

# SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

## Joint Advisory Committee Meeting



11.30am-2.00pm, Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon

### Minutes

---

**Chair: Cllr Peter Tyzack**

**ACTION**

**Attendees (36)**

Richard Aston, South Gloucestershire Council  
Chris Barrow, Bristol City Council  
Zoe Banks, Cardiff Council  
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University  
Natasha Barker, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP) Officer  
Angus Bloomfield, Natural England  
Peter Byrant, North Somerset Council  
Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean District Council  
Cllr John Cordwell, Gloucestershire County Council  
Richard Dunn, Sedgemoor District Council  
Vicky Durston, Environment Agency  
Steve Edwards, Vale of Glamorgan  
Tim Far, Regional Flood Defence Committee  
Nigel Hale, South Gloucestershire Council  
Dave Harris, Monmouthshire County Council (SECG Chairman)  
Kate Hoare, Bristol City Council  
Susan Howard Countryside Council for Wales  
Richard Horrocks, Environment Agency  
Patrick Kearon, Bristol Port Company  
Mathew Lewis, Monmouthshire County Council (ASERA Chairman)  
Eve Leegwater, Environment Agency  
John Marks, Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Don Metcalfe, Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers  
Martin Mills, Environment Agency  
Rhys Morgan, Environment Agency Wales  
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council  
Dave Norman  
Angela Proctor, Environment Agency (North Devon & Somerset Coastal Group)  
Andrew Ross, Caldicot Internal Drainage Board  
Susan Russell, Environment Agency  
Rebecca Seaman, Somerset County Council  
Ken Tatem, Environment Agency  
Cllr Humphrey Temperley, Environment Agency & Devon County Council  
Caroline Thomas, Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust  
Cllr Peter Tyzack, South Gloucestershire Council – SEP JAC Chairman  
Graham Quarrier, Environment Agency

**1 Welcome**

**Apologies for Absence**

Richard Archer, RSPB  
George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council / SEP Management

Group Chairman  
 David Fletcher, South West Regional Assembly  
 Jonathan Calderbank, Sport England  
 Vaughan Granthem, Cardiff Council  
 Cllr John Major, Monmouthshire Council  
 Donald McDonald, Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association  
 Donald Sutherland, Royal Yachting Association (RYA) & Bristol Channel Yachting Association (BCCPA)  
 Eirian Thomas, Health Protection Agency  
 Cllr Mark Wright, Bristol City Council  
 Dean Jackson-Johns, Caldicot & Wentloog Internal Drainage Board  
Note: Bob Parton has retired from Cardiff Council – Gary Jenkins new rep.

## Minutes of the Last Meeting (8<sup>th</sup> November 2007) & Matters Arising

Minutes of the last JAC meeting were approved as a true record.

Summary of actions from 8 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2007	Person	Progress
The DRAFT Recommendation from the JAC on the SDC report to be amended and circulated.	NB	Posted on SEP website November 2007.

## 2 Estuary Groups – Common Platform

### 2.1 Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) progress report

Mathew Lewis (Chairman of the ASERA Management Group) reported that the focus of this afternoon's meeting would be reporting on the outcomes of the previous AGM, Management Group and Working Group. There would be an update on progress with drafting of the Conservation Objectives for the cSAC by Natural England/CCW but the main item for discussion was the continuing relationship between ASERA & SEP with changes in Implementation Officer staff and the need for recruitment.

### 2.2 Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) progress report

David Harris (Chairman of the SECG) indicated that this morning's meeting had covered two main issues:

- i) Defra restructuring Coastal Groups in England. The Regional Flood Defence Committees would remain in place but the role of the existing SECG and SMP2 sub-group would require further discussion in mid July – a decision would be reported to the JAC in October.
- ii) SMP2 progress – there had been 2 meetings of the sub-group to date and the PAR for obtaining the grant aid, was ready for submission.

### 2.3 Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association (BCCPA) progress report

Donald McDonald was not present.

***ACTION 01/08: NB, SEP to check status of Bristol Channel Counter-Pollution Association in relation to the Maritime Coastguard Agency.***

### 2.4 North Devon & Somerset Coastal Group (NDSCG) progress report

Anglela Proctor (Secretariat of the NDSCG) reported that the Environment Agency were progressing with their SMP2, tendering was underway and they expected to appoint consultants at the end of June.

