

Community Action Team Meeting (CAT) Tuesday 29th March 2016

Who was there?

Present: Chairman Cllr Arthur Mandry, Executive Member for Planning & Development, Cllr Keith Evans

Residents: 65+

What was talked about?

Executive Member for Planning & Development, Cllr Keith Evans gave a brief introduction about the future of the Hill Head Promenade.

Mark Stratton (Policy Team Leader) and Andrew Pearce (Operations Team Leader) from the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership (ESCP) gave a presentation, which outlined the roles of the ESCP and Fareham Council in the management of the Hill Head coastline. They also talked about erosion and defences at the site since the 1900's, including the recent temporary repairs and outlined some of the permanent options that could be considered. They finished with a timeline for the project.

You can view the presentation in full here. <http://www.escp.org.uk/hill-head-exhibition>

Following the presentation, the Chairman opened the floor for questions.

- **What is this project about?**

The aim of this project is to develop, design and build a cost effective sea defence option, at Hill Head in Fareham, which maintains amenity and leisure access along this frontage for the lifetime of the structure.

- **How can I find out more information about this project, and Fareham Borough Council's Coastal Team?**

From 1st April 2016 all the project boards, presented at this exhibition, will be available online. To keep up to date with the project, please keep checking www.escp.org.uk
For general coastal flood or erosion enquiries, please call us on (023) 9244 6013 or email info@escp.org.uk.

Community Action Team Meeting (CAT)

Tuesday 29th March 2016

The Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership are also on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Follow or like us for up to date facts, videos and pictures about all the work we're doing across Fareham, Havant, Portsmouth and Gosport.

- **Where has the beach gone?**

Over the 2015/16 winter period we experienced more wind driven wave and swell wave sea conditions, than ever before. As a result a considerable amount of Southern England's, including Hill Head's beaches, have 'dropped'. The beach at Hill Head is at its lowest level, and as a result exposed the toe of the promenade structure (resulting in a collapse).

From Hill Head Sailing Club to Gilkicker Point we are working with partners to deliver a Beach Management Plan (BMP). This BMP, is a recommendation from the River Hamble to Portchester Coastal Strategy Study. It will likely involve us maintaining the existing defences, installing new beach management structures and replenishing/recycling beach material along this coastline. As part of Phase 1 we propose to renourish (replace lost shingle) (the beach at Hill Head, to protect the toe of the promenade from further exposure to wave damage).

- **Will the promenade be repaired, upgraded or replaced?**

The purpose of the repair works, carried out in Winter 2015/16, was to re-open the promenade. The concrete bags were installed as 'temporary works', not a sea wall, used to form/support the concrete pumped under the deck of the prom. This repair was achieved under challenging wave conditions, which resulted in a less than desirable finish. Phase 2 of this project will look at options to replace the promenade. Replacement of the promenade will be subject to satisfying environmental constraints, planning and obtaining sufficient funding. No exact date has yet been confirmed for this work.

- **The last time the sea wall collapsed, it took three weeks to repair. If this happened again, could this response time be shortened?**

Yes, in order to reduce our response time we can work in a more suitable tidal window and more favourable weather conditions. The works were also complicated when additional promenade undermining was discovered during the works.

Community Action Team Meeting (CAT)

Tuesday 29th March 2016

- **The promenade repairs don't look like they're finished! Are they?**

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- **Will the groynes be repaired or replaced? If so, when?**

As part of Phase 1 of this project all groynes, which are on land owned by Fareham Borough Council (FBC), will either be repaired or replaced (dependent on their condition). Replacement groynes will be built from sustainably sourced or recycled tropical hardwood (for its enhanced strength and durability). We are currently inspecting FBC's groyne structures, which can be repaired, to calculate the repair costs. Repair and replacement is subject to satisfying environmental constraints, planning and agreeing funding. It is currently estimated that works may start in late summer 2016.

- **Earlier in the year a plastic groyne appeared, why?**

This plastic groyne was installed, with the best intentions of the contractor; unfortunately it did not meet our specifications and was promptly removed (at no cost to the council). As part of Phase 1 of this project we are looking to replace this particular groyne with a tropical hardwood groyne (for enhanced strength and durability). This timber will be supplied from a sustainable or recycled source.

- **We have heard that the permanent repair/replacement of the sea wall will require the beach huts to be removed. Is this true?**

The preferred replacement option for the seawall has not been determined nor the need to re-locate beach huts and alike. In selecting a preferred option we will consider how best to protect beach huts from damage and consult with beach huts owners on their preferences.

Community Action Team Meeting (CAT)

Tuesday 29th March 2016

- **How will sea/beach access be considered in this project?**

Existing pedestrian access along the promenade, and to the beach, will be retained as part of any future option. Where practicable we will look to improve access for people with limited mobility. We understand that the beach access ramp is used as a slipway; therefore we will discuss access options with local stakeholders (such as the Sailing Club). The beach access ramp is currently steep and potentially requires modification; if additional/external funds were made available modifying this facility (to become a slipway) could be a possibility.

