

# Guiding Principles of the Western Yar Estuary Management Plan

## 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 British economy if they are to continue to support such a wide range of uses.

The Western Yar Estuary Management Plan (WYEMP) 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 Western Yar by using its resources wisely and in a sustainable way.

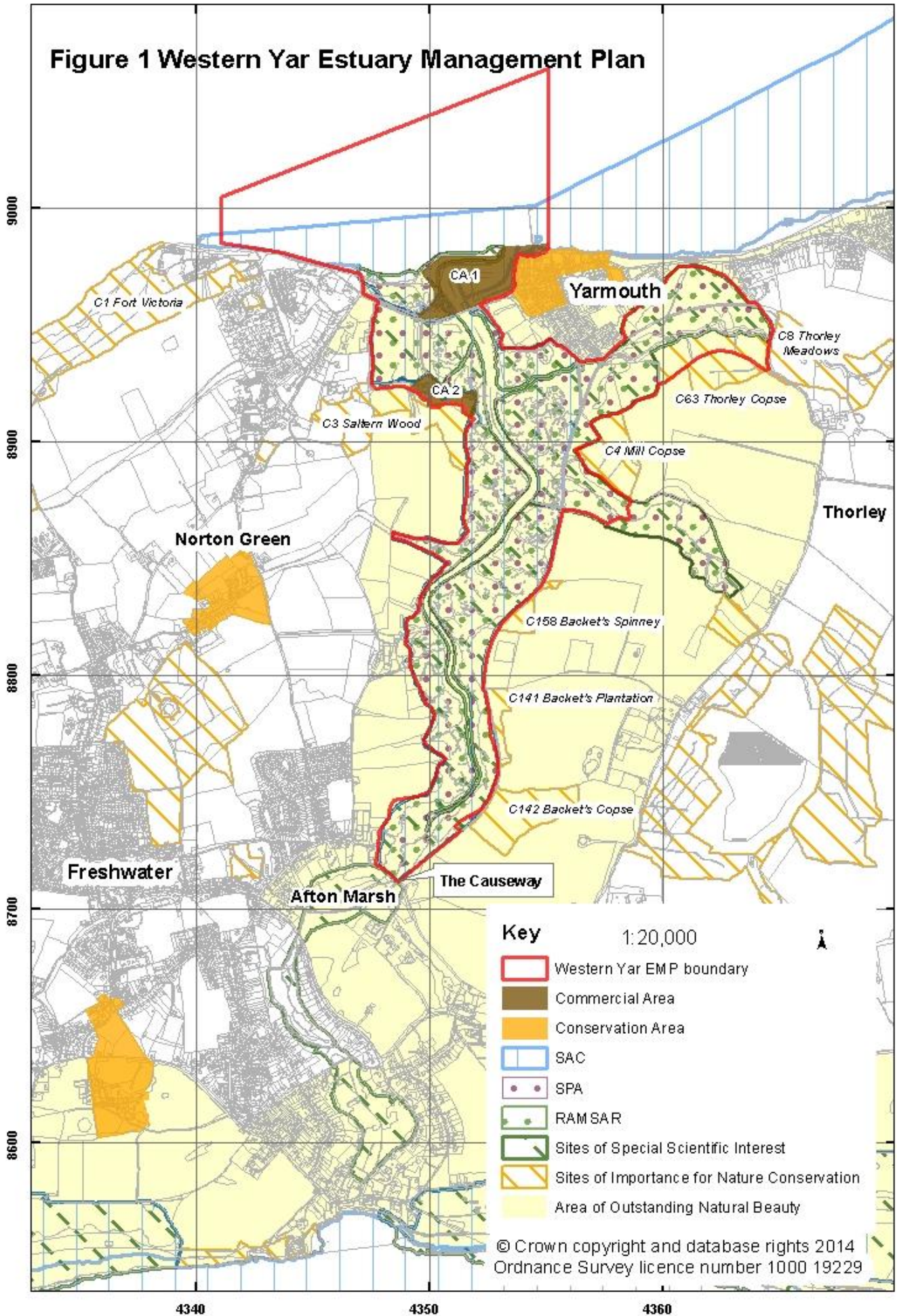
The WYEMP was developed through extensive local consultation and engagement in 1998 and then reviewed and revised by the local stakeholder group in 2004. It was a voluntary initiative with no legal or statutory power but it was considered at the time to be an excellent example of an Estuary Management Plan and was used as a model by other groups around the country.

