

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**June 2020**

**COUNCILLOR - CABINET MEMBER FOR - Cllr Fitch-Tillett Portfolio Holder for Coastal Management**

For the period February 26 – June 9<sup>th</sup>

### **PROGRESS ON PORTFOLIO MATTERS.**

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##### **Project Updates**

###### *Bacton to Walcott:*

Further beach and nearshore surveys have been completed as part of the 50% Dutch government funded Partners for Water Project. The data collected will inform the performance monitoring of the scheme and also contribute to the development of a digital twin to help with longer term monitoring and modelling of the Sandscaping Scheme.

Specialists have been contracted to work alongside our team in continuing to survey breeding birds at Bacton. Following surveys, it is recorded that Sand martins continue to visit and breed in the area and other ground nesting species are present. Prior to the breeding season NNDC worked with Natural England and the RSPB in formulating an agreed approach to maximise the likely success should ground nesting birds use the area. Cordons and signage have been deployed to encourage people and dogs away from the most sensitive areas.

###### *CLIFF:*

The Coastal Loss Innovative Funding and Finance (CLIFF) project phase 1a aims to consider new ways to support people living near eroding coasts and give them options when it comes to selling their homes or having to leave their properties due to erosion. This project is being delivered and developed with Defra, LGA Coastal SIG and Lewes District Council. Phase 1a of the report is now completed and will be available soon. The document is currently with Defra and we hope its recommendations will be considered in their national coastal erosion policy refresh.

###### *Hemsby, Pakefield and Great Yarmouth*

Although not in the NNDC district, it is relevant to report the CPE team continue to input into coastal erosion management issues at Hemsby, Pakefield and Great Yarmouth.

###### *Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) Refresh*

A national project to refresh the SMPs has been underway for a period of time. The project has a number of differing outputs but includes a national website for SMPs and also a health check as to the adopted SMP documents. Through the refresh process the CPE team is seeking to again feedback the limitations in the delivery of the SMP policies due to the ongoing lack of national policy on adaptation and lack of funding to deliver schemes and maintain assets. It is likely that following the health

check there will be a need to: develop a new Action Plan to deliver the SMP; consider new SMP requirements to clarify policies and policy drivers; and for recommendations to be considered and prioritised by the statutory stakeholders. The refresh process does not seek to make changes to SMP policy but may highlight where further assessment may be necessary.

#### *Broadland Futures Initiative*

We continue to keep light-touch involvement in the project, attending stakeholder meetings and contributing to drafts of key coast related documents as part of the evidence review.

#### **Inspections and Maintenance update**

During the COVID situation we were able to continue to mobilise and support our maintenance contractor to safely operate to complete essential works to our coastal structures. Maintenance since March has included:

- Overstrand revetment repairs
- Overstrand concrete blocks revetment improvements (using block recycled from the gas terminal)
- Reclaiming of timbers for reuse from deteriorating Sidestrand revetment
- Bacton revetment repairs and shaping of beach cliffing
- Ostend revetment repairs
- Safety works to timber groynes at Walcott and Bacton
- Handrails at Sheringham steps
- Overstrand prom refurbishment pre-season, removal of slip materials and improvements to retaining walls.
- Mundesley apron repairs
- New groyne markers at Bacton and Walcott and navigation beacon repairs along the coast.

Pre-season Health and Safety inspections have been completed across the NNDC coastal assets with maintenance work prioritised.

Beach access and safety signage at Bacton and Walcott are being replaced. This has raised a query relating to the launching of pleasure craft including jet skis, this is under consideration prior to the signage being completed.

#### **Health and Safety and Incidents**

A report of an injury to a foot from splinters from a timber sea defence was reported. Prompt action was taken to contact the member of the public and identify the location of the incident. Following inspection, work was completed on the asset. In this case the asset had been recently inspected but due to changing beach levels at the time of inspection no issue was visible.

#### **Planning**

Discussion regarding a shared/consistent Coastal Supplementary Planning Document across NNDC, GYBC, ESC and the Broads Authority is progressing. An

initial consultation document is being prepared to consider the principles of the SPD which will be consulted upon following appropriate approvals. Due to each authority's local plan process being over differing timescales, a number of options as how best to achieve consistency are being considered.

### **Consultation Submissions**

#### *EFRA Committee call for evidence*

CPE submitted evidence to the The House of Commons Environment Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee inquiry into the Government's response to the winter floods and future plans for managing flooding in England, 2020. This follows the submission last year which will now no longer be considered further by the government due to the election. This request for evidence appeared to be for flooding, although as flood and coastal erosion are guided by joint government strategies and policies, it became clear that evidence could also include issues relating to erosion. Please contact the CPE team for the full submission.

#### *Government Environmental Audit Committee Call for Evidence – Offshore Wind.*

The CPE team worked with a number of teams across Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council, New Anglia Local Economic Partnership, Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council to support the joint submission of evidence to the Government Environmental Audit Committee on offshore wind. Please contact the CPE team for the full submission

#### *Partnership funding calculator DEFRA consultation*

The Partnership Funding calculator is used to assess the level of national government funding flood and coastal erosion schemes may be eligible to receive. The CPE team submitted a response to a quick consultation by Defra on the draft calculator, highlighting the need for inclusion on schemes to adapt the coast, further consideration of the value of coastal economies, clarity over environmental gains and the disparity between flood and river proposals and coastal proposals.

### **Issues**

#### *Sea Palling Beach Access*

The beach access at Sea Palling is not owned or managed by NNDC, although the intertidal zone does form part of our leasehold from The Crown Estates. Due to falling beach levels, access for the local fishing fraternity and the voluntary lifeboat have been challenging. The CPE team worked with the local fishermen to try to assist with a short term measure to improve the situation although due to inclement weather this was not successful. The Team are now seeking to progress with facilitating a longer term solution with the Environment Agency, who own the ramp.

### **Research**

#### *NERC UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher Scheme*

CPE team was successful in being selected to submit a phase 2 bid for the NERC UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher Scheme. This fully funded scheme, if successful, enables the host (NNDC) to work for 12 months with an academic researcher (UEA/Tyndall Centre with support for a number of research bodies). The submitted proposal seeks to bring together academic knowledge and practical coastal management in order to consolidate the coastal adaptation and climate change leaning to date and to identify where there are gaps or further opportunities.

#### *Coastal Launch Pad Initiative*

CPE has supported a Coastal Launch Pad Initiative as an end user which

investigated the use of satellite imagery with regards to monitoring coastal change and processes. The project has now completed and we are assessing the outputs.

*Aries Doctoral Training Partnership*

We are working as a collaborative partner in a PhD which seeks to explore building resilience in coastal governance. The PhD studentship is offered and funded jointly by the ESRC-funded SeNSS and NERC-funded ARIES Doctoral Training Partnerships and will be mentored at the UEA.

**Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

Continuation of all work streams within COVID working practices and guidance.

**Diary Dates**

**3 Meetings Attended**

- Weekly briefings on responses to Government advice.
- Overstrand Parish Council via email x 2
- Briefing on the Financial impact to NNDC
- LGA Coastal SIG x 2 – We have offered to head the LGA SIG Adaptation Working Group with member and officer representation.
- Norfolk Coast Partnership Board Meeting
- Coastal Partnership East Board Meeting
- Briefing on Homelessness
- Westminster Energy, Environment and Transport Forum - Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Conference
- Development Committee x 3
- Cabinet x 2
- Norfolk Coast Partnership Task and Finish Group - Reopening the Norfolk Coast X 2
- Briefing from Environmental Health
- Catch up discussion with the Head of Coastal Partnership East