

Meeting of the Coastal Group Chairs and National Strategic Overview Team

18th July 2014, Nobel House, London

Meeting summary and actions

Attendees

Peter Woods – NE Coastal Group Chair
Mark Johnson – E Anglia Coastal Group Chair
Bryan Curtis – SE Coastal Group Chair / Overall Chairman
Sam Cope – Southern Coastal Group (on behalf of Andy Bradbury)
Philip Rees – SW Coastal Group Chair
Dave Harris – Bristol Channel Coastal Group Chair
Emyr Williams – Welsh Coastal Groups
Carl Green – NW Coastal Group Chair

Wendy Brooks - EA FCRM Strategic Overview Manager (via telecom)
Nick Hardiman – EA FCRM Strategic Overview Senior Coastal Advisor
Laura Henley – EA FCRM Strategic Overview Officer
Graham Wilson – EA National Coastal Flood Risk Programme
Carol Holt – EA FCRM Learning and Recovery Programme
Eleanor Heron – EA Evidence Research Scientist
Mike Steel – EA FCRM Mapping Modelling & Data Senior Advisor
Will Wakefield – Defra FCRM Policy Advisor

Apologies

Andy Bradbury – Southern Coastal Group Chair
Louise Pennington – NRW FCRM Senior Coastal Advisor
Anne Thurston – EA FCRM Asset Performance & Engineering Senior Advisor

1. Welcome and actions from last meeting

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

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

ACTION: DH to confirm new Coastal Group arrangements in the Bristol Channel with NH by email – completed (see agenda item 10).

ACTION: Alison Baptiste 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 - completed.

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 - completed.

2. National Coastal Monitoring Programme

The winter storms have delayed progress. AB is currently pulling together the information he has received on current successes and efficiencies. This will be completed by the end of July and then sent to the Project Board, followed by a first meeting of the officers/delivery group.

3. Data

The EA has formed a user-group looking at open data (data available to the public for free) and Kate Marks has written to AB inviting him to join the group (**Minutes paper 1**). The group will work with Defra and the Cabinet Office.

How accessible is SMP data? Is it still an issue?

ACTION 1: All CGCs to check how easy it is to access the raw data for their local SMPs and report back to NH.

ACTION 2: NH to collate this picture nationally so that any issues can be identified and addressed together.

NH is finalising the form A for a 4 year programme of NCERM updates. The work will go out to tender to encourage competition and new ideas. The project will start in September or early October. LAs will be asked to submit updates rather than a full systematic review being carried out at this stage. The project will hopefully seek to make improvements to NCERM data in forthcoming years, such as by including metadata and linking more effectively with the Coastal Monitoring Programme and AIMS, as well as being gradually brought in-house.

ACTION 3: NH will ask CGCs to start brigading members to collate updates they would like to see in NCERM in late August/September so that the project can 'hit the ground running' when contracts are finalised.

4. Learning and recovery from the winter storms

The recovery programme is progressing well. 329 projects have been completed (37% of the programme) and up to the end of June, £50 million has been spent. 312 LA projects were approved and 40% of those have been completed.

The flood envoy role is scaling down. Three ministers were due to continue but this may have changed following the cabinet re-shuffle.

We are currently facing some pressures in relation to working on beaches during the summer due to tourism. In other places, temporary repairs have been undertaken to provide protection to properties this winter, with a more permanent solution to follow later. By 31st October, subject to weather, the standard of protection to the projects on the most urgent programme will be restored.

A learning update is due to go to the EA Board on the 11th of September and four factual summaries will be published externally. EA Areas will share their local reports with LRFs. The NAO are also producing a report.

ACTION 4: CH to distribute presentation and confirm if the final document to EA Board (or a summary) can be shared with CGCs and LAs.

Some recommendations from the CGCs included: clarification on charges for using the military; using the coastal monitoring programme to provide relevant wave and tide information; re-mapping of coastal risk maps as this is essential information for planning evacuations; powers to remove 'storm tourists' from promenades and other areas not classed as highways.

The State of the Nation report is not yet published. The short timescales for the assets inspections were because we needed the information to inform funding requests. The lack of consistent coastal asset data is an issue as they aren't on AIMS. We need an interim position and agreed lines to take in preparation for this winter. A CGC needs to be involved in these discussions.

