



Severn Estuary Commission meeting

Tuesday 20th August 2024, 9:00 – 11:00

Teams meeting

Attendees

Commission: Andrew Garrad (Chair) (AG)
Sue Barr (SB)
Nigel Costley (NC)
Peter Davies (PD)
Madeleine Havard (MH)
Chris Mills (CM)

Secretariat: Will Mansfield, Head of Sustainable Energy (WM)
Nicola Lomax, Project Support (NL)

Chair Update

Meetings

AG provided an update on his engagement activities over the last month:

- **Dr Danny Coles, University of Plymouth:** discussions about the MOSAIC project and involvement in Energy Work Package (see Energy Systems update).
- **Simon Calverley, Advisor to Ed Miliband:** informative meeting about GB Energy remit and future developments. AG noted it would be good to meet with the Chair of GB Energy. PD has contact detail for Juergen Maier.
- **Professor Phil Taylor, Vice Chancellor and President of University of Bath:** meeting to discuss the energy systems work particularly in relation to the integration of renewables into the grid. Prof Taylor reviewed the energy system activity and has agreed to be a critical friend to the Commission.
- **Mark Shorrocks, Tidal Lagoon Power:** meeting to discuss learning points from the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon project.

Of note was the need to understand the distinctions and relative influence of the Treasury and the Department for Business and Trade (formerly BEIS). The evidence from the project about aquatic ecology and fish will be important for the Commission.

The Commission acknowledged the extensive evidence base provided by this project, which is why it has been included in the study area. It was noted that the Commission will refrain from aligning themselves with any specific project(s).

- **James Curtis, tidal range lead at DESNZ:** agreed to keep in contact and keep the Commission apprised of any developments.
- **Professor Reza Ahmadian, Cardiff University:** meeting to discuss the alignment between the TARGET project and our energy systems work.



WM emphasised our commitment to avoiding duplication of efforts, noting that while the TARGET project operates on different timelines, there is a significant overlap with our energy systems work package.

WM also highlighted that the Crown Estate may plan to consolidate all energy systems work into a single evidence base, encompassing the Tidal Lagoon Challenge, TARGET, MOSAIC, and the Commission.

The Commission discussed the Crown Estate and GB Energy collaboration. At this stage, it is not clear what this will mean for tidal range in terms of funding and policy alignment.

- **Mary-Ann Brocklesby, Chair of CCR and Leader of Monmouthshire Council and Paul Matthews, Chief Executive of Monmouthshire Council:** meeting to discuss the Commission generally, to welcome CCR's financial contribution to the Commission's work and opportunities at Aberthaw in light of the OREC funding.

Forthcoming meetings:

- **Cllr Dimitri Batrouni, Leader of Newport City Council:** due to meet with Andrew and Will today.
- **Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority:** hoping to meet with Stephen Peacock, the new Chief Executive Officer.
- **Cllr Tony Dyer,** new Leader of Bristol City Council.
- **Mersey Tidal Power project:** WM and AG will be visiting the project team.

WM noted that the support of Liverpool's Mayor has been a factor in the project's success so far. AG asked if there was anything specific the Commission would like him to investigate during that visit. SB mentioned that it would be helpful to understand what those with a public-facing interest consider to be a successful project

- **RWE:** meeting their tidal range team to discuss the Commission's work.
- **Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero:** the Secretary of State has declined the opportunity for a meeting. AG will follow-up with him later in the year with an update on the Commission.

Energy Systems work package

This has been a complicated work package to co-ordinate. The Secretariat have been working with The Crown Estate to identify the various organisations that are working in this area. Currently, a proposal is being finalised with Danny Coles from the MOSAIC project to develop a "mini-MOSAIC" project, which will cover the scope of the Energy Work Package. A team has been assembled, with support from Phil Taylor at the University of Bath, The Crown Estate energy teams and the MOSAIC team. DESNZ is also involved.

WM noted that this approach has provided access to DESNZ and NESO, an opportunity that would not have been possible with a conventional consultancy firm.

WM will share material on the MOSAIC project, including a brief and documentation.



Finance Commissioner

AG has been in discussions with several potential candidates for the Finance Commissioner role, with Ian Simm, Founder and Chief Executive of Impax Asset Management, currently being the leading contender.

