

Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of Coastal and Marine Forum held on Friday 17th November 2006 at 2.00pm in The Quay's, Pub and Seafood Restaurant, Portavogie.

In Attendance:

Prof. Andrew Cooper, University of Ulster. (Chairman)
John Anderson, Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
Maeve Bell, Royal Yachting Association
Gordon Best, Quarry Products Association NI
Ken Bradley, Environmental Policy Division, DOE
Cllr. William Burns, Mourne Heritage Trust
David Clarke, The Loughs Agency
Claire Donnelly, Northern Ireland Tourist Industry Confederation
Liam Flanigan, Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Dr. Joanne Gaffney, Cross-Border Aquaculture Initiative Team
Peter Harper, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
Dermot Hughes, Marine Task Force
Dick James, Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation Ltd.
David Knott, Belfast Harbours Commissioners
Geoff Nuttall, The National Trust
Kate Reeves, Marine Task Force

Alan Hamilton, CMF Officer
Michael McSorley, DRD

Apologies:

Dr. Paddy Boylan, The Loughs Agency
Caroline Nolan, Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee
Matt Peach, Countryside Access and Activities Network

1. Welcome

- 1.1. Ken Bradley, Environmental Policy Division welcomed the group on behalf of the Department. He said he was delighted to see such a large attendance and thanked those present for giving up their time.
- 1.2. He went on to say that he was delighted to introduce Professor Andrew Cooper as the first Chairman of the Forum.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Prof. Cooper said that it was an honour to be the first Chairperson. He then retraced the journey of ICZM in Northern Ireland and explained that there had been several attempts to establish a Northern Ireland Forum going back as far as 1995 when the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside first mooted the idea.
- 2.2. For his part he said that he did not see the Forum acting as a lobby group nor would he allow it to be. Rather he saw Forum acting as a focal point for

ICZM in Northern Ireland providing advice on how integration might be achieved between various sectors, government policies etc. Any advice provided would also be based on the Forum having reached a consensus. He acknowledged that this may not always be possible but saw this as a challenge for the Forum.

Coastal Implementation Group

- 2.3. At this point members asked what the position was regarding the 'Coastal Implementation Group' as set out on Page 64 of the strategy document. Ken Bradley clarified the position. He explained that while the strategy did take account of setting up a group made up of Government Departments, Agencies, National Trust and Industry the position had changed. He explained that following a meeting with the Council for Conservation and the Countryside it was decided to move the Industry Sector to the Coastal and Marine Forum and we have representatives from that sector present today.
- 2.4. Ken went on to say that while reflecting on the idea of setting up, what is basically, another Inter Departmental Group, and how to achieve Senior Level time commitment, it transpired that there may be a possibility of using an existing Group made up of Senior Departmental Officials that is the Water Framework Directive Inter-Departmental Implementation Board.
- 2.5. Ken explained that the Board meets twice a year to discuss progress on the Water Framework Directive. It is chaired by Stephen Peover, Permanent Secretary DOE and is made up of Senior Officials from other Departments and their Agencies. The idea would be to have ICZM as an Agenda item of their meetings.
- 2.6. He went on to say that he is in the process of preparing a paper for discussion at the next meeting of the Board sometime in December, date has yet to be confirmed. Ken went on to say that if the Board does decide to include ICZM, its membership will have to be expanded to include other Agencies such as the Crown Estate and Maritime and Coastguard Agency to name but two. However, this scenario does exclude the National Trust from sitting on the Implementation Board and consequently it is now taken a seat on the Coastal and Marine Forum. Ken apologised to Geoff Nuttall, the Trusts' representative, for any inconvenience caused.
- 2.7. Ken went on to explain that it would be the intentions to have Prof. Cooper attend the WFD Board meetings for the ICZM Agenda Item only.
- 2.8. There was a feeling within the Forum that given the very close linkages between ICZM and the WFD it would be prudent and maybe helpful to the Board if the Chairman was allowed to attend the full meeting. This was noted.
- 2.9. Members also asked if it is agreed that ICZM will be included would it be possible to get a copy of the Membership of the WFD Board in order that they could identify possible representational gaps. Ken said that he would be

content to look at this. The group welcomed the idea of using an expanded WFD group as proposed.

2.10. It was suggested that coordination and the relationship between both groups was crucial and that the Forum should have at least two meeting before each Implementation Board meeting in order for the Chairman to be properly prepared.

