

Subject: Update on Hemsby coastal management project

Report to: Executive Leadership Team 23rd September 2020
Environment Committee 4th November 2020

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Environment Committee note the progress of this work.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The coastline at Hemsby is eroding which has and will continue to have impacts on the lives of individuals and the communities at risk. Since the 2018 'Beast from the East' work has progressed in understanding the coastal process on the coast, consideration of short and long term coast protection options, initiating consideration with regard to rolling back or adapting assets at risk of erosion and continuing discussion with the community.

A report was presented to the November 2019 Environment Committee meeting outlining the coastal processes that have brought about the current situation, the projects objectives, how we will engage with the community and how we propose to move forward.

This report seeks to provide an overview of coastal adaptation and how this may apply to Hemsby in relation to developing adaptation options for the longer-term management of the coast. There will be a presentation to the committee by Kellie Fisher from the Environment Agency.

The report also provides an update to the development of the short-term coastal defence scheme at Hemsby. There will be a presentation to the committee by Jacobs UK Ltd and the Coastal Partnership East team on ideas and options for the rock berm design.

The next steps as outlined in the November 2019 report were:

- Develop and submit environmental screening and scoping for preferred short term rock berm coast protection option.
- Develop outline designs and refined costs to support screening and scoping,

Environmental Impact Assessment and funding development

- Procure and complete EIA, Habitat Regulations Assessment etc. for preferred short-term option
- Develop suite of short-term adaptation options for further consideration
- Investigate financing options for short term protection option and adaptation options
- Support the delivery of the Icarus project to assist with community understanding of coastal change and long-term adaption options.

This report relates to the first four items.

2. MAIN BODY

2.1 Coastal adaptation

Where the coast is changing and coastal protection options are not viable or can only slow erosion rates, other actions could be considered to reduce the impact to communities and individuals. This could be specific actions to enable infrastructure to continue to function or be relocated, or, specific actions to enable individuals to be more resilient to the change. Such approaches could be wide ranging and unlike traditional engineering approaches, there are no set options.

Examples of coastal adaptation initiatives were trialled with DEFRA funding in the 2009 Coastal Change Pathfinder programme and successful local examples were developed and deployed in North Norfolk at Happisburgh. One example within this project, the Local Authority (LA) purchased the most at risk properties from the owners without compulsion. The LA then negotiated with a local landowner a rollback site and applied for planning consent to replace the properties just outside of the village development envelope. The proceeds from the development site were then shared between the landowner and the LA to offset some of the cost of the initial purchases. This alongside other approaches and learning will be utilised in developing an approach at Hemsby. Please see for more information <https://www2.north-norfolk.gov.uk/pathfinder/>

On the 14 July 2020 national government published a policy statement on flood and coastal erosion risk management. The policy highlights that:

- Everyone must play their part, from government to individuals
- Local people, communities and businesses should be at the heart of decision making to ensure that local plans work effectively for all and have support. To achieve this, affected communities need to understand the level of risk and the potential impacts.
- Local areas may determine that a managed transition away from high risk areas is the most effective and practical response. The government is committed to enabling this transition by supporting local areas to help them to implement long-term plans

The Environment Agency has released its national Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Risk Management Strategy. There is a clear mandate highlighted in the Strategy for transition and adaptation to coastal change. This is considered to be a shared responsibility between Government, Environment Agency, Risk Management Authorities (such as Great Yarmouth Borough Council), Communities and individuals.

The Coastal Partnership East team will continue to engage with government and the Environment Agency to understand how the policy statement and strategy will be implemented and resourced.

A presentation on the concepts around coastal adaptation will be given to the Committee by Kellie Fisher, Senior Advisor, from the Environment Agency. This will provide background so when adaptation options that may be suitable to Hemsby are brought to the committee there can be an informed discussion.

Next steps

A range of adaptation options are being developed for wider discussion and input. These will be brought to the Committee for discussion.

