

Sidmouth and East Beach Management Plan - Public Consultation June/July 2016

How we did it

We invited over 150 residents and businesses at risk of flooding or coastal erosion, as well as properties that could be directly affected by the proposed options to a consultation event at Kennaway House in Sidmouth on the 15th June 2016.

The event was also advertised through our website, social media, press releases, District Councillors and the project steering group which includes representatives of the following community organisations:

- Cliff Road Action Group
- Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce
- Vision group for Sidmouth
- Sid Vale Association
- Sidmouth Sailing Club
- Sidmouth Lifeboat
- Sidmouth Town Council
- Sidmouth Fishermen

The event was reported in the Sidmouth Herald and in other local newspapers, as well as featuring on their respective websites.

During the event, a series of posters were presented explaining the background to the scheme and the options that are being considered, with people invited to leave feedback. For those who were unable to attend on the day, information and feedback forms were provided on our website, and at our offices in Sidmouth.

The consultation material made clear the fixed project requirements, and those elements which are negotiable in line with best practice.

Fixed Requirements (your views are welcome but we need to follow national guidance on the assessment of options)
Cost-benefit of the preferred option: We must subject any proposals to a cost-benefit analysis and this will influence the choice of the preferred option.
Funding: Funding to implement the preferred option cannot be guaranteed as it will be assessed amongst national priorities. However, the greater the amount of partnership funding contributions that can be secured, the greater the chance of implementing the preferred option will be.
Detailed design and investigation: The preferred option identified in the BMP will need to be subjected to further more detailed design and investigation to refine and optimise the scheme. This will take about 1-2 years following approval of the BMP, depending upon exactly what option is chosen and so the amount of work required. East Devon District Council is already planning for this work.
Consents and Planning: As part of detailed design and investigation, the final scheme will need Planning Permission, a Marine Licence and various environmental consents.
Negotiable (the views of residents and professional partners will guide the preferred option selection process as part of this BMP project)
Scale and form of defences: We will listen to your views on the scale and form of each option, and the acceptability of each option on access, visual impact, use of the beach and promenade etc.
Alignment/position of defences: There are technical constraints that influence the alignment and position of proposed defences, and whilst these are subject to refinement in detailed design, we welcome views on how these may impact use of the frontage and where we can seek to minimise any such impacts through detailed design.
Other potential benefits: We are already considering potential for each option to incorporate broader benefits to the area as part of the measures to reduce the risk of coastal flooding and erosion, such as access to the shoreline and regeneration of the Port Royal area, but we would welcome your views on any particular broader benefits that could be considered for incorporating into any of the options.

Figure 1 - Consultation requirements

Following a steering group meeting of the 16th June, a number of the Sidmouth representatives from the steering group requested that a variation to Option 4 with breakwaters angled to face the South West was added to the public consultation. This variation was added to the EDDC website and the display at EDDC offices on the 22nd June, and publicised through a press release and social media on the 23rd June.

Around 100 people attended on the afternoon of the 15th June, with around the same number again visiting the public consultation pages on our website before the 5th July deadline.

31 feedback forms were received on the day, with a further 37 responses received subsequently.

45 people asked the BMP project team to continue to keep them updated.

