

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP



Management Group

Monday 14th May 2007

10.00am, Environment Agency Offices, Severn View Services, Aust

Minutes

Chair: George Ashworth

ACTION

Attendees:

George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council
 Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University
 Natasha Barker, Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP) Officer
 Vaughan Grantham, Cardiff Council
 David Mitchell, Countryside Council for Wales
 Rhys Morgan, Severn Estuary Officer, Environment Agency
 Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council
 Peter Tyzack, South Gloucestershire Council (Acting JAC Chair).

1 Apologies for absence

Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean Council
 Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council
 John Marks, Vale of Glamorgan Council
 John Reeves, Associated British Ports

2 Minutes from previous Management Group Meeting (26th February 2007)

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3 Matters Arising

All

Action Number	ACTIONS from 26 th February 2007	Complete?
07/1	NB to write to other statutory agencies and potential sponsors for funding for the 2 nd Severn Estuary Forum 2007	Limited
07/2	NB to write to SCOSLA members (local authorities) proposing approach to Severn Estuary representation at the 'Tidal Power in the UK' SDC project stakeholder workshops and asking for views.	Yes: note PT was not available to attend but NB & GA did on behalf of SEP & RN for Glos.
07/3	NB to send RM copy of tidal energy options paper obtained from Canada	No
07/4	NB to ensure all SEP MG correspondence is sent to Sue Howard, Jessica Poole, Kirsty Dernie and David Mitchell.	Yes
07/5	RB to liaise with the Head of School over staff contracts.	Ongoing: on the agenda
07/6	NB to set up Cardiff University budget for SEP for 07-08 based on this budget position statement.	Yes
07/7	MG members to read AR&AP 07-08 and provide comments to NB by mid- March for preparing the Final Draft report to be circulated to the JAC at the end of March and presented at the JAC meeting on 24 th April	Yes (no comments received)

07/8	NB to present 'priority C' actions as a group of actions that can't be progressed without additional funding.	No: on the agenda
07/9	NB to send draft AR&AP 07-08 with 06-07 publications to funding partners with invoices for 07-08 at the beginning of March.	Yes
07/10	NB to discuss proposed election procedures with Cllr Peter Tyzack.	Yes: on the agenda
07/11	NB to amend proposed membership structure and present to JAC in April.	Yes: on the agenda
07/12	All MG members to identify any staff within their organisations available to support preparations for the Forum, ideally someone on a short-term secondment to SEP.	No
07/13	RM to invite Chris Mills to Chair the Forum	Yes: he would have liked to but is on annual leave
07/14	RB to provide timesheet template for MG members and circulate ICZM discussion document to all.	Yes: timesheets. No: ICZM
07/15	NB to invite SEP Esturiales members for views on Esturiales activity before the next Bureau meeting.	No but Secretariat Report for Bureau meeting to trigger discussion.

The COREPOINT ICZM discussion document is not yet ready for circulation. All those that had submitted timesheets were thanked; those who hadn't yet returned them were still welcome.

4 Financial Position & Employment

4.1 COASTATLANTIC project overspend

The COASTATLANTIC project overspend had been confirmed on 21st March at £28,990 subject to exchange rate fluctuations and the final reimbursement being paid by the Secretariat and lead partner. NB reminded the Management Group about the background to this in relation to the over-commitment on staff costs and measures that had been taken to reduce and try to avoid it. A meeting had taken place between GA, RB, NB and Cardiff University Finance team on 2nd April, to identify a way forward. Three possible solutions for meeting the overspend were proposed:

- SEP underspend/carry-over from 06-07;
- Cardiff University reimburse part of the overhead contribution from the project to the University onto SEP;
- Consider a 'rescue-package' asking the SEP partners that had most benefited from the COASTATLANTIC project to help.

Cardiff University would expect SEP to meet the balance of the COASTATLANTIC project account when it closed (technically August 2007, subject to final reimbursement). A letter from the SEP Management Group Chair (GA) may help to make a case for the account to be kept separate from SEP for longer.