Impax Asset Management is one of the world's leading investment managers focused on the transition to a more sustainable economy. Outside Impax, Ian is a member of the UK government's Net Zero Innovation Board, which provides strategic oversight of public sector funding of energy innovation programmes. He is also a board member of the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change and a Commissioner with the Energy Transitions Commission. Between 2013 and 2018 he was a board member of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

Time constraints are a concern, so AG is in discussions with Ian to determine the most effective working arrangements for him if he were to become a Commissioner.

Environment work package update

WSP provided the following update to the Commission:

- Baseline review with specialists progressing though slowed by holidays and late agreement of study area.
- Baseline programme has now been issued, with adjusted milestone dates reflective of the delay in kick-off and so forth.
- Study area and example projects now agreed - this is being progressed in GIS.
- Agreement made to vary the contract to include GIS build and hosting costs by WSP to support work-in-progress thinking/mapping.
- WSP team catch-up (20th August) to discuss stakeholder requests, programme and ongoing progress update.
- Begin scheduling stakeholder 1-2-1s and consider dates for stakeholder workshops in October.
- Once study area in GIS, begin Goldset collection work.

The key points from the Commission's discussion can be summarised as follows:

- The Commission noted some concerns regarding the current pace of progress and feels that it is important to address these collaboratively. WM agreed to arrange an update meeting with WSP to review the current status and discuss the next steps to ensure we are all aligned moving forward.
- WM note that the study area has been finalised. The Commission discussed concerns about being too focused on specific projects and locations, which might limit the broader strategic guidance needed as part of its recommendations. There was consensus on the need for a balance between generic strategic guidance and specific project examples and this will vary across the work packages.
- There was a discussion about the importance of considering new technologies and innovation rather than rehashing existing ones.



Socio-economic work package update

HJA are in their baseline review stage, with a literature review and parameter setting underway.

The key points from the Commission's discussion can be summarised as follows:

- The Commission expressed confidence in HJA's approach and progress to date.
- There were discussions about the stakeholder engagement process for the socio-economic work. WM noted that a list of stakeholders for 1-2-1 engagement has been drawn up for review with HJA.
- There was some discussion about the geographic groupings and the need to treat South Wales and the South West of England as distinct economic groupings. The Commission raised concerns about the political implications of this and how grouping distinct geographies could mean a lack of sufficient detail at the reporting stage.

WM clarified that the intention is not to combine the regions but instead that the geographic groupings represent granularity of detail but he will clarify this with HJA.

- Currently, the geographic grouping will consider the socio-economic impacts within the Great South West's region. We are exploring the possibility of extending the study to provide a more detailed analysis of this area and have reached out to the Great South West to gauge their interest in funding this additional work (with the caveat that the work will only be undertaken as long as it does not impact the timelines for the Commission's work).

Stakeholder framework

- The WSP consultant team requested a detailed Stakeholder Engagement Framework to guide their stakeholder engagement and a draft version has been sent to both consultant teams. The Commission noted that the stakeholder framework and related documents should be considered working documents, meant to guide internal discussions with consultants. There was agreement to mark these documents as confidential and ensure they remain flexible and subject to further refinement.
- The next step in stakeholder engagement is 1-2-1 sessions with key stakeholders. The objectives of the 1-2-1 sessions were discussed. The primary aim is to gather information from existing evidence bases and there will be opportunities for further engagement in the autumn.

The Commission reviewed the Framework and key points from the discussion were:

- There is a question of whether we should be contacting the organisations that fall under the umbrella of Wales Environment Link directly.
- There was a concern about missing critical stakeholders, such as fisheries, which need early engagement. There is a need to understand the various bodies that will cover fish e.g. Welsh government, Rivers Trust, NRW. PD and CM noted they have contacts in these organisations.
- From a socio-economic perspective, other key stakeholders could be those engaged in skills/employment, Bristol Port and AB Ports, trade unions and key industrial organisations.
- The Commission noted that it is key to ensure organisations from both sides of the border are engaged e.g. Wildlife Trusts



- The questions for stakeholders within the Framework were reviewed. The Commission agreed that these were the key questions that should be considered but also discussed whether they should be framed in the context of climate change and the nature emergency so that a broader perspective is considered.
- The need for a “narrative” to put the Commission’s objectives into this broader context for stakeholders was discussed. The Commission also considered whether an endorsement from the UK Climate Change Committee would be helpful. The Secretariat agreed to draft a document for review by AG and PD in the first instance.
- The Commission agreed that the final recommendation section of the Framework should also acknowledge the possibility that the Commission may not be able to recommend pursuing tidal energy exploration in the Severn. WM will amend this section to reflect this.
- The Commission agreed to review the Framework and provide comments by the end of the week.

