

Severn Tidings

Working in partnership for the future of the Severn Estuary

www.severnestuary.net

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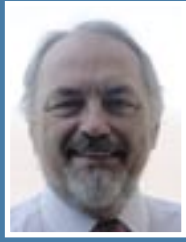
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Bridging Boundaries



Welcome!



Chairman of the Severn Estuary Partnership Cllr Peter Tyzack

As the debate over the proposals for tidal power progresses, the Severn Estuary

Partnership continues to work with a wide range of organisations to ensure that the various options are properly discussed and that adequate information is available. To assist with this we have recently updated our website to provide additional resources on the topic. While the discussion continues, however, we must also not neglect the other issues and opportunities that arise in the estuary and with this in mind, over the next few months we will be investigating how we can update and develop a new strategy for the area. The existing Strategy for the Severn Estuary has served us well, but is now outdated.

The Partnership itself has also entered a new phase of development with the appointment of Jonathan Mullard, as Partnership Manager. Jonathan, who has over 20 years experience of coastal and marine management, will be developing new strategic and funding plans, following consultations with a wide range of organisations. He is supported by Paul Parker, SEP Assistant, who many of you will know from his previous work for the Partnership. In the coming months the team will be joined by a new Severn Estuary Partnership and European Marine Site Officer.

On behalf of the Partnership I would like to thank Natasha Barker (Partnership Officer) for her work over the past 2-3 years. Natasha has moved on to work for the World Wildlife Fund as their Senior Marine Policy Officer.



From left to right, Paul Parker (Partnership Assistant), Jonathan Mullard (Partnership Manager), Gwilym Owen (Website designer).

Bridging Boundaries

The Severn Estuary Partnership is now entering a new phase of activity which is mirrored by the changes taking place at a national level and the proposals contained in the Marine and Coastal Access Bill

Writing this at the end of my third week with the Partnership I am struck by two things. Firstly, how much the dynamic nature of the Severn estuary itself, with its tides and shifting sandbars, is mirrored by the ebb and flow of the activities of the numerous organisations with a stake or interest in the area. Secondly, I am encouraged by the enthusiasm of people in these organisations, and local people too, for developing a sustainable future for the estuary and its surroundings. That means providing opportunities not only for conservation and enjoyment, but also for economic activity and, crucially, supporting the communities that live along the banks of the Severn. Securing such a future without damaging the very special qualities of the area will though demand a clear strategic approach to planning and management.

There are presently major differences in the way that strategic planning and management is currently applied in the marine environment, compared to the processes we are familiar with on land. The Marine and Coastal Access Bill aims to create a new strategic planning system that will improve this situation and encourage decision-makers and users to utilise and protect our marine resources more efficiently. The Bill recognises, in particular, the current arrangements for coordination in estuaries can be complex and at times, inconsistent. Even with the eventual implementation of the Bill though there will not be complete integration.

The Government intends to set up a new Marine Management Organisation to deliver its objectives for the English marine area, while the Welsh Assembly Government will have similar responsibilities for delivering functions of the Marine Bill in Wales. In

a devolved UK that is how it should be, but delivering the commitments to an ecosystem approach and integrating planning and management in cross-border areas such as the Severn estuary is clearly still going to be a challenge. It is apparent that the coordinating role of the Partnership is going to be needed more than ever. The organisation therefore has a clear responsibility to make sure that it is adequately resourced to deliver its immediate objectives, while reviewing the existing condition of the estuary, current and emerging threats to the essential values of the area and highlighting priorities for action and research.

Much of this review and debate takes place at the annual Severn Estuary Forum, which will be held this year on Friday 11th September in Gloucester. Please put this date in your diary. The theme of the day will be the management of the upper estuary. There has been a concentration on the lower Severn in the last few years, due in part to the proposals for tidal power, but the Partnership's remit is estuary wide and there are specific issues in the upper reaches that need to be discussed. More details, including the day's programme, will be circulated in due course.

In the meantime up to date information on the Severn estuary and the activities of the Partnership can be found on our website, which is now being updated on an almost daily basis. Partnership staff can also be contacted directly by email at severn@cardiff.ac.uk or by phone on 029 208 74713. A partnership is only as strong as its individual members, so if you have something of interest or issues of concern please contact us.