Action: To consider providing CMF members with a copy of the membership of WFD Inter-Departmental Implementation Board following outcome of the December Board meeting. [Ken Bradley]

3. Remit of the Coastal and Marine Forum

3.1. Attention then turned to the 'Remit' of the CMF. The Chairman said that he wasn't suggesting that the Forum goes through the wording in fine detail as long as they were content with the broad detail he felt that would suffice.

3.2. The Chairman said that the underlying aim of the group was to provide the mechanism to integrate the various activities around the coast and for members to bring their particular expertise to the table.

3.3. The members then discussed the 7 Remit Issues in turn:

- **Drive the ICZM strategy forward and monitor implementation of its objectives**

3.3.1. Some members felt that 'Drive' was a very strong word given that the Forum is Non-Statutory and has no powers. In addition it was felt that this item was a huge task on its own and that the Forum could not do everything given that there are over 50 objectives. .

3.3.2. Ken Bradley said that perhaps the Forum should consider progress at the end of the first year. This could concentrate on those Key Objectives which were due to be completed in Year 1 and report on progress on those. Ken said he is content that, if slippage is noticed at an early stage, the Chairman is quite capable of approaching the Implementation Board on behalf of the Forum.

3.3.3. Kate Reeves asked if there was any potential legislative mechanism to underpin ICZM possible.

3.3.4. Ken explained that both he and a Welsh colleague had made approaches to Defra for the inclusion of an ICZM duty within the Marine Bill but the signs are not positive. He went on to say that he is looking at the Sustainable Development duty as one possible vehicle but others will be considered.

- 3.3.5. John Anderson while welcoming the Sustainable Development Duty said we would have to wait until March and beyond to find out what weight it carries especially with particular reference to Planning.
- 3.3.6. Ken felt that the timing is ideal in that we may have time to influence SD Duty. He went on to say that Sustainable Development is Governments main driver and added that ICZM was included in the NI strategy.
- 3.3.7. Peter Harper highlighted his concerns about the lack of powers of a Non Statutory Group and because in Northern Ireland, AONBs are not underpinned by legislation as they are in GB, the management of such sites is difficult to enforce as his organisation is experiencing. He therefore felt that ICZM was more complicated and therefore it was crucial to know what credence the Forum has before we commit to putting a lot of time into it.
- 3.3.8. Ken reiterated the fact that he was looking at ways of having an ICZM duty and agreed to continue to pursue this further.

Action: To look at methods of placing an ICZM duty within legislation or other potential mechanisms. [Ken Bradley]

- **Progress Report to Government on ICZM every 3 years.**

- 3.3.9. It was suggested and was supported by the members that the Forum should produce a report at the end of the first year. It was also suggested that Forum reports should be copied to the European Commission. This was noted.
- 3.3.10. It was also agreed that what is meant by 'Government' within this item required to be defined further as this was ambiguous.

Action: To amend Item 2 of the Remit to define Government. [CMF Officer]

- **To consider future government initiatives (policy, legislation, actions) relevant to the coast and marine environment and to promote their integration.**
- 3.3.11. The Chairman said this item was self explanatory but it did raise the issue of the need for consensus within the Forum when producing responses. He went on to qualify that this might not always be achieved and in any case did not preclude the right of members to respond on behalf of their own organisations.
- **To advise government in relation to strategic coast/marine coastal issues.**

3.3.12. The Chairman said that we do have within the members a vast knowledge and expertise of coastal issues. Given this he felt that the Forum should have a proactive role in identifying any apparent problems or issues and bring them to the attention of the Implementation Board.

- **To promote an understanding and raise the profile of ICZM in Northern Ireland.**

3.3.13. The Chairman felt that the main focus should be 'educational' and raising awareness not only of ICZM but also of the existence of the Forum.

3.3.14. It was suggested that with regard to this item the Forum needs to set its own objectives some of which would no doubt require funding and this issue would have to be addressed prior to committing the Forum's time and effort.

- **To consider and make recommendations on additional structures, activities, research and information deemed necessary to progress ICZM in Northern Ireland.**

3.3.15. The Chairman felt that the Forum could have a role in identifying areas to support ICZM and bring these to the attention of the Implementation Board. He went on to say that it was important Government support the Forum and was grateful for the Department of the Environment being able to provide secretarial and administrative support for day to day operations. He regarded this support as essential to the forum's activities.

