



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING

Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee meeting: 17 September 2020: notes

Notes from the meeting of the Flood and Coastal Erosion
Committee on 17 September 2020.

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Reports

Any other business previously notified to the Chair

A resolution was agreed to exclude members of the public where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Confidential Item - Storms Ciara & Dennis – Issues and Lessons Learned - Discussion

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Meeting No 4: minutes

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Martin Buckle (Chair)	Flood & Coastal Erosion Committee
James Morris (JM)	Welsh Government
Andy Fraser (AF)	Welsh Government
Chris Curry (Secretariat)	Welsh Government
Owen Griffiths (OG)	Rhondda Cynon Taff

Committee Members:

Adrian Philpott (AP)	Dwr Cymru – Welsh Water
Darren Thomas (DT)	Pembrokeshire County Council
Geraint Edwards (GE)	Conwy County Borough Council
Andrew Stone (AS)	Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
Jean-Francois Dulong (JFD)	Welsh Local Government Association
Lorna Davis (LD)	National Farming Union Cymru
Karen Potter (KP)	Open University
Paul Blackman (PB)	Wallingford Hydro Solutions
David Harris (DH)	Independent Consultant
Anne-Marie Moon (AM)	JBA Consulting
Jeremy Parr (JP)	Natural Resources Wales
Mike Wellington (MW)	WSP Consultation
Natalie Haines (NH)	Mott MacDonald

Apologies:

Catherine Wilson (CW)	Cardiff University
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Apologies and introductions

Chair gave the apologies and introductions were made.

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Declaration of Interests

The Chair asked members of the committee to consider the papers and declare if they had any conflicts of interest, none were given. The Chair advised members that today's meeting will be recorded by the secretariat.

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019, and Matters Arising

Draft minutes had been circulated for comment and subsequently published.

The Chair noted Action 3 to look at Section 19 reporting has been taken forward as an additional measure within the new National Strategy. It was also noted that Action 4 would be discussed later in the meeting under agenda item, sustainable farming and our land.

Chair's Announcements

The Chair provided an update on his activities since the third meeting of the Committee in January 2020. With the cancellation of the May meeting, this was a longer update than normal.

In February, he attended the regular quarterly meeting with the Chairs of the English RFCCs in London. The primary focus of the meeting was on recent flooding events. There was also an update on the UK Spending Review and its implications for FCERM, and on a Surface Water Action Plan, which is being led by the Chairs Committee. The following meeting with the RFCC Chairs took place remotely in June. The main agenda items were funding programmes and the proposed Environmental Land Management Scheme. The next meeting takes place remotely on 30th September.

Also in February, he attended a meeting in Wrexham on the proposed Wales Environmental Growth Plan, chaired by Sue Essex. There is a reference to this in the Wales National FCERM Strategy. It was evident from the meeting that this

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Plan was still at concept stage. The Chair believes the work on this plan has largely gone into abeyance for the moment.

In March, he attended a virtual meeting of the Wales FCERM Programme Board. The next meeting is due to be held in October.

In May, he was invited to join a meeting of the Joint England and Wales FCERM R&D Theme Advisory Group, but unfortunately it was very short notice and he was unable to do so. As a result, colleagues from NRW offered a briefing on the meeting and the programme.

In July he had a further catch-up meeting with Elizabeth Haywood, who chairs the Flood Risk Management Committee in Natural Resources Wales.

In August, he attended a webinar organised jointly by the Royal Town Planning Institute in Wales and the Royal Society of Architects in Wales on Sustainable Urban Drainage.

At the January Committee meeting, he reported that he had been invited to chair a conference of the Royal Town Planning Institute in Wales on coastal and marine planning, which was due to take place in Deganwy in March. This has now been re-arranged as an online conference, taking place on 25th November.

Although a date has yet to be scheduled, he is due to have one of his periodic meetings with the Minister during the autumn.

Following the Chair's update the Committee discussed how Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) were working in Wales, following their introduction in January 2019.

Members discussed at length with differing views on the overall progress, process of applications, engagement, consistency and issues. It was agreed that discussions would be arranged and continued offline.