*Jonathan Mullard
Severn Estuary Partnership Manager*

3rd Severn Estuary Forum and Cruise

'A Severn Estuary Double Bill' Renewable Energy and 'Secrets of the Severn'

The 3rd Annual Severn Estuary Partnership Forum was held on the 19th of September 2008 at the Paget rooms in Penarth, Cardiff. Over 100 delegates attended the morning session which consisted of an update on tidal energy options in the Severn and a series of talks entitled 'Secrets of the Severn'. Over 70 delegates then boarded the M.V. Balmoral for an afternoon cruise on the Severn Estuary which included more enlightening 'Secrets of the Severn'.



Jane Davidson AM was the first speaker

Jane Davidson AM was first to speak discussing themes centred around 21st century challenges. The Minister focused on the threats of climate change and the potential to

harness renewable energy from the Severn Estuary. The importance of meeting these environmental challenges and the necessity to monitor and reduce Wales' ecological footprint were also outlined by the Minister. The Minister's speech was followed by three presentations on renewable energy and policy for the Severn Estuary.

Gary Shanahan (Department for Business Enterprises and Regulatory Reform) began the session by outlining the background and future aims of the Government's feasibility study into Severn Tidal Power options. Peter Kydd (Parsons Brinckerhoff) then gave an account of the Severn Estuary Tidal Power options, including the applications, implementation, cautions, benefits, protocol and case studies. He



George Ashworth taking questions from the floor



Sunset over Cardiff and Penarth



RNLI display beside the MV Balmoral, with short commentary by Jim Meyer



View of Flat Holm island from beside Steep Holm

is leading the consortia of consultants undertaking the Government's feasibility study. Nick Lyness (Environment Agency) looked at potential impacts of varying Severn Tidal Power options from a flooding perspective. His presentation included the downstream and upstream effects, issues surrounding the decommissioning of any potential structures, potential effects on habitats and channel morphology and the effects on coastal development and drainage.

After coffee and a short informal networking session, Peter Tyzack chaired the second session on 'Secrets of the Severn'. This was an opportunity for delegates to learn about those little known facts around the Estuary. Themes included:

- Tale of a Tunnel – Geoff Ballinger, BBC Wales
- Wild Places and Spaces – Dave Paynter, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

- A Blast from the Past – Peter Kavanagh, Severn Estuary Fisherman's Association

- A Modern Port – John Chaplin, Bristol Port Company

Following lunch, 70 delegates joined Partnership staff aboard the M.V. Balmoral for a cruise on the estuary. The cruise presented the opportunity for further informal networking and a chance to hear about more 'Secrets of the Severn' including;

- An Angle on Angling – Don Metcalfe, Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers

- Steep Holm - Joan & Stan Rendel, Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust

- Flat Holm - Glyn Jones

- Saving Lives – Mervyn Fleming, Severn Area Rescue Association

- Current Conditions – Nick Rogers, Cardiff University

- Out and about by boat – Don Sutherland, Royal Yachting Association

Penarth Inshore RNLI station also launched two high speed ribs for a short display alongside the Balmoral.

Once again feedback from the event has shown that it was a great success with delegates commenting on the diversity of interests, informal networking opportunities, overview of tidal power options for the Severn and the interest and variation of the 'Secrets of the Severn' talks.

Further 'Secrets of the Severn' can be found on the following pages of this issue of Severn Tidings. For additional information on the 2008 Severn Estuary Forum please visit the forum pages on our website (www.severn-estuary.net/sep/forum), or contact the SEP office.

Due to the popularity of the 'Secrets of the Severn' presentations at the 2008 Severn Estuary Forum, the Partnership decided to run a special feature on this theme. The response from speakers offering articles was overwhelming and as a result SEP have been forced to reduce the articles to an abstract only. A new section of the Partnership's website has been designed to host such articles in full. <http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/secrets.html> The Partnership can now offer anyone with an article related to the Severn Estuary space online. For further information please contact the Severn Estuary Partnership Office.