3.3.16. Ken said that there was the potential for Environment and Heritage Service colleagues to provide technical and scientific support. In addition Local Authorities also wished to assist in the process and Environmental Policy Division is to investigate this further. Geoff Nuttall said while he appreciated such support suggested that there was a need to keep all budgetary requirements of the Forum under review.

- **Liaise with other UK and Ireland interests on aspects of the Coastal Zone.**

3.3.17. It was suggested and agreed that the EU should be added to the list.

3.3.18. The Chairman concluded by thanking members for their input and that the Remit should be kept under review as the Forum develops.

Action: Remit to be amended and presented to next meeting for signing off. [CMF Officer]

4. Working methods for CMF.

4.1. The Chairman suggested that having recently attended a meeting of the Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership it would be his desire to hold meetings of

the Forum at different locations around the coast as was the case with the Welsh. This would not only help raise the profile of the Forum but would also provide those hosting the event with an opportunity to highlight ICZM in their local area.

- 4.2. This was welcomed by the members and the Chairman went on to say that he was therefore looking to members to volunteer to host future meetings.
- 4.3. With regard to the role of the Forum members felt that its relationship with the Implementation Board was a crucial factor especially the need for two way communication and how the Forum influences the Implementation Board. It was suggested that copies of the Forums' minutes should be sent to the Implementation Board and perhaps a formal note from the Chairman highlighting matters of concern. It was felt that if possible copies of the minutes of the Implementation Board should be made available to the Forum. It was agreed that further discussion on this topic should be left until after we know the outcome of the WFD Inter-Departmental Implementation Board meeting in December.
- 4.4. The relationship with external interest groups which are not represented on the Forum was also crucial. Members agreed that it was important to develop mechanisms whereby their concerns could be brought to the attention of the Forum. This could include invitations to the Forum to give presentations. Members were of the opinion that this is why raising the profile of the Forum and letting the general public know we exist was of immediate importance.
- 4.5. Ken Bradley said that if required he was willing to give presentations to interest groups perhaps beginning with Local Authorities as they have an important role to play in the delivery of ICZM.
- 4.6. It was suggested that it would be useful if the diagrams on Page 64 of the strategy document outlining the makeup of the two Groups could be updated once the way ahead is clearer. Ken said he was prepared to look this.

Action:

To consider looking at the diagrams on Page 64 of the strategy document with a view to updating once the way ahead is clearer. [Ken Bradley/CMF Officer]

5. Mechanisms for monitoring delivery of Northern Ireland Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy.

- 5.1. The Chairman asked members how the Forum was going to monitor progress. It was suggested that Departments should be asked to submit reports to the Forum prior to each meeting. It was important that such reports not only provided information on progress but also highlighted any slippage. The reports should also contain an integration element in that comments from all organisations/partners involved in the delivery of the objective should be taken into consideration in the overall report. This would ensure that the

Forum would have a means of flagging up any concerns at an early opportunity.

- 5.2. Some members felt that that some of the objectives would be hard to monitor as they were not time bound in that they were ongoing over the duration of the strategy. Likewise some objectives were considered to be aspirational. Members therefore considered that if the Forum is to be effective the monitoring of the Objectives set out on Pages 45 to 61 should be the main focus of the Forum and if possible it should try to assess each action annually.
- 5.3. With regard to monitoring progress it was suggested that consideration be given to placing tables on an ICZM website. These tables should indicate progress on each objective perhaps on a 'Traffic Light' basis. This was noted.
- 5.4. Some members asked if was within the Forum's rights to make public any concerns it has regarding ICZM in Northern Ireland.
- 5.5. Ken Bradley said that he could see no problem with the Forum making Public Statements which would also help raise its profile. The Chairman then stated that any public statements by the Forum would only be made on the proviso that such a statement was representative of the consensus of the Forum opinion.