Summary of the results

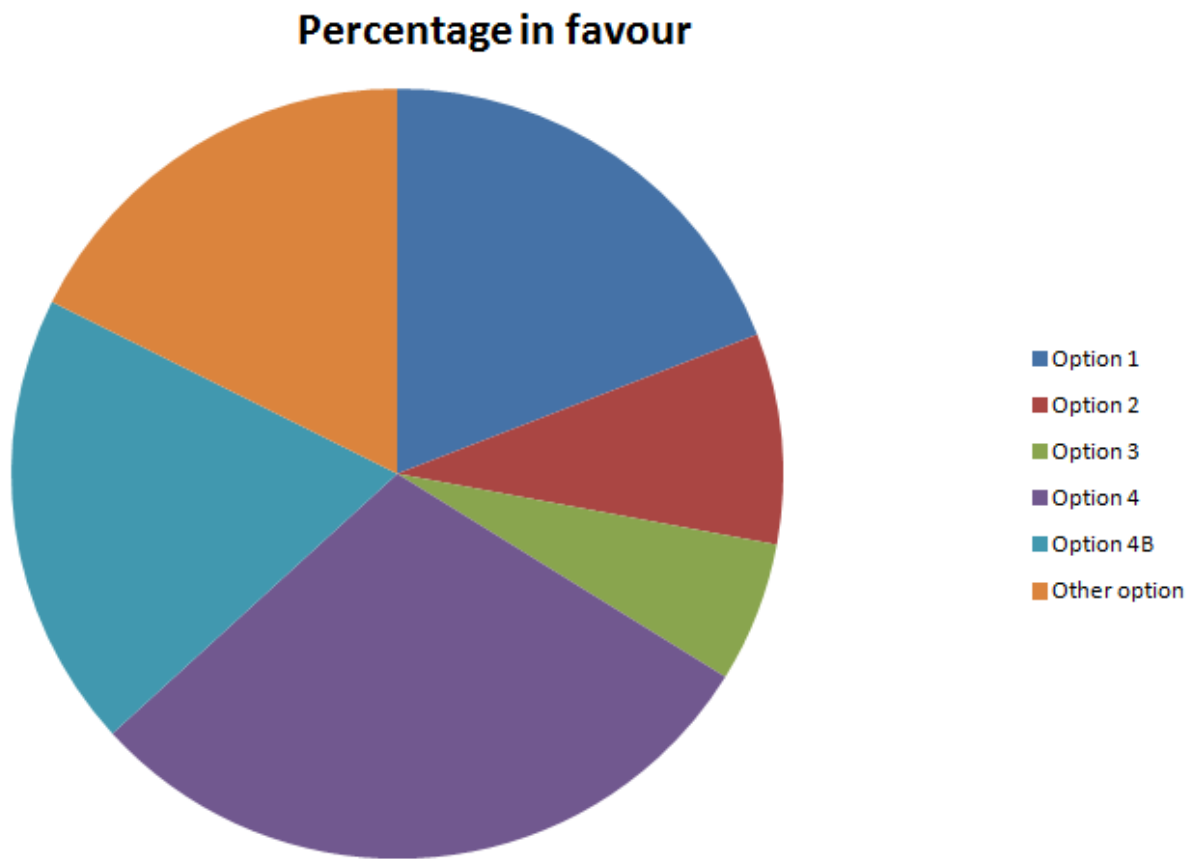


Figure 2 - Overall Option Preference

The overall preference from the consultation was for Option 4 (29%), with Option 1(19%) and the variation to Option 4 (19%) in second place. “Other” was very close (18%), with Option 2 (9%) and Option 3 (6%) the least favoured.

The other options suggested including do nothing, constructing a walkway along the base of East Cliff, wooden groynes and an extended jetty/breakwater from Port Royal.