Secrets of the Severn



Rescue in the Severn Estuary - This is SARA

Mention the word "lifeboat" and most people will immediately think of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (R.N.L.I). Whilst the R.N.L.I. has approximately 225 lifeboat stations there are also approximately 163 independent lifeboat stations in the UK. This article outlines the activities of the largest independent lifeboat service, the Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA), which operates 10 boats with approximately 150 personnel. SARA is considered to be unique as a voluntary multi-disciplinary rescue organisation and has been in operation for over 35 years, this article provides details of the association's day to day work!

Merv. Fleming - Chairman, Beachley (Chepstow) Lifeboat and Rescue Station

An Angle on Angling:

Despite appearances, the muddy waters of the Severn Estuary support a plethora of fish species that are sought by recreational sea anglers. This article explores the changes in species diversity and the development in recreational sea angling in the estuary over the past 50 years.

Don Metcalfe – Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers

Steep Holm

Most members of the Severn Estuary Partnership will identify Steep Holm as "that hump of rock" rearing out of the sea half way between the English and Welsh coasts. How many realise that it supports rare flora and has a proven history stretching back well over 2,000 years? Archaeological work has discovered pre-historic flint tools; a unique Celtic carved stone head, and clear evidence of a Roman signal station being manned from the 2nd to at least the 4th century. This article explores the history of the island and outlines the current work being done on the island by the Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust.

Stan & Joan Rendell – Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust



The Tale of a Tunnel

It's no secret that that the Severn Tunnel remains a vital link between England and Wales. But less familiar, perhaps, is the story of how the entire project was threatened by the waters of a subterranean spring, and was only rescued from disaster by the bravery of a Scottish diver and the inventiveness of an English music-hall artiste. Yes, the fate of this great enterprise once depended on a performer who shared the billing with a performing dog! This story outlines the construction journey of the tunnel from its origin in 1873 to its completion 13 years later in 1886.

Geoff Ballinger – BBC Wales

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge Reserve:

This article outlines the changes at Slimbridge Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust reserve and explores the developments, as a response to broad climate change. The article identifies some of the changes that are occurring on and around the estuary concentrating on specific bird populations. The importance of the Atlantic Salt Pasture and other pasture land adjacent to the estuary is also explored.

Dave Paynter - Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

A Modern Port:

