

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

Joint Advisory Committee Meeting



11.30am-2.00pm, Thursday 8th November 2007, Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon

Minutes

Chair: Cllr Peter Tyzack

ACTION

Attendees (45)

Richard Archer, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council / SEP Management Group
Chairman
Jose Azevedo, Lisbon Metropolitan Council / Esturiales member - Observer
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University
Natasha Barker, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP) Officer
C Barrow, Bristol City Council
Dave Bloomfield, Environment Agency Wales
Mervyn Bramley, Royal Society for Arts, Industry & Commerce (RSA)
Peter Byrant, North Somerset Council
Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean District Council
Cllr John Cordwell, Gloucestershire County Council
Allan Davies, North Somerset Council
Stephen Dury, Somerset County Council
Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council
Edith Evans, Gloucestershire Archaeology Trust (GGAT)
Ricardo Fernandez, Lisbon Metropolitan Council / Esturiales member - Observer
Matt Hamilton, Avon Biodiversity Partnership
Dave Harris, Monmouthshire County Council (SECG Chairman)
Anne Hayes, Bristol Port Company
Susan Howard Countryside Council for Wales
Mike Johnson, Gloucester Harbour Trustees
Mathew Lewis, Monmouthshire County Council (ASERA Chairman)
Cllr John Major, Monmouthshire County Council
Nick Michael, North Somerset Council
Rhys Morgan, Environment Agency Wales
Bob Nightingale, Stroud District Council
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council
John Osmond, Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA)
Adrian Philpott, Environment Agency Wales
Graham Quarrier, Environment Agency
Jon Rees, Associated British Ports, Swansea
Max Roksnoer - Rhine-Scheldt Delta / DeltaNet project proposal – Observer
Mark Ross, Environment Agency
Gary Shanahan, Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR)
Tom Shaw, Shawater Ltd - Observer
Dick Sage, Bristol City Council
Cllr Venk Shenoj, Forest of Dean Council
Donald Sutherland, Royal Yachting Association (RYA) & Bristol Channel Yachting
Association (BCCPA)
Ken Tatem, Environment Agency
Cllr Humphrey Temperley, Environment Agency & Devon County Council
Eirian Thomas, Health Protection Agency

Cllr Peter Tyzack, South Gloucestershire Council – SEP JAC Chairman
 Maija Verbeek – Rhine-Scheldt Delta / DeltaNet project proposal – Observer
 Mark Wright, Bristol City Council
 Sonia Xavier, Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR)

1 Welcome

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Lucy Bourne, English Heritage
 Jonathan Calderbank, Sport England
 Donald McDonald, Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association
 Cllr Charles Price, Bristol City Council
 Angela Proctor, Environment Agency (North Devon & Somerset Coastal Group)
 Cllr Christopher Williams, Planning & Transportation, Vale of Glamorgan Council
 Dean Jackson-Johns, Caldicot & Wentloog Internal Drainage Board
 Richard Dunn, Sedgemoor District Council

1.2 JAC Chair Position

Cllr Peter Tyzack welcomed everyone to the JAC and emphasised the value of the SEP continuing to bring people together from around the Severn Estuary which it has now been actively leading for over ten years.

George Ashworth, Chair of the SEP Management Group indicated that Peter had been Acting Chair of the JAC since its formation (3-4 years ago) and at the last meeting we had agreed to formalise the position. No other nominations had been received and Peter had agreed to continue as Chairman. He was therefore announced as Chair for the next two years (for which there was an applause). The position of Vice Chair is still open and people were requested to put themselves forward – in particular someone from the Welsh part of the estuary would be welcome.

Peter welcomed our partners in Europe to the meeting (4) through the Les Esturiales network, who then introduced themselves.

1.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes from Tuesday 24th April 2007 at Chepstow Racecourses were agreed to be a true record. The following matters arising were reported by Natasha Barker (SEP Officer).

