

Meeting of the Coastal Group Chairs and National Strategic Overview Team

2-4pm, 27th March 2014 (telecom)

Attendees

Andy Bradbury (ABr) - Southern Coastal Group
Mark Johnson (MJ) – East Anglia Coastal Group
Carl Green (CG) - North West Coastal Group
Dave Harris (DH) –Severn Estuary Coastal Group
Philip Rees (PR) – South West Coastal Group
Louise Pennington (LP) – Natural Resources Wales, Senior Coastal Advisor
Wendy Brooks (WB), Nick Hardiman (NH) and Laura Henley (LH) - Environment Agency, Strategic Overview team
Anne Thurston (AT) – Environment Agency, FCRM Senior Advisor (Asset performance & Engineering)
Eleanor Heron (EH) – Environment Agency, Research Scientist
Alison Baptiste (ABa) and Sally Sudworth (SS) – Environment Agency, National Recovery Programme

Apologies

Bryan Curtis (BC) – South East Coastal Group and Chair of Chairs
Peter Woods (PW) – North East Coastal Group
Emyr Williams (EW) – Cardigan Bay Coastal Group
Jim Hutchison (JH) – Environment Agency Regional Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, Anglian Region

1. Welcome and actions from last meeting

NH to speak to MJ about Anglian NCERM issues – a way forward was agreed at the East Anglia coastal group

LP to speak to NH about NRW involvement in NCERM updates – NH to get a date in the diary to do this

MJ to circulate the 'knowledge capture' reports – MJ to forward to NH to send out to the coastal community

NH to circulate the list of local contacts (regional habitat creation programme coordinators) and the national report - completed

All to send invoices for claims up to October to NH – all processed except for DH

NH to confirm the date of the next coastal practitioners' workshop – completed (30th April – 1st May)

NH to confirm position re CGC attendance at RFCC meetings – completed. All CGCs to attend RFCC meetings if they don't already do so

BC to send WB and NH a list of the meetings he attends – to be completed.

NH/AB to send round the broad timescales for the national coastal monitoring programme review – completed

NH to circulate a copy of the Coastal Concordat once it is published – completed

NH to circulate the draft copy of the definitions document for coastal works - completed

NH to send any relevant MMO updates to the group between meetings - completed

To note: the North Devon and Somerset Coastal Advisory Group have now joined the South West Coastal Group. The others groups that form the Bristol Channel Strategic Group will join the Severn Estuary Coastal Group.

ACTION: DH to confirm new Coastal Group arrangements in the Bristol Channel with NH by email.

2. Recovery programme

ABa presented paper 2 on the recent floods including information on response and recovery.

There is £30m recovery money for 13/14 for urgent repairs to defences and £100m for 2014/15. The deadline for completing work is the end of October 2014 to ensure we are prepared for winter. There is a further £140m to be spread over the next two years:

14/15 - £60m capital, £20m revenue (+ £15m revenue carried over from existing recovery pot)

15/16 - £25m capital, £35m revenue (+£20m revenue carried over from existing recovery pot)

ABa is currently in discussion with contractors who will help to deliver this programme of works. Processes are being streamlined in order to meet the October deadline. We are also looking at packaging up EA and LA work together for contractors.

ABa will be handing over to SS from 1st April as she will be starting her new role as Deputy Director of Strategy Development.

ABa asked for a CGC to sit on the project board to provide a LA perspective. AB volunteered for this role.

ACTION: ABa to send a briefing note to WB to clarify the allocation process and packaging of work under the WEM framework so LAs are aware of the offer.

ABa commented that LAs need to speak to Area FCRMs to discuss the detail of their schemes as her team don't have the resource to contact every LA (there are already over 1,000 bids) where insufficient information has been provided.

BC has sent a request to all Coastal Groups for information on local authority coast protection asset condition for the purposes of informing the Environment Agency's 'state of the nation's defences' report to Government on 12th April. The deadline for submitting this information within the template provided is 2nd April in order to get a more complete picture of the repair work that is required. It is acknowledged that the information is being gathered on a 'best endeavours' basis given the lack of resource and therefore won't be directly comparable to the inspections being supported by the armed forces.

