



Lower Otter Restoration Project

Minutes of the Stakeholder Group Meeting

Clinton Devon Estates Office, Bicton Arena

10.00 am Wednesday 9 May 2018

1 - Attendees

Cllr Tom Wright (Chair)	East Devon District Council & Budleigh Salterton Town Council
Chris Woodruff	East Devon AONB
Mike Williams	Environment Agency
Megan Rimmer	Environment Agency
Mark Rice	Environment Agency
Bridget Beer	Environment Agency
Andrew Howard	KOR Communication
David Butler	Representing Granary Lane residents
Richard Spurway	Devon County Council
Christy Tolliday	Natural England
Cllr Geoff Jung	East Devon District Council, Colaton Raleigh
Tom Pyne	Pulhayes Farm
Greg Evans	Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club
David Turner	East Devon District Council
Luke Richie	South Farm
Roger Saunders	Otter Valley Association
Sam Bridgewater	EDPHCT/Clinton Devon Estates
Jayne Savage	Clinton Devon Estates

2 – Introductions & Apologies

Barry Real	Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club
Ian Wycherley	South Farm Residents and Business
Cllr Claire Wright	East Devon District Council
James Chubb	East Devon District Council
Marcus Adams	South West Water

3. Minutes of last meeting (2 August 2017)

Agreed – no actions

4. Updates and forthcoming work

Megan Rimmer, EA, gave an update on progress since the last meeting. As the Options Appraisal nears completion, Option 3 is the preferred option (Option 1 too expensive; Option 2 too risky; option 4 too few benefits). The final stages of the Options appraisal is considering the potential impact of Option 3 on existing boreholes and drinking water.

Current modelling indicates that Option 3 would not increase flooding risk to properties, but might increase water speeds at the mouth of the estuary. Work is required to understand the impact on SWW infrastructure.

Sam Bridgewater, EDPHCT/Estate, advised the group that Heritage Lottery Fund application (National bid) was unsuccessful. Feedback from the HLF advised that the application met all of the requirements. The project is being encouraged to consider applying again for regional funding, with this focusing on the access, education and public engagement elements of the project.

Mike Williams informed the group that the project team were pursuing other European funding options. Interreg funding could support 70% of project costs.

Megan confirmed that an application had also been made to Environment Agency to fully fund the project on the basis that there is a legal obligation to provide compensatory habitat for flood defence work on the Exe Estuary. There would still be an expectation to seek external funding to reduce costs to the public purse. The project would still need to be justified through presentation and review of a Business Case.

By March/April 2019 we should have the results of all the applications.

FAB Link

Report included in Project team update April 2018.

Feedback from Technical Steering Group meeting.

Update from Cllr Tom Wright –

- Sewage pipe, on the north side of the embankment is being investigated by South West Water to establish the depth of the pipe. Details to be added to Risk Log.
- If planning permission is granted it will take approximately 6 months to build the road.
- Estimates 2 – 3 years to move the cricket club and achieve an appropriate pitch.

Greg Evans, Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club raised concerns about losing 2 – 3 seasons. Outfield can be delayed but main part of square needs time to settle. Sam confirmed that although it is possible to initiate planning for the cricket club, it cannot be considered as separate to the wider project i.e. the relocation cannot happen unless the project proceeds. The project not only facilitate the move, but would also be the primary funding agent. However, work could commence on the new pitch whilst BSCC continue to play on the existing pitch.

Granary Lane Residents

Report from residents is that the exhibition last Summer was well received, has helped residents understand what the project intends to achieve and has answered a lot of the concerns. One resident has written to EA, under the Freedom of Information act, with a complaint against Clinton Devon Estates claiming that they have been distracted by the project and are not taking seriously the repair and responsibility regarding the river. Mike Williams confirmed that the EA has responded to the letter. Sam confirmed that the Estate are carrying on with riverine woodland work as they have done in the past and that they are following best practice which includes allowing natural processes to occur. Mike confirmed that the EA are aware that the river bed is changing and evolving

but there is no immediate risk of flooding. IF the EA were concerned they would be talking to the relevant land owners.

