

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP



Management Group Meeting

Thursday 13th July 2006

Committee Room 2, South Gloucestershire Council Offices, Kingswood

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
 Jim Mitchell, SEP Access, Interpretation & Communications Officer
 Rhys Morgan, Severn Estuary Officer, Environment Agency
 Tim Stojanovic, Cardiff University (to advise on COREPOINT Project progress)

1 Apologies for absence

Sarah Diacono, Somerset County Council
 Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council
 Anne Valdes, Newport Council

2 Minutes from previous Management Group Meeting (23rd May 2006)

Draft minutes of the last meeting were tabled and approved as a true record.

3 Matters Arising

Most recommendations and actions would be covered under the agenda. Natasha raised the point under item 6 regarding the ICZM monitoring exercise and recommended clarification be sought through and following an upcoming meeting arranged with English Nature and grant application to CCW. There was some discussion about approaching the WAG for clarification.

Recommendation: NB write to WAG and SW Regional Assembly to remind them of SEP's role, experience, our interest in the Marine Bill & ICZM and to highlight the major issue of how marine spatial planning would evolve across England and Wales. NB would do this immediately to coincide with a visit of Ben Bradshaw to the Welsh Assembly next week.

NB

As minuted in the last meeting, Natasha would be spending time over the summer working with the Bay of Fundy as part of her travelling fellowship: 20th July-25th August. One third of her time would be work time and two thirds were being taken as annual leave. The benefit to SEP would be exchange of information over renewable energy options (including a visit to the Annapolis Royal tidal power plant); marketing the tide for tourism; and flood risk management options. The visit to the Russian estuary as the site with potentially the 3rd highest tidal range had been postponed until next summer 2007.

4 SEP Financial Position

The balance of the budgets as at 6th July in the Cardiff University accounts, was £86883 in the SEP account (inc. approximately £30,000 held on behalf of Esturiales network) and £-38124 in the Coastatlantic account. Natasha advised the Management Group that there were still some transactions from the Festival and Forum to be finalised and that the Coastatlantic account did not reflect income from the last claim. There was one more claim period for invoices up to 31st July 2006, to be submitted to the lead partner in October. Management of the budgets was skewed by the uncertainty of the Coastatlantic account and the projected overspend on staff time that had been previously discussed. An SEP spreadsheet had been designed by NB but not kept up to date recently with the Festival & Forum organisation. Obtaining additional administrative/financial support could be considered.

Recommendation: It is important to resolve management of the budget to know where we are and have a more accurate forecast. NB & RB

5 Severn Estuary Forum & Festival Report

A draft evaluation report of the Festival and Forum was tabled. Natasha and Jim briefly talked through the report. Members felt that the Forum had been incredibly well organised with excellent speakers. It had proved very successful, 'worked wonders for the partnership' and worth continuing. The key was to 'harvest the momentum' now. A conference and outdoor event providing partners with the opportunity to do something they wouldn't otherwise (e.g. see the bore, visit an island) was deemed worthwhile. More time was needed to evaluate the Festival by contacting event organisers. It was viewed by the SEP team as a lot of work to take on every year but had proved a good initiative with further potential. It was suggested that we maintain the momentum through advertising events via Severn Tidings under the banner of 'Summer on the Severn '07' through an announcement of our intentions in the Autumn 06 edition. Early establishment of a working group for the Forum &/or Festival was advised. Booking a speaker such as Michael Meacher MP or Madelaine Moon MP (Bridgend) flagging up the 'phenomenal success' of the Forum & Festival for Thursday 7th June 07 was suggested.

Recommendations:

- **Obtain further feedback from Festival event organisers** JM
- **Comments on the draft report be sent to Jim for editing, particularly on the table p.20 .** All
- **Natasha to draft the Summary section with the views of the MG** NB
- **Logos of funders (as per the publicity) should be added to the report** JM
- **The report be made available on the SEP website by the end of July, together with all the speakers presentations.** JM
- **Seek the commitment of a speaker for the next Forum on 7th June 2007.** NB

6 Partnership Services

• **Role of JAC & Operating Procedures**

Although we had discussed the role of the JAC previously it was suggested at the last meeting that we review its role after the 1st Forum. RM felt that attendance at the JAC is too varied and dependent upon the guest speaker. He asked what it achieves and would like to see a more regular membership attending with a defined role. RB commented that the old Steering Group was

more effective in steering the Strategy for the Severn Estuary. There is limited dialogue and debate in the JAC and not much real engagement of partners – a guest speaker or topic group meeting may help to bring people in, but they are different each time. It is important for the local authorities to have an opportunity for engagement but the JAC may have more potential if it could really engage in decision-making. With the Forum established as an opportunity for information exchange, now could be a good time to formalise the role of the JAC by giving it a strategic role. AONBs had good experience (e.g. Wye Valley & Cotswolds) but it was seen that the scale of the Severn – 14 LA's, may mean we have to think again. It was agreed that we need an agreed framework with voting by funding members only to encourage formal membership.

Recommendation:

A short framework statement for the role of the JAC would be drafted for the next meeting, to take to the JAC in October.

NB

- **Marketing Brochure**

Publication had been delayed until after the Forum & Festival. JM was incorporating the comments made at the last MG meeting for the brochure to be printed in September/October.

- **Marketing & Publicity through the SEP mail-outs**
- **Bi-lingual publicity**

There was limited time to discuss these issues so it was suggested that NB & JM work on a policy statement that the MG could agree to at the next meeting. Examples of the need to consider this had arisen with the CCW funding request and requirements under the Welsh Language Act, and during the Festival with WWF asking to send out info in our mail-out.

