Investigating Blight

Task 3 Report
Annex 3

for

North Norfolk District Council

Collingwood Environmental Planning

RPA

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Task 3 Report: Annex 3

prepared for

North Norfolk District Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overall Description of the Project

The coastline of North Norfolk is around 45 miles in length, a large proportion of which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural beauty (AONB) and Heritage Coast. The population is around 100,000 living in 200 distinct communities[1].

The final version of the Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan (SMP[2]) was produced in 2006 and largely reflects the shift in Government policy to being more in keeping with natural processes. As a result there are numerous recommendations of no active intervention and retreat. The potential for significant social and community issues has made it difficult for North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) to accept the results. Instead, NNDC has identified a number of conditions for acceptance within the overall aim of developing a positive vision and addressing the consequences of coastal change.

The overall aim of this study is to derive data and support a strategy for the long-term management of the North Norfolk coast. It is intended to cover areas where knowledge is absent or limited, or to help develop other policy tools.

This objective is to be achieved through four specific study areas that are required to provide the necessary evidence to support bids for resources and to indicate the most feasible option to assist in implementation of processes to adapt to climate change. This report presents the approach and findings of Task 3, which is to provide evidence of any current blighting effects of the process of coastal change in North Norfolk and the potential for future blighting effects.

1.2 Objectives of the Project

The objective of Task 3 is to build upon the findings of research undertaken by the Tyndall Centre to investigate the blighting effects of coastal change for North Norfolk. The Task focuses on the impact of the change in public policy regarding the defence of this part of the coastline from the time it was set out in the SMP consultation document and describes the blighting effects perceived by the coastal communities affected. Recognising that much greater blighting effects may be felt in the future, the Task also explores these potential future blighting effects.

1.3 Overview of Task 3

Task 3 is to investigate social, economic and wellbeing issues associated with blighting such as:

[1] NNDC (2003): **Economic Development Strategy to 2007.**

[2] Halcrow *et al* (2006). **Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan, First Review Final Report,** November 2006.

- investment decisions relating to existing property and business;
- maintenance of infrastructure;
- inward investment;
- effect on land and property values;
- reduced maintenance, dereliction and abandonment of property;
- changing demographic profile;
- participation in community activity;
- viability of community facilities (including commercial enterprises serving community needs);
- changes in visitor numbers/patterns/behaviour;
- social exclusion;
- psychological and social aspects of identity;
- impact upon environmental assets or tourist attractions; and
- any knock-on (multiplier) effects.

The Task combines a focus on the actual manifestations of blight in terms of changing personal, social and economic wellbeing on the one hand, with an effort to document the community's experience and perception of change. This is based on the appreciation that the way that communities, individually or collectively, experience processes that threaten their sense of place is likely to have a major impact on their response or resilience to blighting effects.

1.4 Organisation of the Task Report

The Task 3 Report is organised as follows:

- Section 2 sets out the approach followed and the literature reviewed
- The key findings are set out in Section 3; and
- Section 4 provides a summary of Task 3.

The report sets out the findings of Task 3 only, with links to work undertaken in other tasks, as appropriate. The final Report for the study as a whole will provide full discussion on the linkages between the tasks and the overall implications.

2. APPROACH AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The approach to Task 3 includes six stages:

- identification of communities, land use and infrastructure at risk (drawing on the initial outputs of Tasks 1 and 2 supplemented by information included in the SMP);
- desk-based review of relevant longitudinal research into the effects of blight on communities;
- links through the overall engagement plan for the study (see Section 6) to determining a specific engagement plan for Task 3;
- engagement with affected communities through focus groups or in-depth interviews;
- analysis of results of engagement and combination with the results of Tasks 1 and 2; and
- summary of results including assessment of impacts on property, investment, infrastructure, community activities and participation, impacts on visitors and visitor attractions and the potential for knock-on effects.

2.2 Identification of Communities, Land Use and Infrastructure at Risk

Drawing on the results of Task 1 which looked at the effects of coastal change on infrastructure in the short-term (to 2025) and Task 2 which looked at the requirements and resultant costs for the roll-back of different types of land use over three time scales (to 2025, 2055 and 2105), fifteen different types of land use were identified:

- residential property;
- commercial property/land use;
- hotels and guest houses;
- residential institutions (including care homes);
- non-residential institutions (including schools and libraries);
- assembly and leisure (including village halls);
- other properties (including sewage works, sewage pumping stations, MoD facility, places of worship, telephone exchange and mobile phone mast);
- historical (including listed buildings, sites of historical importance and Saxon cemetery);
- agricultural land;
- caravan parks (including chalet and holiday parks and their associated infrastructure);
- recreation/open space (including car parks, National Trails and other footpaths, beach accesses, allotments, slipways, parks, playing fields, playgrounds, promenades);
- golf courses;
- roads;
- environmental sites (including cliff top habitats and County Wildlife sites); and

- lifesaving and emergency (including coastguard lookouts, lifeguard stations and lighthouse).

Using the information from Task 2 it was possible to identify the time period in which the risks to these assets and land uses threaten their integrity. The following table shows how many assets in each of the categories are threatened in each of the three epochs considered:

Table 2.1: Assets lost by Epoch

Category	EPOCH 1 (to 2025)	EPOCH 2 (to 2055)	EPOCH 3 (to 2105)
Residential property	51	283	655
Commercial property/land use	4	6	19
Hotels and guest houses	0	1	5
Residential institutions (including care homes)	0	1	0
Non-residential institutions	0	0	0
Assembly and leisure (including village halls)	1	0	2
Other properties (including utilities)	1	3	3
Historical	0	2	5
Agricultural land	0	0	175ha
Caravan/chalet/holiday parks [1]	327	656	491
Recreation/open space	0	614m	0
Environmental sites	0	0	0
Golf course [2]	0	3	4
Roads	0	860m	2830m
Lifesaving and emergency	2	0	2

Notes:
[1] The caravan park assets are expressed in numbers of pitches for individual caravans
[2] Expressed as number of holes affected

This information highlights the significant impacts of coastal change that are already being seen or will be experienced in the immediate future. Over the next 20 years around 50 homes will be lost, along with more than 300 caravan park pitches in an area where tourism is the major economic activity. Nevertheless, the scale of the impacts is significantly greater in the following period, for example with a five-fold increase in the number of homes likely to be lost. The effect of the perceived "stay of execution" for properties likely to be affected in Epochs 2 or 3 should not be underestimated.

The NNDC's amended Shoreline Management Plan was used to identify the communities at risk from coastal erosion. The amended SMP characterises the coastline east of Cromer to Happisburgh as "the most active length of coast within the SMP area[3]" and the long-term defence of the six settlements along this stretch - Overstrand, Mundesley, Trimingham, Bacton, Walcott and Happisburgh - is

[3] North Norfolk District Council (2007): **Amended Shoreline Management Plan**, August 2007, p16.

considered to be unsustainable. These settlements not only face the risk of erosion, they are also now subject to restrictive planning conditions, as shown in Box 2.1 below.

Box 2.1: Restrictions imposed by NNDC Coastal Erosion policy

(extract from Local Development Framework Core Strategy policy EN7)

New development in areas at risk of coastal erosion will be restricted.

Indicative coastal erosion zones identified in the 2004 Consultation Shoreline Management Plan will be shown on the Proposals Map.

In the indicative erosion zone up to 2025 new development will not be permitted except for minor, non-residential extensions, alterations, householder development and changes of use which reduce the risk to people or property. These will be undertaken at the owner's risk.

In the indicative erosion zone up to 2055 and 2105, new development will be restricted as above, however short-term temporary uses which provide community or economic benefit may be permitted subject to other policies in the Core Strategy. This will be undertaken at the owner's risk.

2.3 Longitudinal Research into the Effects of Blight on Communities

2.3.1 Background on Blighting and Coastal Communities

Blight has been defined as "the negative social and economic consequences of third party decisions. The decisions may be made by the public or private sector and may be policy or regulatory decisions"[4]. While planning blight is a much narrower concept[5], blight is here associated with depressing effects on property, which in turn lead to negative economic and social effects going beyond the properties immediately affected.

