

**A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT BOARD
WAS HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2023**

Councillors Mrs Huggins, Westerby, Mrs Cully, Johnston, Maynard, Mrs Morgan and Ms Ballard (Substituting for Miss Kelly)

Part II

32. PRESENTATION ON THE AIMS OF THE SOLENT CLUSTER BY CLLR MAYNARD

Councillor Maynard fed back to the Board his visit to the launch of the Solent Cluster.

The keynote speakers at the launch on November 1 2022 were:

Anne- Marie Mountfield- Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (SLEP)

Dr. Lyndsey-Marie Armstrong- Associate Professor faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences at the University of Southampton

Will Lockhead- Deputy director, Head of Hydrogen Production, Storage and Carbon Capture Business Models. Works within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, reporting directly to Government Ministers.

Matt Crocker- Senior Vice President Low carbon Emissions, ExxonMobil, overseeing the setting up of Hydrogen Processing and Storage facility at Fawley.

The Cluster Group must fulfill these criteria:

- Be diverse: a mix of academia, public and private business, local influencers and decision makers
- Demonstrate cooperation, pooling of ideas, rigorous application
- Demonstrate societal benefits
- Development of a wider supply chain

He wished to ensure that contact would be maintained and the next meeting attended by an Officer who could then prepare a report for Board.

33. CONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD DEFENCE STRUCTURES AT ALVERSTOKE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Streetscene updating Members on the Alverstoke coastal defence scheme since the update in September 2022 and setting out the next stages for the project.

Much of the discussion related to both the Alverstoke Scheme and the Forton Scheme.

Officers understood Members wish to be honest with their residents and manage their expectations, address their concerns, and to make clear to them that Gosport Borough Council was not to blame for the funding shortfall. They assured them that they were still in

the fight and exploring every funding avenue. The Environmental Agency will allow a small uplift on funding to counter inflation within the grant aid funding rules.

Officers advised that approximately 20% of the spend to date was on the consents and consultation, and 40% on design work; products that can still be of use, and a proportion of the spend on construction had provided useful information and learning which can be applied to the schemes.

Members recognised that in any project unforeseen circumstances can arise that incur additional costs, but were keen to ensure that if other organisations had caused delays, a rise in costs or provided incorrect information, then they should be held responsible.

Members were advised that the Local Levy was a fund contributed to annually by County and City Councils which can be applied for to top up projects, and is currently helping to fund a project at Stokes Bay. An application will be made in respect of the two schemes.

Members wished to acknowledge the efforts and hard work that the Officers had put in to date, but requested a report be brought back to Board containing the following information:

1. The time limits left on licenses and planning permissions, and any considerations for Covid in those timescales
2. Forecasted cost funding gap and progress on closing that gap
3. Forward work programme for both schemes
4. SSE updates
5. A breakdown of spend to date.

Members wished to receive updates from Officers within the budget cycle eg before summer recess and then again in September/October.

RESOLVED: That the Board noted:

- The project remains paused until there is a significant change in the funding prospects.
- Ongoing funding applications and work to manage scheme risk around buried services will be concluded.
- A decision may be required in 2023/24 whether to continue to pursue the construction phase of the approved scheme.

34. CONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD DEFENCE STRUCTURES AT FORTON

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Streetscene updating members on the progress of the Forton coastal defence scheme since the update in September 2022 and setting out the next stages for project delivery.

Members were advised that the presence of Badgers on the Forton site was only verified in approximately December 2021 as the sett was underneath a prefabricated building and not found during the initial searches. The ecological consultant has been appointed and initial steps taken to investigate building a new sett elsewhere. Members recommended that

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Officers made contact with an expert in the field of badgers known to the Council to see if he can hasten the relocation plans.

A Member reminded the Board that the Forton scheme incurred delays to allow the college to raise funding for a house building project, which is not proceeding.

The report requested by Members and referred to in the previous item applies to the Forton scheme as well.

RESOLVED: That the Board noted:

- There remains insufficient funding to construct the scheme, and the location of a badger sett remains a significant risk to the project.
- The available project funds will be utilised to progress applications to close the funding gap, while working to confirm the updated scheme costs and relocate the badger sett away from the works area.

35. ANY OTHER ITEMS

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 6.56 pm