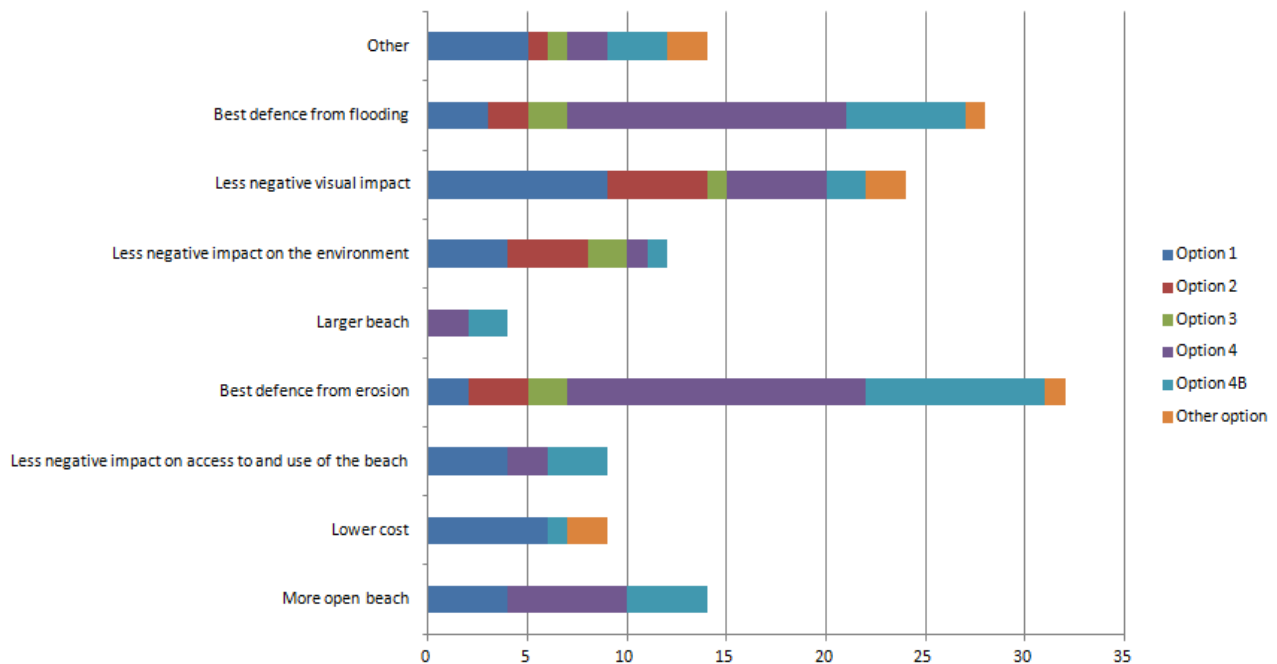


Figure 3 - Main reasons cited for option preference

Those who responded primarily cited defence from flooding and erosion as the main reasons for selecting an option, particularly for Option 4 and its variant. Those who preferred Option 1 tended to cite the visual impact and the lower cost as their reasons for doing so.

A wide range of comments were received in the responses including:

- Concerns over the visual impacts, and whether this could put off tourists.
- The need to protect the town from south easterly storms, as well as south westerly ones.
- Concern regarding removing some of the existing shoreline structures.
- Concern over timescale and a consensus that work needs carrying out.
- Suggestions of the inclusion of a jetty or harbour.
- Acknowledgement that the best protection against flooding and coastal erosion would come at a higher cost and that realistically it would be difficult to achieve.
- Concerns that additional breakwaters would detract from the visual amenity of the beach, and could create a hazard.

Change in results post publication of the variation to Option 4

It had been queried whether sufficient opportunity had been given for members of the public to comment on a variation to Option 4 with angled breakwaters, and whether this may have influenced the responses received.

The variation to Option 4 was added to the consultation material 7 days after the start of the 20 day consultation period, with 30 (43%) of the 68 responses received after this date. Results from responses received after the 22nd June are shown in Figure 4 and 5.