RB is making a case to the Head of Earth Sciences (the School within which SEP is hosted) regarding the overhead charge. Total overheads charged to the project by the University were £25,000. Some has been top-sliced by the Finance division with £17,000 having gone to the school. Approximately £7000 would have gone to RB's personal research account but she is happy for it to be paid back into SEP. There may be other possibilities for COREPOINT match funding (e.g. SEP staff time). RB maybe able to make a case to the School for the other £10,000 of overheads to be paid back to SEP.

It was agreed that a rescue package maybe necessary, but that it carried a risk of undermining SEP's progress and should only be used as a last resort.

It was noted that South Gloucestershire had been a sub-contractor to Cardiff

University for the project and had been paid all their invoices.

DM suggested that if Cardiff University have to close the COASTATLANTIC account, perhaps another partner could host the deficit as a loan to SEP for a few years whilst it was being paid off.

The need for accountancy support was highlighted again. RB suggested that another School within the University may be worth approaching.

ACTION 07/16: NB to finalise end of year 2006-07 accounts

NB

ACTION 07/17: RB to negotiate overhead contribution back to SEP

RB

ACTION 07/18: GA to write to CU requesting the COASTATLANTIC budget remain open for as long as possible (subject to the outcome of actions 07/16 & 07/17).

(GA)

4.2 Budget 2007-08

The SEP 2007-08 budget had been agreed by Cardiff University for April 2007-March 2008. The grant award RCGE 464 was circulated for information. This included 1.5 FTE staff and the costs of SEPs core services (Severn Tidings, 2 Estuary Group Days, annual Forum etc). There was still a shortfall of approximately £10,000 for 2007-08 but it was hoped that this would be met through statutory agency contributions. The EA collaboration agreement for 06-07 had been signed with an income of £10,000 to last until the end of 2007, with discussions already initiated regarding a longer term collaboration agreement. CCW had provisionally allocated £10,000 for 07-08 which needed applying for. Natural England (NE) had been approached but were unable to make any commitments in advance of their national policies being set.

ACTION 07/19: NB to seek statutory agencies (e.g. CCW, EA, NE) funding contributions in 2007-08.

NB

5 SEP Staff

5.1 Existing contracts & capacity

Steve Knowles (SK) contract with SEP had been renewed from April 2007 for 12 months, for his 1 day/week Secretariat role for ASERA (20%FTE) plus an increase from 1hr/week to 3.5hrs/week (10%FTE) directly on SEP work. This was to provide support in the preparation of the Forum and generally towards SEP due to other staff losses.

Wendy Dodds (WD) had been providing the Secretariat for the Severn Estuary Coastal Group for the past 2 years but had limited additional capacity due to a priority to focus on her PhD. NB reported that there was likely to be more work for SECG coming up with the formation of a sub-group for delivering SMP2.

The extension of Natasha Barker's contract was discussed. Given the Management Group's desire to extend NB's contract as long as possible within the confines of the current SEP financial situation, it was agreed that her contract should be extended for a nine (rather than the previously agreed six) month period, from 22 May 2007. It should be noted that NB's contract now extends until the end of the SEP financial year. Given NB's special circumstances and the need for SEP to provide a duty of care with respect to NB's working conditions, it was agreed that NB would be given an expenses allowance (see Section 5.2). It was further agreed that NB would be given a short period of sabbatical leave (9 weeks) in addition to annual leave over the summer (July–Sept 07 inclusive). Measures to cover a sabbatical were under consideration and could include SK 1-3hrs/week (&/or discussions with Monmouthshire), Paul (previously a 2nd year volunteer) covering for 2 days/week and additional staff to fulfill the Corepoint extension project tasks (RB had a PhD student in mind).

RB

ACTION 07/20: SEP Officer contract to be renewed and support staff sought to cover a sabbatical for NB.

5.2 NB expenses

It was recommended that Cardiff University renew NB's contract with an expenses allowance of £50/week. The payment of expenses is not to set a precedent for CU or SEP but to recognise NB's special circumstances. Cardiff University will require a letter from the Management Group to justify this decision to Cardiff University.

