



Slapton Line partnership living with a changing coast

Notes for the Slapton Line Partnership meeting

Date 22 March 2022

Time 1400 to 1600

Location Follaton House, Totnes

Attendees

Hilary Bastone – Deputy Leader South Hams District Council

Laura Wotton – South Hams District Council

Dan Field – South Hams District Council

John Fewings – Devon County Council

Jane Abbey – Slapton Parish Council

Piers Spence – Stokenham Parish Council

Graham Campbell – Strete Parish Council

Nigel Smith - Frogmore and Sherford Parish Council

Su Beswick – Frogmore and Sherford Parish Council

Lee Dennison – Field Studies Centre

Martin Davies – Environment Agency

George Arnison – Environment Agency

Eamon Crowe – Natural England

Timothy Poate – University of Plymouth

Sam Lew - Adaptation Manager

Roger English – Slapton Line Partnership Chair and South Devon AONB Manager

Apologies

Peter Chamberlain – Devon County Council

Michael Billis - Southwest Water

Peter Hales – Strete Parish Council

Michaela Barwell – NE – Eamon Crowe will represent

Andy Pratt – FSC – Lee Denison will represent

Vicky Croughan – South Hams District Council

Gill Claydon – Stokenham Parish Council

Kirsten Pullen – Wild Planet Trust

1. Matters arising

- Vulnerability Assessment slides were distributed to the group and included again for reference with the agenda for this meeting
- Slapton Parish Council questions will be addressed at the next SPC meeting supported by Sam Lew
- Torcross Culvert – to be addressed at a later date
- Quick wins – immediate Actions – addressed below in the agenda

HB – Anthony Magnall was meant to bring something back to the SLP?

DF – Discussions are underway with AM about next steps for the Line and requests for resources. Submission will be fed back to the SLP when more information is available.

2. Tasks for the next two years (Jan 2024) (Sam Lew)

SL – Adaptation Funders Group – DCC, SHDC, EA, and AONB have agreed 4 key areas of work to be delivered over the next two years - items A to D below in the Agenda - based on the collective decision by the SLP and the 2019 Strategy to work towards Adaptation for the loss of the road and employ an Adaptation Manager.

a. Adaptation Plan development

- An Adaptation Plan co-creation workshop will be held with the SLP on April 5th (all day) with two outcomes, 1. Collectively agree the Vision and Goals for the Plan and, 2. Ways of Working. The workshop outputs will be a starting point and there will be opportunity for the broader community to input and sense check the Plan. The detail of the Plan will be co-created with local community engagement to decide on-the-ground Actions.

EC – will be bringing in other Natural England support and expertise to the workshop. NE will also be carrying out a piece of work to understand future scenarios for the Slapton Line and surrounding area.

SL – Kirsten Pullen at WPT will be doing similar work and there is an opportunity to collaborate.

JB – we have 10K years before the Ley becomes part of the sea. There are more urgent matters to focus on.

SL – there are some key future scenarios that we need to factor into Adaptation Planning

EA – we need to use the best information available to predict the future scenario for the area and additional resource is available to do so.

• Immediate Actions – agreed priorities (All)

1. Monument relocation update (Piers Spence)

PS – The Monument is called the Slapton Line **Memorial** and we need to call it that from here-on-in. PCs will jointly fund ongoing site maintenance when moved to new site at Strete Gate. We have requested that the FSC will be the first-choice maintenance partner.

LD – Sub-committee meeting has seen the proposal and hopefully we will have an answer soon. DCC need a long-term maintenance agreement in place before planning permission for relocation is given. We still don't have long-term responsibilities agreed for maintenance of the Memorial structure itself.

PS - PC's have stated Memorial physical maintenance is outside of their scope.

LD – FSC will also not want to take on that responsibility

SL – who is responsible at the moment?

RE – There is no formally agreed responsibility, DCC have previously facilitated as good will but can't continue.

PS – Maintenance of the site is not the same as the maintenance of the Memorial and is not considered in the current contract

RF – Agree PCs cannot take on structural maintenance but could be taken on by SHDC or DCC.

JB – where are we with planning permission?

RE – a large proportion of the preparatory work needed in readiness for submission of a planning application has already been undertaken by DCC. Now that a site maintenance

agreement is close to being concluded, this and a structural maintenance agreement needs to be in place before a planning application can be submitted.

2. Managing the inland road network (John Fewings)

JF - In 2018 – central government funded a large clean up, drainage and passing place improvements. DCC have now commissioned the consultant WSP to understand what else can be done to enhance the inland road network. Scope of works will never replace the Line. A package of works will, however, be produced to deliver road improvements.

RF – who has been asked locally regarding inland road improvements and changes? There is a lot of knowledge available locally that can inform intervention decisions.

JF – the proposed package of works will be brought back to the SLP for consideration

SL – we are working with University of Exeter on project proposals to support modelling of the road network, bringing in local knowledge to parameterise the models, building on the extensive work that DCC have been doing

JF – DCC are working with WSP to build traffic models for the area to try and anticipate what will happen in the real world if the road closes

3. Plan to maintain the road for as long as feasible (Graham Campbell)

There are two aspects needed. 1. Adaptation Plan (essential) 2. Maintenance of the Line – what is being done to protect it? Surprised to see that the maintenance of the Line is not featured on the agenda, and it is difficult to see if anything is being done. Do we need a separate group to discuss Line maintenance?

