

# **Evaluation of the use of Working with Others - Building Trust**



## **For the Shaldon Flood Risk Project**

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# 1 This report, the brief and approach

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## 1.1 Introduction to this report

This report evaluates the use of the Building Trust with Communities – Working with Others (BTwC) approach to Flood Risk Management in Shaldon, Devon. The use of BTwC in Shaldon was designed to *pilot* the BTwC approach. As a pilot, significant amounts of time and money have been invested by the Environment Agency, members of the local community and other organisations in exploring the approach.

This report should be of interest to people inside and outside the Environment Agency who need to have a view on whether the approach to engaging the community in Shaldon was a success, what lessons were learned and what should be done in the future. For the Environment Agency there is quite a lot in the report that could be operationalised, and should be of interest to:

- Project Managers
- Communications teams including Communications Business Partners and Building Trust Mentors
- FCRM
- ncpms
- Engineering Consultants
- NEAS
- Board
- Directors.

Outside the Environment Agency we hope the report will be of interest to members of communities and for other public agencies who are interested in engaging the public in making and implementing decisions, including local authorities and other civil contingency partners and Defra.

In January 2007, an interim lessons learned report for the BTwC approach in Shaldon was produced by Ruth Johnston (SD6 Project Manager and Head Office Shaldon BTwC Project Manager) and Lynn Wetenhall (Lindsey Colbourne Associates)<sup>1</sup>. This report describes a comprehensive set of lessons learned together with detailed recommendations for future applications of the Building Trust approach.

The interim report also identified '**internally contradictory views and rumours**' on the relative costs of the business as usual and the BTwC approach as a key barrier to learning lessons from the Shaldon experience:

These contradictory views could be summarised as:

- 'When we get things wrong with communities, it is hideously inefficient (in terms of staff time) and expensive, and we don't set any limits on that expense –we just react to the problem until it stops or is resolved. Therefore, we must adopt this new [BTwC] approach to stop that kind of expense and inefficiency.'

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<sup>1</sup> Shaldon Building Trust with Communities pilot. Lessons learnt and recommendations from the perspectives of the project team and consultants . January 2007. By Ruth Johnston (SD6 Project Manager and Head Office Shaldon BTwC project manager) and Lynn Wetenhall (Lindsey Colbourne associates)

- 'Of course, this BTwC approach is very expensive/much more expensive than what we would usually do and is unlikely to be affordable in the future'.

The uncertainty over whether BTwC is actually highly efficient or a mistaken use of limited resources... made it hard to believe in BTwC as a supported corporate policy, even for the keenest supporters.

*Shaldon BTwC pilot: lessons learned and recommendations, 2007*

This evaluation report addresses the costs and benefits of use of BTwC in Shaldon. It is strategic in its focus, drawing out insights with relevance to the Environment Agency's role in and approach to flood risk management (and other contentious issues) in the future. Those interested in detailed recommendations on use of particular processes and techniques for engaging with communities should refer to the 2007 interim lessons learned report<sup>1</sup>.

An important piece of context for this evaluation report is that many of the ideas and approaches used in Shaldon have already been used elsewhere. Indeed some of them have become widely used, such as the way that public exhibitions and drop ins are designed and run, the focus on getting buy-in to a problem before moving onto solutions. When the project was developed in Shaldon these were new and innovative ideas, as yet untested. The pilot therefore carried additional costs and stresses that will not occur if the approach – or parts of the approach - are adopted in the future.

At the time of drafting this report (March 2009), the Shaldon project had been placed on hold. The extreme tide guidance (to be published 'later this year') had been changed and may question whether the defences are needed. In July 2009, the Environment Agency, came out in support of a scheme with defences, across the entire scheme, 275 millimetres lower than originally proposed. The scheme, with its new height is now with the planning authorities. It had been intended that this evaluation of the Shaldon BTwC pilot would have been undertaken with the project well into design and construction and thus with a clear outcome. However, movable science is of itself an issue in building trust, and this is evaluated in this report.

Following the executive summary, the report is divided into three main sections:

- Section 3:       What happened?**
- Section 4:       Was it cost beneficial?**
- Section 5:       Lessons learned:**
- How much engagement and how to do it well?**
- Section 6:       Moving on from the Shaldon pilot: what next?**

## 1.2 The approach

The research was conducted in three stages:

**Stage 1:** Gathering relevant reports, information.

**Stage 2:** Interviewing staff, consultants and liaison group members<sup>2</sup>.

**Stage 3:** Analysis and Reporting.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, section 8.1 for details

The work was carried out by Ed Straw and Lindsey Colbourne on behalf of Lindsey Colbourne Associates. Ed Straw is a former partner with PricewaterhouseCoopers, responsible for a wide range of evaluation studies ranging from Streamlining FRM, cost benefit assessment of the North Liverpool Community Justice Centre to the impact of the National Audit Office. Qualifications include BSC Civil Engineering Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants, MBA, and Associate of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. Lindsey Colbourne is the professional process designer and facilitator employed on the Building Trust with Communities pilot in Shaldon.

In undertaking the research, LCA were mindful not to duplicate evaluation and learning work already conducted, including:

- Work done by LCA on best practice communications materials<sup>3</sup>, updating the BTwC toolkit, informing SD6<sup>4</sup>, and Improving Social and Institutional Responses to flooding<sup>5</sup> between 2005 and 2008. This has resulted in some new high level tools such as 'types of decision making A-C', the updated Building Trust steps and case studies (now used in the Building Trust training and mentor networks), and some detailed guidance such as how to run a good drop in, using questionnaires, running liaison groups and so on.
- Work done by Lynn Wetenhall and Ruth Johnston in 2007<sup>6</sup>. This focused on lessons learned re: how to apply building trust approaches and what is required to make them work. It lists recommendations in terms of policy/corporate issues, communication issues, staff and project team roles, building capacity across the organisation.

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<sup>3</sup> Colbourne, L, 2005. Internal report for ComCoast/the Environment Agency

<sup>4</sup> Colbourne, L, 2006. Making Space for Water project SD6 internal report for Ruth Johnston and Karen Thomas

<sup>5</sup> Colbourne, L. Improving Social and Institutional Responses to flooding 2009

<sup>6</sup> Johnston, R and Wetenhall L. 2007. Shaldon BTwC Pilot. Lessons Learned and recommendations.

## 2 Executive summary

This report explores the actual and potential **benefit-cost of engagement**<sup>7</sup>, based on an evaluation of the pilot Building Trust with Communities - Working with Others (BTwC) approach used on the Shaldon Flood Risk project between 2005 and 2009. The BTwC approach encourages a shift from working practices based on a 'Decide-Announce-Defend' (DAD) relationship with the community towards practices which encourage more proactive engagement, based on the 'Engage-Deliberate-Decide' (EDD) model<sup>8</sup>. The report is based on Environment Agency documentation and interviews with staff, engineering consultants and members of the Shaldon and Ringmore Liaison Group.

It uses insights from the Shaldon pilot to highlights areas of **process efficiency** for flood and coastal risk management (FCRM) in similar situations in the future. It also indicates what needs to be done if these efficiencies are to be robust in the future, including tailoring the amount and type of engagement to the risk and needs of the work.

The headline conclusions, further expanded in the full report are:

### 2.1 The highest engagement benefit: cost ratio is not achieved by deciding whether to engage or not, but by making the right decision about how much to engage. This will depend on:

- a) **Whether the work is responding to an established need, with the possibility of an accepted solution or not?** The table below illustrates four very different scenarios:

	<b>Reactive situation</b> Well established history of flooding of the type(s) and extent being considered	<b>Proactive situation</b> Little or no awareness of the flood risk of the type(s) and extent being considered
<b>Likely to be a solution</b> (eg a flood defence scheme) that will solve the problem for everyone	<i>Light touch</i> BTwC engagement may be enough (focused on getting details right)	<i>Full</i> BTwC engagement likely to be necessary to build understanding of flood risk, to work up solutions and agree details
<b>Unlikely to be a solution</b> (eg a flood defence scheme) that will solve the problem for everyone	<i>Full</i> BTwC engagement will be necessary to build understanding of the reasons for lack of solutions, deal with fairness issues, create and enable (a range of) adaptation measures	<i>Focused</i> BTwC engagement will be necessary to build understanding of the flood risk and lack of solutions, deal with fairness issues, create and enable (a range of) adaptation measures

The table illustrates that fuller BTwC approaches will be required in proactive situations with the possibility of a flood defence scheme (as in Shaldon) and in both proactive and reactive situations without the possibility of a flood defence scheme being offered.

<sup>7</sup> The benefit-cost being assessed here is of the use of BTwC to secure public engagement in the design of a flood risk scheme. This is very different from the benefit-cost of the scheme itself in relation to public expenditure.

<sup>8</sup> For further information on the DAD to EDD approach, see Building Trust with Communities



- b) **One obvious solution or a range of solutions?** Where there is one 'blindingly obvious' way of reducing flood risk (such as maintaining or enhancing existing defences), engagement may be focused on getting the details of that solution right. This will be lighter touch application of BTwC than programmes where there may be many different solutions or significantly different permutations of solutions (such as barrage vs. linear defences, or different lines or heights of walls) to reducing flood risk.
- c) **Visually or physically intrusive or not?** Any scheme likely to cut into a sea or river view, prevent access or change the character of a place is almost certain to require enhanced BTwC, involving the community as early as possible to ensure the best amenity, design and finish. By contrast, schemes without significant impact will require much lighter touch BTwC (such as selective liaison with key stakeholders and quality public exhibitions).
- d) **High or low impact of flooding?** Shaldon has a comparatively high cost of annual flood damage and potential loss of life. Getting the scheme completed much sooner rather than later is important. To minimise the objection and time risk, enhanced BTwC is recommended. Conversely, if much less is at stake, enhanced BTwC may not be cost effective.
- e) **Solo delivery or collaborative delivery?** In some situations, the Environment Agency may be in a position to deliver flood risk reduction without the support, active involvement or ownership of the community and other organisations. The application of BTwC in these situations can be light touch. But in other situations, successful implementation may require key organisations to play a major role (e.g. operation of gates by the Parish Council, tackling or integrating issues beyond the remit of the Environment Agency such as surface water flooding), or for individuals, community or public to take action (e.g. flood proofing properties, responding to flood warnings, giving permission for works). The application of BTwC in these situations will need to be much fuller in order not only to get their buy in, but also to ensure that the solution is workable and people will take action when needed.

In terms of the considerations above, Shaldon was a high impact situation (flood damage and potential loss of life) and a large scale, proactive scheme, without one obvious solution. Many of the potential solutions were potentially visually and physically intrusive, and would require collaboration for delivery. The project costs were estimated at £8.529m. The Shaldon situation would be considered worthy of an extensive application of BTwC, as it was at the time by the Area Flood Risk Manager (who had been involved with the development of BTwC). The additional recorded costs, pre-PAR (Project Appraisal Report) of the pilot BTwC approach were in the order of £225,000. Staff and consultants have suggested that this could be reduced to £100,000 for future similar situations. For appropriate lighter touch use of BTwC, additional costs have been estimated at as little as £10,000. For example, hosting a local meeting (such as a liaison group, public meeting or task and finish group) costs approximately £2,000.

Although figures relating to the total cost of pre-PAR work and total project costs have been secured for this report for Shaldon<sup>9</sup>, insufficient figures relating to the cost of engagement have been recorded for comparator schemes such as Teignmouth, Lympstone, Ottery St Mary and Boscastle. The true benefit-cost of different amounts of BTwC will not be known until a few more schemes are assessed.

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<sup>9</sup> See section 4.1

However, this report offers a benefit-cost framework to assist with future assessments. A BTwC tool has also been developed by Lindsey Colbourne Associates for Making Space for Water SD6 and for a recent science research project (which is now embedded in the project appraisal processes of Streamlining and FCDPAG now FCRM-AG) to assist with identifying the situations which will require light touch application of BTwC, which will require the medium and which a more extensive application of BTwC<sup>10</sup>. The tool is included in the appendix to this report.

## 2.2 Critical to a high engagement benefit: cost ratio is doing engagement well, and doing it efficiently.

*"Shaldon is definitely the right way of doing it, but we threw everything at it. We could get 80% of the benefit with 20% of the cost and knock one year off the duration".* Environment Agency staff

Capturing these efficiencies in future work requires:

- ✓ At a minimum, consistently bringing BTwC **attitudes** and style to interactions with communities and stakeholders. As Environment Agency staff said: *"BTwC could just be a courteous way of dealing with people"*.
- ✓ Developing BTwC **skills**, style and confidence amongst staff and consultants, and involving someone with the right level of skills from the start of the project will help to bring consistency of approach across the business.
- ✓ Building key planning and preparation parts of BTwC into Operational Instructions (OI)<sup>11</sup> **procedures** for teams (such as NEAS, ncpms) to reduce conflicts in internal guidance and requirements.
- ✓ Knowing when and how to use **particular BTwC methods and techniques**, especially when dealing with controversial, proactive, intrusive flood defence schemes (or conversely, where flood defence is being withdrawn).
- ✓ Applying the series of **detailed** lessons learned from Shaldon, whenever full or light touch BTwC is used in the future.

## 2.3 What next? The pilot work at Shaldon raises a strategic set of issues to be resolved:

- ✓ What policy is driving the work of the Environment Agency– best value vs. public acceptability and resilience?
- ✓ How to deal with changing data and requirements such as extreme tide levels, sea level rise, priority score, compensation, policies and funding? Trust cannot be built on a false scientific premise.
- ✓ Does engagement have a valuable role in scrutiny and accountability?
- ✓ How to avoid the temptation to use engagement as manipulation or 'education in disguise'?
- ✓ How to know when a remit to act has been secured from the community, how to maintain that remit, what to expect as a scheme progresses and how to deal with objections?

The full report also outlines the process used at Shaldon, illustrating how the approach and methods used differs from the business as usual process. The results of engagement and the results of piloting the BTwC approach at Shaldon are listed.

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<sup>10</sup> See Colbourne, L, 2008. Improving Social and Institutional Responses to flooding.

<sup>11</sup> Previously known as Agency Management Systems (AMS)

### 3 Using the BTwC approach in Shaldon – what was done and what happened

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#### 3.1 Origins

The pretty village of Shaldon with a population of 1500 - 1700, lies near the mouth of the Teign estuary on the South Devon coast, opposite the town of Teignmouth. The Shaldon (and neighbouring Ringmore) sea front stretches for approximately 1.5km along the Teign estuary.



The Environment Agency became concerned about the tidal flood risk in Shaldon in 2004 although it had not flooded 'in living memory'<sup>12</sup>. The existing informal defences offered a low standard of protection with a large number of low-lying properties behind. Properties are in a 'basin' behind the defences, and this basin would begin to fill – to life threatening first floor level - if the defences were overtopped. Wave action and the number of gaps in the existing defences, which are present to provide people with direct access to the beach, could exacerbate this risk. Existing defences also affect the ability of some of the minor tributaries and surface water drainage systems to discharge, which can cause localised flooding (surface water and sewage).

The Environment Agency was interested in adopting a 'building trust' (Building Trust with Communities or BTwC) approach to working with the community to reduce the flood risk in Shaldon because of the<sup>13</sup>:

- Situation in Teignmouth (which lies across the estuary and is joined by a bridge and ferry) – rejection of flood defence scheme. A scheme was worked up, in the traditional 'Decide-Announce-Defend' manner, approved at PAR and rejected at an acrimonious public meeting in 2004. Staff had other poor experiences including the judicial review at Bideford
- History of quite frequent flooding from surface water and sewage. No direct experience of tidal flooding, but a near miss in September 2004. So widespread

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<sup>12</sup> This term is taken from the Environment Agency's internal discussions. It had not flooded for decades, at least 30 years.

<sup>13</sup> Taken from minutes of internal meetings, based on the six step BTwC planning template.

awareness - or even acceptance – that there is a tidal flood risk was unlikely. Furthermore, as you move inland, away from the sea, you come into an area that would suffer the worst consequences of a tidal flood (because it is in a bowl) but residents there are not directly linked to the sea so probably unaware of the extent of the tidal flood risk. This includes a primary school.

- Prosperous, 'picture postcard' village, seen as desirable place to live, with high property values. Considered 'posher' and nicer than Teignmouth. Visual and/or historic issues and preserving 'character' likely to be very important to a significant/influential portion of the population. The predominating elements within the landscape depend on the state and location of the person experiencing the landscape, usually this will be a visual appreciation, and therefore vulnerable to any impediment to the view, such as barriers. Individual landscape elements, both natural and built, can be identified in isolation, but it is in conjunction that their significance builds.
- Relationship with the sea. Movement of people on foot and by boat (the latter at all scales of use) between land and sea is part of life in Shaldon. Economic viability of a large number of activities and businesses depends on the estuary. Also a significant number of events such as bonfire night, the regatta, focused on access between the village and beach
- Older, stable population: probably quite good sense of community and high levels of participation in formal and informal community and voluntary sector activities. For example there have been very strong public responses to development proposals in the past, for example, to the Teignhaven development
- History of difficult relationships between District and Parish Councils particularly on planning decisions
- Scale of the problem – 1.2 – 1.5 km compared to Lymington (approx 300m) or Teignmouth (approx 500m)



## 3.2 What was done, and how the BTwC approach differed from 'business as usual'<sup>14</sup>

### 3.2.1 Timing and extent of BTwC activities

Full BTwC as used at Shaldon is an extensive process, engaging organisations and communities in *every stage* of decision-making. Six distinct phases of activity were undertaken<sup>15</sup>:

#### **Internal preparation.** *March – May 2005*

This involved creation of a single plan including project management, engineering, Environmental Impact Assessment and engagement/communication requirements, and production of high quality communication materials.

#### **Problem and task definition.** *October 2005 – January 2006*

This included one:one meetings, invitations to all households/businesses, interactive public exhibition and public meeting, October 2005. Convening of a liaison group, and two liaison group meetings, January 2006

#### **Exploration of solutions.** *February 2006*

This included two liaison group meetings, five option-development sub groups, February 2006

#### **Development of preferred solution(s).** *March 2006 – March 2007*

This involved seven liaison group meetings; five sub group meetings, visits and individual meetings with property owners. Also included changes to funding requirements and possibility of scheme no longer qualifying for national funds.

#### **Refinement of preferred solution.** *June 2007 – October 2008*

This included public exhibition and one liaison group meeting, June - October 2007, internal Environment Agency processing and appointment of new Environment Agency team October 2007 – October 2008

#### **Implementation of preferred solution.** *October 2008 – January 2009*

This comprised three liaison group meetings and a series of Saturday morning drop ins.

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<sup>14</sup> As noted in the introduction, we have taken 'business as usual' to be the standard practice in similar situations at the time, described in the BTwC approach as largely based on the 'Decide-Announce-Defend' (DAD) model of engagement. Business as usual may have changed since the Shaldon pilot was started, not least as some parts of the more collaborative BTwC 'Engage-Deliberate-Decide' (EDD) approach to engaging with communities have now been adopted as standard practice. However, for the purpose of evaluation, innovations which were innovations at the time of the pilot are included as innovations.

<sup>15</sup> An ongoing process: At the time of writing the Shaldon project has been placed on hold, and the planning application has been withdrawn, pending revisions to Extreme Tide Levels and Climate change sea level rise.