The Isle of Wight Estuaries Partnership has agreed that the document, although in need of updating, still has a lot to offer in terms of presenting an understanding of the sustainable management of the Western Yar. 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 every year 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.

**THE WESTERN YAR IS A SPECIAL PLACE....BY WORKING TOGETHER  
WE AIM TO SAFEGUARD ITS NATURAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS AND  
ENCOURAGE A STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY.**

**Figure 1 Western Yar Estuary Management Plan**



## Guiding Principles

**Maintaining the Character: Recognition that the Western Yar is generally in good condition and that the special character of the area should be maintained.**

- Ensure that the landscape, cultural and nature conservation resources of the Western Yar estuary are maintained.
- There should be no net increase in the area of moorings established south of the Yar Bridge; efficient use of the present mooring area will be encouraged.
- Appropriate further development should be contained within the Commercial Areas. The remainder of the estuary should be retained as a tranquil area and should be safeguarded from further development or other intensive use that is likely to have an adverse impact on the natural environment.
- In considering the landscape, the balance between open water, the moorings, the dredged channels and the saltings is particularly important in maintaining the character of the area.

**Physical Processes: Allowing the physical and other natural processes within the Western Yar to function with the minimum of human modification.**

- Ensure the natural and physical processes within the estuary continue with the minimum of human modification. Wherever possible restore more natural coastline or processes.
- In line with the Shoreline Management Plan 2, maintain and improve the existing defences to protect people and property from flooding. Future coastal defence should be encouraged to explore soft engineering solutions.
- Any new built development that does not rely upon a coastal location should not be constructed in coastal areas. Development should be avoided in areas that are at risk from either flooding or coastal erosion.

**Encouraging a Strong Local Economy: To encourage a strong economy in Yarmouth, the Harbour and the estuary hinterland.**

- Proposals for new development and/or commercial activity should be encouraged to locate within Commercial Areas 1 and 2 in line with planning policies and other relevant legislation and guidance.
- Development proposals which may generate a significant adverse environmental impact on the EMP area should be discouraged.
- Encourage existing businesses to identify and develop opportunities to reduce the seasonality of trade.
- Ensure commercial fishing activities in the EMP area harvest fin fish and shellfish at levels that are sustainable.
- Encourage the farming community and landowners to continue practices which minimise any adverse environmental impacts, in line with existing legislation and initiatives.
- Discourage mooring and landing of small craft in the sensitive parts of the SSSI, in line with management agreements.

**Landscape Quality: Enhancing the beauty of the estuary both in terms of natural features and historic buildings by ensuring that future development reflects the local character of the area.**

- Any modification of the landscape of the area should adopt a high quality of design, paying particular attention to the needs of the conservation area, visual intrusion associated with incremental development and the cumulative effect of different activities.
- Maintain a level of signage and street furniture that balances the provision of information with minimal adverse visual impact.
- Where appropriate, encourage habitat creation / restoration.

**Pollution: To ensure that the environment of Western Yar is safe, clean and pollution free.**

- Ensure that the discharge and/or release of nutrients into the EMP area is minimised.
- Encourage motor vessels and yachts to adopt a code of good environmental practice and not discharge human waste or litter into the estuary.
- Improve public understanding and awareness of water quality issues in the Western Yar.
- Encourage the statutory agencies to provide the local community with information on water quality and monitoring programmes.
- Noisy recreational activities in the tranquil area should be minimised by the enforcement of the General Directions and the promotion of good practice.
- Light pollution within the whole area should be minimised.

