

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Sidmouth and East Beach BMP Project Advisory Group held at Kennaway House, Cellar Function Room, Sidmouth EX10 8NG on 22 May 2025**

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

The meeting started at 10.05 am and ended at 12.55 pm

#### **58 Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Group were introduced to the new project manager for the introduction of the scheme, Steven Donnelly of the South West Flood & Coastal Service and the relationship with the District Council was explained as well as the South West and Flood and Coastal Service structure.

The South West and Flood and Coastal Service were a centre of expertise for flood and coastal erosion risk management, providing skills to address the challenges of flooding and coastal change. It worked with local communities and partners to share understanding of the challenges faced, enabling development of innovative solutions to strengthen resilience whilst enhancing the environment. The South West and Flood and Coastal Service had been in shared service with EDDC since May 2024. The shared cost was all staffing and associated support. All maintenance funding was separate. All capital funding was hosted at respective authorities, with staff able to charge time at full on-cost rates against projects, creating the shared income and reducing net cost of the service.

Steve, who joined the shared service as Principal Engineer in November 2024 as a full time dedicated resource to the Sidmouth and East Beach project also introduced Peter Christie, Capital Projects Manager. The Capital Projects Team delivered schemes/projects such as:

- Flood defence infrastructure.
- Rock groyne upgrades.
- Timber groyne renewals.
- Beach renourishment.

They were a team of engineers to deliver the project, not consultants.

#### **59 Updates from the last Advisory Group meeting**

The Group had been provided with previous notes from the last meeting, as well as action points from the last meeting of the Project Board.

Elements of the project undertaken since the Advisory Board took place included:

- Publishing outline business case.
- Shared service agreement in place and live.
- Project gateway 1 and 2 assurance checks completed.
- Handover X8 document – currently being updated and formalised into a handover document to the project team.
- Review of commercial strategy as part of Gateway 2 status check, leading to open market procurement route using the X22 (2 stage) ECC ECI contract
- Initial site visit with Project Board.

- Site meeting relating to Community Access Ramp Project.
- Data collation and document review.
- March to November 2025 – competitive tender with local and regional coastal defence specialists.

## 60 **Procurement Strategy Review**

The procurement strategy review process was set out to the Group, to outline reaching the decision of the Project Board to proceed with an open tender using NEC ECC X22 2 Stage Contract. Assessing the route to market was about getting value for money. The three criteria used for assessing value for money in commissioning were:

1. Economy.
2. Efficiency.
3. Effectiveness.

The data used to capture the assessment criteria to conduct the Procurement Strategy for the scheme was largely qualitative with some quantified information, and based on conversations with framework owners, framework suppliers, EDDC Procurement and experienced sector colleagues.

The benefits of the open tender NEC ECC X22 two-stage contract approach were:

1. Flexibility and adaptability.
2. Cost efficiency.
3. Clear distribution of risk.
4. Quality assurance.
5. Transparency.
6. Innovation.

Subsequent discussion included the following points:

- The contract value was £20 million.
- Design modelling would be part of the contract package.
- Community concerns relating to detailing of onshore works and the impact on the town.
- Important the communications plan informed the community about design.
- X8 document be brought back to the Advisory Group (respecting commercially sensitive information).

## 61 **Two-stage Approach: Overview of Key Project risks - April 2025**

It was explained to the Group that X22 contract option provided two stages, the details of which were set out by the client in the scope of service requirements.

1. Stage one was the pre-construction Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) phase, with development of the detailed design and agreement on price.
2. Stage two was the construction phase, with the completion of any remaining detailed design.

The Group were assured that there were specific touch points with the local community/public events in the timeline during stage one. A highlight report/newsletter would be circulated monthly as well as a monthly Project Board meeting. The Advisory Group would meet twice a year. All involved acknowledged that communication was critical.

The project risks were set out to the Group in the following aspects:

- Financial
- Legal, planning and designs
- Environmental
- Construction materials

- Change in key personnel

## 62 **Environmental Considerations**

The list of considerations were explained to the Group. These were:

- Dorset to East Devon Coastal UNESCO World Heritage Site (Jurassic Coast).
- East Devon AONB.
- Lyme Bay to Torbay Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- Sidmouth to West Bay SAC.
- Sidmouth and Beer Coast SSSI.
- Ladram Bay to Sidmouth SSSI.
- Connaught Gardens Registered Park and Garden.
- Listed buildings.

