

Essex Coastal Forum – Meeting Minutes

Date:	2 nd March 2015	
Time:	14:00 – 16:00	
Venue:	Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford CM1 1QH	
Chairman:	Cllr Mick Page (deputising for Cllr Hirst) ECC	
Attendees:	Mark Johnson (MJ) John Lindsay(JL) Mark Nowers (MN) Lucy Shepherd (LS) Nicola China (NC) Mike Badger (MB) Cllr Nick Turner (NT) Cllr John Aldridge (JA) Cllr Ray Howard (RH) Cllr Keith Hudson (KH) Shaun Scrutton (SS) Andrew St Joseph (ASJ) Richard Hatter (RHa) Deborah Fox (DF) Ben Brown (BB) Phil Sturges (PS) Nicky Spurr (NS)	Environment Agency (EA) Environment Agency (EA) RSPB ECC Flood Partnerships Manager ECC Flood Management Team Tendring District Council (TDC) Tendring District Council Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (ECC Rep) Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (ECC Rep)/Castle Point Borough Council Rochford DC Rochford DC Essex Coastal Organisation (ECO) Thurrock Council (TC) Essex County Council Maldon District Council Natural England Essex County Council
In attendance:	Gavin Rowsell (GR)	Essex Coastal Organisation (ECO)
Apologies:	Cllr Roger Hirst Jonathan Bustard Stacey Clarke	Essex County Council Natural England Marine Management Organisation

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

2. Essex Coastal Forum Terms of Reference

a. Election of Chairman & Vice Chairman

Cllr Page explained that Cllr Hirst was unable to attend and sent his apologies and had asked him to be the Chairman for the meeting. Cllr Hudson proposed that Cllr Page act as Chairman for the meeting and this was seconded by Cllr Turner, with all in agreement.

An election followed for the positions of Chairman and a new position of Vice Chairman. Cllr Hirst had advised that he would be prepared to stand again as Chairman and any others wishing to be considered were asked to make themselves known. There were no other

nominees and Cllr Hirst was duly elected as Chairman with no opposition. Cllr Page advised that he was prepared to stand as Vice Chairman and was elected without opposition.

Action : NS to amend the Terms of Reference to reflect the creation of a position of Vice Chairman.

b. Representation

Jo Carrington, the Coastal Catchment Manager for Anglian Water was in attendance as an observer. The group discussed the Chairman's recommendation that Anglian Water should be asked to become a formal Member of the Essex Coastal Forum in view of their substantive assets along the coast and their new partnership working approach to coastal and flood defence schemes. All were in agreement and Anglian Water became formal Members of the Forum.

Action : NS to amend the Terms of Reference with regards to Forum Membership.

c. Frequency of Meetings

MP explained that many coastal issues, including flooding, had a very high profile at the moment felt there was much to cover in the 2 Essex Coastal Forum meetings each year. JA also felt that a minimum of 3 meetings pa were required to ensure that all aspects could be adequately covered in the meetings, especially given the long length of the Essex coast. JA proposed the frequency of meetings was increased to 3pa, this was seconded by RH. JA commented that additional meetings could still be called if required.

Action : NS to amend the Terms of Reference with regards to meeting frequency.

DF commented that clarification of role and distinction between this and the Essex Flood Board would be helpful.

3. Minutes of last meeting and Matters Arising

Agenda item 1 : Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) - one ECF member felt that there was no clear strategy re sea defences for the coast. MJ explained that the SMP is a high level strategic approach for the management of coastal flood defences. It was explained that the Elected Members Forum had provided the democratic input into the SMP which had now transferred to this group (ECF). It was noted that the ECF oversees the SMP implementation.

ASJ commented that many people visit the coast, which has the capacity to welcome many more, but it is important that local people are sufficiently engaged to be able to make this happen.

Agenda item 2a : Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

ASJ questioned how the MCZ could have been established when data is being withheld. PS explained that it was not in Natural England's gift to be able to share this data which was owned by the Essex Wildlife Trust. ASJ commented that it was surprising that the MCZ could be established with oysters being the key feature without transparency over the data.

It was agreed that this should form an agenda item at the next meeting.

Action : NS to ensure MCZ item on agenda of next meeting

4. Presentations / Update

a. Dengie Gateway Project – Ben Brown (Maldon District Council)

Ben Brown provided some personal background and credited Peter Garrett, Cllrs Miriam Lewis and Penny Channer and the ECC funding team who had all been key in developing this project.

A study had estimated that approx. 1000 jobs would be lost locally due to the decommissioning of Bradwell Nuclear Power Station, (due to end in early 2016) when the site would move to 'Care and Maintenance' mode, when no staff would be present on site.

