

BUSINESS ADVICE PROJECT
PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT
North Norfolk Pathfinder Programme

2010

CONTENTS

1. **Background to Pathfinder**
2. **Introduction**
3. **Scope and overall approach**
4. **Project organisation**
5. **Project timescales**
6. **Project constraints**
7. **Project controls**
8. **Quality plan**
9. **Configuration**
10. **Reports to Defra**



1. Background to Pathfinder

In late 2004 North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) published the draft Kelling to Lowestoft Shoreline Management Plan. On much of the frontage it was proposed that there would be a change from a policy of defence to one of retreat or doing nothing. While in many respects this move reflected the reality that the North Norfolk coastline has been eroding for thousands of years, it was nevertheless not a change the Council and its communities found acceptable without there being some recognition of the consequences of such a policy change and the need for help in responding to the issues arising from coastal erosion.

In the period since 2004 the Council has, with others, lobbied strongly for changes to the proposed arrangements. The outcome was the announcement by Government as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 of a Coastal Change (formerly Adaptation) Fund. This has been coupled with the publication in June 2009 of a draft Coastal Change Policy.

At the same time as publishing this draft Coastal Change Policy the Government invited local authorities in whose areas coastal change and management was a significant issue to bid for funds to trial various approaches to coastal change. North Norfolk District Council submitted a bid under the Coastal Pathfinder Programme and was successful in securing £3 million to trial a number of projects.

This project forms part of NNDC's trial Pathfinder projects.

2. Introduction

There are a number of businesses along the North Norfolk Coast, particularly to the east of Cromer, which lie within and immediately behind the Coastal Erosion Risk Zone as identified in the Shoreline Management Plan, which as a result of the possible change of policy with respect to the future maintenance of coast defences, may lack the confidence to invest in their business operations and have wider impact upon the perceptions of the area as a visitor destination.

Over time it is feared that the uncertainty caused by the risk of coastal erosion and change will impact negatively on levels of business confidence, leading to short-termism in business planning and a lack of investment by such businesses over the medium term. It is feared that this lack of business confidence will result in a weakening of the local economy – particularly as the majority of businesses are of locally significant importance to the local tourism sector which is based upon the coast / beach offer – either being accommodation providers (hotels, caravan parks) or directly support the tourism offer (being shops, cafes, pubs, restaurants etc). Other businesses potentially affected may directly support the local community in that they provide valuable village / community services – eg pubs, food shops, the potential loss of which will serve to undermine the wellbeing of these communities. There are also a small number of other businesses within the Coastal Erosion Risk Zone including fishing businesses, residential care homes, agricultural businesses which may not be in sectors directly related to either the tourism or local community service provision, but which contribute to the character / sense of place of the area and will also need to plan for the future of their business around the risks posed through coastal change in the years to come.

Through the Coastal Pathfinder Programme the District Council therefore wishes to provide a programme of support to businesses within the Coastal Erosion Constraint Zone over the twelve months April 2010 – March 2011 so as to encourage confidence and minimise the risk of possible blight through businesses and financial institutions being concerned over the risks of return on investment posed by the changing coastline.

3. Scope and overall approach

3.1 Project Aims

- The project aims to provide coastal businesses with the following business advice:
 - business diagnostic health checks to 80 coastal businesses by December 2010 and will require businesses agree and sign an action plan.
 - up to 3 sessions with a value of £450 of specialist advice (solicitor, financial, ICT, Marketing etc) will be available to all 80 businesses on completion and signed agreement of the diagnostic health check.
 - following the health check and any specialist advice the business will be eligible to develop or refresh a business plan with the nominated advisor. This will then enable them to apply for further assistance through the business investment, adaptation and relocation projects.
 - provision of aftercare assessment and advice at 9, 18 and 36 months.
- Following the provision of advice to businesses, information regarding the issues faced by coastal businesses and the potential solutions will be presented to financial and insurance organisations to increase the understanding and awareness of coastal change.

3.2 Scope

This project will offer a level of free business advice and support to all businesses within the 100 year erosion line in north Norfolk, expanding to other businesses affected by coastal change should resources be available.

3.3 Approach

The project will consist of four phases, business diagnostic health check, provision of specialist advice as identified in the health check, support in the creation of a business plan and ongoing monitoring. Further projects to be delivered through the pathfinder Programme will also link to the business advice project, notably the business investment and relocation projects. These projects offer practical help to businesses and should act as an incentive to encourage uptake of the Business Support Package.