The threat of coastal erosion may cause blight if economic and social activities in the threatened area are relocated, reduced or ended. There is a risk that this could lead to a downward spiral of decline, as the reduction in economic activities or transfer of population may have knock-on effects on other businesses and services, in the public as well as the private sector, and the area is likely to cease to attract new residents or even visitors. Some of the expressions of the blighting effect documented by researchers are:

- drop in value of unprotected properties;
- negative equity ties owners to current properties as they are uncompetitive in the wider market;
- potential financial liability of landlords with current leases when properties are lost;

4 Taussik, J *et al* (2006): **Adapting to Changing Coastlines and Rivers,** Preliminary Report to Defra, London.

5 "[Blight] is the depressing effect on property caused by development proposals. Strictly speaking, blight is where a development plan allocates land for a public authority function – for example, for the creation of a new road. Only then can a blight notice be served." Source: Richard Max and Co, solicitors. http://www.richardmax.co.uk/atoz/b.htm

- business failure as a result of reduced demand for goods and services;
- loss of jobs;
- lack of maintenance of the built and natural environment; and
- threat to public services (schools, health services, transport links)[6].

Many of these phenomena are not unique to coastal communities facing erosion. The particular characteristics of coastal settlements and towns, and the problems of economic and social decline often found in them have been explored by the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee. The Committee's Second Report of Session points out that coastal towns account for a disproportionately high percentage of England's deprived areas, with common features such as physical and social isolation, high proportions of older people combined with high levels of outward migration by young people, low-wage low-skill economies with seasonality of employment and a high incidence of poor housing conditions and high proportion of private rented accommodation[7].

However, the Committee also notes that there is a wide diversity among coastal towns, with some coastal towns thriving while others stagnate. Particular conditions and circumstances create or limit opportunities for development and the risk of coastal erosion has had a significant negative influence in recent years, largely as a result of a shift in Government policy. While coastal erosion is not new, but an ongoing natural phenomenon, there is clear evidence that the process of erosion is increasing: under all of the Government's four Future Flooding scenarios, average future coastal erosion rates over 100 years are anticipated to increase, with extreme or very high rates of erosion expected in a number of locations[8]. This evidence has informed second generation Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs)[9], the first of which were published for consultation in 2004 and which look at management options including managed realignment[10] and no active intervention[11]. Where the second SMP proposed "no active intervention" as the preferred option, this came as a profound shock to communities which up till that time had a reasonable expectation that the coastline would continue to be defended.

There is no public responsibility to provide defences to reduce the risk of flooding or coastal erosion, nor to provide compensation to those suffering loss as a result. "There can be no general assumption of blanket compensation for any property owner facing loss of property due to coastal change or an alteration of coastal management policy"[12]. Some writers and politicians have argued that people living in coastal areas should have known that they were at risk and have made plans to manage that risk. This position is used both to justify the change in coastal policy and to deny public responsibility for the consequences of the change: "… there is no argument for public

6 Taussik J *et al* (2006): p18.

7 House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee (2007): **Coastal Towns,** Second Report of Session 2006 – 07.

8 Evans E *et al* (2004): **Foresight Future Flooding. Scientific Summary: Volume 1. Future risks and their drivers**, Office of Science and Technology, London.

9 Shoreline Management Plans are planning tools that provide a high-level assessment of the risks associated with coastal evolution and present a policy framework for addressing those risks.

10 allowing retreat of the shoreline with monitoring and, if appropriate, management to limit or control movement.

11 a decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences.

12 O'Riordan T *et al* (2006): **Living with a Changing Coastline: Exploring New Forms of Governance for Sustainable Coastal Futures**, p15.

compensation of individuals for their bad luck. Instead they rely on their own planning (usually property insurance)"[13]. However, insurance is not available against coastal erosion[14] and it is hard to see how individuals can be expected to predict changes in public policy.

Many institutions have recognized that the current policy of putting the burden on the individual resident or business to manage the losses resulting from the change in approach to managing coastlines is unsustainable. In its submission to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government session on Coastal Towns, the Environment Agency suggested that "In some areas, particularly those areas subject to aggressive coastal erosion, [there is] the need for long-term, possibly innovative, adaptation solutions. It told us 'what preys heavily on people is compensation for their property', and that 'there may be a case for recognising the current generation's special needs in grants and social support *where individuals are affected*'[15].

2.3.2 Current UK Policy Context for Coastal Erosion Risk Management

The overall policy context for both land use planning and for flooding and coastal erosion risk management is that of sustainable development. This is reflected in the 2005 UK Government SD Strategy[16], which sets out five principles:

- living within environmental limits;
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
- achieving a sustainable economy;
- using sound science responsibly; and
- promoting good governance.

The second principle covers meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion and creating equal opportunities for all.

While these high-level principles set out a comprehensive framework for sustainable development, in practice there are often conflicts between the individual principles, leading to variations in their application in different contexts. One example is the use of Sustainability Appraisal as a test of sustainability in the case of land use plans and strategies, whereas other plans and strategies, including Shoreline Management Plans, are subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment which, as its name suggests, focuses principally on the environmental dimension.

The linkage between land use planning and environmental plans, including SMPs, becomes crucial and the level of implementation of the plans, as this involves Regional Spatial Strategies, Local Development Documents, Local Authorities, Local Strategic Partnerships and the planning system.

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13 Cooper JAG & McKenna J (2008) p298.

14 If householders can get the problem classified and *landslip*, they may be able to obtain insurance: this happened in at least one case in Overstrand in the 1990s.

15 House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee (2006-07), op cit.

16 HM Government (2005): **Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy**.

Citing Ballinger and Dodds (2004), Taussik (2006)[17] says that "community strategies and associated Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) do not deal adequately with coastal risks issues and associated management". However, the new approach to the development, monitoring and assessment of priorities through Local Area Agreements (LAAs) should mean that these risks are being better integrated into local planning and actions[18]. Each LSP must prepare its LAA to promote or improve wellbeing and contribute to sustainable development. A single set of 198 National Indicators has been developed for this purpose; performance against each of the 198 indicators will be reported for every single tier and county council LSP. However, LSPs will also negotiate their own targets with central Government against a sub-set of indicators and these targets will be used for performance management and allocation of funding. The National Set of Indicators includes: "adaptation to climate change" (188) and "flood and coastal erosion risk management" (189). Local authorities must have regard to the priorities set out in the LAA in exercising their well-being powers.

The Local Government Act 2000 provides local government with the power to promote or improve the environmental, social and economic wellbeing of their area. This is a discretionary power which should free local authorities from most of the constraints of the *ultra vires* principle and make them better able to address cross-cutting issues. However, while this power allows local authorities to, among other things, incur expenditure and give financial assistance, there are cash limits on spending under the wellbeing powers and no additional funding is available to support authorities in these areas. As the money comes directly out of Council Tax, it competes with other calls on the local authority's finances.

If residents suffering loss as a result of coastal erosion are unable to obtain assistance from their local authority, there is an argument that they could have recourse to the 1998 Human Rights Act: "There are grounds for a challenge where people suffer from flooding or coastal erosion resulting from a decision not to undertake works where that decision was one which *no reasonable Minister* (or other person in authority) *could possibly have made*. This could apply to decisions to abandon the public maintenance of an existing defence line or to adopt managed realignment. As with all flood and coastal management works, decisions must be rational and take account of the general interest (including the economic interests) of the country. It is in the interests of all parties that decisions are fully supported by appropriate documentation"[19]. However, economic appraisal is undertaken to Government guidelines with the intention of providing the basis for rational decisions that take account of the general interest. Thus, it would have to be proven that the reasoning upon which the decision has been made was flawed and the wording of the 1998 Human Rights Act (making specific reference to the decision made by a reasonable Minister), could be interpreted as meaning that the underlying information is not contestable.

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17 Taussik *et al* (2006) op cit, p11.

18 Communities and Local Government (2007): **An Introduction to the Local Performance Framework**: delivering Better Outcomes for Local People, HM Government, London.

19 Defra Guidance Note (2003): Managed realignment (**Land Purchase, Compensation and Payment for Alternative Beneficial Land Use**), Defra, London.