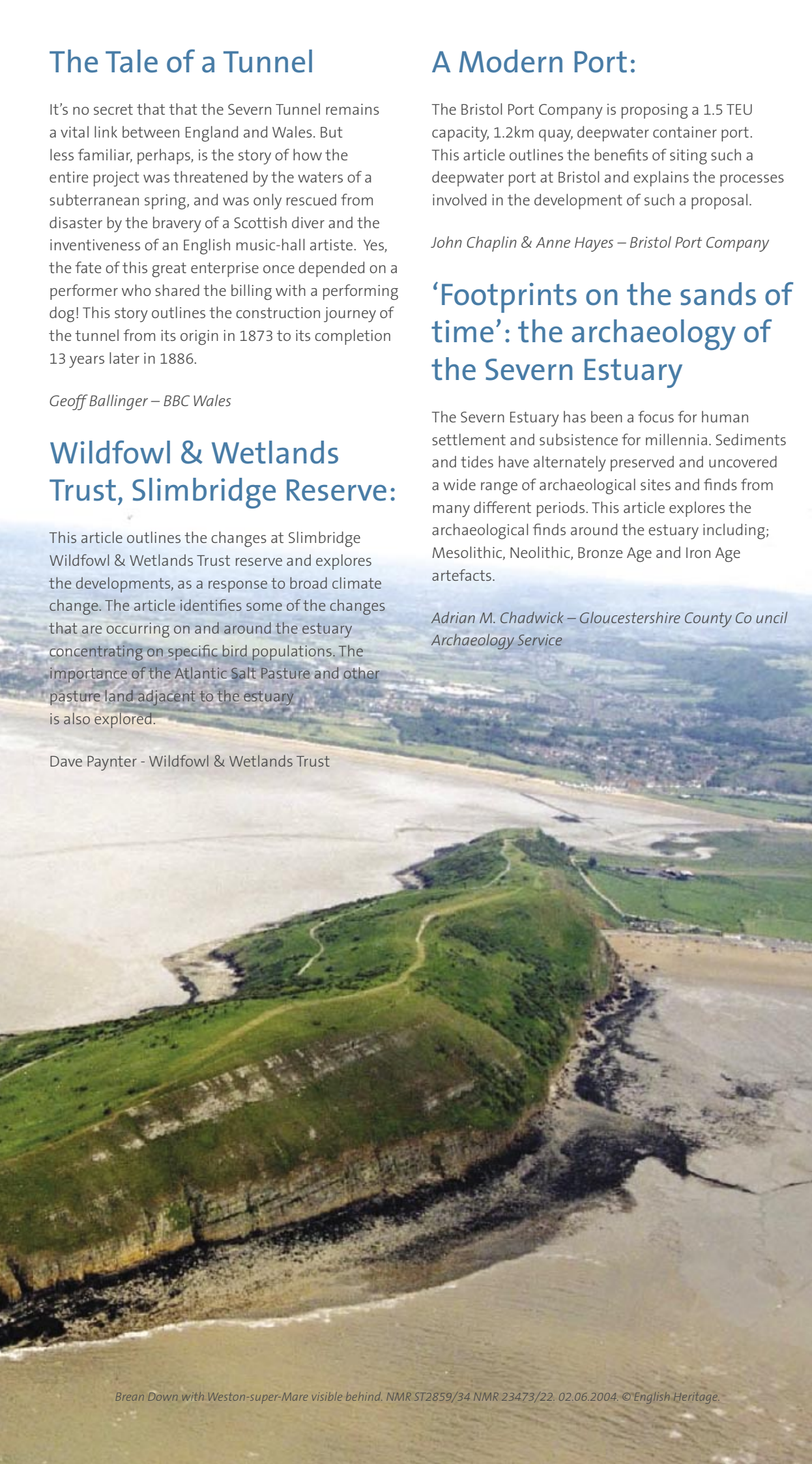
The Bristol Port Company is proposing a 1.5 TEU capacity, 1.2km quay, deepwater container port. This article outlines the benefits of siting such a deepwater port at Bristol and explains the processes involved in the development of such a proposal.

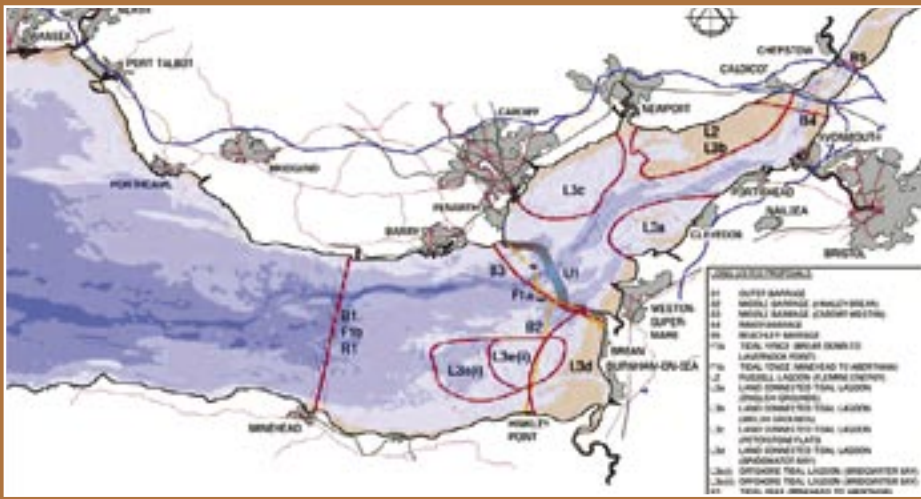
John Chaplin & Anne Hayes – Bristol Port Company

‘Footprints on the sands of time’: the archaeology of the Severn Estuary

The Severn Estuary has been a focus for human settlement and subsistence for millennia. Sediments and tides have alternately preserved and uncovered a wide range of archaeological sites and finds from many different periods. This article explores the archaeological finds around the estuary including; Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age artefacts.

