

LGA Special Interest Groups

2014 Annual Report to LGA Leadership Board

SIG NAME, LEAD OFFICER, AUTHORITY AND CONTACT DETAILS:

SIG NAME: Coastal SIG

CHAIR: Cllr Andy Smith

LEAD OFFICER: Bill Parker

AUTHORITY: Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council

ADDRESS: Melton Hill, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 1AU

TEL: 01394 444553

EMAIL: bill.parker@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

WEBSITE: <http://lgacoastalsig.com/>

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP:

[Note: Only LGA member authorities are entitled to SIG membership]

57 Member Authorities (4 new this year)

ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL
ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL
BLACKPOOL COUNCIL
BOURNEMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
BRIGHTON (& HOVE) COUNCIL
CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL
CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL
CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORNWALL COUNCIL
DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL
DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL
DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL
DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL
EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

EAST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL
EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
EASTBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL
ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL
GREAT YARMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL
HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL
KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK BOROUGH COUNCIL
LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL
LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL
NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL
NORTH DEVON COUNCIL
NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL
NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL
PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL
PURBECK DISTRICT COUNCIL
ROTHER AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL
SCARBOROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL
SEDGEMOOR DISTRICT COUNCIL
SHEPWAY DISTRICT COUNCIL
SOUTH TYNESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL
SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL
SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL
TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL
TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL
THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL
WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL
WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL
WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
WIRRAL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
WYRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

The LGA Coastal SIG will champion and take forward the coastal strategy and represent the collective interests of all maritime local authorities by:

- a. bringing pressure on the Government to achieve a step change in the level of funding to overcome present and future problems;**
- b. use every opportunity to secure full involvement of local Government at all levels of policy formulation concerning the coast;**
- c. strongly oppose any changes which take responsibility and decision-making powers out of the hands of local democratic leaders.**

KEY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

The Objectives of the Coastal Issues Special Interest Group (“the Group”) are:

- 1.1 To increase awareness and debate at a national and European Level of environmental, economic and social issues and concerns that directly affect or which may so affect coastal, estuarine and maritime communities;**
- 1.2 To act as a focus for liaison between local authorities and other bodies representing coastal, estuarine and maritime interests;**
- 1.3 To secure improved cross-departmental co-ordination with Government on coastal, estuarine and maritime issues with a view to ensuring consistency in policy and the provision of resources.**
- 1.4 To work in partnership with other organisations with complementary aims.**

KEY ACTIVITIES/OUTCOMES OF WORK UNDERTAKEN

The Coastal SIG group meets quarterly, usually in London, with the annual Field Trip and AGM taking place within one of the Member's Authorities, this year to be Scarborough and will include field trips in relation to local coastal issues and activities. The AGM for 2013 was held at Falmouth, Cornwall and touched on topics such as Marine Planning, Shipping related pollution incidents, the Cornwall Maritime Strategy, RNLI and Fishing for Litter.

Speakers and guests to SIG meetings this year have included Defra Minister George Eustice MP, Professor Virginia Murray Head of Extreme Events and Health Protection at Public Health England, Mel Nicholls from the MMO and Dan Osgood, Deputy Director at Defra, who all value the opportunity to talk collectively to the leading local authorities on coastal issues. This demonstrates the important communications being maintained between SIG members and government departments and other bodies.

The Chairman, Cllr Andy Smith and Bill Parker, as Lead Officer (both of Suffolk Coastal District Council) have met with a range of Ministers such as Dan Rogerson MP (Defra) and Matthew Hancock MP (BIS and a Flood Envoy for the Cabinet Office) to discuss issues of critical importance for coastal communities, including matters put forward by Coastal SIG members, raising awareness of these events, the recovery and the residual issues for communities affected by them.

The SIG maintains "On the Edge", a Coastal Strategy document to define the local authority agenda for the coast. The aim of this is to set out the priorities and vision of Coastal Management, to provide support to councils with a tidal edge, and to raise awareness at local and national level of the important work of local government along the coast. Updated every few years, the final draft of the latest revision is now complete, and the launch will be this summer 2014.

The Chairman of the Coastal SIG, Cllr Andy Smith, was a member of Defra's Drafting Group during 2013 for the Coastal Concordat. The Concordat aims to reduce and streamline the complex and overlapping regulatory processes involved with projects in the intertidal zone, where multiple consents or licences are required. It will also aim to help improve both sustainable growth and marine protection by agreeing the most efficient ways of managing projects, and ensuring all aspects of planning and environmental legislation are identified at an early stage. The Concordat was launched on the 11 November 2013 by Business Minister Michael Fallon James Cross, Chief Executive of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), and Cllr. Smith on behalf of the LGA.

The SIG website (<http://lgacoastalsig.com/>) has been given a new face, and the official Coastal SIG logo has been finalised for use with letters, presentations, and endorsements and so on. We have welcomed four new members of the SIG recently; Bournemouth BC, East Devon DC, Purbeck DC, and Tendring DC. At present the Isle of Wight Council are pending, however we are in the process of furthering our membership list by contacting Authorities with a tidal edge to let them know of the SIG's presence and of the work we do.

The SIG is also looking to ensure that interests of coastal LAs are represented at EU level. The Coastal SIG has actively supported the work of the Cross Channel Declaration, which involves understanding the implications of shipping incidents in the English Channel, the impacts on our coasts, and how local government is involved with the aftermath of an incident. This has helped to promote the work of the SIG to EU Level and encourages communication between European and South Coast authorities. The Cross Channel Declaration project, and work involved with Interreg V, and the EU Directive on ICZM are going some way to expanding the progress of LAs within Europe.

Work is ongoing in strengthening relations with government bodies such as Defra, Environment Agency, Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation. Cllr Smith attends regular Stakeholders' meetings, bi-annually with Defra / EA and quarterly with the MMO, with opportunities to question or influence their policies both formally and informally with their most senior personnel.

Cllr Smith has also promoted the work of the Coastal SIG to the Coastal and Marine All Party Parliamentary Group, and was invited by their chair, David Morris MP, to address their recent meeting.

Of particular importance over the Winter months were the Surge of 5 December 2013, and then the following storms all of which was given wide coverage by the media. The SIG provided an excellent platform by which authorities that have been affected by these events can share support and experiences of this, and provide a political voice needed by coastal communities, with the backing of technical and regulatory information.