ACTION 5: WB to speak to AT about AIMS and work up an options paper in relation to coastal flood risk management assets.

ACTION 6: CGCs to discuss the recovery programme at their Coastal Group meetings and encourage LAs to submit claims for expenditure.

Marine licensing of LA recovery schemes – NH has a meeting with the MMO on 30th July to look at LA licensing of recovery work, and will pick up again after 2 weeks leave 4-18 August to ensure MMO discussions have taken place and any outstanding issues or uncertainties can be addressed quickly.

Briefing notes on Marine Licensing for emergency works and for beach management were distributed to CGCs in January and are re-attached with these minutes (**Minutes papers 2 and 3**).

5. Local authority capacity to deliver the FCRM programme

John Riby submitted a paper to the RFCC Coastal Members meeting in April 2014 on the issue of LA capacity to deliver against the 6 year programme when revenue budgets are routinely cut and capital budgets are thinly spread across a range of services, creating much risk in the programme. There was concern that LA staff are being instructed only to act as project clients and not to be involved in project management, which may also result in a skills gap.

The EA needs to look strategically and map what resource is needed to deliver the 6-year programme and compare that with what currently exists.

A LA Capacity Building Advisory Board has been established and they are looking for a CG member to sit on that group to improve engagement with District authorities. This is a LA-led group, with EA, Defra (Roger Orpin), ICE, CIWEM and Leeds University involved. It replaces the EA/Defra led capacity building board and merges it with LANDFORM. The issues in John Riby's paper were echoed (unprompted) at the meeting held on 17th July.

3 partnership funding workshops are planned for September/October as well as 4 to 6 half day seminars this financial year covering topics such as emergency planning, SUDS, land management and flood investigations. The group are also looking at options for future versions of the Foundation Engineering degree and continued e-learning courses. **Minutes paper 4 – briefing note; Minutes paper 5 - ToR**

ACTION 7: A CG member, Chair or RFCC Coastal Member to volunteer as a representative on the LA capacity building advisory board to represent coastal issues and provide a link back to CGs. Please respond to NH by end of August.

6. Planning and R&D update and discussion

Partnership Funding pack: MJ shared the East Anglia CG partnership funding pack. EA and LA staff worked together to pull together relevant reference information to answer the questions that are likely to be asked when starting the process. The pack is available on the [East Anglia coastal group](#) website along with a number of case studies. This initiative was strongly welcomed by the CGCs who noted the potential to use it across the country.

North Norfolk DC has written to MPs to highlight the issue of adaptation to coastal change in No Active Intervention areas. There is currently no way of funding this. Defra have responded to this.

Defra work on adaptation: The ERYC-led, Defra-funded project on Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) ended last summer and WW and NH are now encouraging ERYC to finalise a guidance document for dissemination. The guidance needs to be shortened to make it more succinct, but it essentially sets out the steps required for identifying and designating CCMAs in a four-stage approach, in 10-15 pages. Background information will be in an appendix.

There are potential issues with sharing the document as it doesn't meet the criteria for publishing on gov.uk. Possible alternatives could be the Coastal Group websites and the EA/Defra research pages. It was suggested that we need a coastal 'library' to collate all the relevant guidance in one place, as there is a concern that gov.uk will entail the loss of a substantial amount of reference material.

ACTION 8: LH and WW to speak to EA and Defra colleagues regarding the transfer of information to gov.uk from archive pages, what information will be lost and how it might be retained elsewhere in an accessible way for practitioners.

ACTION 9: CGCs to search on gov.uk for documents they refer to and report any issues to NH

A tender has gone out for a 6 month research project, starting in September, looking at the outcomes of the relevant coastal change pathfinder schemes. (**Minutes paper 6**). The work will further explore the feasibility of roll-back and relocation options for LAs building on the pathfinder experience, to explore if it is possible to replicate in other areas and how it would be funded. Findings from the 5 pathfinder projects that undertook rollback will be compared. It is likely that Defra will be able to provide an update at the next Stakeholder Forum in November.

Note that a review of the pathfinder projects was produced and circulated after the 18-month projects had formally concluded, in recognition that many of the initiatives are of course ongoing. Details are attached (**Minutes papers 7 and 8**).

