

# SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

## Joint Advisory Committee Meeting

11.45am - 2.00pm, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2006, WWT Slimbridge

### Minutes



**Chair: Cllr Peter Tyzack**

**ACTION**

#### Attendees

Natasha Barker, SEP Officer  
Cllr John Cordwell, Gloucestershire County Council  
Deborah Dunsford, Environment Agency  
Richard Dunn, Sedgemoor District Council  
Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council  
Carol Hall, North Devon & Somerset Coastal Group, Environment Agency  
Vaughan Grantham, Cardiff Council  
David Harris, Severn Estuary Coastal Group Chair  
Sue Hughes, Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust  
Adrian Jowitt, Natural England  
Gary Kennison, Gloucestershire County Council  
Steve Knowles, ASERA Officer  
Martin Langdon, Lower Severn IDB  
Mathew Lewis, Monmouthshire County Council  
Graham Lymbery, Sefton Council (Corepoint Project)  
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council  
Charlotte Pagenham, Natural England  
Angela Proctor, Environment Agency  
Andrew Ross, Caldicot & Wentloog Levels IDB  
Dick Sage, Bristol City Council  
Ken Tatem, Environment Agency  
Cllr Peter Tyzack, SEP JAC Chair & South Glos Council  
Cllr Mark Wright, Bristol City Council

## 1 Welcome

### 1.1 Apologies for Absence

George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council & SEP MG Chair  
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University  
Sue Howard, Countryside Council for Wales  
Cllr Peter Clarke, Monmouthshire County Council  
John Marks, Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Donald McDonald, Bristol Channel Counterpollution Association  
Rhys Morgan, Environment Agency  
Lia Moutselou, SEP Assistant  
Anne Valdez, Newport City Council

### 1.2 Minutes of the last JAC meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April were agreed as a true record. Progress on actions/recommendations arising from the last meeting:

- NB had submitted a response to the Marine Bill on behalf of SEP.

- The Business Plan 2006-09 had been published and distributed through the JAC and Forum.
- The Annual Report & Action Plan 2006-07 had been published and distributed through the JAC and Forum.
- The Coastatlantic report had been published and circulated amongst partners in June.
- Corepoint research strategy – see below
- Planning issues and consultations see below.

## 2 Estuary Groups – Common Platform

### 3.1 Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA)

Steve Knowles, ASERA Officer, reported from the morning's ASERA Management Group meeting. Separate minutes are available. His update included reference to:

- The potential SAC designation is under discussion within Defra
- Open access issues at 3 sites and consultation from North Somerset on a new 'tidal trail'
- Archaeology guidance notes soon out for consultation
- New leaflet about the SPA available for distribution.

ASERA's role in relation to the Severn barrage was clarified; that its role is very focused to duties under the Birds Directive through the Scheme of Management – which may be extended if the estuary is designated as an SAC. ASERA in itself wouldn't have a position; individual members would.

### 3.2 Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) progress report

David Harris, Chair of the SECG, gave a brief update and insight into the agenda for the afternoon meeting of SECG which would follow the JAC. Separate minutes are available. Current issues included:

- Champ progress
- New Defra arrangements under 'Making space for water' influencing decisions and funding; with different procedures for England and Wales
- A new Defra paper out on Monitoring Coastal Erosion
- SMP 2 guidance out now with SECG needing to decide on the way forward e.g. a Steering Group and Terms of Reference
- Changes to the boundaries of SECG's area

The Severn Barrage had not been on their agenda but came up in discussion at their last meeting. It was decided to see what others do, acknowledging the potential environmental impacts but recognising the benefits and questioning who would fund it.

David Harris referred people to the minutes and the attached note for the outcomes of the meeting.

DH & NB

### 3.3 North Devon & Somerset Coastal Group (NDSCG) progress report

Carol Hall, the new officer from the Environment Agency representing NDSCG on behalf of the new Char Cllr Humphrey Temperley, reported on the progress of the group.

- Terms of Reference for the group had been established and were to be published on the internet.
- They are beginning to look at the SMP2 to start in 2008, but the

high flood risk may bring it forward. The group are using the technical advisory services of Keith Cole (previously Chair of the Lyme Bay & South Devon Coastal Group).

