



SEVERN ESTUARY FORUM 2010

Conference report

*Severn
Estuary
Partnership
– promoting
a holistic,
estuary-wide
perspective
for the
Severn*

Introduction

The Severn Estuary Partnership was welcomed to Bristol by Cllr Simon Cook, the Cultural, Sport and Capital Projects Executive of Bristol City Council, who outlined the importance of the maritime history of the City of Bristol and the value of working together. Dr. Jeanette Reis, Severn Estuary Partnership Manager, then highlighted the aims and objectives of the Partnership, indicating the importance of the Severn Bridge Logo to link everyone together. Dr Reis explained the opportunities that the forum presented for joint working and information gathering, before handing the stage back to Cllr Peter Tyzack, SEP Chair, to continue with the Forums proceedings.

Steve Brooker, Head of Marine Planning, Marine Management Organisation, delivered an informative keynote address on the role of the MMO and local Coastal Partnerships. Steve outlined the importance of working with all stakeholders in the marine planning process and indicated the usefulness in partnerships such as SEP to achieve this. Steve also explained the importance of cross border working and early engagement with the Welsh Assembly Government.

Julia Williams, Head of Marine Planning & Nature Conservation, Welsh Assembly Government, was unable to attend the Forum due to unforeseen circumstances. Her presentation was given by Paul Parker, Severn Estuary Partnership Officer, who outlined the intention of WAG to have an all Wales Marine Plan by 2012/13. The importance of engaging stakeholders around the coast was also reiterated.

Christine Marsh, Associated Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) Officer, presented a short talk on the Severn Estuary European Marine Site, outlining the work of ASERA, the importance of the Estuary from a species and habitats perspective and the timescales for the emergence of a new Severn Estuary European Marine Site management plan to cover all three designations (Special Area of Conservation, Special Protected Area, and RAMSAR) on the Estuary.

Kath Winnard, Marine Environmental Scientist, Water and Environment Atkins, delivered an informative presentation on the lessons learnt through stakeholder engagement on the Severn Shoreline Management plan. Kath explored the areas of engagement that work, and those that were not so successful, before stressing the importance of stakeholder engagement in marine planning and offering some suggestions on how this can be best achieved by the MMO and WAG on the Severn.

In a change to the advertised programme, John Chaplin, Director of Engineering, Bristol Port Company concluded the morning proceedings. John presented Bristol Port Company's plans and progress to develop a deep water container terminal at Avonmouth, outlining the needs and benefits to the area.

After lunch and an opportunity for informal networking, Richard Hellen, Low Carbon South West, took the Chair for the Private Sector Session. Richard introduced the work of Low Carbon South West and stressed the importance of sustainable industry around the shores of the Severn Estuary.

Nigel Knee, Head of Nuclear Policy, Nuclear New Build, EDF Energy then presented EDF's proposed Nuclear Power Development, Hinkley Point C. Nigel stressed the demand and importance of low Carbon Energy and informed delegates that the proposed Hinkley Point C could be capable of generating over 6% of the UK's electricity. Nigel then informed delegates of the potential job creation and economic benefit to the region before showing some illustrations of what the plant could look like from the Estuary.

Kate Royston, Robbee Smole Sustainable Business Solutions, presented on Sustainable Industrial Development and the Severn Estuary. The focus was on port development, green service providers, renewable energy developments, multi-modal transport and resource and process management. Kate highlighted the importance of co-operation and collaboration in order for sustainable industries to thrive.

Delegates then broke for a final networking opportunity before George Ashworth, Chair of the Severn Estuary Partnership Management group, brought proceedings back into action with the start of the final session entitled 'The Public'.

Dr. Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University, gave an update on the ongoing European IMCORE project, which is looking into the enhancement of the capacity for Climate Change adaptation in the Estuary. Rhoda outlined the aims and objectives of the project before explaining the need to enhance the science base and the mechanisms for enhancing science-policy integration. The need to develop guidelines for adaptation to climate change were also highlighted, with further workshops and other ways to get involved in the project being outlined.

Stuart Ballard, a local resident to the Severn, keen Bore Surfer and trustee of the Severn Rivers trust, treated delegates to a unique presentation explaining his discovery of the tidal Severn. His journey started with a surf board in the river, involved taking putchers to Glastonbury Festival and ended up with a river festival for all to share. Stuart explained in detail his journey with the Severn, from a dream to reality.

Andy Marvell, Chief Executive of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust gave the penultimate presentation, exploring the archaeology around the Severn Estuary. Andy explained the importance of the Severn Estuary for archaeological finds, before highlighting some of the more significant finds including a 15th century Newport Ship and 3rd century Barland's Farm boat.

The final presentation of the day saw Dr. Jeanette Reis review the past 12 months in the world of SEP. Jeanette highlighted the partnership's ongoing core activities, responses to key consultations and input into local and European project work.

Initial feedback from the event indicates that delegates had a rewarding and enjoyable day, celebrating the diversity of our estuary and embracing the importance of marine planning and the need to work together towards a sustainable future. The Severn Estuary Partnership would like to thank the IMCORE project for sponsoring the 2010 Forum, the speakers and chairs for their contributions to the day and all those who helped to make the event a success. Should you wish to find out more about the event or feedback on the day, please do not hesitate to contact the Partnership Office.