



## **Cuckmere Pathfinder Project**

### **Summary of Findings for Assessment Criteria (Intensive Workshop)**

**Held on 8 March 2011 at the Seaford Town Council Chambers**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Cuckmere Pathfinder Project is for East Sussex County Council to work together with the local community to reach consensus on how best to manage change at the Cuckmere Estuary. Some change at the Estuary is inevitable over the long term, and it is important to start planning for that change now. The County Council wants to make sure that everyone's views have been taken into account and all the options have been carefully considered in making decisions about the future of the Cuckmere. The £250,000 Pathfinder Project is being funded by DEFRA and will run until June 2011.

### 1.2 Engagement Plan

[Hopkins Van Mil: Creating Connections](#) with [Rhoden Green Marketing and Communications](#), was commissioned by East Sussex County Council to work with them on the design and implementation of the engagement and communication elements of the Pathfinder project. Two workshops were held in summer 2010 at which the Environment Agency presented its reasons for withdrawing current flood maintenance, and members of the community put forward alternative management solutions. These were the first in a series of workshops and events held as part of the Pathfinder Project, which will culminate in a major public event to be held on 7 June. . The full programme of intensive workshops and public events is given at Appendix 1.

At this intensive workshop held on 8 March participants were invited to discuss a list of themes from which to devise criteria through which the options agreed at the December workshop will be filtered.

### 1.3 Who is involved?

The Cuckmere Pathfinder Project is being managed by East Sussex County Council. The Project Officer reports to the Project Board made up of members of the community, the County Council and the Cuckmere Estuary Partnership (CEP). The membership of the Project Board is included at Appendix 2. Working closely with the Project Board, and with an overlapping membership, is the Community Forum. The Forum was established in November 2009 further to the recommendations that came from the community engagement events run in the same year. It has an extremely active role in working through options for the future management of the Estuary.

## 2. Event content

### 2.1 Event Purpose and Outcomes

The event was divided into three main parts, combining presentation, plenary and small group facilitated discussions. The full programme is available at Appendix 3 of this report. The first introductory session explained the purpose of the Cuckmere Pathfinder Project and this particular event. The second took the form of presentations on the criteria themes and statutory requirements which might affect decisions that are made through the Cuckmere Pathfinder project. Participants were given the opportunity to comment on these presentations in a short plenary session.

The expected outcomes of the event were described as follows:

- To support participants to agree on a set of criteria through which the community as a whole will assess the options at the final Pathfinder event on 7 June
- To weigh those criteria in terms of their importance for participants to the future management of the Cuckmere Estuary.

In the introductory plenary session, Andy Arnold, Team Manager, Environmental Advice, East Sussex County Council explained the background to the Pathfinder Project. He described the role of the Cuckmere Estuary Partnership, the Community Forum, the Cuckmere Pathfinder Project Board and East Sussex County Council. He explained that the current community engagement programme aimed to lead to a process through which some kind of consensus could be reached on the future management of the Cuckmere Estuary. Andy referred to the previous workshops and events and encouraged participants to continue their involvement in the process.

Henrietta Hopkins, the lead Facilitator, explained the purpose of this event and introduced the facilitation team. She invited the participants to introduce themselves and comment on their involvement in the last intensive workshop on 14 December. Participants were reminded that each workshop is written up and the summary of findings together full transcripts of the recorded flip charts included in the Cuckmere Pathfinder website<sup>1</sup> so that they are available for everyone to review.

### 2.2 Criteria Themes

Richard Mann, Chairman of the Community Forum presented briefly on the criteria themes to be discussed at the workshop. Richard explained that these had been drawn up primarily by the Community Forum with additions from the Pathfinder Project Team. He provided the following summary of the themes:

#### *Access*

Access to the beach, in Richard's view, was shown to be 'a major desire' at the meeting on 8 February.

#### *Cost*

In relation to cost he said it was, he felt, something that should be considered as a business planning process with all options being costed following the planning stage.

#### *Educational value*

Educational value had been discussed by the Community Forum as an area which was extremely broad from visits by local schools to the Estuary informing world knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cuckmerepathfinder.org.uk](http://www.cuckmerepathfinder.org.uk)

#### *Flood risk:*

Richard wanted the session to be clear about what flood risk was being referred to, property? Roads? North of Exceat Bridge? He pointed out that land is valuable north of the A259, possibly 4-5 times more valuable than south of the bridge.

#### *Heritage:*

The community believed the report prepared by Oxford Archaeology and presented at a previous evidence event was very good and deep, highlighting the need to preserve and exhibit archaeology of the Estuary if and where possible, whilst acknowledging that some preservation might be impossible.

#### *Landscape aesthetics*

Richard highlighted the beauty and peace of the area, and said that it was important that the theme explored this as an opportunity to make the heritage perhaps more visible than it is now in the future.

#### *Landscape processes*

Emphasised the need for hydrologically sound, natural physical processes of landscape if possible, working with the river.

#### *Local economy*

Richard commented that the figures quoted in the economic impact study didn't sound a great deal. But he felt they were still important and wondered if more is spent in pubs and B&B than the report indicated. He emphasised the view expressed on 8 February that value and impact should also be quantified in "heart and soul" terms, not just economics.

#### *Practicalities of implementation*

Whilst this is an important issue he felt it had not been gone into in any detail as yet.

#### *Sustainability*

In Richard's view it would be important for any scheme to be self running with time and for a good period into the future.

#### *Tourism and recreation*

Richard summarised this by saying, 'It's a very attractive spot, "like a lung" suddenly it is open, very attractive, interesting and easy for many to visit. It is important for well being of individuals and the area'.

Richard also added that in addition to the themes previously identified by the Community Forum for the criteria it was important also to consider the present state of the river and its system and how the advantages and disadvantages of each option related to this issue. He emphasised the importance of timing in any decisions on future management. He said that, 'the river is degrading all the time and is at risk from storms and high tides.'

Following Richard's presentation comments were made from participants. The full transcript of comments and responses is included at Appendix 4. A recurring theme for the process has been,

'Cost - we need to include the issue of who pays'

Other comments included a discussion on the risks involved in assessing one option against another, and one criteria theme against another,

*'There is a risk the process is adversarial, environment becomes seen as an obstacle'*

this was countered by another who said that the process had demonstrated that,

*'There are lots of shared interests, we need to draw strands back together, and we'll come back to a win/win situation'.*

Within this discussion the group agreed that health and wellbeing needed to be integrated into a discussion of tourism and recreation.

### 2.3 Statutory requirements

Andy Arnold, Team Manager, Environmental Advice, East Sussex County Council gave a presentation to review current legislation which may affect decisions about the future management of the Cuckmere Estuary. Andy emphasised that he is not a legal expert, but there is no single person with a legal background who is able to cover the broad range of legislation listed in his presentation. He explained his role as being to convey information to the group as objectively as possible, given that statutory requirements can be interpreted given the context. He pointed out that the information had been provided by others who deal with the issues regularly and then provided an overview. The summary of the statutory requirements presented at the workshop is provided at Appendix 4.

Andy invited the group to fill in any gaps to the list that they were aware of. The full list of comments is provided at Appendix 5. Legislation that was mentioned was,

*'Other legislation associated with land drainage, Land Drainage Act 1930 onwards including the 1995 Environment Act'*

which East Sussex County Council agreed to investigate further, together with the Water Framework Directive. A question was raised on the Habitats Directive and legislation affecting fisheries. It was suggested that the Water Resources Act would cover the latter and that the Habitats Directive depended on species designation. It was confirmed that the Environment Agency has overall responsibility for land drainage and flood protection.

