



ALDE AND ORE ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF THE ALDE AND ORE ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH DECEMBER AT ORFORD TOWN HALL

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| PRESENT | Edward Greenwell | (EG) | (Chairman, Farmer Nominee) |
| | Alison Andrews | (AA) | (A&O Association Nominee) |
| | Richard Davey | (RD) | (Funding Chairman) |
| | Harry Young | (HY) | (Business Representative) |
| | Brian Johnson | (BJ) | (Boyton and Bawdsey Parish Council Nominee) |
| | Tim Beach | (TB) | (Snape Parish Council Nominee) |
| | Jane Marson | (JM) | (Landowner Nominee) |
| | Mike Finney | (MF) | (Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council Nominee) |
| | Peter Palmer | (PP) | (Aldeburgh TC Nominee) |
| | Rodney West | (RW) | (Ecological Representative) |
| | Elizabeth Stanton | (ES) | (Householder Representative) |
| | David McGinity | (DMcG) | (Butley Parish Council Nominee) |
| Amanda Bettinson | (AB) | (Partnership Secretary) | |
| ADVISORS | Emma Hay | (EH) | (Natural England) |
| | David Kemp | (DK) | (Environment Agency) |
| | Karen Thomas | (KT) | (IDB) |
| | Jane Burch | (JB) | (SCC) |
| APOLOGIES | Guy Heald | (GH) | (Finance and Business) |
| | Bill Parker | (BP) | (SCDC) |
| | Andrew Hawes | (AH) | (Hawes Associates- Partnership Consultant) |
| | Simon Amstutz | (SA) | (AONB unit) |

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC Roger Baxter

- The Chairman welcomed both Colin Taylor and Nicola Corbett from EDF Energy who had attended to give a presentation on their Stage II Public Consultation for Sizewell C. Stage I consultation was 4 years ago and various options had changed since then but it was noted that the partnership needed to only consider the issues directly related to the Alde and Ore Estuary and coast. **ACTION**

Colin Taylor discussed the 3 options for the proposed temporary jetty to provide a means to deliver very large loads by sea. Concern was expressed that the jetty would alter coastal processes but CT explained that the jetty would be constructed with piling and maintained that it would not restrict movement of waves or shingle underneath it. 20 years of data had been considered on the effect of longshore drift on the Sizewell frontage and although there was movement both north and south mainly depending on the prevalence of either a north easterly or south easterly wind direction, in general sediment takes about 5 years to move 500 metres. JB noted that this was a similar conclusion to work The Crown Estate had undertaken in connection with the potential Shingle Engine for the Slaughden coastline defences.

It was agreed that the AOEP would submit comments on the issues relevant to the coastal protection but it is important to ensure that comments are submitted independently by parish councils and all individuals. The deadline for responses is 3rd February 2017. **Action** AA to consider and draft comments for AOEP. **AA**

2. There were no declarations of interest. Apologies as above.

MINUTES of Wednesday 14th September were agreed with the following amendments:

- i) Minute 4 vi)..**Preparation work** to dismantle the lighthouse is underway as ...
- ii) Minute 9 ... that were not *and consideration would be given to how best to improve these areas.*
- iii) Minute 10 for Regional Director read *Area Manager.*

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

i) Helicopter bags are available at, Gedgrave Hall, Capel St Andrew, and Valley Farm. Jane Skepper is the IDB contact in an emergency.

ii) following the NE presentation on the MCZ a boat expedition was organised to view the 'muddy gravel sites' which turned out to be areas almost anywhere covered by river and is not a convincing argument for additional designations. The rocky outgrowths had already been shown to be man-made and the evidence of smelt is insubstantial. AA agreed to draft a letter to NE stating that due to the number of designations the estuary already has (RAMSAR, SPA, and SAC etc) there is no need for further regulations. The criteria and impact that these additional designations would have would also be requested. These are the same comments being made by fisherman, both Orford and Aldeburgh and it was thought essential to keep making these representations to reinforce the issue.