ACTION 07/21: Letter from SEP Management Group to Cardiff University (fao Professor D Edwards, (copied to Dr RC Ballinger) regarding expenses in relation to NB's new contract. GA

5.3 Recruitment

The 2007-08 budget allocation included recruitment of a part time assistant. NB indicated that ideally this would be made up to a full time position, through statutory agency contributions, additional Secretariat services (e.g. SECG) and COREPOINT input. PT suggested that SEP could retain the Les Esturiales Secretariat as an additional income stream (see item 11).

ACTION 07/22: NB prepare for recruitment process to start over the summer. NB

6 Annual Report & Action Plan 2007-08

6.1 Final Approval including Operating Procedures

The AR&AP07-08 was agreed for print & to launch at the Forum with the following final changes:

- p.18 P2 Aggregates Working Group reporting to the Estuary Groups Day was not applicable to maintenance dredging, only aggregates dredging. It would be more appropriate to support EA in assessing beneficial uses of dredged material. The Bristol Channel deep sea container terminal dredging proposals were noted.
- p.4 P4 RM noted that the Bristol Channel Marine Safety Committee were likely to already have this kind of information (e.g. boat users safety information).

The Operating Procedures were adopted as part of the AR&AP07-08.

ACTION 07/23: Finalise and print AR&AP07-08 for circulation at the Forum NB

6.2 Severn Tidings – summer/winter 2007-08

Due to staff availability over the summer the timing of the next issue was discussed. It was agreed that a summer issue could contain a special COREPOINT project feature and we should go ahead with a summer issue.

ACTION 07/24: Severn Tidings issue 10 Summer 2007 to contain special COREPOINT feature. NB & RB

6.3 Water Related Sport & Recreation Strategy

The EA's national strategy workshops were currently taking place. SEP had been offered as a potential mechanism for taking forward recommendations for the Severn Estuary. This could help deliver the action to 'seek support for a recreational boat users working group' identified in this year's AR&AP.

6.4 State of the Estuary

Confirmation that this action should be within the AR&AP07-08 was sought by NB. It was agreed that funding should be sought to start this year, for example through a Scoping/Feasibility Report and that there could be overlap with a feasibility study that maybe recommended by SDC for tidal power options. Would the SoE process look at the baseline/trends or both?

ACTION 07/25: Include action on AR&AP07-08 to seek support for State of the

Estuary preparation.

NB

7 Membership Structure

The final draft proposed membership structure had been highlighted at the JAC in April. Comments had been received from Natural England raising concern about any future voting rights within SEP. DM reported that CCW would have significant concerns about SEP having views on policy issues (which could interfere with their statutory remit). It would lead to the statutory conservation agencies not being able to associate with the SEP (in that context). The MG discussed the difference between voting on internal/process matters (e.g. signing off the Business Plan) and policy/issue matters. It was envisaged that the former would be the main purpose of any voting. At the moment the JAC are asked to approve/adopt SEP outputs but attendance is ad-hoc. SEP need a core of people to vote. AONBs have an advisory role on consultations & it was noted that this included CCW who chose not to have a vote. Due to concerns raised by NE and CCW it would therefore be necessary for SEP to clarify voting procedures and ensure all partners were comfortable before any voting activity was undertaken. The procedures would need to state who can vote (i.e. just partners) and what on. SEP's ability to facilitate open debate and remain neutral whilst presenting views on policy issues would need further exploration.

ACTION 07/26: Voting procedures to be drawn up for agreement by all partners.

NB

Some minor modifications to the membership scheme were suggested and agreed, including: Forum places free rather than discounted (to reduce administration); access to the SEP contacts database on request to all types of members (on the condition that the source is acknowledged); additional service through use of SEP interpretation images – free to all types of members. It was agreed to open the membership scheme now, announce it at the Forum and produce a leaflet to promote it more widely in the autumn/winter. Membership would be on an annual basis for the financial year beginning on 1st April each year (with no discount for joining mid-term). This would reduce administrative burden with only annual renewals issued by SEP.

ACTION 07/27: Open the membership scheme by announcing at the Forum.