### 2.4 Workshop Evaluation

27 people attended this intensive workshop drawn from the Community Forum, the Project Board, the Cuckmere Estuary Partnership, East Sussex County Council staff, other statutory organisations and other members of the community. Each participant was asked to complete an evaluation form to assess whether the session had met people's needs. The full results of the evaluation are included in Appendix 6. In summary:

- 84% heard about the event from direct email communications from the Cuckmere Pathfinder team;
- 74% found the process of booking their place at the event either good or excellent;
- 70% found the information provided before the event either good or excellent;
- 100% of participants said they had enough opportunity to express their views;
- 94% found their round table facilitator to be either good or excellent.

Participants' comments on the event are included in full at the end of Appendix 4. There is no doubt that the process has now reached a critical stage where decisions are being made which will have an impact on the final outcome. This means that there is a lot of information to digest and review, as one participant said,

*'Possibly the large amount of information undermined effectiveness of the session'*

Another commented,

*'Format v good so allowed process to move forward efficiently and with enough good humour!'*

### 3. Event findings

The participants split in to three small working groups for facilitated discussions. The full transcripts of each of the small group discussions can be found in Appendix 4. The summary which follows is the results of the summary of the criteria produced by each group. This was then sent to all participants to be weighted. The sheet used for the weighting (but not the results which have not been returned at time of writing<sup>2</sup>) summarising the criteria agreed by the group in the plenary session is included at Appendix 5.

#### 3.1 Group 1 findings

In a consideration of access as a criteria theme Group 1 felt that each option should retain access to the beach and consider everything south of Milton Lock. Discussion was held on the importance of safeguarding the A259. It was considered an opportunity by the group to consider how an option might,

*'Improve overall access to the Cuckmere Estuary'.*

Participants were keen to ensure that none of the options prejudice sustainable transport in the future and discussions were held on previous initiatives to encourage the use of cycling but which had been thwarted by both cost and the issue of cyclists safety.

Similarly the group considered education as an opportunity for reviewing the potential for,

*'Improved education and better interpretation of the Cuckmere Estuary'*

Under Tourism & Recreation / Health & Wellbeing the group wanted to ensure that the options should provide an opportunity to help the visitor get full enjoyment from the experience. They discussed the importance of inspiration as a draw for tourism and for health and well-being. In considering the affect to tourism businesses Group 1 wanted to know how tourism businesses were going to be affected by the options and ensure that no net damage to tourism and recreation is created by the options. In this discussion the group returned to access saying that the options must ensure disabled access.

The discussion under the economy theme lead the group to ask,

*'Will the option generate employment?'*

and conclude that the options should ensure that money generated locally should remain in the local economy; provide opportunities for training and shouldn't discourage visits.

The group considered both landscape processes and aesthetics together. They concluded that the options should ensure that the landscape is still worthy of having National Park status and that any changes should achieve a balance between the natural processes and human intervention. A discussion on climate change concluded that any option should be future proofed against climate change. It was brought to the group's attention that a key concept of landscape at an international level is that of 'complexity' in terms of all its assets and the group therefore concluded that,

*'the options [should] maximise the complexity of the landscape'.*

Ecologically the group agreed on the importance of complying with existing statutory regulations including good ecological status or potential (Water Framework Directive); maintain SSSI status; optimise high biodiversity of the site. Participants felt that it is important

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<sup>2</sup> The date for returning the weighted criteria to the facilitation team is 23 March

for wildlife to be allowed to adapt to climate change and sea level rise and that ecological connectivity should be created throughout the landscape.

Heritage discussions highlighted the value of assets in the Cuckmere and the balance that needs to be brought to bear between design, research, recording, conservation giving access to understanding, OR extracting the embedded knowledge prior to loss and managing the change to minimise the impact of loss. The group concluded that the criteria should include a filter for,

*'Options allowing opportunities for appropriate mitigation relative to the significance of the heritage assets'* and

*'To try & conserve where possible the significant heritage assets'*

Options which allow a greater understanding of the valley were seen to be important by the participants.

The timing of change was discussed in relation to providing enough time for adaptations and mitigations to take place and for people to adapt to any proposed change. Consideration was also given to the extent to which an option might meet the requirements of the sustainability triangle of environmental, social and economic factors.

### 3.2 Group 2

Group 2's discussions on ecology focussed on the need for the Cuckmere Estuary to have high biodiversity and the potential for greater and improved biodiversity. They saw this an integrated with education, heritage and landscape,

*'Must be rewarding to visit by educational groups and individuals for reasons of ecology / heritage / landscape'.*

In terms of flood management the group considered the criteria to be whether or not an option affected flood risk north of the A259. Linked to landscape processes they discussed their view that the options must be hydrologically sound; sympathetic to and going with natural processes to ensure sustainability. They agreed with the introductory comments by Richard Mann that any scheme should be self-running in time.

The group felt that for the heritage of the Cuckmere it should be a criteria to,

*'Protect and enhance most significant heritage assets by investigating & understanding it, not at all cost preserving it'*

They wished consideration to be given to how an option would conserve and enhance the unique character and completeness of the landscape including the meanders, cliffs, Coastguard cottages raised in the recent focus studies commissioned through Pathfinder.

The group discussed the multifaceted character & quality of the landscape and its relevance to increasing the number of visitors to the Estuary and their length of stay. They agreed that the key to all of the options is access by all to the beach and taking the opportunity to enhance that access. They described access as including to the West Beach and the Coastguard Cottages for maintenance vehicles and residents.

### 3.3 Group 3

Group 3 spent some time discussing issues around the criteria as well as the criteria themselves. As with all the groups access to both beaches, the car park, the A259, for emergency vehicles, cyclists and for Cottage owners were all seen as essential. There was some disagreement in the group as to whether disability access should be a criteria. One

participant was very clear that this is 'a given' and should not be singled out as a criteria as it is an essential part of the process and can't be separated out from any scheme.

Group 3 were the only group who included a criteria on cost at this stage. They wished to assess the options against whether they would be likely to attract funding for their development.

The participants here saw a link between ecology, landscape and the Coastguard Cottages. They did not want to see a reduction in biodiversity and wanted to look at the contribution made at a local, national and international level. Equally the group did not wish to see a reduction in educational value, they agreed that whichever option is taken forward it will have an educational value.

In agreement with previous groups, Group 3 felt an option,

*'Should not increase flood risk upstream e.g. Alfriston, A259' and should provide,*

*'Protection of existing properties noting that for the cottages this relates to coastal erosion'*

For landscape aesthetics the group wished a criteria to assess the,

*'extent to which an option is pleasing on the landscape'*

and also wanted them to take into account the emotional response people have to the landscape. In considering landscape process the group discussed the impact of sea level rise; coastal erosion; long-shore drift; river flooding and habitat development. They wished to know whether or not an option would work with or against natural processes.

Heritage was explored by the group in terms of the extent to which options would take in to account identified heritage assets and protect and maintain access to unexplored history.

The group explored tourism and recreation predominantly in terms of maintaining access which has been discussed previously. They wished to ensure that the Cuckmere was maintained as an area for informal recreation and the overall image was appropriate for tourism, health and recreation. They reminded everyone of the wish to maintain a canoeing facility and therefore the still water in the meanders.

For local economy the group discussed criteria which would demonstrate that the option did not have a detrimental impact on the local economy, and in fact be,

*'Something that will augment the local economy'*

maintaining local visitor numbers; extending the visitor season and supporting the adaptability of the local economy.

