Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee

Meeting No 2: Minutes

Rhos, Llandudno Junction, Welsh Government

10 September 2019

PRESENT:
Martin Buckle (Chair) Flood & Coastal Erosion Committee
James Morris (JM) Welsh Government
Chris Curry (Secretariat) Welsh Government
Lisa Goodier, Senior Project Manager Gwynedd Council

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 (JD) Welsh Local Government Association
Jeremy Parr (JP) Natural Resources Wales
Lorna Davis (LD) National Farming Union Cymru
Karen Potter (KP) Open University
Paul Blackman (PB) Wallingford Hydro Solutions
Mike Wellington (MW) WSP Consultation
David Harris (DH) Independent Consultant
Natalie Haines (NH) Mott MacDonald
Anne-Marie Moon (AM) JBA Consulting

Apologies:
Catherine Wilson (CW) Cardiff University
Jonni Tomos (JT) Welsh Government

1 - 2. Apologies and introductions

Chair gave the apologies and advised that JM will introduce the items on the National Development Framework (NDF) and Planning Technical Advice Notes (TAN 14 & 15).

3. 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.
4. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2019, and Matters Arising

Draft minutes had been circulated for comment and subsequently published.

The Chair noted that the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Wales is due to be published later this year.

Chair noted ACTION 5 – Secretariat to investigate the implementation of a secure electronic workspace for the sharing of papers, remained outstanding.

5. Chair’s Announcements

The Chair provided an update on his activities since the first meeting of the Committee in June.

He met with the Minister for the Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, in June. This provided an opportunity for the Chair to update her on progress in establishing the Committee. He was also able to share with her the views of the Committee on the proposed work themes, and to consider priorities and timescales for the work programme with her. The Minister agreed to a further meeting to discuss the work programme once formalised.

He has subsequently been working closely with Welsh Government colleagues to develop the Committee work programme, and to consider the FCERM Programme, and the Draft National Strategy for FCERM in Wales. In this process, he has been liaising with colleagues in Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), and has attended the FCERM Programme Board. He has also taken the opportunity to have a conversation with each member of the Committee to gauge their capacity and personal interest in progressing the work of the Committee.

He has received a letter from the Chair of the Flood Risk Management Group within NRW, outlining some concerns about resources for flood risk management. These issues have featured in the Committee’s consideration of the Draft National Strategy for FCERM in Wales, and he will share the Committee’s views with the Chair at NRW.

Following meetings in the spring with the Wales Coastal Groups Forum, and with the regional flood risk management groups for North and South-East Wales, the Chair has also met with the regional group for South West Wales.

In June he attended a meeting in Yorkshire of the Chairs of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees in England. The meeting provided an opportunity to visit the Yorkshire coast, and view some of the challenges and responses to coastal erosion in that area. He also attended the Wales National Flooding Conference which took place in July.

In July he participated in a research programme involving the Water Research Institute at Cardiff University on “Integrating FCERM and Well-Being in Wales.
He has also agreed to meet with the Association of British Insurers and Association of Drainage Authorities over the coming weeks.

6. North Wales Case Study – Fairbourne – Lisa Goodier, Gwynedd CC

LG gave a presentation to the Committee on Fairbourne, framework for the future.

The slides will be shared online, alongside the minutes.

JM confirmed that the WG want to continue to work with Gwynedd Council (GC) and the Fairbourne community, but agreed the situation was complex. On the compensation issue, he advised that Welsh Ministers have not made a decision either way, although it would set a precedent if residents were compensated, and Fairbourne is not the only Welsh community at risk. He also suggested one of the concerns we face is the chance of a catastrophic breach, which could result in the loss of life. JM advised that WG were open to all options and are continuing to support Gwynedd and NRW in managing risk and funding research in the area.