2.3.3 Social and Environmental Justice

Social justice is a complex phenomenon, further complicated by the consideration of environmental justice and equity issues.

One way of looking at the social justice dimension of coastal erosion risk management policy decisions or actions by authorities is to consider two aspects: distributive and procedural justice[20]:

- distributive justice – how the beneficial and adverse effects of humanly induced climate change and adaptation to climate change impacts are distributed across groups of people and time. Equity and fairness are common concepts of distributive justice; and
- Procedural Justice how and by whom decisions on adaptive responses are made. Recognition, participation, and legitimacy are common concepts of procedural justice.

Adaptation to changing coastlines entails costs and how those costs are shared out raises issues of distributive justice. For many people, the emphasis on the cost benefit principle in decision making on flood and coastal erosion risk management rules out the possibility of ensuring equity, particularly in areas with small or scattered populations. However, the underlying principle of cost-benefit analysis is that it should identify who wins and who loses, such that the winners should compensate the losers and where a project is only undertaken where the benefits outweigh the costs (such that society as a whole is better off). It is the way in which the methodology has been implemented that is, perhaps, a more pertinent concern.

A recent examination[21] of the 'fairness' current flood risk management system using three social justice models concluded that that current FRM decision making is based on benefit and not on equality or fairness. This means that decision-makers are unable to target those most vulnerable to flooding or areas where large capital investments are not justified. However, this conclusion suggests that the authors were considering 'fairness' from the local perspective only. Current FRM decision making is intended to ensure that the projects implemented provide good value for taxpayers and provide benefits at the national scale. It could be argued that implementation of schemes on a local basis may be unfair at the national scale, for example, if a scheme that would protect more people, properties, businesses, etc. could not be funded because the money had been spent on a rural area. Steps are also being taken to address concerns over vulnerability of communities to flooding or erosion, while a move to outcome measures as the basis for prioritising projects may address some of the equity issues[22].

The sense of injustice felt by coastal settlements and individual residents who face loss of property without any prospect of assistance from the state is compounded by the fact that provisions do exist for the protection of wildlife and habitats: "…it is now

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20 Paavola J & Adger WN (2002): *Justice and Adaptation to Climate Change*, Tyndall Centre Working Paper No.23 p2.

21 Johnson C *et al* (2007): *Natural and Imposed Injustices: The Challenges in Implementing 'Fair' Flood Risk Management Policy in England*, The Geographical Journal, 173 (4).

22 Equally, it may introduce new issues.

clear that while there is considerable protection for the environment (e.g. Water Framework Directive) there appears to be nothing comparable for communities. This lacuna in policy fairness is of grave concern to those whose properties and livelihoods are directly affected by flood and coastal erosion." [23] In fact, the Water Framework Directive does include consideration of communities and taxpayers more generally through the need to determine whether a measure would incur disproportionate costs and the explicit inclusion of the polluter pays principle.

2.3.4 Research on Blighting

There is little research in the UK on the blighting effect of coastal erosion on communities. The term "blight" comes from its use in planing to refer to "the draining away of development value" associated with the publication of a development plan which renders land virtually unsaleable. However, it has taken on a wider meaning, covering "the negative social and economic consequences of third party decisions[24]". The Making Space for Water project's work on Adapting to Changing Coastlines and Rivers (strand SD2) looks briefly at the blighting effects of shoreline or catchment management options which leave previously defended assets or communities undefended. The authors suggest that "… the no active intervention policy carries considerable social and economic costs, costs which need to be incorporated in wider cost benefit analysis … [25]". The authors suggest that these costs could be considered under five main headings:

- uncertainty;
- stress and other health issues;
- economic blight;
- social blight and loss of community spirit; and
- ethics.

It is also important to consider the relatively narrow focus of many economic appraisals, where these often ignore (or take no account of) many of the social impacts of schemes. An assessment of the 'real' costs of the no active intervention baseline is undertaken as part of the Task 4 report.

The Tyndall Centre has carried out significant research on the effects of coastal change and erosion on communities, including its 2007 study 'Investigating the Scope for Community Adaptation for a Changing Shoreline in the Area between Caister and Hemsby'[26]. The focus of this research was on the impact of proposed changes in the management of the coastal area and perceptions of the strategies that would be necessary to facilitate adaptation to future change.

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23 O'Riordan T *et al* (2006) op cit. p49.

24 Taussik J *et al* (2006) p4.

25 Taussik J *et al* (2006) p21.

26 Nicholson-Cole S *et al* (2007): **Investigating the Scope for Community Adaptation to a Changing Shoreline in the Area Between Caister and Hemsby,** Great Yarmouth Borough Council, January 2007; O'Riordan T *et al* (2006): **Living with a Changing Coastline: Exploring New Forms of Governance for Sustainable Coastal Futures,** Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, Norwich.

The study provides a valuable community perspective on the far-reaching impacts on both businesses and residents. However, these impacts are just beginning to be felt in coastal communities. In order to explore how "negative social and economic consequences of third party decisions" affect communities over time and how they might be reduced, an effort was made to find comparable cases of communities living with other kinds of risk.

Given that the change from an approach to coastal management based on defending the coastline to one of adaptation to natural processes is relatively recent, there is little data on these phenomena. The option of drawing on data about blighting effects experienced in other situations was also explored. However, an examination of the literature on blight and urban communities, for example, highlighted that in these situations the causes of blight are mainly related to socio-economic deterioration (characterised by unemployment, crime, etc.). Here blight is the spiralling downward impetus of these negative social and economic phenomena, but is not generally associated with any threat to the physical integrity of the community. This was felt to be a fundamental difference with the threat of erosion to coastal communities, making if difficult to draw parallels between the two.

An alternative line of research was to look at communities with a strong place identification facing major upheaval caused by the impact of external events. The experience of mining communities following the closure of the pits in the 1980s was felt to be relevant.

Gusfield (1975)[27] identified two dimensions of community: territorial and relational. The relational dimension of community has to do with the nature and quality of relationships in that community, and some communities may even have no discernible territorial demarcation, as in the case of a community of scholars working in a particular specialty, who have some kind of contact and quality of relationship, but may live and work in disparate locations, perhaps even throughout the world. Other communities may seem to be defined primarily according to territory, as in the case of neighbourhoods, but even in such cases, proximity or shared territory cannot by itself constitute a community; the relational dimension is also essential.

Later authors have refined Gusfield's definition and suggested that sense of community is composed of four elements: membership (covering: boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment, a common symbol system), influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, shared emotional commitments[28]. Members of a community share a "perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure". [29]

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27 Gusfield (1975):

28 McMillan DW & Chavis DM (1986): *Sense of community: A definition and theory*, Journal of Community Psychology, 14(1), pp 6-23.

29 Sarason SB (1974): *The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology, San Fransisco* Psychological, p157.

A strong sense of community identity and attachment to place can heighten the experience of loss in the face of threats such as natural disasters, man-made impacts from pollution or economic change. On the other hand, it can also be a source of strength and vitality, as suggested by the coalfields regeneration case study in Box 2.2.

Box 2.2: Case Study: Coalfields Regeneration

In the early 1990s the collapse of coal mining removed at a stroke the economic rationale of coalfield places, ruptured their cultural and social fabric, and precipitated a deep sense of loss.

A study was made ten years later when the coalfields remained blighted by severe socio-economic problems, relating to unemployment, long-term sickness and poverty. While poverty affected some of those in employment because new jobs tended to be low paid, community initiatives had helped to create alternative forms of work and provide services that both the government and market failed to deliver. While not a substitute for well-paid jobs in the formal economy, they have enhanced people's quality of life.

The 'success' of many community initiatives extends beyond quantifiable criteria that account for numbers of jobs and training places created. It often hinges, less tangibly, upon their ability to help individuals to feel included, needed and valuable in places that feel they are no longer of use.

There was some support for community initiatives from national government and the European Union. However, requirements for partnership working, competition and constant innovation can be difficult obstacles for community initiatives.

The researchers concluded that the lesson from the coalfields is that places subject to restructuring need strong support from national government and EU programmes. This support needs to be formulated, implemented and managed to help local people use their own creativity and talents to play a role in the regeneration of their distinct places. Programmes for regeneration need to recognise the specific requirements of individual places.

