

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

THE WASH EAST COASTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Minutes from the Meeting of the The Wash East Coastal Management Strategy held on Thursday, 15th October, 2015 at 10.00 am in the Council Offices, Valentines Road, Hunstanton

PRESENT:

Stuart Barbrook	-	Environment Agency
Councillor Richard Bird	-	Borough Council
Councillor Mrs Carol Bower	-	Borough Council
Edward Davey	-	Hunstanton Clifftop Residents
County Councillor John Dobson	-	Norfolk County Council
Peter Frew	-	Environment Agency RFCC
Councillor Brian Long	-	(Chairman) Borough Council
Mike McDonnell	-	East Wash Coastal Management CIC
Andrew Murray	-	Hunstanton Civic Society
David Norman	-	Heacham North Beach
Dave Robson	-	Borough Council
Michael Ruston	-	Hunstanton Chamber of Commerce
Emma Stainer	-	Environment Agency
Michael Williamson	-	Heacham Parish Council
Rob Wise	-	National Farmers Union
Jen Woodward	-	Environment Agency
Tim Woodward	-	CLA
Councillor Mrs Avril Wright	-	Borough Council

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

Stacey Clarke	-	Marine Management Organisation
Councillor Ian Devereux	-	Borough Council
Kelly Gibbons	-	Norfolk County Council
Ray Harding	-	Borough Council
Rob Lucking	-	RSPB
Andy Millar	-	Natural England
Louise Oliver	-	Natural England

2 INTRODUCTION

The Chairman, Councillor Long welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Those present introduced themselves.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference, which had been circulated with the agenda, were presented to those present for comments.

The Group was informed that Borough Councillors and Norfolk County Councillors who represented areas covered by the Strategy were invited to attend the meetings.

AGREED: (i) Hunstanton Clifftop Residents Association be added to the make-up of the Forum.

(ii) Dave Robson to circulate to the Forum, and publish on the website structure charts which showed which organisations were responsible for the different aspects of the Strategy and how the various project groups related to each other.

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STRATEGY UPDATE

Peter Jermany reminded those present that the Strategy had been approved by the Borough Council in January 2015. The Strategy had then been submitted to the Environment Agency and was signed off in July 2015. Now that the Strategy had been agreed the implementation stage could commence.

County Councillor Dobson highlighted that the briefing note dated March 2015 stated that the Strategy was supported by Norfolk County Council and he explained that it was not. Dave Robson agreed to get the briefing note amended.

The Chairman explained that the Strategy had been presented to the relevant Norfolk County Council Committee but had not been supported as it was felt that not enough information had been made available to them. He stated that it would be a shame, going forward, if the Strategy was not supported by Norfolk County Council given that they had been involved in the formulation of the Strategy over many years. County Councillor Dobson commented that more information regarding finance of the CIC had been requested. He explained that there was a need for the CIC to have reserves, should funding not be forthcoming. Members of the Forum agreed that this was a sensible option and should be explored with Norfolk County Council.

The Forum discussed the reasons why the Strategy was not supported by Norfolk County Council and it was noted that no officers from County were present at the meeting. Peter Jermany informed those present that Norfolk County Council officers did attend the Funding Group Meetings.

AGREED: (i) Dave Robson to amend the briefing note dated March 2015.

(ii) The Forum supported the possibility of Norfolk County Council providing a reserve for the CIC.

(iii) The Chairman to liaise with the relevant Members and officers at Norfolk County Council with a view to presenting additional information to them on the Strategy and to ask for Norfolk County Council's support.

(iv) The Forum be kept updated on progress via email in between meetings if required.

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UNIT A UPDATE - CLIFFS

The Group was informed that there was a trigger point on when actions should be taken on defending Unit A. A Project Appraisal Report would be created to look at what action could be taken to minimise coastal erosion. The Report would look at options including sandbags, netting and drainage issues.

Work was ongoing to engage a consultant to carry out the Project Appraisal Report and associated costs.

Peter Jermany explained that he had received comments from Natural England, who were unable to attend the meeting, which stated that when any proposals to slow erosion at Hunstanton Cliffs were brought forward Natural England would be able to assist with respect to the geological SSSI there. They also asked to be engaged in proposals as early as possible.

