

# SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

## Joint Advisory Committee Meeting



11.30am-2.00pm, Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008, Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon

### DRAFT Minutes

#### ACTION

#### Attendees (34)

George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council (SEP MG Chair)  
Chris Barrow, Bristol City Council  
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University  
Natasha Barker, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP)  
Fiona Bowles, Wessex Water  
John Clark, Countryside Council for Wales  
Cllr John Cordwell, Gloucestershire County Council  
Richard Dunn, Sedgemoor District Council  
Vaughan Grantham, Cardiff Council  
Nigel Hale, South Gloucestershire Council  
Helen Hall, Bristol City Council  
Dave Harris, Monmouthshire County Council (SECG Chairman)  
Cllr James Harris, Monmouthshire County Council  
Susan Howard Countryside Council for Wales  
Susan Hughes, Glamorgan – Gwent Archaeological Trust  
Ian Kear, Stroud District Council  
Bill Kelloway, Cardiff Council  
Gary Kenninson, Gloucester City Council  
Mathew Lewis, Monmouthshire County Council (ASERA Chairman)  
Louise Lieberknecht, Finding Sanctuary (Guest Speaker)  
Cllr John Major, Monmouthshire County Council  
Don Metcalfe, Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers  
Sue Munns, Environment Agency Midlands  
Natalie Newton, Environment Agency Wales  
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council  
Charlotte Pagendham, Natural England  
Paul Parker, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP)  
Alan Rafelt, Environment Agency  
Rebecca Seaman, Somerset County Council  
Ken Tatem, Environment Agency  
Cllr Humphrey Temperley, Environment Agency & Devon County Council  
Cllr Peter Tyzack, South Gloucestershire Council – SEP JAC Chairman  
Sarah Vincent-Piper, Environment Agency Wales  
Gareth Withers, North Somerset Council

#### 1 Welcome

#### Apologies for Absence

Sian Davies  
Tim Farr - Chairman, Severn - Trent RFDC  
Matthew Hamilton - Avon Biodiversity Action Plan Co-ordinator

Kate Hoare, Bristol City Council  
 John Marks – Vale of Glamorgan Council  
 Donald McDonald, Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association  
 Rhys Morgan – Environment Agency Wales  
 Angela Proctor – Environment Agency  
 Cllr Venk Shenoi - Forest of Dean District Council  
 Eirian Thomas, Health Protection Agency  
 Cllr Mark Wright – Bristol City Council

### Minutes of the Last Meeting (20<sup>th</sup> May 2008) & Matters Arising

Minutes of the last JAC meeting were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising

Summary of actions from 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	Person	Progress
Check status of Bristol Channel Counter-Pollution Association in relation to the Maritime Coastguard Agency.	NB/PP	Ongoing: Status requested from BCCPA (Awaiting response).
Seek wider representation of interest sectors to provide brief updates on EGR Day Common Platform.	NB - PP	Ongoing:
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.	NB/VG	Completed: Sent to Defra June 2008
Actions in the Severn Estuary Strategy (2001) to be checked for implementation via the Flood Risk Management Strategy & Shoreline Management Plan.	NB	Outstanding: PP to contact GQ & KT

## 2 Guest Speaker

### Louise Lieberknecht, Finding Sanctuary Marine Protected Areas Network Development

Planning a network of MPAs around SW England – a partnership of regional government & NGOs.

Set up 2004 & launched 2007 with a focus on a network, science & stakeholders - to address the need for an ecologically coherent network of MPAs – in the light of the forthcoming Marine Bill.

Area covered out to 200nm & based on political boundaries i.e. England & Wales: the Bristol Channel & Severn Estuary shouldn't be split.

Finding Sanctuary is to some extent leading the national remit for Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) for biodiversity protection under the Marine Bill. The statutory conservation bodies will have a statutory duty to designate MCZs. These are different from Natura 2000 sites (i.e. Special Protection Areas & Special Areas of Conservation). N2K + MCZs = OSPAR network for which there is a requirement for an ecologically coherent network by 2012.

Other regional projects are now being established: Eastern English Channel; Irish Sea. The key to Finding Sanctuary has been combining sound science with a

stakeholder approach; moving to transparency & participation and valuing local knowledge. Part of the ecosystem approach is understanding people as part of the ecosystem. Learning from overseas i.e. California coast MPA network – only out to 3nm but process of integrating stakeholders into the planning process showed valuable lessons.

Many stakeholders that need to be engaged: fisheries, industry, leisure – need to build up a comprehensive picture to work towards marine spatial planning including biodiversity protection (MCZs). They are unlikely to be successful unless people are involved in the process.

