

Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP)

Joint Estuary Groups Initiative & Joint Advisory Committee Launch

Monday 26th April 2004, Monmouthshire County Council, Cwmbran

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introductions

George Ashworth (GA), Chair of the SEP, welcomed all present at the launch meeting of the Partnership's Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and invited all present to introduce themselves. The names of the attendees are appended to these minutes.

2. Apologies for absence

GA informed the attendees that Charlotte Street the SEP Project Officer could unfortunately not be present at the meeting due to personal reasons.

Lia Moutselou (LM) read out apologies sent by the following:

Dr Rhoda Ballinger	Cardiff University
Helen Batte	Wales Tourist Board
Peter Brown	South West Regional Assembly
Jonathan Calderbank	Sport England-South West
Neil Crumpton	Friends of the Earth
Deborah Dunsford	Environment Agency
Barrie Evans	Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association
David Fletcher	Somerset County Council
Peter Hall	Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association
Margaret Humphreys	Vale of Glamorgan
Haydn Jones	Severn Estuary Conservation Group
Cpt Peter Lee	North Somerset & Devon Coastal Group/Sedgemoor DC
Andrew Peterken	Bristol Channel Standing Environment Group
Cllr Charles Price	Bristol City Council;
Terry Smith	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew	Somerset County Council
Cllr DW Whitelock	Forest of Dean Council
Cllr A.J. Williams	Vale of Glamorgan Council

3. Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) introduction and launch

After thanking everyone for their attendance and referring to the impressive turn out at this inaugural JAC meeting, GA referred to the SEP as an overarching body with a generalised agenda at a strategic level, which aims to bring the various & numerous groups of overlapping remit in the Severn Estuary together. He then went on to introduce the concept of a JAC, as being crucial to engage elected Members from Local Authorities and representatives of other organisations in the decision making process for the SEP. This had been proposed in the 'Strategy for the Severn Estuary'. It was modelled after the equivalent Committee in other similar organisations and its launch is an important step towards the implementation of the Severn Estuary Strategy.

The Chair went on to refer to the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) produced by the SEP, which propose a voting & membership framework for the JAC, e.g. right to vote limited to SEP/JAC funding partners. It was emphasised that Terms of Reference need to be agreed by all partners in order to be able to formalise the partnership. It is important that each organisation take the draft terms of reference and proposal for a JAC back through their own decision-making process, so that the proposed JAC can be formally constituted at its next meeting in October.

GA also pointed out the current absence of an elected chairman of the SEP/JAC during this preparatory phase leading up to formal constitution of the Partnership. GA stated that Cllr Pembridge (NCC) would have been a natural choice, as current Chair of the Standing Conference of Severnside Local Authorities, however GA suggested, given his heavy involvement in and commitment to SCOSLA, ASERA, Esturiales and the Joint Chairs Group, Cllr Tyzack be nominated to the Chair. This was proposed by Cllr Pam Birchall and seconded by Cllrs Pembridge, Cordwell and Gething. Cllr Tyzack then chaired the rest of the meeting.

The new Chair stressed the importance of the Severn Estuary. He suggested that the membership of the JAC was revised to include any omitted organisations, e.g. invite businesses etc, and stressed the need for partners to take back and ratify the proposed partnership and JAC arrangements through the decision making process of their own organisations.

It was suggested that an annual forum for the Severn Estuary Partnership could be held, and that there was need to better involve commercial interests (GA).

4. Joint Estuary Groups Initiative Common Platform

The Severn Estuary Groups Representatives were invited to update the JAC attendees.

SEP (Severn Estuary Partnership)

Jim Mitchell standing in for Charlotte Street updated the meeting. The core activities within the past year involved the publication & distribution of two Sep Newsletters; a web-based 'Who Does What' guide for the Severn Estuary; the first joint meeting of the Joint Estuary Groups Initiative last April 2003; the drafting of ToR for the SEP; the launch of discussion on the JAC (26/04/04).

Since April 2003, the SEP has taken over the Secretarial Duties of SCOSLA.

The SEP was successful in obtaining INTERREG funding for a six strand project that involves cooperation with nine other European Partners. The six strands include: Coastal Access and Interpretation, Cultural Heritage, GIS, Natural Heritage, Urban / Rural and Stakeholder Involvement. The SEP (Charlotte Street) is the leading partner in the Stakeholder Involvement Strand and the work produced is informed by research by Cardiff University. Two more SEP officers work on the Coastal Access and Interpretation (Jim Mitchell) & Natural Heritage (Steve Knowles) strands.

Being proactive in obtaining funding to continue the Partnership's work in the future, the SEP is looking to submit two further INTERREG funding bids, for the second phase of the current work being undertaken by the SEP & a new project (COREPOINT).

ASERA (Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities)

The Chair of ASERA, Simon Brett updated the assembly. This has been a busy year for ASERA at the end of which a management document is about to be concluded (July 2004). Steve Knowles, ASERA Technical Officer, has left his post to rejoin SEP but still works towards the completion of the management document two days a week. The next stage will be the implementation of the proposed and agreed upon management

measures. Subject to its ratification ASERA will buy officer time from SEP to assist the management implementation process.

ASERA (Simon Brett) has been involved with ongoing CoastNET's work on Partnerships and has been invited to the '*Blue Sky Horizons*' Project Meeting by the Environment Agency.

SECG (Severn Estuary Coastal Group)

The attendees were updated by Diarmuid Mulrenan (DM). GIS work and the Shoreline Management Plan (1) were produced during the last year. SECG costs of completion were under the initial budget.

SMP 2 review is about to embark and will take place in two stages. SMP 2 has to be completed by 2006 and will be based upon previous work done on three pilot SMPs in the area. In addition to that, the group has received Government advice regarding an Estuary wide CHaMP and the scoping study that has been taking place this year.

SECG has also set up a Steering Group consisting of three Environment Agency Regions; Welsh Local Authorities, CCW, EN, with DEFRA and WAG as observers. The role of this group will be to help deliver the SMP review by 2006 and take the CHaMPs advice. A new chairman will be appointed in the next few months to take place of DM's place.

The SEP was approached with the proposal to take over the Secretarial functions of SECG and was giving this favourable consideration.

ND& SCG (North Devon and Somerset Coastal Group)

Lia Moutselou (LM-SEP) updated the attendees on behalf of Cpt Peter Lee.

The Group were holding a meeting on the 28 April (Wednesday) and therefore were not able to give an update on the latest developments. Issues that will be considered at the meeting are: appointment of a paid external consultant as a chair of the Culver Sands' dredging proposal; SMP 2; a monitoring Strategy and group finances.

BCCPA (Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association)

LM (SEP) updated the attendees on behalf Peter Hall (Treasurer) & Barrie Evans (Chair). BCCPA expressed their support of the Joint Estuary Groups Initiative.

In the last year BCCPA drafted a Bristol Channel Contingency (Command & Control) Plan for pollution incidents. The Plan was tested in a National Contingency Plan Exercise held in Bristol Channel on the 09/03. At the next meeting scheduled for the 19th May 2004, the feedback received from the exercise will be taken into consideration in amending the Plan.

5. Renewable Energy in the Severn

In the light of EPS 22, Offshore Wind & Tidal Renewable Production development and the separate regional targets for the production of renewable energy, SCOSLA seeks to influence Central Government to enable Severnside Local Authorities to deliver such targets collectively.

GA referred the attendees to the SCOSLA draft Motion on renewable Energy (See Background Notes).

Tony Prater (TP-RSPB) raised the point that there are no renewable energy production targets for Wales set as yet. There seem to be different approaches set for England &

Wales. John Pembridge (JP-NC) responded to this by saying that no matter what the approach this motion would endeavour to set the frame/basis for future collective action. It was also stressed that individual County targets for renewable energy production are not considered by the government (TP-RSPB).

Mark Wills (MW-EN) expressed concerns that, although he had no problems supporting the general principle of estuary wide strategic planning, the specific wording of the motion seemed to have an assumption built into it that production of renewable energy from the Severn Estuary was the least damaging environmental option available to local authorities. He referred the committee to the national and international designations in place on the estuary and pointed out that this would therefore not necessarily be the case. He felt it was inappropriate to agree to assign a target for renewable energy production from the Severn Estuary at this time. He also raised concerns about the general principle that a campaigning Motion such as this had been put forward to the SEP JAC to vote on as an SEP policy. He felt that the driving force behind the motion was clearly the government targets that applied to local authorities only and therefore it should remain within SCOSLA. He stated that in his view it was inappropriate that such a motion should be put to the vote by the Partnership JAC which should represent a much broader range of views and objectives and English Nature was not in a position to support it.

It was suggested that particularly as regards renewable energy production the Estuary is not thought of as stopping at the SAC and that it should be widely looked at as the greater Severn Estuary. (TP-RSPB;)

The Estuary wide approach was confirmed and endorsed by those who put the motion forwards (PT; GA; JP). In response to MW's concerns, GA noted that organisations such as English Nature & CCW do not have the power or remit to endorse such motions, so they are effectively excluded from such votes. GA noted that similar reservations could apply to other organisations, hence the need for each partner to consider the proposed voting and membership arrangements before the October meeting. Nonetheless, the overall approach of taking an estuary wide coordinated view on such important issues was fundamental to the SEP. The motion was passed with a formal objection from MW of English Nature.

