

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Engagement Strategy (during COVID-19)



1 INTRODUCTION

The Dumfries and Galloway Shoreline Management Plan (SMP), originally produced in 2005, is currently being updated to further develop a sustainable approach for managing the risk of coastal flooding and erosion along each part of the Dumfries and Galloway coast. RPS Consulting Engineers have been appointed by the Council to develop the new Plan.

This is a complementary document to the Engagement Plan for the Dumfries and Galloway SMP. The COVID-19 pandemic has completely changed the way social interaction can happen and guidelines, restrictions and risks mean that traditional engagement events are not possible. This document identifies possible alternative methods of engagement.

2 STAKEHOLDERS

The main stakeholders for the Dumfries and Galloway SMP, as identified in the original Engagement Plan, are grouped as follows:

- **Client Steering Forum**

The Client Steering Forum comprises the following organisations: Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage, Marine Scotland, Solway Firth Partnership, Solway Marine Information, Learning and Environment (SMILE) and Dumfries and Galloway Council (Development Planning & Environment).

- **Elected Member Forum**

This group includes all Elected Members for Dumfries and Galloway and Members of the Scottish Parliament for the South Scotland region.

- **Key Stakeholders Forum**

Key influential stakeholders have been identified and will be engaged with directly throughout the lifetime of the project. Examples of constituents of this group are Community Councils, Community groups, State agencies and bodies, Universities, Utilities bodies, MoD.

- **Public Stakeholder Meetings**

This group comprises the general public living within the vicinity of, or with an interest in, the Dumfries and Galloway coast.

3 POSSIBLE ENGAGEMENT METHODS

To reduce barriers to participation by stakeholders, it is advantageous that more than one engagement method is used. The methods under consideration by the Project Team are summarised in the following subsections.

3.1 Digital Approach (as proposed by RPS)

3.1.1 1st Phase – Client Steering Forum, Key Stakeholders Forum and Elected Members Forum

Pre engagement events actions:

- Advertise, via email, that consultation is live for this stage of SMP development for a defined period. Ensure to add the Live Digital Consultation date to Elected Members' calendars.
- Upload information banners and previous presentations onto the SMP website for background information. Draft Policy Reports placed online for stakeholder / Elected Member review.
- Digital feedback forms/questionnaires supplied with reports to focus feedback.
- Allow period for document review and feedback on the reports.
- Feedback via the Dumfries & Galloway SMP email, forwarded onto RPS.

Live Digital Consultation, using Microsoft Teams (or Skype)

At the end of the document review period, there will be a half day set aside for engagement with the Elected Members Forum and a half day for the Key Stakeholders Forum and Client Steering Forum. These presentations/meetings will be via MS Teams or Skype, with Q&A time at the end. This would be by invite only.

3.1.2 2nd Phase – Public Stakeholders

- Two weeks after the 1st Phase, following any required amendment's being made, the public is invited to view the website. This invitation can be done:
 - i. by email, sending the invitation to those who attended the 1st round of engagement events.
 - ii. by posting the invitation on social media and SMP website.
 - iii. by creating a general invitation leaflet and liaising with different organisations/individuals (library officers, ward officers) to have these displayed in public buildings.
 - iv. local press.
- Generalised summary information on draft Policies shown at a strategic scale, as well as the draft Policy Reports.
- Digital feedback forms/questionnaires are available on the website to focus feedback.
- Period of 4 weeks given for public feedback on the strategic level policy information provided.
- Feedback will be via the Dumfries & Galloway SMP email, forwarded onto RPS.
- A question on the feedback form will be if a member of the public requires a call on a specific issue. The questionnaire will also clearly state that the Project Team is available for discussions in relation to the Plan via a range of channels, which include telephone, SMP email address and MS Teams calls. Contact details are to be provided on the questionnaires.

3.2 Possible adaptations to Digital Approach (RPS) for Public Stakeholders, to allow for inclusion

Alternative participation methods should preferably be made available to provide members of community without access to computer/internet resources with an opportunity to present their views on the Plan. Potential alternatives, as well as possible constraints related to them, are summarised below:

- Make hard copies of the documents available for consultation at key locations (eg libraries). Also provide hard copies of questionnaires/feedback forms at these locations. Although this alternative is considered within this document due to the current COVID -19 restrictions, it may not be feasible and safe in practice due for example to the need to 'sanitise' printed documents that will be handled by different people in a short period time).
- Liaise with the library teams and provide a number of computers in selected libraries, which will be available for members of the public, upon booking a time slot (online or by phone), to view the documents and fill in feedback forms. Again, although this option is suggested, the same risks apply as the point above.
- Possibility of posting hard copies of documents and questionnaires to specific groups and individuals on request only. Examples of these specific groups include Community Councils and other community groups.

