



Flood Alleviation Scheme – Barmouth North Prom

Stakeholder Engagement Event



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Introduction

Barmouth is a popular seaside resort attracting around 280,000 visitors annually¹. Tourism provides an important source of income to the community (estimated to be £42.7 million²) in the form of visitor spending and local business supply chains and wholesalers. The area's character is drawn from the beach and promenade, forming part of the Wales Coast Path, and views across Cardigan Bay. The seafront hosts leisure activities including a small fairground, amusement arcades, kiosks, a land train and watersports (including sailing).

Barmouth, and in particular, its north promenade is identified as at risk of coastal flooding and erosion. It is commonplace to see overtopping at the north-most end of the promenade in what could be described as relatively "normal" conditions i.e. median level tides, without surge, swell, low pressure or high winds.

The main risks facing the north promenade are as follows:

- Beach levels are reducing and this has accelerated in recent years. This exposes the defences and increases the risk of structural problems or failure.
- The structural elements comprising the defences (e.g the timber groynes, sea wall and revetment, steel sheet piles, and secondary and tertiary flooding walls) have varying remaining life-spans. Some elements need continual repairs or improvement.
- The effects of climate change that increase the storminess and rise in sea levels.

Stakeholder Engagement Event

On March 25th, 2019 a stakeholder engagement event was held in Barmouth to discuss the proposed flood alleviation scheme on the North Promenade. 47 local residents attended the events.

The day consisted of two parts. During the morning an introduction was given to all relevant parties from other public service organisations. All participants recognised the need to sustain and improve the flood defence at the north promenade and gave their support to the scheme.

The second part of the day consisted of a public drop-in event, which was held between 2pm and 7pm. Information boards were displayed highlighting the current situation, current risks, key scheme objectives and options to consider. Experienced staff were there to answer any questions and give further context and information regarding the scheme.

The main purpose of the consultation was to give stakeholders sufficient opportunity to ask questions and voice their opinions. The thoughts and views from different stakeholders will then contribute towards the overall assessment of the scheme and options to take forward.

¹ Barmouth Tourism Estimates - Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd, October 2018

² Barmouth Tourism Estimates - Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd, October 2018

Stakeholder Feedback

The general feedback was that the public support the need to improve the flood defence at the north promenade in Barmouth.

Three topics mentioned the most within the comment forms from the public meeting were relating to the beach, mainly its accessibility, the recognition for the need to maintain a flood defence and the effect the scheme might have on tourism.

Residents wanted to sustain the beach and improve the access, highlighting its importance to them as residents as well as the local economy by being an integral asset for tourists. The sandunes were very unpopular and support was given for them to be removed. Concerns were raised regarding the negative effect that neglecting the north promenade would have on the tourism. The north promenade is part of a cycle route, coastal path and numerous different businesses within the town depend on the north prom for attracting tourists. The north promenade is also an important health and wellbeing asset for the residents. Support was therefore given to improve the defence.

The need for improving the flood defence at the north promenade was clearly conveyed in the comments. The general views were that the defence should respect the beauty of the beach and its importance to the town. Suggestions were made that existing defences should be strengthened, that additional rock armour should be placed at the foot of the north prom and the use of groynes would also be feasible.

The remaining topics mentioned included:

- the concern over the siltation of the surface water drainage culvert running down the length of the railway behind the housing estate;
- the need to sustain enough parking spaces;

Comments on the proposed options

One of the main aims of the stakeholder engagement event was to encourage the public to give their opinion on the proposed options. A summary of the general feelings surrounding each option can be found in Table 1 (below).

Option	General comments
Option 2 – Betterment of the defences	• The preferred option by many as it minimises disruption to the beach, which is a vital asset to the town.
Option 3 – Beach management	• Favourable comments compared to Option 4, as it maintains the full length of the existing promenade. • Use of larger shingle or cobbles, with groyne structures would limit access along the beach and limit horse riding activities. • Could have significant visual impacts, which may impact on the popularity of the beach.

