

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

Joint Advisory Committee Meeting



11.30am-1.30pm, Tuesday 11th May 2010.

The Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon, BS21 7BL

DRAFT Minutes

ACTION

Attendees (32)

1. George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council (SEP MG Chair)
2. Fiona Bowles, Wessex Water
3. Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University
4. Stuart Ballard, Severn Rivers Trust
5. John Cordwell, Member of the public
6. Hannah Dineen, Cardiff County Council
7. Vicky Durston, Environment Agency
8. Tim Farr, Severn - Trent RFDC
9. Sue Hughes, Glamorgan - Gwent Archaeological Trust
10. Lyn Jenkins, Environment Agency
11. Gary Kennison, Gloucestershire County Council
12. Cllr Bill Kelloway, Cardiff Council
13. Eve Leegwater, Environment Agency
14. John Marks, Vale of Glamorgan Council
15. Christine Marsh, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP)
16. Don Metcalf - BCFSA
17. Nick Michael, North Somerset Council
18. Rhys Morgan, Environment Agency Wales
19. Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council
20. Gwilym Owen, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP)
21. Charlotte Pagendam – Natural England
22. Paul Parker, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP)
23. Louise Pennington, Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre
24. Graham Quarrier, Environment Agency
25. Andrew Ross, Caldicot & Wentlooge IDB
26. Jeanette Reis, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP)
27. Dick Sage, Bristol City Council
28. Cllr Venk Sheno, Forest of Dean District Council
29. Nick Stevens, Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium
30. Don Sutherland, RYA & BCYA
31. Ken Tatem, Environment Agency SW
32. Henry Way, James Maddison University

1 Welcome**GA**

George Ashworth welcomed delegates to the Joint Advisory Committee meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Chris Barrow, Bristol City Council
 Angus Bloomfield – Natural England
 John Buttivant, Environment Agency
 Matthew Lewis – Monmouthshire County Council
 Cllr James Harris, Monmouthshire County Council
 Dave Harris, Monmouthshire County Council
 Anne Hayes, Bristol Port Company
 Sue Howard, Countryside Council for Wales
 Rebecca Seaman, Somerset County Council
 Dusi Thomas, Welsh Water

Minutes of the Last Meeting (10th November 2010) & Matters Arising

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

2 Estuary Groups – Common Platform**2.1 Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) progress report****FB**

Fiona Bowles (Chair of ASERA MG)

Fiona Bowles introduced herself as the new chair to ASERA and gave an update on the work that had taken place over the previous 6 months.

In December 2009, the Severn Estuary was formally designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The revised scheme of management for the European marine site will include this designation; a program is in place to complete this by July 2011. It is likely that ASERA will engage with the SEP JAC in January 2011 as the high level advisory group during the consultation process. In the meantime, the ASERA website has had a makeover and the new site is to go live at the end May 2010.

Don Sutherland asked Fiona Bowles whether a specific ASERA Advisory Committee group would be necessary in the future. Fiona responded and said that it was hoped that the January JAC day would be used as an initial forum for consultation of the plan, however the original ASERA Advisory Group may be revitalised depending on the outcome of the review of activity proformas.

Stuart Ballard from the Severn Rivers Trust enquired as to why the SAC designation stopped at Slimbridge. Charlotte Pagendham from Natural England said that the SAC designation was primarily based upon the 'estuary' feature, which goes up to this area. The SAC also underpins the SSSI designation and includes habitats and species.

2.2 Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) progress report**PP (on behalf of DH)**

Paul Parker SEP gave a report on behalf of David Harris (Chairman of the SECG)

The main issue of discussion since the last JAC meeting has been the progress of the Shoreline Management Plan. Consultation closed mid-January with some 90 responses of good quality. The consultants, Atkins have analysed these and identified changes, as well as preparing responses to each submission. In addition the National Quality Review Group (NQRG) responded in mid-February with their comments. There were some 58 points, with 9 as 'show stoppers' i.e. those that need to be addressed in detail to progress with the plan. This and the public comments seem to be average for the SMP2's around the UK.

Atkins have prepared a response to the NQRG which was agreed at a Project Management Group and returned to the NQRG, a telephone conference followed to discuss this. The NQRG core members sought more detail on the response before they would share this with the full group. That has been done and returned to them. The NQRG have since asked for full SMP2 documents and Appendices to be amended in line with all comments received. Copies of amended documentation should be sent to NQRG and the process should be concluded in late May 2010. SECG hope to hear from the NQRG by mid to late June for their signoff. The sign-off is required before the SECG can proceed with the next stage of seeking Local Authority and Regional Flood Defence Committee's sign off. It now looks as if this stage may slip to September – partly due to the summer recess and RFDC committee dates.