The structure of Finding Sanctuary: overarching goals; gathering stakeholder & scientific information overseen by a Steering Group (15 key stakeholder reps) & Scientific Expert Group working on design principles to steer what the network would look like. An independent science group provides unbiased peer review towards the outcome of a network by 2011. Government have looked at this as a model for other parts of the UK seas and it is therefore influencing a national planning process.

Times are changing...there is a need for Finding Sanctuary to fit in & influence the national plan (under development) and an urgent need for clear policy/science guidance.

Design guidance – fundamental questions such as what needs protecting (species, habitats, biodiversity surrogates); how much, specific sites, what do conservation features need protection from, what levels of protection – some No Take Zones – but also other measures; single large or scattered small areas, separation devices etc. Pragmatically we can only protect things if we know where they are and what is the socio-economic cost?

Systematic conservation planning, the 'ecosystem based approach', is beyond an ad-hoc opportunistic site selection, beyond hotspots and a network is more than the sum of its parts. It is representative, complementary/efficient; adequate, replicable & has connectivity. A coarse and fine filter approach is used to develop a representative network where there isn't fully adequate data. National guidance is needed to set percentage representative targets e.g. for temperature, depth, sediment types.

The JNCC 'MESH' project mapped broad habitat types for UK seas. The Marine Recorder database shows regional distribution of biological survey records – but data is concentrated around the coast where people have recorded species. Many species are very mobile but others can be protected in particular locations.

There are some protected areas already in the SW: Lundy NTZ and a trawling exclusion zone in Lyme Bay. There is also a voluntary no take zone in south Devon. Potential offshore renewable energy development areas include Lyme Bay – info provided by the Crown Estate.

An example of new mapped info includes fishing for different species in different locations at different times of the year – obtained through interviews. An interactive web-based mapping system has been provided on the Finding Sanctuary website for people to draw areas of activity – for stakeholders to do themselves as it isn't possible for the FS team to speak to everyone.

Key points: FS is developing a MCZ network in SW, transparency & involving people is important to developing a representative network.

Further info: [www.finding-sanctuary.org](http://www.finding-sanctuary.org)

Email: [louise.lieberknecht@southwestfoodanddrink.com](mailto:louise.lieberknecht@southwestfoodanddrink.com)

South West Food & Drink, Darts Farm, Topsham, EX3 OQH

Tel: 01392 878327/324

Q: How do we cope with global warming & movement of species?

A: Difficult as we don't know where a lot of species are now – but if a representative network is put in place now it should work

Q: Basking sharks off SW coast have disappeared? WWF project out of Falmouth monitoring them – but they are still there & in Bude – nature conservation agencies looking for them in the wrong place? Engaging with the leisure boat industry is really important: RYA & yacht clubs need to be engaged in reporting sightings, particularly for cetaceans.

A: RYA supported the above as there hasn't been contact by FS. Also the 'Green-Blue' project that represents many water leisure users. Also the leisure fishermen such as the Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers. They have a wealth of info available.

A: FS focused on fishing industry as key stakeholder group to start with (partly led by funding), now they have more staff resources and the website to facilitate contact.

Q: Many (e.g. 5 million) recreational sea anglers. Locally there are 30 clubs (mainly English side) in the Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers (similar federation on the Welsh side). They are antagonistic towards the commercial fishermen who have a much more significant impact. They are also seldom approached for their views. There are more (poss 10,000) recreation anglers in the Severn Estuary/Bristol Channel as little trawling until north Devon. What is FS view on NTZs based on experience in Lyme Bay? Recreational angling has a minimum impact compared to commercial. Many species in this area are migratory – how will the Marine Bill deal with this? Don Metcalfe offered himself as a representative for future contact.

Q: How does FS interface between the land & sea; particularly significant in the Severn Estuary due to the high tidal range in the Severn. Do MPAs extent inland to areas that inter-tidal areas depend upon?

A: FS have had interesting discussions with RSPB e.g. location of nesting/feeding sites. The interface is being looked at.

Q: Boundary of FS down the middle of the Severn – political not ecosystem based!

A: Not ideal but they talk to CCW and hope to improve this situation.

### **3 Estuary Groups – Common Platform**

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

Mathew Lewis (Chairman of the ASERA Management Group)

- update on collaborative agreement with SEP
- arrangements with CU for recruitment for EMS Officer to provide support to ASERA 2 days/week for 2 years – interviews soon.
- AGM to be on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December at Newport RSPB Wetlands Centre inc presentation of 2 year programme, new scheme of management for SAC & reviewing SPA.
- Aim to spend more time delivering management scheme than concentrating on process.

