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North Norfolk Coastal Change Pathfinder Project

Post Project Evaluation

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North Norfolk District Council Coastal Change Pathfinder Project Post Project Evaluation

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North Norfolk District Council

Coastal Change Pathfinder Project

Post Project Evaluation

1. Summary

- 1.1. In 2004 the draft Kelling to Lowestoft Shoreline Management Plan⁶ was published. It concluded that continued defence of parts of the North Norfolk coast may not be sustainable over the whole of the following 100 years.
- 1.2. In 2009 Defra invited councils to bid for a share of £11 Million fund to develop and trial ideas for managing coastal change and the impacts of coastal change. The Council bid for £5.786 Million³ and was awarded £3 Million.
- 1.3. While some projects were reduced in scope, the size of the award was, nevertheless, sufficient to trial many different techniques and in many cases can claim to have made a lasting impact.
- 1.4. Community involvement was a key element in the delivery of the projects and is a concept that can and should be adopted in the future. The dedicated web site proved to be useful and was well received.
- 1.5. Strategic direction was given by a dedicated Project Board. Formed from an augmented Coastal Management Board, it brought together senior officers and members to steer the projects. While generally functioning as intended, on occasion it was inclined to focus too heavily on detail, deflecting attention from strategic matters.
- 1.6. The creation of a dedicated team, incorporating specialist staff and project management, helped to ensure support in key areas and to maintain control of finance and information.
- 1.7. Future management of the coast will need to adopt an integrated approach. It is increasingly unlikely that much of the coast can be defended into the long term, so resources will be required to support adaptation.
- 1.8. A repetition of the type of community involvement seen during the Pathfinder Project will be an important element in managing this process. However, it must be coupled with actual support, such as relocating infrastructure, preferably before it is lost, but in any event as soon as possible thereafter.
- 1.9. Regarding housing at risk of loss, it is apparent that unless a way forward can be found it will not be many years before the situation that prevailed near the cliff edge in Beach Road, Happisburgh will be replicated elsewhere: a situation that must be regarded as unacceptable. Therefore a solution must be found. If that cannot be achieved, then much of the effort will have been wasted. It may require changes to planning policy, but will certainly require a co-ordinated approach from all levels of government, working closely with experts and the local communities.

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2. Introduction and Report Format

- 2.1. With the North Norfolk Coastal Change Pathfinder Projects now nearing completion, North Norfolk District Council wishes to evaluate the effectiveness of the work that was undertaken. In particular, in moving forward with an integrated approach to coastal management, it is particularly desirous to learn which of the many projects were successful and which were not and why. If particular projects or techniques are repeatable, again it wishes know which can be replicated elsewhere. It also wishes to learn more general lessons that can be applied more widely.
- 2.2. While the Defra Review focussed on a limited economic measure of the costs and benefits of the various projects, this evaluation has attempted to gather views from both within the Council and outside it in what may be regarded as a more subjective analysis. To attempt to gain an insight into the effectiveness of the work, much use has been made of interviews with individuals who were involved in the Project in some way and who are able to give an informed opinion.
- 2.3. The report considers each of the projects under the following headings
 - Objectives
 - Outcomes
 - Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives
 - Finance
 - Transferability
 - Lessons and Recommendations
- 2.4. Separately, it then analyses overall project governance, communications, community views, finance, lessons and options for the future.

3. Background and Origin of the Bid

- 3.1. In 2004 the draft Kelling to Lowestoft Shoreline Management Plan⁶ was published. It concluded that continued defence of some parts of the North Norfolk coast may not be sustainable over the following 100 years. While some lengths may not experience loss until well into that period, other lengths may begin or continue to experience losses in the short term (the following 20 years).
- 3.2. The Council responded in a number of ways, but for the purposes of this report, it set out in its 2006 Corporate Plan an aim to put in place a management solution for the coast. This was supported by a dedicated coastal team.
- 3.3. As part of the development of the management solution the Council held a workshop⁷ in November 2008 to which it invited representatives from parish councils and other organisations with an interest in the management of the North Norfolk coast. The ideas generated by the workshop formed the basis of the bid.

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- 3.4. The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review identified a sum of around £30 Million to be used to support communities affected by changes on the coast brought about through changes in management regime and climate change. From 2007 to mid 2009 Government (mainly Defra and CLG) developed its coastal change policies and the principles it would apply to the use of any monies it made available.^{1,2}
- 3.5. In mid 2009 Defra invited councils to bid for a share of what had become an £11 Million fund to develop and trial ideas for managing coastal change and the impacts of coastal change. North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) developed bids totalling £5.8 Million³ to undertake a variety of projects within its coastal communities.
- 3.6. The Council was awarded £3 Million, the largest award. This report is an evaluation of the projects undertaken by North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) and should be read in conjunction with reviews published by Defra in 2012^{4,5}. These take a high level view of the projects. This report will focus on local issues and findings. It will include some economic analysis, a review of the governance arrangements and include observations from some of those most closely involved in the development and implementation of the projects.