JP was encouraged with the collaboration involved with the issues around Fairbourne. He commended GC for confronting this, understanding the huge resource implications involved. He raised the issue of the wider implications for other locations in Wales, and suggested using the Fairbourne situation to raise awareness. He suggested the Committee could play a role in helping with this. JP also confirmed the Coastal Adaptation agenda has been massively affected by the climate emergency.

LG suggested that the Coastal Adaptation toolkit needs the correct resource working to deliver it.

DT suggested that we need to reflect on this as Newgale, Pembrokeshire is faced with a similar situation. He advised that there was a lack of engagement with the SMP, and that they are still hoping to rebuild the assets. He agreed that communicating with transparency and clarity was essential and raised issues around insurance and the social impacts of flooding. He also suggested using simpler terminology when communicating with the Fairbourne community. Going forward he suggested working closer with planning on the impact of climate change, as currently there is an absence of consideration on how we plan ahead. DT asked for the presentation to be shared.

ACTION 1 – Secretariat to share presentation with Committee

MW discussed the scheme in Dumfries which the community doesn’t want due to the social impacts. He suggested the social / wellbeing impacts need to be considered in the business case, alongside the benefit to cost ratio.

JD suggested the issues in Fairbourne won’t be isolated and that this issue could be taken forward by the Coastal Groups. He had a question for LG around the community's legal challenge failure. LG advised that the community were out of time with their challenge.
NH made an observation around the SMP process, we need to realise the cost of doing nothing as opposed to managed re-alignment.

LD asked about engagement. She asked how we capture a process where all stakeholders are engaged. LG advised that a frequently asked questions document has been produced which currently has 152 questions, which should help.

JM asked whether the Arthog Community Council were represented on the Fairbourne Moving Forward Board. LG confirmed they were but don’t very often attend.

7. Reports

7.1 National Development Framework (NDF)

JM advised that the NDF was out for consultation

AP had undertaken an initial review of the NDF and provided an update to the Committee.

AP explained that to begin with he had undertaken searches on key words within the 72 page document:

- 17 uses of Climate Change (CC) – including links to CC, challenges of CC, water sources, ecological etc. There was no explicit reference to CC and flood risk
- 14 uses of risk or resilience with no reference to Community resilience
- 3 references to flood
- 6 uses of flooding – which was a common statement used in 3 areas of Wales
- 1 use of adaptation, erosion and reference
- 94 uses of infrastructure, with no reference to flood defences

The Chair thanked AP for his helpful analysis and suggested the Committee explore the issues today and then pull together a first draft response to submit before the consultation end date on 1st November.

DH advised the consultation document references North Wales as a flooding risk, but no mention of South East Wales or anywhere else for that matter.

The Chair agreed that there was greater emphasis to the issues in North Wales compared to the rest of Wales. He explained this will be the first version of an NDF in Wales, which will carry more weight than the Wales Spatial plan.

NH commented that the NDF looks at barriers to where they would like to develop, due to flood risk.

The Chair drew attention to the Committee’s work programme, which explicitly features the response to the NDF consultation. He proposed members provide initial comments by Friday 4 October, following the Chair will circulate a first draft for
comments on Friday 11 October, and produce a final draft for submission by Friday 25 October.

**ACTION 2 – The Chair to produce initial draft response to NDF, with a view to the submission of a final response prior to November 1st.**

**7.2 Planning Technical Advice Notes (TAN) 14 & 15**

JM advised that the consultation on TAN15 had been delayed until later this autumn. He confirmed the attendees of the FCERM consultation events would have seen the TAN14 & 15 presentations, and that there will be a stronger stance on development in the flood plain.

**7.3 National Strategy for FCERM**

To consider the report of the Chair on the Committee’s consultation response.

The Chair thanked all for their input into the document. He advised the draft feedback was comprehensive, with 76 paragraphs in addition to the responses to the questions.

PB suggested the Committee review the main points in the meeting.