**Access and Public Rights of Way: Encourage and promote public enjoyment of the estuary through careful provision and management of access and rights of way.**

- Access to the estuary waterside should be carefully managed to protect wildlife, sensitive habitats and the rights of private land owners.
- Encourage respect between users of rights of way to enable people of all abilities and interests to enjoy the special experience of the Western Yar estuary.
- The tranquil waters of the estuary south of the bridge should be freely navigable and be used for quiet, water-based recreation which respects its special sensitivity for wildlife.

**Recreation: Maintain the recreational use of the Western Yar through voluntary systems of management and co-operative agreements. Intervention or regulation will only be used when the voluntary approach proves ineffective.**

- Maintain the estuary outside Commercial Areas 1 and 2 as a tranquil place for farming, leisure and recreation recognising the existing commercial activities.
- Provide information to recreational users on access, heritage, safety and sensitive habitats of the Western Yar.
- Monitor current and future activities to establish whether or not they are having an adverse effect on the nature conservation interests of the estuary. Where appropriate, consider mechanisms to improve the voluntary management of such activities.

**Safety and Emergency Planning: Ensure that the Western Yar is a safe place.**

- Make information readily available to assist and improve knowledge of the safety implications of recreation activities on the Western Yar.
- Assist with the promotion of safety information as developed by the Harbour Commissioners and statutory authorities.
- Contribute to the development of relevant emergency contingency plans by provision of information and promotion of the guiding principles of the EMP.
- Ensure that the system of river traffic controls at the bridge is safe and appropriate for the sensitive environment.

**Communication and Raising Awareness: Improve communication between different users of the estuary and ensure that appropriate and high quality information on the EMP is available.**

- The Isle of Wight Estuaries Project will act as the focus for the EMP and maintain and improve communication in the EMP area.
- Encourage existing and proposed management initiatives to take account of the guiding principles of the Western Yar EMP and where appropriate ensure that the Western Yar Estuary is represented on regional initiatives and groups.
- Raise awareness and understanding of the Western Yar and surrounding area including places of interest, public rights of way and its importance for nature conservation.

**Data Management: Identify and prioritise research and information needs.**

- Develop a knowledge base on the Western Yar's physical processes, together with the wider influence of processes operating in the Solent, in order to inform future decisions
- Identify gaps in the understanding of the Western Yar and encourage projects and research to address them.
- Maintain a central point of information on the flora, fauna, human uses and heritage of the Western Yar and make this accessible where possible.
- Ensure that the Guiding Principles and the information on management remain up to date and relevant through regular review.



## **Appendix I: Responsibilities in the Coastal Zone**

The following list is not comprehensive but includes the main statutory authorities and organisations with responsibilities in the coastal zone, specifically in the Western Yar Estuary Management Plan area.



### **European Commission (EC)** ([http://ec.europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm))

The European Commission (EC) is the executive body of the European Union and is responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions, upholding the Union's treaties and day-to-day running of the EU. It represents Europe as a whole rather than the interests of individual countries. The Directives and Regulations and international obligations that Member States have signed up to require them to put in place regulatory and other mechanisms to achieve the EC objectives. Failures or breaches can be challenged in the European Courts.

The Directives under which the UK government has responsibilities in the coastal zone include: Habitats and Species, Shellfish, Bathing Water, Urban Waste Water, Water Framework, Environmental Impact Assessment and Marine Strategy Framework.



### **Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)** ([www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk))

Defra is the UK government department responsible for policy and regulations on environmental, food and rural issues. It has wide ranging and diverse responsibilities as well as some regulatory controls that cross the boundaries of topics including; agriculture, coastal protection and flood defence, tourism, recreation and access and fisheries. Defra is supported by 39 agencies and public bodies all of which help to implement the visions of Government across all topics through a wide range of strategies. It is responsible for policy and regulations on:

- The natural environment, biodiversity, plants and animals
- Sustainable development and the green economy
- Food, farming and fisheries
- Animal health and welfare
- Environmental protection and pollution control
- Rural communities and issues

Defra is the lead Government body and sets the overall national policy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. It provides Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid funding, through the Environment Agency, to local authorities and the Minister continues to confirm the “sanctioned list” of projects for the forthcoming year. Defra does not build or manage flood or coastal erosion defences and does not direct any authorities on which specific projects should be undertaken.