Adrian M. Chadwick – Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service





'Map of the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary showing the long-listed proposals' locations © Crown Copyright'

Tidal Power Consultation

Few people interested in the Severn estuary and the surrounding area can be unaware of the debate regarding harnessing the power of the tides. It is the biggest issue currently affecting the estuary and one which the Severn Estuary Partnership is keen to see properly debated.

The UK Government is committed to generating 20% of the nation's energy from renewable sources by 2020, while the Welsh Assembly Government target is for 4 terawatt hours of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2010. This latter target will require 800MW of additional installed capacity from onshore wind resources in Wales, and 200MW of additional capacity from offshore and other renewables.

A tidal power project in the Severn estuary could also contribute to the UK's commitment to meeting the European Union's Renewable energy target along with domestic and international greenhouse gas targets. Developments in the Severn Estuary, with a tidal range of 14 metres (the highest tidal range in Europe), could therefore make a major contribution to meeting both these ambitious targets, but any scheme is inevitably going to have a significant impact on habitats and wildlife. It is also claimed that some proposals could limit the entry of shipping to the ports of Cardiff, Bristol, Gloucester, Newport and Sharpness.

A number of organisations have stressed

the need for an open public debate in order to help identify the best way of capturing the enormous renewable energy resource of the Severn estuary whilst safeguarding its internationally important combination of species and habitats and bringing lasting benefits to local communities. The Government's Severn Tidal Power Feasibility Study Consultation is therefore gathering and assessing evidence to enable the Government to decide whether or not to support tidal power development in the Severn Estuary.

In July last year the Government published a list of ten possible schemes, including barrages, onshore and offshore lagoons, a tidal fence and a tidal reef. They then assessed, in high level terms, the costs, benefits and impact of potential schemes and how they might affect the environment and the region. A consultation on a short-list of 5 schemes is currently taking place.

It is important to note that the Government is not seeking views in this consultation on whether or not to build a Severn barrage or other scheme. They will be asking for views

on this in a second public consultation, probably in 2010, once there is detailed information on the costs, benefits and impacts of the short-listed schemes.

The five projects selected are those that the government's engineering consultants, Parsons Brinckerhoff, deemed to be based on the most proven technology. Proposals for tidal reefs and tidal fences are not included. Although these more innovative technologies have not been short-listed, an additional £500,000 of Government finance has been announced to speed the development of such proposals before a decision on which scheme to proceed is taken in 2010.

Due to the diverse issues, the Sustainable Development Commission, the UK Government's independent watchdog on sustainable development, set out three 'sustainability tests' which a Severn tidal power scheme should pass:

- It must be publicly led as a project and publicly owned as an asset, in order to avoid short-termist decisions and ensure the long-term public interest
- It must go ahead in full compliance with EU Habitats and Birds Directives, which will require assessment of mitigation and compensation on a scale as yet unseen in Europe.
- Any tidal power scheme must not divert Government attention away from much wider action on climate change.

Whatever your views on the proposals it is important that you or your organisation responds to the consultation, before 23rd April by visiting the consultation website at <http://severntidalpowerconsultation.decc.gov.uk/> or sending a written response to:

Douglas Cook
 Department of Energy and Climate Change
 Severn Tidal Power Team
 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET
 Tel: 020 7215 0143
 Email: stp-consultation@berr.gsi.gov.uk

Further detail relating to the Severn Tidal Power debate can be found on the Partnership website: <http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/resource.html>

A round-up of key policy developments affecting management of the Severn Estuary.

Shoreline Management Plan Review (SMP2) Update - Spring 2009

As you may be aware by now, the Second Generation Shoreline Management Plan Review (SMP2) is currently underway. This remains as a non-statutory, policy document for coastal defence management planning, though one main difference to the first SMP is that it seeks to advise on how the coastline should change over three 'epochs' of 25, 50 and 100 years to manage the risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable way. It is developed in partnership by Local Authorities, regulators and other stakeholders.

The shoreline around the Severn Estuary will be divided into 'Policy Units'. There is a choice of four policies that can be applied to a Policy Unit in each epoch:

- Hold the existing defence line - maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by defences.
- Advance the existing defence line - build new defences seaward of the existing line.
- Managed realignment - allow retreat of the shoreline, with management to control or limit movement.
- No active intervention - a decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences.

The Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) is responsible for undertaking a Shoreline Management Plan Review (SMP2). Work started on the review in October 2008 and the SMP2 is due to be finalised by April 2010. Atkins Ltd and ABPmer have been retained to help the SECG and to carry out the production of the SMP2 and to produce technical advice on the way the shoreline is predicted to change. SEP is also providing additional support, as well as acting as Secretariat for the SECG.

The SECG would like to encourage everyone to get involved in the development of the SMP2 because the opinions and views of stakeholders are important in developing an effective SMP.

Over 300 key stakeholders around the Estuary have been contacted individually to inform them of the development of the SMP2 and two stakeholder meetings were held in January to begin developing the SMP2 with the input of people from around the Estuary. The SECG have produced a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, which sets out how different groups of stakeholders will be asked to contribute to the development of the SMP2. There are four main ways of keeping up to date with what is happening and getting involved:

- Information will be posted to the SECG website - this may be for information and update only, or requesting comments and feedback.
- E-mail updates / requests via an e-mail distribution list and the SEP e-news mailing list.
- Stakeholder meetings - the next meetings will be held in late Spring / early Summer. Dates will be posted on the website and sent round via the mailing lists.
- Public consultation - this will happen in the autumn. There will be a number of meetings and people will have the opportunity to comment at these or to send their comments direct to the SECG. Details of the public consultation have not been finalised yet. Information will be posted to the website / sent via e-mail.

More information about the SMP Review, all the information and documents produced so far and further information as the project progresses can be found on the SECG website at www.severnestuary.net/secg

The UK Marine and Coastal Access Bill

The UK Marine and Coastal Access Bill entered the current session of Parliament in December last year. At the time of writing (March 2009) it is progressing through the House of Lords with good debate on the future role of a Marine Management Organisation and the proposed new marine planning framework.

The Bill will also introduce new legislation to designate Marine Conservation Zones, replace Sea Fisheries Committees with Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities (in England) and measures to streamline licensing of marine activities. It aims to improve co-ordination between organisations for the better management of our seas.

For the Severn Estuary Partnership, the Marine & Coastal Access Bill is a huge opportunity to provide a more secure basis for partnership working across the Severn Estuary. Debate in the House of Lords has included discussion about the potential role of a Joint Commission for the Bristol Channel. Wales is establishing some separate provisions in the legislation so it will be important that organisations on both sides of the estuary continue to work closely together. It is hoped that the new Marine Management Organisation in England and the Welsh Assembly Government will work together on a new joint plan for the estuary - an opportunity to review progress with the current Severn Estuary Strategy championed by the Severn Estuary Partnership.

For further information and to watch the progress of the Bill through Parliament, go to <http://www.defra.gov.uk/marine/legislation/index.htm> <http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Home.aspx> Natasha Barker, Senior Marine Policy Officer, WWF-UK (nbarker@wwf.org.uk)

News in Brief...

Estuary Round-up

Partnership News

The Partnership hosted a successful Estuary Groups day on the 27th October 2008. The event included a meeting of the ASERA management group, a Joint Advisory Committee meeting with guest speaker Louise Lieberknecht from the Finding Sanctuary project and a meeting of the Severn Estuary Coastal Group. The next Estuary Groups day will take place on the 12th of May 2009, details will be circulated by email and SEP E-News.

Further Severn Estuary updates including the current progress with the Flood Risk Management Strategy, Severn Estuary Shoreline Management Plan 2, River Basin Management Plan and ICZM Strategy for England can be found through the Partnership's E-News. <http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/enews.html> It is hoped that future SEP documentation and E-News bulletins can be offered bilingually in both English and Welsh.

