

Decision evaluation matrix

Saltmarsh Bay (fictional): hold, retreat or do nothing?



NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____

LEARNING GOAL

Weigh three options fairly, then decide.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- ☐ I can score an option from three viewpoints and justify my recommendation.
- ☐ I can weight what matters most and work out a total.

1

The scenario

*This place is **fictional**, invented for this sheet.*

Saltmarsh Bay (fictional) is a small coastal village where the sea is eroding the cliff. The council is considering three options for the **next 30 years**.

Option A

Hold the line

Build a hard sea wall along the cliff foot. A wall is an example of **hard engineering**.

Option B

Managed retreat

Allow the sea to take the cliff edge in places and move the most at-risk homes inland.

Option C

Do nothing

No new defences and no moving of homes.

2

Facts and assumptions

*Nothing here is real, so **you** decide.
Write what you will assume.*

WHO LIVES HERE?

WHAT IS AT RISK?

WHAT IS THE BUDGET?

3

How the matrix works

Words and numbers always go together.

2

very positive

STEP 1: SCORE

Give each option a score from 2 to -2 for each viewpoint.

1

positive

0

neutral or mixed

STEP 2: WEIGHT

Give each viewpoint a weight: 1 minor, 2 important, 3 most important.

-1

negative

-2

very negative

STEP 3: MULTIPLY

Score $\times$ weight. Keep the sign: a -1 with weight 3 is -3.

STEP 4: ADD

Add the three results to get the option's total.

The matrix: Saltmarsh Bay



NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____

Do this. Weight each viewpoint first. Read each prompt and write your score in the dashed circle, copy the weight, then multiply. Scores: 2 very positive, 1 positive, 0 neutral or mixed, -1 negative, -2 very negative.

	WEIGHT	A: HOLD THE LINE	B: MANAGED RETREAT	C: DO NOTHING	WORKED EXAMPLE: SCHOOL GARDEN
Environmental <i>land, shore, wildlife</i>	 how much does it matter?	How does a wall change the beach and shore wildlife? × =	What land and habitats change if the sea moves in? × =	What does natural erosion do to the cliff and shore? × =	Garden gives wildlife a home and less paving. × =
Economic <i>money, jobs, property</i>	 how much does it matter?	Who pays for the wall, and for how long? × =	What would moving homes cost? What is lost? × =	What might homes, shops and land lose in value? × =	Cheap to build, but needs a gardener. × =
Social <i>people, safety, community</i>	 how much does it matter?	Who feels safer? Who might feel left out? × =	How would moved families and the village feel? × =	Who is at risk, and how would people cope? × =	Pupils can grow food and relax together. × =
Total <i>add the three boxes</i>		+ + total =	+ + total =	+ + total =	+ + total =

Worked example (fictional school): a school chose between a new pitch, a garden and a library space. The garden totalled 7, the pitch 3 and the library 4. Weights: environmental 1, economic 2, social 3.

Your recommendation

Saltmarsh Bay (fictional): what should the council do?



NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____

4

Check your totals

Copy them from page 2. A total is a **prompt** for judgement, not the answer.

A total

B total

C total

Same as my first instinct?

☐

Yes

☐

No

5

I recommend

Tick **one**, then argue for it.

☐

A Hold the line

☐

B Managed retreat

☐

C Do nothing

BECAUSE

THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE IS

6

Risk and doubt

A good argument faces its weak point.

THE MAIN RISK IS

ONE THING THAT WOULD CHANGE MY MIND

7

Weighing

Think about who gains and who loses.

WHICH VIEWPOINT DID I WEIGHT HIGHEST, AND WHY?
