering Group will review the Plan on an annual basis and make an assessment of how the specific management actions identified in Section 2 are being progressed. Updates on actions and projects will be disseminated to the general public through the individual Steering Group members as well as via the project website and an annual newsletter. The Plan will also be subject to an in depth evaluation one year prior to the end of the six yearly reporting cycle for the European Marine Site, which is next due in 2012. In this way the Aquatic Management Plan can act as a focus point for actions to ensure the ongoing sustainable management of the European Marine Site. As new management actions are agreed and projects put in place, additional pages will be produced in order to keep the Plan up dated. Amendments will be issued as complete page(s) and will include the date and amendment number on each page.

Those who use Poole Harbour for recreation, commerce or who have an interest in the area's environmental resources are encouraged to discuss and provide input into the implementation of the Aquatic Management Plan. The Poole Harbour Steering Group meet every six months to discuss the ongoing management of the Harbour and its members can present issues raised with them by the general public or other interested parties. In this way areas of concern or forthcoming initiatives can be communicated and topics for future research identified. It is anticipated that as major plans or projects arise that may have a significant impact on the Harbour, additional focus meetings will be set up to engage the thoughts of all stakeholders.

Chapter 4 Guiding Principles

This chapter lists the overriding guiding principles that the plan promotes. Whilst many are generic and apply to the management of the whole Harbour, some are more specific and relate to certain activities. Each chapter starts with a list of the number of the guiding principles that most apply to the topic discussed within it.

1. To support initiatives that encourage the responsible and sustainable use of the Harbour and which seek to educate and raise awareness amongst users.
2. To support the protection and enhancement of the nature conservation interests of Poole Harbour and the coastal zone.
3. To encourage the development of policies, strategies and plans in accordance with the aims of the conservation objectives for the European Marine Site.
4. To support projects and initiatives that aim to enhance public understanding of the habitats and wildlife of the Harbour.
5. To ensure that all development activities, plans and projects comply with relevant legislation requirements and that the nature conservation interest of the SPA, Ramsar and SSSI sites are maintained or restored to favourable condition.
6. To support initiatives that are necessary to maintain and improve water quality for all appropriate uses.
7. To support initiatives that are necessary to improve air quality and the reduction of noise levels at source within the Harbour.
8. To support the establishment of a co-ordinated environmental monitoring programme to investigate sediment movements in Poole Harbour.
9. To support initiatives that raise awareness of climate change and coastal processes and address their implication for the Harbour and coastal zone.
10. To support the provision of sustainable coastal management works that take account of potential environmental impacts and effects on natural processes.
11. To support the protection and enhancement of the high quality fisheries associated with Poole Harbour, now and for future generations, (with due regard to Guiding Principle 5).
12. To support initiatives aimed at maintaining and improving appropriate facilities for the fishing industry, (with due regard to Guiding Principle 5).
13. To support initiatives to improve the marine safety management of Poole Harbour to the benefit of its stakeholders, (with due regard to Guiding Principle 5).
14. To support initiatives to maintain Nationally agreed standards for safe marine operations.