

East Devon District Council

Notes of meeting of the Steering Group for the Sidmouth Beach Management Scheme, held at Council Offices Sidmouth on Wednesday 13 September 2017

Attendance list at end of document. The meeting started at 9.00am and completed at 10.07am.

Welcome and introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone present and members of the Steering Group introduced themselves.

Notes of the 15 March 2017

The notes of the previous meeting of the Group were agreed, subject to the following amendments:

The notes to be corrected in that the 2011 planning application for a rock reventment along the East beach was withdrawn **prior to a decision being made on the application**;

A point was clarified by [REDACTED] relating to the benefits of a scheme not being attributed to Pennington Point, as when that point erodes, there is an ongoing impact on the River Sid.

In discussing the notes of the previous meeting, comments were made from the group on a reluctance to the agreement in going forward with option S1, but taking a pragmatic approach to moving work forward whilst also considering modelling work on option S4. Many group members felt it was worth keeping options, should future work on S1 reveal that option S4 could be a more viable option. As had been discussed at previous meetings, S4 was much preferred by most of the group but was not deemed viable at the present time because of the funding gap identified between it and the more viable S1 cost.

During the discussion on the notes of the meeting, Councillor Cathy Gardner commented that she was unhappy with a number of issues, including the accuracy of the minutes, meetings not happening as anticipated, lack of clarity on who had voting rights in the Group, and concerns at the overall process of delivery of a scheme. She voiced her concern at delivering the right scheme to protect the town and its residents in light of continued accelerated erosion, and commented that she felt she was wasting her time in attending the meeting.

Cllr Gardner and Cllr Rixon then left the meeting.

Costs for modelling option S4 had already been sought as the Group had previously requested. This equated to an additional £40K on top of the costs of dealing with option S1. With the significant gap in cost between the two options and the previous decision to go forward with the Plan containing option S1, work had been progressed by officers as instructed. The additional £40K was challenged and therefore newly

contracted consultants Royal Haskoning DHV agreed to provide a scale of costs against the level of cost certainty that they could provide.

ACTION Scale of costs against levels of work to be provided by Royal Haskoning DHV

Procurement of OBC and bathymetry

The criteria breakdown of the tender process was set out for the Group, with the successful contractor achieving the highest or joint highest scoring against those criteria.

Royal Haskoning DHV was awarded the contract for OBC; whilst Clinton Marine AB was awarded the contract for bathymetry, with the bathymetry now complete, checked by PCO and issued to RHSK.

Introduction to Royal Haskoning DHV

The Group received an introduction from the newly appointed consultants, including information on their recent projects.

Work to date as included:

- EA agreed modelling approach
- Setup and import of data into wave model
- Initial discussions with LPA and statutory consultees to confirm the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) including the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Work on the SMP in the autumn covered:

- Modelling overtopping, flood propagation and sediment transport
- Calculating “do nothing” coastal flood and erosion damages
- Confirm scope of EIA

Work for the consultants over the winter months included:

- Develop and appraise option S1
- Review construction costs and calculate new
- Start outline of preferred options
- Start EIA and HRA

Spring and early summer work covered:

- Complete outline design of the scheme
- Environmental Impact Assessment complete
- Produce outline business case for submission to Environment Agency review group

Question arose during the presentation on the extent of work that would be carried out. In response:

- Modelling of overtopping will also examine risk and consequences of a breach of the River Sid western wall
- The brief for numerical modelling does not include looking at ground water levels or increased rainfall prediction. It is considered that these factors are unlikely to have a significant effect on the long term cliff erosion rates
- Locations for and frequency of recharging the beach will be reviewed
- Information from the 1995 scheme modelling report would be considered

There had been past challenges and concerns with the previous consultant, Halcrow CH2M. The approach outlined by the consultants would help affirm or uncover any inconsistencies in that previous work to ensure that a robust scheme would be ready to be deployed once the Council was in a position to bid for funding.

The intention was for the Outline Business Case to be completed in June 2018.

Key Issues Register

The issues log currently used by the Group would be continued to be fully utilised by the consultants and officers – referred to as the Key Issues Register.

The current list covered:

- Locations of beach replenishment
- Adaptions to river training wall
- Accuracy of economic benefits (values, erosion rate, key areas identified by review)
- Environmental acceptability
- Operational costs
- Smart pebbles (devices to track shingle movement)

The Group requested the addition of issues, including:

- Land Ownership – this was particularly relevant to land owned by the National Trust that had been impacted by changes in mean high water and erosion, altering from a length of land to individual pockets of land, much being the cliff face
- Be mindful of the Port Royal development
- Frequency of beach replenishment; equally as relevant as location
- Alma Bridge

ACTION To re-circulate the relevant documentation from the BMP which sets out the environmental constraints that need to be taken into consideration when developing the BMP, taking into account the Jurassic Coast status and the AONB.

ACTION to check liability of land owner in regards to cliff fall and debris onto beach below is still the same position as advised to Cliff Road owners in 2007 – Cllr Tom Wright will check this position and respond directly

Any other business

Through the Chairman, Cllr Stuart Hughes had asked for a one-way gate installation to be considered for Alma Bridge. [REDACTED] confirmed that the County have already indicated that this will be undertaken.

Date for next meeting will be confirmed, but will cover interim updates on the work being undertaken by the newly appointed consultants.

Attendance list

Steering group members present:

