

101422134

Revision 01

ENVIRONMENT REVIEW GROUP

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Meeting:	16 th December 2024, 14:00-15:30
Location:	MS Teams
Chair:	Mark Kemp (ESC)
Attendees:	SZC: Steve Mannings (SMan), Nick Stayt (NS) – (Observer) ESC: James Meyer (JM) (Observer), Mark Kemp (MK) – (Chair), Naomi Hayes (NH) – (Observer), Rebecca Brooks (RB) – (Observer) SCC: Tim De-Keyzer (TDK) Natural England: Kim Pearce (KP), Sean Mahoney (SM) – (Observer) Environment Agency: Simon Barlow (SB)
Apologies:	None

Meeting Notes:

Approval of terms of Reference:

- Environment Review Group: The group unanimously agreed to escalate these Terms of Reference to the Delivery Steering Group for approval.
- Ecology Working Group: NS ran through the changes to the purpose and scope of the Terms of Reference as decided in the previous EWG session. The group unanimously approved these Terms of Reference.
- Natural Environment Awards Panel: The Terms of Reference will be distributed to the group for approval after the meeting following approval by the Natural Environment Awards Panel itself.

Project Update (SMan)

SMan provided an overview of the works ongoing at the Main Development Site and Off-site infrastructure sites. This included an update on the plans for 2025, such as the Temporary Sea Defence and the diversion of the coast path and the SSSI crossing.

SMan also noted that the Fen Meadow works at Benhall are complete, with seeding planned for next year and that updated Fen Meadow plans for all fen meadow and wet woodland sites will be submitted to East Suffolk Council for re-discharge of DCO requirements 25 & 26 in February 2025. Prior to this a meeting will be convened of this forum to brief members.

Summary of business of other Working Groups

Ecology Working Group

The Ecology Working Group held four meetings this year. Key matters arising included a) Agreement of the scope of the Marsh harrier and other ecology surveys carried out under the Terrestrial Ecology Monitoring & Mitigation Plan (TEMMP) under DCO Requirement 4; b) Confirmation that there will be no permanent land-take from M22 fen meadow habitat because the habitat no longer exists within the order limits, having naturally transitioned into sedge swamp which is of little or no ecological value. This resulted from pressures from high water levels within that part of the SSSI over a number of years; c) Update of SSSI land-take estimates taking account of the final SSSI crossing design approved under DCO requirement 20, permanent land-take being approximately 0.5ha less than assumed in the DCO; d) Survey evidence showing that the compensation SSSI wetland created at Wild Aldhurst is of SSSI quality in respect of vascular plants and invertebrates; e)

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Successful completion of reptile capture within MDS and re-location to Wild Studio and marsh harrier receptor sites; and f) Good progress made in implementing the initial measures secured under Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for Minsmere European sites, including development of signage in collaboration with Suffolk RAMS and scoping of initial interventions in terms of car parks/fly parking/footpaths in discussion with stakeholders to fund under SZC's European Sites Access Contingency Fund.

Water Management Working Group

- Held two meetings, focus was largely on the Water Monitoring Mitigation Plan (WMMP) and reviewing monthly results. The first meeting reviewed the Water Management Plan (WMP) before submission for approval, addressed questions, and clarified feedback in the next meeting. By the second meeting, the plan was approved by ESC, and discussions centred on current issues.
- The focus of the group is ensuring compliance with the Water Management Plan (WMP) is a priority.
- ToR to be agreed at Group level on 13th January.

Water Levels Management Group

- Closely aligned with WMWG, with only one meeting held so far. Future meetings will be scheduled in tandem with WMWG.
- This group operates independently and does not report to the EnvRG, but SMan proposes that WLMG reports to EnvRG, even though this is not specified in the DoO, and that if the group agrees, this can be recorded in the Terms of Reference (ToR) going forward.
- SB recommended instead first exploring informal partnerships with the aim to improve operational practices, management techniques, and maintenance regimes. He also cautioned against endeavours to make this group more closely tied to the working group hierarchy, as the WLMG's purpose (as described) appears disparate from the working group structure and the EA's role in the WLMG may become difficult to justify if that group were to become too connected to the construction project and subject to voting arrangements and escalatory mechanisms. SMan agreed to proceed on this basis and review in six months.

Marine Technical Forum

- It was agreed in the previous Environment Review Group meeting that the Marine Technical Forum (MTF) should escalate issues to this forum.
- There have been three meetings this year, focusing on Deemed Marine Licence (DML) condition returns and updates to the coastal mitigation and monitoring plan.
- The main purpose of this group is to provide updates on progress and address any delays. Next year's focus will be on ensuring planned progress, reviewing hooks and controls, and possibly adjusting the vessel management plan for winter.

Natural Environment Awards Panel

- The group focuses on the use of the Natural Environment Awards Fund, inviting applications from landowners and third parties to mitigate the project's residual landscape effects.

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- Two key roles, as defined in the Deed of Obligation, for managing the fund have been filled by ESC and SCC. These individuals will collaborate to review applications and present them to panel members for voting.
- A chair was appointed in the last meeting, with Simon Amstutz of the National Landscapes team elected for a 12-month term.
- The main discussion in the last meeting focused on the timeline. An intended timeline was proposed, with a meeting planned for February to finalise details for a late spring launch of a one-year pilot scheme to gather feedback.

Decision Making and Escalation

Sizewell Car Park Subsidy

- JM explained that the EWG oversees the mitigation monitoring plan for European designated sites, funded by the European Sites Access Contingency Fund, and implemented on third-party land.
- The first approved funding request is to subsidise the Sizewell Beach car park for a period of 9 months as a trial.
- JM, on behalf of the EWG, requested approval to draw down £30,414.23 from the European Sites Contingency Fund for this purpose.
- **The group voted unanimously to approve the request.**

Quick Access Fund

- JM explained that the potential need for accessing funds more quickly, given that the EnvRG only meets twice a year.
- JM seeks the group's feedback and opinions on this idea of a pre-agreed quick access fund and asked for their guidance.
- **The group unanimously agrees that the EWG can discuss this further and report back to the Environment Review Group with a suggested value of the fund and process of notification when intending to use the fund.**

Future Meetings

- To be scheduled every 6 months. Next meeting due in July 2025.

Actions raised during the meeting:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
16/12/2024	1	NEAP Terms of Reference will be distributed to the group after the meeting for approval via email.	EnvRG	Next meeting

Author: Caitlin Murphy (SZC)