The project will be lead within NNDC by Jose Socao, Economic & Tourism Development Officer with support from Rob Goodliffe, Programme Manager. The direct contact with coastal businesses will be conducted by the North Norfolk Business Forum. The business forum will provide publicity and promotional activities to encourage businesses to take advantage of the support package, identify businesses to be put forward for the business diagnostics, act as a broker on completion of a diagnostic for signposting businesses to specialist advice, monitoring the progress of businesses through the support package, passing the business to the provider of the Business Planning Phase and completing the aftercare. The forum would also provide regular updates to NNDC and gather information with regards to the businesses throughout the project.

Business Link will provide the diagnostic health check for the first phase of the project. The Business Planning will be contracted on a competitive basis. The specialist advice accessed by businesses through the voucher system will be selected by the client business.

3.4 Outcomes

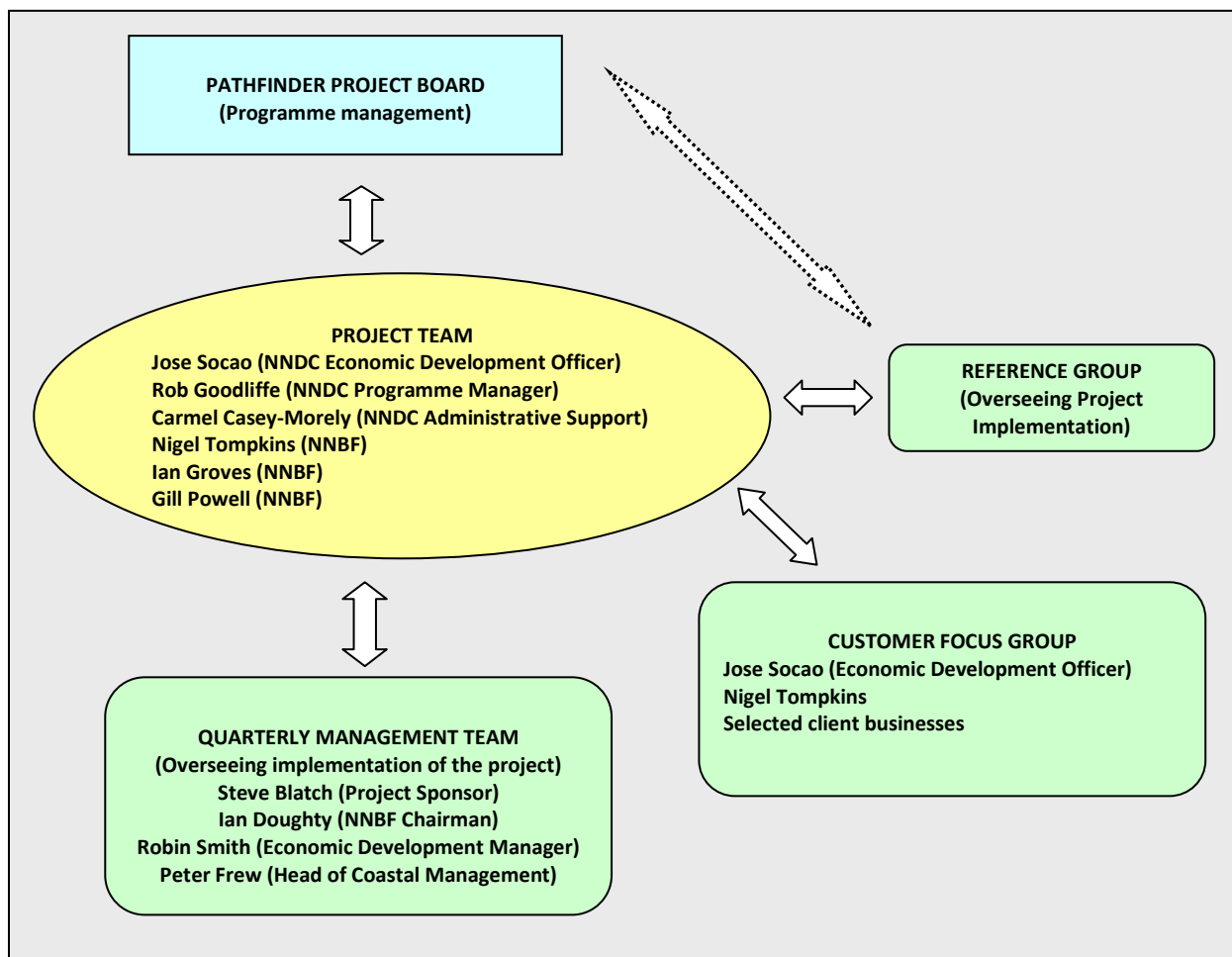
- Well informed business who have considered how and if coastal change will impact on their business and implemented plans or strategies to ensure the business meets their needs or vitality is maintained as the coastline changes.
- Increased collaboration by key business support organisations in both public and private sectors on providing assistance to businesses affected by coastal change issues
- An increased understanding of how coastal change affects businesses of different types and sizes and the methods which can be utilized to combat blighting.