Given this background, steps were being made to seek to secure funding through the Dengie Gateway Project. High level targets included safeguarding 37.5 jobs, attracting 50 000 visitors and generation of £1.8m tourism spend, including through lengthening visitor stay. BB highlighted that a coastal trail already exists around the coast of Maldon District, and that the project aimed to improve the condition of this, create additional walks (including from railway station) and also to link to the Wallasea Wildcoast project. The size of the Burnham pontoon would be increased to accommodate greater visitor numbers. BB provided information about MDC's successful 'Saltmarsh 75' challenge event for walkers / runners and the intention to further expand this.

Funding : £330 000 of investment, of which £292 000 was to come from the Coastal Communities Fund. Delivery would be through working in partnership with other local businesses including the existing and well used ferry link to Wallasea, accommodation and refreshment providers.

RH commended BB on an excellent presentation. ASJ expressed gratitude to 2 members of the Essex Coast Organisation who permitted access across their fields. He also thought the question of how the anticipated increase in usage of the coastal paths would impact on the seawall should be addressed.

BB said he was very keen to link up with Andrew St Joseph and other landowners, especially to seek to address issues around North Fambridge.

b. Implementing ECC ambitions for a high quality and sustainable environment – Deborah Fox (Essex County Council)

DF explained that she was the Head of Commissioning for ECC's Environment Commissioning Strategy 'People in Essex Experience a High Quality and Sustainable Environment'

ECC had changed its focus to the delivery of specific outcomes as opposed to how services are delivered. DF noted that the South East Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan highlights the diversity of coastal places to both live and work.

DF highlighted that since the last Essex Coastal Forum meeting she attended in July, the draft strategy had been circulated and account taken of the responses to the consultation. This had resulted in a change to ECC's ambition to take greater account of the importance of the coast and the opportunities offered by tourism. She recognised that collaboration between local authorities, communities, landowners and businesses will be key to ensuring delivery of successful outcomes.

DF acknowledged the importance of the work that MDC were undertaking and advised the Forum that ECC would like to join with MDC with regards to delivery of some of the work involved with improving coastal access.

DF highlighted 3 specific objectives in the Commissioning Strategy of relevance to the coast;

- The importance of improving access and the quality of the environment which would result in an increased footfall not only along Essex's coast but also across the rest of the county
- ECC has a strategic action for a comprehensive path along Essex's coast and estuaries
- ECC is keen to establish a picture of the level of pollution and that includes coastal pollution.

DF said that any sharing of information and / or knowledge, including regarding the activities people would like to participate in, would be welcomed.

RH commented on the value that volunteers could add to this work, and cited the example of 'Friends of Concord Beach' who were extremely active in clearing litter and reporting information for relevant sections of the Canvey Island coast.

5. Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)

a. Annual Action Plan Progress Review

One of the key functions of the ECF is to see and review the progress made towards SMP Action Plan delivery over the last year. The SMP Working Group (officers) had met on 2nd Feb to undertake the review of and update the 125 actions in the Action Plan.

NT commented that the dual policy of Managed Realignment / Hold the Line for Holland Haven was considered to be the 'Achilles Heel' for Tendring DC and that this policy had been responsible for the loss of a major house sale in the area. He questioned how it would be possible to remove this from the SMP, and felt this would also benefit Anglian Water, given their sewage treatment works was located immediately behind the seawall. He also felt there was a similar strong case to change the dual policy for Jaywick, especially in view of the collaborative work being undertaken by ECC and TDC.

MJ highlighted that before any changes could be made to the SMP there was an agreed process which would need to be followed. PS commented that issues such as coastal squeeze would also need to be taken into account if any policy change was to be considered and that there was a duty to consider the natural environment and have a strong evidence base.

KH enquired re what was happening regarding the potential managed realignment at Paglesham as the wall was regularly overtopped. He felt that without action at some stage the defences would fail and the area would soon be destroyed, but emphasised that this historic village needed to be protected. It was commented that the boatyard at Paglesham had had to relocate due to flooding issues

RHa asked whether a presentation regarding TE2100 would be useful for a future meeting, and it was agreed this would be. At subsequent meetings RHa offered to provide brief updates on progress. Lack of Member and Officer representation from Southend Council was commented on.

Action NS : Add TE2100 as an item for the next ECF meeting's agenda

JL continued with the SMP update

Current statistics re progress of actions;

Complete 16%

Progressing 56%

On Hold 23%

Planned 5%

The SMP Working Group (SMPWG) is responsible for making minor changes which include changes to text (which have been circulated). The SMPWG has, to date, been meeting twice a year although the need for the 2nd meeting had been questioned by the Group. It was agreed that if no objections were forwarded to NS before the end of March, that the SMPWG meetings would revert to an annual meeting with additional ad hoc meetings or teleconference calls taking place as and when deemed necessary.

b. Rewalls, Mersea Island

One moderate change was proposed to the SMP by the SMPWG i.e. to advance the preferred policy of managed realignment in the SMP from the 2nd epoch to the 1st epoch in respect of Policy Development Zone E2 (Seaward frontage between North Barn and West Mersea). The ECF Members recalled seeing the damaged sea defence during last summer's Essex Coastal Forum site visit.

