

## Essex Coastal Forum – Meeting Minutes

<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	
<b>Time:</b>	12.30pm – 14.30pm	
<b>Venue:</b>	Committee Room 1	
<b>Chairman:</b>	Cllr John Jowers (JJ)	
<b>Attendees:</b>	Cllr John Lamb (JLamb) Cllr Nick Turner (NT) Mike Badger (MB) Phil Sturges (PS) Beverley McClean (BM) Andrew St Joseph (ASJ) Cllr Nigel Edey Peter Garrett Cllr Ray Howard  Alex Cooper Lucy Shepherd Mark Johnson (MJ) John Lindsey (JL) Nicky Spurr (NS)	Southend Borough Council Tendring District Council Tendring District Council Natural England Colchester Borough Council Essex Coastal Organisation (ECO) Essex County Council (ECC) Maldon District Council Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (ECC Rep)/Castle Point Borough Council RSPB ECC Flood Partnerships Manager Environment Agency Environment Agency Coastal Officer , ECC
<b>In attendance:</b>	Matthew Brown (MBr) Richard Titchener Lisa White	ECC (Bid Development Officer) Sea-Change Note Taker, ECC
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cllr Tracey Chapman Cllr Keith Hudson Shaun Scrutton Roy Read	Essex County Council Rochford District Council Rochford District Council Maldon District Council

### 2. Coastal Communities Fund / Flood Resilience Pathfinder Funding Streams: Matthew Brown (ECC)

#### A. Community Flooding Resilience Pathfinder Bid,

MBr advised that ECC have submitted an expression of interest to bid to DEFRA for a £250,000 project to raise awareness about flood risk in caravan parks. If successful in the 1<sup>st</sup> preliminary stage, then a further 1 – 2 month period will be available to develop the full bid.

#### B. Coastal Communities Fund

The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of this funding stream is due to be announced within the next 1 – 2 months. There will be a maximum bid value of £½ million, with only one bid being able to be led by any one organisation (although no limit to the total number of projects which an organisation can support).

The main focus will be on economic regeneration and economic growth in coastal communities( including job creation), with both capital and revenue elements being able to be incorporated. ECC was successful in the last round in a bid led by Suffolk County Council, and in partnership regarding Norfolk in wind and energy sectors, with Essex benefitting from a number of apprenticeships particularly in Tendring and Colchester. Cllr Jowers recognised that economic regeneration is becoming increasingly evident in decisions made by planning inspectors.

#### **Comments from Mark Johnson (EA)**

Following a previous action point, a paper re work with caravan parks in Norfolk and Suffolk had been circulated. The work had proved to be successful and ties in with the bid that has been put in by ECC.

NT – How do caravan sites receive flood warnings? MJ – Once registered, they would receive warnings either by text or telephone calls which had replaced the old system which used sirens.

NS – stated that due to potential to link with surface water issues of interest to the Flood Management team, that the application is focused for the first year on Maldon, with the transfer of knowledge to other sites to be undertaken in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. JJ – understands a need for a focus to the work, but would not wish undue attention to be focused on the Maldon District to the detriment of other areas. ASJ – ECO are in touch with a number of caravan sites. Very hard to get local staff in national caravan park companies to take an interest to increase their knowledge about flood risk although some sites already have done so.

**Post Meeting Note** : unfortunately the application for the Flood Resilience Pathfinder funding stream (caravans) was unsuccessful.

### **3. Presentation re partnership funding for Flood and Coastal Erosion/Flood defence schemes – John Lindsay**

Following consultation, Defra have announced a new approach to funding. There will be changes in the way projects will be delivered and funded. Partnership funding will be required for the great majority of schemes and will be increasingly important. It will also mean that local communities can have a greater say in projects which are undertaken. The new approach will result in an increase in benefits delivered with more properties protected and more money being spent in the flood risk area. 2012/13 is a transitional year for the new policy. JL – agreed for slides to be circulated.

JJ - Highlighted this as a very important change and a total change in the way schemes will be delivered and funded. Cllr Jowers advised his support for the 2.7% increase in the local levy contribution. RH – paid tribute to Cllr Jowers feeling support for the 2.7% increase, during this difficult economic climate, is admirable not least as this stance also influences others to find this funding within their organisations.