All applications for repair work in the recovery programme need to be submitted to by the 8th April (22nd April for Somerset). Applications will not be considered after this date.

MJ – Boston and East Lindsay have not submitted information on asset condition for the report, but otherwise a fairly comprehensive picture provided. Anglian Region has streamlined approvals (through LPRG Lite) and there is a quick turnaround on applications – the process is working! There is joint responsibility from LPRG and Area staff to discuss what work is appropriate to make the LPRG reviewer's job easier.

PR – Cornwall Council are struggling to complete asset inspections due to a lack of technical staff and the number of locations (around 400). This means it is difficult for them to either provide information for the state of the nation report or submit bids for money by the deadline. It was suggested that PR could ask the Cabinet member to write to Government, requesting more time. Also the LGA have a MoU whereby a LA can request resource from other areas of the country where LAs have not been as affected. PR to raise this with Cornwall Council.

There are also issues with damage to third party coastal assets e.g. harbour walls and breakwaters and who is responsible for their repair. Most of these will only have a partial flood risk benefit so how do we proportion the funding?

CG – all inspections and urgent repair work has been completed. CG is confident in a full submission of information for the report.

AB – there were some queries with the reporting template. AB hasn't had any responses back yet. We're likely to need to use the recovery bid submissions as a proxy. Need to ensure that beach management schemes are picked up in the process. AB has been looking at sites in SE to see how they have responded to the storms. The erosion rate witnessed over the winter is equivalent to 5-20 years of erosion and 50% of the total number of storms in the last ten years happened in 2013-14.

DH – not aware of any significant damage to coastal assets.

There will be time to reflect on the learning from the floods at the next CGCs meeting, which will be a face-to-face meeting. Graham Wilson and SS to attend.

EH asked the group to consider any new R&D ideas or priorities following the storms and subsequent flooding.

NRW coastal review – North Wales was impacted in December 2013, followed by the West and Southern coast in January, where the impacts were more widespread. NRW are undertaking a review of both events and all 15 coastal LAs in Wales are involved. The [Phase 1 report](#) looks at the impacts, repair costs and work needed. An estimated £8.1m of damage was caused to coastal defences in Wales during the storms in December and January. The Phase 2 report will focus on the lessons learned and recommendations and is due to be published in May.

£7.2m is currently available for repairs (with £1m of this going to NRW and the rest to LAs). £1.6m will also support businesses and tourism.

There were significant impacts to Network Rail assets (that also act as defences in some areas) however LP commented that it was difficult to engage with transport and utility providers when writing the report. JBA are currently looking at risks to Network Rail infrastructure and are running a pilot on the West coast which may be extended to the rest of the coastline.

3. SMP reporting and Section 18

CG is a member of the risk management authority steering group for the 2013-14 National FCERM (Section 18) report, representing Coastal Groups and district authorities. Emma Thomson (EA) is aiming to have a first draft by the end of April which will then be shared with Defra in May. Final internal approvals will happen in June, with publication before summer recess on the 22nd July.

A pro-forma has been sent to other RMA partners (water companies, ADA and Highways Agency) to request information on their involvement in FCRM over the past year. Any information that is normally collected via the Coastal Groups will automatically be fed through to s18 reporting.

ACTION: All to use the pro forma to capture any key National coastal issues they would like included in the S18 report and send to CG.

CG asked how best to collect information on numbers of properties lost due to coastal erosion and properties that are now uninhabitable due to coastal erosion. All agreed that the applications for the coastal erosion assistance grant would give a good picture of loss.

MJ raised the issue of availability of capital funding for adaptation, following on from the coastal pathfinder projects. WB highlighted that there is an ongoing R&D project reviewing the pathfinder schemes as the new processes are embedded. Evaluation needs to happen before a decision can be made about funding.

SMP reporting spreadsheets are due back to NH by **April 16th**. Clarity is needed over reporting actions classified as 'not done'. There may be a number of reasons why an action hasn't been completed e.g. not due to start until next epoch. This needs to be reflected in the summary report.