The main outcomes of the consultation will see some changes of policy. A draft action plan has also been prepared by Atkins which shows how the outcomes of the SMP2 will be implemented. Much of that relates to monitoring work to see the effects of change over time, particularly climate change impacts.

One future issue raised by WAG is that of maintenance, repair and replacement of coastal defences over the long term. It is recognised that finance is limited and not all demands will be met. This means that resilience measures will be much more commonplace and geographical areas that are more extensive than those currently identified may need to be considered for Managed Retreat in the third epoch i.e. in the period 50-100 years hence (2060 – 2110).

On other aspects, Louise Pennington (Project Manager at the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre) attended the meeting in April to update the SECG on her role and progress. This new centre will allow SECG to co-ordinate monitoring work from across Wales and provide a single point of access for users.

Finally, Dave Harris attended RFDC meetings for both the Wessex and Severn Trent areas to update their members on the progress of the SMP2 in the Severn Estuary.

2.3 North Devon & Somerset Coastal Group (NDSCG) progress report

Cllr Humphrey Temperley was unable to attend the JAC meeting and therefore no formal update was presented. However, progress of the North Devon & Somerset Coastal Group can be observed through their website at: <http://www.ndascag.org/>

2.4 Bristol Channel Yachting Association (BCYA)

DS

Don Sutherland (Chair of BCYA) and the Royal Yachting Associations representative for South West England gave an update.

The BCYA were a statutory consultee in the Severn Barrage feasibility study for the navigation section.

The BCYA have been working with Finding Sanctuary (in the main and Somerset steering groups) to nominate potential Marine Conservation Zone's (MCZ's). The BCYA is of the opinion that the MCZ's will not encourage more fishing to take place, however there are concerns that the Severn Estuary will be split into two completely different planning areas due to the different approaches being adopted by England and Wales in establishing the MCZ's. This is particularly an issue for the BCYA, whose members are constantly crossing the estuary and Bristol Channel. DS expressed his concerns about this issue.

The BCYA are also liaising with those managing the Atlantic Array wind farm project. The RYA are concerned that navigation may be severely restricted in this area once the development is in place.

DS also mentioned that live data can be obtained from the wave rider buoys at Minehead, Bridgewater Bay and Weston Bay. The experimental tidal turbine at Foreland Point has recently been removed.

The RYA have recently undergone some staff changes, having lost both their Environmental and Planning Manager and Assistant. A new member of staff has recently joined to cover these posts and the RYA would like to continue working closely with SEP in the future.

2.5 Bristol Channel Standing Environment Group (BCSEG)

CM

Christine Marsh, SEP gave a report on behalf of the BCSEG

The SEP have taken over the secretariat for the BCSEG. This group is working with those on both sides of the channel to revise the Marine Pollution Contingency Plan for the Bristol Channel. The group had its third meeting last month and has so far re-established its membership and Terms of Reference; it is now in the process of re-establishing links and setting up a work and training programme.

The BCSEG have been advised by the MCA (Marine Coastguard Agency) to take on examples of best practice, and are therefore following the example of North Wales.

CM made it clear that the Marine Pollution Contingency Plan for the Bristol Channel should not be confused with the Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Plan, BCSEG's plan details how the Standing Environment Group will operate in the event of an incident i.e. providing environmental and public health advice to response units.

3 SEP Management Group Update

GA

George Ashworth informed the JAC that Jonathan Mullard (SEP Manager) had recently left the SEP and had moved onto another post with DECC. GA welcomed Dr Jeanette Reis who is currently replacing JM in the interim period.

The SEP are in the process of setting up a Working Group for the State of the Severn Report. Partners have been identified to form the working group and a meeting is likely to take place in June/July. Anyone who is interested in joining the State of the Severn Working Group is asked to contact Christine Marsh at the SEP office.

