

Looe Flood Defence and **Regeneration Scheme**



Update re Looe Flood Defence and Regeneration Scheme November 2021

Enabling the economic regeneration of Looe through the feasibility and design of a tidal flood defence scheme to protect the homes, businesses and infrastructure.

Following our previous update I am writing to provide you with the latest information about the work which has been taking place to develop the Looe Flood Defence and Regeneration Scheme.

Keeping people informed

This is a highly complex scheme, with a huge amount of ‘behind the scenes’ work being carried out in order to develop the most effective and appropriate solution to address the challenges caused by flooding in Looe.

We published the third edition of the Looe Flood Defence newsletter in August and are working on the next edition which we plan to publish in December. You can see the latest copy on our Let’s Talk site <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/hub-page/looe-flood-defence>

We want to provide people with clear information about the history and background of the scheme, highlighting the significant amount of work which has been carried out since the previous consultation, and identifying the next steps towards delivering the final design. To help us achieve this we will be staging a series of online and face-to-face engagement events during the next few months. These will include workshops and public events, as well as newsletters, leaflets, letters, feedback forms, and other material available in public information points across the town.

The first round of events will take place this month. This will provide a summary of the progress of the project to date, including information about wave and climate change modelling and the surveys carried out to support the environmental challenges. It will also provide an opportunity for the community to tell us the potential benefits they would like the scheme to deliver for the town.



There are currently three specific events being planned:

- 23 Nov’21 - Harbour Users - Sardine Factory (by invitation)
- 24 Nov’21 - Stakeholder Group – Sardine Factory (by invitation)
- 25 Nov’21 - Public – Online (open to the public) (Zoom)

The second round of engagement in Spring 2022 will provide information about the emerging designs and offer the opportunity for the community to provide comment which can then be considered for the designs. This will include specific in person workshops for

businesses and the community (COVID restrictions permitting) as well as an online workshop which will be open to everyone.

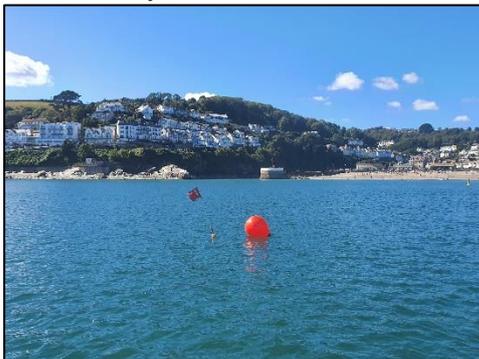
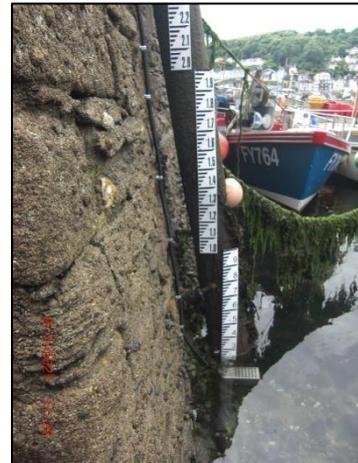
Feedback from the engagement will be analysed by the project team and used to shape the final designs, as well as supporting the bid for funding for the scheme. Details will be presented to key partners and the local community and published on the Let's Talk site.

What we have been doing:

Thanks to the proactive approach of all partners, we have been continuing to work on developing the design of the flood defence scheme. This has included collating information on tidal levels, tidal flow, and the movement of sediment along the river as well as carrying out some preliminary detailed ground investigations.

Specific activities include:

- Installing a tide gauge to measure the water level in the harbour 24 hours a day, every day. This will provide vital information on the risk of flooding and how often Looe floods, as well as helping to improve predictions of storm surges.
- Carrying out bird & bat surveys
- Using a drop-down camera from a small boat to better map the extent of seagrass and other marine habitats.
- Using a small hovercraft to map the intertidal habitat, with divers surveying the sea grass beds in more detail to provide information on the health and density of this important ecological asset.
- Carrying out threshold surveys to assess the doorstep level of every property that could flood in the future. These will help us to understand the operating conditions for the flood gate.
- Investigating ways to lower the carbon footprint of the structures and boost marine biodiversity.



- Deployment of an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) in the bay to collect water velocity and turbidity data for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), model calibration and design.
- Carrying out assessments on the option and potential locations for the flood gates and the different types of flood gates which could be used for a barrier across the mouth of the river.
- Using a vessel tracking survey to monitor the swept path of vessels in and out of the harbour

- Arranging for reef cubes constructed from low carbon, marine-friendly concrete to be deployed in a trial off Banjo Pier. Supplied by local company ArcMarine Ltd, this will help us understand the potential for using the structures to create habitats for marine wildlife such as seaweeds, barnacles and limpets, as well as larger species such as lobster and crab.



Future Adaptation

While building sea defences higher and higher over the next 50 years is certainly an option, and our scheme could lay the structural foundations to enable this to happen, this could lead to visual intrusion which may not be acceptable to the local community; unacceptable heritage impacts; severe environmental impacts would be very expensive to build, operate and maintain; and have a large carbon footprint. It would also be contradictory to many local and national strategies and policies on adapting to and mitigating for climate change and sea level rise.

Although adaptation is not required immediately, it is very important to start thinking about potential adaptation pathways now, so the local community has the opportunity to shape these plans. We must be wary of the sustainability of maintaining the existing situation and pinning all our hopes on building higher-and-higher flood defences.

Securing funding

During the past few months, we have continued to work with partners to build the strong economic case for the scheme needed to help secure Government and other sources of funding.

Securing this funding will be a hugely significant step both for the project and the town as, without Government support and funding, it will not be possible to deliver this scheme.

Next steps

We are continuing to work with the Environment Agency to investigate the possibilities of setting up a local flood group in Looe. Flood groups are a really good way of helping local communities to prepare for and manage flooding in their area. We will provide further information as these discussions evolve.

Subject to the successful outcome of our funding application to the Environment Agency, we will be focusing on working with partners to develop the outline business case so it can be submitted to the Government in 2022. We will also be continuing to work on the design of the scheme.

Once the designs have been developed and the funding has been secured, the scheme will be subject to significant planning processes before any final decision is taken. This will include an application for planning permission, as well as well as application for a harbour revision order and a marine licence.

If the necessary permissions and funding are secured in accordance with the current timetable, we remain on schedule for construction to begin in 2024, with the scheme completed by 2026.

We will continue to keep you updated on the progress with the project.

Kind regards
Nigel Blackler.