

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22 March 2023

Water testing in Langstone Harbour

FOR DECISION AND FOR NOTING

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Elizabeth Lloyd

Key Decision: No

Report number: HBC/128/2023

1. Purpose

For a decision on Havant Borough Council's approach and involvement with water quality sampling in Langstone Harbour

2. Recommendation

- a. Cabinet is requested to NOTE the need for water quality sampling in Langstone harbour
- b. Cabinet is requested to RECOMMEND to full Council that :
 1. The Cabinet Lead for Local Plan, Environment and Water Quality be authorised to work with Langstone Harbour Board to put in place a programme of water quality sampling in Langstone Harbour.
 2. Cabinet Lead for Local Plan, Environment and Water Quality to report back to full Council on progress.

3. Executive Summary

- a. During a meeting of the Full Council held Wednesday 22 February 2023 the Council resolved to continue to work closely with partners to monitor the sampling of seawater in Langstone Harbour.
- b. The motion called for Havant Borough Council (HBC) to work with Portsmouth City Council (PCC) to develop regular water quality sampling to understand the environmental, health and safety impact within the harbour
- c. A Meeting was held with Officer's from PCC to understand the scope of the programme of monitoring approved by PCC.

- d. Parallel discussions between HBC and Langstone Harbour Board (LHB) have highlighted that it also has a material interest in understanding current water quality within Langstone Harbour, that it has capacity for the physical collection of samples, and that it is willing to work in partnership with HBC to ensure that the programme is able to deliver a meaningful judgement of water quality.

4. Additional Budgetary Implications

- a. None

5. Background and relationship to Corporate Strategy and supporting strategies and policies

- a. There is no requirement or duty for the Council to assess water quality, work toward the meeting of water quality targets for public health protection, nor to provide the stakeholders with accurate information about the associated risks to health. With specific regard to the public health impacts of water pollution, the Council's duties are limited to its role as a bathing water controller (Beachlands & Eastoke), and insofar as its general role in emergency planning.
- b. However, the waters of both Langstone and Chichester Harbours are known to be popular for many other activities such as kite surfing, wind surfing, paddle boarding, kayaking, sailing etc., and there is significant public interest in their quality as both a leisure destination and for their intrinsic environmental & ecological value.
- c. As part of the Pride in Place theme, the Corporate Strategy highlights that the Council will "aim to take measures to promote and embed environmental matters and consider environmental impacts in all our decisions to help tackle climate change".
- d. The Council is already working closely with the Environment Agency, Portsmouth City Council, Southern Water and the Langstone Harbour Board to ensure our water quality is the best it can be, however the Councils own harbour sampling programme ceased at the close of the 2015 bathing season.
- e. At least two short sea outfalls discharge to Langstone Harbour, carrying storm wastewater when the treatment capacity at Budds Farm is exceeded. Discharges by the sewage undertaker, Southern Water (SW), during or after periods of heavy rainfall are necessary to prevent flooding in urban areas during storm periods which would itself have significant impacts on both human health and the environment. The regulating authority for wastewater discharges is Environment Agency (EA).

- f. The presence of these outfalls, together with network Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO's) has led to significant public concern and media interest in the impact that wastewater treatment works can have upon local water quality.
- g. Some members of the public who undertake recreational water activities have reported ill health following a visit to Langstone Harbour, and local Campaign groups suspect that poor water quality may be the cause.
- h. Whilst Chichester Harbour Conservancy operates an ongoing water quality sampling programme within Chichester Harbour, only limited sampling is available in the public domain in respect of Langstone Harbour, post-dating 2015.
- i. The Council has previously decided not to pursue a discretionary sampling regime, however it is recognised that there is a paucity of recent information relating to water quality within Langstone Harbour, and that it might be an appropriate time to consider how to gather up to date water quality information in order to support informed decision-making.
- j. The proposal would be 7 sampling locations, using an accredited lab for 20 weeks, with weekly collections. The costs of this would be £4,683 +VAT for analysis and some costs for courier services (upper limit of £1000 expected).

6. Options considered

- a. HBC making a financial contribution to PCC's sampling programme. Option not favoured as PCC's current provision would not yield sufficient sampling density within Langstone Harbour.
- b. HBC reinstate a discretionary sampling programme. This option has been considered by HBC officers, relatively recently, and was dismissed at the time.
- c. Making a detailed recommendation to Langstone Harbour Board to achieve stated objectives. This is a favoured option, as Langstone Harbour has access to watercraft, has permanent staff which have the requisite Health & Safety training to operate in a marine environment, and has a routine presence on the water.

7. Resource implications

a. Financial implications

1. Whilst we would expect LHB to manage the collection of samples, and their transit to the laboratory for analysis, there would still be some financial input from the council as there's a legal obligation for the council to part fund LHB at times when their budget runs at a deficit
2. HBC officers may be required to contribute time in a technical capacity to advise on the rationale for the recommended sampling programme, and/or to assist in using the results obtained in the making of appropriate water quality judgements.

Section 151 Officer comments

As per the main body of the report the total cost of this testing regime is likely to be in the region of £5,700 and will be charged to via precept from the Langstone Harbour Board.

Through the precept mechanism Portsmouth City Council would contribute 50% of this. The Council's share of this will be £2,850 and will be met from existing cash limited budgets, for this one-off testing regime.

The officer time for Council will also be met from existing cash limited budgets.

10/3/23

b. Human resources implications

1. none

c. Information governance implications

1. None

d. Climate and environment implications

1. The data collected would allow an informed position to be understood by all users of Langstone Harbour.

e. Other resources implications

1. None

8. Legal implications

No direct legal implications arise would arise as a result of this decision.

Monitoring Officer comments

HBC has no statutory duty or responsibility with regards to water quality. The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for monitoring and classifying bathing water quality at designated bathing waters. The EA regulate the activities of the sewerage undertakers, including permitted releases, and have powers to take enforcement action in relation to pollution of waters. These powers are not available to HBC.

HBC has previously facilitated meetings with Southern Water with a view to addressing the issue of water quality in the Borough and this paper serves as an extension of that initiative and is in accordance with the decision taken recently at full Council on this as referenced earlier in this Report.

15/3/23

9. Risks and mitigations

- a. It assumes that there are sufficient resources available at LHB to undertake sample collection
- b. Technical support for assessment of water quality results may require resources of HBC staff

10. Consultation

- a. None

11. Communications

- a. Communication with local stakeholders would be prudent including Hayling Sewage Watch, Surfers Against Sewage, Havant Matters, and Save our Island.

12. Appendices

- a. Proposed Sampling locations

13. Background papers

- a. None

Agreed and signed off by:

Portfolio Holder: [Cllr Elizabeth Lloyd 15.3.23]

Executive Head: [Neeru Kareer 15.3.23]

Monitoring Officer: [Mark Watkins 15.3.23]

Section 151 Officer: [Wayne Layton 10.3.23]

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Harbour Sample Location Options

Creator: Environmental Control Officer