### 3.2.2 What was different about BTwC in the overall timing and approach?

Environmental Impact Assessment Process Guidance currently used by NEAS staff sets out the procedure for engaging with organisations and communities on schemes such as Shaldon and Ringmore FDS. An integrated project management plan was created for Shaldon, which incorporated both the EIA and BTwC requirements (see the section below). This showed that the stages and processes of decision-making were similar (for example, considering the full range of options before identifying the preferred options) but there were significant differences:

- The BTwC involved members of the community in considering whether there was a problem to solve, and in framing the scope or the task. This was done as '**shared sense making**' – it was about sharing views of risk and concern between the community and the Environment Agency rather than simply educating the public about the Environment Agency's concern.
- Once sufficient support for action was secured, the community was involved in **generating and assessing options** and in finessing the preferred option.
- In the **EIA process**, the focus is on information and data gathering to inform the comparison of options by the Environment Agency. Statutory organisations (Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales) are asked for data and information relating to constraints and opportunities of options as part of the 'baseline review'. Wider consultation may be undertaken 'where appropriate' on the list of options, and on the scoping report which sets the framework for EIA assessment and evaluation. In the EIA process, emphasis is on feeding data and information into the internal Environment Agency assessment process.
- By contrast, in the BTwC process, value is placed on **community perceptions, experience and information** alongside that of statutory organisations. The focus is on integrating information and views, trying to understand differences in opinion, and using these insights to inform decision-making by the Environment Agency (and others as appropriate).

### 3.2.3 Internal team and preparation

The Shaldon project team comprised:

- ✓ **Technical team:** ncpms, NEAS, Area Flood Risk Management, Atkins/ Peter Brett Associates
- ✓ **Engagement team:** Lindsey Colbourne Associates as specialist engagement designers and facilitators; Head Office Community Relations lead, Regional Corporate Affairs and Devon and Cornwall area communications staff providing additional support.

In the preparation phase, the BTwC approach differed from the business as usual approach to a flood risk scheme in terms of:

#### What was different about BTwC in the preparation/planning phase?

- Bringing together the **whole team** to plan the approach together right from the start, resulting in a **single plan** which included the project management, engineering, Environmental Impact Assessment and engagement/communications requirements
- Clarifying the **business and engagement objectives** of the work, what was negotiable and non-negotiable, how decisions were to be made, when, the role of the Environment Agency, anticipating what the community and stakeholders might want or need from the process. This resulted in a decision to ask the community about the estimated flood risk, and whether they agreed something should be done to tackle it, before starting to look at solutions.
- **Detailed planning and preparation** before any contact with stakeholders/public, including not only careful stakeholder analysis, but detailed planning of how to approach individual stakeholders and the development of a number of what were to become 'standard' communication and planning materials such as how to explain risk, Priority Score, Economic Constraints, the Environment Agency's approach to flood risk management, how to design exhibition boards and questionnaires, exhibition takeaways, wording of letters and invitations.
- The use of an **independent facilitator and professional communicator** to mentor the project team through the work, provide specialist engagement design advice and to run internal and external meetings.

This preparation phase took approximately 6 months.

### 3.2.4 The BTwC principles



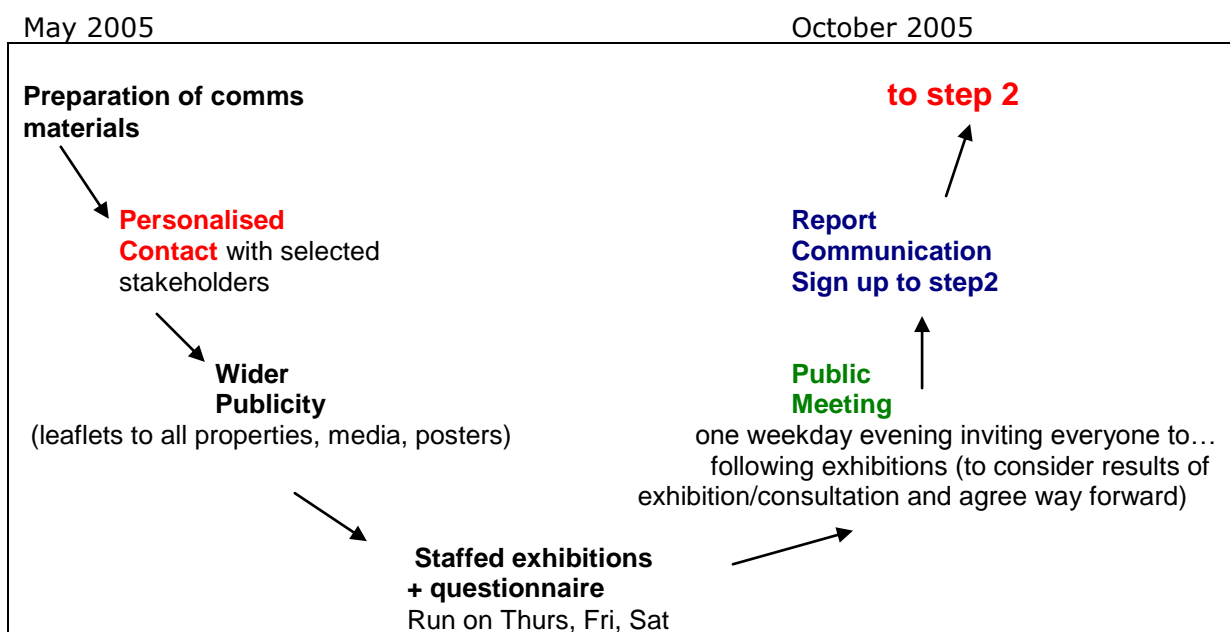
As noted above, the BTwC approach in Shaldon was divided into two parts, separating out the identification of the problem/need from the potential solutions. This was enshrined in the principles agreed by the project team:

- Adopt a precautionary approach: engage as openly, inclusively and early as possible (and reduce intensity later if appropriate)
- Clarify the need (ie that flood risk is sufficient to justify action) *before* moving to consider the range of possible solutions *before* working up preferred way forward
- The Environment Agency is part of engagement process/decision-making: we will be working alongside members of the community in an ongoing collaborative way rather than relying on consultation.



### 3.2.5 The BTwC engagement plan

**Step 1:** Raising awareness of the flood risk, and understanding the community/stakeholder levels of acceptance that there is a flood risk, and acceptability of likely consequences



[note: detail of activities involved has been removed]

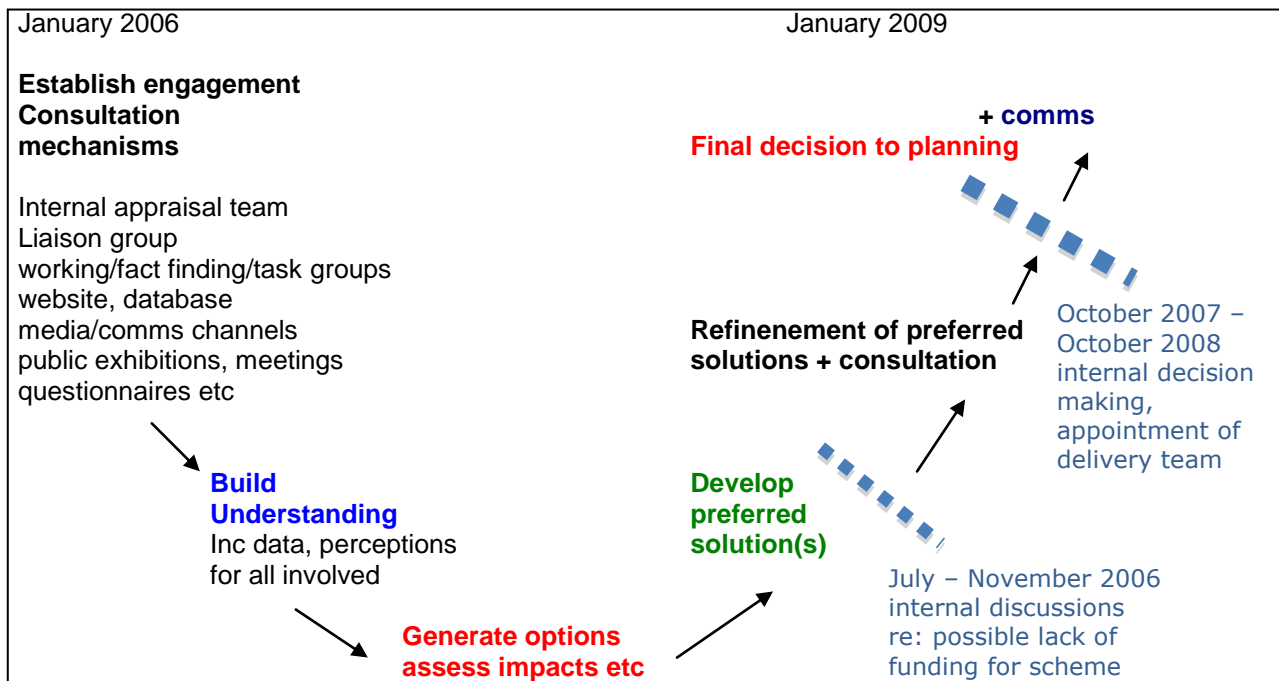
#### Result of phase 1

250 people attended drop in/public meeting. 87% supported work to reduce flood risk in Shaldon. Difference in approach was noticed by the community and the media:

*"Something has got to be done and it's wonderful to be consulted in this way. I really feel we are getting to have our say".*  
Chair of Shaldon and Ringmore Parish Council.

*"It's good to see that the agency is being proactive rather than reactive. We need to move forward".*  
Western Morning News, 27th October 2005.

**Step 2:** working with the full range of interested parties on options for responding to the flood risk in Shaldon



**Notes:**

*Detail of activities involved have been removed - see following section for detail of what was done by each Liaison Group meeting, public exhibitions and so on.*

*Timings shown are the actual timescale achieved, including dotted line - - - - to indicate where (and over how long) internal Environment Agency processes took place, adding significantly to the overall timescale.*

### 3.2.6 What was different about the principles, style and methods used in the BTwC approach?

- A decision was taken to engage as widely as possible as early as possible as a **precautionary** approach: if not controversial, or if no interest, extent of engagement would then be reduced. For example, a liaison group would be offered but if no interest or controversy, engagement may have been restricted to exhibitions or even to newsletters.
- The process was structured and publicised in **two phases**. Again this was a precautionary approach: if the community didn't buy into the existence of the problem, no work would be done on intrusive solutions
- The views and information of **dissenters and objectors** were deliberately sought out . Time was invested in sharing information with them, and on incorporating their information where possible.
- **Independent, professional facilitators and communicators** (Lindsey Colbourne Associates) were used to complement the internal team. They were involved in (and often ran meetings for) internal planning as well as leading on the design and delivery of engagement activities. They also acted as a point of reference during times of challenge, for example where internal changes might have led to abandonment of the BTwC approach.
- **Staff were briefed** and trained to encourage constructive face-to-face contact with public. This included practicing listening skills, generating and answering **Frequently Asked Questions**.
- The exhibitions were designed to **encourage interaction and discussion** rather than be restricted to provision and extraction of information. They included a reception desk, café area, visually appealing exhibition boards that explained the whole story in lay terms, use of an interactive map, use of flip charts to record comments (and comments on comments) in public. As a result, people tended to stay at least half an hour, rather than the usual 10 minutes.
- Staff able to **answer questions** on all aspects of the scheme – and flood awareness - were present at the exhibition and public meeting. Once the remit was extended to cover all aspects of flooding, staff from other organisations were also asked to attend so that all questions could be answered as far as possible
- **Every household** and building in the community received invitations to become involved, **at each stage** in the process
- **Contact details** of all who took part in exhibitions or who expressed an interest were captured. All received report of the exhibition and meeting, and were invited to take part in future activities. Preferences re: mode of communication and extent of involvement were captured.
- **Questionnaires** were designed to encourage respondees to explore their own concerns and experience and to express considered views in an actionable way, setting the remit for the next steps.

- The **public meeting** was facilitated, enabling all present to raise their concerns, conflict to be dealt with constructively, and responses to be given to concerns and questions in the meeting where possible. A document was produced answering all questions following the meeting, and circulated to participants and put on the website.
- Web pages were established on the Environment Agency's website on which information was readily available about the process and results.
- An **open invitation** was given to all with sufficient interest to join the Liaison Group. [For more information on the use of the Liaison Group see the following section.]



### 3.2.7 Shaldon and Ringmore Flood Risk Liaison Group

Detailed liaison with the community in Shaldon was conducted through a Liaison Group. This was by far the most resource-intensive engagement mechanism used in the BTwC process. This section describes the work done, timings and membership.

The Liaison Group set its own aim:

Our aim is:

***To work together with all interested parties in deciding how best to respond to all\* flood risks in Shaldon and Ringmore.***

***In particular to insist on an integrated response by the Environment Agency, South West Water, Devon County Council Highways and Teignbridge District Council (the responsible bodies).***

\*all = wave, tidal, fluvial, surface water run-off and sewage

15 liaison group meetings were held in all, taking the scheme up to the planning application phase. The group worked through five distinct phases over 3 years:

**Initiation: Problem and task definition**

(2 meetings, January 2006)

**Exploration of solutions** (2 meetings, 5 sub groups, February 2006)

**Development of preferred solution(s)**

(7 meetings, 5 sub groups, visits and individual meetings with property owners March 2006 – March 2007)

**Refinement of preferred solution**

(public exhibition and 1 meeting, June - October 2007)

**Implementation of preferred solution**

(3 meetings, October 2008 – January 2009)

What was done at each liaison group meeting is summarised in the table overleaf. A substantial proportion of the three years – 14 months - was taken up with internal Environment Agency process, including:

- ✓ Four months between July and November 2006 in which discussions about funding (or likely lack of it) took place
- ✓ One year between October 2007 and October 2008 in which funding and a new team was secured

### 3.2.8 The Shaldon and Ringmore Liaison Group: meetings, work done and time taken

Phase	Task	Liaison Group (LG) <sup>16</sup>	Sub-group
<b>Initiation: Problem and task definition</b>  October 2005 to January 2006	Public consultation on flood risk: Drop in and public meeting Oct 2005. Attended by 250 people. 87% supported work to reduce flood risk in Shaldon.	Open invitation to all to join liaison group	
	Agree aim of the flood risk work <sup>17</sup> and role of LG within that, programme of work, membership	LG1: 11.1.08	
	Understand Defra/Environment Agency constraints, including benefit-cost system	LG2: 26.1.06	
<b>Exploration of solutions</b>  February 2006	Understand community constraints Information needs Long list possible solutions	LG3: 8.2.06	
	Consolidation of constraints, possible solutions and agree solutions to analyse	LG4: 28.2.06	
	Analysis of possible solutions involved working through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- options/sub options</li> <li>- description</li> <li>- who/what would benefit and how</li> <li>- who/what would suffer and how</li> <li>- what would be required for this option to be viable</li> <li>- what do we need to find out.</li> </ul>	Sub groups on - whole estuary solutions - flood warning - do nothing - wave breaks/dredging - flood walls/gates	

Continued/...

<sup>16</sup> Note: Each Liaison Group was 2 hours long (7 – 9pm), facilitated by Lindsey Colbourne, attended by approx 12 – 24 community members plus Environment Agency staff/consultants. Every meeting was recorded on flip charts, and then minuted.

<sup>17</sup> See aim on previous page

Phase	Task	Liaison Group	Sub-group
<b>Development of preferred solution(s)</b>  March 2006 to March 2007	Set spec for detailed work on most viable options, in context of defence height	LG5: 13.3.06 LG6: 26.3.06	Visits to investigate other defence schemes
	Progress surface water issues		Surface water group (continues throughout)
	Comment on draft spec and draft layout plans, including agreement to include Ringmore	LG7: 24.5.06 LG8: 29.6.06	Meetings with individual property owners
	Internal Environment Agency discussions re: potential lack of funding for scheme	July – November 2006	Internal Environment Agency
	Deciding how to deal with funding hiatus, and how to progress work (including setting up sub groups)	LG9: 2.11.06	Flood plan (continues throughout)
			Height/mitigation task and finish sub group including 2.11.06 Walking tour
			Gate operation
			Communications
	Build on sub-group recommendations to inform Environment Agency work on design	LG10: 30.1.07	Above continue
	Agree design to put to public consultation, and advise on consultation process	LG11: 15.3.07	
<b>Refinement of preferred solution</b>  June – October 2007	Public consultation: drop in exhibition 8 – 12 June 2007. Attended by 300 people: 83% support proposals.	Liaison group, partner organisations and sub groups attend drop ins	
	Recommendations on how to take on board public consultation results. Confirm future role liaison group	LG12: 29.10.07	Gate operation agreed with parish council
			Emergency plan in place and tested
			Design and finish sub group

Continued/...

Phase	Task	Liaison Group	Sub-group
<b>Implementation of preferred solution</b> October 2007 – January 2009	Secure funding + new team. Deal with changing tide predictions (which would have required a higher wall). Revision to wave action.	October 2007 – October 2008	Internal Environment Agency
	Re-connect. Agree timetable of action, re-emphasise and advise on process of engaging the community and outstanding issues to resolve	LG13: 23.10.08	Surface water group
	Details of design and finish. Preparation for planning application	LG14: 27.11.08 LG15: 22.1.09	27.11.08 Drop in
	Planning application	Feb 2009	Exhibition held
	Planning application withdrawn in the light of the extreme tide level data	March 2009	
	Planning application re-submitted with reduced height of the proposed defences, across the entire scheme, by 275 millimetres	June 2009	LG offered to explain changes, but not taken up by LG members



### 3.2.9 Interests represented on the liaison Group

The liaison group consisted of members of the Environment Agency's team (including the project manager, client and engineering consultants) and members from the community. Membership stayed open throughout the process. The interests (and representative status<sup>18</sup>) of community members were confirmed at each meeting.

Community member	Their statement re: who or what they were representing
1	Self Interest & Dog Walkers
2	Shaldon Boat Owners Association
3	Personal Interest
4	Personal Interest
5	Shaldon Water Carnival
6	Teignbridge District Council
7	Ringmore Flood risk Group
8	Artist
9	Neighbours & self-interest
10	Self Interest
11	Parish Council Shaldon
12	Village concern & personal interest
13	Self Interest & Holiday Home Owners
14	Residents of Dolphin Court
15	Self Interest, Neighbours and others who ask
16	Own Interest & Shaldon Regatta Committee
17	Personal Interest
18	Self Interest, Neighbours & marine conservation
19	Rowing Club
20	Personal Interest
21	Self Interest & General Interest in Village, Neighbourhood Watch, Tourism Centre, Over 60's Club, Sandbag Distribution
22	Personal Interest
23	Teign Estuary Partnership
24	Shoreside Residents and School Governor
25	Parish Council – Riverside
26	1) Shaldon Businesses – Chair of business Forum 2) Beach Users
27	Personal Interest
28	Chairman of Parish Council, Personal interest, Ringmore Flood Risk Group, RNLI Committee & Co-ordinator of the Shaldon & Ringmore Flood Emergency Response Scheme

<sup>18</sup> See section 6.5 for discussion of representation issues

### 3.2.10 The difference in BTwC approach to working with a Liaison Group

- Liaison Group set up after **consulting** the wider community on the need/appropriateness of the group
- Environment Agency staff and engineering consultants as **members** of the Liaison Group, working *alongside* individuals and representatives from the community (rather than as advisors, assessors or recipients)
- **Independently facilitated** meetings, minutes transcribed from flip charts. Decisions/actions/who/when recorded in meeting.
- Minutes placed on **website**
- **Core work** done through liaison group, rather than the liaison group being an 'add on' to the real work
- Group **set its own remit**, to include all forms of flooding and Ringmore alongside Shaldon and tidal flooding
- **Open membership** of group allowed people to join or attend throughout the process
- Individual's **interests** and 'representation' openly stated. Included both personal interests and community interests
- **Task and finish groups** established to undertake detailed work
- **Statement** of the meeting agreed by the group before the end of the meeting, to assist with clarity of communication
- **Openly shared** trade offs, difficulties, constraints including internal Environment Agency processes, changes to funding and priority score in the middle of the project and uncertainties including wall height.