ASERA update

ASERA continues to enable relevant authorities to discharge their statutory duties in relation to the nature conservation designations on the European Marine site, by helping facilitate the implementation and updating of the management scheme. ASERA are currently recruiting for a new European Marine Site Implementation Officer. The implementation officer will take the key role in the preparation of a new management scheme embracing the cSAC and Ramsar Site, and reviewing the SPA elements. Plans are currently being developed for a workshop to be hosted in mid June to offer an update, to raise awareness and highlight the way forward for the development of the management scheme. Existing activity information will need to be reviewed and any new or changed activities identified to enable their potential impact to be assessed.

Further updates, including the Regulation 33 documentation prepared by Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales, will be made available through the ASERA Website in due course. <http://www.severnestuary.net/asera/>

Severn Estuary Coastal Group:

The Severn Estuary Coastal Group is currently responsible for the development and implementation of the Severn Estuary Shoreline Management Plan 2. The group's recent focus has been on this project with monthly sub-group meetings. There have also been two successful stakeholder workshops, attracting around eighty stakeholders, which were held in late January. SECG has also re-branded its website and all SMP2 documentation and consultations can be found here: <http://www.severnestuary.net/secg/index.html>

Interreg Project Update: Interreg IIIB COREPOINT project

The main outputs from the project are now available at <http://corepoint.ucc.ie/>. Reports and guidance of particular interest to SEP include those on partnership working, the development of Local Information Systems and the 'Point of COREPOINT' document which provides suggestions for improving capacity for Integrated Coastal Zone Management in North West Europe.

Interreg IVB IMCORE project



The COREPOINT partners, including SEP, Cardiff University and Glamorgan University, have been successful in gaining funding for a 4 year study, IMCORE, Innovative Management for Europe's Changing Coastal Resource. This exciting and innovative project will develop adaptation strategies for coastal climate change at key sites across North West Europe. For SEP, the project will include the opportunity to reinvigorate and develop the Severn Estuary Climate Change Research Advisory Group (SECCRAG) and the associated citation database, as well as creating new educational materials building

on the success of the 'Stories of the Severn Sea' schools' pack. There will also be a range of related workshops, including one specifically investigating coastal 'futures' for the Severn - not to be missed!

To inform the IMCORE project, Cardiff University are undertaking research into corporate Severn-side responses to climate change. This work will stocktake climate change-related policy commitments by planning bodies around the Severn; examine the supporting evidence base; and explore current and emerging mechanisms for local government to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts along their coastal frontages. Importantly, it will explore Severn Estuary-wide cohesion on the challenging issue of climate change. Wendy Dodds from the Marine and Coastal Environment (MACE) Research Group at Cardiff University will be contacting SEP Local Authorities partners and others to seek assistance. SEP and Cardiff University will be working together to make sure the outputs of this Severn Estuary-wide climate change assessment are made available in relevant and useful formats.

Contacts and further information:

General project:

Dr Rhoda Ballinger (BallingerRC@Cf.ac.uk)

SECCRAG and research database:

Dr Tim Stojanovic (Stojanovic@Cf.ac.uk)

Severn Estuary Planning for Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation:

Wendy Dodds (Dodds1@Cf.ac.uk)

IMCORE website: <http://www.imcore.eu/>

Les Estuaries Network:

SEP has now completed three years as the host of the European Estuaries network of Local Authorities. It has been a very successful period with the Partnership supporting a number of conferences and meetings, managing and developing the website and producing a newsletter. Discussions are now taking place with the other partners on whether to hand the Secretariat over to another member and how the benefits of the initiative can be secured for the future. This may include developing an e-news network and proposals for new projects.

The Severn Estuary Partnership

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Editor Paul Parker

All photographs © Severn Estuary Partnership unless otherwise stated. Cover Photograph: Severn Estuary Forum delegates departing the M.V. Balmoral at Clevedon Pier, September 2009.

The Severn Estuary Partnership involves local authorities, other organisations and users of the estuary working together to ensure that the estuary remains a resource of great value throughout the 21st century.



Coming up...

Joint Estuary Groups Day & SEP Joint Advisory Committee	12/05/09
Severn Estuary Forum	11/09/09
The Magnificent Severn Festival	22/08/09
Wild Waters' Festival	10-18/10/09
Severn Tidal Power Public Consultation	26/01/09 - 23/04/09
River Basin Management Plan Public Consultation	22/12/08 - 22/06/09