#### **Questions following the presentation**

JLamb - Whilst it is possible to measure the number of households where water has come over the threshold, the situation is very different re coastal erosion, where the frontage is a cliff that could subside and take a property with it. MJ- advised he would look into this as he considered it represented a coastal erosion risk rather than flood risk and hence the assessment of benefits would be undertaken through the coastal erosion outcome measure.

**Action MJ : To feed back to ECF re how coastal erosion risk would be treated in the new funding scheme.**

**Post Meeting Note :** EA advise that properties likely to be affected by coastal erosion risk are measured using Outcome Measure 3. To count as a benefit under OM3, OM3b and OM3c they must be expected to incur direct damage (i.e. those where occupancy would no longer be safe and the property is expected to receive structural damage).

JLamb also queried whether the monitoring and management of saltmarsh to ensure minimisation of foreshore erosion (which can cause issues for coast protection), can be used as part of the partnership funding to get additional funding for the area. His query was particularly relevant, given that Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) will be taking on the responsibility for monitoring Ramsar / MCZ sites.

**Action MJ : to feed back to ECF whether IFCA's work managing saltmarsh can be included as a contribution of partnership funding in the calculator**

NT – enquired whether this is just another way for Natural England to increase quantities of saltmarsh? He understood that the figures re loss of this habitat had reduced from 50 ha pa to 2.5 hectares every 10 years. Ensuring this figure is correct is important as saltmarsh has a major impact on shoreline and landowners. MJ – advised an addendum to the SMP had been completed and had been previously reported to back to the ECF. This has taken account of future predictions and the required compensatory habitat and revised saltmarsh loss figures to 1.1 ha per annum. PS – confirmed there had been a change in saltmarsh figures but this was due to differing methodology and scientific development but there was still a deficit which needs to be dealt with.

**Action MJ : to forward the SMP addendum for circulation to the ECF**

LS – provided an update from ECC's flood management team and discussed how they use the new partnership funding calculator process. She felt the process was generally a good one for drawing down partnership funding, but raised concerns over lack of consistency. She advised that the operator of the calculator is responsible for determining the value of hospitals and schools and key highway networks (which do not form part of the outcome measures) and that this led to lack of consistency depending on who operated the calculator.

JL – advised that the partnership funding process was relatively new and that rates would likely to change and revisions be required.

JLamb – advised IFCA's would be responsible for management and enforcement of sites but would be given no money to do so.

RH – asked whether there could be linkages with the LEP to draw down funding as it was noted that Cllr David Finch represents Essex at that meeting. MJ – saw LEP structure as an excellent opportunity to attract funding, he advised the new Anglian LEP has authorised funding for the Ipswich flood defence scheme. It was considered possible that regional growth funds might in the future be able to be used as matched funding.

ASJ – stressed that with 300 miles in the county and such a large variety of different land owners including wildfowlers, farmers and householders, that it would be very difficult to quantify the economic benefits from this range of interests. He also commented that the General Drainage Charge already represents one form of partnership funding. MJ – advised that he / EA are always happy to have further

discussions with ECO regarding work. JL's presentation summarises how the schemes work but is specifically geared around capital income. ASJ – much greater clarity is required regarding what should be included in costs and benefits of schemes especially if there is a need to look for extra funds. Some landowners are currently maintaining their sea walls and it was felt this should be counted as a contribution. MJ – replied that this represents revenue not capital contribution and partnership funding relates to capital schemes.

JLamb has concerns regarding FDGIA as he felt a number of schemes which had previously received 100% FDGIA funding would now drop out of receiving this. This would place a greater demand on the local levy, with a reduction available for local schemes. MJ – feedback received from DEFRA that including the contributions being made by partners, the total amount being spent on flood and coastal erosion management had increased.

Cllr Jowers - advised that ECC also likely to agree 5% rise in levy for the Thames, to make ECC's contribution approx. £680,000. If it is possible to encourage third parties to contribute funding e.g. RSPB, this will mean additional schemes can become viable. ASJ – As the Local Flood Defence Committee no longer exists it is necessary to ensure the right level of local input is achieved to carry these issues forward. Cllr Jowers – the Essex Coastal Forum together with the Essex Flood Management Partnership is the opportunity to provide this input.

