

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date:
19 July 2012

Meeting time:
10:00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



For further information please contact:

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Agenda

1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2. Inquiry into coastal protection – Evidence from the Minister for Environment & Sustainable Development (10:00 – 11:00) (Pages 1 – 5) E&S(4)-21-12 paper 1- Welsh Government

John Griffiths AM, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development
Nicola Edwards, Head of the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Team
Prys Davies, Deputy Director – Energy, Water and Flood Division

3. Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill – Water Legislative Consent Motion (11:00 – 12:00) (Pages 6 – 11) E&S(4)-21-12 paper 2

4. Papers to note (Pages 12 – 13) Minutes of meetings held on 21 June, 27 June and 5 July.

4a Inquiry into coastal protection – Paper from the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science (Pages 14 – 18) E&S(4)-21-12 paper 3 – Welsh Government

5. Motion under Standing Order 17.42(vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for item 6

6. Discussion on forward work programme – autumn 2012 (12:00 – 13:00) (Pages 19 – 25)

7. Common Agricultural Policy – draft letter (Pages 26 – 35)

Environment and Sustainability Committee

E&S(4)-21-12 paper 1

Inquiry into coastal protection – Evidence from the Minister for Environment & Sustainable Development

The purpose of this paper is to provide information on Welsh Government's approach to coastal management and, in particular, in regard to coastal erosion and tidal flood risk. The foundation of this approach is found in the National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales, published November 2011.

The Welsh Coastline

1. The Welsh coast currently has in the region of 415km of constructed coastal defence structures that protect over £8 billion of assets from coastal erosion and tidal flooding¹. This includes residential and business properties, road and rail, energy, water and sewerage infrastructure and a range of other nationally and locally significant assets. In addition to economic and human infrastructure, 75% of the Welsh coast is designated for its environmental importance.
2. Historically, coastal erosion has been low in Wales and it has been estimated that 1.4 km² of land and three properties have been lost to coastal erosion over the last 100 years². However, climate change projections suggest that rate of loss could increase in the future and it is estimated that erosion is occurring along 346km (23%) of the Welsh coast³.
3. The key findings⁴ for Wales from the UK Climate Projections 2009 suggest that by 2050 sea levels around Wales are predicted to rise by approximately 20cm and storm intensity in summer and winter will increase, leading to more severe storms and larger waves attacking our shores.

National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management

4. In November 2011 the Welsh Government published the first National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales. The National Strategy sets out the following four overarching objectives for managing flood and coastal erosion risk:

1 The total length of Welsh coastline is approximately 2740km including Anglesey and Holyhead; British Cartographic Society.

2 Taken from Environment Agency report 'Historical Losses to Coastal Erosion – Wales Region' commissioned for the National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping project

3 Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership, Plymouth University, 2008.

<http://www.mccip.org.uk/annual-report-card/2007-2008/marine-environment/coastal-erosion.aspx>

4 Key findings from medium emission scenario, using central estimate of probability.

- reducing the consequences for individuals, communities, businesses and the environment from flooding and coastal erosion;
- raising awareness of and engaging people on flood and coastal erosion risk;
- providing an effective and sustained response to flood and coastal erosion events; and
- prioritising investment in the most at risk communities

Reducing the Consequences

5. It is not possible to stop or prevent all flooding or coastal erosion. Building more and higher defences is not a sustainable option in the longer term, and even where we can build appropriate defences there will always be a residual risk. We can however take steps to reduce the consequences and create more resilient communities.
6. A risk management approach encompasses measures to help communities as well as the wider environment. Some measures incorporate natural processes to provide a more flexible and long-term solutions, such as returning an area to natural tidal flood plain, whilst others concentrate on increasing our understanding so that communities can respond or prepare in advance of flood events or make longer term plans to minimise material or personal loss to coastal erosion.

Improving our understanding

7. A fundamental element to limiting the consequence of events is improving our understanding of risk. Integral to this is the work of the Welsh Government funded Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre, which will publish standards on coastal monitoring later this year, and continued improvements in the technology that underpins our modelling and mapping facilities.
8. The Environment Agency has recently completed National Coastal Erosion Risk Maps, which provide a series of interactive public maps, available online, and a wealth of data for use by stakeholders. The maps take account of the climate change projections and are based on the 50% probability of the erosion predictions occurring. They provide a starting point for discussions with communities and business on the long term sustainability of Welsh coastal locations, and the choices we and they face for the future. Some of this work has already been started through the development of our Shoreline Management Plans, which have been subject to extensive consultation.
9. The coastal erosion risk maps complement the flood risk maps also hosted on the Environment Agency website. These maps provide an indication of

the areas of Welsh coastline that are at tidal flood risk and the likely extent of flooding from rivers (based upon a 1 percent (1 in 100) chance of happening in any year), the sea (based upon a 0.5 percent (1 in 200) chance of happening in any year) and from extreme flood events from the rivers and the sea (based upon a 0.1 percent (1 in 1000) chance of happening in any year).