- There were big changes relating to the boundary with SECG and need to tie in with Catchment Flood Management Plans.
- The group were involved in the SW Coastal Monitoring Project and supporting the new regional data centre in Plymouth. Estuary modelling has been undertaken on the Taw-Torridge.
- Abstraction proposals had been under consideration for Culver and ?Gall Sands. The sand had been identified to have a different chemical content to that onshore.
- A presentation had been given to the group by Peter Murphy from English Heritage on their involvement in SMP2.
- Consultation with Defra had been underway over the Coastal Groups role in coastal management – the main concern being about local authority teams involvement and the stronger EA role.
- A site visit had been made to the River Parrett and the site of a potential tidal barrage.

Cllr Charlie Price (Bristol City Council) reported that concern had been raised about sand extraction at the Regional Flood Defence Committee and the need for a buffer to tidal surge.

David Harris highlighted that a regional data centre was being set up in Wales; and links should be made to the new centre in Plymouth.

### 3.4 Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association (BCCPA) progress report

Donald McDonald, Counter Pollution and Salvage Officer for Wales & West of England of the Marine & Coastguard Agency & Chair of the BCCPA had sent his apologies with the following update:

*It is encouraging to report that we have had no incidents within the area, the BCCPA plan is on hold at this moment whilst we await the National Contingency Plan to be re-issued, this we expect in the very near future. Once issued we shall see if there are any issues that present the group with any problems. On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> the Bristol Port Authority and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency held a Hazardous and Noxious Exercise within Bristol Port, a successful exercise was concluded albeit some challenging mixes of chemicals to deal with.*

### 3.5 Other Estuary-wide Groups

NB reported interest from two new groups in future participation in the Estuary Groups Common Platform:

- Severn Estuary Health & Liaison Advisory Group
- Severn Estuary Aggregates Working Group (Crown Estate).

***ACTION: NB to discuss Severn Estuary MoA with Severn Estuary Health & Liaison Advisory Group and Severn Estuary Aggregates Working Group (Crown Estate) and invite their participation in future Estuary Group Days.***

NB

## 4 SEP Management Group Update

Natasha Barker, SEP Officer, provided an update on behalf of the Chairman of the Management Group, George Ashworth.

**4.1 Severn Estuary Forum & Festival**

The Festival & Forum had been a great success with over 40 events taking place under the banner of Severn Wonders around the estuary. Approximately 130 people had participated in the Forum conference and over 400 had participated in the Severn Wonders cruise. Approximately 1/3 of those present at the JAC had attended the Forum. NB asked the JAC for views on the future of the Forum & Festival.

***RECOMMENDATION: Severn Wonders branding is unique and worth sustaining, if possible with some use every year to retain momentum and recognition of SEP.***

NB & Mgt  
Group

**4.2 Annual Report & Action Plan Review for 2007-08**

NB reminded the JAC of SEP's core services and asked for views on continuing with these and/or offering new services.

***RECOMMENDATION: SEP MG to consider progressing a State of the Estuary report with metadata provision to partners across England and Wales; this had arisen during the workshop for local planners on Strategic Environmental Assessment.***

NB & Mgt  
Group

***RECOMMENDATION: SEP MG to consider regular e-news to JAC members.***

NB & Mgt  
Group

**4.3 Themes for Severn Estuary Forum 2007**

NB suggested continuation of some themes from the Forum 2006 in next year's programme: renewable energy and flood risk management. ASERA had asked for a theme on habitats and species. There had been interest for this year's Forum in a theme on dredging/aggregates and this was seen as useful for 2007. Additional suggestions included coastal access; erosion & monitoring. JAC members raised concern about having sessions in parallel and them being too short. Overall, however, the format of the 1<sup>st</sup> Severn Estuary Forum had been very well received.

***RECOMMENDATION: SEP MG to determine themes for 2<sup>nd</sup> Severn Estuary Forum 2007.***

NB & Mgt  
Group

**4.4 Role of the JAC**

NB reminded the JAC of the organisational structure of the SEP and the role of the JAC. Issues surrounding its effectiveness were being considered by the Management Group. A formal voting procedure for a Chair and Vice-Chair were likely to take place next Spring.

**5 SEP Project Work Updates****5.1 COASTATLANTIC Project Outputs**

In addition to the outputs highlighted at the last JAC meeting, work was being finalised on Guidance Notes. The final report from the Coastatlantic lead partner was available, including results of the project's 4 themes and 4 activity strands. SEP had been the lead partner on stakeholder involvement with SEP's services (including the Forum & Festival) having provided a significant demonstration to other partners. A separate report

on stakeholder involvement across the Atlantic Arc had been prepared by NB. GEK reported on the achievements of the project which began in preparation 5 years ago. Interpretation boards had been placed around the estuary for the 1<sup>st</sup> time e.g. 2 at Severn Beach. S Glos were producing guidance notes on cultural heritage and local produce with an interactive map on their website. Work on GIS would make data on designations, recreation, access and bird data more readily available.

