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PREVIOUSLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LANGSTONE FCERM SCHEME

March 2021

Coastal Partners (previously known as the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership) have hosted a number of community events where questions are asked about the Langstone Coastal Scheme. We have gathered those questions and answers below.

Q. Who are Coastal Partners?

A. We are a team of specialist coastal officers and engineers who manage coastal flood and erosion risk across 162km of coastline on behalf of Portsmouth City Council, Fareham Borough Council, Havant Borough Council and Gosport Borough Council. Our team leads on coastal issues, such as managing flooding and erosion risk, plan design and manage construction of new coastal defence schemes and inspect, manage and maintain existing coastal assets whilst planning for the future.

You may have previously known us as the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership. Find out more about us in our latest [Coastal Partners Report 2020](#). You'll get an insight into the work of our engineers, scientists, surveyors, project managers, environmental and finance experts. We hope this shows you what makes us who we are, what drives us forward and why we're industry leading

Q. What is the Environment Agency's role?

A. The [Environment Agency](#) are responsible for the allocation of Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding made available from Defra. They decide which schemes are allocated funding nationally based on technical, environmental and economic factors.

Q. Who are AECOM and what was their role in the Langstone Study?

A. [AECOM](#) are an international engineering consultancy with a wealth of experience in designing coastal protection schemes around the world. They were appointed by Coastal Partners on behalf of Havant Borough Council to provide specialist consultancy services to assist with the coastal flood defence outline design study for Langstone. The scope of AECOM's work has now concluded. The process to procure a new consultant for the next stage of detailed design is underway.

Funding:

Q. What is the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)?

A. The RFCC is a committee established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The aim is to encourage efficient, targeted and risk-based investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management that represents value for money and benefits local communities. The RFCC Local Levy is another possible source of funding available to bid for, if a scheme has a funding shortfall, and has been used to fund the outline design stage of the Langstone Scheme. Further funding from this source is allocated for the detailed design stage.

Q. What is Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)?

A. Community Infrastructure Levy is a levy that local authorities can charge on new developments in their area. The rate is based on £ per square metre. The money collected through this levy can be used to fund additional infrastructure required to support new development including roads, schools, coastal flood defences, green spaces and community facilities. This source of funding will contribute to the scheme at outline design, with funds also allocated towards detailed design and construction.

Q. Who is required to fund the “contributions”?

A. The project team are actively seeking funding contributions to address the shortfall from several potential sources. Please visit the project's [funding and responsibilities](#) page to find more information relating to the funding we have already secured and the avenues we are exploring to identify and secure additional funding.

Engagement:

Q. Why were residents asked to vote on three options for the Royal Oak frontage, what about the other areas?

A. The engagement undertaken in summer 2020 focused on just one element of the core scheme (the Royal Oak frontage), as this appeared to be the area of most concern raised at previous engagement events. The leading option identified at outline design for all other elements of the core scheme remain.

Whichever alignment is taken forward to detailed design will of course need to tie into the defences from the High Street to The Ship Inn. Through this engagement, we were looking to get a steer from the community as to what would be most acceptable along the Royal Oak frontage, as there are differing views. The responses we received formed the evidence on which the Council made their decision on which defence alignment to progress around the Royal Oak frontage.

Q. Why were only a few visualisations provided? Can residents see visualisations for flood gates?

A. To produce visualisations for every possible option is not cost effective, particularly where several exist. We have previously provided images of what floodgates look like and when we understand the detailed alignments it is likely that further visuals will be refined and prepared during detailed design to support our discussions with the community.

During the outline design stage of the project, which identified the leading approach to coastal defence and standard of protection the defences will provide, it was difficult to provide accurate visualisations. It is not until the next stage of the project, at detailed design, that the structural design is refined, detail of how the defences will tie in with each other determined, height and location of flood gates defined, aesthetics incorporated into the design and choice of materials identified. Progress with the design will lead to more accurate visualisations.

Q. What is the height of the tide shown in the visualisation for the Royal Oak frontage?

A. The height of tide shown in the visuals is 3.5m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), which is equivalent to the present day 1 in 200 year extreme water level. The seawall is designed to be 0.3m above this level as a freeboard allowance.

Q. Why didn't I receive a leaflet for the Royal Oak alignment survey?

A. Previously, leaflets were delivered to properties in Langstone via a delivery company. We also emailed it to those residents and stakeholders who expressed an interest in the project as well as to all frontline residents personally on the same day. All information is kept up to date on the website, and this is the best place to access up to date details. Going forward we will start using email newsletters and encourage you to sign up [HERE](#)

Royal Oak Frontage:

Q. Will the height of the wall around the Royal Oak frontage be higher than the tops of the cottage windows, is this true?

A. No, we are not proposing a wall that would come to the top of the windows. Our consultants have developed options that will be adaptable in the future for a scheme with a 50-year life. They have calculated that the height of the proposed wall around the Royal Oak frontage will be in the order of between 1m and 1.3m above the existing quay wall level to provide a present day 1 in 200-year standard of protection plus an allowance for freeboard. As the quay is not uniform in height, the exact heights along the quay, materials and look of the wall will be determined in the next phase of the project during detailed design.

