

**The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site Management Scheme
Core Management Group Meeting – 24th January 2007**

Attendees:

Mat Mander (Chair) (ESFJC), Michael Rooney (NE), Conor Donnelly (NE), Jon Watson (LCC), Capt. John Lorking (KLCB), Manfai Tang (EA), Peter Rushmer (Project Manager)

1.0 Apologies:

Rick Keymer (EN), David Hawley (EA) George Dann (SHIDB), Diane Fairchild (SHDC), Judith Stoutt (ESFJC)

2.0 Notes of last meeting (4th October 2006) and matters arising:

MM opened the meeting by welcoming MT who was representing DH and the EA. CD asked if the meetings could be earlier in the day, p.m. or a.m. and MT asked that EA be canvassed when meetings are set. These were agreed. PR said meeting dates were usually agreed at the previous meetings. This meeting had been set with others at the AFMB and details circulated at Christmas 2006.

PR updated on corrections to 5.1 of the notes previously circulated following input from JS: “given consideration to fishing-out the lays” and “the Inspector was not convinced abandonment of the lays would be serious” were both the correct wording.

3.0 Review of effectiveness of new working practices:

3.1 CD said there had been no major change in the NE set up though Peter Lambley had retired and Helen Dixon left. MR added that Norfolk was not recruiting replacements, though it has been raised many times. MM had received confirmation that a letter was coming following his to Helen Phillips; it will be interesting to see what is said. CD added that NE nationally do not have a marine ecologist and there is only one person dealing with fisheries. MR said the Norfolk temporary plan is to give him PL’s work, but they have not taken anything away from him to compensate. He will attend the North Norfolk Coast Advisory Group from now on. He meets his line manager tomorrow.

3.2 PR asked if the commitment to the future is secure, noting we have been paid for this year. CD said they have a Regional Offer basis now and he has put this project into that. January is planning time and it should go through. PR confirmed NE was covered by the current MOA till 31.03.08, but as EN. JW confirmed LCC had every intention of continuing their financial commitment.

MT and JW both confirmed their organisations were suffering cuts and travelling might be curtailed for both.

MM suggested organisations should note that this project is the best way to meet their statutory obligations

4.0 Conservation Objectives and Condition Assessment:

MM said he believed good progress had been made in this respect. CD said the first workshop had been held yesterday with scientists from Cefas, CEH, RSPB, BTO, EA, NE and ESFJC, looking at intertidal flats. Progress had indeed been made, though the agenda had not quite been finished. Mussels, cockles and other attributes had been looked at, with the exception of the physical attributes. The draft saltmarsh objectives had been done last year with part of the SPA features too, but others have to be done e.g. SPA habitats, subtidal banks, reefs, lagoons, seals, etc. Yesterday was a big step forward and the mussel and cockle discussions went well. There was debate about whether stocks had recovered and, though targets were set higher rather than lower, this was qualified with recognition that good work had been done to improve stocks and good management measure were now in place. Therefore, regarding condition, it was agreed management was in place to aid full recovery.

There was other work to be done that was taken away from the workshop, but CD hoped a working decision would be available soon that could be circulated. He added the Wash SPA had been done.

MM made the point that what was agreed yesterday was important for the SPA, but MR said we cannot use these attributes because the SPA approach is based on Units and Species. The saving grace is, however, that we do not need a workshop for these. One thing that was holding this up was the North Norfolk SSSI conservation objectives. They have now been done so he can work up the SPA; it has been started. CD suggested the process needs a smaller liaison working group. PR asked if the idea was still that he should take the findings round the management and advisory groups once they were summarised in draft and CD agreed. PR said he was encouraged by the good progress made and congratulated CD on moving matters on since the concern expressed at the October FMG. CD and MM thanked PR for his assistance in convening the workshop.

Action – CD will advise a programme plan for the remaining work on the Conservation Objectives following a chat with MR.

CD said he realised ESFJC was concerned the Wash was shown unfavourable presently and he recognised the need to amend it to recovering. He hoped to do this next week all being well. MM was glad to hear this and said all he wanted to see was some expression that change is occurring for the better. He said it was a reflection of all we have been doing and at present what is shown denies that recovery.

PR said it would be good if we could plan the rest of the process for completing the Management Scheme review at the FMB meeting in July; the Board is keen for a 2nd edition.

5. Plans and Projects Update:

5.1 SMPs 2d and 3a - EA's stakeholder engagement:

MT advised there was an SMP in place for North Norfolk, but not for the Wash and PR said he had attended recent initial meetings set up by the EA starting the review process for both. At the last it had been confirmed that the Minister had agreed to fund SMPs on the back of which Royal Haskoning had been approached to take on both the Wash and North Norfolk Coast. The plan was to bring the two on in parallel and data gathering will start by February. The target is to be finished by October 2008, for sign up over the following two months.