ACTION 1 – AF to provide a note on the Welsh Government's position in advance of the next Committee meeting in January

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Items from the Regional Groups

AS provided an update on the South East Wales group which met a couple of weeks ago. Items discussed included:

- February storms
- surface water flooding and its lack of coverage in the draft TAN15
- capital and revenue funding
- SuDS Approving Body (SAB) & SuDS applications – AS explained that the SAB resource was utilised to assist following Storm Dennis

GE provided an update on the North Wales group. Items discussed included:

- February storms – Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) and its consequential benefits
- SAB – consistency is key with developers not understanding the differences between local authorities
- Funding and financial constraints – increase in revenue funding was welcomed, although there remains a concern in regards to resource. 85% capital funding is appreciated, although there remains a disproportionate impact on authorities with lots of schemes, as 15% funding is difficult to raise
- Coastal Risk Management Programme (CRMP) – design and construction of 2020/21 schemes are of concern, due to the availability of materials and contractors as a result of COVID19
- The delivery of work by the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre (WCMC) was commended

DT provided an update on the West Wales Flood Risk Management (FRM) and Coastal Engineering (CE) Groups. The FRM group last met in April. Items discussed included:

- How the group could support the work programme of the Committee and measures within the new National Strategy
- COVID 19 – remote working, site inspections etc. have been on hold due to lockdown restrictions.
- Welsh Government representative was Chris Daw

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- No date set for next meeting, DT to speak with Ben Kathrens, West Wales FRM Group chair.

The CE group last met on 11 February. DT provided the group with an update on FCEC

JFD informed members that he had attended the SABs sub-committee meeting

JM welcomed the updates from the regional groups, although had concerns about Local Authorities encountering difficulties funding their 15% contribution for flood alleviation schemes given the recent increases in grant and whether councils were seeing these schemes as a priority. Partnership funding was discussed as a potential solution.

The Chair suggested the Resources Sub-Committee would need to consider this issue.

Storms Ciara & Dennis – presentations by Owen Griffiths, Flood, Water and Tip Risk Manager, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT); and by Jeremy Parr, Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

OG gave a presentation to the Committee on the impacts of Storm Dennis on RCT.

JP gave a presentation to the Committee on the 2020 Floods across Wales.

The slides from the RCT presentation will be shared with the Committee.

Reports

8.1 Flood & Coastal Erosion Committee Annual Report

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2020

To agree the Annual Report.

The report was both shared with the Minister and published in May. The Chair recommended the Committee formally sign off the report. This was agreed.

8.2 National Strategy for Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management:

JM provided an update on the final changes made prior to launch.

Amendments have been made to reflect initial lessons learned from the 2020 storms and new funding streams. Given the excellent presentations from RCT and NRW today, he would like to consider adding to the case studies and requested use of the images, providing credit to RCT / NRW.

There is new material from the storms in the introduction and the chapters on 'Impacts' and 'Future funding and longer-term programme pipelines'.

There's more case studies throughout, and a new chapter on 'Monitoring and Reporting of this National Strategy', which will involve the Committee.

Timelines for several of the measures have been extended to reflect feedback and the effects of the pandemic. For example, in considering the need for legislative changes to strengthen roles and responsibilities, plus delivery of TAN15 and the Flood Map for Planning.

There are four additional measures:

- 11. Coastal Groups to report on the implementation of SMP2 epoch 1 policies, through Wales Coastal Group Forum to the Welsh Government, by 2025;
- 14. Welsh Government will work cross policy to ensure NFM is considered in wider land and water management, including agriculture and Area Statements;

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- 21. Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee, WLGA and Local Authorities to collaborate and establish high-level requirements and supporting guidance for Section 19 flood investigation reports by 2023;
- 22. The Welsh Government will work with Risk Management Authorities to develop a 5 to 10 year investment programme pipeline (complements measure 23 on long-term investment scenarios).

JM went on to discuss the Strategy timeline. The Strategy was agreed at Cabinet on Monday 15th June. Cabinet welcomed the improvements and agreed to lay the National Strategy in the Senedd, as is required by law.

