

19<sup>th</sup> June 2026

## Slapton Line Partnership

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### Attendees

#### In-Person:

Caroline Voaden MP	CV
Cllr Georgina Allen (South Hams District Council)	GA
Cllr Jacqi Hodgson (Devon County Council)	JH
Cllr Jane Abbey (Slapton Parish Council)	JC
Cllr Julian Brazil (Devon County Council)	JB
Cllr Nigel Hannaford (East Allington Parish Council)	NB
Cllr Paul Green (Strete Parish Council)	PG
Cllr Paula Doust (Stokenham Parish Council)	PD
Cllr Peter Hadley (Frogmore & Sherford Parish Council)	PH
Cllr Peter Osborne (Slapton Parish Council)	PO
Cllr Piers Spence (Stokenham Parish Council)	PS
Cllr Ralph Clark (Strete Parish Council)	RC
Cllr Tim Singleton (Strete Parish Council)	TS
Damien Jones (Devon County Council)	DJ
Dan Field (South Hams District Council)	DF
Gill Claydon (Stokenham Parish Council)	GC
James O'Dwyer (Wild Planet Trust)	JOD
Lewis Kiely (Devon County Council)	LK
Lou Hoskin (Adaptation Manager)	LH
Martin Davies (Environment Agency)	MD
Roger English (South Devon National Landscape)	RE
Sarah Barr (Wild Planet Trust)	SB
Stephen Kings (Wild Planet Trust)	SK
Steve Mullineaux (South Hams District Council)	SM
Tom Vaughan (Devon County Council)	TV
Vicky Croughan (South Hams District Council)	VC

#### Online:

Cllr Jonathan Hawkins (Dartmouth Town Council)	JH
Cllr Laurel Lawford (South Hams District Council)	LL
Cllr Tim Moseley (Stoke Fleming Parish Council)	TM
Catherine Bowen (South Hams District Council)	CB
Dave Shorten (Environment Agency)	DS
Matt Hawes (Field Studies Council)	MH

## Agenda Items

### EA Torcross defence scheme

*Martin Davies*

- Approval has been secured for £19.8m revetment works at Torcross.  
The Rock armour design has been finalised, and the focus is now on the detail at either end of seawall, including access onto the beach and defences in front of the Tank Car Park. Environmental Impact Assessments have been issued, and further detailed assessments are underway.
- Kier has been contracted to do works, and they will look at detailed construction planning. Investigations are ongoing into movement and voids.
- The project is on track for most of the work to be completed this year, depending on the deliverability of rock being feasible and assents being received.
- FAQs have been sent to residents.
- A drop-in has been planned for 30<sup>th</sup> June at Stokenham Parish Hall - all detailed technical questions should be directed to the team that will be onsite, where drawings, visualisations etc will be available.

#### Points raised:

- 1) PG: Will technical drawings be made available to stakeholders if requested?  
MD: Yes, after the public drop-in as these are still being finalised at present.
- 2) PG: There are concerns that work is being undertaken in isolation, so who is looking at the impact on the rest of the Line?  
MD: This is a process for the Environmental Impact Assessment. The EA's work doesn't go beyond the existing structure, so it is up to others to comment as part of statutory feedback.
- 3) PG: Will details of statutory bodies be shared?  
MD: Assume this is public knowledge so will be available online. The application is also available online.
- 4) JB: Concerned about the works starting in August, as lorries might not get through Chillington if they meet a caravan. Realism is needed, so they will have to work at night if in August. Ideally it wouldn't be in August as businesses will lose their summer trade. Work needs to take the wider context into account and not be done in isolation.  
MD: They have a good liaison with partners so are aware of constraints. Work will be dictated by the delivery of rock from Norway, especially if it is to be done in time for winter. It might impact community and access – they will do what they can to mitigate but there are certain things outside their control.
- 5) CV: Will the open day on 30<sup>th</sup> June be a consultation or just telling people what will happen? Will the question be asked about whether the wider community want to go ahead?
- 6) MD: There will be a chance to influence some of the detail, but the design will be restricted in order for work to be done this year. The event will primarily be to relay

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information rather than full consultation, although there will be some conversation about details so they can understand local concerns.

## DCC A379 Reinstatement Bid

*Tom Vaughan*

- A bid of approximately £20m has been submitted to Government. Further consultation is ongoing.
- DCC had a call on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June with Department for Transport (DfT) consultants, who asked for further information including the impact on wider networks.
- The positive news is that DfT haven't said no.