4. Summary of the Bid and Award

- 4.1. The bid was in three strands:-

	Project	Bid	Allocation (by NNDC)
A:	Happisburgh Whole Settlement Projects	£3,078,000	£1,650,300
B:	Business Support	£1,892,000	£700,000
C:	Infrastructure Works	£816,000	£355,000
	Project management		£304,700
	Defra Total	£5,786,000	£3,000,000
	EDDA Grant		£10,000
	Total Fund		£3,010,000

- 4.2. A further £10,000 was given by EEDA to develop the bid and the initial business diagnostics were carried out by Business Link at no cost to the Council.
- 4.3. Each bid was made up of a number of smaller projects as shown in the table below. The award of £3 Million inevitably meant that some projects were curtailed, while others were merged. The status of each is also shown in the table.

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	Project	Project status
A	<u>Happisburgh Whole Settlement Projects</u>	
i	Facilitate relocation of Manor Caravan park	In progress
ii	Facilitate relocation and demolition of 11 houses in Beach Road	In progress
iii	Establish purchase and lease back options	Abandoned after in depth investigation
iv	Secure a process and establish a buffer on the cliff top	In progress
v	Remove redundant defences	Completed as far as resources and beach conditions permit. A contingency has been arranged for future beach clearance work as and when required in this location.
vi	Remove cliff top debris	In progress
vii	Relocate car park	Completed
viii	Create a new ramped beach access	Completed
ix	Reprovide public toilets	Completed
x	Establish cliff top paths	In progress
xi	Help the community record coastal change and the impact on heritage	Completed
B	<u>Business Support</u>	
i	Long and short term Business advice	Completed
ii	Strategic support for businesses	Completed
iii	Purchase and lease back of businesses	Not investigated
iv	Roll back of businesses	Only pursued in Happisburgh
v	Roll back of community infrastructure	In progress
vi	Business and private contributions to flood defence	Completed
C	<u>Infrastructure works</u>	
i	Salthouse car park	Not taken forward
ii	Happisburgh car park	See Project A
iii	Happisburgh beach access	See Project A
iv	Cromer footpath diversion	Completed
v	Remove derelict defences at Beeston	Completed
vi	Investigate mechanisms to realign Wells East flood bank	Not taken forward

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5. Happisburgh Whole Settlement Projects

5.1. Facilitate relocation of Manor Caravan Park

5.1.1. Objectives: To assist in the relocation of the caravan site including business planning and other support through the business package, identification of an alternative location and development control advice and support.

5.1.2. Outcomes: Slow to progress because a) difficulty of finding an acceptable alternative site (Note: 'acceptable' means to both the site owner and local community), b) objections from the local community to the suggested site and c) the natural reluctance of the site owner to pursue options that create community tensions.

5.1.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: Too little progress to give meaningful evaluation. Difficult to establish the public economic benefits, but would be considerably in excess of the costs.

5.1.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£300,000
Revised budget	£160,000
Actual spend	£6,867
Commitments + anticipated	£153,133 (currently committed for grant provision to business)
Remaining budget	£0

5.1.5. Original budget revised to comply with State Aid Rules.

5.1.6. Transferability: Can be applied anywhere, but does require a willing site (or other business) owner and more importantly community support

5.1.7. Lessons: Will not proceed smoothly without community support. Is probably best initiated locally.

5.2. Facilitate relocation and demolition of 11 houses in Beach Road

5.2.1. Objectives: To establish a methodology to relocate the houses and subsequently to demolish them.

5.2.2. Outcomes: Valuation methodology created and majority of at risk houses acquired. Demolition underway. The Bruton Knowles reports prepared to support this project were invaluable.

5.2.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: Although the Council could not meet the upper end aspirations of the owners, the amount offered exceeded expectations. Defra have some concerns that the sums paid amount to compensation, but they were based on a valuation methodology that satisfied the internal auditors and solicitors. The short timescale possibly enhanced the payment: had offers been made 10 years earlier a lower sum might have been

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accepted. However, the politics of the circumstances precluded that. The final outcome will not be known until the arrangements for the relocation site are completed. The likely outcome is that the outlay will not be recouped and hence there must be some doubt as to the effectiveness of this part of the project. It may be more effective to facilitate individual owners to exercise their EN12 rights, as it is unlikely that any future scheme will involve a whole row of houses.

5.2.4. For this reason it is also impossible to evaluate the economics of this project. Clearly, if the planning option cannot be realised then there is no tangible return: the only benefits become those for the individual owners and the wider benefit to the community through the improved environment. It is arguable that with out the relocated development there are intangible negative benefits to the community through loss of some of its members and their economic input.

Finance:

Original Budget	£550,000
Revised budget	£856,000
Actual spend	£751,067
Commitments + anticipated	£52,531
Remaining budget	£52,402

5.2.5. Budget of £1,000,000 allocated to this and the buy to lease projects.

5.2.6. Transferability: Methodology is transferable, but requires significant seed funding and reasonable expectation that the acquired EN12 'right' can be exercised. The methodology can be used by any private home owner whose property is at risk in the 1st SMP epoch, but may need support (in the form of advice) from the Council.

5.2.7. Lessons: Needs longer lead time than was available in this Project. Costs will not be recovered if housing market or land prices are depressed for what ever reason; e.g. new NPPF may have the effect of increasing the supply of development land and hence deflate prices. Care needs to be taken to ensure the current Defra demolition grant can be drawn down.