Action: To consider mechanisms for asking Departments to submit progress reports prior to each Forum meeting. [Ken Bradley/CMF Officer]

6. Priority Actions

- 6.1. The Chairman said that it was important for the Forum's credibility to be seen to achieve some early wins.
- 6.2. Maeve Bell suggested that given that Section 5 of the Strategy sets out three main stages, each with a different focus, the Forum should concentrate on Priority Period Years 1-3 for early wins.
- 6.3. Kate Reeves highlighted that, because there was no established baseline for the coastal zone in Northern Ireland and alluding to the Indicators outlined on Pages 65 and 66 of the strategy document, it may be worthwhile to carry out a baseline survey and develop a set of indicators for Northern Ireland. She went on to say that she was aware that Clive Gilbert, a member of the EU ICZM Expert Working Group, was already working on an Interreg project on ICZM indicators and would be keen to extend this to cover Northern Ireland. The Chairman confirmed that he was also aware of Clive's work and if the members were in agreement he would be prepared to meet Clive along with Kate to pursue this further.

Action: To pursue the possibility of Clive Gilbert extending his project on ICZM indicators to cover Northern Ireland. [Chairman/Kate Reeves]

7. Priority Actions

- 7.1. The Chairman reiterated the fact that it was important that people know that the Forum exists and that this needs to happen as soon as possible. Various suggestions such as brochures, web site and news sheet were put forward as possible mechanisms. It was also suggested that there was a need for the Forum to integrate with other interest groups such as the or to place articles in
- 7.2. It was finally agreed that there was a need for a PR/Publicity Sub Group to discuss the way ahead and that any member who wishes to be on this Sub Group should contact the CMF Officer.

Action: To establish a PR/Publicity Sub Group. [Members to contact CMF Officer]

8. Update on PPS20 – Michael McSorley, DRD

- 8.1. Michael thanked the Chairman for the invitation and wished the Forum every success for the future.
- 8.2. He explained that preparation of work on a PPS for the coast began in January 2003. The main stages included , Bilateral meetings/ workshop with various agencies – to inform the process of identifying issues for coastal planning policy, Scoping Paper produced towards the end of 2003, Issues Paper Agencies were consulted on 3 occasions in 2004 and Draft PPS 20 April 2005.
- 8.3. He went on to say that he became involved in January this year with the task of reviewing previous work with the intention of having a new Scoping Paper for consultation with Planning Service by July 2006. He explained that this deadline was met and as a result a subsequent framework paper was put to Planning Service in October and comments are awaited.
- 8.4. He confirmed that the target was to produce draft PPS 20 for public consultation next year.
- 8.5. He went on to provide a brief outline of some of the issues which may be covered such as strengths and opportunities, weaknesses and threats; pressures from supply side and demand side; issues of environmental, economic and social nature; implications for the developed and the undeveloped coast.
- 8.6. Members then asked several questions such as
Will 2nd homes be included?
Issue of illegal sand extraction from beaches/impact on tourism?
Will policy refer to climate change?
Will PPS20 recognise the issues of aquaculture/ not defined as agriculture?
- 8.7. Michael acknowledged these questions and said that he would take them into consideration as PPS20 develops.

8.8. The Chairman thanked Michael for his presentation.

At this point the Minister David Cairns MP joined the meeting. He said he was delighted to have had the opportunity to attend the Inaugural meeting of the Forum. He went on to say that we must ensure that our coastline, which we value for its scenic beauty, economic importance and as a natural resource, is made sustainable and that it remains a vital and dynamic part of Northern Ireland's heritage.

The Minister welcomed Professor Cooper as the first Chair of the Forum and said that his knowledge and experience would make a huge contribution to the success of the Group. He went on to say that the Forum is unique in that all major coastal and marine coastal stakeholders are represented and that members views will be taken into account in developing policies on coastal areas.

9. Any other business

9.1. Peter Harper wondered if there was scope for the Forum to learn from previous Best Practice of other Forums such as Devon and Cornwall Coastal Forum, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum or even European Interegg projects such as Skagerrak (Sweden, Norway Denmark) and consider an Interegg Project of our own.

9.2. Ken Bradley pointed out that he was pursuing the possibility of Interreg Projects with colleagues in Environment and Heritage Service.

9.3. The Chairman asked members to consider bringing forward coordinated funding opportunities.

Action: To consider coordinated funding opportunities. [All Members]

10. Date of next Meeting.

10.1. It was agreed to hold the next meeting in January with the third meeting in March and that the CMF Officer would be in touch with members regarding suitable dates. Venues to be confirmed.

Action: To seek suitable dates for the next two meetings of the Forum. [CMF Officer]

Alan Hamilton

December 2006

