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Sent: 17 September 2012 16:42
To: info@solentforum.org
Cc: Thompson, Simon (NE); Cameron, Rob (NE)
Subject: Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project - update

Hello Karen

I am sending you this on behalf of Simon who is on annual leave this week but was keen for the group to receive this asap.

Thank you for sending through the agenda and papers for the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project (SDMP) Steering Group Meeting. As you may already know Vanessa Burley has now left Natural England and Simon Thompson has picked up the SDMP work and will be managing Natural England's involvement going forward. Simon's work has been focused on the Solent Coast and South Hampshire for the last few years so is well placed to take up this role. Unfortunately, due to leave commitments, Simon will be unable to attend the steering group meeting but he will be more than happy to provide answers to any questions in writing upon his return.

To provide you with an update on progress with regard to the Peer Review of the scientific evidence, we unfortunately did not receive any tender responses to undertake the work. Natural England has, therefore, had to re-advertise the Peer Review Invitation to Tender and this new advert went live on 11th September. We have contacted a number of organisations to inform them of the opportunity to tender for the work and given the positive reactions we have received so far we are confident that the tender will be successfully let. Clearly the failure to let the contract following the initial Invitation to Tender will lead to a delay but we are hopeful of completing the Peer Review by the end of the calendar year but obviously we cannot provide a finalised timetable until a contractor has been appointed.

Finally, we would like to reassure those members of the group from Local Planning Authorities that, with regard to the recent letter issued by the Solent Forum, that the scenario of Natural England objecting to new residential development in South Hampshire is very much a last resort. The key reason behind the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project is to provide robust and evidenced mitigation options which will enable the proposed residential development to go ahead whilst avoiding a significant impact on the European sites due to increased levels of recreation. Natural England remain committed to working with the Local Planning Authorities and the Solent Forum to develop a solution.

If you have any other questions please direct them to Simon Thompson at the contact details below:

simon.thompson@naturalengland.org.uk

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