



Severn Estuary Partnership

Annual Report & Action Plan 2006-07



The Waverley will be used to launch the 1st Severn Estuary Forum during the Severn Wonders Festival, June 2006

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Approved by the JAC April 2006

Severn Estuary Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACTION PLAN 2006-2007

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASERA	Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities
BCCPA	Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association
CA	Countryside Agency
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
COASTATLANTIC/CA	Coastatlantic Project
COREPOINT/CPT	Coastal Research & Policy Integration Project
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EC	European Commission
EN	English Nature
GIS	Geographic Information System
ICE	Institute of Civil Engineers
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
JAC	Joint Advisory Committee
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
ND&SCG	North Devon and Somerset Coastal Group
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
RGS	Royal Geographical Society
SCOSLA	Standing Conference Of Severnside Local Authorities
SECG	Severn Estuary Coastal Group
SELRC	Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee
SEP	Severn Estuary Partnership
SES	Severn Estuary Strategy
WCMP	Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

ANNUAL REPORT & ACTION PLAN 2006-07

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The *Severn Estuary Partnership* (SEP) was formed during the development of the *Strategy for the Severn Estuary* in the mid 1990s. Since the launch of the Strategy in 2001, the Partnership (SEP) has continued to work towards implementation of the Strategy's recommendations.

This *Annual Report & Action Plan* will provide a regular update of progress made by the SEP in implementing the recommendations of the Strategy. It is supported by the *Business Plan 2006-2009*, which contains further background to the Partnership's achievements and future opportunities. The Business Plan proposes a monitoring and review framework to review delivery on an annual basis, which will be undertaken through this reporting mechanism.

Box 1.1 *The Severn Estuary Partnership*

The Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP or 'the Partnership') was set up in 1995 to develop and facilitate delivery of the Strategy. It is an independent, estuary-wide initiative funded and supported by local authorities, statutory agencies, non-governmental organisations, industry and civil society. It encourages partnership working between all organisations and individuals who are concerned with the future of the estuary and its resources. It aims to help facilitate and promote the need for sustainable management.

1.2 Annual Report & Action Plan

The basis for the annual review of SEP activities is presented in the Business Plan 2006-09. Of the 350+ proposals for action identified in the Severn Estuary Strategy, the Business Plan reviews progress with just over 100 actions identified for implementation by SEP (Appendix B.1 of the Business Plan).

A review of activities is presented in Section 2 of this report. Section 3 sets out a work programme for the year ahead (April 2006 - March 2007). This is based on the role for SEP set out in the Strategy and presented in the Business Plan (p9-10). The financial year from April 2006 to March 2007 will be used for the purposes of the annual review. Section 4 describes the SEP's position in relation to resources for the previous and forthcoming years and funding opportunities. Finally, Section 5 provides a brief summary of the previous and forthcoming year's progress and priorities.

1.3 Implementation of the Strategy for the Severn Estuary

Indicators to monitor the delivery of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) have been researched in recent years by the European Community Expert Group and just recently accepted by the European Commission. The SEP Business Plan refers to indicators for ICZM which will begin to be utilised in 2006 to illustrate progress towards ICZM for the Severn Estuary.

Delivery of the Strategy for the Severn Estuary has not yet been monitored by the SEP or other organisations in any structured or formal manner. The Business Plan 2006-09 and this first Annual Report & Action Plan 2006-07 provide a new framework to monitor the progress of *SEP* in implementing recommendations in the Strategy.

