

East Devon District Council

Notes of meeting of the Steering Group for the Sidmouth Beach Management Scheme, held at Council Offices Sidmouth on 15 March 2018

Attendance list at end of document. The meeting started at 2.00pm and completed at 3.45pm.

Welcome and introduction

Councillor Tom Wright chaired the meeting in the absence of Councillor Phil Twiss. The Chairman welcomed everyone present and members of the Steering Group introduced themselves.

Notes of the 10 January 2018

The notes of the previous meeting of the Group were agreed, subject to some comments being provided directly from [REDACTED] who would confirm figures quoted in those notes.

Outline business case phase programme summary and update on outline design

Representatives of Royal Haskoning DHV reminded the Steering Group of the key dates of the project to 2021. Work had now progressed to phase 2, covering refinement of the preferred option and its appraisal. The appraisal work was demonstrated on a set of slides that showed the beach profile and how it was impacted during a severe storm event. Five sections of the beach had been closely studied, using both the X-Beach model, and run again using the Amazon model. The models gave similar results for overtopping. The results had also shown that an increase in height of the splash wall would be beneficial to the scheme.

The Group were taken through visualisations of the ground levels and how the wave models impact on the movement of sediment in the area. They were also shown a mapping of the ground levels, which was helpful to understand the land area and which parts were more vulnerable because of the levels.

The Group discussed their own experience of levels of shingle varying along the coastal strip, with significant erosion further east.

Modelling was shown to the Group of what impact was expected if replenishment was implemented. A representation of the expected impact of one, and two, groynes was shown to the group that helped give a concept of how the beach would reform due to the wave patterns. The consultants would also consider how the groyne options would impact on the river.

Any groyne option would also include a risk assessment, because of the likelihood of the public gaining access to any introduced structures.

Arrangements for public consultation

A list of content for the public consultation was shared with the Group, covering:

- The refined preferred option
- Project programme and approval process
- Highlight the natural variability along the frontage and the natural process at work
- Differences of sand versus shingle
- Present modelling
- Illustrations of potential new groyne and splashwalls
- Construction methods.

The Group were invited to comment on the content and suggest any additional points to include.

██████████ commented on the need to take account of the previous consultation, negative comments in the press and the public expectation in his view that the scheme will either fail, or not be delivered. He stated there was also a fear of “overbidding” which will not deliver match funding. Overall the public event needed careful handling to deal with the scepticism.

Additional comments made on the event included:

- Outline positive impact of the existing structures
- Make clear what the benefits are of the scheme, in particular in relation to flooding
- Include expected outcome if no scheme undertaken
- Costs estimates
- Care in using the word “protect” – when it was expected that the scheme would reduce erosion, not stop it
- Clarify safety issues for users of the beach

Partnership funding update

Funding level from South West Water was not yet known, but officers were optimistic. SWW had been informed of the potential impact of the scheme, particularly the impact on the Ham.

A bid had been made to Devon County Council. Officers were also checking if the scheme would meet the criteria of the Coastal Communities Fund.

Available on the agenda papers were template letters seeking funding. Comments on the content and the timing of the letters had been received but further feedback was still welcome.

Any other business

- An update on the south west coastal path was given;
- Improving launch facilities was requested to see if it could be included in the works. Having better facilities was felt to be beneficial to the town in its

tourism offer. In response, the implications were that improving such facilities were not directly related to flood prevention, and had the implication of encouraging more larger vehicles and associated trailers to transport craft to and from the launch facilities – therefore additional car parking space would also be required and was unlikely to be deliverable.

The Chairman commented that he perceived there was a general appreciation around the Group of the work done by the consultants, particularly in demonstrating through the modelling the impact of the scheme in helping to protect the town from the threat of flooding.

Date of next meeting

Expected in May to follow up on public exhibition, date to be announced.

Attendance list

Steering group members present:

[Redacted names]

[Redacted names]

[Redacted names]

[Redacted names]