

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Corporate Director for Place
To
Cabinet
On
6 January 2015

Report prepared by: Richard Atkins
Coastal Defences Engineer

Review of Shoebury Common Flood Defence Improvements

Executive Councillor: Councillor Martin Terry
Part 1 Report Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

To report on the findings of the outcome of the review.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the options review report attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That the existing preferred option (Option 1) that was agreed by Cabinet on 5th November 2013 and at Council on 12th December 2013 is not progressed.
- 2.3 That Mott MacDonald are commissioned to develop a further range of options to provide coastal protection at Shoebury Common.
- 2.4 That Members approve the continued liaison with stakeholder groups on development of the project.

3. Background

- 3.1 Between 2011 and 2013, the Council developed a project to provide improved flood protection to a large area of Shoeburyness by constructing a new defence wall on Shoebury Common. This would have a raised crest height, and would provide a Standard of Protection of 1 in 200 years. The proposal was for a sheet piled wall, clad with masonry and backed by an embankment and landscaped earthwork to soften the appearance of the wall. It received Planning Consent in April 2014. This scheme generated considerable resistance from groups of local residents.
- 3.2 In May 2014, following Council elections, the new Administration resolved to review the current preferred option for coastal protection at Shoebury Common, as well as the previous options which were considered; and identify a coastal protection scheme that will be more acceptable to local residents and still provide the necessary standard of protection, safeguard the local environment and offer

value for money. This commitment was agreed at Cabinet on 1 July 2014 (minute 26) and endorsed by Council (as part of the Corporate Plan) on 17 July 2014 (minute 62).

- 3.3 Mott MacDonald, the Council's recently appointed coastal consultant, were appointed to undertake an independent engineering review of the previously considered options. Mott MacDonald has had no previous involvement with developing coastal protection options at Shoebury Common.
- 3.4 As an element of the review, representatives from the various residents groups who had expressed views on the original proposals, were invited to present their opinions on the important aspects which needed to be incorporated in a future project design. The single aspect which emerged as the most important to them all was the quality of the finished appearance, in order not to degrade the attraction of the area to visitors. They differed, however, on how this should be achieved.
- 3.5 The report of Mott MacDonald has been received (Appendix 1), and the Consultants have based their assessment on a comparison of advantages and disadvantages of the options. These have been summarised using a red/amber/green scoring of the respective strength and weaknesses in technical, economic, environmental and stakeholder acceptability criteria. The original proposal was confirmed to be satisfactory on cost, technical and environmental grounds, but discounted on grounds of public non-acceptability. The other projects in the review received a range of gradings, but with no outright recommendation.
- 3.6 At a stakeholder meeting of 26th November 2014, it was noted that two options previously considered by the Council as part of its options appraisal process (Options 2 and 3) in which works were set back to the line of Shoebury Common Road, had not been included in Mott MacDonald's review.
- 3.7 A request was made, and agreed to, for the review to be extended to include these schemes, which has now been done and included in Appendix 1.

4. Future Steps

- 4.1 In recognition that no proposal is likely to be completely satisfactory to all the stakeholders, Mott MacDonald's suggested way forward is to continue consultation with the various groups in a workshop format to attempt to arrive at a consensus view on the outline design.
- 4.2 It is therefore proposed to commission Mott MacDonald to develop a further set of options for Member's consideration and progress these through to the Environment Agency's (EA) Project Appraisal Report process.
- 4.3 Discussions have been held with the EA and they have confirmed that, subject to completion of a satisfactory Project Appraisal Report (PAR) on whichever project emerges from the stakeholder meetings, their funding will still be available. Members should note, however, that the level of EA finance is calculated from the financial and environmental benefits accruing from improved defences, and that this is unlikely to be greater than would have been available for the previous

project. Any increased costs would therefore have to be found from increased Council or other community contributions. In addition to this, the EA have advised that having fully funded the Project Appraisal Report (and process) through which the original scheme was developed, they are unlikely to fund a second document, since the change of scheme has been the Council's choice. The outline estimate for this work is £100k, which will have to be funded by the Council.