### 3.3 The result

By February 2009, BTwC engagement in Shaldon had led to:

- ✓ Getting a **mandate** for action from the community, based on agreement that the tidal **flood risk** is sufficient to justify finding ways to reduce the risk
- ✓ Involving the community in **generating** and **scrutinising** all possible ways to reduce the flood risk, including a wall-based tidal flood defence scheme, barrage, individual property protection, doing nothing, awareness-raising campaigns and reducing wave action.
- ✓ Getting community input to maximise the community **utility** of a wall based tidal flood defence scheme by advising on layout, height, finish
- ✓ Responding to the community concern (ultimatum) about the need to tackle **all forms of flooding** by helping all relevant bodies to work together to tackle surface, sewage and tidal flooding rather than just focusing on the Environment Agency remit of tidal flood risk
- ✓ Responding to community **identity and governance** by extending the scheme to cover Ringmore as well as Shaldon despite it being a separate flood cell and initially excluded
- ✓ Increasing **resilience** of the community by generating interest and creating a parish flood action plan. This included coverage of flood issues in parish newsletters and the press
- ✓ Generating community **ownership** of (and confidence in) the scheme's operation via the parish council
- ✓ Improving **trust** in and respect for the Environment Agency staff, and opening constructive channels of communication
- ✓ Suggesting how to **speed up** the construction process without interrupting local events and tourist season
- ✓ Suggesting how to maintain **communication** with the wider community throughout the construction process, and playing an active part in delivering those communications.

In addition, the **pilot** status of the project has resulted in a plethora of communication materials, techniques, skills, case study material, good practice guides and new standards (see section 3.4).

However, the withdrawal of planning application (see 3.5), followed by the reinstatement of the scheme at a height of 275 millimetres lower than originally required, raises a set of strategic concerns that go well beyond the BTwC approach. These issues are dealt with in sections 5 and 6.

### 3.4 Wider set of outcomes from the pilot

Wider outcomes of the BTwC approach have included:

#### 3.4.1 New materials and standards of practice

- ✓ Shaldon style interactive exhibitions and questionnaires (and feedback to participants) used as basis for many drop ins, exhibitions and surgeries including Boscastle, post 2007 floods in Gloucestershire and Yorkshire, the revived Teignmouth scheme
- ✓ The use of briefing, training and FAQs for staff before they meet with the public for example with British Energy on nuclear consultation, Thames, Didsbury
- ✓ New leaflets on how to explain Priority Score, Economic Constraints, Risk and the Environment Agency Approach to Flood Risk
- ✓ Approach to writing letters used in many projects such as Beesands
- ✓ Recognition of need to define and agree the problem before working up solutions. For example, recent report to Defra by Scott Wilson on 'community adaptation planning'<sup>19</sup> used Shaldon as a case study alongside other areas and concluded: *"The current approach of presenting potential solutions before communities are aware of the problem leads to conflict and is seen at both the strategic (SMP) and the scheme level"*

#### 3.4.2 How to/good practice guides

- ✓ New 'how to guides' based on Shaldon pilot<sup>20</sup> include:
  - Engagement or communications strategy?
  - How to design an effective engagement process
  - Exhibition boards and visuals
  - Explaining engagement to the community
  - Explaining Environment Agency processes including Priority Score, Economic Constraints
  - Using exhibitions and drop ins for consultation
  - Designing exhibition takeaways
  - Explaining risk
  - Working with liaison groups
  - Designing questionnaires
  - Working face to face with the public; staff guidelines
  - Websites
  - How to give bad news

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<sup>19</sup> 7 April 2009. PowerPoint presentation by Scott Wilson to Defra's Project Steering Group for the 'Community led adaptation' project.

<sup>20</sup> Produced by Lindsey Colbourne Associates for Ruth Johnston, 2006. Now incorporated into the BTwC guidance and available on the Environment Agency Odrive/intranet.

*"I use the how to guides quite often for information and guidance, together with our exhibition boards to show how to tell a story and how to share a problem before jumping to a solution"*  
Environment Agency staff

- ✓ Total revision of BTwC 6 steps between 2006 – 2009, including revised M77 training and manual as result of Shaldon experience. <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SCHO1005BJTE-e-e.pdf>

### **3.4.3 Materials for case studies, and a focus for debate**

The experiences in Shaldon have fed directly into:

- ✓ Case studies and evaluation, for example Making Space for Water (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/policy/strategy/Shaldon.pdf>) and Improving Social and Institutional Responses to Flooding, social science reports (<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SCHO1005BJTE-e-e.pdf>)
- ✓ Cost/benefit frameworks such as the National Institute of Clinical Excellence's cost-benefit analysis of community involvement in improving public health (<http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/PH009Guidance.pdf>)
- ✓ Used as a case study at numerous conferences
- ✓ Currently used by Scott Wilson /Defra as a case study of working with communities around adaptation (<http://www.scottwilson.com/news.aspx?theme=default>)
- ✓ Ongoing debates on the desirability of engagement, how it fits with the role of the Environment Agency and adaptation.

### **3.4.4 Staff skills and attitudes**

Staff have reported being appointed on other jobs partly as a result of Shaldon experience

*"The other thing I'm doing with my learning from Shaldon is talking to other teams. Like yesterday, I met the fisheries, recreation and diversity team in Bodmin, and I'm able to refer to real experience and bring it alive so they believe you, rather than talking out of a book. It adds credibility and you feel confident so you can sell it in."* Environment Agency staff

### 3.5 What is happening now?

This report was to cover the Shaldon pilot up to the January 2009 liaison group. Following that meeting, the following events unfolded:

- ✓ **Planning application for the scheme was submitted**, and a public exhibition held, managed by the internal team (February 2009). *"There were 326 people over two days, we have had 121 questionnaires back so far (deadline 3 April). Two thirds for the planned scheme, one third against. I think there are probably about a dozen objections and some letters of support too. Concerns over height of the wall or expressing a feeling against being 'walled in'. Lots of the same people although there some new ones who hadn't been to previous sessions."* Environment Agency staff
- ✓ While the application was in the planning process, **internal discussions** were held re: possibility of withdrawing application due to revisions to Extreme Tide Level estimates.
- ✓ 8 April 2009, Environment Agency issues press release and **withdraws planning application for Shaldon and Ringmore Scheme** in order to assess the new extreme tide and Climate Impact Programme data 'later in the year'.

*"Following advice from the South West Regional Flood Defence Committee today the Environment Agency is to delay progress with its £8.5 million tidal defence proposals for Shaldon and Ringmore on the Teign Estuary in Devon by withdrawing its current planning application. ....The Environment Agency's South West regional staff are continuing to analyse the most up-to-date data on tide levels. The new data indicates a significant change from previous studies...."*

*The extreme tide level information does not include allowances for climate change. The United Kingdom Climate Impact Programme is also due to publish its future climate change predictions later in the year including implications for sea levels and increased wave heights.. It is clearly important that all this information is considered together."*

Environment Agency press release, 8 April 2009

- ✓ 9 June 2009, Environment Agency writes to the Liaison Group (and whole community) to inform them of the **resubmitted planning application, at a lower defence height:**

*"We have now completed our review of the improved extreme tide level data, and as a result reduced the height of the proposed defences, across the entire scheme, by 275 millimetres. Our next action is to resubmit our planning application to Teignbridge District Council early next month, with a view to gaining planning approval in September. This would enable us to start work on site early next year."*  
Email from the Environment Agency to Liaison Group members<sup>21</sup>

We cover the implications of these significant developments in section 6, including dealing with changing data and requirements, the notion of scheme shepherding and team continuity, and scrutiny and accountability.

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<sup>21</sup> For more information on the resubmitting of planning, see appendix, section 8.5

## **4 The use of BTwC at Shaldon was both costly and significantly cost-beneficial, depending on the comparators**

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### **4.1 Introduction**

The cost –benefit of public engagement can be assessed with reference to the costs and benefits of the scheme itself, with reference to the wider benefits to the Environment Agency and with reference to the wider benefits to the community. Any cost-benefit analysis is limited by the data available for the calculations.. Typically, BTwC is used to ensure a scheme goes ahead at all ie public opposition is not so strong as to stop it, to reduce the overall project time, to gain knowledge from the public on the scheme which will improve its outcomes, and/or to reduce staff stress. The analysis below uses the data available to conclude that compared with the standard Environment Agency approach of not using BTwC for projects, Shaldon has been costly. But compared with the time to completion it would be reasonable to assume Shaldon would have taken, then BTwC has been highly beneficial – a benefit-cost ratio of 89:1 is calculated below.

The purpose of this section is not to suggest that the analysis here proves with scientific certainty one case or another, but to prevent the conclusions to Environment Agency staff to use in assessing whether and how to use BTwC in the future.

### **4.2 Benefit-cost comparators of five flood defence schemes**

The cost benefit of the Shaldon approach was compared to four other flood defence schemes, the characteristics of which are summarised in the table onerleaf:

## Benefit-cost comparators of five flood defence schemes

Scheme	Time taken	Type	Recorded total costs to PAR	Total estimated or actual project costs	BTwC activities	Outcome
Shaldon	Economic viability report (2006) to planning submission (2009) – 3 years	Proactive. High stakes. Intrusive.	£672k	£8.529m <sup>e</sup>	Full BTwC with all relevant organisation and community. 3 exhibitions. Walking tours. Liaison Group. Public meeting. Task and finish groups.	Agreed scheme for 1.5km wall plus gates and steps. Submitted to planning authority for 1:200 protection, considers all sources of flooding. Ringmore added, Community operation agreed.
Teignmouth 1	Pre-feasibility start (1999) to rejection (2004) – 5 years	Proactive. Medium stakes. Semi – intrusive.	£144k	£2.44m <sup>e</sup>	Teignmouth District Council only.	PAR scheme rejected locally. Shelved. Now started on new scheme. 400 m wall plus port defence.
Lympstone	Pre-feasibility report (1996) to scheme complete (2005) – 9 years	Reactive Low stakes Non intrusive	£99k	£970k <sup>a</sup>	Informal. Early research to check local politics/opinion with key stakeholders. Targetted communications. Taken at appropriate pace – 2 public exhibitions	Scheme completed 1:200. Gates, telemetry. Tidal only. Not surface water. Fluvial done previously.
Ottery St Mary	Feasibility (2000). To scheme complete (2004) – 4 years	Reactive. Non intrusive	£94k	£4.2m <sup>a</sup>	Several Town Council presentations. Exhibition	Scheme complete. 500m culvert for Furze Brook. But inlet over-topped twice. River Otter and some surface water not done
Boscastle	Flood (2004) to scheme complete (2008) – 4 years	Reactive High stakes Intrusive	£371k	£7.245m <sup>e</sup>	Informal. Post flood surgeries. Exhibition. Bridge task group including Parish Council members	Scheme complete 1:75



### 4.3 The additional costs of BTwC at Shaldon

The additional recorded costs, pre-PAR, of the BTwC approach over and above the business as usual costs of engagement in Shaldon are of the order of £225,000 (2.6%) for a whole scheme cost of £8,529,000 (SoD approval cost). These costs split roughly 50 percent engineering consultants, 33 per cent Environment Agency staff and 17 percent external facilitator. Being the first application of full BTwC to an FCRM scheme, and BTwC being field-tested for potential application nationally, and avoidance of repeating the rejection at Teignmouth being nearly mandatory, the approach could be regarded as 'gold-plated'. Staff and consultants have highlighted areas of process efficiency for future application. Depending on the scale and public impact of future schemes, applying BTwC elsewhere would cost from around £10,000 (low risk A) to £100,000 (high risk C).

### 4.4 Calculating benefit-cost

At Shaldon, the costs of using BTwC can first be assessed against the costs of not using BTwC – this is termed the **counter-factual**. Thus, public participation can be costly. But equally, non-participation can be costly too. Typically these costs occur in defending the proposed scheme, in defending and re-motivating staff, and in repairing the Environment Agency's reputation. These 'fire-fighting' costs do not appear in the costing system where they are management and central office costs. The management costs are both of their time and, usually more importantly, of the opportunity costs. Reputations are easily damaged and not so easily repaired.

The approach at Shaldon has taken three years from first engaging with the public through to the start of detailed design and construction (although 14 months of this was taken up with the Environment Agency's internal processes) This is a long time when set against experience in other places. But a comparatively short time in comparison with Teignmouth where the originally non-participatory approach, is now in its seventh year.

The costs of using and not using BTwC can secondly be assessed against the **outcomes** of the scheme. The main outcome is in flood damage incurred or saved. This is measured in terms of annual average flood damage. At Shaldon, this is comparatively high at c. £4m which would be saved by the proposed scheme reducing the return period from 1:17 to 1:200 years. Thus, *if* BTwC reduces the time from start to scheme completion from the c10 years estimated at Teignmouth to the c5 years at Shaldon, then the flood damage saved amounts to c. £20m, against a cost of £225,000, a **benefit-cost ratio of 89:1**. Given the nature of the bowl at Shaldon and 2 metre depth of flooding, loss of life would be likely here. This has not been costed in this analysis. The c.10 years for Teignmouth is regarded as an unusually long time by some staff, but it's circumstances were such as to make it one valid comparator for Shaldon.

Taking an Environment Agency-wide view of the economics, the benefit-cost ratio would be very much lower. It would be assumed that the capital unspent at Shaldon would be spent on other schemes and that these schemes would, of course, secure flood damage savings. The outcomes benefit attributable to BTwC would be in any marginal difference between these savings.

BTwC can thirdly be assessed against **wider benefits** accruing in the community. The experience of participation in decision-making is perceived by individuals involved (as staff, consultants and community members of the liaison group) as largely beneficial, as illustrated throughout this report.

This sense of empowerment can build social capital and willingness to tackle other

community issues be they litter, schooling or crime, for example. Participation may also result in commitment to the implementation of the decision. In the case of flood defences this will be significant where the community is to be responsible for the operation of gates, as at Shaldon. There is some circularity here in that to be acceptable to the community schemes may have to have gates (and not steps or simply continuing walls); and to be operationally acceptable to the Environment Agency, there must be confidence in the community to operate the gates. **BTwC can produce this 'win-win'.**

BTwC can fourthly achieve wider scheme benefits. For example, staff and consultants at Shaldon attribute the inclusion of all types of flooding (rather than just tidal flooding) and the Ringmore flood cell (as well as Shaldon) in the scheme to the insights and pressure created through community engagement. These 'joining up' benefits have not been quantified but are significant. For example, at Ottery St Mary the wider causes of flooding were not considered in the flood defence scheme. If BTwC had been used there, the River Otter and surface water, still sources of flooding, would likely have been incorporated into the scheme. The Pitt Review, in providing the Environment Agency with strategic responsibility for all types of flooding, may stimulate more systematic solutions. And community involvement in those solutions will continue to be important - BTwC provides a practical methodology for all agencies implementing this more integrated remit.

The benefit-cost analysis above is limited by the sample size (essentially one only for BTwC) and availability of data. As experience increases, the framework below provides the basis for a more comprehensive assessment.

#### 4.4.1 Benefit-Cost Framework for Community Engagement in Flood Risk Projects

Scheme benefits	Wider Environment Agency benefits	Wider community benefits
1. Scheme is implemented or scheme is implemented sooner or neither of above	9. Improved or less impaired reputation of Environment Agency	15. Improved resilience to flooding, its risks and responses.
2. Scheme is implemented with less conflict and stress for Environment Agency staff and for local community	10. Improved working relationships of Environment Agency staff internally and with partners	16. More active community to tackle other problems (eg crime, education, litter)
3. Reduced Environment Agency staff time dealing with individual complaints	11. Improved respect for public by Environment Agency staff	17. Individual employment and capacity building
4. Scheme has higher utility for community (access, sight lines, recreation)	12. New/improved tools (e.g. better exhibitions) transferable to future projects	
5. Scheme has better FCRM performance and/or is cheaper	13. Increased staff engagement skills and culture for future application	
6. Scheme incorporates other types of flooding (surface and sewerage)	14. Creation of wider environmental and social benefits	
7. Community motivated and ready to operate scheme (gates, warnings)		
8. Access to other funding sources and opportunities		

#### Additional costs of engagement

1. Engagement specialist
2. Pre- and during design engineers and  
project managers, less post-design defence  
time of engineers and project managers
3. Community opportunity cost

## 4.5 Improving benefit-cost of engagement through efficiencies

During interviews, staff and liaison group members involved in Shaldon readily identified ways of doing a full BTwC **more efficiently** than was achieved in the pilot at Shaldon and Ringmore.

*"Shaldon is definitely the right way of doing it, but we threw everything at it. We could get 80% of the benefit with 20% of the cost and knock one year off the duration".* Environment Agency staff

*"We spent a lot of time to-ing and fro-ing – all that argy bargy about flood risk and heights... there must be a better way of doing modeling or graphics?".* Liaison Group member

*"A very good process, and the trick is to streamline it to get the best parts at a sensible cost".* Consultant

*"Whole idea of community approach was excellent, a brilliant idea to do that particularly with Teignmouth situation where they'd rejected a plan. ... I'd say definitely do it again. I'd say definitely but whether it has to go on for 2 years I don't know, it's been a bit drawn out."* Liaison Group member

*"My time has never been accounted for separately; I've been involved in sorting minutes, hand writing envelopes and so on. but now we've got staff who are ready to use the templates. So that will save time. For the first time we are now staffed up with 3 and 4 part time staff, but they are new to it."* Environment Agency staff

Staff, engineering consultants and Liaison Group members suggestions for **future efficiencies** included:

- ✓ Greater **awareness** before the project started of the rationale and practical benefits of the BTwC approach within technical, engineering consultant and communications teams. One staff member estimated it took 6 months to get the original team up to speed. This could be resolved by ensuring appropriate training of staff, for example through BTwC M77 'designing stakeholder engagement' training or tailored training for the project team at the start of the project.
- ✓ Standard **materials and templates**, including integrated project plan incorporating NEAS, ncpms and engagement requirements. This would include the BTwC 6 steps (including making decisions about 'how much' engagement to use and stakeholder analysis), and would anticipate and deal with any uncertainties and changes around data, requirements, priority score.
- ✓ Planning the **preparation** time required in from the start.
- ✓ Pick and mix set of effective engagement **techniques** ranging from how to write a good letter to how to run a good public meeting. Use of **lower intensity** mechanisms (and when they are appropriate) such as task and finish groups, one:one meetings.
- ✓ Having the right **number of staff** attending liaison group/other meetings: when it is a new thing, there is a tendency to throw too many people/resources at it. Many efficiencies could be gained as the Environment Agency gets used to these types of collaborative relationships and meetings.

- ✓ Expertise and confidence in planning for and dealing with the public. Recognising the vital role of the independent **facilitator** – cutting this role or trying to do it in-house would be a false economy.
- ✓ Having staff/consultants in the right **role**: in Shaldon engineering consultants and the communications business partner were involved in writing minutes of meetings, hand writing envelopes. Systems and templates need to be in place for more junior staff to do this job. In Devon and Cornwall there are now more staff who can help out with this.
- ✓ Clear remit and guidance on the need to deal constructively with **wider flooding issues** beyond the formal Environment Agency remit. This was new in Shaldon and took time to consider and deal with. Pitt Review and Strategic Overview role will assist in producing more coherent schemes taking into account all the various interests in an area.
- ✓ **Continuity of teams**. Replacing the feasibility team with the delivery cost significantly in terms of time and loss of trust. Some members of the Liaison Group, consultants and Environment Agency staff reported that they felt the new team never really understood the BTwC approach as they were not fully exposed to engagement thinking and practice.
- ✓ Including **appearance** in the outline design as it can make or break the acceptability of the scheme. Paying more attention to details which are valued by the public such as finishes.
- ✓ Streamlining use of **liaison group**, including increasing the responsibility of members to liaise more closely with the wider community, having less staff attending.
- ✓ Start from assumption that **local technical knowledge** is essential to getting the scheme right, and build processes in to enable that. This should be seen as a core part of design work, not just an engagement hoop to be gone through.

