

JOINT SEVERN ESTUARY GROUPS INITIATIVE

Monday 24th November 2003, 10.00am
South Gloucestershire County Council, Thornbury

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Agenda

Invitees:

George Ashworth (SEP Chair)
Simon Brett (ASERA Chair)
Gillian-Ellis King (SCOSLA, SEP, ASERA)
Barrie Evans (BCCPA)
Peter Hall (BCCPA)

Helen Jenkins-Environment Agency
(ASERA, SEP)
Steve Knowles (ASERA)
Peter Lee (ND&SCG)
Diarmuid Mulrenan (SECG)
John Pembridge (SCOSLA Chair)
Charlotte Street (SEP)
Peter Tyzack (SCOSLA)

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising (attached)
3. Individual Groups Issues and Update
4. Feedback Report from 28/04/03 Meeting (attached)
5. Format, date and venue of next Joint Groups Initiative Meeting
 - Renewable Energy in the Severn Estuary and SCOSLA Draft Motion
6. Future of the Initiative (Further Integration)
 - Financial arrangements
7. EU ICZM Recommendation
 - ICZM Stocktake and Workshop Findings (attached)
8. AOB
9. Date of Next Meeting
(Monday April 26th 2004 and Monday October 11th 2004 – Joint Meeting Days)

ASERA/BCCPA/ND&SCG/SCOSLA/SECG/SEP

CHAIRS MEETING

Wednesday 15th January 2003

S. Glos Co Co Offices, Thornbury

MINUTES

Present:

George Ashworth, SEP (Chair)
Charlotte Street, SEP
Cllr John Pembridge, SCOSLA
Cllr Peter Tyzack, SCOSLA
Steve Knowles, ASERA
Peter Lee, ND&SCG
Diarmuid Mulrenan, SECG
Dave Andrews, EA

1. Apologies

Alan Hurford/SCOSLA, Simon Brett/ABP, Gillian Ellis-King/SEP

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.

3. MoU between existing estuary groups

The SEP, ASERA, SECG, ND&SCG & SCOSLA have agreed the principle and wording of the MoU, and Chairs of each group signed the document. The BCCPA still need to confirm whether they are able to sign the MoU and will reply to the Estuary Chairs Group after they have had a meeting to discuss the issue. The Swansea Coastal Group has confirmed that they are focussing their joint arrangements with Pembrokeshire Coastal Group and will therefore not be signing the MoU.

ACTION: Steve Knowles to circulate the signed copy of the MoU to all Estuary Chairs

4. Estuary Groups joint meeting

Steve Knowles outlined suggestions for a joint meeting date on Monday 28th April 2003 at Monmouthshire County Council offices, Cwmbran. All agreed the principle and running order of the joint meeting date.

ACTION: George Ashworth to confirm room availability at Cwmbran for the 28th April

George Ashworth to arrange lunch for 30 people for 12 noon on 28th April

Charlotte Street to confirm the timing and room numbers of the separate Estuary Group meetings to Estuary Chairs/secretariat at least 3 weeks in advance of the 28th April.

All Estuary Chairs to prepare a 10 minute presentation on the work/progress of their group, to give at the opening of the SEP meeting, scheduled for 12.30pm

All Estuary Chairs to inform Charlotte Street of any presentation equipment required for presentations, at least 2 weeks before the 28th April

5. Funding formula for the SEP

George Ashworth confirmed that due to the Interreg bid which the SEP were preparing over this and the next financial year, it would be prudent to defer any funding formula for the SEP until 2003/4. John Pembridge enquired whether the Estuary Chairs Group were intending to consider projected funding for all Estuary groups. All agreed that this should be a goal for financial administrative arrangements on the Estuary, but that the process to arrive at these arrangements may take some time. All agreed that the Estuary Chairs Group would be a suitable mechanism for addressing this issue.

6. Paper on the role of Estuary Groups

Steve Knowles explained that there had been several requests for an explanation of the roles and relationships between the different groups with an estuary-wide remit. Steve confirmed that he would draft a short paper and circulate it to the Estuary Chairs for approval. Peter Lee suggested that the text should reflect the SEP document '*Strategy for the Severn Estuary*'. Steve Knowles suggested that the paper could be included as an article in a SEP newsletter.

ACTION: Steve Knowles to prepare a short paper on the roles and relationships between the Estuary groups and circulate to Estuary Chairs for approval.

7. Severn Estuary Gateway web site

Dr Tim Stojanovic from Cardiff University presented the developing Severn Estuary Gateway web site. Tim explained that the gateway site, provided by the SEP, provides a single point of reference for Severn Estuary related projects, enabling each Estuary group to have a presence on the site, while retaining their own distinct identity. Tim confirmed that the SEP and ASERA already have comprehensive web sites on the gateway site, and that the SECG have submitted a brief outline for a web page. Both Peter Lee and John Pembridge expressed interest in providing the SEP with a summary of information to include a web page on the gateway site for the ND&SCG and SCOSLA respectively. It is hoped that the BCCPA will also provide information to have a presence on the gateway site.

