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nature
a home



Environment
Agency



The Moors at Arne Project, Stakeholder Liaison Group 4 November 2020, 17:00 – 18:30, Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

Project Team

Helen Morgan – Environment Agency Project Manager
Kevin House – Environment Agency NEAS (National Environment Assessment Service)
Catherine Farrugia - Environment Agency Advisor (Flood & Coast Risk Management)
Neil Watson – Environment Agency Coastal Engineer (Wessex)
Hayley Hills – Environment Agency Community Engagement Officer
Dante Munns – RSPB Area Manager
Peter Robertson – RSPB Senior Sites Manager, Dorset Reserves
Paul Canning – Associate Director Atkins Ltd
Charles Bennett – Senior Engineer Atkins Ltd
Ian Alexander – Natural England

Chair – Helen Morgan chaired this meeting.

Representative of Birds of Poole Harbour
Representative of Ridge Moors Action Group
Representative of Dorset Bird Club
Representative of Arne Parish Council
Representative of CPRE
Representative of Open Spaces Society
Representative of Dorset Council
Representative of the RYA
Representative of Ridge Wharf Yachting Centre
Representative of Redclyffe Yacht Club
Three Ridge and Arne Residents

Welcome

Welcome and introduction by the Chair.

Review of notes from last meeting

Notes from last time agreed-

Brief project update and discussion

The project team updated the group with the progress working towards the completion of the detailed design including updates on ecological surveys, ground investigations and archaeological trenching. The project team also updated the proposed public access route map for the group.

Questions following the update:

- A comment was made around the left hand lagoon bank and the positioning to Ridge Wharf Yachting centre.
- Another question was asked about the extent of the archaeological trial trenching and why fields outside the area that would be flooded are being investigated? There are a number of points around the site that will be evaluated including along the alignment of the embankment construction which is a requirement from English Heritage as well as other areas that will be affected such as site compound areas and access tracks.
- A question was raised about the public access at the eastern end of the site, and whether there is a proposal for a carpark at that end of the site? There are no proposals to encourage car parking at this end of the public access to the site other than a possibility of some accessible parking for those with limited mobility. This will be limited by current space available.
- A further question was asked, about the need for the path to the eastern end of the site. The path is looking to form connectivity from the other parts of the RSPB reserve particularly Hydes Heath so you would be able to walk off road continuously through The Moors site, over Hydes Heath and to the carpark and facilities at the main Arne reserve. The principles of the public access to the site was to provide off road access and to consider accessibility whilst not disturbing the habitats being created. Further updates will be shared with this group when available.

Navigation and Siltation

Consultants from Atkins Global Ltd explained the findings from the river Frome surveys and the modelling assessment on the Geomorphology (Navigation and Siltation) report. The work concludes that there would be no impact to the water levels within the river Frome and no impact to the currents within the river Frome (with a small exception of approximately 0.2m/s at Turners Cove where the a breach location is positioned).

Questions following the presentation:

- A question was asked whether there would be any sediment impacts after the scheme has been created? When the scheme has been completed the indication is that the sediment would be pushed into the site and there would be little sediment that would be washed out of the site.
- A question was asked how long the monitoring would continue after the completion of the works and what would be undertaken should any accretion of sediment happen? Would foresee monitoring over a period of 4/5 years after the completion of the works as a scheme based commitment. There is a benefit of the coastal monitoring programme, which is based at the channel coast observatory, funded by DEFRA and which is happening across the country including other managed realignment sites. If there are changes that are shown to have been caused by the scheme we would have to have to address this based on the scale of the impact.
- A comment was made that whilst the modelling shows no scheme impact, there was concern amongst river users over the consequences of siltation within the Frome and the viability of future navigation on the Frome. Why could a written assurance not be given by the Environment Agency to cover these concerns? In response, it was stated that it would be put in writing that no siltation impacts affecting navigation on the River Frome are expected as a result of the

scheme. However any assurance has to have boundaries to set it outside of the natural sediment transport regime within the Frome. If monitoring demonstrates an adverse siltation change linked to the scheme, then this will be addressed.

- A question was asked around the material within the site (clays peats and sands) and whether historically the site itself was open to the sea. The sediments on the site show a layering over time due to marine inundations. This is an area that has been claimed from the sea at least 200 hundred years ago and the banks have followed a similar alignment to the present day.

Traffic Survey Data

The project team shared the results of the traffic survey work undertaken as a result of concerns raised as part of the project. The information can be seen within the presentation sent alongside the notes.

Questions following the presentation:

- During the presentation a question was asked whether the carpark counts included the overflow parking at the RSPB reserve? Yes this does include the overflow carpark.
- A further question was raised to how the car parking was counted? Non-members visiting the reserve pay for a ticket and carpark counts are done three times a day to work out the members/ non-member ratio to conclude the amount of cars visiting the reserve.
- A question was asked about the visitor numbers in comparison to other managed realignment sites where traffic has increased in the first year, is it likely that it will happen at Arne? Finding something that is similar to Arne is difficult but we are looking at other comparable. We envisage the visitors to the Moors would primarily be birdwatchers and residents who might want to visit on foot.
- A question on whether dogs would be allowed on the site? The area being created is to provide habitat for birds which are easily disturbed by dogs. We are therefore suggesting that dogs will not be permitted on proposed new access routes.
- A question was raised to ask when the SLG would see the plan for when the parking reaches capacity? The presentation and survey data evidence is concluding that there wouldn't be regular occasions when this would happen. If there is a rare occasion when a bird of national interest is seen, there would be a plan to accommodate this in consultation with Natural England.
- Would visitor facilities be provided at Sunnyside, including public toilets? No, there are existing facilities including toilets at the Arne reserve and in Wareham and elsewhere in Purbeck. .
- Would there be an office to limit the number of numbers to the site? No, it will be limited by lack of promotion and lack of facilities. The type of site being created is not one that will attract large amounts of visitors.

Open Forum

- A question was asked about the flood risk presentation from the previous meeting. The flood risk assessments did not consider the worst-case i.e. 0.5 percent tidal event alongside an extreme fluvial conditions. When we are told that extreme weather will increase its frequency and intensity, why is this? There is standard guidance that we use for this modelling based on actual recorded data

over the last 50 years including gauges on the river Frome and from tidal data between Portsmouth and Weymouth over the last 30 years. The analysis of this data gives the guidance and the factual information to support this approach. The July 2012 event is an example of this in which an extreme fluvial event (1.5% annual chance event), occurred during a normal astronomic tide.

- A further question was asked as to why the freshwater flood risk calculations were done using the present layout of the Furzebrook, when the project plan is to realign the Furzebrook? The current assessment has been based on the present day alignment. The design of the area is under development. The current assessment can be considered conservative as the scheme is likely to create widening of the ditches and wetland areas within the design of this area. When the final design of the area is completed there would be a review of the modelling and depending on the degree of change within the area it might be necessary to redo the modelling assessment. If there is need to update the model we would bring the results back to this group if there are any significant changes.
- A further comment was shared that the project is not being created as a visitor attraction but as a mitigation for loss of habitat.
- A question was asked about other opportunities in the area, from Poole eastward, for other habitat creation sites? There are limited opportunities within Poole Harbour, we have looked at the options and this is our preferred site. We will look at Christchurch Harbour as the flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for this area is looked at.. The EA have Regional habitat creation programmes and we are working locally and together regionally on this.

Next Steps

The project team suggested February for the next meeting and would confirm a date in the New Year.