

**CABINET**

Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**NORTH CORTON AND CORTON COASTAL EROSION PROJECT OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE (REP1945)****EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. In 2016 the Gorleston to Lowestoft Coastal Strategy was completed and approved by the Environment Agency's Large Project Review Group. The Strategy covered the coastline between Gorleston South Pier in the north and Pakefield Lowestoft in the south.
2. The Strategy identified areas which would require action in the short (to 2025), medium (2025 to 2055) and long-term (2055 to 2105).
3. The Strategy sets out recommended actions for north Corton (shown as Hopton to Corton in the Strategy document) and Corton village frontage.
4. For north Corton the strategy refers to developing a managed realignment scheme which would allow valuable sediment to be released into the system whilst creating an improved and safer beach for the community.
5. Simply allowing defences to fail and remain as derelict structures on the foreshore will not improve beach accessibility. There are also opportunities to explore ways in which the beaches can be improved and become an asset to the coastline. Construction of any defences (this includes a managed realignment scheme) to support this will need to involve private investment as there are insufficient benefits that attract Government funding. Similarly removal of defences does not attract Government grants and will need to be funded locally.
6. Early discussions with landowners Park Holidays (Broadland Sands) indicates a willingness to contribute to a managed realignment scheme.
7. For the Corton village frontage the strategy recommends, alongside continued monitoring, early engagement with local landowners to ascertain plans for defending this frontage and to agree the preferred nature of a scheme.
8. The main community of Corton is set back from the coastal edge, therefore the primary beneficiary to defence works would be the caravan and leisure parks. It is unlikely that such works would attract substantial government funds, therefore this approach will rely significantly on alternative sources of funding.
9. Flood Defence Grant in Aid for any scheme at Corton will be small so involvement of local businesses is key to ensuring that the right option is in place to support the local economy and the community.

10. However, it is essential that there is a co-ordinated approach to funding these works to avoid piecemeal solutions. It is therefore critical, continuing the approach taken to develop the Strategy, to involve local businesses and the community in the development of any proposed options
11. Although Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) will be minimal, private contributions to coastal schemes that include some form of FDGiA enable investors to benefit from tax relief.
12. To facilitate any claim of FDGiA requires the presentation of an Outline Business Case to the Environment Agency for approval and administration on behalf of DEFRA.
13. The recommended framework provider for the development of the Outline Business Case is Scape Procure.
14. Scape Procure is amongst the most well-established framework providers in the UK delivering over £5.2 billion of construction work. They are a public sector owned built construction and environment specialist with over 500 public bodies signed up to the process including Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils.
15. The Gorleston to Lowestoft Coastal Strategy's governance structure included a Strategy Board and a Community Advisory Group. It is proposed that a similar governance structure is adopted for the development of the Outline Business Case. It is proposed that the Project Board is formed in July, once some progress has been made and the new single Council formed.
16. Project costs for the completion of the Outline Business Case (£200k) will be met using residual funds from the original Corton Pathfinder Project. This work remains within the original Pathfinder brief.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Gunton and Corton Wards
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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member for Planning & Coastal Management
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<b>Supporting Officer:</b>	Sharon Bleese Coastal Manager (South) 01502 523346 <a href="mailto:Sharon.bleese@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">Sharon.bleese@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a>
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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In 2016 the Gorleston to Lowestoft Coastal Strategy was completed and approved by the Environment Agency's Large Project Review Group. The Strategy covered the coastline between Gorleston South Pier in the north and Pakefield Lowestoft in the south.
- 1.2 The Strategy identified areas which would require action in the short (to 2025), medium (2025 to 2055) and long-term (2055 to 2105).
- 1.3 The Strategy sets out recommended actions for north Corton (shown as Hopton to Corton in the Strategy document) and Corton village frontage.
- 1.4 For north Corton the strategy refers to developing a managed realignment scheme which would allow valuable sediment to be released into the system whilst creating an improved and safer beach for the community.
- 1.5 Simply allowing defences to fail and remain as derelict structures on the foreshore will not improve beach accessibility. There are also opportunities to explore ways in which the beaches can be improved and become an asset to the coastline. Construction of any defences (this includes a managed realignment scheme) to support this will need to involve private investment as there are insufficient benefits that attract Government funding. Similarly removal of defences does not attract Government grants and will need to be funded locally.
- 1.6 Early discussions with landowners Park Holidays (Broadland Sands) indicates a willingness to contribute to a managed realignment scheme.
- 1.7 For the Corton village frontage the strategy recommends, alongside continued monitoring, early engagement with local landowners to ascertain plans for defending this frontage and to agree the preferred nature of a scheme.
- 1.8 It is unlikely that the beach which has established along the Corton village frontage would be substantial and permanent enough to provide significant protection to the existing seawall. Although the existing rock revetment may have helped to prevent further lowering of the foreshore since 2005, levels here fluctuate and it is unlikely that a fuller beach could be sustained in front of Corton without considerable works and costs involving recharge and large control structure.
- 1.9 To maximise protection to cliff top assets involves defending the present line. There are strategic reasons to hold this position to support the evolution of a semi-stable bay to the north and help retain beaches to Gunton Warren to the south. A further aspiration is to retain and preferably improve public access along this frontage.
- 1.10 The main community of Corton is set back from the coastal edge, therefore the primary beneficiary to defence works would be the caravan and leisure parks. It is unlikely that such works would attract substantial government funds, therefore this approach will rely significantly on alternative sources of funding.