3.3 Face to face consultation and engagement events

It is recognised that due to the restrictions and risks in relation to COVID-19, face to face consultation and engagement events may not be advisable and feasible at present and at best estimates, probably not until Spring 2021. However, this type of event has also been considered and this section aims to identify some of the steps that could be put in place to reduce risks.

During the first round of engagement events, the Client Steering Forum, Elected Members Forum and the Key Stakeholders Forum events were poorly attended. It is, therefore, anticipated that holding the next round of engagement events with these groups on MS Teams will more than likely result in higher attendance. Nevertheless, this section considers carrying out face to face engagement events with these groups, as well as with the Public Stakeholders.

Pre engagement events actions

Prior to the Client Steering Forum, Elected Members and Key Stakeholders engagement events, send invitation emails to the existent recipients lists for these groups. Ensure to add the engagement events dates to Elected Members' calendars. Responses are sought confirming intention to attend in order that the need for the events can be established and a suitably sized venue identified to ensure social distancing etc.

Prior to the Public Stakeholders engagement events, these must be properly advertised to ensure wide participation. This can be done:

- i. a general invitation leaflet/poster and liaising with different organisations/individuals (library officers, ward officers) to have these displayed in public buildings.
- ii. by posting the leaflet on social media and SMP website.
- iii. by email invitation to those who attended the 1st round of engagement events.
- iv. local press.

Should face to face consultation with any of the stakeholder groups be assessed as the best option for consultation and engagement for this stage of the Plan, this must be carried out in risk assessed rooms, of an appropriate size to allow for social distancing and with appropriate protocols in place such as:

- Mandatory use of face coverings.
- Provide hand sanitiser at entrance and exit.
- Ensure to collect personal information for Track and Trace purposes.
- Ideally, have stickers on the floor indicating where attendees must stand when reading display boards and watching video content.
- Consider the use of social distancing partitions.
- Use a one-way system when entering and leaving the premises.
- Ensure to limit the number of visitors within the events venue to allow for social distancing.
- Questionnaires to be filled at home and sent by post/email or online, if requested.
- Create a slot system, to limit the number of visitors at the same time and to allow for sanitising measures to be carried out in between slots.

3.4 Possible Adaptations to face to face consultation and engagement, to allow for inclusion

If face to face consultation and engagement is the chosen method for this stage of Plan, consideration should be given to providing additional alternatives for engagement, as it is possible that anxiety about social gatherings will still be high amongst certain members of the community. Potential alternatives, as well as the possible constraints related to them, are summarised below:

- Make hard copies of the documents available for consultation at key locations (eg libraries). Also provide hard copies of questionnaires/feedback forms at these locations. Although this alternative is considered within this document due to the current COVID -19 restrictions, it may not be feasible and safe in practice due for example to the need to 'sanitise' printed documents that will be handled by different people in a short period time).
- Liaise with the library teams and provide a number of computers in selected libraries, which will be available for members of the public, upon booking a time slot (online or by phone), to view the documents and fill in feedback forms. Again, although this option is suggested, the same risks apply as the point above.
- Possibility of posting hard copies of documents and questionnaires to specific groups and individuals on request only. Examples of these specific groups include Community Councils and other community groups. Written feedback returned by these groups.
- Ensure to advertise on all relevant media that the Project Team is available for discussions in relation to the Plan via a range of channels, which include telephone, SMP email address and MS Teams calls, as well as advertising the corresponding contact details. A question on the feedback form/questionnaire will be if a member of the public requires a call on a specific issue. Contact details are to be provided on the questionnaires.

4 NEXT ROUND OF ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – SUGGESTED DATES

If Digital Approach or Digital Approach plus adaptations are chosen as the method of engagement, proposed dates are:

- **Client Steering Forum, Key Stakeholders Forum and Elected Members Forum**

Document review starting from first week of March 2021. Live Digital Engagement on 08/03/21 for Elected Members Forum; and on 09/03/21 for Key Stakeholders Meeting and Client Steering Forum.

- **Public Stakeholders Meeting**

Document review starting from 22/03/21, for 4 weeks.

5 FEEDBACK POST ENGAGEMENT

Feedback from engagement events will be available on the SMP website, as well as distributed to SMP stakeholders by email or post when requested. A link to the feedback document can also be posted on DGC social media pages.