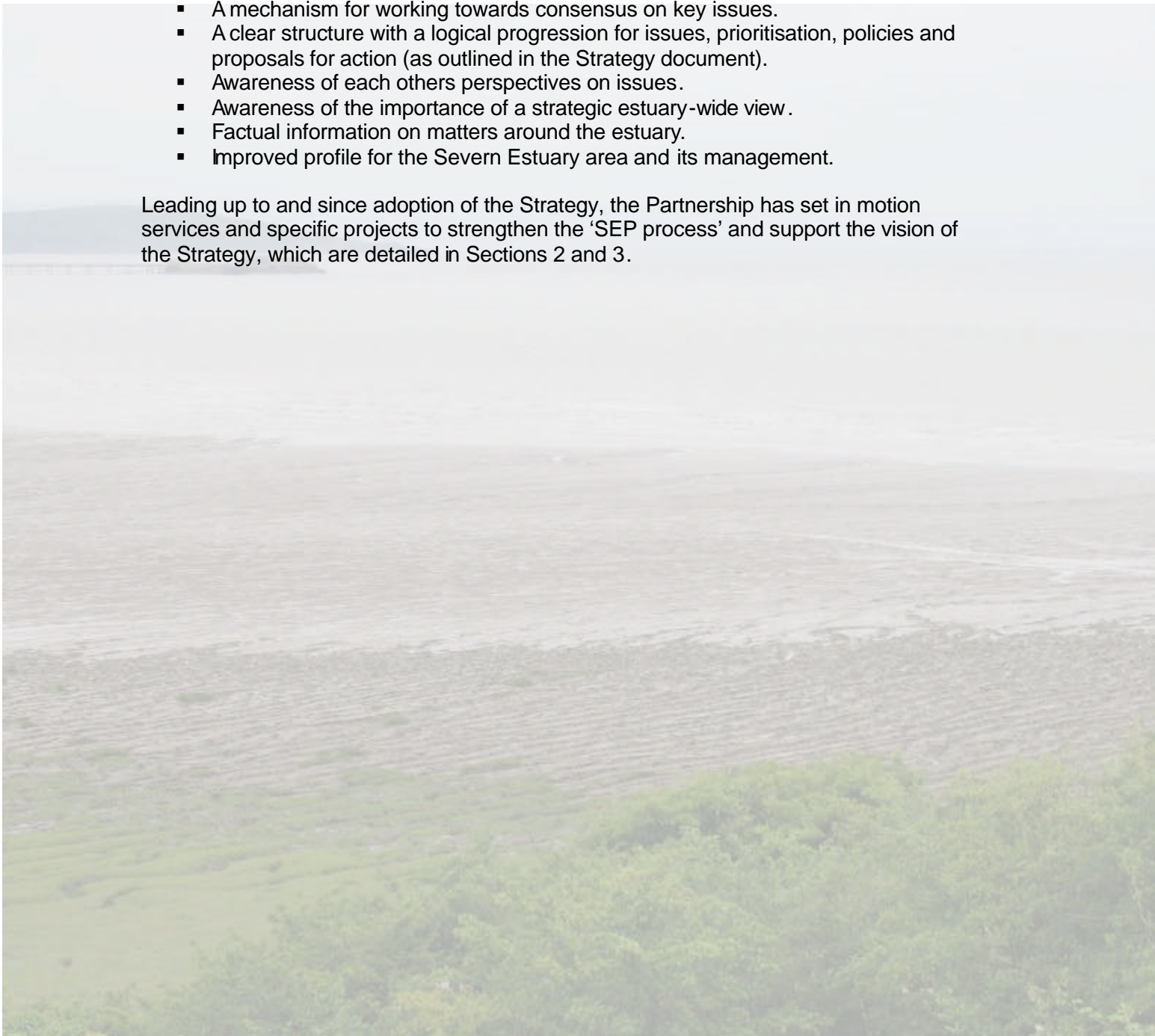
It is proposed during 2006-07 that a monitoring framework be offered by SEP to assist *other* organisations to monitor their delivery of recommendations from the Strategy.

1.4 Benefits of the SEP process

The 'benefits of the SEP process' identified in the Strategy for the Severn Estuary, recognised the general achievements of the Partnership and its ongoing role in providing:

- Structure to ad-hoc consultation between organizations.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration.
- A mechanism for working towards consensus on key issues.
- A clear structure with a logical progression for issues, prioritisation, policies and proposals for action (as outlined in the Strategy document).
- Awareness of each others perspectives on issues.
- Awareness of the importance of a strategic estuary-wide view.
- Factual information on matters around the estuary.
- Improved profile for the Severn Estuary area and its management.

Leading up to and since adoption of the Strategy, the Partnership has set in motion services and specific projects to strengthen the 'SEP process' and support the vision of the Strategy, which are detailed in Sections 2 and 3.



2 REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES (2005-2006)

2.1 Introduction

The Business Plan (Section 1.4) details key achievements to date based on the aims and anticipated outputs set out in the Strategy. As this is the first Annual Report and Action Plan, a 'snapshot' description of progress in recent years is described in the following section of this report. The Work Programme tables in Section 3 (Table 3.2, Table 3.3) illustrate progress during 2005-06 in the context of the aims and outputs envisaged by the Strategy, alongside planned activities for 2006-07.

2.2 Operating Environment

2.2.1 SEP Staff & Accommodation

SEP continues to be hosted by the School of Earth, Ocean and Planetary Sciences at Cardiff University. The hosting relationship with Cardiff University is of two-way benefit and continues to strengthen. SEP staff attend regular meetings of the Marine & Coastal Environment Group in the School. A 'List of Benefits' was prepared in 2005-06 and will continue to form the basis for retaining the in-kind support provided by the University.

SEP currently employs a Partnership Officer (Natasha Barker), Communications Officer (Jim Mitchell) and Partnership Assistant (Evangelia Moutsleou) on a part time basis, with the equivalent funding for 2 full time staff. The outgoing Partnership Officer in January 2005 was replaced in June 2005. In addition, two staff are employed to deliver specific Secretariat Services for the Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities - ASERA (Steve Knowles) and the Severn Estuary Coastal Group – SECG (Wendy Dodds). Current positions are shown in the following box. SEP also utilises the voluntary support of students gaining work experience at Cardiff University. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement which helps to strengthen the hosting relationship between SEP and the University.