SEP have continued Secretariat work for the SECG and ASERA; including work on the SMP2 and Management Scheme for the European Marine Site. Due to the successful involvement in the SMP2, SEP are currently in discussions with the Environment Agency over assisting with the public consultation and publicity of the Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Partnership has also been successful in gaining €31,528 funding as a partner within the Interreg IVC Deltanet 3 year €1.16m project. This project supports a network of nine partners to investigate approaches to estuary/delta policy and governance, including better science-policy integration. Further information regarding Deltanet and SEP's involvement can be found at <http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/enews.html>

4 SEP Strategic Business Plan**JR**

Jeanette Reis introduced herself as the interim SEP Manager and outlined SEP's next steps for its Strategic Business Plan.

The most recent version of the SEP's Strategic Business Plan has been amended to detail 'Responsible Partners' for the actions. The consultation period for the document has been extended until Monday 31st May 2010. All partners were asked to review the document on the Members Area of the website, and to provide feedback via email.

5 The Severn Rivers Trust (SRT)**SB**

Stuart Ballard gave a short presentation to the JAC about the SRT and its founder, Tony Bostock.

The Severn Rivers Trust is an independent environmental charity established to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of the rivers, streams, watercourses and water bodies in the Severn catchment, and to advance the education of the public in the management of water and the wider environment.

The SRT's remit does not stop at the banks of the river, it looks at the whole catchment area and links up industry and organisations, with those who use the estuary (e.g. farmers, fishermen) to monitor the health of the river and manage the catchment area.

In this way, SRT works in a similar way to SEP and there are many overlaps between the two organisations. SEP will work with the SRT to add value and fill gaps.

It is expected that Tony Bostock will attend future SEP JAC days to speak in more detail about the work that SRT are doing.

6 Flood Risk Management Strategy – An update**GQ**

Graham Quarrier from the Environment Agency gave a short presentation about the FRMS

The Environment Agency's FRMS is a continuation of the SMP2, whereby the SMP2 is a high level policy document, the FRMS goes into more detail about how and when changes (if any) will be made to the flood defences. The FRMS will be linked into the councils' and local authority's core development strategies.

The FRMS is a 100 year plan over 3 epochs (0-20, 20-50, 50-100 years) whereby some areas will need to be reviewed more frequently depending on their risk levels. Plans for sea defences will be more detailed in the FRMS and will include specifics about their shape, make-up and appearance etc.

The consultation for the FRMS is coming up in a few months time and will be advertised in the local press and at public events. 3 different versions of the consultation document will be produced for S.Wales, Gloucestershire and S.Gloucestershire, thereby making the documents more relevant (and cost effective). Comments will be invited during public meetings and via online questionnaires. The consultation will commence once the SMP2 has been signed off in the Autumn, it should be noted that the consultation process will not be equal around the estuary, it will be specifically targeting those areas subject to short term

changes. Where there are such changes, the Environment Agency will engage with local landowners.

7 **Habitat Creation on the Severn Estuary**

LJ

Lyn Jenkins from the Environment Agency gave a presentation about the EA's habitat creation plans for the Severn Estuary.

<http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/publications/JAC100511Habitat.pps>

8 **IMCORE – An update**

RCB

Dr Ballinger from Cardiff University gave an update on the IMCORE Project work which is being undertaken on the Severn Estuary.

Dr Ballinger gave an overview of the IMCORE project aims, which are to promote a transnational, innovative & sustainable approach to reducing the impacts of climate change on coastal resources; To develop adaptation strategies for coastal sites across North West Europe; To demonstrate the effectiveness of various approaches to climate change adaptation.

Researchers at Cardiff University are specifically looking to enhance the capacity for climate change adaptation in the Severn Estuary area by informing the development of climate change adaptation on the Severn Estuary and encouraging joint working and improved interaction between scientists and policy makers.

<http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/publications/JAC100511IMCORE.pps>

9 **Policy, Planning Issues and Consultation**

Marine Policy Statement

JR

Dr Jeanette Reis gave the JAC an update on SEP's involvement with the pre-consultation for the Marine Policy Statement, both on the Welsh and English sides.

Marine Conservation Zones

CM

Christine Marsh (SEP) gave the JAC an update on SEP's involvement with MCZ Project Wales, and Finding Sanctuary (England) to facilitate stakeholder engagement.

10 **AOB**

State of the Severn

CM

Christine Marsh (SEP) reminded members that the Partnership was looking for members for the State of the Severn Working Group, to provide input for the various sections of the final document. The document is intended to be a valuable resource for the Partnership and its partners, it is expected that a draft document will be produced by the end of this year. A Project Brief will be issued shortly to Working Group members.

The meeting closed at 13:30 for lunch