

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP



Management Group Meeting

Thursday 17th January, 10.00am
Forest of Dean Council Offices

Minutes

Chair: George Ashworth

Attendees:

George Ashworth, Monmouthshire County Council.
Natasha Barker, Severn Estuary Partnership
Susie Gardner, Severn Estuary Partnership
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University
Vaughan Grantham, Cardiff Council
Rhys Morgan, Environment Agency
Alistair Chapman, Forest of Dean Council
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council

1 Apologies for absence

Jane Thompson, South Gloucestershire Council

2 Minutes from previous Management Group Meeting (11th October 2007)

The Minutes were agreed to be a true record.

3 Matters Arising

Outstanding actions from 21.06.07:

- 07/36: NB did not formally submit a response to the EA's Working Together Consultation but together with Rhys Morgan, met with Mark Scott (EA Midlands) and Damian Crealy (EA Wales) to highlight the role of SEP in relation to RBD planning.
- 07/39: RB – "3rd Mission" funding maybe available to Cardiff University for debate on tidal energy options. There is no progress yet on this, however there is a lot of interest on the subject.
- 07/43: NB – SEP contacts database is not yet finished but well progressed.

Progress with actions from the last meeting are detailed in the table below.

ACTION No.	ACTIONS from 11.10.07	Complete?
07/52	Esturiales agenda to include presentation on NB's fellowship.	Yes
07/53	NB & RB to seek clarification from CU regarding recruitment from RCGE464 budget.	In progress
07/54	NB to write to Natural England regarding support for SEP services.	No, review outcomes Autumn 08
07/55	NB confirm to ASERA SEP's willingness to continue with the ASERA Secretariat role.	Yes – continuing
07/56	NB to clarify current and future SECG Secretariat requirements with Dave Harris.	Yes – continuing
07/57	NB to re-draft voting procedures and make the membership pack available as soon as possible in order to open the scheme.	In progress
07/58	NB to send draft agenda to SEP MG before distribution to all members of the JAC next week.	Yes
07/59	NB to ask PT if he is happy for his position as Chair of the JAC be formalised at the next meeting on 8 th November 2007.	Yes
07/60	NB to send draft agenda for 8 th & 9 th November to Esturiales members and obtain confirmation of their attendance before booking translators.	Yes
07/61	NB to notify all members of the date for next years Forum.	No – on agenda
07/62	NB forward emails from Karla Hill (DBERR) and the transcript of discussions in the WAG this week to all MG members.	Yes
07/63	GA & NB draft a recommendation for the next JAC to clarify SEPs position and invite discussion on SEP's future role in relation to this significant issue.	Yes
07/64	SEP write to the Dept for DBERR and WAG.	No – on agenda
07/65	RM to report to JAC on recent consultations.	Yes
07/66	NB liaise with RM to clarify EA contacts in the revised SEP database before Severn Tidings is distributed.	In progress

4 Reflections on JAC (8th November 2007)

The last JAC had more positive interaction and was a real networking event for stakeholders.

The MG discussed the fact that CCW and NE were not comfortable with the idea that membership of SEP can lead to a JAC seat. It was recommended that the JAC role be clarified to only vote on administrative and procedural matters relating to the management of SEP services and projects; not on policy issues.

ACTION 08/01: NB to redraft the operational procedures to clarify the role of the JAC and run it past CCW and NE.

Recommendations on Tidal Power (Severn Barrage) agreed by the JAC.

ACTION 08/02: NB to send the 'SEP recommendations on tidal power' to DBERR.

5 Financial Position and SEP staff

NB outlined the future SEP service requirements:

- ASERA want to increase staff time for up to 2 days/wk for 2 years. However this is subject to Cardiff University agreement for which a letter of agreement is needed from Monmouthshire, as we don't hold ASERA's money.
- SECG time is about to be increase significantly (double) from January 2008 to service the SMP2 sub-group which will meet approx 6 times in 2008.
- SEP will also carry on the secretariat for Les Esturiales 2008.
- Corepoint is awarded and there is 1.5 days/wk person from May or June 2008.

The Deltanet EU project bid has been submitted. Caution was expressed about SEP participating in European projects due to the financial problems caused by Coastatlantic. After extensive discussions over the Christmas period, South Gloucestershire pulled out of offering match funding for Deltanet. The Deltanet lead partner was very keen for Les Esturiales to be involved in Delatnet so approx £13,000 match funding from the Les Esturiales reserves has been allocated towards Deltanet with the agreement of Cllr Peter Tyzack (President of the network). Cardiff University have agreed to this, however RB is not allowed to get involved in day-to-day activity of Deltanet.

ACTION 08/03: NB to circulate more information on Del tanet when the project is awarded (May 08).

NB indicated that provision needs to be made in the SEP budget to pay for a financial accountant/book-keeper to confirm the SEP & Esturiales budget position for next financial year.

ACTION 08/04: NB to appoint financial accountancy/administrative support to clarify SEP & Esturiales budget position.

Coastatlantic – Cardiff University has still not received the final payment and is still hoping that when they receive it they can claim a bit more back. However the last payment has been held back until some UK wide auditing issues are sorted out. There will be no resolution until at least the Autumn, possibly 2009.

RB indicated that NB's contract needed to be renewed and put together a budget for next financial year. AC asked if another two-year contract could be agreed for NB. GA hoped that in time SEP may get onto a permanent secretariat contract like Forest of Dean have for the Wye Valley AONB service. VG indicated that Cardiff Council are having budget cuts all the time and with a new administration in May it may be a good idea to pay next years subscriptions out of this years, as next year is looking tight.