Box 2.2.1 *SEP employed positions, March 2006*

Severn Estuary Partnership Officer (1 post, 90% FTE)
Severn Estuary Access, Interpretation and Communications Officer (1 post, 80% FTE)
Severn Estuary Partnership Assistant (1 post, 30% FTE)
ASERA Implementation Officer (1 post, 20% FTE)
SECG Secretariat/Partnership Assistant (1 post, approx 10% FTE).

SEP is hosted in the Main Building of Cardiff University in well accommodated office-space. Most of the equipment used by Partnership Staff is owned by the SEP. The main University services utilised by Partnership staff include IT software & support, financial services, telephone, fax and postal service. Any significant utilisation of these services (e.g. postal mail-outs >50, stationary, printing costs) are funded from the SEP budget.

2.2.2 Partnership Agreement and Operating Procedures

Work to date on the Partnership Agreement will provide a good basis for further development of the Partnership. Due to the constraints outlined in the Business Plan (Section 2.2.2) it was decided during 2005-06 to limit input to progressing the Partnership Agreement in the current operating environment. Due to the need to operate in a commonly understood manner, this Annual Report & Action Plan contains basic operating procedures in the appendix. This enables all organisations to understand how the Partnership's services are provided and the mechanisms which are used to encourage networking between organisations through the Management Group, JAC and Forum.

2.2.3 Business Plan Development

During preparation of the Strategy a Business Plan was produced in 1997. Alongside this Annual Report & Action Plan, a new Business Plan has been developed to provide a baseline to this new annual reporting framework. It is envisaged that the new Business Plan will cover a maximum term of 3 years until 2009. Nonetheless, it will be reviewed annually to inform and guide the Annual Report.

2.2.4 Annual Reporting Framework

The Management Group have recommended this Annual Report & Action Plan as the basis for annual reporting of SEP activity. It is intended that a review of SEP activity will begin in October of each year, to inform budget forecasting and action planning for the forthcoming financial year. A final draft Annual Report & Action Plan will then be presented to the JAC in March/April for the forthcoming financial year and presented as a final report to the annual Forum in May/June each year.

2.3 SEP Services

2.3.1 Introduction

The SEP team provide a co-ordination service which is unique due to the independence, neutrality and non-sectoral perspective of the staff. This is a valuable platform from which organisations and individuals can tap into information and resources. Current services include:

- Secretariat Services to ASERA, SECG, SCOSLA, Les Esturiales.
- Estuary Groups Common Platform – twice yearly meetings .
- Joint Advisory Committee – twice yearly meetings.
- Severn Tidings Newsletter – twice yearly newsletter.
- Severn Estuary Gateway Website– simple access to estuary-group websites .
- Severn Estuary Partnership website – SEP web pages and links .
- Severn Estuary Contacts Database and Who's Who Guide – over 2000 individuals & organisations on an Access Database and key organisations listed in a Who's Who Guide accessible through the SEP website.
- Spatial Metadata and Geographic Information Systems – digital map resources .
- Severn Estuary Forum (in preparation).

The following sections describe progress with each of these services in more detail.

2.3.2 Secretariat Services

SEP continues to strengthen its provision of Secretariat Services since signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between other Estuary Groups in 2003. SEP staff currently provide the secretariat for:

- Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA).
- Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG).
- Standing Conference of Severnside Local Authorities (SCOSLA).
- Les Esturiales (October 2005 – October 2007).

Details of the services provided are contained in individual agreements and the progress with each group is minuted at their meetings.

2.3.3 Estuary Groups Common Platform

During 2005, the SEP arranged two Estuary Groups' meetings on the same day as the Joint Advisory Committee (April and October 2005). This arrangement saves time and resources of many organisations and their officers who need to attend more than one of the group meetings. It also encourages attendance at SEPs' JAC and informal networking.

2.3.4 Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

During 2005 the JAC met on two afternoons with attendance averaging between 60-70 representatives from over 100 invited organisations. Guest speakers included: Natasha Barker (Exe Estuary Officer) as the incoming SEP Officer, talking about the establishment of an Estuary Forum in April 2005; and Nicholas Crane from the BBC Coast Series talking about his experiences of presenting the series on the Severn Estuary in October 2005.

2.3.5 Severn Tidings Newsletter

An opportunity to refresh the image of the Partnership in Autumn 2005 led to a new style newsletter. This was well received, with over 2000 copies distributed by mail and a further 1000 distributed to local outlets and at conferences/workshops. The newsletter is also made widely available electronically through the Severn Estuary Partnership website.

2.3.6 Severn Estuary Gateway and SEP Website

SEP continue to service the gateway website for the estuary groups who have signed the MoU. The SEP website was relaunched in 2005 with a new SEP branding and additional information about the estuary, access and interpretation guidance and an image library. The website is now regularly maintained and includes minutes of meetings and forthcoming dates (www.severnestuary.net/sep).