4. Project Organisation

4.1 Project Structure

The Project will co-ordinated as part of the Pathfinder programme of projects and will be structured as in figure 1.

Figure 1. Business Advice Project structure



4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The programme Sponsor is Steve Blatch (Strategic Director, Community Services). The Project Board will be responsible for the overall management of the Business Advice Project. It consists of officers and councillors, augmented by the Chair of the North Norfolk Business Forum.

The Reference group for the programme will receive information of the project through the project board actions and decisions tables and via updates from the programme manager. The group can request to discuss the project with the Project Officer on request.

For information regarding the Project Board and Reference Group please view the Programme Initiation Document.

The Business Advice Project Team will consist of Jose Socao, Economic & Tourism Development Officer, Rob Goodliffe Pathfinder Programme Manger, Nigel Tompkins, Ian Groves and Gill Powell from NNBF. Administrative support will be provided by the Tourism Development Administration Support Officer Carmel Casey-Morely. The responsibilities of

NNDC and the NNBF have been agreed and are stated in the Service Level Agreement between the two organisations.

The function of the Project Team is to:

- oversee the delivery of the project and provide advice/ideas/input into the project and identify any challenges, issues, risks, lessons learned and costs;
- ensure that the tasks identified within the project plan are carried out in accordance with the timetable of the project plan;
- ensure the project communication/promotion is undertaken as identified in the Programme Communications Matrix and that any further methods are identified and complete as per the requirements of the Service Level Agreement.
- ensure that all responsibilities in the Service Level Agreements are met.
- report progress to the Project Board.

Business Link East will provide the initial business health check diagnostic for coastal businesses which will be maintained and monitored under a Service Level Agreement between NNBF and BLE.

The Management Team will meet quarterly to oversee the projects progress and will consist of Steve Blatch (Project Sponsor), Ian Doughty (NNBF Chairman), Robin Smith (Economic Development Manger) and Peter Frew (Head of Coastal management), members of the Project team will be requested attendance as appropriate.

4.3 Interfaces & Community Engagement

All the North Norfolk pathfinder projects have been based on public engagement and this will be maintained throughout their implementation. The Communications and Community Engagement Strategy sets out how this will be achieved (see the Programme Initiation Document).

To enable face to face feedback on the initiative, services procured and overall success of the project a customer focus group will meet, facilitated by Jose Socao and Nigel Tompkins. The group will discuss the initiative and the experiences of the client businesses. The object of the group will be to receive feedback to refine the initiative and generate overall feedback to the success and failures of the project.

During implementation client businesses will be requested to complete monitoring forms to feedback their observations and experiences.

The success of the project will be dependent on the willingness of businesses to participate, it is anticipated that an increased confidence in client businesses will be achieved through the nomination of the NNBF in the coordination of the advice offered and promotion of the project. Therefore a business will be the organisation helping businesses rather than provision through Local Government which can sometimes be perceived with suspicion or mistrust from the community.

The table below summarises the communications required for this project as identified in the Pathfinder Programme communications matrix.