- 4.4 In view of the work which will be required to develop and deliver a new coastal defence scheme an indicative outline programme is:-

January 2015 – March 2015	Determine new project outline through Stakeholder discussion
April 2015 – August 2016	Produce revised PAR
November 2016	EA approval to PAR
December 2016 - July 2017	Detail design and procurement
September 2017 – March 2018	Construction

These preliminary dates will probably change as the project progresses.

5. Other Options

- 5.1 The Council considered a number of other options in the development of its previous preferred option and will need to do so again in order to comply with the EA's Project Appraisal Report process.
- 5.2 The Council does have the option not to progress with a coastal defence scheme – given that the area has been identified as a potential flood risk and that the Council and EA have recognised the need to mitigate that risk, this option is not recommended.

6. Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The recommendations are intended to identify a coastal protection scheme for Shoebury Common that will deliver the required standard of protection, protect the local environment, offer value for money and be acceptable to local residents and stakeholders.

7. Corporate Implications

7.1 *Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities*

- 7.1.1 The Council is committed to protecting its local environment and to discharging its responsibilities in respect of flood defence and these proposals are consistent with those objectives

7.2 *Financial Implications*

- 7.2.1 The Council is likely to have to fund the cost of a new PAR, the cost of which is likely to be in the order of £100K. The EA have advised that subject to completion of a satisfactory PAR, on whichever project emerges from the stakeholder meetings, their funding will still be available. However it is not likely to exceed the level of potential financial support identified for the previous preferred option. This will mean that any increase in costs will have to be funded by the Council. As an indicative guide to the revenue consequence of any increase in costs, there is a cost of approximately £80k for every £1m borrowed. The Council's existing capital funding has been re-profiled to reflect the changed delivery timescale, with the £100k for the new PAR identified from the part of the existing approved programme that was already to be financed by borrowing.
- 7.2.2 The appointment of Mott MacDonald for this work was made under their five year tendered Contract with the Council to provide coastal consultancy support in delivering the Borough's Shoreline Strategy. This contract allows for additional tasks, above those expected for the strategy

7.3 *Legal Implications*

- 7.3.1 There are no significant legal implications at this stage. Attention is however drawn to an extra Village Green application relating to Shoebury Common. This will be determined in accordance with the requests of the Commons Regulations Act and associated regulations. Was Shoebury known to be registered as a Village Green, then this fact would need to be taken into account in the context of any flood protection scheme.

7.4 *People Implications*

- 7.4.1 There are no direct people implications as a result of this report.

7.5 *Property Implications*

- 7.5.1 A number of Council housing (Jena Close) and parks (Shoebury park) assets are located in the 1 in 200 flood risk area and so will benefit from increased flood protection when a coastal protection scheme is completed.
- 7.5.2 There are also a number of residential properties within the flood risk areas that will also clearly benefit from the added protection provided by a coastal protection, sea defence scheme.

7.6 *Consultation*

- 7.6.1 The development of any new scheme will involve direct input from key stakeholder groups and will be subject to consultation, including statutory consultation if a new planning consent is required which is likely to be the position.
- 7.6.2 The PAR development process also requires a formal consultation process with statutory consultees on the environmental impacts of the proposals.

7.6.3 There will be Pre-Cabinet Scrutiny at the next stage when the more detailed report comes back from Mott MacDonald.

7.7 *Equalities and Diversity Implications*

7.7.1 Any new scheme will have to ensure that it is compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act

7.8 *Risk Assessment*

7.8.1 The PAR process requires a full risk assessment to be undertaken as part of the process to develop a preferred option. This will therefore be undertaken as part of the process to develop a new scheme.

7.9 *Value for Money*

7.9.1 The PAR process requires a full value for money, economic cost benefit assessment to be undertaken in order to secure EA financial support.

7.10 *Community Safety Implications*

7.10.1 The purpose of the scheme is to mitigate against a known flood risk and in doing so, protect life and property.

7.11 *Environmental Impact*

7.11.1 Maintaining the quality of the environment at Shoebury common has been a critically important consideration and any new coastal protection measures developed as part of this process will need to be acceptable to the EA and to Natural England.

8. Background Papers

Shoebury Common Flood Risk Management Scheme – Report of the Corporate Director for Place to Cabinet 5th November 2013

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Shoebury Common Flood Defence Review
Mott MacDonald