Those present discussed Unit A and were reminded that the Strategy had been approved, which set out the aims and options which could be carried out in the future. However, the Strategy did not approve the release of any finances. Project Appraisal Reports were a business case for the approval of funding for each individual project.

Peter Frew explained that a Technical Appraisal would be required alongside the Project Appraisal Report. This would need to be circulated to the relevant statutory organisations and the relevant consents obtained.

Those present discussed the different types of works which could be carried out and provided details of examples of work which had been carried out in different areas such as concrete blocks used at Hemsby, rock armour and the use of surplus motorway breeze blocks.

The Chairman reminded those present that all options would be considered in the Project Appraisal Report and the use of different technology would be assessed, natural and geographical constraints would also have to be considered.

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UNIT B UPDATE - PROMENADE

Dave Robson reminded those present that the strategy for Unit B was to "hold the line". He explained that some repair work had been carried

out to the Promenade area as part of the Capital Programme, some emergency repair work had also been carried out following the Tidal Surge in 2013. Repairs included work to the concrete and replacing the wooden stop logs with metal gates. There was budget for further repairs available, but the aim was to look at the long term rather than minor annual repairs.

An application for funding had been submitted to the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee for works to fill voids, resurface the Promenade, repair Goynes and prepare a Beach Management Plan which would negate the need for annual repairs.

In response to a question from Councillor Bird, Dave Robson explained that the area of The Wash East Coastal Management Strategy came under RFCC Central, not RFCC Eastern.

Dave Robson reminded those present that the section of the Promenade from the Pier to the Sailing Club had a residual life of between 15 to 20 years because of wave action at the base due to lower beach levels. Dave Robson commented that data was available to show that the beach levels were cyclic and levels were monitored regularly. The section of Promenade from the Green to the power boat ramp had an expected life of between 3 to 50 years.

In response to a question from Andrew Murray, Dave Robson explained that there was no intention to raise the level of the splash wall. He explained that a consultant had been engaged to look at this work, but costs would be high and the increase in the standard of protection would not be significant. A copy of the report was available on the Borough Council's website.

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UNIT C UPDATE - SOUTH HUNSTANTON TO WOLFERTON CREEK

Peter Jermany reminded those present that Unit C was the area from South Hunstanton to Wolferton Creek and included the shingle ridge recycling operation.

A Project Team and Board had been established to take forward arrangements for recycling. The Environment Agency were leading on this project as they had responsibility for the coastline. The Funding Group included representatives from the Borough Council, County Council, Environment Agency, CIC and Anglian Water.

Stuart Barbrook explained that they were following the approach as outlined in the Strategy and would continue annual recycling operations for the next five years, starting from 2017.

A tender process would be carried out to engage a consultant to take forward the project and put together the Project Appraisal Report.

Mike McDonnell explained that the CIC had now been set up. He was just waiting for the bank account to open so that he could deposit cheques which had already been received. He reminded those present that there were 19 caravan parks in the area and these had been the main contributors so far, there were over 3,000 plots along the coastal strip and he had asked for a voluntary contribution of £50 per plot. He had asked for all contributions to be made by 1st November.

Mike McDonnell explained that Heacham Beach Caravan Park and Park Resorts were in the process of merging with Park Dean, which may have an effect on contributions as they could be managed nationally, which could mean that regional managers would not have the authority to collect contributions or sign off cheques.

He explained that he was also working with Snettisham and Heacham Parish Councils to make them aware of the CIC and to encourage support from residents.

Mike McDonnell informed those present that he had not received any negative comments when asking for contributions and he hoped that sufficient funds would be collected along with a holding fund which would be used for additional projects such as recharge.

It was confirmed that CIC contributions would be topped up by approximately 25% from Central Government.

