

PEMBROKESHIRE COASTAL FORUM

MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING 6 FEBRUARY 2003

THE FUTURE OF THE FORUM

By mid-summer we shall be half way through the three-year period of Objective 1 funding. We need, therefore, to start thinking about the future role and shape of the Forum and its team. This may seem odd when in the middle of a busy work programme. However, in my view, it is timely not least because funding partners start to think about expenditure in the financial year 2004/5 very soon. We cannot wait until December 2004 before thinking about the future.

It is also important to be thinking about the role of fora such as ours in the context of the preparation of an ICZM strategy for Wales and the UK, an exercise that will be starting shortly. There is already a great deal of interest in local fora and their ability to help deliver integrated management at a local level. It is clear that there will be an important opportunity to influence the way things develop and to highlight the resource requirements of such fora.

The purpose of this short paper is to initiate a process that will end when all those involved with our Forum have come to an agreed position in relation to its future. It will be very useful at this meeting to have a discussion that sets the parameters and timescale for the consideration of the Forum's future; and identifies any matters that we can assume to be "given" at the start of the process particularly in relation to:

- Can we assume that we still need the Forum? I sincerely hope that the answer is positive, but what do we need to do to convince any doubters?
- Assuming it is still needed,
 - What will be its role? – much as now securing integration and acting as a catalyst or should it take on a more executive role?
 - Should it remain legally unconstituted as it is now or become more formally constituted as a limited company and a charity?
 - What will be its requirements be in terms of resources? – what size of team is needed? Will it need significant project budgets?
 - Where should we be looking for funding? Can we assume that the present funding partners will be prepared to continue doing so in the future?

The Forum is a strange organisation in the sense that it is a creature of all those organisations that have set it up. It is not like an independent voluntary body that has a life of its own. It relies on the member organisations for momentum and resources, though not without the good work of the Forum team. Its future depends on the role perceived for it by its membership. That is why it is crucial, in the first instance, for those organisations that comprise the management group take charge of this process. I hope that consideration of these questions will kick start this process and enable us to tease out what we need to do and how we need to do it over the coming months.

It is unfortunate that we will not have the benefit of having to hand a completed ICZM strategy and action plan for Pembrokeshire. It was always anticipated that the long-term role of the Forum would emerge from these documents. Given that we cannot wait until they are completed, we may well need to adopt an interim approach that establishes the necessary core resources for the Forum, to which can be added specific projects and initiatives that emerge from the planning process.

Edward Holdaway
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