## 5.2 COREPOINT

Tim Stojanovic reported on progress with this 4 year project which is approximately half way through. Overall the project would increase effectiveness in delivering ICZM, e.g. through SEP.

- Maritime Heritage – an education pack was in progress
- Research Strategy – research has been conducted by Cardiff University on approaches taken by other coastal partnerships. This would lead to the establishment of an advisory group on climate change, with the 1<sup>st</sup> workshop planned for January 2007.
- Local Information System – the results of a ½ day workshop in July on SEA had involved 40 strategic planners looking at information availability and options for SEP to provide services e.g. dissemination & development of spatial metadata; identifying and sharing information on coastal issues; promoting existing data sharing initiatives e.g. SW Observatory.

Natural England were interested in the use of the GIS & metadata. Cardiff University would be progressing with all aspects of the project.

***ACTION: Results of LIS workshop to be added to SEP website.***

Cardiff  
University  
& SEP  
team

## 5.3 ESTURIALES European Network

NB summarised the recent Secretariat work to provide materials (new leaflet & stationary) and service the AGM & conference. In addition, a workshop had been held by SEP at the Littoral conference in Poland to which 30 participants had attended and opportunities strengthened for new members and links between them and an evolving European Interreg proposal - DeltaNet.

Cllr Tyzack reported from his attendance at the AGM and conference in Szczecin, Poland. The Oder estuary experienced several similar issues to the Severn.

## 6 Planning Issues & Consultations

6.1 The JAC provided a platform for raising awareness and discussion of consultations of wide interest. Recent consultation responses had been submitted by SEP to the Marine Bill & ICZM Strategy for England. CP asked for SEP to give other organisations an early opportunity to see responses submitted on behalf of the SEP and cautioned that SEP should not be seen to represent the views of individual organisations. NB & GEK clarified that SEP responses were generic and referred to the experience of the SEP, its general position and its services.

6.2 An update on the Severn Barrage was given in the form of the statutory agencies submission to Government on the Energy Review. NB also highlighted the proposed study by the Institute of Welsh Affairs and

Sustainable Development Commission proposed studies. This led to discussion and a suggestion that SEP should take a lead in organising a conference (for IWA/SDC) and/or lead discussion through the JAC. There was much activity proceeding in England and Wales on renewable energy and the barrage. It would seem appropriate for SCOSLA to be re-convened to take an active role.

***ACTION: NB to make statutory agency position statement available on SEP website.***

NB

***RECOMMENDATION: SEP JAC/SCOSLA take a lead in discussions on renewable energy/Severn barrage considerations in order to widen the debate and encourage information exchange.***

NB & Mgt  
Group

## **7 'Fundy Facts' Sharing Perspectives with the Severn**

NB gave a brief presentation on the findings from her Winston Churchill Memorial Trust fellowship to the Bay of Fundy, Canada. Four themes had been explored: coastal governance, public awareness of the tide & tourism; flood risk planning; renewable energy and barrage proposals. There were many opportunities for knowledge exchange and an overall proposal to establish a twinning association. NB's report would be made widely available.

## **8 Any Other Business**

The provisional date for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Severn Estuary Forum was 7<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

## **9 Dates of Future JAC Meetings**

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2006** with ASERA and SECG meetings

### Summary of actions

- NB to discuss Severn Estuary MoA with Severn Estuary Health & Liaison Advisory Group and Severn Estuary Aggregates Working Group (Crown Estate) and invite their participation in future Estuary Group Days.
- Results of LIS workshop to be added to SEP website.
- NB to make statutory agency position statement available on SEP website.

### Summary of recommendations

- Severn Wonders branding is unique and worth sustaining, if possible with some use every year to retain momentum and recognition of SEP.
- SEP MG to consider progressing a State of the Estuary report with metadata provision to partners across England and Wales; this had arisen during the workshop for local planners on Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- SEP MG to consider regular e-news to JAC members.
- SEP MG to determine themes for 2<sup>nd</sup> Severn Estuary Forum 2007.
- SEP JAC/SCOSLA take a lead in discussions on renewable energy/Severn barrage considerations in order to widen the debate and encourage information exchange.