

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

Joint Advisory Committee Meeting



11.30am-1.30pm, Tuesday 8th November 2011.

Armada House, Bristol

DRAFT Minutes

ACTION

Attendees (24)

1. Chair: Cllr Martin Quaile, Gloucestershire County Council (SEP Chair)
2. George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council (SEP MG Chair)
3. Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University
4. Dr. John Cordwell, Gloucestershire County Council
5. Richard Dunn, Sedgemoor District Council
6. Roger Godwin, Frampton Court Estate
7. Pete Gilbert, Stroud District Council
8. Dave Harris, Monmouthshire County Council (SECG Chair)
9. Rose Hewlett, Frampton Court Estate
10. Sue Howard, Countryside Council for Wales
11. Richard Lloyd, Newport City Council
12. Nick Michael, North Somerset Council
13. Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council
14. Gwilym Owen, Severn Estuary Partnership
15. Paul Parker, Severn Estuary Partnership
16. Louise Pennington, Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre
17. Barry Phillips, Natural England
18. Eve Read, Welsh Water
19. Kate Rodgers, Countryside Council for Wales
20. Andrew Ross, Caldicot and Wentlooge Levels IDB
21. Susan Russell, Environment Agency
22. Alan Storer, Welsh Assembly Government
23. Don Sutherland, RYA & BCYA
24. Beth Taylor, Severn Estuary Partnership

1 Welcome

MQ

Cllr Quaile welcomed delegates to the Joint Advisory Committee meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Bettina Bockelmann-Evans, Cardiff University
 John Buttivant, Environment Agency
 James Harris, Monmouthshire County Council

John Inman, North Somerset Council
Cllr Bill Kelloway, Cardiff Council
John Major, Monmouthshire County Council
Don Metcalfe, Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers
Rhys Morgan, Environment Agency
Charlotte Pagendam, Natural England
Nicola Rimmington, Countryside Council for Wales
Colin Robson, Marine Management Organisation
Rebecca Seaman, Somerset County Council

Minutes of the Last Meeting (11th May 2011) & Matters Arising

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

2 Estuary Groups – Common Platform

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

Paul Parker (Secretariat to ASERA)

Paul gave a brief update of ASERA activities over the past 6 months.

- The Draft Management Scheme for the European Marine Site was published for consultation in August
- The response to the consultation was poor so the closing date was extended to the 4th of October. Only 10 responses from relevant authorities were received, and it is now proposed to hold a workshop in January to assist organisations in agreeing their Relevant Authority Action Plans so that the Management Scheme and Action Plans can be finalised. The publication date is now proposed for May 2012. – *Since the JAC ASERA have held their AGM and have decided not to go ahead with a workshop in January. Instead the implementation office will review all data from the relevant authorities and update the action plans accordingly.*
- The ASERA AGM will be held on November 28th at Cardiff University. Tim Robbins will speak on the role of the new Devon and Severn IFCA and Sue Rice will speak on the new All Wales Coastal Path.
- Further information can be found at: www.severnestuary.net/asera

Discussion:

- GA- What were the reasons for the lack of response?
- PP- It is difficult to tell, however the majority of received responses have praised the draft management scheme. It is therefore probable that others have not responded as they are happy with the draft scheme. A lack of resources within individual RA's could also be a contributing factor.
- SH- There are (access) issues, the Estuary is dynamic and cannot be restrained. The plan is to pick this up in January.
- GA- So generally there is a positive picture.

2.2 Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) progress report DH

David Harris (Chairman of the SECG)

Dave Harris gave a brief update of SECG activities over the past 6 months.

