

Draft Terms of Reference for the Medmerry Stakeholder Advisory Group: Implementation Phase

February 2011

Background

At an initial workshop on 14 July 2009, community stakeholders supported the idea of setting up a group of key local stakeholders to input into the Medmerry managed realignment scheme. This group became known as the **Medmerry Stakeholder Advisory Group (MStAG)**.

The Environment Agency hosted a number of meetings with MStAG over the next year at key stages during early scheme development. MStAG's remit was to provide feedback on the outline scheme design and ensure the decision making process was transparent and understood in the wider community.

MStAG members acknowledged that, once planning permission had been determined, the membership and terms of reference for the group would need to be updated. These changes are necessary in order to reflect the new priorities and challenges during the implementation phase (i.e. through to the finish of construction). MStAG's role following scheme completion can then be reviewed once the new flood defences are in place.

During 2009 and 2010, MStAG helped the project team to identify opportunities for public access and recreation at the Medmerry site. Some of these enhancements are now included in our core scheme. Some of the aspirational elements that will not be delivered by the Environment Agency flood risk management scheme have now been put forward for European funding in a bid called "Floodcom". Chichester District Council (CDC) is leading this bid, with support from several local organisations represented at MStAG. If successful, Floodcom will be delivered in coordination with our realignment scheme.

In the future it is likely that the RSPB will take on the ongoing responsibility for managing access, recreation and habitat at Medmerry, while the Environment Agency will retain ongoing responsibility for the flood defence and drainage aspects of the scheme.

It is therefore recommended that future MStAG meetings during the implementation phase are co-ordinated by the Environment Agency with support from CDC and the RSPB.

MStAG Roles and responsibilities

MStAG will help to ensure the community is involved throughout the implementation phase. In this way, we can work together so that the Medmerry managed realignment scheme and associated aspirations work reflect the interests of the local community.

The role of MStAG is:

- to offer ideas and local perspective for the public elements of the scheme (such as recreation enhancements, public footpaths, cycle ways, wildlife, and landscaping) so that they can be delivered either through the Environment Agency flood risk management scheme or through related community initiatives, such as Floodcom;
- to communicate with the wider community and interest groups to keep as many people involved and appraised as possible, as construction gets underway and changes start to happen on the ground at the Medmerry site. Group members will commit to keep in touch with individuals and groups that they have links with, and keep them updated throughout the implementation phase;
- to share information about related local initiatives underway, so that they can be best linked for their mutual benefit; and
- to help all parties understand the local community's aspirations for the scheme.

MStAG is an advisory group, not a decision-making body, but it is able to influence widespread elements of the project.

The Environment Agency recognises its role in supporting MStAG members in doing this, and will seek advice from the group on the best engagement methods. We commit to hosting MStAG meetings at least twice per year during the implementation phase.

Criteria for membership

- Members should be sought from all local councils affected by the proposal to ensure that all residents are officially represented: West Sussex County Council, Chichester District Council, Selsey Town Council, Sidlesham Parish Council, Earnley Parish Council, and East Wittering Parish Council;
- Members will ideally represent a group with a specific interest in the Medmerry managed realignment scheme. A balance of different interests should be represented, including but not limited to: businesses (major and small companies, and especially tourism), landowners, recreational interests (walkers, cyclists, other user groups), agriculture and horticulture, fishing, and community and environmental groups; and
- Members should be willing to commit time to attend meetings and to communicate with their networks of interest groups before and after each meeting.

Written communications from the project team will come from the dedicated project email address: medmerry@environment-agency.gov.uk