All

ACTION 07/28: Prepare publicity flyer for membership scheme (winter 2007-08)

NB

8 JAC Chair & Vice-Chair Election**8.1 Procedure**

JAC members had been invited to nominate a Chair & Vice-Chair by the end of September. One nomination for each position had so far been received, which had raised the question of whether the JAC Chair needed to be an elected member/Cllr. It was decided in the light of the new membership scheme opening up to other (non-public sector) partners that it was not necessary for the JAC Chair to be a local politician. It was noted that other Partnerships are often chaired by industry/academics. It was not seen necessary for the vice-chair to automatically become the Chair. Partners would be invited to vote during October on the nominations received via email. It was agreed that the post would be for 2 years with a possible overlap with a chair-elect for the 3rd year. It was noted that other Partnerships are often chaired by industry/academics.

ACTION 07/29: Voting for JAC Chair & Vice-Chair to be conducted via email during October 2007.

NB

8.2 Outcome of Estuary Group Chairs Meeting

A short but positive meeting following the JAC had given support to the Estuary Groups Day becoming a platform for other estuary-wide groups and revising the MoU to include them. Progress had already been made in this direction with two new estuary-wide groups providing updates at the last JAC.

8.3 Date of next JAC meeting and Estuary Groups Day

The date of the next meeting was agreed for Thursday 8th November 2007 at Slimbridge (or Chepstow again, which seemed to work well).

ACTION 07/30: JAC, ASERA & SECG representatives to be notified about the date of the next Estuary Groups Day.

NB

9 2nd Severn Estuary Forum

9.1 Programme for conference, evening reception & chairmanship

The draft full programme was circulated for information and advice sought on chairs and a compere/master of ceremonies. Suggestions included asking Trevor Fry (BBC Radio Bristol), Chris Wooldridge (CU), G Ball/Roy Noble/Jamie Owen (Radio Wales presentors), Roger Wade (EA), Simon Haslett (Bath Spa Uni) and the MPs/AMs and MEPs who took an interest in the Forum last year.

9.2 Logistics Support

NB asked MG members to consider if they were able to offer support to run the conference and evening reception.

10 COREPOINT Progress Report

10.1 Climate Change Research Advisory Group

The second workshop at the Forum would feed into the plenary planning and climate change session. A synthesis of key recommendations to feed into the discussion would be provided in the session between 11-1230. This would be followed by a workshop in September/October funded by the Corepoint extension project to formally establish the group.

10.2 Maritime Heritage Education Pack

This was in draft form ready for printing and would be launched at the Forum and available on the internet thereafter. It was noted that CCW maybe able to grant-aid translation into Welsh.

10.3 Local Information System – coastal planners workshop

A 2nd workshop for local planners would take place on 22nd May in Bristol including an update on coastal issues and re-visiting information of value to the SEA process.

10.4 ICZM Discussion Document

RB was leading on this to prepare a draft for the Autumn. SEP had provided valuable experience through a case study to help assess adherence to the EC ICZM principles. The SEP MG would be invited to look at the final draft of the document.

10.5 ICZM Training School

A second opportunity to attend the COREPOINT training school was invited to be held in Wales 9-10 October.

10.6 COREPOINT Extension project

SEP would be working with Sefton on communication strategies for ICZM. The Severn would be reviewed for best practice in partnership working.

11 Esturiales Secretariat Update

PT had just returned from the Bureau meeting in Lisbon, which had been enthusiastically led by the Portuguese. SEP were thanked for bringing the Les Esturiales initiative 'off the bottom' following the French presidency. The constraints of SEP were recognised but the Portuguese felt that the budget was there to be utilised. Options for the Secretariat for 2008-2009 were discussed and the Polish were to be approached. There was an option of SEP continuing if it fitted in with SEP recruitment plans. Otherwise, the Portuguese would take the Secretariat next. It had been recommended that we produce an online newsletter and start discussion topic groups within the website. The annual conference this year could be hosted by SEP in Autumn 2007 as part of the Estuary Groups Day with the annual meeting on the following Friday 9th November.

ACTION 07/31: An indication of SEP's willingness to continue hosting the Les Esturiales secretariat to be given to partners before the summer.

