

# SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

## Management Group Meeting

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2006

EA offices, Severn View Service Station, Aust



## Minutes

**Chair: George Ashworth**

**ACTION**

### Attendees:

George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council & Chair of SEP Management Group  
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University  
Natasha Barker, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP) Officer  
Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean Council  
Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council  
Vaughan Grantham, Cardiff Council  
Phillip Holliday, ABP  
John Marks, Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Rhys Morgan, Severn Estuary Officer, Environment Agency  
Cllr Peter Tyzack, South Gloucestershire Council & Acting Chair SEP

### 1 Apologies for absence

Anne Valdes, Newport Council  
David Mitchell, Countryside Council for Wales

### 2 Minutes from previous Management Group Meeting (28<sup>th</sup> September 2006)

Draft minutes of the last meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September were tabled and approved as a true record.

### 3 Matters Arising

Actions from the last meeting were checked:

<b>ACTION from 28.9.06</b>	<b>Complete?</b>
NB to send a copy of the SEP consultation response on DEFRA's ICZM Strategy to WAG & SWRDA.	Yes – mtg held with SWRDA
NB to ask JAC for views on next Forum & future of Festival	Yes – see JAC minutes
NB to call MG members to review their involvement; look at options for JAC structure and provide a long term vision with steps towards it.	Partially – see Operating Procedures
SEP seek the support of a qualified accountant to manage and report on the budgets.	Partners asked – CU & EA. Forest of Dean maybe able to help.
NB to email SEP ICZM Strategy Response to JAC group and invite them to respond individually to Defra quoting from, or supporting, the SEP response.	Yes – some partners sent individual responses to Defra.
NB to send the Marketing Brochure to print and prepare for distribution to inc. EA contacts and .pdf version.	Yes – printed, to be disseminated with Severn Tidings mailout
NB to approach representatives of the two new groups about the SEP MoA and participation in the Estuary Groups Day.	Partially – RM, EA has contacts.
RM provide position statement on the Severn Barrage for the JAC.	Yes – NB read out at JAC, helpful to discussion.
RM to investigate feasibility of future meetings at EA offices, Aust.	Yes.

#### Items discussed:

- Seeking the support of a qualified accountant: EA asked but not able to provide someone with a practicing licence for external work. CU have access to qualified accountants but with no spare capacity. Alastair Chapman offered to look into options within the Forest of Dean. Depending upon the above outcomes, a letter could be sent to all partners to ask for qualified accountancy support.

#### **ACTION: AC to investigate the possibility of accountancy support (FoD).**

AC

- Avonmouth Port development proposal from Bristol Port Company: an HRO is being applied for to the DoT (instead of through the planning process). BPC have met with statutory agencies and have appointed consultants to undertake a Scoping Study by February-March 2007. This is a significant development proposal (e.g. 1.2km breakwater, 33ha loss of inter-tidal area, 14 miles of dredging). An EIA is likely to be conducted by the end of 2007.
- RM provided an update on the Crown Estate formulated dredging group bringing together applicants to look at in-combination affects in order to resolve outstanding licencing applications. CCW had raised major objections.

#### **ACTION: RM to make the aggregates working group to be made aware of the Avonmouth proposal.**

RM

## 4 SEP Financial Position & Employment

A separate paper described the SEP's *Financial Position and Employment Options*, together with the *Budget Position Statement as at 28.11.06*. The forecasted budget balance for the end of 2006-07 was between £-6000 and £24000 depending upon the Coastatlantic budget decision in January-February 2007. However, the forecast should also take account of unresolved carry over, likely to be £11,000 (due to salary allocation mistakes in CU) and the anticipated allocation to SEP from the Corepoint extension of around £15,500. Partners were asked to note that the Coastatlantic project budget had supported SEP in 06-07 to the extent of £8413 on staff and over £10,000 on activities (i.e. Severn Wonders publicity & Severn Tidings) amounting to approximately £18500.

There was discussion about the outstanding items, particularly the need to gain clarity on the EA's contribution. RM reported that there had been internal meetings from which it was very likely that EA Wales would fund £5000-£10000 this financial year and hopefully this will trigger off the other 2 regions into longer term non-project related funding, possibly through a Service Level Agreement (with £5000-£10000 from each region). GEK suggested SEP trigger invoicing to finalise the position for 06-07.