RE – SLP have a broader role than just adaptation

SL – co-creation workshop will agree the structure of the plan and Partnership and how different initiatives are complementary. We also need a clear explanation of the case for adaptation, the history of the SLP and what has been done –we can do more to make information available to the public and PCs.

RF – DF asked if existing material could be moved and used better to protect the Line and the answer is no. There are too many barriers to protecting the road and we need to do more.

HB – encouraged by SL but it will take a lot of time to create the Plan and we need to keep the road in place in the meantime. What is the issue with putting a small amount of rock armour in place to protect the road at key points?

DF – The buffer (natural road protection) is rapidly eroding. We met on the Line to see what else could be done. We believe that we can build on experiences at Dawlish to do work to actively relocate rock armouring to protect key areas, pending NE agreement. There are many areas that cannot be protected, and we have undertaken an extensive options analysis to reach this conclusion, available in the Vulnerability Assessment.

EC – 2014 and 2018 NE agreed to interventions to protect the road, and 2021 to maintenance at Torcross. NE don't always say no. NE are basing decisions under Acts of Parliament and there are red lines that we cannot cross under existing environment law. We are working to allow relocation of rocks and support maintenance of the road over the next few years, based on trigger points.

MD – we (SLP) made the collective decision to support adaptation. EA are working with the SLP based on this decision. EA also support flood and coastal erosion risk management. EA support the proposal to relocate rocks to best use for protection. Long-term sustainable management needs adaptation, this is the case in most other similar coastal scenarios.

JB – trigger point is when the road washes away. Truth of the matter is the road will be washed away within the next 5-years. What worries me is that we have nothing in place at all in terms of adaptation. If the road goes and we have nothing in place and that will be a huge failure for all authorities and agencies. We need to give AM the projects and costs to get the funding in from central government to make changes on the ground.

RE - key to recognise that a lot has been done and we have provided AM with a list of items to be funded. The adaptation plan will identify the key items that we need to fund straight away.

- **Funding Strategy**

SL – The Funding Strategy is a live document and I’m constantly looking for resources to bring in to support and delivery adaptation. We need to strike a balance between what we need as priority and what’s available to fund.

I will align our Adaptation Plan with government legislative drivers to strategically align adaptation needs to public sector funding opportunities. I can then look to fill gaps with alternative funding sources (third and private sector).

JA – we need greater communication about what is going on so local keep are kept in the loop. Can you please make sure that information is available to us, and communications are part of the Adaptation Plan? Local people feel like decisions are being made behind closed doors.

RE – there is a history of engagement and communications and Parishes have been part of the SLP for many years – Celebrate Start Bay, workshops, and engagement sessions have had strong public participation. SL is pulling together Contingency and Emergency Response, which will also have strong public engagement

SL – the Adaptation Plan workshop will agree how we work locally to ensure transparency and accountability. The development of the Plan is a participative process, not a consultative process. There are resource limitations for communications, but we have support from SHDC communications professionals, so we are in a good position. We also need to build on this Partnership and the resources that we all have

JA – please work with us in the Parishes, we have great resources that we can share and help with communications.

MD – we can work together to create a communications Strategy – need to ensure it is not resource intensive – a regular briefing is possible.

PS – we can do more to improve communications – it’s been SLP biggest weakness. The SLP have discussed the key details many times before, but we have not communicated this externally, effectively.

RF – involved for a long time and a lot has been done over the years. One bit of advice – be bold regarding requests for funding from central government

b. Contingency and Emergency Response Manual

- The CERM is a synthesis of extensive existing Plans with two outcomes 1. Public Relations – to provide clarity and reassurance and, 2. Provide an opportunity for joint agency working.

c. Coastal Change Management Area – Tim Poate (University of Plymouth) gave a presentation, and the slides are attached

LD – would you class the road as a defence?

TP - Westward Hoe behaves as a barrier. Slapton Line behaves differently and not as natural as Westward Hoe due to the presence of the road.

SL – pers. comms. From Uni of Plymouth researchers – Slapton Line barrier would build up and move landwards if the shingle/gravel wasn't repeatedly swept back onto the beach for road maintenance. The barrier would form a stronger line of defence to protect the Ley if the road wasn't there and would respond naturally to sea-level rise.

TP – agree with statement from SL

d. Guidance for Practitioners

- RE – SLP will ensure experiences are shared locally (Start Bay), Devon wide (SW Coastal Group), and Nationally

3. AOB

- Slapton Parish has questions regarding inland flood mapping. What is the accuracy of maps and who is responsible to protect housing and access?

MD – EA have a duty to produce flood maps – and the maps sent are accurate. The maps are fluvial flood maps and so do not have relevance to Slapton Line or coastal flooding. The EA doesn't have a legal requirement to provide defences (EA work on defences at Torcross) but as we understand there is no legal requirement to protect the homes from fluvial flooding.