

NORTH EAST COASTAL GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT ROYAL YORK HOTEL, YORK ON FRIDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2009 AT 10.00 AM

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| Present: | Mr J Riby | Scarborough BC (Chairman) |
| | Ms A Baptiste | Environment Agency |
| | Mr R Belfield | Lincolnshire County Council |
| | Mr P Briggs | Alnwick DC |
| | Ms R Bendell | Northumberland County Council |
| | Mr C Budzynski | Berwick upon Tweed BC |
| | Mr R Caudwell | Chairman of Anglian North RFDC |
| | Mr A Coulson | Hartlepool BC |
| | Mr M Dugher | Environment Agency |
| | Mr T Gurr | Blyth Valley BC |
| | Mr A Gill | Environment Agency |
| | Mr D Hancock | Hartlepool BC |
| | Ms J Hines | Environment Agency |
| | Mr C Holliday | North East Lincs Council |
| | Mr P Holmes | Environment Agency |
| | Mr A Hunter | Port of Tyne Authority |
| | Mr J Hutchison | Environment Agency |
| | Mr J Pickles | East Riding of Yorkshire Council |
| | Mr S Longstaff | Easington District Council |
| | Mr B Marley | Environment Agency |
| | Mr J Rice | Sunderland City Council |
| | Mr S Rowe | Scarborough BC |
| | Ms A Shorland | East Lindsey District Council |
| | Mr T Straker | Wansbeck DC |
| | Mr N Tribe | Natural England |
| | Mr J Walker | Chairman of Yorkshire RFDC |
| | Mr S Wilson | South Tyneside MBC |
| | Mr P Winn | Environment Agency |
| | Mr P Wood | PD Ports |
| | Mr P Woods | North Tyneside MBC |
| | Mr P Welton | Environment Agency |
| | Mr I Williams | Scottish Borders Council |
| | Mr P Younge | Environment Agency |

01/09 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman drew to the attention of the meeting that Chris Budzynski, Terry Gurr and Trevor Straker were retiring on 31 March and this would be their last meeting as representatives of their respective authorities. He thanked them for their valuable contributions and wished them well for the future.

02/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Ball, Aisling Lannin, Frank Major, Len Selvaratnam, Stan Timmins, Alan Todd, Ed Wallage and Susan Wilson. Apologies for lateness were received from Nick Tribe and Phil Younge.

03/09 MINUTES

It was agreed to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2008 without amendment.

04/09 MATTERS ARISING

a) Embedding Coastal Management – The Coastal Overview

Further to Minute 4/08, Jeremy Walker said it now seemed likely that RFDCs would not be given levy raising powers for coastal schemes. However, it should be possible to use levy funding for coastal works. He hoped that the situation would be clarified in the draft Floods and Water Bill intended to be published in Spring 2009.

b) RFDCs – Update

It was agreed to make this a standing item with a report from the respective Chairman [Action:RFDC Chairs]

05/09 REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE (NECG/09/01)

It was agreed to approve the revised Terms of Reference as set out in the paper.

06/09 ELECTED MEMBER INVOLVEMENT (NECG/09/02)

The Chairman submitted a paper on the role of Elected Members in Coastal Groups.

He proposed to invite Elected Members to attend the annual meeting and to copy the Minutes of all the NECG meetings to the respective Executive Member for information. However, he invited comments from the meeting.

Robert Caudwell, Chairman of Anglian Northern RFDC commented on coast protection representation on the RFDCs. It was proving difficult to be consistent. However all the RFDC Chairmen favoured keeping a local authority bare majority. Most RFDCs already had Elected Members with coastal experience and the Chairmen were keen to maintain that position.

It was agreed to ask the three RFDC Chairs to use their best endeavours to ensure that coastal interests are adequately represented on the RFDCs [Action: RC/FM/JW]

Chris Budzynski said it was important to have a degree of political input into the Coastal Groups. In his particular area he was concerned that coastal issues had been underestimated in the new unitary authority (Northumberland).

It was agreed to flag these concerns with the new Chief Executives of Northumberland and Durham Councils [Action: JR to write to CE's]

The Chairman encouraged members to pass on this paper to Elected Members and to forward any comments to him [Action: all]

Subject to any further comments and a minor change to table 1 on the position of the Coastal Groups(as advocated by Alison Baptiste) on the delivery of coastal management in England, it was agreed to proceed on the basis of the proposals in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.6 of the paper.

07/09 BUDGET, COSTS AND FEE STRUCTURE [NECG/09/03]

The Chairman submitted a report on the proposed fee structure for 2009/10.

With regard to funding from the Environment Agency, he had received confirmation of funding of £10,000 for each Group for 2008/09 with an appropriate sum promised for 2009/10 and thereafter.