Source: Bennett K *et al*: **Coalfields Regeneration: Dealing with the consequences of industrial decline.**

Individual sense of identity has been shown to be closely linked to place. This link may be stronger – and the impact of breaking it by involuntary relocation more severe – in the case of people with vulnerability characteristics (such as lack of mobility due to age, disability or ill-health, low levels of income, low educational attainment, etc.). They will generally have fewer networks connecting them to alternative sources of identification[30].

Another experience of the application of policies of abandonment in mining villages following the closure of the pits in the 1980s[31] highlights the differential impact of relocation on groups within the community. The most vulnerable people are most likely to remain, because they have less ability to move and the decline in the local community and local economy that accompanies the abandonment measures leaves them less connected than before. However, this may have been partially a result of failures in the way land management measures were applied, rather than in the

30 Speller Gerda (2000): **A Community in Transition: a Longitudinal Study of Place Attachment and Identity Processes in the Context of an Enforced Relocation**, University of Surrey PhD Thesis.

31 Pattison G (2004): *Planning for decline: The "D" Village Policy in Durham UK* in Planning Perspectives, Vol.19, No 3, July 2004 , pp311- 332.

relocation per se. It is also worth pointing out the differences between this example and that of land management for erosion risk, in particular the fact that people remaining in the mining villages did not face any risk to their physical safety.

2.3.5 Monitoring the Impacts of Community Upheaval: The Value of Longitudinal Research

Given the lack of data on blighting and the impact of threats to community cohesion and integrity caused by external factors like coastal erosion, there is a strong case for putting in place a systematic process of data gathering and analysis. This would make it possible to identify trends in a whole range of indicators of community well-being: from property values, investment and economic growth to indicators of physical and mental health and measures of community identity and self-efficacy.

The two examples below, one from the US and one from the UK, demonstrate the value of collecting and analysing this kind of data.

The Relocation of Elderly People from Run-Down Neighbourhoods in the US

The HOPE VI Panel Study tracks outcomes for original residents at five sites where redevelopment was carried out under the Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere programme. Residents of these communities were usually obliged to leave their current homes to make way for new developments. While they had often been at daily risk of personal injury from violence related to crime, drug trafficking, and gang activity, some, especially older people, were still hesitant to leave the troubled communities they called home. These older people were often very poor (three-quarters lived on less than $10,000 a year) with few housing options. The prospect of moving was particularly difficult for many long-term senior residents who had "aged in place," or remained in the neighbourhood after raising their children.

An initial baseline survey of the original residents highlighted some particular themes which may be relevant to communities at risk of coastal erosion:

- an unexpectedly high number of older adults living in the five developments nearly a quarter of the sample were 50 or older; 12% were 62 years old or older. The findings suggested the need for a special focus on older adults because of their particular situation:
  - they may be at risk for health problems;
  - they may require special assistance if they need to move;
  - the prospect of relocation creates stress but also threatens to disrupt networks of social support; and
  - many of these older respondents, even those who were very frail, were assisting younger family members: about one-quarter of the households headed by older adults had children under 18.

- surprising levels of resilience: some families seemed to cope amazingly well with the challenges they faced. Researchers understand a great deal about what causes poor outcomes for children, but less is known about why others in the same

circumstances manage to thrive. This could be important in suggesting support strategies for communities facing challenging circumstances.

The baseline findings were used to formulate suggestions regarding the supportive services offered to residents as part of the relocation and revitalisation initiative. These supportive services are likely to be relevant to the UK context and to coastal communities facing relocation. The suggestions are:

- service programmes that emphasize self-sufficiency will not meet many residents special needs;
- health should be a focus of any supportive service package;
- housing authorities and service planners need to pay attention to the needs of older adults;
- relocation plans should try to minimise disruption for schoolchildren; and
- housing authorities should make sure that residents have adequate information to make informed choices about relocation.

The findings of the longitudinal study also demonstrate the importance of place to individual wellbeing: familiar neighbourhoods and places provide a connection to social networks and offer a personal sense of belonging, particularly to older residents[32]. This is frequently more important than the physical improvements offered by a new environment. In a separate study of a different HOPE scheme, Clampet-Lundquist (2004) looked at a redevelopment in Philadelphia and examined the factors affecting people's choice of housing options[33]. The study suggests that moving to "better" neighbourhoods and thereby improving both the standing and opportunities for themselves and their families is not the most important motivating factor in making choices about where to live. In fact, this was only one aspect that residents considered: more important were considerations about existing social networks such as kinship (residents were more likely to chose to live near members of their family than to chose to live in "better" neighbourhoods where they had no family) and accessibility of services such as food stores.

The HOPE VI Panel Study provides a wealth of information about a range of effects (health, employment, housing, education and community) over years of upheaval for communities in several different locations in the US and suggests how this kind of monitoring could provide valuable data to inform public policy and its practical implementation.

The Enforced Relocation of Arkwright Town, a Derbyshire Mining Village[34]

This study examined the experience of residents in a former coal mining village over a five-year period during which the village was relocated because of the risk of gas escaping from the disused coal mine. The authors explored the way that changes in

32 Smith, Robin E, Ferryman, Khadija, **Saying Goodbye: Relocating Senior Citizens in the HOPE VI Panel Study**, Urban Institute, January 2006.

33 Clampet-Lundquist S (2004): *HOPE VI Relocation: Moving to New Neighbourhoods and Building New Ties*, Housing Policy Debate, Vol 15, Issue 2.

34 Speller G *et al* (2002): *A Community in Transition. The Relationship Between Spatial Change and Transition***,** Social Psychology Review, Vol 4(2), pp39-58.

the spatial environment affected residents' perception of themselves and contributed to changes in the community. They found evidence that the physical environment has an important role in maintaining and enhancing self-esteem and self-efficacy; two principles of identity that are fundamental to mental health and well-being.

The framework of analysis used in the study is Breakwell's Identity Process Theory (IPT)[35]. Breakwell developed this theory to explain what happens when external change threatens an individual's identity. Speller *et al* (2001). apply the theory to a situation in which the identity of a community is threatened by forced relocation because of an environmental threat. This situation has many parallels with that of communities facing the threat of coastal erosion.

IPT sees identity as composed of two dimensions: the content dimension and the evaluative dimension. The content dimension contains information about the individual including aspects such as physical and behavioural characteristics, history, group membership and so on. The evaluative dimension is constantly making sense of, or evaluating, these content dimensions. In European cultures, four basic principles are seen as guiding this evaluation[36]. These are: self-esteem, self-efficacy, distinctiveness and continuity.

Self-esteem: a feeling of personal or group worth or social value. Self-esteem is threatened by property blight: suddenly homes and businesses in the community are seen to lose their value in the eyes of others. The initial reaction of anger against an injustice can over time be transformed into a rejection of the authorities who are seen as failing to protect the community against this injustice.

Self-efficacy: a person or community's perception of their own efficacy in achieving their goals. A change in one's physical place, perhaps as a result of relocation or of a threat of erosion, can undermine the sense of efficacy or ability to control the environment: residents at a workshop in Bacton talked about their "*feeling that future is lost;[that they have] no choice or options".*

Distinctiveness: a sense of uniqueness or difference from others. This can be seen clearly in the mining community at Arkwright, where one of the residents states, *"it is a unique place. ... [at that time] no one knew anything other than the coal industry"*[37]. Distinctiveness is also clearly a significant principle for coastal communities. As one of the participants at a workshop in Overstrand said, *"we are a coastal community: we care about the coast".*

Continuity: the sense that one is the same across time and across different situations. The loss of familiar places – the "old Arkwright" in Speller (2001) - can be felt as a loss of continuity.

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35 Breakwell GM (1986): **Coping with Threatened Identities**, London.

36 Speller G *et al* (2001): "This List of Identity Principles is Presumed to be Neither Exhaustive nor Universally (cross-culturally) Applicable", op cit p42.

