

Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee

Meeting No 3: Minutes

Block 5 Meeting Room, Carmarthenshire County Council, Parc Myrddin

30 January 2020

PRESENT:

Martin Buckle (Chair)	Flood & Coastal Erosion Committee
James Morris (JM)	Welsh Government
Andy Fraser (AF)	Welsh Government
Chris Curry (Secretariat)	Welsh Government
Jonni Tomos (JT)	Welsh Government
Jenny Dickinson (JD)	Natural Resources Wales
Ben Kathrens (BK)	Carmarthenshire CC
Elizabeth Haywood (EH)	Natural Resources Wales

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
Catherine Wilson (CW)	Cardiff University

Apologies:

Jeremy Parr (JP)	Natural Resources Wales
Mike Wellington (MW)	WSP Consultation
Natalie Haines (NH)	Mott MacDonald

1 - 2. Apologies and introductions

Chair gave the apologies and introductions were made.

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 10 September 2019, and Matters Arising

Draft minutes had been circulated for comment and subsequently published.

The Chair advised that the published minutes were not the final agreed record of the meeting, as they did not capture a number of member's amendments.

ACTION 1 – Secretariat to publish and upload to objective connect, the agreed record of the meeting.

5. Chair's Announcements

The Chair provided an update on his activities since the second meeting of the Committee in September 2019.

Shortly after the second meeting, he met with Welsh Government colleagues from the Planning Division to discuss the National Development Framework (NDF), prior to the submission of the Committee's consultation response to the draft NDF.

He has been working closely with Welsh Government Flood and Coastal Erosion colleagues to further develop the Committee's work programme. In this process, he has also been liaising with colleagues in both the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

He has met with the Head of Public Policy for Wales at the Association of British Insurers (ABI). The Head of Public Policy noted with interest, within the Committee's work programme, the theme of highlighting good practice, and offered to come to talk to the Committee with a focus on property flood resilience and insurance.

The Chair recently attended a meeting of the Wales branch of the Association of Drainage Authorities, where he was interested to learn of the diversity of our Internal Drainage Districts, and the challenges that they face.

He met with the Minister for the Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs in January. This provided an opportunity for the Chair to update her on the work of the Committee, to secure her approval for the Committee's work programme, and to offer the Committee's advice on the Section 18 Report prepared by NRW.

As the Chair advised the Committee at the September meeting, he had participated in a research programme involving the Water Research Institute at Cardiff University on the subject of "Integrating FCERM and Well-Being in Wales." He confirmed that the final report of this research had been published and shared with the Committee. He explained that the report is very pertinent to much of the work programme, and

included a specific recommendation about the role of this Committee. Accordingly, he proposed to include it as an agenda item for the next meeting.

He had recently been interviewed by BBC Radio Wales, who are preparing a series of three programmes under the title "What if". These programmes are looking ahead at the changes that Wales may see over the next 50 years or so. The programmes are due to be broadcast in March.

Looking ahead, he will be attending a meeting of the Chairs of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees in England.

He has also been invited to chair the Spring Conference of the Royal Town Planning Institute in Wales, which this year is focusing on coastal and marine planning. The Conference takes place in Deganwy on 18th March.

6. Flood Risk Management in Carmarthenshire and the response to Storm Callum, October 2018 – Ben Kathrens, Carmarthenshire CC

BK gave a presentation to the Committee on Flood Risk Management in Carmarthenshire and their response to Storm Callum.

The slides will be shared with the Committee.

ACTION 2 – Secretariat to share the presentation with the Committee

The presentation covered three main themes:

- Introduction – BK's professional background and his team's structure
- Flood Risk Management in Carmarthenshire – Covering the roles and responsibilities of a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) in flood defence & coastal protection, and the work of the SuDS Approval Body (SAB).
- Storm Callum – Details included flooded properties, managing the storm event and post event, and the Section 19 flood reporting process.

The Committee discussed the implications of the requirements of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) on new agricultural developments. They also questioned the duties placed on Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) in the new draft National Strategy, suggesting 24-hour notification of flooding incidents was unrealistic.

JM explained that Ministers only require indicative figures and whether Welsh Government funding is required within the initial 24-hour period.

The Committee raised concerns of households not being aware of their flood risk, and therefore, not obtaining the necessary flood insurance coverage.

JM suggested households not being aware of the Flood Re scheme is concerning, and that both Flood Re and Association of British Insurers (ABI) need to be more proactive to raise awareness of the scheme.

BK commented that some businesses have flood plans and property level protection measures, but do not always activate them.