10. The maps represent a significant advancement in the understanding of coastal erosion risk but the predictions are very dependent on the rate of sea level rise and climate change impacts so continued monitoring and review will be necessary.

Raising Awareness

11. The Environment Agency's Flood Awareness Wales campaign has visited 242 geographical communities across Wales and to date over 200 community flood plans have been prepared with over 80 of those having been tested. These plans help prepare those living in flood risk areas and improve their understanding of that risk.
12. In October 2011 the Welsh Government published the first toolkit for raising awareness of flood risk. Developed from the evaluation of awareness raising work underway across Wales, the toolkit is designed to help those working with communities at risk of flooding. It is the intention of the Welsh Government to revisit the toolkit within the life of the National Strategy and incorporate additional advice in relation to the risks of coastal erosion.

Responding to Events

13. It is important to ensure that, as well as acting to raise awareness of and reduce the consequences of the risks we face, we plan to respond when flooding or erosion occurs. In early June parts of Mid and North Wales experienced significant flooding and while the main causes of that flooding were rivers and surface water run-off, the response demonstrated the value of good emergency plans.
14. Wales has experienced severe coastal flooding in the past, the most significant at Towyn in 1990 when thousands of people had to be evacuated from their homes. We have also seen examples of erosion recently, with a cliff fall in Porthkerry in November 2011. Coastal erosion tends to be a slower progressive process compared to a flood event. Although cliff falls and landslides can occur suddenly they are difficult to predict so the response is often less about an emergency response and more about adaptation over time.

Prioritising Investment

15. The Welsh Government is leading a five year programme of flood and coastal erosion risk management works supported by almost £50m from the European Regional Development Fund. With Welsh Government's match funding, our total investment in this programme is over £100 million over the life of this Assembly. This will reduce risk to over 7,000 properties across Wales.
16. The overall core budget for flood and coastal erosion risk management for 2013/14 and 2014/15 is higher than in previous years. We also continue to seek additional capital funds from other areas including the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan and European Regional Development Fund
17. The National Strategy includes a commitment to develop a national funding policy and prioritisation methodology, also known as the Single Investment Programme. A Single Investment Programme for flood and coastal erosion risk management in Wales will set out a prioritisation methodology that will allow us to rank areas of Wales from the most at risk to the least at risk. This will then enable us to target investment in the most at risk communities, with appropriate intervention methods directed as required.

Development Management

18. Managing the risks of coastal erosion and flooding also includes taking appropriate action in relation to development, as set out in Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Notes (TANs) 14 and 15. The overall aim of our planning policies is to ensure new development, in particular highly vulnerable development, is directed away from the floodplain and that inappropriate development is not permitted in unsuitable coastal locations. However, it does acknowledge that some development will be necessary in the floodplain and sets out a number of tests to be applied where development may be justified and any risks can be appropriately managed for the lifetime of the development.
19. Overall, the evidence demonstrates that Planning Policy Wales and the TANs can provide robust policy where planning applications are submitted for development on flood plains.⁵

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

20. Implementing the National Strategy is the responsibility of everyone involved in or affected by flooding or coastal erosion, including: the Welsh Government; the Welsh Risk Management Authorities; and the people of Wales. Policies supporting the National Strategy will also be set out in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategies being prepared by each local authority in Wales and Shoreline Management Plans.

⁵ High Level Target 13 Report 2010/11; Environment Agency Wales

21. Local Flood Risk Management Strategies will set out how local authorities will manage the risks of flooding within their areas. These strategies are intended to balance the needs of communities, the economy and the environment and form the framework within which communities have a greater say in local risk management decisions.
22. All 22 local authorities in Wales are in the process of developing their Local Flood Risk Management Strategies in line with guidance issued by the Welsh Government in November 2011.
23. Shoreline Management Plans are concerned with the risks of flooding from the sea and the wider risks of coastal erosion. They are compiled by Coastal Engineering Groups; joint working groups led by coastal local authorities and with representation from the Environment Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales amongst others.
24. There are four Shoreline Management Plans covering Wales and each one covers a number of coastal communities and a series of sea defences. They detail a proposed shoreline position policy designed to reduce the risks to people, property and land and are scheduled for completion by December 2012.
25. Monitoring and reporting on the National Strategy's implementation is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. Reports on the implementation of the National Strategy will be published every two years, and will form part of a wider assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk in Wales and the management of that risk. Welsh Government will use the reports and assessments to identify good practice, trends and issues to be resolved, then work in partnership to address them where appropriate.
26. The first review of the National Strategy is scheduled to take place in 2016.