### Marine planning and licensing, aspects of fishing and marine protected area networks.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is an executive non-departmental public body established and given powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. It is responsible to and sponsored by Defra and was established to continue the work of sustainable development in the marine area and to promote the UK government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. The MMO brings together key marine decision-making powers and delivery mechanisms to provide an integrated method of planning, regulating and licensing activity in the marine area. Where flood and coastal erosion risk management works, harbour development and dredging are proposed to take place below the mean high water mark, a marine licence is needed from the MMO.

Key responsibilities of the MMO are:

- implementing a new marine planning system designed to integrate the social requirements, economic potential and environmental imperatives of our seas
- implementing a new streamlined marine licensing regime with clearer, simpler and quicker licensing decisions
- managing UK fishing fleet capacity and UK fisheries quotas
- working with Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to manage a network of marine protected areas (marine conservation zones and European marine sites) designed to preserve vulnerable habitats and species in UK marine waters
- responding to marine emergencies alongside other agencies
- developing an internationally recognised centre of excellence for marine information that supports the MMO's decision-making process.



## Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCAs)

([www.southern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk))

With the introduction of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 the 12 Sea Fisheries Committees (SFCs) that regulated inshore fishing activities in England were replaced by [Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk) (IFCAs) in 2011. These have clearly defined duties, including protection of the marine environment, and greater powers for enforcement. They also have byelaw making powers and parts of the sea bed are now protected for conservation and to preserve key spawning grounds.

IFCAs are Committees that are tasked with the sustainable management of inshore sea fisheries resources in their local area. The Committees are made up of representatives from the constituent local authorities (who provide funding for the IFCA) along with volunteers from across the different sectors that use or are knowledgeable about the inshore marine area, such as commercial and recreational fishermen, environmental groups and marine researchers.

Each of the 10 IFCAs manage a district that covers part of the English coast out to six nautical miles and its inland boundaries align with those of its constituent local authorities. IFCAs also manage sea fisheries resources in estuaries that fall within their districts. The Isle of Wight is covered by the [Southern IFCA](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk) which stretches from the Devon border in the West to Sussex border in the East and covers the entire Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight coastline out to 6 nautical miles from baselines.



## **Environment Agency (EA)** ([www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk))

The Environment Agency is an executive non-departmental public body responsible to and sponsored by Defra. Its principal aims are to protect and improve the environment and to promote sustainable development. It plays a central role in delivering the environmental priorities of central government through its operational and regulatory functions. This includes; pollution prevention and control, waste management, water quality, land quality, air quality, water resources, navigation, conservation, nuclear regulation, recreation and fisheries.

The EA is tasked with the delivery of improvements to water quality across catchments in order to comply with the Water Framework Directive. This includes the modelling and assessment of point and diffuse pollution sources, discharge consents and compliance, impacts of nutrient enrichment and community engagement.

The EA is also the principal flood and coastal risk management operating authority in England. It is a Flood Risk Management Authority and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authority, as defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. As well as managing flood risk from main rivers and the sea, it has an overarching strategic overview role to manage flooding from all sources and coastal erosion. At a local level, the Environment Agency leads on emergency planning for flooding from main rivers, reservoirs and the sea; carries out flood risk management works as appropriate according to its powers; and issues consents for others to carry out flood risk management works.

The EA is responsible for allocating and administering Defra's Grant-in-Aid budget for individual projects and maintenance activities for both its own assets and schemes and local authority schemes under the 1949 Coast Protection Act.