37 Speller G (2001): "*Arkwright: A community in transition*" PhD Thesis 2001, University of Surrey, p196.

Speller (2001) monitors the way that the management of the threat to the physical location of the community over a five-year period impacts on the four principles of identity. The management option chosen (relocation) and the way it was implemented had far-reaching impacts on people's feelings about themselves and their relations with others. As Arkwright's story unfolds, one cannot help feeling that if the results had been used to inform the way the relocation was managed, some of its negative impacts could have been attenuated.

IPT's four principles of identity may provide a valuable tool for analysing the information obtained from engagement with stakeholders and communities in North Norfolk and for exploring how different members of the community may make sense of and cope with events that threaten their individual and shared identity.

2.3.6 Conclusions from the Literature Review

The review of a wide range of sources relating to blighting and the impacts of coastal erosion on communities issues confirms the value of taking a broad view of blighting that includes the five elements identified by Taussik (2006)[38]:

- uncertainty;
- stress and other health issues;
- economic blight;
- social blight and loss of community spirit; and
- ethics.

Considering the lack of evidence for many of these issues in coastal communities anywhere in the UK, it would be valuable to establish a baseline for affected communities in North Norfolk and to design a systematic process of data collection, to inform coastal erosion policy development, implementation and evaluation.

2.4 Specific Engagement Plan for Task 3

Engagement with stakeholders and communities was seen as a central part of the process of gathering evidence to inform the North Norfolk Coastal Management Plan. The main purpose of engagement was to gather information for the four studies included in the project and to understand the values and concerns of local people around the issues raised by options for the management of coastal change, in order to inform the studies' content and recommendations.

It was not considered feasible or necessary to involve all stakeholders and local people as NNDC will carry out its own consultation on its proposed CMP. NNDC has also recently held stakeholder events with coastal communities as part of its engagement on the LDF Core Strategy. This study has been able to draw on some of the outcomes of that engagement.

[38] Taussik J *et al* (2006): p18.

An engagement plan was agreed that took account of existing sources of evidence and the types of input sought from different stakeholders on each of the four studies, ensuring that engagement was proportionate. All four studies have drawn to some extent on local and community knowledge. Task 2 (Indicative cost of implementing a roll-back policy for different types of land use) and this study (Task 3) on the wider blighting effects of coastal change on whole settlements and communities, were particularly concerned to capture the attitudes and values of local people in relation to coastal change. Engagement activities on these two studies were carried out in parallel as far as possible, in order to use stakeholder and contractor time more efficiently and to bring out the links between the studies.

Table 2.2 summarises the input required for each of the studies:

Table 2.2: Engagement Requirements	
Task	**Specific Contribution Needed**
1: Effects of coastal change on infrastructure	Data on infrastructure
2: Indicative cost of implementing a roll-back policy	Identification of example areas to include Identification of existing constraints to roll-back (physical, socio-economic and political) Identification of intervention measures required to initiate roll-back (through removing or reducing constraints)
3: Wider blighting effects on whole settlements/ communities	Attitude data on the major impacts of living with coastal erosion and priorities for adaptation
4: Possible effectiveness and viability of underwriting properties at risk	Feedback on underwriting options Fill any data gaps and/or address specific issues that have been raised during the study
General	General engagement to ensure evidence collection is as efficient and effective as possible

Stakeholder Analysis

During the period this study was carried out, the CMP was a live topic in North Norfolk. The NNDC had already held a series of five workshops as part of the process of developing the LDF: these were well attended and in general reaction to the Council's proposals was positive. It was expected that stakeholders and members of the public would want to input to the evidence gathering and could be well placed to provide some of the following information:

- catering sector, holiday parks and caravan site owners: information on the costs of effectively managing rollback;
- local Area Partnerships and Parish Councils: evidence on the wider blighting effects of coastal change; and
- business associations and the Chamber of Commerce: information on the viability of underwriting properties at risk.

Further assessment of the likely distribution of evidence and expertise across stakeholder organisations led to agreement to focus engagement primarily on the following stakeholder sectors for each of the studies:

- Study 1: North Norfolk District Council
- Study 2:
  - Local Authorities;
  - Businesses and trades;
  - Leisure and tourism;
  - Parish Councils and Village Committees; and
  - Infrastructure sector.
- Study 3:
  - Local communities;
  - Local Authorities;
  - Parish Councils and Village Committees;
  - Local Action Groups;
  - Primary Care Trust; and
  - Local Area Partnerships.
- Study 4:
  - Local communities;
  - Local Authorities;
  - Business and trades; and
  - Local Area Partnerships.

Given the focus of the studies and the time available, most engagement involved organised stakeholders. However, two workshops held in Bacton and Overstrand in February were publicised to a wider audience.

Workshop Evaluation

Participants at the workshops to gather information for Tasks 2 and 3 were invited to complete a short evaluation form to assess:

- Question 1: the relevance of the event to them (how far did the Workshop address issues of importance to you in relation to coastal management?);
- Question 2: how easily they felt they could participate in the event (how easy was it for you to provide information from your experience and knowledge?); and
- Question 3: how effective the event was in achieving its stated objectives (to what extent did the workshop provide an opportunity to explore the current and likely future impacts of coastal change?).

The results of the evaluation of the workshop held at Bacton are shown below. These indicate that the majority of participants thought that the workshop was "good" in relation to the three evaluation questions and that none of the participants felt that the event had been poor.

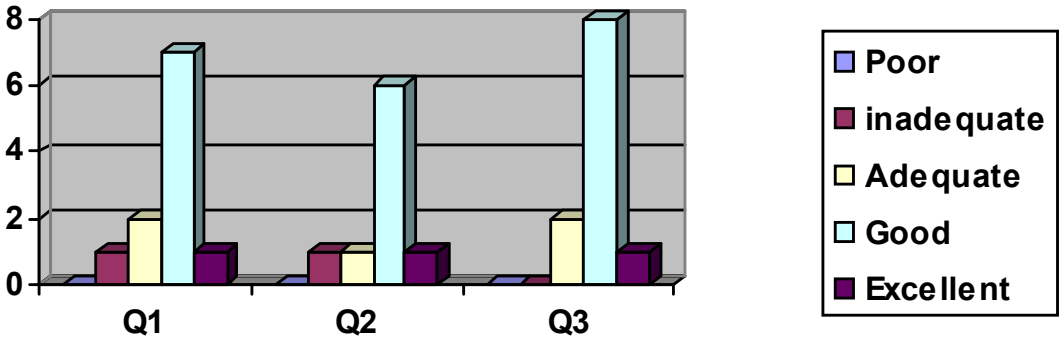

Figure 2.1: Bacton Workshop: Participants' Evaluation

There are no comparable results from Overstrand workshop because the programme was changed in line with the suggestions of attendees. The workshop instead involved small groups considering issues agreed with the attendees, which have been used in the Task 4 report, in particular, to inform the assessment of the real costs of the no active intervention baseline.

2.5 Analysis of Evidence

The analysis of the evidence of socio-economic blighting in communities threatened by change and erosion of the North Norfolk coast was based on the themes identified in the original study brief (covering physical and economic evidence of blight, along with community activity). The analysis also takes account of a number of additional themes suggested by longitudinal studies of communities faced with major upheaval in their physical environment. In particular, the diverse strands of evidence contributing to this task have been analysed through:

- the review of the initial evidence for blighting effects on the assets at risk along the coast;
- input from the community and local businesses on the current experience of blighting and the factors that could potentially exacerbate or mitigate blighting effects; and
- the understanding developed by longitudinal studies of other communities going through physical upheaval.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Blighting Effects on Community Assets and Infrastructure

Tasks 1 and 2 identify the assets that will be at risk from erosion should no active intervention be adopted as the preferred option. Where assets are impacted by erosion, this could be expected to have knock-on effects on the sustainability of the community and its activities. Failure to maintain or repair these assets, for example as the result of a policy of "no active intervention" will lead to further deterioration and contribute to a downward spiral in the physical appearance and the socio-economic well-being of the area.

This section examines what deterioration can already be observed in assets and infrastructure, how this is impacting on communities in the area and what further blighting of assets and infrastructure can be expected.

