

SEFTON COAST PARTNERSHIP

Nature Conservation and Shoreline Management Task Group

Ainsdale Discovery Centre
15th April 2005

Present: D. McAleavy (chairperson) S. White R. Northover R. Critchley P. Wisse
G. Lymbery (deputy chair) C. Bennett P. Smith

Apologies: A. Brockbank, A. Kimpton, A. Worsley

Sefton Coast Nature Conservation Strategy

ACTION

1. Proposed Officer Post

Two papers were circulated:

The Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Delivery Plan Outline Proposal, 20/12/04 and notes from Sefton Coast Nature Conservation Strategy Meeting of 29/3/05.

The Outline Proposal, prepared by the sub group, has been to Cabinet and agreed. There is potentially funding for a post to develop and establish long term monitoring.

Officer post (PO1 or above, 2 year contract) initially to be funded by Sefton Council (Leisure and PERD). Leisure Services to provide the majority from an existing Senior Ranger post. English Nature also agreed funding. Further funding probably will be needed for commissioning external research work etc. DMc to contact Ceri Jones and Paul Green confirming exact amount of funding on offer from Planning and EN.

DMc email CJ and PG

English Nature has agreed to put the next phase of the dune restoration project at Ainsdale NNR on hold during the 2 year period. The Nature Conservation Strategy will address this amongst other issues.

This is a secondment opportunity. No Suggestions from the partners so far. PS suggested that John Houston be made aware of the post. This was agreed. **PS**

CB informed the group that a national award has been made available for biodiversity work. Will fund local Biodiversity Officers. Further information to follow as it becomes available.

2. Governance and role of Task Group

It was agreed that those present today plus others who were in some manner able to offer support to the post should form a steering group for the Officer reporting to the Task Group.

Timescales for Consultation would need to be included in the Work Programme. How would information from the Officer reach the public domain? 'Coastlines' was suggested as a medium. A press release was also discussed, to go out after the election.

DMc to check with CJ.

There was some discussion regarding the level of community involvement in the Task Group. Although the minutes etc. are available for the public and for local interest groups to view, it was felt that there should be more representation.

Rather than making the membership of the group too large and unwieldy, it was suggested by GL that something like the Beach Consultation Group be set up to reach a wider audience, meeting say twice a year. Would this make the Task Group redundant?

Future outputs for the Task Group will include a Coastal Processes Conference organised by GL in autumn 2006 to support scientific understanding. The following year there ought to be a conference / forum relating to the Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Delivery Plan.

It was decided that the Task Group should keep running along side this Biodiversity Consultation Group, which would be a forum for the Officer to undertake consultation and report on progress.

Reporting would also take place through the Area Committee Process.

It was agreed that consultation etc. would be carried out via the Steering Group. The NC&BDP would ultimately be approved by the Board. Mechanism would be:

Steering Group → Task Group → Consultation → Task Group → Revision → Working Group → Board

DMc agreed to continue as Chair of the Task Group. RN nominated as Deputy Chair.

The Steering Group as a sub group of the Task Group will require a Chair. SW was nominated. The Officer would do the support work for the Chair.

To be confirmed

The Steering Group would:

- Agree direction and policy
- Formulate work programme
- Set timescales and targets
- Have meetings as required
- Report to the Task Group
- Support the post - each member to provide idea of level of support

The Council (Coast and Countryside Service) would:

- Provide day to day management and contractual stuff
- Ensure implementation of policy

3. **Job Description**

A meeting has been arranged for May 5th to finalise a job description. This and person spec will then be circulated to Steering Group then to board on 19th May.

DMc

Title of Project? DMc to check the title of the report that went to Cabinet

DMc

SW stressed that the SAC and the NMBAP needed to be worked on side by side. All felt that the post should cover the Partnership Area. A map of this would be attached to the candidates' information pack.

Also need to identify external sensitivities particularly the seaward boundary.