## **Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)** ([www.jncc.defra.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.defra.gov.uk))

The JNCC is the public body that advises the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation. Its role is to provide evidence, information and advice so that decisions are made that protect natural resources and systems. It works on nature conservation issues that affect the UK as a whole and internationally. Its role includes:

- Taking forward issues to inform policy development and providing support to ensure that European and international requirements are understood and implemented through national policies and actions.
- Providing objective advice on the priorities and investment for creating a cost-effective evidence-base for use across the UK. Devising strategies for collecting and using data and providing tools and mechanisms to enable others to make their data freely available.
- Playing a key role in the UK's offshore marine nature conservation including identifying, monitoring and advising on how protected areas are run and providing advice on the impacts of offshore industries.
- Supporting nature conservation in the UK's 14 Overseas Territories and three Crown Dependencies, all of which are important for global biodiversity and geodiversity.

The JNCC's specific responsibilities for offshore marine nature conservation are set out in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and various Regulations that relate to the activities of the offshore petroleum industry. The JNCC has also been appointed by the UK Government as the scientific authority on fauna under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the corresponding EC Regulation.





## **Natural England (NE)** ([www.naturalengland.gov.uk](http://www.naturalengland.gov.uk))

### **Natural environment including marine conservation and seascape issues in England and Wales' territorial waters (from the coast to 12 nautical miles offshore).**

Natural England is an executive non-departmental public body responsible to and sponsored by Defra. It is the Government's advisor on the natural environment and is involved in the management and notification of designated sites, such as National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Together with the JNCC it provides scientific evidence to Defra for the establishment of Marine Conservation Zones and Reference Areas. It also advises on the designation and management of internationally important sites, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar Sites.

Other responsibilities include:

- Providing advice to planners and developers to ensure the natural environment is conserved and enhanced through the planning system
- Providing advice and information on nature conservation to other organisations and individuals;
- Reducing the decline of biodiversity and licensing of protected species across England
- Managing England's green farming schemes
- Issuing licences which permit people to work with protected animals and plants;
- Supporting and carrying out research;
- Implementing Natural England's share of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in England and assisting in the practical application of sustainable development;
- Increasing opportunities for everyone to experience and enjoy the wonders of the natural world
- Designating National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Natural England takes an interest in flood and coastal risk management works in terms of how they can benefit and enhance the natural environment and to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on domestic or international designated sites. Natural England's role is to develop consents and assents with landowners and competent authorities who wish to carry out works on these designated sites. They are also a statutory consultee for responsible authorities who seek their advice on planning permissions, marine and coastal works, and all other developments affecting designated sites.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

## **English Heritage (EH)** ([www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk))

### **Protection and promotion of the historic environment including supporting research and engagement. Responsible for historic buildings, monuments and archaeology.**

English Heritage is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by and responsible to the Department for Media, Culture and Sport. It is the English Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment and its advisory role is exercised on matters related to scheduled monuments, listed buildings and registered parks and gardens. It works in partnership with central government, local authorities, voluntary bodies and the private sector to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

English Heritage's work falls broadly into three main categories:

- Identifying buildings of historical or architectural interest and ancient monuments for protection
- Assisting their owners and other bodies with conservation responsibilities to secure the future of England's historic environment
- Helping the public to appreciate, understand and enjoy the built heritage.

The Crown Estate manages all the tidal land owned by the Crown. This includes most of the seabed within the 12 nautical mile limit and around half the intertidal foreshore around the UK. The surplus revenue (profit) is paid to the Treasury every year for the benefit of the nation. Objectives, which are laid down by Parliament under The Crown Estate Act 1961, include enhancing the value of the estate and the revenue it produces. The responsibilities of TCE are to maintain and enhance the value of the estate and its income over the long term and to do this having regard to good management.

Ownership of the foreshore and sea bed applies only to the “land” or “soil”, not to the water above it. The public have general rights to navigate and fish tidal waters and to anchor or ground vessels but not to place fixed moorings which need consent / licence/ lease from owners. Rights can be regulated by General directions and byelaws e.g. of Harbour Authorities to control navigation. Other public activity on the foreshore is not a legal right but is widely tolerated.