## 2.5 Severn Estuary Health & Environment Liaison Group (SEHELG)

Eirian Thomas (SEHELG Chairman) had sent apologies, but provided the following update for the minutes:

- i) The Severn Estuary Health & Environment Liaison Group (SEHELG) will be meeting on the 26th June in Cardiff to discuss how public health can best be protected and improved for those living around the Severn.
- ii) It is anticipated that SEHELG will become a member of SEP in the near future.
- iii) Health and Environment colleagues have discussed how best to take forward their individual and collective agenda in the SW of England. Every two years the South West Public Health Group hosts 'our coast and health conference'. It aims to integrate the environment and health agenda and encourages multi agency partnership working. Natasha Barker from SEP presented the keynote speech at the conference which was held this year in Plymouth (late April). The meeting was encouraged by the work of SEP and considered how partnership working on this scale could be developed in other coastal areas of the SW. Further work, in the form of focus groups, is planned to find practical ways of working together. This work will form the basis for the next conference in 2010.
- iv) Examples of issues of mutual interest to colleagues in the field of environment and public health include flooding', the impact of climate change, the location and management of regulated sites (COMAH @ IPPC sites) and marine pollution incidents.

If anyone would like to know more, they can email Eirian at:  
[eirian.thomas@hpa.org.uk](mailto:eirian.thomas@hpa.org.uk)

## 2.6 Bristol Channel Yachting Association (BCYA)

Don Sutherland (Chair of BCYA) and the Royal Yachting Associations representative for South West England had sent his apologies.

## 2.7 Other

NB suggested that it would be useful for the Estuary Groups Day Common Platform to include a 5 minute update from every major sector with estuary interests. The platform had been expanded in recent years but there were other sectors such as fisheries, energy, conservation that were not reported on. Where existing estuary-wide groups existed for these, they could easily be asked to attend and provide an update. Where they didn't exist, SEP could consider initiating a working group or seek a spokesperson.

***ACTION 02/08: SEP to seek wider representation of interest sectors to provide brief updates on EGR Day Common Platform.***

## 3 SEP Management Group Update

### 3.1 Brief Overview of Progress

Natasha Barker (SEP Officer) presented an update on behalf of the Management Group. She reminded JAC members of the role of SEP in implementing recommendations from the Strategy (SES, 2001) and the challenging task this was considering the cross-boundary responsibilities for estuary resources (map shown). The SEP outlined our approach to supporting delivery of the Strategy and promoting its sustainability vision through the Business Plan and Annual Report & Action Plan. SEP actions identified in the Strategy were evaluated for progress every year to draft the new Annual Report & Action Plan. A review of 2007-08 and plans for 2008-09 was provided, covering: SEP services, Secretariat services; Projects; and Projects which had now become services (see presentation on SEP website:

<http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/partnership/diary/jac.html>).

The new Membership Scheme has now been launched (April 2008). Resources and meeting dates were illustrated for the forthcoming year. The draft Annual Report & Action Plan was available at the meeting for comment and feedback was invited by the end of June.

### 3.2 Annual Report & Action Plan 2008-09

Plans for the forthcoming year were covered by the presentation and included:

- Regular meetings
- Communication services
- Reporting
- Publicity
- Other Partner services
- Secretariat Services
- EC IMCORE project
- SEP development
- Strategic & local project support
- Input to Tidal Power Feasibility Studies.

## 4 Policy, Planning Issues and Consultations

### 4.1 DEFRA Marine Bill

Consultation on a draft Marine Bill had begun in early April and would close on 26<sup>th</sup> June. Members were encouraged to submit their own responses. SEP would submit a short response relating to the role of the Partnership.

***ACTION 03/08: NB to prepare SEP response to the Marine Bill consultation for approval by the SEP Management Group before submission to Defra by 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008.***

### 4.2 EA River Basin Planning – Estuary Workshop

SEP were being contracted by EA Midlands to organise and host a workshop for the River Basin Planning process. Invitations had been issued and the workshop would take place on 6<sup>th</sup> June. A report would be available afterwards.

### 4.3 BERR Severn Tidal Power Feasibility Studies

Since attendance at the last JAC meeting by Gary Shanahan from BERR, SEP had been in discussion with BERR & WAG representatives about the

stakeholder engagement process for the Feasibility Studies which were announced in January. SEP had not tendered for work within the studies, but had presented an outline of SEP services to support the stakeholder engagement programme. BERR & WAG were drafting their own stakeholder engagement strategy and had set up a national and regional forum for engagement. Consultants Parsons Brinkerhoff & Black & Veatch were working with The Environment Council who would deliver the stakeholder engagement programme for the feasibility studies. NB was expecting to have further discussion about the utilisation of SEP services to support the process.