MR said their representative would now be John Jackson; it used to be Peter Lambley.

PR said that the EA were concerned for early and effective stakeholder engagement and had set up a Client Steering Group on which he had represented the project. Latterly they had also established a Elected Members Forum, in respect of which both he and Tammy Smalley had suggested that members common to our respective projects be involved. He had attended the first meeting of the latter and it appeared it would work well. He had also recommended using our Advisory Group networks for disseminating information and for consultation.

5.2 Cockle and Mussel Fishery:

MM said the dredge fishery on the Gat was agreed and opens on 29th January with 22% adult stock. This signifies the key point of how the Wash fisheries are being progressed in partnership and in a positive spirit by the fishermen, ESFJC and NE. CD added it is really good to have such positive discussions in meetings. MM said getting an agreed fisheries management plan together will be good as it will speed up management of the opening and closing of the fishery by not requiring the carrying out of an appropriate assessment every time. It may take 12 months, but by then at least one species should have it. An informative debate then followed on what this involves between JW and MM.

5.3 Windfarm Cable Landfall Proposal:

MM said Centrica's Environmental Statement had now been delivered to JL, PR and NE. MR added they were still planning to build round 1 windfarms in April this year which was worrying; they have yet to agree the monitoring and mitigation programme. He has had no response to queries he has posed. These are conditions of their licencing. The environmental statement for the Round 2s will be looked at and there will be a lot of discussion. He stressed

it is a difficult issue resource wise for NE. There will be a need for 3 Appropriate Assessments anyway so it will take time yet. JL added that Centrica want to build in 2008-09, but this could well slip. MR added there will also be aggregation issues on these with Round 1 and Round 2; there is a lot of work yet to be done. On the Cromer proposal, MR said they were waiting to see if it was going ahead. Sheringham Shoal will most likely go ahead.

5.4 Boal Quay Proposal:

JL reported that the initial public consultation had concluded with two options comprising a 250 berth marina, or a satellite marina and smaller marina with locks. The new project officer, Mr Wakerling, seems to be reviewing the whole process and ideas so far. This will work in association with the NORA Project (Nar/Ouse Regeneration Area) where work is progressing.

6.0 AOB:

6.1 Review of Action Plan Progress Updates:

PR took the meeting through a selection of the Action Plan returns he had received and showed how he had analysed the information provided on the reporting proformas and applied progress traffic lights. He had then transferred them to the Action Plan itself; this latter would form part of the 2006 Annual Report. He said this would enable an audit trail of progress, allowing actions showing yellow (with a problem) or red (stalled) to be analysed further by the CMG and corrected. PR said he was still waiting for some outstanding returns before he could complete this work, but the information required was on its way.

6.2 Annual Report Progress:

PR said he had made good progress with working up the draft Annual Report, the completion of which hinged on the above. He hoped it would be ready by early in February if not by the end of January; it would then be placed on the website initially as a draft.

Action – PR is to complete drafting of Action Plan Review and Annual Report and place on website.

6.3 3rd MOA '08-'11; a start at planning how to get there:

PR reminded the meeting that the current 2nd Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), set up between the parties to the project, expired on 31st March 2008 along with his contract. This being only a little over 12 months away, we needed to begin to consider firstly, whether the project should continue, secondly, if so and in what form and thirdly, then begin to draw up an appropriate 3rd MOA.

Asked how he saw the future need, PR said the statutory obligation to safeguard the conservation interest features (while encouraging sustainable use) would never go away. He was of the view that the project had been set up on a bureaucratic basis originally to get the process working and that his job description reflected that. The process was clearly working quite well now; there was more understanding of, and progress with, the issues and relationships between the management and advisory groups, authorities, organisations, etc. PR felt the principal weakness was in liaison with the public and engaging with recreational and user groups. This did not fit readily with one organisation's responsibilities and also needed constant topping up to avoid what tended to happen now outside the managed sites; i.e. peaks and troughs of contact through himself resulting in some progress, followed by a lapse due to other demands.

PR said, in his view, the emphasis should now change. He felt dedicated admin support would be appropriate to cover the administration and bureaucracy of the project, while the project manager should be more focussed on liaison with the public to raise awareness of issues and progress and with user groups, tourism promoters and other organisations. PR felt this would make more effective use of resources and was of the opinion that it could be achieved on a similar budget to the present. This assumed dedicated admin support was engaged, but pegged at 2 days per week, with a project manager working 3 days per week focussed mostly on the sorts of issues referred to above.

