

Future Coastal Management Arrangements	
Executive Summary	<p>In 2016 NNDC entered into a Partnership agreement (under Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972) with Suffolk Coastal District Council, Waveney District Council (now East Suffolk Council) and Great Yarmouth Borough Council to share resources and prioritise activities relating to coastal matters. This created “Coastal Partnership East”.</p> <p>In the intervening years each Council has faced significant demands relating to coastal change, climate change and competing pressures of project delivery and bidding for funding. As a result, it is a prudent time for each partner Council to consider its future coastal management resourcing requirements and approach to ensure local priorities are met.</p> <p>This paper discusses these pressures and provides proposals for the dissolution of the partnership and North Norfolk District Council’s future approach.</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Request a continuation of the current partnership arrangement (N.B. This is not an option with which NNDC has any direct control) 2) Agree to disband the partnership and put in place service level agreements between each Council, hosted by East Suffolk Council, to deliver engineering and consultancy services to partners (and other Councils as requested) – N.B. This was not an option as East Suffolk Council did not feel that this could be adequately resourced 3) Agree to disband the partnership, appoint a Coastal Management Team at NNDC, and retain/explore alternative service level agreements with other Local Authorities as appropriate.
Consultation(s)	<p>PH for Coast Coastal Partnership East Partner Local Authorities</p>
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the contents of this paper 2. Approve the dissolution of the Coastal Partnership known as Coastal Partnership East with effect from 20th January 2025 (taking into account the appropriate notice period to end the Section 113 agreement). 3. Continue to support partnership working and retain/explore service level agreements with other Local Authorities as appropriate.
Reasons for recommendations	<p>To ensure that the Council has effective coastal management arrangements in place.</p>

Background papers	N/A

Wards affected	Districtwide
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Harry Blathwayt
Contact Officer	Martyn Fulcher, Director for Place & Climate Change, martyn.fulcher@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Our Greener Future A Strong, Responsible & Accountable Council
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	An effective coastal management arrangement assists the council in addressing coastal issues and in achieving financial prudence.
Council Policies & Strategies	Corporate Plan 2023-27

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	N/A
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	N/A

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the dissolution of the Coastal Partnership East with effect from 20th January 2025 (considering the appropriate notice period to end the Section 113 agreement) and future intentions regarding coastal management in North Norfolk.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 In May 2016, a Partnership Agreement (under section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972) was agreed between North Norfolk District Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, and what was then, the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils (now both combined to form East Suffolk Council).
- 2.2 The aim of the Partnership was to share a collective ambition and vision for partnership working in relation to managing the Norfolk and Suffolk Coasts, and the creation of a joint coastal team. The concept for the partnership was to share resources associated with coastal change across the shared coastal frontage, recognising that coastal change occurs across geographical

boundaries. The Partnership was to deliver the collective Marine Local Authority responsibilities and functions and share information to inform decision making.

- 2.3 To ensure oversight and governance of the Partnership, a Board was established consisting of one member supported by a senior officer from each Council. As well as monitoring the progress of the partnership against its aims and objectives, the Board was to collaboratively set shared objectives and prioritise projects on an annual basis.
- 2.4 Whilst this partnership has proved successful, the increased pace of coastal change has meant that it is increasingly difficult to prioritise works across our shared boundaries. As such, the Partnership has considered the future ways of working that enable each Council to develop and deliver on its own priorities.

3. Proposals and Options

- 3.1 At its most recent board meeting in October 2024, and based on the recommendation from East Suffolk Members, the CPE Board gave its approval for the dissolution of the partnership and requested that Officers bring this decision for formalisation at their respective Cabinet meetings during January 2025.
- 3.2 As part of its approach, NNDC considered several options for future coastal delivery as follows:

Option A - Continuation of the current partnership arrangement – however this is not a realistic option, as NNDC does not have any direct control on partner authorities' ability to withdraw or not.

Option B - Disband the partnership and put in place a service level agreement between each Council, hosted by East Suffolk Council to deliver engineering and consultancy services to NNDC, GYBC and other Councils. This was not an achievable option as East Suffolk Council did not feel that this approach could be adequately resourced.

Option C - Disband the partnership, appoint a dedicated Coastal Management Team at NNDC, and explore alternative service level agreements with other Local Authorities. This is the preferred approach to enable the Council to continue to carry out its Coastal Management responsibilities, set local priorities and work closely with our communities to adapt to coastal change, as it has done successfully for many years.

- 3.3 **Option C is recommended.**
- 3.4 Separately, and between now and 2027, North Norfolk District Council is delivering Coastwise, which is part of the Environment Agency's Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme. This is a North Norfolk District Council project that is set apart from the work of Coastal Partnership East and is unaffected by the proposed disbandment of CPE.

4. Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report is linked to the Corporate Plan priorities: Our Greener Future and A Strong, Responsible & Accountable Council.
- 4.2 The Corporate Plan sets out the aim to protect and transition our coastal environments and this paper portrays how this aim will be met into the future.

5. Financial and Resource Implications

- 5.1 No staff resources will be placed at risk as part of this process. Each Council directly appoints staff and these staff will remain in the employment of their host Council under these new arrangements, albeit with local management and priorities. The exception of this will be the continuation of any shared arrangements, which will mean those resource costs will continue to be shared as presently. As such, there is limited financial impact in terms of resource implications.
- 5.2 Upon Cabinet approval, Officers will commence activity to amend reporting lines and review staff priorities, as well as consider any need to appoint to any gaps in resourcing that may emerge as part of this transition (there are some shared roles which Councils may elect to retain on a full-time basis which may cause some resource gaps for other councils). Whilst covering of any resource gaps will in the first instance be covered by the existing budget, there may be a minor requirement for additional funding over time, which will be subject to the normal approval process. As an example, as the Council may be responsible for future capital funding bids for grant in aid, capital schemes and repairs, so there may be a need to incur future costs in terms of the drafting of bids, to be agreed on an individual basis.
- 5.3 It is being made clear that the proposed change in approach is not considered to impact the availability of future funding, as the Council will maintain a direct relationship with the Environment Agency over future funding opportunities, such as Coastwise.
- 5.4 Whilst there is a 12 month notice period built into the partnership agreement should this be required; each Council has agreed to endeavour to have revised arrangements in place by the end of March 2025.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

The existing arrangements for paying staff and sharing costs will continue and so there will be a negligible financial impact for the Council

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 None other than the ceasing of the Section 113 Partnership agreement as highlighted above.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

A dissolution of the arrangement, would not prevent the work of the Council and in particular the Coastwise project, continuing. Any dissolution of the agreement should be in accordance with the s.113 agreement or as otherwise agreed by all parties

7. Risks

- 7.1 There is a risk to local priorities in the event of resource gaps, however, officers are working to mitigate these so far as possible. Much of the Council's Coastal transition planning aligns with the Coastwise Project, the resourcing for which will remain in place, providing continuity. The Council's coastal engineering resources are unaffected.
- 7.2 Emergency response and community support will continue as existing, and it is not envisaged these changes will have any impact on this.

8. Net Zero Target

- 8.1 None as a direct consequence of this report.

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 9.1 None as a direct consequence of this report.

10. Community Safety issues

- 10.1 None as a direct consequence of this report.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 11.1 The Partnership has been in place for over 8 years, and it has proved successful in terms of project delivery across our shared coastlines. However, it is now appropriate to facilitate change to enable local resourcing and prioritisation of coastal matters, and the approach outlined in this paper will enable the Council to more effectively support its communities facing coastal change.