

Report to: **Cabinet**



Date of Meeting 4 March 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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**Sidmouth and East Beach Coastal Defence Scheme – Authority to award the contract**

**Report summary:**

This report is to seek delegated authority to award the Sidmouth and East Beach Coastal Defence Scheme Two Stage Contract involving the Detailed Design, Modelling, Consenting & Statutory Consultation within Stage One, with the option to progress to Stage Two, Construction Phase thereafter.

**Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget                      Yes  No

Policy Framework    Yes  No

**Recommendation:**

1. That Cabinet grant delegated authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment Operations and Portfolio Holder Finance to award the contract to the preferred supplier.

**Reason for recommendation:**

1. To enable the award of contract to the preferred supplier following completion of the tender exercise. The delegation will allow the contract to be entered without a further cabinet paper, to ensure programme targets are met.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** High Impact

Information about storm intensity and sea level risk is included in the risk section below, but also relates to climate change and is the reason for this being high impact. Without improved coastal

defences. Sidmouth faces the prospect of increased frequency and magnitude of damage and flooding from coastal storms. The scheme will be designed to meet 2100 standards (sea level and climate change) as outlined in DEFRA's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy to provide protection to Sidmouth from coastal erosion and flooding.

The project is also high impact from a climate perspective as the rock and concrete required and transport of the same will have a high carbon footprint.

**Risk:** High Risk; Sidmouth faces multiple coastal flooding and erosion mechanisms that already pose significant risk and are expected to worsen with climate change. The town has a long record of severe coastal impacts, with major events documented since the 1824 "great gale." Since 1981, at least 14 overtopping incidents have affected residential and commercial properties along the Esplanade, with the most notable modern events occurring in 2014, 2017, 2020 and 2022. These events now occur roughly every two to three years. The town is exposed to storm conditions from both the southwest and the southeast. Southwest storms are typically more damaging, but an increase in southeast storm activity in recent years has further eroded the already depleted beach and increased pressure on the seawall. Low beach levels significantly increase overtopping frequency and severity. Sidmouth's topography funnels overtopped water inland, causing ponding around York Street and Ham Car Park. Flooding in the west of the town is more contained but still affects areas such as Bedford Square and Chapel Road. Climate change is expected to amplify all of these issues by raising sea levels, increasing wave energy, and intensifying storminess. Higher baseline water levels mean that storms which previously posed limited risk will increasingly result in overtopping and flooding, particularly in the exposed eastern part of the frontage where limited shelter is provided by the existing offshore breakwaters. Overall, the town's existing defence system is already under stress, and climate change will significantly increase the frequency, severity, and impacts of coastal flooding and erosion, reinforcing the urgent need for intervention at Sidmouth.

**Links to background information** Sidmouth and East Beach management Plan: [Sidmouth and East Beach Management Plan and Scheme - East Devon](#) Sidmouth and East Beach Approved Outline Business Case: [Sidmouth and East Beach Outline Business Case - East Devon](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#)**

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
- Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- Resilient economy that supports local business
- Financially secure and improving quality of services

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**Report in full**

**1. Contract with a contractor (yet to be appointed) will exceed £100k.**

- 1.1. A competitive tender has been live via our electronic portal since 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026 for delivery of the Sidmouth and East Beach Coastal Defence Scheme Two Stage Contract. The deadline for submissions is Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April. We will evaluate the submissions and identify the preferred supplier in April, with the view to start delivery of the stage 1 design elements mid-May 2026. The overall works have an estimated value of £21m, but split into two stages with a break clause.
- 1.2. Stage 1 is the detailed design element including modelling, consultation and the planning process, as well as production of construction drawings. The Sidmouth and East Beach

Coastal Defence Scheme has been tendered with this element being valued at around £1.8m

- 1.3. Stage 2 is the construction element. Should we wish to proceed, within the schemes financial envelope, we would be able to proceed to construction without a further tender period. Under the contract, the Council is not compelled to progress to Stage 2, and could re-tender the construction should we wish to.
- 1.4. The funding of the project has been approved as below.

Funding Source	Value
Environment Agency FDGiA funding	£17,540,000
Local Levy Funding	£500,000
East Devon District Council primary budget	£1,700,000
East Devon District Council risk budget	£500,000
East Devon District Council Housing contribution	£50,000
Devon County Council Highways	£500,000
Sidmouth Town Council	£100,000
Sidmouth Lifeboat	£100,000
CRAG	£50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£21,040,000</b>

- 1.5 It is worth noting that all funds identified above have conditions attached to them, however the project is currently planned to meet all those conditions.
- 1.6 Environment Agency funding is fully approved, however it is subject to programme allocation approval. This means the EA still need to allocate funding for the construction phase in their financial plan. However we have enough funding allocated to complete part 1.
- 1.7 Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Place in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders to award the contract to the supplier that provides best value.
- 1.8 All procurement is via an open tender to the whole market, via the Supplying the South West portal.
- 1.9 Due to the scale of the project, and its value being above threshold we have worked with Devon County Council's procurement service to ensure that the contract meets all procurement regulations.
- 1.10 Further checks on the contract have been carried out via specialist advice received from Bevan Brittan solicitors.
- 1.11 The target programme for the scheme delivery is as follows

Date and Time	Design and Construction Stage
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<b>May 2026</b>	<b>(Stage One) Design, Modelling and Consenting Stage commences with Early Contractor Involvement</b>
July 2027	Detailed Design Complete – issue Notice to Proceed to Stage Two
July 2027	Lead time/mobilisation
<b>Aug 2027</b>	<b>(Stage Two) Construction Phase commences</b>
Aug 2028	Construction Phase Completion

2. The Outline Business Case for the Beach Management Scheme was adopted via Cabinet in Feb 2023, the same report gave authority to start the procurement process. There has subsequently been extensive work undertaken by South West Flood and Coastal to ensure the procurement process and extensive background documentation, including the agreed scope for the project which the Advisory Group and Project Board input into, have been incorporated into the tender documents and a robust procurement undertaken.

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### **Financial implications:**

The financial details are outlined in the report, the recommendations have no effect on the financial implication to that already approved by Council.

### **Legal implications:**

This contract has been procured with support by Devon County Council and is in compliance with Procurement legislation and the Council's Contract Procedure rules. Delegated authority to award is sought due to the tight timescales.