AOB

- The next Commission meeting will be held at the RSPB offices at Pye Corner on the Gwent Levels.
- The Severy Estuary Partnership Forum will be held at Blackfriars in Gloucester on 8th October. It was agreed that MH will present and WG, WM and NC will all attend.

Actions from the last meeting:

	Action	Owner	Status	Target date
1	Secretariat will work with consultants to draft a stakeholder engagement plan, including relevance/ importance of each stakeholder – to be reviewed by Commissioners.	Secretariat	Complete	20.8.24
2	Secretariat will organise meeting between topic lead Commissioners and consultants to discuss frequency of meetings and stakeholder engagement plan.	Secretariat	In progress	10.9.24
3	Secretariat will develop a public-facing update on its activities since the launch, in addition to our intentions going forward (published on website). This should also include direct communication with key stakeholders on our engagement plans.	Secretariat	In progress	17.9.24
4	Secretariat will develop a ‘hymn sheet’ on key points for Commissioners to reference in meetings etc – to be reviewed by Commissioners.	Secretariat	Complete	20.8.24



5	Secretariat will write draft letters to relevant politicians (Ed Miliband and Welsh Government equivalent when cabinet confirmed)	Secretariat	In progress	17.9.24
6	Secretariat to reorganise Commission meetings – 20th August 9am (online) and 10th September (in-person) site visit to Gwent Levels (tbc).	Secretariat	Complete	20.8.24
7	WSP to write 1-page note that sets out the likely reference projects, based on the 2010 work and shortlist. This will need to be agreed by Commissioners/Secretariat.	WSP	Complete	20.8.24
8	Secretariat to obtain further information on the Tidal Lagoon Challenge's work on aquatic ecology and fish (methodology, timescales)	Secretariat	Complete	20.8.24
9	Secretariat to liaise with The Crown Estate to access cumulative effects studies that may be useful for the Commission.	Secretariat	Complete	20.8.24
10	Secretariat to contact David Chubb, Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission in Wales and arrange introductory meeting.	Secretariat	In progress	17.9.24
11	Secretariat to liaise with Crown Estate on GB Energy report and check whether this can be shared with the Commission.	Secretariat	Complete	20.8.24

New actions:

12	Commissioners review Stakeholder Framework and add any stakeholders to lists.	Commission	In progress	30.8.24
13	Secretariat to review and adjust Framework based on feedback. Secretariat to reiterate to consultants that the Framework is an internal draft/ work in progress & to contribute their view on stakeholders to engage.	Secretariat	In progress	10.9.24
14	Secretariat to set up meeting between Commissioners and WSP/ HJA on progress & stakeholder engagement ahead of next Commission meeting to include: Update on WSP progress so far.	Secretariat	In progress	10.9.24



	Clarify with HJA that their geographic groupings represent granularity of detail.			
15	Secretariat to write up initial narrative with Peter and Andrew and then review with wider Commission.	Secretariat/ Commission	In progress	10.9.24
16	Secretariat to organise session with Peter and Sue on wider comms, political engagement, and sequencing (i.e. political groundwork), then review with wider Commission.	Secretariat	In progress	10.9.24
17	SEP Forum: Madeleine (presenting), Nigel, and Andrew to attend SEP Forum on 8 th October – Secretariat to draft slides and arrange logistics.	Secretariat	In progress	8.10.24
18	Secretariat to change date of monthly Commission meetings.	Secretariat	Complete	17.9.24
19	Secretariat to update Commission on details of Energy and Finance work packages/ progress, including details on the MOSAIC project.	Secretariat	In progress	17.9.24