

North Norfolk Coastal Change Pathfinder Programme

Evaluating Options for Business/Private Contributions to Sea Defences between Wolferton Creek and South Hunstanton



**Report on:
Drop-in Session
Heacham Parish Offices
2 December 2010**

for

Stakeholders and Drop-in Session Attendees

RPA

December 2010

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by

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RPA REPORT – ASSURED QUALITY	
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FINDINGS FROM THE DROP-IN SESSION

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the Pathfinder Project, a drop-in session was held in Heacham Parish Offices on the 2nd December 2010. The session ran from 2pm until 7pm and was attended by around a dozen people. The aim of the session was to provide local residents and businesses with the opportunity to find out about the Pathfinder, as well as to feed in their opinions and comments. The session was arranged around a series of tasks, designed to gather information on what activities people undertake in the local area, what people like about the locality and what they think about contributing towards sea defences. This report summarises the findings from the session.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 Task 1: Aerial Photograph



Figure 1: Aerial Photograph of the Study Area

This task had two aims:

- to determine whether attendees were residents, business owners, or visitors/tourists; and

- to indicate where people who attended the session lived/worked/were staying.

Attendees were asked to put a coloured pin in an aerial photograph¹ to show the location of their house, business or holiday accommodation. Figure 1 presents the aerial photograph, with red pins representing residents and blue pins businesses.

2.2 Task 2: Activities undertaken in the Area

The first task was designed to determine which activities people undertake, and therefore which facilities and areas are most important. Table 1 summarises the information provided on the poster at the drop-in session, along with the results.

Activity	Please indicate here if you have done this in 2010
Used the beach....for walking, dog walking, watching the sea, sea fishing, kite surfing, etc.	* * * * * * 6
Watched wildlife....bird watching, sea life, animals, etc.	* * * * 4
Used the water....for sailing, boating, windsurfing, etc.	* 1
Used the car parks	* * 2
Visited local businesses....shops, restaurants, pubs, etc.	* * * 3
Used supermarkets	* * 2
Visited local attractions....Sealife centre, Park Farm, fairground, etc.	* * 2
Used the golf courses	-
Used holiday accommodation....caravans, B&Bs, self-catering	* 1

Note: this task involved sticking stars next to any activities undertaken in the last year

The findings from this exercise will be used to help evaluate the potential options for the coastline in this area. For example, Table 1 indicates that the beach is a popular place to go. Consequently, any coastal management option which might result in loss of the beach is unlikely to be rated highly.

2.3 Task 2: What Attendees like best about the Area

The second task involved attendees being given five stars. They then had to use these stars to show which features they liked best about the area. Table 2 shows the results from this task. Once again, the beach scores highly. Therefore, future management of the coast needs to ensure that the importance of the beach to local people is taken into account.

¹ The aerial photograph was provided by BCKL&WN.

Table 2: Features in the study area which people like best		
Feature	Please stick your stars against your favourite features	
Being able to visit the beach/see the sea	* * * * *	7
Footpaths, being able to walk along the coast	* * * * *	5
Having friends and family nearby	* * *	3
People are friendly	* * *	3
Being involved in making local decisions	* * *	3
Lots of things to do	*	1
Peace and quiet	* * * *	4
Beautiful area	* * * * *	6
Value of my house or business	*	1
Good road links		-
Good bus links	* *	2
No/little crime	* * *	3
Health services, emergency services	*	1
Range of businesses and shops	* *	2
Community facilities (village halls, schools, parks/gardens, etc.)	* * * * *	5
Note: Attendees were limited to five stars each. This ensured that they had to choose their favourite features, as opposed to just marking all features.		

2.4 Task 3: Voting Cards

In Task 3, attendees were given a voting paper with a series of questions and answers, as well as the opportunity to add their own answers. Nine voting papers were filled in. The results are presented on a question by question basis, with the questions and possible answers given in italics.

Question 1: Which do you think is the best option for the future?

A: local people and businesses should raise the money needed to ensure that local sea defences continue to be managed and maintained

B: local people and businesses should be prepared to adapt to coastal change (this would avoid the need to contribute towards managing and maintaining local sea defences)

Five attendees (56%) thought option A was best. Of these, two represented businesses whilst the other three were residents.

Two attendees (both residents) (22%) thought that option B was best.

A further two attendees (both residents) did not select either option A or option B. One of these responded: “Neither of the above. Coastal defences should be funded at

a national level – at a higher rate than has been the case in the recent past”.

Additional comments received on Question 1 included:

- additionally central government should contribute;
- help for [Option] A from some of the business rate; and
- believe there is some sort of obligation from the Environment Agency to raise funds towards the coastline.

Question 2: Who do you think should contribute towards paying for defences?

A: just those who could be flooded

B: everyone in the parishes of Heacham, Snettisham, Hunstanton, Dersingham and Ingoldisthorpe

C: everyone in the Borough

Seven respondents (78%) ticked Option C (everyone in the Borough). Of these, five were residents whilst two represented businesses.