BK discussed post flood Section 19 reporting, confirming that the guidance from the Welsh Government is that flooding of 20 or more properties triggers this requirement. He advised there were 55 recommendations on RMA's and other multi-agency groups following Storm Callum, with close to 50% of the actions now completed.

The Committee discussed the Section 19 reporting, and the Chair asked whether the information contained in the Section 19 report fed seamlessly into the Carmarthenshire's return for NRW's Section 18 report. BK suggested it did not and that they needed to be more robust in their information gathering.

JFD suggested to the Committee that he would look at taking forward Theme 9 of the Committee's work programme, to influence research via a case study.

ACTION 3 – JFD to develop thinking on Theme 9 of the Committee's work programme, to influence research via a case study, and to bring back to the next meeting.

7. Reports

7.1 Sustainable Farming and Our Land

To note the report on the Committee's consultation response.

AP asked if the Chair had received a response on the Committee's offer to assist with development of the policy framework relating to flood risk management. The Chair confirmed that he had not heard anything.

ACTION 4 – Welsh Government to follow up and obtain a response on the Committee's offer.

7.2 Planning Technical Advice Notes (TAN) 14 & 15

JT thanked the Committee for their response to the Planning Technical Advice Notes (TAN) 15 consultation, and provided an update. To date there had been 75 responses and in addition, some holding responses, whilst a number of Local Authorities (LAs) had asked for more time.

He explained that they were aiming for a September publication alongside the NDF as a package.

The Chair advised that the Committee's provisional response had been submitted on time, but that more time had been agreed to submit the final response following discussions at today's meeting.

Question 2 – Clarity on roles and responsibilities:

JFD highlighted the inconsistencies across Wales with regard to Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA).

ACTION 5 – JFD to provide additional lines for the Committee’s consultation response.

LD had additional concerns raised around response 2.7 – SuDS. She explained the agriculture sector were worried about the effects of the SuDS requirements on their community, advising that the feedback received was the implementation of SuDS is too costly, with the measurement of risk in agricultural buildings lower, and therefore, implementation possibly unnecessary.

ACTION 6 – LD to provide additional lines for the Committee’s consultation response.

Question 6 – Surface water flooding:

JM asked for the views of the Committee with regard to surface water. He confirmed surface water will be taken into consideration within the mapping, and valued the Committee’s opinion regarding the risk weighting.

AS was concerned that although the maps are showing higher risk for surface water, planners may not consider this.

PB suggested both fluvial and tidal were higher risks and, therefore, for flood zones 2 and 3 pluvial (surface) shouldn’t be considered.

Question 7 – Integrating coastal erosion issues into TAN 15

JM asked whether the Committee think coastal erosion risk should be shown on the flood map.

The Committee consensus was coastal risk should be included as it’s the best available evidence.

ACTION 7 – Committee members to provide any further comments for the consultation response to the Chair within 10 days.

ACTION 8 – The Chair to submit the Committees final official response within 2 weeks

7.3 Committee Work Programme

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

The Chair presented the paper, highlighting the key changes and advised that an earlier version was approved at the last meeting.

AF commented on theme 1, suggesting the Committee could insert a scrutiny component of the Welsh Government into the narrative.

The Chair discussed theme 4 – explore opportunities to maximise resources for FCERM in Wales, including partnership funding contributions, and theme 5 – Review of the policy and legislation around FCERM in Wales

The Chair explained that he would be looking to prepare a detailed programme for both theme 4 and 5 for approval at the May Committee meeting. He also suggested there might be a requirement to set up sub-committees to assist with resources, policy and legislation, which will be brought back to the next meeting.

There was a suggestion that Strategy Measure 1 – Establish the scope and consider the need for changes to legislation, should be extended to 2022.

The Chair advised theme 10 – Respond to consultations relevant to FCERM in Wales had been updated significantly to reflect the work the Committee had already completed. The Chair also explained that the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales had launched a call for evidence, although this does not currently include flood risk management. This, however, will probably be launched in their next annual report.

The Chair next brought the attention of the Committee to the administration section of the Work Programme, which includes annual appraisals of Committee members. The Chair proposed to undertake the appraisals by telecon, and will diarise these individually with the members, to take place in April and May.

The Chair also highlighted the requirement to prepare a Committee annual report for sign off at Committees 4 and 7. The Chair confirmed the report should include what we have done and plan to do in the future.