It may be that such a project should never be repeated if it is not established at the outset that the housing to be lost can be replaced so as to avoid the intangible losses the community suffers otherwise.

5.3. Establish purchase and lease back options

5.3.1. Objectives: Investigate valuation options, leasing arrangements, potential management options (RSL, commercial, holiday letting, public and private sectors; undertake trial.

5.3.2. Outcomes: Investigations showed the economics to be marginal, the risks (to the Council) to be high, the long term potential uncertain and the set up costs to be high. The learning form this and the other

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property project will be used in developing a coastal property buyers and sellers guide.

5.3.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: This did not meet the original objectives, though there is still value in understanding a) why; and b) alternative approaches. These are covered in the Bruton Knowles and associated NNDC internal reports. There was no economic return to this project: the only benefit is increased knowledge.

5.3.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£350,000
Revised budget	£20,000
Actual spend	£10,284
Commitments + anticipated	£7,217
Remaining budget	£2,498

5.3.5. Budget amended as this project could not be pursued.

5.3.6. Transferability: Not possible under current legal, fiscal and market conditions.

5.3.7. Lessons: Intuition suggests this option ought to be possible; but it has proved not to be. It may be different in different housing markets (both rental and sales) or if it was completed by an alternative organisation on a larger scale. The main obstacles are linked to current rental laws, the problems of long term management that avoid blight and the social and financial desires for home ownership.

5.4. Roll back of businesses

5.4.1. Only Manor Caravan Park taken forward. See 5.1.

5.5. Remove redundant defences

5.5.1. Objectives: to make the beach environment safer and more attractive to visitors and the local community.

5.5.2. Outcomes: Derelict defences and other debris removed from beach as far as possible. Limited by finance and beach state.

5.5.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: High profile, highly effective. The community saw a tangible outcome: a clean beach. The economic benefits are difficult to quantify. The potential short term increased erosion has to be balanced by the improved environment. Though even this latter may be seen as being limited if beach conditions vary and bring more debris to the surface, reducing the initial positive impact. (See Lessons.)

5.5.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£120,000
Revised budget	£170,000
Actual spend	£110,684
Commitments + anticipated	£71,322

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Remaining budget	-£12,006
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5.5.5. The contingency includes funds to revisit for further beach debris removal.

5.5.6. Transferability: Can be applied anywhere.

5.5.7. Lessons: Clear debris as and when it arises to avoid more debris appearing as beach levels change. Derelict defences should be removed as soon as they are either dangerous, unsafe or ceasing to function effectively. Delaying (as at Happisburgh) because they have a residual limited coast protection function is counter productive. Serve timely demolition notices to minimise deposition from abandoned buildings.

5.6. Remove cliff top debris

5.6.1. Objectives: To create an improved environment and prevent further deposition of debris on the beach.

5.6.2. Outcomes: to be undertaken as part of the housing demolition contract.

5.6.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: Too early to evaluate.

5.6.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£75,000
Revised budget	£0
Actual spend	£0
Commitments	£0
Remaining budget	£0

5.6.5. Combined with car park and toilets.

5.6.6. Transferability: Limited by access to the land. It requires the co-operation of the owner or the serving of a notice (if that is possible).

5.6.7. Lessons: See 5.5.5 above.

5.7. Relocate car park

5.7.1. Objectives: to roll back the car park to a more secure location and design it in such a way as it can be further rolled back as the coast retreats.

5.7.2. Outcomes: New car park constructed, to be managed by Happisburgh PC.

5.7.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: An improved car park close to the new ramp with toilet provision. Objectives fully met. The future management by Happisburgh PC is a bonus. While the costs are wholly borne by NNDC, the overall societal benefits are wider. The PC gains an income; the community regains public toilets and the car park has greater long term security.

5.7.4. Finance:

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Original Budget	£25,000
Revised budget (incorporating all cliff top enhancements)	£312,000
Actual spend	£230,893
Commitments + anticipated	£111,917
Remaining budget	-£30,810

5.7.5. Started as a separate item. Now combined with provision of toilets and cliff top enhancement.

5.7.6. Transferability: Can be applied anywhere, provided funding and land are available. The transfer of the management to Happisburgh PC opens up possible alternative funding and management opportunities.

5.7.7. Lessons: Needs community support to be fully accepted.

5.8. Create a new ramped beach access

5.8.1. Objectives: Replace ramp lost in 2003.

5.8.2. Outcomes: New ramp that can be re-excavated as and when necessary.

5.8.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: Highly effective, once the problems with some imported fill were resolved. Economically there are no tangible benefits. However, with the establishment of a new car park on the adjacent cliff top, the wider community economic benefits are clear, though difficult to quantify.

5.8.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£75,000
Revised budget	£0
Actual spend	£0
Commitments	£0
Remaining budget	£0

5.8.5. Included in beach debris removal.

5.8.6. Transferability: Transferable to many locations, though with limitations. Requires cliff top land. Would need considerably greater finance if a fully engineered ramp were demanded.

5.8.7. Lessons: Requires open dialogue with community and land owners. Take care when using recycled materials.

5.9. Reprovision of public toilets

5.9.1. Objectives: To replace the public toilets previously located on the old car park and subsequently demolished. Ideally to be relocatable.