2.3.7 Severn Estuary Contacts Database and Who's Who Guide

With the distribution of Severn Tidings in Winter 2005-06, a new Contacts Response Form asked all those on our Contacts Database, to inform us of changes. Of approximately 2200 distributed, approximately 500 returns were received. The Contacts Database was updated in February 2006. The information is being used to update the online Who's Who Directory in March-April 2006.

2.3.8 Spatial Data and Geographic Information System Mapping

The COASTATLANTIC project has enabled SEP to provide this new service. GIS data was sent to 50 organisations in March 2006 to aid assessment of nature conservation and recreation activities. A spatial metadata directory was prepared and is under further development.

2.3.9 Severn Estuary Forum

The Strategy for the Severn Estuary envisaged the formation of an estuary-wide Forum. Preparation is underway for the 1st Severn Estuary Forum on 8th June 2006.

Further detail of SEP's *services* are provided in individual **Service Sheets** accompanying the Business Plan and will continue to be updated as services develop.

2.4 SEP Projects

2.4.1 Introduction

The unique position of SEP makes it ideally placed to co-ordinate estuary-based projects which require input from more than one organisation and/or which need a neutral co-ordination body.

SEP has benefited significantly through the EC Interreg Programme for the COASTATLANTIC project (2003-2006) and COREPOINT project (2004 – 2008). These projects have enabled the delivery of a wide range of practical projects as well as supporting the ongoing provision of the partnership.

Other project specific funding has been received to support the Severn Wonders Festival and Forum.

Further detail of SEP's *projects* is provided in individual **Project Sheets** accompanying the Business Plan and will continue to be provided as new projects are undertaken.

2.4.2 COASTATLANTIC

The EC Interreg IIIb Atlantic Area COASTATLANTIC Project, with match funding from ODPM, local authorities and statutory agencies, has supported:

- Interpretation panels and leaflets.
- Interpretation/Access Strategy and access infrastructure improvements.
- Recreation and Nature Conservation Geographic Information System (GIS) and GIS metadata directory.

- Support to local farmers markets and promotion of local produce.
- Nature Conservation Guidance Notes.
- Cultural Heritage Guidance Notes.

The Severn Estuary Partnership led the stakeholder involvement theme for the COASTATLANTIC trans-national partnership. This culminated in the production of a draft report in January 2006, on 'Stakeholder involvement in the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Policy across the Atlantic Arc'.

2.4.3 COREPOINT

The EC Interreg IIIb North West Europe COREPOINT Project, with match funding from Cardiff University, is supporting:

- Research Strategy & Forum (in progress).
- Local Information System for planning/development control (in progress).
- Maritime Heritage project delivery (in progress).

As a whole, the COREPOINT Project is providing best practice examples and leadership thought for the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management across North West Europe. The Severn Estuary Partnership is being used as a model of partnership working for this project. The project has therefore supported the strengthening of partnership services including the running of the Management Group, JAC and Severn Estuary Forum.

2.4.4 Other Project Funding

The Environment Agency, World Wide Fund for Nature, South Gloucestershire Council, Forest of Dean Council and Gloucestershire County Council have provided significant additional project funding to support preparation for the **Severn Wonders Festival and 1st Severn Estuary Forum** in May-June 2006.

Project funding was sought from the other statutory agencies (Countryside Council for Wales, Countryside Agency, English Nature) who did not contribute to core funding of partnership services in 2005-06. Project funds from these agencies may be realised during 2006-07.

The table in Section 3.3 provides an overall review of SEP projects in 2005-06 alongside planned activities for 2006-07.

3 PLANNED ACTIVITIES 2006-2007

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines activities planned for the forthcoming year: April 2006-March 2007. These form the basis for the annual work programme which is tabled below.

3.2 SEP Services

The following table is based on the SEP intentions outlined in the Strategy (2001) followed by a brief description of SEP Activity in 2005-06 and planned activities for 2006-07.