In practical terms the group discussed the need to meet the statutory and legal framework e.g. planning and ensure that the proposals for engineering are technically feasible. The group agreed that sustainability in terms of maintenance is important and that self sustaining is a possibility.

## 4. Next steps

### 4.1 Points to clarify the process and evidence available

As a result of the discussions held during the event Hopkins Van Mil has emailed or posted a list of the criteria devised by the working groups to each participant. They agreed to weight them on a scale of 1-5; 1 being 'of no importance to me' for the future management of the estuary and 5 being 'of great importance to me' for the future management of the estuary. Participants were advised that they could weight a criterion 0 if they felt it bore no relevance to future management decisions. Participants have been given until 23 March to complete and return the weighting sheets which will then be displayed in summary on the Cuckmere Pathfinder website.

The weighted criteria will then be reviewed at the next intensive workshop on 12 April to ensure that they are a workable and robust tool for the assessment of the options. At the same workshop the community will then pilot the options assessment process so that any required amendments can be made to it before the full community meets for the final event on 7 June.

### 4.2 Function of this report

This report is a summary of the discussion on 8 March. It will be sent to the Project Board for comment, distributed to all those who attended the workshop, and published on the Cuckmere Pathfinder Project's website. The media will be informed of the report via a press release and follow up telephone calls.

Hopkins Van Mil would like to thank all those who took part in the workshop, contributing their views so positively when complex issues and processes were being discussed.

Hopkins Van Mil 18 March 2011

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## Appendix 1

### Timeline for intensive workshops and public events

14 December 2010	Options Identification (Intensive Workshop)
8 February 2011	Landscape, Visitors, Heritage and Economy of the Cuckmere: Evidence Presentation Stage 1 (Public Event)
8 March 2011	Assessment criteria agreement (Intensive Workshop)
5 April 2011	Landscape, Visitors, Heritage and Economy of the Cuckmere: Evidence Presentation Stage 2 (Public Event)
12 April 2011	Options Assessment Pilot (Intensive Workshop)
7 June 2011	Planning for Change at the Cuckmere (Public Event)

## Appendix 2

### The Pathfinder Project Board

The Pathfinder Project is led by a project board made up of local residents and members of the County Council and Cuckmere Estuary Partnership (CEP). The members are:

- Michael Ann, Cuckmere Community Forum
- Jane Cecil, National Trust, CEP
- Alan Edgar, Cuckmere Community Forum
- Councillor John Freeman, Seaford Town Council and CEP
- Richard Mann, Cuckmere Community Forum
- Carolyn McCourt, Cuckmere Community Forum and CEP
- Andy Robertson, East Sussex County Council
- Chris Wick, Environment Agency and CEP
- Tony Whitbread, Sussex Wildlife Trust

## Appendix 3

# Cuckmere Pathfinder Project

## 8 March Intensive Workshop – Seaford Town Council Chambers

### DRAFT Programme

(Please note that timings are approximate)

11.00-11.20

#### 1. Introductory remarks

- A short welcome
- An overview of the Pathfinder Project, East Sussex County Council
- An overview of the purpose of the workshop
- An introduction to the facilitation team
- Overview of the proposed criteria themes for discussion

11.20-11.30

#### 2. Statutory requirements

- A statement on the statutory requirements for the Cuckmere Estuary

11.30-12.45

#### 3. 1st part facilitated discussion on the criteria

- Themes
- Essential / desirable objectives
- Weighting

#### 12.45 - 1.30 Lunch

1.30-2.30

#### 4. 2nd part facilitated discussion on the criteria

- Essential / desirable objectives
- Weighting

2.30-3.00

#### 5. Round-up within small-group discussion

- Each group summarises their discussion
- Points are checked to ensure they have been recorded accurately
- Each group identifies their list of assessment criteria

3.00-3.45

#### 6. Plenary discussion to confirm final list of assessment criteria

3.45-4.00

#### 7. Close with brief summary of next steps

## Appendix 4

### 1. Overview

- **Objectives:**
  - help guide which criteria might need to be prioritised.
  - Seek feedback on omissions and areas requiring further clarification.
- An overview, not a definitive guide.
- Interpretation of some legislation is required.

### 2. Access – Highways

- **Legislation:** The Highways Act (1980), Road Traffic Act(1988) & Traffic Management Act (2004).
- **Key requirements:** ESCC, as the Highways Authority, has a duty to keep the highway passable and safe (Section 41 of the Highways Act).
- **Process:** Asset Management Plan sets out inspection regimes of the bridge and road for defects and remedial response times.

### 3. Access - RoW

- **Legislation:** The Highways Act (1980) & Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).
- **Requirements:** ESCC, as the Highways Authority, has:
  - A duty to assert and protect the rights of the public to their use and enjoyment;
  - The power to make Public Path Orders to create, divert or extinguish RoWs (eg. in the public interest).

**NB:** RoW law is complex, and needs to be treated on a case-by-case basis.

# Rights of Way



Map Title: Cuckmere Haven - Aerial view		East Sussex County Council County Hall St Annes Crescent Lewes	
Key:	Public Footpath		Bridleway
	Restricted Byway		Byway
Date:	4/03/11	Map No:	1
Scale:	1:10,000	Author:	ALG

East Sussex County Council  
County Hall  
St Annes Crescent  
Lewes

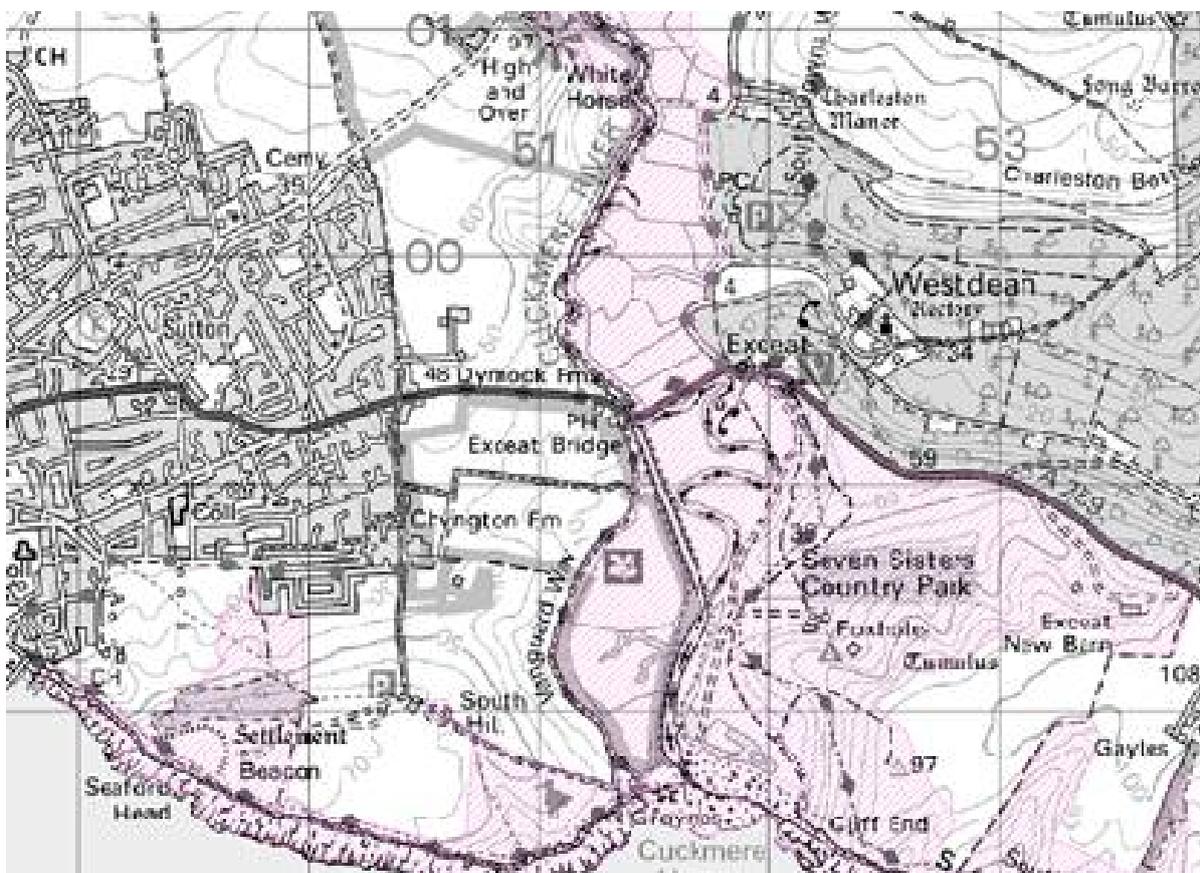
© East Sussex County Council 2010  
Aerial Photography © Earthmapping.com 2010