4. R&D

EH has returned from maternity leave and has taken the lead on coastal projects back from Owen Tarrant. The briefing note lists projects that have secured funding for 2014-15. Unfortunately the proposal to find a means to increase accessibility of Futurecoast didn't secure funding through the Joint Programme which is disappointing. EH is currently looking into other routes to get this work delivered. Support from Coastal Groups would be welcome. AB has already written a letter to Andy Moores to protest against the decision.

A presentation on the sand engine project in the Netherlands can be found on the SCOPAC website [here](#).

There have been some changes to the evidence themes – they are now 'policy, strategy and investment (WB sits on this group), 'incident management and modelling' and 'asset management' (AB sits on this group).

5. Coastal Group resourcing and future strategic work

There is £65k available for 14/15 to resource CGC activities. We will have at least one face-to-face meeting a year and the remainder will be via telecom. The coastal practitioners' workshop at the end of April also provides an opportunity to meet face-to-face.

6. Update items

Multi-coloured manual update – the 2013 update of the handbook (that accompanies the manual) is now available online www.mcm-online.co.uk/ to registered users and the website will be further

enhanced in May for public use, to increase transparency in the economic appraisal process. There are workshops organised for the 9th April and 15th May to allow input from LAs to help develop the website.

Partnership Funding Review - has now been completed but since the meeting we have learned that publication is on hold due to Defra concerns about aspects of content in relation to the recent floods.

Environment Agency change programme – from 1st April the Environment Agency will move from a three-tier to a two-tier structure and Regions will no longer exist. Regional services will move to Areas or National, for example emergency planning, programming and modelling. In time, the Areas will be re-named. There are no changes yet to current Area contacts. WB's team still sit under Strategy & Investment at Head Office, reporting to Alison Baptiste. New structures will be in place by 1st October. If a Coastal Group is covered by two separate Area teams, there will be a local decision as to which leads the relationship with the Coastal Group.

Floods Directive – the flood risk and hazard maps were published before Christmas and there have been good levels of usage by the public during the flooding. One issue that has been raised is that the colours on the maps are hard to distinguish by those with colour blindness. No other issues were raised by CGCs at the meeting.

Flood risk management plans have to be produced and published by December 2015. They will contain information from SMPs on coastal flooding (information on erosion is not required under the Floods Directive, although can be supplied). Whilst the current intention is that CFMPs will be subsumed into FRMPs, SMPs will remain as separate documents. FRMPs will be assessed against the Habitats Directive, as they are 'new plans' – however, we will seek to avoid unnecessary duplication by incorporating/referencing existing assessments of SMPs and CFMPs where possible and only doing new work where the development of the FRMP itself engenders changes to management policies, involves a change to the environmental baseline or results in new 'in-combination effects' on sites. The SMP change process will continue to operate and SMP updates will trigger updates to the FRMP, with associated assessments captured as required. The consultation timetable for FRMPs has changed to fit with the RBMP consultation for WFD in September. The consultation period for FRMPs will however only be for three months, rather than six, to allow LAs more time to finalise and approve the plans, especially as there will be elections in May 2015. This could open up consultation again on SMPs. Discussions are ongoing with SEPA regarding the cross-border catchments. FRMPs will be covered in more detail at the CGC face-to-face meeting.

7. AOB

NRW – expecting sign-off of SMP2 for the Severn Estuary in May.

Next CGCs meeting to be arranged for w/c 23rd June and it will be a face-to-face meeting. Location to be confirmed.

Summary of actions

ACTION: BC to send WB and NH a list of the meetings he attends (action carried over from previous meeting)

ACTION: MJ to send NH the 'knowledge capture' reports to forward on to the wider coastal community (action carried over from previous meeting)

ACTION: DH to confirm new Coastal Group arrangements in the Bristol Channel with NH by email.

ACTION: ABa to send a briefing note to WB to clarify the allocation process and packaging of work under the WEM framework so LAs are aware of the offer.

ACTION: All to use the pro forma to capture any key coastal issues they would like included in the S18 report and send to CG.