#### **ACTION: NB to identify where the £5000 Severn Wonders sponsorship had gone within CU as it had definitely been released by EA.**

NB

#### **ACTION: NB to raise invoice from CU (SEP) to EA for funding 06-07.**

NB, RM

English Nature had contributed £1000 this financial year and CCW recently made a grant offer of £2000. NB had been in discussion with the Sustainable Development Commission over their 'Tidal Power in the UK' project as it could lead to engaging SEP in the process with supporting resources.

#### **ACTION: NB to circulate 'Tidal Power in the UK' project update from SDC.**

NB

## 5 Staff Requirements

Lia Moutselou was leaving SEP after working as the assistant for several years. The Management Group were very appreciative of her dedication and hard work for the Partnership and asked NB to pass on a formal letter of thanks.

#### **ACTION: NB to send formal letter of thanks to Lia before she leaves.**

NB

The MG had been provided with a spreadsheet detailing *SEP Staff Requirements* which illustrated a shortfall of just under 100 days time to provide the essential SEP core services.

GA raised concern about the need for the Management Group to exert a duty of care towards NB's position with the loss of staff from SEP and the end of her contract in May 2007. The budget for next financial year had to be the top priority for SEP. It was therefore recommended that the EA and Coastatlantic budget positions be resolved asap. RB confirmed that CU would not be in a position to recruit in the current position of uncertainty.

***ACTION: NB to draft a letter for GA and PT to sign & send to EA Directors in Wales and England.*** NB

***ACTION: NB to check with the Coastatlantic lead partner if the final claim was submitted on time and if all partners final claims resulted in a total under or overspend for the project.*** NB

It was suggested that NB/RB prepare for recruitment and in the meantime make use of volunteers in Cardiff University (which NB had initiated through interviews held yesterday). Meanwhile all agreed that NB needed to prioritise work on SEP's core services and seek additional funding for Severn Wonders Festival and Forum 2007. RM reminded NB that he had industry contacts we could pursue. At this stage SEP could only commit to doing the minimum option for the Forum. Any more than that, including promotion of a Festival would require additional funding to increase staff capacity.

***ACTION: NB to write to partners seeking additional funds for Severn Wonders Festival & Forum.*** NB

## 6 SEP Operating Procedures

To form an appendix to the annual report & action plan the draft operating procedures were presented to the group and the following amendments proposed:

- Add a general statement about our role in facilitating debate amongst stakeholders/members to formulate views on issues/projects of common interest (through, for example the JAC, newsletter) as part of our core service.
- Add a general statement on our role in attracting funding/resources to deliver an integrated service (i.e. SEP Officer time spent fund raising)
- Severn Wonders should not be identified as a core service (as it is subject to additional sponsorship)
- Core Services should be described before Secretariat Services
- Delete reference to over 100 under the Severn Estuary Forum
- As recommended at the last meeting, include information on our approach to marketing and publicity (e.g. through SEP mail-outs)
- Core Services should include contribution to national ICZM policy development (e.g. Coastal Partnerships Working Group and Marine Bill consultations).
- Add a procedure for charging for consultancy/advisory time e.g. a scale of charges at a discounted rate for partners and advertise on our website. Caution should be exercised in relation to potential problems with selling data.

In the context of the final point, it was recommended that at this time NB could tell people we only have the staff capacity at the moment to deal with core functions.

***ACTION: NB to amend draft Operating Procedures ready for inclusion in the Annual Report & Action Plan 2007-08.***

## 7 Proposed Membership Structure

NB introduced the paper *Proposed Membership Structure* as a 1<sup>st</sup> draft for discussion and consideration over the next few months, on the basis that it could provide longer term stability to the SEP from local and regional partners. Members of the group felt that it was very risky to offer core services for £1000+ as it was likely to reduce contributions

from the higher funding partners. This risk was weighed against the likelihood of attracting new funding partners from NGOs and industry. It was suggested that it be turned around and provide a framework just to attract new partners. To reduce risk, it was agreed that no amount be shown for partners (including the existing partners) and that their contribution should be through decision of the MG by an agreed formula (e.g. based on population – the MG could refer back to the previous work on a funding formula). This was more likely to keep existing contributions from key partners at the same level. Lifetime membership and 'friend' of SEP were suggested. Distinction could be made between industry and NGOs and £250 was suggested instead of £150 for this organisation member/sponsor level. It was agreed that discretion on an individual basis could be exerted with the Estuary Officer bringing membership applications to the Management Group/Chair for a decision.