## 4.6 Engagement benefit-cost as a core part of the Environment Agency's remit?

Achieving the wider benefits of individual participation and social action are not formally part of the Environment Agency's remit. They are objectives of the government. Typically, **formulaic consultation** (for example, questionnaires and consultation documents towards the end of a decision making process) is a requirement of public sector organisations but not the type of BTwC engagement seen at Shaldon. Some parts of the business are shifting their emphasis towards the use of BTwC to secure better delivery of core business and added value<sup>22</sup>. Others are not convinced.

A further organisational discontinuity occurs in the Environment Agency's performance measures. The project appraisal regime is comprehensive and rigorous. It has been built in response to some schemes being proposed in the past which, in practice, were not cost-beneficial and/or of sufficient priority. The analysis and performance hurdles are now significant. But the National Review Group (NRG)'s remit and concentration is in achieving **best value for public expenditure**. Its focus is not on community acceptance or participation or building social capital. Similarly, once the scheme passes onto the detailed design and construction stages, the relatively new incentive regimes for consultants and contractors are about the immediate costs of the scheme.

Whilst the NRG has rigorous project approval processes once a scheme comes forward for appraisal, the overall time taken from a scheme first coming onto the table at pre-feasibility stage to its completion on the ground, is not measured. NRG does not count delayed schemes. Similarly, project costs are carefully scrutinized for their efficiency but the overall programme costs do not receive the same level of scrutiny for efficiency. This would provide a window into the level of nugatory cost and inefficiency arising from non-participation as well as highlighting the cost of participation.

For more analysis and recommendations on this issue, refer to section 6.

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<sup>22</sup> For example the current national review of Environment Agency consultation processes by InterAct Networks Evaluation of the use of BTwC for Shaldon Flood Risk Project. Lindsey Colbourne Associates for the Environment Agency. July 2009

## 4.7 Conclusions

As is concluded elsewhere in this report, BTwC is not a black and white option: to engage or not engage, that is not the question<sup>23</sup>. The counter-factual to building *trust* with communities is to build *mistrust* with communities. And the absence of BTwC or inaction or thoughtlessness can and does produce this outcome. It is assumed then that the Environment Agency does wish to build trust.

There is a range of levels of BTwC that can be applied. The base level of applying BTwC, may be no more than a change in **attitude** (the public are not the enemy, stupid, obtusely self interested or scary) or behaviour (being courteous, and listening) by staff. These are explored further in Section 5 alongside low cost **procedures**, like stakeholder analysis, which could be wrapped into the procedures and form **baseline BTwC**.

Beyond this, Areas will have to make a judgment as to whether and how much BTwC to invest in. Typically this will be determined by:

- a) **Whether the work is responding to an established need, with the possibility of an accepted solution or not?** The table below illustrates four very different scenarios:

	<b>Reactive situation</b> Well established history of flooding of the type(s) and extent being considered	<b>Proactive situation</b> Little or no awareness of the flood risk of the type(s) and extent being considered
<b>Likely to be a solution</b> (eg a flood defence scheme) that will solve the problem for everyone	<i>Light touch</i> BTwC engagement may be enough (focused on getting details right)	<i>Full</i> BTwC engagement likely to be necessary to build understanding of flood risk, to work up solutions and agree details
<b>Unlikely to be a solution</b> (eg a flood defence scheme) that will solve the problem for everyone	<i>Full</i> BTwC engagement will be necessary to build understanding of the reasons for lack of solutions, deal with fairness issues, create and enable (a range of) adaptation measures	<i>Full</i> BTwC engagement will be necessary to build understanding of the flood risk and lack of solutions, deal with fairness issues, create and enable (a range of) adaptation measures

The table illustrates that fuller BTwC approaches will be required in proactive situations with the possibility of a flood defence scheme (as in Shaldon) and in both proactive and reactive situations without the possibility of a flood defence scheme being offered.

- b) **One obvious solution or a range of solutions?** Where there is one 'blindingly obvious' way of reducing flood risk (such as maintaining or enhancing existing defences), engagement may be focused on getting the details of that solution right. This will be lighter touch application of BTwC than programmes

<sup>23</sup> Similarly, a recent Science project for the Environment Agency (Mainstreaming Collaboration with Communities and Stakeholders for FCRM, Colbourne 2008) identified one of the pervasive myths within the Environment Agency was that it was possible to choose whether to engage or not: The research showed that this is no longer possible to deliver FCRM without engagement. The question is how much engagement, or what kind, when. See Appendix 8.3.

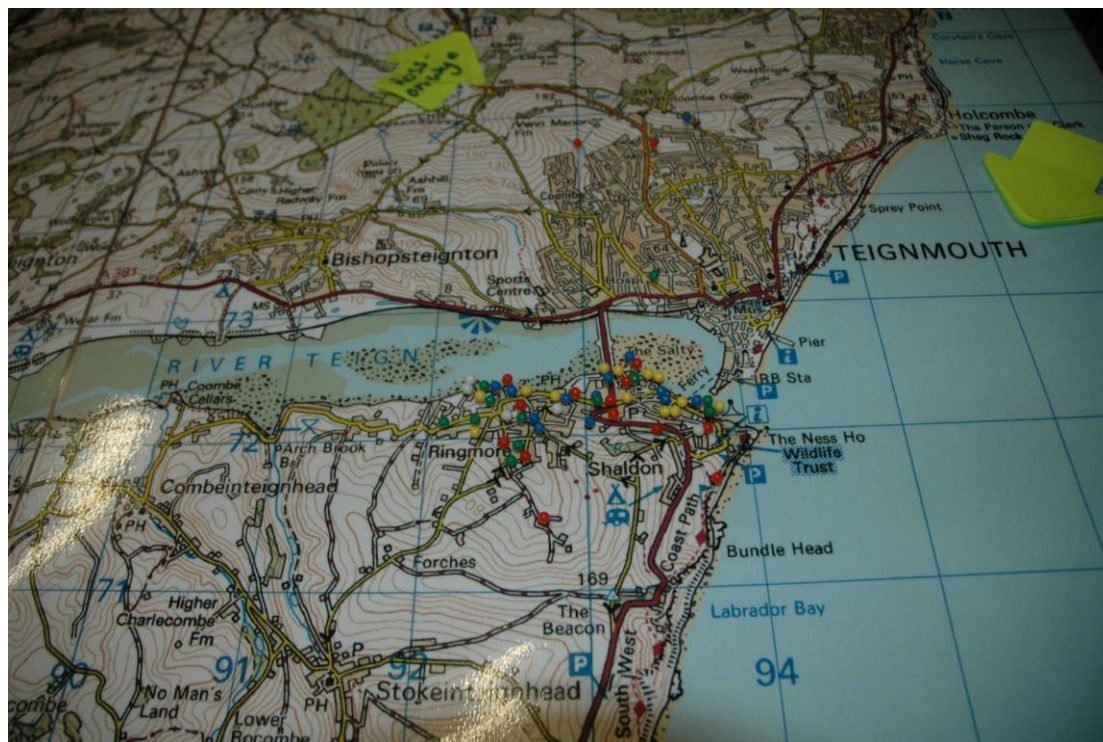
where there may be many different solutions or significantly different permutations of solutions (such as barrage vs. linear defences, or different lines or heights of walls) to reducing flood risk.

- c) **Visually or physically intrusive or not?** Any scheme likely to cut into a sea or river view, prevent access or change the character of a place is almost certain to require enhanced BTwC, involving the community as early as possible to ensure the best amenity, design and finish. By contrast, schemes without significant impact will require much lighter touch BTwC (such as selective liaison with key stakeholders and quality public exhibitions).
- d) **High or low impact of flooding?** Shaldon has a comparatively high cost of annual flood damage and potential loss of life. Getting the scheme completed much sooner rather than later is important. To minimise the objection and time risk, enhanced BTwC is recommended. Conversely, if much less is at stake, enhanced BTwC may not be cost effective.
- e) **Solo delivery or collaborative delivery?** In some situations, the Environment Agency may be in a position to deliver flood risk reduction without the support, active involvement or ownership of the community and other organisations. The application of BTwC in these situations can be light touch. But in other situations, successful implementation may require key organisations to play a major role (e.g. operation of gates by the Parish Council, tackling or integrating issues beyond the remit of the Environment Agency such as surface water flooding), or for individuals, community or public to take action (e.g. flood proofing properties, responding to flood warnings, giving permission for works). The application of BTwC in these situations will need to be much fuller in order not only to get their buy in, but also to ensure that the solution is workable and people will take action when needed.



## 5 How to do BTwC well?

### 5.1 At a minimum the Environment Agency and the public would benefit if the Environment Agency were to bring consistently more engaging attitudes and style to working with the public



#### 5.1.1 Attitudes

In their interviews, ncpms staff and consulting engineers reported being uncomfortable with or actually disliking engaging with the public: it can be a frustrating and fraught experience.

The first Project Manager at Shaldon mentioned in her interview that it wasn't her initial preference to connect with the public. But as a result of Shaldon experience, she has changed her attitude with the realisation that:

- ✓ the public do not see the work of coastal scientists as fact
- ✓ difficult decisions can be shared with the public
- ✓ the public are able to make trade-offs

At the basic level, she considers BTwC as being about **being courteous in dealing with information and the public**. It is about working with rather than against them. Another team member said that BTwC is really just about "treating everyone as we'd want to be treated".

These attitudes were valued by the Liaison Group:

*"The commitment of the Environment Agency personnel and quality was a very important factor.... [The project manager] right from word go showed terrific commitment herself and then having people like the engineering consultants who talked with members of the Liaison Group and communicated well with them and I think that was a very important factor". Liaison Group member*

One of the most important attitudes is that of **valuing what others value**, rather than focusing entirely on what is required by or for the Environment Agency. In Shaldon, the willingness of the team to incorporate issues of concern to the community was central to the community being willing to work with the Environment Agency:

*"There was an awful lot of interesting information at that opening meeting and exhibition. The Environment Agency were saying you've got a problem with flooding from tides in the village, but the villagers experience was flooding from the land. I'd have separated them out so would have had a more solid thing which would have been able to pull in more information about people's experiences and opinions earlier on. These were the issues that have dragged meetings out over a long time."* Liaison Group member

*"An integrated approach makes sense to communities. I know it's a tidal defence scheme but people are a bit confused that an Environment Agency that deals with freshwater flooding all over the country restricts itself in this instance to tidal defences and anything to do with freshwater is to do with someone else! They say they have done their best, and I'm sure they have. But who is involved in Ottery St Mary, or in Gloucestershire? It's a bit like the bulge in the road to Ringmore where the Environment Agency were saying it meant we couldn't include Ringmore. But in the end we did. They'd have had an easier ride if they'd have incorporated the freshwater and Ringmore right from the start. It's all part of the same thing. They are all linked. It's a great learning exercise – you learn who is responsible for what. It's ridiculous but water that runs off roofs and down roads and not into drains is the South West Water's responsibility. If it runs into a drain it is Devon Highways. The surface water flooding group was very important to the community working on the tidal side".* Liaison Group member

*"I was very thrilled that we managed to get the Environment Agency to include the whole of the community, the Parish, by including Ringmore".* Liaison Group member

*"Not shutting the door on other related things is crucial. So if we'd gone to Shaldon and said we are not doing surface water, the community wouldn't have worked with us. So even though it wasn't our responsibility, we stepped out of our remit, making ourselves open to working with them so they'd be willing to work with us."* Environment Agency staff

Another issue that matters to communities is **design detail**. Although 87% of people attending the second (2007) exhibition expressed support for the 'wall and gate based' flood defence scheme, many commented on the fact that this support was 'conditional' on the final finish. But very little attention was actually paid to illustrating or detailing what was proposed, and this was of particular concern to members of the Liaison Group. Indeed, some Liaison Group members felt that the detail was exactly what they should be focusing on:

*"The design group never really got onto design, but I joined the group because I'd be interested to know the finish. That seemed to get pushed to one side. It's the finish that's what matters. The parish council have to mitigate its effect on us as a community and one is the visual effect."* Liaison Group member

*"My view is the Liaison Group should have been about the detail of the wall, how it looked, where it went, where the gates should be, where we could actually have*

*an influence. We helped stop massive howlers in terms of the design, but not necessarily about the need for it [a flood defence scheme] or not. If I was Environment Agency I'd want to get as much approval as I could for the details, and that was what the LG was about"* Liaison Group member

In the end, after significant pressure from the Liaison Group and from the independent facilitator, the team did respond to calls for examples of finishes. They also changed one proposed concrete finish section to stone.

The NEAS member of the Environment Agency team suggests **including design and finish earlier in the process**:

*"Shaldon has shown me that we should be building appearance into the outline design. Appearance is more than detailed design, it needs to be built into outline design stage because it can make or break the acceptability of the scheme".* Environment Agency staff

For more on this issue see the section 5.2 on procedures.

There are serious risks in staff not having the BTwC attitude, and not being encouraged or supported in working in that way. In Shaldon the change in attitude of the new Environment Agency team (brought in in Autumn 2008) was noticed by the Liaison Group straight away – the lack of attention or involvement in the details, an attempt to reduce the involvement of the liaison group in the run up to planning, the use of a different style of interaction (Saturday morning drop ins):

*"The four drop in sessions on the Saturday mornings were a bit weak. All they had were the plan and line drawings without any pictures of the artists view of what it should be like: people go in and they can't work out from a plan what the height of the wall is. All these plans just on the table and you had to grovel through. It was a shame. We had this one stage to go, where details matter. It is very important that the final open day and exhibitions continue to be of a high quality, with actual pictures of design that people can understand."* Liaison Group member

For more on continuity of teams, see section 5.2.5.

### 5.1.2 Style

An easy way to reflect a change in attitude towards working *with* rather than *despite* the public (or communities) is to ensure **a change in the style of interaction between the Environment Agency, stakeholders and communities**. This change in style was mentioned by Environment Agency staff and engineering consultants as one of the key ways that they have used lessons learned from Shaldon on other schemes.

The changes in style recommended by staff and consultants on the Shaldon project include:

- ✓ More **considerate communications** such as the way letters are written and how people are greeted on arrival at a meeting or exhibition, the design of exhibition boards so that they tell a story rather than simply reflect engineering interests.

*"One of the things I'll always do differently now – like at Boscastle - is how you make an event welcoming to the public, - even little things like saying 'you are invited to'... rather than 'we are holding a drop in'. But also making sure everyone attending the exhibition was greeted and shown around."*  
Environment Agency staff

*"Getting people [visiting the exhibition] to put a pin on the map to show where they are from on arrival – it gives a much easier look at where our customers are coming from and lets them feel part of it straight away. It enhanced the relationship and settle them in a bit before they went off to look at the exhibition boards. A tangible way in".* Environment Agency staff

- ✓ Ensuring the style of interactions are as much about **enabling others to influence** the Environment Agency as about the Environment Agency influencing or educating. For example at exhibitions, in one: one meetings, in the design of feedback forms and questionnaires.

*"The exhibition in 2005 was a very good way of opening up the whole thing to the whole community as opposed to a restricted liaison group. Very good display and there were opportunities to talk to people. Nice drawings, felt that whatever idea you had you could put it down. Set the framework quite well."*  
Liaison Group member

*"Challenging the use of things like consultation and exhibitions to just tell others our decisions. Is there an opportunity to use what they are telling us, or is it that we want to tell them? For example in Teignmouth, when we got involved, we were able to challenge them and find out what could be really influenced by the community input, so options were offered rather than a fait accompli".* Environment Agency staff

*"Need for consultants to understand the difference between what they do for preparing for an exhibition and what an engagement specialist would say is needed".* Environment Agency staff

- ✓ Providing a **level playing field for debate** in which all interested parties (including the Environment Agency) can have their say, and discuss their views, rather than a question, attack, defend relationship. This requires a separation of the Environment Agency's advice and decision making roles from the 'convening' role which brings together interested parties.

*"Trust was established by the actual presence and by the even-handed, unbiased, skilful manner in which the meetings were led. In a very short time the 'independent' quality was established and 'trust' was cemented. The service of the Independent Facilitator was a vital factor in the achievement of the objective".* Liaison Group member

*"Of that first public meeting I was really interested to see what other people were saying about their experience, what they were writing on those little tickets and the flip charts. It showed common ground".* Liaison Group member

*"I wasn't really convinced initially about having those flip charts up to record and show public comments at the exhibition. But I used it at Teignmouth – I explained it to a graduate engineer – and people used it and mentioned it in the feedback that it was great to see other's comments and great to have that opportunity: it meant it was less us and them and more of an open debate".* Environment Agency staff

A couple of staff members referred to the temptation to revert to back to business as usual styles under pressure, and the need for an engagement 'lead' to ensure **consistency of style**:

*"One thing I was quite shocked by was the fact that everyone reverts to type as soon as they can – when things get difficult they go back to a DAD rather than doing EDD... [There is a] need for an independent facilitator - for someone with enough knowledge and confidence and experience to be able to understand how to do engagement, how to moderate it to what is needed and how to sell it and keep people on track even when things get a bit wrong, like funding is withdrawn. Its then that the temptation to change back into the old-style is too much.". Environment Agency staff*

*"The employment of an independent facilitator took a lot of heat out of the situation because you knew there is a basic antagonism to authority and the use of an independent facilitator meant – even at the last with someone coming into one of the meetings and blasting off you were able to say you weren't an Environment Agency stooge. That worked well right the way through".* Liaison Group member

### 5.1.3 Skills

Staff mentioned the need for basic level communication skills in order to deliver BTwC:

*"Some of the skills are really basic. Like the ability to question properly, and to start a conversation with 'hello how are you' rather than 'what do you want'". Give them the practical things – like the changing your invite to a 'you are invited' – the value of flip charts, explaining how sign in sheets mean you can keep in touch with people."* Environment Agency staff

One of the consulting engineers at Shaldon thinks that at the minimum, BTwC is about getting the right people in the team, those who are:

- ✓ Able to bite their tongue and not get defensive
- ✓ Not roll over when things get tough
- ✓ Play devils' advocate.

Others team members reported greater confidence in a deeper range of styles, techniques and skills for engaging with the community

*"I now feel confident in the range and depth of communication tools we should be using to get the result/feedback we need: it isn't good enough to just present engineering drawings/the option(s) we have decided on".* Environment Agency staff

Some however, have drawn attention to the difficulty in transferring the skills to other teams:

*"We'd certainly be able to do it more easily now, the stuff for Teignmouth was a little easier because although we had a different project manager, the consultants were the same, and they are able to reinforce the same messages. It would be different again with a different team. We're looking at Cornwall incinerator today and we're looking to do some surgery type events end April/mid May and yes it will be different as there won't be the comfort zone of the engineering consultants who have done it before."* Environment Agency staff

If engagement is to become part of everyday business, or an essential toolkit in the Environment Agency's armory, then the Environment Agency needs to build the style, skills and confidence of its staff and contractors in working with the public.

*"I've concerns about how to do it in more places, unless we are able to raise people's skills so it doesn't cause so much stress. I think the reason they did revert to type under pressure is that they don't have the skills, or because they are just not that type of person. How do you even get them to recognise that they are not that type of person?"*  
Environment Agency staff

*"There was the occasional email but no visible support or recognition that the team was doing things differently. It didn't really feel supported in doing things in this new way."* Environment Agency staff

Getting an organisation to value and work with the public is not something to undertake lightly. When British Airways decided to do it in the early 1980s, it took these huge highly developed training programmes and changes in performance measures and the systems all led from the top. If **Environment Agency does want to embrace engagement, much will need to be invested in developing attitudes, style and skills:**

*"The one thing that is really hard to get across is the whole BTwC approach and why and how it works. The bigger picture. Instead of expecting the project team to learn on the way, make them all go together on the training course and get their knowledge up to speed over 2 days rather than 6 months. If you did that in say 10 projects in each region, you'd hit so many people on new skills, and they'd start applying it to new bits of work. In Shaldon it took about 6 months to get the team up to speed".*

*"We probably need to move to topic specialisms amongst the BTwC mentors and business partners. So there's a communications person who understands flood – they would be better at the relationships and language".*

Environment Agency staff



## 5.2 There are key planning and preparation elements of BTwC which should consistently be built into Environment Agency procedures

This section outlines some basic **planning and preparation** elements of the BTwC approach. Better planning of engagement would be relatively easy to deliver when integrated within existing procedures for teams, and would provide immediate improvements in business as usual approaches.