6. Other Areas of Interest

- (i) LM-SEP gave a brief updating presentation on the ICZM Stocktake and the Final report issued recently. References to the SEP as good practice implementing internationally accepting ICZM principles were brought to the attention of the attendees.
- (ii) Matthew Boon (MB-EA) was standing in for Deborah Dunsford and gave a short update the Severn Coastal Habitat Management Plan (CHaMP). It was mentioned that the Severn CHaMP was not included in the WAG list of targets. The aim of the CHaMP is to provide some indication of where restoration of habitat could occur. It is a particularly important plan in areas where coastal defence works could endanger vulnerable & protected habitats. The Plan could be considered as a decision making tool for the future. A scoping study is currently being undertaken by Environment Agency (Deborah Dunsford) and is concerned with the overlapping boundaries of the Severn pSAC, Ramsar Site; SSSI with the Shoreline Management Plans.
- (iii) Alun Attwood (EA) gave a comprehensive presentation on the European Water Framework Directive and the UK Regulation transposing it. Presentation to be made available on SEP Website

7. Financial Report

Copies of the SEP Financial Report & the proposed funding formula were given out at the meeting. There are a number of pending credits from various contributors.

In the absence of Charlotte Street the funding formula was not greatly analysed or discussed. It was nonetheless suggested that this comprehensive mode of payment should be considered for endorsement by the various current and potential funding partners(GA).

Funding issues and the proposed ToR or constitution as it was also referred to (GA) should be considered by each of the member organisations. It was agreed that the latest version of the ToR and Funding Formula should be circulated to members. The JAC members/attendees would then be requested to consider the arrangements within their organisation's decision making processes and comment back to the SEP by 13th September prior to the next meeting. In this way the ToR can effectively be revised to address membership, structure, procedures and financial arrangements in order to achieve a Committee structure that all members are happy with.

8. AOB

The list of JAC Members is to be reconsidered and revised. It was pointed out that an effort was being made to include equal representation from across the borders, e.g. South West Regional Assembly had been invited to the meeting together with Minister Carwyn Jones. In order for members to agree upon the ToR, the potentially changeable membership appendix could act as list from which to draw members.

Charles Hill (CH-GGAT) commented that it makes absolute sense to have an overarching organisation like the SEP in the Severn, which can help small groups with limited funding like GGAT get a comprehensive overview of who has an interest & competencies in the Estuary.

9. Date & Venue of Next Meeting

The date of the next JAC meeting was agreed to be 11th October 2004, although some concern was expressed that this might be too late for some local authorities (financial arrangements).

Appendix

Alphabetical List of 26/04/04 JAC Launch Attendees

George Ashworth (GA)	Monmouthshire County Council (MCC)
Alun Atwood (AA)	Environment Agency (EA) Wales
Cllr Pam Birchall (PM)	Monmouthshire County Council (MCC)
Matthew Boon (MB)	Environment Agency(EA) (for Deborah Dunsford)
Fiona Bowles	Wessex Water
Simon Brett (SB)	ASERA/ABP Ports
Alistair Chapman	Forest of Dean District Council
Madel Cheung	RSPB
James Clemence	Cardiff Council (CC)
Russell De'ath	CCW
Cllr Dr John Cordwell	Gloucester County Council (CCC)
Councillor R Derbyshire	Cardiff Council (CC)
Richard Dunn	Sedgemoor District Council (SDC)
Steve Edwards	Vale of Glamorgan Council (VOG)
Mike Ellingham	NFU South West Region
Gillian Ellis-King (GEK)	South Gloucestershire Council (SGC)
Sue Fletcher	Environment Agency
Nigel Gibbons	Forest of Dean District Council (FDC)
Cllr Jon Gething	North Somerset County Council (NSCC)
Nick Harrison	DEFRA
Charles Hill (CH)	Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT)
Marloes Holtkamp	Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership
Dr Sue Howard	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Helen Jenkins	Environment Agency
Mike Jones	Environment Agency Wales
Gary Kennison	Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)
Martin Langdon	Environment Agency (EA)
Matthew Lewis	Monmouthshire County Council (MCC)
Steve Knowles (SK)	ASERA/SEP
Rachel Lewis	North Somerset County Council (NSCC)
John Marks	Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG)
Jim Mitchell (JM)	SEP
Lia Moutselou (LK)	SEP
Diarmuid Mulrenan	Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG)
Robert Niblett	Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)
Robert Nightingale	Stroud District Council (SDC)
Dr Conor O'Gorman	British Association of Shooting & Conservation (BASC)
Cllr John Pembridge	Newport City Council (NCC) /SCOSLA
Jessica Poole	CCW
Dr Tony Prater (TP)	RSPB
Gerry Quarrel	Welsh Assembly Government
Vanessa Straker	English Heritage South West Region
Helen Thompson	Government of the South West
Cllr Peter Tyzack (PT)	South Gloucestershire Council (SGC)
Anne Valdes	Newport City Council (NCC)
Darren Walsh	Environment Agency Wales
Mark Wills (MW)	English Nature