***ACTION: NB to re-draft the Proposed Membership Structure for possible adoption next year through the Annual Report & Action Plan (2007-08) which would be taken to the JAC in April 2007.***

NB

## 8 Future Role of SCOSLA

The background to this item included recent conferences on the Severn Barrage and discussions NB had been in with the Sustainable Development Commission over their 'Tidal Power in the UK' project.

Peter indicated that there had been 17 Local Authority members of SCOSLA and it had been formally constituted. GA's view of SCOSLA was that it had been serviced within SEP and should only be convened if there was a specific need for the Local Authorities to meet and formulate a discrete view. There was a risk that its resurgence with the barrage debate could undermine SEP's services and position. The need and timing for information provision and debate/voting on large development proposals such as renewable energy proposals/the barrage and the Bristol Port Company proposal were discussed. It was agreed that the best approach could be to tell SEP partners of our intentions to invite the SDC project work to be 'launched' in June with a speaker at the Forum (7<sup>th</sup> June) followed by an opportunity for SCOSLA members to receive specific information and debate, assistance from the SEP Officer to distill information for committee reports in June-July and a follow up meeting/JAC at which a vote could be taken if there is a need for a local authority unified view.

***ACTION: All to look for evidence of the formal constitution of SCOSLA – it would be useful if it is to be rejuvenated by SEP as a group.***

PT & All

***ACTION: NB to notify through JAC email group and Severn Tidings our intention to encourage information exchange with presentation of the SDC project results at the Forum and meetings of SCOSLA members through up to 2 follow up meetings (possibly within the JAC platform).***

NB

## 9 COREPOINT Progress Report

RB provided an update on the Research Advisory Group which was to have its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2007. A speaker was required on planning issues relating to climate change, with various options discussed. VG offered to seek a speaker from the Cardiff Council climate change group. A speaker from GoSW, SWRA or WAG was recommended. Tim Stojanovic had taken over the project work after Iwan Ball left Cardiff University and had prepared a list of contacts and database of key references which would be distributed at the workshop.

***ACTION: VG to seek a speaker from Cardiff Council***

VG

## 10 COAST ATLANTIC Progress Report

The Guidance Notes for Natural Heritage were being completed by NB and the Cultural Heritage & Local Food note shortly going to print by S Glos.

NB,  
GEK

**11 ESTURIALES Secretariat Update**

Peter had provided a detailed update at the JAC. A date for the Spring Bureau meeting needed to be decided soon.

PT/NB

**12 Any Other Business**

RM and the EA were thanked for providing a very suitable meeting venue.

**13 Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

10.00am Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007. The same venue was requested if possible.

RM

**Summary of Actions:**

<b>ACTION from 08.12.06</b>	<b>Notes on completion</b>
AC to investigate the possibility of accountancy support (FoD).	
RM to make the aggregates working group to be made aware of the Avonmouth proposal.	
NB to identify where the £5000 Severn Wonders sponsorship had gone within CU as it had definitely been released by EA.	
NB to raise invoice from CU (SEP) to EA for funding 06-07.	
NB to raise invoice from CU (SEP) to EA for funding 06-07.	
NB to circulate 'Tidal Power in the UK' project update from SDC.	
NB to send formal letter of thanks to Lia before she leaves.	
NB to draft a letter for GA and PT to sign & send to EA Directors in Wales and England.	
NB to check with the Coastatlantic lead partner if the final claim was submitted on time and if all partners final claims resulted in a total under or overspend for the project.	
NB to write to partners seeking additional funds for Severn Wonders Festival & Forum.	
NB to amend draft Operating Procedures ready for inclusion in the Annual Report & Action Plan 2007-08.	
NB to re-draft the <i>Proposed Membership Structure</i> for possible adoption next year through the Annual Report & Action Plan (2007-08) which would be taken to the JAC in April 2007.	
All to look for evidence of the formal constitution of SCOSLA – it would be useful if it is to be rejuvenated by SEP as a group.	
NB to notify through JAC email group and Severn Tidings our intention to encourage information exchange with presentation of the SDC project results at the Forum and meetings of SCOSLA members through up to 2 follow up meetings (possibly within the JAC platform).	
VG to seek a speaker from Cardiff Council	