As one member of the Environment Agency staff said:

*"Its not a question of before BTwC there was no engagement – built into NEAS procedures there is lots of consultation and communication with the public. BTwC should look at the procedures in every team – their operational instructions (OI)<sup>24</sup> and ensure thorough understanding of BTwC is embedded in those procedures".*

This report shows that there is much to learn from the Shaldon experience, and the existing procedures (such as the NEAS procedures) need to be first reviewed in the light of experience and improving those practices where possible. This section highlights some of those changes.

### 5.2.1 Deciding how much engagement is appropriate given the risks.

The Environment Agency does not operate in a vacuum. By design or default, the Environment Agency will build or destroy trust every time it undertakes work affecting individuals, communities or organisations. The days of (expert) institutions deciding from on high and 'doing to' a passive community are over. The community (or parts of it at least) will always demand engagement of some kind, at some point. Better to plan for the most appropriate engagement, and to deliver it well, rather than be on the back foot. Engagement is not 'warm and fluffy' : good engagement is essential to building social capital, change management, risk reduction and effective delivery. Whether to use a BTwC approach or not is not a yes/no decision, but a question of **how and how much**. Furthermore, making the decision about how and how much is a strategic decision, requiring appropriate BTwC or engagement skills and insights.

Environment Agency staff, engineering consultants *and* liaison group members that have been involved in Shaldon are clear that the amount and type of engagement undertaken by the Environment Agency should vary according to the circumstances. For example, one of the engineering consultants has suggested the 'amount' of engagement should be determined by:

- whether it is a reactive (after flooding has been experienced) or proactive (before flooding has been experienced) scheme<sup>25</sup>
- whether there is one obvious solution or a range of solutions
- whether delivery requires the ownership and actions of others

The most cost-beneficial form of engagement will depend on the situation in which it is taking place. For communities that haven't been flooded (but that are being considered for a flood defence scheme (FDS)), it will be essential to start with agreeing the problem to be solved before looking for solutions. This is particularly true in communities where it may not be able to offer risk reduction to all individuals in the

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<sup>24</sup> This is the new term for what used to be known as Agency Management Systems (AMS)

<sup>25</sup> Communities that have experienced flooding are more likely to accept or understand the need for a FDS, but less likely to accept the need for no active intervention or for managed realignment



community, indeed it may make the risk to some greater while reducing the risk to others. But for those communities that have been flooded this may not be necessary if floods and their consequences are well understood, and outcomes are likely to be similar for all. Similarly, in some situations there may be big options to discuss (barrage, wall, flood warning, property resilience) whereas in others there will just be micro choices, such as finishes, locations of gates.

For example, Boscastle FDS was a reactive scheme, with limited solutions which were to be operated by organisations (rather than the community). Engagement was focused on the details and undertaken quickly. Shaldon by contrast was a proactive scheme, with a range of possible solutions. The operation of the preferred scheme with gates required full ownership by the Parish Council. There was more risk of non-delivery, and more options on the table in Shaldon than in Boscastle, and more comprehensive engagement was required. Teignmouth (round 2) is somewhere in between:

*"We threw the whole Building Trust toolkit at Shaldon. Now at Teignmouth – a smaller scheme - we are judging the public mood, working closely with some of the key interests and saying yes to X and no to Y and Z. No one can know the true cost of Building Trust until a few more schemes have been done. But consultants who have used engagement will use it again and with other clients (not just with Environment Agency). Unless it is an emergency scheme, we must do something about building trust to get into the community."* Consultant

*"I'm certain in my own mind, I know it is very expensive in time and resources, but certainly because of the failed Teignmouth situation and the suspicions that have been created, the Environment Agency were right in deciding to go down the maximum liaison route".* Liaison Group member

*"If a scheme will have to depend upon the voluntary involvement of the community it is designed to serve for its eventual operation (viz. the physical shutting and opening of floodgates) it is essential that the scheme achieves 'ownership' by that community. I know that the kind of approach used in Shaldon and Ringmore worked. I cannot envisage any other approach being as successful in the same circumstances. Should 'Community Involvement' not be an essential feature of a scheme, then it could be imposed without such finesse".* Liaison Group member

**The very first step in beginning a piece of FCRM work should include making an outline decision about how much engagement might be appropriate.** This step is 'Step 0' in the 6 step BTwC planning process. A basic tool already exists<sup>26</sup> to assist teams in making these judgments, and has already been integrated into the project appraisal processes of FCRM-AG. It could go further, and be integrated as the first step in all team's work.

*"Critical to us doing engagement in the future is the ability to understand how much engagement we need to do and tailoring our approaches to those scales of engagement"*

This tool also indicates the kinds of approaches to engagement that might be appropriate for each of these different situations. Further work could be done to develop particular tools for FCRM (for example, use of flood wardens or writing flood plans) as well as flood defence solutions.

In addition to this change in procedure, changes will need to be made to the risk

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<sup>26</sup> IISRF, SD6 and BTwC by Lindsey Colbourne Associates

register. In the **standard risk register** which goes forward as part of the PAR, the cost of planning rejection is recorded as £150,000, and the cost associated with public objection is recorded as £30,000. Experience now indicates that the impact of public objection is the same as planning rejection, i.e. the scheme is scrapped. Therefore the cost associated with public objection and planning rejection in the risk register should be the same.

### 5.2.2 Integrating plans for NEAS, engagement, ncpms, and communications.

Project teams should produce an integrated (project) plan which brings together NEAS, BTwC steps 1 - 4, communications and ncpms requirements.

*"Bringing NEAS and ncpms together so that NEAS doesn't have a comms plan around EIA, its all integrated is essential. So we can see how they relate to each other and then they have to communicate with each other instead of going off and doing NEAS process separately". Environment Agency staff*

This will require significant preparation time involving staff from each relevant part of the business. In Shaldon, it was done for the first time:

*"There was better team working and better understanding of what engagement meant across the wider range of staff because of all the planning work at the beginning – the fact that [the facilitator] clearly roped all the staff in and they didn't go off on their own. [The project manager] was very skilled at keeping all docs and everything together. For example we did a doc called 'engagement meets engineer', we made clear statements of what we can and can't do, what will change as a result of talking to the community, how we will talk to people. Integrating everyone's work into one plan, including NEAS. This was critical". Environment Agency staff*

**Integrated templates** could be produced to assist this, perhaps based on the ones created for Shaldon. The BTwC 6 steps already incorporates key points, and these need to be integrated with NEAS and ncpms and communications requirements. The integrated plan would include

- ✓ Writing clear **aims**

*"A big thing has been learning about the need for clarity, to know what we are doing. How on earth can we go and explain stuff to the public when we haven't a clue ourselves. If a member of the public asked you, you'd give an answer to them but it might not be clear. It is very important the team has agreed these things". Environment Agency staff*

- ✓ Undertaking **stakeholder analysis**

*"One of the things I'd always do again is determining who the stakeholders are. Particularly local community, trade and employment groups as well as each individual in the locale". Consultant*

- ✓ Carefully thought through understanding of **requirements, constraints** and preferences

*"The thing about the gates – the dictat from the Environment Agency was no flood gates because of the Bristol incident where gates weren't closed. It was a self imposed policy because of one failure. It was one reason Teignmouth was rejected." Consultant*

*"In Shaldon the facilitator questioned the assumption against gates and we ended up with saying 'we'd prefer not to have any'. If we'd have started off with that point of view, rather than having to, it would have saved months!" Environment Agency staff*

- ✓ Clear articulation of **uncertainties** and risks (see the discussion about data in Section 6)

- ✓ Genuine consideration of **information required** from the community [not assuming that the Environment Agency can know all the answers]

*"Much of what we got I wouldn't put down as an engagement cost, but an engineering cost: we need the information from the community on things like water flows or which access points are most important, when. We just don't know as much as they do". Consultant*

*"With Shaldon, the way we got this information was to get it much earlier in the process when things could be changed and adapted more easily, and the 'right' – the acceptable or integrated – way forward reached without testing lots of other ideas first". Environment Agency staff*

### 5.2.3 Joining up across flooding issues and organisations

The Shaldon pilot showed the importance of introducing ways of working within the Environment Agency that allow for:

- ✓ An integrated approach to **all forms of flooding** (whoever's remit they fall under) including working closely with other organisations such as local authorities and statutory consultees

*"Not shutting the door on other related things is crucial. So if we'd gone to Shaldon and said we are not doing surface water, the community wouldn't have worked with us. So even though it wasn't our responsibility, we stepped out of our remit, making ourselves open to working with them so they'd be willing to work with us." Environment Agency staff*

- ✓ Using **all sources of information (and funding)** relating to floods and solutions (from building something through to personal resilience measures), including information from the community

*"We've got a better scheme in terms of design because of the ideas from the community" Environment Agency staff*

*"It's a bit ironic isn't it, that it might end up that those members of the community that said we had extreme tides wrong, will end up being right – at least right in the historical sense. There's always the climate change thing to deal with!"*

Environment Agency staff

- ✓ Considering the full **range of solutions** - not just engineering solutions - to reduce flood risk. This should include personal resilience, self help measures, flood warnings and so on.

*"One of the best things we did in Shaldon, was to get a flood plan organised, working with the Environment Agency. It came out of the funding hiatus when we thought we wouldn't get the scheme, but we should organise ourselves to respond to the flooding". Liaison Group member*

- ✓ Dealing with issues that **matter to people**. For example, focusing more on details of design at an earlier stage in the process:

*"Appearance is more than detailed design, it needs to be built into outline design stage because it can make or break the acceptability of the scheme". Environment Agency staff*

*"In Lympstone it was handy to use the local pressure to get the surface water fixed: forced drainage authorities to do what they should be doing." Consultant*

These recommendations chime with the Pitt review. Now that the Environment Agency has the strategic overview roles, it is pushed in the direction of engagement as a source of better information about all types of flooding. Engagement becomes a vehicle for

producing a coherent scheme which takes into account all the various interests and needs in an area.

#### 5.2.4 Use of (independent) engagement expertise

*"The public are generally distrustful of public organisations: if the Environment Agency was working in an environment where public organisations as a matter of course engage with the public in making decisions, it would make their job a lot easier".*

Consultant

The Environment Agency could be considered in the position of 'prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner' in relation to flood schemes. Similarly, consulting engineering firms have an interest in building a scheme. There is evidence from the Shaldon pilot that this was of concern to members of the Liaison Group:

*"Half the team sat in on the Liaison Group are engineers. I know them all because they buy their trucks here [at the company I work for]. It can't be right, them championing the wall. They are all for it because they want the business. It just feels like we are being railroaded. .... Another factor which makes some people twitchy is the height of the defence is joined to the funding or the other way round and so its almost being driven by what we can get funding for, it feels fundamentally wrong that it isn't do we want it and how high should it be. Take the problem with the insurance height and funding height. It feels like the Environment Agency isn't listening. Its just going through its institutionalised way of getting funding and that equates to the wall that is that height: they haven't got the interests of the village at heart but the funding". Liaison Group member*

This perception of vested interests is not just restricted to the Environment Agency and engineers: other public organisations are considered to have interests in particular solutions and issues. For example, in Teignmouth, the District council is considered as having too much focus on economic development:

*"The hundred or so fishermen don't trust the district council because they were trying to get Back Beach to develop a hotel".*

By contrast, an **independent facilitator** is someone without a particular stake in the area or issue being discussed. They can act as a 'third party' or 'neutral convenor' which allows all parties (including the Environment Agency) to work together without one party taking over:

*"the employment of an independent facilitator took a lot of heat out of the situation because you knew there is a basic antagonism to authority and the use of an independent facilitator meant – even at the last with X coming in blasting off you were able to say you weren't an Environment Agency stooge. That worked well right the way through". Liaison Group member*

It may be possible to use internal facilitators, or to use other organisations (which don't have a stake in the outcome) for this role in less conflictual situations. Work needs to be done to clarify what would need to be included in and required of those undertaking the convening role. This could build on the strong history in the UK of environmental conflict resolution and dialogue work.

### 5.2.5 Continuity of teams

The Shaldon pilot points to the benefit of keeping the same project manager with the same skills and portfolio throughout the design and construction of the scheme.

There are high quality appraisal and high quality delivery teams, with specialists on each, but the transition between the two does not work in an engaged process:

*"Can't just have [the appraisal project manager] walk off the job with all that knowledge and [the design/construction project manager] comes in without any experience of the history. The problem was that they hadn't been exposed to the facilitator".* Environment Agency staff

*"I'm not sure it was a good idea to change from [the appraisal project manager] to a new man all of the sudden once the scheme had been funded. Why not have the continuity of the person that we know. I thought it was dreadful".*

Liaison Group member

Perhaps the notion of **Scheme Shepherding** could be introduced to support continuity of approach and trust: The project manager or (internal) facilitator could take on the role of continuity of approach, chasing through difficulties and providing a point of contact throughout the scheme's design and construction.

### 5.2.6 Communication requirements

There was evidence in the Shaldon pilot that current communications requirements are not consistent with good practice. In fact in some cases they held back basic good practice. Guidance and templates need to be checked for consistency, including letters, websites, public meetings, responding to inquiries, designing exhibition boards, questionnaires.

## 5.3 Methods and techniques for engaging with communities

In addition to the BTwC approach to planning engagement (see previous section), the Shaldon pilot demonstrated the value of some particular methods and techniques. Detailed guidance exists on most of these already, as part of the BTwC programme<sup>27</sup>.

### 5.3.1 Light touch methods and techniques which could become standard practice

In engaging with the (whole) wider community:

- ✓ Wording and use of **direct communications** and letters to all households: From basics such as 'you are invited to...' to removing ambiguity from the message and telling a clear story. Reaching all householders directly (e.g. with a letter) rather than relying on press releases

*"Because of Shaldon, the Clyst St Mary project manager asked for help with a newsletter. We turned it into a direct mail letter to 100 residents, supported with an article in the parish newsletter. Traditionally it would just be a news release at the beginning and end and a newsletter to pick up in the shop."*  
Environment Agency staff
- ✓ **Standard materials** such as how to explain flood risk, how to explain the Environment Agency's role. See detailed guidance.
- ✓ **Websites:** *"More and more people expect information from the web"*. Website information is often used by active participants as an indicator of how open and transparent a process is. Maximise the use of these as a way of making sure that information is available to whoever wants it. These websites should be linked to the Environment Agency, or to an independent 'convenor' rather than to an engineering consultant's website as the latter reduces transparency and accountability of decision making, giving the impression that it is the consultant engineer's project (see 5.2.4).
- ✓ Keeping in touch with and providing **feedback** to participants. Capture people's contact details and ask them how they want to be involved in the future. Use these to maintain ongoing relationship with them. Rather than responding to each individual's query or feedback after an exhibition, collate all responses and send out a complete set of answers/results.
- ✓ **1:1 contact:** use 1:1 contact to sort out specific issues. These can be meetings with individuals, or with particular interest groups. But they need to be explicitly part of the wider engagement process, otherwise they can create suspicions of 'divide and rule'.
- ✓ **Proactive use of local media:** Don't wait for others to take the lead. Use media in a way which is consistent with the engagement approach: avoid the 'us and them', use it to encourage more to get involved, use it to support and promote working together.
- ✓ **Interactive exhibitions/drop ins/surgeries:** See detailed guidance<sup>28</sup>, including meeting and greeting everyone who arrives, using an orientation map, interactive maps for comments, flip charts for comments, well designed exhibition boards, well designed handouts and takeaway materials, café area, getting other organisations to attend

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<sup>27</sup> See Building Trust with Communities

<sup>28</sup> Available from Building Trust with Communities, Communities Relations Team, Bristol Office.

*"In Teignmouth I've used everything I learned in Shaldon again, in respect of public exhibition: the briefings [the independent facilitator] gave to us on staffing, pre-exhibition meeting and so on. And the response –feedback from project manager and his boss has been really really positive". Environment Agency staff*

- ✓ Deliberative questionnaires: many staff have used the Shaldon exhibition questionnaire as the template for future consultations as it *"gives you useable information that is actually thought through"*. See detailed guidance.

In addition, staff and engineering consultants suggest that engaging in **more depth with interested individuals and organisations** benefits from:

- ✓ Taking a **step by step approach** to defining the problem (flood risk) before looking at solutions
- ✓ **Independent facilitation**. See previous section.

*"I have to say it is the first time I've ever worked in a situation where an independent facilitator has run a meeting. I was a bit iffy to start off with but I must endorse the success of it". Liaison group member*

*"it's a false economy not to have a professional facilitator. Always try to use a professional facilitator anywhere you have a meeting where you want something out of it. In-house people are not facilitators but chair people"*  
Environment Agency staff

- ✓ **Task and finish groups** to work through particular issues.
- ✓ Seeking out and using **local technical knowledge** rather than defending against it.
- ✓ The use of **visits/tours** to explore the practical realities and details, showing and exploring rather than telling.



### 5.3.2 Methods and techniques for dealing with proactive, intrusive schemes

As we have described earlier in this report, the Shaldon pilot is a full and extensive application of the BTwC approach. In the previous sections we have highlighted some basic recommendations, such as changes in staff and consultant attitudes and style, and basic techniques and methods which can be applied whenever the Environment Agency engages with communities and stakeholders. In this section we highlight methods and techniques which are more intensive and therefore relevant to the more controversial schemes.

#### ✓ **Independent facilitator as convenor**

For proactive, highly contentious schemes, using a facilitator as an independent convenor who designs the engagement process and works closely with the project team in making key decisions (rather than just running meetings) is essential. This person (or organisation) would have the authority to stop things happening, being done or going out that aren't appropriate.

*"Like in Didsbury, engagement consultant produced changes to newsletter and the contractor didn't use them. There has to be acceptance that they are the specialist – like we accept the project manager is specialist on engineering".*  
Environment Agency staff

The convenor role is considered further in section 6.

#### ✓ **Liaison groups**

For complicated schemes, Liaison Groups that work through the detail and complexity in full view of the wider community will be essential. See section 6 for more details.

#### ✓ **Public meetings**

Holding or attending a public meeting has recently been avoided by the Environment Agency in favour of public exhibitions, drop ins and surgeries. However, public meetings may be required for highly contentious issues where the Environment Agency may be accused of 'divide and rule'. Success will be dependent on good design and use of an independent, professional facilitator, rather than a good chair.

#### ✓ **Detailed problem definition**

Unless the existence of a problem to be solved has been widely understood and articulated, it is not possible to get buy-in to a solution to the problem. This lack of buy into the problem, or the constraints on that problem underpin many of the most contentious schemes. The Shaldon pilot demonstrates the value of defining that problem through a '**shared sense making**' approach, whereby the Environment Agency view is tested, expanded and validated by the views of others.

#### ✓ **Detailed generation and analysis of options**

The Shaldon pilot also demonstrates the value of exploring the full range of possible solutions:

*"We looked at every possibility, all sorts of wild ideas [for reducing flood risk in Shaldon and Ringmore]. It wouldn't matter if you had a consultation of 5x as many people: we wouldn't have come up with any other answers. We only came back down to a wall – I don't think anyone felt they were led into a wall as if it was a predetermined answer of the Environment Agency – after making suggestions each was dismissed as being impractical whether for physical or financially. We needed to go through that assessment together. The Environment Agency had to be open to new ideas if we'd have come up with something better".* Liaison Group member

Interviews with both the Liaison Group and with staff and engineering consultants showed that those who have experienced the full professionally run BTwC process have become **convinced of its value**. Those that have not, by and large, don't see its value. There is something about it being one of those things that needs to be experienced before it is understood and valued sufficiently to take seriously, and this must be taken into account when applying BTwC on contentious issues in the future.

