

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP
Management Group Meeting
2.00pm 13th June 2005
Monmouthshire County Council, Cwmbran

MINUTES

Attendees:

George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council
Natasha Barker, SEP
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University
Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council
Vaughan Grantham, Cardiff Council
Andy Hicklin, Environment Agency SW Region
Steve Knowles, ASERA/SEP
Jim Mitchell, SEP
Lia Moutselou, SEP
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council
Anne Valdes, Newport Council

1. Apologies for absence

Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean Council

2. SEP SWOT Analysis

Natasha Barker engaged the management group in a Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.) exercise with the aim of reflecting on the current status of the SEP and to assist with her work as the new Partnership Officer.

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3. Minutes from previous Management Group meeting

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the last Management Group meeting. The following matters arose:

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i. Les Esturiales

Following an extended period of inactivity from the Les Esturiales network, with the current partners in France holding presidency, the Severn Estuary UK partners have asked that a meeting was convened to discuss progress and the future of the network. A meeting has been organised in Gironde, France for Thursday 16th and Friday 17th June. Gillian Ellis-King will be attending this meeting on behalf of the Severn Estuary partners and the SEP. The latest news on the network includes the expression of interest from a Polish Estuary/partner who will be attending June's meeting.

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The SEP management group agreed that, since the matter of renewed presidency arrangement will come up at the meeting, it is desirable that the SEP takes on that role for the next couple of years. **This would be** on the condition that the functions of the Les Estuariales network will be funded by the contributions of its partners and not by other SEP run projects and will remain separate

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ii. **SEP Website**

The new SEP Website is still being revised and remains to be set up and running.

4. **JAC Minutes & Feedback**

The JAC minutes from 18th April 2005 were noted with no matters arising.

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5. **SEP Finances Update**

Given that Natasha Barker had just started in her post as Partnership Officer, an elaborate financial update was not possible.

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It was noted that the SEP is currently managing numerous separate accounts including the COREPOINT and COASTAT LANTIC Interreg projects as well as the Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) account apart from its own. Nick Rodgers is still chasing up this years subscriptions from some of the Local Authorities. Some of the authorities wish to contribute the SCOSLA subscription only. However, its needs to be clarified that SCOSLA is part of the larger SEP network and will not convene separately unless an appropriate matter arises.

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SCOSLA subscription only allows for the maintenance of the SCOSLA platform but does not automatically entitle the contributing local authority to the SEP services and a place on the JAC.

6. **Partnership Agreement (amended Terms of Reference)**

Steve Knowles informed the group that further comments and recommendations have been received on the final draft of the Partnership Agreement. Natasha Barker noted that it is important to conclude this process as its main role is to document the operational structure of the partnership and provide the basis for seeking further commitment from the partners in the future. This Partnership agreement shall remain separate from any type of document which may establish the partnership as a legal entity. It was agreed that the term 'Project officer' will be changed to 'Partnership Officer' and that minor inconsistencies will be corrected together with incorporation of changes to respond on the further comments.

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It was also agreed that:

- **The SEP team will track any changes to the final Partnership Agreement draft and circulate to all JAC members ASAP, with the aim of progressing to formal adoption at the Autumn meeting of the JAC.**
- **Where no further comments are received on the Agreement this is to be taken as acceptance of the final draft.**
- **Natasha Barker will draft a letter for the JAC presenting the Agreement**

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<#>The Final decision on the agreement will be taken on the 11th October by the Management Group, which shall present the final draft to the JAC on the same day¶
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7. Partnership Services

Partnership Services is to remain a standard item in the Management Group's agendas. Natasha Barker noted that a Business Plan and an Annual Work Plan should be put together for the SEP as a matter of priority. The purpose of the Business Plan should be to outline the Partnership's services that everyone can refer to and should be used as a marketing mechanism for implementing the Severn Estuary Strategy. The Annual Work Plan should make the necessary distinction between the work the partnership and the partners leads on. This should be drafted as a matter of priority and is to be followed by a Business Plan. A separate review of the Severn Estuary Strategy itself was also considered necessary and should follow on from the drafting of the two plans in the future.

