

# Severn Estuary Partnership

## Communications Strategy

**2008-2009**



*Working together for a sustainable estuary.*



## **Introduction**

The Severn Estuary Partnership is an independent, estuary-wide initiative led by local authorities, organisations and statutory agencies. We work with all those involved in the management of the estuary, from planners to port authorities, fishermen to farmers and people concerned about the future of the estuary.

Promoting the value of the estuary and the work of the Severn Estuary Partnership to all partners is vital to achieve both support for the Partnership and a better managed and sustainable estuary.

One of our main services is communication. We aim to improve communication between organisations, groups and individuals to work towards a sustainable estuary. This strategy is primarily concerned with raising our image and highlighting our work, and will also assist with the delivery of the business plan.

## **Background**

The Severn Estuary Partnership has been running for over 10 years. During this time considerable progress has been made in improving communication between organisations and higher level groups, highlighted by the publication of the Strategy of the Severn Estuary in 2001. Communication can play a vital role in changing attitudes and gaining support from national, regional and local organisations and groups to work together.

The size and nature of the estuary, covering such different cultural and geographical areas, including England, Wales and 14 local authorities, makes it a challenge to reach out to local communities and the general public. No sustained effort to engage the public has been made however, and communication to this huge stakeholder group could reap large rewards in terms of vitality & support for the role of the Partnership.

This communication strategy sets out the messages, audiences and actions to be taken to maintain and harness the potential of the Partnership.



## **Purpose of the Strategy**

*To support delivery of Partnership services by ensuring focussed, efficient and effective communications over the period 2006-2009.*

## **Objectives**

1. To promote the estuary as a valuable resource for nature conservation, business and as a place to live, work and enjoy.
2. To increase awareness of the Severn Estuary Partnership and its role in the sustainable management of the estuary.
3. To increase the level of support for the Partnership through recognition of the its role in the sustainable management of the estuary.

## **Target Audiences**

The strategy breaks down the audience into two key areas, with several sub-types.

- a.** Partners, potential partners, national and regional bodies, statutory agencies, NGO's, politicians. All these groups may fund / aid the partnership in some way.
  - a(i)** Local existing partners and organisations
  - a(ii)** Local potential/lapsed partners and organisations
  - a(iii)** Regional and national organisations/political representatives.
  
- b.** All those who use and live on or near the estuary, including local<sup>1</sup> interest groups, communities and visitors.
  - b(i)** Local groups / users closely associated with the use or management of the estuary – *'engaged users'*
  - b(ii)** Local groups / individuals living near the estuary not closely associated with its use or management.
  - b(iii)** Tourists, visitors and the general public at large.

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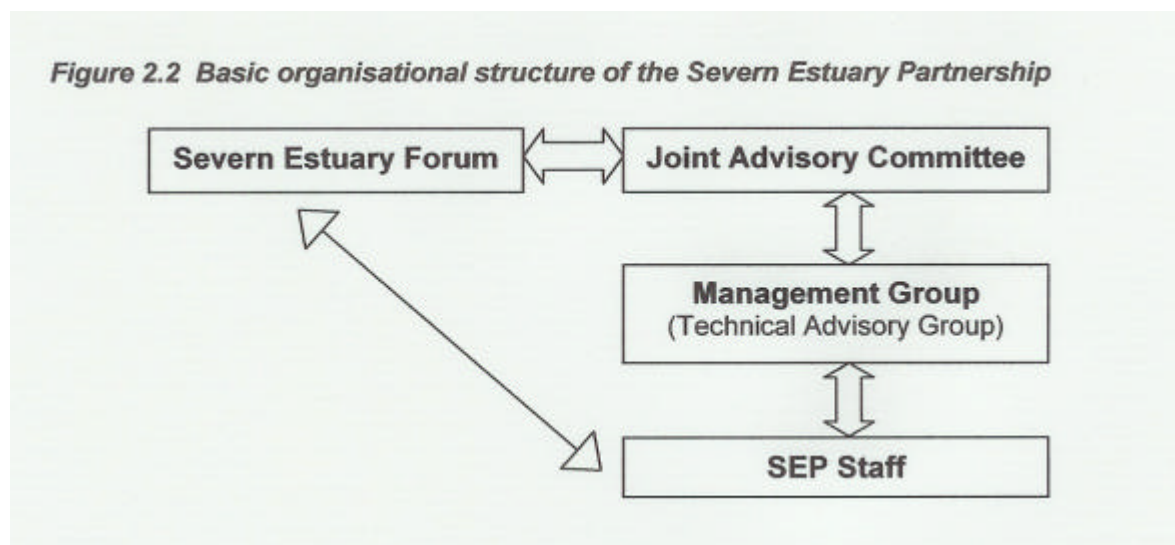
<sup>1</sup> *Local* in the above means local to the estuary- so groups such as Severn-wide angling groups or Rotary Clubs would be in b(i) and the general public would be in group b(iii).

## SEP's Evolution & Target Audiences

In the late 1980s/early 1990s local authorities collaborated under the bracket of the *Standing Conference of Severnside Local Authorities* (SCOSLA). In the mid 1990s, through preparation of the *Strategy for the Severn Estuary*, over 130 organisations collaborated, extending the network to include all major local and regional organisations with an interest in managing the estuary's resources. Over several years of stakeholder engagement the voluntary strategy document was published (SES, 2001) outlining estuary-related issues, recommending policies and actions to work towards sustainable development based on the principles of integrated coastal zone management (ICZM).