NB & PT

ACTION 07/32: A budget statement was required by the end of June under Portuguese law.

NB

12 Consultation Responses

12.1 Defra Marine Bill White Paper

The JAC had recommended NB circulate a list of points for consideration in individual organisation responses. A provisional list of points was provided at the meeting and agreed, with some additional points. A full response would be drafted by NB for submission to Defra and circulated for approval to the MG members.

ACTION 07/33: Points for consideration in Marine Bill White Paper response to be circulated to JAC email group. Full draft response to be circulated to MG members for approval before submission to Defra (by 8th June).

NB

12.2 EC Maritime Green Paper

There was greater reference to ICZM within this consultation. A seminar for the SW response had been attended by NB and RN. A response could be submitted on the same basis as above.

12.3 EA Water & Sport Related Recreation Strategy

A recent workshop for SW had led to discussions with the project manager Roger Goulding about the potential for SEP to help deliver recommendations from this consultation. There were potentially strong links between this initiative and the AR&AP07-08 action to seek support to establish a recreational boat users working group. The draft Strategy would be out for consultation in the summer.

13 Meetings & Conferences

Attended by NB:

- Defra Marine Bill White Paper launch 15/3/07
- SDC Tidal Power project stakeholder workshop 29/3/07
- *Professor John King, Cardiff University* 12/4/07
- Defra/CoastNet Coastal Partnerships Forum 19/4/07
- SW Finding Sanctuary MPA network 25/4/07
- SW Maritime Green Paper 26/4/07
- *Dr Mervyn Bramley OBE, UWE & RSA*, 3/5/07
- EA Water & Sport Recreation Strategy, 8/5/07
- *PR officers for British Energy/Hinkley Point B*, 10/5/07

Coming up:

- ICE Severn Barrage conference, 17/5/07
- Solent Forum MSP workshop, 18/5/07
- EC Atlantic Environment & ICZM, 23/5/07?

14 Any Other Business

None

15 Date & Venue of Next Meeting

10.00am, Thursday 21st June 2007 at EA offices, Severn View Services (tbc).

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action Number	ACTIONS from 14.05.07	Complete?
07/16	NB to finalise end of year 2006-07 accounts	Progress to report
07/17	RB to negotiate overhead contribution back to SEP	Progress to report
07/18	GA to write to CU requesting the COASTATLANTIC budget remain open for as long as possible (subject to the outcome of actions 07/16 & 07/17).	Pending
07/19	NB to seek statutory agencies (e.g. CCW, EA, NE) funding contributions in 2007-08.	Progress to report
07/20	SEP Officer contract to be renewed and support staff sought to cover a sabbatical for NB.	Yes
07/21	Letter from SEP Management Group to Cardiff University (fao Professor D Edwards,(copied to Dr RC Ballinger) regarding expenses in relation to NB's new contract.	Pending
07/22	NB prepare for recruitment process to start over the summer.	Pending
07/23	Finalise and print AR&AP07-08 for circulation at the Forum.	Yes
07/24	Severn Tidings issue 10 Summer 2007 to contain special COREPOINT feature.	Pending
07/25	Include action on AR&AP07-08 to seek support for State of the Estuary preparation.	Yes
07/26	Voting procedures to be drawn up for agreement by all partners.	Progress to report
07/27	Open the membership scheme by announcing at the Forum.	Yes
07/28	Prepare publicity flyer for membership scheme (winter 2007-08).	Pending
07/29	Voting for JAC Chair & Vice-Chair to be conducted via email during October 2007.	Pending
07/30	JAC, ASERA & SECG representatives to be notified about the date of the next Estuary Groups Day.	Pending
07/31	An indication of SEP's willingness to continue hosting the Les Esturiales secretariat to be given to partners before the summer.	Yes
07/32	A budget statement was required by the end of June under Portuguese law.	Yes – in progress
07/33	Points for consideration in Marine Bill White Paper response to be circulated to JAC email group. Full draft response to be circulated to MG members for approval before submission to Defra (by 8 th June).	Yes