MR agreed we should start the MOA review early as NE's processes are not smooth. JW asked if there was anything coming out of the draft Marine Bill and PR said there was a

greater emphasis on Marine Protected Areas and national co-ordination of their management and that might mean funding coming available in time. JW was of the view this might give greater *raison detre*, but it was likely to be after a new MOA was required. He said this project has two Lincolnshire elected Member representatives and questions will be asked whether the Wash Estuary Strategy and this project can be put together, or if both are needed. We may therefore need to justify this project. He noted there was good interface and co-operation between the two.

PR added that he had a more radical view than that expressed above. This was that the two projects (this and the Wash Estuary Strategy) should be amalgamated. Although they have different emphases, together they would form a good example of Integrated Coastal Zonal Management (ICZM). PR pointed out there might be combined savings in the aggregate cost of the projects, though this had not been researched

PR asked if we should put his idea to the Full Management Group (FMG) and let them debate it. MT felt it a good idea to propose these ideas in advance of the FMG and MM agreed.

JW added there were new ways of considering such issues now. There had been an announcement by the Lincolnshire Local Authorities. This means Lincolnshire County Council will need to consider such issues with all the Local Authorities in the district before responding. PR asked if the group wanted him to ask people's views by emailing them out. MM agreed it was a good idea in order to get the dialogue going and to include PR's ideas as a suggestion. The feedback can then be refined into a proposal for putting to the next FMG.

Action – PR to circulate his proposal for the future of the project to the CMG in advance of the next FMG meeting requesting they consider it for taking a proposal to that meeting.

7.0 Date of next CMG meeting:

It was agreed this should be left for deciding depending on the need for a meeting, using 'e' conferencing where practical.

8.0 Summary and conclusion:

MM summarised by saying there had been some significant movement on the Conservation Objectives and let's get on with putting a plan together for the future of the project. He thanked attendees and closed the meeting.

**The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site Management Scheme
Core Management Group (CMG) Meeting - 23rd May 2007**

Attendees:

Mat Mander (Chair ESFJC), Capt John Lorking (KLC), Manfai Tang (EA), George Dann (WLMA), Lou Mayer (WLMA), Judith Stoutt (ESFJC), Conor Donnelly (NE), Rick Keymer (NE), Jon Watson (LCC) Diane Fairchild (SHDC), Jeff Goodley (SHDC), Peter Rushmer (Project Manager)

1. Apologies

John Jones (Norfolk County Council)

2. Welcome to new officers:

MM welcomed new members Lou Mayer, who will replace George Dann on behalf of the IDBs and Jeff Goodley, new SHDC Conservation Officer.

He explained the work of CMG takes forward issues for and on behalf of the FMB/FMG. Introductions around the table and MM stressed it would be useful to iron out where we go for the future in this meeting.

3. Notes of the last meeting:

MM had received no reply from NE's Helen Phillips; he would follow up.

4. Conservation Objectives Timetable:

CD referred to a timetable for completion of Conservation Objectives (CO) review and condition assessment, he had finalised following the FMG. He said all the SPA COs were in a reasonably final state. The Gibraltar Point one is a little further behind, but done. The saltmarsh CO has been circulated previously and an Intertidal Flats workshop was held in January. Others are being drafted now. Intention is all to have all drafted by 22nd June and circulate to groups from 3rd August, providing a plain English version. Consultation would run until 28th September with the various groups. He will then send a summary of comments and then finalise them. He said a further workshop for Intertidal Flats will be necessary. Once all this is done, a condition assessment can be undertaken, all as the timetable. There are one or two things that will continue to be issues as complete information not available on all attributes e.g. SMPs; NE needs to see how they feed into these processes with Vicky Eade, EA, e.g. extent of saltmarsh and topography, etc. PR advised this was consistent with the action plan.

Discussion ensued.

JL advised that the European Space Agency have pictures of Wash at suitable state and publicly available; this might help obtain knowledge required.

CD said Mick Yates, CEH, was being contracted to get more information. He will advise him of the ESA facility. JW asked if we know where sea level is and is it above datum now?

JL suggested checking with Ordnance Survey. JW said there is LIDAR data, but bottom is plus 2 metres now, so is that datum? JL responded it was not totally easy to be specific.

MM clarified, are we CO setting now, then carrying out condition assessment based on these COs. CD said yes.

MM asked if new assessment would reflect positive or negative results, relative to what COs existed in the past. Are there set criteria for the condition assessment?