## 63 **Project Licence and Consents Status Check**

The status of the elements of licences and consents required for the scheme were reported to the Group. These were:

- Local Planning Authority – pre-planning advice and phase 2 habitats regulations assessment were complete, planning permission was required.
- Environmental Impact Assessment – complete.
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment - complete.
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and survey – complete.
- Environmental Statement – required.
- Crown Estates – Marine Works licence (required), not all foreshore owned by The Crown Estate.
- Environment Agency – Environmental Permit required.
- Marine Management Organisation – Marine License required.
- Natural England – SSSI Assent and mitigation license required.
- UNESCO – Impact Assessment required.

The Group discussed the importance of collaborative working and agreed that early formative engagement was critical.

## 64 **Project Programme and Key Milestones**

The progress and next steps of the delivery of the scheme were explained to the Group.

- The shared service agreement was in place.
- The preliminary market engagement procurement exercise was being delivered and had gone live that week.
- There was a supplier day on 16 June 2025, to include a site visit and question and answer session.
- Client documents – the client scope of works and services were being drafted and included the NEC ECC contract data.
- Advisory Group meetings – next meeting October/November 2025.
- Risk and lessons learnt workshop update – held 13 March 2025.
- Forward looking project team integration – collaboration and coordination with the Advisory Board and Stakeholder Groups during the planning, tender and procurement stage. Key message from the meeting was communications and engagement with the public.

It was reported that there was a lot of collaboration of pre-construction information. Asset inspections with identified surveys were being scheduled for delivery to inform the detailed design. There was also re-engagement with statutory consultees. It was noted

that there was mixed land ownership on the seafront. 80% of costs would be the construction element.

It was requested that the erosion surveys be updated and that the impact of the scheme on the erosion rates be considered. It was important to have the bench line erosion rates and a target standard protection review in the project aims.

Action points:

- that the latest erosion rate details be considered and cross referenced with the aims of the Beach Management Plan.
- that the explanation of the beach management plans be shared with the Group.

## 65 **Timeline for Supplier Procurement Onboarding**

The timeline was set out for the Group, through the supplier onboarding stage expected to run from November 2025; with the complete detailed design stage being complete by November 2026. The marine construction phase was expected to commence in April 2027 and complete in March 2028 as part of the stage two construction phase. There would be a monitoring period after the marine works to assess the offshore coastal defence structures. Eleven months had been included in the timeline for planning determination. An offshore planning application was likely to be less contentious than onshore planning. The planning process would include public engagement. Offshore works were likely to take place during the summer months to take advantage of the long light days and two tides.

It was suggested that the current splash wall be considered and a design/height agreed sooner rather than later. For example, the wall could be designed at a height to include seating, with the ability to increase the height in the future if required. It was important to consider what was acceptable at a community level. The Group stressed the abundance of local knowledge and the importance of including the local community and residents. Communication should be channelled in the right ways.

It was noted that 11 months 'float' time had been allowed for in the programme. It was felt that the timeline was realistic, but there could be delays. Any risks or delays would be reported on using traffic light reporting.

## 66 **Forward Look Plan to engage with the Advisory Group and Stakeholders**

The next engagement with the Advisory Group was expected to be in November 2025 to further update on progress. The appointed contractor would be invited to this in person meeting to speak to the Group. Communication would continue as the project progressed to keep the Group informed.

Key assurances included:

- Key updates would be provided as the scheme developed.
- Communication would be maintained to keep all informed on the project programme.
- Information would be circulated at key stages as the scheme made progress.
- A stakeholder engagement section would be included within the clients scope.

The Project Board meetings continued on a monthly basis.

## 67 **Discussion points**

Discussion points had been raised throughout the meeting.

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

I Barlow  
S Hughes  
G Jung (Chair)

**Members also present (for some or all the meeting)**

Tony Burch  
Paul Griew – Cliff Road Action Group  
Becky Elliot - Cliff Road Action Group  
Philip Wragg – Sid Vale Association  
Martin Davies – Environment Agency  
Mary Walden Till – VGS  
Robin Goodman – Sidmouth Surf Lifesaving Club  
David Rafferty – Beach Ramp Project

**Officers in attendance:**

Andrew Hancock – Assistant Director – Streetscene  
Tom Buxton-Smith – Engineering Projects Manager  
Anne Mountjoy – Communications Officer  
Alethea Thompson – Democratic Services Officer  
Steve Donnelly – Principal Engineer, South West Flood and Coastal  
Peter Christie – Capital Projects Manager, South West Flood and Coastal

**Apologies:**

Cllr D Bickley  
Cllr J Loudoun  
Peter Blyth - EDDC  
Colin Boynton – Sid Vale Association  
Anne Tanner – Sid Vale Association  
Chris Lockyear – Sidmouth Town Council  
Phil Sheppard – Sidmouth Lifeboat  
Matt Hosey  
Sam Gibbons

Chair .....

Date: .....