5.9.2. Outcomes: New toilets nearing completion. To be managed by Happisburgh PC. Limited relocation capability.

5.9.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: New toilets on a new car park close to the new ramp. Objectives fully met. The future

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management by Happisburgh PC is a bonus. While the costs are wholly borne by NNDC, the overall societal benefits are wider. The community regains public toilets and the car park has greater long term security. The PC gains an income.

5.9.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£75,000
Revised budget	£0
Actual spend	£0
Commitments	£0
Remaining budget	£0

5.9.5. Included in provision of car park

5.9.6. Transferability: Capable of transfer to any site. Requires land and finance. The transfer of the management to Happisburgh PC opens up possible alternative funding and management opportunities.

5.9.7. Lessons: Needs community support to be fully accepted. Set a clear design brief.

5.10. Establish cliff top paths

5.10.1. Objectives: Establish new routes from the village and along the cliff.

5.10.2. Outcomes: Cliff top routes will be dependent on clearance of the land on the cliff top, but a path has been established from the new car park to the lighthouse, with another alongside the majority of the length of Beach Road.

5.10.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: Highly effective as the result of the generosity of local landowners with a willingness to negotiate.

5.10.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£0
Revised budget	£0
Actual spend	£0
Commitments	£0
Remaining budget	£0

5.10.5. Included on provision of car park.

5.10.6. Transferability: Can be transferred to any other site, provided there are willing landowners.

5.10.7. Lessons: Maintain dialogue and be open to offers.

5.11. Help the community record coastal change and the impact on heritage

5.11.1. Objectives: To give a voice to the people of Happisburgh enabling them to tell their own story for posterity. This project was managed by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

5.11.2. Outcomes: Several successful workshops. A local historian's notes turned into a 160 page book. Workshops held in other villages.

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5.11.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of meeting objectives: Highly effective against expectations. Became a point of reference for the village.

5.11.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£80,300
Revised budget	£78,312
Actual spend	£78,312
Commitments	£0
Remaining budget	£0

5.11.5. Transferability: Has already been transferred to other villages. No limit on its transferability. May be self funding.

5.11.6. Lessons: An exceedingly well received project after much initial scepticism. Has helped to bring the Happisburgh community together and repaired much of the damage caused by years on uncertainty.

6. Business Support Projects

6.1. Long and short term Business advice

6.1.1. Objectives: Businesses in the east of the District are better able to continue to invest, relocate and adapt.

6.1.2. Outcomes: 90 businesses (30% of those contacted) signed up for an initial diagnostic. Of these 37 took up vouchers for professional advice and 40 developed business plans or gained specific business advice. Grants and loans schemes set up to provide longer term support. Service Level Agreement arranged to deliver lasting marketing activities in the East of the district. Business finance toolkit developed.

6.1.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of achieving outcomes: Without Pathfinder many of these businesses could not have accessed any of this kind of support. Many are now better able to think of how they can respond to changes, not just coastal erosion. Has contributed to sustainability of communities

6.1.4. Finance:

Original Budget – Business Advice	£175,000
Revised budget– Business Advice	£171,000
Actual Spend – Business Advice	£113,732
Commitments + anticipated	£16,150
Total Cost	£129,882
Original Budget – Business Relocation	£250,000
Original Budget – Business Investment	£200,000
Revised budget– Business Relocation & Investment & Marketing Activities	£504,000

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Actual spend – Business Support	£353,887
Commitments + anticipated	£103,500
Total Cost	£457,387

6.1.5. Most of the funds for other business support projects re-allocated to this project.

6.1.6. Transferability: Can be applied anywhere where communities and businesses are under stress for any reason.

6.1.7. Lessons: If the project were to be repeated there is a need to consider how to engage early and get across the messages. This will be the case if the Coastal Communities Fund is used in any similar exercise. The external management by a local group in touch with local business needs (North Norfolk Business Forum) worked well.

6.2. Marketing of the east of the district

6.2.1. Objectives: Better marketing and promotion of tourism for east of District

6.2.2. Outcomes: A shared understanding of the important features of the East of the district.

6.2.3. Marketing toolkit for businesses to assess and develop their marketing activities whilst encouraging an area wide approach to marketing.

6.2.4. Publication of a photographic library of high quality images for businesses to access for free

6.2.5. Evaluation of effectiveness of achieving outcomes: Marketing project in particular made many simple recommendations some requiring little in the way of external funding. The cluster study raised awareness among groups some of whom will now work together more closely, rather than see others solely as competitors.

6.2.6. Finance:

Original Budget	£200,000
Revised budget	£45,000
Actual spend	£46,900
Commitments	£0
Remaining budget	-£1,900

6.2.7. Funds re-allocated to 6.1 above to complete marketing based business activities.

6.2.8. Transferability: Can be applied anywhere where communities and businesses are under stress for any reason.

6.2.9. Lessons: Coastal adaptation support will continue to be needed. A community is those who live, visit and work there. The Coastal Communities Fund can ensure this continues.