## 6 Moving on from the Shaldon pilot: what next

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The previous section suggests some basic changes to Environment Agency procedures and activities as a result of lessons learned from the Shaldon pilot. This section addresses the broader issues and questions raised by the pilot, from the things that didn't go so well. Identified by staff and members of the community alike, they warrant urgent attention, consistently across the Environment Agency. If left unaddressed, area front line staff will continue to be caught between conflicting internal and external requirements.

The issues were brought into sharp focus between June 2008 and March 2009 when:

### **Critical issues raised by the Shaldon BTwC pilot: June 2008 – March 2009**

By **October 2007**, the Shaldon and Ringmore Liaison Group and the public exhibition had shown clear 'qualified support' for the development of a wall/gate flood defence scheme to reduce flood risk in Shaldon and Ringmore.

This support was based on the Environment Agency's assessment of risk to life and property (which some still found hard to believe as it ran counter to their own observations of tide levels) and was dependent on successfully designing a scheme that did not fundamentally change the village character, that dealt with surface water and sewage flooding issues and that was no higher than absolutely necessary (leaving room for future heightening of the wall with sea level rise).

At this point:

- The proposed scheme went into the internal economic assessment process in October 2007.
- In March 2008, the internal economic assessment concluded the wall was required to offer 1:300 protection, 90mm (3.5") higher than the 1:200 year protection used at the public exhibition and discussed with the Liaison Group.

- A letter was drafted to the Liaison Group to inform them in March 2008, but was never sent as concerns were raised by the Communications Business Partner and external facilitator as to how to introduce the raised height of the wall
- This hiatus coincided with early sight of the revised Extreme Tides Levels report which indicated a reduction in the predicted water levels, although this was considered too close to the PAR submission date to be able to do anything about it in the PAR. Engineering consultants made changes to estimates of wave action which meant that the wall could be lowered, thus cancelling out the change in wall height
- PAR submitted to NRG, early June 2008. Approval given, August 2008.
- The letter was sent to the Liaison Group informing them of the approval, and the height being that which was recommended by the Liaison Group
- A new ncpms team came in September 2008 including a new Project Manager and Project Executive from the delivery team.
- A Liaison Group meeting was convened in October 2008, one year after the previous meeting. No sub-group meetings (including surface water group) had been convened in this time.
- October 2008 Liaison Group meeting, with new team, was more confrontational than previous meetings: New team surprised by the lack of enthusiasm for the scheme from some members of the Liaison Group. Some Liaison Group members felt the tone adopted by Environment Agency mis-represented how enthusiastic they were about the scheme. Liaison Group also unhappy about the level of involvement they were to have in the run up to planning submission and requested additional meetings to discuss design and finish details
- Team became aware of District Council conservation officer objections, including a preference for a wall of 'differing heights' which could imply building up walls in some places
- Team put on informal drop ins on Saturdays, where people could look at plans. These partly very well and partly very badly received.
- Planning application submitted, and public exhibition held: More than 300 people attended: approximately 2/3 for, 1/3 against the scheme
- While application in the planning process, internal discussions were held re: possibility of withdrawing application due to Revisions to Extreme Tide Level
- 8 April 2009, Environment Agency issues press release and withdraws planning application for Shaldon and Ringmore Scheme in order to assess the new extreme tide and Climate Impact Programme data 'later in the year'. Project team suspended.

The sections below explore these events – and related issues - further. The questions that need to be answered are:

- What policy is driving the work of the Environment Agency – best value versus public acceptability and resilience?
- How to deal with changing data and requirements such as extreme tide levels, sea level rise, priority score, compensation, policies and funding?
- Does engagement bring welcome or unwelcome scrutiny and accountability?

- How to avoid the temptation to use engagement as manipulation or 'education in disguise'?
- Participation, representation and democracy. How to know when a remit to act has been secured from the community?

## 6.1 What policy is driving the work of the Environment Agency– best value vs. public acceptability and resilience?

NRG's objective is '**best value**' for the public purse, and that tends towards higher flood defences to meet longer flood return periods. In the case of Shaldon this would have been 1:1000 years. However, these requirements do not necessarily make sense from the community side. As one Liaison Group member put it:

*"It feels like the height [of the wall] is being driven by the availability of funding. Because who knows what happens – it will be revisited in 40 years anyway – why not build to 1:75 [as required by insurance companies] and add more on later. It feels like the drivers are wrong: it has to be this high because funding requires it rather than what we need for the next generation".*

Liaison Group member

But NRG does not have public **acceptability** as an objective, so it is down to the project team to manage the community's requirements on the one hand (as one Liaison Group member said "No one really wants a wall around them, so we are always going to try to minimise it."), and NRG's on the other. In Shaldon, a 1:200 year gated scheme had been shown to be the highest that could be publically acceptable. Re-calculations meant it was possible to amend the scheme to offer 1:300 years' protection (a level of protection that NRG accepted) at the same height, by revising down the wave height actions.

Part of the scheme's acceptability was that it was gated. And it was only possible to have it gated if the community took on the operation of the gates. And the community – via the Parish Council - only took on the operation because they were engaged in the BTwC approach:

*"If a scheme will have to depend upon the voluntary involvement of the community it is designed to serve for it's eventual operation (viz. the physical shutting and opening of floodgates) it is essential that the scheme achieves 'ownership' by that community. I cannot envisage any other approach being as successful in the same circumstances".* Liaison Group member

So this was essential to a successful scheme. But again, NRG does not include increasing flood **resilience** within its objectives. Conversely, public acceptability and flood resilience can both be increased as a result of engagement and are the core drivers of the BTwC approach. However, BTwC is not policy, it is merely tools and guidance:

*"If we have a policy it means that the Environment Agency accepts the cost of working in this new way. The reason we had BTWC in the first place is that Defra wouldn't give us extra funds for the implications of having an engagement policy so we went for improving how we worked within our existing funding regime, developing BTWC guidance, training and skills."*  
Environment Agency staff

So these acceptability and flood resilience benefits of engagement may be of value to Defra and government ministers but don't feature in the Environment Agency's score card. Unless given a place, they are always going to be second fiddle to other objectives, which, as in Shaldon, will undermine what is required for good engagement, and building trust.



## 6.2 How to deal with changing data and requirements such as extreme tide levels, sea level rise, priority score, compensation, policies and funding?

*"They should build into return periods the uncertainty limits (this is a 1:200 +/- 50 years). Once you do that you'll start to get some more sensible decisions."* Environment Agency staff

*"Flooding from the sea doesn't often happen and people have difficulty looking into the future that far ahead and others have a view about the sea levels that don't agree with the Environment Agency".* Liaison Group member

*"One of the most useful documents was of the tide height in layman's terms – should have come to meeting one with that".* Liaison Group member

The Environment Agency makes sophisticated appraisals based on sophisticated analysis and models based on changeable data. The result is that, overnight, a 1:100 scheme can become 1:65, a high cost scheme can be withdrawn at the point of design and construction, and a community can be misled.

The scientific supply chain to the specific projected flood risk at Shaldon is long and complicated. It is based on:

- ✓ Defra policy for sea level rise allowances (Oct 2006)
- ✓ Proudman Oceanographic lab analysis to calculate Extreme tide level predictions
- ✓ Wave action analysis
- ✓ Extent of flood envelope derived from topographic data and over-topping simulation using the Tuflow model
- ✓ Hydrology
- ✓ Local experience and observation including local tide gauge data
- ✓ Prediction of flood duration
- ✓ Assessment of flood damage to property and the environment using saline methods from "The Benefits of Flood and Coastal Defence: Techniques and Data: The Multi-Coloured Manual"

The forecasts can and do change year on year, as new data becomes available and climate change is better understood. Defra can and does change its priority score funding criteria. Entirely unpredicted events occur, as at Boscastle. Some of the analysis is, partly, a matter of judgment or as the chief executive of the Environment Agency has said, 'it is weather forecasting'.

The consequence at Shaldon is that the Environment Agency has gone to the community with a quite specific flood risk and has presented that risk in return periods as fixed (other than future climate-change induced sea level rise). The reality is that the flood risk is real but has a significant variance. As of today, the science can only produce a risk to +/- X% accuracy, X being significant. By presenting flood risks as precise and certain, the Environment Agency is presenting a false premise. For BTwC to work, the flood risk must be presented accurately (which means with variance), and the Environment Agency and the community have to come to its decisions with this uncertainty. This is an added complication but a reality in an uncertain world. The



alternative is going back to the community with flood defence heights rising and falling like fashions in hem lines.

In Shaldon, that is exactly what happened. At the beginning of the BTwC process, the community asked questions about changes in defence height requirements as evident in recent housing developments. Just before the PAR was submitted, changes in sea level and wave action were discussed by the team and resolved so that the defence height could remain the same. But the scheme was put on hold in April 2009, during the scheme's planning application, as explained by the Environment Agency's press release:

*"Following advice from the South West Regional Flood Defence Committee today the Environment Agency is to delay progress with its £8.5 million tidal defence proposals for Shaldon and Ringmore on the Teign Estuary in Devon by withdrawing its current planning application. The Environment Agency asked the Committee for additional time to evaluate information emerging from improved data and modelling of extreme tide levels. The Agency's South West regional staff are continuing to analyse the most up-to-date data on tide levels. The new data indicates a significant change from previous studies....."*

*The extreme tide level information does not include allowances for climate change. The United Kingdom Climate Impact Programme is also due to publish its future climate change predictions later in the year including implications for sea levels and increased wave heights.. It is clearly important that all this information is considered together."*

Environment Agency press release, April 8, 2009<sup>29</sup>

The local press coverage of this release was, predictably, about the lowering of sea level rise predictions, in line with the views from the community. Typical was this article entitled **'Wrong' tide figures delay flood defences:**

*"Local MP Richard Younger-Ross said that residents had been concerned for some time that the Agency had not calculated tide levels correctly. If the concerns had been taken seriously, he said, the Agency would not have ended up with 'egg on its face'. He said: "the Environment Agency has been told by local people that its calculations of tides were wrong. They've ignored whatever they've been told". Now that the Agency had done some national data calculation, he said it was beginning to realise that perhaps its calculations for the required height of the proposed tidal defences were 'exaggerated' – something residents had known for some time"*

The Western Morning News, Friday April 10, 2009<sup>30</sup>

The Liaison Group had spent a great deal of time discussing and checking tide predictions and levels. Indeed several members of the Liaison Group had taken away detailed documents for review. In interviews, many members of the Liaison Group commented that a key way of speeding up the deliberations of the Liaison Group would have been to tackle this issue of tides more effectively:

*"Is there a better way of displaying/modelling the flood risk data that could have helped the discussion. Might have made us mere mortals not feel my god we've got to have a wall that high? No one really wants a wall around them, so we are always going to try to minimise it. We spent so much time to-ing and*

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<sup>29</sup> See Appendix 8.4 for the full text of the Environment Agency press release

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix for the full text of press coverage

*fro-ing and all that argy bargy about tides, waves, fetch, distance travelled why things are different here to at Lympstone ... there must be a better way".*

Liaison Group member

However, in terms of tide levels *without* sea level rise predictions, it does indeed appear that those members of the community were right. There are lots of motivators and drivers for staff and consultants to believe they are dealing with certainty. One of which is dealing with and planning under uncertainty is so much more difficult. Another is dealing with a community or a stakeholder on the basis that you don't really know what you are talking about is very challenging. And the third is that people don't want to admit that they are wrong.

However, the extreme tides data – and the views of those concerned members of the community – does not take into account sea level rise. What these articles did not cover was the information in the last paragraph of the Environment Agency press release which suggests another possible U-turn in the light of increased sea level and wave predictions in a *separate* report, also due out 'later in the year'. Quite how or why these two sets of data are due to be published so close together, separately, and very likely with opposite implications for flood defences, should be a matter of concern to the reputation of the Environment Agency and Defra.

In fact, the councillor and Liaison Group member who was initially very anti the need for any kind of scheme and most vociferous about questioning the tide levels was quoted by the press in saying:

*"He [the councillor and Liaison Group member] was 'shocked' to hear the planning application had been withdrawn. It had been a complex application and there were concerns locally that the proposed defences were too high and would spoil the look of the area. However, a lot of time and money had been spent on the application and he thought the proposals were close to being agreed. He said "There's a huge conservation aspect – we want the place protected and we welcome the scheme but we don't want to ruin the place".*  
The Western Morning News, Friday April 10, 2009

This supportive quote from someone who initially opposed the scheme, illustrates just how much might now be lost as a result of not dealing well with these data changes.

On a broader scale, Defra and Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) should consider national public education and debate on flood risks, their calculation, and the Dutch model of the economics of long-term protection. But this has to be about **shared sense making**: not about Defra/the Environment Agency having all the answers but sharing with the public, community and stakeholders. Without this, conflicts will continue at a local level, with uncertainties being played out again and again at the expense of area and regional staff.

The Environment Agency causes itself further problems by basing its decisions on very precise flood risk calculations. Its comprehensive appraisal process is designed to rank schemes one by one and ensure that only those meeting the (changeable) priority score and benefit-cost ratio are funded<sup>31</sup>. But the appraisal process does not acknowledge the uncertainty in the data and aims for a degree of appraisal accuracy which is not possible. For example, a question from NRG on the submitted PAR asked whether the proposed height rise in the sea wall for 2047 based on climate change was right! Given the increasing flood risks and increasing funding available, prioritisation

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<sup>31</sup> This process was designed, the part, to prevent low priority or uneconomic schemes being proposed, as had happened in the past

now is often not about whether a scheme is built ever, but when it is built.

The Environment Agency could spend its flood defence money in a more systematic and construction efficient way by approving all schemes which are likely to be fundable over say the next five or ten years. Then order them time wise according to location. This would allow a much more orderly approach to the pre-PAR work including such engagement as is necessary. This would in itself help to minimise costs of engagement and get neighbouring communities ready for the engagement process.

Two things that should change in the way that the Environment Agency presents its work with the outside world are:

- a) Explicit recognition that the Environment Agency is dealing in **uncertainty** in its calculations and positions, and that these are therefore likely to change: it is not possible to know with 100% certainty what the best answer is.
- b) A commitment (and flexibility in procedures and requirements) to taking on board a range of views, from a range of stakeholders in order to help reduce uncertainties, fill gaps in information, and increase the number of solutions on the table, thereby increasing the likelihood of choosing the 'best' way forward.

These changes in attitude are a prerequisite for BTwC. Once in place, BTwC offers a methodology for bringing in the range of views and ideas that are needed for making the most robust decision under uncertainty.

### 6.3 Does engagement bring welcome or unwelcome scrutiny and accountability?

*"Because the community could express their concerns and challenge things, the team found they could change things that they wouldn't have thought of and still get priority score cost benefits to work.*

*Things like including Ringmore, surface water and sewerage issues, gates and using stone rather than concrete. Things where the team seems to have a very fixed mindset and if done the normal way, it wouldn't be challenged about how flexible those things actually are.*

*It has challenged the Environment Agency's natural ability to assume things. Like they wouldn't get funding if they had lots of gates. And the community would be happy with concrete if it was pretty pink. As a result it is a better scheme, the community is brought into the scheme, there is joint responsibility for its operation and the effects if the scheme isn't operated properly"*  
Environment Agency staff

*"At Shaldon it undoubtedly forced the issue of surface water and all forms of flooding to be taken into account. Whereas at Ottery St Mary the scheme (PAR approval of £2.5m and final cost of £4.2m) still doesn't work properly.. They haven't dealt with the surface water nor the river. Question – what happened? If you'd have had greater local knowledge would it have been better estimated or not gone up so much? Would you have got a scheme that worked better?."*  
Environment Agency staff

*"I'm going to be engaging every time because there's just a whole load of local knowledge that you couldn't possibly have as consultants/the Environment Agency"*  
Consultant

The quotes above illustrate that when engaging a community, the BTwC approach brings with it greater opportunities for the community to *constructively* question, test or add to the Environment Agency's data, processes, priorities and decisions. In doing so, inappropriate assumptions or restrictions may be surfaced, and if dealt with or responded to, rather than defended against, a better scheme or decision may result. In turn this increases the information, evidence trail and accountability of decisions made and the remit or mandate for Environment Agency intervention.

However, there is evidence from the Shaldon case study and elsewhere<sup>32</sup> that some staff can view this as an additional hurdle, an inconvenience rather than a helpful or indeed an essential part of coming to the 'right' decision. **Incorporating the rationale and role of engagement in scrutiny and accountability will place the Environment Agency in a stronger position as a trusted and effective public body.**

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<sup>32</sup> See for example Colbourne, 2008. IISRF. Ibid.

## 6.4 How to avoid the temptation to use engagement as manipulation or 'education in disguise'?

The two quotes below illustrate two very different perceptions of the Liaison Group process in Shaldon: The first considers engagement as a genuinely open process. The second is concerned that engagement was a form of manipulation or 'education in disguise'. These quotes illustrate how important it is to be clear from the outset that engagement cannot be used as a way of getting others to come up with the same view as the Environment Agency.

*"We [the Liaison Group] looked at every possibility, all sorts of wild ideas. It wouldn't matter if you had a consultation of five times as many people: they wouldn't have come up with any other answers. We only came back down to a wall – I don't think anyone felt they were led into a wall as if it was a predetermined answer of the Environment Agency– after making suggestions each was dismissed as being impractical whether for physical or financially".*  
Liaison Group member

*"If I was the Environment Agency I'd want to get as much approval as I could and that was what the Liaison Group was about. But perhaps, because it was the first up, perhaps we were indulged a little bit. I'm slightly frustrated and slightly confused because I feel that ... perhaps we were indulged a little bit to feel we could influence what's the scheme going to look like – is it a breakwater, are we going to have a turbine on a barrage and so on. It kinds of alienates me, because I think local involvement is important if you want successful planning. I've been to all but say 2 or 3 [Liaison Group] meetings. The received wisdom of the Environment Agency was that it will be a wall: in order to feel like we were got on board, they thought: ' why don't we let them come to the same conclusion we have by going through the discussions?'. It would almost be better – on the efficiency/resource side – if they came with a 'this is what our plan is', we've done all the other investigations, and we know these other options won't work. We did talk about the detail in the last 2 or 3 meetings because everyone is at the point where its going to be a wall. If had this at the start could have cut down the process significantly. If role of LG would have been to comment on this answer, given the constraints."*  
Liaison Group member

One of the most significant and distinctive decisions in the BTwC approach to Shaldon was to engage the community in not just refining an option that the Environment Agency had worked up, but to understand community views as to: a) whether the problem (tidal flood risk) was significant enough to warrant something being done and b) what the full range of possible solutions – and variants on those solutions such as gates and finishes - might be. These views continually informed the decision making process, which would be taken by the Environment Agency, following the usual benefit-cost, priority score route.

This was a significant shift from the 'usual' process, and its success and integrity would depend on

- (i) the Environment Agency being genuinely open to being influenced by and working with other's information, views and ideas and
- (ii) the community being open to being influenced by and working with each other's and the Environment Agency's information, views and ideas.

In other words, the BTwC basis for finding the 'best' solution for reducing tidal flood risk in Shaldon would depend on all parties working with the full range of information, views and ideas. This requires the Environment Agency to be open to influence too. If it is not, then it will be guilty of using engagement as a form of education and coercion by stealth.

In the case of Shaldon, genuine changes resulted from engagement, as recorded elsewhere in this report. Work would have stopped if the original drop in and public meeting did not show support for finding ways of reducing flood risk. The team changed plans to include Ringmore and surface water flooding. They were –in theory at least - open to finding another solution to the risk than a wall and gated scheme, but one was not found. So engagement was used primarily to influence the detailed design of the scheme.