ACTION: SEP to launch the gateway web site, MoU and appointment of project officer (maybe in newsletter)

8. Any other business

8.1 National Counter Pollution Exercise

Peter Lee confirmed that the Bristol Channel is to host the next national counter pollution exercise in 2004.

8.2 Managed re-alignment at Steart Peninsula

Peter Lee informed the meeting about a major managed re-alignment project at the Steart Peninsula in Bridgwater Bay.

8.3 SCOSLA secretariat

John Pembridge confirmed that Alan Hurford, the SCOSLA secretariat, would be retiring at the end of January. John enquired whether any other authority/group may be able to provide a secretariat to SCOSLA. George Ashworth stated that the SEP would consider whether the SEP, through Charlotte Street, maybe able to provide this service as SCOSLA generally meet twice a year at most.

9. Date of next meeting

It was agreed to consider the date of the next meeting after the Estuary Groups joint meeting in April.

Summary of Severn Estuary Partnership Joint Groups' Day 28 April 2003

Report on Feedback Forms

1. Representation

At the first Joint Day of the various Severn Estuary based groups, the group members -attendees of were asked to comment on the day's structure and the joint initiative itself. The number of completed and returned feedback forms, which were disseminated on 28th April, was considerably low. Out of the approximately sixty groups' members present at the meeting, a mere **thirteen** responded to the request.

The responses received did not represent all four of the groups, partners to the Joint Initiative. It is observed that response largely came from the bodies that the SEP has closely co-operated with in the past, e.g. ASERA. A better representation of the other groups and their views on the Initiative would be useful in the near future. Table one indicates the source of the responses received.

Table 1-Group & Stakeholder Information

Form No.	Group	Body/Organisation
1	COSLA ^S	South Gloucestershire
2	SECG	-
3	BCCPA & BCSEG	-
4	ASERA/SEP	Environment Agency
5	-	Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust
6	ASERA/SEP	-
7	ASERA, SCOSLA & SEP	South Gloucestershire
8	ASERA/SEP	Environment Agency
9	BCCPA & BCSEG	-
10	SEP, SCOSLA (ASERA)	Cardiff County Council
11	ASERA, SECG & SEP	Conservation Agency (?)
12	ASERA(SEP)	ASERA
13	SEP	Forest of Dean

2. The Feedback Form

The attendees were asked to comment on the following issues:

- Usefulness of the Initiative (General and Group relevance)
- Advantages and Disadvantages of the Initiative;
- Future of the Initiative;
- The Role of the SEP in furthering the Initiative;
- How to improve group integration; and
- The structure and of Joint days

3. The Response

(a) The initiative was thought of being **useful** as by increasing awareness of other groups their objectives and work within the same geographical area it enables better co-ordination of action of the numerous groups and initiatives. The opportunity to understand the role of other groups as well as be able to address questions to their member is much needed at this stage. This according to some may enable better streamlining of issues and even future integration of plans and projects.

(b) The following **advantages** of the Initiative were identified:

- Effective Overview and Increased Understanding of existing action and effort
- Networking & Improved Communication
- Information exchange and common informative venues
- Co-ordination & potential rationalisation
- Integration: general and of Plans and policies in particular
- Effort Convergence and Time Economy & Efficiency
- Research Cost Reduction
- Increased effectiveness in general and through dealing with common and focused concerns
- Improved implementation and enforcement

The major **drawback** stated was the long of the day which can be tiring and impossible to attend due to other work commitment (particularly when short notice is given). It was nonetheless preferable that all meetings are

held on one long rather than two half days. It was also mentioned that there is a risk that we end up with yet another time and energy consuming group and that in order to avoid it communications between groups and the Initiative's purpose and agenda need be clarified.

(c) In the near **future**, it was argued that financial integration and joint meetings of the groups would be the way forward for the Initiative. The Initiative was seen as the appropriate means to channel rationalisation and links formalisation.

(d) The **role of the SEP** was stated to be to further the initiative into next stages and provide the necessary single groups focus; to organise common issues driven joint meetings and to provide low tone yet flexible and supportive services to the other groups. It was also mentioned that the SEP could provide common Secretariat for group like for example **ASERA**.

(e) In order to **improve group integration** it was suggested that:

- Group membership lists are made available on the SEP Website and a 'Who Does What Guide' for each group is created
- A 'Who Does What Guide' about Group activities is circulated and at the same time if possible visualise their location and remit on a map
- It is ensured that no meetings overlap on a joint groups' day, hence enabling individuals to attend respective meetings
- A forum of individuals is set to drive convergence
- Representatives of each group should attend each other groups meetings
- Establish a common platform and ensure participation through day structure revision

(g) Several useful suggestions on future the **Joint Days** made with regard to their **structure, format, location, duration and frequency**. It was suggested that :

