

Medina Estuary Management Plan

Guiding Principles

Introduction

Estuaries are some of the most sensitive and highly valued natural resources in the world. Ensuring that they are used sustainably is of fundamental importance to the wide range of activities they support.

The Medina Estuary Management Plan (MEMP) was originally developed as part of English Nature's (now part of Natural England) Estuaries Initiative. Underpinning the whole management process is the principle of safeguarding the future of the Medina by using its resources wisely and in a sustainable way.

The MEMP was developed through extensive local consultation and engagement in 1997 and then reviewed and revised by the local stakeholder group in 2000. It was a voluntary initiative with no legal or statutory power but it was considered to be the first step in holistic management of the estuary. The plan provided a framework from which the range of activities could be managed or co-ordinated and issues resolved through collaboration within a vision of sustainable management. It aimed to use existing powers and influences to secure agreed objectives and improve the value of the estuary to the local community.

The Isle of Wight Estuaries Partnership has agreed that the document, although in need of updating, still represents an understanding of the sustainable management of the Medina. It was agreed that the main guiding principles of the existing plan should be extracted and presented with appendices containing information about responsibilities and legislation within the coastal zone. The appendices will be reviewed and updated as necessary. Information about the local area will also be updated and held separately as reference material.

The philosophy behind the plan, captured by the original vision statement, still stands.

Vision

To achieve the sustainable use of the Medina Estuary through the integrated management of its resources by ensuring that a balance is secured between the protection and enhancement of the natural and man-made environment and the continued development of the local economy.

To develop appropriate management of the resource through co-operation and liaison between estuary managers, user groups, the voluntary sector and the community.

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Agriculture: To support the maintenance and awareness of rights of way and to ensure stakeholders are included in discussions on land use.

- To ensure that existing and future rights of way are designated, managed and maintained appropriately to minimise potential trespass
- To increase public awareness about the existing rights of way network and the effects of trespass.
- To ensure that landowners and farmers are consulted over appropriate issues relating to present and future land use.

Commercial and Economic Use: To encourage a range of appropriate commercial opportunities and maintain the socio-economic benefits of the estuary.

- To identify the means to establish alternative commercial opportunities and attract new businesses to the area.
- To reserve, where appropriate, riverside land or areas of the harbour with adjacent deep water for river dependent activities.
- To maintain access channels and wharves, subject to technical and environmental considerations.
- To investigate the feasibility of providing landing and storage facilities for the commercial fishermen registered at Cowes.
- To improve the tourism resource and actively promote tourism.

Fisheries: To encourage work that maintains and improves the quality and knowledge of fisheries.

- To contribute to the restoration of the native oyster fishery.
- To expand the knowledge of fisheries and fish populations in the estuary.

Historical and Cultural Resources: To promote an understanding of the Medina's man-made heritage and assist in its conservation.

- To safeguard the cultural resource.
- To promote survey, research and integrate historic information and data to achieve a thorough understanding of the historical and archaeological interest of the estuary.
- To promote a better understanding of the man made heritage resource.

Landscape: To maintain and promote the landscape of the Medina Valley.

- To maintain and enhance the estuarine landscape.
- To preserve and enhance the open rural landscape.
- To promote a high standard of maintenance of the estuary landscape.
- To promote enjoyment, awareness and understanding of the estuary landscape.

Nature Conservation: To conserve and enhance the nature conservation of the estuary and ensure the designated sites responsibilities are met.

- To minimise the adverse impact of development on the nature conservation resource.
- To maximise opportunities to conserve and enhance the nature conservation resource.
- To ensure that appropriate protection is given to designated areas of the estuary
- To minimise disturbance to estuarine habitats and wildlife in recognition of international obligations.
- To monitor and conserve the saltmarsh habitat and where appropriate encourage opportunities for re-creation.
- To achieve co-ordinated, comprehensive information about the nature conservation resource.

Physical Processes: To assist with the coordination and collation of information about coastal processes and encourage further research.

- To develop a comprehensive knowledge base about the physical processes to inform and facilitate decisions.
- To ensure the co-ordination of appropriate coastal protection and flood relief.

Recreation and Leisure: To encourage the provision of access to the water and promote the responsible and sustainable use of the estuary for recreation.

- To provide adequate and appropriate access onto the water.
- To improve the quality and provision of footpaths and cyclepaths.
- To improve facilities for yachtsmen visiting Cowes and Newport Harbours and the Harbour Authorities moorings.
- To promote the responsible use of the estuary as a recreational resource while minimising the conflict with and between other users and interests.

- To improve the water quality of the estuary.

Water Management: To improve water quality and ensure compliance with water management responsibilities.

- To improve the treatment of wastewater within the estuary.
- To ensure that chemical pollutants do not significantly affect water quality.
- To ensure that up to date and comprehensive plans to deal with any oil spill incident exist.

Public Awareness and Education: To increase public awareness of all aspects of the estuary and estuarine resource.

- To increase public awareness and understanding of the estuarine resource.
- To increase awareness and understanding of the range of estuary users.

Research and Monitoring: To encourage and collate research and monitoring in the estuary.

- To develop and co-ordinate programmes of research and monitoring.
- To develop and co-ordinate specific targets which will enable the success of the project to be measured