In 1999 The Crown Estate established its programme of Marine Stewardship to provide funding to support practical projects, relevant research, and other initiatives that improve the status and management of the marine estate. Since 2011/12, TCE funds the Coastal Communities Fund which coastal communities may bid for funds connected with regeneration, job creation and the like.



**Isle of Wight Council (IWC)**  
([www.iwight.com](http://www.iwight.com))

As the Local Authority and Planning Authority, the Isle of Wight Council has an input into the regulation of activities in the coastal zone in a number of ways. Planning, land use and development proposals on land throughout the estuary are largely regulated through the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, the implementation of which is the duty of the Planning Authority.

One of the main functions of the Local Planning Authority is to evaluate the potential for change and produce policy based plans and strategies to guide future change, provide certainty for all those with an interest in the Island's future, secure sustainable development and achieve regeneration. The Island Plan (the Isle of Wight's Local Development Framework) provides the basis on which planning decisions are made. The Core Strategy sets out the vision, objectives and spatial strategy, and includes the core policies for guiding future development and land use to address the key planning issues affecting the Island up to 2027. It covers the whole of the Island. The Island Plan Core Strategy was adopted by the Isle of Wight Council on 21 March 2012.

The Isle of Wight Council is also the Coast Protection Authority for the Island. Under the Coast Protection Act 1949 it is empowered to carry out such coast protection works whether within or outside its area as may be needed for the protection of any land in its area. Responsibility for management of the Island's coastal defences against erosion and sea flooding is shared between the Isle of Wight Council and the Environment Agency. The [Shoreline Management Plan](#) is the means by which these organisations determine the best way to look after the coast in a sustainable way for the next 100 years. It is prepared using guidelines set down by Defra, the Government Department with responsibility for setting national policy for defence of the coastline.

The IWC also has an input to emergency planning. In a major emergency the functional role is to support the emergency services during the 'life-saving' phase and to provide those services it considers required for the well-being of those in distress. Principal responsibility for the clean up of the coastline in the event of an oil spill also lies with the IWC, which has powers to incur expenditure to alleviate the effects of an emergency or disaster.



## Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk))

Matters relating to health and safety, including development at or near to a harbour area. This includes the Port Marine Safety Code, key guidance for Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners.



## Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners (YHC)

([www.yarmouth-harbour.co.uk](http://www.yarmouth-harbour.co.uk))

Yarmouth Harbour is a Trust Port formed under The Yarmouth (Isle of Wight) Pier and Harbour Orders (Cowes and Yarmouth) Confirmation Order of 1931. Like all Trust Ports, it is an independent statutory body run by a board of trustees, known as Commissioners. It is an organisation that is non-profit making but is required to be run commercially in order to reinvest all surplus back into the harbour for the benefit of harbour stakeholders.

YHC is the statutory harbour authority that manages Yarmouth Harbour under the 1931 Act. Its area of jurisdiction extends approximately half a mile offshore between Fort Victoria pier to the west and 100 metres east beyond Yarmouth Pier. It includes the inner harbour and the Western Yar Estuary to the Causeway at Freshwater.

YHC is accountable to the Department of Transport under its document 'Modernising Trust Ports' but also has to take into account the views of all existing and potential stakeholders, mainly represented through the Yarmouth Harbour Advisory Committee (YHAC). In 2011 a new harbour revision order gave YHC power of General Directions. The new General Directions came into force in March 2012 and replaced the 1973 byelaws.



## Southern Water

([www.southernwater.co.uk](http://www.southernwater.co.uk))

Southern Water is responsible for water and wastewater services on the Isle of Wight and it supplies over 30 million litres of water per day from 10 water supply works. The company operates 786km of sewer, 114 pumping stations and 22 sewage treatment works that cleanse waste water and safely discharge it to the environment. Discharge licences are provided and monitored by the Environment Agency.

## Private landowners

Most of the frontage of the Western Yar is privately owned. In terms of coast protection, private landowners do not have a duty to protect their frontages although under the Coast Protection Act 1949, the coast protection authority may require them to take action to do so. Landowners are consulted in the development of the Shoreline Management Plan and other coastal strategies.

