

ANGLIAN COASTAL AUTHORITIES GROUP – SUB-CELL 3C

FIRST REVIEW OF SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN LOWESTOFT NESS TO FELIXSTOWE LANDGUARD POINT

MINUTES OF ELECTED MEMBERS FORUM MEETING No. 1

Thursday 22 June 2006 at Ufford Park Hotel, Ufford, near Woodbridge, Suffolk.

Present:

Cllr Andy Smith	(AS)	Suffolk Coastal DC	(SCDC)
Cllr Rae Leighton	(RL)	Suffolk Coastal DC	
Cllr Christine Block	(CB)	Suffolk Coastal DC	
Cllr Ken Sale	(KS)	Waveney DC	(WDC)
Cllr John Goldsmith	(JG)	Anglian East Regional Flood Defence Committee	(EA)
John Sharpe	(JSh)	Anglian East Regional Flood Defence Committee	
Jeremy Schofield	(JSc)	Strategic Director, Suffolk Coastal DC	
Julian Walker	(JW)	Principal Engineer, Waveney DC	
Cheryl Callaby	(CC)	Strategic & Development Planning Officer, EA	
John Jackson	(JJ)	Conservation Officer, English Nature	
Helen Raine	(HL)	Conservation Officer, English Nature	
Bob Chamberlain	(BC)	Principal Planner, Suffolk Coastal DC	
Terry Oakes	(TO)	Terry Oakes Associates Limited	(TOAL)
Keith Tyrrell	(KT)	Terry Oakes Associates Limited	

Please note: These minutes should be read in conjunction with the copies of the presentation slides previously circulated.

1 Introductions

JSc opened the meeting and welcomed the representatives to this, the first meeting of the Elected Members Forum for the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) review. He then invited everyone to introduce themselves.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Tony Coe (EA), Cllr Bruce Proven (WDC), Cllr Sue Allen (WDC), Cllr John Goodwin (SCC)

3 Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

JSc invited nominations for these posts from the meeting.

CB nominated AS as Chairman. This was seconded by RL. There being no other nominations Cllr Andy Smith was duly elected as Chairman of the Forum.

KS nominated BP as Vice-Chairperson. This was seconded by JG. There being no other nominations Cllr Bruce Proven was duly elected as Vice-Chairperson of the Forum.

ANGLIAN COASTAL AUTHORITIES GROUP – SUB-CELL 3C

FIRST REVIEW OF SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN LOWESTOFT NESS TO FELIXSTOWE LANDGUARD POINT

Cllr Smith assumed the Chair for the rest of the meeting

4 Declarations of Interest

JSh - Employee of RSPB

KS – Southwold Harbour Users Association

JG – Attends SCAR (Suffolk Coast Against Retreat) meetings,
Member of LGA Coastal Special Interest Group.

AS – Member of Felixstowe TC and beach hut owner.

CB – Attends SCAR meetings

5 Introduction to Anglian Coastal Authorities Group

(Please see presentational slides)

JW gave a short presentation about ACAG and the role it plays in managing the coast within the Anglian region between the Wash and the Thames estuary. It is one of 17 coastal groups covering the entire coastline of England and Wales. The Chairs of the coastal groups meet approximately 3 times a year to discuss matters of national significance and twice-yearly they meet with senior officers from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to discuss national policy. The membership of ACAG is drawn from the Operating Authorities (maritime local authorities and the Environment Agency) Defra, English Nature, Port Authorities, and British Energy. A principal objective of the group is to ensure that Shoreline Management Plans are completed and that these are incorporated into formal development plans for the region.

During a brief discussion it was confirmed that the interests of the Port of Felixstowe were covered through the membership of Harwich Haven Authority.

6 Shoreline Management Plan Background, Policy and Process and Stakeholder Engagement.

(Please see presentational slides)

TO provided an outline of the main aspects of the Shoreline Management Plan. It is a high-level policy document looking at the management of the plan coastline over a 100-year period. It needs to accommodate the current legislative framework and, whilst it is non-statutory it will need to form supportive evidence for planning issues.