It was agreed to:

- a) Keep the NECG Member fee at £350 per annum.
- b) Not charge 'Associate Members' a fee
- c) Not charge 'Associate Members' for agendas and minutes and to consider charging for other hard copy documents on a case by case basis.
- d) Note that the Environment Agency will pay for all meeting costs from the income received, other than the annual meeting to be funded in accordance with Paragraph 1.14.1 of the Constitution.
- e) Note that the proposals will be put to the Annual meeting in October.
- f) Note that a budget will be presented at the next meeting following confirmation of national funding for 2009/10.

[Action:JR/BM]

08/09 NATIONAL COASTAL FORUM MEETING [NECG/09/04]

The Chairman presented a report on outcomes from the National Coastal Forum Meeting held on 5 February 2009.

Alison Baptiste explained her own role as National Coastal Policy Manager along with the roles of Jim Hutchison and Jenny Hines. They would be supported by Emma Thompson on communications and another team member on stakeholder engagement. At least one member of the team would attend NECG meetings.

The Chairman said he would send out the note of the Coastal Forum meeting with the Minutes [Action: JR/BM]

The Chairman then highlighted exception items from his report as follows:

SMP2s: No change in the situation in this area in that all three plans were on programme.

Coastal Engagement and Erosion Maps: Currently working with Environment Agency staff to produce a communications strategy for

engagement with affected communities. Defra had offered £900k nationally to support the process. It was agreed to bring this back to NECG for endorsement and buy-in to the process [Action: AB]

SMPs, Coastal Strategies and Coastal Monitoring: It was agreed to draw up a schedule of coastal strategies to be put to each NECG meeting to keep members informed of progress.[Action:All]

Adaptation, Planning and Mapping: There is a draft Defra consultation due later in the year which will have a greater focus on supporting communities.

Richard Belfield said that Lincolnshire County Council was part way through a detailed planning study to inform the next stage of the Regional Spatial Strategy in EMDA.

Jeremy Pickles said that East Riding of Yorkshire Council were involved in the Defra consultation and were pushing hard for closer involvement with coastal communities and for use of the adaptation toolkit for Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

Improving our Working Partnership on the Coast: As the first year of the Agency's the Coastal Overview role drew to a close, feedback was sought on how it was working for local authorities in terms of people, processes and systems. The NECG commented as follows:

- **People:** There remained some issues about knowing who to contact, but this was getting better. At Area level, it was noted that the first point of contacts were Mike Dugher (Anglian North), Adrian Gill (Yorkshire) and Phil Welton (North East). There remained a few concerns about adequate arrangements for succession planning to take on board turnover of staff.
- **Processes:** Environment Agency involvement was good and getting better, but there remained some issues surrounding consistency of approach. Local authorities were generally satisfied with the way the Agency carried out consultations but there was room for improvement eg on CFMP consultation.
- **Systems:** Generally OK in terms of ease of access to documents and efficiency and approval of payments.

It was noted that Coastal Groups were seen as an effective model for managing the risk from sea flooding and coastal erosion. As a consequence David Rooke had written to the Local Government Association to set up something similar for Inland flooding.

It was agreed to submit the NECG's comments to David Rooke as appropriate [Action: JR]

Skills and Workforce Planning: It was agreed to develop a skills questionnaire to be sent out to NECG members [Action: JR/PY]

09/09 ANNUAL MEETING 2009

Richard Belfield outlined the draft programme for the Annual Meeting to be held on 14 October 2009 at The Epic Centre, Lincolnshire Showground.

There would be a mix of business items, workshops and local field trips. Further details would be supplied later [Action: RB]

10/09 PITT ANNOUNCEMENT IMPLICATIONS FOR EA AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Attention was drawn to the letter from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Minister for Local Government to Council Leaders. This set out the Government's response to the Pitt Review with particular reference to local authority roles in flood risk management and the engagement with the Environment Agency and the water and sewerage companies.

Richard Belfield said that Lincolnshire County Council had developed a 'Framework for strategic and drainage management in Lincolnshire' and this was being seen as a model for good practice.

Generally speaking the reaction to the Pitt Review had been positive with many good examples of collaborative working.

One such example included collaboration between North Yorkshire County Council and the districts in North Yorkshire to look at the response to the Pitt Review from an operational perspective. This was being investigated at Scrutiny Committee level.

The NECG noted the report.

11/09 NECG WEBSITE

Stewart Rowe said that this remained work in progress. However, a domain name had been selected (www.northeastcoastalgroup.org.uk) and he was working to an indicative budget of £5k per annum. He expected that the site would be operational in the next few weeks. He hoped that there would be some consistency surrounding all the Coastal Group websites.[Action:SR]

On the issue of consistency, Alison Baptiste said that Emma Thompson would try to ensure that this happened with support from Bryan Curtis.

