

WORKSHOP SUMMARIES

Workshop 1. Financial Benefit Assessment of Coastal Partnerships

This workshop was delivered by Caroline Chambers, Senior Consultant from *Entec* Ltd. The remit for the research, which is funded by Defra and the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group, has been developed with full input from the Coastal Partnership Working Group (CPWG). Defra, the LGA-SIG Coastal and CPWG form the project Steering Group. The project is aimed at exploring the financial benefits that partners might enjoy through supporting Coastal Partnerships. As such, this represents a key piece of research for partners and by implication, to the partnerships themselves.

It is not the intention of the research to solve funding issues for partnerships. It may, however, provide a key element upon which partnerships can build a case for increased or continued funding when pitching to existing and new potential partners, acting as a 'hook' upon which to demonstrate how working in partnership can financially benefit a new partner, and how the core services of coastal partnerships might match the needs of potential partners. Through this innovative approach Coastal Partnerships may be able to better engage with the sectors not currently engaged. The majority of Coastal Partnerships have difficulties engaging with the full spectrum of stakeholders in coastal areas and maintain a predominant Environmental sector membership. It is anticipated that the output of this project will enable better engagement with the Social / Economic sectors so that Coastal Partnerships may become more representative of all the interests in coastal areas, and so better able to deliver various functions, if they choose.

The issues and questions being addressed were potentially highly emotional and complex. As such it was difficult to fully capture all ideas in the time available. Many of the discussions centred on broader issues of coastal partnerships and the need for them to obtain financial stability in order to underpin their work. They also covered aspects of the 'soft' benefits of coastal partnerships, which are not easy to measure or to put a financial benefit to.

Whilst the issues of financial security for coastal partnerships are long-standing and complex, this project focuses specifically on the benefits to partners. There has been a large amount of separate research into Coastal Partnerships already. The majority of this research to date has had a broad remit and drawn unclear conclusions as to the benefits to partners - which is why this project has a specific and narrow focus.

KEY POINTS:

- There are four main areas in the services delivered by coastal partnerships where there can be seen to be a financial benefit to funding partners: Facilitating; Assisting; Providing a voice and Raising Awareness
- The coastal partnerships are well-placed to provide the leadership, management and networks that can deliver these four key areas
- Coastal partnerships function best when they are balanced and representative
- Coastal partnerships provide a focus for action and a coherent voice for marine stakeholders in each locality
- Coastal partnerships help to reduce or address conflicts and manage issues through participatory processes
- The combined actions of the partnerships provide a coherent voice where the 'whole is greater than the sum of the parts'
- Working in partnership is seen to be cost effective
- The cost implications to partners in the potential absence of coastal partnerships appear hard to predict
- There are very many different potential partners who might benefit from working within coastal partnerships

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Workshop 2. North Devon Biosphere Reserve

This workshop was delivered by Andy Bell, Manager for the North Devon Biosphere and the North Devon Countryside Service. The concept of the Biosphere reserve was developed as an open, dynamic tool to reconcile nature conservation with economic development, backed up by science and education. As such it represents a real application of the Ecosystems Approach which seeks to consider the three elements of a healthy environment, socio-economic benefits and a sustainable future with equitable sharing amongst communities.

The workshop aimed to look in detail at some of the lessons learned so far in North Devon and globally about the application of the Biosphere approach, and how delegates might contribute to future directions and solution-finding as the Biosphere Reserve attempts to address marine issues more directly.

The discussion was divided in to different sections, looking at what the key issues are; mechanisms for defining seaward boundaries; appropriate levels of management; using the Ecosystems Approach and integrating conservation and resource use issues in North Devon.

KEY POINTS:

- We need to learn from the lessons of stakeholder involvement from other projects as this will be essential to help ease the passage of new legislation and by-laws regarding no-take and protection of different marine habitats – for example the St. Agnes lobster fishermen who were engaged in the process of adopting by-laws restricting fishing in their area
- What level of protection/management is provided by the AONB designation and how can this be applied to help develop the Biosphere sensitively?
- The Atlantic Array proposals highlight the need for extensive research and information in order to make appropriate decisions when large-scale projects are planned with implications across many different sectors
- There are many different potential methods for defining the seaward boundary of the Biosphere Reserve but these need to be considered alongside land-based methods, but whichever is used, it needs to have a thematic approach
- There is a need for extensive map-based information both on topography and biotopes within the marine element of the Biosphere Reserve, but also recreational activities, commerce and navigation
- It will be important to undertake a participatory approach as these boundaries are more clearly defined
- It is essential that the Biosphere builds understanding amongst stakeholders in order to avoid conflict
- Stakeholders need to be broadly but clearly defined
- The temporal scale of the vision of the project needs to be defined
- The project needs to accommodate changes both seasonal and longer-term
- Need to address the issues of the local economy and its ability to sustain all sectors whilst ensuring the environmental integrity of the Reserve is maintained
- The awareness of the local communities for the issues involved needs to be raised in order to address the issues of the local economy

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Workshop 3. The Atlantic Array

This workshop was delivered by Michael Huntingford from Farm Energy, the company undertaking the proposals for this offshore wind-farm development. The project is very much in its infancy and the team involved are very keen to ensure they capture all ideas and stakeholder concerns as the proposals move forward. They have already undertaken preliminary consultation in the local area and beyond to this end but this represented a great opportunity for members of the Forum to discuss the proposals in more depth.

The workshop was divided in to three clear sections, each section addressing the concerns of a particular sector. These sectors were: fishing, navigation and transport at sea; local infrastructure, supply chains and communities; environmental concerns.

KEP POINTS:

Fishing and shipping interests

- Exclusions zones - loss of prolific fishing ground & Displacement issues
- Transferable skills within fishing industry?
- Some positives for fish stocks?
- Effect on elasmobranches & other fish species
- Effect on the seabed benthos
- Collision risks, cable dragging
- Radar issues
- Interaction with aggregates extraction

Local infrastructure

- Critical mass for Ilfracombe to regenerate, ability of local infrastructure to cope
- Effects on tourism and leisure
- Capturing potential local benefits, Appledore, local companies, skills
- Competition with Wales
- Decommissioning issues

Marine and Terrestrial environment

- Seascape and AONBs, National Parks & light pollution
- Industrialised seascape
- Potential for contamination
- Birds displacement & collision risks
- Cables crossing sensitive intertidal areas
- Research on protection of native species
- Risks to marine mammals
- Potential for species diversification