Summary of actions	Person	Progress
Nominations for Chair & Vice-Chair of the JAC to be forwarded to Natasha Barker (SEP Officer) by the end of September 2007. Appointments to be made in October/November.	ALL	No nominations received: Cllr Peter Tyzack willing to continue. SEP MG propose his role be formalised.
Comments invited on the final draft of the SEP Annual Report & Action Plan 2007-08 by 11 th May 2007.	ALL	Comments incorporated into final version, disseminated at Severn Estuary Forum in June.
Ideas for potential patrons of the Severn Estuary Partnership were invited.	ALL	Ideas received and invited – ongoing.
Outline response to be circulated to all JAC members to assist and encourage their individual responses to the Marine	NB, SEP & ALL	Submitted following consultation.

Bill White Paper consultation. A draft SEP response to be considered by the SEP Management Group.		
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2 Estuary Groups – Common Platform

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

Mathew Lewis (Chairman of the ASERA Management Group) reported that the focus of this morning's meeting had been the implications for ASERA to make a new single management scheme to cover the new cSAC and existing SPA designations. The Group would be working alongside CCW and Natural England for two years on this. The next AGM was being planned.

2.2 Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) progress report

David Harris (Chairman of the SECG) indicated that this afternoon's meeting would receive presentations on the coastal monitoring project by the Environment Agency and see where they were with the Severn Estuary Coastal Habitat Management Plan (CHAMP). DEFRA and the EA are trying to make regional coastal groups for the South West one large regional group. The Welsh side has a new Minister Jane Davidson and they are looking at policies for risk management. They are due to convene a sub group meeting to start the Shoreline Management Plan 2 process and get more up to date information on a new website.

2.3 Bristol Channel Counter Pollution Association (BCCPA) progress report

Donald McDonald had sent his apologies for the meeting and commented that he was still very active in addressing the Napoli clean-up.

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

Humphrey Temperley (Chairman of the NDSCG) discussed the size of the proposed regional coastal group, reaching from Portland Bill in Dorset to Lavernock Point in South Wales (the area of 4 flood defence committees and some 30 local authorities). There would be so many people involved that he believed there would be no local relevance. Therefore there needs to be an alternative, possibly keeping Cornwall as one group. It maybe appropriate to have a coastal group from Portland to Hartland in north Devon and then have one from Hartland to Cardiff, keeping two coastal groups. DEFRA initially wanted one but now feel it may be too large. There is money and an operational budget to deliver and get a lot of engagement with local authorities. To make progress with flood risk management for the Severn, the CHAMP needs to be signed off. The English side believe that if they don't have a flood risk management strategy they cannot advance any schemes. There was an issue of how to deal with compensatory habitat on single schemes and a need for a 'land bank' for the Severn Estuary.

2.5 Severn Estuary Health & Environment Liaison Group (SEHELG)

Eirian Thomas (SEHELG Chairman) discussed topics relating to the South West of England, Wales and West Midlands. The main focus was on health and population around the estuary. They have been looking at the chemical impact of flooding and carbon monoxide poisoning. Members of the group had invited SEP staff to meet them early next year to discuss

possible areas for future collaboration and increase integration, recognising three was a direct health component to SEP's work.

2.6 Bristol Channel Yachting Association (BCYA)

Don Sutherland (Chair of BCYA) and the Royal Yachting Associations representative for South West England, reported that their main interest was yachting and sailing facilities and activities. He is excited about the prospect of a Severn barrage which could be Europe's largest manmade sailing area. There are some concerns about navigation rights on the Severn. He also raised the point that there is concern about the duty on red diesel as this would affect leisure facilities. RYA were currently providing significant input to the Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plan process, for example, identifying the location of all sailing clubs and moorings. There has been a new yachting guide for the Bristol channel published and launched at the Severn Estuary Forum this year – the 'Blue Book'. He believes that website and communication is very important as we assess the changing sailing environment of the Severn.