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## 4. Ecology

- **Legislation:** the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).
- **Requirements:**
  - The Cuckmere Estuary forms part of Seaford to Beachy Head Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
  - Natural England has a legal duty to act for the benefit of SSSIs.
  - Public bodies & landowners with SSSIs must notify N.E. of any operation that may damage a SSSI, and N.E. has the legal power to withhold consent or can impose conditions to prevent damage.

### SSSI boundary



## 5. Heritage

- **Legislation:** The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act (1990), the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act (1979).
- **Requirements:**
  - Listed buildings: the Planning Authority would need to 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.
  - Scheduled monuments: must apply to the SoS for prior written consent for 'works' (including flooding).
  - PPS5: the absence of designation of heritage assets doesn't indicate that they are of lower significance.



## 6. Flood risk

- **Legislation:** The Water Resources Act (1981), Land Drainage and Sea Defence Byelaws (1981), & The Flood & Water Management Act (2010).
- **Requirements:**
  - The E.A. is the principal flood risk management operating authority.
  - The E.A. has the power, but not the legal obligation, to manage flood risk from designated main rivers (ie. including the Cuckmere Estuary) and the sea.
  - The E.A. has a strategic overview role for all flood and coastal erosion risk management.

## 7. Other

- **The Town and Country Planning Act (1990):** planning permission required for 'significant' developments in, on or over land. The purposes of the South Downs National Park:
  - Conserve & enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage;
  - Promote opportunities for the understanding & enjoyment of the Park's special qualities by the public.
- **The Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2010):** a higher level of planning requirement.
- **The Occupiers Liability Act:** landowners have a legal duty of care to visitors to their land.
- **Others?**

## Appendix 5

### Transcripts of Plenary Sessions

#### **Statutory Legislation**

- Comment: Other legislation associated with land drainage, Land Drainage Act 1930 onwards (no in 1995 Environment Act) – needs investigating further
- EA has overall responsibility for land drainage and flood protection
- Q: if foot path is closed will it involve a public inquiry? A: this would be dealt with on a case by case basis - under certain situations it would lead to public inquiry
- Q: habitats directive and fisheries. A: species designation – national designation, under habitats and birds directive, species (great crested newts and bats) A: water resources act will cover fisheries
- Q: flash point/Seaford Head – no one stepping forward to take responsibility, some said Crown, does that have significance for the estuary? A: Some of the options to relate to coastal legislation, The Crown owns beach, and the County Council lease the beach from the Crown
- Q/comment: water framework directive - should this be included?
- For SSSI it is important that good ecological status / and the potential for it is maintained.

### Transcripts of Small Group Discussions

#### **Group 1 (HH)**

##### **Discussion recorded by facilitator onto flip chart paper**

##### **Summary Criteria From Group 1 as set out in the plenary session:**

###### *Access*

Each Option Should:

- Retain access to the beach
- Consider everything south of Milton Lock
- Safeguard the A259
- Improve overall access to the Cuckmere Estuary

Also:

- Make sure none of the options prejudice sustainable transport in the future

###### *Education*

- Potential for improved education and better interpretation of the Cuckmere Estuary

###### *Tourism & Recreation / Health & Wellbeing*

- Does the option provide an opportunity to help the visitor get full enjoyment from the experience?
- Does it inspire?
- Are tourism businesses going to be affected by the option?
- The option should create no net damage to tourism and recreation
- The option must ensure disabled access

###### *Economy*

- Will the option generate employment?
- The option should ensure that money generated locally should remain in the local economy
- Does the option provide opportunities for training?
- The option shouldn't discourage visits

###### *Landscape*

- Worthy of being part of the National Park

- Any changes should achieve a balance between the natural processes and human intervention
- The option should provide future proofing against climate change
- Do the options meet the challenge of climate change?
- Do the options maximise the complexity of the landscape

#### *Ecology*

- Good ecological status or potential (Water Framework Directive)
- Maintain SSSI status
- Optimise high biodiversity of the site
- Allows wildlife to adapt to climate change and sea level rise
- Creating ecological connectivity throughout the landscape

#### *Heritage*

- Options allowing opportunities for appropriate mitigation relative to the significance of the heritage assets
- To try & conserve where possible the significant heritage assets
- The extent to which the options allow a greater understanding of the valley

#### *Timing*

- Does an option provide enough time for adaptations and mitigations to take place?
- Does an option provide enough time for people to adapt to the change?

#### *Sustainability*

- To what extent does an option meet the requirements of the sustainability triangle?

### **General discussion recorded on to the flip chart by facilitator**

The group initially agreed to discuss the themes in the following categories:

#### 1. Process

- Access
- Education
- Tourism
- Economy

#### 2. Things

- Landscape
- Community key assets
- Ecology
- Heritage

#### 3. Implementation

- Cost
- Practicality
- Timing
- Sustainability

It was agreed that each area cross-referenced and could not be seen as independent of each other.

#### *Access:*

- Includes vehicular and pedestrian access
- From Milton Lock southwards - north of the A259 has not been studied in the same level of detail as south of A259 and the cost of working in the area north of A259 is greater
- What are the levels of these roads?
- We could say we don't want any of the options to decrease overall access
- Access isn't adequate currently - either side of the river not accessible either south to long bridge.
- Traffic congestion at Exceat Bridge - it's horrendous and getting worse
- Threat of accidents to pedestrians at Visitor Centre and Wildlife Trust
- Q: ESCC programme of improvements - is this going to improve this situation?