AA

4. **SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN (SMP)**

In BPs absence he explained in an email that The Client Steering Group (CSG - made up of officers from all the Risk Management Authorities) is undertaking a review the SMP policies at Slaughden and Bawdsey. The CSG met recently to agree the detail of the review process.

The review will look at each epoch (short/medium/long term) in each location and will then summarise the options ensuring that they could be realistically delivered. This will then be submitted with a recommendation to the Suffolk Coast Forum for a decision. The detail in both locations is quite complex and it been agreed to employ some external expertise to independently review the evidence. They will not be making any specific recommendation; that will be made by the CSG based on the summarised evidence.

The full range of published evidence will be included in the review and therefore the CSG team will circulate the proposed list of evidence shortly that the consultant will be considering. It is felt that this approach will ensure that this will be robust and transparent. The updated timescales to complete this work are awaited and will be communicated as soon as the detail is confirmed.

- If the decision of the SCF is to retain the SMP policies as they are currently then we will work with you to communicate the reasons why locally.
- If the decision of the SCF is to recommend a change in policy then this will need to follow the process set out in the SCF SMP Policy change framework and go to public consultation.

JB advised that the options being considered are i) hold the line, ii) management realignment or iii) do nothing. It was noted that management realignment might be to advance rather than retreat the line (ie. with a shingle engine) JB noted that both the

County Council and SCDC are assessing the additional benefits including tourism & landscape over and above just flood defences. Funding the shingle engine is the main issue particularly as most of the 'benefits' used in the calculation of FDGiA in that location are used up.

5. IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Tim Beach reported that the first phase of works on FC10 Aldeburgh wall had gone well and to budget. The consents for work at Snape Maltings is agreed and initial work will proceed on the site west of the main road to avoid losing the benefit of the environmental assessments.

However, raising the village wall is contingent on the modelling data – there remains uncertainty due to the somewhat unorthodox presentation of the recent data received and it is difficult to understand the detail of risk in various parts of the estuary. As there is no modelling for the whole estuary for the various wall heights and spill ways (including Hazlewood, Boyton and Iken flood storage areas envisaged) as detailed in the Estuary Plan, it was agreed that a comprehensive assessment should be undertaken of the whole estuary that would then be used for the business cases for every flood cell. This modelling is at present out to tender and it is hoped that this work would be completed in 3 months and the business case would take a further 3 months to complete. It was hoped to piggyback on modelling work that Tidal Lagoon Power Ltd were considering undertaking on the Alde and Ore for their own mitigation purposes and any uplift in cost for additional work that the AOEP required would be agreed once the Implementation Group had scoped the additional modelling criteria.

It was noted that the RFCC had allocated £267K for this combined project and this figure would be approved once the business case is agreed.

Richard Davey sounded a note of caution re the fundraising launch as he was concerned that it would be inappropriate to go to the public who may not be willing to give funds until there was certainty of the final work costs. It was thought possible that the final figure may not be as great as anticipated and in any event it would be almost impossible to accurately cost a ten year project at the outset.

A meeting had been held with the Aldeburgh Town Council (ATC) to ask for their support and discuss how best the AOEP and ATC should work together. A community meeting will be held in the new year to discuss the Aldeburgh project.

6. OTHER WORKS

DK noted that the Orford wall FC4 had a further 700 metres of wall repaired at a cost of £70K and topographic surveys were ongoing at Iken. No additional revenue budget was anticipated in this estuary for 2017/18 beyond the normal annual budget allocation.

7. FUNDING GROUP

It was noted that RD had contacted Allen and Overy (solicitors) who had agreed to study the constitutional arrangements between the AOEP, Trust and IDB on a pro bono basis. Janine Edge (ex lawyer and potential trustee) was advising the Trust and discussing how best to protect the personal liabilities for all concerned. There needed to be a mechanism for releasing funds from the Trust and the Funding Group needed written instructions from the Trust (GH) as to their responsibilities. Elizabeth Stanton agreed to speak to PWC (accountants) for advice that they might give on tax/accounting issues.