Option 4 – Managed Realignment	- Residents concerned about the loss of the northern extents of the promenade – this is considered a significant asset to the local community and tourist economy. - Option should only be considered further in the future, possibly when the Cambrian Railway has been compromised. - The Cambrian Railway is a valued asset to the local residents and must be protected.
Other thoughts	- Thoughts to whether the Cambrian Railway is adequately protected along the full extents of the frontage. - There should be provision of a temporary flood barrier at the opening opposite the Arbor Hotel. - Residents interested in the future programme of activities, timescales and funding. They are keen to be kept informed of activities going forwards. - Comments on sand-dunes – the sand should be moved to the northern extents of the frontage, as opposed to the lower middle extents. The actions of the yearly sand clearing are believed exacerbate their growth. The material is considered to move in a southerly direction down the coastline. YGC note they are reviewing how this is being undertaken and material is supposed to be moved to the low tide mark.

Table 1: Comments on each proposed option.

Ways forward

All feedback received will be considered during the process of selecting the suitable option for Barmouth north promenade.

Stakeholders will be further consulted during XXX phases.

Subject Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

Date 25 March 2019

Job No/Ref

Barmouth North
Promenade

1 Arup Stakeholder Engagement Summary Notes

Summary	
25th March, 2019 47 Local Residents attended the event	
Historical Observations	- In the winter of 1975/6 the promenade was breached and the adjacent flats/houses were flooded. - During high tides the ditch along the railway surcharges. Previously the fire brigade attended, with significant flooding in 1980s – now the surface water pumping station is seemingly effective (low-lying area near wren used to flood). 1970s the council placed cobbles on foreshore – these were angular (assumed to be from local quarries) and experienced problems with erosion of concrete. - Residents have observed that the northern beach levels have dropped significantly over the past 10 years. The shingle berm (to the north) and material along the foreshore is noted to move around considerably.
Present Day Observations	- The area to the rear of the café on North Promenade is green field. It has recently been built-up (in the last 5 years) with made ground with the intention to accommodate a Network Rail temporary compound. Previously acted as a form of local flood storage. - During high tides the ditch along the railway surcharges. Watercourses inland of the railway are prone to surcharging – maintenance of culverts under railway a concern of caravan park owner. The culvert running down the length of the railway is overgrown and silted up, this created fluvial flooding issues further upstream. Water can become stagnant and can begin to pose a risk to the Heol-Y-Llan housing estate. - Flap valve of northern watercourse outfall was damaged around 5 years ago. This was reported and then removed. Tidal egress is an issue. During the culvert survey by YGC (December 2018) similar observations were noted, the team were unable to access the culverts on Network Rail's land. - Network Rail repairs to the network following the 2014 storm were extensive. Costs indicated to be over £10million: https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/cambrian-coast-railway-10m-cost-6796053 - Residents recognised the increasing vulnerability of the northern extents of the structure and were concerned about the implications of long timescales before any action is taken.
Value of Local Area	- The promenade links with the cycle and long distant foot path north. This provides a good circular walk. - The full length of the promenade is considered a significant asset – both in attracting tourists (main economy of the town) and providing amenity value for local residents and their wider families and grandchildren (beyond Barmouth). It is frequently used (daily) by locals for recreation, exercise, dog walking, land-train horse-riding and access to the beach. Implications on the promenade are seen as likely to impact on the wider town of Barmouth and the tourist economy. - The housing (flats) and the caravan park (to the rear of the railway) both play a vital role for the local economy. Caravan park hosts 300 pitches and licenced for 10 months, attracting visitors to the town of Barmouth. - The car-parking facilities to the northern end of the town are considered vital. Local residents noted they experience issues with overcrowding of tourists and lack of parking facilities during the summer months. Without the northern promenade this would exacerbate issues further.

Subject Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

Date 25 March 2019

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Barmouth North
Promenade

Reasonable Improvements	Improving access points to the beach – particularly disabled access points.
Residents Views of Schemes	
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Further feedback is expected from local residents who prefer to respond via email.