*"It has influenced stuff we'd have fallen over later: we [the Environment Agency] would have put in a walled and gated scheme, but all the stuff we'd been talking about re: opening and closing, locations, finishes etc could provide problems through planning – hopefully 85% are nailed."*

Environment Agency staff

In the case of Shaldon, community engagement did influence decisions. The role of the external facilitator, Communications Business Partner and Project Manager in checking the genuine nature of the engagement, and the influence of the engagement, will be critical in future uses of the BTwC approach. This must include being clear about what can and can't be influenced and how dissenting voices are heard. For more on this see section 6.5.

## 6.5 Participation, representation and democracy. How to know when a remit to act has been secured from the community?

The Shaldon pilot, particularly but not exclusively in the latter stages, raises questions about how and when the Environment Agency secures a remit to act from the community and how to deal with objections. These issues are of concern to staff, consultants and community alike.

Questions raised in interviews included:

- Is a mandate only secured with 100% consensus? How much of a mandate does more than 83% support secured at two public exhibitions/drop ins (to which 250 people from a community of 1500 attended each time), and a final one at which more than 300 turn up with approximately 2/3 in support of the scheme?
- What was the role of a Liaison Group in speaking 'for' or 'with' the community? Could more be done to make the Liaison Group more 'representative' or in touch with the wider community?
- What is the meaning of the increased levels of interest (and conflict or concern) that arise once a scheme becomes 'real' – i.e. that it secures funding, is put into a planning application and then construction?

Each of these questions are addressed in more detail below.

### 6.5.1 What kind of mandate is being sought from community engagement?

In engaging with communities, it is vital to consider quite explicitly what kind of mandate (if any) is required from the community. Staff, consultants and members of the Liaison Group within the Shaldon pilot (and the interviews) have suggested a range of different types of mandate required:

A mandate is when....

- ✓ The majority support the decision directly (either at key points in the process, or throughout), or do not object
- ✓ An individual or organisation representing the majority, like a councillor or the Parish Council, support the decision or do not object
- ✓ Everyone supports the decision or does not object
- ✓ Those who are most affected or interested support the decision or do not object
- ✓ All views have been taken into consideration and conflicts resolved where possible
- ✓ The views of the most knowledgeable, most involved, or most affected have been taken into consideration and conflicts resolved where possible.

A clear distinction can be made between getting a mandate through trying to *accommodate and understand all views* and getting a mandate through *the level of support*:

### Type 1: Securing a particular level of support

The level of support might include:

- ✓ Extent of support: Some, those most affected, the majority, all?
- ✓ Support for what: Some bits of what is proposed, all of it, some or all with conditions?
- ✓ Type of support: Won't oppose it, grudging (don't like it but will live with it) or enthusiastic?
- ✓ Consistency of support: At key point, throughout?

### Type 2: Accommodating views and information

Incorporating views and information might include:

- ✓ Gathering the full range of views and information
- ✓ Understanding differences underpinning information/views
- ✓ Reducing differences by further research/information gathering
- ✓ Resolving differences to agree something

**The Shaldon pilot did not *explicitly* plan for securing a particular mandate.** This was a weakness of the pilot approach and should be addressed in future schemes. However, analysis of what was done in the Shaldon pilot suggests that the team attempted to secure a mandate *both* through assessing the level of support and by attempting to accommodate *and* understand views and information. For example:

- ✓ The questionnaires used at the **public exhibitions and public meetings** asked people to what extent they supported something, but they were also designed to gather information about why people had the view that they had.
- ✓ The **Liaison Group** was asked its opinion, it worked through issues and resolved them as far as possible, but no 'voting' was conducted. Instead, decisions were noted on flip charts in the meeting and statements were agreed at the end of the meeting.

However, it is clear that what mandate was required or being sought was **not always clear to those involved**. People in the Liaison Group and project team made their own assumptions about their role and contribution. An example was where the new project team clashed with the Liaison Group, after a year without Liaison Group meetings in which internal Environment Agency agreement and funding for the scheme was secured:

*"This letter came after a year of silence – 'you'll be pleased to know that we've got funding for the wall'. That really missed where [some of] the liaison group was: if I am unhappy with where we are with it, is it being ignored now? I was concerned that as the liaison group we were being expected to put in the planning application: not in my name! I think the Environment Agency even asked it at that meeting. I'm thinking no way! Hang on! What if I disagree? We seemed to switch from decision making to advice and I wasn't sure when we were doing what".*

Liaison Group member

The clash in tone and intent, where the Environment Agency staff considered a much more enthusiastic mandate had been secured was recorded in the minutes of that meeting:



*"Although the Liaison Group has agreed the flood defence scheme is the best way of managing tidal flood risk in Shaldon and Ringmore, it was a difficult decision, not taken lightly, and some members continue to be concerned. Action: Ensure language and claims of consensus is used appropriately – it was a tough decision (e.g. in letters to individual landowners over design and finishes)"*

Minutes of Liaison Group Meeting, 23.0.08

This apparent 'turnaround' concerned many of the project team and Liaison Group alike. The consulting engineers felt that support built up over the past few years had evaporated. However, the issue was resolved by referring back to the wider remit of the community, and the Liaison Group asking for more meetings to discuss the design and finish. It was the details that mattered and these had not been discussed:

*"You see when you look at the result of those exhibitions, everyone was in favour of a wall - 80% plus. And lets face it in terms of difficulty, we have referred back to that as our remit – the result of the exhibition was that 80% were in favour".* Liaison Group member

*"One of the problems was that [the finish] seemed to get pushed to one side. Its the finish that's what matters. We suddenly were asked to submit planning application when we hadn't discussed it... The parish council have to mitigate its effect on us as a community and one is the visual effect. One simple example was the decision in those extra meetings to have 2 more gates. That's very very good as far as people are concerned".*

Liaison Group member

**Future uses of BTwC approaches must explicitly consider what kind of mandate is being sought from the community.**

This must bear in mind that taking a BTwC approach does not (necessarily, and possibly can never) mean whole community consensus. But knowing when a mandate (for a particular decision or scheme, and the details of that scheme) has been secured, and sticking with that mandate once it is secured is critical. This requires anticipating and dealing with changes and politics over time whilst continuing to try to incorporate insights from objections and differences in opinion where possible. It is about understanding the reasons – information, uncertainty, data, winners/losers - that might underpin various views and dealing with those<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> The Improving Social and Institutional Responses to flooding report illustrates that this 'political' territory is not a natural strength, and suggests some ways of building strengths in this area

### 6.5.2 Liaison Groups -speaking for and with the community? The role and membership of Liaison Groups

The Shaldon and Ringmore Liaison Group was tasked with working through the detail of decisions to be made by the Environment Agency, from advising on possible options all the way through to working out the details. The initial mandate for working up solutions was taken from the first public exhibition and meeting, at which more than 80% of the 250 people attending requested that ways of reducing flood risk in Shaldon (and Ringmore) were explored.

The kind of iterative, deliberative engagement in which the details are worked through together (as in the Shaldon Liaison Group) is not feasible with unlimited numbers of people. It is almost always the case that some people closely involved will be giving opinions or making decisions on behalf of others<sup>34</sup>. It's value therefore will depend on:

- how 'representation' is dealt with
- quality of deliberation.

In moving on from the Shaldon pilot, improvements and efficiencies can be made in both these areas (see below).

#### 6.5.2.1 Representation

The issue of representativeness relates to:

- a) Whether the group covers - or represents- the full range of **views** in the village
- b) Whether the group represent the range of different **types** of people in the village, or geographical **areas**
- c) Whether the group acts as an effective **channel** of communication between those people or interests or areas they 'represent'
- d) Whether the group fits with **democratically** elected representation.

*"The thing about all this is, the thing we have to remember, is that it is in addition to the usual democratic routes. We've had so much more say, and been able to influence things so much more. Because usually we'd just have been able to express concerns at the planning stage. Its important that we remind people of that. What we have done is not replacing anything, its adding to it."* Liaison Group member

*"Thoughts on the liaison group, in itself it was not terribly representative of the village. I don't know how this could be improved. I agree that what we did was to have an open meeting for anyone interested, it gradually whittled down to people locally affected or interested in the community but there were gaps which have come to haunt us ever since. I'd put it this way - the members of the liaison group were supposed to report back to the village but didn't have a specific directive on who to report to".* Liaison Group member

*"No work was done to gauge the level of 'representation' by participants in the dialogue. Did they go back and communicate with their constituencies?"*  
Environment Agency staff

The Shaldon pilot Liaison Group implicitly addressed these issues by being 'open

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<sup>34</sup> Involve/NCC: Principles of deliberation

throughout' to new members. It also asked members to explicitly state their interests/who they were attending on behalf of, and a statement was agreed at the end of each meeting to enable clear communication back to constituencies.

The Liaison Group was successful in maintaining a core group of people's involvement throughout the process. Many were impressed that it overcame 'apathy', especially at the beginning. And that the level of involvement compared well to more traditional ways of engaging the community, such as through meeting the Parish Council:

*"I think to try to get people more involved at the beginning wouldn't work, there's a bit wodge of apathy. They have known for ages and ages on surface water flooding and no one has really done anything with it."* Liaison Group member

*"In Parish Council meetings, if we are lucky on a controversial planning issue, we might get a dozen people."* Chair of Shaldon and Ringmore Parish Council

It is clear, however, that **much more could be done.**

*"The members of the liaison group were supposed to report back to the village but didn't have a specific directive on who to report to. This meant that a lot of people are now saying – or maybe they are just pretending – that non one said anything to them....Somehow the liaison group got a little bit distanced from the village. That has resulted in some of the flak we've had in the last month or two".* Liaison Group member

In particular, the project team and Liaison Group members felt members of the Liaison Group could have done more to keep in touch with the wider community including:

- ✓ Putting summaries of the Liaison Group meetings in the **parish magazine**, covering the main issues discussed and who/how to contact to get involved or find out more
- ✓ Asking members of the Liaison Group to **report** on how they are in touch with the interests they represent
- ✓ Actively seeking wider participation of particular types of people such as young families
- ✓ Using different techniques such as **new technology** of Facebook, blogs to present findings and stimulate wider debate
- ✓ Doing more work with **elected** representatives
- ✓ Not relying on one person or one group or organisation (such as the Parish Council) to do **communication** with the wider community
- ✓ More communication with the **wider community** between the two public exhibitions.

Suggestions were also made in terms of **recruitment processes** for the Liaison Group:

*"First of all you have to go down the volunteer route, and get as many people as possible representing the various interests, but then there's got to be a filtering process where you turn round and say thanks X, but I've listened to what you say and who you are representing and we actually have a rep already covering all the points you've raised, so thank you. The Environment Agency – or maybe an independent expert – have got to direct it and they've got to pick. Its in their interest that all the different opinions and facets are covered, but not by people that are going to go on about their issue and they are a NIMBY and not interested in the flooding that's going to take place in the two basins where water will get in and not get out. They are worried about petty issues and destructive in terms of progress of whole scheme."* Liaison Group member

### 6.5.2.2 Quality of deliberation

Views within the Liaison Group and within the project team are divided on whether the quality and depth of deliberation and analysis by the Liaison Group was necessary or efficient. Some felt it was essential, others felt there were 'lighter touch' ways of going about it, such as using Task and Finish Groups on particular issues (as currently being used in Teignmouth), or just focusing the work of the Liaison Group on the details of a scheme.

The issues raised were:

Whether the Liaison Group **process could have been cut down**, to focus on the design of the wall-based scheme, rather than from start to finish:

*"It would almost be better if the Environment Agency – on the efficiency/resource side – if they came with a 'this is what our plan is', we've done all the other investigations, and we know these other options won't work".* Liaison Group member

*"We had to go through all that thinking, otherwise we'd never have understood why we needed a wall that high. Of course we don't want a big wall around us – we are always going to be trying to find ways of reducing it, or finding a way of not having a wall. But in this case there wasn't another way".* Liaison Group member

*"I think that if you make it much briefer or less representative, you lose the huge bonus where the Environment Agency can honestly say hand on heart they have tried to deal with the public. It'll never be perfect – there'll always be people who don't want it".* Liaison Group member

Whether it is appropriate to engage Liaison Group (lay) members in **technical discussions** on tide levels, engineering details. Some felt they had specific skills which enabled them to take part in discussions and that this was in itself a valuable role on behalf of the community. Others felt it was a distraction from what they should have been doing:

*"It was important that the community got to question many of our assumptions. It is a much better scheme as a result".* Environment Agency staff

*"I was one of the few women, and I did grow up in the village, and I have been a design teacher so I do know the steps and processes that you need to go through for any design solution. I have grown up here and I think I'm used to thinking of plans and design schemes and I can read them I can see what's going on better than other people. An awful lot of people can't read design and plans but I could see it at a glance".* Liaison Group member

*"A lot of the debate we had, like going on about the height of the tides, was not very useful because it just took time and who are we to argue with the experts of the Environment Agency. I don't think we are equipped or knowledgeable to consider those elements".* Liaison Group member

Whether it would be more efficient to (do more) work **through 'task and finish groups'** rather than a liaison group. Some felt that it would have been possible to just work through task and finish groups (as is now being undertaken at Teignmouth), others felt that this would even further undermine the representative role of the Liaison Group:

- *"I believe that having a number of smaller working groups would work. In fact we did have some and they all worked quite well. Perhaps we could have continued down that route a bit more".* Liaison Group member
- *"I'd use more one:one or smaller group work to sort out specific issues".* Consultant
- *"Too much time and involvement was sometimes spent on relatively minor situations [in Liaison Group meetings]. This could have been avoided by having a number of smaller working groups. However, adopting such a method of working could well have damaged the progress towards achieving total acceptance/ ownership by the Liaison Group who were representing the Shaldon and Ringmore community".* Liaison Group member
- *"I'm not in favour of the sub groups I don't think you'd get a consistent view of what's going on. Perhaps a smaller group at the centre better? Always tricky."* Liaison Group member
- *"Sometimes it felt we didn't get the full picture. All those meetings with sub-groups, or with individual owners. The Liaison Group was the only place to get the whole picture. Without it, there would have been no accountability at all".* Liaison Group member

**Future programmes should explicitly test the value and appropriateness of Task and Finish groups working alongside (as in Shaldon) or instead of Liaison Groups.**

### 6.5.3 Changing interests over time

An issue that wasn't covered in the planning of the BTwC approach to the Shaldon pilot was how community interest in the work would change over time. With hindsight, it is common sense to plan for an increase in interest and concern as a project progresses from theory into bricks and mortar:

*"I think now it has got real, a lot [of people] will say they have suddenly heard about it. Some of it is apathy, there were newsletter and exhibitions – its about information flow. But to be honest I never thought we'd get the funding – there are other places and industry like Worcestershire where they are losing it. The last drop in was getting quite heated and it had attracted quite a crowd. One of the people who lives in Shaldon has done a wall height projection and it struck some notes with quite a few people. And so I do think there's an anti feeling to it. I'm a little bit sensitive to it because people look at Liaison Group and they'll say why didn't you do more?" Liaison Group member*

**Values Modes**<sup>35</sup> - a well validated public segmentation model used by the Environment Agency may offer a useful frame of reference for understanding differences in public interest and acceptability in the future, and how these will change from the conceptualising, design and construction of a flood risk project.

The segmentation offers three broad categories:

- ✓ **Settlers** make up about 20% of the UK population. They are socially conservative, concerned with the local, known, identity, belonging, and prefer trusted channels and known behaviours. They are wary of change and espouse discipline, are acquiescent, keeping to the rules and wanting a lead from authority.
- ✓ **Prospectors** make up about 40% of the UK population. They want to acquire and display the symbols of success in everything they do. They want to make their lives better and be seen to succeed. They are a higher energy more fun seeking group. They are early adopters but not innovators, which involves social risk that they avoid.
- ✓ **Pioneers** make up about 40% of the UK population. They are society's scouts, testing and innovating, and always questioning. They are attracted not so much to signs of success but what is 'interesting' including 'issues'. Some of them are strongly ethical believing that to make the world a better place they must be better people. Others are more relaxed and holistic and some are into 'doing their own thing'. They are most at ease with change and most global in outlook of all the groups.

About 50% of the population are associated with an 'extreme' version of one or other of these types, the other 50% fall into what is called the 'mushy centre'. Those in the 'mushy centre' are not too different from each other. But those on the extreme ends of each of the three types look at and experience the world very differently.

For example, the people that fall into the pioneer category will get involved in liaison groups, attend drop ins and public meetings, usually as they feel some responsibility for the greater good. They enjoy finding out about things, going through the process and debating the issues and dealing with complexity. The 'usual suspects', essential to public engagement of the kind promoted by BTwC, and who lead many established

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<sup>35</sup> <http://campaignstrategy.org/articles/usingvaluemodes.pdf>

campaign groups, will almost all be pioneers. However, their interests and approach really do nothing at all for about a third of the population (the extreme versions of the prospectors and settlers). So while pioneers will work away on a liaison group, doing their best to keep the rest of the community informed and involved, the way they work and think will not actually engage others at all. For example, Pat Dade illustrates the difference in motivation between pioneers and prospectors:

<b>Pioneers</b>	<b>Prospectors</b>
Outside the box	Inside the box
Driven by ethics	Driven by power
Connection to	Competition with
Process focused	Results focused
Optimize	Maximize
Complexity accounted for	Complexity "cut through"
How it works for the team	How it works for me

In stark contrast to the pioneers, prospectors will only get involved once their personal interests in terms of esteem, property, income or status are going to be impacted (positively or negatively), or if it becomes 'the thing to do', led by a local celebrity or a critical mass of those that they consider successful or of high status.

Prospectors are a key group not generally reached by NGO campaigns and public agency communications efforts. Attracting their support, whether overtly or indirectly, may well make a significant difference to a campaigns success but is essential if the purpose is community-wide behaviour change. Prospectors dislike being told they are doing anything wrong, fear social censure and controversy and are early adopters rather than innovators. There are ways to get them to act on social issues, for example 'green' subjects but they need simple choice do/don't options which involve doing stuff better, getting 'the right stuff' or 'the right' experiences and being rewarded, not made to give something up. Once riled and organised they create remarkably media-worthy protests, and so they have a disproportionate effect as their campaigns are magnified through the media lens. It is these people that decision makers, politicians and the Environment Agency fear most! And it is these people who are likely to become engaged once pictures of the new scheme are shown overshadowing their property, interrupting their view or favourite pastime.

*"One of the things as well is that people kept saying 'oh we've done that in Lympstone. I don't care what happened there. Its different here. People like Shaldon as it is. People live where they live because they live here and want to see the sea. The last drop in was getting quite heated and it had attracted quite a crowd. One of the people who live has done a wall height projection showing how it affects people's houses and the walks and it struck some notes with quite a few people. And so I do think there's a growing anti feeling to it."* Liaison Group member

This is powerful stuff. However, it is vital to understand that campaigns by prospectors are short lived, and once the heat is over, they are likely to accept the decision.

Settlers will tend not to become involved and will even resist house-visits unless the visitors are introduced by someone they know. But they will respond to authority and actually expect and like to be told what to do.