GH/ES

RD explained that it was important for the landowners to take on ½ of the total amount

to be raised as major beneficiaries of upgraded flood defences (£10M is the current figure to work to) and their £5M had to be agreed as a precursor to the public fundraising launch. Under consideration was an IDB Public Works Loan of £3M to be paid by landowners and IDB rate payers (yet to be agreed and ratified) and it is anticipated that the first phase of enabling development sites will raise about £2M. Any additional funds on ED could help to pay off the loan. Agricultural land would need revaluing as the present rates are 25 years old. Currently the IDB rates for pumped and sluice drained land are at different rates and these would need to be recalculated to approximately 3 times present rate for pumped, and a much greater factor for sluice drained, land. EG agreed to inform Councillor Ray Herring as the SCDC pay IDB rates for all households. Defra agreement would be required before the loan was accessed but provided landowners, the IDB board and Defra agreed, funds might be accessed by April.

EG

RD said it was also important that the launch was presented as a community project and it should give a sense of obligation to **everyone**, parishes, public and press, to participate. The Funding Group were looking to raise funds from the generosity of individuals, those whose houses are most at risk, other statutory bodies and amongst other areas were due to discuss the creation of a Business Improvement District [BID - mechanism where business can agree to raise a levy to improve services] which could be used to raise funds for capital schemes or annual maintenance.

Mike Finney raised the issue of house insurance and an assessment of risk for those less exposed to flooding once the defences are upgraded but RD thought that the Flood Re insurance scheme would now benefit all those who might have had difficulty in obtaining insurance cover. Consequently, insurance companies were unlikely to contribute to flood schemes.

8. **ENABLING DEVELOPMENT**

EG explained that there were potentially 6-7 sites in the first phase of enabling development and after meeting 6 architect who had expressed an interest in being considered to provide plans for the outline planning applications, 2 firms were considering the sites with a view to providing sketch drawings to then discuss informally with the parish councils prior to a formal application being drawn up. It would be extremely important to have written agreement from not only the parish councils but the local community as well.

The AOEP were very grateful to Jane Burch who had agreed to provide £10K for architect fees, Councillor Andrew Reid, SCC, had offered £2K from his Locality Budget and AJB agreed to write to other councillors for further funds. Around £50K will be required as fees to progress 6 sites to formal outline planning.

AJB

9. **SALTINGS GROUP**

DMcG explained the Saltings Group are in the process of agreeing the future sites and project details before applying for the relevant licences.

MMO discussions

It was noted that a meeting had been set for 7th February 2017 with the Secretary of State for Flood Defences and the MMO in the Defra offices.

Jane Burch (Flood and Coastal Policy Manager, Suffolk County Council) noted that there are a number of conversations nationally with Natural England, Environment Agency and the MMO all expressing extreme disquiet about the operational experience

of the MMO as far as coastal and estuary works are concerned.

Karen Thomas (Project Manager, WMA Eastern) who managed the Waldringfield Flood Defence scheme on the Deben, explained that any defence works schemes initiated by the IDB for the local community are thoroughly scrutinised by the statutory bodies locally (EA & NE) before a Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) is issued. Local officers from statutory and non-statutory organisations are working in partnership in Suffolk and are involved in designing, developing and finalising projects with community and interest groups. A disproportionate amount of time goes into preparing license applications compared with the level of risk and cost the projects involve.

The same officers are then engaged by the MMO to go over the project detail as the licensing officers have no local knowledge. This double-working of the project largely by Defra family officers incurs IDB ratepayers' cost for their wages and in addition the licensing costs to pay for MMO officer time which very often is out of proportion to the very small cost of the project.

A condition of the Waldringfield licence was that the applicant needed to inform The Coastguard when work commenced so that '*shipping could be alerted*' to avoid risk of collision. This again highlights the lack of understanding from the MMO as all work is undertaken up an estuary at low tide (as stated in the application).

As most of the officers involved in licence development and application locally come from within the Defra Department it was thought only a political decision could ensure that the MMO interpret and operate appropriately under the Marine and Coastal Access Act legislation.

10.

THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for **Monday 6th March 2pm** in Orford Town Hall.