

Statement of Purpose

Visions for the future of Devon Maritime Forum:

“The Devon Maritime Forum is a key partnership for voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations that have a stake in marine and coastal issues in Devon. We are independent, neutral and inclusive. We aim to deliver sustainability for our coasts and seas through Integrated Coastal Zone Management - by championing marine issues and wider marine management actions.”

The Partnership

The Devon Maritime Forum is funded by a variety of bodies who value access to a broad network of maritime stakeholders and the benefits of working together through an independent partnership. They value marine and coastal environments, and the important roles these play in the lives of many people. They understand that the complex challenges facing our coasts and seas are best addressed through working together. The Maritime Forum serves as a focal point for action and discussion, taking a pro-active role in highlighting issues, championing best practice and encouraging the sharing of information. The partners at present are listed below:

- Devon County Council
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Devon Wildlife Trust
- South West Water
- University of Plymouth
- The National Trust

The aims of the Devon Maritime Forum are to:

- Promote the fundamental value, protection and restoration of the maritime environment by acting as a ‘champion of the sea’
- Raise the profile of people working on the coast, highlighting their dedication, aspirations and concerns
- Promote the use of our coasts and seas as places of opportunity for sustainable marine industries
- Provide a platform for all sectors, enabling each to have a stronger voice in maritime issues
- Facilitate conflict resolution by supporting balanced debate, partnership-working and fostering engagement in coastal issues
- Play a leading advocacy role for maritime Devon in order to highlight priorities and lobby effectively at a strategic level
- Place marine and coastal issues at the heart of local, regional and national policy development

The Forum will:

- Take a pro-active role in all areas of operation
- Expand its membership to reflect all maritime sectors in order to generate balanced debate and robust decision-making
- Retain its independence and neutrality in order to find creative solutions and common ground through stakeholder dialogue and participation
- Take action by advocating the inclusion and consideration of marine issues in the development of new policies such as Local Area Agreement negotiations and other changes in local governance
- Strengthen lobbying roles at local, county and national levels
- Respond to consultations effectively and help stakeholders understand new legislation
- Facilitate the sharing of best practice

Constitution:

The constitution of the Forum is evolving to reflect its growing influence, and the need for it to remain flexible and accountable to its membership in a changing political landscape.

1. Steering Group

The Steering Group at present consists of funding partners, Forum Co-ordinator and other members by invitation when appropriate. This group will continue to perform the executive functions of managing the business of the Forum related to budgets, work programmes and project development.

2. Consultative Group

We aim to establish a broader Consultative Group to reflect the diverse interests of the membership. The function of this group will be to focus on current and forthcoming issues, and to provide steerage on the direction the Forum takes with respect to these. It will be constituted from a representative cross section of relevant sectors such as recreation, fishing, commerce and academia. It will also include the chairs of any 'Task and Finish' groups that are active at the time, as well as the Chair of the Forum and all members of the Steering Group as required.

3. Forum Co-ordinator

The Forum Co-ordinator operates from the offices of Devon County Council and is line-managed by their Coastal Officer. The work of the Forum Co-ordinator is monitored and directed by the Steering Group and is dictated by the needs of the partnership as a whole – members and funding bodies. The Forum Co-ordinator retains independence of action, answering to the partnership. The Coastal Officer has a dual role, line-managing the post as well as representing Devon County Council as the Chair of the Steering Group.

4. Task and Finish Action Groups

'Task and Finish' groups will be constituted where there is an identified need. This need will come from within the membership itself, and each group will only have a life for as long as the need exists. The Chairs of these groups will sit on the Consultative Group. There may be occasion for longer-standing groups such as one formed from representatives of the different coastal partnerships and coastal designations (e.g Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) operating in Devon. There would then be formal representation from this group on the Consultative Group.

