

Forum Report Spring 2008 Minutes and Feedback



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Section 1: Presentation Summaries

1. Update from the Exe Estuary Officer, Jennifer Lockett

Themes of the Partnership: The work plan of the partnership has been divided into 5 key areas; community work, public awareness, forum, partnership and supporting strategies.

The progress so far in each of these areas, since the employment of the Estuary Officer is as follows:

Site Visits: Extensive site visits to learn more about the Estuary e.g. with DSF and NE

Meetings with Officers: Met with each Officer to discuss role and their aspirations.

Community Work

Education:

- 4 sessions with Lymptstone Primary school group to aid creation of mural for section of wall on Exe Estuary Trail.
- 12 Educational sessions delivered at Exmouth LNR to 290 students
- 2 Education sessions delivered at Dawlish Warren to 58 students.

Volunteer Opportunities: 1 day delivered for Environ on Old Sludge Beds

Estuary Clean up Event:

- Successful autumn event delivered at 4 locations with 50 + volunteers, sponsorship from Halcrow.
- Spring 2008 event an even bigger success with over 70 volunteers involved, 4 locations, sponsorship from the Environment Agency and help from local shell fisherman Myles Blood-smyth to remove the waste collected at Exmouth

Exe Action and Issue Groups:

- Action Group to create Recreation leaflet for Exe
- Exe Action group to discuss creation and role of Friends of group
- Issue group to discuss disturbance resulting in sponsorship of £20,000 from EA for disturbance study.
- Action group to organise 1st clean up event

Public Awareness

Exe Explorer leaflet: Updated in 2007 and again for March 2008. Distributed to appropriate locations

Recreation Leaflet: Created through task group and almost completed

Website: Changed to live link and site redesigned, soon to be relaunched.

Newsletter: Autumn and spring edition produced and sent to homes, organisations, TICs, etc

Forum:

- Autumn forum relaunched the partnership and generated crucial feedback
- Spring Forum currently taking place

Partnership

Partnership Meetings: 2 Officers working group and Management Partnership meetings

Promoting the Partnership: 2 radio interviews given, numerous press articles and presentations given to local community groups.

Representation of Partnership: Attendance at appropriate meetings / conferences locally and nationally.

Supporting Strategies: Key dissemination role in Coastal Management Study, created Action Plan for 08/09.

If you would like a copy of the 08/09 Action plan to view the objectives that are hoped to be achieved for the remainder of the year please let me know (jenny.lockett@devon.gov.uk / 01392 382236) It will also be available on the new website once this has been launched in a few weeks time.

2. Update on the Coastal Management Study from Chief Engineer of East Devon District Council Mike Baker

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Flood defence of the Estuary and adjacent Communities, with particular regard to

- Dawlish Warren
- Exmouth Sea Front
- Environmental condition of the Warren
- Amenity value of Dawlish Warren beaches
- Security of the railway lines flanking the Exe.

Coastal Evolution Analysis

- Literature review
- Storms analysis (10 yrs)
- Historical mapping analysis (150 yrs)
- Aerial photography analysis (60 yrs)
- Beach profile analysis (10 yrs)
- LIDAR analysis (10 yrs)
- One-line modelling (predictive)
- Boolean modelling (predictive)

Coastal Evolution Analysis

- Exmouth undeveloped and unprotected in early 19 century, and was still a mobile sand spit.
- Analysis shows that Dawlish Warren has rotated 15° to 20° anticlockwise since 1853.
- Evidence of “distal” end having been lost over a short period of time but subsequently recovering.

Issues Identified

- Exmouth
 - Overall loss of sand.
 - Increased exposure to SW Storms.

- Estuary
 - Increased exposure to SE Storms – more wave action.
- Dawlish Warren
 - Changing environmental conditions
 - Effectiveness and resilience as a flood defence.
 - Beaches for visitors.

Consultation Programme

- July 08 - Draft Initial Findings Report.
- September 08 - Review by Project Board
- October 08 - Report available on Exe Estuary Forum website
- October 08 to January 09 - Consultation Period.
- Spring 09 – Inclusion of IFR into SMP2

3. Summary of the Shoreline Management Plan 2 – Mike Baker

The SMP is the National shoreline defence strategy which the Coastal Management Study will feed in to.

What Is An SMP?

- A non-statutory document
- Recommends coastal management policy
- Strategic level

What Does It Do?

- Identifies sustainable coastal management options.
- Assist coastal management decision making.
- Forms part of the Government's strategy.

Government Strategy

To manage flooding and erosion risks taking into account, i.e:

- Social issues.
- Environment issues.
- Economic issues.

SMP 2 will provide:

- More emphasis on improved links with the planning system;
- More consideration of effects on the environment; and
- Longer-term coastal policies.