One respondent (11%) (a resident) preferred Option B.

A further respondent suggested their own option: “everyone who benefits, either directly or indirectly, i.e. the good citizens of the area south of the Wash as far as Bedford”.

Additional comments received on Question 2 included:

- anyone living in any one of the affected villages should contribute financially – and those with holiday homes, cottages, caravans, etc;
- we have to support amenities in King’s Lynn and Downham. They should help us too; and
- Borough Council should be prepared to help ratepayers.

Question 3: If you were asked to contribute towards maintaining the defences, how much would you be willing to pay?

- *I am not willing to pay*
- *£1 to £2 per year*
- *£2 to £5 per year*
- *£5 to £10 per year*
- *£10 to £20 per year*
- *£20 to £50 per year*
- *£50 to £100 per year*
- *More than £100 per year*
- *I don’t know/cannot say*

This question attracted a range of responses:

- one respondent (a resident) was willing to pay £5 to £10 per year;

- two respondents (one business and one resident) were willing to pay £10 to £20 per year;
- two respondents (both residents) were willing to pay £20 to £50 per year;
- one respondent (a resident) was willing to pay £50 to £100 per year;
- one respondent (a business) was willing to pay more than £100 per year;
- one respondent (a resident) answered “ I don’t know/cannot say”; and
- one respondent (a resident) provided their own answer: “None of the above. I would be willing to pay through national taxation”.

Although this is a very small sample size, it is possible to calculate a weighted average willingness to pay across the nine respondents (with the two that did not tick an amount assigned £0). The weighted average willingness to pay across the nine respondents is £30 per year².

There was an additional comment from one respondent on this question:

- would like some assurance from the Environment Agency that they would be prepared to help.

Question 4: If there is not enough money to maintain the defences, how do you think the area should adapt to the risk of increased flooding?

- A: increase flood warning*
- B: homes and businesses should be made flood-proof*
- C: people should not be allowed to build in the floodable area*
- D: people should move out of the floodable area (roll-back)*
- E: properties in the floodable area should be moved or demolished*
- F: you may prefer to add your own ideas below*

Under this question, respondents were able to tick as many boxes as they wanted. The numbers below therefore indicate the number of ticks which each option received overall:

- Option A: 3 ticks (all given by residents);
- Option B: 2 ticks (both given by residents);
- Option C: 4 ticks (all given by residents);
- Option D: 1 tick (given by a resident) with the additional comment of “eventually as and when risk identified”; and
- Option E: no ticks.

Several respondents made suggestions under Option F. These included:

- “bring back the flood sirens and educate people on the consequences”;
- “is B possible? D given the option. E as they become vacant?”;
- “new houses should be built with garages below”;
- “would prefer to contribute and have defences”; and
- “the money must be made available. This is a national issue not a local one”.

² Using the mid value of the range and £100 for the category of >£100.

2.5 Feedback

Following completion of the activities, attendees were given the opportunity to complete a feedback form. The comments received about the event included:

- “thought provoking”;
- “well organized”; and
- “the timing of the event was very short notice and the wrong time of year”.

In relation to the last point, it is recognised that any engagement event held during the winter months is unlikely to pick up any of the large visitor population. In addition, the short notice period and the adverse weather conditions are also likely to have limited the number of residents and business representatives who could attend. Since the timings of the engagement events are constrained by the length of the study and the overall Pathfinder deadline, it was not possible for the engagement events to be held at a different time of year. However, the Pathfinder Project is being run in conjunction with the Environment Agency’s ongoing Coastal Management Review for Hunstanton to Wolferton Creek. Therefore, it is anticipated that views and comments from local residents, affected businesses and visitors can continue to be fed into the Environment Agency’s work on this area of coast after the Pathfinder Project has finished. Thus there will be further opportunities for those affected to submit their views.

In addition, RPA and the BCKLWN will send questionnaires covering the same questions as were asked at the drop-in session to businesses in the PEN area and to the owners of caravans (at their home addresses).

3. NEXT STEPS

The information gained from the drop-in session will be fed into the study along with other data gathered so far:

- information on the activities that people undertake and the features they like best will be used to help identify the criteria for an evaluation matrix. This matrix will subsequently be used to assess the suitability of the various options for dealing with coastal change. For example, if one option results in loss of the beach, then this will not score very highly since the beach is a popular feature which people visit; and
- information on whether people are prepared to contribute towards defences, and if so, how much will be used to help identify an equitable mechanism for securing business and private contributions towards the long-term cost of coastal defences in the area.

All the information gathered will also help the Environment Agency with the Coastal Management Review for Hunstanton to Wolferton Creek.

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Thank you to all participants who attended the drop-in session and gave us their ideas, opinions and views on coastal change in the area. Thank you in addition to Heacham Parish Council for providing the venue for the session and helping to publicise it.

Any additional comments on the session are welcome.