RK said yes; protocol set out in common standards now. COs were very general before so bound to be more informative now. Might reconsider doing condition assessment straight away anyway. PR suggested it was better to reset, than to review after a couple of years has elapsed.

MM raised the special meeting that appeared in the revised timetable. This was debated, but it was suggested CMG acts as an initial considering forum if necessary, sending out round group subsequently.

MM summarised saying it was good to see NE working hard to get a good realistic timetable. RK re emphasised they might consider slipping condition assessment. MM responded that it was better to stick to it as it is FMG expectation and RK concluded saying it was most important to get management measures right, but of course this does depend on condition.

5. Future of the Management Project post 31st March 2008:

PR summarised proposal he was recommending and tabled a paper 'Project Evolution Post 01.04.08' containing proposed resource and associated cost estimates:

The thinking was to have a project manager 3 days a week and a project /admin assistant 2 days a week, to make better use of resources. This was designed to work within current financial constraints, to achieve "more bang for the buck" and take in those issues that the project has learned it needs to cover more thoroughly.

Project manager would cover liaison and engagement with users, owners, managers and groups, location updated weekly on central digital calendar, co-ordinating with managers and others and reporting to CMG and the project/admin assistant a variety of admin, helpdesk and project support work.

PR emphasised it was proposed to keep the same robust project framework as presently. Discussion followed.

JW said there may be potential for combining the two projects WEMP and EMS and asked if other authorities have views. RK was not aware of any proposals. MT said David Hawley, EA, feels there could be some advantages. RK felt both projects complementary at the moment. JW felt the great saving could be in admin resource, e.g admin post being advertised presently for WEMP too. RK said the danger of amalgamating is that authorities may want to reduce funding.

MM said officers are bound to be asked why two similar projects exist and need to be aware of monetary justification of both or one.

DF said SHDC is considering commitment to both projects as Wash Estuary MOA is being reworked. JW than advised that the Chair of WEMP is asking for winding up of WEMP project, bearing in mind perceived overlap between the two. DF said ideas to feed into SHDC's committee would be helpful.

RK was not sure there would be savings by amalgamating; it could be suggested value of WEMP is just starting, e.g. marinas in the Wash and one to one contact and planning, etc. Also coastal access consultations going on this year that generates liaison with people. High level engagement could be beneficial and the need is not likely to go away.

CD added that it also facilitates local schemes e.g. marsh beef, local fish, the Lincs BAP, etc. JW agreed there is a role for both.

DF said SHDC's Cabinet reports in June, so it is out of DF's hands. She requested sending anything that is relevant to team leader planning policy.

MM felt this was a good time to feed into both processes, showing some savings and benefits of both.

DF said she felt their review focussed more on an amalgamation of the two rather than one in preference to the other.

PR had sympathy with this view, but felt it may be premature to amalgamate now, though the Marine Bill and development of ICZM is likely to justify it sooner or later. He felt the two projects complement each other well presently.

RK agreed redesign now might be too early, saying the Marine Bill may take on some issues for the future and also may bring forward longer term funding, etc; the MOA's are for three years at a time and are not sustainable.

MM said we are not likely to have a decision before we need to review our MOA for next Spring and wondered about using the current admin proposal for WEMP for both projects.

JW felt it sensible to look at amalgamation for the future, but not now.

RK said there may be some opportunity for admin in the future and it is accept that both projects work well together.

JW suggested calling an emergency meeting for the WEMP to flush out an assurance for continuing for the future; in 2009 there will have to be changes within authorities anyway. RK said the Regional Spatial Policy says a project needs to be in place for the Lincs coast, so this is a driver for the WEMP.

RK agreed proposal put forward by PR. CD agreed it had right focus.

JL said it was a shame we could not include future refinements, but we are looking too far in the future so need to look after this project for now.

PR re-emphasised his earlier point that we are making better use of resources to get improved results with his proposal, within existing budget levels. We are not suggesting expanding the project. The results we need to get are those identified as not being achieved through the action plan review programme.

JS also agreed with the requirement and the suggested way forward; she is of the view that there is a definite need for administrative support. She added, however we go forward, we need to keep action plan to learn what progress or otherwise we are making.

PR agreed this essential.

JL asked if PR was looking for assistance with the project too. PR agreed he was. MM asked how it would work. PR gave an example of the flying incident follow-up, research and letter sending process; a defined and established sequence of tasks, but he emphasised we must not overlook the basic need for administrative support too. He read out an email reply sent to CD a while before covering this point and listing subject headings.