- The joint session/platform is moved from the end to the beginning or the middle of the day to ensure increased attendance;
- Short updating presentations from each group should be given during the common session
- The day is shortened by removing external presentations during the common session- Discussion/Issues session;
- After better streamlining, issue specific, more or only joint be meetings should be held in the future so as to avoid duplication;
- The joint day format was changed to that of a public meeting chaired by a panel of group representatives that would report back in round table discussion of the common issues;
- SEP and SCOSLA and likewise any other meetings, where and when possible, are combined;
- Separate Group meetings are held in separate rooms **or** if held in common venue simultaneously, large rooms and halls whose acoustics may exaggerate noise, should be avoided to avoid distractions
- The joint day is either reduced to half or planned well in advance paying attention at timing to ensure there are no gaps so as to emphasise the group overlap;
- The Joint day is kept as an annual event
- Further meetings in a year and a workshop are arranged
- An effort is made to ensure common participation during the common session

4. Concluding Remarks-The need for information circulation and consultation

In conclusion, it is deemed necessary that everyone understands each group's role and contribution as well as why and how group co-operation can prove beneficial. Understanding of group's roles and common issues could be assessed and enhanced by the SEP through a *Who Does What Guide* and by face-to-face contact & communication within groups, between individual groups as well as of all groups collectively (workshop).

It is now essential to identify the vessels in which this co-operation can be taken forward, starting by existing initiatives that provide such opportunities (e.g. Champs, etc.)

While the responses from those actively involved in the Initiative may be positive and show a great deal of willingness for development of the Initiative, before further steps are taken better groups involvement and representation should be sought. Individual groups and their chairs should ensure that the majority of if not all the groups' members understand the issues involved, the other groups' role and equally support of the initiative at their won time. Ways in which this can be enabled without adding burden and costs to the groups should be sought.

Hence, the members and groups' chairs are invited to express their interest in the initiative as much as their time allows them to. Comments and suggestions to the SEP will be of utmost use at all times.

Finally, the SEP would like to thank all those who responded with feedback this time.

Summary of ICZM Stocktake Welsh Workshop:

In response to the recent EU Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management¹ the UK Government commissioned a study aiming to take stock of the national legislation, institutions and stakeholders involved in the management of its coastal zone.

This stocktaking exercise was commenced in March 2003. A series of regional workshops around the UK have recently been held recently. The ICZM Stocktake Welsh Workshop took place in Newtown on 4th September 2003. A recent draft report from ATKINS Consultants summarises the workshop findings under the following headings and points to a diversity of issues.

- **Statutory Requirements for ICZM?**
- **Co-ordination of Plans**
- **Funding ICZM**
- **Information Needs**
- **Leadership in ICZM**
- **Linking Management of Land and Sea**
- **Additional Issues for Wales**
- **Stakeholder Interaction**
- **Improving Integration**

Overall it was suggested that there is uncertainty over whether all are in agreement for the introductions of special statutory provisions for ICZM. It was however thought imperative that internal communication between bodies and reduction of bureaucracy was essential for the co-ordination of existing and future plans and the success of ICZM. Particular emphasis was also put on regional level initiatives such as the Severn Estuary Partnership with regard to increasing stakeholder involvement and improving their interaction. Amongst other, it was further observed that a lack of understanding of overlap between land and sea management processes, powers and opportunities hinders organisation inputs and further integration.

At the end of the workshop a joint discussion was held on the issues of implementation of ICZM. Broad initiatives like regional coastal partnerships (e.g. Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership, Pembrokeshire Forum, Severn Estuary Partnership, etc.) could play an important role in implementing ICZM. Shoreline Management plans; port strategies and European Marine Sites were identified as instruments that could help establish more permanent ICZM processes. It was also stressed that there is need for adaptivity in management responses for the coasts & waters. It was agreed upon that currently the status of ICZM as regards its broad and long term implementation and its adaptivity to emerging issues, is poor and need to be improved.

Initiatives that account for ICZM locally have been better developed to date, e.g. through the establishment of voluntary Local Codes of Conduct, local Green Sea groups. It was pointed out that there is need for better observation of natural processes and betterment of public and stakeholder involvement. At the same time it was thought important to support and involve all existing bodies, e.g. SAC groups, National Parks, Coastal Engineering Groups, in the management process, i.e. make use of existing institutional arrangements. In line with this, better use and combination of existing instruments, e.g. byelaws, district councils, etc. should be made.

¹ *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council ...concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe* (2002/413/EC) Official Journal of the European Community (OJEC) L148

SCOSLA Renewable Energy Draft Motion

“The Severn Estuary is surrounded by 13 Local Authorities, which are increasingly responsible for meeting renewable energy production targets. It is suggested that an Estuary-wide approach be adopted whereby the Severn Estuary identifies or is given a collective target. In estuary terms this collective approach could have a considerably smaller environmental impact than numerous individual schemes and could achieve a far greater renewable energy contribution. SCOSLA will be campaigning with the SEP for this approach to be recognised by WAG/SWRDA/DEFRA and approved as such”.

It was added that is it not only power generation that needs to be addressed but efficient use of power and further commented that Local Authorities are certainly pushing this.

At the last SCOSLA meeting held on 24th October, it was suggested that the next joint estuary group meeting could have this area/motion as its theme.