- The SECG are exploring options for the storage of all SMP2 data.
- The SECG are awaiting sign off of the SMP2 IROPI from both DEFRA and Welsh Government.
- Severn Estuary flood updates, National Strategy with workshop sessions (Welsh launch on 14th November 2011). - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/waterflooding/floodin/g/nationalstrategy/?lang=en>
- Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre Annual report available at: www.severnestuary.net/secg
- There is some controversy over the Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy and associated delays. Updates can be found at: <http://www.severnestuary.net/frms/publications.html>
- SECG have a healthy financial report; although there is slight concern over future budget cuts.
- Reports from LAs / EA & Other Members on Coastal Works:
 - Gloucestershire County Council: Environment Scrutiny Flood Task – to review issues from FRMS.
 - Stroud District Council: Completing level 2 strategic flood risk assessment in terms of planning and local development. Halcrow have led work on behalf of Stroud DC.
 - Natural England: EA currently undertaking 1 to 1 visits in terms of the FRMS with support from NE where appropriate. Some landowners may take the opportunity for small scale realignment
 - Newport City Council: Ongoing works to banks of River Usk at Newport are progressing well.
 - Caldicot and Wentlooge IDB – Interim Manager, hope for permanent manager in spring, probably a non technical role. A new Board and new Chairman of the Board will be appointed on the 15th November 2011.
 - Implications of NFU court cases – currently taking further advice regarding liabilities – issue of clarity regarding what is meant by maintenance – ‘maintaining sea wall to good standard at present height’. Questions regarding if the IDB are liable for maintenance.
 - Environment Agency – Severn Trent flood and coastal committee out for consultation regarding splitting into two committees – 21st Nov (closes) – looking to have representation of all authorities on the committees.
 - CCW: On Cardiff’s behalf. Looking at implications of flooding across Gwent levels – looking at both landward and seaward flooding. Cardiff’s LDP is likely to have a year’s delay (Autumn 2012).

Discussion:

- GA- In terms of controversy, are LA’s signed up to SMP?
- DH- All LA’s are signed up as far as he knows, but some feel they weren’t consulted enough.
- Habitat replacement; there is the potential for this to now only cover the replacement of man-made habitats.
- WG feel uncomfortable that habitat loss on the Welsh side is being provided by the English side.
- Steart Scheme, 3 SMPs will all benefit from it, alongside Bristol Port Company.
- Gloucestershire are also concerned due to confusion between SMPs, therefore set up a task group to be held on 19th November.

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

Unfortunately no member of North Devon and Somerset Coastal Group was present to offer an update.

2.4 Royal Yachting Association South West & Bristol Channel Yachting Association

DS

- RYA held a 'concluding' meeting with Finding Sanctuary's Somerset Steering Group to discuss MCZs. Result was to establish a "reference zone MCZ off Sand Point", but no actual MCZ to be created, due to this idea not being popular with RYA or Port of Bristol in addition to the area already being highly designated.
- Major concern over Coastguard Stations was raised at a recent meeting; i.e. closure of Swansea coastguard station. Swansea answers approximately 75% of all calls-therefore if the RYA was forced to choose a station to close, the RYA would prefer to close Milford Haven and save Swansea.
- RYA fears over increased beaurocracy from MMO; as from April 2012, one needs to register and possibly pay for minor mud and pebble disposal (dredging). i.e. the mounds of pebbles at Minehead.
- Praise and thanks for 2011 Severn Estuary Forum.
- Revising 'Blue Book-Pilot Guide' which is aiming to be launched in March 2012.
- Brief mention of the Severn Barrage proposal-with emphasis on the fact that private talks and developments are still progressing.
- Project Kraken- (Avon and Somerset) anti-terrorism project to raise surveillance on vessels and sea traffic in the lead up to the Olympics 2012. - http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/community_safety/GASP/project-kraken.aspx
- PP and CMQ- comments on support over the saving of Swansea coastguard station, but emphasis on SEP's neutrality.

2.5 Bristol Channel Standing Environment Group (BCSEG)

RM

No member of the BCSEG was available to give a formal update, however the following written update was provided.

The Bristol Channel Standing Environment Group continues to work on improving its functionality. Following the exercise in April when the group tested its Activation Plan (<http://www.severnestuary.net/bcseg/>), the Chairman, John Harrison (EAW) conducted a communications test, testing the contact details and availability of the group's core members. Both exercises are considered to have been successful, but shortcomings were identified and work has been underway to make improvements.