Table 3.2 Review of Services 2005-06 and Planned Service Provision 2006-07

SEP INTENTIONS (Strategy for the Severn Estuary 2001)		SEP ACTIVITY 2005-06		SEP PLANNED ACTIVITY 2006-07		
Aim	Output	Month & Year		Month & Year		Approx Value (£) Time & Expenditure
Source & collate data and information that is useful to all organisations/agencies/interests.	Who's Who Guide (web-based)	03,06	Online Who's Who Directory updated.	03,07	To be updated annually (i.e. March 2007).	1000
	Internet based data	10,06	Website re-launched with wide range of information about the estuary.	08,06	Strengthen <i>links</i> between Severn Estuary gateway and SEP website pages.	1500
	Progress of organisations/agencies on their work/ statutory duties	03,06	Little or no information to SEP from other organisations. Monitoring framework established for SEP actions through Business Plan 2006-09 and Action Plan 2006-07.	10,06	Establish monitoring framework for implementation of Strategy as a whole.	2000
Develop mechanisms to make information available and raise the profile of partners and their role in the management of the estuary.	Web site	10,05	Website launched 2001 and re-launched 2005 in more user-friendly format with SEP branding. (www.severnestuary.net/sep)	Monthly	Further promotion and development of the Severn Estuary Gateway and Partnership website. Updated monthly.	1500
	Severn Tidings newsletter	05,06 & 10,05	May 2005, October 2005	04,06 & 10,06	Two editions per year; summer & winter.	2500 (+ 4000 printing & distribution costs)
	Presentations	07,05 02,06 03,06	Numerous, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COREPOINT Cardiff CIWEM SW Exeter CoastNET Llanelli 		Ongoing as opportunities arise and time allows, with the possibility of covering costs/generating income.	500
	Action Plans	03-04,06	1 st Annual Report & Action Plan 2006-2007 prepared for adoption by JAC	10,06 - 03,07	Review Annual Report & Action Plan.	2000
	Media & PR	11,05	SEP Communications	04,06	Communications Strategy	500

	Strategy		Strategy 2006		to be adopted alongside the Business Plan, Spring 2006.	
Create a flexible structure that encourages involvement, co-operation and exchange of information.	Annual standing conference	12,05 ongoing	Severn Estuary Forum in preparation	06,06 10,06	First Severn Estuary Forum planned for 8 th June 2006. Review with intention to convene 2 nd annual Forum in May/June 2007.	See Table 3.3. below
	Specific sub-groups		Online Who's Who Directory updated.	Ongoing	Review all Severn estuary-wide groups, identify overlaps/gaps and propose transparent complete framework for all groups, promoted widely and facilitated by SEP. Access Forum likely to continue to be serviced by SEP.	500 ?
	Workshops	04,05 & 10,05	Coastatlantic project – stakeholder involvement workshops	10,06	Explore need(s) for additional topic groups/fora as a result of the above review.	500
Identify and address information gaps and information required by decision-makers in organisations/agencies.	Research Forum	03,06	Preparatory research	Ongoing	In preparation with Research Strategy during 2006.	Corepoint projecgt (CPT) budget
	Information System	03,06	Geographic Information System and Metadata Directory developed through COASTATLANTIC project (2003-2006)	Ongoing	Distribution of GIS data via CD and further development/application of data. Other 'information system requirements' via LIS	Coastatlantic Project (CA) budget
Maintain a database of organisations/ contacts including their commitment to working towards <i>proposal for action</i> outlined in the Strategy document.	Access Database with over 2000 names & addresses	Monthly	Ongoing updates. No 'monitoring framework' established to assess commitment to working towards <i>proposals for action</i> .	Monthly	Maintain Contacts Database Monitoring framework to be established for SEP to monitor other organisations proposals for action and collate responses	2500 1000
Monitor, evaluate and report on the progress of the SEP	Reports to committees	04,05 & 10,05 07,05 10,05 01,06 03,06	Joint Estuary Groups Common Platform & Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) Meetings. Management Group Meetings.	04,06 10,06 0606 Quarterly	Ongoing: Twice/year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joint Estuary Groups Common Platform. ▪ Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) Meetings . Annual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Severn Estuary Forum. At least quarterly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management Group. 	2000

	Presentations & facilitated workshops	3	Numerous including involvement in meetings, workshops and conferences to inform future adoption of ICZM principles and sustainable management of estuarine resources. Examples include: CNET Llanelli, CIWEM Exeter, Coastatlantic Blaye.	5	Numerous including involvement in meetings, workshops and conferences to inform future adoption of ICZM principles and sustainable management of estuarine resources. Anticipated to include: DEFRA Marine Bill Forum, WCMP, ICE Cardiff, Littoral 06 Poland, RGS London.	1500
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Individual **Service Sheets** are presented with the Business Plan and updated by Partnership Staff on a regular basis.

3.3 SEP Projects

The following table summarises the main projects which have allowed SEP staff time and project budgets to implement actions linked to the Strategy over the past year.