RH – asked for reassurance that maintenance will be continued as he was concerned that local levy funds previously used for maintenance might be diverted to FDGIA projects. MJ – advised that some of the levy will be spent on maintenance.

NT – suggested ECF might be able to be a one stop shop for funding. Cllr Jowers – could be difficult due to the input of other bodies such as the LEP. The ECF would need to focus on finding specific bodies which could fund a local community proportion.

Discussion took place regarding Hole Haven creek and whether the nature conservation designation would be changing.

**Action PS – would provide confirmation regarding the designation status of Hole Haven Creek.**

#### **4. Election of Chairman – JJ/All**

Due to the fact that this body only meets twice a year, it was agreed that a 2 year term of office for the position of chairman would be more appropriate. There were no other nominees for this position - Cllr John Lamb proposed Cllr John Jowers' (Nick Turner seconded) re-election to position of Chairman – this was agreed by all.

Cllr John Jowers gave notice that he would not stand again after this next period of office.

#### **5. Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) update**

MJ – circulated a draft “Shoreline Snippets” to update stakeholder regarding SMP progress. Comments were sought by Members after which the update would be shared on partners' websites.

**Action all : to advise any comments regarding the draft Shoreline Snippets back to MJ by end of January**

He also provided a governance update that the ECF has previously agreed to provide the democratic input for the SMP. All Elected Members Forum members had been emailed proposing the EMF is abolished with democratic responsibilities transferring to the ECF. All except for 1 of the partners have responded positively and this transfer was therefore agreed by Members.

MJ - advised that the Client Steering Group (CSG) had met in November to review the SMP Action Plan, however due to the need for wider circulation / comment of the Action Plan within the partner organisations, it was not possible to circulate the Action Plan at this stage to Members. Following the sign off of the final SMP, it had been agreed that a revision to the CSG Terms of Reference was appropriate and that the Shoreline Management Plan Working Group (SMPWG) would be established to take on these responsibilities. MJ advised that the minutes of the CSG meeting would be forwarded to Members.

**Action MJ : to forward minutes of the Nov CSG meeting for distribution**

Change protocol – a previous version, had been discussed by the ECF in the past, where concerns had been expressed that too many decisions would be authorised below elected member level. This final version had been produced nationally by the Environment Agency involving many different partners. It was agreed major and more moderate changes would be discussed at the ECF with minor changes e.g. grammar and text to be agreed by the officer group.

**Action MJ : to share the SMP change process via circulation with the meeting minutes.**

ASJ – felt the CSG needed to be more open as they had met in the past without the ability for others to be involved. It was clarified that the proposed terms of reference for the SMPWG included ECO in its membership. RH – asked it be noted that he has confidence in officers and work undertaken in their professional meetings.

**6. Coastal Action Plan – JJ/NS**

NS – advised a draft Coastal Action Plan had been circulated to Members and officers but had had a disappointingly low response. It was therefore proposed and agreed that actions would be taken forward, where appropriate, through the following topic based workstreams.

- SMP
- Caravans
- Coastal defence
- Coastal monitoring (through Essex Coastal Wardens)
- Increasing coastal access

Cllr J Jowers – advised the Marine and Coastal Access Act will have a continuous coastal route. The development of circular routes along with opening for specific weekends would support this work. It is preferable to be ahead of the game than reactive. ASJ – felt there was mileage to improve experience of what people get when they use existing routes. He advised he was not in favour of opening up new routes without careful consideration as there is a need for some quiet areas.

Cllr J Jowers – considered that the benefits of tourism need to be carefully balanced with an increase in access. The creation of new routes everywhere would not be suitable. It was noted that the consent of land owners would be required.

RH – Outlined the greenway project (Benfleet to Thurrock peninsular) where RSPB were encouraging coastal access, however if an area was particularly sensitive for birds they would direct people around and not through the site.

## **7. RFCC updates – EA/RFCC Members**

This was discussed earlier in the meeting

## **8. Terms of reference – Cllr Jowers**

Changes to the ECF Terms of reference agreed  
SMPWG terms of reference agreed as drafted.