3 SEP Management Group Update

3.1 2nd Severn Estuary Forum

Natasha Barker (SEP Officer) presented an update on behalf of the Management Group. SEP had hosted a successful 2nd Severn Estuary Forum in June, to which we were oversubscribed for the 120 places. Larry Hilderbrand from the Bay of Fundy in Canada gave the keynote speech. There were also speakers on natural & cultural heritage, planning and climate change, tidal energy and an Industry and infrastructure heritage exhibition. The Forum has been established an excellent way to connect decision-makers and key stakeholders who attend the JAC, with estuary users.

3.2 Annual Report & Action Plan 2007-08

The Annual Report and Action Plan 2007/08 is now complete. Operating Procedures are in final draft and comments were invited. The Management Group plan to introduce a new membership structure in the New Year and want acknowledgement from the JAC that they are happy with the proposed membership structure.

3.3 SEP project work

SEP had not been able to do as much project work recently due to the loss of staff funding through the Coastatlantic project. Guidance Notes on archaeology, habitats & species and local produce had been produced from that project, with copies still available for distribution. The areas of current activity through Cardiff University were:

- Climate change research strategy – citations database available; 3rd meeting on 7th December.
- Local information systems for planners – value in further meetings of local authority planners e.g. original SCOSLA¹ members?
- Maritime heritage education pack – 'Stories from the Severn Sea'.

Rhoda Ballinger (Cardiff University) reported that two local authorities (Monmouthshire and South Gloucestershire) had committed match funding for the next 2 years to an EC Interreg Corepoint 2 project proposal with

¹ SCOSLA – Standing Conference of Severnside Local Authorities

Cardiff University.

SEP has been providing the Secretariat to Les Esturiales network of European estuarine authorities since the beginning of 2006, due to end in 2008. There was an opportunity for members of the network to participate in a new EC Interreg project called 'DeltaNet' which was represented by Max Roksnoer from the Rhine-Scheldt delta, in attendance at the meeting.

3.4 The Way Forward for SEP

The change with SEP resources was leading to an evaluation of priorities and sources of funds for SEP work. The Marine Bill was announced in the Queens Speech this week and was going to be important. DEFRA is working on a project to demonstrate the financial benefits of coastal partnerships, with emphasis towards the private sector. The proposed new membership scheme for SEP was intended to widen opportunities for funding SEP work.

The SEP position on the SDC "Turning of the tide" report is important. There have been proposals for SEP to be involved in related work. The RSA have had discussions with SEP to set up public forums - Mervyn Bramley was introduced as the representative at the meeting. The IWA would like SEP to work with them on scoping reports to assess the impacts of a barrage and public forums – John Osmond was introduced as the representative at the meeting. A draft recommendation in response to the SDC report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and would be considered before the end of this meeting for approval.

Natasha highlighted completion of her fellowship visits to Canada (Bay of Fundy) in 2006 and Russia (Penzhinskaya Guba) in 2007 with reports available at the meeting.

4 Planning Issues and Consultations

Rhys Morgan provided an update on the proposed Penarth Headland link which had looked to put in a suspended walkway from the pier to Cardiff Bay, but was likely to be dropped.

Graham Quarrier highlighted the Environmental Agency Flood Risk Management (FRM) strategy and limited progress on the ecological side i.e. identifying cost-effectiveness. The SMP could run alongside the FRM strategy to avoid consultation fatigue but it was going to take 2-3 years to get to a proposed strategy.

Gillian Ellis-King asked for an update on the Port of Bristol deep water container terminal proposal. Anne Hayes commented that Bristol Port Company had undertaken the Scoping Study which had involved major consultation and were now undertaking a full Environmental Impact Assessment. Site investigations were now largely complete for numerical modelling. The EIA was due for completion in May/June 2008, when there would be formal consultation. However, comments were invited prior to that – the sooner the better.

Mathew Lewis raised the issue that Defra & WAG have been looking at coastal access on the Welsh side. Monmouthshire CC and Newport CC have been looking at areas from Rumney to the River Wye and are taking a joint approach the employment of an Implementation Officer. There is

further information on the Monmouthshire website.