Time periods

- Short term: 0 to 20 years
- Medium term 20 to 50 years
- Long term 50 to 100 years.

The recommended SMP2 policies are:

- Hold the existing defence line;
- Advance the existing defence line;
- Managed realignment; and
- No active intervention.

Stakeholder Consultation

- Decide the stakeholder consultation process;
- Identify the stakeholders, their status and contact details; and
- Contact stakeholders and inform them of the SMP process.

3. Navigation Changes in the Exe Estuary by River and Canal Manager for Exeter City Council Jack Nott

- A summary of the types of Buoys and markers used by Exeter City Council in the Estuary.

Changes to the Channel

The sand bank in the mouth of the Estuary, known as Pole Sands, has been gradually shifting closer to the Exmouth bank. So far the navigation has been managed to move in line with this shift and has therefore also moved closer towards Exmouth. It is no longer safe to continue this route and the navigation will therefore be changed to redirect users around the West side of Pole Sands. The buoyage will be changed by the end of July.

Updating the Admiralty Chart

As the admiralty chart will need to be updated to reflect these navigation changes there is an opportunity to look at other improvements that could be made to the channel. The afternoon workshop sessions will discuss suggested improvements.

Section 2: Workshop Session Notes

1. Exe Estuary Management Partnership:

An opportunity to put forward project ideas, discuss the partnership's use of promotional material, and the role of the partnership

Issues faced by the Partnership:

- No overall statutory authority but partners do have
- The role of the Forum has changed over recent years and is now unclear to some
- There is a noticeable lack of users of the Estuary attending the Forum. This can be partly attributed to the date chosen for the Forum as it coincides with the more active spring season. There is concern that it may also be due to the users feeling a lack of connection with the partnership and forum.
- There is still some concern at the transition from Focus Groups to Exe Task and Issue Groups. It is felt that issues will now be discussed in isolation and that the communication network that the focus groups created has been jeopardised. However the group agreed that the partnership must be sustainable so must look to diversify the activities that it delivers in order to secure long-term funding. By streamlining the focus groups to address individual issues as they occur or achieve tangible outcomes the Estuary Officer can spend time on community

projects, such as education, that were not previously delivered by the partnership.

- The profile of the partnership has been diminished due to the 2 year gap without an Estuary Officer and the subsequent changes to the structure and function of the partnership. The partnership now needs to do what it can to rebuild this profile.
- The partnership needs to communicate with local user groups to emphasise the benefits of engaging with it, why it should be supported and help people to understand what it does / what it's role is. It is hoped that as the partnership continues to implement new methods of engaging and proves its role as a community organisation the value of it will be evident.

2. Navigation: A chance to make suggestions as to how buoyage in the Estuary can be improved as well as an update on navigation changes to the mouth of the estuary.

- Define channel to minor locations such as Starcross and Retreat
- Improve 3rd party Marus
 1. Transco
 2. Clyst
- Minor channel improvements such as to No. 11
- Future Luxuries e.g. sector lights

3. Conservation: The Estuary is a delicate balance of wildlife and human use; this is your opportunity to discuss the protection and use of the Estuary with Natural England Officer Mel Parker.

Designations on the Estuary: Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and RAMSAR site (international designation).

- Designated as a SSSI in 1986 it is a UK designation linked to WCA and CROW
- Designated as an SPA in 1992 which under the EU Habitats Regulation
- The Estuary is of International Importance for wintering wildfowl such as Brent Geese, Wigeon, Ringed Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, and Avocet.
- Also rare plant species in ditches on Exminster Marshes
- The sandbanks and mudflats support nationally significant populations of invertebrates.
- Orcombe Rocks are a key geological feature under SSSI.
- Shallow coastal waters and intertidal and subtidal boulder and cobble scar comms, such as the mussel and cockle beds, are important habitats under SPA
- Designations mean that all competent authorities have a responsibility to protect the identified features.
- Consent must be applied for from Natural England for any proposal/ operation likely to damage or disturb the features. Under the SPA requirements stringent steps must be followed before any permission is granted and if a proposal does go ahead due to over riding public interest then the developer must take steps to provide compensatory habitat.
- Prosecution is possible for those who deliberately damage or disturb the features of the SSSI.
- Aim of SPA is to conserve habitat of qualifying birds to ensure their survival within the EU

Issues discussed:

- Groynes for protecting Dawlish Warren. Some members of the local tourism group were concerned that the coastal management study would come out with management options that weren't objective (they thought Defra and council's would all opt for the cheapest option). Martin Davies (EA) reassured them that the CMS process gathers environmental and socio-economic data and that models will run through scenarios of different management options, showing the consequences of each.
- There was some concern that Dawlish Warren will never achieve Favourable Condition Status because of the groynes and un-natural maintenance of the beach for socio-economic reasons
- Residents of Exmouth were worried about the declining numbers of wintering wildfowl that they see on the LNR. We talked about national trends and the fact that there are more wildfowl being spotted further up the estuary and I directed them to the WeBS data (can you put a link in?)
- One lady thought that the shadows from the kite surfers' kites in the Duck Pond at Exmouth were disturbing wildlife because they look like predators and startle waterfowl, etc.
- A few mentioned that they had seen the shape of Little Bull Hill changing and they thought it was a result of excessive mussel fishing. Sarah Clark (DSFC) explained that all dredging in the estuary is now illegal which should ensure that mussel fishing is better controlled on the Exe in the future, and also that there will be natural changes in shape of Little Bull Hill.
- People were concerned that the proposals for an ASDA on the estuary side at Exmouth are already set in stone and they were very unhappy that such a development should be allowed on such a special site. I explained that I have only seen preliminary plans and that no formal planning proposals have been made yet. Also, that NE is involved in the planning process and is working with RSPB and EDDC to raise all necessary environmental concerns and force them to consider measures to mitigate / remove any potential negative impact of the development on nature conservation in the Exe. I tried to encourage them to think of environmental enhancement opportunities that we could require from developers.

4. Sustainable Energy: Is the Exe a source of energy? What are the opportunities for supporting the energy demands of our local communities and if so what would be the consequences to the habitats and wildlife of the Exe?

1. What factors favour the development of micro generation on the Exe?

- Funding available for microgeneration projects
- Cost of fossil fuels differential will reduce pay back.
- Planning may become easier
- Community involvement – payback to community
- Can learn from elsewhere e.g. Europe
- Independents – cost less on central government now
- Peoples attitudes can change
- Monetary aspect may help bring about change
- Tidal, wind, wave and tributaries – small / repeat
- Guaranteed tide twice a day
- Deep water harbour – 30 meters generator depth
- Construction – fast flow

- Lots of locations
 - Significant local population giving customers on both sides
 - Technology might be coming on stream - joint enterprise
 - Climate is right – main stream
 - Community commercial facility
2. What factors will stop the development of micro generation on the Exe?
- Who owns resource? SW stream / river? Needs statutory regulation.
 - Legal implications of a community scheme – legal status
 - How easy is it to get the community to come together
 - Is it easier to go on as we are?
 - Reaction of energy suppliers.
 - Who manages it?
 - Initial investment???
 - Time to do it
 - Conservation / wildlife
 - Businesses
 - Where is the leadership – who is going to do it?
 - Planning system and statutory designation, conflict of interest.

Section 3: Feedback from Attendees

1. Were you happy with the format of the Forum? What suggestions would you make to improve it?

Yes : 93%

Not Sure

No 7%

Comments:

- “It was good to have some presentations and also an opportunity for feedback in smaller groups. May be the presentation topics didn’t have a wide enough appeal? Not that many people came.”
- “A great deal was packed into the 4 hours session so perhaps it may be best in future to limit the topics. And 11 till 3 spoils the whole day: What about 9 – 1? A fine venue!”
- “I enjoyed the sessions and the variety. Could we have sticky labels next time so we can put our names on – would help with meeting people.”
- “Better advertising / contacts so that more people and younger people attend. Perhaps VI farmers could be invited to attend as a representative group”.
- “I think that an evening meeting –mid week might be better attended”.
- “Very well run”.
- “First time I’ve been”.
- “Very disappointed yet again no representation from natural England or Network Rail present to comment on Halcrow report. I also feel Teignbridge District Council also let you down by failing to arrive”.
- “The format worked well, but I don’t think it should be used for every Forum. I prefer the format to be varied; lectures, field trips, debates etc.”
- “It covered the aspects on the agenda reasonably well but there was no facility to raise other issues.”

2. Were you satisfied with the general level of information given?

Yes 100%

Not Sure

No

Comments:

- “About right for a Saturday morning”
- “The navigation presentation was a little too long and detailed”

- “This was excellent. The information given was clear and concise and focused from all the presenters”
- “A great deal of useful information given in detail which could be easily understood”.
- “Topics on agenda were ok”.
- “Very informative”.
- “Partnership update – very good, Navigation Changes – very good, Coastal Management Plan – no update – poor, Shoreline Management Plan – did not happen – poor.”

3. Did you find the event useful?

Yes 100%

Not Sure

No

Comments:

- “Always good to keep up to date with CMS and interesting to hear Jack’s talk about navigation and buoys”
- “Very helpful that the participants brought knowledge and information (and attitudes) from a wide range of backgrounds”.
- “1. Liked the update on flood study
2. Liked to see progress
3. Liked to talk to people and get different views
4. Liked to see how it all slotted together.
Met some likeminded people so we may be able to take things forward on micro generation”.
- “Opportunity to learn more about the Management Partnership and Natural England and their representatives. To network with councillors and others”.
- “It gave me much to think about and pointed to ways forward to share with my grand children. We were given a clear insight into the proposed plans for flood development and navigation”.
- “Very! Of great value to all users of the Exe; Naturalists, boating people and organisers of events for tourists and visitors etc”.
- “It gave an opportunity for people to give suggestions / feedback on the activities / actions of the partnership”.
- “Workshop was very useful (Natural England and EA)”.
- “Able to make contact with others”.
- “Forums are not just useful they are important and essential to the partnership”.