PR also outlined progress with the proposed volunteer wardening process, details of which he was to review following the site managers' meetings and submit to the Groundwork Trust, requesting it be considered for a joint HLF bid for funding, HLF themes this year being environment, sustainability and raising public awareness. Other sources of funding were suggested e.g. Marine Aggregates Levy, Land Waste Levy, Crown Estates Marine Stewardship, etc.

All were in favour of taking both forward as proposed.

Action - PR to draft a 3rd MOA, associated job descriptions and budget estimates based on his proposals and circulate prior to the FMB with CMG's recommendations to proceed.

Action - MM requested attendees send PR comments on alternative sources of funding for the volunteer wardening proposal.

6. Plans and projects update:

6.1 JS/MM reported as follows:

Cockles- the start of 2007 fishery about to take place. 2006 handworking fishery about to terminate. Surveys done. Reviewed areas to open, quota and management measures. Good standing stocks of adults and juveniles. Applying sustainable management principles; handworking June, dredge July, subject to negotiations with NE and ESFJC.

Mussels- micro management of the Gat has been going on. Pleased the way industry has abided by conditions. Sub-littoral bed found off Chapel St Leonard. 6 miles by 1 mile, could be 1000 hectares. Under ESFJC's control, but not in the Wash. Part of a significant spat fall all over the Wash and the wider area in sub tidal areas.

RK suggested a timetable for the agreed fisheries policy would be helpful; it would help raise awareness of complexities. MM agreed, but added there might need to be flexibility in agreed measures; discussion would be valuable.

Action – ESFJC and NE to pursue discussion on Fisheries Policy and timetable to launch.

6.2 Windfarm cable landfall proposal:

RK said NE had put in an objection, but nothing heard from Centrica so far.

6.3 Boal Quay and Fisher Fleet, King's Lynn:

JL said the Fisher Fleet Phase One was going ahead. Phase Two was shelved because of objections. Phase One was approved, but in ABP's area of jurisdiction and Harbour Revision Order was being put through. He was not sure of time-scale. RK suggested there might be a need for an appropriate assessment.

With Boal Quay, the NRA link has been shelved. Link proposed from the Ouse for 250 berth marina now at the Boal. Proposals are a concern because of implications of dredging and disposal. Time frame is 2009 start, but there is also a proposal for a plant to recycle used paper half mile away and there are issues about discharges.

MT commented that Regulations have now changed to make it complex for the disposal of arisings.

7. AOB:

7.1 Proposed consultation response from FMB to Centrica:

RK said there had been no conclusion on an issue touched on at the FMG on whether to write as a group/board, objecting to Centrica's proposals to cable lay through the Wash on a plan or project basis. He wondered if this issue was a big enough one to justify the management group/board doing so; though time has passed, may not be too late.

MM felt it could be justified for an organisation outside the management group, but thought the Members of the board would be in favour.

JL reminded the meeting that, in the past, as these were plans and projects, it was appropriate to leave it to statutory authorities who will be consulted anyway. RK agreed the management group/board was not a competent authority.

JL added, something else might be of equal importance in future to some members as the Centrica issue is to us at the moment, but others may disagree. DF asked if there was a set of criteria we could use that are exceptional. GD wondered if there is any situation where these may necessarily be exceptional to everyone. RK said there is argument about National Grid not being adequate.

PR pointed out, on-going activity is the focus of the management group, not plans and projects; we are right to be concerned about the right plans and projects processes being pursued, but that is where our responsibility ends as a group.

MM summarised that it was probably not appropriate and we can advise the FMG/B accordingly. The meeting agreed.

7.2 Apache Attack Helicopter (AH) and the Wash Ranges:

RK said NE had taken a strong line on this issue. A letter had been written, but there was no response yet. It was interesting that MOD never came with view on activities in the Wash; they have a consent for the broad activity. There is pressure on other authorities to meet regulations and NE expects MoD to as well.

PR explained the background, that involved the MoD not consulting as they should before introducing AH to the Wash.

JG offered to find out what is going on at RAF Holbeach and report back in due course.

7.3 PR said he knew of some retiring and some new Members following recent local elections but asked the meeting to keep him up to speed with any known changes to Member representation within authorities, to keep records and liaison on track. It was stated that KL&WNBC's Appointment to outside bodies was taking place on June 28th.

Action – attendees to update PR on Member representation as/when appropriate.

8. Date of next meeting & 9. Summary and conclusion:

MM confirmed we would 'e' conference for next meeting if possible, noting the good representation and input at this meeting for which he thanked everyone. He summarised that we now have a clear steer on the way forward. He concluded by thanking NE for use of their office at Roads Farmhouse and to George Dann for representing SHIDB and the WLMA over recent years, who he was now handing over to Lou Mayer.

