

Coast and Estuary Conference
Southwold Pier – 14 June 2008
Workshop Questions and Responses

WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

Generic Questions for all Groups:

- 1 What are the means by which the local community best respond to future EA flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy consultations i.e. for Alde/Ore and Deben Estuaries and the Shoreline Management Plan?
- 2 How could the local authorities (Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council) assist the local community to respond to proposed flood and coastal risk erosion polices?
- 3 How can the local community contribute to finding the solutions to the pressures of climate change and limited funding?
- 4 How do we ensure that work I the estuaries ties in with the issues to be tackled at the coast?

For Blyth Estuary Group:

- 5 How can the local community continue to forward its proposals for the management of the estuary and does it have the ability to deliver them?
- 6 Are there effective communication with the local community, businesses etc? If not, how can it be improved?

For Open Coast:

- 7 How can the local communities place themselves in a position to be able to respond effectively to the SMP draft proposals?
- 8 Where it is acknowledged that the coast will change, for example Dunwich, how best can that change be accommodated?

For Deben Estuary Group:

- 9 How can the local community work together to influence proposals for the management of the estuary and in their delivery?

For Alde/Ore Estuary Group

- 10 An option that will have to be explored is planning for a breach at Slaughden. How can the local community contribute towards assessing the advantages and disadvantages of any such proposal?

Coast and Estuary Conference
Southwold Pier – 14 June 2008
Workshop Questions and Responses

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP RESPONSES

Blyth Estuary Group 1

Question 1

- A good start has been made by the existing groups e.g. the Walberswick SOS campaign
- Seek improved communications and the sharing of objectives
- Establish a common direction for the various interests involved in the estuary
- Actions, not words, are more important
- Need to involve local businesses and insurance companies
- Offer to share the experiences gained on the Blyth Estuary with other estuary groups.

Question 2

- Natural England should work with local communities to retain and adapt the local environment
- Suffolk CC to look at main communication links of the A12 and A1095 – now that the A12 is also threatened at Toad Row
- Engagement of local authorities has taken place too late in the day.
- Waveney DC needs to invest urgently in Southwold Harbour.
- Strategic support from the Blyth Strategy Group is appreciated
- Need to view the coast as a single unit, not disparate sections.

Question 3

- Involve local businesses in effective engagement
- Can provide local knowledge of the estuary
- Forming local community groups
- Production of a newsletter
- Involvement of Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Question 4

- This meeting has helped to raise awareness of this interaction
- Learn from experience elsewhere e.g. The Netherlands
- Need to make sure that the Environment Agency views the whole coast as a single unit. Estuary Strategy Group should raise this with the Environment Agency.
- Ensure links with the Shoreline Management Plans

Coast and Estuary Conference
Southwold Pier – 14 June 2008
Workshop Questions and Responses

- Need to ensure strategies have considered all possible risks.

Question 5

- Local communities already working well but need funding (£200k) to deliver this
- Alternative funding could be provided by InterReg 4, aggregates levy, or some form of adaptation fund.
- Need for representatives outside the immediate area to understand that this issue does affect them.
- Need to work with the Environment Agency, as the responsible body, to secure funding for well-justified schemes.
- Flood defence works could be a project to be undertaken by the Royal Engineers
- Approach Regional Flood Defence Committee for funding.

Question 6

- Newsletter
- Need to engage the wider community that this is not just a local issue.

Coast and Estuary Conference
Southwold Pier – 14 June 2008
Workshop Questions and Responses

Blyth Estuary Group 2

Question 1

- Increase the scope of the consultation process
- Ensure that all interested parties are identified.
- Possible use of local authority Area Forums
- Present consultation process is too selective

Question 2

- Independent facilitator required to ensure balanced review of arguments and objectives.

Question 3

- Inputs are made but not listened to.
- Local taxation should benefit local problems

Question 4

- There is a role for an independent coordinating group to ensure that all the sub-groups' inputs are considered.
- It would be advantageous to seek overlapping or shared membership of the individual groups.

Question 5

- Blyth Estuary Group is communicating well with the EA and Natural England.
- Communication with and dissemination to the community should be improved.

Question 6

- Increase the role of the media in dissemination of issues and outcomes – also use leaflets and door drops.
- Language is important – avoid official sounding text.
- Make it “From the heart”
- Explore opportunities for funding.