4. Were you given an opportunity to feedback your comments and ask questions?

Yes 86.8%

Not Sure

6.6%

No 6.6%

Comments:

- “Sometimes time got a bit tight for questions, but people available over lunch. It would have been useful to have, say, 20 minutes longer in the workshops”.
- “It felt very participatory. Perhaps people could have stated who they were.”
- “In many ways I found this session (in group 4) to be the most interesting and helpful. I learned a great deal and look forward to forum notes”.
- “None of the comments made in my submitted questions were referred to and there was little chance to raise them”.
- “However time scale was very tight”.
- “The small groups provide an excellent opportunity for Q & A between group leader and members of the team”.

- “The speakers over ran their allotted times which really didn’t give enough time to the question and answer sessions as productive as they could have been – this was surely the object of the exercise”.
- “Good job the EA (Martin Davis) was present”.

5. Did you find the venue suitable for the event?

Yes 100% Not Sure No

Comments:

- “Was I the only person to arrive by train?”
- “Good Food”.
- “May be an element of being out on the Estuary, mixed with an afternoon / morning of presentations would have attracted more people”.
- “Splendid. Very good facilities, and an unparalleled view of our topic”.
- “It was interesting to go around the barracks”.
- “Very good, particularly right on the Estuary
- “A pleasant and interesting venue providing an opportunity to visit the camp and an appropriate back drop - the river – to our talks and discussions”.
- “Very”.
- “The acoustics could have been better it was difficult to hear what some of the speakers were saying – particularly the deliveries from East Devon DC”.
- “Not been to any others”.
- “Easy parking, plenty of room”.
- “For this type of forum it was suitable. Riverside location very fitting. My main concern was lack of PA system hard to hear some of presentations.”

6. Do you have any preference for the Forum to be held in the Council Chamber at County Hall?

Yes Not Sure 27% No 73%

Comments:

- “Devon County Hall is better equipped with microphones and the acoustics are good. The location is more central to both sides of the Estuary”.
- “Attempt to keep it at a place on or near the Estuary – C.T.C RM was ideal”.
- “This was preferable and most conveniently situated for transport”.
- “Whoever is accessible and suits our participants”.
- “Sometimes a more informal venue is better for networking and different activities”.
- “I expect many of the participants (e.g. Town and District Councils) would be more than happy to take their share”.
- “No preference, but it’s good to balance those meetings with site visits”.
- “Not been to Council Chamber”.
- “I think that a change of venue around the Estuary provides the opportunity for those not wishing to go in to Exeter to attend. Greater accessibility”.
- “County Hall more suitable for winter functions?”

General Comments

- “Jenny Lockett is to be warmly congratulated on her organisation and management of the day which was superb. The presenters are to be congratulated too on clear, well illustrated and informative presentations”.
- “Well organised and informative day well done Jenny and all your colleagues!”

- “Buffet lunches need to include pieces of fruit”.
- “Well organised and well run – well done!”
- “Well organised informative and enjoyable”.
- “Jenny Lockett did a splendid job, she and the presenters are to be congratulated on their achievements”.
- “There is always a danger, with special interest groups of this nature, that they become impotent talk-shops with lots of minutes etc which aren’t read by anyone except participants. How can we translate good ideas into practice - perhaps using a higher education centre with environmental interests to become involved? Why not ask one of them (Plymouth?) to make a presentation, or otherwise to become involved”.
- “If the submissions of the various speakers had been set down as handouts beforehand it would have probably produced a better response than the curtailed question and answer sessions. The delivery by the Exeter City Council navigation expert was excellent.
The film which I made forty years ago of the emergency repairs to Dawlish Warren had little hearing without an accompanying dialogue or in fact any significant explanation. John Wilkinson of DARE is having a recording made to accompany history”.
- “Providing a variety agenda of talks and workshop is paramount. An evening event might be better attended as weekends are busy times for many”.
- “Food was very good.”
- “I am surprised that there were not more people present especially as this is a subject that affects all those who live in the area, particularly the younger generation. You have given me so much to report back to our committee (S.F.C.C)
- “The JAC and EEMP are different animals. I feel the demise of the Focus Groups could mean a loss of numerical support of the partnership. Each focus group had its own players and supporters, all of which felt they had a voice”.
- “Good to see the E.E. Partnership up and running”.