

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

Joint Advisory Committee Meeting

1pm, 24th April 2006
Council Chamber, Cardiff University



Minutes

Chair: Cllr Peter Tyzack

ACTION

Attendees (32):

George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council & Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP) Management Group Chair
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University
Iwan Ball, Cardiff University
Natasha Barker, SEP Officer
Cllr Pete Bryant, North Somerset Council
Mabel Cheung, RSPB Wales
Cllr Dr Cordwell, Gloucestershire County Council
Wendy Dodds, Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG)/SEP Assistant
Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council
Edith Evans, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust
David Fletcher, North Devon & Somerset Coastal Group & GOSW
Cllr Anne Gee, Cardiff Council
Vaughan Grantham, Cardiff City Council
Dave Hall, Cardiff Harbour Authority
David Harris, Severn Estuary Coastal Group Chair
Mike Jones, Environment Agency
Steve Knowles, Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) Officer
Martin Langdon, Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board (IDB)
Mathew Lewis, Monmouthshire County Council
John Marks, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Jim Mitchell, Access & Interpretation Officer, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP)
Rhys Morgan, Environment Agency
Lia Moutselou, SEP Assistant
Robert Nightingale, Stroud District Council
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council
Charlotte Pagendham, English Nature
Jim Poole, The Sustainable Forum for Wales
Andrew Preece, Environment Agency Wales
Vanessa Straker, English Heritage
Ken Tatem, Environment Agency South West
Cllr Peter Tyzack, SEP Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) Chair & South Glos Council
Dr Simon Wakefield, Cardiff University
Cllr Clive Webb, North Somerset Council

1 Welcome

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Richard Archer, RSPB
Sarah Black, WWF
Jonathan Calderbank, Sports England
Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean Council

Prof Dianne Edwards, Cardiff University
 Angela Giddings, Farmer's Union Wales
 Cllr John Guy, Newport Council
 Gordon Hewston, National Trust
 Cllr Pat Hockey, South Gloucestershire Council
 Peter Jonas, Environment Agency South West
 Donald McDonald, Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association
 Anne Valdes, Newport City Council
 Chris Wooldridge, Cardiff University

1.2 Minutes of the last JAC meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting held on 10th October 2005 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. Matters arising would be dealt with during the meeting, following the guest speaker.

2 Guest Speaker: David Bench, DEFRA & Discussion on the Marine Bill

David Bench introduced the Marine Bill to the JAC. The development of a Marine Bill is an opportunity to fundamentally change the framework for coordinating and managing the marine environment that delivers the government's commitment to sustainable development. Dave highlighted that this is a 'once in twenty years' opportunity. The Bill should be both flexible and robust enough to provide the tools needed to manage the marine environment for the next thirty years. The main changes that the forthcoming Bill will introduce are a) a Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) and a planning process for the marine environment that will be guided by such a plan and b) a possible Marine Management Organisation (MMO), which may take over this newly proposed planning process as well as, potentially, existing licensing functions. The MSP will be significantly complemented by ICZM processes (regionally and locally).

DEFRA invited all JAC attendees to make their representations on the Marine Bill and contribute to the discussion of planning in the coastal zone.

All
Partners

David Bench was queried on the future role of Partnerships like the SEP within this current framework. He pointed out the need of a new MMO to take over formal proceedings. On the comment that estuaries like the Severn will present a challenge for implementing such a piece of legislation, particularly in the light of the different approach that the devolved administration in Wales may be taking, David replied that it is not the intention of DEFRA to replace existing groups and initiatives, like the Partnership, and are currently contemplating on how to best ensure better implementation and enforcement of the forthcoming legislation on a local and regional level.

Katharine Winnard, represented WAG and pointed out that the Welsh Government is envisaging that it is possible there will be a slightly different approach in Wales as regards a MMO and MSP.

Natasha Barker pointed out the Partnership is integrally involved in the Marine Bill Consultations and invited Partners to contribute to this consultation either through the Partnership or separately through their organisations.

3 Joint Estuary Groups – Common Platform

3.1 Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) progress report

Steve Knowles, ASERA Officer, reported from the morning's ASERA Management Group meeting. Separate minutes are available.