The group continues to work through its work programme looking at areas such as

shoreline sensitivity, clean-up options, use of dispersants, booming plans and environmental impact assessment.

3 Policy, Planning Issues & Consultations

AS

Marine Planning:

Alan Storer, Welsh Government offered a short update on the marine planning process in Wales. A copy of Alan's presentation can be viewed at:

<http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/publications/JAC111108MarinePlanning.pdf>

The main discussion points were as follows:

- Wales are at a different stage to MMO and Scotland.
- A recent consultation has made a couple of key commitments; a 'National Plan with spatial priorities for 2012-2013'.
- A few key questions, such as; 'How do we plan sub-nationally?', 'How do we plan with the land-sea interface in mind?' and 'How do we plan with the recent proposal of Government structure'.
- Agreement to set up a Marine Evidence group.
- Brief update on responses:
 - Stakeholders broadly in agreement for national spatial planning, but there is also concern or confusion over the 'sub-national' plan; therefore there may be a need to re-consult.
 - Data gaps are apparent (i.e. in tourism, fishing, species, sub-tidal arrays etc).
- New administration has meant a review of 'timings'-hence the 2012/2013 deadlines are simply not achievable (add 2-3 years). The new administration has asked to clear the process with cabinet colleagues.
- Further meeting with WCMP group.
- Currently, the marine team is working to map spatial priorities with reference to 'futures' and mapping evidence gaps- (is the data robust and what are the confidence levels?)

Discussion:

- How does MSP fit with other policies e.g. NEF?
- AS-There is the role of 'coastal fora' to consider when discussing marine planning and there are no fora in the North of Wales for a reason. Is there really the need for a new one-rather than just using existing fora? (CCW tried unsuccessfully to establish more, therefore we cannot simply 'create' more.)
- There are also issues around multiple use and cumulative effects.
- How is WG dealing with un-devolved aspects of marine planning such as ports and energy?
- AS- Any offshore planning requests have to go to the Secretary of State. Inshore planning requests go to Secretary of State too, but, will there also be the need to tie in with a possible National Infrastructure Plan? There will of course be some cross-border issues (i.e. within port expansion etc).

ICZM Update

- DEFRA are currently reviewing policies, with workshops discussing European perspectives taking place.
- SEP to circulate further updates via SEP E-news.

4 **IMCORE and DeltaNet – An Update** **RB**

Dr. Rhoda Ballinger offered a short update on the IMCORE project and DeltaNet project. A copy of the presentation can be viewed at:

<http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/publications/JAC111108IMCORE.pdf>

The main discussions points are as follows:

- Comments on SOSER and thanks to staff of SEP who have been involved.
- Members of the JAC were asked to review the SOSER and send comments directly to Beth Taylor (TaylorBA@cardiff.ac.uk) by the 22nd November 2011.
- Agreement by CMQ and RCB that SOSER should be kept as one whole PDF document on the website once it is finished.
- Discussion on how best to disseminate this information and SOSER itself.

5 **SEP Future Direction** **PP**

PP gave a short presentation outlining recent activities of SEP and the potential priorities and future direction of the Partnership. He also introduced a workshop session to assess which SEP services are most valued by members and to identify potential development for new services. A copy of Paul's presentation can be viewed at: <http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/publications/JAC111108SEP.pdf>

6 **Workshop Report** **PP**

Aims of Workshop:

- To assess which SEP services are most valued by members.
- To identify potential development of new services.
- To help set key priorities for SEP for 2012/13.
- Outputs will feed into a workshop report and will be incorporated into the 2012/13 Action Plan embedded into SEP's strategic Business Plan.

Workshop Questions:

1. What added value does the SEP currently bring to your organisation?
2. What are the main barriers that limit your organisations engagement and resourcing of SEP?
3. Which areas/services would you like to see SEP develop? Which areas/services will deliver the most added value to your organisation?
4. Any Questions/points of clarity for SEP?
5. What do you see as the main priorities for SEP in 2012/13?