Who will be informed	How	How Often
NNDC Staff	The Briefing Newsletter	Monthly Monthly

Who will be informed	How	How Often
Council Members	Members Bulletin Coastal Management Board Coastal issues Forum Newsletter	At key stages During scheduled meetings Quarterly Monthly
Project Board	Meetings	At scheduled meeting or if required
Project Team (Internal)	Meetings	Weekly
Parish Council	Via the Happisburgh Liaison Group and attending meeting where required.	Throughout the project.
Reference Group	Meetings Documents and updates from the Project board	Minimum once per quarter Ongoing
Liaison Group	Meetings	As often as required by the project and the group
Public	Outlook Articles Pathfinder Newsletter Press articles Local newsletter articles Website Open days/Workshops	Quarterly Monthly At key stages When key information is required to be disseminated Updated Weekly At key stages
Businesses	Open days Letter Telephone contact Visits General publicity Circulation of information through local business organisations.	At key stages At key stages At key stages During implementation Ongoing Ongoing
Defra	Quarterly Reports Final Report	April, July, October 2010, January 2011 June 2011
External government agencies, authorities, & professionals	Conferences/Events Meetings Workshops Periodicals Website Final Report	As required Ongoing June 2011

4.4 Dependencies/Links

This project could have beneficial links to the East Norfolk Coast Marketing Project in the utilisation of the marketing workshops and toolkit.

Project Programme

4.1 Project Timetable

The project will progress as outlined in the figure 2.

Figure 2 – Project timescales

	Task	Predicted timescale
1	Agree project approach	January 2010
2	Develop aftercare provision	September – October 2010
3	Develop business planning advice provision	February – June 2010
4	Develop specialist advice provision	March – May 2010
5	Develop business health check diagnostics	March – May 2010
6	Develop project co-ordination and monitoring	March – May 2010
7	Continued promotion	May 2010 – February 2011
8	Launch Business Support	May 2010
9	Delivery of business support	May 2010 – March 2011
10	Ongoing monitoring & assessment	Throughout project
11	Development of Business investment and relocation projects (to link into the support)	June – July 2010
12	Discussions with banking and insurance providers to improve understanding of coastal issues.	March – April 2011
13	Final reporting to government	April – May 2011
14	Ongoing aftercare	March 2011 – March 2013

4.2 Project plan

The project plan will be created and updated using MS Project. The plan will detail all the tasks required to complete the project and will be used to forecast estimated timescales of project completion and aid in the allocation of resources.

5. Project Constraints

6.1 Time

This project has a defined timeframe and must be completed or have funds committed by April 2011.

Due to the business community in North Norfolk being mostly tourism based many business owners will not have available time to take advantage of the scheme until the end of the peak season.

6.2 Personnel/contracts

Officer time is limited due to other commitments beyond the Pathfinder programme.

North Norfolk Business Forum is limited to completing the tasks as outlined in the Service Level Agreement, however following discussions amendments can be made to the SLA.

Business Link East is limited to completing the Business diagnostic health check but will also carry out any requirements under the SLA with NNBF.

The business planning advisor has been contracted for specific tasks, however there is scope within the contract to request additional tasks to be completed should the need arise and the funds be available.

Additional internal assistance may be required from other NNDC teams, this may be limited due to other commitments.

6.3 Finance

The pathfinder projects have been allocated budgets to enable them to be planned and proceed. These allocations may be amended as projects progress.

The Business Advice Project has been allocated a project budget of £175,000 (revenue) with an addition of £21,617 for project management costs, totalling £196,617.

The East of England Development Agency has granted an award of £10,000 towards the start-up of this project (included in the project budget).

6.4 Legal

Procurement must follow the NNDC Procurement Strategy.

The project supports the corporate aims of developing the competitiveness of the local economy as stated in Changing Gear, the corporate plan (pages 20-21).

Delegated authority has been granted by the cabinet of NNDC that the Chief Executive or Strategic Director (Communities) is able to procure works and services within the parameters set out in the Council's Coastal Change Pathfinder applications.

State aid rules apply to this support and should be managed under the de minimus rules. It will be necessary to confirm the level of de minimus state aid received by the business within the last 3 years and assess the business eligibility against the criteria set by the de minimus code. Records of the aid provide must be kept for 10 years.

6.5 Assumptions

It is assumed that Defra wish NNDC to complete the projects as we see fit as indicated by to the open nature of the funding offer. The Coastal Management Team also assume the general support of the Authority and its departments as a whole in the project delivery.

This project assumes that the previous consultations completed by NNDC and the Tyndal Centre in which the project concept was developed is still relevant and reflected the genuine views of a cross section of the business community.

