

Mr Peter Frew
North Norfolk District Council
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11th July 2010.

Dear Mr Frew,

Cromer Coastal Strategy Study

CPRE Norfolk welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Cromer Coastal Study Review, following our visit to the exhibition on the 9th July.

We consider that your preferred Scheme Option 4 is clearly the best 'package' of measures, both in meeting the requirements and the time phasing of the programme. Overall this best meets the technical, economic and environment and heritage criteria.

In addition, it allows some flexibility in assessing the priority of individual sections of the wall in the light of on-going experience. There are inevitably some inherent uncertainties in the degree and rate in the further deterioration of existing defences as regards weather patterns and the overlay of climate change impacts over the time periods 0-5, 6-50 and 51-100 years.

We add two specific points for consideration. The main issues on the Cromer frontage are the poor conditions of the sea wall and groynes, and the low beach levels. A potential addition (not an alternative) to the package could have been a recharge of the frontage with sand from elsewhere. This is of course costly and the sourcing (and transport) will have an environment downside. In addition, the coastal processes will see a movement along the coast, raising the issue of a periodic recharge. However it could be argued that this has some benefit to the receiving coastline to the east, so the benefits are not entirely 'lost'.

The second point is that we wish to emphasise the need for the monitoring that is planned. Beach level is critical in that any fall increases the vulnerability of the wall and the consequent undermining, hence the recharge comment we make above.

The ongoing assessment and monitoring of cliff recession to the east and west of the frontage is very important in the longer term as regards the rate that the sea might progress towards some encirclement of the defences and the town on the 'flanks'.

Both loss of sediment from the beach and rate of cliff erosion are 'irregular' of course; they will be erratic, with periods of relative stability that can be followed one of rapid change and loss of sediment from a beach or slump and loss of a section of cliff. In our view this makes the monitoring all the more important, and it should be linked with attempts to relate cause and effect to obtain an improved understanding of the processes at work.

Finally, we welcome the attention being paid to the importance to the heritage listed sections of the wall, including the flint work at section 9.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Shepherd,
Policy Co-ordinator
CPRE Norfolk