It was found in the Task 1 report that the assets most affected in the twelve policy units covered by the SMP are:

- car parks;
- beach access points; and
- the Norfolk coast path National Trail/Paston Way long distance path.

All these are assets that facilitate access to the coast by car or on foot. Access to the coast is central to the identity of residents of this part of North Norfolk as well as providing the focus for economic activities (tourism and fishing in particular) and for recreation for both local residents and visitors (surfing, beach games, dog walking, etc.). Limited public transport means that travelling by car is often the only way for people to get to the beach. High cliffs may mean that steps and slipways are needed to provide access points.

In all but one policy unit the beaches will not be affected before 2025, however some access points are already being affected and about 7% of car parking is likely to be lost within this period. At Happisburgh the ramp giving access to the beach has collapsed; according to local people, the loss of the ramp has led to blight. The loss or threatened loss of access to beaches is perceived to have knock on effects for a series of economic activities such as caravan parks, hotels and the fishing industry: "access to the sea and coast…is what brings people in and helps to support the area"[39]. While the ramp at Happisburgh has been replaced by a metal walkway and a tower with several flights of steps, this is considered to have done little to attenuate the blighting effects since as well as being out of keeping with the natural surroundings, the stair access is felt to be off-putting to the less physically-fit or people with young children in pushchairs.

Access to the beach has also been lost from some caravan sites, for example in Bacton, while steps to the beach from Beeston caravan park were closed on health and safety grounds. Lack of action to stop erosion, resulting in rubbish and rubble on the

[39] Overstrand workshop, op cit.

beach from collapsing defences and buildings was seen by caravan park owners as an eyesore with a perceived blighting impact on the tourist trade and the well-being of local residents alike. For all tourism-related businesses it is important to ensure the location remains attractive – some businesses worry that the defences "look dreadful and are putting visitors off"[40]. However, the decision to remove a failed defence is not an easy one: even a failed defence structure provides some residual defence value. NNDC is also concerned that if it were to remove the failed defence structures, this could compound local people's feelings that they were being abandoned[41].

With the publication of the SMP, villages along the coast face the prospect of losing beach access points or having to pay for its maintenance themselves if they are to ensure their economic viability. According to one Overstrand resident, "to maintain economic activity without defences would involve building a new slipway every year"[42]. Another agreed: "…beach access is fundamental for tourism - access must be continuously maintained or replaced".

Participants at the workshop had little confidence that public authorities will be able to provide alternative access that would allow them to maintain their current economic and social well-being. When asked about the possibility of rolling back property and amenities to locations safe from the threat of erosion, participants at the Bacton workshop were dubious about how this could be achieved, pointing out that it is "not clear who will ensure that property is available" and emphasising the difficulty of moving infrastructure. Some expressed the concern that not only would it be difficult to replace the assets that would be lost, but that any solution of this kind would itself be only temporary: "roll-back is not a definitive solution: there will never be an end to adaptation"[43].

The wider issue of access to the coast and transport links could also trigger future blighting. On stretches of the coast through routes are likely to be affected in the medium to long term, impacting on community sustainability in a number of ways:

- reducing transport links;
- restricting tourist access and movement around the coast;
- restricting economic activities involving transport of goods; and
- affecting the desirability of the area as a residential location.

One participant in the Bacton workshop argued that there would be a "key change when the through route is lost: [currently] there is disbelief in Mundesley that it will be lost"[44].

40 Workshop with caravan park owners, 13 February 2008.
41 Personal communication, Peter Frew, NNDC.
42 Overstrand workshop, 21 February 2008.
43 Bacton workshop, 20 February 2008.
44 Bacton Workshop, op cit.

3.2 Socio-Economic Blight

This section examines the socio-economic effects of blighting that are already observed, how these are experienced by the local community and what further blighting can be expected.

3.2.1 Evidence of Economic Blight on Property Values

Perhaps the classic expression of blight is the fall in the value of property. Local people and experts agree that the SMP has had an impact on property values in locations which are shown as being affected by coastal erosion by 2025. Taussik *et al* (2006)[45] examine the evolution in the value of a sea front bungalow property at Bacton between the date of publication of the SMP (which showed the risk to this property as significant after 20 years) and 2006. The figures in Box 3.1 taken from that report indicate a fall of 15% in the value of the existing property, while the fall in value of developing the property at this location is put at 20%. The workshop attendees gave similar values for a decrease in market value of properties. For example, residents in Overstrand reported a slightly more gradual loss in property value. Prices for semi-detached properties are said to have declined in real terms by 10-15% since 2005, with no apparent effect in the case of terraced or detached properties. A questionnaire sent to estate agents as part of this study also suggested a decline of around 11%.

While Taussik *et al* (2006)[46] point to the SMP as the cause of the loss of value of the Bacton property, elsewhere evidence of coastal erosion seems to have triggered a fall. Residents report that when the ramp providing access to the beach in Happisburgh was lost property prices fell 25-30% overnight. This is a compelling account of cause and effect, but the reality may be more prosaic, with difficulties in getting insurance and mortgages exacerbating the problems of buying and selling property and depressing prices.

Residents' accounts suggest that owning property in locations which are likely to be affected by coastal erosion by 2025 is more of a liability than an asset. Villagers from Happisburgh state that it is virtually impossible to get a mortgage, while there is a case of a villager in Bacton being refused equity release. Home owners face huge difficulties in obtaining home insurance and complain that they are made to feel they are not entitled to insurance.

The blighting effect of this situation can be see in the physical environment, for example, in the "string of unoccupied properties along the seafront [in Bacton][47]" and in the changing composition of local communities. Residents in a number of coastal villages worried that no young people were buying property, with the result that settlements like Bacton were coming to seem like retirement villages.

45 Taussik J *et al* (2006) p20.
46 Taussik *et al* (2006) op cit p20.
47 Of course, properties may also be empty for much of the year because they are holiday homes.

Box 3.1: Time Line of Events Relating to Sea Front Bungalow Property at Bacton
(source: Taussik *et al*, 2006)

Property	• Small, flat roofed, sea front bungalow at Bacton.
SMP1 for North Norfolk adopted 1996	• Strategic option of hold the line for Bacton.
North Norfolk Local Plan adopted 1998	• Endorses SMP1; provides local confidence.
Pre-purchase investigations 2004	• North Norfolk DC land search: North Norfolk Local Plan, adopted 1998, refers only to countryside policy and states no land use designations (e.g. risk zone) apply to site; identifies potential for contamination. • EA: Property outside tidal flood risk area. • Search by environmental consultants: environmental risk unlikely to have adverse effect on value of property; would not be designated "contaminated land". Report designed to satisfy concerns of Law Society warning card. Considers: contamination; subsidence; flood risk; and other matters but not erosion. Contacts with North Norfolk DC and EA. • House did not go on the market. Value established by valuations from 3 local valuers; gave valuations within £1000 of each other. • No structural survey undertaken; purchaser is an architect with structural knowledge.
House purchased 2004	• House purchased for £95,000. • Mortgage of £50,000 secured.
Redevelopment proposal	• Intention to extend the ground floor of the bungalow and construct a first floor extension to create 3 bedroom house. Design work.
Draft SMP2 for North Norfolk published 2004	• The strategic option Bacton proposed to be to allow shoreline retreat once present defences reach the end of their effective life (estimated at 20 years).
Planning application 1 submitted 2004	• Timing coincided with publication of draft SMP2; North Norfolk refuse planning permission because of uncertainty generated by SMP2 strategic option.
Refinement of redevelopment proposal	• Development proposal amended to make property demountable; specialist technical engineering design commissioned. • Work expected to cost £80-100,000.
Planning application 3 submitted 2005	• Planning application to North Norfolk DC: representations apply only to view and design aspects; Local Plan policies referred to only for countryside and design; appraisal limited to design aspects; "The site is not within the Coastal Erosion Risk Area identified in the adopted Local Plan but the draft Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) identifies it as likely to be affected by costal erosion in the period 2025-2055. However bearing in mind that the proposal is merely for the extension of an existing property and given that the Council has not adopted the draft SMP and that the implications of the draft SMP have not been incorporated into a planning policy document (and consequently carry little weight) then it is considered that coastal erosion has little bearing on the determination of this application."; permission granted February 2005 subject to standard time limit and conditions on boundaries and materials.
Pre-development valuation March 2006	• Local valuer provides market valuation: short term demand but market along sea wall volatile; encloses material from SMP 2006; site suitable for security for mortgage purposes for a loan period of 10 years; site life limited to 25-50 years; sets valuation in context of continuing increasing house prices (based on RICS survey of Feb 2006) which are expected to continue to rise; market value of existing property - £80,000; expected market value of proposed development – little over £200,000. • Valuer suggests value of proposed property without the impact of SMP2 would be £250-300,000. • Local estate agent suggests value of proposed property without the impact of SMP2 would be £240,000. • In a rising property market generally, value of existing property fallen £15,000 or some 15% on publication of draft SMP where risk expected to become significant in 20 years time. • In a rising property market generally, value of proposed property fallen, say, £60,000 or some 25% on publication of draft SMP where risk expected to become significant in 20 years time.