Peter Tyzack commented that the Draft Marine Bill should be expected for consultation in the Spring. Natasha said it was hoped that ICZM must be part of the proposed new maritime policy.

5. Tidal Power Options & Severn Barrage Proposal

5.1 Turning the Tide – Sustainable Development Commission report

Gary Shanahan from the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) gave a presentation summarising the recommendations from the SDC's report 'Turning the Tide' on tidal energy in the UK and Government's work on a feasibility study for a Severn Barrage. His presentation included the following key points:

History

- 1975 – CEGB Studies
- 1981 – Bondi Committee – Energy Paper 46 considered 6 locations and recommended Brean Down – Lavernock Point 7.2GW Barrage
- 1987 – Parsons Brinckerhoff Study on English Stones Barrage (updated in 2006)
- 1989 – STPG study – Energy Paper 57 - part funded by CEGB/DEn – confirmed Bondi preferred option but upgraded capacity to 8640MW
- 2002 + 2006 – Updated studies by STPG and PB Power

SDC conditions for a sustainable Severn barrage

- Started from a general position in favour of renewable energy
- Conditions-led approach focusing on 'deal-breaking issues'
- SDC's framework for consideration:
 - placing a high value on the long-term public interest
 - maintaining the overall integrity of internationally recognised habitats and species

SDC position on environmental issues

- Barrage must comply with the Habitats Directive and other environmental legislation in force – no derogations
- Carry out an 'appropriate assessment' using up-to-date modelling techniques to really understand the impact
- Do not view the need for compensatory habitat as a burden on the project, but as an 'environmental opportunity'
- In this way, combine climate change mitigation (the barrage) with adaptation (the compensatory habitat)

SDC position on project development

Severn Barrage should only proceed as a public sector project:

- reduces the cost of capital (and electricity)
- mitigates the risk of short-termism
- facilitates integrated regional development
- only realistic way of funding compensatory habitats
- Ensures a fair distribution of risks and benefits.
- Development and ownership to remain in public hands

Feasibility Study

- Currently defining scope, planning, timescales for feasibility study. Looking at...
- how to organise the work across 6 Departments, WAG, SWRDA, others
- how to involve interest groups/stakeholders
- how to communicate with wider public
- process and timing to reach key decisions

Areas for study

These include:

- Environmental impacts and how these could be mitigated
- Financing, risk and organisation of such a project, including impacts on the energy market. Overall cost/benefit analysis
- Technical and engineering aspects
- Regional impacts / infrastructure, including social and economic impacts and transport implications
- Planning, consents and other regulatory issues

A full copy of the presentation would be made available on the SEP website (www.severnestuary.net/sep).

5.2 Questions & Answers

Following Gary Shanahan's presentation, 20 minutes was allowed for open questions & answers. The following points were made:

- The organisational structure was being considered for such a project e.g. as a private finance initiative (PFI) or private-public partnership (PPP). Government considered that public sector capital funding reduced private sector risk, the cost would be higher in the private sector and the public sector had a longer term focus and could fit better with regional development and infrastructure. Concern was raised that public borrowing could increase the cost of the project. SDC thought that compensatory habitat requirements could only be met through the public sector.
- Government were considering what is the ideal planning structure to take the proposal forward and how best to communicate.
- The scoping phase Government were currently undertaking would run for 6 months, looking at work streams and processes.
- How many consortiums had approached Government? Several, including Severn Tidal Power Group.
- There had been many claims about flood risk associated with a proposed barrage. How were Government addressing interdependencies between work streams (e.g. flooding, infrastructure, environmental impacts)? BERR are stepping back from the SDC report to look at various options and evidence-based policy.
- Were Government looking at alternative options? SDC had looked at all tidal technologies. The BERR feasibility study is considering barrages and lagoons for the Severn Estuary. Wider issues were addressed in the Energy White Paper.
- What emphasis is being placed on the energy potential of the barrage compared to the economic opportunities? BERR will balance economic and environmental sides to all plans and projects.
- Was SDC's work the prime source of stakeholder opinion, as many estuary-based local & regional stakeholders which would be affected, were not involved in that process? BERR are currently working on a communications strategy which would be wider than SDC's work.
- Had BERR accepted SDC's recommendations? BERR's feasibility study was looking at the detail and they hadn't responded formally. BERR are looking at the best way to communicate their messages and would make it clear what SDC recommendations they would not accept.
- Was a cross-departmental group being established? BERR's work would feed into a Ministerial Working Group.
- What was the status of Baroness Young's (Chief Executive of the Environment Agency) comments, who was very opposed to a Severn Barrage? GS could not comment.
- Had flooding concerns downstream of a barrage and siltation been considered? The engineering and technical stream of the feasibility study work would look at this.