Those present discussed how residents in Snettisham and Heacham could contribute towards the CIC, and it was suggested that this could be included in the Parish Precept. Mike McDonnell explained that he had not contacted Hunstanton Town Council because Hunstanton was not part of Unit C, but if the Town Council supported contributions to the CIC they could take this forward. There was also the potential to look at Business Rate contributions in the future, however this was not feasible within the current legislation. County Councillor Dobson suggested that a Charity could be set up in the future.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Wright, it was confirmed that the CIC only covered Unit C and funds would not be used for consultants. Dave Robson explained that the Environment Agency was working to reduce the financial aspect of recycling as various licences and monitoring had to be carried out. He explained that the MMO had now agreed on an exemption rather than a licence which assisted in reducing costs. Stuart Barbrook explained that the cost of developing the project would be covered by local levy from the RFCC or Capital Funds and would not have to be covered by the CIC, however there may be the need for this to come from the CIC in the future.

In response to a question from Councillor Bird, it was explained that other funding sources were being investigated. Dave Robson had

agreed to contact Norfolk County Council Highways and utility providers. Anglian Water was represented on the Funding Board. The Council was also to approach beach hut owners and the RSPB.

Dave Robson explained that alongside the recycling project options would be looked at for recharging, such as joint working with other local authorities and other potential funding streams. Mike McDonnell commented that the aim of the CIC was to raise funds to do more than just recycling.

It was confirmed that all money collected by the CIC would be ring-fenced. It would not form part of the Borough Council's accounts. The Borough Council was just acting as a holding fund.

Those present were informed that representatives from the CIC had approached the Internal Drainage Board and they had agreed to place a voluntary levy on land owners' drainage rates to pass onto the CIC. The Internal Drainage Board had indicated their support for the CIC as they often had to clear up after floods and supported prevention measures.

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COMMUNICATIONS/WEBSITE

Dave Robson explained that it was important for everyone to understand the processes involved and that the wider community was aware of the Strategy. He informed those present that information was available via the Borough Council's website at: <http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=27341>

Minutes from the Stakeholders' meetings and Funding Group meetings would be published on this site. Terms of Reference and the Strategy were also published.

Dave Robson asked the group to let him know if they had any suggestions on additional information which should be made available on the site or suggestions on different communication methods.

The following suggestions were made:

- Parish Council newsletters.
- Notice Boards.
- Links added to Parish Council websites.
- Links to/from the Environment Agency website.
- Press releases.
- Involvement in the Environment Agency Flood Action Campaign Month.
- Promotion at Flood Roadshows.
- Editorial in local papers.
- Information in correspondence, such as renewal letters.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Parish Boundaries

In response to a question from County Councillor Dobson, it was confirmed that Sandringham Parish Council had not been involved in the process for Unit C as their Parish boundary was not impacted by the flood zone.

(ii) Norfolk County Council

Those present further discussed the action to be taken with regard to Norfolk County Council's support. The Chairman, Councillor Long explained that he would lead the effort and raise the issue with the relevant Officers and Members at County. He asked for the support of the relevant division members. Mike McDonnell also requested that Norfolk County Council be asked to give consideration to their limit of 2% increases on Parish Precepts which would be required to go to a Referendum. He asked if there was the potential for the entire County to share the burden and then funds could be directed to the relevant area of coastline.

It was explained that under the Coastal Protection Act, the County Council could give contributions to Capital Schemes. Those present discussed the funding available through the Central RFCC and the constraints.

(iii) Planning Permissions

Mike McDonnell explained that he had been informed that temporary planning permissions on holiday homes which expired in 2020 would not be renewed unless funding was secure for defence work. Beach hut tenants had also been informed that planning permission would not be renewed. The Chairman, Councillor Long agreed to investigate this with the Planning Department and Resort Services and report back to the Stakeholders Forum.

(iv) Flood Warnings

The Group discussed the mobile phone signal along the coast and how flood warning information was provided by text. Jen Woodward from the Environment Agency confirmed that there were different methods to receive flood warning information.

The Chairman explained that Government Funding could potentially be available to fill in black spots where mobile coverage was poor and there was a community need for it. This was something that could be investigated in the future.

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DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Stakeholders Forum would be held on 10th March 2016 at 10.00am, in the Council Offices, Valentine Road, Hunstanton.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am