

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

Management Group Meeting

10am, 6th September 2004

Monmouthshire County Council, Cwmbran

MINUTES

Attendees:

George Ashworth (chairman), Monmouthshire County Council
Charlotte Street, SEP Project Officer
Evangelia Moutselou, SEP/Cardiff University
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University
Helen Jenkins, Environment Agency Wales
Jim Mitchell, SEP
Vaughn Grantham, Cardiff Council
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council
Andy Hicklin, Environment Agency SW Region
Anne Valdes, South Gloucestershire Council
Dairmuid Mulrenan, SECG

1. Apologies for absence

Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council
Simon Brett, ABP
Steve Knowles, SEP/ASERA

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Given that this was the first meeting of the Management Group meeting, minutes were not available however the minutes from the previous JAC meeting held on 26/4/04 were presented and accepted as a true record.

Progress Report

CS commented that the Progress Report followed the agenda and also referred to how each area of progress/ action related to policy within the Strategy for the Severn Estuary, in order to monitor implementation.

2. SEP Finances Update

i. SEP Account

CS presented to the group a spreadsheet detailing the SEP finances. The current balance stands at £49,741. CS went on to say that although the balance is healthy at the moment, using projected income and expenditure figures, there will be a shortfall in the budget by the end of FY 06/07. Even if the Local authorities adopt

the funding formula, income will still be short without project related funding from Government Agencies and other organisations.

CS and financial Assistant Nick Rogers will be looking at a Business Plan area of work over the next few months to address this issue early on.

VG raised the issue of the difficulty of Local Authority contributions to voluntary partnerships in the light of budgetary cuts which AV agreed with. CS replied that through the Term of Reference area of work it is hoped that this will be resolved to some extent by gaining commitment of Local Authorities for a 3 year period. The Terms also state that all JAC member organisations should pay £100 per annum towards administrative costs. We should see how organisations take this suggestion at the next JAC meeting.

AH stated it would be useful to see the kind of figures that the SEP would be thinking of bidding to the EA for well in advance.

RCB also commented on this issue, stating there are 2 forthcoming areas of work that may address the funding issue - The Wales Coastal Strategy development process and Steve Fletcher's work for The Crown Estate. JM added that he had contacted the Crown Estate to find out their area of ownership in the Estuary with regard to possible funding. A large proportion of the SEP area, from the Severn Bridge Down to Minehead and Llantwit Major came under the Crown Estate.

ii. Interreg Finances

CS summarised the Interreg account as having gained £25045 in match funding and spent £22884 leaving a balance of £2161. Financial claims have been submitted to Interreg to re-coup this spend, and payment will be coming from the lead partner at a future date.

3. Joint Advisory Committee Meeting (11/10/04)

i. JAC Meeting Arrangements

CS reported that the venue for the forthcoming meeting will be The Port and City of Bristol Social Club. It is intended that an agenda and papers for this meeting will be circulated the week beginning the 13th September.

ii. Draft Agenda

CS presented a draft agenda for this meeting and asked for comments and suggestions from the group. It was felt that as a matter arising from the minutes, The Renewable Energy issue should be reported on with a 'Where we are now' style paper.

ACTION: CS to compile Renewable Energy paper.

CS stated that the Thames Estuary Partnership had agreed to present at this meeting and asked if there were specific issues the group felt would be useful for them to cover. Administrative issues, legal status, their Research Forum and

success stories of joint working in order to sell the idea of the partnership to attendees were suggested.

It was also felt that the minutes of this Management Group meeting should be reported (paper).

ACTION: CS to contact TEP

ACTION: CS to prepare paper reporting on minutes.

AV also commented that a Vice-Chair had not been elected and this should be on the agenda.

ACTION: CS to liaise with Peter Tyzack and LAs to identify a Vice chair prior to the meeting.

RCB commented that it would be useful if the Head of School at Cardiff, Dianne Edwards, be invited to the next meeting to inform her of the SEP process a little better.

iii. Terms of Reference

CS reported that she had been receiving comments from organisations and slowly the Terms were nearing their final form. Contact with Monmouthshire and South Gloucester had been useful in anticipating how Local Authorities would receive this document and making any necessary changes.

CS commented that it will be sent round to organisations for their approval and signature; however organisations had commented that a month may not be long enough to complete this prior to the next JAC meeting, however a review of progress would be made.

ACTION: CS to send round final ToR to Management Group digitally for final comments before circulation. Comments to be received by 10/09/04.

ACTION: Send to Laura Williams, Cardiff in GAs name.

In connection with the Terms of Reference, CS reported that she had been looking at the next steps i.e. legal status, Partnership Agreements. It was decided that a paper of this nature should not be taken to the JAC at this stage but considered at future Management Group meetings.

ACTION: CS and EM to prepare papers in consultation with GA and circulate to JAC members the week beginning 13th September and where necessary, follow with phone calls.