6 Membership Scheme

VG- We must know how much money we can charge partners. We need to have continuity between how much partners pay, can we justify quoting different prices to different Local Authorities?

RM- Need more up to date information if that is what we are promising to our members.

For these (and other) reasons the fee to partners was not advertised on the leaflet and potential partners would 'apply to SEP Management Group'.

We should have discounted forum places not free places to organisations, clubs and individuals. Partners should have one free place and two discounted places.

Some other amendments were made to the visual layout of the Flyer.

NB- Mentioned the need for something set in place to enable SEP to charge for services and consultation. However there should be a discount for partners.

ACTION 08/05: Terms & Conditions for the use of SEP services to be drafted.

SEP Management Group members should be elected/formalised at the JAC (like ASERA do at the AGM) to ensure balance between English & Welsh Local Authorities and sectors.

ACTION 08/06: Formalise SEP Management Group membership at the JAC in May 2008.

RM recommended that the SEP website needs strengthening e.g. photo library, EA data on bathing water quality results.

ACTION 08/07: SEP website photo library to be strengthened.

ACTION 08/08: EA to supply monitoring information for SEP website.

7 Severn Estuary Forum 2008

RB recommended that the Forum move from the proposed date of July to September 2008. The venue could be Penarth, Clevedon, Weston or Avonmouth to tie in with a Balmoral sailing. NB thinks this should be a two-day event rather than a one-day event as the Les Esturiales annual conference was due to be held in UK this year and could run alongside the Severn Estuary Forum.

8 Tidal Power Options – Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA)

Jon Osmond from the IWA presented a proposal for a study alongside the Governments feasibility study to look at the Severn Estuary and what it contributes to the economic impact of the area (e.g. before and after the impacts of a barrage). Jon was keen to find funding for his project; he feels that CCW and EA have funded studies like this in the past.

The Management Group felt that Government have not yet scoped for the feasibility study so it may be a little early to do commit to this. Government is doing an SEA of the impact of the barrage, which will look at renewable options. It could be unwise to do this as it may risk duplication with the feasibility report. JO suggested that whoever asks the questions may get a different answer and

whether the Governments approach was going to be enough? RB indicated that it would be useful to understand the economic value of the environment of the Severn, an action that is identified to progress in the current SEP Annual Report & Action Plan. CCW said they would fund a study like this last financial year. JO clarified that IWA would be looking at the estuary as a whole not just Wales. NB asked if SEP pitched themselves as leaders or waiting for what the Government does. AC felt we should wait to see if the Government will represent a true representative sample. GA indicated that the study will have millions invested in it and we don't have the funding for such studies. Maybe we should wait until the Government does their research and see if they cover the criteria proposed by IWA. The Feasibility study will be 2 years until January 2010, some may argue that it does coincide with a convenient time politically, there will be new information published next week from the Government about the feasibility study. JO suggested that we should wait to discuss this in light of ongoing developments. VG summarised that there could be value in independent research but where is the funding going to come from? We should revisit this discussion at the next MG meeting when there should be more information available from BERR on the content of the Governments feasibility study.

9 Annual Report and Action Plan

NB outlined progress on some actions in the current years report:

- Water recreation user group – NB was in discussion with the RYA and attending local user group meetings to assess the need and potential role for such a group. RM indicated that there was a Bristol Channel Marine Safety Group of largely commercial boat users chaired by the MCA that meets twice/year.
- SG had produced a report on her research into the existing promotion of the Severn Estuary and options for promoting the Severn Wonders brand. SEP MG members were given a copy of the report and asked for feedback.

ACTION 08/09: MG members to provide feedback on the tourism report to SG.

10 Consultations, Meetings and Conferences

RB- European Coastal Sciences Association (ECSA) Conference is being organised by the engineering department of Cardiff University.

RM- The Estuary from Foreland Point is now administered by the Marine Fisheries Agency with inshore sea fisheries duties moved to them.

RPS Chepstow has been contracted by WAG to do a marine renewable strategic framework for Wales.

RM- Bedwyn Sands aggregate extraction application – Monmouthshire County Council are the minerals planning authority but EA are proposing a monitoring programme as part of the consent.

RB- Corepoint update to be provided by email. There had been some very positive steps with the Climate Change Research Advisory Group. RB would be attending the UKCIP workshop in February. The LIS report would soon be available.

ACTION 08/10: RB to provide feedback from UKCIP workshop and make LIS report available to SEP Management Group to agree next steps.

11 Any Other Business

VG mentioned that there is a mistake on the Habitats and Species Guidance Notes which should be changed if there was a print re-run or the .pdf could be updated.

ACTION 08/11: Amend Habitats & Species Guidance Note

12 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

19th March 10.00am 2008

The meeting was closed at 1315.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

ACTION No.	ACTIONS from 17.01.08	Complete?
08/01	NB to redraft the operational procedures to clarify the role of the JAC and run it past CCW and NE.	
08/02	NB to send the 'SEP recommendations on tidal power' to DBERR.	
08/03	NB to circulate more information on Deltanet when the project is awarded (May 08).	
08/04	NB to appoint financial accountancy/administrative support to clarify SEP & Esturiales budget position.	
08/05	Terms & Conditions for the use of SEP services to be drafted.	
08/06	Formalise SEP Management Group membership at the JAC in May 2008.	
08/07	SEP website photo library to be strengthened.	
08/08	EA to supply monitoring information for SEP website.	
08/09	MG members to provide feedback on the tourism report to SG.	
08/10	RB to provide feedback from UKCIP workshop and make LIS report available to SEP Management Group to agree next steps.	
08/11	Amend Habitats & Species Guidance Note	