6.3. Purchase and lease back of businesses

6.3.1. Not taken forward due to limited funds and opportunities.

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7. Infrastructure Projects

7.1. Cromer footpath diversion

7.1.1. Objectives: To re-establish footpath link from cliff top car park to beach and town centre.

7.1.2. Outcomes: Land swap agreed with local owner and new footpath established. Old foot path closed.

7.1.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of achieving outcomes: Very effective. New footpath is of better standard. The economic benefits are mostly intangible. However, one measure might be any change in use of the car park. An adjustment would be needed to any raw data to factor in any recessionary effects.

7.1.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£35,000
Revised budget	£45,000
Actual spend	£38,643
Commitments + anticipated	£1,000
Remaining budget	£5,357

7.1.5. Remaining funds transferred to contingency then reallocated.

7.1.6. Transferability: Can be applied to any location provided funding and a willing land owner can be found.

7.1.7. Lessons: a quick and easy win in the right conditions.

7.2. Remove derelict defences at Beeston

7.2.1. Objectives: To remove remains of defences destroyed by a cliff fall, re-establish a safe pathway above high water and to improve the beach environment.

7.2.2. Outcomes: All objectives achieved. Well received locally.

7.2.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of achieving outcomes: Very effective and quickly achieved as the land was in NNDC control. An economic analysis is not possible as it is not possible to ascertain the benefits.

7.2.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£120,000
Revised budget	£14,282
Actual spend	£14,556
Commitments	£0
Remaining budget	-£274

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7.2.5. Transferability: Fully transferable, provided funding is available

7.2.6. Lessons: A quick and easy win in the right circumstances.

7.3. Roll back of community infrastructure

7.3.1. Objectives: To facilitate the replacement of community infrastructure at risk of loss to give confidence and continuity to the community.

7.3.2. Outcomes: Agreement reached with Trimmingham PC who were given a grant of £200,000 to be used to enable a new village hall to be constructed on a site farther inland. Funds may be used for any capital aspect of the project including the drawing down of further funding.

7.3.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of achieving outcomes: While this initiative came about as a result of an approach by the PC, it has generated internal tensions within that community. To date these and difficulties alongside securing the purchase of the preferred relocation site has prevented much progress. In theory the project is still capable of reaching a satisfactory outcome. The economic benefits (assuming the project is concluded) relate the confidence and security the community feels as a result. They are therefore difficult to quantify. One measure for the future might be any rental achieved from the new facility and the reuse of the old hall, but this would only be a part of the benefit.

7.3.4. Finance:

Original Budget	£200,000
Revised budget	£206,000
Actual spend	£65,551
Commitments	£140,000
Remaining budget	£449

7.3.5. Transferability: Capable of application at any site, but needs a) funds, b) drive within the community and c) a suitable site. See also Lessons.

7.3.6. Lessons: While this project initiated within the community, it is clear that not all were in favour. It may be better for the project to be managed from within NNDC, but this is contrary to the move towards a more locally set agenda, and may lead to higher costs (from lack of a voluntary input). It is clear that the claw back clause in the agreement is imperative.

7.4. Business and private contributions to flood defence

7.4.1. Objectives: To explore mechanisms for private funding for the maintenance of flood defence where this is no longer possible from public funds. (Note: This is not intended to subvert or be contrary to

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SMP policies where the non-continuation of defence is proposed for the maintenance of coastal processes.)

7.4.2. Outcomes: A number of options were investigated and analysed. They will be investigated further as part of the Wash East Coastal Management Strategy currently underway.

7.4.3. Evaluation of effectiveness of achieving outcomes: Though there has as yet been no final outcome, undoubtedly this study has provided the impetus for the current work. It has also brought together all of the parties involved and dialogue is continuing. Until the Strategy is completed an economic analysis is not possible.

