

Avon Estuary Forum - Terms of Reference

The Purpose of the Estuary Forum

- To provide a co-ordinating and advisory role in the conservation and environmental enhancement of the Avon Estuary.
- To promote effective co-operation between those involved in the conservation management in and around the Estuary.
- To oversee the preparation, monitoring and implementation of the Estuary's Management Plan.
- To promote the awareness, understanding, appreciation and active conservation of the special qualities, status and natural processes of the estuary.

Geographical scope

- The Forum will focus on the Avon Estuary, while also having regard for the wider water catchment area and communities insofar as they affect the estuary.

Thematic scope

- The Forum's remit includes a wide range of environmental issues including wildlife and habitats; landscape; heritage and archaeology; natural resources including air, water and soils; agriculture and land management; public access and recreation; and environmental awareness and education.

Forum structure

- The Forum will seek to maintain a structure and procedures that are effective and relevant to the conservation of the Avon estuary.
- The Forum's terms of reference and structure will be reviewed every five years alongside the review of the Estuary Management Plan, or sooner if circumstances require, with change introduced as needed.

Organisation of Forum meetings

- The Forum will normally meet twice a year. The quorum for meetings will be five member organisations or groups present.
- The estuary's Estuaries Officer will be responsible for the organisation and practical arrangements of meetings.
- Notice of the dates of Forum meetings will be sent out to members at least one month in advance of a meeting at which time members will be invited to submit items for inclusion in the agenda.
- Agendas and any papers will be sent out to members at least one week in advance of meetings.
- Meetings of the Forum will be open to any members of the public and representatives of interested organisations to attend.
- The Estuaries Officer will aim to distribute notes of each meeting to members within one month following the meeting.
- The Forum may, at the discretion of the Chairman, invite any person or representative of an organisation to address and take part in a meeting where his or her knowledge or experience would contribute to a relevant matter on the agenda.
- The Forum may establish Technical Groups to consider appropriate issues and to provide a specialist focus on the implementation and monitoring of the Avon Estuary Management Plan or to undertake specific tasks. The Forum will provide clear terms of reference for any such group. A Technical Group may be wound up following a decision of the Forum.
- Alterations to organisational arrangements may be made by the Forum

Membership

Membership is open to any organisation or interest group with an interest in the conservation and management of the Estuary.

Members representing organisations are expected to represent the majority view of their organisation on items during discussions.

Appointment and termination of Forum membership

- It will be for each member organisation to appoint its representative to the Forum, who will normally attend meetings.
- A member of the Forum may resign his or her membership, or may be replaced by a new nominated representative of his or her organisation.
- The Forum may, at its discretion, appoint additional members by co-option or make alterations to its membership.

Appointment of Forum Chairman

- A Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Forum will be elected from the membership of the Forum, normally for a two year period.
- The Chairman would be expected to act as a “champion” for the estuary; to be committed to the purposes of estuary designation and management; and to act as an effective chairman of the Forum meetings.

Publicity and public relations

- In respect of press and publicity, only the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Estuaries Officer may speak on behalf of the Forum.
- The proceedings (agendas and minutes) of the Forum will be available to the public on request and will be uploaded to an appropriate website (AONB website).

Limitations

- The Forum is a co-ordinating and advisory group and does not in itself hold executive powers or authority. It does not replace or assume any statutory duties of relevant authorities for the management of the area.
- Whilst the Forum will seek to operate by consensus this will be limited to the membership attending any particular meeting and the Forum will not express a view unless there is a very clear majority.

Avon Estuary Forum Terms of Reference adopted by the membership of the forum attending the 24th November 2009 meeting