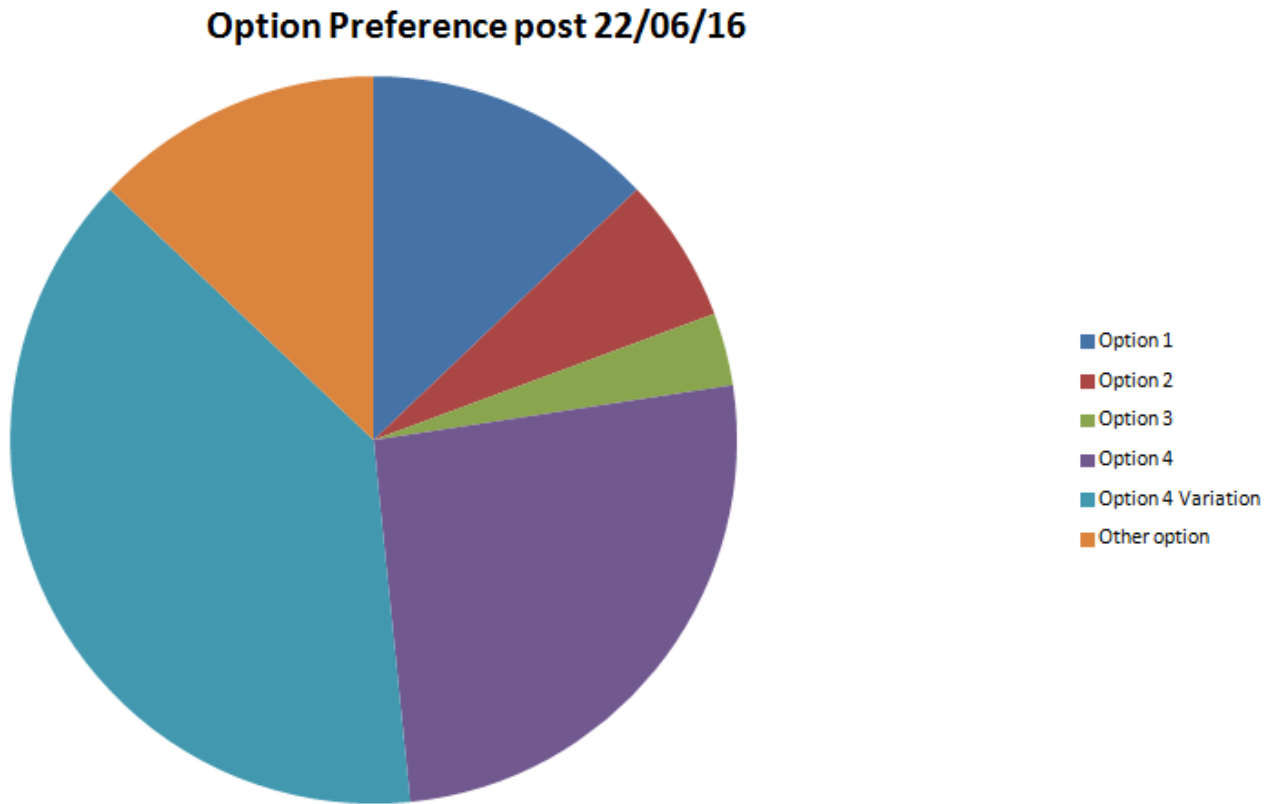


Figure 4 - Option Preference 22nd June onwards

Responses received after the 22nd June show more of a preference for the variation on Option 4 (+20%). Corresponding the percentage in favour of Option 4 (-3%), Option 1 (-6%), other Option (-5%), Option 2 (-3%) and Option 3 (-3%) was lower during this period compared to the consultation as a whole.

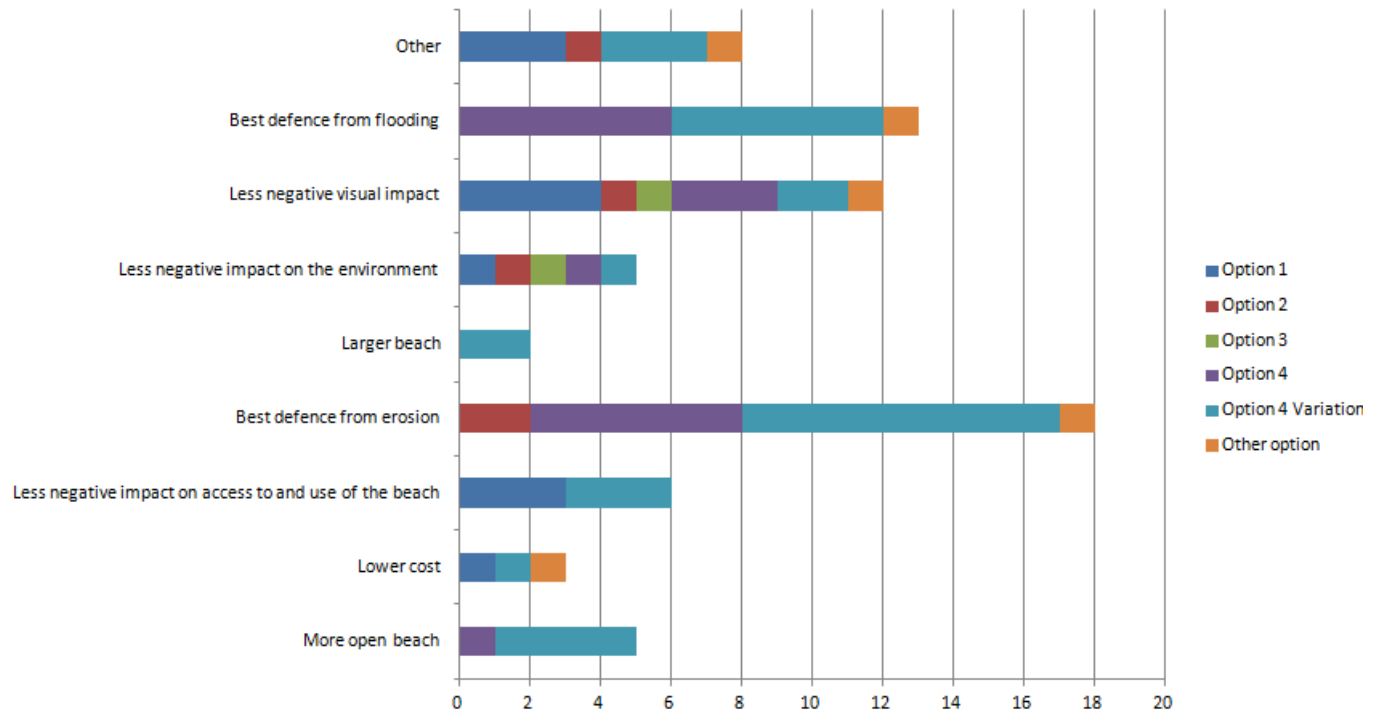


Figure 5- Main reasons cited for option preference post 22/06/17

The main reasons cited for preferences after the 22nd June also changed, with the best defence from erosion given as the main reason in the majority of responses.

Comments received after the 22nd June were broadly similar to those received throughout the whole consultation period, including

- Concern was raised over cutting cost, at the expense of long term protection of Sidmouth.
- Concerns over removing existing shoreline structures.
- The suggestion of a link between an offshore breakwater and Port Royal.
- Concern over the time it could take to implement a scheme.
- The suggestion that the variation to Option 4 could include fewer breakwaters.
- Concern over cost, and whether that money could be better spent elsewhere in the town.