

**Salcombe Harbour Board – 12 November 2007****ESTUARY AND AONB PARTNERSHIP****Report of Head of Landscape & Leisure**

**Statutory Powers:** Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

**Financial Implications:** The Harbour Authority currently contributes £16k annually towards the costs of employing an Estuary Officer as well as covering the office overhead costs. A new partnership budget is presented at Appendix 1 which proposes a contribution towards new arrangements for the next three years.

**Purpose**

To provide financial information to support the establishment of a new AONB Estuary Management Partnership to deliver relevant environmental management on behalf of the Harbour Board.

**Recommendations**

**That the Harbour Board resolves to make a financial contribution towards the proposed Estuary Partnership of £10,000 annually for three years from 2008/09 to 2010/11, index linked for inflation;**

**That the Harbour Board nominates a representative to serve on the AONB Partnership Estuary Steering Group along with the Harbourmaster.**

**Background**

1. Members of the Board considered a report at its last meeting which outlined current arrangements for the environmental management of the South Hams estuaries. It drew attention to the fact that the current Salcombe Estuary Partnership is not financially viable and that an alternative arrangement is required in order for the Harbour to continue to meet relevant environmental responsibilities towards the Site of Special Scientific Interest and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty highlighted in the Salcombe–Kingsbridge Estuary Environmental Management Plan.

**Financial Implications (Exempt Appendix)**

2. Current and proposed budgets are presented in Appendix 1 and refer to staff costs which are exempt information.

A range of options for future estuary management is being considered by the following funding partners:

- Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority
- Natural England (formerly English Nature/Countryside Agency)
- Duchy of Cornwall
- The National Trust
- South Hams District Council
- Devon County Council

3. Each body has agreed to the principle of establishing a new Estuary partnership linked to the existing AONB Unit and is considering the draft budget.

## The AONB Estuary Officer – working arrangements

4. A revised job description and person specification have been prepared. The proposed new post will become part of the AONB staff unit based at Totnes with work stations available in Dartmouth and Salcombe.

### Estuary Steering Group

5. It is proposed that a steering group be formed from the funding partners to guide the work of the officer. This would ensure the work is being done that each funding partner requires. The financial and management arrangements would be covered by a three-year Memorandum of Agreement which would also include reference to the service levels agreed by the relevant partners. This will clearly set out the activities and outputs to be provided to each funding partner.
6. The Harbour Board would need to nominate a representative to serve on the steering group. The group would act as a technical group to the AONB Partnership with its Chairman thereby having a place upon the AONB Partnership Committee.
7. In addition to an annual contribution towards core costs of the proposed new post, the Harbour Board could also consider contributing project funding to enable Salcombe Estuary projects to be delivered, with the AONB Unit seeking external support to ensure good value. By linking with the AONB staff team, there will be additional benefits to the harbour provided by the AONB Unit as a whole; whilst ensuring that conservation work across the AONB estuaries receives appropriate maritime input.
8. The AONB Partnership, while acknowledging the need to having suitably resourced estuary management arrangements in place, requires that a Memorandum of Agreement be established and that employment costs, office, IT support and management time be accounted for with commitment from the various funding partners for a reasonable working period as it is not in a position to underwrite the costs of an estuary officer.

### Risk Assessment

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Failure to deliver environmental management	Development of environmental objectives within Harbour Business Plan
Loss of existing management experience	Development of links to the AONB Unit
Lost Community support via Conservation Forum	Develop exit strategy and offer links via other community groups
Potential impact upon Harbour Business Plan	Identity impact on visitor numbers
Damage to the environmental qualities of the estuary	Monitor with existing environmental bodies

## **Conclusion**

9. A number of funding partners have considered working together to ensure that Estuary management and environmental considerations are addressed in the working harbours and estuaries of the South Hams. The proposed AONB estuary partnership offers the Board a cost effective option to ensure relevant environmental management can continue at an appropriate level.

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Head of Landscape & Leisure

Salcombe Harbour Board  
12 November 2007

Ian Gibson  
Head of Service (Salcombe Harbour)

## **Background Documents:**

Salcombe/Kingsbridge Estuary Plan  
AONB Management Plan