- Access to beach requires keeping river mouth where it is (ex: digger marooned)
- C<sup>3</sup>: Retain access to the beach
- Sustainability of access - encourage other access
- Road floods at highest of predicted tides now, so don't want a lot of traffic on road
- C: Consider everything south of Milton Lock
- C: Safeguard the A259
- C: Improve overall access to the Cuckmere Estuary

Also:

- C: Make sure none of the options prejudice sustainable transport in the future

#### *Education*

- Include access / safe access / loos on right side of the road (x-ref access)
- Educational opportunities
- Existing facilities v. busy re: Sussex Wildlife Trust. Q: Are they adequate?
- Greatest opportunities for education for everyone
- Life-long learning
- Emphasis on local education - sense of place enhancing this
- Retaining the meanders [debate followed]
  - it's what brings people here
  - they will be silted up within next 10 years
  - fish dying in silted up meanders isn't a draw for people
- It's important that the Estuary continues to provide educational facilities
- We need effective interpretation
- Information Centre is owned by ESCC, the National Park refused to take it on. Pressure on ESCC to invest in these things
- In the field you need to get a feel for where you are
- C: Potential for improved education and better interpretation of the Cuckmere Estuary
- All options have educational value in recording heritage accurately and interpreting the change

#### *Tourism & Recreation / Health & Well-being*

- link to access
- Car-parks @ country park gets full
- It's about both appeal and aesthetics
- There is no signing to car-park on this side
- Free parking for residents?
- It needs serious management if we are to have vast crowds
- We need to think about different / new audiences
- Help people to see the 7 sisters (they may be missing it if they only go to the car park)
- How about having 2 / 3 suggested trails
- C: Does the option provide an opportunity to help the visitor get full enjoyment from the experience?
- C: Does it inspire?
- C: Are tourism businesses going to be affected by the option?
- C: The option should create no net damage to tourism and recreation
- C: Must ensure disabled access

#### *Economy*

- Linked to tourism (no. of visitors) and landscape (film companies) - Q: who benefits from film company money? A: it depends whose land is used it might be ESCC, National Trust or a private owner.
- C: There is a value in financial terms of the visitor experience
- C: Will the option generate employment?

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<sup>3</sup> Printed in blue: criteria identified during small group discussion

- C: The option should ensure that money generated locally should remain in the local economy
- C: Does the option provide opportunities for training? (x-ref education)
- C: The option shouldn't discourage visits
- There should be no net disbenefit in terms of access and the economy

#### *Landscape (aesthetics & processes)*

- C: Worthy of being part of the National Park
- Inter-play between the human and natural processes - consider the Coastguard Cottages
- C: Any changes should achieve a balance between the natural processes and human intervention
- Even the natural options require human intervention
- C: The option should provide future proofing against climate change
- We need consideration of short, medium-term and long-term
- C: Do the options meet the challenge of climate change?
- Landscape = what we see and what we know - understanding, knowledge & education. Key concept of landscape as an open idea; an intangible idea with geomorphological aspects. So complexity is an important part of landscape.
- C: Maximising the complexity of the landscape (x-ref balance) - aesthetic, affective & cognitive aspects of the landscape
- Optimise the landscape character

#### *Ecology*

- C: Good ecological status or potential (Water Framework Directive)
- C: Maintain SSSI status
- C: Optimise high biodiversity of the site (the few species that are the rarest)
- Flood and Water Management Act of 2010 - examine & explore
- C: Allows wildlife to adapt to climate change and sea level rise
- C: Creating ecological connectivity throughout the landscape

#### *Heritage*

- Good baseline
- Statutory designations
- Scheduled monuments
- Physical impacts / setting issues
- C: Allowing opportunities for appropriate mitigation relative to the significance of the heritage assets (x-ref timing)
- Design, research, recording - conservation giving access to understanding
- Preserve, conserve, keep OR extract the embedded knowledge
- Managing the change to minimise the impact of loss
- Finite and non-renewable
- PPS5 - a record of the past is not as good as the thing itself
- C: To try & conserve where possible the significant heritage assets
- Includes Coastguard Cottages - buildings etc
- C: The extent to which the options allow a greater understanding of the valley
- Appreciate the heritage
- There are opportunities
- Sensitivity of what the environment might contain

#### *Cost*

- The group agreed that there must be a costing but it's not a criterion for assessment at this point
- Best value; justifiable are words you might use
- Shouldn't be swayed by funding sources
- Or by containing our thought processes at this stage

- Work through this as a business planning process - cost wouldn't be a criterion at this point
- At this point it's whatever it takes
- We cost the project later when we know more
- Funders will use their own criteria to assess best value - cost comes at the end.

#### Practicality

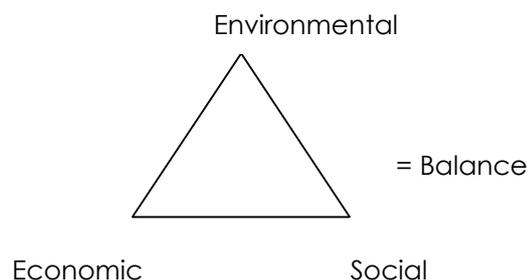
- Can we judge if one option is more practical than another?
- They have all been looked at for practicality anyway
- This is not a criteria
- This will become an issue when we have the selected scheme in detail
- This is tied in with simplicity

#### Timing

- Does an option provide enough time for adaptations and mitigations to take place?
- Does an option provide enough time for people to adapt to the change?
- Remember that change may be imposed on us by a storm event

#### Sustainability

- How do you measure sustainability?
- Whatever we do shouldn't be a quick fix
- Is the option sustainable in the long-term?
- It would have to be flexible; built upon as an idea
- We shouldn't prejudice the future and future decisions (x-ref balance)
- Concern - north of the river - any developments will be expensive so may never happen - more salinated water could move northwards which would change the vista and the ecology - all of this would cost more money to deal with.
- Consider the sustainability triangle



- C: To what extent does an option meet the requirements of the sustainability triangle?

## Group 2 (AvM)

Discussion recorded by facilitator onto flip chart paper

### Summary Criteria From Group 2 as set out in the plenary session:

#### Ecology

- High biodiversity
- Greater / improved biodiversity
- Must be rewarding to visit by educational groups and individuals for reasons of ecology / heritage / landscape

#### Flood Management

- Does option affect flood risk north of A259?

#### Heritage

- Protect and enhance most significant heritage assets by investigating & understanding it, not at all cost preserving it
- To conserve & enhance the unique character and completeness of the landscape (meanders, cliffs, cottages - see recent studies)

#### Local economy & tourism

- Must emphasise the multifaceted character & quality of the landscape to increase the number of visitors and length of stay

#### *Landscape processes*

- Must be hydrologically sound
- Has to be sympathetic to and going with natural processes to ensure sustainability
- Becoming increasingly self-running in time

#### *Access*

- Key is access to the beach
- Access for all
- Enhancing access to the beach
- Access to West Beach & Cottages / maintenance vehicles / residents

### **General discussion recorded on to the flip chart by facilitator**

Note: Group would like to see criteria being grouped in instrumental and intrinsic  
We need to look at themes again and how they overlap / cross to make it meaningful to human beings; write a narrative and possibly group criteria together when weighting them

#### *Ecology*

- C: High biodiversity
- C: Greater / improved biodiversity
- Important for both local residents / tourists for different reasons e.g landscape aesthetics
- To increase natural sustainability of the estuary
- It can't get any worse legally - must improve

#### *Educational value*

- Given mission of South Downs National Park: ecology & heritage criteria fall under this educational them
- Must distinguish between intrinsic values & instrumental values when talking about criteria e.g. educational value
- C: Must be rewarding to visit by educational groups and individuals for reasons of ecology / heritage / landscape
- There is a cumulative effect. Educational value is the sum of a lot of the themes together
- How do we judge educational value?
  - ecology
  - heritage and so on

#### *Flood Management*

- Add: including above A259
- (flood risk north of A259 not part of new evidence - however will be part of modelling)
- C: Does option affect flood risk north of A259?
- Doesn't need to be part of this list as all options have same outcome in terms of flooding north of A259
- Turning flood risk in to criteria means assessing value of other themes, such as heritage assets, economic value, etc. access
- It's like cost, inherent to decision-making process

#### *Heritage*

- National Trust identified 5 values to assess heritage:
  - evidential value (things we don't know about yet)
  - historical value (things we know about)
  - aesthetic value (design or fortuitous e.g. weathering)
  - communal value (tell us something about where we come from, sense of place)
- Evidence report reveals there is a lot of evidential value at the Cuckmere
- Archaeological potential?
- How much heritage will be preserved?