The Strategy will be published this autumn alongside the new Flood Risk Assessment Wales (FRAW). Officials are working with the Minister and communications teams on timings. Looking at a week of flood stories and visits to get people talking about flood and coastal risk. Also working with Finance teams on funding announcements.

JM also discussed recent funding announcements. In April, the Minister announced the Flood and Coastal Programme for 2020/21. Which will support £35 million worth of capital investment, with £27 million revenue funding. This programme is available in full, along with a map of investment on the Welsh Government's flood pages.

100% funding has been provided to all RMAs for emergency repairs and maintenance to flood assets following this year's flooding, exceeding £4m so far this year.

A new NFM programme was also launched to promote these projects and wider catchment schemes. £2m has been awarded this year, funded at 100%, with the first 12 projects announced at the end of July.

The Minister also announced changes to the programme, which will make it easier for RMAs to bring forward schemes and to accelerate delivery. All development work is now funded 100% by Welsh Government and grant support for Local Authority coastal schemes has increased to 85%. This emphasises the support to develop long-term investment plans to reduce flood risk.

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8.3 A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales

The Chair reported on this response to the Welsh Government consultation which had been submitted in May of this year, and recommended the Committee formally sign it off. This was agreed.

8.4 Sustainable Farming and Our Land: Proposals to continue and simplify Agricultural Support for Farmers and the Rural Economy

AP discussed the Committee's draft response to the current Welsh Government consultation on sustainable farming and our land.

AP advised this was a further focussed and limited consultation on transitional arrangements, following on from the full 2019 consultation. He confirmed the consultation closes on 28 October, and there are 28 questions.

The committee reviewed APs responses to the questions, and comments, suggestions were provided.

ACTION 2 – Committee members to provide written comments to AP by 30th September

8.5 Resources Sub-Committee

The Chair introduced this item, which was to confirm the establishment of a Resources Sub-Committee to progress work programme theme 6, to consider its terms of reference (TOR), and to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 7th August.

The Chair advised that the TOR will need to be signed off by the Minister. He explained that the secretariat support is provided by Cardiff University via the Severn Estuary partnership.

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The Chair provided an overview of the minutes. There was broad recognition that the sub-committee has a well-established programme of work with six planned meetings up until August 2021. The Chair advised that all members will be invited to input into the sub-committee and asked members for their comments.

DT drew attention to the skills and capacity work item as of particular importance, whilst JFD discussed the resource capacity issue during the response and recovery phase of recent flooding events.

AM questioned whether the sub-committee should focus on development of capital pipeline or revenue funding. The Chair agreed that capital was a significant element of the sub-committee's workload, although revenue was also covered, highlighting the importance of maintaining the existing infrastructure.

The establishment of the Sub-Committee was confirmed, and the terms of reference were provisionally agreed.

8.6 Wales Coastal Groups Forum update

DH introduced the report.

He explained that the Welsh Coastal Groups Forum (WCGF) brings together the Chairs of the four Coastal Groups in Wales with Welsh Government, NRW, National Trust and Network Rail. Since the re-establishment of the Welsh Coastal Monitoring Centre (WCMC), they have also been represented. The current Chair is Jean-Francois Dulong of the WLGA and a member of this Committee.

DH advised that the broad remit of the group is to share knowledge and experience, to co-ordinate work and policy such as coastal monitoring / surveys, to offer mutual support, and to provide and communicate the strategic direction to coastal groups on coastal risk management matters.

He confirmed he had attended the one meeting as a FCEC member, in March. The items covered at the meeting were a good example of the broad role of the

group.

The WCGF also acts as the Advisory Panel to the WCMC, meeting at least twice a year to support and advise the WCMC with their programme and other strategic monitoring issues. The WCMC is currently only funded until March 2021, and a new business case looking at improving the quality of the monitoring programme is being developed by the Consortium.

DH discussed the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) refresh in Wales. He confirmed discussions had taken place between the EA, WG and NRW. WG have asked NRW to lead on this to follow the English model. He also confirmed Coastal Groups were currently undertaking the annual update of SMP Action Plans, to be submitted back to NRW by September 30th. Progress on delivery is anticipated compared to last year, with the Forum helping to steer priority work for the year to come. SMP Action Plans will have annual reviews to check on progress.