#### **3.2 Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) progress report**

David Harris (Chairman of the SECG) indicated that this afternoon's

meeting would cover:

- new grouping of Strategic Groups imposed by Defra to cover 3 groups: Swansea & Caermarthon Bay & North Devon & Somerset with SECG. ToR being drafted for new group to cover all 3 for meeting in December.
- New coastal forum arrangements (c.12) Chairs from England & Wales started in July – Cllr Humphrey Temperley attending.
- SMP2 progress; project appraisal report with WAG & EA and guidance received from Defra. WSAtkins will be progressing this and the Severn Estuary Flood Risk Strategy. Ken Tatem indicated that the Strategy is an EA project, but the SMP is being led by EA on behalf of the stakeholder group (SECG etc). FRS is looking at the 'do nothing' scenario and how to maintain inter-tidal habitats which provides important input to the SMP. Consultation on draft SMP Oct-Dec 2009 with a lot of stakeholder involvement before then – has to be completed Spring 2010. Formal consultation Apr-May 2010 on FRM Strategy.

### **3.3 Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association (BCCPA) progress report**

Donald McDonald was not present; a written statement will be requested following the meeting.

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

Humphrey Temperley reported that:

- Halcrow on board for SMP2 since August 2008
- Elected members of coastal authorities now engaged
- SW coastal monitoring programme – LIDAR flying extended to Sharpness & Chepstow & bathymetry to Severn Stones. We are short of wave buoys on north coast so an application has gone in for Taw-Torrige estuary. The wave buoy at Minhead had to be salvaged. National Flood Defence & Coastal database isn't quite as useful as we'd hoped so there will be an unexpected cost to improve it. Another £100,000 is needed for these additional requirements.
- As DCC Cllr & member of the Sea Fisheries Committee looking at operation post Marine Bill. There is likely to be a new arrangement through an Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority for north Somerset to Glos to which all LAs will be obliged to contribute. Devon Sea Fisheries Committee are relied upon for enforcement on the north coast at the moment, so there may need to be a new fisheries protection vessel for the north coast.

### **3.5 Severn Estuary Health & Environment Liaison Group (SEHELG)**

Eirian Thomas (SEHELG Chairman) had sent apologies; a written statement will be requested following the meeting.

### **3.6 Bristol Channel Yachting Association (BCYA)**

Don Sutherland (Chair of BCYA) and the Royal Yachting Associations representative for South West England reported:

- Bristol Channel Blue Book all sold out
- Embarking on a 'photographic' based guidance document for harbours – many can be seen already on the BCYA website.
- North Somerset District Council has re-buoyed the channel in the R. Axe nr Weston-Super-Mare.
- R. Axe historic vessel blocking the navigable waterway: The water

safety committee approved its removal but Cllrs overturned the decision due to cost of £10,000. They are now approaching the Government about the situation.

- Successful rally in Cardiff during July; 60 boats at Mermaid Quay with many yachtsmen.
- Green-Blue (sponsored by RYA) initiative to reduce pollution from boats holding AGM in Bristol next week.

### 3.7 Other

Don Metcalfe raised concern about the lack of available launching sites for dinghies from Weston-Super-Mare to the bridges. Portishead now prohibitive expense (£50 to operate the lock gates). The N Devon Water Safety Committee have started looking for alternative launching sites.

## 4 SEP Management Group Update

### 4.1 Brief Overview of Progress

Paul Parker, SEP Assistant presented progress.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Severn Estuary Forum, 19<sup>th</sup> September

- 100 delegates attended the conference in Penarth
- Keynote speech by Jane Davidson, followed by presentations on feasibility studies for tidal power, possible flood implications of a potential barrage and presentation depicting the 'secrets of the Severn' including 'Tale of a Tunnel', Wild Spaces & Places and 'A Modern Port'.
- Speakers included: Gary Shanahan – BERR, Peter Kydd – Parsons Brinckerhoff, Nick Lyness – EA, John Chaplin – Bristol Port Company, Geoff Ballinger – BBC Wales, Dave Paytner – WWT Slimbridge and Peter Kavanagh – Severn Estuary Fisherman's Association
- 70 delegates went onto the M.V. Balmoral for an afternoon cruise with talks from estuary users, displays and informal networking.
- Feedback from the Forum included the usefulness of the speakers, good participation from local government, need to review audio-facilities and make presentation material available beforehand.
- A detailed forum report and copies of speakers presentation are available from the SEP website

[www.severnestuary.net/sep/fourm/2008](http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/fourm/2008)

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

- copies available today & on SEP website
- services, projects, financial position & forecast
- operating procedures & structure of SEP activities.

#### Project Work Updates

- **COREPOINT project:** latest info in Severn Tidings newsletter. It was completed in 2008 with outputs available on the website & in hard copy at the next JAC meeting. A position paper on integrated coastal zone management should be useful & will be circulated at the national & regional level to highlight issues from the local level. Indicators from Severn pilot study have fed into Europe. A new portal for coastal management called 'CoastWeb' is available. The 'Stories of the Severn Sea' education pack has been very popular so Cardiff & Swansea Universities are looking at another version.

