

In place of a Port Solent Neighbourhood Plan¹

Input to local planning initiatives by residents tends to be reactive and can often be contentious. In 2012 the Government introduced Neighbourhood Planning via the Localism Act (ref. 1) as a means to promote the active involvement of communities in shaping their future environment. The take-up nationwide was impressive and the results for local communities encouraging. It remains to be seen whether new town planning and building legislation promised by the Government after the December 2019 General Election will allow for such participation to continue.

RAPS exists primarily to protect and cherish Port Solent's unique character. At its 2015 AGM, Penny Mordaunt and Councillor John Ferrett encouraged residents to engage with neighbourhood planning on the basis of those stated aims. Recalling Councillor Mike Hancock's 2010 address to a crowded meeting in the Port House (then called the Quayside) the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Port Solent seemed prudent. In that address he told Port Solent residents that Portsmouth City Council was pursuing four options for the future of Port Solent, all of which envisaged the construction of a large housing estate south of the marina. Three of the options would have effectively closed down the marina, while the fourth would have severely limited marina operations.

A group of concerned residents, including RAPS Chair John Crooks, set up an *ad hoc* community working party to organise a protest. A website was set up and eleven meetings were held in 2010 and 2011. A planning application meeting with Portsmouth City Council was held on October 5th 2011 at the Guildhall, attended by members of the Community Working Party, which resulted in a [published report](#) (ref 9). In that report, the number of houses to be built is reduced to 500, a much more manageable amount than originally proposed, which would enable the marina to continue to function.

The final meeting of the Working Party was on Aug 14 2012. Members of the Working Party were concerned that they were a self-elected body, and needed a mandate from the Port Solent community as a whole. To this end, they set up an Alliance. Delegates to the Alliance were to be elected at the AGMs of the various residents' association and the Port Solent Yacht Club. John Crooks was elected as the PSYC delegate. The tragic and premature death of the Chair of the Alliance, Peter Read, in summer 2013 caused the

¹ *This is a reduced version, brought up to date, of the Neighbourhood Planning text that appeared 2017-2020 on the old RAPS Website. That document has been archived.*

Alliance to go into hibernation, hence the idea that it could be re-awakened as a Neighbourhood Forum.

The RAPS Committee put in many hours to bring that about but by the end of 2018 three things were abundantly clear:

1. the immediate threat of large-scale re-development at Port Solent had receded;
2. developments on the periphery of Port Solent, the Horsea Island Country Park and Tipner West had emerged as real issues to deal with that would need representation but not the extent and sophistication of a Neighbourhood Forum and Plan;
3. There was little perceived willingness on the part of business and residents at Port Solent to put in the effort required to tackle the conditions that needed to be met in order to formulate and publish a Neighbourhood Plan, not least the holding of a referendum to validate it.

Therefore the RAPS Committee fell back on ensuring that regular consultation with the City Council took place through the appointment of a working party on planning that would seek to address live issues, such as the Country Park and Tipner West.

The legacy of more than six years work remains valid, however, in the form of a list of policies taken from the [Planning Inspector's Report](#) of January 2012:

- the aim is to maintain and enhance the marina character of Port Solent and realise the opportunities presented to create a sustainable mixed use development, whilst complementing the proposals at Horsea Island and Tipner;
- Port Solent may provide approximately 500 additional dwellings, together with a local centre (the Boardwalk), and 3.4ha for marina related operations (including the retention of the existing boat hoist);
- the existing open space immediately south of Marina Keep (an important feeding site for Brent geese) will be protected;

- to accommodate this level of development, highway improvements to Port Way and the junction with the A27, including access capacity improvements to the HWRC, may be required. The development must also ensure the highways layout is able to accommodate a link road adjacent to the Horsea Island Country Park to the proposed development at Horsea Island;
- in addition, any development will need to:
 1. include measures to avoid and mitigate any adverse effect on the integrity of European sites, in particular the Brent goose feeding site south of Marina Keep as well as the high tide wader roosts;
 2. include measures to avoid and mitigate the impact on the Portsmouth Harbour SSSI;
 3. include measures to deal with the issue of land contamination, including measures to ensure the future management and maintenance of gas venting can be adequately regulated;
 4. improve flood defences to ensure the site is defended against a 1 in 1000 year flood event;
 5. have appropriate separation of foul and surface water;
 6. connect to the eastern interceptor sewer in conjunction with planned development at Horsea Island and Tipner;
 7. connect to the new electricity sub station in conjunction with planned development at Horsea Island and Tipner;
 8. contribute towards community and/or health facilities in conjunction with planned development at Horsea Island and Tipner as necessary;
 9. contribute towards increasing the capacity of nearby schools as necessary;
 10. contribute towards the delivery of the bridge link;

11. improve facilities for cycling and walking linked to, and enhancing, the existing networks, including access to the Horsea Island Country Park;
12. provide sufficient car parking to serve the Boardwalk, the marina operations and any new development;
13. safeguard the retail and leisure uses at Port Solent and complement the designated the local centre (The Boardwalk);
14. ensure the amenity of occupiers / users of any new development can be adequately protected from any harmful noise impact from, for example, the motorway;
15. appreciate, take into account and where appropriate protect view points and the wider visual impact across Portsmouth Harbour, including the impact on Portchester Castle;
16. provide high quality designed buildings to complement, in design and scale, the existing residential dwellings;
17. provide good quality public realm and landscaping in any new development proposals including measures to reduce the impact on the more sensitive nature conservation sites;
18. minimise the visual impact of any proposed car parking; and
19. provide an indicative masterplan as part of any planning application to ensure the coordinated development of Port Solent and Horsea Island.

It is important to understand that residents can realistically only contribute a finer grain of detail to City Council planning intentions. With regard to housing, for instance (policy no. 16 above), we can only specify more units than are in an adopted plan, not less, but we can be concerned about details of character and design and focus on impact, e.g. education and health provisions, or other community needs.

References (taken from earlier version, not necessarily included in this one)

ref 1 Localism Act (2011)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

ref 2 Town and Country Planning Act (1990)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/contents>

ref 3 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents/made>

ref 4 Planning Practice Guidance - Neighbourhood Planning (ID: 41 9.2.2015)

<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/>

ref 5 Portsmouth Core Strategy (2012)

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/pln-portsmouth-plan-post-adoption.pdf> (Port Solent and Horsea at pp37-)

ref 6 Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 20125

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/pdfs/uksi_20120637_en.pdf

ref 7 Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2015) - nb: successful referendum Nov. 2015

<http://www.lewes.gov.uk/planning/22190.asp>

ref 8 Milton Neighbourhood Plan (2015-)

<http://miltonplan.org.uk/>

ref 9 Report to Portsmouth City Council, by David Hogger (10th January 2012) [https://](https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/pln-portsmouth-plan-inspectors-report-jan12.pdf)

www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/pln-portsmouth-plan-inspectors-report-jan12.pdf

ref 10 City deal sites: Tipner & Horsea Island regeneration

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/development-and-planning/regeneration/city-deal-sites.aspx>