

Welcome...

...to the first newsletter of the Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area (ASEA) Ecology Mitigation and Flood Defence project.

South Gloucestershire Council, Bristol City Council and the Environment Agency are working in partnership on this project to improve flood defences and create new habitats for important wildlife species. This will help to ensure that economic development can continue to take place within the designated Enterprise Area without harming the environment. Improving the flood defences and biodiversity will also have benefits for the local community.

The project is currently at an early stage. This first newsletter sets out the project background and provides an overview of the work that is planned. We will issue a series of newsletters during the project to keep you up to date and hope you will find them useful.

To be added to our mailing list and receive newsletters direct please email us at ASEA@environment-agency.gov.uk. For further information on the project please see www.insouthglos.co.uk. We are keen to hear from you!

Strategic context

The Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area (ASEA) is recognised by the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as a strategically important employment location. South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol City Council are looking to facilitate up to 1.6 million square metres of new commercial floor space, which will potentially lead to the creation of 12,000 new jobs within the Enterprise Area by 2026. In order to ensure the Enterprise Area can reach its full economic potential there is a need to:

- Deliver new and improved **flood defences** to reduce the risk of flooding now and into the future.
- Provide **new wetland habitat** to off-set the impact of likely development on the nationally and internationally recognised wildlife of the River Severn.



Figure 1 – Study area

By 2050, Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area will be an internationally significant industrial location and home to key sectors, drawn by investment opportunities and a reputation for innovation, competitiveness and superb infrastructure.

Joint Council Outline Development Strategy Statement

Previous work

This project is not starting from scratch. A great deal of previous work and consultation has been undertaken and the project will build on this. Our website www.insouthglos.co.uk contains details of key previous studies.

Flood Defences

The existing flood defences within the area vary in terms of their effectiveness to deal with flooding. Over time, sea level rise will increase the risk of tidal flooding to this area.



Figure 2 - A key consideration will be enhancement of the existing coastal defences

In 2012 an important study concluded that improving the existing flood defences was essential to achieving the Enterprise Area's full economic potential. Through a further study in 2013 a number of options were considered and a preferred option was identified. This was based on improving defences along the coast (a 'hold the line' approach) and aligns with the Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy.

This project will develop and refine the preferred option. It will take account of different types of flooding in the area, such as that from the sea, from rivers and streams (rhines) and from surface water runoff. The flood defences provided will also help to improve protection for existing communities in the area.

Ecology Mitigation

The Severn Estuary and areas within the Enterprise Area are ecologically important. In 2010/11 a key study looked at the distribution of wetland birds in the Enterprise Area and assessed the impact of proposed future development on them. This Study concluded that further development in the Enterprise Area was likely to result in a significant effect on the wetland birds of the Severn Estuary. It made recommendations about creating new areas of wetlands to off-set this impact, so that the economic potential of the Enterprise Area can be realised while also safeguarding the wildlife of the Severn Estuary.

This project will look at how this wetland habitat can best be provided.

Economic impact

The ASEA Outline Development Strategy published in 2012 showed that the economic benefits of providing flood defences and ecological mitigation was considerable.

This project aims to ensure that these economic benefits can be realised by delivering the required ecological mitigation and flood defences.



Figure 3 – Management of the existing drainage network is an important consideration

This project

This project is looking at 5 areas.

- Area 1 – Defences between Severn Beach and Aust.
- Area 2 – Defences at Avonmouth docks.
- Area 3 – The existing outfalls (which drain the Enterprise Area) and embankments between Severn Beach and the Docks.
- Area 4 – Hallen Marsh.
- Area 5 – Northwick.

For Areas 1, 2 and 3 the project will focus on improving existing flood defences and creating new defences to reduce the risk of flooding and enable economic development.

Areas 4 and 5 are the focus for introducing new wetland habitats for birds by creating new ponds and wet grassland. The aim is to safeguard the protected species found within the Severn Estuary.

Within each of the areas the project will:

- Consider the **advantages and disadvantages** of various potential interventions.
- Identify **preferred interventions** in consultation with key stakeholders such as Natural England, Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board, Wessex Water, Network Rail, Highways England and Bristol Port.
- **Engage with the local community** and landowners to share work in progress and invite comment at key stages.
- Prepare **engineering designs**.
- Prepare **funding bids**.
- Apply for **planning permission**, where this is required.
- Prepare the documents required for **contractors** to deliver the required works.



Figure 4 – Creation of wet grassland habitat is a key objective. This has been done very successfully elsewhere.

Work to date

Project activities to date have included:

- Setting up a **communications group** to ensure that we engage relevant stakeholders and local communities.
- Considering the preferred **location for flood defences** in Areas 1, 2 and 3.
- Considering the pros and cons of various **technical solutions** for flood defences ranging from banks and slopes to walls and gates.
- Facilitating a **stakeholder workshop** to discuss options. Stakeholders shared a clear preference for flood defences along a coastal alignment.
- Considering the various **ways of creating wetland habitat**. A key issue is how we will assemble the required amount of land in locations that best suits the various species of birds.

Forward programme

Most of the above work will be delivered in stages over the next 2-3 years. However, the wider project, including construction of the new defences and ecological sites, has a long and detailed programme which could take much longer to be developed and fully implemented at all locations.

Key programme dates are:

- Autumn 2016 – Development of options, environmental surveys and ground investigations
- Winter 2016 – Identify preferred options
- Early 2017 – Modelling and design of preferred option
- Summer 2017 – submit planning applications
- Winter 2017 – submit funding bids
- 2017 to 2030 – detailed design and construction of the preferred options in a number of phases.

Have your say...

There are various ways you can find out more and comment on the project.

- **Autumn 2016** – We will be attending two public events to share information on the project. Our project team will be on hand to explain our work in progress.
 - A joint South Gloucestershire Council, Environment Agency and Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board public flood drop-in event - **Tuesday 25th October**, Severn Beach Primary School, Ableton Lane, BS35 4PP, 3pm to 8pm.
 - Avonmouth Neighbourhood Forum meeting - **Thursday 17th November**, Avonmouth Community Centre, BS11 9EN, 7pm to 9pm.
- **Spring 2017** – We will also be holding further events in spring 2017 and this will provide everyone with an opportunity to discuss our more developed proposals.
- **Email** – Please feel free to email us comments at any time ASEA@environment-agency.gov.uk
- **During the planning process** – Where planning permission is required there will be a further opportunity for comment.