In conclusion, the implications of the Values Modes insights are:

- ✓ **Anything new has to start with the Pioneers:** Liaison Groups as used in Shaldon are essential. They will be happy to work through the detail, the complexity, the ethics, the trade offs to come up with the 'best' option. Broadening the membership of these liaison groups to Prospectors and Settlers would build a greater validity for their work and would encourage a wider range of communication channels to be used. Joining a local action group or liaison group might appeal to Prospectors if it involved them being lauded/rewarded, to Settlers if it protected tradition, identity, or guaranteed belonging and to the 'usual suspect' Pioneers if it 'benefited the whole' (i.e. all groups) community.
- ✓ **But to build momentum beyond that Liaison Group,** or get uptake by the Prospectors, some sort of 'success bridge' is needed. It is likely that this will come some way down the line: Prospectors will only want to become involved when things get real: in the run up to planning applications for example. These can be endorsement by an esteemed person (e.g. a celebrity); adoption by an esteemed ('big' or 'premium') brand; communication via an esteemed channel (e.g. a high viewership TV programme); or 'winning' rewards (e.g. financial enrichment, a prize); or acknowledgement in media that this is 'the new thing'. Show homes or computer models that illustrate the benefits (rather than giving up) of a new scheme. Currently it is the objectors that use these tactics: note the use in Shaldon of computer generated images to show how the shadow of the flood defence scheme will affect individual properties.
- ✓ Some attention will also need to be paid to **how best to engage settlers.** This will involve carefully designed house to house visits of those most affected, where Environment Agency staff are introduced by a trusted neighbour or community member (for example someone sitting on a Liaison Group). Later in the process, authoritative statements of what is required will be needed.



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## 8 Appendices

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### 8.1 Interviewees for this report

Many thanks to the following for their input to this report. Although we have drawn from the views expressed by these interviewees, they in no way endorse this report, which remains the views of the authors.

#### **Staff**

Megan Rimmer, Project Manager, ncpms

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Ruth Johnston, Head Office Shaldon BTwC Project Manager

Bridget Norris, Communications Business Partner

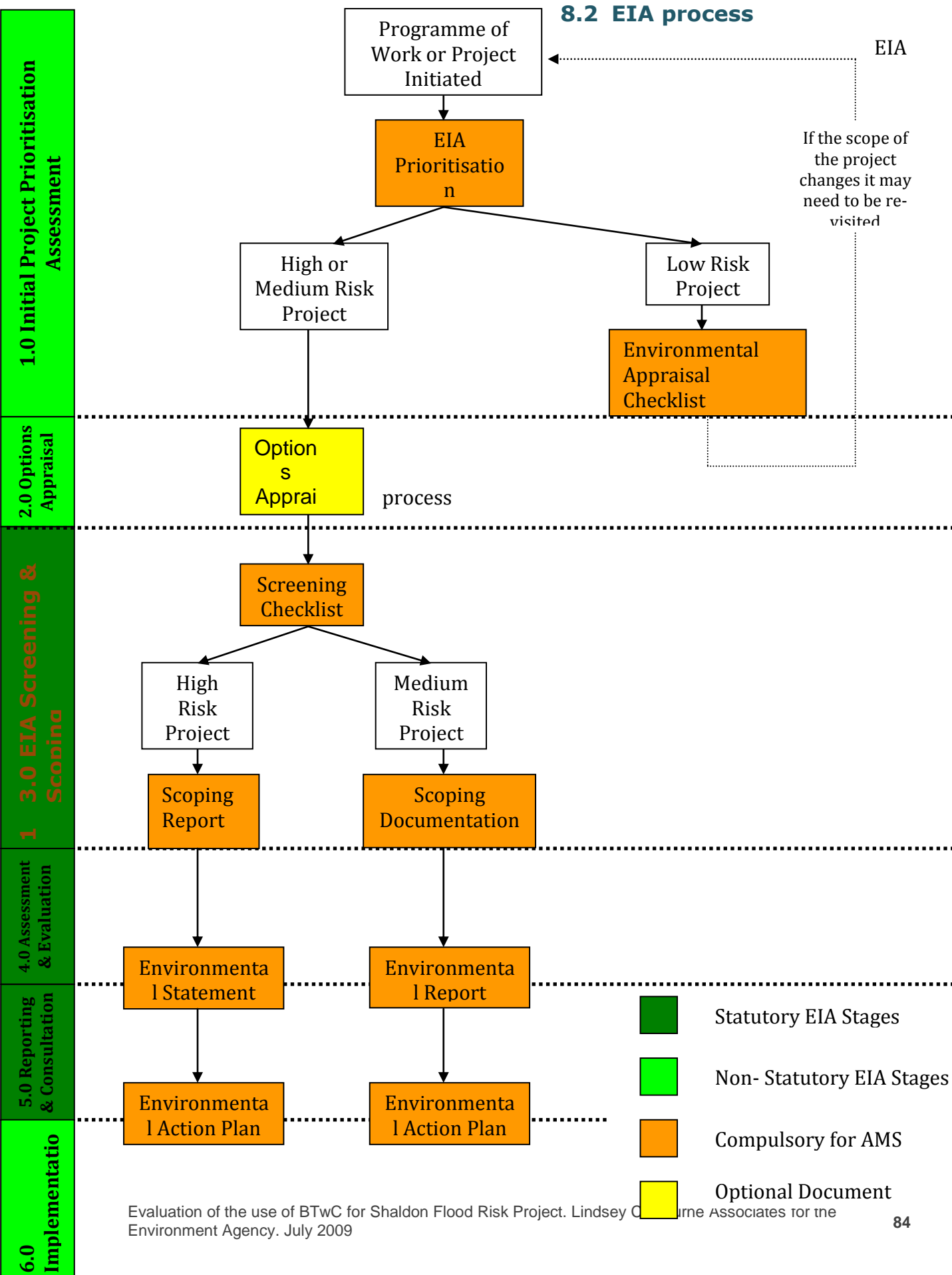
#### **Liaison Group**

Ron Evans

Andrew Endall, local resident (self interest)

Peter Williams, Chairman of Parish Council, Personal interest, Ringmore Flood Risk Group, RNLI Committee & Co-ordinator of the Shaldon & Ringmore Flood Emergency Response Scheme

Lisa Pash, Rowing Club



## 8.3 Type A, B, C tool

This research provides a new analysis tool to help Environment Agency staff decide how much collaboration is appropriate in different situations, to improve flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM).

The need for such a tool is based on a review of literature and practice which shows that FCERM solutions can no longer be imposed or delivered by the Environment Agency using traditional decide-announce-defend (DAD) approaches alone. Instead, a broader range of approaches is required, especially those which enable others to engage-deliberate-decide (EDD). Many examples of the EDD-type of collaboration exist, and programmes such as *Building Trust with Communities* are helping to develop these examples.

However, the research found that two myths pervade, preventing the consistent use of collaboration to improve FCERM outcomes:

the research found that two myths pervade, preventing the consistent use of collaboration to improve FCERM outcomes:

### **Myth 1: Collaborating with others is expensive and time-consuming**

*Reality:* There is a range of ways of collaborating with others, each with a range of associated costs and benefits. Matching the most appropriate approach to the situation at hand offers a cost-effective way of achieving multiple goals and added value. Collaborative methods also offer a precautionary approach which can reduce the costs and risks associated with non-delivery of flood schemes. The critical factor is for collaboration to be tailored to the situation.

### **Myth 2: It is possible to choose whether or not to work with others on FCERM**

*Reality:* All FCERM work will involve some type of engagement, which will increasingly be needed to deliver essential services. Working with others is sometimes the only way of getting things done – not just at the local level, but also nationally. Choices to be made are about the extent and type of engagement with others, not whether or not to collaborate.

To counter these myths, the report suggests that new processes are needed to help the Environment Agency decide how much and what type of collaboration is required, in a similar way to current Environment Agency processes which assist engineering-based decision-making. For collaboration to be used effectively within FCERM, a clear decision-making process is needed at the start of any project or programme that looks at what type of decision or situation is being dealt with, how much and what type of engagement is appropriate (and how much it will cost).

The report suggests that use of the proposed analysis tool could not only improve Environment Agency decision making, legitimacy and trust, but could significantly reduce the risk of non-delivery of flood risk projects, and reduce the costs of controversial decisions. The tool will enable staff to decide on the most appropriate amount and type of collaboration for a given situation, whether the situation is a unique project or the delivery of ongoing work:

- **Type A situations** are characterised by low controversy and/or few alternative options due to constraints of time, procedure and resources, or by the existence of a crisis (and need to act immediately).
- **Type B situations** are characterised by a greater number of options, increased uncertainty around the 'right' decision and/or the need to make trade-offs and compromises.
- **Type C situations** are characterised by the need to make a decision that will affect many stakeholders (individuals, communities and/or organisations) in a situation with much

complexity or uncertainty and a range of (often entrenched) views on the 'right' decision and a strong likelihood of conflict and resistance.

Extract from IISRF, Work Package 4<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Colbourne, Lindsey (2008) *Mainstreaming collaboration with communities and stakeholders for FCERM*. Science Report SC060019 Improving Institutional and Social Responses to Flooding. Environment Agency, Bristol.

## **8.4 Withdrawal of planning application, April 2009**

### **Environment Agency withdraws planning application for Shaldon and Ringmore tidal defences**

Following advice from the South West Regional Flood Defence Committee today the Environment Agency is to delay progress with its £8.5 million tidal defence proposals for Shaldon and Ringmore on the Teign Estuary in Devon by withdrawing its current planning application.

The Environment Agency asked the Committee for additional time to evaluate information emerging from improved data and modelling of extreme tide levels.

The Agency's South West regional staff are continuing to analyse the most up-to-date data on tide levels. The new data indicates a significant change from previous studies.

Clive Gronow, who chaired the meeting in Bodmin, said: 'As we become more aware of the implications of the revised information on tide levels that suggest they could be lower than previously thought at these specific locations, the committee agreed that the Agency needed time to fully evaluate the impact on tidal defences at Shaldon and Ringmore, and across the river at Teignmouth Back Beach.

'Although the new information is not yet fully validated, the implications may be too significant just to carry on at this critical time in the development of these schemes. The Environment Agency has been working hard in partnership with the community and has made a commitment to share all information on this project. We owe it to the community to make sure the decision is based on the right information.'

'We have asked the project team to look closely at this data to understand how it may impact on the proposed works on the Teign Estuary. We feel it is better to do that now and make any revisions that may be necessary at this stage.'

The Agency anticipates a delay of six to 12 months while the new information is evaluated. This means that construction of the scheme will not start this autumn.

The extreme tide level data for England and Wales is due to be released for consultation later this year. The extreme tide level information does not include allowances for climate change. The United Kingdom Climate Impact Programme is also due to publish its future climate change predictions later in the year including implications for sea levels and increased wave heights.. It is clearly important that all this information is considered together.

'We will continue to keep local residents on both sides of the Teign up to date with progress as this delay is bound to cause residents some concern and uncertainty,' added Mr Gronow.

## 'Wrong' tide figures delay flood defences

Friday, April 10, 2009, 10:00

THE Environment Agency has withdrawn its planning application for £8.5 million tidal defences on a Devon estuary after new information about tide levels came to light.

The agency said the withdrawal will delay progress with the proposed defences at Shaldon and Ringmore on the Teign estuary after advice from the South West Regional Flood Defence Committee.

It has now asked the committee for more time to consider new data and modelling of extreme tide levels which it said indicated a "significant change" from previous studies. A new planning application will be submitted.

However, local MP Richard Younger-Ross said yesterday that residents had been concerned for some time that the agency had not calculated tide levels correctly. If the concerns had been taken seriously, he said, the agency would not have ended up with "egg on its face".

He said: "The Environment Agency has been told by local people that its calculations of tides were wrong. They've ignored whatever they've been told."

Now the agency had done some national data calculation, he said it was beginning to realise that perhaps its calculations for the required height of the proposed tidal defences were "exaggerated" – something residents had known for some time.

Although the agency had taken the correct decision in delaying plans until it was certain of the figures, he said he felt it could have avoided the delay by listening to locals.

An Environment Agency spokesman disputed the claim that local people had been ignored, saying there had been a "thorough consultation" with the public.

The new information had come from ongoing studies by the agency.

Chris Clarence, Teignbridge district councillor for Shaldon and Stokeinteignhead, said he was "shocked" to hear the planning application had been withdrawn.

It had been a complex application and there were concerns locally that the proposed defences were too high and would spoil the look of the area.

However, a lot of time and money had been spent on the application, and he thought the proposals were close to being agreed. He said: "There's a huge conservation aspect – we want the place protected and we welcome the scheme but we don't want to ruin the place."

He did not think there was much evidence yet that sea levels were rising in the North Atlantic.

Commenting on the decision to delay the application, committee chairman Clive Gronow said: "Although the new information is not yet fully validated, the implications may be too significant just to carry on at this critical time in the development of these schemes."

The agency anticipates a delay of six to 12 months while it evaluates the new information.



WMN Picture of the Day

<http://www.thisiswesternmorningnews.co.uk/news/Wrong-tide-figures-delay-flood-defences/article-892785-detail/article.html>



## 8.5 Resubmitting planning application, July 2009

**From:** Kingdom, Mark

**Sent:** 09 June 2009 15:49

**Subject:** Shaldon and Ringmore Tidal Defence Scheme

Dear Liaison Group Member

I am sure you are all keen to know the latest situation with the Shaldon and Ringmore Tidal Defence Scheme proposals.

We have now completed our review of the improved extreme tide level data, and as a result reduced the height of the proposed defences, across the entire scheme, by 275 millimetres.

Our next action is to resubmit our planning application to Teignbridge District Council early next month, with a view to gaining planning approval in September. This would enable us to start work on site early next year.

Attached, for your information, is a copy of the letter we will be sending to the whole community in the next few days to ensure everyone is kept up to date with progress.

Other than the reduction in height the revised planning application is essentially the same as before, although we will be working to a very tight programme to deliver the substantial part of the scheme by March 2011 with full completion by Summer 2011. This delivery date is a condition of the funding.

So, taking this timetable into account we are not anticipating making any further fundamental changes to the design. However there will be the opportunity for you to comment during Teignbridge District Council's planning consultation.

If you think it would be helpful for the Liaison Group to meet and discuss the scheme including our decision to withdraw the planning application and the revised proposal, we will be happy to set this up. We have set aside Thursday, June 25 for this meeting so please let me know as soon as possible if you want to attend. In order for the meeting to occur, we will need the support of the majority of the Liaison Group members.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Mark Kingdom  
Environment Agency Project Manager

Tel: 01392 442019

Email: [mark.kingdom@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:mark.kingdom@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## 8.6 Embedding lessons learned

The following table summarises the practical BTwC lessons learned from the Shaldon pilot, and how to embed them in the Environment Agency's future work. The table references further sources of information on each lesson learned, both within this report and elsewhere.

Attitude/style					
Lesson learned	Embed in...				
	Procedures	Standard approach to particular situations <sup>37</sup>			Practical application (detailed lessons learned efficiencies)
		A	B	C	
Making clear and defensible decisions about 'how much' engagement is required at the start of the project	<b>To do:</b> for example as has been done in the project appraisal processes of FCRM-AG; changing cost of public objection in the PAR risk register	√	√	√	See IISRF and Shaldon BTwC pilot: Lessons learned and recommendations 2007. Sections 5 and 6 of this report.
Valuing expertise from the community and other organisations	<b>To do:</b> for example requiring teams to consider how can the Environment Agency can be influenced as well as how can they influence others		√	√	
Engagement as a way of increasing scrutiny, openness and transparency, sharing difficult decisions and trade offs openly			√	√	
Placing value on things the public values	<b>To do:</b> for example including appearance of the scheme in outline design	√	√	√	
Joining up across the business	<b>To do:</b> for example integrated plan for the project	√	√	√	
Joining up across the (flood) issues		√	√	√	

<sup>37</sup> See section 8.3

Resources/skills					
Lesson learned	Embed in...				
	Procedures	Standard approach to particular situations			Practical application (detailed lessons learned efficiencies)
		A	B	C	
Allow sufficient preparation time, and sufficient engagement time	<b>To do:</b> for example develop indicative guidelines	√	√	√	Shaldon BTwC pilot: Lessons learned and recommendations 2007
Integrated strategy for the project incorporating engagement (BTwC 6 steps including stakeholder analysis), and NEAS EIA/SEA requirements	<b>To do:</b> for example integrated plan for the project. No separate comms plan.	√	√	√	Building Trust with Communities M77 training and manual. See BTwC guide on 'Engagement or communications Strategy?', based on Shaldon experience
People in team with right skills including ability to treat others respectfully, maintaining flexibility and willingness to incorporate range of views, being clear and holding true when things get tough.		√	√	√	Shaldon BTwC pilot: Lessons learned and recommendations 2007
Roles in team to include scheme shepherding, communications expertise, independent facilitation	<b>To do:</b> For example, include these in project team. Use SEAFS contract to access facilitation and process design skills	√	√	√	Shaldon BTwC pilot: Lessons learned and recommendations 2007. Section 6 of this report
Building staff confidence and skills through briefings, FAQs and training			√	√	See BTwC guide, based on Shaldon experience re: staff briefing and training, FAQs.
Provide continuity of staff and teams from start to delivery	<b>To do:</b> for example change requirement to handover from project appraisal to detailed design and construction		√	√	Section 6 of this report

Techniques and approaches					
Lesson learned	Embed in...				
	Procedures	Standard approach to particular situations			Practical application (detailed lessons learned efficiencies)
		A	B	C	
Step by step approach: problem then solutions	<b>To do:</b> For example, incorporating as requirement in all other processes	√	√	√	See BTwC M77 training manual phases section (part of step 4). Also See BTwC 'Explaining engagement' guide, based on Shaldon experience
Joining up with other organisations	<b>To do:</b> For example, incorporating as requirement in all other processes	√	√	√	See IISRF, also Pitt review.
Explaining internal (Defra/Environment Agency) processes, and ensuring that processes (and data etc) are fit for purpose	<b>To do:</b> Addressing changing data and policy requirements nationally, rather than waiting for those at the front line to have to deal with the consequences	√	√	√	See BTwC guides on 'Explaining Environment Agency Processes' such as Priority Score, Economic Constraints and 'Explaining Risk', based on Shaldon experience. Also Section 6 of this report
Problem definition		√	√	√	See BTwC M77 guide, step 1. See BTwC guide on 'Explaining Risk', based on Shaldon experience
Wording and use of direct communications and letters to all households	<b>To do:</b> For example, check current comms requirements	√	√	√	See letters sent to all households in Shaldon. Section 5 of this report
Options generation and analysis	<b>To do:</b> For example, incorporate within NEAS guidelines		√	√	See Shaldon options analysis grid (February 2006 Liaison Group meeting minutes). Section 5 and 6 of this report
Task and finish groups			√	√	
Using local technical knowledge	<b>To do:</b> For example, incorporate within all relevant guidelines, rather than assumption that internal information will be sufficient		√	√	

Techniques and approaches (continued)					
Lesson learned	Embed in...				
	Procedures	Standard approach to particular situations			Practical application (detailed lessons learned efficiencies)
		A	B	C	
Public meetings (both run by the Environment Agency and in partnership with others)	<b>Yes:</b> Redress current assumption that public meetings are to be avoided			√	See design and minutes of Shaldon public meeting, October 2005
Interactive exhibitions/drop ins/surgeries			√	√	See BTwC guides on 'Exhibition boards and visuals', 'Using exhibitions for consultation' and 'Exhibition takeaways', based on Shaldon experience + post 2007 IISRF guide
Deliberative questionnaires			√	√	See BTwC 'Questionnaires' guide, based on Shaldon experience
Liaison groups			√	√	See BTwC 'Working with Liaison Groups' guide, based on Shaldon experience
Websites	<b>Yes:</b> For example, making it easier to have direct link to local website	√	√	√	See BTwC 'Websites' guide, based on Shaldon experience
Keeping in touch with and providing feedback to participants	<b>Yes:</b> For example, keeping contact details as standard practice; changing requirements for individual responses to queries to providing collective consultation or event reports	√	√	√	See BTwC 'Using Exhibitions for Consultation' guide, based on Shaldon experience, and IISRF Flood Drop in Guide
1:1 contact considered as part of wider engagement strategy		√	√	√	
Proactive use of local media		√	√	√	
Visits/tours to explore details			√	√	