LD offered to cover her observations. Farmer’s fields are not always necessarily categorised as an asset, and subsequently won’t receive flood alerts. This has resulted in farmers losing livestock. She suggested that the delivery of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is something the Committee should advocate and use, although the same urban design wouldn’t necessarily be fit for purpose in a rural environment. It should be noted that agricultural businesses are a different industry and carry separate risks. LD confirmed the National Farmers Union (NFU) will be responding separately to the consultation.

PB suggested the Committee summarise the key messages on the Strategy response into 4 or 5 themes, as he is conscious the response is very long, and could be difficult for the WG to interpret.

The Chair commented that there were a few measures in the Strategy that refer directly to the Committee. He suggested they also highlight:

- Coastal adaptation – roles of the Coastal Groups and forum
- Access to information for stakeholders and the public, which is reflected in objective A in the strategy – “Improving our understanding and communication of risk”
- Interface with planning
- Revenue and maintenance funding – emphasis on our wider responses, commitments in the strategy are short term.
- Natural Flood Management (NFM)
- Link in with Wellbeing, e.g. Fairbourne
- Issue of coastal squeeze – focuses on habitats and the environment, but fundamentally can also impact on settlements
The Chair asked for members thoughts on the suggested key themes and measures.

NH suggested that monitoring and reporting (Section 18 reports) is important and needs to be emphasised.

AP suggested that the Strategy shouldn’t necessarily be written for the general public, but for stakeholders with flood risk management knowledge.

JM advised that the responses should ideally address the questions, and additional comments should be covered in Question 12.

The Chair confirmed that the response could be redrafted in that way.

JP suggested the roles and responsibilities section is really important, and links to measure 1, although disagreed with the legislative context.

AS suggested the resource required to keep the public informed would be huge, good example being Fairbourne with GC hosting 250 + meetings. He explained that if it were a duty rather than best practice, then it would be easier to get through Council committees.

The Chair brought discussions on the Strategy to a close confirming he would take into account today’s discussions and LD input, and produce a final draft for submission by 16 September.

**ACTION 3 – The Chair to redraft and submit Committee’s consultation response**

### 7.4 Committee Work Programme

To receive the report of the Chair and consider the recommendation that the Work Programme be approved.

The Chair presented the paper and its themes and then fielded any questions and observations.

NH expressed concerns on applying timelines to Theme 11 – “Wider resilience and emergency issues from an FCERM perspective” when it is an ongoing need. JM advised that this relates to the policy behind resilience and response.

The Chair confirmed that the work programme can be reviewed and rolled forward annually, so timelines and actions could change.

JD suggested that Brexit priorities would make the timelines with regards to Theme 5 – “Review of the policy and legislation around FCERM in Wales” challenging.

Chair advised that they would need to revisit the work programme once the new Strategy is published.
JM confirmed that the Minister is keen on highlighting good practice in FCERM and NFM which are covered in Theme 3.

The Chair recommended that this work programme is approved in advance of a conversation with the Minister.

The Committee approved the work programme.

8. Any other business previously notified to the Chair

JD discussed the upcoming Coastal Risk & Climate Change Seminar in Llandrindod Wells on 17 October. He advised that a range of stakeholders had been invited to the seminar, which will provide an insight on the enormous challenges facing local authorities, partner organisations and communities in the context of ongoing budget pressures and diminishing resources to protect our communities in the future.

ACTION 4 – JD to forward the invite onto the Committee members, who are encouraged to attend

9. 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.

Not required as there was no public attendance at this meeting.

10. Confidential Items

10.1 Report under Section 18

JP introduced this item.

ACTION 5 – Chair to draft a response to the Section 18 report for Members to review and provide comments by 20 September

11. Date and venue of next meeting – w/c 27 January 2020

ACTION 6 – Secretariat to confirm date and location for meeting 3

ACTION 7 – Secretariat to provide meetings dates for all of 2020

NH requested that all meeting papers are circulated earlier, to allow an adequate time to review and Committee members to provide input to the agenda for subsequent meetings.