ASJ expressed dismay that the issues now being realised were first identified in a report dating back to 1992 and felt that lessons should be learnt to ensure that a similar situation doesn't occur in the future. ASJ commended Colchester Borough Council's pragmatic approach to the planning issues of adaptive works.

ASJ also questioned whether the saltmarsh creation payment was being reduced, and PS proposed that this should be discussed further at a future meeting, which was agreed.

RH commented that there had been support to try to progress a solution in the form of the creation of a boating lake, but NS advised that this had not been possible due to differing views over the terms of lease for the lake between ECC and the landowner. ASJ asked whether the relevant ECC Service could re-visit the decision reached with the landowner and it was agreed that this would be reported back to the next meeting.

ASJ enquired who would be responsible for the concrete which would remain on the foreshore? MJ advised that the EA would continue to monitor and undertake reasonable and practicable measures to fulfil health and safety requirements, and that the majority of this work would consist of signage and fencing. ASJ felt that there might be a need for the EA to undertake additional work, however JL advised that the national lead for health and safety at the EA had reviewed the situation and been happy with the proposed level of action from the EA.

The decision was taken to move the Managed Realignment Preferred Policy for Policy Development Zone E2 (Seaward frontage between North Barn and West Mersea) from Epoch 2 to Epoch 1. All partners were in favour with the exception of Cllr Nick Turner (Tendring District Council) who abstained on a point of principle.

Action : JL to ensure appropriate changes made to SMP document

c. Clacton to Holland on Sea Scheme

Background information was provided by Cllr Nick Turner / Mike Badger. This was a £36m scheme to protect a 5 km frontage through the installation of 22 fishtail groynes and 1 terminal groyne together with approx. 950 000 m3 of sand and shingle recharge. The scheme was progressing well and was currently ahead of schedule. 8 groynes have already been completed in Phase 1, with 375 000m3 of recharge already being undertaken. Phase 2 to complete the remainder commenced today (2nd March 2015), and the intention is to be off site by the end of November 2015.

ASJ offered his congratulations on the significant achievement to date.

d. Shoeburyness Scheme

RH enquired whether the SMP would be affected if Southend Council decided to no longer pursue a scheme at Shoeburyness? JL advised that Southend Council had asked for a review of the project which has now been completed. It was the understanding of the EA representatives present that Southend will be progressing some form of scheme but that nothing had yet been re-submitted.

6. Site Improvement Plans

NS briefly outlined that there were two Site Improvement Plans (SIP) of relevance to the Essex Coast namely one for the Essex Estuaries which had recently been published and another for the Stour Orwell Estuaries. SIPs are non-statutory documents which are intended to be delivered through partnership working. Some information kindly provided by Natural England was available for any interested ECF members. NS commented that little local consultation appeared to have been undertaken during the development of the local SIPs. ASJ enquired what communication had been undertaken with those who own property within the site? PS who was substitute for Jonathan Bustard, said that he would arrange for more information regarding SIPs and how partners / landowners will be consulted / involved to be forwarded to ECF partners.

Action : PS to forward additional information re SIPs including partner engagement

7. Items to be Noted

a. Tax Incentives for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management

NS advised that the LGA Coastal Issues Special Interests Group (SIG) had been instrumental in obtaining tax relief for private businesses contributing to flood and coastal defence schemes which were also attracting Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) funding. Lobbying was also continuing to seek to extend tax relief to similar schemes which hadn't received FDGiA funding.

b. Harwich Haven Authority : Potential Capital Dredge – a status update had been circulated prior to the meeting. ASJ confirmed that he had been communicating with the Harwich Haven Authority through the Environment Agency.

- c. DP World – an update had been circulated prior to the meeting, and an invitation to hold next meeting at DP World to enable site visit had been received. It was commented that maintenance dredging would need to be undertaken and that it was important that the resultant material should be properly used rather than purely for disposal.
- d. Marine Planning – information had been circulated prior to the meeting
- e. Key meetings attended – none reported
- f. Issues or best practice examples for Forum's attention – none reported
- g. Legislation updates – none reported

8. Any Other Business

ASJ asked MJ if there were any experiments associated with overtopping which had been undertaken in Suffolk

Next meeting : NS advised Members that an invitation had been received from London Gateway Port to host the next meeting and to undertake a tour of the Port now that it was operational. Members discussed and all agreed that this was an offer which they'd like to take up.

Action : NS to liaise with London Gateway Port to arrange next meeting for June / July

Post Meeting Note : The next Essex Coastal Forum meeting will take place at London Gateway Port on 10th July 2015

12 noon	Registration
12.30 – 13.30	Port tour
13.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 16.00	Essex Coastal Forum meeting