

# **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the meeting of Exmouth Beach Management Plan Steering Group held at online via zoom on 23 October 2024**

### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.19 pm

### **1 Introductions**

Councillor Geoff Jung of East Devon District Council chaired this meeting of the Group.

Cllr Jung welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

### **2 Beach Management Plan progress to date**

Alan Frampton from South West Flood & Coastal, client project manager for the Beach Management Plan (BMP), updated the Group on progress to date, alongside Paul Norton from AECOM who is the consultant project manager.

As a reminder, the process for development and implementation of the BMP were:

- Stage 1 – data collation and review
- Stage 2 – Establishing the baseline scenario, including review of previous 2015 BMP
- Stage 3 – Future Management Regime Appraisal, including statutory environment assessments and 12 week public consultation
- Stage 4 – Reporting to the Group and seeking formal approval by EDDC's Cabinet

Discussion on this update included:

- Members recognised the volatility of sand levels on the beach, particularly evident following recent storms.
- It was difficult to conclude from the analysis that there was a definite trend of beach loss, or to identify exactly where and when to intervene.
- Approaches to addressing the aforementioned volatility included putting in place a solid structure to protect the sea wall, or using best endeavours to maintain beach levels and using those as a means of defence.

### **3 Presentation and discussion on draft proposed leading options**

The Group received [a presentation](#) on the emerging options from the work to date for the BMP.

The presentation set out three options, summarised the basis of selection, and outlined the relevant considerations, benefits and risks associated with each option. It went on to summarise the funding and affordability of the respective options, highlighting indicative shortfalls of between £18 million and £23 million for the two leading options or £2 million for the backup option.

The three options included:

1. National Economic Leading Option – Seawall Encasement with Setback Floodwall. This was the most cost-beneficial option and would significantly reduce risk of coastal erosion and flooding; however, the amenity value of the beach could be lost in the long-term.
2. Local Aspirational Leading Option – Beach Nourishment with Groynes and Setback Floodwall. This option would control beach levels and retain the amenity value and wider

benefits of the beach. It could require a setback floodwall to provide protection from sea level rise.

3. Backup Option – Patch Repair to seawall. This option was similar to the current management approach and would delay the need for larger capital intervention but flood risk would remain, beach material could be lost during storms and the option was not a long term sustainable solution.

Questions and discussions on the options included:

- Challenges around financial viability were not unusual with projects of this nature but it was necessary to know the strategic vision, in order to raise the funding to realise the vision.
- The long term nature of the project was discussed, looking at a 10-year horizon until any works were carried out.
- It was suggested to contact David Reed MP concerning funding for this work, to ask for his assistance in lobbying government so as not to place an unfair burden on local Council Tax payers. The Chair commented that he had tried to make contact but had not received a response to date.
- The Council could consider incorporating one of the options into the wider Placemaking agenda in Exmouth, possibly providing some efficiencies and opportunities.
- Of the options available, groynes would be more expensive but would maintain a beach. A great deal of design effort and modelling would be necessary using the most advanced available modelling techniques to best replicate the complicated dynamics of the estuary system in order to get the groynes system right. A set back wall could be added at later date in the event of rising sea levels and increased flooding; this would involve the loss of some of the promenade.
- Measures would need to be in place to ensure that groynes did not create a hazard for lifeboats launching from the lifeboat station. This would include modelling to work out the layout of the groynes in interaction with the lifeboat, and a navigation marker on each groyne above the tide level, for visibility.
- In considering the potential loss of some of the promenade, some members were of the view that the cycle path along the seafront was unsafe and needed to be relocated and therefore ought not, in its current location, to be a consideration for this Group in reviewing the proposed leading options. Other members expressed the importance of keeping the existing cycle path at least until such time as an alternative was in place. It was noted that the cycle path was the responsibility of DCC Highways.
- If the objective was to stop erosion and secure the wider town from flood risk, then the National Economic Leading Option – Seawall Encasement with Setback Floodwall would be appropriate; however, it was likely this would be at the sacrifice of the beach as an amenity, in the longer term.
- Members were generally of the view that loss of the beach as an amenity would not be favourable. The beach was important for the town, bringing in a large number of visitors and trade, attracting visitors and giving the economic driver that the town needs. The members therefore widely favoured the Local Aspirational Leading Option as an attractive option which would maintain beach levels and the amenity value.

Alan Frampton set out next steps including environmental assessments for comment by statutory consultees Natural England and the Environment Agency, this to be carried out in parallel with the consultation on the leading options presented.

## 4

### **Public consultation commencing November 2024**

Public consultation was due to run from 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025\*. The consultation would comprise:

- A drop-in engagement event for members of the public to find out more about the draft leading options on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 2pm – 7pm at Exmouth Town Hall.
- Online survey to capture feedback.

- Hard copies will be available to collect from Exmouth Town Hall.

\*Post meeting amendment: Following this steering group meeting, it was found to be necessary to delay the start of the consultation period by 2 weeks. The revised consultation period is to be 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Consequently, the drop-in event has been moved from 12<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2pm – 7pm at Exmouth Town Hall.

### **Attendance List**

G Jung (Chair)  
M Rixson  
N Hookway  
T Dumper  
A Hall  
O Davey

### **Also attending:**

Alan Frampton, BCP  
Chetna Jones, Exmouth Town Council  
Cllr Pauline Stott, Exmouth Town Council  
John Morgan, Exmouth Watersports  
Cllr Christine Channon, Devon County Council  
Paul Norton, Aecom  
Martin Davies, Environment Agency

### **Officers in attendance:**

Tom Buxton-Smith, Engineering Projects Manager  
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer  
Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene

### **Apologies:**

Max Underhill, RNLI

Chair .....

Date: .....