Table 3.3 Review of Project Involvement 2005-06 and Planned Projects 2006-07

PROJECT	SCOPE & RESULTS	DURATION	FUNDING SOURCE	FUTURE PLANS (2006 onwards)	Approx Value 2006-07 <small>Time & Expenditure <i>Italics = directly rechargeable</i></small>
Aim	Outputs				
SEVERN WONDERS FESTIVAL & FORUM	Co-ordinated publicity for over 40 events around the Severn culminating in the 1 st estuary-wide Forum, bringing together over 100 estuary-related organisations.	20 th May – 10 th June 2006	EC COASTATLANTIC project (Festival) EC COREPONT project (Forum) S Glos Council WWF In-kind support of working group members	Review impact & effectiveness of Festival to determine value of repeating.	<i>20000</i>
SEVERN TIDINGS NEWSLETTER	Regular estuary-related news and SEP service & project updates.	Twice/year	SEP core funds	Ongoing	See above Table 3.2
SEVERN ESTUARY GATEWAY & SEP WEBSITE	Easy access to information for estuary groups and SEP.	Regularly updated	SEP core funds	Ongoing	See above Table 3.2
COREPOINT	Research Strategy & Research Forum .	2005-2008	EC Interreg IIIb and led by Cardiff University	Research Strategy Research Forum	CPT budget
	Local Information System.	2005-2008	EC Interreg IIIb and led by Cardiff University	Local Information System	CPT budget
	Maritime Heritage.	2006-07	EC Interreg IIIb and led by Cardiff University	Increased public awareness of maritime heritage.	CPT budget
COAST-	Access infrastructure	2003-2006	EC, ODPM and	Access Forum	CA budget

ATLANTIC	improvements (£20k). Access Strategy Information panels (4). Interpretation Leaflets (2).		local partners	Interpretation Strategy. Additional information panels.	
	GIS.	2003-2006	EC, ODPM and local partners	GIS Forum (on demand).	CA budget
	Natural Heritage.	2003-2006	EC, ODPM and local partners	SPA leaflet publicity. Nature conservation guidance leaflet.	CA budget
	Cultural Heritage.	2003-2006	EC, ODPM and local partners	Cultural heritage guidance notes leaflet.	CA budget
	Urban-Rural interdependencies .	2003-2006	EC, ODPM and local partners	Ongoing promotion of local food (S Glos), demonstration website for promoting local food & ecotourism and sharing lessons with other LA's	CA budget
	Stakeholder Involvement.	2003-2006	EC, ODPM and local partners	Final reporting	CA budget

Individual **Project Sheets** are presented with the Business Plan and are updated by Partnership Staff on a regular basis.

3.4 Summary of Planned Activities 2006-07

SEP will continue to strengthen its provision of unique estuary-wide services and projects to organisations.

Services will include ongoing provision of communication tools: the *Severn Tidings* Newsletter, Severn Estuary Gateway and SEP website pages with the on-line 'Who's Who' guide, improved links and frequent updating with SEP outputs available electronically. Regular meetings of the Estuary Groups' Common Platform, JAC and Management Group will continue to be convened. The addition of the Forum is a significant step forwards for SEP in 2006.

Project funding has been made available to help ensure that the Severn Wonders Festival and Forum is successfully launched. Project funding through the COASTATLANTIC budget will come to an end in August 2006. COREPOINT funding will continue with those projects taking a higher priority in SEP's activities, specifically through the development of the Research Strategy and Local Information System. Additional project funding will be sought to continue the development of some of the projects initiated through European funding support (e.g. Access Forum, GIS & metadata development and cultural heritage).

Outstanding project bids from 2005-06 which may come to fruition in 2006-07 include:

- Valuing the Severn Estuary – CCW, EN, CA and WWF.
- Access Forum – CCW, EN.
- ICZM Training – CCW.
- Tides of Change – DEFRA (Climate Challenge Fund).

Overall, emphasis will be put on strengthening resources for SEP’s core services and seeking longer term funding agreements with statutory agencies and local authorities. This will aim to reduce the reliance on annual funding contributions.

The new Business Plan, together with a marketing brochure, project and service sheets will facilitate the strengthening of existing relationships with our funding partners and engage with new potential partners.

3.5 Meeting Dates

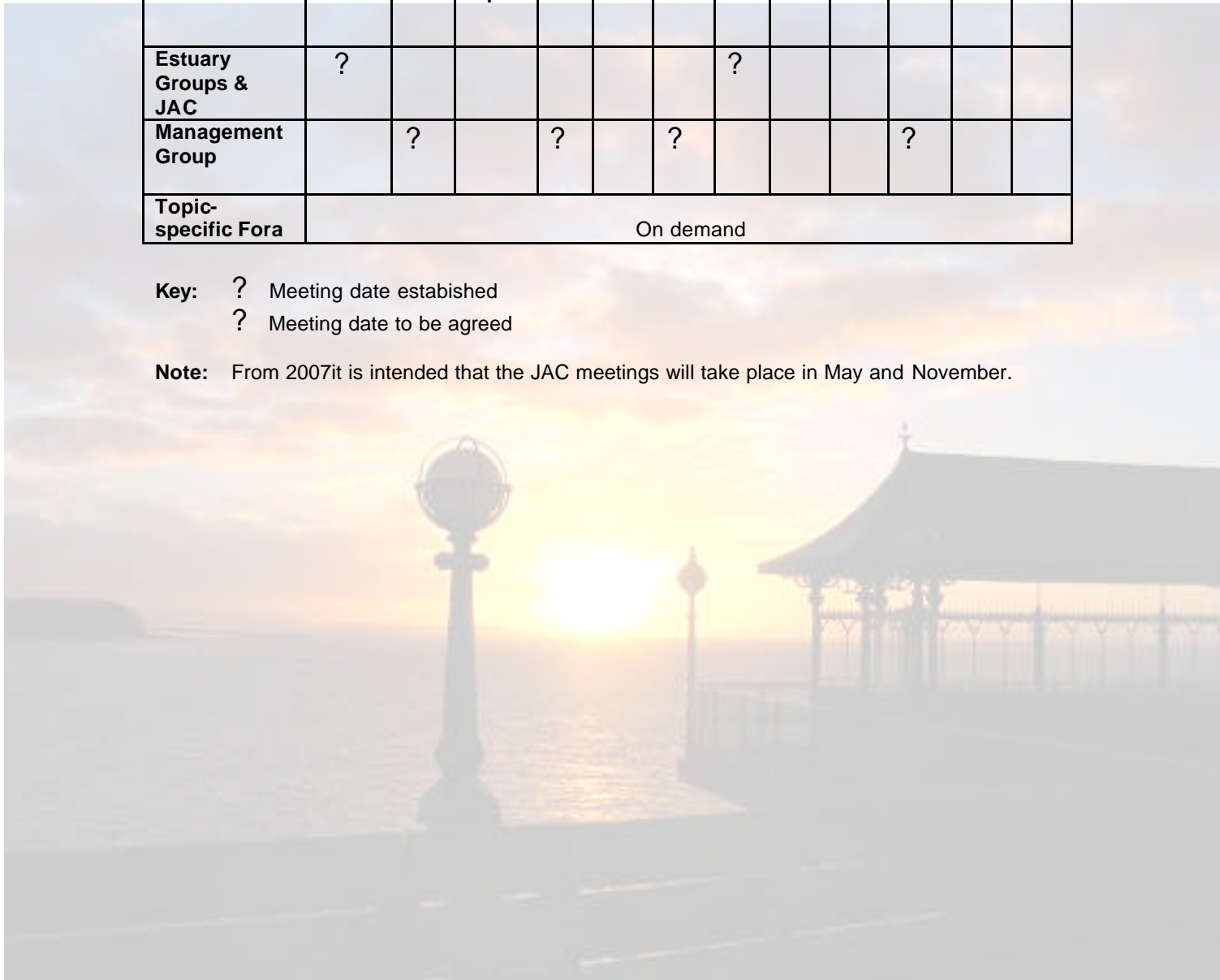
The following table indicates the proposed meeting times for the different groups administered by the Severn Estuary Partnership.

Table 3.5 SEP Meeting Dates 2006-07

Group	Dates											
	2006									2007		
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Forum			?									
Estuary Groups & JAC	?						?					
Management Group		?		?		?				?		
Topic-specific Fora	On demand											

- Key:** ? Meeting date established
 ? Meeting date to be agreed

Note: From 2007 it is intended that the JAC meetings will take place in May and November.



4 RESOURCES

4.1 Funding Sources

Resources to run the SEP have varied over the past 10 years, with a basic level of funding from local authorities contributing to core running costs. However, relative funding from local authorities is decreasing due to the increasing pressures on local government budgets and the non-statutory basis for ICZM partnerships.

Approximately £30,000-£35,000 is received from local authorities each financial year. With additional project funding the Partnership has an annual turnover of approximately £50,000. There have, however, been several gaps in service provision due to the inconsistent nature of core funding and changes in personnel.

If the UK Marine Bill provides a statutory basis or duty towards ICZM, there may be improved scope for local authorities to support SEP's services. In the absence of any changes in policy, SEP will need to work more closely with statutory bodies and local authorities to meet service needs and deliver projects linked to their existing statutory remits and non-statutory collaborative endeavours.

Opportunities to provide services to the ports and industry sector require further exploration. Links with regional government and the Welsh Assembly Government to explore opportunities for service provision also warrant further investigation.

Over and above local and regional organisations, further opportunities for European funding will continue to be explored (e.g. the DeltaNET project). Other funding sources for projects and grants will also continue to be investigated (e.g. Crown Estate, Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund).

Finally, the status of SEP as part of Cardiff University and its possible evolution into an independent charity and/or company will have a bearing on funding opportunities. Subject to the outcome of the changing Government context for Estuary Partnerships over the next two years, the pros and cons of establishing independent status may be assessed.

4.2 Financial Position 2005-2006

Due to multiple projects and annual funding streams, the SEP managed several accounts within Cardiff University at the beginning of 2005-06. By November 2005 these were rationalised into one SEP account with separate accounts held for ASERA and COASTATLANTIC. Within the new SEP account, monies are held on behalf of SECG and the Les Esturiales network. A budget management system has been designed by the Partnership Officer to keep track of all income and expenditure and provide reports to the Estuary Groups.