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An outline of the Annual Work Plan should be presented to the Management Group at their following meeting in July with the aim of completing a final draft by September 2005

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The existing Funding Formula will also be reviewed by September.

8. Partnership Status

Once reporting mechanisms are in place the SEP should consider its possible evolution into a charity and/or a company. The options on the status of the SEP will be researched so that this can be progressed following the JAC meeting in October.

9. COAST ATLANTIC Progress Report

i. General progress report

The last Coastatlantic Project partners' meeting took place in Westport, Ireland in April. At the meeting it was reported that the Coastatlantic project website is now up and running and can be viewed at <http://www.coastatlantic.org/>. The Gironde partners are also now fulfilling their role in disseminating information on the project. Furthermore Jim Mitchell reported that payments are now arriving from the Lead Partner. The next Coastatlantic partners meeting will take place in October, in Aquitaine, to include an Open Seminar in early October.

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ii. Access and Interpretation

Good progress is now being made in installing gates in S. Glos and Monmouthshire. A budget has been allocated for footpath works around Lydney dock and the work is ongoing. The opening of the dock and footpath is on Saturday 23rd July. There are also interpretation design meetings planned for 6 panels, 2 in Newport, 2 in Monmouthshire and 2 in S. Glos. The 4th Estuary-wide Access Forum was held in April and it was agreed that an Access Toolkit should be composed and made available online with the aim of disseminating results of pilots and to offer advice on Coastal Access on the Severn. Web based Interpretation work is also progressing well and the interpretation toolkit has now been written.

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iii. Urban/Rural Interdependencies / Cultural Heritage

Gillian Ellis-King from South Gloucestershire Council will provide an update on this project strand at the next Management Group meeting on the 19th July.

iv. Natural Heritage/ GIS

The Natural Heritage project continues to involve all necessary organisations around the estuary. A consultation draft of the guidance notes is anticipated for July. It is hoped that the guidance notes will be ready for circulation this autumn and that a road show to explain the value of the guidance notes can be arranged for over the winter.

Contracts have been let for the nature conservation / recreation GIS and for producing a database to collate Severn Estuary existing spatial data. Both these projects will be completed by October this year. A dissemination programme will complete the overall project over the winter months. The networking aspect of the project is still proving difficult.

10. COREPOINT Project Update

The COREPOINT project partners will be meeting in Cardiff on Tuesday 5th July. This project meeting is part of a series of COREPOINT events organised by the Severn Estuary partners (Cardiff University/Severn Estuary Partnership) which include: an Expert Surgery and project launch for the Severn on the 6th July at the Norwegian Church, Cardiff Bay; and an ICZM Training Course led by ENVISION consultants, on the 7th & 8th July at the Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon.

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11. AOB

i. Marine ALS Fund

Jim Mitchell presented the management group with the idea of bidding for Marine ALS fund. It was agreed that he will communicate with the appropriate person to express interest in the fund and he will then draft a proposal on communication and interpretation aspects of Severn Estuary management that neatly links to the Severn Estuary Strategy relevant policies and actions.

ii. Deltanet

Deltanet was mentioned as another potential Interreg project group that the team had expressed interest in joining.

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iii. Interreg Fair Oporto, Portugal

Natasha Barker informed the management group that she will be attending an Interreg meeting and fair in Oporto, Portugal on 28th and 29th June, with an aim of looking at further European funding opportunities.

iv. Crown Estate Funds

It was agreed that the SEP team should be looking into the possibility of bidding for Crown Estate funds.

12. Date and venue of next meeting

Two management group meetings were planned before the October 2005 JAC meeting on the following dates:

Tuesday 19th July 2005 - England

Friday 9th September 2005 - Wales