EA/Defra R&D programme: EH shared a briefing note, providing an update on the ongoing coastal research activities within the joint EA/Defra Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Programme. The group confirmed that they liked the format of the update and would like to continue to receive them. The beach modelling project has just finished and there was a webinar to explain the outcomes. There is a link to this in the briefing note.

One of the key bits of R&D this year is looking at options for withdrawing maintenance from existing defences at the coast. Defra will look at asset transfer to third parties and associated liabilities, whilst the EA will look at the practicalities of withdrawing maintenance, health and safety and environmental implications etc. It is envisaged that a practical information resource will be produced for practitioners as a result. Involvement from Coastal Group/ RFCC coastal members would be welcome, as the project governance is currently being established. MJ volunteered to be involved in this. Specification is attached (**Minutes paper 9 – note the Defra elements of this paper are changing currently**)

with list of coastal R&D ideas in discussion in the CORDDI framework (**to be circulated by EH**). EW has sent EH information on similar work in Fairbourne, Wales that should tie in with this project.

ACTION 10: CGCs to provide feedback to EH on the ideas for coastal R&D projects

Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs): The FRMP [scoping reports](#) have now been published on gov.uk as well as the guidance documents. PSO teams are progressing the plans and LLFAs (and some District authorities) have inputted measures into the FRMP database which informs what goes into the plans. The split is roughly 50% EA actions and 50% LA actions. A paper went to the RFCC chairs who were supportive of this partnership approach. There is a FRMP lead for each RFCC. On the 20th August, the plans will go to Paul Leinster for approval and then they will be uploaded to the e-consultation tool on 22nd September. The consultation questions are currently being drafted for approval by the board.

SMPs will remain alongside FRMPs, and will remain the main point of reference for LAs and the EA when engaging with the public. They will be kept live and current by means of the established change process (already distributed but re-attached as **Minutes paper 10**. Note this will shortly be updated to reflect new EA structures). Whilst it is unlikely that the FRMPs consultation will lead to changing anything in existing SMPs, any changes that are proposed will have to go through this change process, which is overseen by Coastal Groups. However, the FRMPs will draw SMP information together with information on other types of risk and link this with WFD objectives, forming a crucial link between flood and more general water management more clearly through strategic planning.

Some areas (Wessex, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk) are including erosion information in the FRMP database but this won't appear in the final plans unless agreed with LAs. We encourage LAs to enter (or agree for EA teams to enter) erosion information into the database as this is where we can collate all risk information for this and future FRMP cycles. Information being in the database does not automatically entail it being in the FRMP itself.

ACTION 11: NH to continue to liaise with EA Area teams to encourage work with LAs to populate the database.

ACTION 12: CGCs to encourage members to engage with this process, and to provide them with clarity about how FRMPs and SMPs will sit together as per above.

SMP reporting: Thank you for your efforts in SMP reporting this year. The high-level summary statistics regarding progress with actions will appear in the 2013-14 National FCERM (section 18) report along with the key messages that were discussed at the last meeting.

Changes to SMPs continue to trickle through, e.g. at Thorpeness in Suffolk. NH is updating the change process in light of new EA structures and will re-distribute and seek publication. Major changes are to be signed off by the relevant EA Area Manager (rather than Regional Directors, now discontinued as a post) and communicated on CG websites.

ACTION 13: NH to produce summary statistics from this year's SMP reporting and share with the CGCs

ACTION 14: NH to circulate updated change process once complete.

7. AIMS: progress and stage 2

AT provided a written update:

The first phase of Creating Asset Management Capacity (CAMC) provided a replacement for NFCDD – AIMS. The intention in the initial business case was to make this system available to LAs, and as such the EA provided funding into a project to allow access via Government Gateway. However, Government Gateway is planned to be discontinued which has meant there is currently no viable way to provide external access. A few RMAs have trialled the use of the system via Connect 2. Whilst the feedback was that AIMS is actually quite good to use, accessing it via Connect 2 was very problematic, and so would not be a successful solution long term.

During this time, most LAs have needed to create / continue to use their own systems for recording their assets and condition, to comply with the FWMA requirement to maintain an asset register. This has further decreased the number of LAs who are actively seeking to use AIMS. However, almost all organisations we have canvassed have shown a desire to be able to view EA asset data, and exchange data with their own systems. A paper has been circulated to FCRM Directors Board to discuss options for providing external use, and how best we can meet the needs of all organisations for sharing data if AIMS cannot be accessed.