- C: Protect and enhance most significant heritage assets by investigating & understanding it, not at all cost preserving it
- (There is an enormous educational potential that hasn't been realised yet)
- To inform decision making; justifies a phased investigation - short, medium and long-term

#### *Landscape Aesthetics*

- Must not harm unique character & completeness of the landscape, which is a harmony of natural processes & human intervention
- Must further enhance appreciation of landscape
- C: To conserve & enhance the unique character and completeness of the landscape (meanders, cliffs, cottages - see recent studies)

#### *Local Economy & Tourism*

- Conserve & enhance attractiveness of landscape
- Cuckmere is contributing to the national economy too
- C: must emphasise the multifaceted character & quality of the landscape to increase the number of visitors and length of stay

#### *Landscape processes*

- C: Must be hydrologically sound
- C: Has to be sympathetic to and going with natural processes to ensure sustainability
- C: Becoming increasingly self-running in time

#### *Practicalities of implementation*

- Dependent on short, medium and long-term
- Clarity about ownership of delivery
- Easier to implement?
  - engineering
  - cost
  - time-frame
  - ownership of delivery
- However we don't know enough to score this criteria (as with cost) or even specify it further. Must leave it to the professionals

#### *Sustainability*

- Goes right the way through all criteria
- Becoming increasingly self-running over time - see landscape processes!

#### *Recreation*

- Preservation of existing recreation facilities e.g. canoeing and walking
- Develop the recreational contribution to the community e.g. cycling & marine activities

#### *Access*

- C: Key is access to the beach
- From A259 & either side of river and southill barn & down (=westside)
- Eastside access = C: Access for all as accessible for wheelchair users
- Access for wheelchair users & access for pushchairs etc could be provided if southill barn now to be developed
- We want to provide access to wheelchair users, it is an important outcome - access for all to the beach
- Take it one step further: C: enhancing access to the beach
- C: Access to West Beach & Cottages / maintenance vehicles / residents

#### *Cost*

- Try to make it happen, whatever is outcome of this process
- What is it we are comparing timescale?

- Cost is part of 'practicalities of implementation' - we'll address it there
- It depends on *who* is paying
- Aspiration has to be achieving long-term vision & working way back towards consistent & criteria for short, medium & long-term including cost

### **Group 3 (HI)**

#### **Summary Criteria From Group 3 as set out in the plenary session:**

##### *Access*

- Access to both beaches, East and West
- Access through the middle, as well as both sides
- DDA requirements – disability access
- Access to car park, A259, for emergency vehicles, cyclists and for Cottage owners

##### *Cost*

- Whether it can attract funding

##### *Ecology (link to landscape, coastguard cottages)*

- Not reducing the biodiversity
- What makes a greater contribution to biodiversity?
- Need to look at contribution at local, national and international levels

##### *Educational value (link to economy)*

- Whatever happens it will have educational value... as long as access is maintained
- We don't want the educational value to reduce

##### *Flood risk*

- It should not increase flood risk upstream e.g. Alfriston, A259
- Protection of existing properties (note: for the cottages this relates to coastal erosion)
- Flood water has to get out (but there are different ways of doing this?)

##### *Heritage*

- Extent it takes into account identified heritage assets
- Protect and maintain access to unexplored history

##### *Landscape aesthetics*

- The extent to which an option is pleasing on the landscape
- It needs to take into account emotional responses to landscape

##### *Landscape processes*

- Extent to which an option will take into account:
  - If/if not rising sea level
  - Coastal erosion
  - Long shore drift
  - River flooding
  - Habitat development
- Does it work with or work against natural processes?
- Coastguard cottages protection (this links to other themes, see flood risk)

##### *Local economy*

- Nothing that will have a detrimental impact on the local economy
- Something that will augment (increase) the local economy
- Maintaining local visitor numbers
- Extend the visitor season
- Adaptability of the local economy

##### *Practicalities of implementation*

- Need to meet the statutory and legal framework e.g. planning
- Engineering – it has to be technically feasible

##### *Sustainability*

- Sustainability in terms of maintenance is important
- Self sustaining is also a possibility

##### *Tourism and recreation*

- Maintaining access to the flat areas and the concrete path
- Maintaining access and enjoyment for tourism and recreation

- Maintaining informal recreation
- Maintaining the overall image of the area for tourism (landscape is important for tourism)
- Health, financial, recreational etc benefit of Cuckmere for the wider area
- Maintain canoeing facility e.g. still water)

### **Discussion recorded by facilitator onto flip chart paper**

#### *General comments about the themes*

- It's a good comprehensive list
- Q: Is health and well being a separate theme? Or is it covered under access or recreation
- Is public safety a separate theme? Is it under access? Suggest cover under practicalities
- Law is another criterion. Suggest it goes under practicalities
- Access – need to look at access to the beach, long shore drift will come into this too
- General point – studies on recreation and local economy were a bit vague
  - A: There is further working going on
  - Alan Edgar can provide information/ ideas re: cost/local economy

#### *Access*

- C: Access to both beaches, East and West
- C: Access through the middle, as well as both sides
- C: DDA requirements – disability access
- C: Access to car park, A259, for emergency vehicles, cyclists and for Cottage owners
- Q: Are there different types of access?
- Cyclists (Sustrans)
- Is baseline the status quo?
- Landowners have a say over what happens

#### *Cost*

- Need to include all costs e.g. cost of option, cost of implementation, cost when things go wrong, maintenance
- Does it attract additional funding?
- Affordability (?): Careful, with this you may end up doing nothing!
- Range of possible costs
- Who pays/are they willing to pay (each options has its own costs, but it might come from different places depending on the option)
- C: Whether it can attract funding
- Remember cost occurs over the long term, after implementation e.g. maintenance costs
- General point – different authorities are involved with costs (?)

#### *Ecology (link to landscape, coastguard cottages)*

- C: Not reducing the biodiversity
- Is it maintaining existing biodiversity or enhancing it?
- C: What makes a greater contribution to biodiversity?
- There were differing opinions on habitat/species e.g. salt marshes (and conflicting reports on what will form), meadow lands
- It is difficult to compare different habitats
- How do we value differing habitats?
- Need to look at links between different ecosystems and sustainability
- There is a statutory framework to follow e.g. What a SSSI means
- C: Need to look at contribution at local, national and international levels

#### *Educational value (link to economy)*

- This is very important
- C: Whatever happens it will have educational value... as long as access is maintained
- C: We don't want the educational value to reduce

- There are various aspects to education e.g. schools visits, archaeology

#### Flood risk

- C: It should not increase flood risk upstream e.g. Alfriston, A259
- C: Protection of existing properties (note: for the cottages this relates to coastal erosion)
- Different types of flooding
  - river flooding & impact of any changes
  - tidal surge
  - water off the downs/groundwater
  - flood drainage
- Flood risk to assets e.g. car parks, paths
- C: Flood water has to get out (but there are different ways of doing this?)