The Chair introduced the new Annex 2, which focuses on the interface with the regional groups and with the Coastal Groups Forum (theme 6)

The Chair advised that DH, as an independent member of the FCEC has kindly offered to join the WCGF, and the advisory group for the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre (WCMC) to provide stronger links to the Committee.

The Chair expressed the need to further strengthen the link with WCGF and the regional groups, with committee senior local government officers able to attend their respective regional groups.

GE advised the North Wales Group were content for him to attend.

AS confirmed the South East group had agreed to representation from FCEC, and feedback to the Committee. Members had discussed the terms of reference, secretariat support, realignment of the terms of reference and a standing agenda item. They also discussed the possibility of a membership fee to fund a secretariat post.

DT provided feedback on the South West Environment Directors group. He suggested that FCERM could get lost in the agenda at this meeting, and there is a need to strengthen links.

JM commended the Committees approach to wider engagement, which addresses theme 6.

The Chair asked when and where the Wales National Flooding Conference was taking place. JM confirmed Tuesday 9 June at Schooner Way, Cardiff.

ACTION 9 – AM to find out when CIWEM Wales conference takes place

The Chair provided Ministerial feedback of the work programme following their meeting. He confirmed that she was content that the Committee has set itself high expectations, and is pleased with their work to date.

7.4 Report under Section 18 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010

JD provided an update on the report under Section 18 of the Flood & Management Act 2010.

JD advised internal feedback from NRW staff was positive, although it was recognised the report wasn't necessarily a clear picture of all FCERM in Wales. She suggested a link with Section 19 reporting would be useful and confirmed returns from Risk Management Authorities were inconsistent.

JD confirmed the report has been published and is now in the public domain.

The Chair discussed the paper (Annex 2) regarding NRW's response to the recommendations from the FCEC.

The Chair advised that the Section 18 report is drafted as a factual, descriptive document, and the Committee has commented that it could be more analytical, highlighting issues, opportunities and making recommendations. He suggested that the Committee could have a role in this.

The Chair noted that the current S18 report is incomplete, as not all RMA's are providing input, this has been raised with the Minister.

JM read out the WG's response to the Report of the National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee on Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management in Wales, which accepted the need for FCEC to provide an independent review or oversight role of the Section 18 report. The Welsh Government consider providing this oversight role to the Committee to be an appropriate way to separate NRW's duties as a Risk Management Authority and its legislative role to review the implementation of the National Strategy in Wales.

JM also confirmed that the Minister is keen the Committee has an oversight role, and an input into the content of the report. He explained that the Welsh Government want to strengthen the Strategy with regard to the Section 18 report.

ACTION 10 – JD to share list of RMA's which hadn't responded, to enable JM and the Chair to feedback to the Minister

8. Any other business previously notified to the Chair

KP provided an update on the Joint Research Thematic Advisory Group, which is looking at a number of projects which are of relevance to the Committee's work, such as 'supporting the uptake of resilient repairs in flood recovery' and 'understanding effective flood and coastal risk governance' including Fairbourne and the Severn Estuary.

KP advised she would circulate the case studies on Fairbourne and the Severn Estuary when they are available.

CW commented on the CIRIA project on guidance on the delivery of Natural Flood Management. It is a 2-year Environment Agency project, which is finishing in December 2021. It will provide help in terms of FRM, bringing everything together, including structural designs of NFM interventions. The guidance will be published at the project end or very soon afterwards.

ACTION 11 – CW to circulate the CIRIA proposal – Guidance on the delivery of NFM

AS suggested, it would be useful to have a table of all research projects to assist the Committee with the delivery of theme 9 of their Work Programme.

JM explained that there is a regular newsletter produced which flags up joint research programmes. JM confirmed that both he and JFD sit on the Joint Research Programme Group.

ACTION 12 – JFD to share the joint research newsletter with the Committee

The Chair suggested the Committee has 2 roles; identify research gaps and monitoring the progression of reporting, identifying elements of research that could be put into practice.

JFD discussed the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) spring conference, and asked the Committee if they would consider attending as their valuable input would be appreciated.

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.

10. Confidential Items

10.1 National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales

JM introduced this item, which was to consider the Welsh Government's draft summary of responses report on its consultation.

10.2 Draft National Development Framework Flood Policy

JT introduced this item, which was to consider the draft National Development Framework (NDF) policy document.

ACTION 13 – Committee members to provide any further comments by 6 February

ACTION 14 – Chair to collate and feedback to Jonni by 10 February

11. Date and venue of next meeting

The Chair confirmed the next meeting would take place on the 20 May 2020, at Newport City Council Chamber.