It was noted that members needed further information on their proposed involvement and notification of forums/events for their engagement.

#### **4.4 Water Related Recreation Strategy for SW England**

The strategy had been made available to SEP by the EA South West.

#### **4.5 Other**

JAC members were invited to raise awareness of any other policy, planning or consultation issues:

- **Bristol Port Company – Patrick Kearon**

Early engagement was sought on options for tidal power. BPC were bringing ships closer to the UK population than anywhere else which was beneficial for reducing carbon emissions from transport. A reduction in the maximum tide from a barrage would be highly detrimental to their commercial operations. There were potentially enormous implications from what would happen to sediment in the estuary with likely unforeseen eventualities. BPC were in favour of renewables & are planning for more wind turbines, but wanted to see appropriate harnessing of the tide.

- **River Parrett Catchment Flood Management Plan**

Ken Tatem reported that consultation was underway and available on the Environment Agency website.

### **5. Guest Speaker – Flood Risk Planning & Shoreline Management**

Graham Quarrier & Ken Tatem, EA South West Region, presented.

#### **5.1 Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy**

The Strategy for the Severn Estuary (2001) had been used as a baseline for informing the new FRM Strategy. The FRM:

- provides the economic case for the investment plan,
- defines defence alignments
- the optimum standard of protection for each flood cell

Key issues for the FRM Strategy were:

- Climate Change
- Coastal squeeze – finding sites for replacement habitat
- Investment plan – how much and when
- Advice to utilities and other agencies
- Pointers for Development control, Flood warning activities

Challenges the EA face included:

- Limits of Agency legal powers
- Acquiring land for habitat creation
- Difficult or unpopular decisions
- 100 year timescale – not important to everyone
- Phased approach might be easier but more expensive
- Affordability

Third party influences on the FRM Strategy may include:

- Port Expansion
- Barrage or power generation
- Power stations
- Dredging issues

Technical and economic assessment of existing defences	Now to Autumn 2008
Prioritisation of habitat sites based on technical criteria and delivery potential	Now to early 2009
Strategic policies and options developed	Early 2009
Draft Strategy for formal consultation	Autumn 2009
Start of the process for Strategy Approval (Agency, Defra, WAG)	Spring 2010

The FRM Strategy would not preclude urgent works.

Proposed consultation and communication included:

- Try to stick to strategic issues
- Expect to dovetail consultation with SMP2
- Less effort where little change is proposed especially, in the short term
- Expect local meetings where change is greatest
- Using SEP website and meetings for updates

## 5.2 Severn Estuary Shoreline Management Plan

The SMP provides the *policy* for coastal units from a choice of advance the line, hold the line, retreat or abandon the defence.

Key issues so far included:

- Start up could be disrupted by changes to Coastal Groups
- Defra target exists (2010) but no WAG target for Completion
- Use of common technical data, eg flooding risk, most promising habitat creation sites
- *Approval* of the Strategy likely to be achieved after adoption of SMP2.

Ken Tatem commented that ideally the SMP would come first, but the main objective for the EA was not to duplicate effort between the FRM and SMP processes.

***ACTION 04/08: Actions in the Severn Estuary Strategy (2001) to be checked for implementation via the Flood Risk Management Strategy & Shoreline Management Plan.***

Discussion points included:

- Defra have delegated responsibility to the EA for replacing coastal defences including habitat losses due to climate change.
- Some areas of drained land (13,000ha at present) may have to

become wetter as some 2,000ha more is needed (at a cost of £20-30,000/ha). There is an issue over who would manage this land – the EA expect to establish partnerships for this purpose. Further information is available in the Coastal Habitat Management Plan. It was noted that the EA was taking a neutral starting point in relation to potential impacts of a barrage and were first getting a baseline in place because the implications of a barrage would be 20-30 years away.

## 6 Any Other Business & Date of Future JAC Meetings

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

The meeting closed at 1.20pm for lunch.

### Summary of actions from JAC Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008

No.	Action	Person	Progress
01/08	Check status of Bristol Channel Counter-Pollution Association in relation to the Maritime Coastguard Agency.	SEP	
02/08	Seek wider representation of interest sectors to provide brief updates on EGR Day Common Platform.	SEP	
03/08	SEP response to the Marine Bill consultation for approval by the SEP Management Group before submission to Defra by 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2008.	SEP	
04/08	Actions in the Severn Estuary Strategy (2001) to be checked for implementation via the Flood Risk Management Strategy & Shoreline Management Plan.	SEP/EA	