The downward spiral of blight means that lack of confidence in the housing and property market can be seen as both cause and effect. Lack of confidence means that people find it difficult to sell houses and other real estate, or can only sell at low prices. Sometimes an event can cause a sharp downturn in prices: following a coastal slip in Overstrand some years ago, house prices in the area fell by some 20%,

although they later returned to previous levels (once work started on the defences). The depressing effect on prices often goes beyond the area identified as being at risk by the SMP maps. Blight is driven by the lines on the SMP maps, but because the pattern of erosion does not follow a line, there is considerable uncertainty and speculation over where and when future losses will occur.

3.2.2 Blighting Effects on Investment and Economic Activity

Tourism is the most important economic activity for the villages along the North Norfolk coast, both in terms of revenue and employment. Task 1 found that direct spending on tourism is estimated to be in excess of £357 million per year: Overstrand's SMP Committee reviewed the economic activity that would be at risk if the village's sea defences were not maintained and stated that 200,000 tourists visit the village each year, with 34,000 staying overnight, resulting in a significant contribution to the region's economy and providing 187 jobs.

Because the coast is the main attraction for tourists, there is evidence that erosion and change are having a negative impact. The closure of the Overstrand promenade during part of 2008 has had an impact on tourism, and tourism businesses in villages like Bacton are also felt to be declining. Caravan park owners report that the SMP has caused concerns among people who are thinking of investing in a caravan about when and where erosion is likely to happen. There are few incentives to invest and plenty of reasons not to, such as the potential loss of road links and essential infrastructure.

In spite of the problems they face, there was little evidence of a significant reduction in the number or scale of businesses supporting the tourism industry. The owners of tourist facilities like caravan and chalet parks recognise that coastal erosion poses a challenge to their business and that they will need to take significant investment decisions. At East Runton, for example, where there have never been defences, a good many caravan park pitches have been lost recently. There is no room for individual sites to retreat: they will have to relocate to new sites in order to stay in business, but they may not be able to find a cliff top site and may not get planning consent[48].

The concern of people operating tourist facilities is that uncertainty limits the ability to plan ahead or make investments. While some of this uncertainty relates to understanding of the natural processes involved in coastal change, other decisions, for example about the maintenance or development of infrastructure and services (transport, shops, etc.) depend more on political will.

3.2.3 Evidence of Social Blight

This section examines the evidence that the stated SMP policy of not maintaining the coastal defences has damaged the well-being of the affected communities. There appears to be only limited data available on this aspect, perhaps reflecting the

[48] "The Council is encouraging caravan parks to move to inland sites where they can be screened - some people regard caravan sites as blight in themselves." Personal communication, Peter Frew, NNDC

prevailing view that blighting is essentially an economic phenomenon. This is a narrow perspective considering the clear synergies between social and economic impacts, for example between unemployment and mental health problems, and suggestions as to how evidence could be gathered in the future.

We would expect to find that the threat of coastal erosion has a diverse range of impacts on the communities affected, including:

- changes in the availability and condition of housing stock;
- impacts on physical and metal health;
- access to social services;
- access to essential community services;
- impacts on learning and attainment;
- recreation and leisure provision; and
- differential impacts, particularly affecting vulnerable sectors of the population (children, young people, the elderly, people with disabilities).

However, the progressive nature of coastal erosion, which means that predicted impacts vary over time and across the coastline, makes it difficult to define the boundaries of affected communities.

One social impact which has been reviewed is the stress caused by coastal erosion. The 2006 study for Defra on "Adapting to changing coastlines and rivers" involved engagement with a number of communities along the coast, including Happisburgh. The report describes the impacts of coastal change on individuals and communities: "The Happisburgh workshop indicates that where homes and ways of life may be lost to the sea, stress levels are high… Those affected will come from an extended area rather than being associated only with properties (homes, businesses, employment, schools) at immediate risk. They include all sectors of the population: those living in owner occupied or rented houses; businesses; employers and employees; the richer and the poorer; and those offering services to the community. While affecting persons of all ages and backgrounds, older and less financially secure persons are likely to be affected the most"[49].

Heightened levels of stress were also reported by participants at the workshops held in Bacton and Overstrand in early 2008. Participants at the Bacton workshop talked about waking in the night as a result of worries about the future. One stated that their doctor had reported seeing more cases of people affected by stress. Uncertainty (possibly associated with difficulties in planning ahead, selling property, moving house, etc.) contributes to stress and depression.

Evidence from the workshops and community web sites[50] shows that many people living on the coast are very angry about their situation. From their perspective, the change in coastal management policy has taken away their right to make decisions about their own future. One resident from Overstrand described this feeling of

[49] Taussik *et al* (2006) op cit p18.

[50] such as www.happisburgh.org.uk.

powerlessness and lack of rights as "being like a refugee"; another talked about "feeling that [the] future is lost; having no choice or options".

The qualitative information gathered from local people makes it clear that despite the lack of data on specific social impacts of blighting, coastal erosion is affecting the well-being of people in these areas.

3.3 Individual and Community Processes for Coping with Change

The evidence from longitudinal studies of communities experiencing disruption in their physical environment suggests that there are likely to be differences in the way that members of the community are affected by the change process. It is also clear that impacts can also be influenced by the way that the change process is managed. Drawing on the longitudinal studies reviewed, and particularly the work on Identity Process Theory, this section examines if and how two elements of identity – self esteem and self efficacy – are affected by coastal change and what strategies people use to reinforce their sense of identity in the face of change.

The study of changes in community identity in the context of a changed physical environment in the mining community of Arkwright[51] highlighted the way that changes in place impact on individuals' sense of identity. These changes are not uniform across the community, but are experienced and interpreted differently by individual members.

A series of interviews were carried out with the same members of the community over the five-year period from when the relocation of the village was agreed to several years after the last families had moved in. These interviews make it possible to explore how different dimensions of identity are impacted by change in the environment over time.
This kind of detailed evidence, obtained from interviews with a range of actors, is not available for the North Norfolk coast. But a certain amount of information can be gleaned from the reports of community workshops, which suggests that there would be value in continuing to monitor these dimensions of identity.

[51] Speller G (2007): **Cultural and Social Disconnection in the Context of a Changed Physical Environment**.

Box 3.2: Blighting Effects of Coastal Erosion on Self-Esteem

Self-esteem: a feeling of personal or group worth or social value. Self-esteem is threatened by socio-economic blight as homes, businesses and the entire community appear to lose value. Maintaining self-esteem in the face of real or potential impacts is likely to be an essential element of community resilience.

Negative impacts of coastal erosion on self-esteem

- lack of value of properties and activities: for most people, their homes and property embody their achievements over the course of their lives. The emphasis on the need for the *underwriting* of properties to cover value that they have lost, or *compensation* to balance this loss at community events reflects the deep concern around this subject;
- lack of confidence in the future gives no incentive to invest or develop; and
- injustice: the affected villages and properties are seen as being penalised without compensation, while in other locations defences will be maintained.

Responses to impacts on self-esteem:

- anger;
- denial: unwillingness to talk about the threat, possibly because of a fear that this would in itself lead to blighting;
- active efforts to promote recognition of the village's economic and cultural contribution to the region; and
- campaigning against abandonment of coastal settlements.