7.4.4. Finance:

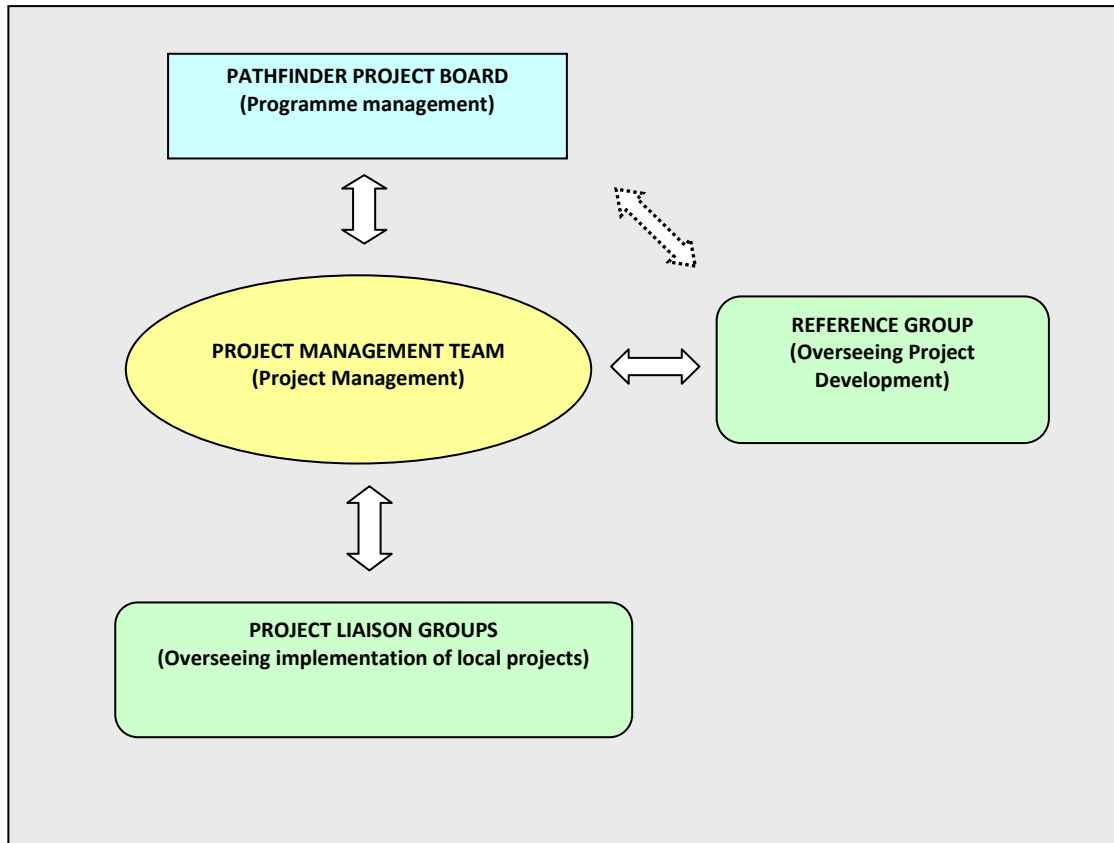
Original Budget	£25,000
Revised budget	£20,000
Actual spend	£20,000
Commitments	£0
Remaining budget	£0

7.4.5. Transferability: widely transferable to other sites where significant economic interest exists. Should not be seen as a universal panacea. May be of less value to the all or nothing coastal erosion scenarios because of the scale of funding involved in these cases. Protection against flooding has a definite advantage in so far as it can be applied to varying standards of protection.

7.4.6. Lessons: A good example of taking forward a locally generated idea using highly skilled consultants whose abilities would not otherwise have been available to that community.

8. Project Governance

8.1. The project governance arrangements are set out below.



North Norfolk Coastal Change Pathfinder Programme: Structure

- 8.2. Generally the project management structure worked well. The exception was the function of the Reference Group. While originally conceived as a “critical friend” to give an external unbiased strategic overview of the Council’s handling of the Pathfinder projects, it struggled to find a role for itself. It tended to become embroiled in the details of projects rather than take that strategic view. Some felt frustrated by a lack of power, as their role was only to make comment. There was a feeling that only comments picked up by an officer did any good. There was also a view that reference groups needed to be made up of people with relevant knowledge or experience.
- 8.3. Even so it was not without its benefits, often ensuring the Council did adhere to its own strictures, particularly about communications and community involvement. For the future any similar body would need to have greater clarity as to its function, both on the part of its creators and its members.
- 8.4. Though similarly without decision making powers of any sort, the local Liaison Groups generally worked well, particularly those in Cromer and Happisburgh. The latter especially was an invaluable link to the local community and shaped much of the direction of individual projects where it was possible to do so. This particularly so regarding the new car park, toilets and the overall perception that was being created.

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- 8.5. The Trimmingham Liaison Group was less effective due to community tensions. NNDC may have been able to assist further if it had been more involved with facilitation of the group.
- 8.6. Within the Council the previously formed Coastal Management Board was enhanced and became the Project Board. As such, on occasions, it became too large a forum and in consequence could lose some of its focus. In a small organisation it was sometimes difficult to ensure the attendance of staff outside the immediate Project Team due to other commitments. This had the effect of prolonging the decision making processes owing to misconceptions arising and the need for secondary meetings.
- 8.7. When comparisons are made with other Pathfinder local authorities, it is clear that the existence of the dedicated Coastal Management team gave the Council a head start. With the coast being such a key part of North Norfolk life and economics such a team must be seen as vital.
- 8.8. Similarly the long history of community engagement, particularly in respect of the coast and its changing environment was another crucial element.

9. Engagement and Communication

- 9.1. As referred to above the Council had been working with its coastal communities for a number of years with village and coastal workshops. It saw Pathfinder as a natural extension of this work.
- 9.2. Regular newsletters were published and distributed to individuals, community groups and the media. A dedicated web site was created which, as well as being a further medium for distributing the newsletters also hosted all reports produced by the project, though in some cases these were redacted where they contained confidential information. The web site was well received.
- 9.3. The local Liaison and Reference Groups were a more formal aspect of engagement. But equally important were regular newsletters and use of the web.
- 9.4. An important member of the Management Board was the Communications Manager. He oversaw the newsletters, managed the web site and gave general direction to outward facing communications, though the technical content often originated elsewhere.
- 9.5. He was also the link to the media ensuring timely and accurate communication with the press. This was well received by them and valued as a trusted source of material.
- 9.6. Throughout the media were supportive. A good relationship had been established with the local media over many years. The North Norfolk News, for example, had long campaigned for social justice for communities at risk. So, the overall result was a good reception both in the press, but also in the wider community, who have felt involved and informed.