- Is the Do Nothing option being considered, for example in terms of energy savings and other forms of electricity generation – this was a baseline for Environmental Impact Assessment? The Energy White Paper and Government Working Party said that we needed to consider both energy efficiency and generation to reach the target of 20% energy generation from renewables by 2020. Cost/benefit analysis of different options were being considered.
- Will there be interim feedback? BERR are working on a Communication Strategy but had welcomed the opportunity to meet local & regional stakeholders this early in the process.
- There was a risk that tight timescales would lead decision-making by perceptions and politics? Climate change would not wait.

5.3 Discussion on the Future Role of SEP

The JAC delegates undertook an interactive exercise for 40 minutes at their tables (each person participated in two groups). Discussion was based on the following questions:

Q1: How should local and regional stakeholders be involved in the feasibility studies proposed by SDC & DBERR ?

Q2: What role should SEP have in facilitating co-operation across administrative boundaries and with the estuary community?

Q3: How do you see the role of the SEP in the future?

The background purpose of the discussions were to consider the draft recommendation that had been given to all in advance of the meeting.

5.4 Feedback & Summary

Each table host provided feedback on the views of their group, which included:

- Communication of messages via different media, therefore a Communication Strategy was needed to reach different people
- The neutral role of SEP was important – advocacy, championing
- SEP as a independent arbitrator could gather information to increase time efficiency e.g. hold an electronic library of information and engage additional stakeholders.
- SEP could have a ‘process-monitoring’ role, supporting with facilitation and information dissemination, not representing or a decision-making role.
- Clarity was needed over the process of consultation with the ability to influence and rules of engagement made clear. SEP should have a role throughout the consultation process.
- There was a need for an estuary-wide focus, therefore a clear role for SEP. The scale of this should not be underestimated with very complex interests and many organisations. Issues and facts needed to be gathered if consultation thereafter was to be effective and then it should be user-friendly. SEP as an impartial body needs to be seen as legitimate in providing information and facts.
- Local awareness is needed (e.g. through public forums) providing the opportunity for more issues and opinions to be raised. A web-based forum could be provided by SEP. A broad and balanced approach was needed.

GA (SEP Management Group Chair) had discussed with GS (BERR) the practicalities of how SEP would be involved.

The results and recommendations from each table discussion are available in a separate paper.

The Draft Recommendation presented to the JAC was invited for comment. The following amendments were approved:

- reference be made to the Habitat Regulations
- reference to La Rance be removed and a general statement to be made relating to other schemes and relevant experience

In relation to the proposed new membership structure for SEP, there should be some caution about inviting private sector funding support which could influence the public perception and independence of SEP. GA stated that the SEP Management Group would address the balance between SEPs funding and its role.

ACTION: The DRAFT Recommendation from the JAC on the SDC report to be amended and circulated.

6 Any Other Business & Date of Future JAC Meetings

Tuesday 20th May 2008

The meeting closed at 2pm for lunch, followed by an opportunity to visit Weston-Super-Mare where delegates could look at regeneration issues and the alignment of a proposed barrage from Brean Down to Lavernock Point.