

## Report on the meeting of the Pause subgroup 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021

This meeting was in preparation for the Zoom meeting next week with the consultants. Putting points in advance so they can be prepared for them and can give answers immediately.

1) What do we want to get out of the meeting?

We need to see what they are up to and why they are doing it, rather than just receiving verbal reports to Tom. They have not produced any documents yet.

2) We should hear about the work being done as part of the Pause study but not go into highly technical details about modelling. However, do we need to ask them about calibration? Does the Environment Agency require it? Or is their model approved in our particular circumstances, and how has the software model been populated?

3) What have they been doing? What are their conclusions to date? How have they got there? What are they beginning to propose?

4) Do they have any idea of costs yet?

5) Some subgroup members have already submitted questions by email. These will be forwarded to the consultants along with any questions raised during this meeting.

6) Has any modelling they have done been **with**, or **without**, the current beach groynes in place? It is possible that the presence of these groynes could have a considerable effect on outcomes.

7) How wedded are they to a 4 island solution rather than a 3 or 2 island scheme? What has led to them deciding that 4 islands is the best option? May we see justification?

8) Given the sensitivity of visual intrusion in this situation how much effort is being put into avoiding an over-engineered solution? We got an over-engineered solution last time and we don't want to repeat the error.

9) Are the consultants aware of the photographs on the VGS website showing the history of the beach? And are they using them to inform their thinking?

It is important to remember that when the Sid pushed through high beaches around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> C the river defences on the west side of the river, along the Ham, weren't present. The force of the water was dissipated by spreading into the Ham, which was a water meadow, and yet it still pushed through the shingle on the beach. Before 1917 the Esplanade didn't extend past the Drill Hall, so the Sid had a very wide mouth.

10) If the consultants feel that they can design a scheme where periodic recharge is not necessary then how will that affect the perceived need for a slipway so that excavators can reach the beach quickly?

11) If a large beach was to be built up on East Beach would it eventually subsume any islands off the beach? And what results would that be likely to have?

### Other thoughts

Concerns were expressed that we were a long way into the Pause study and the consultants hadn't produced anything for us to study yet. Nothing was in writing except in emails, which would be forwarded by Tom to the subgroup.

The topic of whether the meeting next week would be minuted by the consultants, with a cost to EDDC out of the BMP budget, or done by a member of the subgroup was raised. Mary, for the VGS, expressed willingness to do them if that would be helpful.

It is usual to ask consultants to produce a written monthly report but, with the amount of work we want them to fit in, it has not been requested in this case. We can ask for that going forward if we are

not happy at the meeting with them.

Are we getting feedback from them which indicates they are going in the right direction? Could this feedback also be shared with the subgroup?

The meeting of the consultants with the subgroup will be recorded so that it can be shared with the public, to aid clear communication of the progress of the Pause study.

Questions on how much of 'draft or working' documents we are legally allowed to share with members of the groups we represent, or with the general public, were raised. The position is very murky but Geoff and Tom will seek further information to bring clarity, if such clarity is possible.

One problem with making draft documents public is that they can be given more weight by the public than warranted, this may create a false impression. It can be difficult to correct misunderstandings once the idea has been planted.

It is the responsibility of Advisory Group members to extract from draft documents the information they think it is right to share with the groups they represent: and for them to then share it in a way which minimises misunderstandings or the potential for scare stories to proliferate. Especially when information is put up on websites such as that belonging to VGS.

It was questioned as to whether the consultants would require information from the subgroup during the meeting, if so could we be informed in advance so we had the information ready?

Modelling was raised again. Would the consultants be coming to us having roughly modelled only one option or several? There was the danger that they would only model one over-engineered 'safe' option we could not afford.

The answer was not known, but Tom said he hoped they would model a 'safe' option, a minimalist option and perhaps one in-between.

The meeting closed with a commitment to share with the public any briefing report which was given by EDDC to our local MP, Simon Jupp. Probably to be published on the EDDC website.