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10. Financial Management

- 10.1. The grant from Defra was made in four tranches over two financial years divided between capital and revenue. The split into the tranches was determined by Defra. Other than the clear division between capital and revenue the money was not ring fenced and could be spent in any way the Council chose within its powers.
- 10.2. Management of the finances was shared jointly between the Council's finance team and the Project Manager. The fact that the internal audit report made no recommendations showed that the controls put in place were satisfactory.
- 10.3. However it should be noted that there were some significant changes between the original budget allocations and the final spend on individual projects. In part this reflected the need to adjust most of the allocations from those submitted in the bid. The sums quoted above in Sections 5 to 7 as "Original Budget" are those agreed at the Coastal Management Board meeting on 03 December 2009 held immediately after notification of the award. These were incorporated into the Programme Initiation Document with amendments and agreed by the board in March 2010. It was always understood that as the project was a trial, the budgets would require some amendments as the programme progressed. Amendments where required were notified to the board for agreement.

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11. Lessons and Conclusions

11.1. General

- 11.1.1. In general terms the Pathfinder Project can be regarded as successful. Inevitably some aspects were more successful than others, although even projects that fail to meet their original objectives can deliver lessons.
- 11.1.2. Of immediate benefit has been the improved sense of community, particularly in Happisburgh. By a) delivering material change and b) involving the communities in the delivery, the Council has engendered a noticeable difference in attitude and approach. The next step is to sustain it and some easily deliverable opportunities exist.
- 11.1.3. Nevertheless, it should be made clear that the success was only achieved at a cost. Without the initial grant little, if any, of the projects would have been undertaken. Even those that were of relatively low cost would not have been done. Examples might be the relocation of the Marrams footpath and the clearance of beach debris at Beeston and Happisburgh. Despite being such obviously beneficial projects they would not have been completed, because to have done so would have drawn on scarce resources allocated to other work.
- 11.1.4. However the scale of the benefits resulting from these simple projects suggests that there is a general lesson that, with careful handling, where there are significant benefits to be achieved, it is possible to divert funds away from apparently more important work. Therefore, as defences fail and cannot be replaced, it should be carefully considered whether the coast protection budget should be used to remove them even if it means repair work elsewhere is deferred.

11.2. Infrastructure

- 11.2.1. It was noticeable that improving the physical environment had a positive effect. In particular the removal of blighting effects such as derelict defences and debris from the beaches and cliff tops. Equally, the re-establishing of lost, or at risk, infrastructure has a similar effect. These two combine to give an economic boost to a community. (See 11.1)
- 11.2.2. The earlier Coastal Management Plan Evidence Gathering Study⁸ suggested that usage of a facility falls off if it is more than a 150 metre walk. The new ramp is considerably further than this from the caravan site. Thus it is suggested it is important that the steps at Happisburgh are reinstated as soon as possible as they are seen as having a benefit to the economics of the caravan site and, by extension, the whole village.
- 11.2.3. Similarly it has been beneficial to re-establish a proper foot way from the Marrams car park in Cromer.

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11.2.4. Clearly over time there will be further similar losses experienced along the North Norfolk coast. The Council should therefore take steps, so far as it is able, to replace losses as and when they occur.

11.3. Engagement

11.3.1. One message that has come through some of the interviews is to maintain a legacy from the investment. To this might be linked following up that investment. A striking positive note is sounded through the involvement of the affected communities in the projects. While this was perforce limited to the Pathfinder communities it is something that could be extended to the wider coast. This would build on the previous work such as the Overstrand workshop⁷. If taken forward the Council should recognise the very different needs of communities at risk from erosion compared with those at risk of flooding: there is far more support given to the latter at national level.

11.3.2. The local media are interested in the coast and how it is managed. If used effectively, to mutual benefit, they can be an effective tool in garnering wider support and maintaining the high profile that is necessary to ensure coastal issues are not neglected nationally.

11.4. Business Support

11.4.1. While the short term support that has been provided through this Project has clearly had some benefit, it is the long term support that will provide lasting benefit.

11.4.2. However, without external funding it is difficult to see how this can be delivered. There may be an opportunity to recycle the loan monies, but that may be a few years away. The most obvious potential source of further funding is the Coastal Communities Fund which appears to be focused towards job creation and the economy and through linking in with other local economic development activities.

11.5. Housing

11.5.1. The acquisition of the houses in Beach Road, Happisburgh received much attention. Only when their replacements are constructed can this element be said to have reached a totally satisfactory conclusion. Even then it can be argued (as it has by Defra) that the costs outweigh the benefits. But this is to ignore the very real, but difficult to cost, intangible benefits.

11.5.2. While some of the difficulties of this element stemmed from the need to ensure transparency but avoid accusations of compensation (not entirely avoided^{4,5}) the timing of the planning application for the replacement housing and demolition of the existing houses could possibly be simplified in the future by careful redrafting of the relevant planning policies, particularly EN12⁹.

11.5.3. It is difficult to see how such an operation could be repeated without significant outside financial support. Indeed this was

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recognised from the outset and hence the alternative approach of buy and lease was explored. While this could not be pursued either in North Norfolk or elsewhere, it is apparent that unless a way forward can be found it will not be many years before the situation that prevailed near the cliff edge in Beach Road, Happisburgh will be replicated elsewhere: a situation that must be regarded as unacceptable. Therefore a solution must be found.