Because the sub-cell plan to the north has been completed (it was one

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of the 4 pilot plans used by Defra to formulate their guidance document) its boundary with the 3C Sub-cell plan area is fixed as Lowestoft Ness. There is an issue about how far the SMP boundaries should extend up the Suffolk tidal estuaries.

TO clarified, when explaining the organisational and consultative structures for management of the plan production, that the main role of the EMF was to oversee and approve the draft version of the plan which would be used for wider public consultation.

At this point several member representatives asked to be provided with a short, written statement explaining the roles and responsibilities of the EMF members so they could seek a suitable mandate from their colleagues within their parent organisations. Further discussion on the point was deferred to item 7.

It was also confirmed that the anticipated costs of the consultancy services to be commissioned were below the European procurement threshold.

7 Outline Constitution and Terms of Reference

(Please see presentational slides)

At the end of KT's presentation it was pointed out that some members of the Regional Flood Defence Committee are appointed as opposed to being elected. As such the current name of the forum seemed inappropriate. TOAL were asked to consider a new, more appropriate name for the Forum.

TOAL

Members did not support allowing for substitutes as they considered this would disturb the continuity of membership which was seen as essential to the efficient production of the plan.

It was decided that a quorum of 6 members should be established ensuring that this included at least one representative from the Operating Authorities of WDC, SCDC and EA.

It was reiterated that the primary task of the EMF, and that which members should seek a mandate for, was to agree the form and content of the draft SMP which would go out for public consultation. A number of members stressed that they would be unable to obtain a mandate at this stage for them to agree the final policies to be included in the plan.

8 Presentations on issues facing the future management of the coastline.

ANGLIAN COASTAL AUTHORITIES GROUP – SUB-CELL 3C

FIRST REVIEW OF SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN LOWESTOFT NESS TO FELIXSTOWE LANDGUARD POINT

(Please see presentational slides)

Flood Risk Management Issues: CC set out the lengths of the plan coastline which were maintained by the EA and highlighted the challenges for the future, particularly climate change and sea level rise. We need to plan for a net rise in sea level of 6mm/year.

Erosion Risk Management Issues: - JW made a presentation from the local authorities' point of view in their role as Coast Protection Authorities.

In the discussion which followed this presentation JS pointed out that it should be recognised that other funding of capital works was possible beyond the normal grant aid provided by Defra. This would mean that the Defra criterion for economic “soundness” would need to be examined carefully when considering policy options. The use of locally generated funds may lead to the production of appropriate locally generated objectives for the plan.

JW stressed that the SMP must be realistic to be deliverable.

Environmental Issues - JJ explained that there was a high importance of the natural environment throughout the plan area with many areas having a national or international status. It was important to recognise that the importance of these habitats resulted from the continuance of natural processes. As such, it was necessary to recognise the long-term changes which were taking place at the coast. These would then dictate to a strong degree the sustainability of the optimum policies for the plan area. The coastal “squeeze” which was affecting the Suffolk coast was leading to a reduction in coastal habitats such as the coastal lagoons. It may be necessary to consider where compensatory habitats may be necessary to meet out obligations under European legislation. There are a number of examples where there are conflicting needs - for example the sustainability of disturbing and damaging shingle ridges to protect freshwater habitats in the hinterland is in question, and a more appropriate approach may be to allow the hinterland to gradually develop into intertidal habitat, and to replace the freshwater habitat at a more suitable location inland.

Land Use Planning Issues - BC pointed out that the Regional Plan makes a clear reference to the SMP. The Community Strategy also makes strong reference to social issues at the coast which may well be affected by the SMP policies. Members should bear in mind that the Local Development Framework will be subject to the scrutiny of an Inspector. It will be important to demonstrate that any reference to the SMP shows it to be a robust document based on a rational

ANGLIAN COASTAL AUTHORITIES GROUP – SUB-CELL 3C

FIRST REVIEW OF SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN LOWESTOFT NESS TO FELIXSTOWE LANDGUARD POINT

appraisal of the technical, environmental, and economic issues involved.

9 What next?

TO set out the business which will need to be covered at the next meeting :

- Inspector's Report on Planning for the Region
- Stakeholder Engagement Strategy
- The identification and prioritisation of issues to be considered within the SMP.

10 Date/time of next meeting

11 October 2006 at 15:00. Venue - to be arranged.