- Other outputs include the local information system & climate change research advisory group.
- **IMCORE project** awarded this year for 3 years to the same partners as COREPOINT to specifically look at climate change adaptation and innovative coastal management. The Severn Estuary will be used as a case study again, to look at climate change drivers and devise adaptation strategies – it is hoped to work with SEP partners to build on existing work. Further info: <http://www.imcore.eu/>
  - **DeltaNet project** – bid supported by Esturiales & SEP; 2<sup>nd</sup> bid now being drafted.
  - **Severn Wonders brand** – marketing & tourism strategy work initiated to identify how local authorities promoting the Severn showed there is limited promotion. Further research is ongoing and an opportunity to use the SEP website for an interactive map showing the location of facilities.
  - **SEP Membership Scheme** – launched this Spring – a success story with 2 new partners; 3 organisations; 1 local club/society and 8 individuals so far.
  - **Recreational (boat/water) users** project to improve links with existing user groups facilitated by BCYA, it is hoped the new SEP Officer will progress this next year.
  - **ESTUARIALES European network** has diminished in enthusiasm from other partners despite the opportunity for more networking with very similar issues in each estuary. Project focus (for funding) may have diverted enthusiasm away from a 'group of friends'. SEP still hold Secretariat but are not sure about its future. There is a possibility we could engage with La Rance as many people have visited, but it is a different size & there was limited environmental assessment before their barrage was built. However, Humphrey Temperley pointed out that a useful piece of work would be to compare La Rance with other nearby estuaries. Commissioner Borg is now more interested in regional government limited jurisdiction below HWM – there is scope to approach EC over this issue as they may be more receptive than our UK Government. Inter-estuary working between the Atlantic Arc countries; Brittany & SW England would be in tune with emerging Interreg IV/IVb cross-border programme. RB indicated that SEP resources are limited but there maybe potential in the IMCORE project to take this forward & revitalise the network. There has been consideration to widening the network beyond estuaries and broaden to include accession countries.

### Severn Estuary Gateway: website development

Paul asked for input on further development of the site; what's good about it; what needs more regular updating. Since refreshing the home page in July use has increased. Comments were open from the floor:

- keen to see a tidal energy section with impartial analysis of options & what is possible, with links to other websites with more 'partial' views on the options and to improve the quality of information available. We still don't know what the impact of a barrage would be on the ecology. George Ashworth (Chair of the SEP Management Group) welcomed these comments to support the estuary-wide perspective and inform the decision-making process. Resourcing & the capacity of SEP is an ongoing issue! Vaughan

Grantham indicated that Government feasibility studies are in progress – but the DBERR website is not easy to use. There needs to be much more user-friendly info for local politicians. Peter Tyzack & Rhoda Ballinger highlighted the need for SEP to engage in the tidal power feasibility studies.

***ACTION 05/08: All to provide ideas for future development of the SEP website.***

***ACTION 06/08: SEP write to DECC (Ed Miliband) copies to SW Regional Assembly & Welsh Assembly Government re: topic papers & public consultation opportunity for stakeholder input with need for non-technical summaries with reference list/bibliography – suggestions for further resources.***

#### **4.2 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.

### **5 Policy, Planning Issues and Consultations**

#### **5.1 Severn Tidal Power Feasibility Study**

John Clark from CCW offered to raise the above concerns at the next SEA Steering Group.

#### **5.2 Environment Agency Flood Risk Management Strategy** – covered above under SECG update by Ken Tatem.

#### **5.3 Marine Bill** – response to Jt Committee given to Government. Humphrey Temperley was the only witness at Committee stage as LGA witness dropped out. The ‘estuaries’ message re: inshore fisheries limit ending at HWM not helpful and how estuary plans could be generated. Under the current staffing allocation comprehensive estuary/small scale plans would be decades away – Section 20 forbade establishment of joint local committees now being re-assessed; with delegated powers by the MMO. Rhoda Ballinger attended a Wales Coastal Maritime Partnership meeting – the Welsh Local Government Association are meeting in November to look at coastal partnerships role in relation to the Marine Bill – she encouraged Welsh Local Authorities to attend.

#### **5.4 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 07/08: 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**

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009

The meeting closed at 2.20pm.

**Summary of actions from JAC Meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008:**

No.	Action	Person	Progress
05/08	All to provide ideas for future development of the SEP website.	All	
06/08	SEP write to DECC (Ed Milliband) copies to SW Regional Assembly & Welsh Assembly Government re: topic papers & public consultation opportunity for stakeholder input with need for non-technical summaries with reference list/bibliography – suggestions for further resources.	PP	
07/08	Actions in the Severn Estuary Strategy (2001) to be checked for implementation via the Flood Risk Management Strategy & Shoreline Management Plan.	PP	