DH advised that NRW planned to carry out a Lidar survey of the Welsh Coast this autumn at low tide, but that this had been affected by the Covid19 virus situation. He confirmed the Habitat Compensation Programme was progressing with the British Geological Survey doing some work on ground water levels. He explained that marine licensing was under review, which may help inform how RMAs deliver coastal work.

DH concluded by discussing the WCGF programme of work. He confirmed the WCGF has an ambitious and evolving work programme driven by key FCERM issues, coastal group's priorities and measures set out in the new National Strategy. However, due to a lack of dedicated resources and funding to take forward major pieces of work, the Forum relies on existing members thus reducing its ability to be more pro-active.

JFD advised the WCGF has received great support from NRW to assist with the monitoring programme. He discussed the expectations of the Forum and the ongoing resource implications. Funding for additional resource was discussed, with JP suggesting a coordination and planning project officer is required.

The committee were in agreement that Public Service Boards (PSBs) should be

the engine room on coastal adaptation, and with NRW having a seat on these boards, would be influential in getting across consistent messaging.

JM recognised the good work of the WCMC and WCGF and advised that their annual report had been well received. He confirmed the Minister had written to NRW instructing them to lead on the SMP refresh and portal in Wales. He also explained that although there was a finite revenue budget, the FCERM team were attempting to get additional funding.

The Chair suggested that the WG should not be seen as the only source of funding. Partnership funding will be discussed at the Resource sub-committee.

ACTION 3 – DH & JFD to provide Annual updates on the forum to the Committee

8.7 Committee Work Programme

The Chair introduced the item, to receive the report and to approve the updated work programme to 2022/23, and to establish the sub-committee to progress theme 5, review of the policy and legislation around FCERM in Wales.

He explained the updated work programme had been rolled forward for another financial year, and picks up changes arising from the National Strategy. He confirmed themes 1 & 2, review the Strategy progress through Section 18 report had been pushed back a year to 2022.

Theme 12 was an addition relating to Section 19 investigation reports, targeted for Committee meeting 7. Annex 1 is updated with the new proposed dates for Committee meetings, with Annex 5 an addition, based on theme 5, policy and legislation.

The Committee approved the updated work programme.

The Chair then discussed the establishment of the Policy and Legislation Sub-Committee (PLSC). He explained that he didn't want to overload particular members, so with this in mind had spoken to individuals prior to this meeting.

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The following members have agreed to sit on the PLSC:

- Paul Blackman
- Lorna Davis
- Natalie Haines
- Adrian Philpott
- Andrew Stone
- Mike Wellington
- Jeremy Parr

The Chair advised that as JP was already a member of the RSC, he could nominate a representative from NRW to deputise when stretched. He confirmed AP would Chair the PLSC, which will have 7 members. He explained he will not be a member, although, as Chair of the full Committee, he would need to attend certain meetings when appropriate.

The secretariat support role has been discussed with WG, with the recommendation to extend the role from the RSC. When it meets the Chair and members of the PLSC will need to consider the frequency and timings of the meetings, and the TOR.

The establishment of the Sub-Committee was agreed,

8.8 British Standards Institute Committee – Floods & Watercourses

AP introduced the next item, which was to consider his report on the BSI technical committee on floods and watercourses.

AP explained that he was contacted by a former colleague who sits on the Committee, and asked if he would be willing to join as a representative for Wales. He concluded that firstly he may not be the most appropriate person to do this and secondly, he couldn't justify asking DCWW for time to commit to this Committee.

JM confirmed that the WG's FCERM team had been contacted separately, and if

workloads allow, would provide a watching brief at future meetings.

The Committee noted APs response.

Any other business previously notified to the Chair

None

A resolution was agreed to exclude members of the public where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Confidential Item - Storms Ciara & Dennis – Issues and Lessons Learned - Discussion

The Chair introduced this item, where members discussed key issues and lessons learned following the February storms. The Chair invited OW and JP to speak following their informative presentations.

The Chair concluded the meeting.

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