3.2 Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) progress report

David Harris, Chair of the SECG, reported from the morning's SECG meeting. Separate minutes are available.

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

David Fletcher, Chair of the NDSCG, reported on the progress of the group. NDSCG met at the end of March. DEFRA South West are commissioning a £4.5 million monitoring project on high level targets. The project is not likely to include the Severn Estuary. There seems to be limited funding towards shoreline planning and management.

3.4 Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association (BCCPA) progress report

Donald McDonald sent his apologies and asked that Partnership staff give the following update to the JAC:

'The final parts of the Contingency plan are slowly coming together, soon we hope to be in a position to ask the appropriate authorities to agree and sign up to the final document. Once this has been completed we should then be better placed to having a copy for the Severn Estuary website.'

'There have been no significant incidents within the Bristol Channel since the last meeting, however a small incident did take place of Sheerness which is currently undergoing further investigation.'

4 Management Group Update

4.1 Business Plan 2006-2009

Natasha Barker reported the completion of the Draft Business Plan that had already been circulated to Management Group and JAC members for consultation. A 'Business Plan' had previously been completed in 1997 but had never been reviewed since the completion of the Severn Estuary Strategy. The current Plan picks up from the policies and actions that are proposed in the Strategy; clarifies and summarises the aims and objectives of the Partnership and endeavours to assess progress towards their completion. It should be treated as an adaptable document that will be reviewed together with estuary management activities completed every year by the Partnership team and the partner organisations (see Annual Report and Action Plan Item 4.2). It is seen as the best way to ensure that best use is made of the Strategy and that in turn it is updated and reviewed to reflect the changing context within which it operates.

The existing 'Communication Strategy' of the Partnership is appended to

the Business Plan. Various Project and Service Sheets summarising the array of activities undertaken by Partnership staff are also appended to the Plan and will give a better idea of how the time of the Partnership Team is divided between different projects and services.

Partners were invited to approve the plan and comment on its contents. The plan was proposed by Martin Langdon and approved by the JAC.

**All
partners**

4.2 Annual Report & Action Plan 2006-2007

Natasha also referred to the draft Annual Report and Action Plan, which has already been circulated to Management Group and JAC members for consultation. The aim of the document is to assist the review of actions suggested in the Strategy and to better monitor its implementation within the context of the Business Plan and the Strategy. The Action Plan will further guide and monitor annual activity; and set priorities for action and Strategy implementation both through the Partnership staff and individual partner organisations. The Plan may also have an important role in monitoring ICZM in the Severn estuary.

Peter Tyzack asked the JAC to approve the Draft Business Plan and Annual Report and Action Plan. Martin Langdon proposed the above, which were then approved by the JAC.

Partners were asked to send any additional comments on the Reports to the Partnership team as soon as possible.

**All
partners**

4.3 Severn Wonders Festival & Severn Estuary Forum 2006

Jim Mitchell referred to the planned Severn Wonders Festival & Severn Estuary Forum. This is the first Festival and Forum of its kind for the Severn. There are 40+ events that are advertised as part of the Severn Wonders Festival. Most of these events are incorporated in the Severn Wonders Festival leaflet that has been widely circulated and disseminated to various information points along the Severn. Regularising this as an annual event will depend on its success and future resources that can be invested in it.

Natasha Barker referred to the first Severn Estuary Forum planned for the 8th June as an opportunity to gradually bring in estuary users into the management of the Estuary. This is an annual commitment. This year's Forum will take place in Clevedon and will be followed by a cruise on the Waverley. Partners have been asked to return the Forum booking forms that were mailed out to them with the latest issue of 'Severn Tidings' if they intend to attend the Forum day.

Peter Tyzack thanked Natasha and Jim for all their effort in organising the Forum and Festival.

5 Project Work Updates

5.1 COASTATLANTIC

Jim Mitchell reported that this project is nearing completion. The outputs of the Severn Estuary Partnership include the interpretation toolkit package including four panels and two leaflets. The Natural Heritage and Cultural

heritage guidance notes are currently under consultation. South Gloucestershire Council have also led in promoting local produce in the Severn Estuary area. The Partnership has led on the 'Stakeholder Involvement' strand of the project and has collated a report based on examples and experiences of stakeholder involvement from all the European participants to the project.