Q. What is freeboard?

A. Freeboard is an allowance added to the required design height of a defence that takes account of the adverse uncertainty in the prediction of future water levels and uncertainty in relation to physical processes such as waves, winds and tidal surges. We have included a freeboard of up to 0.3m within our designs, dependant on the location of the defence.

Q. Not everyone supports a wall in front of the Royal Oak, are there other options?

A. The quay wall in front of the Royal Oak was raised as a key concern both during our January exhibitions and our workshop earlier this year. Some residents may not prefer this option; however, others have voiced a preference for it. The summer survey, therefore, aimed to draw out a transparent reflection of residents' views collectively. The responses received formed the evidence base on which the Council decided on which defence alignment to progress around the Royal Oak frontage.

Q. Is repairing the quay around the Royal Oak frontage an option that has been considered?

A. The quay around the Royal Oak is in poor repair and has significant voids in the structure, it is getting to the stage of being unrepairable and therefore our only option for intervention would be to replace the quay. We will be including structural surveys at the next stage of design to confirm this.

Q. The community has strong feelings about the heritage of the area, views and historic buildings. How can you reassure the community that the heritage landscape will be preserved and protected?

A. Coastal Partners recognise the importance of heritage at Langstone and as such have been engaging with the regulators Historic England, Natural England, the Local Planning Authority, Havant Borough Council's conservation officer, Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the Langstone Harbour Board since the very start of the project to ensure the options being presented are legal and appropriate in light of the regulations which apply to heritage and coastal habitats. Through meetings with regulators it's recognised that something needs to be done to preserve the heritage into the future. If we do nothing, we will lose the heritage altogether. Heritage impact will be unavoidable whatever option is delivered, public benefits relating to reducing flood and erosion risk are likely to outweigh the impact to heritage assets, and it will be a case of balancing these as best as we can within the constraints of the location we have. Our regulators recognise this, and as such have shown support for the core scheme put forward.

Langstone Village Frontage:

Q. Why is widening the footpath between The Ship Inn and Langstone High Street not an option?

A. Widening the footpath between the Ship Inn and Langstone High Street would increase the footprint of the structure, meaning significant encroachment into designated environmental habitat. Environmental law states that encroachment into environmental designations can only take place where there are no other less damaging alternative solutions and therefore there is no other option but to do so. We have followed the advice and guidance given to us by Natural England and we have consistently followed the habitat regulations in our assessment. Between the Ship Inn and Langstone High Street, the least damaging option in terms of encroachment is identified as a 'boardwalk' type accessible path, where only the supports to the structure encroach onto the designated habitat rather than the entire structure (like widening the footpath).

Q. Why is it acceptable to encroach into designated environmental habitat along the Royal Oak frontage and not between the Ship Inn and Langstone High Street?

A. Please see the answer above. Along the Royal Oak frontage, the leading option protects against flooding and erosion, and yes will involve encroachment, but this frontage is essential to include in the scheme and therefore this is unavoidable. The design along both frontages is still to be refined during the next stage of design, including further investigations about the condition of existing structures.

Q. The option of a boardwalk with an industrial handrail is not favoured, are there alternatives?

A. The materials, finish and style of a handrail has not yet been determined and will be the subject of further engagement during the detailed design stage. Whilst the area forms part of a conservation area, this does not mean that no change can occur, and the finer detail of the leading design will be carefully considered to ensure that the character of the area is conserved for many years to come.

Q. Has repairing the existing wall between the High Street and Green Cottage been considered?

A. The existing wall is very thin and over time is unlikely to be able to withstand the pressures of water against it as sea levels rise. Repairing the wall will not improve the structures to the standard required to withstand these pressures over the next 50 years. Structural investigations were undertaken on the path along this frontage as part of the outline design stage however not along the wall. This is because more intrusive investigation could compromise and undermine the structure and it is the view of AECOM, our specialist consultant engineers who supported the project during the outline design stage, that there is little confidence that another survey would give further information above and beyond what is already known at that stage. Reliance on existing structures presents a real risk to the integrity of the whole performance of the scheme as a sea defence so further investigations will be undertaken at the detailed design stage so that it is possible for the designer to accept design liability for a scheme which uses sections of existing structures.

Q. What is the current preferred option for the grassed area in front of Green Cottage?

A. The current leading option for the frontage between the Ship Inn and Langstone High Street, including Green Cottage is a new seawall and accessible path. The section around Green Cottage will be challenging to design, but we are in contact with the landowners who have expressed support for the leading option and proposals to work with the project team during the detailed design stage, when we will look at the design of this section in more detail.

Mill Lane Frontage:

Q. Have you removed Harbourside / Mill Lane from the plans?

A. The Harbourside / Mill Lane leading option will be progressed at the next detailed design stage. Although not part of the core scheme due to affordability, a detailed design for the frontage will be developed at no cost to residents in order to help these landowners understand their choices. These defences are privately owned, and it is the private resident's own responsibility to maintain their defences. However, we will continue to work hard to support these frontline landowners to consider how a scheme may be funded.