Partnership Area not shown in UDP? Planning are refining the designatory maps. PW was asked to provide up to date current maps of SAC etc.

PW

It was felt that there should be a collation of statistics about the Coast, which could be put into an information pack or leaflet. Communications Task Group?

DMc

4. **Steering Group Membership**

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Ruth Critchley | English Nature |
| Andrew Brockbank | National Trust |
| Steve White | Wildlife Trust (proposed Chair) |
| Dave McAleavy | Sefton Council – Coast and Countryside |
| Graham Lymbery | Sefton Council – Shoreline Management |

Chris Bennett EAS
Tony Baker RSPB
Phil Smith Wildlife Trust

5. Recording Systems

Conservation Objectives - there was discussion on these. RC reminded the group that this is an EN internal process. CB said that it needed to be reviewed after the first 6-year cycle to ensure not such a generic process.

DMc to circulate a paper on the new CMS system. Possibly organise a demonstration of the software and identify places where it is already in operation. GL offered support for GIS and metadata etc.

DMc

6. Red Alert

SW told the group that the Refuge and Buffer Zone would be launched in September during Red Squirrel Week. The Red Alert Newsletter was passed around for information.

7. Inventory of Vascular Plants Identified on the Sefton Coast

PS has completed and circulated the new inventory. Main points:

- A 21% increase in records – 202 extra taxa since 1999
- 1173 in Partnership area and 1054 in dune system
- 166 of these are notable
- Sefton has 56% of the entire S. Lancs. Vice County Flora and 35% of all notable taxa in the North West
- Non native and introduced taxa make 37% of the Partnership Area and 33 % of the dune system taxa (In v.c. as a whole it is 50%)
- Mostly low impact neophytes, with the exception of eg. Sea buckthorn, Japanese knotweed although white stonecrop, Russian vine and *rosa rugosa* may be problems in the future
- The data reinforces the high nature conservation value of the Coast

PS offered his services for walks and talks – already leading the Altcar Walks in the Ranger's events programme.

This is further information for good news / statistics as mentioned previously

Copy available on web ? and in Resource Centre

PW / RN

8. Forest Plan Work

PS expressed concern over tree planting on field at Ravenmeols (compartment 18f). He said there was some botanical interest here plus a pair of nesting Whitethroats in the scrub.

DMc explained that this was consulted on that the area in question had been tipped on in the past. The planting scheme has retained the bramble and scrub and is meant to compensate for some reduction in woodland area across the coastal woodlands as a whole. Only here and on the pony field at Kirklake is there any new planting. RN added that the south west corner of the woodlands were being engulfed by sand and so would eventually be lost.

SW said that he had been having difficulty with the Forestry Commission's requirement for replanting felled areas like for like. The Appropriate Assessment requires the removal of trees on the dune heath to improve the habitat, but there is nowhere else to plant on the site.

DMc to contact Paul Nolan regarding any paperwork on this issue.

DMc contact
PN

RN suggested that the Woodland Owners Group should bring a report to the NCTG.

RN

9. AOB

PS – although outside the SSSI, there is Hazel being planted at Altcar – squirrel issues.

GL – been approached to fund a PhD looking at soil and hydrology of the Sefton Coast .
Would underpin the work of the Biodiversity Development Plan Officer. Requires £4k / year
over 3 years, 50% from Shoreline Management. It was suggested that the Environment
Agency should be approached and DMc offered a small contribution.

GL

PS – the 10th August is the 40th anniversary of the declaration of Ainsdale NNR. A
celebration is being organised. DMc offered loan of land rovers if required.

DMc – looking at undertaking dune reprofiling and wetland improvements at Crosby
Coastal Park. PS felt that the dune work would be damaging and destructive. He
suggested a full ecological survey would be required before any work could take place.
DMc explained some of the pressures from the residents there.

DMc

PS – undertaking Isle of Man Cabbage survey this summer.

Date of next meeting

Steering Group meeting 24th May 2pm
Task Group Meeting - TBA