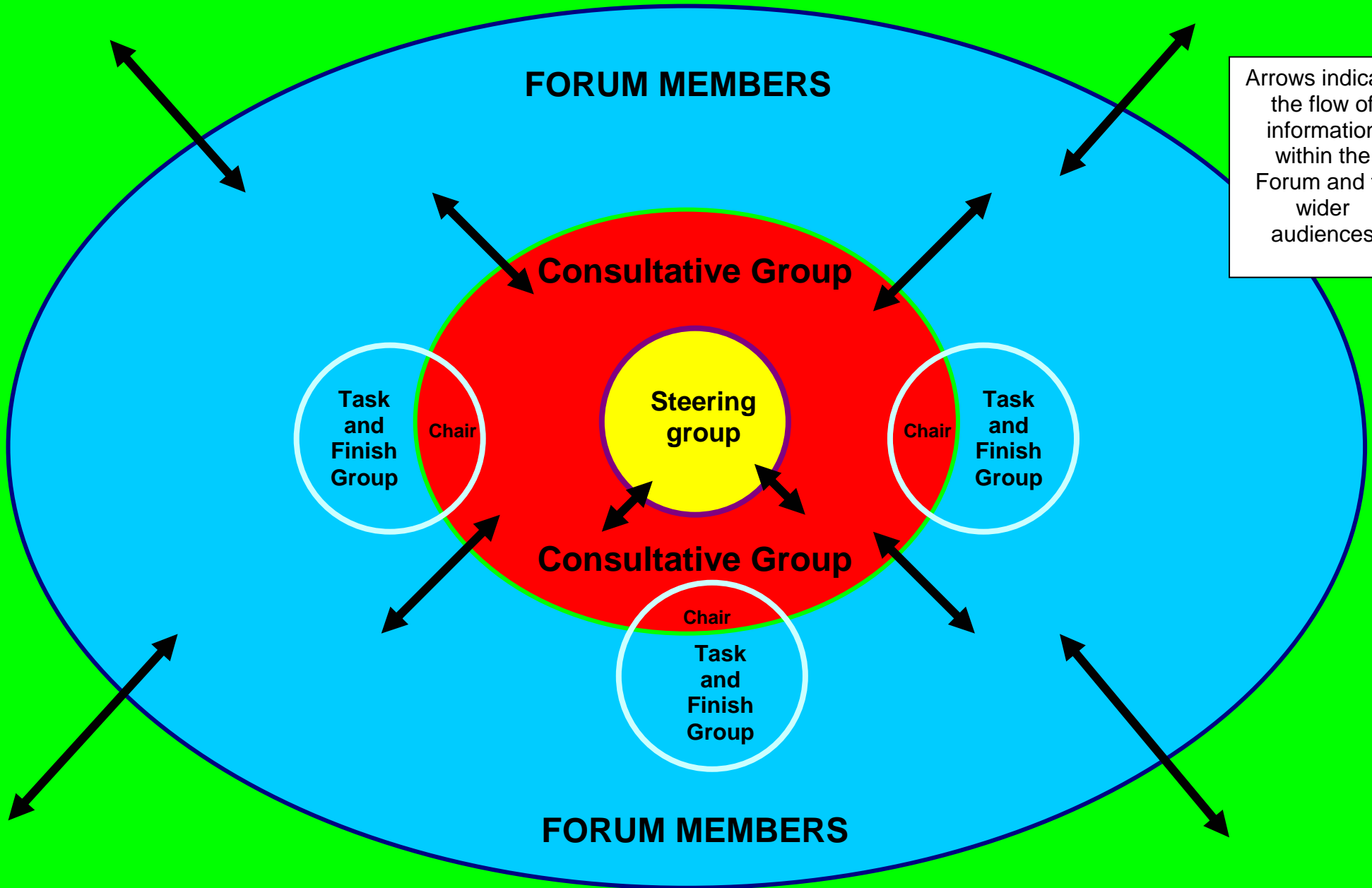
5. Membership

The Forum operates on behalf of its membership and as such any works undertaken need to reflect their aspirations and interests. Where these are in conflict across the membership it is important to find common ground. This is achieved through open dialogue. Membership at present is free and open to relevant stakeholder organisations and businesses. At present individual, unaffiliated members of the public with a strong interest in coastal issues are encouraged to become involved in their local coastal and estuary partnerships. The Devon Maritime Forum values all input and commitment to sustainability but aims to retain a strategic overview. Local interest is best fed in through local networks with these then feeding directly in to the Forum itself.

The Devon Maritime Forum is expanding to reflect a wide cross section of sectors. This will include:

- Local authorities
- Government agencies
- Maritime landowners and access holders
- Economic and business partnerships
- Private, voluntary and environment sectors
- SWRDA
- Fishing industry
- Commercial shipping and ports
- Aggregate and dredging interests
- Academic and scientific communities
- Cultural and heritage sector
- Recreation activities
- Education and awareness-raising organisations
- Business associations and clusters
- Marine safety organisations
- Local coastal partnerships
- Designated areas such as Heritage Coasts, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks
- Planning and emergency response teams

Devon Maritime Forum Constitution



Arrows indicate the flow of information within the Forum and to wider audiences