Recommendation:

- ***A brief policy statement on SEP's approach to marketing and publicity through mail-outs and bi-lingual publicity be presented at the next meeting.***
- ***Severn Tidings headline to be presented in Welsh if possible.***

NB

JM

7 SEP Personnel Options

Jim had been offered a permanent job with the New Forest National Park Authority as an Interpretation Officer. He had enjoyed his time with SEP but this new position was timely with getting married and the job being near his home base. The MG offered congratulations and thanked him for his very significant contribution to the work of SEP. Jim would be with the SEP until 8th September. His time would be spent 3 days/week on COREPOINT project maritime heritage and 2 days/week for SEP.

Options for recruitment were discussed. The COREPOINT Project maritime heritage element would be covered by Jim and handed over to other staff. The additional skills which would need replacing in SEP were considered but a decision could not be made until there was further financial certainty. The priority would be to obtain the CCW grant and progress the possibility of a Service Level Agreement with the EA. The EA had just submitted a bid to WAG. It was desirable for SEP to retain at least 2 FTE positions which we currently have with NB 90%, JM 80% and LM 30% (SK - ASERA & WD - SECG are charged out for Secretariat services in addition to this). There was a risk that the quality of Severn Tidings and the website would drop without the

support of a 2nd officer with skills such as Jim's. However, it was seen that the second post would probably only be viable through project funding. The contribution of statutory agencies had previously been project focused, but NB reported there may be scope for this to change.

Recommendations:

- **Submit grant application to CCW asap**
- **Set up a meeting with the EA to discuss a SLA asap**
- **Seek an extension of funding through the COREPOINT project for ICZM related work e.g. training, ICZM monitoring (NB speak to G Lymbery).**
- **Reconsider our position in September with a financial statement.**

JM
RB/NB
NB/RB
NB

8 Marine Bill & ICZM Strategy Responses

Natasha had provided a response to the Marine Bill consultation on behalf of SEP which was available. It indicated that activities we had undertaken to encourage response from individual organisations, quoted from the Strategy for the Severn Estuary and commented on some (not all) of the questions posed. Natasha had also submitted a personal response based on her new role as Chair of the English Coastal Partnerships Working Group (CoastNET article tabled). The Defra ICZM Strategy was now out for consultation until 8th September 2006. WAG had received copies of all responses to the Marine Bill received by Defra and would provide a summary from a Welsh perspective.

Recommendation:

Members to respond to Defra's ICZM Strategy before 8th September 2006.

All

9 COREPOINT Project Progress Report

- **Research Strategy**

Rhoda reported that Iwan was making good progress following the consultation at the Forum. They were currently pulling together knowledge of other institutes/research initiatives on climate change before targeting the direction of the Severn Estuary Research Forum's work on climate change to be in a stronger position. A document had already been produced on the experience of other coastal partnerships in establishing research forums. Iwan/Rhoda would make this available to the group.

RB/IB

- **Maritime Heritage**

Jim was developing an education pack for schools around the estuary with local museums for key stage 3 history and geography.

JM

- **ICZM & General Project Progress**

Local evaluation of the EC ICZM indicators was being led by Cardiff University who would develop criteria to assess the principles at the local level and a draft report by January 2007. The Severn could be used as a case study, particularly if an extension of funding is realised.

RB, NB

- **Local Information System**

Dr Tim Stojanovic reported on the recently held workshop for coastal planners on SEA and coastal issues in Local Plans. Attendance had been positive but the workshop had not been completed. The MG considered how to go forwards and it was agreed that all the invitees would be sent an evaluation form, the workshop report and table asking for recommendations on sources of useful information. Their feedback would allow the MG to be in a better position to consider any future Local Information System using IT tools as a decision-making tool. AC commented that the 'jigsaw' exercise had been very valuable and further development of a visual map would be useful. It was noted that

there was funding available in Corepoint for GIS work.

Recommendation:

- **Evaluation questionnaire and table for information sources to be sent to all workshop invitees with report.** TS

10 COAST ATLANTIC Project Progress Report

- **Report from final meeting in Gijon, Spain**

A final draft report on the project had been presented at the final meeting and comments were now invited from the lead partner. Meeting notes were available.

All

- **Financial Position**

The lead partner had decided through advice from the Secretariat that it would not be possible to re-allocate budget between partners. They would, however, take a flexible approach to the spend of partners between their sub-headings and possibly across sub-headings within the whole partnership. The last date for invoices was 31st July and the final claim had to be with the lead partner by mid October 2006.

All

- **Natural Heritage & Cultural Heritage Guidance Notes Consultation**

The JAC distribution list would be used to offer consultation on the draft NH, CH and urban-rural interdependencies guidance notes. Jim would be overseeing this process over the next few weeks.

GEK,
JM

- **Panels & Leaflets Progress**

The panels will be installed within the next few weeks. Leaflets are completed

JM

11 LES ESTURIALES Progress Report

- **Bureau Meeting in Clevedon, 9th June 2006**

Minutes of the meeting were available and being circulated to members. It had been a good meeting following the participation of the Polish and Portuguese delegation in the Forum.

- **Conference & AGM Plans**

The date for the conference had changed to 25-26th September and SEP would be supporting the Polish in preparations.

LM &
NB

12 Joint Estuary Day & JAC

The next meeting was on 17th October 2006. We would need to avoid overlap between the ASERA & SECG meetings. The venue for the next JAC could be Cwmbran subject to identifying if Aust Service Station, Chepstow or the new harbour area in Lydney had any facilities.

NB &
GA

11 Any Other Business

Cardiff University had offered the Management Group a boat trip on the new 'The Guiding Light' catamaran. A date, possibly alongside the next meeting, would be sought.

NB

12 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

28th September 2006, venue tbc. Bristol City Council could be approached and/or it could coincide with a boat trip from Cardiff.

NB