#### Heritage

- C: Extent it takes into account identified heritage assets
- What is best for future generations?
- C: Protect and maintain access to unexplored history

#### Landscape aesthetics

- C: The extent to which an option is pleasing on the landscape
- Can we use the visual impact assessment? C: It needs to take into account emotional responses to landscape
- Discussion about maintaining status quo vs. evolving process
- General discussion about landscape:
- Landscape is everything... to me!
- This is a subjective area
- Spirit of place
- People want to look at it and be in it
- The way we respond to landscape is a very personal thing
- Landscape means different things to different people
- Visual appreciation of the landscape
- You have an undeveloped estuary
- South of the A259 you see it all in one go, very visible from all sides, the overall area
- Psychic health and wellbeing of the nation
- Coastguard cottages are very important

#### Landscape processes

- C: Extent to which an option will take into account:
  - If/if not rising sea level
  - Coastal erosion
  - Long shore drift
  - River flooding
  - Habitat development
- C: Does it work with or work against natural processes?
- C: Coastguard cottages protection (this links to other themes, see flood risk)

#### Local economy

- C: Nothing that will have a detrimental impact on the local economy
- C: Something that will augment (increase) the local economy
- C: Maintaining local visitor numbers
- C: Extend the visitor season
- (comment – visitor numbers could be a misleading criteria)
- C: Adaptability of the local economy

#### Practicalities of implementation

- C: Need to meet the statutory and legal framework e.g. planning

- C: Engineering – it has to be technically feasible
- Who is responsibility for maintain the river/ will someone be able to maintain it
- Access will be required for engineering work
- Will it affect the river mouth upstream / river mouth will need clearing (this point may be covered under another theme)

#### Sustainability

- There are different timescales for sustainability
- Option – raising the banks will give us further time for consideration
- C: Sustainability in terms of maintenance is important
- C: Self sustaining is also a possibility
- Sustainability depends on sea level rising, or not
- Perhaps sustainability is an unhelpful label!

#### Tourism and recreation

- C: Maintaining access to the flat areas and the concrete path
- C: Maintaining access and enjoyment for tourism and recreation
- C: Maintaining informal recreation
- C: Maintaining the overall image of the area for tourism (landscape is important for tourism)
- C: Health, financial, recreational etc benefit of Cuckmere for the wider area
- C: Maintain canoeing facility e.g. still water (ask opinion of canoeists)



## Appendix 6

Criteria	Weight					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Access</b>						
Retain access to the East & West beaches						
Consider everything south of Milton Lock						
Safeguard the A259						
Improve overall access to the Cuckmere Estuary						
Make sure none of the options prejudice sustainable transport in the future						
Access for <u>all</u> <sup>4</sup>						
Enhancing access to the beach						
Access to car park, A259, for emergency vehicles, cyclists and for Cottage owners						
<b>Education</b>						
Potential for improved education and better interpretation of the Cuckmere Estuary						
Must be rewarding to visit by educational groups and individuals for reasons of ecology / heritage / landscape						
<b>Tourism &amp; Recreation / Health &amp; Well-being</b>						
Does the option provide an opportunity to help the visitor get full enjoyment from the experience?						

<sup>4</sup> One participant voiced concern that this criteria is included at all as access should be accepted as a given for all options. It remains in this table for the present as this view was not the consensus view.

Does it inspire people?						
Are tourism businesses going to be affected by the option?						
The option should create no net damage to tourism and recreation						
Must emphasise the multifaceted character & quality of the landscape to increase the number of visitors and length of stay						
Maintaining access to the flat areas and the concrete path						
Maintaining informal recreation						
Maintaining the overall image of the area for tourism (landscape is important for tourism)						
Health, financial, recreational etc benefit of Cuckmere for the wider area						
Maintain canoeing facility (e.g. still water)						
<b>Flood risk management</b>						
It should not increase flood risk upstream e.g. Alfriston, A259						
Protection of existing properties (note: for the Cottages this relates to coastal erosion)						
<b>Economy</b>						
Will the option generate employment?						
The option should ensure that money generated locally should remain in the local economy						
Does the option provide opportunities for training?						
The option shouldn't discourage visits						

Nothing that will have a detrimental impact on the local economy						
Something that will augment (increase) the local economy						
Maintaining local visitor numbers						
Extend the visitor season						
Adaptability of the local economy						
<b>Landscape (Aesthetics &amp; Processes)</b>						
Worthy of being part of the National Park						
Any changes should achieve a balance between the natural processes and human intervention						
The option should provide future proofing against climate change						
Do the options maximise the complexity of the landscape						
Must be hydrologically sound						
Has to be sympathetic to and going with natural processes to ensure sustainability						
Becoming increasingly self-running in time						
Does it work with or work against natural processes?						
Coastguard cottages protection (this links to other themes, see flood risk)						
Extent to which an option will take account of If/if not rising sea level						
Extent to which an option will take account of coastal erosion						
Extent to which an option will take account of long shore drift						

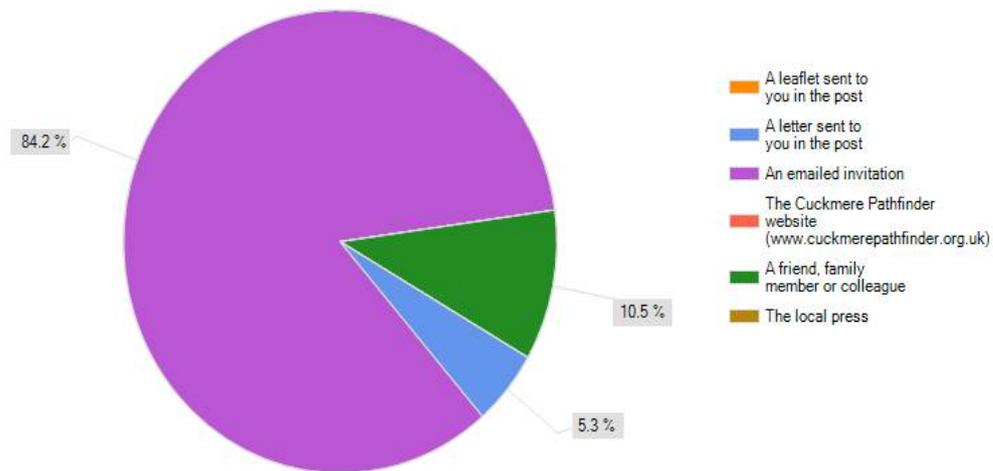
Extent to which an option will take account of river flooding						
Extent to which an option will take account of habitat development						
<b>Ecology</b>						
Good ecological status or potential (Water Framework Directive)						
Maintain SSSI status						
Optimise high biodiversity of the site						
Allows wildlife to adapt to climate change and sea level rise						
Creating ecological connectivity throughout the landscape						
Not reducing the biodiversity						
Greater / improved biodiversity						
What makes a greater contribution to biodiversity?						
Need to look at the contribution at local, national and international levels						
<b>Heritage</b>						
Options allowing opportunities for appropriate mitigation relative to the significance of the heritage assets						
The extent to which the options allow a greater understanding of the valley						
Protect and enhance most significant heritage assets by investigating & understanding it, not at all cost preserving it						
To conserve & enhance the unique character and completeness of the landscape (meanders, cliffs, cottages - see recent studies)						
Extent it takes into account identified heritage assets						

Protect and maintain access to unexplored history						
<b>Timing</b>						
Does an option provide enough time for adaptations and mitigations to take place?						
Does an option provide enough time for people to adapt to the change?						
<b>Sustainability</b>						
To what extent does an option meet the requirements of the sustainability triangle?						
<b>Cost</b>						
Whether it can attract funding						

