

Workshop - 'Life Line'

This workshop focused on climate change; coastal defence; transport; hinterland planning and prosperity; Dawlish rail link. 20 participants joined this workshop. The workshop began with brief presentations on:

Climate change, by Chris Gordon of the Met Office (summary points available from Chris Gordon).

The Dawlish rail link, by Ian Frostick of Network Rail (PowerPoint slides available from Ian Frostick)

Following these presentations, participants worked in small groups to identify the key issues that a forum would need to address. The issues they raised were mapped. This is a summary of that work:

- Unpredictability
- Precautionary approach
- Integrated approach
- Integrated view of sea defences
- Coastal defence where necessary and sustainable. Objective vs. Political
- Transitional strategies, leading to new solutions for long term
- Communication vital rail link to South West
- Rail link: Investigate options
- Planning: Short term needs vs. sustainability past the next election
- Conflicts of interest
- Planning supported by focused research
- Local relevant science
- Finance: Investment cost vs. negative impact cost
- Business case
- Communication of risk

The participants then worked as a whole group to reflect on the above statements. The following points arose from their collective discussion:

- Communicating climate change is challenging. The issues are slippery and are confusing to the public, but note that there is also strong interest amongst the public.
- We are in the early stages of public awareness and action on climate change.
- There are benefits of bringing bodies together to address these issues.
- Local authorities and councillors receive signals from local people and from central government when addressing climate change.
- What is risk? What does it comprise and does it justify costs of response?
- Risk needs to be communicated to both the public and to councillors.

From the small groups and the collective discussion, the whole group agreed the following three linked priority points:

There is a need to:

1. Understand risks of climate and environmental change.
2. Communicate the likelihood and the consequences of the various risks.
3. Set out business cases for acting on the risks and produce guidance on how to act in response to the risks.