## **9. Future Coastal Conferences – Nicky Spurr**

NS - highlighted that through involvement in the SUSCOD project, there had been 2 Essex Coastal Conferences held over the last 2 years which had focused on flood management /planning and coastal economy/regeneration. A further conference will be held later this year with the proposed theme of “community involvement at the coast” which could encompass both partnership funding, the coastal warden scheme and also the 1953 floods.

It would be necessary to consider the value that members placed on these conferences to decide how they could be funded in the future once the EU project “SUSCOD” had finished.

## **10. Regular Agenda items**

- Reports from meetings attended

It was agreed that these had been sufficiently discussed throughout the meeting.

- Issues or best practice examples for Forum’s attention

NS highlighted the current consultation re proposed Marine Conservation Zone designations and advised Members that copies were available for the proposed sites for designation in 2013 in Essex

- Legislation updates – none to report
- Review of Performance of the Forum

Cllr Jowers valued this opportunity for Members to say what they want they think. All agreed they were happy.

- Notes and Actions from last meetings

Minutes were agreed.

Action Points – all action points had been completed with the exception of the action for NS to ascertain how many of the 28 prioritised project in the Integrated County Strategy (ICS) related to the coast and communities of Essex. NS explained that this had been difficult to complete given many actions in the ICS included elements of relevance to the coast, though there did not appear to be much that was significantly focused on just coastal action. Members agreed to note this and the action was agreed cleared.

## **11. Date of next meeting :**

RH supported the venue for the last meeting and Members agreed a visit to Clacton for the next meeting would be of interest. NT advised that everyone would be most welcome in Tendring and he would contact June Clare to sort arrangements.

**Action Mike Badger : to liaise with June Clare and Nicky Spurr re arrangements for next meeting in Clacton.**

## **12. Any Other Business**

LS suggested that the Coastal Forum may like to be involved in discussing potential flood alleviation schemes across Essex. The Essex Partnership for Flood Management (local flood risk group) will be discussing this at their April meeting, and voting on the principles for which sites should be prioritised in future. A further aim is to ensure that multiple outcomes are achieved for a number of flood risk organisations where possible. Feedback from the Coastal Forum suggested that coastal flood risk and erosion schemes are very large-scale capital schemes in comparison, and it may be difficult to align these with the delivery of smaller local schemes. Cllr Jowers felt that the Coastal Forum should have some input into this area of work and hence it was agreed that the 'Medium Term Plan' for Essex flood defence schemes could be shared with the Coastal Forum.

**Action : John Lindsay to forward copy of the Medium Term Plan for circulation**

JLamb – recommended the TV programme “Is our weather getting worse?” which was previously broadcasted on Channel 4. He advised the programme had been backed by scientists and that it would be worth getting hold of a copy to show the members and put on show at the next conference. Climate change and weather.

**Action NS : to investigate possibility of acquiring a copy of the TV programme “Is our weather getting worse?”**

NS – Thames Estuary 2100 liaison had successfully been established, who had considered attending the meeting. An update will be sought to bring to the next ECF meeting

JJ : An event will be held on 31<sup>st</sup> January in Chelmsford Cathedral to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the 1953 floods. Cllr Jowers has invited a number of people but anyone present today who wished to attend should let NS know at the end of the meeting.

### **Post Meeting Note**

The next meeting will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> July in TDC offices in Weeley and will also involve a site visit to the Tendring coastline – further details will be circulated nearer to the meeting.

Action (from 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2013)	Owner(s)
<b>To provide information to ECF re how coastal erosion risk would be treated in the new funding scheme</b>	MJ
<b>To feed back to ECF whether IFCA's work managing saltmarsh can be included as a contribution of partnership funding in the calculator</b>	MJ
<b>To forward the SMP addendum for circulation to the ECF</b>	MJ
<b>To provide confirmation regarding the designation status of Hole Haven Creek.</b>	PS
<b>To advise any comments regarding the draft Shoreline Snippets back to MJ by end of January</b>	All
<b>To forward minutes of the Nov CSG meeting for distribution</b>	MJ
<b>To forward copy of the SMP change process for circulation</b>	MJ
<b>To forward copy of the Medium Term Plan for circulation</b>	JL
<b>To investigate possibility of acquiring a copy of the TV programme "Is our weather getting worse?"</b>	NS