Discussion Summary:**What added value does SEP bring to your organisation?**

In response to this, participants noted the following:

- SEP focuses on the Severn Estuary and provides an estuary focus.
- SEP facilitates coordination between estuary users and estuary wide initiatives (e.g. through Joint Days).
- SEP provides a one-stop shop on Estuary matters. In this context, the following were mentioned as being of value:
 - SEP's contact database (including local contacts)
 - SEP's communication outputs and mechanisms (notably Severn Tidings, E-news and the annual forum – with useful annual themes)
- SEP helps break down barriers between organisations (and between English and Welsh dimensions/approaches).
- SEP / Cardiff University is able to employ staff (and is able to provide part-time capacity for Secretariat roles).
- SEP provides a neutral and informed Secretariat role.
- SEP is able to link with Government and to pull in both Government, international and outside speakers to provide a very valuable external insight into estuary affairs.
- Meeting opportunities – interaction.
- Information; ports.
- Recognises the catchment.
- Cost effective.
- Brings together different organisations.
- Good for networking.
- Good website and one stop shop, has really evolved and useful to dip in.
- Web based archives.
- Overcoming the national barriers of England and Wales.
- SEP recognises the whole estuary, not just upper and lower.
- Different tiers of groups for different reasons.
- Signposting ways for different information.

What are the barriers which limit your organisation's involvement/engagement with SEP?

In response to this, participants noted the following:

- Limited engagement with local, grass roots organisations across the Estuary.
- The lack of perceived clarity regarding SEP's role in recent consultations may have confused some organisations and individuals as to the role of SEP and may have undermined its perceived neutrality (seen as an issue of 'labelling').
- Funding streams and statutory responsibilities of some organisations limit their involvement with SEP and their ability to provide core funding (however, possibilities of using other funding schemes for dedicated projects was mentioned).
- SEP may be viewed as being too strategic by local level organisations / individual members.
- The current lack of a common cause to unite and stimulate organisations to get involved.
- Gloucestershire County Council – not many people knew of SEP – need to promote.
- Coordination role; responsibilities.

- Not all LAs are SEP members – limits involvement. Think of land-based organisations.
- Resources issue – would like to get more involved but lack of time.
- Scope for web/tele conferencing? Online PowerPoint presentations, podcasts?
- Extend the Annual Forum to a 2 day event.
- Yacht club venues around Severn Estuary could be used to host meetings for free?
- Newport City Council can also offer meeting rooms free – could possibly host a future JAC event.

Any questions/points of clarity for SEP?

- Was low attendance at the November JAC due to timing and the success of the forum in September? Think of timings between next year's events to maximise attendance, possibly only having an annual JAC?

Which areas/services would you like SEP to develop? Which areas/services will deliver the most added value to your organisation?

In response to this question, participants proffered the following:

- SEP to promote more effective local stakeholder involvement in relevant consultations. In such cases SEP needs to try to ensure /develop clearer rules of engagement.
- SEP should encourage greater integration and communication between organisations in providing information on estuary-wide news/developments. Closer liaison with partner Press Officers and SEP / Cardiff University Press Office were suggested.
- Further use of external experts to provide a much valued, outsider perspective on the Estuary.
- Some local 'observers' were keen to see SEP engage more fully with local users.
- Information dissemination and trustworthy sources.
- A glossary for acronyms.
- Utilising student resources, e.g. volunteers, interns etc.
- University Partnerships with other Universities in the estuary: encouraging student led research through the 'seeding' of dissertation ideas/title ideas. These can then be published on the website to create a self-perpetuating critical mass of data for SEP to add value to its website.
- Site visits, encouraging the partners to offer semi regular site visits around the estuary, perhaps quarterly? Maybe as a SOSER visit format for each theme?
- Map for general public, e.g. tourism, sites of interest etc.

The above workshop outputs will be used alongside the completed SEP priority tables to inform SEP's forward work in 2012/13 and to set clear priorities for the organization. The outputs captured through this workshop process will also feed in directly to the annual update of SEP's Strategic Business Plan.

The Severn Estuary Partnership would like to thank all delegates for their time and efforts throughout the Joint Estuaries Day and associated workshop session.