For conservation purposes, landowners work with Natural England and the local authority to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Similarly, landowners consult with the relevant authority to ensure compliance with legislation governing all forms of land use and other activities.

# Appendix II: Nature conservation legislation and designations

## National designations

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest are notified by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They aim to safeguard the nature conservation value of an area by establishing a consultation system between Natural England and the owners and managers of the land. Natural England notifies landowners/occupiers of the sites conservation interest and the activities which could cause damage - known as 'Operations Likely to Damage the Special interest' (OLDS). The landowner/occupier is required to consult with Natural England before carrying out any OLD on the site, or any operation adjacent to the site which could cause damage. This consultation process enables Natural England to advise over ways of managing the land which takes into account the special interest of the site.

The Western Yar EMP area contains the Yar Estuary SSSI (shown in Figure 1 of the Guiding Principles).

## International designations

There are a number of international nature conservation designations which are of relevance to the Western Yar Estuary. The background and implications of these designations are important considerations in the overall management of the area. The three relevant designations are the Ramsar site, Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation (which together are known as Natura 2000 sites) and are explained below.

### Ramsar Sites

Ramsar sites are designated under the 'Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitats'. It ensures that special measures are taken to protect internationally important wetlands. They are called Ramsar sites because they were identified by the signatory states to the international convention that was held in Ramsar, Iran. In the UK the sites are identified by Natural England on behalf of the Government. Areas which are designated as Ramsar sites are often also Special Protection Areas.

### Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas (The Natura 2000 sites)

Natura 2000 is the title for the network of areas designated to conserve natural habitats and species of wildlife which are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community. The term Natura 2000 comes from the 1992 EC Habitats Directive the network includes two types of area: a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) classified under the Habitats Directive and; a Special Protection Area (SPA) classified under the Birds Directive. The SAC is designated where the site supports certain species or contains certain types of habitats (listed in the Habitats Directive) and the SPA is designated where an area supports significant numbers of wild birds and their habitats. Some sites may be designated as both SPA and SAC.

Where the designated area includes areas covered continuously or intermittently by tidal waters, it is described as a 'European marine site'. There are two European marine sites relevant to the Western Yar Estuary: The Solent & Southampton Water SPA / Ramsar and; the Solent Maritime SAC. The Solent and Southampton Water SPA / Ramsar is based on the SSSI network on the north coast of the Isle of Wight, Western Solent and Southampton Water and recognises the importance of these intertidal and estuarine areas for overwintering and breeding waterfowl. The Solent Maritime SAC forms a complex of interlinked sites of importance for a range of marine, coastal and maritime habitats. The particular features whose international importance has been recognised are the estuaries, Atlantic saltmeadows and cordgrass swards.

## **The implications of the international designations.**

The main aim of the Habitats Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural requirements and local and regional characteristics. The UK Government is required to ensure that there is no deterioration of: i) the habitats themselves; ii) the habitats of the species; or, iii) the disturbance of the species for which the site has been designated.

To ensure the above, any activities, plans or projects likely to have a significant effect on the conservation status of the features for which the site is designated, shall be subject to assessment. This is the case whether they are inside or outside the European marine site. Generally, such plans and projects may proceed only when it has been ascertained that they will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. However in certain cases where it has been shown that the plan or project will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site, the plan or project may still go ahead if it can be shown that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest of an economic or social nature and that there are no alternative solutions. In such cases compensatory measures are necessary to ensure the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network. This decision will always be taken by the Secretary of State.

The Habitats Regulations state that a single management scheme may be written for each European marine site. Where European marine sites overlap, only one management scheme may be written. The Relevant Authorities (those authorities with statutory responsibilities in the marine and coastal environments), form a management group with responsibility for producing and implementing the plan, but Government Policy also states that it should be produced in full consultation with other interested parties such as user group representatives and voluntary conservation organisations.

The Management Plan for the Solent sites of which the Western Yar estuary is a component is managed by the Solent Forum ([www.solentforum.org](http://www.solentforum.org)), a coastal partnership.