Points raised:

- 1) PO:** Could DCC clarify the figures mentioned in the submission, including optimum bias and environmental assents – it appears that road cost is minimal.  
TV: Due to the nature of the area we are working in, there are sensitivities and risks so there are costs to obtaining permissions. Optimum bias accounts for the current fluctuations in costs, which will have a significant impact on the cost of materials etc.
- 2) PG:** Is it correct that nothing that has been submitted is final, as the deadline for the Structures Fund isn't until 3<sup>rd</sup> August? Was unaware there were two separate processes underway.  
TV: Consultation and conversations are ongoing. A draft bid was submitted to seek advice on which direction to go – the conversation with DfT provided clarification.  
CV: It was unclear what pot of money was originally being applied to. The Structures Fund is designed for roads and bridges, with a national deadline for ringfenced funding. There is a possibility Government might give money separately to the Structures Fund.
- 3) PH:** Is the bid to DfT to replace the tarmac road?  
TV: Yes, it is for reinstatement of the road.  
PH: We are talking about spending a lot of money on a road that will go again so should look at a temporary bridge and beach repatriation.  
JB: If we don't get funding to replace the road, we can look at alternatives. If we look at alternatives now, it will muddy the waters. Government may say the cost is too high, so what is the alternative? A group within the Partnership should look at alternatives – at the moment this is very hypothetical as we need to see what Government say.  
It is not unusual for different bids to be put forward – the initial bid was more general, but DCC have been told the Structures Fund might be good avenue.

## SLP Working Group: Amenities

*Lou Hoskin*

- The Amenities working group met in March and had a broad conversation about place making and what could be changed, improved etc at either end of Line and in the surrounding areas.

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- An online survey will be launched by 30<sup>th</sup> June in the style of the inland roads survey, for communities to share their views: <https://slaptonlinepartnership.commonplace.is/en-GB/map/start-bay-placemaking>
- A Working Group is needed to discuss the Memorial and relevant planning permissions. Meeting options have been shared.

Points raised:

- 1) JB: Attended a Parish Council meeting and was told the business community feel they have no dedicated representative. They want a representative on the Partnership or on a working group.  
LH: Has been in touch with businesses and will touch on that point later.

## SLP Inland Routes Working Group

Lewis Kiely

- The Inland Routes working group has discussed the delivery of passing places, splitting the network into 10 sections with passing places for improvement or places where new passing places are needed [Figure 1].

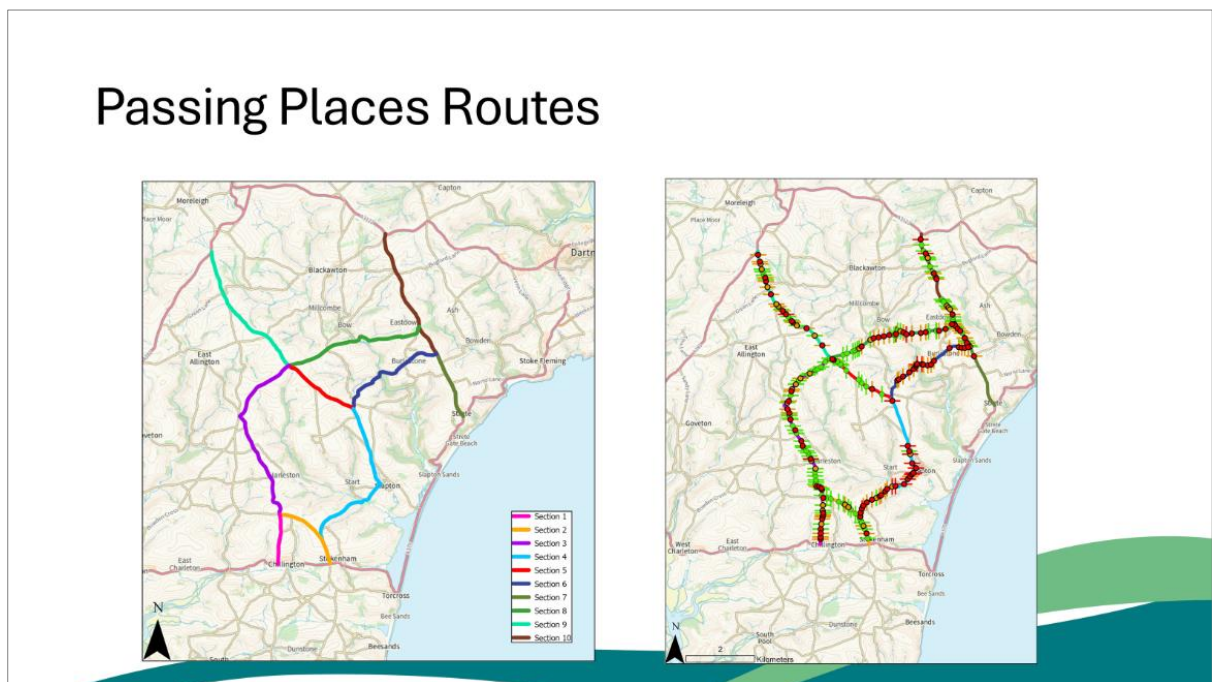


Figure 1: (Left) Inland Route Sections under consideration; (Right) Passing places identified for improvement

- DCC have a pot of money available to do work. To deliver passing place improvements a section of road will have to be closed so they will do all passing places on that road section in one go.
- The decision was made to focus on North-South routes first, with certain roads identified as priorities.

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- They want to deliver these improvements ASAP – the usual design process takes a lot of time due to carrying out surveys and contacting landowners. To make it quicker they used alternative methods of data collection such as a car survey taking GPS and road measurements, which enabled data collection to be carried out within a week. Analysis and translating to designs has also been quicker than usual.
- The next step is to assess the ecology of sites. Hedgerow relocation requires lots of ecological assessments due to nesting birds etc, requiring a desktop study plus onsite works which necessitated recent road closures.
- Construction of Tranche 1 [**Figure 2**] has received approval.

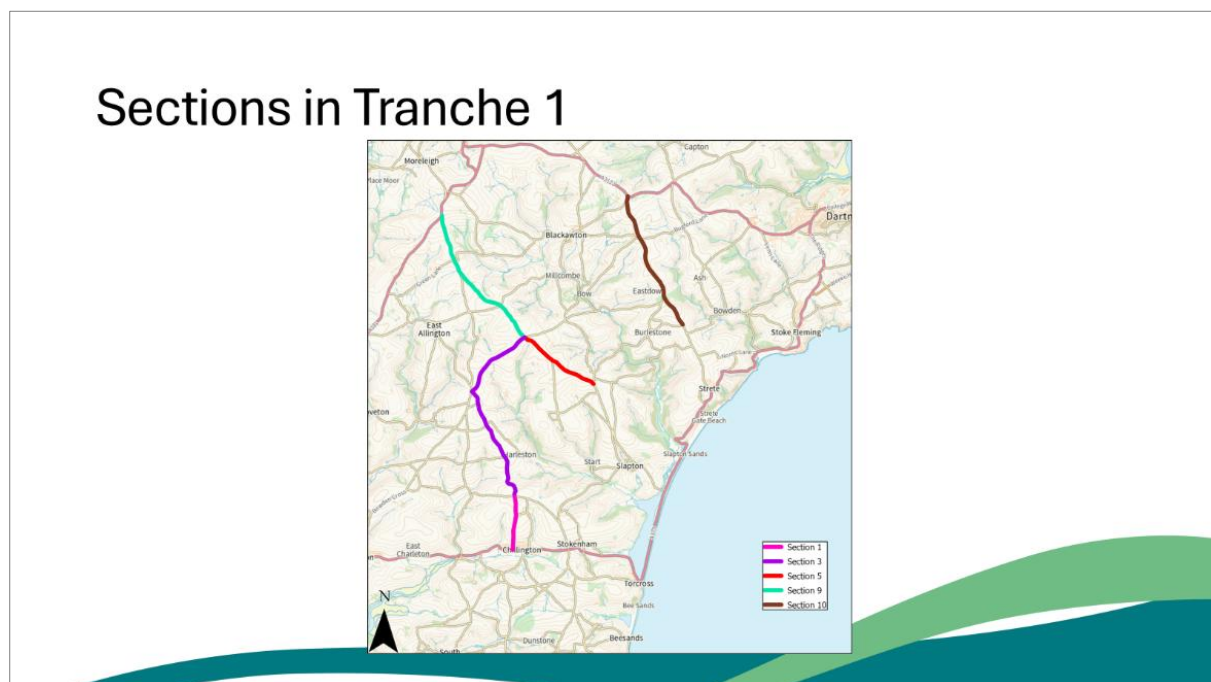


Figure 2: Sections on the Inland Routes included in Tranche 1 work

- A traffic count was carried out in March and will be repeated in August.
- A detailed design of the first three sections will be confirmed in September, and construction will begin in winter.

#### Points raised:

- 1) LH: This is a good example of a working group coming together and making progress. Thanks to Lewis.
- 2) PO: The Deer Bridge Road has caused chaos, so businesses are concerned. Could there be more hedge cutting?  
 Since the closure of A379, field gates have been locked along the Deer Bridge Road. Could they be unlocked to enable getting round traffic jams?  
 Appreciate the issues with a one-way system so could traffic lights be installed with a convoy system? Would slow traffic but at least you would definitely get through.  
 LH: Need to take these points to the Working Group meeting.  
 CV: Would need to discuss with farmers as there might be crops or livestock in the fields.

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NH: East Allington Parish Council are against a one-way system as their community would be heavily impacted.

## Start Bay Open for Business

*Cllr Peter Osborne*

- Shops, pubs etc have come together since the A379 has been closed, with the aim of making people aware that it is only the A379 that is closed – businesses are still open. There was initially disaster tourism to Torcross, but other businesses are struggling.
- They have encouraged businesses to share data but reticent.
- The Camping & Caravanning Club site in Slapton is well down on businesses - at the end of April their bookings were down 26%, duration of visits was down 40%, forward bookings were down 70%. The site is possibly unviable now due to access. Even the Start Bay Inn's business is down. They are trying to get a positive message across and have an interactive map showing where businesses are located. There is a [website](#) and Facebook page.

Points raised:

- 1) JOD: Are car parks open and free? People could be encouraged that way.  
TS: There aren't any car parks – the Tank Car Park might be closed this summer, the Memorial Car Park has lost half its spaces in the past 10 years, and Strete Gate Car Park needs a lot of improvement such as disabled facilities in the toilets. Car parks are normally full.  
JB: There are car parks, but they aren't free. The issue is capacity rather than price. The expansion of the car park at Strete Gate is being explored, and Stokeley are putting in application to expand car parking there which would be free with a shuttle to Torcross. They would have to go through due process, but we should be supportive.

## 93 Bus Service

*Damien Jones*

- A shuttle service to the Slapton Turn will run during the summer months, from Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June onwards. The weekday service will be operated by Country Bus, and the Saturday service will be operated by Tally Ho. There is a possibility of the shuttle bus going to Slapton Village but don't want to raise expectations that it could be permanent.
- The Torcross shuttle is currently out for retender on a long-term basis, so the price might come down.
- The current taxi service has given notice.
- There are issues with the main 93 service as it is struggling to keep to time. Revenue has fallen while the current route is longer than previously, so it is more costly to run. DCC are looking at different options.
- Bus services are funded by DCC revenue budget, Government grants and S106 funding, plus partner contributions. There is a huge subsidisation of services in Devon, so they are looking at how to move forward with franchising.

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#### Points raised:

- 1) JA: When will bus service to Slapton start?  
DJ: Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June. DCC will publicise as much as possible – [Timetable](#) available.
- 2) JA: The taxi service doesn't work efficiently so what will happen for the Kingsbridge connection? School children are using the taxi service rather than residents and filling up seats, so commuters can't get on.  
DJ: Hoping taxi will continue to end of academic year but a new service will give the opportunity to look at it again. DCC did ask for a bigger vehicle or second vehicle to be used if the first vehicle full.
- 3) RC: Could the shuttle go from Slapton to Dartmouth rather than 93 bus travelling down 3 Mile Lane? When the 93 bus goes down 3 Mile Lane it causes big traffic jams, which will worsen with road closures. There are also issues in Strete village where the bus turns around.  
DJ: During the summer months, the shuttle bus will be in addition to the existing 93 service. DCC will speak to Stagecoach regarding Strete issues.

## Slapton Parishes Alliance

### *Cllr Paul Green*

- The Alliance started to form at end of last year as they felt progress isn't being made within SLP and are hoping that voice will be stronger by coming together.
- The Alliance has taken advice from Cllr Laurel Lawford, Cllr Julian Brazil and Caroline Voaden MP, all of which have provided useful guidance. It has been helpful in understanding how SLP works and could be made more effective.
- The Alliance's aim is to ensure future sustainability of communities impacted by coastal erosion along the Slapton Line. This should be shared by the SLP.
- The Alliance believe we are in crisis – children can't get to school; people can't get to work or healthcare.
- SLP so far hasn't been responsive as they should be. Covid was an example of when organisations worked quickly to deliver results – they are looking for that kind of response from the Partnership to make lives better in the short, medium and long term. There should have been interim solution – this could have been put in place within weeks. Conversations show lots of individuals working on trying to make this happen – landowners, Caroline Voaden, Julian Brazil, business owners. Alliance wants SLP to become relevant to that.
- A study into the Skerries Bank is needed – keen not to rebuild the road without long term protection for the bank. The Alliance wants to support DCC with funding bid and is committed to providing information. Examples from businesses will be sent on to Caroline Voaden's office. Doesn't think it makes sense to support bid for the A379 without protections in place for medium term. James Morrison's work includes a £70-£100k study to remodel rebuilding Skerries Bank. The Alliance thinks money is available - £100m in DCC reserves, £30m could be used for transport emergency response.

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- Beach replenishment is proven to work. It is not a silver bullet but should be looked at alongside Skerries Bank. The beach previously provided protection in Torcross, so seawall wasn't necessary. Before the Skerries Bank disappeared, Hallsands was protected.
- An A road is needed to maintain the sustainability of communities. The Alliance doesn't think work on back roads provides the solution - the 2023 Strategy clearly says that improving back roads is not replacement for A379. Communities will say that if there is no funding to replace A379, we need to be looking at an alternative route for an A road. The community is not happy without an A road due to increased journey times and traffic volumes.

#### Points raised:

- 1) LH: It is important for everyone to be aware of what the Alliance is asking for. There is no time to unpick the details now – some things will be answered later such as the purpose of SLP, as there appears to be confusion and misunderstanding about this.  
 PG: Looking forward to a reset of the SLP – the priority should be the protection of communities for the medium and long term, as otherwise the SLP shouldn't exist.  
 CV: Communities will be sustainable without the A379 even if they aren't same as before.  
 PG: A study on the sustainability of villages is needed.
- 2) JB: Lives in East Prawle which has one road in and one road out – the village is perfectly sustainable. Feels like the Alliance's proposal is a wish list – they want road to be there forever and for everything to be as it was, which is not realistic or pragmatic. The SLP has spent the last 25 years discussing that and not getting anywhere but could now discuss how to make villages sustainable in a different way. If SLP descends into that discussion again and again, it will not make progress.  
 PG: Has asked for study to see whether works are worth doing. Why is £70-£100k not worth spending?  
 JB: There is a divergence of opinions. Alliance opinion is theirs, others believe we have known road would go so we need to find a solution. A lot of what is said is theoretical. Natural England said cannot bring in foreign material to protect that stretch of road.  
 PG: This is a negative view. Need people to pull together to support communities.  
 CV: Lots of people are working hard to pull together. Progress is being made, so it is unfair to say people are not digging deep.

## Coastal Adaptation Pilot

*Dan Field*

- The Coastal Adaptation Pilot is a funding opportunity through the Environment Agency, which became available in April. It is for local adaptation actions in the areas of erosion risk.
- The South West will have approximately £1.5m out of £12m for UK.

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- Bids are led by the Coastal Protection Authority – South Hams District Council in this case - in alignment with Shoreline Management Plan. Criteria include deprivation, based on statistics.
- Other SW authorities are involved in bids, which will be prioritised by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC).
- Lou Hoskin and Dan Field pitched at a recent meeting and have spoken to the funding body to discuss best options. The SLP is central to the pilot, which could help drive forward adaptation. The bid will focus on Start Bay, to include Beesands and communities.
- Focuses will be on relocating the Memorial, improved inland access (especially on the Deer Bridge Road, working with DCC), beach access and car park resilience, an extension of Adaptation Manager role and additional resource. Some work will be desktop based but others will be tangible. They are speaking to Plymouth University about warning systems linked to Beesands.
- This bid is for £750k - £1m. The deadline is 30<sup>th</sup> June, and we should hear the outcome in Autumn/Winter. They are working with other authorities to work out priorities.

#### Points raised:

- 1) PS: Is an evacuation plan included?  
LH: Emergency response can't be included within this bid but will be supported.
- 2) RC: What is the plan when SHDC no longer exists?  
MD: Funding will be passed over to whoever becomes the new local authority.

## Partnership Updates: Finances

### *Roger English*

- Finances will be shared with the meeting minutes.
- A cost centre for SLP is held within SHDC finances. Funds have been held separately since SLP was formed.
- Figures are small and are purely to do with operations of the SLP. The regional monitoring programme is funded separately.
- Staff costs shown were originally for Alan Denby then Sam Lew, now Lou Hoskin.
- Funding is ringfenced for the Memorial and adaptation work.
- DCC and SHDC previously provided match funding for Local Levy funding.

## Partnership Updates: Terms of Reference

### *Lou Hoskin*

- Current Terms of Reference have been circulated – these were adopted in 2007.
- Things have moved on so has sought advice from SHDC legal team. Now seeking feedback from the SLP before issuing first draft.
- Comments on the Terms of Reference will be taken verbally and by email.

#### a) Purpose

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- The purpose of the SLP is not to be a not pressure group or decision-making body, but a formal mechanism where statutory bodies can consult with stakeholders. It can issue recommendations to these bodies, rather than instruction.
- Adaptation is the process of changing to suit different conditions, and the process of changing slightly over time. The EA definition mentions anticipating appropriate action to prevent or minimise the likelihood of consequences of coastal flooding.
- The definition in the proposed Terms of Reference of the SLP's purpose is different to the 2007 version, in line with the 2023 Strategy. Ensuring suitable expertise is available is an important addition, while the SLP is not best placed to hold emergency and contingency plans but can help Parish Councils to facilitate.

#### Points raised:

1) PO: A strategic review is needed, with 'what does 'good' look like in 5 years time' as a measure.

2) PG: Further work is needed, as people impacted by change aren't central to new Purpose. If you believe the SLP could be faster and more effective, saying not decision-making plan is problematic – need decision maker to join the Partnership so they will commit.

JB: Agrees with PO regarding what good looks like. Should use the 5-year vision as the starting point. The A379 is unlikely to be replaced, so what will the area look like without that. For example, increased car parking capacity at either end of the Line, people attending doctors and school at their end of Line. Empathises with the people in the immediate area who will inevitably be affected in the next five years. Would love to see everyone working together on a vision.

PH: Managed retreat is not mentioned in the Terms of Reference, but active coastal management is essential. Disagrees with JB and believes we need to follow the Save our Shoreline plan.

3) JH: As Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Biodiversity & Transport, has attended meetings with EA and Flood Team. The Slapton Ley is one of the reasons for visitors coming to the area, so it should be protected. The EA and Flood team clearly said that best protection for the Ley is just to have the sand bar without road. Storms are likely to get worse.

4) JOD: Verb is needed for 'Contingency Planning ...' point. Plus, lots of membership bodies have different responsibilities, so need to ensure that is covered.

#### b) Membership

- Proposes a new suggestion taking the best of what's working at the moment. Broadly suggesting that the SLP consists of the Funders (SHDC, DCC and EA - the 'doers') and
- Advisory Panels (including elected councillors from SHDC, DCC and Parish Councils, as well as officers from other relevant organisations). These groups would have a vote each for formal recommendations.
- Further panellists (landowners and relevant organisations) would then be invited to provide advice and opinions as needed.

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- The MP for South Devon and the Partnership Manager would also sit on the SLP but wouldn't have a vote.

#### Points Raised:

- 1) PG: Believes this is worse than the original document as it indicates that communities don't have a say and will have less influence than previously. Needs to be community led.

LH: A Parish Councillor from each Parish would be included on the SLP.

NH: Which Parish Councils would be represented? It shouldn't be restricted to coastal Parish Councils.

LH: A discussion is needed over what the remit is of the SLP.

#### c) Governance and ways of working.

- Need to establish the following: How often the Partnership meets? How is progress reported? How are recommendations carried forward? Whether statutory bodies should provide a formal response if recommendations are not actioned? How the SLP makes amendments to the Strategy and other documents, and how often? What is the strategy for when the Adaptation Manager isn't in post, if funding isn't secured? How can formal complaints be submitted?
- Reiterated the importance of respect – the subject is emotive, but we need to make sure integrity and other principles are formalised.

#### Points Raised:

- 1) CV: Important that Parish Councils feel listened to. Feels it is justifiable for feedback to be required on members' suggestions, rather than organisations just dismissing ideas. For example, an explanation has not been provided for why a temporary bridge is not being considered.
- 2) TS: Meetings can be useful but need to understand funding opportunities. Honesty over what funding is available to DCC or other bodies is important.  
CV: Makes sense but difficult in current environment.
- 3) PH: Retrobridge representative has offered to come for free to give advice to DCC.  
CV: Has spoken to Retrobridge representative – he doesn't want to spend lots of time giving free advice without anything being likely to happen.

[Lou invites feedback on Terms of Reference](#)

**CV wraps up meeting.**