Agenda Item 3

Environment and Sustainability Committee

E&S(4)-21-12 paper 2

Legislative Consent Memorandum - Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill

The Committee will be considering the Legislative Consent Memorandum - Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill.

Please find attached a link to the Legislative Consent Memorandum - Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill.

[Legislative Consent Memorandum - Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill](#)

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Agenda Item 4

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Meeting Venue: **Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

Meeting date: **Thursday, 5 July 2012**

Meeting time: **09:00 – 14:30**

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This meeting can be viewed on Senedd TV at:

http://www.senedd.tv/archiveplayer.jsf?v=en_700001_05_07_2012&t=0&l=en

http://www.senedd.tv/archiveplayer.jsf?v=en_400000_05_07_2012&t=0&l=en



Concise Minutes:

Assembly Members:

**Mick Antoniw
Keith Davies
Russell George
Vaughan Gething
Julie James
William Powell
David Rees**

Witnesses:

**Steve Cook, Environment Agency Wales
Phil Dyke, The National Trust
Dr Susan Gubbay, Countryside Council for Wales
Greg Guthrie, Royal Haskoning
Graham Hillier, Environment Agency Wales
Emlyn Jones, Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre
Kevin Owen, Atkins
Louise Pennington, Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre
Marcus Philips, Halcrow
Dr Nicola Rimington, Countryside Council for Wales
Neville Rookes, Welsh Local Government Association
Kath Winnard, Atkins**

Committee Staff:

**Lara Date (Clerk)
Catherine Hunt (Deputy Clerk)**

1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

1.1 Apologies were received from Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Llyr Huws Gruffydd and Antoinette Sandbach. There were no substitutions.

2. Inquiry into coastal protection – Oral evidence

2.1 The witnesses responded to questions from members of the Committee on coastal protection.

2.2 Dr Rimington agreed to provide copies of papers by Defra on the initiatives being developed using natural processes in defences.

2.3 Mr Dyke agreed to update the Committee on the availability of the Defra evaluation of the Pathfinder project.

3. Motion under Standing Order 17.42(vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

3.1 The Committee agreed to exclude the public from the meeting.

4. Inquiry into coastal protection – Consideration of evidence

4.1 The Committee considered the evidence it had received on coastal protection.

TRANSCRIPT

View the [meeting transcript](#).

Agenda Item 4a

Environment and Sustainability Committee

E&S(4)-21-12 paper 3

Inquiry into coastal protection – Paper from the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to set out written evidence to the Environment and Sustainability Committee in relation to their inquiry into Coastal Protection in Wales.

2. Summary

- 2.1. This paper outlines the importance of the Coastal Environment to Welsh tourism and provides information on activity undertaken by my tourism officials and our partners to maximise the value of the Coastal Environment to the Welsh visitor economy.

3. Background

- 3.1. The coastal environment is one of the most important features for tourism in Wales. In contrast to other GB destinations, trips to seaside/ coast dominate the Welsh holiday market at 44 % followed by village/ countryside at 26% (Source: GTBS 2011).
- 3.2. My officials have been working to get Wales's coastal environment recognised internationally as one of the best in Europe for the quality of its beaches, conservation and management of its biodiversity and the quality of its sea water. These positive associations can be used to promote Wales as a destination for coastal tourism.
- 3.3. In terms of coastal erosion, some of our culturally significant sites are located in areas at risk of flooding and/ or erosion. Natural and constructed tourist sites such as coastal paths, nature reserves, monuments and beaches are in at-risk areas.
- 3.4. Although my department is not directly developing programmes targeting coastal erosion and risks of flooding, it is leading on the sustainable development of the coastline and investing in the infrastructure, leisure facilities, quality and sustainable management.
- 3.5. My officials work in close partnership with the regeneration department (Housing, Regeneration and Heritage) to ensure tourism developments within the coastal regeneration areas contribute to and support the overall strategic objectives of the sector. We continue to work jointly through the

current regeneration review to ensure tourism plays a key strategic role in the future policy direction of seaside resort regeneration

4. Coastal Tourism Strategy

4.1. The Welsh Government's Coastal Tourism Strategy was launched in December 2008 and sets out a common strategy for the development of coastal tourism, which realises and builds on the economic potential of the coastline of Wales, whilst respecting its environmental quality and recognising the importance of achieving community benefits. Coastal Tourism, in particular, is highly dependent on the quality of the natural environment and cultural distinctiveness of Wales - qualities which can be destroyed if poorly planned or managed. The natural environment can also be a driving force for the preservation and promotion of these qualities through raising awareness and indirectly by providing an economic justification for investment. The coastal tourism strategy directly addresses the challenges of developing coastal tourism in a sustainable way in order to achieve economic, environmental and social benefits.