4. Joint Initiative Arrangements

i. ASERA

CS reported to the group that the SEP had now been contracted to implement the ASERA Management Scheme. HJ updated the group on how the decision was

made. The contract will run from 1/09/04 for 18 months with Steve Knowles as the nominated officer.

ii. Severn Estuary Coastal Group

DM gave the group a brief overview of the history of the SECG and reported that after 3 years as secretary and Chairman, was looking to relinquish the role. A Chair had not so far been confirmed but discussions were ongoing. The SEP had been approached regarding taking on the secretariat role. A paper had been prepared highlighting the tasks and activities that would be involved. DM commented that annual subscriptions from partner organisations amounts to £7000, which would be transferred from North Somerset Council to the SEP (Cardiff University).

GA thanked DM, and commented that by the SEP taking over this secretariat it is a step closer to achieving the aim of one streamlined group rather than several disparate groups as has been the way in the past. The ToR also reflect the potential secretarial role of the SEP for other Estuary Groups. CS agreed with these comments.

DECISION: It was decided that the SEP were in a position to take over the role of SECG secretariat given that a chair is identified. The issue will be put forward at the meetings on 11/10/04 for resolution.

5. Coastatlantic Progress Report

i. General/Stakeholder Involvement

CS reported that the project was progressing in each of the thematic strands and that the next transnational partnership meeting was to be held mid October in Aquitaine France which herself and JM were to attend.

In terms of Stakeholder Involvement CS had compiled an initial report detailing the stakeholder involvement methods each partner were using. The next report to be presented at the October meeting will look more closely at how stakeholder input was influencing the direction of the projects and how this information was fed in.

CS commented that each of the other strands were reported on in the accompanying progress report.

ii. Access and Interpretation

JM summarised progress made with the Access and Interpretation project stating that he was pleased with the way in which organisations were involved and aware of the project around the Estuary. A CCW grant has been secured to part-fund the work of the Estuary wide Access Forum.

JM reported that the Access working group was meeting at the end of September and the Forum in December.

JM commented that the pilot projects were in the process of contracting out the work and should be underway in this financial year (04/05).

6. Other European Project Work

i. CultureAtlantic

CS reported to the group that she and HJ had submitted a second Interreg bid. The project would be looking at the cultural heritage resource and looking at ways to restore and promote this in terms of developing access to these sites (particularly for disabled and elderly visitors). The SEP would lead with partners from Ireland, Spain and Portugal. CS added that they had been warned that funds were low and it may be unlikely to get this bid approved however, they were still advised to submit as this puts you in a good position for subsequent calls for projects. A decision will be made mid October.

ii. Corepoint

RCB updated the group on the Corepoint project which had been conditionally approved by the Interreg North West Europe Programme.

It is to be led by the Coastal and Marine Resources Centre Ireland, with Cardiff University as the official partner; however certain areas of the project will be carried out through the SEP. These areas will look to develop a Severn Estuary Research forum, a Local Information System, deliver training in ICZM and Maritime Heritage and Education. It will be a 45 month project starting in Jan 05.

RCB stated that it will be necessary to have a letter from GA addressed to Cardiff to reflect involvement. RCB said that she would be preparing a leaflet on this project in time for the JAC meeting.

ACTION: CS/RCB to arrange

7. Newsletter and Website Information

CS tabled a draft format for the autumn newsletter and asked the group for comments and suggestion on the articles included.

HJ suggested that the Flat Holm article would be better placed in the spring edition as boats to the Island stop for the winter. AV suggested that Sue Rice at the Newport Levels Nature Reserve write a short article on their project and progress re. visitors centre.

ACTION: CS to contact Sue Rice

JM mentioned it would be useful to have a 'who we are' paragraph as standard. He also raised the issue that we should start thinking about who we are aiming the newsletter at which will determine how we pitch articles. AH agreed and stated that it should have public appeal. CS agreed and stated that at the moment, the newsletter is both aimed at the public and stakeholders/partners. At this stage when the organisation is being set up it is useful to have a glossy production that is of interest to both groups. However at a later stage, when partners become more

established the progress reports may be sufficient for them and enable us to target the newsletter solely at the public i.e. annual forum attendees. GA commented that it would also be useful to have a short article on the JAC.

ACTION: CS to finalise newsletter and circulate to group before printing. To be available for the JAC.

Regarding the website CS reported that the SEP team had been looking at developing a public section of the website and a new home page. She had approached Cardiff University for a quote for this work which is charged out at staff costs only so should be quite reasonable.

ACTION: CS to take forward. To provide a laptop at the JAC meeting in order for partners to take a look at the site.

8. AOB

EM summarised the aims and objectives of her PhD research project. It is necessary to establish how organisations interact with the various coastal management groups and networks in the Severn and also in SW Wales. She thanked the group for their help and assistance so far and stated she would be contacting individuals to arrange for further discussions at their convenience.

9. Date and Venue of next meeting

- **Joint Estuary Groups Day and JAC**
11/10/04 The City and Port of Bristol Social Club.

ACTION: CS to contact Peter Tyzack in order to propose 2005 dates at JAC meeting

- **Management Group Meeting**
29/11/04 Shire Hall, Gloucestershire County Council. *Change of Venue to Monmouthshire.*