Coast and Estuary Conference
Southwold Pier – 14 June 2008
Workshop Questions and Responses

Alde/Ore Estuary Group

Question 1

- Representative Group is in place – Alde/Ore Association
- The setting up of an Estuary Planning Partnership to ensure effective communication using local events.
- Need to engage with the community prior to the occurrence of major issues such as the November 2007 surge – there was concern that communication of this event took place by the broadcast media.

Question 2

- Ensuring that communities have full understanding of the issues – this is a role for the local authorities.
- Managing “overload” of technical information and the preponderance of jargon and acronyms. Make the content appropriate for the audience.
- Establishing who is responsible for implementation of the plans and for championing local cases.

Question 3

- Regional Flood Defence and Drainage Boards must be part of the delivery process but their structure needs to be more representative.
- Concern that current priorities are for schemes on the Thames and in Essex.
- Local action by local groups with resources identified locally should have a role.
- Need to be aware of the “ground rules” in advance.
- Possible funding from other sources for environmental flood defence schemes (e.g. saltmarsh creation)
- Need to avoid “politics”.
- Implementation strategy required for local action to avoid adverse issues elsewhere.
- Local community should respond with urgency rather than wait for Government to catch up.

Question 4

- “Integration” is essential and considered to be in place for the Alde/Ore.
- Needs improved community engagement

Question 10

- Not enough is understood about the effects of a breach at Slaughden to allow the pros and cons to be considered.

Coast and Estuary Conference
Southwold Pier – 14 June 2008
Workshop Questions and Responses

- Given the preceding point the feelings of the groups were that the breach should not be allowed to take place because of the uncertainty. Time was needed for further research but it was acknowledged that in 20 years time natural processes may dictate the future of the estuary.
- Throughout any such process community involvement should be allowed to continue.
- The part which Stony Ditch has to play in the management of the estuary needs to be set out.

Coast and Estuary Conference
Southwold Pier – 14 June 2008
Workshop Questions and Responses

Deben Estuary Group

Question 1

- Need public meetings
- Amass information about the Deben e.g. state of the river walls.
- Innovate to find ways by which the local community can take “ownership” of the area.

Question 2

- County Council to maintain cohesion of all estuary/coastal groups
- Need to ensure liaison with other groups outside Suffolk
- Regular forums similar to today’s
- The ICZM officer will be a vital role to this process.

Question 3

- Need to put pressure on the EA with reference to the economic criteria which they are using.
- Need time to understand climate change better.
- “Greenest County” should include flood risk and defence as an element in its classification.

Question 4

- The SMP must include consideration of the estuaries
- Again, the ICZM officer will be crucial.
- Parishes must be engaged in the process.

Question 9

- A strategy group should be formed for the River Deben.
- Wide invitation should be extended to stakeholders
- Need to communicate the extent of the flood risk and other related issues.
- Look at the factors impacting on the estuary.
- Aim to “champion” the estuary
- Learn from the experiences of the other estuary groups.

Coast and Estuary Conference
Southwold Pier – 14 June 2008
Workshop Questions and Responses

Open Coast Group

Question 3

- Shouldn't be seen as just a local issue. The whole nation benefits.
- Pragmatic view needs to be taken for the short and medium term
- Raising of funds by local precepts – difficulties in selling this to local communities.
- Example of Walberswick where the community is exploring the potential of a public-private partnership.
- Essential that the full cost implications of finding compensatory habitats are taken into account.

Question 7

- Need to ensure that the consultation process is made known to parish councils
- Potential stakeholders need to be made aware of the principal issues which affect the SMP e.g. present predictions of sea level rise.
- Major assets, such as Sizewell Power Station.

Question 8

- Important that local knowledge is brought to bear on the strategic decisions.
- Local knowledge and involvement can open up opportunities for adaptation e.g. making land available.
- Decision making to be transparent. This will help with communities' acceptance of inevitable change.
- Allow for innovation with respect to the means by which the coast is managed. Ideas may come from other than the operating authorities.
- Use the broadcast media to highlight the issues at the coast.
- Proper consideration should be given to roll-back policies on eroding coasts.
- Consider planning gain from development to fund defences.
- Plea for a flexible approach to planning at the coast.