## **2 DEVELOPMENT OF AN OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE**

- 2.1 Flood Defence Grant in Aid for any scheme at Corton will be small so involvement of local businesses is key to ensuring that the right option is in place to support the local economy and the community.
- 2.2 However, it is essential that there is a co-ordinated approach to funding these works to avoid piecemeal solutions. It is therefore critical, continuing the approach taken to

develop the Strategy, to involve local businesses and the community in the development of any proposed options

- 2.3 The proposed option for north Corton is to allow some controlled realignment along this section of the shoreline. This is expected to include complete or partial removal of the existing failed defences. Partial removal would include encasing selected lengths of the existing structures within rock bunds, reducing erosion extents and allow safe and accessible beaches to develop.
- 2.4 The proposed option for the Corton village frontage is to construct a larger rock revetment along the line of the existing wall with enhancements to the rock revetment to the north of the wall.
- 2.5 Although Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) will be minimal, private contributions to coastal schemes that include some form of FDGiA enable investors to benefit from tax relief.
- 2.6 To facilitate any claim of FDGiA requires the presentation of an Outline Business Case to the Environment Agency for approval and administration on behalf of DEFRA.

### **3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?**

- 3.1 “The coast is the golden thread which runs through the coastal economy in Suffolk” This was a statement made recently by Mark Pendlington, Executive Director of Anglian Water and outgoing Chair of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. Our Business Plan sets out a vision for the development of tourism, economic growth and arts and culture. It refers to our spectacular coast and acknowledges the need for the management of this long and eroding or floodable coastline. Managing our coast effectively, and this could mean natural coast management such as cliff top realignment or adaptation of coastal businesses or communities, just as it could mean the construction and maintenance of hard defences, is extremely important in supporting the defined outcomes in our business plan.

### **4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The recommended framework provider for the development of the Outline Business Case is Scape Procure.
- 4.2 Scape Procure is amongst the most well-established framework providers in the UK delivering over £5.2 billion of construction work. They are a public sector owned built construction and environment specialist with over 500 public bodies signed up to the process including Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils.
- 4.3 Scape are the framework providers for the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project and their framework consultants, Jacobs Plc (formally CH2M) were the consultants employed to develop the Gorleston to Lowestoft Coastal Strategy. Jacobs Plc are known and trusted by the local businesses, community and stakeholders in Corton.
- 4.4 As both Balfour Beatty and Jacobs Plc are engaged in the development of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project, the immediate benefit of this OJEU compliant framework for the development of the Outline Business Case are resources and cost saving around consultant’s time and Early Contractor Involvement.
- 4.5 The Gorleston to Lowestoft Coastal Strategy’s governance structure included a Strategy Board and a Community Advisory Group. It is proposed that a similar governance structure is adopted for the development of the Outline Business Case. It is proposed

that the Project Board is formed in July, once some progress has been made and the new single Council formed.

- 4.6 Project costs for the completion of the Outline Business Case (£200k) will be met using residual funds from the original Corton Pathfinder Project. This work remains within the original Pathfinder brief.

## **5 OTHER KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 The Outline Business Case will be prepared taking into account the results of an Equality Impact Assessment.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 As part of the Gorleston to Lowestoft coastal strategy extensive engagement was undertaken with the community, which included a Community Advisory Group. Relevant members of that group, local to Corton, have indicated their willingness to continue to support engagement with the community as we develop the Outline Business Case for works to North Corton and Corton. It is intended that a similar Community Advisory Group is established to support this work.
- 6.2 As part of the strategy engagement local businesses were involved in its evolution. The largest businesses, Park Holidays and Bourne Leisure have expressed an interest in further conversations as work to develop the Outline Business Case progresses. An early indication of possible investment in coastal adaptation and protection works has been received.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 There are other frameworks available to deliver this work which have been carefully considered, including the Water and Environment Management framework and the Coastal Partnership East Dynamic Purchasing System framework. Scape Procure has the potential to deliver efficiencies in terms of time saved and Early Contractor Involvement.
- 7.2 The development of the Outline Business Case is in accordance with the recommendations of the Gorleston to Lowestoft Coastal Strategy and current Shoreline Management Plan policies.

## **8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 To enable procurement of works for the timely development of the Outline Business Case for Corton in accordance with Gorleston to Lowestoft Coastal Strategy recommendations and current Shoreline Management Policy.
- 8.2 To enable project governance to be established to support the appropriate development of the Outline Business Case.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That agreement is given to progress the Outline Business Case for Corton through the Scape Procure Framework.
2. That agreement is given to establish a Project Board once work is sufficiently advanced and the new Council has been formed.

**APPENDICES – None**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS - None**