12/09 REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAMME AND THE PROPOSED NATIONAL PROGRAMME

Stewart Rowe updated the NECG on the progress of the Regional Monitoring Programme and on the national work being undertaken by Professor Andy Bradbury of the Channel Coastal Observatory. He would soon be making a submission to the National Review Group (NRG) for a 5-year National Monitoring Programme.[Action:SR]

Stewart said it was intended to hold a workshop on updating coastal findings in the NECG's area and he hoped to incorporate this into the programme for the NECG Annual meeting in October.

In reply to the Chairman on ways of getting benefit and feedback Stewart said it was still early in the process but there would be opportunities to receive progress reports via the cell wide website when set up.

Jim Hutchison said that the Agency had encouraged Professor Bradbury to address communications issues as part of his submission.

13/09 SMP2 ACTION PLANS AND NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Jim Hutchison submitted an update on outputs from the Quality Review Group including the production of a lessons learned report and action plan based on the first five SMP2s produced so far. This would hopefully help to aid the production of future SMPs. Other work included the inter-relationship between coastal strategies, WFD guidance and SMPs.

Philip Winn said that a meeting had been held in Leeds on 23 February between the Agency, Local Authorities and other partners to discuss the EA/LA interface for NI189. There had been a useful exchange of views and some progress made. However, it had been agreed to hold further one-to-one discussions to agree on a process for reporting on LA performance in years 2 and 3.

It was noted that there remained a lack of clarity over who to contact in the Environment Agency. This was particularly apparent where local authorities dealt with more than one Environment Agency Region.

Philip Winn said that some progress had been made at the Leeds meeting on local authority contacts and it was agreed that the Agency and local authorities needed to work together to tackle these communications issues [Action:PW]

14/09 COASTAL STRATEGIES – STATUS AND PROPOSALS FOR ANY UPDATES, INCLUDING ROLE OF NEW COASTAL OFFICERS

Philip Winn undertook to issue a list of EA coastal officers with a description of their roles and their geographical areas [Action: PW]

Richard Belfield updated the Group on the Climate Change Adaptation Study on the Lincolnshire Coastline. More detailed information would be incorporated into the programme for the Annual meeting in October. [Action: RB]

In reply to a question from the Chairman on climate change impacts on the coast, Jim Hutchison said that SMPs used the most up-to-date information from 2006 but new data would soon come on stream in line with the publication of the next generation of data under UKCIP09.

It was agreed that local authorities provide to the Agency a list for information of all ongoing strategies to enable updates to be provided at each meeting and reports on an exception basis [Action: All]

15/09 ACHIEVEMENT OF LA BUDGET IN 2008/09 AND PROPOSALS FOR 2009/10

It was noted that details of allocations for 2009/10 and indicative allocations for 2010/11 and 2011/12 had been circulated to local authorities by email.

The NECG discussed ways of monitoring spending against the budget.

Mike Dugher suggested this should be done via the Regional Asset Investment Planning teams because they already tracked this sort of information as part of their budget monitoring role.

It was agreed to:

- i) Invite the Agency to produce a regular financial monitoring report for NECG meetings.
- ii) Invite a financial officer from a local authority and an asset management team member from the Agency to attend a future NECG meeting to give their perspectives on financial monitoring of coastal schemes. [Action:JR/BM]

16/09 JOINT LA/EA COASTAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The NECG discussed training issues linked to submissions to National Review Group.

Phil Younge said it would be useful for planning purposes for local authorities to let the Agency know their schedules in terms of NRG submissions.

It was agreed to:

- i) Invite Jenny Buffrey, NRG Technical Manager, to attend a future NECG meeting to explain the NRG submissions process [Action: AB]
- ii) Bring to NECG a schedule of NRG and PAB meetings for 12 months and to look at ways of reporting back on outcomes and lessons learned [Action: BM]

17/09 MARINE MANAGEMENT HQ LOCATION

The Chairman reported that the location of the MMO Headquarters would be on Tyneside.

The Chairman undertook to invite the Chief Executive of the MMO to a future NECG meeting after the relocation had taken place [Action:JR]

18/09 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) National Coastal Erosion Mapping Project

Alison Baptiste informed the NECG of this project to collect historical data.

b) Coastal Partnerships

Alison Baptiste referred to a project sponsored by the LGA SIG and the Coastal Partnerships Working Group to look at the benefits of working with coastal partnerships.

19/09 NEXT MEETING

Friday, 19 June 2009 at 10.00 am at Hilton Hotel, York.