

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Sidmouth and East Beach BMP Project Advisory Group held online via zoom on 8 March 2023

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.05 pm

44 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Group. Colin Boynton was now the representative for the Sid Vale Association.

45 Notes from the previous meeting on 30 June 2022

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed.

46 Outline business case

The Engineering Project Manager had provided the Group with the outline business case for the BMP, which had required some minor amendments left to complete. The Group had been asked to consider the OBC with a view to giving their view for proceeding onto submission stage.

The option set out in the OBC was now referred to as Option 6, presented as a fixed price option to secure funding. It was re-iterated that the outline is subject to change following detailed design, modelling and consultation. The main planning risk was also highlighted, in that if reverting to a 1m splashwall for the length of the esplanade, the application would be refused at the planning stage.

Option 6 includes foundations large enough to raise the splash wall in the future.

The Project Board has the authority to approve the OBC for submission, and once approved the full document will be available online.

Discussion from the Group included:

- Reminder of the first line of defence for the esplanade being the development of the breakwater and recharge of beach;
- The process of submission to the Environment Agency meant that, if approved, the funding could be released;
- The OBC drawings on the BMP elements were not final, only a mechanism to provide a fixed cost to meet the EA requirements for budget requirement;
- Looking for assurance that rip currents would be considered in the scheme – yes, this factor would be taken into account, and needed discussion through the sub group being set up (see minute x);
- Change needed to the draft OBC in relation to western end splash wall recognised;
- Funding for modelling was included;
- Provide an acronym glossary when publishing the final OBC submission;
- Elements such as flooding gate at turning circle would be picked up through the detailed design stage;
- EA had been working with officers, giving advice on the OBC for some considerable time, and reminded the Group that the purpose is to release funding and demonstrate that the BMP is good value for money and meets due diligence;

- Questioning the advice from Natural England and Jurassic Coast as not giving specific performance measures. In response, the detailed design stage would provide more detail for those consultees to respond with specific impacts in that area, and what further work was needed. An example was given of maintaining some interaction between the sea and the cliff at the east beach end to help reduce erosion;
- Will check on figure for set payments for damage/uninhabitable impact on coastal homes;
- Include reference to South West Water and what impact their systems could have on assisting the BMP.

The Group unanimously agreed for the OBC to proceed to the Project Board for a decision on submission to the Environment Agency.

47 **Community Ramp proposal**

The Chair welcomed David Rafferty, a local resident, who had become involved in progressing a community ramp for access to the sand area of the beach and to the rock pools. He outlined the history of the project, including previous discussion with the District and Town Council on the feasibility and the funding of the project.

Fund raising had begun, but it had become apparent that further funds were needed to deliver the ramp. As a result, the funding strategy had been revisited, and discussion taken place to see if dovetailing into the BMP delivery would help deliver the ramp by means of economies of scale. The ramp would also be at the detailed design stage at the same point as the BMP scheme.

The Engineering Projects Manager assured the Group that incorporation of the community ramp would not impact on the funding for the BMP delivery; and that there were efficiencies in that it could be included in discussions with the MMO and planning applications, as well as deliver efficiencies of scale when contractors were on site.

The Group were shown photographs of the site in question and an idea of the design of the ramp. The Group asked for comment and views on including the aspect in the BMP.

The Group discussed the merits of including the ramp in the scheme, delivering a further enhancement to the area overall. The Chair particularly welcomed the work to deliver access to all.

There was still further work to get to the detailed design stage and funding, with the plan to fully involve the local community in the design, potentially including incorporating artwork.

The Group unanimously agreed to include the community ramp project into the BMP for reasons of efficiency, economies of scale and to further enhance the overall seafront offer of the town.

48 **Scoping detailed design stage**

The Engineering Projects Manager (EPM) discussed the importance of both the local community's wishes, and the unique Sidmouth conditions, into the detailed design stage.

He set out how a new sub-group of the Advisory Group could work with RHDHV to prepare the scope for the detailed design stage, and requested volunteers.

The following put themselves forward, from which the EPM would select for the sub-group:

Colin Boynton
Mary Walden-Till
Tony Burch
Robin Goodman
Becky Elliott/Paul Griew
Cllr Denise Bickley
Dave Rafferty
Chris Lockyear
Sam Scriven
Phil Sheppard

The EPM advised that he would contact the volunteers to decide on the membership of the new sub-group, and conduct consultation by correspondence before reporting back to the Advisory Group.

49 **Procedure of detailed design and contractor discussion**

The views of the Group were sought on the detailed design and contractor. Four options were available to pursue:

1. Whole Market Designer, then Whole Market Contractor
2. While Markey Design and Build
3. Environment Agency Framework Design Contract and Construction Contract
4. Other Local Government Framework

The Chair sought clarification on the timescales of the options. The process was expected, for a large project as the BMP, to take six months for detailed design – potentially if following option 1, with then running the contractor market, another six months potentially would be needed, although there could be some overlap. Essentially, the four options presented a timeframe of between 6 and 12 months.

A number of views were expressed covering both options 1,2 and 3. Overall the Group felt that time was an important factor in the scheme and as swift a process as possible was preferred, because of both rising costs and continued sea impact on the coastline. The scale of the project meant that there was interest in obtaining the contract, as one of the largest in the South West for this type of project.

The views of the Group were acknowledged and would be fed back to the Project Board for a decision on progression.

50 **Next steps**

The Project Board makeup had been agreed at Cabinet; however there still remained the appointment of a representative of the secondary funders, referred to on the Project Board as the Project Secondary Partner. This position covered the financial input from Devon County Council, Sidmouth Town Council and CRAG.

Chris Lockyear was nominated from the Chair and received unanimous support for the role. He assured the Group that he would consult with all parties involved as required in the role.

The Chair also nominated Tony Burch in an advisory role on the Project Board, due to his long involvement with the Project and his valued technical expertise. Tony received unanimous support for the role and thanked the Group for their support.

RESOLVED that Chris Lockyear acts as Project Secondary Partner on the Project Board; and Tony Burch acts as Advisory Member on the Project Board.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

G Jung (Chair)
M Rixson
D Bickley
J Loudoun
E Rylance

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

Martin Davies, Environment Agency
Tony Burch, by invitation of the Chair
Cllr Ian Barlow, Sidmouth Town Council
Oliver Salter, Sailing & Sea Angling
Sam Scriven, Jurassic Coast
Phil Shepperd, Sidmouth Lifeboat
Richard Eley, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce
Robin Goodman, Surf Lifesaving Club
Cllr Chris Lockyear, Sidmouth Town Council
Mary Walden-Till, VGS
Tom Aldridge, Devon County Council
Rebecca Elliott, CRAG
David Rafferty, local resident

Officers in attendance:

John Golding, Director of Housing, Health and Environment
Andrew Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene
Tom Buxton-Smith, Engineering Projects Manager
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services

Councillor apologies:

Cllr S Hughes, EDDC
Cllr C Gardner, EDDC

Chair

Date: