



CCATCH – Royal Victoria Country Park Community Workshop 2: 24 October 2013 19:00 – 21:00

Draft Workshop report

1. Introduction

The third workshop in a series of three was held at the Empire Rooms, Royal Victoria Country Park and attended by 14 members of the local community and stakeholders from organisations who have a role in the Park or in flood prevention. It should be noted that a number of the participants had not attended previous workshops, and others who had attended previous workshops were not available for this session.

This report aims to capture the essence of the discussion and is not meant to be a formal minute of the meeting. The majority of the issues discussed at the workshop will form part of the adaptation plan for the Royal Victoria Country Park. This is currently being drafted and will be circulated to all those who have attended the workshops by early December 2013 so that it can be discussed as a group early in the new year.

1.1 Welcome & Introductions

Henrietta Hopkins (Resources for Change) welcomed people to the meeting and set the scene by explaining that:

The meeting is intended to explore:

- To finalise the vision for the adaptation plan for the Royal Victoria Country Park
- To design an adaptation plan which meets community and stakeholder expectations
- To scope options for change for the coastal frontage at the Royal Victoria Country Park
- To manage risk at the Royal Victoria Country Park

During the workshop we will cover:

- A discussion of the draft information leaflet
- Developing a vision for the Royal Victoria Country Park coastal frontage
- Agreeing a set of options for inclusion in the adaptation plan
- Key actions

Henrietta confirmed that once up-to-date costings were provided in the Halcrow report expected early in the new year, a fourth workshop would be held to discuss the findings and the adaptation plan. The date for this would be confirmed once the date of publication of the Halcrow report is finalised.



For the majority of the subsequent discussions participants split themselves in to two sub-groups to work with Henrietta Hopkins and Anita van Mil in small group facilitated discussions.

2. Draft information leaflet

These small group discussions began with a conversation about a draft information leaflet on the issues at the Royal Victoria Country Park. The draft leaflet was circulated to all those on the distribution list for the CCATCH project at the Royal Victoria Country Park in advance of the workshop. Rachael Gallagher, Coastal Planning Delivery Project Manager at Hampshire County Council explained that the leaflet had been modelled on one produced for the St Denys CCATCH-Solent site which provided residents with the technical information they would need to take appropriate resilience measures for their area. The discussion on the draft leaflet was focused on two questions:

- Which points from the leaflet stuck in the mind?
- Is there anything you would wish to add / change / edit / amend in the leaflet?

The view from both groups was the leaflet in its current form was too wordy and technically dense to be useful for residents and users of the Royal Victoria Country Park. Participants said,

"I wouldn't pick up this leaflet, it just has too much information in it."

"I like the two questions. The rest is too wordy and complicated."

Participants suggested that to be useful it should be edited to a few main messages being quite clear about who the leaflet was to be for. Participants expressed the view that at the moment the target audience was unclear and the message too complex for the majority of readers,

"Who is the leaflet aimed at? It is too wordy for Joe public."

The general view was that it would be useful to have a very succinct and clear leaflet explaining what the issues are for the sea wall at the Royal Victoria Country Park and what the potential solutions are. They asked for the inclusion of visual material including maps and up-to-date data. They felt that information on climate change and sea levels was probably available as part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2013 report¹.

It was agreed in a general discussion that key points to address for the Royal Victoria Country Park should be printed in a much slimmed down version of the leaflet. That this information should be put in non-technical language and addressed at both residents and users of the Park. Any additional background and supporting material should be included in the CCATCH website² for those with an interest in the in-depth and technical information.

3. A vision for the Royal Victoria Country Park's adaption plan

Each of the sub-groups were asked to look at three vision statements drawn up in draft during discussions at the two previous workshops. The statements were:

¹ [Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis](#)

² http://www.solentforum.org/current/CCATCH/Netley_and_RVCP/



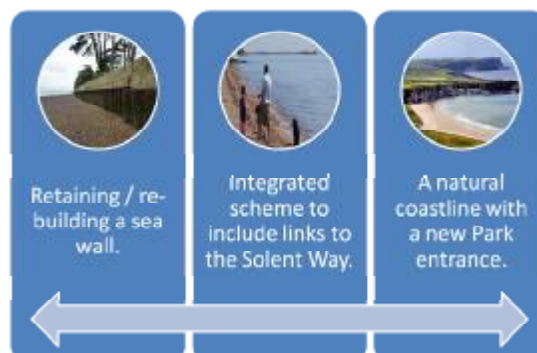
They were asked to say which words formed part of their own vision and were therefore essential (for them) to retain or words which were counter to their own vision and should be removed. Members of the orange group wished to remove the words 'cycling' and 'floodlighting' but were generally happy to continue with the words in the illustration. They did feel that a vision should include the words 'history' and 'education'. The green group members came up with a longer list of words which they felt should be included in a vision but were not apparent to them in the current visual:

- Integrated (with coast path to North and South)
- Tourist attraction
- Asset to community
- Swimming in clean water
- Safe
- Coastline and seas views
- Beach and parkland
- Natural
- Sustainable
- Affordable

In summarising their vision discussions the orange group suggested that there might be a short, medium-term and long-term vision. They put forwarded the following visions:
 short-term - the sea wall is repaired and the entrance to the Park kept where it is with the sea wall as a defence mechanism.
 Long-term - the entrance to the Park would be moved (Hamble Lane), allowing the current entrance to lapse and therefore the orientation of the Park to move away from the road which would not be used as an access route.

The green group proposed an amended vision as follows:
The coastal frontage at the RVCP needs to be accessible for all with the flood and erosion risks managed. An environmentally acceptable and cost-effective engineering solution will be found for the road and the park entrance. The scheme will be part of a bigger vision in which the community in and around the park can be proud with iconic views across Southampton Water and enjoyment of recreational activities.

These discussions have given enough information for Resources for Change to incorporate them in existing work on the vision for the adaptation plan so that it can be discussed and finalised at the fourth workshop in the New Year. However it is clear that there remains little consensus on what they community believes should be the response to the end of the sea wall's design life. Visions range from:





3. The options

The penultimate section of the workshop was focused on the options for adaptation at the Royal Victoria Country Park. For options which had been previously presented at workshops 1 and 2 were described in four areas around the room. The options described were:

- Replacement of all or part of the sea wall
- Continue to maintain the current seawall
- Beach replenishment
- Removal of the seawall and return to a natural coast

Next to each option was space for participants to comment on the constraints, opportunities, risks and next steps associated with each of them. Each sub-group visited each option for a few moments and discussed it as well as placing a green sticker next to discussion points made by the previous groups with which they agreed and a red sticker next to the discussion points with which they disagreed.

3.1 Replacement of all or part of the sea wall

The option to receive the most green dots, signifying approval of the option was replacement of all or part of the sea wall with 13 green dots and 1 red dot. However one group noted a word of caution in their remarks on the option,

"The cheaper option in the short-term, but not in the longer term and for future generations"

People described the opportunities for this option as being able to provide an asset for visitors and the community and giving options for linking to the Solent Way. Participants stressed the risk of this option to future generations as,

"It's not going to last forever."

They also noted an ecological objection and questioned how the wall would be designed to combat the risks from rising sea levels and issues caused by climate change.

3.2 Continuing to maintain the current sea wall

Seen as similar to the option as described in 3.1 this was not seen as a strong option, mainly because participants understood from the Hampshire County Council staff at this and previous workshops, that it is not feasible and would not facilitate the opening up of the sea wall to walk on. There was some agreement around the point made by one group that,

"This is short-term and therefore a waste of money."



Opportunities around this option were seen to be about involving private finance in the solution, such as approaching ABP and Southern Water which both were seen as having a vested interest in the solution.

3.3 Beach replenishment

This option was seen as a positive move in the short-term by participants. Constraints raised by the group included ensuring that if dredging material was used it was suitable material to be used on the coast line and the cost implications of annual dredging and maintenance. The opportunities were seen in using beach replenishment as part of a longer-term solution to take down the wall and revert to a natural coastline which is the next option in this list. As one participant said,

"This should form part of a staged approach to the problem."

3.4 Take down the sea wall and return to a natural coastline

This option provoked the most discussion. A significant number of participants felt that the cost of removing the wall material from the site would be prohibitive and stressed that it was not their preferred option. For others this presents a more attractive long-term option with beach replenishment as a stepping stone towards it. Constraints were also listed as the loss of the football pitch and a local, valued amenity in a sea wall which can be walked upon. However, the group also came up with a long list of opportunities resulting from this option including the potential for a greater stretch of accessible beach and increased opportunities for education. The risks identified ranged from making sure there is vehicle access for residents to a more serious concern,

"If cost proved prohibitive would HCC possibly decide not to have the Park and sell it?"

The discussion points raised in the workshop will be integrated with the adaptation plan with the constraints, opportunities, risks and next steps identified by the community woven in to it.

4. Close and next steps

Two participants summarised each group's findings in a short plenary session. Both groups whilst valuing the sea wall were open to a combination of options as steps to a longer-term adaptation plan. Henrietta Hopkins explained that the findings from this and the previous workshop would be used to inform the development of the draft adaptation plan which would be circulated via email to all those who have expressed an interest in CCATCH in the Royal Victoria Country Park.

The group was encouraged to attend the additional workshop in the new year at which the draft adaptation plan would be discussed in relation to the findings contained within the new Halcrow report evaluating the options for the sea wall in the Park. They were asked to encourage others within the community to attend.

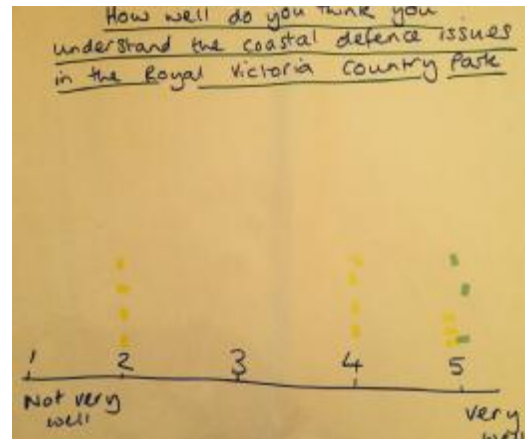
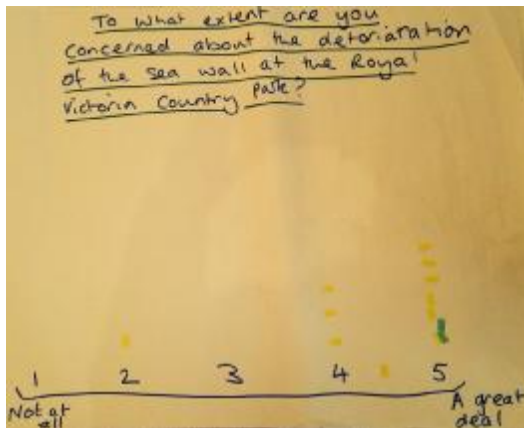
5. Evaluation

The CCATCH project is keen to collect data on participant reactions to the issues raised in these workshops. As participants entered the session they were asked to answer three questions by sticking an orange dot on a sheet. The questions were:



1. *To what extent are you concerned about the deterioration of the sea wall at the Royal Victoria Country Park?*
2. *How well do you think you understand the coastal defence issues in the Royal Victoria Country Park?*

The following images show the results:



13 participants said they were concerned / very about the deterioration of the sea wall at the Royal Victoria Country Park with 1 ranking their concern at a level 2 denoting not very concerned. 4 participants scored their understanding of the coastal defence issues at the Royal Victoria Country Park at level 2, 4 at level 4 and 5 at level 5 (where 1 = I do not understand the issues at all well and 5 = I understand them very well). This is a more widespread response through the rankings than has been seen in previous workshops where the majority of participants placed their understanding between a level 2 and 3.

In addition participants were asked *How high do you think the sea level will rise in 100 years time?* For previous workshops the majority of participants in answer to this question said that they thought that sea level will rise by 50cm or more by 2113, with 6 believing that it would rise by 100cm or more in the time period and 1 feeling that it would rise less than 10cm in the time period. For this workshop participants gave an even spread of responses with one or two participants making their mark at every 10cm level from 10cm to 100cm.

13 participants said that they were feeling positive about the outcomes of the workshop as they left the session. No one marked the session negatively.



Appendix A: Workshop Transcripts

1. Information leaflet

Who has read the leaflet? [3 people in the sub group]

What stuck in your mind?

Orange group:

- It is complicated - do we have a decision on how high sea levels will rise?
- Options are the crux of the matter, that's the first thing to be decided
- The main question for people is how it affects them
- I wouldn't pick up this leaflet, it just has too much information in it

Green group:

- Is there a knock on effect on the Country Park of the work carried out recently?
- Is it going to take another 25 years before anything is being done? First talks about the current work in the park were held 25 years ago...

Orange group:

Is there anything you would wish to add / change / edit / amend?

- Most of the public don't live here
- Who is it aimed at?
- I think we need to aim lower rather than higher (in terms of complexity / depth of information)
- It's too complex
- Use simple language to explain the erosion issue and the financial implications
- Basically it is explaining the issue - the wall is where the problem is

Green group:

- Consensus that the beach in front of seawall is disappearing and why? Effect of commercial dredging?
- Who is the leaflet aimed at? It is too wordy for Joe public
- I like the two questions. The rest is too wordy and complicated
- Need to know what concerns us and what we can do about it
- It's too technical and technical people don't need a leaflet
- We need to write for Sun-readers
- Include online links to more information
- Which piece of coastline are we talking about, it's a bit confusing. Explain the two different places and different solutions for each
- Include a map
- Climate change: 2009 data are out of date, compare to recent IPCC report!
- Distribute as widely as possible in abbreviated format
- Not as an insert but as a stand alone leaflet
- Add contact details



- Should be about the whole of the coast line and distributed to Netley village as well

2. Vision for the adaptation plan

Each group to look at 2 vision statement produced as a result of the discussions at previous workshops plus a word cloud of key phrases.

Orange group:

To what extent do either / both of these vision statements reflect your views?

- I agree with all of them including walking / cycling and link to the Solent Way
- Nature usually wins - the only effective solution is a natural solution
- I'd hate the Park to be open all night (resident)
- There is no cost effective engineering solution, so the elements will eventually take it [the sea wall]

Green group:

1. Mostly in agreement.
 - a. Why a place of peace, wording reminds of a cemetery
 - b. Linked to the Solent Way is not right; Solent way is an integral part of it
2. Solent Way incorporated in this vision statement, which is good.
 - a. One group member said: 'We need an ecological solution as well.' Group answer: it's in there where it says 'environmental'
 - b. 'Will continue to be accessible' is not correct. It is not accessible at the moment.
 - c. The path is not mentioned, therefore this vision statement feels misleading and ambiguous to some
3. Scrap the pier, other than that it is very good description of everyone's aspirations
 - a. Include the Victorian gate
 - b. Important that the seawall is mentioned

Orange group:

Word cloud: are there any words / phrases which you feel must / must not be included in a vision for the Royal Victoria Country Park?

Participants recording on post-its:

- Delete cycling
- Delete floodlighting
- Education
- Natural coast
- History [3 post-its]
 - chapel / cemetery
 - WW1 memorial - restore

Green group:

- INTEGRATED (with coast path to North and South)
- Tourist attraction
- Asset to community (discussion: local community feels it's theirs, 'it is ours', the Local Authority is managing it)
- Swimming in clean water Safe
- Coastline and seas views



- Beach and parkland
- Natural
- Sustainable
- Affordable
- COST
- FUN
- Cycle, walking, users, natural, route, seating, foot path access (like a promenade), proud
- Heritage caretakers, history (Discussion: it's a cherished place. Netley was built around it)
- Protect and prolong
- Recreational (discussion: staying healthy/ fit)

Orange group:

Given the discussion you have had how would you frame a vision for the Royal Victoria Country Park coastal frontage?

- 2 entrances for vehicles
- Open up entrance at Hamble Lane, open up police college, Victoria House bought back / donated
- Eventually get rid of existing front entrance
- Move focus of the Park backwards
- Abandon the road

Or:

- Entrance stays where it is, sea wall acting as a sea defence - what we've got already.

Or:

- Take the wall down and then think about how to manage it
- Create a sheltered area
- Cruise ship / tanker wash affects the wall
- If we'd looked after the wall better / inspected it more we wouldn't be in this position
- We might get better at looking after a new wall
- We need a medium term leading to a long-term solution:
 - Medium term - leave the entrance where it is
 - Longer term - entrance is at Hamble Lane
- You need steps along the way to a longer-term solution
- Or are you just passing the problem on to future generations
- You could have a toll booth to raise money
- There is no parking up to Prince Consort pub so people would have to use safe parking in the Park. That would bring in income and is safer

Green group:

'The coastal frontage at the RVCP needs to be accessible for all with the flood and erosion risks managed. An environmentally acceptable and cost-effective engineering solution will be found for the road and the park entrance. The scheme will be part of a bigger vision in which the community in and around the park can be proud with iconic views across Southampton Water and enjoyment of recreational activities.'



Orange Group Summary:

Short-term

Leave the entrance where it is with the sea wall acting as a sea defence - replace what we've already got.

Longer-term

2 entrances - one at Hamble Lane, but leading to an eventual focus of entry at the Hamble Lane entrance.

- It's a solution that combines the two that we need by getting inhabitants involved and talking about the 500m of sea wall as a focus
- I thought that's what we'd been doing for the last year, but lots of people are only just coming to these meetings

Green group summary

Q: Which option do you prefer and why?

1. Replacement of all or part of the sea wall
 - a. It supports our vision
 - b. It is what the community wants
 - c. It enables us to walk on the wall again
2. If the seawall becomes repairable a combination with beach replenishment might be a good option if it is deemed safe
 - a. Use replenishment as protection for a rebuild wall
 - b. More expensive now but more cost effective in the long run
 - c. We want the wall
 - d. New wall won't erode as quickly in combination with beach replenishment; it will be given a longer life

3. Options: roving ideas storm

Green pen comments– blue group

Red pen comments – orange group

Replacement of the sea wall

1 red dot

13 green dots

The cheaper option in the short-term, but not in the longer term and for future generations

Constraints

- ecological objection [1 green dot]
- cost
- design?



- compensation: need to build new intertidal habitat to replace what is lost through coastal squeeze
- Sheet piling lifetime of max 50 years

Opportunities

- Extend the wall to protect the access [what does that mean?]
- People can still walk along the top of the wall [1 green dot]
- It's what people want: keeping the community happy
- Incorporate pier and flood lighting elements of some people's vision
- Asset for visitors / the community
- Restores the original route of the Solent Way
- Supports national vision of supporting access to coastline
- Good for crab fishing

Risks

- Not going to last for ever
- Not natural and doesn't look nice
- To future generations

Key steps

- Achieving funding
- Necessary licences / planning permission
- Finding necessary mitigation compensation (habitats)

Removal of the seawall and return to a natural coastline

1 green dot

9 red dots

If it wasn't more expensive I'd still want the wall – for the walk / sea defence / and to save the football pitch

Aesthetic value

Constraints

- Most expensive: disposal of materials [1 green dot]
- Unacceptable to local people – continuation of what is happening along the beach – ongoing erosion
- Removal of a major amenity
- Loss of football pitch [1 green dot / 1 red dot]

Opportunities



- When the wall goes – related opportunity, getting rid of the trees?
- Greater stretch of accessible beach [1 green dot]
- Release of sediment which could be used elsewhere
- Aesthetic value of not having a concrete wall
- Only acceptable ecological solution [1 green dot / 1 red cross]
- Greater use of whole Park
- Encourage greener activity
- To find a long-term / sustainable solution [1 green dot]
- Cheaper in the long term
- To have a nice walk along the cliff top
- More education [1 green dot] a gradual slope
- Football pitch somewhere else
- to think about what we are doing who for / extending the use of the Park

Risks

- Quicker loss of the access road
- Loss of southern water's sewer pipes
- Loss of football pitch
- Would we have a country Park? Need to build a new vehicle access
- Making sure there is vehicle access for residents
- Dangers of erosion – people could fall in?
- If cost proved prohibitive would HCC possibly decide not to have the Park and sell it?

Key steps

- Marine licenses
- Find funding
- Mote around the chapel
- Planning permission
- Need a disposal site
- Informing the community
- Part of a staged process towards a long-term solution

Beach replenishment

7 green dots

6 red dots

- Good idea in the short-term

Constraints



- Ecological – the designation
- Objections to the dredging material being dumped on the beach
- Timing – can only use material when ABP dredge it – it is the wrong material!
- Costs – if the wall has to come down and the beach needs to be replenished annually
- Is the material the right stuff – small shingle, not mud [2 green dots]
- Loss of mud flats
- Requires annual maintenance: cost implications

Opportunities

- Short-term this is ok with Natural England as long as it is part of a longer-term solution of a natural coastline [2 green dots / 1 red dot]
- De-designate it [2 green dots]
- Cheaper in the short-term [2 green dots]
- In engineering terms it is accepted as the best solution
- Move amenity for the public to use

Risks

- To ecology [2 green dots]
- But v. v. short-term solution
- therefore bigger container ships can come through after dredging – causing more problems (unproven) [1 green dot]
- Container ships will continue coming anyway

Key steps

- This should form part of a staged approach to the problem
- Time it appropriately
- Funding
- Planning

Continue [??] to maintain [better to say 'start to maintain!'] the current sea wall

5 green dots

10 red dots

If the experts say it is repairable I would go with this option

Constraints

- If the experts say it can't be done then there is nothing more to be said



- £ - it all comes down to the finances [1 green dot]
- We still wouldn't be able to walk on it

Opportunities

- Sound out ABP / BP / £ people who have a stake in Southampton Water (such as cruise companies) – as soon as possible so that they are aware of what's going on
- Sub-options to repair part of the wall
- Using the dredging material to maintain the sea wall [3 green dots] In which case we wouldn't be able to walk alongside the wall either as we would sink in it
- It may be possible in the short-term

Risks

- Short-term and therefore a waste of money [2 green dots]
- Not cost-effective