

A Local Growth Plan for Hampshire and the Solent – Call for evidence

Response form

Part 1 – Organisation details

Organisation name: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Where is your organisation based (address including postcode)? Beechcroft House, Vicarage Lane, Curdridge, SO32 2DP

Which of the following best describes your organisation (tick one)?

- Local authority []
- Other public body []
- University []
- Further education college []
- Business / private for profit []
- Business representative organisation []
- Voluntary and community sector / private non-profit [x]

Organisation size (tick one)

- Fewer than 50 staff []
- 50 to 249 staff [x]
- 250 or more staff []

This call for evidence is a joint venture by the four upper tier local authorities within the Hampshire and the Solent region. For information on how your details will be used please refer to the privacy notices included below:

[Portsmouth City Council](#)

[Southampton City Council](#)

[Isle of Wight City Council](#)

[Hampshire County Council](#)

Part 2 – Evidence

Please provide us with any work that you have undertaken that would contribute to the evidence base for the Local Growth Plan for Hampshire and the Solent, and which is no more than five years old. This may include (but is not limited to) research, analysis, surveys, economic assessments, economic strategies or plans, and other reports. The work must relate to at least part of the geographic area covered by Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton councils, but may relate to only part of this area (e.g. a particular place within the region), or to a wider geographic area which includes all or part of Hampshire and the Solent.

Please list the documents you are sending to us in the table below. For each: either insert a link to a published document in the table; or provide a separate attachment, with the file name inserted in the table.

Document	Insert link or attachment file name
A Nature Positive Economy (Arup/ HIWWT 2025)	FINAL nature positive economy report_28.10.25.pdf
Nature as Infrastructure article (Debbie Tann, 2026)	Nature as Infrastructure: From False Choices to Shared Solutions LinkedIn
Solent Growth and Prosperity Strategy (SGP)	SGPS-Jan-2025.pdf
Solent State of Nature Report, (Solent Seascape Project, 2025)	Solent-State-of-Nature-Report-2024-v4-compressed.pdf
Natural Wealth – Natural Capital Report (Hampshire and Isle of Wight LNP, 2022)	https://hantswightlnp.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022_04_natural-wealth_lnp_final.pdf
Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)	Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire Environment Hampshire County Council
Isle of Wight Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)	Island Nature
Solent LEP Low Carbon Skills Report	https://solentpartners.com/
Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan	https://www.hampshirechamber.co.uk/
Dasgupta Review of Biodiversity and Economics, (HMT, 2021)	Final Report - The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review - GOV.UK
State of Natural Capital Report for England 2024 – risks to nature and why it matters (NERR137)	https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6683489974616064
Biodiversity and national security (DEFRA, 2026)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-security-assessment-on-global-biodiversity-loss-ecosystem-collapse-and-national-security
Assessing the multiple benefits of natural flood management	Assessing the multiple benefits of NFM A06.indd

(Wildlife Trusts, 2025)	
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/climate-change-risk-assessment-2022
Mobilising Green Finance Strategy (UK Government, 2023)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-finance-strategy
Environmental Sustainability and housing growth (Environmental Audit Committee, 2025)	Environmental sustainability and housing growth
Mental Health & Nature Access (NIHR, 2023)	https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/alert/access-to-green-and-blue-spaces-linked-to-better-mental-health/

Part 3 – Views on shared priorities (optional)

If you wish to do so, please provide your view on what some of the “shared priorities” for Hampshire and the Solent could include. Please briefly describe up to three potential priorities, including a brief rationale for each, without exceeding 500 words in total.

Please refer to part 4 of the following guidance:

[Guidance for Mayoral Strategic Authorities on developing Local Growth Plans - GOV.UK](#)

You may also find it useful to review the shared priorities agreed by existing Mayoral Strategic Authorities, available here:

[Agreed shared Local Growth Plan priorities - GOV.UK](#)

1. Nature-Positive Growth and Economic Resilience

Positioning nature recovery as essential economic infrastructure is the region’s most significant opportunity to support sustainable growth and manage long-term risk. Evidence from the Climate Change Committee, the Dasgupta Review and research about the local economy we commissioned from Arup, all demonstrate that healthy ecosystems underpin productivity, climate resilience and human wellbeing, and that failure to invest in nature represents a material risk to economic growth across housing, infrastructure and the region’s key economic sectors including maritime, tourism and agriculture.

Hampshire and the Solent are well placed to lead a nature-positive green economy, benefitting from internationally important natural assets (including marine and freshwater environments), and a strong track record in pioneering nature-based solutions, including nutrient neutrality and biodiversity markets. These approaches have already demonstrated their ability to unlock development, attract private investment, create skilled employment and improve the natural environment (e.g. by reducing pollution/increasing biodiversity).

2. Skills and Workforce for Nature-Based Industries

Delivering a nature-positive growth strategy requires a workforce equipped with the skills needed for nature recovery, sustainable land management, green infrastructure, environmental services and nature-based tourism. Aligning skills provision with emerging green markets will support productivity, inclusive growth and labour-market resilience, particularly in rural and coastal communities.