2.2 Coastal defences for Hemsby

2.2.1 Environmental screening and scoping opinion.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion was requested from Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment for the coastal defence option of a rock berm was required.

In addition, a Scoping Opinion, over the scope and content of the proposed EIA (if required), in accordance with Regulation 15 (1) of the EIA Regulations was requested.

The Screening Opinion response received on 4 February 2020 was that it had been determined that an EIA is required. The possible impacts of the scheme related to noise and vibration, water quality, historic environment, landscape and socio-economic factors.

The Scoping Opinion response received on 10 March 2020 outlined that certain matters relating to community health, traffic and transport, biodiversity, landscape, water and historic environment needed to be addressed within the Environmental Impact Assessment.

2.2.2 Outline design and Environmental Impact Assessment.

We tendered for consultants to undertake this work and appointed Jacob UK Ltd. Jacobs commenced work on 24 August and plan to finish the work by Christmas 2020.

There will be two consultation periods for input to the outline design of the rock berm. The first in early October to seek feedback on issues that need to be considered within the design. Further consultation will take place in late November when Jacobs will present their final proposal. Consultation will be with the landowner, Hemsby Lifeboat, Save Hemsby Coastline, the Hemsby Winterton Community Liaison Group and Council officers. There will also be an on-line briefing available to the wider Hemsby community.

Jacobs UK Ltd will present to the Committee their initial ideas and options for the rock berm design for discussion and feedback.

Next steps

- When the first period of consultation is complete Jacobs will develop the outline design options for the rock berm.
- Jacobs are also gathering information for the Environmental Impact Assessment report.
- The work is planned to be completed by Christmas 2020.
- In parallel with this work Coastal Partnership East will be preparing the planning and marine licence applications for the rock berm.
- The final rock berm proposal will be brought back to the Committee in late November.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding of £75,000 was allocated from the Coastal Repairs and Maintenance Revenue budget to undertake the short term defence option development including the EIA process, applying for consents and outline design.

The construction of the short term rock berm scheme is not yet funded. Some funds may be available from Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Partnership Funding, although significant funding will need to be identified and secured from a range of funding sources.

Any adaptation options will need to be costed and are not currently funded.

4. RISK IMPLICATIONS

| Risks | Mitigating action |
|--|---|
| Weather event leads to loss of further assets/properties | <input type="checkbox"/> Open, honest and transparent communication which clearly sets out timeframes and objectives. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Raised expectations of what can be achieved. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Open, honest and transparent communication which clearly sets out what is in scope and what is out of scope for the project. • Project documentation approved by GYBC and shared with the Community Liaison Group. • Preparation of Communications Plan. |
| Stakeholders that are directly affected by the project are not sufficiently involved resulting in disagreement on the proposed actions. | Sufficient opportunities are offered to get involved with the project and stakeholders can see where their feedback has been considered; |
| Negative media and social media coverage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive engagement with the community and via social media where appropriate. • Media is informed of progress and communications are open, honest and transparent. |
| Timeframes may not meet community needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge risk levels & community feeling. • Open, honest and transparent communication about progress of the project |
| The rock berm and adaptation options are unaffordable | Ensure that communications manage expectations as far as possible |
| Stakeholders not engaging in elements of the project. | On-going assessment and adjustment of communication plan and activities |

5. CONCLUSIONS

The information in this report and the two presentations will provide an update to the Committee on progress of this work. It provides an overview on the work to date and enable the Environment Committee to input in relation to the ongoing consultation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Environment Committee note the progress of this work.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

| Area for consideration | Comment |
|--|----------------|
| Monitoring Officer Consultation: | |
| Section 151 Officer Consultation: | |
| Existing Council Policies: | |
| Financial Implications: | Noted |
| Legal Implications (including human rights): | Noted |
| Risk Implications: | Noted |
| Equality Issues/EQIA assessment: | Noted |
| Crime & Disorder: | None |
| Every Child Matters: | |