A meeting of all Coastatlantic European Partners will take place in Inverness between the 25th-28th April. **The project report should be complete this summer and will be presented at the next JAC meeting in October 2006.** SEP team

5.2 COREPOINT

Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University, Project Manager for the European COREPOINT project, gave a comprehensive talk on the progress of COREPOINT project. A copy of the presentation is available through the Partnership.

The Research Strategy and Local Information System (LIS) strands were discussed as the most relevant. Dr Iwan Ball, who leads on the former, has completed the preparatory work on the Strategy, through collating information on existing research strategies of coastal partnership. This was done through literature review and has unveiled weaknesses of existing strategies. **A report on this review will be circulated to the SEP Partners in May and comments are invited by 25^h May.** SEP partners

The second stage of this project will include drafting a research Strategy for the Severn Estuary and setting a Severn Estuary Research Committee up to progress that. The LIS strand is led on by Dr Tim Stojanovic. This strand of the COREPOINT Project is closely intertwined with the Research Strategy, in that it will make use of the Severn Estuary Research Committee to guide the design of an LIS for the Severn Estuary. A meeting of some Local Authority planners on LIS has been arranged for July 2006. Cardiff University & SEP team

5.3 Les Esturiales

SEP is providing a two year secretariat for the Les Esturiales European network. It has been decided for 2006 that Les Esturiales partners will be invited to the Severn Estuary Forum in the 8th June. The next Bureau meeting will follow the Forum and will be held in Clevedon on the 9th June 2006. The conference and AGM will be 21-22nd September 2006 in Poland.

6 Planning Issues & Consultations

The JAC provides a platform for raising awareness and discussion of consultations of wide interest. This JAC slot is aimed at giving partners an opportunity to share further information and if appropriate collaborate/campaign on common concerns. Natasha Barker confirmed that this slot will include estuary wide plans and proposals along with significant developments in a specific area of the estuary. **All partners are invited to bring relevant projects, planning applications , consultations etc to the attention of the JAC.** All partners

Natasha mentioned the Marine Bill consultation that the Partnership is actively participating in consultation (deadline 23rd June). The Partnership can represent some of its partner's views, but it is appropriate that Partners also make their own representation to the Bill's consultation. The following consultations and issues were also referred to:

- The Draft ICZM Strategy for Wales Welsh Assembly Government out for consultation until 31st March 2006
- The imminent completion of DEFRA's ICZM Strategy for England
- Environment Agency's Water Framework Directive Consultation on representation on new River Basin District Liaison Panels
- Countryside Agency & CCW ; Access to the Coast
- Environment Agency's Severn Estuary CHAMP
- Clevedon Wildfowlers and Crown Estate Lease
- Severn Estuary Barrage developments

Comments from the JAC attendees included:

- Cllr Cordwell mentioned that the SE Regional Assembly and that the DTI Energy review both did mention the Severn Barrage
- On the of SEP in light of developments of things like a Barrage Natasha Barker stated that the Partnership's role would be to facilitate the debate, e.g. through holding a workshop or other events.
- David Fletcher brought to the attention of the JAC the development of the Wetland, Coastal and Climate Strategy by Somerset County Council. Additionally, he reported that a project officer has been employed by Sedgemoor District Council to investigate the Parrot Sluice.

7 Any Other Business

Dr Tim Stojanovic (Cardiff University) indicated that the development of the Local Information System (LIS) under the COREPOINT project is addressing the information overload and blockages facing Local Authority development and strategic planners. As part of the development of the LIS, he will be contacting the fourteen Local Authorities around the estuary to create an LIS for the Severn Estuary.

TS

Lia Moutselou reminded JAC delegates to complete and return the questionnaire on the Severn Estuary Research Strategy distributed by Dr Rhoda Ballinger and the SEP's ICZM progress questionnaire.

All partners

8 Dates of Future JAC Meetings

October 17th 2006, location to be advised (England)