South Farm Residents

Commented that the felled trees on the old tip site are an eyesore. Sam stated that he understood their concerns but that this unsightly phase would be relatively short lived. He confirmed that the site will be allowed to develop as scrub following natural succession.

A concern was raised over whether existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) would be kept open during works if the project proceeded. Devon County Council Highways confirmed that PRoW could be closed for the duration of the works but re-opened upon completion. Alternative access would have to be found for the public highway during works.

Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club

Greg Evans confirmed that the club remain supportive of the project.

Pulhayes Farm

Tom Pyne raised concerns he has regarding the Estate land that he farms including:

- Habitat that will be adversely impacted by proposed change in water levels.
- Consequences of higher water flows/inundation up to Otterton, in particular associated with high spring tides when the tide meets heavy fluvial flows.
- Trees that fall into Budleigh Brook were historically removed by DCC, but are now not being removed by the Estate. He believes this to be a mistake
- Should the project proceed, any new causeway along the route of South Farm Road would need suitable culverts to take water underneath otherwise it could be potentially dangerous.

Cllr Tom Wright confirmed that it had already been agreed that adequate culverts would be provided.

5. Issues Log

Mike Williams advised that the 2008 and 2014 floods were being replicated by modelling which will provide a useful insight into possible flooding outcomes if the project goes ahead. Being able to use real flooding information rather than creating an imaginary flooding event is obviously enormously helpful. To date, results from the modelling show no significant increase in water levels are being identified if the project goes ahead. Further modelling is being carried out, including of groundwater impacts related to drinking water abstraction boreholes.

Sam reported on data being collected regarding mosquitos as part of a national research programme. A trap has been sited near the area of the tip and will be monitored through the summer with data analysed by Public Health England and APHA.

Megan to add exposure of the sewerage pipe at the estuary mouth to the Issues Log.

6. Future communication with the Stakeholders Group

Noted that Councillor Mike Clark is no longer living in the area and therefore East Budleigh Parish is no longer represented on the Stakeholders committee. Agreed necessary to contact the Parish Council to invite an alternative representative.

7. AOB

Ground water modelling to look at the potential impact on SWW abstraction boreholes takes a long time to carry out, so there may be a delay in getting the results.

EA confirmed they are still committed to the project and a follow up Public Consultation will be planned for later in the year.

Core samples – Megan confirmed the results will be used for the project going forward. The ground is more permeable than the desk study indicated, which means that there is more potential for saline water to affect the ground water; there is not much overlying clay to provide an impermeable layer.

8. Statement

Kor Communications to write a statement for approval of Chairman before issuing to press.

9. Date of next meeting

Originally planned for 19 September suggested to be delayed by 2 weeks to allow for all information to be available.

Statement of the Meeting

Lower Otter Restoration Project Stakeholder Group Statement of Meeting

Meeting of: Wednesday May 9, 2018, at 10.00am

At: East Budleigh Village Hall

The stakeholder group noted Option 3, Big and Little Marsh floodplain restoration, has emerged as the favoured option for the project team. This was also the option most favoured by the public following an exhibition in 2017, with 62 per cent supporting this option. A public exhibition about the preferred option is likely to be held in late autumn 2018.

The Environment Agency and Clinton Devon Estates remain committed to the project, despite not being awarded funding by the National Heritage Lottery Fund.

Funding options including the Regional Heritage Lottery Fund and the cross-Channel Interreg VA fund are being explored.

Computer modelling to predict how habitats and associated key species will change and develop in the estuary under Option 3 is continuing. This modelling suggests that Option 3 would not increase flood risk to properties and infrastructure, although flow speeds will initially increase at the estuary mouth which may deepen and/or widen the channel, reducing flow speeds again.

Analysis of the contents of the old tip raised no areas of concern in respect of potential leachates. Technical studies and negotiations are on-going with South West Water over the potential impact of Option 3 on ground-water, and a sewerage overflow pipe.

Preliminary options for an embankment for South Farm Road, with suitable culverts, have been sent to Devon County Council, as Highways Authority, for discussion, although detailed technical drawings have not been developed.

To allow time for a replacement playing surface to be prepared, the Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club asked that consideration be given to an earlier, separate planning application for the new pitch prior to any other work getting under way, should the project proceed.

Ends