11.5.4. It is suggested that a) Planning Policy is revisited at an appropriate time and b) Central Government has a role in understanding why a number of LAs felt unable to pursue buy and lease and amend the relevant legislation. The work undertaken by Bruton Knowles¹⁰ on behalf of NNDC and subsequent internal reports are useful starting points.

11.6. Project Management

11.6.1. Much of the success of the NNDC Pathfinder project as a whole can be attributed to the management approach that was taken. At its highest level this meant a dedicated Project Board. In the early days this may have been more effective and resulted in fewer misunderstandings by the inclusion of senior legal and financial representation.

11.6.2. Even so the management systems put in place were effective and ensured that reports were timely and directed, financial control was in place and decision making was largely smooth. If any improvement could be made in this area it would be for the Project Board to become more strategic and be less concerned with detail.

11.6.3. A hallmark of this project was its external engagement. The local Liaison Groups worked well and any deficiencies in this area were due to locally based issues. There is no reason to suppose any future arrangement would be any different and hence this is a model that can be repeated.

11.6.4. A slightly different view could be taken of the Reference Group. The concept of an external friendly critic has much to commend it. But if repeated, a) more clarity is needed as to its role and function and b) the members of the Group need to be equally clear as to their and more particularly the limitations of their role. Even so the Reference Group was an important piece of the project governance and did make a difference. However, rather like the Project Board it could become too focused on detail.

11.7. Staff Resources

11.7.1. The Pathfinder Project had a major advantage over many Council projects: despite the award being less than the bid, its funding was generous. There were sufficient funds to allow the appointment of a Project Manager, a specialist solicitor and specialist property advisors. Unlike many projects it was not a matter of designing down to a price: rather it was a matter of bringing into the project appropriate resources until the funds were expended.

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11.7.2. Nevertheless there are valuable lessons for future Council projects:

- Be generous with first estimates
- Ensure proper use of Optimism Bias
- Ensure proper project management
- Employ sufficient resources
- Employ relevant resources
- If resources are limited reduce the scope of the project: do not attempt to stretch limited resources

11.8. Coastal Management

11.8.1. The coast is important to North Norfolk. It is a key contributor to its economy. However, it is a coast that is constantly changing and, if predictions can be believed, it will change more rapidly in the future. Therefore coastal management needs to be resilient.

11.8.2. Clearly Central Government funding will be limited for several years to come. Currently such funding appears to be rather blinkered in that much of the effort is directed towards flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM). But that is only a small element of coastal management. Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) must bring all elements of coastal management together: all levels of government, plus the local communities. Importantly it must recognise a) the enormously strong links to spatial planning and b) that funding needs to be channelled towards coastal management as a whole, not just FCERM. The Coastal Communities Fund would appear to be a step in that direction, but its current focus on regeneration and economic activities is perhaps too limiting. Nevertheless Defra is clear that the Coastal Communities Fund is the successor to the Coastal Change Fund.

11.8.3. In terms of local delivery of ICZM, the critical element will be to achieve a balance between defence and adapting to coastal change. Two points are key: acceptance by everyone that many places currently defended will not be defended in the future, for whatever reason; and spatial planning is the driver. However these must be supported by intervention to replace lost infrastructure to ensure community and economic continuity.

11.8.4. The aim should be to avoid the recreation of the situation that existed in Beach Road, Happisburgh prior to the Project. If that cannot be achieved, then much of the effort will have been wasted. It will require a co-ordinated approach from all levels of government, working closely with experts and the local communities.

12. Recommendations

12.1. The Pathfinder programme was a one off and a first of its kind. A key driver was not only to make a difference to communities facing coastal

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change, but to trial approaches and share the experiences. North Norfolk District Council has passed on its experiences as the programme has progressed and now should ensure that all information is made easily available for the future through a final update of North Norfolk Pathfinder website.

- 12.2. The other Pathfinder authorities have trailed different approaches. Although some may not be appropriate on our coastline, some concepts and learning may be of great value and worth exploring further. Therefore these lessons should be considered alongside the conclusions of this report as the Council embarks upon developing a ICZM approach.

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1.	Glenn Berry, Happisburgh PC	21
2.	Steve Blatch, Strategic Director, NNDC	25
3.	Dan Corbett & Sue Willis, Reference Group members	28
4.	Cllr. Angie Fitch-Tillett, Coastal Portfolio Holder, NNDC	30
5.	Malcolm Kerby, chairman, Reference Group	32
6.	North Norfolk News	34
7.	Robin Smith & José Socao, Economic development, NNDC	36
8.	Clive Stockton, former Coastal Portfolio Holder, NNDC	39

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14. References

1. Adapting to coastal: developing a Policy Framework, Defra, 2010
2. Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and coastal change, CLG, 2010
3. Coastal Pathfinder Bid Documents, NNDC 2009
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7. Coastal Planning Workshop. Dialogue by Design, 2008.
8. Assessment of the Effects of Coastal Erosion on Infrastructure, RPA, 2008.
9. Local Development Framework Core Strategy, NNDC, 2008.
10. Buy to Lease Option Appraisal, Bruton Knowles, 2011.