6.6 Risks

Ref	Date Logged	Owner	Title	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent Risk (Likelihood x Impact)	Description	Summary of Actions/Mitigation	Status	Subsequent Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk
1	15.03.10	JS	Poor Uptake	5	5	25	Poor uptake of business support scheme	Monitor uptake and amend entrant criteria/promotion/scope as required	Open	3	3	9
2	15.03.10	JS	Business Forum	4	4	16	Business Forum are a new organisation and have not previously fulfilled the role required.	Monitor Business Forum through client monitoring forms. Set up Service Level Agreement setting out terms of the partnership and outputs required.	Open	2	2	4
3	15.03.10	Tbc	Linked Projects	3	3	9	Unable to provide Business investment, purchase lease back, rollback options which act as 'carrots' to encourage business uptake.	Scope these projects prior to detailed advertisement. Do not raise expectations in promotional activities beyond what is feasible.	Open	2	2	4
4	18.05.10	JS	Providers	1	5	5	Providers of business support do not meet the needs of the businesses	The suppliers of the business planning advice and aftercare will be under contract, included in the tendering will be the ability to amend the service provided. Business Link East are a government appointed body and will provide free advice which has been tried and tested across the UK. The specialist advisors quality will be assessed by NNBF prior to the specialist advice vouchers being issued.	Open	1	2	3

Ref	Date Logged	Owner	Title	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent Risk (Likelihood x Impact)	Description	Summary of Actions/Mitigation	Status	Subsequent Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk
5	08.06.10	RG	State Aid	4	4	16	State aid rules are complex and it is essential to prevent future issues for the council and the business that the assistance complies with state aid rules.	Investigations by the Economic Development Team state that there are issues with state aid. The de minimus rules can be applied limiting the levels of assistance provided. Further clarification and agreement with the DTI is required to ascertain that we have interpreted the advice correctly.	O	4	4	16

6. Project Controls

7.1 Management

The project will be documented with the following; project initiation document, project plan, ongoing issues log, quality log, lessons learned log and change log as required. The project initiation document will be agreed by the Project Board.

The board will be updated during each stage of the project and will make decisions at key points and advise in the project direction. When 'exceptions' occur which require a decision to be made urgently by the project board, information will be circulated via email to members of the Board. The discussions and decision will be recorded in the emails and resolution must be met in a maximum of 5 working days.

NNDC officer time in delivering this project will be recorded so the cost can be allocated to the project budget. The cost of officer time will be accounted for in the project management costs allocated to the project.

The contract with the business planning consultant and aftercare provider will be monitored through monthly reports which will be submitted to the project officer, issues causing an exceptions to the project or high levels of risks will be directed to the Project Board.

The SLA between NNDC and NNBF will be monitored monthly by means of a monthly project team meeting.

The minutes of the Management Team meeting and Quarterly Customer Focus Group meetings will be made available to the Project Board and to the Reference Group for consideration where required.

7.2 Financial

As stated the project must not exceed the total budget of £196,617 revenue spend. The accounts will be monitored monthly following a report from the Accounts Team by the Programme Manager and reported back to the board.

Should the project have an expected under spend of 10% or if there is any predicted overspend, it will be reported to the board.

7. Quality Plan

The quality log will include the meetings for the Project, Management and Customer focus Groups and reports of any open days/workshops available for businesses. Where the quality check reveals the project is off specification or feedback suggest the scope of the project may need amending, the project team with the programme manager will investigate the options and present to the Project Board agree the most appropriate action.

The monthly financial report/check and scheduled re assessment of risks and issues logs will be completed prior to Project board meetings.

8. Miscellaneous

9.1 Document Versions

Project documents will be saved in the pathfinder folders M:\File System\Pathfinder Programme\Projects\Infrastructure Package\Trimingham village hall of the coastal

management section and documents will carry in their title the creation/amendment date to enable current versions to be easily identified.

9.2 Meeting Minutes

Meetings will be concisely recorded with Actions, Decisions and Issues highlighted where appropriate.

9. Defra Reports

The project will be reported quarterly from April 2010 to Defra on the proforma provided.

Report will be produced for the end of the month in:

- April 2010
- July 2010
- October 2010
- January 2011
- April 2011