5. Green Sea Partnership (GSP)

5.1. The aim of the Green Sea Partnership (GSP) is to achieve co-ordinated practical action to sustainably improve the quality of our coastal environment, focusing on bathing water and beach quality and the safe use of our beaches.

5.2. Since its launch in May 1996, the partnership has encouraged the up take of the existing codes of conduct and marine codes in operation in Wales and has achieved considerable success in improving the quality of Wales' coastline and increasing the number of award winning beaches in Wales. For 2012 the Wales achieved the following beach awards:-

- 43 Blue Flag beaches,
- 5 Blue Flag marinas,
- 51 Green Coast Awards,
- more than 100 Seaside Awards.

5.3. In 2010, two coastal authorities were selected to drive forward the Green Sea Project on behalf of all the coastal authorities in Wales. This project now forms part of the overall Environment for Growth (E4G) Convergence Coastal Tourism Project.

6. Environment for Growth – Coastal Tourism and Sustainable Tourism

6.1. The aim of the two EU projects on Coastal Tourism and Sustainable Tourism is to invite residents and visitors alike to improve their health,

reduce stress and learn about all aspects of the environment by taking advantage of national outdoor assets.

6.2. As part of the approvals process, all “Centre of Excellence” proposals were subject to consultation with the Environment Agency Wales (EAW) and Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) regarding planning and regulations affecting coastal developments (i.e. Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation), EU environmental habitat protection and other related policies.

6.3. Visit Wales is continuing to work with the project leads, EAW, CCW and Local Authorities in terms of policies relating to Shoreline Management Plans and the planned Marine Conservation Zones in Wales.

6.4. The focus for the Coastal Tourism project is to develop high quality watersports and activity tourism products around the coast, encouraging more sustainable recreation, integrating sustainable transport and improving the environmental management. The project has supported three key Centres of Excellence (CoEs) on the Welsh coast:-

- Trust in Aberdaron (National Trust)
- Pembrokeshire Coastal Waters Centre (Pembrokeshire)
- Swansea Bay Water Sports Centre (Swansea)

6.5. The objective of the Green Sea Coastal Improvement Programme (part of the E4G Coastal Tourism Project) is to ensure the quality of beaches - around the coast of the Convergence area of Wales - is maintained and improved in order to meet growing visitor expectations. The programme is designed to enhance the quality of the visitor experience at Welsh beaches through:

- Developing the natural environment through improved access and enjoyment;
- The provision/improvement of appropriate infrastructure, facilities, access – (i.e. car parking, access paths, visitor information, interpretation, toilets and environmental facilities etc);
- Monitoring activities;
- Encouragement of ‘Sense of Place’; and
- Interpretation and Sense of Place - supported by an improvement in the provision of information and interpretation.

7. The Tourism Investment Support Scheme (TISS)

7.1. The objective of TISS is to stimulate increased demand from new and existing markets by encouraging capital investment projects aimed at improving the quality of facilities. Any investment in tourism projects via

TISS is subject to planning permission and wider consultation with Local Authorities. Welsh Government is reliant on coastal protection issues being taken into account by Local Authorities or National parks where appropriate at the planning stage.

8. Coastal Access and the Wales Coast Path

- 8.1. The Welsh Government Coastal Access Improvement Programme (CAIP) aims to improve existing coastal rights of way, develop new routes and ensure access from many user groups including cyclists, disabled people and horse riders. In May 2012 the all Wales Coast Path was launched and has resulted in a significant media response both in the UK internationally.
- 8.2. My department chairs the Wales Coast Path marketing and communications group. Additional joint work is underway in terms of facilitating circular routes that allow people to head inland and link to towns and villages, bringing economic benefits to Welsh rural communities.

9. Other partnership activities:

- 9.1. Keep Wales Tidy - developing a dedicated website to encourage more sustainable management of the coast. The website will include key information on beach profiles, marine heritage, biodiversity, accessibility and wider sustainable coastal management. Supporting Coastcare Groups, which empower local communities, encouraging them to take ownership of certain areas including beaches. There are currently 136 groups operating along the Welsh coast
- 9.2. The Coastal Communities Toolkit - help beach managers develop and deliver a more sustainable approach to coastal management, events and activities on and around the coast as well as key environmental information coastal activity.
- 9.3. Tourism and Climate Report - Visit Wales commissioned a report in 2010 to look at the impacts of climate change on the tourism industry in Wales. Phase 2 of the study will be commissioned in 2012 and identify key impacts for the industry and practical recommendations for future proofing tourism development in the future.
- 9.4. Development of factsheets and support for businesses on climate change including flooding, future proofing and erosion.
- 9.5. Tourism Recreational Audit and Toolkit - The South West Wales Recreational Audit is a useful guide to identifying tourism pressure points and volumes of activities around the coast. An online toolkit has been

developed on the back of this so other regions can benefit from the work and develop a similar approach to sustainable coastal monitoring and management.

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