- **Currently there is a 'kink' in the promenade, could this be straightened?**

The foreshore is designated at a UK and European level. The designations include a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Protection Area for birds. The SSSI/SPA extends to Mean High Water Springs meaning any construction works would take place within the designated areas. These designations reinforce how critical the natural environment is to the character of the coast here. Using our experience of securing approval for works in similar location (Portsmouth Harbour for example), we will engage with Natural England to explore what modest changes to the defence alignment are permitted and would be adversely affect the setting and character of the environment.

- **Why is public access restricted during construction activity?**

It is not only workers who are at risk from construction work. The best way to protect members of the public is to keep them out of the area where we are working. The last time we had a site at Hill Head we diverted the pedestrian route, added signage and installed two layers of fencing. This unfortunately did not prevent determined trespassers entering the site and vandalising some of the work. Many children see construction sites as adventure playgrounds. Even though they may be entering the site without authority, and may be trespassing, they should still be protected from site dangers; many will be too young to appreciate the risks. At the end of every working day our contractor will undertake the following reasonable steps to reduce the chance of public injuring themselves (if they were to get onto the site):

- Lock the site gates and secure the site perimeter;
- Barrier off or cover over excavations, pits etc.;
- Isolate and immobilise vehicles and plant; if possible lock them in a compound;
- Store building materials (so that they cannot topple or roll over);
- Remove access ladders from excavations and scaffolds; and

Community Action Team Meeting (CAT)

Tuesday 29th March 2016

- Lock away hazardous substances.
These steps and information are in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive's [HSE] 2006 guidance: 'Health and Safety in construction'.

- **Do you intend to repair the steel piles and wire gabion baskets at the sailing club?**

We are aware of the damage to the sheet piles and wire gabions here. We are talking to contractors on how best to address this, while being mindful to the proposed replacement works. Due to the high water table at this point, we may need to engage specialist marine contractors to weld the piles.

- **What enhancements could be considered/included as part of this project?**

Considerations such as a wider promenade, improved promenade surface, measure to reduce overtopping, improving access to the beach could be considered. We will also listen carefully to any suggestions from the public on what they would like to see. A large number of suggestions have already been received during the exhibition event and we will be listening to the public when we consult on the project in the summer.

- **What are the future arrangements for the selection and supervision of contractors?**

The ESCP uses a framework of approved Contractors. These range from large International companies such as Balfour Beatty through to smaller local contractors. These are organised into Lots depending on their skills and experience. We work closely with all our contractors, draw upon their knowledge and experience to complement our own. The works undertaken over the first weeks of January were not how we would typically approach coastal maintenance; we would normally demolish a failed structure, and not attempt to repair it. It is noted that our contractors do not work on an hourly rate or the like, we typically call off fixed prices for our contractors with quantities re-measurable at the work progresses. Our contractors are therefore motivated to complete activities in a timely fashion.

- **Why did the seawall failure at the Pyramids, Southsea over Christmas get such a rapid and large scale intervention?**

Approximately 8500 properties would be affected by flooding following breach of the coastal defences at Southsea. The potential flood hazard following failure of the seawall

Community Action Team Meeting (CAT)

Tuesday 29th March 2016

at the Pyramids necessitated a rapid and large scale intervention. These repairs were eligible for ~£500,000 of emergency funding from central government, were designed and supervised by the ESCP and constructed using one of our Framework Contractors.

Following failure of the Hill Head seawall, a similar request was made to the Environment Agency, however as the properties behind the structure were not an immediate risk of flooding or erosion, funding toward repair works was declined.

- **What constraints are there to building a seawall replacement at Hill Head straight away?**

Licence's and consents are required from the Marine Management Organisation, Natural England and Crown Estates among others. As the works, and access to the working areas, are within the intertidal zone of the environmentally designated foreshore these bodies will look to ensure the works are carried out in such a way so as to minimise impact to the environment. Restrictions such as no works allowed during the overwintering birds period (October - March annually) will be imposed. We also need to prepare and have accepted an Environmental Impact Assessment. Additionally a new seawall, like all almost all new structures, needs planning permission from Fareham Borough Council. A structural design needs to be completed and approved before we can tender the project and engage a contractor. The public need to be engaged with to ensure the project gains broad acceptance across the community.

- **When and how will you be consulting next on the project?**

We will be consulting the public in the summer. This will involve a range of methods such as community events, workshops, feedback forms etc. We will update you on this as soon as we have the dates confirmed.

- **Have you considered charging for car parking to pay for the repairs and maintenance?**

Free car parking helps encourage people to enjoy the Borough's coastal areas. We have made a commitment to keeping coastal and district centre car parks free and from previous consultations we know that residents are in support of this approach.

- **FBC Maintenance budgets for the site - how much is capital vs revenue**

I do not have the exact breakdown of figures to hand. However, we are working to find

Community Action Team Meeting (CAT)

Tuesday 29th March 2016

the best solution for everybody and part of this will be finding securing enough funding to carry out future repair and maintenance works.

- **Could you ring fence beach hut revenue to pay for repairs and maintenance?**

We do not have a ring fenced budget for the maintenance of the beach and promenade. We will have to consider the best approach for ensuring that there is funding available for the maintenance and repairs.

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