The statement provided in Appendix B.1 illustrates the forecasted financial position of the Partnership at the end of 2005-06. This was based on remaining funds and existing running costs without utilising further funds from the COASTATLANTIC to pay for staff time (due to full utilisation of that budget strand). Whilst the forecast at that time projected an £11,000 deficit, additional contributions have been received from local

authorities, options are being assessed to increase capacity for staff time funding through the remainder of the COASTATLANTIC budget, and significant contributions are due from the Environment Agency and WWF for the Severn Wonders Forum & Festival which are anticipated for inclusion in the end of year accounts.

4.3 Financial Forecast 2006-2007

During 2006-07 the final balance of the COASTATLANTIC project will be identified with the balance to be transferred by Cardiff University into the SEP budget.

Core funding contributions are anticipated to come in at just over £32,000. With additional financial support from SECG, ASERA and Les Esturiales for the provision of Secretariat Services, total income is anticipated to be just over £47,000. Total expenditure on SEP staff with a minimum operating budget for expenditure on SEP services, is just over £49,000. This does not include funding for the *Severn Tidings* newsletter, website maintenance costs or conference costs. During 2006-07 40% of the Communications Officer and 20% of the Partnership Officer's positions will be funded through the COREPOINT project budget.

The current financial position of the Partnership is relatively consistent with recent years, with a similar level of core funding provided by the local authorities. SEP's financial position in relation to contributions from statutory agencies has weakened, but several project applications are awaiting feedback at the time of writing. The Partnership has and will continue to benefit from match funding through European projects.

The SEP Business Plan 2006-09 describes in more detail our approach to strengthening SEP's financial position.

5 SUMMARY

5.1 Progress to Date (2005-06)

This section provides a 'snapshot' description of the current position of the Partnership in the context of recent years.

A highlight of recent years has been the closer collaboration between estuary-wide groups including ASERA, BCCPA, SCOSLA, SECG and SEP. The Partnership has convened several meetings of the **Estuary Group Common Platform** which are increasingly well received. By having meetings of the groups in the same place on the same day, many people save time and travel expenses. This has increased opportunities for valuable informal networking.

The SEP **Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)** has evolved from the Steering Group into a bi-annual gathering of stakeholders. Meetings circulate around the estuary with a guest speaker and update on SEP projects and services.

The **Secretariat role of SEP** has now been established and has potential to provide services to additional partners and projects.

The **COAST ATLANTIC project** funding has enabled the Partnership to deliver tangible outcomes which may not have otherwise been possible: **interpretation panels, access infrastructure, GIS and a spatial metadata directory**. This 3 year project has also helped substantiate the core funding available to develop SEP's unique services including the **Severn Tidings newsletter, Severn Estuary gateway website and SEP web pages**, and topic specific Fora for Access and GIS.

Over the past few years significant time has been invested in preparing Terms of Reference which developed into a **Partnership Agreement** and a funding formula for annual contributions to fund the core costs of SEP. In the current climate of local authority budget cuts, the changing policy context for statutory agencies, and opportunities which may emerge from the Marine Bill, it has not been possible for enough organisations to formally sign up to that Agreement or to resolve a funding formula for annual contributions. Despite stating that the Partnership Agreement was not intended to be a legal document, it was considered by some to be a legally binding document that was not appropriate for a non-statutory initiative. It was therefore decided by the Management Group in January 2006 to put the Partnership Agreement aside and continue to work on a voluntary, goodwill basis with existing organisations.

The SEP continues to attract core funding from local authorities and project funding from statutory agencies and other sources. **Core funds** contribute to the cost of just under 1 FTE position, with project funds supporting additional staff. The priorities of Partnership staff are guided by the Strategy recommendations but also led by project funding. The EC Interreg IIIb **COAST ATLANTIC** project (2003-06) enabled a full time Partnership Officer to be employed after a gap of 2 years and momentum to be generated in project-work relating to natural heritage, cultural heritage, GIS, urban-rural interdependencies (e.g. promoting local food produce) and stakeholder involvement.

5.2 Priorities 2006-07

The main objective for the short term is to strengthen and develop SEP's unique services and project capabilities. The new Business Plan 2006-09 will be a useful tool to achieve this by promoting SEP as a service provider and mechanism for helping to bring project teams together and attract funding. The commitment from local authorities remains fairly consistent but is limited by the non-statutory status of ICZM compared to their other statutory obligations. The involvement of statutory/agency representatives in SEP activities appears to have weakened and needs attention, with the possibility of significant opportunities arising within the forthcoming year. The engagement of industry, businesses and the community was initially quite high during preparation of the Strategy and needs re-visiting in order to re-engage this audience. A new Communications Strategy prepared alongside the Business Plan describes these objectives in more detail.