Box 3.3: Blighting Effects of Coastal Erosion on Self-Efficacy

S*elf-efficacy*: a person or community's perception of their own effectiveness in achieving their goals. Socio-economic blight can limit freedom of action, access to resources or other factors that contribute to effectiveness.

Negative impacts of coastal erosion on self-efficacy:

- lack of ability to make decisions about home or property: unable to sell house, raise a mortgage or raise equity against the value of a house;
- lack of ability to safeguard the value of property: falling property value, lack of access to insurance policies; and
- loss of choice about the future.

Response to impacts on self-efficacy:

- resignation: *"feeling that future is lost; no choice or options"*.
- sense of injustice: change in policy deprives community of rights;
- vulnerability and inability to care for oneself: feels like being a refugee; and
- may result in communities feeling more powerful because they have organised themselves.

A systematic process to monitor residents' experience of coastal change, with particular reference to the two identity dimensions of self-esteem and self-efficacy, could provide valuable evidence on the impacts of this process and the responses of local people. This might provide a barometer of the resilience of the community as a

whole, as well as enabling support services or local organisations to see which parts of the community may be particularly affected, to understand these responses and to develop and implement effective support strategies.

3.4 Engaging Coastal Communities in Managing Change

This section turns from the evidence about the impact on communities of things that happen (like erosion or loss of assets) to consider the effect of the way that change processes are managed and particularly the importance of engaging communities. The experience of regeneration programmes across the country demonstrates that when change processes fail to involve affected communities, they usually fail across the board.

Participation provides a range of benefits:

- governance – strengthening democratic legitimacy and stimulating active citizenship;
- social cohesion and social justice – building relationships and social capital, equity, empowerment;
- improved quality of services – that meet real needs and reflect community values; and
- capacity building and learning – to provide a basis for future growth and development and help build stronger communities[52].

In the case of communities facing potentially dramatic impacts of change, participation can be an invitation to express and channel experiences that are meaningful for them, thus giving support on a long-term basis. And while engagement of this kind is often justified as a means of avoiding negative outcomes, positive change can often be the result, by increasing unity, encouraging a sense that "we're all in this together" and demonstrating that the authorities are not imposing their preferred solution but are actually working with local people.

A review of the community engagement process carried out to support evidence collection for this project, provides examples of both the positive benefits of engagement and participation but also the risks of negative impacts if effective engagement does not take place:

- failure on the part of the authorities to provide effective communication channels with the community may result in members of the community becoming frustrated and feeling that they are not given a proper response by anyone. Caravan site owners complain of this kind of treatment;

- lack of early and open discussion of options for managing change: the roll-back option being presented by the authorities assumes that people want to remain in

[52] Adapted from Involve (2005): **People and Participation**, London.

their current locations, but communities have to change; there is a need for a flexible approach to roll-back recognising different needs [53]; and

- need for meaningful engagement to ensure that multiple perspectives are taken into account. There was recognition on the part of those attending the Overstrand village workshop that the District Council had made an effort to engage on the tricky issue of options for coastal management.

[53] Bacton workshop.

4. SUMMARY

The Task 3 report has identified the communities, land use and infrastructure at risk in the SMP area. The evidence provided highlights the significant impacts of coastal change that are already being seen or will be experienced over the next 20 years.

There has been little research in the UK on the blighting effect of coastal erosion on communities. The change in flood and coastal erosion risk management policy from an approach based on defending the coastline to one of adaptation to natural processes is relatively recent and there is little data on the effect on people. A review of the literature on communities facing dramatic changes in their physical environment found difficulties in extrapolating from these experiences to the situation of coastal communities in North Norfolk.

Valuable evidence was obtained through a process of engagement with stakeholders and communities that was seen as a central part of the evidence gathering process. The main purpose of engagement was to gather information for the four studies that make up the current project and to understand the values and concerns of local people in relation to the management of coastal change.

The report found that deterioration can already be observed in assets and infrastructure at parts of the coast, and that this is impacting on communities in the area. While social and economic blighting have been caused by coastal change, there is limited understanding of the characteristics of blighting and how it may develop.

The impacts of blighting on self-esteem and self-efficacy have been highlighted, drawing on the literature review and engagement with local communities. The negative impacts reported and the responses experienced emphasise that the costs of no active intervention extend far beyond the financial consequences of losing capital value in the property.

A longitudinal survey of the impact of change on coastal communities would provide valuable information to inform the development of policy and programmes to address the problems associated with coastal erosion. It is recommended that this kind of survey should be established, considering the following topic areas:

- demographics: including distribution of the population by age, household income, nature of housing tenure, health etc;
- attitudes: covering perception of the local environment, perception of home, perceptions of the changes that are happening in the community; and
- efficacy and identity: what actions have they taken and with what outcome?

ANNEX 1:

ENGAGEMENT PLAN: STAKEHOLDERS AND METHODS

Table A1: Main stakeholder categories and their likely input to the four study areas.

Main stakeholder categories and their likely input to the four study areas				
STAKEHOLDER SECTORS AND KEY ORGANISATIONS	STUDIES WHERE INPUT SIGNIFICANT			
	1 Infra-structure	2 Rollback	3 Blighting	4 Underwriting
Local Authorities				
NNDC	X	X	X	X
NN LSP		X	X	
Norfolk CC		X		
Broads Authority & Broads Society				
Businesses and trades				
North Norfolk Business Forum, Chamber of Commerce				X
Estate Agents				X
Shops/commercial: Foodshops, Superstores		X	X	?
North Norfolk Fisherman's Society			X	
Catering: Cafes/Restaurants/Fish Shops/Pubs		X	X	?
Garages		X		
Farm/Farm Shop/CLA		X	X	?
Leisure and tourism				
Golf Courses / Driving ranges				
Guest Houses/Hotels/Holiday cottages (North Norfolk Hotel and Guest House Assoc)		X	X	?
Holiday Parks/Caravan Sites		X	X	
Community and action groups				
Norfolk Coast Partnership				
Local action groups and Coastal Concern Action Group		X	X	
Green NGOs				
Green NGOs (CPRE, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts)				
Government Agencies				
Environment Agency				
Natural England				
English Heritage		X		
Health and welfare organisations				
Primary Care Trust			X	
Care Homes				
Relevant others				
Internal Drainage Boards				
Local Area Partnerships		X	X	X
National Trust				
Parish Councils / Village Committees				
Parish Councils/Village Committees/Associations		X	X	
Norfolk Rural Community Council				
Infrastructure				
Infrastructure & services: Railways, Royal Mail/Post Offices, telephone exchange		X		
Schools				

Table A2: Principle Engagement Methods

Study	Stakeholders	Purpose of engagement	Method
General	All	Explain the purpose of the evidence gathering, the focus of the different studies, how stakeholders and the community will be involved and the timetable. Provide contact details.	Information distributed when contact made, at project activities and at other relevant events
1. Effects on infrastructure	North Norfolk District Council	Identification of infrastructure	Face-to face meetings with individual officers
2. Indicative cost of roll-back	Local Authorities Businesses and trades Leisure and tourism Parish Councils and Village Committees Infrastructure sector	Identification of example areas to include Identification of existing constraints to roll-back (physical, socio-economic and political) Identification of intervention measures required to initiate roll-back (through removing or reducing constraints)	Contact (email, telephone or face-to-face) with individual representatives. Small group meetings with key sectors identified through initial contact, to explore constraints. Workshops with community groups and businesses to discuss implications of proposed intervention measures
3. Wider blighting effects	Local Authorities Businesses and trades Leisure and tourism Parish Councils and Village Committees Local Action Groups Local Area Partnerships Local communities	Understand the major impacts of living with coastal erosion and priorities for adaptation	Contact (email, telephone or face-to-face) with individual representatives Workshops with members of the community and business interests
4. Viability of underwriting properties	Business and trades Local Area Partnerships Local communities	Feedback on underwriting options Fill any data gaps and/or address specific issues that have been raised during the study	Initial input from members of the community (tie in with Study 3 workshops above) Contact with individual representatives to discuss implications of proposed intervention measures.