



SOLENT MARINE SITES MANAGEMENT SCHEME

MANAGEMENT GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

February 2024

Introduction

[The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) states that ‘the relevant authorities, or any of them, may establish for a European marine site a management scheme under which their functions (including any power to make byelaws) are to be exercised so as to secure compliance with the requirements of the Directives in relation to that site. Only one management scheme may be made for each European marine site.’

For the purposes of these Regulations, the relevant authorities, in relation to a marine area or European marine site are:

- nature conservation body;
- a county council, county borough council, district council or London borough council;
- the Environment Agency;
- the Marine Management Organisation;
- a water undertaker or sewerage undertaker, or an internal drainage board;
- a navigation authority within the meaning of the Water Resources Act 1991;
- a harbour authority within the meaning of the Harbours Act 1964;
- an inshore fisheries and conservation authority
- a National Park authority.

All Relevant Authorities have a duty under the Habitats Regulations to exercise their functions to prevent damage to designated sites. They can do this individually or work in partnership via a single Management Scheme, such as the Solent Marine Sites scheme of management.

The Marine Management Organisation have a duty under the [Marine and Coastal Access Act](#) to put management in place for marine non-licensable activities.

Management Schemes set the framework within which non-licensable activities can be managed, either voluntarily or through regulation, so as to achieve the conservation objectives of the site. Where a management scheme exists Relevant Authorities, who are part of that scheme, are obliged to exercise their functions under the scheme to secure the requirements of the Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017.

Solent Marine Sites (SEMS)

“The Solent Marine Site (the “site”) comprises; the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation, the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area, the Portsmouth



Harbour Special Protection Area, Chichester, and Langstone Harbour Special Protection Areas and the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA.

SEMS Management Scheme

The Management scheme for the Solent Marine Sites sets the framework for how Relevant Authorities exercise their statutory functions. It includes the completion and evaluation of an annual survey of changes to and impacts from non-licensable activities on designated sites, input from a Strategic Stakeholder Group, an annual Management report and an annual meeting to discuss findings and agree actions.

The annual Survey also monitors the potential impacts from activities on Marine Conservation Zones in the Solent, even though those sites are outside the Management Scheme.

Membership

Membership of the Management Group is open to all Relevant Authorities as defined in [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#).

SEMS Management Group

The Management Group will:

- Submit an annual survey response and agree the subsequent Annual Management Report.
- Attend the annual Management Group meeting.
- Ensure that any relevant actions or management measures agreed in the SEMS Annual Management Report that are in their area of jurisdiction are supported.
- Where necessary consult with local interests, owners and occupiers, user groups and conservation groups or other existing advisory fora to ensure a comprehensive annual survey return and to help fulfil actions or management measures identified in the Annual Management report.
- Pay an annual fee to cover the cost of running the scheme.
- Have automatic membership of the Solent Forum's Natural Environment Group which uses partnership working to develop the evidence base and carry out the strategic actions identified in the Annual Management Report.

Chair

A chair will be agreed by the Management Group, from a Relevant Authority which is a member of the management scheme, but no relevant authority shall have precedence or powers over any others. This chair will stand for three years and following this period can be re-elected or a new chair can be appointed.

Administration

The Solent Forum will act as the secretariat for the Management Group. It will provide the following services:

- Be responsible for the collection of the management scheme annual subscriptions and provide financial updates to the Management Group. Manage the annual project budget that is available from the SEMS subscriptions.
- Conduct the annual online survey of activities and prepare the Annual Management report.
- Be the secretary for the annual Management Group meeting.
- Consult with the Strategic Stakeholder Group.
- Provide a contact point for general enquiries regarding SEMS matters.
- Conduct a five yearly review of the Management Scheme.
- Host the [SEMS website](#).
- Provide the secretariat for the Natural Environment Group, its bi-annual meetings, and its project bursary.
- Represent the interests of SEMS on the national Marine Protected Area Officer working group.

Meetings

The SEMS Management Group will meet annually to discuss the findings from the SEMS Annual Survey and agree the actions and management measures set out in the Annual Management Report.

There will be an annual meeting of the SEMS Chair, Solent Forum staff and Natural England to steer the SEMS management scheme process and identify when and if changes are needed. Any actions identified from this meeting will be reported to the annual SEMS Management Group meeting for ratification.

There will be biannual meetings of the Natural Environment Group to progress actions arising from the SEMS Management Scheme and allocate the annual project budget.