

WEST WITTERING PARISH COUNCIL

NOTES OF PUBLIC MEETING HELD 18TH JULY 2008

PAGHAM TO EAST HEAD DRAFT COASTAL STRATEGY

Present; J. Curzon, Natural England, A. Lawrence, National Trust, M. Wardle, National Trust, J. McKerchar, Cakeham Estates, P. Morton, WWE, R. Young, Chair, D. Lowesley, CDC, J. Pearce, EA, R. Traynor, Consultant Engineer, J. Davis, CHC,
WWPC; R. Shrubbs, J. Robertson, T. Tupper, W. Buckland, K. Martin, D. Hopson
WWRA; W. Tayler

1. Presentation by Panel (Powerpoint)

DL outlined the current position regarding the draft strategy and the options available after the initial consultation, the creation of the East Head Working Group and the panel of experts. He described the plan to install a geotextile layer to prevent further erosion or creation of a new channel from action of the waves scoring against the rock berm and other hard defences.

2. Options

These were outlined as follows;

- a) Do nothing
- b) Commit to a process known as adaptive management
- c) Develop an adaptive management solution and address the risk of current defences failing.

3. Preferred Option

The preferred option was to develop an adaptive management solution at East Head. The East Head Coastal Issues Advisory Group would take the adaptive management solution forward. It was noted that CHC had voted to support the adaptive management role.

4. Questions from WWRA

The first question concerned “hold the line” and the repair of existing groynes. Why not use gabions as at Snowhill?

DL – hard defences ultimately reduce the level of the beach (essential for protection from waves) cause end scour under the defence, and eventually contribute to “catastrophic” failure when the weakest point is breached. Not feasible to build a wall around East Head, not what people want and will change charm and character. Not affordable.

concern over Snowhill Moorings if East Head is allowed to move – JD confirmed that in the 100 years that Panel were considering this would not make a difference to these moorings.

Questions from floor regarding the geotextile sill and its development and use particularly in Holland.

Question re rock berm and its use. JD confirmed that at the time this was installed the Shoreline management Plan was to “hold the line” in advance of any other strategy this is what it has done. This strategy will require rock berm to stay as may be needed in the future depending on how adaptive management develops as it is a flood and erosion preventative measure.

Question from WWSC re sill and its role. DL explained that it is designed to prevent waves cutting down which they would do against hard engineered defences. Geotextile designed to absorb wave action and build up as in any beach activity. PM said that the group had

considered removing the rock berm but agreed that it was part of options in adaptive management approach.

WWRA asked if planning consent for berm would lapse, JC confirmed that Natural England would not ask for it to be removed as they supported adaptive management.

DL confirmed that "hold the line" was still policy until strategy was agreed and in place and expected this to take less than 3 years to achieve.

Panel confirmed that lowering groynes was contributing to the beach building up, therefore contributing to best defence.

WWRA question re Posford Duvivier report – DL confirmed that understanding of how hard engineering affects coastline was now improved, and JD confirmed that CHC accepted that "hold the line" from 1999 report now in reality was "managed realignment", subsequently developing to full adaptive management approach. The best defence is a sloping beach, which absorbs and deflects wave energy, not concrete barriers which will challenge wave energy.

Question re flooding at Selsey in March 2008. DL explained that shingle bank was high and narrow and by design would fail because wave energy is stronger along this stretch.

Discussed preferred height of beach, and issues over whether overtopping caused flooding.

Question re frontage at EW, and sea wall. DL confirmed risk of flooding does exist in EW.

Timber groynes are failing, and sea wall buried. Policy is to still hold the line, but this defence work is not affordable as not currently at flood risk. Comment from floor re the large amounts of sand and shingle which DL aware of.

Question from Snowhill Mooring Association, - will wave action following any overtopping of beach damage boats? JD responded that this would only occur at the top end of tidal action and should not be of concern as the moorings are sheltered.

Question re EW and concern re lack of funding. DL explained that CDC has no duty to provide sea defences but does have authority. Looking for funding package within next 2 years, but some defences may be uneconomic and would not qualify for government subsidy.

Question re cost of providing geotextile defence, DL - £100 - £160k,

Question re the proposed bund to protect against flooding. F/P No. 1 if overtopped or breached would lead to flooding very quickly in central WW village, apart from the defence of the road to the beach and culverts. DL confirmed looking at raising the level of the road and bund and F/P No 1 and agreed this would have priority if flood risk identified.

Question re EA figures on sea levels – RT confirmed that appraisal is for event in next 100 years and that the proposed strategy will look at flooding immediately where there is risk.

Question re why the strategy is considering hard engineering at EW and not at East Head.

DL confirmed that if East Head were shored up it would lose its natural status – more sustainable to manage its movement.

Question re concern over speedier action for flood defences – how quickly could defences be in place if there was a breach. JP confirmed that the strategy needed to be in place but that any emergency would be dealt with. EA would look at raising level of F/P No.1

DL said that flood warning system was in place and that support for strategy was best option to ensure this happened.

Question re management of dunes and marram on East Head. MW confirmed that marram will be killed if dunes overtopped but that could be managed. Boardwalk will remain to prevent human interference in dune creation. NT in agreement with strategy.

Question re rising sea levels and data used in strategy. RT confirmed DeFRA figures show trend is rising so strategy has to deal with this.

Question from WWRA re finance. DL Woodger Trust has a commitment via CHC to support and protect East Head but had not been approached to fund the geotextile. JD confirmed that CHC has to be able to deliver a feasible solution and that CHC supports this

strategy as the vehicle to achieve this. If strategy is not accepted then this will threaten future. JMk confirmed Cakeham and WWE part funded rock berm.

Question re priority for funding. DL any option must be feasible and affordable.

Question re flood risk for properties at Ellanore. JP confirmed that some properties were omitted and this was an error. These properties not at same risk so there would be a different solution.

RY summed up the position in the strategy as adaptive management for East Head and hold the line for EW frontage. JD confirmed that East Head will be looked after by special group hoping that this will speed up the solution. Urged all present to support strategy for East Head.

WWRA asked about responsibility of new group. JMk – whole group agreement on way forward with CDC supervising work to achieve solutions and CHC carrying out the work. JC confirmed Natural England would not object on planning.