In terms of AIMS developments in house, we are working on CAMC phase 2, which will enable us to consistently schedule our maintenance activities, include a wider range of assets (e.g. Public Safety Risk assessment sites), and we are also developing an App to do asset inspections and PSRA inspections on an iPad.

This news was very disappointing and CGCs were keen to have it confirmed that all technical routes had been explored for LA access. It will be hard for LAs and the EA to work in partnership if we can't share data. It was suggested that LA officers could access the system via EA offices.

ACTION 15: AT to provide clarity on the options being proposed and share the outcomes from the paper for the FCRM Directors' Board on AIMS in a briefing.

8. Legal requirements surrounding groyne markers

Suffolk DC and Waveney DC have been working with Trinity House regarding navigation markers on groynes. They have managed to save money by agreeing that there only needs to be a marker every 4th groyne rather than on every one.

9. ABC1 – the new NaFRA

This project looks at the requirements and associated benefits of better flood risk information. It is being referred to as 'ABC1', which stands for 'A Blank Canvas', to reflect the Environment Agency's intention to explore all options for providing better flood risk information. It was originally started to support the fall-back flood insurance option but now Flood Re is the preferred option it is continuing in its own right. In February and March, internal teams were asked about the data they currently use and their needs. From April to June there was external consultation and now the draft report is out for comment (**Minutes paper 11**, comment form **Minutes paper 12**).

It is currently weak on coastal aspects so CGCs input will be much appreciated. We are looking for information on data gaps – does the data that currently exists meet your required needs? What other data do you need? What do you want to use it for? We are looking especially for validation of the

assumptions made by each stakeholder/partner about the potential for better risk information to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

ACTION 16: CGCs to provide comments on the draft ABC1 report (using the comments sheet) to Eddie Robinson by **8th August** – eddie.robinson@rhdhv.com (cc Mike Steel mike.steel@environment-agency.gov.uk).

10. Activities and administration

Bristol Channel Coastal Group: The SW coastal group have now incorporated the North Devon and Somerset SMP group. The Bristol Channel CG is now a more strategic group with the focus back on the Severn Estuary (covering only 1 SMP).

Finance: There is £65k available this year for CGCs strategic activities and over the next few years. It was agreed that every other meeting would be a face-to-face meeting (twice a year), with a joint meeting with RFCC coastal members annually, most likely tagged on to the annual coastal practitioners event. It was agreed that such a meeting would be a full morning meeting after an overnight stay as the last RFCC members meeting was far too squeezed for time.

ACTION 17: CGCs to submit their accounts by or on the 1st October to enable NH to keep track of spending.

Recent international liaison: BC recently attended an ‘influentials’ meeting in Holland to share information and see first-hand some of the approaches being used. The level of risk and therefore the whole approach to coastal flood (largely) risk management is of a different order of magnitude. They offer residents a 1 in 100,000 level of warning service and people are aware of the risks and what protection has been provided. Other risk management actions include the sand engine and dwelling mounds for farmers who wish to remain on their land rather than re-locate to an area at lower risk. Notwithstanding the differences, there are always parallels and innovations from the Dutch experience from which we can learn and vice-versa.

ICE coastal conference 2015: BC will pick out the highlights of his visit for the ICE coastal management conference to be held in the Netherlands 9-11th September 2015. This is the first time it will be held outside of the UK. The topics and themes are available on the [ICE website](#). BC is working on the programme and encouraged the CGCs to submit abstracts by 31st July.

Stakeholder Forum: It was felt that there was more of an inland focus at the last Defra Stakeholder Forum in May. It would be good to see more coastal items next time, not just in relation to flooding. Items on the agenda should at least include a coastal perspective where relevant. The date of the next meeting is 11th November 2014.

ACTION 18: NH to contact CGCs when the organisation starts for the November Stakeholder Forum meeting to suggest coastal agenda items, or ensure the coast is captured in cross-cutting items.

Next meeting: November teleconference, plus an opportunity to see each other at the Stakeholder Forum. January/February next face to face. April face to face with RFCC coastal members at the coastal practitioners event in Blackpool.

ACTION 19: NH to get dates in the calendars in August.

Summary of actions

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