3. Strategic Spatial Planning, Nature Recovery and Sustainable Places

A coordinated spatial planning approach is essential to deliver sustainable growth while reversing nature's decline. Integrating Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) into plan-making and investment decisions will ensure the maintenance and enhancement of natural capital, create high-quality places to live and work. Strategic planning and investment in green infrastructure will support health and wellbeing, climate adaptation and alleviate recreational pressure on high-value and sensitive habitats, whilst enabling increased access to (more robust) nature close to where people live and work.

This approach will reduce planning risk, unlock development, and ensure growth delivers long-term environmental, social and economic benefits.

4. Nature-Led Tourism and the Visitor Economy

The region's natural environment is a critical driver of the visitor economy and a key component of place competitiveness. In particular, the National Parks, Areas of Natural Beauty (AONB) and Isle of Wight Biosphere, as well as the popular coastline all act as popular visitor destinations, contributing significantly to local employment and economic value.

Investment in nature recovery and high-quality green and blue spaces will sustain and enhance the visitor economy. Priority should be given to the promotion of nature-based and low-impact tourism that strengthens local economies while protecting the natural capital on which the sector depends.

By embedding nature at the heart of tourism, the region can support resilient, high-value visitor growth whilst also harnessing the wider ecosystem benefits from a thriving natural environment.

Part 4 – Views on priority projects (optional)

If you wish to do so, please provide your view on what some of the “priority projects” for Hampshire and the Solent could include. Please briefly describe up to three projects, including a brief rationale for each, without exceeding 500 words in total. Priority projects can be projected to start delivery in the short, medium or long term.

Please refer to part 5 of the following guidance:

[Guidance for Mayoral Strategic Authorities on developing Local Growth Plans - GOV.UK](#)

Project 1. Strategic, Co-ordinated Investment in Nature Recovery

Nature should have a strong strategic voice on the Combined Authority board, driving a nature-positive vision for the region with proactive investment, delivered through:

a. Strategic Environmental Mitigation and Recovery Programme

A region-wide programme to deliver strategic, upfront environmental mitigation and nature recovery at scale, unlocking housing and infrastructure growth while meeting statutory obligations.

- Creation of an Environmental Mitigation and Recovery Fund, with public seed funding to crowd-in private and ESG-aligned investment (including TNFD-compliant finance).
- Coordinated delivery of nutrient neutrality, Biodiversity Net Gain and compensation for unavoidable habitat loss through strategic mitigation sites.

b. Nature Recovery Network Delivery Programme

Targeted investment to implement Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)- delivering biodiversity recovery, climate resilience and ecosystem services.

- Strategic habitat creation and restoration in priority LNRS areas, ensuring connectivity and improved ecological resilience.
- Integration with flood management, water quality improvement and climate adaptation objectives.
- Targeted investment through strategic mitigation and nature-based solutions (as above).

Project 2. Planning and Placemaking

Spatial Development Strategies and Local Plans must ensure that land-use decisions are based on robust evidence and deliver benefits for economic growth, ecological and societal health.

a. Green Infrastructure and Healthy Places Programme

Investment in green infrastructure to support sustainable growth, public health and productivity, while reducing pressure on sensitive sites.

- Delivery of new country parks, green corridors and accessible natural greenspace linked to housing and employment growth areas.
- Strategic access planning to manage visitor pressure and protect high-value, sensitive habitats.
- Integration of green infrastructure into transport, housing and regeneration schemes.

b. Climate and Nature Risk, Data and Investment Planning Tool

A region-wide evidence and decision-support programme to quantify climate and nature-related risks and opportunities and guide future investment.

- Spatial mapping of environmental risk exposure to businesses, infrastructure and communities.
- Identification of land and investment requirements to meet mitigation and recovery needs under growth and climate scenarios.
- A shared data platform to support spatial planning, investment prioritisation and regulatory compliance.

Project 3. Growing the Nature Economy

Transitioning to a climate and nature-positive economic model offers huge growth potential in itself. Targeted support is needed to develop talent and nurture emerging commercial markets.

a. Green Skills and Nature-Based Employment Programme

Workforce development for green and nature-based industries.

- Training and reskilling initiatives aligned with employer demand in nature recovery, land management and environmental services.
- Support for rural and coastal employment pathways linked to nature-based growth sectors.
- Partnerships between employers, education providers and delivery organisations.

b. Nature-Positive Enterprises

Investment to support sectors of the economy highly dependent on nature and natural resources with growth potential.

- Strategic investment in high-value, low-impact tourism, to sustain demand whilst investing in restoring and protecting critical natural assets.
- Visitor infrastructure to balance access, experience and environmental protection.
- Promotion of regenerative farming and high-quality local food, leading to positive social, health and nature outcomes and boosting the rural economy.
- Supporting transition to nature-positive farming, including targeted support for new entry regenerative farmers.
- Supporting food partnerships, marketing of sustainable local food and links with tourism.

Part 5 – How we will use your information

Please note that information (including quotations) from the evidence and views you have provided will be used in a published report, and in other published documents in future, and may be attributed to your organisation. The published report will also include the name of your organisation in a list of respondents to this call for evidence. **If you do not wish the report to include the name of your organisation, please tick this box: []**

Please email this form plus any attachments to HatS.Devolution@southampton.gov.uk Please include “Local Growth Plan call for evidence” in the subject line of your email.