Q. Will Langstone Spit be protected?

A. The Langstone Sailing Club have expressed concern about the erosion that is occurring at the southern tip of Langstone Spit, and the implications this has on providing protection to their assets. As for the Mill Lane area, the leading option for the spit will be taken forward to the detailed design stage at no cost to the community and the project team will continue to explore potential funding sources and investigate how this option can be funded to enable it to progress in the future.

Technical:

Q. What is meant by likelihood of flooding?

A. The probability or likelihood of flooding is described as the chance that a location will flood in any one year. The likelihood is expressed as a percentage i.e. 0.1%, or as a chance e.g. a 1 in 100 chance in any given year. This method of describing the risk does not refer to how regularly a flood will occur it is simply the chance of it occurring in any year.

Q. Will building flood defences in Langstone increase flooding elsewhere?

A. No, as the volume of floodwater that would be prevented is displaced over such a large area, in this case both Langstone and Chichester harbours, the actual increase in water level observed elsewhere in these harbours would be negligible.

Q. Why don't you dredge the harbours to make space for more water?

A. Both Langstone and Chichester Harbours are home to a range of highly protected intertidal habitats and species under both national and international environmental laws. Dredging in the harbours would damage these habitats and impact on the protected species present. Given the large volume of water entering both harbours, a decrease in water level from dredging would be negligible.

Q. Flood gates are proposed at certain places along the frontage, who will shut these?

A. Coastal Partners provide technical assistance to the Emergency Planners in the 4 Local Authorities within the Coastal Partnership for Coastal Flooding Response. As part of this, we have Coastal Flood Duty Officers who are on call 24/7, who monitor and shut flood gates during a likely flood event currently at Old Portsmouth and Eastoke. Coastal Partners are therefore well versed in the process of closure and operational flood risk management and will be working with the Langstone

Community to set out operational flood response for the actively managed defences at Langstone.

Q. Will there be improvements along the frontage for access?

A. Maintaining and improving access along the frontage was a key priority from the community following stakeholder working group meetings and at the short list engagement event. This has been factored into the option appraisal process and will continue to do so throughout detailed design.

Q. Instead of building an option along the Langstone frontage, has the option of fitting houses at risk with flood boards been considered?

A. Property level protection only addresses flood risk to properties. It does not address erosion risk, nor does it provide protection to the main road (A3023) access to Hayling which is another key driver for the scheme.

Q. Will Coastal Partners take into consideration residents' preferences for the scheme?

A. Coastal Partners do not choose the options we prefer. The option is selected in line with the guidance we must follow set for us by our regulators and funders and set for good reason i.e. to arrive at the most technically, environmentally, socially and economically sustainable option. The leading options identified are those which reduce the risk of flooding and erosion to the largest proportion of properties. These options are just that, at this stage, no defences are 'being built' at this time. Further details on how we've developed the options can be found [HERE](#).

Q. What is the standard of protection of the scheme and how long will the scheme be designed for?

A. The scheme being promoted is an "adaptive" approach to reduce the risk for 50 years at which time a further phase will need to be developed that takes account of the understanding of the risk, economics and environmental factors nearer that time. The current scheme is being designed to provide a 1 in 200 year standard of protection today against an extreme event, which will reduce to a 1 in 75 year standard of protection as sea levels rise in 50 years

Q. Has the construction of a breakwater to protect the village from flooding been considered?

A. The project team assessed the viability of constructing an [offshore breakwater and flood gates](#) on the eastern side of the village. Although technically possible, the assessment concluded that due to significant social, environmental and cost issues associated with progressing this option the project team were not able to progress this option any further.

Our regulators, Natural England and the Chichester Harbour Conservancy were both consulted on this option. Natural England's view was that the construction, operation and maintenance of a breakwater structure in the harbour will result in several

adverse effects upon designated sites. On this basis, Natural England would not support the option of an offshore breakwater and encouraged the project team to continue pursuing an alternative less damaging solution. Chichester Harbour Conservancy also opposed the option due to its impacts on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and that an offshore breakwater option would be highly unlikely to gain the consents needed for the scheme to be implemented as there is a viable alternative option. Both regulators have confirmed that they are therefore fully supportive of the current leading options for the Langstone Village and Royal Oak frontages.

Q. What will happen if the scheme doesn't go ahead?

A. Without intervention the defences across Langstone are likely to deteriorate rapidly and lead to potential damage and loss. Coastal Partners, on behalf of Havant Borough Council will undertake works using permissive powers but in the absence of an agreed way forward, or funding for the scheme, the responsibility for protecting Langstone from flooding or erosion risk rests with the residents and landowners.

'Do Nothing' is a baseline option considered for all flood and erosion risk management schemes. Whilst discounted as an option early in the process (given it does not deliver the objectives), if no agreement can be reached or no decision is made to take the project forward, this will be the default position for Havant Borough Council. In this instance residents and landowners would, as is currently the case, be responsible for managing their own risks in terms of flooding and erosion. Under a 'Do Nothing' scenario any future failure or maintenance of the defence here is not and would not be the responsibility of Havant Borough Council under the current legislation.