Until 2006, SEP was mainly operating with target audience *a.* (above) facilitating communication between organisations with management responsibilities or interests. From 2006 onwards more emphasis has been put on involving a wider audience to promote awareness of the value of the estuary. This was initiated in 2006 with the Severn Wonders Festival to celebrate the estuary and partnership working, plus establishment of the Severn Estuary Forum – now firmly established as the annual conference hosted by the Severn Estuary Partnership. The Forum's primary aim is to bring together audiences *a.* and *b.* to encourage 'vertical' as well as 'horizontal' integration to support decision-making (based on ICZM principles). The bi-annual JAC meetings are primarily focused on 'horizontal' integration between sectors (see diagram below).

The current remit of SEP is to focus primarily on its long-standing target audience *a.* whilst extending communication services to reach target audience *b.* where opportunities and resources allow. A distinction has been made between the target audiences within *b.* to focus SEP resources on the *b (i)* group of '**engaged users**'. In broad terms SEP defines '**stakeholders**' as all those in target audience *a.* and *b (i)* and those in target audiences *b (i)* and *(ii)* as the '**public**'



## Key messages

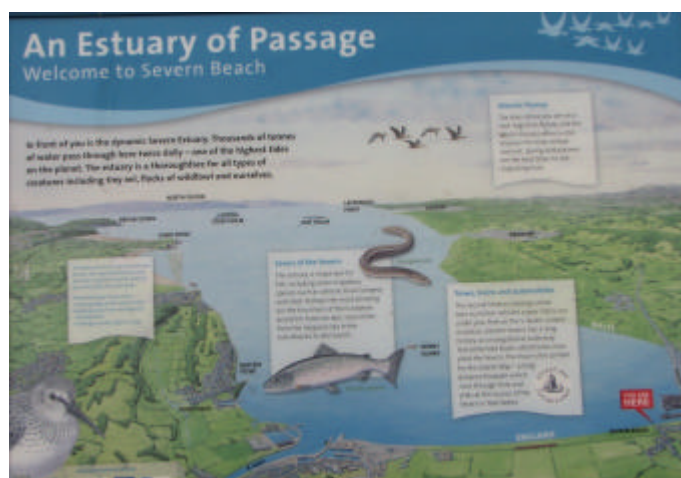
Whilst each separate communication in our work has a specific message, there are a number of key messages that will be incorporated into our communications which will contribute to achieving the objectives. They are separated by which key audience they should address. It is important to recognise the difference between the Partnership itself, i.e. the network made up of all partners, and the Severn Estuary Partnership team, which is the staff and resources required to keep the network effective.

### Audience a. Partners & Organisations

1. The Severn Estuary Partnership provides a framework and network which is essential for the sustainable use of the estuary.
2. The Severn Estuary Partnership is a forward thinking open network, which promotes a holistic, estuary-wide perspective.
3. The Severn Estuary Partnership team is dynamic, efficient and unique networking initiative promoting co-operation between local and regional stakeholders.
4. Investment of time and resources into the Partnership will reap much larger rewards in return in the longer term.

### Audience b. Clubs, local communities, interest/ user groups

1. The Severn Estuary is essential for our current and future livelihood.
2. The Severn Estuary is a dynamic place which continues to change.
3. The Severn Estuary is an international area of beauty and distinctiveness.



*SEP Interpretation Panel*

## Delivery

Communication activity	Target Audiences					
	a(i) Current Partners	a(ii) Potential / lapsed	a(iii) National /regional	b(i) Local / associated	b(ii) local / dis assoc'd.	b(iii) visitors/ tourists / gen. public
Face to face / meetings						
Email						
Phone						
Mail						
Estuary Groups Day & JAC						
Talks at National conferences e.g. ICZM						
Severn Estuary Forum						
<i>Severn Estuary Day (potential)</i>						
Attending Events / shows / stalls / walks/ exhibitions						
Outdoor panels / V.C.'s						
Website						
Severn Tidings Newsletter						
Media – Radio, TV, Newspapers						
Leaflets – SEP						
Leaflets/Newsletters - other						
Other printed material						
Delivering our messages by proxy through other organisations						

## Key communication tools and some actions to improve them.

Communication Medium	Identified techniques to improve and make consistent our communication
Face to face / meetings	Image- SEP name badges with logos. SEP T-shirts for public events. Professional & friendly conduct.
Email	Consistent signatures- same style, font, and logo attached All letters on headed template.
Phone	Templates for phone records.
Mail	Use headed notepaper & compliments slips.
JAC	Display material, reaffirmation of purpose of partnership at start / close.
Talks / presentations –SEP	Use branded template for powerpoint presentations. Always use a theme for presentations/ talks. Plentiful use of images of the estuary and 'working together' circle.
Attending Events / shows / stalls / walks	Take posters / newsletters & other SEP & estuary publicity material Attend annual shows (with partners).
Exhibitions / Outdoor panels / V.C.'s	SEP logo present with publicity materials.
Website	Aim for public friendly site with added depth beneath. Easy to navigate.
Use of Images and maps	Charging / non charging policy.
Newsletter –SEP	Aim for public friendly newsletter, with lots of short pieces. Consistent design style based on image produced Oct 05.
Newsletter – other	Draw up list of partners' newsletters. Seek opportunities for one piece in each once every two years.
Media – Radio, TV, Newspapers	Aim for monthly estuary / SEP stories to gain regional press coverage
Leaflets	Continue to develop in house leaflets for partners. Consistent design style based on Severn Estuary brand image produced Oct 05.
Leaflets- other	Consistent design style based on Severn Estuary brand image produced Oct 05.
Delivering our messages by proxy through other organisations	Very important method. Look for opportunities to get our messages across.