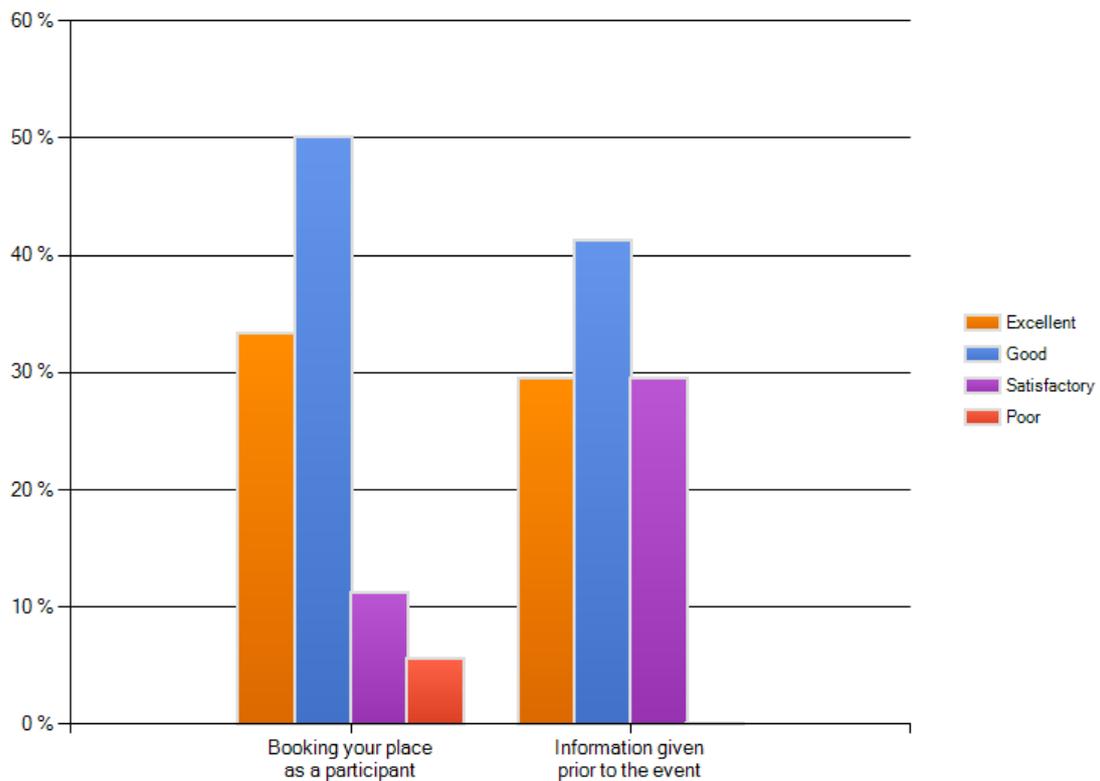


## Appendix 7 - Summary Event Evaluation

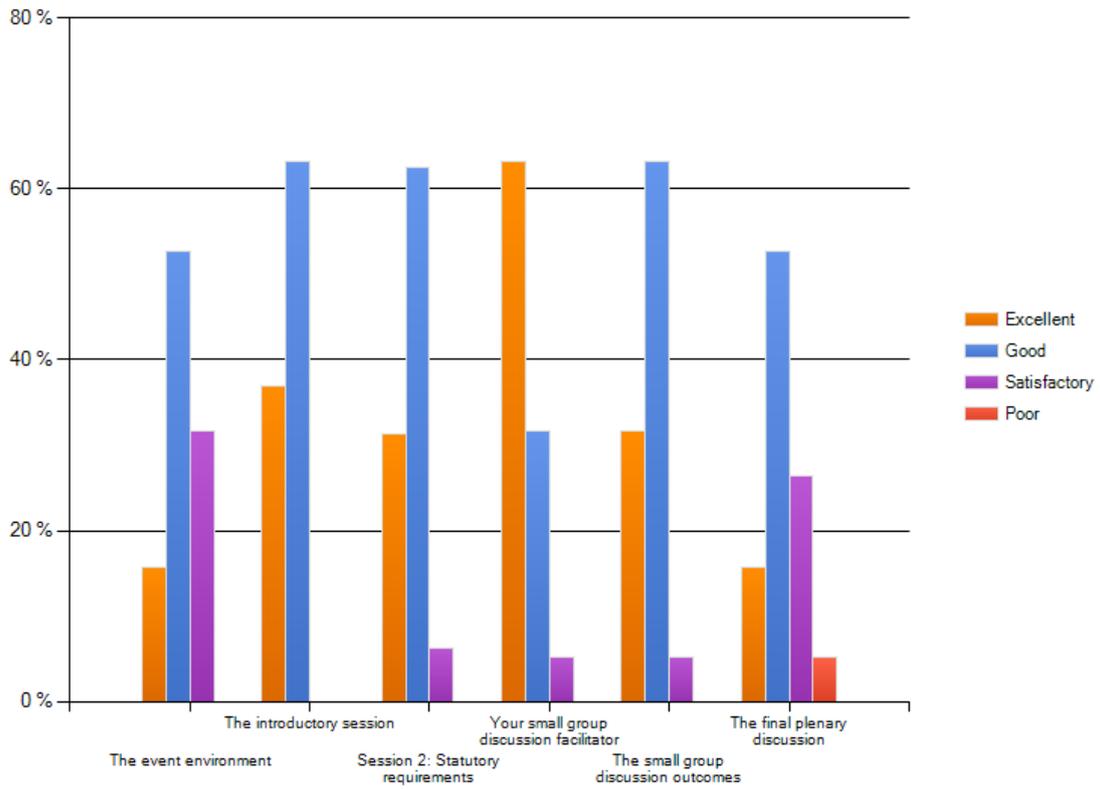
How did you find out about today's event? (please tick one box)



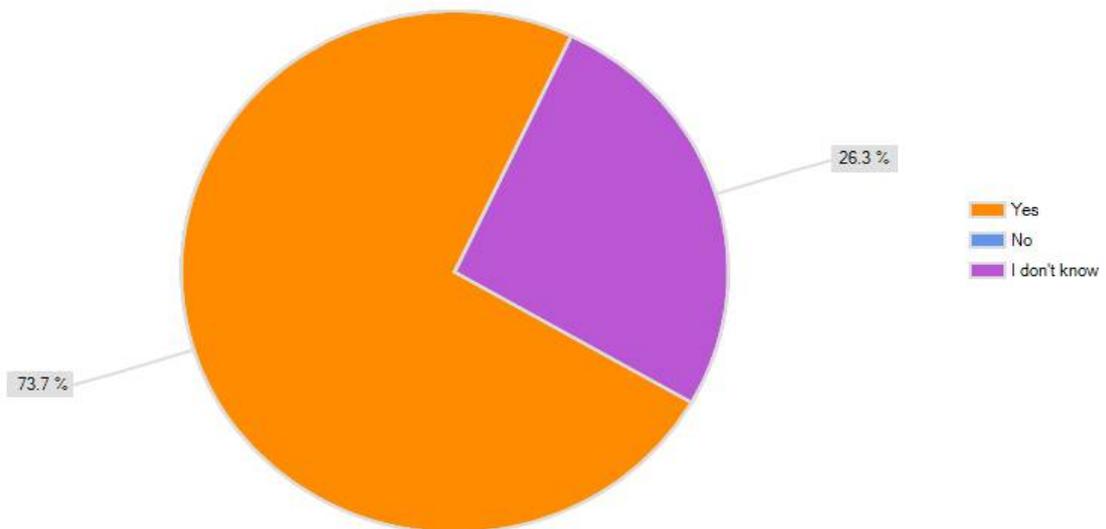
How did you find the following pre-event activity?



**How did you find the following during the event?**



**In your view did the workshop meet its objectives?**



100% of participants said they had enough opportunity to express their views.